

## ABSTRACT

The Military and Administrative Leadership of the Black Prince

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Edward of Woodstock, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine (1330-1376), has been analyzed on many different levels for his military genius in battle during the Hundred Years War. Known as the Black Prince, Edward had an effective ruthlessness in battle that has made his military career and his chivalrous nature a subject of interest to historians. However, Edward was more than a military leader; he was a ruler. Becoming Prince of Aquitaine in 1362 after the Peace of Brétigny, Edward had to face a new role many have overlooked in his rather short lifetime: governor and leader of a foreign people. This role tends to be overlooked among the historical community, due in large part to the lack of primary documents. Regardless, this role was an important aspect of the prince's life for it proved that the Black Prince had both successes and failures throughout his lifetime.

The Military and Administrative Leadership of Edward, the Black Prince

by

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A Thesis

Approved by the Department of History

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

Edward of Woodstock, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine (1330-1376), has been analyzed on many different levels for his military genius in battle during the Hundred Years War. Known as the Black Prince, Edward had an effective ruthlessness in battle that has made his military career a subject of interest to historians. However, Edward was more than a military leader; he was a ruler. The prince spent many years in England as *custos Angliae* (the “protector of England”) while his father was at war, giving him an early exposure to government. It would seem to make sense that the prince would equally flourish in government as he did in the military. Becoming Prince of Aquitaine in 1362 after the Peace of Brétigny, Edward had to face a new role many have overlooked in his rather short lifetime: governor and leader of a foreign people. How well did he perform this role? How did his outstanding military career compare to his performance as Prince of Aquitaine? Would this have prepared him for the kingship of England had he survived his father, Edward III (r. 1327-1377)? What were his strengths and his weaknesses as a political leader? Did the fact that the principality was in France have any effect on the way Edward governed Aquitaine? These are some of the questions that bear further examination. The focus of historians has been so concentrated on the military persona of the Black Prince that one forgets Edward was also Prince of Wales and Aquitaine.

Much consideration has been placed on the military campaigns of the Black Prince, from the 1346 campaign that led to the battle at Crécy, where the prince began to show his military prowess, to the siege of Limoges in 1370, where a decline in the prince's health affected his overall military and ruling capabilities. Thrown into war at a fairly young age (he was knighted at sixteen), the Prince had known little but war. He was competent and successful, proving himself time and again as an excellent military strategist and leader. It is no wonder the historical community has concentrated its studies on the military career of the Black Prince. Not only is this the most fascinating aspect of his life, but most primary sources in existence concerning Edward focus on his military campaigns. While the few letters and remaining accounts extant today concerning the Black Prince usually consist of military matters, or possibly French propaganda, they speak very little to the prince's character as a ruler. Though the abundance of primary material on Edward's military persona may explain the historical focus on his military genius, it does not justify the lack of discussion of his performance as Prince of Aquitaine.

The best known primary source on the Black Prince is Jean Froissart's *Chronicles*. Froissart's *Chronicles* cover the Hundred Years War from its inception, with Edward III's claim to the French throne, to the deposition of Richard II (r.1377-1399) and the reign of Henry IV (r. 1399-1413). Froissart mainly focuses on the military exploits of the prince and does not dwell on the governing of Aquitaine; however, it is still a valuable source, especially since Froissart spent a long period at the court of Gaston Phoebus, the count of Foix. It not only explains the military strategies that made the prince's expeditions effective, it also reflects the feelings of the English people

concerning the prince. Clearly the prince was greatly admired, as the son of the English king and as a soldier. This was a century devoted to chivalry and warfare, which makes the focus on the military life of the Black Prince unsurprising. However, it was also what made the prince's reputation, and as a chronicler, Froissart would seek to portray him in the best light, rather than criticizing him for his failures. Froissart may be biased in his veneration of the Black Prince, but he is a valuable resource as a contemporary chronicler of the Black Prince's life.

The *Life and Campaigns of the Black Prince* is a modern collection of campaign letters written during the Crécy campaign of 1346 and the 1355-1356 military campaign, and includes excerpts from two chronicles devoted to the military campaigns of the Black Prince. These chronicles, written by Geoffrey le Baker and Chandos Herald, provide very different but very flattering accounts of the Black Prince's military exploits.

Geoffrey le Baker's chronicle, covering the Crécy campaign as well as the 1355-1356 campaign (including the battle of Poitiers), is a contemporary of Edward's. Though his account of the 1346 campaign is not as satisfactory as his description of the 1355 campaign (as it was written later, between 1357 and 1360), and especially his portrayal of the Battle of Poitiers, his account provides more accurate details of the battle at Crécy than any other account. However, it is his description of Poitiers that seems to be more trustworthy, for it was written within a few years of the battle. Though he does take poetic license concerning the battle itself, he also provides a detailed account of the campaign, drawing his information most likely from a campaign diary. This makes le Baker's account the most reliable source for the 1355 campaign.

Chandos Herald's account, however, provides a different (though no less flattering) description of the Black Prince, for he was the herald of Sir John Chandos, one of the prince's closest companions. Though this poem may not be very reliable as an historical account, as it is very vague on the details of the battles of Crécy and Poitiers, it shows how the people saw the prince not long after his death when the poem was composed between 1376 and 1387. The prince emerged as a romantic and heroic figure able to cause the river to run "crimson, to everyone's amazement, with the blood of dead men and horses" at the battle of Najera. On the other hand, Chandos Herald does cover some of the prince's life in Aquitaine, including his response to Charles V upon being summoned to France in 1369. Though the author still portrays the prince as capable of handling his administrative affairs, it is clear where his devotion lies, for the prince is said to have responded with a threat to march on Paris despite his physical incapacitation from the illness contracted after the Spanish campaign. England mourned the loss of what they believed was a prosperous future, especially when faced with the disastrous reign of the prince's son, Richard II. This poem was a subtle lament for the people, to mourn the passing of a valiant figure.

Primary sources for the Prince of Aquitaine do exist, but these are more difficult to obtain. For instance, the register rolls of the Black Prince give an account of the expenditures the Prince made in Aquitaine, which in turn might show the revenue of the principality. There were also grievances addressed to the King of France, Charles V, by the people of Aquitaine who in turn would have documentation of these grievances. Unfortunately, many other sources have been lost and little is known about the full extent of the hostility felt towards the prince. The French were very embittered towards the



English, especially after the Peace of Brétigny, and some members of the nobility of Aquitaine would find it particularly difficult to live under the rule of English royalty after supporting the French king.

While these problems may explain why very little has been written about Edward's political role, there is enough evidence to analyze the prince's role in Aquitaine. If this is so, why has the focus been on the military role of Edward? Another explanation might be that Edward was hardly in Aquitaine when he was prince. From the time Edward acquired the principality in 1362, he had spent a total of four years there before going off on another campaign in Spain (1366). Though he would come back every now and again, Edward spent little time in Aquitaine and left the governing to his council of advisors. Eventually he surrendered the principality to Edward III in 1372. Perhaps because Edward spent so little time in Aquitaine, his political role may have been overlooked as insignificant compared to his military role. Nevertheless, his role as Prince of Aquitaine would prove to be his most important, because it showed him as unsuited to succeeding his father as king, as so many had believed he was capable of doing. That is why this role of the Black Prince should not be forgotten, but instead be magnified.

Two men in particular have written well researched biographies on the Black Prince, and could be considered as the authorities on the man. They sought to go beyond the chivalric image to find out who the Black Prince had truly been. However, they were unable to keep out of the trap of focusing on his military career rather than his administration.

Richard Barber tends to believe that the prince's administration, particularly in his earlier years, was of little importance and therefore did not have to be covered to a large extent. On the other hand, David Green attempts a more thorough study of the prince's entire experience as an administrator, particularly in his most recent biography, but he still tends to be more general in his descriptions of the administration, preferring to refer to what was generally happening around the prince rather than the prince himself.

Richard Barber, a medieval historian and Arthurian specialist, has written extensively on the life of Edward. He has written one biography on the Black Prince and compiled a collection of some primary sources on Edward. In the preface of *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine: A Biography of the Black Prince*, Barber states that writing a biography of the Black Prince,

without turning first to the chronicler of chivalry . . . Jean Froissart, may seem self-defeating, particularly as there is so little light to be shed on the prince's character from other sources. . . . I have therefore tried to work outwards from accounts and 'official' chronicles . . . .

He also believes that to catch the true character of the Black Prince, "a great baron and . . . an almost sovereign ruler in Aquitaine." However, instead of focusing on the political leadership of the Black Prince, Barber goes into great detail about his military campaigns, describing the strategies and techniques used by the prince and his men-at-arms. Barber spends very little time on the principality of Aquitaine and the governing of it. However, the research on the Aquitanian government is extensive and covers the various ways the principality was governed (mainly through councilors and advisors), the extremely high tax imposed on the French people, and the reaction of the French upon Edward's takeover. Barber is not unreliable as a source, but it seems he did not accomplish the

goals he set for himself at the beginning of his biography. This demonstrates that it is difficult to separate Edward, Prince of Aquitaine, from the Black Prince.

David Green, a Lecturer in medieval history at Harlaxton College, is another author on the Black Prince, who has done extensive research on the man and the myth, producing two biographies and numerous articles. Unlike Richard Barber, Green places his focus on the political role the prince played as ruler of Aquitaine. In “Politics and Service with Edward the Black Prince,” Green shows the equal importance of both roles Edward played during the Hundred Years War, and provides ample primary sources to support his argument. He also clearly understands the time period and the prince’s part in it when he states: “The Black Prince was not a political animal. The war, however, was political and the prince’s life was played out against it as a changing but constant backdrop.” Green is determined to point out that the prince’s life had to have been political. This is especially seen in his most recent biography, *Edward, the Black Prince: Power in Medieval Europe*, published in 2007. Rather than write the typical biography, Green instead draws from different aspects of the prince’s life, such as war, plague, religion, household, chivalry, and government. This gives clearer insight into the administrative life of the Black Prince, not only in Aquitaine, but in his holdings in Cornwall, Chester, and Wales. It also deals with the prince’s interaction with Parliament, which, though small, should be considered important, as he was the son of Edward III, who helped develop Parliament’s role in the English government. However, Green faces the same problem as Richard Barber and others who have attempted to write about the Black Prince: the lack of administrative sources.

The lack of primary sources focused specifically on the Black Prince's administration, especially his very early years as *custos Angliae*, has proven to be a consistent problem for historians, who instead choose to analyze his military career. This may have been an integral part of the prince's life, and though it must not be ignored, it must also not be the only focal point of the prince's life. Despite the fact that much is being done to scrutinize the prince as a chivalrous figure, there still needs to be an in-depth analysis concerning the Black Prince's administration in England and France. This man was supposed to have been the successor to Edward III and as such, his administrative failures need to be looked into. The sources that do exist, though they are few in number, can shed light on the breakdown of the prince's administration. More importantly, why the prince failed needs to be looked at, for he had an ample education in politics and trustworthy officials to guide him, both as a child and as an adult. This thesis will seek to provide a thorough account of the Black Prince's administration, as well as discover his weaknesses and strengths, and in the long run, show the reasons why the prince was doomed for failure the moment he arrived in the principality of Aquitaine in 1362.

## CHAPTER TWO

### The Prince's Introduction to Politics

The Black Prince's role in politics has largely been ignored in favor of his martial career. Many of the prince's contemporaries preferred to focus on his chivalrous military nature, rather than his performance as prince of Aquitaine or his brief tenure as *custos Angliae*, limiting the available number of primary sources. More than was the case with his father, the prince had been raised in a time of warfare, with conflicts raging in France and Scotland. The art of war exercised a great influence upon his life, to the point where it overshadowed other aspects of his preparation as heir to the throne. However, rather than ignore the prince's involvement in government, it must be examined in order to determine why the prince did not achieve the same success in politics as he gained on his military campaigns.

Edward of Woodstock, prince of Wales and Aquitaine, duke of Cornwall, earl of Chester, was born on 15 June 1330 during a time of political turmoil. His father, Edward III, was only seventeen years old and in the control of his mother Isabella and her lover Roger Mortimer, the earl of March. Having been made king on 24 January 1327 after the forced abdication of his father, Edward II, the young king's every move had been watched, most particularly by Mortimer. While campaigning in Scotland in 1327, Edward III was frustrated to hear that the two regents had negotiated a peace treaty with the Scots, popularly known as the "Shameful Peace," without first notifying the king. This settlement recognized Robert Bruce's right to the Scottish throne; gave Edward's sister in marriage to Bruce's son, David; and recognized the Franco-Scottish alliance

which would cause trouble for England during its war with France. Though this obvious usurpation of power frustrated the king, it was not until he received news of his son's birth that the king most likely decided it was time to assert his independence from Mortimer and Isabella. The reason for this could be that the king was in fear of his life, for Mortimer had orchestrated the execution of the earl of Kent, Edward III's uncle, and the probable murder of Edward II. It would not have been surprising, therefore, if Mortimer was plotting to get rid of the new king and place himself on the throne.<sup>1</sup> The king would need to rid himself of Mortimer not only for his own preservation but for his son's as well.

Mortimer, increasingly suspicious of Edward III, interrogated him and his associates in front of a council at Nottingham Castle on 19 October 1330. A group of Edward's trusted friends, including William Clinton (the future earl of Huntingdon), Edward Bohun, and William Montagu were given access to the castle on the same night by William Eland (a man Montagu had found on the inside); the party then snuck into the castle through a series of underground tunnels.<sup>2</sup> The king awaited his comrades inside the castle, most likely under the close supervision of Mortimer's allies. It was important for the conspirators that the king be present at the coup, for it would appear that he was involved in asserting his rights as king, yet at the same time it was imperative that he not be injured during any skirmish, for it was a vulnerable moment in the king's reign, as he was not yet out of his minority.<sup>3</sup> They seized "gentle Mortimer" and Isabella, as well as

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<sup>1</sup>Caroline Shenton, "Edward III and the Coup of 1330," *The Age of Edward III*, J.S. Bothwell, ed. (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2001), 15.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 16.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 17.

Mortimer's advisers Simon Bereford and Oliver Ingham, and Henry Burghersh, bishop of Lincoln, who had reportedly tried to escape down a privy.<sup>4</sup> On 26 November 1330 Mortimer was tried for treason in London by Parliament and was executed, having received the punishment of a traitor by being hanged, drawn and quartered. Isabella, who had to give up her power as an unofficial regent, was allowed to retire to Castle Rising until her death in 1358. However, she remained close to Edward after the coup, despite her actions during his minority. Once out of Mortimer's shadow, the king would be able to focus on himself and his government.

Two main developments during Edward's early reign became synonymous with the king: the war with Scotland and the growth of Parliament's role in English government. Parliament had begun in the context of the Magna Carta, and its influence continued to grow throughout the thirteenth century and into the fourteenth. It reached a level of prominence never before seen when it voted to depose Edward II, the first time this had ever occurred. However, there are questions surrounding Edward II's deposition and abdication. One particular quandary that has been debated by historians concerns the legality of the Parliament in question. This particular Parliament had been held without the presence of the king, which made it illegitimate.<sup>5</sup> As the Parliament did not have as much power as it does now, the absence of the king, who still held power over the Parliament, would call its actions into question. However, because the king eventually abdicated, this question became moot. Yet another difficulty posed by this Parliament is the lack of Parliamentary rolls covering the deposition. To some historians, this is

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 16-17.

<sup>5</sup>Claire Valente, "The Deposition and Abdication of Edward II," *English Historical Review*, vol. 113, no. 453 (September 1998): 862.

evidence that the assembly in charge of the deposition was not an actual Parliament.<sup>6</sup> However, Claire Valente argues that the lack of a Parliament roll does not necessarily mean the assembly was not considered a Parliament; there are very few remaining proceeding rolls for Edward II's Parliaments, and some have no rolls at all.<sup>7</sup> Despite the questions concerning the legitimacy of the Parliament, it is clear that Mortimer and Isabella had wished to stress the king's abdication in favor of his son, in order to secure Edward III's ascension to the throne. It became clear to Edward III that he would have to work with this body of government in order to keep the throne, even though, according to Valente, this Parliament was one "which upset the accepted order of things, threatened the sacrosanctity of kingship, and lacked clear or established process."<sup>8</sup> His willingness to ask Parliament's advice and listen to what it had to say was a very important and valuable characteristic in a king. By seeking their advice, it would become easier for the king to get Parliament's support, particularly for his wars in Scotland and France. The only thing Edward III stressed was that, in the end, any decision would be the king's and not Parliament's. By doing so, the king asserted his rights over Parliament and therefore kept it somewhat in check. Prince Edward would have been well aware of his father's cooperation with Parliament, and would have been educated in the belief that he would one day do the same. Yet, the prince, unlike his father, would prove to be too reliant on his own officials and would separate himself from the main responsibilities of a monarch, which would contribute to his downfall in Aquitaine.

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 862-863.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 863.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, 852.



Scotland had been a thorn in the side of the Plantagenet family for many years. Edward I was acknowledged as the “Hammer of the Scots,” yet his son Edward II was known for his very unsuccessful attempts to bring the Scots down, such as the failure at Bannockburn. Edward III wished to prove himself as a military king, and the Scots provided a convenient target. Edward III had made an attempt to subdue the Scots in 1327 at the age of fourteen, but due to a lack of sufficient resources and the interference of his “guardians” was unable to complete his mission. Once free of Mortimer and Isabella, Edward began earnestly campaigning in Scotland in 1332. Though Edward was not at the battle of Dupplin Moor in 1332, which was to place Edward Balliol on the Scottish throne, the value of English archers became apparent with the slaughter of the Scottish forces, which vastly outnumbered the English; it was also the first instance in which English men-at arms fought on foot rather than on horseback. The success of this tactic, perhaps discovered by accident, was used again at Halidon Hill in 1333, which was to place Edward Balliol back on the Scottish throne, and proved once again successful for the English. Edward would develop these military tactics in Scotland, but would perfect them in France. Though the king never completely conquered the Scots, he showed himself to be more than capable of following in his grandfather’s footsteps, particularly in martial terms.

In part because of his father’s youth and vulnerability, the prince would be a focal point of royal diplomacy by his first birthday. In July 1331, envoys had been named to negotiate a marriage alliance between the prince and the daughter of Philip VI, king of France.<sup>9</sup> The negotiations seemed to be going well; plans had been made for the French

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<sup>9</sup>*Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1330-1334*, p. 157.

and English king to go on crusade together in November, and by April 1332, Princess Joan had been named as a prospective bride for the prince. Unfortunately, the union never came to pass.<sup>10</sup> This type of alliance was not unusual for the children of a monarch. Edward III was most likely trying to tie his son to the French throne, perhaps to retain the lands once held by the previous English kings, or possibly to gain new territory in addition to these lands. This type of negotiation would be a common occurrence for the young prince, as Edward III would take every opportunity to forge a marriage alliance with those whom he believed would assist his ambitions in France. This policy was also applied to all of the king's children, as well as family members, such as Edward III's brother, John of Eltham, earl of Cornwall. Once the war with France began, Edward tended to believe that the more children in his family, the more alliances he could make.

The prince formally became earl of Chester (a traditional title of the king's son since 1254) on 18 March 1333, though his officers had been receiving all the revenue from Chester by 1331 and letters bearing his name included the title.<sup>11</sup> The prince's household affairs were controlled by the queen, who needed the revenues for the maintenance of the infant prince. Before receiving the title, the prince's steward of the wardrobe was in charge of the revenues from 16 September 1330 to 25 February 1331, during which the prince was given 500 marks (about half the revenue of Chester) for

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<sup>10</sup>Richard Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1996), 17-18.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 17, 19; *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1330-1334*, p. 78. "Grant to queen Philippa, for the support of Edward, earl of Chester, the king's son, and Eleanor, the king's sister, of the issues of the county of Chester from the time of the arrest of Roger de Mortuo Mari, earl of March, by the hands of the chamberlain of Chester for the time being, until the king order otherwise." 25 February 1331.

living expenses; after the prince is made earl, the revenue was granted to the queen.<sup>12</sup>

Cheshire's revenue base was mainly agricultural, including corn, and various livestock.<sup>13</sup>

Though only three at the time, the prince's household in Chester in 1333 included a steward (William St. Omer), a treasurer (John Burnham), his own almoner, and a tailor (William Stratton), all of whom looked after the prince's well-being.<sup>14</sup> However, William St. Omer and his wife, Elizabeth, were probably the most important people in the prince's life at this time, as the couple was placed in charge of the prince's welfare.

It was somewhat unusual for the prince at such a young age to be named earl of Chester. Only his father had held the title while in infancy. Edward III was twelve days old when he received the earldom of Chester, though his predecessors had received the title in their teens.<sup>15</sup> The reason for this may be the desire to integrate the heir into the forum of politics as quickly as possible. The prince's administration would have the responsibility for the administration of justice, the collection of rents, and the raising of troops and supplies in time of war, the last of which became Cheshire's largest export.<sup>16</sup>

On 9 February 1337, the prince was named duke of Cornwall, the first time this title had been used among the English aristocracy. The king's brother, John of Eltham, had been earl of Cornwall before he had suddenly died in September 1336 without an heir. Though the loss of his brother devastated the king, the acquisition of Cornwall

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<sup>12</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 16.

<sup>13</sup>*Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1330-1334*, p. 419; The importance of Chester, at least during the prince's time, would derive from the steady supply of soldiers for the king, and later on, the prince.

<sup>14</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 17.

<sup>15</sup>Ian Mortimer, *The Perfect King: The Life of Edward III, Father of the English Nation* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2006), 23.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*

provided a welcome addition to the royal coffers. Believing the title of earl was not adequate for the prince, especially as the king would be leaving his eldest son as the royal figurehead while he was in France, the king created the title of duke for him. This would be politically important, as the prince now held a title that no one in England had ever had bestowed upon them; eventually, Henry of Lancaster would receive the title of duke in 1351. It is possible Edward III bestowed this title upon his eldest son in order to associate the prince with the French aristocracy. The English king was claiming his right to the French throne, and quite possibly wished to link his family to the French aristocracy by bestowing the highest noble rank in France to his eldest son.

The economy of Cornwall centered on the production of tin in stannary towns throughout the duchy.<sup>17</sup> Tin had been an integral part of Cornwall's economy for centuries. It was believed that Saint Piran, the patron saint of tin-workers, had discovered white tin in burning coals in Cornwall in the sixth century. However, the process of smelting tin had been a tradition in Cornwall even before the arrival of the Romans. Though this made the duchy very wealthy, it was often a difficult area to exploit financially for Edward, especially as the stannaries were frequent targets for theft. For instance, in 1344, the prince made complaint against several men concerning the theft of tin valuing approximately £1,000.<sup>18</sup> Edward tried to control the revenue tin produced in Cornwall; in 1347, he used Cornwall's tin to raise funds, either for himself or the war effort, by selling the tin to Flanders.<sup>19</sup> This trade system would cause the prince problems after the devastation of the plague, for the desperation of the people would

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<sup>17</sup>David Green, *The Black Prince* (Gloucesterchire: Tempus Publishing, Ltd., 2001), 24.

<sup>18</sup>*Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1343-1345*, p. 401.

<sup>19</sup>*Black Prince's Register*, vol. I, 92.

compel them to act dishonestly. Unfortunately for the prince he was unable, or more than likely unwilling, to deal with these problems and often left them in the charge of his officials.

Childhood in medieval times was divided into three parts; *infancia* (the ages between birth and seven years), *puercia* (seven years to fourteen years of age), and *adolescencia* (fourteen years to approximately twenty one or twenty four years of age).<sup>20</sup> During the age of *infancia*, most aristocratic children were left in the charge of women until they turned seven years old. Edward and his sister Joan were left in the charge of their mother and Elizabeth St. Omer, who had the task of supervising the children's nurse and the rest of the prince's servants (the royal family, except for the king, was living in Chester from 1331 to 1337), providing the nursery with food and clothing, as well as educating the children in speech and good manners.<sup>21</sup> It is interesting to note that while men were considered to be the educators, it was a woman who started Edward's education. However, once the prince reached the age of seven, he would be placed under the care of some of the king's most trusted officials, who would educate him in various subjects.

