The Legend of Saladin from Book to Screen: How Saladin Is Transformed from the Auchinleck MS to the Silver Screen

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THE LEGEND OF SALADIN FROM BOOK TO SCREEN:
HOW SALADIN IS TRANSFORMED FROM THE AUCHINLECK MS
TO THE SILVER SCREEN

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For my sons, Omar and Gilani.
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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I investigate the representations of Saladin in English textual representations from the medieval period to the present, beginning with the romance, *King Richard* in the fourteenth-century codex, Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates 19.2.1, the Auchinleck Manuscript, and continuing to *Kingdom of Heaven*, a modern Hollywood film. Representations of Saladin are key to helping us understand how the Muslim is characterized in Western popular culture, and how, in contemporary times, those depictions might influence public policy. I argue that American views of Islam are a cultural legacy from Britain due, not only to common language, but also because of the United States’ role as a former colony of Great Britain. The representations of Islam as a spiritual and economic threat—through one of its central figures—have a long history and continue to persist because, despite an increasingly global culture, the West has failed to resolve a relationship with Muslim countries that is not dependent upon a binary of superiority and inferiority, of power and opposition. The figure of Saladin has become cultural shorthand in both the East and West for a vision of a region unified by Islam and antagonistic towards the Christian Other.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Saladin’s image comes down through time in many forms: lyrical descriptions from his contemporaries’ accounts, carefully drawn miniatures from medieval manuscripts, woodcuts and engravings, equestrian sculptures, film, cartoons, video games, and even in the name of a modern tank, the Saladin (FV601) used extensively by the British Army. Historians, writers, and artists have added to his legend over time. He emerges as a shifting figure—in one instance, a bloodthirsty yet cowardly warrior; in yet another, he is an opponent full of compassion for his suffering enemy. Some of the renderings show the old wise Saladin. In these, he has earned his long white beard and weary look through a lifetime of battle and leadership that united much of the Muslim Arab world. Others show a haughty, cruel-looking figure overseeing the beheading of prisoners of war, such as the miniature that depicts the beheading of Raynald of Chatillon in a French manuscript of the Historia of William of Tyre. ¹ Here, he has the appearance of the villainous archetype with a pointy beard that is the predecessor of villains from the Saracen figures in mystery plays, such as the York and Wakefield cycles, and medieval romances such as Guy of Warwick and Beves of Hamptoun to Jafar from Disney’s Aladdin series.

My work in the following pages is indebted to the work of Edward Said and Frantz Fanon who have, in Said’s case, described how the institution of Orientalism works, and in Fanon’s case, how formerly colonized peoples struggle with establishing the self in a post-conquest and post-colonial context. While both of these writers’ groundbreaking works were published in the 1950s and the 1970s, their ideas have laid the foundations for what was to come both in literary theory and in cultural studies and also within the arts themselves. Their ideas are useful for examining how Saladin is

¹ Guillaume de Tyr, Historia, MS Fr. 68 (Bibliotheque Nationale, MS date: 15th century) folio 399.
represented in medieval and Victorian texts and some of the contemporary artistic representations have been made with their discourse in mind, as shall be discussed.

The work of Benedict Robinson, Ralph Hanna, Murray J. Evans, and Jeffrey Jerome Cohen informs my reading of romances and Saracen characters throughout this dissertation.

Benedict Anderson and Michael Oren provide some of the framework I use when discussing the ideas of nationalism and language in political and literary writing. The work of Daniel J. Vitkus also plays an important role in the chapters where I am considering the ways in which fictional representations interact with the political climate in which they are created.

The Muslim figure in English-language works has, until very recently, not been created by Muslims as a self-reflective image. Rather, the Muslim figure has been used by non-Muslims to address or represent anxieties and fears of Islam as an economic and spiritual competitor of a Western, Judeo-Christian culture. For the purposes of this dissertation, I am considering the image of Saladin through English and American representations. It is not my intent to discuss how Kurds and Arabs have presented Saladin over the centuries because I lack the proper background in regard to language and awareness of the cultural nuances of the Kurds or of Arabic-speaking groups besides the Palestinians to access and investigate their art, literature, and political writings. This would also take the focus away from interpreting the English-language dissemination of the Saladin legend.

It should be noted that I use the more common versions of names in this dissertation; for example, Salah al-Din becomes Saladin and Richard I of England becomes Richard the Lionheart in these pages. The exception to this is when quoted materials refer to them in other terms.

CHAPTER OVERVIEWS

The dissertation begins with an examination of a book – Advocates’ MS 19.2.1 (The Auchinleck Manuscript), which is housed at the National Library of Scotland. The Auchinleck Manuscript is important because it is written almost exclusively in Middle
English at a time when most books produced in England were written in Latin, Anglo-Norman, or a combination of the three languages. I argue that the decision to produce the book in Middle English shows a developing sense of English nationalism. The book is also a rich source for surviving romances from the period and many of the romances in the Auchinleck have Crusading as a theme or make use of the Saracen figure as a foil for Christian goodness. For the purposes of this dissertation, I have chosen to focus on the poem, *King Richard*, because it is an early example of an artistic rendering of the relationship and conflict between Richard the Lionheart and Saladin.

Chapter 3 moves from the description of the Auchinleck Manuscript to a more focused look at the representations of Richard the Lionheart, including the Auchinleck Manuscript’s version of *King Richard*. In this chapter I suggest that the medieval romance, *King Richard*, appears in Auchinleck not only for its interest as a “historical” item, but also as a piece of political commentary on the leadership of England, because the manuscript is believed to have been created in the early fourteenth century, either at the tail end of Edward II’s reign or the beginning of Edward III’s. The contents of the manuscript show much interest in crusading and history and might be read as a guide to what the ideal English noble character should be and how that character might deal with the non-Christian enemy.

Chapter 4 examines some of the general perceptions about Islam as they are found in English writing in the Early Modern Era and in American writing from the colonial period and early nineteenth century. In this chapter I suggest that shared heritage and similar economic concerns during the height of the Barbary Wars contribute to the American adoption of English attitudes toward Islam in political writings and popular culture representations of Muslims.

Chapter 5 considers the role of Sir Walter Scott’s novels as influential both on American cultural ideas about chivalry and gentility as seen in the Deep South, and on American genre writing that provided the model for early Hollywood films. Scott’s novels sold second only to those of Charles Dickens in the U.S., and, unlike Dickens, Scott used the historical novel to explore ideas about societal roles beyond the boundaries of England. His works were popular and influential enough that American writer Mark Twain felt compelled to critique his work and its impact on Southern politics. Finally, the
formulaic writing of Scott— with its emphasis on spectacle, exotic landscapes, battles, and easily identified heroes— lends itself well to the basic architecture of the film genre. Several of Scott’s works have been used as the basis for a film and the depictions of Richard the Lionheart and Saladin in modern film have roots in his writings.

The film *Kingdom of Heaven* is the focus of Chapter 6. Director Ridley Scott and screenwriter William Monahan use the character of Saladin and the fight for control of the Holy Land to discuss the contemporary political climate during which the film was made. *Kingdom of Heaven* is a Hollywood production that helps to show that cinematic culture in the U.S. helps perpetuate these representations and continue to use Saladin as a symbolic figure.

The appendix includes a discussion of the digital version of the Auchinleck Manuscript and questions of readership and editing in the digital era. The digitization of manuscripts opens the door for a bigger audience of scholars— allowing amateurs and professionals alike the opportunity to study and scrutinize texts and images from around the globe. Digitization also provides nearly limitless opportunities for editors to compile information for readers’ use such as links from one manuscript to another or to information that can help modern readers better understand the social and political climate in a given locale at the time a manuscript was produced. On the other hand, having access to the images and information electronically could have a detrimental effect on manuscript studies and access. With images available online, many curators may discourage viewing of manuscripts in person, limiting the hands-on study to a very select group of scholars. This chapter’s focus on the digital also extends the media through which Saladin can be studied, widening the textual scope of this thesis and providing an interesting case study of the potential accessibility of Saladin as a figural trope for Islam.

In considering the history of contact between Muslims and Westerners, it is possible to see how the view of Islam as a “threatening force” has different interpretations, depending on the situation and time period. For example, from the medieval period through to the Renaissance, literary and historical works often expressed a fantasy of Christian conquest of the Holy Land, while modern media expresses fear of
Islam not on spiritual grounds, but rather on militaristic or economic ones. Instead of trying to restore the “Holy Jerusalem” to Christian hands, modern representations generally focus on who has control of the oil fields and strategic sites (yet spiritual overtones are still present in much American writing about the Middle East).

In the Middle Ages and Renaissance, the fear of Islam was defined in spiritual terms as well as in militaristic ones. For example, in medieval romances, the heroes often do battle with “Saracens,” and followers of “Mahomet” and “Mahoun.” Sir Beves of Hamtoun, King Richard, and Guy of Warwick, all have scenes where the brave knights fight off Muslim forces and are helped in battle due to their faith in God. Prayer and faith are used as weapons in medieval hagiography, even when the casting of Muslims is anachronistic, such as in the Life of Saint Margaret. Margaret, who lived and died before the foundation of Islam, is coveted by a Muslim sultan in one version from the Middle English period. Drama also incorporated the Muslim as a figure to fear and despise. The Wakefield Mystery plays include a version of “Herod,” which presents him as a Muslim.\(^2\)

By the Renaissance, the Turk plays, such as A Christian Turned Turk and The Renegado give voice to the fear that Christians were converting to Islam while offstage the Ottoman Empire encroached upon European lands and Europeans were falling victim to the Mediterranean slave trade.

Saladin emerges from his historical roots to become symbolic of Muslim unity, defiance in the face of the West, and the one leader strong enough and clever enough to pose a lasting threat to Western power. From contemporary accounts made during his lifetime through to video games in the modern era, Saladin remains a paradoxical and compelling figure in the Western imagination—simultaneously a threat and a man to admire for his courage, power, intellect, piety, and wisdom.

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CHAPTER 2

THE AUCHINLECK MANUSCRIPT

Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates 19.2.1 (the Auchinleck Manuscript) is the starting point for this study of literary representations of Saladin. It contains not only *King Richard*, which has a depiction of Saladin, but also a number of romances and hagiographical pieces, which deal with the East or Saracen figures. While there are earlier works depicting the Saracen, such as Matthew Paris’s *Chronicle*, written in the first half of the thirteenth century, I would argue that the Auchinleck Manuscript provides one of the first sustained depictions of the Saracen in English to survive, making it one of the earliest self-conscious vernacular articulations of us and Other. These writings provide a glimpse of how Muslims in general and Saladin in particular were viewed by largely Christian English people at an early point in the history of relationships between East and West. I believe the Auchinleck Manuscript shows the textual and cultural interactions in fourteen-century England that Siobhain Bly Calkin discusses in her work on the manuscript. Calkin argues that the Saracen figures in the Auchinleck Manuscript are usually quite close to the Christian knights because they often serve as substitutes for the French. She writes, “The Saracen knights in the Auchinleck serve as reflexive comments on England’s efforts in the early fourteenth century to rewrite the longstanding cultural and political ties between England and France, and thereby define and English identity in the contradistinction to that of France.” The Auchinleck Manuscript provided Sir Walter Scott with ideas of chivalry and models of romantic heroes, which I detail further in my discussion of Scott’s novel featuring Saladin, *The Talisman*. In turn, it can be argued that Romantic novels such as Scott’s formed ideas of chivalry and heroism still at work in modern representations of Saladin and Richard the Lionheart in film and video games.

First, we turn to the Auchinleck Manuscript as a book and what it tells us about the era in which it was produced. This is crucial to our understanding of how an English identity was formed and solidified against images of Others, especially a Muslim Other. I use “Other” in the sense that postcolonial theory does: to signify any group that is outside the majority in any population and used by that majority group in a binary structure to define its own identity. Considering its production and nearly exclusive use of Middle English at a time when England had a trilingual tradition, with English having less prestige than Latin or Anglo-Norman in written texts, we can hypothesize that the book was produced specifically for a literate English audience, one that was interested in topics of crusading, ethics, and politics, if we also consider the volume’s contents. C.M. Millward describes the resurgence of English as an official language:

Well before the end of the Hundred Years War, however, French had already become an artificially maintained second language in England, even among the nobility. By the mid-fourteenth century, English was widely used as the language of instruction in schools. In 1362, English became the official language of legal proceedings. The kings of England had spoken English for some time. The number of manuscripts written in English increased enormously in this same century.  

The Auchinleck Manuscript was probably produced two decades before the adoption of English as the language of legal proceedings; it is one of the physical markers of the transition from Anglo-Norman to English and it is a book that is read for both pleasure and instruction, which indicates that it was owned by someone who had enough status to be both literate and who had some leisure time in which to read and ponder, and perhaps disseminate to a family group, the contents of the volume.

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AN OVERVIEW OF THE AUCHINLECK MANUSCRIPT

The Auchinleck Manuscript has been dated to the middle of the fourteenth century, possibly 1331 to 1340 and is often labeled a “miscellany,” because it contains a variety of materials — hagiography, historical items, and romances. Much of the literary scholarship on the manuscript has focused on the romances, while scholars interested in the development of the English language have used the manuscript’s contents to better understand English in its “Middle” period.

Scholars know little about the early history of the Auchinleck Manuscript, but most currently agree on the following:

The manuscript was produced between 1331 and 1340, probably in a London bookshop.

Six scribes appear to have worked on Auchinleck, although Ralph Hanna believes there were only five because of the similar handwriting in portions attributed to two scribes.\(^5\)

Because of its size, professional production, and content, it was probably a commissioned piece, but there are several theories about who might have been the original owner. These include:

A London merchant who aspired to aristocratic status and expressed that desire by reading texts concerned with chivalric themes.\(^6\)

A wealthy woman, someone like Katerine de la Poole, a widow or self-made woman whose name appears among the list of Norman names in the Battle Abbey Roll in Auchinleck.\(^7\)

A very rich family with a long tradition of crusading, because of the sustained attention to the topic in Auchinleck.\(^8\)

\(^8\) Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature and National*
Owners of the Auchinleck Manuscript are unrecorded from the manuscript’s production until Alexander Boswell, Lord Auchinleck, acquired the manuscript in 1740 and presented it to the Advocates’ Library, Edinburgh, in 1744. Derek Pearsall records that the Auchinleck Manuscript was part of a donation of non-legal books and manuscripts made by the Faculty of Advocates to Scotland when the National Library was established in 1925.9

Eugen Kölbing, Laura Hibbard Loomis, A. J. Bliss, I. C. Cunningham and Derek Pearsall, Timothy Shonk, and David Burnley and Allison Wiggins have all provided studies of the manuscript which have considered the book in full and established many of the theories of how and when it was produced. There has been much scholarship on individual romances, issues of production, linguistic features, national or political representations in the manuscript. Recent scholarship10 has reconsidered the manuscript for the light it might shed on the development of an English identity, because the majority of the items are in Middle English rather than in French or Latin; or has focused on how items create or support an identifiable English-ness through characterization of historical or fictitious English people. The concern in this dissertation is with the characterization of Saladin and, to a lesser degree, Richard the Lionheart, as shown in the poem, King Richard, which appears near the end of the book. Saladin is the focus of this dissertation because he is a figure that resonates far beyond his actual place in history and has come to represent the potential for a unified version of Islam that the West continues to fear. His memory has been co-opted and politicized by both Eastern and Western discourse. Before discussing the contents of the book, I will give a short overview of its condition and possible production since these can offer insight into identity politics at work during the time of its origin. These ideas of Englishness are important because they are absorbed and reflected by later readers and writers and it gives us some clues as to how the book was valued over time.

THE PHYSICAL CONDITION

THE BINDING

Derek Pearsall, I. C. Cunningham\textsuperscript{11}, David Burnley and Allison Wiggins\textsuperscript{12} all suggest that the manuscript has had at least three bindings. Pearsall and Cunningham describe the present binding at length in their introduction to the facsimile, including information on how the codex is sewn together with the viewer in mind and the attempt to copy the nineteenth-century binding in both material and form.\textsuperscript{13} While the present binding is at least the third, the exact condition of the original binding and the reason for its replacement remains unknown. Cunningham writes, “The first is known only from sewing holes, which show that the volume had been sewn on six raised cords.”\textsuperscript{14} He points to pencil marks for evidence that the “sheets of gathering 47 were disarranged and one was already missing” by the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{15} He further speculates that the volume was probably rebound in the 1820s along with other manuscripts in the Advocates’ Library collection, but no records of exact dates or possible binders exists. During this second binding, Cunningham observes, the vellum was repaired and “the volume was sewn on five singled recessed cords, the first four and last six leaves being oversewn (the seventh last, although belonging with those following, was pasted to ff. 326-7).”\textsuperscript{16}

HMSO Bindery, Edinburgh, rebound the volume in 1971 because the cords had broken and the cover was worn. The boards, cover, and headbands, of the nineteenth-century binding were preserved. Cunningham describes the boards as being made “of very thick millboard, beveled at the edges. The headbands were of green, white, and red

\textsuperscript{11} Derek Pearsall and I.C. Cunningham, introduction to \textit{The Auchinleck Manuscript} (London: Scolar Press, 1977), xvi.
\textsuperscript{13} Pearsall and Cunningham, introduction to \textit{The Auchinleck Manuscript}, xvi.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} ibid.
thread on two flat strips of vellum, tied down at five points.” In the current binding, each gathering has been sewn to a guard of equal thickness and the guards sewn onto five recessed cords so the construction of the volume can be inspected and so the book can be opened flat. The previous headbands have been imitated and the “back is hollow, with five single bands, and the cover full brown morocco, lettered in gilt.”

The endpapers of the 1820s binding were reused and Cunningham describes the reuse thus: “Six endpapers and pastedown of vellum were used at both front and back, and at the front an older endpaper with inscription was included.” In the context of this dissertation, the information about the series of bindings is important to our understanding that the manuscript has been deemed “of value” by generations of readers and the attempt to preserve it as a whole book rather than as individual folios speaks to the perception of it as a volume, both by the original compiler(s) and by those who have studied the manuscript in some manner since. One example is Sir Walter Scott, who knew the Auchinleck Manuscript well and used it to edit a version of Sir Tristem as well as listing and describing the contents of the book in the appendix. The digital facsimile does not contain images of the binding, which results in viewers being directed to individual items and fragmenting the perception of the Auchinleck Manuscript as a book. Not having a concept of the manuscript as an object with concrete starting and ending points does not impose an order in which one approaches the volume’s items. Even though a table of contents is provided, one also has the option of viewing the items arranged alphabetically. Viewed electronically, the manuscript becomes more fluid as readers are able to select either the transcription of the items or images of the individual folios. Further, readers can elect to view the contents in the same order as they are presently bound together or to view them alphabetically.

17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
STRUCTURE

Most of the scholars who have studied the manuscript agree that it was made of continuously copied quires, of which 47 survive. Continuous copying implies a custom order rather than a piece of speculation work because it stands to reason that all the pieces were selected beforehand and the work distributed among the scribes in order to produce the piece efficiently and on time, which again indicates that the volume was produced for a specific reader. The combined quires make up a dozen booklets of between one and nine quires each. Each of the quires is made up of eight folios, with the exception of quire 38 which is made up of ten folios. Burnley and Wiggins note that quire 38 is a self-contained unit in regard to content, containing the whole of Outel a Knight. They also suggest that quire 52, which contains only Þe Simonie, was likely to have been self-contained as well; however, this is the final quire and it ends imperfectly, so this cannot be said with certainty. The remaining quires do not stand alone content-wise, but, rather, form ten booklets that contain between two and nine items. Burnley and Wiggins write, “There is a tendency to place major poems at the beginning of new fascicles; for example, Guy of Warwick, Beues of Hamptoun, Kyng Alisaunder, Sir Tristrem, King Richard and The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle each appear at the head of a fascicle.”

Burnley and Wiggins consider as “major poems” pieces that are both lengthy and appear in other manuscripts from the era, so that they might be hypothesized to have been popular works that readers would have wanted to include in personal collections.

Thirty-seven catchwords survive in the manuscript, and Wiggins asserts that because the catchwords correctly refer to what follows, they indicate that the booklets are in their original order. The catchwords appear in the lower right-hand corner of the verso side of the last folio of a quire. Thirty-six of the catchwords appear to be in Scribe 1’s hand and support theories that Scribe 1 had an editorial role in the production. One of the catchwords, that on f. 99v, is at the center of a debate among scholars. Bliss, Pearsall and Cunningham, and Mordkoff believe it was written by Scribe 3, while Timothy Shonk

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argues that it was written by Scribe 1. Having a manuscript that survives in the order in which it was written gives insight into book production and readership. Seeing the volume’s contents in their original allows readers to experience reading them in the intended order, possibly discovering overarching themes that tie the contents together. Because this dissertation is focused on the representations of Saladin in literature, it is not my aim to speculate on the number of scribes who worked on Auchinleck, but the effort and expense of the production are noted here because they indicate the manuscript was made for a reader who was literate and politically astute. The representations of Saracen figures, including Saladin, in the book are reflective of a reader who may have conceived of the Muslim world as a complex and nuanced entity.

Pearsall and Cunningham’s introduction to the facsimile speculates on the production of the Auchinleck Manuscript within a bookshop where items were copied and customers could select the ones they wanted to have bound. If this was the case, then it stands to reason that the customer who commissioned the book did have a great interest in Crusading, religion, and the proper conduct of English nobility. The contents do lend themselves to the idea of a commissioned piece rather than a speculation book because items such as the “Battle Abbey Roll” seem on the surface to be of very narrow interest to a specific group. This coupled with the emphasis on crusading and the East throughout the manuscript certainly suggests an original owner who was interested in these topics, not simply the Romance genre or general saints’ lives.

