



Article

# Roamin' Holiday: Protestants on Foot in the Eternal City

**Emily Michelson** 

School of History, University of St Andrews, St Andrews KY16 9BA, UK; edm21@st-andrews.ac.uk

**Abstract:** This article analyses accounts of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Anglophone travellers to Rome who encountered and described Catholic rituals of walking. These visitors observed Catholic rituals such as pilgrimages and processions so closely that they came to understand the act of walking and ways of walking as expressions of religious identity. They also used the language of walking to interpret such moments of encounter in their narratives. Taken together, this evidence demonstrates the centrality of walking to their understanding of a religiously diverse Europe.

**Keywords:** walking; early modern travel; early modern Rome; Catholicism; spectacle; processions; seven churches; pilgrimage; reformation; Judaism; Protestantism

During his visit to Rome, the Protestant traveller and diarist John Evelyn enjoyed a close-up view of Catholic ceremonies. One of his entries from 1645 shows a sustained curiosity for the details of Catholic ritual:

On Good Friday, we went again to St Peter's, where the handkerchief, lance, and cross were all exposed and worshipped together. All the confession seats were filled with devout people and at night was a procession of several who most lamentably whipped themselves till the blood stained their clothes, for some had shirts, others upon the bare back, having visors and masks on their faces; at every three or four steps dashing the knotted and ravelled whip-cord over their shoulders, as hard as they could lay it on; whilst some of the religious orders and fraternities sung in a dismal tone, the lights and crosses going before, making all together a horrible and indeed heathenish pomp . . . the next day (holy Saturday), there was much ceremony at St John di Laterano, so as the whole week was spent in running from church to church, all the town in busy devotion, great silence, and unimaginable superstition. (Evelyn 2015) (emphasis added).

Amid all this vivid visual imagery, Evelyn's attention lingers on the act of walking. He describes five separate moments of mobility, using different language for each. His encounter with Catholic Eastertide ceremonies arises from his own initiative and his own journey: "we went again". Next, he notes a procession, which provides the occasion for the discipline with the cord and, with it, he describes the actual walking and stopping and whipping necessary to this ritual. That act, in turn, is framed and validated by the "lights and crosses going before", that is, being carried on foot ahead of the processors. Finally, the next day, Evelyn's judgment of all this ritual as "unimaginable superstition" is summed up in his description of the town's "busy devotion", epitomized by the act of "running" from church to church. The language he uses to describe walking, travel, and mobility reveals the strength of his feelings, including a deep ambivalence, as he keeps revisiting and observing an action that he supposedly disdains.

Critics and cultural theorists have long since established that walking is culturally conditioned: a learning experience, a marker of individual and class identity, a vehicle for sensory experience and intellectual formation. They have demonstrated that when we walk, we build up a set of preconceptions and associations that shapes our response to an event—especially if the event is unfamiliar or tense. Analyses of walking can therefore isolate a crucial process of cultural accumulation for a given moment and assess its impact



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at a human level, giving us an immediate snapshot of everyday life and interpersonal dynamics at street level. The study of walking is thus especially valuable for the early modern period: walking on foot was the most common form of mobility, especially in cities; gait and modes of moving indicated character and status. Recent studies increasingly treat walking as a valuable analytical lens for early modern Europe (Amelang 2016; De Vivo 2016; Nevola 2020).

An analysis of walking also can also offer us specific, powerful new ways to understand religious affiliation in Reformation-era Europe. The late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries saw a rapid expansion of travel between Protestant and Catholic regions within Europe and a growing awareness of religious difference. Public religious rituals, which were almost always based on walking, became more visible to visitors of other faiths who were, in turn, likely to be on foot themselves. Evelyn's interest in foot processions represented an attempt to interpret such confessional differences. In the Eternal City, the capital of an increasingly fervent Catholicism, these processes took on added symbolism. Seventeenth-century Protestant travellers in Rome came to see the physical act of walking as the very embodiment of Catholic identity. In addition, I suggest that the concepts of walking, gait, or carriage provided these authors with valuable language for interpreting the unfamiliar religious culture they encountered. Attention to the role and depiction of walking in their narratives reveals subtle interconfessional dynamics: a simultaneous Protestant repulsion and fascination towards Catholic ritual.

# 1. Walking to Catholic Rome

Walking served to strengthen religious identity both for Catholics and Protestants. Before the Reformation, processions and pilgrimages were powerful acts of penance. They were therefore a necessary part of the overall penitential cycle.<sup>2</sup> For Catholics, they remained so, and the Council of Trent further reconfirmed their potency by committing strongly to the path of tradition. Religious identity was formed through walking at both an individual level, such as a local pilgrimage or even a mental, meditative pilgrimage, and at a corporate level, though confraternal or other group rituals, notably processions.<sup>3</sup> However, Protestants also maintained or added religious traditions of walking, even as Protestant denominations rejected the theological need for acts of penance. During the French wars of religion, religiously mixed regions staged rituals of reconciliation in which Protestant and Catholic young men, in an attempt at a show of unity, processed two by two through their cities (Diefendorf 2012). The medieval ritual of perambulating the parish, also called beating the bounds, survived into Protestant religious life and is still practiced today (Hindle 2008). Finally, as all Christian life is structured as a path to salvation, the metaphor of a journey could thus provide the language to describe right or wrong Christianity and could infuse every act of walking with potential religious meaning.

