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Insular Secular Carolling in the Late Middle Ages

Frances Mary Eustace

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in
accordance with the requirements for award of the degree of
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Music.

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Abstract

This study shows the importance of carolling in the celebrations and festivities of medieval Britain and demonstrates its longevity from the eleventh century to the sixteenth. It illustrates the flexibility of the English carole form for adaptation to include content in high and low registers and its suitability for use on all occasions and by different communal peer groups. It also shows that the carole was part of a developmental trajectory that was not totally subsumed by the dominance, from the sixteenth century onwards, of the religious, composed, polyphonic carol and the subsequent use of the name to denote a specifically Christian Christmas hymn. Although the vast majority of extant texts in carol form, from the late medieval period, are religious in subject content, secular carolling was far more prevalent than the textual record implies. The dance-song elements of the medieval carole were so strongly woven into the vernacular cultural fabric of the British Isles that their threads can be traced through the folk-songs and dances of subsequent centuries. This study contextualises the written evidence and re-integrates the various components of the activity in order to illuminate our understanding of the universally popular medieval, participatory, pastime of carolling.

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I wish to thank Professor Pamela King, who encouraged me to start this study and supervised it at the beginning, Professor Emma Hornby who took over and saw me through, and Dr Leah Tether who injected much needed enthusiasm towards the end. I also thank Professor Christopher Page who generously gave me his research reference notes in a private email and assured me that he was happy for me to make use of them as his own studies had developed new fields of interest. I also thank my husband, Malcolm Shepherd, who, being a blacksmith, understands little of my work but, being a passionate artist, understands the dedication involved.

Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: ………………………………………………… DATE: ………………

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Abbreviations

EEC	*The Early English Carols*
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*
HRB	*Historia Regum Britanniae*

Most frequently cited manuscripts, with sigla. (A full list of manuscripts can be found in the Bibliography).

	Date	Sigla
Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 383/603.	Mid XV cent.	G. & C., MS 383/608
Cambridge, St John’s College, MS S.54	XV cent.	MS St John’s, S.54
Cambridge, University Library, Ms Add. 7350 Box 2.		Ther was a frier of order gray.
Cambridge, Trinity College, O. 3. 58.	Early XV cent.	The Trinity Roll
Dublin, Representative Church Body Library, MS D11/1.2	XIV cent. First half.	The Red Book of Ossory
London, British Library, MS Sloane 2593.	Early XV cent.	MS Sloane 2593
London, British Library, Add. 5465..	Early XVI cent	The Fayrfax MS
London, British Library, Add. 31922.	XVI cent.	Henry VII’s MS

London, British Library, MS Harley 541.	XV cent.	MS Harley 541
London, British Library, MS Harley, 5396		The Ritson MS
Matlock, Derbyshire Record Office, D77 box 38	c.1500	The Gresley Manuscript
Oswestry, Lord Harlech's Library, MS Porkington 10		MS Porkington 10
Oxford, Balliol College, MS 354	XVI cent.	Richard Hill's Book
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. poet. e.1.	XV cent.	Eng. poet. e.1.
Guglielmo Ebreo (also called Giovanni Ambrosio) *De pratica seu arte tripudii*, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, fonds italien 973.	1463.	Ebreo
Domenico da Piacenza *De arte saltandi*, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, fonds italien, 972.	c. 1455.	Domenico
San Marino, California, Huntington Library, *Christmas Carolles newely Inprynted* printed by Richard Kele	c.1550.	Richard Kele's *Christmas Carolles*

Introduction

Caroles and carolling are so frequently referred to in literary texts and other records from the eleventh century to the sixteenth century that it is clear carolling was understood to be a universally shared cultural experience in Western Europe. It is, however, the very universality of that cultural experience that presents a problem to modern researchers. When a familiarity can be assumed, among contemporary readers, it is not necessary for a writer to describe the activity in detail. The 'cultural assumption', within any particular society, leaves a void in the record for the reader who lacks that shared knowledge. Medieval carolling is a case in point: it was apparently ubiquitous in practice but it is rarely documented with clarity. There are no extant medieval manuscripts containing tunes or song texts that designate particular ones as caroles.[1] Although carolling is mentioned, in passing, in many sources, it is very seldom described in detail regarding what steps were used or how many people took part, or how long it took. The aim of this study is to take an inter-disciplinary approach to the medieval activity of carolling and, by assessing the evidence concerning all aspects, without the constraints of disciplinary subject boundaries, to explore what carolling may have meant to the people of late medieval Britain. By drawing together existing scholarship from the disciplines of Music, English, French or Anglo-Norman, Dance, Social History and Cultural History, together with undertaking original research focussing on the activity of carolling, rather than just the written object of the carole text, I aim to re-instate the symbiotic relationship of song, text and dance within the communal culture of medieval Britain and, with the benefit of my background in music and dance, to shed new light on our understanding of the activity of carolling.

State of the field

The seminal work on the extant texts of medieval English carols is by Richard Leighton Greene and, although it was published in 1935, it has only been added to, not superseded in subsequent scholarship.[2] He adopts the definition of a carol as 'a song on any subject, composed of uniform stanzas and provided with a burden' in which the burden, also called a fote, is usually a refrain written at the beginning and repeated between the stanzas.[3] Greene's collection, of necessity, covers the later medieval period from c.1400 to c.1550 as it relies on extant written or printed manuscript sources, although Greene covers the earlier history and origins of carols in the extensive introduction. My study begins with the earliest evidence of the activity of carolling in Britain, before the Norman Conquest, and long before any actual 'carols' were recorded.

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[1] John Stevens, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 163.

[2] Richard Leighton Greene, *The Early English Carols* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935).

[3] Greene, *EEC*, p. xxiii.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) gives the earliest occurrences of the Middle English word 'carol' being used as a verb and a noun c.1300.[4] The many variant spellings in Middle English are given as follows: karol, karole, karolle, carole, carol, carolle, careld, caroul, karalla, caral, caralle, caril, caryl, carell, karrel, karil, carrold and carol. The verb is most commonly formed using -ll- as in 'to karolle', 'carolled' and 'carolling'. Its etymology derives from the Old French *carole* (noun) and *caroler* (verb). The Larousse *Dictionnaire de L'Ancien Français* gives two spellings, *carole* and *querole* and gives the earliest example as Wace's *Brut* in 1155.[5] As the modern spelling 'carol' was not the preferred form in the Middle Ages and carries such strong associations with the post sixteenth-century religious Christmas song, I will adopt the Middle English terms of 'carole' and 'carolling' throughout this thesis and use italics for *carole* only when referring specifically to Old French or Anglo-Norman examples. The exact etymology of the word in romance languages is uncertain but the most strongly attested theory is that it derives from the Latin '*choros'* and its derivitives *'chorea'* and '*choraules',* meaning a group of singers or dancers. The early twentieth-century scholar, Margit Sahlin's theory on a link with the word '*kyrie'*, has largely been superseded by later writers.[6] The *OED* states that it is unclear 'whether the verb or the noun takes priority etymologically'. The priority given in the *OED* to the noun over the verb in quantity of examples, perhaps reflects the disappearance, in modern usage, of the verb rather than the frequency of use in Middle English, thus perpetuating a perception of the carole as an object rather than an activity that this thesis seeks to redress.

Robert Mullally explores the etymology fully in Chapters II and III of his thesis, 'The *Carole*: A study of a Medieval French Dance'. This thesis was published, in 2011, as *The Carole: A Study of a Medieval Dance*, dropping the word 'French' from the title and adding chapters on Italy and England but without substantially altering his hypothesis that the '*Carole*' was 'a

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[4] <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/28124?rskey=UhQ9ca&result=2#eid>

[5] *Dictionnaire de L'Ancien Français,* ed. by Algirdas Julien Greimas (Paris: Larousse, 2001), p. 86.

[6] Margit Sahlin, *Étude sur la carole médiévale: l'Origine du mot et ses rapports avec l'Êglise* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Boktryckeri-A.-B., 1940).

Medieval French dance'.[7] Mullally's focus on the dance aspect of the carole and his emphasis on its performance does not reflect the complete experience of medieval carolling. Indeed, he frequently uses the term 'perform' when referring to 'the carole' as in 'We find it being performed by all classes'.[8] He also frequently translates the verb as the noun, by inserting a word, for example: '*comencierent a karoler'* is translated as 'they began to perform caroles'.[9] In my study, I question this emphasis on the performative, rather than the participatory, aspects of carolling. Bakhtin's description of Carnival is of interest in this respect. He opines that 'carnival does not know footlights' and 'Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it'.[10] I similarly propose that the firm distinction between audience and performers, present in modern Western European culture, had no place in medieval carolling. In my thesis, I argue that carolling was an activity, involving singing and dancing, in which all participants contributed, the boundaries between the roles of lead-singer, dancers and on-lookers being somewhat fluid.

The excellent work of Ardis Butterfield concentrates on the carole as a literary construct within the genre of French romance literature and as such, she emphasises a performativity inherent in that courtly genre that is not necessarily fundamental to the activity of carolling in general.[11] She, and Mullally, imply that the activity of carolling went out of fashion in courtly circles c.1400. I would propose instead that it was the fashion for literary inclusion, of caroles or scenes of carolling, that ended around this time. Christopher Page, in *Voices and Instruments*, provides a list of over sixty romances and over forty epics that contain musical or carolling references.[12] He points out some ambiguities as to whether caroles were accompanied by instruments and states that they 'were performed by a mixed company of men and women or by women alone'.[13] He also says that 'in numerous references the young girls are said to dance *caroles* while the young men indulge in chivalric sports such as fencing'.[14] In *The Owl and the Nightingale*, Page does emphasise that carolling was popular across all levels of society.[15] My research suggests that the picture is even more complex, and I have encountered references to men (knights and squires) dancing caroles without women.[16] Recent research has possibly been influenced by preconceptions regarding male dance culture in Europe in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This is not appropriate when interpreting the sources regarding other cultures and other times.

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[7] Robert Mullally, '*The Carole: A Study of a Medieval Dance* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011). Robert Mullally, 'The *Carole*: A study of a Medieval French Dance' (doctoral thesis King's College, London, 2005), pp. 29-77. All further references apply to this thesis.
[8] Mullally, p. 11.
[9] Mullally, p. 125.
[10] M. M. Bakhtin, 'Carnival Ambivalence', in *The Bakhtin Reader,* ed. by Pam Morris (London: Arnold, 1994), pp. 194-221 (p. 198).
[11] Ardis Butterfield, *Poetry and Music in Medieval France: From Jean Renart to Guillaume de Machaut* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)
[12] Christopher Page, *Voices and Instruments of the Middle Ages: Instrumental Practice and Songs in France, 1100-1300* (London: Dent, 1986), Appendix 2, pp. 151-56.
[13] Page, *Voices and Instruments*, p. 80.

John Stevens includes a chapter on 'The Dance-Song' in *Words and Music in the Middle Ages* in which he devotes sections to 'Courtly dance-song: *carole* and *rondeau*' and 'The French *refrain*'.[17] As his title claims, Stevens includes music as well as text in his study, unlike the authors mentioned above. This book contains valuable material based on literary sources and the later section on 'The music of dance-song' provides a credible analysis of the essential ingredients for suitable tunes for carolling, which provided a basis for my work in my final chapter.[18]

Methodology

The defining feature of the carole is the use of the refrain or burden. I follow Greene's terminology in this respect, in order to distinguish between the French and English forms. The English carole burden (also called a fote) is usually written before the first stanza, at the head of the song, and is to be repeated between each successive stanza.[19] The French *carole refrain* is integrated within the stanza. This is discussed more fully in Chapter Two, but it is important to state here the importance of this aspect of the carole as it is fundamental to the call and response nature of carolling. The repetition of the burden or refrain provides the opportunity, in the song, for the participants to respond.

I take a holistic approach to the research, integrating material from the fields of literature studies, ethno-musicology, cultural history, social history, and dance history. The thesis progresses incrementally, using the knowledge and understanding gained previously to interrogate the evidence in each subsequent chapter. Before interpreting the written record

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[14] Page, *Voices and Instruments*, p.156.
[15] Christopher Page, *The Owl and the Nightingale: Musical Life and Ideas in France 1100-1300* (London: Dent 1989), p. 118.
[16] *The crusade and death of Richard I*, ed. by R.C. Johnston, (Oxford: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1961), p. 15 available online at <www.anglo-norman.net/sources/>. See discussion on p. 46 below.
[17] Stevens, *Words and Music*, pp. 163-78.
[18] Stevens, *Words and Music*, pp. 186-96.
[19] Greene, *EEC*, p. cxxxiii.

(that is, literary accounts of carolling and the later extant carole texts) it is important to understand the medieval culture of orality and memory, not only among the illiterate but also among literate members of society. Divisions between different members of society may be applicable in some contexts but music and dance render some barriers permeable as, for example, even a literate bishop cannot un-learn the songs and dances of his childhood. The written record serves, in the words of Karl Reichl, as the 'textualisation' of oral culture.[20] Much of the primary source material has been addressed in recent scholarship by academics from various disciplinary backgrounds. This predominantly literary view will be integrated within a broader context that considers the background of oral culture and semi-literacy that pertained in the wider society in Medieval Britain.

Some scholars have perpetuated the predominantly negative attitude of medieval churchmen towards dancing in general and carolling in particular.[21] The question needs to be asked as to what extent has this been influenced by a modern, possibly male, academic antipathy to dance and dance studies. My re-examination of the record, both written and iconographic, regarding carolling within the context of medieval dance culture sets the background for the study of ecclesiastical male polemical condemnations. I reconsider the interpretation of the primary source material in the context of the assumption that dance, for both men and women, was an essential part of medieval entertainment culture and I seek to place in context the academic, and possibly anti-female, prejudices of both medieval and more recent writers. The Franciscans were particularly influential in the development of the English carole, both religious and secular, and their attitude to the activity needs to be integrated into the account. A study of the Franciscans' use of dance imagery as metaphor in sermons will be included to support the hypothesis that the Church's attitude was less uniformly negative than has generally been portrayed in recent scholarship, and that the frequently repeated condemnations of carolling by some preachers do not give a realistic picture of the carolling culture of the period. A brief study of Franciscan theology and their contribution to education in England will provide a context for the examination of the four manuscripts containing secular caroles, written by Franciscans and other clerics educated under their influence, forming a central part of this thesis.

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[20] Karl Reichl, 'Plotting the map of Medieval Oral Literature', in *Medieval Oral Literature*, ed. by K. Reichl (Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter GmbH &Co 2012), pp. 3-68 (p. 9).
[21] Page, *Voices and Instruments*, p. 78.

The extant secular carole texts are interrogated for clues about their use and possible links to a larger oral repertoire that most certainly existed but has left little trace. The content of the texts points to themes, regarding seasons and recurring topics, that indicate a wider participation in secular carolling than the predominantly pious corpus suggests. I propose that the development of dance and song follows a continuum along which certain elements are transformed or absorbed. The development of the religious carol, from the sixteenth century onwards, into the seasonal hymns still in use today, is well documented. I follow, instead, the record of dance and song history, searching for remnants of carolling, through to the so-called 'folk' culture of the last century. My dissertation concludes with a case study of the fifteenth-century carole, 'Ther was a frier of order grey' with a tune composed using the information gained from my research.[22]

Chapter Summaries

The first chapter places dance and dance-song within an oral cultural context and establishes the social and cultural background for the study. It unpicks some cultural assumptions from twenty-first century European society that might mislead the researcher. Here, I trace the earliest references to carolling and offer support for the hypothesis that the activity existed in a recognisable form before the Norman Conquest. In Chapter Two I examine the written and iconographical evidence in chronicles, literature and other records referring to the culture of courtly carolling, though not the carole texts themselves. The image of caroles and carolling conveyed by romance literature tends to dominate scholarship in this field. I place this literary view in context in order to clarify the picture as to what carolling practice involved as well as when and where it took place. Chapter Three contains a discussion of the attitude of the Church to carolling and examines the context for the emergence of the English Franciscan carole writers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

In Chapter Four I explore four manuscripts that contain secular caroles, focussing not just on the texts of the caroles themselves, but on also the *mise en page* and details of the manuscripts' compilation. I show that there was no separation of religious and secular caroles evident in the manuscripts themselves and draw conclusions as to what the implications of this may be for our understanding of medieval carolling practice. In Chapter Five, the extant texts of caroles, collected and published by Greene, Duncan and others, are examined for themes and content that indicate something about their use. The final chapter moves forward in time and traces elements of carolling culture through the centuries up to the present day. The separation of dance and song is discussed, and the two separate threads are followed through the works of Arbeau, Playford, Ravenscroft and the later ‘folklorists’ including Cecil Sharp, Sabine Baring-Gould, and Ralph Vaughan Williams. The thesis concludes with a speculative reconstruction of a medieval carole, employing the knowledge gained about melodic idiom and carolling practice.

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[22] This carole text is preserved in Cambridge, University Library, Ms Add. 7350 Box 2.

Chapter One

Carolling and dance-song in the context of a primarily oral culture.

Introduction

It is the purpose of this chapter to suggest that carolling was fundamentally an orally transmitted cultural activity and that dance-songs, or caroles, existed within the context of the communal song culture of medieval society at all levels. Not only did caroles exist before any extant examples were written down, but many also circulated long after in a parallel oral culture, even within a predominantly literacy-dependant society. John Haines draws attention to the attitude of scholars to vernacular song in general, stating that the impression given by most music histories is that people's voices were used only for speech until liturgical chant was invented and notated.[1] He reminds us that music history has been the history of the written record not of music itself. This is particularly the case with the carole. A carole recorded in a scene of carolling in a romance narrative is not the thing itself, just as a set of variations on Cotton Patch Rag published in a Bluegrass Fiddle Styles book is not Bluegrass Fiddling.[2] Caroles have been brought to the attention of scholars by their presence in medieval literature and sermons, and by the later recording of texts as poems, but these must be placed within the context of a song culture that accompanied many activities of daily living, and which has left virtually no trace. Such a song culture, in the context of the earlier period of the fourth century, is vividly described in this passage by St. John Chrysostom (c.347-407):

> For this reason travellers also sing as they drive their yoked animals at midday, thus lightening the hardships of the journey by their chants. And not only travellers, but peasants are accustomed to sing as they tread the grapes in the winepress, gather the vintage, tend the vine, and perform their other tasks. Sailors do likewise, pulling at the oars. Women, too, weaving and parting the

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[1] John Haines, *Medieval Song in Romance Languages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.12.

[2] Mark O'Connor, 'Cotton Patch Rag' in *Bluegrass Fiddle Styles* ed. by Stacy Phillips and Kenny Kose (New York: Opak Publications, 1978), pp. 59-62. Haines uses the example of Jazz 'fake' books in *Medieval Song* p. 13.

> tangled threads with the shuttle, often sing a particular melody, sometimes individually and to themselves, sometimes all together in concert.[3]

Of this rich world of secular song, including lullabies, laments, caroles and work-songs, only fragments remain. Their written record dates from the fourteenth century and is distorted by the influence of the Church on book production and by the vagaries of the survival of any text from that period. The picture of the oral vernacular culture, portrayed by the written record, is as tantalisingly fleeting as the sparkle of a speck of gold in a prospector's pan. It is therefore necessary to approach the study of caroles and carolling from a position of an understanding of the predominantly oral, secular song culture that existed throughout the Middle-Ages. This opening chapter provides an overview of source texts, relating to carolling, that evidence the existence of that oral culture and provides a context for understanding the relationship between oral and written cultures in a developing literate society.

1:1 The existence of carolling prior to its appearance in romance literature in the late twelfth century.

The earliest use of the word '*carole'* that I have found thus far is in Psalm 149 in the Anglo-Norman Psalter of Montebourg: 'Lodent le num de lui en carole; en tympane e saltier cantent à lui.'[4] (Praise his name in the *carole*; with drum and psaltery sing to him.) Produced in the first half of the twelfth century, this translation of the Gallican psalter was produced as part of a movement to create a literary corpus in the Anglo-Norman vernacular and is one of many devotional books written before the development of courtly romance literature in the later twelfth century. Geoff Rector writes:

> The very vernacularity of the Oxford Psalms speaks, in the end, to the role of *romanz* in the sociolinguistic dynamic that gave us Anglo-Norman literature

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[3] Text: *Patrologia cursus completus. Series graeca*, vol. 55, cols. 155-59, ed. by Jacque Migne, trans. by Oliver Strunk, revised by James McKinnon, in *Music in Early Christian Literature*, ed. by James McKinnon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 124.

[4] Psalter of Montebourg, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 320.

> […] Here the *romanz* Psalter is presented without any accompanying Latin text of any kind – it is available by itself, as a self-sufficient literary instrument of studious reading and spiritual distinction.[5]

The translator was, by definition, using a vocabulary that would have clarity of meaning for the readers. Therefore, it can be assumed that the idea of praising the name of God '*en carole'* was entirely familiar by this date. The phrase used in the original Latin is '*in choro'*, a term that had been in general use in Europe to describe dance-songs and most commonly ring-dances, although there may have been regional variations both in the form of the dance and of the song.[6] This first appearance of the word '*carole'* in the written record does not therefore herald the invention of a new French or Norman dance-song form, but is, rather, evidence of a familiar term that was understood and in current usage by the twelfth century.

The use of the term '*carole*' in the Anglo-Norman Psalter establishes that this activity most likely predated the Norman Conquest of Britain. This suggests that earlier references in Latin might shed light on the same practice.[7] For example, in Bede's commentary on Luke 2. 43-44, the following passage tells of Jesus being left behind in Jerusalem by his parents;

> 'And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance.'[8]

In order to explain this apparent dereliction of parental duty Bede (fl.731) describes how the men and women danced caroles (*choros ducentes*) on their way to and from festivities and that the children could go with either parent. This may have been how the misunderstanding arose, each parent thinking that Jesus was with the other.

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[5] Geoff Rector, 'The Psalter *en romanz*: The Anglo-Norman Psalters' in *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England, c. 1100- c. 1500*, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013), pp. 198-206 (p. 206).

[6] '*Laudent nomen ejus in choro: in tympano, et psalterio psallent ei.'* <http://archive.org/stream/psalterinlatinen00chur/psalterinlatinen00chur_djvu.txt> [accessed 29 Sep 2014]

[7] For a brief discussion of the Latin term *chorea* and etymology of *carole* see the Introduction p. 2.

[8] Authorized King James Version.

> Cui respondendum quia filiis israhel moris fuerit ut temporibus festis uel hierosolimam confluentes uel ad propria redeuntes seorsum uiri seorsum autem feminae choros ducentes incederent infantes que uel pueri cum quolibet parente indifferenter ire potuerint ideo que beatam mariam uel ioseph uicissim putasse puerum iesum quem se comitari non cernebant cum altero parente reuersum. [9]

(The answer is that it was the custom among the children of Israel in times of festivity, when they were either going to Jerusalem or making their way back home, that men and women danced caroles apart. The children and boys that walked along could go with either parent).

Presumably, even if this was not actual common insular practice in the eighth century, it was close enough to their experience and understanding to provide a plausible explanation. Certainly, it assumes an understanding of the Latin term ‘choros’ as singing and dancing along the journey, and it also implies that it was considered a perfectly respectable thing to be doing, as Bede is not trying to criticise Mary or Joseph for neglectful behaviour.

The *Vita Sancti Dunstani* (c.1000) contains another pre-Conquest reference to carolling.[10] The description of the Saint’s vision, experienced in the Abbey at Canterbury at night, includes the following passage:

> He saw the aforementioned basilica was all swathed in a brilliant light, and that virginal throngs in a gyrating chorus (*choro gyranti*) were singing this

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[9] ‘In Lucae evangelicum expositio’, in *Beda Venerabilis Opera, II, Opera Exegetica,* ed. by D. Hurst, (Turnhout: Brepols, 1960), pp. 5-425 available online at <http://www.brepols.net/Pages/BrowseBySeries.aspx?TreeSeries=LLT-O>.

[10] Christopher Page, ‘The Carol in Anglo-Saxon Canterbury’, in *Essays on the History of English Music in Honour of John Caldwell*, ed. by E. Hornby and D. Maw (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), pp. 259-69 (p. 263).

> hymn of the poet Sedulius as they circled, *Cantemus, socii domino,* and so on. Further-more, he noticed that, in the manner of human virgins, these same [virgins] repeated the first versicle of the same hymn verse by verse, with alternating voice, as if in the music of a round […].[11]

As noted by Page, the hymn by Sedulius occurs in several manuscript sources and was well known. The comment on this particular visionary performance, 'in the manner of human virgins', and the observation that the first versicle was repeated 'with alternating voice, as if in the music of a round' implies that this was not the usual way of presenting the hymn.[12] The passage suggests that the comparison of the visionary virgins, in a gyrating chorus, with the common practice of human virgins, in the music of a round, would have conveyed a vivid and understandable image to the reader. Page further points out that this is clarified in a later version of St Dunstan's Life by Osbern of Christchurch Canterbury (c.1070), who was himself a skilled musician. He describes how, in the vision, the Virgin Mary led the singing with *Cantemus socii Domino,* which was then taken up by some of the virgins and repeated as a refrain, alternating with other verses. Although no caroles in Middle English survive complete until some four hundred years later, this evidence suggests that a form of ring-dance song, with refrains, was familiar in Anglo-Saxon Britain.

The strength of these references, before 1066, lies in the treatment of the activity as perfectly ordinary. Bede thought it quite reasonable for Mary and Joseph to carole with their companions on the journey to and from Jerusalem, and the author of the Life of St Dunstan assumed that his readers would be familiar with the circular dance-songs enjoyed by 'human virgins'. It seems, however, that it was not only respectable parents and innocent maidens who took part in eleventh-century carolling. The tale of the sacrilegious carollers of Cölbigk, as told in Robert of Brunne's 'Handlyng Synne' (c.1288- 1338), is familiar to many medievalists. It also exists in an earlier version by Goscelin of St. Bertin, who moved to England c. 1060. He was probably chaplain at the wealthy Wilton Abbey and wrote the *Translatio Edithae* in which the account occurs.[13] According to Goscelin, a man named Theodoric came to Wilton in the time of Abbess Brihtgifu (1045-65) and he was trembling and suffering from spasms. These symptoms were explained as being the result of a punishment meted out to him and ten companions who began a ring-dance in the churchyard at Cölbigk on Christmas night, while mass was being held inside. According to Goscelin, they were planning to rape the priest's daughter later, though this detail has not been emphasized in subsequent versions (eg. Robert of Brunne's) so much as the irreverence of disturbing the mass, which they should themselves have been attending. They were forced, by the curse of the priest, to continue dancing for a whole year, repeating their refrain, 'why stondë we, why go we noȝt?' Although this terrible event was said to have occurred in Germany, the appearance of the trembling man, Theodoric, at Wilton Abbey prompted Goscelin to include the account in his *Translatio Edithae* c.1080.[14] The image of a group of young men whipping themselves into a state of excitement by circle-dancing, to commit a gang rape, is redolent of male-bonding and pagan sacrificial rituals that may still have resonated in the communal folk-memory. David Rubin cites Eric Havelock, for example, in stressing the effect of rhythm on group cohesion; [15] a similar use of singing or chanting accompanied by synchronised movement is familiar to anyone who has watched the Haka ritual before a New Zealand All Blacks rugby match. This sinister aspect of carolling is a far cry from the image of courtly amorous couples more commonly evoked in the romance literature of medieval France and England but it was part of the wider picture in the culture and cultural memory of Britain at the turn of the eleventh century.

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[11] Page, 'The Carol in Anglo-Saxon Canterbury', p. 263.
[12] Page, 'The Carol in Anglo-Saxon Canterbury', pp. 264-65.

Writers of history in the Middle Ages, such as Goscelin, relied on a mixture of written sources and oral histories. Although medieval society was 'literate' in the sense that matters of religion and government were documented, the majority of the inhabitants of Britain did not depend on literacy. Literacy was not so much a mark of wealth or social standing as of profession. Michael Clanchy states that lay literacy grew out of bureaucracy rather than abstract desire for education or literature.[16] Christopher Small demonstrates that, in societies where neither total literacy nor total non-literacy is the norm, it is useful for the researcher to consider the state or level of reliance upon the written word.[17] If non-literacy is the norm, as in Britain during the period around 1100, then knowledge may have been held communally in the form of dancing, singing, painting, sculpting, masking and story-telling.[18] When a society transitions from oral dependency to literate dependency then the surviving oral culture no longer carries the responsibility for a memorised code of behaviour. Rituals that once embodied and reinforced social cohesion become relegated to the level of stories and performances for mere entertainment.[19] Eric Havelock observed this transition in the societies and cultures of the American Indians, Polynesians and Africans following their invasion by literate cultures. A similar transition can be observed in courtly society in Britain during the late Middle Ages as carolling became relegated to scenes of feasting and entertainment in romance fiction rather than an expression of community and social ritual.

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[13] This episode is analysed more fully in Chapter Three, pp. 80-84.

[14] Goscelin, 'Translatio Edithae', in *Writing the Wilton Women*, ed. by Stephanie Hollis, W.R. Barnes, Rebecca Hayward, Kathleen Loncar, and Michael Wright (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), pp. 82-85.

[15] David C. Rubin, *Memory in Oral Traditions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 66.

1:2. Stonehenge called the Giants' Carole in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, Robert Wace's *Roman de Brut* and Layamon's *Brut.*

Caroles and carolling were so culturally ingrained in twelfth-century Britain that the signature image of the ring dance was used to signal ancient orally transmitted belief systems. This is demonstrated by the metaphorical but vivid description of Stonehenge as the Giants' Carole in the *Historia Regum Britanniae* (*HRB*) by Geoffrey of Monmouth, written c.1138. Although purporting to be a 'history' based on information contained in an 'ancient British book'; the work of Geoffrey of Monmouth, who may have had Welsh origins, was woven together from Welsh legends and Latin writings, by Bede and Gildas, in order to fill the void in the historical record between the departure of the Romans in the late fourth century and the beginning of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* initiated by Alfred the Great in the ninth century. Following the civil war, in 1153 a new version of British history was written in Anglo-Norman: the *Roman de Brut* by Robert Wace.[20] This was based on the *Historia Regum Britanniae* (*HRB)* but Wace added certain touches of his own to add emphasis to the narrative and to appeal to his patrons. He presented his *Brut* to Queen Eleanor in 1155. [21] Weiss says in her introduction to the *Brut*:

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[16] M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 19.
[17] Christopher Small, *Music of the Common Tongue: Survival and Celebration in African American Music* (Middleton, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), p. 229.
[18] Small, p. 224.
[19] Eric A. Havelock. *The Muse Learns to Write* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 45.

> The *Brut* of Wace is the earliest extant vernacular chronicle of British history, […] The climax of this history is the reign of king Arthur, and this is the first sustained account of his life in any vernacular language.

Laȝamon wrote his translation of Wace’s *Brut* at the beginning of the thirteenth century in Early Middle English.[22] These three narrative histories all contain the story of Merlin and the Giants’ Carole at Stonehenge and provide evidence of an understanding of the carolling imagery in the three languages, Latin, Anglo-Norman and Middle English.

Prior to the reign of Arthur, the magician and prophet Merlin advises King Ambrosius (Lat. *Aurelius)* in an episode concerning the great stone circle of Stonehenge. Ambrosius is at Amesbury and wishes to honour the site of the treacherous killing of his predecessor, Hengist. Merlin suggests that they transport a magical stone circle, from Ireland to Amesbury, to create a fitting monument. Geoffrey of Monmouth refers to the stone circle as the ‘*chorea gigantum’*. The three versions of the passage can be compared (in Table 1:1) as follows:

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[20] Judith Weiss, ed. *Wace’s Roman de Brut: A History of the British* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, revised edition 2002), p. xvii.

[21] Judith Weis, p. xii.

[22] BL MS Cotton Caligula A.IX

Table 1:1 The description of Stonehenge as the Giants' Carol.

HRB[23]	Wace's *Brut*	Laȝamon's *Brut*[24]
Si perpetuo opera sepulturam vivorum decorare volueris, mitte pro chorea gigantum, quae est in Kilarao mont Hyberniae. Est etenim ibi structura lapidum, quam nemo hujus aetatis construeret, nisi ingenium Artem subvectaret.	Ki mult seit bele e convenable E dunt tuz tens seit mais parole Fai ci aporter la carole Que gaiant firent en Irlande, Une merveilleuse ovre e grande De pieres en un cerne assise. (ll.8040-45)	I-seo ȝe nu ohte men. þene muchelne hul; þe hul swa swiðe hæh; þere weolcne he is ful neh. þat is þat seolliche þing; hit hatte þere Eotinde Ring. elches weorkes unniliche; hit com of Aufrike. (ll. 8621-24)

Weiss translates this passage from Wace's *Brut* as follows: 'If you wish to create a durable monument, beautiful and fitting, and remembered forever, have the Giants' Dance brought here, made in Ireland. It is a huge and marvellous work of stones set in a circle,one on top of the other'.[25] The use of the word 'dance' here is problematic in Weiss's translation as it diffuses the iconic imagery. She later continues to use 'carol' and 'dance' inconsistently. A more literal translation of the phrase '*la carole que gaiant firent en Irlande'* is 'the carole that the giants made in Ireland'. The *HRB* description is more ambiguous and could mean the 'giants' carole' or 'the carole of the giants', so called because of its appearance, leaving its construction as a mystery. Laȝamon also follows this meaning, describing the stones as follows: Þat is þat seolliche þing; hit hatte þere Eotinde Ring (That is that weird thing, it is known as the Giants' Ring). The *Brut* of Laȝamon provides the only Early Middle English direct translation of the Anglo-Norman term '*carole'* as 'ring' of which I am aware.

The visual imagery evoked by the description of the enormous stones either standing, as if holding hands, in a giant ring-dance or having been placed by giants in this form, is powerful and certainly unforgettable. Moreover, the intersecting threads of history and mythology, of facts and fabulation, throughout the passage form a complex web that invites further unpicking. The significance of Stonehenge as a pre-Christian religious site was obvious to the medieval authors and audience, and its origins were, and still are, obscure. Their original, fictional, placement in Ireland puts them at the edge of the known world, certainly as far as medieval Europe was concerned, but a further literary displacement of them to Africa lends an even more exotic value of 'otherness' to the myth. The following passages are from Wace's *Brut.*

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[23] < https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/History_of_the_Kings_of_Britain Book 8>, Chapter X.

[24] Laȝamon, *Brut*, London, British Library Ms. Cotton Caligula A.IX, l. 8623. <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/cme/LayCal/1:87?rgn=div1;view=fulltext> [accessed 8 Feb. 2018].

[25] Weiss, p. 203.

D'Aufrice furent aportees,
La furent primes compassees;
Gaiant da las les aporterent;
En Irlande les aloerent.
Mult suelent estre saluables
E as malades profitables.
Les genz les soleient laver
E de l'eue les bains temprer.
Cil ki esteient engroté
E d'alcune enferté grevé
Des laveures bainz feseient,
Bainoent sei si guarisseient
Ja pur enferté qu'il sentissent
Altre mecine ne quesissent. (ll. 8065-8078)

(They were brought from Africa, where they were first constructed; giants took them from there and placed them in Ireland. They used to be most beneficial and useful to the sick. People used to wash the stones and mingle this water with their baths. Those who were ill and suffering from any disease prepared baths from these cleansing waters, bathed themselves, and were cured; they never sought any other medicine, for whatever infirmity they might suffer).[26]

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[26] All further extracts and translations of Wace's *Brut* are from Weiss.

Merlin himself is a mythological figure and yet his use of the past tense to explain how the stones 'used to be most beneficial' distances him from the pagan predecessors, giving him more credence as a true historical figure in post-Roman, Christian Britain. The authors' confabulations of oral history and written source material from post-Roman Britain preserve the ritual currency that circle-dances held in oral societies, whilst transferring them into the cultural norms of a Christian civilisation. According to Geoffrey of Monmouth, the stones were re-erected at Amesbury for a great feast, not at the time of the Winter solstice which would have been the significant date for the pagan calendar, but at the Christian celebration of Pentecost, for the coronation of Ambrosius. It has been suggested that Geoffrey was familiar with oral histories still held and transmitted by Welsh bards and containing elements of Druidic knowledge, although Stonehenge was pre-historic even for the Druids.[27]

According to Wace, the stones are too heavy to be moved by the Britons, but Merlin mutters a prayer - or a spell - and the stones are taken to the ships and transported to Amesbury. Geoffrey of Monmouth's version is more pragmatic, suggesting the use of machines rather than magic, to shift the stones. Interestingly the 'Giants' Carole' becomes 'stones' during the discussion of their transportation. Laȝamon also refers to *'þe stanes'* after the initial naming of the *Eotinde Ring.*
Wace includes a passage, not found in Geoffrey of Monmouth's account, explaining the three differing terminologies.

> E Merlin les piers dreça,
> En lur ordre les raloa;
> Bretun les seulent en bretanz
> Apeler carole as gaianz,
> Stanhenges unt nun en enleis,
> Pieres pendues aen franceis. (l. 8173-78)

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[27] Graham Robb, *The Ancient Paths: Discovering the Lost Map of Celtic Europe* (London: Picador, 2013), p. 220.

(And Merlin erected the stones, restoring them to their proper order. In the British language the Britons usually call them the Giants' Carole; in English they are called Stonehenge, and in French, the Hanging Stones.)

The final reference to the carole in Wace's *Brut* is in the passage that follows immediately afterwards. A son of the defeated Vortigern, called Paschent, (Lat. *Pascentius*) has returned to Ireland to gain support in his quest for vengeance for his father.

> Paschent pur sun pere vengier
> E pur s'ecrité chalengier,
> Li reis pur querre vengement
> De cels ki orent nuvelement
> Lui vencu e sa gent robee
> E la carole od els portee; (ll. 8201-06)

(Paschent, in order to avenge his father and claim his inheritance, and the King in order to seek revenge on those who had recently robbed his people and carried off the Dance.)

According to Wace, the Irish do not wish to reclaim the stones as such, but the carole. It would seem that the significance, and indeed the magic, does not lie in the stones themselves but in their configuration as the 'giants' carole'. There can be little doubt that, in the minds of the Anglo-Normans of mid twelfth-century Britain, the signature image of the carole was that of a group of figures in a circle, rather than just as any dance in various forms such as a line or a procession, and that some associations with pagan ritual practices remained.

1:3 The birth of romance literature and the inclusion of courtly scenes of *carolling* both festive and magical in the genre.

The subject of *caroles* and dance-songs in romance literature has been thoroughly explored, albeit from different disciplinary perspectives. None of these studies have, however, placed the fictional literary examples within the context of an essentially oral culture. The following discussion does precisely this.

Although no texts of caroles in Middle English survive before 1300, references to caroles and carolling are numerous in literature and sermons in Northern Europe throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, leading Christopher Page to opine that ‘in the eyes of contemporary social commentators the *carole* simply was the secular music of the North’.[28] He goes on to say:

> The *carole* therefore presents a particularly striking case of the iceberg problem which meets us everywhere in medieval music: the forms which dominate our view of secular music-making in twelfth- and thirteenth-century France are those which survive, but the view of contemporaries was dominated by material which has left little trace.[29]

It is in the courtly Anglo-Norman and French romance literature that *caroles* are best documented during this period and this source has therefore provided the principal evidence for academics working across a number of disciplines, such as Christopher Page, John Stevens, Ardis Butterfield and Robert Mullally.[30] The lack of source material dealing with non-courtly culture has led scholars to speculate, from a twentieth-century cultural viewpoint, about the relationship of different types of social dances within cultural hierarchies that were not necessarily applicable. John Stevens begins his chapter on ‘The Dance-song’ in *Words and Music in the Middle Ages* with quotations from the writings of Chaucer and Dante and asserts that:

> Any social history of the dance must distinguish, for the period 1100-1400 as for other periods, between professional dances and social dances. The first are danced as an exhibition before spectators; they are performances. The second are danced for the amusement and delight of the dancers themselves.[31]

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[28] Page, *Voices and Instruments*, p. 77. See also Page, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, p. 111.

[29] Page, *Voices and Instruments*, p. 77.

[30] Page, *Owl and Nightingale*, John Stevens, ‘The Dance-Song’ in *Words and Music*, pp. 159-98. Ardis Butterfield, *Poetry and Music in Medieval France*, and Robert Mullally, ‘The *Carole*’.

[31] John Stevens, *Words and Music*, p. 160.

He goes on to divide what he calls ‘company dance’ or ‘social dance’ into three main categories, ‘popular, courtly and clerical’ and then distinguishes the first category further, between ‘folk’ or ‘popular by origin’ and merely ‘popular’, stating:

> That there must have been many such – genuine ‘folk’, as distinct from ‘popular’ dances and dance-songs – goes without saying.[32]

As we shall see, these distinctions are misleading when applied to the cultural practice of carolling in the Middle Ages. Moreover, musicologist Matthew Gelbart argues that the categorisation of music as either ‘folk’ or ‘art’ and the consequent linking of low-middle-high registers to social hierarchical constructs was an eighteenth-century invention.[33] Previously the categorisations of low, middle or high related more to the function of the music than to the origins of the melodic material or the social status of the milieu of its producers and receivers. With reference to the carole Peter Dronke seems more discriminating when he says:

> The two best-known types of medieval dance-song, the carol and the rondeau, are essentially popular forms … their melodic and poetic simplicity made them intrinsically suitable for dancing and festivities irrespective of class […] It is highly probable that carols and rondeaux flourished long before any were written down, and there is no evidence whatever that they were originally restricted to an exclusive milieu.[34]

With these considerations in mind, we can interrogate the accounts of carolling in the courtly literature for information about broader carolling culture and meaning.

Chrétien de Troyes is often said to have been the inventor of the high medieval Arthurian romance and his five courtly romances, written in the second half of the twelfth century, are possibly based on the Arthurian material by Geoffrey of Monmouth, or alternatively on orally transmitted tales of Breton origin. Two of the earliest extant manuscripts of his poems are bound together with Wace's *Brut*.[35] Little is known about his life, apart from the link with the court of Marie de Champagne at Troyes, in northern France. She was the daughter of Eleanor of Aquitaine by her first marriage and consequently there were strong links between Troyes and the court of Henry II and Eleanor in England. From its earliest creation, in the tale of *Erec et Enide,* the genre of courtly romance literature contains scenes of carolling at times of feasting, celebration or recreation. Kibler proposes that the fictitious coronation of Erec at Nantes on Christmas Day may reflect the Christmas Court held there by Henry II in 1169, albeit in an idealised form.[36]

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[32] Stevens, *Words and Music,* pp. 161-62.

[33] Matthew Gelbart, *The Invention of "Folk Music" and "Art Music": Emerging Categories from Ossian to Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 13.

[34] Peter Dronke, *The Medieval Lyric* (London: Hutchinson, 1968; 2nd edition 1978), pp. 188-89.

> An la sale molt grant joie ot;
> Chascuns servi de ce qu'il sot;
> Cil saut, cil tunbe, cil anchante,
> Li uns sifle, li autres chante,
> Cil flaüte, cil chalemele,
> Cil giue, li autres vïele;
> Puceles querulent et dancent;
> Trestuit de joie fere tancent. (ll.1987-1994)[37]

(In the hall there was great joy; each served as they knew how; one jumped, another tumbled, another did magic. One of them whistled, the other sang. One [played] flute, one the shawm, one the *giue*, one the vielle; maidens carolled and danced each trying to beat the other in showing joy.)

This descriptive passage illustrates the multi-layered aspects of courtly carolling. It is an expression of the joy of the participants, but it is also for the benefit of the observers. It also contains an element of competitiveness in the environment of a court in which skill at dancing and carolling was valued.

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[35] MS Bib. Nat. f. fr.794 and MS Bib. Nat. f. fr.1450. William E. Kibler ed. *Chrétien de Troyes: Arthurian Romances* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), p. 2.

[36] William E. Kibler ed. *Chrétien de Troyes: Arthurian Romances* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), p. 6. 'Maidens performed rounds and other dances', *Erec and Enide* in same edition, p. 62. The biographical information is taken from this edition.

[37] Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec et Enide.*

Chrétien also includes scenes of carolling and rejoicing that were less exclusively courtly. For example, in *Le Roman de Perceval*, it says 'everyone went carolling through the streets and squares rejoicing at the release of the prisoners' (ll. 2744-47).[38] This illustrates a blurring of any distinction between courtly and popular carolling. The first example is contained within the hall and has an element of performance in the attempt to out-do each other and the individual choices of music making. In contrast, the carolling in *Perceval* is a spontaneous, communal expression of celebration that involves the whole population of the city. It is a manifestation of social cohesion and a re-enforcement of civic identity. The deportment of the participants may have varied among the different levels of the social hierarchy but carolling transcends these distinctions on occasions of communal celebration.

1:4. From Ritual to Recreation

The relegation of carolling from important ritual to mere entertainment, as reflected in the romance literature, certainly accords with Havelock's definition of the transition from a primary oral culture to a predominantly literate one, and yet in some instances some more serious resonances remain.[39] For example, in the anonymous thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman romance *Lancelot du Lac*, the eponymous knight comes upon a scene of enchanted carolling among the pine trees in a forest.[40] There are several knights, some still with their helmets on, dancing with maidens. Some knights are holding hands with each other as there are many more knights than maidens. Lancelot forgets all thoughts of chivalry, battles and leading assaults; suddenly he only wants to dance. He begins singing, skipping and stamping his feet, much to the dismay of his squire who thinks that he looks like a fool and despairs that he will be trapped in the enchanted *carole* for ever. This episode seems at first to be amusing, indeed in the illustration in BL MS Royal 20 D IV, fol. 237v even the two horses look a little embarrassed.

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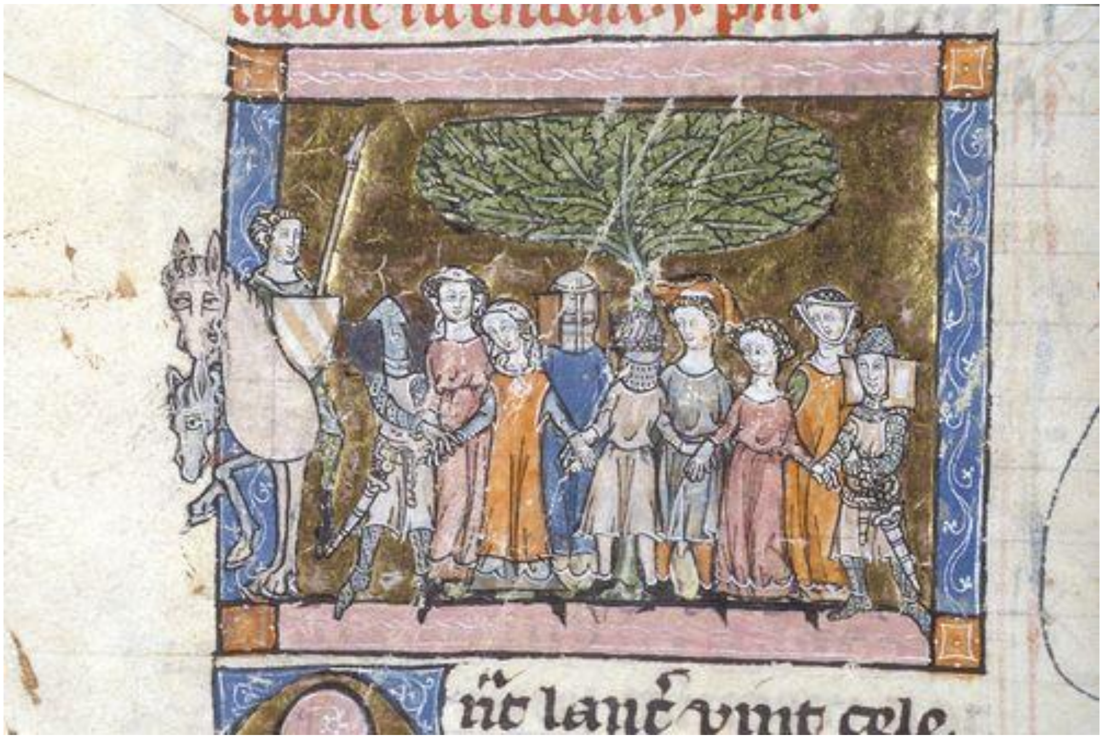
[38] Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Roman de Perceval ou Le Conte du Graal* ed. by Keith Busby (Tubingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1993).

[39] Havelock, p. 45.

[40] London. British Library, MS Royal 20 D IV. Fol. 237r.

Fig. 1:1 London, British Library, MS Royal 20 D IV, fol. 237v.


nt lanc vint cele.

However, when considered in the light of the meaning of ritual dances in oral cultures, more ominous undertones suggest themselves. Lancelot is being entrapped by the power of the culture or the social group controlling the *carole* and he is also judged by his dancing as to his fitness or worthiness as a knight.[41] A similar method of societal evaluation can be seen in an example quoted by Walter Ong of a villager in Central Africa in the twentieth century, who, when asked what he thought of the new headmaster of the school, replied, "Let's watch a little how he dances." [42] It is difficult for us to understand how critical these values might have been within a society in which physical attributes of swordsmanship, horsemanship and comportment were of paramount importance from the distance of our own civilisation in which government is held by committee, and battles are fought by guided missiles that are controlled via remote computer screens.

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[41] This yardstick, though sadly not applied to our twenty-first century rulers, was upheld in European courtly culture certainly in the time of Elizabeth I and to some extent through to the beginning of the eighteenth century. For a broader discussion see Jennifer Nevile, *Dance, Specatacle, and the Body Politick, 1250-1750* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).

[42] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologising of the Word* (London: Routledge, 1988) p. 55.

1:5. The co-existence of oral and written cultures.

The fact that no manuscripts of caroles exist from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, even though carolling was apparently part of a literate courtly culture, would imply that carolling belonged predominantly to oral culture. This is not surprising as vernacular secular musical culture, in general, appears to have remained un-notated throughout the twelfth century. Emma Dillon speculates that the repertoire of the troubadours and trouvères may have been temporarily recorded on rolls or song-sheets as the extant *chansonniers* were not compiled until after the mid-thirteenth century, more than fifty years after they were composed and well after the deaths of the performers.[43] The songs were recorded as representing a high-status 'old' art form in classified genres and accompanied by semi-fictitious *vidas* or biographies of the composers.[44] The *chansonniers* were created as an art form in themselves and not as song-books for use in performance or for memorisation. As Havelock states, 'publication in a primary oral society is by performance and participation'.[45]

It is thus important to hold in mind the fact that the written record does not necessarily reflect the contemporary oral culture, and this was particularly true in the multi-lingual environment of post-conquest Britain. Michael Clanchy's study of court documents shows that throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries 'the fact that a statement is recorded in a certain language does not mean that it was originally made in that language'.[46] Therefore it is possible that, although records of carolling in the late twelfth century were written in Latin and Anglo-Norman, the languages that were actually employed may have been Middle English, Occitan and other regional dialects.

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[43] Emma Dillon, 'Music Manuscripts' in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Music* ed. by Mark Everist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 219-319 (p. 305).

[44] The main corpus of approximately 2500 troubadour poems and 300 melodies is contained in Paris, Bibliotheque National de France, Fr. 22543, the *Manuscrit du Roi,* Paris, Bibliotheque National de France, Fr. 844 <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84192440> [accessed 5 Aug 2014] and the *Chansonnier de St. Germain des Pres,* Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale de France, Fr. 20050, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b60009580> [accessed 5 Aug 2014].

[45] Havelock, p. 77.

[46] Clanchy, p. 206.

A glimpse of this possibility, can be found in the manuscript record in Gerald of Wales' *Gemma Ecclesiastica* (written in 1197). He relates how a priest, in the diocese of Worcester, was kept awake at night by the carollers in the churchyard and the next morning at Mass, instead of singing '*Dominus vobiscum*', he proclaimed to the scandalised congregation, in a loud voice the Middle English refrain that had lodged as an 'ear-worm' in his head, '*Swete lemman dhin are'* (Mercy, sweet beloved!).[47] The vernacular secular culture, usually existing in a parallel oral culture outside the church, had momentarily penetrated the walls and accidently found expression through the voice of the priest, and through the writings of Gerald of Wales.

It is not until the middle of the following century that another fragment of a carole refrain in Middle English is recorded, this time in a sermon.[48] The preacher begins, 'My dear friends, wild women and lecherous men in my native region when they join the ring sing this, among many other worthless things that they sing: *Atte wrastlinge mi lemman i ches, and atte ston-kasting I him for-les'*.[49] (I chose my beloved at the wrestling match, and at the stone-casting competition I forsook him') Although these fragments are recorded approximately half a century apart they hint at a continuous oral culture of English vernacular carolling, of songs learnt in the mother tongue perhaps at 'mother's knee' and virtually obscured by the more prolific literate Anglo-Norman corpus. It is a further example of the complex interplay between orality and literacy on what Karl Reichl refers to as the 'orality-literacy continuum'.[50] This interplay, between the vernacular languages and Latin, and the written and un-written, is exemplified in the life of Orderic Vitalis (1075- c.1142) who was born in England. Although his father was a French priest in the service of a Norman magnate, as a boy he spoke only his 'mother-tongue' of English until he was ten years old. His education, including literacy, began at five years of age but this was in Latin, and when he was sent to a monastery in Normandy five years later, aged ten, he could not understand the Anglo-Norman language being spoken.[51] This situation must still have existed a century later when Walter Bibbesworth wrote a poem in Anglo-Norman called *Le Tretiz* to help the grandchildren of William Marshal to learn the language.[52] The poem, glossed with English vocabulary to help with understanding of unfamiliar words, contains many uses of the term *karole* (un-glossed) implying, therefore, that the children were familiar with the activity, although their mother tongue was not Anglo-Norman. Just one passage is sufficient to demonstrate this.

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[47] *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera,* ed. by J. S. Brewer, 4 vols. (London: Longman & Co., 1862), ii, p. 120.
[48] Cambridge, Trinity College Library, MS 43 (B.1.45), fols.41v-42r. Translation courtesy of Christopher Page.
[49] K. Sisam and C. Sisam, eds. *Oxford Book of Medieval English Verse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 274.
[50] Reichl, p. 54.

Ussent faces pleins de veroles	*pokes*
E teus ribaus les rugeroles	*maselinges*
Si lerreint dunt les braceroles	
E les foles les karoles,	
schure[i]nt les blaces foles. (ll. 621-25)	

Bibbesworth glosses the French words for pocks (veroles) and red blotches (rugeroles) but does not explain ‘karoles’.

It is clear from the scattered references to caroles in the centuries before the emergence of a body of examples of texts, in the fifteenth century that, for whatever reason, it was not necessary even for an increasingly literate society to commit them to the written record. Mary Carruthers describes the ‘highly mixed oral-literate nature of medieval cultures’ and shows how *Memoria* (the art of memory) was adapted to the more bookish culture from the eleventh century onward ‘without losing its central place in medieval ethical life’.[53] It must be presumed that, in a culture which depended on memory for much of its daily functioning, and in which the languages of the recorded word were officially Anglo-Norman and Latin, the vernacular carole repertoire remained primarily in the oral domain.

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[51] Clanchy, p. 214.

[52] William Marshal’s carolling skills are discussed in Chapter Two, p. 43.

[53] Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 153.

1:6. The missing music notation.

Thus far, this chapter has considered only the transmission of texts, but a discussion of carolling must also address the musical element of dance-song and, more specifically, why the manuscript record is almost completely silent in this respect. The manuscript compilations of carole and song texts, discussed in Chapter Four of this study, contain no musical indications whatsoever, apart from a fragment of black non-mensural notes on a three-line stave in one of the manuscripts.[54] Although the notation of sacred music had developed throughout the Middle Ages and by the thirteenth century a sophisticated system denoting both pitch and rhythm was in general use, secular music making remained largely un-notated well into the fourteenth century.[55] This should not be evaluated as meaning that the music was necessarily primitive or crude. It is clear from the accounts of the Royal and courtly households that highly skilled, professional minstrels and instrumentalists were maintained to provide music for dancing and to entertain by singing and playing.[56] However, the actual music that they played is not recorded in the accounts and almost no notated evidence of their repertoire exists.[57] The training of these professional musicians was through an apprenticeship system, often within families, and therefore their repertoire would have been learnt 'by ear'.[58] There is no reason to assume that these secular musicians could notate music; however, they seem to have had no need to. Their skills of memorisation and improvisation were sufficient to sustain a secular musical culture. Conversely, the Franciscans who wrote the many carole texts, extant from the fourteenth century onwards, would all have had some basic music training and it cannot be argued that they omitted to write down any melodies because they were musically illiterate.[59] It is possible that the text alone served to remind them of the melody, in the way that a single word like 'Yesterday' will immediately bring to the mind, of someone of my generation, the tune of the song by The Beatles.

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[54] Cambridge, Gonville and Caius MS 383/603, p. 210.

[55] The development of courtly polyphonic art songs and the highly decorated manuscripts of the *Ars Subtilior* genre were exceptional.

[56] Richard Rastall, 'Secular Musicians in Late Medieval England' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Manchester, 1968), p. 11. This thesis provides invaluable information about the training and employment of professional minstrels and waits.

[57] An exception is the collection of fourteenth century Italian dance tunes in London, British Library, Add. MS 29987.

[58] Rastall, p. 56.

[59] Peter V. Loewen, *Music in Early Franciscan Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), p. 207. This subject is discussed more fully in Chapter Three of this thesis.

Conclusion

It must be concluded, therefore, that dance tunes, songs and caroles were firmly embedded in a parallel oral culture that existed at all social levels, regardless of whether those members of society could strictly be termed literate or illiterate. Elaine Treharne, in her chapter on 'the vernaculars of medieval England,' in the years from 1170 to 1350, argues for the 'comfortable co-existence of French and English' during that period.[60] She cites the example of the song 'Mayden moder milde', in Harley 2253, as showing 'the comfortableness of moving between two languages and the clear expectations of a genuine understanding of both simultaneously'. She argues that:

> The medieval period in its entirety yields far more when seen holistically, like the manuscripts and texts themselves, without our false categorizations of secular versus religious, French versus English, educated versus uneducated, written versus oral, central versus marginal. Our own hierarchies are in urgent need of reassessment if we are to understand a complex era of strategic literacy, generic fluidity and linguistic competencies beyond our own experiences.[61]

I propose that a similar reassessment should be applied to the understanding of the culture of secular carolling in that it existed in a similar state of 'fluidity', in a society that encompassed secular and religious, educated versus uneducated, written versus oral. The fact that caroles remained largely unwritten for so long obscures our understanding but, to return to Christopher Page's analogy, there is enough of the tip of the iceberg visible to give some idea of the substantial body below the surface.

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[60] Elaine Treharne, 'The vernaculars of medieval England, 1170-1350', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Culture* ed. by Andrew Galloway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 217-36 (p. 233).
[61] Treharne, p. 235.

Chapter Two

Courtly Carolling: contexts and practices.

Introduction

Scenes of carolling and references to the activity within the context of courtly culture can be found in much of the literature of the late Middle Ages. The dependence of carolling upon the use of burdens or refrains, as already defined,[1] and the practice of including refrain material in literary works of the *roman à chansons* has also resulted in a large corpus of research in the field of refrain studies. Some of these studies have included the *carole.* However, because the focus of these scholars has been predominantly on the romance literary sources there has been an inevitable association of carolling with the idealised fictional world of courtly love and chivalry. It is my purpose in this chapter to re-examine the record, both written and iconographic, regarding courtly carolling within the context of a universal, though un-notated, medieval dance culture. The literary sources will be examined for information about two main aspects of the practice. Firstly, when and why did carolling take place and secondly, how was it done? I will place literary examples beside accounts of carolling in chronicles and other pseudo-historical records to demonstrate that courtly carolling, as an activity, was not confined to the constraints of the romance narrative.

2:1. Francophile courtly culture and literary romance.

English courtly culture was dominated by Norman-French influence after the conquest in 1066 and this Francophile influence remained for the greater part of the following four centuries, despite periods of enmity between the two countries. The successive marriages of English kings to French nobility reinforced this cultural bond, regardless of the political situation at any particular moment. The influence of French romances in England, and the development of Arthurian romance has already been mentioned in Chapter One.[2] As well as the famous marriage of Henry II to Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1152, several successive English monarchs also had

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[1] See p. 4.
[2] See pp. 19-23.

French wives: John married Isabella of Angouleme; Henry III married Eleanor of Provence; Edward II married Isabella who was the daughter of the French King, Philip IV. Other English kings such as Richard I and Henry II spent many years in their French territories. The situation was further perpetuated, throughout the mid-fourteenth century, by the marriage of Edward III and Philippa of Hainault.[3]

The language of English literary culture was largely French or Anglo-Norman throughout the period, until the end of the fourteenth century when Chaucer, Gower and other, anonymous, authors began to write romance literature in the vernacular Middle English. Lefferts points out that there is a 'striking absence' of English courtly love lyrics until the fifteenth century. [4] I would add that this lacuna in the written record applies equally to carole texts and must be considered when studying insular courtly culture. However, the cultural boundaries of the period were not constrained by the English Channel. [5] In view of the shared nature of the culture it is therefore necessary to draw on some French literary sources in any study of insular courtly practices, including carolling.

Many literary works refer to carolling taking place, but it is within the narratives of *romans à chansons* that the most detailed descriptions of dance-song scenes are to be found. Although the songs are not always defined as *caroles* it is clear from the context that they are indeed intended to represent the activity of carolling if, for example, the preceding narrative has introduced the idea with a phrase such as *Ainz i sont si granz karoles*.[6] Jean Renart claimed that he was the first writer to include songs within a narrative, in *Le Roman de la Rose ou Guillaume de Dole* (c.1228), although other writers in the early thirteenth century, including Gautier de Coincy, were also exploring the genre that became known as *roman à chanson*.[7] These works, written during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, contain songs of varying lengths and registers, including *grands chants, chansons de toile, pastourelles* and also *chansons de carole.*[8] The writing of song lyrics became an increasingly literary art in this context and, as most of the manuscripts do not contain musical notation, many questions remain as to how these *romans à chansons* were performed or received.[9] Shorter one- or two-line refrains, left undeveloped, are also interspersed within the narratives. The refrain and stanza are essential components of the *carole,* relying as it does upon antiphonal interplay between the lead singer and the participants.[10] Stevens defines the French refrain as 'a sort of courtly aphorism, a love-tag, usually with a melody attached to it'.[11] Butterfield uses a more general definition when discussing the *rondet de carole* and other 'humble genres' such as the *pastourelle* or the *jeu-parti*: 'Interspersed among, and to a large extent the basis of, many of these types is the refrain, a brief formulaic tag of verse and (in many cases) melody cited in thousands of permutations.'[12] Through the work of Friedrich Gennrich and later Nico H.J. van den Boogard some two thousand refrain texts and around five hundred melodies have been collected.[13] It is not the remit of this thesis to review the extensive work done in the field of refrain studies; it is only necessary to acknowledge, at this point, that all the *caroles* embedded within the narratives of the *romans à chansons* make use of refrain material. The form of the majority of French *caroles* differs from the later English examples in that the refrain is integrated within the stanza, rather than stated separately before the stanza as in the case of the burden or fote. (see Table 2:1)

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[3] Peter M. Lefferts, 'England', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Music*, ed. by Mark Everist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 107-20 (p. 112).