HANDWRITING

The variety of hands at work on the manuscript does suggest a situation where scribes of differing training and background have been called together to work on the book. While it is not the aim of this dissertation to add to the discussion of how many scribes might have worked on the manuscript, it does seem as though Scribe 1 did have some kind of editorial control over the manuscript’s production. This number of catchwords written in

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Scribe 1’s hand suggests that he oversaw the ordering of the items. This also suggests that the book was a custom order rather than an *ad hoc* piece. That the items are so linked thematically lends weight to the theory that the original owner had a vested interest in crusading and the ethical character of nobility. Allison Wiggins summarizes the major theories about scribal practice and the manuscript:

Paleographical analysis provides some additional information about each of the scribes. Scribe 4 copies only the list of names (the Battle Abbey Roll) and his hand is square and formal, a style well suited to the presentation of this the only non-verse item in the manuscript. Scribes 1 and 6 have clear and straightforward book hands, sufficiently similar to have lead Robinson (1972) and Hanna (2000) to suggest that these were, in fact, the same scribe. Scribe 5’s hand is scratchy and is described by Bliss (1951) as ‘very ugly … disjointed, and … difficult to read.’ The hands of the other two scribes have some particularly interesting features. Scribe 2 had what has been described as a formal and ‘…almost liturgical…’ bookhand (Bliss, 1951); much has been made of this feature by Mordkoff (1981) in order to support her thesis that the manuscript was the product of a monastic scriptorium. Scribe 3 has a cursive bookhand described by Parkes (1969) as an early idiosyncratic form of Anglicana Formata and by Bliss (1951) as showing some evidence of Chancery training. Bliss comments that “…the length of f, r and long s (all of which run well below the line), shows the influence of Chancery hand…” This is highly significant with regard to manuscript production. It may imply that Scribe 3 worked within Chancery and would supplement this regular work with freelance copying, such as his stint on the Auchinleck Manuscript. The appearance of this hand also argues strongly against Mordkoff’s notion that Auchinleck was a monastic production, endorsing, instead, the likelihood that it represents an enterprise that was lay and commercial.24

That the scribes who worked on Auchinleck may have come, judging from their varying scribal attributes, from a variety of backgrounds and experiences may reflect the rising prestige of English and the ability to work comfortably in the vernacular. A Chancery trained scribe would have had training in Latin scripts, but that such a person was also employed to write in English speaks to the demand for scribes who were familiar with both languages and the traditions associated with them. The manuscript is evidence of the process of the resurgence of English before it was adopted in official ways such as in legal proceedings or business transactions. While it stands to reason that an English speaker trained in Latin would be able to write in his or her native tongue, the employment of a scribe to write poetry and lengthy prose in English indicates an audience of readers that would financially support projects in English.

SIGNATURES AND MARKS

Cunningham writes of possible owners and readers, stressing that the dates he provides are provisional. Among the items he and Derek Pearsall list in their introduction to the facsimile are those lists of names discussed below.\textsuperscript{25} Scholarly annotations appear in the margins of \textit{Arthour and Merlin}. These names and markings will be discussed in more detail in chapter four. As mentioned earlier, most previous studies of the Auchinleck have centered on its romances, questions of its production, etc. and little has been done with possible ownership of the book.\textsuperscript{26} This is partially due to little surviving evidence about the book’s ownership and history and partially due to scholarly interest in other areas concerning Auchinleck.

\textsuperscript{25} I.C. Cunningham, introduction to \textit{The Auchinleck Manuscript National Library of Scotland Advocates’ MS 19.2.1.} (London: The Scolar Press, 1977), ix-x. Cunningham notes that the dates he provides are provisional which indicates that these signatures and notes should be approached from a paleographical standpoint as well as examining the content of the notes and their location within the book.

\textsuperscript{26} For more, see Laura Hibbard Loomis “Chaucer and the Breton Lays of the Auchinleck Manuscript.” \textit{Speculum}, 38 (1941).
In the fifteenth century, the names Mr Thomas and Mrs Isabell Browne and Katherin, Eistre, Elizabeth, William, Walter, Thomas, and Agnes Browne were written on f. 107.

In the sixteenth/seventeenth century there is critical comment on the contents of f. 101v., scholarly annotations on ff. 201v-212v and on ff. 305v to 308 v; the name William Gisslort (?) appears on f. 107 v. In the margins of “Of Arthour and of Merlin,” there are notations about “Angys of Denmark” 27 (f. 201v).

The name John was added to f. 300 in the seventeenth century.

In the eighteenth century, the name Christian Gunter was inscribed on f. 205. Gunter was a German poet, whose works include “Brothers, Let’s Be Merry.”

John Harreis was added to f. 247. A John Harreis is mentioned in fifteenth century public records: “Johannes (John) Harreis of Prittlewell Essex County 1470-1520.” 28

No one to date has done much research on the names listed in the Auchinleck, but with more public records accessible through the digitization process, there are more resources readily available for such research – research that previously might have been deemed too time consuming and of little import in the overall study of manuscripts and their contents. An inquiry into the names listed might help shed light on owners and readers of the book over the centuries and help us understand how it was perceived and valued. The compulsion to write one’s name into a book indicates ownership and communication with the book. If readers over the generations took the time to write in the volume, they presumably had developed a relationship with the book that elevated it beyond the status of a mere object. Medieval books were objects that were generally considered of enough value that they were left to surviving family members or friends.

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28 John Sherren Brewer, Robert Henry Brodie, James Gairdner. *Letter and Papers, Foreign, and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII*. Great Britain Public Record Office, *British Museum* (Longman, Green, Longman & Roberts) 1896. Further work needs to be done to see if there is any connection between the John Harreis whose name appears in Auchinleck and that mentioned in the work of Brewer, Brodie, and Gairdner.
through wills.\textsuperscript{29} The marginalia indicates a certain amount of engagement with the text and communication between reader and book.

CONTENTS

The manuscript does not contain a table of contents or index, but both the facsimile and the digital edition by Burnley and Wiggins have a table of contents based on the current arrangement of the texts. The following is a list of the items in their present order in the manuscript. The Arabic numerals are current followed by the title and the lower-case roman numerals that appear to be contemporary with the manuscript; items that have no manuscript title appear in parenthesis and the title is one that is conventionally accepted:

1. (The Legend of Pope Gregory) (vi)
2. “Þe King of Tars” (vii)
3. (The Life of Adam and Eve) (viii)
4. “Seynt Mergrete” (ix)
5. “Seynt Katerine” (x)
6. (St. Patrick’s Purgatory and the Knight, Sir Owen) (xi)
7. “Þe desputisoun bitven Þe bodi & Þe soule” (xii)
8. (The Harrowing of Hell) (xiii)
10. (Speculum Gy de Warewyke) (xiv)
11. (Amis and Amiloun) (xv)
12. (Life of St Mary Magdalene) (xvi)
13. (Nativity and Early Life of Mary) (xvii [error for xviii])\textsuperscript{30}
14. [On Þe seuen dedly] sinnes [xxi]
15. “Þe Pater noster vndo on englissch” (xxii)

\textsuperscript{30} Derek Pearsall and I.C. Cunningham, introduction to \textit{The Auchinleck Manuscript} (London: Scolar Press, 1977) … who also note “xix-xx are omitted in the manuscript numeration; they were presumably left for vacant for fillers’ on f. 69v. The catchword on f. 69v indicates that no gathering has been lost.”
16. (The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin) (xxiii)
17. (Sir Degare) (xxiii)
18. (The Seven Sages of Rome) [xxv]
19. (Floris and Blancheflur) (xxvi)
20. (The Sayings of the Four Philosophers) (xxvi [again])
21. (List of names of Norman barons [The Battle Abbey Roll]) (xxvii)
22. (Guy of Warwick) (xxviii)
23. (Guy of Warwick, stanzaic continuation) (xxviii, cont.)
24. “Reinbrun gij sone of warwike” (xxix)
25. “Sir beues of hamtoun” (xxx)
26. “Of arthour & of merlin” (xxxi)
27. “Þe wenche þat [lou]ed [a k]ing” (xxxii)
28. “[A penni]worþ [of wi]tte” (xxxiii)
29. “Hou our leuedi saute was ferst founde” (xxxiii)
30. “Lay le freine” (xxxv)
31. (Roland and Vernagu) (xxxvi)
32. “Outel a kni3t” (xxxvii)
33. (Kyng Alisaunder) (xliii)
34. (The Thrush and the Nightingale) (xl)
35. (The Sayings of Saint Bernard; also The Three Foes of Mankind) (lvido)
36. “Dauid þe king” (l)
37. (Sir Tristrem) (li)
38. (Sir Orfeo) (li or lii [?])
39. (The Four Foes of Mankind) (lii)
40. “Liber Regum Anglie” (liii)
41. “Horn childe & maiden rimnild” (liii)
42. (Alphabetical Praise of Women) (lv)
43. “King Richard” (Richard Coer de Lion) (lvi)
44. “Þe Simonie” (?)
That a table of contents has been added by twentieth- and twenty-first century scholars may comment on the modern need for categorization and order. While most scholars who have seriously examined the book do agree that its present arrangement is probably the intended order of the items, there is room to speculate about the book-making process and the “miscellaneous” nature of the contents. Ralph Hanna suggests that the book is made up of sections that are arranged thematically (e.g. romances, history, and religious items). Hanna suggests “it is possible to see in the book a somewhat more coherent structure, imposed by scribe I, than merely the constituent production pieces.”31 He is suggesting that scribe 1 had an editorial role in the manuscript, overseeing not only the copying of the texts, but also of arrangement as the contemporary numbering and surviving catchwords seem mostly to be in the same hand as that of scribe 1.32 When taken together, the manuscript’s contents do have thematic threads that cross genres of form (prose and verse) and type (romance, history, homily etc.) and prevent it from being a collection of disparate writings as the name “miscellany” suggests. The word miscellany implies a certain amount of randomness, while “collection” and “anthology” imply some attempt at imposing order, whether it is in the broad sense (e.g. The Norton Anthology of English Literature) or in a very narrow sense (e.g. The Christ-Haunted Landscape: Faith and Doubt in Southern Fiction).33 I am considering Auchinleck in a “whole book” light, admittedly searching for signs of order and organization that might provide clues to its original use and early readership. The contents seem to inform each other thematically if one considers items like The Battle Abbey Roll, Outel a Knight, and King Richard, which all contain references to crusading and the two romances also meditate on what makes a good and worthy leader.

32 Ibid.
AN OVERVIEW OF THE SCHOLARSHIP

The earliest of the studies on the manuscript is Eugen Kölbing’s from the late nineteenth century. He was the first to write a full description of the manuscript and its contents as well as editing editions of some of the texts for publication. Other scholars have built on his findings, with some (Bliss, Cunningham, etc.) revising his numbering of the items. There is also debate about the number of scribes who worked on the manuscript, Kölbing originally suggested that there were five discernible hands; Bliss argues for six; Pamela Robinson, four; and Ralph Hanna counts five scribes. Wiggins has used the digital facsimile in her study of scribal practice and agrees with Bliss that there are six scribes.

Laura Hibbard Loomis work on the manuscript in the 1940s put forth the idea of a London-based bookshop as the origin of the book, speculating that the scribes involved worked in close communication with each other. The other major theory that Loomis offered was that Geoffrey Chaucer was familiar with the manuscript and had used the romances as a model for the “Knight’s Tale” in The Canterbury Tales and as a basis for his satires of the genre. While she speculated that Chaucer had actually read the manuscript at some point in his youth, most subsequent scholars find little evidence to support the idea however tantalizing it might be.

A. J. Bliss’ work in the 1950s considered both the physical make-up of the book and the contents from a linguistic view. His “Notes on the Auchinleck Manuscript” offer revisions of Kölbing’s observations about items and scribal numbers. In addition, Bliss

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38 Alison Wiggins, “Are Auchinleck Manuscript Scribes 1 and 6 the Same Scribe? The Advantages of Whole-Data Analysis and Electronic Texts,” Medium Aevum. LXXII, (19)
used ultra-violet photographs of the fragments of *The Life of Adam and Eve* to provide updates to the work done by Hortsmann and Kölbing.

I. C. Cunningham and Derek Pearsall had the opportunity to examine the book as it was being rebound in 1977. They were able to fully examine the folios without the binding and establish a theory of how the gatherings were compiled. Their overall assessment of the gatherings follows that of Bliss, but they have modified the numeration. Their introduction to the facsimile is one of the starting points for understanding the book as a whole and its history.

Timothy Shonk suggests that the first scribe not only took a major editorial role in the book’s production, but that the scribe might also have been the bookseller. He also argues that the book was made on commission, not speculation.40

Burnley and Wiggins have designed a digital facsimile of the manuscript for the National Library of Scotland. The features of this digital version include color images of each folio, a search tool that allows readers to look for words and graphemes in the manuscript, notes on the appearance of the manuscript, a glossary of terms, transcriptions of each item, and a bibliography of scholarship on the manuscript. While the facsimile in this format is accessible to anyone, the format and contents lend themselves to use by scholars who are interested in manuscript production, paleography, or linguistics, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, where we will focus on the manuscript’s life in the digital era.

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This chapter will examine some of the representations of Richard I, or Richard the Lionhart, in English-language popular culture because he serves as foil to Saladin in the representative materials scrutinized throughout this work. The two leaders’ legacies are intertwined and both continue to strike a symbolic nerve in the political arena—following the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the U.S. and the war in Iraq, Saladin was used by many in the Muslim world as a symbol of the power of Islam unified. While the use of Richard the Lionheart and Saladin in political rhetoric is not new and did not begin with the Sept. 11 attacks, the uses of the term “crusade” and references to Saladin became more pronounced in the United States.

Former U.S. President George Bush chose to use the word “Crusade” in his early response to the attacks; while the word may not have held a much meaning to American listeners, it had a deeper resonance in Europe and the Middle East, where political analysts feared the president’s speech would trigger a full-scale religious war, or at the very least, renew violence between Christians and Muslims worldwide. Briefly, some examples of the modern uses of “crusade,” Richard the Lionheart, and Saladin include this:

It was during a press conference on Sept. 16, in response to a question about homeland security efforts infringing on civil rights, that Bush first used the telltale word "crusade" in public. "This is a new kind of—a new kind of evil," he said. "And we understand. And the American people are beginning to understand. This crusade, this war on terrorism is going to take a while." 41

And this:

Iraqi president Saddam Hussein’s publicity machine used Hussein’s association with the town of Tikrit (the birthplace of Saladin) to bolster the image of him as a liberator and opponent of the West. “The legend of Saladin is also part of the Tikrit myth, and he is often compared to Saddam. Born in 1138 in Tikrit, Saladin was a Kurdish warrior who became a legend in the East for ousting the Crusaders from Jerusalem. It was Saladin who subsequently formed a unified Islamic state centred in Egypt.”

This grain of political symbolism in both Richard I and Saladin as figures in literary and visual art goes all the way back to early representations. Richard the Lionheart was the subject of poetry from his first royal appointment as Duke of Aquitaine at the age of 12. By the mid-14th century and the romance, King Richard, as it appears in the Auchinleck Manuscript, Richard was used as a symbol of what a strong English leader should be even though he only spent six months of his ten-year reign in England. Over the centuries, both Richard and Saladin undergo a transformation in the literature where their characters become nearly opposite to the original representations. Richard first appears to be a brave and fearless leader who is kind and wise to his followers; later he is presented as rash and temperamental. Saladin is portrayed as a Satanic figure in early Western representations; he is described in later works as a master strategist, pious, gentle to prisoners, noble in bearing, and generous to friend and foe alike.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE LITERARY SOURCES

Before looking closely at the Auchinleck Manuscript version of King Richard, I want to do a brief overview of the other artifacts I will examine in other chapters as I consider the

43 Needler, George Henry. Richard Coeur de Lion in Literature. University of Leipzig Dissertation, 1890. (8) Needler’s dissertation also highlights Richard’s support of troubadours as well as discussing some of his own poetry written while Richard was imprisoned.
characterization of Saladin. I will give a short summary of each and the basic characterization of Richard here so that the reader will have a better understanding of the representations of Richard over the centuries in relation to the ways Saladin is portrayed. In addition to the Auchinleck version of the poem, it was reprinted twice by Jan Van Wynkyn (Wynkyn de Worde). He printed a version in 1509, which has woodcuts illustrating the story. A second printing based on this one was done in 1528. In this work, Richard is developed as an English warrior-king, a ruler who is willing to lead in battle as well as in court.

Walter Scott’s *The Talisman* was published in 1825 and Richard makes brief appearances in the novel, mostly in his sick bed in camp. He is a supporting character in the novel, serving to give the book a sense of historical accuracy and acting as another reflective character that allows Scott to show Saladin’s mercy in the scene where he comes to Richard’s camp in disguise, offering medical help to the suffering king.

*The Lion in Winter* (1968) *Kingdom of Heaven*, (2007) *Saladin* (1963) all have Richard I as a minor character or, in the case of *The Lion in Winter*, depict his life prior to his meeting with Saladin in battle. I am not using Robin Hood films since I am interested in Richard as a foil to Saladin. Most of the Robin Hood films do not depict the battles and negotiations between them.

“KING RICHARD” THE ROMANCE

My starting point for considering the representations of Saladin in English is the Middle English poem, *King Richard*, which is also sometimes titled *Richard Coeur de Lion*, and which appears in at least seven medieval English manuscripts and three printed versions from the sixteenth century. Roger Loomis’ study of various portrayals of the encounters between Richard and Saladin in medieval art includes descriptions of romances and visual art. He uses the consistent visual representations of one particular incident – a fantastic fight on horseback where Richard defeats Saladin, who is depicted with his body leaning back as his horse is falling – as evidence for his theory that the story was so well

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44 Loomis, Roger Sherman. “Richard Coeur de Lion and the Pas Saladin in Medieval Art.” *PMLA*, 30, No. 3 (1915) 509.
known that by the fourteenth century, it had become a standard depiction of an armed encounter between Christians and Saracens. He described one depiction as found on the Chertsey Tiles:  

On examining the reproduction of the pair of tiles, we note certain features of the Middle English romance, namely the shield blazoned with three leopards, the broad falchion, the broken girth and stirrups, the spear athwart the colt’s main, the Sowdan’s body thrown backward, and the falling mare, more or less faithfully reproduced in the design. Before, however, we come to any rash conclusion, we must realize that three of these features, the falchion, the body thrown backward, the falling steed, were part of an artistic tradition for representing the overthrow of pagan warriors by Christian champions.

The early portrayals of Saladin show him as a dark, opportunistic figure, which stands in stark contrast to later portrayals that show him as a pious, generous, smart man who was fair to comrades and enemies alike. When considering the political climate in which the poem was probably composed, it is not surprising to find the demonized version of the Muslim leader. England in the fourteenth century experienced a great deal of turmoil from both external and internal forces. The poem appears just after the deposition of Edward II and may be an expression of what people thought a strong king of England should be in contrast to the disastrous leadership of Edward II. Edward III took the throne from his mother Isabella in 1300; by 1337, he was embroiled in “The Hundred Years’ War” with France. One of the reasons the Hundred Years’ War has held historical significance is the conflict between dynasties such as the House of Valois and the House of Plantagenet who battled for control of the French throne. The series of conflicts helped plant the seeds of nationalism in both France and England.

Benedict Anderson discusses the idea of “nationalism” as coinciding, in part, with the rise of printed books. Anderson writes that “…the very possibility of imagining the nation only arose historically when, and where, three fundamental cultural conceptions,

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46 Ibid (515).
all of great antiquity, lost their axiomatic grip on men’s minds.” The conceptions
Anderson points to are script-language, which he says was viewed as “privileged access
to” and “inseparable from” ontological truth; the belief that society was organized
“around and under high centres,” monarchs who ruled by divine right; and “a conception
of temporality in which cosmology and history were indistinguishable, the origins of the
world and men essentially identical.”

The Auchinleck Manuscript can be looked at as a precursor to the conceptions
Anderson delineates. The language, while written in script for an arguably limited
population of readers, was accessible to English-speaking listeners. Producing the texts in
English and modifying the contents to reflect English sensibilities certainly indicates a
readership of people who identified themselves as a group not only connected by
language, but also by a demand for written text that helped to reflect and solidify the
concept of “Englishness.”

The texts in the manuscript indicate that people were critical of the monarchy in
England and did not necessarily view the leadership as placed and protected by any sort
of divine source as detailed more fully below in the discussion of Richard the Lionheart
in literature.

Finally, the manuscript does separate the cosmological from the historical. The
saints’ lives in the Auchinleck Manuscript are presented as instructional guides that are
separate from the romances and historical items. The historical items tend to be straight-
forward histories that do not try to align the origins of England with the Biblical tradition
or past cultures, such as Geoffrey of Monmouth’s Historia Regum Britanniae, which ties
England to the Trojans via Brutus, son of Aeneas.

While the Auchinleck Manuscript likely did not have a large readership, it has the
seeds of nationalism as defined by Anderson. The choice to write in the vernacular
indicates a conception of England as a nation united by language and differentiating itself
from France, especially, but also other European countries based on language, culture,
and history.

At a time when England was re-asserting itself as English and London was now

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47 Benedict Anderson. Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of
fully established as the political and cultural capital, the Auchinleck Manuscript seems to accomplish the establishment of London English as the language of prestige, and it places an emphasis on what constitutes a good English society: one in which there is a hierarchical order for all, including, at the top of the social estate, the warrior king.

In the late nineteenth century, George Henry Needler made a similar observation in his survey of *Richard Coeur de Lion* in literature:

> In as short a period as about a century after his death *Richard Coeur de Lion* had become almost as much a mythical personage in epic poetry as Roland and Charlemagne. This quick process of heroification, if one may use the word, was begun by Norman-French romancers and, probably about the beginning of the fourteenth century, taken up by versifiers in the English language; the course of political events at that time favored the process, and with the rapid fusion of the numerically small, but politically great, element of the Norman-French conquerors with the main body of the English people, Richard became transformed by the singers into a national English hero, whose chief glory was his life-long antagonism to the French. The fact that he was French himself and had only been the rival and enemy of another king in France, had in the course of a hundred years faded away to a dim tradition, and Richard in the heroic poetry of the fourteenth century was only the brilliant counterpart of the Edward of the then national struggles with a later French Rival.48

The English appropriation of Richard was purposeful as indicated by the erasure of his ties to France in English-language texts. Needler makes the point that Richard’s French ties were largely ignored by the poets who paid him tribute in the fourteenth century and chose to remold him as a symbol of England. One might argue that these literary representations actually create a sense of hybridity because they mimic the blending of English and French in language and culture in society in the generations after the Norman conquest. However, by the time the Auchinleck Manuscript was produced, England was

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separating itself from France politically and culturally. We shall see in the Auchenleck Manuscript version of the poem that the poets often took pains to re-inscribe Richard as English, pointing out that his axe handle and castle are made of English wood, for example, so that even his weapons are extensions of his innate being. He thus becomes symbolically English in the poet’s depiction, and indeed, metonymically stands for the nation. This is part of his transformation in memory from an absentee king who levied taxes to fund his war chest to becoming a symbol of England when the country is strong and fierce (the 1860 Carlo Marochettie statue of Richard outside the houses of Parliament coincides with the expansion of the British Empire), or, as may be the case in the earlier fourteenth century, when the country needed a model of nationalistically inclined strong kingship.

