McInnes, Louise

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The Social, Political and Religious Contexts of the Late Medieval Carol: 1360-1520

Louise McInnes

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2013
Dedication

This thesis is lovingly dedicated to my children, husband, and parents for their unconditional love and support. My great thanks must also go to Dr Lisa Colton and Professor John Bryan for their sage advice and endless patience.
Abstract

This thesis examines the late medieval English carol, an important indigenous musical form that is abundant in a number of sources from the late fourteenth to the early sixteenth century, both with and without extant musical notation. Carols with musical notation have been favoured by musicologists in previous research. This thesis however, provides a new context for the study of the carol by also including a close investigation of those carols without extant musical notation; thus presenting a fuller picture of the genre than that of previous musicological studies. The carol has been somewhat neglected in terms of recent, detailed, published research, therefore this study addresses the reasons for its neglect, and reveals a broader understanding of the genre. It applies a combination of traditional and modern methodologies: empirical research, gender study and ethnomusicological research, in order to place the carol genre in clearer social, political and religious contexts and better understand its place and use in late medieval society.

Through the application of these methodologies, this thesis provides an important perspective on the place of women, not only in the carols, but also within broader social and musical contexts, revealing a complex picture of their place in medieval music as subjects, performers and composers. Suggestions for the use of carols in sermons and other forms of worship are also made, and the carol’s value as a vehicle for political commentary and English nationalism in this period is demonstrated. By approaching the carol in this manner, this study takes us beyond the popular perception of it as a genre merely for the amusement of educated clerics, instead revealing an important, popular musical form that was found in all strata of society.
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Introduction

The late medieval carol, abundant in a wealth of sources both with and without musical notation, is an important musical form that, in terms of detailed, published, academic research, has been greatly neglected for many years; most of the main studies of the genre were undertaken in the middle of the twentieth century by literary specialists such as R. L. Greene, and musicologist John Stevens.\(^1\) The reason for this gap is certainly not due to saturation of research in this area, as there is still much to learn about the importance of this musical form and its diverse uses in medieval life, but more likely a combination of factors such as: the carol only being found in English sources, and therefore seen as divorced from the perceived ‘mainstream’ of continental music developments; the perception of it as a form in the main for the amusement of educated male clerics; and the seeming finality of both Steven’s and Greene’s publications.\(^2\) This thesis therefore, will initially examine the carol in terms of its key elements: form, language, text, subject, musical devices and its placement in manuscript sources in order to fully understand what is meant by the term ‘carol’, followed by a thorough examination of those factors that may have contributed to its neglect. In addition to being side-lined in terms of published research, the carol has also been conventionally separated by academics into musically notated and non-musically notated carols. This approach, as will be demonstrated throughout this thesis, will not allow for a full and thorough investigation of the genre. Therefore, a more detailed investigation of carols without musical notation will shed new light on those that do.

In order to explore the carols in this way, this thesis will examine a number of aspects of the genre using traditional and modern musicological methodologies: empirical research,

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2 There has been a recent publication on the origins of the Agincourt Carol: Deeming, Helen, ‘The sources and origin of the “Agincourt Carol”’, *Early Music*, 35/1 (2007), 23-38. There have also been some recent PhD dissertations written upon the subject but with no resulting publication of the research: Zamzow, Beth Ann, *The Influence of the Liturgy on the Fifteenth-Century English Carols* (PhD from University of Iowa, 2000), Smaill, Adele Margaret, *Mediaeval Carols: Origins, Forms, and Performance Contexts* (PhD from Michigan, 2003), and Palti, Kathleen, ‘*Singe we now alle and sum*: Three Fifteenth-Century Collections of Communal Song’ (PhD from University College London, 2008).
gender study and ethnomusicological approaches. This combination of approaches should allow the carol to be seen in the wider contexts of time and place; viewing the carols as part of a larger scheme, and moving them away from the commonly held view that they were merely an amusement for educated clerics. Instead, this thesis will reveal a far more multifaceted genre. Greene’s publication, although forming a strong foundation on which to build, will be challenged here in order to break down previous preconceptions of the form; an approach that has not been attempted in carol research thus far. A readdressing of Greene’s methodology for the exclusion of certain carols from his publication, and his general categorisation of carol subjects, is necessary in order to place the carols within a modern musicological framework.

The carol will also be examined in context with other musical forms of the late medieval period, and analysed on equal terms with genres such as the motet and the hymn - both genres that are found in manuscripts alongside the carol. Previously, the carols have tended to be treated in isolation from other musical forms. This is a misconception that will be challenged in this study, instead revealing, through the examination of manuscript evidence, that the carol was written and performed alongside many other musical genres in the late medieval period, and should therefore be treated similarly in current research and performance. In doing this, the carol can then be seen as part of a larger medieval corpus and placed in a more thoroughly representative context than previous approaches. In order to achieve this, it is important to distance oneself from the composer-centred approach in the examination of the genre due to the small number of extant named carol composers. It is imperative therefore that one avoids being fixed upon these few named composers, instead concentrating on the wider, largely anonymous whole. This approach will facilitate a fair and balanced approach to the carol material.

Musicological research has tended to favour the polyphonic carol of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries for study, however, there also exist a significant number of monophonic carols. These monophonic survivors have previously been thought, by scholars such as Stevens, to be a small window into lost popular song melodies that were more generally transmitted orally rather than in notated form. This thesis will develop this argument, and ultimately discuss the possibility of a large body of lost popular song melodies that may have been used for the corpus of carols extant without their melodies. These lost melodies
may point to an oral carol tradition used amongst the less educated classes of society that is now lost to us, again moving the carol away from the general preconception of the carol and the educated cleric.

The involvement of women in music of the Middle Ages is generally still unclear; however, this thesis will present evidence that may explain their association with the carols in some capacity, whether as subject, audience, performers or composers. There are a large number of carols that speak directly to women, speak in a female voice, are about women or contain an amount of female narrative. By exploring these, this study will aim to place women more clearly within the music of this period, challenging Greene’s categorisation of these particular carols and ultimately revealing a far larger corpus of ‘carols of women’ than has previously been realised. This will demonstrate a far more complex picture of women in the medieval carol.

The political carol, as classified by Greene, will also be addressed in detail. The definition of what makes a ‘political carol’ will be clarified, and an important case for the addition of carols, namely those for the Saints George and Thomas of Canterbury, to this category will be made, thus allowing a re-examination of what is perceived as political in this period. GB-Lbl Egerton 3307 is central to this research, as this thesis will demonstrate that the grouping of the political carols in this manuscript shows their strength and importance as a collection, something not previously noted, and will further validate the inclusion of carols to St Thomas of Canterbury in this political category. This should show that politics had a stronger influence and impetus than has previously been considered in this genre. By analysing the political carols of the period it will also be shown that a politically texted carol was equally at home in the celebrations of the Christmas season as those of the nativity, and importantly, that a strong sense of English nationalism was emerging from within their texts.

Finally, this study will address the possible use of the carols in worship. Carols are found in a substantial number of manuscripts alongside sermons, theological material and instructional devices, or in manuscripts that originated in the hands of priests, clerics and friars and contain within them lines from hymns and liturgical texts. This may point to their use as a preaching tool or perhaps other possible uses in medieval worship. By examining
the carols within these manuscripts, this thesis will aim to explore possible uses for the carol in worship, and examine their connection to the liturgy.

By employing these methodologies, this thesis will disclose a more complex picture of the carol than has previously been portrayed, revealing a musical form that was not only for the use of educated male clerics, but one that found its way into all strata of society in one practice or another.
Chapter 1
The Carol: Musical Features and Previous Scholarship

The late medieval carol is abundant in a wealth of English manuscripts of the period. Approximately 500 texts survive from 1360-1520; over 130 of which have extant musical notation. The carols with musical notation and without survive in approximately 138 manuscripts that vary greatly in terms of provenance, size and content.\(^1\) Table 1 illustrates the extant manuscripts that are particularly explored within this thesis, detailing their approximate dates and whether or not they contain carols with musical notation.\(^2\) This chapter aims to clarify the textual and musical characteristics of the carol, and investigate theories pertaining to its origins. An evaluation of past and current research into the carol will also be undertaken in order to illustrate the ways in which the genre has been previously defined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manuscript</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>GB-Bbcm 123</td>
<td>15(^{th}) century</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Cgc MS 383/603</td>
<td>14(^{th})-15(^{th}) century</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Cjc S.54</td>
<td>Late 15(^{th}) century</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Ctc O.3.58 (Trinity)</td>
<td>Early 15(^{th}) century</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Ctc 0.9.38</td>
<td>15(^{th}) century/second half (carol layer)</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Ctc R.4.20</td>
<td>15(^{th}) century/second half</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Ctc R.14.26</td>
<td>Early 15(^{th}) century</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB- Cu Additional 5943</td>
<td>15(^{th}) century/ first quarter</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^1\) The period of 1360-1520 has been established as important in order to take in the earliest non-musically notated carols of the late fourteenth century, to the latest notated manuscript source, the Henry VIII manuscript of c.1520.

\(^2\) For a full and up to date table of all of the extant carol manuscripts see: Smaill, Adele Margaret, *Medieval Carols: Origins, Forms, and Performance Contexts* (Michigan, 2003), 464-467. Table 1 lists the manuscripts alphabetically in order of sigla. Some dates are necessarily broad due to the nature of the manuscripts. All dates are as accurate as possible and have been compared with Greene, R.L., *The Early English Carols* (Oxford, 1935), Individual Library Catalogues, The Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music (www.diamm.ac.uk) and RISM (www.rism.org) as well as individual publications.
<table>
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<tr>
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<td>c. 1492</td>
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<tr>
<td>GB-Cu Ff.5.48</td>
<td>15th century/first half</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-En Advocates 18.7.21</td>
<td>1372</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-G, Hunterian 83</td>
<td>1475-1500</td>
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<td>GB-Lca 1.7</td>
<td>16th century (carol layer)</td>
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<td>GB-Ob Ashmole 1393</td>
<td>15th century</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>GB-Ob Bodley 26</td>
<td>14th century</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Ob Douce 302</td>
<td>15th century/first half</td>
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<td>GB-Ob Eng. Poet.e.1</td>
<td>Late 15th or early 16th century</td>
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<td>GB-Ob Selden b.26 (Selden)</td>
<td>c.1425-40 (carol layer)</td>
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<td>GB-Lbl Additional 19046</td>
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<td>GB-Lbl Additional 31042</td>
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<td>GB-Lbl Additional 31922 (Henry VIII)</td>
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<td>GB-Lbl Cotton Vespasian A.XXV</td>
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Table 1: Manuscripts containing carols that are addressed within this thesis.

With the exception of GB-Lca 1.7 and GB-Bbcm 123, sigla used is in concordance with RISM. A full table of the manuscripts used in this study with full references and contents can be found in Appendix A.
In order to place the carol in wider social, political and religious contexts within this thesis, it is first imperative to understand the manuscripts and the musical and textual forms and devices that identify the genre.

**Manuscript Sources**

There is no ‘typical’ fifteenth-century source in which carols, with or without musical notation, are located. They are found in courtly manuscripts and simple pocket books; in manuscripts dedicated to music and those found nestled amongst accounts and recipes. In order to better understand the diversity of carol sources, it is useful to examine two sources: one non-musically notated manuscript, and one with musical notation.

**London, British Library, Sloane 2593**

London, British Library, Sloane 2593 (henceforth known as Sloane 2593), is an interesting manuscript that dates from the early fifteenth century. It particularly stands out in the non-musically notated carol manuscript collection in the sense that approximately 80% of its contents are carols.  

The manuscript itself is unassuming, measuring 150 x 110 mm and made from paper, it contains no illumination or embellishment. It is, however, very neatly, and densely, written in a consistent hand throughout its 37 folios, with the exception only of folios 35v-37v which contain some scribbles, a note and medical recipes in three other hands. The insertion of carols within seemingly unrelated content, or indeed unrelated content inserted alongside the carols is a common occurrence in many of the extant manuscripts containing this genre. Commonly, manuscripts containing carols are often found bound together with other manuscripts, or seem to have originally been a part of something larger. Sloane 2593 falls in to the latter category, as it contains previous folio numbering that shows the present f.2 to have formerly been f.49’.  

---

4 For a complete list of the carols found in this manuscript see: Appendix 1.
The carols are particularly easy to identify visually within this manuscript due to their written arrangement. This technique is described by Palti thus:

The burdens are written as ‘prose’ at the top, with a paraph mark in the margin to their left. Each stanza begins with a slightly less elaborate paraph mark in the margin. A brace connects the lines of the stanza, and the final line of each stanza is written to the right of this brace. A plain line is drawn between each song.6

This method of carol notation is echoed throughout the fifteenth-century, often enabling the initial visual identification of carols within manuscripts of this period. Another commonality is the inclusion of other material alongside the carols. In Sloane 2593, carols are found together with other Latin and English songs, fourteen in total. They include:

‘Three Latin songs: the famous ‘Meum est propositum in taberna mori’, a rondeau, ‘Procedenti puer’ and a cantelina, ‘Non pudescit corpore’, in praise of St. Thomas of Canterbury, which is undefaced and shows that the MS. did not continue in a secular house.’

English songs are also present, namely: ‘I syng of a mayden’; ‘I have a gentil cook’; ‘I have a newe gardyn’; ‘Robin lyth in grene wode bowdynam’ (ballad); ‘As I wnet throw a gardyn grene’; ‘Be the way wandering as I went’; ‘Seynt Steuene was a clerk’ (ballad); ‘Aue maris stella’; ‘If I synge ye wyl me lakke’; ‘Enmy Herowde, thou wokkyd kyng’; ‘As I me lend to a lend’.7 The subject matter for both the Latin and English songs varies considerably, as does the subject matter of the carols, which are listed in appendix one. They range in classification from those centred on religious events, particularly the nativity, to the celebration of saints and texts that discuss women and marriage. The religious songs are, however, the most abundant.8 The grouping together of subject matter is equally eclectic, although the carol genre is particularly well defined in the manuscript layout. Palti notes that:

While patterns in subject matter are difficult to trace, ribald jokes on occasion sharing a page with Marian praise, the first part of the manuscript can be divided

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6 Palti, Kathleen, ‘Singe we now alle and sum’: Three Fifteenth-Century Collections of Communal Song (PhD from University College London, 2008), 70
9 Wright, Thomas, Songs and Carols Printed from a Manuscript in the Sloane Collection in the British Museum (London, 1856), vi
into two sequences of songs sharing similar formal patterns. The first twenty-four texts are all carols with quatrains stanzas and couplet burdens [with one exception]...The next seven songs are written in long couplets...only one of which has a burden...After these two groupings the pattern is less clear, consisting of short sequences of carols, punctuated by songs of different types, sometimes in pairs.10

Despite its seeming loss of defined structural layout latterly, this manuscript does show some initial degree of organisation, and its grouping together of carols in this manner is typical of manuscripts that hold a significant number of this genre.

The provenance of this manuscript, as with the majority of manuscripts containing carols from this period, is unproven. Various hypotheses have been presented. David Fowler suggests:

The matter has been disputed, but it may well be that this collection is representative of popular minstrelsy in the fifteenth century, and is therefore one of the best manuscripts available for the study and the emergence of the popular ballad from folk song tradition.11

Greene however suggests a more precise provenance for the manuscript. He argues that:

This important MS. is from Bury St. Edmunds, almost certainly from the great Benedictine monastery there. It contains the only preserved English carol in honour of St. Edmund...It also offers the only two known carols in honour of St. Nicholas...The boy-bishop who was rewarded at Bury...was there known as ‘the bishop of St. Nicholas’...There was an altar dedicated to St. Nicholas in the monastery church...The whole MS. is written in a specifically East Anglican form of language.’

Greene also cites the name ‘Bardel’, which is included in the manuscript as more evidence of its roots in Bury St. Edmunds due to its commonality in that area. Palti however, disagrees with this assertion, claiming that the mane ‘Bardel’ may well help to place the manuscript in

10 Palti, Kathleen, ‘Singe we now alle and sum’: Three Fifteenth-Century Collections of Communal Song (PhD from University College London, 2008), 70
the East Anglian region, but not specifically in Bury St Edmunds itself.\textsuperscript{12} Lisa Colton suggests that the Bury St Edmunds connection is in fact correct but places the manuscript in the hands of the town chaplains. She writes:

The fifteenth-century carol \textit{Synge we now}...is preserved in its single source alongside the only two carols to have survived in honour of St Nicholas, indicating that the manuscript is of Bury provenance. I would argue that the manuscript belonged to the chaplains working in the town rather than to the monks of the abbey. The \textit{Douzeguild} comprised burgesses and twelve secular priests, who were responsible for the running of the grammar school and the song school; there are payments recorded to this effect in a rental of 1386.\textsuperscript{13}

Other theories include a connection to the Lynn due to the mention of this place name in the carol ‘Thynk man qwerof thou art wrout’.\textsuperscript{14}

\textbf{London, British Library, Additional 5666}

London, British Library, Additional 5666 (henceforth known as Additional 5666) also has its roots in a similar period to Sloane 2593, the early part of the fifteenth century, and therefore provides a comparative study in terms of chronology. In contrast to Sloane however, Additional 5666 contains only three carols, all of which survive with musical notation. These three carols are: ‘Lullay my child’, ‘This ender day’ and ‘Lullay: I saw’. ‘Lullay I saw’ is the only polyphonic carol, scored for two voices, the others are monophonic. Unlike the carols of Sloane 2593, the carols in this manuscript all follow a lullaby theme, perhaps chosen by the compiler specifically for this reason. This is especially likely due to the existence of a further lullaby fragment that has unfortunately faded, the song ‘Now has Mary born’ that follows a similar theme and a further piece, the Latin nativity motet ‘Puer natus in bethlehem unde gaude’.

\textsuperscript{12} Palti, Kathleen, ‘\textit{Singe we now alle and sum}: Three Fifteenth-Century Collections of Communal Song’ (PhD from University College London, 2008), 73

\textsuperscript{13} Colton, Lisa, ‘Music and identity in medieval Bury St Edmunds’, in Anthony Bale ed., St Edmund: Images of Royalty, Martyrdom and Masculinity (Woodbridge, 2009), 109

Like Sloane 2593, this manuscript also contains a selection of material unrelated to the songs and carols, found grouped together at the start of the manuscript, including a Latin grammar treatise in prose and the expense accounts of John White which is dated ‘12 Henry IV’ and therefore places the expenses in 1410/1411. It would seem that there are three scribal hands at work throughout, of which the songs, carols and Latin grammatical treatise are in one, the notes (which include three lines of French verse and a hand drawn tree with a pierced heart that includes the motto ‘Pur vere amur je su mort’ and ‘Fuit homo’) in a second, and later notes in a third.\footnote{Greene, R.L., *The Early English Carols*, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (Oxford, 1977), 308}

The songs and carols are written in landscape, with the remainder of the material in portrait. The manuscript, measuring 133 mm x 95.25 mm, compiled of 22 folios, and constructed of paper, is slightly smaller than Sloane 2593, and doesn’t have the latter’s consistent neat construction and written style. The staves are drawn freehand, and lack uniformity. This may suggest that this was originally a pocket book, it is certainly the right size for this purpose, and that the carols and other songs were simply being recorded for the owner’s personal use. The carols are inserted in this manuscript in such a way that suggests they were not merely an afterthought slotted in to fill spaces in the remaining paper, but a valued content of the volume

Provenance for this source, like many of the manuscripts that contain carols, is difficult to ascertain. Greene points out the uncertainty of one clue within the source:

\begin{quote}
The note written on f. 1v of the volume is certainly erroneous. It states that the volume is in the hand of Friar John Brackley of Norwich, the friend and advisor of the Paston family. None of the hands, however, is that of Brackley as represented in his preserved holograph letters.\footnote{Greene, R.L., *The Early English Carols*, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (Oxford, 1977), 308}\
\end{quote}

Other names also appear within the manuscript: John White and Robert Brouugham. Again, these do little to help establish provenance.

These two manuscripts, although both offering examples of carol sources, cannot hope to demonstrate any great typicalities in extant manuscripts containing the genre as there is no standard non musically notated or musically notated sources. They range from the neatly
written, non-notated Sloane 2593, to the pocket book style notated form of Additional 5666, to the large, impressive and beautifully executed institutional manuscript, London, British Library, Egerton 3307, with its 33 polyphonic carols in choirbook format. The diversity of carol sources will be demonstrated throughout this thesis; the exploration of which will help to place the carol in clearer social, historical and religious contexts than previous scholarship has provided.

Text and Language

Carol texts are English, Latin or macaronic (mixing English, Latin and French in various combinations). The combination of these varies from manuscript to manuscript. Table 2 illustrates the use of language in the main manuscripts with musical notation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>English and Latin</th>
<th>English Latin and French</th>
<th>Un-texted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trinity</td>
<td>6 (46%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7 (54%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selden</td>
<td>10 (33%)</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>15 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egerton</td>
<td>4 (12%)</td>
<td>22 (67%)</td>
<td>6 (18%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritson</td>
<td>14 (32%)</td>
<td>7 (16%)</td>
<td>23 (52%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fayrfax</td>
<td>18 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry VIII</td>
<td>12 (92%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (8%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: The use of language within the carols of the main notated carol manuscripts

Although generally thought of as genre for the celebration of Christmas themes, surviving lyrics challenge that view. Indeed, the majority of extant carols are intended for the celebration of the nativity, but a large quantity also survive that focus upon many other subjects; women, annunciation, humour, the celebration of saints, and political themes, to name but a few: contrary to popular belief, it is not the subject of Christmas that defines a carol.

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17 This manuscript is also discussed in relation to monophonic carol settings in Chapter 4: ‘That we with merth mowe savely synge’: The fifteenth-century carol, a music of the people?

18 Greene does not categorise the entirely Latin texted carols as carols, instead he labels them cantilenas. From a musicological perspective however, the musical structure is not altered by text choice and therefore the Latin carols are still relevant to this study.
There are certainly a number of liturgical quotations within the carol texts. In the main notated carol manuscripts of interest in this chapter, there are no fewer than 45 of carols from the Trinity Roll, Selden, Egerton and Ritson manuscripts that show liturgical quotation.

**Musical and Textual Structure**

It is the unmistakable fixed structure of the late medieval carol that really defines it as a genre: burden, verse, and burden. This form is particularly well illustrated by Richard L Greene:

> It is generally recognized on the basis of musical as well as literary and historical evidence that in England in the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries the word ‘carol’ denotes a poem for singing, on whatever subject, in uniform stanzas and provided with a burden, a choral element which is sung at the beginning of the piece and repeated after every stanza.

The use of ‘choral’ is important here, as a small number of carols indicate the use of solo voices in the stanzas by placing the word ‘chorus’ next to particular sections of the carol. This is seen sometimes when a third voice is added at the start of the stanza, or sometimes the second burden which most probably indicates its referral to the added voice. However, the rubric is also found at the start of sections in carols that have not altered the number of voices in use, although less often, perhaps pointing to the general increase of voices at these points; an example of this being the carol ‘Lauda salvatorem’. The crucial distinguishing feature is of course, this consistent use of a burden. The burden is most often found to be two or three lines long, and as Greene explains, mostly follows a pattern of ‘a

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19 Chapter 7, “But here the greatest melody arises without any physical instrument, when the angels minister and sing to Christ’: The Carol in Sermons and Late Medieval Worship’ explores the liturgical quotations found in the carols in more detail.

20 The main musically notated carol manuscripts are labelled thus purely due to numerical considerations. These manuscripts contain the largest extant collations of carols with musical notation.

21 This information has been collated from research presented in Zamzow, Beth Ann, *The Influence of the Liturgy on the Fifteenth-Century English Carols* (PhD from University of Iowa) 2000, and is explored in greater detail in Chapter 7, “But here the greatest melody arises without any physical instrument, when the angels minister and sing to Christ’.

22 Greene, A Selection of Early English Carols (Oxford, 1962), 1

23 For a full musical and textual transcription of this carol see: Stevens, John, ed., *Mediaeval Carols* (London, 1970), 62
couplet burden rhyming with the last line of a tail-rhyme stanza of the form aaab and with four measures to the line’. This is illustrated in the carol ‘Worship we this holy day’.

Worship we this holy day,
That all innocentes for us pray.

Mary with Jesu forth y-frought,
As the angel her taught,
To flee the lond till it were sought,
To Egypt she took her way.

Worship we this holy day,
That all innocentes for us pray

Herod slew with pride and sin,
Thousands of two year and within,
The body of Christ he thought to win
And to destroy the Christen fay.

Worship we this holy day,
That all innocentes for us pray

Now, Jesu, that diest for us on the rood
And christendest innocents in their blood,
By the prayer of thy mother good
Bring us to bliss that lasteth ay.

Worship we this holy day,
That all innocentes for us pray

A number of carols, as well as having the obligatory repeated burden, also contain refrain lines within their verses. These are usually used as the final line as each stanza, and often echo the final line of the burden as seen in the carol ‘War yt, war yt, war yt wele’:

War yt, war yt, war yt wele:
Wemen be as trew as stele.

Stele is gud, I say no odur;
So mown wemen be Kaymys brodur;
Ylk on lere schrewdnes at odur;
Wemen be as trew as stele.

Stel is gud in eury knyf;
So kun thes women both flyt and stryf:
Also thei cun ful wele ly;
Wemen be as trew as stele.\(^\text{25}\)

The refrain line is often in Latin, despite the rest of the verse being written in the vernacular, and frequently echoes the final line of a Latin burden. This is seen in the carol ‘Of thy mercy’:

Of thy mercy lete vs not mys,
Fili Marie virginis.

\(^{24}\) This carol for the innocents is taken from the late fifteenth-century manuscript GB-Lbl Add. 5665 ff. 24v-25. For a complete transcription with accompanying musical notation see: Stevens, John, ed., Mediaeval Carols (London, 1970), 82

\(^{25}\) This carol originates from the late fifteenth-century manuscript GB-Cjc S.54 f.9v. It has a total of five stanzas, of which only two are shown here. For a full transcription of this carol with the remaining three verses see: Greene, R.L., The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1935), 266-7
O King of Grace and Indulgence,
By whome alle thing hath existence,
Forsake not man for his offence,
Fili Marie virginis.

Haue mercy, Lorde, haue mercy on me,
For thi mercyes that so grete be,
For why my soule dothe trust in the,
Fili Maries virginis.26

Refrain lines seem not to be favoured in any particular period but are seen equally throughout the carol repertory; from the earliest extant manuscripts of the period to those of the early sixteenth century.

There are a large number of carols that are written with what John Stevens describes as a ‘double burden’. With the inclusion of a second burden, the structure of the carol changes from, ‘burden, verse, burden, verse, etc.’ to ‘burden I, burden II, verse I, burden I, burden II, verse II, etc.’ This structure is generally accepted as correct and it would seem unlikely that these second burdens were solely alternatives rather than part of the structure due to the large amount of carols, across a number of manuscripts that contain them; there would seem no need for so many carols to offer alternatives to an initial burden. Rather than being an alternative setting however, they were perhaps optional, particularly as the carol form would have stayed perfectly intact with their removal; thus providing a way of altering the carols for performance. The latter half of double burdens are generally found to be textually identical to the first burden, but change in their musical scoring, and/or alter their melodic lines for the textual repetition. ‘Man, be joyful’ is a clear example of such a technique. Burden one is scored for two voices and is followed by a second burden containing a third voice; both seen in Example 1. This additional voice then repeats the same text.

26 This late fifteenth-century carol originates from the manuscript GB-Cul Ee.1.12 f.46v. It contains a total of five stanzas. For a full transcription of this carol, including the remaining three verses see: Greene, R.L., The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1935), 195
Example 1: Burdens 1 and 2 of ‘Man, be joyful’

There are however, some inevitable exceptions to this pattern; occasionally small sections of three voice settings are found in the middle, or ends of verses, and in the case of ‘O Blessed Lord’, a two voice burden is followed by a four voice second burden. Burden one and two of ‘O Blessed Lord’ can be seen in Example 2.

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Example 2: Burden one and two of 'O Blessed Lord'\textsuperscript{28}

The pieces with a double burden are usually found with subsequent verses scored for two voices. Table 3 illustrates the scoring patterns found within these pieces, highlighting the two/three voice burden followed by the two part verse. A number of carols that contain three voices within the second burden, often include a small section either in the middle, or at the end of the verse also scored for a third voice. In these instances, Stevens, in his

\textsuperscript{28} This carol originates from the late fifteenth-century Ritson Manuscript. A full transcription of both text and music is found in: Stevens, John, ed., 
\textit{Mediaeval Carols} (London, 1970), 106
edition of the fifteenth-century carols, chooses to give the direction ‘Voice II Tacet’. This is a purely editorial decision on his part, and it may therefore be the case that voice two simply doubles one of the two continuing voices rather than being rendered entirely silent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of carol in Stevens’ edition</th>
<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>Approximate Date</th>
<th>Voices in Burden I</th>
<th>Voices in Burden II</th>
<th>Voices in verse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>GB-Ctc 0.3.58</td>
<td>c. xv 1/2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>GB-Ctc 0.3.58</td>
<td>c. xv 1/2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>GB-Ob Selden b.26</td>
<td>c.1425-40 (carol layer)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>GB-Ob Selden b.26</td>
<td>c.1425-40 (carol layer)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>GB-Ob Selden b.26</td>
<td>c.1425-40 (carol layer)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>GB-Ob Selden b.26</td>
<td>c.1425-40 (carol layer)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>GB-Ob Selden b.26</td>
<td>c.1425-40 (carol layer)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>GB-Ob Selden b.26</td>
<td>c.1425-40 (carol layer)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>GB-Ob Selden b.26</td>
<td>c.1425-40 (carol layer)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
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<tr>
<td>45</td>
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<td>c. 1450</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Egerton 3307</td>
<td>c. 1450</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
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<td>c. 1450</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>52</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>53</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
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<td>GB-Lbl Egerton 3307</td>
<td>c. 1450</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Egerton 3307</td>
<td>c. 1450</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Egerton 3307</td>
<td>c. 1450</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Egerton 3307</td>
<td>c. 1450</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
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<tr>
<td>64</td>
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<td>c. 1450</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
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<td>67</td>
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<td>c. 1450</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
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<td>c. 1450</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Egerton 3307</td>
<td>c. 1450</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

29 For Stevens’s editorial policies, see: Stevens, John, ed., Mediaeval Carols (London, 1970), xvi-xvii
| 73 | GB-Lbl Egerton 3307 | c. 1450 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 74 | GB-Lbl Egerton 3307 | c. 1450 | 2 | 3 | 2/3 |
| 75 | GB-Lbl Egerton 3307 | c. 1450 | 2\textsuperscript{31} | 3 | 3 |
| 76 | GB-Lbl Egerton 3307 | c. 1450 | 2 | 3 | 2/3 |
| 77 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 78 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 79 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2/3 |
| 80 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2/3 |
| 81 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2/3 |
| 82 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 83 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 84 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 85 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 86 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 87 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 88 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 89 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 90 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 91 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 3? |
| 92 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 93 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2/3 |
| 94 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2/3 |
| 95 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 96 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 97 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 98 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 99 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 100 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2/3 |
| 101 | GB-Lbl Additional 5665 | c.1460-1510 | 2 | 3 | 2/3 |

\textsuperscript{31} The initial two-voice burden of this carol has been erased from the manuscript.
The carols containing only a single burden predominantly follow the structure of a burden scored for two voices, followed by a verse scored for the same.

There are only two carols in the earliest manuscript, GB-Ctc 0.3.58, henceforth known as the Trinity Roll, which contain double burdens.\(^{32}\) However, by the time we reach the manuscript GB-Lbl Add. 5665, henceforth known as the Ritson Manuscript, 41 of 44 carols are structured this way. Table 4 illustrates the increasing popularity of the double burden structure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>Approximate Date</th>
<th>Polyphonic Carols</th>
<th>Double Burdens</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trinity</td>
<td>c. xv 1/2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selden</td>
<td>c.1425-40</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egerton</td>
<td>c. 1450</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritson</td>
<td>c.1460-1510</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Percentage of Carols with Double Burdens within the Main Notated Carol Manuscripts.

Although the second burden always uses the same text as the first burden, the music is, more often than not, different. Sometimes the second burden is a direct quotation of the first, but when this happens, there has usually been a change in the texture with the addition of another voice. Some carols have elements of quotation of the first burden within the second burden without entirely repeating the melody; the carol ‘Princeps pacis’ is a good example. Example 3 below illustrates the quotation of burden one in burden two. Burden one employs more florid melodic flourishes than burden two. Burden two, although using a number of directly quoted phrases from burden one (seen particularly in the direct quotation of the first burden at the beginning of burden two), elongates the melody at points, and simplifies it; something also echoed in the lowest voice.
Example 3: ‘Princeps Pacis’, GB-Lbl Egerton 3307, ff. 49v-50

The important structural device of the burden is described by Greene as:

A line or group of lines, most often a couplet, repeated after every stanza, often linked to the stanza by rime, but essentially independent of and external to it. Such a

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33 Stevens, John, ed., Mediaeval Carols (London, 1970), 34
burden or any part of it does not ordinarily appear within a stanza, although one of the burden-lines will often be found as the last line of a stanza, as a refrain. The carol, then, consists of an alternation of two organic units, stanza and burden, the first changing its text, the second invariable.  

An example of burden and verse with a repeated burden line as a refrain is found in the nativity carol ‘Y-blessed be that Lord’ from the notated manuscript GB-Ob Selden B.26 (henceforth known as ‘Selden’). The burden and first stanza read:

**Yblessid be that Lord in majesty**

**Qui natus fuit hodie.**

That Lord that lay in asse stalle
Cam to die for us all,
To mak us free that erst were thralle,
Qui natus fuit hodie.  

The refrain line repeats almost exactly the music, with the exception of a tiny rhythmic decoration in the verse’s version, in the second corresponding line of the burden, as can be seen in Example 4. This surprising change at the end of bar nine in comparison to bar 34 is very slight, and could perhaps be down to scribal error.

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Example 4: ‘Y-blessed be that Lord’

This repetition of musical material when repeating the refrain line of a burden is a commonplace structural device in the carols; close to half of the carols in the main notated manuscripts containing textual repetition of some of the material in the burden also contains the equivalent musical repetition as demonstrated in ‘Y-blessed be that Lord’. Very occasionally the repeated music is merely an inflection of the original material in the burden, and, as demonstrated in ‘I pray you all’ from the Ritson Manuscript in Example 5, can even vary in terms of voice texture.

Example 5: ‘I pray you all’

One could even go so far as to say these loose interpretations of previous material could be copying an improvisatory style of performance, with a sense of the original tune being embellished or altered by the performer.

37 Stevens, John, Mediaeval Carols (London, 1970), 88-89
The carols are a relatively compact genre textually as well as musically. Generally, we don’t find carols with exceptionally long stanzas. In fact, as Greene notes,

Only twenty-one carols are written in stanzas of more than seven lines. These more complicated rime-patterns are represented as a rule by only one or two carols apiece, and may pass as isolated experiments with the general carol-type. The standard of the carol-writers remained the simpler stanza with separate burden.\(^{38}\)

Number of stanzas varies considerably from only one or two up to as many as thirty seven in the case of ‘Lullay, lullay, la lullay’\(^{39}\) from the late fourteenth century. However, the carols in the main notated manuscripts of the fifteenth century tend not to exceed nine; only one notated carol actually contains nine stanzas, the remainder tending to range from two to eight, with the majority favouring a smaller rather than greater amount. It is a possibility that this was due to only selected verses being included in notated manuscripts where there was perhaps less room; or that fewer verses were required. There is also the possibility that many of the texts were known from memory and therefore they did not need to be written into manuscripts in their entirety. Indeed, GB-Lbl-31922 (henceforth known as the ‘Henry VIII’ manuscript) contains a number of carols with notation only for the burdens, suggesting the melodies for the verses were already well known; this principle could also be applied to the texts.\(^{40}\) The general rhyme scheme is the distinctive aaab, as demonstrated here in two of the stanzas of ‘Hail Mary, full of grace’ from the Trinity Roll.

