Crusading as an Act of Vengeance, 1095–1216

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List of Abbreviations

AQDGM	Ausgewählte Quellen zur Deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis
CFM	Les Classiques Français du Moyen Âge
CHF	Les Classiques de l'Histoire de France au Moyen Âge
DHC	Documents relatifs à l'Histoire des Croisades
MGHHT	Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Hebräische Texte aus dem Mittelalterlichen Deutschland
MGHSS	Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Series Scriptores
OFCC	The Old French Crusade Cycle
PL	Patrologia Latina
RHCOc.	Recueil des Historiens des Croisades, Historiens Occidentaux
RHGF	Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France
RS	Rerum Brittanicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores
SBO	S. Bernardi Opera Omnia
TLF	Textes Littéraires Français

NB: With the exception of the Hebrew sources, all translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

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Introduction

Sometime in the late twelfth century, roughly around the year 1180, a French scribe wrote down a version of a popular *chanson* that presumably had been making the rounds. This epic song engaged its audiences with what was arguably one of the most entertaining stories of the times, a narrative of religion, war, and honor that featured an impossible journey, menacing foreign enemies, strange and distant lands, do-or-die battles, treachery and betrayal, miracles and visions, and agonizing crises of faith.

This narrative was, of course, the story of the First Crusade until the crusaders' victory at Antioch. The primary concern of this particular version of the story was entertainment, not argument, yet all the same it provided audiences with a clearly stated justification for the events of the First Crusade: vengeance. Even within the first forty laisses of the poem, attention is drawn to the First Crusade as vengeance:

> but the noble barons who loved God and held him dear,
> went to *outremer* in order to avenge his body.[1]

As the *chanson* continues, it becomes clear why vengeance is required: the seizure of "Christian" lands, the desecration of the holy places, the abuse of pilgrims and eastern Christians, and even the crucifixion of Christ—all demand revenge. Not only does the narrative of the *chanson* draw the audience's attention to the motif of vengeance, but also characters within the poem, from Pope Urban II to the knight Rainald Porcet, are described envisioning the First Crusade as vengeance.[2] Vengeance drives the ideology of the *Chanson d'Antioche*, and also provides its internal narrative momentum, as crusaders in the text seek engagement after engagement with Muslims to avenge their fallen comrades.

Even a cursory examination of other twelfth-century texts reveals that the construction of crusading as vengeance was hardly an anomaly. Numerous chronicles, in many ways the meat-and-potatoes documents for historical research, also included the idea. To give but one example, the accepted and widely used account of Baldric of Bourgueil, written in the early twelfth century,

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[1]   *La Chanson d'Antioche*, ed. J. Nelson, OFCC 4 (Tuscaloosa, 2003), p. 49.
[2]   Ibid., pp. 50 and 182.

depicted the crusaders driven by the obligation to avenge Christ as a fallen kinsman.[3] And notably, another twelfth-century *chanson de geste*, *La Venjance de Nostre Seigneur*, portrayed the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. as revenge for the crucifixion.

It would be possible to dismiss an emphasis on vengeance in one lone text, like the *Chanson d'Antioche,* as exceptional and largely irrelevant. Carl Erdmann, the father of the modern study of crusading ideology, certainly did so when he described the emphasis on crusading as vengeance as "an obvious improvisation suggestive of how immature the idea of crusade still was."[4] But although even a quick survey of twelfth-century crusading texts reveals that the *Chanson d'Antioche* was not a singular, anomalous text, only recently have historians of the crusades begun to seriously investigate the presence of the idea of crusading as an act of vengeance.[5]

Understandably, to date the study of this idea has primarily concentrated on non-ecclesiastical phenomena such as feuding, purportedly a component of "secular" culture and the interpersonal obligations inherent in medieval society.[6] Some scholars have begun to elaborate the ways in which Christian theology contributed to the idea,[7] and many historians have noted the apparent relationship between ideas of vengeance on the Jews for the crucifixion and the crusading movement.[8] But until now, no one has tackled these topics directly in a comprehensive study.

