Introduction

A Christian cleric, upon hearing of the rout of a crusader army, accuses the Virgin Mary of failing to protect her followers. A Muslim knight, struck by an epiphany, converts to Christianity, bringing with him qualities – strength, obedience to superiors, and a sense of communal responsibility – previously lacking in Christians. Envoys of a powerful sultan lament the cruel execution of their friends and relatives by an English king. These are some of the characters populating the literary texts that I examine in this book: Middle English crusade romances produced from around the time of the Mamlūk reconquest of Acre (1291), the last major crusader stronghold in the Levant, to around that of the Ottoman siege of Constantinople (1453). In the following chapters, I argue that these characters and others performed complex cultural work, speaking to some of greatest crusade-related concerns of the post-1291 era: God's will and support of wars waged in his name, the selfish ambitions these wars could satisfy, Latin Christendom's ability to compete on the global scene, sinfulness and divisions within the Christian community, questions of poor leadership, notions of shared humanity across religious and racial divides, and the morality of violence, even when sanctioned by the Church.

Middle English crusade romance, as I conceive it, is a subgenre that imaginatively engages with the history of the Levantine crusades, geopolitical circumstances in the Holy Land after 1291, and late medieval realities of religious warfare in other locations, including North Africa, Iberia, the Baltic, the Balkans, and Anatolia.[1] My reasons for concentrating primarily on this subgenre are twofold. First, it is the most comprehensive testimony to the crusade imaginary of late medieval England. Second, I see it as especially well suited to bringing out the heterogeneity of, and conflicts within, contemporary crusade culture.[2] As I hope to show in this study, crusade romances take up, dramatically enact, distill to their essentials, combine, and place in tension ideas featuring in an eclectic range of more "historical" sources on the crusades, from those whose agendas are

unambiguously celebratory and propagandist to the more critical. These include letters of invective against heaven, penitential treatises by ex-crusaders, poems denouncing the hypocrisy of combatants, chronicles registering discomfort at the human costs of holy war, and various works staging what I call "reverse Orientalism" – a mode in which the achievements and opinions of Muslim figures (real or imaginary) are made to reflect critically on Christians. In assembling these materials, the overall picture I seek to paint is of a deeply conflicted post-1291 English crusade culture: one committed to the ideals of crusading, yet harboring profound anxieties about these ideals – about their providential underpinnings, potential success, enactment, debasement, and even justification. Here and elsewhere in this study, I use the term "anxiety" in its general sense, to mean "worry" or "uneasy concern," a sense that goes back to the Middle English *anxiete*, the Old French *anxieté*, and the Latin *anxietas*.[3] This term, and its near-synonym "concern," are especially apt for my purposes because of their connotations of durability. Indeed, the moral, political, and providential issues that I discuss in the chapters that follow persisted, unresolved, for long periods of time.[4]

My approach in this book is informed by a tradition of postcolonial scholarship that developed in part out of studies of the modern colonial novel, which may (I think productively) be viewed as the literary successor to the crusade romance.[5] To situate my work in relation to previous scholarship on crusade literature and within the broader field of postcolonial studies, I will briefly discuss some general tendencies in the reception, by modernists and medievalists, of Edward Said's epochal *Orientalism* (1978). Postcolonial scholarship on the nineteenth to mid twentieth centuries has often echoed Said in arguing for the complicity of Western literature in the ideology of imperialism. However, much of this scholarship has considered Said's conception of Orientalism as a discourse whose essence is "the ineradicable distinction between Western superiority and Oriental inferiority" too homogenizing and restrictive, stressing the need to attend to the "heterogeneities and ambivalences" of colonial culture, and the "anxieties and tensions" it carries, to quote Lisa Lowe and Yumna Siddiqi.[6] Said himself in his later *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), a study that focuses on the modern novel, affirmed the capacity of European literature not only to uphold but also to unsettle dominant ideologies and civilizational polarities.[7] In *Culture and Imperialism*, Western culture is described as "heterogeneous," "unmonolithic," and traversed by "critical and often contradictory energies," a view supported by readings of novels such as Joseph Conrad's *Nostromo*, which Said sees both "criticizing and

