'The Evil Genius of the Third Crusade': Conrad of Montferrat, stereotype and scapegoat

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Ara sai eu de pretz quals l'a plus gran (*Now I know whose is the greatest worth*) wrote Bertran de Born, praising Conrad of Montferrat's defence of Tyre (1187-90), and berating Philip II of France (r. 1180-1223) and Richard I of England (r. 1189-99) for delaying going to his aid.[1] However, Anglophone popular histories and fiction more often depict him as a treacherous villain.

William Stubbs dubbed Conrad 'the evil genius of the Third Crusade',[2] and blamed him for his own death: 'it is a wonder he was not disposed of earlier than he was'.[3] Steven Runciman made him a fugitive killer.[4] He could as easily have become the Third Crusade's tragic hero: brilliant, brave and handsome, according to Niketas Choniates;[5] with a talent for turning up in time to resolve crises; elected king, but assassinated before his coronation. The early historian Charles Mills had portrayed him positively, writing of his election as king: 'The imbecile Guy had but few partisans, and the public voice was in favour of the valiant Conrad'.[6] However, popular works, including films, which treat the Third Crusade as 'Richard versus Saladin', outweighed this with a hostile tradition. Here, I wish to explore some of the most influential examples.

Literary Framing

Conrad's vilification in post-mediæval Anglophone writings stemmed from the succession dispute after Queen Sibyl of Jerusalem (r. 1186-90) and her daughters died at Acre in 1190. Guy of Lusignan, her widower, sought to remain king, but Conrad, marrying her half-sister Isabel (r. 1190-1205), was supported by the local nobility and his kinsman Philip of France. The Anglo-Angevin *Itinerarium Peregrinorum* and works of Ambroise and Roger of Howden reflected Richard I's support for Guy and claim to crusade leadership. Rejecting the legality of Conrad's marriage and thus his kingship,[7] they denounced him for negotiating directly with Saladin. This enabled *The*

Crusade and Death of Richard I, based on Roger, and the fourteenth-century English romance, *Richard Coer de Lyon*, to depict him as a 'traitor' in Saladin's pay.[8]

Having acquired some of Raymond III of Tripoli's former allies, Conrad was linked retrospectively to Raymond's alleged treachery *before* the battle of Hattin. That he arrived in Tyre only *after* Hattin was ignored: *a* Marquis of Montferrat – his father, William – had been there. The *Narratives of the Minstrel of Reims* (1260s-90s)[9] and a related romance, *Le Pas Saladin*, elided them.[10] This composite marquis re-emerged in 2007 in the computer game *Assassin's Creed* (Ubisoft Montréal), named 'William' because it is set in 1191, when the father died.

Returning from the crusade, Richard was arrested for plotting Conrad's assassination by Meinhard II of Gorizia (Conrad's nephew) and handed over to Leopold V of Austria (his second-cousin, r. 1177-94). The tale of Blondel discovering his location through song, set down by the Minstrel of Reims, became popular when the Gothic Revival began in the late eighteenth century. Michel-Jean Sédaine and André Grétry's opera *Richard Cœur-de-Lion* (1784) supplied French Royalists with an anthem in Blondel's aria, 'O Richard! O mon roi! L'univers t'abandonne',[11] while John Burgoyne's adaptation (1786) made Richard an English hero. The Blondel legend featured in children's adventure novels, including William Gordon Stables' *For Cross or Crescent: The Days of Richard the Lionhearted* (1897).[12] John Hooper Harvey's homosexual depiction of Richard in *The Plantagenets* (1948) let Norah Lofts' *The Lute Player* (1951) make it a love story. Wilfred of Ivanhoe took the Blondel role in the prologue of Richard Thorpe's 1952 film of Scott's *Ivanhoe*. As recently as 2005, David Boyle attempted the legend's 'rehabilitation as serious history'.[13]