RICHARD IN THE AUCHINLECK MANUSCRIPT

The Auchenleck Manuscript is often labeled as a miscellany, implying that the contents were gathered at random and bear no relation to one another; however, I believe a study of the book as a whole shows that the seemingly disparate collection of religious, historical, and literary items can be read as having common threads which point to a consciously “English” character. Others have already considered aspects of the manuscript in this light: Siobhan Bly Calkin’s *Saracens and the Making of English Identity: The Auchenleck Manuscript* examines how the figure of the Muslim is used to bolster “Englishness” in the romances. In *London Literature, 1300-1380*, Ralph Hanna writes that, “‘Romance’ and ‘history’ interface and interpenetrate here, and not simply in the chronicle interpolations.”

Other items in the Auchenleck Manuscript, such as *The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, lend themselves to a “nationalist” reading, and can be seen to be functioning more broadly in an emerging historical and fictional re-writing of England’s medieval past. Robert Mannyng of Brunne’s *Chronicle*, for example, reconfigures the Norman Conquest as an interpellation in the country’s proud Germanic and Saxon

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heritage.\textsuperscript{50} The \textit{Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle} itself similarly holds clues to the manuscript’s date of production and shows pro-English leanings with references to the Classical past, “British” heroes such as King Arthur and King Alfred, and anti-Norman sentiment in the use of \textit{William the Bastard}. Interestingly, in the movement from a predominantly Anglo-Norman culture to one that saw itself as essentially—and to the core—English, \textit{King Richard} and the \textit{King of Tars} both have surviving miniatures and use English religious identity as a signifier. The language is Middle English, but the poetics are transitioning from those of Anglo-Norman sources to a recognizably English poetic form. While the manuscript contains religious, historical, and literary items, these texts showcase how books produced in fourteenth century London—and the Auchinleck Manuscript as a whole—were often consciously “English” in design and content.

The Auchinleck Manuscript version of \textit{King Richard} is 1,046 lines of short couplets describing the exploits of Richard I. The surviving text in the Auchinleck Manuscript is contained in separated leaves from Edinburgh University Library 218 and St. Andrews University Library R4. Parts of the poem are missing in this version, where words and phrases are no longer legible, such as lines 61-64; while these losses disrupt the reading of the poem, it is hard to tell whether they make a significant change in the characterizations of both Richard and Saladin.

However, reading what is there helps construct the legend of Richard the Lionheart, glossing over his ties to France and converting the time he spent outside England into a militaristic and diplomatic tour to strengthen England. In the poem’s opening lines, Richard and his life are venerated:

\begin{verbatim}
Lord Ihesu, kyng of glorie
Swiche auentour & swiche victorie
Pou sentest king Richard,
Miri it is to heren his stori
& of him to han in memorie
Pat neuer no was couward. (1-6)
\end{verbatim}

Translated into modern English:

\begin{verbatim}
Lord Jesus, king of glory
Such an adventure & such a victory
You sent King Richard,
It is to hear his story
& to have in memory
That never was coward. (1-6)
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{50} Idele Sullens, ed., \textit{Robert Mannyng of Brunne’s Chronicle} (Tempe, AZ: MRTS, 1992).
Lord Jesus, king of glory
Such adventure and such victory
Thou sent to King Richard,
Merry it is to hear his story
And to hold him in memory
That never was a coward.

Using Jesus’ name in the first line gives heavenly approval to Richard’s mission and life while linking his “glory” to that of God. This helps reinforce England’s Christian identity, which would have been one of the main “national” identifiers at the time the manuscript was produced in roughly the mid-1300s.\(^{51}\) His victories are the victories of England and a point of pride as well as a model of how the English should behave with bravery in battle fitting to the memory of King Richard. This is also a way to criticize Edward II’s ineptness by showing what he is not through detailing Richard’s bravery and aggression on behalf of England.\(^{52}\) In the next few lines, there is a list of great heroes from history and literature — Roland, Oliver, Alexander, Charlemagne, Hector, Arthur, and Gawain (8-10). This commonly seen list of heroes from history and literature gives the tale a grounding in tradition while simultaneously raising the status of Richard to that of the great heroes of the past and giving him a lineage that surpasses his mortal one.\(^{53}\) By connecting him to heroes from ancient Rome and England as well as the French warrior royals, the emphasis can be deflected from his own Norman parentage while developing the notion of his Englishness and its reflection on the national character.\(^{54}\)

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\(^{52}\) Roy Martin Haines. *King Edward II: Edward of Caernafon, His Life, His Reign, and Its Aftermath*. Quebec: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003. Edward II ruled from 1307-1327, when the Auchinleck was produced. During his lifetime, Edward II was unpopular, surrounded by political upheaval, and eventually deposed.


Throughout the poem there are phrases and lines that point back to England and situate Richard's loyalties within the country. Lines 265-6 paint him as an English hero, with his castle of timber felled in his own land, as an answer to the criticism that Richard spent most of his reign outside the country:

Ich haue a castel ich vnderstond
Of timber made of Inglond.

(I have a castle, I understand
Of timber from England.

When the king of France speaks of “Inglische cowardes” in line 289, the effect is to set up the English/French opposition and again show where Richard’s loyalties lie. (However, it should be noted that in the poem, as in reality, when push came to shove, the English and French united against the common Muslim enemy.) As one more method of identifying Richard with England, the poet employs the epithet, “Richard our king” in line 295.

After establishing Richard as a Christian English king, the poet shows him in action in line 327 as he engages in one battle after another, fighting more men than any of the others in his army. There is no doubt about the warrior king’s bravery in armed combat, and his skill as a strategist and thinker is illustrated by his playing chess in line 451. Once Richard has been described in general terms, the poet can focus in on the details that make him unique, such as his battleaxe, which is described in lines 476-484:55

Þis king Richard ich vnderstond
Er he went out of Inglond
Hadde don made an ax for þe nones
For to cleue SarraŠins bones.
þe heued was wrouŠt wonder wel,
þeron was tventi pounde of stiel

& þo he com into Cipre lond
Þilk ax he tok in his hond,
Al þat he hit he tofraped.  

(This King Richard I understand
Before he left England
Had an axe made for the one purpose
To cleave Saracin bones.
The head was wrought wonderfully well
There upon was twenty pounds of steel
And when he came into Cypress’s lands
This axe he took in his hand;
All that he hit he cut in two.)

The description of Richard’s battleaxe is akin to the description of the shield of Aeneas in Virgil’s *Aeneid* and to the near-mystical descriptions of Excalibur in Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia Regum* or Gawain’s shield in his arming depiction in Fitt 2 of *Sir Gawain and The Green Knight*. By calling attention to his arms in this fashion, the poet is again linking King Richard to the heroic past and the chivalric ideal. By giving him the specific aim of cleaving the Saracens’ bones, the battleaxe takes on greater importance than a simple tool used in war. This is a weapon to be used against the enemy of Christendom and it is therefore, a holy and sanctified object. The head of the axe has twenty pounds of steel, which also testifies to Richard’s strength because he is able to heft the axe and swing it hard enough to cleave his enemies in two. His stop in Cyprus was just a warm-up for the Holy Land. Indeed, so significant is the battleaxe as a symbol of righteous warfare and individual strength that it is depicted being carried in Richard’s hands in the miniature illustration that heads the poem in the manuscript. It is notable that the illustration shows Richard at the gates of Acre with the battleaxe commissioned just for this crusade since Acre was the decisive battle between the armies of Richard and Saladin.

56 Ibid.
What awaits Richard in the Holy Land are Saracens who are usually portrayed as a faceless, cowardly mob. In line 715, the Muslims are described as “Folk of heathen law.”\textsuperscript{57} The leader of these “heathens” is, of course, Saladin, who does not get the grudging respect in the poem that he would later get in Western literature. As with the portrait of Richard, most of the characterization in the poem is fictive. The historical Saladin is nowhere to be found in the poem. Nothing is said of his generosity nor of the kindness he showed to prisoners of war that was a stark contrast to the treatment Richard showed to his captives. Instead, he is portrayed as inferior in physical and moral character to Richard. His religious conviction is called into question when the poet claims that Saladin had been a Christian king for some while, and by “turning Turk” had brought shame upon all the Christians. Subverting Saladin’s true religious heritage saps the power of Islam as a religious force equal in power for its followers to that of Christianity. Islam is destabilized by the mischaracterization of the religion in these lines. Rather than being seen as part of the monotheistic Judeo-Christian tradition, the invocation of “Mahoun” and “Teraguant” turn it into a polytheistic religion\textsuperscript{58}. Using Mahoun, or Muhammad, as a god is an anathema in Islam, whose followers worship God, not Muhammad. While these lines were likely written with ignorance of Islamic practice, they do have the effect of further separating Islam from Christianity, implying polytheism, and showing it as a threat to the core beliefs of Christian teaching.

As with Richard, the poet moves from a generalized description of Saladin to a narrow focus on him, which further reveals character: “Elleuen þousend of our meyne/Þus were þer sleyn wiþouten pite” (833–834).\textsuperscript{59} Saladin is portrayed as vicious and merciless as his army slaughters the crusaders. It is not enough, though, to wipe out the English in battle. He is compelled to use underhanded tricks to gain advantage as well. Saladin has corpses of men and horses thrown in the well from which the crusaders drink, poisoning the water:

\begin{quote}
He lete take alle cors
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid
Bope of man & of hors
& cast in water of our wel
Ous to apoisen & to quel.
No ded he neuer a wers dede
To Cristen men for no nede
For þurth þat poisoun & þe breþ
Fourti þousend token her deþ (837-844)60.

(He had taken all the corpses
Both of man and horses
And cast them into the water of our well
Us to poison and to quell.
Now, he never did a worse deed
To Chrisian men without need
For through that poison in the breath
Forty thousand took their death.)

Geraldine Heng sees this passage as interchanging Jews and Muslims, as she writes Jews were accused of poisoning wells during the Black Death.61 Showing Saladin in this light would help the reader or listener unfamiliar with Islam to make a connection to something familiar and understandable and also viewed with suspicion and hatred — Judaism. Though there were not many Jews in England at the time of the poem’s composition or the compilation of the Auchinleck Manuscript, the audience probably would have been familiar with the figure of the diabolical Jew from other literary works, such as Marian tales or Mystery plays.

Because faith plays a large role in defining both the enemies and Richard himself, it is also the key to success in the work. The poet writes that the Christian knights muster their strength and faith to defend, and finally defeat, the Saracen army, which “flowe wiþ

60 Ibid.
wo & crie” in line 848. It is their belief in Jesus that turns the tide for the Christian warriors in lines 970-974:

& herd be þat holy gost,
& þe miþt of swete Ihesus,
Þat þe today hæþ sent to ous,
For þurth help of þe we hopen alle
þe vile Sarraþins adoun falle.’

(And heard that by the Holy Ghost
And the might of sweet Jesus
That they today have sent to us
For through their help we hope all
The vile Saracens will down a-fall.)

While the poem has been in praise of Richard’s courage and valor, these lines again remind us of his role as a warrior of God rather than a man merely squabbling over territory. He is figured here as a fighter whose battle and victory are selected by divine will. In line 1015, the poet calls him “King Richard þe conquerour,” acknowledging his victory at Acre. This particular descriptive has echoes of William the Conqueror and Richard’s Norman ancestry, which undermines the idea of Richard being solely English. Even so, the overall effect of the poem is to show Richard as a man deeply devoted to God and country.

The beginning idea of nationalism flowers in the poem as the notion of Englishness is expressed in several ways from the literal use of language to the subtle movements of literature. The composers of the Auchinleck Manuscript present Richard as a national hero by the specific descriptions of his character and deeds and by including the poem with others that also privilege Englishness, such as Of Arthor & of Merlin, Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle, Guy of Warwick, and Sir Orfeo.\textsuperscript{63} The

\textsuperscript{62} Burnley and Wiggins. \textit{Auchinleck Manuscript}.
\textsuperscript{63} Even though the Orpheus myth is decidedly not English, the poem, \textit{Sir Orfeo} places the
English language is given priority in the manuscript as a whole, which helps to raise its status from a spoken language of the common people to the language of literature, learning, and power. Continual reminders throughout the poem that others see Richard as English underlines this divorce from French as a language of the powerful. The Christian values associated with Richard in the poem also figure in the manuscript as a whole, with saints’ lives, Biblical stories, and homilies making up a large portion of the non-romantic content. All of the works together can be seen as instructional, pointing the way for the proper Englishman or Englishwoman to behave. *King Richard* shows how English leaders should be brave, clever, and submissive to God. The tale also gives the English audience a source of pride in the heroism and bravery of a native son who is able to make the great Saracen army fall when no other leaders had been able to do so before him.
CHAPTER 4

NOTIONS OF ISLAM CROSS THE OCEAN

In this chapter, I will examine the general perceptions about Islam in British and American writings of the late Renaissance/Early Modern eras and establish the theory that American conceptions of public policy about Islam are largely inherited from the British and that some of the stereotypes we see in contemporary representations, such as Hollywood films, are directly descended from those found in British and early American writings about Islam. This chapter is largely synoptic, covering ground established by Nabil Matar, Elie Salem, Michael Oren, Daniel J. Vitkus, and Margaret Jubb; the chapter serves to provide a chronological link from the medieval to the contemporary eras and to show that the thread of representing the Muslim as a threat runs through writing in English from the early eras to the present. The point here is to show the consistency of the representations, so that when we go from examining the specific representations of Islam in *The King of Tars* or Saladin in *King Richard* from the Auchinleck Manuscript to the portrayal of Saladin in twenty-first-century works like *Kingdom of Heaven* and *Age of Empires*, we can see where the representations are rooted and call into question their persistence despite the increasing knowledge of the Muslim world in the West. It should be noted that Saladin is an anomaly among the representations of the Muslim Other in English-language texts because he is often portrayed in a positive light, which will be discussed in more detail in the conclusion to this dissertation. The representation of Saladin stands in contrast to the common portrayals of Muslim figures in English and American texts, which often to paint the Muslim in terms that Edward Said says, “…symbolize terror, devastation, the demonic, hordes of hated barbarians.”64

These representations can no longer be written off as ignorance when modern readers and viewers have readily accessible information about Islam. The United Kingdom and the United States now also have sizable populations of Muslims, with which the larger society has regular contact. Surely, one can argue, there is a reason these

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stereotypes and representations have been retained; one reason I offer is that with much of the United States’ economy being tied to fossil fuel, it is of strategic interest to maintain the façade of Western mistrust of Islam in order to rally support for military action in the Middle East. We shall see that as early as the late Renaissance and Early Modern eras, much of the fear of the Muslim is rooted to economic anxiety in the West. America’s direct involvement with the Middle East as a political and economic threat began with the Barbary Wars and has continued intermittently throughout the country’s modern history.

OVERVIEW

The discussions of Islam or of Saladin as a representative of that faith appear in English writing from 1500 to the mid 1700s, and are chiefly found in histories, travelogues, captivity narratives, and drama. While these appear to be disparate sources at first glance, they are usually related thematically with either a discussion of Islam as a threat on a moral or social level or the risks of trading in the Mediterranean where Muslim sailors were to be found.

The majority of writings on Saladin from the Early Modern period come from histories and travelogues; usually they are brief entries to locate the reader in time or place, explaining the significance of landmarks in the battle for control of the Holy Land. Some of these writings do not give details or commentary about Saladin, but rather mention him in passing simply to note that a certain territory was under his power during the Third Crusade, which suggests that readers from this time were still familiar enough with Saladin’s legacy that writers felt only the need to mention his name. This signifies the embeddedness of the Saladin-legend in the literary culture of the day.

Patrick Symson mentions Saladin twice in this manner, noting, “The discord and debate betweene Raimund and Guido presented occasion to Saladin king of Turkes to recouer againe Ierusalem”\textsuperscript{65} However, some, such as\textit{ Memorable conceits of diuers noble and famous personages of Christendome, of this our moderne time}, written by Gilles

\textsuperscript{65} Patrick Symson.\textit{ The Historie of the Church Since the Dayes of our Saviour Iesus Christ, vntill this Present Age.} (London: I I[ohn] D[awson] for Iohn Bellamie, 1624).
Corrozet, highlight Saladin’s modesty and piousness. Corrozet claims Saladin commanded that his linen shirt be displayed throughout his army’s encampment upon his death with a messenger calling out to all that even the great Saladin went into the next world taking with him with only his burial garment and leaving behind for others the memories of his virtuous deeds:

The Testament of Saladin.
Saladin king of Asia, of Syria, and of Egypt shewed at his death, how well he knew the life of man to be most miserable. For he commaunded that after his decease, the shirt which he vsed to weare, shold be caryed upon the top of a lance throughout all his Campe in the open sight of all his Nobles, Captaines & soildiers: and that the party which shold carie it, should cry with a loud voice: Behold how Saladin the great Conquerour and Commander of Asia, of all those great riches and conquests which he hath purchased, doth carry nothing with him, saue this onely peece of linen. The chiefest thing wherein men can iustly triumph at their departure out of this world, are their vertuous deeds.66

The moral point here is clear, and firmly emphasized by the triumphant closing of this quotation; that is, that Saladin believed his virtuous deeds were the only things of value in his life. This underscores the reputation he earned even within his lifetime as a merciful and just opponent. The public announcement of death is common in the Muslim Middle East and it is not unusual that a messenger be sent around a given area to carry the news. What is noteworthy is the brandishing of Saladin’s shirt and the message that Saladin is said to have requested be delivered on his behalf. The linen shirt would be proof of his piety in death, and, ironically, act as a simulacrum of a saintly relic; and the message would have fallen in line with Muslim teaching that the faithful should exhort others to be strong and true in the practice of their religion. That this is done through the visual

66 Gilles Corrozet. Memorable conceits of diuers noble and famous personages of Christendome, of this our moderne time. (Folger Shakespeare Library, 1602).
display of a personal item renders this ceremonial tribute to Saladin intensely performative.

THE MUSLIM IN EARLY MODERN WRITING

Apart from these kinds of depictions, Saladin is conspicuously absent from English writings during this period. While the Muslim still figures in drama and other writings, the focus is no longer on trying to keep Jerusalem in Christian hands, but rather seems to show a fear of the Muslim as a religious rival in Europe or is negotiating the Muslim as an economic rival or potential partner. There is a move away from the particular, individual enemy (Saladin) to a general one (Muslim, Turk, or Saracen). I do not address William Shakespeare’s *Othello* or Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine* here because both have been widely studied and I have no new contributions to make to the discussion of either play in this context.

In the introduction to *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England*, Daniel J. Vitkus writes of Christians in the Early Modern era trying to explain away the success of Muslim conquerors. “The notion that the victories of Islam were signs of divine favor was unacceptable, and so the rise of Islam and the expansion of the Ottoman Empire were explained instead as a divine chastisement or ‘scourge’ to punish backsliding Christians.”67 Vitkus points out a binary that continues to resurface over the centuries as political and religious ideology intertwine. The depiction of Islam as a scourge upon unfaithful Christians is revisited in different contexts as English-speaking Christians travel from Europe to settle in North America and the American colonies become involved in the Barbary Wars and again after the events of September 11, 2001, when the Reverends Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson claimed the U.S. was being punished because “we have insulted God at the highest level of our government.”68

The Ottoman Empire was rising between 1299 and 1453, and grew dramatically from 1453 to 1683, encroaching upon Europe and helping to change the religious makeup

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of Eastern Europe, so that the largely Christian identity of Europe was no longer. The Protestant Reformation (1517-1648) overlapped with the growth of the Ottoman Empire and the two forces changed not only the religious identity of Europe, but also the nature of representing the enemy.

Piracy is one of the focal points of the writing about Islam from this period. It appears in non-fiction in captivity narratives, political writing about trade in the Mediterranean, and in travelogues. It appears in fiction in the drama as characters who have been captured by Muslim pirates or as threats hinted at with the action being off stage, such as in William Rowley’s play “All’s Lost by Lust.” America later became concerned with the Barbary Pirates as Thomas Jefferson refused to pay them tribute, putting the young nation at risk of alienating possible allies in Europe.69

While British knowledge of Islam in the medieval period was largely second-hand coming from descriptions of pilgrims and crusaders returning from the Holy Land and travelogues, by the Elizabethan era there were political and economic threats to Europe by the Ottoman Empire, and much more first-hand knowledge of Islam through contact with traders and possibly from scholars returning from Spain and from the accounts of people who had been captured by the Barbary Pirates. The fear of the Ottomans led to expressions of anxiety over Islam, including denouncing it as a false religion. According to Elie Salem, the Elizabethan image of Islam is summed up in the following remarks by Alexander Ross introducing an early English language version of the Quran:

' Good reader, the great Arabian impostor, now at last after a thousand years, is by the way of France arrived in England, and his Alcoran, or gallimaufry of errors (a brat as deformed as the parent, and as full of heresies, as his scald head was of scurf), hath learned to speak English. I suppose this piece is exposed by the translator to the public view, no otherwise than some monster brought out of Africa, for people to gaze, not to dote upon; and as the sight of a monster... should induce the beholder to praise god, who hath not made him such; so should the

reading of this Alcoran excite us both to bless God's goodness towards us in this land, who enjoy the light of the gospel ... as also to admire God's judgments who suffers so many countries to be blinded and enslaved with this misshapen issue of Mahomet's brain'.

The passage above shows the sort of anxiety the British had about Islam. In introducing the first English-language translation of the Quran, Ross accuses Muhammad of being full of heresy and as physically repugnant as he was perceived to be morally and spiritually. Muhammad and the religion he represents become monstrous and deformed. This perception of Islam as a mutation was not new in the Early Modern era; medieval romances, such as the *King of Tars*, attribute monstrosity and deformity to Islam. Only after accepting Christianity, does the transformation from deformity to wholeness take place.

