The History of the Crusades Podcast presents
Reconquista: The Rise of Al-Andalus and the Reconquest of Spain
Episode 142
Castile versus Navarre, Part 2

Hello again. Last time we left Navarre in a perilous state. It had been invaded by Castile, which was now occupying most of its southern and western regions, while Navarre's king, Carlos the Bad, had abandoned his kingdom and had fled over the Pyrenees to safety.

We ended the last episode with Carlos the Bad and his ally England coming up with an ambitious plan. The plan involved an English captain named Sir Thomas Trivet taking 400 English soldiers and escorting Carlos the Bad back to Navarre. Once in Navarre, Sir Thomas was meant to break the siege of Pamplona and reinstall Carlos into his capital city. Sir Thomas then planned to march his 400 men southwards to the fortress of Tudela, which was located near the border between Aragon and Navarre. The Aragonese army would then mobilize into Navarre and join with Sir Thomas's English fighters to push the Castilians out of the kingdom.

So how did this ambitious plan pan out? Well, Sir Thomas mobilized out of Bordeaux with his 400 men towards the end of October in the year 1378. He met with Carlos the Bad a few weeks later, and together they successfully negotiated a mountain pass through the Pyrenees. They entered Navarre with no problems and made their way towards Pamplona. As they descended into the plain of Pamplona they discovered, to their surprise and delight, that the Castilians had not only lifted the siege of Pamplona, they had withdrawn altogether. There was absolutely no sign of any Castilian fighters in the vicinity of Pamplona, so the King of Navarre was able to march right in and reclaim his capital city.

In the third volume of his series on the Hundred Years' War, Jonathan Sumption speculates that the young commander of the Castilian forces, Juan, the 20-year-old son of King Enrique II of Castile, may have panicked when he heard that an English army was coming to the defence of Pamplona. Jonathan Sumption states it's probable that Juan received exaggerated reports about the strength of the English forces. Despite their recent setbacks in the Hundred Years' War, English fighting men were highly regarded, and in his first command at the head of his father's army Juan probably decided against confronting them in the field. As winter was coming, Juan ended up deciding to pause his campaign. He left Castilian garrisons in the main towns he had conquered inside Navarre, but then paid off the rest of his men, telling them to return home to Castile for the winter. Juan himself withdrew out of Navarre to the town of Logroño , which was on the border between Navarre and Castile on the River Ebro, with the idea that he would restart the Castilian annexation of Navarre in the spring.

Back in Pamplona, the Navarrese Cortes granted King Carlos a chunk of money to be spent on repairs and reconstruction inside the kingdom's capital city. In true Carlos the Bad style, he instead spent most of the money paying off his French mercenary fighters. In the middle of December Carlos the Bad mobilized out of Pamplona with Sir Thomas Trivet and the English fighters, with the entire force numbering between 800 and 1000 men. They marched southwards, crossed the river Ebro, and entered the fortress city of Tudela. Tudela was the second most important city in Navarre, with the capital Pamplona being the only place more consequential. Its population of around 8000 or 9000 people comprised Jewish and Muslim residents as well as Christians, and they all lived together in this impressively fortified city. Inside Tudela, on top of a hill, was the royal castle. The town

housing the city's residents had developed into a maze of streets around the castle. The whole town was surrounded by high walls and heavily fortified gateways. The reason why Tudela was so fortified was the fact that it was located near where Navarre shared a border with the two kingdoms which traditionally wished to defeat it, Castile and Aragon. It was basically a border town with two hostile kingdoms nearby.

Jonathan Sumption reports that Sir Thomas Trivet became restless inside Tudela and on Christmas Eve decided to take his 400 men and pop over the border into Castile to raid the town of Soria, which was located at the junction of a number of roads and promised a significant amount of booty. Jonathan Sumption reports that Soria, which is located 60 miles from Tudela, ordinarily wasn't a difficult place to travel to. However, the English forces had embarked on their journey to Soria during winter, and Soria was located in a mountain range over 1000 metres above sea level. As the English forces rode towards it, they were hit by a snowstorm. Sir Thomas's plan had been to ride through the night and surprise the garrison of the town early on Christmas morning, but his men became disorientated in the snowstorm, and even his guides lost their way. Which meant by the time they arrived outside the gates of Soria it was late on Christmas morning and the defenders of the town were waiting for them. There was a Christmas Day skirmish during which both sides suffered casualties then, realizing that Soria wasn't going to be an easy target for some quick Christmas booty, Sir Thomas withdrew back to Navarre, setting fire to a couple of Castilian villages on the way. A couple of days later, Sir Thomas tried again. This time his target was a more modest one, a small Castilian town closer to Tudela, just over the border. Again, though, he was thwarted. The English fighters lured the garrison of the town out of the gates and killed some of them, but before they could press their advantage the women of the town closed the gates, leaving the Englishmen with no way to enter the town.