Italy was a walking region. As Filippo de Vivo has shown, European travellers destined for Rome would first stop in Venice, a city impenetrable except on foot. In Venice, in contrast to most other European cities, noblemen walked. The resulting social mixing became a point of civic pride, embodying the city's rhetoric of egalitarianism (De Vivo 2016). This difference would have been immediately visible and noteworthy to visitors, especially elite travellers, who would usually otherwise ride on horseback or travel by coach. As John Ray commented:

Little chanels of water cross and divide the city into many Islets, and may rather be called the Streets of it, than those narrow Lanes or Alleys (Calle they call them) through which you pass on foot from one place to another. By these chanels you may convey your self and goods from any one place of the city to any other, by boat; which is the only way of carriage, except mens shoulders, there being neither coach nor litter, cart nor wain, horse nor ass used or so much as to be seen heer. For passage on foot there are built about 450 bridges cross the channels (Ray 1673, p. 152).

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For Ray, the absence of any form of transport other than foot or boat was a notable change; he and his companions had ridden south from Treviso and then hired a gondola to take them into Venice (Skippon 1746, p. 486).

Modes of transport remained visible and significant when travellers reached Rome, even though Rome had streets. The city was famous for using carriages to wage status battles, especially among local nobles and foreign diplomats (Hunt 2014). Foreign travellers, such as those who left itineraries, seemed to have switched frequently to walking once inside the city or in noted areas of walkability, such as when Skippon described the scale of the colonnade at St Peter's: "in the middle a coach may drive, and on each side people may walk" (Skippon 1746, p. 648).

Protestant travellers from the British Isles arrived in Rome aware that they were entering a place portrayed to them as the dark heart of the papist enemy. Often, their journey was driven not only by a desire to see antiquities but also by intense curiosity about its religion—a religion they had been taught to disparage for its elaborate ceremonies and its attention to ritual and material culture. Travellers therefore sought out those very activities, often concealing their own Protestant identities in order to observe and participate. Travellers from the British Isles arrived in Rome after months of travelling through a religiously varied Europe. Many went on to the Levant, bringing them into contact with more exotic (to them) faiths: Christian Orthodoxy and Islam. Sometimes they passed through Rome again on their return journey, better able to draw widespread comparisons among differing cultural practices. But Catholicism was their nearest antagonist, framed as the depraved mirror image to their own upright religion.

Written travel narratives provide a rich source for detailed observations about walking. In describing the journey, they often emphasize modes of travel and types of terrain, noting their familiarity or unfamiliarity. At the same time, travel narratives are a suspect genre. They borrow from each other and from a wide variety of literary genres and tropes; narratives might be completed only many years after the journey and supplemented by the authors' other reading. The unreliability of genre was all the more probable for the elite, well-read male authors in the examples that follow (MacLean 2019; Das 2019; Ward 2011; Ansell 2018). More than perhaps any other source, theirs should be read with scepticism and awareness, precisely because they appear to be strictly factual. Indeed, one scholar has recently recommended that we see travel tales not as a defined genre or set of genres, but as a "tapestry ... of textualities that was borrowed from, contributed to, and prescriptively produced to help future travellers" (Holmberg 2019, p. 520). Bearing this in mind, I suggest that the mentions of walking and modes of travel in these narratives are worth investigating either way. Narratives that mention walking in passing or take a scientific or topographical approach are likely to be fairly accurate, and the author's unreflective word choice can be revealing. Even if descriptions and the language of walking are included for symbolic or literary reasons, then the author has deliberately chosen to include them. In short, attention both to episodes of walking and to the rhetoric of walking remains valuable despite our suspicions of the text, as we are reading both for narrative and for attitudes and assumptions.

## 2. Walking and Knowledge

Rome served as the culmination of many elite travellers' European voyage—a chance to encounter the classical art and architecture that had underpinned their education since the Renaissance. After the fall of the Byzantine empire, Rome became the primary site for Europeans to confront classical Greek and Roman antiquities, the tour to Italy capping off years of formal education and culminating in an exploration of the Eternal City (See generally Collins 2019). The city of Rome thus took on a role as the locus of knowledge—an intentional learning site where visitors expected to be transformed and to come to see in new ways. The increased receptivity to learning of such travellers is reflected in their accounts.

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More specifically, the education of the travellers was often refracted through the act of walking as foreigners first learned their way around. Travellers to Rome might, for example, introduce the city in their narratives in chorographical terms, describing its scope and layout as with any large city. It was typical of such narratives to introduce the city by means of its major walking routes, measured in paces. Walking served both as a way of getting the measure of the city and, more specifically, of measuring the city. John Raymond, who visited Rome in 1646, alternated both methods seamlessly:

Hee that would see Rome may doe it in a fortnight, walking about from Morning to Evening, he that would make it his study to understand it, can hardly perfect it in lesse then a yeare. A man may spend ma|ny Moneths at Rome, and yet have something of Note to see every day ... The first day we walkt to the Villa of Prince Ludovisio, which stands on the same Soyle, where that renowned one of Salust anciently stood, as one may collect from the broken Guglia, one and twenty paces in length, which was rais'd in his Hippodromus (Raymond 1648, pp. 72–73).

