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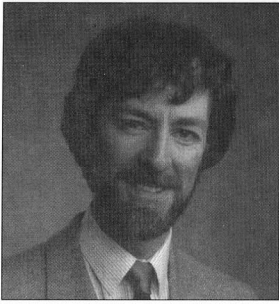
English Medieval Knight 1300–1400

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Christopher Gravett • Illustrated by Graham Turner



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Author's Dedication

To Joanna, to thank her for her love of history

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Artist's note

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
CHRONOLOGY	6
ORGANISATION AND TRAINING	6
Household troops • The feudal summons Obligations to serve • Wages and contracts • Training	
ARMOUR AND WEAPONS	17
The increase in plate armour • Weapons Horse armour • Civilian dress	
IDEALS AND CUSTOMS	43
Chivalry • Tournaments	
CAMPAIGNING	46
BIBLIOGRAPHY	52
GLOSSARY	55
COLOUR PLATE COMMENTARY	59
INDEX	64

ENGLISH MEDIEVAL KNIGHT 1300-1400

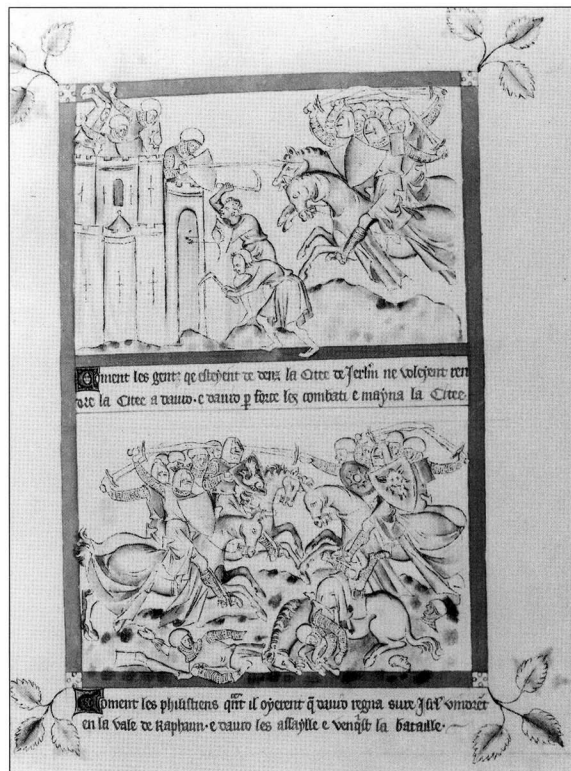
INTRODUCTION

The 14th century was a time of great changes for the English knight, not only in terms of his armour and costume, but also in the method of his recruitment. In 1300 armies were composed largely of men summoned to perform their feudal duties; by 1400 the king could command a professional army raised largely by contract and paid in cash.

This was just as well. When the century opened, Edward I was still embroiled in his struggle to force the Scots to recognise his authority. On his death in 1307 his son, Edward II, continued the war with an army strong in mounted knights, but lost decisively in 1314 to Robert the Bruce at Bannockburn. Unfortunately Edward had a knack of raising up unpopular favourites to help him govern, firstly Piers Gaveston, then the Despencers, men who were hated by some of the most powerful barons. The Earl of Lancaster led an opposition to Edward's rule but was beaten at Boroughbridge in 1322. However, Edward's favourites perished and his queen and her lover, Roger Mortimer, plotted his downfall, Edward reportedly suffering a gruesome death in Berkeley Castle in 1327. His young son came to the throne as Edward III and soon took control, incarcerating his mother and executing Mortimer. A king interested in spectacle and war, Edward gradually won over his lords; knights found themselves fighting for him in Scotland where, after several victories, a treaty was agreed in 1357 and David was recognised as king in Scotland.

Meanwhile, following clashes in the Channel, England had drifted into war with France in 1337, after which Edward laid claim to the French crown itself. The conflict carried on intermittently for so long (116 years) that it became known as the Hundred Years War. At first things went well for Edward, with a naval victory at Sluys in 1340 and English armies triumphing at Crécy in 1346 and Poitiers ten years later, when King John of France was captured. In 1348, however, the Black Death, having ravaged France, reached England and within two years wiped out perhaps one-third of the population. The king's eldest son, Edward, the Black Prince,

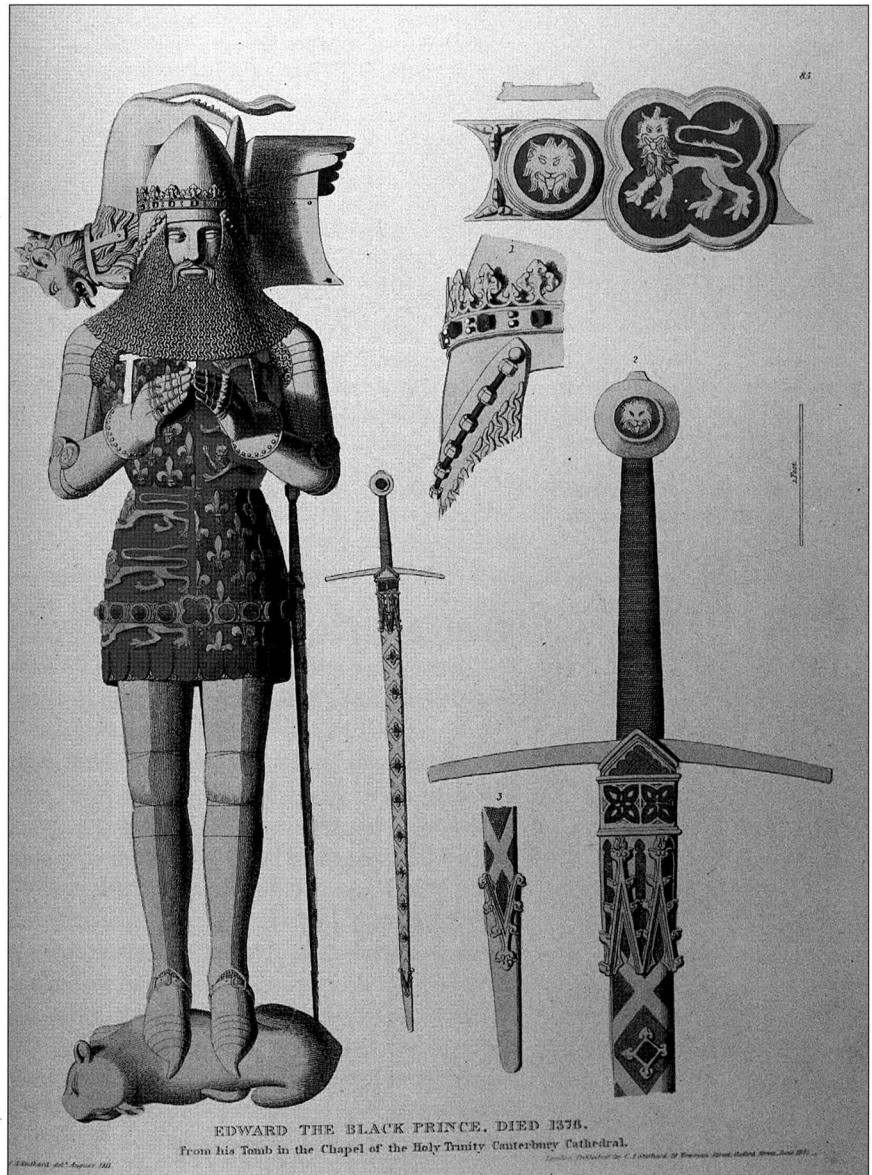
The siege of Jerusalem, from the early 14th-century St Mary's Psalter. The mailed figures wear great helmets or basinets, with poleyns at the knee. Separate gauntlets, ailettes and falchions can be seen. (By permission of the British Library, MS Royal II B VII, f.56)



victor of Poitiers, joined Peter the Cruel in a bid to secure the latter on the throne of Castile, but his brutality alienated Edward and he returned from Spain in poor health. He never fully recovered, dying in 1376. The French now usually refused to meet their enemy in the open, while the English were too weak to besiege towns and strongholds effectively.

The once martial King Edward sank into his dotage and died in 1377, leaving his young grandson to inherit the throne as Richard II. Though still a boy, he faced hostile crowds at the outbreak of the Peasants' Revolt in 1381 with praiseworthy calm, but he was no military general. The powerful John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster and third son of Edward III, invaded Spain in 1386 in a bid to secure Castile for himself through the claim of his Spanish wife, but, as in France, he was denied battle and forced to make a truce. The war policy in England, as happened before and would again, always created problems at home when victories dried up, and Richard could not effectively curb his barons who protested about the cost of war (among other things). He grew more tyrannical, and banished Gaunt's son, Henry Bolingbroke, in 1395. When Gaunt died in 1399 Richard made the banishment permanent, but then Henry landed with a small force at Ravenspur. Tricked into giving himself up, Richard was forced to abdicate. An uprising in Richard's favour sealed his fate, and the unhappy prisoner died in Pontefract castle that same year. As Henry IV of the house of Lancaster, Henry would reign until 1413, when his warlike son, Henry V, took over and led England once more into France. The Hundred Years War would sputter on until 1453.

Effigy of Edward, the Black Prince (died 1376); a drawing by Stothard from his tomb in Canterbury Cathedral. Depicted on the tomb chest is also a black shield with white ostrich feathers, his 'shield of peace' for jousts, which probably gave rise to the name, 'Black Prince'.



CHRONOLOGY

- 1300 Siege of Caerlaverock.
- 1307 Battle of Loudon Hill: Bruce defeats an English army.
Death of Edward I and ascension of Edward II.
- 1314 Battle of Bannockburn: English defeated.
- 1322 Battle of Boroughbridge: Lancaster defeated.
- 1327 Murder of Edward II and ascension of Edward III.
- 1332 Battle of Dupplin Muir: victory for Edward Balliol.
- 1333 Battle of Halidon Hill: defeat of supporters of King David II.
- 1339 Hundred Years War begins.
- 1340 Sea battle off Sluys: English victory.
- 1342 Battle of Morlaix: drawn contest between English and French.
- 1345 Battle of Auberoche: English victory.
- 1346 Battle of Crécy: English victory.
Battle of Neville's Cross. Capture of David II of Scotland.
- 1347 Battle of La Roche Derien: English victory.
- 1348–50 The Black Death reaches England.
- 1351 Combat of the Thirty.
Battle of Ardes: English defeated.
- 1352 Battle of Mauron: English victory.
- 1356 Battle of Poitiers: capture of King John of France.
- 1359 Battle of Nogent-sur-Seine: English victory.
- 1364 Battle of Auray: English victory
- 1367 Battle of Najera: the Black Prince helps Peter the Cruel to throne of Castile.
- 1370 Battle of Lussac: French victory, but lack of horses means they are captured.
- 1376 Death of Edward, Prince of Wales, the Black Prince.
- 1377 Death of Edward III and ascension of Richard II.
- 1381 The Peasants' Revolt.
- 1385 Battle of Aljubarrota: English troops help win victory for Portugal over Castile.
- 1386 John of Gaunt lands at Galicia with an army to seize crown of Castile.
- 1387 Truce between John of Gaunt, John of Portugal and John of Castile.
Battle of Radcot Bridge. Lords Appellant defeat royalist force.
- 1388 Battle of Otterburn: English defeated.
- 1399 Henry Bolingbroke lands at Ravenspur.
Murder of Richard II. Ascension of Henry IV.

ORGANISATION AND TRAINING

At the beginning of the 14th century knights and squires might serve in several different contexts. They might be employed as household knights, as feudal troops, as volunteers, or as paid fighting men. Many knights were quite prepared to fight when the call came for troops, but their wish was for relatively short campaigns. Some found that running their estates was their main interest. Others became county members of parliament – knights of the shire – though from the middle of the 14th century not all of them were actually knights. The more intuitive of them might rise to the rank of sheriff, might become part of judicial commissions of ‘oyer and terminer’, or commissioners of array to select men for war service. By the 14th century knighthood formed a bridge between county knights and the landed aristocracy, whose great estates and judicial rights had been slowly eroded by the increase in royal power and government involvement in local areas. This stability and order was reinforced by the continuation of service, now increasingly laid down by indenture.



Some knights originated as members of the free peasantry, whose family rose in government or religious lay office until their status (particularly in the legal profession) deemed them worthy of knighthood. Marriage was still a lucrative way to acquire wealth, but for landless younger sons there was not much to offer a girl's family in return. Not many of the English gentry made a career of war. The landless knights had less call on their time at home, and were often willing to stay in the field. Others pursued military careers after the Treaty of Bretigny in 1360 had removed English troops and garrisons in France, and instead joined the free companies. There were a few knightly bandits in England, gangs led by gentry such as the Folevilles and Coterels in the 1320s and 1330s, who settled matters of land ownership by summary justice.

In the 13th century the cost of the knighting ceremony and the additional duties that the rank required had led many men to avoid becoming knights. To combat this, Henry III and Edward I began to force those men with defined amounts of land or property to become knights. This was known as distraint and was still employed to a lesser extent in the 14th century. Fielding a full complement of knights was often a problem and deficiencies were made up with squires, a group who were considered worthy of coats of arms in the first half of the 14th century, and increasingly formed a social level below the knights. Many now found themselves disinclined to take up knightly status, however. Apart from the expense that it entailed, they enjoyed being landowners and managers, and many were busy in local government. Some would never become knights, but together with burgesses would form the new class of gentry who absorbed knightly ideals.

Practice at the pell in mail armour with shield and sword, from an early 14th-century French version of Vegetius, *De Re Militari*. (By permission of the British Library, MS Royal 20 B XI, f.3)



A battle scene from the Holkham Picture Bible Book of 1326–27. In the upper panel, riders wear visored helmets, that of the king having a bevor at the chin, as do some kettle hats. Several body defences of coat of plate construction consist of small square plates apparently riveted at the corners to the outside of a fabric coat. The king seems to have fluted couters and spaulders, with gutter-shaped plates on the arms and plate gauntlets; his horse has a simple shaffron, with a peytral worn over the caparison. Only one man carries a shield. (By permission of the British Library, MS Add. 47680, f.40)

Household troops

Household knights were similar to the old Germanic war band or hearth troop, and lived with their lord at whichever castle or manor he happened to be residing. Their upkeep was paid for by him, and in return the knights were employed on various duties, such as forming a bodyguard wherever he went, escort duty, carrying messages and, most importantly, forming the nucleus of his troops in battle. This group was called the *familia* and their relationship with their lord was often close. Equally, the king also had his *familia regis*, made up of bannerets, knights bachelor and troopers. It formed the main body of men in an English army, men who could be detailed for special duties such as escorting workmen or provisions. Some became constables of Welsh or Scottish castles, or led *chevauchées* (mounted raids) into Scotland, or even held posts in the navy. Even under Edward II, a king not noted for his military interests, 32 bannerets and 89 household knights were in service in 1314–15. Under Edward III, 14 bannerets and 66 knights were with him in 1347, although the records for this French expedition do not distinguish between wages for household knights and other knights. In mid-century the name ‘household knight’ began to change to ‘knight of the chamber’. After 1360 chamber knights are mentioned to the exclusion of ‘household knight’, perhaps because of more domestic duties. It should be remembered that Edward III took a less active military role in his later years and his own household was being run

more along the lines of those of the great magnates. Under Richard II a new term appears: 'king's knights' were men who drew annuities from the exchequer instead of royal household fees. King's knights formed the nucleus of the later 14th-century armies, but were not as close to the king himself as the earlier household knights. In 1394 Richard II had 48 king's knights for his Irish expedition, over half the total number of knights and bannerets in charge of retinues.

The feudal summons

The feudal summons introduced by the Normans was already becoming outmoded by the early 14th century, but had been maintained by the barons themselves. By this system the king parcelled out land to his great barons (tenants-in-chief) or directly to lesser barons, in return for which he was provided with the service of armed men. The period of service was usually 40 days in war and a similar period in peacetime; after this, additional service was negotiable. Tenants-in-chief in turn had their own tenants. A man receiving land performed an act of fealty and homage by which he swore to support his lord, and the lord in turn swore to uphold his new vassal.

In the 13th century the number of men a baron agreed to send had been drastically reduced, although feudal agreements meant both king and baron knew the numbers expected. On the *Caerlaverock Roll* in 1300, 40 knights and 366 sergeants appeared, but only three years later numbers had declined to 15 knights and 267 sergeants. In 1310 the Earl of Pembroke provided one knight and eight sergeants but ten barded horses, the latter now a more important requisite; the earl's obligation was actually five knights, but one knight was worth two sergeants. Generally speaking, the proportions of knights to sergeants had altered greatly by the first quarter of the 14th century, contrasting to those a century earlier in which perhaps over half the mounted troops were knights.

The old, the sick, and female or religious landowners could send money in lieu of service, with which the king could hire troops. This scutage (literally 'shield money') had been increasingly popular since



An infantry battle, from the *Holkham Picture Bible Book of 1326–27*. One man has a mail coat but most wear a quilted aketon under the tunic, glimpsed at the forearms or hem. Some have mail hoods, others quilted versions, that of the left figure buttoning up at the chin. Leather gauntlets seem to be worn, only one man having plate versions. Small bucklers with metal boss and rim can be seen. (By permission of the British Library, MS Add. 47680, f.40)



Brass of Sir Roger de Trumpington, Trumpington, Cambs, c.1326. Apart from poleyns he wears complete mail armour, with his arms displayed on the ailettes. His pointed helm is attached by a chain to the waist belt, an early example of this fashion. The point of attachment would soon shift to the chest.

the 12th century. Equally, some knights were simply too busy or too disinterested in military matters to attend in person, and scutage allowed them to pay the king instead of performing their military service. Ecclesiastics sometimes contracted military men to provide soldiers for the feudal summons.

For the campaigns in Scotland of 1300, 1303 and 1306, Edward was granted a levy of scutage raised. All who served, who paid their fines *pro servitio* (for service) in full, or who were doing duty elsewhere, were allowed to take a levy from their sub-tenants at 40 shillings per fee. Despite low quotas, the tenants-in-chief were able to take scutage from their own tenants at the old 12th-century rates. As in 1292, in 1305 there was a complaint that tenants were being pressured to pay arrears of scutage, but Edward said the rolls should be searched so that service could be proved. Prelates, earls and barons had sanctioned a levy of scutage of 40 shillings per fee for these two campaigns, to be taken within two years if Edward so wished, but the officials had apparently been pressing even those who had fought.

Obligations to serve

Paid troops had many advantages: they did not go home after the usual 40-day feudal service was over (when the king in any case had to pay his feudal troops if he wanted them to remain), and they could be selected for the quality of their military skills. As Edward I became involved in wars with Scotland and France, he found the restrictions of feudal service were becoming a burden. Full coffers would allow him to take armies of professional fighting men out of England for long periods of time if necessary. Thus by 1300 his armies also enlisted members of the baronage for periods of service by contract, whereby they were paid to follow the army for a designated campaign or time. Perhaps lack of interest in Scottish campaigns that promised little reward had something to do with it, as well as hard economics. Most had already served in this way when the 14th century opened, but feudal service remained, largely because aristocrats did not want to be seen serving for pay like common mercenaries. Some served for nothing, especially if it entailed a personal campaign against a hated enemy, for example by marcher lords. In raising troops in 1297, 1298, 1307 and 1319, the king had ordered no feudal summons. For that of 1316 Edward II asked for as many additional troops as the tenants could bring, but now homage was demanded as well, with a threat of confiscating lands if not obeyed. No exact obligation or pay structure was laid down, and it caused much bitterness and could not be implemented. Service from £50 landholders was also demanded with similar threats. In 1327, Edward III ordered his first and only feudal summons, the last of such demands. The summonses of 1314, 1322 and 1327 had not been stunning successes, but the usage of terms such as 'fealty' and 'homage' continued to be used when agreements were made. In the early 14th century new lands in Scotland were given under feudal obligation, to provide castle garrisons, while in Ireland it continued into the 15th century. It was revived in England in 1385 for a Scottish campaign (though no troops were really necessary), perhaps so that Richard II could confirm that such summonses could still be demanded.

The king might use a special summons that appealed to the chivalric nature of his lords. Thus in 1300 they were asked to bring as many as they could plus their formal quotas. For Scotland Edward I then tried using a structure based on wealth rather than knighthood. He had done this before in the 13th century but had come unstuck when reducing the qualification from land held worth £40 to £20. Now, again with a £40 level, men argued that either they were not tenants-in-chief and did not have to serve, or else were and so owed feudal service anyway. Backing off, Edward changed tack, and in 1301 sent 935 men summonses for wages. This too failed.

Edward II, successful after the battle of Boroughbridge but smarting from his failed 1316 summons, now expected all cavalry not retained to muster at Newcastle for the 1322 Scottish campaign. This had wildly varying results, such as 56 bannerets and knights from Essex but only two from Huntingdon. Two years later all knights were asked to meet at Westminster to discuss things, and a distraint was issued to force knighthood. Lists of knights and men-at-arms were drawn up by the sheriffs, some 1,150 knights and 950 men-at-arms from those lists surviving. For the war in Gascony commissioners were to array all knights, squires and men-at-arms, noting who formed part of a magnate's retinue and who were ready to serve. Then demands came for men-at-arms, light horse and infantry, with a total of about 650 fully armed horse. In 1325 the sheriffs demanded that all men be ready to serve, and a new distraint of knighthood went out. That the commissions of array used for infantry were now extended to cavalry was a very new departure, probably the work of Edward's unpopular favourites, the Despensers. In 1327 it was abandoned.

In the 1330s Edward III revised the 1285 Statute of Winchester, which defined the equipment of different classes of society. He demanded that a £40 landholder should have arms and horse for himself and one other. In 1344 this idea was extended, with a scale for assessing contributions to the army, embracing all those with an income of £5 or more, up to £1,000. £5 meant finding an archer, £25 a man-at-arms. Only the victorious campaign with its victory at Crécy staved off a real backlash.