[4] Lefferts, 'England', p. 111.

[5] Christopher Page, 'The geography of medieval music' in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Music* ed. by Mark Everist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 320-34 (p. 334).

[6] Jean Renart, *Guillaume de Dole* ed. by G. Servois (Paris: Librarie de Firmin Didot, 1883; New York: Johnson reprint Corporation, 1965), l. 2355.

[7] For an extensive study of this subject refer to Ardis Butterfield, *Poetry and Music in Medieval France*.

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[8] For definitions of these terms see *New Oxford Companion to Literature in French*, ed. by Peter France (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). Online <www.oxfordreference.com>.

[9] This question is addressed by Ardis Butterfield, 'The Musical Contexts of Le Tourney de Chauvency in Oxford, Bodleian, Ms Douce308', in *Lettres, Musique et Société en Lorraine Médiévale*, ed. by Mireille Chazan and Nancy Freeman Regalado (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2012), pp. 399-422.

[10] Greene, *EEC*, p. xxiii. Greene's definition has been discussed in the Introduction of the thesis, p. 1.

[11] Stevens, *Words and Music*, p.171.

[12] Butterfield, 'Vernacular poetry and music', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Music,* ed. by Mark Everist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 205-24 (p. 216).

[13] F. Gennrich, ed., *Rondeaux, Virelais und Balladen,* 3. vols (Dresden 1921, Gottingen 1927, Langen 1963), N.H.J.van den Boogard, *Rondeaux et refrains du XIIe au début du XIVe siècle* (Paris:1969).

Table 2:1 Comparison of French *rondeau* form and English carole form.

Basic French *rondeau* form (refrain in italics)	Later English carole form (most frequently used) Two-line burden and stanza.
La jus desouz l'olive, *ne vos repentez mie,* fontaine I sourt serie: Puceles, carolez! *Ne vos repentez mie* *de loiaument amer.* (ll. 2369-74)[14]	*Hos is to hoth at hom,* *Ryd out; it wol agon.* Wan ic wente byyond the see, Ryche man for te bee, Neuer the betur was me; Ic hadde leuer ben at om.[15]

It is possible that the French form existed alongside the English form in the bilingual vernacular oral culture that existed at the time, though this was not reflected in the literary culture, to our knowledge. These literary French examples of *carole* texts provide some indication as to what forms the dance-song took at a time when the written record for the equivalent in the English language is silent.

2:2. When and why did carolling take place within the courtly society of late medieval England?

An initial investigation into the subject of medieval carolling might result in the impression that people of all ages carolled at Christmas time in celebration of the Nativity, and that young people carolled in the spring and summer when courting. The *Harvard Dictionary of Music* provides the information that the word 'carol' was derived from the medieval French word *carole* and that 'this term was associated with early pagan dance-songs performed in celebration of the winter solstice, a ritual that was later merged with Christmas'.[16] *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, however, states that 'The origins of the carole are in ancient ring dances of May and midsummer festivals'.[17] Whilst the evidence indeed suggests that these particular seasons were popular for carolling at court, the activity was not limited to those times. Our perception of the purpose or intentions of the participants has been greatly influenced and polarised by the nature, and interpretation, of the extant evidence. The survival of the Christmas carol, and its transformation into the religious hymn repertoire in use in modern times, has made the term synonymous with this genre of seasonal song and obscured the medieval sense that it could be a dance-song about other topics and done at other times. In this section I look at some other contexts in which carolling took place.

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[14] *Guillaume de Dole*, by Jean Renart, quoted in Stevens, *Words and Music,* p. 171.

[15] Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 680/383, p. 41.

[16] *Harvard Dictionary of Music* ed. by Willi Apel (London: Heinemann Educational, 1970).

[17] <http://www.britannica.com/art/carole>, [accessed 5 Nov. 2015].

2:2:1. Carolling for Love

Stevens begins his section on courtly dance-song in *Words and Music in the Middle Ages*, with the following statement: 'The best introduction to the high courtly, social meaning of the *carole* is through the first part of the *Roman de la Rose* (c. 1235) by Guillaume de Lorris'.[18] Stevens is referring to the scene in the walled garden in which young people are carolling. The familiarity of this allegorical portrayal among English medievalists, through the translation attributed to Geoffrey Chaucer, forges an association of ideas between carolling and the *fin amours* imagery of springtime, love and romance.[19] There can be no doubt that the *carole* did carry a strong association with courtly love-making, in the broadest sense, in the minds of literary medieval writers. The anonymous author of *Amur Curteiz* (c.1325) employed the image of the *carole* as a metaphor for the game of love itself.[20] He wrote:

> *Ce temoyne la karole: meuz voyl ke amurs me occye ke aur mauz, taunt est la mort jolive'*

(The carole bears witness to me of this: it is better that love kills me than any other ill, thus the death is fun.)

The author may be referring to the sentiments expressed in the *caroles* of courtly love literature, or he may mean the physical activity of the dance and the pleasures, experienced in the close proximity of members of the opposite sex, that carolling afforded. The value of such an aphorism is that it conjures up a meaning that is both generally understood and personally inflected due to individual experience. It does, however, depend on an assumed understanding of the *carole* within medieval courtly culture and this assumption is endorsed by the use of the extensive scene of carolling in the allegorical work *Le Roman de la Rose.* Here I will consider this idealised portrayal and also the carolling episode in Jean Renart's *Romans de la Rose*, known as

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[18] Stevens, *Words and Music*, p. 163.

[19] Chaucer, 'The Romaunt of the Rose', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 685-767.

[20] London, British Library, MS Arundel 220, fol. 306r. Anonymously written in the form of a letter to an un-named '*tres noble dame'*. The previous inclusion in this manuscript is a copy of *Le Tretise* by Walter Bibbesworth, discussed in Chapter One of this thesis, p. 27.

Guillaume de Dole, before widening the study to consider situations in which participants were not lovers or even necessarily prospective partners.

Le Roman de la Rose was begun around 1237 by Guillaume de Lorris and completed by Jean de Meun c.1278 and was widely copied and disseminated during the following two centuries.[21] Its popularity on both sides of the Channel is endorsed by Chaucer's translation, undertaken at the end of the fourteenth century. The scene of carolling in an enclosed garden cannot be assumed to represent an exact depiction of courtly custom, nor 'the best introduction' as Stevens claimed, as the details primarily serve a narrative and allegorical function rather than necessarily being a literal depiction.[22] However, in order to have currency as a literary device, the context and imagery must have appeared to be plausible to the medieval audience. It is therefore worth considering that some information applicable to carolling in general might be gained from scrutiny of this passage.

The poem is written in the voice of the young lover who describes himself as having been twenty years old at the time. This places him firmly in *adolescentia,* the third age of the seven ages of man as taught in the Middle Ages, and the period associated with the frivolous pursuits of love.[23] The poem is in the form of a dream vision and the season is set as being late spring, when the natural world is bursting into life. The following extracts are taken from the translation by Chaucer, *The Romaunt of the Rose*.[24]

> That it was May, thus dremed me,
> In tyme of love and jolite,
> That al thing gynneth waxen gay,
> For ther is neither busk nor hay
> In May that it nyl shrouded ben
> And it with newe leves wren. (ll. 51-56)

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[21] Guillaume de Lorris et Jean de Meun, *Le Roman de la Rose,* ed. and trans. by Armand Strubel (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1992).
[22] Stevens, *Words and Music*, p. 163.
[23] John V. Fleming, *The Roman de la Rose: A Study in Allegory and Iconography* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 77.
[24] *The Riverside Chaucer*.

The poem goes on to describe vividly the effect of the warmer sun, after the winter cold, on the natural world, and how the singing of the nightingale and other birds sets the mood:

> Than yonge folk entenden ay
> Forto ben gay and amorous-
> The tyme is then so saverous. (ll. 82-84)

The link has therefore been made between the month of May, springtime, and the thoughts and actions of young lovers. The dreamer enters the Garden of Love, or Pleasure, through a gate in a wall, the outer façade of which is covered with images of all the evils and vices of the world (l. 140). Immediately he is inside he is surrounded by birdsong. It is clear that this is not just a pastoral idyll: the high wall is there, in place of a hedge, expressly to keep out such rustic realities as shepherds and wild animals. Only the songs of the birds and the 'daunces of love' are to be experienced in this enclosed world (l. 508). This is not a depiction of the court imitating the pastimes of the common people, as became the fashion in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England and France. Instead it is a representation of an enclosed private secretive space, where intimate encounters might take place, separated from the scrutiny of the outside world and from harsh reality. The iconographical treatments in Paris, Bibliotheque National de France, fr. 19153, fol. 5v and London, British Library, Add. MS 31840, fol. 3r. show the garden enclosed by crenellated walls, thus emphasising that the young people are not escaping from the confines of court into the *plein air* but rather entering into the confines of an artificial, allegorical world of love within the well-defined boundaries of courtly life.[25] It must be seen in the context of the allegorical meaning and not, as Stevens might lead one to believe, primarily as a literal representation of a typical 'high courtly, social meaning' for the carol.

2:2:2. Carolling at weddings and formal occasions for entertainment and not just for love.

In contrast, and perhaps more typically, the first scene of carolling in Jean Renart's *Guillaume de Dole* takes place after formal feasting, a time suitable for carolling often described in other romance literature of the period. This was not dependent upon a particular seasonal occasion such as Christmas or summer. For example, in *Le Roman de Perceval ou Le Conte du Graal* by Chrétien de Troyes:

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[25] Digitised illustrations available online at <http://romandelarose.org/#select;NUM_ILLUSTRATIONS> [accessed 15 March 2018].

> Ainz que li mengiers fust fenis
> Sors le mengier ot molt paroles,
> Et molt ot dances et caroles
> Apres mengier, ains qu'il couchessent. (l. 8252-55).[26]

(Thus, during the feast there was much eating and talking, and between feasting and going to bed, many dances and caroles.)

We see a similar scene in *Jehan et Blonde* by Philippe de Rémi:

> Aprés disner i eut vïeles,
> Muses et harpes et freteles
> Qui font si douces melodies,
> Plus douce ne furent oïes.
> Aprés coururent as caroles
> Ou eut canté maintes paroles. (4761-66)[27]

(After dinner there were vielles, *muses* and harps and *freteles* that made such sweet melodies, sweeter than ever heard. After, they made caroles in which were sung many words [verses]).

These are just a couple of examples of indoor carolling in which the whole company took part and could occur at any time of year.

A further layer of literary elaboration occurs in *Guillaume du Dole.* Whilst the tale of Guillaume de Dole and his sister Liénor is set within the conventions of the world of *fin amours* or 'courtly love', the description of carolling is in the context of a social interaction and witnessed both by the participants in the narrative and by the reader. In this sense, it can be taken as a performance within the narrative, thus containing a certain amount of verisimilitude, though not necessarily as an exact re-enactment. The scene begins as the ladies and the companions of the Emperor emerge from the tent, having finished feasting. A conventional pastoral setting is evoked, *'en un pré vert'* (in a green meadow), and it is implied that only the young maidens and squires participate in the *carole,* dancing as couples.

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[26] Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*, ed. and trans. by William E. Kibler and Carleton W. Carroll (London: Penguin Books, 2004), p. 482.

[27] Philippe de Rémi, *Jehan et Blonde*, ed. by Sylvie Lecuyer (Paris: Champion, 1984).

> Main a main, empur lor biau cors,
> Devant le tref, en un pré vert,
> Les puceles et li vallet
> Ront la carole commenciée. (ll. 507-10)[28]

(Hand in hand, without their beautiful cloaks, in front of the tent, in a green meadow, the maidens and squires began their *carole.*)

The conventional 'taking hands' at the start of a *carole* is depicted here. Of the four *caroles* reproduced at this point within the narrative, two are led by female *chant-avants* and two by males, thus undermining any assumption that courtly carolling was predominantly led by women. Although the sentiments expressed are about love, and in the courtly love idiom, they are addressed to the participants and audience in general and not to specific pairs of lovers or partners. The context of the scene is one of pure entertainment, albeit on several levels: for the Emperor; his guests; other participants within the narrative; and also, for the audience and readers of the romance. There is a performative element that is not so obvious in the *Romaunt of the Rose* scene because, although the dancers themselves are the young people, the older observers and readers are also involved.

The naming of the lead singers as '*la Duchesse d'Osteriche'* and '*li filz au conte d'Aubours'* (the son of the Count d'Aubours) gives a clue as to how carolling might have been observed in real life situations such as weddings and formal courtly celebrations. It could be led by more mature and respected women, not just maidens, and also by young men. These occasions provided opportunities for social interaction and for exhibiting all the courtly skills and attributes necessary for creating a favourable impression and career advancement. This would also have applied to more formal dancing. However, carolling probably usually took place in a more relaxed environment after the main feasting and entertainment, as described in the example above from *Jehan et Blonde*. In carolling, the skill of the lead singer was appraised as thoroughly as that of the dancers. In the words of Chaucer:

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[28] Jean Renart, *Le Roman de la Rose, ou, Guillaume de Dole,* ed. by G. Servois (New York: Johnson, 1965).

> A lady karolede hem that hyghte
> Gladnesse, [the] blissful and the lighte;
> Wel coulde she synge and lustyly,
> Noon half so wel and semely,
> And make in song sich refreynynge:
> It sat hir wondir wel to synge. (ll. 744-50)

It is not just the quality of her voice that is admired but also her ability to 'make in song' or to improvise around the refrain. Chaucer again differentiates between the separate skills of dancing, carolling and singing in *The Book of the Duchess* of whom the narrator says 'I sawgh hyr daunce so comlily, carole and synge so swetely,' (ll. 848-49).[29] This poem is believed to have been written in memory of the wife of John of Gaunt, Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster.[30] This would imply that the ability to lead caroles was admired in married men and women of high rank, and not just young lovers and maidens.

2:2:3. Carolling on Holydays and seasonal festivals.

The connection between carolling and Christmas festivities is frequently made in both literary and historical accounts of the period, and carolling was certainly a source of indoor entertainment during the month-long celebrations. This is reflected, not just in Anglo-Norman literature, but also in Middle English in the fourteenth century. The anonymous poet of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, for example, evokes the wintry court of King Arthur in the following opening passage:

> Þis kyng lay at Camylot vpon Krystmasse
> With mony luflych lorde, ledez of þe best,
> Rekenly of þe Rounde Table alle þo rich breþer,

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[29] Chaucer, 'The Book of the Duchess', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 329-46 (p. 340).

[30] Colin Wilcockson, Introduction to 'The Book of the Duchess', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, p. 329.

With rych reuel oryȝt and rechles merþes.
Þer tournayed tulkes by tymez ful mony,
Justed ful jolilé þise gentyle kniȝtes,
Syþen kayred to þe court caroles to make.
For þer þe fest watz ilyche ful fiften dayes,
With alle þe mete and þe mirþe þat men couþe avyse;
Such glaum ande gle glorious to here,
Dere dyn vpon day, daunsyng on nyȝtes,
Al watz hap vpon heȝe in hallez and chambrez
With lordez and ladies, as leuest him þoȝt.[31] (Passus 1, ll. 37-49)

(This king lay at Camelot one Christmastide / with many mighty lords, many liegemen, / Members rightly reckoned of the Round Table, / In splendid celebration, seemly and carefree. / There tussling in tournament time and again / Jousted in jollity these gentle knights, / Then in court carnival sang catches and danced; / For fifteen days the feasting there was full in like measure / With all the meat and merry-making men could devise, / Gladly ringing glee, glorious to hear, / A noble din by day, dancing at night! / All was happiness in the height in halls and chambers / For lords and their ladies, delectable joy).[32]

Thus, the scene is set, at the beginning of one of the most well-known tales of medieval English literature. As Brian Stone states in the introduction to the Penguin edition, ‘above all it is a Christian festival poem […] in the spirit of Christmas, all the events are presented as a kind of game, with its carefully stated rules and observances and its appropriate audiences’.[33] A distinction should be made between this indoor courtly carolling practice, practical in large banqueting halls and castles, and the outdoor activities of the common people in graveyards and streets that so disturbed the religious writers, redolent as it was, in their eyes, of pagan pre-Christian traditions. There is no evidence, in these literary sources, to suggest that courtly carolling which took place at times of religious festivals was necessarily religious in content; indeed, the *caroles* and *refrains* in the context of the *romans à chansons* are all secular.

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[31] Anonymous, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ed. by J. R. R. Tolkien and E. V. Gordon, revised by Norman Davis, University of Michigan. <http://www.luminarium.org/medlit/gawaintx.htm>.
[32] Brian Stone, trans. and ed., *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (London: Penguin Books, 1974), p. 22.
[33] Stone, p. 15.

These literary accounts of fictional carolling provide a picture of a far more inclusive activity involving all the members of courtly society in various circumstances, either as active dancing and singing participants or as observers. Although Christmas was indeed a typical occasion for indoor feasting and therefore carolling, and Maytime was a popular time for young couples to meet romantically in gardens and carole together these were by no means the only participants or occasions.

2: 3. Accounts of spontaneous celebratory carolling.

Carolling was also a means of expression in celebration of events other than planned seasonal festivities. E. K.Chambers cites an example of the Mayor and other London dignitaries carolling in celebration of the return of Edward II and his Queen, Isabella of France, in 1308 and also the inhabitants of London carolling (*menerent la karole*), in the churches and streets, on the occasion of the birth in 1312 of prince Edward.[34] There are many passing references to this sort of spontaneous carolling but what form it took is never detailed. Although carolling took certain generic forms the element of improvisation would have allowed the participants to adapt texts to suit different occasions. The spontaneity of such occasions suggests strongly that certain formulaic refrains were in common usage and could be adapted by the insertion of different names and specificities.

Caroles were not only created in praise of people and events but also sometimes in derision. Christopher Page has brought to my attention an account in William of Tyre’s *Chronicon*, describing how Arnulf of Choques, who later became patriarch of Jerusalem, was infamous for his immoral conduct and so a carole was sung about him, by ‘foolish and lascivious men’ during the First Crusade.[35] This reference to male mockery and social comment, as expressed through carolling, is far removed from the image of springtime merrymaking implied by the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* reference quoted earlier. It can be seen from these examples that carolling provided a vehicle for sections of society, including courtly society, to express cohesion in response to events or situations, sometimes with specific reference to those events.

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[34] *Extracts from the Archives of the City of London 1276-1419*, ed. and trans.by H. T. Riley, 1868. Cited in E. K. Chambers, *The Medieval Stage* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), I, p. 164 and p. 107.

2:3:1. Carolling to pass the time, at any time.

In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, a connection is made between jousting and carolling.[36] In the later medieval period, from the thirteenth century onwards, jousts became festivals of sport and entertainment for the entire court to enjoy. *Le Tournoi de Chauvency* by Jacques Bretel is a verse account of just such a tournament, held between October 1st and 5th, in 1285 at Chauvency in Lorraine. It contains song texts in the style of *romans à chansons*, and was influenced by the work of Jean Renart, written sixty years earlier.[37] The entertainment, including songs in *carole* form, was held on the Thursday evening after the jousting and comprised a play or game called *Le tour du chapelet*, led by the Countess of Luxembourg. Stands were erected for an audience and the entertainment was organised for the courtly audience. The episode has been proposed by Axton as evidence that this sort of game, expressed in dance-song, was an example of carolling.[38] However, as Butterfield says 'these sorts of narratives are not mere enactments of the social realities of courtly entertainment; they are literary in the sense that they are shaped and crafted ways of representing such entertainment.'[39] Bretel's literary opus was written for the entertainment of a courtly audience and describes an entertainment laid on for a courtly audience. The term *carole* is not used specifically during this *jeu* or enactment and the dance-song element is in the form of a dialogue performed by the girl, the minstrel and the chosen knight. The song is not in the antiphonal call and response idiom, between a lead singer and the other participants, typical of the *carole*, and therefore it cannot be taken as evidence illuminating how informal carolling after jousts might actually have taken place. Instead, it shows the flexible use of songs in carole form in different sorts of entertainments that were not necessarily described, or conceptualised, as carolling.

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[35] *Willemi Tyrensis Archiepiscopi Chronicon*, ed. by R. B. C. Huygens. 2 vols. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1986), pp. 421-22.

[36] See p. 40 above.

[37] The *Tournoi* is preserved in four extant manuscripts, one of which was commissioned by a prominent banking family from Metz, in the fourteenth century, the family Gronnais. This manuscript, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 308, was the subject of a colloquium held in 2007 and a resultant book *Lettres, musique et société en Lorraine médiévale* ed. by Mireille Chazan and Nancy Regalado (Geneva: Librarie Droz, 2012).

[38] Richard Axton, *European Drama of the Early Middle Ages* (London: Hutchinson, 1974), pp. 48-9, quoted in Stevens, *Words and Music*, p. 167.

[39] Butterfield, *Poetry and Music*, p. 417.

2:3:2. William Marshal at the tournament at Joigny in 1180.

A much earlier account from a non-fictional work can provide a more enlightening source of information about an incident of carolling at a joust. I must begin with a caveat as all medieval chronicles might be considered as having been fictionalised to some extent, if judged by modern standards. However, the example I have chosen cannot be seen as an inclusion in the chronicle for literary or fictional reasons. According to Holden, the *Histoire de Guillaume Le Marèschal* is not a literary fiction but the earliest surviving biography in any European vernacular.[40] As such it is an invaluable primary source for events between c. 1147 and 1219. It was commissioned by William Marshal II after his father's death in 1219, and the poet, named only as John, was informed by John of Early, who had been William Marshal's squire since 1187 and later his closest friend and executor. Holden opines that the *Histoire* provides a 'strikingly authentic insight into the daily life of the knightly classes and the brutal nature of early medieval tournaments'. He comments upon the lack of any literary conceit of courtliness and assumes that the 'frolicking with the ladies of the castle before the tournament at Joigny' is an isolated and not repeated incident.[41] The use of the perjorative term 'frolicking' serves to minimise the importance of the account as a merely entertaining interlude in the serious business of knightly conduct. Asbridge, in his recent book, asserts that Marshal 'appears to have shown only limited interest in the likes of dancing, music […]' and mentions the tournament at Joigny only in passing, as being the only one at which ladies were present.[42] This dismissive view of William Marshall's carolling perhaps reflects the view, regarding masculine attributes, of a twenty-first century historian, and was presumably not shared by the thirteenth-century author of the biography, who saw fit to include it within his account of the life of his subject.

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[40] A. J. Holden, ed. *The History of William Marshal,* trans. by S. Gregory (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 2002-2006), p. 3.

[41] Holden, p. 8.

[42] Thomas Asbridge, *The Greatest Knight* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2015), p. 47.

The episode is preceded by a general account of William's successes at tournaments between Lent and Whitsuntide in 1180, in which he took one hundred and three knights prisoner. (l. 3409-3424). According to the *Histoire,* he went with only a few men of his company to Joigny and, because they wished to conserve their energy, and also that of their horses, they dismounted in front of the lists ready armed, and awaited the arrival of the other contestants. The author describes how the countess and her entourage of married ladies and young girls came out of the castle. John W. Baldwin points out that this is the only occasion in the many tournaments fought by William that any mention of ladies being present is made.[43] The description of the ladies is couched in conventional courtly phrases such as:

> La contesse s'en eissi fors,
> Qui ert de vis e de cors
> Si a dreit, ç'ai oï retraire,
> Come nature la sout faire, (ll. 3455-58)

(The countess came out of the castle. She was in face and body beautifully formed, so I have heard say, as only Nature could contrive her.)

One of the knights suggests that they should pass the time in carolling to alleviate boredom, 'Aucuns a dit: "Kar carolomes / Dementiers que ci atendomes, Si nos en ennuiera mains." (ll. 3471-73) This suggests it was an entirely spontaneous event and not part of an organised entertainment associated with the tournament. The knights and ladies take hands 'Lors s'entrepristrent par les mains', and a singer is called for. William Marshal, whose voice is described as pure and sweet, obliges. Thus far it could be assumed that the scene was included purely to illustrate his conventional knightly attributes and the only unusual element is the impromptu nature of the interaction between the knights and the noble ladies of Joigny. It does emphasise the fact that the *carole* repertoire was not explicitly prepared for this occasion. It must have been either previously memorised or was improvised; it needed no rehearsal within courtly circles, even among strangers. This particular encounter, however, has been singled out by the author for a more specific reason as becomes clear in lines 3483 to 3520.

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[43] John W. Baldwin, Preface to *Lettres, Musique et Société en Lorraine Médiévale,* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2012), p. 16. 'A une exception près, les femmes sont totalement absentes des tournois de l'Histoire. L'exception apparaît à Joigny où les chevaliers dansent avec des femmes sur les chansons de Guillaume, avant l'ouverture du combat'.

> E quant il out sa chanson dite,
> Qui molt lor pleist e lor delite,
> Lors commensa un chantereals
> Qui ert hiraulz d'armes novals,
> E chanta novele chanson;
> Ne sai qui louot ne que non,
> Mais el refreit out: "Mareschal,
> Kar me donez un boen cheval!"
> Quant li Mareschals l'entendi,
> Unques puis de ileoc n'atendi,
> Einz se parti de la karole
> Sans faire en a nului parole; (ll. 3483-94)[44]

(And, when he had finished his song, which gave them much pleasure and delight, a young singer, recently made a herald-at-arms, began to sing a new song. I do not know who was the subject of it, but the refrain contained the words: "Marshal, come on, give me a trusty steed!" When the Marshal heard it, he stayed there not a minute longer, but left the dance without saying a word to anyone.)

The passage goes on to describe how Marshal's squire brought him his horse, he beckoned to the young herald and then rode straight over to the front rank of opponents, who were getting ready for the contest, knocked one of them off their horse with his lance and gave the mount to the herald. Without having uttered a word, he returned to the carole and it was only when the herald returned saying, "Look, what a fine horse! The Marshal gave it to me." ("Vez, quel cheval! Cest me dona le Mareschal"*)* that the rest of the company realised what had happened. Baldwin points out that, during this period, a century before Chauvency, jousting was essentially a male sport engaged in purely for glory and the acquisition of booty, and not as entertainment for the entire court, as it later became. It therefore makes sense that this episode was included not to demonstrate any ‘frolicking with the ladies’ but the complete fearlessness and prompt actions of William and his ability to acquire a much-prized mount. It was not the usual occurrence at a tournament at that time.[45]

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[44] Holden.

Although the focus here is on chivalric conduct, this passage also offers some clues about knightly *carolling* practice at the end of the twelfth century. There is no mention of the singing being led by a woman. Indeed, the implication is that William Marshal was well known for his good voice and, although the author says that he did not know who the subject of the herald’s *carole* was, and therefore it could have been about a lady in the courtly love style, the refrain was obviously improvised to fit the situation rather than being a pre-rehearsed one. The spontaneity and appropriateness of the refrain to the masculine concerns of the herald, namely his need for a horse, has a resonance that is not so evident in the more stylized accounts of carolling that appear in much romance literature. In the examples of *rondet de caroles* in Renart’s work it is quite usual for the subject of the stanza to have little or no connection with the refrain.[46] This raises the possibility that it was this ability to combine the conventional elements of courtly carolling culture with immediate topical concerns, that Chaucer refers to as ‘And make in song such refreynynge’, in his translation of *The Romaunt of the Rose.*[47] This broadens the cultural significance of carolling, in courtly circles, not just as an opportunity for a display of dancing, singing, and social interaction, but also for the chance to show a quick wit, adaptability, and skill with words.

2:3:3 Carolling as a weapon of war.

A further example of masculine carolling is found in the *Chronique en prose de la croisade de Richard I^{er} et de la fin de sa vie (faits 1187-1199).* In this case there are no ladies present.[48] The chronicle recounts how, on September 23rd, 1190, Richard I sailed into Messina with a fleet of over a hundred ships. According to the author, the powerful effect of the size of the fleet was enhanced by the sights and sounds emanating from the ships, that of ‘buisines, cymbals and other minstrelcies’, the noise of the sailors and the sight of the knights and squires ‘carolling and dancing with great pleasure’.[49] The pomp and magnificence of Richard's arrival is in stark contrast to that of the French King Philip who had crept into port a few days before. Those observing Richard’s arrival from the shore, King Philip and his entourage were very impressed by this display, not only of the magnificence of the fleet but also the high state of morale of the English party as expressed by their relaxed manner. This, as well as for entertainment, was presumably the intention as relations between Richard and his French allies were rather strained at this stage of the campaign.[50]

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[45] ‘Estrangement s’en merveloent/ Plusor qui uncorecuidoent/ Qu’il fust uncore en la carole/ E molt en firent grant parole. / Li chevalier e les puceles,/Les dames e les damiseles/ Distrent qu’il n’aveit imés fait/ El torneiement si beal fait’. (ll. 3513-20) Holden ed. *History of William Marshal*, p. 174.

[46] Butterfield, *Poetry and Music* p.46.

[47] Chaucer, ‘The Romaunt of the Rose’ in *The Riverside Chaucer*, p. 694, l. 749.

[48] *The crusade and death of Richard I*, ed. by R. C. Johnston, (Oxford: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1961), p. 15. Available online at <www.anglo-norman.net/sources/>.

A fictional example of male-only carolling can be found in the second scene containing *caroles* in *Guillaume de Dole*.[51] Guillaume and his companions amuse themselves by carolling and, although no mention is made of any female participants, the first song exhorts ‘puceles’ or girls to carole and employs the same refrain as in the earlier scene which included the Emperor’s ladies:

La jus desouz l’olive,
Ne vos repentz mie,
Fontaine I sourt serie.
Puceles, carolez!
Ne vos repentez mie
De loiaument aimer. (l.2360-2365)

(Over there under the olive tree – do not repent at all-, the fountain rises merrily, Maidens, carole! –do not repent at all- of loving loyally.)

It is uncertain whether a group of young men would sing *caroles* so firmly entrenched in the *fin amours* idiom when not in female company and outside the pages of romance fiction. It seems unlikely that the men under Richard I's command were singing songs of such insouciance but, lacking any further evidence, it must be assumed that these representations of the epitome of chivalric youth were able to do so. It was perhaps these very aspects of self-control and discipline that these descriptions were intended to convey. These examples of male carolling refute Mullally's assertion that 'A *carole* consisting entirely of men is possible, but is all but unknown'.[52] It is clear from the evidence that any group of people might take part in carolling for a variety of reasons and it was not dependent upon an equal distribution of males and females for partners. Nor was it necessarily part of an organized social event such as a feast or seasonal celebrations.

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[49] ‘Le Roi de France, q'estoit herbergez, et touz les princes et autres grantz seignurs q'[i] estoient, vindrent a la rive de meer pur veoir et enmerveiller de le grant poair qe le Roi d'Engleterre avoit mesné, qe tant ert la noise dedeinz les niefs des bui[si]nes, simbalx et d'autres ministralcies qe entresonoient checun en sa guise, qai des chivalers et des esquiers karolantz et daunsantz a grant deduit, qai de noises de mariners, qe toutes les gentz de la citee se esmaieront tant q'ils quidassent estre touz pris et destruitz, car tielle noise ne tiel veue n'avoient ils unqes oi ne veu devant cel temps’. Johnston, ed., *The crusade and death of Richard I*, p. 15.

[50] Johnston, p. 15, fn. 3.

[51] Jean Renart, *Guillaume de Dole* (New York: Johnson repr, 1965), ll. 2355- 75.

2:4. How was courtly carolling done?

We have seen that carolling was enjoyed by the court in many different situations and at any time of year. The question arises then, as to how any single genre or form could have fulfilled so many functions and how it was adapted to the needs of men and women both together and separately, not only in banqueting halls but also in the streets and onboard ship. The following part of this chapter will endeavour to answer that question, or at least to provide some suggestions.

2:4:1. The Music.

No complete music notation exists for any dance-songs specified as being *caroles*; indeed, very little notated music for dances of any kind exist before the middle of the fifteenth century. However, the existence of *refrains* with music notation in literary manuscripts or integrated into polyphonic motets has provided scholars with enough information to reconstruct some examples of *caroles* and to deduce the main ingredients for the musical elements of carolling. Stevens' contribution provides a comprehensive evaluation of the research prior to 1985 and his conclusions, regarding the characteristic elements of carole melodies, remain valid.[53] The work of collecting and transcribing the *refrain* material was begun by F. Gennrich and continued by N. H. J. van den Boogaard and it is to their work that subsequent research is indebted.[54] The notation of the musical examples in the corpus of refrain material is non-mensural and the conclusion to adopt a triple time realisation for dance-songs is discussed, and endorsed, by Stevens.[55] It should be added that melodic material notated for dancing in the fifteenth century was utilised in both duple and triple time for different sections of the dance and it can be surmised that it was common practice to adapt tunes in this way. The word stresses of the text would have governed the metre for a *carole* and would have been clearly established by the *chant-avant* in the opening line. Stevens asserts that ‘the triple-time transcription is more likely’, as advocated by Gennrich, and employs as an example *Prendés i garde*, which, due to the word stresses, is unambiguous in this respect. The complete reconstruction can be seen in Appendix 1.[56]

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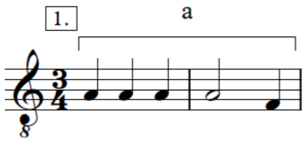
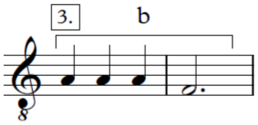
[52] Mullally,'The *Carole',* p. 101.
[53] Stevens, *Words and Music*, pp. 186-96.
[54] F. Gennrich, ed. *Rondeaux, Virelais und Balladen.* N. H. J. van den Boogard, *Rondeaux et refrains.*

The characteristics of a typical melody used for carolling can be analysed as follows, using examples from *Prendés i garde.* The phrases are short and of approximately equal length. There are usually two melodic elements, referred to as ‘a’ and ‘b’. These may be contrasting, although in this example ‘b’ is a simplified version of ‘a’.





Open and closed endings are used to punctuate the repetition of phrases; The use of open and closed endings is consistent with other dance music of the period, as can be found in the collection in London, British Library, MS Add. 29987.

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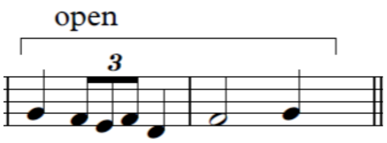
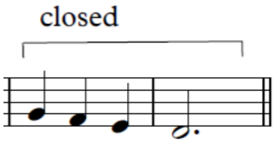
[55] Stevens, *Words and Music*, p. 188.

[56] A tune with a similar name *Prenes a Garde* can be found in the Gresley manuscript, the earliest English extant collection of dance choreography with tunes. However, it is not in carole form and does not seem to correspond in any other way.





The vocal range is small, frequently within a fifth as in this example. Some melodies extend to the sixth above and to one note below the tonic. The use of the musical form termed a *rondeau,* as shown in *Prendés i garde,* and most frequently found in literary *romans a chansons*, cannot be assumed to have always been strictly adhered to in all situations, but the use of the simple formulaic conventions described above and the 'call and response' nature of the activity, would have provided enough information for the *chant-avant*, equipped with a clear voice and a quick wit, to lead enjoyable carolling based on a repertoire of *refrain* material either previously learnt or improvised.

2:4:2. Information about the choreography.

The predominant image of carolling is that of a round-dance, formed of a circle of people holding hands, facing inwards with a lead singer at the centre. This concept is supported by the references to Stonehenge already mentioned.[57] Dante evoked the image of the *carole* to describe the celestial spirits moving in the heavens like the rotating wheels of a clock.[58] This universality of understanding presents problems for the dance historian as writers felt no need to describe in detail the choreographic elements. Indeed, the problem posed by the lack of *carole* song-texts in the manuscript record prior to the fourteenth century is compounded in the case of the dance: the first choreographic manuscripts of any description were not written until well into the fifteenth century and did not include *caroles*.[59] Mullally has endeavoured to reconstruct a choreography for the *carole*, taking its meaning in the restricted sense of it being a medieval French dance that was , in his words, 'performed'.[60] I take a broader understanding of the term as my starting point. The term *carole* could be used to refer to a lengthy activity involving several separate songs and episodes of dancing and not just a single dance. Similarly, the modern term 'dance' can be used to mean a social event involving dancing and lasting an entire evening, or alternatively it can indicate a particular combination of steps, or choreography.

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[57] See Chapter One, p. 14.

[58] Dante, *Paradiso*, 24, ll.13-18. <https://it.wikisource.org/wiki/Divina_Commedia/Paradiso/Canto_XXIV>
'E come cerchi in tempra d'orïuoli/ si giran sì, che 'l primo a chi pon mente/ quïeto pare, e l'ultimo che voli;/ così quelle carole, differente-mente danzando, de la sua ricchezza/ mi facieno stimar, veloci e lente'.

[59] A discussion of the earliest treatises containing choreographies can be found in Chapter Six, p. 177.

To begin to unpick the various uses of the term I will start in the same place as Stevens, with the scene in the Garden of Delight in the *Le Roman de la Rose,* as this provides not only an extended description of informal carolling but also a great number of accompanying illustrations in the many extant high-status manuscripts. Chaucer begins the description by saying 'This folk, of which I telle you soo, upon a karole wenten thoo.' (ll. 725-6) In the original French, this passage begins:

> Lors veïssiez querole aler
> Et genz mignotement bauler
> Et faire mainte bele treche
> Et maint biau tor sor l'erbe fresche. (ll. 742-5)

This immediately presents the first problem encountered when studying the images of carolling: the juxtaposition of the terms '*querole'* and *'treche'*. It has been established that the carole was commonly assumed to be a circle-dance, however, the majority of the illustrations of this scene in *Le Roman de la Rose* show a line-dance or *tresche,* literally a 'plait' or 'braid'. The illustration in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 195, fol.7r. (see Fig. 2:1 on next page) does fit all expectations of conventional courtly carolling.[61]

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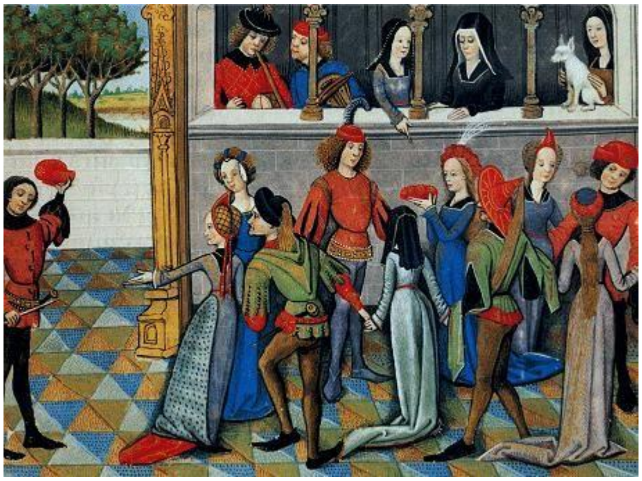
[60] Mullally, 'The *Carole*', pp. 100-20.

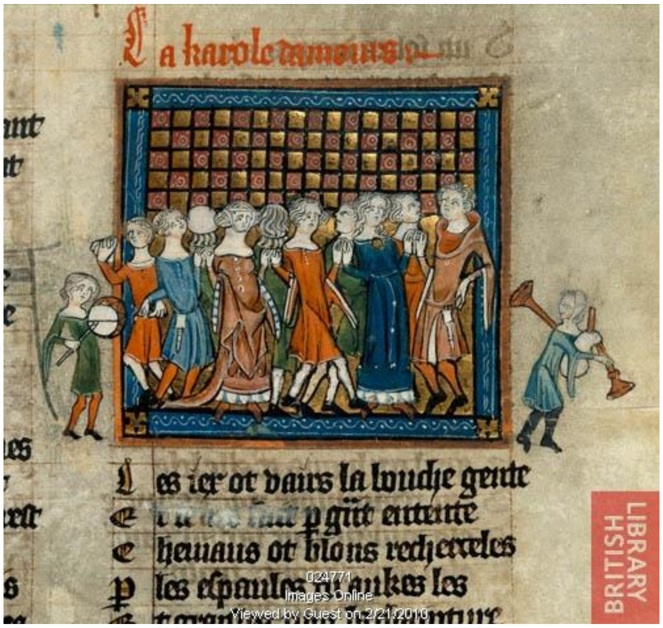
[61] Of the 24 illustrations accessible on <www.romandelarose.org.> nineteen show the dancers in a line or a chain, the remaining five are circle dances. Mullaly's analysis of forty examples show: thirty-seven in various sorts of lines, three in circle facing inwards. London, British Library, Harley MS 4425, fol.14v is not included in this analysis as it was produced c.1500 and the illustrator did not follow the exemplar. The scene in the garden shows separate couples in a basse- danse formation typical of the late fifteenth century.

Fig. 2.1. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 195, fol. 7r.



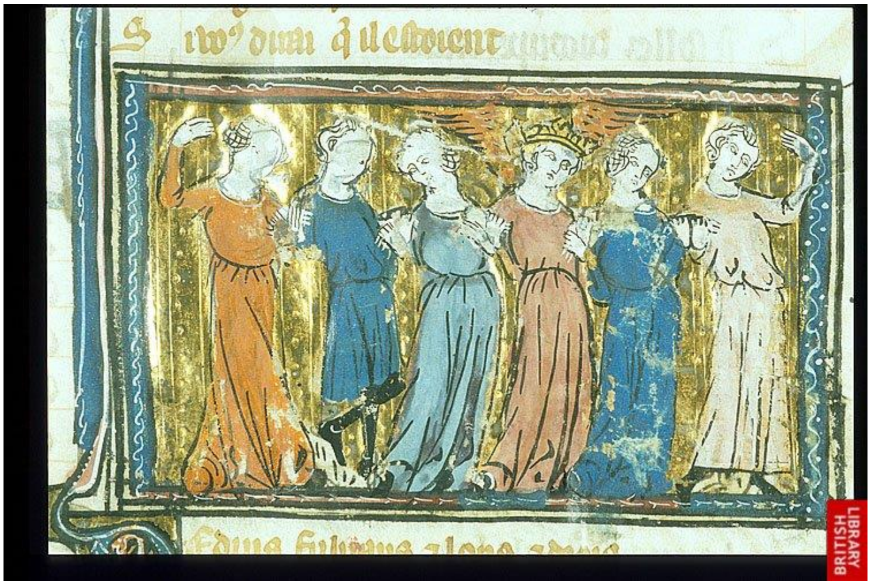
It shows a circle of alternating male and female dancers, at the centre of which is a female proferring a chaplet of flowers. The female on the far left is opening the circle and extending her left hand, to invite the dreamer to join in and to complete the balance of the sexes. The artist of London, British Library, MS Royal 20 A. XVII, fol. 9. (Fig. 2:2) shows a male dancer leading a double line of ten dancers, roughly alternating male and female though not strictly, and facing outwards, in the style of a later *farandole.*

Fig. 2.2. London, British Library, MS Royal 20 A. XVII, fol. 9.



London, British Library, MS Stowe 947, fol.7. (Fig. 2:3) shows a single line of six dancers, alternating male and female. The dancer at each end of the line has their outside hand raised and there is no suggestion of a ring-dance taking place in this picture.

Fig. 2:3. London, British Library, MS Stowe 947, fol.7.



How can all these pictures represent the same scene of carolling contained in the narrative? It is possible that the illustrators were instructed to depict dancing in general, rather than carolling specifically, even though in some examples the word 'karole' appears adjacent to the picture (Fig. 2:2). I propose that carolling was such a familiar activity across all social classes, and among literate and illiterate people alike, that it is unlikely that the compilers of these high-status manuscripts would have accepted pictures showing dance figures that were untypical of carolling. To dismiss the depictions of line-dances, in these and other similar manuscripts containing illustrations of carolling, as evidence that the 'illuminator was merely concerned with depicting a dance of some kind, and was more anxious to complete his task of executing a large number of miniatures rather than to attend to choreographic verisimilitude', as suggested by Mullally, can only be supposition.[62] Fleming also asserts that 'for the greater part of the fourteenth century the northern French style was incapable of capturing such a multilinear concept with convincing verisimilitude.'[63] Certainly, the artist of Fig. 2:2, who has shown two lines of dancers, could have turned them to form an inward facing circle, though he may have preferred to show the faces and clothes of those nearest the viewer, for aesthetic reasons rather than for lack of technique. A depiction of the inward-facing, circular *carole* form most frequently described in texts would have resulted in a view of the backs of the participants. I would propose that it is for this reason that many illustrators chose to depict *tresche* sections of the dance in order to fulfil the decorative and descriptive functions of the manuscript illuminations. The diversity of the depictions demonstrates that the *carole* was a form of dance that was adaptable and flexible and could contain many different 'figures' throughout its duration, a figure being a combination of steps or floor patterns fitting a stanza.[64] It is plausible that caroles might begin in a circle but then break into a chain if, for example, the dance continued through narrow streets or confined spaces.

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[62] Mullaly, 'The *Carole'*, p. 204.

2:4:3. Caroles in sequence.

In order to understand the composite nature of what might be termed a 'carolling session', and how the role of *chant-avant* could be shared among participants of both sexes, it is necessary to return to the carolling scene in *Guillaume de Dole.* The role of *chant-avant* or lead singer is initially taken by a lady, described as *une dame,* perhaps indicating that she is not one of the dancing couples of young maidens and squires. She employs the refrain *Vos ne sentez mie les maus d'amer si com ge faz!* (You do not feel the ills of love at all as I do!) in a conventional poetic rondeau form beginning with a line that sets the place and follows with the first part of the refrain as the second line.[65] The third and fourth lines continue the sense of the first line, and the *rondet de carole* is completed by the two-line refrain:

> C'est tot la gieus, enmi les prez.
> *Vos ne sentez mie les maus d'amer!*

---

[63] Fleming, p. 84.

[64] The sixteenth-century dance writer Thoinot Arbeau describes in his instruction book, *Orchesographie,* how the *branle,* the popular circle-dance of that era could also be executed in a line, being led by the lead dancer with their left hand remaining free. This convention would seem to have remained consistent throughout the centuries. Thoinot Arbeau, *Orchesographie,* trans by Mary Stewart Evans (New York: Dover, 1967). The relationship between the *carole* and the *branle* is explored in Chapter Six of this study.

[65] Poetical *rondeau* or *rondet de carole* form can be expressed as aAabAB where the letters refer to the tail rhyme and the capital letters indicate the repetition of words and music in the refrain lines. Stevens, *Words and Music,* p. 170.

Dames i vont por caroler.
Remirez voz braz!
Vos ne sentez mie les maus d'amer
Si com ge faz! (ll. 514-19)

(It is all over there, among the meadows. You do not feel the ills of love! Ladies go there to *carole.* Attend to your arms! You do not feel the ills of love at all as I do!)

The second singer picks up the opening tag of '*C'est tot la gieus',* altering it to evoke a different place, this time 'down there just under the olive tree'. This male *chant-avant* is named as the squire of the Provost of Espire. He employs traditional pastoral characters, those of the shepherd and shepherdess, *Robin* and *Mariete*.

C'est la jus desoz l'olive.
Robins enmaine s'amie.
La fontaine i sort serie
Desouz l'olivete
E non Deu! Robins enmaine
Bele Mariete. (ll. 522-67)

(It's down there just under the olive tree. Robin leads his lover away. The fountain springs clearly, under the olive tree. In God's name! Robin leads away the pretty Mariete.)

This scene shows how the leadership of the carolling might have been passed informally around the company, with each new leader picking up a theme or verbal cue from the one before, thus developing an extended activity or in modern folk-singing terminology, a 'session'.[66] Renart employs the term *tour* in the linking description to the third song:

C'este n'ot pas duré.iii. tours,
Quant li filz au conte d'Aubours
Qui mout amoit chevalerie
Reconmencë a voiz serie:
    Main se levoit Aaliz,
    -J'ai non Emmelot-

---

[66] This occurs with pub shanty singing sessions in which singers are perhaps reminded of a song in their repertoire and take over from each other, sometimes continuing for an hour or more.

> Biau se para et vesti
> Soz la roche Guion.
> *Cui lairai ge mas amors*
> *Amie, s'a vos non?* (ll. 528-37)

(This [carole] had not lasted three turns when the son of the Count of Aubours, who greatly loved chivalry, began again in a pleasing voice: Alice arose in the morning, - I am called Emmelot- made herself beautiful and dressed beneath the rock of Guion. To whom shall I give my love, beloved, if not to you?)

It is unclear from this context whether the term '*tours'* means stanzas, rotations or repetitions of a circular dance; the implication is, however, that it lasts longer than the single stanza contained within the narrative. The phrase is used in *le Roman de Laurin* when Synador invites, or rather orders, Dyogenne to dance with him with the words "Dame, levez sus. Assez avons hui parlé. Alons .i. tour a la querole".[67] Returning to the episode in *Guillaume de Dole*, the next *carole* uses a conventional image of Aaliz waking and dressing in the morning. However, it takes a different verse form, with the two-line refrain placed at the end of the stanza.[68] Presumably, the dancers would have been able to adapt to this variation, and the *rondet de carole* was not necessarily the only form of dance-song used for carolling, although it is the form most frequently employed in the literary context of *romans à chansons*.[69] This excerpt, although appearing at first to be firmly placed in the idealised context of the courtly *fin amours,* questions any perception that *caroles* were usually led by women as several men are specifically named as leaders. It also demonstrates that each *carole* may have been repeated several times, if that is how the term *tours* is to be understood, and that the form of the dance-song could be varied within one carolling session.

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[67] *Le Roman de Laurin, fils de Marques le Senechal,* BN Fr. MS 22548, ed. by Lewis Thorpe (Cambridge: Heffer, 1958). "Lady, get up. We have talked enough today. Let us take a turn in the carole."

[68] Stevens, *Words and Music,* p. 177. A sermon attributed to Stephen Langton (d. 1228) Archbishop of Canterbury contains a stanza as follows: 'Bele Alis matyn se leva, / sun cors vesti appara. / En un verger s'en entra, Cync florettes I trova. / Une chapelette feit en ha, / de rose flurie. / *Pur Deu, trevus en la / vos qui ne amet mie.'*

[69] For further information on the *rondet de carole* and *refrains* see Butterfield, *Poetry and Music,* pp. 80-85.

2:4:4. Taking Hands

It does seem clear that carolling usually commenced with the participants taking hold of each other's hands as described in *Guillaume de Dole*:

> Main a main, empur lor biau cors,
> Devant le tref, en un pré vert,
> Les puceles et li vallet
> Ront la carole commenciee. (ll. 507-10)

(Hand in hand, without their beautiful cloaks, in front of the tent, in a green meadow, the maidens and squires began their *carole.*)
This could be to define partners but also to form a circle and gather the attention of the company. This would be necessary for unaccompanied dance-song. When instruments are used, the dancers might be alerted by the sound of the band starting to play.

Indications to take hands at the commencement of carolling also occur in other literary sources, for example the maidens celebrating Gawain's safe return in *Perceval,* although in this context it could be interpreted as a preparation for general dancing:

> Devant le palais fu assise
> La roïne por lui atendre,
> Et ot fait ses puceles prendre
> Main a main totes por danser
> Et por grant joie commencier.
> Contre lui grant joie commencent,
> Chantent et carolent et dancent,
> Et il vient et descent entre eles. (ll. 8986-93)

(The queen was seated in front of the palace waiting for him and she had all her maidens take hands for dancing and great celebration. In his honour they celebrated, singing and carolling and dancing, and he arrived and dismounted among them).[70]

The account in the history of William Marshal is very clear on this point:

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[70] Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Roman de Perceval,* ll. 8986-93.

Aucuns a dit: “Kar carolomes
Dementiers que ci antdomes,
Si nos ennuiera mains.”
Lors s’entrpristrent par les mains. (l. 3471-4)

(One of them said: “Come on, let us carole while we are waiting, we won’t be so bored.” So they took one another by the hand.)[71]

In the carolling scene in *Lancelot du Lac* the author specifically mentions that some of the knights hold hands with each other as there are not enough maidens.[72] The phrases used could mean that the dancers hold hands in pairs but all the illustrations of carolling in *Le Roman de la Rose* manuscripts show the dancers all linked together, either in a circle or a line. Upon close inspection London, British Library, MS Stowe 947 fol.7 (Fig. 2:3) appears to show the dancers holding gloves between them, rather than their hands directly. According to Fleming, this detail appears in ‘something like half’ of the extant illustrations and accords with some European folk dances that employ a glove, handkerchief, or scarf as the link between dancers.[73] London, British Library, MS Yates Thompson 21 fol.11 shows the lover dancing with Franchise and the pair are holding gloves in both hands between them (see Fig. 2:4. On next page).[74]

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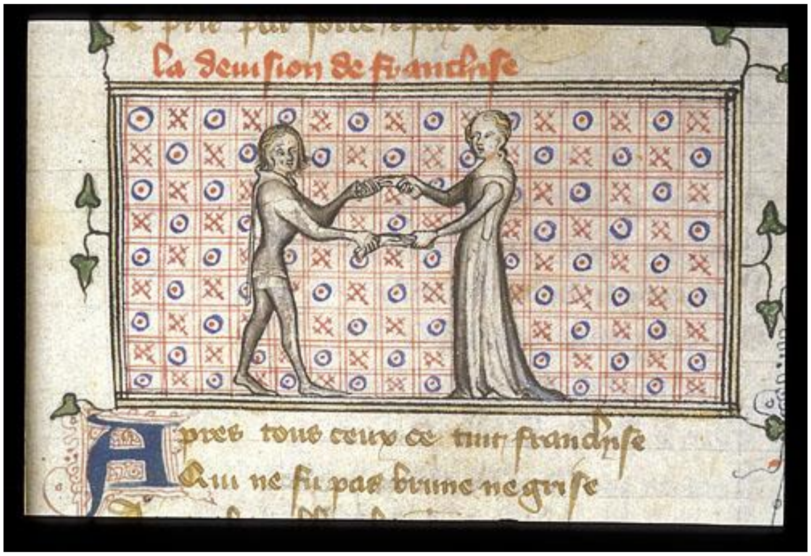
[71] Holden, p. 177.

[72] ‘*tenoient damoiseles par les mains et tiex en avoit qui ne tenoient ne damse ne damoiseles, ainz tenoient chevaliers par ses mains dont il I avoit assez plus que de damoiseles’.* (LXXIX 34). ‘Lancelot du Lac’, trans. William W. Kibler in *The Lancelot-Grail Reader* ed. by Norris J. Lacy (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 34.

[73] Fleming, p. 84.

[74] <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8126> [accessed 117 March 2018]

Fig. 2:4 London, British Library, MS Yates Thompson 21, fol.11.


La deuision de franchise
Apres tous ceux se tint franchise
Qui ne fu pas brune ne grise

As Fleming points out, gloves held symbolic meaning in chivalric culture and could signify loyalty to a feudal lord or lover and were frequently given as gifts and tokens. This attention to details of courtly custom, though not necessarily adhering literally to the narrative text being illustrated, does endorse the illustrations as important source material. It would be erroneous to assume that courtly carollers always employed gloves as barrier devices to avoid social impropriety or even to signify submission and devotion; however, their frequent inclusion does indicate a genuine cultural convention, expressed through a vocabulary of gesture, that was understood and carefully designated by the artist. Such implicit cultural references, expressed in carolling, may have existed on many other levels that are not clear from the manuscript record as they did not warrant inclusion in the iconography and the narratives contain no references to them.

2:4:5. Footwork

Information regarding the steps used during carolling is even harder to find than that relating to floor-patterns and partners. It is generally accepted that convention demanded that the circle or line moved towards the left, a practice that remained in the notated circle-dances or *branles* of the early sixteenth century.[75] In the case of a circular formation this might mean that the initial step is taken with the left foot but that the circle returns to its original orientation by the end of one *tour.* Alternatively, it could be that the dance moves gradually to the left in both circle and *tresche* formation by means of the right foot being brought to join the left and not always taking a complete step to return to place. In later dance terminology this would be described as a ‘double to the left’ followed by a ‘single to the right’.

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[75] See the choreographies of Arbeau in *Orchesographie* discussed further in Chapter Six, pp.178-84.

Evidence for the hypothesis that *caroles* moved towards the left can be found in the writings of some theologians who use the association of the *sinistra* with the devil to make their theological point. Jacques de Vitry is most frequently quoted on this: *Chorea enim circulus est, cuius centrum est diabolus; omnes vergunt in sinistram, quia omnes tendunt ad mortem eternam.* (The carole is a circle at whose centre is the devil; everyone in it turns to the left because they are all going to eternal death).[76] Certainly, the majority of the illustrations of *Le Roman de la Rose* in which any direction of movement is indicated also support this. Image 2:1 (above) clearly shows the mens’ feet pointing in a clockwise direction and Image2:2 depicts a line or *tresche* being led by the dancer at the far right of the picture. In this case the direction of travel is further emphasised by the bagpiper and drummer, shown outside the frame of the illumination. Image 2:3 is an example of one of the static line-dance type illustrations but even so the convex body shapes of the dancers indicate a sense of swaying motion towards their left. An exception to this is the illustration in Bibliotheque Municipale d’Albi, MS Rochegude, 103 fol. 6v which clearly shows the line of dancers being led to their right.[77]

The only descriptive term relating to footwork that is used relates to the lead singer in *Le Roman de la Rose,* for example ‘ainz se savoit bien debrisier, ferir dou pie et envoisier.’[78] This passage describes how *Liesse* leads the carolling with a clear and beautiful voice and that she knows well how to gracefully undulate her body, strike or beat with the foot and amuse. Chaucer leaves out the detail of the foot striking, concentrating only on Gladnesse’s beauty of voice and her eagerness and skill at leading the singing.[79] It is questionable whether all the participants in a *carole* would beat, strike or stamp their feet in a similar fashion. The example cited by Mullally from the *Lancelot du Lac* scene as proof that the feet were struck against each other, needs to be placed in context.[80] The relevant passage begins where Lancelot and his squire encounter a group of knights and ladies carolling among the pine trees. Although he has been warned not to enter the forest Lancelot joins the dancers.

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[76] Jacques de Vitry, ‘Sermones Vulgaris’ in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds lat. 17509 (s. xiii), fol. 146v quoted in Mullally,’The *Carole’*, p. 103.

[77] These illustrations may be accessed online at <www.romandelarose.org>.

[78] *Le Roman de la Rose,* ll.735-6.

[79] Chaucer, *Riverside Chaucer,* ll. 746-58.

> Et lors commance a chanter et a ferir del pié ausi comme li autre, si a'anvoise et joue assez plus qu'il n'avoit onques mes fet et tant que li vallez meesmes le resgarde et le tient por fol.

(Then he began singing and stamping his feet like the others, making merry and playing more than ever before and so much so that the squire watched him and thought him a fool).

As is often the case when studying the written record concerning medieval culture, this description is important because it illustrates an unusual situation. Lancelot's behaviour is not the norm and, in the squire's mind, very unlike acceptable courtly carolling. The squire eventually goes off weeping, believing that his master will be trapped forever. It can be inferred from the squire's reaction that for all the carollers to be stamping their feet, and for his master to be joining them in such an exaggerated fashion, is an indication of the severity of the enchantment and not a demonstration of standard courtly carolling footwork.

2:4:6. Instrumental accompaniment.

Having established that carolling was essentially a dance-song activity it remains necessary to integrate the evidence that suggests that instrumental musicians were also sometimes involved. The description of William Marshal's tournament at Joigny shows clearly that, in a situation of spontaneous carolling, all that was required was a singer with a good strong voice and the willingness to take on the role of *chant-avant* and this is corroborated by most, though not all, of the literary references. Mullally asserts that instruments were only used in 'low status performances' and that *caroles* were otherwise always unaccompanied.[81] This conclusion is based upon a misunderstanding of the role of 'haut' and 'bas', or loud and soft instruments during the Middle Ages. Here, I will re-assess the iconographical and written evidence in the light of my experience as a performer on bagpipes, rebec, and pipe and tabor, and as well as using the research done by Richard Rastall on musicians employed by aristocratic households in Britain.[82]

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[80] Mullally, 'The *Carole'*, p. 116.

[81] Mullally, The *Carole*, p. 200.

The minstrel Jouglet in Renart's *Guillaume de Dole,* when asked if he will play, replies that he will return with his vielle if there is to be carolling.[83] The vielle is frequently depicted as being one of the preferred instruments to accompany song. Grocheio states that 'the good artist generally introduces every *cantus* and *cantilena* and every musical form on the vielle' and goes on to say that the forms most commonly used at rich people's feasts are the *cantus coronatus, ductia* and *stantipes.* He has previously equated the *ductia* with the *carole.*[84] Gautier de Coincy, author of *Miracles de Nostre Dame* (c. 1225), describes himself as playing the instrument and is illustrated as such in Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale de France, fr. 25532, fol. 109r.[85] It is reasonable therefore to accept that, although the instruments most frequently used to accompany dancing were from the *'haut'* or loud category, in a courtly context where the entertainment contained a mixture of singing, dancing and carolling a quieter string instrument could have supported the *chant-avant*. The categorisation of instruments as *haut* or *bas,* loud or soft, was strictly adhered to from the fourteenth century onwards and was governed by their function rather than any inherent status of the instruments. The loud instruments included trumpets and drums of many types used for heraldry and signalling; shawms and bagpipes were employed for entertainment and dancing. The soft instruments included plucked and bowed strings, portative organs and various flutes.[86] Bagpipes and pipe and tabor were used across the divide as they could be made in various sizes and voicings.[87] The piper or wait was an important member of any courtly establishment.[88]

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[82] George Richard Rastall, 'Secular Musicians in Late Medieval England' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Victoria University of Manchester, 1968)

[83] Renart, *Guillaume de Dole*, ll. 1554-62.

[84] Grocheio, *Ars Musice,* ed. and trans. by Constant J. Mews, John L. Crossley, Catherine Jeffreys, Leigh McKinnon and Carol J. Williams (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2011), [12.3], p. 73 'Bonus autem artifex in viella omnem cantum et cantilenam et omnem formam musicalem generaliter introducit.Illa taamen que coram divitibus in festis et ludis fiunt communiter ad .3. generaliter reducuntur, puta cantum coronatum, ductim et stantipedam.' p.72

[85] For a study of this illustration see John Haines, 'A sight-reading vielle player from the thirteenth century' in *The Sounds and Sights of Performance in Early Music: Essays in Honour of Timothy J. McGee,* ed. by Maureen Epp and Brian E. Power (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 13-26.

[86] Rastall, Chapter Five of 'Secular Musicians'.

[87] The ubiquitous Scottish Highland Pipes are voiced to be played loudly and at high pressure and the three drones create harmonics that exaggerate this effect. Most medieval bagpipes have a single drone an octave lower than the chanter and a proportionally bigger bag that can support the wind through the reeds at a lower pressure.

