



Albert of Riga (c. 1165 – 1229)

Albert was the third **Bishop of Riga** in Livonia who founded Riga in 1201, and built the city's cathedral twenty years later. Albert headed the armed forces that forcibly converted the eastern Baltic region to Christianity, in the nature of a crusade that was undertaken while the **Fourth Crusade** was sacking Constantinople.

Albert was a canon in Bremen when his uncle, the Archbishop of Bremen and Hamburg, named him Bishop of Livonia, provided that he could conquer and hold it, and convince the pagan inhabitants to become Christians. In 1200 he embarked with a Baltic fleet of 23 vessels and more than 1,500 armed crusaders. He had the support of the Hohenstaufen German King, Philip of Swabia, and the more distant blessing of Pope Innocent III.

Together with **merchants** from the Baltic island of Gotland, Albert founded Riga in 1201, where a small community of Hanseatic **traders from Lübeck** held a tentative trading encampment. He successfully converted many Livs under their leader Caupo, offering them protection against neighboring Lithuanian and Estonian tribes; Albert also converted some Latvians later on. He spent almost 39 years in the conquest of Livonia.

Albert created a military order, the **Livonian Brothers of the Sword**. King Philip made him a Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, with Livonia for a fief, and thus Albert became a "**Prince-Bishop**". Albert declared his diocese independent of Bremen, and later Riga was raised to an archbishopric. Albert died in Riga in 1229, and was venerated as a Catholic saint until the Protestant Reformation.



Hermann von Salza (c. 1165 – 1239)

Hermann was the **fourth Grand Master** of the Teutonic Knights, serving from 1210 to 1239. A skilled diplomat with ties to the Holy Roman Emperor and the Pope, Hermann oversaw the expansion of the military order into Prussia.

Hermann was born to a dynasty of ministeriales of the Thuringian landgraves, he may have already taken part in the 1189/91 **Siege of Acre**, where the Teutonic Order was founded. He was possibly also on the Crusade of 1197. The crusade was aborted upon the death of Emperor Henry VI, whereafter the Teutonic Knights were re-established as a military order.

Hermann was a friend and counselor of the Hohenstaufen emperor Frederick II, for whom he represented as a mediator in the Papal curia from 1222 onwards. Pope Honorius III also recognized Hermann's capabilities, and granted the Teutonic Knights an equal status with the Knights Hospitaller and the Knights Templar, after it had gone into decline under previous Grand Masters.

At the request of **King Andrew II of Hungary** in 1211, Hermann led the placing of Teutonic Knights in the Burzenland in Transylvania to defend against the Cumans. Hungarian nobles complained of the order's presence, however, and they were forced to leave by 1225. Meanwhile, Hermann accompanied Frederick on the Fifth Crusade against Damietta in 1219. Hermann later convinced Frederick to undertake the Sixth Crusade.

Upon his return to Europe, Hermann helped to lift Frederick's excommunication. He was then requested by **Konrad I of Masovia** to fight the pagan Old Prussians. After Hermann had gained approval from both the Pope and the Emperor the knights began their lengthy campaign to Christianize Prussia in 1230. He was also able to obtain the

incorporation of the **Livonian Brothers of the Sword** into the Teutonic Order in 1237.

Within the Teutonic Order, however, the knights began to grow dissatisfied at his absence, so they recalled him and had him withdraw from his political life. However, he was less successful as a religious leader, and soon retired to Salerno in 1238. He died there in 1239. All communication between Frederick and the pope broke off with Hermann's death.

In World War II, SS-Panzer-Abteilung 11 was named Hermann von Salza.



JOGAILA (1350-1434)

Jogaila ruled in Lithuania from 1377 as the **Grand Duke of Lithuania** with his uncle Kęstutis. In 1386 he was baptized as Władysław, married the young queen regnant Jadwiga of Poland, and was crowned **King of Poland** as Władysław II Jagiełło. In 1387 he converted Lithuania to Christianity. His own reign in Poland started in 1399, upon the death of Queen Jadwiga, and laid the foundation for the centuries-long Polish–Lithuanian union.

Jogaila was the last pagan ruler of medieval Lithuania. After he became King of Poland, the Polish-Lithuanian union confronted the growing power of the Teutonic Knights. The allied victory at the **Battle of Grunwald** in 1410, followed by the Peace of Thorn (1411), secured the Polish and Lithuanian borders and marked the emergence of the Polish–Lithuanian alliance as a significant force in Europe. The reign of Władysław II Jagiełło extended Polish frontiers and started Poland's Golden Age.