The Holy Ghost is to thee sent,
From the Father omnipotent,
Now is God within thee went,
When the Angel said Ave.

When the angel Ave began,

\(^{38}\) Greene, R.L. *The Early English Carols* (Oxford, 1935), xl
\(^{39}\) GB- Ed. Advocates 18.7.21, folio 3v. Full transcription found in Greene, R.L. *The Early English Carols* (Oxford, 1935), 103-105
\(^{40}\) A detailed discussion of the Henry VIII manuscript is found in Chapter 3: ‘The Named Composer: an obstacle to understanding the late medieval carol?’ which also discusses the possibility of lost popular carol melodies.
Flesh and blood together ran;
Mary bore both God and man
Through virtue and through dignity.  

The subject of the texts of the notated carols tends to be either sacred or political on the whole, with the non-notated carols consisting of the same, but with additional subjects such as the sexual, amusing or female centred carols.  

Voices

The earlier carol manuscripts tend to favour two-voice settings more than three, and then as the century progresses we find a significant increase in three-voice settings, and by the time we reach the Ritson manuscript c. 1500 all the settings are for three, with the exception of one four-voice carol (the only one extant from this period). Voice textures can be seen in Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MS</th>
<th>Approximate Date</th>
<th>2 voices</th>
<th>3 voices</th>
<th>4 voices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trinity</td>
<td>c. Early 15\textsuperscript{th} C.</td>
<td>10 (77%)</td>
<td>3 (23%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selden</td>
<td>c. 1425-40</td>
<td>19 (61%)</td>
<td>12 (38%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egerton</td>
<td>c. 1450</td>
<td>15 (46%)</td>
<td>18 (54%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritson</td>
<td>c. 1460-1510</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>44 (98%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fayfax</td>
<td>c. 1505</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>14 (77%)</td>
<td>4 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry VIII</td>
<td>c. 1510-20</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>13 (100%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Number of voices used in the fifteenth-century carol manuscripts.

The carol voices are fewer than those of the standard fifteenth-century English motet, although in terms of voice expansion throughout the century, the carol also increases voice texture chronologically, until the two-voice carol eventually becomes obsolete.

\footnote{For a full transcription see: Stevens, John, \textit{Mediaeval Carols} (London, 1970), 2}

\footnote{For more discussion as to the reasons behind this inconsistency see: Chapter 5: ‘Women in the Carols’}

\footnote{This table lists the original source voices and does not include the editorial third voices that are added to a number of the two-voice carols by Stevens in his edition: Stevens, John, ed., \textit{Mediaeval Carols} (London, 1970)}
The earlier carols, such as those in the Trinity Roll, tend to favour a single texture throughout, but as the carol develops, this becomes less and less common until we find that alternating scorings are standard practice; this is illustrated in Table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MS</th>
<th>Approximate Date</th>
<th>No Voice Alternation</th>
<th>Voice Alternation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trinity</td>
<td>c. Early 15(^{th}) C.</td>
<td>10 (77%)</td>
<td>3 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selden</td>
<td>c. 1425-40</td>
<td>19 (61%)</td>
<td>12 (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egerton</td>
<td>c. 1450</td>
<td>17 (51%)</td>
<td>16 (49%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritson</td>
<td>c. 1460-1510</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>45 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Alternation of voice number within the carols

It is not until the later manuscripts that we start to see any three-voice texture followed throughout an entire piece; it is generally more expected that those carols with three voices use reduced scoring to distinguish between burden, verse and second burden sections.

**Voice Pitches**

The carols employ an expected range of individual voice pitches for this period; each voice using the span of just less, or just over an octave and sometimes extending to an 11\(^{th}\) in range. In terms of overall voice compass, the carols range from a ten note to a seventeen note range, which is as expected in relation to other music of this period. As Roger Bowers notes:

> Analysis of a large proportion of English sacred music surviving from the period c. 1350- 1450...reveals that not a single piece employs an overall compass of 18 notes or more. Any piece which exceeds two octaves is a rarity; five reach 17 notes, and 27 reach 16 notes. However, 103 reach 15 notes; 113 reach 13 notes, and 120 reach 14. Meanwhile, only 30 items are limited to 12 notes or fewer. Thus two octaves emerges as the normal practical working limit of overall compass.\(^{45}\)

\(^{44}\) The Fayrfax manuscript and the Henry VIII manuscript have not been included in this table. The carols of these manuscripts all treat voice alternation in a more fluid manner, rather than in the distinct sections we find in the earlier manuscripts. Additionally, four of the thirteen carols identified by John Stevens in: Stevens, John, *Music at the Court of Henry VIII* (London, 1962), have no musical notation for the verses, only the burden. This therefore makes comparison impossible in such a table.

\(^{45}\) Bowers, Roger, *English Church Polyphony* (Aldershot, 1999)
There is however, a chronological difference in terms of individual and overall voice ranges. The earlier carols, such as those in the Trinity Roll favour more conservative individual voice ranges; sometimes as narrow as a 5th, and only once stretching a voice as far as a 10th, with the later carols of the Ritson manuscript placing most of its voices in the 10th-12th range. The conservative range of pitches from the Trinity Roll can be seen in Table 7, and a selection of pitches from Ritson, are observed in Table 8. The overall voices ranges from four of the main manuscripts of the 15th century also follow this pattern of chronological expansion of range and can be observed in Table 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carol</th>
<th>Voice 1</th>
<th>Voice 2</th>
<th>Voice 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hail, Mary, full of grace</td>
<td>E-d’ - 7th</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nowell, nowell: In Bethlem</td>
<td>e-d’ - 8ve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alma redemptoris mater</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now may we singen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be merry, be merry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nowell sing we</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deo gracias, Anglia</td>
<td>a-c’’ - 10th</td>
<td>d-d’ - 8ve</td>
<td>d-c’ - 7th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now make we mirthe</td>
<td>a-a’ - 8ve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abide, I hope it be the best</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What tidings bringest thou?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eya, martyr Stephane</td>
<td>a-b’ - 9th</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

46 The only carol to use a 10th in this manuscript is ‘Deo Gracias’, otherwise known as the ‘Agincourt Carol’. This carol is discussed at various points within this thesis.
Pray for us  
\[ \text{g-g'} - 8\text{ve} \quad \text{c-d'} - 9^{\text{th}} \]

There is no rose  
\[ \text{g-a'} - 9^{\text{th}} \quad \text{c-c'} - 8\text{ve} \]

Table 7: Voice Ranges in the Carols of the Trinity Roll

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carol</th>
<th>Voice 1</th>
<th>Voice 2</th>
<th>Voice 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sing to we this merry company</td>
<td>c'-e'' - 10\text{th}</td>
<td>f-a' - 10\text{th}</td>
<td>f-a' - 10\text{th}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johannes assecrecis</td>
<td>c'-e'' - 10\text{th}</td>
<td>c-g' - 12\text{th}</td>
<td>c-f' - 11\text{th}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonet laus</td>
<td>c'-e'' - 10\text{th}</td>
<td>f-a' - 10\text{th}</td>
<td>f-a' - 10\text{th}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nowell, nowell: The boares head</td>
<td>c'-e'' - 10\text{th}</td>
<td>g-a' - 9\text{th}</td>
<td>d-a' - 17\text{th}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pray for us</td>
<td>c'-c'' - 8\text{ve}</td>
<td>d-e' - 9\text{th}</td>
<td>d-e' - 9\text{th}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship we this holy day</td>
<td>d''-d'' - 8\text{ve}</td>
<td>f-g' - 9\text{th}</td>
<td>f-f' - 8\text{ve}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letare, Cantuaria</td>
<td>c'-e'' - 10\text{th}</td>
<td>c-g - 5\text{th}</td>
<td>f	ext{f}' - 8\text{ve}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tidings true</td>
<td>c'-e'' - 10\text{th}</td>
<td>f-g' - 9\text{th}</td>
<td>e-g' - 10\text{th}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proface, welcome</td>
<td>c'-e'' - 10\text{th}</td>
<td>f-g' - 9\text{th}</td>
<td>e-g' - 10\text{th}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Voice Ranges from a selection of carols from Ritson\textsuperscript{47}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>10\text{th}</th>
<th>11\text{th}</th>
<th>12\text{th}</th>
<th>13\text{th}</th>
<th>14\text{th}</th>
<th>15\text{th}</th>
<th>16\text{th}</th>
<th>17\text{th}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trinity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selden</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egerton</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritson</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Overall Voice compass of the four main manuscripts of the fifteenth century

\textsuperscript{47} There is a second table that includes the pitch ranges of other carols from Ritson in Chapter 2, 'The Carol: an isolated genre?' page 70
The carol ‘Nowell, nowell: The boares head’ has a particularly large range in voice 3: a 17th. This is due to voice 3 splitting into two parts for the final chord. For the majority of the Ritson carols, the range is only from g-a’ and therefore a 9th. The splitting of voice 3 into two parts appears to be unique to this carol. It would suggest that the carol was being sung by more than one voice to a part (lower part at least), but due to its isolated use, cannot be used as evidence for the doubling of voices in other carol performance.

**Melodic Behaviour**

The carol, as with voice numbers and texture, develops in terms of melodic behaviour throughout the century. The earliest carols, those from the Trinity Roll, are relatively homophonic in character, with any extra melodic floridity generally shared between parts, or taken by the top part; the carol ‘Lullay Lullow’, from the manuscript GB-Lbl Add. 5666, is an excellent example of this homophonic texture and is seen in Example 6.
Example 6: ‘Lullay lollow’

The slightly later Selden manuscript is similar in style to the Trinity Roll. It contains a lot of homophonic texture in its carols, but with a greater amount of polyphonic movement; the top voice taking the most florid melodic line, and lower voices playing a slower moving harmonic role. In terms of melodic movement, the voices are reasonably similar in the use of leaps; all parts follow a similar style of conjunct motion, with a conservative use of leaps seen at points in all parts. Melismatic writing becomes more prevalent chronologically, but not extensively. Although Zamzow notes that ‘Fewer than half the carols in the Trinity Roll, two-thirds of those in Selden, nearly all in Egerton and all the carols in the Ritson manuscript

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have melismatic passages’, the melismatic material is not tremendously florid in style however, and in a sense still retains the feel of the earlier carols. Interestingly, it is often Latin burdens, or in the case of the Selden manuscript, fully Latin carols that contain the most florid of the melismas, perhaps echoing some forms of liturgical music for worship. What is also interesting is the use of ‘Alleluia’ in these melismatic burdens, particularly as the melismatic ‘alleluia’ had a long ancestry in liturgical music; a practice that seems to be echoed in the carols. The alleluia is ‘performed in a responsorial manner: the first word ‘alleluia’ is sung, concluding with an extended melismatic flourish...then a verse...is chanted in a moderately elaborate setting; and finally the alleluia is repeated’. The following four examples of the most florid melismatic burdens from Selden illustrate these points, followed by a fifth example of an Alleluia setting to compare melismatic tendencies and demonstrate the protracted use of the word in liturgical plainchant as it is echoed in the carols.

Example 7: Burden of ‘Alleluia: Now well may we mirthes make’

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49 Zamzow, Beth Ann, The Influence of the Liturgy on the Fifteenth-Century English carols (PhD from University of Iowa) 2000, page 24
51 Taken from: Stevens, John, ed., Mediaeval Carols (London, 1970), 14
Example 8: ‘Alleluia, pro virgine Maria’\textsuperscript{52}

Example 9: Burden of ‘Alleluia: A newe work’\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{52} Taken from: Stevens, John, ed., \textit{Mediaeval Carols} (London, 1970), 21

\textsuperscript{53} Stevens, John, ed., \textit{Mediaeval Carols} (London, 1970), 22
Example 10: Burden of ‘Ave Maria’\textsuperscript{54}

Example 11: ‘ Alleluia’ with its following verse. ‘Veni Sancte Spiritus’\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{54} Stevens, John, ed., \textit{Mediaeval Carols} (London, 1970), 25

One of the most popular melodic treatments amongst voices in the carols is the use of contrary motion. As Zamzow notes:

Contrary outward motion, an expansive movement where the cantus rises and the tenor falls, is the most common type of motion in carol stanzas. Contrary inward motion, where the cantus and tenor collapse, is the second most common type, occurring on burdens, especially in Ritson, more than anywhere else. An important relationship exists between initial sonority and direction: burdens tend to open with a unison and then expand outwardly in contrary motion.\(^{56}\)

A good example the use of contrary inward motion can be observed in a carol from the Trinity Roll, ‘Eya mater Stephane’ from the early fifteenth century, and can be seen in Example 12. This carol also demonstrates some outward motion. Zamzow does not mention in this quote the extensive use of phrases in parallel motion also found within the carols. Example 11 demonstrates this technique of writing in parallel motion, and can be seen in bars 10 and 11 and 26 to the end.

Example 12: ‘Eya, martyr Stephane’\(^{57}\)

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\(^{56}\) Zamzow, Beth Ann, *The Influence of the Liturgy on the Fifteenth-Century English Carols* (PhD from University of Iowa) 2000, page 23

\(^{57}\) Stevens, John, ed., *Mediaeval Carols* (London, 1970), 9
This contrary motion device juxtaposed alongside sections of parallel motion is favoured throughout the manuscripts from the early to the late fifteenth century, as Example 13 demonstrates; a carol from the Ritson manuscript, ‘Jesu for thy mercy’.

Example 13: ‘Jesu, for they mercy’

58 Stevens, John, ed., Mediaeval Carols (London, 1970), 102
Sections/Phrasing

There is generally a correlation between length of sections and melismatic material and chronology. The earlier carols tend to have shorter sections and less melismatic material to draw them out, with the later carols of, say, the Ritson manuscript becoming much longer and more elaborate with greater use of melismatic material. If we compare the music of the Trinity Roll, for example, to that of the Ritson manuscript we find that approximately half of the Trinity Roll employs melismatic passages in comparison to all of the carols in the Ritson manuscript.\(^{59}\) This would seem to be a general musical trajectory in style as opposed to a difference in complexity related to provenance or the use of the source, as the use of melismatic material seems to gradually increase chronologically. One must be cautious however at implying that the carols start to employ vast swathes of melismatic passages; this is certainly not the case. The carols are generally moderate in their use of this musical device, even by the time we reach the Henry VIII Manuscript.

Mensuration

The carols are nearly all written in triple time, with the notable exception of ‘Ave, decus seculi’ (Example 15) which changes time signature from triple to duple time at very brief points.\(^{60}\) Alternating mensuration is in itself, not unusual for this period, but Stevens notes that its uniqueness lies in it prescriptiveness:

The very fact of a time-signature is most unusual, so firmly was the triple tradition established. The original time signature C is repeated in all three voices at the beginning of B II [burden 2] but not of the V [verse].\(^{61}\)

‘Marvel not Joseph’ (Example 14), also found within Ritson,\(^{62}\) is presented by Stevens as alternating between two time signatures throughout. While this is a sensible representation of the original carol in modern notational values, it is important to note that the original

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\(^{59}\) This is also discussed in: Zamzow, Beth Ann, *The Influence of the Liturgy on the Fifteenth-Century English Carols* (PhD from University of Iowa) 2000, page 24

\(^{60}\) For a full transcription see: Stevens, John, *Mediaeval Carols* (London, 1970), 73


\(^{62}\) For a full transcription see: Stevens, John, *Mediaeval Carols* (London, 1970), 68
score only uses one time signature, O. The final anomaly is also found in Ritson; ‘Worship we this holy day’. 63 This carol also shows mensural complexity, which Stevens choses to interpret as occasional slips into modern 7/8 time. The slightly greater mensural intricacy within these carols could indicate singers with greater capability performing from Ritson, than other manuscripts of a similar period. The carols of the later Fayrfax and Henry VIII manuscripts are entirely different in terms of mensuration, almost entirely moving away from triple mensuration, instead favouring duple time, and therefore reflecting the other songs in the manuscript.

Example 14: ‘Marvel not Joseph’

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63 For a full transcription see: Stevens, John, Mediaeval Carols (London, 1970), 82
64 Stevens, John, ed., Mediaeval Carols (London, 1970), 68
Example 15: ‘Ave, decus seculi’

Use of Pre-Existential Material

Musical borrowing in the middle ages was common place, not only within the carols but in other genres too.66 Zamzow’s research indicated a good number of carols containing what could be musical quotations of pre-existent textual and musical liturgical material, particularly in the later carols of the Ritson manuscript.67 These are not large quotations, but perhaps would have been enough for a fifteenth century audience, coupled with a familiar text, to recognise in connection with liturgical meaning or function. The motet of the same period was equally at home borrowing both text and music, although Julie Cumming advises caution in the quest to identify pre-existent musical quotations in the motet of the same period; which could equally be applied to the carol.68 She notes that:

Sometimes...the concentration on pre-existent material causes scholars to assume it is there even if they cannot find it, and lead them to ignore other features of the motet...if a composer wants you to know that he is using chant, he finds a way of letting you know. If a well-educated twentieth-century musicologist cannot tell if there is pre-existent material after consulting the standard references, odds are most of the fifteenth-century audience could not tell either.69

Zamzow’s study was inclusive of any sequence of four notes or more that could be indicative of the use of pre-existent material, which could fall into Cumming’s cautionary category of looking for musical material that simply does not exist, however she does only look for these small sections in conjunction with liturgical texts which would make these small sections more likely to be accurate borrowings from liturgical chant rather than chance melodic similarities.

Monophonic Carols

In addition to the large corpus of extant polyphonic carols, there are also ten extant monophonic carols, surviving in six manuscripts. These carols can be seen in Table 10.

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66 One only has to look at the motet tradition and the use of pre-existent chant to form a cantus firmus juxtaposed with new melodies.
67 Zamzow, Beth Ann, The Influence of the Liturgy on the Fifteenth-Century English Carols (PhD from University of Iowa) 2000, page 24
68 For further discussion on the carol in comparison to the motet, and other genres, see: Chapter 2, ‘The carol; an isolated genre?’
69 Cumming, Julie E., The Motet in the Age of Du Fay (Cambridge, 1999), 34-35
The monophonic carols vary in musical style, and text subjects vary from vernacular love lyrics to Latin sacred subjects. The scope of language and text are seen in Table 11.

Table 11: Text and Language in the Monophonic Carols

Table 10: Extant Monophonic Carols

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70 This table is based on the extant lyrics, which in the majority of cases with monophonic carols, are often sparse. In the case of Sing we now, Of thy mercy, Though I sing: le bon l. don and Of all the enemies, the extant lyrics consist of no more than one line of text which makes they classification of such carols problematic; Though I sing: le bon l. don and Sing we now are particularly impossible to classify with any certainty. One must bear in mind that the future discovery of a full text for some of these monophonic examples may alter our view of the text topic.
Although Table 11 gives a good overview of the genre, one must be cautious in the cases of at least seven of these carols: ‘Lullay, lullay’, ‘Lullay, my child’, ‘I have loved’, ‘Sing we now’, ‘Of thy mercy’, ‘Though I sing’ and ‘Of all the enemies’, due to the fact that they only survive as fragments. In fact several of them are only extant with one line of text and music: ‘Sing we now’, ‘Of thy mercy’, ‘Though I sing’ and ‘Of all the enemies’. Therefore, the lost text could contain the use of an additional language.  

The Carol and the Carole

The fifteenth-century English carol is most popularly thought to be a direct descendent of the French carole, a popular form of dance song. The most prolific supporter of this argument is R. L Greene. Greene’s work is specifically focused on the literary, rather than musical aspects of the carol, and convincingly argues the link between carol and carole, beginning with the origins of the word itself. He writes:

The word seems first to occur in extant English literature about 1300 in the Cursor Mundi, where it has the exact sense of the old French carole, that is, a ring-dance in which the dancers themselves sing the governing music.

Greene also claims that a story of German origins; which appears in an English manuscript of the eleventh century and discusses the wickedness of the carole, gives undisputable evidence that the carole was indeed well known in England by this date. He notes:

The importance of this story is twofold. It shows that as early as 1080 in England a Flemish-born monk who had lived in France could present to an English audience, without feeling the need of any explanation, the text of a carole...divided into stanza and burden, the burden expressing in its very words the change from rest to motion that comes with the chorale part.

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71 The monophonic carols are explored in greater detail, and with more emphasis on their musical content and their possible connection to lost popular melodies in Chapter 4: ‘That we with Merth Mowe Savely Sing: The fifteenth-century carol, a music of the people?’

72 Greene, R.L, ed. The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1935)

73 Greene, R.L, ed. The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1935), xxiii

74 Greene, R.L, ed. The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1935), xvii
Greene’s argument that the *carole* was sufficiently known in England from such an early date, certainly adds weight to the theory that the carol is of direct descent from the French *carole*. Unfortunately for Greene however, there a missing link in his argument. There appears thus far, to be no convincing extant transitional carol music or texts that show a direct correlation between an earlier *carole* and a fifteenth-century English carol. Greene does however, offer up one piece that he believes could represent this missing link; the single stanza carol, ‘Icham of Irlaunde’. He notes that a:

> casual jotting of the first half of the 14th century in a small collection of written fragments challenges attention by its invitation to the dance. Is it actually a dance-song; is it burden and verse?...It appears to be of somewhat nondescript metre; but, with the form of the primitive dance-song as guide, inspection will show that the little piece divides very easily into a burden and stanza.\(^{75}\)

There are some regrettable cracks in his argument, particularly the lack of evidence supporting his claim that ‘Icham of Irlaunde’, was actually intended to be a carol. Margaret Smaill, in her recent dissertation on the performance practises of the medieval carol, writes most disparagingly on Greene’s ‘missing link’ hypothesis. She writes that:

> To view *Icham of Irlaunde* as the crucial link in a chain of evidence connecting carol and carole, as Greene and others would seem to do, requires a long stroll down the garden path. First, readers must assume that the poem is in fact a *carole*, and not some other type of dance-song, and second, that Greene’s arrangement of the poem into burden and stanza is appropriate. Third, they must overlook the fact that unlike *Icham of Irlaunde*, fifteenth-century carols almost invariably had multiple stanzas.\(^{76}\)

Smaill’s observations are certainly convincing: Greene’s argument relies on a number of ‘possibilities’. Undoubtedly, Greene would have been aware of the flaws; but in this area of research, there is so little extant surviving evidence, he could certainly be forgiven for clutching at some proverbial straws.

Despite lack of proof, a link between *carole* and carol seems a highly likely conclusion; and this transition between genres may well have been instigated by the Franciscans. This

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\(^{76}\) Smaill, Adele Margaret, *Medieval Carols: Origins, Forms, and Performance Contexts* (Michigan, 2003), 15
monastic order was known for its practice of replacing texts of popular secular songs with religious subjects. F.L.Harrison supports this theory writing:

The history of the carol as literature, which has been traced by R.L Greene, involved the adoption by the church of elements from the secular oral tradition of poetry and music. There is evidence that the Franciscans were the main agents in turning the intoxicating secular carole, a round dance with leader, to the uses of popular devotion in the carol, as sacred (or secular) song with burden. Sometime between 1317 and 1360 for example, Richard de Ledrede, Franciscan bishop of Kilkenny in Ireland, wrote Latin lyrics, some with refrains, to replace the impious English and French songs which his vicars and clerks had been singing.\footnote{Harrison, F.L, 'Benedicamus, Conductus, Carol: a newly discovered source', \textit{Acta Musicologica}, xxxvii (1965), 40-41}

Richard de Ledrede wrote a total of sixty Latin texts within the manuscript known as \textit{The Red Book of Ossory}. A Latin inscription is also found within this Franciscan manuscript; the English translation of this reads:

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.\footnote{Greene, R.L. ed., \textit{The Lyrics of the Red Book of Ossory}, Medium Aevum Monographs, 5 (Oxford, 1974),iii-iv}

This theory is further supported by the fact that three of the ten fully surviving monophonic carols have texts that appear in Franciscan manuscripts.\footnote{Stevens, John and Libby, Dennis, “Carol.” In \textit{Grove Music Online}. \textit{Oxford Music Online}, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/04974 (accessed August 14, 2010).}

John Stevens seconds Greene’s theory of connection with the French carole. He also concurs that in addition to its direct descent from the carole:

The recurrent burden and the dominance of the stanza pattern aaab link the carol with a family of European lyric-forms. The courtly French \textit{virelai} and the Italian

\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{Harrison, F.L, 'Benedicamus, Conductus, Carol: a newly discovered source', \textit{Acta Musicologica}, xxxvii (1965), 40-41}
\end{itemize}
Ballata are closely related to the carol from the formal point of view, while the Italian lauda resembles the carol in form and in spirit.\(^{80}\)

It is also argued that links between the carol and carole can be seen in relation to movement. The French carole was designed to accompany dancing, and this element of movement could still be glimpsed in the fifteenth-century carol. Stevens notes that:

A narrow but at the same time highly significant way of describing them is as ‘processional’ music - the earliest carols, especially, were written as ‘popular litanies’ for use in ecclesiastical procession, but any processions, civic or courtly, provided a suitable setting. In church and out of it the carol was associated with physical movement; when it was not danced to it was ‘processed to’.\(^{81}\)

It is not even out with the realms of possibility that the Franciscan monks moved or danced to the carol repertory they adopted and developed. As Stevens notes:

Two important facets of the medieval religious carol are its relation to religious dance and popular song, and its connection with the activities of the Franciscan friars. It is not as absurd as it may sound to imagine festive religious songs being danced to. At Sens Cathedral the clergy were permitted by regulation to dance, provided they did not lift their feet off the ground.\(^{82}\)

The arguments surrounding the origins of the fifteenth-century carol in relation to the French carole are plentiful and in many cases, convincing, yet none can quite provide enough evidence to definitively answer the question: is the fifteenth-century carol a direct descendant of the French carole? As Robert Mullaly notes, despite the hypothesis:

One awkward fact remains: no obvious relationship is discernible between the dance and its song on one hand [the carole] and the burden-and-stanza form on the other [the carol], although the term carol came to be applied to both.\(^{83}\)

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\(^{80}\) Stevens, John, ed., *Mediaeval Carols* (London, 1970), xii

\(^{81}\) Stevens, John, ed., *Mediaeval Carols* (London, 1970), xiv


\(^{83}\) Mullaly, Robert, *The Carole, A Study of a Medieval Dance* (Padstow, 2011), 118
Perhaps the use of the same term to describe both types of musical form is enough to alert us to their connection in some way in the Middle Ages?

F.L. Harrison advanced a theory in the 1950s that ‘the sacred carol of the fifteenth century took over from the conductus the role of Benedicamus substitute on certain festivals’. Harrison argues that carols as a Benedicamus subject are more than likely due to large gaps in evidence of Benedicamus substitutes:

after the period of the thirteenth-and fourteenth century ordinals. The disappearance of the conductus in the second half of the fourteenth century and the appearance of the votive antiphons make it clear that this could not have been the main function of the votive antiphon...the words of some polyphonic carols...make it likely that the sacred carol of the fifteenth century took over from the conductus the role of Benedicamus substitute on certain festivals.

Harrison compounds his theory with evidence of the words Deo Gratias, the response of the Benedicamus, found within a number of carol texts. He writes:

The texts of some polyphonic carols strongly suggest that this was their function. The famous ‘Agincourt’ carol Deo Gratias Anglia has the refrain- line Deo gratias. The Latin carol Deo gratias persolvamus in the Selden manuscript ends with Benedictam
Harrison names seven carol texts in total, which considering approximately five hundred survive, would seem to suggest that his theory, whilst compelling, is by no means proven. In fact, most of the arguments and theories around the origins and uses of the late medieval carol are complex and compelling, but as yet, unproven.

This brief summary of the key elements of the late medieval carol and the theories surrounding its origins and connections to the French carole, reveals it as a fascinating genre with many areas ripe for further study.

**Previous Scholarship: the need for a multidisciplinary approach**

Previous publications of research concerning the late medieval carol have tended to deal with the genre in isolation from other musical forms. However, the carols were by no means an isolated form of composition in the fifteenth century, and were frequently found in manuscripts alongside other genres. Further separation within carol scholarship is seen in the tendency of researchers to deal with those surviving with musical notation, and those without extant notation separately. We have a large number of non-notated carols; carols that must be seen in the context of those with extant notation rather than a separate branch of the same tree. To separate the two, is to only see one side of the coin.

Until Greene’s landmark literary study in 1935, published carol research had been minimal. Greene’s work, which catalogued the carols and placed them into subject categories, brought the carol texts to the fore. His publication however was primarily concerned with carol texts rather than music, and additionally, only included those carols in

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87 The carol in relation to other genres is addressed in Chapter 2, ‘The Carol: an isolated genre?’
88 Some publication of songs and carols was undertaken in the nineteenth century by the prolific publisher and Editor Thomas Wright. He published titles such as: Wright, Thomas, *Songs and Carols: Printed from a Manuscript in the Sloane Collection in the British Museum* (1836), and Wright, Thomas, *Specimens of Old Christmas Carols, Selected from Manuscripts and Printed Books* (1841). These publications contain no musical notation.
89 Greene’s carol classifications are addressed in Chapter 5: ‘Women in the carols’.
English or English/Latin. He completely excludes the Latin carols, classing them instead as cantilenae, and subsequently creating yet another avenue of isolation.

It was not until John Stevens’ comprehensive edition of the polyphonic and monophonic carols in 1952 that the music was brought to the forefront. Stevens chose, quite rightly, to include the Latin carols excluded by Greene, on the grounds that the musical form was identical to those that were English or macaronic. Indeed, if the Latin carols were included alongside the English and macaronic carols in the fifteenth century without any clear separation, there would seem no reason to separate them for research purposes today. Writing in his introductory commentary, he notes that:

> It seemed logical...to include the Latin carols often called cantilenae, of the fifteenth century, which are from a musical and social point of view absolutely indistinguishable from their English counterparts.

Stevens’s inclusion of the Latin carols in his edition certainly emphasised their musical value, but he did not include, due to the purpose of his study, any of the vast corpus of non-notated carols; although he does allude to them, writing that the carol’s ‘importance is substantiated by the survival of nearly 500 distinct vernacular lyrics in this form’. Stevens’ edition contains 135 carols from twelve manuscripts. Table 12 details the manuscripts included by Stevens.

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<td>GB-Ob Eng.poet.e.1</td>
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90 This volume was originally published in 1952, reviewed in 1954 and subsequently reprinted in 1970.
91 Stevens, John, ed., Mediaeval Carols (London, 1970), xiii
92 Stevens, John, ed., Mediaeval Carols (London, 1970), xiii
This edition of carols did not, however, include the eighteen carols of the Fayrfax manuscript from c.1500, or the thirteen carols of the Henry VIII manuscript due to the difference in style between the carols of this early period and those of the early sixteenth century. Instead, Stevens produced a volume of songs and carols from the Ritson and Fayrfax manuscripts in 1975, and had already published an edition of Henry VIII’s Manuscript in 1962; thus creating yet another way of separating the carol into different research categories. This edition however, presents the carols in a wider context, placing them alongside other songs from both manuscripts, thus not treating them in isolation.

Since Stevens’ editions, scholars have seemed reluctant to publish on the carols, viewing his work as definitive. As a result, editions of manuscripts that contain carols have been published that omit carols. This again projects a false image of the separation of the genre from other musical forms.

Music in Medieval Britain, a monograph by F.L. Harrison, sits chronologically after Stevens’ work. Harrison is particularly occupied by placing the carol in a liturgical context. This is immediately evident from the title of the chapter in which the discussion of the carol unfolds; ‘Other Ritual Forms; The Carol’. He argues that the carol was utilised as a Benedicamus Domino substitute. Harrison cites the inclusion of Benedicamus Domino at the end or within the text of some carols as an indication that they were indeed for this use, however, when we look closer, of the number of carols that survive with notation, only six actually include this phrase, and one carol contains the first two lines of a Benedicamus

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93 As discussed earlier in this chapter.
96 Harrison, F.L., Music in Medieval Britain (1958). This is the earliest edition of this publication. There are several later editions of the same publication, although the carol section remains identical.
tropé set for Christmas celebration. This is quite a small percentage of the overall extant repertoire, and although it doesn’t entirely rule out Harrison’s theory, it does make it less likely that this would have been their sole purpose, and one must not forget that the phrases ‘Benedicamus domino’ and ‘Deo gracias’ would have been well known in the Middle Ages.

Harrison, as with most other authors, does not really touch on the carols without extant musical notation, but does allude to there being ‘a considerable number of ‘moral’ and convivial carols which could not have been introduced into a service, and were probably sung at banquets in royal and aristocratic households and at evenings of recreation in colleges and collegiate churches’. The discussion of the carol only in terms of either textual or musicological importance is not isolated to Stevens, Greene and Harrison; it continues within other academic publications too, for example, Denis Stevens also only dealt with one dimension of the repertoire. He wrote:

The word of these often polyphonic songs might also be in Latin or English or a mixture of both languages. They too were usually religious and the form was once again ABA pattern like the virelai. There are fine monodic pieces such as Nowell, this is the salutation and Nova, nova ave fit but also polyphonic works like Abyde I hope with a monodic burden for solo voice which is taken up again in polyphony by a three part chorus. Monody, however, soon disappeared and two-and-three-part polyphony became the rule.

Denis Stevens, although noting earlier that the carol was one of the most popular genres of the period, does not mention the non-notated carols which make up approximately three quarters of the repertoire. John Caldwell too, in his 1978 monograph Medieval Music, continues this tradition, only discussing the polyphonic carol and including little mention of the monophonic repertoire, and nothing of the non-notated corpus. In the 1990s, however, Caldwell does address this imbalance and writes that ‘A large number of lyrics in carol form have survived without the music’ and that they ‘embrace all areas of subject-matter, sacred and secular’. Caldwell attempts here to give a more rounded view of the carol, although

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97 Harrison, F.L., Music in Medieval Britain (London, 1958), 418
98 Stevens, Denis, Medieval Song (1970, n.p.), 41
he almost dismisses its worth as a genre when he notes that ‘we have here a body of homely lyric’, although he does note that the ‘polyphonic carol is nearly always a high-minded genre’, and addresses important sources such as the Henry VIII, Ritson and Fayrfax manuscripts at points within different chapters, showing the perhaps more sophisticated side of the carol repertoire, and its evolution from the early repertoire; although he does not include it within the bulk of his carol discussion. He also points out that ‘the musical settings of satirical, amorous, or erotic songs in this form have almost disappeared. These will have been the province of a lower class of musician.’ Caldwell does not give any evidence for his suggestions, but does appear to be acknowledging the diversity of the genre. Caldwell’s, of all the publications thus far chronologically, has treated the carol in the most balanced manner, if rather briefly.

There are also publications from the mid-twentieth century that deal exclusively with the textual aspects of the carols and omit any discussion of their musical aspects. One example of this is found in Rosemary Woolf’s 1968 edition of *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages*. This publication is particularly concerned only with sacred texts, of which the carol provides many examples, and devotes an appendix to the discussion of the carol. The only mention of the music of the carols within this volume is Woolf’s comment that:

*The carol is a poem designed for singing-musicologists identify in it a distinctive musical shape-with regular stanzas (most often quatrains), and a burden which recurs after each. They were written by men in religious orders for use on festive or liturgical celebrations.*

Peter Dronke is another example of a scholar of this period addressing, if somewhat briefly, the textual issues of the medieval carol; this time in relation to its presumed dance origins in his publication *The Medieval Lyric* from 1968 Although Dronke doesn’t particularly address the musical characteristics of the genre, he does allude to its musicality.