Returning to the illustrations of the *carole* in *Le Roman de la Rose* manuscripts it is possible to find evidence of plausible instrumental combinations which, although possibly included by the artist for reasons other than literal depiction, could also have effectively accompanied the singing and dancing. It would be naïve to assume that illustrations in high-status decorative manuscripts can be taken at face value as literal depictions of carolling; the inclusion of instruments and minstrels might have multiple layers of meaning including an intention to convey an impression of opulence or a mood of celebration. It is however, unjustifiable to dismiss what Mullally calls 'the random choice of instruments' as 'to suggest artistic preference rather than reflect actual musical practice'.[89] Sylvia Huot succinctly addresses the dilemma in her study of depictions of troubadours.[90] She points out that, in the same manuscript, William d'Amiens, known as 'the painter', is depicted holding a palette; Perrin d'Agincourt has a portative organ and Martin Le Beguin de Cambrai holds bagpipes.[91] Whilst the chosen instruments may have additional currency, indicating that Perrin was a member of the aristocratic establishment whereas Martin Le Beguin was more transient, the instruments fall into the category of 'tools of the trade' and therefore seem to represent plausible accompaniments to their art. The metaphorical meaning may be an additional layer to the practical one. It is, therefore, with this model in mind that I now consider some illustrations of instrumentalists involved in carolling.

The manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 195, fol. 7r. (Image 2:1) clearly shows two musicians in a covered *loggia* type structure. One is playing a three-stringed rebec, an instrument tuned in fifths, with a brighter sound than the vielle, that was used to accompany dancing right up to the mid-sixteenth century. The second musician is playing pipe and tabor, a combination also used throughout the Medieval and Renaissance periods. The pipe is longer than the player's upper arm, and the left hand, used to cover the three holes, is below the parapet. This would indicate that the instrument is low pitched at around D or middle C and therefore quite soft and mellow sounding.[92] These instruments would not have overpowered the vocalists and the drum would have supported the beat, as suggested by Grocheio, '*Est autem ductia sonus illiteratus cum decenti percussione mensuratus.'* (A *ductia* is an unlettered sound measured with an appropriate beat).[93] McGee translates this passage as 'A carol is an untexted piece, measured with a regular beating of time'.[94] The relationship between the *ductia* and the *carole* is somewhat ambiguous in this text but it does suggest a strong beat. The word *illiteratus* could mean 'un-written', rather than without words or text. It should also be pointed out that the instruments may not have all played throughout, a possibility being that they also reflected the contrasting sections between the solo *chant-avant* and the responses of the other dancers, with only the drum beat continuing throughout. This is however speculation, based only on my own experience in accompanying performances of fifteenth-century dance, as no instructions or records of instrumental practice are extant.

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[88] For further information see Rastall, 'Minstrelsy'.
[89] Mullally, 'The *Carole'*, p. 212.
[90] Sylvia Huot, 'Voices and Instruments in Medieval French Secular Music: On the use of Literary Texts as Evidence for Performance Practice', *Musica Disciplina* 43 (1989), pp. 63-113.
[91] Vatican Library Lat. Reg. 1490 cited by Huot, 'Voices and Instruments', p. 107.

It is not necessary here to list every instrumental permutation illustrated in the many *Roman de la Rose* manuscripts, merely to note that the most commonly depicted are bagpipers and shawm players together in twos and threes, or pairs of trumpets, and also rebecs or vielles.[95] Whilst a definitive answer cannot be arrived at as to whether these represent a visual metaphor for generic dance music or specific representations of courtly carolling, the use of the louder instruments in the outdoors and the quieter instruments indoors, with tabors accentuating the beat, cannot be dismissed as implausible in all circumstances. Mullally cites Froissart's *La Prison Amoureuse* to show that the minstrels stopped playing when the *carolling* began. The passage could equally imply that the musicians had run out of their repertoire of *estampies*, not that they put down their instruments and were silent.[96]

> Et si trestost qui cessé eurent
> Les estampies qu'il batoient,

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[92] The instrument in current use for Morris dancing and shown in many other medieval pictures is an octave higher and is effective outdoors due to its rather piercing sound.
[93] Johannes de Grocheio, *Ars Musice*, 12.5, pp. 72-3.
[94] Timothy McGee, *The Sound of Medieval Song: Ornamentation and Vocal Style according to the Treatises*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 36.
[95] I have only considered illustrations that show the instrumentalists with the dancers in one picture and not marginalia or musicians used as separate decorative insertions.
[96] Cited in Mullally, 'The *Carole*', p. 192.

> Chil et Chelles que s'esbatoient
> Au danser, sans gaires atendre,
> Commenchierent leurs mains a tendre
> Pour caroler (ll. 354-63)

(And as soon as they had ceased beating the time of the *estampies* the men and women who were amused by dancing, without waiting, began to take hands for carolling.)

The passage suggests that participants themselves took the initiative to change the dance from *estampies* to carolling; however, it does not rule out the possibility that the musicians joined in with the new dance.

In a similar situation in *Perceforest*, the minstrels specifically get their instruments in order to play to lead the *carole.*

> Tant parlerent entre eulx de ceste chose et des merveilles qu'ilz eurent veues qu'il fut temps de tables oster, et lors qu'elles furent ostees la josne chevalerie et les pucelles emprindrent la carole, et les menesteux que a ce estoient duictz emprindrent a jouer de leurs instrumens pour la carolle mener. (ll.3566-71)[97]

(They talked much among themselves of these things and the marvels that they had seen until it was time to clear the tables, and when they were cleared the young knights and maidens began to *carole* and the minstrels who were trained began to play on their instruments to lead the *carole*.)

It therefore seems likely that minstrels, if available with appropriate instruments, could have accompanied courtly carolling.

Conclusion

The references to carolling, and the descriptions of the activity found in literature and chronicles provides a rich source of information. They sometimes give a distorted impression by the very nature of the unrealistic and idealised portrayal of courtly life and culture that they depict. Whilst the fashion for the inclusion of scenes of carolling and *carole* texts in literature lasted for approximately two hundred years it cannot be assumed that carolling as an activity was confined to the romance narrative. It also existed in the real world, not necessarily reflected in those texts but evidenced in some chronicles and histories. Carolling, as attested by the extant contiguous evidence, was an activity enjoyed by all members of courtly society and in many diverse situations, not always romantic ones. It could be a vehicle for the expression of social cohesion at certain seasonal festivals, times of celebration, periods of inactivity, in response to specific events, or at any time or place whatsoever.

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[97] *Le Roman de Perceforest*, ed. by Jane H. M. Taylor (Geneva: Droz, 1979), ll. 3566-71.

Using the information gained from these sources, alongside the illustrations, it is possible to draw some conclusions about carolling culture but not to define it by rules. It was a flexible practice, based on certain conventions regarding, for example, the role of the lead singer and the relationship of the dancers (holding hands to begin, and forming a line or a closed circle). Regarding the steps or choreography, it can perhaps be assumed that this was not a particularly important element to pin down, as it gets little mention, although the style and deportment of the dancers was considered by writers and commentators. The evidence of spontaneous carolling among strangers would imply that the steps were simple enough to be imitated or improvised without difficulty or that they were universally known and understood and therefore did not warrant comment. The exception to this is when the conventional style was transgressed, for example by exaggerated stamping. The evidence regarding the use of musical instruments is inconclusive and I can only conclude that the primary characteristic of carolling, as opposed to other court dances, was that it could be done when instruments were not available. In other circumstances, however, instrumentalists were not prohibited from accompanying the dancers, if appropriate.

Chapter Three

The Church, carolling and the emergence of the English Franciscan carole writers of the 14th and 15th centuries.

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to clarify when and where carolling was considered appropriate in medieval culture, and also to examine the English Franciscans' adoption of the carole genres of dance-song and lullaby for vernacular song writing. Previous scholarship has often focused on the negative attitude of the medieval church towards dancing in general and carolling in particular. Here I examine this, questioning the extent to which the manuscript record genuinely reflects the opinions of the majority of medieval clerics. I conclude that our impression of ecclesiastical values may have been unduly influenced by those who exercised the power of the pen, some of whom were clerics with a distinctly misogynistic bias.

The use of vernacular song as an expression of piety and praise was present at the very beginning of Franciscan practice, in the Canticle of the Sun (*Cantico delle creature*) a hymn said to have been composed by Saint Francis himself, c.1225.[1] The placement of music at the centre of Franciscan devotion and the order's use of the vernacular for songs in non-liturgical contexts was expressed in Italy by the singing of *laude*, a kind of strophic and devotional song.[2] In England, the Franciscans were particularly influential in the development of the carole, both religious and secular, and their approach to carolling needs to be integrated into our understanding of the practice's place in society. Although fifteenth-century Franciscans embraced the carole as a vehicle for pious, and not so pious, expression, some recent research indicates that some early Franciscan writers reflected a more negative attitude to somatic manifestations of music and emotion in their interpretations of the teachings of Francis of Assisi.[3] I will argue that the work of the Franciscan orders, in the heart of the community, led them to connect with the culture of the people. Adopting the premise that dance, for both men and women, was a fundamental part of medieval entertainment culture, I re-interpret some of the primary source material. I place in context the academic, and possibly anti-feminine, prejudices of both medieval and more recent writers. The voices of clerics in the later medieval period, as they admonished the sinners in the confessional or instructed the priests as to how to interrogate their wayward flock, may have given the impression that the church frowned on any form of carolling at any time and by anybody. If this disapproval was so universal, it is difficult to understand how the carole become so embedded in fifteenth-century insular Franciscan culture that they adopted the dance-song and lullaby idioms, thus laying the foundation in England for the seasonal hymns that have been popular since the sixteenth century. As Max Harris says, with reference to The Feast of Fools, 'disapproving clerics are often unreliable witnesses'.[4] This chapter will show that carolling was not in fact universally condemned throughout the late Middle Ages and that the inevitable association by clerics of carolling with the sinful life and the deflowering of virgins has been interpreted selectively by modern writers. Many of the condemnations were specific to particular times and places: the church or churchyard during services and on other occasions, such as during Sunday afternoon sermons, when the sacred and the secular competed directly for the people's attention. As I shall show, the perceived volume of those critical voices, speaking through the written record, has been influenced by the effects of Dominican book production and distribution in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and does not necessarily realistically reflect the balance of opinions at the time.

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[1] Assisi, Biblioteca Communale, Codex 338, fol. 33r.

[2] Marco Gozzi, 'Italy to 1300', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Music,* ed. by Mark Everist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 121-35 (p. 129).

[3] Peter V. Loewen, *Music in Early Franciscan Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), p. 31-33.

3:1. Opinions about carolling from the time of Bede (c.731) to the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215

First, I will interrogate opinions expressed in various sources before the beginning of the thirteenth century to establish what we can deduce about attitudes to carolling before that time. The reforms of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 and the efforts to improve standards of preaching to the laity resulted in a proliferation of books and manuals produced and distributed to educate and aid the preachers. The written record containing references to carolling is very sparse before this and the first part of the thirteenth century represents a watershed in the type and quantity of manuscript sources that contain relevant references. This material will therefore be considered separately from the pre-1215 sources.

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[4] Max Harris, *Sacred Folly: A New History of the Feast of Fools* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), p. 3.

Bede's discussion of the passage in Luke 2: 43-44, in which the twelve-year-old Jesus remains behind in Jerusalem, unmissed by his parents for the first day of their return journey to Bethlehem, has been mentioned in Chapter One.[5] Bede, writing in the eighth century, explains that it was the custom for the Israelites, when travelling at times of festivity, to amuse themselves by carolling. The men and women did this separately and the children were free to join either group.[6] It is a simple and plausible explanation describing a misunderstanding familiar to many families, where each parent thinks that the other one is looking after the child; there is no criticism from Bede of the behaviour of the Holy Family. Bede here alludes to the custom of carolling, with no differentiation between the appropriateness of the activity for either the men or the women, nor is any blame attached to either party.

The well-known tale of the cursed carollers of Cölbigk, in its earliest version in England written by Goscelin in his *Translatio Edithae (*c.1080*)* is not a moralising tract against the evils of carolling as such.[7] The embellishments to this tale in subsequent versions will be studied later in this chapter, but it is relevant to note that the fault of the carollers lay in the disturbance they caused to the midnight Christmas mass being observed by the priest inside the church, and also that the group of men were planning to rape the priest's daughter later. To extrapolate from this that carolling in general was considered a bad thing would be similar to assuming that the game of football, in Britain in the late twentieth century, was always associated with the bad behaviour of some of its fans.

Honorius of Autun, writing in the *Gemma Animae* (c.1120), an allegorical explanation of the liturgy, uses the *carole* as an image of pre-Christian worship engaging the voice and the body to express the movement of the planets and the stars. He goes on to say that this form of worship has been translated into the Christian practice of choral psalmody.[8]

> De choro.
>
> Chorus psallentium a chorea canentium exordium sumpsit, quam antiquitas idolis ibi constituit, ut videlicat decepti deos suos et voce laudarent, et toto corpore eis servirent. Per choreas autem circuitionam voluerunt intelligi firmamenti

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[5] See p. 10.

[6] On the use of the Latin '*chorea'* to mean carolling see p. 2 in the Introduction to this thesis.

[7] Cited by Page, 'The Carol in Anglo-Saxon Canterbury', pp. 264-7. See also Chapter One p. 11.

[8] Honorii Augustodunensis, 'Gemma Animae' in *Patrologia Latina*, ed. by Jacques-Paul Migne, vol. 172, p. 587. <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5494193p/f294> [accessed 13 February 2018]

> revolutionem […] Quod fideles imitati sunt, et in servitium veri Deo converterunt. (Cap. CXXXIX)

(The choir of psalmodists is descended from the carole of singers, which the ancients made for the idols, so that the misguided could praise their gods with their voices and their whole bodies. Through the carole they wanted the revolutions of the firmament to be understood […] This is imitated by the faithful and converted in service of the true God.)

Honorius is clear that these idol-worshipping carollers of the ancient world were mistaken (*decepti*) in the object of their praises but he does not condemn the corporeal expression of their faith. He explains the metaphoric imagery of the round-dance, or carole, and condones its subsequent use in the service of the one true God.[9] Not all Christian writers were so comfortable with this association with pagan practices, however. Caesarius of Arles (d.542) writing five hundred years earlier, admonished those who sing obscene songs and lead caroles (*choros ducere*) on saints' days as follows: 'These wretched and unhappy persons, who are neither fearful nor ashamed when they dance and leap before the basilicas of the saints, may come to the church as Christians but as pagans they leave it, for this custom of dancing is a residue of the pagans' usage.'[10] It is possible that the passage of time had made the association with antiquity and the ancient classical world less threatening, when seen from a position of a converted twelfth-century Christian Europe. When Caesarius was writing, during the first half of the sixth century, the term 'pagan' referred to anyone who was not Christian. It could, for example, have been applied to the people of Kent at that time, before the arrival of St Augustine of Canterbury in 597 and their subsequent conversion.

The translator of the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman Psalter, also quoted earlier, thought that the carole was an appropriate medium for expressing praises to God, in the words of Psalm 149: '*Lodent le num de lui en carole; en tympane e saltier cantent à lui.*' (Let them praise his name in the carole; with drum and psaltery sing to him.).[11] These examples, though scattered thinly over a period of five centuries, show that there was some ambivalence towards carolling because of its pagan associations but certainly not universal condemnation.

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[9] This is a theme that re-emerged in the life of St Francis a century later.

[10] Germain Morin, Sermon 13. *Sancti Caesarii Arelatensis Sermones,* I, 67 (Leuwen: Brepols, 1953) translated in private email from C. Page.

[11] Chapter One, p. 9.

3:2. The Fourth Lateran Council and the foundation of the mendicant orders.

The largest body of source material about the attitude of the church to carolling was produced in response to a renewed threat to Christian orthodoxy in the early thirteenth century, this time from the heretics within rather than the pagans without. This is found in the sermons and treatises of the mendicant friars, the Dominicans and the Franciscans. Here I will briefly outline the background to the foundation of these two Orders and then turn to comparisons of their approaches and responses to the customs and entertainments of the inhabitants of England.

The Fourth Lateran Council was called in 1215 by Pope Innocent III and part of its agenda for reform within the clerical establishment addressed the need for effective preaching to the laity, against sin and heresy.[12] The post-Benedictine Cistercian order, which had seen great growth in the previous century, was initially enlisted by the Pope to carry out this task, but an itinerant life of ministry among the inhabitants of villages and towns was in direct conflict with the strict principle of *Opus Dei*. This laid emphasis on a contemplative life of manual labour and prayer, away from the cities and worldly distractions, based in great abbeys built in remote rural locations, such as Tintern and Rivaulx. Dominic Guzman originally went from Spain to southern France in 1206 to join the Cistercian preaching offensive against the Cathar heresy that was rife in the vicinity of Albi and Toulouse and, more widely, in the regions where the *langue d'oc* was spoken.[13] It was the Cathar practice for the elders, or *perfecti* as they were called, to travel around the towns and villages, in pairs, teaching and preaching.[14] Dominic Guzman saw this as an effective model of what would be called 'outreach' in modern terminology and adopted the practice of travelling with a companion, in poverty and relying on alms for food and lodging.[15] He was joined by other preachers and supported by Fulk, Bishop of Toulouse. In 1216 Pope Honorious III formally confirmed the *Ordo Praedicatorum* (Order of Preachers or OP), known as the Dominicans, after Dominic Guzman. Members of this order quickly rose to prominence within the hierarchies of both the

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[12] Kienzle, Beverly Mayne and John Zaleski 'The Fourth Lateran Council and Preaching to the Laity', in *A History of Medieval Christian Preaching as Seen in the Manuscripts of Houghton Library A History of Medieval Christian Preaching as Seen in the Manuscripts of Houghton Library* <http://harvard.edu/libraries/houghton/collections/early_manuscripts/preaching/fourth_lateran_council.cfm>.

[13] A clear analysis of the Cathar response to the state of the Catholic church during the twelfth century can be found in the chapter by José Dupré, 'Le Discours Chrétien et l'évangelisme dualist dit "Cathare"', in *Troubadours et Cathares en Occitanie Médiévale,* ed. by Richard Bordes (Cahors: L'Hydre Editions, 2004), pp. 29-40 (p. 31).

[14] <http://www.cathar.info/cathar_beliefs.htm#elect>.

[15] <http://www.aquinasonline.com/dominic.html>.

Church and the Universities (especially the University of Paris) placing, as they did, great importance on education, the production of books, and the power of the spoken and written word in the battle for the salvation of souls. Many of the preaching manuals, sermon exemplars and moralising tracts containing references to carolling in the later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are productions of the Dominican Order.

3:3. Conflicting responses to carolling by some University Dominican theologians: Peyraut OP, Albertus Magnus OP.

Guillaume Peyraut (c.1200-1270), was the Dominican prior of Lyons and he wrote one of the most widely disseminated works for the instruction and aid of preaching friars. This was a collection of sermon cycles on the vices and virtues, titled *Summa de vitiis et virtutibus*. In the section devoted to the sin of lust, *Luxoria,* Peyraut paints a vivid description of a swarm of locusts emerging from the smoking pit of the Apocalypse and blotting out the sun. He explains that the sun represents the priests who light the church, and the locusts are the women who sing and dance caroles (*cantatrices et saltatrices)* with wild abandon.[16] He continues to interpret the vision of John by employing the metaphor of these carolling women, who adorn themselves like horses prepared for battle and are inspired by the Devil to wear the hair of dead women on their heads. Page, in his book *The Owl and the Nightingale: Musical Life and ideas in France, 1100-1300,* places such monastic antagonism towards dancing in contrast to the writings of some of the more tolerant university-trained theologians during the thirteenth century. I will take a closer look at the opinions of some of these writers as expressed in sermon exemplars, confessional manuals and other treatises, and will consider the differences between the situation on the continent and that which pertained among the English Franciscans.

Peyraut's language seems particularly vehement and accusatory as he rails against the carollers who, in the five months after Easter, undo all the good soul-saving work that has been achieved during Lent.[17] The question must be asked as to whom this tirade was directed. Had the carolling women to whom he refers attracted his ire because they diverted attention away from his preaching, a topic that occurs in many sermon *exempla*?[18] Alternatively, the passage, and many other similar ones by other writers, might reflect the misogyny driven, in Page's words, 'by the volatile combination of sexual disgust and envy which celibate men in the clerical state felt for female display and for the female libido'.[19] The context for these published sermons certainly influenced the content as well as the manner of its expression: Peyraut's *Summa* became a standard text book in Dominican libraries. Peyraut had been educated at the university in Paris and became a member of the Dominican order whilst there. He was sent to Lyons, a great centre for preaching, and his work, the *Summa de vitiis et virtutibus,* was widely copied and distributed. D'Avray points out that collections like this, written in Latin, were primarily for the use of the clergy; Peyraut himself stated that they should be adapted 'according to the diversity of those to whom you will preach'.[20] Peyraut was addressing his treatise directly to scholars, clerics and fellow mendicant preachers in the expectation that they would make use of the arguments and theological material it contained, adapting and even translating it into the vernacular if intended for an illiterate congregation. Page, in his chapter on *The Carole,* compares the passage in Peyraut's sermon with that of another Dominican, Albertus Magnus, a Master in Paris from 1245. Albertus' passage, Page argues, demonstrates a scholastic approach to questions of morality.[21] In his commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, Albertus lays out his arguments, based on Biblical examples, as to why carolling is sinful, but he also explains why it can be considered acceptable as an expression of rejoicing under certain specific conditions. He concludes that carolling is an acceptable activity at times of celebration, for the laity, if it is done decorously not lecherously. However, it is never a suitable activity for the clerics themselves, for whom the commentary is intended. He does not single out carolling in this respect, as he also forbids clerics from taking part in other leisure pursuits such as hunting, on the grounds that their time should always be spent in the service of God.[22] It is therefore inadvisable to take the opinions expressed in such treatises as intended to apply to everyone. Instead, once we consider the dimension of theological debate and pedagogy that influenced their widespread dissemination we can see that attitudes vary depending on the intended audience of the Dominican writings.

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[16] Page, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, p. 126. The passage is quoted in full in the appendix, pp. 196-98.
[17] Page, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, p. 129.
[18] G. R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), p. 71.

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[19] Page, *The Owl and the Nightingale,* p. 15.

[20] D. L. D'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. 127.

[21] Page, *The Owl and the Nightingale,* p. 131.

[22] For a discussion of these arguments by Peyraut and Albertus Magnus see Page, *Owl and Nightingale,* pp. 126-33.

The carole certainly provided vivid metaphorical imagery for the writers of sermon material and it is possibly partly for this reason that extensive passages on the subject can be found in many compilations. One such compilation, which also contains Peyrault's *Summa,* includes the following passage:

> Item in chorea habet diabolus sacerdotem cantantem et clericum respondentem […] et sicut sacerdos mutat vestimenta quando debet celebrare isti quando debent choreas ducere[…] et loco officii dei faciunt officium diaboli.[…] et magis devote et virilius serviunt diabolo quam deo[…] Sed et per cantus earum cantus ecclesiasticus contempnitur; quoniam enim deberent interesse vesperis intersunt choreis.[23]

(In the carole the devil has a priest who sings and a cleric who sings the responses […] and just as a priest changes his vestments when he must celebrate (mass) so must the leaders of caroles […] in place of the offices of god they celebrate the office of the devil […] and by the singing of the women they show contempt for the music of the church; for when they should be present at Vespers they are at the carolling.)

The call and response model of the carole and the imagery of the participants changing into their best clothes is interpreted as a direct mockery of the actions of the priest and clergy. This blasphemy is compounded by the women joining in the singing, in perceived imitation of the exclusively male preserve of the church choristers. As with many other condemnations of carolling, however, it is not purely the activity that is the cause for criticism. The timing also provides grounds for complaint, since it occurs when people should be at evening service. Preachers took opportunities to rail against other pastimes too, such as wrestling, but, as Mavis E. Mate says, women did not participate in many public social activities, except as spectators. [24] It is thus possible that their visible and energetic participation in caroles acted as a magnet to the attentions of zealous preachers. In a patriarchal society, where women's entertainments were mainly confined to the domestic environment, any public display such as carolling might be construed as a loss of male dominance and control, particularly by a misogynistic cleric.

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[23] London, British Library, MS Harley 3823, f. 376r cited in Page, *The Owl and the Nightingale,* p. 14.

[24] Mavis E. Mate, 'Work and Leisure', in *A Social History of England, 1200-1500,* ed. by Rosemary Horrocks and W. Mark Ormrod (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 276-92 (p. 290).

Given that we are reliant on written source material for information concerning the opinions of thirteenth-century theologians, and that the Dominicans placed such emphasis on the production and distribution of books, it is not surprising that their opinions dominate the record. The circulation of the material was, however, within the clerical and academic world and not necessarily reflective of the broader view.

3:4. The Order of Friars Minor, also known as Franciscans.

The Franciscan order was founded as a result of a differently expressed desire for reform within the Catholic Church at the beginning of the thirteenth century; a desire resulting from the feeling that the establishment had become altogether too worldly. The rapid expansion of the order, following its official confirmation in 1223, reflected an enthusiasm among pious men to emulate its founder in leading a life of poverty and service, in imitation of Jesus. Unlike the Dominicans, the impetus for the foundation of the Franciscans, or Friars Minor as they were officially called, did not come from the established church but grew from the example of the life and work of its charismatic leader. Francesco Bernardoni (henceforth referred to as Francis) was born the son of a prosperous merchant in the town of Assisi (c.1182). According to the earliest biography, Francis grew up as a wealthy and extravagant young man who, until he was twenty-five years old, was an object of admiration for his flamboyant displays of vain accomplishments, wit and singing.[25] Upon his conversion, as is well documented, he stripped himself of all the trappings of his earlier life and embarked on a mendicant existence, walking barefoot and joining the lowest members of society in menial tasks to earn sustenance and shelter. He was inspired by the Gospel passage that tells how Christ sent his disciples out, two by two, into the world to preach and teach by example.[26] Although he cast off the worldly pleasures of his previous life, Tommaso de Celano and later biographers describe how Francis's love of music was not purged as a 'vanity' but converted along with his soul, and employed as a powerful expression of his piety.[27] With reference to the episode in Tommaso's *Vita Secunda,* when Francis was sick and asked a fellow friar, who played the cithera, to borrow an instrument and play for him, Loewen states that:

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[25] Tommaso de Celano, *Vita prima sancti Francisci,* cited by Peter Loewen, *Music in early Franciscan Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), p. 25. I am indebted to Loewen for his research and publication on this aspect of Franciscan theology.

[26] Bert Roest, *Franciscan Literature of religious Instruction before the Council of Trent* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), p. 1.

[27] Loewen, p. 27.

> Francis's speech about converting (or, indeed, reverting) song to its former pious use is another illustration of the "conversion of the vanities." The art of harnessing secular songs would become the *modus operandi* for Franciscan preachers, and others working within their orbit.[28]

The position of music, song and dance at the centre of early Franciscan thought can be demonstrated by the following two examples. Tommaso describes a sermon that Francis gave, before Pope Honorius III, in which he became so inspired and moved that he found words alone inadequate to express himself and began to dance:

> Et quidem cum tanto fervore spiritus loquebatur, quod non se capiens prae laetitia, cum ex ore verbum proferret, pedes quasi saliendo movebat, non ut lasciviens, sed ut igne divine amores ardens, non ad risum movens sed planctum doloris extorquens.

(And in fact he was speaking with such spiritual fervour because he could not express himself through joy, he moved his feet as if dancing, not playfully but burning with the fire of divine love, moving [the audience] not to laugh but reducing them to weeping sorrowfully).[29]

In a later version by Bonaventura, this episode was modified slightly to refer to gestures and divinely inspired speech, rather than dancing, perhaps reflecting the more academic influences of the University-trained friars later in the thirteenth century.[30]

The second example is Francis's instruction to his fellow friars that they should be *joculatores Domini* (jongleurs of God). This took place in the following context: one of the friars, Brother Pacifico, was a skilled musician and Francis instructed him to go out in the world with his fellow friars and to use their musical skills to uplift people's hearts and to sing God's praises. They were to go through the world preaching, and afterwards everyone should sing together, praising God just like God's minstrels, 'et post preadicationem omnes cantarent simul laudes Domini, tanquam joculatores Domini'.[31] It is worth noting that the singing was to be in addition to the preaching and not in place of, or as part of, the sermon. This application of the 'conversion of vanities' is an important concept in the Franciscan attitude to music. It contributed to the later writings of theologians, such as Robert Grosseteste and Roger Bacon, and also to the developments in teaching at the Franciscan schools and Universities, as we shall see. It is a possible explanation for the later Franciscans' adoption and 'conversion' of the vernacular secular carole.

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[28] Loewen, p. 34. See also Michael Robson, *The Franciscans in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), p. 11.

[29] Tommaso, *Vita prima*, p. 73 cited in Loewen, p. 30.

[30] Loewen, p. 30.

[31] 'A Mirror of the Perfection of the Status of a Lesser Brother', ed. by Paul Sabatier, in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 3, ed. by Regis J. Armstrong, O. F. M. Cap., et al. (New York: New City Press, 2001), pp. 255-372, cited in Loewen, p. 59.

3:5. The need for the education of members of the preaching orders and the establishment in England of Franciscan Schools.

In spite of Francis's original wish that his followers should have few possessions and preach with spiritual wisdom rather than book-learning, it became increasingly clear that the friars needed to be literate and well educated.[32] Although the Franciscans set less store by this aspect than the Dominicans, a thorough knowledge of the Bible and a grounding in philosophy, rhetoric and music was still necessary for their ministry to be effective. It was for this reason that many Franciscan and Dominican friars attended the Universities of Paris, Oxford and Bologna. As early as 1224, nine Franciscans of various nationalities, including three Englishmen, arrived in Canterbury and established a community there.[33] This was quickly followed by two more communities, in London and Oxford. The choice of these three cities was made for both practical and spiritual reasons; Canterbury was the religious centre of the island; London the capital city; and Oxford the centre of learning. All three places were full of souls in need of salvation. The Franciscans concentrated their efforts on the towns in which the greatest numbers could hear their preaching, and also where their work amongst the poor and the sick could best be carried out. A foundation in Cambridge followed shortly and, as there was no faculty of theology there at that time, Vincent of Coventry was appointed to organise lectures and lecturers.[34] Robert Grosseteste, who was a prominent theologian though not a friar, was invited to teach at the School of Theology set up in Oxford in 1229.[35] The links between the mendicant orders and the universities were strengthened throughout the thirteenth century, with the orders aiming to play a vital part in intellectual and academic life.

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[32] Neslihan Şenocak, *The Poor and the Perfect: The Rise of Learning in the Franciscan Order, 1209-1310* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2012), p. 107.

[33] John R. H. Moorman, *The Franciscans in England* (London and Oxford: Mowbrays, 1974), p. 1.

[34] Moorman, p. 19.

[35] Moorman, p. 17.

By 1230 Franciscan houses had been established in twelve English cities. A century later Pope Benedict XII raised seven of these establishments to become colleges. These were in London, Newcastle, York, Exeter, Norwich, Coventry and Stamford. This created a three-tier system of education for friars that began in the convent, continued in the college, and was completed at Oxford or Cambridge. The schools became very popular for both lay students wishing to follow a clerical career, and for friars. The Franciscan presence within the universities also attracted not only young students but also some teachers to join the order. The English school system produced some of the most important Franciscan scholars of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, including Alexander of Hales, Roger Bacon and John Duns Scotus.

3:6. The English response to Lateran IV.

The implementation of canons 21 and 27 of the Fourth Lateran council had a distinctive influence in England, resulting in the increasing use of the vernacular in preaching material. Canon 21 commanded that every Christian, male or female, should confess their sins at least once a year to their parish priest, who would then instruct them in an appropriate penance. Canon 27 instructed the bishops to ensure that well educated and suitable men were ordained for this purpose.[36] When Robert Grosseteste became Bishop of Lincoln in 1237, following his tenure at the Franciscan school in Oxford, he issued statutes that outlined the basic requirements for the role of the parish priests. These requirements included knowledge of the ten commandments, the seven deadly sins, the seven sacraments and creeds.[37] Priests were required to preach on these subjects and to scrutinise the morals of their adult parishioners through the means of the confessional. Grosseteste himself was an accomplished musician and included ‘the ministry of music’ as one of the means of healing the soul that should be part of the clergy’s effective ministry.[38] During his service as a deacon, sometime between 1219 and 1225, Grosseteste had composed a manual to aid priests in this work, called *Templum Dei.* In it he employs the allegory of the priest representing a spiritual and corporeal embodiment of the the holy temple of God. This concept influenced Franciscan thinking regarding the responsibility of the clergy to remain unsullied by profane songs. The importance that Grosseteste placed on the ability of priests to preach and minister effectively to all their parishioners is evidenced by the fact that, in 1253, he entered into a dispute with Pope Innocent IV over the appointment of a non-English-speaking priest to his Lincoln diocese.[39]

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[36] Eamon Duffy, ‘Religious belief’, in *A Social History of England, 1200-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 293-339 (p. 301).

[37] Duffy, ‘Religious Belief’. p. 301.

[38] Loewen, p.123. See also Nancy van Deusen, ‘Thirteenth-Century Motion Theories and Their Musical Applications: Robert Grosseteste and Anonymous IV’ in *The Intellectual Climate of The Early University,* ed. by Nancy van Deusen (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997), pp. 101-24 (p. 102).

One of Grosseteste's pupils from Oxford, Roger Bacon, expressed the Franciscan ideas of music and dance as a corporeal expression of spirituality more fully in his writings. Bacon, who studied at Oxford c.1230 was a highly regarded scholar, scientist and theologian, when he became a Franciscan friar in Paris sometime between 1245 and 1256.[40] Drawing upon Augustinian teaching and classical examples, such as Cato dancing in a manly and heroic manner to refresh his mind, Bacon developed the idea through his works, *Opus Maius* and *Opus Tertium,* that God can be perceived by sensual means through the rhythms of his Creation.[41] Bacon defined dancing as a distinct art form, *ars saltandi,* in *Communia mathematica*, citing the authority of Aristotle's *Metaphysics.*[42] He also advised that preachers should guard against verbosity and should instead combine divine knowledge and speech with physical gesture. This very brief introduction to some of the Franciscan ideas about the place of dance and music within a spiritual framework provides a balance to the Dominican view that the word, written and spoken, was the most powerful weapon in the preacher's armoury.

3:7. The effects of the reforms on parish life: Churchyard enclosures, Sunday afternoon sermons, and the difficulties of sharing public space.

The implementation of the Fourth Lateran Council's reforms affected life in England in both urban and rural parishes on a more practical level. At the instigation of the increasing number of secular bishops and in response to the reforms, production of manuals, to aid priests in the discharge of their duties, proliferated during the thirteenth century. Many contained lists of questions to be posed in the confessional. One example mentions caroles twice in connection with the sins of Pride and Lust.[43] The penitent, addressed as male, is asked to consider that the sin of Pride may have been committed in the following circumstances: in gathering to celebrate caroles, buying fine clothes and disturbing young girls. The section on Lust places taking part in caroles after a question about visiting prostitutes and deflowering a virgin, although it is slightly qualified by the phrasing:

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[39] The Electronic Grosseteste, < http://www.grosseteste.org/grosseteste/bio.htm> [accessed 13 February 2018].
[40] Loewen, p. 131.
[41] Loewen, p. 141.
[42] Nancy van Deusen, 'Roger Bacon on Music', in *Roger Bacon & the Sciences: Commemorative Essays,* ed. by Jeremiah Hackett (Leiden: Brill, 1997) pp. 223-242 (p. 236).

> Enquire whether the penitent will have polluted himself with a prostitute, deflowered a virgin or visited a widow. [Enquire whether the penitent] will have taken part in *caroles* much, or in spectacles of this kind, and delighted in others.[44]

It does not clarify what quantity of carolling might be acceptable nor does it imply that any blame should be attached to the 'young girls' or the deflowered virgin. The picture emerges of an attitude to carolling that accepted it as a fundamental part of social interaction and as such it presented opportunities for sinning that should be guarded against. Carolling provided particular temptations perhaps, such as squandering money on fine clothes or behaving inappropriately with members of the opposite sex. There is nothing to suggest that carolling itself was intrinsically sinful as long as it was participated in with moderation and circumspection.

3:7:1. Churchyards.

In 752 AD St Cuthbert obtained permission from the Pope to include churchyards within the consecrated space of churches for burial use.[45] This necessitated some sort of boundary and in later centuries, due to the increasing pressure of population expansion and urban development, many churchyards were enclosed by a wall.[46] For example, Bishop Quevil of Exeter, in 1267, ordered all the cemeteries in his diocese to be walled to prevent animals from grazing. This protectionism by the church authorities over what had previously been considered a communal space in the centre of villages and towns was a source of conflicting interests. In the earliest version of the tale of the carollers of Cölbigk mentioned earlier, as told by Goscelin of St. Bertin in his *Translatio Edithae* (c.1080), a man named Theodoric arrived at Wilton Abbey, Wiltshire suffering from spasms which were a result of a punishment inflicted for his behaviour and that of ten companions one Christmas night in Cölbigk. [47] They had been carolling around the outside of the church at midnight, disturbing the priest inside saying mass, and they were planning to rape the priest's daughter later. They were cursed to continue dancing for a whole year. The tale is told again in Robert Mannyng's poem *Handlyng Synne.*[48] This was a free translation of the Anglo-Norman poem *Manuel de Pechiez* by William of Waddington, a preaching manual based on the teachings of Peyrault, and written c.1220-1240.[49] Peyrault and Albertus Magnus employed the discussion about carolling in their teachings on the sin of *luxuria* but Waddington and Mannyng found it useful in illustrating a different moral point. In the section on the Seven Deadly Sins Waddington adds a further sin of 'Sacrylage':

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[43] Cambridge, Peterhouse College Library, MS 217, fol. 112. For discussion see Page, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, p. 121.

[44] Translation from Page, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, p. 120.

[45] Walter Johnson, *Byways in British Archeology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), p. 354.

[46] Population peaked around 1300 and, after the Black Death and subsequent outbreaks, had not recovered even by 1500. Richard Britnell, 'Town Life' in *A Social History of England 1200-1500,* ed. by Rosemary Horrocks and W. Mark Ormrod (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 134-78 (p. 143).

Here bygynneþ Sacrylage. (l. 8582)
(Here begins Sacrilege)

As 'manuel pecchés' me lers. (l. 8618)
(as the 'manual of sins' taught me)

The reader is reminded that the churchyard is consecrated ground and therefore someone doing villainy there is doing more than just trespassing:

Also may he be sore a-ferde
Þat doþ vyleynye yn chyrche ȝerde,
Namly, syn hyt halewed was,
Þe more he doþë of trespas. (ll. 8647-50)

(Also he who acts villanously in the churchyard should be very afraid since, because it was consecrated, he does more than just trespass.)

The section includes several exemplars of behaviour that are disrespectful in the churchyard including 'The Tale of the Temptation of St. John Chrysostom's Deacon' and 'The Tale of the Sacrilegious Husband and Wife who stuck together', before he gets to the exemplar that includes carolling. He begins with a general introduction that includes many activities that are forbidden in the church or churchyard while the priest is taking the mass. These include carolling, wrestling, summer games, interludes or plays, singing, playing pipe and tabor, and other piping. Waddington refers only to '*karoles ne lutes',* (caroles or games).

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[47] Chapter One, p. 12.

[48] Robert Mannyng, *Robert of Brunne's "Handlyng synne"*, ed. by Frederick James Furnivall, (London: Early English Text Society, 1901-3). <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/AHA2735.0001.001> [accessed 13 July 2016]. Online version with parallel text William of Waddington, *Manuel de Pechiez* <https://archive.org/details/p1robertofbrunne00mannuoft> [accessed 17 July 2016].

[49] <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/collectionsindepth/medievalliterarymanuscripts/wollatonlibrarycollection/wlclm4.aspx> [accessed 8 July 2016]. Author's own translations for the following quotes.

karolles, wrastlynges, or somour games,
who-so euer haunteþ any swyche shames
Yn cherche, oþer yn cherchëȝerd,
Of sacrylage he may be a-ferd;
Or entyrludës, or syngynge,
Or tabure bete, or oþer pypynge,
Alle swychë þyng forbodyn es,
whyle þe prest stondeþ at messe. (ll. 8987-94)[50]

(Caroles, wrestling or summer games, whoever haunts any such shames in church or in the churchyard, he may be guilty of sacrilege or sinning; or interludes or singing, or playing pipe and tabor or other piping, all such things are forbidden, while the priest takes Mass).

It is important to note the caveat 'while the priest takes mass', therefore implying that it may be acceptable, or at least tolerable, at other times. It is not necessary to analyse Mannyng's version of the Colbigk story here other than to point out that he introduces two females into the company of twelve carollers. These are friends of Ave, the priest's daughter, and are sent to fetch her out to join the revellers.

Twey maydens were yn here coueyne,
Mayden Merswynde and Wybessyne;
Alle þese come þedyr for þat enchesone,
Of þe prestës doghtyr of þe tounne. (ll. 9027-30)
[…]
Hys doghter, þat þese men wulde haue,
Þus ys wryte, [wrete.] þat she hyȝt Aue; (ll. 9033-4)

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[50] Waddington's version is as follows: Karoles ne lutes nul deit fere/ En seint eglise, qe me veut crere/ Car en cymitecr neis karoler, / Est outrage grant, ou luter,/ Souvent lur est mes avenue/ Qe la fet tel maner de iu,/ Qe grant peché est, disturber/ Le prestre quant deit celebrer. (ll. 6919-6926)

(Two maidens were included, maiden Merswynde and Wybessyne; all these came thither for that reason, for the town priest’s daughter […] the priest’s daughter that these men would have, thus is written, that she was called Ave;)

Waddington’s version says that the carollers included three women and four men but names only a nun, called Marcent, who is the particular recipient of God’s wrath. Mannyng greatly embellishes this section and, instead of the nun, he includes the priest’s daughter. He also names the two other females and implicates them as being in collusion with the men’s plan. Presumably it was more plausible that Ave would willingly join in if some other female companions were included.

Both versions describe how the time came for the priest to begin the midnight Christmas Mass, but the carollers continued to make a noise that he could hear from his place at the altar. He went to the church porch and forbade them from continuing, calling them instead to come in and celebrate Christ’s birth.[51] They ignored him and continued making a disturbance. It was in response to this that the priest cursed them. After the gruesome account of the effects of the curse, that they were stuck together and forced to continue dancing for a year, and subsequent death of Ave, Mannyng concludes as follows, translating Waddington closely:

> Þys tale y tolde ȝow, to make ȝow aferde,
> Yn cherche to karolle, or yn cherche ȝerde,
> Namely aȝens þe prestys wylle;
> leueþ, whan he byddeþ ȝow be stylle, (ll. 9249-52)

(This tale I told you, to make you afraid to carole in church or in the churchyard, namely against the priest’s will, when he has told you to be quiet.)

The conditions of the prohibition have been made quite clear; it is that the consecrated ground of the churchyard is under the church’s jurisdiction and the priest’s will must be respected. The priest is the guardian of the sacred space, both physical and temporal and had specifically asked for them to be quiet at that time. It should not be assumed therefore that a blanket ban existed on all the activities, listed at the beginning, if they did not impinge on the religious life of the community.

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[51] Þe preste, þat stode at þe autere/ And herde here noysë and here bere,/ Fro þe auter down he nam,/ And to þe cherchë porche he cam, / And seyd, "on Goddes behalue,***.** [halfe.] y ȝow forbade/ Þat ȝe no lenger do swych dede;/ But comeþ yn, on feyre manere,/ Goddës seruysë for to here, / And doþ at Crystyn mennys lawe;/ karolleþ no more for Crystys awe,/ wurschyppeþ hym with alle ȝoure myȝt,/ Þat of þe vyrgyne was bore þys nyȝt. (ll. 9061-73).

3:7:2. Sunday afternoons

The thirteenth-century reforms and the increased emphasis on preaching provided other opportunities for friction over the use of communal space and the leisure time of the common people. Although Sunday markets were abandoned in the face of clerical disapproval, the thirteenth century also saw the beginning of the development, in the towns, of taverns and alehouses.[52] Following the Black Death and the resulting improvement in economic circumstances of agricultural labourers, many had a small disposable income from wages, and could afford leisure time and entertainment.[53] The resulting competition for the attention of the people became the subject of sermon exemplars. Owst quotes the Dominican, John Bromyard, writing in the fourteenth century, complaining that even the twelve apostles would have been unable to hold the congregation's attention in the distracting presence of the ladies leading the dances.[54]

According to Duffy, 'By the late thirteenth century the barn-like urban preaching churches were attracting large and eager lay audiences'.[55] It is unlikely that these popular events took place every week. Various statutes were issued regarding the frequency of sermons. For example, Bishop Grandisson of Exeter stipulated, in 1342, that sermons should be preached at the College Church of St Ottery, Devon, on the following Sundays; 1st and 3rd Advent, Septuagesima, 1st, 3rd and 5th of Lent.[56] These sermons were not part of the liturgy within the church service: the service itself might contain a short homily between the creed and offertory, but separate preaching events usually followed Sunday dinner. Wooden pulpits, in the form of a platform on legs, could be transported outside the church if the weather was fine. It can be imagined that hardworking labourers enjoying their restful Sunday and looking forward to some carolling in the Spring sunshine outside the tavern would not be best pleased when the parish clergy emerged carrying the pulpit into the churchyard or village square. An extract from the canonisation dossier of Thomas Cantilupe, Bishop of Hereford, (d.1282) shows how an ordinary spring Sunday might have been spent, though in this particular case a tragic accident unfolded.[57] A husband and wife went to the Inn in the village of Marden, near Hereford, after Nones one Sunday in April. There were about a hundred people there, including many of their neighbours with their children. The couple's five-year old daughter Joanna followed them instead of staying at home with her siblings, but when they noticed they were not worried as there were other children there. Unfortunately, there was a fishpond in the garden of the tavern and, unnoticed by the adults inside, a little boy named John pushed Joanna into the water where she drowned. The witness states that, 'according to their custom and manner, when they had finished drinking the younger members formed a carol (*chorea)* which wound its way through the garden.' Some of the carollers saw the girl's body but thought it was the child of a local destitute woman, Christine de Greenway. The subsequent behaviour of the carollers does not give a good impression of the inhabitants of Marden's moral health, as they tried to cover up the accident and hide John so that he would not tell anyone what really happened. Once again, the carolling itself does not elicit criticism. Instead, it is presented as a regular way to enjoy a Sunday afternoon in springtime. It could however be interpreted as an example of how people engaged in a boisterous activity and fuelled by alcohol do not always behave well or sensibly.

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[52] Richard Britnell, 'Town Life', p. 139.

[53] Mavis E. Mate, 'Work and Leisure', p. 283.

[54] Owst, p. 71.

[55] Duffy, 'Religious Belief', p. 300.

[56] Owst, p. 145. The earlier Franciscan Archbishop John Peckham issued his Constitutions 1281. (Owst p. 282.)

These examples have highlighted the normality of carolling as a leisure-time pursuit in various circumstances and the situations in which friction between the interests of preachers and people was likely to occur. The question of how Sunday leisure time is spent has resonances with the twenty-first century debate about Sunday trading laws and a recent dispute concerning buskers playing outside Bath Abbey and disturbing the services inside shows that similar conflicting interests remain.[58]

3:8. Insular Franciscans and the development of the vernacular Middle English religious carole in the 14th and 15th centuries.

There can be little doubt that, regardless of any disapproval expressed by theologians or church authorities, people continued to spend their time carolling on feast days and holidays throughout the late Middle Ages, including members of the clergy. No matter how pious a life a person may have intended to live in adulthood, it would not have been possible to grow up completely untouched by popular oral culture. As discussed in Chapter One, a vernacular oral culture existed that has left little mark in the manuscript record. A brief glimpse of this hidden repertoire is shown by the story of the priest in the diocese of Worcester, as told by Gerald of Wales in *Gemma Ecclesiastica.*[59] Having been disturbed all night by the carollers singing round the church, he found the refrain had lodged as an 'earworm' and instead of chanting "Dominus vobiscum" standing at the altar for mass on the Sunday morning, he sang with a loud voice "swete lamman dhin are". This is an example of a vernacular, secular carole making its way into church by mistake. It is more usual to find examples within sermon materials, where the preacher, assuming the familiarity of his congregation with the secular material, presented a Christian or moralising interpretation of a carole text.

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[57] Miracles of Thomas Cantilupe, Canonisation dossier 1307, BHL 8254. Roma, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. Lat. 4015. A shorter account of this incident can be found in Robert Strange, *The Life and Gests of S. Thomas Cantilupe, Bishop of Hereford,* (Ghent: Robert Walker, 1674), p. 244. Original in the National Central Library of Florence, digitized 9 June 2017. <https://books.google.co.uk/books/about/Life_and_Gests_of_S_Thomas_Cantilupe_Bis.html?id=F1U2LgXgNT0C&redir_esc=y> [accessed 16 February 2018].

[58]<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/sep/23/bath-buskers-fight-threat-ban-amplified-music-abbey> [accessed 16 February 2018].

There are several examples of references to carole texts, rather than to the activity of carolling, in the somewhat fragmentary manuscript record extant from the two centuries preceeding the emergence (c.1400 onwards) of the main body of Franciscan carole texts. The French carole *Bele Aaliz* was used in a sermon attributed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Stephen Langton (d.1228). In this sermon the popular character, (a beautiful maiden washing and dressing in the morning and adorning herself with flowers), is interpreted as an allegory of the Virgin Mary.[60] This technique of referencing and re-interpreting familiar secular themes as religious allegories was modelled in the many sermon exemplars and teaching aids of the Franciscans after the Fourth Lateran Council. For example, a sermon in the trilingual manuscript compilation Trinity College, Cambridge B.1.45 begins with the underlined heading:

> 'Atte wrastlinge mi lemman i ches, and atte ston-kasting i him for-les.' [61]
>
> (I chose my love at the wrestling match, and I left him at the stone-casting game.)

The author goes on to explain, a little further into the sermon:

> Mi leve frend, wylde wimmen and golme i mi contrei, wan he gon o þe ring, among manie oþere songis, þat litil ben wort þat tei singin, so sein þei þus: 'Atte wrastlinge mi lemman I ches.'

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[59] Gerald of Wales, *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera,* p. 120. See Chapter One, p. 25.

[60] Stevens, *Words and Music,* p .179.

[61] Cambridge, Trinity College Library, MS B.1.45. Online at <http://trin-sites-pub.trin.cam.ac.uk/manuscripts/B_1_45/manuscript.php?fullpage=1&startingpage=1>

(My dear friends, wild women and lecherous men in my country, when they join the ring [dance], among many other songs, that are of little worth, they sing thus, ‘At the wrestling I chose my love’.)

This thirteenth-century sermon, according to Scahil, ‘usefully shows how such verses might be used homiletically’.[62] It also shows a familiarity with a secular vernacular dance-song that was part of a repertoire in common use but almost entirely absent from the written record until a century later. The Middle English word ‘ring’, used in this text, is the same as that used by Laȝamon in his Brut to describe Stonehenge as the *Eotinde Ring*, translating Wace’s ‘carole*’* which was in turn a translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s ‘chorea gigantum’.[63] This would imply that the dance existed in a parallel vernacular culture as a ‘ring’ and only gradually became known universally as karole or *carole,* influenced by the literary Anglo-Norman vocabulary, due to the spread of literacy during the fourteenth century. Although the evidence is sparse, it is clear, from my examples, that English Franciscan preachers were familiar with carolling culture long before any written evidence emerged of their own compositions.

3:9. Franciscan vernacular religious song.

The emergence of carole texts during the fourteenth century and the gradual blossoming of the religious carols of the fifteenth century, if considered without reference to the social context, could be mistaken for the development of an entirely new genre rather than an insular Franciscan adaptation and partial appropriation of an existing one. As already discussed, the Franciscan education system in England during the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries may have contributed to this development because of the communal life of the colleges. However, its conception lay in the Franciscan attitude to song and dance that pertained all over Europe, albeit expressed in various national forms. The source of this lay in the experience of St Francis and the adoption by his followers of the practice of singing vernacular spiritual songs or *laude.*[64] In 1225, while St Francis was recovering from an illness he wrote the *Cantico delle creature*, known in English as the Canticle of Brother Sun, a hymn expressing Franciscan spirituality and joy in the natural world.[65] The language used is Umbrian dialect and it became a model for followers of Franciscan preaching to express their devotion in strophic, vernacular songs.[66]

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[62] John Scahil, ‘Trilingualism in Early Middle English Miscellanies: Language and Literature’, *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 33 (2003*)*, 18-32 (p. 23).
[63] See p. 15 of this thesis.
[64] *Harvard Dictionary of Music* ed. by Willi Apel (London: Heinemann, 1970), p. 463.

The earliest known example in Middle English of a carole on the subject of the Nativity can be found in a manuscript compilation that contains Latin sermons and sermon notes written by a Franciscan in the first half of the fourteenth century.[67] It begins with the burden exhorting the listeners as follows:

> Honnd by honnd we schulle ous take,
> And joye and blisse schulle we make.

It can be surmised that this was a familiar style of burden, inviting dancers to the ring-dance.[68] Similarly exhortational burdens can also be found in later vernacular English carole texts.[69] In this example the sermon writer places it in a Christian context with the additional two lines forming the first strophe:

> Honnd by honnd we schulle ous take,
> And joye and blisse schulle we make.
> For the devel of elle man haght forsake, *the devil of hell*
> And Godes Sone ys maked our make. *made our mate*

The earliest example of a Franciscan adoption of a lullaby, though not in strict carole form, occurs in the Kildare collection of Anglo-Irish poems, c.1300.[70] It begins with the line, ‘Lollai, lollai, litil child, whi wepistou so sore?’ Many of the caroles in Greene’s anthology contain the word ‘lullay’; they comprise a proportion of the repertoire second only to those specifically about the Virgin Mary. This indicates that the lullaby carole had become extremely popular in the fifteenth century as a vehicle for the expression of Franciscan Marian devotion.[71] These brief snippets suggest that a vernacular English carole repertoire may have been far more substantial, but held in the oral tradition, before the second half of the fourteenth century.

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[65] Earliest transmission is the codex Assisi, Biblioteca Comunale, MS 338.
[66] Marco Gozzi, ‘Italy to 1300’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Music*, pp. 121-35 (p. 129).
[67] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 26, fol. 202v. Printed in Greene, *EEC*, no. 12.
[68] See p. 57 for similar examples in romance literature.
[69] See Chapter Five, p. 136.
[70] London, British Library, MS Harley 913, cited in Greene p. cxxv.
[71] Greene, in *EEC*, classifies nos. 142 to 155 as ‘Lullaby carols’ and nos. 172 to 229 as ‘Carols to the Virgin’.

3:10. Latin contrafacta and The Red Book of Ossory

The Franciscan practice of composing Latin *contrafacta* or setting of religious texts to existing songs or dance tunes is far better documented. The most familiar example of this, in the English repertoire, is the mid-thirteenth century *'Sumer is icumen in'* in which the music is underlaid by two texts, one in red ink and one in black.[72] The text written in red is the Middle English *rota* about springtime, while the one in black is an Easter hymn in Latin. In this case it is not clear whether the vernacular song pre-dated the Latin. A collection of song texts, without music, where the intention is clearly stated as providing religious words for pre-exisiting songs is found in The Red Book of Ossory in the Bishop's Palace, Kilkenny.[73] This collection of sixty Latin song texts, compiled during the time of the Franciscan friar Richard Ledrede, who was Bishop from 1317 until his death in 1360, contains the following explanation:

> Attende, lector, qu[o]d Episcopus Ossoriensis fecit istas cantilenas pro vicariis Ecclesie Cathedralis sacerdotibus et clericis suis ad cantandum in magnis festis et solaciis, ne guttura eorum et ora Deo sanctificata polluantur cantilenis teatralibus, turpibus et secularibus, et cum sint cantatores prouideant sibi de notis conuenientibus secundum quod dictamina requirunt.

(Be advised, reader, that the Bishop of Ossory has made these songs for the vicars of the cathedral church, for the priests, and for the clerks, to be sung on the important holidays and at celebrations in order that their throats and mouths, consecrated to God, may not be polluted by songs which are lewd, secular, and associated with revelry, and, since they are trained singers, let them provide themselves with suitable tunes according to what these sets of words require.)[74]

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[72] London, British Library, MS Harley 978.

[73] Dublin, Representative Church Body Library, MS D11/1.2 <https://www.ireland.anglican.org/news/2385/red-book-of-ossory> [accessed 16 February 2018].

[74] R.L.Greene, ed. *The Lyrics of the Red Book of Ossory,* Medium Aevum Monographs, New Series V (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974).

Kilkenny, at that time, was a centre of English power, not Irish, though there had been a Celtic church there before the Norman conquest, the round tower of which still stands. St Canice's Cathedral was built in the thirteenth century and was part of the Diocese of Ossory. It was the clerics of this cathedral whose festive activities the zealous Bishop Ledrede wished to influence.[75] The reference to the mouths and throats of the clerics having been consecrated to God echoes the teachings of Grosseteste in his work, *Templum Dei*, as previously mentioned.[76]

The songs are written in two different hands; the first forty-seven in one hand are, according to Greene, dance-song based. The last thirteen, written by a different scribe, reflect a shift of intention.[77] What makes this collection of Latin song texts important is the marginalia of *incipits,* which include fragments of vernacular secular dance-songs indicating the known repertoire to which they were contrafacta. Whether or not these were the actual songs that were deemed unsuitable is impossible to say. Instead, it could just be an indication of a suitable familiar tune, although in some cases the rhyme scheme of the Middle English is reflected in the Latin.

The first example is the two-line burden 'Have mercie on me, frere, barfote that ygo.' This is indicated beside three songs one of which, number twenty-eight, takes up the rhyme ending 'frere' as follows:

Maria, noli flere
Sepulcro Domini
Surexit enim vere
Sepultus ab heri.

The other *incipits* that resemble burdens, or references to burdens, are as follows:

'Do, do nyghtingale synges wel ful murye. / Shal y neure for thyn love lenger karie'. (Songs 22 and 34)
'Gayneth me no garland of greene, / bot hit ben of wythoues ywroght.' (Song 30)
'Have god day, my lemman etc' (Songs 24 and 7)

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[75] Pre-conquest Kilkenny had been the centre of the Kingdom of Osraigh and the name was retained for the diocese.
[76] See p. 78 of this chapter.
[77] Greene, *Ossory,* p. ix.

‘Hey, how, the chevaldores wokes al nyght.’ (Song 41)
‘Harrow! Leo su trahy / Par fol amour de mal amy.’ (Song 18)
‘Heu, alas, par amour, / Qy moy myst en taunt dolour.’ (Song 40.)

These vernacular ‘incipits’ have similarities to later extant secular caroles both in vocabulary and topics, such as the song of a nightingale, the vagabond or itinerant man, the theme of the young *mal marie*.[78] However, only one has a direct correspondence. In the left-hand margin next to the first stanza of the eleventh Latin song, *Perperit virgo,* Greene deciphered the marginalia as ‘*Mayde yn the moore lay’* and a lyric with this first line can also be found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson D. 913. Much has been written about this song and its possible interpretation as an allegory of the Virgin Mary, though as Greene points out, if it had had any credible religious meaning it would not have been necessary to replace it with a suitable Latin text.[79] What can be learnt, which is of relevance to this study, derives from the fact that the first stanza of the Latin song is written out in full. This models the repetitive way in which dance-song texts, more commonly recorded in abbreviated form, might have been used. The repetition provides opportunities for calls and responses between the lead singer and participants. As Duncan says, ‘This dance song is recorded in a highly abbreviated form in the Rawlinson MS’.[80]

Maiden in the mor lay in the mor lay. Seuenyst fulle
seuenist fulle maiden in the mor lay in the mor
lay seuenistes fulle ant a day Welle wat hire mete
wat was hire mete þe primerole ant the þe pri
merole ant the welle was hire mete wat was
hire mete the primerole ant the violet Welle
wat was hire drying þe chelde water of [ ]
Welle spring Welle was hire bour wat was hire
bour þe rede rose ante lilie flour {Next item begins][81]

---

[78] See Chapter Five of this study.
[79] Greene, ‘The Maid of the Moor’ in the Red Book of Ossory, *Speculum,* 27 (Oct. 1952) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), pp. 504-06. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2850478> [accessed 16 April 2016]. For discussion of the possible allegorical content, see D. W. Robertson, E. T. Donaldson, John Speirs and Peter Dronke in *Middle English Lyrics* ed. by Maxwell S. Luria and Richard L. Hoffman (New York: Norton, 1974).
[80] Duncan, *Medieval English Lyrics,* p. 367.
[81] Thomas G. Duncan, ‘The Maid in the Moor, and the Rawlinson Text’, in *The Review of English Studies,* 47, (1996), pp. 151–62, <https://doi.org/10.1093/res/XLVII.186.151>.

Duncan's version of the first stanza is reproduced below, following the Latin text from the Red Book of Ossory.

Table 3:1

Rawlinson MS version	*Perperit virgo,*	Maiden in the morë lay,
Maiden in the mor lay in the mor lay. Seuenyst fulle seuenist fulle maiden in the mor lay in the mor lay seuenistes fulle ant a day	*Virgo regia,* *Mater orphanorum,* *Mater orphanorum* *Perperit virgo,* *Virgo regia,* *Mater orphanorum,* *Mater orphanorum,* *Plena gracia.*[82]	In the morë lay, Sevenightë fullë – Sevenightë fullë - Maiden in the morë lay, In the morë lay, Sevenightë fullë – Sevenightë fullë - Fullë and a day.[83]

Greene asserts that this is not a 'carol' as the form does not follow his rigid definition, that of a *burden* followed by a verse, applicable to the texts of the later fifteenth century.[84] It is, however, most likely to be a dance-song, as agreed by Duncan, because it has the same strong, regularly accented, flow as the Latin version. As Stevens notes, there were no collections of songs or tunes labelled as 'caroles' in this period; and therefore, it is possible that several forms were in use and it was only through the literary development during the fifteenth century and the written collections of Franciscan provenance that the English carole form became more standardized.[85]

One more of the nine marginal *incipits* does not fit the category of a possible reference to a familiar burden but instead is a complete five-line stanza on the topic of *mal marie* as follows:

Alas, hou sholdy synge?
Yloren is my playing;

---

[82] Greene, 'The Maid of the Moor', p. 505. An expanded version of the Rawlinson lyric is published in Duncan, *Medieval English Lyric,* p. 175.

[83] Duncan, p. 175.

[84] Greene, 'The Maid of the Moor', p. 506.

[85] Stevens, *Words and Music,* p. 163.

Hou sholdy with that olde man
To leven and let my leman,
Swetist of al thinge?

(Alas, how should I sing? Lost is my delight; how should I lie with that old man and abandon my lover, sweetest of all things.)

Caroles upon this topic are found in the later extant repertoire.[86]

This glimpse of a nearly invisible repertoire, which was assumed to be completely familiar to the English clerics in Kilkenny, connects thematically with the corpus of secular, vernacular written caroles that emerged throughout the following century. It is important to note that there is no intention on the part of Bishop Ledrede for these sacred versions to be used as preaching or didactic material. There is no suggestion that the religious songs will be sung in church or be part of any formal celebrations, even though twenty are topical for Christmas time and eleven for Easter time. These are the seasons for '*magnis festis et solaciis'* (important holidays and celebrations) when the lay people were singing and dancing to their own songs, but the trained clerics were being encouraged, separately, to sing words more befitting to their religious calling. From what I have argued, we should assume that it is unlikely that the early development of Franciscan carol writing was for the benefit of the laity nor, as Robbins said, that:

> 'by the fifteenth century […] these religious adaptations had become so popular with the non-literate laity that their original intention of religious propaganda was lost sight of, and they became as natively popular as the first secular songs which they had intended to replace'. [87]

It is more probable, judging by the evidence presented in this chapter, that the English Franciscan carole writers were composing purely for their own use within the environment of their colleges, universities and friaries, in order that they could entertain themselves within the conditions advocated by the teachings of Albertus Magnus, Robert Grosseteste, and Roger Bacon.