In his introduction, Ross encourages the reader to look upon the words found in the Quran with caution and to use it as a reminder that God has chosen for Christians the righteous path. He expresses fear that those who waver in their faith might be taken in by the Quran, but suggests that Christians of solid faith will find their belief enhanced by reading the Quran and comparing it to the Gospels. As Salem explains:

Ross knew that the publishing of the Qur'an was 'dangerous' and 'scandalous', but it was dangerous only to those who 'like reeds are shaken, and like empty clouds carried about with every wind of doctrine'. But for the solid Christian it was no more dangerous than the heresies of a Tertullian. One need not have feared the seductive influence of the Qur'an because it was a 'misshapen and deformed piece'. In fact its ugliness enhanced the beauty of the Gospels. 'Who is so mad as to prefer the embraces of a filthy Baboon, to his beautiful mistress, or the braying of an ass to a concert of music?'. The reader had no need to fear the proselytizing influence of the Qur'an for no nation 'did voluntarily receive the

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Alcoran except the theevish saracens of Arabia.\footnote{Ibid. (52).}

Salem’s discussion of Elizabethan attitudes toward Islam give the impression that, during this era, the general conception of Islam was very much like those of evangelical Christians in the contemporary U.S., such as Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, whose spiritual guidance played a role in the life of former presidents George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush.\footnote{McCain, John. “Loathed by Liberals, Falwell was Force Among The Right-Wing.” CNN.com. 15 May 2007. http://articles.cnn.com/2007-05-15/politics/falwell.politics_1_thomas-road-baptist-church-jerry-falwell-moral-majority?_s=PM:POLITICS} Media commentators such as Glen Beck, Bill O’Reilly, and Rush Limbaugh often present a distorted view of Islam in their broadcasts and writings which are popular with conservatives in the U.S.\footnote{Esposito, John L. and Sheila B. Lalwani. “Bigotry and Islam: Bill O’Reilly’s at it Again.” \textit{Huffington Post}. 16 October 2010. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-l-esposito/bigotry-and-islam-bill-or_b_765300.html} The ideas of media figures such as these are transmitted to a large audience, many of whom accept as fact the commentary and opinions expressed.

Salem suggests that as contact between England and the Near East increased in the late 1600s, some of the misinformation was replaced by solid knowledge born of new scholarship focusing on the Near East:

English Scholarship on the Near East began to take form at the end of the 17th century. As scholarship developed, the mythology of the East and of Islam faded gradually before the light of facts and experience. In 1632 Sir Thomas Adams founded the first chair of Arabic at Cambridge, and four years later Archbishop Laud endowed a rival chair at Oxford. The Cambridge chair was occupied by Abraham Wheelock and later on by Simon Ockley (born 1678) who did more to further Arabic studies, than any of his contemporaries. It is interesting to note that Ockley's career was encouraged by Prideaux, the author of the famous work on
imposture. Ockley urged his colleagues to read the Qur'an in the original and not to rely on the 1649 version.\textsuperscript{74}

Studying any text in the original language may give a deeper understanding of its meaning as some nuances that get left out in translations become apparent. Benedict Anderson and Frantz Fanon both emphasize the power of language in their works, illustrating that language unifies people so that they can visualize themselves as part of a larger group, but also that language is tied to privilege and power. Language is crucial to forming identity; literacy and fluency in a given language enhances understanding beyond mere comprehension of words and their meaning, but allows the individual to move into higher levels within a society. For example, simply speaking and understanding a language gives one entry into the society; being able to read and write in a language elevates the individual above those who have only oral mastery of the language. Literacy gives one access to education and the ability to interpret documents for one’s self rather than relying on another to explain the meaning. Having that mastery can open doors to power.

Outsiders studying a language and reading the texts of a culture gain more intimate access to the culture than those who have to rely upon translations of some sort, whether it be textual or an oral summary.

While the English were institutionalizing the study of Arabic and Islam, the American colonists still had the older myths about the religion, combined possibly with observations of African Islam brought by slaves after 1619. Most colonists had no observational knowledge of Islam. During the Barbary Wars, America decided not to pay the pirates tribute—a big political risk for the young nation—and embarked on its own investigation of Islam, refining its use as a foil for the primarily Christian republic. Considering Benedict Anderson’s discussion of the role of language in the shaping of national identity, I believe it is important to consider the prominence of English in the American colonies. Immigrants to the New World came from many European countries, but the majority of those in 13 original colonies were English speakers. English as a common tongue also meant a certain amount of British culture was embedded in the

\textsuperscript{74} Elie Salem.
language. Cultural expectations and attitudes were brought to the New World by the immigrants, who modified their language and culture to better represent their new surroundings—for example, finding words to describe native plants and animals previously unknown to them or adopting words and terms from the indigenous peoples.

EARLY AMERICAN VIEWS OF ISLAM

Benedict Anderson’s work in *Imagined Communities* bases national identity, in part, on language, especially a vernacular language. Anderson’s work helps us locate the practical role Ben Franklin played in communicating ideas in the American colonies. Anderson shows the monopoly a community’s printer had when it came to disseminating information:

The figure of Benjamin Franklin is indelibly associated with creole nationalism in the northern Americas. But the importance of his trade may be less apparent. Once again, Febvre and Martin are enlightening. They remind us that ‘printing did not really develop in [North] America during the eighteenth century until printers discovered a new source of income—the newspaper. Printers starting new presses always included a newspaper in their productions, to which they were usually the main, even the sole, contributor. Thus the printer-journalist was initially an essentially North American phenomenon. Since the main problem facing the printer-journalist was reaching readers, there developed an alliance with the postmaster so intimate that often each became the other. Hence, the printer’s office emerged as he key to North American communications and community intellectual life.  

Franklin’s career as a printer and journalist was well established before he rose to prominence as a statesman. He had an established voice within the colonies in the guise of ‘Poor Richard,’ a persona that he used for the yearly almanac he published from 1739-1758. The Almanac was a bestseller in the colonies and helped establish American

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vernacular. Writing in the vernacular, as we saw with Middle English in the Auchinleck Manuscript, gave prestige to Americanized English and helped distance the colonies intellectually from the seat of power in England.

Franklin was among the early American writers to use Islam as a source of rhetorical strategy in his writing. Thomas Kidd suggests that early Americans many not have had much observational knowledge of Islam; they did discuss it first and briefly as a religious threat, but also later—and in a context that continues into modern American discourse—as a political threat. Early Americans might have been introduced to Islam by the slave trade. There is evidence of Muslim presence in the Spanish-controlled territories by way of sailors and navigators who practiced Islam; however their activity was largely in the role of exploration toward the American West and into the Caribbean area and did not enter as much into the concerns of the colonial Americans.

Piracy was another of the areas where Islam posed a threat to early American trade, and was likely the initial source of political rhetoric about Islam in America. Kidd writes:

In the last public act before his death, Benjamin Franklin parodied a proslavery speech in Congress by comparing it to a fictitious pro-slavery address "anno 1687" by a North African Muslim, a pirate named Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim. Like proslavery southerners, the Algerian argued that he could not countenance the end of Christian slavery because it would hurt the interests of the Algerian state, there would be no way to compensate the Muslim slave masters, and nothing could safely be done with the freed slaves. Franklin's salvo against slavery was published in 1790 in major northern newspapers.' His use of Muslims and Islamic images is one of the most famous in eighteenth-century America, but not unique. Islamic references pepper the public documents of early America, demonstrating that many were not only aware of the religion but also ready to use it as a rhetorical tool of argument. A close look at the uses of Islam in Anglo-American writing before 1800 shows that Franklin's use of the proslavery argument was

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another version of a well-established tradition: citing the similarities between an opponent's views and the "beliefs" of Islam as a means to discredit one's adversaries. Over the course of the eighteenth century, rhetorical uses of Islam became increasingly secularized. Early in the century, Islam was typically used for religious purposes in religious debates while later commentators often took knowledge "derived" from observations of despotic Islamic states to support political points. Although one should hesitate to describe early Americans as conversant with Islam, they certainly conversed about Islam regularly.

Kidd claims the tradition of “citing similarities between an opponent’s views and the ‘beliefs’ of Islam as a means to discredit one’s adversaries” was a well-established practice in Franklin’s time. Franklin was well read in a variety of subjects and as a professional writer and statesman, he was aware of the power of words. Franklin used the figure of the Muslim slave trader to hold a mirror up to North American slave owners, trying to use the image of the Christian slave held captive in Muslim lands to humanize the slaves held in North America.

This secularized use of Islam as a rhetorical device has appeared in American writing since the eighteenth century, but has been especially strong since the 1970s as the United States’ crude oil consumption has deepened its dependence on foreign oil. Political commentators and policy makers make use of the fear of Islam to question that dependence and to justify military involvement in the region. Kidd describes the use of Islam as a rhetorical device in colonial America as largely discursive:

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, real and imagined Muslims interacted with Elizabethan and Jacobean Britons in business and seafaring contacts, as well as in plays and print. After migrating to North America, however, British

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colonists, especially those with no ocean-going business, experienced direct contacts with Muslims much less frequently. It appears that the two main sources from which early Americans derived their impressions of Islam were the enslavement of Europeans, including North Americans, in North Africa, and widely circulated books and sermons related to Islam. Colonial North Americans, though living in a provincial society far distant from the physical residence of most African or Asian Muslims, nevertheless included them in their mental array of conflicting world religions. … Knowledge of Islam in early America represented a rhetorical strategy of power. Anglo-Americans used the knowledge of Islam that they produced both to reinforce the superiority of their brand of Protestantism over its challengers such as Deism or Catholicism, and to delegitimize Islam and Muslims religiously, morally, and racially.\textsuperscript{78}

As we look at the Barbary Wars in American politics, we will see some of the uses of rhetorical strategy Kidd mentions.

**ON THE POLITICAL STAGE**

The United States came into its own on the world stage with the American Revolution; however, the Barbary Wars helped solidify the young country’s image as an international power. Kambiz GhaneaBassiri, in *A History of Islam in America: From the New World to the New World Order*, sees the presence of Islam in the U.S. as more complicated than the binary of Us and Other. GhaneaBassiri describes the country’s first encounter with the Barbary Pirates:

> The first merchant ship flying an American flag was seized on October 11, 1784 after several delays by the newly independent nation to form its own treaty with Sultan Sidi Muhammad ibn “Abdullah of Morocco 9r. 1757-1790). Thereafter, several other American ships were captured and members of their crews held for ransom. For the next three decades the United States relationship with the Barbary

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid (767).
States was negotiated through a series of amity treaties, U.S. tributes paid to the Barbary States, and military clashes that came to be known as the “Barbary Wars.” A number of Americans who fell victim to the corsairs of North Africa wrote about their experiences as “white, Christian slaves” in Muslim Africa. This genre of captivity narrative had captured the American imagination at the turn of the nineteenth century to such an extent that some literary entrepreneurs published fictional Barbary captivity narratives.\textsuperscript{79}

The impulse to create fictional accounts of captivity shows the degree to which the pirates attracted the attention and imagination of the Americans. Narratives that play up the fear of Islam through personalized tales of suffering recur at other times when tensions between the U.S. and a Muslim state are high. Betty Mahmoody’s 1987 book Not Without My Daughter and the 1991 film it inspired take place in Iran shortly after the Iranian Revolution, and the narrative has shaped how many Americans view Islam. While the book and film refer to events in Iran, many Americans considered it an example of how Muslims act universally. The film’s appearance coincided with the first Gulf War in Iraq, which will have assisted in the cultural demonization of the Muslim.

American leaders have generally put forth a strong front when faced with a Muslim adversary. Going back to the Barbary Wars, Thomas Jefferson refused for America to continue making bargains with the Barbary pirates in the fashion of European nations doing trade in the Mediterranean. In his autobiography, Jefferson wrote about the stance he adopted during the Barbary Wars: “I was very unwilling that we should acquiesce in the European humiliation, of paying a tribute to these lawless pirates, and endeavored to form an association of the powers subject to habitual depredations from them.”\textsuperscript{80}

Jefferson’s straightforward word-choice, such as “paying tribute” and “lawless pirates,” underline his conviction. The use of “tribute” implies that the country is held hostage by a hostile invader, and strengthens the idea that America’s independence is at

\textsuperscript{79} GhaneaBassiri, Kambiz. A History of Islam in America: From the New World to the New World Order. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 25.

stake, just as it was at stake in the war against the European colonizers. As a politician and writer, Jefferson was very aware of the power of rhetoric. His selection of simple language shows his absolute faith of his correctness, even though it put the young nation at great risk. The language and his decision to not negotiate with an armed group that he felt did not represent a recognized nation, provided a model for later presidents who would opt to use force rather than pay bribes to other groups who threatened the United States.

Michael Oren examines America’s relationship with the Middle East in *Power, Faith, and Fantasy*. His work sheds light on the contact between the newly formed United States and the Barbary pirates, ultimately emphasizing how this period shaped America’s role as a player on the global stage.

Oren writes that Thomas Jefferson’s early views of the Middle East, based on his dealings with the Barbary pirates set the tone for later statesmen confronted with challenges in the region. Oren writes, “Jefferson was typical of the Americans who later viewed the region as the repository of despotism, depravity, and backwardness, a kind of inverse mirror of their own democracy, probity, and enlightenment.”

As we consider the emergence of a national image, the Barbary Wars were crucial in the development of America’s self-identity. As Oren writes, “The Barbary Wars altered European perceptions of the United States, but, more decidedly, the victory also transformed Americans’ image of themselves. The war infused them with reinvigorated emotions of national pride and a galvanized sense of identity.”

The Barbary Wars were decisive in the final establishment of the United States as a power separate from its European forebears. The decision to go to war against the pirates may have been costly in the material realm, but in the political arena, the decision paid off handsomely by establishing the United States as a naval power and by helping the young nation earn international respect.

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CAPTIVITY NARRATIVES AND VIEWS OF ISLAM

The Barbary Wars are the link between English and American attitudes toward Islam in public policy. The fear of Islam as a religious rival is expressed in works that criticize the practice of conversion from Christianity, or “turning Turk.” From both English and American writers, we have captivity narratives that talk of Christian sailors turning Turk while in captivity. This fear of conversion was felt not only in Europe and the Americas, but had been ongoing in Africa as well. As with the former, tales of conversion include those done for political or economic gain. In his study of Muslims in Early America, Michael Gomez writes:

Some sub-Saharan African (or ‘Sudanese’) merchants living in the sahel (‘shore’ or transition zone between the desert and savanna) and the savanna began to convert, so that Islam became associated with trade, especially long-distance networks of exchange. In some societies, political rulers also converted to the new religion with varying degrees of fidelity, so that Islam became a vehicle by which alliances between commercial and political elites were forged.83

Gomez is establishing here that Africans living in the areas where most of the slaves originated had converted to Islam in significant numbers by the time the slave trade had reached its height. He goes on to argue that there was likely a large number of Muslims amongst the slave population, but their history has been fragmented by both ignorance on the part of observers who made notes about the daily lives of slaves in the U.S. and by the reluctance of the slaves’ descendants to acknowledge their personal histories. While whites did not express fear that Muslim slaves would try to convert them, they did write about forced conversions at the hands of the Barbary pirates; the converts sometimes turned out to be more bloodthirsty than the pirates according to accounts from their fellow captives. Richard Zacks, in The Pirate Coast, shares the following about a letter

smuggled out of a prison: “The anonymous letter writer — no doubt funnelling hollered suggestions — especially noted that the five U.S. servicemen who had renounced Christianity were ‘worse to us than the Turks.’ He added, ‘I hope when we get released we will have the pleasure of stretching their necks a little longer.’”84 This passage from Zacks does not go into detail about the motivations of the converts, but hints that opportunism was at the forefront, far more than religion.

Benedict Robinson’s discussion of Islam in early modern romance touches on fictionalizations of captivity and slavery that addressed real-world issues:

Crusade, politics, sexuality, renegadism, commerce, terrorism: early modern romance opens up a wide range of discursive practices, including the political, the economic, the erotic, and the theological. It also evokes a wide affective register, an unstable mix of wonder, longing, and fear, and an often unpredictable oscillation between violence and desire. This is an emotional register perhaps not unique to the early modern romance, but which in early modern romances expresses a deep-seated conflict over forms of identity that were threatening to dissolve at every moment, both at home and abroad.85

Robinson’s point that the literary treatment of Islam reveals anxiety about identity formation is one that can be applied to other eras, including the Romantic era and the industrial age of film production. The issues that he underlines—politics, economy, eroticism, and religion—are all dissected in the cultural depictions of Islam by British and American artists. His concentration is on romances, but the same anxiety over Islam rises in poetry, novels, political cartoons, television programming, and films as American and British artists try to define their selves and times in relation to the larger world. Islam continues to rise as a constant foil, simultaneously used to define by contrast while also occupying a space as distant relation in the Judeo-Christian spectrum.

Robinson uses the example of the fictionalized versions of piracy and slave markets to express this multiplicity:

These accounts of piracy and the slave market perform a double cultural work. On the one hand, they offer an anxious image of the Mediterranean contact zone between Christendom and Islam. On the other hand, they also focus anxieties about the expanding global economy. Depictions of the economy of piracy and slavery evoke a concern about an international market that was enabling forms of travel and contact, eroding old boundaries and encouraging new cosmopolitanism.

The erosion of boundaries becomes a source of anxiety during the early modern era and during the time of exploration. Much later in the post-modern era, this dissolution would become a source of celebration as multiculturalism and hybridity became sources of pride and inspiration rather than a source of shame.

Daniel Vitkus’ work traces the stereotypes of the Muslim from the Early Modern period to today’s news media, suggesting that the core representations remain the same while the external details appear to have changed:

Unfortunately, the demonization and misunderstanding of Islamic society and religion remain prevalent in Western culture. Today, many of these stereotypes continue to shape the image of Islam produced by the mass media in North America, Europe, and other parts of the world. If we examine, in particular, the representations of Islam in American journalism during the last thirty years, we will find ample evidence for an unbroken tradition depicting Islamic people as violent, cruel, wrathful, lustful, and the like. With the end of the Cold War, America needed a new ideological bogey to serve as an alleged external threat; perhaps this explains the recent resurgence of anti-Islamic imagery, a revival that draws upon a venerable tradition of demonization that began in the medieval

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period and acquired some of its present features in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.  

Vitkus’s discussion of the media’s role in continuing the tradition of vilifying Islam is core to the discussion of Saladin’s continuing ability to occupy a place in Western imagination after eight centuries. Saladin has come to symbolize on one hand, the best of Islam—generosity, piety, and mercy, and on the other—the possibility of unifying Muslims against a Western threat. It is this second image of Saladin that has the deepest resonance because we can talk with admiration about his military strategy or treatment of enemies on the battlefield, yet it is his role as a leader who was able to unite Muslims of many tribes and nations that earns him respect and homage in the Middle East today, and therefore becomes a source of anxiety and fear in the West. News coverage of the Arab world that depicts Muslims as violent, backward, and vengeful, in turn helps to solidify the stereotypes of Muslims in films.

These stereotypes are not questioned as forcefully as those of minority groups in the United States who speak up to challenge wrongful portrayals. Jack Shaheen and James Zogby speculate that Arab-Americans do not often challenge Hollywood portrayals of Arabs and Muslims for two reasons — one: there is not a unified face of Arab-Americans, who like Latino and Asian populations, actually come from a variety of countries and have little in common culturally apart from formal language (the spoken, everyday Arabic language as used in Middle Eastern countries can be so different in vocabulary and usage that speakers from different parts of the region cannot understand one another); and two: many are afraid of profiling and prefer to blend in with other immigrant groups, claiming to be Italian or Spanish, for example.

Many of these stereotypes have been communicated from one generation to another and from Britain to the United States through popular culture. The medieval

audience heard of the Saracen threat in romances, plays, and songs; the Elizabethans saw representations of the Muslim Other on stage and modern viewers have films, television, video games, and the Internet as sources.

American vilification of the Muslim has roots in European culture—specifically the English-language culture—that crossed the Atlantic through immigration and trade. In the nineteenth century, British novelists had a lively following in the U.S. Along with figures like Charles Dickens and W.M. Thackeray, U.S. readers devoured the works of Sir Walter Scott.

Scott’s novels captured the imagination of Americans so much so that Mark Twain felt compelled to write a complaint about their impact on Southern culture and going so far as to blame Scott in part for establishing attitudes that allowed the Civil War to happen. Scott’s novels set in the medieval period acted on one level as pure entertainment, and on another, commentary about ideas of chivalry, nationalism, and expansion of power. In The Talisman, he uses Saladin and Richard the Lionheart as characters that exemplify the ideals of chivalry.
CHAPTER 5
SIR WALTER SCOTT AS ARCHITECT

Sir Walter Scott’s place in my argument is as a bridging figure, both in the chronology of English depictions of Saladin from the medieval to the present and as a writer whose work looks forward to new genres and representations while borrowing themes from the past. Scott’s popularity has waned dramatically over the past century. Scott’s works were selling second only to those of Charles Dickens’ at the end of the nineteenth century, while he is hardly read today; yet he is crucial to an understanding of how European ideas reached America in this early period of its independent history. George Dekker writes:

From 1815 until about 1840 Sir Walter Scott was American’s favorite novelist and much the most important model for her own budding fictionalists – Irving, Cooper, Paulding, Simms, Kennedy, Hawthorne, and others. Yet although fairly accurate estimates of Scott’s American sales and circulation have been available for several decades, our understanding of his impact on American fiction has made only modest advances since the 1930s.

Dekker highlights a 25-year span of popularity for Scott’s novels in the United States. More importantly, he looks at Scott’s influence on American fiction writers, especially Cooper and Hawthorne whose works are part of the American canon and still read and analyzed at various levels of the public school curriculum. Dekker suggests these writers borrowed from Scott’s technique and thematic approaches, showing that his sway over American Romantic fiction and its influence on popular culture in the U.S. should not be underestimated. Dekker

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uses analysis of the way Scott, Cooper, and Hawthorne all use the Angel of Hadley story in their fiction as evidence for his ideas of Scott’s influence on American fiction. (My interest in this chapter is in Scott as an influence on American storytelling, especially as it later appears in film. For this reason, I am not switching my focus to American writers such as Washington Irving and their treatment of Islam.)

