

3 Some notes on the history of *crociata* in the Italian language

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The earliest attestation of the Italian word *crociata* ('crusade') dates back to the late 13th century. Surprisingly, it is found in a comic poem written by the Sienese playful poet Cecco Angiolieri (c.1260–1312). Angiolieri used the expression *fare una crociata* ("carry out a crusade") for one of the hyperboles of the sonnet *Chi dice del suo padre altro ch'onore*:

Chi dice del suo padre altro ch'onore
la lingua gli dovrebbe esser tagliata
perché son sette le morta' peccata
ma infra gli altri quell'è il maggiore.
S'i' fussi prete o ver frate minore
al papa fôra la prima mia andata,
e direi: "Padre santo, una *crociata*
si faccia indosso a cui lor fa disnore".¹

The sonnet has to be read from an antiphrastic perspective. The *vituperium* against his father is among the main motifs of Cecco Angiolieri's caustic poetry. To disclose the full irony of this particular call to a crusade, it is interesting to note that Cecco's father was the wealthy Angioliero, banker of Gregory IX. Angioliero financed a pope who resorted extensively to the crusade to impose ecclesiastical authority.²

* I would like to thank Fabien Montcher for reading the text and for the corrections he suggested.

- 1 "Whoever says of his own father anything but good / his tongue should be cut out / for there are seven deadly sins / but among the others [venial ones] / that [speaking evil of the father] is the greatest. / If I were priest or friar minor / I would make the pope my first visit, / and I would say: 'Holy Father, let there be a crusade / against those who dishonor the fathers'". I quote the quatrains from the forthcoming critical edition by Fabio Jermini, whom I thank for allowing me to read the text he established. For the figure and poetry of Cecco Angiolieri see Fabien Alfie, *Comedy and Culture: Cecco Angiolieri's Poetry and Late Medieval Society* (Leeds: Northern Universities Press, 2001); Francesco Carapezza, "Cecco Angiolieri," in *Encyclopedia of Italian Literary Studies*, ed. Gaetana Marrone, Paolo Puppa, Luca Somigli (New York, London: Routledge, 2007): 43–45.
- 2 Christopher Tyerman, *God's war: A new History of the Crusades* (Cambridge MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 756–762; Michael Lower, *The Barons' Crusade: A Call to Arms and Its Consequences* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

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The Italian word denoting the medieval expeditions made by Christians against Muslims or heretics thus emerges in written form about two centuries after the first armed pilgrimages that followed the pope's sermon in Clermont (Cecco Angiolieri is supposed to have composed his rhymes in the last decade of the 13th century). Regarding older attestations, it must be remembered that not too many Italian vernacular texts from the 12th century have come down to us. It should be noted, however, that the cognate noun and adjective *crociato* ("crusader") have attestations that precede by about two decades those of the noun *crociata* in Cecco Angiolieri's sonnet. As a noun, *crociato* is first attested in the plural form *crociate* in another poetic text, an anonymous *serventese* transcribed on a Ravenna parchment and composed in the third to last decade of the 13th century. In this text, a Ghibelline jester invites Guido da Montefeltro to command a military expedition against the Guelphs in Bologna. The terse sixth stanza of the poem contains a reference to some '*oltremare crusate*' ("Outremer crusaders") who helped the Bolognese in the military expedition against Forlì between 1273 and 1274.³ As an adjective, *crociato* emerges instead in texts that are proceeding from the Tuscany coeval with or slightly older than Cecco Angiolieri's sonnets. With the clear meaning of "participant in the crusade", *crociato* is used in an anonymous Florentine *Cronica* dating from the late 13th century. Here the reference is to Bohemond of Altavilla: "*nel costui tempo Baimondo, nobile duca di [Puglia], con li cristiani, crociato, andò oltremare e racquistò il sancto sepulcro di Cristo*".⁴ Further on in this text, we also find the mention of the '*crociati d'Italia*' ("crusaders of Italy") who left for Acre.⁵ Some '*cristiani crociati*' following Emperor Baldwin II are also mentioned in the *Leggenda di Messer Gianni di Procida* ("Legend of Sir John of Procida"), a chronicle derived from a lost text composed in the first years of the 14th century, and also from the Tuscan area, which fancifully recasts the role of Baron John of Procida in the Sicilian revolt against Charles of Anjou in 1282.⁶

3 Angelo Eugenio Mecca, "Dante e il serventese romagnolo del 1277", *Nuova rivista di letteratura italiana* 8 (2005): 9–18.

4 "In his time [of pope Urban II] Bohemond, noble duke of Apulia, with the Christians, crusader, went overseas and recaptured the holy sepulchre of Christ" See *Tesoro della Lingua Italiana delle Origini*, accessed 26 February 2023, <http://tlio.oivi.cnr.it/TLIO/> (=TLIO). For this chronicle see Colette Gros, "Cronica Fiorentina compilata nel secolo XIII," in *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, ed. Graeme Dunphy and Cristian Bratu, accessed 26 February 2023, doi: 10.1163/2213-2139_emc_SIM_00196. The text is edited in Alfredo Schiaffini, ed., *Testi fiorentini del Duecento e dei primi del Trecento* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1954).

5 See TLIO. Schiaffini, *Testi fiorentini*, 110.

6 Marcello Barbato, ed., *Cronache volgari del vespro* (Roma: Istituto storico per il Medio Evo, 2012), 96. The manuscript can be dated shortly after 1325: The occurrence of *crociato* in one of the Iacopone da Todi's *lauda* reported by the TLIO does not appear to be a reference to those participating in one of the historical crusades. In the laude *O Francesco povero* ("O Poor Francis"), the image of the cross is central, since seven appearances of the cross in the life of Francis of Assisi are recalled in this mystic text. Therefore, the expression *popolo crociato* ("crusade people") may simply indicate the overall group of Christians evoked in the final part of this apocalyptic vision. In verse 9, the occurrence of the adjective *crociato* in *scuta crociate* ("shields with the sign of the cross") is also a reference to the arms of Christ in a vision of the cross described in Bonaventura's *Legenda maior* which is the main source of the composition. See text and comments in Iacopone da Todi, *Laudi. Trattato e detti*, ed. Franca Ageno. Premessa alla ristampa di Lino Leonardi (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo, 2013), 244, 249.