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[86] Chapter Five p. 147.

[87] Rossell Hope Robbins, 'The Earliest Carols and the Franciscans' in *Modern Language Notes,* 53 (1938), 239-245 (p. 239).

Conclusion

This study of the evidence concerning the attitudes of clerics towards carolling has shown that it was not universally condemned as a form of entertainment for the laity. The critical opinions that were expressed in respect of carolling were, however, qualified by concerns about the conflict of interests in the use of public spaces and the celebration of 'holydays' that designated the leisure periods for the majority of the working population. In other words, the evidence suggests that carolling may have been generally tolerated so long as it did not disturb church services or encourage sinful behaviour. The Book of Ossory shows that some clerics even enjoyed carolling on feast days and that they were not prohibited from continuing, though the content of the song-texts was laid open to scrutiny. It was not considered suitable for the clerics to join in with the laity but, within their own communities, they were permitted to entertain themselves with caroles based on appropriately pious texts. The Franciscan Order lived and worked within urban society and, rather than trying to suppress popular culture, they espoused Francis' example of the 'conversion of the vanities', to employ vernacular song and dance to celebrate the Christian festivals and to express their joyful piety. The place of music in the theology and education of Franciscan brothers provided a fertile environment for the blossoming of English vernacular carole writing in the fifteenth century.

Chapter Four

Carole texts in Context: the manuscripts.

Introduction

It has been established, in previous chapters of this thesis, that carolling was primarily an orally transmitted culture and that the written records of carole texts represent merely a fragment of the repertoire in circulation during the late Middle Ages. The question to be asked, therefore, is not, 'Why were so few caroles written down?' but 'Why were particular caroles written down at all?' The aim of this chapter is to study manuscripts that contain secular caroles compiled alongside religious caroles or other texts. Many of these caroles have been published in modern anthologies; here I am seeking to discover what can be learnt from the *mise-en-page* of these recorded caroles about their possible use, within the context of the manuscripts.[1] A considerable amount of information can be gained from the small scraps of oblique evidence revealed by the inclusion of these texts and their compilation alongside content of differing registers. This information is not available when the texts alone are studied within the context of an anthology, arranged by topic or chronologically. The four manuscripts studied here, examples of both individual and collaborative scribal practice, nuance this evidence in different ways. By considering the *mise-en-page* as well as the content of the texts I will show that assumptions and generalisations should not be made regarding the use of these manuscripts for the activity of carolling. Even caroles written within the same manuscript or anthology may have been the result of a variety of compilational impulses. I will examine the preference for non-religious material to be written, or at least begun, on the verso sides. I will also explore the implications of the use of conventional poetic scribal layouts with regard to the culture in which the manuscripts were used or circulated.

As Stevens has stated, 'there is no collection of poems or songs headed caroles' and no caroles are designated as such in the extant manuscript record.[2] Texts of songs in carole form (a burden or refrain followed by stanzas) can be found within collections of songs or poems in other forms and also among prose material. It must be noted that in the manuscripts studied in this chapter, the songs are not separated by genre. It is only in the self-referential context found in the 'caroll' 'Hay, ay, hay, ay, make we mery as we may', transcribed below, and also in the religious lyrics of John Audelay, that we can be sure of the appellation.[3] John Audelay was an early-fifteenth-century Franciscan whose writings, including twenty-five caroles, are contained in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Douce 302. The final carole contains the words: 'I pray youe, seris, pur charyté, Redis this caral reverently.' Whilst it is reasonable to assume that songs in this form and which fit Greene's strict definition, were called 'caroles', it is also possible that communal or participatory songs and dance-songs in other forms were also employed, or adapted, for carolling occasions. An example of this is alluded to by Chaucer who wrote, in *The Legend of Good Women*:

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[1] Greene, *The Early English Carols*; Luria and Hoffman, *Middle English Lyrics*, and Duncan, *Medieval English Lyrics and Carols*.

[2] Stevens, *Words and Music,* p. 163.

> And after that they wenten in compass,
> Daunsynge aboute this flour an esy pas,
> And songen, as it were in carole-wyse,
> This balade, which that I shal yow devyse.' (ll. 199-202)[4]

This is followed by a three-stanza 'balade' in which each stanza has six lines followed by a one-line refrain. The refrain is different in the two versions. Version F, which does not contain the reference to singing carole-wyse, employs the refrain 'My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne', whereas Version G uses 'Alceste is here, that al that may disteyne'. The song is otherwise the same in both versions. It is possible, therefore, that any song containing a refrain may have been adapted to singing 'carole-wyse' in practice, without it being designated as a 'carole'.

Very occasionally the activity of carolling or the use of a song as a 'caroll' is referred to within the text, as in the following example.

> Hay, ay, hay, ay, make we mery as we may
>
> […]
>
> Therefore every mon that ys here
> Synge a caroll on hys manere;   *in this manner*

---

[3] John Audelay, Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Douce 302. (Saint Francis, ll. 73-6), available online at <http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/poems-and-carols-introduction > [accessed 10 January 2014]. Audelay in Greene, *EEC,* nos. 310, 314, 369 and 428 contain the word, spelt either 'caral'or 'carol'.

[4] Geoffrey Chaucer, 'The Legend of Good Women', Text G, *The Riverside Chaucer,* p. 594.

Yf he con non we schall hym lere *if he doesn’t know any we will teach him*
So that we be mery allway.

[…]

Mende the fyre and mak gud chere!
Fyll the cuppe, Ser Botelere!
Let every mon drynke to hys fere!
Thys endes my caroll with care away.[5]

The carole, from which the third and fifth stanzas are quoted here, can be found in a manuscript that otherwise contains an anthology of Welsh poems, charms and medical receipts in Latin and English, and two stanzas of an English drinking song, not in carole form. Though neither the lyrics of this song nor those of the carole are of great literary merit, their meaning is clear and to the point. Listeners are exhorted to join in the festivities, to contribute caroles of their own or, if they know none, to learn one with the gathered company. The Welsh poetry in this manuscript is by named authors of some standing and yet the scribe has felt moved to include this jovial anonymous seasonal communal ‘caroll’. The evidence indicates that a mixture of known and learnt caroles could have been sung alongside some notated ones, thus providing a context for the caroles written in the extant manuscript record.

Although this thesis is primarily concerned with secular carolling, the record shows that sacred and secular co-existed, though sometimes the more lewd songs are somewhat hidden within the written record. An understanding of the use made of these carole texts would be incomplete if either the secular or religious content were to be considered in isolation, without reference to these contextual aspects. Indeed, opinions of past scholars, asserting that the religious caroles in these collections were for use in liturgical processions, would seem to be dependent on a disregard for the secular, and sometimes profane, items also contained in the manuscripts.[6] To accept the written record, as Robbins asserted in 1938, as representative of 'popular taste in the fifteenth century' or to assume that 'if secular and coarse songs had been popular they too would have been written down' would be to misread the evidence from the vantage point of a modern, universally literate, culture.[7] Indeed, upon the later discovery of a manuscript fragment containing four caroles, Robbins revised his view in 1966 stating that 'the two ribald carols suggest that more of this genre were current than the surviving few carols have hitherto indicated'.[8] The chance discovery of this manuscript fragment among the loose papers in the possessions of Henry Bradshaw, librarian at King's College, Cambridge, after his death perhaps illustrates the reason why so few 'ribald' caroles have survived, in contrast to the religious ones that are preserved in high status manuscripts and books. The manuscript fragment, although presumably recognised by Bradshaw as dating from the fifteenth century, was not filed meticulously but left undiscovered among loose papers on his desk for many years. The chances of other similarly jotted down, secular, caroles surviving in the extant manuscript record are demonstrably slim.

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[5] London, British Library, Add. 14997. fol. 86v. Modern edition quoted above from Duncan, *Medieval English Lyrics*, no. II, 125, p. 291.

[6] R. H. Robbins, ‘Middle English Carols as Processional Hymns’, *Studies in Philology*, 56 (1959), 559-582 (p. 562). Also cited in Kathleen Rose Palti, “‘Synge we now alle and sum’ Three Fifteenth-century Collections of Communal Song”, 2 vols, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University College, London (2008), p. 42.

The present chapter, whilst focussing on examples of a secular carole repertoire, looks at the case-studies within the framework of the manuscript culture of the time. Clues about the possible use of caroles can be extracted from information that has been obscured by the division of religious and secular that has tended to persist in more recent scholarship.

4:1. Cambridge, St John's College, MS S.54.

The first manuscript to be considered in this chapter is Cambridge, St John's College, MS S.54 (hereafter referred to as MS St John's S.54). Kathleen Rose Palti has made a detailed study of the contents of this anthology and the two other collections that share some of the same material, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. poet e.1 and London, British Library, MS Sloane 2593 (hereafter referred to as MS Eng. poet.e.1 and MS Sloane 2593).[9] I am indebted to her for a thorough examination of the texts. MS St John's S.54 is thought to originate from the region of East Anglia.[10] The collection is written on paper measuring 146mm x 105mm (approximately UK

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[7] R. H. Robbins, "The Earliest Carols and the Franciscans", *Modern Language Notes,* 53 (1938), 239-45, (p. 245).

[8] R. H. Robbins, 'The Bradshaw Carols', *PMLA,* 81 (1966), 308-10 (p. 310). The fragment discussed is Cambridge University Library Add. 7350 Box 2 that contains a version of '*Inducas in temtationibus'* which is used as a case study in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

[9] Palti, 'Synge we now alle and sum'. I will use her transcriptions of texts for this manuscript.

[10] Greene, *EEC* p. 326.

A6) and consists of one quire of sixteen leaves constructed by nesting together two divided sets of octofolia (only partly cut). It is worn and dirty and the first and last leaves are very badly damaged. It was bound in a vellum wrap-around wallet. 'The cover as a whole is rather scrappy and gives the impression of having been unprofessionally made.' [11] It is dated to the late fifteenth century. The manuscript has been extensively studied and the nineteenth-century appellation of 'the Minstrel Manuscript' has been contested by Andrew Taylor.[12] Although the wallet cover and damaged leaves are evidence of transportation and use, it is not necessarily an indication of minstrels' use as their repertoire would have been predominantly memorised.[13] Other professional groups, such as clerics and merchants, were also likely to have been well travelled and therefore might have made use of such a portable manuscript. Also, the original authors' or compilers' intentions cannot be extrapolated in retrospect from the subsequent use and transportation of a book or manuscript which may have passed through many different hands after its original production. The contents are largely in keeping with Franciscan carolling practice, as discussed in Chapter Three, and all except four of the twenty songs are religious in content. The manuscript is in two clearly distinguishable hands, both anglicana with some letters showing secretary forms; however, Scribe A has a small neat hand whereas Scribe B's hand is larger and more erratic both in letter size and line orientation, and the rhyme braces are roughly drawn. Fig. 4:1 (on next page) shows a quadrifolium containing caroles written in the two scribes' hands and the use of rhyme braces.

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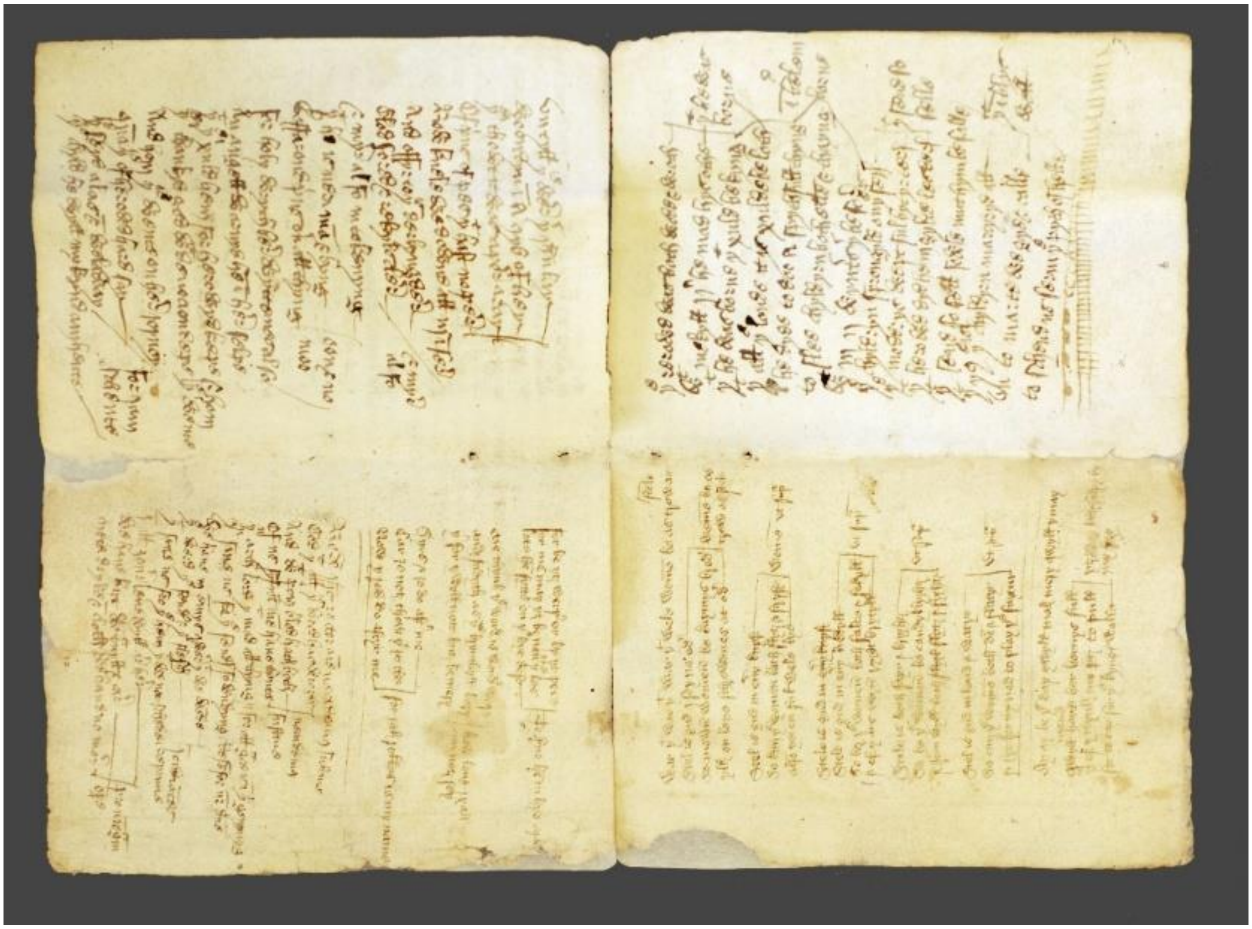
[11] Verweij Sebastiaan, *Browsing Cambridge, St John's College MS S.54* (2009) available online at <https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/194173>.

[12] Andrew Taylor, "The myth of the Minstrel Manuscript" *Speculum,* 66 (1991) 43-73.

[13] George Richard Rastall, 'Secular Musicians in Late Medieval England'.

Fig. 4:1. MS St John's S.54 Quadrifolium (fols. 5v, 6r, 9v & 10r).



Both scribes use graphic tail-rhyme layout. This is described by Rhiannon Purdie as a specifically English *mise-en-page* deriving from Anglo-Norman practices, which appeared towards the end of the twelfth century and continued to be used in play scripts until the early sixteenth century.[14] It developed from the practice of bracketing the ends of rhyming lines and is most often encountered in Middle English lyrics. It would seem to have been associated with expectations of oral or musical performance, hence its retention in play scripts. In the notation of caroles with quatrain stanzas and a rhyme scheme aaab cccb etc., where 'b' is the burden rhyme, the 'b' line is written to the right of the bracket, however caroles of couplet stanzas put a reference to the actual burden to the right of the bracket. This can be seen in lines 4-6 onwards in Fig. 4:2. (overleaf).

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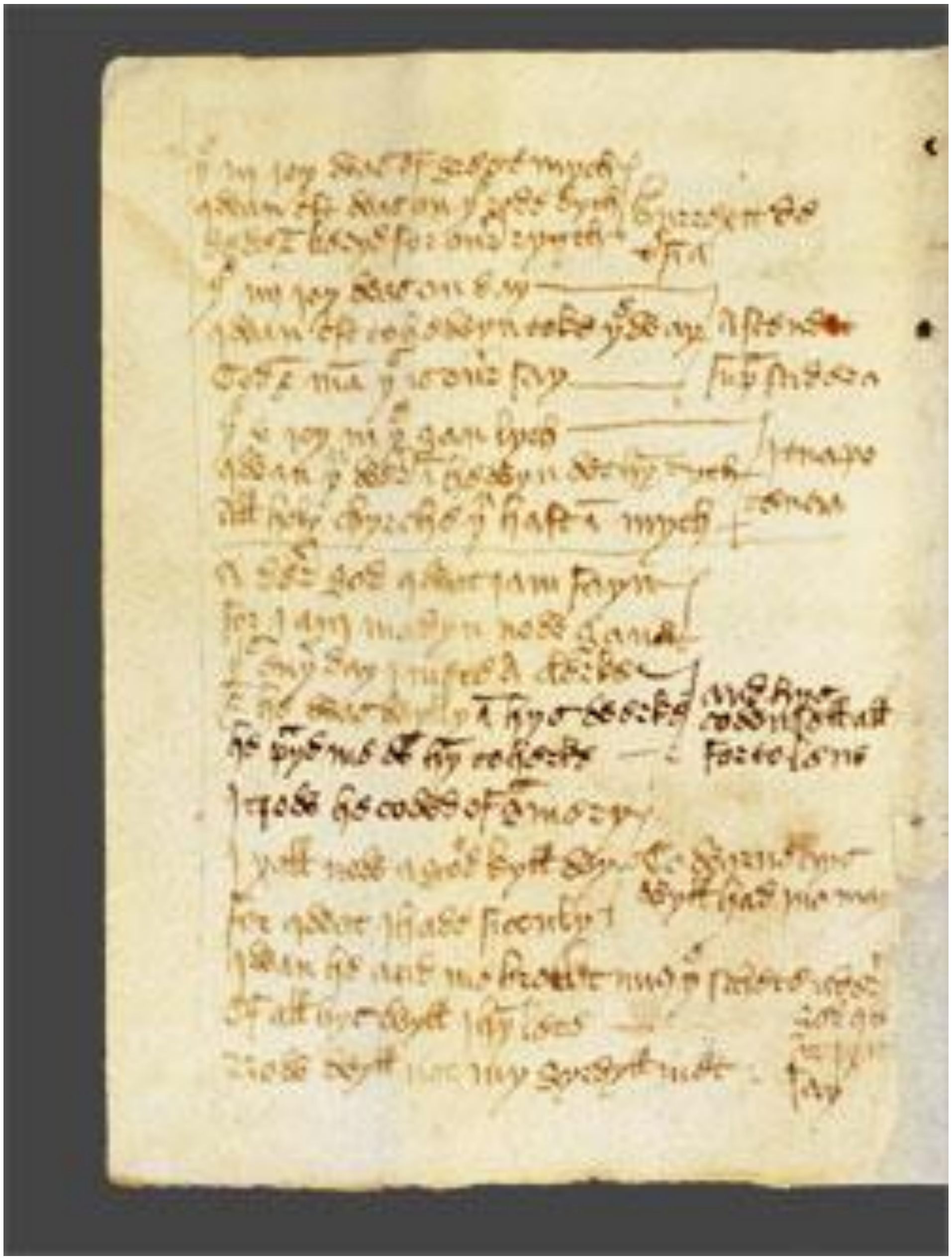
[14] Rhiannon Purdie, *Anglicising Romance: Tail-Rhyme and Genre in Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2008), p. 66.

Fig. 4: 2. MS St John's S.54 fol.2v.



This repeated reminder is lost in modern editions where the temptation is to read from stanza to stanza, even if it is noted editorially that the burden is to be repeated between each verse. The fifteenth-century layout emphasises the scribal commitment to a sung performance and to the hearing of the burden between each stanza even if, in the case of the text being read, it was in the 'inner ear'.

The use of graphic tail-rhyme layout in St John’s MS S.54 therefore implies that both scribes were familiar with current literary practice. Further, the concordance of five of the religious caroles in one or more contemporary manuscripts would imply that these items, at least, were part of a written repertoire in wider circulation.[15] The scribes were therefore working within a written cultural context although some of the songs have faulty or repeated rhymes, which might imply they were being notated from memory rather than written exemplars. This can be illustrated by a comparison of a stanza from *Now ys þe xij day com* as it appears in the three concordant manuscripts. (See Table 4:1.)

Table 4:1. *Now ys þe xij day com*

St John’s S. 54. f. 7v.	Sloane 2593. f. 17r.	Bod. Eng. poet.e.1. ff 31v.-32v.
Qwan he had seyde hys lykyng Syr herawd’ þat mody kyng’ & firth þe wente with þer offrynge Be nyȝth þe stere gaue hem lyȝht.	Of herowdys þat mody kyng He tokyn her’ leue of eld & ȝyng & foþ þey wente with her’ offeryng In syȝte & þer þey come be nyte	Of herowdys þat mody kyng þei toke her leue both held and ȝyng’ & for þei ȝedyn with her offeryng’ be nyth þe stere ȝaf them lyth.

The narrative content of the stanza is common to all three versions, with the Wise Men taking leave of King Herod and going with their offerings, guided by the star at night. The rhyme scheme is also the same (aaabb) although the words are not identical. Sloane 2593 and Eng. Poet e.1 share kyng/ȝyng/offering but differ in the last two lines which are the same in St. John’s S 54 and Eng. poet. e.1. (nyȝth/ lyȝht or nyth/ lyth).

While the St John’s S.54 collection may be a result of a combination of both oral and written means of transmission, the implication of the repeated burdens and graphic tail-rhyme layout is that the caroles were notated with some sort of performance or recitation in mind. The anthology begins with a single stanza of ‘þe borys hed haue we in broȝht’ which may have been the last stanza of a complete carole with burden, begun on a missing, previous, folio.[16] It is written in the hand of Scribe A and places the anthology firmly in a festive, communal celebratory context.

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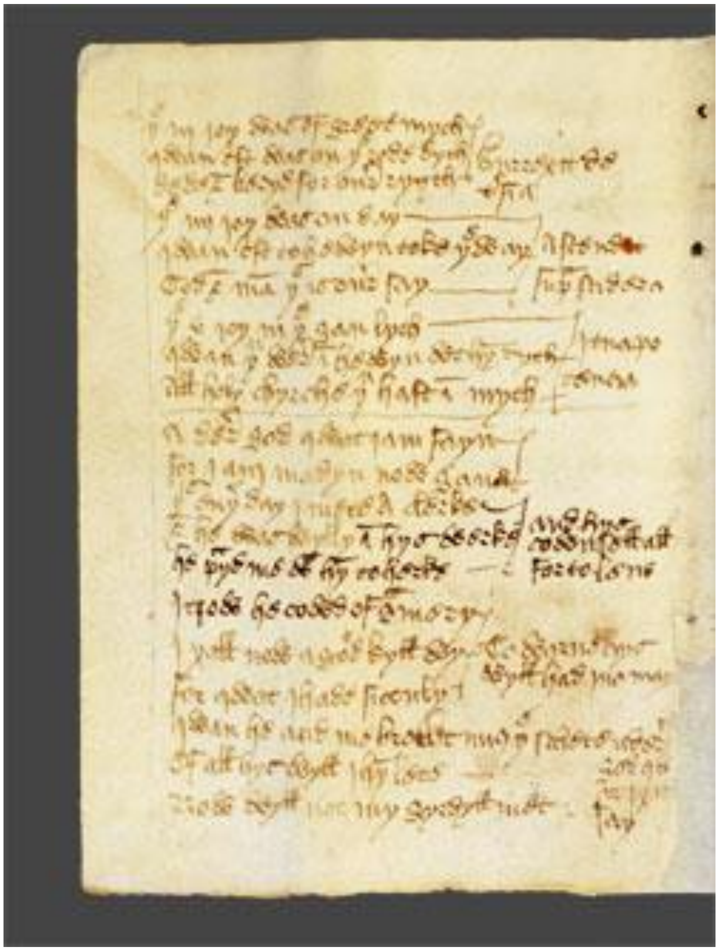
[15] See Palti, ‘Synge we now’, I, p. 175.

Although both scribes contribute to each other’s work and both show familiarity with conventional Latin scribal abbreviations, they appear to observe slightly differing editorial criteria. Three of the four secular caroles were inscribed by Scribe A and they all begin on verso folia (fols. 2v, 3v and 9v). The carole on fol. 2v in Scribe B’s hand begins with the burden ‘A dere god qwat I am fayn / for I am madyn now gane’ in the middle of the page.

Fig. 4:3. MS St John’s S.54, fol. 2v.



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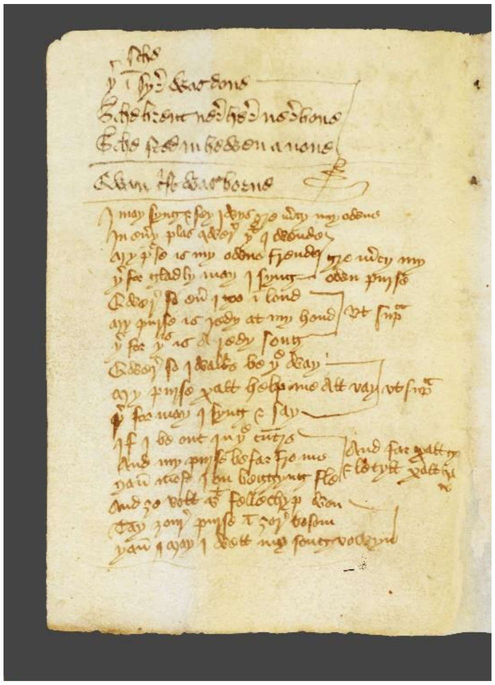
[16] Greene, *EEC*, Appendix iii. Greene cites M. R. James and G. C. Macaulay, ‘Fifteenth Century Carols and Other Pieces’, *The Modern Language Review* 8 (1913), 68-87, (p. 86).

It is a short four-verse song on the popular topic of a maiden whose virginity is lost to a clerk, with a consummation that bears a striking resemblance to ‘Were it undo that is ydo’, to be discussed later in this chapter.[17] Verse four is written at the top of f.3r. and Greene thought it was in a different hand.[18] It certainly has the appearance of an additional commentary answering the question left at the end of the previous page, with the suggestion for a clever alibi that the maid has been away on a pilgrimage, instead of confessing to a pregnancy. The topic of this carole and the messy appearance of the hand has led some scholars to debate as to whether Scribe B might have been female.[19] The conceit is that the song is in a woman’s voice but the lack of sympathy with the inevitable outcome “Of all hys wyll’ I hym lete / Now wyll not my gyrdyll met” does not convince all scholars that the carole is presented from a genuinely feminine point of view.[20]

Folio 3v shows an interesting interchange between the two scribes. (See Fig 4:4.)

Fig. 4:4. MS St John’s S.54, fol. 3v.



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[17] p. 112.

[18] Greene, *EEC,* p. 343.

[19] Palti discusses the question of the woman’s voice in Chapter Eight of her thesis.

[20] Palti, ‘Synge we now’, p. 180. For a Discussion of ‘Womens’ Song’ see Judith M.Bennet, ‘Ventriloquisms: When Maidens Speak in English Songs c. 1300-1550’, in *Medieval Woman’s Songs: Cross Cultural Approaches,* ed. by Anne L. Klinck and Ann Marie Rasmussen (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), pp. 187-204.

As can be seen here, Scribe B has completed a carole to St Catherine, drawing a line across the page, and begun a new song, not in carole form, with the first line ‘Qwan crist was borne’. However, he got no further at this point. This very long song, of eight stanzas, was begun again by Scribe B, from the start, on folio 4v and written in full, continuing through to folio 6r. Scribe A has drawn another line across folio 3v., this time adding a pen flourish, and completed the page with a carole on the burden ‘I may synge & sey iwys gremercy my owne purse’. The topic of this song is far more prosaic than ‘Qwan crist was borne’. ‘I may synge’ extols the pleasures of a life of freedom as long as there is a bit of money in your pocket. A carole with a similar burden appears in MS Sloane 2593, to be discussed later in this chapter, and they are of a generic type that show evidence of an oral tradition.[21] Different or extra stanzas could be inserted or added without disturbing the narrative, and some incremental repetition is employed, for example in stanzas two and three:

> Qweresoeuer I goo in lond
> My purse is redy at my hond
> Þerfor þis is a redy song I may synge & sey iwys etc
>
> Qwereso I walke be þe way
> My purse xall’ help me all’vay
> Þerefor may I syng & say I may synge & sey iwys etc.[22]

The lines of both stanzas begin with the same words ‘Qwereso{ever}’, ‘My purse’ and ‘þerefore’ and reference the topic of travelling and singing with small variations in the rest of the line, concluding in a different rhyme. It is of a quite different register, and a much lower one, than the contribution of Scribe B on the same folio. Perhaps the exemplar was not available for Scribe A to continue ‘Quan crist was borne’, or maybe he chose to insert something more frivolous regardless.

The first carole on folio 9v (See Fig. 4: 1, p. 100) was written by Scribe A and is on the subject of women, reflecting stock anti-female sentiments. The first line of verse three is mistakenly a repeat of the beginning of the previous verse since the scribe has crossed it out. This error would imply that a written exemplar was being used and the mistake was a result of 'eye skip'. Another carole, on a typical goliardic theme of the bachelor life, begins on this page with the burden 'Ay ay be þis day y wyll' mak mery qwyll' y may' but is completed on fol. 10r with the punchline 'for jak rekles is my name'. The principal intention of the compilers of this anthology may have been to record some suitable songs for communal use on festive occasions, as Daniel Wakelin suggests, and 'that they were members of some steady community such as a religious house, school, household or lay guild'. However, it seems that the two scribes had slightly different criteria for inclusion; though they both inserted some secular material into the collection, scribe A wrote more.[23] It should be noted that these secular caroles are begun on the verso side. It is commonplace, in European book production, to begin new or important material on the recto page. This placement of secular caroles on verso pages may have occurred because they were less important, or it could perhaps indicate that the scribes wished to hide them from an initial perusal of the book. This tendency for secular material to be written on verso pages will be noted in other manuscripts in this study. Since none of the manuscripts studied here contain any form of index of contents, so confining non-religious material to left- hand pages might serve to make finding it easier if in a particular situation it seemed appropriate, or less inappropriate. This idea will be considered further in the later part of this chapter.

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[21] See also Karin Bocklund-Lagopoulou, *I Have a Yong Suster: Popular Song and the Middle English Lyric*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), p. 74.
[22] MS St. Johns S 54 fol.3v. see also Greene *EEC*, no. 391.

MS St John's S.54 appears to be a collaborative effort, by two clerically trained scribes, to record a repertoire of songs and caroles to be used, or already in circulation, within their social group. This was possibly a collegiate or domestic setting in which songs in a variety of registers could be enjoyed.

4:2. Cambridge, Gonville and Caius Library, MS 383/603.

Having studied an anthology by two different scribes I shall now look at a manuscript that presents two differing examples of *mise-en-page* but within the work of a single scribe. This second manuscript is Cambridge, Gonville and Caius Library, MS 383/603 (hereafter referred to as G. &

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[23] Daniel Wakelin, <http://scriptorium.english.cam.ac.uk/manuscripts/images/index.php?ms=S.54&page=1 related articles> [accessed 13 October 2013].

C., MS 383/608). This small book, measuring 226mm by 150mm, is written on paper and contains 108 folia, paginated, and it dates from the middle of the fifteenth century. It is in fact two booklets bound together, one inside the other, as pages 1-70 and pages 101-216 are principally in one hand (Scribe A) and the central thirty pages (pp 71-100) are in at least one other hand (Scribe B). Marginalia and pen marks are in other hands. It contains items in Latin, French and English. According to Greene the other contents are:

> Forms of letters, deeds, &c., in French. Latin grammatical notes and verse. A note from Sidonius' *De Natura Rerum* on the names of animals. Much miscellaneous and some confused material, including Latin grammatical exercises. Latin treatises on passages of Scripture used in the liturgy. The statute 'Quia emptores terrarum', French songs in carol-form. […] Accounts in French. Instructions for keeping accounts, with specimens. An English verse-riddle.[24]

The terms 'commonplace book' and 'miscellany', sometimes used to describe this manuscript, have been called into question in recent scholarship as being anachronistic to this period. The nomenclature 'commonplace book' refers to books compiled in the sixteenth century with the specific intention of collecting a variety of material of particular interest to the compiler or their household. The term 'miscellany' was first coined by Thomas Ravenscroft at the beginning of the seventeenth century.[25] The term 'miscellany' is usually used to cover manuscripts that contain a variety of material compiled by one or more scribes or items that have been bound together at a later date. The resulting entity may never have been envisaged by the original scribe, or the criterion for inclusion may not be clear to a modern reader. The outer pages (1-70 and 101-216) of G. & C., MS 383/603, with which I am concerned, are a student's notebook. The degree of deliberation regarding the entries made by the different scribes at different times and for different reasons was very varied. However, at a time when the skill of memorisation was a vital part of students' training and the act of preparing inks and pens was laborious, the notating of texts in a book cannot be considered as a random act, even if the book as a whole does not appear to the researcher to have coherence. Even though clerics in the late Middle Ages were expected to be able to both read and write, as Mary Carruthers asserts, university education remained heavily dependent on oral forms such as lectures, disputations and *viva voce* examination, and manuscript illustrations show students in libraries reading typically without pens in their hands. [26] Although by the late Middle Ages books for students were more readily available, the *ars memorativa* was still highly valued and practised. The deliberation involved in writing down these songs is difficult to evaluate in the context of the constant availability of writing materials in the twenty-first century, just as the preparation required of a nineteenth–century photographer would be incomprehensible to the modern smartphone camera operator. It is with this in mind that my study of this student's notebook is undertaken. The book contains six secular songs in carole form, three on page 41 (Fig. 4:5) and three more on page 240 (Fig. 4:6.). These are all written in the hand of scribe A.[27] For the purpose of this case study I will focus on the *mise-en-page* of pages 41 and 210, both containing secular caroles that are unique to this manuscript.

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[24] Greene, *EEC*, p. 342.

[25] Thomas Ravenscroft, *Pammelia: Musicks Miscellanie* (1609) available online at <http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/ravenscroft/pammelia/ > see Chapter Six, p. 189.

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[26] Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 199.

[27] Page 68 contains one English song possibly in carole form, a carole in Latin on St Thomas of Canterbury, versions of which can be found in three other sources. British Library, Sloane MS 2593, fol. 23 v. and Oxford, Balliol College MS 354, fols 227v -228r, Public Record Office, Chancery Miscellenea, Bundle 34, file 1, No. 12, f.1r. and v MS Balliol, 354, fol. 249 v., and a macaronic carole to the Virgin Mary also in Oxford, Balliol MS. 354 fol. 249v.

Fig. 4:5. G. & C., MS 383/603, p. 41.

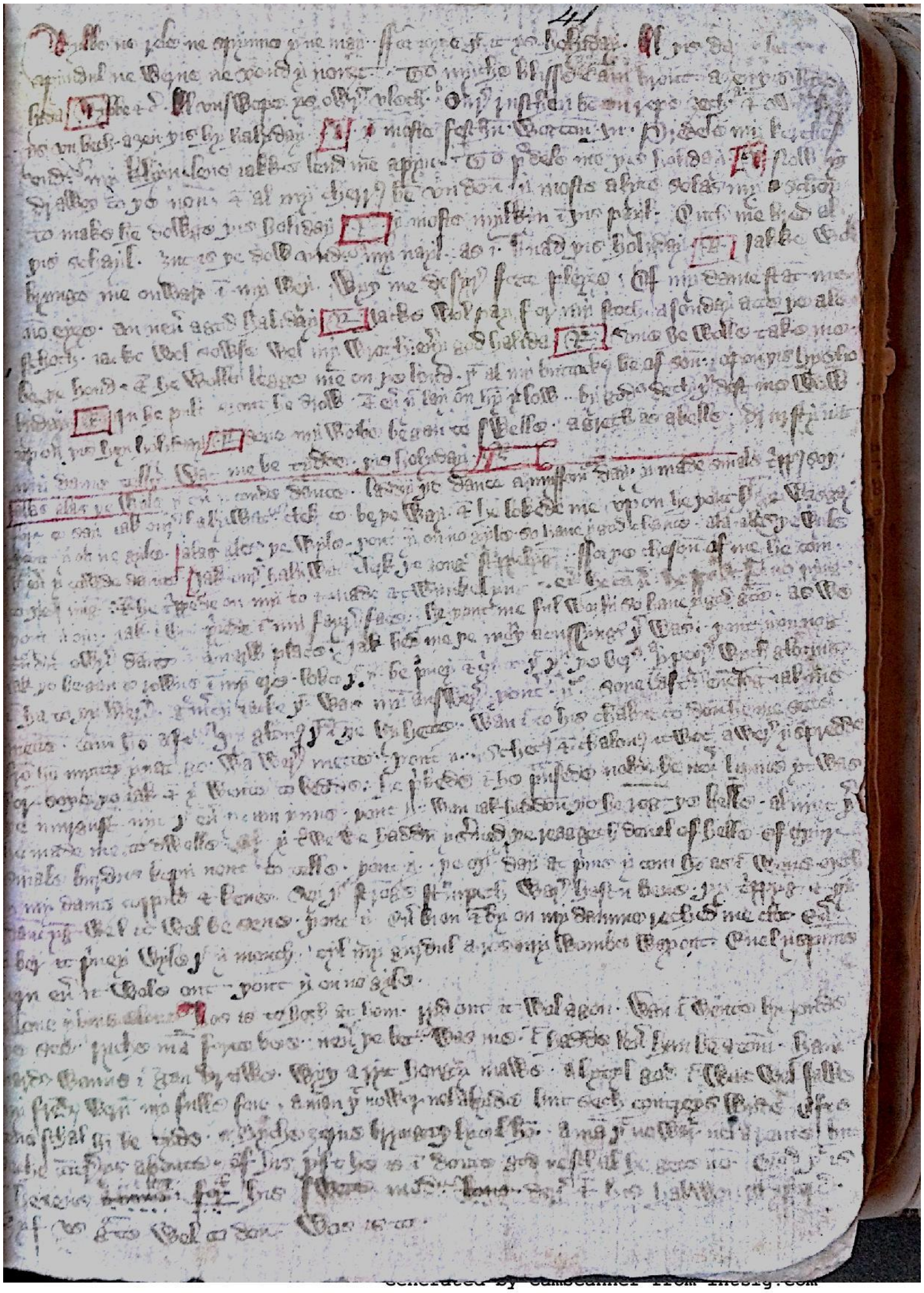
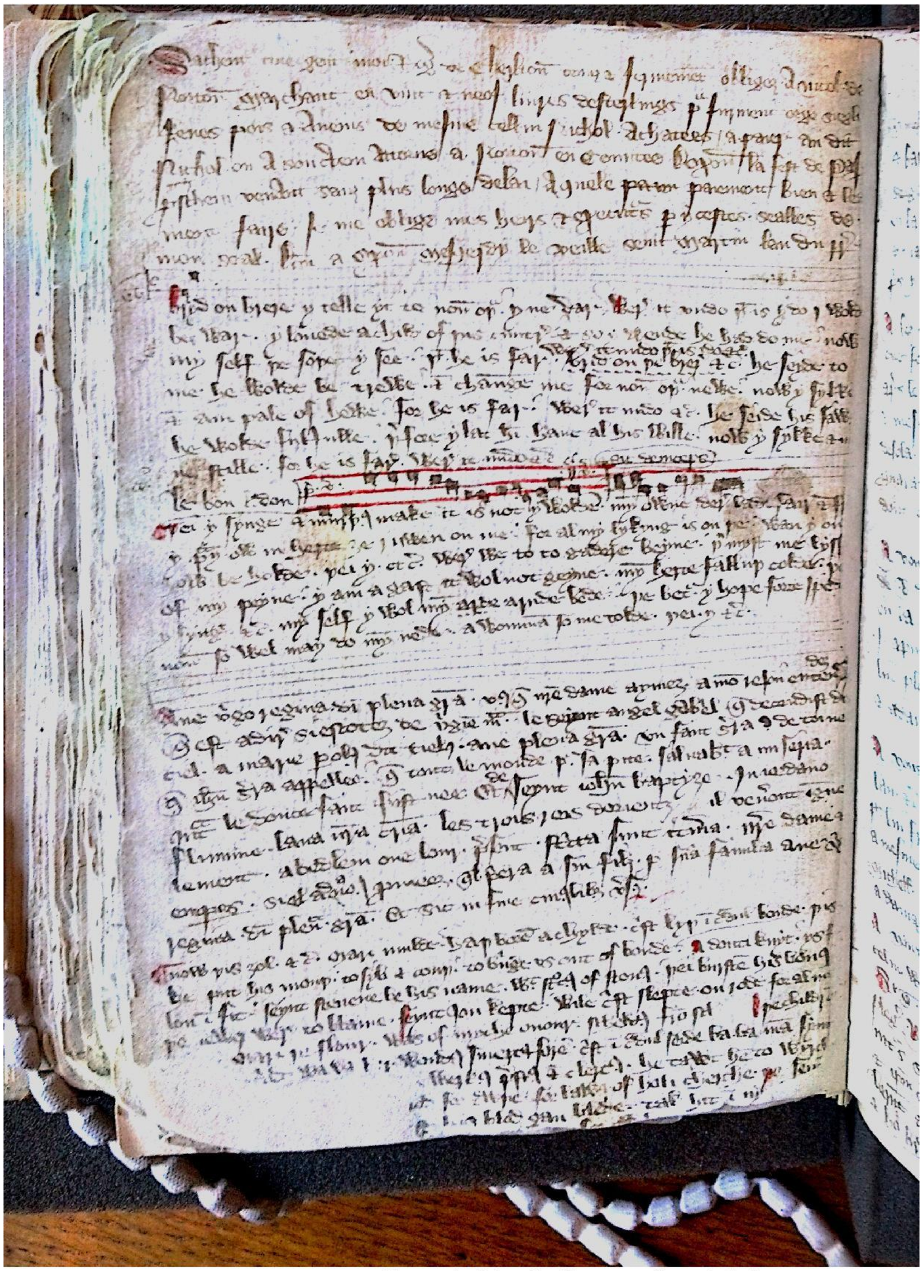


Fig. 4:6. G. & C., MS 383/603, p. 210.



Generated by CamScanner from intsig.com

Although written by the same scribe in the same book, it is immediately apparent that the two pages present very different circumstances of notation. Page 41 (Fig. 4:5) is densely written in continuous lines from the top left corner, with no first line indents or line spaces between the three songs. The scribe has not followed the convention of writing poems and songs in short lines aligned at the left of the page, starting with a burden and indicating rhyming lines with braces, as adopted by the two scribes of MS St John's S.54, discussed above. The consistency of the ink on page 41 would indicate that the songs were copied in one sitting and the lack of crossings out, insertions or corrections would imply that the scribe may have been working from an exemplar or draft copy or was notating from dictation. Page 41 was certainly not a transcription directly to this manuscript from a live performance or rendition. The fact that the scribe begins a new recto folio and that the three songs take up the whole page, finishing with a single line space at the bottom of the page, would perhaps indicate that the scribe had an exemplar for the whole page, not separate ones for each song, and was therefore able to estimate the spacing for a single page. However, the closeness of the lines and the lack of visual clues would also make it less suitable for use as a script for a live performance.[28] It is clear when looking at a page written in the conventional graphic tail-rhyme layout, as previously discussed, using bracketed rhyme schemes and indications for the repetition of the burden written to the right of the stanzas, that the visual cues are of vital importance for both memorising and performing. The scribe was either unaware of the conventional layout or felt that the need to conserve space on the page was a more important consideration. For a university student well trained in the *ars memorativa* the act of notation may have been initiated by a desire for an *aide-memoriser* (an aid to memorising) rather than a script for performance or an *aide-memoire*. Scribe A has begun page 41 with the burden 'Rybbe ne rele ne spynne yc ne may / For joyghe that it is holyday.' This is followed immediately, without a line break, by the first stanza 'All this day ic han sou[ght;] Spyndul ne werne ne wond Y nought; To myche blisse ic am brout Ayen this hyghe [ho]lyda[y.] Rybbe etc.' [29] The entire ten stanzas are densely written in this manner with the repetition of the burden indicated by a capital 'R' between each stanza.

The second carole begins with the burden 'Alas, alas the wyle, that ever I could dance' followed by the first of nine stanzas beginning, 'Ladd Y the daunce a myssomer day'. A fuller five-line version of the burden is written after the first stanza and thereafter only the bob or cue 'Thout Y' (referring to the final refrain line of the stanzas 'Thout yc on ne gyle') is written after each subsequent stanza.[30] This more complicated carole form is even less clear to the eye when scanning the page than the previous song. Scribe A has seen fit to add rubrication to ‘Rybbe ne rele’ but not to ‘Ladd Y the daunce’. The scribe has drawn a red line between the two caroles and highlighted the repetitions of the first carole burden by drawing a red square round the ‘R’ of ‘Rybbe’ each time it occurs. The ‘A’ of the first word of the first stanza is also written over in red. I propose that ‘Rybbe ne rele’ was treated in this manner in order to facilitate reading for oral rendition or singing subsequent to its initial notation. The third carole on this page is much shorter, comprising only five stanzas, and is prefaced by reference to another burden ‘Alone y lyve a lone’ followed by the burden ‘Hos is to hoth at hom, ryd out it wol agon’ the initial ‘H’ of which is coloured red. ‘Alone y lyve alone’ may have been a well-known burden, suggesting a possible melody, although no other examples of it are extant. The closest correspondence is a song entitled ‘Alone I leffe alone’ by Cooper, that can be found on folio 22r of the later collection, London, British Library Add. MS 31922 also known as the Henry VIII Manuscript.[31]

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[28] The use of rubrication will be discussed later in this chapter.

[29] Square brackets indicate scribal abbreviations in editorial agreement with Greene, *EEC*, p. 306. no 452. An edited version is published in Duncan, no. II, 209. p. 280 and as Appendix 2 in this document.

[30] The term 'bob' refers to a word or phrase that links the stanza to the refrain. It may be the beginning of the refrain, as in this example, or an additional link such as "with a" as in Old MacDonald had a farm.

Page 210 immediately presents a different appearance (Image 5). It is a verso page and the top seven lines are a continuation, from the previous recto, of a letter exemplar in French, probably written by Scribe A but in a neat version of fifteenth-century secretary hand with wider line spacings that allowed longer descender strokes. The scribe used double compartment ‘d’ and ‘g’ forms and the writing matches page 211 in neatness, line-spacing and ink colour. It seems then that the scribe returned at a later date to use the space remaining on the page. He drew a four-line stave across the page immediately below the seventh line with the obvious intention of filling in some musical notation. He wrote a C clef on the second line down and notated two black notes, a longa below followed by a brevis *d* above the *C* line.[32] The rest of the stave is left empty. Immediately below the longa the scribe begins, with a rubricated capital, the burden ‘Bryd on brere y telle yt to non*e* oþ*ur* y ne dar’ but then begins his three stanza carole with another burden with a rubricated capital ‘Wer*e* it undo þ*a*t is ydo I wold be war’. Possibly the scribe felt that the indication of the ‘Bryd on brere’ burden was enough to remind him of the tune and musical notation was not required. After the first stanza he wrote ‘bryd on brere etc’ but has then underlined it and written above, squeezing it in between the lines, his chosen burden ‘Wer*e* it undo þ*a*t is ydo’.

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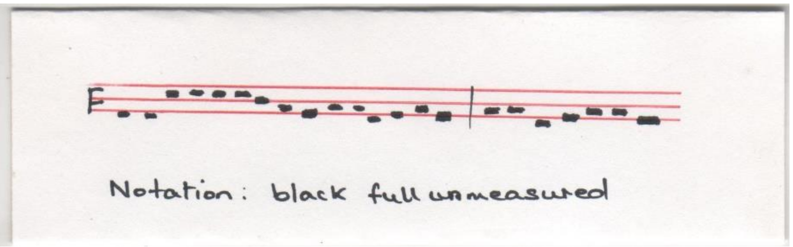
[31] Dr. Cooper (c.1474 – c.1535-40). Information available online at <http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_31922>.

[32] Guidonian notation convention uses upper case note names for the lowest octave of the gamut, lower case for the next octave and double lower case (aa, bb etc.) for the upper octave.

By the end of the second stanza there is no confusion and ‘Wer*e* it undo etc.’ is clearly written to indicate the correct burden.

The tune for the next carole is indicated by the burden ‘le bon li don’ written on the left and a roughly drawn stave completes the line. This time the scribe has completed a notation of the intended tune with unmeasured black notes (see Image 4:7). Presumably he felt unsure of his ability to remember the melody without this further *aide memoire*.

Fig. 4:7. Transcription of notation



Though it is quite roughly notated, the shape of the melody is clear, and the lines of the stave stand out from the page as they have been drawn over in red ink thus enabling the reader to be reminded by just a cursory glance. This carole also has three stanzas and follows the same standard carole form [burden] aaab [burden] cccb [burden] dddb where b is the burden rhyme. The burden is ‘Thei Y synge and murthus make, It is not Y wolde’.

Another four-line stave is ruled under this carole, but it was left empty and the third carole is written in English carole form but in French with a Latin burden ‘Ave virgo regina/ Dei plena gratia.’ It is neatly written in continuous lines, with extensive use of conventional scribal abbreviations typical of ‘school hand’. The final carole on page 210 begins with a burden that was presumably so familiar that it did not need to be quoted in full. The scribe just writes ‘Now this Yol, &c’ and the intact lines contain four four-line stanzas in which only the second and fourth lines rhyme.[33] Damage to the bottom left corner of the page has resulted in loss of text. However, the carole is clearly pious and in the Franciscan tradition of praise of the Saints, Mary and the Christ child. The four short caroles and staves on page 210 appear to have been notated in one sitting and perhaps the scribe intended to complete the musical notation later. In the event, however, and perhaps when adding the rubrication, he only completed the one stave. The presence of these music staves, two empty and one notated, provide evidence of the musical literacy of the student scribe but also perhaps are indicative of the relatively low priority awarded to specifying the melodies. This could have been either because they were very well known or because any suitable ones could be used.

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[33] See Chapter Three for a discussion of ‘cultural assumptions’ and knowledge of burden repertoire and Chapter Five for seasonal topicality of burdens.

The simplicity and brevity of the texts on page 210 contrasts with the sophisticated narrative and witty content of page 41. The first two caroles on page 41 consist of long and complex narratives, of ten and nine stanzas respectively. They would have been reliant on a clear delivery and reception if transmitted orally, in order to do justice to the wit, humour and suggestive ambiguities of phrases such as 'Leve Jakke lend me a pyne, To þredele me this holiday' although the opening of stanza nine of 'Rybbe ne rele' is hardly ambiguous, 'In he pult, and out he drow'. The conceit of both songs is that they are in the voice of a servant girl who gets seduced by Jak, a clerk or holy-water clerk, whilst at the holyday festivities. 'Rybbe ne rele' refers to 'A sonday atte the ale-scot' and *Alas alas* begins 'Ladd y the daunce a Myssomur Day'. Although the dance is referred to, the wordiness of these caroles might seem to make them less workable as dance-songs: some of the humour of the narrative might be lost through the movement of participants, especially if taking place in the open-air. However, gestural additions could have served to amplify and enhance the meaning. The register of the texts is goliardic, dwelling as it does on the build-up, seduction and act of intercourse.[34] The result, 'sone my wombe began to swell' and 'my wombe wax out' is given only scant mention in the final verse in both cases. Little attention is paid to the consequences, although *Alas, alas* ends with a moral comment, 'Evel y-spunne yern, ever it wole out' which I interpret as 'Badly spun yarn will always unravel'. The use of a clichéd proverb somewhat diminishes the moralising impact.[35] There is no indication of music and neither burden has correspondence in any other sources although, as already noted, the caroles show similarities in register and voice, to "A dere god qwat I am fayn" in MS St John's S 54 fol. 2v.

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[34] The Goliards were a 'class of educated jesters, buffoons, and authors of loose or satirical Latin verse, who flourished chiefly in the 12th and 13th c. in Germany, France, and England'. *OED* online at <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/79829?redirectedFrom=goliardic#eid2841550>. The adjective 'goliardic' describes the type of ribald and satirical songs for which they were renowned.

[35] Duncan, *Medieval English Lyrics,* no. II, 110, notes 'ill-spun yarn will always ravel'.

From the observations expressed above I would conclude that these two caroles were copied from exemplars or pre-composed drafts and were for use in Hall, or a similar communal indoor space, to be read, recited or sung as written, rather than providing an opportunity for improvisation or elaboration. There are no obvious opportunities for the addition of extra stanzas as the narrative is carefully paced. Perhaps ‘Rybbe ne rele’ was memorised and performed for the amusement of the scribe’s fellow students, hence the rubrication. They both make reference to a pastoral tradition of maidens leading caroles but are carefully worked out and unique to this manuscript, showing no signs of improvisation or repetition and they differ in register from the third carole on the same page.

The statutes of St John’s College, Cambridge provide a setting for a possible use of this student’s caroles, albeit more than fifty years later:

> Concerning not wasting time in hall after meals. [Students] shall go to their studies or to other places without any long interval of time [except] when a fire is built there to the honour of God or his glorious mother or another saint as a solace to all the residents. For at that time we do allow fellows, students, and servants of the college to spend time in the hall after the said meals and drinkings for the sake of refreshment in songs and other decent amusements, in a respectable way becoming to clerics, and also to practice among themselves, compose, read and tell poems and stories and other literary relaxations of this kind.[36]

Page 210 however, represents a slightly different situation. It was obviously the original intention to notate songs and, whether or not musical notation was eventually needed, there are enough indications to conclude that these much shorter caroles were always intended to be sung. The theme is traditional (lost love) and although one carole is in the female voice it has none of the bawdiness or *double-entendres* of the earlier caroles, stating only ‘He saide his saws he wolde fulfulle,

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[36] *Records of Early English Drama*, Cambridge, ed. by Alan H. Nelson, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), II, p. 1107, St. John’s College Statutes 1529-33, fol. 28.

Therefor Y let him have al his wille'. The cross-referencing to other burdens would imply that they are placed firmly within the context of a shared oral culture.

This small collection of caroles, written by a student in his notebook and preserved for hundreds of years, in spite of the modest status of the manuscript, illustrate different registers within an individual's repertoire, and a variety of possible performance contexts. The witty, bawdy, carefully constructed caroles on page 41 would seem to be most appropriate for an all-male collegiate hall environment in which the text could be clearly heard and the narrative followed, and enjoyed, through nine or ten stanzas. In contrast, the shorter caroles on page 210 suggest a more intimate situation, perhaps among a few friends, in which more personal feelings could be expressed.

4:3. London, British Library, MS Sloane 2593.

I shall now consider two more manuscripts that are undoubtedly single-scribe anthologies of predominantly religious content but with some inclusions that might seem surprising to the twenty-first-century reader. MS Sloane 2593 is a small, very portable book, 150mm by 110mm, written throughout in a neat, legible secretary hand and dated to the first half of the fifteenth century.[37] There is no notated music. Greene suggests that it originated from a clerical establishment in East Anglia, such as Bury St Edmunds.[38] Palti agrees that the dialect points in that direction but writes that the attribution cannot be so specific.[39] The scribe employs graphic tail-rhyme throughout and the burdens are always written as a single line at the beginning of each song, for example on folio 23v: 'Nowel el el el el el el el el el el el el el el el', or folio 26v 'Go bet peny go bet go for thou mat makyn bothe frynd and fo'. (see Fig. 4:8 overleaf). A line is drawn across the page between each song.

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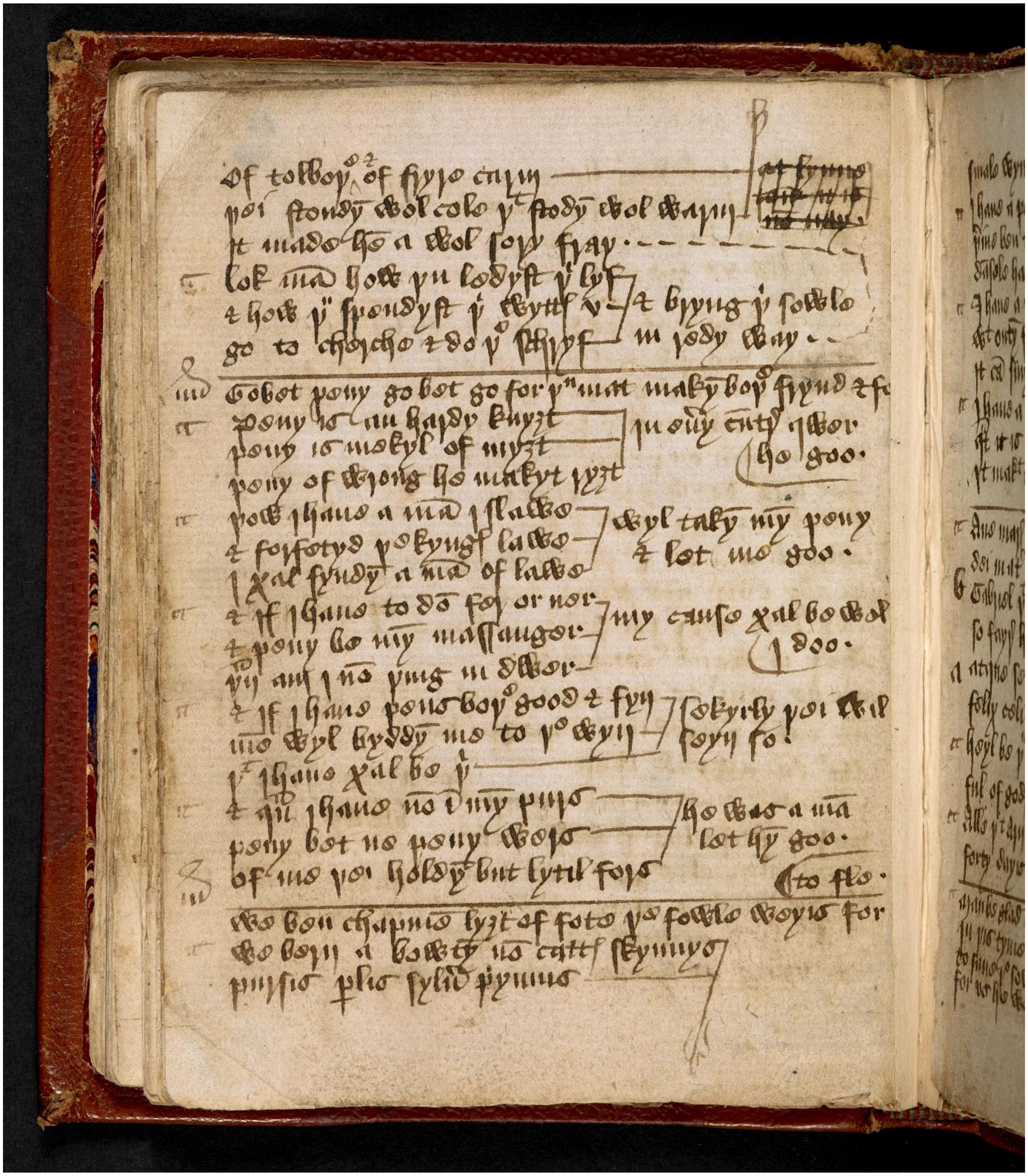
[37] Raymond Oliver wrongly asserts this to be a minstrel's book in *The English Lyric 1200-1500* (London: University of California Press, 1970), p. 13.

[38] Greene, *EEC*, p. 306.

[39] Palti, 'Synge we now', p. 73.

Fig. 4:8. MS Sloane 2593, fol. 26v.[40]



The scribe employs some rubrication on burdens and initial letters up to folio 6r and none thereafter; however, the hand is very consistent in all other respects throughout the manuscript.[41]

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[40] ©British Library Board MS Sloane 2593, fol. 26v. Permission for the image to be included was obtained from British Library Permissions Department 28/3/2018.

[41] Some of the devotional contents may be familiar to the modern reader in settings by twentieth-century composers such as Benjamin Britten and Gustave Holst. Benjamin Britten, *A Ceremony of Carols Op.28* (London: Boosey &

Due to the consistency of the writing and the continuity with which the scribe notates the songs, one after the other, with no appreciable alterations to line spacing or alignment, there is less to be learnt from the purely visual *mise-en-page* than in the previous two manuscripts. However, the ordering and resulting juxtapostioning of material does seem surprising to modern sensibilities. Of the seventy-four songs, of which fifty-five are in carole form, only twelve are secular and, of those, seven are in carole form.[42] As there are no obvious inconsistencies in the copying nor any occurrence of scribal errors, it would appear that all the songs were being represented as finished, composed items. It can be assumed, therefore, that the order of their inclusion was the result of scribal intention, although possibly influenced by the availability of exemplars. MS Sloane 2593 does show some organisation in that the first twenty-four items are caroles with quatrain stanzas and that is followed by a group of six songs in long couplets. I shall briefly discuss this group, despite the fact that they are not in carole form, as they demonstrate one of the surprising aspects of this manuscript.[43]

Fol. 10v begins with the Marian devotional song ‘I syng a of a mayden þat is makeles’ and is followed immediately by a rude riddle song ‘I have a gentil cook crowyt me day/ he doþ me rysen erly my matynis for to say’ and a drinking song ‘Omnes gentes plaudite’. There is no indication that these were added later as the ink and script is consistent throughout the group. The next page, fol. 11r, returns to devotional subject matter with ‘Adam lay ibowndyn’; this is followed by another riddle song, ‘I have a yong suster fer beyond þe se’. The writer of this anthology was not perturbed by this juxtapositioning of religious and profane material although it does follow the pattern, already noted, of writing, or at least beginning, the profane songs on verso pages. This applies to five of the seven secular caroles in this manuscript.

The first secular carole on fol. 6r is ‘Syng we alle & sey we þus gramersy myn owyn purs’ already referred to as being similar to MS St John’s S.54 fol. 3v, and although in a low register it contains little that could be considered truly profane in content. The next secular carole on fol. 9v ‘Man

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Hawkes, 1942) includes ‘I saw a fayr maydyn syttyng and synge’ (Sloane 2593 fol. 10v.) and ‘Adam lay ybounden’ (Sloane 2593 fol. 11r.). Gustave Holst, *Four Songs for Voice and Violin, Op.35* (London: J & W Chester LTD, 1920) includes ‘I sing of a maiden’ (Sloane 2593 f. 10v.). None of the secular lyrics have been set to music, to my knowledge.

[42] For a full analysis of content see Palti, ‘Synge we now’, pp. 69-76.