One of the points Dekker makes about the transfer of Scott’s technique is the way Scott chooses to deal with the mysterious elements of the story in a way that is conducive to the suspension of disbelief for the reader: “This method of dealing with alleged marvels was adopted, refined, and used so extensively by Hawthorne that the American critic Yvor Winters gave it a name: ‘the formula of possibilities.’” 92 This style of storytelling—where multiple solutions are available and the narrator chooses the most likely while leaving the others open for the audience to ponder—is a strong part of American genre fiction from mysteries, science fiction, horror, suspense, and spy stories. These popular forms were also fodder for early filmmakers looking for plots that were easily understandable to an audience already familiar with the structure in a different format. 93 While many writers refined the technique and made it an earmark of American genre fiction, the roots lie in Scott’s work that play with the fantastic such as the short fiction pieces “The Angel of Hadley” and “The Tapestried Chamber” and portions of the The Waverly novels. The fiction of Scott, Cooper, and Hawthorne has been adapted to the silver screen several times. Certain of their stories seem to have all the elements the film industry has relied upon from the beginning – concrete plot; solid characters with distinct heroes and villains, clearly defined lead and supporting characters; easily identifiable conflict and satisfying resolution. Film versions of Ivanhoe (Scott) were made in 1913 and again in the 1950s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. 94 The Legend of Sleepy Hollow (Irving) was brought to life on screen as early as 1908, remade in 1912, and saw other versions in the 1920s,

92 Dekker, 216.
94 http://www.imdb.com/find?s=all&q=Ivanhoe
1940s, 1980s, and the 1990s. The Last of the Mohicans (Cooper) was filmed in 1911, and again in the 1920s, 1930s, 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The film adaptations of their work shows the direct influence of these writers upon Hollywood and in turn, on American cultural sensibilities, but I argue as well that more subtle influence comes in the ideas Scott presented and the way they have been carried into American culture.

Scott’s influence on American culture was recognized during his lifetime in the popularity of the Waverly novels and references to his characters to be found in everything from tavern signs to steamboat names. John Henry Raleigh writes:

But the meaning of the Waverly novels to the Victorians is quite another matter. All his defects on his head, Scott was an original and powerful cultural and intellectual force. Like Wordsworth to whom he was allied in many ways, he had put together a new combination and, like Wordsworth, he was a mover and a shaker: the world would never be seen in quite the same way after the Waverly novels had been absorbed. Scott did not cause the American Civil War, as Mark Twain claimed; nevertheless, almost every steam-boat that pulled in to Hannibal bore the name of a Scott heroine. To have been alive and literate in the nineteenth century was to have been affected in some way by the Waverly novels.

In the late nineteenth century, Mark Twain wrote about his perception of Scott’s ideology and the effect upon the American South, claiming that Scott’s romanticized version of chivalry was so influential in maintaining hierarchy in Southern society that he was responsible for the Civil War, which is explained in more detail below. Twain’s criticism of Scott can also be read as frustration with America’s continuing fascination with Britain after gaining independence. Twain looked forward to a new society that was wholly American and modern; he made disparaging remarks about cultural ties of any sort between the countries. Twain’s argument about the influence of British literature on

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95 http://www.imdb.com/find?s=all&q=Sleepy+Hollow
96 http://www.imdb.com/find?s=all&q=Last+of+the+Mohicans
American culture can be expanded to include contemporary American politics and films made in the post 9/11 era that are analogous to and have links with the ideas and characterizations of East and West found in Scott’s novels.

To better interrogate the widespread influence of Scott, it is helpful to understand his career during his own lifetime. Scott’s writings were wildly popular in Britain and may have been the catalyst for many people’s efforts to become literate. The demand for his books created an industry that expanded overseas to the U.S. market as well. Richard Altick wrote of Scott: “The effect of Scott’s popularity upon English book-trade economics, and therefore upon the rate at which the reading public was to grow, can hardly be overestimated.”

Scottish writer and essayist Thomas Carlyle claims that Scott’s main readership was with the intellectual elite rather than populace, yet he credits Scott with being an immensely popular writer: “Whether Sir Walter Scott was a great man, is still a question with some; but there can be no question with any one that he was a most noted and even notable man. In this generation there was no literary man with such a popularity in any country; there have only been a few with such, taking-in all generations and all countries.”

The idea of a writer whose works become a part of the cultural fabric may be easier for twenty-first century readers to understand if compared to the career of J. K. Rowling. Her Harry Potter novels have had an impact on society beyond the bestseller lists—teachers and parents credit her for awakening the reader in their children; book stores, libraries, and museums across the U.S. and U.K. held events for the release of books in the series; religious groups sought to have the books banned for their use of magic as a theme; the product tie-ins and films were as popular as the books; and publishers have been on the look-out for the “next Harry Potter” since Rowling’s series pumped new life into the book industry.

100 http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/r/j_k_rowling/index.html

“The book series, which had 121.5 million copies in print in the United States and 325 million worldwide prior to the release of the seventh and final book, has also spawned a whole industry of Harry Potter audio books, collectibles and costumes. Dozens of
Before Rowling, Scott (and others such as Charles Dickens) enjoyed similar careers where their books inspired small cultural revolutions of literacy and gave rise to product tie-ins or marketing to pay homage to the books.\textsuperscript{101} Scott’s active writing and publishing was in the first two decades of the nineteenth century and his works sold enough that Ian Duncan describes the atmosphere surrounding Scott’s publishing as one of economic boom, where the written word had become accessible to many and consumption spurred publishers to look for more writers to supply reading material for the masses:

To these golden decades (1805-25) belong the anecdotes of princely publishers handling out thousands of guineas to lordly authors who would condescend to accept them. [John Gibson] Lockhart, with characteristically satirical hindsight, identifies the tension among the categories – patron, author, publisher – in his anecdote of a complacent [Archibald] Constable marching up and down in his rooms exclaiming, “By G--, I am all but the author of the Waverly novels!”\textsuperscript{102}

Scott ceased to be an individual and became an industry that symbolized publishing success at its finest. His name as well as his books became a brand. Scott’s power in the publishing market allowed his books to be marketed and distributed abroad, including in the United States, where his influence as a model of marketing over literary style translated to high volume sales and criticism from the likes of Mark Twain, who

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\textsuperscript{101} Munro, Lachlan. “Sir Walter Scott and The Civil War.” http://www.electricscotland.com/history/articles/civilwar.htm
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It is difficult nowadays for anyone who has managed to plough through a Scott novel to understand the tremendous influence he had on the world. Not only was he regarded as the greatest writer of his age, his influence was everywhere - everything from operas to knitting patterns, from dog breeds to railway stations, were named after his books and characters (he was even responsible for a minor agricultural revolution in Poland).”
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complained that Scott’s books and “romanticism of an absurd past that is dead,” contributed to the Southern states’ secession during the Civil War. Twain leveled the complaint at Scott on the grounds that his novels portrayed a chivalric code of honor that was unrealistic and unfortunately internalized in Southern culture:

Then comes Sir Walter Scott with his enchantments, and by his single might checks this wave of progress, and even turns it back; sets the world in love with dreams and phantoms; with decayed and swinish forms of religion; with decayed and degraded systems of government; with the sillinesses and emptinesses, sham grandeurs, sham gauds, and sham chivalries of a brainless and worthless long-vanished society.

Twain presents his argument in a voice that recalls for the reader the spoken language of the American South with its rhythmic tone and rhetorical devices such as the balancing of the adjectives “silliness” and “emptiness” and the emphatic listing of “shams.” Twain writes in a way that underscores the spareness of his word choice in comparison to the dense prose of Scott, while also using a style that calls to an American reader’s mind the oratorical devices of politicians debating. Twain is engaging in a discussion about writing on one level, but on another he is using the lean, active prose that steps away from Romanticism and anticipates modernity. In form and content, Twain is ready to leave the romanticized past behind and embark on the future. Through his word-choice and sentence structure, Twain is reinforcing his vision of America.

Scott’s fascination with the past is in direct contrast with Twain’s anticipation of the future. Nigel Leask has called Scott’s writing, “patriotic mediaevalism” and says Scott and François-René de Chateaubriand “appealed to the mediaeval past of the

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104 Twain, Mark. “Warmonger.”
The kind of patriotism found in Scott’s novels is the opposite of what Twain sought because it looks backwards for inspiration rather than using inspired thinking to move forward, creating a national identity that breaks from the past.

The medieval romances upon which Scott drew so heavily are tales of action and vivid description. Scott used Ellis’s Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances in the introduction to The Talisman. Scott’s interest in the past provided much fodder for his novels. Scott’s working style was to write with little planning in the area of plot and scant revising after the first drafts of the books were finished. Scott was writing like a businessman, trying to remain financially solvent, and he did not have time for shaping his books into “literary art.” He took the kernel of ideas he had heard in folk tales told by the hearthside and which he had read in his own studies of medieval romance and updated them to fit the novel format. In doing so, he struck a nerve with readers on both sides of the Atlantic. Mark Twain argued that Scott instilled a sense of false chivalry in the South that became a detriment to the region.

Twain lays blame for the American Civil War on the ideas he claims Southerners internalized from reading Scott’s works set in the “Age of Chivalry.” In Twain’s mind, any progress Southerners had made was strangled by the incorporation of and a focus on a romanticizing of social rank. Twain writes:

He did measureless harm; more real and lasting harm, perhaps, than any other individual that ever wrote. Most of the world has now outlived a good part of these harms, though by no means all of them; but in our South they flourish pretty forcefully still. Not so forcefully as half a generation ago, perhaps, but still forcefully. There, the genuine and wholesome civilization of the nineteenth century is curiously confused and commingled with the Walter Scott Middle-Age sham civilization; and so you have practical, common-sense, progressive ideas, and progressive

107 Walter Scott. The Talisman.
works; mixed up with the duel, the inflated speech, and the jejune romanticism of an absurd past that is dead, and out of charity ought to be buried. But for the Sir Walter disease, the character of the Southerner-- or Southron, according to Sir Walter`s starchier way of phrasing it-- would be wholly modern, in place of modern and medieval mixed, and the South would be fully a generation further advanced than it is. It was Sir Walter that made every gentleman in the South a Major or a Colonel, or a General or a Judge, before the war; and it was he, also, that made these gentlemen value these bogus decorations. For it was he that created rank and caste down there, and also reverence for rank and caste, and pride and pleasure in them. Enough is laid on slavery, without fathering upon it these creations and contributions of Sir Walter.\footnote{Twain, Mark. “Warmingen.”

Twain argues that while Scott’s novels were popular elsewhere, they did “real and lasting harm” in the South where people were unable to progress to a true democratic society because they had accepted the idea of a society that was steeped in tradition and rank. A classless society could not exist with those influences and the South continually found itself crippled on the path to progress by the infatuation with rank and status. Twain asserts that it was the false pride of meaningless titles and ranks he saw promoted in the novels of Scott that allowed Southerners to stall in their progress toward a society that was truly democratic and based in “modern” ideas and principles rather than in the age of chivalry. This craving for rank, Twain claims, is partially responsible for the horror of slavery in the South and largely responsible for the Southern states’ collective decision to secede from the Union. Twain’s claims are simplistic and absurd on the surface – a handful of historical novels responsible for the most pivotal (and still divisive) wars on American soil -- but his insight about Southern notions of societal rank and pride are compelling. Today, honorary titles such as the Kentucky Colonel,\footnote{http://kycolonels.org/index.cgi?id=52 Kentucky Colonels did have their roots in the militia that fought during the War of 1812, but today the organization is honorary and has nothing to do with military service; however, the organization does do many fund-raising efforts across the state of Kentucky.} show that
Southerners still cling to notions of rank and gentility. Twain’s writings, such as *Puddin’ head Wilson*, suggest a desire for a society where individuals are judged for their character and actions rather than material worth or external factors such as race over which they have little control. Twain was a realist at the core even though he uses humor and exaggeration in nearly every piece of commercial writing. Twain’s journalism career made him a stickler for details and accuracy of reporting; that background certainly made him conscious of the power of the written word and social movements. He took James Fennimore Cooper to task for writing action scenes that seemed unrealistic and not based upon experience. In Scott, Twain saw, on the surface level, writing that conflicted with his own aesthetic principles and, on a deeper level, themes that reinforced societal structures that kept people divided by rank and class. Twain’s awareness of the power of the written word led him to disparage Scott’s writing publicly as he feared Southerners would rebuild the region on the same principles that had led to the Civil War to begin with; Scott’s popular novels reinforced notions of rank.

A continuation of the passage from *Ivanhoe*, illustrates the kind of the romanticized version of history that Twain disliked in Scott:

The whole race of Saxon princes and nobles had been extirpated or disinherited, with few or no exceptions; nor were the numbers great who possessed land in the country of their fathers, even as proprietors of the second, or of yet inferior classes. The royal policy had long been to weaken, by every means, legal or illegal, the strength of a part of the population which was justly considered as nourishing the most inveterate antipathy to their victor. All the monarchs of the Norman race had shown the most marked predilection for their Norman subjects; the laws of the chase, and many others equally unknown to the milder and more free spirit of the Saxon constitution, had been fixed upon the necks of the subjugated inhabitants, to add weight, as it were, to the feudal chains with which they were loaded. At court, and in the castles of the great nobles, where the pomp and state of a court was emulated, Norman-French was the only language employed; in courts of law, the pleadings and judgments were delivered in the same tongue. In short, French was the language of honour, of chivalry, and even
of justice, while the far more manly and expressive Anglo-Saxon was abandoned to the use of rustics and hinds, who knew no other.

Scott’s description of the vanquished, yet ‘manly’ and ‘rustic’ Saxons shows them as underdogs, salt-of-the-earth people who have an internal nobility that mere titles cannot convey. While Southerners have historically been concerned with societal rank, there is also a long tradition in the Deep South of valuing people who are stoic in the face of hardship and who are simple working folk. The two seemingly contrasting themes of social rank and pride in commonness pervade Southern literature and culture, so the appeal of Scott’s works which take place in a distant place and time is understandable in the context of a society that simultaneously values land-ownership, agrarian life, and a class system.

Scott and Twain both used the Middle East as a subject and setting. For Scott, the region appears in his historical novels as an exotic place where cultures clash. Twain’s approach to the Middle East was unromantic and often full of disdain. Twain detailed his experiences in the Middle East in *Innocents Abroad*, published in 1869. Michael B. Oren writes that travelogues and memoirs about the Middle East were a source of both romantic escapism and negativity that served to help solidify identity:

Negative depictions of the Middle East also reached America through the memoirs of European diplomats and travelers, over a hundred of which has been published by the late eighteenth century. Though most of these books were in French, a few, including James Bruce’s *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile*, were available to English readers. These depicted the Middle East as an alien realm, at once romantic and threatening. Whereas his predecessors looked at the region and saw in its brutality and backwardness an inverse image of their own tolerance and refinement, the mirror, for Twain, showed Americans to be equally small-minded and crude. Seven years earlier, before the Civil War, American readers might have objected to such an unflattering depiction. But the violent deaths of 600,000 soldiers forced Americans to look at themselves, to
question whether they indeed retained any claim to innocence or the right to call any other culture uncivilized.\textsuperscript{110}

Twain applied his caustic wit to the travel pieces he wrote while touring the Middle East as a way to critique his country and to make people question the moral and ethical direction the country might be headed in the Reconstruction era.

**SCOTT AS A LITERARY INFLUENCE**

Moving beyond the South and considering Scott as a literary influence, it is easy to see his mark on American storytelling conventions. Scott is still an influential figure for having solidified the historical novel. His novels are cited as examples of the historical genre in books on the craft of fiction\textsuperscript{111} and in references on literary terms.\textsuperscript{112} In *Aspects of the Novel*, Forster praises Scott’s ability to introduce characters, writing, “He slides them in very naturally, and with a promising air.”\textsuperscript{113} I say he has solidified the genre, not created it, because I ascribe to the idea that most “histories” contain large enough portions of fictitious material that there is little pure history. I should also point out that I am borrowing from the New Historicists in my interpretations of historical writing.\textsuperscript{114} While Scott is among the early novelists who labeled his own work “historical fiction,” he did not create the genre alone. Scott’s working journals show that he did research in various areas of local and world history before and during the writing process,

\textsuperscript{110} Michael B. Oren. *Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007.) 240
\textsuperscript{112} The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms, 2nd ed. Ross Murfin and Supryia M. Ray, eds. New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2003. Murfin and Supryia note, “Historical novels are often vehicles for their authors’ insights into historical figures and their influences or into the causes and consequences of historical events, changes, or movements.” (201). The first example they give of the genre is Scott’s 1814 Waverley. Using their definition on *The Talisman*, one can point to examples in the text where Scott uses Saladin as a figure who shows more nobility than the English king, Richard I, which will be discussed further in the body of this chapter.
\textsuperscript{113} E.M. Forster. *Aspects of the Novel*. (33). While Forster praises Scott’s ability to introduce characters, his overall opinion of Scott’s writing is unfavorable.
with a conscious desire to transmit accuracy to his fiction. In this, he has done as predecessors such as Aphra Behn (while writing about the Monmouth Rebellion in *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister*) and Daniel Defoe (*Robinson Crusoe* and *A Journal of the Plague Year*) did when they drew on personal experience, research, and journals to create realistic fiction that was associated with a specific place and time and to create an illusion of “being there” through details, scene, and characterization.

In Scott’s 1825 novel, *The Talisman*, there are formulaic conventions borrowed from medieval romances, such as characters in disguise and ladies and their champions. In chapter four, the protagonist of the novel Sir Kenneth, witnesses the procession of nuns and novices in a chapel. One of the novices drops a rose at his feet as she passes. Scott turns this scene into a scene that borrows from courtly love tradition where a man devotes himself to an unattainable woman:

Still, while the procession, for the third time, surrounded the chapel, the thoughts and the eyes of Kenneth followed exclusively the one among the novices who had dropped the rosebud. Her step, her face, her form were so completely assimilated to the rest of the choristers that it was impossible to perceive the least marks of individuality; and yet Kenneth's heart throbbed like a bird that would burst from its cage, as if to assure him, by its sympathetic suggestions, that the female who held the right file on the second rank of the novices was dearer to him, not only than all the rest that were present, but than the whole sex besides. The romantic passion of love, as it was cherished, and indeed enjoined, by the rules of chivalry, associated well with the no less romantic feelings of devotion; and they might be said much more to enhance than to counteract each other.

From one gesture on the novice’s part, Kenneth feels a surge of love and devotion. Scott has transferred the usual scene of courtly love from a palace court to the cloister.

Kenneth’s devotion to a novice on the path to spiritual refinement and vows that will

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remove her from worldly love and experience twists the notion of courtly love until it becomes unrecognizable. The near anonymity of the novice -- “Her step, her face, her form were so completely assimilated to the rest of the choristers that it was impossible to perceive the least marks of individuality…” – emphasizes the importance of ritual over true feeling for the characters in the novel and dehumanizes the object of Kenneth’s affection. She remains nameless and drifts out of the scene as easily as she came into it, ushered away within the safety of the group.

The rest of the passage confirms that the novice purposefully dropped the rose at his feet, for she repeats the action. In the description that follows, Scott again emphasizes her lack of identity while expanding Kenneth’s by including his sobriquet “Knight of the Leopard”:

It was, therefore, with a glow of expectation that had something even of a religious character that Sir Kenneth, his sensations thrilling from his heart to the ends of his fingers, expected some second sign of the presence of one who, he strongly fancied, had already bestowed on him the first. Short as the space was during which the procession again completed a third perambulation of the chapel, it seemed an eternity to Kenneth. At length the form which he had watched with such devoted attention drew nigh. There was no difference betwixt that shrouded figure and the others, with whom it moved in concert and in unison, until, just as she passed for the third time the kneeling Crusader, a part of a little and well-proportioned hand, so beautifully formed as to give the highest idea of the perfect proportions of the form to which it belonged, stole through the folds of the gauze, like a moonbeam through the fleecy cloud of a summer night, and again a rosebud lay at the feet of the Knight of the Leopard.\textsuperscript{117}

Scott’s characters are usually men of action and do not do the sort of brooding introspection that typify the works of Romantic poets like Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley. However, he is often classified as a Romantic writer for stylistic reasons. The

\textsuperscript{117} Sir Walter Scott. \textit{The Talisman}. 
passage above, with descriptions like “the fleecy cloud of a summer night,” being set in both the distant past and in an exotic locale, combined with the thematic nod to unrequited love marks it as Romantic.

Scott’s novel is also placed squarely in the nineteenth century with its theme of conquest and European domination. Edward Said reads Scott’s works as reinforcing the binary of Occidental and Oriental, suggesting that Muslim characters in Scott’s novels, including Saladin the Talisman, “cannot escape from the fences placed around him” as the Other.¹¹⁸

While it is easy to see “Orientalist” themes at work in his fiction, Scott actually shows more subtlety and complexity than many postcolonial critics give him credit for. 1819’s Ivanhoe is noted for the sympathetic treatment of the Jewish heroine, Rebecca, and the characterization of Saladin in The Talisman is as a man of superior character and intellect. The sympathetic treatment of the “Other” in the cases of Rebecca and Saladin indicates that Scott visualized the world in complex terms and was able to see merits of other cultures, hinting that non-Western culture is as valuable as European, especially British, culture. His depiction of Saladin shows a Saladin who is superior in ethics to King Richard, following Islamic tenants of helping his fellow man even if that man is technically an enemy—whether it is providing medical care to Richard or guiding Sir Kenneth through the unknown territory. Scott also explores the complex identity of his lead Western character, Sir Kenneth, in a way that anticipates arguments of hybridity in late twentieth-century cultural studies. Sir Kenneth is a Scot fighting under the direction of English King Richard the Lionheart. Later it is revealed that Sir Kenneth is actually Prince David of Scotland. The identity of Sir Kenneth creates a duality of loyalties— to his native land of Scotland and to the English king. Scott was active just before the “home rule” movement of the 1850s; the debate about Scotland’s independence has been evolving since it unified as a nation state in 843. Trade and war with neighboring countries has put Scotland’s sovereignty at issue throughout its existence as a nation. Sir Kenneth is the personification of a set of divided interests— on the one hand, providing military support to the English monarchy ensures Scotland’s safety; on the other, Prince

David is a leader in his own right, which surely brought to mind questions about loyalty and unification within the British Empire to Scott’s readers.

Scott’s writing is very detailed, but the prose is ponderous to modern ears that have been tuned in to lean prose and sound-bite dialogue of contemporary fiction. His initial descriptions of Sir Kenneth and the Emir (Saladin in disguise) walk a fine line between the Orientalist texts criticized by Edward Said and work that is truly original in its characterizations. In one passage, Scott begins with a generalization: “The champions formed a striking contrast to each other in person and features, and might have formed no inaccurate representatives of their different nations.” The reader anticipates more broad-brush strokes, but is then lead into more focused, specific description that renders Saladin as an individual.