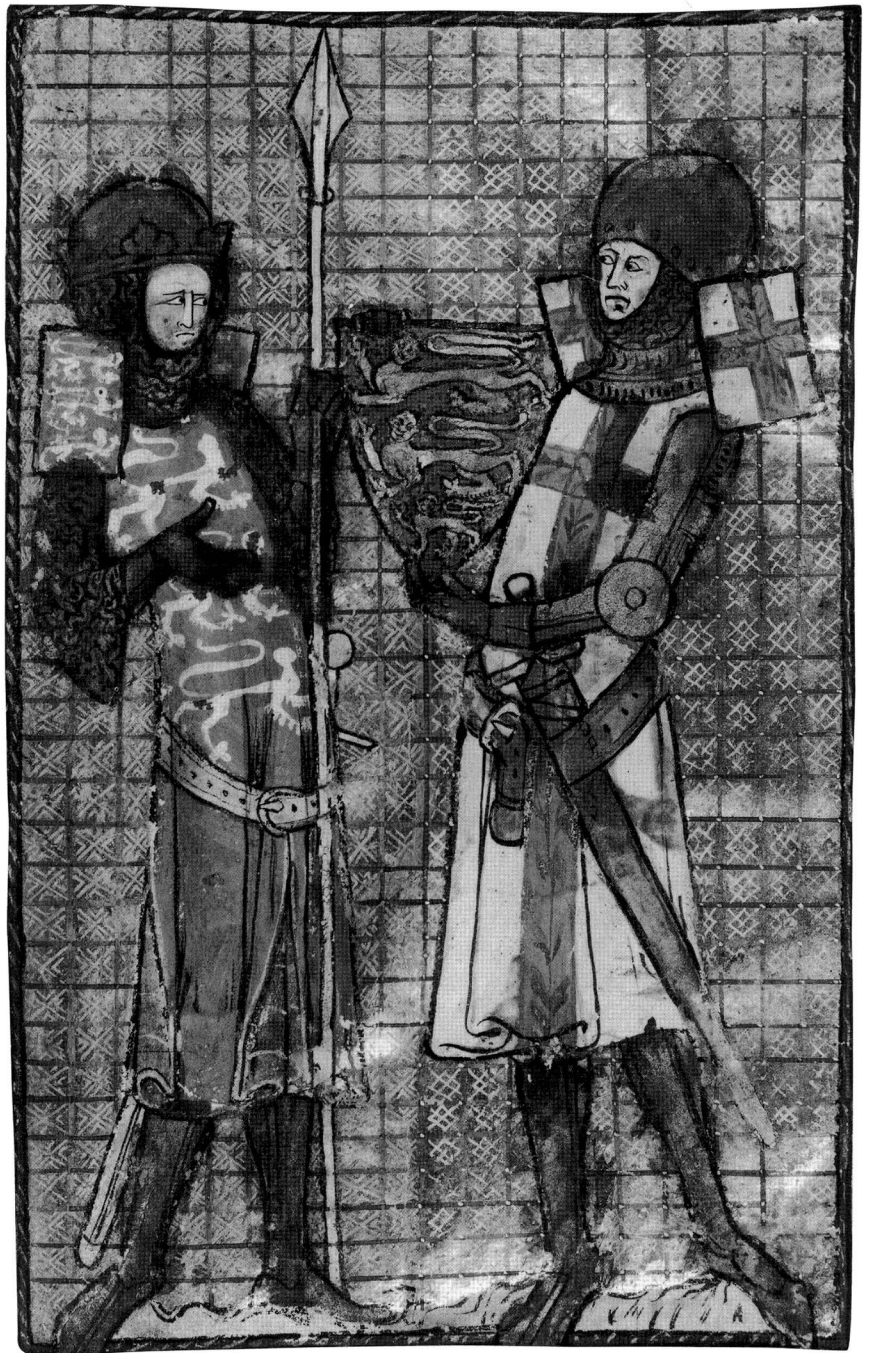
Sometimes barons sent men by an individual bargain struck with the king. In 1306 Thomas and Maurice Berkeley sent ten men-at-arms for as long as King Edward remained in Scotland, in return for the removal of a 1,000 mark fine imposed for lawlessness in Gloucestershire.

None of these attempts to raise men by non-feudal obligation had any great success, and some caused serious ripples in government. Walter de Milemete, a royal clerk writing in the 1320s, puts it at the bottom of the three ways to raise men, with voluntary service as the most favoured. Between these come paid troops, and it was with pay and rewards that the king would find the successful formula for raising field armies.

Wages and contracts

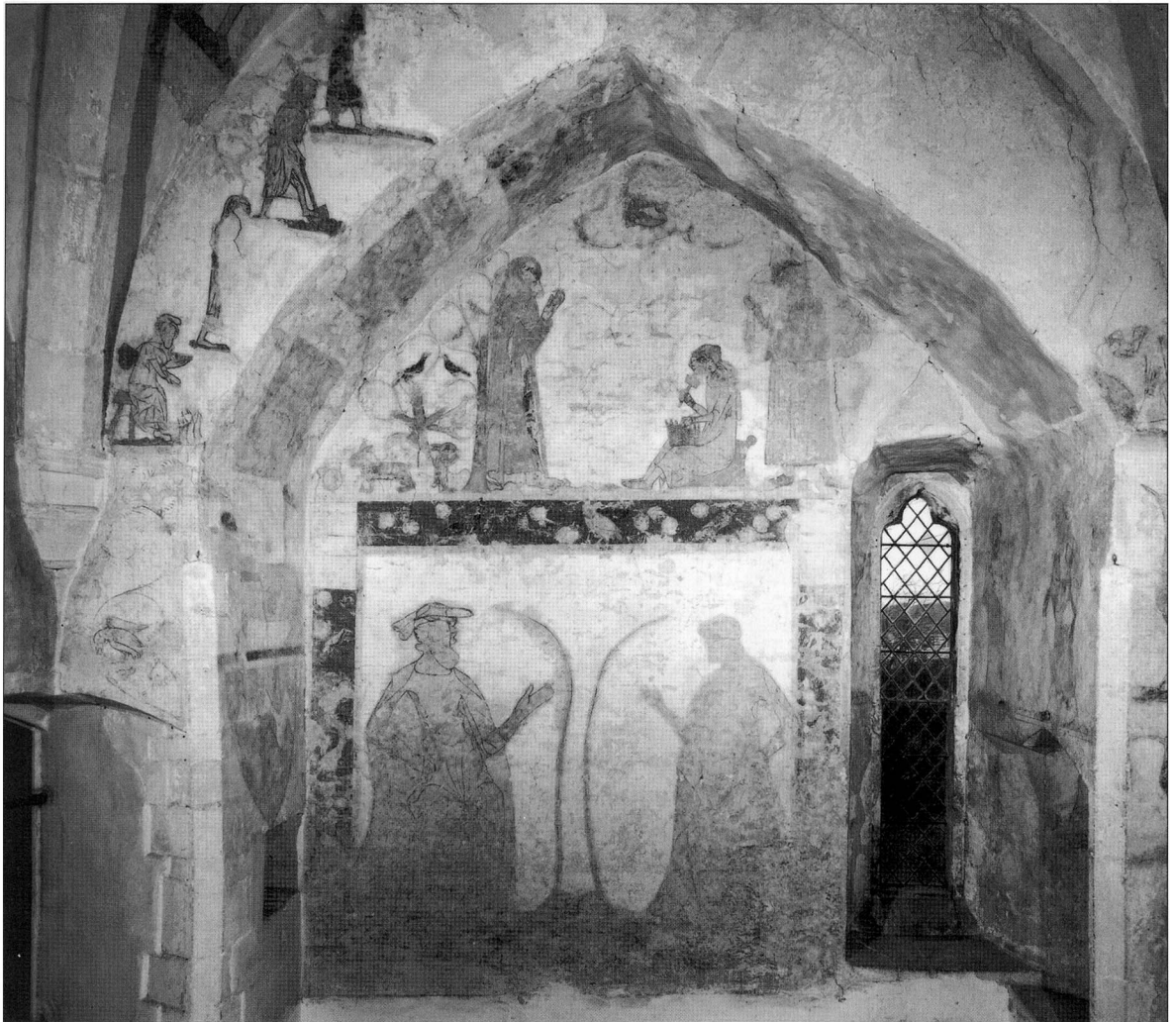
Pay was more attractive than feudal summons. By 1300 the Crown usually paid a knight two shillings a day, a sergeant or man-at-arms one shilling, but others were forced to offer higher wages as need arose. Edward III induced service by paying twice the rate between 1338 and

St George gives Edward III his shield and lance, from the treatise of Walter de Milemete of 1327. Reversing heraldic animals on the wearer's right ailette or right side of his horse's caparison was sometimes done to imply they were moving forwards; it was not normal to do so on the surcoat, suggesting here a mistake by the artist. (The Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford, MS 92, f.3r)



1339 but had to fall back to the lower level. Even this tended to be based on the horses owned. Some men-at-arms with only two horses found their wages held at 12 pence.

Advances, called *prests*, might also be paid out to help a man bring together and maintain his following, an idea that had been in use since the 12th century. The sum was offset against the total wage, but Edward I paid few in his later years, because of shortage of money. Edward III paid many *prests* to foreign fighting men in his army but some English



knights also received them. After a very generous initial advance of £200 in 1339, William Stury received £2 and 16s 6d the next year. From the 1340s wages could be increased by paying a quarterly bonus called a *reward* to those supplying troops, usually 100 marks for every 30 men-at-arms, a bonus that could be paid at one-and-a-half or double this amount.

Wages were frequently in arrears, so much so that huge debts accrued. The Earl of Lancaster was owed £2,343 in 1343 following the campaign into Brittany. John of Gaunt's *chevauchée* of 1373 ran up debts of nearly £20,000 over seven years, a huge sum largely caused because no money was sent from England as promised. Soldiers sometimes had to wait ten years for payment, and some only received it when they gained political influence. Cavalry assessments show how members of a retinue, both knights and squires, might come and go during a campaign.

The earliest known contracts date from 1270, for Prince Edward's projected crusading enterprise. These new indentures increased gradually in the late 13th and early 14th century. Two copies of the terms

The interior of Longthorpe Tower in Cambridgeshire, added by Robert de Thorpe, steward of Peterborough Abbey in about 1330 to an existing manor house of c.1300–10. This rare survivor has walls covered in paintings made for him or his son. (Crown copyright NMR)

were set out on one piece of parchment and a wavy or zig-zag line was drawn horizontally to separate them. The parchment was cut in half along this line, one half going to the contractor and the other to the contracted knight. Fitting the two halves together meant that only the originals would be an exact fit, and so helped prevent forgery or deceit. It was, perhaps surprisingly, uncommon for the terms to be broken, even though one reason for such written contracts was a safeguard in the law. Contracts known as money fiefs (*fief-rente*), purchasing service for a fixed sum per year, had been used since the 11th century, and were used by Edward III to buy foreign allies.

Contracts were a simple way of securing castle garrisons beyond the campaigning season. Thus in 1301 John Kingston contracted to hold Edinburgh castle with 30 men-at-arms and 54 foot and others, between the end of November and Whitsun, for £220 paid in four instalments. In 1316 Edward II made contracts for peace and war. In 1317 the Earl of Pembroke agreed to bring 200 men-at-arms for land worth 500 marks and a wartime fee of 2,000 marks paid quarterly. These terms of agreement were beneficial to the great lords and designed to attract them to a contractual agreement in the hope that it made them less dangerous to the crown.

In 1337 contracts were used for the first time to raise an army for an expedition to Scotland. The method was not a major success, and many also deserted. Despite this, contracts were still drawn for provision of garrisons. Contracts were few when the king accompanied an army in person, for example in Edward III's forays in the Low Countries in the late 1330s. Similarly, for his French expeditions of 1346–47 or 1359 no formal contracts were generally needed.

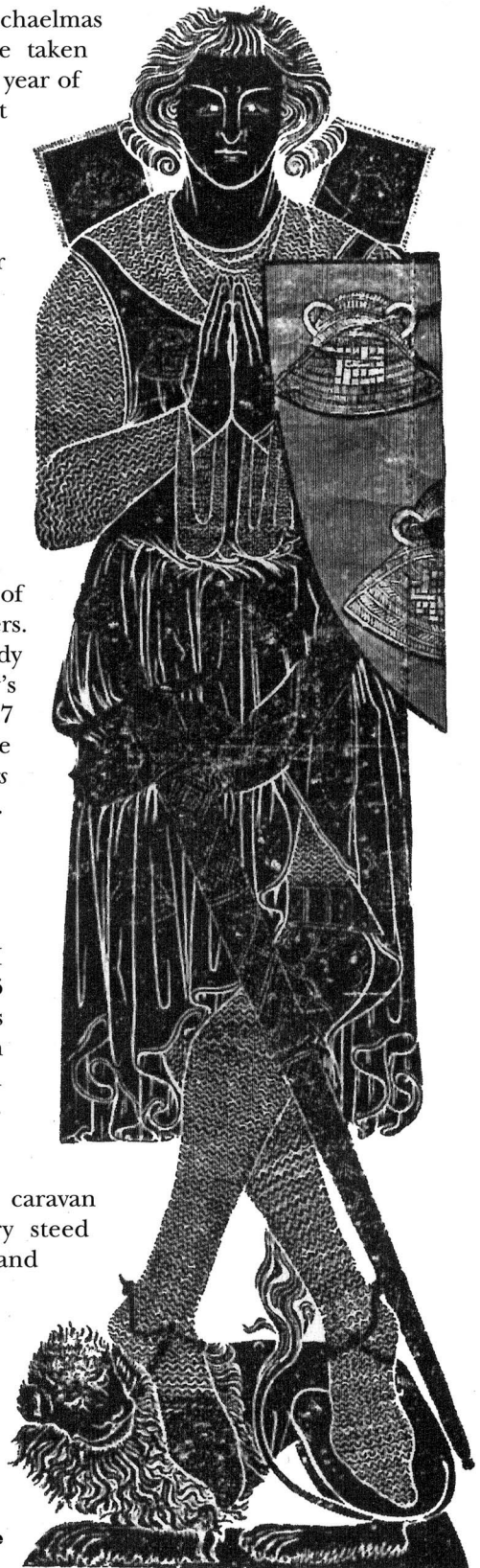
Where the king was not present, contracts recorded in indentures were more usual and a common formula soon developed. Edward III usually paid quarterly at the accepted rate, the first in advance. From the mid-1340s there is written evidence of another incentive, the *regard*. This was a form of financial assistance in kind, provided by the king in addition to the terms of the contract; fees might also be used. Thus in 1347 the king contracted with Thomas Ughtred for a year's service of 20 men-at-arms (six being knights, including Ughtred) and 20 mounted archers, for a fee of £200, half paid soon after the agreement was made. Once at the coast, wages would be paid in quarterly instalments, the first in advance. Ughtred also received livery of foodstuffs as other royal bannerets, a good horse, compensation for any animals lost, and provision of ships to and from France. A fairly standard form of contract developed. The amount of wages paid (usually quarterly in advance) was set out, plus the regard, the standard being 100 marks for 30 men-at-arms per quarter. In Edward III's later years a double regard was common, and occasionally, even double wages.

Captains in their turn made contracts with their followers. John of Gaunt added two-thirds of the profits of war to the standard terms mentioned above. The sub-contracts were not always as generous as those agreed between king and captain, and sub-contractors could be hired on differing scales of wages, fees and regards. Gaunt's contract with Roger Trumpington in August 1372 grants him for life, for himself and a squire, 40 marks per year in war and 20 marks in peace, taken

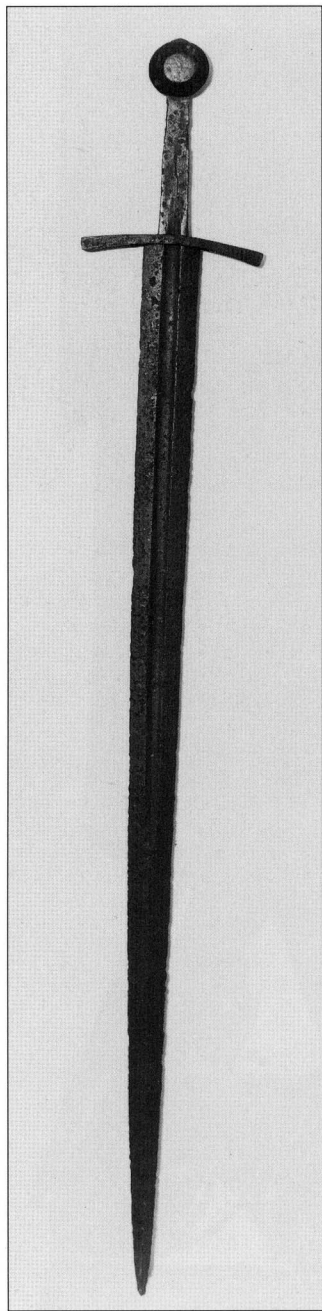
from specific manors and paid by Gaunt's receiver at Michaelmas and Easter. The wages for himself and his squire are taken together with other wages paid to others of his rank. The year of war starts on the day he sets out from home to join Gaunt in accordance with instructions that will be sent to him, and he will be entitled to wages for reasonable travelling time there and back. He will provide adequate equipment for his men and horses himself. Gaunt would recompense him in accordance with his rank, for war horses taken or lost in service, or prisoners or other prizes taken or won by Trumpington, his esquire or servants. In order to ensure the terms of a contract were being followed, musters were at first generally confined to garrisons, and others may well have been slipshod in fulfilling the terms that they had agreed. Lists were drawn up in order to note the names of deserters or for non-attendance. Even so, knights sometimes recruited poorer quality troops – and fewer men – than had been agreed. In mid-century the ratio of men-at-arms to archers was about 1:1; for example, in 1342 the retinue of Ralph, Lord Stafford consisted of three bannerets, 16 knights and 31 esquires, plus 50 archers. In Edward III's later years, however, the ratio had already often become as much as 2:1. In 1369 Henry, Lord Percy's retinue comprised one banneret, 12 knights and 47 esquires, plus 100 archers. Other soldiery might include *armati* (mailed horsemen or mounted infantry), *hobilaris* (light horsemen) or *bidowers* (Gascon light infantry). However, by mid-century men-at-arms (bannerets, knights and esquires) and mounted archers were the usual forces recruited.

Restor, the restoration of horses lost on active service, was often part of an indenture agreement. Edward I usually replaced horses lost on service. One 1346 indenture of Edward III with three men notes that it was the English custom to do so (not exclusively, in fact). Each man was expected to have only one horse valued, but in 1357 the Earl of Salisbury was allowed his own mount as well as his horse of arms. If a horse was killed, the presentation of ears and tail to the royal clerks then resulted in action. Some were given back to the royal caravan because they were deemed no longer fit (one sorry steed ended up as a royal carthorse). The low valuations and administrative difficulty in checking claims for a set price asked by the owners, saw a move to drop *restor* early in the century, but it was not until war with France erupted again in 1369 that it was largely abandoned in favour of compensation payments for costs.

Brass of Sir William de Setvans, Chartham, Kent, c.1322. Still largely covered in mail, his mittens hang loose, revealing the cuffs of the aketon. Ailettes are shown flat. The seven fans for winnowing grain are a pun on the knight's name.



A sword made for a child, probably in the first half of the 14th century. Found in the River Thames, the blade is of flattened hexagonal section, changing to flattened diamond halfway down its length. It is 78.5 cm (40 in.) long. (Copyright of the Society of Antiquaries of London)



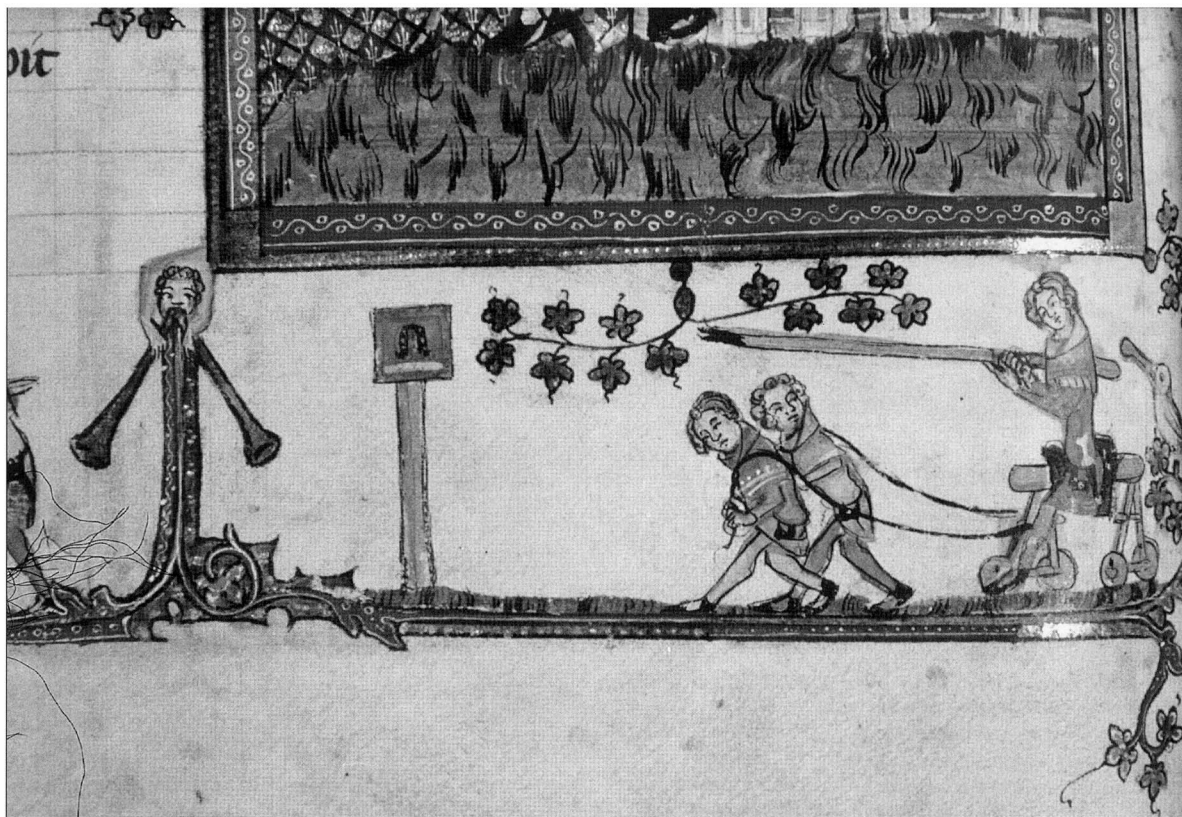
Training

Training for knighthood began at an early age. Most boys came from knightly backgrounds, though some were from the ranks of prosperous merchants, lawyers or government officials. The latter might have achieved knighthood as recognition of their services, but most sons of knights began their training earlier, occasionally as young as seven years old, when they became a page. Many would be sent away to a lord's household, often that of a relative or, for the sons of men in the royal favour, to the king's court. A page learnt how to behave in polite society and how to entertain the ladies, often themselves the wives, mothers or sisters of knights. He was taught to recite poetry and to sing, perhaps to play an instrument, and some might be taught by a clerk or chaplain to read and write in French or Latin. English was only just becoming the language of the court during the middle of the century but most people probably spoke it as their first tongue. Pages had to learn how to wait at table and how to look after horses. At the age of about 14, those who had done well became esquires and would be assigned to a knight, when their military training with armour and weapons began in earnest. They accompanied him to the hunt, in itself good physical exercise that had the bonus of bringing additional food to the table. They were taught how to break a freshly killed deer, but the use of the bow or crossbow was limited to the hunting field; it was not a knight's business to use one in battle.