[43] This order is reflected in *The Oxford Book of Medieval Verse* ed. by Cecilia Sisam and Kenneth Sisam (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), nos. 188-193.

bewar of þin wowyng for weddyng is þe longe wo', warning against the dangers of marrying wrongly in haste, is more surprising as it follows on from a carole on the 'joyis fyve' of Mary. It seems ironic to a modern reader to include a misogynistic rant alongside a celebration of holy motherhood but perhaps the contemplation of the perfection of the Madonna serves to throw into sharp relief the faults of worldly maidens 'for þey be boþ fals and fekyl & vnder þe teyl þey ben ful tekyl', much in same way that the story of the virgin birth was routinely parodied in bawdy fabliau narratives.[44]

The secular carols are distributed quite unevenly throughout the manuscript with only two occurring in the first two-thirds ie. numbers eleven and twenty-two. However, five are written in the last twenty-five, appearing as numbers forty-nine, fifty-three and fifty-four, sixty-one and seventy-four. Theo Stemmler, writing about London BL MS Harley 2253, favours the word 'compiler' to describe the writer of a medieval anthology as it implies some degree of organization, but one that is subject to external considerations.[45] A modern editor would expect to have all the prospective material available before the final edit takes place and would group songs according to stated principles such as genre, author, form or topic. However, in the case of MS Harley 2253, and also MS Sloane 2953, the book may have taken months or even years to write and different exemplars would probably have become available during that period. Also, Stemmler points out that, in MS Harley 2253, verbal association seem to remind the compiler of a piece in another genre.[46] Returning to MS Sloane 2953, it appears that the compiler's high moral tone gradually lowered towards the end of the anthology with the inclusion of more secular items.

The manuscript also shows evidence of association of ideas governing inclusion of songs. The forty-ninth carole, 'How hey it is non les I dar not sayn quan che seyth pes' is in the voice of a hen-pecked husband warning young men against taking an older wife. Once again, it begins on the verso page and is sandwiched between two Marian devotional caroles, both of which occur in other manuscripts. The preceding carole ‘M & A & r & i syngyn I wyl a newe song’ is also in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Poet. E. 1, and the following ‘Synge we synge we Regina celi letare’ is also in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Arch Selden B. 26. A pattern is beginning to emerge that shows the scribe inserting *unica* caroles, from his own, or from orally-transmitted, repertoire, among devotional ones, some of which were in written circulation. It is less likely that all these secular caroles were copied from one or more manuscripts that have since been lost. The way these secular songs contrast in theme and register is analogous to the juxtaposition of sacred and profane material visible in some illuminations and marginalia as discussed by Emma Dillon.[47] The depiction of the mock funeral procession of Renart in the *bas-en-page* illustrations of Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, W 102, fols. 72v-81 at first glance appears to be a separate story but in fact it also echoes the text of Christ’s persecution. The faces of Christ’s tormentors are reflected in the faces of the ape family in the margins.[48] As Stemmler states:

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[44] 'Man bewar of þin wowyng for weddyng is þe long wo' BL Sloane 2953 fol. 9v. ll. 14-15. For example, a song which parodies the immaculate conception is 'De Puero Niveo' (the Snow Child) in *The Cambridge Songs*, Cambridge University Library, MS Gg. 5. 35, fol. 435v. For further study of the genre see Mary Jane Stearns Schenck, *The Fabliaux: Tales of Wit and Deception* (Amsterdam: John Benjamin, 1987).

[45] Theo Stemmler, 'Miscellany or Anthology' in *Studies in the Harley Manuscript: The Scribes, Contents, and Social Contexts of British Library MS Harley 2253*, ed. by Susanna Fein (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), pp. 111-21.

[46] Stemmler, 'Miscellany or Anthology', p. 119.

> ‘Christian theology and poetry contain many paradoxes and oxymora as do medieval love lyrics: Mary is mother *and* virgin; God is triune; love is sweet *and* bitter, etc. In medieval religious and erotic texts, the “juxtaposition of opposites” is endemic.’[49]

In the context of this culture of ‘the juxtaposition of opposites’ it is perhaps less surprising to find that a Franciscan friar’s song book contains material of very differing registers.

The carole, ‘Man be wys & arys & think on lyf’, begun on MS Sloane 2593 fol. 26r, ends at the top of fol. 26v (Image 6) with the stanza:

Lok man how þou ledyst þi lyf
& how þou spendyst þi wyttis v *five*
Go to charche & do þe schryf
& bryng þi sowle in redy way.

This somber, moralising tone perhaps reminded the compiler of two secular caroles on the futility of caring too much about money, ‘Go bet, peny, Go bet, go’ and the joys of a bachelor life, ‘We ben chapmen lyght of fote þe fowle wayis for to fle’.[50] It is worth quoting this second carole in full so as to leave no doubt about the contrast in register to which I refer above.

We ben chapmen light of fote, the foulë wayës for to fle. (burden)

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[47] Emma Dillon, *The Sense of Sound* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 278.
[48] Dillon, p. 278.
[49] Stemmler, ‘Miscellany or Anthology’ p. 118.
[50] Greene, *EEC,* nos 392 and 416.

We bern about no cattës skinnes,	*carry about*
Purses, perlës, sylver pynnes,	*pearls*
Smale wimpeles for ladies chinnes;	*fine head-dresses*
Damsele, bye some ware of me.	*buy some wares from me*
I have a poket for the nones,	*for the purpose*
Therin ben tweyne precious stones;	*two*
Damsele, hadde ye asseyed hem ones,	*if you once tried them*
Ye sholde the rather gon with me.	*you would the sooner go with me*
I have a jelyf of Godes sonde,	*jelly (slang for penis) by God's grace*
Withouten feet it can stonde,	*stand*
It can smite and hath non hand,	*no hand*
Red yourself what it may be.	*guess*
I have a powder for to selle,	
What it is can I not telle,	
It makëth maydenes wombes to swelle;	
Therof I have a quantité.[51]	

Although this carole is begun at the bottom of fol. 26v (see Image 6), it is continued from the third line on folio 27r. With no apparent irony this page is completed by a song in long couplets:

> 'Ave maris stella þe sterr' on þe see / dei mater alma blyssid mot xe be'.

The scribe of MS Sloane 2593 saved the bawdiest carole for the very last pages of the anthology (fols. 34r-34v) and it is on a topic already familiar from the other two manuscripts, that of the maid impregnated by Joly Jankyn the merry clerk.[52] It is a witty song in which Jankyn's seduction of Alison parodies the order of the mass, the very name of the victim being a pun on *eleison*. It begins with the burden: 'Kyrie so kyrie jankyn syngyt mere with aleyson' and the first, fairly innocent, stanza at the bottom of fol. 34r. It continues over the page with the 'offis' on Yole Day through the reading of the 'pistil', the *Sanctus*, *Agnus*. *Benedicamus Domino* to the inevitable conclusion '*Deo gratias* therto – alas I go with childe'. The preceding six songs are all appropriate for the Christmas season and it is evidence that even pious clerics were not averse to including witty and irreverent words in their seasonal celebrations, although the scribe wrote out the more circumspect ones first.[53]

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[51] Duncan, no. I, 128, p. 182.
[52] Duncan, no. I, 129, pp. 182-83.

4:4. Cambridge University Library MS Ee. 1. 12

This brings me to the final manuscript to be considered in this chapter, Cambridge University Library MS Ee. 1. 12, a parchment book containing one hundred and nineteen songs in carole form by the Franciscan friar, James Ryman, and dated c.1490 to 1500. It is the largest extant single anthology of songs and translations of hymns and apparently represents the author's intention to collect or compose suitable songs of religious content to be used for festive occasions. However, even this devout man could not resist the lure of empty parchment as a place to record a frivolous song. The collection officially ends on fol. 80r with a colophon stating Ryman's authorship, and yet fol. 80v is filled with a nonsense refrain song in rhyming couplets about 'The Fals fox' (For the full text see Appendix 4). Greene ignores this song as it does not begin with a statement of the burden, but I would argue that it is written with conventional graphic tail-rhyme brackets and the refrain, which has all the characteristics of a traditional burden, is notated to the right of the bracket of the second stanza. This disorganisation implies a less planned approach than in the main part of the manuscript, possibly indicating that the scribe was preoccupied with recording the stanzas and decided to include the burden or refrain 'With how fox how, with hey fox hey, / come no more into our croft to bere our gese awaye' only after he had begun. Although it could be argued that the theme of the 'fals fox' in the guise of Renard was one familiar in medieval moralising this song is eccentric, and indeed the stanza 'The goodman saide unto his wife/ the fals fox lyveth a mery lyfe' would imply the opposite. The eighteen couplets illustrate many of the techniques of improvisation and embellishment designated by Karen Bocklund-Lagopoulou as indicating popular and folksong antecedents.[54] There is, for instance, repetition and elaboration in stanzas 8 and 17:

> He toke a gose fast by the nek
> And the goose thoo began to quek. (stanza 8)

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[53] For a recent study of the *Feast of Fools* and other Christmas season irreverences see Max Harris, *Sacred Folly: A New History of the Feast of Fools*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2011).

[54] Bocklund-Lagopoulou, *I Have a Yong Suster*, p. 212.

> He tok a gose fast by the nek
> And made her to say Whoccumquek. (stanza 17)[55]

The neatness of the scribe's hand deteriorates towards the bottom of the page and the very last line is faint and in a different hand. I would surmise that it was not Ryman's original intention to include this song in his manuscript, but he had the blank page to hand when he wished to notate an amusing improvised or remembered communal song. It is possible that this manuscript shows that it was the practice at the end of the fifteenth century to participate in both sacred and secular carolling side by side and, though generally only the 'composed' sacred versions were notated, a repertoire of secular caroles were co-existant in the orally transmitted medium. These verses, written on the back page after the official end of the anthology, are more likely to offer an example of a transcription of a heard or remembered carole or a record of the activity of carolling in a communal setting as evidenced by the repetitions and modifications of the stanzas. Though there is an element of incremental repetition and narrative development, as the fox comes nearer to the geese in stanzas three to seven, the ordering of the stanzas is not strictly adhered to and could represent a compilation of couplets contributed by a community taking turns, for example, round a table or a circle. Perhaps Ryman was present at a communal sing-song, with his anthology and its empty back page to hand, when the amusing verses were sung, or he wrote the verses down just in case there was a future opportunity to share them on another occasion when his carol book was used.

Conclusion

My study of these manuscripts has shown that, in order to understand more about the activity of carolling, it is not enough to read the written carole record without reference to context. Though the number of recorded secular caroles may be small, frequently on verso pages making them less obvious to the casual glance, and vastly outweighed by the bulk of religious songs, it cannot be assumed that this reflects the proportion of songs held in communal oral repertoires. Furthermore, the motivation for writing caroles down can vary in different manuscripts, not only from scribe to scribe but even within a single scribe's work. One must also consider whether the manuscript represents an *aide-memoire* or a repertoire repository for an individual or a community rather than a script for performance, as is increasingly recognised to be the case with play manuscripts from the same period, for example.[56] Moreover, when incorporating the element of dance, using a written script would be impractical and memorisation or improvisation essential. The fact that the four manuscripts in general appear to fall into the *aide-memoire* category supports the impression that carolling was a participatory oral and aural experience. Even if clerical carolling was more sedentary, it still retained the participatory aspect and, as described in the carole quoted at the beginning of this chapter, carollers were expected to already know, or be prepared to learn, the communal repertoire. If pious Franciscans wished to influence the register of this repertoire, by composing and writing collections of carefully crafted religious songs, it is clear, from the manuscripts, that the bawdy or irreligious could not be completely banished; indeed, it appears that they existed hand in hand.

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[55] The carole is published in *The Oxford Book of Medieval English Verse* ed. by Cecilia Sisam and Kenneth Sisam (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

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[56] Pamela M. King, 'Manuscripts, Antiquarians, Editors and Critics', in *The Routledge Research Companion to Early Drama and Performance*, ed. by Pamela M. King (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 277-95.

Chapter Five

Carole texts as witnesses to carolling practice

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to study the burdens and subject matter of secular carole texts in order to gain a greater understanding of how and when they might have been used. I established, in previous chapters, that the manuscript record represents only a part of what was primarily an oral tradition. Here I argue that it is possible to deduce, from the written evidence, some themes and styles that might have been widespread in the oral or improvised repertoire, and how this illuminates our knowledge of carolling culture. Much work has been done by Kathleen Palti on the BL MS Sloane 2593 and its concordances, to which I am greatly indebted.[1] I take this as a departure point in my search for clues in these, and other manuscripts sources, about the relationship of the secular clerical caroles they contain and a wider, and largely unwritten, carolling culture.

The question arises as to how literally the contents of the songs are to be understood and to what extent any interpretation of themes and topics should be influenced by the cultural context of the caroles. Some scholars have read the poems very literally, but I am exploring a more nuanced reading.[2] I would propose, for example, when considering seasonal topics, that a song about Maytime might be sung all year round if it expresses universally appropriate sentiments but a carole addressing a specific feast, such as the Boar's Head Carol (discussed below), would only be appropriate for that day or for the mid-winter season. It seems possible that caroles intended only for specific seasons or occasions were more likely to be written down, lest they were forgotten over the intervening year. However, the publication by Richard Kele, entitled *Christmas Carolles newely Inprynted* includes some songs that are not specific to that season.[3] It is possible that this was a particularly fruitful season for the invention of entertaining and witty songs of all sorts, especially among clerical fraternities, for use in halls and households. The question that arises is whether the proliferation of manuscript evidence for this type of song, well suited for sedentary indoor delivery, was due to the clerical timetable and did not necessarily a reflect the balance of overall participation in carolling and dance-songs throughout the whole year.[4] The performance of a complex narrative text, even if it was memorised, would depend on a good acoustic for its coherent reception and would be less successful if the participants were moving around dancing. It is possible that much of the spring and summer repertoire, involving dancing outdoors, remained solely in the oral repertoire. The more specific caroles and those with complex narratives, therefore, may be better represented in the manuscript record than ones that could be sung all year round.

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[1] Kathleen Rose Palti, ‘‘Synge we now alle and sum’. This thesis is a study of London, BL Sloane MS 2593; Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Eng. Poet. e.1.; and Cambridge, St John's College, MS S 54. Palti provides background information on the manuscripts, and excellent transcriptions of the contents.

[2] Anne L. Klinck, ‘Woman's song in Medieval Western Europe’ in *Medieval Oral Literature* ed. by Karl Reichl (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), pp. 521-54 (p. 544). See Chapter 4, above, p.114. Klinck takes the carole *Rybbe ne Rele*, in Cambridge, Gonville and Caius MS 383/603, to be representative of a woman's voice even though it is written in a male student's notebook.

Sources:

In Chapter Four it was demonstrated that secular caroles can be found within otherwise predominantly religious manuscript collections and compilations. Editors have tended to isolate texts for inclusion in anthologies under categories such as subject matter or calendar order. Duncan, for example, groups together nine secular songs, from BL Sloane 2593, in the section headed ‘Miscellaneous Lyrics’ but isolates others, from the same manuscript, in sections of ‘Devotional Lyrics’, Moral and Penitential Lyrics’ and ‘Popular and Miscellaneous Lyrics’. Similar editorial practices have contributed to a fragmented perspective of the existence and nature of the record of secular caroles in the late Middle Ages. The present chapter will focus on the material evidence of that repertoire and will be loosely ordered under themes or topics. This is done for pragmatic reasons, in order to more easily follow patterns across the repertoire, but references to the manuscript contexts will be made throughout. It must be stressed, as has been made clear in the previous chapter, that the scribes of at least three collections made no such thematic distinctions. A few secular caroles are preserved in manuscript fragments, not in collections such as those described in the previous chapter and have been collated within collections of assorted material or remained as a single loose folio. In this chapter I will integrate such isolated examples and trace any links with the rest of the repertoire. In this way the texts will be further scrutinised for evidence of cultural practice with respect to orality and written transmission.

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[3] San Marino, California, Huntington Library, available online at <http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Hymns_and_Carols/Notes_On_Carols/keeles_christmas_carolles.htm>.

[4] See the reference to students staying in hall after supper, for entertainment, on feast days or when a fire was lit in Chapter Four, p. 115.

I take as my starting point the secular caroles already encountered in St. John's College, Cambridge MS S.54. and BL Sloane 2593. Thereafter several themes will be followed through other manuscript sources. These are as follows:

- Festive songs involving eating and drinking.
- Seasonal songs including references to the natural world (holly and ivy, May and midsummer etc.)
- Women and relationships
- Bawdy
- Political or satirical
- Nonsense

Some carole texts may be cross-referenced in more than one section; as has already been mentioned they are not categorised by topic in the manuscripts. Although the period under scrutiny is mainly the fifteenth century, because it was at that time that the English carole record proliferated, for the purposes of this chapter the booklet published by Richard Kele c.1550 will be included as it contains material concordant with examples from the previous century.[5]

5:1. The Boar's Head Carol.

It has been established in previous chapters that carolling was frequently an important part of the entertainment at feasts; Christmas was a time for great feasting. It is therefore an appropriate place to begin this study. On the first folio of St John's College, MS S.54 scribe A has written one stanza as follows:

> þe borys hed haue we in broȝht
> lok ȝe be mery in herte & thoȝht
> & he þat all þis worlde has wrowt

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[5] Richard Kele, *Christmas Carolles.*

Saue yow & eke me.   (IMEV 3312, Greene App. iii)

It is presumed by Greene that this is the final stanza of a song the rest of which, including the burden, was written on a missing first folio.[6] Similar caroles on the theme of the 'Borys hed' or boar's head are to be found in two other fifteenth-century sources; Bod. MS Eng. poet. E.1. f.29v and MS Porkington 10 f. 202r.[7] This so-called Christmas carol has become familiar to present day revellers and folk enthusiasts in the version from Queen's College, Oxford, published in the *Oxford Book of Carols*.[8] This version is a nineteenth century transcription, although it is claimed in the sleeve notes of the College choir's Christmas Album:

> *The Boar's Head Carol* is the work most strongly associated with the heritage of the College. It originated in the 14th century at Queen's and has been sung every year since at the Christmas time Boar's Head Feast in the College Hall.[9]

It is not possible to corroborate that it originated at Queen's College, but the following study of the development of this carole from a vernacular fifteenth-century feasting song to a macaronic 'religious carol' shows the later medieval influence of the written clerical tradition over the oral tradition.[10] Neither of the extant fifteenth-century versions have Latin burdens or macaronic stanzas. Both the burdens have first lines that could belong to any carole for any season or topic and function purely to attract the attention of the company by the repetition of a nonsense word. (See Table 5:1. on following page)

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[6] R. L. Greene, *EEC*, p. 321.

[7] Lord Harlech, Brogyntyn, Oswestry, MS Porkington 10. Greene, *EEC,* nos. 134 and 135.

[8] *The Oxford Book of Carols,* ed. by Percy Dearmer, R. Vaughan Williams and Martin Shaw (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), no. 19. from Dibden's *Typog. Antiq.,* 1812, ii. 252. I first came across this version at my own school, Nottinghill and Ealing High School, GPDST, where the tradition of the candle-lit Boar's Head procession, on the last day of the Autumn term, goes back at least to 1911. The school was only founded in 1866 so the tradition must have been introduced sometime between these dates. I took part in 1973 in my final year as was the custom. A papier maché boar's head is used.

[9] <http://www.avie-records.com/releases/carols-from-queens/> [accessed 11 Nov 2016].

[10] The Boar's Head Carol is sometimes popularly categorised as a religious one. <http://www2.cpdl.org/wiki/index.php/The_Boar's_Head_Carol_(Traditional)> [accessed 23 Oct 2016].

Table 5:1. The Boar’s Head Carol in the 15th century manuscript sources.

Bod. MS Eng. poet. E. 1. f.29v.[11]	MS Porkington 10 f. 202r. [12]
Po, po, po, po, Loue brane & so do mo. (*brawn*)	Hey, hey, hey, hey The borrys hede is armed gay.
1.At þe begynnyng of the mete Of a borys hed ȝe schal hete & in þe mustard ȝe xal wete & ȝe xal syngyn or ȝe gon (*and you shall sing before you go*)	1.The borys hede in hond I bryng, With garlond gay in porttoryng; I pray yow all with me to synge, With hay!
2.Wolcum be ȝe þat ben here & ȝe xal have ryth gud chere And also a ryth gud fare & ȝe xal syngyn or ȝe gon	2.Lordys, knyghtttus and skyers, Persons, prystis, and wycars, The borys hede ys the furst mes, With hay!
3.Welcum be ȝe euerychon For ȝe xal syngyn ryth anon Hey ȝow fast þat ȝe had don & ȝe xal syngyn or ȝe gon	3.The boris hede, as I yow say, He takis hi leyfe, and gothe his way, Son after the tweylffyt Day, With Hay!

These versions of the carole make no reference to any religious context. Instead, they celebrate good food and jovial company. In the Eng. poet. e.1. version, the voice of the first person is implied in the burden ‘[I] love brawn’ which, when sung by the whole company, would express a feeling of unity and shared tastes. The stanzas are in the voice of the host or master of ceremonies, exhorting the company to enjoy the food, and also to contribute to the entertainment with their singing. These elements recur in other caroles on the subject of drinking, as discussed later in this section. The first stanza mentions mustard as an accompaniment to wet the meat, as was traditional.[13] This detail also appears in some of the later versions. There is no indication of this carole being a dance-song, but neither is there any indication that it is a processional one accompanying the ceremonious entrance of the dish. This is implied more specifically by the phrase ‘in porttoryng’, in the first stanza of the other fifteenth-century extant version (see Table 5:1.) and also appears in some subsequent versions.

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[11] Transcription after Palti.

[12] Greene, *EEC*, no. 135.

[13] According to Nicole Crossley-Holland, mustard was more liquid than the condiment that we use today and was also made into a soup consisting of oil, wine and water, thickened with bread and flavoured with mustard. Nicole Crossly-Holland, *Living and Dining in Medieval Paris* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996), p. 142.

MS Porkington 10 contains five more stanzas, (not included in Table 5:1) describing more courses of a feast, which Greene suggests are additions for another song as they are not consistent in metre or in the number of lines, which vary between three and four.[14] The sixth stanza does however refer to 'The borys hede with mustard armed soo gay'. This version of the carole also starts with a repeated exclamation to attract the company's attention. It then refers directly to the dish to be served being carried in, 'in hond' […] 'in porttoryng', and it is therefore likely that it accompanied a procession or ceremonial entrance of some sort. This is made specific in the 1521 edition by Wynkyn de Worde (see Table 5:3) which is headed 'A caroll bringyng in the bores heed'.[15] All the subsequent versions share the reference to carrying or bringing the boar's head in the first stanza.

The Porkington version contains no religious references other than the seasonal one of the Twelfth Day signalling the end of the Christmas festive period. Instead the second stanza addresses the human presences by rank: lords, knights, squires, parsons, priests and vicars. This leaves us in no doubt about the expected, exclusively male participants in this particular feast and implies that it was not intended for use in a manorial or courtly context; nor does it suggest that it is sung 'by a minstrel […] to the company of revelers', as suggested by Raymond Oliver.[16] This verse replaces the more general, non-specific welcome expressed in the Eng. poet.e.1. version: 'Wolcum be ȝe þat ben here'. Without any further contemporary examples, it is not possible to say whether this adaptation was customary to suit particular groups of participants or whether it was unique to the compiler of that particular manuscript, but it does seem to indicate that it was customised to suit the community.

Three versions of the carole are extant from the first part of the sixteenth century and these will now be discussed as they show signs of an evolution, due to clerical influence and possibly mis-remembered orally transmitted material, that has contributed to the present assumption that the Boar's Head carol is a religious one.

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[14] Greene, *EEC*, p. 380.

[15] Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson 4to. 598 (10) in Greene, *EEC*, no. 132 B. This is a single leaf fragment of a book printed by Wynkyn de Worde. The recto contains 'A caroll of huntynge' (Greene no. 424). The verso contains the Boar's Head carol followed by a colophon stating 'Thus endeth the Christemasse carolles […]'

[16] Raymond Oliver, *Poems Without Names: the English Lyric 1200-1500* (London: University of California, 1970), p. 19.

The Ritson manuscript contains the carole in its most pious version (see Table 5:2).

Table 5:2: The Ritson manuscript, fol. 7v.

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,
Tydynges gode Y thyngke to telle.
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,
Tydynges gode Y thyngke to telle

1.

The borys hede that we bryng here
Betokeneth a Prince withowte pere
Ys born this day to bye vs dere;
Nowell, nowelle.

2.
A bore ys a souerayn bests
And acceptable in euery feste;
So mote thys Lord be to moste and leste;
Nowell,

3.
This borys hede we bryng with song
In worchyp of hym that thus sprang
Of a virgine to redresse all wrong;
Nowell.

Here the boar's head represents a 'Prince withowte pere' and is brought 'in worship of him that thus sprung of a virgine to redresse all wrong'.[17] This carole is headed '*In die nativitatis'* and is provided with music by Richard Smert. The manuscript, containing many songs all with music, is thought to have been of Franciscan origin but intended for lay use, and it dates from the first quarter of the sixteenth century.[18] It is the only pre-modern example of the translation of this carole into a self-consciously contrived Christian idiom and as such seems to represent a branch of its development that was separate from the secular one.

Returning to the subject of that secular carole, the following table places the two sixteenth-century versions alongside the nineteenth-century one.

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[17] London, British Library, MS Add. 5665, fol.7v.

[18] Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music (DIAMM) <http://www.diamm.ac.uk/jsp/Descriptions?op=SOURCE&sourceKey=796> [accessed 25 Oct 2016].

Table 5:3 The Boar's Head Carol in 16th and 19th century versions.

Wynkyn de Worde (1521)	Oxford, Balliol, 354 *Richard Hill*.	Oxford, Queens College, (1812)[19]
Caput apri differo, Reddens laudes Domino.	Caput apri refero, Resonens laudes Domino.	Caput apri defero, Reddens laudes Domino.
1. The bores heed in hande bring I, With garlans gay and rosemary; I pray you all, synge merely, Qui estis in conuiuio.	1. The boris hed in hondes I brynge, With garlondes gay and byrdes syngynge; I pray you all, helpe me to synge Qui estis in conviuio.	1. The Boar's head in hand bear I, Bedeck'd with bays and rosemary. And I pray you, masters, be merry, Quot estis in convivio.
2. The bores heed, I understande, Is the chefe seruyce in this lande; Loke, whereeuer it be fande, Seruite cum cantico.	2. The boris hede, I understond, Ys cheff seruyce in all this londe; Whersoever it may be fonde, Seruitur cum sinapio	2. The Boar's head, as I understand, Is the rarest dish in all the land, Which thus bedeck'd with a gay garland. Let us servire cantico.
3. Be gladde, lordes, bothe more and lasse, For this hath ordeyned our stewarde To chere you all this Christmasse, The bores heed with mustarde.	3. The boris hede, I dare well say, Anon after the Twelfth Day He taketh his leve and goth away, Exiuit tunc de patria.	3. Our steward hath provided this, In honour of the King of Bliss, Which on this day to be served is, In Reginensi Atrio.

The version printed by Wynkyn de Worde has already been mentioned in the context of the processional use of the carole. The most similar version is in Oxford, Balliol College, MS 354, fol. 251r (also known as The Commonplace Book of Richard Hill). This book was compiled during the first half of the sixteenth century and contains over seventy caroles, written in one hand and thought to be that of Richard Hill himself.[20] These two versions, although very similar, contain in their differences elements of possible mis-hearings or mis-rememberings. They both begin with a burden in Latin 'Caput apri refero Resonens laudes Domino' in Richard Hill's version, rendered as 'Caput apri differo, Reddens laudes Domino' in Wynkyn de Worde's. Although the general sense is the same, (I bring the boar's head, sing praises to the Lord) the use of a different but similar sounding verb could indicate that these are written versions of an oral transmission, possibly misheard or misremembered, or an example of flexible practice, in which the burden has been altered through a creative decision.[21] Within a clerical peer group fluent in Latin, the slight adjustments to nuance the meaning would be plausible. Both words can mean ‘to carry’ or ‘to give’ but *refero* has a meaning of ‘to bring back’ whereas *differo* can mean ‘to disperse’ which could be more suitable for a ceremonial entrance in a formal setting.[22] The Queen’s College, Oxford (1812) version, included here as it is familiar to modern readers, settled on *defero,* an aural combination of both, that implies an offering being carried, following the solemn processional idea.

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[19] *The Oxford Book of Carols*, ed. by Percy Dearmer, Martin Shaw and R. V. Williams (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1928), p. 37, taken from Dibden's *Typog. Antiq.*, 1812, ii. 252.

[20] Greene, *EEC*, p. 338.

The first stanza also shows signs of the effect of oral tricks, or scribal alteration, in the second line. Although the sense is similar to the Porkington version, the two sixteenth-century versions have a different tail rhyme which necessitates an adjustment in word order and content, ‘byrdes syngyng’ in the place of ‘rosemary’. Importantly, the Queen’s College version shares the tail rhyme of Wynkyn de Worde but instead of ‘garlans gay’ has ‘bedecked with bays’. Even though this is not a necessary alteration for the tail rhyme, it suggests a memory slip or ‘flexible practice’ intervention, replacing a visual decoration with a rhyming culinary herb more appropriate for the context.

The second stanza has the fewest differences between the two sixteenth-century versions, apart from the fourth line, although it is completely different in content from the ‘welcome’ stanza of the previous versions. The boar’s head is praised as the chief service in all the land wherever it may be found, (my paraphrase). When it comes to the macaronic fourth line another discrepancy can be found. In Richard Hill’s book, the mustard from Eng. poet. E. 1 puts in a reappearance, translated into Latin ‘*Servitur cum sinapio’* (served with mustard) but Wynkyn de Word has ‘*servite cum cantico’* (served with singing) and that idea is retained in the Oxford 1812 version ‘Let us

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[21] For a discussion of flexible practice in the context of Hispanic Chant see Emma Hornby and Rebecca Maloy, ‘Fixity, Flexibility, and Compositional Process in Old Hispanic Chant’, *Music and Letters,* 97 (2016), 547-74.

[22] *Collins Latin Dictionary* (Glasgow: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006) *defero* to bring down, bring, carry; *differo* to disperse; *refero* to bring back, carry back.

servire cantico', thus making a more dignified ending perhaps considered more suitable for performance by an Oxford college choir.

All the versions have the three-stanza form in common, but the final stanza varies most in content. Richard Hill's picks up the allusion to the ending of the Christmas season on the Twelfth Day, already found in MS Porkington 10. Wynkyn de Worde's version has a more general leave-taking, addressed to the company, and with a last-minute reference to the mustard, this time in the vernacular. Similar forms of address, calling the attention of the general company, are, as Boffey asserts, 'fossilised reminders of oral circulation present in many popular tales'.[23] The Oxford 1812 version retains most of this, adjusted to be performed on Christmas Eve, though the mustard is replaced with a site-specific macaronic final line, 'In Reginensi atrio' (in the Queen's hall), placing the carole firmly in Queen's College.

What makes the Boar's Head carole worthy of such detailed study in this chapter is that it is one of the few examples of a secular carole that appears in the manuscript or printed record in every century since the fifteenth, due to its association with university clerics.[24] It is therefore possible to trace its permutations and nuances through its adaptation for different places, people, circumstances and times. There is no clear developmental chronology traceable through the different versions, but it is possible to conclude that certain themes were popularly associated with the feast: the boar's head being the best or rarest dish; the seasonal green or herbal decoration; the exhortation to be merry; the mustard accompaniment. Many other versions of the carole may have existed but are not represented in the extant record. It is likely that the extant versions, with their clerical and collegiate associations, represent only a carole appropriate to their particular environments. Indeed, the annual Boar's Head procession of the Worshipful Company of Butchers, a tradition that, according to the Guild's records, began in 1343 and in which the Lord Mayor of London is presented with a head, is now accompanied by drummers only.[25] It now involves a procession through the streets rather than a feast in a hall, and I have not been able to ascertain whether it was ever accompanied by singing.[26] The existence of several versions of the same carole, although spread over several centuries, belies the claim of Queen's College that it 'originated' there. Instead, the evidence illustrates how a carole, held and transmitted by a common oral tradition, could be adopted and adapted for use in different contexts.

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[23] Julia Boffey, 'Popular Verse Tales' in *A Companion to Fifteenth Century English Poetry*, ed. by Julia Boffey and A.S.G. Edwards (Woodbridge: Brewer, 2013), pp.213-24 (p. 216).

[24] According to the footnote in the *The Oxford Book of Carols*, p. 37 a version from St John's College, Cambridge was recorded in 1607. Greene provides the information that songs from London, British Library, MS Add. 5665 were printed by Joseph Ritson, *Ancient Songs* (London, 1790, 1829, 1877), Greene, *EEC*, p. 331.

[25]< http://www.london-walking-tours.co.uk/boars-head-ceremony.htm> [accessed 13 Nov 2016].

5:2. Other festive caroles involving eating and drinking.

The exhortation to 'make merry' can be found in several burdens associated with Yuletide festivities. For example, a carole found in a Welsh manuscript begins: 'Hay, ay, hay, ay, Make we mere as we may', which is reminiscent of the Porkington Boar's Head burden mentioned above.[27] The song announces the coming of the messenger, Sir Nu Yere, who bids everyone to 'make as mere as we may'. The third and fourth stanzas give an insight into the process of the entertainment.

Therefore every mon that ys here
Synge a caroll on hys manere;
Yf he con non we shall hym lere,
So that we be mery allway.
Hay, ay etc.

Whosoever makes hevy chere,
Were he never to me dere;
In a dyche I wolde he were,
To dry his clothes tyll hyt were day.
Hay, ay, etc. (Duncan, II, 125.)

From this we can deduce that everyone was expected to lead a carole of their own, or at least learn and join in with everyone else. If not, the singer of this carole would be happy to throw them in a ditch for the night. This song refers twice to itself as a *caroll,* in the third stanza cited above and also again in the final stanza:

Mende the fyre and make gud chere!
Fyll the cuppe, Ser Botelere! (*Sir Butler*)
Let every mon drynke to his fere! (*to his companion*)
Thys endes my caroll with care away.
Hay, ay, etc.

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[26] This information was given in a private email from the clerk, who informed me that the archives are in storage at present, because of building works.

[27] Greene, *EEC,* no. 10, London, British Library, MS Add. 14997, fol. 44v. Carole is dated in the manuscript 4 October 1500. Greene, *EEC,* p. 9.

In view of the lack of categorisation of songs as ‘caroles’ in this period, as Stevens says, ‘there is no collection of poems or songs headed *caroles*’, this is valuable confirmation of the appelation of the genre in a secular context.[28]

A drinking song for any occasion, with the burden ‘Bryng us in good ale, and bryng us in good ale; Fore owr blyssyd Lady sak, bryng us in good ale’ can be found in MS Eng.poet.e.1. fol. 41v.[29] A copy also exists in a collection of papers, among which a different hand has copied this and another Epiphany carole contained in the Bodleian manuscript, with some variations. That burden is ‘Bryng us home good ale, ser, bryng us home good ale, And for owre dere Lady love, brynge us home good ale’.[30]

Table 5:4. Two versions of Bring us in good ale.

Bod. MS Eng. poet.e.1. fol. 41v. (Greene, 422A)	British Library, MS Harley 541, fol. 214 v. (Greene, 422B)
Bryng vs in good ale, and bryng vs in good ale; Fore owr blyssyd Lady sak, bryng vs in good ale.	Brynge vs home good ale, ser; brynge vs home good ale, And for owre dere Lady love, brynge vs home good ale.
(Stanza 2) Brynge us in no befe, for ther is many bonys, But bryng us in good ale, for that goth downe at onys. And bryng us in good ale.	(Stanza 1.) Brynge home no beff, ser, for that ys full of bonys, But brynge home good ale enowgh, for I love wyle that, But [brynge us home good ale.]

The variant words of ‘bring us home’, and ‘Lady love’ in the place of the reference to ‘owr blessed Lady’ suggest that these were not scribal copying errors but alternative versions that were in oral circulation. This hypothesis is supported by a comparison of the stanzas. The sense of the song is that each of the stanzas satirically suggests a delicious dish of meat, or other protein, that the singers would refuse, even if it were to be offered, because they only want ale. It is representative of the type of song in which numerous verses can be added according to the inventiveness of the solo singer, described by Boklund-Lagopoulou as 'open to improvised continuation'.[31] The Eng. poet. e. 1. version has eight stanzas on the topics of brown bread, beef, bacon, mutton, eggs, butter, puddings and capon. The Harley version has only six verses in the following order: beef, bread, mutton, veal, cider. Both songs follow the same formula for the stanzas, that of naming a delicacy, perhaps somewhat wistfully, and then stressing its imaginary, or exaggerated, drawbacks. Beef, for example, contains too many bones, and butter too many hairs. Some topics occur in both versions with a concordance of associations; beef as shown above, also fat pork or bacon, but the stanzas are not in the same order. As there is no narrative element, this is immaterial, but it shows that some stanzas were in circulation, either orally or in written exemplars, while others were perhaps more individually composed. MS Harley 541 contains one other carole in the same hand; it is a religious one on the subject of the Epiphany and has concordances in Sloane 2593 and St John's S. 54 but not in Eng. poet. e. 1. It would seem, therefore, that the scribes had access to exemplars from a similar clerical group. It is impossible to confirm whether this drinking song was written down from oral transmission with additional unica stanzas, or whether many versions were in circulation of which only two are extant.

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[28] Stevens, *Words and Music*, p. 163. The only other contemporary reference is in the sacred caroles of Audelay. See Chapter 4, p. 96.
[29] Greene, *EEC*, no. 422 A.
[30] Greene, *EEC*, no. 422 B.

It is a short step from this satirical, jovial drinking song to one that expresses the potentially disastrous results of excessive consumption as shown in 'Doll thi ale, doll; doll thi ale, dole; Ale mak many a mane to have a doty poll.'[32] The Eng. Poet. E. 1. manuscript, which has already been referred to above, was written by two scribes during the last part of the fifteenth century, working from several collections of exemplar texts. Many of the caroles have concordances in other manuscripts and the comparison of this manuscript with MS Sloane 2593 and MS St John's, S.54 is the subject of Palti's dissertation. This particular carole is, however, unique and its repetitive style marks it out as being in a lower textual register than the religious songs that surround it.[33] Greene claims that its 'vigorous disapproval' of ale 'marks the piece as the work of a moralising religious.'[34] I conversely would suggest that the simplicity and repetitiveness of its form points to a more prosaic origin, that of a self-mocking drinking song within the oral tradition, such as the folk song 'Ye Mar'ners All' or 'A Jug of this', versions of which were collected in Dorset and Somerset at the beginning of the twentieth century.[35]

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[31] Similar examples can be found in Richard Hill's book including 'How, butler, how! Bevis a towt!' This is described by Bocklund–Lagopoulou as follows, 'The song is structured as a series of loosely connected stanzas, each one providing a new and different excuse for calling for more drink, and thus open to imrovised continuation.' Karin Bocklund-Lagopoulou, *I Have a Yong Suster*, p. 212.

[32] Greene, *EEC,* no. 423, Oxford, Bod. MS Eng. poet. E.1. fol. 52 r.

[33] The preceeding carole is 'Nowell nowell this is the salutation of the aungell gabriell' also found in Richard Hill's book, and the following is 'Blyssid be that lady bryght, that bare a chyld of great myght.' Palti, Vol 2, pp 126-7.

There are five stanzas which are ordered to describe the downward spiral of the life of a drunkard, from falling asleep by the fire to hanging on the gallows. Each line begins 'Ale mak many a mane' picked up from the second line of the burden. To illustrate, stanzas one, three and six are included in Table 5, in Palti's transcription.

Table 5:5. Oxford Bod. MS Eng. poet.e.1., fol. 52r.

	Doll þi ale doll doll þi ale dole	(*warm, mull the ale)*
	Ale mak many a mane to haue a doty poll	(*stupid head)*
1.	Ale mak many a mane to styk at a brere	*(to get stuck in a briar*)
	Ale mak many a mane to ly in þe myere	(*to lie in the mire*)
	& ale mak many a mane to slep by þe fyere	
	With doll	
3.	Ale mak many a mane to draw hys knyfe	
	Ale mak many a mane to mak gret stryfe	
	& ale mak many a mane to bet hys wyfe	
	With dole	
6.	Ale mak many a mane to ryne ouer þe fallows	(*ploughed land*)
	Ale mak many a mane to swere by god & alhalows	
	& ale mak many a mane to hang upon the galows	
	With dol	

The formulaic repetitive nature of each line, the simple rhyme scheme and the 'bob' word 'with', to signal the return of the burden, are all signs that this was a communal, semi-improvised song using some familiar proverbial sayings and rhyming words. Chaucer employs the rhymes of 'fallows' and gallows' in a proverb told by the Wife of Bath in the prologue to her tale.[36] A phrase in modern usage that might have similar resonance might be ‘The rain in Spain falls mainly on the’ which could be completed, by most native English speakers, with the word ‘plain’. The pairing of ‘stryfe’ and ‘wyfe’ also appears in another carole in the same manuscript, ‘Hey, howe! Sely men, God helpe yowe’.[37] It would be possible, in a convivial festive setting among colleagues or friends, to insert other mishaps that might befall someone on their drunken way home, perhaps based on personal experience.

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[34] Greene, *EEC*, p. 438.

[35] *The Penguin Book of English Folk Songs* ed. by Ralph Vaughan Williams and A. L. Lloyd (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1959), p. 103.

[36] Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, l. 656 and l. 658.

These few surviving drinking and feasting songs may provide some clues to a whole culture of caroles with burdens that contain a request of some sort. This is reminiscent of the squire’s carolling request for a horse in *The History of William Marshall* studied in Chapter Two.[38] In late fifteenth–century clerical or collegiate culture the petition is altogether more prosaic and the tone of the stanzas satirical or amusing, being adapted to suit the company and the occasion.

5:3. Caroles about the natural world: Holly and Ivy.

The pre-Christian practice of decorating places with seasonal foliage was encouraged by the church in England, although the pagan meaning attributed to the various plants was typically either ignored or subverted. The Venerable Bede includes a letter from Pope Gregory to Abbot Melius containing advice to be given to Augustine, on the subject of utilising the pagan customs and celebrations, in 601 CE:

> ‘we wish you to inform him that we have been giving careful thought to the affairs of the English and have come to the conclusion that the temples of the idols among the people should on no account be destroyed. The idols are to be destroyed, but the temples are to be aspersed with holy water, altars set up in them, and relics deposited there. […] In this way, we hope that the people seeing that their temples are not destroyed, may abandon their error and, flocking more readily to their accustomed resorts, may come to know and adore the true God. And since they have a custom of sacrificing many oxen to demons, let some other solemnity be substituted in its place, such as a day of Dedication or the Festivals of the holy martyrs whose relics are enshrined

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[37] Greene, *EEC*, no. 409. Oxford Bod. MS Eng. poet. E. 1. fol. 34v. will be discussed in a later section as it deals with the problems of marriage.
[38] Chapter Two, p. 43.

> there. On such occasions they might well construct shelters of boughs for themselves around the churches that were once temples, and celebrate the solemnity with devout feasting.'[39]

According to Hutton, the parish accounts of the late Middle Ages show that urban churches were purchasing holly and ivy for their Christmas decorations.[40] Rural parishes presumably followed the same practice but did not need to pay for it. Hutton asserts that mistletoe is not mentioned as being a part of medieval or Tudor Christmas customs, though Phythian-Adams includes it in his list of seasonal vegetation that was ritually imported into 'settlements' in the period between Christmas and midsummer.[41] He lists other seasons and associated vegetation such as: willow for Palm Sunday; hawthorn for May Day; red rose at Corpus Christi and midsummer birch.

There are only four extant caroles from fifteenth-century manuscripts that employ the symbolism of the holly and ivy winter decorations. This makes it problematic to assert that it was a common theme for winter carolling, though the examples do show some characteristics of oral repertoire and also some concordances with the examples that re-emerged in oral circulation in the nineteenth century.[42] Greene, in his introduction, sets out the meaning of this symbolism, quoting several folk traditions recorded in the nineteenth century.[43] The upright, pricking holly represents the male, and the binding, clinging ivy, the female. One of the four caroles sets the holly and ivy against one another in a battle of the sexes.[44] Eng. poet. E. 1. includes separate caroles in praise of each tree, and St John's MS S. 54. '*Nowell, nowell, ell, ell! I pray yow, lysten qwat I yow tell'* employs the word as an acrostic to represent a religious theme.[45] The first letter, 'I' represents also the name of Jesus, written as Iesus, the 'V' the Virgin mother, and the 'E' is 'lykyn to Emanuell'.

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[39] Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People,* Book I: 30. (London: Penguin Books, 1955, revised 1990), p. 92.

[40] Ronald Hutton, *The Stations of the Sun: a history of the ritual year in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 34.

[41] Charles Phythian-Adams, 'Ritual Constructions of Society' in *A Social History of England 1200 to 1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 369-382 (p. 380).

[42] Cecil Sharpe, *English Folk Carols* (London: Novello, 1911), p. 17.

[43] Greene, *EEC*, pp. xcix-ci.

[44] Ritson, BL Harley, MS 5396, fol. 275v. There is a more developed version of this theme, with some direct concordances, in Richard Hill's book. Oxford, Balliol, MS 354, fol. 251r.

[45] The association of the feminine Ivy with Mary is an idea which recurs in the two Christmas carols sung today, in which Ivy has been completely replaced. In 'The Holly and the Ivy, when they are both full grown, of all the trees that are in the wood, the Holly bears the crown' Ivy is not mentioned again after the first verse. Her place is taken in lines three and four of each verse by a reference to Mary. This

I shall begin this section by looking at the simplest, secular carole on the topic, reproduced in Table 5:6.

Table 5:6: Oxford, Bodleian Library. MS Eng. poet. e. 1. fol. 53v.

Alleluia, alleluia,
Alleluia, now syng we.

Her commys Holly, that is so gent;
To pleasse all men is his intent.
Alleluia.

But, lord and lady off this hall,
Whosoever ageynst Holly call-
Alleluia.

Whosoever ageynst Holly do crye,
In a lepe shall he hang full hye. (*In a basket*)
Alleluia.

Whosoever ageynst Holly do syng,
He maye wepe and handys wryng.
Alleluia.[46]

This carole bears many hallmarks of an oral tradition as already discussed earlier in this chapter. The burden exhorts the company, with a generic communal command 'Alleluia, now synge we'. The first stanza, beginning 'Her commys Holly', could suggest that this is part of a New Year welcoming song in which, traditionally, it was considered good luck for a man, symbolised by the holly tree, to be the first to cross the threshold.[47] There is also an example of incremental repetition in the introduction of the line in the second stanza, 'Whosoever ageynst Holly' which is then repeated and expanded in the following two stanzas. This pattern could be extended by improvisation in some contexts, adding further misfortunes that might befall any

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also applies to the Sans Day carol from Cornwall. 'The Holly and the Ivy', in *English Folk-Carols,* collected and ed. by Cecil Sharp (London: Novello, 1911), no. 6. 'The Sans Day Carol', in *The Oxford Book of Carols,* ed. by Percy Dearmer, Martin Shaw and Ralph Vaughan Williams (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924), no. 35.

[46] Greene, *EEC,* no. 147.

[47] Hutton, *The Stations of the Sun, p.* 50.

detractors of Holly’s virtues. It should be noted that this carole does not set up the notion of Holly’s superiority or strength, only his benevolence. The punishment suggested in the third stanza refers to the practice of humiliating wrongdoers, according to Greene, by parading them, hanging in a basket. This was a variation of the ‘Stang ride’ in which the miscreant was forced to ride backwards on a horse or on a pole carried on men’s shoulders.[48] The humiliation was meted out to cuckolded husbands or to those who were judged by the community to be under their wife’s thumb and were therefore losing face in the proverbial battle of the sexes.

The next carole in MS Eng. poet. e.1. is in praise of the Ivy (see Table 5:7). The allegorical identification of the female tree with the Virgin Mary is implied by the burden ‘Ivy, chefe off treis it is, *Veni, coronaberis.*’ The phrase *‘veni coronaberis’* is taken from the Vulgate Bible Song of Songs 4:8 ‘veni de Libano sponsa veni de Libano veni coronaberis de capite Amana de vertice Sanir et Hermon de cubilibus leonum de montibus pardorum’, (Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon; look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions dens, from the mountains of the leopards).[49] This phrase also occurs in a carole burden by James Ryman, *Rarissima in deliciis, Iam veni coronaberis* in which Christ addresses his mother in the language of the Song of Songs. The translation of the highly sexualised imagery of lovers into the love of Christ for his bride, the church, or his virgin mother was, as Greene says, ‘in accordance with frequent medieval practice’.[50] ‘Veni, coronaberis’ also forms the refrain of another song entitled ‘A song of great sweetness from Christ to his daintiest Dam’.[51]

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[48] Greene, *EEC*, p. 380.
[49] < http://biblehub.com/vul/songs/4.htm> trans. King James Version.
[50] Greene, *EEC*, p. 400.
[51] Lambeth, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 853, (c. 1430) EETS ed. by Furnivall p. 1. Available online at <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/cme/ANT9911.0001.001/1:3.1?rgn=div2;view=fulltext> [accessed 3 Jan 2017].

Table 5:7. MS Eng. poet. e.1. fol. 54r.

Ivy, chefe of trees it is;
Veni, coronaberis.

The most worthye she is in towne –
He that seyth other doth amysse –
And worthy to bere the crowne:
Veni, coronaberis.

Ivy is soft and meke of spech,
Against all bale she is blysse, (*against all misery she is joy*)
Well is he that may hyre rech:
Veni, coronaberis.

Ivy is green with coloure bright;
Of all treis best she is;
And that I preve well now be right:
Veni, coronaberis.

Ivy bereth berys black –
God graunt us all his blysse!
Fore there shall we nothyng lack:
Veni, coronaberis. (Duncan, II, 129)[52]

The first two stanzas, although not explicitly naming the Virgin Mary, express a pious sentiment. However, the third and fourth retain the associations with the symbolism of the natural world that is a common thread through all the associated caroles: 'green with coloure bright' that is so welcome in the depths of winter, and the 'berys black'. The interpretation of this symbolism with a Christian message is far from explicit and it seems it is, in Oliver's words, the familiar 'commonplaces' of green ivy and its black berries, that provide an opportunity for a seasonal joyful message.[53]

The Eng. poet.MS includes a short secular song, not in carole form, 'Holvyr and Ivy mad a gret party' in which the two trees dispute 'who shuld have the maystry', (see Table 5:8).

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[52] Duncan, p. 295.
[53] Oliver, p. 66.

Table 5:8. MS Eng. poet. e.1. fol. 30 r.

Holvyr and Ivy mad a gret party, (*made a great dispute*)
Who shuld have the maystry,
In londës wher thei goo.

Than spake Holvyr: ‘I am frece and joly; (*fresh and jolly*)
I wol have the maystry
In londës wher we goo.

Than spake Ivy: ‘I am lowd and prowd,
And I wyl have the maystry
In londës wher we goo.

Than spake Holvyr, and set hym downe on his kne:
‘I prey the, jentyl Ivy,
Sey me no veleny (*say nothing unkind about me*)
In londës wher we goo.’
(Duncan II, 130,)

Though not in carole form it has the simplicity and repeated refrain that suggests it could have been a dance-song, so I include it here as it provides a reference for the more extended ‘dispute’ song, and it is with a study of this type of song that I will conclude this section.

The final carole to be considered in this section is from the Ritson collection and takes the form of a debate about the relative condition of the male holly and the female ivy.[54] It has no religious allusions but employs traditional imagery from the natural world.

Table 5:9. The Ritson Manuscript, fol. 251r.

Nay! Ivy, nay! Hyt shal not be, i-wys;
Let Holy hafe the maystry, as the maner ys.

Holy stond in the hall, fayre to behold;
Ivy stond without the dore; she ys ful sore a-cold.

Holy and hys mery men, they dawnsen and they syng;
Ivy and hur maydenes, they wepen and they wryng. (*wring their hands*)

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[54] London, British Library, MS Harley 5396, fol. 275v. (Greene, *EEC*, no. 136 A, Duncan, II, 127). A more extended version, using the same themes, is in Richard Hill’s Book, (Greene, no. 136 B, Duncan, II, 128).

Ivy hath a kybe, she kaght yt with the cold; *(chilblain*)
So mot they all haf ay that with Ivy hold.

Holy hath berys as rede as any rose;
The foster, the hunters kepe them fro the doos. (*protect them from the does*)

Ivy hath berys as blake as any slo;
Ther com the oule and ete hym as she goo.

Holy hath byrdes, a ful fayre flok,
The nyghtyngale, the poppynguy, the gentyl laverok. (*woodpecker, lark)*

Gode Ivy, what byrdes ast thou?
Non but the howlat, that kreye 'How, how!' (Duncan, II, 127)

Greene suggests that this carole might have been enacted by the men and women of the company, in a 'dramatic game' similar to some French dance-songs depicted in courtly entertainments.[55] It would certainly lend itself to some gestural expression by the male and female participants, such as the wringing of hands or the imitation of hunters' actions. The second stanza contains a clear reference to dancing and singing. This strengthens the case for this to be a dance-song, or closely related to an active, danced carolling culture.[56] The association of the Owl with Ivy is referred to in the *Owl and the Nightingale* in which the Owl sits on an ivy-covered tree stump that is her home.[57] She is considered, in that poem, to be an ugly bird. This contrasts with the beautiful, gentle and tuneful birds associated, in this carole, with the Holly.

Once again, the repetitive elements of the song show evidence of an oral tradition. The first stanza begins 'Holy stond' and the response is 'Ivy stond'. A similar pattern exists in verse two. Thereafter the two protagonists take a whole stanza each, beginning alternately 'Ivy hath' or 'Holy hath', until the final stanza in which Ivy is addressed directly with, 'Gode Ivy'. The strength of this mnemonic system is borne out by the fact that the association of the red and black berries, albeit with a religious slant, was retained in the Cornish *Sans Day Carol* which was transcribed directly from the singing of Thomas Beard, at the end of the nineteenth century.[58] The well known *The Holly and the Ivy* carol, also retained the elements of this association and surfaced, in the written record, printed on broadside sheets in Birmingham in 1814, and collected by Cecil Sharp in 1911 in Gloucestershire.[59]

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[55]Greene, *EEC*, p. xcix.

[56] The Richard Hill's Book version extends the disrespectful behaviour of the birds to Ivy, in a stanza about the wood-pigeon that eats the black berries and then 'cakkës' or shits before it leaves.

[57] London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix (C), fol. 233r.

[58] *Oxford Book of Carols*, p. 74.

This small group of caroles, based on pre-Christian symbolism, show a thematic consistency suggesting that they are just a few examples of a long tradition of winter caroles using the symbolism of the natural world. The caroles employed formulaic language to express the co-dependency of male and female in the natural world and the domestic setting. The pagan imagery was adapted by some Christian carole writers in order to re-direct the meaning away from the theme of male and female engaged in the battle of the sexes, but the vernacular metaphoric language remained embedded in the texts.

5:4. May or midsummer caroles or other natural world themes

It has already been demonstrated that the large number of extant caroles appropriate for use in the winter season may be due to the influence of clerical scribes and the importance of the Christmas season in their festive timetable. References to the social activity of carolling, as shown in previous chapters, show that it was an activity that took place all year and was very popular in the spring and summer seasons. Notated secular caroles showing any specificity to this time of year, however, are hard to find. The carole that begins ‘Ladd Y the daunce a Myssomur Day;’ in the Gonville and Caius MS 383/603, refers to events that befell the hapless caroller on that day.[60] There is no evidence to show that it was to be sung only at that time of year. Similarly, a carole that exists in an incomplete form, in a different hand from the rest of the manuscript, in London, British Library, MS Harley 1317, begins ‘Apon a mornyng of May, In the mornyng grey’ and continues in the style of a *chanson d’aventure*.[61] The use of similar opening lines has remained in the folksong tradition to the present day. Four folk songs begin with the line ‘As I walked out one May morning’ and another begins, ‘One morning in the month of May’ in Vaughan Williams’ collection, ‘*Bushes and Briars’*.[62]

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[59] Cecil Sharpe, *English Folk Carols,* p. 17.

[60] See Chapter Four, p. 114.

[61] Greene, *EEC,* no. 462. London, British Library, MS Harley 1317, fol. 94v.

A more specific reference to the time of year occurs in the carole burden, *‘Up, son and mery wether, somer draweth nere’*.[63] This carole, and another poem in the same hand, are in a compilation manuscript containing works mainly by Chaucer, Hoccleve and Gower. The following eight stanzas, on the subject of ill-fated love, are in a higher literary register than the burden and this may be an example of the use of a familiar generic burden similar to the ones already encountered in the *Red Book of Ossory*. There are no further seasonal references in the text. The earliest known secular carole, written in Leominster Priory sometime in the fourteenth century, is a ten-stanza love poem, employing sophisticated symbolism and form.[64] The complex eight-line stanzas do not indicate a use as a dance-song, but the burden, ‘Blow, northerne wynd, send thou my swetyng; Blow northerne wynd, blow, blow, blow’, not obviously connected in meaning to the rest of the song, would have had significance as a symbol of strength as well as a representation of the bringer of cold weather and change. This burden may also have been held in common oral culture.[65] Anne L. Klinck suggests that this burden evokes the image of a woman, standing on a sea shore, awaiting the return of her lover. This is unconvincing however, as, in the British Isles, a North wind would be of limited help in bringing a ship to shore safely anywhere but Scotland or the East coast facing the North Sea.[66] Furthermore, in European culture the North Wind is not considered clement or benign.

Linking the evidence of these isolated generic burden examples with those in the *Red Book of Ossory* such as ‘Gayneth me no garland of greene’ and ‘Do, do nyghtyngale synges wel ful mury’ it can only be supposed that the seasons and the natural world were reflected in carolling repertoire throughout the year. Unfortunately, so few complete examples exist in the written record that it must be assumed that they remained outside, in the oral culture, un-converted from their pagan origins. It is possible that the spring and summer repertoire was less relevant, or less disturbing, to the pious clerics who needed suitable seasonal winter texts for their own use in halls, during the religious Christmas festivities.

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[62] Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Bushes and Briars,* pp. 34, 37, 60, 162 and 94.

[63] Greene, *EEC,* no. 469. Cambridge, University Library. MS. Ff. 1. 6. fol. 139v.

[64] London, British Library, MS. Harley 2253, fol. 72v. Greene, *EEC,* no. 440, Duncan, I, 3.

[65] Aesop’s Fables, ‘The North Wind and the Sun’, also in Bible, Song of Solomon 4:16 ‘Awake, O north wind; and come thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.’

[66] Klinck, ‘Woman’s song’, p. 546.

5:5. Caroles about Women, love and marriage, or the bachelor life.

Courtly love themes, so prevalent in the Anglo-Norman romance literature up to 1400 (discussed in Chapter Two), did not generally find expression in the vernacular English caroles of the following century, at least not according to the written record. There is, however, evidence that the 'lemman' or beloved was a subject for carolling, as has been seen in the example of Gerald of Wales' account of the priest's earworm in the form of the carole burden '*Swete lemman dhin are'*.[67] There is also the reference in the *Red Book of Ossory* to the burden, '*Have god day, my lemman'* and also the enigmatic '*Maiden in the more lay'*.[68] This latter carole employs the allegorical language of flowers and of nourishing spring-water, familiar from some of the examples in Chapter Two. However, the interpretation of the text is the subject of some debate. John Spiers places the maiden in the context of a nature rite of spring or summer, possibly to do with fertility, and perhaps 'the spirit of the fountain'.[69] He goes on to suggest that Christian interpretations of the maiden as Mary 'illustrate how the imagery of the songs of the earlier religion was being adapted to Christian meanings'.[70] Peter Dronke, in the same anthology, asserts that the song centres around a water-sprite that would appear at village dances in the guise of a beautiful young woman and in order to 'fascinate young men'.[71] In support of this theory he refers to German folksongs, and he goes on to imagine an enactment of the dance-song involving a sleeping girl, a bell striking to awaken her, an admirer offering her flowers and her eventual repose on a bed of flowers. Although this playing out of the song is rather fanciful, I would agree with his point that, if the maid had been understood as a representation of the Virgin Mary, rather than a personification of

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[67] Chapter One, p. 25.

[68] Chapter Three, p. 92. Further evidence that carols referring to the 'lemman' remained in oral culture will be explored in Chapter 6, including Ravenscroft's *Three Ravens* and its relationship to the Corpus Christi Carol, and also *The Midsummer Carol* and *The Lemonday Carol.*

[69] John Spiers, 'On "Maiden in the mor lay"', in *Middle English Lyrics,* ed. by Maxwell S. Luria and Richard L. Hoffman (New York: Norton, 1974), pp. 323-4 (p. 324).

[70] Spiers, p. 324.

[71] Peter Dronke, 'On "Maiden in the mor lay"', in *Middle English Lyrics,* pp, 324-5 (p. 325).

‘un-Christian’ beliefs, Bishop Ledrede would not have seen it as necessary to replace the words with Christian ones in the *Red Book of Ossory*.[72]

It is possibly not surprising that caroles about love of women did not find a place in manuscripts written by clerics for use in celibate all male environments, but the model of the Virgin Mary provided the topic for many religious caroles in the fifteenth century. These may have been modelled on secular repertoire. The use of the lullaby motif, for example, would certainly suggest that traditional women’s song forms were adapted for pious expression. Greene includes fifteen lullaby caroles and over eighty Marian caroles in his collection, including the subjects of the ‘Five Joys’ and the Annunciation. The language and imagery employed for many of these texts can be seen to reflect the language of romance literature such as, for example, in the well-known burden ‘Ther is no rose of swych vertu as is the rose that bare Jhesu’.[73] A carole in MS Sloane, 2593, as a further example, begins with a burden and first stanza which could well be mistaken for a courtly love theme. Here it is only in the second stanza, about the Annunciation, that the Marian theme is made specific.

> *Of a rose, a louely rose,*
> *Of a rose is al myn song.*
>
> Lestenyt, lordynges, bothe elde and yynge,
> How this rose began to sprynge;
> Swych a rose to myn lykinge
> In al this word ne knowe I non.[74]

The introduction of the allegory of the rose representing a beloved lady, followed by the address to the assembled company of Lords, could be based on a continuing tradition of romantic vernacular courtly carolling that was adapted by Franciscan carole writers.

Some English secular caroles about women do exist but they are generally of a more earthy nature and not always complimentary. In MS St. John’s, S 54 Scribe A wrote,

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[72] Dronke, ‘On “Maiden in the mor lay”’, p. 324.
[73] Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O. 3. 58. (Greene,*EEC*, no. 173.)
[74] MS Sloane 2593, fol. 6v. (Greene, no. 175 C) also a version in MS Eng. poet. E. 1, fol. 21.r (Greene, *EEC,* no. 175 A)

‘War yt, war yt, war yt wele: Wemen be as trew as stele.’[75] Although the burden seems to express a favourable sentiment, each of the following stanzas express a distinctly ambivalent opinion. For example, in stanza four:

> Stele is both fayre and bryght;
> So be thes women be candlellyght,
> And som wyll both flyt and fyght;
> Women be as trew as stele.