The education of the prince was an important role for a nobleman. Edward's tutor would be responsible for molding the mind of the future king, a role not to be taken lightly. Specifics regarding the education of Edward are limited, and the person who handled the prince's education is unclear. It is possible Walter Burley was appointed to this role. A close friend of Richard Bury, the former tutor to the king and the almoner for

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<sup>20</sup>Nicholas Orme, *Education and Society of Medieval and Renaissance England* (London and Ronceverte: The Hambledon Press, 1989), 159.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

Queen Philippa, Walter Burley was also a philosopher and avid proponent of Aristotle's teachings. His association with Richard Bury, whom Edward III cared about and admired, makes Burley a good choice as the young Edward's tutor. However, Burley was approximately sixty years of age in 1337 and would die around 1344. There is also no evidence to support Burley's role as the prince's tutor, though he seems to be the most likely candidate.

Because little is known about the prince's tutor, it can only be surmised as to the subjects in which the prince was educated. Grammar would have been an important subject for the heir to learn, and during this time period children of the nobility would have been taught the formations and meanings of Latin words and eventually how to use these words in speech, prose, writing, and verse.<sup>22</sup> They also received a religious education, learning the Paternoster, the Ave Maria, and the Apostle's Creed, as well as religious stories and texts, though this would not necessarily ensure devoutness later on in life. Despite the tension between the English king and the pope, religion was still an important factor in education and daily life. As the prince may not have been very interested in education, judging from his later life, it is difficult to address exactly what the prince might have received in his education.

Edward was also taught by Nicholas de la Beche (who would later be governor of the prince's affairs while the prince was abroad in 1346),<sup>23</sup> and Bartholomew Burghersh (who held the title of master to the prince's household by 1340), two trusted officials in the king's council, who would have focused more on the prince's courtly life, such as dress, behavior, and other courtly matters, as well as his military training. They might

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 171.

<sup>23</sup>*Black Prince's Register*, vol. I, 103.

also have stressed the importance of personal hygiene, another subject addressed to the children of the nobility. This education might include how to keep oneself clean, how to avoid habits considered unpleasant by others, when and how to speak in public, and the etiquette of waiting at the table.<sup>24</sup> Edward III had not been an avid student, but it seems that an education was greatly valued by the king, which he attempted to stress to his son.<sup>25</sup>

Once the king decided to begin his fight for the French crown, he named his son as *custos Angliae* or “keeper of England”; this made him ruler of England, though in name only. The prince held this title from 1338 to 1340, and again from 1342 to 1343. His council consisted of many of the king’s most trusted advisors who handled the affairs of government, though all government acts were witnessed in the prince’s name. Some of the men in the prince’s council included Ralph Neville, Richard Fitzalan, earl of Arundel, Henry of Grosmont, earl of Lancaster, William Clinton, earl of Huntingdon, and John Stratford, archbishop of Canterbury, who was the principle councilor of the prince’s regency council.<sup>26</sup> Many of these men owed their position to Edward III, who sought to reward them for the support given to him in his early years of independent rule.

Richard Fitzalan, third earl of Arundel, had served the king as a war captain during the war with Scotland in 1333, 1335, 1336, and 1338. His title had been restored by Edward III after the execution of Mortimer, who had taken Arundel’s lands and had

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<sup>24</sup>Orme, *Education and Society*, 172. Edward would famously attend the table of Jean II of France following his capture at the battle of Poitiers.

<sup>25</sup>Mortimer, *The Perfect King*, 289-290

<sup>26</sup>Green, *The Black Prince*, 23.

his father executed.<sup>27</sup> William Clinton had been a supporter of Edward III and assisted in the *coup* against Isabella and Mortimer. He was a close personal friend to the king and was given the title of earl of Huntingdon in 1337 as a reward for his services to the king and also as part of Edward III's efforts to regenerate the English nobility, decimated in the civil unrest between 1322 and 1330. He had been scheduled for a campaign into Gascony in 1338, but when this was cancelled, he became a member of the regency council to the Black Prince.<sup>28</sup> Henry of Grosmont, earl of Lancaster, who soon earned a name for himself as a close friend of Edward III and a capable military leader, served the king in Scotland 1333-1335, and was named the king's lieutenant of Scotland in 1336. In 1340, he would be appointed as an ambassador to Valenciennes to negotiate with the pope's envoys. Ralph Neville, of the famed victory at "Neville's Cross," had been a supporter of Edward III at Nottingham in 1330 after ending his alliance with Isabella and Mortimer, and went on campaigns against Scotland on numerous occasions. In 1333-1334, he was an envoy for the king to convince Edward Balliol to implement the Roxburgh agreement,<sup>29</sup> and had been named warden of the king's lands in Scotland along with Henry Percy.<sup>30</sup> John Stratford, archbishop of Canturbury (1333-1348), had been a frequent ambassador in France, discussing the king's homage to the French king as well as other matters from 1331 to 1338, when he was appointed to the prince's council.

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<sup>27</sup>C. Given-Wilson, "Fitzalan, Richard (II), third earl of Arundel and eighth earl of Surry (c. 1313-1376), *soldier, diplomat, and royal councilor*," H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, ed. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 19, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 768-769.

<sup>28</sup>W.M. Omrod, "Clinton, William, earl of Huntingdon (d. 1354), *soldier and magnate*," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 12, 151-152.

<sup>29</sup>Edward Balliol would do homage to Edward III for the kingdom of Scotland.

<sup>30</sup>Anthony Tuck, "Neville, Ralph, fourth Lord Neville (c. 1291-1367), *soldier and administrator*," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 40, 515.



These men had an intimate friendship with the king, and were considered more than capable of assisting the prince in running England while the king was overseas.

The prince's title of keeper of the realm was only nominal; though government actions were performed in his name, he was still too young to participate fully in the running of England. He would attend state ceremonies and would be considered the center of the court, but his actual administrative role was likely very small.<sup>31</sup> The main purpose of the prince's council was to assist the king in his needs overseas, including the collecting of taxes. Young Edward presided over a Great Council in Northampton from 26 July to 2 August 1338, which focused on the revenue to support the war against France. One way in which Edward gained money was through the taxation of the laity, which between 1337 and 1340 amounted to £114,000.<sup>32</sup> However, the king's largest source of income would be the wool industry. In 1337, Edward III proposed a plan in which the English merchants would pay £200,000 for thirty thousand sacks of wool, thus having a monopoly over the wool trade and giving the king the money needed to fund his campaign. However, the merchants were only able to gather 11,500 sacks of wool, worth approximately £66,666. Royal officials, unable to accept this amount, bought the wool on credit, which was not repaid, thus ending the merchants' trust in their king.<sup>33</sup> Edward III had needed the revenue from these sacks of wool to negotiate alliances on the continent, and without the support of the merchants, these were difficult for the king to

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<sup>31</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 29.

<sup>32</sup>Michael Prestwich, *The Three Edwards: War and State in England, 1272-1377*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 193.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*

obtain. He would have to turn to the Italian banking houses of the Bardi and Peruzzi in 1338, bankrupting them in a year.

The prince stayed in the Tower of London at the beginning of the regency, as his mother and sisters had accompanied the king to France. It was ordered that the Tower be fortified, for there had been a constant fear of a French attack since the declaration of war. The English council also managed to gather a reserve army and placed it under the nominal command of the prince.<sup>34</sup> The prince eventually moved to his favorite manor, Kennington. It was also for a short period of time the center of government; Parliament met at the manor on at least two occasions, in January 1340 and July 1342.<sup>35</sup> It appears that many of the actions taken in the prince's name recorded in the *Calendar of the Patent Rolls* during his time as keeper of the realm took place at Kennington, which was quite close to both London and the seat of government at Westminster. By 1339, the prince was given the power to "grant letters of licence to elect, royal assent and restitution of temporalities, receive homages and fealties, remove and appoint justices and other ministers and sell or lease custodies and marriages falling in."<sup>36</sup> In 1342, the king gave the prince the responsibility of appointing a person to "hold the pleas" in the king's marshalsea, as well as ministers and "all things pertaining to the office."<sup>37</sup> Though these grants were specifically addressed to Edward, these undertakings were in all likelihood handled by his council. These responsibilities were some of the things the

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<sup>34</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 262.

<sup>35</sup>David Green, *Edward, the Black Prince: Power in Medieval Europe* (Harlow, England: Pearson Education, Limited, 2007), 10.

<sup>36</sup>*Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1340-1343*, p. 522.

<sup>37</sup>*Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1340-1343*, p. 527.

prince would have to do in Aquitaine. Thus, he was able to gain experience for the procedures he would have to perform in France. Though the prince may have matured at a faster pace because he was the heir, he was only a child and did not have the experience to control the king's requests fully.

The prince's main responsibility, however, would be to enact the orders given to him by the king. This not only included the collection of taxes, but the appointment of men to specific offices, informing the king which homages were being performed (as the king would have to approve them), and so on. In a letter from the king concerning the 1339 campaign, Edward III mentions the absence of aid (namely financial) coming from England, which explained the lack of movement out of Brabant.<sup>38</sup> Though only briefly mentioned in the letter, the king consistently had problems with the lack of financial aid coming from England, mainly because there was not much to be had. The people were so overtaxed that the economy of England was in great trouble, though Edward III could never see this. It is very possible that the king was reprimanding his councilors in England, including his son, for the lack of support. This subject is seen again in the king's letter to the prince describing the 1342 Brittany campaign.<sup>39</sup> While describing the success the king obtained in France, he also stresses the importance of funding when he makes the statement "But always, dear son, it is necessary that you spur our Chancellor and Treasurer to send money to us, for they know well our state."<sup>40</sup> Though keeper of the realm at the time, the prince was still only twelve years old, and most likely did not have

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<sup>38</sup>Clifford Rogers, ed., *The Wars of Edward III: Sources and Interpretations*, "Edward III's Letter on the 1339 Campaign" (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1999), 71.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., "Edward III's Dispatch to Prince Edward on the 1342 Brittany Campaign," 101.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 102.

as much influence over the council, or as much interest in government, as the king seemed to believe.

Most historians tend to gloss over this part of Edward's life, believing it had very little effect on him in his adult years. Though it is true that the prince was quite young when he became keeper of the realm, it seems that this type of guardianship helped prepare him for his future in Aquitaine. He would have to learn the functions of the English government and learn what his position would be, not only as *custos Angliae*, but also as the future king of England. Edward would have to look to his council for guidance, seek the advice of Parliament, and protect the country from possible French invasion as commander of the army, and so on. This is very similar to the charges placed upon him as prince of Aquitaine. He would have to protect his principality from his enemies, seek the advice of the Estates, and work with his advisory council.

If the keeper of the realm title should have prepared him for his role in Aquitaine, why was he such a failure? One reason has to do with his age at the time of being guardian. The prince was still very young at the time, and a considerable period of time elapsed between his role as *custos Angliae* and prince of Aquitaine. Secondly, Edward was soon introduced to the world of warfare, and unlike his keeper of the realm title, received much more acclaim for his military success. Martial achievements seemed to be more important to the world at that time, and were considered enough experience for an administrative role. The prince had never shown true interest in politics, but since he brought victory to England in 1355, he was considered more than capable of ruling the newly acquired principality in 1362. Yet another reason for his ill-preparedness might have to do with his council. As *custos Angliae*, Edward had to depend on his council a

great deal due to his age and inexperience. This would continue as he grew older, for after the Crécy campaign, he very rarely visited Chester and never visited Wales, leaving his household officials in charge. He also depended on his advisory council during the 1355 campaign, and did not make many decisions without their advice. Though some might see this as an admirable quality of the prince, it can also be seen as an overwhelming dependency on his officials. This inability to make decisions on his own would only hurt him in Aquitaine, for he would need to take a more prominent role in politics than he was prepared for.

Unfortunately Edward would also at this time experience a frequent problem of the royal family: debt. Due to the taxes placed on the people during the war, Edward's officials were unable to collect a great deal of the rent owed to the prince. Not only was the collection of rents difficult, the prince also had to contend with theft in his many holdings throughout England. In September 1342, there was a complaint made by the prince concerning the theft of two ships "laden with wine" from the port of Lostwythiel, in Cornwall.<sup>41</sup> That same month, men in Cornwall had forced the tin workers to work in the stannaries (where the tin was mined and smelted) for them instead of the prince, in order to collect the revenue for themselves while paying the men only one penny a day, causing the loss of £240 of annual revenue from the tin.<sup>42</sup> The prince also had the problem of shipwrecks being plundered; as long as the ship had been wrecked in his holdings, the prince had the right to the items able to be salvaged.

Many were upset with the constant taxes and it is possible they could have taken their frustrations out on the prince, who, being fairly young, would not have the abilities

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<sup>41</sup>*Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1340-1343*, p. 553.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 553-554.

necessary to handle this situation and apparently neither did his household officials. The prince was not able to take complete control of his household and it appears his officials were not dealing with these problems and protecting the prince's finances. However, the fourteenth century was difficult for many people, who sometimes acted in desperation. It is not surprising that they would resort to theft, just as it is not surprising that the nobility would not understand the situation and would therefore punish the thieves harshly. The prince also had the difficulty of officials abusing their power. Edward was still too young to be able to handle these types of problems, which only made crime in his holdings worse. At least the prince's council, chosen by the king himself, was trustworthy and guided Edward in dealing with this situation, though his household officials would have to deal with these problems as the council was focused on running England. By 4 August 1339, the prince was in charge of the king's debt, and would have to fulfill the king's monetary promises should he happen to die overseas.<sup>43</sup> This would be a difficulty for the prince, for he was too in debt at the time, though he most likely did not concern himself with the possibility of such an enormous responsibility. Edward's council took care of these administrative issues but he was still the guardian of the realm and had to participate in the workings of English administration. Although the prince would not have the advantage of learning politics from his father, he would be able to observe the trustworthy officials of his council, who educated him in administration and diplomacy.

The political role of the prince and his council would continue to grow, even during the time when he was not keeper of the realm. In 1341, the prince was given the responsibility by the king to have sacks of wool carried to various ports in England in

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<sup>43</sup>*Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1338-1340*, p. 391; "If [the king] does not fulfil this in his lifetime, he enjoins Edward, duke of Cornwall, his first-born son, by his paternal benediction, to fulfil his promise."

order to pay for Flemish support.<sup>44</sup> This was an important role for the prince, as the king relied on these sacks of wool to support his alliances. Many economies in Europe relied on the English exportation of wool, particularly that of Flanders. The prince was also charged with collecting fines, ransoms, amercements, and other charges that could raise money owed to the king.<sup>45</sup> The prince would not be the one to do this, but as the person charged with this responsibility, he would be seen in a negative light as there was not much money to be had. This might explain the lawlessness in his holdings. In 1345, Edward III gave the prince and his council the responsibility of meeting with the pope's envoys as well.<sup>46</sup> Though the king was in England at the time, this responsibility introduced the prince to the constant negotiations between the pope and England. Despite the king's willingness to make peace, Pope Clement VI, a Frenchman, and Philip VI refused to meet his terms, or even negotiate them, on numerous occasions. This made Edward III less inclined to see the envoys and made the papacy very unpopular in England. Although the prince had been involved in sending funds to his father and presiding over the kingdom in Edward III's absence, this might well have been the first instance of the prince's direct involvement in the war and gave him his first experience in diplomacy, a surprisingly rare occurrence which might explain his diplomatic failures as Prince of Aquitaine. It also prepared him for the many negotiations he would face with the pope's envoys during his military campaigns. The prince would also seek to

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<sup>44</sup>*Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1340-1343*, p.174.

<sup>45</sup>*Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1343-1345*, p. 264

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 569.

strengthen the governance of his holdings, including the principality of Wales, which he received in 1343.<sup>47</sup>

Wales had become a principality in 1284, during the reign of Edward I. The central administration of northern and southern Wales was made up of the king's English officials; however, Edward I knew the most effective way to keep peace in the new principality was to keep Welsh officials in office, though mainly at the local level.<sup>48</sup> It is a common theme throughout history that a conquered people are not as apt to accept the rule of a foreign power if their own powers are taken completely away. This type of a system stayed in place until the deposition and abdication of Edward II. Edward III, not trusting Welshmen and seeing the principality as mainly a source for troops, put more emphasis on English control of the government, which continued upon the prince receiving Wales in 1343.<sup>49</sup> This caused resentment among the lords, which continued to grow after the establishment of a statute in 1354, which (in simple terms) forced the Welsh to give up their national identity in exchange for an English one.<sup>50</sup> The prince also did not care for the principality and never visited it during his time as prince of Wales. However, Edward would need the revenue and soldiers from the principality, thereby emphasizing its importance.

Despite the distrust felt towards the Welsh by Edward III, the economy of Wales proved valuable to the English. It was mainly agricultural and included such crops as

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<sup>47</sup>Mortimer, *The Perfect King*, 201. Mortimer believes this is around the time the king was informed of Edward II's death.

<sup>48</sup>A.D. Carr, *Medieval Wales* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 84.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*



wheat, barley, oats, rye, beans, and peas.<sup>51</sup> It was amazing that the economy was able to do well, considering the devastating Great Famine. The mainstay of the Welsh economy, however, was the livestock (particularly cattle) being exported to English markets by the mid-fourteenth century. Sheep were especially valuable to the English economy, as they were needed for the wool which funded the king's alliances and bribes. Though sheep farming did not become prominent in Wales until the fourteenth century, its importance to the economy soon became realized and the farming quickly grew.<sup>52</sup> Fishing (mainly herring) was also an important industry in Wales, due to the nearness of the Irish Sea. Wales also had a largely forested area, which provided material for a great many things. The minerals found in Wales proved to be of great importance as well, as it yielded coal, lead, iron and copper. The prince was able to bring in an income of £5,000 per annum from the principality, even during the years that followed the plague.<sup>53</sup>

While the prince was preparing to leave for France on his first campaign, he needed to place his household in the care of trustworthy officials before he departed. Bartholomew Burghersh had previously been in charge of the prince's household, but this knight was to accompany him on the campaign. On 2 June 1346, the prince's household was placed in the charge of John Stratford, archbishop of Canterbury, the bishop of Winchester, Sir Thomas Berkeley, Sir William Shreshull, Sir Robert Sadyngton, and Peter Gildesburgh, until the prince's return. The archbishop of Canterbury was well acquainted with Edward III, having served as Chancellor on numerous occasions, and

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 96.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 97.

<sup>53</sup>R.R. Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence and Change: Wales, 1063-1415* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 402.

even bearing the brunt of the king's anger after the 1340 campaign. The king believed Stratford had been keeping him from his goals by denying the king funds, and sought to destroy Stratford in his anger. However, the archbishop was not as intimidated by the king as he would have liked, and Edward III eventually had to capitulate to the archbishop, who was soon back in the king's good graces. Sharesull, a justice who had been seated on the common bench and the king's bench, also fell out of favor with Edward III in the early 1340's, but was reappointed as a justice by 1342. Sharesull would conduct judicial inquests in the prince's land and was frequently a part of the prince's council.<sup>54</sup> Sadyngton had served as deputy treasurer of the exchequer in 1339, acted as chancellor during the 1340's, and helped raise funds for the king.

The prince would also have the responsibility of making a will before leaving on the campaign. The prince, much like his father, had accrued a large amount of debt, and the king believed it would be best for all parties if the prince took care of this matter before leaving on campaign. Though every effort would be made throughout the campaign to protect the prince, Edward was not the type to stand idly by, but preferred to act. This increased the possibility of the prince being captured or killed while on campaign. He would be more valuable alive to his enemies, but death was still a risk and the prince needed to get his affairs in order before leaving, a large responsibility for a sixteen year old boy. The prince would have to create a will again before leaving in 1355 for Bordeaux, particularly since his debt had only increased, partially due to the plague,

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<sup>54</sup>Richard W. Kaeuper, "Sharesull, Sir William (1289/90-1370) *justice*," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 49, 993.

which would devastate not only the prince's finances, but the lives and financial situation of thousands of people across Europe.<sup>55</sup>

When the Black Death appeared in Europe in 1347, England had been desperate to keep the disease from its shores. Times had been difficult previously in England, due to the ravages of the Great Famine, which destroyed many crops, the split in the papacy, and the hefty taxes placed on the people due to the wars with Scotland and France. As England relied heavily on trade, its ports were vulnerable to the possibility of an infected ship landing on its shores. Despite their efforts to stop the plague from entering, it arrived with a vengeance in 1348. It is possible the plague first arrived in Melcombe Regis in Dorset,<sup>56</sup> an important port for England, and quickly spread, beginning with the prince's duchy of Cornwall, as it traveled along the normal trade routes.<sup>57</sup> After arriving in Dorset one of its routes traveled to Wales, Edward's principality. The plague was so severe in Wales that it was impossible to find men to fill important offices, including serjeant, bailiff, and reeve.<sup>58</sup> Though the prince's holdings were not as dramatically hit as some other areas, due to the lack of numerous towns and villages, they still showed a high mortality rate.<sup>59</sup>

As a result of the hundreds of people dying a day in England, the prince's finances received a hard blow, which would continue to be seen years after the plague.

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<sup>55</sup>*Calendar of the Patent Rolls 1354-1358*, p. 264; "Grant to Edward, prince of Wales, now going to Gascony on the king's service, that, in case he die on the voyage, his executors shall hold all his castles, manors, lands and rents in England, Wales, and elsewhere, with the profits and emoluments of the same, for three years form his death to discharge his debts thereout."

<sup>56</sup>Now Weymouth.

<sup>57</sup>Susan Scott and Christopher Duncan, *Return of the Black Death: the World's Greatest Serial Killer* (Chichester and Hoboken, NJ : Wiley, 2004), 35, 37.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 39

<sup>59</sup>Green, *Edward the Black Prince*, 56.

Previously, Edward had received a life annuity of 1,000 marks from London customs; however, due to the plague, which hit urban areas particularly hard, these payments had to be defaulted for at least six months.<sup>60</sup> Edward had a difficult time collecting his rents as well; many of the prince's bailiffs and ministers had problems determining who was a tenant and who was not. This led to a great drop in revenue from all his holdings, even a decade after the plague.<sup>61</sup> The relationship between lord and vassal also began to change, and the prince was left with an economy in a perilous situation. Edward III had made a desperate attempt to salvage the feudal system with the Ordinance of Laborers (1349)<sup>62</sup> and the Statute of Laborers (1351),<sup>63</sup> but the attempt was futile. More than anything, Edward III was trying to save the fragile state of the nobility, for it had taken a great amount of effort on the king's part to build up the aristocracy, which in turn increased the king's army. Though the prince and his officials were able to lessen the effects of the plague on some of his holdings, some areas were unable to come back from the mire. For instance, the manor of Drakelowe in Cheshire lost a great number of tenants, yet the prince was able to let all but six of the remaining holdings to new tenants.<sup>64</sup> However, Edward also lost revenue, particularly in rent arrears, which on Macclesfield manor alone

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>*Black Prince's Register*, IV, p. 194.

<sup>62</sup>"Ordinance of Laborers, 1349," *Internet Medieval Sourcebook* (Paul Halsall: 2006, accessed 27 May 2007), available at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/seth/ordinance-labourers.html>, Internet. This ordinance was a great deal harsher than the statute that followed. Peasants were not allowed to demand more wages, they were not allowed to raise the prices of their goods, they are not allowed to refuse labor, etc. If any of the items listed in the ordinance were not followed, the person(s) would face "the pain of imprisonment."

<sup>63</sup>"Statute of Laborers, 1351," *Internet Medieval Sourcebook* (Paul Halsall: 2006, accessed 27 May 2007), available at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/seth/statute-labourers.html>, Internet. Unlike the Ordinance, the statute's main issue was the desire to keep the prices of goods, as well as the wages, at the same amount seen in the twentieth year of the king's reign.