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<td>musical discussion. Concerned only with secular carol lyrics.</td>
<td>Literary approach. No discussion of musical elements. Only concerned with those carols of religious content.</td>
<td>Literary approach. Brief discussion of the carol. Brief mention of music. Only concerned with those carols of religious content.</td>
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Table 13: The main monographs from 1935-2011 that contain commentary on carols.
Another publication from the same decade as Caldwell’s previously discussed work, *The Oxford History of English Music* (Oxford, 1991), is, Keyte, Hugh, and Parrott, Andrew, eds., *The New Oxford Book of Carols* (New York, 1992); a publication which gives an overview of the carol from the Middle Ages to present day. Within the introduction it includes a brief discussion of the medieval carols, although it is vague and again omits to discuss the secular carols or those without music or on secular subjects; only sixteen carols from the fifteenth century. They describe the carols of the Middle Ages thus:

Despite their calculatedly popular character...these are rarely heard outside specialist circles. They were evidently written for professionals to sing, but their popular idiom must have had a broader appeal than most polyphony of the period. Some were certainly intended for the Christmas banquets in ecclesiastical establishments, others perhaps for use as substitutes for office antiphons, in devotions at the crib, or in the Christmas post-vespers processions. In addition to the polyphonic carols we have included two monophonic examples...which give a rare hint at what Christmas music may have been like outside the church. ¹⁰³

This gives a fair summary, and rightly points out the neglect the carols have faced in terms of performance or recording. Unfortunately, although understandably due to the scope of the work as an anthology of music for performance, this publication still excludes any mention of the large non-notated corpus.

One of the most recent publications, *The Cambridge Guide to Medieval Music* edited by Mark Everist incorporates many elements of musicological research into the medieval period, including a chapter on music in England by Peter Lefferts. Lefferts briefly mentions the carols, suggesting that they were not a genre suitable for the noble courts. He writes that:

The polyphonic English devotional carol in English and Latin is an important indigenous product of the same era 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

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world of the scholars, fellows and singing-men of schools, colleges and major ecclesiastical choral establishments.¹⁰⁴

This would seem a rather sweeping statement, and one that again isolates the carol into one restrictive category. With manuscripts such as the Henry VIII Manuscript, which includes royal compositions and arrangements and was most probably connected with the royal court, and the splendour of Egerton and the Fayrfax manuscript, Lefferts would seem to be generalising unfairly, not to mention evidence that exists of carols being sung in royal company. There is ‘An account of a royal banquet on Twelfth Night’ in 1487 tells us that ‘At the Table in the Medell of the Hall sat the Deance and those of the Kings Chapell, which incontynently after the King’s first course sange a Carall’.¹⁰⁵ This is clear evidence of carols being deemed appropriate for royal company, and would seem to counter the view that Lefferts presents.

More recently, musicology scholars such as Helen Deeming have tackled the genre anew, with valuable work on individual carols such as the ‘Agincourt carol’.¹⁰⁶ David Fallows has also discussed the importance of, not necessarily the carols themselves, but at least their extant manuscripts, to the mapping of song throughout the fifteenth century, writing that:

> it is still necessary to begin any such survey on a note of extreme caution and with a declaration that the picture must be built on a series of widely separated stepping-stones – or more precisely, on a scattered group of stones peeping up from the river and perhaps never intended to pave a way across...a landing place is now fairly solidly established on the far bank thanks to the recent publication by John Stevens of the Fayrfax Manuscript...dating from around 1500, and of the Ritson Manuscript...some of which must have been copied around 1470. Further, a little way up the river, there is a more or less continuous path across provided by the

¹⁰⁶ Deeming, Helen, ‘The sources and origin of the “Agincourt Carol”’, *Early Music*, 35/1 (2007), 23-38. As noted within the introduction, there have also been some recent PhD dissertations written upon the subject, but regrettably, with little resulting publication of the research: Zamzow, Beth Ann, *The Influence of the Liturgy on the Fifteenth-Century English Carols* (PhD from University of Iowa, 2000), Smaill, Adele Margaret, *Medieval Carols: Origins, Forms, and Performance Contexts* (PhD from Michigan, 2003), and Palti, Kathleen, ‘Singe we now alle and sum’: *Three Fifteenth-Century Collections of Communal Song* (PhD from University College London, 2008).
English carol tradition...and surviving in a series of five manuscripts that are miraculously fairly even in their chronological and stylistic spacing over the years from 1430 to 1500. 107

Richard Taruskin too, in his recent tomes charting the history of western music, also includes a discussion of the carol. His approach is to consider the carols up to the early second half of the fifteenth century, thus dealing with the Ritson and particularly the carols of the Fayrfax manuscript separately. He includes no discussion of the non-notated carols. In treating the carols this way, he not only follows tradition by not including any mention of the non-notated corpus and their significance to the carol genre as a whole, but succeeds in further splitting the genre into two further sections: early fifteenth-century carols and late fifteenth-century carols.

This renewed interest extends to literary scholars too with new publications such as Medieval Oral Literature by Karl Reichl which presents a balanced and forward thinking description of the carol which does mention the tradition of singing this genre, but fails to discuss any musical aspects in detail. 108 This is in contrast to his earlier writing on the carol from 2005 in which he actually presents a well balanced presentation of the carol in musical and textual terms, dealing with themes, form and music, manuscript transmission and the carols possible relationship to the carole and the processional hymn.

The predisposition to treat the carol as either a musical or textual genre (and sometimes also in terms of carol before 1470, and carols after 1470) serves only to look at the repertoire one dimensionally. All aspects of the repertoire must be seen as equally valuable to understanding the carol and its place in fifteenth-century society. The need for a multidisciplinary approach is imperative. Although many carols have no extant music, we cannot say with any certainty that they had never been set to music; indeed, in such a society oral traditions were strong, and there would have been less of a need for notation. As musicologists therefore, we must ask ourselves whether the possibility of musical settings for these carols is also strong, and if so, why the music not copied alongside these extant texts rather than shying away from the problem altogether and placing them in a

separate category. One only has to look to the large non-notated chansonniers to see the
chronicles are not alone in surviving or being deliberately compiled without notation; this
however, does not render them any less important to musicological research, we just need
to value them in a different way. As Mary Atchison notes in relation to the non-notated
chansonniers:

perhaps in this search for melodies and a musicological frame of reference for the
texts the point...is missed. The texts have no melodies. There are no empty staves.
Melodies are not ‘missing’; they were never designed to be included. This is quite
distinct from chansonniers which have staves drawn yet the notation never entered.
The former can be seen to be conceptually complete, the latter incomplete. 109

This concept could be applied to the non-notated carols. Rather than searching for lost
melodies to make them of worth to musicological research, we must see them instead as a
complete repertoire that can help add to our understanding of the notated carols. 110

Conclusion

The carol can be seen as a genre that had many levels of use in society and musically and
textually evolved throughout the fifteenth century; evolving and growing in line with other
musical trends. Despite its inclusion in a number of publications, the genre has never been
approached in a research context that fully embraces all of the extant carols as one body of
material, or fully addresses it beyond the standard textual transcriptions by Greene, or
musical transcriptions by Stevens. Academics seem to have neglected the carol of late,
perhaps due to the perception of it as a ‘homely’ genre with less musical value than the
Latin motet or the large cyclic masses, but it is precisely this sort of popular genre that gives
a real insight into the social aspect of the Middle Ages, the place of music in society outside
of the liturgy, and the overlap between music of the church and so called ‘popular’ song. A

109 Atchinson, Mary, The Chansonnier of Oxford Bodleian MS Douce 308 (Aldershot, 2005),2
110 The issue of possible lost melodies is addressed in Chapter 4: “That we with merth mowe savely synge’: The
fifteenth-century carol, a music of the people?”
more comparative approach to the genre is now needed in order to better understand the genre; thus allowing it to be seen in a much wider context.

The remainder of this thesis therefore, will attempt to examine carols with and without musical notation as one genre in an attempt to place the carol within clearer social, political and religious contexts. The separation of the carol from other genres in terms of research gives a distorted impression. To disregard the source material which shows that the carol was collected alongside other musical forms and was therefore clearly not thought of as entirely ‘separate’ by those copyists or their patrons is to misrepresent the genre; a concept that will be argued in the following chapter.
Chapter 2
The Carol: an isolated genre?

With the exception of the Trinity Roll, the notated carol generally sits alongside other musical genres in extant manuscripts of the fifteenth century. However, most carol research discusses the carol as a separate entity to other music of the fifteenth century. In addition, research into this genre has tended not to be multidisciplinary, with notated and non-notated carols often being treated as two different areas of research. In order to better understand the carol in not only a social context, but also in terms of musical content, it is essential to look at it in comparison with other common genres of this period. This chapter aims to examine the carol alongside contemporary genres such as the motet, hymn and cantilena, as well as older musical forms such as the conductus and the three formes fixes: rondeau, ballade and virelai.

Of the extant, notated carol manuscripts of the fifteenth century, only one, the Trinity Roll consists only of carols and no other musical or lyrical forms. This roll contains thirteen carols only. This manuscript is an exception. Generally, the carol is found alongside other lyrical genres. Table 14 gives a general overview of the other musical genres placed alongside the carol in the main extant notated manuscripts. The main musically notated carol manuscripts tend generally to contain large numbers of carols in comparison to the other genres; they are always the dominant content, testament to their popularity at this time.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MS</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Carols</th>
<th>Motets</th>
<th>Hymns</th>
<th>Mass/Mass sections</th>
<th>Te Deum</th>
<th>Canticle</th>
<th>Processional Hymns</th>
<th>Passion</th>
<th>Latin secular song</th>
<th>English Secular Song</th>
<th>Dutch secular Piece</th>
<th>French Secular Song</th>
<th>English Sacred Song</th>
<th>Textless Music</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trinity</td>
<td>Early 15th century</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selden</td>
<td>1425-1450</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egerton</td>
<td>1450</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritson</td>
<td>1475</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS Add. 5666</td>
<td>15thC 1/2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashmole 1393</td>
<td>1425</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fayfax</td>
<td>c.1500</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry VIII</td>
<td>c.1520</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12 + 3 French/English</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14: Musical genres within carol manuscripts

One can see from this table, the diversity of other musical forms within these im
manuscripts, ranging from sacred song to hymns and music for liturgical use. In a
further understand the carol, a comparison between it and some of these other forms
imperative.

The Carol and the Motet

The carols, as we can see in Table 14, sit most prominently alongside the sacred
fifteenth-century motet is an inherently difficult form to define, with many schol
able to give vague and basic descriptions. Margaret Bent laments that “A piec
in several parts with words’ is as precise a definition of the motet as will serve fr
thirteenth to the late sixteenth-century and beyond’. Julie Cumming, in her
groundbreaking study of the motet of the fifteenth century, deliberates the prob
motet definition within the fifteenth century itself and among modern scholars. She writes:

Contemporary definitions of the term are extremely vague and there is li
scholarly consensus in the twentieth century on the nature and function of
fifteenth-century motet: the boundary with liturgical music is especially pr
At one end of the spectrum are the scholars who use “motet” loosely as a
form for the many kinds of Latin-texted polyphonic music other than the
the other end are the scholars who treat the “motet” as a residual categorie
containing only pieces without pre-existent liturgical texts...If we try to define
motet in terms of function the problems are just as great. The little evide
e have suggests that the motets were used in numerous contexts, almost n
them liturgically prescribed.112

110 For further reading on the motet see: Pesce, Dolores, Hearing the Motet (New York, 1992), Le
The Motet in England in the Fourteenth Century (Michigan, 1983), Cummings, Julie E., The Motet
Dufay (Cambridge, 1999), and for a detailed look at the earlier thirteenth century motet see: Eve
111 Bent, Margaret, ‘The late-medieval motet’, in, Knighton, Tess and Fallows, David, eds., Compa
Medieval and Renaissance Music (Berkley, 1997) 114-119,
112 Cumming, Julie E., The Motet in the Age of Du Fay (Cambridge, 1999), 1-2
The carol at least, is much easier to define in terms of form, although it shares a strong similarity with the motet in terms of the difficulty in determining definitive function and purpose.\textsuperscript{113} Apart from some evidence that attests to the carol’s use at Christmas, there is little other evidence on which to base theories of additional function, or indeed to suggest in what context the carol was being used at Christmas. In order to look closer at the motet and the carol in such a comparative context, Julie Cumming’s criteria for motet definition in this period will act as the basis of this research.\textsuperscript{114} Her detailed study into the fifteenth-century motet is clear and concise in its analysis of the changing nature of the motet in the period 1400-1475 and gives information and definitions of style and function in the fifteenth-century motet, addressing issues such as: number of voices, voice ranges, melodic behaviour, rhythm, reduced scoring, length, sections, mensuration, complexity, use of pre-existent material and issues of text.\textsuperscript{115} A number of these definitions have already been discussed in general terms in relation to the carol in Chapter one; these definitions will now be examined comparatively with the motet genre, before looking at some more specific examples.

Voices

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the carol favoured a two-voice texture in the earliest manuscripts of the fifteenth century. The later manuscripts however, have evolved into mainly three-voice carols; with one perhaps experimental four-voice piece. Within these three-voice carols, the texture is enhanced by the alternation of voice texture between burdens and verses.\textsuperscript{116} The motet however, seems to be in favour of the three voice texture from the beginning of the century, with a marked increase in four-part writing. Cumming writes:

\textsuperscript{113} Although Cumming states that almost no motets were liturgically prescribed, Robert Nosow’s work, which considers how motets were used and performed in the fifteenth century, disputes this and considers all motets to have held a ritual function. Nosow, Robert Michael, \textit{Ritual Meanings in the Fifteenth-Century Motet} (Cambridge, 2012)

\textsuperscript{114} Cumming, Julie E., \textit{The Motet in the Age of Du Fay} (Cambridge, 1999)

\textsuperscript{115} Cumming, Julie E., \textit{The Motet in the Age of Du Fay} (Cambridge, 1999), 24-40

\textsuperscript{116} See Chapter 1: ‘The Carol: musical features and previous scholarship’
Most fifteenth-century motets are for three or four voices. The three-voice pieces are usually fairly short and song-like, while most four-voice pieces are longer and more ambitious in terms of form and structure...Over the course of the century the amount of three-voice writing decreases, while music for four voices becomes the norm.\textsuperscript{117}

This use of three voice texture for shorter and more song-like motets resonates well with the use of two or three-voice textures within carol writing. The carols are, by nature, simple in form (although one must not confuse a simple form with simple musical content). The use of four-voice texture would perhaps have been seen as unnecessarily complex for this genre, particularly one that is written in the vernacular, and seems to place an emphasis on text.

\textbf{Melodic Behaviour}

There were, as Cumming notes, a number of general rules in terms of the melodic behaviour of different voices. Indeed, ‘The upper discantus voices were melodic, with relatively restrained use of leaps and predominantly stepwise melodies’, with the tenor voice having a slightly greater freedom but consisting ‘primarily of conjunct motion’. In terms of the voice with the greatest amount of melodic freedom, the contratenor easily fits that category with ‘large leaps of dissonant intervals, motion through a twelfth in the space of two or three beats, and so forth. They also had the widest range.’ \textsuperscript{118}

As noted previously, the carol grows in terms of melodic behaviour throughout the century; demonstrated in the surviving manuscripts. The earliest carols are relatively homophonic in character, with any extra melodic floridity, as with the motets, generally coming from the uppermost part.

The slightly later Selden manuscript is relatively similar in style to the Trinity Roll, containing a lot of homophonic texture in its carols, but with more polyphonic movement; the top voice taking the most florid melodic line, and lower voices playing a slower moving

\textsuperscript{117} Cumming, Julie E., \textit{The Motet in the Age of Du Fay} (Cambridge, 1999), 29
\textsuperscript{118} Cumming, Julie E., \textit{The Motet in the Age of Du Fay} (Cambridge, 1999), 30
harmonic role. In terms of melodic movement, the voices are reasonably similar in the use of leaps and jumps; all parts follow a similar style of conjunct motion, with a conservative amount of leaps and jumps seen at points in all parts. Melismatic writing becomes more prevalent chronologically, but not extensively. Although Zamzow notes that ‘Fewer than half the carols in the Trinity Roll, two-thirds of those in Selden, nearly all in Egerton and all the carols in the Ritson manuscript have melismatic passages’, the melismatic material is still not tremendously florid in style, and still retains the feel of the earlier carols.

**Text Setting**

Like the carol, the motet is often written using liturgical text; Cumming’s comments on motet texts could just as easily apply to the carol repertory when she writes that:

> Motet texts can be divided into sacred and secular, though sometimes the distinction is difficult to make. Sacred texts include those in honour of the Virgin, of Christ, and the saints. Secular texts include admonitory texts about the evils of the world or of the church and laudatory political texts about rulers...sometimes with reference to specific occasions.  

The carols also have texts relating to human weakness, sexual exploits and relationships, which perhaps give them a more ‘earthy’ character, and place them closer to the popular music genre than the more stylised motet of this period, and as we will explore in later chapters, they also tackle political subjects, and celebrate particular saints and occasions.

The motet though, as Bent notes ‘By the sixteenth century, motets were more often sacred than secular’. The carol too, is more often sacred than secular, but this could be due to the survival of sacred texts notated in the manuscripts of the church educated rather than a true representation of the genre. Where the motet and carol differ somewhat, is in the treatment of text. The fifteenth-century motet is known for its juxtaposition of different

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119 Zamzow, Beth Ann, *The Influence of the Liturgy on the Fifteenth-Century English Carols* (PhD from University of Iowa, 2000), 24

120 Cumming, Julie E., *The Motet in the Age of Du Fay* (Cambridge, 1999), 36

121 Bent, Margaret, ‘The late-medieval motet’, in, Knighton, Tess and Fallows, David, eds., *Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music* (Berkley, 1997), 114

122 The issue of surviving texts is discussed within Chapter 4, “That we with merth mowe savely synge: The fifteenth-century carol, a music of the people?”
texts simultaneously in one piece. There are however, no examples of this in the carol repertory at all; all voices sing the same text.

The carols are notable for their macaronic text setting, often mixing English and Latin or English and French text within one piece; often alternating language between burden and verse or placing a Latin refrain within an otherwise English text. Often these Latin lines are liturgical; something that is echoed in the motet repertoire. The motet in the first half of the fifteenth century generally used new texts, but by the late fifteenth-century composers ‘usually chose pre-existent texts and set them to music’.123 In terms of text style, the motet embraced both poetry and prose, the carol however is very much a poetic genre, favouring rhyming lines and stanzas.78)

**Egerton- A Comparative Study**

Egerton is one of the largest of the musically notated manuscripts. It not only contains a total of 32 carols, but also includes a number of other liturgical, sacred and secular pieces. The carols in this manuscript are collected in one section, with exception of ‘O Potores’ (the drinking song) and motet ‘Domino sanctus Socie’. The first section consists mainly of music for Holy Week; one Mass, three Mass Proper sections, seven processional hymns, two Passions and five motets.

The Egerton Manuscript is compiled in two very distinct sections; the first being music for Holy Week, the second containing mainly carols, with exception of one polyphonic drinking song, and one motet.124 The Egerton manuscript, includes the motet ‘Cantemus Domino’ within the carol section of the manuscript. It is placed beside the carol ‘Comidentes Convenite’ which addresses ‘Sister Feasters’. It has been argued that the motet, due to its pitch range could have been written for female voices, McPeek writes:

> The motet immediately after the drinking song is singularly appropriate for women, since not only does it use the feminine forms in the word endings, but as Greene

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123 Cumming, Julie E., *The Motet in the Age of Du Fay* (Cambridge, 1999), 35
124 Egerton is discussed in most detail in Chapter 6: ‘The Medieval Carol: a vehicle for political commentary and English nationalism.’
points out, both the poem and the tenor melody were traditionally associated with women. In addition, treble voices of soprano range, so rare in the Egerton MS (this piece contains the highest notes in the entire manuscript), suggest performance by women of a piece specifically appropriate to them'.

The feminine ending that McPeek refers to is seen in the word ‘socie’. If referring to male companions, the word would read ‘Socii’, which, according to Greene, ‘appears in almost all known texts of the hymn’. The text in its entirety reads:

```
Cantemus Domino socie, cantemus honorem
Dulcis amor Cristi personet ore pio
Primus ad yma ruit magna de luce
Superbus sic homo cum tumuit primus
Ad yma ruit unius ob noxam multi periere
Minores salvantur cuncti unius ob
Meritum femina sola fuit patuit qua
Janua leto per quam vita redit femina
Sola fuit.
```

McPeek also notes that ‘as well as an additional reason for the motet’s position at the close of the original grouping: not only is it the sole sacred motet, but it is the only one specifically appropriate to women, and, traditionally, to women only’. Does this suggest the motet form was more appropriate in the context of this manuscript for women to sing than the carol, or would perhaps the women also have sung some of the carol material? Either is a possibility, but the evidence would suggest perhaps the motet was the only one that would only have worked with female singers due to the feminine ending. It is not impossible however that these endings could have been changed to masculine to suit male singers. Endings were

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128 The changing of gender within the carols is documented in Chapter 5: ‘Women in the Carols’.
changed in order to change a lyric from masculine to feminine in the carols, why not also in motets?  

In analysing the choice of motet against the carols in this manuscripts section, a number of factors will be taken in to consideration, again drawn from Cumming’s model: pitch, voices (number of, ranges and speed), language, subject, movement, melodic behaviour, rhythm and phrasing, construction and counterpoint, mensuration, complexity, use of pre existent material.

The motet ‘Cantemus Domine Socie’ is based on eight lines of a poem by Sedulius found in Osbern’s ‘Life of St Dunstan’ and includes the antiphon ‘Gaudent in celis’ in the tenor part. It is written for four voices, but much of the texture alternates between duet and full voice singing; imitating the carol form. Although the motet is written for four voices, none of the carols in this section, or indeed the drinking song ‘O Potores’ are written for the same number of voices.  

‘O Potores’ is written for two and the carols either for two voices or three. Interestingly, Julie Cumming notes that this motet is one of two English motets where:

The tenor is the lowest voice, the contratenor slightly higher...Cantemus Domino is also the only piece in this group to have a tenor cantus-firmus.

In comparison to the carol pitch ranges, the motet is relatively similar, although the top part does reach a pitch one step higher than the carols, which led McPeek to speculate that the motet was meant to be sung by women, particularly with its place in the manuscript next to the carol ‘Comidentes Convenite’ which is a direct address to women present. This however, is not conclusive, the pitch difference does not seem large enough to prove this definitively, and a number of carols also reach the same top note, which would suggest they too would be intended for female singers.

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129 For discussion surrounding women and carol performance/authorships see Chapter 5: ‘Women in the Carols’.
130 Three or four voices is a normal number for the fifteenth century with four voices becoming more and more popular towards the end of the century.
131 Cumming, Julie E., *The Motet in the Age of Du Fay* (Cambridge, 1999), 236
132 For more detailed analysis of this carol, see Chapter5: ‘Women in the Carols’.
133 This argument is explored in detail in Chapter 5: ‘Women in the Carols’.
Table 15: Pitch range of the motet in comparison to three voice carols (two of which sit in close proximity to the motet in the manuscript)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Voice 1</th>
<th>Voice 2</th>
<th>Voice 3</th>
<th>Voice 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cantemus Domino Socie (Motet)</td>
<td>d-f’ (10)</td>
<td>a-b’ (9)</td>
<td>c-f’ (11)</td>
<td>c-c’ (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princeps Pacis (Carol)</td>
<td>d-d’ (8)</td>
<td>f-g’ (9)</td>
<td>f-a’ (10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parit Virgo Filium (Carol)</td>
<td>c’-c’’ (8)</td>
<td>c-f’ (11)</td>
<td>d-d’ (8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauda Salvatorem (Carol)</td>
<td>a-c’’ (8)</td>
<td>c-f’ (11)</td>
<td>d-c’ (7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The use of voice ranges in the carols of table 15, are relatively similar to the motet.
Certainly, voice one in the motet displays the highest pitch of the carol section, but only by one tone, and in terms of range, it is matched and exceeded by some of the carol voices.

The length of *Cantemus Domino Socie* is 214 perfections, split into two sections (section one consisting of a total of 91 perfections with an original ‘O’ (perfect) time signature(91 bars), and section two, with an original ‘C’ (imperfect) time signature and 123 perfections (123 bars)). 134 In terms of comparison with the carols sitting alongside this motet in Egerton, the longest carol consists of 82 perfections, and the shortest only 23. The longer ones are usually deemed more complex and in a higher style. It has a borrowed cantus firmus, which is easily identified in the tenor’s much slower movement than the other voices. In general the motet, in terms of melodic movement, behaves quite typically in relation to Julie Cumming’s generalities of motet form in the fifteenth century: the top voices tend to move in a melodic but relatively stepwise manner, with limited use of leaps; the contratenor, typically, has the widest pitch range and is not afraid of large jumps and leaps; with the tenor moving largely in conjunct motion.

This treatment of voices is not too dissimilar to the carols in Egerton, although, due to the lack of cantus firmus, the voices tend to be more similar in terms of movement and melodic

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and rhythmic similarity. Indeed, the top voice tends to display slightly more in terms of movement in comparison to the lowest voice, but in no way comparable to the difference between top voice and tenor in the motet. As motets were so often composed with a cantus firmus, the Egerton carol section motet reflects the wider motet genre in terms of voice style and pitch.

It is interesting that this lone motet (alongside the drinking song ‘O Potores’) is placed within an section entirely made up of carols. It would seem that this motet is deemed a suitable musical genre to sit within a body of carols, and that the scribe or compiler perceived a link between the motet and the carol. Strangely however, for a section that only uses three voices, this one four voice piece does seem unusual; in fact it is the only four voice piece in the entire manuscript. This four voice motet with its tenor in the base, is one of only two non-isorhythmic motets with this voice formation and number (the other being Dunstaple’s ‘Descendi’) extant from this period. It seems, as Cumming points out:

This particular approach to four –voice texture, with the tenor alone at the bottom of the texture, does not seem to have been used on the Continent.135

This manuscript, with its favouritism of the carol, a very English and insular genre, and its inclusion of its particularly English subject matter, would seem to favour such a peculiarly English motet.

It would appear then that the motet of the fifteenth century was thought to be an appropriate genre to be placed alongside carols. Although there is one extant source that contains only musically notated carols, the remainder of the corpus, like motet ,is always found amongst other genres.

Like the carol, the motet is hard to pin down in terms of functionality. As Cumming notes, the motet is:

A genre that is textually and functionally flexible, with no fixed subject matter and no prescribed liturgical position, that lies in the middle of the genre hierarchy, and thus has a broad range of tone and style height’.136

135 Cumming, Julie E., The Motet in the Age of Du Fay (Cambridge, 1999), 236
The main difference between the two genres however has to be in the flexibility of form. The carol is very much a fixed form (although the development of the double burden throughout the fifteenth century does attest to its development with time). The motet however has a flexibility of form denied to the carol. What the carol does have is a more defined personality than the motet, it is easier to get a hold on it and its place. The carol too, like the motet has gradients of style, some of the perhaps ‘lewder; carols lacking notation could have been used for recreational purposes and set to popular melodies.\textsuperscript{137}

The carol has somehow been sidelined in recent musicological studies, however, the importance of the carol seems somewhat undervalued, perhaps due to its pigeon holing as merely a form for festivities at Christmas, or its misunderstanding as only being a genre written by clerics for their own amusement. One look at the Egerton Manuscript or Ritson would dispel this as far too general a viewpoint. The carol, like the motet, has both low and high style versions of the same form; the high style of the carols seen in most of the extant polyphonic genre, and glimpses of a more simplified style evident in some of the monophonic survivors; some of the non-notated carols too, with their ‘earthier’ subject matter, may fall into the clerical amusement category, but this certainly cannot be said for all of them.

\textbf{The Carol and Earlier Genres}

The carol, due to its fixed structure, is very often placed in the same context as the chronologically earlier three \textit{formes fixes}: the ballade, the rondeau and the virelai. Usually in academic writing, this observation comes as only a brief comment or as an after or closing thought without further explanation. In order to understand fully the similarity, and indeed differences, between the carol and the three \textit{formes fixes} it is important to examine them more detail. All three genres are continental in origin but found in English sources, all three have a fixed structure, and all three have connections to dance. Of these three generalities, the carol can identify in its use of a fixed structure and does have an ambiguous link to the

\textsuperscript{136} Cumming, Julie E., \textit{The Motet in the Age of Du Fay} (Cambridge, 1999), 60
\textsuperscript{137} See Chapter 4: ‘‘That we with merth mowe savely synge’: The fifteenth- century carol, a music of the people?’
French carole which was a fixed form dance genre, but as discussed in previous chapters, no definitive proof of this currently exists. The carol is not a continental genre and does not travel outside of English sources, therefore the main similarity between the carol and these three fixed forms really stems from its fixed structure.

Of these main characteristics: continental genres, connections to dance and fixed musical structure, the carols can at least partially be said to relate to the dance element and the fixed structure. There are of course, other elements of each individual form: ballade, rondeau and virelai that the carol shows some affiliation with, which will now be discussed in further detail, starting with the virelai.

The virelai has the basic structure ABBA, and is most similar to the carol. The refrain ‘is normally several lines long and occupies the whole of the first musical section.’" It is perhaps unfairly seen as the least popular genre of the forms fixes, due only to its lack of survival in written form. Nigel Wilkins notes that the virelai’s use of increasing development of complex metrical patterns within the text structure meant that it:

"came to be a rather more boisterous form than the ballade or the rondeau. An indication perhaps of its more ‘popular’ nature is in the fact that of the 33 virelais that Machaut set to music only eight use polyphony; and of these seven are very simple two-part settings for voice and untented tenor." It is this idea of the virelai as a ‘popular’ genre that seems to sit well with the carol repertoire, that and the preference for monophonic settings. Despite a huge number of polyphonic notated carols surviving, there are still a number of monophonic carols, and a vast number of untented carols which point to lost popular melodies.

The text of the virelai differs greatly from the carol repertoire as it is concentrated mainly on courtly love lyrics, as opposed to the carols’ diverse subject matter, a trait also seen in the rondeau and the ballade.

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140 See Chapter 4: ’That we with merth mowe savely synge’: The fifteenth-century carol, a music of the people?’
The ballade however, by the end of the fourteenth century had developed to incorporate a wide range of texts ‘in praise of patrons or in celebration of historical events; in the main, however, the ballade was throughout its history the preferred form for the serious love song.’ The carol is certainly not known for its praise of patrons, but certainly does have some love lyrics and a number of carols that celebrate important events in English history as well as English Kings and Saints; one only has to look to the famous ‘Agincourt carol’ as a fitting example of a tribute to both a King and important historical event. The basic form of the ballade is AAB; both musically and textually. A large number of ballades survive without musical notation, indeed 200 by Machaut alone; similar to the carol and its large number of extant un-notated repertoire. Of course, collections of lyrics without their music is certainly not exclusive to the ballade and the carol; many English and continental manuscripts survive with large numbers of lyrics with no musical notation; the fifteenth-century GB-Lbl Sloane 2593 is a good example of an English manuscript that falls in to this category, and the fourteenth -century Chansonnier Oxford, Bodleian Library Douce 308 is an exceptional continental example of a large collection of lyric forms (500 in total), collected without corresponding musical notation.

The rondeau, like the ballade and virelai, was also concerned in the main with courtly love, rather than the nativity, political and more pragmatic ideas of love portrayed in the carols. Of course, one must remember that the ballade, virelai and rondeau were earlier musical forms, in a time where courtly love was a particularly fashionable lyric on the continent, unlike the English carol. Interestingly though, other than the similarity of fixed form, the rondeau does have an affiliation with the carol in terms of use of pre existent material; or rather the use of rondeau material in other musical forms and the carol’s use of pre existent text. As Wilkins notes:

A vital...factor is the particular importance acquired by the rondeau refrain, since its performance, though it may be only two lines long, entails the use of the whole melody, not simply part of it. This may well be the reason why rondeau refrains took on a life of their own and were often inserted into other songs, motets, romances

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and many miscellaneous literary works. Some 13th-century motets use an entire rondeau as one of the voice parts or as the fundamental tenor, which occasionally makes possible the reconstruction of a piece found elsewhere without music.\footnote{Wilkins, Nigel, "Rondeau (i)." \textit{Grove Music Online}. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, accessed May 21, 2013, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/23782}

In each fixed form there is some similarity to the carol beyond a fixed structure, but the chronological difference between the formes fixes make them difficult to compare with any real comparative meaning. By the time the carol flourished in the fifteenth century, the formes fixes had waned in popularity on the continent, or developed into something new; for example the virelai becomes a literary genre rather than a musical one in the fifteenth century. The dance form connection between the formes fixes and the carol, suggesting that all three derived from dances, is certainly possible, although difficult to prove. The carol has often been argued to be a derivative of the French dance form, the carole, but the lack of extant music for the carole, and any form of definitive evidence that links the two forms is severely lacking.\footnote{For more discussion of the origins of the carol see Chapter 1: 'The Carol: Musical Features and Previous Scholarship'} Indeed, even the extant formes fixes and their link to dance has been questioned. Henrick Van der Werf suggests that:

There is a theory that the rondeau, the virelai, and the ballade either are, or derive from dancing songs. This usually goes together with the assumption that their refrains derive from a practice that dance songs were intoned by a soloist, some of whose verses were repeated by the (other) dancers. It is a thankless task to try to disprove a theory that has never been proven... From some narratives we may also conclude that an alternation between a soloist and others occasionally occurred in dancing songs. Forms of the word "rondeau" occasionally appear as labels for a dancing song. The noun "ballade" seems to be related to the verb \textit{ballare}, meaning "to dance." Some late entries in \textit{Le Manuscrit du Roi} which in their form resemble the virelai, have the title \textit{danssa}. Beyond that, there is little or nothing to connect all rondeaux, virelais, and ballades to dancing. Exploring their origin a bit further, I suggest that if the rondeaux, virelais, and ballades of Guillaume de Machaut were

\begin{footnote}
\footnotetext{For more discussion of the origins of the carol see Chapter 1: 'The Carol: Musical Features and Previous Scholarship'}
\end{footnote}
descendants of dancing songs, they are at least as far removed from their origin as Beethoven's scherzos are removed from the courtly minuet. 146

So it seems that the uncertainty, or indeed gulf between the dance form carole, and the fifteenth-century carol might be as far removed as the original dance forms that may have led to the final three formes fixes as they came to be known by the fourteenth century.

The chronological distance between the fifteenth-century English carol and the earlier continental formes fixes makes meaningful comparison difficult, but there are certainly some similarities beyond the use of a fixed structure between them. Indeed, some continuing use of the formes fixes, in particular the ballade and rondeau, was taking in place in England alongside the carol, but the music is not extant on the scale of the carol. As David Fallows succinctly notes:

It is possible...to see...clearly separable stylistic strands among the English song sources from the middle years of the fifteenth century, strands that are made visible only if we add the various songs in continental sources and follow the leads offered by poetic form. Strand one is the rondeau, thoroughly French in style, represented in English only by the Portland leaf and the fragment at Cambridge. Strand two is the ballade, also strongly influenced by continental music, but cultivated by English composers at a time when continental musicians had all but abandoned it...Finally there is what one might call the truly English tradition of free-form songs...they have simple imitation, much homophonic writing and increasingly elaborate closing melismas.147

Fallows does not mention the carol within these stylistic strands, perhaps due to the tradition of academics to continually place the carol as separate to every other genre, a practice that needs addressing, and shall be discussed now in further detail.

