

Dr William Purkis MA, PhD

Senior Lecturer in Medieval History

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About

I am a historian of medieval religious cultures (c.1000–c.1300), with particular interests in crusading, pilgrimage and monasticism.

Feedback and office hours

I will not be holding regular Office and Feedback Hours during the Summer Term 2014. If you wish to meet with me, please send me an email to arrange an appointment.

Qualifications

- BA (Hons.) in History (Lancaster University)
- MA in Historical Research (Lancaster University)
- PhD in History (Emmanuel College, University of Cambridge)

Biography

I developed an enthusiasm for the Middle Ages as an undergraduate student at Lancaster University, where I completed a BA (Hons.) in History in 1999 and an MA in Historical Research in 2000. In October 2001 I began doctoral research at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, where I worked under the supervision of **[Jonathan Riley-Smith](http://www.crusaderstudies.org.uk/resources/historians/profiles/riley_smith/index.html)** (http://www.crusaderstudies.org.uk/resources/historians/profiles/riley_smith/index.html). Upon completion of my PhD in September 2005, I taught for two years at Royal Holloway, University of London, and Queen Mary, University of London. I was appointed to a lectureship in medieval history at Birmingham in September 2007 and promoted to a senior lectureship in September 2012.

Teaching

First year

- Discovering the Middle Ages
- Living in the Middle Ages
- Practising History B - The Crusaders' Kingdom: European Colonialism in the Middle Ages?

Second year

- Group Research - The First Crusade as Seen by Contemporaries
- Option - Crusading and Crusader Kingdoms
- Research Methods

Third year

- Dissertation Supervision
- Special Subject - Bearers of the Cross: Violence and Devotion in the Crusading World

MA teaching

- Approaches to Medieval Studies
- Research Skills for Medieval Studies
- Option - Crusade, Jihad and Cross-Cultural Encounters on the Medieval Iberian Frontier, c.1031-c.1212

Postgraduate supervision

I am currently supervising the following postgraduate research students and topics:

- Helen Coy, 'Negotiating Group Identity in Crusading Narratives, 1095-c.1300' (AHRC funded)
- Frances Durkin, 'Crusade Preachers, c.1095–c.1330: Identities and Impact'
- **Beth Spacey** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/historycultures/departments/history/research/postgraduateresearch/profiles/spacey-beth.aspx>), 'Crusading and the Miraculous, 1095-c.1300' (AHRC funded)

Recently completed postgraduate research students:

- Ian Styler, 'Establishing and Analysing the Sphere of Influence of Saints Oswald and Wulfstan of Worcester, c.950 to c.1400' - MPhil(B) Medieval History (2014)

I would be pleased to discuss the possibility of supervising dissertations on any aspect of the religious cultures of the central Middle Ages (particularly the history of crusading, pilgrimage and monasticism) and/or the social and cultural history of Iberia or the Latin East.

Research

I am currently working on two main research projects:

The Cistercians and the Crusades: narratives, texts and commemorative traditions

This project is assessing the relationship between the Cistercian Order and the crusading movement in the period c.1100–c.1300. In particular, I am examining the way in which the Cistercians of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries contextualised and narrativised the history of the crusades, with a specific focus on the way in which the Cistercians integrated their involvement in crusading into the Order's sense of institutional memory and its traditions of storytelling.

The materiality of medieval belief

This is a collaborative project that I am working on with Dr Simon Yarrow (History), which is examining the material culture of relics, reliquaries and shrine-centres in Europe and the eastern Mediterranean in the early and central Middle Ages. I am addressing the role played by relics in early crusading history, which involves a study of the relationship between crusading and the acquisition, veneration and circulation of Holy Land relics in the West and the development of relic-cults in the Latin East.

In my past research I have worked on monastic influences on the religious ideas and devotional practices of the eleventh- and twelfth-century laity, with a focus on the spiritual ideals associated with crusading and pilgrimage in the Iberian peninsula and the eastern Mediterranean. In my first book, *Crusading Spirituality in the Holy Land and Iberia, c.1095-c.1187* (<http://www.boydellandbrewer.com/store/viewItem.asp?idProduct=8074>), I placed the origins and evolution of crusading ideology within a broader context of ideas more normally associated with monastic reform; in particular, I considered how ideas of the imitation of Christ and the pursuit of an apostolic life influenced early crusader piety. More recently, I have worked on the relationship between ideas of crusading and reconquest in eleventh- and twelfth-century Iberia and assessed the impact of crusading ideas on peninsular perceptions of the past.