The first sentence of the passage is, “The Saracen Emir formed a marked and striking contrast with the Western Crusader.” Scott is immediately setting up a binary, describing Saladin by what he isn’t, while giving readers his idea of what a Western hero should be in contrast. The next few lines of the passage describe Saladin in what appears to be great detail and nuance on the first reading, but in a manner that upon closer inspection serves to describe the East as something that needs to be tamed and brought into line with Western ways. Saladin is rendered “good” because he has been assimilated into the story through Scott’s romanticized vision of chivalry. On closer reading, Scott’s description paints Saladin in terms that recall the spectacle of a sideshow:

His stature was indeed above the middle size, but he was at least three inches shorter than the European, whose size approached the gigantic. His slender limbs and long spare hands and arms though well proportioned to his person, and suited to the style of his countenance, did not at first aspect promise the display of vigour and elasticity which the Emir had lately exhibited. But, on looking more closely, his limbs, where exposed to view seemed divested of all that was fleshy or cumbersome; so that nothing being left but bone, brawn and, sinew, it was a frame fitted for exertion and fatigue, far beyond that of a bulky champion, whose strength and size are counterbalanced by weight, and who is exhausted by his own

119 Walter Scott. The Talisman. 34
exertions. The countenance of the Saracen naturally bore a general national resemblance to the Eastern tribe from whom he descended, and was as unlike as possible to the exaggerated terms in which the minstrels of the day were wont to represent the infidel champions, and the fabulous description which a sister art still presents as the Saracen’s Head upon signposts.  

Scott’s description is actually hard to visualize because it is vague, relying on phrases such as “above the middle size,” “long spare hands” and arms that are “well proportioned to his person, and suited to the style of his countenance.” Scott contrasts Saladin’s form with his prowess in battle. He writes that Saladin does not appear to have the “vigour and elasticity” of appearance that he shows in battle.

Scott’s reference to the stereotypical portrayals in medieval minstrels’ songs alludes to his own study of medieval literature and art. He is showing his awareness of what has come before and his debts to the source materials and attempting to answer the critics who claimed his work had little basis in historical fact. Scott uses binaries to describe Saladin and uses comparison and contrast to give the reader a visual image. As Scott compares the two men, he describes them in terminology that recalls descriptions of horses like the Arabian and European draught horses such as the Shire or the extinct Old English Black Horse – “his limbs, where exposed to view seemed divested of all that was fleshy or cumbersome; so that nothing being left but bone, brawn and, sinew, it was a frame fitted for exertion and fatigue, far beyond that of a bulky champion, whose strength and size are counterbalanced by weight, and who is exhausted by his own exertions.”

Describing the men in animalistic terms shows that breeding is as important to Scott as the environment in which one is raised. The Emir is bred for the desert, lithe and light of frame to conserve energy while ensuring agility necessary for survival in the harsh environment. Sir Kenneth, on the other hand, possesses great height and strength that is not useful for long periods unless he learns to adapt to the new environment. The Emir’s countenance is “as unlike as possible to the exaggerated terms in which the

120 Scott. *The Talisman*. 35-36
121 Charles Mills, author of *A History of the Crusades; Quarterly Review*, and *Edinburgh Magazine* were among the contemporary critics of Scott’s fiction.
minstrels of the day were wont to represent the infidel champions,” Scott writes, showing that Saladin is a unique individual who stands out from the rest of the “Eastern Tribe,” hinting that upon first appearance and performance, his leadership is evident to anyone who witnesses him in action:

The manners of the Eastern warrior were grave, graceful, and decorous; indicating, however, in some particulars, the habitual restraint which men of warm and choleric tempers often set as a guard upon their native impetuosity of disposition, and at the same time a sense of his own dignity, which seemed to impose a certain formality of behavior in him who entertained it. 122

Throughout The Talisman, Scott subverts stereotypes about the East – he uses descriptions such as this to create a Saladin who is in line with the legacy of the leader that became widely admired in Europe within a few decades of his lifetime. 123 Scott acknowledges the stereotypes of Arabs as impetuous and hot-headed and indicates that Saladin has to work against his “nature,” developing “habitual restraint.” Scott’s description includes the idea that Saladin’s carriage lends others to treat him with respect because he has “a sense of his own dignity.” Saladin views himself as a strong man and leader and Sir Kenneth is won over by the confidence he projects.

Even with mutual respect established during the fight scene, both men feel a need to challenge the other about diet and religious belief. The scene allows Scott to show his knowledge of Muslim dietary law, while expanding upon each man’s character:

“Valiant Nazare, is it fitting that one who can fight like a man should feed like a dog or a wolf? Even a misbelieving Jew would shudder at the food which you seem to eat with as much relish as if it were fruit from the trees of Paradise.

“Valiant Saracen,” answered the Christian, looking up with some surprise at the accusation thus unexpectedly brought, “know thou that I exercise my Christian freedom, in using that which is forbidden to the Jews, being, as they

122 Scott, Sir Walter. The Talisman, 36.
123 See Dante’s use of Saladin in The Inferno.
esteem themselves, under the bondage of the old law of Moses. We, Saracen, be it known to thee, have a better warrant for what we do — Ave Maria!—be we thankful.” And, as if in defiance of his companion’s scruples, he concluded a short Latin grace with a long draught from the leathern bottle.  

“That, too, you call a part of your liberty,” said the Saracen; “and as you feed like the brutes, so you degrade yourself to the bestial condition, by drinking a poisonous liquor which even they refuse!”

The language here may be an example of what Twain was talking about when he accused Scott of “inflated speech,” “sham grandeurs,” and “sham chivalry.” The stiff construction of the sentences is Scott’s rendering of what he expected noble speech to be; as familiar as he was with Geoffrey Chaucer’s work and the very natural and earthy rhythms of Chaucer’s characters, Scott must have had other reasons to choose such unnatural sounding speech for his characters.

Sir Kenneth’s food and the manner in which he eats draws criticism from Saladin, who even after a fight and in the midst of the desert, eats with delicacy. Sir Kenneth’s defense is that Christians are not bound by the strict dietary laws of either the Jews or the Muslims and underlines their difference by drinking alcohol. Saladin reminds Sir Kenneth that alcohol reduces men to an animalistic state. Even animals have better sense than the Europeans he says. There is irony in his observation as he later explains his ancestry and name that means “Lion of the Mountain.” He takes pride in his association with the name and the tribe from which he descends.

“Now, by Our Lady, Saracen,” exclaimed the Christian, “if thou darest name in the same breath the camel-driver of Mecca with —“

An electrical shock of passion thrilled through the form of the Emir; but it was only momentary, and the calmness of his reply had both dignity and reason in it, when he said, “Slander not him whom thou knowest not; the rather that we

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124 Scott. The Talisman. (37).
126 Scott. The Talisman. (37).
venerate the founder of thy religion, while we condemn the doctrine which your priests have spun from it. I will myself guide thee to the cavern of the hermit, which, methinks, without my help, thou wouldst find it a hard matter to reach. And, on the way, let us leave to mollahs and to monks to dispute about the divinity of our faith, and speak on themes which belong to youthful warriors — upon battles, upon beautiful women, upon sharp swords, and upon bright armour.”

Scott continues to characterize Sir Kenneth and Saladin as opposites of one another as well as in opposition to the stereotypes of each man’s origins; that is, the Easterner is usually portrayed as brutish and hot-headed, but Saladin waits until he is calm before speaking after Sir Kenneth has called the Prophet Muhammad “the camel-driver of Mecca.” Instead of taking Sir Kenneth’s bait and arguing, Saladin explains that Muslims revere Christ while opposing the way the Catholic Church interprets his life and teachings. Saladin offers to take Sir Kenneth to visit the mystic hermit and suggest that they refrain from religious discussion and discuss more worldly topics instead. Scott gives Sir Kenneth’s dialogue brashness and bravado “if thou darest name in the same breath the camel-driver of Mecca with —” that shows him as a man of action, ready to fight rather than discuss. By contrast, Saladin’s words are measured so that he quickly puts Sir Kenneth in his place, “I will myself guide thee to the cavern of the hermit, which, methinks, without my help, thou wouldst find it a hard matter to reach.” His final sentence combines the balance and alliteration of “to mollahs and to monks” and the final listing of “upon battles, upon beautiful women, upon sharp swords, and upon bright armour,” the repetitive construction of which makes this speech slow and rolling, the speech of a mature man rather than the “youthful warrior” he claims to be. In this speech, Saladin effectively turns the tables on Sir Kenneth and becomes the leader.

Andrew Lincoln sees Scott’s work as germane in the current era as nations around the globe come to grips with postcolonialism:

We can see the relevance of Scott to our own age if we consider some of the consequences of the abrupt regime changes that have occurred across the globe in the last few decades. From Eastern Europe to Latin America, from Asia to the Middle East, as governments have fallen, nations have seen themselves, or been seen by others, as emerging from oppressive regimes into more liberal or more modern ones. Where sudden political change gets linked to ideas of modernization, liberalisation, even civilization, historical accountability comes to be seen as a key test of legitimacy.\(^\text{128}\)

Investigation of historical relationships and notions of perceived self and other is part of the process for a nation building its own identity separate from former colonizers. As a nation steps into the global playing field, it seeks a separate and unique identity. Defining Self against Other is one of the easiest ways to communicate identity. Postcolonial writers often solidify their voice by investigating what has been said about their people by those on the outside of the culture. People in the Middle East and people in the West continue to revisit the myth and figure of Saladin because he is a landmark on the historical terrain. A reference to Saladin in a work is nearly like using shorthand—a millennium of historical and cultural information is stored in his name alone. He continues to be a figure to whom Westerners have a hard time reconciling their feelings. On one hand he represents Islam unified, an idea that sends a tremor of fear through many secular Western governments. On the other, he is a symbol of nobility, mercy, and dignity in war and politics; he is a figure that many in the West admire. Hanns Mohring includes Scott’s novel *The Talisman* in his assessment of literary depictions of Saladin that helped solidify his legend in the West:

Several decades after the Enlightenment, the Romantics seized upon the image of Saladin, particularly through the works of the Scottish poet, Walter Scott. In his novel *The Talisman* Scott drew a very sympathetic image of the sultan, and as had been true of Lessing, permitted himself all kinds of license. Thus, for example, he

presented Saladin entering the Crusader camp dressed as a physician and healing Richard Lionheart from a severe illness, although the two men never actually met each other face to face.\textsuperscript{129}

Mohring’s point that Scott took poetic license with the historical events is useful when looking at other popular culture representations of Saladin. As we will see in the next chapter, the film \textit{Kingdom of Heaven} is a fictionalized account of the events leading up to the Battle of Hattin that seeks to discuss modern-day conflict in the Middle East in the guise of a period film.

CHAPTER 6
SALADIN ON THE SILVER SCREEN

It is not my intention to give a history of Hollywood in this chapter, but there are some points about the industry that are important to the ideas I will be using to frame my discussion of the 2005 Ridley Scott film, *Kingdom of Heaven*. At times, the United States’ government has exercised control over film content to promote national identity. This has been documented during World War II as actors and studios were enlisted to cheer on the United States’ war efforts; during the 1950s as Hollywood took part in the “Good Neighbor Policy” which attempted to ease relations between U.S. and Latin America; and finally again, in the days following September 11, 2001 as some films were edited or had delayed release dates to prevent offending the public.\(^{130}\)

The social aspect of the movies is crucial in American society; especially during the pre-television era, going to the movies was a large part of the American social life for the middle and lower classes. John Belton has described well the simultaneity of the movies as a product and producer of culture. While audiences have shaped the movies by dint of their spending – determining which genres, stars, formulas, etc. are used, the movies have also shaped the audience – imparting middle class values and giving displays of a material life to which many aspire.\(^{131}\) Many Americans growing up in the pre-World War II years describe weekly trips to the movies as a ritual nearly like other institutions such as school or church, an experience that helped them develop their worldview as well as taught them values and ethics.\(^{132}\)

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132 Harry Crews, Willie Nelson, and Frank McCourt have each written about the relief movies offered at the end of a hard week of working during their childhoods and how the images they saw on screen inspired them to leave their small towns and search for the kind of life they saw depicted.
POLITICS IN THE BACKGROUND

Part of the American mythology is the idea that we have complete freedom of speech, unhindered by government interference even if most Americans no longer believe this to be true. Americans like to think that artists and intellectuals are particularly free in this respect. While we do not have fully state sponsored media (public radio and television, for example, generate funds through listener and viewer donations) or a government censorship board in the United States, there have been times in Hollywood’s history where the U.S. government has called upon Tinsel Town to pitch in for efforts of national security or economic partnership with other countries. In the 1940s stars hawked war bonds, signed up for duty, took part in USO shows, or worked on projects that upheld the American image – even if it was idealized fiction such as interracial military units in World War II-era films.\textsuperscript{133}

Our foreign policy has dictated subject matter and portrayals in Hollywood films at various times throughout its history. Because much of Hollywood’s revenue comes from distribution outside the United States, the filmmaking industry has been cooperative about making content that is palatable to U.S. and foreign markets alike, whether that be in the form of the 1930s practice of having imaginary countries for settings rather than real ones\textsuperscript{134}, especially European locales, or through the Good Neighbor Policy of the 1940s and 1950s that was an appeal to Latin America through the use of locations, music, cultural references from Central or South America or using performers of Latino descent. Harry Benshoff and Sean Griffin describe how the film industry accepted a role in the Good Neighbor Policy as a way to boost income after the war in Europe had weakened the market for Hollywood films there:

On-screen images of Latin American cities and their urban sophisticates increased in the early 1940s. This marked rise was due to a governmental propaganda plan known as the Good Neighbor Policy, a series of federal initiatives and programs

\textsuperscript{133} John Belton. \textit{American Cinema}. President Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order 9981 in July 1948, officially integrating the U.S. armed forces.

designed to recognize and celebrate US ties with Latin American nations. As the war in Europe accelerated, the United States felt the need to shore up relations with its neighboring countries, promoting the idea of hemispheric unity to make sure that Central and South American nations did not align themselves with the so-called Axis powers (Germany, Italy, and Japan). As an important part of the Good Neighbor Policy, Hollywood was enlisted to create films and images that would celebrate Latin cultures and the idea of friendship between nations of North, Central, and South America. Having lost the profits from distributing their film in Europe due to the war, Hollywood studios were eager to court the Latin American market.  

One effect of the Good Neighbor Policy on Hollywood was to have more varied images of Latinos on screen. Granted, even if they had moved away from the Latino as a heavy, many of the representations were still stereotypes – the Latin lover and his female counterpart, the spitfire, while introducing the idea of a Latino as a romantic possibility characterized our neighbors as excitable and overly sensual at best and completely oversexed at worst. Figures like Desi Arnaz emerged as romantic/comic characters on-screen, while moving into positions of power off-screen thanks to business and personal relationships with white power players. Finally, the economic power of Central and South America pushed Hollywood filmmakers to produce movies that had appeal through characters, cultural reference, or setting to the Latin American market. In addition, some studios, such as Universal made Spanish-language versions of films they expected to be hits, such as Dracula.  

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Hollywood found itself responding to two very different reactions in the United States. First and foremost was a reaction of shock and grief that had turned to the idea of revenge against those who had

135 Harry M. Benshoff and Sean Griffin. America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality at the Movies, 140-141.
136 Ruth Vasey. The World According to Hollywood 1918-1939, 122. The Spanish-language version of Dracula was filmed on the same set, but used Spanish-speaking actors and costumes that were supposed to appeal to the Latin American market, such as dresses that were had lower-cut necklines.
perpetrated the act. Second was the fear of that revenge being directed at them felt by American-born Muslims, Arab-Americans of different religious backgrounds, and immigrants who feared being mistaken for a Muslim Arab. As an industry, Hollywood had to figure out how to deal with the attacks and their aftermath with minimal offense and while gaining a profit. Some films that had been in production before the attacks were shelved due to sensitive content, such as a plot that involved a similar attack or views of the Twin Towers. On the other hand, new films went into production that showed heroic Americans vanquishing vaguely Middle Eastern bad guys. Finally, actors such as Tony Shaloub stepped out of their roles to emphasize their Arab roots and to plead for tolerance and cultural education. Television responded more quickly than the film industry simply because of production costs and project lengths. Public service announcements were made with people from all walks of life and from varied backgrounds proclaiming unity as Americans. The United States government did not directly censor anything coming out of the entertainment industry; these efforts were largely self-policed with a mixture of compassion, empathy, and thoughts of the bottom line at stake.

ON THE MARGINS OF HOLLYWOOD

English-born Ridley Scott is not a direct product of Hollywood filmmaking, yet Scot emerged as one of the most powerful action directors in Hollywood in the 1980s. Scott’s narratives, while often strong on character (Agent Ripley in the Aliens series comes to mind), are driven by action and he has visited relationships between the East and West or imperialism on more than one occasion in his career. Scott’s films in this area include: 1492: Conquest of Paradise (1993); G.I. Jane (1997); Black Hawk Down (2001); Kingdom of Heaven (2006); and Body of Lies (2008).

137 http://www.civilrights.org/about/psa/all_america_2_text.html.
138 However, if one takes the view of scholars such as Ruth Vasey and John Belton that Hollywood-style filmmaking by the mid-1940s was the global standard of filmmaking, then Scott learned plenty about his craft from watching American films at his local theaters in Britain.
Scott’s work deals directly with images of the United States, especially in its political structure and climate, than does Chahine’s. Scott maintains a residence in the United States and has done much first-hand observation of the society. The association of Scott with Hollywood rather than strictly with the British film industry is indicative of the hybridity of the industry as well as a continuation of the cross-pollination between Britain and the United States in the cultural arena. While parts of the United States were first colonized by other European nations—Spain, France, and the Netherlands—the cultural ties to those countries have not remained nearly as strong as the ties to the United Kingdom.

Scott’s use of strong female characters calls into question notions of masculine superiority. Both Captain Ripley in *Aliens* and Jordan O’Neill in *G.I. Jane* challenge the males around them and provide models of women who are physically and mentally strong in militaristic settings. Scott’s other specialty is action, whether it is in science fiction such as *Blade Runner*, contemporary drama such as *Black Rain*, or a period piece like *Gladiator*. His films do not depict particular national characters, so much as general characteristics such as bravery, loyalty, or following one’s principles.

**KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**

From the beginning, Hollywood has borrowed from history to make its feature films. Period pieces have been a steady fixture in Hollywood from the silent epics of Cecil B. deMille through to modern films by directors like Francis Ford Coppola, Martin Scorsese, and Ridley Scott. While Scott is British, most of his major works including *Kingdom of Heaven* are Hollywood productions, complete with the big budget, sweeping action scenes, and expensive special effects associated with Hollywood.

Hollywood’s adoption of the Middle Ages can be related to the United State’s cultural ties to Europe. For some Americans, part of the attraction of the stories set in that era is to reinforce roots that extend deeper than those of the transient, industrial society of the United States. The narratives of kings, queens, knights, and saints gives many hyphenated-Americans a sense of connection to a past that came to these shores on ships from the sixteenth century through to airplanes in the twenty-first. Another attraction is the storytelling—some of the films have formulas that have been adapted from the
Romantic novels of Sir Walter Scott or from forms of the original medieval romances, poems, and histories. George MacDonald Fraser points to the awkwardness of some Hollywood films attempting to recreate and time and place to which many Americans have no cultural references:

To some extent, Hollywood has had to create the Middle Ages in its own image, and has not been helped by the fact that men in armour are difficult to take seriously. They not only look clumsy and overdressed, clanking about and inviting ribaldries about spanners and tin-openers, they seldom sound right either. This is largely the fault of Sir Walter Scott, who imposed his own style of ‘Look-for-the-knight-of-the-Fetterlock-fair-Rebecca’ dialogue on the Age of Chivalry, setting a pattern which survived well into talking pictures; in the 1950s they were still ‘prithee-my-liege’-ing away because it was the traditional thing to do, and audiences were supposed to like it.”  

Fraser’s assertion that many pre-1970 Hollywood films follow too closely the stilted dialogue of writers such as Scott is accurate. A move toward more natural dialogue and attempts at historical research in recent decades has made for films that may not produce as much cringing in the audience, but which can still be problematic in terms of historical accuracy.

One area where Hollywood succeeds in these period pieces, according to Fraser, is in the realm of legend:

The spirit has been followed, but seldom the letter. In all its excursions into the lists, Hollywood has hardly ever tried to deal with straight history; the concentration has been on folk-tale and legend, and on the semi-historical works of Shakespeare and Scott. This is perhaps as well; one may regret that Chandos and Bayard have never cantered across the screen, that Bruce has never sat his

pony waiting for Bohun, or that Hereward has never defied the Normans in the Fens, but the treatment of Richard Lionheart in leading roles suggests that these other heroes may be better left alone. He has done well enough in supporting parts, usually arriving back from the Crusades just in time to put the royal seal of approval on the triumph of Robin Hood or Ivanhoe over the usurping Prince John. These brief appearances in various costume adventures have correctly established Richard as a brawny, neglectful monarch who won fame as a leader in Palestine (although he never reached Jerusalem), made peace with Saladin, was held prisoner in Austria and ransomed despite his brother’s efforts to prevent it, and magnanimously forgave John for his treachery. So far, so good; his guest appearances have been in the robust figures of Ian Hunter, Norman Wooland, George Sanders, Anthony Hopkins, Richard Harris, and others including even Frankie Howard, but the one film fully devoted to him, The Crusades, was an artistic and historic disaster.140

King Richard is relegated to a bit part in Kingdom of Heaven, while Saladin is a presence and source of tension throughout the film. The medieval period in general and the story of Richard I and Saladin in particular have been the inspiration for many films, including the 1923 film, Richard the Lionhearted, and 1954’s King Richard and the Crusaders. I am focusing on the 2005 film Kingdom of Heaven in this chapter because the film attempts to use historical figures to hold a discourse on contemporary issues. Scott has said in interviews that Kingdom of Heaven was made partially in response to the events of September 11, 2001 and, since its release in 2005, it has been a source of discussion and debate on political and religious grounds from both Muslim and Christian as well as secular and non-secular perspectives.

