

History of the Crusades.  
Episode 181.  
The Crusade Against the Cathars.  
Betrayal.

Hello again. Now, before we get started on this week's episode, some of you may have experienced some problems accessing last week's episode. That's because a couple of hours after I loaded my episode to my host site Podomatic, their servers malfunctioned. After a few hours of frantic activity, they managed to get the servers up and running again, but iTunes, which automatically uploads any new episodes onto its system, read all the episodes on the rebooted Podomatic servers as being all-new episodes and proceeded to download them merrily on to everyone's devices. So if you were subscribed to this podcast through iTunes, you may have had the entire series re-downloaded onto your device. Bonus. So, sorry to everyone who experienced delay or confusion, or had their device clogged up with unnecessary past downloads. Technology's so much fun sometimes. Hopefully, Podomatic have now addressed the problem, and it won't happen again. Okay, on to this week's episode.

Last week, we saw the Franciscan friar Bernard Delicieux hatch a crazy plot to eject the Dominican Inquisitors from Languedoc with the assistance of the tiny Kingdom of Majorca. With the support of the councilors of Carcassonne, Bernard traveled to the Kingdom of Majorca, only to have his plan unravel spectacularly. Now events seem to be catching up with Bernard. Not only has he just committed an act of treason against the Kingdom of France by plotting with the Kingdom of Majorca, he has also attracted the ire of the Dominican Pope, Pope Benedict XI, who has demanded that the head of the Franciscan Order in Languedoc place Bernard under arrest and deliver him to Rome.

So, in the summer of 1304 Bernard Delicieux was firmly in the cross-hairs of two of the most powerful men in Europe, King Philip IV and Pope Benedict. Oddly, though, Bernard manages to stay out of harm's way. The head of the Franciscan Order in Languedoc, who has been ordered, under threat of excommunication, to arrest Bernard and take him to Rome, doesn't actually defy the pope's order, but takes a long time in carrying it out. And it's not hard to see why. Friar Bernard Delicieux is the most prominent Franciscan in southern France, and arguably also the most popular. Arresting the star performer of the Order is something the head of any Order would be reluctant to do.

Finally, though, on the 6th of July 1304, the Pope's arrest order could be delayed no longer, and a lowly vicar from the Franciscan Order was sent to Carcassonne to arrest Bernard. Bernard responded by refusing to be arrested. While the vicar was pondering on how to deal with this unexpected turn of events, Pope Benedict died in Italy. Yes, you heard right. The day after a person had been dispatched to arrest Bernard Delicieux, the person who ordered the arrest, the Pope, dropped dead. This sequence of events was so unexpected and so oddly beneficial for Bernard that many years later he was actually charged with Pope Benedict's murder, a charge which was clearly questionable as the Pope had died of dysentery in Italy. So really, it was just a happy coincidence for Bernard.

Anyway, with the Pope who had ordered Bernard to be arrested and brought before him now dead, there was no requirement to either detain Bernard or take him to Rome. With his conflict with the Papacy seemingly resolved, at least for now, there was just the remaining small matter of treason against the Kingdom of France to contend with. Bernard decided to confront this issue head on. In the autumn of 1304 a Franciscan friar in the

court of the Queen of France sent word southwards to Bernard that rumors had reached Philip the Fair of Bernard's intrigues with the Kingdom of Majorca, so in response, Bernard decided to travel to Paris, along with a delegation of citizens from Carcassonne and Albi, to convince King Philip that it had all been a terrible misunderstanding. The group arrived in Paris in October 1304, and while they were unable to meet with the King they were received by Queen Joan. She was able to inform them that it was only the councilors of Carcassonne who were in trouble, not the men of Albi. The men from Albi all gave a collective sigh of relief and headed back home. Bernard and the men from Carcassonne hung around a bit longer, but it's unclear whether they managed to actually meet with the King.

Oddly, dealing with or punishing the treasonous actions of Bernard Delicieux and the councilors of Carcassonne just didn't seem to be on King Philip's radar at the moment. In his book "The Friar of Carcassonne", Stephen O'Shea points out that at this period in his reign, King Philip was a busy man, and perhaps dealing with the crazy failed plot was just something he didn't have time for. Or, Stephen O'Shea speculates that perhaps behind the scenes someone was intervening on Bernard's behalf and pleading with the King for mercy. Someone, perhaps like Queen Joan, who seems to have developed a soft spot for Bernard and the people of the south.

