Thanks to Shakespeare, Henry V is one of England's best-known monarchs. Or is he? The image of the young king leading his army against the French and his stunning victory at Agincourt are part of English historical tradition. Yet to understand Henry V we need to look at far more than his military prowess. While Henry was indeed a soldier of exceptional skills, his historical reputation as a king deserves to be set against a broader background of achievement, for he was a leader and a diplomat, an administrator, a keeper of the peace and protector of the Church, a man who worked with and for his people. This new study, the first full scholarly biography of Henry V, based on the primary sources of both English and French archives and taking into account a great deal of recent scholarship, shows his reign in the broad European context of his day. It concludes that, through his personality and professional approach, Henry not only united the country in war but also provided England with a sense of pride and the kind of domestic rule it was so in need of at the time. Allmand offers far more than a biography of a king. His book is also a rich work of cultural history, with fascinating material on, for example, royal funerals, the reburial of Richard II in Westminster Abbey, the rise of Lollardy in England, and how one governed in the late Middle Ages.

My Personal Review:
Prof. Allmand's biography of Henry V is the first coherent work on the subject for our generation. It is also the best bio on Henry V in the past 60-70 years. Allmand gives a fairly bare-bones analysis of King Henry V's brilliant but short life, and then expands in later chapters on several themes such as the royal family, law + order, and the like. Allmand's work is scholarly but does not drown the reader in details. Is a good read and moves along in a coherent manner. If you are looking to learn more about the man Shakespeare called "the Mirror of all Christian Kings" Allmand's deft work is a good place to start and a valuable resource.