The focus of Scott’s film is on Balian, a blacksmith-turned-knight, who heads to the Holy Land to atone for his and his late wife’s sins. Saladin is a central figure in the film as well. Throughout the film his presence as a leader is felt even though he does not appear on screen until the second half of the film. As was likely the case for the historical Saladin, his reputation as a strategist and warrior made him the topic of discussion long

140 Ibid, 42-43.
before his enemies met him on the battlefield. During the climatic battle scene, the music is full of minor chords, melancholy and contemplative. Scott slows the camera and action, leading the viewer’s eye around the destruction and horror of hand-to-hand combat. Blood bathes actors’ faces, the sand, and the rubble of the stone wall that Saladin’s troops have broken through with their Trebuchets.¹⁴¹ *Kingdom of Heaven* ultimately points out the futility of war — near the end, after the battle for Jerusalem, Balian (Orlando Bloom) who has led the Christian forces meets Saladin for a truce and to surrender Jerusalem to his control:

The sound of flags flapping, fire crackling, and horses moving about. Behind Balian (Orlando Bloom) is the destroyed wall and an overturned Trebuchet; further back is the militia army he has assembled to defend Jerusalem. Behind Saladin is his army, lined up, shields in front of them. Scott has arranged the actors so they are standing together under the canopy and he makes generous use of close ups and reverse shots during the conversation. Balian is covered in blood and dirt, with stubble on his chin, and bareheaded, while Saladin is clean in golden armor and helmet with decorative scrollwork, full beard with white streaks show his age/experience. Balian’s eyes wander throughout the scene. Saladin stares directly at him. They have the following conversation:

**Saladin:** Will you yield the city?

**Balian:** Before I lose it, I will burn it to the ground. Your holy places, ours, every last thing in Jerusalem that drives men mad

**Saladin:** I wonder if it would not be better if you did. You will destroy it?

**Balian:** Every stone. And every Christian knight you kill will take ten Saracens with him. You will destroy your army here and never raise another. I swear to God that to take this city will be the end of you.

Saladin: Your city is full of women and children. If my army will die, so will your city.

Balian: You offer terms; I ask none.\(^{142}\)

In this short exchange, Scott’s direction and writer William Monahan’s script show Saladin as a tough negotiator who responds to Balian’s passion with matter-of-fact logic, telling Balian that continued fighting will simply be destruction for both sides and mainly the innocent will pay for the vanity of war. Saladin’s reputation as a just and fair fighter gained him respect in Europe during his lifetime. This honor is alluded to in the truce scene as well:

Saladin: I will give every soul safe conduct to Christian lands—every soul. The women, the children, the old, and all your knights and soldiers, and your queen. No one will be harmed. I swear to God.

Balian: The Christians butchered every Muslim within the walls when they took this city.

Saladin: I am not those men. I am Salah Ad Din. Salah Ad Din

Balian: Then under these terms I surrender Jerusalem.\(^{143}\)

For Balian, Saladin’s assurance that he personally does not hold a grudge for what was done a generation before and that he offers his word of honor as Salah Ad Din is enough. The emphasis on Saladin saying his name twice, helps him stand out as both the uncontested leader of the region, but also has the effect of emphasizing his faith and obedience to God since “Ad Din” roughly translates to the “The Faithful” or “the Religious.”

After they talk of terms, Balian asks, “What is Jerusalem worth?” Saladin’s answer is “Nothing … everything.”\(^{144}\)

\(^{142}\) Scott, Ridley. *Kingdom of Heaven*. Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, 2005.

\(^{143}\) Ibid.

\(^{144}\) Ibid.
That the film was made during the Iraq war is a comment on the U.S. (and British) involvement in the war. Scott has said in interviews that the film was made partially in response to the events of 9/11 and the subsequent response by the U.S. \(^{145}\) So, having the great Muslim hero Saladin utter these words and replace a cross upon a table at the film’s end show an example of a Westerner appropriating his legend and interpreting it to their own gain – the ambivalence of the of the nothing/everything binary is evident in Ghassan Massoud’s delivery. He is smiling wearily at Orlando Bloom’s character and makes a simple gesture with each word.\(^{146}\)

As he utters, “Nothing,” Massoud is filmed off-center of the frame in a medium shot. He is turned at a three-quarter angle, his arms down at his side.\(^{147}\) There is a reverse shot of Bloom filmed from the same distance and framed the same way to show that his character, Balian, and Saladin are now equals. He receives the answer with a wry turn of his lips.\(^{148}\) This is followed by another reversal of shots and Massoud closes his hands and draws them near his chest as he breathes out the word, “everything.” He gives Balian a once over, then turns and walks away from the camera. His tone of voice is both shots is quiet, weary. Combined with his smile and the cool appraisal in his eyes as he sizes up Balian, the effect is to underline the image of Saladin the strategist who enjoyed the game of negotiation as much as any glory or honor to be earned in battle.\(^{149}\) Balian steps over bodies and announces to the men lined up on the remains of the wall, “I have surrendered Jerusalem. All will be safely escorted to the sea. If this is the kingdom of Heaven, let God do with it as he wills.”

Soon after this scene, there is one where the Christians are leaving Jerusalem and Saladin’s army is coming in to take up their posts. Saladin is shown walking through the palace of Baldwin IV and he finds an overturned cross upon the floor. He bends down and picks it up, finally putting it to rights on a nearby table. The scene closes with a profile shot of Saladin where the lighting emphasizes his gray hair and the lines and

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\(^{145}\) Scott, Ridley. “When Worlds Collide.”
http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2005/apr/29/1

\(^{146}\) Scott, Ridley. Kingdom of Heaven.

\(^{147}\) Scott, Ridley. Kingdom of Heaven.

\(^{148}\) Ibid.

\(^{149}\) Ibid.
creases on his features. Scott is showing Saladin the wise old war veteran who has opted to show mercy to the Christian population of Jerusalem, offering them safe passage out of the land. The deep lighting also underscores the image of him as weary of battle, fatigued, but unable to rest because the stream of Crusaders will not stop, especially now that he has taken control of Jerusalem. It is a sharp contrast to Scott’s vision of Richard the Lionheart, whom Balian meets on the journey back to France. Richard is full of face with a dark, neatly trimmed beard. He is shot slightly from below to emphasize his height, power, and strength. He looks confident as he questions Balian about the route to Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{150} Again, Scott makes us of the reverse shot, keeping Balian in center of the frame as he has done with Richard, but filming him straight on, sapping his power slightly, but not making him appear to cower before the English king (as one might have expected since Balian ultimately lost Jerusalem to the Muslims). The exhaustion is still in his eyes as Balian gives directions and only offers up that he is a blacksmith. Let Richard find out for himself about the futility of fighting for the Holy Land.\textsuperscript{151}

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have suggested that both \textit{Kingdom of Heaven} is political commentary in the form of entertainment. \textit{Kingdom of Heaven} calls into question the reasons for fighting in the Middle East and denounces war as a solution to human problems. It also suggests that religion is simply an excuse for these wars and not their true cause.\textsuperscript{152} The film has been the subject of discussion and used by various groups to point to their causes. The other point I have raised is that \textit{Kingdom of Heaven} utilizes formulas and characterizations popularized in earlier forms of the same stories—medieval romances, captivity narratives, and the novels of Sir Walter Scott. While the technology and production are modern, the storytelling and character types at the core are not.

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{152} \textit{Kingdom of Heaven}. Before meeting with Saladin during the truce, Balian is standing with the priest, who tells him, “Covert to Islam. Repent later.” Balian’s response is, “You’ve taught me a lot about religion your Eminence.”
CONCLUSION

The story of Saladin resonates nearly a thousand years after his death because the West continues to wrestle with Islam as a source of spiritual and political rivalry. To both East and West Saladin represents the potential for unity within Islam. He is a figure to be admired because of his personal and political charisma. For the devout Muslim, he is also a figure who exemplifies Islamic ideals of mercy and compassion (these virtues are highly important in Islam where each verse of the Quran opens with “In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful”). When he took Jerusalem, Saladin freed those who had not been ransomed; in contrast, when Richard the Lionheart won the battle at Acre, he put to death more than 2,000 enemy troops. Richard’s actions made sense in the immediate situation; killing the troops meant Richard’s army avoided the financial strain of housing them as captives. Saladin’s actions made political sense—freeing the non-Muslim occupants of Jerusalem and providing safe passage surely elevated his reputation as a fair and formidable foe. Saladin may not have been thinking about his legacy beyond his spiritual salvation when he made this decision, yet this act is one of the key moments that ensured his enduring fame.

Moving into a broader reading of Saladin’s legacy, I would like to consider Dante Alighieri’s placement of Saladin in Limbo alongside the great figures of the past who had died before they could have gained knowledge of Jesus Christ. In lines 127-129 of Canto IV, he writes, “I saw that Brutus who drove Tarquin out, Lucretia, Julia, Marcia, and Cornelia, and, solitary, set apart, Saladin.”

Edward Said discusses the placement of Saladin and other Muslim figures Dante admired, such as Avicenna and Averroes, in this area of Hell as indicative of the complex relationship Europeans held with Islam. Said writes, “Eternity is a great leveler of distinctions, it is true, but the special anachronisms and anomalies of putting pre-Christian luminaries in the same category of ‘heathen’ damnation with post-Christian Muslims does not trouble Dante.”

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Western writers and thinkers have had trouble resolving their admiration for certain Muslim figures with a general anti-Islamic sentiment that predominated in the culture. Saladin is one of those figures that recur in literary and artistic representations over many centuries. In addition to Dante’s solution—simply ignoring the contradictions implicit in his admiration, there has also been the strategy to uncover a secret past for Saladin—converting him to Christianity or giving him European lineage. Appropriating Saladin on a theological or genealogical plane allows Europeans (and later, Americans) to embrace him. However, not every one of these representations serves to transfer Saladin from his roots to more European origins. Some of the representations consider Saladin as potential lover, crumbling his devout image.

FETISH AND FANTASY ABOUT THE ORIENT

Hannes Mohring speculates that Europeans felt compelled to inscribe Saladin as Christian in order to feel comfortable with expressing admiration for him:

In large part, Saladin shaped the European image of the ‘noble heathen.’ Because of their experiences with him during the Third Crusade, his European contemporaries believed Saladin to be a perfect knight, and in the eyes of some, even a secret Christian. Over the course of the following centuries a number of claims were made about Saladin by Christians, including that as a young man he was dubbed a knight by the baron of the kingdom of Jerusalem, that he had a Christian mother, and that he died as a baptized Christian.  

Appropriating Saladin in this way helped Europeans put Saladin into a context where he could be seen as a figure to admire for his ethics and his strategy in war. However, other stories circulated about Saladin, that served to assert power over his legend in a different way.

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Saladin is usually put forth in Western accounts as a pious man, the concentration being on his use of wit and strategy on the battlefield. This categorization of him as a religious man lent itself easily to the depictions of the spread of Islam as a punishment for corruption and faithlessness among Christians. However, it contrasts starkly with the more common representation of the Muslim as a sensual, fleshly being. Many of the English and American writers play with the notion of the unbridled sexuality they imagined behind the veil and the harem wall. In romances and dramas from the medieval and Elizabethan era, the lusty sultan is a stock character. In *The King of Tars*, the Saracen king is a threat to the Christian woman on a sexual and spiritual level. He will take her by force and impose his beliefs upon the household. Only when his child is born monstrous and the power of his Christian wife’s prayer restores the child to a healthy whole, does he repent and seek salvation in Christian terms.\(^{156}\)

While Saladin is generally cast as a figure of piety, there are stories that cast him as a lover —especially as a partner to Eleanor of Aquitaine. When Saladin is recast in the light of a sensuous lover, the fantasy can both show him as a threat to Western female sexual purity, and also to “feminize” him through the portrayal. While masculinity is tied to virility and sexual expression in popular culture, this does not necessarily translate to these representations of Saladin because he is not cast in the typical role of Western male sexuality—the dominant partner. He is cast as a sensitive lover, who is younger than his partner, reinforcing the Western notion of femininity in Eastern men. Maria Rosa Menocal discusses rumors of Saladin’s involvement with European women in *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage*. In her book, she describes the unlikely rumor that Saladin was the lover of Eleanor of Aquitaine. She writes:

> One of the best-told stories, in fact, came from Eleanor’s own trip to the Middle East, for Eleanor not only accompanied her French husband, Louis, on the Second Crusade, which began in 1146, but reputedly created quite a scandal while she was there. Among other things, it was rumored that she had taken more than one Arab, including the great Saladin, as her lover. There can be no accuracy to the

story, at least as far as Saladin was concerned. The man who was to proclaim the Holy War of 1186 and take Jerusalem the following year, thus rocking all of Europe, was but a boy when Eleanor and her entourage were enjoying the pleasures of Palestine, as crusaders before them had done.

But the ultimate truth of such a rumor about Eleanor is not nearly as important as the fact that such a legend not only arose but apparently remained quite popular throughout her lifetime and during the rest of the Middle Ages. The association of Eleanor with Saladin — who was to become a symbolic character in his own right, the personification of Arab honor and magnanimity in the northern European imagination and in later medieval literature — and with other Arab princes at a sexually intimate level is a more interesting reflection (from a literary point of view) of other, less titillating kinds of intimacy. It remains a good story, an indication, in part, of the degree to which the Arab world — the dominant Other, whether in al-Andalus or the Holy Land — was an entity associated with great appeal and seduction.157

The sexualization of the Other in these accounts and stories serves as an attempt to explain their power as a primal, yet fleeting force, something that can be conquered like other fleshly urges. The implication, too, is that like battling an addiction or craving for something, the urge to join with the Muslim Other is a difficult one to repress, one which requires discipline and strength, the masculine traits Said speaks of when pointing out how Westerners “feminize” the Muslim male158 in an attempt to make him subordinate. Anxiety about Muslim power encroaching upon Europe (and today, the fear of Islam as a political force) is often expressed as mixed repugnance for and attraction to the Western fabrication of the sensual East. Male-female relations in medieval romances, Early Modern drama, and modern Hollywood films are often symbolic of national struggles. In myth or legend, the seduction or rape of a woman as the image for the succumbing of one culture or political entity to another is certainly common, and in archetypal terms the

attraction of the Other at one level is often commensurate with his repulsiveness at another. Eleanor’s sexual attraction to the enemy of the crusade fits such patterns all too neatly, and in this case it is perhaps even more telling that Eleanor had anything but an active and willing role in her intimate associations with the Arab prince or princes with whom she consorted. This too is part of the story, since in fairly short order the Europeans who had participated in the First Crusade had embraced the cultural and material amenities of their supposed enemies.  

Edward Said focuses on as the fetishizing of the Orient in his books *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*. Said uses examples from literature and visual art to show how the East is a construct of the Western imagination. He argues that Westerners felt compelled to describe and define the East as part of a self-identifying process, using the East as a foil to the West. “Therefore as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it a reality and presence in and for the West. The two geographical entities thus support and to an extent reflect each other.” Europeans reading the accounts of the Ottoman courts were offered a vicarious thrill with the peek into a lifestyle that is likely largely imagined. Similar accounts of the lifestyle of the sons of Sadam Hussein or Momar Qaddafi with his female bodyguards are part of the contemporary news accounts that demonize not only the individuals, but all Islamic rulers by association. Consider the opening paragraph of a 2003 *Time* magazine article on Uday Hussein:

> After months of recovering from an attempt on his life that put eight bullets in his left side, Uday Hussein, the eldest son of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, was ready to party. At his first outing in 1998, at the posh Jadriyah Equestrian Club, he used high-powered binoculars to survey the crowd of friends and family from a platform high above the guests. He saw something he liked, recalls his former aide Adib Shabaan, who helped arrange the party. Uday tightened the focus on a

159 Menocal, Maria Rosa. *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage*, 51.
pretty 14-year-old girl in a bright yellow dress sitting with her father, a former provincial governor, her mother and her younger brother and sister.\textsuperscript{161}

The description follows the typical narrative description of a debauched rock star scanning the crowd for girls he wants the roadie to bring back stage. That the girl in question is “a pretty 14-year-old” is supposed to add another level of disgust as the reader now views Hussein not only as corrupt, spoiled, and cruel, but also as a pedophile. The attraction to youth is mentioned by Said in \textit{Orientalism} as another stereotype of Muslims promoted in the art and literature by Europeans characterizing the Arab world:

In all of his novels Flaubert associates the Orient with the escapism of sexual fantasy. Emma Bovary and Frédéric Moreau pine for what in their drab (or harried) bourgeois lives they do not have and what they realize they want comes easily to their daydreams packed inside Oriental clichés: harems, princesses, princes, slaves, veils, dancing girls and boys, sherbets, ointments, and so on. The repertoire is familiar, not so much because it reminds us of Flaubert’s own voyages in and obsession with the Orient, but because once again, the association is clearly made between the Orient and the freedom of licentious sex\textsuperscript{162}.

The fantasy of “Oriental sex” is certainly hinted at in the lurid tales of Uday Hussein’s behavior and in popular culture references such as “true” stories about escorts hired by rich Saudis or simply the stereotype of the lusty sheik who appears on screen from the silent era’s Rudolph Valentino \textit{The Sheik} to the 1983 film, \textit{Sahara}, starring Brooke Shield and John Rhys-Davies.\textsuperscript{163} The comodification of “Oriental sex” may have had its beginnings in the travel narratives and novels of the nineteenth century, but is still part of the world of pornography where magazines and web sites have sections devoted to Orientalist fantasies.

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The characterization of the East — and especially the Muslim East — as a land of erotic delight is another of the continuing threads from the medieval period through to the modern. Romances such as *The King of Tars* play with the idea of the oversexed Easterner posing a threat to the chastity of British women. The fear of conversion during the early modern period is partially explained by the idea that wayward men (and they’re nearly always men in the captivity and piracy narratives), attracted by the sensual pleasures of the East, convert to Islam as a way to permanently join its world.

**COMPLEXITY OF THE IMAGE**

The representations we see of Saladin from the medieval to the present are indicative of the West’s need to circumscribe the East in terms it can readily apprehend. Saladin is a figure that recurs in the imagery because of his complexity; he cannot be written off as a bogeyman like Saddam Hussein or Osama bin Laden, who are primarily viewed in the West as terrorists. Unlike them, he struck fear into the hearts of his contemporaries for what he could do on the battlefield, and also because he was a just foe who practiced brilliant strategy. He had a reputation for mercy that went hand-in-hand with his success in battle, which earned him grudging respect from Europeans.

Saladin’s duality as both a fierce warrior and a leader who had compassion for his enemies made it difficult for Europeans to define and understand him. This difficulty in coming to terms with Saladin applies to the broader area of Islam and has been transferred from European countries to the United States. America does not know how to interpret and understand Islam, so it revisits the old images and figures to try to construct a digestible version.

America has assumed the role of political and cultural colonizer. Since the discovery of oil in Saudi Arabia, the U.S. has engaged with the Middle East in an effort to dominate the region economically and culturally, exporting popular culture and political ideals in exchange for crude oil. While the U.S. has not taken over Iraq as a colony, it has attempted to impose its will on the post-Saddam Hussein Iraq, trying to influence the government and rebuilding efforts. As the U.S. struggles to gain or maintain control in the region, it also attempts to define itself by its engagement or disengagement
with both Islam and the Middle East. As Michael Oren uses the term, power, he means it “… refers to the pursuit of America’s interests in the Middle East through a variety of means—military, diplomatic, and financial.”

While the U.S. has been involved in Middle East affairs for a variety of reasons since the country’s first independent years, the Middle East has played a part in the cultural fabric of America that resonates deeper than the daily headlines. The continual investigation of the Middle East shows America’s obsession with region. As Oren writes:

The idea of the Middle East has always enchanted Americans, enthralling them with an ethereal montage of minarets and pyramids, oases, camels, and dunes. Romantic notions of the region originated in the Bible, traditionally the most widely read book in America, with its otherworldly depictions of the desert. Another popular volume, *A Thousand and One Arabian Nights*, the medieval Persian anthology, further endowed the Middle East with a sexual aura. Lured by these seductive images, great numbers of nineteenth-century Americans traveled to the Middle East and vividly portrayed its landscapes in their prose. Later, when film and sound recordings replaced books as the primary means of perpetuating myths, Middle Eastern motifs became the rage in Hollywood and the music industry. Such revelries not only influenced the public’s perceptions of the area, they also impacted government policy.

Oren correctly assesses the impact of Hollywood upon public policy. The representation of Arabs as violent backward people, no matter from which country they originate is common—seen in films such as *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Delta Force*. As these images are continuously put in front of the public, the audience is more inclined to accept these fabrications over fact.

In *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, the crowds of Egyptians that Indiana Jones encounters are largely a faceless mob, easily outwitted by the Westerner, Jones. The one Egyptian in the Indiana Jones series that is shown as an individual is Sallah, portrayed by Welsh actor John Rhys-Davies. In contrast to the robed and faceless mobs of the markets and dig sites, Sallah wears a light linen suit in many scenes and hums Gilbert and Sullivan

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tunes. The show tunes and fastidiousness mark Sallah as feminine despite the fact that he is married with several children. The hybridity of the character makes him an acceptable intimate for the roguish Jones. Both men have cobbled together identities that make them individuals within their own societies—Jones is a professor by day, complete with the suede elbow patches on his blazer and an adventurer in his off-time. Jones steps out of the classroom and dons a leather bomber jacket, dusty fedora, leather satchel and a whip—not the expected daily wear of middle class American men in the World War II era.

Viewers were presented with cartoonish versions of Nazis and Arabs in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Many in post-war America had grown up with popular culture portrayals of Nazis as mindless killers, and because of historical circumstances, few would complain about negative stereotyping of Nazis. The film was consciously made to mimic the cliff-hangers writer George Lucas and director Steven Spielberg had grown up with, so having hordes of bad guys, exotic locales, a hero, a sidekick, and a damsel in distress were all part of the expected ingredients.

Hollywood also had a long-standing tradition of portraying Arabs in a negative light, such as trickster figures, kidnappers, violent Bedouins, greedy sheiks, etc. The representation of Arabs as figures of terror began in the 1970s, and took firm hold in the 1980s with films such as *The Delta Force*, a 1986 film starring Chuck Norris and Lee Marvin as American troops sent in to rescue a planeload of primarily Jewish American hostages whose flight was hijacked and taken to Beirut by terrorists. The film, based on a 1985 TWA hijacking, unfolds with non-stop action and pays little attention to accuracy—in one scene, the Arab terrorists, who are supposedly from several countries, are shown with a portrait of the Ayatollah Khomeini in their hideout. The result is an image of the Middle East as a homogenous entity rather than individual nations and as if all Arabs are Shiites, rather than a mix of religions including Druze, B’hai, and various branches of

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Christianity. The film tapped into a national anxiety about the Middle East as an enemy on political and spiritual grounds. As Roger Ebert wrote, “The movie caters directly to our national revenge fantasies; in ‘The Delta Force,’ the hijacking ends the way we might have wanted it to.”