The murder accusation against Richard was dismissed. George Alfred Henty claimed Richard had 'appointed' Conrad king as a conciliatory gesture.[14] In *For Cross or Crescent*, Stables condemned Conrad as 'a bully, and treacherous to a degree', making Richard say: 'I […] was accused of causing the death of the Marquis of Montferret [sic], not a hair of whose head I could have had the heart to injure.'[15] Lawrence du Garde Peach's Ladybird children's educational book,

Richard the Lionheart, described the Blondel legend as 'not true', but omitted Conrad entirely and depicted Richard's imprisonment as Leopold's 'revenge for the insult to his flag' at Acre.[16]

Walter Scott made the flag dispute central to *The Talisman* (1825), but changed its context. This novel, on which generations of future historians and writers grew up, created the dominant template for crusade fiction and depictions of Conrad.[17] Eleanor Porden's verse-epic, *Cœur de Lion; or the Third Crusade* (1822), had more historical content, though Romantic and romanticised, with Conrad a swashbuckling Byronic rogue whose half-crazed Byzantine wife interrupted his wedding to Isabel.[18] While it possibly influenced *Jane Eyre*, it could not match Scott's international reach. Five editions of his works were published in Milan in 1830 alone.[19] Translations of *The Talisman*, often retitled *Riccardo Cuor di Leone*, appeared throughout the twentieth century, including Fabbri's illustrated children's abridged versions (1969-70).

Enlightenment historiography led Scott to depict Saladin as the Franks' moral superior; his villains therefore had to be Frankish.[20] As Mills had noted of *Ivanhoe* (1819), 'when he wants a villain… he as regularly and unscrupulously resorts to the fraternity of the Templars as other novelists refer to the church, or to Italy.'[21] In *The Talisman*, Scott used both. He invented a conspiracy against Richard by Grand Master Giles Amaury (a fictional substitute for Guy's ally Gerard of Ridefort and Richard's placeman Robert de Sablé), with Conrad as his henchman. He combined the treacherous Marquis of Montferrat from the *Richard Coer de Lyon* romance (which he knew)[22] with Italian ethnic stereotypes from contemporary Gothic novels – the scheming Machiavellian and dandified, unctuous *cicisbeo*. Misreading 'f' as 'long s' in printed sources, he turned Montferrat into 'Montserrat', redesigning Conrad's blazon as 'a serrated and rocky mountain'.[23]

Scott made *Conrad* attack *Richard*'s banner, injuring Roswal, the Scots hero Sir Kenneth's hound. The dog later recognised and attacked him. In trial by combat, Kenneth wounded Conrad, whom the Grand Master then stabbed to prevent him confessing. Since a dwarf jester witnessed the

murder, Saladin beheaded the Grand Master: a scene derived from Reynald of Châtillon's killing after Hattin.

In *The Life and Death of Richard Yea-and-Nay* (1900), Maurice Hewlett portrayed Conrad as a usurper, ignoring his ties to the kingdom through his brother William Longsword and nephew Baldwin V. Conrad was said to have 'the ravished wife of old King Baldwin for title-deed',[24] with Richard saying: 'I will never get a kingdom for him, and I marvel that King Philip can make no better choice than of a man whose only title is rape'.[25] Hewlett conflated Baldwin III's widow, Theodora Komnene (who eloped with Andronikos Komnenos) with Conrad's second wife, Theodora Angelina, and Queen Isabel. This 'rape' claim may have inspired his most extreme 'Gothic villain' depiction in the American edition of Graham Shelby's *The Kings of Vain Intent* (1970): 'the monster of Montferrat', who flogs and rapes Isabel.[26]

