

TERTIA PARS: THE ECONOMY OF TRINITARIAN REDEEMERS AT THE TIME OF THE CRUSADES AND JIHAD. AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE PAPAL ECONOMY OF ARMAMENTS

TERTIA PARS: LA ECONOMÍA DE LOS REDENTORES TRINITARIOS EN LA ÉPOCA DE LAS CRUZADAS Y LA YIHAD. UNA ALTERNATIVA A LA ECONOMÍA PAPAL DEL ARMAMENTO

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Abstract

From a concrete and material perspective, money has always been an undisputed value that is both a reflection of, and a driving force in politics and religion and of the ensuing economies, not to mention its specific financial and market aspect. This study offers a panoramic view of the close connection between the politics of the papacy and the investment of money at the time of the crusades and jihad. As will be clearly demonstrated, the most substantial investment was made for rearmament purposes and for «holy war» enterprises. As an alternative to the propaganda and the politics of rearmament and crusading, there were various voices crying out *Deus non vult*. Among these was a concrete alternative project to military service that proposed, as in the manner of an international Red Cross, a humanitarian service to redeem Christian and Muslim prisoners of 'holy wars.' This task required an important quantity of money. The Trinitarian redeemers assume as a rule of life the arithmetic division of all goods into three equal parts: one for one's sustenance, another for the hospitality of the poor and the final one for the redemption of captives. This is a unique case throughout history in the

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distribution of church property, despite the precise rules based on the intuition of Ambrose of Milan codified in the *Decretum Gratiani*.

Keywords

Tertia pars; Trinitarian Redeemers; Crusades; Jihad; Economy of Armaments.

Resumen

En el ámbito de la concreción y la materialidad, el dinero siempre ha sido un valor indiscutible que es exponente y dígito de control de la política y la religión y de las economías consiguientes; sin mencionar el aspecto financiero y mercantil específico. Esta contribución ofrece una visión panorámica sobre la estrecha relación entre la política del papado y la inversión de dinero en la época de las cruzadas y la yihad. Se verá claramente que la inversión absolutamente más importante se destinó al rearme y a las empresas de la «guerra santa».

Como alternativa a la propaganda y a la política del rearme y de las cruzadas, hubo varias voces que gritaban *Deus non vult*. Entre ellas había un proyecto concreto alternativo al servicio militar que proponía, como una cruz roja internacional, el servicio humanitario para redimir a los prisioneros cristianos y musulmanes de las «guerras santas». Esta labor necesitaba mucho dinero. Los redentores trinitarios toman como norma de vida la división aritmética de todos los bienes en tres partes iguales: una para el propio sustento, otra para la hospitalidad de los pobres y otra para la redención de los cautivos.

Se trata de un caso único a lo largo de la historia en la distribución de los bienes eclesiásticos, a pesar de las reglas precisas que a partir de la intuición de Ambrosio de Milán se codifican en el *Decretum Gratiani*.

Palabras clave

Tertia pars; redentores trinitarios; cruzadas; yihad; economía de armamentos.

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AT PRESENT, research on the material goods, the money, the properties of the Church and its investments has been limited to the right of the Church to possess and administer goods, to the market, to currency, to usury and simony and to some pages of local history. In the boundless bibliography on the history of the Latin Church or of the papacy, the subject of finance and economics therefore needs broader and more in-depth research.

We still need to answer many questions related to money and its use by the Church's clergy and religious: starting from the papacy and the apostolic see, on to the dioceses, abbeys, and the religious orders. Where did the money come from, how was it used, what were the most important expenses, the various types of investments? Another theme that deserves to be developed is that of poverty understood as deprivation and / or as an investment, voluntary begging for alms together with the organization of work and the distribution of the relative income of the western monastic world in its various forms. Among the most conspicuous investments of money by the Latin church and the papacy there are ample pages to explore around the finances of the papal state, the management of tithes (*rationes decimarum*) with policies that directed substantial cash flows to set up corsair activities and military expeditions by land or by sea. Finally we need to achieve a deeper understanding of the history of the monies accumulated through voluntary donations, the banks of the church in competition with the banks of the kingdom or the city, and the laws that regulated the market, even that, obviously, developed 'with others', whether Jews or Saracens, a practice that moved from excommunications to collaboration: it started by being tolerated and then allowed and even encouraged. Eventually, the real investment of the money given to the church for the poor, gathered in the *archae*, the *troncs* normally found at the various ecclesiastical institutions.