It is possible to hypothesise an even earlier use of the noun or adjective *crociato* thanks to a particular attestation of the Latin form *cruciatus* that has so far not been commented on. The occurrence is located in a text dated between 1177 and 1180, which is already well known to historians. These are the depositions collected by Cardinal Laborante to settle the long dispute over the possession of certain *pievi* between the dioceses of Siena and Arezzo. In the document, the deposition made by the witness “*Froncio de sancto Quirico*” ends with these words: “*fuit autem ego natus tempore quo cruciati christiani revicerunt sepulchrum domini, cum esset tunc captus a sarracenis Girardus magister hospitalis*”. Before commenting on this occurrence, it should be noted that here the word *cruciati* is the correction made by the 19th-century editor of the erroneous lesson *cruciani* in the manuscript.⁷ Froncio’s deposition, with the vague reference to the “*cruciati christiani*” and to Blessed Gerard, is likely to have been issued in the vernacular language. Therefore, in the Latin translation, it is not impossible to glimpse the reproduction of a vernacular word such as *crociati* uttered by a peasant of San Quirico d’Orcia in the late 12th century.⁸

Not only the word *crociato* but also the cognate verb *crociare* (i.e. “to take the cross, to join the crusade”) benefits from older attestations to the word *crociata*. Used as a reflexive, this verb of ancient usage (but still present in the early 20th century in the poetic language of Giovanni Pascoli and Gabriele D’Annunzio) first appeared in a letter written in 1265 from Troyes, France, by another Siense, the merchant Andrea de’ Tolomei.⁹ In a report addressed to his family members, Tolomei mentions the good people who still have to join King Charles of Anjou in the crusade against Manfred launched first by Urban IV and then by Clement IV: “*molta buona gente di questo paese si die anchora crociare*” (“lot of this country good people still has to join the crusade”). In the same letter, Andrea de’ Tolomei

7 I found this attestation thanks to the Archivio della Latinità Italiana del Medioevo, accessed 26 February 2023, <http://alim.unisi.it/> (=ALIM). The text of the document, preserved in the Diocesan Archive of Arezzo (ms. n. 435), is published in *Documenti per la storia della città di Arezzo nel Medio Evo, raccolti per cura di Ubaldo Pasqui Volume primo. Codice diplomatico (an. 650?–1180)* (Firenze: Viesseux, 1899), 531. See also Enrico Faini, “Le memorie del territorio nella Tuscia dei secoli XII–XIII: strategie di condizionamento nei *dicta testium*,” *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome - Moyen Âge*, 123–2 (2011): 487–497, and Chris Wickham, *Courts and Conflict in Twelfth-century Tuscany* (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 286–289.

8 Another evident sign of a deposition made in the vernacular is the presence in the Latin text of a word like *strichia* “strip, piece”: “*et episcopus ivit [...] ad plebem de Cosana, et abstulit unam strichiam de porta plebis*” (*Documenti*, 530). Note that the first attestation of the Italian form *striscia* is in Dante’s Comedy, but the Latin form of the word, a probable vulgarism, is already employed in 11th century Tuscan texts written in Latin, see Arrigo Castellani, “Striscia,” in Gabriella Del Lungo Camiciotti et al., ed., *Studi in onore di Carlo Alberto Mastrelli. Scritti di allievi e amici fiorentini*, in *Quaderni del Dipartimento di Linguistica*, Studi 1 (Padova: Unipress, 1994), 63–65; Pär Larson, *Glossario diplomatico toscano avanti il 1220* (Firenze: Accademia della Crusca, 1995). In Larson’s repertoire of Latin words derived from vulgar forms, *cruciatus* is absent, even if the texts edited by Pasqui are part of the reference corpus (see Larson, *Glossario*, xvii).

9 *TLIO and Grande Dizionario della Lingua Italiana*, accessed 26 February 2023, <https://www.gdli.it/> (=GDLI).

also uses the rare term *croceria*, ‘crusade’, which in Italian medieval texts is attested again only in Giovanni Villani’s *Nuova Cronica*, written almost a century later. Villani uses *croceria* to refer to the crusader host, the “innumerable people on horseback and foot” following Lord Edward, the future king of England, on crusade in 1270.¹⁰ Given Andrea de’ Tolomei’s stay in France and Villani’s knowledge of French (he also travelled for years in France and Flanders), one might also think that this sporadic word is an adapted loan from the French *croiserie*, attested from the second decade of the 13th century.¹¹

The few occurrences of *crociato* in the extant Italian 13th century texts and the unique attestation of *crociata* in Cecco Angiolieri’s sonnet certainly do not allow one to establish the extent of such a vocabulary at this time. However, these few attestations prove that these words were already in use. In the Sieneese area, as early as the late 12th century, it is even possible to assume a quite common use of the term *crociato* in reference to those who participated in the expeditions to the Holy Land, while about a century later, a comic poet of great flair could use the expression *fare la crociata* in an ironic sense. After all, the involvement of Tuscans in crusading expeditions was considerable, and the preaching of the Third Crusade was concentrated around Tuscan cities.¹²

It is more difficult to affirm how widespread the use of *crociato* or *crociata* was during the 12th century, partly because, as aforesaid, the preserved Italian vernacular texts from this period are scarce. In addition, it is difficult to find other attestations of Latin words in Italian sources on the basis of which to make the same assumptions about the *cruciatus* we find in the depositions collected by the archbishop Laborante. We should add that even the periphrases built on the word *croce* (“cross”) – to indicate the calling of a crusade – have few attestations in the coeval Italian texts: the expressions *predicare* or *bandire la croce* or *le croci* (“preaching/proclaiming the cross”, “calling for a crusade”) appear equally in Tuscan texts written between the end of the 13th century and the beginning of the 14th century. These expressions both have more occurrences in 14th-century texts, where we find *dare*, *pigliare* or *prendere* and *ricevere la croce* (“giving, taking, receiving the cross”, i.e. the crusaders’ insignia).