Hewlett placed Conrad at the French court in 1188-89, rather than defending Tyre: despite his interest in *trobar*, featuring Bertran de Born as a character, this contradicted Bertran's song, *Ara sai eu de pretz quals l'a plus gran*.[27] Hewlett's Conrad schemed with Philip II and Richard's brother John: 'any king of England who would help him to the throne of Jerusalem was the king of England he would serve.'[28] He then accompanied Richard and Philip on crusade in 1190. There, his plot to have Richard killed by the Assassins was discovered by Jehane, Richard's fictional mistress.[29] She persuaded their leader, Sinan, to prevent the murder in exchange for marrying him.[30] When Conrad arrived, Sinan ordered two Assassins:

> Return with the Marquess to the coast by the way of Emesa and Baalbek; and when you are within sight of Sidon, strike. One of you will be burned alive. […] Let the other return speedily with a token […].[31]

That 'token' was Conrad's severed hand. (Curiously, Hewlett identified Sidon, taken by Saladin in 1187, as Conrad's stronghold.) Hewlett later had Jehane carry Sinan's letters to Europe to clear Richard's name. In 1199 Sinan let her join Richard in France – without telling her he had sent

Assassins to kill the king. Reconciled with the dying Richard, she admitted her role in Conrad's murder: 'He deserved it'.[32]

Hewlett's key innovation, which informed Conrad's portrayal in Cecil B. DeMille's *The Crusades* (1935), was depicting him conspiring against Richard *in Europe* and plotting *his* assassination. To absolve Richard fully, Conrad had to be shown as a murderer or attempted murderer himself – to merit his own death. Similarly, in *A History of the Crusades* (1952), Runciman decided to depict him fleeing to Tyre after being 'involved in a murder' in Constantinople.[33] That 'murder' was his defeat of Vranas in battle, described in Niketas Choniates' *Historia*,[34] yet Runciman, one of the few popular Western writers familiar with Choniates, misrepresented it.

Playing the Villain on Stage and Screen

Conrad had appeared on stage sympathetically in Italy in Francesco Ottavio Magnocavallo's neo-classical tragedy, *Corrado, Marchese di Monferrato* (1772), but adaptations of *The Talisman* dominated the nineteenth century. Many were operas or musical productions: *The Knights of the Cross, or The Hermit's Prophecy* (1826), by Beazley and Bishop; *Il Talismano; ossia, la Terza Crociata in Palestina* (1829), by Barbieri and Pacini, which premièred in 1829 in Naples and was performed in Milan and, in 1835, in Viareggio;[35] *Richard en Palestine* (1844), by Foucher and Adam; and *Il Talismano* (1874), by Matthison and Balfe. Pacini's *Il Talismano* elided Conrad with Leopold and the Grand Master into one villain, while Balfe focused on young lovers Edith and Kenneth. Beazley and Bishop had Conrad wounded in the judicial combat, but *not* murdered afterwards. Julius Benedict and Alfred Bunn's 1846 opera, *The Crusaders (Der Alte vom Berge* in German), began with the assassination of King Conrade of Jerusalem, but progressed with more influence from Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*.[36] A 'young lady' composed *The Talisman: a new and much admired set of quadrilles, as danced at the Clifton Assembly Rooms* (Bristol, 1827).[37]

Pantomimes and parodies included J.F. McArdle's *Plantagenet Preserved in a Salad-in Pickle* (1874), while Roswal's role popularised a sub-genre with performing dogs.[38]

Nino Berrini's *Rambaldo di Vaqueiras (I Monferrato)* (1922), modelled on Edmond Rostand's *La Princesse Lointaine* and *Cyrano de Bergerac*, featured Conrad as a sympathetic minor character. It could not compete with Scott-based films. *Richard the Lion-hearted* (Chester 'Chet' Withey, 1923) showed Kenneth rescuing Edith 'from the unholy power of Conrad, and Richard fights Saladin in a spirited combat out of which comes a treaty of peace and fellowship'. *TIME Magazine* was impressed by the 'amazing trick dog',[39] while *The New York Times* praised Wallace Beery, usually 'one of the chief screen villains', for 'clever light comedy' as Richard.[40] Canadian actor Clarence Geldart played Conrad.