Meanwhile, the first secular carole in MS Sloane, 2593, also found in London, British Library, MS Harley 7358, similarly expresses the opinion in the burden: ‘Wymman beth boþe goude & truwe wytnesse on Marie’.[76] The following five stanzas then praise women’s cleanliness and gentleness, and place them on a pedestal to be worshipped. MS Sloane 2593 also contains several unflattering caroles about women, and the problems they cause men. In Chapter Four we saw that their immediate juxtaposition with caroles in praise of that embodiment of feminine perfection by the Virgin Mary is difficult to interpret.[77] For example, fol. 9v. contains the two final stanzas of a carole on the Five Joys of Mary and continues with ‘Man bewar of þin wowyng for weddyng is þe longe wo’. This carole warns against marrying widows as they will take all your money, and also against wooing young maids as they are fickle. Again, in Chapter Four, we noted that this ordering of the collection may be due to the connection of ideas for the writer, rather than a suggestion that material might have been used in any particular order.[78] This is an example of why organisation by topic, in this study, could be misleading. This carole, and the preceding one, are unique to MS Sloane 2593, and therefore may have been authored by the compiler, whereas the following religious one is found in two other sources and so may have been written with the aid of an exemplar. The change of register between the religious and the secular caroles, shown by the use of an earthier vernacular style, is a possible reflection of the origins of these caroles in a parallel, oral culture, and will be discussed further below.[79]

It is perhaps not surprising to find caroles expressing some misogynistic sentiments in the clerical collections, as they were presumably intended to be consumed in all male company. Members of the community might have wished to affirm their life-choice of celibacy, to use a modern cliché, and they also may have wished to discourage any student members from thinking that the 'grass might be greener on the other side of the fence'. Oliver includes 'marriage is to be avoided (wives are shrewish, greedy, etc)' as the third in his list of 'commonplaces' that, he asserts, were the building blocks of many medieval poems.[80] Certainly, the topic of *mal marie* was thoroughly explored by writers in the late Middle Ages and the importance of securing property and wealth within the family in the face of frequent premature death of both husbands and wives meant that matches were often made between couples of considerably different ages.[81] The economic viability of agricultural families depended on the contribution of labour by both husband and wife and this was also a reason why widowers often remarried quickly.[82] It is therefore possible that many more caroles were in oral circulation concerning this theme, amongst the lay population, than are represented in the clerical collections. MS Sloane 2593 and MS Eng. poet. E. 1. both contain caroles on the subject of having a shrewish wife. Apart from the opening of the first stanza, which addresses the audience as 'Yyng men', the two caroles do not share any textual content. MS Eng. Poet. E. 1 also contains a carole on the miseries of having a drunken, bullying wife, *All that I may swynk or swet, My wyfe it wyll both drynk and ete.*[83] The following example (see Table 10) describes the miserable life of a hardworking young man who is bullied by his older wife.

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[75] MS St John’s, S. 54, fol. 9v. (Greene, *EEC*, no. 400).
[76] Greene, *EEC*, no. 395.
[77] Chapter Four, p. 118.
[78] Chapter Four, p. 119.
[79] For a discussion of ‘low’ style see Oliver, p.78.

Table 5:10. MS Sloane 2593, fol. 24v.

How, hey! It is non les	(*no lie*)
I dar not seyn quan che sey, 'Pes!'	(*I dare not speak when she says 'Peace!'*)
Yyng men, I warne you euerychon:	
Elde wywys tak ye non,	
For I myself haue on at hom;	
I dar not seyn quan che seyght, 'Pes!'	
Quan I cum fro the plow at non,	(*from the plough at noon)*
In a reuen dych myn mete is don;	(*In a cracked dish)*

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[80] Oliver, p. 66.

[81] Duncan, p. 371.

[82] Mavis E. Mate, 'Work and Leisure', in *A Social History of England 1200-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 272-92 (p. 280).

[83] MS Eng. poet. E. 1, fol. 23r. Greene, *EEC*, no. 406.

I dar not askyn our dame a spon;
I dar not […]

If I aske our dame bred,
Che takyt a staf and brekit myn hed
And doth me rennyn under the led; *(makes me run under the cauldron)*
I dar not […]

If I aske our dame fleych,
Che brekyt myn hed with a dych:
'Boy, thou art not worght a reych!' *(a rush)*
I dar […]

If I aske our dame chese,
'Boy,' che seyght, al at ese,
'Thou art not worght half a pese.' *(half a pea)*
I dar not […] (Greene, no. 405, Duncan, I, 127.)

Arguably, these poems have been over-interpreted from a literary point of view, because they are contained in manuscripts alongside poems of great merit. Whilst this type of analysis is helpful, it may be approaching the texts as if they were examples of a genre of poetic endeavour, rather than written down examples of an oral improvised culture. Oliver uses the carole *How, hey! It is non les* as an example of 'low style', stating that 'whatever the specific purpose of this poem, the low style creates a sense of forthright intimacy, usually between speaker and audience'.[84] He explains that concrete nouns are used as metaphors; the plough represents the husband's hard, honest labour and his requests for bread, meat and cheese are mundane daily essentials.[85] Indeed, when compared to other *unica* songs in this same collection such as *I syng of a myden þat is makeles* (fol. 10v.) the metaphorical language is unsubtle and the tone is forthright. I would propose that the majority of Franciscan religious caroles employ an elevated literary style in keeping with a poetic genre, whereas secular caroles, such as the one above, represent a low register also in current use, but less well documented. This has been seen in the drinking songs such as *Bryng us in good ale,* and *Doll þi ale* discussed previously in this chapter.

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[84] Oliver, p. 78.
[85] Oliver, p. 51.

The written record is devoid of the caroles that may have been sung by women married to old or unsuitable husbands. We have only one hint that this may have been a topic in oral circulation. This comprises two fragments of songs, not in carole form, from a sermon, quoted by Bocklund-Lagopoulou: ‘Of my husband giv I noht, Another havet my luve ybohit’ and ‘Lete þe cukewald syte at hom, and chese þe anoþer lefman.’[86] There is no evidence that carolling, participatory and therefore rather public, was used by women to express these sentiments. As mentioned previously, women’s social entertainment was more often within a domestic setting and possibly these sentiments were expressed within the context of domestic work-songs, in an all-female environment, and remained unwritten.

5:6. Goliardic and bawdy carolling in an all-male environment.

All the clerical collections include caroles on the theme of the joys of a life without a wife, but the treatments are all individual. *Hos is to hoth at hom, Ryd out; it wol agon* (Whosoever is by hearth at home), in G. & C., MS 383, expresses the feelings of the young man who sets out to make his fortune in foreign parts.[87] *Synge we alle and say we thus: ‘Gramercy myn oyen purse,* in MS Sloane 2593, recounts how a man’s friends do not stay around if he has no money, but he can entertain himself instead with his bow and hunting horn.[88] The representative of the common man, referred to as ‘Jak’, in this and many other caroles, does not seem overly concerned but the treatment of a similar burden in MS St John’s S 54, *I may syng and sey, iwys, ‘Gremercy my owne purse,* advocates a much tighter hold on the singer’s money, with lines such as ‘My purse is my owne frende’ and ‘Tay youre purse in yore bosom’.[89] This is an example of a burden idea in circulation but showing individual interpretations of the theme.

It is, arguably, a small step within an all-male community from enjoying caroles on the subject of the joys of a bachelor life to the enjoyment that can be gained from making contact with members of the opposite sex.[90] A carole extolling the free life of a pedlar, *We ben chapmen light of fote, the foulë weyës for to fle,* in Sloane MS 2593, adopts a more obviously goliardic tone in its description of the wares on offer.[91] This has been discussed fully in Chapter Four so will only be summarised here. The first stanza lists the things a pedlar would be expected to sell that might be of interest to young women, such as pearls and silver pins, having stated clearly in the first line that the singers of this carole do not carry them. The following three stanzas set out the wares that are on offer in their place, employing *double entendres* for the various parts of male genitalia including; ‘two precious stones’ for testicles, a ‘jelly’ for the penis, and ‘a powder’ that ‘makes maiden’s wombes swell’. The meaning is quite obvious, and the humour could be termed as ‘schoolboy’ or ‘locker room’, written by a man to be enjoyed in the company of other men. This carole perhaps gives some idea of the sort of unsuitable texts, enjoyed by clerics, that Bishop Ledrede wished to replace in the *Red Book of Ossory*.[92]

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[86] Boklund-Lagopoulou, *I have a yong suster,* p. 222. citing Dublin, Trinity College Library, MS 347.

[87] G. & C., MS 383/603, p. 41

[88] MS Sloane 2593, fol. 6r.

[89] MS St John’s.S. 54. fol. 3v. Greene, *EEC,* no. 391.

[90] I am writing this in the week of Donald Trump’s inauguration as President of the U.S.A., and after hearing his recorded comments about grabbing women by the ‘pussy’ being referred to as normal talk among men in a male only ‘locker room’ environment.

As discussed above, it has been established that many pious churchmen considered carolling to be a step on the path to licentiousness and ruin, but the type of carole content that may have contributed to this opinion is missing from the written record. If women led caroles of a seductive nature to inflame the passions of young men, or vice versa, their words and melodies remained part of an oral culture. What has been recorded is a handful of caroles, written in the female voice by clerics, narrating the seduction of young females. Oliver includes the ‘lament of the seduced maiden’ in his list of ‘commonplaces’, mentioned earlier in the context of marriage.[93] It may even have been part of the practice and education of clerics to be able to compose letters as if speaking in a woman’s voice. The letters of the Paston family show that, even though an educated woman may have been capable of writing for herself, a draft of a letter for her to copy was sometimes composed by a man, in this case her son, using a feminine voice to further his cause in family legal or business matters.[94] The following section will consider four examples of the type of witty and salacious carole found in clerical contexts, but employing a woman’s voice.

G. & C., MS 383/603 contains two such caroles, both describing the successful seduction by Jak of the willing, or gullible, young girl in whose voice it is written.

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[91] Transcribed in full Chapter Four, p. 121.
[92] Chapter Three p. 89.
[93] Oliver, p. 66.
[94] Diane Watt, *Medieval Women’s Writing* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), p. 157.

They are in a narrative style, constructed of nine or ten stanzas that do not call for improvisation or expansion. They also do not exhibit other characteristics of oral transmission, such as formulaic opening lines of stanzas, discussed previously in this chapter.[95] *Rybbe ne rele* paints the image, over the first six stanzas, of a servant girl full of excitement over having a day off and being accompanied to the church-ale by Jakke. A few suggestive comments are made. For example, in the third stanza she asks Jakke to lend her a pin to 'thredele' her kerchief under her chin. In the seventh verse she starts to quench her thirst with ale and events quickly speed up. The next stanza depicts the laughable, but probably familiar, situation of *al fresco* sex:

Sone he wolle take me be the hand,	
And he wolle legge me on the lond,	(he will lay me on the ground)
That al my buttock*us* be*n* of son[d,]	(so my buttocks will be covered in sand)
Open this hye holyday.	

After a slow narrative, courtship build-up of eight stanzas, the consummation and resulting pregnancy are dispatched with, in a matter of fact fashion, in the final two.

In he pult, and out he drow,
And euer yc lay on hy*m* y-low;
'By God*us* deth, th*o*u dest me wow
Vpon this hey holyday!'

Sone my wombe began te swelle
A[s] greth as a belle;
Durst Y nat my dame telle
Wat me betydde this holyday.

Bennett opines that the depiction of a 'lusty young woman' servant would have added appeal to a more privileged class of audience but less likely is her assertion that the carole might actually have been performed by women, at church ales 'in the vibrant social world of late medieval parishes'.[96] It is true that during the second half of the fifteenth century church-ales became an important part of fund-raising and social activity outside the big cities. Some parishes built church-houses that contained baking and brewing facilities for the purpose.[97] The church-ale would have provided an opportunity for closer interaction across the social strata and a believable setting for this topic of seduction. The behaviour of servants, apprentices and labourers on the prescribed free days, or 'holydays', was a concern in the late Middle Ages. Following the Black Death and the subsequent increased flexibility in working practices many young single-women lived and worked away from home, away from the control and authority of a father or husband.[98] In urban contexts, where clerics and servants lived side by side, the social hierarchy would nonetheless have controlled social interaction, thus providing a backdrop for these fictional flirtations, in defiance of the norm. Nevertheless, the lack of concern for the consequences of their actions, in these examples in clerical notebooks, expresses an element of misogyny unlikely to have been expressed by an authentic female voice. It is even less likely that a woman would have actually provided entertainment, by singing caroles, in this clerical context.

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[95] See Chapter Four for an analysis of the *mise en page* indicating they were copied without errors from a draft or exemplar.
[96] Bennett, p. 198.
[97] Mate, p. 290.

The second carole, written on the same page immediately following the first, is nine stanzas long. Each stanza contains five lines, instead of four, and ends with the reiteration of the girl's naivity, 'Thout yc on ne gyle' (I thought no guile/ deceit). The opening line 'Ladd Y the daunce a Myssomur Day' sets the scene of the young girl leading the seasonal carolling and being talent-spotted by the young cleric, 'Jak, oure haly-water clerk'. The language of this carole is more descriptive of the developing relationship and employs teasing imagery, for example in stanza two:

For the chesone of me he com to the ryng
And he trippede on my to and made a twynkeling, *(he trod on my toe and winked)*
Ever he cam ner; he sparet for no thynge.

Stanza three continues:

As we turnden owre daunce in a narw place,
Jak bed me the mouth; a cussing ther was

This imagery is reminiscent of Chaucer's description of carolling in *The Romaunt of the Rose* in which the carollers in the garden are described as seeming almost to kiss as they came close to each other in the turns of the dance.[99]

> That oon wolde come all pryvyly
> Agayn that other, and whan they were
> Togidre almost, they threwe yfere
> Her mouthis so that thorough her play
> It seemed as they kiste alway –
> To dauncen well loude they the gise. (l.784-789)

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[98] Mate, p. 282.

[99] 'The Romaunt of the Rose', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ll. 784-789. p. 695.

The carole employs colloquial imagery rather than the blatantly salacious language of the previous example. In the fifth stanza, retaining the metaphor of the dance, Jak 'prikede and he pransede' and 'Yt was the muryust nyght that ever y cam ynne'. The imagery in the next stanza employs the ringing of the bell 'Whan Jak had don' as a colloquialism for having reached an orgasm.[100] Duncan also suggests a more literal meaning; that Jak went to fulfill his bell-ringing duties at the church or that he blasphemously mimicked the ringing of the bell signalling the elevation of the host at mass, before keeping the girl in his bed all night. Within the context several layers of meaning are probable. Once again, the final stanza relates the inevitable result of the amorous midsummer carolling, as the girl's womb grows and, expressing little sympathy for her predicament, the carole ends with a proverb, 'Evel y-spunne yern, ever it wole out', meaning that badly spun yarn will always unravel. Although this may have been the sort of thing a woman might say, it does not express any feminine empathy with the girl's situation. As Bennett says, 'These carols […] express the interests of men through the voices of women.'[101]

The last carole in MS Sloane 2593, takes the imagery in the salacious tale of seduction, by Jankin the cleric, a step further towards blasphemy, in its ridicule of the holy office (see Table 5:11 on next page). Using the same theme, that of the girl relating the story of her downfall as she is beguiled by the singing, the winking and the playing of 'footsie' during the Yuletide procession by jolly Jankin, the carole is constructed to follow the divisions of the office of the mass: *Kyrie,* Epistle, *Sanctus, Agnus, Benedicamus Domino* and its response *Deo Gratias.* It begins with the burden: 'Kyriё, so kyriё' Jankyn singёth miriё, with 'alёyson', 'alёyson' being employed as a pun for the girl's name Alison.

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[100] Duncan, p. 433.
[101] Bennett, p. 200.

Table 5:11. MS Sloane 2593, fol. 34r.

'Kyriё', so 'kyriё', Jankin singёth miriё, with 'alёyson'.[102]

1. As I went on Yol Day in our processyon,
   Knew I jolly jankyn by his mery ton.

2. Jankyn began þe offis on þe Yole Day
   And yet me þynkyt it dos me good, so merie gan he say
   Kyrieleyson.

3. Jankyn red þe pystyl ful fayr and ful wel
   And yet me þinkyt it dos me good, as ever have I sel.

4. Jankyn at þe *Sanctus* crakit a merie note, (*divides)*
   And yet me þinkyt yt dos me good, I payed for his cote.

5. Jankyn crakit notes an hundred on a knot,
   And yet he hakkeþ hem smaller than wortes to þe pot. (*than herbs for the pot)*
   K

6. Jankyn at þe *Angnus* beryt þe pax brede,
   He twynkelid but sayd nowt, and on myn fot he trede.

7. *Benedicamus Domino,* cryst fro shame me schylde;
   Deo Gratias þerto alas, I go with chylde!
   K

Whilst sharing some thematic material, such as the foot treading and the winking, with the previous caroles discussed, much of the humour in this one is derived from the parody of the ceremony of the Mass and the descriptions of Jankyn's vocal abilities. It is not explicitly salacious but enjoys the conceit that the trilling vocal antics of the clerk's divisions and ornaments are enough to thrill the receptive maiden.[103] Klinck interprets the inclusion, by the supposedly female singer, of the blessing in the final verse as a pathetic cry. She says: 'the mechanical Latin words learned by rote contrast with the very real personal feelings and her sharp fear for her future'.[104] In the context of a clerical carole it has more of a flavour of thoughtless misogynistic mockery aimed at the ignorant and the naïve but tempered with the obvious self-parody of singing men.

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[102] Transcription based on Palti with editorial additions from Duncan, I, 129. p. 182.

[103] The same terms are used in the Townely *Second Shepherds' Play* to describe the singing of the Angel. II Pastor: 'Say, what was his song? Hard ye not how he crakyd it? Thre brefes to a long.' III Pastor: 'Yes, mary, he hakt it.' (ll. 656-8) *Medieval Drama* ed. by Greg Walker (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p. 55.

[104] Klinck, p. 545.

These few examples must surely represent compositions, in carole form, on a topic that must have been a popular one among communities of young male clerics and students. The carole form provides a framework for participatory songs, that include shared jokes and self-mockery. The form has been transferred from the purely improvised to a well-worked-out narrative with pace and punch-lines, that deserved, in the mind of the scribe, to be recorded for further use. That so few examples were recorded could be due to the high standard of memorising that clerical training required rather than to the fact that very few caroles like this were sung.[105]

The employment of extracts from the liturgy to satirise the church is taken to greater lengths in the carole about the friar and the nun, which has the refrain, parodying the *Pater Noster,* 'Inducas, inducas, in temptacionibus'.[106] This carole is extant in two versions, one of which is a short, four-stanza, unsubtle account of seduction in Kele's *Christmas carolles newely Imprynted*.[107] The other version (see Table 5:12) depends on a sophisticated understanding of medieval music theory for its full enjoyment. It was found among the papers of the retired librarian of Cambridge University and Fellow of King's, Henry Bradshaw, and is thought to have been written by a member of King's College in the second half of the fifteenth century.[108] The carole is one of four that are written, in different hands, on an unbound paper bifolium. The first two were by the pious Franciscan James Ryman and the other two, in the words of Robbins 'augment the few recorded ribald carols' of the period.[109]

Before studying the text of the carole it is necessary to include a brief summary of the music theory with which its audience would have been acquainted. Medieval music theory was based on the hexachord, or six-note scale, and comprising the pattern of intervals between notes as follows; tone, tone, semitone, tone, tone. As an aid for teaching and memorising, Guido d'Arezzo (c. 990-1050) designated the vocables ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la to the six notes of the hexachord. These are the syllables that begin consecutive lines of a hymn to St John in which the first six lines of melody, thought to have been composed by Guido for the purpose, begin on the ascending notes of the hexachord.[110] There are three hexachords; *naturale* starting on C, *durum* (hard) on G, and *molle* (soft) on F. In order to preserve the pattern of intervals between the six notes as tone, tone, semitone, tone, tone the B in the F hexachord must be lowered, or flattened by a half step. This was indicated by writing a rounded, or soft, 'b', that became the modern sign for a 'flat', as opposed to a square, or hard, 'b' that evolved into the 'natural' sign. The musical terms 'bémol' and 'bécarre' remain in use for flat and natural in modern French. The progression of the nun's singing lessons through the three hexachords, and the puns associated with the musical terminology, reflect the friar's state of arousal. A knowledge of Latin and psalmody is also essential to an understanding of the humour, as will be explained below.

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[105] Ralph Hanna, 'Literacy, schooling and universities', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 172-94 (p. 174).

[106] The Friar and the Nun theme seems to have circulated in oral culture for centuries. Shakespeare references it in *The Taming of The Shrew* and John Playford includes a tune of that name in his 17th century publication for dancing.

[107] Richard Kele, *Christmas carolles*, p. 18.

[108] P. J. Croft, 'The Friar of Order Gray and the Nun', *R.E.S. New Series*, 32, (1981), 1-16. <http://res.oxford journals.org>.

[109] Cited by Croft, p. 1.

Table 5:12. *Ther was a Frier of order gray*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, Add. 7350, Box 2 (c.1490)[111]

Inducas, inducas,
In temptacionibus.

1. Ther was a frier of order gray,
Inducas,
Which loved a nunne full meny a day.
In temptacionibus. Inducas, etc.

2. This fryer was lusty, proper and yong,
Inducas,
He offerd the nunne to lerne her syng
In temptacionibus. Inducas etc.

3. *Othe, re, me, fa,* the frier her tawght,
Inducas,
Sol, la, this nunne he kyst full oft
In temptacionibus. Inducas etc.

4. By proper chaunt and Bequory,
Inducas,
This nunne he groped with flattery,
In temptacionibus. Inducas etc.

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[110] *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, ed. by Willi Apel (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 1970), p. 384.

[111] Transcription from Duncan, II,142, p. 304.

5. The fryers first lesson was *'Veni ad me',*
Inducas,
'Et ponam tollum meum ad te'
In temptacionibus. Inducas etc.

6. The frier sang all by Bemoll,
Inducas,
Of the nunne he begate a cristenyd sowle.
Inducas etc.

7. The nunne was taught to syng '*Sepe',*
Inducas,
'Lapides expugnaverunt me' *(the stones have afflicted me)*
In temptacionibus. Inducas etc.

8. Thus the fryer lyke a prety man,
Inducas,
Ofte rokked the nunnës quoniam.
In temptacionibus. Inducas,etc

The Nun's singing lesson begins in the third stanza with the notes of the natural hexachord starting on the C. This is refered to as 'proper chaunt' using the square notated 'b' natural, or 'Bequory'. Obviously aimed at an esoteric community, the carole continues, combining musical references with liturgical ones. The fifth stanza quotes Matthew 11:28 'Veni ad me' (Come unto me) but instead of continuing 'all ye who are heavy laden and ye shall find rest' the friar continues with a bowdlerised version of Matthew 12: 18, 'Et ponam spiritum meaum ad te', (I will put my spirit upon you) but in the place of 'spirit' he inserts 'tollum'. This word has no direct translation but the root, *tollo,* means 'to raise up', with obvious associations to the state of the excited male member, and is translated by Duncan as 'I shall put my peg to you'. It may also be a bilingual pun on the Latin *telum*, meaning weapon, and the Middle English *thole* or 'peg'.[112] After this, the lesson procedes to its inevitable conclusion, in stanza six, using the third *molle, or soft,* hexachord and the nun's resulting pregnancy, 'Of the nunne he begate a cristenyd sowle'.

In stanza seven the carole says that the nun 'often' had lessons and misquotes Psalm 128, 'Saepe expugnaverunt me', (Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth),

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[112] Croft, p. 5.

with the insertion of the word '*lapides'*, (literally translated as 'stones') a euphemism for 'testicles', already encountered in *We ben chapmen light of fote.*[113]
The word '*quoniam'* in stanza eight is used in a similar context by Chaucer in the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*: 'And trewely, as myne housbondes toldë me / I hadde the bestë quoniam myghte be.' [114] *Quoniam*, literally translated as 'whereas' is used as a euphemism and Duncan surmises that the use of 'qu' sound made an aural association with the Old French word *con* (from the Latin *cunnus,* meaning 'vulva'). It could equally be aurally associated with the Middle English word, 'cunt'.

A comparison of this version of the carole with the simpler one in Richard Kele's book demonstrates how a carole idea and burden could be worked for the participation and amusement of very different communities. The two occurrences of the carole, with the *Inducas* refrain irreverently referencing the Lord's prayer, show that chronology does not necessarily indicate thematic development. This simpler four-stanza version (see Table 5:13) was published after the complex one, although that does not preclude its oral circulation before its inclusion in Richard Kele's book.

Table 5:13. *Christmas carolles* (Richard Kele) c. 1550 p 18.

Inducas, inducas,
In temptationibus.

The nunne walked on her prayer; *Inducas, inducas.*
Ther cam a frere and met with her *In temptationibus*.

This nunne began to fall aslepe; *Inducas, inducas.*
The frere knelyd downe at her fete *In temptationibus.*

This fryer began the nunne to grope; *Inducas, inducas,*
It was a morsell for the Pope, *In temptationibus*.

The frere and the nunne, when they had done, *Inducas, inducas,*
Eche to theyr cloyster dyd they gone *Sine temptationibus.*

The brevity and simplicity of this version, and the omission of any verses actually describing the seduction, suggests that it may have been adapted for inclusion in Richard Kele's publication which was for the consumption of a more general readership, not just clerical but possibly including merchants and guildsmen. The four-stanza template could have been expanded by improvisation, depending upon the sensitivities of the audience. The Latin words of the Lord’s Prayer would have been familiar to lay participants and the alteration of the final burden to *sine temptationibus* (without temptation) would have been accessible for a literate audience. Alternatively, a simple version may have been in wider circulation and was adapted for the more esoteric consumption of the King’s College clerks. These two vastly differing renditions of the theme are tantalizing examples of how medieval humour could be expressed in very different registers depending upon the contexts of its reception. It also shows how the written record may reflect only a select angle on carolling culture and that similar themes and topics were in circulation but with different realisations.

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[113] See above p. 121.
[114] *The Riverside Chaucer,* p. 113, l.608.

5:7. Political caroles

It has been shown in earlier chapters that the most popular occasions for carolling, other than seasonal or religious feasts, were in celebration of events such as homecomings and victories. The well-known, so-called ‘Agincourt Carol’ surely fits into this category. This three-part polyphonic song does not, however, represent a spontaneous carole of rejoicing that might have been sung by the soldiers on the battlefield, except perhaps in the imaginations of nineteenth-century antiquarians. Here, Helen Deeming’s detailed discussion of the Agincourt Carol serves as a background for my examination of other political caroles from the late fifteenth century, that show clearer evidence of being closer to a vernacular, oral tradition.[115] The song exists in two copies, both with sophisticated musical settings and showing a high scribal standard.[116] The burden, ‘Deo Gracias anglia redde pro victoria’, is possibly representative of refrains sung at the pageant in London celebrating the King’s victorious return, though Deeming points out that ‘none of the sources documenting the pageant mentions *Deo gracias Anglia* by name’.[117] The attribution of the victory solely to the power of God is consistent with the account, in the *Vita et Gesti Henrici Quinti, Anglorum Regis* attributed to Thomas Eltham, which relates that the King piously forbade any musicians or minstrels from making songs in his honour.[118] The sophisticated Agincourt Carol may, in Steven’s opinion, represent a bridge that links the monophonic, vernacular carole repertoire, in oral circulation, with the refinements of the polyphonic art songs composed in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[119]

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[115] Helen Deeming, ‘The Sources and origin of the ‘Agincourt Carol’, *Early Music*, 35 (2007), 23-36. Available online at <http://em.oxfordjournals.org>.

[116] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Selden B.26, ff. 17v-18r. and Cambridge, Trinity College Library, O.3.58, carol 7. (known as The Trinity Roll).

[117] Deeming, p. 30.

A carole about the victory over the French at Agincourt, in a much simpler style and drawing on idiomatic symbolic language of the rose that was more usually employed in caroles in praise of the Virgin Mary, is *The Rose es the fayreste flour of alle* (see Table 5:14 on next page). It is the only carol in a manuscript by the scribe Robert Thornton, of Lincoln Cathedral in the middle of the fifteenth century.[120] It is headed ‘A carolle for Crystynmesse’ and it is not until the second of three stanzas, with the mention of the French fleur-de-lys, that its political subject matter becomes apparent.

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[118] *Thome de Eltham Vita et Gesta Henrici Quinti, Anglorum Regis*, ed. T. Hearne (Oxford, 1727) cited by Deeming, p. 35.

[119] John Stevens, ‘Carol’, *New Grove II*, iv, p. 164.

[120] London, British Library, MS Addit. 31042, fol. 110v. (Greene, *EEC*, no. 427). The manuscript contains poems and literary works including *The Destruction of Jerusalem* and a fragment of the *Cursor Mundi.*

Table 5:14. London, British Library, MS Addit. 31042, fol. 110v.

The Rose es the fayreste of alle
That euermore wasse or euermore schall,
The Rose of Ryse; (*on a branch*)
Off alle thies flourres the Rose berys pryce.

The Rose it es the fairest flour;
The Rose es swettest of odoure;
The Rose, in care it es conforthetour;
The Rose, in seknes it es saluoure,
The Rose so bryghte;
In medcyns it es moste of myghte.

Witnesse thies clerkes that haue wysse:
The Rose es the flour moste holdyn in prysse;
Therfore me thynke the Flour-de-Lyse
Scholde wirchipe the Rose of Ryse
And ben in his thralle,
And so scholde floures alle.

Many a knyghte with spere and launce
Folowede that Rose to his plesance;
When the Rose betyde a chaunce,
Than fadide alle the floures of Fraunce
And chaungyde hewe
In plesance of the Rose so trewe.

According to Greene, the manuscript is incomplete and there may have been more stanzas, but this fragment illustrates the adoption of a familiar metaphoric language, that of the Rose from romance literature and appropriated in Marian caroles, to express a patriotic sentiment specific to a particular contemporary event. Whilst employing the repetitive idiom, derived from oral traditions, in the first stanza, the text has a declamatory aspect which could give a clue as to how the form and language of carolling was harnessed to function as a vehicle for communal celebrations.

Considering the tumultuous events in late-fifteenth-century Britain, including the Wars of the Roses, it might be expected that caroles were used to express opinions about events and to convey loyalties. As always, the documentary evidence is sparse, but the following section will consider examples on both sides of the Yorkist and Lancastrian divide. The generic carole burden opening line '*Nowell, nowell, nowell,*

nowell!' is followed by *'And Cryst save mery Ynglond and sped yt wel!'* in a carole from c.1470 expressing Lancastrian sympathies.[121]

Table 5:15. London, British Library, MS Addit. 19046, fol. 74r.

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell!
And Cryst saue mery Ynglond and sped yt well!

Tyll home sull Wylekyn, this joly gentyl schepe, (*ship*)
All to houre combely Kyng Hary this cnat ys knyt; (*knot is knit*)
Therefore let vs all syng nowel.

Tyll home sull Wylekyn, this joly gentyl mast,
All to my Lorde Prynce, that neuer was caste;
Therefore let vs all syng nowel.

Tyll home sull Wylekyn, this joly gentyl nore,
All to my Lorde Chaberlayne, that neuer was for-sore;
Therefore let vs all syng nowel.

Tyll home sull Wylekyn, this joly gentyl sayle,
All to my Lorde Fueryn, that neuer dyd fayle;
Therefore let vs all syng nowel.

The carole is notated in a manuscript containing several hands, that also includes Latin poems and rules of grammar. Greene states that it 'is probably a close parody of a folk-song, to judge from its lilt and repetitive formulas'.[122] Notwithstanding Greene's use of the anomolous term 'folk-song' it does show possible grounds for being a topical adaptation of a vernacular carole model. In this case the metaphor of a ship represents the King, or the ship of State, and Wylekyn is Warwick. The formulaic opening lines of each stanza and the inclusion of a 'bob', 'therefore let us all syng nowel', before the repeat of the burden places this carole firmly in the context of an orally transmitted culture.

The final example in this section also uses the symbolism of the Rose but in a style of carole very different from the one quoted above. *Now is the Rose of Rone growen to a gret honoure* will not be transcribed in full as it is a fifteen-verse account of the Battle of Towton (29 March 1461) written by a Yorkist supporter.[123] It exists in Part II of a compilation volume in which two unrelated manuscripts are bound together. The manuscript contains other political poems on Yorkist policy and an account of the Battle of Northampton.[124] Although it begins with a two-line burden the register of the carole is that of a high, courtly style including many references to heraldic emblems and aristocratic participants in the battle. For example, stanza nine is as follows:

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[121] London, British Library, MS Addit. 19046. fol. 74r. (Greene, *EEC*, no. 430).
[122] Greene, *EEC*, p. 441.

> The Grehound and the Hertes Hede, thei quyt hem wele that day;
> So did the Harow of Caunterbury and Clynton with his Kay;
> The White Ship of Brystow, he feryd not that fray;
> The blak Ram of Couentre, he said not ons nay.
> Blessid be the tyme that euer God spred that floure.

The repetitive beginnings of the lines and the formulaic listings of the heraldic charges, which is continued through verses eight to twelve, is derived from the oral tradition of *chansons de gestes* and sagas, but this long and complex poem looks more towards the literate works of the sixteenth century than to the semi-improvised dance-songs of its carole antecedents. It is difficult, therefore, from these late examples, to make any firm conjectures about how the carollers may have celebrated the victorious arrivals and royal entries discribed in previous chapters of this thesis. It can only be guessed that *Nowell* might have provided a starting point for the burden, and that appropriate names and events would have been inserted into formulaic and repetitive stanzas according to the knowledge and inventiveness of the participants.

5: 8 Nonsense caroles

My final category is nonsense songs though there are so few examples that it does not really constitute a ‘category’. I include it only to provide some context for Ryman’s nonsense carole already discussed in Chapter Four. I have established that, while it is dangerous to make generalisations from a few examples, they may suggest a more substantial hinterland of a similar repertoire in oral carolling practice. The False Fox, (see Table 5:16) written on the back page of James Ryman’s book of religious songs, is the sole example of its kind in the manuscript record pre-sixteenth century.[125] It is a lighthearted, nonsense song about the stock character of the wily fox, often personified as Reynard and given a moralistic slant in sermons, but not in this example.

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[123] Trinity College, Dublin. MS. D. 4. 18. f.70v. (Greene, *EEC*, no. 431)
[124] Greene, *EEC*, p. 347.

Table 5:16. *The False Fox.*

With how fox how with hey fox hey / come nomore into our croft to bere our gese awaye.

The fals fox came into our stye
And toke our gese ther by and by.

The fals fox came into our yerde
And ther he made the gese aferde *with how etc.*

The fals fox came into our gate
And toke our gese ther wher they sate *with how fox etc.*

The fals fox came to our halle dore
And shrove our gese ther in the flore *with how fox etc.*

The fals fox came into our halle
And assayled our gese both grete and smale *with how fox etc.*

The fals fox came into our cowpe
And ther he made our gese to stowpe *with how fox etc.*

He toke a gose fast by the nek
And the gose thoo began to quek *with how fox etc.*

The good wyfe came out in her smok
And at the fox she threw [] he rok *with how fox etc.*

The good man came out with his flayle
And smote the fox upon the tayle *with how fox etc.*

He threw a gose upon hys bak
And furth he went thoo with his pak *with how fox etc.*

The goodman swore yf that he myght
He wold him slee or it wer nyght *with how fox etc.*

The fals fox went into hys denne
And ther he was full mery thenne *with how fox etc.*

He came ayene yet the nextwek
And toke away both henne and cheke *with how fox etc.*

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[125] Cambridge, University Library MS Ee. 1. 12. See Chapter Four, p. 122.

The goodman saide unto his wyfe
The fals fox lyveth a mery lyfe *with how fox etc.*

The fals fox came upon a day
And with our gese he made affray *with how fox how etc.*

He took a gose fast by the nek
And made her to say Whoccumquek

Academics have tended to ignore this text on the grounds that it is not of any relevance to studies of the religious songs in the main part of Ryman's manuscript. Greene did not include it in his anthology because he did not consider it to fit his strict rule that a carole must begin with a burden, although in this case the burden is written in brackets beside the first stanza and referenced after every subsequent stanza. However, its existence on the back page, in the same hand as the rest of the caroles in the manuscript, points to the existence of a parallel repertoire showing features of improvisation, incremental repetition and other hallmarks of a 'low'-registered oral tradition.

Another nonsense carole does exist, in Richard Kele's book, which takes corrupted Latin phrases from the Mass for Christmas Day and mixes them with snippets of garbled proverbial phrases.

Table 5:17. *Gebit, gebit, gebit, gebit.*

Gebit, gebit, gebit, gebit,
Lux fulgebit hodie. (*The light will illuminate the day*)

Ipse mocat me; (bowdlerised version of *Ipse invocavit me*)
An aple is no pere tree
In civitate David. (*In the city of David*)

Notum fecit Dominus:
By the byll one knoweth a gose
In civitate David.

Aparuit Esau: (Mass includes the phrase *Apparuit gratia*)
A red gowne is not blew
In civitate David.

Verbum caro factum est; (*The word was made flesh*)
A shepe is a peryllous beste
In civitate David.

Whilst these two caroles do not share a theme they do both clearly demonstrate a form that could be added to by members of the convivial company with further familiar Latin phrases or foxy misdemeanours. It is frustrating so little written evidence exists for this repertoire, but it is unlikely that these were the only two caroles in this style that were ever shared in carolling entertainments. They seem to share enough characteristics with the caroles discussed in the previous sections to suggest that carolling provided an opportunity for playing with words and ideas, misquoting familiar Latin texts and telling stories purely for the fun of it. This is a far cry from the literary carolling studied in Chapter Two or the pious carolling of the Franciscans but the essential ephemeral nature of much secular carolling, its spontaneity and informality, would, I suggest, have encouraged improvised caroles similar to these two.

Conclusion

This study has shown that some conclusions about carolling practice during the late fifteenth to early sixteenth century can be drawn from what is a somewhat fragmentary manuscript record. Carolling was fully participatory in that the community or company was expected to join in and also make contributions of their own. This was from a repertoire of memorised or improvised caroles based on burdens, topics, themes or styles that were held in common in the collective oral tradition. Some themes were pre-Christian, non-Christian and even anti-Christian in their choice of topic, language and imagery. The use of the carole as a vehicle for religious expression was only one aspect of carolling practice but, due to the diligence of some Franciscans, it became something of a literary form in itself and, therefore, overwhelmingly represented in the manuscript record. This proportion of evidence in respect of religious caroles, in comparison to secular ones, does not necessarily represent the balance of subject matter that would have pertained at a festive gathering at the time, however, even among the clerics themselves.

The fact that some topics reappear in the records at different times, and are accorded different treatments, suggests that they, or at least the burdens' ideas, were held in wider circulation than just amongst the direct clerical community and that a visitor at, for example, a mid-winter feast would have been able to join in, or even contribute some stanzas of their own. Some of the literary caroles that have formed the basis for this chapter were perhaps less suitable for dancing and more sedentary, but they retain many of the characteristics of their dance-song antecedents and it cannot be assumed that participatory carolling, revolving around dancing, was no longer popular during this period, especially in the spring and summer months. It is credible that fewer caroles, suitable for dancing to, were recorded in the extant manuscripts which were so predominently clerical in authorship.

The carole was a versatile idiom and similar material could be adapted to suit a variety of contexts. These included the composition of the company, whether it was clerical, courtly or common, and also the situation, seasonal or celebratory for example. Some generic burdens were employed that could be connected to seemingly unrelated material but served a purpose to gather the company’s attention, signal the tune to be employed and initiate the response. The composition of the stanzas could be repetitive, accumulative or narrative and, although most of the recorded caroles are short, consisting frequently of only four verses, some allowed opportunities for expansion with the addition of improvised material. The carole provided a milieu for enjoyment by all members of late medieval society including the young and the old, the literate and the illiterate, the drunk and the sober.

Chapter 6

‘*Survivances’* of carolling in folk culture.

Introduction

It has been established, in the previous chapters, that medieval carolling was the activity of singing and dancing at the same time but that the two components took separate lines of development after c.1500, according to the written record. It is possible that the combination of singing and dancing in dance-songs remained in oral culture far later but the terms ‘carol’ and ‘carolling’ became attached to the seasonal song element alone. People continued to accompany their activities with songs, especially in the contexts of communal agricultural work, rowing, sailing and presumably dancing, in the absence of available musical instruments. However, the written record is fragmentary for the period from the sixteenth century until the interest in what came to be called ‘folk’ culture blossomed in the nineteenth century.

Recently, Mullally has argued that the carole, as a Medieval French dance, ‘went out of fashion about 1400’.[1] Moreover, he continues, ‘The fact remains, however, that no obvious relationship is discernible between the carole as a dance and the carol as a burden-and-stanza form’, and that this English ‘lyric form’, though the name ‘carol’ was applied to it, was unrelated to dancing.[2] The previous chapters of this study have shown, however, that there existed a more fluid and complex relationship between the French or Anglo-Norman use of the word carole, and the central position of the activity in insular British culture than his view allows. The emergence of the polyphonic carol, for example, as exemplified by *The Agincourt Carol* in 1415, represents just one, well documented, direction that the song element of carolling took during the fifteenth century.[3] This is described by Lefferts as follows:

> The polyphonic English devotional carol in English and Latin is an important indigenous product […] that did not circulate abroad. Not the music of the noble courts but not the music of the people either, the carol appears to have been a repertory primarily for recreational use at Christmas and Eastertime in the world

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[1] Mullally, ‘The *Carole*’, p. 257.

[2] Mullally, ‘The *Carole’*, pp. 255-6.

[3] Cambridge, Trinity College MS O. 3. 58 and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Arch Selden B. 26, fol. 17v.

> of the scholars, fellows and singing men of schools, colleges and major ecclesiastical choral establishments.[4]

It is certainly true that singing and dancing followed separate paths of development in Britain, first in courtly culture and later in what might be referred to anachronistically as 'folk' culture.[5] However, this was not the case in other parts of Europe or even the whole of the British Isles where some dance-songs have remained in the folk repertoire. Further, it is false to assume, as Mullally seems to above, that all carolling ceased sometime during the fifteenth century and that entirely new dance and song repertoires were invented. I was inspired by the work of the French-Canadian ethnomusicologist, Conrad Laforte, who found *survivances,* or relics, of medieval dance-songs in the folk-song repertoire of twentieth-century Poitou.[6] He describes how, in April 1976, a group of folk dancers from that region were asked if they could dance to songs. The accordion was put to one side, the group held hands in a circle and 'font balancer leurs bras et leurs jambes' while the *chante-avant,* or lead singer, sang a *vers signal* which was then repeated by the dancers.[7] Immediately after this the circle dropped hands and regrouped, as couples going around in a circle, while the lead singer sang the verse or second part. One lead singer asserted that it would be impossible to sing in the first part if the dancers did not *balancer* as required and another suggested that the repetition of the *vers signal* by the dancers, gave the lead singer the chance to remember or make up the next verse.[8] This chapter will explore similar threads or relics of carolling, in England, in the songs and dances of subsequent centuries.

In Section One I give a brief background to the influence of humanist ideas on the development, and rise in popularity, of choreographed dance in courtly and clerical circles. This will serve to contextualize the lack of courtly carolling references after the fifteenth century and help to explain the separation of the art forms of dance and song. I include studies of sixteenth-century branles and circle-dances for possible evidence of remnants of carolling. These notated, choreographed dances give some indication of a movement repertoire and branles such as the *Washerwoman's Branle* and the *Branle de Poictou* also include gestural elements similar to those that may also have been a part of earlier carolling practice.

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[4] Lefferts, 'England', p. 113.

[5] See Chapter One, p. 20 for a discussion on appellation of 'folk' to so called 'low'or 'popular' culture, a distinction that did not pertain to medieval society.

[6] Conrad Laforte, *Survivances médiévales dans la chanson folklorique* (Quebec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1981).

[7] Laforte, p. 64.

[8] Laforte, p. 65.

In Section Two I begin with an analysis of dance-tune elements in general, and carolling tunes in particular, in order to trace these elements in the seventeenth-century publications by Thomas Ravenscroft and John Playford of music and choreographies for country dances. Many of the tunes included in these publications were known, at the time, to be much older songs and some can be found in contemporary broadsheet ballads, but there is no indication that they were to be sung to accompany the dances. The practice of including country dances in the Inns of Court anti-masques, in theatrical productions and at court provided source material for the publisher John Playford. This material will be interrogated to ascertain what elements of carolling vernacular dance tunes might have been retained in the seventeenth century.

In Section Three I study remnants of carolling preserved in English children's circular singing-games. My starting point here is the seminal research by Iona and Peter Opie.[9] I will show that many such games follow the carolling pattern in which participants form an inward facing ring and the singing is led by one person with the rest joining in the chorus. The devaluation, and consequent relegation, of oral cultural ritual practices to a position of entertainment within literate society, has been discussed in Chapter One of this thesis.[10] The preservation of carolling practice within the pre-literate culture of young children will be shown to resonate with this theory.

In Section Four, I interrogate the legacy of folk-song collectors at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. I look closely at songs including *Down in yon Forest, Midsummer Carol* and the *Lemonday Carol,* seeking evidence of their evolution from medieval carole antecedents.

The chapter concludes with my pastiche setting of *The Friar and the Nun.* It was created using an experiential research model and incorporates the melodic elements analysed earlier in the chapter. It pulls together theory with continuing practice to show how a carole for communal participation might have been generated.

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[9] Iona Opie and Peter Opie, *The Singing Game* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

[10] Eric A. Havelock, *The Muse Learns to Write,* p. 45. See p. 14 of this thesis.

6:1. Developments in courtly and clerical dance practice in the sixteenth century.

Carolling as a dance activity seems to have declined in popularity in courtly and clerical circles during the fifteenth century, although evidence exists of continuing practice among the common people. Opie quotes Sir Richard Maitland exhorting the people in towns to 'dance caroles through the streets, in celebration of the marriage of Mary Queen of Scots to the sickly young *dauphin*, Francis, in April 1558'.[11] It is unlikely that older styles of popular dancing were abandoned immediately, but the gradual change in courtly and clerical dance and singing practice that took place during the fifteenth century served to develop two distinctly separate art forms. The term 'carol' became increasingly synonymous with the Christmas religious hymn and carollers were associated primarily with the mid-winter celebrations. This is reflected in references in the *Records of Early English Drama* which show that Prior William More of Worcester paid 'syngares of carralles at Christmas day at nyȝth' in 1518, and 'syngers of caralles Apon Neweyeres day' in 1520 while in June 1533 he refers to 'þe syngeres in þe morenyng on þe Dedication day'.[12] These accounts refer consistently merely to 'syngers' throughout the year, confining the term 'carralles' to the Christmas season.

During the Tudor period, the courtly or clerical carol, a song that was either secular or religious, consisting of a burden and several stanzas, became a composed polyphonic art-song for performance by trained, male singers. The Ritson MS, mentioned in the previous chapter as containing a version of the Boar's Head Carol, contains over forty carols, all with musical settings, many by Richard Smert who was rector of the village of Plymtree, near Exeter.[13] Stevens describes these as follows: 'the 'rude' popular verses receive vigorous metrical setting in highly stylized music built up from an old-fashioned popular mode'.[14] The other two extant early sixteenth-century English song-books are The Fayrfax MS and Henry VIII's MS.[15] These were professionally produced for performance and consumption in the highest courtly circles and the carols they contain are mostly in three parts and written for accomplished male singers. Stevens states that 'from a literary, as well as from a musical point of view, *Ritson's MS* stands at the end of a tradition – the tradition of the medieval carol'.[16] Although retaining the form of burden and stanza the songs were for performance by a few singers and did not allow for spontaneous participation by the company, nor for dancing. From this time onwards, the term 'carol' became associated more and more with any seasonal religious celebratory song rather than the burden and stanza dance-song form. Much work has been done by scholars on this later religious carol repertoire and, as the present study is concerned with secular carolling, I will instead pursue the dance element and the developments of the circle-dance form in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

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[11] Opie and Opie, *The Singing Game*, p. 6.

[12] *Records of Early English Drama (REED): Herefordshire and Worcestershire*, ed. by David N. Klausner (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

[13] Stevens, *Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Court* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 5.

[14] Stevens, *Music and Poetry*, p. 20.

[15] London, British Library, Add. 5465: The Fayrfax MS and London, British Library, Add. 31922: Henry VII's MS.

As has been seen earlier in this study, while much had been written about dancing, there had been no attempt at precise description or notation of specific steps until the fifteenth century.[17] Dance had remained part of the oral, or visual, culture and was learned by demonstration and participation. It is clear that some dance tunes and caroles enjoyed widespread use and that it was possible for dancers such as William Marshall to join in dancing with strangers, within a courtly culture of carolling, without having to learn any specific dances or steps for the occasion.[18] This situation changed around the beginning of the fifteenth century, and the first notated choreographies began to appear in teaching manuals in the middle of the century in Italy.[19] This was due to the influence of humanist ideas on education including the belief that dancing was an important skill to possess, for the true government of both the individual and of society.[20] Social dancing oiled the wheels of international diplomacy in court circles and performances were seen as an expression of the sophistication, education, and self-discipline of the participants. Complicated, specially composed and choreographed dances could only be learned by members of a society who enjoyed the wealth to employ a teacher, and the time to practise. We have learned, in earlier chapters of this thesis, that skill at carolling was considered a desirable attribute in a knight or a lady, in the medieval period, but this was as a semi-improvised or spontaneous social activity, rather than a rehearsed performative one. As Nevile says, 'In *quattrocento* Italy dance had become a social marker; it was one way by which the elite level of society distanced itself from the rest of society.'[21] The treatises and dance manuals of the fifteenth century make it clear that the marriage of dance and music, expressed by skilled practitioners as dancers and instrumentalists, had become an 'art'. As the fifteenth-century dance teacher Guglielmo Ebreo wrote, 'when music was played, and the dancers adjusted their steps to fit that music, then dancing moved from being a natural activity to being an art'.[22] Though the music of existing *chansons* was adapted to accompany the dancing, and words were sometimes set to popular dance tunes, the dialogue was between the dancer and the music, controlled by the teacher or choreographer, and no longer between the lead singer of the carole and the other participants.

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[16] Stevens, *Music and Poetry,* p. 9.

[17] Chapter Two, p. 50.

[18] Holden, ed. *The History of William Marshal.* See Chapter Two p. 42 of this thesis.

[19] Antonio Cornazzano, *Libro dell' arte del danzare,* Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.; Cappon 203 (1455/56), Domenico da Piacenza *De arte saltandi* Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, fonds italien, 972 (c. 1455), Guglielmo Ebreo (also called Giovanni Ambrosio) *De pratica seu arte tripudii* Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, fonds italien, 973 (1463).

[20] For an in-depth study of this topic see Jennifer Nevile, *Dance, Spectacle, and the Body Politick, 1250-1750.*

Two main choreographed dance forms developed in Italy, the stately *Bassadanza* (*basse danse* in French) and the *ballo*, which was constructed of several sections in contrasting tempi and metres. These dances were designed to be performed to an audience, not necessarily on a stage but in a hall with the onlookers observing from three sides. The choreographed figures were either processional or forward facing thus exploiting the physical aspects of the dancers from the view of an audience seated at the head and sides of a hall. This is unlike the carole in which the dancers were predominantly in an inward facing circle and resulting in a spectacle of less interest to an audience, who would have mainly seen the dancers' backs. The *Basse danse* and the *Ballo* were taught across Europe and therefore were the first to be notated so that they could be accurately transmitted. Two of the earliest dance notations to appear in England are for *basses danses*. These are Robert Copelande's *The maner of dauncynge of bace dances* (1521) and some dances jotted down on the first flyleaf of a book in Salisbury Cathedral Library.[23] The third source for the earliest dance notations in England is known as The Gresley Manuscript.[24] It is a gentleman's *aide-memoire* of twenty-six dances that reflect French and Italian dance practices but which do not adhere to any particular *ballo* form. They are not all social dances, as might be expected in the context of dances for the participation of men and women couples, with or without an audience. Fourteen of the twenty-six choreographies are specifically for three men, and the dances for two people are not gender specific. This is expressed as '*de tribus'* and '*de duobus'*.[25] The situation for their use is therefore unclear. The existence of the book itself, however, does reflect the spread of formal dance instruction and set choreographies that emerged during the period.

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[21] Nevile, 'Dance and Society in *Quattrocento* Italy', in *Dance, Spectacle and the Body Politick,* pp. 80-93 (p. 85).

[22] Ebreo cited in Nevile, 'The Relationship between Dance and Music in Fifteenth-century Dance Practice', in *Dance, Spectacle and the Body Politick*, pp. 155-165 (p. 156).

[23] Both cited by Jennifer Nevile in 'Dance Steps and Music in the Gresley Manuscript', *Historical Dance,* 3 (1999), 2-19 (p. 2). Salisbury, Salisbury Cathedral Library, Johannes Balbus de Janua, *Catholicon* (Venice, 1497).

[24] Matlock, Derbyshire Record Office, D77 box 38, pp. 51-79.

These notated dances were performed in Britain to demonstrate the fashionable skill and refinement of the court but the old social 'rownde dance' still had a place. This is illustrated by the Somerset Herald, John Young, describing the entertainments on Mary Tudor's Progress from London to Edinburgh, to marry James IV, in 1503.

> After som words rehersed betwyx them, the mynstrells begonne to play a basse daunce, the wich was daunced by the said qwene and the Countess of Surrey. After thys doon, they played a rownde, the wich was daunced by the Lorde Gray ledynge the said qwene, acompanyd of many lords, ladyes, and gentylwoemen.[26]

This description illustrates the co-existence of the learned and performed formal *basse danse* and the informal 'rownde' in which all the company could join. It demonstrates that ring-dances continued to be a part of social courtly dancing, even though the term *carole* was no longer commonly used in this context and the choreography for a 'rownde' was not notated in any extant treatises.

6:1:1. The earliest notated ring-dances: Arbeau's Branles

The term *branle* first appears as the name of a step in *basse danse* notations and is written in two of the Gresley Dances as *brawle* (Talbott) and *brayll* (Northumberland).[27] It is a pair of steps, left then right, remaining on the spot; in modern ballet terminology it is called a *balancé.* It is also described by David Wilson as follows: 'there is reason to think it comprised two symmetrical movements by which the dancers turned first toward their left and then toward their right, without lifting their feet from the ground'.[28] It may therefore just have required a transfer of weight from side to side. The word is used in modern French in the phrase *mettre en branle* meaning 'to set swinging' and in *branler la tête*, meaning 'to shake one's head'.[29] It is not clear exactly when or how a dance of that name first appeared or how it was related to the medieval *carole*, but evidence can be found during the later sixteenth century of the terms being used interchangeably. Jacques Yver wrote, in 1572:

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[25] This is expressed as '*de tribus'* and '*de duobus'* in the titles but as 'first man, second man and third man' in the choreographies. The gender of the dancers is the subject of some debate.

[26] John Young, The Somerset Herald, 'The fyancells of Margaret, eldest daughter of King Henry VIIth to James King of Scotland: together with her departure from England, journey into Scotland, her reception and marriage there, and the great feasts held on that account', in *Collectanea de Rebus Anglicanis,* iv, ed. by John Leland, (London: Thomas Hearne, 1774), pp. 258-300 (p. 284).

[27] Nevile, 'Gresley Manuscript' p. 10.

[28] David R. Wilson, 'The Basse Dance c.1445- c.1575' in Nevile, *Dance, Spectacle,* pp. 166-82 (p. 168).

> Car les gentilshommes, ayant quelques temps branle à la lourdesque (qu'ils appellant à Tholose la pageoise), prièrent les damoiselles de se mettre de la partie; lesquelles, ayant agrandi la ronde carole, commencèrent à dire force branles autour du bouquet […].[30]

(for the noblemen, having *brawled* [danced] for a while to the *lourdesque* (which is called *la pageoise* in Toulouse), would invite the young ladies to take part; the latter, having expanded the carole circle, would energetically begin *branles* around the *bouquet.*)

The terms *branles* and *carole* are used here in a similar way to the use of the expression that one could be said to 'waltz around' in a dance, whilst not necessarily dancing a specific waltz such as *The Blue Danube.* This extract shows that the term *carole* was still being used to describe the typical signature ring formation, whilst the verb and noun to describe the general activity is replaced by *branlé* and *branles.* Mullally states that Yver 'quotes several lyrics that he calls branles'.[31] This strengthens the association of *branles* with dance-songs, and therefore the connection with carolling, although it is not clear whether the *branles* lyrics were sung and danced simultaneously. The practice of adapting *chansons* for dance music, and conversely of setting words to dance tunes, was common at that time.[32]

It is towards the end of the sixteenth century that the first notated choreographies for *branles* appear, confirming some of the characteristics shared with known aspects of carolling. In 1589 the treatise entitled *Orchesographie* was published in France, under the pseudonym Thoinot Arbeau. It was the work of a priest, Jehan Tabourot, who was supported by the Jesuits, who in turn placed great importance on dancing as part of a good education. It was an important development in the evolution of dance notation as each page has the music stave running vertically down the left side, with the steps described written horizontally and adjacent to the notes. (See Fig. 6:1.)[33]

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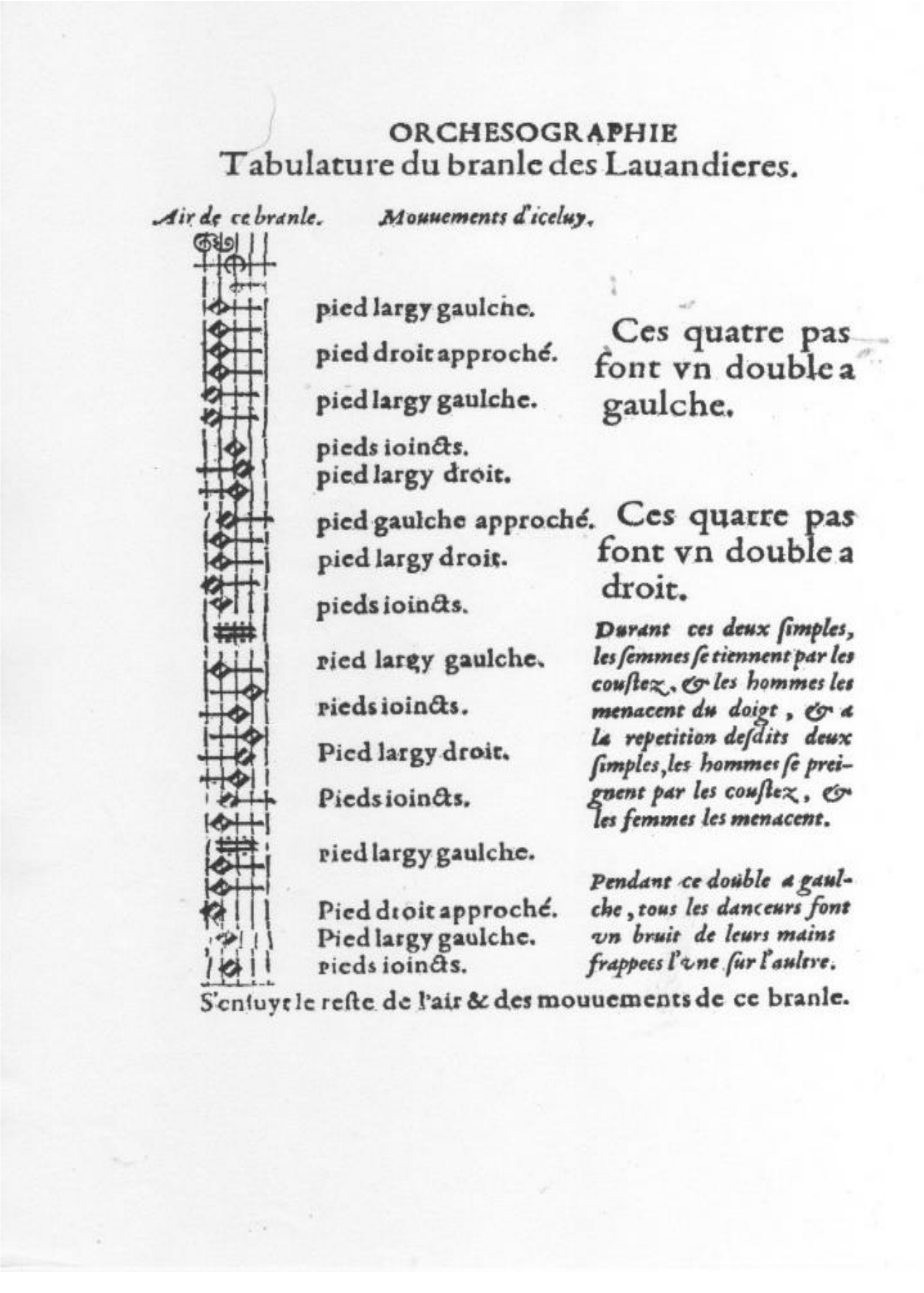
[29] Collins French Dictionary.

[30] Jacques Yver, 'Le Printemps d'Yver' in *Les Vieux Conteurs français* ed. by Paul L. Jacob (Paris 1841) p. 573. Cited in Mullally, 'The *Carole*', p. 92. This is somewhat misleadingly translated by Mullally as he interprets *branle à la lourdesque* to be a dance called 'The Branle à la Lourdesque'.

[31] Mullally,'The *Carole*', p. 92.

[32] Nevile, *Dance, Spectacle,* p. 209.

Fig.6:1. Arbeau: Branle des Lavandieres.



ORCHESOGRAPHIE

Tabulature du branle des Lauandieres.

Air de ce branle. *Mouuements d'iceluy.*

pied largy gaulche.
pied droit approché.
pied largy gaulche.
pieds ioincts.

Ces quatre pas font vn double a gaulche.

pied largy droit.
pied gaulche approché.
pied largy droit.
pieds ioincts.

Ces quatre pas font vn double a droit.

pied largy gaulche.
pieds ioincts.
Pied largy droit.
Pieds ioincts.

Durant ces deux ſimples, les femmes ſe tiennent par les couſtez, & les hommes les menacent du doigt, & a la repetition deſdits deux ſimples, les hommes ſe preignent par les couſtez, & les femmes les menacent.

pied largy gaulche.
Pied droit approché.
Pied largy gaulche.
pieds ioincts.

Pendant ce double a gaulche, tous les danceurs font vn bruit de leurs mains frappees l'vne ſur l'aultre.

S'enſuyt le reſte de l'air & des mouuements de ce branle.

The bulk of the treatise contains exhibition type dances for performance (i.e. *balli* and *basse danses*), but in the introduction to the collection of *Branles,* Arbeau says:

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[33] Thoinot Arbeau, *Orchesographie*, p. 83v, available online at <http://www.imslp.org/wiki/Orch%C3%A9sographie_(Arbeau,_Thoinot)>

> Puis que vous savez bien dancer la pavane & la basse dance, il vous sera facile de dancer les branles à la mesme mesure binaire, & entendrez que les branles se dancent de cousté, & non pas en marchant en avant.

(When you know how to dance the pavane and the basse danse well, it will be easy for you to dance the branles to the same binary measure, and you will understand that the branles are danced sideways and do not advance forwards).

He provides music and steps for twenty-three branles.[34] The treatise takes the form of a dialogue between a teacher, Arbeau, and his pupil, Capriol.

