

History of the Crusades. Episode 269. The Baltic Crusades. The Livonian Crusade part 47. The end of the Civil War.

Hello again. Last week we saw the Samogitian Crusade spring back into life with Grand Master Orseln and King John of Bohemia intent on conquering Samogitia, while Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland moved in to oppose them. By the end of last week's episode a truce had been called between the warring parties, closely followed by Grand Master Orseln's unexpected assassination by a violent and unpredictable Teutonic knight. This week we are leaving all the drama in Prussia and Samogitia aside, and heading back to Livonia.

For some time now, in our episodes dedicated to Livonia, we have seen Archbishop Friedrich hover around in Avignon trying to attract the attention of the Pope, in order to convince him to give the Livonian Chapter of the Teutonic Order a pummelling. Archbishop Friedrich did finally attract the attention of the Pope in episode 267 when Pope John XXII sent him off to Lithuania to oversee the negotiations for the conversion of the Lithuanians to Christianity, a mission which was ultimately unsuccessful. We returned to Livonia in May of the Year 1328, when Grand Master Orseln has just appointed a man called Eberhard von Monheim to the position of Master of Livonia.

Now we've seen from our recent episode on the Samogitian crusade that Grand Master Orseln isn't the sort of leader to shy away from a conflict, and the appointment of Master Eberhard was definitely a move designed to provoke conflict in Livonia. Eberhard von Monheim was a military man, not a peacemaker. He had been castellan of both Windau and Goldingen castles, and was known for the aggressive action he had taken against citizens from Riga who had been residing in Kurland. Less than a month after Master Eberhard had travelled to Livonia to take up his post, the Rigans decided to take the initiative. They staged an audacious and ambitious night assault on the Order's stronghold at Dunamunde. Having the element of surprise totally on their side, the Rigans managed to take the town of Dunamunde, but they were unable to capture the strongly fortified keep. Knowing that they couldn't secure the town without taking the keep, the Rigans were forced to withdraw back to Riga. I guess it will come as no surprise to anyone to learn that, in response to this attack, Master Eberhard led the Teutonic Knights up-river to Riga, and besieged the city, blocking it entirely by both land and sea. To get themselves out of this situation, the Rigans decided to call upon the Lithuanians. Two city councillors and two prominent Rigan citizens were dispatched to Lithuania, with the authorisation to offer Gediminas a bunch of castles and fortifications which were under Riga's control, in

exchange for his help to lift the blockade. Gediminas agreed, but when the Lithuanians arrived in Livonia they discovered that the castles promised to them by the Rigans had already been attacked and defeated by the Teutonic Order, so they could no longer be handed to Lithuania as promised. A furious Gediminas threatened to withdraw his forces back to Lithuania, but the Rigans convinced him to instead go on a booty scoring rampage through Central Livonia into the Bishopric of Dorpat, attacking Teutonic interests and scoring enough booty to make up for the loss of the castles that they have been promised. Gediminas embarked upon this course of action, scored much booty, and managed to capture 4000 prisoners, whom he eventually marched back to Lithuania.

Unfortunately, though, this didn't help the Rigans one little bit. Master Eberhard ignored the invading Lithuanians and instead focused on tightening his grip on the city of Riga. With no supplies able to make their way into the city, by the spring of the year 1330 the situation was dire. Councillors from Riga had written to the Pope, and to officials from the Hanseatic League, requesting urgent assistance, but none had been forthcoming. The city was starving. The citizens who could had left Riga. Those who remained behind faced the real threat of starvation, and also the threat of injury at the hands of their fellow citizens, as violence had broken out over the distribution of the few grain stores which were left. In desperation, the Mayor of Riga addressed the citizens, stating that outside help may not be coming, and that attempts to negotiate a peace settlement with the Teutonic Order had come to nothing. Instead the Mayor urged the citizens who still possessed grain to sell it to those who are starving, and to allow those who had no money to purchase the supplies on credit. This speech was met with howls of protest from the gathered crowd, who pointed out that there simply wasn't enough grain left in the city to feed those who needed it, regardless of their financial circumstances. The Mayor spoke with representatives from the crowd and eventually it was determined that a truce must be sought with the Teutonic Order at any cost, as the alternative was to let most of Riga's population starve to death. So, the white flag of surrender was raised. Five days later a truce was signed, and the Teutonic Order lifted the siege on the city, allowing food supplies to make their way into Riga to feed its starving citizens. What were the terms of the truce? Well they weren't actually too harsh, considering the fact Riga had been a thorn in the side of the Teutonic Order for nearly three decades. Here are the terms of the treaty as described by William Urban in his book "The Livonian Crusade", and I quote.

"The citizenry promised to rebuild the Convent of Saint George and fortify it so that the Teutonic Knights could dominate the city from that post. The convent would be endowed with lands and incomes sufficient to supply it. One Knight was to preside at judicial

functions jointly with the archiepiscopal advocate, all magistrates would swear an oath of allegiance to the Master and Brothers of the order, and so would all citizens whenever demanded. The citizens would assist in all wars by financial contributions and personal service, and finally, to demonstrate the extent to which the city submitted, a gap of 50 feet was torn in the walls for the victory parade of the Teutonic Knights.” End quote.