In this *mare magnum*, the papal finances and economy occupy a place of absolute importance especially for the period of the so-called Middle Ages, when they involved, or tried to, the economic policies of the various *Christianae nationes*.

In this contribution we shall focus on a twofold «contradictory» investment: that for the rearmament in the time of the crusades and jihad, and the alternative to military spending, the choice to invest the assets in favour of the victims of the «holy wars». It is, as we shall see, an investment managed through an arithmetic division.

1. «DUDUM RATIONABILITER DECRETUM». THE PRE-CONSTANTINIAN AND ROMAN CHURCHES

The Gospel of Christ distances itself from the riches and goods of this world, declares a «woe» to the rich incapable of welcoming the poor and who place their total trust in material goods (*Luke 6: 24-26*); recommends not to worry about the necessities of life («look at the birds of the sky that do not reap and do not

weave»; «give us today our daily bread»), warns against hypocrisy (the widow's mite), offers ample and repeated attention to the need to include the poor in the economy of Christ's disciples. The Gospel, however, does not offer indications or arithmetical provisions for the sharing and distribution of the goods of the earth. Keeping all this in mind, the organization of the nascent church, the disciples and first converts, had to find ways of answering to this double call, to have a «common purse» and to share by drawing from this purse.

These indications of the Gospel were implemented in the apostolic Church, as is witnessed by the Acts of the Apostles: «They would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.» (*Acts 2: 45*); and it can be assumed that in general Christians had the awareness of the «need» of the obligation to share earthly goods.

The letter of James sounds as an impetuous warning and reproach throughout the history of the Church: «What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill', and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?» (*James 2: 14-16*).

So that in the Didache, in the Letter to Diognetus, in the conciliar texts and in the various texts of Tertullian, John Chrysostom and of the Fathers of the Church, Christians were reminded of the importance of the right use of material goods and the obligation of sharing.

Ambrose gives immediate precedence to the value of the captives per se, vis-à-vis the sacred vessels, which are the inalienable and sacred property of the Church. By so doing, Ambrose unsettled the stability of the rules of the economy and even of the absolute priority of divine worship. «For the One who sent the apostles out without gold assembled the churches without gold. The church has gold, not to preserve it for itself but to dispense it, to provide people with assistance in times of need. [...] The sacraments have no need of gold; they take no pleasure in gold, for they are not bought with gold. The glory of the sacraments lies in the ransom of prisoners. Here are vessels that really are precious - the vessels that ransom souls from death.»² His theory and practice are of such immense value as to set an example that has spanned the centuries, and even established a juridical norm that would be in force in our period and far beyond it, through the *Decretum Gratiani*. Thus, Ambrose's approach became the norm; it was incorporated into Justinian's *Decretum*³ and subsequently into Gratian's *Decretum*⁴.

2. Ambrose, *De officiis*, book 2, chap. 28. Edited with an introduction, translation and commentary by I. J. Davidson. Oxford, 2001, 343, 345, 347.

3. *Novellae Constitutiones*, I. Milan, 1977, 339.

4. Cf. E. Friedberg, *Corpus iuris canonici. Decretum Magistri Gratiani*, 690-91, 710. *Decreti secunda pars* C 12. 2, 70: *Res sacrae quibus ex causis alienari debeant*; C 12. 2. 13: *Vasa sacra, nisi pro redemptione captivorum non sunt alienanda*; c

The norm of the fourfold division of ecclesiastical income –income from property and from the voluntary donations of the faithful– is attributed to Pope Gelasius I. One part was for the poor, another for the maintenance of churches and the decorum of the divine service, a third for the bishop, and the fourth for the clergy. Some authors consider this division of the church's funds to be prior to Pope Gelasius, since the Pope himself speaks of the distribution of goods as being in force for a certain period *dudum rationabiliter decretum*.

The arithmetical division became the universal law of the church, since it passed from the letters to the decrees of the popes together with the canonical norms of synods and councils, until it was assumed by the *Decretum Gratiani*, becoming a perennial admonition for clerics and religious. It is well known that the observance of these canons was often at best lukewarm or replaced with the construction of temples, images and statues «to the greater glory of God».