The introduction describes how the *branle* steps always move sideways, not forwards and that people of all ages can enjoy them. He explains the *double branle* steps as being three steps and a joined foot, in other words 'left step, right together, left step and right foot close (unweighted)' ready to start with a right step in the other direction. The *branle simple* is just a single step left or right. It is also made clear that the dance always begins with a *double branle* to the left and it is a jumped step (*getterez a cousté le pied gaulche*).[35] In order to progress the dance to the left, the steps to the right must be restrained and the ones to the left '*gaignent toujours avantage'* (always gain an advantage). This fits the many descriptions of the carole moving round towards the dancers' left.[36] Arbeau also describes how, when lots of dancers have joined hands in a line, the last person takes the leader's left hand and '*ainsi fera une dance ronde'*, (thus makes a round dance).[37] Capriol asks about the leader of the dance and Arbeau replies that this should be the eldest young woman or a *Seigneur* of repute. He explains that one should take the young lady with your right hand or graciously take a place among those who are in the dance. As shall be seen in the following study of some of the dances, the choreographies are for any number of dancers, but some require couples. In these the circle splits up as the dancers drop hands and turn to each other in pairs.[38] The circle reforms as the music begins again. This could be a remnant of the stanza and burden pattern of the carole. The tunes have lost their texts but in many of the choreographies a narrative or gestural element remains. There is a sense of a chorus or refrain at the beginning as the dancers circle to the left, followed by an action section that contains descriptive or interactive movements, sometimes in the form of a dialogue between the couples.

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[34] Arbeau, *Orchesographie*, p. 68v.
[35] Arbeau, *Orchesographie*, p. 68.
[36] Chapter Two p. 59.
[37] Arbeau, *Orchesographie*, p. 70.
[38] Arbeau, 'Branle des Lavandieres' in *Orchesographie,* p. 83.

6:1:2. Various characteristics of Branles.

It became standard practice, in the seventeenth century, to begin courtly, social dancing with a set of *branles*.[39] They were not 'country dances' as such but contained some movements that imitated or were derived from a simpler and freer movement repertoire than that employed in the formal court dances. They always began with the dancers holding hands in a circle and would therefore have functioned as vehicle for fostering a sense of community and an opportunity to observe the other participants. The earliest examples are those collected in Arbeau's treatise. The first two choreographies are the *Branle Double* and the *Branle Simple* and these each consist of a sequence of 'double' or 'simple' steps, as described above.[40] These are in duple-time and are followed by the *Branle Gay* which is in triple-time, and is called 'gay' because '*l'un des pieds est toujours en l'air',* (one of the feet is always in the air); in other words, it is jumped throughout.[41] These three choreographies set out the basic characteristics of the dance which can be executed with more, or less, energy depending upon the age or status of the participants. In some of the following dances Arbeau describes some more specific characteristics. The *Branle de Poitou* for example, contains a lot of jumps from foot to foot to exploit the sound of the regional footwear of clogs, or *sabots*, while the *Branle d'Ecosse* includes steps in which the raised foot crosses over the other one.[42] Arbeau comments that this dance has been fashionable for about twenty years, thus implying that these dances were already in general circulation and are not newly composed choreographies by him.

The *Branle des Lavandieres* provides the model for a dance that contains a comic exchange of gestures between each couple. The dance begins with the standard '*branle* double left and *branle* double right' followed by a series of single steps during which the women *'se tiennent par les coustez'* (hold their sides) while the men *'les menacent du doigt'*, meaning that they wag a finger menacingly at them. The musical phrase is then repeated and the roles are reversed. This charade of a public argument between the sexes gives the sophisticated, educated dancers the opportunity to behave in a gross and uncouth manner and to mock the poor washerwomen and their ilk. The closing section of the dance requires the dancers to clap their hands together to imitate the sound of the washerwomen beating their linen in the Seine, in Paris. It is described as follows: '*Pendant ces quatre pas, les danceurs font encore du bruict, en frappant de leurs mains l'une a l'aultre.'* (During these four steps, the dancers make more noise by clapping their hands together.) This movement with the hands and arms is made specifically in order to produce the descriptive noise and does not imitate the movements of a dancing washerwoman, whereas it is feasible that particular characteristic regional steps were used by Poitevins or Scotsmen, as mentioned above.

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[39] Entry for 31st December 1662 describing the ball at Whitehall. Samuel Pepys, *Diary* ed. Robert Latham, Vol. I, (London: The Folio Society, 1996), p. 246.
[40] Arbeau, pp. 69-71.
[41] Arbeau, pp. 71-2.
[42] Arbeau, pp. 79-80.

The *Branle des Sabots* includes a foot tapping action, making use of the sound, or imitating the sound, of the clogs.[43] This foot tapping movement reminds Capriol of the action of a horse when '*il veuillent troubler l'eau* (the pawing action when it 'wants to disturb the water').[44] This leads Arbeau to mention that a similar action is employed in the *Branle des Chevaulx* which he goes on to notate next. In this dance, the men and women take it in turns to make two taps and turn on the spot while the other looks on, thus breaking the circle and providing a section of dyadic interaction between couples, as in the *Branle des Lavandieres*. Similar sections occur in other *branle* choreographies and could provide a model for caroles in which some parts might shift the attention of the participants away from the leader, or the group as a whole, and turn their focus towards the adjacent person, as for example, in a convivial drinking song.

It cannot be assumed that these courtly choreographies mirrored the actual movement repertoire of the common people that they try to evoke. An outsider, observing the harmonious movements of rowers or labourers accompanied by work-songs might see the element of dance in the spectacle but the participants are not dancing. A dance incorporating similar movements is a translation into an art form. For example; the clog dances of the nineteenth-century Lancashire cotton-mill workers imitated the sound of the looms with their clogs, they did not imitate the actions of their labour. The courtly *branles* did not purport to be exact enactments of the regional folk dances but were constructed so that highly skilled, trained dancers might have some relaxation from the highly-controlled movement repertoire of the exhibition dances. They do, however, provide some indications as to how circle-dances might have been executed and some of the universally known conventions that governed them. For example, they all begin with ‘a double to the left’. Could this have been a remnant from the actions during the opening burden of a carole? In Chapter Two, we saw that carollers were sometimes exhorted to take hands and *balancer*.[45] This could be a connection with the side to side movement of the *branle* step, executed while the leader of the carole set the dance in motion with the opening burden. It is not possible to answer these questions definitively, but music and dance develop along a continuum. New forms and styles emerge, and old styles gradually disappear or are absorbed, adapted and transformed and it is possible that the *branle* was a locus for the continuation for some aspects of carolling.

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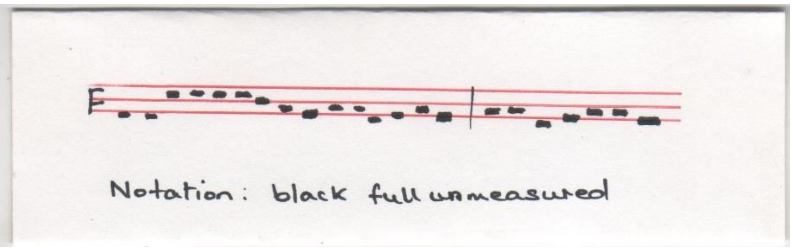
[43] Arbeau, p. 87.
[44] Arbeau, p. 88.

In order to trace remnants of carolling during the seventeenth century it is necessary to search for traces of characteristic elements, in the development of the separate repertoires of dance and song. The signature inward-facing circle of dancers has been traced through the *branles* of the sixteenth century and can be picked up in the published dances of John Playford. The carole’s antiphonal song form, with a communal burden and solo stanzas, and the characteristic textual themes, that were studied in the previous chapter, can be found in the works of Thomas Ravenscroft. These elements will be traced later in this chapter. An aspect that has not been explored before in this study, due to the lack of notated evidence, is the melodic and rhythmic elements of monophonic secular carole tunes.

6:2:1. Melodic and rhythmic style of monophonic carole tunes.

There are so few examples of tunes notated for medieval English monophonic secular caroles that a comparison with other known dance-song repertoires must be made to find elements that might distinguish a dance-song from songs of other genres. To the best of my knowledge, the *aide memoire* fragment of musical notation for the carole in G. & C., MS 383/603 (see Fig. 6:2.) is the only specific secular example.

Fig.6: 2. Transcription of notation in Gonville and Caius MS 383/603



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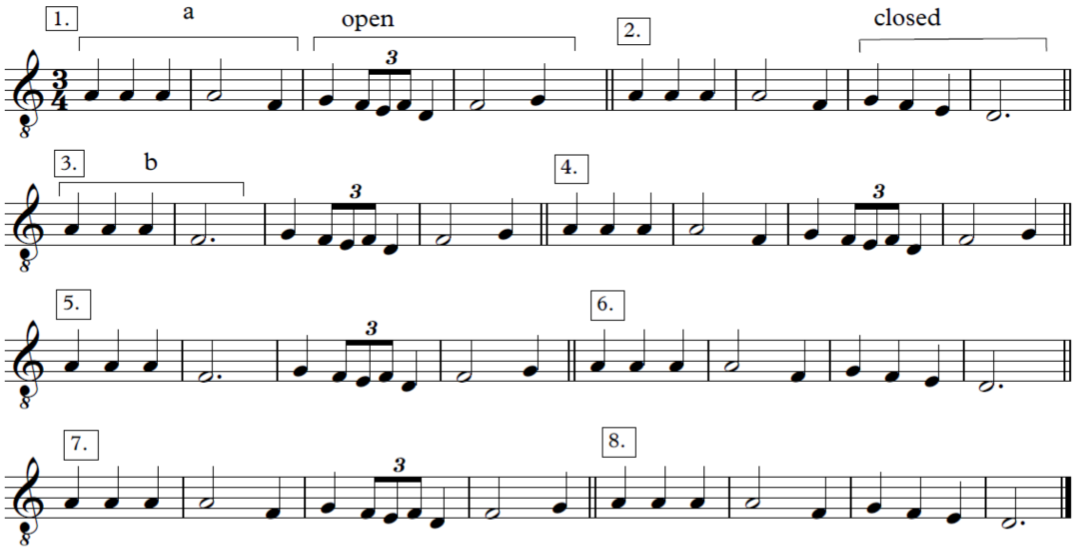
[45] Chapter Two, p. 58.

As it is not written in mensural (rhythmic) notation and there is no indication of the textual underlay it is not clear how the melody was applied. It covers at least twenty-four, possibly twenty-five syllables, if set syllabically, and would therefore be rather long for an incipit. Also, it is possible to see that the last seven notes are a repetition of the previous six and this would be unnecessary if it were just an incipit. This short stave of music presumably represented enough information, if the repetitions of musical phrases were understood, for the burden and stanza to be realized as a carole.

To gain some understanding of the conventions or idioms that might have applied to carole melodies it is necessary to look at some other relevant source material and to find emerging patterns. In his study of a French *rondeau, Prendés i garde,* by Guillaume d'Amiens. Stevens observes that the melody consists of 'short concise phrases', has a 'clearly defined tonality; a small melodic range; simple note-to-syllable relationship with virtually no melismas'. [46]

Fig.6: 3. Prendés i garde.



I would further propose that the melodies of dance-songs move predominantly by step, with few jumps of an interval greater than a third, and that the rhythm is repetitive and usually in a triple meter. In the following section I look at several examples to see how this list of characteristics might apply to dance-songs generally and to secular caroles also. I include information gleaned from a source of dance-songs that uses antiphonal call-and-response forms but does not contain caroles. This is the *Llibre Vermell de Monserrat.*[47] The ten extant songs were written specifically for the use of the pilgrims staying overnight in the church, so that they could continue to enjoy themselves, with singing and dancing, but with appropriate pious texts.[48] *Cuncti Simus concanentes* provides a clear example of the dance-song genre, in *virelai* form and demonstrates the characteristic elements outlined above.

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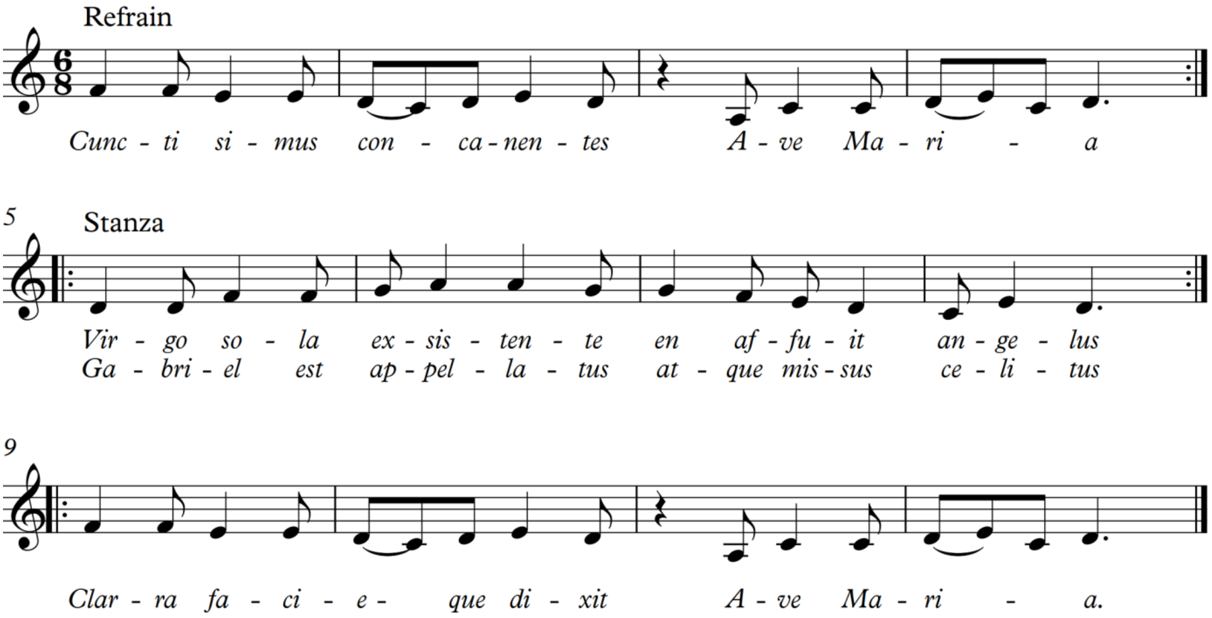
[46] Stevens, *Words and Music* p. 189. Also discussed in Chapter Two p. 49.

Fig. 6:4. Cuncti simus concanentes


Refrain
Cunc - ti si - mus con - ca - nen - tes A - ve Ma - ri - a
5
Stanza
Vir - go so - la ex - sis - ten - te en af - fu - it an - ge - lus
Ga - bri - el est ap - pel - la - tus at - que mis - sus ce - li - tus
9
Clar - ra fa - ci - e - que di - xit A - ve Ma - ri - a.

The opening refrain lies within the small range of a fourth, apart from one low quaver, and sets up a strong sense of a triple rhythm, (notated here in modern compound duple notation) which is frequently used for dance music. It can easily be imitated on the repeat by the other participants, either in its entirety, or at least the ‘Ave Maria’ bars. The stanza completes the range to a full octave and contains some varied rhythms (quaver, crotchet). The melody is repeated for the second line of text. The stanza concludes with the refrain melody but with a new line of text for two bars. The participants would be able to recognize the 'Ave Maria' ending and join in on the repeat.

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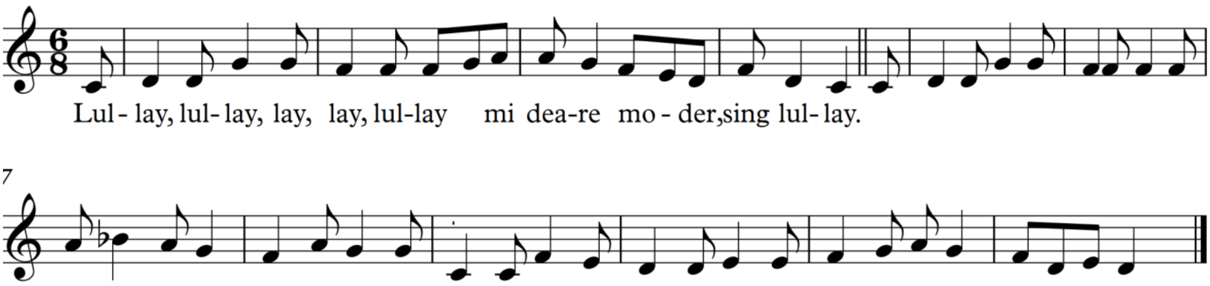
[47] ‘Llibre Vermell and the Legends of Monserrat’, *Amarinth Publishing*, available at <http://www.amaranthpublishing.com/LlibreVermell.htm> [accessed 21 January 2018].

[48] *Quia interdum peregrini quando vigilant in ecclesia Beate Marie de Monte Serrato volunt cantare et trepudiare, et etiam in platea de die, et ibi non debeant nisi honestas ac devotas cantilenas cantare, idcirco superius et inferius alique sunt scripte. Et de hoc uti debent honeste et parce, ne perturbent perseverantes in orationibus et devotis contemplationibus.*
(Because the pilgrims wish to sing and dance while they keep their watch at night in the church of the Blessed Mary of Montserrat, and also in the light of day; and in the church no songs should be sung unless they are chaste and pious, for that reason these songs that appear here have been written. And these should be used modestly, and take care that no one who keeps watch in prayer and contemplation is disturbed.) ‘Llibre Vermell and the Legends of Monserrat’.

For examples of a complete notated tune for an English carole it is also necessary to turn to the religious repertoire. The earliest surviving example of an English carole text with music is *Lullay, lullay: Als I lay on Yoolis night.*[49]

Fig. 6:5. Cambridge, University Library, MS Addit. 5943. f.169. (my transcription adapted from Dobson and Harrison, no. 20. p. 275)


Lul - lay, lul- lay, lay, lay, lul-lay mi dea-re mo - der,sing lul- lay.
7

The text of this carole, by John Grimestone, exists in an earlier manuscript, c.1372, without music and with thirty-seven stanzas.[50] The version above, with only sixteen stanzas, is presumed to have been notated by Thomas Turk, fellow of Winchester College c. 1400 for use at Christmas feasts in hall there.[51] The burden (bars 1-4) uses a vocal range of a sixth and, apart from the jump of a fourth up at the beginning and a third down at the end, is stepwise. The music for the stanza follows the same shape as the first line of the burden and then extends the vocal range by a semitone higher in the second line. The music for the third and fourth lines (bars 9-12) follows the general shape of the burden in a mostly stepwise motion but with some small differences in notes and rhythm. It has an open ending that requires a repeat of the burden to re-establish the sense of the hexachord *naturale* on C, rather than the hexachord *molle* (soft) on F, implied by the Bb.[52]

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[49] *Medieval English Songs,* ed. by E. J. Dobson and F. Ll. Harrison (London: Faber, 1979), p. 96.
[50] National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 18.7.21., fol. 3v.
[51] Dobson and Harrison, *Medieval English Songs,* p. 25.
[52] See p. 160 for an explanation of medieval music theory and the three hexachords.

My final example is the mid-fifteenth-century Christmas carol *Nova, nova, Ave fit ex Eva.*[53] The text of this carol can be found in two sources, without music: Bodleian MS. Eng. Poet. E.1 where it has seven stanzas, and a version with eight verses in Richard Hill's book, Balliol MS 345. The single verse with music notation (Fig. 6:6) is one of two songs in a composite manuscript compiled in the late 15th century, c.1488.[54]

Fig. 6:6. Glasgow, Hunterian Library, MS 83, fol. 12r.

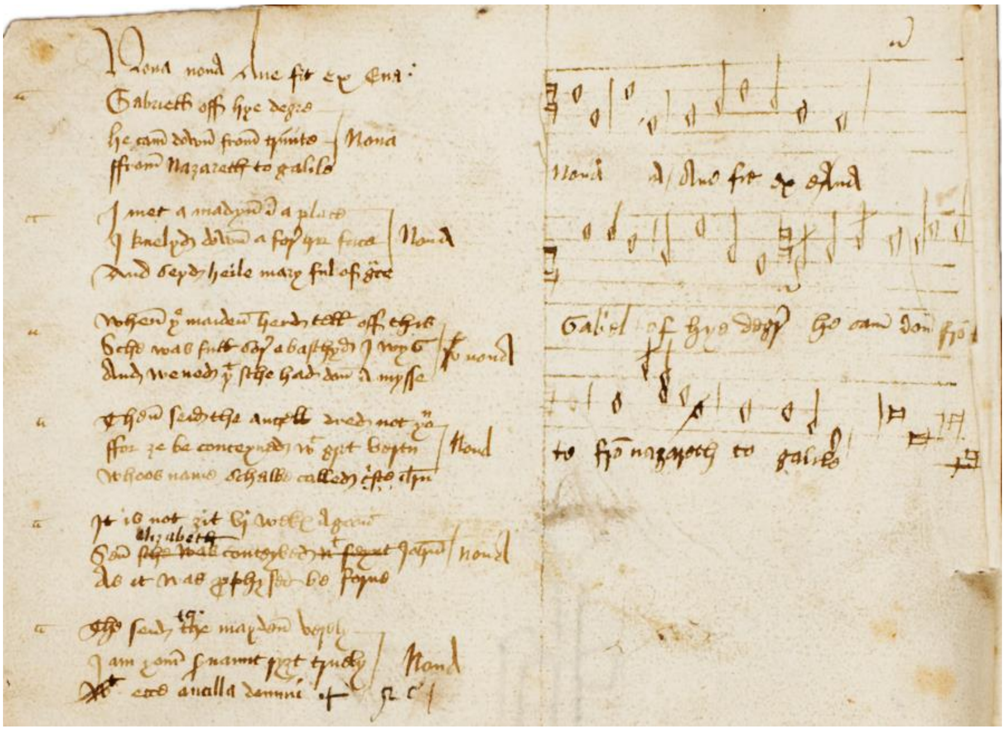
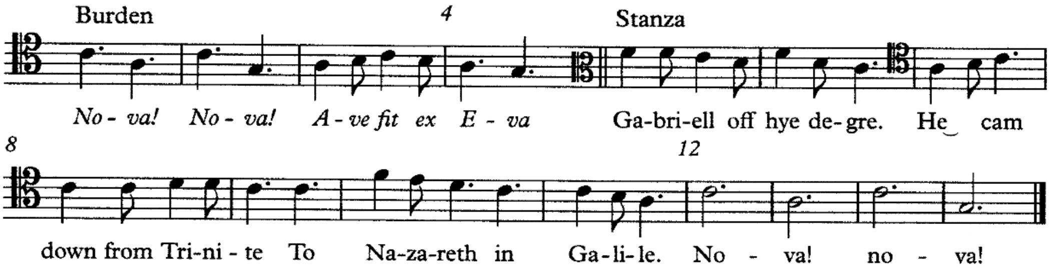


Fig. 6:7. Transcription of Nova, nova.


Burden
4
Stanza
No - va! No - va! A - ve fit ex E - va
Ga-bri-ell off hye de- gre. He cam
8
12
down from Tri-ni - te To Na-za-reth in Ga - li- le. No - va! no - va!

The fact that any music exists for this carole and that it is contained in a manuscript of mainly un-related material is an example of the fragmentary nature of the musical record of monophonic English carolling. It can be seen (Fig. 6:7 bar 3) after the initial *Nova, nova,* that it employs a repeated triple rhythm, notated in the original as a semibreve followed by a minim. The burden lies within a small vocal range of a fourth and the words are set syllabically. The stanza covers a larger range, necessitating a change of clef to fit within the four-line stave. The stanza ends with a repeat of the first four notes of the burden, but with a prolongation of double note lengths.

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[53] Glasgow, Hunterian Library, MS 83, fol. 12r.

[54] <http://www.qub.ac.uk/imagining-history/resources/wiki/index.php/Glasgow,_Hunterian_MS._83>

Table 6:1. Comparison of examples of dance-song melodies

Dance-song melodic characteristics.	Gonville & Caius	Cuncti simus.	Lullay, lullay.	Nova, nova.
1. Short phrases.		Y	Y	Y
2. Repeated musical phrases.	Y	Y	Y	Y
3. Clearly defined tonality.		Y	Y	Y
4.Note-to-syllable textual underlay.		Y	Y	Y
5. Regular rhythm, usually triple meter.		Y	Y	Y
6. Small vocal range, especially in refrain.	Y	Y	Y	Y
7.Mainly stepwise melodic movement.	Y	Y	Y	Y

To summarise: in the absence of a notated secular carole tunes, by making comparisons between other dance-song melodies, a pattern has emerged that can provide a possible guide for recognising and reconstructing suitable carolling melodies. The word setting is predominantly syllabic and in a triple rhythm. The burden often uses a smaller range than the stanza, within a fourth or fifth or at most a sixth, but the solo singer can extend the range in the stanzas. The melodic material of the burden can be repeated, or referred to, in the stanza and some new material incorporated. The repetitive nature of dance-song tunes makes it easy for the participants to respond to the lead singer even after just one hearing of the refrain words. In spite of the paucity of specific secular carolling tunes it is possible to re-create a plausible melody for an English carole text. Therefore, these guidelines will be followed in my setting of *The Friar and the Nun* at the end of this chapter.

6:2:2. Thomas Ravenscroft’s Country Humours

Having clarified some characteristic elements of carole melodies I will now return to the possible traces of carole elements in the seventeenth century, and search for examples that contain them. At the beginning of the seventeenth century the composer Thomas Ravenscroft published three collections of songs: *Pammelia* (1609); *Deuteromelia* (also 1609); and *Melismata* (1611).[55] These were compositions and arrangements of songs for three, four and five men's voices, some of which were already in circulation. Although these publications are the earliest link to what might be called a 'popular song repertoire', Ravenscroft cannot accurately be described as the earliest 'folk song' collector as his stated intention was to provide entertainment rather than to preserve a corpus of music. Indeed, apart from one song entitled '*A Round of three Country dances in one'*, he does not indicate which songs are his own compositions and which are arrangements of pre-existing ones.[56] Influenced by Thomas Morley who advocated a belief in the simplicity and social value of music, Ravenscroft claimed that his arrangements were within the ability of 'almost all men […] that are not altogether unmusical'.[57] Bidgood traces several songs or song fragments found in the three volumes to references in literature, drama and other sources of the previous century. For example, *As I walked the wode so wyld* published in *Pammelia* was referred to earlier as 'a Freeman's song' that was sung by Henry VIII and Sir Peter Carew (c. 1530).[58] Two songs in the Ravenscroft collection are of particular interest for this study: one in the *Country Pastimes* section of *Melismata*; and another in the section of *Rounds* in *Pammelia.*

In *Country Pastimes* a song on the medieval theme of the dying or wounded knight lying in the forest, attended by his hawk, hounds and beloved is preserved as *The Three Ravens.* The earliest extant carol on the topic of the dying knight is the so-called *Corpus Christi Carol* in Richard Hill's book, c. 1536, and two later versions were recorded in the nineteenth century.[59] The only known tune was collected in Derbyshire by Ralph Vaughan Williams in 1908.[60] A great deal has been written about this carol and its possible meanings. My purpose here is not to revisit that debate but to highlight the way in which the written record can represent the tip of the iceberg, a small visible fraction of a hidden oral repertoire.[61]

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[55] Thomas Ravenscroft, *Pammelia, Deuteromelia* and *Melismata,* available at *IMSLP Petrucci Music Library* <http://imslp.org/wiki/Category:Ravenscroft,_Thomas> [accessed 19 February 2018].

[56] Z. D. M. Bidgood, 'The Significance of Thomas Ravenscroft', *Folk Music Journal,* 4 (1980), pp. 24-34 (p. 29).

[57] Ravenscroft, *Deuteromalia.*

[58] John Vowell (alias Hooker), *The Life of Sire Peter Carew,* cited by Bidgood, p. 30. Hooker's biography of Carew, written shortly after his death in 1575, is Lambeth Palace Library MS 605.

[59] Oxford, Balliol College Library, MS. 354. All three versions in Greene, *EEC,* no. 322 (A, B, C and D) p. 222.

[60] R.V.Williams, *Bushes and Briars,* ed. by Roy Palmer (Lampeter: Llanerch Press, 1999), p. 20.

[61] Greene, *EEC*, pp. 411-2.

Table 6:2. Comparison of the texts of *Lully, lullay* and *The Three Ravens.*

Balliol College, Oxford. MS 354. F.165v.[62]	Thomas Ravenscroft *Melismata* No. 20.[63]
Lully, lulley; lully, lulley; *The fawcon hath born my mak away.* 1. He bare hym up, he bare hym down; He bare hym into an orchard brown. 2. In that orchard ther was an hall, That was hangid with purpill and pall. 3. And in that hall ther was a bede; Hit was hangid with gold so rede. 4. And yn that bed ther lythe a knight, His wowndes bledyng day and nyght. 5. By that bedes side ther kneleth a may, And she wepeth both nyght and day. 6. And by that bedde side ther stondith a ston, ‘Corpus Christi’ wretyn theron.	1. There were three Ravens sat on a tree, *Downe a downe, hay down, hay downe,* There were three Ravens sat on a tree, *With a downe,* There were three Ravens sat on a tree, They were as blacke as they might be, *With a downe derrie derrie derrie downe downe.* 2. Then one of them said to his mate, Where shall we our breakfast take? 3. Downe in yonder greene field. There lies a Knight slain under his shield. 4. His hounds they lie down at his feete, So well they can their Master keepe. 5. His haukes they flie so eagerly, There’s no fowle dare him come nie. 6. Down there comes a fallow Doe, As great with young as she might goe. 7. She lift up his bloudy hed, And kist his wounds that were so red. 8. She got him up upon her backe, And carried him to earthen lake. 9. She buried him before the prime, She was dead her selfe ere euen-song time. 10. God send every gentleman Such haukes, such hounds, and such a Leman.

I did not include the Richard Hill version in my study of secular carole texts in Chapter Five as the inclusion of the ‘Corpus Christi’ reference in the final verse arguably makes it a devotional, religious song. Without that additional verse, this version could be considered to be about worldly love and loyalty, similar to the sentiments expressed in the Ravenscroft version. The following section explores some of the similarities. As with many of the caroles studied in the previous chapter, it is possible that many more versions were in oral circulation but have left no trace.

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[62] Greene, *EEC*, no. 322 A.

[63] See Appendix 5 for facsimile.

The symbolic figure of the dying or wounded knight is introduced in Chrétien de Troyes' *The Story of the Grail (Perceval)* but is thought to originate in Celtic mythology.[64] The Wounded King or Fisher King is depicted as having been wounded in the thighs, a euphemism for emasculation, and for this reason he can only hunt by fishing, lying in a boat. His wounds can only be healed by a magical intervention without which he will remain impotent and without heirs. The image of a women cradling the body of her dead beloved knight is also a common one in romance literature. Ravenscroft's secular version of the carole thus contains elements of symbolism from tales told many centuries before his time: the wounded knight; the hawk and hounds protecting their master's body; and the lover represented as a pregnant doe who dies also, thus emphasizing the loss of the knight's lineage.

The burden in Richard Hill's version, as Greene points out, was probably much older than that manuscript and connected with secular caroles on the theme of a lover's death. It employs the comforting words of a lullaby refrain, '*Lully, lullay'* found in many Franciscan Marian caroles.[65] By contrast, *The Three Ravens* employs an internal refrain of repeated alliterative nonsense words that occur in other folk songs (see Table 2). The original meaning of 'Downe a downe, hay downe, with a down derrie, derrie down down' is lost. It may have been a formulaic, nonsense refrain, in the style of 'fa, la, la' or 'hey nonny no'. Alternatively, it may link up with the 'down' at the end of the first line in the first stanza of Richard Hill's version.[66]

The inclusion of the 'Corpus Christi' reference, in Richard Hill's version, could indicate a midsummer seasonal connection as the feast day (instituted in 1317) falls in May or June, depending upon the date of Easter. The reference may not be for seasonal reasons but an allusion to anti-catholic sentiments.[67] However, the theory that its inclusion is a direct reference to the abolition of the feast at the reformation is not tenable as this occurred in 1548 and the *terminus ante quem* assigned to the manuscript is 1536.[68] The practice of adapting caroles for seasonal or political topicality by the addition of stanzas containing specific material has been studied in the previous chapter and this may also have been the intention here.[69]

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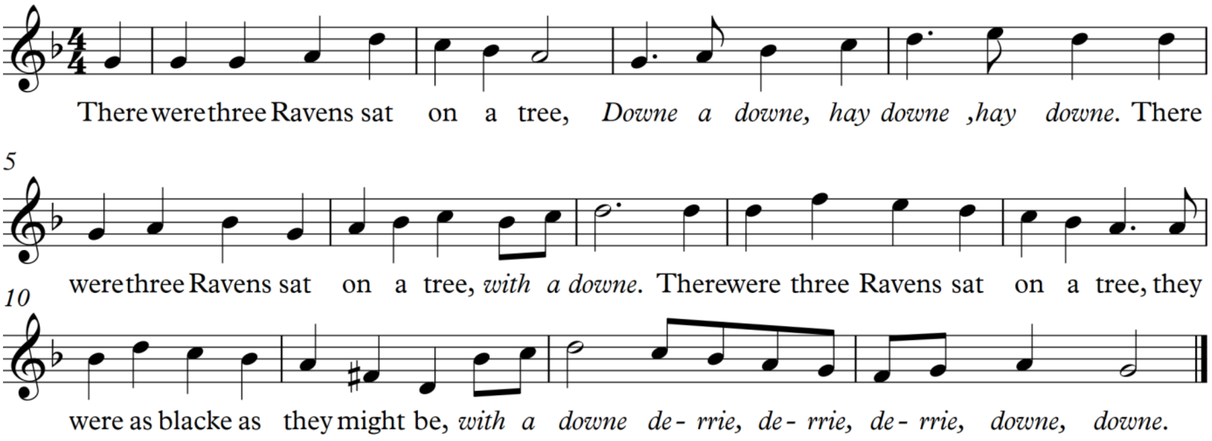
[64] Chrétien de Troyes, 'The Story of the Grail (Perceval)' in *Chrétien de Troyes: Arthurian Romances* ed. and trans. by William Kibler (London: Penguin Books, 1991), pp. 418-26.

[65] Nine examples can be found in Greene, *EEC,* pp. 97-115. nos. 142, 143, 144, 147, 149, 150, 151, 153 and 155.

[66] The same word is retained in Vaughan Williams version which begins: 'Down in yon forest there stands a hall'. See p. 209 of this chapter.

Ravenscroft's melody for *Three Ravens* (see Fig. 6:8.) has some characteristics found in medieval dance-song melodies, fitting the criteria outlined above. The melodic movement is mostly stepwise and the melodic shapes are repetitive, although employing a sequential pattern rather than the exact pitches. The text is also set syllabically. The setting is in four-part harmony throughout and does not follow the call and response format of a carole but the internal refrain (sections of text in italics) does move stepwise, is imitative and has a range of only a sixth.

Fig. 6:8. *The Three Ravens* (melody) For an image of the original see Appendix 5.


There were three Ravens sat on a tree, Downe a downe, hay downe ,hay downe. There
5
were three Ravens sat on a tree, with a downe. There were three Ravens sat on a tree, they
10
were as blacke as they might be, with a downe de- rrie, de- rrie, de- rrie, downe, downe.

In contrast, the second phrase of the stanza (bars 8-11) contains the only triad and provides dramatic tension in the use of the greatest vocal range, a ninth from top 'e' down to 'D'.

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[67] Greene, *EEC,* p. 411. It has been proposed, also by Greene, that the modification of the carole in this version, was made around 1533, to express sympathy with Catherine of Aragon whose 'make' had been stolen by Anne Boleyn. Anne Boleyn's emblem was a falcon. See R. L. Greene, 'The Meaning of the Corpus Christi Carol', in *Medium Aevum,* 39 (1960), 10-21, cited in *Bushes and Briars* p. 20.

[68] Greene, *EEC,* p. 339.

[69] Chapter Five p. 163.

This may reflect the solo singing of the stanza material from an earlier carol form as discussed above. This use of a much larger vocal range perhaps indicates a more consciously composed song for performance by Ravenscroft than might have been found in popular oral circulation but without any details or attribution it is only possible to speculate. This haunting song certainly was not an entirely new invention by Ravenscroft but incorporated material from earlier centuries harmonized in the style of a Renaissance madrigal.[70]

The only piece about which Ravenscroft does provide some additional information is the other one identified as of interest for this study. It is entitled *A Round of three Country dances in one* and is in *Pammelia:Musicks Miscellanie.*[71] (see Appendix 6.) The three dance tunes are for tenor voices and are set to a 'Basse or Ground', presumably composed by Ravenscroft and written in tenor clef thus creating a close four-part texture. The three dance-songs have texts that are reminiscent of medieval caroles, containing references to the traditional natural colours of red, white and green. The character of Robin Hood, derived from Robin-of-the-wood or the mythical Green-man figure, was first mentioned in a court masque in 1510 with reference to Robin Hood Games, a form of folk-play.[72] Two of Ravenscroft's country dance texts self-referentially refer to the dancing, and the third is about the contents of an empty purse.[73]

The melodies contain strong, regular beats, in compound duple time and the notes move predominantly stepwise. It will have to remain speculation that these three country dance tunes may be relics of two-line carolling burdens, though they do bear striking hallmarks, such as exhortations to the company to 'foote it' and 'come dance'. It has been shown, in Chapter Five, that similar exhortations are contained in several medieval caroles.[74] The fashion for setting material from the oral cultural repertoire, such as the melodic calls of the street vendors in *The Cries of London*, persisted through the seventeenth century, but these two examples from Ravenscroft are the only published songs from this period that present any links to a dance-song, carole tradition of earlier centuries.

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[70] Thomas Morley, 'Now is the Month of Maying' in *The Oxford Book of English Madrigals,* ed. by Philip Ledger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978) p. 190. This also contains an internal refrain of nonsense words, 'fa, la, la'.

[71]< http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/ravenscroft/pammelia/ > no. 74. Earliest use of word 'miscellanie' to describe collection of various compositions.

[72] Douglas Kennedy, *England's Dances* (London: G. Bell and sons, 1949), p. 99.

[73] Appendix 3 and Chapter Five, pp. 147.

[74] Chapter Five, p. 139.

6:3. John Playford's *The English Dancing Master (1650/51)*: some background to its publication. [75]

The view of history provided by the written record is strongly influenced by the viewpoint of the authors of that record. Ravenscroft's collections or miscellanies had a specific audience in mind and were not examples of a collector's objective record of songs in popular circulation. This filtering effect is even more pronounced when considering the transmission of English dance culture between the sixteenth and the twenty-first centuries. During the intervening years between Ravenscroft's publications (1609-11) and that of Playford in 1650 there had been various tensions between the Protestants and Catholics in England over the suitability of some leisure activities. In order to settle the difficulties, James I issued a declaration entitled *Book of Sports.*[76] It stated that, if they had attended church on Sunday, it would be permissible for the 'good people' to enjoy 'lawful recreation', including archery, dancing, May games, Whitsun-ales and Morris-dances afterwards. Bear and bull baiting were, however, prohibited.[77] Charles I re-issued his father's declaration in 1633 but the *Book of Sports* was publicly burned by the Puritans in 1643. It is therefore important to understand the historical and social context in which the stationer, John Playford, chose to compile and print his book in 1650. Whitlock explores the evidence to support the theory that Playford maintained Royalist sympathies and, by adding the word *English* to the title, he was disassociating the publication from unfavourable, French culture in order to avoid censorship. The future Charles II was at the time in exile at the court of Louis XIV. It was not the case that the Puritans were against dancing per se. Although the public theatres were closed, masques and anti-masques continued to be performed at the Inns of Court and in private houses. It was in these productions that most of Playford's 'country dances' were performed and collected, not among the 'good people' in the rural communities who were the subjects of James I's declaration.[78]

The inclusion of country dances in the Revels, the end of the masque when actors and audience danced together, was a time when dances that were in common circulation could be done. They were primarily participatory and therefore an inward-facing circle formation, the signature carole formation, could be appropriate. For the dances within the masque, that were performed for the observation and appreciation of an audience seated on three sides of the performance space, an inward-facing circle would only afford a view of the backs of some of the dancers.[79] The majority of the Playford dances are in longways sets, or lines of couples, not circle dances, as they were intended for performance and were composed, and taught, by dancing masters. Whitlock quotes a member of the Inns of Court as saying, 'we have only French dancing and Country dancing used by the best rank of people. Morris dancing is an exercise that the loose and vile sort only use, and that only in faires and meetings of lewdenesse'.[80] Whitlock suggests that Playford's country dances were rural 'by association' as his sources were urban and courtly, not collected in the field in the manner of nineteenth and twentieth-century folklorists.[81] Playford's collection is a valuable source in that it is a unique repository of tunes that were in popular circulation, but it is unlikely to represent the complete picture of country dances in the second half of the seventeenth century.

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[75] *The Complete Country Dance Tunes from Playford's Dancing Master (1651-ca.1728)* ed. by Jeremy Barlow (London: Faber Music Limited, 1985). Online facsimile available at <http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/playford_1651/>.

[76] < https://www.britannica.com/topic/Book-of-Sports>.

[77] Keith Whitlock, 'John Playford's the English Dancing Master 1650/51 as cultural Politics', *Folk Music Journal*, 7 (1999), 548-78 (p. 572).

[78] Whitlock, p. 574.

6:3:1. Circle-dances in *The English Dancing Master.*

It is, therefore, with these considerations in mind that I search Playford's 1651 publication for remnants of carolling and round-dances. I confine my search in Playford's first edition of 1650/1 to dances that fulfil the criterion of the characteristics already mentioned. They must be circle dances with tunes that have a strong rhythmic pulse and mainly stepwise melodic movement. There are several which also begin with instructions such as 'goe twice round, back again' (Peppers Black) or 'Hands and goe two doubles round and back again' (Milfield).[82] 'Chirping of the Nightingale' begins with the instruction, 'take hands and two doubles round' then 'back again'. These are strongly reminiscent of the commands to 'take hands' at the beginning of a carole and the beginnings of the sixteenth-century branles which circle with 'doubles' to the left and then back. These three dances are designated as 'round for as many as will'. The melody of Milfield is mostly stepwise with some triads and fits within the vocal range of an average untrained singer, but some of Playford's tunes which suggest the name of a song, such as 'Cuckolds all a Row' (not a circle dance) which was known to be a popular cavalier song, and 'Chirping of the Nightingale' (both in G major) are set too high for comfort for most singers. ‘Cuckolds all a row’ begins on top A above the treble stave and ‘Chirping of the nightingale’ goes up to the B above. A lower key such as C major, as used by Lucy Skeaping for ‘Cuckolds all a row’, would be more suited to voices.[83] This may be because, as Playford stated, his publication was for dances to be accompanied by the treble viol or violin, instruments which would be more effective in their upper registers; it does not necessarily reflect the tessitura of the original songs. The range of the high notes fits easily for the left hand in first position on the violin. The original words of most of the songs used by Playford are not known but many were used later for published Broadside Ballads.[84] The disconnection of known songs from their lyrics and the adaptation of tunes and dances, for the purposes of stage performance or for publication by Playford, affords a confusing picture but *The English Dancing Master* is none-the-less a valuable and unique source for information relating to informal dancing in the late seventeenth century.

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[79] Frances Eustace, 'Dance and Gesture' in *The Routledge Research Companion to Early Drama and Performance,* ed. by Pamela King (London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 153-169 (pp. 165-6).

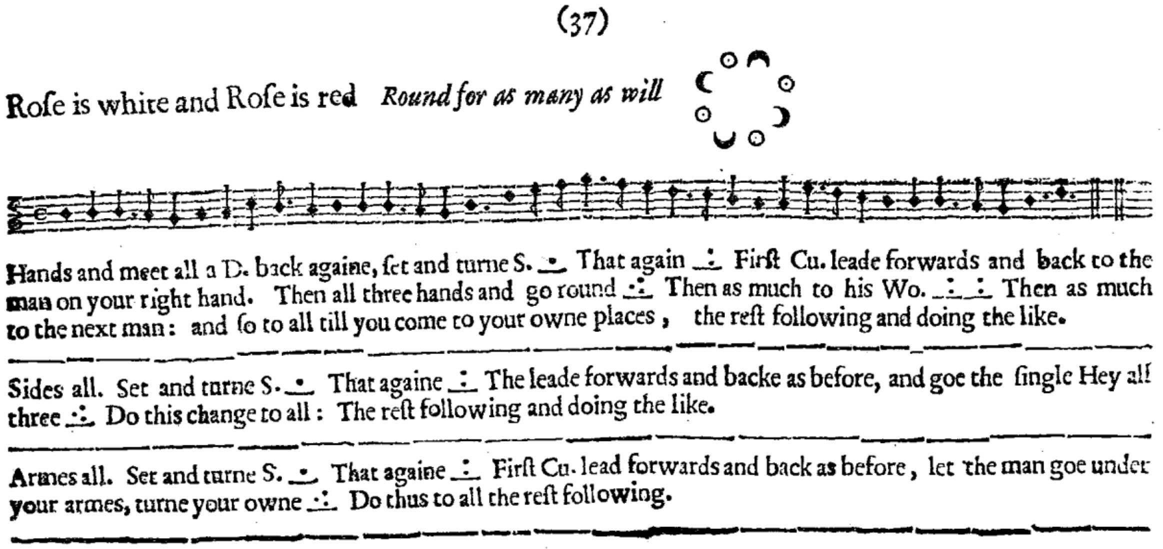
[80] Edward Waterhouse, *Fortescutus Illustratus* (London 1663) cited in Whitlock, p. 574.

[81] Whitlock, p. 574.

[82] All the following dances can be found in alphabetical order in Barlow's modern edition or by accessing the index online. See fn. 75.

‘Rose is White and Rose is Red’ is a dance that seems to fulfil all the criteria related to carolling discussed above.[85]

Fig. 6:9. *Rose is white and Rose is red*


(37)

Roſe is white and Roſe is red *Round for as many as will*

Hands and meet all a D. back againe, ſet and turne S. · That again : Firſt Cu. leade forwards and back to the man on your right hand. Then all three hands and go round ∴ Then as much to his Wo. : : Then as much to the next man: and ſo to all till you come to your owne places, the reſt following and doing the like.

Sides all. Set and turne S. · That againe : The leade forwards and backe as before, and goe the ſingle Hey all three ∴ Do this change to all: The reſt following and doing the like.

Armes all. Set and turne S. · That againe : Firſt Cu. lead forwards and back as before, let the man goe under your armes, turne your owne ∴ Do thus to all the reſt following.

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[83] Lucy Skeaping, ed. *Broadside Ballads: Songs from the streets, taverns, theatres and countryside of 17th-century England* (London: Faber Music, 2005) p. 69. ‘Cuckolds all a row’ is mentioned in Pepys’ diary for December 31st, 1662 as being Charles II favourite dance. *Pepy’s Diary* ed. by Robert Latham, 3 vols. (London: The Folio Society, 1996), I, p. 247.

[84] Skeaping, *Broadside Ballads.* A round dance in Playford for which the song has remained in circulation, albeit as a nursery rhyme, is ‘If all the world were paper’. Playford, No. 42. Opie, *Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* (1951) pp. 436-438.

[85] Playford, *The English Dancing Master,* 1651 edition.

It is a round dance for as many as will; it begins with ‘Hands and meet, all a double and back again’, (join hands in a circle, dance a double step towards the middle and a double step out again).We have already encountered political caroles about the Wars of the Roses in the fifteenth century and the topic of the red and the white rose immediately evokes this period.[86] The melody is in compound duple time and employs stepwise movement with occasional triads. Taken literally, Playford employs a flattened leading note which may evoke its earlier origins, when the performer would have employed discretion based on knowledge of the conventions of *musica ficta,* but it would feel more appropriate to the seventeenth century harmonic conventions to use the sharpened leading note.[87]

I have shown that there is evidence that certain elements of carolling practice continued in the songs and dances of Ravenscroft and Playford. This is to be found in the inclusion of some characteristic melodic traits of dance-songs and the signature circular formation of the medieval carole. I propose therefore that the tradition of carolling, or round-dances accompanied by song, did continue in the rural oral culture and is evidenced by the seventeenth-century written record, but it appears in that record as a theatrical, courtly and literate genre. Whilst the upper and middle classes of English society enjoyed dabbling in country dancing, they disassociated themselves from the activity as enjoyed by the rural peasant classes. Meanwhile, medieval carolling, which had been a common experience for all members of society, literate and illiterate, had become broken down into the separate components of song and dance in the written record, a separation that was re-enforced by the antiquarians and folk music collectors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

6:4. Traces of carolling in two children’s circle game-songs.

Havelock observes that the transition of a society from primarily oral to literate results in the relegation of ritual oral culture to mere entertainment.[88] The deeper significance of the ritual, in other words, is subverted and sometimes lost completely. This chapter has focused on the record of a literate culture and the transmission of notated songs and dances, but even in a literate society a small segment of the population retains a predominantly orally transmitted culture of song, dance and play. That is to be found in the pre-literate world of children's games and songs. In the collection gathered by Iona and Peter Opie in the middle of the twentieth century, several games can be found which employ the signature carolling formation of a circle of participants holding hands whilst one in the centre leads the singing.[89] In these games the courtly, courting rituals and symbolism once enjoyed by all members of medieval society are relegated to the mock weddings and kissing games of children. An example of the tenacity of some of the imagery mixed with the obscurity of its meaning can be found in the various versions of *Green gravel,* a game in which the players hold hands in a circle and slowly walk around singing. After each rendition a child is named and they have to turn to face outwards for the next time through.

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[86] See p. 184.

[87] Before c.1600 notated music rarely contained indications of what are known as ‘accidentals’ in modern terminology. Any notes that deviated from the diatonic scale, needing to be sharpened or flattened, were known as *musica ficta* and were altered according to certain rules. From 1600 the major and minor scales replaced the modes of the Renaissance and many later editors added accidentals to conform to those rules rather than the music theory of the previous centuries. *Harvard Dictionary of Music,* ed. by Willi Apel (London: Heinemann, 1973), p. 550.

[88] Havelock, *The Muse learns to Write,* p. 45.

Table 6:3. Green gravel.[90]

Basic text	Earliest recorded version c. 1835
Green gravel, green gravel, the grass is so green, The fairest young lady that ever was seen. We'll wash her in milk, and dress her in silk, And write down her name with a gold pen and ink. Oh *Mary,* oh *Mary,* your true love is dead, He sent you a letter to turn round your head.	Green gravel, green gravel, the grass is so green, The fairest young damsel that ever was seen, O *Mary,* O *Mary,* your true love is dead! He sent you a letter to turn round your head. O mother, O mother, do you think it is true? O yes, O yes, and what shall I do! I'll wash you in milk, and dress you in silk, An' write down your name with a gold pen and ink.

According to Opie and Opie, Thomas Hardy and William Barnes both knew it in Dorset and 'folklorists have been fascinated by the obsolescent floweriness of the phrases'.[91] The meaning of 'green gravel' is unknown but the theme of the dead lover and the imagery, such as the milky wash and the silk dress, is reminiscent of imagery used in the the 'holly and ivy' caroles discussed in Chapter Five.[92]

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[89] Iona Opie and Peter Opie, *The Singing Game* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).
[90] Opie and Opie, no 54, p. 240.
[91] Opie and Opie, p. 240.
[92] Chapter Five, p. 139.

The well-known *Here we go round the Mulberry Bush* is equally obscure in its origins but Opie and Opie describe it as being ‘carried out in the manner of a medieval carole, the circle of performers dancing round holding hands while they sing the refrain; and standing still, releasing hands, and imitating the action suggested when they sing the narrative stanza’.[93] I will give the refrain and first stanza here, although any number of actions can be added by the participants in further stanzas. It is sung to the tune of ‘Nuts in May’.

Here we go round the mulberry bush,
The mulberry bush, the mulberry bush;
Here we go round the mulberry bush,
On a cold and frosty morning.

This is the way we wash our clothes,
Wash our clothes, wash our clothes,
This is the way we wash our clothes,
On a cold and frosty morning.

Here we go round the mulberry bush etc.

Thomas Hardy knew the song as ‘All around the gooseberry bush’, so there may have been other regional variants, and Opie and Opie assert that any connection with the mulberry tree outside Canterbury Cathedral and the story of the knights washing the blood off their clothes after murdering Thomas Becket was a ‘joke-history […] going the rounds in 1978’.[94] The practice of carolling around trees is illustrated in some manuscripts of the *Roman de la Rose.* However, the dancers sometimes appear to be being led around the tree in a chain rather than forming a closed ring with a tree at its centre.[95] The words cannot be taken literally, to mean that the children must find a tree or bush to dance around, but refer to an imaginary bush.

These are just two examples of the many children’s games that seem to bear traces of carolling practice in their form and content. The participants dance round in a circle holding hands and there is a balance between an individual action or singing and the chorus. The possibility for improvising additional stanzas is reminiscent of some of the caroles studied in the previous chapter or, alternatively *Green gravel* is just repeated, again and again, and this could have been the model for some shorter caroles, the participants' interest being maintained by the turn-taking of the dance.

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[93] Opie and Opie, no. 66, p. 287.
[94] Opie and Opie, p. 291.
[95] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Latin MS 1173, fol. 20v.

6:5:1 The English folk song and dance collectors at the turn of the 20th century.

Douglas Kennedy, the Director of the English Folk Dance and Song Society in 1949, summarized the prevailing view of the situation for English music during the nineteenth century as follows: 'There could be no good English music'.[96] At a time when European classical composers, such as Bela Bartok, were taking an interest in their own national musical heritage, and the music of Scotland had been embraced by European composers including Felix Mendelssohn and Max Bruch, it seemed that a distinctive English folk tradition was in danger of being lost. The Industrial Revolution resulted in the creation of new towns and the expansion of existing ones, while the rural communities, in which traditional culture could be passed down through generations by word of mouth and direct exposure, seem to have suffered fragmentation. The Folk-Song Society had been formed in 1898, followed by the English Folk Dance Society in 1911 and the two merged in 1932 to form the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS). This marriage of the two societies did not, however, result in a re-uniting of interest in dance-songs. A quote from the introduction by Roy Palmer, to *Bushes and Briars*, a collection of some of the work by one of the leading collectors, Ralph Vaughan Williams, is most telling in this respect. Palmer says, 'Mainly during the next ten years (from 1903) Vaughan Williams diligently amassed a collection of 810 songs, together with some singing games and country dance tunes which need not concern us here'.[97] The passion of the pioneer collectors including Sabine Baring-Gould, Cecil Sharp, Frank Kidson and Lucy Broadwood was fired by a belief that they were 'rescuing the beautiful traditional music of England from oblivion'.[98] The original notebooks in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library show that their work in the field mostly endeavoured to record melodies and at least one verse faithfully and to also indicate something about the singer and the circumstances. For example: *The Midsummer Carol* collected by Baring-Gould is recorded as 'taken down from William Aggett, aged 70, cripple and infirm, Chagford, entirely illiterate, an old brokendown day labourer, Oct. 1890'.[99] This record demonstrates that an oral tradition had been maintained in some places, in spite of the social upheavals of the nineteenth century.

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[96] Kennedy, p. 13.

[97] Roy Palmer, ed. *Bushes and Briars*, p. x.

[98] Introduction to *The Penguin Book of English Folk Songs* ed. by R. V. Williams and A. L. Lloyd (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1959), p. 7.

[99] Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, available at <www.vwml.org> [accessed 20 February 2018].

Cecil Sharp was a pioneer and a visionary in his work on education and published a great deal of material that he thought suitable for this purpose. He re-discovered the work of John Playford and selected, and adapted, dances for teaching, once more re-circulating these so-called country dances rather than recording ones encountered in the field. He collaborated with Baring-Gould in 1907, publishing *English Folk Songs for Schools* and, although many of the texts that were thought to be unsuitable for children were modified, the originals were saved for posterity in the archive. The extent, and intent, of this bowdlerizing has been much discussed, following the publication of *Fakesong* by David Harker in 1985 but, as Carole Pegg points out, Harker failed to acknowledge that the original, accurate notes were available and as such, the work of these collectors can be studied outside the context of a socio-political critique of the era.[100] The success of the educational work of Sharp, Baring-Gould and others, has had an unfortunate effect of associating folk-dance almost exclusively with children's performance, and the songs with polite middle-class sensibilities. Indeed, the Cornish May celebration in Helston, to be considered later in the section, appears to have been completely re-invented as a children's processional dance-song sometime in the early twentieth-century, and the local museum has no detailed information about earlier traditions.[101] Whatever the social and political contexts of the folk-music revival in the early part of the twentieth century may have been, the field-work of the folk-music collectors, in its archived form rather than the published editions, does provide valuable evidence for the case studies in the following section.

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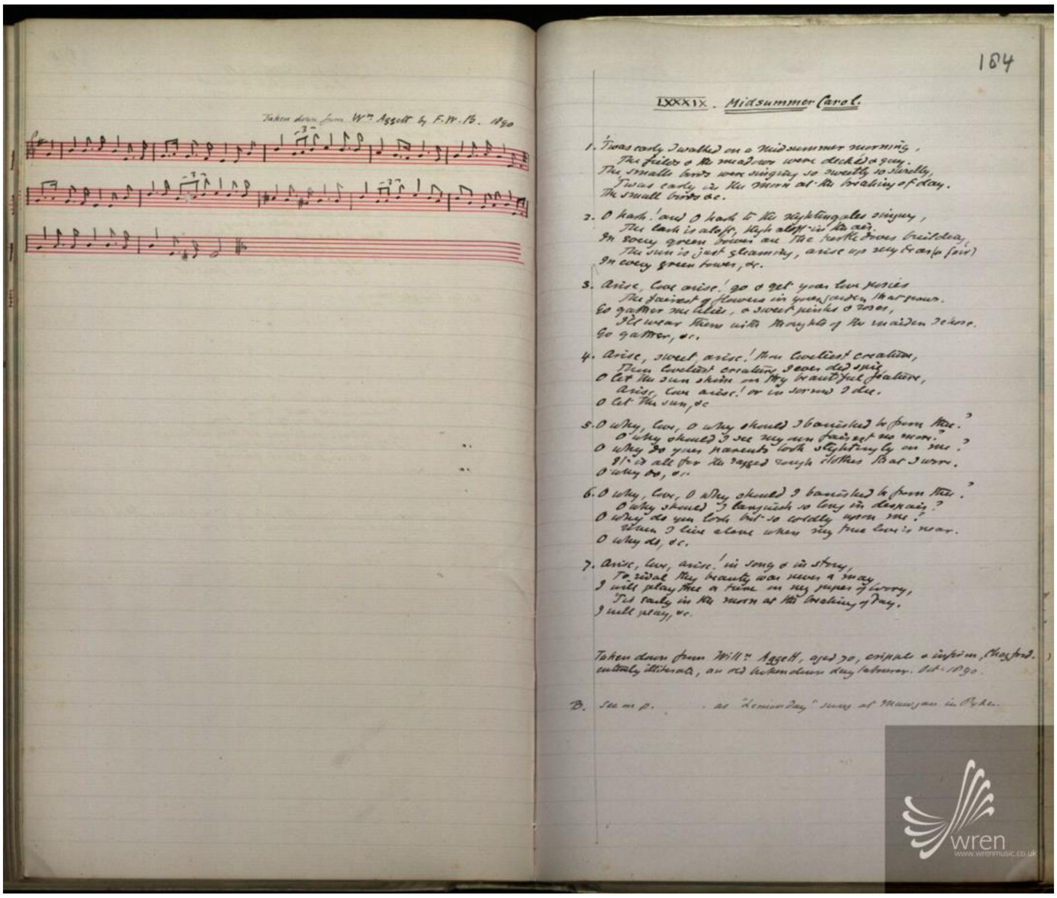
[100] David Harker, *Fakesong: the manufacture of British 'folksong' 1700 to the present day* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1985) reviewed by Carole Pegg, *Popular Music*, Vol. 6, No. 3, Beatles Issue (Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 346-350. Stable URL:<www.jstor.org/stable/853197> The collecting and recording methods of Sabine Baring Gould are discussed at length by Martin Greabe, *As I walked Out* (Oxford: Signal Books, 2017).

[101] I visited in August 2017.

6:5:2 Case studies of two folksongs that show possible carolling ancestry, recorded in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library.

Fig. 6:10. Midsummer carol collected by S. Baring-Gould [102]



Taken down from Wm Aggett by F.W.B. 1890

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LXXXIX. Midsummer Carol.

1. 'Twas early I walked on a Midsummer morning,
The fields & the meadows were decked so gay.
The small birds were singing so sweetly so [illegible],
'Twas early in the morn at the breaking of day.
The small birds &c.

2. O hark! and O hark to the nightingales singing,
The lark is aloft, high aloft in the air.
In every green bower are the turtle doves [illegible],
The sun is just gleaming, arise up my [illegible] (fair)
In every green bower, &c.

3. Arise, love arise! go & get your love posies
The fairest of flowers in your garden that grows.
Go gather me lilies, & sweet pinks & roses,
I'll wear them with thoughts of the maiden I chose.
Go gather, &c.

4. Arise, sweet arise! thou loveliest creature,
Thou loveliest creature I ever did spie
O let the sun shine on thy beautiful features,
Arise, love arise! or in sorrow I die.
O let the sun, &c

5. O why, love, O why should I banished be from thee?
O why should I see my own fairest no more?
O why do your parents look slightingly on me?
Is it all for the ragged rough clothes that I wore.
O why do, &c.

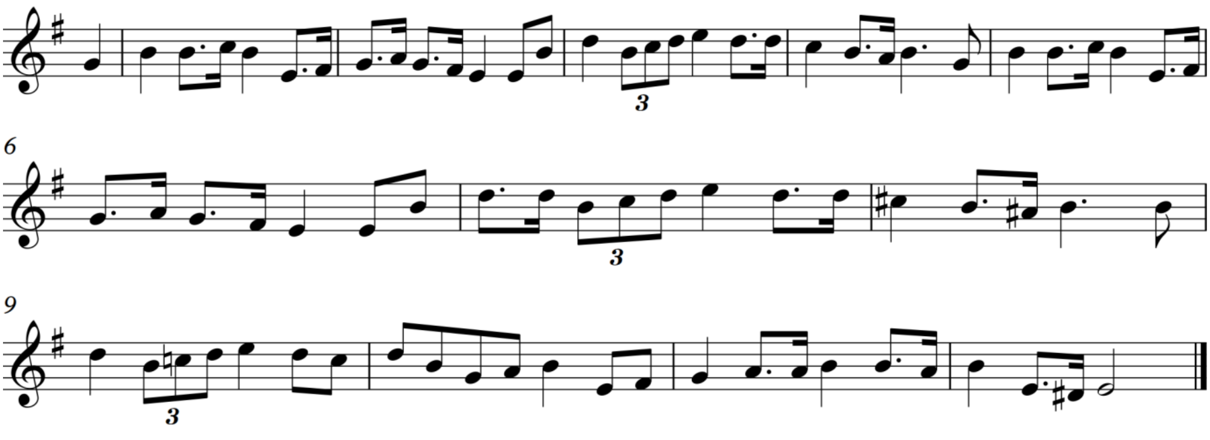
6. O why, love, O why should I banished be from thee?
O why should I languish so long in despair?
O why do you look but so coldly upon me?
When I live alone when my true love is near.
O why do, &c.