Chaucer's squire gives a portrait of a young man seemingly vibrant with the joys of youth (and presumably a privileged upbringing). Unlike the rather sober picture of his father, the knight, the squire seems to have boundless energy; he is dressed in garish finery while he sings, dances and plays the flute, or courts young women all night. Interestingly, apart from jousting there is no sign of the military side of his work in Chaucer's description, and in the early 15th-century illustration in the *Ellesmere Manuscript* the squire is in civilian dress, unlike his father. He is clearly an accomplished young man, able to write and draw. Young men being trained for knighthood were now becoming educated as well, learning that would stand them in good stead in managing their affairs or if they pursued careers in government.

At some time usually between the ages of 18 and 21, a squire who had performed well was dubbed knight. During the 14th and 15th centuries this was sometimes done before a battle, and produced new knights keen to fight bravely to uphold their honour, and who might be needed to lead troops, something squires were not supposed to do. Edward III made new knights before a raid into Scotland in 1335. For the new knights, it also meant they received a higher wage and were more likely to be captured for ransom rather than killed outright in battle. It also removed the problem of the costs involved in the lavish ceremony. Knighting was also performed after a battle, such as at Crécy in 1346, when Edward III declined to send help to his hard-pressed son, the Black Prince, telling the messenger to let the boy win his spurs, which he did.

For a full ceremony, the aspirant might be given a symbolic bath to cleanse him and be placed in a bed; from which he would arise dry and thus foreshadowed paradise. He may also have spent the night in vigil



at the chapel, with his sword on the altar. The knighting ceremony now included prayers to help the knight fight for England. Distrainment of knighthood was still in evidence, though it was not such a problem as it had been in the 13th century. Sometimes the knighting of the king's son was the opportunity for knighting other noble youths. A notable example occurred in 1306 when Edward I knighted his 21-year-old son together with 276 squires, a number so large that the grounds of the Temple in London had to be taken over. For the squires, only their horses and armour had to be paid for. Apart from Prince Edward and a few companions at Westminster, the rest kept vigil at the Temple. Having been knighted at the palace by his father, Prince Edward returned to Westminster to knight the others. In the crowds two knights were killed, a number fainted, and fighting broke out; only when order was restored could the ceremony continue. There was good reason for this pageantry; the king needed men for his next adventure into Scotland.

Practice on a wooden horse against a fixed quintain, one of three forms of exercise with the lance depicted in the Flemish Romance of Alexander of c.1330–40. (The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, Misc 264, f.82v)

ARMOUR AND WEAPONS

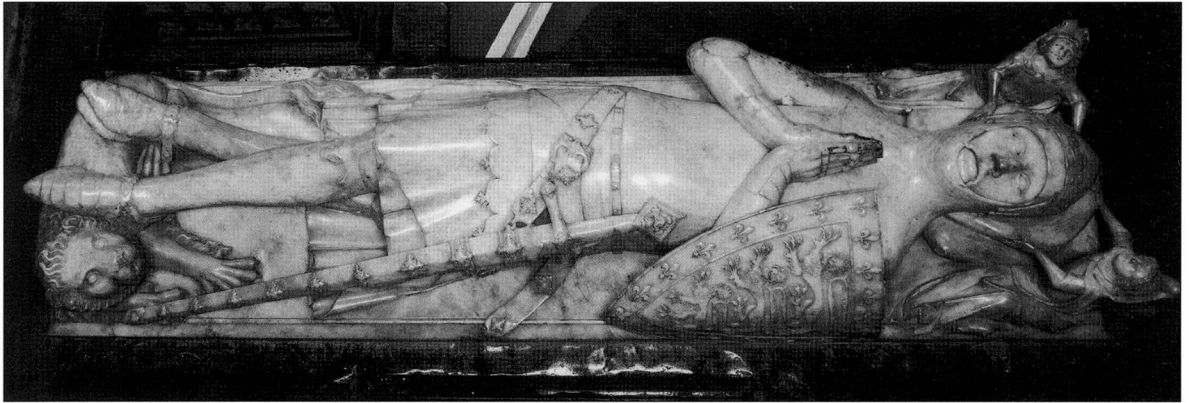
The 14th century saw the greatest change in the armour of the medieval knight. In 1300 the main body armour was mail; by 1400 most knights were completely protected by plates of steel.

Mail would continue to be the predominant defence well into the 14th century. A mail coat or **hauberk** consisted of thousands of

An extremely rare *cuir bouilli* tubular upper right arm-defence of the first half of the 14th century. Now flattened, it is provided at the top with a pair of holes for lacing to the undergarment, and decorated with moulded leaves and flowers. (The British Museum, Dept of Medieval and Modern Antiquities, 56, 7-1, 1665)



The inner side of the arm-piece, stitched to the outer. (The British Museum, Dept of Medieval and Modern Antiquities, 56, 7-1, 1665)



ABOVE Effigy of John Plantagenet, Earl of Cornwall (died 1336), from his tomb in Westminster Abbey. The layers of body armour are clearly visible, and he wears enclosing vambraces and gauntlets. The aventail seems to be attached quite high on the basinet; the leather edging appears to have a decorative pendant fabric curtain. (Copyright Dean and Chapter of Westminster)

interlinked iron rings. In 1300 the mail coat usually reached just above the knees, and might have a small slit at the front (and presumably the rear) for ease of movement. It was long-sleeved, often terminating in mittens held in place by a thong at the wrist, usually threaded through the links. These had a glove or leather palm, furnished with a slit to allow the hand to emerge. Some knights now wore separate **gauntlets**, however. These gauntlets had a flared cuff, but most seem to have either been lined or externally covered with plates, often of whalebone but sometimes of iron or steel, secured by rivets through the material. These too seem to have been of mitten form.

The mail was extended up to form a **coif** or hood, the mail about the throat loose to facilitate putting it on. The ventail was a flap of mail pulled up and across the chin and even the mouth before action, and tied or buckled at the side of the head, sometimes laced via a thong threaded through at the temple to further secure the hood. A padded coif or **arming cap**, quilted front to rear, was worn underneath to provide a comfortable seat for the hood and to help absorb blows. From at least the mid-13th century a separate form of mail coif had appeared, though in 1300 many still preferred the attached form of coif. A shorter form of mail coat, the **haubergeon**, with sleeves to the elbow or forearm, might still be seen occasionally.

Mail stockings or **chausses** were worn over cloth hose, and had leather soles to prevent slipping. The upper end was secured by a lace to a belt at the waist. A very few might still wear simple strips of mail over the front of the leg and foot, laced behind and also supported at the waist.

Being flexible, mail yields when struck, sometimes allowing a blow to bruise or break bones without tearing the links; if they were damaged they might be driven into the wound. A padded coat or **aketon** (also sometimes confusingly called a **wambais**, **gambeson** or **pourpoint**) was therefore worn underneath mail. The long-sleeved aketon was usually quilted vertically, consisting of two layers of cloth stuffed with wool, tow, hay or something similar. Some may have been made instead from many layers of linen, as in 15th-century descriptions. In the 1326 inventory of Edward II's possessions in Caerphilly Castle, a green canvas aketon covered with red kid is recorded. Some may also have had a standing collar, perhaps even of solid material such as whalebone or iron, but some knights certainly wore what appears to be a separate collar

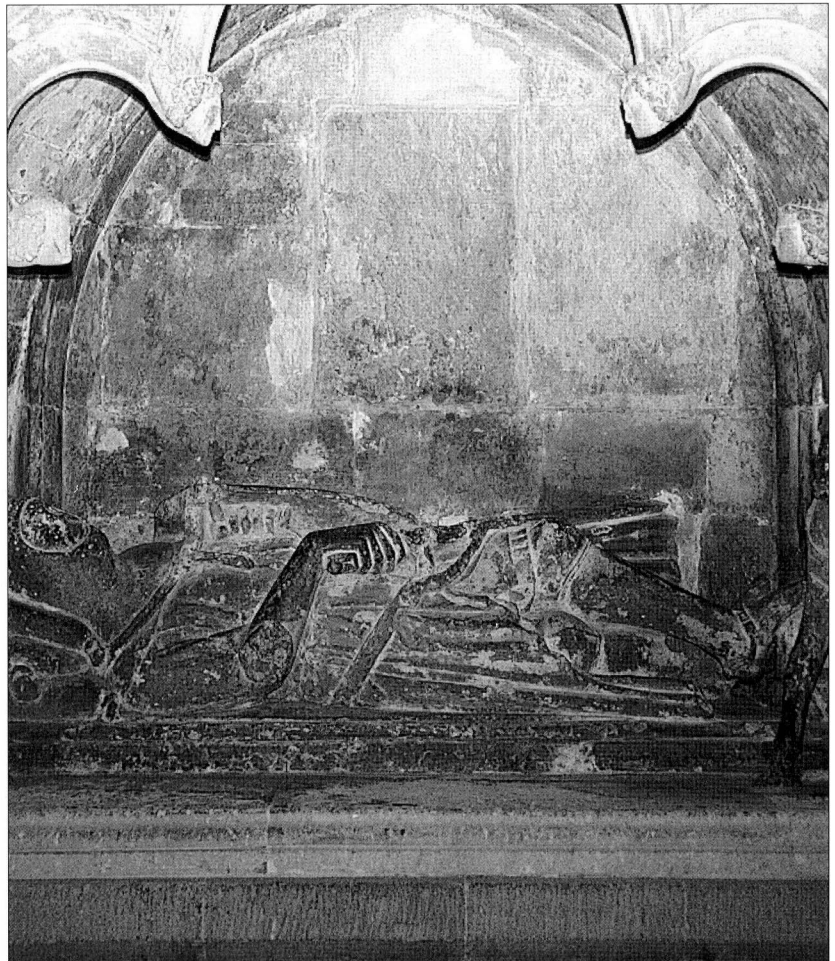


Brass of Sir Robert de Bures, Church of All Saints, Acton, Suffolk, c.1331. Note the decorated poleyns and gamboised cuisses.

Effigy probably of Richard Stapledon, c.1332, with his fighting unit of squire and page, the latter holding his horse. The squire appears to be wearing an aketon beneath his surcoat. (By courtesy of the Dean and Chapter of Exeter Cathedral)

beneath or even over the mail.

Plate armour was beginning to become popular in 1300. From about 1320 the most commonly mentioned item is the **coat of plates**, also called the pair of plates, hauberk of plates, *côte à plates*, or 'plates'. This consisted of a poncho-like garment lined with an arrangement of plates which were riveted inside the cloth over the front of the body. Vertical plates lined the side flaps, which were tied or buckled at the back, perhaps additionally laced to the back flap by a ring at each upper corner. The coat of plates was usually worn over the mail but under the **surcoat**, making it difficult to see at this period. Occasionally, the plates were fastened over, rather than under, the cloth. Surviving examples from battle graves at Wisby in Gotland (1361) show that some coats consisted of rows of small vertical plates at front, sides and back, with extra plates over the shoulders and scales at the armpits. One opens at the right side and right shoulder, another at the left side and both shoulders. Swiss examples open at both shoulders and were probably laced shut at the sides. The **cuirie**, possibly a leather body armour is also mentioned, and 13th-century depictions suggest it was buckled at the sides, perhaps reinforced by plates. A rare example of a coat of scales over mail occurs on an effigy from the second quarter of the 14th





century in the church at Moccas, Herefordshire.

Plate leg defences were usually restricted to **poleyns** over the knees, either riveted over the mail or else attached to **gamboised cuisses**, quilted tubes worn over the thigh and attached at the waist. A few might have **schynbalds**, plate shin guards, or even, rarely, a completely enclosed greave on the lower leg, hinged on the outer side and buckled shut on the inner side, to protect the leather straps. Very rarely, a plate **couter** was worn at the elbow.

Ailettes were flat pieces of wood, leather or parchment, mainly rectangular, more rarely circular or diamond shaped, and decorated with the knight's coat-of-arms. These flimsy items were worn on the shoulder purely for identification and show, and were discarded after about 1350.

The **helm**, a helmet which covered the whole head, was usually, by the 14th century, conical or sugar-loaf shaped, rather than flat-topped. It was lined with leather or cloth padded with hay, wool or tow which was stitched to a leather or canvas lining band riveted around the upper part of the helmet (avoiding the breathing holes); the helm was laced or buckled under the chin. The lining was cut into scallops which could be adjusted with a draw-string, thus ensuring the helm fitted correctly whenever it was put on, and especially that the vision slots lined up with the eyes. Some were fitted with a visor and some with a pivoted bevor, a

Sir Geoffrey Luttrell, from the Luttrell Psalter of c.1335–45. He receives his lance and helm from his wife, while his daughter-in-law holds his shield. He wears some plate armour on his limbs. Large ailettes, a triangular lance pennon and the ladies' robes all display his arms. His basinet will be worn under the helm, which bears a fan crest, as does his horse's shaffron. The front arçon of his saddle encloses the knight's torso rather than curving in the opposite direction. (By permission of the British Library, MS Add. 42130, f.202v)

plate to give additional protection to the throat. A leather, wooden or whalebone crest was sometimes worn, laced through holes in the metal that were hidden by a cloth wrapped round like a scarf or hanging down like a curtain. However, the helm was increasingly confined to the tournament.

The **cervelière** was sometimes also called the **basinet** (although the helmet we now regard as the basinet was also developing in the early years of the century). The basinet was small and globular, covered only the ears and often had a visor. Some were conical and did not cover the ears, resembling instead the old conical helmet without its nasal, or noseguard. Another conical variety was much larger, reaching almost to the shoulders, and when provided with a visor looking very much like a visored helm. A few might have a nasal, instead. The cervelière, or low or tall basinet (not the deep form) might be worn under the mail coif until the 1330s, but even before 1300 a few might have a simple mail curtain, or tippet, riveted inside the helmet, thus obviating the need for a coif. This was probably rare until about 1320, though it is difficult to know what was worn under many helmets shown resting on mail. The helm might be worn over either the cervelière or the smaller forms of basinet.

Kettle hats might occasionally be worn by knights wanting more ventilation at the expense of safety, while the broad brim was a good defence for siegework in deflecting missiles. At first it was made from several pieces with applied bands to cover the joints and an applied brim. After about 1320 it seems to be made from a single piece or else a few large ones riveted together, and some had high pointed skulls. It was sometimes worn with a large bever.

Most knights wore a **surcoat**, a gown pulled on over the head, split up the fork before and behind for ease of movement. It was usually sleeveless, though a few had elbow- or wrist-length sleeves, and it was often lined in a contrasting colour. Richer versions were made from silk. It varied in length from the ankles to just above the knees (rare) and might bear the coat-of-arms, though many did not. It is uncertain if it was developed to protect armour from rain or heat, or whether it simply copied Muslim fashions seen on crusade. A few may have been lined with plates over the chest. By about 1330 the surcoat became shorter at the front until it was cut off horizontally at the thighs. This has sometimes been called the 'cyclas'. It was not long, however, before the rear of the skirt was also shortened.

The increase in plate armour

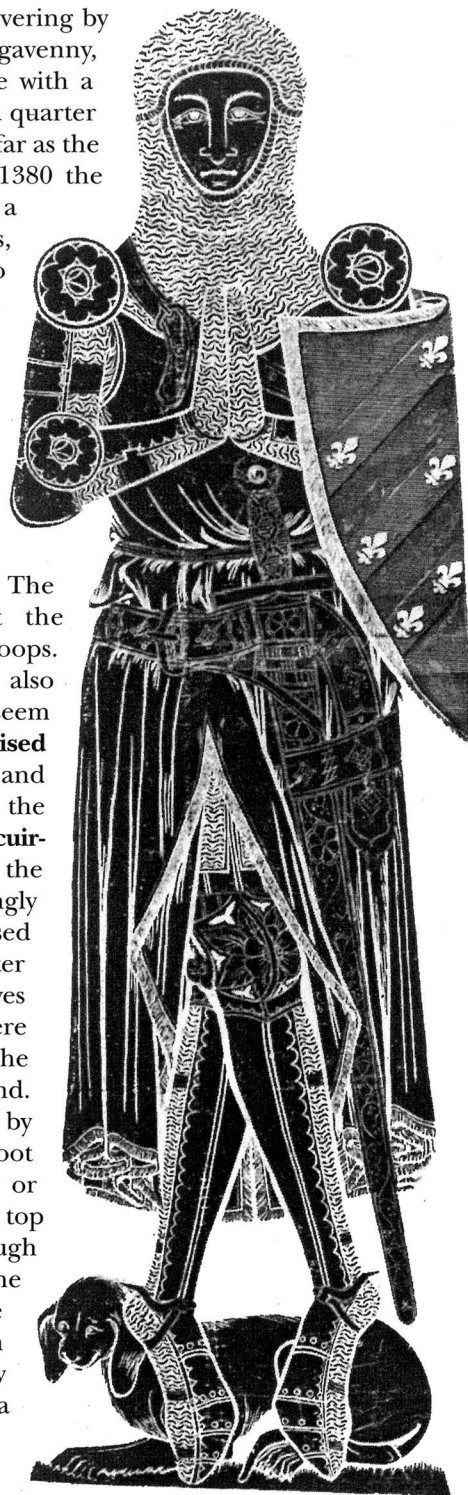
Evidence from German effigies suggests that the **breastplate** began to appear in about 1340. At first it was quite short, but by the 1360s it became deeper and curved. It was fastened to the inside of the coat by two semicircles of rivets, with narrow waist **lames** with the wider hoops below these. Another form of breastplate appeared in the 1370s, less globular and with a notable medial ridge.

A list of armour for the Wardrobe of Edward III drawn up for the years 1337 and 1341, refers to separate breastplates, though these, and others in Dover in 1361, are specified as for the jousts. If contemporary German effigies are anything to go by, these early breastplates were perhaps flat with curved edges, or shaped rather like an inverted

heart, presumably being attached to the front of the covering by straps and buckles. An effigy on a 1340 tomb at Abergavenny, Monmouthshire possibly shows a small, flat breastplate with a medial ridge worn under the surcoat. By about the third quarter of the century a larger form covering the whole chest as far as the waist also appeared on German effigies. From about 1380 the breastplate, rounded in the chest and sometimes with a medial ridge, was usually worn without the coat of plates, but often with a **fauld** of plates that might curve down to cover the abdomen. They seem to have been strapped and perhaps laced in place over a cloth or leather jupon, and some may have been held by a saltire of straps across the back, as on a figure in Basle Cathedral. The back-defence was presumably of the coat of plates form until about 1400, for at about this date the effigy of John, Earl of Salisbury, displays hinges down the wearer's left side under a heraldic jupon, suggesting the fabric has a lining consisting of a large ridged breastplate with a (presumably) one-piece backplate. The hinges continue down the side, suggesting that the waist lames connected the breast and back to a skirt of hoops.

By mid-century, plate armour for the limbs had also become more popular. Until about 1320 many knights seem to have worn no more than mail **chausses** and **gamboused** cuisses, quilted tubes covering the thighs and knees and presumably suspended from the waist belt. By this date the knees were often additionally protected by plate or **cuir-bouilli poleyns**, either laced or riveted to the mail or the cuisses. However, solid plate **schynbalds** were increasingly worn over the shins, and, more rarely, greaves that enclosed the lower leg entirely, being usually hinged on the outer side to protect the leather straps on the inner side. Greaves became increasingly common by mid-century, and were sometimes worn with **sabatons** over the top and sides of the foot, leaving the sole of the shoe in contact with the ground. The strips were connected by internal leather straps and by pivoting rivets. They were probably strapped under the foot or pointed to the shoe, that is, a pair of points (twine or leather laces terminating in a metal aiglet) stitched to the top of the shoe, or threaded through holes in it, passed through a pair of holes in the sabaton and tied in a single bow. The upper end was probably attached to the front of the greave by points. Some sabatons appear to have been made from overlapping scales, either of iron, copper-alloy or leather, attached by a rivet at the top of each scale to a fabric or leather backing. Others may have been made from plates riveted under a cloth covering.