Like many others, Raymond's narrative highlights the novelty of the act of walking in Rome and its close links to the foreignness and freshness of his experience. It also serves as the medium of his Roman education: in his view, one comes to know the city by walking it, and one comes to appreciate its antiquity through the counting of paces. Descriptions such as Raymond's may seem pedestrian (in both senses), but they laid the foundation for the experience of Roman walking as learning.

The link between walking and knowing could also run deeper, enabling a traveller not simply to acquire information but also to evaluate it. This was true in the case of Maximilien Misson, a French Huguenot whose *New Voyage to Italy* was immensely popular in both French and English. Misson's narrative frequently showed his scepticism of received knowledge in Rome, even regarding geography and topography:

You are not ignorant that Rome was known by the name of Septicollis, or the City on Seven Hills: Before the Reign of Servius Tullius it had no more; but since that time it has been much enlarg'd, and at present contains Twelve: You must not imagine that these Hills are so many considerable Mountains, they are only small Hillocks, the ascent to which is scarce sensible (Misson 1695, p. 16).

In this instance, Misson's own experience of walking up the seven hills of Rome enabled him to question received aggrandizing wisdom about their elevation and to recognize these as boastful myths. In such ways did the act of walking become a vehicle for learning about Rome.

Rome required a lot of walking, particularly in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. Much of the area within the city walls was uninhabited. Those regions were full of antiquities that could be encountered in the open air and also, increasingly, in the personal collections of nobles and cardinals (Collins 2019, pp. 565–66; Stenhouse 2005; Keyvanian 2019). The role of Roman guide—what John Evelyn called a 'sights-man'—proliferated. Guides walked visitors through the *disabitato* and often arranged access to these private collections, which displayed classical statuary in Renaissance gardens. Such guides, together with a rapidly proliferating body of guidebooks and other printed material, curated and mediated visitors' experiences of Rome.

The physical intensity of such visits was notable, and visitors often commented on it. <sup>4</sup> John Evelyn's "Diary" of his trip to Rome paid close attention to modes of travel. Walking is ubiquitous in his recollection of events. He was often precise about modes of travel, such as when he took a horse and when a carriage: "I came to Rome on the 4 November 1644 ... and being perplexed for a convenient lodging, wandered up and down on horseback" (Evelyn 2015, p. 153). Extensive walking, as noted above, was a notable aspect of Italian travel that occasionally bested Evelyn. After a day visiting Palazzo Medici as well as Monte Cavallo (the Quirinal hill), he noted, "Being now pretty weary of continual walking, I kept within, for the most part, till the 6 December ... The next excursion was over the

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Tiber, which I crossed in a ferry-boat" (Evelyn 2015, p. 201). Although much of his diary was composed later from memory, it seems we can trust that the memory of sore feet stayed with him. It is clear that walking had meaning for Evelyn as a way of knowing—for example, when he discovered antiquities. Evelyn's encounters with Catholicism in Rome alternated with very long antiquarian walks: "in the morning Mr Henshaw and myself walked to the Trophies of Marius . . . Continuing our walk a mile farther, we came to Pons Milvuys, now Mela, where Constantine overthrew Maxentius" (Evelyn 2015, p. 254). In this way, walking defines both his encounter with antiquity and his sense of knowing the city.

As ever more students, pilgrims, and travellers surged into Rome, Romans responded by adapting the built environment in ways that shaped the visitors' walking experience. Grandees arranged their gardens and collections to allow greater access to tourists while protecting their own privacy (Stenhouse 2005, p. 411). Popes commissioned straight streets that eased pilgrimage routes and redirected them towards particular churches. Pope Alexander VII Chigi built up the area around Piazza del Popolo, the northern entry point to the city, in order to stage a grand welcome for foreigners (Collins 2019, pp. 573–74). In Renaissance Italy, as Fabrizio Nevola established, Italian city renovations paid close attention to the visitor experience. They reinforced gates and ports and policed sites of transit, and they turned public areas into arenas of performance, repositories of memory and rich sensoria, and practiced spaces of ritual (Nevola 2020, chp. 2). By traversing these spaces and immersing in their details, visitors earned their knowledge of the city step by step.

