

Between Material Prosperity and Loyalty to Ideological Doctrine: The Forbidden Trade in the Era of the Crusades (1096-1291 AD)

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Abstract:

The present article examines the policy of prohibiting the trade of war goods between Christians and the Islamic East, and between Muslims and the European West, during the Crusades (5th-7th centuries AH / 11th-13th centuries AD). This policy is primarily documented in Vatican records for the European West and in Islamic jurisprudence for the Muslim world. Despite the ban, merchants were more focused on commerce, often disregarding the consequences of their actions. In response, the Church intensified its support for the Crusades by convening councils where the issue of trading strategic goods with Muslims was addressed. The Church imposed excommunication on those who sold essential war materials to Muslims, and this prohibition was repeatedly renewed. The banned items included metals, timber (especially long wood, which was scarce in the region and crucial for shipbuilding), tar, weapons, sulfur, and horses. Even food and livestock could be subject to the ban. This article argues that merchants frequently defied these restrictions, continuing to trade in strategic war goods, which highlights the challenges faced by authorities in enforcing papal decrees.

Introduction:

The Crusades (1096-1291 AD) were not only a battleground for military and religious confrontation between Muslims and Crusaders but also a space for cultural, political, and commercial exchange. Amidst the intense conflict, these interactions opened new avenues of communication between the two sides, fostering relationships beyond the immediate context of war. However, trade was deeply affected by the war efforts, with both sides imposing bans on the exchange of strategic war goods. Strict penalties were enforced for violating these prohibitions through religious fatwas and church councils, which sought to control commercial dealings that could aid the enemy's war capabilities.

However, economic interests often took precedence over religious and political considerations. This study aims to examine the efforts made by both Islamic and Christian authorities to impose trade restrictions and prevent the exchange of strategic goods used in

warfare. It will explore how traders responded to these restrictions: *Did the bans significantly impact their activities? How did the trade in prohibited goods continue despite the church's control over merchants' records and their trade destinations?* This analysis will investigate whether the enforcement of these bans was effective or if merchants found ways to bypass the regulations to continue their commercial dealings.

THE FIRST TOPIC: The Trade Ban Among Muslims:

Islamic law provides clear and explicit guidance on how Muslims should interact with others, whether they are covenanted individuals (*ahl al-'ahd*), (*dhimmis*) (non-Muslim citizens under Islamic rule), *musta'mins* (temporary visitors under Muslim protection), or combatants. Islamic law permits commercial dealings with non-Muslims, including buying and selling, Islamic law allows commercial dealings with non-Muslims, but it establishes clear limits guided by textual evidence. These texts clarify the principles that govern such interactions, particularly concerning the types of goods involved. Some goods are permissible for trade, while others are restricted based on Islamic values. A key guiding principle is found in the Qur'an: "And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression" (Surat Al-Ma'idah, verse 3). ¹ (Al-Asqalani, 1986, pp. 478-479), (Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi, 2003, p. 574).

Islam has forbidden the export of what is known as strategic goods or materials to a non-Islamic country that is at war with Muslims (Yasha, 1996, p. 170), such as war machines, horses, and wood for building ships and military equipment. The rationale behind this ban is that trading these items would strengthen non-Muslims in their fight against Muslims, thereby falling under the category of cooperation in "sin and aggression," which is explicitly forbidden. The legal principle is grounded in the verse from the Qur'an that prohibits such collaboration.