By about 1350 the all-enclosing **poleyn** was gradually superseded by a smaller form that had appeared some ten years earlier. This covered the front and outer side, the latter usually extended to form a circular, fan-shaped wing to deflect cuts,



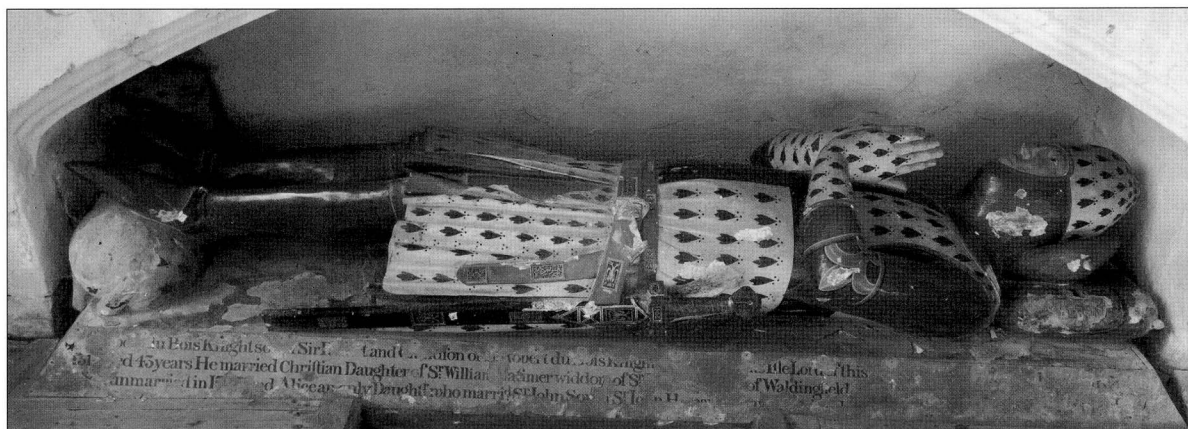
Effigy of Sir William FitzRalf, Pebmarsh, Essex, c.1335. The outer sides of the arms and front of the lower leg and foot are protected by strapped gutter-shaped plates. The feet are also protected by plates.

and occasionally another on the inside. Later wings were often oval in shape. The **cuisse** was also changing in about 1340, to a form made from small plates riveted to a covering so the heads were visible, rather like the later brigandine worn on the body. The poleyn was secured to the lower part of the cuisse, and the cloth edge of the latter was often visible below it, cut in a fringe that overhung the armoured lower leg. From about 1370 a new form of cuisse appeared, made from a single plate shaped to the leg and protecting the front and outer side, though as early as c.1324, a figure on the canopy of Aymer de Valance's tomb in Westminster Abbey appears to have both plate cuisses and a fan-shaped side-wing on his poleyn. Later cuisses are shaped slightly over the top of the knee, and were attached to the poleyn by a pivoting rivet at each side. The cuisse of the boy prince in Chartres cathedral suggests that the top edge was rolled out to stop weapon points snaking up past it; a **stop-rib** was sometimes added to the upper surface from about 1375. At about the same time, an additional outer plate was sometimes hinged to the cuisse. The cuisse was strapped round the leg and was probably also suspended like later examples by a leather tab riveted to the upper edge and pierced for points.

From the beginning of the period a small, circular, slightly shaped plate was occasionally attached to the point of the shoulder. This **spaudler** is sometimes seen without any other plate arm defences. For the first quarter of the century a small elbow cop or **couter** was occasionally riveted over the point of the elbow. However, though some references suggest that a form of arm defence (perhaps of leather or even coat of plates construction) was worn occasionally, it is not until about 1320 that gutter-shaped plates, strapped over the outside of the arm with the couter, appear in artistic representations. A circular plate, the **besagew**, was sometimes attached in front to guard the armpit and a disc at the front of the elbow. Besagews at the armpit tend to disappear after about 1350, and only reappear in the 15th century.

By about 1335 tubular arm-defences were already known, the upper and lower cannons together with the couter being called the **vambrace**. Occasionally forearm defences of scale are shown. The cannon might be closed entirely and slid up the arm, or, as with an upper cannon from an effigy from Lesney Abbey, open slightly on the inner side and closed

Painted effigy of Sir Robert du Bois, c.1340. Like his helmet, his gauntlets are painted and presumably represent plates covered in fabric. (English Heritage, copyright NMR, and the Parochial Church Council of Fersfield, Norfolk)



by straps and buckles. However, at this date the upper cannon was sometimes still of gutter-shaped design. The tubular lower cannon was usually worn under the loose three-quarter sleeve of the mail coat, from which it protruded. Cannons hinged on the outer side and buckled on the inner, became more usual. Some couters were now of laminated construction. By 1360 a heart-shaped wing had replaced the disc-shaped wing of the couter, which itself now consisted of a single shaped plate with one or two **lames** to connect to the upper and lower cannon. In some late examples the rivet attaching the lame to the lower cannon may have run in a slot in the latter, forming a sliding rivet to allow the forearm to twist. Laminated spaudlers had appeared by 1335 and were soon being riveted permanently to the upper cannon of the vambrace. In the last years of the century a larger shoulder-defence, the **pauldron**, emerged, in which the plates extended over the chest and back.

Extensions of the mail sleeve into mittens remained popular as the century opened, and might still be found 50 years later. Mail gauntlets with flaring cuffs were rarely seen, but gauntlets of metal plates riveted over or between a fabric glove (presumably tinned or coppered to prevent rusting under the covering) were in use. They might have a large plate over the cuff or several strips. By 1350 the so-called 'hour-glass gauntlet' had appeared, and within about 20 years became the dominant form for the rest of the century. Many such gauntlets also had **gadlings** over the finger-joints and knuckles, low spikes for use as a kind of knuckleduster.

By about 1330 the tall conical **basinet** had begun to extend down to cover the ears and neck, and within 20 years, together with the globular form (some of which were now pointed), it had extended further down to the base of the neck and the cheeks. The very deep basinet went out of use by about 1350. From 1375 the point of the skull of all basinet tended to be set further back.

In the 1320s the riveted mail **aventail** began to be replaced by a detachable version secured over staples, and this would become almost universal after 1350. Some aventails were covered by a decorative cloth, while a few were tied down to the jupon at intervals by laces. A plate bevor was occasionally fixed to the basinet from about 1330, and by the end of the century a few were extended to overlap the edges of the basinet and to cover the whole aventail. By 1400 large bevors riveted to the basinet formed the first great basinets.

From about 1330 the basinet was often worn with a visor. This was at first often formed with a swelling over the face. The vision-slits were usually flanged to deflect a weapon point, and some seem to have been pointed at the bottom or extended horizontally to form a throat guard. After about 1380 the visor became drawn out in front, sometimes in a rounded form but more usually into a snout, and now had a flanged



LEFT Brass of Sir John de Creke, Westley Waterless, Cambs, c.1340–45. His aketon, mail coat and coat of plates with floriate rivet heads are all visible. Hinged tubular plate defences are visible on the lower arm, emerging from the shortened mail sleeve, with gutter-shaped upper arm defences. Note the lion's-head design of the couter disk and spaudler. The lower end of the cuisse emerges decoratively from below the poleyn. Plate sabatons additionally cover the mail of the foot.



A basinet, probably of the 14th-century, found at Pevensey, Sussex. It is of unusual form and is decorated with a line of shields. (By permission of the Trustees of the Armouries, IV.444)

An ornate copper-alloy rowel spur (the rowel missing) of c.1300–40, for the left foot decorated with gilding and enamel and with an unusual bent neck. It has three shields (perhaps of the Noon family) on each arm, plus one curving out at the rear, one at each ring terminal and others at the buckle and terminal for the leather. (Courtesy of King's Lynn Museums)



slit over the mouth. Each arm usually had a removable pin to allow the visor to be detached. The snouted form of helmet was dubbed a 'pig-faced basinet' in the 19th century and it is sometimes claimed that the term *Hounskull*, which appears to come from a contemporary German term: *Hundsgugel* ('hound's hood'), was also used in England. One unusual hybrid is to be found on the Hastings brass, where a figure wears what appears to be a basinet, but in this case fitted with a broad brim.

The basinet might be decorated by a plume of feathers, perhaps one or two pheasant feathers, set in a hole at the apex of the

skull. Very rarely it might carry a crest. From about 1375, however, a number were decorated around the skull with an orle, a roll of cloth, or sometimes leather, which may be jewelled or embroidered. Others bore a simple circlet or crown. An ornamental pendant sometimes hung from the centre rear of the helmet.

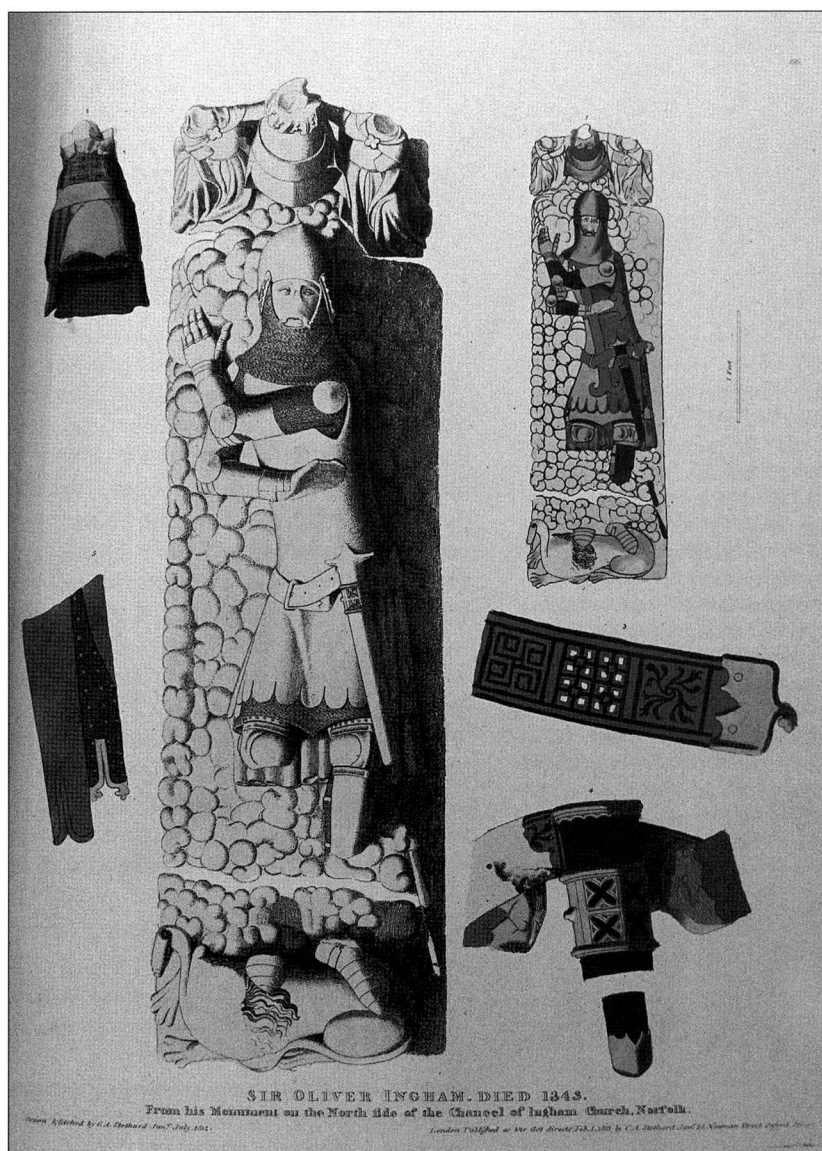
The shield was soon to lose its place on the battlefield. In the second half of the century a rectangular form of shield had appeared, usually concave, the upper and lower surfaces curving or bent outwards to the field. A cut-out was sometimes added to the top corner to accommodate the couched lance, it being mainly used on horseback. The shield was increasingly relegated to the tournament, where safety made its use desirable.

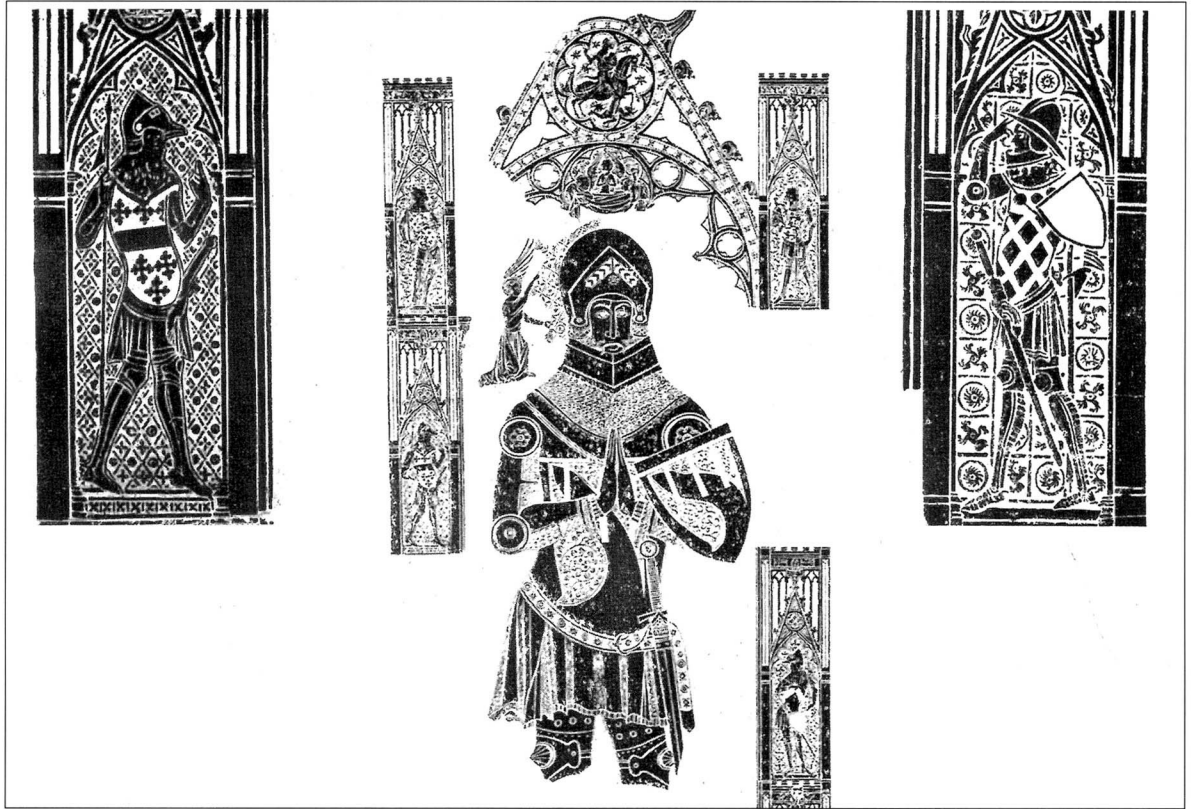
Weapons

The sword was the revered weapon of a knight, girt about him when he was knighted and usually blessed at the altar before the ceremony; the cross-guard made a crucifix when needs were pressing. Some knightly weapons were richly decorated, and a glimpse at representations in detailed effigies hint at the richness also of the scabbards and sword belts.

One type that had been extremely popular in the 13th century had a fairly broad, slightly tapering blade with a fuller running as much as three-quarters of the length. Others were broad bladed, but the blade does not noticeably taper, while most widen just before the hilt. These swords have a long grip, some 16.25cm (6 inches) on average, though some lack this and are sometimes narrower in the blade. Some swords of this type are large, 94–101.5cm (37–40in.) long, with the grip as much as 23cm (9 in.) long. Known as 'great swords' or 'swords of war', they were designed to be swung in two hands.

Effigy of Sir Oliver d'Ingham, died 1344, a drawing by Stothard from his tomb in Ingham, Suffolk. The black colouration of the limb pieces noted by Stothard may represent cuir bouilli, or armour left black from the hammer, or painted perhaps in an effort to prevent rusting. The short sleeve of the mail coat covers the top of the upper cannon. He wears a great sword of some length.





Brass of Sir Hugh Hastings, St Mary's Church, Elsing, Norfolk, c.1347. Sir Hugh's basinet has a bevor and visor. His thigh is protected by a cuisse made in the manner of a coat of plates, presumably with small plates under the fabric. The poleyn at the knee seems to be strapped over a layer of fabric. He wears no plate armour on the lower legs. The right-hand figure wears what appears to be a basinet with wide brim.

By contrast, another form of sword was quite short, with a grip less than 16cm (4 in.) long and a wide, strongly tapered blade with a fuller running about half way and a 'wheel' pommel. This type was used for 'armour piercing', as the blade was acutely pointed, with a flattened diamond section and no fuller, to impart rigid strength for a thrust. A narrower-bladed form with long grip (between 17.75 (7 in.) and 25.5cm (10 in.)) appeared at some time around mid-century. Some of these thrusting swords were made with a short section of the blade in front of the guard left blunt (later called the 'ricasso'), enabling the user to hook his finger over it and hold the sword further forward, the better to deliver a thrust.

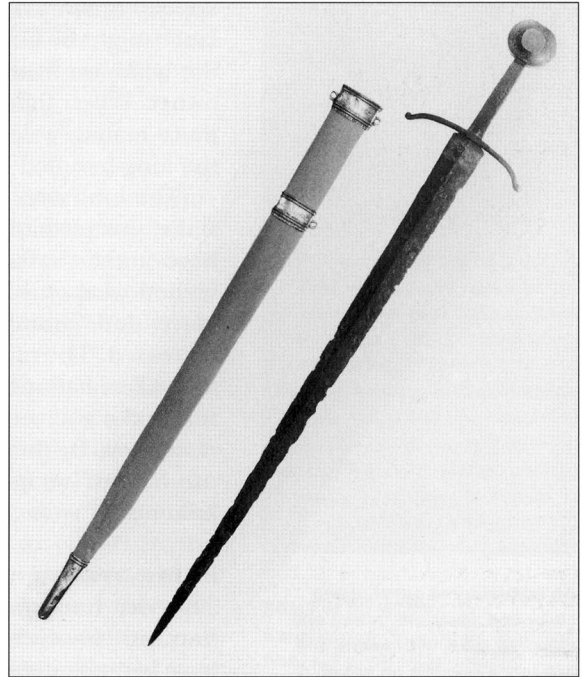
Dual-purpose weapons for cutting and thrusting were made from the beginning of the century, with a tapered blade which was fullered for just over half its length, but with the lower part of the blade made in flattened diamond section. Another type of weapon has a long tapered blade, fullered for about one-third of the length, with a long grip. One group dating from about 1355 to 1425 has a long tapering blade usually of hexagonal section, and a long grip. The pommel is a flattened oval or else a late 14th-century 'scent-stopper' variety. Some carried a **falchion**, a single-edged, cleaver-like weapon whose blade expanded toward the point to add weight to a cut.

The sword hilt was covered by a grip of wood, bone or horn. On swords with a flat form of **tang**, the grip consisted of two pieces cut out to accommodate the tang, then glued together over it. As thinner tangs became popular in the second half of the century, a one-piece grip was

bored longitudinally before the heated tang was forced up through the hole, widening it as it burned through it. The core was usually covered additionally by winding cord or wire round it, but might also be bound in diaper fashion by cord or leather strips, all designed to prevent the weapon slipping in a sweating hand. The cross-guard was often straight or gently curved down towards the blade. Some swords had a small flap of leather folded over the cross-guard and down over the blade. Called the '**chappe**' (literally 'cape'), this flap overlapped the mouth of the scabbard when the weapon was sheathed, and helped prevent water running down inside and rusting the sword.

Pommels came in many shapes. The most common was the disc pommel or a variant, the wheel pommel, but many other styles were seen with varying frequency, including a faceted version and a flat form of chamfered disc pommel (both types from about 1350). One form of pommel seen up to about 1325 has the form of a petalled flower. A spherical pommel survives on a sword of about 1300 from London, and a bevelled cube on an effigy at Halton Holgate (Lincolnshire). A 'tear-drop' style flourished until about mid-century. A lobated pommel was used in northern England and southern Scotland until about mid-century. A type rarely seen before about 1360 was the 'scent-stopper' pommel, so named from its likeness to the stopper of a scent bottle. Some examples were faceted.

Scabbards were fashioned from two wooden slats bound with a leather covering. The lower end was often protected by the addition of a metal **chape**. The mouth of the scabbard might have a metal locket to prevent damage, and both were sometimes ornamented with engraved or openwork designs. Sword belts would change dramatically in design, from a two-point attachment of leather, or increasingly, metal mounts, to the hip belt that appeared in about 1340 and would become standard for the rest of the century. Usually decorated with gold, gilt or silvered plaques often set with jewels or enamel, the belt was normally clasped or sometimes buckled at the front. In some instances the sword was still hung from a diagonal strap, while the horizontal hip belt was used only for the dagger on the other side. The dagger carried in the last quarter of the century was often a form of rondel dagger, with a disc or rondel at the base of the grip, but a pommel instead of the more usual second rondel at this end. These daggers were usually of triangular section, single edged and tapering to a point, being sturdy but very sharp weapons. Quillon daggers were also worn, or occasionally ballock daggers, although they were more usual with civilian dress. Like scabbard leather, sheaths were often highly decorated with punched or engraved designs, and civilian daggers might be fastened behind the pouch, slung from the belt, or hung from a cord on the belt.



A sword found in the Thames in the vicinity of Westminster Bridge, dating from the second quarter of the 14th century. The blade is of flattened diamond section. The silver scabbard lockets and chape survive, now mounted on a reconstructed scabbard. As well as decoration each locket has a heraldic stag's head caboché. A maker's mark appears on the blade and, unusually, also on the pommel. (Courtesy of the Museum of London)



A single-edged dagger, probably of the second half of the 14th century, similar to those worn by some knightly effigies such as that of Sir Miles Stapleton. The chamfered disc pommel is made in two halves. The *cuir-bouilli* grip has narrow latten strips apparently with collets for pastes or stones, an unusual feature. (Courtesy of King's Lynn Museums)

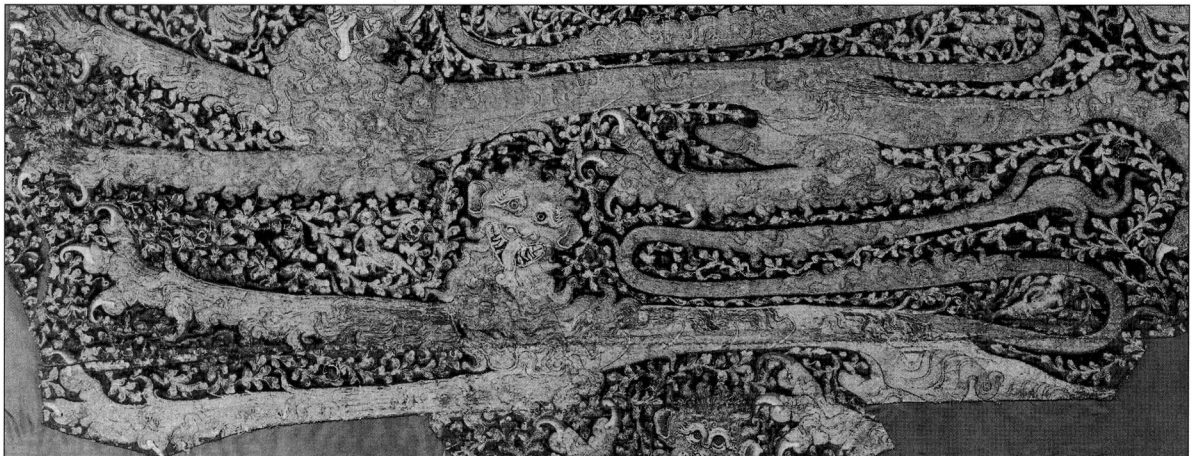
An embroidered panel, using silver and silver-gilt thread and coloured silks, with pearls and cabochon crystals on velvet. It probably originally came from a horse's caparison, and shows the leopards passant guardant of England. (Paris, Musée National du Moyen-Age – Thermes et hôtel de Cluny, copyright RMN)

The **lance** was carried on horseback, with a shaft of Cypress wood according to Chaucer, although ash was just as likely. At first it was a simple staff tipped with a steel head, but in the early years of the century a steel disc, the **vamplate**, was sometimes nailed on in front of the hand. By the end of the century, the hand grip was usually waisted somewhat and the vamplate more conical in shape. A leather strip was often nailed around the shaft behind the hand. This, a simple form of **graper**, was designed to ram against the armpit to prevent the lance sliding back on impact. By the end of the century early **lance-rests** had probably appeared, riveted to the solid breast-defence to take the impact. The lance might be used to carry a small pennon, nailed on the shaft behind the head, on which were painted or embroidered with the arms of the owner. When fighting on foot the lance was sometimes cut down to a more manageable 1.5m (5 feet) in length, but it was not as effective as the long-handled axe.