Starting from the second half of the 13th century, *bandire la croce* occurs in a figurative way for expressive purposes in a narrative: both Boccaccio in his masterpiece and his imitator Franco Sacchetti write about priests and other men who have proclaimed the cross against some wives in order to seduce them (*Decameron*,

10 Text edited in Arrigo Castellani, ed., *La prosa italiana delle origini: I, Testi toscani di carattere pratico* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1982), 401–7. See also *Lettere volgari del secolo XIII scritte da senesi pubblicate e illustrate con documenti e annotazioni da Cesare Paoli e da Enea Piccolomini* (Bologna: Romagnoli, 1871), 49–58. For Villani’s chronicle see Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, ed. Giuseppe Porta, 3 vol., (Milano: Guanda, 2007), vol. 1, 469.

11 *Dictionnaire Étymologique de l’Ancien Français*: “croiserie”, accessed 26 February 2023, <https://deaf-server.adw.uni-heidelberg.de/lemme/croiz#croiserie>.

12 Giuseppe Ligato, “*Oriens Pugnati!*”. *Aspetti del movimento crociato* (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro Italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo, 2016): 129–141.

VIII, 2; Franco Sacchetti, *Trecento Novelle*, 25).¹³ We can also find attestations of the vernacular forms *crocesegnati*, *crocisegnati* and *crucesignati* to refer to crusaders in 14th-century texts coming from Florence and Umbria-Romagna.¹⁴

The word *crociata* occurs only in five out of the 3,443 texts that make up the current corpus of Old Italian.¹⁵ In the 14th century, the other expressions to refer to the crusades in the Holy Land, such as *santo passaggio* (“holy passage”) or *passaggio d’oltremare* o *generale* (“outremer, general passage”), have more attestations than *crociata*, not only in Tuscan texts but also in those from Veneto and the central area.¹⁶ In her letters, Catherine of Siena, who intensely promoted the crusade throughout society as a sacred mission, calls the expeditions *santo* or *dolce passaggio*.¹⁷ Still, *passaggio generale* is the expression that Boccaccio used in the *Decameron* to refer to the Third Crusade, the one crusade evoked in his book as the historical backdrop for some of the novellas. *Crociata* is used in the anonymous *Chronica senese* of 1362, relating the history of the city between 1202 and 1391.¹⁸ The author first recalls that in 1331 “*venne uno cardinale leghato e perdonava cholpa e pena a chi voleva pigliare la croce*”,¹⁹ then at the time of “*Ufredi di Fondi, nipote del papa Bonifazio*” (Roffredo III di Pietro II

13 Cfr. *TLIO*. Franco Sacchetti, *Le Trecento Novelle*, ed. Michelangelo Zaccarello (Firenze: Edizioni del Galluzzo per la Fondazione Ezio Franceschini, 2014), 57.

14 The corresponding Latin term had entered institutional use with the letters of Innocent III, and at least from 1208 onward also in reference to those who fought against the Albigensians: Michael Markowski, “Crucesignatus. Its origins and early usage,” *Journal of Medieval History* 10 (1984): 157–165.

15 Corpus OVI dell’Italiano antico, accessed 26 February 2023, <http://gattoweb.ovi.cnr.it/>.

16 *TLIO* s. v. *generale e oltremare*. *Passaggio d’oltremare* is first attested with explicit reference to expeditions to the Holy Land in the will of Countess Beatrice Di Capraia (1279), who left one hundred pounds, precisely “*per lo passaggio d’oltremare, il quale si fa in aiutorio dela Terra Santa*” (“for the outremer passage, which is made in aid of the Holy Land”), see Schiaffini, *Testi fiorentini*, 240. *Passaggio generale (d’Oltre mare)* is instead an expression that we find for the first time in the *Croniche della città di Firenze* composed by Paolino Pieri beginning in 1302: the reference is to the crusade called by Gregory X during the Council of Lyons, see Paolino Pieri, *Croniche della città di Firenze*, ed. Chiara Coluccia (Lecce-Rovato: Pensa MultiMedia, 2013), 47. The word *passagium* was then the later Latin term used to refer to expeditions to the Holy Land, see Franco Cardini, “Ripensare la crociata,” in *Scrinium Berolinense. Tilo Brandis zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Peter J. Becker et al. (Beiträge aus der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin - Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Band 10, 2000): 103–13. In Italian sources, the word with the same meaning has several occurrences in Salimbene de Adam’s *Cronica*, see *ALIM* and Salimbene de Adam de Parma, *Cronica*, ed. Giuseppe Scalia, transl. Beardo Rossi, 2 vol. (Parma: Monte Università Parma Editore, 1966) vol. 2, 653, 655.

17 Massimo Viglione, “*...Rizzate el gonfalone della Santissima Croce*”. *L’idea di Crociata in santa Caterina da Siena* (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2007), 84–87.

18 Alessandro Lisini, Fabio Iacometti, ed., *Cronache senesi* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1939), 122. See also Matteo Pace, “Cronaca senese di autore anonimo del secolo XIV,” in *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, accessed 26 February 2023, doi: [10.1163/2213-2139_emc_SIM_00792](https://doi.org/10.1163/2213-2139_emc_SIM_00792).

19 “a cardinal legate came and forgave guilt and punishment to those who wanted to take up the cross”.