The idea of crusading as vengeance merits a fuller discussion for two reasons. First, admittedly at the most basic level, because it is an area of crusading studies that is incomplete and, as it turns out, currently inaccurate. Although there can be no doubt that military obligation and notions of family honor contributed to the concept of crusading vengeance, we have not yet taken into full account the frequent references to the Biblical God of vengeance that reside alongside more "secular" themes in crusade narratives. Moreover, the general assumption remains that the idea of crusading as vengeance only flourished among the

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[3]   *Baldric of Bourgueil, Historia Jerosolimitana*, in RHCOc. 4 (Paris, 1879), p. 101.

[4]   Carl Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusading*, trans. M. W. Baldwin and W. Goffart (Princeton, 1977), p. 116.

[5]   That said, in the last seventy years many scholars have noted its existence. For a brief overview of the historiography of crusading as vengeance, please see Appendix 1 below.

[6]   Notably Jonathan Riley-Smith, Peter Partner, Jean Flori, and Tomaz Mastnak. For more information and references, see pages 190–92.

[7]   Notably John Gilchrist, John Cowdrey, and Phillipe Buc. For more information and references, see pages 190 and 92.

[8]   Notably Jonathan Riley-Smith, Susan Jacoby, Jean Flori, and Tomaz Mastnak. For more information and references, see pages 189–92.

laity, and only at the very beginning of the First Crusade, a vivid example of their limited comprehension of theological subtlety and the general emotional excitement that accompanied the expeditions of 1096.[9] But there has been no extensive study of the origin and evolution of the ideology to prove these points.

Second, and much more importantly, the topic of crusading as vengeance matters because of its potential impact on our understanding of contemporary perceptions of crusading. Our current understanding of crusade ideology is centered on the concepts of pilgrimage, penitential warfare, just war, holy war, the defense of the Church, liberation, Christian love, and the imitation of Christ.[10] Studying these ideological themes has challenged us to reconcile values that seem recognizably Christian to our modern minds (like charity and pilgrimage) with the bloody reality of crusading. They have pushed us to consider notions of justice and religion that only incompletely resemble our own—yet that nevertheless do bear some resemblance.

The idea of crusading as vengeance, on the other hand, compels us a step further, asking us to acknowledge the importance of an ideological theme that runs counter to our post-Enlightenment sensibilities in virtually every way. Moreover, we cannot retreat to the position that those vengeful crusaders, were, after all, simply "primitive" or amoral human beings, because it is so clear that the idea of crusading as vengeance was seen at the time as perfectly compatible

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9   This assumption is largely based on two of Riley-Smith's seminal works: *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (London, 1986) and *The First Crusaders, 1095–1131* (Cambridge, 1997). See also page 4 and 189–90.

10   I hope to undertake a synthesis of recent work on ideas of crusading in the twelfth century in the future. For those new to the subject, good places to start are Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History* (2nd edn, New Haven, 2005), pp. 1–25; and Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (Cambridge MA, 2006), pp. 27–57. Other useful scholarship on ideas of crusading not previously cited in this chapter includes: Jonathan Riley-Smith, "Crusading as an Act of Love," *History*, 65 (1980): 177–92; Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches Toward the Muslims* (Princeton, 1984); Norman Daniel, "Crusade Propaganda," in H. W. Hazard and N. P. Zacour (eds), *A History of the Crusades 6: The Impact of the Crusades on Europe* (Madison WI, 1989), pp. 39–97; Michael Markowski, "Peter of Blois and the Conception of the Third Crusade," in B. Z. Kedar (ed.), *The Horns of Hattin* (Jerusalem, 1992), pp. 261–9; H. E. J. Cowdrey, "Martyrdom and the First Crusade," *The Crusades and Latin Monasticism, 11th–12th Centuries* (Aldershot, 1999), pp. 46–56; Jonathan Phillips, "Ideas of Crusade and Holy War in De Expugnatione Lyxbonensi (The Conquest of Lisbon)," in Robert Swanson (ed.), *Holy Land, Holy Lands, and Christian History*, Studies in Church History 36 (2000), pp. 123–41; William Purkis, "Elite and Popular Perceptions of Imitatio Christi in Twelfth-Century Crusade Spirituality," in K. Cooper and J. Gregory (eds), *Elite and Popular Religion*, Studies in Church History 42 (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 54–64.