reproducing the imperial ideology" of its time.[8] In the wake of *Culture and Imperialism*, most scholarship exploring colonial themes in novels has aligned more closely with this study than with *Orientalism*,[9] often emphasizing the role of imperial setbacks and indigenous resistance in rendering the terrain of colonial writing more diverse and conflicted.[10] Elleke Boehmer argues that, in the aftermath of the Second Boer War (1899–1902), which "laid bare the vulnerability of the Empire," British novels came increasingly to express uneasiness and critiques, if rarely about colonialism per se, about the practices, effects, and abuses of colonial rule.[11] Boehmer notes that in many of these works of latter-day empire, rather than serving as foils for Western rationality, colonized cultures serve as "agents for metropolitan self-questioning."[12] In a similar vein, Priyamvada Gopal argues that, under the pressure of armed insurrection in the colonies, British novelists began "to ask troubling questions about the imperial project."[13] And Jennifer Yee, drawing attention to French colonial losses, traces a "littérature coloniale" that responded to these events with "anxiety and doubt." Yee writes that alongside depictions of Eastern cultures as radically Other, what she calls "first-degree Saidian Orientalism," the novels in her corpus feature "Critical Orientalism: a discourse on the Orient that foregrounds a critique of its own modes of understanding."[14]

If scholars of modern colonial literature have often highlighted its tensions and self-critical elements, much of the pioneering work to which we owe the field of medieval postcolonialism has tended to read crusade epics and romances in ways that align quite closely with Said's approach in *Orientalism.*[15] John V. Tolan, for example, sees the imaginative crusade literature produced in Europe from the First Crusade (1095–99) to the fall of Acre and beyond operating as part of a specifically medieval Orientalism, used to justify military action, celebrate crusaders, and establish boundaries between Christianity and Islam.[16] In a study that also aims at unearthing the roots of modern Orientalism, Suzanne Conklin Akbari considers the depiction of Muslims in *chansons de geste* and romances composed circa 1100–1450 in terms of two negative stereotypes, serving "to differentiate the Western self from its Eastern other" along religious and racial lines: the polytheistic, idolatrous "Saracen" who rebukes his "gods" and the intemperate Arab whose irascible character is a product of both "the Oriental climate" and "the deviant 'law of Muhammad.'"[17] In *Empire of Magic*, Geraldine Heng argues that the First Crusade gave rise to the genre of romance, which she sees functioning throughout the centuries (much like modern Orientalism, in Said's conception) as an

"ideological instrument" of colonization, authorizing Christian conquest and settlement in the Levant, and following the Mamlūk reconquest of Acre, exercising a form of "cultural domination."[18] Romance "projects," according to Heng, include constructing a "discourse of essential differences among peoples," voicing "triumphant celebration" of crusaders, and "exercising a will-to-power in geographically conceiving the world as the hinterland of Europe and the playground of the Christian faith."[19] In her more recent *Invention of Race*, Heng draws on imaginative and historical crusade writings spanning the First Crusade to the rise of the Ottomans to argue for an understanding of holy war as "a matrix conducive to the politics of race," which she defines flexibly, in language coterminous with that deployed by Said in his 1978 study: "a tendency to demarcate human beings through differences" that are "selectively essentialized as absolute and fundamental."[20] In the field of Middle English studies, scholars have often read crusade romances as projecting a world where Christians are heroic and divinely supported, while Muslims are monstrous, religiously frustrated, and "wholly Other."[21]

While in many ways indebted to this scholarship, the present book seeks to expand the study of crusade literature in directions that are broadly consistent with those taken by much postcolonial criticism on modern colonial literature since *Orientalism*. In the rest of this Introduction, I discuss issues of periodization, methodology, and genre that are key to my thinking about Middle English crusade romances, while unpacking my arguments and offering some hints of the analyses to come. I then present the rationale behind my selection of romances and offer a more detailed summary of the chapters. Let us start with periodization. In his important *Des Chrétiens contre les croisades*, which has yet to receive the attention it deserves in the Anglo-American academy, historian Martin Aurell shows that critiques related to the crusades, while expressed following the First Crusade, increased and diversified as the Muslim countercrusading movement gained traction and Christian defeats multiplied: Imād al-Dīn Zangī's reconquest of Edessa (1144), Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's recovery of Jerusalem (1187), Louis IX of France's two failed expeditions (1248–50 and 1270), and the Mamlūk campaigns culminating in the siege of Acre, to name only some central events.[22] The attitudes that Aurell examines, focusing on the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and drawing mainly on nonliterary sources, range from disapproval of particular practices to interrogation of the very concept of crusade. My book extends this line of inquiry to the period after 1291 and into the realm of literature, placing English crusade romances in dialogue with a large body of evidence to