Really, the terms of the treaty were designed not to crush Riga, but to enable it to continue to thrive as a merchant city under the oversight of the Teutonic Order, and you might be happy to know, that's essentially what happened. The end of the civil war in Livonia allowed the Teutonic Order in that region to finally look beyond their own internal issues and engage in wider regional disputes. In other words, the end of the civil war in Livonia allowed the Livonian Chapter of the Teutonic Order to join the Crusade against Samogitia. By the year 1332 the Livonian Chapter of the Teutonic Order had become actively involved in the Samogitian crusade, and will continue to assist the Prussian Chapter of the Order in their pagan push-backs for the next few years. But there was one person who refused to admit that the civil war in Livonia was over and that the Teutonic Knights had effectively won the war, and that person was, of course, Archbishop Friedrich. In case anyone is wondering, yes, Archbishop Friedrich is still in Avignon, and he still convinced that, if he just persists enough if he stays on task, if he remains optimistic, then Pope John will eventually be worn down, will give into Archbishop Friedrich's demands, and will hit the Teutonic Order with a large Papal stick. Actually, at this point in time Pope John doesn't need any additional incentive whatsoever to hit the Teutonic order with a large Papal stick. Hitting the Teutonic Order with a large Papal stick is exactly what Pope John would like to do, but his reasons for doing so have nothing to do with Archbishop Friedrich. The reasons why Pope John would like to hit the Teutonic Order with a large Papal stick are as follows. As we all know the Papacy is currently in conflict with the Holy Roman Emperor Louis IV. Louis IV has just taken the conflict between the Empire and the papacy to a whole new level, by invading Italy and setting up an anti-Pope in Rome. Emperor Louis then looked around to see which of his allies were willing to throw their support behind this new non-Avignon Pope, and lining up in the front row, jumping up and down with enthusiasm, was the Teutonic Order. Emperor Louis was rather touched by the Order's support for what was a pretty bold power move on his part, so to reward the Order for its loyalty, Emperor Louis gave them, wait for it, Riga. Yes that's right. In a grant signed in the year 1332 the Holy Roman Emperor declared to the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order that to the Teutonic Order, and I quote, “We confer the dominion over the city of Riga, situated in the land of Livonia, and over its territory and district and inhabitants of whatever type or law, and the said city and its inhabitants shall be under their rule,” end quote.

Now, the interesting part about this, of course, is that the city of Riga wasn't really the Holy Roman Emperor's to give away. If it belonged to anyone it belonged to the Archbishop of Riga, who held it on behalf of Pope John, but of course the Holy Roman Empire no longer recognises Pope John as the true Pope. Instead the empire has installed its own Empire-friendly Pope in Italy, so according to Emperor Louis, their Pope now holds all the lands which Pope John exercised power over, and of course the Emperor is the person who installed this new Pope so, if the Emperor wants to take Papal lands and give them to one of his buddies, who is going to stop him? Well, Archbishop Friedrich, that's who.

As soon as Archbishop Friedrich found that Riga had just been wrapped up in shiny packaging, embellished with a fancy bow, and handed over to the Teutonic Order, he requested an urgent hearing before Pope John. Pope John granted the Archbishop's request, and unsurprisingly found in the Archbishop's favour. But when it came to enforcing the decision, the Papal Commission started to drag its feet. Again, the same problem which always plagued Archbishop Friedrich reared its head, that problem being the papacy really didn't want to make an enemy of the Teutonic Order, and would do just about anything it could to keep the order on side. In the end Pope John's deliberate delaying of moves to enforce his ruling against the order's possession of Riga, paid off. The Emperor's anti-Pope in Italy didn't get the widespread support he was hoping for, and he resigned in disgust, leaving the Emperor's Papal ambitions to vanish in a puff of smoke. The Teutonic Order returned cap in hand to Avignon, pleaded with Pope John that the whole support the anti-Pope thing had been a huge misunderstanding, and asked for forgiveness, which was duly granted.

Now, I don't know whether Archbishop Friedrich was the sort of person who kept his feelings in check, or whether he was the sort of person who flew into a giant chair throwing, precious things smashing rage. Regardless of how he expressed his emotions he must have been pretty upset. No matter how badly the Teutonic Order behaved, it always seemed to be forgiven, and it always seemed to be able to retain the upper hand over the Archbishop. What Archbishop Friedrich didn't seem to be able to grasp was the politics behind the Papacy's support for the order, and over all those years and all those set-backs, he still appeared to think that if he just kept plugging away, he would eventually prevail. But that's just not the way things work. As stated by William Urban in his book "The Livonian Crusade", and I quote, "John XXII, like his predecessors and successors, needed the military orders more than he needed any one ambitious prelate like the Archbishop of Riga. In the final analysis, the Pope had to ask himself which party had the ability to send

knights to fight in Papal causes, who could contribute money, who had the most important family ties, and who had influence in the Holy Roman Empire. The Teutonic Knights were simply a far more valuable to the Papacy than the Archbishop.” End quote.

But while Pope John couldn't afford to upset the Teutonic Order, he also had to acknowledge that justice was mostly on the Archbishop's side. The Teutonic Order had behaved badly in Livonia, and in the year 1334 Archbishop Friedrich finally had cause to celebrate win the Papal Commission ruled in his favour, ordering the Teutonic Knights to restore castles and property they had confiscated from Archbishop Friedrich in Livonia, back to the Archbishopric and to pay a hefty fine. Actually getting the ruling enforced, though, was an entirely different affair, and two years later, Archbishop Friedrich was still in Avignon, still trying in vain to get someone to make the Order comply with the Pope's ruling.

Meanwhile back in Livonia, Archbishop Friedrich's efforts we're going on heralded and unnoticed. Gradually the citizens and merchants of Riga came to terms with the fact that they needed to work with the Teutonic Order and not against them, and to the Archbishops horror his subjects in Riga simply stopped obeying his orders, and instead threw their support behind the Teutonic Order. So, it's official. Even if Archbishop Friedrich is struggling to come to terms with the fact, the civil war in Livonia is now over. Woohoo!

Join me next week as we return to the Samogitian Crusade, to see the Teutonic forces and the Royal Polish army clash in a massive battle on Polish soil. Until next week, bye for now.

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