with the other components of crusading ideology that we may find easier to stomach: love, penance, defense, liberation, and even the desire to emulate Christ. In addition, the frequency and enthusiasm with which the idea was used by writers in the Church—and not only when writing to the laity—prevents us from clinging to the idea that crusading as vengeance was purely secular and socio-political, an unsophisticated carry-over from the violent and chaotic society inhabited by the men with swords (and arrows and lances) who actually prosecuted the crusades. By confronting the ways in which it seemed perfectly reasonable (indeed, desirable) to view crusading as vengeance in the twelfth century, and what contemporary sources in fact meant when they talked about "vengeance," we are faced with the fact that many of our own assumptions about justice, religious violence, and the morality of revenge are cultural constructs, too.

Moreover, the current consensus about crusading as vengeance—that the idea was secular in origin, most dominant during the First Crusade, and filtered out of crusading ideology by monastic revisionists working in the early twelfth century[11]—all too easily corresponds to a progressive view of medieval history. From this perspective, practices like feud and ideas like vengeance were more dominant in the early Middle Ages, and were gradually replaced with state-sponsored justice. The intellectual premise underlying this perspective is that concepts of justice replaced concepts of vengeance, because justice is a more sophisticated idea than vengeance. In addition, this perspective contains an inherent moral judgment—that feud and vengeance are "primitive," "barbaric," and, in some obscure way, less desirable. At its most extreme, the implication is that as human societies clawed their way out of the "dark ages" towards the light of the Renaissance, they gradually abandoned such practices as vengeance and took up more enlightened customs, customs which just so happen to more and more closely resemble our own form of civilization.[12] Ironically, then, there is a risk in acknowledging that the idea of crusading as vengeance was more prominent, in a later period, than we might have expected. The risk is that we will simply conclude that the "primitiveness" of the Middle Ages lasted longer, and the "barbaric" nature of the crusades was more dominant, than we have thought. Fortunately, as this book demonstrates, the evidence continually pushes us away from such a reactionary judgment, towards an appreciation of the wide range

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[11]   Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, pp. 49, 55 and 154. For more detail, see pages 189–90.

[12]   The "long history of vengeance may be a history of the civilizing process—how states and societies repressed the urge to do violence" (Daniel Lord Smail and Kelly Gibson (eds), *Vengeance in Medieval Europe: A Reader* (Toronto, 2009), p. xvii).

of themes (many of them quite sophisticated) that contributed to the twelfth-century understanding of crusading as vengeance.

To be sure, this work does not deny the relative importance of other ideological elements of crusading. The theme of crusading as vengeance is for the most part a theme written between the lines, a theme taken for granted, perhaps both by medieval contemporaries of the crusades and by present-day historians.[13] Indeed, the almost subconscious nature of the idea of crusade as vengeance is what makes it worth investigating. By doing so we are going beyond the glossy surface of the twelfth century to look at a pervasive aspect of culture that was assumed to make sense by those living at the time.

It is in truth very difficult to study the history of any idea, and especially when the idea in question is ambiguous, and heavily weighted both then and now with moral value. A brief explanation of the methodology with which I have attempted to read my sources, and the nature of the sources themselves, is therefore in order.[14] Of primary importance are questions of language, meaning, and translation. After all, if I simply were to investigate the events and discourse that seem to me to relate to vengeance, I would be looking at modern ideas of vengeance in medieval texts, not the medieval ideas themselves. In trying to analyze what those medieval ideas were, the medieval words become vitally significant, and serve almost as signposts in the texts, highlighting that "here is a matter that was considered to relate to vengeance." Given this, it was important to decide which medieval terms should be considered to signify "vengeance," and, if more than multiple terms were to be considered, would it be accurate to group them together and at the same time exclude other terms?