It is stated, "It is not appropriate for the imam to allow anyone from the people of war to enter with security, nor for a messenger from their king to leave with any slaves or goods that would empower them against the Muslims." This restriction applies to goods that could contribute to military strength. However, everyday items like clothing and general goods are not subject to this prohibition. These items are not considered harmful, and their sale is permissible under Islamic law, as their use aligns with the general rulings applicable to Muslims. Nevertheless, it remains "impermissible to sell within Islamic lands anything that God has specifically forbidden" (bin Ibrahim, 1979, p. 188)

The views and explanations provided by earlier jurists and scholars were upheld by the Muslim jurists during the Crusades. They strongly emphasized the prohibition of selling and trading weapons with the Crusaders. This position remained consistent across the Islamic

¹ *Ibn Battel* said: "Dealing with the infidels is permissible, except for that which the people of war use to help them against the Muslims." See: *Al-Asqalani, A. i. (1986). (d. 773-853 AH), Fath al-Bari bi Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari (Vol. 4). Dar al-Rayyan li-Turath. Ibn Hazm says in al-Muhalla:* "It is not permissible to bring them weapons, ropes, or anything by which they can gain strength against the Muslims." Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi, A. i. (2003). *al-Muhalla bi al-Athar* (1 ed., Vol. 7). (A.-G. S. al-Bandari, Ed.) Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah.

legal tradition of the time. For example, when the arms dealers of Damascus, whose livelihood depended on selling weapons, sought guidance from **Sheikh Izz al-Din Abd al-Salam**² (al-Salami, 1986, pp. 8-9) (d. 660 AH / 1262 AD) about the ruling on selling weapons to the Franks, he responded decisively, saying, "It is forbidden for you to sell weapons to them because you are certain they will use them to fight your Muslim brothers." He reinforced this ruling by reiterating it from the pulpit, making sure to emphasize the prohibition after his two sermons before stepping down, underscoring the seriousness of the issue. (Al-Subki, 1964, p. 243)

The legal texts prohibiting the sale of weapons to enemy territories are clear and well-established in Islamic jurisprudence, as they serve the higher interests of the Muslim nation. In line with this principle, **Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi** enforced a strict ban on supplying weapons and military equipment to Christian countries. He issued a decree explicitly stating, "No one is allowed to transfer weapons or war equipment to the land of the Romans... and all necessary precautions must be taken to prevent this." This policy reflected the broader Islamic approach to preventing the empowerment of adversaries in conflicts against Muslims." (Al-Muqaddam., 2018, p. 240)

The prohibition extended beyond weapons to include certain food products as well. While the ban encompassed alcohol and pork, it also included Roman cheese, which was commonly imported from Western Europe and popular among Muslims at the time. In response to this, the jurist (Al-Tartushi, 1997, p. 70) Al-Tartushi noted that a treatise on the prohibition of Roman cheese, in which he included a fatwa prohibiting it for many reasons.³ (Al-Tartushi, 1997, pp. 70-71)

² He is **Abu Muhammad Izz al-Din Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd al-Salam ibn Abi al-Qasim al-Salami, Shafi'i** in doctrine, Moroccan by origin, Damascene by birth, Egyptian by residence, and nicknamed **Sultan al-Ulama**. He was born in Damascus in 577 AH or 578 AH/1181-1182 AD, and died in Egypt in 660 AH/1261 AD. See: al-Salami, I.-D. I.-S. (1986). *Ahkam al-Jihad wa Fadhailuhu*, ed. Nazih Hammad (1 ed.). Jeddah: Dar al-Wafa Library for Publishing and Distribution.

³ **Sheikh Abu Bakr bin Al-Waleed Al-Tartushi Al-Maliki** responded to a group that asked him about the cheese that the Romans carried on ships to Alexandria, whether it is forbidden, disliked, or permissible. He drew three scenarios from permissibility to prohibition: The first scenario is that the rennet that was tied with it was an animal that was slaughtered according to the conditions of Islam, slaughtered from the throat, then tied in a new vessel that was not touched by wine, pig meat, or meat that was not slaughtered. If this scenario is confirmed, then it is pure and permissible to eat it. As for the second scenario, it is tied with the rennet of an animal that was not slaughtered, either dead or hamstrung in a place other than the throat and tail, or slaughtered by a Zoroastrian, and the rennet of a pure animal was free from all impurities. In this scenario, it is permissible to eat it. **Malik and Al-Shafi'i** agreed on this prohibition. The third scenario is that the cheese that the Romans carried on ships to Alexandria and its environs, the description of which was told to us by one of the Muslims, was that I was very careful and researching its matter. While I was talking about it with our companions one day, a man called **Ibn Iskandar** entered upon us and said, "Do not ask about it." Other than that, I was the first man to enter the Roman ships when they landed on the coast, and I conveyed their news to the prince. I found that the ships were loaded with cheese and pork, some of