Caetani, nephew of Pope Boniface VIII)²⁰ a legate arrived in Siena who, by the pope's mandate "*perdonava di cholpa e di pena a qualunque persona pigliava la croce per andare inverso il turco e a chombattare per la santa fede cristiana*".²¹ Next, the chronicler also tells us that "*ducento chavalieri, e' quai erano iti cho' la crociata*"²² returned to Siena, thus using the noun *crociata* in the clear meaning of an "armed expedition".

With the same meaning, but in the form *cruciata*, the word occurs four times in the ground-breaking *Cronica aquilana* written in the Abruzzese vernacular by Iacobuccio (Buccio) di Ranallo da Popplito, a member of L'Aquila's aristocracy. In a moralistic work in verse, the author tells the story of the city up to 1362, recalling the crusade called in 1344 by Pope Clement VI and headed by Umberto II of Vienna. He dwelled on the sentiments that drove the people to take up the cross:

Su innello mare fare ci aparse uno sengiale,
che paria che struccassese tucto lo nostro male;
fo facta la *cruciata*, questo fo in generale,
l'uno co' l'altro amavase como frate carnale.
Grande *Cruciata* fecese per gire na Turchia,
multe genti la presero et tucti a compangia;
multe però se strussero ché lo lor se vennia;
chi volze Dio gabare, prese la mala via.²³

We also find the word *crociata* in another chronicle from the Tuscan area, written almost twenty years after the Siennese chronicle mentioned above. The author, Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, used the word in the expression *predicare la crociata* with reference to the call for the Third Crusade made by the Apostolic Legate, the

20 Daniel Waley, "Caetani, Roffredo" in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 16 (Roma: Treccani, 1973) and Emiliano Bultrini, *I Caetani dopo Bonifacio VIII. Roffredo III e Benedetto III (1303–1308)*, in « *Pazzi innocui che consumano il tempo a frugare vecchie carte* ». *Raccolta di saggi per il centenario dei Comuni di Campagna e Marittima di Giorgio Falco*, 2 vol. (Roma: UniversItalia, 2021), vol. 2, 9, n. 7.

21 "Forgave guilt and punishment to any person who took up the cross to go against the Turk to fight for the holy Christian faith".

22 "Two hundred knights who had gone to the crusade".

23 "While so much evil was being committed, a sign appeared to us / which seemed to put an end to all our evil, the crusade was made / this concerned the whole of Christendom, / one with another loved as carnal brother / a great crusade was made to go to Turkey / many people undertook it and all going together / many however became impoverished because they sold their possessions / those who wanted to deceive God [pretending to repent] / took a bad path [ended badly]", Buccio di Ranallo, *Cronica*, ed. Carlo de Matteis (Firenze: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2008), 193–94. I quote the text from Carlo de Matteis's recent edition, despite the several philological problems of the work highlighted by Vittorio Formentin, "Sfortuna di Buccio," *Lingua e stile*, 45.2 (2010): 185–222, since the choices to be corrected do not seem to affect the quoted verses. For the *Cronica aquilana* see also Pierluigi Terenzi, "Buccio di Ranallo," in *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, accessed 26 February 2023, doi: [10.1163/2213-2139_etc_SIM_000847](https://doi.org/10.1163/2213-2139_etc_SIM_000847).

bishop of Ravenna Gerardo. In this case, the meaning of the word could be “expedition”, as well as “content of the bull by which the crusade is proclaimed”:

Avvenne che essendo negli anni di Cristo 1188 di settembre arrivato in Firenze l'Arcivescovo di Ravenna a predicare la crociata, di che si commosse molta gente di Firenze a piede ed a cavallo.²⁴

The earliest 14th-century chronicle that attests to the word is the remarkable *Cronica di'Anonimo romano*, written firstly in Latin and then translated into the ancient vernacular of Rome by an educated, aristocratic author who recounts the events that took place in the city between 1327 and 1357, with particular reference to the rise and fall of the tribune Cola di Rienzo.²⁵ In the vivid account of the Anonymous, the word *crociata* occurs several times, including in the form *cruciata*. It appears again with the clear meaning of “armed expedition” both in [Chapter 11](#) and in [Chapter 13](#), in which the events surrounding the conquest of Smyrna (1344) by the league promoted by Clement VI are reported:

L'ambasciata de Veneziani fu denanti allo papa in Avignone e domannaoli umilmente la *crociata* sopra Turchi. Papa Chimento recipéo graziosamente questi ambasciatori e offerze soa voluntate bona. Allora vao la voce per tutta Cristianitate della *crociata* fare: remissione de pena e de colpa a chi serviva, chi se moriva deritto ne iva alli piedi de Dio non piecanno né da lato manco né da lato ritto. Predicata non fu questa *crociata* per li puosti dalla Chiesa, né servato l'ordine lo quale se devea servare, se non che sola tanto la voce mosse la iente.²⁶

More interesting are the occurrences in the expression *bandire la crociata* that we find in [Chapter 26](#). Here the Anonymous presents the clash between the prefect of Viterbo, Giovanni da Vico, and the man that Pope Innocent VI chose for the reconquest of Italy, Cardinal Egidio de Albornoz. The author tells us that despite the opposition of the prefect, described as a treacherous man who had occupied the Church lands, the legate decided not to launch a crusade against him: “*puoi che lo*

24 “It happened that in September of the years of Christ 1188, the archbishop of Ravenna having arrived in Florence to preach the crusade, many people of Florence were excited, walking or riding horses”, Niccolò Rodolico, ed., *Cronaca fiorentina di Marchionne di Coppo Stefani*, (Città di Castello: Lapi, 1903), 26. See Flavio Boggi, “Marchionne di Coppo Stefani,” in *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, accessed 24 April 2023, doi: [10.1163/2213-2139_emc_SIM_01774](https://doi.org/10.1163/2213-2139_emc_SIM_01774).