<sup>64</sup>Green, *Edward, the Black Prince: Power in Medieval Europe*, 60.

increased by seventeen percent.<sup>65</sup> The economies of Wales and Chester were particularly devastated, due to their mainly agricultural economy. Without the people to work the fields, many crops were left unattended and livestock were not cared for, causing the animals to either die or wander away. Because of this, the ever important wool trade also suffered major setbacks, for animals were just as vulnerable to the plague as humans.

After the 1346 campaign and the turmoil of the plague, the prince's presence in his English holdings began to increase. Because the devastation of the plague was so great, the war remained suspended and the prince, with no other option, turned his attention to his holdings. This was especially evident in Cornwall, where plans to alleviate the financial crisis began. After the plague, the prince's revenue in Cornwall was only three-fifths of the revenue of 1347, and Edward and his household were willing to go without collecting rents rather than finding the tenants who had abandoned their holdings.<sup>66</sup> This speaks more for the prince's practicality than benevolence, for if he had treated the people harshly so soon after the devastation of the plague, the Peasant's Revolt of 1381 could have made an early appearance. There was also a problem with false tin after the Black Death. Many tin-workers would put a false metal in the middle of a shell of tin, thereby making fraud undetectable until it was too late.<sup>67</sup> This was an embarrassment to the prince, especially when the tin reached its destination of Flanders. As the English wished to keep the territory as an ally, the shipment of fraudulent tin to

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<sup>65</sup>*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, 166. Many of the lands on Macclesfield manor had gone to ruin due to the plague. This was due to the arrears and reliefs that would have to be paid should the land be occupied once again. It was therefore the responsibility of the remaining tenants to pay the arrears and reliefs.

<sup>66</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 96.

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*, 132.

Flanders most likely caused the prince a great deal of trouble, and quite possibly increased his irritation, for it reflected badly on his administration, something any nobleman would hope to avoid. Those men in Flanders who happened to acquire the false tin were then in “great peril of their bodies” if they tried to pass on the false tin, for the fraud could not be discovered “except by the breaking of the pieces.”<sup>68</sup> This type of fraud would also affect the prince’s income as well as England’s treasury, which bought Edward’s tin as well, thereby providing another source of frustration for Edward, who appeared unable to control his duchy. John Dabernoun, steward of Cornwall, was called in to make investigations, but the result is uncertain, as the problem is not mentioned again in the *Black Prince’s Register*. Edward also had to use the entirety of the remedies of the king’s justice to subdue the constant lawbreaking in Cornwall, including illegal hunting in the prince’s parks, raiding docked ships, and the evasion of paying the duty on tin.<sup>69</sup>

However, the prince was greatly involved in Cheshire and Wales, where his policies were also felt. The prince, now in his twenties, seemed to be eager to assert himself as administrator, and his actions threw Cheshire and Wales into turmoil. This was extremely difficult for the people in this area after the ravages of the Black Death. Edward was particularly concerned with the affairs of Cheshire after the murder of his bailiff, Hugh Hamson, who had been out on the prince’s business.<sup>70</sup> Edward believed his officials were restoring the peace after the plague, but in Wales they instituted several actions that only caused confusion in the land. *Quo warranto* inquiries were established;

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 108.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 105.

new surveys were ordered; officials were sent to repair the administration, thus interfering with the local government; justices were appointed; local officials were held accountable to the prince's officials rather than the local chamberlain, making it inconvenient for the locals, as the prince's officials were not always in the place where they were needed; heavy fines were instituted for criminal activities; and orders were issued to quickly collect local revenue.<sup>71</sup> Edward's willingness to collect the revenues of his holdings no matter what the cost proved difficult for the principality, causing much resentment towards the prince. Chester was also having troubles after the plague; one of the main issues was the continuing increase in crime, both by officials and the Cheshire people. One of the jailers and revenue collectors on Macclesfield manor, Adam Mottram, used the devastation of the plague to line his pockets with rents and other forms of profit from dead tenants.<sup>72</sup> Mottram also attacked the prince's other officials, including Richard Janny, the lieutenant of Robert Foxwist, forester of Macclesfield.<sup>73</sup> Richard Done, the master forester of Delamere, was convicted of extortion, taking money and bribes from prisoners.<sup>74</sup> With so many officials out of control, it is not surprising the administration of the Black Prince would not be trusted by his people. The prince also had a problem with officials embezzling from his revenue, which occurred in both Chester and Wales. It seems that lax administration had been commonplace in Chester, yet the prince did not seem to discipline these officers. This type of behavior was common in Edward, who sought adventure rather than the tedium of administration. Despite his desire to assert his

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<sup>71</sup>Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change*, 403.

<sup>72</sup>P.H.W. Booth, "Taxation and Public Order: Cheshire in 1353," *Northern History*, 12 (1976), 27.

<sup>73</sup>*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, 255

<sup>74</sup>Booth, "Taxation and Public Order," 27.

authority over his various holdings and prove his ability to follow in his father's footsteps, it appears that the military life appealed to Edward far more than the life of a politician.

It seems that Edward had a great many problems to contend with in his holdings after the plague. To some, it might appear that the prince was unable to handle these difficulties, which in turn reflected badly upon his administration. However, he was not the only nobleman to have difficulties in his holdings, though perhaps not on the scale faced by Edward's administration. The plague had disrupted the "natural order" of things, and many people who were once not even thought of were able to provide for themselves and their remaining family, and their dependence on the overlord became less and less. It was a difficult time for much of the nobility, who had to reevaluate their relationship with their tenants. On the other hand, the extent of the chaos in Edward's holdings seems to be much more out of control than that of other noblemen. This is due to the fact that, despite having been keeper of the realm, the prince was still relatively young and had little administrative experience. He also appears to have been more lax in his administration of Chester and Wales. It is obvious his preference tended to lie in Cornwall, most likely due to its impressive revenue. Despite his many programs instituted in these two holdings, they tended to have more criminal activity than Cornwall, due in part to the prince's corrupt officials, but also due to his unwillingness to take responsibility for his people's actions.

Regardless of the deceitfulness of many of the prince's officials after the Black Death, Edward was able to retain a large number of trustworthy officials, many of whom stayed in their positions until the prince's return from Aquitaine in 1372. This only



shows what a charismatic man the Black Prince was; men often wished to be in his retinue despite his administrative failures. John Wingfield, governor of the prince's business and part of the prince's army in 1355, was a household bachelor and a financial administrator, and at one point negotiated a loan from London merchants for the prince in 1359.<sup>75</sup> Edmund Wauncy served as steward of the prince's household from 1352 until approximately 1362 and Bishop Robert Stretton served as the prince's clerk and almoner in 1347 and confessor in 1349.<sup>76</sup> Sir Richard Stafford, who had served as a royal envoy in 1337 to the Count of Hainault and to the Holy Roman Emperor Ludwig of Bavaria in order to negotiate an alliance with England and had served in the prince's vanguard at Crécy, was named steward and surveyor of all Edward's English and Welsh holdings in 1347, as well as justice of the courts in Cheshire and keeper of Cheylesmore and Coventry. He also became a member of the prince's council and would follow the prince to France in 1355.<sup>77</sup> Peter Lacy, who was a clerk in the prince's household in 1337, became receiver-general in 1347, as well as keeper of the wardrobe. Lacy would be placed in charge, more often than not, of withdrawing funds from the prince's exchequer and disbursing them depending on the prince's orders. Lacy was often equated with the prince's extravagant spending, and is even referred to by Richard Barber as the prince's "long-suffering receiver," for he would fill this role for a number of years.<sup>78</sup> The prince's

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<sup>75</sup>David Green, "Politics and Service with Edward the Black Prince," *The Age of Edward III*, J.S. Bothwell, ed. (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2001), 54-55.

<sup>76</sup>R.N. Swanson, "Stretton [Eyrik], Robert (d. 1385)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 53, 66.

<sup>77</sup>Carole Rawcliffe, "Stafford, Ralph, first earl of Stafford (1301-1372)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 52, 61.

<sup>78</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 174; John L. Leland, "Lacy, Peter (c. 1310-1375), administrator," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 32, 195.

spending was often unrestrained, but this was fairly typical for a nobleman of his stature and was a common characteristic in his family. However, there is no justification for this excess, because his spending would only hurt his reputation, particularly during his time as Prince of Aquitaine.

The prince lived a very extravagant lifestyle, a characteristic that he inherited from his father. Edward III was notorious for his extravagant spending, particularly when he did not have the revenue to spend. The king was most known for his largesse towards his friends, often gifting them with clothing of the same quality as the king's. Tournaments were also a form of extravagance the king shared with his son, who participated in his first at the age of thirteen. Tournaments were a symbol of chivalry, a martial training ground for noblemen, and a fascinating way of displaying wealth. This can be seen in the extravagant costumes used at the events, the gifts bestowed upon fellow noblemen, and so on. For instance, at a tournament in 1354, the prince gave John Chandos and James Audley a gift of tournament armor covered in black velvet.<sup>79</sup> Tournaments were an expensive affair, not just in gift giving but in the potential losses suffered as a result. One particular loss that would be financially damaging would be the loss of a horse, for a horse was often considered a symbol of wealth and status, and horses were very costly. Those noblemen who had experienced financial loss during a tournament would be compensated by the host, thereby depleting the host's coffers even further.<sup>80</sup> This would be a problem for Edward, who hosted tournaments frequently.

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<sup>79</sup>*Black Prince's Register*, vol. IV, 123. This is not where the Black Prince's name originates; he purchased a suit of armor covered in red velvet for himself. This does, however, show his penchant for expensive living.

<sup>80</sup>Malcolm Vale, *The Princely Court: Medieval Courts and Culture in North-West Europe, 1270-1380* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 186.

Hunting and gaming was another favorite pastime for Edward. Cheshire was an area with a great number of forests, making it an optimum place for hunting. Malcolm Vale believes it is possible hunting was enjoyed by much of the aristocracy for many centuries due to the risk of the hunt, as well as the satisfaction once the object has been attained.<sup>81</sup> This statement corresponds with the character of the Black Prince, who tended to enjoy taking risks.<sup>82</sup> It was also a way to avoid committing sin and prevent idleness. According to Edward, Duke of York,

The first reason is that hunting causeth a man to eschew the seven deadly sins. Secondly men are better when riding, more just and more understanding, and more alert and more at ease and more undertaking, and better knowing of all countries and all passages; in short and long all good customs and manners cometh thereof, and the health of men and his soul. For he that fleeth the seven deadly sins . . . he shall be saved . . . .<sup>83</sup>

Hunting was not only a great sport for the nobility, it also, according to Edward, duke of York, provided men with an outlet by which to avoid sin. This made hunting not only a way to provide military training or sport, but it also theoretically kept men out of trouble and kept them on the path of righteousness

Falcons were often used during the hunt, and the housing and training of these predators would take a large amount of funds for any noblemen. In one instance, the prince paid his falconer £6 13s. 4d. for the purchase of falcons, and paid 12d. as a daily wage to the prince's yeoman and falconer as he stayed at Wallingford during the summer

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 183.

<sup>82</sup>This type of behavior would be more prominently seen after the 1355 campaign, and especially during the Spanish campaign.

<sup>83</sup>William A. and F. Baillie-Grohman, ed. *The Master of the Game*, Edward, Second Duke of York (New York: Duffield and Company, 1974), 4.

to mew his falcons and see to their welfare.<sup>84</sup> Edward III seems to have especially taken pleasure in falconry, as he had numerous falcons and hawks, with special housing for them. The king seemed to enjoy falconry even more after his “retirement” from military life. After the Treaty of Brétigny, Edward III tended to settle into a more relaxed lifestyle, foregoing tournaments for hunting and falconry.<sup>85</sup> Falconry was strictly for the aristocracy, due mainly to the great cost of the birds as well as the cost to train them. Falcons were usually used in the hunt for flying prey, and the female peregrine falcon tended to be the most favored, due to its greater size than the male and its fierceness in the hunt.<sup>86</sup>

Yet another way the prince showed off his supposed wealth was the amount of food served at banquets, or for the general supply of the prince’s household. On one occasion, Edward asked that 500 codfish, 400 salted congers, and 200 salmon be shipped from Cornwall to Bordeaux, where the prince was residing at the time.<sup>87</sup> Feasts were important in a noble household, for they were often signs of largess, a characteristic which the prince had in abundance, as well as a sign of wealth. At one occasion, Edward was the guest of honor at a feast prepared by Elizabeth de Burgh (granddaughter of Edward I), who served 568 herrings, ten stockfish, four saltfish, three codfish, one and one half salmon, eight pike, six lampreys, four sturgeon, six crayfish, 650 whelks, 42 codlings, one conger eel, twelve mullet, twenty four skate, fifty whiting, three eels, three sole, 400 oysters, and a quarter of a porpoise (considered a delicacy); this food was

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<sup>84</sup>*Black Prince’s Register*, vol. IV, 117, 160.

<sup>85</sup>Mortimer, *The Perfect King*, 308.

<sup>86</sup>Richard Almond, *Medieval Hunting* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2003), 20.

<sup>87</sup>*Black Prince’s Register*, vol. II, 98.

served to eighty-one groups consisting of three to four people each.<sup>88</sup> This feast is a classic example of the way food displayed wealth; though this was a large amount of food for such a group, the feast had to be spectacular for the Prince of Wales was to attend. Burgh was a supporter of the prince and most likely wanted to display her wealth and to honor the Black Prince. Another example of the importance of feasting to a nobleman such as the prince was the number of offices designated for food or anything associated with food. Some of these offices included purveyors of poultry, scullery, butter, fish and flesh, the kitchen, the great kitchen, wheat, saucer of the household, spicer, apothecary, bakers, and yeomen of the buttery, ewery, spicery, scullery, poultry, and pantry.<sup>89</sup> It is clear that food meant a great deal in a noble household in order to have so many officers for such specific things. Swan was also considered a specialty, served on rare occasions, which might explain the prince's orders for their care while he was away. These birds were associated with the aristocracy, and symbolized culinary and cultural elegance.<sup>90</sup> The prince placed Simon de Biflet and Nicholas de Mideford to care for his swans before he went on campaign in 1355.<sup>91</sup> These men not only had to care for the swans, they also had to recover them should the swans escaped.

However, Edward seems to be best known for his love of horses. Horses were an essential part of medieval life, both in terms of transportation and in warfare. They often defined a nobleman, not only by how many he had in his possession, but also in the way

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<sup>88</sup>Green, *Edward, the Black Prince*, 114.

<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup>*Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1354-1358*, p. 308.

he handled the horse.<sup>92</sup> Edward would have most likely displayed his prowess on the horse at his first tournament at the age of thirteen, for tournaments were usually the first test of a young man's military talents.<sup>93</sup> Despite the English tactics of fighting dismounted in a battle, the horse remained a symbol of status and wealth. The prince himself owned a large number of these beasts, which were stabled in his various estates in England, and later on, in France. Pack-horses would be of value to the prince during military campaigns, and on one occasion, before leaving for France in 1359, the prince purchased "ten of the best and strongest sumpter-horses" to be found in Cheshire.<sup>94</sup> Edward also purchased a number of horses from such major markets as Smithfield, Stamford, Chester, Germany, France, Cologne, Brussels, Spain, Sicily, and possibly Lombardy, along with breeding his own horses.<sup>95</sup> Horses, especially those purchased in foreign markets, were a classic form of displaying opulence, but it appears that they had more than a financial value to the prince. Due to the importance of horses in Edward's life, the care of these animals would be a very important task, and Baldwin Botetourt assumed the office of Surveyor and Master of the Prince's Great Horses for most of his life.<sup>96</sup> These animals were not only valuable on campaign, but would also be an asset in hunting.

Edward once again left his household for a military campaign in 1355, which would set the prince's reputation firmly in place. However, he would need to prepare his

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<sup>92</sup>Andrew Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses: Military Service and the English Aristocracy under Edward III* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1994), 32.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., 33.

<sup>94</sup>*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, 351.

<sup>95</sup>Green, *Edward, the Black Prince*, 112.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid.

household for his lengthy departure. The prince was gifted all the fines and amercements collected by William Shareshull and his fellow justices in Cornwall, a necessity for a man about to travel abroad.<sup>97</sup> Though the spoils from the campaign would be great, the first few months were financially difficult and the prince would need to provide for his army. Edward also had to raise money, people, and supplies from his holdings throughout this campaign. In 1356, the prince sent Robert Pipot to England, and later to Chester, to purchase one thousand bowstrings, two thousand sheaves of arrows, and four hundred gross of bowstrings.<sup>98</sup> As the king was hoarding arrows for his own particular use, the prince had to turn to Chester to obtain the needed amount of arrows. The shafts of the arrows were most likely made from black poplar, which could be found in the forested area of Cheshire, yet another economic benefit of the earldom.

After the 1355 campaign, Edward issued a number of pardons and rewards to those who served with him. Many of the men who were issued the pardons had a criminal past, and a good number had committed such crimes as robbery, murder, and rape while in France. William Wight was pardoned by the prince for his service in Gascony, though he had committed a felony in Cheshire.<sup>99</sup> This is a good example of the hidden political understanding the prince had, though rarely applied. These men could be a valuable asset to the prince later on, particularly if he should go on another campaign (as he did in 1359). Though he may have been criticized by his contemporaries for pardoning criminals, this seems to have been a typical action among those who were involved in warfare, who needed the physical and financial support of these felonious

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<sup>97</sup>*Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1354-1358*, p. 243.

<sup>98</sup>*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, 223.

<sup>99</sup>*Ibid.*, 240.

men. Edward was also very free in his gifts to those who performed admirable deeds while on the campaign. After the battle of Crécy, the prince granted the gift of forty marks a year for three years until the sum of £20 was reached to the man who replanted his standard after it had been knocked down, Sir Thomas Daniel.<sup>100</sup> After the battle of Poitiers, Edward gifted Sir James Audley £400 per year from the coinage of Cornwall for services rendered to the prince.<sup>101</sup> Audley had been severely wounded during the battle, but had fought with such bravery, according to Froissart, that Edward felt the gift necessary for one of his dearest friends. Welshman David ap Blethyn Vaghan was compensated for the loss of his homes (while he was in Gascony serving the prince) with three oaks from Edward's Eulowe woods.<sup>102</sup> The prince also compensated for horses lost by his men during the 1355 campaign into Gascony on numerous occasions. For instance, Randolph Stoke was granted two oaks in Pekforton Park in reparation for the loss of his horses while in Gascony with the prince.<sup>103</sup> Though these gifts were extremely magnanimous on the Edward's part, they did not bode well for the prince's finances, despite the success of the 1355 *chevauchée*.

Though the prince's early political career was not very impressive, it does provide some interesting insight into how the prince would use this knowledge acquired over an approximate thirty year period and how he would apply it to his administration in Aquitaine. Edward did not seem to tolerate much opposition to his rule, yet he did very little to prevent it from happening, as seen in Cheshire. The prince also lived an

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<sup>100</sup>*Black Prince's Register*, vol. I, 45.

<sup>101</sup>*Black Prince's Register*, vol. II, 105.

<sup>102</sup>*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, 259.

<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*, 257.



extravagant lifestyle, not unusual for a nobleman of the time period, yet it would not be beneficial to him either financially and politically once he became prince of Aquitaine. Despite his education in political affairs, both as keeper of the realm and as a nobleman in his father's court, it appears Edward learned very little in terms of diplomacy, but instead relied heavily on his experience as a military commander and a chivalric aristocrat to establish himself in Aquitaine.

## CHAPTER THREE

### “That Young Mars of Men”: The Black Prince’s Military Background and Its Role in Politics

Military training and warfare were strong influences on the Black Prince from childhood to his death in 1376. At only seven years of age, the prince was introduced to the life of a nation at war, when his father, Edward III, declared war on France in 1337. From this point on, the prince would be groomed in both warfare and politics, and would eventually integrate his leadership skills acquired through military training into his government, particularly in Aquitaine. His way of organizing a military campaign would be significant to the Black Prince, for it would prove he had the capability to be a great leader, even in politics.

The Black Prince’s military education is somewhat mysterious. In 1337, the prince’s care was turned over to Nicholas de la Beche and Bartholomew Burghersh, who counseled him on a great many courtly subjects, including martial matters. Burghersh had a very important diplomatic career, including his offices as seneschal of Ponthieu from October 1331 to September 1334, admiral of the western fleet from 1337 to 1339, negotiator for financial support from allies in Europe at the outbreak of the war with France in 1337, as well as constable of Dover Castle in 1343. Nicolas de la Beche was a part of Edward III’s Scottish negotiating council in 1335. Both had military experience in Scotland, the most difficult realm thus far, which provided each man with a prestigious martial background. It is likely the pair trained the prince using a handbook on military

arts written in the late fourth century A.D., *De re militari* by Vegetius.<sup>1</sup> This handbook dealt less with the technical aspects of military art, but rather emphasized the importance of good leadership, which could only be developed through practice and experience. This manuscript clearly had an impact on the prince's military life, developing in the 1346 campaign, and becoming more concrete in the 1355 campaign.

The prince began his knightly training at a very young age; in 1338, the same year he was named *custos Angliae* for the first time, he owned a complete suit of armor (including a helmet for war and another for jousting practice), and a canvas tent for his personal use. Though very young at the time, it is not surprising the prince would be given these knightly accoutrements. Due to his father's enthusiasm for tournaments, the prince was introduced at an early age to the sport, and would become a devotee of the tournaments himself. It was important for boys of noble rank to be trained at an early age for the physical strain of military campaigns, as most men would be fairly young when knighted at the onset of the war with France, and tournaments were one way of training.

The title of knight was seen as honorable, but with it came many responsibilities. The knight had the duty to assist his king and his fellow countrymen in time of war, to be ready to fight to the best of his ability, to never abandon his fellow knights, to fight for the common good, and to go into battle without fear. These knights-in-training learned to swim, exercised with swords, spears, and bows, and practiced their agility while wearing armor. The prince most likely received a great deal of his military training through hunting as well, which would have educated him in horsemanship, archery and the use of other weapons, knowledge of the land, woodcraft and strategy, which became

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<sup>1</sup>Christopher Allmand, *The Hundred Years War: England and France at War c. 1300-1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 68.

valuable assets to the prince in his adult life. The prince was also trained in the honorable code of chivalry, which would influence his position as a military leader and a political figure.

While there were various chivalric codes throughout Europe for knights to observe, there were certain values that were always stressed: largesse, courtesy, prowess, and loyalty. Upon being knighted, the knight would also swear to “defend and maintain right, reason and justice on all sides without being false to the Christian faith or to the rights of the Holy Church for anyone.”<sup>2</sup> These are all values which the prince upheld to the best of his ability; however, some of these values would also cause the prince a great amount of trouble later in his life, most especially his penchant for largesse (his gifts to his favorites would be one cause for financial strain on his household). Contemporaries of the Black Prince emphasized his role in upholding these important principles. “He honored [chivalry], and [chivalry] reigned him for thirty years. He used his time nobly, for I dare say that since Christ was born, there was no-one more valiant of body . . . .”<sup>3</sup> He was very generous in giving gifts and offices to those loyal to him, both Gascon and English, to the point of placing himself in debt, and thus overburdening his subjects with taxes. His chivalric nature was very admirable, but it also posed quite a dilemma when he acquired the principality of Aquitaine.

The prince’s first experience with warfare would be during the 1346 campaign, where his training in the martial arts would be put to the test in a significant way, and his skills as a military leader would be honed and developed by two men greatly trusted by

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<sup>2</sup>Geoffroi de Charny, *The Book of Chivalry*, trans. Richard Kaeuper and Elspeth Kennedy (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 169, 171.