At the beginning I decided to limit the field of research as much as possible, and so chose to focus on the root-words *vindicta*, *ultio*, and *venjance*, and for the purpose of discussion and comparison I have translated these terms into the modern English *vengeance*. There is reason to believe that *vindicta*, *ultio,* and *venjance* were understood as roughly equivalent in the Middle Ages: Hebrew words such as *nâqam* were translated into both *vindicta* and *ultio* in the Latin Vulgate, and *vindicta* was translated into the Old French *venjance*, as in the case of the Latin poem *Vindicta Salvatoris* and its vernacular equivalent, *La Venjance de Nostre Seigneur*. It is also reasonable to translate the medieval

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[13]   As opposed to the "consciously present and largely unproblematic" categories usually investigated. For this phrase and further discussion, see Marcus Bull, "Views of Muslims and of Jerusalem in Miracle Stories, c. 1000–c. 1200: Reflections on the Study of First Crusaders' Motivations," in Marcus Bull and Norman Housley (eds), *The Experience of Crusading 1: Western Approaches* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 13–38.

[14]   A more comprehensive overview of the primary sources I used in this study can be found in Appendix 2 at the end of the book.

terms as the modern English *vengeance* for similar reasons. However, my choice of the specific term *vengeance* is based on linguistic similarity, and by no means implies perfect conceptual equivalence. *Vengeance* is a modern English word with its own accompanying baggage of meaning, emotional significance, and moral value, and there is no way to verify that without exception it corresponds exactly to concepts designated by words in historical languages.[15]

For the sake of clarity I have restricted my research to the words discussed above, despite the abundance of similar nouns like *retributio*. Medieval writers gave *retributio* both positive (in the sense of reward) and negative (in the sense of punishment) connotations, making it semantically distinct, though undoubtedly related to, *vindicta* and *ultio*.[16] The topic is difficult enough without complicating the question with a large number of terms that share a roughly similar meaning, or by using modern ideas of vengeance to frame medieval events. That said, future scholars will, I hope, both deepen our understanding of *vindicta* and *ultio*, and broaden our knowledge of related terms like *retributio*.

As a result of the methodology I have outlined above, if I use the word *vengeance* to discuss a certain passage or group of passages, it is because *vindicta*, *ultio*, or *venjance* were present in the medieval texts. It is worth repeating that I have not myself interpreted events as being "vengeful" or "acts of vengeance."[17]

My final chapter on vengeance and emotions requires an additional methodological explanation, since, of course, there is no way to reconstruct internal emotional feelings from the past, and a reliance on textual sources raises the question whether it is reasonable to analyze physical sensation through such a medium.[18] The last fifty years have seen an explosion of research on the emotions in the biological and social sciences, and this has provided a new basis for the analysis of emotion within specific historical contexts. One of the most significant insights to emerge is the recognition that emotion is more than just a

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[15]   Though working independently of each other, François Bougard and I seem to have come to similar conclusions regarding the vocabulary. François Bougard, "Les Mots de la Vengeance," in Dominique Barthélemy, François Bougard, and Régine Le Jan (eds), *La Vengeance 400–1200* (Rome, 2006), pp. 1–6. See also page 12n below.

[16]   For example, *Gratian, Corpus Iuris Canonici*, ed. A. E. Richteri (2nd edn, 2 vols, Lipsiae, 1879), vol. 1, col. 896 (Causa 23 Q. 3 C. 1 *Quot sint differentiae retributionis*). Interestingly, modern theorists are asking the same sorts of questions about the relationship between revenge and retribution. See, for example, Peter French, *The Virtues of Vengeance* (Lawrence KS, 2001), pp. 67–8.

[17]   In this I was influenced by the discussion of the difficulties of researching words and concepts outlined by Susan Reynolds in *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford, 1994), especially pp. 12–13.

[18]   I am just now beginning to look at representations of crusading as vengeance in medieval images and physical artifacts, and I hope others will do so as well.

universal physical sensation divorced from thought, reason and culture. William Reddy, in his guide to the study of emotions in the natural and social sciences, has noted that since 1989 research has emphasized the definition of emotion as an "overlearned cognitive habit."[19] Although emotion involves a quasi-autonomous physiological reaction, a racing heart or a flushed face, nevertheless the intellectual interpretation of that reaction is learned through culture. In essence, then, an "emotion" could be defined as the application of intellectual judgment to a sensation or series of events.[20]

If emotion is not just physical sensation, but also cultural interpretation, it may be possible to evaluate that cultural component through textual analysis. Language, the way in which a culture describes, discusses, and relates emotions to each other, is undoubtedly significant, since the interpretation of emotions is embedded in cultural discourse. Emotional experiences seem to be frequently shaped by the "emotional lexicon" of a given language and the behavior that stems from that lexicon.[21] This is given further weight by the fact that the words used to describe emotions impact the emotions themselves.[22] In other words, how people think about their feelings may be visible in the words they use to acknowledge or repress those feelings, and in the values they attribute to them.