The truce agreements between Muslims and Crusaders included provisions regarding prohibited trade. For instance, the treaty signed by *Mamluk Sultan Qalawun* with the Franks of Acre in 682 AH / 1283 AD included the following clause: “The prohibited items, which have been known since ancient times, are acknowledged by both sides. If a merchant from the Sultan's realm, or his son, is found in the company of someone who has purchased prohibited items from him, the price paid for those items shall be refunded, and neither he nor his possessions shall be harmed. Similarly, if Frankish merchants from Acre or neighboring coastal regions enter the Islamic territories under this truce and are found in possession of prohibited items, such as weapons, those items will be returned to the original owner, and the purchase price will be refunded, with no harm done to either the merchants or their goods. The Sultan and his subjects may also decide the fate of those who leave their country with prohibited items, regardless of their religions or backgrounds. Likewise, the guarantors of the kingdom in Acre may exercise their discretion regarding individuals leaving their territory with items banned under the truce.”. See: (Al-Maqrizi , 1997, p. 171), (Qalqashandi, 1919, pp. 51-63)

THE SECOND TOPIC: The Church and the Trade Ban with Muslims:

The ban on trade was not limited to the Islamic authorities only but was imposed even on Christians before the Crusades. The Byzantine Empire prohibited trade in war goods with the Levant and Egypt (Robert, 1985 , p. 395), Ships from Italian cities transported wood and weapons to Muslims, prompting *Byzantine Emperor Leo V (813-836 AD)* to issue a decree warning the Venetians against trading with Muslims in the Levant and Egypt. Similarly, Byzantine Emperor John Zimisces threatened the Venetians with severe penalties for supplying Muslims with wood and iron, reflecting the concern over the support these materials provided to their adversaries in the region. (Sabrah, 1983, pp. 84-85)

After the Crusaders established themselves in the Levant, the fleets of maritime cities like *Venice, Genoa, and Pisa* gained significant privileges along the coast. In response, the *Doge of Venice, Peter Zayani*, issued a decree prohibiting trade with *Egypt*. However, trade soon resumed its previous levels with Muslims, prompting a renewed conflict over trade restrictions in the 6th century AH / 12th century AD. This surge in trade with Muslims, particularly in war goods, conflicted with the interests of the Crusader campaigns. In light of this, *Baldwin IV* signed a treaty with Pisa in 551 AH / 1156 AD aimed at curbing the trade in weapons with Muslims. One of the key provisions of this treaty allowed him to confiscate iron, wood, and tar found during inspections of ships bound for Egypt (Hyde, 1985, p. 45), without having the right to issue any complaint in that regard.

However, the bans imposed by the *Kingdom of Jerusalem* proved difficult to enforce and limited in effectiveness. In response, the Church focused its efforts on bolstering the Crusader cause by convening church councils to address the issue of trading strategic goods with

them covered with each other, and some of them had cheese on top of each other, then the pork was placed on them. I confirmed this news from a group of translators who confirmed this picture to me... etc. See: Al-Tartushi, A. M. (Ed.). (1997). *Risalah fi Tahrim al-Jubn al-Rumi wa Kitab fi Tahrim al-Istima' wal-Ghina'* (1 ed.). Beirut: Dar Al-Gharb Al-Islami.