### 3. Walking and Exotic Catholicism

The overt practice of Catholicism both attracted and repelled Catholic visitors. Fynes Moryson, visiting the Holy House of Loreto, was stupefied to see an exorcism: "As I walked about the Church, behold in a darke Chappell a Priest, by his Exorcismes casting a diuell out of a poore woman: Good Lord what fencing and truly coniuring words he vsed! How much more skilfull was he in the diuels names?" (Moryson 1617, p. 98). Yet he described the ritual and the sanctuary of Loreto in attentive, observant detail. In Rome's Catholic spaces, people, and practices became a key part of the city's attraction in addition to its antiquities. Protestant visitors described in fascination St Peter's Basilica, the Scala Santa, St John Lateran, and other holy sites. Above all, visitors sought out, closely observed, and even participated in Catholic religious rituals, often at risk to themselves. Protestants were not generally granted leave to enter Italy. They had to conceal or downplay their own identity and avoid questions from the Inquisition while there (Fosi 2020, 2011). But this danger did not deter them. For example, Matthew Coneys Wainwright has described undercover Protestants deliberately infiltrating the pilgrimage centre of SS Trinità dei Pellegrini and undergoing the ceremony of ritual foot-washing offered to dusty pilgrims (Wainwright 2020). Indeed, John Evelyn was one:

In the Hospital of the Pelerini della S. Trinita, I had seen the feet of many pilgrims washed by Princes, Cardinals, and noble Romans, and served at table, as the ladies and noble women did to other poor creatures in another room (Evelyn 2015, pp. 246–47).

Walking became a marker of Catholic identity in the eyes of Protestant viewers because most of the rituals open to visitors were ceremonies of walking. Pilgrimage, of course, was the primary public sign of Catholic practice. More specifically, as a rite embraced by Catholics and rejected by Protestants, a procession embodied the direct opposition between Protestant travellers and pious Catholic locals. Travel narratives frequently describe the papal processions that wound through the Roman streets as well as the pilgrimage of the Seven Churches of Rome, a circuit of c. 20 km that encompassed St Peter's and extended well beyond the city gates along parts of the via Appia. This pilgrimage of the Seven Churches was a new practice, dating only from the mid-sixteenth century; its broad popularity made it a distinguishing feature of a specifically Counter-Reformation Rome (Wisch 2012; Bonadonna Russo[1950] 1997; Michelson 2022, pp. 143–45). Processions,

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pilgrimages, and local holy sites reinforced, for participants and viewers of all faiths, the idea that Rome was a sacred landscape whose holiness was defined and reinforced by the religious routes that traversed it (Ditchfield 2005).

Witnessing the proud, visible, joyful celebration of rituals they had been taught to despise could trigger profound reactions in Protestant visitors. Take the instance of Fynes Moryson on his first day in Rome, when he decided that he should immediately undertake the Seven Churches pilgrimage. The decision to make this his very first activity in the city suggests the close association between Roman Catholicism and walking:

The first day being to visit these seuen Churches, by reason of their distance, and the hast we made, I and my consorts hired each of vs. a mule, each man for two poli, and we neuer found our errour till the euening, when we demanding the way of a man of meane sort, he replied thus with some anger; What doe you ride to heauen, and we poore wretches goe on foote without shooes to visit these holy Churches. By this we found our errour, and were glad that we had passed that day without further danger (Moryson 1617, p. 129).

Fynes' error was to ride instead of walk, misconstruing the very nature of pilgrimage. Immediately, in his interpretation, his mistake renders the act of walking more Catholic, bound up with local knowledge and foreign ignorance, and confirms him as different, Protestant, and at risk. If, alternatively, he had deliberately chosen to ride despite writing it off as an innocent error, then the act of riding serves, in his memoir, to ensure he could not be confused with a Catholic. Well into the seventeenth century, walking embodied the difference between foreign-seeming Catholic religious behaviour and Protestant forms of comportment.

One precedent for Protestant descriptions of Catholic behaviour in Rome belongs to Anthony Munday, the famous sixteenth-century traveller, spy, and anti-Catholic polemicist (Kitzes 2016). While staying in the English College in Rome, Munday described the pilgrimage of the Seven Churches in an extended passage that comprises a full chapter, one of eight in his memoir. In writing about the route, he also discusses each station, church, and relic in close detail, meaning that he undertook the pilgrimage undercover together with his English Catholic compatriots. Munday describes Catholic devotional practices meticulously, with a slight cynicism and scepticism:

To these places they trudge commonly once every week, sometimes twice ... but when they have been at these seven churches and honoured all these paltry relics, they think they have done a most blessed and acceptable service to God.

If Munday's stance on the benefits of pilgrimage were not already evident, his focus on walking, and specifically the verb "trudging", would leave no doubt. It is clear, in Munday's text, that the pilgrimage embodies the essence of despicable Catholic practice:

Another day they go to the seven churches ... in all these churches there by diverse relics which make them haunted of a marvellous multitude of people: whereby the lazy lurden friars that keep the churches get more riches than so many honest men should do ... But because every good subject may see into the Romish jugglings and perceive the subtlety of Antichrist the eldest child of Hell, I will rehearse some of these relics, as many of them as I can possibly call to my remembrance (Munday 1980, pp. 45–46).

In other words, Munday portrays pilgrimage as nothing but an extended opportunity for corrupt priests to fleece the credulous faithful. He returns repeatedly to this theme throughout his description, describing the scheming priests, the zealous pilgrims, and function of each of the many individual relics. Readers thus come to see the Seven Churches as an entry into a broader polemic. The ambitious and distinctively Roman procession offers Munday an ideal framework for interpreting the entire gamut of Catholic ritual and Rome's religious life. Thomas Hoby, a young Protestant courtier devout enough to have translated Martin Bucer's works into English, found himself uncomfortably in Rome during

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the papal elections of 1550. His sentiments on the Seven Churches resembled Munday's: it was less a pilgrimage, he felt, than a means of swindle:

Whosoever will receive the full indulgence of this Jubilee must visit the VII principal churches of Rome all in one day (which he shall have enough to do) afoot. With these and like fond traditions is the papall seate chiefly maintained, to call men out of all places of Christendom to lighten their purses here, at pardons, indulgences, and jubilees to stocks and stones (Hoby 1902, p. 61)<sup>5</sup>.