illuminate the hopes and ambitions, as well as the anxieties and critiques, that animate them.[23] Chapter 1 argues that, in a post-1291 context, literary depictions of both Christians and "Saracens" or Muslims voicing divinely addressed frustration should be understood as expressive of collective anxieties about God's lack of support to the crusading enterprise.[24] Chapter 2 discusses how late medieval England's "fantasy of conversion," whereby a strong and virtuous Muslim warrior embraces Christianity, exposing and then rectifying the moral shortcomings of his new coreligionists, engages concerns about Christian vulnerability and sinfulness caused by the Mongol conquests, the Mamlūk recovery of Acre, and Ottoman victories at Nicopolis (1396) and Constantinople.[25] Chapters 3 and 4 explore how crusade romances articulate tensions – between devotion to God and worldly ambition, and between legitimate and illegitimate violence – which, while going back to the beginnings of the enterprise, were subject to late medieval developments in the context of crusading in the Baltic, North Africa, and Iberia. Although clearly invested in perpetuating ideals and realities of holy war, Middle English crusade romances are far more self-critical and troubled by anxiety and tension than a clear-cut Orientalist approach would allow.

If European responses to crusading diversified under the pressure of Christian defeats in the Levant, so too did views of Muslims and Islam.[26] As Tolan, Akbari, Heng, and others have demonstrated, derisive representations of Islamic doctrine, lurid biographies of Muhammad, and stereotypes of Muslims as irrational, driven by bodily pleasures, and overall lacking moral discipline are constitutive elements of Orientalist and racializing discourses – discourses that retained currency throughout the high and later Middle Ages.[27] Yet, while some European authors writing after 1291 portrayed Islam as manifestly different and Muslims as inferior Others, those pondering the implications of crusading defeats often reversed these representational tendencies. They presented Islam as akin to Christianity in the values and practices it enjoins, and extoled the merits of Muslims to highlight the failures of Christians. This representational mode is well illustrated by the English Dominican friar John Bromyard's *Summa praedicantium* (c. 1330–48), a widely disseminated manual for preachers composed a few decades after the fall of Acre.[28] Like many fellow churchmen, Bromyard explained crusading defeats via the linkage between morality and fortune: they had occurred because the crusaders, and Christians in general, were sinful. Yet Bromyard brought this moral and providential rationale to bear not only on Christians, but also on Muslims. He asks his audience to ponder the following question: "Sed diceret quis

infideles Terram illam inhabitantes, bona opera non faciunt, quare ergo tradidit illis Deus terram, vel quare illos malos permittit, terram inhabitare, qui nihil boni faciunt?" ("But if someone says that the infidels who inhabit that land [the Holy Land] do no good works, then why did God give them that land to inhabit?"). His answer is to suggest that, while Christians were able to conquer the Holy Land at a time in which they served God well, Muslims now occupy it because they are less evil (*minus malis*).[29] Accordingly, throughout the *Summa*, Bromyard focuses on perceived similarities between practices in Christianity and Islam (including almsgiving, kindness to strangers, marital fidelity, and avoidance of profanity), highlighting the good works (*bona opera*) of Muslims, and ascribing to them pointed critiques of Christians, to shame and educate his fellow coreligionists.[30] The coexistence of Orientalism and what may be called "reverse Orientalism," a mode that I further discuss in Chapter 2, goes a long way in explaining the varied and often contradictory representations of Muslims in Middle English romance. In post-1291 romances, representations that uphold and unsettle Orientalist and racializing ideologies collide. Constructions of difference compete with an emphasis on sameness. And the voices and behaviors of Muslim characters (or previously Muslim characters, in the case of those who convert to Christianity) are frequently used to edifying, self-critical ends.

My primary methodology in this book is engaged historicism, which I practice to meet a critical need: due to disciplinary boundaries and emphases, Middle English romances of religious warfare are only rarely studied in light of wider traditions of crusade writing, especially works produced after 1291.[31] Despite the "cultural turn" in crusade studies, historians have largely ignored these romances.[32] In literary scholarship, a major tendency since the 1990s has been to focus on the ways in which they articulate national and regional identities, often (though not always) without reference to the broader English and European archive of extant crusade documents.[33] To date, the study of insular crusade romances to most fully engage with the historical discourses, ideologies, and practices of crusading is Lee Manion's 2014 monograph, *Narrating the Crusades*, which analyzes these romances as evidence of crusading's narrative-generating power, situating them within a paradigm of "loss and recovery" and exploring their afterlives in early modern works.[34] My study aligns with Manion's in its interdisciplinary, historicist approach, but draws on a largely distinct, more linguistically diverse and international body of contextualizing sources, some insular (in English, French, and Latin) and others continental (in French, Occitan, German, and Latin), including

writings produced by crusaders and travelers in North Africa and West Asia. I draw on this vast, multilingual corpus – a substantial portion of which has been overlooked or sparsely explored by literary scholars and historians alike – to offer new readings of Middle English crusade romances and a new interpretation of the post-1291 political culture to which they belonged. But I also do so to reveal their internationalism: their engagement with concerns, ideas, and traditions that overran European national boundaries. This book thus joins a chorus of recent work that, building on foundational studies by scholars including Ardis Butterfield and David Wallace, seeks to "de-insularize" insular literature and expose the limitations of traditional nation-bound approaches to literary history.[35]