Muslims. This initiative began with the Second *Lateran Council in Montpellier in 557 AH / 1162 AD*, where the trade in such goods was a key topic of discussion. The first attempt by the papacy to limit trade with Muslims (Hartmann & Pennington, 2008, p. 329) was when Pope *Alexander III (1159-1181 AD/554-485 AH)* prohibited the ⁴ delivery of weapons, wood, and iron to Muslims. (Kelly, 1996, pp. 176-177)

The Pope's initiative garnered broader support during the *Third Lateran Council*, convened in 575 AH / 1179 AD, under the leadership of *Pope Alexander III*. During this council, he issued a decree prohibiting the export of war goods to Muslims and forbidding any form of assistance to them in military or related matters. (Carr, 2015, p. 108). The decree stated that "all sinful Christians who supply Muslims with weapons, iron, and wood necessary for building ships, as well as those who serve on Muslim vessels or provide support to Muslims in their wars against Christians, are to be expelled from the mercy of the Church. Their wealth and property will be confiscated by secular authorities, and if caught, they will be enslaved by those who apprehend them." (Kampbell, 2014, p. 60)

This decision marked the first significant step in the establishment of prohibition laws against trading with Muslims. However, the greed of the Italian cities, driven by their economic interests and the desire for profit, led them to repeatedly supply iron and wood to Egypt, often ignoring the papal decrees. This disregard for the Church's authority prompted the papacy to reiterate its warnings at various church councils, culminating in the Fourth Lateran Council, presided over by Pope Innocent III ⁵ in 612 AH / 1215 AD (Al-Sayyid, 2005), which he renewed his support for the decisions of the Third Lateran Council, which stated: "We renew the decision of the *Third Lateran Council* that prohibits those lying and evil Christians who supply the Muslims with weapons, iron, and wood necessary to build their ships, at the expense of the Holy Land, and it was decided that their property would be confiscated and they would become slaves to those who captured them...", The Pope ordered that this decree be disseminated in all maritime cities on Sundays and holidays, ensuring that the message reached as many people as possible. He decreed that churches would be closed to any merchants caught violating the ban, subjecting them to penalties of damnation. Furthermore, these merchants were prohibited from sending their ships to the East for four years, as the Church aimed to mobilize resources for the upcoming Crusades. The decree also included a prohibition on providing any assistance or advice to the enemies of the Crusaders, (Bird & Smith, 2018, p. 243) while the legislation included the horse trade in 626 AH/1229 AD. (Coulon, 2013, p. 164)

⁴Alexander III was born around 1110 AD/504 AH. His original name was Roland, and he chose the name Alexander III when he ascended the papal throne in 1159 AD. He received support from Frederick Barbarossa, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. He died in 1181 AD/577 AH. See: Kelly, J. D. (1996). *The Oxford of Popes*, Oxford. 176-177. Oxford.

⁵*Innocent III* assumed the papacy in 1216 AD/613 AH, succeeding Pope Clement III. He studied theology in Paris and canon law in Bologna. He played a major role in supporting the Fourth Crusade. He died in 1216 AD. See: Al-Sayyid, A. L. (2005). *In the History of Relations between East and West, the Crusader Policy of Pope Innocent III (1198-1216 AD)*. Alexandria: Modern University Office.

This recurring prohibition highlighted the challenges of restricting trade with Muslims. **Pope Innocent IV (1243-1245 AD / 641-643 AH)**⁶ (Awad, 2015, p. 533) emphasized the need for unity and the launching of a new crusade against Egypt with the assistance of Italian cities during the *First Council of Lyons in 643 AH / 1245 AD*. He reiterated the ban on the sale and transport of war materials aboard their ships. Subsequently, this prohibition was expanded to encompass food and horses, broadening its geographic scope to include the *Iberian Peninsula*. (Menache, 2012, p. 244) Given the situation witnessed in the East, the Second Council of Lyon was held in 673 AH/1274 AD, headed by **Pope Gregory X**⁷ (Setton, 1976, p. 109), He also reaffirmed the earlier decisions regarding the prohibition on the transfer of war materials and other means of transportation to Muslims. The Pope expressed significant dissatisfaction with the Venetian merchants who continued to disregard the ban and engage in trade with *Alexandria*. (Baldwin, 2012, p. 81)

