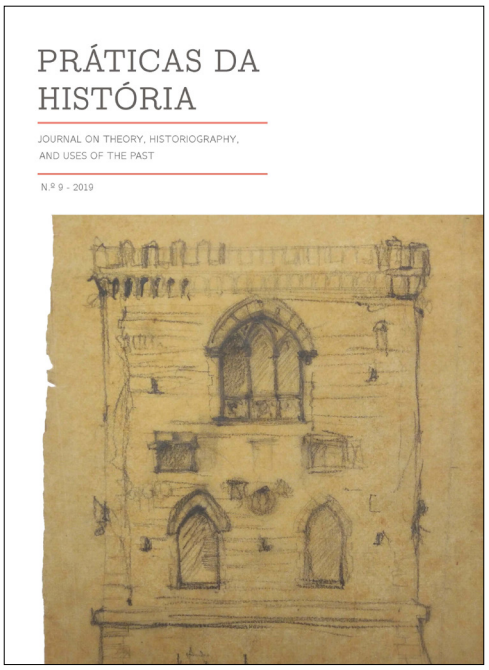

DEUS VULT? Crusade Apologists, Historians and "Abortive Rituals" in the 1999 Reconciliation Walk to Jerusalem

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The nine-hundredth anniversary of the First Crusade (1095-99) saw hundreds of evangelical Western Christians trace the route of the medieval expedition apologising to local communities for the violence of the crusades. The Reconciliation Walk embodied an active and direct engagement with the crusading past and an attempt to defuse its perceived toxic legacies. The criticisms of the walk by crusade historian Jonathan Riley-Smith went beyond factual disagreement and illustrate tensions at the interface of popular and academic perceptions of the past.This article revisits Michel-Rolph Trouillot's analysis of the rhetorical structure of an historical apology and his application to the Reconciliation Walk to reveal the ways in which both the organisers of the walk and their critics constructed continuities and discontinuities between communities over time. Rather than agreeing with Trouillot that the walk constituted an "abortive ritual", I suggest that the performance and reception of the apology demonstrate the affective power of perceptions of the past, and reinforce the need for historians to take these – often factually inaccurate – collective memories seriously in considering the presentist significance of the past.
Keywords: Crusades, apologies, reconciliation, history.

DEUS VULT? Apologistas, historiadores e "rituais abortivos" na caminhada da reconciliação de 1999 até Jerusalém

No nonagésimo centésimo aniversário da Primeira Cruzada (1095-99), centenas de cristãos evangélicos ocidentais percorreram o caminho da expedição medieval, desculpando-se às comunidades locais pela violência das cruzadas. A Caminhada da Reconciliação deu corpo a um comprometimento ativo e direto com o passado das cruzadas e a uma tentativa de neutralizar as suas percecionadas heranças tóxicas. As críticas à caminhada por Jonathan Riley-Smith, historiador das cruzadas, foram além da discordância fatual e ilustram as tensões no cruzamento das perceções populares e académicas do passado. Este artigo revisita a análise de Michel-Rolph Trouillot da estrutura retórica de um pedido de desculpas histórico na sua aplicação à Caminhada da Reconciliação para revelar as formas pelas quais os organizadores do passeio e os seus críticos construíram continuidades e descontinuidades entre as comunidades ao longo do tempo. Em vez de concordar com Trouillot que a caminhada constituía um "ritual abortivo", sugiro que o desempenho e a receção do pedido de desculpas demonstram o poder afetivo das perceções do passado e reforçam a necessidade de os historiadores levarem a sério essas memórias coletivas – muitas vezes imprecisas – ao considerarem o significado presentista do passado.
Palavras-chave: Cruzadas, desculpas, reconciliação, história.

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Mike Horswell*

Introduction

Too many inheritances of the crusades endure.

– Jeffrey J. Cohen[1]

Though often portrayed as a quintessentially medieval phenomenon, crusading continues to haunt the modern social imaginary.[2] The crusades lurk in the peripheral vision of the present, providing the afterimage for religious violence in, and beyond, the Middle East. They resist relegation to the "dead" past, instead appearing in the rhetoric of Islamic fundamentalists and right-wing European terrorists alike.[3] This flexibility and durability has led to significant variety between (and within) popular and academic perceptions of the crusades and has raised questions as to their relationship to the present. Are the crusades part of, if not the origin of, a titanic and continuing "clash of civilizations"? Were the medieval expeditions proto-colonial ventures?

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1 Jeffrey J. Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 223.

2 See Andrew B. R. Elliott, *Medievalism, Politics and Mass Media* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2017); Susanna A. Throop, "Engaging the Crusades in Context: Reflections on the Ethics of Historical Work", in *The Crusades in the Modern World: Engaging the Crusades, Volume Two*, eds. Mike Horswell and Akil N. Awan (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 129-45.

3 E.g. Official Spokesman for Islamic State, "Indeed Your Lord Is Ever Watchful", *Dabiq* 4 (September 2014): 6–9; Daniel Wollenberg, "The New Knighthood: Terrorism and the Medieval", *postmedieval* 5, n.º 1 (March 2014): 21-33.

Or terrible deviations from the Christian message? Various of these questions have preoccupied theologians, political theorists and policymakers as well as historians since the instigation of the crusades themselves.[4]

This article will consider conflicting approaches of engagement with the legacy and memory of the crusades through the Reconciliation Walk (1995-99) and the criticism it engendered. Established in 1995 on the 900th anniversary of the First Crusade (1095-99), the Reconciliation Walk consisted of Western evangelical Christians who retraced the paths of the first crusaders across Europe and the Near East to Jerusalem apologising to local communities for violent actions of their crusading forefathers. Denounced by eminent crusade historian Jonathan Riley-Smith, the walkers were criticised on grounds of historical factuality as well as for their reading of "Muslim" memories of the crusades. The interaction of these two approaches to the past – the active exorcism of the reconciliation walkers and the historian's call to objective, factual history – expose tensions at the interface of popular and academic engagement with the past which extend beyond the memory of the crusades.

Historical apologies can be read in this light; "each is an attempt to define a meaning for the past constructed around the notions of remorse and responsibility."[5] Any historical apology contains a set of relationships which animate its delivery: between past and present; between present and future; and between communities of peoples.[6] Interrogating these rhetorical structures, as Michel-Rolph Trouillot has done, reveals the ways in which temporal and inter-communal relationships are assumed to be structured.[7]

4 For themes in crusade historiography, see Christopher Tyerman, *The Debate on the Crusades* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011); in the US, see Matthew Gabriele, "Debating the 'Crusade' in Contemporary America", *The Mediæval Journal* 6, n.º 1 (2016): 73-92.

5 Robert R. Weyeneth, "The Power of Apology and the Process of Historical Reconciliation", *The Public Historian* 23, n.º3 (2001): 21.

6 For discussions of historical apologies, see Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, "Righting Wrongs, Rewriting History?", *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 2, n.º 2 (2000): 159-70, and other articles in this journal issue.

7 Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "Abortive Rituals: Historical Apologies in the Global Era", *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 2, n.º 2 (January 2000): 171-86.

Trouillot's schema (see Figure 1) identified the communal and chronological relationships necessary for the apology to function. The perpetrator (1) and victim (2) located in the past, and the apologiser (3) and addressee (4) located in the present. These entities relate through the initial "wrong" in the past and the culminating apology in the present but, again, to function the apology requires some form of continuity of identity to be established over time between both the perpetrators and apologisers (a) and between the victims and addressees (b) of the apology. These collective identities have to remain sufficiently coherent to survive the intermediate past and be identifiable in both temporal planes. Moreover, they must accommodate both continuity of collective identity, and discontinuity; the apologisers in the present had to demonstrate *change*, such that the apology was not rendered hollow by continuing perpetration of the wrong.

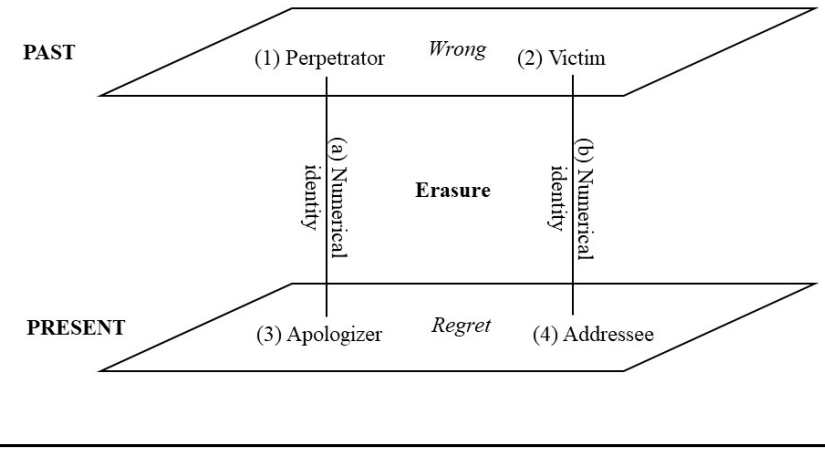

Figure 1: The Structure of Apology. Adapted from Trouillot, "Abortive Rituals", 175.