During the Cold War, *The Talisman*'s focus on traitors undermining the crusade from within paralleled fears of Communist infiltration. The Arthurian adventure film *The Black Knight* (1954), loosely based on the romance of Gareth and Linet, starring Alan Ladd, had a similar emphasis.[41] *King Richard and the Crusaders* (David Butler, 1954), scripted by John Twist, starred Rex Harrison as Saladin and George Sanders as Richard. The 1930 Motion Picture Production Code ('Hays Code'), prohibited villainous or comic depictions of clergy, so the Templars were renamed the 'Knights of Castle Refuge', 'Castelaines' or 'Castlers':[42] *Ivanhoe* (1952) similarly excised Templar references.

In *The Talisman*, Scott anachronistically introduced Conrad's brother 'Enguerrand' (sic, for Boniface) as a Venetian ally.[43] On screen, Philip of France described Conrad (Michael Pate) as 'the wise Venetian whose gold pays for much of this crusade'. He threatened to withdraw this unless the Grand Master was appointed commander. He was shown knifing a guard in the back and poisoning the arrow used to shoot Richard – embodying precisely the racist Gothic stereotype John Chetwode Eustace had denounced in 1815 of the 'Italian […] with a dose of poison in one hand and a dagger in the other'.[44] His portrayal as a Venetian moneylender evoked another dubious stereotype – Shylock

in *The Merchant of Venice*. In the film, Sir Kenneth (Laurence Harvey) killed him in a swordfight immediately after the hound Roswal recognised him.

On television, *Richard the Lionheart* (Ernest Morris, ITV, 1962-63) borrowed freely from *The Talisman*: in the episode *A Marriage of Convenience* (1962), Conrad (Michael Peake), not Richard (Dermot Walsh), plotted Edith's marriage to Saladin.[45] BBC1's *The Talisman* (Richard Bramall, 1980-81), with Damien Thomas as Saladin and Richard Morant as Conrad, and a two-part Russian version (1992-93), *Rytsar Kennet* ('Sir Kenneth') and *Richard lvinoe serdtse* ('Richard the Lionheart') were more faithful.

The *Doctor Who* adventure *The Crusade* (BBC1, 1965), by David Whitaker, restored Joanna of Sicily and 'Saphadin' (Al-Adil), Saladin's brother, to their historical roles in Richard's marriage diplomacy. The series initially had educational aspirations, but the 'historical' adventures owed more to popular fiction: for example, *Reign of Terror* (1963) drew on Emmuska Orczy's *Scarlet Pimpernel* novels.[46] *The Crusade* adhered to Scott's focus on romance tropes: Barbara's abduction into a harem; Richard knighting Ian; Vicki's disguise as a youth.[47] Richard and Saladin were treated favourably, while the villains were fictional. 'Conrad of Tyre', though mentioned, remained off-screen. Instead, his fictional envoy, Luigi Ferrigo (Gábor Baraker), a Genoese merchant, replaced not only Reynald Grenier but – as stereotyped scheming Italian – Conrad himself: his surname, 'Ferrigo', echoing 'Monferrato'. Saladin, whose fictional role from *The Talisman* onward included exposing Frankish traitors, uncovered Luigi's involvement in Barbara's abduction.

Cecil B. DeMille's *The Crusades* (1935) gave Conrad his most prominent screen portrayal. It was a typical DeMille fable: the boorish Richard (Henry Wilcoxon) discovering true faith through love for the devout Berengaria (Loretta Young) and chivalric encounters with Saladin (Ian Keith). Saladin's portrayal was drawn from *The Talisman*, including his slicing silk to show off his superior sword.[48] His idealisation as leader of 'highly civilized and chivalrous foemen' meant DeMille, like Scott, had to find an enemy among the Franks, where he divined 'motives ranging from the purest

faith to the blackest treachery and greed'.[49] He chose Conrad.[50]