<sup>3</sup>Richard Barber, ed., “Chandos Herald: Life of the Black Prince,” *Life and Campaigns of the Black Prince* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1986), 86.

the king: Thomas Beauchamp, earl of Warwick and William Bohun, earl of Northampton. Though these men would guide the prince throughout the campaign, it was the prince who made a name for himself, especially at the battle of Crécy, when he would not only lead the most important column of men on the battlefield (the vanguard), he would also prove his military skill by maintaining the line, despite wave upon wave of French cavalry. The prince would also gain the experience of traveling with a large army, and faced the difficulties of keeping the soldiers under control. This experience would provide an education for the prince and would train him in the maintenance of an army and the planning of a campaign.

The prince began his first expedition upon arriving with his father in Saint-Vaast-La-Houge, Normandy on 12 July 1346. He was knighted that same day at the age of sixteen, along with several other young men. Edward, without any previous military experience except for the training that many young noblemen underwent, was then placed in charge of the vanguard and continued with his father to campaign through the countryside of France. However, this command was only nominal and he was assisted by the earls of Warwick and Northampton, two men whom the king trusted a great deal, and with reason. Northampton's twin brother Edward had aided the king in his *coup d'etat* against Queen Isabella and Roger Mortimer at Nottingham Castle in 1330, and Northampton eventually became a close advisor to the king and accompanied him on the first campaign to France in 1339. Warwick was sent to Scotland in 1334 along with the earl of Oxford and Edward Balliol to guard the western marches; he would later return with Edward III to Scotland in 1335 on yet another campaign against the Scots.<sup>4</sup> These

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<sup>4</sup>Clifford Rogers, *War, Cruel and Sharp: English Strategy Under Edward III, 1327-1360* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000), 87, 98.

men had distinguished careers in warfare in Scotland and France and were well-suited to guide the prince throughout his first campaign and develop his skills as a military leader. Bartholomew Burghersh, one of the men responsible for the prince's military training, was also among the noblemen placed in the vanguard, thereby insuring the young prince was surrounded by men well-versed in the ways of war.<sup>5</sup>

The impact Warwick, Northampton, Burghersh, as well the king himself, had on the Black Prince is easily seen in the development of the prince's leadership skills. These men had proven themselves time and again on the battlefield, and though the English may not have always achieved success under them, they continued to lead the nation in the war for their king. The prince often heeded their words of advice, for they had the experience and he needed their knowledge. The guidance of these men would help mold the prince into his future role as lord and leader.

The prince followed his father through France, stopping at Caen to take the castle, a strategic fortress located at the confluence of the rivers Odon and Orne.<sup>6</sup> Before arriving at Caen, the prince and his vanguard were marching to Pont-Hébert when they received news of a group of French troops in the vicinity. As they would not be able to cross the nearby river Vire until daybreak, they formed battle lines and several men were knighted, as was customary before a battle.<sup>7</sup> Upon this occasion, Edward knighted Henry

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<sup>5</sup>Richard Barber, ed., "The Acts of Edward III," 29. The Acts of War of Edward III (1346) gives a list of the men who "raised their banners" in the vanguard. Many of these men had an extensive background in warfare.

<sup>6</sup>Jonathan Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Volume One, Trial by Battle* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1990), 507-508.

<sup>7</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 52.

de Burghersh (eldest son of Bartholomew de Burghersh, the prince's mentor),<sup>8</sup> the prince's first official act on the campaign as a member of the royal family and leader of the vanguard. The prince and the king then converged upon Caen on 26 July from separate directions and took the fortress, protected by the French, fairly quickly. Though this was a strategic victory for the English, as it gave them control of two major waterfronts, the prince's military talents were not truly seen until the battle at Crécy, 26 August 1346.

The battle at Crécy was a notable event, not only in the Black Prince's life, but also in terms of the English position in the war. Previously, Edward III had achieved a few significant victories, but nothing had been decisive until this battle. This has less to do with the king's military skills, and more with his allies' lack of confidence in the king, as well as their lack of pay. The French were considered the superior military force by all of Europe and their overwhelming numbers were a problem for the English king. Even at Crécy, Edward III had the difficulty of facing a greatly superior French force. It is possible that Philip VI had between 20,000 and 25,000 troops, whereas the English army had approximately nine thousand soldiers.<sup>9</sup> The English king placed his army in a defensive position, with the troops split into three columns, and the archers along the sides of the army. A series of trenches were also dug in front of the army, giving the terrain a more defensive position for the English. The cavalry was to fight dismounted, which might seem unusual, but Edward III realized where his strengths and weaknesses

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<sup>8</sup>Anthony Verduyn, 'Burghersh, Bartholomew, the younger, third Lord Burghersh (d. 1369), Soldier and Diplomat,' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/view/article/4006?docPos=2>, 1.

<sup>9</sup>According to Jonathan Sumption (*The Hundred Years War: Volume One*, 530), at the end of the battle, 1,542 French knights had fallen near the prince's line.

were in his army after the many battles fought in Scotland, and he needed as many dismounted soldiers as possible, knowing his archers would be able to inflict the most damage. Chandos Herald describes the beginning of the battle in the following way:

That day the battle took place, so horrible that even the boldest man would have been frightened by it. The sight of the mighty forces of the king of France was a great marvel! Full of hatred and anger, the armies met, and plied their weapons in such a knightly fashion that so fierce a battle had never been seen since Christ's coming.<sup>10</sup>

Though the Herald undoubtedly takes poetic license with this description, the battle that day must have been a sight to behold. The English, vastly outnumbered by the French, were unwavering in their stand against their enemy and would show all of Europe that it would be unwise to write them off so quickly.

The Black Prince himself, placed in charge of the vanguard, fought dismounted as well, which is unusual as the prince was the commander of the vanguard and therefore might have been expected to remain on horseback, a symbol of authority. Unlike the brief skirmishes and sieges he had encountered so far, this battle would decide the prince's fate as a military leader. The fact that Edward was placed in charge of the center line is evidence that this battle was more than a fight against the French to Edward III; this was also a way of testing once and for all the military skills of his son and England's future king, to let the prince "earn his spurs."<sup>11</sup> The vanguard quickly became a target for the French cavalry, for the capture of the prince would be a high honor (not to mention the source of a large ransom) for the man who accomplished the capture. The center line

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<sup>10</sup>Barber, ed. "Chandos Herald: Life of the Black Prince," 89.

<sup>11</sup>Kelly DeVries, "Teenagers at War during the Middle Ages," *The Premodern Teenager: Youth in Society, 1150-1650*, ed. Konrad Eisenbichler (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, Victoria University, 2002), 216.



faced wave upon wave of French cavalry charges, and had the prince's line broken, the English position could have collapsed.

This was not to be, as the Black Prince not only proved his talent in combat, but also his ability to lead his men.<sup>12</sup> Edward did have difficulty, as a group of French soldiers managed to break through the line of archers and men-at-arms, and soon began to engage the prince's men in hand-to-hand combat. The prince had "all the flower of the English knighthood"<sup>13</sup> with him, including Sir John Chandos, who had distinguished himself at the battle of Sluys, and further established his chivalric reputation at Crécy. However, the prince began to lose his confidence and sent a knight to his father asking for aid, but the king's faith in his son encouraged the prince, for he and his troops maintained their ground, despite the dangerous situation. This battle established the prince's reputation as a capable military leader, as well as his suitability to someday succeed his father as king of England.<sup>14</sup> Having achieved such unexpected success at Crécy, Edward III chose to consolidate his victory by besieging Calais.

The siege of Calais, beginning on 3 September 1346 and ending with the surrender of the burgesses nearly a year later on 4 August 1347,<sup>15</sup> gave the Black Prince an introduction to both an extended siege and the politics of negotiations with the opposing side. The siege of Calais was possibly the largest and longest military

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<sup>12</sup>Barber, ed. "Chandos Herald: Life of the Black Prince," 89. Chandos Herald records that Edward "behaved so valiantly [as he led the vanguard] that it was a wonder to see."

<sup>13</sup>Jean Froissart, *Chronicles*, trans. Geoffrey Brereton (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1979), 91.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 93. Froissart is quoting Edward III as he speaks to his son at the end of the battle of Crécy. The king is clearly proud in what his son has accomplished when he is quoted as saying, "Dear son, God grant that you may long go on this way. You are indeed my son, for you have done your duty most loyally this day. You have proved yourself worthy to rule a land."

<sup>15</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 72, 78.

operation embarked upon by the English. By the end of the siege, approximately thirty-two thousand soldiers had served at one point or another at Calais, and the English position had been fortified into a small town that included houses, streets, butcher shops, bakeries, a market, and various other shops.<sup>16</sup> The king had many reasons for staying entrenched as long as he did outside Calais, causing his troops and his family to suffer through a brutal winter and camp disease. However, two reasons in particular tend to support the king's decision. First, Calais was a strategic port for the king, and would advance the English position in the war. Second, the king had promised Parliament that he would end the war with France, and he did not believe Crécy was a definitive finish. However, by keeping his position outside Calais, Edward III hoped to draw Philip VI into a final battle. These two reasons were so important to the king that he ignored the Scottish invasion into England and French invasion into Flanders. This seems unusual for the king's character. Though Calais was a valuable port, Edward and his predecessors had fought hard to control Scotland, and by disregarding it he invalidates the fight against their enemy. The same could be said of Flanders, for the king had a difficult time gaining an alliance with the Flemish; ignoring their difficult situation shows the king's desire to win such an important port. It is unclear how much of a role the prince played in the siege against Calais, as it seems he suffered the same illness a number of the soldiers had come down with: camp fever, or typhus.<sup>17</sup>

The negotiations for Calais between the envoys of the opposing kings was an experience for the prince in understanding the position the French were in after Crécy, as well as the politics of dealing with the enemy. The French position was considerably

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<sup>16</sup>Rogers, *War, Cruel and Sharp*, 273.

<sup>17</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 74.

weakened after the defeat at Crécy, as well as the devastation previously wrought by the English army through the use of the *chevauchée*, which undermined Philip VI's authority both politically and financially. At first, Philip VI believed the port town would be able to defend itself, as it was very well fortified. However, upon hearing of the desperation of the people, Philip VI attempted to relieve the burgesses of Calais in October 1346, but his resources were extremely limited. Efforts were made to send supplies to Calais but the English army continued to intercept the ships carrying the supplies. A call for French troops resulted in an embarrassingly small number (many were trying to defend their own holdings), particularly in Saintonge and Poitou, where the earl of Lancaster was inflicting a great deal of damage, and those who showed could not be paid as the French government had run out of money. Philip VI then tried negotiating with the English, first sending Charles of Bohemia (the son of John the Blind of Bohemia), and then two cardinals, in order to assist Calais.<sup>18</sup> These peace talks soon failed as the French began making unrealistic demands, a foolish decision on their part as their position was tenuous, and on 27 October 1346, after less than a month of attempting to relieve the town, Philip VI left Calais to fend for itself. This act of the French king would be seen by his people as cowardly, but it would give the prince an insight into French politics and it would influence his later campaigns in France. In fact, Philip VI's abandonment of Calais and the French lack of funds may have influenced the Black Prince's decision to undertake a *chevauchée* in 1355 for he knew their vulnerabilities. The burgesses of Calais eventually surrendered, handed the keys to the English king, and with the help of Queen Philippa, managed to escape with their lives, though they were forced to leave Calais permanently.

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<sup>18</sup>Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Volume One*, 555.

Upon arriving in England in 1347, the prince returned with the reputation of a chivalrous knight. He was one of the founding members of the Order of the Garter, established by Edward III and his eldest son in 1348, to honor twenty-four of the king's closest military commanders in France. It was created to be a "chivalric forum of the highest order"<sup>19</sup> where placement was dependent not on political rank, but on chivalric accomplishments, and it soon became the highest attainment of English chivalry. It was designed after the myth of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, as Edward III, a dedicated chivalric leader, greatly admired the legendary king. The colors of the order, blue and gold (the colors of France), not only represented the victory at Crécy, but they also reaffirmed his claim to the French throne,<sup>20</sup> as did the motto *Honi soit qui mal y pense* ('Shame on him who thinks ill of it'). The function of the Order was almost solely religious: the knights must attend the celebration of mass for dead knights and the maintenance of the canons at Windsor; no knight might pass the chapel at Windsor without hearing mass; the Order was dedicated to St. George and the Virgin Mary; and the feast day of St. George was celebrated every year at Windsor. The only secular functions of the Garter were that the knights were not allowed to leave England without permission, the knights might not fight on opposite sides nor "engage in the retinue of any lord who is fighting another lord who has already retained one member of the Order,"<sup>21</sup> and no member was allowed to be seen in public without his garter.

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<sup>19</sup>David Green, *The Black Prince* (Gloucestershire: Tempus Publishing, Inc., 2001), 43.

<sup>20</sup>Hugh E.L. Collins, *The Order of the Garter 1348-1461: Chivalry and Politics in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 2000), 12.

<sup>21</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 91.

A brief truce had been declared after the siege at Calais on 25 September 1347 between England and France, binding all parties, which would end on 8 July 1348.<sup>22</sup> During this time, neither country would have been prepared to enter into hostilities, for the plague hit Europe with a vengeance. Arriving in Italy in 1348, it spread rapidly throughout the continent, and, because of the war and trade, spread to England through the soldiers and merchants. No one was exempt from this disease, including the king's daughter and the prince's sister, Joan, who became a victim of the Black Death in Bordeaux on her way to the Castilian court, where she was bound to marry Pedro the Cruel's son. She died in 1348. Despite the devastation of the plague, however, hostilities had resumed by 1350, and the prince's reputation would further be solidified as a military leader.

Upon the death of the prince's sister, Anglo-Castilian relations became strained, and the French used this opportunity to encourage the Castilians into harassing English shipping along the English coast, hoping to intercept any communications between England and her troops in Gascony and Brittany. At this point in time, the Castilian navy far outweighed the naval power of the English, whose navy had yet to truly be created. In July 1350, the English government set about requisitioning a number of ships outfitted for warfare and departed from the coast of Kent to bring the Castilian harassment to a halt.<sup>23</sup> The prince was captain of one of these ships, which allowed him to develop his leadership in an entirely different and unfamiliar area: the sea. Unlike a land battle,

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 78.

<sup>23</sup>Jonathan Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Volume Two, Trial by Fire* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1999), 66.

Edward was directing both sailors and soldiers against an enemy with far superior naval forces.

The Castilian vessels were known for their size, allowing them to fire down upon the enemy, and the English had a great amount of difficulty boarding them, suffering many casualties before finally getting close to the Castilian fleet.<sup>24</sup> Edward had another important charge; his ten-year-old brother, John of Gaunt, was also on board the prince's vessel. This was Gaunt's first experience in warfare, and it was not unusual for young aristocratic boys of his age to be introduced to warfare by being brought along on a campaign. The battle of Winchelsea began on 29 August 1350, and the Castilian archers were quickly bested by the English, but the obstacle of their superior ships remained. The prince's ship quickly became bombarded by Castilians, to the point where the ship slowly began to sink.<sup>25</sup> Despite the danger, the prince and his men did not falter, but continued with their mission, until they were eventually rescued by the Duke of Lancaster. Upon boarding Lancaster's vessel, the ship Edward and Gaunt had previously been on sank, thereby causing all to realize the extent of the danger to the king's heir and his brother.<sup>26</sup> At the end of the battle, the Castilians lost twenty-four of their ships to the English, while the rest escaped. This was not a complete victory, as the Castilian fleet continued to harass English shipping. However, the prince most likely discovered that his strengths, as well as the general strength of the English, did not lie in the navy. Though Edward may not have enjoyed a complete military success in this particular battle, as his ship was in fact lost, his willingness to stay with his men and not let them

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 67.

<sup>25</sup>Froissart, *Chronicles*, 117.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

falter proves the abilities the young man was beginning to cultivate and solidified his reputation as a military leader.

The years following the battle at Winchelsea were relatively peaceful, as the truce between England and France continued to be extended. The prince would be named the king's deputy, but as such he had very little to do, and instead focused his energies on his various estates.<sup>27</sup> It was not until the 1355 campaign that the prince was once again placed in the role of military leader; however, this position was not over one column of an army, but of the entire Anglo-Gascon force.

The 1355 campaign would not only establish the prince's reputation as a military leader, it would also further initiate the now twenty-five year old in the arts of warfare, politics, and peace negotiations. The prince had proven himself time and again, and when the time came for a new campaign in France, the Gascons, subjects of the English king, preferred a member of the royal family to lead them against the French; in truth, they desired the Black Prince.<sup>28</sup> A group of Gascon barons traveled to England to ask the king to intervene against the oppressive policies of Jean d'Armagnac, the French king's lieutenant in Languedoc.<sup>29</sup> The prince was also desirous to prove himself, outside of the shadows of his father and the duke of Lancaster. Though he had military experience, the Black Prince had yet to truly have his own command, and this was his opportunity.

The prince chose a great many men who had accompanied him during the 1346 campaign, including the earl of Warwick and Sir James Audley, who would become an

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<sup>27</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 103.

<sup>28</sup>Rogers, *War, Cruel and Sharp*, 294.

<sup>29</sup>H.J. Hewitt, *The Black Prince's Expedition of 1355-1357* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958), 3.

integral part of the Black Prince's later retinue. The prince was assigned 800 men-at-arms and 1,400 archers,<sup>30</sup> and recruited half the number of his troops from his own lands, first turning to his earldom in Chester, "a region long distinguished for the number of soldiers it had furnished for the royal armies,"<sup>31</sup> and to his principality in Wales. The preparations caused a great deal of commotion and alerted the French to the coming invasion. What is interesting about the soldiers of this campaign, at least those coming from England, is that the soldiers did not have the same 'feudal' element seen in the 1346 campaign. Due to the Black Death, the army had shifted from recruited soldiers to paid soldiers, which was yet another financial challenge for the prince and his father.<sup>32</sup> It could also be a problem if the campaign was not lucrative, for the men could choose not to fight without pay, thereby making the army useless until funds could be found or unless their leader was so charismatic that they would be unwilling to desert. The Black Prince's fleet finally set sail for Bordeaux on 9 September 1355 from Plymouth harbor, after a rather lengthy delay due to rough weather.

During the delay at Plymouth, the leaders of the army most likely had time to discuss further the operations to be made in France. As the king's lieutenant in Gascony, the prince would have power over many aspects of the region's government. The prince would be able to make his own military decisions, arrange truces, collect ransoms on those prisoners captured, and grant away land gained during the campaign. It was also specified that the only prisoner the prince would not be able to keep was the king of

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<sup>30</sup>Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Volume Two*, 154.

<sup>31</sup>Hewitt, *The Black Prince's Expedition*, 15.

<sup>32</sup>Green, *The Black Prince*, 19.



France, who would be transferred to the king; however, the prince would be compensated for the loss of the large ransom. Edward would also be in charge of supplying the army with food, drink, feed for the horses, and so on.<sup>33</sup> This was a great deal of power for a man in his twenties, who had yet to truly experience this kind of leadership responsibility. Unlike the 1346 campaign, a *chevauchée* had been decided upon by the prince and his advisors as the most effective means of bringing the French to battle, as well as to weaken French resolve. Since the prince was prepared for what might lay ahead of his army, he had to decide how many supplies were needed for it. Though the army would spend a great amount of time ravaging the countryside (and thereby obtain at least some of their necessities), it was best that the army be taken care of before leaving England.<sup>34</sup> This was yet another aspect of leadership that the prince would have to consider. Fortunately for the prince, he would take to this role quite naturally, for his army would stick with him even in the most desperate situations.

From the beginning of the campaign to the end, the prince would be in charge of an army numbering six thousand to eight thousand troops, including the 800 men-at-arms and 1,400 archers from England, and at least four thousand men raised from the forces of the Gascon nobility.<sup>35</sup> This may not be an impressive number by modern military standards, but it was still a large group of men that Edward would have to preside over. It could almost be seen as a practice in politics, for the army was administered much like one of the prince's holdings. The prince would have an advisory council, as he did in 1338 as *custos Angliae* and would later have in Aquitaine in 1362; he would have to

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<sup>33</sup>*Black Prince's Register*, IV, 143-145.

<sup>34</sup>Green, *Edward, the Black Prince*, 35.

<sup>35</sup>Green, *The Black Prince*, 55.

control the actions of his troops and mete out justice to those who disobeyed his orders; he would need to keep the army fed, clothed, and watered; and he would have to deal with the native French people, deciding what their fate would be. In all actuality, this campaign could be considered the prince's first independent political role away from his father's influence.

Arriving in France on 20 September 1355 after eleven days at sea, the prince remained in Bordeaux for two weeks in order to unload horses and supplies, as well as allowing his men to rest before setting off on the campaign.<sup>36</sup> During that time, the prince and his council began to solidify their plans for the raid. All were in agreement that the greatest threat to Gascony was Armagnac, appointed lieutenant-general of France in 1352; therefore, his lands became the target for the Anglo-Gascon army. Though Armagnac did not officially govern the province south of the Garonne River, he did hold land there, and the prince believed attacking Armagnac's lands might weaken the resolve of the French people living in the area and turn them against the French king and Armagnac.

Edward would use the typical English tactic of the *chevauchée* as a way to cause havoc on Armagnac's lands, for Armagnac targeted Gascon leaders who supported Edward III. The *chevauchée* was carried out by mounted soldiers, who would pillage towns and villages, burn crops, and cause general destruction across enemy territory. This would cause fear and uncertainty among the inhabitants of the affected region, and would possibly bring the enemy out into battle. Edward believed the best way to attract the attention of the French king, as well as turn the French people against Jean II, who succeeded his father after his death in 1350, would be to lay waste to the targeted region.

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 175.

To show preferential treatment to the enemy would lose the respect of his men, which could not be allowed if he wished to make a name for himself as a military commander.

On 5 October 1355, the Black Prince began his campaign and “laid waste and harried all the countryside as well as many towns and castles.”<sup>37</sup> At this point it must be stressed that the king and the duke of Lancaster had made plans to campaign throughout northern France along with the prince’s *chevauchée* in the south, but these plans quickly fell through, leaving the prince alone and in command.<sup>38</sup> Those participating in the grand *chevauchée* traveled from Bordeaux following the Garonne River to Langon, where they then turned south to Bazas, an episcopal seat at the edge of the Landes, English territory.<sup>39</sup> The French did not believe Edward would travel further south of the Garonne (as it did not have much to offer in strategic strongholds), but expected him to attempt to regain the key positions recently recovered by the French, such as Aiguillon and Tonneins.<sup>40</sup> However, the prince’s main objective was not the capture of strongholds. Rather, Edward targeted the people of the region, punishing those who had allied themselves with the French king, and supporting those who upheld their allegiance with the English. Making the people a target for his wrath does not seem the type of behavior for a man known for his chivalric values, especially when inflicting this devastation on a region whose rightful ruler he claimed to be. However, the code of chivalry only applied to the nobility; the peasantry was not considered in chivalrous warfare, and therefore received the full force of an invading army. Another reason for this may have been the

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<sup>37</sup>Barber, ed., “Chandos Herald: Life of the Black Prince,” 93.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., “Edward, prince of Wales to the bishop of Winchester, 25 December [1355],” 52-55

<sup>39</sup>Rogers, *War, Cruel and Sharp*, 305.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

prince's realization that the nature of warfare had transcended the bounds it had once known. He therefore sought the most efficient means of damaging the position of Jean II in France by proving how ineffective the king's forces were in protecting the French people. He also, whether intentionally or not, threw this area into an economic depression for years, another reason for the distrust subsequently felt towards Jean II.