Trouillot argued that an apology presupposed a temporal distance between a past in which a wrong was committed and a present in which the apology is delivered; in "claiming a past, they create pastness."[8]

8 *Ibid.*, 174.

This temporal distance is basic to the functioning of the apology as it distinguishes it from an expression of sadness for an ongoing wrong or condition of oppression. Moreover, it facilitates the change-over-time needed for one party to experience contrition. An apology, wrote Trouillot, "sets a temporal marker between those things – and the past to which they belong – and a present characterized by my new relation to my interlocutor."[9] The temporal structure called into being by an apology of necessity creates an erasure of intervening history which ignores previous possible statements or acts of contrition or reparation as being inadequate – the "wrong" remains outstanding and "active" in some way in the present. The amplification of the historical "wrong" sees the silencing of other, intersecting, "wrongs", and the ignoring of the implications and consequences of the initial "wrong" for "other times, places, actors" argued Rajeswari Sunder Rajan.[10]

This structure is useful for analysing the components of the Reconciliation Walk's apology (as Trouillot himself does) and asking how temporal and communal identities are constructed, enacted and received. Trouillot himself concluded that the historical apology was an "abortive ritual" because the transference of the apology from individuals to collectives hinged on constructions of collective identities which were by their nature unable to remain continuous (and so support the continuities of identities at (a) and (b)) *and simultaneously* express the discontinuous transformation required of genuine apology.[11]

This study will focus on the ways in which the past is variously invoked and embodied to demonstrate that these constructed temporalities and communal relationships resonate and have affective power. In employing Trouillot's framework to consider the Reconciliation Walkers' construction of an apology for the crusades and its reception, we will see how the past continues to be contested, negotiated and entan-

9 *Ibid.*

10 Rajan, "Righting Wrongs", 162.

11 For a discussion of the importance of continuities and discontinuities in constructions of the past see Nickolas Haydock, "Medievalism and Excluded Middles", *Studies in Medievalism* 18 (2009); 17-21.

gled with perceptions of the identities of contemporary communities. "Abortive ritual" or not, this will highlight the power of perceptions of the past in the present.

I. The Reconciliation Walkers as Anti-Crusaders

On the anniversary of the First Crusade, we also carry the name of Christ. We wish to retrace the footsteps of the Crusaders in apology for their deeds and in demonstration of the true meaning of the Cross. We deeply regret the atrocities committed in the name of Christ by our predecessors. We renounce greed, hatred and fear, and condemn all violence done in the name of Jesus Christ.

– from the Apology of the Reconciliation Walk[12]

On 27 November 1095 the town of Clermont-Ferrand saw Pope Urban II declare what would become known as the First Crusade; the same date in 1995 was marked in the French town by a day of prayer by the organisers of what would become the Reconciliation Walk.[13] On Easter day of the following year, roughly 300 walkers gathered in Cologne, Germany, to launch the walk itself. Chosen to parallel the departure of crusaders from the city's cathedral 900 years before, participants walked through the city and presented their apology to Muslim leaders at a local mosque. The senior imam was said to have responded that "Whoever had this idea must have had an epiphany."[14] From there teams of walkers crossed Europe, Turkey and Syria – following the routes taken by contingents of crusaders – and arrived in Lebanon in September 1998. The climax of the walk was held in Jerusalem on 15 July 1999: exactly nine centuries after the city fell to the First Crusaders.

12 "The Apology", *Reconciliation Walk*, <https://web.archive.org/save/http://www.recwalk.net/>, [accessed 14 March 2019].

13 Nick Megoran, "Towards a Geography of Peace: Pacific Geopolitics and Evangelical Christian Crusade Apologies", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 35, n.º 3 (April 2010): 382.

14 Rusty Wright, "Crusades: Christians Apologize for Ancient Wrongs", *Christianity Today*, 7 October 1996.

The Reconciliation Walk was organised by British-based members of the US evangelical Christian organisation Youth With A Mission (YWAM). It consisted of groups of evangelical, Protestant Christians (estimated to include 30 nationalities but predominantly British and US citizens[15]), who apologised to communities of Jews, Muslims and Eastern Christians encountered for the actions of the first crusaders.[16] The apology was printed in local languages and t-shirts worn by walkers said "We apologise".[17] In each country participants presented the apology to whoever they met and formally apologised to local civic and religious leaders. The walk culminated with an interfaith event in Jerusalem which included meetings with representatives of the religious communities considered wronged by the crusaders: namely Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, Greek Orthodox Patriarch Diodoros and Muslim Mufti Ekrima Sabri.[18] About 2,500 people participated overall, while the Jerusalem service was attended by around 430.[19]

The walk's function was primarily symbolic: a "gesture of reconciliation" which was "designed to increase understanding between Western Christians and Muslims, Jews and Eastern Christians."[20] This was predicated on the understanding that the crusades had been a point of conflict between Christians of the West and Eastern religious communities, and that they continued to have a toxic legacy for contemporary relations of those communities to the present.

15 Megoran, "Geography of Peace", 389.

16 David Sharrock, "Crusade Arrives in Holy City to Say Sorry", *Guardian*, 28 June 1999, 11. See also Megoran, "Geography of Peace", 382. Written by a participant, and containing quotes from other walkers, see Carl Stauffer, "Crusades, Conquest and Conciliation: Exploring the Chasm between Violent and Peaceful Religious Expression" (June 1998), <http://www.academia.edu/4915697/Crusades_Conquest_and_Conciliation_Exploring_the_Chasm_between_Violent_and_Peaceful_Religious_Expression> [accessed 19 July 2018].

17 Nicholas Blandford, "Christians say sorry for Crusades", *The Times*, 8 September 1998; Sam F. Ghattas, "Western Christians 'Apologise' for 11th Century Crusade", *Associated Press*, 9 September 1998.

18 Tomas Dixon, "Jerusalem: Reconciliation Walk Reaches Pinnacle", *Christianity Today* 43, n.º 10 (6 September 1999), <https://web.archive.org/web/20090215120838/http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1999/september6/9ta024.html> [accessed 10 May 2018].

19 Figures from Liz Cox, "July 1999, Part 3: The Reconciliation Walk Reaches its Conclusion", *Reconciliation Walk*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20000304103749/http://reconciliationwalk.org/99jul3.htm >, [accessed 14 March 2019]. Megoran estimated 3,000 participants, Sharrock 2,000.

20 From "Manifesto #1" and "Manifesto #2" respectively, *Reconciliation Walk*, <https://web.archive.org/save/http://www.recwalk.net/ > [accessed 14 March 2019].

Denouncing the Crusades

The organisers of the Reconciliation Walk understood the crusades in uncompromising terms. In a statement delivered by Matthew Hand, the walk's field director, on the eve of the anniversary of the capture of Jerusalem by the first crusaders, the crusades were characterised as "those infamous atrocities that we all condemn as the barbarism of an earlier age", which included "massacres", "cannibalism" and "gruesome slaughter".[21] The manifesto of the walk declared the crusades to be a fundamental corruption of Christian faith: "the Crusaders breached the walls of this city [Jerusalem] bearing the cross but betraying its meaning."[22]

The Apology of the walkers saw the crusades as having been fuelled "by fear, greed and hatred".[23] In depicting the motivations of ordinary crusaders Hand drew from three crusade historians; Steven Runciman, Norman Cohn and John France. They had established, said Hand, that crusaders were motivated by eschatological and prophetic goals which led them to consider their violence benevolent. He quoted France in support:

> *To hack down a child, as many must have in Jerusalem, was an act whose merit was equal to that of the Good Samaritan. These were rational people performing what they believed to be the will of God and certain that it would contribute to their own salvation.*[24]

The crusades were seen to not only be violent, but to be a manifestation of "political" Christianity in which the Church "acted as a nation" by employing forceful means to achieve its goals – this was

21 Matthew Hand, "Mt. Zion Speech", *Reconciliation Walk*, 15 July 1999, <https://web.archive.org/save/http://www.recwalk.net/> [accessed 14 March 2019].

22 *Ibid.*

23 "The Apology".