The long axe, sometimes provided with a rear spike and later a top spike, was primarily for use on foot. Smaller axes for horsemen might have a rear spike. Later manuscripts sometimes show a very large bladed weapon with no spikes, the lower end curled round the haft. Maces and hammers were also becoming more popular as plate armour increased. The mace usually had a flanged steel or iron head nailed to a wooden haft. Short or long hammers were usually furnished with a rear spike and sometimes the corners of the hammer face were slightly elongated. By the end of the century the poleaxe was also coming into use, a staff weapon with an axe blade and top spike, backed by a hammer or spike, or else having a hammer with top and rear spike.

Horse armour

The war horse often had no protection, only a decorative leather harness. However, a cloth **caparison** was sometimes worn, which might have been padded and could catch weapons in the folds. The caparison was usually made in two halves, divided at the saddle and often enclosed the tail, head and neck, usually including the ears. Sometimes a testier might be worn on the head, a form of padded and quilted defence. Some cloth caparisons may have concealed a trapper of mail, which was quite heavy and expensive and would be worn over a



linen lining cloth to absorb sweat and provide some comfort for the horse. Some mail trappers even covered the head (though not the ears) as well.

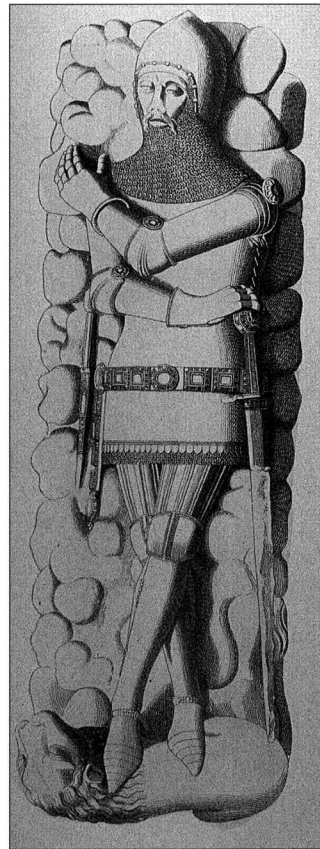
Early forms of **shaffron** were occasionally worn, which may have been attached to the mail trappers. The shaffron could be of metal or *cuir-bouilli*, and was probably used as a point of attachment for the fan or moulded crests sometimes shown on top of horses' heads. By the late 14th century shaffrons that enclosed almost the whole head might be worn, perhaps with a poll plate or short laminated **crinet** (neck defence). By this date a mail crinet was sometimes worn with a plate shaffron, together with perhaps a mail curtain around the chest and rump. A plate chest defence, the **peytral**, was occasionally used by the 1330s, sometimes worn over the caparison.

Civilian Dress

The basic undergarments of the knight were a long-sleeved linen shirt and drawers, or braies, which reached down to the knees or even slightly below; by 1400 they had shrunk almost to the size of modern boxer shorts. A draw-string kept them in place, and presumably they had some form of frontal slit, though this is not very clear. The shirt was roughly knee-length, with wrist-length sleeves.

From about 1335 the tunic was superseded by the **jupon**, also known as the **pourpoint** or doublet (the latter term rare until after about 1370). The jupon was of similar length, but was rather tight-fitting, with no folds, and was usually padded all over. It was closed right down the front (or to the waist for those out of fashion) by laces, or ball or flat buttons, with perhaps a row of buttons from wrist to elbow. In the second half of the century the area over the chest was further padded, while the skirt gradually grew shorter until it barely covered the hips, usually being joined to the body of the garment by a seam. By this time some had short side slits that could be buttoned. Some sleeves now stretched over the hands to the knuckles, and some were inset well over the front and back of the body. Belts tended not to be worn until the second half of the century, since before this the jupon was usually covered by the **cote-hardie**, a tight, belted garment, which replaced the super-tunic by 1330. It was laced or buttoned to the waist, from where it became a full open skirt to the knees. In the second half of the century the fastening continued down to the hem, which might be dagged, and which in turn began to shrink upwards like that of the jupon, until for the last ten years of the century, it was high fashion to wear the cote-hardie daringly short. Sleeves terminated at the elbows, but the back edge extended to a flap, which became longer from about mid-century. Called a **tippet**, this flap was often coloured white, with a white band at the elbow forming a cuff. At the end of the century a long-sleeved version appeared, buttoned down the forearm and extending over the hands. From about mid-century the belt moved to the hips and was often similar to that worn with armour. Decorated with plaques and jewels, it was probably fastened in place with stitches or hooks. From about 1375 some cote-hardies were made with a collar. The poorer classes wore a different cut of cote-hardie.

At the beginning of the century the **garde-corps**, a long super-tunic with wide sleeves and a slit for the arm to pass through, dropped out of



Effigy of Sir William de Kerdiston, a drawing by Stothard from his tomb in Reepham Church, Norfolk, c.1361. The thighs are protected by what appears to be stud and splint armour, which disappeared in about 1380.

fashion, as did the **tabard**, which was pulled on over the head and clasped or stitched at the sides. The super-tunic with loose and short sleeves, or no sleeves, continued. So did the **garnache**, a wide garment pulled over the head and falling sometimes as far as the ankles, and stitched all the way up the sides or just under the arm, or not at all, but now with tongue-shaped lapels.

The **houppelande** appeared in about 1380, a closed gown worn over the jupon and reaching anywhere from the knee to the floor. Cut from four panels with front, rear and side seams, it widened as it fell into folds, held in place by a waist belt. The seams might be left open at the bottom in varying number, to form vents. The houppelande had a very high upstanding collar which was often dagged; cutting a border in fanciful shapes, and was usually closed in front by hooks or buttons. By the end of the century some houppelandes were buttoned right down the front. The sleeves were generous, reaching the wrist but with an enormous opening so that the lower edge trailed sometimes to the ground. The edges of the sleeves, hem, vents and collar were often dagged, especially after 1380, a decorative effect seen with less frequency on other garments also. Some dagging was added in overlapping layers as appliqué work. At the end of the century a new version of the cote-hardie came into use, with similar sleeves and collar to those of the houppelande, from which it was difficult to distinguish except for its hip belt, unlike the waist belt of the houppelande.

Hose, usually of wool or linen and often parti-coloured, reached the thigh for the rich, or knee for the less well-off. In the first half of the century the tops of the hose were pulled over the braies and tied to the draw-string or buttoned, perhaps to a string from the braies' girdle. Garters of wool or linen (often embroidered) might be worn tied below the knee. During the second half of the century *estaches*, or strings, were sewn inside the jupon for the suspension of the hose, which were now furnished with pairs of eyelet holes along the upper edge. At the end of the century the two legs reached the fork and became joined. The feet of some hose were stuffed with hay, moss or tow to produce exaggerated points called 'pikes', and some were soled with leather and worn without shoes.

Effigy of a knight, probably Sir Robert Hilton (died 1372), in Swine Priory, Yorkshire. Notice the single staple at the chest from which hang two chains to sword and dagger, the latter suspended from the belt by a looped cord. The aventail has a decoratively wavy leather upper edge, a form seen on other effigies. (Courtauld Institute, Conway Library, copyright Maurice H. Ridgway)



A: Knight and Equipment c.1330



GRAHAM TURNER

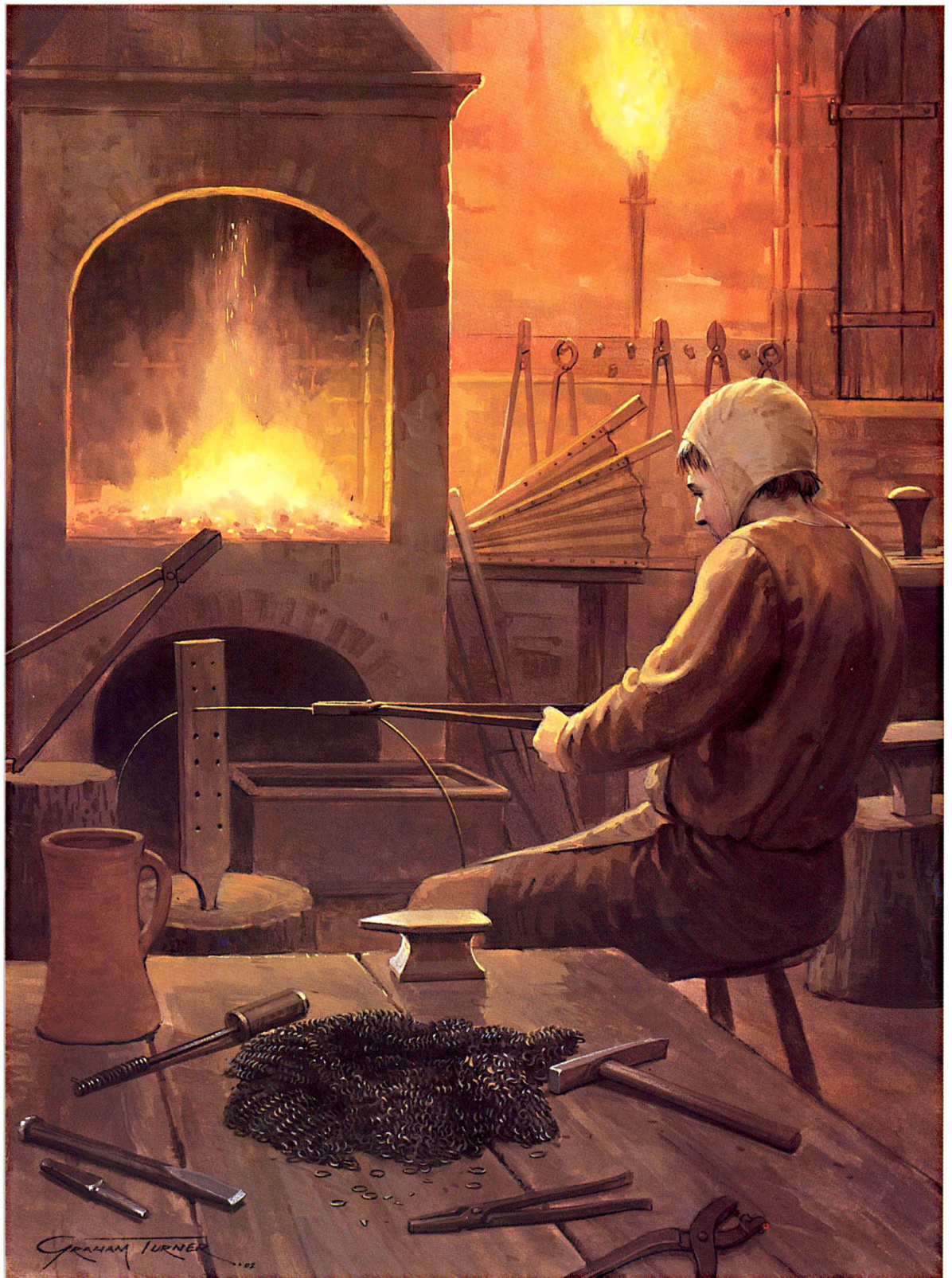
B: Training



C: Horses



D: Making armour



E: Knight and equipment, c.1350



F: The Mine at Cormicy, 1359



G: Jousts of peace, late 14th century



H: Knight and equipment, c.1390



Shoes were laced on the inner or outer side or with a flap folding over a long tongue; some were cut away over the instep and fastened at the ankle with strap and buckle. Leather might be punched with patterns or cloth embroidered, and by 1360 the shoes became sharply pointed and often had openwork designs. Edward III's Sumptuary Law forbade knights under the estate of a lord, esquire or gentleman (and anyone else, for that matter!) to have pikes over 5cm (2 inches) long; transgressors were to be fined 40 pence. In 1395, however, **poulaines**, very long, pointed shoes, became fashionable for men of rank and their attendants. Boots, or **buskins**, tended on occasion to follow the style of toe seen on shoes. Short boots were closed by buttons or laces at the side, or, from about 1395, by being hooked on the outer side. Long riding boots were sometimes shaped to the thighs and secured by buttons, laces or buckles below the calf; open varieties could be closed by a flap across the outside of the calf, fastened by hooks or buttons. Some boots were additionally decorated with tassels or silver-gilt. **Galoches** (clogs) and patterns were sometimes worn from about 1350, the latter with wooden soles and a leather strap to keep feet out of mud in bad weather.

Gloves were common, sometimes simply carried in the hand. They had long, wide cuffs and might be decorated with embroidery. Mantles were sometimes worn for ceremonial occasions. Cloaks were usually of circular cut, richly lined and fastened with a brooch in front or a button on the right shoulder. From about 1330, shoulder capes appeared, some being long, cut on the circle, to reach the thighs, and buttoning down the front. Some had hoods, and from mid-century many were dagged.

From about 1330 the hood was extended to include a tail, the 'liripipe'. It hung down the back unless cut vertically, when it would hang to the side. Long versions were often twisted round the head. The hood might also be made into a turban by wearing it with the face-opening on the head, turned up to a rolled brim, and the liripipe and gorget (the part around the neck, if the hood was worn properly) hanging on opposite sides. However, from about 1380 a new form, the



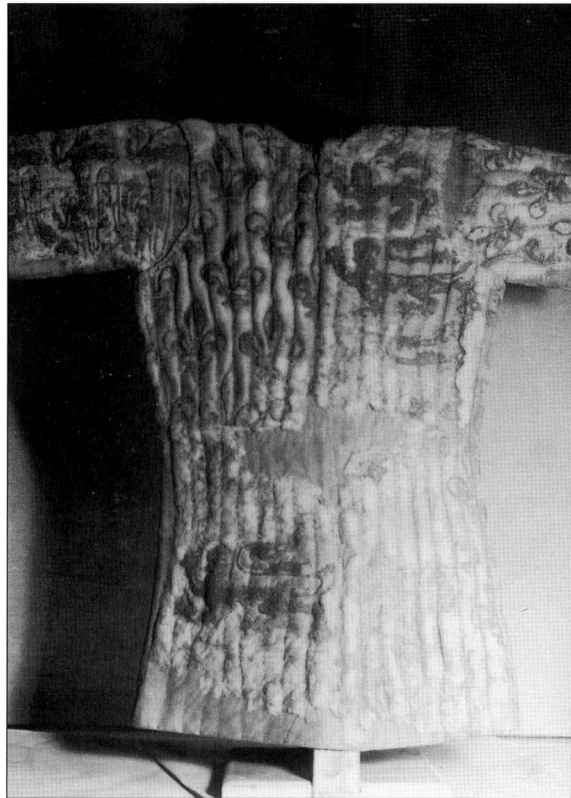
Effigy of Sir Robert Shurland, a drawing by Stothard from his tomb in Minster, Isle of Sheppey, c.1320–35. This effigy shows the inner side of the shield, with braces adjustable by a buckle. Sir Robert wears a quilted jupon with inset sleeves and his squire wears a quilted aketon.

Probably one of a number owned by the Black Prince, his jupon fastens down the front, and has lost some of its shape from earlier mounting. Four squares of silk velvet form the quarterings on front and back, laid on a linen foundation with a layer of wool between, quilted vertically. The heraldic charges were embroidered in gold thread on separate pieces of applied velvet, the seams covered with gold cord. The inserts of the sleeves are longer at the back than the front, and the sleeves each bear two quarters. (By courtesy of the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury and the Trustees of the Armouries)

hood-turban, appeared. The face-opening fitted the head and the edges rolled back, while those with a long liripipe had it wound round the crown with an end hanging on one side. The gorget either fell on the other side or stood up if the material was stiff enough, and since most were dagged, gave the appearance of a cock's comb. Knights might wear a hat with a wide, turned-up brim to form a sharp point in front. From 1325 a high or round crowned hat with a rolled or turned-up brim was also seen. From 1392 some hats had a floppy bag-shaped crown that drooped over a rolled brim, while two years later a hat with a tall but often flattened crown, widening at the top, was worn over a rolled or turned-up brim. In the second half of the century some headgear sported a plume, usually of one or two dyed ostrich or peacock feathers fixed at front or rear of the bottom of the crown by a brooch. Decorative hat bands also began to appear at this time. The coif was still worn.

Men were either clean-shaven or else had a beard sometimes without moustaches and with no sideburns. Hair styles were relatively simple: in the first part of the century a roll curl across the forehead and nape was common, but after mid-century the hair was either parted in the centre and hung down, or else was cut more closely all over.

The pouch had two straps for suspending it from the belt. The ballock dagger, so called from the two swellings at the base of the grip, was sometimes worn in civilian life at the front of the belt, so mimicking male genitalia. Richard II is said to have introduced the 'hand-cloth' or 'hand-coverchief' or mokador, for wiping his nose.



IDEALS AND CUSTOMS

Chivalry

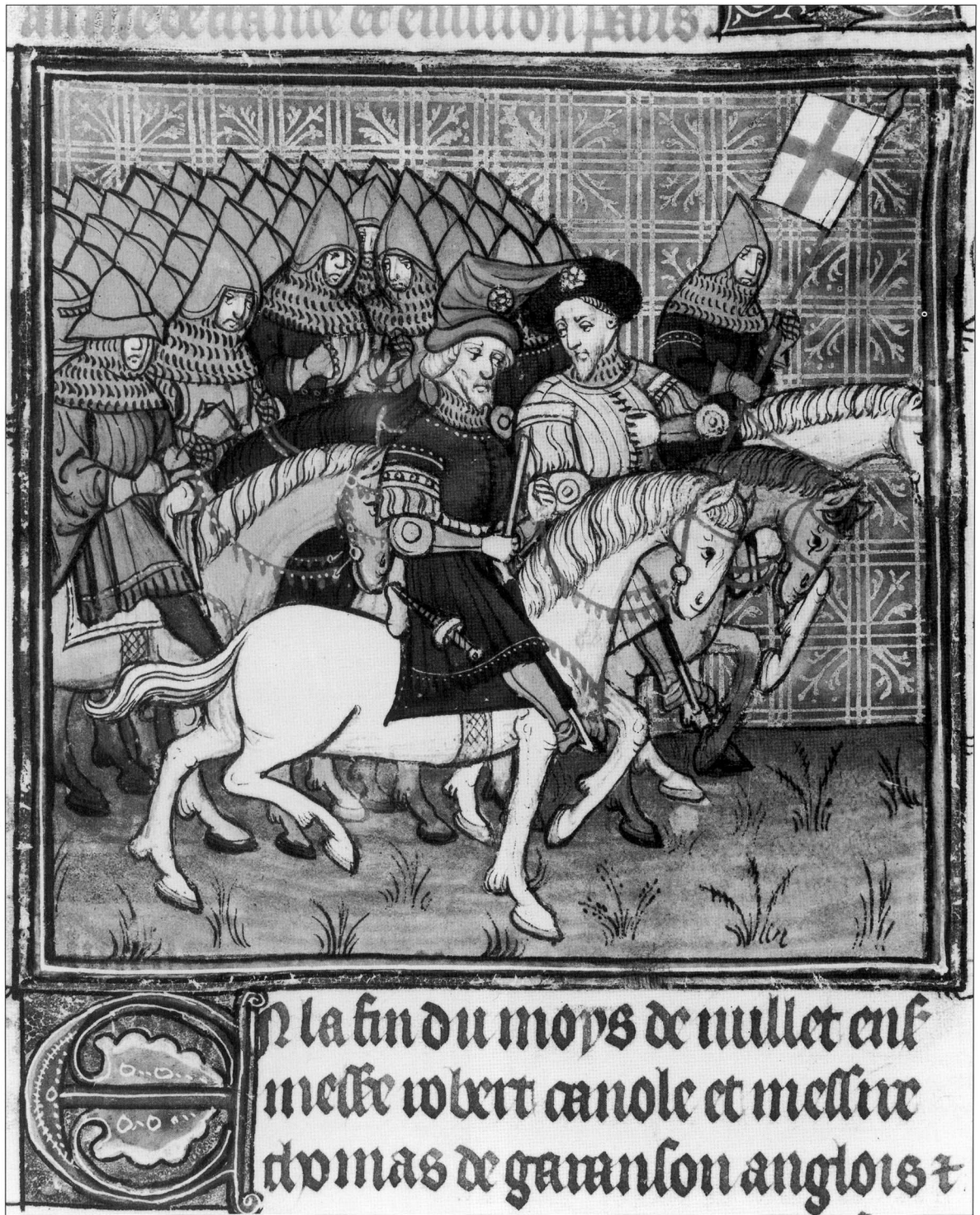
Chivalry was an ideal of knightly behaviour that bound knights across Europe together. The old tales of chivalrous heroes, notably King Arthur, were still read and narrated, and real heroes appear in the pages of great storytellers such as Froissart, one English notable being Sir Walter Manny. Besieged in Guingamp by the French after dinner, Manny suggested he and his friends go to attack the siege engine outside as a fitting end to the entertainment, which they duly did. Attacked as they retreated back to the fortress, Manny swore never to be embraced by mistress or friend if he did not unhorse one of the riders, and a skirmish followed. He later led a sortie from Hennebont Castle to rescue two companions who were about to be beheaded by the French and was clearly a brave and skilful fighter, well versed in the ways of war.