Conductus

The earlier conductus has been argued by academics to be the predecessor of the carol, not necessarily in terms of form, but perhaps more for its setting of not only sacred subjects but, as with the carol, the setting of political or satirical text. As Hoppin notes:

This textual variety makes the conductus difficult to define and its function difficult to determine. Some conducti could, and probably did, serve as unofficial additions to the liturgy. A more appropriate use for others might have been the musical and moral instruction of the young or the leisure entertainment of clerics and scholars.\(^{148}\)

The conductus repertoire is not in strict musical form as the carols are; instead their musical form can change substantially, giving a more flexible approach. Like the carol, conducti were also thought to, in the main, have consisted of ‘new’ melodic material rather than relying on existing material to provide a cantus firmus. The carol too, is not often found to use cantus firmus material, but does on occasion, as does the conducti, borrow fragments of melody and text.

Due to the almost complete disappearance of the conductus by the fifteenth century, and the subsequent emerging popularity of the carol, it has been argued that the carol is a replacement genre for the conductus. This is impossible to prove certainly, but is nevertheless a possibility. In the poem ‘Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight’, written towards the end of the fourteenth century however, a quarter of a century before the emergence of our extant carol manuscripts, both genres are mentioned together, perhaps implying they are similar or interchangeable in some way. The poem reads:

Much glam and gle glent therinne
About the fyre upon flet, and on fele wyse
At the soper and afer, mony athel songez
As condutes of Krystmasse and carols newe
With al the mannerly merthe that mon may of telle.\(^{149}\)

\(^{149}\) Transcription taken from: Harrison, F.L., *Music in Medieval Britain* (London, 1963), 418
This poem places the ‘newe’ carol in the same category as the much older genre of the conductus, not least because it calls them conducti of Christmas, which could indeed point to a relationship between the two genres. The interpretation of the wod ‘newe’ is of course ambiguous; it could refer to the carol as a new genre, or be referring to new examples of an already established one. I may be inclined to suppose it is referring to recent examples of an already established genre as one would expect the author to be using familiar terms to engage with his reader, rather than introducing them to a new, lesser known musical device.


\section*{The Ritson Manuscript and the Hymn}

We only have to look at the connection between carol and hymn to further see that the carol was not a genre in isolation, and was drawing from and engaging with other sources. Greene lists a total of sixty macaronic carols that contain lines borrowed from hymns that were ‘some of the finest and best known which the Middle Ages produced’.\footnote{Greene, R.L., The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1935), lxvii} Greene’s wish to continue to separate the carol as a genre however leads him to surmise that:

More probably the carols’ independence of the hymns’ subject-matter is due to the recognition by those who produced the carols that the masterpieces of church song were in a more exalted strain than was fitting for pieces modelled on popular song.\footnote{Greene, R.L., The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1935), lxxi. Greene lists carols that contain quotations from hymns on pages lxv-lxvii within this same publication. Despite this table from Greene, it would seem there has been no further detailed research on the inclusion of hymn texts in the carols since his research. This would seem to require future research that is beyond the scope of this thesis.}

This would seem rather a presumption. It could also be argued that the carols’ writers, by including some Latin hymn lines, were paying homage to the hymn tradition or subject but deliberately wanting to create something new from it, in particular the addition of
vernacular text, in order to appeal to a different audience or performance setting. This could perhaps be seen in the context of troping.

The hymn was an important part of the Western Church, with ‘a hymn sung in each of the daily offices’. The general description by Hoppin being:

From the time of Ambrose until now, hymn texts have been divided into short stanzas, or strophes, all of which have the same poetic structure. This structure may vary from one hymn to another, but all the stanzas of one hymn will have the same number of lines, the same metrical pattern, and the same rhyme scheme, if rhyme is present. It follows, therefore, that when the melody of the first stanza is repeated for each succeeding stanza, strophic form results. It also follows that all hymns with stanzas of the same poetic structure may be sung to the same melody, and the use of one melody for two or more different hymns was as common in the Middle Ages as it is in present-day hymnals.

The Ritson manuscript is one of only ‘Two 15th-century English sources [that] contain polyphonic hymns...they use the techniques of cancertus firmus treatment...that is not known elsewhere and marks them as English...The paucity of 15th-century sources makes a complete understanding of English polyphonic hymn practices very difficult’. The carol too is difficult to pin down in terms of practice, despite the deluge of extant material. One polyphonic hymn in Ritson is ‘O lux beata trinitas’, written for two voices. It is a ‘Hymn at first Vespers of Sundays, when the service is of the Sunday, from the first Sunday after Trinity until Advent’. It reads:

O lux beata, trinitas
Et principalis unitas,
Jam sol recedit igneus,
Infunde lumen cordibus.

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153 Hoppin, R., Medieval Music (New York, 1978), 110
154 Hoppin, R., Medieval Music (New York, 1978), 111-112
157 Lane, Eleanor, Sandon, Nick and Bayliss, C., The Ritson Manuscript: Liturgical Compositions, Votive Antiphons, Te deum (Newton Abbot, 2011), xvi
Te mane laudem carmine,
Te deprecemur vespere;
Te nostra simplex Gloria
Per cuncta laudet secula.

Deo patri sit Gloria
Ejusque soli filio
Cum spiritu paraclito
Et nunc et in perpetuum.\textsuperscript{158}

Although this hymn is not quoted in any of the carols in the Ritson manuscript itself, it is quoted in two extant carols, in three manuscripts: ‘To blis God bring vs all and sum, christe redemptor omnium’\textsuperscript{159} from GB-Obc 354, and GB-Ob Eng.poet..e.1, and ‘Make we joye nowe in this fest’\textsuperscript{160} from GB-Selden b.26, and GB-Eng poet.e.1.\textsuperscript{161} These carols use the first line of the hymn ‘O lux beata, trinitas’ in different ways in the text. The carol ‘To blis God bring vs all and sum’ uses Latin lines from six hymns for the second line of the burden and the last line of each stanza. The first line of this particular hymn is found at the end of stanza four in the version from GB- Obc 354, and at the end of stanza three in the GB-Ob Eng.poet.e.1 version. The GB-Obc 354 version reads:

\textbf{To blis God bring vs all and sum,}

\textbf{Christe redemptor omnium}

In Bedlem, in that fayer cyte,
A child was born of Owr Lady,

\textsuperscript{158} For a full transcription and translation of this hymn see: Lane, Eleanor, Sandon, Nick and Bayliss, C., \textit{The Ritson Manuscript: Liturgical Compositions, Votive Antiphons, Te deum} (Newton Abbot, 2011), xxix and for a musical transcription see pages 21-23 in the same publication.
\textsuperscript{159} For full text see: Greene, R.L., \textit{The Early English Carols} (Oxford, 1935), 14-15
\textsuperscript{160} For full text see: Greene, R.L., \textit{The Early English Carols} (Oxford, 1935), 22
\textsuperscript{161} This hymn, although present in Ritson, only appears with the burden and the first two stanzas, therefore omits the quotation of this hymn.
Lord and Prynce that he shuld be,
A solis ortus cardine.

Chyldren were slayn grett plente,
Jhesu, for the love of the;
Lett vs neur dampned be.
Hostes Herodes ympie.

He was born of Owr Lady
Withowt wembe of her body,
Godes Son that syttyth on hye,
Jhesu saluator seculi.

As the son shynyth thorow the glas,
So Jhesu in her body was:
To serue hym he geve vs grace,
O lux beata Trinitas.

Now ys born owr Lord Jhesus,
That mad mery all vs;
Be all mery in thy howse;
Exvltet celum lavdibus.\(^{162}\)

Unfortunately, there is no surviving musical notation for this carol in order to compare the music of the hymn and the music of the carol. The carol ‘Make we joye’, however, does survive with musical notation, although there seems to be no obvious relationship between the two melodies. It uses Latin lines from ten hymns as the second line of its burden, and as the first and last lines of each stanza.

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Make we joye nowe in this fest,
In quo Christus natus est.
Eya!

A Patre vnigenitus
Thorw a maiden is com to vs.
Synge we to here and sey, ‘Welcome!
Veni redemptor gencium.’

Agnoscat omne speculum:
A bright sterre thre kynes [made] come
For to seke with here presens
Verbum supernum prodiens.

A solis ortus cardine,
So mighty a lord was none as he,
For to oure kynde he hath yeue gryth,
Adam parens quod polluit.

Maria ventre concepit;
The Holy Gost was aye here with.
In Bedleem yborne he ys,
Consors paterni luminis.

O lux beata Trinitas!
He lay bytwene an oxe and asse,.
Thou moder and maiden fre,
The hymn is not placed next to the carols in the manuscript, but between a Marian antiphon and an antiphon. The carols in the Ritson manuscript are placed near the beginning. The initial construction (until the completion of the carols only) consisting of:

1. Antiphon (Miserere michi domine) Layer 5
2. Benedicamus Domino Layer 5
3. Marian Antiphon, (Stella celi extirpavit) Layer 5
4. 31 carols Layer 1
5. Later Carol Layer 5
6. 8 carols Layer 1
7. Marian antiphon, (Salve Regina) Layer 5
8. 5 carols Layer 1
9. Vernacular song\textsuperscript{164} Layer 1
10. Textless fragment Layer 1
11. Marian Antiphon (Nesciens Mater) Layer 1
12. Alleluia (Per te dei genitrix) Layer 5
13. Marian Antiphon (Beata dei genitrix) Layer 5
14. Marian Antiphon (Nesciens Mater) Layer 1
15. Marian Antiphon (Nesciens Mater) Layer 1
16. Marian Antiphon (Ave Regina celorum) Layer 1

Although we can observe large sections of carols, they are still interspersed with other forms. Ritson is compiled in five layers. The first three layers are of particular interest to this study. Layer one, the earliest, consisting of all 44 carols and six other items such as antiphons and three settings of Nesciens matter; layer two with the polyphonic hymn and eight songs; and finally layer three which contains two masses by Thomas Packe: Rex Summe and Gaudete in Domino. The first layer is commonly believed to be started around 1460, with the final layers completed around 1500. The inclusion of material from layer five around the carols would suggest their continuing popularity and use c. 1500. The polyphonic hymn discussed previously is written for two voices. None of the carols are in two voice forms.

\textsuperscript{163} Greene, R.L., \textit{The Early English Carols} (Oxford, 1935), 22

\textsuperscript{164} For a complete inventory of the contents of Ritson see: Lane, Eleanor, Sandon, Nick and Bayliss, C., \textit{The Ritson Manuscript: Liturgical Compositions, Votive Antiphons, Te deum} (Newton Abbot, 2011), xvi
format; nearly all are written for three voices with the exception of one; written for five. Table 16 below illustrates the voice texture in all of the music of Ritson.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RITSON</th>
<th>One Voice</th>
<th>Two Voices</th>
<th>Three Voices</th>
<th>Four Voices</th>
<th>5 voices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vernacular Song (20)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>5 (25%)</td>
<td>14 (70%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carols (44)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>44 (98%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (34)</td>
<td>3 (9%)</td>
<td>8 (24%)</td>
<td>20 (58%)</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (98)</td>
<td>4 (4%)</td>
<td>13 (13%)</td>
<td>78 (79%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16: Voice texture in the Ritson manuscript

The other music from layer one consists of: a monophonic vernacular song, two three-voice Nesciens Mater, two three-voice Marian antiphons, and a three-voice textless fragment. So essentially the voice number is consistent with the carols within this first layer, and with the exception of the vernacular song ‘I have been a foster’, the material surrounding the carols is concerned with the Christmas season.

So again we see the carol, not isolated from other musical genres, but surrounded by them. The fifteenth-century scribes/compilers of these manuscripts clearly saw them as worthy enough to sit alongside liturgical music as well as other vernacular song, therefore as researchers, we should do the same.

**Possible Reasons for the Isolation of the Carol in Current and Past Research**

Why then, when we see that the carol is very much integrated with other musical genres of the fifteenth century, is it still not treated in conjunction with other genres by academics and performers (it is rare to hear carols performed, other than the obvious Christmas ones, and usually only by English performers)? One reason may be that the carol is very much an ‘English’ genre, one that has had little if no influence on continental music of the same
period, and is instead seen more as a progression of older continental styles such as the carole, or placed in the same category as the earlier *formes fixes*.

The lack of carols composed by ‘famous’ composers has not helped in raising the interest of musicologists. With the exception of one carol that is labelled ‘J.D.’, which musicologists have long clung to the hope that it may be by John Dunstaple, there are no famous composers connected with the extant carol repertoire until we reach GB-Lbl Additional 5465, otherwise known as the Fayrfax manuscript, where we find a number by familiar names such as Cornish, Davy, Browne, Banister, Turges, Sheryngham and William Cornish Junior.\(^{165}\) This makes the earlier carols less desirable as a genre for serious research, and places them in the cabinet of musical curiosity rather than at the forefront of research. The named composers we do have are, in the main, considered provincial due to their location outside of the Royal court and the continent, and the lack of any of their work appearing in manuscripts other than Ritson.\(^{166}\) As musicologists researching in an area that is littered with large swathes of missing material, we must desist from concentrating on the ‘famous’ composers, and re-evaluate these smaller provincial musical survivors and their contribution to the fifteenth-century repertoire.

The abundant use of English in the carols may not only have caused their lack of influence abroad, particularly as the amount of English texted music abroad is so minimal, but also may be another reason that the genre has been so neglected in current research and been another catalyst in the separation of the genre from the rest of the fifteenth-century song repertoire. Certainly, English vernacular song is not prolific in extant continental sources. David Fallows in his catalogue of fifteenth-century song only lists a total of five purely English texts. He does however note that:

> English texts of a kind appear in Continental manuscripts for one song in Tr88, one in EscB, and three in Mel. But the ‘English’ repertory can be considerably expanded by

\(^{165}\) The ‘J.D.’ carol and questions of authorship are discussed in Chapter 3: ‘The Named Composer: an obstacle to understanding the late medieval carol?’

\(^{166}\) The Ritson manuscript contains the greatest number of named composers, the two most prolific being Richard Smert and John Trouluffe.
taking account of songs ascribed to English composers as well as those in a style related to works established as English.

The misconception that carol texts are only centred upon the nativity does not help the cause of the genre either. The variety of text subjects in the carols are a valuable insight into non-liturgical/sacred aspects of medieval thinking and medieval life. Their text setting can open a far greater window into medieval life than yet another Mass setting by a famous composer. Focusing on these large and famous works is only presenting a narrow elitist view of music from this period, neglecting the larger picture and the music surrounding these grand works. The carols’ ‘popular’ nature perhaps also makes them less interesting to scholars as a serious musical genre, but it is precisely this popularity that should be drawing academics to study them further. They were obviously of particular importance in the fifteenth century in a variety of classifications; in substantial notated volumes such as Egerton, sharing manuscript space with liturgical music, to smaller pocket manuscript books owned by preachers or minstrels and cover subjects from the nativity to sexual encounters. This ability to span class divides should make the carol of great value to researchers of this period.

Conclusion

The carol is so often treated in isolation to other genres, yet it is found placed in manuscripts alongside many other genres that receive far greater serious musicological study and are performed more widely. This suggests that it was not treated as a separate genre in the fifteenth century. We only have to look at the carols interspersed among other music in the main notated manuscripts in order to see this. Apart from the isolated Trinity Roll, all the other manuscripts contain other musical material alongside the carol. Granted, Egerton does have a ‘carol section’ but within that section is also found a motet and an English song, and a section of music for holy week. Also, its ability to incorporate other genres, such as hymn texts and lines from the liturgy also proves it is not by any means an isolated genre.

In terms of musical value, it has been demonstrated, not only within this chapter, but also in Chapter 1, that the carol is not a simple, stagnant musical form. It has grown and developed

in musical style throughout the fifteenth century and beyond; growing in its use of voices like the motet, and developing its form. It, like the motet, uses a variety of language combinations (although the carol only uses one language at any one time in all voices) and it is, also like the motet, able to adapt to a variety of text settings: sacred, secular, liturgical.

Its lack of influence abroad should not be seen as detrimental to the form, but rather a testament to its peculiarly English nature. Links to the continent do not make a genre any more valuable a commodity. Placing the carol in a wider context throughout this thesis; in terms of its placement alongside other genres in manuscripts and in performance, and in terms of its place in society will help us to understand this important form in a more three-dimensional fashion. The possibility of a lack of famous composers linked to the fifteenth-century carols would certainly seem one possibility for the sidelining of the genre, and is one that needs addressing further within the following chapter.
Chapter 3
The Named Composer: an obstacle to understanding the late medieval carol?

In the pursuit of understanding and connecting with music of the past our natural starting point remains, more often than not, with the composer. Although often a valid research method, this approach can cloud rather than clarify our understanding. This need to connect with a composer, a method originating in the nineteenth century, is one that is still evident to a certain extent in current thought. A greater value is often placed on those pieces which can claim a named composer or author, thus resulting in the side-lining of a great deal of anonymous music in musicological research. This has resulted in research interests often bypassing anonymous works in favour of those by prominent or even just named composers, creating a false picture of music and its place in history. In the case of early music, very little evidence survives of named authors or composers, and the evidence that does is often sparse or unreliable, which places the music of the middle ages very differently to that of the nineteenth century musical cannon. This chapter aims to discuss the legitimacy of focusing on the composer as the only, or indeed the primary aspect of researching music of the Middle Ages and in particular, the late medieval carols.

The Author’s Voice

Music invites human connection; a need to understand. This connection with the sound is more often than not mediated through our knowledge of the composer and a need to hear and understand the possible biographical narratives he or she may be trying to convey to us through his/her compositions. Echoing this sentiment, Roland Barthes writes:
The *explanation* of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it, as it were always in the end, through the more or less transparent allegory of the fiction, the voice of a single person, the *author* ‘confiding’ in us.\(^{168}\)

This perception of the author’s voice was particularly perpetuated in the nineteenth century, and resulted in the creation of an almost divine status surrounding the composers of the European classical tradition. The composer as an artist creating a ‘work’ was born. No longer was music merely a practical device, but had emerged as art in its own right. Willem Erauw discusses this phenomenon in relation to the work in this field by Lydia Goehr. He notes that:

> a classical concert had become a ritual event, production/performance was now clouded in an atmosphere of nebulous secrecy. It was no longer obvious that mortal human beings, composers and performers alike, were still capable of evoking this sacred realm instrumental music now belonged to.\(^{169}\)

In creating these ‘celebrity’ or ‘divinely touched’ composers, we have unintentionally produced a closed canon of classical music that excludes a great wealth of musical material. Sophie Fuller writes:

> A complex and varied art form, classical music is in origin a Western genre, that has grown out of the music used for Christian worship and European folk traditions. Over the centuries it has travelled throughout the world, borrowing freely from other musics and cultures, although it remains dominated by a central Germanic canon from Bach through Beethoven to Brahms and Wagner.\(^{170}\)

This nineteenth-century conception still remains to a certain extent in the thoughts and attitudes of today’s listeners and researchers, despite the success of the contemporary and early music movements of the last 30 years. It is however, an outdated concept, which creates too narrow a focus to allow a truly three-dimensional understanding of music. The composer is only one element of the wider picture available to us, not the ultimate one.

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Even when our knowledge of the composer is plentiful, and manuscript sources are readily available, we can still never be entirely sure that the manuscript that remains even accurately represents the composer’s intentions; particularly in early music, where extant sources and authorial information is so much scarcer. When working with nineteenth-century sources, and prominent composers such as Chopin, Randel notes just such problems:

For a piano piece by Chopin, you may well have the composer’s autograph ...; copies made for sending to publishers; publisher’s proofs. In fact there may be three first editions from three different publishers ... And the three published editions are not quite the same ... which of the three versions is right? The last because it represents the composer’s most considered intentions? The first because it is closest to his original conception?  

There are many pitfalls in trying to understand the music from the point of view of the composer only, but much to be gained in combining knowledge of the creator of the work with other methodologies. Caution however, must be used when trying to build a narrative around a work from any starting point, particularly that of a connection with a distant creator. It is too easy, in attempting to engage with the music, to create false images of the past; and again, even greater caution is needed when dealing with early music, where we have so much less evidence available to us. Leo Treitler also advises caution in this approach. In his work on early chant he notes that:

The vocabulary of these early histories is bathed in a feeling of nostalgia for a golden age undebased by corruption, but an age, we must remember, about whose music little or nothing was known. But that is just the point about a golden age. It has meaning only as a transcendent idea whose main attribute is the unspoilt quality that attracts nostalgia. To concretize it is already to spoil it. The penumbra of a golden age has always tended to surround ... and continues to do so.  

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172 Treitler, Leo, *With Voice and Pen: Coming to Know Medieval Song and How it was Made* (Kings Lynn, 2003), 213
One must therefore be cautious in approaching early music as such a golden, unspoilt and romanticised entity created by hazy, God-like figures, but instead ensure its examination, in so far as is possible, in the context of the factual evidence available to us.

As a student, I recall the visit of a local poet. A number of weeks before his arrival, the class were coached in the analysis of his poems; exploring and understanding them at a critical level. The poet himself on hearing the analysis so painstakingly constructed by teacher and class, explained that none of it had any point, what we were discovering was not at all what had been his intention to convey, that we were looking for a sub-narrative and explanation for his work that simply wasn’t there, but had been invented by us, the readers. This danger of over-analysis and the creation of false narratives is an ever present danger, as this example illustrates. However, one must consider that although the analysis had little point for him as a ‘creator’, it is still of use to the ‘receiver’. Analysis, it could be argued has some positive value in helping to engage modern audiences with music from the past, particularly early music, and Barthes would certainly argue that the listener of today is of greater importance than the author of yesterday when he writes that:

Classic criticism has never paid any attention to the reader, for it, the writer is the only person in literature ... we know that to give writing its future, it is necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author.\textsuperscript{173}

I would argue however that our understanding and connection with the music of the past, need not necessarily be at the expense of the ‘death of the author’ where an author is available to us, but can be enhanced in our understanding of the authorial presence in conjunction with a greater appreciation of the music in a wider, more three-dimensional context. This is never more the case than in our treatment of the medieval period, where very few extant sources detail authors or composers, and those composers that are named very often have little known about their lives in order to help us to relate to them intimately in their music in any way. Don Michael Randel points out one of the problems in implementing this change of approach, encouraging listeners, performers and researchers

\textsuperscript{173} Barthes, Roland, ‘The Death of the Author’ in, \textit{Image, Music Text} (London, 1977), 142-3
alike to broaden their field of repertoire beyond that of named canonical composers. He writes:

   Even when there is no hope of identifying a single composer, as in some medieval repertories, for example, we seem to prefer to study music for which we can imagine more clearly the possibility of an individual creator.\(^{174}\)

It is important that we remember that music, and in particular early music, cannot be understood as a stand-alone art form, or as a fantasised communication from an authorial voice. It is only when it is placed into a social and historical context that a more detailed picture can be constructed. It is particularly important to understand early music in such a way, not only because, as Randel points out, so often we cannot identify a composer, but also that more often than not, when researching medieval music, we must remember that it was not created to be treated as a work of art, but was instead created for a practical purpose. It was a useful part of ceremonies, court functions; or most often, church services. We only have to look at the medieval carols to see this in practice. John Stevens summarizes the place of music in the middle ages and in particular that of the carols, writing:

   ‘Ceremonial’ is a word which may be applied to all the polyphonic carols. Like so much other mediaeval music the carol was an ornament in a ceremony. The most powerful appeal, however, of any ceremony, whether processional in character or not, was certainly visual – in church, silken copes, lighted tapers, jewelled crucifixes would fix attention. Next would come the dramatic quality of the scene – a ceremony is always an action, and a procession is not a meaningless walk. The music we may be sure was subordinate to the ‘sight’ and to the ‘plot’, but it is not to be looked down upon on that account. On the contrary we must put resolutely aside our own ideas of the self-sufficiency of art. To the mediaeval way of thinking even music had a function, and its function on these occasions was to adorn the ceremony.\(^{175}\)


\(^{175}\) Stevens, John, ed. Mediaeval Carols(London, 1970), xiv
Medieval music then, needs to be treated as a functional device. We must remember it was not created as an art work, and very often has little or, in many cases, no authorial information connected with it; therefore, connecting with it on alternative levels is imperative. The fifteenth-century carol echoes this same sentiment of practical music; music with a purpose. The carol’s purpose is arguably, music to be moved to. As John Stevens notes:

A narrow but at the same time a highly significant way of describing them is as ‘processional’ music – the earliest carols, especially, were written as ‘popular litanies’ for use in ecclesiastical procession, but any procession, civic or courtly, provided a suitable setting. In church and out of it the carol was associated with physical movement; when it was not danced to, it was ‘processed to’.  

Practical music such as the carol therefore, cannot then be treated, or indeed fully understood, as art for art’s sake. Even if we could connect with this music in this nineteenth-century manner, the assignation of authorship in music of the middle ages is too vague. Even those attributions to specific composers cannot be presumed accurate. We need to find new ways of appreciating with the music on the page, using new methodologies such as semiotics, gender study and approaching music in an ethnomusicological way; all methodologies that are utilised within this thesis. Too often these methodologies are reserved for contemporary study, but implemented correctly, could open a whole new way of understanding early music. An ethnomusicological approach in particular could help to place the music in a wider context. Too often ‘Musicologists and music theorists see ethnomusicology as the study of the music they don’t study; ethnomusicologists see it as the study of all music, in terms of its social and cultural context, embracing production, reception, and signification.’ Reinhard Strohm also echoes this call for new methods of constructing a more comprehensive study of early music when he writes:

In order to make it our own, we may have to reconstruct its history in its full depth, for example by exploiting the meta-poetry of all those extant documents and

176 Stevens, John, ed. Mediaeval Carols (London, 1970), xiv
messages that illustrate or transmit music in its cultural contexts. None of them has ‘Middle Ages’ or ‘Renaissance’ written on it.\(^{178}\)

**Authorship in the Carols**

The carol repertoire of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries is an ideal example of the ambiguity found in attributing authorship in the Middle Ages and the need for academic study to introduce modern methodologies in order to better understand the repertoire. There are approximately 130 extant carols with music; although a large number in terms of extant material from this period, only twenty five have attributed authors, the majority of which survive from the early sixteenth century rather than the fifteenth century. Of these twenty five carols, only a total of fifteen separate names are attributed. Table 17 shows these works with their attributed authors/composers and details of the manuscripts in which they are found.

Carol | Manuscript | Date | Composer/ Author
--- | --- | --- | ---
I Pray You All | Selden | c. 1450 | J.D.
Ecce Quod Natura | Selden | c.1450 | James Ryman
Y-Blessed be that Lord | Selden | c. 1450 | Childe
Nowell, nowell: Dieu vous garde | Ritson | c.1500 | Smert
Man, be joyful | Ritson | c.1500 | Smert
Ave, decus seculi | Ritson | c.1500 | Smert &Trouluffe
Soli Deo sit | Ritson | c.1500 | Smert
Have Mercy of me | Ritson | c.1500 | Smert &Trouluffe
O clavis David | Ritson | c.1500 | Smert &Trouluffe
Jesu, fili Dei | Ritson | c.1500 | Smert
Nascitur ex virgine | Ritson | c.1500 | Smert
Jesus autem hodie | Ritson | c.1500 | Smert &Trouluffe
Blessed mote thou be | Ritson | c.1500 | Smert
I love, I love, and whom love ye | Fayrfax | c.1500 | Phillips
Jesu, mercy, how may this be | Fayrfax | c.1500 | Browne
Woefully Arrayed | Fayrfax | c.1500 | William Cornish, Junior
Ah, gentle Jesu | Fayrfax | c.1500 | Sheryngham
Woefully arrayed | Fayrfax | c.1500 | Browne
My fearful dream | Fayrfax | c.1500 | Banastir
Ah, mine heart, remember thee well | Fayrfax | c.1500 | Davy
Margaret Meek | Fayrfax | c.1500 | Browne
Joan is sick and ill at ease | Fayrfax | c.1500 | Davy
Hoyday, hoyda, jolly rutterkin | Fayrfax | c.1500 | William Cornish, Junior
From stormy windes | Fayrfax | c.1500 | Turges
Enforce yourself as Goddes knight | Fayrfax | c.1500 | Turges
Alone I live alone | Henry VIII | c.1520 | Cooper
Green groweth the holly | Henry VIII | c.1520 | Henry VIII
You and I and Amyas | Henry VIII | c.1520 | Cornish
Whiles life or breath | Henry VIII | c.1520 | Cornish
I have been a foster | Henry VIII | c.1520 | Cooper
Though some saith | Henry VIII | c.1520 | Henry VIII

Table 17: Named Authors of Carols

James Ryman, a fifteenth-century poet and musician, is heralded as the most prolific of carol writers. His carols, most of which are found in GB-Cu- Ee.1.12, are an ideal example of the

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179 It is most likely that the ‘William Cornysh Junior’ of the Fayrfax manuscript is the same ‘William Cornysh’ of the Henry VIII manuscript, despite the lack of ‘Junior’ used in the latter manuscript.
uncertainty of authorship in this period. This doubt concerning his authorship still exists despite an inscription found half way through the document that reads:

Explicit liber ympnorum et canticorum, quem composuit frater Iacobus Ryman ordinis Minorum ad laudem omnipotentis dei et sanctissime matris eius Marie omniumque sanctorum anno domini millesimo ccc.molxxxijo\textsuperscript{180}

[Here ends the ... book of songs, which were composed by James Ryman, the brother of the Order of Friars Minor, to the praise of Almighty God and of his most holy mother Mary and of all the saints, in the year of our Lord 1492]\textsuperscript{181}

The inscription does not act as definitive confirmation of what is often presumed; that Ryman did in fact compose the lyrics, or indeed the music to accompany these carols.\textsuperscript{182} The Latin word ‘composuit’ could just as easily mean ‘compile’ as it could ‘compose’. David Jeffrey notes that:

There has been some question as to whether Ryman was the composer or merely the collector of the verse in MS. Cambridge library Ee.1.12, and it is perhaps difficult to decide this matter definitively, even by an appeal to the stylistic similarity of any of the pieces in the later portion of the book with those of the former.\textsuperscript{183}

The likelihood that Ryman was indeed the author of the lyrics is certainly high, but by no means certain, particularly as this inscription occurs part way through the manuscript, and not at the end, therefore omitting to apply to thirty nine other pieces. Whether these compositions still apply to the Ryman inscription is open to debate. However, Jeffrey does write that:

\textsuperscript{181} Translation by Louise McInnes
\textsuperscript{182} There is some musical notation within this manuscript, but most of it is faded.
Zupita believed that the new hand which commenced at song number 112 [within the manuscript] and continued to the end was that of the poet himself, since it was the same hand that made corrections throughout the manuscript.\textsuperscript{184}

This scribal similarity could therefore link Ryman to the remainder of the manuscript. Interestingly, however, in other writings about James Ryman and his relationship to the carols, a much clearer picture is painted. Mary Berry writes that:

Towards the end of the 15th century Friar James Ryman of Canterbury composed no fewer than 119 carols and some 40 other poems, in a homely, simple style. He often used some well-worn Latin snippet, such as ‘O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Maria’, as a burden (Greene, 1935). Ryman also made English homespun translations of Latin hymns which were probably sung to their plainchant tunes. Either he or his scribe was familiar with the musical technique of faburden.\textsuperscript{185}

Within this quote we find James Ryman confirmed, without any reference to doubt, as the composer of 119 carols. Greene also affirms this view in his description of GB-Lbl- Ee.1.12 when he writes:

Ryman is thus responsible for a quarter of all the extant English carols of a date earlier than 1550. He tried his hand at almost every device of style used in other carols and appears to have invented a few of his own. He used Latin freely, particularly in his burdens, and several times composed a series of carols in the same strain and using the same burden, either in an identical form or with slight variations ...

Greene is to be regarded as a conscientious, rather uninspired Franciscan, engaged in turning religious and profitable matter into vernacular songs in order to appeal to the people. His use of the carol-form is doubtless the result of observation of popularity of the carol at the time he was writing, and there is every reason to

\textsuperscript{184} Jeffrey, David L., ‘James Ryman and the Fifteenth-Century Carol’, in Fifteenth-Century Studies: Recent Essays, ed. R.F. Yeager (Hamden, CT, 1984), 304

believe that he meant his work to be more than a pious literary exercise – that he designed his poems to be sung by his preaching brothers and their audiences.\(^{186}\)

This quote is interesting, not only for its strong opinion on the author of the GB-Cul- Ee.1.12 carols, but also of Greene’s humanizing of Ryman. He paints a picture of an ‘uninspired Franciscan’, composing carols for his fellow friars and their congregations in a conscientious manner; and drawing on his knowledge of the popularity of the carol at this time. This underlying attempt to make Ryman a three-dimensional, and somewhat dull, figure and to give a narrative to his work is a good example of our need to create and understand the music through the author, no matter how sparse our evidential material may be. John Hirsh too attempts to understand Ryman the man through his lyrics, claiming that Greene’s cataloguing of Ryman’s carols in his ‘Early English Carols’ obscures the ‘ways in which their themes intersect and re-imagine one another’.\(^{187}\) Hirsh claims that the carol lyrics, when examined in small groups can help us to ‘gain an insight into his orthodox and theologically considered beliefs [and] devout attitudes that are as well received in song as anywhere’.\(^{188}\) This is true to a certain extent, as certainly Ryman’s carols comment upon many aspects of Christian doctrine as well as secular subjects.\(^{189}\) However, uncertainty still remains over whether Ryman is indeed the author of these carols; and even if we could confirm that Ryman was the author of all 119 currently attributed to him, some uncertainty would still remain as to exactly how much of the material was indeed Ryman’s own. Borrowing of music and lyrics in the Middle Ages was commonplace and Ryman may well have worked in collaboration with others. Too much uncertainty exists around the shadowy artistic figures of the medieval period to take small fragments of evidence and attempt to build them into fully focused images of the men, or indeed women, behind the music and lyrics of the fifteenth century.

\(^{186}\) Greene, R.L, ed. The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1935), clv
\(^{187}\) Hirsh, John C., ‘Christian Poetics and Orthodox Practice: Meaning and Implication in six carols by James Ryman, O.F.M’ in Changanti, S. And Sztlya, P.R., eds., Medieval Poetics and Special Practice (Fordham, 2012), 56
\(^{188}\) Hirsh, John C., ‘Christian Poetics and Orthodox Practice: Meaning and Implication in six carols by James Ryman, O.F.M’ in Changanti, S. And Sztlya, P.R., eds., Medieval Poetics and Special Practice (Fordham, 2012), 56
\(^{189}\) Ryman’s carols are discussed from a gender perspective in Chapter 5: ‘Women in the Medieval Carols’.
Who is the composer? Musical Borrowing Within the Carols

Borrowing within music and lyrics in the Middle Ages was commonplace, and not the issue it is in today’s creative arts. Musicians and lyricists borrowed freely from one another to create their own compositions. A good example of this is seen in the suggested borrowing between the composers Browne and Turges; found within the carol, ‘From Stormy Windes’. Hugh Benham, in his article *A Carol and a Cantus Firmus*, argues that a large amount of material from Browne’s *Stabat juxta Christi crucem*, was borrowed from Turges’ carol and subsequently used as a cantus firmus. Benham writes:

John Browne's six-part votive antiphon *Stabat juxta Christi crucem* (from the Eton Choirbook, GB-WRec MS 178, opening d.1) uses as its cantus firmus the same melody as the lowest voice of Turges' carol.

Example 1 clearly shows the striking similarity between melodies, but it does raise a number of questions.

