'We did commit these crimes': Post-Ottoman solidarities, contested places and Kurdish apology for the Armenian Genocide on Web 2.0

Huw Halstead
University of St Andrews, UK

Abstract

Web 2.0 facilitates the articulation of transcultural solidarities between Armenian, Assyrian, Greek and Kurdish social media users. This has led to a growing trend for some Kurdish users to apologise for Kurdish complicity in Ottoman crimes, most notably the Armenian Genocide. These post-Ottoman solidarities layer different times and places, creating digital palimpsests where fantasies about place can be constructed, but fantasies that remain connected to enduring and historical place identities and concerns about future territorial borders. These multitemporal montages can foster reconciliation between erstwhile antagonists, lead to mutual recognition of shared victimhood, and perhaps even form the basis for a more inclusive sense of shared (lost) place. Yet, these solidarities can also incubate nationalist irredentism and othering. Moreover, they frequently founder on the very notions of territoriality and exclusive place identity that they sometimes seem ostensibly to transcend.

Keywords

Apology, Armenian Genocide, digital memory, genocide, Kurdistan, transcultural memory

In 2013, Armenian news websites widely reported comments made by Kurdish politician and Turkish parliamentarian Ahmet Türk in an interview with Turkish TV. Türk was quoted apologising for the participation of Kurds in the 1915 Armenian Genocide and calling on Turkey to issue its own apology: 'we, as Kurds', he declared, 'say that we did commit these crimes, but we committed them against our will' (Asbarez.com, 2013). Türk's remarks reflect wider discourses of transcultural solidarity between Armenians and Kurds that began to be articulated by politicians, organisations and diaspora activists from both communities in the early 1980s (Galip, 2016: 464), and which formed part of broader, if diffuse, networks of solidarity and collaboration incorporating other erstwhile antagonists of the Kurds such as the Assyrians and the Greeks (Halstead, 2018). By the 1990s, this had led to widespread recognition by Kurdish politicians and activists of Kurdish complicity in Ottoman crimes against non-Muslims, especially those committed against the Armenians.

Corresponding author:
Huw Halstead, University of St Andrews, St Katharine's Lodge, The Scores, St Andrews KY16 9BA, UK.
Email: hh79@st-andrews.ac.uk

With the rise of Web 2.0 and its capacity to dynamically connect users from diverse ethnic and geographic backgrounds, these discourses have proliferated digitally. Blogs, Facebook groups, YouTube videos and social media posts abound dedicated to constructing solidarities between former Ottoman non-Turkish ethnic groups, particularly the Armenians, Assyrians, Greeks and Kurds. Users from these communities discuss their overlapping history and future, draw parallels between each other's historical experiences and sometimes forge hypothetical alliances against common antagonists, most notably Turkey and Azerbaijan. I refer to these discourses of commonality and allegiance as *post-Ottoman solidarities*, which is both shorthand and a reflection of the prominence within these discourses of a notion of shared experience during the demise of the Ottoman Empire and foundation of the Turkish Republic.

The user-generated content I analyse in this article not only meshes together diverse media – images cribbed from search engines, historical footage and photography, music both traditional and modern, snippets from Hollywood film, popular memes and crude MS Paint maps – but also equates and blurs different times and places. For all its temporal and compositional promiscuity, the result is not a nowhere but rather a connective somewhere: a digital palimpsest where fantasies about place can be constructed, yet fantasies that remain connected to enduring and historical place identities and concerns about future territorial borders. These digital palimpsests – precisely because they generate a multitemporality in which the Kurdish-Turkish conflict comes to be layered over earlier histories like the Armenian Genocide – have the potential to facilitate reconciliation between historical antagonists in which mutual recognition of shared victimhood and suffering trumps comparative and competitive victim stratification. Within this context, some Kurdish Web 2.0 users choose to issue their own personal apologies for their ancestors' complicity in Ottoman persecution, an act that also provides them with a potent discursive weapon with which to admonish official Turkish denial, and in this way can bolster Kurdish claims for recognition and restitution.

Yet, these post-Ottoman solidarities can also produce what Relph (1997) calls 'a poisoned sense of place' in which discourses of rootedness breed othering, enmity and conflict. Not infrequently, post-Ottoman solidarities go hand-in-hand with aggressive nationalist irredentism and the vilification of 'the Turks' (as opposed to the Ottoman or Turkish states) as a homogenous community of violent perpetrators. This prompts negative backlash, most notably from some Turkish and Azeri users, who construct their own networks of solidarity opposing the Armenians/Assyrians/Greeks/Kurds. As these two sets of digital allies face off across the (virtual) keyboard, major national and historical antagonisms may be fortified even as others are eroded. Post-Ottoman solidarities also face vociferous resistance from 'within': by users who object to the grouping together of erstwhile victims and perpetrators; by others concerned that their online forums have been hijacked by ultranationalists; by Armenians/Assyrians/Greeks who suspect that Kurdish apology is motivated by political expediency; and by Kurdish users who dispute Kurdish complicity or who worry that Armenians are abusing Kurdish remorse to make territorial demands of a (future) Kurdish state. Following these threads reveals Web 2.0 to be a forum for the creation and consolidation of new transcultural solidarities, but one nevertheless strongly contoured along the lines of place identities, geopolitics and territoriality.

Historical background

The decline of the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was accompanied by extensive violence, bloodshed and displacement. Myriad interlocking factors were at work including (belated) Ottoman attempts at modernisation and centralisation; Ottoman defeats in major conflicts and rising insecurity about the Empire's integrity; a related shift away

from the ideology of Ottomanism towards a more exclusive focus on Turkish nationalism and Sunni Islam; the rise of nationalism amongst the Empire's minority groups; the actions of Western powers; and a host of regional and local factors (Akçam, 2007, 2012; Bloxham, 2005; Gingeras, 2009; Suny, 2015).