24 Hand, "Mt. Zion Speech"; quoting John France, "The Capture of Jerusalem", *History Today* 47, n.º 4 (April 1997): 42.

antithetical to the Christianity of the walk's organisers: "Christ's kingdom should not behave as a state, and specifically has no right to use force."[25] Reflecting some years after the walk, its instigator Lynn Green described the crusades as unique because of having been called and endorsed by the "institutional church". He considered them distortions of Christianity in their violence and presented them to listeners in 2014 as having a message of "convert or die" to those they encountered.[26]

Toxic Legacies

Organisers of the Reconciliation Walk argued that the crusades had a "powerful mythological legacy" which had influenced adherents of different faiths' perspectives of one another, "sowing seeds of discontent that still poison relations between the faiths today. [...] For generations, the legacy of the Crusades has been one of mistrust and misunderstanding."[27] Cathy Nobles, the third principal co-ordinator of the walk, told a reporter at the time that this perception of a crusading legacy had motivated many Americans to volunteer for the walk – they saw continuity with contemporary US policies in the Middle East. Moreover, it had resonance in the East too: "There are many in the Middle East today who perceive Americans as the new Crusaders and this is something we hope to redress."[28] Commenting after the walk, Green confirmed that motivation came in part from "the fact that most Turks and Arabs still view Christianity in light of the medieval crusades. To them it is a Western political movement bent on conquering the Middle East".[29] The "cycle of distrust",

25 "Manifesto #1"; "The Apology".

26 Lynn Green, "God Stories with Lynn Green – The Reconciliation Walk (Part 2: Stepping into the Vision)", *YWAM (Youth With A Mission)*, YWAM Harpenden, 15 August 2014, *YouTube* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1429yis1uN0> [accessed 10 May 2018]. The only historical work Green cited was Anthony Bridge, *The Crusades* (London: Franklin Watts, 1982).

27 Hand, "Mt. Zion Speech"; Christy Risser, "Press Release: 1 April 1999", *Reconciliation Walk*, <www.crusades-apology.org/blog/April%201999_Press_Summary_of_Projet.htm> [accessed 15 July 2014].

28 Blandford, "Christians say sorry".

29 Tomas Dixon, "Organizers of Reconciliation Walk Say Effort Defused Mideast Tensions", *Charisma*, 31 January 2001, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180516205459/https://www.charismamag.com/site-archives/134-peopleevents/people-events/266-organizers-of-reconciliation-walk-say-effort-defused-mideast-tensions > [accessed 16 May 2018].

as the walk's organisers' framed it, could be traced back to the crusades.[30] The haunting of contemporary Middle Eastern politics by the ghosts of the crusaders rendered peace impossible without their exorcism.

The legacy of the crusades was conceptualised in two further ways. Organisers of the walk saw a "crusader spirit" as having persisted to the present, which consisted of pragmatism, short-termism and the wielding of force by Christians: "the belief that Christ's promised kingdom could be established through political and military action [...]. Many Christians continue to trust power to bring redemption."[31] Accordingly, Nobles asserted that a "'Crusader spirit' of arrogant superiority [...] infects subsequent Christianity (and Westernism) down to and including contemporary evangelicalism."[32] Secondly, Hand cited his reading of Matthew of Edessa, in Turkish translation, as crucial to his understanding of the relationship of apocalypticism to crusading mentalities.[33] He argued that just as the medieval crusaders were motivated by an over-realised eschatology, an "apocalypticism" was similarly present – and destructive – in the modern world:

> *Apocalypticism is another aspect of the Crusader worldview that still colors the perspective of many Western Christians. This viewpoint prevents many Westerners from seeing the Jewish, Muslim and Christian people of Holy Land as human beings. Instead, they are viewed as pawns of eschatology, an attitude that has historically led to gross exploitation and violence.*[34]

This provided further justification for the Reconciliation Walk: to combat the survival of crusading mentality as it existed in their contemporary churches and societies.

30 "Manifesto #1".
31 Hand, "Mt. Zion Speech".
32 Megoran, "Geographies of Peace", 392.
33 Megoran, "Geographies of Peace", 390.
34 Risser, "Press Release: 1 April 1999".

The crusades, then, for the organisers of the Reconciliation Walk could be boiled down to blindly violent incursions against Jews, Muslims and Eastern Christians which were inspired and advocated by the Western church. These perceptions of the nature of the crusades were tied to a contemporary diagnosis of their ongoing divisive legacy. Together these aspects compelled organisers and participants to take action.

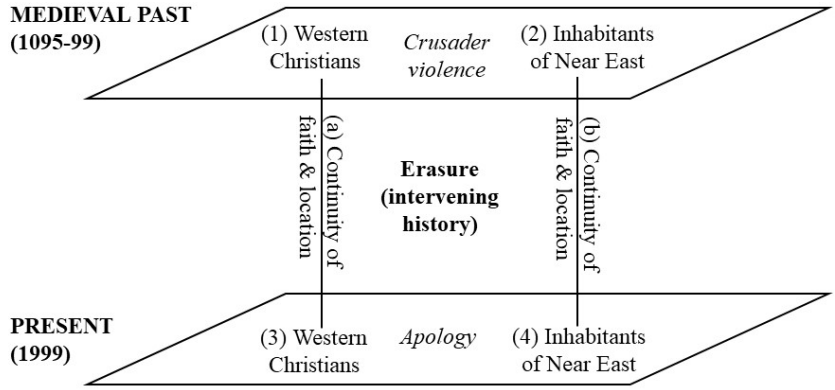

Figure 1: Apology of the Reconciliation Walk

Repentance: Continuity and Discontinuity

Trouillot's framework for collective apologies schematises the relationships of the identities projected by the Reconciliation Walk. As seen in Figure 2, the temporal planes of the apology were the medieval past of the original crusading expeditions – more precisely that of the First Crusade (1095-99) – and their present. The walkers saw themselves as the "physical and cultural descendants of the Crusaders", while local communities of Muslims, Jews and Eastern Christians, by virtue of their location and faith, were heirs of those who encountered the crusaders.[35] In constructing these temporal continuities, historian Jonathan Riley-Smith was quoted by the walkers as an authority: "There cannot be anyone of west European descent who does not have at least one ancestor who actively crusaded, or who contributed to crusading in some other way."[36]

35 Hand, "Mt. Zion Speech".

36 "Manifesto #2". From Jonathan Riley-Smith, "Holy Violence Then and Now, *Christian*

Importantly, the identification with the crusaders was performed by 'retracing the steps of the first Crusaders' as far as geopolitical realities would allow.[37] Nick Megoran observed that, "Following the exact routes that Crusaders took, and reaching places on the anniversary of their arrival, was considered a vital aspect of the historical authenticity of the project"; the timing and physical re-enactment employed temporal and spatial resonances of the original event to suggestively connect walkers and crusaders.[38] Additionally, the walkers claimed the "privately expressed support from the Vatican", gesturing towards a "temporal bridge" of papal endorsement with the medieval crusades, despite their Protestant Christianity.[39] These constructions of continuity – cultural, ethnic, temporal, spatial, and of papal authority – underpinned the vitality of the apology.

The purpose of the apology presented to local communities by the walkers was explicitly to engage with the actions of the crusaders and to mitigate and undo their consequences. The organisers of the walk saw the crusades as "a discreet historical enterprise whose spiritual legacy could be 'defused'."[40] The approach taken by the Reconciliation Walk was not merely one of denouncement, but rather that of embodiment. They identified themselves as inheritors and descendants of the crusaders in part by walking-out the same route in paired time with the participants of the First Crusade. Inhabiting this identity enabled them to conduct their own pilgrimage and to work through the tensions between their theological understanding of their Christian faith and its historical expressions, deemed aberrant. The result was hoped to be the annihilation of the bitter legacies of the crusades and their actions

History 40 (October 1993), <https://web.archive.org/web/20190315095501/https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/holy-violence-then-and-now> [accessed 15 March 2019]: "First, we need to understand that medieval crusaders are likely to be our relatives. If you are of Western European origin, you have nearly a 100-percent chance of being a direct descendant of someone who had a link with a crusade. Even if your ancestors did not go on a crusade, they would have paid taxes to finance crusades, and they would have attended crusade sermons."

37 Risser, "Press Release: 1 April 1999".

38 Megoran, "Geographies of Peace", 389.

39 Sharrock, "Crusade Arrives", 11; "temporal bridge" is from Trouillot, "Abortive Rituals", 172.

40 Megoran, "Geography of Peace", 392.

as complete as the encounter of matter and antimatter. The Reconciliation Walkers were not merely publicising an apology for the crusades; they were themselves anti-crusaders.