In 683 AH / 1284 AD, *Venice*, responding to pressure from the papacy, issued directives to its consul in Alexandria. The instructions mandated that only strategic goods be unloaded in *Tyre and Acre*, and the consul was tasked with confiscating any items arriving in *Egypt* via Venetian ships, regardless of whether they came from Venetian merchants or other nationalities. Additionally, fines were to be imposed on the owners of such goods. The captains of Venetian vessels were required to be interrogated under oath to uncover any merchants involved in arms smuggling. If any illicit goods were discovered after being sold, the merchant would face a penalty equal to double the selling price. (Jacoby, 2004, p. 06)

Immediately after *Tripoli* fell to **Al-Mansur Qalawun in 688 AH / 1289 AD**, **Pope Nicholas IV** issued a sweeping ban on trade with Egypt. Unsurprisingly, this prohibition was met with discontent among the Frankish merchants and transporters in *Acre*, who heavily depended on *Egypt* for their business transactions. In response to their strong opposition, **Nicholas Hannais**, the ruler of *Acre*, permitted them to resume trade, albeit except for strategic war materials and horses. In December **688 AH / 1289 AD**, **Pope Nicholas IV** allowed for certain exceptions to the trade ban.⁸ (Kelly, 1996, pp. 205-206). The ban on trade with *Egypt* was

⁶ Innocent IV was born in 1190 AD/586 AH. He was elected Pope in 1243-1245 AD/641-643 AH. He is considered the first Pope to confront the Mongol expansion and their attack in 1241 AD/639 AH. Therefore, he gave this issue attention at the Second Council of Lyon in 1245 AD. He studied the possibility of converting the Mongols to Christianity and using them in the Crusades. He died in 1254 AD/643 AH. See: Awad, M. (2015). *Dictionary of Notable Crusaders in the East and West in the Two Centuries (12th and 13th AD)* (1 ed.). Cairo: Maktabat al-Adab.

⁷ Pope Gregory X 1271-1276 AD/670-675 AH from a prominent family in Pisa was known for his great enthusiasm for the Crusade project. Therefore, upon his accession to the papal throne, he hastened to call for organizing a new Crusade for the Holy Land and saving the Latin East. The Second Council of Lyons was held for this purpose. See: Setton, K. M. (1976). *The Papacy and the Levant, 1204-1571* (Vol. 1). American Philosophical Society.

⁸ He was born in 1227 AD/625 AH in Italy. His real name was Girolamo Masci. He rose through the ranks of the church until he was appointed Pope in 1288 AD/627 AH. During his reign, the Muslims were able to expel the Crusaders from Acre, their last stronghold. He died in 1292 AD/692 AH. See: Kelly, J. D. (1996). *The Oxford of Popes*, Oxford. 205-206. Oxford.

relaxed during periods of peace, thanks to renewed truces between the *Franks and the Mamluks*. However, this decision was later revoked following the collapse of the *Crusader Kingdom* in 690 AH / 1291 AD, leading to the imposition of financial penalties on those who violated the trade restrictions. (Jacoby, 2018, p. 152)

THE THIRD TOPIC: The Extent of Merchants' Commitment to Implementing the Trade Ban Policy:

The historical evidence indicates that commercial dealings in prohibited goods continued between the two parties. However, the key difference lay in the degree to which each side adhered to the trading of war equipment. In the case of Muslims, there are documented instances of violations, beginning in the early years of the Crusader invasion. For example, during their march to *Jerusalem*, Crusaders looted a herd of cattle in a valley near *Shaizar* in 493 AH / 1099 AD. This act revitalized the financial resources of the knights who then traveled to *Shaizar* and *Homs* to purchase horses, resulting in the acquisition of approximately a thousand of the finest warhorses ⁹ (Gil, 1989, p. 182) which constituted a major problem for them during the first years of their arrival. (Pryor, 2006, p. 528)