On the first day of the invasion of Armagnac's lands, the prince and his army had burned three significant villages, and their arrival was seen from miles away by the smoke rising from the ruins.<sup>41</sup> The army then spent the next eleven days (13-23 October 1355) marching across the lands of the Count of Armagnac, encountering ancient castles, villages, and *bastides*,<sup>42</sup> which they destroyed with ease as the fortifications were only capable of preventing bandits and wild animals from entering. Edward avoided Montesquieu and Mirande, finding them too strongly defended; by besieging these two strongholds, the prince would have lost time (as it was October, the cold weather had started to affect his troops and the pack animals), as well as his aim to cause as much damage as possible. Edward also refused to destroy any place belonging to the Church, which shows his belief that some chivalric ideals should remain a part of warfare policy. The prince's army continued into the county of Astarac, finding it largely abandoned, as many had left upon hearing of the devastation of the *chevauchée*. This did not stop the army from burning and pillaging the empty towns, for the prince wished to make the statement that he would not leave without causing as much destruction as possible.

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<sup>41</sup>Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Volume Two*, 176.

<sup>42</sup>New towns found mainly in southwest France where settlements had never been. Some were built specifically for military purposes and included strong, defensive walls. However, by 1355, many of the towns strategic defenses had fallen into disrepair.

Because he would be given a bad reputation in France and would often be considered a “demon,”<sup>43</sup> he may have even earned his epithet “Black Prince” from this campaign.

Much like his father, the prince believed in seeking a decisive battle, and upon hearing that the Count of Armagnac was assembling a force to the north-east, turned his army in the direction of Toulouse.<sup>44</sup> Toulouse was a grand city, approximately the size of Paris, and at the moment, packed with French troops ready to defend it against a siege.<sup>45</sup> The French were expecting the prince to attack the city, but he was aware that his army’s strengths lay in an open-field battle. He therefore drew up his troops in the traditional three divisions in full battle gear, and marched them onto the fields outside the city under their standards. Fires were set in the surrounding countryside in order to draw out the citizens of Toulouse. However, the count, unwilling to fight the prince’s army, believed the advance of the Anglo-Gascon army had been effectively blocked, as he had broken all the bridges crossing the Garonne, except the one at Toulouse. Armagnac believed he would be able to prevent the prince’s crossing, (unlike the attempt to block Edward III from crossing the Seine which led to the battle of Crécy), and force the Black Prince to turn back to Bordeaux.

The river for all practical purposes was controlled by the French army. For the prince to attempt a crossing under these conditions would be somewhat risky.<sup>46</sup> However, the English army had become more than capable of crossing rivers, and

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<sup>43</sup>The Angers Apocalypse tapestry commissioned by Louis of Anjou c. 1380 depicts Edward III and his sons as demons.

<sup>44</sup>Rogers, *War, Cruel and Sharp*, 308.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, 308-309.

<sup>46</sup>According to Rogers (*War, Cruel and Sharp*, 310), the summer had been unusually dry and the rivers had reached extremely low levels, the lowest seen in twenty years.

Edward felt this crossing would prevent the French from countering it. On 28 October, the prince's army found a ford unguarded by the French, crossed the river in single-file, continued marching until they reached the Ariège River, crossed it, and made camp at La Croix Falgarde.<sup>47</sup> This was all accomplished within twelve hours, crossing in places where horses had previously never been. To achieve a feat such as this in such a short amount of time and with very few casualties shows not only the creative thinking of the prince, but also the loyalty inspired by Edward in his men. This was a dangerous risk to take, but the prince's troops followed their leader on this very treacherous action. They then turned on Toulouse from the south, as if to attack the city; instead, the prince, not wishing to spend the winter in a siege, turned east towards the Mediterranean.

Why turn east? Languedoc had remained virtually untouched by the war, and though the French people in the area had suffered financially and demographically from the plague, they were able to subsist fairly well on grain, cloth, and the commerce of Europe as the area was one of the great crossroads of the south.<sup>48</sup> It had also been a place never before conquered by the English.<sup>49</sup> The fortifications in the region were minimal and easily destroyed, which caused the army to become bolder in their plundering. On 3 November, the army reached Carcassonne, a major administrative and ecclesiastical center in the region. The city was filled with wealth and provisions, as many refugees had poured in from all directions, bringing their possessions along with them. However, the city had weak fortifications, and the people moved towards the center of the city while the Anglo-Gascon army plundered the outside, enjoying the food and wine left

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<sup>47</sup>Hewitt, *The Black Prince's Expedition*, 56.

<sup>48</sup>Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Volume Two*, 179.

<sup>49</sup>Jean Froissart, *Oeuvres*, vol. 5, ed. M. le baron Kervyn de Lettenhove, 339.

behind. The citizens, hearing of the prince's deeds through the refugees' tales, attempted to pay the prince 250,000 gold *écus*<sup>50</sup> to depart, but he refused, stating in a letter to the bishop of Winchester, "we did not want to enter into any treaty until we knew the wishes of our most honoured lord and father the king."<sup>51</sup> Though the prince had the power to make treaties, it seems that throughout this campaign he preferred to consult the king before acting. This could be Edward acknowledging the king's superiority in such matters, or it could demonstrate the prince's hesitancy to act on such an important subject without the guidance of his father and Parliament, making him dependent upon the advice of others rather than making decisions on his own. This refusal of money may seem unusual for a man known for his extravagance, but this was not the prince's main motive for the *chevauchée*. He believed in teaching the French a lesson, and the most effective way to do this would be to destroy their homes. It is also possible that the time it would take to negotiate or even raise such a sum would be too long, for winter was closing in on the Anglo-Gascon army. It is more than likely, however, that the prince had very little patience for negotiations, one of his more noticeable character flaws. Therefore, upon capturing the wealthy town, he ordered that it be burned to the ground.

The English army then reached Narbonne on 8 November 1355, and received a great deal of plunder from the rather wealthy city. At the same time, the Pope sent emissaries to negotiate a peace with the prince, which he refused. The fact that the Church was attempting to negotiate with Edward proved the success of the *chevauchée*, and the established reputation of the Black Prince. However, he did have other

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<sup>50</sup>Green, *Edward, the Black Prince*, xiii. The French *ecu* was worth approximately 40d. sterling by 1360.

<sup>51</sup>Barber, ed., "Edward prince of Wales to the bishop of Winchester, 25 December," 54.

difficulties to worry about. Though the *chevauchée* was a success, the timing was unfortunate, for the army would have to travel back to Gascony in winter, short on provisions, crossing streams swollen with rain and fields so wet they were now bogs. Narbonne itself was becoming difficult, as the citizens were growing bold in their disdain for the English army, including attacks on the city by a French garrison and angry mobs of townspeople, and it soon became a volatile place for the soldiers to be.<sup>52</sup> A large number of the people in Narbonne were refugees from the countryside which had just been pillaged by the Anglo-Gascon army, and it is more than likely that they had become frustrated with their continual losses and more willing to act on their aggressions as long as a French garrison was there to provide some protection. The French army was making its way towards Narbonne, and the prince and his council decided to retreat towards Gascony. His council included many experienced knights, such as the earl of Oxford, the earl of Warwick, and Sir James Audley. He had trusted most of these men in his earlier years, and believed in their council. The prince and his army therefore headed back towards the west coast.

News of the prince's return through southern France spread like wildfire, and those unscathed thus far from the grand *chevauchée* began to strengthen what limited defenses they had. The army was heavily laden with loot, and unable to move at a very quick pace, thereby making the journey back to Gascony more time consuming. Little is known about the first few days of the journey back; Geoffrey le Baker makes a brief mention of the army lodging at Villemagne, "a poor place with few houses and little

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid.



water, after a long and waterless march.”<sup>53</sup> After a few days of marching, they managed to make it to “fair open country.”<sup>54</sup> The army then began to plunder and pillage the various areas around them as they marched towards the Garonne, amazing the locals with their skill at re-crossing the river. Edward also made several attempts to draw out the French army into an open-field battle, but the French leaders knew they were no match against the English army, even with their superior numbers. This frustrated the prince, and after marching several more days without battle, Edward and his council decided it was time to return to English territory. Though the prince might have been like his father in desiring battle against the enemy, it is also likely he desired to prove himself capable of leading his army in such an operation, much like his father and the duke of Lancaster. Though the grand *chevauchée* was by no means a small feat, it lacked the definitive outcome of a battle.

A moment needs to be taken to study the prince’s control of the army up to this point. Though the army did plunder throughout the *chevauchée*, an essential aspect to this particular military maneuver, it appears to have been more controlled than the 1346 campaign in central France. Edward III and his commanders did not have much control over the great number of troops during the 1346 campaign, though they made various proclamations and threats against those who disobeyed.<sup>55</sup> However, the Black Prince seems to have had more control over his troops, as there is only one instance recorded of

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<sup>53</sup>Barber, ed., “Geoffrey le Baker: Chronicle,” 66.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Barber, ed., “Campaign letters: The Crécy Campaign, Michael Northburgh, 27 July 1346,” 15, provides the following example: “A lot of wine and food was found there [Carentan], and much of the town was burnt, the king being unable to prevent it.”

the prince's soldiers disobeying his direct orders.<sup>56</sup> Edward's orders tended to be obeyed, particularly in what would and would not be destroyed, and his troops were rewarded handsomely. There could be many reasons why this occurred. One, the Gascons had specifically asked for the prince to lead them against the count d'Armagnac, and were therefore more willing to obey the orders he gave. Second, the prince had experienced a campaign before, and observed what measures should or should not be taken, and was most likely prepared for the possibility of the army becoming difficult to control.

Though he had a large number of strong leaders in his retinue, his promise of wealth, not to mention his reputation as a talented warrior, most likely kept his troops from rebelling against him, even in the most difficult of times.<sup>57</sup> Third, Edward's reputation was not exaggerated. Though he had not had much of a chance to prove himself before, his training and his skills were proven throughout this *chevauchée*. He was willing to take risks along with his troops, he was unwilling to treat with the enemy, and he proved himself time and again in this successful campaign. He had developed his leadership role very well, which he would need when he began his second *chevauchée* through the north in 1356. This characteristic, along with his charismatic nature, drew men to the prince and held their loyalty.

The prince and his army returned to Bordeaux on 2 December 1355 heavily laden with the spoils of the *chevauchée*, and though he had yet to bring the French to battle, he

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<sup>56</sup>Barber, ed. "Geoffrey le Baker: Chronicle," 63. "[The English army] lodged at Seissan, which, despite strict orders from the prince to the contrary, was burnt."

<sup>57</sup>In a letter by Sir John Wingfield to the Bishop of Winchester, 23 December 1355, Wingfield, the prince's steward, gives a rather detailed account of the monetary value of the *chevauchée*. Edward was very different from his predecessors, in that he would have his officials examine the financial records of the plundered towns to determine the monetary loss for the French. The prince was also gracious in his largesse, gifting his most honored knights on the campaign with gifts, including James Audley, who was given £400 for his valor at Poitiers.

had managed to undermine Jean II's authority in the region, while at the same time warning other defectors of their fate if they continued to side with the French. After spending the winter in Bordeaux, he set about establishing English influence in the region by sending out his army in four different forces, lead by the Captal de Buch and Bartholomew Burghersh, the earl of Warwick, the earl of Oxford, and Sir John Chandos and Sir James Audley. It was at this point that the capturing and garrisoning of strongholds became important, in order to control the region. During these various raids, many noblemen in the area made the shrewd decision to join Edward III's cause against Jean II. This produced a great deal of trouble for Jean II, who began to suspect treachery at every turn (though not without reason). His inaction against the English and the measures taken against his own noblemen, including the execution of four noblemen and the constant nuisance of Charles, King of Navarre, caused much distrust of the French king throughout the various provinces.<sup>58</sup> Charles of Navarre had been involved in a number of plots to overthrow the French king and place himself on the throne, including the murder of Jean II's favorites, Charles of Spain. These executed men included the count of Harcourt and the lord of Gravelle, who were associates of Charles of Navarre and were involved in his constant conspiracies against Jean, Guillaume de Mainemares, who was part of a plan to kidnap the Dauphin and the king, and Colin Doublet, Charles of Navarre's squire, who threatened the French king with his dagger.<sup>59</sup> Then, on 4 August 1356, the Black Prince made the decision to start a second *chevauchée*, beginning at

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<sup>58</sup>Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Volume Two*, 206

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

Bergerac and going north to Tours, before eventually turning south to Poitiers.<sup>60</sup> Unlike the previous *chevauchée*, the French army was now following the English, and scouting parties often encountered each other and skirmished. The *chevauchée* also had a differing characteristic than the previous one in that the Anglo-Gascon army took the time to besiege places of value.

Once the prince was aware that Jean II desired to do battle, the prince began to move his army. Unwilling to be cut off by his enemy and limited to fighting on his terms, the prince made attempts to move ahead of the French. However, the French king had crossed the Loire River ahead of the English army, while the prince was desperately awaiting word of Lancaster's location, who was in Brittany at the time.<sup>61</sup> On 17 September, the prince hoped to surprise the French while some of their forces were on the east bank of the Vienne River; those plans changed, and the march quickened when the prince received reports that the French had crossed the Vienne and were marching towards Poitiers.<sup>62</sup> Jean had ridden ahead with a small force to Poitiers, and soon lost contact with both his scouts and the prince's positions.<sup>63</sup> This dispersed the French troops, which gave Edward a brief advantage. However, on the morning of the 18<sup>th</sup> it was discovered the French were at Poitiers in battle formation. The prince had to commit to this venture now despite the weak condition of his army, for to back down would be seen as a craven act, and would not be supported by the king.

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<sup>60</sup>Hewitt, *The Black Prince's Expedition*, 102-103.

<sup>61</sup>Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Volume Two*, 233.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 137.

The prince had the best position on the field, a seemingly unlikely circumstance as the English were the last to arrive. He chose a hilltop north of Nouaillé, a village near the battlefield, while the French were a mile away, also on a hill.<sup>64</sup> The prince had a forest at his back, which provided coverage for any hidden troops, as well as a possible escape route. The front of their position also contained a thick and thorny hawthorn hedge, and on the right wing of the archers, trenches were dug, while the left wing of the archers was surrounded by marshes.<sup>65</sup> The prince took command of the center, while the earls of Warwick and Oxford were placed in command of the left wing and the earl of Salisbury was placed in command of the right.<sup>66</sup>

The battle was preceded by an attempt at peace negotiations initiated by the cardinal of Périgord between the opposing sides. Froissart claims the prince was willing to listen to “any reasonable proposal,”<sup>67</sup> while Chandos Herald maintains the prince would not agree to any suggestions without speaking to his father and his men.<sup>68</sup> The prince did not have the full power to negotiate with the French, yet his position at this point was very weak and he was willing to attempt a negotiation, while strengthening his position lest the discussions fall through. Though each author portrays the prince as a man willing to make peace, he most certainly used the negotiations as a front to buy more time while he organized his battle plan. He also did not seem to trust the “impartial” position of the emissaries, especially when some of the cardinal’s associates slipped away

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<sup>64</sup>Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Volume Two*, 235.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 236.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 235.

<sup>67</sup>Froissart, *Chronicles*, 130.

<sup>68</sup>Barber, ed., “Chandos Herald: Life of the Black Prince,” 95.

to join the French.<sup>69</sup> After the battle, he was indignant that men belonging to the Church, who had previously attempted to mediate peace, chose to fight in the very battle they had tried to prevent, and on the French side no less.<sup>70</sup> At one point, he was so incensed at these men, that when he found the body of the Cardinal de Perigord's nephew on the battlefield, he sent it to the cardinal, "with [his] compliments."<sup>71</sup>

Despite the previous success of the English forces, the prince had a growing problem on his hands. The army was becoming more uncertain as the time for battle drew near. The French army greatly outnumbered the English, which caused a number of the Anglo-Gascon soldiers to become nervous. The English army consisted of three to four thousand men-at-arms, approximately three thousand archers, and one thousand other light troops.<sup>72</sup> The French army, on the other hand, was composed of approximately fifteen to sixteen thousand soldiers, including eight thousand men-at-arms and two thousand *arbalesters*.<sup>73</sup> The English were also running low on supplies, such as water and food, and the troops had slept all night in their armor at their stations.<sup>74</sup> Lack of rest can often hinder a person's ability to function, and for an army, can have disastrous consequences. The thought of being starved out by the enemy could have been the driving force behind the prince's decision to push the battle along. Now that the French had made the decision to fight and had chosen the battlefield, the possibility of a

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<sup>69</sup>Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Volume Two*, 237.

<sup>70</sup>Froissart, *Chronicles*, 136.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>Green, *The Black Prince*, 64.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Volume Two*, 236, 238.

battle may have put doubts in the minds of a number of the prince's troops. However, the prince kept his men under control and on the battlefield. Only a person with a truly strong character could do such a thing. His men knew that the prince would not be directing the battle from a safe distance, but would be alongside them. Though Edward seems to have had a natural affinity for warfare, and seems to have enjoyed the life of a soldier, it appears he also knew that working behind the scenes was not the quality of a good leader. The fact that he fought alongside his troops proves the strength of his character, and the desire to serve his lord and country, excellent qualities in the future king of England. However, there is considerable disagreement among historians as to whether or not the prince intended to avoid battle against the French.

Many of these authors base their argument on a quote from a letter written by the prince on 22 October 1356, in which he states,

Because we were short of supplies, and for other reasons, it was agreed that we should take a path traversing their front, so that if they wanted to attack or to approach us in a position which was not in any way greatly to our disadvantage, we would give battle.<sup>75</sup>

Clifford Rogers makes the statement that the prince had enough knowledge to know that, with the French as close as they were, avoiding battle would be difficult.<sup>76</sup> He also claims the prince did not necessarily wish to avoid a battle, but rather avoid the possibility of being closed in by the French at Poitiers, and having to fight a siege.

Rogers never mentions a plan of retreat, but instead believes the prince had no choice but

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<sup>75</sup>Barber, ed. "Edward prince of Wales to the mayor, aldermen, and commons of London, 22 October [1356]," 57-58.

<sup>76</sup>Rogers, *War, Cruel and Sharp*, 358.

to attack, as his supplies were running low.<sup>77</sup> However, Richard Barber believes Edward was planning a cautious retreat, stating that the prince's decision in sending Warwick and the vanguard towards the village of Nouaillé and away from the battlefield makes retreat the only explanation for his actions. Jonathan Sumption agrees with Barber, in that he believes the prince and his army were on the verge of exhaustion, and the idea of a battle did not appeal to the prince.<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, the most crucial evidence for this side of the argument comes from Chandos Herald who makes the claim that the prince wished to avoid battle at all costs.<sup>79</sup> It is an interesting remark, for the author does not make the prince's actions cowardly; however, it does not seem like a chivalrous action, the most praiseworthy characteristic of the Black Prince. Though all provide very convincing explanations for the prince's statement, every action Edward had previously made speaks of a man desirous for battle, not only to make a name for himself, but to serve his liege lord, the king. David Green supports this idea by stating an interesting theory that the previous authors have not considered. He believes it is possible the prince was using the appearance of a retreat to provoke a French attack and start the battle. The quote above was written after the battle, and according to Green, does not make a clear statement about a retreat.<sup>80</sup> It should also be mentioned that the sentence previous to the controversial statement reads "There were some troops between the main armies, but

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<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 372, 373.

<sup>78</sup>Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Volume Two*, 238.

<sup>79</sup>Barber, ed. "Chandos Herald: Life of the Black Prince," 99. ". . .[the prince] rode away, because he did not wish to fight that day but to avoid a battle."

<sup>80</sup>Green, *The Black Prince*, 62.



even they refused to yield any advantage by being the first to attack.”<sup>81</sup> This report seems to support David Green’s theory that the prince was simply trying to provoke the French into attacking first. This makes sense, for English strategy tended to depend on the French being the first to attack, for they tended to be less organized when they attacked first. The prince needed this battle, for the *chevauchée* had not been definitive and it did not give the English a solid position in France. It seems unlikely that the prince would attempt a withdrawal after so much effort to draw the French into battle. He had established himself as a competent military leader, and to retreat just as the battle began would be considered a cowardly action for the future heir to make.

On the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup>, the prince decided he could wait no longer and made the first move towards the French right flank, while the prince’s left division moved south across the Miossion River.<sup>82</sup> This left division, led by Warwick, appeared to be moving away from the battlefield in retreat. Meanwhile, two French commanders, Sir Jean de Clermont and Sir Arnoul d’Audrehem, each in charge of the cavalry, noticed Warwick’s movements and suspected a retreat. Audrehem advised caution, as did Sir William Douglas of Scotland, an advisor to the French king who was very familiar with English military tactics, while Clermont wished to charge the English. In the end, they led separate cavalry attacks; Clermont assailed the rearguard, while Audrehem attacked the prince and his vanguard. These attacks were extremely disorganized, much like those made at Crécy, and unraveled the French position. The English repelled these charges and gained the higher ground quickly; this gained them the upper hand.

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<sup>81</sup>Barber, ed. “Edward prince of Wales to the mayor, aldermen, and commons of London, 22 October [1356],” 57-58.

<sup>82</sup>Rogers, *War, Cruel and Sharp*, 376.

The next line of the French cavalry attacked the English divisions without discovering the effects of the first attack. The French had yet to learn their lesson, and their cavalry were quickly picked off by the English archers. The French were soon repelled and the prince and his men launched a counter-attack. The French were then enveloped by the divisions led by Captal de Buch and Sir James Audley, and the French position began to crumble. Jean II, having sent his son and heir, Charles, away from the field once it became clear that all was lost, soon became overwhelmed by English soldiers vying to claim his capture. Jean would not surrender until he was certain that his captor was a knight, and was finally taken by the earl of Warwick and Reginald Cobham to the prince.<sup>83</sup>

This was the beginning moment in the prince's career. His grand *chevauchée* was a resounding success, and he had accomplished what none of his predecessors had done: the capture of the French king. He is praised for his courtesy towards the French king by Froissart: "He [the prince] himself served in all humility both at the King's table and at the others, steadfastly refusing to sit down with the king in spite of all his entreaties. He insisted that he was not yet worthy to sit at the table of so mighty a prince and so brave a soldier as he had proved himself to be on that day."<sup>84</sup> He and his troops left with a great deal of loot, for the French king had brought a great number of noblemen (as well as their

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<sup>83</sup>Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Volume Two*, 245.

<sup>84</sup>Froissart, 144. Geoffrey le Baker mentions the prince's desire to attend his friend, James Audley (who was severely wounded during the battle) ,and begged the French king his forgiveness, at which time Jean II compliments Audley's bravery on the battlefield (Barber, *Life and Campaigns of the Black Prince*, 81-82). Chandos Herald states that the prince wished to help the French king disarm after being captured, and when the king refused, saying "do not trouble yourself, for I do not deserve it," the prince is said to have replied, "My lord, God has done this and not us . . ." (Barber, *Life and Campaigns of the Black Prince*, 103).

effects) with him, and around 3,000 nobles were taken prisoner.<sup>85</sup> Edward was then placed in charge of all the English king's interests, including truce talks, while in France.

In early October 1356, the prince made his way into Bordeaux where he had established his court.<sup>86</sup> Paris was in chaos, and the Dauphin was unable to keep his country together during the negotiations. To even attempt a compromise might seem unlikely, but Jean II and his eleven ambassadors did their best to make the terms acceptable to both the English king and the French people. The Black Prince was charged by his father to begin the truce talks, in order to see how much the French would be willing to concede.<sup>87</sup> Though Edward had only limited capabilities of negotiating a truce between the two conflicting sides, as Edward III needed to approve any decision the prince made, the experience provided him with insight into the weakness of the French position; it also gave him another rare opportunity to exercise diplomacy.

If the Black Prince was successful as a military leader, why did his principality in Aquitaine collapse around him four years after his arrival? He seemed to have all the characteristics of a good leader: he was able to command a large group of men with very little difficulty and managed to keep his troops disciplined and under his control; he was successful as a military strategist, planning two *chevauchées* and a battle that resulted in an English victory; he was generally honorable both in his decisions and towards his men, as the code of chivalry had taught him; and he was unbending towards those who refused to comply with his demands. All of these aspects, as seen in his father Edward

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<sup>85</sup>Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Volume Two*, 247. Sumption includes in the count fourteen counts, twenty-one barons and bannerets, and 1,400 belted knights.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 248.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 262.