Reception

While the above section represents the attitudes and active engagement with the past of the Reconciliation Walk's organisers and, implicitly, those who volunteered in response to the walk's publicity, how the apology was received can point to broader perceptions of the crusades. How resonant was the apology? Were the walkers' assumptions about the crusades – its destructive nature and enduring legacy – shared by those they encountered or those who heard about the endeavour? Though reception is often difficult to evaluate, some reactions to the apology can be gauged. The walk's website included reports and press releases during and after it occurred, while local and international news outlets covered sections of the walk, particularly its finale in Jerusalem. Participants on the walk have subsequently been interviewed or reflected on their experiences – not least the organisers, who Megoran interviewed in 2006. These provide glimpses into how the apology was received by locals, the wider media and walkers themselves.

The Reconciliation Walk's own materials presented the apology as having been well received by local people to whom it was presented. Green recounted how national and local media received the walkers positively throughout Turkey and how mayors from the cities and towns had approached the walkers to present the apology to their communities; "They just loved the message."[41] The official website of the walk reported highlights including positive comments from the Turkish Minister for Religious Affairs, the mayor of Sanli Urfa (medieval Edessa) and locals in places such as Istanbul, Sidon, Beirut, Tripoli and throughout Israel.[42] One report noted that walkers often faced "initial

41 Lynn Green, "God Stories with Lynn Green – The Reconciliation Walk (Part 3: The Way of the Spirit)", *YWAM (Youth With A Mission)*, YWAM Harpenden, 15 August 2014, *YouTube* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VkTzx59xn88> [accessed 10 May 2018].

42 "July 1997: Team meets with Minister of Religious Affairs", *Reconciliation Walk*, <https://

mistrust", but rarely hostility.[43] Whilst the consistently positive reception of the apology from these sources is unsurprising, it should be noted that a narrative of rejection could also have been coded as success for the walkers through a lens of faithful witness in spite of persecution.

Newspaper accounts – which included interviews by reporters with those both apologising and receiving the apology – largely corroborate this view, while adding a note of cynicism. For example, Kristina Stefanova in the *Washington Times* commented that the walkers hoped "to erase centuries of bloodshed with an apology and a handshake".[44] However, writing to the Lebanon *Daily Star* in October 1998, one local saw the apology as significant due to the use of crusading rhetoric in the country's civil war: "all these concepts that could be termed the legacy of the Crusades became part of the collective consciousness of the Lebanese Muslim public throughout the interminable 15 years long civil war." The apology was needed, and powerful:

> *And I think that those sincere reconciliation walkers with their pure Christian motivation will break the cycle of distrust and misunderstanding that colours relations between the West and the East. They will even contribute to bringing together, by setting this example of tolerance and forgiveness, the different struggling sects in Lebanon. In this sense, this movement is more meaningful to us the Lebanese*

web.archive.org/web/19991104080702/http://reconciliationwalk.org:80/97jul.htm> [accessed 16 May 2018]; "August 1998, Part 1: Turkish Mayor Calls for Peace", *Reconciliation Walk*, <https://web.archive.org/web/19991012185339/http://www.reconciliationwalk.org:80/98aug0.htm> [accessed 16 May 2018]; "October 1996, Part 1", *Reconciliation Walk*, <https://web.archive.org/web/19991008232443/http://www.reconciliationwalk.org:80/96oct1.htm> [accessed 16 May 2018]; "October 1998, Part 5: Encounter in Tripoli Changes Hostility to Embrace", *Reconciliation Walk*, <https://web.archive.org/web/19991104082201/http://reconciliationwalk.org:80/98oct5.htm> [accessed 16 May 2018]; Liz Cox, "February 1999, Part 3: 'This Message is Very Good for My People'", *Reconciliation Walk*, <https://web.archive.org/web/19991117200551/http://www.reconciliationwalk.org:80/99feb3.htm>, [accessed 16 May 2018]; Liz Cox, 'May 1999: The Reconciliation Walk in Israel', *Reconciliation Walk*, <https://web.archive.org/web/19991104084132/http://reconciliationwalk.org:80/99may1.htm> [accessed 16 May 2018].

43 Cox, "May 1999".

44 Kristina Stefanova, "Christians Apologize for Bloody Crusade", *The Washington Times*, 16 July 1999, 11.

> *than to any other people in the world. With sincere persistent endeavours, these reconciliation walkers will defuse the legacy of the Crusades.*[45]

Concentrated on the crescendo of walkers who arrived in Jerusalem for the final phase of the walk in July 1999 most of the reports repeated the assertion that the crusades were still divisive. "Even after 900 years the horror of what the Crusaders did has not dimmed" wrote one reporter, "they caused deep and lasting enmity in the Middle East".[46] Several articles reported the words of the Chief Rabbi to the walkers in the Great Synagogue in Jerusalem – "better late than never".[47] He expressed the hope that their visit would signal "the end of what started with the Crusades."[48]

Julian Manyon's article, printed in the *Calgary Herald* on 24 July 1999, contained his account of accompanying a group as they apologised to locals in Jerusalem. Manyon reported conversations with two shopkeepers, both more interested in making a sale than engaging with the walkers or the crusades. He did, however, repeat the idea that crusading rhetoric carried resonance in the Middle East:

> *Certainly, the Crusaders blackened the name of Christendom in the Arab world. Even today many who profess to be Arab nationalists describe the U.S. and British forces deployed against Iraq as the new Crusaders, a phrase designed to inflame passions and to rally ordinary people against them.*[49]

45 Hisham Shihab, "Reader's Letters", *The Daily Star* (Lebanon), 21 October 1998, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb//Opinion/Letters/1998/Oct-21/105990-readers-letters-published-on-21101998.ashx> [accessed 17 May 2018].

46 Julian Manyon, " 'Sorry' Comes 900 Years Too Late", *Calgary Herald*, (Alberta, Canada).

47 E.g. Tracy Wilkinson, "Group on Crusade to Say Sorry – 900 Years Later", *LA Times*, 19 July 1999, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180509205010/http://articles.latimes.com/1999/jul/19/news/mn-57414> [accessed 9 May 2018].

48 Dixon, "Jerusalem".

49 Manyon, "Sorry".

The international scope of the coverage itself suggests the walk was of broader interest. As well as local papers in the countries passed through, national press in Turkey, Lebanon and Israel covered the progress of the march. Media outlets in the UK, US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand all included articles on the walk's conclusion in Jerusalem.[50]

Qualitatively, responses to the walk varied. Manyon ended positively, but both Christopher Hudson in the London *Evening Standard* and Gwynne Dyer in the *Hamilton Spectator* (Ontario, Canada) strongly criticised the venture. Hudson argued that the apology was meaningless because the crusades were no longer a live issue.[51] Moreover, apologising for the heroic, "romantic" and "noble" exploits of the crusaders undermined their genuine piety and suffering. Dyer's argument placed the crusades in the context of a long-term contest between Christianity and Islam. The crusades, here, were a defensive response to Islamic expansion and were not a unique form of warfare.[52]

A third element of reception was the effect that the walk had on its participants. Megoran has summarised two important contexts from which the Reconciliation Walk emerged, that of the US "Christian Right" and that of a "third wave" of Protestant missionary endeavour.[53] Where the former tended to Christian Zionism and support of the state of Israel, the latter was characterised by interdenominational organisations, short-term mission trips and the recruitment of lay young people. While the Reconciliation Walk comfortably fit the "third-wave" paradigm, Megoran argued that it actively unpicked the certainties of the US "Christian Right". Many participants, including Nobles, found

50 Green reflected that "Press interest was extremely high with CNN, Reuters, UPI, the BBC, the Jerusalem Post, several Arab newspapers, other Dutch, Swedish and German reporters, all giving us positive coverage." Lynn Green, "July 1999, Part 2: The Damage Done by the Crusades is Being Reversed", *Reconciliation Walk*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20000110113913/http://reconciliationwalk.org:80/99jul2.htm> [accessed 17 May 2018].

51 Christopher Hudson, "We've Had Enough of the Sword", *The Evening Standard* (London), 5 July 1999, 32.

52 Gwynne Dyer, "Christians Don't Need to be Sorry for Crusades", *Hamilton Spectator* (Ontario, Canada), 12 July 1999, 11.