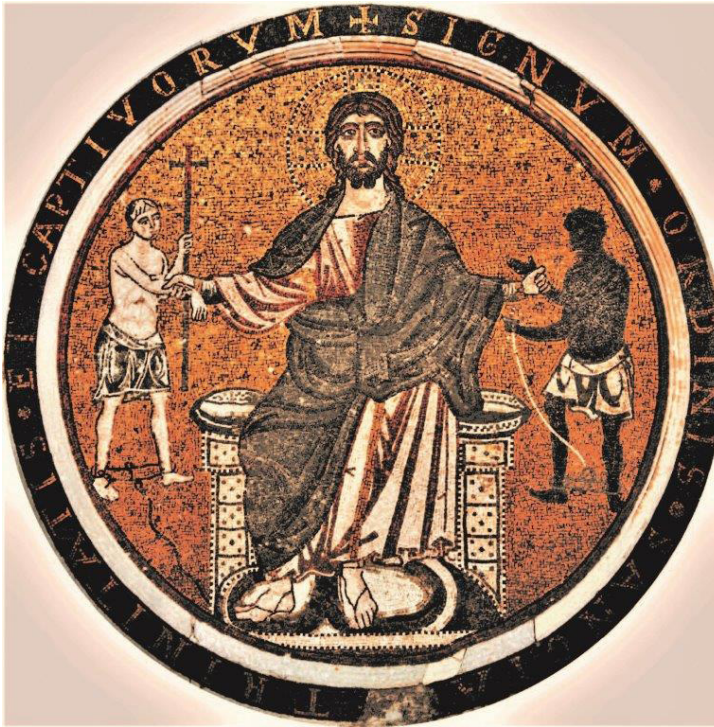


FIGURE 1. ROME, MOSAIC OF SAN TOMMASO IN FORMIS (CA. 1210 / 606 - 607H), WORK OF JACOPO AND HIS SON COSMA, ROMAN MARBLE WORKERS OF THE COSMATI FAMILY. CHRIST PANTOCRATOR LIBERATES A CHRISTIAN CAPTIVE AND A MUSLIM

14: *Pro redemptione captivorum vasa sacra non prohibentur alienari*; c 15: *Res ecclesiae licite inpenduntur pro captivorum redemptione*; c 16: *Res desolatae ecclesiae non preponantur captivis*; c 70: *Res sacrae quibus ex causis alienari debeant*.

It often happened to coexist with venal and military interests, as in the case of the *responcio* and other norms of chivalry of the religious-military orders. In truth it must be recognized, based on the references and sanctions of the synodal and conciliar texts, that those who administered the assets of the Church with a certain frequency fell into the temptation of seeking profit and their own good instead of the common good which included the poor. From now on, among the categories of the poor, the captives are mentioned explicitly.

2. THE PAPACY AND THE INVESTMENT OF MONEY. THE EXPENSES OF WAR

Innocent III, writing to Lawrence bishop of Syracuse and to Luke abbot of Sambucina, at the end of June 1198, refers to profanations and the division of the spoils. The Pope describes the deplorable state of the holy places; he then urges his correspondents to work together in any case for the liberation of the Lord's legacy, calling upon them to collect alms for the military enterprise, and then for the needy Christians of Jerusalem.

«Let the Church's faithful arise then; let them take up arms and shield and hasten to the aid of Jesus Christ [...] Although many may not be able to contribute monetarily to the endeavour, they [...] may nonetheless help with their resources: things may be thus arranged that all come to share in the common work of liberation and in its reward. [...] But we, for our part, so as not to give the impression of imposing heavy and unbearable burdens on others, while we appear to seem unwilling even to lift a single finger to change the situation, have made arrangements to send to those parts one of our brethren at his own expense with the charge to lend succour; with suitable assistance and in all humility, his task is to take charge of the Lord's army [...]».⁵

On August 15th, 1198, Innocent III wishes to induce all the people in the province of Narbonne to work for the liberation of the Holy Land, reminding them of its destruction, and the slaughter of Christian people; to this end he states that, owing to this situation, Christ himself is held as captive in exile. «[...] Let each and every one see to it that next March all cities of themselves along with both counts and barons, according to their own resources, send for the defence of the land of the Lord's birth, at their own expense, a certain number of warriors who are to stay there for at least two years. [...] But lest we should appear of imposing heavy and unbearable burdens on others, while we ourselves seem unwilling even to lift a finger, by merely talking and doing either nothing or very little –since the one who acted and taught will be called great in the kingdom of heaven, following