In the late Ottoman Empire, Ottoman Christians fell victim to economic nationalism, terrorisation, forced deportations and massacres, intensifying after the outbreak of the First World War and, in particular, Ottoman defeat to the Russian Empire at the Battle of Sarikamish. Beginning in late 1914, the ruling Committee of Union and Progress embarked upon a systematic programme of massacre and deportation of Armenians, which would later become known as the Armenian Genocide. In early 1915, Armenian intellectuals and politicians were arrested and Armenian soldiers in the Ottoman army were disarmed and assigned to labour battalions; most were subsequently killed. Armenian civilians in eastern Anatolia were rounded up, men and older boys were often killed in situ, and the rest were deported to concentration camps in the Syrian desert, suffering massacres and abuses en route at the hands of Ottoman gendarmes, irregular fighters and local Kurds, Turks and Circassians. In the desert they were joined by Armenians deported from Cilicia and western Anatolia and held in horrific conditions, and in 1916 many of the survivors were massacred. After the Bolshevik Revolution, there were violent clashes between the (short lived) First Republic of Armenia and the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic – and later between Armenia and the newly established Republic of Turkey – which led to massacres of both Armenian and Azeri civilians (Akçam, 2012: 150, 152; Bloxham, 2005: 1, 5, 70–71, 101–103; Kévorkian, 2011: 808; Suny, 2015: xx–xix, 244, 248–249).

Armenians had been targets of Ottoman violence before, most notably in the 1894–1897 'Hamidian' massacres[1] and in the massacres in Adana in 1909 (Adjemian and Nichanian, 2018; Bloxham, 2005: 51; Galip, 2016: 460; Kévorkian, 2011: 74–96). Assyrians often suffered in parallel with Armenians and, though their persecution may have been less systematic and centralised, they too were subjected to appalling massacres (Bloxham, 2005: 97; Schaller and Zimmerer, 2008: 10). In 1913–1914 and again in 1916 Ottoman Greeks faced deportation from coastal areas to inner Anatolia, and many Greek men shared the fate of Armenians and Assyrians drafted into labour battalions (Akçam, 2004: 146, 2012: xvii, 63, 97, 109, 113; Gingeras, 2009: 43; Suny, 2015: 212–213). The outbreak of the Greek-Turkish war (1919–1922) resulted in more violence and atrocities committed by both armies followed, ultimately, by the 1923 Greek-Turkish population exchange (Bloxham, 2005: 105–106, 164–165).

Ottoman Muslims were also targeted in these years by occupying armies, vengeful Armenian fighters and – in the case of non-Turkish Muslims – by the Ottoman and Turkish states (Akçam, 2004: 129; Bloxham, 2005: 5, 16, 99–100, 105–106, 150; Gingeras, 2009: viii, 42). After the Republic of Turkey's foundation, the Kurds came under particular pressure, facing displacement, violence, denial of identity and Turkification. Several Kurdish uprisings were violently suppressed in the 1920s and 1930s, most notably in Dersim in 1937–1938 (Ayata and Hakyemez, 2013: 133–135; Bloxham, 2005: 107–110). In the 1960s/1970s, formal Kurdish political organisations emerged and clashed with the Turkish government, ultimately precipitating the protracted Kurdish-Turkish conflict (Galip, 2016: 464).

Armenian-Kurdish relations under Ottoman rule were complex and varied. Studies indicate that at times, and in places, the two communities were engaged in positive social interactions, interdependent (though hierarchical) economic relationships and sometimes cooperation against the Ottoman state (Çelik, 2020; Klein, 2007: 156–157; Suny, 2015: 19–20). In some cases, Kurds were instrumental in protecting Armenians from persecution, deportation and massacre, most well-documented amongst the Alevi Kurds in Dersim during the First World War (Blunt, 2014: 76; Klein, 2007: 164–165; Miller and Miller, 1993: 35, 42, 217n18; Schaller and Zimmerer, 2008: 9; Suny,

2015: 322). Nevertheless, and increasingly in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Armenian-Kurdish relations were also frequently marred by tension, suspicion and the oppression of Armenians. This extended to complicity of some Kurds in land grabs and violence against Armenians, including during the 1894–1897 massacres and the 1915 Genocide (Akçam, 2007: passim; Galip, 2016: 460; Klein, 2007: 155, 165–166; Miller and Miller, 1993: 35, 48, passim; Schaller and Zimmerer, 2008: 9; Suny, 2015: 19, 283, passim).

In contrast, however, to the official Turkish position of denying that a genocide took place, there has been growing recognition of the Armenian Genocide – and Kurdish complicity – by many Kurdish politicians, activists and novelists, including the founder of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) Abdullah Öcalan and the Kurdish Parliament in Exile (Ayata, 2009, 2015; Çelik, 2016, 2020; Galip, 2016). In the process of recognising Kurdish participation, Kurdish activists frequently draw parallels between Armenian suffering and contemporary persecution of the Kurds: the landmark statement issued by the Kurdish Parliament in Exile, for instance, drew an analogy between the Hamidiye cavalry implicated in the massacres of the 1890s and the contemporary Village Guards, paramilitaries recruited (primarily) from the Kurdish population to resist PKK activity (Asbarez.com, 1997; see also Ayata, 2009, 2015: 810). An informal oral memory recognising Kurdish involvement in the genocide is also in evidence amongst Kurds on local levels, as shown by Biner (2010: 77–79) in Mardin and Çelik (2016, 2020) in Diyarbakır Province (both southeastern Turkey). Nevertheless, as we will see below, there is also silence, contestation and resistance from some Kurdish quarters regarding Kurdish complicity in, and apology for, crimes against Armenians.

Post-Ottoman solidarities on Web 2.0

Digital technology defied the expectations of early commentators by incubating rather than weakening nationalism (see this issue's editorial). For Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks the Internet facilitated greater interaction between diaspora populations and national 'homeland' people and politics, and for the Kurds created a 'cybernation' (Mills, 2002: 81) or 'virtual nation' (Diamandaki, 2003) that substituted for an as yet unrealised independent nation-state. Yet, the Internet – and Web 2.0 in particular – also brought people identifying with different national communities into greater contact with one another and with each other's histories. The acrimonious clashes that occur at these points of intersection are infamous but opportunities also arise for bridge-building and dialogue; often, the two are found side-by-side, as users reach out to one group of 'others' whilst pushing another away.

