

LONGBOW VERSUS CROSSBOW

	LONGBOW	CROSSBOW
Popularity	England and Wales	Europe particularly the Genosese
Accuracy	Only at short range. Fired from chest/shoulder and not sighted by eye. Relied on mass attack at longer distance (blotting out the sun with a hailstorm or arrow)	Easier to aim than longbows because the crossbowman doesn't have to use a hand to hold the string back while aiming
Range	A heavy arrow cut through armour with equal efficiency at medium ranges of 150-300 metres. Each archer would have carried a few selected light arrows for shooting at extreme ranges and could probably have reached 500 metres with these. Archer tired during long spells of shooting.	Most powerful crossbows could penetrate armour and kill at 200 metres. However, his volume of fire was not as limited by fatigue as with longbow.
Firing rate	10-12 per minute. Behind palisade of stakes, safe from cavalry attack.	3 per minute. In open field vulnerable to attack from cavalry
Reliability and maintenance	Bow strings frayed, but easily replaced. Often kept in cover when not used. Spare strings kept. Bow and strings protected with wax and oil.	Mechanism prone to jamming. Not easily repaired. Rusted in damp conditions.
Archers	Trained professionals. Trained from early age and therefore difficult to replace. Became expensive to employ. Required enormous upper body strength.	Easier to train in use. Anybody could be trained.
Readiness	Could not be pre loaded, string had to be pulled back. Bow string detached when not in use.	Can be loaded long before the Bowman might need to fire. In this way, the Bowman would be able to fire immediately if surprised.
Cost	Relatively cheap	Expensive.
Effects on Archer	Skeletal deformations caused by the stresses of archery: the bones of his left forearm showed compression thickening, his upper backbone was twisted radially, and the tips of the first three fingers of his right hand were markedly thickened.	None apparent.
Misc	Of little use to enemy if it fell into their hands	Could be used by enemy
Weight	Lightweight and easy to carry	Heavy.