The sources credited on-screen were Harold Lamb's popular histories, *Iron Men and Saints* and *The Flame of Islam* (1930). Despite repeating Scott's 'Montserrat' error, Lamb wrote of Conrad: 'Baha ad Din says he was a great personage, wise and energetic, and other Moslems […] call him worse than a wolf and meaner than a dog. He had firm friends and bitter enemies.'[51] Lamb wrote the film's song lyrics, but his script contribution is unclear. Conrad's portrayal drew more strongly on *The Life and Death of Richard Yea-and-Nay* – unacknowledged, as it was still in copyright.

Following Hewlett, the script placed Conrad in Europe in 1187-90, conspiring with Philip of France and Prince John to arrange Richard's death on crusade and make him King of Jerusalem. Joseph Schildkraut, whom DeMille had cast as Judas (*King of Kings*, 1927) and Herod (*Cleopatra*, 1934), played Conrad as a Machiavellian schemer, slighter than Hewlett's 'large, pale, ruminating Italian',[52] his costume suggestive of Shakespeare's *Richard III*. Toying with a dagger, he assured John: 'I have the direst premonition tonight that your lion-hearted brother will never return to England. In fact, I can give you my word for it.' His blazon, changed to *party per chevron, in base a serpent*, emphasised his venomous slipperiness.

In the camp at Acre, Conrad convinced Berengaria she was to blame for hostility between Richard and Philip, driving her to place herself in the line of fire. Wounded, she was rescued by Saladin and became a Hays Code-friendly surrogate for Hewlett's Jehane in revealing Conrad's treachery. When Conrad arrived in Saladin's camp, the guards disarmed him:

> *Saladin:* What brings Conrad of Montferrat to me?
>
> *Conrad:* I offer you victory.
>
> *Saladin:* Tomorrow I shall win it: the crusade is broken.
>
> *Conrad:* Not yet. Victory is not sure while Richard of England lives.
>
> *Saladin:* You're his brother's friend.
>
> *Conrad:* And would be yours.

Saladin: What price do you ask for your treachery?

Conrad: The Kingdom of Jerusalem, which I shall rule under you.

Saladin: And what do you offer me?

Conrad: Richard's death. Within the hour, he will lie on the battlefield among the slain.

Saladin: Who would slay your lion of the crusaders?

Conrad: Fifteen swords of mine follow him where he goes alone. With Richard dead, you will rule unchallenged in Asia.

Saladin: I have no traffic with assassins. Away with this dog!

The guards killed him off-screen, with audible screams. After defeating an attack by Conrad's men, Richard was reconciled with Berengaria and, at her instigation, made peace.

Maud Hughes, in *Picture Show*, warned: 'people who respect history will have reason to be annoyed at de Mille's garbled version of the story'.[53] *TIME Magazine* called it 'historically worthless, didactically treacherous, artistically absurd'.[54] Like Scott, DeMille admitted 'telescoping history': 'Audiences are not interested in dates: they are interested in events and their meaning. We chose the year 1187 as the focal point for our story, but did not hesitate to bring in elements from other Crusades before or after that exact time.'[55] Despite initial losses, *The Crusades* was re-released in 1951. This screening probably influenced Ronald Welch's children's novel, *Knight Crusader* (1954), in which Conrad's description resembled Schildkraut: 'a sleek cat of a man, olive of complexion, and long of face, with white, fluttering hands, and a silky voice'.[56] As recently as 2004, Anton Kozlovic defended DeMille's 'dastardly' depiction of Conrad, claiming he 'historically, was an unsavoury character'[57] – based on Karen Armstrong's uncritical repetition of Runciman's murder allegation.[58]

In 1954, when DeMille and Wilcoxon filmed *The Ten Commandments* in Egypt, General Abdel Hakim Amer, Minister of War, told them:

> *The Crusades* was a very popular film in our Muslim country – due to its fair presentation of both sides and its portrayal of Saladin as a great and holy leader of his people. So popular, in fact, that it ran for three years in the same theater. And during those three years, when Colonel Nasser and I were first in military academy, we saw *The Crusades* perhaps as many as twenty times. It was our favorite picture. […] Colonel Nasser was so taken with the character of the Lionheart in your movie that he told everyone in the military academy that when he grew up he was going to be just like that, and that's how the other boys came to call him Henry Wilcoxon![59]

Gamal Abdel Nasser had overthrown Egypt's monarchy in 1952, defeated Britain and France in the 1956 Suez Crisis, and, like Saladin, united Egypt and Syria (United Arab Republic) from 1958-61. Youssef Chahine's *Saladin the Victorious* (*El Naser Salah ad-Din*) (1963) punning on Nasser's name, projected his secular pan-Arab nationalism back in time. The opening scenes of oppressed Arabs represented not only pre-Nasser Egypt, but also Algeria and Palestine. There was no acknowledgement that Saladin was a Kurd, not an Arab.

Chahine, of Melkite Catholic background, knew Scott's *The Talisman* and *Ivanhoe* from his British-style education at Alexandria's Victoria College, and DeMille's film. As John Aberth pointed out, his depiction of the siege of Acre as 'a picnic', resolved through the governor's treachery, was taken from the First Crusade siege of Antioch, in DeMille-style 'telescoping'.[60] Just as Scott and Hollywood elevated Saladin as the noble opponent, so Chahine idealised Richard alone of the Frankish leaders. He even exonerated Richard for massacring prisoners from the Acre garrison. Instead, he showed Philip (who in reality had already set off home) ordering it, perhaps reflecting anti-French sentiments over the Algerian War of Independence, subject of his earlier film, *Jamila the Algerian* (*Jamila al-Jaza'iriyya*) (1958).

Chahine made Conrad (Mahmoud El-Meliguy) a lover of Virginia of Kerak (Leila Fawzi): as Reynald of Châtillon's widow and would-be queen, she served as a composite fictional substitute for

Stephanie of Milly, Sibyl and Isabel. At her urging, Conrad conspired against Richard and the fictional heroine, Louise of Lusignan, a Tasso-esque female Knight Hospitaller. Louise turned against the crusade through love for an Arab Christian, Issa, so Conrad and Virginia had her tried for treason: a scene echoing Rebecca's trial in *Ivanhoe*. A split screen juxtaposed Louise's unjust trial with Saladin's fair trial of the Governor of Acre, whom Virginia had seduced. Richard, seeing through Conrad's deceit, instead ordered *his* beheading. Virginia next beguiled Richard's fictional advisor, Arthur, with whom she plotted the king's death by poisoned arrow, as in *King Richard and the Crusaders*. However, as in that and its source, *The Talisman*, Saladin healed Richard. Arthur strangled Virginia when, wounded in battle, she confessed to Louise – echoing the Grand Master killing the wounded Conrad in *The Talisman*. The film ended with Richard making peace with Saladin and entering Jerusalem (for a second time) as a pilgrim, Arthur insane, and Louise marrying Issa.

Sir Ridley – heir to Sir Walter?

Like the Cold War swashbucklers and *Saladin the Victorious*, Ridley Scott's *Kingdom of Heaven* (2005) reflected contemporary politics, conceived in New York in November 2001 after the 11 September terrorist attacks.[61] It was set in 1184-1187, culminating in the siege of Jerusalem, with an epilogue c. 1190. The 'enemy within' this time embodied religious fanaticism: 'when leaders who try to make peace are admired, but their efforts so often are subverted by more radical factions'.[62] As in *The Talisman*, the Templars were assigned this role: 'the right wing or Christian fundamentalist of their day'.[63] Despite the leading role of his ally Balian of Ibelin, Conrad was absent, as were Isabel and her mother, Maria Komnene – the historical Balian's wife. Sibyl – here 'Sibylla', as in Runciman – was the only significant female character, conflated with Isabel, who had appeared briefly in an early draft.