Data collection and ethics

Research was conducted on Reddit, Twitter and YouTube covering the period 2006–2019. Recent literature has emphasised that ethical digital research should consider not just bureaucratic/legal factors but also the perceptions of the users whose data are being analysed (Ahmed et al., 2017; Fiesler and Proferes, 2018; Williams et al., 2017). My approach is informed by the results of user surveys presented in this literature. Data were only collected from sections of websites that are explicitly public: areas requiring a username/password for access, private accounts and deleted posts were all excluded. Though not all social media users are necessarily aware of how publicly viewable their data are (Ahmed et al., 2017: 82), in this case the data analysed comprise explicitly public declarations of apology, solidarity, or enmity intended to reach a broad digital audience. To avoid indiscriminate/gratuitous data capture, no scraping tools were used and pertinent data were identified through keyword searches tailored to locate content dealing with post-Ottoman

solidarities (and Azeri/Turkish counter-solidarities). Searches were conducted in English, the *lingua franca* for these transnational dialogues.[2]

To protect users' anonymity and privacy, and in light of surveys indicating that users feel significantly more comfortable with their content being used in academic research if it is anonymised and not traceable back to them (Beninger et al., 2014: 26–28; Fiesler and Proferes, 2018: 7, 10; Williams et al., 2017: 1156), no usernames or identifiable direct quotations are reproduced. The volume of material and difficulty in contacting users – particularly given the preponderance of historic posts in the dataset – make establishing informed consent for direct quotation impractical (see Ahmed et al., 2017: 86). Where indicative examples will aid comprehension, I follow Annette Markham's (2012: 342) suggestion to provide 'fabricated' composite examples based on the dataset that are 'not traceable back to the originals'. As Markham (2012) writes, 'invention and/or fabrication is a sensible and ethically grounded solution for protecting privacy [in digital research]' and is not so different from the anthropologist reconstructing dialogue from memory or field notes (pp. 341, 343, 347). I use this technique sparingly and indicate its instances with an asterisk. URLs for YouTube videos and Reddit topics – and details on how to reconstruct Twitter searches – are provided to allow repeatability of the research (see Supplemental Material).

The platforms

On all three platforms, keyword searches revealed users expressing post-Ottoman solidarities. On microblogging site Twitter, hundreds of pertinent tweets were found, coalescing particularly around Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day on 24 April. Armenian and non-Armenian Twitter users alike commonly mark this anniversary by posting messages of remembrance, support or commonality and by calling for Armenians, Assyrians, Greeks and Kurds to band together to seek recognition and restitution for past and present injustices.

On social news site Reddit – where users discuss topics within special interest communities called 'subreddits' – post-Ottoman solidarities are common on the subreddits r/Armenia and r/Kurdistan. These forums are more intimate than the other platforms analysed, involving sustained dialogue between relatively small circles of users often familiar with each other and each other's political stances. Users from both communities post commemorative messages to mark the Armenian Genocide, statements of solidarity, and questions about Armenian-Kurdish relations. A recurrent theme – encouraged by the ethnic designations of the two subreddits – is Kurdish users posting in r/Armenia, or *vice versa* Armenian users in r/Kurdistan, to canvas the other community's opinion of their own ethnic group, or alternatively to volunteer themselves as representatives of their own community available for questioning (Reddit's 'AMA' or 'Ask Me Anything' format).

On video sharing site YouTube, an array of videos deals with former Ottoman ethnic groups comparatively. Whilst some celebrate shared cultural features or call for peaceful contemporary coexistence, most are explicitly about historic genocide and ethnic cleansing. The two most common genres are what I call *memorial videos* and *versus videos. Memorial videos* are dedicated to commemorating Armenian, Assyrian, Greek and Kurdish victims of state violence. They consist primarily of slideshows of widely remediated images overlain with text and music, and typically carry an explicit anti-Turkish message. *Versus videos* are ultranationalistic short videos (4–6 minutes) in which the video creators stage fantasy battles between, on the one hand, Armenians, Assyrians, Greeks, Kurds and a rotating cast of other (mostly Orthodox Christian) ethnic groups, and, on the other hand, Azeris and Turks (and occasionally Albanians). Though the details of the historical composition varies, the format and aesthetic of versus videos are fairly invariant: *the lineup* sees protagonists and antagonist(s) introduced through flags (the former's flying together or sometimes combined into new composite flags, the latter's often being burned or otherwise

desecrated); *mobilisation* involves a series of photographs/video clips of each protagonist's armed forces, prioritising hyper-masculinised imagery evidently intended to indicate martial prowess over any serious attempt to measure, quantitatively or qualitatively, the strength of each protagonist's forces relative to that of the antagonist(s); and *the battle* – the videos' climactic moment – presents maps of the region crudely edited on MS paint (or similar) showing the protagonists gradually encroaching on the antagonist(s)' territory until the latter is/are effaced from the map altogether. The soundtracks often intersperse modern hip-hop, rock or dance music with military marches and popular film scores. Versus videos targeting Turkey are most common, but Turkish and Azeri users also upload rebukes to these post-Ottoman solidarities.

Blurring boundaries

Post-Ottoman solidarities are frequently underpinned by the casual equation of different historical experiences. On Twitter, Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day prompts the drawing of parallels: Armenian users mark the anniversary by tweeting that the Kurds are today reliving Armenian experiences of 1915 whilst Kurdish users post photographs of Armenian genocide victims captioned with declarations that the Kurds are similarly victimised by contemporary Turkey. Memorial videos on YouTube likewise tend to collapse time and space. Although the images of genocide and ethnic cleansing used in these videos are sometimes captioned with the identities of the victims and the time and place of the atrocity, quite often – as the videos build momentum – this temporal and historical specificity breaks down. Whilst the antagonist remains clear – 'Turkey' or 'the Turks' – the victims begin to blur, often referred to simply as 'they' (e.g. 'they were killed', 'they suffered') overlain onto a series of images of diverse spatio-temporal origin selected precisely for their visual similarity to one another. The result is a palimpsestic (Silverman, 2013) digital memorial, the merging of distinctive historical experiences into a suprahistorical montage, which has the effect simultaneously of reducing the distance – historical, spatial and cultural – between different groups of victims and of magnifying the scale of the charge that is laid at Turkey's door.

YouTube versus videos sometimes include similar segments detailing the grievances of the protagonists in which distinctions between different victims and lost territories are made murky. One video uploaded by a Greek-Armenian user incorporates a slideshow presenting photos and maps of various geographic regions – labelled 'Our Lands' – that Turkey is accused of having stolen from the Armenians, Assyrians, Bulgarians, Greeks and Kurds. Whilst each locale is named, the claimant never is, casually sidestepping – or temporarily putting aside – intra-protagonist disputes over territories like Cilicia, Mount Ararat and Van in favour of an enfolding of places into a jointly claimed territory called 'Our Lands'. A subsequent slideshow enumerates the dead in various massacres and conflicts involving the Ottoman Empire/Turkey ranging from 1876 (in Bulgaria) to the 1980s (during the Kurdish-Turkish conflict). Little effort is made to ethnically mark each event (except by default when an ethnic term appears in the standard nomenclature) and the victims are simply grouped together as 'Our People'.