Another work with a sense of immediacy was the *Scalacronica* of Sir Thomas Gray of Heaton in Northumberland, himself a knight who spent much of his career on the Scottish borders. He relates the story of how, when his father held Norham Castle, Sir William Marmion joined the garrison. A Lincolnshire knight, Marmion had been given a gold helmet by his mistress, who told him to make it known wherever glory was most difficult to obtain. When a small Scottish force appeared, and having received permission of the commander, this 'knight-errant' rode out wearing the helmet and confronted the enemy. Only when Marmion had been unhorsed and badly wounded did the garrison sally forth to save him, an excellent example of a brave, but essentially useless act. Such courage was held up as an ideal of behaviour and was frequently emulated, such as the death ride of Sir William Felton in Castile in 1367 who charged into a group of Spaniards with levelled lance.

The idealistic vision of knighthood persisted, however. *Piers Plowman*, written by John Langland in the 1380s, repeats the notion of the 'pure order' of knighthood, and incorporates ideas such as fighting to defend the truth. Most people in England spoke English (rather than French) as a first language by the early 14th century, and contemporary romances embrace the idea of a national hero fighting for his country. In two



Brass of Sir Ralph de Kneyvnton, Aveley, Essex, c.1370. His upper torso has two semicircles of rivets that secure a solid breastplate beneath the cloth, from which guard chains attach to his sword and dagger.



Sir Robert Knollys with Sir Thomas Grandison, from a French manuscript of c.1392. Under the red cross of St George English troops wear quilted jupons over their armour; some laced or buttoned up the front. The commanders have exchanged their helmets for a top hat and hood-turban. One carries a baton. (By permission of the British Library, MS Royal C VII, f.186)

poems knights are satirised as 'lions in hall, hares in the field'. Chaucer's high-minded chivalrous knight fights in Prussia, Lithuania and Russia, Spain, North Africa, Anatolia and Armenia, and has jousting in the lists in Algeria – all very well except that it was not much practical help to his own country. Terry Jones has argued that the lack of heraldic display and the stained fustian jupon of Chaucer's knight are signs of the professional fighting man, perhaps even modelled on Sir John Hawkwood of the White Company. Others disagree; but even if not technically a mercenary, Chaucer's dowdy knight is a far tougher character than a first reading would imply, and almost certainly a contracted fighter.

With the upset in the Church caused by the collapse of the Templars and loss of the Holy Land, and the internal problems of the Hospitallers, knights began to lose interest in the ideals set by the religious orders and looked elsewhere for inspiration. They turned increasingly to the romances, in particular those about King Arthur and Camelot. Edward I's conquest of Wales and early successes in Scotland strengthened the chivalric ideal and ensured it did not wither despite the setbacks of the early 14th century, until Edward III was able to utilise the enthusiasm for his own war aims in France.

In 1344 at Windsor, Edward III proposed to found an Order of the Round Table, and during a 'Round Table' tournament he swore to found a chivalric order, a fellowship of knights bound together by oaths of mutual support. King John the Good of France founded a chivalric order, that of the Star, in 1351–52, but it was Edward's Order of the Garter (which was largely based on initial ideas for the French Order of the Star), that became the first in 1348. It soon had 24 member knights and before long 25 knights as well as the sovereign, which has remained the membership to this day. It may have had political overtones, but the connection with tournaments made it attractive to knights. There were also 26 priests and the same number of poor knights (religion and charity looked after by the order).

Tournaments

At the beginning of the century, tournaments were still subject to a ban, largely because they were seen as a threat to the recruitment of knights for real war. Edward I was quite keen on tournaments, however, and relaxed the bans during or after a campaign, as after Falkirk in 1302, apparently as a sort of reward for those who had supported him. Later in the century, most of the tournaments were held to celebrate a knight's knighting or marriage, or very occasionally a triumphant return from battle. Many English knights still crossed the sea to joust, especially in the lavish tournaments held between about 1370 and 1385 at Bruges or Ghent by the dukes of Burgundy. The political use of such events was not lost on kings either. In a bid to separate William of Hainault from the French king (which nearly succeeded) Richard II organised a great tournament in London in 1390 when 60 knights held the lists against all comers.

In 1309 Sir Thomas de Maundeville was contracted to serve Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford, for 20 marks per annum for a fixed period. In peace he received hay and oats for four horses plus wages for three grooms, but in war and during tournaments the

allowance rose to eight horses and seven grooms, with horses for himself from Humphrey. Some knights served by a contract solely for the tournament. This was becoming more exclusive. The rolls for the Dunstable tournaments of 1309 and 1334 show that only knights (135 of them) were expected to participate in a full capacity. Knights who arrived without their lord tended to join another retinue.

The Combat of the Thirty in 1351 was a formal foot combat between Sir Richard Bamborough, captain of Plöermel, with 30 companions (including ten German and Breton mercenaries), and the marshal, Richard de Beaumanoir, with 30 Frenchmen. Four Frenchmen and two Englishmen were dead when the two sides paused for refreshments. During the second half, however, Guillaume de Montauban mounted his horse and charged into the English ranks, knocking over seven of them. Following up, his friends killed nine Englishmen and captured the rest.

CAMPAIGNING

During the 14th century war was conducted in a number of ways. The *chevauchée* was a mounted raid (literally 'ride') far into enemy territory. Like the well-tried feudal tactics that preceded it, the aim was to disrupt the economy of the area by swift movement, seizing food for the soldiers and destroying crops, villages and peasants (thereby insulting the lord of the place into the bargain) while evading danger to oneself by avoiding castles unless they were easy to capture.

Successful battles required the use of cavalry and the matchless skills of the English archers. When delivered correctly the charge of the heavy horse was a formidable weapon that could smash a hole in enemy ranks. Starting from a walk, riding sometimes knee to knee, the horsemen increased their speed, breaking into a gallop only when within striking range of the enemy, so as not to blow their mounts or lose formation. It was then that the lances were levelled for the shock. There were times when such a manoeuvre could not be used effectively, for example in the bogs and mountains of Wales. In addition, the Scots used the

Effigy of Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke (died 1324), from his tomb in Westminster Abbey. His armour is little changed from that of the latter part of the previous century, and the surcoat masks the possible coat of plates, though no hem is visible. He wears a separate mail hood with decorative fillet round the temples. The sword belt attaches to the scabbard by a hook and eye arrangement. (Copyright: Dean and Chapter of Westminster)



schiltron, a circle of dense spears, to frustrate cavalry. Bowmen could break up these masses when used together with cavalry who either broke into the gaps or forced the enemy to hold ranks under a withering fire. However, in 1307 a large force of perhaps 3,000 men under Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke was repulsed at Loudon Hill by the 600 spearmen of Robert the Bruce who made a stand with protected flanks. Pembroke withdrew after sending in only two futile cavalry attacks. The Scots were victorious again in 1314, when Edward II spectacularly lost the battle of Bannockburn; the English archers were caught by cavalry and the English heavy horse thrown back by the schiltrons.

Archers was employed effectively at Boroughbridge, Yorkshire, in 1322, this time against Edward's enemy, the Earl of Lancaster. The Earl of Hereford led some 300 men in an abortive charge on foot across the bridge over the Ure against the royalist blockade, but was killed by a spear thrust from under the bridge, and when horsemen made for the ford, the Welsh longbowmen on the opposite bank foiled every attempt to cross.

The young Edward III composed his forces so that the bulk of infantry were bowmen, and were mostly mounted to assist swift movement on the march. His men-at-arms were much more likely now to dismount on the battlefield to form the front divisions (called 'battles'). Where possible, they stood in a naturally defended position with their archers, thus forcing the enemy to wear themselves out attacking them. This style of warfare was first used in battle against the Scots. Froissart describes how, in 1327, when Edward's troops encountered the Scots, they were ordered to dismount and take off their spurs before forming themselves into three battles. In 1332 a force of the 'disinherited Scots' under the pretender Balliol (in fact pretty much an English force) invaded Scotland and after an abortive attack on the Scottish camp on the River Earn, formed a single block of dismounted men-at-arms at Dupplin Muir, with wings of archers and a small mounted reserve. The Scots, under the Regent, Donald, Earl of Mar, withered under the archery, and many of Balliol's men-at-arms remounted to chase the routed enemy. The following year at Halidon Hill near Berwick three divisions with flanking archers annihilated the Scots, the knights remounting to chase the routed Scots back to Duns.

When Edward launched his main campaign against France, the English took their new double-pronged strategy with them. The first encounter in France was in 1342 when the English, driven back from the siege of Morlaix, formed up with a wood at their backs, a stream on one flank and dug a ditch to protect the front. Despite being pushed back to the woods, the English held their enemies off. At Crécy in 1346, dismounted men-at-arms and archers beat off repeated attacks by French

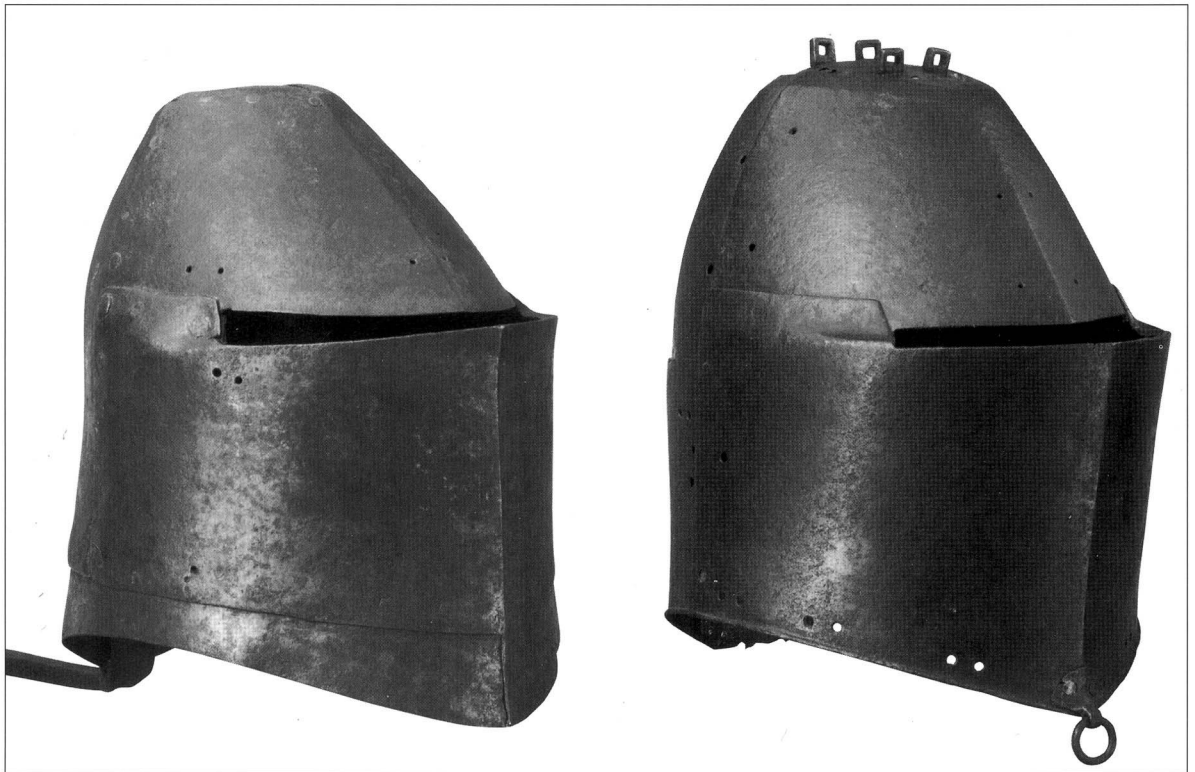


Sir Nigel Loring, who died in 1386, wearing the robes of the Order of the Garter embellished with garters. (By permission of the British Library, MS Cotton Nero D VII, f.105v)

cavalry, whose horses were a prime target for arrows. That same year this combination defeated a Scottish invasion at Neville's Cross near the city of Durham, but there was heavy pressure on the English centre and right until a mounted English reserve was brought up and caught the Scots by surprise, the victory made complete by the arrival of reinforcements. At Poitiers in 1356 a mounted reserve swung the battle for the English, who were hard pressed in their defensive array by dismounted Frenchmen. The reserves turned the battle round and King John himself was captured. At Auray in 1364 a similar use of reserves under Sir Hugh Calveley meant that potential gaps, caused by French pressure on the low numbers of English archers, could be successfully plugged, thus eventually leading to an English victory. The great French captain Bernard du Guesclin advanced his men with pavises (shields) to reduce casualties from arrows, but still lost the battle and was himself captured.

In 1351 at Saintes the French retained mounted wings of horse to try to break up the archers on the flanks, and retained this formation for the rest of the century. At Nogent-sur-Seine in 1359 they succeeded in breaking into the English formation of archers in this way, whereas the men-at-arms kept tightly packed. The significance of English archers in the French theatre is shown by the defeat at Ardes in 1351, where Sir John Beauchamp, caught by a dismounted French force as he returned from a raid, lined a ditch and held them off until they came to close quarters and another force broke up the archers. At Mauron the following year, the English partly used a bramble hedge for an obstacle. Despite losing the right flank of archers to a mounted attack, the dismounted attacks were beaten off.

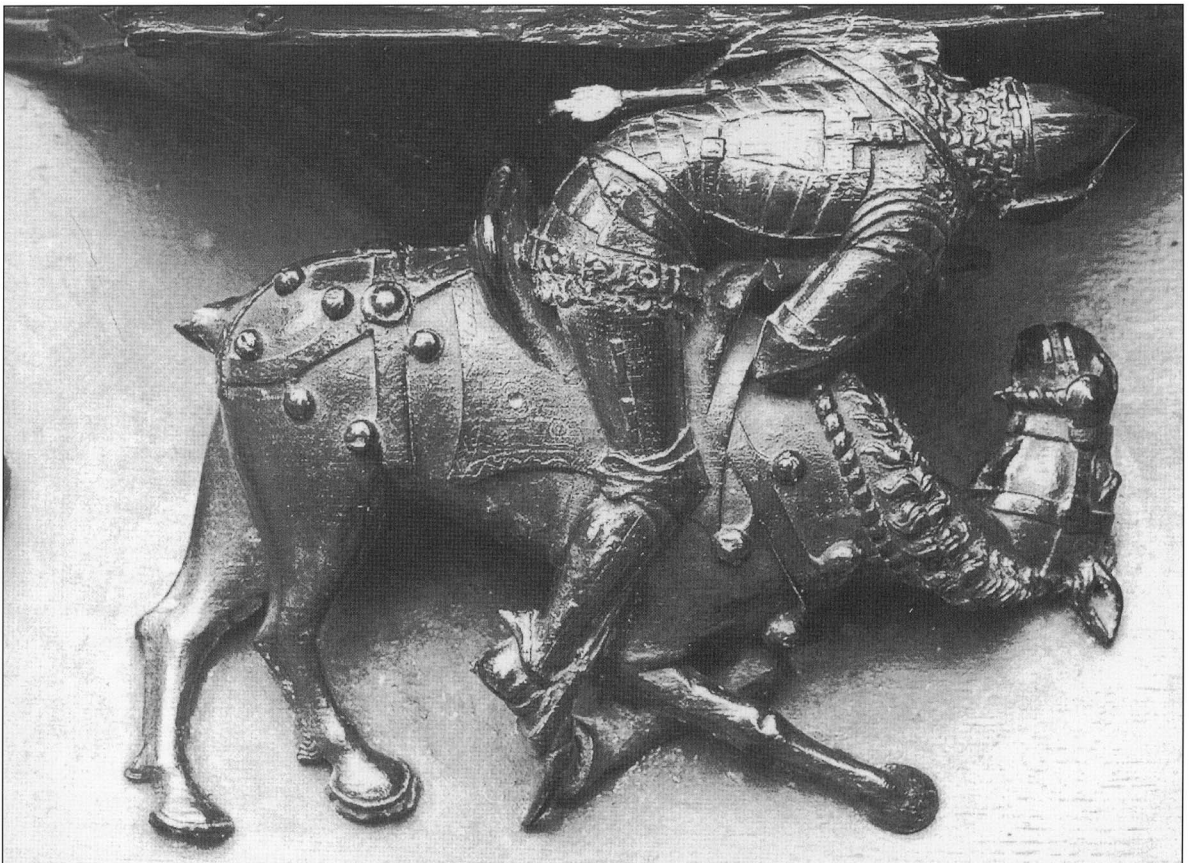
Early frog-mouthed forms of jousting helm of late 14th- or early 15th-century date, that once hung over the tombs of Sir Reginald Braybrook (left) and Sir Nicolas Hawberk, from Cobham church, Kent. The lower band and rear bar on the Braybrook helm are funerary additions. (By courtesy of the Trustees of the Armouries and the Rector of Cobham, Al.30)



In 1345 an English relieving force under the Earl of Derby charged into a French siege camp before Auberoche, the archers and men-at-arms doing much damage, while a sortie from the garrison finally broke the French forces. This form of surprise attack would occur again at La Roche Derien in 1347 during the Breton War of Succession, when an English relieving force fell on the French siege camp at night, although this time they encountered large numbers of troops and were probably saved by a sudden sortie from the garrison at dawn.

In 1388, having failed to assault Otterburn Castle, the Earl of Douglas set up camp instead. When his bitter enemy, Sir Henry Percy, arrived, he held off, perhaps fearing an ambush. Splitting his force, he sent the Umfravilles round to attack the Douglas camp from the rear. Unfortunately, Douglas had moved a large force out of the camp and Percy attacked a baggage park which he mistook for the camp. Douglas had avoided the Umfravilles and caught Percy in the flank. The Umfravilles, meanwhile, seem to have made too large a detour, and when they came upon the Scottish camp it was deserted. In the confusion of darkness, they then appeared on Percy's flank instead of the Scottish rear. The battle was lost to the English, despite the death of Douglas, who had hacked his way towards Percy. Indeed, this was a hard contest, both sides stubbornly refusing to give ground, and both Percy and his brother wounded and taken prisoner. Froissart said that of all the conflicts he wrote about, this was the most bravely fought.

A falling knight, struck by a crossbow bolt, carved on a misericord in the choir of Lincoln Cathedral, dating from the second half of the 14th century. It affords a rare back view of a coat of plates, the sides held by two buckled straps and a third lower down. The sides seem to be composed of horizontal hoops, the back of small overlapping rectangular plates. The hinged outer plate of the cuisse is clearly visible. Note also the bells adorning the horse's harness. (By courtesy of the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln. Photograph by Betty Carpenter)



The helm and crest of the Black Prince, from his funeral achievements in Canterbury Cathedral. The helm consists of front and rear plates plus one forming a dome. The sights are flanged outwards, and the rivets holding the dome have brass washers inside that originally held the (partially surviving) lining strap. Pairs of holes below these were for tying the lining laces. Two sets of four holes on top were for attaching the crest or coronet. Two cruciform holes in front were for the toggle of a (partially surviving) guard chain, while at the back two holes were for the strap to attach it to the body armour. The leather cap of maintenance had canvas glued over the joints and was originally plastered and painted red, powdered with gold roses; the brim was painted as heraldic ermine. The hat even had a red silk lining. The lion is also of moulded leather and canvas, the tail and legs of canvas held by wooden dowels. The hair was simulated by gluing on lozenges of leather that had been stamped with a fur pattern. The tongue, ears and (probably) a collar in form of a white heraldic label, plus a crown are missing. The surface of the lion was gilded and the eyeballs and lashes shaded black. (By courtesy of the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury and the Trustees of the Armouries)



After Poitiers there were no further major battles between England and France until Agincourt in 1415. It was not battles that won a country as much as hard sieges. After Poitiers the French generally refused to fight in the open, instead shutting themselves up in castles and fortified towns, and forcing the English to besiege them, or else wander the countryside.

With the Treaty of Bretigny in 1360 garrisons emptied, and groups of soldiers formed free companies under captains such as Sir Robert Knollys (perhaps the earliest) and Sir John Hawkwood. These 'rutters' as the English called them, or *routiers*, actually consisted of men from many nationalities, though the French often referred to them all as 'English'. Each company often consisted of only a few hundred men, archers, infantry and men-at-arms. A typical ploy was to seize one or two strong castles and use them as bases from which to terrorise an area. Froissart describes them approaching a town by stealth and entering it at sunrise, burning a house to dupe the inhabitants into thinking an army had entered instead of perhaps 60 men. In the ensuing panic they then looted the place. They hired their services out to rulers, and according to Froissart, the Black Prince used 12,000 of them in Castile. At the end of the 14th century they tended to disappear until their rebirth on a smaller

scale after the renewal of war by Henry V. According to the French chronicler Monstrolet they were called '*Écorcheurs*' ('skinners') after 1437 because they even took the shirts off men's backs.