As well as practice a particularly engaged historicism, I pay special attention to processes of translation/adaptation, since Middle English crusade romances are anonymous and most of them rework earlier materials: Anglo-Norman romances and *chansons de geste*, as well as Latin chronicles and histories.[36] Many of the Middle English romances themselves survive in substantially different versions. Influential to my reading practice is the New Philology, which posits that interpretations of medieval literary texts should be underpinned by a detailed investigation of what Bernard Cerquiglini calls "variantes": textual variations in successive manuscript renderings of a given narrative (whether or not translation from one language to another is involved).[37] As the following chapters demonstrate, the anonymous writers of insular crusade romances took a highly dynamic approach to translation or adaptation, exploiting the instability of manuscript culture to alter, expand on, and reconfigure the stories they inherited from previous generations. For example, these authors added altogether new scenes in which Christian and Muslim characters voice religious frustration and doubt.[38] They rendered crusaders more intemperate and sinful while endowing non-Christians with qualifiers of valor and praise.[39] They heightened inter-Christian rivalry and dissent.[40] They established continuities in their characterizations of Christians and Muslims, serving to probe the boundaries of crusader violence.[41] At the hands of writers who conceived of translation or adaptation as an act of creative innovation and topical engagement, romance became a crucial literary site for addressing the fraught questions faced by post-1291 Europe: Was heaven to blame for crusading defeats? Did God support the enterprise? Were God's agents – the crusaders – inadequate? Could Christendom achieve victory without an infusion of Muslim strength and virtue? Could Christians put an end to their internal conflicts and cooperate militarily? Had crusading devolved into a self-serving

activity, driven by expectations of worldly fame and social advancement? Did the extreme violence in holy war even conform to God's teachings?

Additionally, my critical approach attends closely to emotional language and characterizations, especially as they intersect with discourses on the vices and virtues. The texts themselves guided me in this methodological choice: while researching this book, I noticed that emotion words and descriptions of emotional displays are often at stake in moments when the romances of my corpus depart from their sources, revealing their own distinctive perspectives.[42] This study thus contributes to the history of emotions movement, which has demonstrated continuities and differences in expressions of, and attitudes toward, emotions across a dizzying array of cultures and contexts.[43] Yet, though scholars of medieval literature such as Anthony Bale, Rita Copeland, Sarah McNamer, Sif Ríkharðsdóttir, and Megan Moore have produced important work on emotions in noncrusading texts and contexts,[44] and while Stephen J. Spencer, Susanna A. Throop, and others have drawn on historical sources of the crusades circa 1095–1291 to contribute fruitfully to the history of emotions,[45] my book is the first to bring this approach to bear on imaginative crusade literature, and on post-1291 writings of any kind.[46] In the following paragraphs, I explain why emotions were an essential resource for authors or translators of crusade romances, outlining their place in crusade propaganda, in crusade culture more broadly, and in the pastoral education of the laity in late medieval England.

My thinking in this area is indebted to scholarship on modern colonial and neocolonial cultures by Sara Ahmed, Leela Gandhi, and Jane Lydon, who have studied emotional language and rhetoric to understand the workings of dominant ideologies, as well as the contradictions within, and practical limitations of, these ideologies.[47] Love of God, charitable assistance to Christian "brothers" in the East, sorrow for injuries inflicted on Christ's patrimony, righteous vengeance against wrongdoers, and zealous anger (*ira per zelum*) against the sinful – such emotional "scripts" were common in ecclesiastical propaganda, especially in crusade sermons, which played a key role in shaping and perpetuating the ideology of the movement throughout the centuries.[48] Ahmed's notion of "affective economy," invoked to explain how emotions circulate across both psychic and social fields, is useful for thinking about the emotional and ideological work of crusade propaganda.[49] For the individual, a potential recruit, emotional rhetoric served to appeal to a sense of spiritual obligation to take the cross. For the collective, it worked to create and reinforce Christian identity, defined in opposition to a threatening, sinful religious and racial Other.

As the following chapters show, key components of this emotional rhetoric feature prominently in Middle English crusade romances.

