

Medieval Sourcebook:

Pope Innocent III:

License to Venice to Trade With The Saracens, 1198

Besides the indulgence we have promised to those going at their own expense to the east, and besides the favor of apostolic protection granted to those helping that country, we have renewed the decree of the Lateran council which excommunicated those who presume to give arms, iron, or wood to the Saracens for their galleys, and which excommunicated those who act as helmsmen on their galleys and dhows, and which at the same time decreed that they should be deprived of their property for their transgressions by the secular arm and by the consuls of the cities, and that, if caught, they become the slaves of their captors. Following the example of Pope Gregory, our predecessor of pious memory, we have placed under sentence of excommunication all those who in future consort with the Saracens, directly or indirectly, or who attempt to give or send aid to them by sea, as long as the war be tween them and us shall last.

But our beloved sons Andreas Donatus and Benedict Grilion, your messengers, recently came to the apostolic see and were at pains to explain to us that by this decree your city was suffering no small loss, for she is not devoted to agriculture but rather to shipping and to commerce. We, therefore, induced by the paternal affection we have for you, and commanding you under pain of anathema not to aid the Saracens by selling or giving to them or exchanging with them iron, flax, pitch, pointed stakes, ropes, arms, helmets, ships, and boards, or unfinished wood, do permit for the present, until we issue further orders, the taking of goods, other than those mentioned, to Egypt and Babylon, whenever necessary. We hope that in consideration of this kindness you will bear in mind the aiding of Jerusalem, taking care not to abuse the apostolic decree, for there is no doubt that whosoever violates his conscience in evading this order will incur the anger of God.

Source:

From: J. P. Migne, ed., *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, (Paris, 1855), Vol. CCXIV, p. 493, reprinted in Roy C. Cave & Herbert H. Coulson, *A Source Book for Medieval Economic History*, (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1936; reprint ed., New York: Biblo & Tannen, 1965), pp. 104-105.

Scanned by Jerome S. Arkenberg, Cal. State Fullerton. The text has been modernized by Prof. Arkenberg.