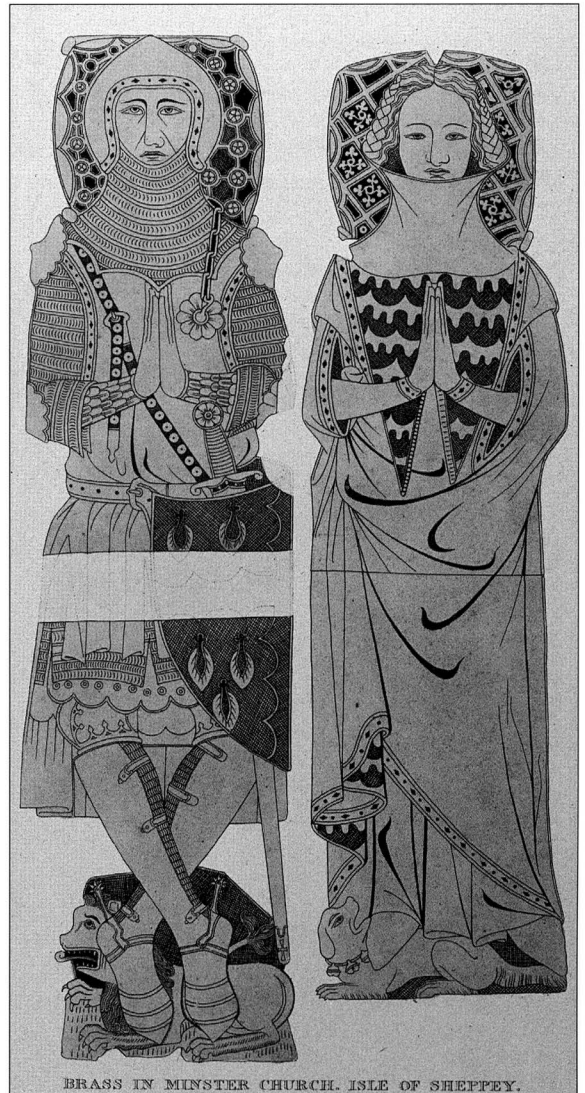
English forces were also involved in Spain. At Najera in 1367 the army of the Black Prince formed three entirely dismounted lines, the main battle in the centre, to face a Castilian force including many French soldiers, also in three lines but with many cavalry. The men-at-arms again fought well, ably supported by archers who out-ranged the Spanish javelin-wielding mounted *jinetes*. They also out-shot crossbowmen and slingers, who drew back, allowing the English men-at-arms to overlap the enemy division. When the English rearguard swung in on the flank, the Spanish and French lines shattered.

Siege warfare called for different measures, in which siege engineers in charge of machines, and latterly gunners with new-fangled cannon, were as important as the knight. Knights were still needed for escort duty, for forays to lay waste surrounding countryside and procure food, or for an attack should a mine or machine collapse a wall, or should ladders or siege tower be required. In captured strongholds he helped to provide the garrison.

When fighting on foot the knight relied in part on his following – his squires, household and retained men – to watch his back. He might wear a *jupon* with his coat of arms displayed on front and rear, but equally some were plain and a warrior with his visor down was then difficult to recognise. If the knight was a banneret his square or oblong banner would be held aloft unfurled when action was expected, and shadowed its owner wherever he went. For his followers, a man of rank might, by the end of the century, also have a standard, a long flag usually carrying the red cross of St George next to the fly, then elements of his heraldic coat, such as main charges and colours, and perhaps his motto, the war-cry shouted to rally and encourage his men. In the din of battle trumpets and hand signals were used to impart instructions.

Knights also fought from ships, notably in the famous battle off Sluys in 1340. In such battles ships came close in for archery and crossbow duels, before trying to grapple each other for an ensuing battle on the decks and rigging. Even here, Edward III arranged his ships with one of men-at-arms between two of archers.

Brass of Sir John de Northwode in Minster Church, Isle of Sheppey, Kent, c.1340. Here he has scale forearm defences instead of plate. The hemlines of his defensive layers suggest the mail coat is worn over the coat of plates, yet he has chains to sword and dagger, which would necessitate them passing through the mail to a solid chest defence on the coat of plates.



BRASS IN MINSTER CHURCH. ISLE OF SHEPPEY.

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The tower house of the castle of Warkworth in Northumberland. Built by the Percy family (hence the carved lion) in about 1390 on the remains of the old Norman castle, such buildings are descendants of the keep. Tower houses, however, were fitted out as private dwellings, the large windows and internal stairs, cupboards and closets making the wall relatively thin.

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Sir John Dalyngrigge built Bodiam Castle in Sussex in 1385 against the threat of French attacks, which never materialised. It is of square plan, with domestic buildings along the inner walls. Sir John had a private first-floor suite connecting to his pew in the chapel. There was a presence chamber and inner chamber with two bedrooms off it. The lower parts of the walls are served by early gun loops.

The shield of the Black Prince with the leopards of England and fleurs-de-lys of France quartered. Made from poplar wood, it is covered in layers of white canvas, plaster, paper and leather; the rear is covered in canvas originally painted green or blue. The straps have gone. The heraldic charges are made from moulded leather and attached by small brads. The ground of the four squares is punched with a spotted diaper. Originally there was also another shield of pointed oval form hanging over the tomb, decorated with an arabesque pattern with the royal arms in the centre. (By courtesy of the Dean and chapter of Canterbury and the Trustees of Armouries)



The standard of Earl Douglas carried at the battle of Otterburn, 1388. A rare early survivor, it bears the blue saltire of St Andrew next to the fly instead of the red cross of St George. The motto: 'Jamais areyre' comes from the Douglas's claim to lead the Scots into battle. (© The Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland)



GLOSSARY

Aketon A padded coat, usually quilted vertically, which was worn beneath mail to absorb blows, or on its own by ordinary soldiers.

Aiglet A conical metal finial attached to the end of a point to prevent fraying and to ease passage through an eyelet.

Ailette A small board of wood or parchment worn at the shoulder and usually painted with heraldic arms.

Arçons The bow and cantle of a saddle.

Arming cap A padded and quilted cap worn under the mail coif, and sometimes over it to support a helm.

Arming sword The main fighting sword of a knight.

Aventail Mail neck-defence attached to the lower edge of a basinet. In France referred to as a 'camail'.

Ballock knife A knife or dagger whose hilt has two swellings at the base next to the blade. Also called a kidney dagger by the Victorians.

Backplate Plate armour for the back.

Baleyn Whalebone, made from the baleen sheets that hang inside the mouth of some whales.

Bard Armoured covering for a horse.

Basinet An open-faced helmet, often with a pointed skull. Also used to describe the *cervellière*.

Bastard sword A larger version of the arming sword, for use in two hands.

Bec-de-faucon A staff weapon consisting of an axe- or hammer-head backed by a beak like that of a falcon.

Besagew A circular plate defence used for the armpit.

Bevor Plate chin- and throat-defence.

Bill A staff weapon derived from a hedging bill, consisting of a broad convex blade with a spike at the top and rear.

Bodkin A long arrow-head without barbs, for piercing armour.

Bow The front of the saddle.

Braies Loose linen drawers tied with a running string.

Brases Carrying straps fitted inside a shield.

Breastplate Plate armour for the chest and stomach.

Breaths Holes in a helmet for ventilation and increased vision.

Brigandine Body armour consisting of a canvas jacket inside which are rivetted many small plates. The outside is usually faced with cloth or leather.

Broad-head A wide barbed arrow-head with long cutting edges, used for hunting or maiming war horses.

Burnet A brown cloth.

Buskins Leather boots.

A north Italian basinet with removable visor and aventail. Though of Italian manufacture, this is of similar form to the type seen in western Europe in the later 14th century. There are few breathing holes on the left side, to lessen the chance of a weapon point catching in them. (By permission of the Trustees of the Armouries, IV.470)



Byssine A fine cotton or flax material.

Cantle The rear part of a saddle.

Cap-à-pied Fully armed, literally 'head to foot'.

Cannon Tubular or gutter-shaped plate defence for the upper or lower arm. Also the term for a gun large enough to require being supported on a bed or carriage.

Caparison Cloth, or occasionally mail, covering or housing for a horse, the former often used to carry the owner's coat of arms.

Cervelière A small hemispherical steel skull-cap.

Chape A metal terminal fitted over the tip of a scabbard to protect it.

Chappe A small leather rain-guard fitted over the sword cross to protect the blade in the scabbard.

Chausses Stockings, either of cloth or mail.

Coat of plates Body armour consisting of a canvas jacket inside which plates are riveted. The outside is usually faced with cloth or leather. Also called 'pair of plates', 'hauberk of plates', 'cote à plates' or 'plates'.

Cote-hardie A front-fastening jacket worn over the doublet.

Coif A mail hood. Also a cloth cap secured under the chin with ties. See also **arming cap**.

Coronel A small crown of points used instead of a single sharp head on lances for jousts of peace. The use of several points spreads the impact of the blow.

Cote The tunic.

Courser A war horse.

Couter Plate defence for the elbow.

Crinet Plate defence for a horse's neck.

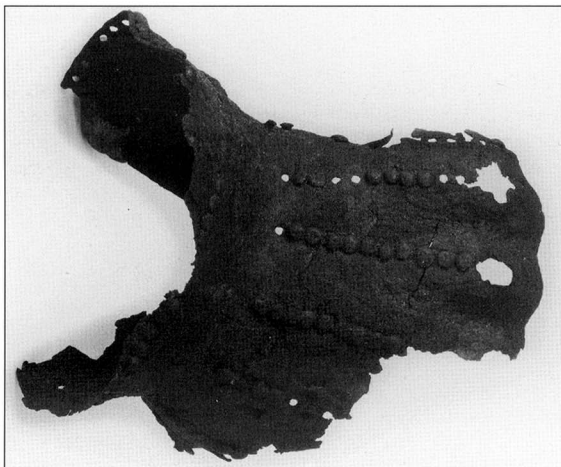
Cuirass Armour for the torso, usually denoting the breast- and back-plates.

Cuir-bouilli Hardened leather that has been boiled or soaked before shaping.

Cuirie Solid body armour, presumably of leather, sometimes reinforced by circular plates.

Cuisse Leg defence.

A fragment of gauntlet from Brick Lane, London, originally riveted inside a cloth covering. (By courtesy of the Trustees of the Armouries, III.773)



Destrier The largest, strongest and most expensive war horse.

Dubbing The tap on the shoulder with a sword to make a new knight.

Enarmes See brases.

Falchion A cleaver-like single-edged short sword.

Fauld The hooped skirt that hangs from the breastplate to guard the lower abdomen.

Fitchet A vertical slit made in super-tunics with no side opening, allowing access to keys or purse hung from the tunic girdle.

Frog-mouthed helm A helm whose lower front plate below the vision slit is extended forward to deflect a blow. Also known as a tilting helm, and used largely for jousts of peace.

Frounce Flounce.

Gadling A metal stud on the knuckle or finger joint of a gauntlet.

Galoches Clogs.

Gambeson A padded coat usually quilted vertically. The term generally refers to a coat worn over the armour rather than beneath it.

Gamboised cuisse A padded and quilted tubular thigh defence, sometimes richly decorated.

Garde-corps Long garment with wide tubular sleeves provided with slits for the arms to pass through.

Garnache A beltless garment cut like the tabard, but with shoulder line wide enough to cover the elbows.

Gauntlet Defence for the hand and wrist.

Gisarme Also called 'guisarme'. A staff weapon consisting of a concave axe-head with the lowest point attached to the shaft.

Glaive A staff weapon with a long convex cutting edge.

Gorget A plate collar to guard the throat.

Graper A metal or leather band nailed round the lance behind the grip.

Great basinet A basinet with plate throat- and neck-defences attached.

Greave Plate armour for the lower leg.

Guard-chain A chain that was initially attached to the waist belt, then the breastplate, and was fixed by a toggle to the helm, sword or dagger to prevent loss.

Guige The carrying strap of a shield.

Guisarme See **gisarme**.

Hackney A riding horse.

Hand-and-a-half sword See **bastard sword**.

Hauberk A mail coat.

Haubergeon A shorter version of the hauberk.

Helm A large helmet enclosing the entire head.

Herald An official employed by a king or nobleman, and who wore his arms. Herald's delivered messages and identified coats-of-arms.

Herygoud See **garde-corps**.

Hounskull The name sometimes given to the pointed visor worn with the basinet. Such a combination has also given rise to the term 'pig-faced' basinet.

Houppelande A front-fastening gown often worn over the doublet.

Hure A cap.

Jamber Defence for the lower leg.

Jousts of peace Contest between two mounted opponents using blunted lances.

Jousts of war Contest between two mounted opponents using sharp lances.

Jupon Also spelt 'gipoun'. A cloth coat worn over the tunic and buttoned or laced down the front. The term also refers to a style of surcoat worn over armour.

Kettle hat Open-faced helmet with a broad brim.

King-of-arms The rank above that of herald.

Klappvisier A visor attached at the brow of the helmet instead of at the sides.

Lame A strip or plate of steel, sometimes used to provide articulation in armour.

Lance A long spear used on horseback; in later forms sometimes swelling slightly before and behind the grip.

Lance-rest A bracket attached to the wearer's right side of the breastplate against which the graper was rammed to stop a lance running back when a strike is made. It derives from the French word 'Arrête' meaning stop.

Latten Copper-alloy very like brass, used for decorating some plate armour.

Lists The tournament arena where combats take place.

Livery Robes worn by a lord's followers, bearing his badge and/or colours.

Locket A metal mount to protect the mouth of a scabbard or sheath.

Mail Armour made from interlinked iron rings. Often all rings were riveted but sometimes alternate lines of riveted and welded rings were used.

Muffler A mail mitten.

Nasal The nose guard on a helmet.

Palfrey A good riding horse.

Pauldron Plate shoulder-defence that overlaps the chest and back.

Pelisson A super-tunic lined with fur.

Peytral Plate, or occasionally mail, defence for a horse's chest.

Pike A long spear used by infantry.

Point A flax, twine or buckskin lace used to attach armour or tie up items of clothing.

Poleyn Solid armour for the knee.

Poulaine A shoe with pierced decoration.

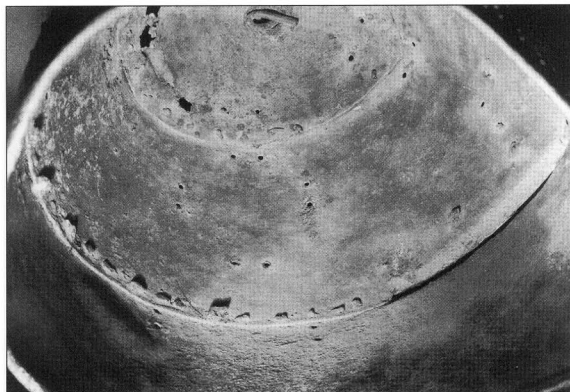
Pourpoint See **aketon**.

Pursuivant The rank below that of herald, identified by wearing the tabard sideways.

Rebated point A weapon point that has been blunted, for use in tournament contests.



A late 14th-century cuisse and poleyn for the left leg. Made either in Italy or England, the cuisse has a stop-rib riveted near the upper edge to throw off weapon points, and a double cusp at the lower edge where it articulates with the upper lame of the poleyn. The lowest lame of the poleyn is similarly cusped. The side wing has been broken off and riveted back on. (By courtesy of the Trustees of the Armouries and James Pickthorn Esq., Al.23/224)



Inside view of a late 14th-century helm. (By courtesy of the Trustees of the Armouries)

Rondel dagger A dagger with a disc at each end of the hilt to guard the hand.

Sabatton Plate armour for the foot.

Scale Armour made from overlapping scales secured to a backing.

Shaffron Plate defence for a horse's head.

Skull The main part of a helmet covering the top and sides of the head above the ears. Also a simple metal cap.

Spaulder A plate shoulder-defence.

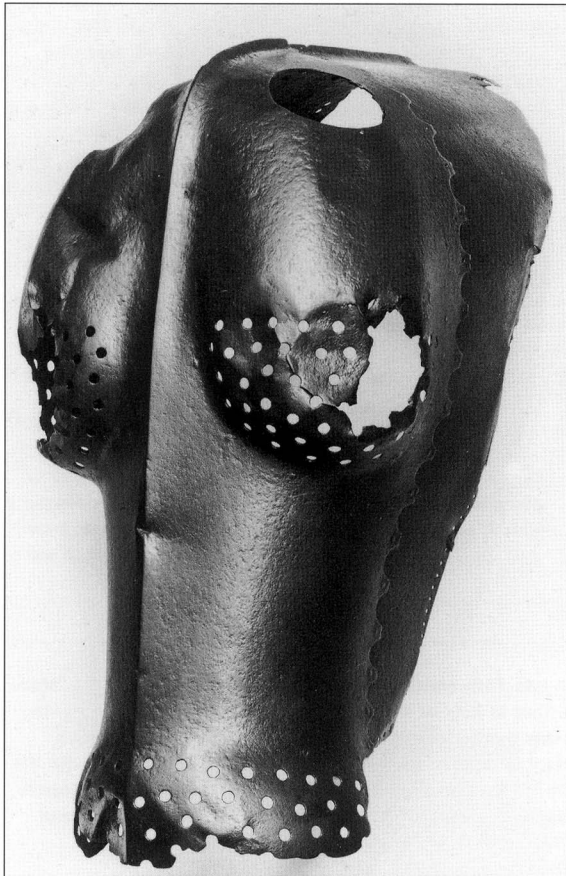
Standard Mail neck-defence usually with an upstanding collar of mail links. also a long rallying flag.

Stop-rib A raised strip of steel riveted to a plate to guide weapon-points away.

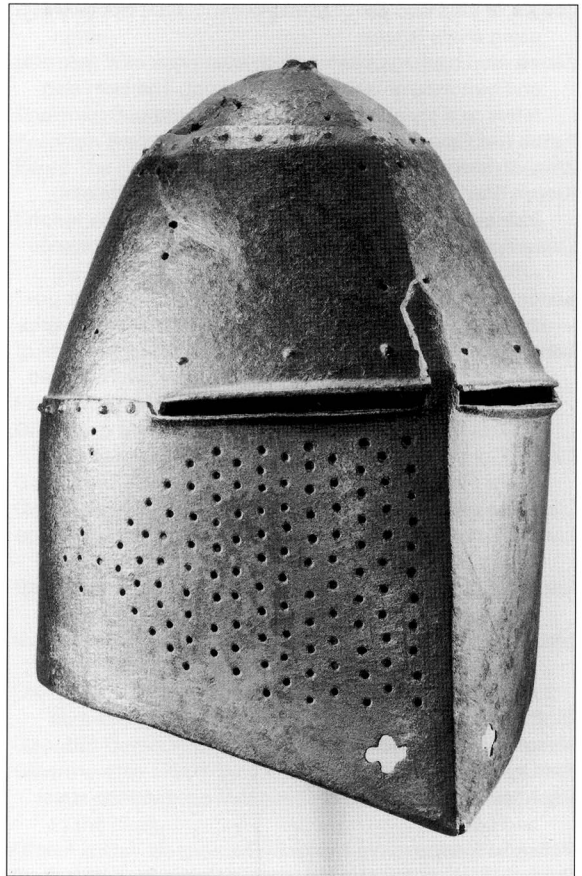
Sumpter A pack horse or mule.

Super-tunic A garment worn over the tunic. Also called a surcoat.

Surcoat In military parlance, a cloth garment worn over armour, usually lined and mostly sleeveless. In civilian parlance, a super-tunic, sometimes similar to the military version.



A shaffron, probably of the late 14th or early 15th century, from Warwick Castle. It has a main plate that joins a subsidiary plate behind the ears; this second plate then continues down either side of the head, being overlapped by and riveted to the main plate. (By courtesy of the Trustees of the Armouries, VI.40)



A great helm of about 1370, very similar to one in the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, that once hung over the tomb of Sir Richard Pembridge in Hereford Cathedral. It may therefore represent an English-made group. (By courtesy of the Trustees of the Armouries, IV.600)

Tabard A sleeveless super-tunic stitched or clasped together at waist level.

Tang The continuation of a sword blade that passes through the hilt.

Tournament Originally a contest between two teams but later used to embrace the developed form in which jousting and foot combat also took place.

Tourney A term used to denote the mounted team event during a tournament, to distinguish it from other events.

Trapper See caparison.

Vambrace Plate arm defence.

Vamplate A circular plate attached over the lance to guard the hand.

Wambais See aketon.

COLOUR PLATE COMMENTARY

A: KNIGHT AND EQUIPMENT, C. 1330

1) At the beginning of the century, knights differed little from those of the end of the previous century, and it was not until about 1325-30 that an increase in the use of plate armour became common. This reconstruction of Sir William FitzRalf shows armour similar in many ways to that of the latter part of the previous century, the main defence being a mail hauberk extended into mittens. However, he now has gutter-shaped plates on his arms, together with a disc at the shoulder and another attached to the couter. Gamboised cuisses protect the thighs, with decorated poleyns at the knees, schynbalds over the shins and early sabatons over the top of the foot. **2)** His squire wears a vertically-quilted aketon with upstanding collar, and carries a sword and ballock dagger. **3)** Kettle hat and bevor. **4)** This knight has a small basinet with rivetted aventail and pendant flaps covering the joints. Note the spaudlers fashioned as lion-heads. **5)** Visored basinet. **6)** Visored helm. **7)** Late prick spur. **8)** Reconstructed tinned rowel spur, Museum of London. Rowel spurs would take over completely in the 14th century. The spur strap rivetted to the arm would give way almost entirely to straps hooked into loops on the arms, though at first some passed through a slot on the inner arm, as here. **9)** Hand-and-a-half sword, first half of 14th century, with 39.5 in. (100.4 cm) blade, Museum of London. **10)** Sword of first half of 14th century. **11)** Sword, c.1290-1330; the style of cross was uncommon after 1300. **12)** Sword belt fastening, using hook and eye attachments, from the brass of Sir Robert de Septvans. **13)** Axe.

B: TRAINING

Squires and knights needed to practice constantly in order to keep muscles supple and to hone their skills. It is possible on occasion double-weight weapons were used, so that normal weapons would feel much easier to swing. Most of these illustrations are based on the detailed pictures seen in the Flemish Romance of Alexander, of 1335-48. **1)** Wrestling from pick-a-back. **2)** Fighting with wooden swords. Note the variant shield shape depicted. **3)** Squires learned to ride and control the powerful war-horses, and might practise against the quintain, a post with a shield attached to it. **4)** Running on foot with a lance against a seated knight. **5)** Running on foot against a quintain in which a pivoting arm has a shield set at one end and a weight at the other; striking the target spun the weighted end and a man had to pass quickly and duck to avoid it. A later quintain still survives on the green of Offham in Kent. Other combative sports such as quarter staff, were also indulged in.

C: HORSES

The horse was, of course, vital to a knight. The destrier was the best war-horse and also the most expensive, sometimes confined to use in the tournament. So-called from the Latin word for 'right' ('dexter'), it is believed it was led on the right hand or was trained to lead with the right foot. About the size of a modern hunter, it was its build and breeding rather than great height that gave it value. Deep-chested for good windage and muscular for carrying an armoured rider, it nevertheless could run and turn nimbly in response to the

spur, knee or rein. War-horses were always stallions, partly because their natural aggression could be channelled into kicking and biting at enemy horses, but probably also because of their macho image. Some lords bought destriers valued at £100, a fortune by standards of the day. A less expensive but nonetheless valuable war-horse was the courser. They were always stallions, perhaps partly to present a macho image, but also that the animal's natural aggression could be directed to biting and kicking at enemy horses, or men. Control was by spurs and curb bits. Though the now out of date prick spur was designed not to penetrate too deeply, some manuscripts do show horses with bloodied flanks, also seen from the use of rowel spurs.