5. Giulio Cipollone, *When a Pope and a Sultan spoke the same language of war*, let. no. 19.

the example of him who began to act and teach; so that we, too —who, although unworthy, are taking his place on earth — might provide an example to others, we have decided to succour the Holy Land with personnel and resources.»⁶

In his letter (ca. 1st -10th November 1198) to William (III) archbishop of Embrun, to Imbert of Aguilères archbishop of Arles and to Guy of Fos archbishop of Aix-en-Provence, and their suffragans, Innocent III writes, «Lest, however, what is to be read in the Gospel be applicable to us: ‘They speak with words but they do not act’, nor again to seem to be imposing heavy and unbearable burdens on others, while we do not wish to move them even with a finger, but wishing to act as well as teach we have imposed the sign of the cross on our beloved sons Soffredo, priest of the title of St Praxedes, and on Peter, a deacon of St Mary, both cardinals, legates of the Apostolic See, to send them at their own expense with any other suitable subsidy, as leaders of the Christian army.»⁷

In April 1213 Innocent III incites the Christians of the province of Mainz to take up arms for the liberation of the Holy Land and emphasizes the fact that many thousands of Christians are imprisoned and enslaved by the Saracens. «Because the contribution for the expedition to the Holy Land may be remitted all the more easily if it is shared by many, we pray all [...] that a congruous number of combatants willing to undertake the campaign by paying for their own sustenance for the length of three years [...] Should this not be possible for everyone, we recommend the pooling of subsidies, for we are certain that the men will be found if we collect sufficient money. [...] And so as not to give the impression of imposing unbearable burdens upon others without our lifting a single finger, we hereby asseverate before God that we do commit ourselves to carrying out in all conscience all that we expect to be carried out by others. [...] Since the aid for the Holy Land could be prevented or greatly deferred if it was necessary [...] by apostolic mandate. For this same reason, we revoke all remissions and indulgences heretofore conceded by us to those who had gone to Spain to fight the Moors, or to Provence to fight the heretics: the decision is motivated by the fact that such concessions applied to a period that has presently expired and for a cause now obsolete.»⁸

Actually, Jerusalem is in more places.

The Crusader goes where the Pope’s discretion sends him, and Jerusalem is not the only way to go to heaven; each destination indicated by the Pope leads to heaven. Between the time of the first crusade until the pontificate of Boniface VIII there are two centuries, and during this time we have about two hundred letters of the Popes: in half of them Jerusalem is exchanged with other ‘equivalent’ destinations that offer the same merits and the same indulgences for the Crusaders.

6. *Ibid.*, let. no. 20.

7. *Ibid.*, let. no. 22.

8. *Ibid.*, let. no. 44.