Yet, from a very early stage in the history of the crusades, and increasingly over time as contemporaries were forced to face up to disparities between ideals and reality, the emotional repertoire of crusade writing broadened to incorporate elements of self-questioning and self-critique.[50] The First Crusade, while militarily successful, raised troubling questions about the human implications of holy war – questions that were asked by chroniclers using the evaluative and empathic possibilities of emotional language. Albert of Aachen's account is a case in point: narrating the horrific massacres perpetrated by the crusaders at the siege of Jerusalem in 1099, he presents his coreligionists not as virtuous conquerors but as pitiless murderers (*percussores*), raving and venting their rage (*bachantes ac seuientes*) at their victims, whose perspective he adopts and whose sorrow he laments (see Chapter 4).[51] Beginning with the reconquest of Edessa by Imād al-Dīn Zangī and the debacle of the Second Crusade (1145–49), the starkly delineated moral hierarchies of crusade propaganda were further complicated by military defeats that, drawing on Old Testament models, contemporaries widely ascribed to Christian pride and envy (see Chapter 2). The long period from the Ayyūbid recovery of Jerusalem in 1187 to the Ottoman victory at Nicopolis in 1396 saw the development of a highly influential tradition in which Muslims, rather than Christians, are portrayed as righteous avengers, endowed with the authority to punish crusaders for their emotional intemperance and moral transgressions (see Chapter 1). Yet, at the time of Louis IX of France's Egyptian and Tunisian campaigns and of the Mamlūk campaigns leading to the reconquest of Acre, crusaders and laypeople, no longer satisfied with receiving the blame for military failure, turned to heaven for accountability. They wrathfully rebuked God, Christ, and the Virgin Mary, and often threatened to abandon their faith (see Chapter 1). During the fourteenth century, the emotion of love came to occupy a central position in debates on the motives of crusaders, rendered pressing by the Christian loss of the Holy Land and the rise of "chivalric crusading" in the Baltic and North Africa (see Chapter 3). In reworking their sources, writers of crusade romances drew extensively on and contributed creatively to this complex emotional culture.

In this study, I tend to avoid the term "affect," as in recent critical practice it has often carried with it the sense of a preconscious and prediscursive experience, favoring instead the term "emotion," frequently employed by scholars to emphasize the conscious, verbal, interactive, and

performative dimensions of feeling – dimensions that crusade romances strongly emphasize.[52] Broadly speaking, my approach to the study of emotions is social constructionist, in that I believe, like Barbara H. Rosenwein and many others whose research is historically oriented, that societies "bend, shape, encourage, and discourage the expression of various emotions."[53] To elucidate the emotional depictions of crusade romances, I delve not only into crusade documents but also into treatises on the passions and the vices and virtues, homiletic literature, medical books on the humors, and manuals for the instruction of knights and kings. I follow Damien Boquet, Piroska Nagy, Carla Casagrande, and Silvana Vecchio in regarding the later Middle Ages as a period when "the Church became particularly concerned with the emotional education of the faithful."[54] Treatises on the vices and virtues reached unprecedently wide audiences during the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, when they were translated into vernacular languages, incorporated into other literary traditions, and used by priests in their daily practices. This development may be traced back to the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, which devised a broad-ranging agenda of reform that included the laity's compulsory annual confession.[55] In England, Archbishop John Peckham's Lambeth Constitutions of 1281 refined this emphasis on pastoral education by imposing quarterly seminars, first in the province of Canterbury and later in York, for the doctrinal instruction of lay congregations.[56] Crucially, as Vecchio has noted, this vernacular approach to pastoral education placed considerable emphasis on the emotional underpinnings of virtuous and sinful behavior.[57] In this tradition, emotions, while not inherently ethical, were considered the raw material for moral acts, whether good or evil.[58] Their moral outcome was thought to rest on the will: in the words of Reginald Pecock, one is to "refreyne hem whanne þei moven a3ens doom of resoun or of feiþ" and to "cherische hem whanne þei moven answeryngli to þe doom of resoun or of feiþ."[59] Anger, when controlled by reason, could be harnessed in the service of virtue. Stirrings or feelings of pride and envy were to be contained lest they give rise to homonymous sins (i.e., prideful or envious acts).[60] When properly regulated and directed, love put God before the self. As noted by Boquet and Nagy, this late medieval "pastoral of emotions" knew no social boundaries, targeting "Western society from top to bottom."[61]

At the same time, growing clerical attention to the education of knights and princes led to the production of a remarkable number of chivalric manuals and *specula principum* in which the emotions feature prominently.[62] A notable example is Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum*

