

= Henry of Grosmont , 1st Duke of Lancaster =

Henry of Grosmont , 1st Duke of Lancaster , 4th Earl of Leicester and Lancaster , KG (c . 1310 ? 23 March 1361) , also Earl of Derby , was a member of the English nobility in the 14th century , and a prominent English diplomat , politician , and soldier . The son and heir of Henry , 3rd Earl of Lancaster , and Maud Chaworth , he became one of Edward III 's most trusted captains in the early phases of the Hundred Years ' War and distinguished himself with victory in the Battle of Auberöche . He was a founding member and the second Knight of the Order of the Garter in 1348 , and in 1351 was created duke . Grosmont was also the author of the book *Livre de seyntz medicines* , a highly personal devotional treatise . He is remembered as one of the founders and early patrons of Corpus Christi College , Cambridge , which was established by two of the guilds of the town in 1352 .

= = Family background and early life = =

Grosmont 's uncle , Thomas of Lancaster , was the son and heir of Edward I 's brother Edmund Crouchback . Through his inheritance and a fortunate marriage , Thomas became the wealthiest peer in England , but constant quarrels with King Edward II led to his execution in 1322 . Having no heir , Thomas 's possessions and titles went to his younger brother Henry ? Grosmont 's father . Earl Henry of Lancaster assented to the deposition of Edward II in 1327 , but did not long stay in favour with the regency of Queen Isabella and Roger Mortimer . When Edward III took personal control of the government in 1330 , relations with the Crown improved , but by this time the older Henry was already struggling with poor health and blindness .

Little is known of Grosmont 's early years , but that he was born at Grosmont Castle in Grosmont , Monmouthshire , Wales , and that he was born c . 1310 , not around the turn of the century as previously held . According to his own memoirs , he was better at martial arts than at academic subjects , and did not learn to read until later in life . In 1330 he was knighted , and represented his father in parliament . The next year he is recorded as participating in a royal tournament at Cheapside .

In 1333 he took part in Edward 's Scottish campaign , though it is unclear whether he was present at the great English victory at the Battle of Halidon Hill . After further service in the north , he was appointed the King 's lieutenant in Scotland in 1336 . The next year he was one of the six men Edward III promoted to the higher levels of the peerage . One of his father 's lesser titles , that of Earl of Derby , was bestowed upon Grosmont .

= = Service in France = =

With the outbreak of the Hundred Years ' War in 1337 , Grosmont 's attention was turned towards France . He took part in several diplomatic missions and minor campaigns and was present at the great English victory in the naval Battle of Sluys in 1340 . Later the same year , he was required to commit himself as hostage in the Low Countries for the king 's considerable debts . He remained hostage until the next year and had to pay a large ransom for his own release . On his return he was made the king 's lieutenant in the north and stayed at Roxburgh until 1342 . The next years he spent in diplomatic negotiations in the Low Countries , Castile and Avignon .

In 1345 Edward III was planning a major assault on France . A three @-@ pronged attack would have the Earl of Northampton attacking from Brittany , the king himself from Flanders , while Grosmont was dispatched to Aquitaine to prepare a campaign in the south . Moving rapidly through the country , he confronted the Comte d ? Isle at Auberöche on 21 October and there achieved a victory described as " the greatest single achievement of Lancaster 's entire military career " . The ransom from the prisoners has been estimated at £ 50 @ , @ 000 . The next year , while Edward was carrying out his Crécy campaign , Grosmont laid siege to , and captured , Poitiers , before returning home to England in 1347 .

= = Duke of Lancaster = =

In 1345 , while Grosmont was in France , his father died . The younger Henry was now Earl of Lancaster ? the wealthiest and most powerful peer of the realm . After participating in the Siege of Calais in 1347 , the king honoured Lancaster by including him as a founding knight of the Order of the Garter in 1348 . A few years later , in 1351 , Edward bestowed an even greater honour on Lancaster when he created him Duke of Lancaster . The title of duke was of relatively new origin in England ; only one other ducal title existed previously .

In addition to this , Lancaster was given palatinate status for the county of Lancashire , which entailed a separate administration independent of the crown . This grant was quite exceptional in English history ; only two other counties palatine existed : Durham , which was an ancient ecclesiastical palatinate , and Chester , which was crown property .

It is a sign of Edward 's high regard for Lancaster that he would bestow such extensive privileges on him . The two men were second cousins through their great @-@ grandfather Henry III and practically coeval (Edward was born in 1312) , so it is natural to assume that a strong sense of camaraderie existed between them . Another factor that might have influenced the king 's decision was the fact that Henry had no male heir , so the grant was made for the Earl 's lifetime only , and not intended to be hereditary .

= = = Further prestige = = =

Lancaster spent the 1350s intermittently campaigning and negotiating peace treaties with the French . In 1350 he was present at the naval victory at Winchelsea , where he allegedly saved the lives of the Black Prince and John of Gaunt . The years 1351 @-@ 2 he spent on crusade in Prussia . It was here that a quarrel with Otto , Duke of Brunswick , almost led to a duel between the two men , narrowly averted by the intervention of the French king , John II . In the later half of the decade campaigning in France resumed . After a chevauchée in Normandy in 1356 and the siege of Rennes in 1358 , Lancaster participated in the last great offensive of the first phase of the Hundred Years ' War : the Rheims campaign of 1359 @-@ 60 . Then he was appointed principal negotiator for the Treaty of Brétigny , where the English achieved very favourable terms .

After returning to England in November 1360 , he fell ill early the next year , and died at Leicester Castle on 23 March . It is likely that the cause of death was the plague , which that year was making a second visitation of England . He was buried in the Church of the Annunciation of Our Lady of the Newarke , Leicester , the church which he had built within the religious and charitable institution founded by his father next to Leicester Castle , and where he had re @-@ buried his father some years previously .

= = Private life = =

Lancaster was married to Isabella , daughter of Henry , Lord Beaumont , in 1330 . The two had no sons , but two daughters : Maud and Blanche . While Maud was married to William I , Duke of Bavaria , Blanche married Edward III 's son John of Gaunt . Gaunt ended up inheriting Lancaster 's possessions and ducal title , but it was not until 1377 , when the dying King Edward III was largely incapacitated , that he was able to restore the palatinate rights for the county of Lancaster . When Gaunt 's son Henry of Bolingbroke usurped the crown in 1399 and became Henry IV , the vast Lancaster inheritance , including the Lordship of Bowland , was merged with the crown as the Duchy of Lancaster .

We know more about Lancaster 's character than of most of his contemporaries through his memoirs , the *Livre de seyntz medicines* (Book of the Holy Doctors) . This book is a highly personal treatise on matters of religion and piety , but it also contains details of historical interest . It , among other things , revealed that Lancaster , at the age of 44 when he wrote the book in 1354 , suffered from gout . The book is primarily a devotional work though ; it is organized around seven wounds which Henry claims to have , representing the seven sins . Lancaster confesses to his sins , explains various real and mythical medical remedies in terms of their theological symbolism , and

exhorts the reader to greater morality .

= = Ancestors = =