53 Megoran, "Geography of Peace", 386-88.

previous stereotypes and theological assumptions challenged, and ultimately replaced, by their experience of the walk: "Stereotypes like all Muslims are fundamentalist terrorists vanish when you eat together and share your hopes and worries."[54] This sentiment was echoed by other walkers. Mike Kent told the *LA Times* that "To shake hands with a Jewish person and a Palestinian, Christian or Muslim, and to speak to them, it changes them from an extremist to a real person."[55] Indeed, Megoran saw the effects on participants, and their home culture, as the key legacy of the walk; a continuing programme, the Journey of Understanding, was founded to continue the work of reconciliation.[56]

In this way, then, the walk lived up to its billing as a "pilgrimage of apology", echoing an ancient Christian practice of penitential peregrination.[57] The organisers were, consciously or not, adopting aspects of a traditional mode of response to perceptions of sin; and one proposed to be at the core of the self-understanding of the medieval crusaders themselves.[58]

II. Historical Apologia

> *To accept blame humbly when one is at fault is always good, of course, but in this case the apologizers were only showing that they did not comprehend the Muslim view of the crusades (which made their conciliatory gesture empty) and did not understand history (which made their act of contrition pointless).*
>
> – Jonathan Riley-Smith[59]

54 Dixon, "Jerusalem".

55 Wilkinson, "Crusade to Say Sorry".

56 Megoran, "Geography of Peace", 393-94. "Journey of Understanding", *Reconciliation Walk* <https://web.archive.org/web/20190315101303/https://epesent.com/recwalk/jou.html > [accessed 15 March 2019].

57 Stefanova, "Christians apologize", 11.

58 "There is no doubt that Urban preached the crusade at Clermont as a pilgrimage [...] The fact that the crusade was a pilgrimage was well understood by those taking the cross", Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (London: Continuum, 2003), 22-23. The mechanics of medieval penitence and modern repentance, though, have significant differences.

59 Jonathan Riley-Smith, "Rethinking the Crusades", *First Things* 101 (March 2000), 20.

The Reconciliation Walk, with its active engagement with the past and assertion that the legacy of the crusades was a contemporary issue which required addressing, unsurprisingly drew the attention of crusade scholars. This was not least because the international historical Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East (SSCLE) had gathered in Jerusalem to mark the same anniversary with a conference.[60] The idea of apologising for the crusades has appeared in several historians' work – usually online articles aimed at a general audience – as part of a conversation about the meaning of the crusades (or lack thereof) for today.[61] Evaluating the hostile reception of the walk in Riley-Smith's work reveals a different version of the crusading past to that of the walkers, which one might expect, but also fault lines in how to engage with the perceptions of the past held by others.

As the above quote illustrates, Riley-Smith was forthright in his condemnation of the walk's organisers' perceptions of the crusades and of the efficacy of their response. He was prompted to respond in print and discussed the apology for the crusades in at least five works up to 2008. Indeed, the question of how the crusades had been remembered and their legacy appeared to have provoked Riley-Smith to take up the subject with some energy, which culminated in his book, *The Crusades, Christianity, and Islam* (2008).[62] The pre-eminent crusade historian for several decades, Riley-Smith had invigorated anglophone crusade scholarship in

60 "SSCLE Conferences", *Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180518154913/http://sscle.slu.edu/sscle-quadrennial-conference > [accessed 18 May 2018].

61 For example, Thomas F. Madden, "Crusade Propaganda", *The National Review*, 2 November 2001, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180723160659/https://www.nationalreview.com/2001/11/crusade-propaganda-thomas-f-madden/> [accessed 23 July 2018]; Thomas F. Madden, "Crusade Myths", *Catholic Dossier* 1 (2002), <https://web.archive.org/web/20180711180636/http://www.ignatiusinsight.com/features2005/tmadden_crusademyths_feb05.asp > [accessed 23 July 2018]; Paul F. Crawford, "Four Myths about the Crusades", *The Intercollegiate Review*, (Spring 2011): 13-22; Jay Rubenstein, "Massacre at Jerusalem — Do The Crusades Still Matter?", *Huffington Post*, 12 February 2011, <https://web.archive.org/web/20190315102712/https://www.huffingtonpost.com/jay-rubenstein/massacre-at-jerusalem-109_b_1115003.html?guccounter=2>, [accessed 15 March 2019]; Andrew Holt, "Apology for the Fourth Crusade", May 2016, <https://web.archive.org/web/20190315102859/https://apholt.com/2016/05/26/apology-for-the-fourth-crusade/> [accessed 15 March 2019]; Rodney Stark, *God's Battalions: The Case for the Crusades* (New York: HarperOne, 2009).

62 Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades, Christianity, and Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

part through identifying leading edges of scholarship ripe for investigation and encouraging their study.[63] And more personally, as described above, the Reconciliation Walk's organisers had quoted Riley-Smith to establish a connection between the medieval crusaders and the modern walkers.

Riley-Smith's criticisms bear unpacking as they challenged the walkers' understanding of the past and their performance as anti-crusaders. Of the two contentions, the historicist objection – that the walkers were operating under a defective understanding of the crusading past – is the simpler to evaluate. At its core, Riley-Smith asserted, the crusades were "war-pilgrimages proclaimed by the Popes on Christ's behalf and waged for the recovery of Christian territory or people, or in their defense."[64] The aspects of defence and "recovery" meant they were not a form of Western aggression. Moreover, seeing the motivations of crusaders as greed, fear or hatred ignored a key facet of Riley-Smith's work which argued that they were primarily animated by penitence and piety: "a crusade was for the crusader only secondarily about service in arms to God or benefiting the Church or Christianity; it was primarily about benefiting himself. He was engaged in an act of self-sanctification."[65]

Riley-Smith argued that the crusades were not unique events; rather, they fit the traditional Christian criteria of Just War in being authorised by a legitimate authority (the Pope) and having "right intention" because of their defensive aspect.[66] Except for the persecution of the Jews in Europe by some contingents of the First Crusade, the violence prosecuted by the crusaders was not unusual: "the behavior of the crusaders in the East cannot be considered to have been quantitatively worse than that of those fighting in any ideological war."[67] Ri-

63 Tyerman, *Debate*, 231. In this vein, see Elizabeth Siberry, *The New Crusaders: Images of the Crusades in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

64 Riley-Smith, "Rethinking the Crusades".

65 *Ibid.*

66 Jonathan Riley-Smith, "Why Apologising for the Crusades is Futile", *Catholic Herald*, 5 October 2001, 6.

67 Riley-Smith, "Rethinking the Crusades". Riley-Smith here adds "If we are going to express contrition for the behaviour of the crusaders, it is not so much to the Muslims that we should apologize, but to the Jews and to our fellow Christians", though he then points out that the violence against European Jewish communities was not the focus of the crusade but collateral damage.

ley-Smith's criticism moved beyond analysis of the medieval crusades and contested the walkers' understanding of crusading as an aberration of Christianity. He contended that the use of force had a long history in Christian tradition – indeed, tracing it was what had initially drawn him to the crusades.[68] This rendered the Reconciliation Walkers' apology historically misguided: "Ought we not rather challenge the widespread sentimental and unhistorical assumptions that on the one hand Christianity is an unambiguously pacific religion and on the other that Christian justifications of force have been consistent?"[69] If the Reconciliation Walkers' version of history was defective, went Riley-Smith's logic, then their apology was fatally undermined by its factual inaccuracy.

The second strand of Riley-Smith's criticism suggested that the apology was an "empty" gesture because it misunderstood the Muslim perspective on the crusades. In later lectures and published works Riley-Smith proposed that Muslims "looked back on the Crusades with indifference and complacency", seeing them as undifferentiated skirmishes in a broader "spasmodic" conflict between Christianity and Islam; "the crusading movement was a succession of episodes in a continuum of hostility between the two religions."[70] Saladin, the iconic Islamic and Kurdish leader, was celebrated in the West as the chivalrous antagonist of Richard I on the Third Crusade but, Riley-Smith argued, had been "almost completely forgotten" by Muslims. Indeed, it was only with Kaiser Wilhelm II's 1898 tour of the Levant and visit to the tomb of Saladin in Damascus that the medieval figure was "reintroduced" to Muslims.[71]

In this schema, the modern "Muslim" memory of crusading was dominated by nineteenth- and twentieth-century perceptions of the

68 Riley-Smith, "Apologising". On his initial interest, see Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and Idea of Crusading*, 2nd ed. (London: Continuum, 2009), 3.

69 Riley-Smith, "Rethinking the Crusades".

70 Riley-Smith, *Crusades, Christianity, and Islam*, 71; Riley-Smith, "Rethinking the Crusades". For Riley-Smith on the Muslim memory of crusading, see Jonathan Riley-Smith, "Islam and the Crusades in History and Imagination, 8 November 1898-11 September 2001", *Crusades* 2 (2003): 151-67; Jonathan Riley-Smith, "Jihad Crusaders: What an Osama bin Laden means by 'Crusade'", *National Review*, 5 January 2004, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180607082840/https://www.nationalreview.com/2004/01/jihad-crusaders-jonathan-riley-smith/> [accessed 7 June 2018].