William Monahan had wanted to write a historical script, inspired by boyhood reading of

Runciman: 'Baldwin IV, the idea of him in a silver mask, had haunted me since I was fourteen or so'.[64] Scott's initial concept, mentioned in his DVD commentary, was of a blacksmith becoming a knight, suggesting youthful memories of Alan Ladd as John the Blacksmith in the Cold War Arthurian swashbuckler, *The Black Knight* (1954). These concepts did not dovetail easily.

Scott and Monahan claimed to use primary sources,[65] following James Reston's plagiarism allegations over *Warriors of God*,[66] but seemed unaware of any post-Runciman scholarship. Scott insisted: 'The way to get over the controversy is to try to be accurate and to try to tell the truth,'[67] and the film was marketed as 'truthful', telling the story 'as accurately as possible'.[68] However, Jonathan Riley-Smith observed: 'where they could have created fictional characters they have opted for real historical personalities whom they have distorted ruthlessly. The characters and careers of the hero, his lover, her husband, the king and Saladin have been re-manufactured to suit the needs of the script'.[69]

Aside from his defence of Jerusalem, Scott's Balian (Orlando Bloom) bore scant resemblance to his historical namesake, being a bastard-born French smith, who fled to take up his father's fief after killing his half-brother, a corrupt priest. Scott asserted disingenuously: 'Sure, there is no evidence that Balian was ever a blacksmith – but there's no evidence to say he wasn't…'[70] He became military engineering expert to Baldwin IV (Edward Norton) and lover of Sibylla (Eva Green), unhappily married to Guy (Marton Csokas). In the Director's Cut she poisoned her son (Conrad's nephew), Baldwin V, after discovering his leprosy – a fiction, but Scott's commentary suggests he came to believe it, with other fabrications such as Reynald of Châtillon murdering Saladin's sister.

Ridley Scott was indebted to his namesake Walter's model of historical fiction and (via Monahan) Runciman's novelistic history. Like Runciman, in Tyerman's words, he appealed to 'the sense that people in the past were essentially just like people in the present; and that […] the past can be judged according to hindsight and modern schemes of value, ethics and morality'.[71] Denying that

'the medieval mind was very different to ours',[72] his sympathetic characters were twenty-first-century figures in fancy dress: 'Balian is an agnostic, just like me,' he claimed.[73] As Riley-Smith responded succinctly to early reports of the film: 'It sounds absolute balls'.[74]

However, in presenting Balian as the gifted incomer defending the kingdom and winning a princess from an unworthy husband, Scott and Monahan made him a partial surrogate for Conrad. They depicted him as a fugitive murderer, as Runciman had Conrad,[75] but in reality more like the Lusignans, banished from Poitou for killing Patrick, Earl of Salisbury.[76] Stubbs had contrasted Guy, whose defeat at Hattin almost destroyed the kingdom, 'a brave soldier, a good commander, an honourable and generous enemy, and faithful friend', with Conrad: 'ruthless in enmity, faithless in friendship, cunning and unscrupulous enough to pass for an Italian of a later age'.[77] *Kingdom of Heaven* overturned this. Scott pressed Monahan to make Guy 'more of an autonomous villain rather than the confused and easily led man described by his contemporaries'.[78] In an early draft, Guy stabbed Isabel's first husband, Humphrey of Toron, and was beheaded by Balian in a swordfight.[79] While Stubbs, like Walter Scott, had been anti-Italian, Ridley Scott associated Guy's Frenchness with snobbish 'Old World' privilege, with his sneer at Balian: 'In France, *this* could not inherit'. (Even more strangely, in *Robin Hood* (2010), he had Eleanor of Aquitaine call Isabel of Angoulême – from Nouvelle-Aquitaine – a 'French pastry'.) Scott had no place for a hero who strove for kingship and its responsibilities. Film-Balian told Sibylla: 'Decide not to be a queen, and I will come to you,' and – unlike his historical counterpart – fled the country after surrendering Jerusalem.