On Reddit, where there is more in-depth back-and-forth dialogue between users from different ethnic backgrounds, similar attempts to create idealistic shared lost lands are subject to more systematic scrutiny. On both subreddits, users periodically post imagined maps for future territorial reconfigurations of the region to be debated by Redditors. Often these exchanges are antagonistic, as users make claims and counter-claims to particular territories (see below), but there is also some productive dialogue in which users recognise each other's place attachments as legitimate. This may even lead users to rethink a singular notion of place as belonging exclusively to their own ethnic community. On r/Kurdistan, in a discussion about a proposed map for a hypothetical future Kurdistan, several Kurdish users responded to a question from an Armenian user about Armenian

territorial claims in the area by proposing ceding some territories (like Igdir or Kars) to Armenia and creating a free zone around Mount Ararat jointly administered by both Armenia and Kurdistan as a symbol of Armenian-Kurdish brotherhood. These speculative discussions bring us closer, if only slightly, to the progressive sense of place envisioned by Massey (1991) that is not static, bounded, or singular but rather extroverted, heterogeneous and interconnected.

#solidarity: transcultural soliloquies

Yet, this vision of post-Ottoman solidarities as vehicles for bringing different victim communities closer together and incubating potentially progressive place narratives is only part of the story. I have elsewhere suggested that transcultural cross-referencing by persecuted communities might sometimes have less to do with understanding others' histories and identities and more to do with adopting a quick and compelling framework for communicating one's own experiences and narratives. I call these *off-the-peg memories*, abstracted and simplified formulae, often accompanied by little historical baggage, that are temporarily adopted in particular discursive contexts without necessarily triggering, or indicating, any particularly in-depth engagement with the experiences of the others concerned (Halstead, 2018: 30). These off-the-peg memories, I argue, are characterised by their simplicity, homogeneity, transience and disposability (Halstead, 2019: 189).

Off-the-peg memories are commonplace in my analysis of Twitter. Whilst I do not suggest that messages of condolence and commonality as outlined above are necessarily disingenuous, nevertheless Twitter users expressing post-Ottoman solidarities may sometimes risk, in Silverman's (2013) words (p. 174), 'clothing [themselves] in others' victimhood' without having properly understood it for reasons that are 'more self- than other-oriented'. Nowhere is this clearer than in *hashtag solidarity*: the tendency for Twitter users to append to posts expressing grievance towards Turkey hashtags invoking other communities seen as having similar grievances. So, for example, users advocating for an independent Kurdistan might write along these lines: 'Free Kurdistan! Turkey is guilty of genocide! #Armenia #Greece #Kurdistan #Cyprus #Syria'*. Hashtag solidarity allows for a rotating cast of victims to be totemically cited in a conveniently truncated fashion to bolster an argument being made about a specific and more delimited group of victims at that particular moment in time. Potentially awkward questions that might emerge from a more systematic attempt to reconcile, integrate or reconfigure different nationalist narratives are evaded. This transient cast can potentially be dismissed – or expediently rearranged – in subsequent posts when its presence is no longer narratively convenient, such as when issues of historical antagonism or current incompatible territorial claims arise.

This problem is reflected in the fantasy maps that emerge from the 'battle' segments of YouTube versus videos, which exhibit notable asymmetries in the redistribution of antagonists' territory. Commonplace discrepancies are the relative size of post-battle Armenia, Georgia and Kurdistan; to whom disputed territories like Mount Ararat and Van are ceded; and whether Greece's territorial expansion stretches as far as the Pontus or stops where Greek forces were halted in 1921 (i.e. roughly as far east as Ankara). In the 'Our Lands' versus video, Kurdistan receives no territory whatsoever – no independent state – in the post-battle redistribution, despite the Kurds having featured prominently in the video's earlier enumeration of victims. Kurdish victimhood in Dersim in 1937–1938 and in the struggle with Turkey since 1978 – both evoked by the video's Greek-Armenian creator – can be characterised as off-the-peg memories: motifs temporarily borrowed when narratively expedient to magnify the scale of the charge levelled at Turkey, but abandoned – placed back on the peg – when they risk raising uncomfortable questions about Armenian-Kurdish disputed territories in eastern Turkey.

Despite their evident transcultural and boundary-transcending characteristics, in many cases post-Ottoman solidarities are thus soliloquies more than dialogues, leaving much unsaid, unshared and unresolved. When direct dialogue does occur the frayed edges of solidarity readily become apparent, with the greatest rifts occurring in relation to the inclusion of Kurds in the coalition. Tweets equating Armenian/Assyrian/Greek suffering with Kurdish suffering, YouTube videos constructing alliances involving the Kurds, and Reddit topics dealing with Armenian-Kurdish fraternity are all frequently met with negative responses ranging from scepticism to fury. These users point to Kurdish complicity in Ottoman crimes and to conflicting territorial claims, and sometimes trade in racialised stereotypes of the Kurds as uncivilised nomads who are latecomers to the region lacking sufficiently venerable place attachments, an argument they often seek to support by sharing images of the Babylonian *Imago Mundi* and pointing to the absence of any area named 'Kurdistan'.

Moreover, even where post-Ottoman solidarities chip away at the edges of nationalist singularity by challenging the uniqueness of one's own historical experience, they are frequently simultaneously ultranationalistic towards common antagonists, a characteristic strengthened rather than undermined by multiplying the number of victims to be avenged and territories to be reclaimed. Similar applies to the counter-solidarities articulated by Turkish and Azeri users. In both cases, discourses of transcultural solidarity often go hand-in-hand with an aggressive nationalist irredentism aimed at either dismembering the Turkish Republic or eradicating its neighbours, and with racist stereotypes of barbaric Turkish Others – derided as 'animals' or uncivilised 'Mongols' – or homophobic characterisations of effeminate 'Gaymenians' and 'Gayreeks'.

