

## Steel 92

### *Chapter 92: Council of Constance II*

The figureheads of the ecclesiarchy debated well into the night about their arguments before concluding the meeting for the evening; after a night of proper rest, they reconvened in an attempt to discuss further the potential solutions to the problems which plagued the Catholic Church at the moment.

Rather than discuss the Berengar Heresy further as they had exhausted so much effort on only to remain entrenched in their own positions, Pope Avilius chugged a chalice of wine before he brought up the growing divide with the Orthodox church over the issues of the Teutonic Order who while favored by the Pope of the Vatican, was not gazed upon fondly by Avilius and the Avignon Papacy. As such, he spoke his thoughts on the matter.

"The Teutonic order has gone too far by forcefully converting the Orthodox of the East into Catholicism if things progress from where they are now relations with the Byzantines, as well as their sphere of influence will continue to drop. The support of the Hospitallers in the Byzantine's efforts to reclaim North Africa can only stall a permanent rift for so long. Something must be done about this unlawful Crusade in which Simeon has sponsored."

Like a true Frenchman, Avilius who was gulping down wine as if it were water, was not afraid to directly blame the crisis at hand as the fault of his rival when in reality the Teutonic Order was an independent State and was largely acting on its own without the official endorsement of either papacy. Though Simeon had never outright condemned them, after all, they were still a powerful force he could call upon to enforce his will upon the increasingly secular Lords of the German world; this did not mean that he, in fact, supported them, at least publically.

This was the main reason the Orthodox had not outrightly schism from the actions of the Teutonic Order, as officially they were a monastic state acting on their own accord without the public endorsement of the church. Avilius was more than happy to tie their actions to Simeon and his so-called Papacy despite knowing this. After hearing these accusations, Simeon was outraged and instantly began bickering with his French counterpart.

"Lies and slander! I have never once endorsed the war against the Orthodox! Those bastards have their own self-sufficient state and have used their power to declare this a Holy War on their own!"

Simeon was playing right into the hands of Avilius, who was obviously trying to provoke Simeon's wrath so that he would further make a fool of himself in front of the Cardinals and Bishops who had gathered. It seemed to be working quite well, as even those in Simeon's camp were quite embarrassed by his actions. Once more, the voice of reason was left to the particularly charismatic Cardinal, who had pretty much been responsible for keeping this entire Council civil throughout the last 24 hours.

"Simeon, while I understand your reasons for not condemning the Teutonic Order, after all, none of us want a repeat of what happened to the Templars. I can't help but ask why you have not withdrawn funding from these Crusades in the North if you are so morally against it? I mean, the Baltic has been thoroughly converted at this point, so what is the purpose of further funding the Teutonic Order's ongoing conquests of their Orthodox neighbors?"

Once more, Simeon did not have a proper answer to this; after all, he could not openly admit that he had disdain for the Orthodox church and that he actually supported the actions of the Teutonic Order as they forced Catholicism on their Eastern neighbors. His disdain for the Orthodox was that they refused to recognize his authority as the Vicar of Christ and thus the ruler over all Christians. This was one of the reasons he despised the French at the moment because they boldly declared Avilius to be the one true Pope.

After silence for a few moments, the charismatic Cardinal once more spoke up, insisting that Simeon answer for his actions.

"Well? We are all waiting..."

After another few moments of silence, Simeon came up with what he perceived to be a valid excuse for his actions.

"The Teutonic Order are the guardians of the faithful in the German-speaking regions; without proper funding, how could they possibly combat the heresies which have begun to spring up from within the Kingdom of Germany and the surrounding regions?"

Avilius laughed at this response and chastised Simeon for his reasoning.

"The Teutonic Order has been trying to convert the Orthodox in eastern Europe for decades! Yet, they have received funding from the Vatican the entire time. The heresies popping up in Southern Germany are a recent thing that only transpired these past few months. Do you really think that is a valid excuse for your actions?"

The charismatic Cardinal sighed in response to these two old men and their ceaseless bickering; Simeon was a control freak who desired to rule the world and had fewer brain cells than a goldfish when he was thoroughly enraged, which more often than not he was in such a state. At the same time, Avilius was an indolent and drunken wastrel who gained pleasure from antagonizing people, especially Simeon. Neither of these two men was fit to call themselves God's representative on Earth. Nevertheless, at the moment, these two fools were the highest authority in the Church; of course, if the Western Schism was ended and one of these two incompetent asshats was recognized universally as Pope in the Catholic world, it would only mean disaster.

It was becoming increasingly obvious to the Cardinals and Bishops present as the conversation went on that the removal of both of these pretenders and the election of a new Pope altogether would be the best path forward. However, nobody was willing to bring up this discussion at the moment in fear of being excommunicated for merely suggesting it. Thus despite the obvious inadequacies of both men proclaiming themselves Pope they would go on to rule over their territories for at least another year before things would progress any further.

With no viable solutions to the problems at hand, this constant bickering would continue for another week. Ultimately like the previous years, the Council of Constance, which had been ongoing to some degree since 1414, ended in a miserable failure. None of the discussions were met with a proper solution, and all that managed to happen was further division in the Church. Simeon would continue to antagonize Berengar over the following year, and Berengar would continue to spit in his face. For now, just like it had in prior years, the meeting of the Ecclesiarchy known as the Council of Constance had ended with absolutely nothing worthy of note being accomplished.