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Example 1: The antiphon ‘Sabat Juxta Christi crucem’, and the carol ‘From stormy windes’\textsuperscript{192}

If it is indeed the case that these two melodies are from the same source, there then arises the question of which source? Turges may well have borrowed the melody himself from another source, tangling the web yet further; or indeed both men could have borrowed the same melody from two separate sources. Benham also discusses this possibility, writing:

But did the melody used by Turges and Browne have an earlier, independent, existence? There is no positive evidence to support this. One possibility, however, is that it began life as a popular or folk melody that gained favour at court, even perhaps having originally had different words from those used by Turges or Browne. Another possibility is that it was extracted from some earlier polyphonic composition

... If either of these possibilities is the case, no direct link need have existed between the carol and the antiphon.\textsuperscript{193}

What Benham succeeds in encapsulating in this quote, is not only the problems faced in attributing authorship within this instance, but also within the wider carol repertoire; and in music of the Middle Ages as a whole. The lines are so blurred, and the possibilities so endless, that it is almost impossible to pinpoint authorship with any accuracy.

**Authorship in the Ritson Manuscript**

A problem of attribution of authorship within the carols is also evident when examining the Ritson Manuscript. As can be seen in table 17, the names ‘Smert’ and ‘Trouluffe’ are attributed to a number of carols within this manuscript. The name ‘Smert’ appears against six carols in isolation and four in conjunction with the name ‘Trouluffe’. The extant biographical information on both these figures is sparse. It is believed that both Smert and Trouluffe were connected with Exeter Cathedral. Nicholas Orme, in his study of musicians from this Cathedral explains that:

Smert has a special claim on our attention. He is the earliest Exeter musician to have left identifiable compositions, which are preserved in the chief surviving collection of medieval west-country music: the so-called Ritson Manuscript in the British Library. These range from a Latin hymn to the Virgin, ‘Ave decus seculi’, to settings of carols in English, as well as other items partly or possibly from his hand.\textsuperscript{194}

Although there is evidence to suggest Smert’s career path, there is no information on his personal life, or personality; nothing to allow any understanding of him as a man. The same could be said of Trouluffe. The extant documentation containing his name is much sparser even than Smert. Orme notes that Trouluffe:

is the second earliest musician of the west country whose compositions survive, again in the Ritson Manuscript, but the details of his life are more than usually


shadowy. As he appears on the scene much later than Pyttes and Smert, he was evidently their junior albeit still a contemporary. Lacy provided him in 1448 with a canonry and prebend in the collegiate church of Probus, Cornwall, and at a subsequent but unknown date he acquired a second Cornish canonry and prebend at Crantock. Neither appointment obliged him to become a priest, and he is not styled as such in any of the documents in which he figures. He probably remained a clerk in minor orders throughout his life. He died in the winter of 1473-4, and he was still in possession of both his benefices at the time of his death.\textsuperscript{195}

Trying to base any significant research of these ten carols on any understanding of Smert and Trouluffe as we often strive to do when researching the music of the composers of later repertory we have created would be fool hardy. The information available to us is far too scant and, for that matter, unreliable. A name next to a composition tells us very little. In the case of the joint compositions; how can we know exactly how much was the work of each man? It could be that one was responsible for lyric, the other for melody. Examining the carols by Smert and Trouluffe in this way, would be doing a disservice to the music available to us, and would only succeed in creating a less than full picture of the past.

\textbf{The Henry VIII Manuscript and the Fayrfax Manuscript}

The Henry VIII and Fayrfax manuscripts, both dating from the early sixteenth century, are chronologically the latest of the musically notated manuscripts. These manuscripts herald a change in the musical style of the carols, as well as a modification of the carol structure in the Henry VIII manuscript.\textsuperscript{196} The carol is seen in these manuscripts to be evolving from the strict burden/verse/burden structure of the fifteenth century; and in terms of authorship, these manuscripts include the names of composers far more frequently than the manuscripts containing carols from the previous century, which is perhaps why they are more widely known and studied than the earlier manuscripts. GB-Lbl-Additional 31922 is commonly known as ‘The Henry VIII manuscript’; although there is no evidence to suggest

\textsuperscript{196} For more discussion of this change of musical style see Chapter 2: ‘The Carol: an isolated genre?’
that Henry ever owned the manuscript at all; the inclusion of Henry’s own compositions and the connection of the manuscript to the royal court having led it to be given this title. Labelling the manuscript in this way undoubtedly gives it more importance in popular consciousness than had it remained simply GB-Lbl-Additional 31922 but could be creating a false image of it provenance. John Stevens justifies his own use of the title in his musical edition of the manuscript, writing:

The songbook has been entitled for convenience Henry VIII’s book. This handy label will not, it is hoped, be used to perpetuate the legend that the songbook belonged to the king himself. It is intended chiefly to acknowledge the fact that it contains many of the king’s own compositions.197

Although Steven’s explanation within the introduction of his edition is clear, I would argue that entitling it as blatantly as ‘King Henry VIII’s Manuscript’ could do nothing but perpetuate such a legend.198 Labelling the manuscript in such a way is essentially continuing the idea of the great composer or musical genius, giving music added value. Although it has value in helping to place the book within a particular environment in the readers’ imagination, this practice still needs approaching with caution.

Of all the named carol composers within the manuscript, William Cornish Junior is the most well-known. Cornish’s name is attributed to two carols: ‘You and I and Amyas’, and ‘While life or breath’.199 He was a leading figure in the entertainments of the royal court, and the name ‘Cornysh’ or ‘Cornish’ is found against a large number of works that are thought to be by him; and also against another number that could possibly be attributed to him. These works range from the carols to large-scale sacred pieces. As David Greer and Fiona Kisby note:

A number of impressive sacred works are ascribed in other sources to a composer named Cornysh. In addition, there are works now lost that are attributed to someone of this name: an antiphon Altissimi potentia ... a Magnificat, a Stabat mater and a five-part antiphon Ad te purissima virgo (formerly in the Eton

197 Stevens, John, ed., *Music at the Court of Henry VIII*(1962), xvii
198 Stevens uses this exact title in: Stevens, John, ed., *Music at the Court of Henry VIII*(1962), xi
199 Both these carols are discussed in relation to their female content in Chapter 5: ‘Women in the Late Medieval Carols’.
Choirbook, GB-WRec 178) and some masses listed in a 1529 inventory of King’s College, Cambridge. The name ‘Cornysh’ was entered in small writing at the end of several works, including three masses, in the Lambeth Choirbook (GB-Llp 1), but the significance of this is not known.

Both Cornysh’s carols only survive with music for the burden which is written for three voices. Stevens suggests the lack of notated verses suggesting they were ‘presumably sung to a known tune’. Both pieces, reflecting in style the other carols of the manuscript, make limited use of melismatic material, except for the ends of phrases and a use a typically compact pitch range with little use of leaps within parts. Example 2 shows the surviving burden of ‘You and I and Amyas’ and demonstrates its limited use of melisma and pitch range.

Example 2: ‘You and I and Amyas’.

The fact that such prolific composers of the time, such as Cornysh, are composing carols alongside larger works shows the importance of the carol at this time. It was not only a simple form of music for the amusement of clerics, but could also be seen perhaps as a

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200 Stevens, John. ed., Music at the Court of Henry VIII (1962), 33
201 Stevens, John. ed., Music at the Court of Henry VIII (1962), 104. The idea of carols being set to popular melodies is addressed in detail in Chapter 4: ‘That we with merth mowe savely synge’: The fifteenth-century carol, a music of the people?.
202 Stevens, John. ed., Music at the Court of Henry VIII (1962), 33
more serious compositional genre, or one that was at least popular and respected enough to be utilised at court and composed by the king himself who can be attributed to at least two: *Green groweth the holly* and *Though some saith*.\(^{203}\) One could suggest that composers like Cornysh adopted a more deliberately popular idiom specifically for certain musical effects, such as representing ‘common people’ in a play, but the use of the carol to convey the words of aristocratic voices such as that of Catherine of Aragon in ‘Whilles lyue or breth is in my brest’\(^{204}\) of the ‘Lady’ in ‘You and I and Amyas’ would dispute this. Indeed, the existence of carols in manuscripts such as these may even suggest that many other carols within the anonymous fifteenth-century manuscripts were being created for use in grander performance settings than previously thought.

**THE ‘J.D.’ CAROL**

There are no carols directly attributed to the prolific fifteenth-century composer John Dunstaple.\(^{205}\) However, there is one carol that exists with words and musical notation in the manuscript GB-Ob-Selden b.26 with the initials ‘J.D.’ placed beside the text; this manuscript folio can be seen in Example 3.

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\(^{203}\) Pieces ascribed to King Henry VIII within this manuscript (20 songs and 13 instrumental pieces) are labelled (contemporary to the music itself) with the heading ‘The Kynge H viij’. Some are believed to be original compositions by the King, but others are arrangements of previously existing melodies.

\(^{204}\) Stevens, John. ed., *Music at the Court of Henry VIII*(1962), 40

Example 3: GB-Ob-Selden b26, folio 5, ‘I pray you alle’

The insertion of these initials has led to speculation that John Dunstaple could be the composer of ‘I Pray you alle’. The popularity of the carol form would suggest that it would be unlikely that a composer such as Dunstaple did not write some carols, although whether any of his survive within extant manuscripts is unproven. Margaret Bent writes that:
The great bulk of the English carol repertory is anonymous, but it is highly probable, on statistical and stylistic grounds, that Dunstaple wrote some. (Note, for example, the carol-like phrase structure of the Gloria settings, nos.4 and 7.)

There is one other work within this manuscript that is attributed to Dunstaple; the motet ‘Beata mater et innupta’, which is found on folio 6v, very close to the carol, which could perhaps indicate a collection of his music in one section of the manuscript. There is no certainty that Dunstaple was in fact the composer of this carol despite his use of a carol like structure in his Gloria settings; the carol form was so popular, Dunstaple would surely have been aware of it and be able to have made use of the carol structure in his other compositions without having had to write any himself. As musicologists however, our tendency is, naturally, to want to attach music to the composers we know of in order to better understand both the music and the man behind it.

This carol was evidently a popular one, as concordances are found with words and music in Egerton and with words in Ritson. All three share the same words, but the musical settings differ, which raises issues of authorship too. If Dunstaple wrote both the words and music, was the musical setting without his initials by another composer, or was he responsible for both settings? It would seem more likely that the second musical setting was by a later composer due to the later provenance of Ritson, and particularly as the music of the later manuscript is more evolved in terms of the carol form. It embraces the evolution of the carol genre by setting a double burden and making greater use of melisma at the ends of sections, as well as setting the second burden for three voices; the earlier setting being for two voices throughout.

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Example 4: ‘I pray you alle’ from the Egerton manuscript.\textsuperscript{207}

\textsuperscript{207} Stevens, John, ed., \textit{Mediaeval Carols} (London, 1970), 53
I pray you all with one thought, amen.

I pray you all with one thought, amen.

I pray you all with one thought, amen.

I pray you all with one thought, amen.

I pray you all with one thought, amen.
The text is entirely in the vernacular. This carol would be only one of five secular pieces attributed to Dunstaple, and the only vernacular piece in the entire repertoire; it would therefore be unique in his surviving output.

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Other Named Carol Composers

The same story is true of most other carol composers of this era. Of them all, the least is known of Childe, whose name is only found above one carol in the Selden manuscript, and no other pieces of music. There has been a suggestion that he ‘may have been the William Child who was assistant master at Eton from 1446 to 1449’, but there is nothing to confirm this as fact. Even John Browne, the producer of three carols in the Fayrfax manuscript, along with numerous other compositions within the Eton Choirbook, has little extant information remaining to tell us of his life. Perhaps the carol composer we know the most about is William Cornysh. A significant amount of factual information survives as to his career and his attendance at important historical events such as the coronation of Henry VIII. It is documented that he became Master of the Royal Children, and subsequently an important figure in the life of the court. Despite however, having this wealth of factual information, very little of it can tell us of him as a man; so to create sub-narratives within his music from this information would be difficult at the least.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it would seem that we must not confuse our treatment of early music with that of later musics. Medieval music must be treated as a separate entity to later repertory. With few exceptions, our knowledge and understanding of the composers of medieval music and in particular, the medieval carols, is not a sufficient foundation for research when exploring this music. Authorial questions are by no means irrelevant, but they only allow us to view one part of the story. The fact that of the approximately 130 extant carols with music, only 25 remain with any suggestion of authorship, should lead us away from scrutinizing the music from a composer-centred research perspective. Although a valuable

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aspect of musicological research, it must be seen as an additional facet, not a primary one. Relying on purely empirical research methods dealing only with purely factual evidence, would result in the production of dry results lacking insight. However, putting the carols and their composers into a wider social and historical context by combining more traditional methods of research with modern methodologies such as semiotics and gender study, and approaching them in an ethnomusicological manner, should create a much more complete and accurate image of the music and its place in society; while still avoiding the temptation of creating false narratives and romanticised images of the past. The remainder of this thesis will attempt to view the carol genre in this way.
Chapter 4

‘That we with merth mowe savely synge’: The fifteenth-century carol, a music of the people?

Carols provide an insight not only into the medieval celebration of the Christmas period, but into further aspects of medieval life both within and outside ecclesiastical practice. Described in recent scholarship as not being ‘music of the people’, there is however a great deal of evidence that could attest to the contrary. Through the exploration of carols and their manuscripts this chapter argues that this musical form was indeed music of the people or at the very least, music for the people. Evidence exists of its use within the popular Corpus Christi plays, Christmas festivities and important public pageants, not to mention the appearance of many carols in informal pocket-book style manuscripts suitable for personal rather than professional use; all of which will be further explored within this chapter.

Lost Melodies and the Oral Tradition

Musicologists should use the phrase, ‘music of the people’ with caution. This is a broad and all-encompassing phrase that can easily be manipulated and misconstrued. The phrase is generally synonymous with describing the music of the illiterate classes; albeit a rather sweeping generalisation. Greene has described the carol as a form that was ‘popular by destination; rather than origin’, noting that ‘it is applied to material the text of which is derived from written or printed sources, but which is designed to appeal to an audience including people of scant formal education and social refinement’.

I would take this a step further, and argue that there was an oral tradition of carol singing by people of ‘scant formal

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211 A definition of ‘the people’ will be explained later within this chapter.

212 Greene, R.L. The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1935), xciii
education and social refinement’ that co-existed with the more refined art music form of the remaining manuscript carol evidence available to us today. The fact the over 500 carol texts survive, yet only approximately 130 with music, and that the majority of the musically notated sources contain mainly sacred carols, suggests a hugely popular form, that must also have had an equally large amount of lost or orally transmitted material that was never committed to writing.

We must remember when researching pre-classical music, that a vast amount of music is no longer extant, and often the job of the musicologist is to try to piece together the surviving fragments in order to give an idea of what the lost whole may have looked like:

Some scholars estimate that between 80 and 90 percent of medieval manuscripts are no longer extant... Studying earlier repertories is like trying to do a jigsaw with half of the pieces missing. Hence scholars and performers alike must take an informed yet creative approach: we must imagine what the past was like because we can never know it exactly.213

The reason why so much of this music does not survive is argued by Elizabeth Aubrey, who writes in her article discussing the ‘High Style’ and ‘Low Style’ in medieval song that:

All of the evidence we have is written down – texts that were deemed worthy of preservation by educated individuals. We have every reason to believe that numerous songs were never written, songs that existed in an idiom for which writing was considered unnecessary. This surely includes dances, simple refrains, working songs, lullabies, and other musical expressions that spiced the daily lives not just of peasants, but of members of every stratum in society. Such songs can be considered ‘popular’ in that they were ‘of the people’, but all of the people, not only those in the lower classes.214

In relation to the carols, it is tempting to see such a number of extant pieces and assume a fuller picture than is actually projected. We must also remember that these Late Medieval

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214 Aubrey, Elizabeth, ‘Reconsidering “High Style” and “Low Style” in Medieval Song, Journal of Music Theory, 52/1 (Spring, 2008), 118
carols are collected from manuscripts that span a time period of approximately 150 years. If this large body of carol material survives, then we must ask ourselves how much more has been lost? This simple question puts a new perspective on the research; the missing repertoire becomes an important figuration in our understanding of the genre. Certainly there is less surviving secular musical material, and indeed secular carols, than there is sacred music, but it must be remembered that much of this sacred material survives only because it was notated by learned monks or clerics. Rose notes that:

Much secular music from before the fifteenth century is lost. One reason for this is that outside the Church, musicians did not necessarily have the education to notate their repertory, and they did not share the Church’s enthusiasm for writing as a way to ensure liturgical uniformity. Virtually no instrumental music survives in written form from the Middle Ages, with the exception of a few dance tunes in manuscripts, but there is plenty of evidence in illustrations, sculptures, letters and poems that instrumental music was an important source of entertainment during banquets and festivals, in taverns and on the streets.²¹⁵

There are however, possible clues in the carol repertory that may lead us to discover elements of these lost secular melodies. One of these clues could perhaps be found in the melodies of the monophonic carols.

Monophonic Carols

Some scholars have speculated that perhaps the extant monophonic carols, surviving in six manuscripts, may provide an insight into a lost popular carol tradition; a tradition that that survived elsewhere through oral transmission.²¹⁶ John Stevens writes:

In contrast to these ‘professional’ sources are the six manuscripts containing monophonic carols... it is likely that these carols are the written residue of a vast body of popular tunes now lost.  

These monophonic survivors, seen in Table 18, offer up a number of traits that could offer clues to their origins.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carol</th>
<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>Folio/Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lullay, Lullay: As I lay</td>
<td>GB-Lbl- Additional</td>
<td>f. 169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-5943</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lullay, my child</td>
<td>GB-Lbl- Additional</td>
<td>ff. 2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-5666</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have loved</td>
<td>GB-Lbl- Additional</td>
<td>f. 3v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-5666</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nowell, nowell: Tidings true</td>
<td>GB-Ob- Eng. Poet.e.1</td>
<td>f. 41v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-5666</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of all the enemies</td>
<td>GB-Ob- Eng. Poet.e.1</td>
<td>f. 50v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-5666</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salve, Sancta parens</td>
<td>GB-Gu, Hunterian 83</td>
<td>f. 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-5666</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova, nova</td>
<td>GB-Gu, Hunterian 83</td>
<td>f. 2v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-5666</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Though I sing: <em>le bon l. don</em></td>
<td>GB-Gcg, MS 383/603</td>
<td>p. 210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-5666</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of thy Mercy</td>
<td>GB-Cul Ee.1.12</td>
<td>f. 46v</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18: Extant Monophonic Carols

Four show a considerable plainchant quality in their melodies, which is not surprising considering the continuing importance of the plainchant tradition throughout the fifteenth century. As Peter Jeffery notes:

In medieval culture... one is dealing not only with the differences between the clergy and the laity, but with several social strata along a continuum from King to noble to peasant, which strata persisted in both the clerical and lay segments of society. In both clerical and lay music there was some sort of continuity perceived between what we would call the ‘folk songs’ and the ‘art’ music – but it was in Grocheio’s view it was at Gregorian chant that all these categories intersected.  

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218 Compiled from: Stevens, John, ed., Mediaeval Carols (London, 1970). This table is duplicated in Chapter 1, page 50. It is re-included here due to its importance.
219 Jeffery, Peter, Re-Envisioning Past Musical Cultures: Ethnomusicology in the study of Gregorian Chant (Chicago, 1995), 85. Grocheio, a French music theorist, was writing in the 14th century. He penned the treatise *Ars Musicae*. He divided music into three distinct categories: Musica simplex (popular music of the layperson), Composita (music of the educated) and Ecclesiastica (music of the Church). Distinguishing between music on a
One of the most interesting carols that display this plainchant movement is ‘Salve, sancta parens’ which is found in the manuscript GB-Gu-Hunterian 83;\(^{220}\) a manuscript from the latter part of the fifteenth century which contains a mixture of material such as lists of fifteenth-century monarchs, Brut chronicles, and a translation of Higden’s *Polychronicon* as translated by John of Trevisa.\(^ {221}\) The text of this carol reads:

Salve, sancta parens.

All hail, Mary, and well thou be,

Maiden and mother withouten offence

For thy sovereign virginity.

Salve, sancta parens.

O courteous Queen most commendable

O prince peerless in patience,

O virgin victorious unvariable,

Salve, sancta parens

O consolatrix of contribulate,

O sovereign well of sapience,

O maiden and mother immaculate,
Salve, sancta parens.

O precious pearl imperpeternal,

O saviour of sadness set in sentence,

O empress both of heaven and hell,

Salve, sancta parens.

O well of grace celestial,

Bring us, Lady, to your presence,

Keep us well that we not fall,

Salve, sancta parens.222

This carol is unique in its combination of both plainchant and mensural notation. The burden is notated in plainchant style (black void, unmeasured notation), in contrast to the black, full measured notation of the verse, and is clearly seen in Example 1. ‘Salve sancta parens’ is notated on the second half of the folio and is laid out textually, in an expected format; a format that is seen throughout most of the carol manuscripts.223

222 Stevens, John, ed., Mediaeval Carols (London, 1970), 111
223 In many manuscripts, carols are found with either the first line of the verse placed to the right of the main text, or the burden. In dense textual manuscripts such as GB- Lbl Sloane 2593 it makes the carols easily distinguishable from the other poetic forms.
Example 1: GB-Gu Hunterian 83, Folio 12r. Showing the carol ‘Salve sancta parens’ notated on the bottom half of the manuscript. 

The use of these contrasting notational styles could point to an indication of performance, perhaps suggesting solo voice for the plainchant and chorus for the verse, or could merely

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Available online at http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/teach/manuscripts/history.html

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be to emphasise the integration of liturgical practise as the chant ‘Salve, sancta parens’ is
set in the Sarum use for the vigil of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.225

Above the carol on folio 12r is the song ‘Nowe well and now woo’, which Robbins describes
as a ‘popular tail-rimed poem’.226 Interestingly the textual layout of the song in the
manuscript is very similar to the layout of the carol form as found often in other carol
manuscripts of the fifteenth century, suggesting it was perhaps treated as a parallel song
style.227

The carol ‘Nova, nova’, one of the most interesting of the monophonic carols from a popular
song perspective, is found much earlier in the manuscript, but is written in the same hand as
the other two musical offerings. ‘Nova, nova’ (which translates as ‘News, news: AVE came
from EVA’, a popular theme in the middle ages which celebrates how Mary had atoned for
Eve’s sins) however, conveys a very different melodic style; a ‘folk’ or ‘dance’ style melody.
It employs triple mensuration as opposed to the duple mensuration of ‘Salve, sancta
parens’, and a consistent dotted rhythm throughout the melodic line. It also makes no use
of plainchant style or notation. Interestingly, the text of this carol can be found in two other
manuscripts: GB-Obac 354 and GB-Ob-Eng. Poet.e.1 (described by Robbins as GB-Obac
29734). Robbins writes that this version of the text ‘agrees very closely with the Balliol... The
slips in the Hunterian text point to its having been written from memory or from oral
transmission.’228 The Hunterian manuscript dates from 1483 at the earliest, with GB-Ob-Eng.
Poet.e.1 dating from 1460-1468, so transmission of this song has occurred within a similar
time frame in each manuscript. Manuscript GB-Obac 354 however (also known as ‘Richard
Hill’s book’), dates from the first third of the sixteenth century, so slightly later than the
other two manuscripts, yet demonstrates the continued popularity of this carol. Example 3
shows a transcription of ‘Nova, nova’, in which we can see its effective rhythmic and
melodic composition, and its artful use of the initial burden material in diminution at the
end of the verse. ‘Nova, nova’ may well demonstrate echoes of a popular song tradition, in

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225 Similar perhaps to a thirteenth-century motet that uses liturgical chant as tenor under a vernacular lyric.
226 Robbins, R.H. ‘Two New Carols’, Modern Language Notes, 58/1 (Jan., 1943), 39
227 In GB-LbI Sloane 2593 the carols are easily distinguishable from the other lyric forms as the burden is
written out on the first line, followed by the first line of the stanza with a paragraph mark to the left. The lines
of the stanza are joined together on the right by a square bracket, with the final line of the stanza placed in the
middle to the right, outside of the bracket.
228 Robbins, R.H. ‘Two New Carols’, Modern Language Notes, 58/1 (Jan., 1943), 40
that it may be an artful recomposition of a popular original rather than represent a direct copy. It certainly seems the most likely monophonic surviving carol to show such a strong traditional song element.

Example 3: ‘Nova, nova’

The fact that both these monophonic carols, ‘Salve, sancta parens’ and ‘Nova, nova’, in their different styles, have been inserted into this eclectic manuscript that contains no other music, illustrates the lack of separation and segregation between musical style and content that is often found in manuscripts of the Middle Ages. Our need as researchers to place music into neat categories of style and social class is neither appropriate, nor possible when approaching pre-classical music, and certainly in the case of this diverse manuscript; it is impossible to say with confidence the reason for their inclusion.

Of course, monophonic carols do not exist only in manuscripts with other monophonic carols, indeed we find the lilting lullaby carol, ‘Lullay, lullay: As I lay’ interspersed among seventeen polyphonic songs in a monastic manuscript from the early fifteenth century, GB-Lbl Additional 5943, and both ‘Lullay, my child’ and ‘I have loved’ are found in the early fifteenth-century manuscript GB-Lbl Additional 5666 which contains in total: three English carols (two of which are our monophonic examples), one Latin polyphonic carol (the lullaby carol ‘Lullay: I saw’) alongside an English secular piece, ‘I saw a swete sely’, a selection of notes and drawings, a Latin grammatical treatise and the accounts of a John White. The monophonic carols are not collected together, as we often find in the case of the polyphonic carols; in large gatherings as in manuscripts such as Egerton with its 32 carols together in one section, or the Ritson Manuscript, with its 44 Latin and English carols, or indeed the earliest source of the polyphonic carol genre, the Trinity Roll with its selection of thirteen polyphonic carols (including the famous ‘Agincourt carol’). These manuscripts were

gathering together a ‘high class’ carol genre, for an educated class of people. However, the monophonic carols, found randomly scattered amongst other music, prose, accounts etc. suggest random, popular carol melodies perhaps heard and transmitted orally, and notated arbitrarily, by those with the ability to do so. Indeed, ‘Nowell, nowell: Tidings true’, a seven stanza monophonic carol telling the story of the immaculate conception, is found within the mainly non-notated manuscript GB-Ob Eng. Poet.e.1, and followed a few folios later by the two line burden of the carol ‘Of all the enemies’. ‘Nowell, nowell: Tidings true’ can be seen in Example 4.

Example 4: GB-Obl Eng. Poet.e.1, f. 41v which depicts the carol ‘Nowell, nowell: Tidings true’.\textsuperscript{230}

\textsuperscript{230} Image taken with permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford.
John Stevens does suggest caution in placing too much expectation upon these monophonic manuscripts however, suggesting that:

The popular character of these miscellanies should certainly not be exaggerated; of the six manuscripts at least two were in monastic hands, and all of them contained learned matter in Latin. Nevertheless it is likely that these carols are the written residue of a vast body of popular tunes now lost.\(^{231}\)

Indeed, two manuscripts were in monastic hands, but we must also note that four were not. One must also remember that monks were not born monks; they too were once the laity, and experienced secular song and popular singing traditions. The appearance of a popular melody in a monastic book is therefore not hard to imagine. We only have to look further back into the fourteenth century to see the Franciscans setting sacred texts to popular secular melodies, not unlike the carol form as we have come to know it, in the ‘Red Book of Ossory’. Richard de Ledrede, a Franciscan Bishop of Kilkenny in Ireland, wrote a total of sixty Latin texts in this manuscript. A Latin inscription in the manuscript reads:

> 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.\(^ {232}\)

Many monastic orders were mendicant, including the Franciscans, and encouraged community involvement, and travelling to the people in order to preach.\(^ {233}\) Peter Jeffery writes that:

> There are references to music in medieval sermons, at least from the time of the mendicant orders (the thirteenth century and later), whose wandering friars incorporated popular singing and dancing into their preaching. In England some of

\(^{231}\) Stevens, John, ed., Mediaeval Carols (London, 1970), xiv


\(^{233}\) One must be aware that there was in fact a distinction between mendicant friars and possessioner monks and canons. Possessioners were owners of property; mendicants were not.
these songs seemed to have been related to the repertory of Christmas carols, which often mixed passages in Latin and the vernacular...  

Even a number of monastic possessioner houses provided sermons to lay audiences within their walls, and as James Clark notes, the divide between monk and laity had all but disappeared by the fifteenth century. He writes:

The barrier between the cloister and society had become almost entirely permeable. Not only were there plenty of laity residing in houses and coming and going; but equally, the monks were often out, sometimes taking their leisure, but also for quite legitimate administrative purposes, running the monastic economy.

The perception of the monk hidden behind cloistered walls, sheltered from the outside community and therefore untouched by popular songs and traditions was, it would seem, fading considerably by this period.

None of the monophonic carols, in fact, show any particularly demanding traits in terms of vocal range or rhythmic complexity. In comparison to the vast majority of the polyphonic carols, which regularly exceed an octave, the monophonic carols are particularly conservative. This makes them easy to sing (or play), which could suggest they were written by, or indeed for, musicians unfamiliar with notation, who would perhaps have favoured a simpler style of melody in order to aid the memorization and oral transmission of the songs.

Table 19 below shows the ranges of all ten.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>Carol</th>
<th>No. In MB</th>
<th>Vocal Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gb-Lbl Add. 5943</td>
<td>Lullay, lullay: As I lay</td>
<td>1A</td>
<td>c – bb (7th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Lbl Add. 5666</td>
<td>Lullay, my child</td>
<td>2A</td>
<td>d-b (6th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Lbl Add 5666</td>
<td>I have loved</td>
<td>3A</td>
<td>c-d' (9th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Obl Eng. Poet.e.1</td>
<td>Nowell, nowell: Tidings true</td>
<td>4A</td>
<td>d-d' (8ve)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

234 Jeffery, Peter, *Re-envisioning Past Musical Cultures: Ethnomusicology in the Study of Gregorian Chant* (Chicago, 1992), 74
235 Clark, James, G., *The Religious Orders in Pre-Reformation England* (Woodbridge, 2002), 186
The carol ‘Of thy mercy’ is one of two monophonic carols with the smallest voice range, encompassing only a fifth. It is found within the manuscript GB-Cul Ee.1.12, with a second monophonic carol, ‘Sing we now’, which also has a small voice range, that of a sixth. This manuscript contains a total of 121 carols, inclusive of the two monophonic carols listed here.\textsuperscript{237} The carols, English songs and hymns of this manuscript, which hail from the latter part of the fifteenth century, are thought to have been written, or at least recorded, by the Franciscan James Ryman. Apart from a small section of musical notation without words, it would seem that these two carols are the only musically notated pieces in the manuscript. The carol ‘Of thy mercy’ (a six stanza carol) and ‘Sing we now’\textsuperscript{238} (a four stanza carol) both only survive with musical notation for their burden, which may suggest that the verses were set to popular melodies with a lesser well known burden added, or even perhaps that the burden acted as an aide memoire to help the singer remember which verse tune went with it. Their simple, stepwise melodies survive without mensuration, which could again suggest that this was a popular melody which had merely needed its pitches to be notated in order to be sufficient enough to jog the memory of the reader/singer, particularly as the melodies of both these pieces are so similar, the singer may have needed reminding which piece was which. Example 5 illustrates the simple melody of ‘Sing we now’, and Example 6 shows ‘Of thy mercy’.

\textsuperscript{237} The Ryman carols are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3: ‘The Named Composer: an obstacle to understanding the late medieval carol?’

\textsuperscript{238} ‘Sing we now’ has a concordance in three other manuscripts: GB-Obc 354, GB-Ob Eng.poet.e.1 and GB-Ctc 0.3.58. However, only the GB-Cul Ee.1.12 manuscript contains musical notation for this carol.
Both carols are macaronic, with the second line of each burden in Latin, as well as the refrain line of each stanza, and the remainder of the text in English.

It is not only in the short musical jottings of GB-Cul Ee.1.12 that we see carols recorded with only their burdens notated. This is also particularly evident in the Henry VIII manuscript. It would seem that musically notating only the burden in this manuscript, possibly for use at the royal court could also have been due to the use of well-known melodies; the burden therefore only served as a reminder to the user. This practice then sees a monastic manuscript, GB-Cul Ee.1.12, and the Henry VIII courtly manuscript echo a similar recording technique for carols that perhaps indicates the prolific use of popular melodies in different strata of society, or even perhaps the use of similar melodic formulae.

The Agincourt Carol

Despite extant manuscript evidence of the medieval carol being composed in monasteries or colleges, there is also evidence of these polyphonic carols being performed to a wider class of audience than these exclusive environments; many extant carols may well have originated there, but they didn’t necessarily remain there. One of the earliest extant polyphonic carols ‘Deo Gracias Anglia’ is testament to that. This carol, found in two manuscript sources from the first half of the fifteenth century (and with only minor

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241 This manuscript and its notated burdens are discussed further in Chapter 3: The Named Composer: an obstacle to understanding the late medieval carol?. The burdens in this manuscript are polyphonic, not monophonic.
242 It could be that as with rather later Italian poetry set to music, that there were ‘standard’ melodies that suited a particular poetic form, often based on common chordal sequences.
discrepancies between the two manuscripts), is a political carol.\(^{243}\) It celebrates the victory of Henry V at the battle of Agincourt in 1415, recounting the events of the battle in some detail over five stanzas in three voice parts, with a rousing almost completely monophonic burden.\(^{244}\) A performance of this striking and unique piece of polyphonic song could well have taken place at the pageant in the city of London in celebration of Henry V’s return from France, and his historic victory at the battle of Agincourt, as has been argued by Helen Deeming.\(^{245}\) If this hypothesis is indeed accurate, those on the streets of the capital that day could not have failed to have been impressed with its patriotic text and the call to sing together ‘Deo Gracias Anglia redde pro victoria’ (England, give thanks to God for victory!). Helen Deeming argues that even if this particular carol was not in fact performed at this pageant:

Certain aspects of the accounts are actively consistent with the singing of carols…Two sources mention the singing of “Nowell”: while not actually used in Deo Gracias Anglia itself, the word is the mainstay of the carol literature in general.\(^{246}\)

The almost entirely monophonic burden of this carol is an intriguing addition. The choice of monophony for this could be for a number of reasons. The end of the final stanza declares ‘That we with merth mowe savely sing’, which could indicate a call to an audience to participate in the singing of the burden, which would have been simpler for an untrained audience to do if a simple monophonic line. Past theories claimed the ‘Agincourt carol’ was sung on the battle field by the victorious English army, but as Deeming notes, ‘The sophistication of both poetry and musical setting are too great to have been the spontaneous invention of the rejoicing troops.’\(^{247}\) However, the simple monophonic burden could perhaps have been a remnant of a song or cry from the victorious army, which has then been embellished and set polyphonically; this burden in its original layout in the fifteenth-century manuscript GB-Ob Selden b.26 can be seen in Example 7, and a modern

\(^{243}\) GB-Ctc 0.3.58, no.7 and GB-Ob Arch. Selden b. 26 , folio 17v

\(^{244}\) Henry V was a popular choice for political carol texts. The majority of political carols in the first half of the fifteenth century deal with this subject. For more discussion of these carols see Chapter 6: ‘The Medieval Carol: a vehicle for political commentary and English nationalism’.

\(^{245}\) Deeming, Helen, ‘The sources and origin of the “Agincourt Carol”’, *Early Music* 35 (2007), 23-38

\(^{246}\) Deeming, Helen, ‘The sources and origin of the “Agincourt Carol”’, *Early Music* 35 (2007), 30

\(^{247}\) Deeming, Helen, ‘The sources and origin of the “Agincourt Carol”’, *Early Music* 35 (2007), 26
transcription of the burden in Example 8. Deeming puts forward the very tangible possibility of their having been ‘an earlier, monophonic version ...performed at the London pageant and subsequently incorporated into a three voice setting’ 248 Although she dismisses the possibility of any battlefield connection, a link of some kind is by no means entirely impossible; musicians were very much a part of Henry V’s entourage.