Not infrequently, this drive to demonise one's antagonists is furthered by not only blurring spatial and historical boundaries but also melding real-world places with fictional worlds, taking advantage of the latter's moral simplicity and transnational intelligibility. By way of illustration, we can examine a versus video pitting protagonists Turkey and Azerbaijan against antagonists Armenia and Kurdistan. After introducing the combatants in the customary fashion through flags, the video cuts to a scene from Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* depicting the Battle of Pelennor Fields, in which Sauron's army is besieging Gondor's capital Minas Tirith and a cavalry force from Rohan is preparing to lift the siege. As the camera pans over the battlefield, the video creator has superimposed the words 'Kurdish Terrorists & Armenian Soldiers' over Sauron's orc army and 'Turks Army' over the Rohan cavalry, with Rohan's King Théoden identified as 'Turk General' and one of his subordinates – Grimbold of Grimslade – as 'Azeri Commander'. In the original footage, as the cavalry begins to charge, the horns of the Rohirrim sound, but the creator has replaced the sound of the horns with the Ottoman military instrumental *Hücum Marşı* played on the zurna (a woodwind instrument), reinforcing the association between the (righteous) Rohan cavalry and the Turkish/Azeri protagonists. The orcs are overrun, and, to labour the point, the despairing orc commander Gothmog is labelled as Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan. For good measure, the video also enfolds *Star Wars* into the historical-fictional montage by featuring through most of its duration John Williams' 'The Imperial March' from *The Empire Strikes Back*. Remediation of this sort – staging (already superimposed) real-world conflicts within fictional places – provides users who are so inclined with a means to succinctly characterise heroes and villains and to distil complex historical antagonisms into the more straightforward good-versus-evil dichotomy of Hollywood.

This section has shown that post-Ottoman solidarities on Web 2.0 are heavily marked by placeness: digital technology may allow for creative and imaginative reconfiguration of place in ways by turns progressive and irredentist, but these remain rooted in place identities and notions of territoriality developed in, and in relation to, the physical world. In the next section, I turn to the phenomenon of digital Kurdish apology for the Armenian Genocide, exploring how these discourses too are inflected by place.

Apology

Categorical apology

Moral philosopher Nick Smith, discussing the variability of both individual and collective apologies, developed the idea of the 'categorical apology', which would exhibit all the following features:

1. Corroborated factual record (detailed and specific account of the harm caused).
2. Acceptance of blame (rather than simply expression of sympathy).
3. Appropriate standing (the person apologising is the correct person to do so).
4. Identification of each harm (rather than conflation of multiple harms).
5. Identification of the moral principles underlying each harm (not just *what* was done but *why* this was wrong).
6. Endorsement of these moral principles.
7. Recognition of the victim as a moral interlocutor (an agent worthy of moral recognition).
8. Categorical regret (wishing the harm could be undone).
9. Performance of the apology (that the apology is explicitly addressed to and reaches the victim).
10. Commitment to reform and redress.
11. Appropriate intentions for apologising (for the sake of the victim rather than for self-serving reasons).
12. Appropriate emotions (though these will always be variable and situational) (Smith, 2008: 28–107, 140–142).

Smith (2008: 12, 17, 21–26, 143) sees his 'categorical apology' as a heuristic device with which to diagnose the meanings and effects of different apologies. Likewise, I find Smith's criteria useful not as a means of qualitatively assessing different users' apologies but instead as a tool for thinking through the diversity of Kurdish apologetic meaning and the variance in how these apologies are received by both Armenian and other Kurdish users.

Kurdish apology

Digital Kurdish apology by individual users is quite common across all three platforms and takes various forms. Many Kurdish users recognise Ottoman crimes against Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks; condemn Ottoman Turks for committing these crimes; testify against Turkish denialism; and express sympathy with the victims. In a general sense, these users thus *corroborate the factual record*; but this remains a noncategorical apology, an expression of sympathy that admits no wrongdoing (Smith, 2008: 146). A significant number of Kurdish users, however, go further, by *accepting blame* (collective or inherited) for what happened to the Armenians (and, sometimes, the Assyrians and Greeks). On Twitter and Reddit, Kurdish users quite regularly post messages commemorating, condemning or offering condolences for the Armenian Genocide that include explicit recognition of Kurdish complicity in Ottoman actions.

Yet, admitting *complicity* may not in itself constitute a categorical apology. As Smith (2008: 74) identifies, explicit apologetic sentiments might be considered a necessary, if not sufficient, component of a categorical apology. This is achieved by users who not only acknowledge blame but also clearly *perform the apology* (e.g. writing 'I apologise' or 'I am sorry') and make efforts to ensure that their apology reaches its intended audience, for instance through hashtags (#Armenia, #Armenians) or by posting in forums like r/Armenia. Regarding *intentions*, apologies may be

spontaneous or emerge in response to challenges from Armenian users. Either way, whilst apologies sometimes stand alone, as often as not they go hand-in-hand with the drawing of parallels between Armenian and Kurdish suffering and sometimes segue directly into castigation of Turkey for committing similar crimes against the Kurds. So, for example, a Kurdish apologiser might write along these lines: 'I, as a Kurd, apologise to the Armenians for the terrible crimes of the Ottomans my ancestors participated in, the same violence that is today visited upon my people by Turkey'*. Indeed, in many cases the audience for apology is as much Kurdish or Turkish as Armenian, with apologisers keen to motivate other Kurds to retweet or emulate their apologies (e.g. by tagging #TwitterKurds) or to goad antagonistic Turkish users.

Apologies that *identify each harm* (not simply that there was a 'genocide' or a 'crime' but more specifically systematic murder, deportation, sexual violence, appropriation of property/land, *et cetera*) and *identify and endorse the moral principles violated* (not just lamenting that genocide occurred but acknowledging with specificity the range of wrongdoings involved) are rare. However, this must be set against the character limit on Twitter, the tendency for Redditors to skip lengthy posts in favour of TL;DR ('Too Long; Didn't Read) summaries, and the general difficulties of providing detailed accounts in large-scale collective apologies (Smith, 2008: 167, 172–173, 221, 224). Identifying the appropriate *emotions* that should accompany an apology is perhaps particularly hazy in digital apologies, but certainly Kurdish apologisers sometimes make special effort to explain how knowledge of their ancestors' complicity makes them feel – expressing shock, disgust and even hatred for the perpetrators – and to offer expressions of *categorical regret* – that is, the recognition that one's ancestors' actions constitute a moral failure, the wish that they could be undone, and a commitment to avoid similar actions in the future (Smith, 2008: 68). Some apologisers, particularly on Reddit, *recognise the victim as a moral interlocutor* by explicitly engaging Armenian users in dialogue about their apologies and responding earnestly to Armenian reactions and grievances, and in this sense evade the criticism levelled at the 'I Apologise' movement in Turkey (Erbal, 2012: 92).