(c. 1270–85), which circulated extensively among the English nobility and gentry. Giles's treatment of the emotions in the context of royal ethics, strongly influenced by Thomas Aquinas, offers nothing less than a code of emotional conduct.[63] Each emotion could be positive or negative, according to object and direction, and certain emotional dispositions were to be followed while others avoided. Properly expressing one's emotions was viewed as important not only to the moral and political lives of contemporaries but also to their physical well-being. Medieval humoral theory, inherited from classical medical philosophy, established the connection between imbalanced bodily humors and the excessive display of emotion.[64] The link between emotional expression and somatic effects meant that emotions could be both the cause and cure for physical ailments. Moreover, the purported interdependence between body and soul endowed discourses of sickness and healing with an ethical quality. Homiletic literature typically viewed illness and other more minor indispositions as physical manifestations of problematic and often sinful actions, choices, and lifestyles.[65] Thus, within all of these types of literature, which were at times conflated within single works, discourses on the emotions were inherently tied up with notions of favorable and unfavorable conduct.[66]

Due to this collective effort to theorize their place in moral and political life, and to their important role in crusade culture, emotions proved highly attractive tools for authors of Middle English crusade romance. Within and between these romances, emotional depictions have myriad intra- and extradiegetic functions and effects, which I cursorily sketch out here and discuss in detail in the following chapters. Sorrow is an emotion that binds Christian characters together, and that invites the audience to identify with their cause. But it is also used to elicit judgment of Christians and sympathy for non-Christians, who are at times cast as sorrowful victims of wrongful actions. Righteous anger frequently underpins legitimate vengeance (or the threat thereof), and is ascribed to both Christians and Muslims. Unbridled wrath serves to pose probing questions about communal politics, crusader violence, and the relations between the human and divine. Fear and shame, often combined, heighten the sense of religious antagonism, as well as that of Christian vulnerability. Envy and pride are the disruptive crusader emotions par excellence. Love – romantic and spiritual – enables explorations of rivaling motives for, even "philosophies" of, crusading. If, in reworking earlier sources drawing on the repertoire of emotions, romance writers were often more interested in unsettling than upholding conventional oppositions (such as virtuous

Christian and sinful non-Christian, righteous crusader and harmful oppressor, divinely protected and religiously frustrated, and just war and illegitimate violence), it is because they sought to inscribe in their narratives the greatest crusading preoccupations of the world around them.

But they also did so because of the generic contract they had with audiences, what Hans Robert Jauss calls the "horizon of expectations."[67] There is a scholarly tradition, going back to influential work by Northrop Frye, that associates the romance genre with schematic dichotomies (good/evil, heroes/villains) and best examples.[68] Critics subscribing to this view have sometimes set the medieval romance against the modern novel, contrasting the former's discursive directness and ideological straightforwardness with the latter's discursive complexity and multiple ideological valences.[69] A different picture has, however, emerged from a number of genre-based discussions of romance as it developed in late medieval England. In attempting to map broad defining parameters for Middle English romance in diachronic and synchronic perspective (i.e., in relation to contiguous contemporaneous genres, such as the *chanson de geste* and the saint's life), scholars such as Jane Gilbert, Christine Chism, and Neil Cartlidge have focused not just on its subject matters and thematic interests but also on various more general tendencies: its ability to encode "a multiplicity of inscribed reader-positions and ideological identifications," the ambivalence and admiration it sustains toward protagonists and antagonists alike, the tensions it explores between ideology and experience, and the critical perspectives it offers on dominant social practices.[70] It is to this view of Middle English romance that the present book contributes. Writers saw romance as a propitious space for articulating ambivalent, self-interrogative meditations on the crusades in late medieval England in part because this is the kind of cultural work that audiences had come to expect of the genre.

These expectations were shaped by the mode in which Middle English romances were delivered and the environment in which they were consumed. Scholars now commonly agree that the target audience of these romances consisted of wealthy nonaristocrats and the gentry. Yet this audience was not the only one to consume them: there is evidence of works filtering up and down the social levels, to kings and to household servants. These romances were commonly read aloud in communal settings and, given that contemporary English households did not tend to segregate according to class, they reached a diversity of listeners in this context, bridging literate and nonliterate segments of the population.[71] Due to its wide, heterogeneous audience, Middle English romance may be

productively thought of as popular fiction, as long as one avoids deeming it "unsophisticated" and allowing only for passive, uncritical absorption.[72] Helen Cooper offers a compelling account of how romances would have been received. The centrality of debate to late medieval English culture, the oral delivery and communal reception of romance, the emphasis that writers placed on meaning alongside story, the questions they sometimes explicitly and often implicitly asked their audiences to reflect upon – all of these factors, Cooper argues, suggest an engaged, socially interactive literary consumption. "Romances could provide a secular forum analogous to academic debate," writes Cooper. "Their audiences expected to respond actively to them, and the writers encouraged such a response."[73] In the case of the Middle English crusade romances, the issues that audiences were invited to discuss and debate were topical and pressing: God's endorsement of the crusading enterprise, the apathy and misdirected priorities of European kings, the selfish motives and competitiveness of knights, Christendom's beleaguered state and military vulnerability, and the morality of violence.