71 Riley-Smith, *Crusades, Christianity, and Islam*, 64.

crusades as Western imperial ventures. This version of history was acquired from the West. Picked up from the romantic imagination of Scottish novelist Walter Scott and the nationalist parallelism of French historian Joseph François Michaud it saw a continuity of Western aggression which culminated in British and French Mandates in Palestine and Syria respectively after the First World War.[72] It had traction because it appealed to both Arab nationalists and pan-Islamists alike; figures such as Egyptian President Gamal Nasser, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and, most recently, the propagandists of ISIS. Riley-Smith explained its efficacy as:

> *Having less to do with historical reality than with reactions to imperialism, the Nationalist and Islamist interpretations of crusade history help many people, moderates as well as extremists, to place the exploitation they believe they have suffered in a historical context and to satisfy their feelings of both superiority and humiliation.*[73]

This criticism of the apology, then, concluded that apologising was pointless on relative grounds, as well as in absolute terms, because for Muslims the offense of the crusades was still being actively perpetrated. Riley-Smith memorably wrote that "any expression of contrition would be rather like a marksman firing at his opponent with a Kalashnikov while expressing regrets for his ancestor's use of a bow and arrow."[74] Furthermore, Western apologisers could be seen to be reinforcing the Muslim perception of the crusades by admitting guilt for the crusades. In an article addressing bin Laden's understanding of the crusades, Riley-Smith summarised that:

72 See Ibid., 66-67; Riley-Smith, "Islam and the Crusades", 152-60.

73 Riley-Smith, *Crusades, Christianity, and Islam*, 76.

74 Riley-Smith, "Apologising". On criticisms of historical apologies more generally, see Weyeneth, "Power of Apology", 29.

> *We are confronted by a dangerous view of the past and of the present, moral as well as historical* [...]. *It has been spreading for a century and nothing has been done to counter it. Indeed, over and over again, in words and deeds, Westerners have thoughtlessly reinforced many Muslims' belief in it.*[75]

Employing Trouillot's schema highlights which connections Riley-Smith was contesting: primarily that of the erasure of intervening history. Where his own work had been employed by the walkers to establish genealogical continuity – Trouillot's "numerical identity" at (a) – his insistence on filling out the historical middle denied the walkers' creation of discontinuity with the past. In fact, both of Riley-Smith's criticisms were of "bad history": that of the Reconciliation Walkers' sketch of the crusades and of "Muslim memories" of the crusades. In his book on the topic, he highlighted the need for "opening our eyes to the actuality – not the imagined reality – of our own past."[76] Here, Riley-Smith was an apologist for history; he offered an *apologia* in the traditional sense for the primacy of historical accuracy over the felt resonance of the past.

Historicising Riley-Smith and the Reconciliation Walk

Discussing the entanglement of academic crusade scholarship ("recreated pasts") and popular perceptions of the past ("revived pasts"), Kristin Skottki has called for "a *relentless* historicisation and contextualisation" of all aspects of presentations of the crusades.[77] This, she suggested, would go some way towards overcoming "structural amnesia" in crusade historiography, whereby popular understandings of the crusades were

75 Riley-Smith, "Jihad Crusaders".

76 Riley-Smith, *Crusades, Christianity, and Islam*, 6.

77 Kristin Skottki, "The Dead, the Revived and the Recreated Pasts: 'Structural Amnesia' in Representations of Crusade History", in *Perceptions of the Crusades from the Nineteenth to the Twenty-First Century: Engaging the Crusades, Volume One*, eds. Mike Horswell and Jonathan Phillips (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 124. Emphasis from original.

overlooked and dismissed, rather than being seen to contain, or be based on, older (or outmoded contemporary) academic interpretations. By bringing both the recreated past of Riley-Smith's work and the revived past of the Reconciliation Walk's organisers into dialogue with broader historical perspectives we can further interrogate their modes of engagement with the past and one another.

Riley-Smith's denouncement of the Reconciliation Walk's portrayal of crusader motivations is consistent with recent academic work which has moved away from materialist considerations of greed and land-shortage and emphasised the costs of crusading and the piety of the crusaders. John France has argued that the first crusaders could only have succeeded in overcoming the extreme conditions of the expedition through absolute religious devotion to the cause, and analysis of charter evidence records both the finances required to undertake a crusade and the pious Christian language which framed the leaving arrangements of departing crusaders.[78] Notably, the turn to investigating crusader motivations and the rehabilitation of piety and zeal as sincere animating factors was pioneered by Riley-Smith.[79] His understanding of crusading had developed over his academic career, been subjected to scrutiny, and was presented with nuance; "Crusading adapted itself over time to circumstances and fashions," he wrote in the third edition of *The Crusades: A History* (2014), "but certain elements were constant."[80]

In contrast, the walkers' characterisation of crusading was a crude synthesis of several strands of popular critique. Crusades beyond the first were rarely mentioned and the chronology and narrative of the 1095-99 expedition seems to have been relatively unimportant aside from its geography. Green's 2014 retelling, for example, was hazy on

78 John France, *Victory in the East: A Military History of the First Crusade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders, 1095-1131* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Jonathan Riley-Smith, "The Crusading Movement and the Historians", in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*, ed. Jonathan Riley-Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 6-8.

79 Tyerman, *Debate on the Crusades*, 221-22.

80 Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History*, 3rd edn. (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 14.

details of the battles, movements of contingents and interactions with locals they encountered that were not bloodshed:

> *they went in the name of Jesus and under the banner of the cross and they considered that they were doing evangelism. And their message was "Convert to Christianity or die", and they first decimated Jewish populations right across Europe, and then when they got to, down to the part of the Eastern Church where there had been a split about 50 years before, then they began Christian-on-Christian warfare. And when they first came to a Muslim area, well I don't know if they practiced cannibalism or not, but at least what they did to terrorise the first city, walled city, that they took is that they capture some children, killed them and at least acted like they were eating them – roasting them and eating them – in order to terrorise the city.*[81]

The crusade became a confected symbol of barbarous, religiously-motivated violence – its semiotic significance was as an originary point for Middle Eastern tensions and Western Christian aggression.[82]

The impulse to apologise for the crusades had precedent. Christian missionary agencies had grappled with the crusades and crusading language and imagery in the twentieth century.[83] A traditional theme saw missionaries as "Gospel Crusaders" who were the inheritors of the crusaders' zeal and Christian expansionism.[84] Alongside this, a thread of missionary criticism of the violence of the crusaders spanned the century preceding the Reconciliation Walk, into which most of their

81 Green, "Part 2: Stepping into the Vision".

82 For "semiotic shorthand", see Tyson Pugh and Angela Jane Weisl, *Medievalisms: Making the Past in the Present* (London: Routledge, 2013), 7; on the need for origins, see Skottki, "Structural Amnesia", 110.

83 For examples see Mike Horswell, *The Rise and Fall of British Crusader Medievalism, c. 1825-1945* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 92-106.

84 *Ibid.*, 100-104.

specific renunciations outlined above fit. The Standing Committee of the Conference of Missionary Societies had written to *The Times* in November 1922 on peace in the Near East, saying that:

> *The first step in that direction we believe to be the recognition of and repentance by Christendom for its own faults in the past in relation to the Near East, as, for instance, in the wholesale slaughter of the inhabitants of Jerusalem by the Crusaders.*[85]

Famously, Pope John Paul II had apologised in 2000 for the church's historic "use of violence", implying (but not specifying) the crusades, and in 2004 expressed regret for the sack of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade in 1204.[86] Rowan Williams, as Archbishop of Canterbury in 2005 had referred to the crusades as "serious betrayals of many of the central beliefs of Christian faith".[87] The Reconciliation Walkers, uniquely, held together these two strands: instead of disavowing the perceived connection between modern missionaries and crusaders, as many had done, they embraced it in order to defuse it.

While the walkers' vision of the historical crusades was extremely hazy, condemnation of the crusades did have precedent in scholarship and was not absent in medieval times.[88] Thomas Fuller, Edward Gibbon, Voltaire and David Hume had all been scathing about the merit of the crusades; Hume memorably proclaimed them "the most durable monu-

85 Standing Committee of the Conference of Missionary Societies, "Near East Peace", *The Times*, 6 November 1922, 13.

86 Weyeneth, "Power of Apology", 37-38; Marco Giardini, "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, Volume Two*, eds. Mike Horswell and Akil N. Awan (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 75-90.

87 Rowan Williams, "What is Christianity?", Lecture at International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan, 23 November 2005, <https://web.archive.org/web/20060426040434/http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org:80/sermons_speeches/2005/051123.htm> [accessed 17 May 2018].