Now, you might remember that the aim of this whole campaign was for the English army to join up with the Aragonese forces at Tudela before driving the Castilians out of Navarre. While most of the Castilians had already left Navarre of their own accord, an English embassy still travelled to Barcelona in the middle of December seeking military support from King Pedro. Jonathan Sumption reports that King Pedro had been expecting a visit from the commander of the English forces, Sir John Neville. However, instead of Sir John Neville or even the captain of the forces currently in Navarre, Sir Thomas Trivet, the person who turned up in Barcelona to speak with the King of Aragon was merely a French lawyer from Gascony who acted as an adviser to the English commanders in France on Spanish affairs. Possibly miffed by this, King Pedro turned down England's request, pointing out that the Castilians were no longer posing a threat to Navarre and stating that he would revisit the matter again in spring the next year if the Castilians invaded once again.

In February of the year 1379 King Enrique of Castile announced that his son Juan would indeed be resuming Castile's offensive against Navarre, and he ordered the Castilian army to get ready to muster at Logroño in April. When word of this reached Carlos the Bad, he decided to wave the white flag. He sent word to King Enrique's court that he wished to seek terms with Castile. A six week long truce was then enacted so peace talks could take place in Burgos. The talks were successful and on the 31st of March in the year 1379 representatives from Castile and Navarre formalized a treaty in the Castilian village of Briones on the banks of the River Ebro near the border with Navarre.

The terms of the Treaty of Briones were absolutely brutal for Navarre. Carlos the Bad was required to drop his support for England and instead enter into a military alliance with

Castile, fighting on the side of France in the Hundred Years' War. All English fighters currently inside Navarre were to be immediately expelled. As a sign of his goodwill towards Castile Carlos the Bad was required to turn over ten of Navarre's primary fortresses to Castile, which would then garrison them with Castilian fighters and keep them under Castilian control for a period of ten years. One of the fortresses covered by this term was Tudela.

As soon as the terms of the treaty were announced, but before it was signed, Sir Thomas Trivet turned on his hosts, raiding villages and towns around Tudela to score himself some booty. In a desperate move, Sir Thomas reached out to King Pedro of Aragon to see whether he would intervene. King Pedro said no, so Sir Thomas and the English forces returned to Pamplona, then withdrew from Navarre back to Bordeaux when the treaty was signed. King Enrique then suggested that both kings meet to celebrate the formalization of their new alliance. Enrique's son Juan was dispatched to Tudela to escort Carlos to the Castilian pilgrimage town of Santo Domingo della Calzada, where they were joined by King Enrique. The two kings ratified the treaty, then embarked upon a week of feasting.

Unfortunately, shortly after his week of festivities, King Enrique fell seriously ill. He had been struggling with poor health for some time, but this bout seemed to be quite serious. Then on the 28th of May, King Enrique II of Castile died, aged 46. Apparently his last words to his son and heir Juan were, and I quote “Always be a friend to the royal house of France, from whom I have received great assistance” end quote.

Although he had died while only aged in his forties, King Enrique II of Castile had achieved his goal. He had claimed the crown of Castile, and he had hung on to it, ensuring via political and marriage alliances that the House of Trastamara would rule Castile well into the future.

Carlos the Bad though was not so fortunate. He lived another eight years, but the Treaty of Briones was pretty much the final nail in his political coffin. During his reign he had lost all of his possessions in Normandy, with Cherbourg now in English hands and the rest of his Norman fortresses now under the control of the French crown. His son and heir Carlos Junior had pretty much flipped over to the French side. He hadn't returned to Navarre following his father's decision to dispatch him to Paris and now, not only happily living in Paris, he had taken up arms and was fighting for France against England. Navarre itself was a mess. It was economically ruined to an extent that it will take a generation to recover. Not only that, it was being partially ruled by Castile. The most important fortresses in Navarre will be under Castilian control for the next decade, meaning that Castile, and not the King of Navarre, will be making strategic decisions over Navarre's military operations for the next ten years.

Not surprisingly, this whole turn of events left Carlos the Bad feeling pretty miserable. He had once genuinely seen himself as a contender for the French throne, but now, instead of ruling over Navarre and France, Carlos the Bad was attempting to rule over the shell of what had been at the beginning of his reign the independent Kingdom of Navarre. Carlos the Bad was grumpy, irritable, and seemingly only happy when he was dreaming up unlikely plots to murder his enemies and avenge his terrible losses without having to admit to himself that his problems were all due to his own terrible decisions. Jonathan Sumption reports that towards the end of his life Carlos the Bad reportedly stated the following to an English musician who played for him after a dinner in one of his castles, and I quote “I have few friends in France and many enemies. Some of my enemies are your enemies too, for I have had a great deal to do with the English in my time and lost much of what I

had on their account” end quote. Carlos the Bad died aged 55 in January of the year 1387 after one of his servants accidentally set his bed on fire with a candle.

Join me next time as we begin a new era, with two new kings on the peninsula: King Juan I of Castile and King Carlos II of Navarre. King Juan will have his hands full. On his to-do list are two items of interest. The first is defeating his neighbour Portugal and claiming the Portuguese crown for himself, and the second is preventing John of Gaunt from claiming the Castilian throne, because with King Enrique out of the picture John of Gaunt will once again attempt to get his hands on the Castilian crown. All the kings on the peninsula will also be distracted by events in wider Europe, not only the ongoing Hundred Years' War, but also a papal schism which will rock Western Christendom to its core and leave the kings of Europe scrambling to deal with the fact that there will be two popes vying for power at the same time. Fun. Until next time, bye for now.

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