Nevertheless, many of the apologies I analysed share features with Smith's (2008: 31, 145) ambiguous and conditional apologies. The use of conditional language may undermine ostensible attempts to corroborate the historical record, for instance a statement like, 'if Kurds were involved in those crimes, then I apologise'*. Similarly, apologisers sometimes adopt what heritage scholar Smith (2010: 193, 2011: 268) calls 'strategies of disengagement and avoidance' to deflect 'feelings of responsibility, guilt and discomfort' that might arise from confronting a traumatic collective past. These strategies include stating that Kurds were coerced into participating; that only isolated Kurdish tribes were involved; that Kurds were targeted in parallel with Armenians; that many Kurds protected Armenians; and that Kurds have since paid for their complicity through their own victimisation by Turkey. Such statements do not automatically render the apology disingenuous, nor are they necessarily untrue, but by peppering apologetic statements with these qualifications the force of the apology and its reception may be significantly affected.

Armenian responses

Armenian responses range from enthusiastic through ambivalent to outright hostile. Many are positive, thanking Kurdish apologisers for the gesture and for rejecting official Turkish denial, sharing stories of Armenian ancestors saved by Kurds, and reciprocating sentiments of solidarity. On Reddit, I encountered several Armenian users encouraging fellow Armenians to unburden Kurdish users of their feelings of guilt by formally accepting their apologies, or apologising to Kurds on behalf of other Armenians (whom they typically characterise as ultranationalists) for not responding positively.

For various reasons, however, far from all Armenian users are satisfied with digital Kurdish apology. Firstly, there is the perception that Kurdish Internet users lack the *appropriate standing* to apologise: they were not alive when the genocide took place so cannot take responsibility for the actions of their ancestors. As Smith (2008: 209–210) identifies, whilst an apology from contemporary descendants of perpetrators can be meaningful, it cannot substitute for an apology from those who were personally responsible: 'the right words, from the wrong person'. On r/Armenia, several Armenian users describe feeling awkward and nonplussed when confronted with apologies from individual Kurds and would prefer either to receive simple expressions of sympathy (Smith, 2008: 146) or apologies from official representatives seen as having more appropriate standing to apologise on behalf of a collective.

The *corroborated factual record* is also a matter of dispute, particularly in relation to agency. Some Armenian users resent Kurdish apologies that emphasise Ottoman coercion or deception, complaining that this shifts moral responsibility onto the Turks and thereby fails, as Smith would have it, to *identify the moral principles underlying each harm*: apology is given for having been an unwitting instrument of Turkish violence rather than for having independently designated Armenians as legitimate targets for violence. Emphasising Kurdish protection of Armenians is likewise interpreted by some Armenian users as a strategy to evade responsibility. As Smith (2008: 236–237) points out, it is common to conceive of responsibility collectively when celebrating a virtue ('Kurds saved Armenians') but to compartmentalise blame when recognising a wrongdoing ('some Kurdish tribes killed Armenians' or 'some Kurds were manipulated by Turks into killing Armenians'*). Simple apology fatigue is also a factor: on r/Armenia some users express a sense of *ennui* or weariness at constantly having to respond to apologies or answer questions about what Armenians think of Kurds.

By far the most common criticism of Kurdish apology, however, relates to *commitment to reform and redress*, and here again place and territoriality come to the fore. Specifically, the charge is that apology is hollow as long as those Kurds apologising lay claim to lands on which Armenians lived prior to the genocide (particularly Mount Ararat but also, for instance, Diyarbakir, Dersim, Kars and Van). In turn, this leads to questions about the *intentions for apologising* and principally the accusation of performing 'instrumental apologies' (Smith, 2008: 149) that have less to do with redress for the victims and more to do with the apologisers' ambitions to attain an independent nation state. Some Armenian users worry that apology is simply an expedient weapon to attack Turkey, that remorse will dissipate once Kurdish statehood is established, and that Kurdish contriteness is a cover for claims over historic Armenian territory.

These concerns also drive an intracommunal debate amongst Armenian users about the appropriate response to apology. With collective apologies there is uncertainty not just about who has the standing to apologise but also who amongst the community of victims has the authority to forgive the offending party (Smith, 2008: 221). Apology sceptics castigate other Armenian users for accepting Kurdish apology, particularly when this acceptance is phrased in the first-person plural, fearing that the performance of an apology will be used to disarm Armenian territorial claims in the region, or, in Smith's (2008: 89) terms, that 'self-castigation' may be used by apologisers 'to immunize themselves from further responsibility for their offence' and thereby 'to eschew a more explicit moral conversation' about that offence. For their part, some Kurdish users respond to these criticisms by offering hypothetical territorial concessions on the part of an imagined future Kurdish state, particularly the hugely symbolic Mount Ararat, thereby providing what Smith (2008: 144) calls a 'promissory categorical apology': redress cannot be offered now, but will be in the future.

Kurdish responses

Another distinctive feature of collective apologies is the problem of consensus (Smith, 2008: 159–166): whom does the apology represent? Digital apology from some Kurds prompts pushback from

other Kurdish users who resent fellow Kurds apologising on their behalf, or who criticise admitting complicity whilst Turkey denies that a genocide occurred, sometimes suggesting that apportioning blame to the Kurds is a calculated Turkish divide-and-rule strategy to forestall Armenian-Kurdish cooperation. Above all, anti-apologists fear that apologies implying a *commitment to reform and redress* will be weaponised by Armenian nationalists, and caution fellow Kurds that taking responsibility for displacement and ethnic cleansing of Armenians undermines the cause of Kurdish independence by calling into question the legitimacy of their claims over territory.

Breaches in nascent solidarities may also occur when those offering apologies perceive that these have not been graciously accepted. Some Kurdish users, having made apologetic statements on Reddit and Twitter, react angrily when Armenians respond by asking about the future of places like Mount Ararat (e.g. 'Thanks. Will you be giving us Ararat back then?'*), complaining that as an independent Armenia already exists Armenian users should be reticent to make territorial demands of an as yet hypothetical Kurdish state. As this section has shown, apology in the digital 'space of flows' is thus shaped by the contours of the 'space of places' (after Castells, 1996): exclusive understandings of place continually impinge upon and limit the transcendent and palimpsestic potential of digital dialogue to create more inclusive place identities.