88 Palmer A. Throop, *Criticism of the Crusade: A Study of Public Opinion and Crusade Propaganda* (Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1975); Elizabeth Siberry, *Criticism of Crusading, 1095-1274* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

ment of human folly that has yet appeared in any age or nation".[89] In the twentieth century, Steven Runciman's hugely popular account had deemed the Holy War "nothing more than a long act of intolerance in the name of God, which is a sin against the Holy Ghost."[90] More recently, this strand of censure was taken up by (among others) Terry Jones and Karen Armstrong; authors who have an whose works have popular, if not academic, resonance.[91] Indeed Armstrong wrote that "I now believe the crusades were one of the direct causes of the conflict in the Middle East today."[92] Amin Maalouf in *The Crusades through Arab Eyes* evocatively concluded that the crusades were still felt as an "act of rape" by the inhabitants of the Middle East.[93] The walkers, despite their monochrome presentation of the historical crusades, were expressing a "revived" past – a version of the past with its own history and contemporary resonance.

Furthermore, the role of apocalyptic anxieties – highlighted by Hand – has been rehabilitated by Jay Rubenstein, who argued in his *Armies of Heaven* that crusading has to be situated in contemporary eschatological perspectives to be understood.[94] Riley-Smith's own work on the experiences of the first crusaders and its subsequent "theological refinement" by ecclesiastical chroniclers made a case for the importance of apocalyptic considerations.[95] Although neither Rubenstein nor Riley-Smith would draw the same parallels between medieval and modern crusader mentalities that Hand did, I suspect neither would deny the possibility of their efficacy in motivating action in either the eleventh or twentieth centuries.[96]

89 Tyerman, *Debate*, 81.

90 Quoted in *ibid.*, 193. Of the Fourth Crusade, Runciman wrote, "there never was a greater crime against humanity"; *ibid.*, 194.

91 Jones' book followed a 1995 BBC documentary series; Terry Jones and Alan Ereira, *Crusades* (London: Penguin Books, 1996); Karen Armstrong, *Holy War: The Crusades and their Impact on Today's World*, 2nd edn. (New York: Anchor Books, 2001). See Skottki, "Structural Amnesia", 119-20.

92 Armstrong, *Holy War*, xiv.

93 Amin Maalouf, *The Crusades through Arab Eyes*, trans. Jon Rothschild (New York: Schocken Books, 1984), 266.

94 Jay Rubenstein, *Armies of Heaven: The First Crusade and the Quest for Apocalypse* (New York: Basic Books, 2011).

95 Riley-Smith, *First Crusade*, especially chapter six.

96 See Rubenstein's reflections on how his own experiences influenced his book: Taylor Smith, "How the Apocalypse Found Me", *The Key Reporter*, 6 April 2013, <http://keyreporter.org/PbkNews/PbkNews/Details/559.html> [accessed 8 June 2018].

Historicising Riley-Smith's approach to Christian history pushes the boundaries of traditional criticism to its limits. Because historical and religious perspectives are entwined in any individual, disentangling them within any given work of scholarship is difficult – and potentially counter-productive in producing artificially discreet entities. It is sufficient to make two observations at this point. Firstly, Riley-Smith published one of the articles which directly addressed the Reconciliation Walk in the *Catholic Herald* and another in the conservative, ecumenical, journal *First Things*. Considered alongside his academic works, these were interventions in the popular sphere to communicate his historical vision and were aimed at a religious audience.[97] Riley-Smith's involvement with the crusading military orders was also personal; he was a member of two Hospitaller successor Orders, the Sovereign Military Order of Malta and the British (Protestant) Order of St. John.[98] Christopher Tyerman – a long-time critic of aspects of Riley-Smith's work – gestured to Riley-Smith's Catholicism when discussing his emphasis on the authority of the pope and clerical figures in defining what crusading was, and in his insistence on the motivating power of devotion and penance. This is merely to say that Riley-Smith was invested in an understanding of Christianity and the Christian past which differed significantly from that of the Reconciliation Walkers. In practice, it may be that the walkers' Protestant Christianity facilitated the discontinuities articulated with a "papal" past; some modern Catholic, or religiously conservative perspectives might be inclined to emphasise continuities of Christian action with the medieval crusades.

With regard to Riley-Smith's second criticism – that Muslims had forgotten the crusades until reintroduced to Western imperialist versions in the late nineteenth century – scholarship has nuanced the

97 This was also the case with the works cited by crusade historian Thomas Madden above, of which his "Crusade Myths" article has been widely republished online. His recent short book, distributed through dynamiccatholic.com, was aimed at a Catholic audience; Thomas F. Madden, *The Crusades Controversy: Setting the Record Straight* (North Palm Beach, FL: Beacon, 2017) Rodney Stark republished his argument defending the crusades in a theological journal issue on Islam as Rodney Stark, "The Case for the Crusades", *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 20, n.º 2 (2016): 9-28.

98 Tyerman, *Debate*, 232.

picture he painted, stimulated in part by his assertions. Riley-Smith's initial claim was based on work by Francesco Gabrieli (1969), Emmanuel Sivan (1972), Bernard Lewis (1975), Amin Maalouf (1984), and Carole Hillenbrand (1999).[99] This has been significantly modified by recent work which has demonstrated that Saladin and the crusades *were* a part of Middle Eastern and Islamic memories to the present.[100] This denies neither their complex and varying place in those memories (as we would expect), nor the significant effect of Western imperial influence in the region on both politics and historical perception. Riley-Smith's evaluation of the influence of the Kaiser, Scott and Michaud on how the crusades were remembered and their appropriation (and adaptation) by nationalist and Islamist regimes remains helpful. Similarly, his reminder that contemporary use of the crusades is more strongly related to political agendas than to recovery of an "objective" historical account has been elaborated upon.[101] On al-Qaeda and ISIS, Skottki has written:

> *it seems odd to expect terrorist organisations* [...] *to engage with history like a research centre.* Of course *they are using history only to serve their presentist concerns and goals;* of course *they cut out bits and pieces of history that seem helpful in justifying their self-fashioning*[102]

99 E.g. Bernard Lewis, *History: Remembered, Recovered, Invented* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975); Francesco Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, trans. E.J. Costello (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010, first published in English 1969); Emmanuel Sivan, "Modern Arabic Historiography", *Asian and African Studies* 8 (1972): 104–49; Amin Maalouf, *Crusades through Arab Eyes*; Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012, first ed. 1999).

100 Diana Abouali, "Saladin's Legacy in the Middle East before the Nineteenth Century", *Crusades* 10 (2011): 175-89; Umej Bhatia, *Forgetting Osama Bin Munqidh, Remembering Osama Bin Laden: The Crusades in Modern Muslim Memory* (Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, 2008); Stefan Heidemann, "Memory and Ideology: Images of Saladin in Syria and Iraq", in *Visual Culture in the Modern Middle East: Rhetoric of the Image*, eds. Christiane J. Gruber and Sune Haugbolle (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), 57–81; Jonathan Phillips, *Saladin* (London: Bodley Head, 2019).

101 See Bhatia, *Forgetting Osama*; Geraldine Heng, "Holy War Redux: The Crusades, Futures of the Past, and Strategic Logic in the 'Clash' of Religions", *PMLA* 126, n.º 2 (2011): 422–31; Bruce Holsinger, *Neomedievalism, Neoconservatism, and the War on Terror* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2007).

102 Skottki, "Structural Amnesia", 117.

This draws attention to the tension that runs through Riley-Smith's writing on the apology of, and call for, greater historical accuracy. The preceding lines to the quote above from his 2008 book reveal this confusion: "we cannot hope to comprehend – and thereby confront – those who hate us so much unless we understand how they are thinking; and this involves opening our eyes to the actuality – not the imagined reality – of our own past."[103] Despite having asserted the ahistorical nature of the perceptions of continuity, Riley-Smith acknowledged their power: "So many share [bin Laden's historical vision] that one is tempted to call it mainstream."[104] In his own terms, if "we" are to understand the way that "those who hate us" are thinking, this surely involves greater engagement with how they perceive the past, notwithstanding any academic consensus. Regardless of the historical reality, perceptions of the crusades have potency.

Historicising Riley-Smith's own work places it into the context of broader discussions of the way he himself characterises crusade history and historical Christianity, in turn complicating both. Neither these depictions, nor Riley-Smith's broader assertions of the need to return to historical factuality, account for the affective power of alternative perceptions of the crusades, or indeed Christianity. Versions of these perceptions (however simplistic) clearly animated the Reconciliation Walkers to undertake an ambitious, five-year-long project of performative public repentance, which seemingly proved attractive to many they encountered. Moreover, a succession of Middle Eastern politicians and Islamic extremists (as Riley-Smith acknowledged) employed the tropes of crusades-as-proto-imperialism or crusades-as-Western-Christian-aggression to political effect. These mobilisations represent a powerful rhetorical tradition which persists. If Riley-Smith's first criticism had traction, his second was undone: rather than dismissing these "revived pasts" the Reconciliation Walk engaged them directly. The example of the Reconciliation Walk and the criticism of Riley-Smith demonstrate

103 Riley-Smith, *Crusades, Christianity, and Islam*, 6.
104 Riley-Smith, "Islam and the Crusades", 166-67.

that academic and popular perceptions of the crusades coexist, persist and intersect. Neither speak into a void – both embody consequences of the ways in which the past is constructed and employed in the present and have their own histories.