25 Anonimo romano, *Cronica*, ed. Giuseppe Porta (Milano: Adelphi, 1979). See Giovanni Spani, “Anonimo Romano,” in *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, accessed 04 November 2022, doi: [10.1163/2213-2139_emc_SIM_00197](https://doi.org/10.1163/2213-2139_emc_SIM_00197).

26 Anonimo romano, *Cronica*, 114: “The embassy of the Venetians was before the pope in Avignon and they humbly asked him for the crusade over Turks. Pope Clement graciously received these ambassadors and offered his good will. Then the news of the crusade went throughout Christendom: remission of penalty and guilt to those who served, those who died went straight to the feet of God not deviating either from the left or the right side. This crusade was not preached for the places of the Church, nor was the order that was to be preserved, the voice alone moved people”.

legato conubbe l'animo dello profietto indurato, vidde la perverza mente ostinata, crociata non li bannio sopra (no-lli pareva da tanto)".²⁷ Next, the Anonymous relates that the same papal legate chose instead to launch a crusade against "*the dog captain of Forlì*", the excommunicated Francesco degli Ordelauffi. In reference to the clash between the "*schismatic*" Ordelauffi and the Church, the Anonymous repeatedly uses the expression *bandire la crociata*.²⁸ He says explicitly that the cardinal had the remission of sins preached both for those who would take up the cross against Ordelauffi and for those who would offer financial support to the expedition ("*aiutorio*"). He also refers to those who fought on the pope's side as *crociati*:

Don Gilio Conchese de Spagna fece sio fonnamento e residenza in Ancona. E per avere più fortezza *bannio la crociata*. Io la odii predicare. Remissione de pena e colpa a chi prenneva la croce o chi faceva aiutorio. Ora ne veo lo legato sopra allo cane capitano de Forlì, Francesco delli Ordelauffi. [...] Dodici milia fuoro li *crociati*, trenta milia li sollati [...] Per moiti anni *vannio la crociata*, e fu predicata la croce per tutta Italia. [...] In questo assedio sopra Forlì fuoro presi assai voite delli *crociati*, li quali per meritare erano iti a commettere contra de quelli scismatici. Li *crociati* presi erano menati denanti a Francesco, lo quale diceva queste paravole.²⁹

The occurrences of the word *crociata* in this Roman *Cronica* are meaningful. Indeed, this is the first known Italian vernacular text in which *crociata* e *crociato* are words repeatedly used to denote, respectively, a war against a single (Christian) political enemy of the pope and those who participate in this war that grants indulgences. Moreover, being the object of the verb *bandire*, here *crociata* could also have the meaning of the "bull" proclaiming, by means of preaching, the indulgences granted to those who take part in the war or give money to support it.

In Italian 15th-century literary texts, quickly searchable thanks to the *corpora*, the word *crociata* continues to have few attestations.³⁰ The only occurrence we can find for this period is nonetheless relevant, because it backdates the written emergence of the clear meaning of "collection or contribution of money". The main historical dictionary of the Italian language reports the first attestation with this

27 Anonimo romano, *Cronica*, 223: "When the legate recognised the prefect's hard spirit and saw his obstinate mind, he did not call a crusade on him (it did not seem necessary to him)".

28 See Leardo Mascanzoni, *La crociata contro Francesco II Oderlauffi (1356–1359) nello specchio della storiografia. Exurgant Insuper Christi Milites* (Bologna: Pàtron, 2017).

29 Anonimo romano, *Cronica*, 228-235: "Don Egidio Conchese of Spain established his residence in Ancona and to have more strength he banished the crusade. I heard it preached. Remission of penalty and guilt to those who took the cross or those who gave financial help. Now I see the legate over the capitano de Forlì, Francesco delli Ordelauffi. [...] Twelve thousand were the crusaders, thirty thousand the soldiers. For many years he banned the crusade, and the cross was preached throughout Italy. [...] In this siege above Forlì they were assailed many times by the crusaders [...] The captured crusaders were led before Francis, who said these words".

30 LIZ 4.0. *Biblioteca Italiana Zanichelli. DVD-ROM per Windows per la ricerca in testi, biografie, trame e concordanze della Letteratura italiana*, ed. Pasquale Stoppelli (Bologna: Zanichelli, 2010) and *Biblioteca italiana*, accessed 23 April 2023, <http://www.bibliotecaitaliana.it/>.

meaning in Francesco Guicciardini's *Relazione di Spagna* (1512), where the reference is evidently to the typically Spanish fiscal device of the *crusada*.³¹ However, in the form *cruciata* and in this particular sense, the word is already found in a narrative work composed in the Kingdom of Naples after 1450. This is the *Novellino* (first printed edition of 1476), a collection of tales written by the anticlerical Masuccio Salernitano (Tommaso Guardati, 1410–1475). In the novella about the greedy friar Girolamo da Spoleto, who passes off the bone of a dead knight for the arm of St. Luke in order to enrich himself and become a high prelate, Masuccio relates that Girolamo thought of how many other friars had secured their careers through money, one becoming inquisitor, the other one “*de la cruciata collettore*” (“collector of the *cruciata*”).³² As Benjamin Weber has shown, it was in the 15th century that the Latin term *cruciata* was established in pontifical documents. The term had various meanings: it may mean a “bull” or “letter offering indulgence in exchange for participation in a holy war”, or refer to the “content” of a bull, that is, the indulgence to be preached. It may also have the meaning of a “financial device”, that is, an official means of raising money, or it may simply mean an “armed expedition”. It is important to note that in Italian, this latter meaning of the word appears well before the Latin term used in official curia texts with this same meaning from the 15th century onward.³³ Moreover, it is during the pontificate of Pius II (1458–64) that the Latin word *cruciata* is affirmed as an administrative and cultural institution of the Church. It is meaningful that the institution managed by a particular custodian of the crusade was called by Pius II with the specific name “*Camera of the Holy Crusade*”. The vernacular terms, therefore, began to be used in Europe, including Naples, with the meaning of money raised with the permission of the Church to finance war against enemies, a *sancta expeditio*. Institutionally, this was now called a *cruciata* made to affirm Christian European identity and to defend the territory of Christendom, especially in eastern Europe.³⁴

In the 16th century, we observe a greater spread of the word. The attestations increase along with the number of texts in which to look for them, which now include printed texts. As for the occurrences in which the word has its primary meaning, we must note that in the first half of the century, we can find for the first time the word *crociata* in a historical work and in the plural form to refer retrospectively to all

31 *GDLI*. See Massimo Carlo Gianni, *Religione, fiscalità e politica: i tentativi d'introdurre la bolla della crociata nel Regno di Napoli nel XVII secolo*, in *I linguaggi del potere nell'età barocca*, 2 vol., vol. 1, *Politica e religione* (Roma: Viella, 2009), 320–326.