Since the *Fatimid era*, Muslims have been selling alum to Italian cities, where it was used as a flame retardant and in the construction of ships and war machines. This trade is documented in correspondence between Saladin, his nephew, and the Pisans, who seized a ship loaded with 225 quintals of alum intended for sale in Christian countries. (Ouerfelli, 2009) These violations recurred when *Al-Salih Ismail* made peace with the Franks in 638 AH / 1240 AD to gain their support in his conflict with his brother *Al-Salih Najm Al-Din Ayyub*. This agreement allowed the Franks to enter *Damascus* and purchase weapons, including numerous swords and war machines. In response, religious arms sellers condemned this action and approached *Sheikh Izz Al-Din Abdul Salam*, who reminded them of the prohibition against selling weapons to the enemy. He was supported in this stance by the *Maliki Sheikh Ismail Abu Omar Ibn Al-Hajeb* ¹⁰. (al-Yafei, 1997, pp. 89-90). Their views significantly influenced the sentiments of Muslims through their sermons. In response to this pressure, *Al-Salih Ismail* decided to provide a place of residence for the two sheikhs. He believed that by doing so, he could alleviate their opposition. Consequently, he permitted them to go wherever they wished. (Al-Maqrizi, 1997, p. 407)

Prince Sanjar al-Shuja'i, the deputy of *Damascus*, was apprehended for selling weapons to the Franks. The *Mamluk* authorities confiscated his assets and put him on trial. During the

⁹ Gil, R. (1989). *History of the Franks, Conquerors of Jerusalem* (1 ed.). (H. Habashi, & M. Attiya, Trans.) Cairo.

¹⁰ He is *Uthman bin Omar bin Abi Bakr bin Yunus*, known as *Ibn al-Hajeb*, the *Maliki* jurist, grammarian, and theologian. He memorized the Qur'an and mastered jurisprudence, its principles, Arabic, and readings, and became one of the greatest scholars of the Arabic language. He moved to *Damascus* in 617 AH/1220 AD and died in *Alexandria* in 646 AH/1248 AD. See: al-Yafei, A. M.-D. (1997). (d. 768 AH), *Mirat al-Janan wa 'Ibrat al-Yaqzan fi Ma'rifat Ma 'T'tibar min Hawadeth al-Zaman* (1 ed.). Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah.

proceedings, he confessed to selling various weapons, including spears and other royal munitions, justifying his actions by claiming that they were unsold items he hoped to profit from. This explanation initially swayed the Sultan in his favor. However, **Mustawfi al-Dawla** countered his argument, stating, "You have concocted these justifications as a defense. The Franks and all enemies do not merely hold the sale of weapons as you claim; they distribute them among themselves, and the enemies pass them on to their allies. The ruler of *Egypt* and the *Levant* is in need, yet you sold your weapons to your enemies." The Sultan's opinion shifted after hearing this, and he ordered the confiscation of **Prince Sanjar's** property and his imprisonment, serving as a warning to anyone who might consider selling weapons to the Franks. (Al-Maqrizi, 1997, p. 204)

Regarding the violations that highlight the ongoing trade of prohibited materials between the Crusaders and Muslims, the *Fatimid* treaty with *Pisa* in 549 AH / 1154 AD explicitly allowed *Pisa* to supply strategic materials to *Egypt*. (Amari, 1863-1867, p. 241) In 568 AH / 1172 AD, at the request of the Doge of *Venice*, **Saladin** granted the Venetians a second chest in *Alexandria*, stipulating that shipments of wood be delivered regularly to the city. (Hooper, 2005, p. 103) **Pope Alexander III** wrote to the Doge of *Venice*, expressing his frustration that the Venetians continued to supply wood to *Egypt* despite the papal ban and with the Doge's approval. The Pope threatened to impose sanctions on all Venetians without exception if they failed to adhere to the ban. Nonetheless, in March 569 AH / 1173 AD, **Doge Romano Mairanoa** agreed to transport 1,400 chests and 600 wooden planks to *Alexandria*. (Kampbell, 2014, p. 67)