III. Abortive Apologies? Negotiating the Meaning of the Past

Thus collective apologies are not meant to succeed – not because of the possible hypocrisy of some of the actors but because their very conditions of emergence deny the possibility of a transformation. They are abortive rituals.

– Michel-Rolph Trouillot[105]

"Apologies", Trouillot observed, "are inherently about affect."[106] This presentist, "future-oriented" function means that their efficacy depends on their relative reception. For the Reconciliation Walkers Trouillot recognised that his argument allowed them the sincerity of their performance, and even warm reception among individuals.[107] Green asserted the positivity of reception of the apology among those encountered while Megoran has pointed to the formative effect of the walk on those who took part, even suggesting that this may prove transformative for sections of Western Christianity.[108]

Trouillot's own consideration of historic apologies led him to conclude that they were "abortive rituals". Fundamentally, he saw the collective identities which were necessary to inter-communal apologies as being inherently unable to undergo the change – or discontinuity – with the past required for contrition whilst maintaining their ontological status. He argued that:

105 Trouillot, "Abortive Rituals", 185.
106 *Ibid.*, 184.
107 *Ibid.*, 185.
108 Megoran, "Geography of Peace", 393-95.

> *The collectives projected in the current wave of apologies are framed outside of history – except of course the history of the encounter on which the apology is premised. Not that this framing denies all historicities. Rather, it requires a particular kind of historicity, notably the possibility of freezing chunks of an allegedly unified past, as in the storage model of memory and history* [...[109]] *On the one hand, history is denied as an experience constitutive of the collectivity: no structure precedes the subject.* [...] *On the other hand, the history that ties the initial wrong to the possibility of – or need for – an apology is brandished as the sole relevant story. Steeped in a language of blood and soul, collectivities are now defined by the wrongs they committed and for which they should apologize, or by the wrongs they suffered and for which they should receive apology.*[110]

Key to this verdict is Trouillot's understanding that the apology should be transformative, it should effect some change in the relationship between participants. Because the collective identities required by the apology have an unclear relationship to the people in the present (in terms of their ability to speak for and alter their fundamental definition) he suggested, it was impossible for them to change and for any transformation to occur. Participants needed to "convince the populations on both sides that identity obtains in ways that make the performance meaningful, collective apologies will have little transformative power."[111] Thus the apology would remain stillborn.

Trouillot himself traced the development in history of the idea of collective identities; he historicised the concept to demonstrate how it had changed. In so doing, he left open the possibility of further evolution. Furthermore, the relationship between individuals and collective

109 Trouillot references another work here, Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, MA: Beacon, 1995), 14-18.

110 Trouillot, "Abortive Rituals", 181.

111 *Ibid.*, 185.

identities is more complex than Trouillot allowed. Individuals may hold many facets of identity at once, even potentially contradictory ones, and different allegiances come into play at different times. That these have historical components or interpret the past according to the needs of the present is no surprise. When it comes to relating to the past – a key aspect of identity-formation – Maurice Halbwachs' work on collective memory has suggested that because these memories need to be embodied in particular communities, they must necessarily be useful to those people.[112] The past, he posited, may provide options for people to identify with or may be overdetermined by presentist concerns. Either way, as Trouillot himself argued above, collective identities are fluid rather than static and themselves need to be understood within their historical context. For example, the walkers' Protestant Christianity had already (consciously or not) negotiated a set of historical continuities and discontinuities which facilitated the functioning of the apology for participants.

The broader discussion of the late-twentieth-century vogue for historical apologies suggests that they open spaces for societies to negotiate their relationship with the past and its legacies, imagined or tangible. Apologies, Robert Weyeneth proposed, "represent a unique and ambitious effort to reconcile past and present."[113] Whether generally accepted, "transformative", or neither, they raise public debate about (often controversial) history and put "on record, formally and publicly" particular perspectives on the past. The apology offers an alternative way of interpreting the past which "becomes part of the historical record for subsequent generations."[114] Here, then, the actions-in-history of the Reconciliation Walkers in apologising for the crusades has required the inclusion of their perspective and interpretation of the past in the discussion of the memory and legacy of the crusades, and of its meaning for the present.

112 Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (London: University of Chicago Press, 1992). As Paul Connerton has asserted, "our images of the past commonly serve to legitimate a present social order"; Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 3.

113 Weyeneth, "Power of Apology", 21.

114 *Ibid.*, 32-33.

Spaces for Negotiation: The Israel Museum

On the same day that the Reconciliation Walk culminated in Jerusalem, the Israel Museum opened an exhibition of the material culture of the medieval crusader principalities. "Museums rarely have the opportunity," wrote the director, "at such a perfect meeting point of time and place, to assemble the historical remnants of an entire culture and to present them in their country of origin and for such a wide public."[115] The crusades were framed as a period of cultural encounter, rather than "clash", partly in response to the material nature of the exhibits'.[116] Alongside the medieval material the exhibition included artistic responses to the crusades and their legacy, reflecting another approach to engaging with the past.

Curator Silvia Rozenberg suggested that Igael Tumarkin's art attempted to "connect different times and cultures and to understand the present in light of the past." It linked "the Crusaders to the Arab-Israeli conflict, responding to a possible analogy between the Crusader kingdom and the Jewish state."[117] Discussing the work of Martin Honert, which consisted of life-size figures stepping out of a flat rural scene into 3D, she wrote: "Simultaneously perpetuating and subverting the romantic fascination with the Crusades, it calls into question the morality of the Crusader movement and demonstrates the relevance of the Crusader myth for those who try to deal with the harsh issues of life today."[118] The pieces in the exhibition, for Rozenberg, constituted a temporal bridge; "bringing us closer to the difficult realities of the Crusader period – and to the controversial questions of our own time."[119] The significance of the crusades could be seen to be in flux – the works of art attempted to navigate and creatively respond to the sedimented layers of meaning the crusades had attracted through the centuries and the breadth of variance.

115 James S. Snyder, "Foreword", in *Knights of the Holy Land: The Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem*, ed. Silvia Rozenberg (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1999).

116 Silvia Rozenberg, "Crusader Imagery in Modern Times", in Rozenberg ed., *Knights*, 299.

117 *Ibid.*, 303.

118 *Ibid.*

119 *Ibid.*, 301.

Attended by Riley-Smith and the crusade historians of the SSCLE with whom it was created, the exhibition could well have been visited by members of the Reconciliation Walk in Jerusalem and thus simultaneously hosted a range of responses to the crusading past discussed and perceptions of their significance: the collection and presentation of entangled material remains; the approaches of scholarly writers and educators; the wrestling of the artistic creations; and the active, affective apologies of the walkers.

Conclusion

It is clear that the crusades, or, to be precise, perceptions of the crusades, now matter beyond the shades of academe.

– Christopher Tyerman[120]

The *meanings* of the crusades remain fractured and contested; they continue to be actively renegotiated. The Reconciliation Walkers, in embodying anti-crusaders, attempted to annihilate the toxic legacy they perceived to have followed the crusades. They engaged directly with the perception of the crusades as a signifier of Western violence in an attempt to nullify it.

Historians, engaged in the ever-continuing project of creating and re-presenting history, mediate the past for the present. They anticipate and respond to deployments of the past, themselves embodied actors within traditions of interpretation and possessing situated perspectives not only on the past, but also on the ways in which it is and *should be* used. And inevitably themselves are fractured – Riley-Smith's own version of history has evolved and is often contested.

What the above discussion demonstrates is that discussions of how people relate to the past must be broader than academic historiography and consider perceptions of the past – no matter how factual.

120 Tyerman, *Debate*, 247.

Perceptions may be plastic, but they are no less powerful for their artificiality. For, if Olympian detachment is impossible, contemporary entanglement inevitable, and self-reflexivity essential (but perpetually required), then the question remains – for historian and walker – of the nature of engagement with the past in the present. "No apologies are required"?[121] Or perhaps, as Rajan has suggested, "The only thing worse than an apology [...] is no apology."[122]

121 Stark, "Case for the Crusades", *SBJT*, 26. See Madden, *Crusades Controversy*; and other works cited and discussion in Skottki, "Structural Amnesia", 120-23.

122 Rajan, "Righting Wrongs", 168.

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