The incumbrance of the long pilgrimage seemed, to Hoby, like part of the hoax; it was both a burden and a smokescreen constructed to hide and enable priestly deceit.

For these writers, walking characterized Catholic devotion throughout the city and was not limited to the pilgrimage of the Seven Churches, although this was the most paradigmatic Roman ritual. Seventy years after Munday's sojourn in Rome, Evelyn was would also see walking as the embodiment of another Catholic practice:

Returning home [from the Capitoline Hill] by Ara Coeli, we mounted to it by more than 100 marble steps not in devotion, as I observed some to do on their bare knees, but to see those two famous statues of Constantine, in white marble, placed there out of his baths (Evelyn 2015, p. 160).

Where the credulous devout ascended as an act of worship, Evelyn is at pains to present himself differently, as an erudite searcher of antiquities. Walking seems, to him, the natural way to draw this distinction. The church of Ara Coeli sits at the top of a long, steep staircase. It can be reached in no other way than on foot. Even so, Evelyn chooses the mode of ascent—foot-walking instead of knee-walking—as the factor that differentiates himself from the Catholic faithful, and that defines the latter.

By the same token, walking was also the method by which Evelyn learned about the faithful and their practice:

On Christmas-eve, I went not to bed, being desirous of seeing the many extraordinary ceremonies performed then in their churches, as midnight masses and sermons. I walked from church to church the whole night in admiration at the multitude of scenes and pageantry which the friars had with much industry and craft set out, to catch the devout women and superstitious sort of people, who never parted without dropping some money into a vessel set on purpose (Evelyn 2015, p. 202).

In these examples, the act of walking offers Evelyn a flexible, easily adjusted tool for observing or distancing himself from Catholics and their rituals. The relatively modest moments described here set up the pattern by which Evelyn would interpret the more dramatic and upsetting events he witnessed later in the year. The events he describes start the night before Carnival, as Evelyn returns to his lodging from a baptism:

In our return, we saw a small ruin of an aqueduct built by Quintus Marcius, the praetor; and so passed through that incomparable straight street leading to Santa Maria Maggiore, to our lodging, sufficiently tired (Evelyn 2015, p. 255).

In his fatigue, Evelyn seems to see the straightness and length of the street as an affront, in a way that might set up the impatience and antipathy he would show the next morning, when Carnival festivities began:

We were taken up next morning in seeing the impertinences of the Carnival, when all the world are as mad at Rome as at other places; but the most remarkable were the three races of the Barbary horses, that run in the Strada del Corso without riders, only having spurs so placed on their backs, and hanging down by their sides, as by their motion to stimulate: then of mares, then of asses, of buffaloes, naked men, old and young, and boys, and abundance of idle ridiculous pastime. One thing is remarkable, their acting comedies on a stage placed on a cart, or plaustrum, where the scene, or tiring-place, is made of boughs in a rural manner,

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which they drive from street to street with a yoke or two of oxen, after the ancient guise. The streets swarm with prostitutes, buffoons, and all manner of rabble (Evelyn 2015, pp. 255–56).

Evelyn's repulsion at the vulgarities of carnival focuses on the racing (as with so many visitors to Rome). His personal emotions are evident through his word choice—"impertinence", "remarkable", "ridiculous",—and epitomized, above all, by his attention to motion and swarming. Where walking had served to teach him about the Roman city, it also separates him from its people. Indeed, immediately after describing the swarming prostitutes, he also notes another, equally unfamiliar practice:

1 March. At the Greek Church, we saw the Eastern ceremonies performed by a Bishop, etc., in that tongue. Here the unfortunate Duke and Duchess of Bouillon received their ashes, it being the first day of Lent. There was now as much trudging up and down of devotees, as the day before of licentious people; all saints alike to appearance.<sup>6</sup>

In this passage, we see that the discussion of walking serves to connect undesirable Catholics to each other at as far a distance as possible from Evelyn himself. Evelyn compares Greek Catholics (who, in this instance, were also foreign migrants) taking communion to the intemperate races of Carnival. In his mind, it is the shared act of walking that links the devotees' misguided religion with the misguided behavior of the races, both groups willingly proceeding on foot towards their own detriments. Seventy years after Munday used the verb "trudge" to describe Catholic processions, Evelyn applies it to both groups—a useful word that immediately signalled an author's position on Catholic ritual.

Evelyn's relative focus on outdoor events and his detached, observant eye, contrast with the bombastic, emotional encounters of William Lithgow, but they both interpreted religious difference through gait. Lithgow spent his life in travel across Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. He left behind two detailed and colourful travel narratives, noted for their colour, high adventure, and furious anti-Catholicism. Many of his stories are clearly exaggerated, but nothing in his Rome visit is entirely implausible, and no evidence suggests that he invented adventures out of whole cloth. Scholarship on Lithgow confirms that his hatred of Catholicism far exceeded his antipathy towards the other less-familiar faiths and cultures he encountered. How did this emotion manifest in his body and movement, and in those of the Catholics he witnessed?