Example 7: The ‘Agincourt Carol’ in GB-Ob Selden b.26, ff. 17v-18r249

248 Deeming, Helen, ‘The sources and origin of the “Agincourt Carol”’, Early Music 35 (2007), 30
249 This image is available at: http://www.luminarium.org/medlit/medlyric/agincourt.php
Example 8: ‘Deo Gracias’ otherwise known as the ‘Agincourt Carol’[^250]

Drama and the Carol

The drama and narrative found in the Agincourt carol, is something that is often seen in fifteenth-century carols. Many carols are almost plays in themselves with a number of speaking characters and an engaging storyline. If we return to the text of ‘Nova, nova’ we can see an excellent example of this; this carol seems to be a miniature liturgical drama all of its own. It has three characters: Mary, Narrator and Angel, all of whom speak. It reads:

Nova, Nova: AVE fit ex EVA
Gabriel of high degree,
He came down from Trinity,
From Nazareth to Galilee:
Nova, nova

Nova, Nova: AVE fit ex EVA
I met a maiden in a place;
I kneeled down afore her face
And said: Hail, Mary, full of grace;
Nova, nova

Nova, Nova: AVE fit ex EVA
Then said the angel; dread not thou,
For ye be conceived with great virtue
Whose name shall be called Jesu;
Nova, nova

Nova, Nova: AVE fit ex EVA
Then said the maiden: Verily,
I am your servant right truly;
Ecce, ancilla Domini;\textsuperscript{251} 
Nova, nova\textsuperscript{252}

This form of narrative is seen in many carols of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, with the result that many carols could be argued to have had their roots in drama, and been intended for plays and maskings; particularly in the Corpus Christi play cycles which were performed in ‘prosperous urban centres, such as Coventry and York, from the late fourteenth century onwards’.\textsuperscript{253} Margaret Smaill argues that:

A few carols and variants have long been associated with plays... but the extent of the connection has been underestimated. This oversight resulted from a combination of factors: playbooks with incomplete or ambiguous music directions; the ubiquity of many of the subjects treated in both plays and carols, which hinders efforts to establish robust connections; and the fact that musicians, especially those hired from cathedrals and churches, may well have supplied their own music.\textsuperscript{254}

If Smaill is correct, and the carols were a part of this dramatic event (and I see no reason why such a popular lyrical and musical style would not have been), then the music would have been shared by the performers with hundreds of people in one day; people of all class distinctions. Certainly, we know that two songs in the Coventry cycles were carols: ‘Lully, lulla’, and ‘As I out rode.’ These three part carols were added in 1591 to a manuscript that dates from almost 60 years previously. What is most interesting in this sharing of music, is Smaill’s hypothesis that musicians may well have inserted their own music into the Corpus Christi proceedings, for example, their polyphonic sacred songs and carols which are extant in some of the manuscripts and available to us today, thus enabling a sharing of musical ideas between different classes of musicians. JoAnna Dukta notes that:

\textsuperscript{251} This translates as ‘Behold, the handmaid of the Lord’. Translation from: Stevens, John, ed., \textit{Mediaeval Carols} (London, 1970), 141
\textsuperscript{252} Stevens, John, ed., \textit{Mediaeval Carols} (London, 1970), 111
\textsuperscript{253} Smaill, Adele Margaret, \textit{Medieval Carols: Origins, Forms, and Performance Contexts} (Michigan, 2003), 325
\textsuperscript{254} Smaill, Adele Margaret, \textit{Medieval Carols: Origins, Forms, and Performance Contexts} (Michigan, 2003), 325
The external evidence of account books and other documents recording the expenses incurred by the play producing craft guilds demonstrates clearly... that far more music was used in the plays than the texts actually indicate. This body of information reveals payments for songs, musicians, and instruments not mentioned in the texts. In Chester, four choirboys are hired for songs not given in the manuscripts... the ‘whistles’ provided for them suggest that simple tunes played by the children would have been still more music in the pageant... boy choristers, conducts, and minstrels are hired... The Precentor of the Cathedral is paid for songs... and the Cathedral organist performs on the regals at least once.²⁵⁵

This use of varying classes of musicians, from the minstrel to the Cathedral organist, to the young boys playing whistles, must surely demonstrate the coming together of not only different musicians, but also a sharing of their musical styles. If indeed, carols were being used for such dramatic function in the fifteenth century as in the sixteenth century, and there is no reason to suppose otherwise, their melodies and themes would have been played and shared amongst all classes of musician and listener. A good example of a high status manuscript, with carols that would seem well designed for dramatic performance, is the Henry VIII manuscript.²⁵⁶ The purpose of the manuscript is unclear, but there can be no doubt that some of its contents were perfect for dramatic performance. Carols such as ‘Hey trolly lolly lo!’ and ‘Hey nonny nonny’ both have a narrative between two speakers throughout that could lend itself to dramatic performance. ‘Hey trolly lolly lo’ is a particularly long narrative between a young milk maid who is trying to reject the advances of her suitor. The burden is a perfect illustration of how the various sections of narrative from male to female are well defined, and could perhaps have given an opportunity to change the performance in some way when each gender is speaking.

²⁵⁵ Dutka, ‘Music and the English Mystery Plays’, Comparative Drama, 7/2 (1973, Summer), 138
²⁵⁶ King Henry VIII’s manuscript is discussed in more detail within Chapter 3: ‘The Named Composer: an obstacle to understanding the late medieval carol?’
Example 9: The burden of ‘Hey trolly lolly lo’

Interestingly, this carol is in triple time, in contrast to the rest of the carols in this manuscript which are in duple time, which harks back to the earlier carol tradition of the fifteenth-century manuscripts. Unlike a number of the carols in this manuscript this carol has full musical notation for both the burden and verses, which perhaps suggests the melody as less well known than that of ‘Hey nonny nonny’, which only has musical notation for the burden. ‘Hey nonny nonny!’ has a short and simple burden that could be derived from popular song (hence the scribe’s decision not to include the remainder of the music). The presence of popular song within such a manuscript could illustrate that the use of such song was used in various classes of society not necessarily just by lower-class musicians, and

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257 Stevens, John, ed., Songs and Carols from the Court of Henry VIII (London, 1962), 95
the mixing of musicians that we have seen previously would suggest that the higher and lower-class musician were far from being exclusive entities, but were possibly mixing together in a variety of circumstances. Certainly, even if the musicians were not playing together, their styles of music were with the higher class of musician at the court of Henry VIII deliberately capturing ‘popular’ elements to represent certain characters in their dramatizations. The burden of this nine-stanza carol is illustrated in Example 10.

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Example 10: Burden of ‘Hey nonny nonny’

Stevens notes that the song by Henry VIII ‘Alack alack what shall I do’ may be linked with ‘Hey nonny nonny’ in a dramatic sense, as ‘In the MS index... it is [Alack alack what shall I do] numbered 27. This number appears on f.36 over... Hey nony nony.’ As Stevens points out, there seems to be no musical connection between the two, but they were both perhaps connected in use within a masque or some other dramatic performance. The text of this song, thought to be by Henry VIII, reads:

Alack, alack, what shall I do?
For care is cast into my heart,
And true love locked thereto.

Certainly, the narrative of ‘Hey nonny nonny’ which describes a love affair and the pain felt by the woman who fears she has lost her love to another, would seem to sit well with the text of Henry’s ‘Alack, alack’. If these two pieces are indeed dramatically linked, it clearly shows the carol enjoying a place in performance beside other musical genres.

The Henry VIII manuscript is also a good example of the inclusion of those carols that do not necessarily fit into the ‘sacred’ category, carols that would have seemed out of place in monastic environments; convivial carols, carols of women and erotic carols. As John Caldwell writes:

258 Stevens, John, ed., Songs and Carols from the Court of Henry VIII (London, 1962), 27
the musical settings of satirical, amorous, or erotic songs in this form have mostly disappeared. These will have been the province of a lower class of musician, for production at a later stage of an evening’s entertainment; and the few surviving specimens with music are perhaps examples of the higher clerical wit rather than of a genuinely popular art."  

What would have been the purpose of a carol such as ‘Of all creatures women be best’,  
obviously written in order to poke fun at women, and most probably in their company due to the hidden meaning within the text, if it was not shared in convivial company alongside women themselves?; or ‘I pray youe, maydys that here be’ which indicates an address directly to women in the present company and advises them to treasure their virginity?  

These carols may not have been used behind enclosed cloistered walls, unless in some cases as a way to preach moral values,  
but as Caldwell argues, may well have been the carol type favoured by the ‘lower class of musician’, and may have simply had a monophonic melodic line.  

These types of carols are often found grouped together in non-musically notated pocket-book style manuscripts, and rarely found in the larger monastic notated manuscripts. Some of them also come with notes that instruct the reader to sing them to a particular melody. The melody is never notated, but must have been a popular enough tune to have been readily known. As Stevens noted:

Two carols in a manuscript at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, for example, are labelled with the names of tunes – ‘Bryd on brere’ and ‘Le bon l.don’; another carol, Hey now now now… is headed ‘A song to the tune of and I were a mayd’

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262 Greene, R. *The Early English Carols* (Oxford, 1935), 265-266. This carol is given greater consideration in Chapter 5: ‘Women in the Late Medieval Carols’.
263 Greene, R. *The Early English Carols* (Oxford, 1935), 265. This carol is given greater consideration in Chapter 5: ‘Women in the Late Medieval Carols’.
264 The argument for seemingly ‘unsuitable’ carols in monastic manuscripts being used to preach a moral message is addressed in Chapter 5: ‘Women in the Late Medieval Carols’.
265 Secular musically notated political carols however are often found alongside sacred musically notated carols in monastic/ecclesiastical manuscripts. GB-Lbl Egerton 3307 is a good example of this. See McPeek, G.S, ed., *The British Museum Manuscript Egerton 3307* (London, 1963)
This evidence surely could argue strongly that many carols were set to popular melodies, and not necessarily all created in polyphonic form by trained musicians.

**Conclusion**

Much of the evidence for the existence of an orally transmitted, popular monophonic carol repertoire is sketchy, but not negligible. I would argue that the number of carol texts that survive, such as ‘Nova, nova’ or secular carols in the vernacular without musical notation, and their appearance in non-musically notated pocket-book style manuscripts rather than large monastic or royal manuscripts, point to a lost body of monophonic carol melodies that were found in all strata of society. Carols were not exclusively for the educated and monastic classes in society, but shared by all social classes in their various polyphonic and monophonic forms in a much freer way than has previously been thought, just as musicians too were not exclusive to one class, but existing within an wider social framework that, as we will examine in later chapters, involved both men and women; educated and uneducated.

The simple but effective carol form of burden and verse would have made it a form easy to remember and transmit orally. Music and musicians, as demonstrated within this chapter, were not exclusive to one area of society, but existed within an art form that bled throughout the social strata. Arguably, then, on examination of the evidence within this chapter, it would seem there exists even in those carols that were written down and notated, glimpses of more widespread ‘popular’ traditions of devotional and secular music making.
Chapter 5

Women in the Late Medieval Carols

Medieval carols, whilst predominantly occupied with the sacred, also open a window into the portrayal of medieval women in society. Issues of gender in the late medieval carols have not been discussed in any great detail, and their value as a social document, particularly in this area, would seem to have been undervalued. The late medieval carols address an abundance of human life, which R.L. Greene categorised under a number of headings: Carols of Advent, Carols of the Nativity Season, Carols of the Nativity, Carols of St John the Evangelist, Carols of the New Year, Carols of the Epiphany, Carols of Holly and Ivy, Lullaby Carols, Carols of the Passion, Carols to the Virgin, Carols of the Annunciation, Carols of Christ’s Pleading, Carols of Christ’s Love, Carols to Christ, Carols of the Trinity, Carols of Saints, Carols of the Eucharist and ‘Corpus Christi’, Carols of Religious Counsel, Carols of Moral Counsel, Carols of Doomsday, Carols of Mortality, Satirical Carols, Carols of Women, Carols of Marriage, Convivial Carols, Political Carols and Amorous Carols. Greene’s categorisations, whilst undeniably useful, may also be misleading, particularly when addressing issues of gender and the representation of women. Greene places twelve carols under the heading of ‘Carols of Women’. However, on closer inspection, this categorisation is clearly far more complex than this as within 35 manuscripts there are actually more than 60 carols that discuss women, are in a female voice, have some female narrative or deal with female saints. I would argue that all of these are in some way ‘carols of women’. Tables 20-24 illustrate: carols with a woman’s voice, carols of female saints/saint carols addressed to women, carols with some female narrative and carols addressed to women.

266 Greene, RL. The Early English Carols, 2nd Edition (Oxford, 1977)
267 ‘Carols to the Virgin’ and ‘Holly and Ivy’ carols are also not included in this list. ‘Holly and Ivy’ carols allude to the masculine and feminine in subtle allegorical terms.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burden</th>
<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>Folio</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>No. in Greene</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A, dere God, qwat I am fayn</td>
<td>GB-Cjc M5.5.54</td>
<td>f.2v</td>
<td>1450-1500</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alas, ales, the wyle!</td>
<td>GB-Gcg 383/603</td>
<td>Page 41</td>
<td>c.1450</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grudge on who liste, this ys my lott</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Additional 17492</td>
<td>f. 78v</td>
<td>1530</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hey, noynye!</td>
<td>US-SM EL 1160</td>
<td>f.11v</td>
<td>c.1500</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>456.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoow, gossip myne, gossip myn,</td>
<td>GB-Obac 354</td>
<td>f.206v</td>
<td>1st half 16th C.</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have forsworne it whil I life</td>
<td>GB-Cul Ff.5.48</td>
<td>f.114v</td>
<td>1450-1500</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrie, so kyrie</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Sloane 2593</td>
<td>f.34r</td>
<td>1400-1450</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English and Latin</td>
<td>457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rybbe ne rele ne spynne yc ne may</td>
<td>GB-Gcg 383/603</td>
<td>Page 41</td>
<td>c.1450</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So well ys me begone</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Sloane 1584</td>
<td>f.45v</td>
<td>15th century</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vp son and mery wether</td>
<td>GB-Cul MS Ff 1.6</td>
<td>f.139v</td>
<td>1450-1500</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiles lyue or breth is in my brest</td>
<td>GB-Lbl 31922</td>
<td>f.104v</td>
<td>c.1500-1525</td>
<td>Music for 3 Voices - Burden Only</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>448.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolde God that hyt were so</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Additional 5943</td>
<td>f.178 v</td>
<td>1415-1462</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were it Vndo that is ydo</td>
<td>GB-Gcg 383/603</td>
<td>Page 210</td>
<td>c.1450</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wep no mre for me, swet hart</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Harley 1317</td>
<td>f. 94v</td>
<td>1450-1550</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 20: Carols with a Woman's Voice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carol</th>
<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>Folio</th>
<th>MS Date</th>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>No. in Greene</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A, a, a, a (St Catherine)</td>
<td>GB-Cjc 5.54</td>
<td>f.3r</td>
<td>1400-1450</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alle maydenis, for Godes grace</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Sloane 2593</td>
<td>f.2v</td>
<td>1400-1450</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(St Nicholas-addressed to women)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mother of Mary, that merciful may</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Douce 302</td>
<td>f.31r</td>
<td>1400-1450</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(St Anne)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wenefrede, thou swete may</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Douce 302</td>
<td>f.26r</td>
<td>1400-1450</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(St Winifred)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 21: Carols of Female Saints/Saint Carols Addressed to Women**

147
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carol</th>
<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>Folio</th>
<th>MS Date</th>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>No. in Greene</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A, a, a, a</td>
<td>GB-Ob Eng Poet.e.1</td>
<td>f. 23v</td>
<td>2nd half 15th Century</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone, I lyue alone</td>
<td>GB-Lpro Excheq. 22.1</td>
<td>f.138v</td>
<td>Late 13th early 14th</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hey nonny nonny nonny no</td>
<td>GB-Lbl 31922</td>
<td>f.36r</td>
<td>c.1500-1520</td>
<td>Music for 3 Voices-Burden Only</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>463.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hey trolly lolly lo</td>
<td>GB-Lbl 31922</td>
<td>c.1500-1520</td>
<td>Music for 3 voices</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inducas, inducas</td>
<td>GB-Cul Additional 7350 Box 2</td>
<td>f.2r</td>
<td>Late 15th early 16th Century</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English/Latin</td>
<td>461.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I pray yow, cum kyss me</td>
<td>GB-CA Letters 2.173</td>
<td>No.173</td>
<td>1500+</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podynges at nyght and podynges at none</td>
<td>GB-Cul Additional 7350 Box 2</td>
<td>f.2r</td>
<td>Late 15th early 16th Century</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>460.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Lullay, Lullay, Lyke a Chylde</td>
<td>US- SM Here</td>
<td>f.1v</td>
<td>c.1520</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yow and I and Amyas</td>
<td>GB-Lbl 31922</td>
<td>ff.45v, 46r</td>
<td>c.1500-1520</td>
<td>Music for 3 Voices-Burden Only</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>463</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 22: Carols with some Female Narrative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carol</th>
<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>Folio</th>
<th>MS Date</th>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>No. in Greene</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'Alas' sayd the gudman, 'this ys an hevy lyff!'</td>
<td>GB-Obac 354</td>
<td>f.249r</td>
<td>1st half 16th C.</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone, I Lyue alone</td>
<td>GB-Lpro Excheq. 22.1</td>
<td>c.1530</td>
<td></td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>450.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avyse youe, wemen, wom ye trust</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Douce 302</td>
<td>f.30v</td>
<td>1400-1450</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blow, northern wynd</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Harley 2258</td>
<td>f.72v</td>
<td></td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blow thi horne, hunter</td>
<td>GB-Lbl 31922</td>
<td>f. 39v</td>
<td>c.1500-1520</td>
<td>Music for 3 Voices-Burden Only</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>466.1 a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GB-Lbl Royal Appendix 58</td>
<td>c.1515-1540</td>
<td></td>
<td>Music for 1 voice</td>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care away, away, away</td>
<td>GB-Ob Eng Poet.e.1</td>
<td>f.23r</td>
<td>2nd half 15th Century</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care away, away, away</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Printed Book MK.8.k.8</td>
<td>Recto</td>
<td>c.1525</td>
<td>1 Voice Burden Only</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>470.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grene growth the holy</td>
<td>GB-Lbl 31922</td>
<td>f. 37v</td>
<td>c.1500-1520</td>
<td>Music for 3 Voices-Burden Only</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Century</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>MS Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herfor and therfor and therfor I came</td>
<td>GB-Ob Eng Poet.e.1</td>
<td>f.13r</td>
<td>2nd half 15th Century</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>402.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hey, howe!</td>
<td>GB-Ob Eng Poet.e.1</td>
<td>f.42v</td>
<td>2nd half 15th Century</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How, hey! It is non les</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Sloane 2593</td>
<td>f.24v</td>
<td>1400-1450</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am as light as any roe</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Harley 4294</td>
<td>f.81r</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In soro and caar he led hys lyfe</td>
<td>GB-Ob Eng Poet.e.1</td>
<td>f.29v</td>
<td>2nd half 15th Century</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In villa, in villa</td>
<td>GB-Obac 354</td>
<td>f.241r</td>
<td>1st half 16th C. 1450-1500</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>410 a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joan is Sick and Ill at Ease</td>
<td>BL Additional MS 5465</td>
<td>93v-96r</td>
<td>1505</td>
<td>Music in 3 parts</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>MB xxxvi 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joly felowe, joly</td>
<td>GB-Lbl K.1.e.1</td>
<td>f.1v</td>
<td>Music for Bass only</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man, bewar of thin wowyn</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Sloane 2593</td>
<td>f.9v</td>
<td>1400-1450</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Meek</td>
<td>BL Additional MS 5465</td>
<td>89v-93r</td>
<td>1505</td>
<td>Music in 3 parts</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>MB xxxvi 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My dere an dese that so fayr ys</td>
<td>GB-Olc Lat.100</td>
<td>f.2v</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>441.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My lady is a pretty on</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Harley 7578</td>
<td>f.85r</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova, noua, sawe yow euer such?</td>
<td>GB-Ob Eng Poet.e.1</td>
<td>f.42v</td>
<td>2nd half 15th Century</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of all creatures women be best</td>
<td>GB-Obac 354</td>
<td>f.250r</td>
<td>1st half 16th C. 1450-1500</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of all the things that God</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Additional 5943</td>
<td>Last Flyleaf recto</td>
<td>1415-1462</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pray we to Oure Lady dere</td>
<td>GB-Cjc S.54</td>
<td>f.7r</td>
<td>1450-1500</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wymmen be both goude and truwe</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Harley 7358</td>
<td>f.8r</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thei Y synge and murthys make</td>
<td>GB-Gcg 383/603</td>
<td>Page 210</td>
<td>c.1450</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This day day dawes</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Additional 5465</td>
<td>108v-109r</td>
<td>1505</td>
<td>Music for 3 voices</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the loue of a maydon fre</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Douce 302</td>
<td>f.30r</td>
<td>1400-1450</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War yt, war yt, war yt wele</td>
<td>GB-Cjc S.54</td>
<td>9v</td>
<td>1450-1480</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We ben chapmen light of fote</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Sloane 2593</td>
<td>f.26v</td>
<td>1400-1450</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whane thes thynges foloyng be done to owr intent</td>
<td>GB-Ob Eng Poet.e.1 GB-Obac 354 GB-Lbl Printed Book I B. 52242</td>
<td>f.43v f.250v ff. 005v-006r</td>
<td>1450-1500 1st half 16th C. 16th Century</td>
<td>No Music No Music No Music</td>
<td>English English English</td>
<td>402 a b c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who so lyst to loue</td>
<td>GB-Cul MS Ff.1.6</td>
<td>f.136v</td>
<td>16th Century</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where ye be my love?</td>
<td>GB-Lbl 31922</td>
<td>f. 111v-112 c.1500-1520</td>
<td>Music for 3 voices</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wome, women, love of women</td>
<td>GB-Obac 354 GB-Ob Eng Poet.e.1 Lambeth Palace Library. MS. Lambeth 306</td>
<td>f.354v f.56v-f7r f.135v</td>
<td>1st half 16th C. 1450-1500</td>
<td>No Music No Music No Music</td>
<td>English English English</td>
<td>401Aa B B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women be Good For Love</td>
<td>GB-Cjc S.54</td>
<td>f.13r</td>
<td>1450-1500</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Vi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 23: Carols about Women in some form/Love of a Woman

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incipit</th>
<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>Folio</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Greene</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be mery, all that be present</td>
<td>GB-Obac 354</td>
<td>f.165</td>
<td>1st half 16th C.</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comidentes convenite</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Egerton 3307</td>
<td>f. 70v-71</td>
<td>c.1450</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ham as I ham, and so will I be</td>
<td>US –Pulp Latin 35</td>
<td>f.[iii]r</td>
<td>15th-16th Century</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>468.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I pray youe, maydys that here be</td>
<td>GB-Ob Douce 302</td>
<td>f.30r</td>
<td>1400-1450</td>
<td>No Music</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 24: Carols in which women are directly addressed

Within this chapter, these ‘carols of women’ will be explored: discussing their place within some of the extant manuscripts, their portrayal of medieval woman, and their possible purpose in late medieval society and the possibility of female song writers.

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268 MB indicates the volume and number of the carol in the Musica Britannica series.
Female Authorship or Female Voice?

The term ‘women’s song’, can be misleading, as there is a definite distinction between female authorship and female texts and we must be clear as to which we mean. Assigning gender to a writer of anonymous medieval song is a difficult, if not impossible, task. In an age where few male writers are recorded, positively identifying female authorship is like finding the proverbial needle. The carols are no exception; a handful of names are assigned to some within the grander manuscripts such as the Henry VIII manuscript, Egerton or Ritson, but the percentage is minimal in comparison to the extant anonymous carols. Female authorship is not immediately visible in the carols; it would however seem unlikely that there were no female writers of carol lyrics or music, or indeed no women singing carols considering the popularity of the form. Women were involved in music in this period. As Lisa Colton notes:

While there is no doubt that women performed music during the medieval period, the details relating to how they participated in music-making as singers, instrumentalists, composers, lyricists, copyists, owners or patrons- have survived only sketchily. Biographical data for male musicians in England before c.1400 are equally scarce, but many surviving manuscripts contain clear evidence of a link with institutions in which only men lived and worked.

This is indeed true of the medieval carols. Many (but not all), of the extant manuscripts have links to male institutions, or are lacking in any provenance in which a link to female ownership could be demonstrated. Evidence of the material held within the libraries of female institutions is scarce, only provides us with a very small window into women’s music making, and reveals nothing tangible in relation to the carols. However, again, the popularity of the form within the male institutions would lead us to presume that they were also a form employed by women in their music making. Anne Bagnall Yardley writes:

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269 Pierre Bec introduces the terms ‘féminité génétique’ for songs composed by women and ‘féminité textuelle’ for those in a female voice in order to differentiate. See: Bec, Pierre, La lyrique français. au moyen age (Xlle-Xllle s.), (Paris, 1977)

Note that the only two specific skills required of a nun are reading and singing. Without the ability to sing she cannot carry out the “burdens of the choir”. Choir service is her principal work. Thus, the most important skills for a nun are the ability to read and sing; in order to maintain the flow of monastic worship new nuns must acquire these arts.271

This emphasis and importance of music in the English medieval nunnery may well have extended, as we find in the male institutions, beyond the standard chant and may well have included material such as the carol form. Interestingly, the amount of material that nuns seemed to be reading in this period included a great many theological texts in the vernacular. Anne Bagnall Yardley again writes that:

What these nuns do read increasingly, however, are devotional works in Middle English. Indeed, a study of vernacular sources indicates that the nuns participate in the move towards theological writing in the vernacular to a much greater extent than monks... These versions were clearly written to accommodate the nuns’ limited education.272

The huge number of carol texts in the vernacular would surely have appealed then to a female institution with a limited understanding of the Latin texts. The bawdier, cruder carols would not necessarily have been appropriate, but certainly the sacred carols, particularly those for the Christmas season or other feasts, would perhaps have been welcomed. The carol to St Nicholas, for example, is a good example of a carol addressed to women. It is found in GB-Lbl Sloane 2593, and addresses women directly. The burden reads ‘Alle maydenis, for Godes grace, Worchepe ye Seynt Nicolas’, and tells the story of St Nicholas coming to the aid of three young women.273 The direct address to women, particularly young women, in this carol could suggest a female presence at any ‘performance’ of it.274 The carol is written by the blind John Audelay, a ‘secular chaplain retired to a chantry

271 Bagnall Yardley, Anne, *Performing Piety: Musical Culture in Medieval English Nunneries* (New York, 2006), 75
272 Bagnall Yardley, Anne, *Performing Piety: Musical Culture in Medieval English Nunneries* (New York, 2006), 77
274 The presence of women may have enhanced the text, but would not necessarily have been an essential component.
priesthood at Haughmond Abbey in Shropshire’. As Susanna Fein notes, Audelay’s subject interest within this manuscript extends to:

the veneration of female saints and an interest in their vitae in the salutations; the convivial carols, some of which are directed to women and seem meant for singing in a hall.

Indeed, extant evidence of nuns engaging in revelry with friars, and being chastised for dancing and drinking with those outside of their sacred community exists, as it does of nuns engaging in secular music. Yardley quotes a medieval nunnery complaint:

Also the said dame Isabel on Monday last did pass the night with the Austin friars at Northampton and did dance and play the lute with them in the same place until midnight, and on the night following she passed the night with the friar preachers at Northampton, luting and dancing in like manner.

I see no reason to suggest that carols would not have been a part of this extra-curricular singing and dancing. The women in these establishments were not hidden behind the walls of their nunnery, but were engaging with the wider community: by providing hospitality and employment to the layman and ‘in several other ways, such as distributing alms, providing intercessory prayers, and burying people in their cemeteries and churches’, and it seems, were maintaining contact with male establishments. The sharing of carols therefore would have been a very real possibility, and the writing of carols by the educated nun, also a possibility. Evidence of women reading mensural notation is lacking, indeed the lack of manuscript evidence from female establishments as a whole is unfortunate, but we must remember that oral tradition was strong, and the writing down of texts and music largely irrelevant. Other evidence survives of monks and nuns partaking in musical activity together in images within manuscripts. One example of this can be seen in the English manuscript BL Royal 2 B VII known as the ‘Queen Mary Psalter’, on folio 177 which depicts a

...
monk and a nun playing musical instruments together; the nun playing a psaltery and the monk playing a mandora or gittern. The monk and nun are turned in to one another, suggesting that they are playing together.

Example 1: BL Royal 2 B VII, folio 177

The manuscript GB-Lbl Stowe 17 also shows a monk and a nun together, this time depicting the nun dancing. This manuscript (a book of hours) although not English, but from the Netherlands, portrays a very different image of the medieval monk and nun than that which we are used to seeing. This satirical image portrays the monk playing a pair of bellows and using a distaff as a bow. The use of the bellows and distaff is interesting, as both are domestic tools used by women; the distaff being a medieval spinning tool, and very much a symbol of domesticity. The use of these items then could be seen in two ways. Firstly, the monk could be being portrayed as lacking in masculinity in some way by his use of the

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There is some dispute over the naming of instruments of this kind, with confusion over the correct identification of mandora/gittern and citole. For more insight into this debate see: Wright, Lawrence, ‘The Medieval Gittern and Citole: A Case of Mistaken Identity’, The Galpin Society Journal, Vol. 30 (May, 1977), 8-42

This image is declared as public domain by the British Library. For more information on this manuscript see the British Library online catalogue of illuminated manuscripts.
domestic tools traditionally associated with women, or secondly, and I believe most likely, the tools are representing the female and symbolises the monk ‘playing the woman’, with excellent results it would seem from the reaction of the nun. The bellows could be seen as a representation of the female body, particularly the womb, with the distaff given male phallic symbolism. Although this is a satirical image, the concept would surely not have worked without the playing of music together by monks and nuns, and indeed inappropriate behaviour between monks and nuns, being well known in the medieval period.

Example 2: GB-Lbl Stowe 17, folio 38

Of course, carols that address women directly within the present company, need not only have been within the sacred community. We find another three carols from three separate manuscripts that also address women directly: ‘Comidentes convenite’, 283 ‘Be mery all that

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282 This image is declared as a public image by the British Library. For more information on this manuscript see the British Library online catalogue of illuminated manuscripts.
283 British Library, MS. Egerton, 3307, f. 70v-71r
be present’, 284 and ‘I ham as I ham, and so will I be’. 285 All four of these carols can be seen in Table 24.

‘I praye youe, maydys, that here be’, reinforces this address directly to the women within the company no less than nine times throughout the carol due to the repetition of its burden. This constant, direct address would simply not work as well in an all-male situation, unless perhaps in the context of a play where men took the part of women. 286 Indeed, there is no extant evidence that exists to suggest the performance of women in plays in England at this time; the likelihood being that the female roles were played by male actors. Rastall writes in the context of the mystery plays that:

Many late medieval plays on the Continent used female actors for the female roles, but this was never the case, as far as we know, in the English plays. The evidence is of course incomplete: no records survive for the East Anglican or Cornish plays, for instance, and it is therefore entirely possible that females played all female roles in those dramas. 287

The possibility of female involvement in plays and dramas of this period is tantalising, but unfortunately inconclusive. This carol is also written by John Audelay, and is found within the same manuscript as the carol of St Nicholas. There are more than just these two carols within this manuscript that speak of women, but ‘I praye youe, maydys, that here be’ is the only one with a direct address. There are in fact a total of five carols within this manuscript that are about women in some context.

Humour in the Female Centred Carol

Not all carols addressed to women are as respectful in tone as ‘I praye youe, maydys’. There is a certain sense of poking fun at women that exists within the carol genre, which is perfectly conveyed within the carol ‘Of all creatures women be best’. This carol celebrates

284 Balliol College, Oxford, MS. 354, f.165
285 University of Pennsylvania Library MS. Latin 35, f.[iii]
286 For a detailed discussion on the use of the carols in plays see Chapter 4: “That we with merth mowe savely synge’: The fifteenth-century carol, a music of the people?”
women within the verses, exclaiming that women ‘be true a tiertyl on tree’, ‘So jentyll, so curtles’ and ‘meke and mylde’ to name but a few compliments. However, the humour within this carol comes with the addition of the burden which reads, ‘Of all creatures women be best, Cuius contrarium verum est’. This burden translates as ‘Of all creatures women be best, the opposite is true’. As Greene writes, ‘One can imagine the possibilities of mirth raised by its performance before women who did not understand the Latin of the burden’. 288

Women would have been unlikely to have had an understanding of this Latin burden, and would perhaps rather cruelly have been mocked in its performance, due to their lack of education. Although one would assume that women such as nuns would be educated in the reading and understanding of Latin, it would seem that this was not necessarily the case. As Eileen Power notes:

It was not possible after the fourteenth century...to assume in them that acquaintance with Latin, the learned and ecclesiastical tongue, which was generally assumed in their brothers the monks. Their learning was similar to that of contemporary laymen of their class, rather than of contemporary monks...in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Bishops almost invariably send their instructions to the nuns in English. The majority of nuns during these two centuries would seem to have understood neither French nor Latin. 289

One must be careful not to assume that all nuns were unable to understand Latin, and be equally careful not to equate a lack of understanding of Latin with illiteracy. 290 Regardless of the level of understanding of Latin within female circles, without a female audience, this carol would not necessarily have had the same effect. Yes, men could tell sexist jokes without the presence of women, but the clever use of language in this carol would seem to make a female presence particularly necessary or at least favourable, to ensuring its humorous meaning had full effect. It is possible that this carol would also have worked in the setting of a play with men playing female characters, one would imagine much hilarity.

288 Greene, RL. The Early English Carols, (Oxford, 1935), 431
289 Power, Eileen, Medieval English Nunneries c. 1275-1535 (Cambridge, 1922)
290 For more discussion on this topic see: Oliva, Marilyn, The Convent and Community in Late Medieval England (Woodbridge, 1998), 64-70
ensuing, but the presence of real women would have enhanced the joke considerably. Palti describes the section of GB-Ob Eng poet.e.1 as an ‘anti-feminist sequence’\textsuperscript{291} which also includes ‘In villa, in villa’,\textsuperscript{292} which bemoans women voicing their opinions, and ‘Women, women, love of women’ which addresses different kinds of women, mainly focusing upon the negative traits, with the burden scathingly repeating that women ‘Maketh bare pursis with sum men.’\textsuperscript{293}

Humour is also found in the carols bemoaning the gossiping of women. This seemingly female trait is mentioned too in ‘Of all creatures, women be beste’. In stanza four it reads:

\begin{quote}
For, tell a woman all your counsayle,

And she can kepe it wonderly well;

She had lever go quyk to hell

Than to her neyghbowr she wold it tell.\textsuperscript{294}
\end{quote}

The Latin chorus of course contradicts this statement. There are other carols that focus on women as gossips. Stanza six of the carol ‘Women, women, love of women’ notes that ‘Sum may prate withowt hire’ for example, but the most interesting carol in this respect is ‘Hoow, gossip myne, gossip myn’,\textsuperscript{295} which is found in both GB-Obc MS. 354 and GB-Lbl Cotton TitusA.xxvi. Greene describes this as a ‘convivial’ carol rather than a carol of women, but there can be no doubt that this carol is a portrait of the male perception of late medieval women and the threat of them gathering, particularly in ‘secret’. As Christine Neufield notes:

\begin{quote}
In fact, in each version of the carol the secrecy of the gossips' gathering is paramount. The women arrive two by two in order to escape the notice of their husbands. Stanza eight of Version A.a lays out the transgression and risks inherent in the gathering: 'A strype or ii God myght send me y f my husband myght here seen
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{291} Palti, Kathleen, ‘\textit{Singe we now alle and sum}: Three Fifteenth-Century Collections of Communal Song’ (PhD from University College London, 2008), 80

\textsuperscript{292} Transcriptions of this carol can be found in: Greene, R.L., \textit{The Early English Carols} (Oxford, 1935), 410-411

\textsuperscript{293} Transcriptions of this carol can be found in: Greene, R.L., \textit{The Early English Carols} (Oxford, 1935), 267-268

\textsuperscript{294} For a full transcription of this carol see: Greene, R.L., \textit{The Early English Carols} (Oxford, 1935), 265-266

\textsuperscript{295} Transcriptions of this carol from both manuscripts can be found in: Greene, R.L., \textit{The Early English Carols} (Oxford, 1935), 280-284
me.’” She that is aferede, lett her flee,’ Quod Alis than; ‘1 dred no man, Good gossippis myn-a’.  