In a letter to the *Abbasid Caliph* in 570 AH / 1174 AD, **Sultan Salah al-Din** highlighted the significant extent of his trade relations with the Italian maritime cities and the crucial role this trade played in supplying Muslims with essential military equipment to bolster their efforts. He wrote: "The Frankish armies, the Venetians, the Bacchus, and the Janawiyyah are often ambassadors who wield influence over Islam through the wealth they bring. The authority of our rulings cannot reach them, as they are the ones who now supply our country with the machinery of war and jihad. They approach us by presenting the unique works of their craftsmen, and all of them have resolved to maintain their dealings, having arranged peace with us on their terms, which they continue to influence." (Abu Shama, 2002, p. 238)

This message highlights the significance of this trade for the maritime cities, whose sole aim was to achieve financial profit,¹¹ (De Vitry, 2005, p. 288) it also underscores the importance of maintaining this trade for Muslims, particularly given the critical value of these strategic goods. For instance, *Egypt* faced a significant shortage of wood, which was urgently needed

¹¹ The Latin historian Jacques de Vitry explained and confirmed this issue by saying: "These people often quarrelled much more than they disagreed or fought with the Muslims, and the reason for that was their keenness on trade and commerce more than their keenness on fighting the enemies of Christ. If these merchants had been keener on fighting the Muslims and instilling fear in them, it would have been better than striving for joy and bringing pleasure to themselves as a result of commercial material gains..." See: De Vitry, J. (2005). Messages Jacques De Vitry. (1, Ed., & A. L. Al-Sayyid, Trans.) Libya: The office University Talk.

for constructing ships and weaponry, as the available forests were insufficient to meet their demands. (Al-Nabulsi, 1960, p. 47) As a result, trade treaties were established with the Italian trading cities that explicitly mandated the supply of these essential resources to Egypt. It is also possible that these agreements extended beyond merely supplying strategic goods to include the transportation of ready-made weapons, a hypothesis that can be inferred from the writings of Ibn al-Tuwair, (Ibn al-Tawir, 1992, p. 141) who mentioned in his description of the Fatimid Caliph's warehouses on the eve of the fall of the regime, that they contained Frankish-made weapons that the Fatimids probably obtained through trade.

The papacy made numerous attempts to restrict trade with Muslims, which elicited various reactions and responses that demonstrated the blatant violations of these directives by the trading cities. The presence of thirty-seven ships in the waters of *Alexandria* in 578 AH / 1190 AD, following the Battle of Hattin, indicates that the decisions made during the Third Lateran Council were not enforced and that trade continued unabated. (Edbury, 2001, p. 65)

The inconsistency in papal statements and their adaptability regarding this issue highlights the defiance exhibited by these maritime cities and their rejection of these mandates. For instance, in 598 AH / 1198 AD, **Pope Innocent III** issued a decree allowing Venice to resume legal trade with Muslims while still prohibiting the supply of weapons. This decree reflects the pressure exerted by these cities on the papacy, and the recurring formulations in later church councils serve only to underscore their ineffectiveness in regulating trade practices with Muslims. These decisions had lost significance, as trade had become akin to politics, stripped of emotional considerations. This is why the Venetians adopted the slogan: "**Sians Venetian poi Christiani**" — "Let us be Venetians first and then let us be Christians." (Menache, 2012, p. 259)

Consequently, the Venetians acquiesced to the Ayyubids' demands for weapons by offering high prices for war materials, disregarding the decrees of **Innocent III**. This is supported by a letter from the Geniza documents dated 597 AH / 1200 AD, which mentions the anticipated arrival of two ships laden with timber at the port of *Alexandria*. (Hooper, 2005, p. 106) The slave trade persisted despite the papal prohibition, much like other forms of commerce, and notably, it was not included in the list of goods exported to Muslims. This trade expanded significantly with the increasing Mongol presence along the Black Sea.