1) War-horse of about 1325 with primitive plate shaffron and early peytral over a cloth caparison. The manuscript does not indicate how the shaffron was fastened; it may have been laced to the head-piece. The arms are those of Sir John de Swynford. **2)** War horse of the second half of the 14th century. The mail trapper, presumably with linen beneath for comfort and to absorb sweat, has a cloth caparison over it. The arms are those of Sir Walter Paveley. The figure is based on an ivory chess piece in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. **3)** Cut leather decorated trappings of c.1380, for use on a war-horse or a good palfrey, the better sort of riding horse. Note the tied tail. Also necessary were rounceys or roncins, horses of poorer quality for a knight's retinue, and perhaps a hackney for his squire or squires. The knight's lady might ride a quiet jennet. Sumpter horses or mules were used for baggage, or else it was carried on wagons. **4 and 5)** 14th-century bridles, fitted with curb bits. These bits rarely survive but are seen everywhere in art. The curb acted like a pivoting lever, pressing the bridge inside up against the roof of the mouth while pulling the bridle against the horse's poll. Some may also have had a curb chain under the jaw, which would squeeze it, though representations are difficult to find at this period. **6)** Typical 14th-century style of snaffle bit with connecting ring and side bars. **7)** Stirrups.

D: MAKING ARMOUR

Some armour was made by groups of workmen almost as a production line, with a particular craftsman using his skills to produce a particular piece of equipment, such as buckles. This sort of industry would become more common in the following century when amounts of plate armour required greatly increased. For the making of mail, however, this form of production was probably usual from the start. Hot iron wire was drawn through holes of various diameters in a wooden board until the right thickness was achieved. A length was then wound round a rod and cut down one side to produce a number of links. For most mail each link must then be flattened at each of its open ends and a tiny hole punched through ready to receive a rivet. All this work was repetitious and time-consuming, and may well have been done by a team of workmen, perhaps including apprentices. The rings might then be case hardened in charcoal. These were then prepared for assembly by the mail-maker, who interlinked four rings through a fifth before closing the latter ring with pliers to overlap the ends and securing these with

a tiny wedge-shaped rivet cut from a sheet. His skill lay not only in this fiddly job but in assembling the mail into a garment that required shaping by increasing or decreasing the number of links, and careful arrangement or even omission of links at joins such as the armpit, to prevent a bulge. It is not known if any special tools were used to speed up the process of making the links, such as special pliers. It appears that a less popular form of construction, in which alternate rows of rings were welded shut instead of rivetted, was rarely seen by the 15th century.

Other skills were needed in the making of plate armour. Plates were shaped over an (often square) armourer's anvil embedded in a tree trunk. A controllable fire, fanned by leather bellows, was necessary for heating the metal, and controllable light sources were needed to enable the armourer to check the colour of the metal to enable him to remove it at the required time for further treatment. A bucket or trough of water and one of sand were used for various cooling processes. Mushroom-headed stakes were set into a wooden table for shaping, much of which was done when the metal was cool. Large snips were needed to cut the steel sheets for working, but all plans of the basic flat shape, if indeed they existed, have vanished. Probably much of it was carried in the armourer's head. The shaped pieces were black from the furnace and were usually burnished and polished to a bright finish. Most would need rivets of some sort: those for attaching a lining band to which a lining was stitched; those that acted as a pivot between two plates and, towards the later 14th century, those that slid in a slot in another plate, usually on the elbow and lower cannon joint. The coat of plates used many rivets in securing it to its backing. Some armour would be made from cuir bouilli, leather soaked or perhaps boiled in water or oil, which then hardened into a light but tough defence. Some of this armour was highly decorated with embossing or punching. On the other hand, linen armour, and the linings of helmets, needed the skills of a dressmaker and seamstress to produce the quilted and shaped garments or inserts needed. A castle might well have a resident armourer who was skilled enough to turn his hand to repairing all types of armour or to make new items. He might also be able to produce weapons, but good swords were the product of a sword smith.

E: KNIGHT AND EQUIPMENT, C.1350

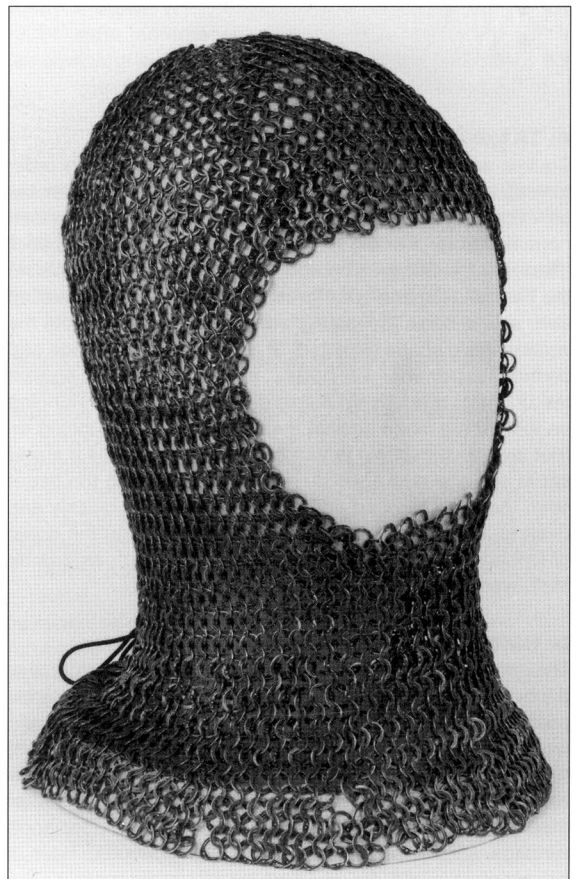
1) By the mid-14th century the surcoat tended to shorten, especially at the front, as seen on this figure based on the brass of Sir John d'Aubonon. He wears layered armour: a quilted aketon, then a mail habergeon, then a coat of plates with floreat rivet heads. The lower cannons cover the forearm completely but the upper arm still only has gutter-shaped plates over the shortened mail sleeves. Circular besagews protect the armpit. Poleyns, schynbalds and plate sabatons are worn. The mail aventail is rivetted inside the basinet, which is fluted and has a gilt finial. 2) Visored basinet and plate collar. 3) The helm of the Black Prince, with decorative breathing holes on the wearer's right side only, c.1376.

A rare mail hood, probably dating from the 14th-century. It has no ventail, instead being slit up the back to allow it to be put on, after which the slit would presumably be laced shut. (The Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland)

4) Decorated basinet fitted with pendant flaps. 5) Inside view of a poncho-style coat of plates with shield-shaped shoulder pieces attached, based on finds from Wisby in Gotland. 6) Evidence for a solid breast-defence seen in the guard-chains running through decorated lion-heads. 7) Arm defence. 8) Lower arm defence of scale. 9) Gauntlet with plates rivetted to a glove. 10) Sabaton of scale, together with enclosed greave. 11) Gilt copper-alloy rowel spur, Devizes Museum. 12) Sword with relatively short blade reinforced by a flattened diamond point, c.1350. 13) Sword, 1st half of the 14th century, found in London. The fuller on this type runs just over halfway down the blade, while the tip is of diamond section. This example has the mark of a fleur-de-lys within a shield punched in the fuller and on the tang. 14) Sword belt fittings, from effigy of Maurice, Lord Berkeley (died 1326) at Bristol. 15) Garnache with tongue-shaped lapels, worn over super-tunic, and wide-brimmed hat. 16) Cote-hardie worn over jupon, and hood.

F: THE MINE AT CORMICY, 1359

During the siege of Rheims several English nobles were ranged about the French countryside to block ingress. Lord Bartholomew Burghersh (seen on right) was lodged in the town of Cormicy, where the enemy-held castle had a strong tower and looked safe from attack. He ordered a mine dug and, when all was ready, invited the castellan, Sir Henry de Vaulx, to come out under safe conduct and see the danger



he was in. Sir Henry's laughter faded when he arrived and saw that the tower's foundations were only held up by props. He accepted honourable surrender for all his men, and the tower was then brought down. Sir Henry acknowledged that if the French Jacquerie ('Jack Goodmans') had got the better of the garrison in this way they would never had been treated so generously. Sir Bartholomew's visor has been drawn down to form a throat-defence, and his coat of plates is visible through the lacing of his surcoat. He wears cuisses of small plates rivetted beneath a material covering. The knight on the far left wears an alternative, side-opening, form of the coat of plates.

G: JOUSTS OF PEACE, LATE 14TH CENTURY

By the 14th century jousts had superseded the tourney, or team event, in popularity. There was as yet no barrier, and a man riding a powerful horse might deliberately set it against his opponent, in the hope of riding him down. Quite apart from this there was always the danger of accidental collisions, or knees being damaged from riding past too closely. The lance could be held at less of an angle than it would be when across a barrier, making it less likely to shatter. The development of chivalric ideals was increasingly being demonstrated in the lists, where a queen of love and beauty might be chosen, and ladies' favours were sometimes

Brass of Sir Miles and Lady Stapleton, formerly at Ingham, Norfolk. Sir Miles, who died in 1364, has no surcoat and so reveals the rivets on his coat of plates. The leg defences also appear to be of this form, with additional strips down the lower legs, a form which disappeared in about 1380.



RIGHT A coat of mail, possibly English and probably dating from the 14th-century. It is made from alternate rows of riveted and welded rings, the rings approximately 1.3cm (1/2in.) in external diameter. There is a short vertical slit in the front hem but it opens up full length at the back. (Courtesy of the Museum of London)





worn by knights. Stands were often built for spectators, especially ladies and those of rank.

The main figure in our reconstruction represents Brian Stapleton, a squire who took part in the celebrated jousts at St Inglevert in France in 1389. By this date the first specialised equipment for jousts of peace had appeared. Saddle extensions that curve out over the lower limbs negate the need for leg armour. He wears an early form of external independent breastplate, on which is a staple from which a cord secures the wooden shield by a cord passing through two holes in the centre and fastened in a knot. A protective gauntlet for the left hand and arm, the manifer, was also in use but its exact form is uncertain. The great helm has begun to be adapted for jousting, with the lower edge of the vision slit projecting slightly forward to form an incipient lower lip, forerunner of the later 'frog-mouthed' helm. The helm is strapped down at the back through a loop on the lower edge of the rear of the helm, and some were similarly fastened at the front. A legitimate target, the helm can sometimes be seen in manuscript illustrations hanging from the rear strap when struck by the lance. For additional protection a plate wrapper, or 'barber', is strapped round the lower half of the front of the helm. The lance is now fitted with a coronel head, formed of several prongs to dissipate the force of a blow. Such 'arms of courtesy' were becoming increasingly popular for these jousts of peace, though sharp weapons and war armour was used for jousts of war, often held in border areas such as Scotland, or against foreign opponents such as French or Spanish knights. The hand is protected by a large vamplate, while behind the hand a spiked 'graper' is nailed on. This was designed to ram against a lance rest to prevent it running back through the armpit when contact was made; illustrations of grapers strongly suggest that a primitive rest was already in use, secured to a solid breast defence. His horse wears a shaffron and crinet on head and neck, and peytral to help protect the chest, especially useful in the absence of a barrier.

A window of c.1340 in the choir of Tewkesbury Abbey depicting four armoured men. All wear plate gauntlets, but only the left-hand figure has full vambraces, this figure also possessing complete greaves. Instead of mail at the throat, three have what appears to be a defence in coat of plates style. All have ailettes shown standing up at the back, presumably an artistic style to display them. (Courtauld Institute, Conway Library)

H: KNIGHT AND EQUIPMENT, C.1390

1) Sir Hugh Calveley, based on his effigy at Bunbury, Cheshire, wears a tight padded jupon over his armour. Beneath it, the coat of plates was giving way to separate breast- and back-plates, the former with a skirt hanging from internal leather straps. A full mail coat and padded aketon were usually still worn underneath, but by the next century would be largely discarded in favour of an arming jacket. The sabaton is tied to the shoe by a point through two holes in the plate, and also laced to the hinged greave. The poleyn is attached to a plate cuisse by pivoting rivets, and the cuisse has a tab to tie it to points from the undergarment. Plate vambraces are laced at the shoulder by two points threaded through holes in a leather tab rivetted to the top of the enclosing upper cannon. The helmet has a decorative band around the skull. The visor can be removed by pulling out the pin on each arm near the pivot. From about 1370 some aventails had the vervelles and cord hidden behind a decorative applied strip. The jewelled sword belt probably hung from hidden hooks at the hips, balanced by a rondel dagger. 2) A loose form of jupon. The aventail is covered by a decorative cloth covering. 3) German basinet showing the form of the Klappvisier, with which a few English examples were fitted. It is hinged to a hasp secured over the brow of the helmet. 4) Basinet with aventail. The top edge of the mail was stitched to a leather band cut at intervals with slits. These were forced over staples, called vervelles, set along the edge of the helmet,

the whole secured by a cord passing through the vervelles. Removing the cord allowed the aventail to be taken off for cleaning or repair. From 1375 a few basinet had wedges set above the vervelles, to ward off a blow from above and safeguard the cord from being cut. **5)** Late 14th-century great basinet with plate collar rivetted on. **6)** Breastplate rivetted to a covering, with attached fauld and holes for a lance-rest, based on a German example in Munich. **7)** Independent breastplate, late 14th century. **8)** Cuisse, poleyn, greave and sabaton for right leg, from the boy's armour in Chartres Cathedral. The deep lower plate of the poleyn now articulates with the greave, probably by a turning pin rather than a rivet. **9)** Hour-glass latten gauntlets of the Black Prince. A single plate was shaped to cover the back and sides of the hand, embossed to the shape of the knuckles and base of thumb, and formed a short flared cuff. Overlapping plates (scales) were rivetted to leather strips that were stitched to the glove and also rivetted to the main plate. **10)** Reconstructed tinned rowel spur, Museum of

London, late 14th-century. **11)** Sword from the great Ouse at Ely, c.1370-1400. A letter 'B' is stamped on the tang, and a little inlaid dagger mark on the fuller (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge) **12)** Sword belt, from effigy of Sir Humphrey Littlebury, (1360) at Holbeach, Lincs. **13)** Sword belt with smaller belt now twisted round scabbard, from effigy of Lord Montacute (1389), Salisbury Cathedral. **14)** Hammer. **15)** Mace **16)** Long houppele with side-vents, piked soled parti-coloured hose and hood-turban. **17)** Short houppele, piked soled hose, and hood-turban.

The gauntlets are of gilt latten and fitted with buff leather gloves embroidered with zig-zag patterns, secured by stitching to lining bands. The fingers had scales riveted to a strip of leather stitched in turn to each stall, and spiked joint-plates. Only one gadling, a moulded lion (not shown here), survives from the knuckles. (By courtesy of the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury and the Trustees of the Armouries)



INDEX

- archers 47-9, 51
 Ardes, battle of (1351) 48
 armies, raising 7, 9-15
 armour, items of
 ailettes 4, 10, 12, 15, 20, 21, 62
 aketons 9, 10, 19, 20, 25, 41, 59, 60, A, E
 arm-pieces 18, 25
 aventails 25, 32, 59, 60, 62, A, E, H
 basinets 4, 19, 21, 22, 25-7, 26, 28, 55, 57,
 59, 60, 62-3, A, E, H
 besagews 24, 60, E
 breastplates 22-3, 43, 62, 63, G, H
 cuisses 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 28, 49, 57, 59,
 62, 63, A, G, H
 falchions 4
 gauntlets 4, 8, 9, 19, 19, 24, 25, 56, 60, 62,
 62, 63, 63, E, G, H
 greaves 62, 63, H
 helms 8, 15, 21-2, 21, 48, 50, 58, 59, 60,
 62, A, E, G, H
 jupons 62, H
 kettle hats 8, 22, 59, A
 mail hoods 9, 46, 60
 poleyns 4, 15, 20, 21, 23-4, 25, 28, 57, 59,
 60, 62, A, E, H
 sabatons 23, 25, 59, 60, 62, 63, A, E, H
 schynbalds 21, 23, 59, 60, A, E
 surcoats 22, 60, E
 vambraces 19, 24-5, 62, 62, H
 armour, making 59-60, D
 armour, types
 cuir bouilli 18, 27
 mail 9, 15, 17-19, 25, 27, 46, 51, 59, 60,
 60, 61, 62, A, E, G
 plate 8, 20-5, 21, 23, 24, 25, 28, 49, 59,
 60, 61, 62, 62, A, E, G
 scale 20, 51
 stud and splint 31
 Auberche, battle of (1345) 49
 Auray, battle of (1364) 48

 Bamborough, Sir Richard 46
 Bannockburn, battle of (1314) 47
 Beauchamp, Sir John 48
 Beaumanoir, Richard de 46
 Black Death 4-5
 Black Prince *see* Edward, the Black Prince
 Bodiam Castle 53
 Boroughbridge, battle of (1322) 47
 bucklers 9
 Bures, Sir Robert de 20
 Burghersh, Lord Bartholomew 60-1, F

 Calveley, Sir Hugh 48, 62, H
 cavalry techniques 46-7
 Chaucer, Geoffrey 16, 45
chevauchées 46
 chivalry 43-5
 Combat of the Thirty (1351) 46
 contracts 13-15
 Cormicy, mine at (1359) 60-1, F
 Cornwall, John Plantagenet, Earl of 19
 Crécy, battle of (1346) 4, 16, 47-8
 Creke, Sir John de 25

 distraint 7
 Douglas, Earl of 49, 54
 dress, civilian 31-42, 41, 42, 44, 60, 63, E, H
 du Bois, Sir Robert 24
 Dupplin Muir, battle of (1332) 47

 Edward I 4, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 45
 Edward II 4, 8, 10, 11, 14, 17, 47
 Edward III 12
 campaigns and tactics 16, 47, 51
 Order of the Garter 45
 raising armies 10, 11, 12-13, 14, 15
 reign 4-5, 8-9
 Edward, the Black Prince 4-5, 5, 16, 42, 50,
 54, 60

 feudal summons 9-10
 fighting techniques 46-51
 FitzRalf, Sir William 23, 59, A
 France, campaigns against *see* Hundred
 Years War

 Garter, Order of the 45, 47
 Grandison, Sir Thomas 44
 Gray, Sir Thomas 43
 Guesclin, Bernard du 48

 Halidon Hill, battle of (1333) 47
 Hastings, Sir Hugh 28
 Henry IV 5
 Hereford, Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of
 45-6, 47
 Hilton, Sir Robert 32
 horses 15, 59, C
 horses' equipment
 bridles, bits and harnesses 49, 59, C
 caparisons 8, 30-1, 30, 59, C
 crinets 31, 62, G
 peytrals 8, 31, 59, 62, C, G
 saddles 21, 62, G
 shaffrons 8, 21, 31, 58, 59, 62, C, G
 spurs 26, 59, 60, 63, A, E, H
 household knights 8-9
 Hundred Years War 4-6, 47-9, 50

 Ingham, Sir Oliver d' 27

 John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster 5, 13, 14-15
 Jones, Terry 45
 jousts and tournaments 45-6, 61-2, G

 Kerdiston, Sir William de 31
 Knevynton, Sir Ralph de 43
 knighting ceremony 16-17, 27
 Knollys, Sir Robert 44, 50

 La Roche Derien, battle of (1347) 49
 Lancaster, Earl of 14, 47
 Longthorpe Tower 13
 Loring, Sir Nigel 47
 Loudon Hill, battle of (1307) 47
 Luttrell, Sir Geoffrey 21
 Manny, Sir Walter 43
 Maundeville, Sir Thomas de 45-6

 Mauron, battle of (1352) 48
 Montauban, Guillaume de 46
 Morlaix, battle of (1342) 47
 Mortimer, Roger 4

 Najera, battle of (1367) 51
 Neville's Cross, battle of (1346) 48
 Nogent-sur-Seine, battle of (1359) 48

 Otterburn, battle of (1388) 49, 54

 pages 16
 pay 11-15
 Pembroke, Aymer de Valence, Earl of 14,
 45, 47
 Percy, Henry, Lord 15
Piers Plowman (Langland) 43
 Poitiers, battle of (1356) 48
 practice *see* training and practice

 quintains 17, 59, B

regard 14
restor 15
 Richard II 5, 9, 42, 45
 Robert the Bruce 4, 47
 rutters 50-1

 Saintes, battle of (1351) 48
Scalacronica (Gray) 43
 schiltrons 47
 Scotland, campaigns against 4, 10, 11, 14,
 46-7, 48, 49
 scutage 9-10
 Setvans, Sir William de 15
 shields 27, 41, 54, 59, B
 ship battles 51
 Shurland, Sir Robert 41
 sieges 51
 Spain, campaigns in 5, 43, 51
 squires 7, 16, 59, A, B
 Stafford, Ralph, Lord 15
 standards 54
 Stapledon, Richard 20
 Stapleton, Brian 62, G
 Stapleton, Sir Miles 61

 tournaments *see* jousts and tournaments
 training and practice 16-17, 17, 59, B
 Trumpington, Roger 14-15
 Trumpington, Sir Roger de 10

 Warkworth Castle 52
 weapons
 axes 30, 59, A
 daggers 29, 30, 32, 59, A
 guard chains 32, 43, 51, 60, E
 hammers 30, 63, H
 lances 30, 62, G
 maces 30, 63, H
 scabbards 29, 29
 sword belts 29, 46, 60, 62, 63, E, H
 swords 16, 27-9, 27, 29, 32, 59, 60, 63, A,
 E, H

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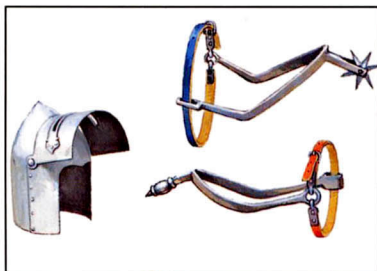
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