Lithgow's writing suggests that he firmly understood walking as a marker of character and religious identity. On first introducing the city of Rome, he describes St Catherine of Siena's supposed reaction to the Holy See, where the pope resides: "At last she came to take view of the Popes Palace, where having spent a whole day, strictly remarking the gesture and carriage of the Popes servants: She saw nothing but abhomination, prophanation, and irreligious living, and worser than in Rome it selfe" (Lithgow 1640, p. 13). It is the carriage—the walking deportment—of the papal household that definitively damns them in Lithgow's eyes. When it comes time for Lithgow himself to visit the papal basilica, physical deportment again becomes a litmus test of confessional identity: "I went to the doore, yet affraid to enter, because I was not accustomed with the carriage, and ceremonies of such a Sanctum Sanctorum: but at the last, abandoning all scrupulosities, I came in boldly" (Lithgow 1640, p. 18). Again, the act of walking differentiates Protestant Lithgow from papal practices. The gait of Catholics seems to set them apart from him; thus, it is the act of walking into their space that most frightens him, with their differences in mind. To Lithgow, physical comportment reflects the inner state, setting up the narrative for a series of judgemental walks that will further damn the Catholic character in his eyes.

Lithgow's extended use of walking as a moral metaphor becomes most clear when he, like Moryson, sets out to visit the Holy House of Loreto. In Lithgow's narrative, the pilgrimage to Loreto serves as an extended parable of Catholic corruption, offered upon Lithgow's departure from Rome before turning his attention towards the more cosmopolitan Venice. The entire journey to Loreto becomes a metaphor for learning to Religions **2023**, 14, 611 9 of 14

distinguish true from false religion: "But by your leave, let mee lay downe before your eyes some notable illusions of *Modonna di Loretta*, which I found in my way-faring journey, to amplifie my former discourse, concerning the errours of the *Roman* Church, and as yet was never Englished in our language" (Lithgow 1640, p. 27).

In Lithgow's extended Loreto set-piece, walking functions on multiple levels. The choice of <u>whether</u> to walk or not distinguishes the devout from the deceitful Catholic pilgrim and even gives the Protestant an edge over them both. Among walkers, the <u>manner</u> of walking further proves the hypocrisy of those who pretend to be devout. As he tells it, a coach bearing two Roman gentlemen and two young, unmarried women passed him on the road to Loreto; they invited him in, but Lithgow refused. At that point, they descended to join him, claiming to be pilgrims "bound to *Loretta* (for devotion sake) in pilgrimage, and for the pennance enjoyned to them by their Father Confessour" (Ibid.). Lithgow points out gleefully that their repentance did not extend to behaving chastely at the inn, "each youth led captive his dearest Darling to an unsanctified bed." At this point, the ambulatory irony lies in the Protestant who has chosen to walk to the pilgrimage site Loreto. In Lithgow's narrative, walking gains him the moral and healthful high ground over the nominal but apparently faithless Catholics in their coach.

The next morning, it is the manner of walking that becomes most important: it reveals the Roman travellers as hypocrites through their gaiety outside the shrine, and their sudden change in deportment on arrival:

wee imbraced the way marching towards Loretta, and these virmillion Nymphs, to let mee understand they travelled with a cheerefull stomacke, would oft runne races, skipping like wanton Lambes on grassie Mountaines, and quenching their follies in a Sea of unquenchable fantasies. Approaching neare the gate of the Village, they pulled off their shooes and stockings, walking bare-footed through the streetes, to this tenne thousand times polluted Chappell mumbling Pater nosters, and Ave mariaes on their beads (Ibid., pp. 27–28).

The group's sudden adoption of devout postures does not, however, redeem them far. Lithgow shifts to describing walking, posture, and gesture to condemn the process of penance itself:

When they entred the Church, wherein the Chappell standeth, I stood at the entry beholding many hundreds of bare-footed blinded bodies, creeping on their knees and hands: thinking themselves not worthy to goe on foote to this idely supposed Nazaretan House.

His religious distance from the credulous pilgrims is embodied by his stationary, un-creeping form observing from the door where his Catholic counterparts shed their shoes and walk in. As with his fear of entering St Peter's, in that moment, walking would embody heretical behavior.

Protestant visitors so closely associated the act of walking with Catholic practice that, to them, it also revealed Catholic character. To both the aloof, slightly amused Fynes Moryson on horseback and the terrified but scornful Lithgow, standing stock still at the church door, walking signals "acting Catholic" or approving of Catholicism. This association seems so instinctive in these travel tales that the authors even use terms of walking to situate themselves in relation to the Catholics they encounter, whom they despise and [are curious about] in equal measure. Munday's 'trudge', Evelyn's 'trudge' and 'swarm', and Lithgow's "skipping" erect a barrier between the authors and their close observation of Catholic ritual. Even if they joined the procession and were indistinguishable from the crowd during their visit, their later word choice reassures the reader of their orthodoxy.