The large number of Middle English romances featuring encounters and battles between Christians and non-Christians has resulted in different scholarly understandings of what qualifies as a "crusade romance." But basing our conception of this subgenre on historical evidence of contemporary identification with the crusading movement puts us on solid ground.[74] The oft-neglected Matter of France or Charlemagne romances – five of which I discuss here (*The Siege of Milan*, *The Sultan of Babylon*, *Otuel*, *Otuel and Roland*, and *Duke Roland and Sir Otuel of Spain*) – occupy a central position in this corpus since references to the Carolingian king and his peers as protocrusaders permeate European writings of the high and later Middle Ages. *Guy of Warwick* contributed to the familial crusading tradition of the Beauchamps, earls of Warwick. The siege of Jerusalem of 70 CE by the Roman generals Titus and Vespasian, imaginatively rendered in the alliterative *Siege of Jerusalem*, was conflated with the crusader conquest of the city during the First Crusade in various chronicles and treatises. And *Richard Coeur de Lion* is loosely based on the events of the Third Crusade (1189–92).[75] As well as offer thickly historicized readings of these narratives, I weave other relevant romances into my discussion to highlight intertextual relations and broader thematic patterns.

The book's structure is text-based and emotion-based. Each of its four wide-ranging chapters discusses one to three romances and two or more emotions. Chapter 1 focuses on articulations of sorrow, anger, and

vengeance in *The Siege of Milan* and *The Sultan of Babylon* to illuminate underlying anxieties about poor leadership, internal disunity, and perceived lack of divine support. *The Siege of Milan* engages two of the most significant crusading disappointments of the post-1291 era. The first concerns the inability or unwillingness of European kings to unite and launch a large-scale campaign to "recover" the Holy Land. The second emerges as a troubling question: why would a God who possessed the power to intervene in human affairs allow for wars fought on his behalf to persistently end in failure? The romance features a striking scene of Christian rebuke of the Virgin Mary, the rationale of which I elucidate in light of an important body of evidence that surfaced in the lead-up to and aftermath of the fall of Acre: a series of letters to the celestial *curia* composed by an Italian Dominican missionary in Baghdad; the poem of a Provençal troubadour Templar in the Levant; and numerous other literary works and chronicles in Latin, Occitan, and German. Creatively reworking the Anglo-Norman *La Destruction de Rome* and *Fierabras*, the writer of *The Sultan of Babylon* addresses a contiguous set of preoccupations by heightening historically charged problematic behaviors. King Charlemagne repeatedly succumbs to wrath, resulting in collectively detrimental fratricidal quarrels. Sultan Laban, while presented as politically virtuous and justified in his military actions against Christians, is constantly disappointed by his "gods," whom he physically abuses and threatens to forsake. As I argue, the motif of the "afflicted Muslim," which proliferated within the genre of Middle English romance, encapsulates a prominent aspect of post-1291 cultural development, whereby Christian frustrations at God's perceived inaction and anxieties about religious apostasy were projected onto the Muslims of fantasy.

Chapter 2 continues to investigate the Charlemagne romances' fraught reflections on divine will and the politics of communal crusading, but with a focus on anxieties related to the conversion of non-Christians, Latin Christendom's beleaguered state, and rash crusader conduct. These concerns underlie the three Middle English *Otuel* romances, which recount the story of a Muslim knight (Otuel) who, after nearly defeating Christendom's chivalric champion (Roland), miraculously converts to Christianity. The adaptors of these romances, I argue, reconfigured their Old French and Anglo-Norman sources according to the emotional rhetoric mobilized in contemporary political discourse in response to the westward conquests first of the Mongol Empire and then of the Ottoman Empire, drawing in particular on the vocabulary of fear, fearlessness, and shame. In these romances, religious conversion does not change

Otuel: he was already fierce, noble, courteous, and pious as a Muslim, attributes that he carries into his "new" Christian life. Following his conversion, the three *Otuel* romances depart from the French tradition in having him reprove Charlemagne's closest peers (Roland, Oliver, and Ogier) for their pride and envy, thus situating him in relation to, if not directly within, a tradition that suffused European chronicles, treatises, travel literature, sermons, and poems. The motif of the righteous, admonitory Muslim, as I demonstrate, was grounded in contemporary beliefs in the providential relationship between morality and military outcomes; and it came to be most pervasively used to comment on the Christian loss of the Holy Land and the Ottoman victory at Nicopolis, which was itself interpreted by Jean Froissart and Philippe de Mézières through the cultural prism of Charlemagne's legendary wars against Muslims.