32 Masuccio Salernitano, *Il Novellino*, nell'edizione di Luigi Settembrini, ed. Salvatore S. Nigro (Milano: BUR, 1990), 151. The expression has already been reported, without comment on the particular meaning of the name, by Donato Pirovano, *Modi narrativi e stile del “Novellino” di Masuccio Salernitano* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1996), 236.

33 Benjamin Weber, “Nouveau mot ou nouvelle réalité? Le terme *cruciata* et son utilisation dans les textes pontificaux,” in *La Papauté et les croisades/The Papacy and the Crusades. Actes du VII^e Congrès de la Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East / Proceedings of the VIIth Conference of the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East* by Michel Balard (London: Routledge, 2011), 11–25.

34 Marco Pellegrini, *La crociata nel Rinascimento. Mutazioni di un mito 1400–1600* (Firenze: Le Lettere, 2014): 42–48.

medieval expeditions against infidels. Niccolò Machiavelli used the word with this connotation in his *Istorie fiorentine*, written between 1522 and 1525 and dedicated to the future pope Clement VII, Giuliano de' Medici. In his work, Machiavelli recalls the Council of Clermont and presents a particular relationship between the pope's insecurity and the call of what would be the First Crusade. Moreover, he gives the etymological explanation of the specific term used to define the Christian expeditions against *Saracenes*, a word, he points out, that came into use only later:

Era pervenuto al pontificato Urbano II, il quale era in Roma odiato; e non gli parendo anche potere stare, per le disunioni, in Italia sicuro, si volse ad una generosa impresa, e se ne andò in Francia con tutto il clero, e ragunò in Auverna molti popoli, a' quali fece una orazione contro agli infideli; per la quale intanto accese gli animi loro, che deliberarono di fare la impresa di Asia contro a' Saraceni; la quale impresa con tutte le altre simili furono di poi chiamate *crociate*, perché tutti quelli che vi andorono erano segnati sopra le armi e sopra i vestimenti di una croce rossa.³⁵

In this period, the word *crociata* seems to be, thus, a quite normal word to indicate a military enterprise against the Turks or other enemies of the Christendom. We can find it both in a domestic chronicle, the *Diary* of the Florentine apothecary Luca Landucci (registrations for the years 1509 and 1518),³⁶ and in a later historical and popular work about the Ottoman Empire, Francesco Sansovino's *Historia universale dell'origine, guerre et imperio de' Turchi*, as well as, preceded by the adjective *santissima*, on a frontispiece of a modest literary work, like that of the Neapolitan marquis Ferrante Carafa, who celebrated the victory of Lepanto and wrote an oration "*alla Santità di Gregorio XIII intorno all'accrescimento della Lega e all'espeditone della Santissima Crociata*" (1573).³⁷ The common use of the word is also indicated by the fact that *crociata* does not belong to the vocabulary

35 "Urban II, who was hated in Rome, had come to the pontificate. And as it appeared to him that because of the disunities in Italy he could not be secure, he turned his attention to a generous enterprise, went away to France with all the clergy, and in Auvergne gathered up many peoples to whom he made a speech against the infidels. This speech so inflamed their spirits that they decided to make a campaign in Asia against the Saracens. This campaign along with all the others like it were later called the crusades because all those who went on them had their arms and clothes marked with a red cross", Niccolò Machiavelli, *Florentine histories. Newly translated edition*, trans. Laura F. Banfield and Harvey C. Mansfield jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 27–28. For the Italian text see Niccolò Machiavelli, *Opere storiche*, ed. Alessandro Montevicchi and Carlo Varotti, 2 vol. (Roma: Salerno, 2010), vol. 1, 136–137.

36 Luca Landucci, *A Florentine diary from 1450 to 1516*, trans. Alice de Rosen Jervis, (London/New York: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1927), 223, 289. Italian text in Luca Landucci, *Diario fiorentino dal 1450 al 1516* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1985), 293, 365.

37 "For our holiness Gregory XIII, concerning the growth of the league and the expedition of the most holy crusade", Ferrante Carafa, *L'Austria dell'illustrissimo S. Ferrante Carrafa marchese di S. Lucido. Dove si contiene la vittoria della Santa Lega all'Hechinadi nell'anno 1571* (L'Aquila, Gioseppe Cacchij, 1573). The expression *santissima crociata* is also found in the text of the oration *For Ferrante Carafa*, see Gaspare De Caro, "Carafa, Ferrante," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 19 (1976).

used in a masterpiece such as the *Gerusalemme liberata* (1st ed. 1581), one of the books that would influence the European vision of the Crusades.³⁸ Indeed, for his epic poem, which was soon popular and translated into several languages, Torquato Tasso sought an epic style and a language far from common usage. It is probably for this reason that he still preferred the expression *gran passaggio* and never used *crociata* in the poetic account of the exploits and adventures of Christian heroes during the First Crusade. In 16th-century Italian texts, the word *crociata* has several occurrences that refer to a financial device, that is, a public grant given by a papal bull in order to finance enterprises against the Moors. With this meaning, the word occurs in particular in the Venetian ambassadors' reports and, as noted above, in Francesco Guicciardini's work, specifically in the *Storia d'Italia*.