I guess we'll never know why King Philip delayed taking action. But delay he did. It wasn't until the summer of the following year, 1305, that the wrath of the French crown finally caught up with the councilors of Carcassonne, the men who had provided support for Bernard's failed plot against the Kingdom of France. Fifteen of the councilors were formally charged with treason, and in September 1305 they were convicted. Their punishment, well, it suited the violent and brutal century they found themselves in. They were publicly flogged in their home town of Carcassonne before being tied to horses and dragged through the streets of the city. The half-dead men were then hung from gallows, their bodies remaining there for the next few weeks to serve as a message to everyone about what happens to people who dare to defy King Philip.

Well, most people that is, but apparently not Bernard Delicieux. For reasons which remain unclear to this day, Bernard Delicieux, the instigator and chief proponent of the treasonous plot to advance the interests of the Kingdom of Majorca in southern France, managed to escape with an almost unbelievably light penalty. What was the penalty handed down by the French King with a reputation for cruelty and merciless punishment? Well Philip the Fair requested the Franciscan Order to place Bernard under house arrest. Historians have been scratching their heads about how Bernard managed to secure for himself this incredibly lenient sentence. Stephen O'Shea suggests that Queen Joan's influence may have had something to bear. Queen Joan had developed a fondness for the eloquent, delicious Bernard, and it seems that that Philip the Fair unexpectedly actually held his Queen in high regard and had a genuine affection for her. Queen Joan had died in April 1305, and perhaps it was in her memory that King Philip, when determining Bernard's sentence a few months later, decided to be lenient.

It turned out that the sentence ended up being even more lenient than King Philip had probably intended, as a few months into Bernard's house arrest a new Pope was chosen, Pope Clement V. Pope Clement V was a Frenchman, and the sort of Pope that Philip the Fair had dreamed of. Indicating that the new Pope was able to be bent to the will of the French crown, Pope Clement ceded to King Philip's wishes and had himself crowned not in Rome but at Lyons in France. He eventually caved in completely to the almost constant

pressure coming from Paris and moved permanently from Rome to Avignon in 1309, starting the 70-year period of the Avignon Papacy.

Under Pope Clement, Bernard was moved from the custody of the Franciscans to the custody of the Papal court, and eventually the charges against him were all dropped. Woohoo! Bernard would spend the next few years following the Papal court as it moved around France, pestering Pope Clement at every possible opportunity, trying to convince him to shut down the Inquisition. Whenever King Philip visited the Pope, which presumably was quite often, Bernard would pester him as well, until eventually both the Pope and the King became so annoyed with Bernard that they told him in no uncertain terms to back off. So Bernard moved back to Languedoc, deciding to base himself in the monastery at Beziers.

Right. We shall now leave Bernard at Beziers and take a look at how the Authie brothers are faring. Now, the good news was that everything had been going surprisingly well for the Authie brothers. Their fondness for using hiding places that made the word "hidden" seem like an understatement, the caution they displayed in moving through the countryside, and their network of sympathetic locals who could keep an eye out for strangers and informers, meant that they had managed to elude the Inquisition. The bad news was, in September 1305 their luck ran out.

Now it wasn't just the hiding places, safeguards and caution that had kept the Inquisition from sniffing out the Cathars in the County of Foix. The Inquisitors of southern France had been distracted for the past few years, and had taken their eye off the Cathar ball, their attention being diverted by none other than, of course, Bernard Delicieux and his constant and persistent efforts to shut them down.

Meanwhile, in the County of Foix the Authie brothers had been quietly and persistently building up quite an impressive Cathar following. Influential citizens in the region had been converted to the Cathar faith, and numerous Cathar Perfect had been ordained to assist the brothers and other established Perfect to spread the word.

But in September of 1305, around the same time as the councilors of Carcassonne were tortured and executed for their role in the Majorcan plot, the network established by the Authie brothers was betrayed by one of their own, Pierre Authie's trusted personal assistant Guillaume Peyre. Guillaume Peyre had been with the Authie brothers since they first came to Toulouse back in the year 1300. By the year 1304, the prison The Wall had been back up and running in Carcassonne, although with greater protections and stronger oversight than before. In late 1304 Guillaume Peyre had been arrested by the Dominicans on suspicion of heresy and had been imprisoned in The Wall. Whilst imprisoned in there he had run up some debts, borrowing money from the Dominicans to buy food to prevent himself from starving. Under the new improved system of justice run by the Dominicans, insufficient evidence was found to charge Guillaume Peyre and he was released the following spring.