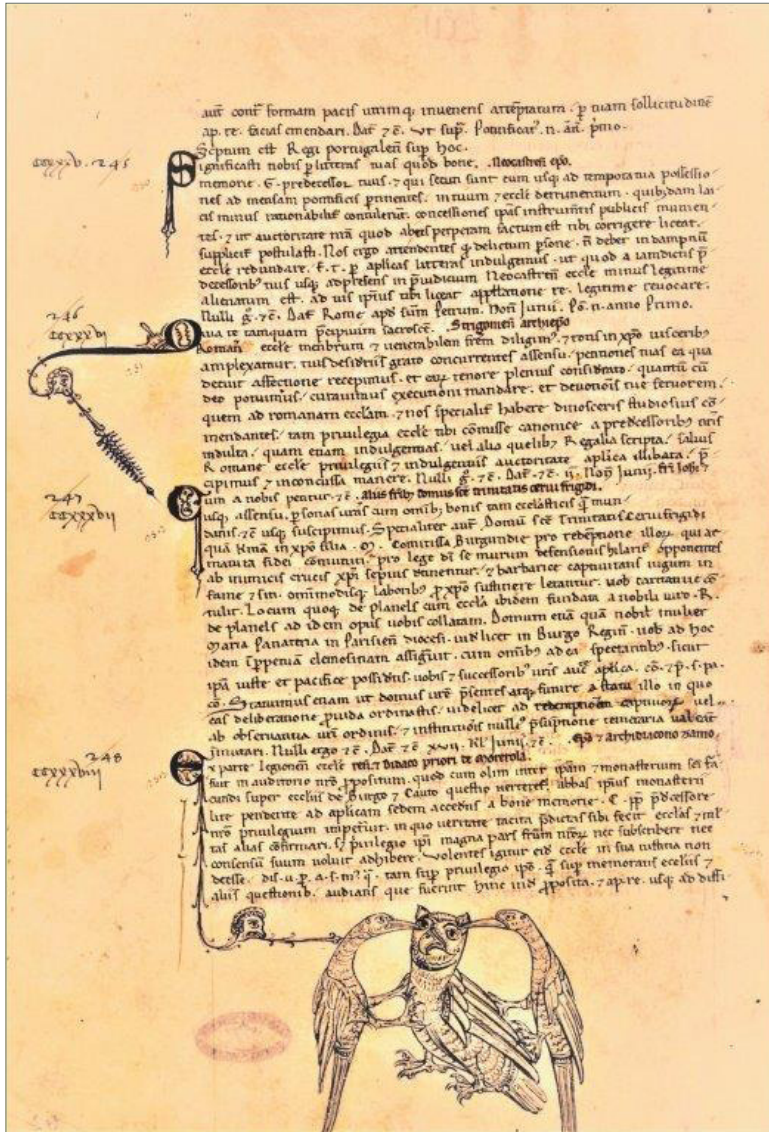


FIGURE 2. VATICAN CITY, ARCH. VAT., REG. VAT., 4, FOL. 62V, AN. I, N. 252. LETTER OF POPE INNOCENT III (LETTER 18), DATED MAY 16, 1198 / 594H., SENT TO JOHN OF PROVENCE, DE MATA, AND THE OTHER BROTHERS OF CERFROID, THE FIRST HOUSE OF THE TRINITARIAN REDEMPTORISTS, ABOUT 80 KILOMETERS FROM PARIS

Pope Honorius III opens further the range of directions equivalent to the *viagium* towards Jerusalem and the land of the Lord's inheritance. The commutation affects not only the direction, but also, obviously, the destination of the twentieth part or other proportions of the money established for the rescue of the Holy Land.

On October 5th 1218, the Pope will complain about an economy that collapsed our *camera apostolica* in such a way that *pene penitus sit exhausta*⁹, having spent 20000 silver brands to cover the huge costs of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, so to switch the direction of ‘money’. Other switching of money concerns the King of France about to move the war to England.

3. THE TERTIA PARS: THE THIRD PART. POVERTY IN THE INTERESTS OF CHARITY. A NEW FORM FOR FINANCING AND ECONOMY

Holy war begets holy captivity. And it is a sad proliferation: the captives are an incalculable multitude. Because of this, in papal politics, «some men redeemers» founded an order as an early International Red Cross.

Some Christian men, *virī quidam redemptores*, in the country of Paris joined as a group to free captives of holy wars, crusade and *jihad*, in the last decade of the twelfth century, between the third and fourth crusades and following the occupation of Jerusalem by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf in 1187. This last event was a source of ‘cosmic,’ harrowing frustration for Christendom as a whole. Tens of thousands of Christians were captured that year by the Muslims; they thus went on to swell the numbers of those who had been captured in earlier campaigns, or in recent times at Acre, Jaffa, Alarcos and elsewhere. Up to twenty thousand Christians were in the hands of the Muslims, spread over Damascus, Jerusalem and Alexandria, or in the Maghreb and al-Andalus. However, the voices pleading for re-armament were louder and far more diffuse than the laments of thousands of prisoners.

The order of the Holy Trinity would take its place among the numerous religious institutions of Christendom for its originality, a large part of which rested on its economic rule. In short, poverty is actively embraced and the risk of enrichment is positively excluded through an arithmetic proportionality that leaves no room for manoeuvre, to the temperamental vagaries either of the individual or the community good.

The third part is to be reserved for the ransom of captives who are imprisoned by the pagans for the faith in Christ. It is clear what the percentage is and who the recipients are. Without any reference to the economic condition of a house, the *TR* prescribes *a priori* that a third of all income be earmarked as ransom for Christian captives. This form of charitable investment is a unique trait of the Trinitarian redeemers, and each house of the order depends on it.