In attempting to evaluate the emotions associated with the idea of crusading as vengeance in the Middle Ages, I have paid attention from the beginning to other words, phrases, and images frequently invoked alongside the vocabulary of vengeance. This attention revealed the significance of the word *zelus* in the sources. I have little doubt that *zelus* is just one of a number of clues to the emotions of vengeful crusading, and I hope my discussion of *zelus* will inspire other scholars to keep working on the topic of crusading emotions.

For this study I have utilized what I consider "crusading texts"— texts of virtually any genre written between 1095 and 1216 that were associated with western Europe's understanding of the crusading movement, including narratives, chronicles and entertainment literature as well as letters and other documents written by key figures in the twelfth-century crusades. This is a broad sweep of source material, and its breadth is not the result of carelessness, but is in fact vitally important. Because I am trying not only to determine whether the idea of vengeance played a role in "official" crusading documents, but

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[19]   William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 17.

[20]   Paul Hyams, *Rancor and Reconciliation in Medieval England* (Ithaca NY, 2003), p. 36.

[21]   M. S. Rosaldo, *Knowledge and Passion: Ilongot Notions of Self and Social Life* (cited in Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, p. 36).

[22]   Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, p. 104.

additionally what the terms *vindicta* and *ultio* may have meant in general to medieval contemporaries who wrote about the crusades, there can be no hard and fast delimitations. Historical fields *may* have clear-cut boundaries—in the past, living ideas did not. To my mind, this approach rightly plants the history of the crusades back where it belongs, in the general history of twelfth-century European culture. I am aware, however, that some may disagree with this approach.

In addition, there will be those who raise the question of authorial intent and genre. Surely, one might protest, we cannot simply read a large group of contemporaneous sources without taking into account the specific, detailed context and genre in which each author was writing. There is some merit to this argument, especially if one inclines to the view that a text can never be viewed independently from its author, or to the opinion that we must, necessarily, separate the "elite" thinkers of the Middle Ages from the rough, unsophisticated mob. I would ask these critics to bear in mind that my deliberate goal has been to identify broad cultural themes, rather than individual proclivities. As a result, I have adopted a modified structuralist approach that separates "the author and authorial intentions from the text that results from the act of writing."[23] In a sense, then, I see this book as a skeleton, and I certainly do hope that future scholars will flesh out the story of the idea of crusading as vengeance, source by source, region by region, decade by decade. The best justification for my approach, however, is the evidence itself—the fact that, as this book demonstrates, dissimilar texts, written by dissimilar authors, in different languages, nevertheless contained ideas and passages that were remarkably alike.

With all that said, histories and chronicles, the core narrative sources that embody medieval attempts to give meaning to the crusades, have indeed formed the backbone of my research.[24] I have distinguished these and other sources by date of composition, rather than by the date of the events described within the texts. For the most part, sources written about a particular crusade will still be discussed within the same chapter, but there are exceptions. For example, Caffaro of Caschifelone wrote about the First Crusade in circa 1155, and thus I will discuss his account in Chapter Three, which deals with sources dating from approximately 1138 until 1197.[25] In a few cases the date of composition has been difficult to establish, and I discuss those texts accordingly, both briefly within the relevant chapters, and also in greater depth in Appendix 2.

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[23] Brian Stock, *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past* (Philadelphia, 1990), p. 17.

[24] Bull, "Views of Muslims and of Jerusalem," p. 21.

[25] Also known as Caffaro "of Genoa," see Richard D. Face, "Secular History in Twelfth-Century Italy: Caffaro of Genoa," *Journal of Medieval History*, 6 (1980): 169–84.