7. Arise, love, arise! in song & in story,
To rival thy beauty was never a may
I will play thee a tune on my pipes of ivory,
'Tis early in the morn at the breaking of day.
I will play, &c.

Taken down from Willm Aggett, aged 70, cripple & infirm, Chagford. entirely illiterate, an old broken down day labourer. Oct. 1890.

B. See m. p. . as "[illegible]" sung at [illegible]

Fig. 6:11. Transcription of the Midsummer Carol (taken down from W. Aggett by F. W. B. 1890)



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[102] Roud, no. 6913 collected by F.W. Bussell and S. Baring-Gould from singer William Aggett, Oct. 1890. Available online at <www.vwml.org.>

1. ‘Twas early I walked on a midsummer morning
The fields and the meadows were decked and gay.
The small birds were singing so sweetly, so shrilly
‘Twas early in the morn at the break of the day.
The small birds etc.

2. O hark! And O hark! To the nightingale singing
The lark is aloft, high aloft in the air.
In every green bower are the turtle doves building
The sun is just gleaming, arise up my dear!
In every green bower etc.

3. Arise, love arise! Go and get your love posies
The fairest of flowers in your garden that grows
Go gather me lilies and sweet pinks and roses
I’ll wear them with thoughts of the maiden I love.
Go gather etc

4. Arise, sweet arise! Thou loveliest creature
The loveliest creature I ever did spie
O let the sun shine on thy beautiful feature
Arise love arise! Or in sorrow I die.
O let the sun etc.

5. O why, love, O why should I banished be from thee?
O why should I see my own fairest no more?
O why do your parents look slightingly on me
It is all for the ragged rough clothes that I wore.
O why do etc.

6. O why, love, O why should I banished be from thee?
O why should I languish so long in despair?
O why do you look but so coldly upon me?
When I live alone when my true love is near.
O why do etc.

7, Arise, love, arise! In song and in story
To rival thy beauty was never a may
I will play thee a tune on my pipes of ivory
‘tis early in the morn at the break of day.
I will play etc.

It is not recorded as to whether the singer himself called this a carol but, given the detail of the record regarding the provenance, there is no reason to suppose the title was an invented archaism on the part of Baring-Gould (although his published version certainly contains examples of interpolated archaisms, as I will discuss below). The carol does not contain the hallmark two-line refrain that would determine its relation to the medieval form but it does provide for the repetition of the third and fourth lines of each stanza and this could have been an opportunity for communal participation. Baring-Gould notes that Aggett was 'entirely illiterate,' and many signs of oral transmission can be found in this song. The first stanza sets the scene and the season with conventional natural world imagery using stock phrases found in many carols, such as 'the birds singing sweetly' and meadows 'bedecked and gay'.[103] The birds singing 'shrilly' and the turtle-doves 'building', rather than a more expected 'billing' or 'cooing', are interesting variants unique to this carol. I suggest 'building' may have been a labourer's interpretation of an aural tic, in place of 'billing'.[104] Thereafter each verse begins with a formulaic phrase that is repeated with some variation eg. 'Arise, love, Arise,' is changed to 'Arise, sweet, arise' and 'O hark, and O hark' becomes 'O why, love, O why?'. The language is expressive but not excessively flowery and does not employ any particularly archaic vocabulary apart from, possibly, the use of 'slightingly' (v.5 line. 3) or 'languish' (v. 6 line. 2).

Unfortunately, the published version of the text in Baring-Gould's book, *Songs and Ballads of the West (1889-1892)* somewhat obscures the simple beauty of the original.[105] He does away with the repetition of the last two lines of each stanza and composes lines of his own, thus providing no opportunity for communal participation and making the form more of a ballad than a carol. Baring-Gould adapts or transposes material from other parts of the text and inserts self-consciously archaic vocabulary such as 'lay' (v.1 line 6) and 'garments' instead of 'clothes', (v.4 line 4.) Some additions, such as 'I stand at the door, pretty love, full of care,' (v.3 line 5) are pure invention. The turtle-doves are 'cooing' not 'building' and the un-grammatical rhyming of 'creature' and 'feature' in Aggett's fourth stanza is avoided by having fewer stanzas. The material from the other two lines of that verse, incorporating the rhyming of 'spie' and 'die' are incorporated in the extra lines of verse two by Baring-Gould.

Fig. 6:12. Baring-Gould's version in *Songs and Ballads of the West.*

1.

'Twas early I walked on a midsummer morning,
The fields and the meadows were decked and gay,
The small birds were singing, the woodlands a–ringing,

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[103] The Boar's Head Carol, discussed in Chapter Five uses similar phrases. See p. 127.

[104] In my personal experience, a person with severe dyslexia tends to make sense of unfamiliar words, that have only been heard and not seen written, by making small alterations for example; discarded becomes disregarded, cleavage becomes cleaverage.

[105] S. Baring-Gould and H. Fleetwood Sheppard, eds., *Songs and Ballads of the West: a collection made from the mouths of the people* (London: Methuen,1891).

’Twas early in the morning, at breaking of day,
I will play on my pipes, I will sing thee my lay!
It is early in the morning, at breaking of day.

2.
O hark! and O hark! to the nightingales wooing,
The lark is aloft piping shrill in the air.
In every green bower the turtle‒doves cooing,
The sun is just gleaming, arise up my fair!
Arise, love, arise! none fairer I spie,
Arise, love, arise! O why should I die?

3.
Arise, love, arise! go and get your love posies,
The fairest of flowers in garden that grows,
Go gather me lilies, carnations and roses,
I’ll wear them with thoughts of the maiden I chose
I stand at the door, pretty love, full of care,
O why should I languish so long in despair?

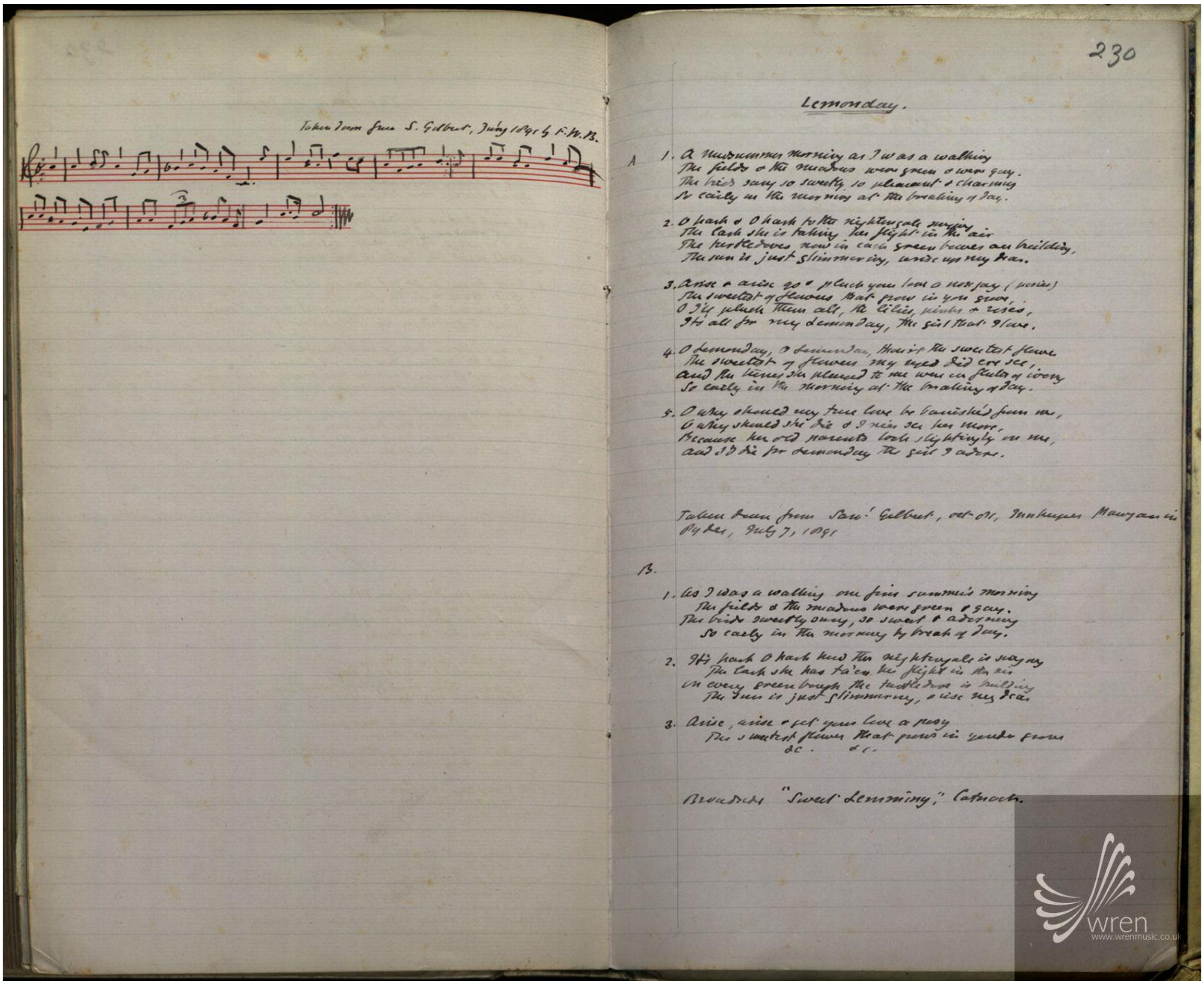
4.
O why my love, O why, should I banished be from thee?
O why should I see my own chosen no more?
O why look your parents so slightingly on me?
It is all for the rough ragged garments I wore,
But dress me with flowers, I’m as gay as a king,
I’m glad as a bird when my carol I sing.

5.
Arise, love, arise! in song and in story,
To rival thy beauty was never a may,
I will play thee a tune on my pipes of ivory,
It is early in the morning, at breaking of day,
I will play on my pipes, I will sing thee my lay!
It is early in the morning, at breaking of day.

The insertion of accidentals in the repeat of the first two lines of melody (bar 8) notated by F.W. Bussel, implies a modulation from E minor to B minor. Without this and the sharpened leading note in the last bar, the tune would arguably have been entirely in the Dorian mode and have an older feel to it, less influenced by nineteenth-century harmonic conventions. The modal form could be a survival of a much older melody and, if the rhythm (written in a mixture of triplets and dotted quaver plus semiquaver) is sung as triplets throughout, a stronger dance-like flavour emerges, reminiscent of the tunes discussed earlier in this chapter. It is common for untrained musicians to execute these two rhythms in a less well-defined way than the Bussel’s transcription would suggest.

In July 1891 Baring-Gould and F. W Bussel notated another song which bore a striking resemblance to the *Midsummer Carol*. It was called *Lemonday* and Baring-Gould noted that it was also similar to a broadside ballad published by Catnach, entitled *Sweet Lemminy.* The song was sung by William Gilbert, an innkeeper in Mawgan in Pydar, Cornwall. His occupation as 'innkeeper' might imply that he was literate (certainly more likely than a day labourer) and therefore it was possible that his repertoire was influenced by songs in printed circulation. A comparison of the two versions is of interest, as Gilbert's song contains a remnant of medieval language that does not appear in Aggett's.

Fig. 6:13. Lemonday Carol (Taken down from S. Gilbert, July 1891, by F. W. B.)



Taken down from S. Gilbert, July 1891 by F.W.B.

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Lemonday.

A
1. A Midsummer morning as I was a walking
The fields & the meadows were green & were gay.
The birds sang so sweetly so pleasant & charming
So early in the morning at the breaking of day.

2. O hark & O hark to the nightingale singing
The lark she is taking her flight in the air
The turtledoves now in each green bower are building,
The sun is just glimmering, arise up my dear.

3. Arise & arise go & pluck your love a nosegay (posies)
The sweetest of flowers that grow in yon grove,
O I'll pluck them all, the lilies, pinks & roses,
It's all for my Lemonday, the girl that I love.

4. O Lemonday, O Lemonday, thou'rt the sweetest flower
The sweetest of flowers my eyes did ere see,
And the kisses she pleased to me were as [illegible] of ivory
So early in the morning at the breaking of day.

5. O why should my true love be banished from me,
O why should she die & I never see her more,
Because her old parents look slightingly on me,
And I'll die for Lemonday the girl I adore.

Taken down from Saml. Gilbert, aet. 61, Innkeeper Mawgan in Pyder, July 7, 1891

B.

1. As I was a walking one fair summer's morning
The fields & the meadows were green & gay.
The birds sweetly sang, so sweet & adorning
So early in the morning by break of day.

2. It's hark O hark how the nightingale is singing
The lark she has ta'en her flight in the air
On every green bough the turtledove is building
The sun is just glimmering, arise my dear.

3. Arise, arise & get your love a posy
The sweetest flower that grows in yonder grove
&c. &c.

Broadside "Sweet Lemminy," Catnach.

Transcription of melody.

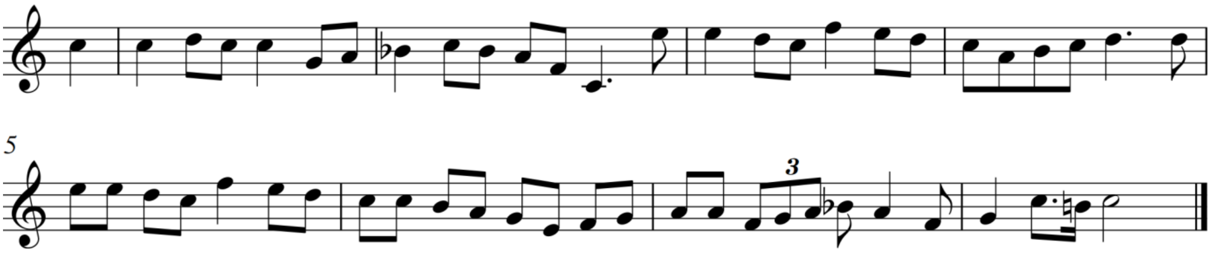

Fig. 6:15. Published version of lyrics.[106]

1.
As I was a–walking one midsummer morning,
The fields and the flowers were green and were gay;
The birds and the blossoms the summer adorning,
So early in the morning, at breaking of day;
The world was a–waking, all drowsiness scorning,
I thought and I warbled of sweet Lemonday.

2.
O hark and O hark to the nightingale's singing,
The lark she is taking her flight in the air,
The turtle–doves now through the green wood are winging,
The sun is glimm'ring – arise up, my fair!
O Lemonday! Lemonday! through my heart ringing,
The name is as bells, between hope and despair.

3.
O Lemonday! Lemonday! thou art the flower,
The sweetest of flowers adorning the May;
I'll play on my pipes in the green summer bower,
So early in the morning at breaking of day.
I'll stand at thy window and watch by the hour,
As the daffodil waiteth the sun's early ray.

4.
Arise, love, arise, I have pluck'd thee fair posies,
The choicest of flowers that grow in the grove;
I've gathered them all for thee, lilies and roses
And pinks, for my Lemonday; maiden, approve!
The sun's on the roof where my fair love reposes,
Then Lemonday waken! my own pretty love!

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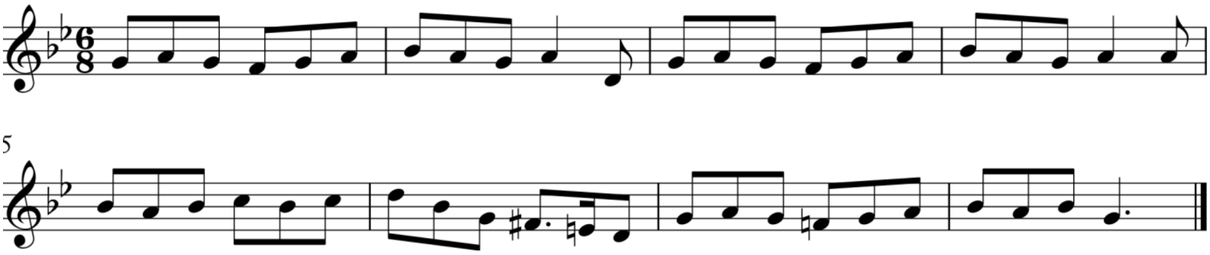
[106] S. Baring-Gould and H. Fleetwood Sheppard, *A Garland of Country Song*: *English folk songs with their traditional melodies* (London: Methuen, 1895), no. 89.

The name ‘Lemonday’ is probably a corruption of the Middle English word *lemman,* meaning ‘beloved’ and referring to either gender (see the last line of Ravenscroft’s *Three Ravens).*[107] In Aggett’s version the singer is exhorting the maiden to get up and gather the flowers for him. In the *Lemonday Carol,* however, in an arguably more conventional gender role-play, the male singer has already gathered the flowers and is exhorting his beloved to wake up to receive his gift. These two ‘carols’, that share so much material but have emerged as different songs, illustrate the layers of alteration and obfuscation that these fragmentary examples have endured. It is difficult to prove any definite link, over several centuries, to any medieval antecedents but I have shown some possible connections and justifications for the ‘carol’ in the title to be a reference to the medieval carole rather than merely an archaism applied by nineteenth or twentieth-century folklorists.

In the archive of another great folk-song collector, Ralph Vaughan Williams, can be found this song, *Down in yon Forest*, which he called a ‘Carol’.[108] The text of the first three stanzas is almost identical to the so-called Corpus Christi Carol in Richard Hill’s book from three hundred years earlier.[109]

Fig. 6:16. Down in yon forest.



Sung by J. Hall, Castleton, Derbyshire, 1908. R. V. W.[110]

1.
Down in yon forest there stands a hall,
The bells of paradise I heard them ring.

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[107] Middle English Dictionary <https://quod.lib.umich.edu>
[108] https://www.vwml.org/record/RVW1/2/134
[109] Balliol College, Oxford. MS. 354. f. 165 v. See Table 6:2, p. 191.
[110] Manuscript available to view at <http://www.vwml.org>. This text taken from *Bushes and Briars* ed. by Roy Palmer.

It's covered all over with purple and pall,
And I love my Lord Jesus above anything.

2.
In that hall there stands a bed,
The bells etc.
It's covered all over with scarlet so red.
And I love etc.

3.
In that bed there lies a knight,
Whose wounds do bleed day and night.

4.
At the bedside there lies a stone,
Which the sweet Virgin Mary knelt upon.

5.
Under that bed there runs a flood,
The one half runs water, the other runs blood.

6.
At the foot of the bed there grows a thorn,
Which ever bore blossom since he was born.

7.
Over that bed the moon shines bright,
Denoting our saviour was born this night.

This version omits the burden at the beginning and the 'orchard' has become a 'forest' but the hall, the bed and the dying knight remain. The stone beside the bed, which in the earlier version had the inscription 'Corpus Christi' on it has become less pivotal but the ambiguity of the characters, the knight and the maid, has been removed by placing the kneeling Virgin Mary on the stone. The adaptation of the medieval carole from its secular origins to a Christmas folk carol, by the beginning of the twentieth century, is completed by the insertion of a devotional internal refrain (*The bells of paradise I heard them ring, and I love my Lord Jesus above anything)*, the loss of the 'Corpus Christi' reference, and the addition of the last two verses. Greene asserts that the 'orchard' in the medieval carole refers to Avalon (Isle of Apples), identified as Glastonbury, and that there was some connection with the abbey there.[111] In Vaughan Williams' version, verse six refers to the Glastonbury thorn, a type of hawthorn tree (*Crataegus monogyna 'Biflora'*) found in and around Glastonbury, Somerset, that flowers in summer and again at Christmas. It is traditionally said to have grown from Joseph of Arimathea's staff when he rested on Wearyall Hill.[112] The connection of the subject material of this carole with the Fisher King in the Arthurian romances of Chrétien de Troyes has been noted above. Later reworkings of the *Story of the Grail,* written after Chrétien's death, connected the Grail, which first appears at the Fisher King's feast, with Joseph of Arimathea and suggested it was the vessel used to catch Christ's blood.[113]

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[111] Greene, *EEC*, p. 411. Another carole in Richard Hill's book can also be found in Trinity College, Cambridge MS. O. 9.38 which was written at Glastonbury Abbey.

The melody, as notated by Vaughan Williams, conforms to the characteristics of dance-songs and caroles outlined in the previous section, namely: the small vocal range; the predominantly stepwise movement; the increased range and melodic complexity in the second line of the stanza; the repetitive phrase for the refrain lines and the syllabic word underlay with few melismas. The opening two-bar phrase (for the first line of the stanza) is repeated exactly for the first line of the refrain and has an open ending (on the super-tonic). Bars 5-6 use new material covering a wider range of an octave, for the second line of the stanza. This is followed by the last refrain line (bars 7-8) which are the same as bars 3-4, except for the alteration of the last two notes to make a closed ending. The carol can be realized as a call and response song led by a solo singer with communal participation in the refrains.

The survival of this carol in the folk repertoire in such a consistent form is extraordinary considering it survives in the written record only once in each of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, not at all in the eighteenth century and then re-emerges in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The differences in the three versions (Richard Hill's, Ravenscroft's and Vaughan Williams') illustrate the flexibility and adaptability of the carole in its themes and forms.[114] The consistency of the imagery and rhymes hint at the fidelity of communal memory and oral transmission.

6:6. A pastiche setting of *The Friar and the Nun*

It has been the aim of this study to gain an insight into medieval carolling, an activity that was enjoyed by people from all levels of society, from the highly educated clerics and most sophisticated courtiers down to the illiterate peasant. It has been shown that the carole form was flexible and adaptable and that singing or dancing ability were no criteria for, or against, communal participation, although the inventiveness of the lead singer and their ability to project in a clear, tuneful voice was considered necessary. Participation could be spontaneous, meaning that no rehearsal was required and that strangers could join in even though they were not part of a particular community. Some more complex repertoire was developed among clerical communities and a shared repertoire probably existed in certain circumstances. The two versions of *Inducas, inducas, in temptationibus* (studied in Chapter Five) show how a single refrain, and topic, could be realised as a simple humorous carole, not reliant upon any specialist knowledge, and also, as a more complex one for the enjoyment of a knowledgeable peer group.[115] For my reconstruction and melodic setting I have used the simpler version, which does not require specialist knowledge of medieval music theory, nor any great vocal ability among the participants.

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[112] Greene, *EEC*, p. 412.
[113] William Kibler, ed. *Chrétien de Troyes: Arthurian Romances* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), p. 498.
[114] Greene, *EEC* includes two more 19th century versions, (without burdens), no. 322 B from North Staffordshire and no. 322 D from Scotland.

The Friar and the Nun theme seems to have circulated in oral song culture for centuries. Shakespeare references it in The Taming of The Shrew when Petruchio sings the opening lines ‘It was the Friar of Orders gray, as he forth walked on his way’.[116] This bears a striking resemblance to the carole that begins ‘There was a frier of order gray, which loved a nunne full meny a day’, discussed in the previous chapter.[117] No tune is notated for the song in Shakespeare’s play. John Playford includes a tune entitled ‘Fryar and the Nun’ in his 1651 edition. (see Fig. 6:17. overleaf)

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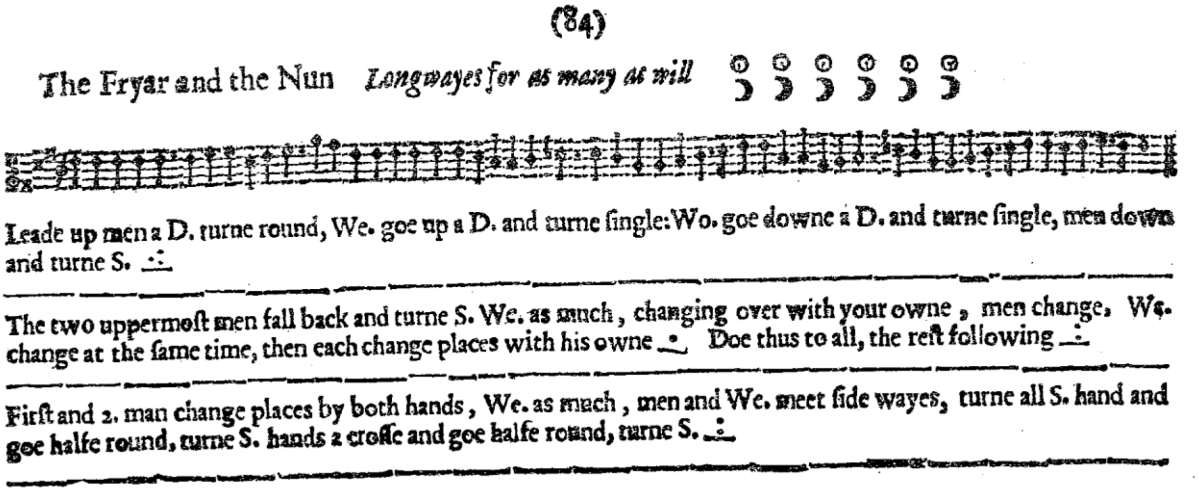
[115] Huntingdon Library, *Christmas Carolles Newly Imprinted* (Richard Keele c.1550), p.18 and Cambridge University Library Add. 7350 Box 2. See p. 159 of this study.

[116] P. J. Croft, ‘The ‘Friar of Order Gray’ and the Nun’, p. 7. online <http://res.oxfordjournals.org/>

[117] Cambridge University Library. MS Add. 7350 Box 2. See p. 160.

Fig. 6:17. Playford melody



(84)

The Fryar and the Nun *Longwayes for as many as will*

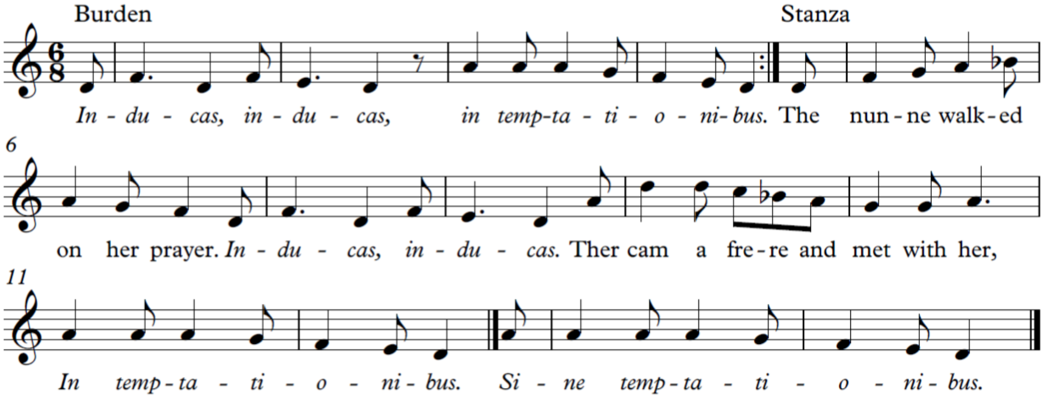
Leade up men a D. turne round, We. goe up a D. and turne ſingle: Wo. goe downe a D. and turne ſingle, men down and turne S.

The two uppermoſt men fall back and turne S. We. as much, changing over with your owne, men change, We. change at the ſame time, then each change places with his owne. Doe thus to all, the reſt following.

Firſt and 2. man change places by both hands, We. as much, men and We. meet ſide wayes, turne all S. hand and goe halfe round, turne S. hands a croſſe and goe halfe round, turne S.

This tune does not fit either of the two extant versions of the carole text (discussed in the previous chapter), in this form, although the fact that the dance is for an unlimited number of couples could indicate a connection with informal, participatory dancing, such as carolling, rather than a more formal performance in a confined space. For my arrangement of the version from Richard Kele’s publication I have chosen not to try to adapt the Playford tune to fit the burden/stanza form of the carole but instead to compose a melody that demonstrates the characteristic elements outlined in Part Two above (see Table 6:1.)

Fig. 6:18. Pastiche


Burden
Stanza
In - du - cas, in - du - cas, in temp-ta - ti - o - ni- bus. The nun-ne walk-ed
6
on her prayer. In - du - cas, in - du - cas. Ther cam a fre-re and met with her,
11
In temp-ta - ti - o - ni- bus. Si - ne temp-ta - ti - o - ni- bus.

Inducas, inducas, in temptationibus. (repeated between each stanza)

1. The nunne walked on her prayer,
   Inducas, inducas.
   Ther cam a frere and met with her,

In temptationibus.

2. This nunne began to fall asleep; *Inducas etc.*
The frere knelyd down at her feet. *In temptationibus.*

3. The fryer began the nunne to grope. *Inducas etc.*
It was a morsal for the pope. *In temptationibus.*

Additional stanzas: The bed began to creak and sway, *Inducas etc.*
Never were censors swung this way. *In temptationibus.*

Soon the nun did chant and sing, *Inducas etc.*
The friar the Matins bell did ring. *In temptationibus.*

4. The frere and the nunne when they had done, *Inducas etc.*
Eche to theyr cloister dyd they gone,
Sine temptationibus.

My simple burden is limited to a range of a fifth and the fragmented repetitions, after each line of stanza, are identical to the opening statement. The melody for the first line of the stanza extends the range by a semitone to a sixth, and the second line begins with a jump up, of a fourth, thus expecting the solo lead-singer to use a whole octave. The ability of a non - specialist group to pick up the burden and the internal refrain of *Inducas, inducas* has been tested in several situations including Leeds International Medieval Congress 2013 and Bristol Centre for Medieval Studies seminar in December 2016.[118] The version of the carole in Richard Kele's publication has four stanzas and I have added two of my own. (see Fig.6:18.) At each performance I have encouraged the audience to participate by contributing additional two-line stanzas before the final verse.[119] The participants were seated on both occasions, so the carole was not danced but the standing lead-singer employed a repertoire of appropriate gestures; for example, a suggestive swaying of a censor in the first additional verse. If the circumstances allowed for dancing it would be done in the following manner. The participants would be asked to form an inward facing circle, holding hands. During the repeated burden the dancers would take eight steps to the left, starting with the left foot, followed by eight steps back to the right. This would be repeated between each stanza. At the beginning of the stanza the dancers would drop hands and *balancé*, a step to the left followed by one to the right, eight steps in total while the lead singer sings the two-line stanzas. All the participants would join in singing the internal refrains and could imitate any gestures that might be modelled by the leader. The leader might also model some steps, such as a turn or a hop, during the internal refrain but would expect the participants' full attention during the other two lines of the stanzas.

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[118] Frances Eustace, 'Karolles, wrastlynges, or somour games, who-so euer haunteþ any swyche shames', Paper presented at Leeds IMC, 3/7/2013. Frances Eustace, 'The Friar and the Nun', Paper presented at Bristol Centre for Medieval Studies Seminar, 15/12/2016.

[119] In a performance in Sturminster Newton, The Workhouse Chapel (January 16, 2015) a participant composed a bawdy, witty stanza employing the rhyme of 'habit' and 'rabbit'. Unfortunately, this was not recorded.

Conclusion

In conclusion, enough information has been accumulated, in this chapter, to enable me to compose a plausible melody for a medieval secular carole which survives only as a text, and for a convivial company to enjoy participating in its execution. It has been tested in several situations and proved to be suitable for the participation of both singers and non-singers. Whilst it has been the practice of composers in the last century, and continues to be in the present one, to re-invent these medieval caroles as sophisticated, solo art-songs with instrumental accompaniment, or as part-songs, this was not their original context. These more recent composers have selected predominantly religious texts for this purpose and neglected the secular ones. The inclusiveness of carolling relied on the simplicity of the melodies and the repetitive call and response format to ensure that all present at a communal gathering could confidently join in. This does not necessarily reflect negatively on the quality of the language or the music, as is demonstrated by the enduring imagery of the caroles studied in this chapter, and is exemplified by the haunting carole, *Down in yon Forest*.

It was the work of the French-Canadian ethno-musicologist, Conrad Laforte, mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, that inspired my interest and approach to research regarding medieval carolling practice. His discovery that antiphonal dance-songs, employing a lead singer (*chante-avant*), refrain and stanza song forms, and circle dance formations, were still being enjoyed in twentieth-century France brought alive the imagery of medieval romance scenes of carolling. It made a connection, despite the intervening centuries, with the pleasure pursuits of ordinary people and the literary accounts of medieval courtly pleasures. In this final chapter I wished to follow the particular evolution of carolling practice in England, where such a direct link was not so obvious. It has not been possible to prove, using the fragmentary manuscript record, un-broken lines of development. I have, however, drawn together many elements, which have been woven through the culture of song and dance in England since the Middle Ages, and made it possible to re-construct a clearer understanding of carolling practices.

Conclusion

My study has shown that the activity of secular carolling was known in Britain long before the Norman Conquest. Its place and significance in oral culture was well established and endured for the following centuries. My holistic approach has built up a vivid picture of the universal participation in secular carolling among the insular population during the late Middle Ages. The integration of the written record within a wider understanding of the background oral culture has provided a context for an activity which encompassed all members of society whether they were literate or illiterate, educated or uneducated, English or French speaking. My study has also shown that boundaries did not exist, even in the written record, between pious and secular carolling. I have sought to redress the balance of the negative view so volubly expressed by some clerics and placed in context that view within a culture of carolling that was so clearly enjoyed by so much of the population.

The use of Anglo-Norman in the written record, from the end of the eleventh century, resulted in the use of the noun ‘carole’ and the verb ‘caroler’ (and the many variant spellings) prevailing over the English ‘ring’. The dominance of the written language did not, however, necessarily reflect the use of the vernacular in the prevailing oral culture. Although the written record is virtually silent concerning caroles in English, I contend that they were being sung during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and were part of the vernacular oral culture that the Franciscans later drew upon. The literature of the twelfth to fifteenth centuries represents an idealised version of carolling in courtly society and does not accurately represent the activity as practised by the populace at large. It does, however, provide clues as to how, when and where secular carolling might have been done.

A re-assessment of the writings of clerics shows that secular carolling was widely accepted as a form of entertainment for lay people across all levels of society, provided it did not distract from, or impinge on, the work of the Church. It was not, however, considered a suitable activity for clerical participation unless it was converted with pious texts. This study has followed the development of Franciscan carole writing and the creation of the body of written Franciscan carole repertoire during the fifteenth century. Although this repertoire is predominantly pious, the extant secular caroles point to a much wider repertoire that remained in the oral cultural domain. The study of Franciscan manuscripts and books has demonstrated that the pious and secular co-existed, within the repertoire of a community or even within the repertoire of an individual writer. It cannot be proved that both repertoires were used on any single occasion, but it can be inferred that even the most pious religious carole writer also enjoyed an impious carole, from time to time.

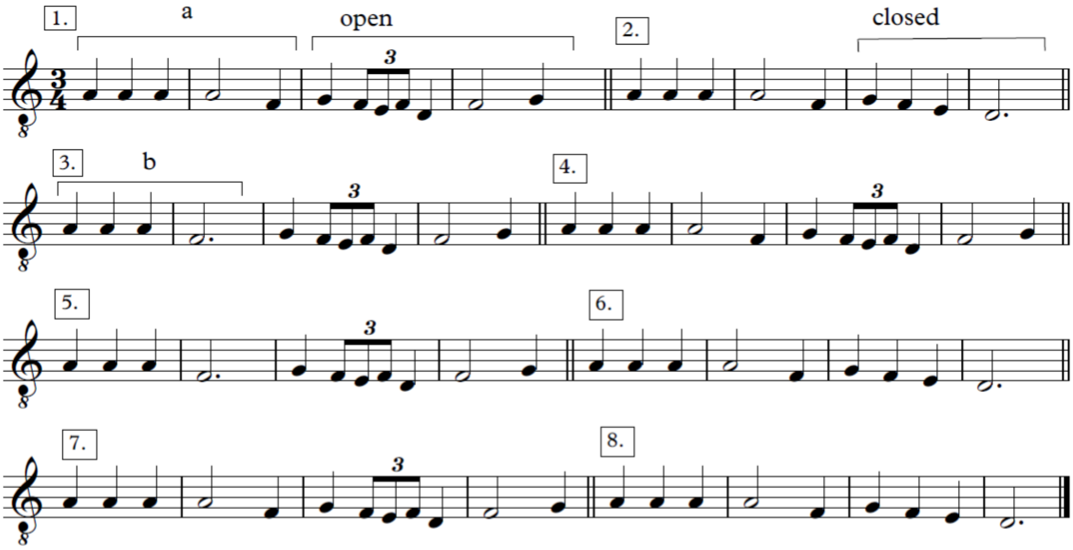
The written carole repertoire records only the texts of dance-songs and this study has drawn from other sources to re-unite the elements of text, dance and music. I have concluded that the steps and the melodies were to some extent formulaic and therefore easy to pick up quickly without any form of training. Carolling culture was universal and strangers could join in, although the skills of a good leader were important and admired. These skills included clear and rhythmic singing, and an ability to remember or improvise topical and appropriate words. The flexibility of the carole idiom provided opportunities for the expression of communal celebration, communal approbation, and social cohesion.

The final part of this study found some remnants of medieval secular caroles and carolling that endured within oral culture, only to emerge centuries later in dance and song. By drawing together themes and motifs it has been possible to create a pastiche setting of a carole that could provide a model for further settings of carole texts, not as art-songs, but as communal participatory activities.

My thesis lays a method for holistic study of other cultures that were primarily oral but whose characteristics and scope can be at least partially inferred from other cultures, time periods, linguistic contexts and surviving documents. When depending upon the written documents it must be remembered that carolling involved dancing and was not a literary activity in itself. Just as a script of a play is not the play, a book of caroles is not carolling. It cannot be assumed that the medieval world was as literary as the written texts, nor was carolling as pious as the body of extant caroles might imply. I have demonstrated the value of integrating study across disciplines and also looking at cultural practice trans-historically in order to access a better understanding.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Guillaume d’ Amiens *Prendés i garde* in Chansonnier du Vatican MS Reg. lat. 1490 f.119v. (Boogaard, rond. 93).



Appendix 2. Cambridge, Gonville and Caius Ms 383/603 p. 41. (Transcribed by Greene, no. 452 in *EEC*)

Rybbe ne rele ne spynne yc ne may
For joyghe th*a*t it is holyday.

All this day ic ha*n* sou[ght;]
Spyndul ne werne ne wond Y nought;   *Spindel ne werve ne fond I nought*
To myche blisse ic am brout
Ayen this hyghe [ho]lyda[y.]

All vnswope ys owr*e* vlech,   *fleth*
And owr*e* fyr*e* ys vnbech;   *unbeth (unlaid)*
Our*e* ruschen be*n* vnrepe yech   *unswept yeth*
Ayen this hy halyday.

Yc moste feschu*n* worton in;
Predele my kerchief vnd*ur* my khyn;   *chin*
Leue Jakke, lend me a pyn
To p*re*dele me this holiday.   *thredele*

Now yt draweth to the non*e*,
And al my cherr*us* be*n* vndon*e*;
Y moste a lyte solas mye schon*e*
To make he*m* dowge this holiday.[1]

Y moste mylkyn i*n* this payl;
Outh me bred al this schayl;
Yut is the dow vnd*ur* my nayl
As ic knad this holyday.[2]

Jakke wol bryng*e* me onward i*n* my wey,
Wyth me desire for te play;
Of my dame sta*n*t me no*n* eyghe[3]
An neu*er* a god haliday.   *And never a good holiday*

Jacke wol pay for my scoth
A Sonday atte the ale- schoch;   *ale-scoth*
Jacke wol sowse wel my wroch   *throth*[4]
Eu*er*y god halide[y.]

Sone he wolle take me be the hand,
And he wolle legge me on the lond,
That al my buttock*us* be*n* of son[d,]
Open this hye holyday.

In he pult, *and* out he drow,

---

[1] Trans. Luria and Hoffman: I must polish my shoes a little to make them useful (soft?)
[2] I ought to spread out all this bowl (of dough)
[3] I am not afraid of my mistress.
[4] Ale-scoth = scotale.

And eu*er* yc lay on hy*m* y-low;
‘By God*us* deth, th*o*u dest me wow
Vpon this hey holyday!’

Sone my wo*m*be began te swelle
A[s] greth as a belle;
Durst Y nat my dame telle
Wat me betydde this holyday.

Appendix 3. Cambridge, Gonville and Caius 383/603 p. 41. (Transcribed by Greene, no. 453 in *EEC*)

Alas, als the wyle!
Thout Y on no gyle,
So haue Y god chence.
Als[s,] ales, the wyle
Th*a*t au*er* Y cowed dau*n*ce!

Ladd Y the dau*n*ce a Myssom*ur* Day;
Y made a smale t*r*ipp*us*, soth for to say,
Jak, our*e* haly-wat*ur* cle[r]k co*m* be the way,
And he lokede me vpon; he thout h*i*t was gay.
Thout yc on ne gyle.

Jak, our*e* haly-wat*ur* clerk, the yong st*r*ippely*ng*,
For the cheson*e* of me he com to the ryng,
And he t*r*ippede on my to *and* made a twynnkelyng;
Eu*er* he ca*m* n*er*; he spar*e*t for no thynge.
Thout Y on [no gyle.]

Jak, ic wot, p*re*yede i*n* my fayre face;
He thout me ful werly, so haue Y god g*ra*ce;
As we t*ur*ndu*n* owr*e* da*n*ce i*n* a narw place,
Jak bed me the mouth; a cussyng*e* th*er* was.

Thout Y on no g[yle.]

Jak tho began to row*ne* in my*n* ere:
‘Loke th*a*t th*o*u be p*ri*uey, and g*ra*unte th*a*t th*o*u the ber*e*;
A peyr*e* wyth glouus ic ha to thy*n* were.’
‘G*ra*m*er*cy, Jacke!’ was my*n* answer*e*.
Thout*ei yc [on no gyle.]*

Sone aft*er* eue*n*so*n*g Jak me mette:
‘Com ho*m* aft*ur* thy glou*us* th*a*t I the byhette.’
Wan ic to his chamber co*m*, dou*n* he me sette;
Fro*m* hy*m* mytte Y nat go wa*n* [we] wer*e* mette.
Thout Y [on no gyle.]

Schet*us and* chalon*us*, ic wot, a wer*e* yspredde;
Forsothe tho Jak *and* yc went*en* to bedde;
He p*ri*kede, *and* he p*ra*nsede; nolde he neu*er* lynne;
Yt was the murgust nyt th*a*t eu*er* Y cam ynne,
Thout Y [in no gyle.]

Wan Jak had don, tho he ro*n*g the bell;
Al nyght th*er* he made me to dwelle;
Of y t*re*we we hadd*un* ys*er*ued the reaggeth deuel of helle;
Of othur smale burdus kep Y nout to telle.
Thout Y [on no gyle.]

The M*on*day at p*ri*me Y com ho*m*, as ic wene;
Meth Y my dame, coppud *and* kene:
‘Sey, th*o*u stro*n*ge str*u*mpeth, war*e* hastu bene?
Thy t*r*ippy*ng and* thy dau*n*cy*ng*, wel it wel be sene.’
Thout Y [on ne gyle.]

Eu*er* bi on *and* by on my damme reched me clot;
Eu*er* Y ber it p*ri*uey wyle that Y mouth,

Tyl my gurdul aros, my wombe wax out;
Euel therinne *es* ern eu*er* it wole out.
Thout Y on no gyle.

Greene writes: Only the last two lines of the burden are written at the head of the piece in the MS. “Alas alas the wyle that euer y coude daunce.” The entire burden is written after stanza 1.

Appendix 4. Cambridge, Cambridge University Library MS Ee. 1. 12 f. 80v.
The original layout has no spaces between couplets which are bracketed and the refrain or burden is written to the right of the second bracket and thereafter indicated to be repeated “with how etc.”

The fals fox came into our croft
And so our gese ful fast he sought

The fals fox came into our stye
And toke our gese ther by and by

With how fox how with hey fox hey / come no more into our croft to bere our gese awaye.

The fals fox came into our yerde
And ther he made the gese aferde *with how etc.*

The fals fox came into our gate
And toke our gese ther wher they sate *with how fox etc.*

The fals fox came to our halle dore
And shrove our gese ther in the flore *with how fox etc.*

The fals fox came into our halle
And assayled our gese both grete and smale *with how fox etc.*

The fals fox came into our cowpe
And ther he made our gese to stowpe *with how fox etc.*

He toke a gose fast by the nek
And the gose thoo began to quek *with how fox etc.*

The good wyfe came out in her smok
And at the fox she threw [] he rok *with how fox etc.*

The good man came out with his flayle
And smote the fox upon the tayle *with how fox etc.*

He threw a gose upon hys bak
And furth he went thoo with his pak *with how fox etc.*

The goodman swore yf that he myght
He wold him slee or it wer nyght *with how fox etc.*

The fals fox went into hys denne
And ther he was full mery thenne *with how fox etc.*

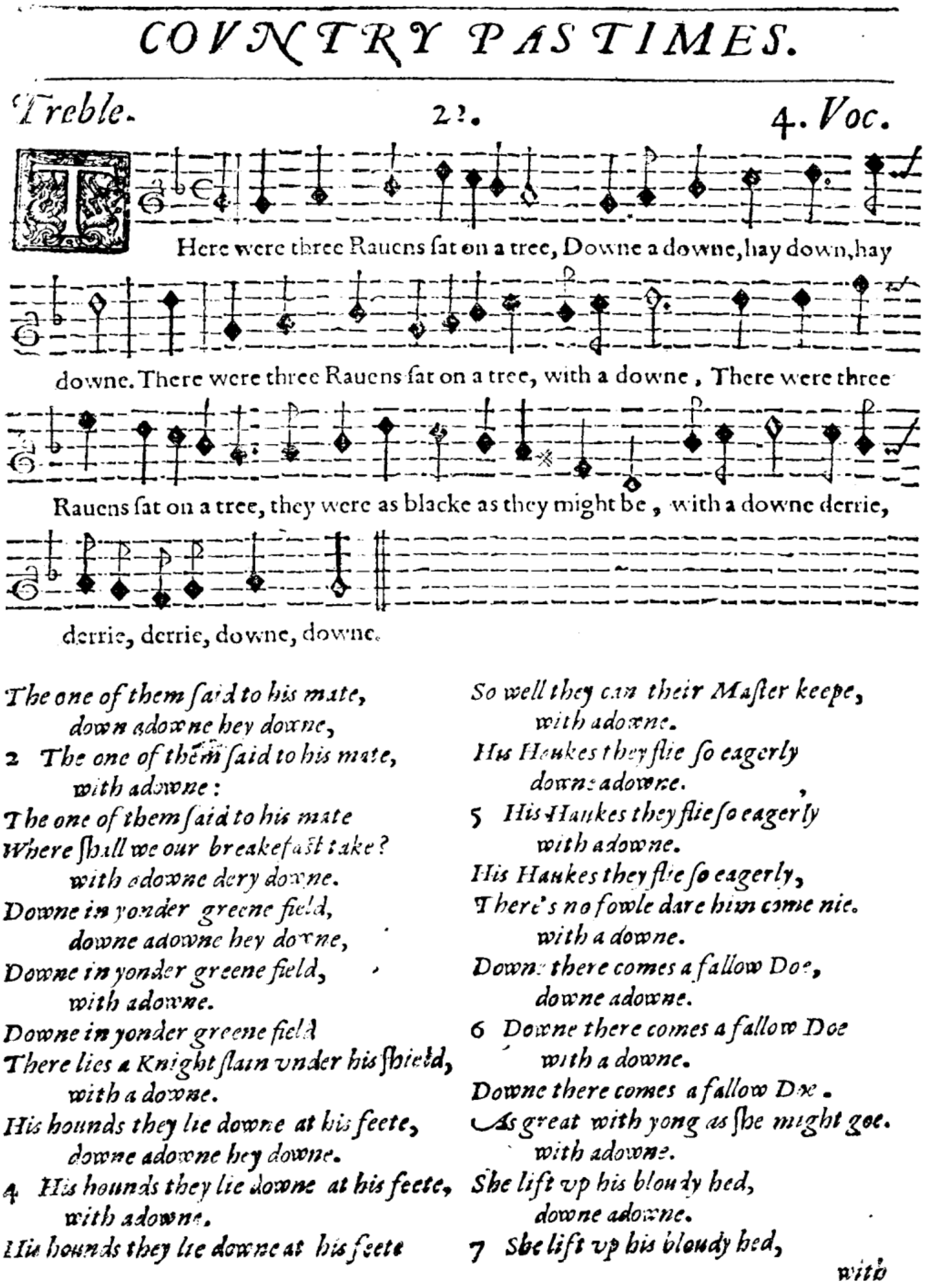
He came ayene yet the nextwek
And toke away both henne and cheke *with how fox etc.*

The goodman saide unto his wyfe
The fals fox lyveth a mery lyfe *with how fox etc.*

The fals fox came upon a day
And with our gese he made affray *with how fox how etc.*

He took a gose fast by the nek
And made her to say Whoccumquek
I pray the fox said the goose thoo
…of my….(final line faint and in a different hand)

Appendix 5. Thomas Ravenscroft: Three Ravens.

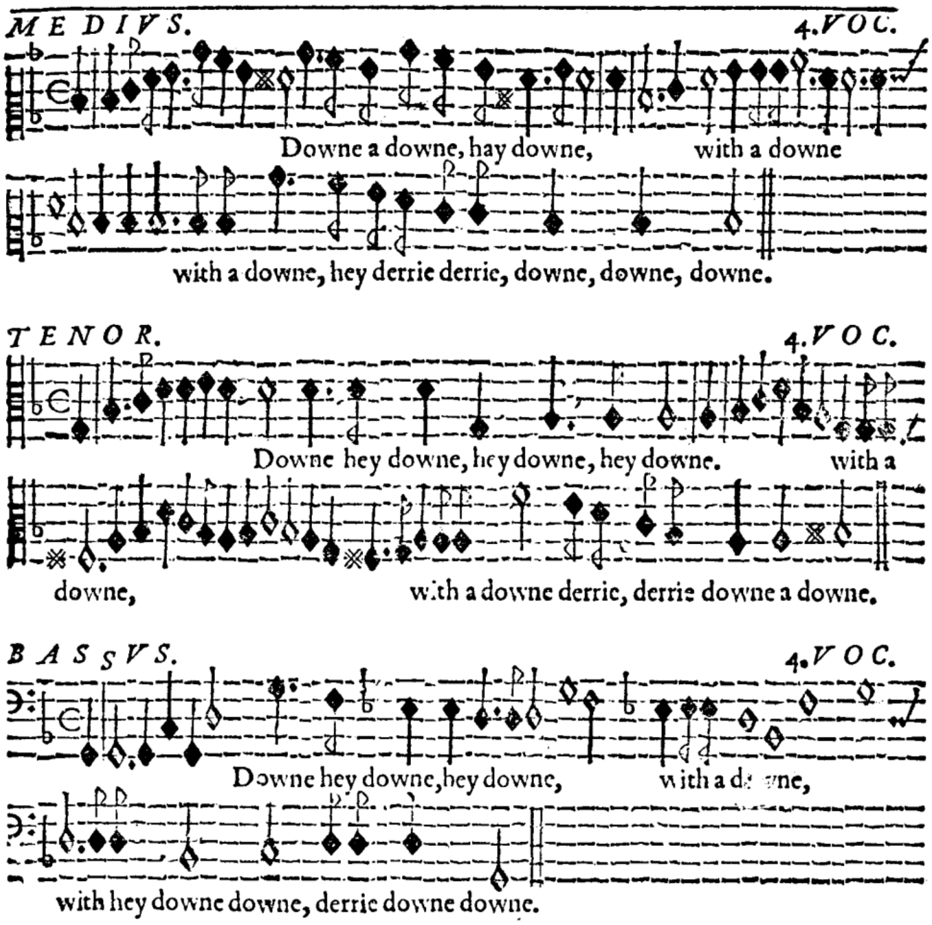


COVNTRY PASTIMES.

Treble. 22. 4. Voc.

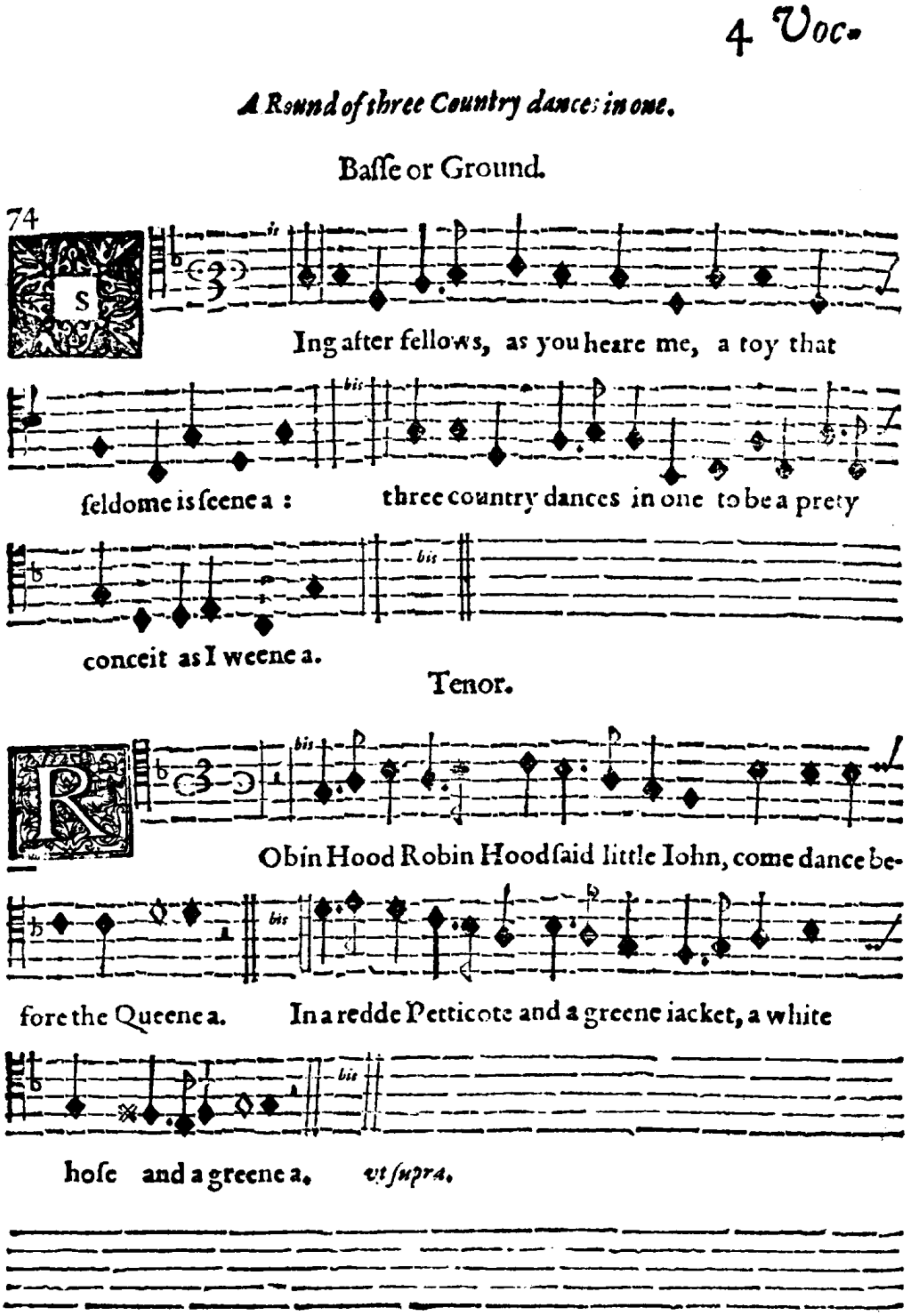
There were three Rauens ſat on a tree, Downe a downe, hay down, hay downe. There were three Rauens ſat on a tree, with a downe, There were three Rauens ſat on a tree, they were as blacke as they might be, with a downe derrie, derrie, derrie, downe, downe.

The one of them ſaid to his mate,
down adowne hey downe,
2 The one of them ſaid to his mate,
with adowne:
The one of them ſaid to his mate
Where ſhall we our breakefaſt take?
with adowne dery downe.
Downe in yonder greene field,
downe adowne hey downe,
Downe in yonder greene field,
with adowne.
Downe in yonder greene field
There lies a Knight ſlain vnder his ſhield,
with a downe.
His hounds they lie downe at his feete,
downe adowne hey downe.
4 His hounds they lie downe at his feete,
with adowne.
His hounds they lie downe at his feete
So well they can their Maſter keepe,
with adowne.
His Haukes they flie ſo eagerly
downe adowne.
5 His Haukes they flie ſo eagerly
with adowne.
His Haukes they flie ſo eagerly,
There's no fowle dare him come nie.
with a downe.
Downe there comes a fallow Doe,
downe adowne.
6 Downe there comes a fallow Doe
with a downe.
Downe there comes a fallow Doe.
As great with yong as ſhe might goe.
with adowne.
She lift vp his bloudy hed,
downe adowne.
7 She lift vp his bloudy hed,
with

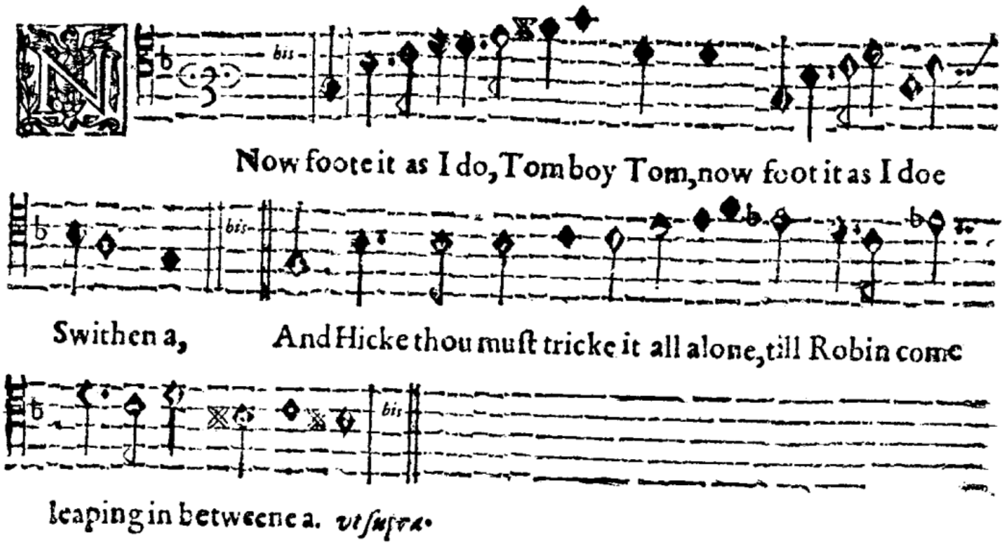

MEDIVS.
4.VOC.
Downe a downe, hay downe, with a downe
with a downe, hey derrie derrie, downe, downe, downe.
TENOR.
4.VOC.
Downe hey downe, hey downe, hey downe. with a
downe, with a downe derrie, derrie downe a downe.
BASSVS.
4.VOC.
Downe hey downe, hey downe, with a downe,
with hey downe downe, derrie downe downe.

with a downe.
She lift vp his bloudy hed,
And kiſt his wounds that were ſo red
with a downe.
8 *She got him vp vpon her backe,*
downe adowne.
She got him vp vpon her backe,
with adowne.
She got him vp vpon her backe,
And carried him to earthen lake,
with adowne downe.
9 *She buried him before the prime,*
downe adowne.
She buried him before the prime,
with adowne.
She buried him before the prime,
She was dead her ſelfe ere euen-ſong time
with adowne.
10 *God ſend euery gentleman*
downe adowne.
God ſend euery gentleman
with adowne.
God ſend euery gentleman *(man,*
Such haukes, ſuch hounds, and ſuch a Le-
with adowne. F

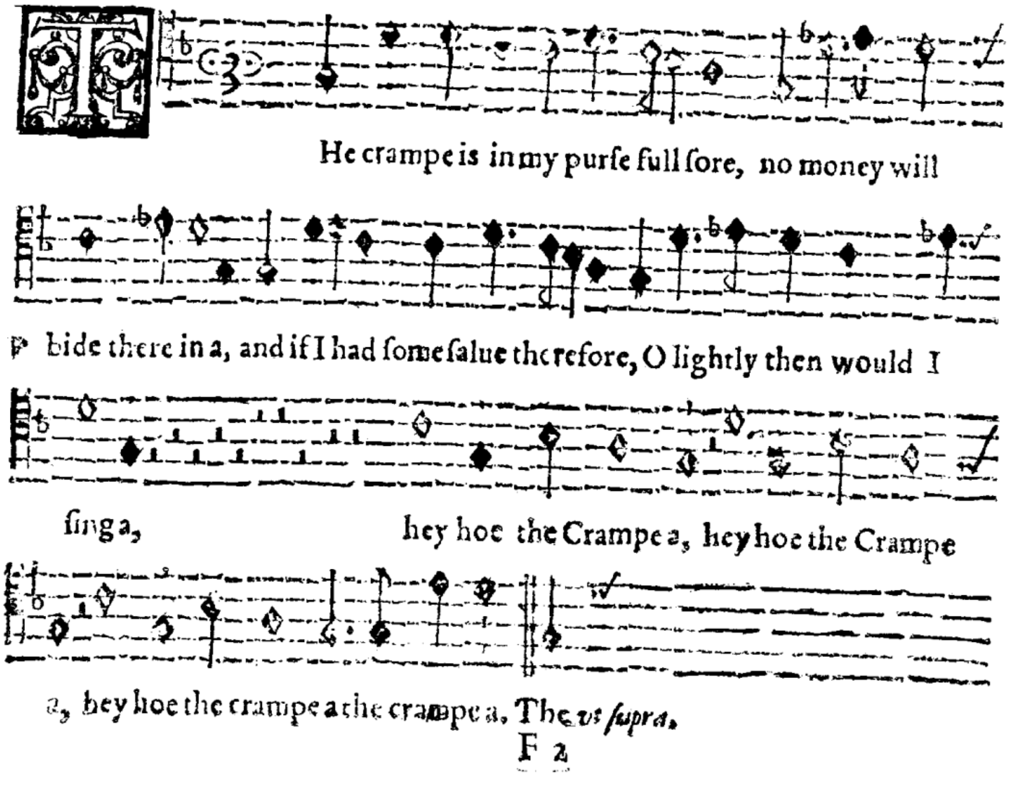
Appendix 6. Thomas Ravenscroft: Three Country Dances from Pammelia.


4 Voc.
A Round of three Country dances in one.
Baſſe or Ground.
74
S
Ing after fellows, as you heare me, a toy that
bis
ſeldome is ſeene a :
three country dances in one to be a prety
conceit as I weene a.
bis
Tenor.
R
Obin Hood Robin Hood ſaid little Iohn, come dance be-
bis
fore the Queene a.
In a redde Petticote and a greene iacket, a white
hoſe and a greene a,
bis
vt ſupra.

Cantus.


bis
Now foote it as I do, Tom boy Tom, now foot it as I doe
bis
Swithen a, And Hicke thou muſt tricke it all alone, till Robin come
bis
leaping in betweene a. vt ſupra.

Medius.


He crampe is in my purſe full ſore, no money will
bide there in a, and if I had ſome ſalue therefore, O lightly then would I
ſing a, hey hoe the Crampe a, hey hoe the Crampe
a, hey hoe the crampe a the crampe a, The vt ſupra.

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