9. Potth. 5906; Giulio Cipollone, «Cristianità e Islam fra crociate e ḡihād: trascendenza, religione e finanza. I ‘trinitari’ redentori e liberatori di captivi cristiani e musulmani nel Nord Africa», in *Person, Transcendence, Powers in Africa*, ed. Pierluigi Valsecchi, Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana – Centro Ambrosiano, 2019, 175.

The *TR* dictates that the order may accept any sort of pecuniary donation provided it comes from *undecumque licite*. One third is for the 'friars' sustenance; another third is for works of charity, and the remainder is for the running costs of the house: boarding, lodging, maintenance, and other possible expenses. Thus arranged, the economy of the order was rather insecure, and the possibility of getting rich, nil. This proportional division of the donated goods (or money) affected the life and finances of each house under every possible aspect: the charitable dynamism of the house and its very expansion, as well as that of the order as a whole, unequivocally depended on it. In a sense, this is what Innocent III conveyed when he declared, in the introduction of the *TR*, that the Trinitarians lived by an economic activity arithmetically bound up with the interests of Christ; and we have reason to believe that the arrangement was such as to keep the order in a perennial state of organized and voluntary economic precariousness.

On 25th September 1246, pope Innocent IV writes to the chief minister and to the friars of the order, dispensing them from paying tithes and the twentieth for the Holy Land and the Empire. The pope grants them this dispensation because, for the sake of their works of charity, and having to live only with one third of their income, they often find themselves forced to mendicate¹⁰.

It is a concession: for that is how Innocent III himself put it «*est concessum*» in his letter to the Almohad emir. «This is a time during which, on pain of severe punishment, it is forbidden to have commercial contacts with the Saracens, or any contact that may be construed as advantageous to them.» With that grant, the pope does not just derogate from the juridical norm, he actually permits the liberation of enemies, even though the exchange is purely instrumental. Meanwhile, his appeal to the Templars and to Christian princes overseas for the *commutatio* was unsuccessful.

In sum, the domestic economy of the Trinitarian house relied on tripartition, licit donations, and the obligation to work for the good of the community. A final observation on the practice of the *virii redemptores* is in order. This practice arose during the period of active rearmament, which was then affecting all of Christendom.

This was the be-all and end-all of the venture and of its entire earning and redistributive structure. Obviously, such an exact arrangement was not without its difficulties. Two thirds for charity; and of those two thirds one was for the ransom of captives: proclaimed by Innocent III himself, this was the economic slogan of the Trinitarians, whom so many upright personalities would come to admire.

The Trinitarians with their non-profit activities offer new investment in the accounting of mercantile profits and a new cultural model of approach to Islam in the late Middle Ages¹¹.

10. Giulio Cipollone, *When a Pope and a Sultan spoke the same language of war*, 467.

11. Josep Hernando, «La 'tertia pars' en la regla de los Trinitarios para el rescate de los cautivos: una forma de inversión económica, de economía evangélica», in *La liberazione, La liberazione dei 'cattivi' tra Cristianità e Islam. Oltre*

All this when more than 20,000 captives were scattered between Jerusalem, Alexandria and Damascus, and when in the Lateran IV ecumenical council there was not even a word spoken about the captives and their possible release¹².

la crociata e il ǧihād: tolleranza e servizio umanitario. Atti del Congresso interdisciplinare di studi storici (Roma, 16-19 settembre 1998) organizzato per l'VIII centenario dell'approvazione della regola dei Trinitari da parte del papa Innocenzo III il 17 dicembre 1198 / 15 safar, 595H, ed. G. Cipollone. Vatican City, 2000, [first repr., 2007] (Collectanea Archivi Vaticani, 46), 263-308; Luciano Palermo, «L'Europa e la cultura araba nel medioevo: l'attività 'no profit' dei Trinitari e la contabilità dei profitti mercantili», *ibidem*, 683-95.

12. G. Cipollone, «Christian and Muslim Captives taken in Crusades and Jihad: 'Not a single word' spoken at the Fourth Lateran Council,» in *Jews and Muslims under the Fourth Lateran Council*, eds. M. Th. Champagne and I. Resnick. Turnhout, 2018, (RELMIN. Religion and Law in Medieval Christian and Muslim Societies, 10), 139-57.

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