Readers familiar with the contentions surrounding the definition of a crusade in the twelfth century will have already recognized that I side in general with the pluralists: I agree that the origins and characteristics of any given campaign were what defined it as a crusade for medieval contemporaries.[26] But to be most accurate, my position is that of a moderate (or modified) pluralist.[27] An extremely strict pluralist might say that until a campaign was authorized by the pope, it was not a crusade—and that any discourse related to the campaign was, by implication, not crusading discourse. To my mind, this would artificially distort the historical record, and would ignore the gradual accumulation of rhetoric and positioning that frequently accompanied the lead-up to official authorization. To give just one example, the Albigensian Crusade was officially proclaimed in 1208, but this was preceded by decades of textual references to Church-approved violent action—and the need to take violent action—against the Cathars. To say that such references only "count" after 1208 would be misleading.

What relationship existed between the concepts of crusading and vengeance, and what accounted for that relationship? Drawing upon not only narrative histories of the twelfth-century crusades, but also upon related letters, legends, *chansons*, and theology of the period, I have mapped the course of the idea of crusading as vengeance from the First Crusade until the end of Pope Innocent III's papacy in 1216. My research demonstrates that the general assumption previously advocated regarding the idea of crusading as vengeance must be revised. The concept of crusading as vengeance was no anomaly, and crusading was conceived as an act of vengeance not only through the application of "secular" values, but also through values inherent in twelfth-century Christianity.

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[26]   For those unfamiliar with the debate on how to define a crusade, a good starting point is Norman Housley, *Contesting the Crusades* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 1–23.

[27]   Ibid., pp. 20–23.

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The Meanings of *Vindicta, Ultio* and *Venjance*

Like other scholars, I have translated the terms *vindicta*, *ultio*, and *venjance* as "vengeance." But using this modern word is a convenience and an approximation, and does not really clarify the precise concepts lying behind the medieval Latin and vernacular vocabulary. What *did* the medieval terms mean?

Turning to great medieval dictionaries like those constructed by Charles Du Cange, Jan Niermeyer, and Alexandre Greimas is only moderately helpful, at best. From their works, we discover that *ultio* and related terms bear some relation to the idea of wounds and violent punishment, while *vindicta* and its family of vocabulary can be translated as some variation of vengeance, feud, justice, and criminal punishment.[1] The range of meaning accorded to these terms in the dictionaries suggests that medieval usage varied broadly, which will come as no surprise to anyone who has read medieval sources at some length. The dictionary entries also suggest we are on the right track—translating these terms into "vengeance" is not capricious—but above all they emphasize that the meanings of the medieval terms were various and depended on circumstances.

In this chapter I clarify how *vindicta*, *ultio*, and *venjance* were used by writers to represent individual and group interactions in my sources. These anecdotal

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[1] Du Cange did not include *ultio* in his dictionary as an entry, and only noted that *ultatus* meant "wounded" (Charles Du Cange, *Glossarium Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis* (7 vols, Paris, 1840–50), vol. 6, p. 863). Niermeyer went further, giving two potential meanings of *ultio*: "punishment, penalty" and "punishment inflicted by God" (Jan F. Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus* (Leiden, 1997), p. 1050). For Du Cange, *vindicta* was "to give in vengeance ... that is, to give to justice, so that a worthy penalty may be exacted." He subdivided this into *vindicta sanguinis*, "high, or supreme, justice," and *vindicta* "as, it would seem, a beating." *Vindicatio* was "*jus* ... through which someone can avenge for himself something stolen or lost." *Vindicare* was simply "to have the use of something (*usum habere*)" (Du Cange, *Glossarium*, vol. 6, p. 838). Niermeyer defined *vindicalis* as "vengeful." *Vindicare* was "to acknowledge as true, to affirm ... to attest ... to hold a plea," while *vindicta* was a noun with multiple meanings including "feud," "*wergeld*," "the right of hearing and trying a criminal cause," and "infliction of capital punishment" (Niermeyer, *Lexicon*, p. 1108–9). Greimas, meanwhile, simply defined the Old French verb *vengier* as "to avenge" (Alexander J. Greimas, *Dictionnaire de l'Ancien Français* (Paris, 1999), p. 613).