In the 17th century, the word *crociata* continued to be used mainly with the two meanings of "armed expedition" and with that of a fiscal device. The word appears both in the frontispiece and text of the historical work expressly dedicated to the First Crusade by the Bolognese painter, poet, and historian, Giovanni Francesco Negri, known for translating *Gerusalemme liberata* into the Bolognese dialect. His *Prima Crociata, ovvero Lega di Militie Christiane* ("First Crusade, or League of Christiane Militias") was printed at the expense of Pope Alexander VII, to whom the work is dedicated. It is therefore interesting to find in the text a note on the continuous and common use of the term to refer to all military enterprises against Infidels and enemies of the Church:

perché i guerrieri che la dovevano essercitare furono dal Vicario di Christo segnalati di Croce, intitolossi crociata, e questo degno titolo si è poi sempre usato in tutte le guerre promosse da' Romani Pastori alli Maomettani e altri nemici della Cattolica Chiesa.³⁹

Thanks to Daniele Menozzi's recent book on crusading ideology in the modern era,⁴⁰ it is now possible to highlight some relevant moments concerning the use of the word in Italy from the late 18th century to the present, especially among Catholics and as part of official Church communication. First, it is worth recalling that in France, the Jacobin Jacques-Pierre Brissot de Warville spoke about a "crusade for freedom" to foment the battle against the enemies of the Revolution. The Italian

38 Luigi Russo, "Constantinople pillage, Venice risen and *Gerusalemme liberata* – a view from Italy," in *Controversial Histories – Current Views on the Crusades*, ed. F. Hinz and J. Meyer-Hamme (London: Routledge, 2020), 87–88.

39 "because the warriors who were to make it [the "formidable enterprise"] were marked with the Cross by the Vicar of Christ, it was called *crociata*, and this worthy title was then always used in all the wars promoted by the Roman Pastors against the Mohammedans and other enemies of the Catholic Church", Giovanni Francesco Negri, *Alla Santità di nostro signore Papa Alessandro settimo. Prima Crociata, ovvero Lega di Militie Christiane segnalate di Croce, liberatrice del Sacro Sepolcro di Giesù Christo e del Regno di Terra Santa* (Bologna: Battista Ferroni, 1658), vii. For Giovanni Francesco Negri see Nicola Catelli, "Negri, Giovanni Francesco," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 78 (2013).

40 Daniele Menozzi, "*Crociata*". *Storia di un'ideologia dalla Rivoluzione francese a Bergoglio* (Roma, Carocci, 2020).

Jacobins instead used the term *crociata* in reference to Catholic opposition.⁴¹ Indeed, a counter-revolutionary book such as the one composed by the Jesuit Francisco Gustà entitled *Saggio critico sulle crociate* (“Critical Essay on the Crusades”, 1794) was not only an apology for the medieval crusades but a general call for a crusade, issued in Italian, against the Enlightened Revolutions. With Gustà’s work as well as texts by other Catholic polemicists, it was at the end of the 18th century that the word *crociata* again became part of the Italian Catholic political lexicon, indicating an intervention against the threat of modernity.⁴²

In the 19th century, attestations of the word *crociata* multiplied, even in poetic language. For example, the Romantic poet Tommaso Grossi uses it both in his medieval setting verse novel *Ildegonda* (1820) and, as the title shows, in the poem *I lombardi alla prima crociata* (1826). This last work inspired the homonymous libretto by Temistocle Solera for Giuseppe Verdi’s opera, in which the public of the time recognised a patriotic intent.⁴³ The choice of Giuseppe Mazzini calling the war of independence a *santa crociata* in his appeal to King Charles Albert (1831) should instead be traced back to the religion of the homeland. But Mazzini is not the only Italian Risorgimento patriot to sacralise the struggle for political independence, calling it the *crociata*. The fight against Habsburg Austria was also called *santa crociata* by several figures (religious and otherwise) engaged in the propaganda for the Italian war of independence. Even some military departments were registered under the name of *crociata* at the Royal Army Historical Office. On the other hand, in later years, the battle to defend ecclesiastical sovereignty started to be referred to with the word *crociata* in public discourse, even though the pope did not issue a specific *bullà cruciatae*, nor did he ever explicitly speak of a crusade. In fact, in the journal *La Civiltà Cattolica*, Jesuit Giovanni Giuseppe Franco wrote an account of the battle won at Mentana by papal troops, titling the last chapter *I Monumenti della crociata* (“Monuments of the Crusade”) and calling *crociata* the clash against Garibaldi’s troops.⁴⁴

To grasp the vitality of the word in this period, it is worth considering its use with references other than to war. We cite here the writer and essayist from Turin, Ludovico Di Breme, who in 1818 wrote an article about Vincenzo Monti’s linguistic essay *Proposta di alcune correzioni e giunte al Vocabolario della Crusca* (“Proposal of some corrections and additions to the Vocabolario della Crusca”), saying that Monti had called for a *crociata* against the most important Italian dictionary.⁴⁵ But it is at the end of the century, and again in Catholic circles, that a relevant semantic shift affects the word. A *crociata* now denoted a fervent political and social

41 See Erasmo Leso, *Lingua e rivoluzione. Ricerche sul vocabolario politico italiano del triennio rivoluzionario 1796–1799* (Venezia: Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 1991), 151, 157, 493, 730, and Menozzi, “*Crociata*”, 22–23.

42 Menozzi, “*Crociata*”, 24–39.

43 Franco Cardini, “Dai ‘Lombardi’ al ‘Jérusalem’”. Fra mito romantico e realtà storica,” in Id., *L’invenzione del nemico* (Palermo: Sellerio, 2006): 232–247.