Conclusions

The discourses of solidarity and apology discussed here are confined primarily to relatively small interest groups: on Reddit, the exchanges occur mostly between regular discussants on r/Armenia and r/Kurdistan; on Twitter, engagement (retweets, comments, likes) mostly centres on a relatively narrow range of users engaged with the politics of the region; and whilst some 'memorial' and 'versus' videos on YouTube have hundreds of thousands of views and thousands of comments most have less than 100,000 views and less than 1000 comments. Post-Ottoman solidarities (and their rebuttals) are produced through active and sometimes creative history-making and composition, but they are also thematically and stylistically highly iterative with extensive remediation and, unlike in some other contributions to this issue (see particularly Hjorth; Mandolessi; Reading et al.), the techniques, technologies and platforms involved are far from cutting-edge. Nevertheless, these discourses bring users from diverse ethnic, social and political backgrounds into contact with one another's histories and sometimes into direct dialogue, and therefore represent a pertinent translocal case study through which to explore place, memory and history-making in relation to digital technology.

In one sense, the palimpsestic creations that emerge from these digital intersections may break down – or at least chip away at – the coveted singularity of nationalist histories by creating shared commemorative moments. Through narratives with '*our* people' as protagonists and '*our* lands' as setting – as opposed to *my* people and *my* lands – different atrocities and lost places are placed alongside one another in a mutually reinforcing rather than competitive relationship, creating anti-hierarchical communities of victims (Halstead, 2018: 23) in which the particular ethnic identity of each victim matters less than the avowed commensurability of their experiences as victims of Turkish/Ottoman aggression. This may be by turns both progressive/productive and regressive/nationalistic. A more heterogeneous and interconnected sense of (lost) place may generate intercommunal commonality and potentially provide a starting point for re-envisaging disputed territories as affectively shared rather than exclusive. Reaching across national boundaries and historical antagonisms to forge new transcultural solidarities, conjoining national flags, recognising others' victimhood and place identities, and the palimpsestic layering of (lost) territories all in some way – however small – demystify the uniqueness of each protagonist's nationalism. Equating Armenian and Kurdish experience, and seeing the suffering of one community reflected in the other, has

undoubtedly facilitated the proliferation of apology by some Kurdish Web 2.0 users for their community's historical complicity in Ottoman crimes. This not only has the potential to generate intercommunal reconciliation and collaboration on human rights issues, but also provides these Kurdish users with a means to draw attention to contemporary Kurdish suffering, memory of one atrocity functioning 'like a motor energizing the discourses of memory elsewhere' (Huyssen, 2003: 99).

Yet, as versus videos in particular make clear, shared lost place may also function primarily to strengthen a digital irredentist coalition for a fantasy war against common antagonists: internal territorial disputes conveniently, but temporarily, forgotten or ignored; negative stereotypes of these antagonists, if anything, strengthened. Moreover, as both instrumental apologies and 'hashtag solidarity' demonstrate, although post-Ottoman solidarities (and Azeri-Turkish counter-solidarities) are ostensibly about different communities coming together in a transnational space, in practice they are sometimes soliloquies more than dialogues, as users invoke, namedrop and borrow from each other's histories without necessarily engaging with precisely how these others understand their own histories or with uncomfortable questions about how they envisage their futures on disputed territories. Likewise, where apology functions partly as a preface to a discourse about the self it may lose its capacity to foster greater mutual understanding between perpetrator and victim or even be perceived by the victim as a further slight. As Smith (2008: 228) writes, '[j]ust as recognizing victims as moral interlocutors may bring groups together, failing to do so can drive them further apart'.

'Others' feature prominently in post-Ottoman solidarities, but sometimes they do so as hollow extensions of the self rather than fleshed out communities with distinctive histories and identities. Users may read about others' histories, like or retweet each other's posts, tag one another (as individuals or collectively), borrow and re-purpose each other's motifs, slogans and images and in turn post about their own histories, but none of this is *a priori* indicative of having shared mutual understandings that may transform views of the past and behaviours in the future. This becomes particularly significant when digital fantasies about place collide with the spatial restrictions of the physical world. Whilst I have highlighted particular instances of cordial and productive dialogue over conflicting place identities in contested spaces, evidently sharing a theoretical sense of 'our lost places' directed towards a common antagonist is quite a different proposition from confronting the reality that these lost places overlap. Web 2.0 may create fertile conditions for more heterogeneous, palimpsestic historical narratives and place identities, but these intersections are at least equally liable to sustain expedient collaborative nationalisms that incubate enmities and exclusivity and in which breaking the sutures of solidarity may be as simple as deleting a hashtag.

This may in one sense lend credence to the notion that Web 2.0 – with its apparent characteristics of transience, ambiguity and disposability – has rendered memory and place amorphous, distracted and ephemeral (see this issue's editorial). Nevertheless, as Erll (2011: 132) has noted, this might equally be seen as simply an amplification of how memory already operated through continual and fluid remediation in the pre-digital era. Moreover, in the case presented here, digital connectivity does not so much represent a creeping disconnect from place and the present moment, but rather creates new (and strengthens existing) ways of connecting with them with potentially far-reaching implications (progressive or otherwise) for how people behave in physical space. This reinforces the importance of appreciating the locatedness and the geographical and territorial contours of connective memory. It also suggests that, rather than dismissing connective interactions as a weak shadow of their pre-digital counterparts, we should take people's constructions of historical and place narratives through digital technology seriously; and perhaps particularly when we find these narratives troubling or misleading, because understanding how they are constructed and why they become meaningful for the narrator will be crucial to any successful attempt to challenge them.

Acknowledgements

Funding

Supplemental material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

Notes

1. The massacres of 1894–1897 are often referred to as the 'Hamidian massacres', after Sultan Abdülhamid's II 'Hamidiye cavalry', composed largely of Sunni Kurds, held to be primarily culpable for the violence. Verheij (2018), however, has called this terminology into question, drawing on microhistorical case studies to suggest that violence against Armenians was in places initiated on local rather than central levels with little involvement of the Hamidiye cavalry.
2. The users involved in these transnational dialogues include people resident in the region and those representing diaspora communities elsewhere on the globe. Whilst some of these users evidently had little or no opportunity to interact with members of the other communities beyond Web 2.0, other users (e.g. Kurdish and Armenian users living in Turkey) referenced daily interactions with members of other communities in their posts. A future analysis conducted in the Turkish language could be profitable in further exploring this latter group.