examples of "ordinary" vengeance highlight the social conventions (or lack thereof) that governed the idea of vengeance in action, illustrate how the vocabulary of vengeance was used at the time, and enable us to begin to evaluate modern theories about vengeance in human societies within the specific context of medieval western Europe.[2]

It is clear that the vocabulary of vengeance was very much a part of everyday life for the crusaders and those who wrote about them. *Vindicta*, *ultio*, and *venjance* were not presented as exceptional or esoteric. Many authors used the vocabulary of vengeance without any further comment or elaboration, implying that the meaning was commonly understood and self-explanatory. Fortunately for the historian, other authors surrounded the vocabulary of vengeance with commentary on the meaning or moral value of events, presumably in an attempt to link events with the words they chose to describe them, or to otherwise serve their own narrative purpose. Although these authors were not concerned with providing "definitions" of their chosen vocabulary, nevertheless it is in their attempts to explain events that we can begin to reason backwards and try to deduce what the terms may have meant.

At the risk of spoiling the surprise, what seems to me the best working definition of the medieval concept underlying *vindicta*, *ultio*, and *venjance* (and perhaps other terms as well) is:

> violence (both physical and nonphysical) driven by a sense of moral authority, and in certain cases divine approbation, against those who are believed to question that authority and/or approbation.

This working definition is compatible with the associations shown below between *vindicta*/*ultio*/*venjance* and *iustitia*, *caritas*, *auxilium*, and *zelus*. Above all, it is compatible with the strong link that I will demonstrate existed between Christianity and *vindicta*/*ultio*/*venjance* in the twelfth-century texts.[3]

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[2]   Of course, we are limited to analyzing the evidence given to us by the sources. And the sources often had their own narrative purposes for relating vengeance episodes, a point made firmly by Thomas Roche, "The Way Vengeance Comes: Rancorous Deeds and Words in the World of Orderic Vitalis," in S. Throop and P. R. Hyams (eds), *Vengeance in the Middle Ages: Emotion, Religion and Feud* (Aldershot, 2010), pp. 115–36. We are still at arm's length from everyday vengeance.

[3]   François Bougard recently attempted to clarify the relationships between *vindicta*, *ultio*, and *faida*. He concluded that although the three words were used interchangeably, *ultio* signified the vengeance of the state or deity roused by just anger, while *vindicta* was associated with the judiciary and the generic idea of chastisement or punishment ("Les Mots de la Vengeance," in D. Barthélemy, F. Bougard, and R. Le Jan (eds), *La Vengeance 400–1200* (Rome, 2006), pp. 1–6). In the same volume, Nira Pancer distinguished between *ultio* and

Vengeance and justice

Vengeance was always provoked by an *injuria*, an "injury."[4] This injury was a personal betrayal, a broken agreement, a physical injury or killing—as Hyams has argued based on the Norman *Summa de legibus*, simply "unwarranted harm" of one sort of another.[5] The injury may have been done directly to the one seeking vengeance, or indirectly to a family member or other closely allied associate of the avenger—at the most basic level, a friend (*amicus*) rather than an enemy (*inimicus*).[6]

Because it was a reaction to a prior event (real or imagined), vengeance was always embedded in a chronological context. An act of vengeance was never the beginning of the story, it always followed upon at least one other event. To describe an act as vengeance was to suggest the question, "vengeance for what?" The answer to that question would obviously vary quite a bit, depending upon whom you asked. However, an act could not be seen as vengeance, unless the act that preceded it was seen as unwarranted and harmful by the individual describing the act. Thus there was an inherent ethical value to vengeance— vengeance could be disputed or denied, but it was never morally neutral.

In our own times, for the most part we see a very keen distinction between private vengeance and public justice, but it was not the same in the Middle Ages.[7]

ulcisci, suggesting that the first corresponds to vengeance taken by a divinity or authority, while the latter corresponds to what we would deem private revenge ("La Vengeance Féminine Revisitée: Le Cas de Grégoire de Tours," in *La Vengeance 400–1200*, pp. 307–24, esp. p. 311). The sources I have looked at do not support the notion that writers were aware of these subtle distinctions, regardless of whether or not the distinctions existed, but certainly there are many common notes sounded by the work of Bougard and Pancer, and my working definition presented here.