III (considered to be a successful ruler throughout most of his reign), tends to point towards a strong political leader. However, the prince seems to have been too entrenched in military life, finding it much more appealing than governing a principality. Much like Richard the Lionheart, Edward preferred being on campaign to seeing to the needs of his people. This is particularly clear in his decision to undertake the Spanish Expedition in 1366. Rather than spending the time needed to establish his presence in Aquitaine, he preferred the military campaign, with the possibility of combat and reward. This drawback in the prince's character may seem to some as his downfall, but it is not surprising that he would prefer the military life, having it stressed upon him from his boyhood. Edward III's desire that his heir be able to continue the war in the king's place is most likely the reason for the prince's overwhelming enthusiasm for warfare, an enthusiasm he never outgrew.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### The Prince in Aquitaine

One might think the acquisition of Aquitaine in full sovereignty was a great accomplishment for the English, and in a way, it was a fitting reward for the war in which England had shown its military prowess. Moreover, it might be seen as the perfect place for the prince to refine his skills as the future ruler of England. He had led the Gascons against Armagnac in 1355 and was admired by the Gascon people for his many military accomplishments. Unfortunately, Edward was unprepared for the hostility of the Gascon nobility and the reliance of the people upon him. Previously, the prince had been able to control his holdings through his officials; however, despite the assistance the prince would receive from such men as John Chandos and James Audley, he would have to take on a more active political role as Prince of Aquitaine, a role for which, as Edward proved, he was ill prepared. “Anyone who is not loved by his people should not be called lord;”<sup>1</sup> though Chandos Herald was speaking of Pedro the Cruel, king of Castile, these words could be applied to the Black Prince, who learned this in a difficult way.

The Treaty of Brétigny (1360) brought a sigh of relief on all sides. The English had suffered through a rather unsuccessful campaign in 1359, due mainly to weather, and France was still in a state of chaos in the aftermath of the Black Prince’s 1355 *chevauchée*. The French king had been captured by the English and the Dauphin was a virtual prisoner in Paris. It was therefore best for all sides to end the war on the most agreeable terms. In the treaty, Edward III not only kept Gascony, but added to it Poitou,

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<sup>1</sup>Barber, ed, “Chandos Herald: Life of the Black Prince,” 107.

Saintonge, Angoumois, Périgord, Limousin, Quercy, Ponthieu, and Rouergue, and for the first time since the acquisition of Aquitaine, held these lands in full sovereignty.<sup>2</sup> Though this was not identical with the English holdings in France during the reign of Henry II, it was a sizable portion of the original lands. Jean II's ransom was reduced to three million *écus* (from the original four million), and Edward III relinquished his claim to the French throne. The French government had to agree to this treaty, as their homeland was on the edge of a civil war. The Dauphin was forced to follow the instructions of the Parlement de Paris. The English king sent some of his most trusted officials to Brétigny to negotiate the treaty, including Bartholomew Burghersh the younger, the earl of Warwick, the duke of Lancaster, and Sir Walter Mauny, a trusted official of the queen and a loyal knight to the king. Now that Edward III had acquired this territory, he would need someone to govern it in his name; for this, he chose his eldest son.

The English monarch's holdings in France were extremely important, both politically and economically. Beginning with the Norman Conquest, the English monarchy had acquired Normandy (the home of William the Conqueror), as well as Maine, Anjou, and Touraine, which Henry II received from his father, Geoffrey Plantagenet, count of Anjou. Once Henry II married Eleanor of Aquitaine, the king added the extensive lands of the duchy of Aquitaine, thereby making the English king's holdings in France more widespread than the land of the French king. This would cause friction between the two monarchs, and by the reign of Edward III, the English king

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<sup>2</sup>Aquitaine had been held in full sovereignty prior to the Treaty of Paris in 1259, but the others had not. The only land that was not held in full sovereignty in 1362 was Béarn, held by the count of Foix. (Margaret Wade Labarge, *Gascony, England's First Colony: 1204-1453* (London: Hamish Hamilton Limited, 1980), 149).

would only have Gascony and the critical town of Bordeaux which England relied on for the importation of wine.

The prince had very little experience in politics; though he had held the title *custos Angliae* during the early years of the war, this was a nominal title only, and rarely was the prince involved in government decisions. Despite his extensive holdings in England, Edward had officials to take care of that business, very rarely having to visit them. This would change with the acquisition of Aquitaine. The prince would no longer be able to rely solely on his officials, but would have to be involved in the government of the principality. The king most likely wished to train his son in politics and in governing a state, as he would eventually inherit the throne. However, Edward did not hold the French lands in complete sovereignty; he had to pay homage to the English king, who made his opinion known on what should be done in Aquitaine as he was unable, or unwilling, to completely relinquish power to his son.<sup>3</sup> It was also a request of the Gascons who supported the English cause that the prince should take over the duty of the principality.<sup>4</sup> The Gascons had fought alongside the Black Prince in the 1355 campaign, and believed he would be the best choice for this particular task.

Another reason sometimes attributed to the prince's assignment to Aquitaine by French chroniclers was his marriage on 10 October 1361 to the countess of Salisbury, Joan of Kent.<sup>5</sup> It is possible the king did not approve of the marriage, which could explain the king's desire to send the prince to France. It had been Edward III's desire to have his son married to an heiress, particularly a daughter of one of his allies or potential

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<sup>3</sup>Mortimer, *The Perfect King*, 352.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 173.

allies. This had been the king's wish since the Black Prince was only a year old, and it continued until the prince married. However, despite the numerous attempts to negotiate such an alliance, varied obstacles prevented any such marriage. One reason why Edward III might have disapproved of the marriage is the rather dubious reputation of Joan, the "Fair Maid of Kent." Joan had first married Sir Thomas Holland in secret in 1340, and was later married to William Montagu, the second earl of Salisbury, in a church ceremony that same year.<sup>6</sup> Holland later demanded the return of his wife after gaining financial security in 1347, and her marriage to Montagu was declared void by the pope in 1349. Joan would be vulnerable to the accusation of bigamy for the rest of her life, despite the fact that it had not been her wish to marry Montagu. There was also a rumor that Joan had a romantic liaison with the king himself, and that it was her garter that is alluded to in the Order of the Garter. Once Holland died in 1360, it was not long before she married Edward, who had originally been sent to speak to her on the behalf of a friend, Bernard Brocas, a knight in the prince's household. This seems to have been a marriage based on love, as the countess was not a financial match for the prince's royal rank.<sup>7</sup> However, the myth that Edward wished to have the newly wed couple out of England does not seem to be based in fact, though it was not the marriage the king sought

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<sup>6</sup>Joan's mother had arranged the marriage to Montagu, and as her marriage to Holland had been made in secret, it was not seen as lawful in England and therefore dismissed.

<sup>7</sup>It is interesting to note, however, that despite the love match between the two, Joan requested to be buried next to her first love at the Minorite Church in Stamford rather than next to Edward (another love and more prestigious in rank) in Canterbury.



for his son. Had he truly disapproved the marriage, he would not have attended their wedding nor later made their son, Richard II, his heir.<sup>8</sup>

Before the prince's arrival, men of his council were sent to prepare the way. Sir John Chandos was perhaps the most famous administrator of the prince's household. He had been associated with the royal family for many years, had been a soldier in the king's first campaign into France, had fought under the prince in the vanguard at Crécy, was a founding knight of the Order of the Garter, and served with the prince on the 1355 campaign. It was on this campaign that the friendship between Chandos and the prince was most noticeable. Froissart claimed that the prince often conferred with Chandos, and on more than one occasion, Chandos was attributed with calming the prince's anger, which could be as volatile as his father's.<sup>9</sup> He was one of the prince's advisors in 1357, when negotiations were being made after the capture of the French king, and was a member of the English delegation during the treaty discussions. Chandos had been appointed in 1361 as the king's lieutenant in Aquitaine and spent five months traveling throughout the re-acquired territory securing homages for the prince.<sup>10</sup>

Sir Richard Stafford, Edward's steward, was appointed seneschal of Gascony.<sup>11</sup> Stafford had been a part of the coup in 1330 against Isabella and Mortimer, was steward and surveyor of the prince's property in 1347, accompanied the prince on his famous

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<sup>8</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 172-173. Edward and Joan were married in the presence of Edward III, John of Gaunt, Edmund of Langley, queen Philippa, Queen Joan of Scotland, the prince's sister Isabella, the earls of Warwick and Suffolk, and a number of lords and ladies.

<sup>9</sup>Froissart, *Chronicles*, 137, 141.

<sup>10</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 171.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

*chevauchée* in 1355, and had a part in the negotiations for the Treaty of Brétigny.<sup>12</sup> Sir Nigel Loring, one of the prince's chamberlains, was sent to prepare for the prince's arrival and to oversee the transference of the treaty lands. Loring had served with the prince at Poitiers, and was a guardian of the Treaty of Brétigny.<sup>13</sup> These men were intimately acquainted with the prince and had participated in his English household; therefore, they were well-suited to handle the enormous task of securing Aquitaine for the prince's arrival.

It was not until 15 February 1362 that the prince was first addressed as Prince of Aquitaine. This title was not established until 19 July 1362, at which time the prince once again did homage to his father.<sup>14</sup> The Prince had done homage for the land as a duchy but the king decided to elevate the territory's status as principality. It has even been suggested that the king thought about making the territory a kingdom, though that has not been proven. This seems unlikely, as the king would not be able to hold sovereignty over a kingdom on the continent, and his inability to completely release control to his son might prove the implausibility of this proposal. The prince gave 26s. 8d. to the king for his fealty and homage. He then arrived in Aquitaine in June 1362 and began the unsuccessful process of establishing his lordship.<sup>15</sup>

The charter of the principality and the transference of Aquitaine to Edward were written on 14 July 1362 by Sir John Freton, who was compensated with 40s. for his

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<sup>12</sup>Carole Rawcliffe, "Stafford, Ralph, first earl of Stafford (1301-1372)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 52, 61.

<sup>13</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 171.

<sup>14</sup>Mortimer, *The Perfect King*, 352.

<sup>15</sup>*Black Prince's Register*, vol. IV, 477.

work.<sup>16</sup> The charter (which documented the transfer of French lands to the prince) outlined which provinces he would be receiving, including Poitou, Limousin, Agen, Périgord, etc. As Edward III, though *Dominus Principalis*,<sup>17</sup> was unable to be there in person, his son would act as a mesne lord, with the powers of *superioritas* (superiority) and *resort* (jurisdiction) reserved for the king.<sup>18</sup> As the prince was the representative for the English king, he would be allowed to receive the homages and *obedientiis* that should have been made to Edward III.<sup>19</sup> Unlike the 1355 charter which granted Edward lieutenancy in Gascony, the limits set on the prince were not as clearly defined and his powers were somewhat vague. However, the flaw with the transference of the lands to Edward was granting in mortmain the lands that had not technically been renounced.<sup>20</sup> The treaty's concluding *cest assavoir* clauses had not been sealed, which made the English sovereignty over Aquitaine technically illegal, for France had not renounced its sovereignty.<sup>21</sup> This would be a problem in the future, as there had not been an agreement concerning the renunciation of Aquitaine, which Charles V would use to his advantage once he became king.

The prince's administration seems to have had a successful start, as most of the people in the territory supported the English, and therefore the Black Prince. In fact,

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 484.

<sup>17</sup>Rymer, Thomas. *Foedera, Conventiones, Literae, et Cujuscunq̄ue Generis Acta Publica, inter reges Angliae et alios ... habita aut tractata (Rymer) and English syllabus: 1361-1377*, vol. III, part. ii. (Ontario: Tanner Ritchie Publishing and the University of St. Andrews, 2006); available at [http://sources.tannerritchie.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/2006/foedera/foedera\\_vol\\_3\\_part\\_2\\_search.pdf](http://sources.tannerritchie.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/2006/foedera/foedera_vol_3_part_2_search.pdf) 667.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 177.

<sup>19</sup>*Foedera*, vol. III, part ii, 667.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid. (*amortizandi*).

<sup>21</sup>Green, *Edward, the Black Prince*, 13.

some of the people in the territory took the opportunity of English ownership to make demands, including their insistence that they only be liable to provide war service in their province and never against the king of France.<sup>22</sup> However, many of the nobility in Aquitaine did not support England's acquisition of the territory, particularly such men as the count d'Armagnac, whom the prince had targeted in 1355.<sup>23</sup> Though Chandos had received homage from the noblemen in the territory, once the prince arrived the ceremony had to be performed again, as the homages previously performed were in the name of the king, not the prince. This took the first six months of the prince's stay in Aquitaine. At the end of the prince's tour, approximately 1,047 homages had been taken.<sup>24</sup> This was quite an accomplishment, considering the history of enmity between the Plantagenet family and the Gascon nobility. However, many nobles had difficulties in paying homage to the prince. A few of the Gascon lords held impressive titles from the French king, and once these were lost, the acceptance of a foreign ruler, particularly an enemy ruler, was extremely difficult. This would naturally make for hostility towards the prince and his council.<sup>25</sup> Edward briefly won the favor of Armagnac in 1364, when the prince paid his ransom to Gaston Phoebus, but this would not last. Due to the

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<sup>22</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 177.

<sup>23</sup>Though Armagnac was not fond of the prince, he often assisted in Aquitaine's affairs, and even borrowed money from the prince to pay his ransom to Foix.

<sup>24</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 180. Edward did have a slight problem with Gaston Phoebus, the count of Foix. Foix only did homage for his viscounties in Marsan and Gavaudum in Languedoc, but he did not for Béarn because he had never done homage for this land. Like others who held their lands in near sovereignty, Phoebus was not willing to renounce his authority in this particular territory (Green, *Edward, the Black Prince: Power in Medieval Europe*, 134). This proved to be a difficult situation between the prince and his new vassal and would continue to be so until the prince left France permanently.

<sup>25</sup>Green, *Edward, the Black Prince*, 133-134.

misgovernment by English officials in the duchy during Edward I's reign, many noble families did not hold much loyalty for their English overlord.

The prince's administration consisted of men on whose loyalty he could depend. As previously mentioned, John Chandos obtained the highest role in Aquitaine's administration, that of constable. This appointment was made by Edward III in 1365 during the fight in Castile between the rival claimants for the throne. This is a good example of the English king's desire to remain involved in Aquitaine's administration, for he circumvented his son's authority by making this appointment, as well as the appointment of two commissioners.<sup>26</sup> However, it is unlikely the prince even thought about leaving an official in Aquitaine to guard the territories against his enemies, for his thoughts seemed consumed with the upcoming campaign in Spain. The constable paid the salaries of the officials, received their accounts, and was guardian of the seal. He also managed supplies and victuals of the household, supervised the coinage, and oversaw the upkeep of castles and other fortresses.<sup>27</sup> Thomas Felton was appointed the new seneschal of Aquitaine, and John Harewell, bishop of Bath and Wells, became the chancellor and constable of Bordeaux, as well as the chief financial officer.<sup>28</sup> As with many of Edward's retinue, Felton had been present with the prince on the 1355 campaign, and had been steward of the prince's household in France for a short period of time. As seneschal, Felton was head of the government with a variety of duties, such as presiding over council and judicial business. Sir William Felton (no relation to Thomas Felton) was appointed seneschal of Poitou in 1362, and later seneschal of Limousin, as well as

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<sup>26</sup>Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Volume Two*, 544.

<sup>27</sup>Green, *The Black Prince*, 85.

<sup>28</sup>*Black Prince's Register*, vol. IV, 479; Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 181.

servicing as lieutenant to Chandos. William Felton had served under Lancaster in Brittany during the 1355 campaign, and would be an asset to the prince in protecting the principality against the Great Companies.<sup>29</sup> Sir Bernard Brocas was named controller and receiver of money due to the king. He had served in the 1346 and 1355 campaigns, and was of Gascon descent on his father's side.<sup>30</sup> These men would have a difficult time in establishing English rule in Aquitaine, because the Black Prince, with no real tolerance for administration, would make the transition from Gascon to English government very complicated.

Upon his arrival, Edward would spend his time up to the Spanish campaign trying to win over the nobles in the area. This mainly consisted of bribes in one form or another. Many nobles had to pay ransoms, perhaps from the 1355 campaign or from the constant fighting between the houses in the area. For instance, the animosity between Foix and Armagnac was so great it had resulted in the battle of Launac in 1362, in which Armagnac had been captured and owed a ransom of 300,000 florins.<sup>31</sup> Due to this ransom, as well as the impact of the grand *chevauchée*, the house of Armagnac was in financial crisis, and the tax system set up by the prince would only make matters worse for this impoverished lord. In order to gain the count's loyalty and avoid a potentially dangerous situation (thus far, only Armagnac had opposed the first *fouage* established by the prince and his council), the prince assisted the count in paying his ransom to Phoebus. Flattery tended to be the main way for the prince to manage his new nobles; in order to

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<sup>29</sup>Barber, "Felton, Sir William, the Younger (d. 1367)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 19, 287.

<sup>30</sup>Green, *The Black Prince*, 86.

<sup>31</sup>Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Volume Two*, 569.

keep things relatively under control, Edward held numerous banquets during his first year in Aquitaine, believing this would ease the tension felt by his “former” enemies.

However, the prince’s extravagant spending only angered those who saw it as the wasting of their money. Though charm had always been the prince’s way of obtaining success, he would be unable to use this asset after the Spanish campaign.

Perhaps the most interesting of complaints concerning life in the prince’s court was his demand that the nobles in the principality wait days before receiving an audience with him, and when they were finally admitted into his presence, they were required to kneel before him, for at least four to five hours.<sup>32</sup> This does not seem unusual for the prince. Edward had never been humble and the praises laid upon him for Crécy and Poitiers could only have damaged his behavior towards his subjects, including, but not limited to, the Gascon nobility. David Green mentions that this type of behavior the prince demanded in his French court could be compared to the court etiquette of his son, Richard II, who required that his subjects kneel should the king even glance their way.<sup>33</sup> This was the wrong way of seeing subjects who had previously been his enemy. Rather than treating his new nobility with respect, it seems that the prince treated them with scorn; after all, he had defeated many of these men in battle. This only caused an increase of animosity towards Edward, which Charles V would use later in trying to take away the duchy from English possession.

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<sup>32</sup>V.H. Galbraith, ed., *The Anonimale Chronicle: 1333-1381* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1927), 56. “demurres quatre iours ou cynk avaunt qil dedigna of eux parlere: et quant ils veindrent en sa presence il les soeffreit genulere et caunger les genules une quatre de iour avaunt qil les comaunda estere;” Green, *Edward the Black Prince*, 135.

<sup>33</sup>Green, *Edward the Black Prince*, 135.

Along with the complaints of court etiquette, the residents of the newly established principality were unaccustomed to the consolidation of administration. Previously, the duchy had been ruled by a series of local administrations and by a group of nobles who were loyal to the duke.<sup>34</sup> However, the prince wished to establish himself in Aquitaine as quickly as possible, and ignored the traditions of the principality. Gascons who once held the higher positions in the duchy found themselves relegated to the lower offices available. Those who received the lower positions after holding the more important offices were also unaccustomed to looking to the English overlord for guidance; rather, they turned to the French king for assistance.<sup>35</sup> It was quite an adjustment for these men to make, and more often than not, they chose to circumvent the English administration and go directly to the French king, a serious problem for Edward as it negated his authority. Yet another problem for the nobles was that many of the men who loyally served Edward III as duke were retiring, leaving their offices open to the prince's English officials. As seen in Wales, Edward's inability to use more locals in his administration, especially the nobility accustomed to their role in the supervision of the duchy's administration, caused resentment among many of the local nobility. Another difficulty concerning the administration in Aquitaine is that it had previously relied on local governments, rather than a centralized government. The prince's quick consolidation of the principality was a difficult adjustment to make, which caused further strain between Edward and the Gascon nobility.

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<sup>34</sup>Labarge, *Gascony, England's First Colony*, 156.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.



The Black Prince issued a new coinage as well, which was yet another way for him to assert his power in Aquitaine. The use of his image on coins in Gascony only solidified his authority, for it equated his image with the principality. The first coinage was introduced in 1363, and though it was similar to Edward III's during his tenure as duke of Aquitaine, it did have a new motto inscribed on it: *Deus iudex Justus fortis et pociens* (God is a righteous judge, strong and patient).<sup>36</sup> This could be the prince's way of saying that he too would be patient and strong in his dealings with the Gascons, though this was never to come to pass. Another gold coin was created in 1364, bearing the prince's image as wearing a prince's crown of roses, carrying a sword in his right hand while pointing at it with his left, with four ostrich feathers (the symbol of the prince) finishing the design.<sup>37</sup> This design was very similar to the French coinage, which showed the king in a similar stance, though holding a scepter rather than a sword.<sup>38</sup> It is possible Edward wished to associate himself with the French ruling class without allying himself completely to the French king, perhaps to gain the trust of the Gascon nobility. This French identity could be his way of identifying himself with Gascony rather than England. The prince also issued the *chaise d'or* at some point during his administration in Aquitaine, which showed him bearded and without a sword, the only gold coin to depict him in this way.<sup>39</sup> Despite often ignoring the Gascon people in his administration,

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<sup>36</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 184-185.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 185.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Green, *Edward, the Black Prince*, 134.

he sought the advice of the people in Gascony by summoning a council of Gascons to determine the type and value of money that the people wished to have.<sup>40</sup>

Edward was extremely extravagant in his spending, particularly during the first year in Aquitaine, which would become a problem for him very quickly. For example, during the churching of Princess Joan in 1364, an event which lasted ten days, Edward was reported to have stabled 18,000 horses and spent approximately £400 on candles alone.<sup>41</sup> Joan was also said to have had a retinue of twenty-four knights and twenty-four lords, as well as the presence of 154 lords and 706 knights (though none are specified as Gascons) at the festivities held for the birth of the prince's first son and heir to Gascony. On yet another occasion, Edward paid £715 13s. 6d. to Giles Davynell for embroidery for himself, his wife, and his wife's daughters from her previous marriage.<sup>42</sup> Edward also purchased two jewel buttons for Joan for the amount of £200, as well as two rubies, two brooches, and four diamonds for a ring, valued at another £200.<sup>43</sup> However, the prince did not buy jewels just as gifts; in 1362, he purchased jewels for himself from Lewis Tortoryn for £157 4s. 4d., a partial payment.<sup>44</sup> This was not unusual for the prince, who spent large amounts of money on clothing and jewels. According to David Green,

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<sup>40</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 185. In this particular case in 1365, the Gascons introduced a small gold coin, the *hardi*, which had limited circulation among nobles and merchants, the silver coinage was not changed, and the *fouage* was made to be half the rate of the previous year.

<sup>41</sup>Antonia Gransden, "A Fourteenth Century Chronicle from the Grey Friars at Lynn," *English Historical Review*, vol. 72, no. 283, April, 1957: 276. "duravit sole[m]pnitas per dies 10, et equi in expensis principis fuerunt xviii m (18,000) per dictam sole[m]pnitatem;" Green, *Edward, the Black Prince*, 108.

<sup>42</sup>*Black Prince's Register*, vol. IV, 476.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, 427.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, 475.

Edward cared more to ensure the presence of his goldsmith and two embroiders than to make certain his administration would have enough finances for their expenses at the onset of the principality.<sup>45</sup> This further suggests the prince's irresponsibility and his spending. It also shows his inability to govern such a principality, since financing his officials should have been one of his first acts as the Prince of Aquitaine. This appreciation of clothing and jewelry seems to be an inherited trait, as both Edward III and Isabella spent lavish amounts of money on fine cloths and jewels, for themselves and for others. However, the prince's spending affected the finances of many living in Aquitaine. This was extremely difficult for those who had fought against the prince during the previous campaigns when many nobles' lands were destroyed and for those who still owed ransoms to the prince or others in the English nobility.