So Guillaume Peyre was now a free man, but a free man who was 40 shillings in debt. Apparently, he asked the Authie brothers and other prominent Cathars to give him enough funds to settle his account with the Dominicans, but they refused. So he decided to extinguish his debt by offering to hand two of the Cathar Perfect to the Inquisitors, in exchange for them releasing him from the obligation to pay the 40 shillings.

In the summer of 1305 he personally traveled to the headquarters of the Inquisitors in Carcassonne and asked to meet with the head inquisitor Geoffroy d'Ablis. He then made the offer: two Cathar Perfect in exchange for the release of a debt worth 40 shillings, and a surprised Geoffroy d'Ablis readily agreed to the deal. It's possible that, in his anger for having been lumped with a prison debt, Guillaume Peyre may well have spilled the beans about the extent of the Cathar heresy in the County of Foix, and the success of the work done by the Authie brothers. He was certainly in the position to reveal a great deal of secret information, due to the fact that he had viewed the Cathar revival from a front-row seat for the past few years. However, it does seem that he kept some of his integrity intact, and stayed quiet about much of what he knew.

Regardless though, after their meeting, Geoffroy d'Ablis was filled with a renewed sense of purpose. After chasing a handful of Cathars around Carcassonne for the past few years and netting mostly innocent civilians, he had just stumbled upon the mother-lode. There was apparently a whole nest of heretics just waiting to be discovered in the nearby County of Foix. While the traitor Guillaume Peyre busied himself springing his trap designed to ensnare two of the Cathar Perfect, Geoffroy d'Ablis briefed the Dominican friars in Carcassonne, telling them that they had all been looking in the wrong places. The Cathar heretics were actually in the County of Foix. Time to head to the foothills of the Pyrenees and start making some inquiries.

The two perfect whom Guillaume Peyre chose to betray were Pierre Authie's son, Jacques Authie, and the senior Cathar Perfect, Prades Tavernier. Prades Tavernier had been a Perfect in the region well before the arrival of the Authie brothers. Guillaume Peyre sent a message to the two men asking them to come to his home town of Limoux to perform the consolamentum. The two Perfect duly made the journey, and were immediately arrested by the Dominicans. Now the good news is that the two Perfect were able to escape almost immediately. The bad news is that we have no idea how they managed to do this. There are just no surviving records which shed any light on the matter, which is a little bit frustrating. Anyway, they next surfaced shortly afterwards in the village of La Born, which is 20 miles northeast of Toulouse, which means that from Limoux the escapees fled northwards rather than heading back to more familiar territory in the Sabarthes, a place to which no doubt the Inquisitors would expect them to run. They hid for eight days inside the house of a Cathar sympathizer, then fled once more.

News of the arrest of the two Perfect, and of the betrayal by one of their own, sent the Authie brothers' network into a tailspin. It wasn't just the fact that two of their Perfect had been betrayed and had narrowly avoided being taken by the Inquisition. Guillaume Peyre was a trusted insider. He knew everything. The identity of every single Cathar in the network was now compromised, as were all their hiding places, their secret traveling routes, their disguises, and even the names of local Cathar sympathizers. Everything they had worked so hard to establish was suddenly in grave danger. To make things even worse, word was coming in that the Dominicans had moved into the County of Foix and were conducting spot raids on houses in the region.

As an indication of how vulnerable members of the Cathar network were now feeling, a meeting of around ten Cathars took place shortly after the escape of the two Perfect. The decision made at this meeting was startling. What was the decision they came to? Well, rather than wait like sitting ducks for the Inquisitors to seek them out, the Cathars decided to hit the road and travel to Rome. In Rome they would confess their heresy to the new Pope, Pope Clement V, and throw themselves at his mercy.

But before we take a look at how this journey panned out, next week we are going to leave the slowly unraveling Cathar network, and spend an episode taking a closer look at a village in the territory covered by the Authie brothers, the little village of Montailou. Now for a tiny, isolated little place high in the mountains of the County of Foix, this village has enough drama, scandal, and intrigue going on within its humble walls to put soap operas like "Days of Our Lives", "Neighbors" and "Dallas" to shame. Join me next week as we take a look at the rather surprising activities currently taking place in the village of Montailou. Until next week, bye for now.

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