[4]   Also noted by Stephen D. White, "Un Imaginaire Faidal: La Representation de la Guerre dans quelques Chansons de Geste," in D. Barthélemy, F. Bougard and R. Le Jan (eds), *La Vengeance 400–1200* (Rome, 2006), p. 175.

[5]   Paul Hyams, *Rancor and Reconciliation in Medieval England* (Ithaca NY, 2003), pp. 145–50.

[6]   Medieval terms highlighted by Hyams, *Rancor and Reconciliation*, pp. 203–13; and previously by Daniel L. Smail, "Hatred as a Social Institution in Late-Medieval Society," *Speculum*, 76 (2001): 90–126.

[7]   Clarification of when and why this distinction arose is greatly needed. One potentially significant development was in 1764 when the Milanese nobleman Cesar Beccaria wrote *On Crimes and Punishments*. Beccaria emphasized that punishment was only justified as a deterrent, and was never justified as revenge (Sasha Abramsky, *American Furies: Crime, Punishment, and Vengeance in the Age of Mass Imprisonment* (Boston, 2007), p. 17). In the fifteenth century, Christine de Pizan, working from Honore Bouvet's *Arbre des Batailles*, stated that it was wrong to seek violent retribution for an injury if the assailant had fled,

Ultio and *vindicta* were not viewed as opposed to justice (*iustitia*). Instead, the meaning of the Latin terms for vengeance and justice seem to have been closely related, if not exactly identical. After all, the event that sparked vengeance was always an "injury"—an *injuria*, translated literally, an unjust action.

An example of the overlap between justice and vengeance, occurs in a melodramatic scene in an account of the First Crusade. A dispute between the crusader Tancred and Arnulf of Chocques was heard before the *proceres* who were responsible for Arnulf's election as patriarch of Jerusalem. Arnulf felt that he had been slighted by Tancred. Since Arnulf was the "minister of God's house" and since the Holy Land could be said to be the *domus Dei*, Tancred had sinned against the minister of the Lord. Thus, Arnulf argued, Tancred was ultimately injuring both God and the *proceres* by wronging him, their minister. Reminding the *proceres* of his own loyalty, Arnulf exhorted them to seek vengeance on his/their/God's behalf: "therefore we uphold your law, O noblest princes; we avenge your injury (*injuria*), [now] punish the unjust (*injurius*)."[8] Otherwise, they would be ignoring the personal injury committed by Tancred to themselves and the law of God: "how could you not spurn one who spurns God?"[9] The passage's clever play on the words *injuria* (injury) and *injurius* (unjust man) suggests that vengeance and justice were analogous, in the rhetoric at least; both terms centered on the sense that a wrong had been committed and the right state of affairs (*ius*) had been breached.

The synonymity between the vocabulary of vengeance and judicial punishment was also evident in Odo of Deuil's criticism of Constantinople during the Second Crusade: "[there] a criminal has neither fear nor shame, and crime is not avenged by law, nor does it come openly to light."[10] From Odo's perspective, the lack of justice in Constantinople was evident in the fact that crimes were not avenged; the vocabulary of vengeance was applied to crime, an injury to society. Similarly, towards the beginning of his account of the First Crusade, Baldric of Bourgueil described the virtues of the crusading army. Among their praiseworthy attributes was their ability to discipline each other: "for if anyone was convicted of any dishonor, either having been censured he was upbraided to his face, or vengeance was gravely taken upon him, in order that

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which she posited lay somewhere between self-defense, which was justifiable, and vengeance, which was not (*The Book of Deeds of Arms and of Chivalry*, ed. C. C. Willard, trans. S. Willard (University Park PA, 1999), pp. 161–2).

8   Ralph of Caen, *Gesta Tancredi in Expeditione Hierosolymitana*, in RHCOc. 3 (Paris, 1866), p. 699.

9   Ibid., p. 700.

10   Odo of Deuil, *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, ed. V. G. Berry (New York, 1965), p. 64.