Yet another problem the prince had to contend with was the ever threatening presence of the Great Companies. These were men who, after serving with their lords on various campaigns, decided to stay in France and plunder the countryside. They included such men as unemployed foot soldiers and archers, professional criminals, the poor gentry, and occasionally, knights.<sup>46</sup> The core of these Companies was formed mainly by Gascons unable to return to a normal lifestyle, having been involved in warfare for so long. During the prince's tenure in Aquitaine, the Great Company that should have concerned him most was Seguin de Badefol's company, which began its incursion in Narbonne and continued through Languedoc towards Toulouse and Carcassone.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Green, *Edward, the Black Prince*, 119.

<sup>46</sup>Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Volume Two*, 360-361.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 472-473.

Badefol was the son of the lord of Badefol (near Dordogne), who had probably served in one of the Albret companies, and made a name for himself, leading one of the largest companies in France.<sup>48</sup> These companies were a plague, not just in France, but in Italy and Spain as well. Eventually, lords would seek to hire these men in their own wars in order to put the Companies to better use. This would become a problem for England, particularly in the case of Robert Knolles and Hugh Calvely, who served in Bertrand du Guesclin's company that aided Enrique of Trastamara in taking Pedro the Cruel's Castilian throne.<sup>49</sup> Edward III had forbidden Englishmen from interfering in this fight for the Castilian throne, and especially from aiding Enrique as England was an ally of Pedro. The fact that these men did not have allegiance to any particular ruler made them all the more dangerous, and the prince would need to see to the defenses of his principality, especially when he departed on the Spanish campaign in 1366. Despite these problems, Edward appears to have been uninterested in resolving them. In fact, it was the king who thought about protecting the principality by making Chandos constable. Even though the king held the principality, the Black Prince, as its lord, should have seen to its defenses.

However, Edward did at times display an interest in diplomacy, though not to the extent of his father. This seems surprising as the prince very rarely had a chance to practice diplomacy. As he aged, the Black Prince appeared to become less interested in mediation, preferring action, much like in his military days. One instance was his role as an arbitrator between Charles of Blois and John of Montfort. These two men were claimants to the duchy of Brittany, and though they had split the duchy in two, with Blois in the northeast and Montfort in the southwest, the decision concerning the title and

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 472.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 544.

peerage for the duchy was to be submitted to the kings of England and France.<sup>50</sup> Despite having agreed to comply with the terms set by the kings, Blois quickly repudiated their decision, staking his claim to the duchy on behalf of his wife, Jean of Penthièvre. Due to Blois' insistence on his claim to the duchy, many of the Breton nobility had abandoned him, thereby causing him to search for help elsewhere. Blois was forced to turn to Edward, due to the overwhelming support of Montfort by the English, though the prince also had a connection to Blois' rival claimant.<sup>51</sup> The two appeared before the prince at Poitiers, and many of his principal officers attended the petition. However, in the classic style of the Black Prince, he withheld his judgment for such a long period of time that the two opposing sides eventually went to war against each other, which resulted in Blois' death.<sup>52</sup> The English then lost Montfort as an ally, for he would quickly defect to Charles V.<sup>53</sup> Despite Edward's decisiveness in battle, it appears he was unable to make decisions for the government of the principality, causing many to wonder whether the prince would make a worthy successor to the English king.

On 8 April 1364, King Jean II passed away in London, after returning to fulfill the terms of his ransom. No longer having the affable King of France on the throne made things more difficult for the English, and especially the prince, when the dauphin became the new king. Unlike Jean II, Charles V was a hard man, having suffered a great deal in

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 517.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 520.

<sup>53</sup>Léopold Delisle, ed., *Mandements et Actes Divers de Charles V (1364-1380)*, (1874), 58.

France during his father's absence and built a strong animosity towards the English.<sup>54</sup> He was also a very cautious and patient man (unlike the Black Prince), and waited for his chance to interfere in the principality and rid France of the English. In Charles V's *Mandements* in the year 1364, he often refers to the Black Prince as *notre très cher et amé neveu*<sup>55</sup> but these conventional salutations mask a deeper animosity. Once upon the throne, rumors began to spread regarding the renewal of the war on behalf of Charles. He soon began to accuse the English king and his son of making open war on his subjects, though it was actually Charles V who brought the war to England by attacking Gascony.<sup>56</sup> His address towards the prince changed, and the dear and beloved nephew was dropped in 1371, leaving reference to the prince as only *prince de Galles*.<sup>57</sup> Charles, believing his position was secure, began to renew the war against England, with the help of the unsatisfied Gascon nobility. This was something the English wished to avoid at all costs. They had received a great amount from the Treaty of Brétigny, and Edward III had become accustomed to living and ruling peacefully in England. Unfortunately, the Black Prince was not known as a tolerant man, and his sometimes violent character would eventually lead to his ruin.

It is not precisely known why the prince would leave Aquitaine for another campaign after having spent approximately four years in the area. It seems that, much

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<sup>54</sup>After the 1355 campaign, France was thrown into a chaotic state, and the dauphin was a virtual prisoner in France from 1356 to 1358. It would not be unusual for Charles to attribute this disorder to the English.

<sup>55</sup>*Mandements*, 58.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, 269. *Nous aient commencé et fait guerre ouverte et à noz subjez et facent encores . . . pour eulx, en tirant et rançonnant, pillant et robant noz subgez . . .*

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, 437.

like Richard the Lionheart, Edward preferred to be on a battlefield rather than holding court. It is clear that the prince's greatest successes occurred on military campaigns, while his failures tend to be in the realm of politics. Though England was pledged to assist Pedro the Cruel of Castile should the need arrive (this had been established during the proposed marriage of Joan, the Black Prince's sister, and the son of Pedro), it appears that the prince was somewhat eager to begin a new military campaign. David Green has even suggested that the appeal of a military campaign was so great for Edward that he possibly knew (and chose to ignore) that Pedro would not be able to reimburse the large sums of money spent on the Spanish campaign.<sup>58</sup> This seems to be the character of the Black Prince: seeking adventure rather than the mundane life of politics. Being paid to go on the campaign has even caused some to compare the prince to a mercenary.<sup>59</sup>

Before the prince and his army had even left the principality, the expenses had risen from 550,000 florins to 1,659,000 florins (approximately £276,500). Though the prince would have a close ally in Pedro, should he be reinstated, he would have to leave the principality vulnerable to possible attacks by Edward's enemies, including the French king, Charles V.<sup>60</sup> With a good number of the Gascon nobility serving with the Black Prince, very few remained in Aquitaine for its defense. This does not seem to have concerned Edward, who appeared quite eager, not only to reinstate an ally, but to try and retain the glory of

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<sup>58</sup>Green, *The Black Prince*, 93.

<sup>59</sup>Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Volume Two*, 558.

<sup>60</sup>Green, *The Black Prince*, 95. There had been an alliance between Louis of Anjou, Enrique the Bastard, and Charles V to launch attacks on Navarre, as Charles of Navarre was an 'ally' to the prince, as well as Aquitaine.

his previous military successes.<sup>61</sup> A large amount of the money used for the campaign would be from the *fouage*, or hearth tax, though after the campaign, it became more difficult to collect the tax.

The imposition of the *fouage*, became one of the main complaints against the prince by the Gascon nobility, and the catalyst for the revolt that eventually took place against Edward. It was first established in 1364 and was set at 25 *sous* per hearth.<sup>62</sup> According to Richard Barber, it was the most burdensome of all the taxes the prince placed upon the principality (as well as the most profitable), and it did not take long for resistance to occur.<sup>63</sup> The tax caused a great amount of pressure on the finances of the Gascon nobility for it took away their ability to tax their own holdings, therefore taking funds away from their treasury. It was also in general a difficult tax to collect. Due to the only recent merging of the principality, certain areas had not been accustomed to a collective tax. However, most areas were willing to pay the taxes, as good will was felt towards Edward for his assistance in interfering with Armagnac's policies as Jean II's lieutenant in Languedoc in 1355. The only noble to speak against the 1364 *fouage* was the count of Armagnac himself, and this was mainly due to his lack of finances. Armagnac's lands had been attacked by the Black Prince during the 1355 campaign, and his rivalry with Gaston Phoebus caused a further depletion of the count's coffers. It is possible the other nobles knew France's position was not strong enough for complaint and therefore kept silent. It was not until the Spanish campaign that the resistance

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<sup>61</sup>Though the prince would be successful at Najera, the cost would be great and his reputation tarnished. It was also at this point that the prince contracted chronic dysentery, which would eventually take his life.

<sup>62</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 181. One *livre* was worth 20 *sous*, and one *sou* was worth 12 *deniers* (Green, *Edward, the Black Prince*, xiii).

<sup>63</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 181.



towards the prince's taxes would grow. After the battle of Najèra, the prince returned to Aquitaine with very little to show for his success. Pedro the Cruel, after being restored to the Castilian throne by the prince, was unable to reimburse him despite his promises and Edward returned to the principality in desperate need of money.<sup>64</sup>

After the 1366-1367 campaign, the prince convened the Estates of Aquitaine to discuss the *fouage*. Edward was in dire financial straits, gaining very little from selling Pedro's jewels and obtaining the installments of the ransoms of Bertrand du Guesclin, Arnoul d'Audrehem, and the count of Denia.<sup>65</sup> The amount for the tax was proposed to be set at an annual rate of 10 *sous* (a yield of 27,000 *livre bordelais*)<sup>66</sup> for a five-year period, until the debt was paid.<sup>67</sup> This was actually a lower rate than that set for the hearth tax in 1364, which is somewhat surprising. Despite the number of years the 1364 hearth tax was collected, the prince's coffers were so depleted that he would need an extraordinary amount of taxes to resupply his treasury. Edward was known for his extravagant spending, and to propose a tax that was actually lower than what it had previously been does not seem like a typical response for the prince. It is possible that Edward was adjusting to governing the principality and felt that a large tax would only incite rebellion. He also knew that a large tax was never well received, as seen by the previous taxes in England during the war, and it was received with less enthusiasm during peace time. This shows the Black Prince knew something of the atmosphere of

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<sup>64</sup>Pedro would be murdered in 1369 by supporters of Enrique of Trastamara, placing Edward in a very difficult position.

<sup>65</sup>Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Volume Two*, 568.

<sup>66</sup>£1 sterling was worth 5-6 *l.b.* (Green, *Edward, the Black Prince*, xiii).

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*

the principality, though perhaps not the extent of it. However, the estates had been unable to agree to the tax, due mainly to the nobility. These men had lost money in the 1368 campaign and felt the tax was inappropriate since the prince owed many of them money. The Estates had to be adjourned due to the inability to make a decision, and when it reconvened in January 1368, it was without the nobility.<sup>68</sup> This made the ability to come to a decision easier and the tax was established. This decision would change the atmosphere in the already tense principality, and would even cause a supposed rift between the prince and Sir John Chandos, who soon after the exaction of the tax left for his estate in Normandy.<sup>69</sup> Despite the decrease in the *fouage*, Edward received a great deal of criticism, even among the English. The *Anonimale Chronicle* relates that *la quel grevouse raunsone fuist appelle focage*.<sup>70</sup> The author of this chronicle was accusing the prince of holding the people of Aquitaine as hostages for his own financial gain, a very strong accusation against the man who had been held in such high esteem by the English. Though reference to the *fouage* as a ransom is somewhat extreme, it is a classic example of the feelings felt towards the prince concerning this tax, and surprising that it comes from an English source, for Edward is often praised by the English chroniclers despite his many faults.

The prince's taxation of Aquitaine after the Spanish campaign was the breaking point for many of the Gascon people. Lord Arnaud-Amanieu d'Albret, one of the lords

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 569.

<sup>69</sup>Jean Froissart, *The Chronicles of Jean Froissart*, trans. John Bouchier, Lord Berbers (London: Macmillan and Co., 1924), 186. "Sir John Chandos . . . was contrary to this opinion and would gladly that the prince would have left it: but when he saw that the prince would not leave his purpose, to the intent that he would bear no blame nor reproach in the matter, he took his leave of the prince and made his excuse to go to Normandy . . ."

<sup>70</sup>Galbraith, *The Anonimale Chronicle*, 56.

with whom Edward often quarreled, was the driving force behind the complaints made to Charles V concerning the Black Prince. Albret had been an adherent of the French king, despite his father's alliance with the English, and the war in France had proved financially rewarding for Albret.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, he had been demanding his annual pension of £1,000 which the lords of Albret had been receiving since 1350, but which was now in arrears.<sup>72</sup> Though there is a lack of records for Gascony during this time period, it is safe to say this issue had not been resolved. The prince was in financial trouble and was unable, or perhaps unwilling, to pay this pension. Albret had also been involved in the battle at Launac in 1362, and he and his two younger brothers and a cousin had been captured along with Armagnac.<sup>73</sup> The ransoms Albret had to pay for himself and his three other family members after Launac proved to be too great, despite his previous success in the war against England. The Spanish campaign only further depleted Albret's funds, who was the "leader" of the Gascons during the campaign,<sup>74</sup> as well as Armagnac's, and the new *fouage* placed on the principality angered those nobles who were suffering financially, especially after their contributions to the Spanish campaign.

However, Albret found an ally in Charles V, and in 1369, the French king summoned Edward to Paris to answer these complaints.<sup>75</sup> The prince was very ill at this

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<sup>71</sup>Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Volume Two*, 570.

<sup>72</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 208.

<sup>73</sup>Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Volume Two*, 570.

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*, 546.

<sup>75</sup>*Archives Historiques de Département de la Gironde*, vol. 1 (1859-1932), microfiche, 157. Albret's defection to King Charles V cost the French treasury a total of 578,000 francs, including indemnities owed to Edward III and the marriage dowry of the French king's sister-in-law.

time, and angered by the duplicity of the French king, who had recently sent an embassy to England to settle the terms of the Treaty of Brétigny.<sup>76</sup> Charles had also been aiding certain other nobles in Gascony, bribing them in the same way the prince had upon his arrival in Aquitaine. Charles helped pay ransoms, such as that of the lord of Audenham, as well as hearing appeals against the prince.<sup>77</sup> The prince's illness left him in a feeble state, which, for a man who had lived a healthy and active lifestyle, only increased his anger at the situation. Charles V would have heard about the Black Prince's illness and most certainly used it as a way to ensure he would not come to Paris, thereby giving him reason to take the principality. Edward's infirmity did not stop him from making a quick response that seemed impossible for a man in his state of health, but typical for his personality. He was reported to be so angered by the situation that he replied,

Lords, I think, from what I hear, that the French believe I am dead; but if God gives me comfort and I can get up from this bed, I will cause them harm enough yet, because God knows that they complain of me now without good cause.<sup>78</sup>

He also threatened to come to Paris with an army, "their helmets on their heads,"<sup>79</sup> in order to prevent the French from taking the principality. This is a typical response for the Black Prince, who preferred to choose action over diplomacy. Regrettably, the prince was more talk than action at this point in his life. Once the French entered into his territory, he was not as able to stop the invasion now that he was virtually bedridden. In a few years, English control in France would lessen, as many of the Gascon nobility quickly defected to the French king.

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<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 219.

<sup>77</sup>*Mandements*, 251, 276.

<sup>78</sup>Barber, ed, "Chandos Herald: Life of the Black Prince," 135.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

The French king believed it was well within his rights, according to the treaty, to hear the appeals against the prince.<sup>80</sup> He also firmly believed it was the English who had violated the treaty by renewing the war, despite French movements in Aquitaine.<sup>81</sup> By 1369, Charles was providing financial aid to the count of Armagnac, in the amount of 100,000 francs, to defend his territory against Edward *pour les grans griefs et dommages que lui faisoient Edwart d'Angleterre, [et le prince de Gales], lors duc de Guienne*.<sup>82</sup> It was also very rare for Charles V to call Edward “Prince of Aquitaine,” but instead he preferred to refer to him as “prince of Wales” or “duke of Guienne.” This is an interesting tactic, for though he claims to follow the guidelines of the treaty of Brétigny, he preferred not to acknowledge the land as a separate principality. Charles V had never supported the treaty, and though he would use it to his advantage, he would also work his way around its terms. Were he to recognize the principality of Aquitaine, he would not be able to claim power over the prince of Aquitaine, though he could over the duke of Guienne.

Along with the quick loss of land, the prince would have to face the death of two of his most important officials and dearest friends, John Chandos and James Audley. James Audley retired in 1369 to the Vendée after contracting an illness, quite possibly the plague. Audley was a respected knight, well-known for his chivalry and honor, and was mourned by English and French alike, for his death marked the beginning of the end for chivalric ideals. John Chandos, who had recently taken Audley’s position as seneschal of

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<sup>80</sup>R. Delachenal, ed., *Chronique des Règnes de Jean II et de Charles V*, vol. III (1920), 144.

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*, 145. *Le roy d'Angleterre en Pontieu, et le prince de Gales en Guienne, procedoient par voise de guettre et de fait.*

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, 146.

Poitou upon his death, had mounted a large raid in Anjou, and in January 1370 met with a small band of French soldiers outside Lussac-les-Châteaux. Though the English were victorious, Chandos had not been wearing a visor during the skirmish and was stabbed in the face. Chandos died the following day, and despite their supposed falling out, was mourned by the Black Prince.<sup>83</sup> The loss of these two men was a devastating blow to the prince (both emotionally and politically), and his life would continue to deteriorate.

The combination of French invasions into Aquitaine and the deaths of his closest friends caused his anger to be great when the town of Limoges defected to the French. The betrayal was felt more strongly by Edward due to the fact that the Bishop of Limoges, Jean de Cros, who had initiated the desertion of the town, had been a trusted friend and godfather to the prince's eldest son, Edward of Angoulême. Loyalty was a chivalric value held in the highest regard (particularly by the prince, who was considered the flower of chivalry), and the treachery of a person held in strict confidence would certainly create a sense of anger in the deceived party. Regrettably, the betrayal of one chivalric value led to the abuse of another, for the prince attacked the town in a brutal fashion, displaying no pity to the inhabitants inside.

Edward and his army marched from Angoulême to Limoges in 1371, a sixty-mile march in a week, with the prince carried the entire way on a litter.<sup>84</sup> Though the prince may have had the right to attack the inhabitants inside Limoges without mercy, as the town was within his principality and therefore his to punish as he saw fit, this would only be appropriate if the guidelines for a medieval siege had been observed. If the citizens

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<sup>83</sup>Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 222.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*, 224. The prince would also conduct the siege from the litter.

had not been willing to negotiate with the prince, he would have had the right to plunder and slaughter the inhabitants of the fallen town. However, as the prince does not seem to have followed these regulations, the brutality inflicted on Limoges should not have taken place. Although Froissart's claim that "Neither man nor woman was heeded, but all who could be found were put to the sword, including many who were in no way to blame,"<sup>85</sup> is most likely exaggerated,<sup>86</sup> those of the lower class were most likely not granted the same mercy that the noblemen in the town were given. The French knights in the town were allowed to fight single hand-to-hand combat with a group of the Black Prince's knights, including John of Gaunt, and upon being defeated by Edward's knights, were treated according to their station and did not receive the same punishment as their compatriots, whom they had earlier advised to hold out against the English invaders rather than surrender.<sup>87</sup> This one instance has tarnished the prince's reputation for chivalric behavior, causing censure from his contemporaries, as well as from modern scholars, calling into question the prince's "honorable behavior" on the battlefield.<sup>88</sup>

The prince returned to Angoulême to find that his eldest son, who had never been in the best of health, had died. To many, the French invasion into Aquitaine, the betrayal of Jean de Cros, his own illness, and the loss of Chandos, Audley and his eldest son

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<sup>85</sup>Froissart, *Chronicles*, 178.

<sup>86</sup>Froissart, along with many of the Black Prince's contemporaries, very rarely spoke ill of his chivalrous character, and his overall descriptions towards the prince are so full of admiration that his accounts are questionable as to their historical authenticity. However, due to his negative comments concerning this particular events, it is possible that this account could be factual, though some, such as Richard Barber, believe Froissart was merely portraying what was expected to happen to the rebellious town, not what actually happened (*Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, 225).

<sup>87</sup>Green, *Edward, the Black Prince*, 90.

<sup>88</sup>Many scholars, such as Jonathan Sumption, question the prince's chivalric decline after the acquisition of Aquitaine. His behavior does seem to change, whether this is due to the hostile atmosphere in France or the prince's declining health upon his return from Spain.

might have been interpreted as signs from God that the prince's time in France was over, and it is quite possible that Edward felt the same way. His way of dealing with the defections of the Gascon nobility was through tyranny rather than diplomacy, and control of Aquitaine quickly slipped through his fingers. Used to being obeyed due to his background as a royal son and military commander, the prince refused to tolerate such behavior, and due to his debilitating illness, his patience was shortened. It is quite possible that Edward was oblivious to the unhappiness of the Gascon nobles until his return from Spain. However, rather than negotiating with the nobility, the prince preferred flattery, and when that was not successful, despotism. With his failures glaring behind him, Edward decided to take his family back to England and sailed for Plymouth in April 1372. He then surrendered the principality to Edward III (whose health was also beginning to deteriorate), who then gave it to the prince's brother, John of Gaunt, though only as a duchy.

Edward, the once victorious knight and conqueror of the French, was forced to leave his principality with very little to show for his efforts. Despite his many military achievements, the prince was unable to handle the instability of a foreign and hostile principality. Aquitaine was on the verge of economic ruin, having also suffered through the grand *chevauchée* of 1355, and despite its general alliance with England, much of the nobility of the area was clearly French and unable to cope with an enemy prince. However, despite this situation, Edward had been educated in politics and should have been able to bring the principality under his control. So what went wrong? Edward was not a very good diplomat, having very little experience in the area, and was unwilling to negotiate with the Gascon nobility. Though he might have used his charismatic nature



and his love for gift-giving, the nobility saw this as a waste of their money and tended to be unimpressed with the prince's generosity. Also, the prince, rather than cooperating with the nobility, chose to show his power in many ways, but especially in his court, where the Gascons would have to go through much just to have an audience with Edward. This can almost be seen as the prince's way of snubbing the nobility for allying with the French. This would be in Edward's character, for he was not a humble man, but tended to enjoy his reputation from the 1355 campaign, during which he defeated many of the Gascon nobility. Rather than dealing in diplomacy when it came to the nobility, he often treated them with disdain (unless he needed them, particularly financially), an unwise move to make in a foreign land.

Politics in England were becoming unstable due to the failing health of both the king and his heir. The king's mental health had begun to deteriorate around 1374, and it is possible that he suffered a series of strokes, which would explain his decreasing awareness, though this has not been proven.<sup>89</sup> This decline could particularly be seen after the death of Queen Philippa in August 1369. The king and queen had been a loving couple, and her death had been devastating for him. Edward III sought solace in his mistress, Alice Perrers, lady in waiting for the queen since 1359, who was seen by many in the government as conniving and manipulative. It is possible that she had once been married to a Janyn Perrers, a man of reasonable substance, who died in 1361.<sup>90</sup> Little is known about her ancestry, despite the accusations of her low birth and unattractiveness (these were most likely propaganda tools used by the chroniclers of the time period, who

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<sup>89</sup>Mortimer, *The Perfect King*, 378-379.

<sup>90</sup>W. Mark Ormrod, "Who was Alice Perrers?" *Chaucer Review: A Journal of Medieval Studies and Literary Criticism*, vol. 43, no. 3 (2006): 224.

showed little love for Perrers).<sup>91</sup> Edward III had given her a royal manor, as well as some of the queen's jewels, which surprised many in his court and caused rumors to spread about her dangerous influence over the king. These rumors would continue with the appointment of several of her allies, including William Latimer, the king's chamberlain, John Neville, the steward of the household. Richard Lyons, a prominent London merchant and friend to Perrers, also became a permanent fixture in the king's court.<sup>92</sup> These men were all under suspicion of corruption and of being a bad influence over the king, and in April 1376, Parliament convened to address this problem.