What would Stubbs have made of his chivalrous Guy replacing Conrad as the 'evil genius'? He accepted uncritically Conrad of Montferrat's villainous presentation in the Anglo-Angevin texts he edited, in a culture where Walter Scott was as ubiquitous as Ridley Scott. All historians grow up and live among historical novels, films and now computer games. If these collectively and cumulatively reinforce one interpretation, transcending it takes effort. Conrad's treatment shows the arbitrariness of many 'hero' and 'villain' labels, rooted in nationalistic narratives and ethnic

stereotyping. They are combatted not by merely reversing them (as in Ridley Scott's vilification of Guy of Lusignan), but by leaving them behind.

Notes:

[1] Bertran de Born, *The Poems of the Troubadour Bertran de Born*, ed. William D. Paden, jr., Tilde Sankovitch, and Patricia H. Stäblein (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1986), Song 41, pp. 414-21.

[2] Roger of Howden, *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houeden*, ed. William Stubbs (London, 1868-71) vol. 2, p. 194, n. 3.

[3] William Stubbs, ed., *Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi* (London, 1864), pp. xxii-iv.

[4] Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, vol. 2, p. 384; Marianne M^{c}Leod Gilchrist, 'Getting Away With Murder: Runciman and Conrad of Montferrat's Career in Constantinople', *The Mediæval Journal* 2:1 (2012), pp. 15-36.

[5] Niketas Choniates, *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, ed. Jan-Louis van Dieten (Berlin and New York, 1975), vol. 1, p. 201.

[6] Charles Mills, *The History of the Crusades for the Recovery and Possession of the Holy Land* (London, 1822), vol. 2, p. 62.

[7] See Gilchrist, 'Getting Away With Murder', pp. 21-23.

[8] Ronald C. Johnston, ed., *The Crusade and Death of Richard I* (Oxford, 1961), p. 28, and Karl Brunner, ed., *Der Mittelenglische Versroman über Richard Löwenherz* (Vienna and Leipzig, 1913), pp. 228-9 and 257-58.

[9] Natalis de Wailly. ed., *Récits d'un Ménestrel de Reims au Treizième Siècle* (Paris, 1876), p. 14; for dating, pp. xxx-xxxiv.

[10] Gaston Paris, 'La Légende de Saladin: quatrième et dernier article', *Journal des Savants* (1893), p. 487.

[11] Laura Mason, *Singing the French Revolution: Popular Culture and Politics, 1787-1799* (Ithaca and London, 1996), pp. 45-48.

[12] William Gordon Stables, *For Cross or Crescent: The Days of Richard the Lionhearted* (London, 1897), pp. 371-72.

[13] David Boyle, *Blondel's Song: The Capture, Imprisonment and Ransom of Richard the Lionheart* (London, 2005), p. xxviii.

[14] George Alfred Henty, *Winning His Spurs: A Tale of the Crusades* (London, 1882), pp. 182 and 209.

[15] Stables, *For Cross or Crescent*, pp. 351 and 347.

[16] Lawrence du Garde Peach, *Richard the Lionheart: An Adventure from History* (Loughborough, 1965), pp. 30-32.

[17] See Gilchrist, 'Getting Away With Murder', pp. 15-36; Marianne McLeod Gilchrist, 'Bleedthrough: The Two-Way Traffic between Popular Historiography and Fiction', *Journal of Historical Fictions*, 2:1 (April 2019), pp. 18-25, <http://historicalfictionsjournal.org/pdf/JHF%202019-018.pdf> [accessed 8 Sept 2019].

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[19] Elizabeth Siberry, *The New Crusaders: Images of the Crusades in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Aldershot, 2000), p. 124.

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