## 4. Walking and Interfaith Rome

If the act and language of walking drew a border between Protestant writers and Catholic practitioners, it also framed perceptions of Rome's other religions. Despite its fame as the heart of the Roman church and a shining beacon of Counter-Reformation Catholic

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piety, the city housed populations of other faiths and, in various ways, valued them.<sup>8</sup> Part of the attraction of Italy, for our visitors, was the chance to observe communities of Jews, who were not permitted to reside in large numbers in the British isles and therefore became objects of British projection and imagination (Shoulson 2013; Holmberg 2011). Many visitors to Rome described visits to circumcision ceremonies in the Roman or Venetian ghettoes, for example.<sup>9</sup> Rome also housed a small Muslim population, much of it currently or formerly enslaved, as well as communities of Ethiopian and Orthodox Christians. While visits to enclaves, denominational churches, and ghettos were possible, many encounters between Protestant visitors and minority groups took place outdoors, while walking. In celebration of the 1572 victory at Lepanto, Muslims captured in battle were chained, shackled, and paraded into Rome in imitation of a grand city entry. Forced processions of enslaved Muslims were common in Rome. So too was the frequent sight of slave crews undertaking public works and heavy labour throughout the city, making them involuntarily complicit in Rome's expressions of triumphalism over Islam and other faiths (Walden 2020, pp. 308–9).

The Eternal City therefore offered the specific opportunity to observe the interplay of oft-reviled minority groups with the larger, also reviled, Catholic majority. Walking provides a framework for considering this interplay. In the case of Anthony Munday, walking allows the author to suggest subtle shifts in judgement through unacknowledged juxtapositions. Munday's discussion of Roman Jewry appears within his chapter on the Seven Churches pilgrimage which he uses, as discussed above, to lambast predatory priests who deceive the faithful by exploiting their belief in holy relics. The third church on the route, St John Lateran, contains a baptistery which often hosted conversions. The sight of this structure prompts Munday to introduce Roman Jews: "From thence we go to a fair large place, in the midst whereof standeth a font  $\dots$  in this font every year on Easter even they do christen Jews, such as do change to their religion" (Munday 1980, p. 48). Munday embarks on a long digression on the status of Jews in Rome. He describes the forced conversion sermons imposed weekly on the Jewish population, the ghetto and its gates, Jewish trades and professions and, only after all this, the details of a conversion (occasioned by sight of the baptismal font), the College of Catechumens, and their lives after baptism. His discussion ends jarringly:

From thence [baptism] they go to a college which the Pope hath erected for such Jews as in this manner turn to his religion; there they stay a certain time, and afterward they be turned out to get their living as they can, none of their former riches they must have again, for that goes to the maintenance of the Pope's pontificality. This aforesaid font is a holy thing, and there must prayers be likewise said.

From this font we go up into a fair chapel, wherein is an altar dedicated to our lady (Munday 1980, pp. 50–51).

The final sentence would seem a non-sequitur were it not for Munday's physical journey on foot around St John Lateran as part of his participation in the Seven Churches pilgrimage. Munday's observations of the physical journey of a Catholic pilgrimage, which he has undertaken with his own feet, are what give rise, in turn, to his mental journey around Jewish itineraries in Rome, and thence to Roman spiritual journeys from Judaism to Catholicism through baptism.

The principle of affirming one's enemy's enemy suggests that Munday might harbour sympathy with Jews, in Rome at least, if not in general. Indeed, some deliberate detachment in his language suggests a hint of consideration or at least neutrality:

"in these rings, they say, the Jews did stick banners all the while that Christ was crucified ... "there is a certain place appointed for sermons, whereat the Jews whether they will or no must be present ... and if he go abroad without [the mandatory Jewish badge] they will use him very ill-favouredly (Munday 1980, pp. 48–50).

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Whatever anti-Jewish sentiments Munday might have harboured, consciously or otherwise, they pale here in the face of the usefulness of Judaism to his broader point. The breaching of Jews' will, their ill treatment, the program for their conversion, and their poverty after baptism all serve primarily as further proof, to Munday, of Catholic rapacity. Munday does not say as much explicitly, but he strengthens the suggestion by nesting his Jewish discursion inside an extended description of pilgrimage stations and their evils.

The careful deployment of language around walking served John Evelyn even more usefully, a century after Munday's example. Recall that when he visited the Greek Orthodox church, Evelyn showed his distaste for unfamiliar ritual by describing the faithful "trudging up and down", distancing himself from their practice, and establishing walking as an identifiably Catholic action. Evelyn's own descriptions of Roman Jews continue to associate the practice of walking with being Catholic, in ways that suggest that this pairing has become an inherent assumption. Evelyn contrasts Catholic walking practices, which he had previously disparaged, with Jewish stasis, which now seems even worse.