Although the carol, as Greene presents it, is a convivial carol, it also speaks of the darker side of life for women in this period, and highlights that gossiping is frowned upon. There is an underlying distaste of gossiping, and women meeting together in general, in the Middle Ages. As Goldberg writes:

Women’s supposedly insatiable desire for ‘gossip’ was frequently a matter of comment and even friction. The Goodwife advised her daughter not to go in to town from house to house ‘for to seke the mase’. Noah’s wife in the Chester miracle cycle made herself the object of ridicule by refusing to enter the ark since it meant leaving behind her gossips... Her disobedience was, of course, not merely in respect of her husband, but of divine authority.

So perhaps what reads as having humorous connotations in fact conveys a different, darker, connotation to the medieval reader. Certainly, this distaste of women meeting can be seen in stanza eight, which reads 'A strype or ii God myght send me y f my husband myght here seen me’ and in stanza fourteen, ‘For my husband is so fell He betith me lyke the devil of hell, And the more I crye, The lesse mercy’. The carol does continue its tale in favour of women, and presenting their gossiping as misunderstood.

The carol has a definite dramatic narrative, with ‘speaking parts’ which may indicate its use in dramatic performance, and the portrayal of woman on the stage. Greene suggests that ‘Some such a piece as this was doubtless the model for ‘The Good Gossippes songe’ in the Chester Play of the Deluge.”

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296 Neufeld, Christine, Marie, *Xanthippe’s Sisters: Orality and Femininity In The Later Middle Ages*, PhD Dissertation, McGill University (Montreal, April 2001), 257-8


‘Comidentes Convinitete’: A Carol to Women Feasters

One of the most interesting carols, one which survives with musical notation, addressed to women must be ‘Comidentes convinite’, found in the carefully executed Egerton manuscript. This carol is written entirely in Latin; it is the only carol within the repertoire that in this language and addressed to women, thus suggesting a particularly educated class of female listener or even perhaps a female performer. It is fully notated for three voices. The first burden and the verse are scored for two voices, with the second burden for three; a common scoring for late medieval carols. A translation of the carol and its Latin text reads:

Comidentes, convenite,
Sero mane se pectite.
Este dulces et condite;
Crebro gentes sint petite

Cibis alvos enutrite crescentes sacre,
Crescents sacre

Parce vivendo nolite effice macre, effice macre.

[Sister-feasters, come together,
comb yourselves late in the morning;
be sweet and adorned;
let folk be often begged [to come]

Nourish your bellies with victuals;
A wax taper to the Holy One [fem]
Do not become thin, frugal in living]

299 This carol is not listed in Greene due to its text being entirely in Latin.
300 This manuscript is discussed in greater detail in the previous chapter in which its political carols are subject to scrutiny.
301 Stevens, John, ed. Mediaeval Carols (London, 1970),58
The voice ranges are not unusual for this manuscript, with the top voice in burden one having a range of less than an octave, from $c’-b’$, and voice two spanning a full octave from $d-d’$. The three voices of burden two span from top voice to bottom voice respectively: $c’-c’’$, $c-f’$, and $d-d’’$.\footnote{303}

The alternation of voices between verse and burden/burdens is a technique which becomes more and more popular chronologically in the carol manuscripts. In Egerton the use of voice alternation is used in 49% of the carols, as opposed to all the carols in the Ritson manuscript. In this sense, ‘Comidentes convenite’ is given an increasingly common texture. Its text is entirely in Latin; a language that dominates Egerton, as can be seen in Table 25.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>English and Latin</th>
<th>Un-texted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22 (67%)</td>
<td>4 (12%)</td>
<td>6 (18%)</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 25: Use of Language in Egerton

‘Comidentes convenite’ also reflects the other carols in the manuscript in its utilisation of melodic material with voices generally quite equal in terms of movement. The text is treated in a predominantly syllabic manner, with short bursts of melismatic material mainly at the ends of phrases and sections. This can be seen in bars 12-13, 28-30, and 64-66 shown in Example 3.

\footnote{302}{Translation by: Stevens, John, ed. Mediaeval Carols (London, 1970),44}

\footnote{303}{One must be aware of the lack of set pitch in medieval song, and therefore be conscious of the fact that although we can gain a solid picture of voice range and span, we cannot necessarily say with any certainty what pitches these were actually sung at.}
Example 3: ‘Comidentes convinete’

Egerton, as discussed in earlier chapters, is an important musical manuscript with no definitive provenance. The inclusion of this carol to women, and a highly illuminated entry of the drinking song ‘O potores’ immediately after it, gives this manuscript an interesting

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There are two distinct halves to the manuscript: the first half is dedicated to music for Holy Week and the second half contains mainly carols – 31 in total plus a motet and drinking song. The second half of the manuscript is of the greatest interest to this study, due to its inclusion of ‘Comidentes convenite’ and ‘O potores’. The insertion of these songs in close proximity to one another within the manuscript is, I believe, no accident. As will be argued in Chapter 6 in relation to the Egerton manuscript, the placement of the carols does not seem to be as random as is the case for the majority of carol manuscripts (and indeed many other late medieval manuscripts). The carols seem more secular than sacred in nature, and would seem to lend themselves to celebrations and feasts. The political carols celebrate England, its victories and its monarchs, whilst the inclusion of the drinking song indicates merriment and feasting, as does ‘Comidentes convenite’; especially as it translates as ‘Sister feasters’. What kind of women then is this carol addressing? One would assume an educated class of female that would perhaps have understood the Latin text, although as highlighted earlier, one cannot presume an educated female would automatically have had an understanding of Latin at this time. Indeed, would they have been singing it? It is hard to say with certainty, but one way or another, the class of women is indeed a high one. ‘O potores’ confirms the presence of these women in its illumination, as they are clearly depicted amongst the revellers. McPeek writes:

The presence of a drinking song in such a collection probably would not be as noteworthy were it not for the way in which the piece is preserved. Not only is it accorded a place of prominence in the manuscripts, but the most ornate and carefully executed work of the entire collection graces the initials of its cantus and contratenor parts. The ostentatious manner in which this text is presented inevitably suggests a secular connection for the manuscript. [...] In the present connection two observations are pertinent: first, women are abundantly represented; and second, the dress of the figures, both men and women, is predominantly non-clerical, appropriate to a court or other lay assemblage. The predominantly secular nature of

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305 This is not in carol form.
306 GB-Lbl Egerton 3307, f. 73r
the costumes, the prominence of women in the scenes depicted, and the ostentation of its presence are all highly suggestive features of this song.\footnote{McPeek, G.S, ed., The British Museum Manuscript Egerton 3307 (London, 1963),10}

Of course, the depiction of the scene in the initials does not necessarily show the performance of the piece itself; indeed none of the figures are singing or performing in any way. The scene is more a reflection of the text of the piece. This aside, the inclusion of women in this initial could still point to an establishment where women are welcomed, particularly combined with the carol addressed to women. What is equally interesting about this grouping of music in relation to women is also observed by McPeek who notes that:

The motet immediately after the drinking song is singularly appropriate for women, since not only does it use the feminine forms in the word-endings, but as Greene points out, both the poem and the tenor melody were traditionally associated with women. In addition, treble voices of soprano range so rare in Egerton (this piece contains the highest notes in the entire manuscript), suggest performance by women of a piece specifically appropriate to them. We see in this piece a further indication of the functional purpose for which the manuscript was compiled, as well as an additional reason for the motet’s position at the close of the original grouping: not only is it the sole sacred motet, but it is the only one specifically appropriate to women and, traditionally, to women only. \textit{Comidentes convenite}, however, is a song addressed to women. Their presence is necessary if it is to make any sense.\footnote{McPeek, G.S, ed., The British Museum Manuscript Egerton 3307 (London, 1963),10}

Of course, we must be wary in assigning definitive pitches to notation of this period, but when we place it in relation to the other pieces from this half of the manuscript, it does seem to sit higher, but not so much higher as to give a clear distinction; in fact the piece only reached one note higher than the other carols in the manuscript. The possibility still remains that women could have sung the uppermost parts of both the carol and the motet. Roger Bowers however, entertains no notion of female voices being used in this motet. He writes:

Its overall compass extends to eighteen notes...The two lowest voices are marked Contratenor...and Tenor...and above them lies a part a fifth higher...Above them lies
the topmost voice...this voice divides into a solo gymel...for the two-part passages introductory to each section. Since the lowest three voices clearly represent the historic core ensemble of *superius*, *contratenor* and *tenor* sung by an alto and two tenors, the upper voice seems certain to have been conceived for performance by boys. Indeed the literary source of the text *Cantemus Domino, socie* presents it as having been sung, in the course of a celestial vision vouchsafed to St Dunstan, by a pair of female *precantatrices* to a chorus of virgins. It is easy to appreciate, therefore, the reasons why it seemed appropriate to the composer that when setting this motet he should experiment with the engagement of the high voices of boys to sing the upper text.\(^{309}\)

Bowers does not even mention evidence such as ‘the occurrence of the feminine form “socie” in the first line of the motet, instead of the masculine “socii” for “companions” which appears in almost all known texts of the hymn’, \(^{310}\) and that coupled with the higher pitch of the uppermost part, the positioning in the manuscript alongside another piece that addresses women and that the literary source of the text is presented as sung by women could point to female singers. The evidence certainly presents it as a possibility worthy of consideration.

Why this feminine form appears within this motet is of interest, but the fact it is there in this manuscript at all is of greater importance to this study.\(^{311}\) Much wrangling over the provenance of this manuscript has taken place, as discussed previously, but whatever its provenance is, the fact remains that this manuscript goes some way to show that women were indeed connected with the carol form, and were involved in celebrations where carols were sung, and indeed may well have been singing them themselves at such occasions.\(^{312}\) Women were certainly involved in performing, and evidence does exist. As Colton notes:

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\(^{309}\) Bowers, Roger, ‘To Chorus from Quartet’ in Morehen, John, ed., *English Choral Practice, 1400-1650* (Cambridge, 2003), 26-27


\(^{311}\) For more information on the origins of this motet see: Greene, Richard L, ‘Two Medieval Manuscripts: Egerton 3307 and Some University of Chicago Fragments’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol.7, No. 1(Spring, 1954) 1-34

\(^{312}\) For further discussion of the Egerton manuscript see Chapter 6: ‘The Medieval Carol: a vehicle for political commentary and English nationalism’
In August 1323, at Wharleton Castle in the Cleveland hills, two women sang songs about Simon de Monfort to King Edward II.\textsuperscript{313}

Other accounts of women singing survive, some of which are recounted by Rossell Hope Robbins. He notes that Edward I, ‘on his progress through Scotland was entertained on the way between Gask and ‘Uggelville’ by seven maidens who sang various songs to him’ and that the register of William of Wykeham towards the end of the fourteenth century, contains the thundering of a Bishop ‘against these secular women [who] often keep up their chattering, carolling [cantalenas] and other light behaviour, until the middle of the night, and disturb the aforesaid nuns, so that they cannot properly perform the regular services.’\textsuperscript{314}

Whether singing or not, the carol ‘Comidentes convenite’, the drinking song, ‘O potores’ with its rich illuminations of women, and the motet ‘Cantemus Domino socie’ which suggests the presence of female companions rather than male, all placed within close proximity within this large section suggest beyond doubt that women were involved in the festivities in some capacity, that this half of Egerton was intended for, and were engaged in carolling whether as singers or audience.

The Henry VIII Manuscript

Another elaborate and equally important manuscript, which also contains notated carols of women, is the Henry VIII manuscript (the notated ‘female’ carol is a rare thing; only eleven survive).\textsuperscript{315} The fact that only eleven carols of women are notated is not of any great surprise, as most of the notated carols that do survive are from elaborate monastic manuscripts where there would have been little call for carols about women to be sung; notated carols with connections to women are therefore more found in non-monastic sources such as the courtly manuscript, the Henry VIII manuscript.\textsuperscript{316} This manuscript


\textsuperscript{316} GB-Lbl Additional 31922
contains musical material for use at the royal court of Henry VIII; 109 pieces in total (33 with claims of being by Henry VIII himself). Twelve of these 109 pieces are carols; and of those carols, seven have some relation to women.³¹⁷ John Stevens describes this manuscript as:

the chief surviving monument of secular music at the court of Henry VIII...a beautifully, though not sumptuously, produced vellum manuscript measuring twelve inches by eight and a quarter; its original binding was of wooden boards with stamped leather. The one hundred and nine songs and instrumental pieces are well written; one main hand wrote the music, as second scribe assisted with some of the words. The notation is extremely lucid and, since most of the songs are in duple time, presents few difficulties of interpretation.³¹⁸

Since John Stevens’ work in this area over four decades ago, the manuscript still remains the ‘chief surviving monument of secular music at the court of Henry VIII’.³¹⁹ No other manuscript has upstaged it. More recent scholarship has attempted to clarify the purpose of this manuscript. Dietrich Helms has proposed that the manuscript may have been an aid to teaching the royal children. He writes:

The strongest argument in support of the presumed educational purpose of the manuscript is its most obvious characteristic: its repertoire. Henry VIII’s book contains specimens of almost all kinds of secular music in circulation at the beginning of the sixteenth century- in England and on the Continent. The manuscript contains various forms of carols, rounds, puzzle canons, and other theoretical compositions, as well as pieces in the florid style of the Fayrfax book (GB-Lbl Add. 5465) and small homophonic courtly songs. Added to these is a selection of what Stevens has called “international song-hits”—some classics of the Burgundian chanson, some samples of the simple predecessors of the Parisian chanson, a motet-chanson, German tenorlieder, an Italian lauda, settings of basse danse tenors, and cantus-firmus-free compositions on short motives, such as Isaacs “La mi.”³²⁰

³¹⁷ A more detailed analysis of the musical content of this manuscript is addressed in Chapter 2: ‘The Carol: an isolated genre?’
³¹⁸ Stevens, ed. Mediaeval Carols (London, 1970),xvii
³¹⁹ Stevens, ed. Mediaeval Carols (London, 1970),xvii
Helms argues that this varied repertoire would have given the royal reader a good understanding of different styles, both English and Continental, as well as a variety of compositional techniques and that the quality of the manuscript as well as its ‘planned, well-ordered structure and its regular, neat form do not fit the characteristics of a musician’s miscellany’ but instead sets it apart as a manuscript made for someone of high ranking within the court. Helms delivers a convincing argument, and could well be correct in his assumptions, but unfortunately there is still no definitive evidence to make his claims conclusive.

What marks these female carols apart from those found in less sophisticated manuscripts, manuscripts which will be addressed in due course, is their far more refined treatment of the female subject. The first female carol in the manuscript is found on folio 36r, and as with the other female carols (and other carols), contains music for the burden only. This would suggest that the carols were sufficiently well know from oral transmission not to need to be fully notated, but merely the burden represented as a memory aid. As Stevens writes:

One thing at least is clear: dozens of popular songs were known within the court circle and formed a staple of both literary and musical composition. As a result, the connection between words and tune was ever present in people’s minds; ‘metrical’ words were still naturally connected with melody. The wide currency of popular song in courtly circles meant that a natural unsophisticated relationship between words and melody was never lost sight of.

The female carols in this manuscript generally portray the women subjects as noble in some way. The carol ‘A Happy Ending’ for example, although alluding to the sexual practices found in other carols, speaks of the female subject being as a ‘lady gent’ which as Greene notes, would translate as ‘pleasant, with implications of aristocratic refinement rather than

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322 Stevens, J. Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Court (Cambridge, 1979), 54
323 In this carol the lady and her love, after holding her in his arms, spend the day alone in the ‘wyldernes’. For a full transcription of this carol, see Greene, R.L. The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1977), 282-283
merely pretty’. In ‘You and I and Amyas’, by William Cornysh, we again find an aristocratic lady, this time behind the gates of a castle. In this carol, all of the characters are symbolic. The lady is called ‘Strangeness’ and her suitor, the Knight, ‘Desyre’. Strangeness does not admit Desyre into her castle, but instead suggests Desyre draws up a petition and shows his worth. Two other characters appear in stanza seven, ‘Kyndnes’ and ‘Pyte’. The carol reads:

Yow and I and Amyas,
Amyas and yow and I,
To the grenewode must we go, alas!
Yow and I, my lyff, and Amyas.

The knight knokett at the castell gate;
The lady meruelyd who was therat.

To call the porter he wold not blyn[wait];
The lady said he shuld not come in.

The portres was a lady bright;
Strangenes that lady hyght.

She asked hym what was his name;
He said, ‘Desyre, your man, madame.’

She said, ‘Desyre, what do you here?’
He said, ‘Madame, as your prisoner.’

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324 Greene, R.L. The Early English Carols, 2nd Ed. (Oxford, 1977), 498
325 GB-Lbl Additonal 31922, ff.45v-46r. The name ‘Amyas’ is believed to be in reference to a family connected with the court. The relevance of using this name is now lost to us, but it is discussed in: Chambers, E.K. Early English Lyrics (London, 1947), 337
He was cownsell'd to breffe a byll[submit a petition]
And shew my lady hys oune wyll.

Kyndnes said she wold yt bere,
And Pyte said she wold be ther.

Thus how that dyd we cannot say-
We left them ther and went ower way.\textsuperscript{326}

The story is left unresolved; perhaps to be concluded at a later point in the dramatization, as Stevens rightly suggests that Cornysh would perhaps have written this piece as part of a larger dramatic performance, and perhaps for the nuptials of Catherine and Henry in 1501.\textsuperscript{327} Stevens also suggests that the burden of the carol does not seem to relate in any way to the stanzas. I would suggest that if this was indeed a work composed to form part of a larger dramatization, which was highly possible given Cornysh’s role as devisor of court pageantry, then perhaps the burden is linking a theme found in other parts of the drama. Drama and entertainment was certainly not lacking at the court of Henry VIII with pageants, disguisings and interludes all frequently performed. Some performances were even open to those from outside the court, as Alison Weir notes:

Under Henry VIII, Eltham Palace seems to have acquired a reputation as a dramatic venue. When the King was in residence, there were frequent performances in the great hall, and Londoners were admitted to watch them.\textsuperscript{328}

This carol could certainly have been part of a pageant, disguising or interlude. Drama within these forms fell into three main areas, as Meg Twycross notes:

Ask anyone who has a nodding acquaintance with late medieval theatre, and they will tell you that there are three major genres: mysteries (biblical plays tracing the

\textsuperscript{326} Greene, R.L. \textit{The Early English Carols} (Oxford, 1977), 282
\textsuperscript{327} The use of the carols within drama is addressed Chapter 4: “That we with merth mowe savely synge’: The fifteenth-century carol, a music of the people?”
\textsuperscript{328} Weir, Alison, \textit{Henry VIII: King and Court} (London, 2011), 90
history of the Fall and Redemption of Man); moralities (allegorical psychodramas); and interlude (cheerful, largely secular plays of no particular length, which comprise the rest).  

The carol ‘You and I and Amyas’ could arguably have been used in any of these contexts, however, inclusion in an interlude or morality play might seem the most likely, especially with its use of allegorical figures (allegory, as we shall see features often in the carols of the Henry VIII manuscript). The diversity of carols in general, even beyond those of the Henry VIII manuscript, would deem them suitable for select inclusion in interludes, moralities or mystery dramas within the entertainment of the court whether in the setting of pageants, which ‘were entertainments involving mock battles-with knights and ladies bombarding each other with flowers, fruit and sweets-allegorical figures, and the ideals of chivalry and courtly love’, or ‘disguisings’, particularly encouraged by Henry VIII and involving the ‘participants dressing up in disguise, with masks, and either performing incognito or taking people unawares’. The possibility for the inclusion of carols in such court entertainments would seem boundless, so their inclusion in a manuscript from the late medieval court may seem entirely logical.

Another carol in a female voice within this manuscript is ‘Whiles life or breath’. This carol again tells the tale of an aristocratic woman, talking about her love for her ‘Lord’: his prowess at knightly tournaments and his warrior nature, yet in contrast; his good countenance, cheerfulness and his goodness. This carol demonstrates the balance of traits believed in the Middle Ages to constitute a good King. They believed, ‘To rule well required traits associated with both the masculine and the feminine: kings had to be both unyielding and tender, both economical and bountiful with words and goods, and both courageous and peace loving’. Greene suggests that this may have been the voice of Catherine of Aragon talking about Henry VIII, and may be a, ‘reference to a particular occasion’. Whether

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330 Weir, Alison, Henry VIII: King and Court (London, 2011), 91
331 Weir, Alison, Henry VIII: King and Court (London, 2011), 91
332 Greene lists this carol on folio 104v of the manuscript, but this is in error. It is actually located on folio 54v-55.
333 Herrup, Cynthia, ‘The King’s Two Genders’, Journal of British Studies, 45/3 (July, 2006), 498
334 Greene, R.L. The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1977), 487
there is a specific occasion referring to Henry VIII or not, the fact remains that the carol is in reference to courtly, aristocratic figures; those who would have been participants in such knightly tournaments.

The treatment of women in these carols is refined and outwardly respectable and probably reflects the use of this manuscript at court, where female company of an aristocratic nature would be expected; similar in status perhaps to the women of Egerton. Indeed, even when addressing subjects of a sexual nature, the texts treat them in an allegorical manner rather than in crude realism. This is demonstrated in the carol ‘Blow thi horne, hunter’, again by Cornysh, which alludes to the chase of a woman and the resulting sexual practices, but told through the chase of a deer by a hunter. The carol itself even points out its obvious double meaning in the last stanza with the text, ‘Now the construction of the same – what do you mean or think?’ (Which translates as – What do you think the double meaning of this song might be?). This carol survives only with its burden notated, which is a common feature of a number of the carols in this manuscript, and with six non-notated stanzas. The burden and stanzas read:

Blow thy horn, hunter, and blow thy horn on high!

There is a doe in the yonder wood;
in faith she will not die:
Now blow thy horn, hunter,
now blow thy horn, joly hunter!

Sore this deer stricken is,
And yet she bleeds no whit;
She lay so fair, I could not miss;
Lord, I was glad of it!

As I stood under a bank
The deer shoff on the mead;

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335 For a full transcription of this carol see: Greene, R.L. The Early English Carols, second edition (Oxford, 1977), 284
I struck her so that down she sank,
But yet she was not deas.

There she go’th over the plain?
And if ye lust to have a shot,
I warrent her barrain.
He to go and I to go,
But he ran fast afore;
I had him shoot and strike the doe,
For I might shoot no more.

To the covert both they went,
For I found where she lay;
An arrow in her haunch she hent;
For faint she might not bray.

I was weary of the game,
I went to tavern to drink;
Now, the construction of the same-
What do you mean or think.

Here I leave and make an end
Now of this hunter’s lore:
I think his bow is well unbent,
His bolt may flee no more.336

336 This transcription is taken from: Stevens, John, *Music at the Court of Henry VIII* (London, 1962), 29
The music of this carol is set for three voices and is mainly syllabic and homophonic in texture with the exception of one short melisma in the final bar of the Tenor, as we can see in Example 4.

There is an obvious element of word painting in bars three to four, where we see the melody rising upwards to c′′, the highest pitch of the piece, as the text reads ‘blow thy horn on high!’ Downward transposition here is limited by the bass G, which would suggest that the uppermost voice must have been sung by boys or even possibly, women. The meaning of the text however, would perhaps render this piece more likely sung by boys in the top rather than women. The pitch ranges are seen in Table 26.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Lowest Pitch</th>
<th>Highest Pitch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top Voice</td>
<td>d′</td>
<td>c′′</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle (tenor) voice</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>e′</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Voice</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 26: Pitch Ranges of ‘Blow thy horn hunter’

The piece conveys a particularly dance like movement, and perhaps we could even say a ‘jolly’ feel, which perhaps is in reflection of the ‘jolliness’ of the hunter in question.

337 This transcription is taken from: Stevens, John, *Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Court* (London, 1961), 29
Sex, Seduction and Shame

Not all carols that relate to women however, are as sophisticated and as subtle in their treatment of the female subject as we find in Egerton and the Henry VIII Manuscript. Many of the carols in female voices or about women are crude, highly descriptive of sexual practices, and often end with the same sorry tale of a woman left ‘holding the baby’. GB-Cgc 383/603 contains three carols in a woman’s voice, and one about a woman.\(^{338}\) There are nine carols in total within this manuscript, of which almost half are female-related in some way.\(^{339}\) This manuscript appears to have been a cleric’s book; it contains an eclectic mix of materials of value to a cleric before taking orders.\(^{340}\) The carols do not particularly stand out within this densely packed manuscript, and the scribe has opted not to lay them out in the format most often found for carols, that of placing either the first line of the verse or burden to the right of the bracketed text. The carols are most definitely crude in their description of the so labelled ‘amorous’ incidents they describe and would seem very out of place in Egerton or the Henry VIII manuscript. ‘Rybbe ne rele ne spynne yc ne may’ is a good example of this type of carol. A transcription can be seen below, and an image of page 41 of the manuscript where this carol is written at the top of the page, is illustrated in Example 5. Interestingly, this page also contains another carol in a woman’s voice, ‘Alas, ales, the wyle!’ which is also on the same theme; that of the seduced maiden (again by Jack) and her resulting pregnancy.

\(^{338}\) Greene list this manuscript as GB-Cgc 383, but its correct citation is GB-Cgc 383/603.

\(^{339}\) Greene only lists 8.

\(^{340}\) For more information regarding the contents of this manuscript, see Appendix 1, or Greene, R.L. *The Early English Carols*, second edition (Oxford, 1977), 324-325.
Example 5: GB-Cgc 383/603, page 41

341 Image provided by Cambridge, Gonville and Caius Library.
Rybbe[scrape flax with iron tool] ne rele ne spynne yc ne may
For joyghe that is holyday.

All this day ic han sought;
Spyndul ne were[nf[flywheel of a spindle] ne wond[found]Y nought;
To myche blisse ic am brout
Ayen this hy halyday.

Yc moste feschun worton[herbs] in;
Predele[pride] my kerchief vnder my khyn;
Leue Jakke, lend me a pyn
To predle me this holiday.

Now yt draweth to the none,
And al my cherrus[chores] ben vndone;
Y moste a lyte solas[made easy] mye schone
To make hem dowge this holiday.

Y moste mylkyn in this payl;
Outh me bred al this schayl;
Yut is the dow yundur my nayl
As ic knad this holyday.

Jakke wol brynge me onward in my wey,
Wyth me desire for te play;
Of my dame stant me non eyghe[awe]
An neuer a god haliad.
Jacke wol pay for my scoth
A Sunday ate the ale-schoch;[scot-ale-a forced contribution at a festival]
Jacke wol sowse[soak] wel my wroch[snout]
Every god halide[y.]

Sone he wolle take me be the hand,
And he wolle legge me on the lond,
That al my buttockus ben of son[d,]
Opon this hye holyday.

In he pult, and out he drow,
And eur yc lay on hym y-low:
‘By Godus deth, thou 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.342

The fate of the serving maid in ‘Rybbe ne rele ne spynne yc ne may’, and ‘Alas ales, the wyle’ is typical of this genre of carol found within many of the similar clerics’ manuscripts. We find that the carols do not tend to address issues beyond the resulting pregnancy or attempt to examine the fate of the women in question. They are more interested in the pursuit of the women; the thrill of the chase would no doubt have been of much more amusement to the singers and their audience that the realities that follow. However, it is important to note that the reality is sometimes mentioned, if only fleetingly, which gives a moral edge to the

342 Greene, R.L. The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1977), 275-6
tales; placing an emphasis at the end of the carols that leaves the listener with the lasting thought that such affairs rarely end well. We must also remember that the woman was very rarely seen as an innocent party in these sorts of situations. Indeed, the medieval understanding of the female reproductive system quite clearly meant that any situation where a woman ended up pregnant must have resulted from her pleasure. Goldberg writes that:

Conception was thought to result from the mixing of the male and female sperm ejaculated through intercourse. It followed that, since sexual pleasure was necessary to stimulate the emission of seed for both women and men, conception could not occur unless the women took pleasure from the act of coitus. The implications of this were mixed. If the church pursued the line that the principal purpose of marriage was the begetting of children, then medicine dictated that pleasure in love-making for both parties was essential to conception. On the other hand; a woman who became pregnant following an alleged rape would not be believed. Similarly it was argued that prostitutes rarely conceived since they engaged in sex for money and not for pleasure.\textsuperscript{343}

This perhaps explains the lack of sympathetic tone in the carols towards the pregnant young maid; a resulting pregnancy indicated a woman who had been more than happy with the situation she found herself in.\textsuperscript{344} The perception of the woman as responsible for the results of such dalliances is echoed throughout this period. Indeed, Cynthia Herrup explains that even:

The laws about the consequences of wanton sexuality punished women more severely than they did men: laws against bastardy, laws against adultery; and laws against concealing pregnancy. Biology meant that a man might deny what a woman in these circumstances could not, but other statutes distinguished female from male as well: men were barraters, women scolds; men who killed their wives were


\textsuperscript{344} It is also possible that these carols were written, or included, as a disincentive to clerics that might be tempted by sexual activity. This possibility is discussed in Chapter 7: ‘But here the greatest melody arises without any physical instrument, when the angels minister and sing to Christ’: The Carol in Sermons and Late Medieval Worship.’, 256-267
murderers, women who slaughtered their husbands were petty traitors; and married men were legal adults, married women were legal children. The masculinity that ruled society was... an exceedingly “anxious masculinity”.

Women endured the expectation of different standards to those expected of men in this period, expectations that would seem to be reflected in many of the carol texts.

**Ms 54: Saints and Sinners**

There is one carol that does address the fate of the pregnant women beyond stating that she was with child, ‘A, dere God, qwat I am fayn’, from GB-Cjc S.54. This carol tells the tale of the seduced maiden, and her resulting pregnancy, and could certainly have been used as a moral tool. It clearly conveys the anguish of the women; particularly in stanzas three and four which read:

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Qwan he and me browt un us the schete,
Of all hys wyll I hym lete;
Now wyll not my gyrdyll met;
A, dere God, quat xal I say?

I xall sey to man and page
That I haue bene of pylgrymage;
Now wyll I not lete for np q[w]age
With me a clerk for to pley.  
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345 Herrup, Cynthia, ‘The King’s Two Genders’, *Journal of British Studies*, 45/3 (July, 2006), 500
346 For a full transcription see Greene, R.L. *The Early English Carols*(Oxford, 1977), 277
The final stanza tells us of the girl’s plans to tell ‘man and page’ that she has been on a pilgrimage. Anne Klinck suggests that the speaker plans to ‘represent her unfortunate accident as a consequence of going on pilgrimage, which, she hopes, will excuse it’, but I think it more likely that Neil Cartlidge’s suggestion that she has rather ‘gone away in order to conceal the pregnancy and birth from her own community’ more probable. Greene has categorised this carol as ‘amorous’ but perhaps it should be classified as a moral carol. The placement of this so called carol within GB-Cjc S.54 is also interesting, as it is nestled between a carol to the Virgin and a carol to St Catherine, both in some way related to women and in praise of them, which seems to further highlight the moral tale. This carol, despite being in the female voice, could just as easily be conveying this cautionary tale to a male audience. Although the cleric was in theory a man who has taken vows of celibacy, a breach of which was in England was ‘seen as rare and transgressive by the later Middle Ages’, there was still an inherent danger of temptation. Composing such lyrics as those in ‘A, dere God, qwat I am fayn’ for a male audience, with a cleric as the protagonist, would clearly convey the dangers of one of his standing becoming embroiled in such situations, whilst lacing the tale with humour. An image of this carol can be seen on the left folio, preceded by the remainder of the carol to the Virgin, in the image in Example 6. The carol to St Catherine on the right hand folio can clearly be seen with the first line ‘A, a,a,a, Salue Caterri[n]a!’.

347 Klinck, Anne, *Anthology of Ancient and Medieval Woman’s Song* (Gordonsville, 2004),139
349 We also find that Greene’s categorisation of ‘marriage carols’, whilst again helpful, perhaps simplifies the genre. The nine marriage carols, none of which have extant musical notation, more often than not tell of the unjust treatment of a husband by his wife, and are a window into the humour of the time, and common attitudes towards women with less of a moral edge. None are in a woman’s voice, but instead are mainly warnings to men by other men.
It would seem that in a manuscript such as this, a cleric’s book, that highlighting the sin-free life of Mary and the saintly life of Catherine alongside the carol of the young women pregnant out of wedlock could be a powerful preaching tool. The exact use of this manuscript is unclear, but as Daniel Wakelin comments:

The regular layout [of this manuscript] suggests that the people copying it had seen that such a layout was customary in other manuscripts, and that the scribes did have other manuscripts [...] to copy from. And the sharing of, and interruptions in, copying

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351 The use of carols in medieval sermons will be addressed in Chapter 7: “But here the greatest melody arises without any physical instrument, when the angels minister and sing to Christ”: The Carol in Sermons and Late Medieval Worship.”
would seem to confirm the use of written exemplars. Yet the dominance of the carol in this book suggests that it might have existed in some relation to performance...

Whoever made and used this book was not alone: the close collaboration of the people copying, over time, suggests that they were members of some steady community such as a religious house, school, household or lay guild.\footnote{Wakelin, Daniel, MS S.54 (Cambridge, St John's College Library), 3}

The suggestion that GB-Cjc S.54 may have originated from a steady, perhaps religious community is more than likely; the inclusion of the female carols suggesting that women were present at the events at which they would have been sung. GB-Cjc S.54 contains a total of sixteen carols; some are sacred and some secular. The secular carols all seem to have a moral message of some kind, whether it is care of money, being wary of some types of women or the dangers of illicit liaisons which would suggest their use in an establishment where the education of others in both scared and secular matters was of importance, as Wakelin suggests, and somewhere where communal singing would have played a part and where carols could have been sung together by both men and women, and perhaps used in sermons.\footnote{The use of carols as a preaching tool within medieval sermons is discussed in Chapter 7: “But here the greatest melody arises without any physical instrument, when the angels minister and sing to Christ”: The Carol in Sermons and Late Medieval Worship.’}

**Carols by Women?**

With such a number of the carols in a woman’s voice (fourteen in total, with a further eight containing some female narrative), it is tempting to believe that carols such as ‘A, dere God, qwat I am fayn’, and ‘Wolde God that hyt were so’ which speaks of a woman’s unspoken love of a man with such description of her anguish, did indeed have a real woman behind the text. It reads:

```
Wolde God that it were so
As I cowed wysshe bytuyxt vu too!
```
The man that I loued altherbest [best of all]
In al thys contre, est other west,
To me he ys a strange gest;
What wonder est thou I be woo?

When me were leuest that he schold duelle,
He wold noght sey onys farewelle;
He wold noght sey ones farewell
Wen tyme was come that he most go.

In places ofte when I hym mete,
I dar noght speke, but forth I go;
With herte and eyes I hym grete;
So trywe of loue I know no mo.

As he ys myn hert loue,
My dyrward dyre,[dearly beloved] iblessed he be;
I swere by God, that ys aboue,
Non hath my loue but only he.