The popular culture representations of Muslims have roots in older discourse borrowed from Europe and modified to fit American culture. Americans may not have the same intimate history of the crusades as Europeans, but thanks to novels such as those penned by Sir Walter Scott, and retellings of the story of Richard the Lionheart, that have been exported to the United States, so too has the image of Saladin. He appears in Hollywood films and video games, such as Age of Empires, where players can control an army in the chapter, “Saladin’s Defence of the Holy Land.”

As we consider these representations and their sources, it is important to keep in mind that, with the medieval romances, the Early Modern plays, the Romantic novels, and Hollywood films, the primary use was for entertainment. As Norman Daniel writes, “I am not saying that the chansons were the ‘same’ as their modern parallels. We cannot say that they ‘were’ the soap operas, the science fiction, the comics, the cowboy stories of the Middle Ages, or even an exact equivalent, but we can say that they responded to much the same needs in an audience.”

We cannot have a full understanding of the impact of these works on the original audience because we are looking at them with modern sensibilities and are searching specifically for evidence within the text that mirror cultural shifts. We have established them as literature bound by text and criticism when they might well have been created with the idea of entertainment. However, the persistent images of the Muslim Other and the configurations of Saladin seem to point to inspiration beyond entertainment. We see in these works a continuing investigation of national identity, religious and economic shifts, and the compulsion to define Self by Other.

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APPENDIX

MANUSCRIPT STUDIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA

In this chapter I will address some of the implications of digitizing manuscripts and relate my experience with studying the Auchinleck Manuscript online. It is important to recognize that in studying the manuscript, it is only through a virtual representation that the codex and its texts have been accessed. Having not seen the actual manuscript, there is a chance that I may not have seen some aspect that would be a clue to its readership over the generations. Knowing more about the owners and readers of the manuscript would help solidify the knowledge of how the book was received and used over several centuries. Being able to see the marginalia or to study the signatures might make answering such questions as whether it had been passed among family members or if authors besides Sir Walter Scott had studied the volume possible.

The reflections on digital manuscripts below reflect my experience and raise some of the issues scholars find when using digital editions instead of the actual manuscript. It temporarily diverts the focus away from the subject of Saladin, but ideally initiates discourse on medieval studies in the digital era and the evolution of both readership and representation.

IMPLICATIONS OF DIGITIZATION

The digitization of manuscript collections is, overall, a benefit to Medieval Studies in general and manuscript studies in particular. It is certainly convenient for scholars on a limited budget to be able to access images of manuscript pages from collections around the globe, or, as Wendy Duff, Barbara Craig, and Joan Cherry note in their survey of historians’ use of archival sources, it is helpful to be able to use digital resources to “verify the existence and content of primary and secondary sources before travelling to remote institutions.” Access to these images is also a boon in the

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171 Wendy Duff, Barbara Craig, and Joan Cherry. “Historians’ Use of Archival Sources:
classroom where teachers and students can examine them together, whether the focus is on learning palaeography, reading a medieval language such as Old English, or examining the artwork that accompanies texts such as the Bible or a book of hours. The flexibility of digital editions is also a great advantage: parallel texts can be included, as can notes to help modern readers navigate medieval culture and society, links to other manuscripts, etc. However, as with anything that has been edited, there is the certainty that our reading is going to be directed in some way by the editing process, which acts to mediate the object for the reader, whether there is a deliberate sense of intervention on the editor’s part or not. This is true even for a non-print edition because while the viewer has control over which sections he or she visits on a website or CD-ROM, there is still an editorial process at work in choosing what materials to make available and how to arrange it for the viewer’s use.

THE DIGITAL AUCHINLECK MANUSCRIPT

The manuscript I have considered the most fully is in this context is Adv. MS 19.2.1, the Auchinleck Manuscript. Allison Wiggins and the late David Burnley headed the effort to digitize the manuscript for the National Library of Scotland. The edition went online in 2003 (it is thus a very early example of the genre) and includes the full contents of the manuscript in both digital facsimiles of the folios and in transcriptions of each item; there are introductory essays on the history of the manuscript; a glossary, a lexicon, bibliographical information, links to other manuscripts of interest, and search tools. For the purpose of this chapter, I am following the Oxford English Dictionary definition of “edition” as: “One of the differing forms in which a literary work (or a collection of works) is published, either by the author himself, or by subsequent editors.” When considering medieval manuscripts, this is an important distinction. Unless one is looking


172 http://dictionary.oed.com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/cgi/entry/50072165?query_type=word&query_word=edition&first=1&max_to_show=10&sort_type=alpha&search_id=F0fq-lJbHLA-4963&result_place=1

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at the manuscript in question in person, then he or she is looking at an edition of some kind – even the most basic facsimile is an edition because someone has decided the original is of enough value that it must be preserved and shared with others, and the layout, production techniques and information surrounding the text will have a direct impact upon the way that object is perceived and apprehended. Often these facsimiles contain more than just reproductions of the manuscript pages. Some include a table of contents and commentary on the manuscripts done by a modern editor. Again, I take my definition from the *OED*: “One who prepares the literary work of another person, or number of persons for publication, by selecting, revising, and arranging the material; also, one who prepares an edition of any literary work.”  

The decision to reproduce the manuscript in black and white or color is an editorial decision made by a contemporary editor who is basing the decision not only aesthetic value, but also on printing costs, budget, and the potential audience use. The editor must ask him or herself who will be using the edition, why, how, and under what conditions. Only then can the decisions about reproduction quality, supplemental materials, and form (a bound object that is as close to the original in feel and look, a digital version, etc.).

**USING AND READING DIGITAL MANUSCRIPTS**

Jonas Carlquist, who has worked on digitizing medieval Swedish manuscripts, writes of the advantages of these digital editions; namely, that editors can include enough information in the form of links to help modern readers understand what he labels the “personal library of a medieval miscellany.” In “Medieval Manuscripts, Hypertext, and Reading,” Carlquist emphasizes the idea of nonlinear reading in the medieval era, proposing that many manuscripts were not meant to be read sequentially, but rather were intended to be used referentially like a modern phone book or encyclopaedia. Depending on our interest in a given manuscript, it is likely that many of us who study them do do a

http://dictionary.oed.com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/cgi/entry/50072171?query_type=word&query_word=edition&first=1&max_to_show=10&sort_type=alpha&search_id=F0fq-IJbHLA-4963&result_place=1
certain amount of non-linear reading. Another comparison might be drawn between medieval manuscripts and modern web sites. A medieval manuscript contained many visual clues for the reader from very basic rubrication to complex illuminated panels that often encapsulated the contents in a visual form. Some manuscripts also have the markings left behind by other readers who put in commentary, explicated passages, or drew the next reader’s attention to another manuscript or passage from the Bible or a classical text. Manuscripts in English often have the visual elements on the top of the folio or marking the text at the initial point of paragraphs, which is usually along the left margin by nature of the writing system that goes from left to right. Visually, the eye might travel across the top of the folio taking in the artwork and any title. Then one might notice the enlarged initial letters of a paragraph or other indicators that a new passage is beginning. In the twenty-first century, studies show that most web users read and scan a web page in a similar fashion. Jakob Nielsen, a former Sun Microsystems engineer turned web-usability expert, has done several studies of how readers scan a web page. According to Nielsen’s research, most people read a web page in an “F” shape; that is, they read horizontally across the top of the page, move down the page some, read across the page in another shorter horizontal bar, and finally, they read down the left side of the page in a strip. This final reading is often slower and more systematic.174

Readership and “anonymity” play a role in web reading that is similar to the way medieval manuscripts were used as well. On sites where forums or comment space is used, readers/users direct one another to other information and sites or comment on the main article or subject. The readers may use real names, but often choose user names that give them a sense of anonymity. The dialogue between these readers is not unlike the way medieval readers interacted with the text through marginalia and interlinear comments.

The reading experience of a manuscript can change if one reads texts by thematic groupings rather than in order of appearance. As Carlquist points out there are often paratextual markers in medieval manuscripts that led the original readers to other sections

of the same book or to other materials altogether such as a passage from the Bible or a saint’s life as depicted in yet another manuscript.

A user of a medieval manuscript must know how to deal with the implicit information given [through paratextual markers]. This means that today a reader of a manuscript must possess interdisciplinary knowledge of the literate culture of the Middle Ages if he or she is to analyse the text in a fair way.  

Burnley and Wiggins’ edition offers through its bibliography some “interdisciplinary knowledge” of fourteenth-century English culture, but there are no direct links to articles or explanatory notes that provide historical/cultural background. Their edition is not created for general reading, but is truly aimed at an audience already somewhat familiar with the culture that created the Auchinleck MS and particularly for an audience interested in the manuscript for the light it sheds on the linguistic practices of Middle English.

VIEWING AND USING THE DIGITAL AUCHINLECK

Viewing the digital edition of the Auchinleck Manuscript is in no way the same as opening a book and examining it. One opens the homepage at http://www.nls/uk/auchinleck/ and finds a simple banner with a collage of two images -- the head of King Richard from the miniature that accompanies the same titled poem and part of the opening line of another item with a decorative initial H. Under the banner is a brief description of the manuscript and its importance, and a series of buttons on the left lead one through the sections of the edition, such as “The Manuscript,” “About The Manuscript,” “Editorial,” “Bibliography,” “About the Project,” and “Contact,” all of which have subsections, with “Editorial” having the most of these at five.

To view one of the digital images of the folios from the home page, one must take three steps: click on the contents button, select an item from the list, open it and then click on the folio icon within the transcription. This is awkward for the reader who is interested in the manuscript as a complete artefact where form is an important as content.

Having to take that extra step to go from the transcript to viewing the image of the folio puts emphasis on the language rather than on the manuscript. The editors may have chosen this for a variety of reasons including technical issues such as the time it takes to load a page of text versus the time it takes for images to load on the web. At the time the project was started, many computers did not have the processor speeds capable of fast image loading, which may have played a role in the decision to make the transcript the default view of the contents rather than actual images of the manuscript. The arrangement of the contents places emphasis on the manuscript’s value for the study of the development of English and English literature because the transcriptions appear automatically when one clicks on the titles in the contents pages, which is not explained when one first accesses the site. Having to take the extra steps to get to the digital images of the manuscript lessens the emphasis placed on those images. The manuscript is not usually noted for its visual appeal. Scholars who do mention the miniatures and decorative elements within the manuscript usually do so only in reference to what damage has been done to the manuscript over the years at the hands of miniatures collectors. Putting the transcripts before the actual images of the folios reinforces the valuing of the manuscript’s contents over its form and tends to draw the reader’s attention to the language used rather than the scribal work or that of the artistic team responsible for the miniatures. However, as Ralph Hanna asserts in *London Literature, 1300-1380*, the manuscript can give us clues to book production in the fourteenth century as we analyse the various scribes’ work and study the division of labor.  

176 The editing process guides our reading and anchoring the folio images as icons within the text of the transcriptions places a higher value on the content of the manuscript rather than on its form. Further evidence of the hierarchies is the order in which the features are listed in the introduction on the home page:

- A full transcription of the manuscript with sophisticated search facilities.
- A digital facsimile of the entire manuscript
- Background information on the origins and importance of the manuscript. 

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177 David Burnley and Alison Wiggins. *The Auchinleck Manuscript*. National Library of
Wiggins and Burnley place emphasis on the usefulness of the site as a tool for studying how Middle English was being used in the mid-fourteenth century, which is reflected in both the arrangement of the site and the selection of supporting materials. However, since 2004, the ongoing addition of links to other manuscripts opens the door for other methods of study – comparing the extant variants of texts or considering how some of the items appear within their manuscript context in other collections.

With the digital edition of the Auchinleck MS, the search tools include: a search for thorn or yogh and the site includes a download of the font specially created for the Auchinleck MS digital facsimile; word and phrase searches, Boolean, special characters, fuzzy searches, stemming (with the warning that this search will only find Modern English forms); and phonic searches. These tools are of particular interest for those who are looking at linguistic features of the manuscript’s contents, such as how the variant spellings in items might help locate the item’s origin, its exemplar, or give clues to the scribe’s background. Other ways these features might be used are to date items by reference to historical figures or events. Wiggins used the site’s search tools to do whole-data analysis of the manuscript to provide evidence for her argument that six scribes worked on the manuscript.\textsuperscript{178}

Looking at the Bibliography as it is ordered by Topic rather than by Text, one gets a different picture of the manuscript and the ways in which scholars over the years have approached, examined, and placed value upon it. The bibliographic entries date back to the late nineteenth century and Eugen Kölbings’s 1884 study of romance manuscripts. In total there are:

35 entries on Studies of the Auchinleck Manuscript, which focus on the book’s production or language, or are truly general studies of the book as a whole;

23 entries on The Medieval Book, many of which are not specific to the Auchinleck, but rather provide background on medieval book production;

10 entries on Sources and Analogues, all of which are specific to Auchinleck;

5 entries on Palaeography, which are of broader scope, but have specific examples within them about the scribes of Auchinleck;

\textsuperscript{178} Ibid.

19 entries on Language, which contain some very close studies of the language used in Auchinleck along with entries that deal more broadly with the subject of Middle English; and

31 entries on Studies of Romance, a few of which focus on particular items in the manuscript, but most of which discuss Romance within a context such as its role in Medieval England, its relation to Anglo-Norman hagiography, or its stylistic and structural elements.

Taken as a group, the bibliographic materials show a balance between the areas of linguistics and book production and are divided roughly in half between the two fields.

DIGITAL MANUSCRIPTS COMPARED

To get an idea of how other manuscripts are presented online, one can turn to a site such as The Catalogue of Digitized Manuscripts, a project by Matthew Fisher and Christopher Baswell at the University of California, Los Angeles. The aim of the project is to collect in one place all the medieval manuscripts that are available in their entirety in an easily navigable form. The database was launched in 2007 and is a work in progress that contains a link to offer suggested sites for inclusion. The site allows users to search for manuscripts by location, shelfmark, author, title, and language.

The site is useful for comparing how different institutions are handling the digitization of their collections. Some, such as the Abbey of St. Gallen in Switzerland have descriptions, details of the binding from all angles, the individual folios, search capabilities, sizing and view options, color charts, and links to request images via email, etc. Others, such as the McPherson Library at the University of Victoria, Victoria, Canada, have a “work in progress” project. The MS Bartholomaeus Anglicus 84-61 held by the McPherson Library has each folio in thumbnail and small, medium, and large sizes, but editors are still working on aspects of the project such as commentary and an extended bibliography. A transcription is planned, but is not yet available. 

179 http://manuscripts.cmrs.ucla.edu/
180 Ibid.
The Abbey of St. Gallen’s collection is part of the e-codices Virtual Manuscript Library of Switzerland and offers its toolbar in German, English, French, and Italian and the description contains links to samples of scripts and scribal hands from the manuscript and external literature. There is no transcription of the text, but the images of the folios are offered in four sizes, some with quite high resolution, placing emphasis on the visual experience of the manuscript.

In a similar vein is the Codices Electronici Ecclesiae Coloniensis (CEEC) (Electronical Codices of the Church of Cologne), part of the Distributed Digital Research Library, a project with an emphasis on the close study of the individual folios and quires, allowing for virtual reconstruction of the manuscripts in cases where manuscripts have been re-ordered over the years. There has been an effort to maintain the same lens aperture and light settings when digitizing an entire manuscript to maintain consistent visual quality and to make it easier for scholars to recognize differences on the codex itself such as flesh- and fur sides of the vellum.181

Similarly, the Irish Script on Screen (ISOS) project of the School of Celtic Studies in Dublin, Ireland maintains that:

The object of ISOS is to create digital images of Irish manuscripts, and to make these images -- together with relevant commentary -- accessible on a WWW site. The purpose of such a site is to provide an electronic resource which will:

• provide exposure on the internet for a vital part of Ireland's cultural heritage.
• place these primary materials at the disposal of scholars and students.
• contribute to the conservation of these valuable books and documents by creating images of high-resolution detail which, generally speaking, will reduce the need to handle the artefacts themselves.182

The manuscript images on the site are available in two formats: small jgps (c.150-500 KB) for the general user and available simply by clicking on the thumbnails to open a new window and large jgps (c. 1.5-5MB) intended for scholarly research and only accessible after registration with the ISOS project.183

181 http://www.ceec.uni-koeln.de/
182 ISOS. http://www.isos.dias.ie/
183 Ibid.
With both the German and Irish sites mentioned above, the current editorial emphasis is on understanding the book-making process and providing high quality images of the folios for study.

Even with the relative freedom of space that a digital edition creates, there are editorial questions one must consider, such as how much material to include, whether to go beyond digital photographs of each folio and add transcriptions, critical and historical articles, etc. As Carlquist suggests, such editions can be “presented at two different levels, one that will give the medieval view of the manuscript, and another that will help the modern reader.”  

A danger of such freely accessible manuscripts is that more students and scholars under tighter budget constraints may forgo seeing the manuscripts in person and become reliant upon the digital facsimiles. As the editors of the ISOS project state in their introduction, there is a hope that the digitization process will reduce the need for handling the manuscripts themselves. There are some compelling reasons to view manuscripts in person such as being able to assess damage and staining accurately, and to get a more realistic concept of a manuscript’s size and condition, which are sometimes difficult tasks simply based on images viewed on screen. Color resolution and calibration differences from monitor to monitor can make accurate description and dating difficult. For example, trying to determine whether a ninth-century scribe or a thirteenth-century scribe put punctuation into an item is something than can be determined by ink color, but one must view the pages in question in person to really see the shades accurately.

IMPRESSIONS OF AUCHINLECK

Peter Hirtle made observations about uses and projected trends of the digitization process. “For most research purposes… electronic access will replace the use of physical artifacts found in special collections.” Hirtle describes the benefits of the looking at the paper originals as including the ability to see the binding and materials used in creating a book or manuscript as well as its true condition. When viewing Auchinleck online or in the paper facsimile, one has no idea of its actual size. The facsimile does include the marginalia and entries on blank pages by later readers. These are not all included in the digital version, so if one is interested not just in the contents of the manuscript, but its history as a physical book passed from reader to reader, one really needs to see the actual manuscript.

When one looks at the bound facsimile edited by Derek Pearsall and I.C. Cunningham, it does give the reader a sense of the manuscript as a book because it is bound and one is able to read the book’s contents in the order in which they are presently collected in the manuscript. One also has the immediate awareness of other readers in the codex’s history because of the marginalia such as signatures, explications, and underlined portions. One does get the sense of the book as an object with an interactive history. Readers have conversed with the book and possibly with one another via the commentary within its pages. There is no illusion that one is looking at the actual manuscript for there is an introduction to manuscript that attempts to place it within its historical context and the images are in black and white, so one gets no real picture of the shades of ink used within the manuscript. The facsimile is also larger than the actual manuscript, which measures on most folios 250 X190 mm, which is slightly larger than a modern paperback novel. The facsimile’s larger format allows for better scrutiny of the various scribal hands, but also gives a false impression of the manuscript’s size as object. Visualizing the manuscript’s true dimensions, one can conceive of it as a portable object, while the facsimile’s sheer weight and size make it appear to be a book that would have been fairly stationary, perhaps kept on a special table. One might think a manuscript with those dimensions would have been an object of reverence rather than something taken on the person and read in more than one setting.

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As suggested earlier, accessing the manuscript online makes one look at its contents as a series of objects and images in a digital environment. Taking the extra steps to get from content list and transcript to actual images of the folios heightens one’s awareness of its artificiality. On one hand the technology that allows scholars to access a manuscript from anywhere on the globe is amazing, yet on the other, the same technology currently has limits that draw our attention to the frustration of digital scholarship. For example, the manuscript images cannot be seen in much detail when they are selected. If one wants to get a good look at the formation of a particular letter, it is necessary to zoom in and manipulate the image up or down, left or right until the area of interest is visible. It is important to note that I used a Mac computer, usually with Firefox or Safari as a browser when accessing the digital manuscript, which the site now notes is not the optimal combination for viewing the manuscript:

Browser note: This web site is optimised for use on Internet Explorer (version 5 and above) and Netscape (version 6 and above) browsers running on the Microsoft Windows operating system. There are special characters in Middle English that may not display properly on other web browsers, users can download and install the Auchinleck font to view the site fully. To find out how to get the best from this site, see www.webstandards.org

While the manuscripts available online are a great tool and resource, it is imperative to keep in mind that they are editions, which implies that they have been through some kind of editing process, whether it is relatively free of intervention such as a site that simply has images of the folios available for viewing or whether there is a fuller attempt to create in the digital environment a scholarly edition such as one would have found in print a decade ago, but with the added benefits of the folio images and the capability to link readers to other relevant materials on the web. As scholars approach these manuscripts in our own scholarly work, they need to take into account that the digital versions have been organized with some kind of purpose in mind when we are applying our own research and assessment to each codex.

This is particularly important in relation to the texts themselves, since in using a digital reproduction, one is reliant on the accuracy of the transcriptions for a

186 http://digital.nls.uk/auchinleck/index.html
reconstruction of the text. If the images are clear and can be magnified with a zoom tool, the transcriptions can be checked, and the authority of the text’s mediation validated. However, the images are not always as clear as one might wish (is this true anywhere), and recourse to hard copy, traditional editions is essential.

In relation to the folios containing the romance, ‘King Richard’, at this point the manuscript is damaged and has been disassembled over the years. ‘King Richard’ in both the facsimile and the digital editions has been reconstructed with folios that have been recovered and which are now kept in other libraries: Edinburgh U.L. MS 218 contains ff.3-4 from quire 48, a fragment of ‘King Richard’; St Andrews U.L. MS PR.2065 contains one folio from quire 48, ‘King Richard.’ Folio 326 rb has damage on lines 61-64 and the script is illegible. The fragments from both Edinburgh and St. Andrews have been damaged and are very hard to read. Interestingly, the miniature at the head of the poem is one of five that survive in the manuscript. Enough of the poem has been preserved that it can be read in comparison with other extant versions of the poem from the era. “Richard Coeur de Lion” is extant in seven manuscripts of Middle English Romance and appears in three printed editions in the sixteenth century. The next chapter explores the portrayal of Richard and Saladin in the poem so that we have a starting point for an examination of the representations of them over the centuries, representations that change dramatically from the demonization of Saladin to a view of him as a fair and honorable opponent and top military strategist.

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