I have also worked in collaboration with [Dr Thomas Asbridge](http://www.history.gmul.ac.uk/staff/asbridget.html) (<http://www.history.gmul.ac.uk/staff/asbridget.html>) and Dr Nicholas Morton on the construction of an on-line historiographical database of scholars working in the field of crusader studies. The project's [website](http://www.crusaderstudies.org.uk/resources/historians/index.html) (<http://www.crusaderstudies.org.uk/resources/historians/index.html>) contains profiles of a range of individuals who have made significant contributions to the history of the crusades and the Latin East from the early nineteenth century to the present day

Other activities

- Head of Postgraduate Studies (Research), School of History and Cultures
- Member of the management group for Birmingham's [Centre for the Study of the Middle Ages \(CeSMA\)](http://www.history.ac.uk/research/activity/cesma/index.aspx) ([/research/activity/cesma/index.aspx](http://www.history.ac.uk/research/activity/cesma/index.aspx))
- Convenor of the Institute of Historical Research's seminar series on [the Crusades and the Latin East](http://www.history.ac.uk/events/seminars/111) (<http://www.history.ac.uk/events/seminars/111>)

Publications

Books

- *Crusading Spirituality in the Holy Land and Iberia, c.1095-c.1187* (<http://www.boydellandbrewer.com/store/viewItem.asp?idProduct=8074>) (Woodbridge, 2008).

Articles

- 'Rewriting the History Books: The First Crusade and the Past', in *Writing the Early Crusades: Text, Transmission and Memory* (<http://www.boydellandbrewer.com/store/viewItem.asp?idProduct=14492>), ed. M. Bull and D. Kempf (Woodbridge, 2014), pp. 140–54.
- 'Crusading and Crusade Memory in Caesarius of Heisterbach's *Dialogus miraculorum*', *Journal of Medieval History* 39.1 (2013), pp. 100–127. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03044181.2012.751551> (%20http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03044181.2012.751551)
- 'Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Perspectives on State-Building in the Iberian Peninsula', in *Reading Medieval Studies* (<http://www.reading.ac.uk/GCMS/GCMSReadingMedievalStudies.aspx>) 36 (2010), pp. 57–75.
- 'The Past as a Precedent: Crusade, Reconquest and Twelfth-Century Memories of a Christian Iberia', in *The Making of Memory in the Middle Ages* (<http://www.brill.nl/default.aspx?partid=210&pid=34709>), ed. L. Doležalová (Leiden, 2009), pp. 441–61.
- 'Religious Symbols and Practices: Monastic Spirituality, Pilgrimage and Crusade', in *European Religious Cultures: Essays offered to Christopher Brooke on the Occasion of his Eightieth Birthday* (<http://www.history.ac.uk/bookshop/general-publications/european-religious-cultures>), ed. M. Rubin (London, 2008), pp. 69–88.
- 'Elite and Popular Perceptions of *imitatio Christi* in Twelfth-Century Crusade Spirituality', in *Elite and Popular Religion* (<http://www.boydellandbrewer.com/store/viewItem.asp?idProduct=8417>), ed. K. Cooper and J. Gregory, *Studies in Church History* 42 (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 54–64.
- 'Stigmata on the First Crusade', in *Signs, Wonders, Miracles: Representations of Divine Power in the Life of the Church* (<http://www.boydellandbrewer.com/store/viewItem.asp?idProduct=11907>), ed. K. Cooper and J. Gregory, *Studies in Church History* 41 (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 99–108.

Encyclopaedia entries

- 'Miracles as Propaganda', 'Miracles of Protection', 'Miracles of Rescue', entries in the *Encyclopaedia of Medieval Pilgrimage* (<https://www.brill.nl/default.aspx?partid=210&pid=22408>) (Leiden, 2010), pp. 432–4, 443–5, 445–8.

Journal editing

- *Crusades* (http://ashgate.com/default.aspx?page=637&calcTitle=1&pageSubject=1088&sort=pubdate&forthcoming=1&title_id=11838&edition_id=12209) 11 (2012), edited with B. Z. Kedar, J. Riley-Smith and J. Phillips.
- *Crusades* (<http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9781409428138>) 10 (2011), edited with B. Z. Kedar, J. Riley-Smith and J. Phillips.
- *Crusades* (<http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9781409402862>) 9 (2010), edited with B. Z. Kedar, J. Riley-Smith and J. Phillips.
- *Crusades* (http://www.ashgate.com/default.aspx?page=637&title_id=9028&edition_id=12110&promotion_id=ebbb265b-4972-4349-a9e0-6322531388b8&calcTitle=1) 8 (2009), edited with B. Z. Kedar, J. Riley-Smith and J. Phillips.

Contributions to websites

- Ten profiles of nineteenth- and twentieth-century historians of the crusades for an [on-line educational resource created by the Department of History, Queen Mary, University of London](http://www.crusaderstudies.org.uk/resources/historians/index.html) (<http://www.crusaderstudies.org.uk/resources/historians/index.html>) (2008)

Reviews

- Reviews for *The English Historical Review*, *History*, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, *Journal of Islamic Studies*, *Women's History Review* and <http://www.h-net.org/> (<http://www.h-net.org/>)