The Good Parliament of 1376 had originally been called due to the renewal of the war with France. Edward III was in need of a subsidy in order to continue the war, but the Commons had more pressing issues to deliberate.<sup>93</sup> The hold Alice Perrers and her associates had upon the king was a serious cause of concern for the Parliament, and the Commons would not grant the subsidy without discussing what should be done about Lyons, Latimer, and Perrers. It was believed that the money from the taxes would not go to the military as planned, but would instead line the pockets of these corrupt officials, especially Latimer.<sup>94</sup> The Commons called a council consisting of two archbishops, fourteen bishops, four barons, and four earls whose purpose was to make sure

certain abuses and defects had been corrected, and . . . certain persons who seemed to have impoverished the king and the kingdom, to have vilely tarnished

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 219.

<sup>92</sup>George Holmes, *The Good Parliament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 5.

<sup>93</sup>Thomas Walsingham believed the knights of the Commons were "divinely inspired" to deliberate the issue of the king's council.

<sup>94</sup>"Medieval Sourcebook: Thomas Walsingham: The Good Parliament of 1376 (excerpt from *Chronicon Angliae*," (Paul Halsall: 1998, accessed 27 May 2007), available at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1376goodParliament.html>; Internet.

his fame and greatly to have diminished his power, should have been eliminated, and their excesses properly punished according to their kind.<sup>95</sup>

Sir Peter de la Mare, steward to Edmund Mortimer, earl of March, headed this investigation into the king's council. His attacks were aimed directly at Richard Lyons and William Latimer, whom he accused of arranging license to evade the staple by the exportation of wool, arranging a large loan to the king and charging him a high interest rate, extortion carried out at Bécherel by Latimer, and the fault of Latimer for the fall of Bécherel and St. Sauver. It was agreed that these men would be removed from their positions and Alice Perrers would be removed from the king's court. The Good Parliament was the first to use the act of impeachment, to allow the role of the Speaker to become more evolved, and to have possibly conducted some of its proceedings in English rather than French. One reason for this could be that the people in general were taking more of an interest in what the Commons did, for it often influenced the people's way of life. The actions of Parliament were noticed by the English, especially now, for the taxation placed upon the people was becoming suffocating, and it would be Parliament's decision whether or not these taxes would continue and even increase.

The prince took very little part in the Good Parliament, for he would die in the middle of its session. However, it is believed he made one last attempt to redeem himself in the realm of politics by attending the Parliament. According to Thomas Walsingham, Edward favored the Commons position, perhaps seeing for himself the corruption in his father's court and seeking to repair the damage and his father's good name. However, John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster seems to have been against this type of parliamentary interference in royal matters, and is often portrayed by Walsingham as a villain as well as

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<sup>95</sup>Ibid.; Galbraith, *The Anonimale Chronicle*, 79.

possibly being involved in Latimer's corruption of the government.<sup>96</sup> Walsingham also describes Gaunt as being somewhat of a coward, who would not oppose the prince and in turn the Commons, until his brother passed away in June.<sup>97</sup> Gaunt was clearly not loved by the people, who often saw him as harsh and greedy, particularly when pressing his claim to the kingdom of Castile. It seems Gaunt sought to have his own kingdom, as he would not inherit his father's, not terribly unusual for a king's younger son, though many in England saw his actions as arrogant and tended to dislike him. This type of behavior could be the source for the rumors that Gaunt and Edward actually hated each other; Edward because Gaunt took over the government of Aquitaine after his own failure, and Gaunt for the succession of Edward's son Richard to Edward III's throne. There does not seem to be any basis for this rumor, as Edward summoned both his father and Gaunt to his deathbed and "commended his wife and son, whom he loved greatly, to [Edward III and Gaunt] and begged them to help them."<sup>98</sup>

A clergyman and admirer of the Black Prince had once preached a sermon in 1368 in his presence at Périgueux, during which he compared him to the son of God;<sup>99</sup> Edward later replied to a friend, "fortune may strike him down at any moment, and all his famous deeds will then be forgotten and reduced to nothing."<sup>100</sup> Though Edward was referring to the overzealous flatterer, it was a prophetic statement of the end of the prince's career in Aquitaine. The prince passed away on 8 June 1376, a shell of his

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<sup>96</sup>Ibid.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid.

<sup>98</sup>Barber, "Chandos Herald: Life of the Black Prince," 139.

<sup>99</sup>G. Mollat *Vitae Papparum Avenionensium*, vol. I, (1916) 411. *Qui episcopus eundem principem, in sermone, in quibusdam Filio Dei comparavit.*

<sup>100</sup>Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Volume Two*, 568.

former self. The once great military leader was bedridden, slowly wasting away. People would mourn the loss of what many believed would have been the next great ruler in England. He was admired by the English for his chivalry, and his failures would be put to the side and eventually forgotten. Believing the prince would follow in his father's successful footsteps in military and political endeavors, the people chose to forget the bungled affair of Aquitaine, which was virtually lost within a decade of its acquisition. Though he will forever be remembered as the flower of chivalry, it is important to remember his failures as an administrator. It seems that the Black Prince passed along many of his bad characteristics to his son Richard II, whose reign was quite troubled and ended in his deposition. The similarities between the two men are striking, and cause one to wonder how successful Edward truly would have been had he survived his father.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Conclusion

“A prince must have no other objective, no other thought, nor take up any profession but that of war, its methods and its discipline, for that is the only art expected of a ruler.”<sup>1</sup> Though these words would come from a man born almost a century after Edward’s death, they are synonymous with his lifestyle. Growing up in the atmosphere of warfare, it is a small wonder that the prince would choose a lifestyle where glory, laud, and honor were often associated with his name. It is not surprising that Edward was referred to as “the flower of chivalry,” for his true passion lay with the chivalric honor of the knights associated with himself and his father. These men achieved their fame through the art of battle, and the Black Prince was no different. However, Edward ignored another great characteristic needed in a successful ruler: diplomacy. Without this art, Edward III would not have had such long-lasting success as king of England. King Edward’s ability and willingness to negotiate with Parliament, despite his occasional displays of temper, solidified his success as a monarch. This was a characteristic the Black Prince did not possess.

Despite his lack of success in his administration of Aquitaine, the Black Prince was able to continue his influence over English government even after his death. Many knights who had once served in his household, including Sir Simon Burley, Sir Richard Abberbury, and Sir Guichard d’Angle, served as Richard’s tutors. Burley also served on the young king’s council. John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, and Thomas of Woodstock,

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<sup>1</sup>Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 58.

earl of Buckingham, Richard II's uncles, were an influence in the king's policies. Unfortunately, many of his council's decisions were called into question by Parliament, and the parliament proceeded to appoint its own officials to advise the king. Whether it was due to the Black Prince's former officials or the decisions of his uncles, the legacy left by Edward was tarnished. It would continue to be so upon the Peasant's Revolt of 1381, which saw the chaos of a peasant uprising and the mishandling of the situation by Richard II's.<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting to compare the two individuals and their handling of certain situations. The most glaring similarity between the two is their way of managing the actions of rebellious vassals. Both seemed to have very little tolerance for those who opposed their rule and often resorted to violence in order to put down opposition. Though many attribute the actions of Edward after the Spanish campaign to his illness, his personality was very much like Edward III, who was quick to anger when something did not go as he planned. This characteristic was instilled in his eldest son, who threatened to march on Paris after being summoned to answer for his actions towards the Gascon nobility, and proceeded to besiege and destroy the rebellious town of Limoges. Richard II would continue this trait, though he would be more subtle.

Edward and Richard were equally concerned with the behavior of their court towards their status. The Black Prince forced his French noblemen to wait hours or days before receiving them, and then forcing them to kneel before him for extreme lengths of time. Richard, in the same way, believed his title deserved certain signs of respect, including kneeling before the king should he even glance in a person's direction. He also

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<sup>2</sup>Wat Tyler was killed in the king's presence and many of the promises made by Richard II to the rebellious peasants were not fulfilled.

expected to be called “royal majesty” or “high majesty” rather than “highness,” which had been the previous form of address for the king. Both of these men could not grasp the concept of lordship. Rather than treating their vassals with respect as befitting their station, they chose to alienate the aristocracy by exaggerating the demands of courtly behavior.

However, despite their similarities, there was an enormous pressure on Richard II to be a great king in order to reflect the prominence of his ancestry. His grandfather had ruled for half a century, had been militarily successful for most of the war with France, had been known for his reliance on Parliament, and was, to some, the savior of the English following Edward II’s deposition and abdication. Richard’s father was a great military leader, a classic example of chivalry and honor, and a man well-loved by the English people. The characteristics which made Edward III and Edward of Woodstock so successful in their lifetime were sadly lacking in Richard II, who followed more in his great-grandfather’s footsteps and would eventually lead face his own deposition.

The Black Prince will never be remembered for his administrative skills, or lack thereof, but will instead be forever known as a brilliant military strategist and one of the last remaining noblemen who followed the code of chivalry. Though this may be due to the lack of sources for Edward’s administration in both England and Aquitaine, it is most likely due to his success as a military leader, for he achieved fame at an early age during the 1346 campaign at Crécy, and he achieved a resounding success in the 1355 *chevauchée*, ending with the capture of the French king. It was the characteristic his chroniclers wrote about, either forgiving or forgetting his disastrous administration in Aquitaine, and it is what historians of the Black Prince today tend to focus on. Despite



modern historians' desire to focus more on the negative than the positive aspects of an historical figure, the Black Prince's failures tend to be glossed over rather than emphasized. It is almost as if criticizing the Black Prince dishonors him in some way. It is also possible that, as the prince did not succeed his father, Edward's mistakes will never be as important as those of his son. Because he died before becoming Edward IV, his administration will never be as important as Richard II's, despite the similarities between the two.

It is important that the Black Prince's failings in his administration be emphasized rather than ignored. Had the prince survived his father, his administration may have been much like the one in Aquitaine. On the other hand, his supposed alliance with the Commons in the Good Parliament suggests his ability to cooperate with Parliament, an important characteristic in the English kings. Though it is questionable whether the Black Prince supported the Commons' investigation into the king's council (for he did not seem the type to abide men questioning the authority of the monarch), he does have a history of relying on his officials and would have most likely been able to work with the Parliament. However, his personality tended to be more like that of his grandfather and his son, rather than his father. As his father had a fairly long reign (fifty years) while his grandfather and son were both deposed, it is not unreasonable to question the prince's success as king should he have survived Edward III.

The Black Prince will forever be synonymous with his achievement in battle during the war with France. Even his epithet most likely derives from his actions during the war. As noted earlier, it is possible that the prince was labeled "black" due to his cavalier attitude towards the French peasantry, particularly during the 1355 *chevauchée*,

as well as the siege of Limoges. As this color was rarely used in a positive context, it is understandable that the Black Prince would come in the form of negative French propaganda. Though it had originally been believed that this name came from the black armor supposedly worn by the prince, there has been nothing to support this theory.

Edward, the Black Prince, was quite simply a product of his time. He had grown up in the midst of warfare, when conflicts with Scotland and France were commonplace. He had been raised and groomed to be the future king of England, though that would never come to pass. He had sought and won his fame alongside his father at Crécy, and then on his own at Poitiers and Najera. One of Edward's more significant flaws would have to be his lack of success in Aquitaine. However, this might have had less to do with the prince than with the ill-timed acquisition of the principality. Aquitaine had never been united under one ruler and its long duration without a lord made it a hostile environment for English takeover. This does not excuse the prince, who, rather than seeing this fairly obvious problem, chose quick and complete domination over the area, and the enforcement of his idea of courtly behavior, though it might have been allowed in England, was not the way to win over this foreign territory. Though the prince would try to redeem himself through his association with the Good Parliament, it was too late. Thus the Black Prince should be known, not only as a chivalrous figure with great military triumphs, but also as the man who lost the land men had fought and died for over a period of over twenty years, losing it in less than a decade. Though the English would still have some territory in France, including Calais which would remain in English hands until 1558, it is a testimony to the prince's inadequate administration that the new principality would slip through his fingers in such a short period of time.

## APPENDIX

### Related Figures

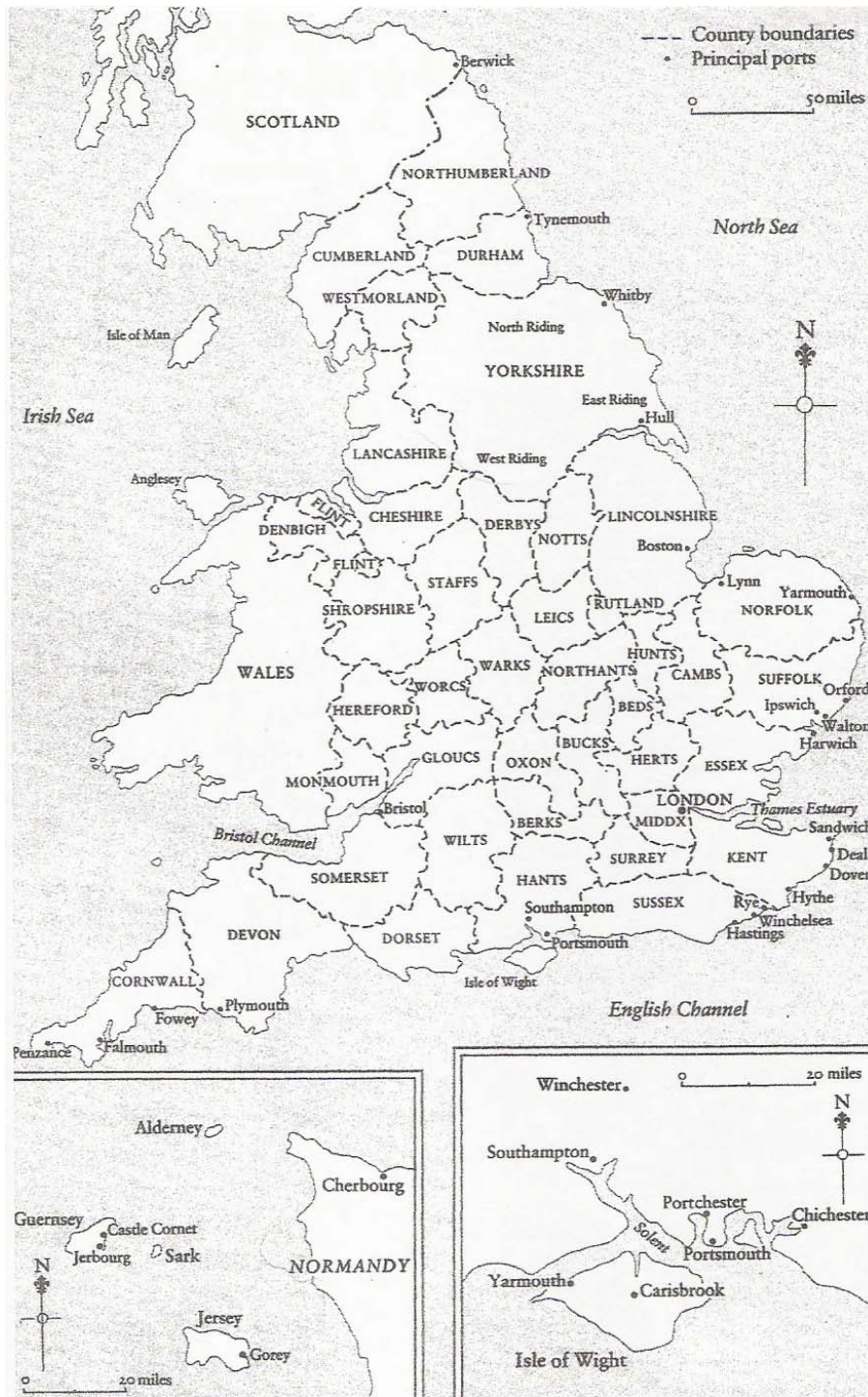


Figure 1 England and Wales and the Channel Island derived from *The Hundred Years War: Volume One, Trial by Battle*

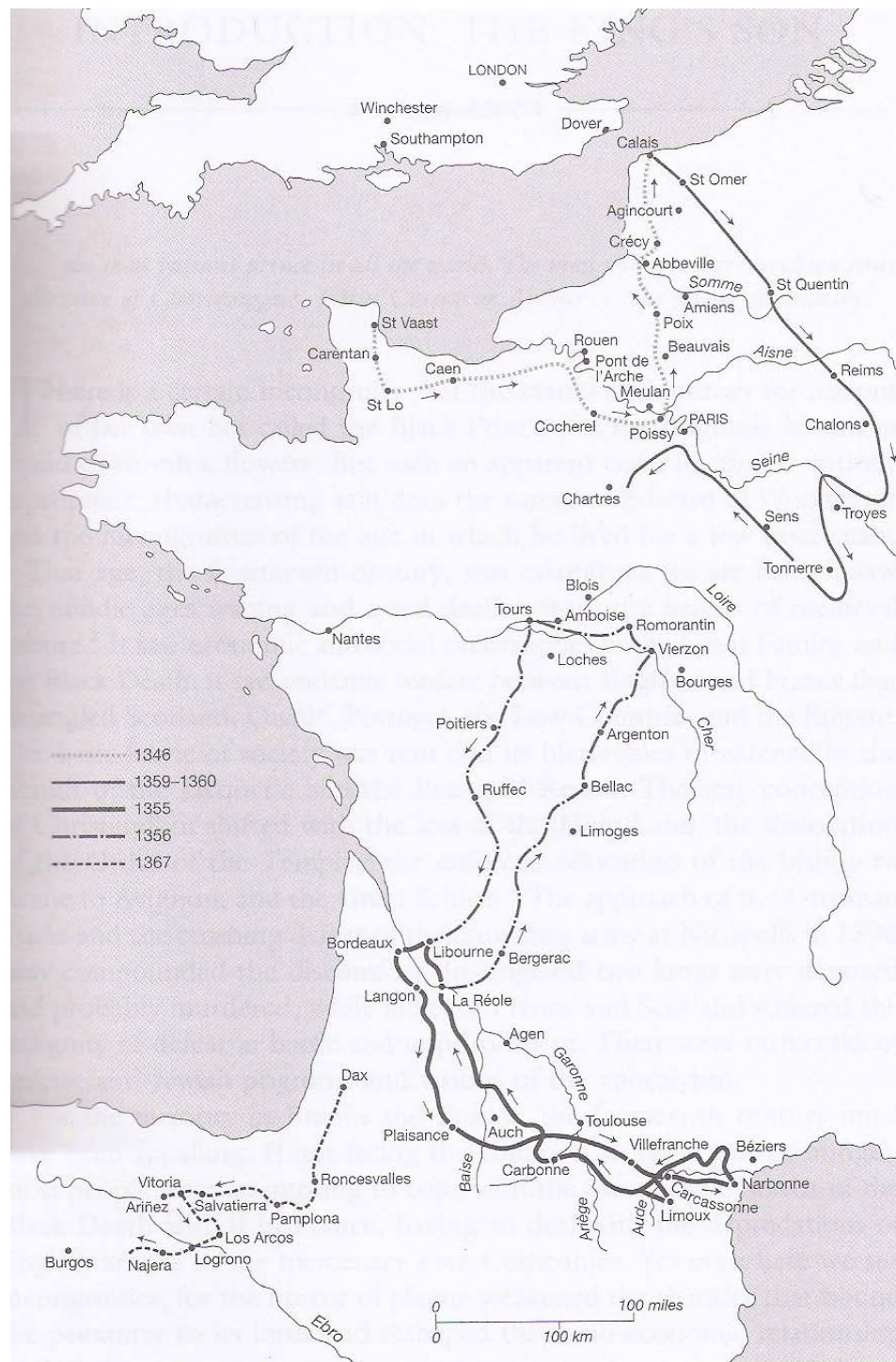


Figure 2 The Prince's Campaigns in France and Spain derived from *Edward, the Black Prince: Power in Medieval Europe*

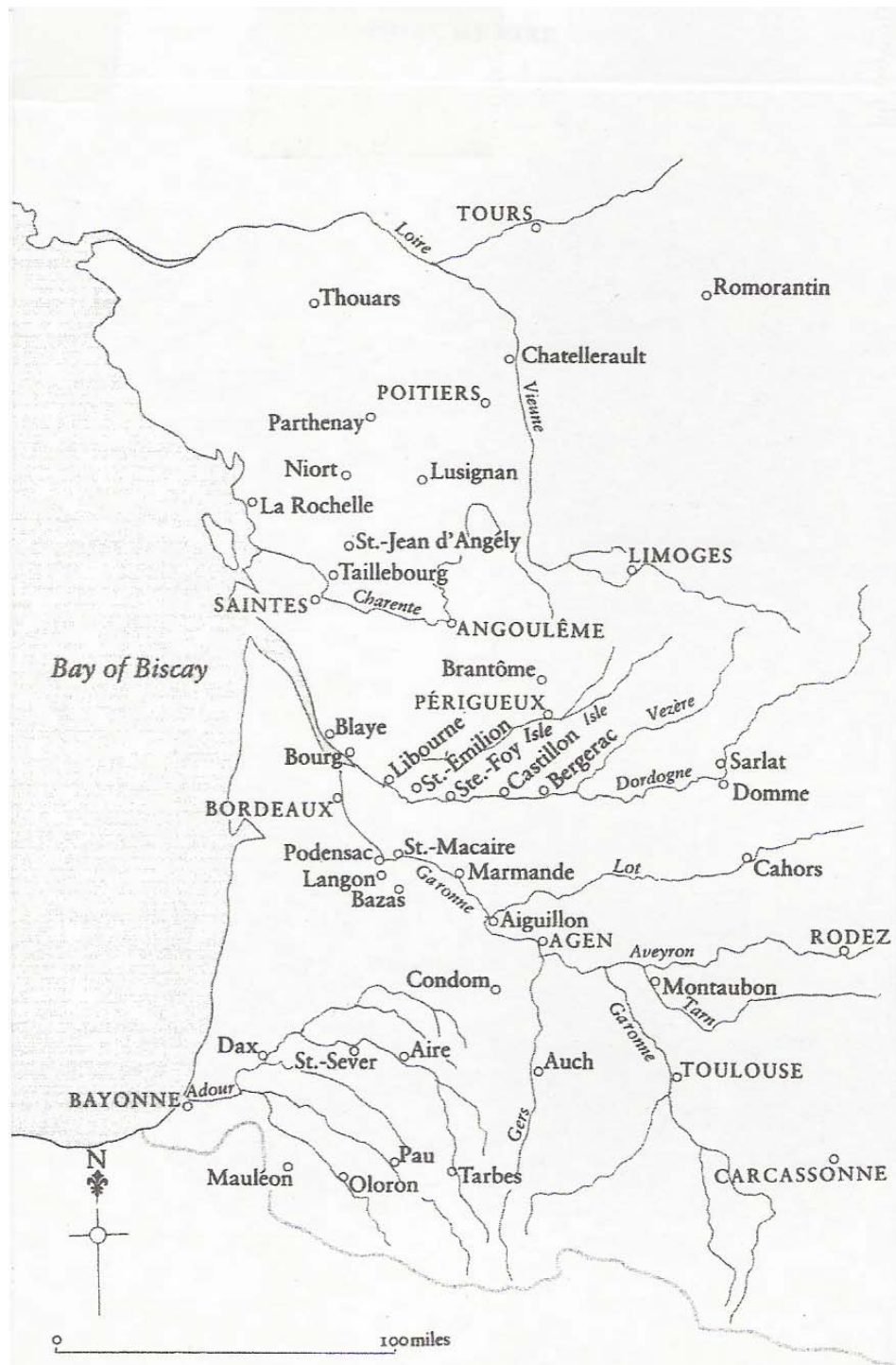


Figure 3 Southwestern France derived from *The Hundred Years War: Volume Two, Trial by Fire*

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