44 Menozzi, “*Crociata*”, 47.

45 Di Breme’s article is in the edition of the romantic literary journal *Il Conciliatore* from 6 January 1818.

action against secularisation. Suffice it to say here that the young priest who would later found the *Partito Popolare Italiano*, Luigi Sturzo, wrote in an 1897 article that “*una nuova crociata*” should be preached against the revolution and the freemasonry that want to destroy religion and the homeland.⁴⁶

Entering the 20th century, it should be remembered that even in various Italian circles, the First World War was called a *crociata*. The word was also widely used in Italy – not only by Catholics – to expressively refer to the Italo-Turkish war. The Vatican publicly opposed the reference to the crusades for this conflict, and later Benedict XV did not favour it for the First World War, but the word continued to be used to emphasise the righteousness of the war that was being fought. Italian religious booklets written for soldiers document the use of the crusade idea and vocabulary to comfort troops. As Menozzi notes, with this language, the cause of the nation was equated with the cause of faith, and the homeland was sacralised, especially by the Catholic nationalists. After the conflict, the word *crociata* is again used by Catholics in a spiritual sense, especially in reference to non-military contexts. Between 1929 and 1931, Pius XI himself promoted a “*crociata di carità e di soccorso*” (“crusade of charity and aid”) for assistance to be given to the society impoverished by the Great Depression, and he also started evoking a spiritual (and political) crusade of prayers against communism.⁴⁷

As for the first half of the 20th century, it is worth mentioning that among the few Catholic voices that criticised the use of the word ‘crusade’ to designate the Spanish Civil War, we can find Luigi Sturzo. As aforesaid, Sturzo had evoked the medieval crusades in relation to countering secularisation. Nevertheless, he later condemned the definition of the Francoist war as an anti-communist crusade, seeing in this recalling the negation of Christian charity. Likewise, it should also be remembered that during the Second World War, after the Barbarossa operation, the Catholic and anti-Fascist professor of Roman law Giorgio La Pira reframed the word ‘crusade’ in reference to opposition to the Nazis. This happened shortly before references to the anti-Bolshevik *crociata* spread in various fascist Catholic circles, including through military chaplains. Many in Italy expected the pope to proclaim the crusade for the ongoing war. Pressure from the fascist press and diplomacy and the spread in the Catholic world of mass adherence to the propaganda of the Nazi-fascist crusade prompted Pius XII to launch a “*crociata sociale*” to oppose the military crusade. The pope did this by means of the Christmas radio message of 1942, thus spiritualising again the word *crociata* while still directing it against the ideas of modernity, above all communism. Even when Eisenhower evoked the medieval crusades with references to the Normandy landings, the Pope avoided politicising the word, using it rather in expressions that always connoted a spiritual sense of the word. The most frequent was *crociata di preghiere* (“crusade of prayers”), by which the pontiff called on the faithful people to pray for Christian ideals to be affirmed in the world, and later as well for the rights of Catholics in Palestine and for the Hungarian uprising against the communist regime. In the

46 Menozzi, “*Crociata*”, 96–102.

47 Menozzi, “*Crociata*”, 114–129.

latter case, what should be emphasised is that Pius XII would take the opportunity to reiterate that the proclamation of a military crusade was still among the possibilities of the Church.⁴⁸

As for the post-war period, it is worth mentioning the radio preaching of the *crociata della bontà* (“crusade of goodness”) by Jesuit Riccardo Lombardi. Supported by the pope, the preaching contributed to the Christian party’s electoral success in 1948. The word *crociata* was, in this case, at the service of Christian Democrat propaganda, which promoted the election campaign as a crusade against communism. Later still, while the American Crusade for Freedom was taking place in Korea, Catholic Action in Italy organised the spiritual “*crociata del grande ritorno*” (“crusade for the great return”) of Christian values (1950).⁴⁹

During the pontificate of John Paul II, the word continued to be used in a spiritual sense (“crusade of the Gospel, of prayers, anti-blasphemy, and Eucharist”). In the Angelus of 12 February 1995, however, the pope, without mentioning the word, confined the crusades to a medieval past to be condemned in order instead to affirm the dialogue between religions and cultures. This affirmation became even stronger during the Jubilee of 2000 in the solemn request for forgiveness for the faults that the Church had committed. However, as Menozzi notes again, the crusades are not explicitly mentioned in the Church’s solemn request for forgiveness; resistance against the condemnation of the crusades by more traditionalist Catholics might have influenced this omission. The request for pardon for the crusades, which John Paul II publicly invoked again in 2001, execrating the sacking of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade during the meeting with the head of the Orthodox Church, thus remains unfinished, although the historical revision of the crusades by the Church has begun.⁵⁰

The use of the word ‘crusade’, as is well known, became widespread during the war and the tension that followed the 9/11 terrorist attacks. For what concerns Italian communication during this period, Menozzi appropriately refers to both the use of the word *crociata* by atheist journalists like Oriana Fallaci to account for the conflict and the new Catholic apologetics that presented the medieval crusade as an integral part of Christian identity under the pontificate of Benedict XVI. The ambiguous stance on the crusades by Benedict XVI is highlighted in Menozzi’s study, as well as the necessary overcoming of the crusade-related vocabulary affirmed by Pope Francis, who instead recognises it as a language contrary to Christian mercy. However, the sentiment that presents the medieval expeditions to Palestine as a foundational identity trait to be displayed politically is still alive among the more traditionalist sectors of the Church.⁵¹

48 Menozzi, “*Crociata*”, 131–165.

49 Menozzi, “*Crociata*”, 165–167.

50 Menozzi, “*Crociata*”, 174–177.

51 Menozzi, “*Crociata*”, 177–192. See also Marco Giardini, “The reception of the crusades in the contemporary Catholic Church. ‘Purification of memory’ or medieval nostalgia?,” in *The Crusades in the Modern World. Engaging the Crusades*, ed. Mike Horswell and Akil Awan (London: Routledge, 2019): 75–90.