Chapter 3 turns to anxieties about the motivations of crusaders, focusing on the romance of *Guy of Warwick* as it features in the Auchinleck manuscript. In fourteenth-century Europe, an ideology of "chivalric crusading" that sought to harmoniously combine knight-errantry, courtly love, the pursuit of fame, and service to God gained wide popularity, disseminated by works such as Guillaume de Machaut's *La prise d'Alixandre*, the anonymous *Livre des fais* of Marshal Boucicaut, Geoffroi de Charny's *Livre de chevalerie*, and Nicolaus of Jeroschin's *Krônike von Prûzinlant*. But this ideology was not without its critics: writers including John Gower, Philippe de Mézières, and Henry of Grosmont seized on the notion of crusading as love-service to articulate complex critiques of the worldly ambitions of crusaders. *Guy of Warwick* intervenes in this debate by exploring the practical implications of fighting for worldly love and, following the protagonist's confession, love of God. Garnering accolades from peers and social superiors is a stipulation of Guy's love-service to Felice, the Earl of Warwick's daughter. Yet this quest for praise and fame becomes so all-consuming that it leads him to nearly forget about Felice and abandon the Christian faith. Reconfiguring the Anglo-Norman *Gui de Warewic*, the Auchinleck *Guy of Warwick* enhances tensions between the protagonist's pre- and postconfessional lives by rendering his rejection of earthly concerns more emphatic and having him translate religious devotion into martial acts of selfless friendship. Drawing on biographical evidence, I suggest that the ascetic ethos purveyed by the romance, harking back to the inception of the crusading movement, held considerable purchase in fourteenth-century English chivalric spheres, and was particularly rife among participants in the Barbary crusade of 1390 to Tunis. I conclude by arguing that Geoffrey Chaucer modeled his Knight and

Squire in the General Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* on the rivaling "philosophies" of crusading documented in the chapter.

Chapter 4 examines tensions between beliefs in the "healthy," salvific character of crusading and anxieties about the morality of violence. It argues that, finding their origins in events that took place during the First Crusade, these tensions became especially pronounced in post-1291 crusade culture, crystallizing in works by John Gower, John Wyclif, John Clanvowe, and Michel Pintoin, among others, and complexly articulated in *The Siege of Jerusalem* and *Richard Coeur de Lion*. The chapter returns to the emotions of anger, sorrow, and fear, but to explore non-Christian emotional and physical reactions to acts of Christian violence, framed as troublingly excessive. In my subchapter on *The Siege of Jerusalem*, I analyze the romance's juxtapositions of unrestrained Christian anger and violence with compassion-arousing Jewish agony in light of comparably ambivalent historical reports of the crusading pogroms against Europe's Jewish communities and the massacre of Muslims in Jerusalem at the conclusion of the First Crusade. Similar concerns, I suggest, shaped the creative adaptation of *Richard Coeur de Lion*, which, in some versions, casts the eponymous king as a cannibal. To elucidate the king's actions, I reassess the long historiographical and literary tradition of crusader cannibalism that originated in events at the siege of Ma'arra (1098), arguing that by the time *Richard Coeur de Lion* was written and rewritten, cannibalism had come to symbolically stand for the necessities *and* the worst excesses of the enterprise. The romance's two episodes of anthropophagy invoke this cultural legacy. The first restores the king to good health while the second exposes the baser instincts to which crusading could appeal.

To read crusade romances with an eye to the anxieties, tensions, and critiques they carry, as I propose to do here, is to pursue critical aims that align with those animating a substantial body of postcolonial scholarship on modern colonial literature in the wake of Said's *Orientalism*. My hope is that the following chapters will stimulate further work in this vein, and further contributions by medievalists to debates in the expansive field of postcolonial studies. At the same time, this study seeks quite simply to provide scholars and students of Middle English crusade romances with a stronger sense of the historical consciousness of these texts, their engagement with broader European traditions of crusade writing, and the pressures exerted on them by contemporary geopolitics. It unearths a variety of new contexts for understanding tropes of romance that have long been recognized yet remain underanalyzed (the "afflicted Muslim," the

"blasphemous bishop," the "worthy sultan," the "heroic convert," the "love-spurred crusader," and so on). Finally, what I hope to illustrate are the benefits of a hybrid methodology combining historicist inquiry, attention to practices of translation or adaptation, and analysis of emotions. This methodological blend is especially useful for my study, on the grounds discussed above, but might be fruitfully applied to other medieval literary texts and corpora.