References

Adjemian B and Nichanian M (2018) Rethinking the "Hamidian massacres": The issue of the precedent. *Études Arméniennes Contemporaines* 10: 19–29.

Ahmed W, Bath P and Demartini G (2017) Using Twitter as a data source: An overview of ethical, legal, and methodological challenges. In: Woodfield K (ed.) *The Ethics of Online Research*. Bingley: Emerald Publishing, pp.79–107.

Akçam T (2004) *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide*. London; New York, NY: Zed Books Ltd.

Akçam T (2007) *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*. London; New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company.

Akçam T (2012) *The Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Asbarez.com (1997) Kurdish parliament in exile recognizes genocide. Available at: http://asbarez.com/33522/kurdish-parliament-in-exile-recognizes-genocide/ (accessed 24 April 2019).

Asbarez.com (2013) Kurdish leader apologizes for role in Genocide. Available at: http://asbarez.com/108106/kurdish-leader-apologizes-for-role-in-genocide/ (accessed 2 April 2019).

Ayata B (2009) Critical interventions: Kurdish intellectuals confronting the Armenian Genocide. Available at: http://armenianweekly.com/2009/04/29/kurdish-intellectuals-confronting-the-armenian-genocide/ (accessed 2 April 2019).

Ayata B (2015) The Kurds in the Turkish–Armenian reconciliation process: Double-bind or double-blind? *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 47(4): 807–812.

Ayata B and Hakyemez S (2013) The AKP's engagement with Turkey's past crimes: An analysis of PM Erdoğan's "Dersim apology". *Dialectical Anthropology* 37(1): 131–143.

Beninger K, Fry A, Jago N, et al. (2014) Research using social media; users' views. *NatCen Social Research*. Available at: http://www.natcen.ac.uk/media/282288/p0639-research-using-social-media-report-final-190214.pdf (accessed 21 April 2019).

Biner ZÖ (2010) Acts of defacement, memories of loss: Ghostly effects of the "Armenian Crisis" in Mardin, Southeastern Turkey. *History and Memory* 22(2): 68–94.

Bloxham D (2005) *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians*. Oxford: OUP.

Blunt AK (2014) After a century of injustice: Moving toward Turkish recognition of the Armenian Genocide. *Peace and Conflict Studies* 21(1): 69–84.

Castells M (1996) *The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture. Vol 1: The Rise of Network Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Çelik A (2016) Mémoires du génocide des Arméniens à Diyarbakır: Une présence par l'absence. *Études Arméniennes Contemporaines* 7(7): 7–37.

Çelik A (2020) The Armenian genocide in Kurdish collective memory. *Middle East Report* 295.

Diamandaki K (2003) Virtual ethnicity and digital diasporas: Identity construction in cyberspace. *Global Media Journal* 2(2).

Erbal A (2012) Mea culpas, negotiations, apologias: Revisiting the "apology" of Turkish intellectuals. In: Schwelling B (ed.) *Reconciliation, Civil Society, and the Politics of Memory*. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, pp.51–94.

Erll A (2011) *Memory in Culture*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Fiesler C and Proferes N (2018) "Participant" perceptions of Twitter research ethics. *Social Media + Society* 4(1): 1–14.

Galip ÖB (2016) The politics of remembering: Representation of the Armenian Genocide in Kurdish novels. *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 30(3): 458–487.

Gingeras R (2009) *Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire 1912–1923*. Oxford: OUP.

Halstead H (2018) "Ask the Assyrians, Armenians, Kurds": Transcultural memory and nationalism in Greek historical discourse on Turkey. *History and Memory* 30(2): 3–39.

Halstead H (2019) *Greeks without Greece: Homelands, Belonging, and Memory amongst the Expatriated Greeks of Turkey*. Abingdon, New York, NY: Routledge.

Huyssen A (2003) *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Kévorkian R (2011) *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History*. London; New York, NY: I.B. Tauris.

Klein J (2007) Conflict and collaboration: Rethinking Kurdish-Armenian relations in the Hamidian period, 1876–1909. *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 13(1–2): 153–166.

Markham A (2012) Fabrication as ethical practice. *Information Communication & Society* 15(3): 334–353.

Massey D (1991) A global sense of place. *Marxism Today* 38: 24–29.

Miller DE and Miller LT (1993) *Survivors: An Oral History of the Armenian Genocide*. Berkely, CA; London: University of California Press.

Mills K (2002) Cybernations: Identity, self-determination, democracy and the "Internet effect" in the emerging information order. *Global Society* 16(1): 69–87.

Relph E (1997) Sense of Place. In: Hanson S (ed.) *Ten Geographic Ideas That Changed the World*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, pp.205–226.

Schaller DJ and Zimmerer J (2008) Late Ottoman genocides: The dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and Young Turkish population and extermination policies—introduction. *Journal of Genocide Research* 10(1): 7–14.

Silverman M (2013) *Palimpsestic Memory: The Holocaust and Colonialism in French and Francophone Fiction and Film*. New York, NY: Berghahn Books.

Smith L (2010) "Man's inhumanity to man" and other platitudes of avoidance and misrecognition: An analysis of visitor responses to exhibitions marking the 1807 bicentenary. *Museum and Society* 8(3): 193–214.

Smith L (2011) Affect and registers of engagement: Navigating emotional responses to dissonant heritages. In: Smith L, Cubitt G, Wilson R, et al. (eds) *Representing Enslavement and Abolition in Museums: Ambiguous Engagements*. London: Routledge, pp.260–303.

Smith N (2008) *I Was Wrong: The Meanings of Apologies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Suny RG (2015) *"They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else" A History of the Armenian Genocide*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Verheij J (2018) "The year of the firman": The 1895 massacres in Hizan and Şirvan (Bitlis vilayet). *Études Arméniennes Contemporaines* 10: 125–159.

Williams ML, Burnap P and Sloan L (2017) Towards an ethical framework for publishing Twitter data in social research: Taking into account users' views, online context and algorithmic estimation. *Sociology* 51(6): 1149–1168.

Author biography

Huw Halstead is a Research Fellow in the School of History, University of St Andrews. He works particularly on the history of the Mediterranean world and former Ottoman territories, focusing on memory, displacement and everyday life. He is author of *Greeks without Greece* (Routledge, 2019).