Evelyn's first mention of Roman Jews appears sandwiched between descriptions of three Catholic processions over January, 1645—the first for the inauguration of the new batch of Conservators, the second displaying the famous Santo Bambino statue from the church of Santa Maria in Aracoeli, and the third celebrating a papal gift of dowries to impoverished Roman brides. In each of these, Evelyn describes the processions with signs of approbation. The new Conservators were grand: "the new officers of the people of Rome; especially, for their noble habits were most conspicuous . . . we ended the day with the rare music at the Chiesa Nuova." The Santo Bambino ceremony "was a great procession . . . and a wonderful concourse of people." The brides are assumed to find success from the Pope's gernosity: "The zitelle, or young wenches, which are to have portions given them by the Pope, being poor, and to marry them, walked in procession to St Peter's" (Evelyn 2015, pp. 203–4).

In contrast, Evelyn's first mention of Jews has them sitting:

A sermon was preached to the Jews, at Ponte Sisto, who are constrained to sit till the hour is done; but it with so much malice in their countenances, spitting, humming, coughing, and motion, that it is almost impossible that they should hear a word from the preacher. A conversion is very rare (Ibid., p. 203).

Especially against the "noble", "conspicuous", "wonderful", and "charitable" Catholic processions, nobody comes off well in Evelyn's depiction of forced conversion sermons. 10 The Roman Jewish audience is constrained to sit; they cannot walk out, and instead they resist by behaving badly. The preacher has no luck with them, but nonetheless must stay and try and preach over their acts of passive resistance. The close juxtaposition of these episodes in Evelyn's text, the claustrophobic sermons seen against the outdoor mobility and success of the three processions, suggests that the poor behavior and outcomes of the former result from being trapped, seated, indoors, and unable to walk the way the Catholics do.

Evelyn's language reflects his own thinking; at least, it does not reflect a wholly generic way of observing Jews. Phillip Skippon, who travelled with John Ray, also visited Rome, twenty years after Evelyn. The mandatory sermons were still in force, but Skippon does not mention them. Instead, his depiction of Roman Jews has them moving about the city:

They go up and down selling and buying old cloaths, and every Wednesday keep a great market, having stalls on Piazza Naona full of old suits of apparel, etc. Some of them, as they walk the streets, cry things for sale; and some carry instruments to card wool with (Skippon 1746, p. 677).

Skippon's Jews are still destitute. He carefully points out that they are "poorer than [the Jews of Venice], these being forbidden all profession of merchandise and trade, except brokerage" (Ibid.). But they are not victims, or at least, not exclusively. By focusing on their trade and mobility, Skippon depicts Roman Jews with far more agency than did Evelyn, despite their poverty. The result is a description that reads as neutral, not degrading. In

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these episodes, attention to both the act and language of walking shows nuances and layers of perception around the Protestant travellers' Roman encounter with other faiths.

In Rome, a city of immense attraction for Protestant travellers, anglophone visitors saw the act of walking as a Catholic activity. Walking defined the Catholic rituals they were most keen to observe and even join, such as papal processions and especially the pilgrimage of the Seven Churches. Ultimately, their travel narratives reveal that they came to associate walking wholly with Catholic identity. This association was strong enough that it applied both positively and negatively. The framework of walking thus also helped them to interpret relations between exotic Catholics and even more exotic other religions: Islam and, especially, Judaism. In addition, travel narratives used the language of walking to interpret these moments and identify the authors' own shifting positions towards Catholic practice.

The act of walking could have more than one meaning simultaneously. It would be premature to draw from this analysis any fixed conclusions about the significance of walking in early modernity, or even to argue that it had any fixed cultural meaning. Nonetheless, I hope to have shown here how walking could play an important role in framing early modern perceptions of religious identity and religious encounters, and how seriously the authors of these travel narratives took walking. In their experience, walking constituted a porous boundary line between one religion and another. Protestant visitors to Rome deliberately crossed that line for the sake of their own education as they followed Catholics on their processions and pilgrimages. But they also used it—in their conscious or unconscious language—to distance themselves from other faiths or show their ambivalence. Attention to walking allows us to reconstruct they layered assumptions about religious identity and positionality in the fluid, multi-confessional landscape of post-Reformation Europe.

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#### **Notes**

- Bourdieu, Outline of a Theory of Practice; Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life; Benjamin, The Arcades Project; Solnit, Wanderlust.
- On the theology and practice of the Catholic penitential cycle, see especially Cameron (1991, pp. 84–98).
- On long-distance pilgrimage, see (Tingle 2017; Reinburg 2019); On processions, Wisch (2012); Wisch, "Celebrating the Holy Year of 1575".
- On print as a mediating force in early modern Rome, see (Tschudi 2016, ch. 2; Lincoln 2014; San Juan 2001).
- On Hoby, see the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Kelly 2004).
- Evelyn (2015, p. 256). The Duke and Duchess of Buillon who converted to Catholicism were Frédéric Maurice de La Tour d'Auvergne and his wife, Eleonora Catharina Febronis, Countess de Bergh.
- On Lithgow, see Bosworth (2006).
- On Rome as a "beacon of piety," see (McGinness 1995; Lazar 2005); On religious diversity in Rome, see Coneys Wainwright and Michelson (2020).
- Exemplars include Michel Montaigne and Phillip Skippon. On Christian tourism/voyeurism of Jewish ritual see Deutsch, *Judaism in Christian Eyes*.
- On these sermons, see Michelson (2022, On this incident, pp. 139–40).

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