



John of Gaunt - A Short Biography

Edward Maunde Thompson

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A short biography of John of Gaunt, 1st Duke of Lancaster, KG (1340 – 1399) was a member of the House of Plantagenet, the third surviving son of King Edward III of England and Philippa of Hainault. He was called "John of Gaunt" because he was born in Ghent, then rendered in English as Gaunt. When he became unpopular later in life, scurrilous rumours and lampoons circulated that he was actually the son of a Ghent butcher, perhaps because Edward III was not present at the birth. This story always drove him to fury. As a younger brother of Edward, Prince of Wales (Edward, the Black Prince), John exercised great influence over the English throne during the minority of his nephew, Richard II, and during the ensuing periods of political strife, but was not thought to have been among the opponents of the king.

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