Between 640-642 AH / 1242-1244 AD, **Marcello**, the Venetian naval agent in Acre, complained that Zorzi Marsilio had imposed taxes on Venetian merchants for selling slaves, despite their entitlement to tax exemptions. Additionally, **Pope Innocent IV** accused Italian merchants in 644 AH / 1246 AD of transporting slaves from the Black Sea region to Acre for sale to Muslims. This slave trade, which Egypt desperately needed to bolster its military strength under the *Mamluks*, was further reinforced, with Genoa largely monopolizing this trade with *Alexandria* following the Byzantine reconquest of *Constantinople*. (Jacoby, 2018, p. 163)

THE FOURTH TOPIC: How did the trade in prohibited items continue under the censorship imposed by the Church on the records of merchants and their destinations?

The embargo remained in effect, yet the trade in prohibited goods continued unabated. Western merchants and seafarers often circumvented this embargo by disguising and hiding war materials intended for export among legal goods, claiming that these items were being shipped to Acre. *In 671 AH / 1272 AD, Pope Gregory X* attempted to curb the smuggling of war goods to Egypt by requiring merchants to present unloading bills issued in Acre by the Patriarch of *Jerusalem*, the Knights Hospitaller, and the Knights Templar. However, in practice, there were instances where merchants delivered these goods to Tyre and Acre, from where they were then transported to *Egypt*. (Jacoby, 2018, p. 163)

When *Prince Edward* of England arrived in the East in *670 AH / 1271 AD*, he was alarmed by the state of the Frankish territories. He was particularly shocked to discover that the Venetians were engaged in a thriving trade with the Sultan, supplying him with all the wood and metals necessary for weaponry. Meanwhile, the Genoese struggled to find their footing in this lucrative market, despite having already established control over the slave trade in Egypt. When Prince Edward reprimanded the merchants for their actions, which he believed jeopardized the future of Christians in the region, they presented him with permits they had secured from the Supreme Court in Acre to conduct their business. (Runciman, 1966, p. 389)

After the First Council of Lyons, the Pope inquired with the Patriarch of Alexandria about the adherence of Italian cities to his directives. The Patriarch informed him that these cities continued to engage in trade with Muslims, directly violating the prohibitions that had been imposed. They misled maritime inspectors by altering their routes to those destinations where trade was permitted. White carrots were frequently used as a cover for smuggling weapons to Muslims. This smuggling operation facilitated the covert transport of arms via Islamic ships, allowing them to bypass Church oversight. Consequently, the trade in war goods was concealed through deceptive practices in commercial contracts, maritime records, and official documents.

Conclusion:

Finally, we can summarize the key findings of the research as follows:

- **Persistence of Trade:** Despite the various measures and restrictions imposed on trade, it continued to grow and develop throughout the Crusades. The repetition of papal decrees indicates the ongoing nature of this trade and the inability to effectively control it.
- **Comparison of Pressures:** A notable difference exists between the pressure exerted by Crusaders during church councils and the fatwas issued by Islamic resistance regarding the trade embargo on war goods, with Crusader pressure being more significant.
- **Reconciliation of Ideologies:** The papacy demonstrated a willingness to reconcile the ideological goals of the Crusaders with their commercial practices.
- **Economic Interests Prevail:** The challenges faced by merchants in continuing to trade war goods highlighted that economic interests and material profit took precedence over other considerations. This underscored the important role that merchants played in

shaping the war economy, despite the restrictions imposed by religious and political authorities.

- **Circumvention of Restrictions:** The arms trade proved to be highly lucrative, motivating traders to circumvent religious decrees. They engaged in secretive exports by disguising prohibited goods among permitted items or by manipulating the documentation and destinations of shipments.

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