I am icomfortyd in eury side;
The colures wexeth both fres and newe;
When he ys come and wyl abyde,
I wott ful wel that he ys trywe.

I loue hym trywely and no mo;
Wolde God that he hyt knywe!
And euer I hope hyt schal be so;
Then schal I change for no new.  

However, this carol is actually the perfect example of the ease in which lyrics can be changed from the feminine to the masculine voice and vice versa. We find within this manuscript, that a second scribe has inserted feminine pronouns in order to provide a carol of flexible gender that changes the speaker from a female longing for the love of a male figure, to a male longing for the love of a female figure.\(^{355}\) This highlights the caution we must use when assigning gender to medieval lyrical forms. Anne Klinck notes that:

> The activity of the girl... is limited to meeting her lover in public places, apparently by accident, leaving without speaking to him, commending him to God, and promising to be faithful. When “the man” is replaced by “she” and the pronouns are changed, the speaker metamorphoses into the male abashed lover of many a lyric in the courtly tradition.\(^{356}\)

Although Greene suggests that ‘The changing of the gender of the pronouns throughout a medieval love-lyric is rare, if not unique to this text’.\(^{357}\) The changing of gender within appropriate carol texts, as well as other lyric forms, may indeed have been common practice, particularly if the carols were being adapted for use in different dramatic entertainments; with the need to write the gender changes into the text perhaps not deemed necessary. This change of pronouns works in the case of this particular carol, and would for a number of other carols.

The possibilities of why this would be done within this particular manuscript are not clear. GB-Lbl Additional 5943 is an eclectic mix of Latin sermons, carols, erotic English songs which have accompanying musical notation and details of the eclipses of the sun and moon to name but a few of its contents.\(^{358}\) The manuscript bears an inscription that places it in the hands of a Carthusian monk named John, from Somerset, who had been gifted it from

\(^{354}\) Greene, RL. *The Early English Carols*. (Oxford, 1935), 306

\(^{355}\) British Library, MS. Additional 5943, Folio 178v

\(^{356}\) Klink, Anne, L., ‘Poetic Markers of Gender in Medieval “Woman’s Song”: Was Anonymous a Woman?!’, *Neophilologus*, 87, (2003), 352

\(^{357}\) Greene, R.L. *The Early English Carols*(Oxford, 1977), 488

\(^{358}\) For a full account of this manuscript see: Rastall, Richard and Hewitt, Leslie, *A Fifteenth Century Song Book, Early Music in Facsimile Vol. 1* (Leeds, 1973)
Thomas Turke, a vicar also from Somerset. We might wonder what a vicar and then a monk should need with a book containing items such as erotic songs and amorous carols. Certainly, personal amusement is a possibility, but they may also relate to the possibility that the carols and other such material were being used by the priest in his sermons in order to provoke humour whilst preaching on moral issues. The change of gender in the carol may be an indication of change depending on need. The female carols within this manuscript are not always as brassy in content as GB-Cgc 383/603, and convey a more tender approach to love and women. ‘Of all the things that God’ speaks in praise of women it seems (although this carol has been damaged within this manuscript so not all the text survives) and their virtues, and ‘Wolde God that hyt were so’ talks of a tender love with no mention of carnal acts or pregnancy of MS 383/603.

Of course, there are many ‘carols of women’ that would not have been able to be altered by a simple change of pronouns. In GB-Cul Ff.5.48 for example, a manuscript from the second half of the fifteenth century, we find the carol ‘I have forsworne hit whil I live’. This carol is written in the female voice, and reads as a cautionary tale of a young woman falling under the spell of Sir John, who leaves her pregnant and wanting. This could easily have been authored by a woman as a warning to others, but looking closer at this carol we not only find it signed ‘bryan hyf my name iet’, which could indicate the poem was perhaps written if not copied by a male scribe or author, but we find the only extant copy of it within a manuscript which is more than likely to have been owned by a male cleric:

A cursory examination of the contents identifies the manuscript as a clerical miscellany. Of the twenty-eight texts, at least eleven can be characterized as catechetical, meditative, or didactic... And the selection from John Muir’s Institutions

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359 The use of the carol as a possible preaching tool is discussed in chapter seven, ‘But here the greatest melody arises without any physical instrument, when the angels minister and sing to Christ’: The Carol in Sermons and Late Medieval Worship.
360 For a critical edition of this manuscript see: Downing, J.Y., A Critical Edition of Cambridge University MS Ff.5.48 (Cambridge, 1980)
361 For a full transcription of the lyric see: Greene, RL. The Early English Carols, 2nd Edition (Oxford, 1977), 278
362 Greene, RL. The Early English Carols, 2nd Edition (Oxford, 1977), 278
for the Parish Priest that opens up the volume strongly suggest a priest owned the book.363

It is possible that in this cleric’s manuscript, that this female-voiced carol could, as has previously been suggested, have been used in preaching to engage with the audience on a humorous level whilst illustrating a point about the dangers of submitting to carnal desires, or falling for the charms of men such as the Sir John of the carol. As Ohlgren writes:

While these tales may have served the priests’ need for private enjoyment and entertainment, they also served more didactic purposes. As Fowler observed, the common denominator of the collection is the desire “to provide materials for the entertainment and instruction of a popular audience”... He cites an anonymous fifteenth-century preacher who tells his congregation “And so may I shewe to you by story, and also by ensampull of kende, and also of gestes” That is, he will enliven his sermon with examples drawn from nature and from stories of deeds or adventures.364

Again, we find Greene classifies this carol as ‘amorous’ but in the context of the manuscript it may be better thought of as a warning against pleasures of the flesh, and the end result of such liaisons for young women.

Although we cannot ascertain whether a female writer was behind some of the texts examined here, Schibanoff makes a valid argument for the existence of female writers and their distinct poetic style, by citing the example of Chaucer and his observations on differences between male and female poetry in Troilus and Criseyde.365 She notes that this work contains three love songs; two in the male voice, and one in the female. She writes:

The third of these intercalated lyrics... is Chaucer’s representation of a “woman’s song”... Not only are the narrator and speaker of this third lyric female, but... so too

363 Ohlgren, Thomas H., Robin Hood: The Early Poems, 1465-1560 – Texts, Contexts, and Ideology with Appendix – The Dialects and Language of Selected Robin Hood Poems by Lister M. Matheson (Delaware, 2007), 32
364 Ohlgren, Thomas H., Robin Hood: The Early Poems, 1465-1560 – Texts, Contexts, and Ideology with Appendix – The Dialects and Language of Selected Robin Hood Poems by Lister M. Matheson (Delaware, 2007), 42
365 This is a poem written by Geoffrey Chaucer c.1380, which tells the love story of Troilus and Criseyde, and the siege of Troy.
is its author – an unnamed woman, the “goodlieste mayde” in all Troy… Most generally, it can illustrate that at least one Medieval author seems to recognize the difference in male and female poetic styles and that his conception of them may not coincide with modern ideas on this subject. It also suggests that one medieval author sees “lament” or “complaint” as a male subject and rhetorical stance, “celebration” as female ones.366

One of course, must still be wary of accepting the representation of female style as female voice. This use of male and female style is also seen in used by Machaut in his ‘Livre dou Voir Dit’ which purports to be an exchange of poems between the lover (Machaut) and his lady (Toute Belle). Machaut’s representation of Toute Belle as a writer of music and poetry is interesting. It is essentially based on her lack of feminine, emotional control in contrast to his more stable output. Findley notes that the narrator in this work depicts the female writing process as:

strikingly erotic, involving emotions that spiral out of control and affect her body. In three episodes he describes Toute Belle composing poetry in the grip of passionate feelings. This state leads her to spout completed pieces without any intermediate process of planning or revision.367

The male writer however, is depicted as composing in a far more controlled style, writing ‘through disciplined, daily work on a regular schedule, as when he produces one poem for his lady on each day of a nine-day pilgrimage, or when he boasts that he is writing exactly a hundred verses per day in her book’.368 Interestingly though, Toute Belle herself does not seem to share this ‘link between the poems she composes and the emotions she is feeling’.369 Her voice gives a greater sense of control than the male narrator wishes to portray. The female voice, it would seem, although acknowledged in the Middle Ages, is still difficult to find amongst the conceived male perception of what it should sound like and how it is created.

367 Findley, Brooke Heidenreich, Poet Heroines in Medieval French Narrative (New York, 2012), 93
368 Findley, Brooke Heidenreich, Poet Heroines in Medieval French Narrative (New York, 2012), 95
369 Findley, Brooke Heidenreich, Poet Heroines in Medieval French Narrative (New York, 2012), 98
In the case of medieval carols, the convention for women to write such lyrics is not necessarily as unusual as we might think; the women troubères and troubadours are a testimony to the work of women in the medieval period, and not forgetting the most famous of all the medieval female composers, Hildegard of Bingen. Indeed, Paula Higgins argues for the existence of the female songwriter in her exploration of the Scottish Princess, Margaret Stuart who married the French King in the early fifteenth century, who was alleged to be writing ballades and rondeaux to the quantity of a dozen in a day. She argues that evidence suggests that the poetry being written by Margaret and her ladies, Jacqueline de Hacqueville in particular, who she argues is the Jacqueline of Busnoys’s lyrics, could well be in notated manuscripts. She writes:

Without wishing to exaggerate unduly the role of women in the literary and musical culture of the late Middle Ages, I would nevertheless suggest that the evidence which reveals that at least half a dozen women in a single court of the 1440s were writing poetry that survives in the same manuscripts from which many texts set to music were drawn would seem to dispel the notion that Christine de Pizan was the only woman of the Middle Ages writing poetry.

The tradition of female song writing is there, and there is no reason to suspect that women in the fifteenth century were not continuing this tradition. Having no named female carol composers does not automatically mean they did not exist; we must not assume that anonymous is always male, or if in a woman’s voice, female. The assumption of course that female-voiced works are the most likely to be written by women may also be precarious, as there is nothing to suggest a woman would not also have written using the voice of a man.

Conclusion

It would seem then, that the late medieval carol has much to say about women, their place in society, and most importantly, their involvement as creators, participant and receivers of

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370 For introductory literature and editions of the work of the female troubadours and trouveres see: Boin, M., The Women Troubadours (New York, 1980) and Doss-Quinby, Tasker Grimbert, Pfeffer and Aubrey, Songs of the Women Trouveres (New Haven, 2001)
medieval carols. The Egerton carol ‘Comidentes convenite’ conveys the presence of women at important feasts, sitting alongside illustrations of women revellers and a motet that speaks of female company, and the refined nature of the female carols of the Henry VIII manuscript, and their aristocratic female voices demonstrates a high-class genre of ‘carols of women’. The many carols that demonstrate the need for women to be present at their performance; whether poking fun at women, addressing them or offering them moral guidance, demonstrates female involvement in carolling at some level. The range of carols that have been identified within this chapter and; speak directly to women, speak in a female voice, are about women or contain an amount of female narrative is testament to the involvement of women in some capacity, whether as subject, audience, performers or composers in the world of the medieval carols. The extent of the involvement and significance of women in the context of the medieval carol should not, in face of this evidence, be underestimated.
Chapter Six

The Medieval Carol: a vehicle for political commentary and
English nationalism.

Throughout the previous chapters, the carol has been examined from a number of different perspectives: its relationship with other fifteenth-century genres; in terms of authorship; lost popular song; and from a gender perspective. Examining the carol in these different ways has allowed a more three-dimensional view of the late medieval carol than has been achieved by previous commentators. One important area that still needs to be addressed however is the carol as a vehicle for political commentary and English nationalism. This chapter aims to address the carol from this aspect and explore how it can convey a political message in a peculiarly English style.

England in the fifteenth century was a land of wars and political turmoil; its focus on war with France in the early part of the century quickly turned into its own inner turmoil, and a bloody civil war between the house of Lancaster and the house of York for control of the English crown ensued. Alessandra Petrina writes that:

The century itself defies definition. There is something deeply contradictory about the English fifteenth century...From the historian’s point of view, it is a time fraught with interest: it is during this century that the English nation finds its modern identity and is ultimately released, even through the endless vicissitudes of the Hundred Years’ War, from its connection with France and the French crown; meanwhile the deposition of an anointed King, Richard II, introduces a time of almost frenetic changes, concluding with the ascent to the throne of the first Tudor King and the beginning of a very long period of relative political stability. 372

England is, despite the turmoil, sowing the seeds of a strong national identity in this period. This identity is reflected in the language and literature of the time, and can be traced back to the writings of the poet Geoffrey Chaucer in the late fourteenth century, and his use of

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372 Petrina, Alessandra, Cultural Politics in Fifteenth-Century England (Leiden, 2001)
the English language for his poetry rather than the favoured languages of the pen; French and Latin. Although Chaucer is seen as the founder of this movement, Krishan Kumar advises caution at placing too much emphasis on his impact as ‘it seems that even the English that emerged as ‘standard English’ was shaped less by the poets than the clerks of chancery’.³⁷³ Alessandro Petrina explains the distribution of language at this time:

By the beginning of the century, the hitherto little challenged co-existence of three languages in England - Latin in ecclesiastical and academic circles, French at court and in the centres of administration and power, English as the language commonly spoken by the King’s subjects - was meeting a number of challenges.³⁷⁴

The growth of the English language was further helped by King Henry V, the first King with English as his first language, in the early part of the fifteenth century, and Petrino suggests his decision to make it not only his spoken, but also his written language had its roots in politics and the growing sense of nationhood, noting that:

It is significant that Henry V’s switch from French to English in his correspondence occurs in 1417, that is, the year of his second invasion of France; it seems to show that the turning point in the English linguistic policy took place at exactly the same moment in which the French adventure appeared to concretise itself into an acquisition of permanent dominions. Henceforth, Henry would write in English...his use of language as a political weapon had a decisive meaning and showed this king’s awareness of the propaganda value of language.³⁷⁵

The carols, although written in English, French and Latin, are predominantly English, and thus reflect this growing use of the vernacular in other fields.³⁷⁶

By the beginning of the fifteenth century, the carol seems to have evolved into a specifically English structure of musical and lyrical expression; something that has become exclusively English in the fifteenth century, and stays that way, echoing the national development of Englishness. As Stevens writes:

³⁷⁴ Petrina, Alessandro, Cultural Politics in Fifteenth-Century England (Leiden, 2001), 81
³⁷⁵ Petrina, Alessandro, Cultural Politics in Fifteenth-Century England (Leiden, 2001), 83
³⁷⁶ The use of language in the political carols is addressed later in this thesis.
The recurrent burden and the dominance of the stanza-pattern aaab link the carol with a family of European lyric-forms. The courtly French virelai and the Italian balata are closely related to the carol from the formal point of view, while the Italian lauda resembles the carol in form and spirit. It is clear that in the carol we have the English representative of this family, and its importance is substantiated by the survival of nearly 500 distinct vernacular lyrics in this form.\footnote{Stevens, John, \textit{Mediaeval Carols} (London 1970), xiii}

Many of the carols are particularly nationalistic; conveying a pride in England and its achievements on the world stage, keeping tales of English saints alive, or pleading for the deliverance of England from her enemies. In total, there are twenty-six carols with and without musical notation that survive which are political in nature; by political it is meant carols that recount political events, carols associated with royalty, and carols associated with the politically significant saints St George and St Thomas of Canterbury.

The carol by the fifteenth century had become a particularly English form of poetical and musical expression, despite academic theory that places its origins in the early French dance, the carole, it developed and grew into a very distinct style of its own; a purely musical device. Judging by the amount of surviving lyrics, it clearly was a popular form of music in fifteenth-century England, one which could convey either a sacred or secular message; both sit comfortably alongside one another within extant manuscripts. It will be argued later in this chapter, that this very English form of musical expression made it the perfect vehicle for conveying the growing sense of English nationhood and identity in the fifteenth century.

## Political Carols in Manuscripts with Musical Notation

There are a total of eighteen carols, from fifteenth-century and early sixteenth-century musically notated manuscripts, that contain strongly political lyrics, or indeed lyrics that convey something about England or the Saints George and Thomas of Canterbury. The political carols with musical notation are listed in Table 27. There are another eight political
carols that survive without notation, which will be addressed at a later juncture within in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carol</th>
<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>Folio number</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deo Gracias Anglia</strong></td>
<td>GB-Ctc 0.3.58</td>
<td>No. 7</td>
<td>Henry V and victory at Agincourt in 1415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gb-Obl Selden b.26</td>
<td>17v</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Princeps pacis</strong></td>
<td>GB-Lbl GB-Lbl Egerton 3307</td>
<td>49v-50</td>
<td>Royal law, victory and peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anglia, tibi turbidas</strong></td>
<td>GB-Lbl GB-Lbl Egerton 3307</td>
<td>60v-61</td>
<td>Plea for England and friendship with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benedicte Deo</strong></td>
<td>GB-Lbl GB-Lbl Egerton 3307</td>
<td>61v</td>
<td>England and France to bless the Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Saint Thomas honour we</strong></td>
<td>GB-Lbl GB-Lbl Egerton 3307</td>
<td>62v-3</td>
<td>St Thomas of Canterbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enforce we us</strong></td>
<td>GB-Lbl GB-Lbl Egerton 3307</td>
<td>63v</td>
<td>St George and the battle of Agincourt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exultavit cor</strong></td>
<td>GB-Lbl GB-Lbl Egerton 3307</td>
<td>64v</td>
<td>Henry V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Princeps Serenissime</strong></td>
<td>GB-Lbl Egerton 3307</td>
<td>64v</td>
<td>In praise of King Henry VI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jesu, for they mercy</strong></td>
<td>GB-Lbl Additional 5665</td>
<td>44v-45</td>
<td>Scottish Truce or perhaps the Wars of the Roses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Letare Cantuaria</strong></td>
<td>GB-Lbl Additional 5665</td>
<td>27v-28</td>
<td>St Thomas of Canterbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clangat Tuba</strong></td>
<td>GB-Lbl Additional 5665</td>
<td>41v-42</td>
<td>St Thomas of Canterbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I love, I love and whom love thee</strong></td>
<td>GB-Lbl Additional 5465</td>
<td>40v-46</td>
<td>Celebration of the end of the Wars of the Roses and the birth of Henry VII’s child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From stormy windes</strong></td>
<td>GB-Lbl Additional 5465</td>
<td>104v-108</td>
<td>For the protection of Prince Arthur (son of Henry VII)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>This day day dawes</strong></td>
<td>GB-Lbl Additional 5465</td>
<td>108v-109r</td>
<td>For Queen Elizabeth, wife of Henry VII</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Enforce yourself as Goddes knight

Though sum sayeth

While life or breath

England, be glad

Table 27: Extant notated carols with political lyrics, or lyrics associated with St Thomas or St George in notated carol manuscripts

Table 28: The number and percentage weighting of political carols in musically notated manuscripts

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378 The fully Latin texted carols such as ‘Exulatavit Cor’, ‘Letare Cantuaria’ and ‘Anglia Tibi Turbidas’ are not listed in Greene, R.L, The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1935). The inclusion of carols to St Thomas of Canterbury and St George are due to their strong nationalistic and political connection. The carols ‘England, be glad’ and ‘Though some saith’ are modified carols, in as much as there is no indication of the repetition of the burden. These carols have been included here as an example of carol development and modification.
Carols to Saint George and Saint Thomas of Canterbury

Saint George, although a particularly popular figure prior to the fifteenth century and seen as protector of the English, came to particular prominence in the early part of the fifteenth century when Henry V invoked him as the patron Saint of England at the battle of Agincourt in 1415. Many soldiers believed they had seen Saint George fighting in the battle for the English side, and as a result of English success the feast of St George was given principal status by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Archbishop Chichele, in the same year.\textsuperscript{379} There is one musically notated carol dedicated in its entirety to Saint George, ‘Enforce we us’ from the Egerton manuscript, a manuscript that is particularly politically charged, and will be addressed later in this chapter in detail. The carol reads:

\begin{center}
\textbf{Enforce we us with all our might}
\\
\textbf{To love Saint George our Lady knight.}
\\
Worship of virtue is the meed,
\\
And sueth him ay of right;
\\
To worship George then have we need,
\\
Which is our sov’reign lady’s knight.
\\
He kept the maid from dragon’s dread,
\\
And fraid all France and put to flight
\\
at Agincourt, the chronicle ye read;
\\
The French him see formost in fight.
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{379} For more detail on the cult of St George and what he came to represent in political terms, see: Good, Jonathan, \textit{The Cult of Saint George in Medieval England} (Michigan, 2009)
In his virtue he will us lead

Againes the fiend, the foul wight,

And with his banner overspread,

If we him love with all our might.380

This carol is written for two voices, one high and one low (although at points within the verse the voices overlap in pitch, which is not unusual in carol repertoire) and is typical in terms of the style of carols in this period. Egerton, as we have seen, employs two- and three-voice carols in almost equal measure.381 This carol has only one burden, typical of almost half the carols in this manuscript. Example 1 shows this piece in its entirety.

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381 For a table of voice use in the musically notated manuscripts see Chapter 1: 'The carol: musical features and previous scholarship', page 36.
Example 1: ‘Enforce we us’

Greene categorises this under the heading ‘carols of saints’, but due to Saint George’s position as protector of the English, and his supposed aid in defeating the French, this carol deserves political status. The importance of Saint George is depicted in the fifteenth-century manuscript GB-Lbl Add.18850, commonly known as the Bedford Hours, and seen in Example 2.

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382 Stevens, John, ed., Mediaeval Carols (London, 1970), 49
383 There is an additional carol without musical notation ‘Prey we to the Trinyte’ from GB-Ob Eng.poet.e.1 which mentions Saint George within its sixth stanza. This carol is not dedicated to the Saint in its entirety and is not overtly political therefore has not been included in this table. This carol is a Litany, and is discussed in further detail in Chapter 7, ‘But here the greatest melody arises without any physical instrument, when the angels minister and sing to Christ’: The Carol in Sermons and Late Medieval Worship. For a full transcription, see: Greene, R.L., The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1935), 212-213
This image from c. 1424 depicts the Duke of Bedford, brother to King Henry V, kneeling in prayer before St George, dressed in his armour. The cross of Saint George is being visibly held in the background. This page shows the importance of the Saint as a political figure. The Saint was also venerated in other lyrical and poetic forms of the time as the motet ‘Christe miles’ by John Cooke, most probably used for daily procession in the chapel royal, demonstrates. Robert Nosow writes:

The motetus voice addresses St George as the “Renowned soldier of Christ/.../who art the glory of all warriors.” It asks that he “Entreat mercy of the mother/of all grace,/ that she may bring help,/ May protect her country/and guard the King/ from the invasion of enemies.” The cogent imagery reflect the charged atmosphere during the wars with France...These lines explicate or gloss the tenor, which reads, “Defend
us Christ, from our enemies.”...Addressing both St. George and St. Mary in the final two stanzas, it goes on to urgently request peace/in our times.”

Both carol and motet portray Saint George as saviour and protector of England, and the placement of the motet within the chapel royal again establishes the prominence of the Saint as a political symbol of the nation.

Saint Thomas of Canterbury is also included as a politically charged saint due to his assassination at the hands of King Henry II’s knights in December 1170. Saint Thomas became an enormously popular saint, with more parish churches in England dedicated to him than any other. Example 3 shows the veneration of St Thomas in the early fifteenth century within York Minster; a testament to his enduring legacy during this period.

Example 3: Fifteenth-Century Image of St Thomas of Canterbury

Greene, as with the carols to Saint George, however, chooses not to place the extant carols of Saint Thomas within his political categorisation, but sets them out in a category of their own. The cult of St Thomas was still strong in the fifteenth century however, and one cannot deny the political undertones that go with this saint. As Helen Parish notes:

Within 50 years of his death, there was already evidence of some disquiet about Becket’s status as a saint. In a debate with Peter the Cantor in 1220, Roger the Norman had criticised the assumption that Becket had died a holy death for the

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386 Image from the aisle of the north choir, York Minster c.1415-20 Image freely available online at: http://vidimus.org/issues/issue-32/panel-of-the-month/
church, and proposed instead that he deserved to be damned for his traitorous behaviour towards the divinely appointed King, Henry II...In 1429, William Emyan, of Bristol alleged that Thomas Becket was no more of a Saint that William Wycliffe, while one Margery Backster denounced Becket as a liar and a coward whose miracles and prophesies were heresies.  

There is no denying the political undertones of cult of Saint Thomas; the eventual attempt by Henry VIII to erase his cult entirely due to his status as a traitor to the crown attests to this, and therefore for the purposes of this study, the carols of St Thomas must be included within the political carol categorisation.

There are three carols that survive to Saint Thomas of Canterbury: ‘Letare cantuaria’, ‘Clangat Tuba’ and Saint Thomas honour we’. ‘Saint Thomas honour we’ is found in the Egerton manuscript, and the remaining two are extant in the Ritson manuscript. The placement of the carol for Saint Thomas in Egerton re-enforces its position as a political carol, as it is found nestled amongst other carols that are unmistakeably political. The Ritson manuscript contains only three political carols out of a total of 44, and two of these carols are in honour of Saint Thomas. Both of the carols are labelled in the manuscript ‘sancto Thoma’, and no other carols to saints are found within this manuscript, thus perhaps showing a particular affiliation to him over other saints, not unexpected perhaps considering that within Exeter Cathedral, most probably connected to the Ritson manuscript, there hangs a fourteenth-century boss depicting his murder, and in the twelfth-century the saint was supposed to have appeared to the master of the choristers informing him that the Bishop, Bishop Bartholomew, was unwell, and instructed the choir to sing the Psalter in its entirety to aid his recovery. The carols do not sit near one another in the manuscript, but are placed amongst nativity carols and carols for the epiphany. Both carols are typical of the manuscript in terms of form and structure: both have two burdens, with burden one scored

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388 Parish, Helen, Monks, Miracles, And Magic: Reformation Representation of the Medieval Church (London, 2005), 95
389 This point will be expanded later in this chapter.
390 The remaining political carol in this manuscript is either in celebration of the truce with Scotland, or the Wars of the Roses; the true nature of its text is uncertain.
for two voices, and burden two for three. There is a difference in the use of language however, ‘Letare Cantuaria’ is written entirely in Latin and in translation reads:

Rejoice, O Canterbury,

In the victory of St. Thomas

Let the English nation rejoice

in praising the holy martyr,

For the feast day of the blessed Archbishop Thomas

now shines upon us,

While he lived,

his life blossomed

with the exercise of his virtues;

He showed justice to all people when they demanded it.

He worshipped God steadfastly,

While watching over his flock;

And he showed, as was most fitting,

That he was a servant of Christ. 392

The use of the phrase ‘English nation’ within this carol for Saint Thomas is particularly evocative. Both of these carols are found to be vandalised, most probably due to Henry VIII’s reformation, and his eradication of the worship of Saint Thomas. The popularity of St Thomas as a saint would suggest that many more carols dedicated to him may have existed that are now lost to us; indeed many other setting such as motets and masses may also now be lost. The existence of a large body of extant musical works dedicated to the saint and

collected together by Denis Stevens reveals the possibility of a larger corpus. As Denis Stevens notes however:

Without doubt, many compositions in honour of St. Thomas perished in the Middle Ages in the same way as other motets and Masses perished: they were considered old fashioned and joined the pile of discarded parchment in the bookbinder’s workshop. At a somewhat later stage, the Reformation made its own rather more deliberate contribution. But in spite of all this, enough remains to prove the enthusiasm and skill with which poets and composers sought to perpetuate the name of an unforgettable character in the history of the Western world.

The carols too then, have captured the essence of this ‘unforgettable character’, and make up only a small section of the surviving corpus of English (and continental) music dedicated to the saint.

The Political Carols of Egerton 3307

The majority of the carols in Table 27 are found in the impressive Egerton manuscript. A large manuscript, from circa 1450, the Egerton manuscript is comprised of two very distinct sections; the first containing processional music for use in Holy Week, and the second containing thirty-one carols plus three other songs with secular texts. The importance of this manuscript in terms of this study, is not only its inclusion of so many political texts, but that it contains the largest amount of political carols, extant with notation and without, that are found within any one manuscript, and that they are grouped together at the heart of the carols.

Egerton, in comparison to some other carol manuscripts from this period, is particularly well executed; this is no random notebook. The choice and grouping of these carols would

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395 GB-Lbl Egerton 3307
therefore appear to be deliberate. Its quality of scribal work, illuminations and sense of order would suggest its compilation for use in an establishment of some importance. Debates over its provenance have not yet come to any definitive conclusions; although the two main candidates for place of origin remain Meaux Abbey in Yorkshire, or the more southerly, St George’s Chapel in Windsor.\(^{396}\) Alternately, according to G. McPeek, there may indeed be a connection with the area of Hythe on the south east coast, rather than the previously thought village of Hythe in Yorkshire. McPeek suggests this alternative location due to the inclusion of the (non-political) carol ‘Ivy is Good’, which sits immediately before the group of political carols at the heart of the carols section, and includes in its final verse the name of ‘hye’ which could allude to this town. The final verse reads:

Where it taketh hold it keepeth fast
And strenketh it that is him by;
It keepeth wall from cost and waste,
As men may see all day at hye:
Ivy: I can tell no cause why
But we must love that gentle tree.\(^{397}\)

McPeek, noting the appropriateness of Hythe due to this geographical area being particularly well known for its ivy in the Middle Ages, writes:

there is another village which well could be the one meant in the carol, namely, Hythe, located on the coast seventy miles south-east of London. The connection of Hythe with the ruling houses of England has been a matter of record for many

\(^{396}\) For more detail on the debate over the provenance of this manuscript see: Schofield, B. ‘A Newly Discovered 15\(^{th}\) Century Manuscript of the English Chapel Royal’, \textit{Musical Quarterly}, 32 (1946), 509-36, and, Greene, R. ‘Two Medieval Manuscripts: Egerton 3307 and some University of Chicago Fragments’, \textit{Journal of the American Musicological Association}, 7 (1954), 1-34. Although both of these publications are from a number of decades ago, the debate has not moved on from these initial thoughts.

\(^{397}\) Stevens, John, \textit{Mediaeval Carols}, (London, 1970), 44
centuries. Moreover, the area round Hythe was noted for its sylvan beauty, and particularly for its profuse growth of ivy. Apparently it was something of a pleasure resort and has been visited frequently by the English royal court. In view of the known connection between Hythe and Henry V and VI in affairs of state, it is entirely possible that business as well as pleasure could have made the area well known to the Royal court and all those in any way closely connected with it. 398

Although alluding to a connection with Hythe, McPeek chooses not to explore this avenue further instead dismissing it as being of relevance only in that those attending St George’s Chapel in Windsor would possibly have known about Hythe and would therefore have understood its inclusion within the manuscript. However, could there be a possibility of a more local connection to the manuscript? Perhaps scholars are too eager to connect extant sources to the most prestigious locations and should also be looking at more provincial possibilities. For example, Hythe was certainly a town of importance in the Middle Ages, providing a port and no less than two castles, one of which, if a more local connection was established, may have proved to have been of interest; the castle of Saltwood. The Archbishop of Canterbury’s palace for a great majority of its life until the reign of Henry VII, Saltwood was a Bishop’s palace of some prominence, and contained within its walls its own chapel dedicated to the Saints Mary and Thomas of Canterbury, and housed its own resident priests:

King John, in his first year, restored the possession of it to the see of Canterbury, to be held of him in capite. From which time it became one of the palaces for the archbishops residence, and they appointed a constable for the chief government of it under them. And I find by the patent-rolls, that king Edward II. in his 19th year, was lodged in this castle. Archbishop Courtenay, who came to the see in the 5th year of king Richard II. beautified and enlarged it at a very considerable expence, and inclosed a park round it, making it his usual residence; and archbishop Chicheley

resided here anno 4 Henry V. as did at times several of his successors, till archbishop Warham, in the 22d year of king Henry VIII.\footnote{Parishes: Saltwood', The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent: Volume 8 (1799), pp. 218-231. URL: http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=63477&strquery=saltwood castle Date accessed: 19 July 2011.}

Is it therefore possible that this type of establishment could have been connected with a manuscript such as Egerton? It is certainly not impossible. McPeek notes the inclusion of the carol for Thomas of Canterbury as an unusual choice for inclusion at St George’s Chapel in Windsor:

One may question the appropriateness of a performance at Windsor of the song about Thomas a Becket.\footnote{McPeek, G.S, ed., The British Museum Manuscript GB-Lbl Egerton 3307 (London, 1963), 11}

This carol would however, be entirely appropriate in a chapel dedicated to him, and certainly would not be unexpected in the palace of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The lyrics of this carol read:

**Saint Thomas honour we,**

**thro whose blood Holy Church is made free.**

All Holy Church was but a thrall,
thro King and temporal lorde all,
he was slain in Christes hall
and set all thing in unity,
and set all thing in unity;
his death hath such auctority.

The King exiled him out of land,
the King exiled him out of land,
and took his good in his hand,
for bidding both free and bond
that no prayer for him should be,
that no prayer for him should be;
so fierce he shewed his cruelty.

All ben exiled that to him lang,
all ben exiled that to him lang,
women, children, old men among,
young babes that weeped instead of song;
Saint Thomas said; welcome ye be;
ilk land is now your own country.  

The overtly political nature of the carols within the Egerton manuscript would seem appropriate in a setting such as Saltwood, a castle that for much of its life ‘seems to have enjoyed an uneasy dual occupation between priests and prelates on the one side, and the noblemen or garrison commanders on the other’.  

The celebration of Henry the V and VI within the carols may also seem appropriate within this setting, not only due to its dual occupation, but also considering the Archbishop of Canterbury’s close connection with Henry V and the battle of Agincourt, where he was present at the King’s side. Archbishop Chichele, who was Archbishop until 1443, was also present at the siege of Rouen, negotiating the surrender of the city in 1419 on behalf of Henry V. The inclusion of secular pieces such as the drinking song ‘O Potores’, would have also been appropriate in such a setting; Christmas celebrations would have taken place with members of the clergy, military figures and members of the castle household. This would certainly have included women, rendering the carol ‘Comidentes convenite’ which specifically addresses women, to be particularly appropriate.

Much of the argument for St George’s Chapel as the place of origin for this manuscript is based around the inclusion of the processional hymn dedicated to St. George, ‘Salve festa dies’. McPeek argues that due to its inclusion in the liturgy and its placement with the other liturgical hymns ‘indicates the probability either of an establishment dedicated to St. George or a chapel in his honour within a large establishment.’ Unfortunately, no reference to any altar or dedication to St George has yet been found in relation to Saltwood; extant

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401 For a full transcription, including a musical setting see: Stevens, John, Mediaeval Carols, (London, 1970), 48  
402 Clark, Alan, Saltwood Castle (Leciester, 1975), 9  
information is scant on the castle and chapel. If a connection with Saltwood was indeed unattainable on this count, there could still perhaps be a connection with Canterbury itself; indeed Hythe was well known to the Archbishop and his fellow priests, the palace/castle of Saltwood being a favourite residence, and would have had significance to them in Canterbury celebrations. Whether Saltwood could have indeed been a possible location for this manuscript or not, the point here is that it is imperative that scholars look to provincial locations for extant manuscripts as well as royal courts, Abbeys and Cathedrals; less obvious locations might be less of a glamorous option, but may be just as valid.

Although the majority of the carols within the Egerton manuscript are centred upon the Feast of the Nativity, there are no less than seven carols that provide a commentary on English politics, and six of these carols are found grouped very closely together, from folios 60v to 64v. I would argue that in a manuscript as well executed and organised as Egerton that this grouping was no accident. The order of the carols in Egerton can be seen in Table 29. The seven stanza long carol ‘Saint Thomas honour we’, also sits within this group of political carols, and it could be argued, that its inclusion within the body of such a strong grouping of political texts confirms its presence there on a political level, and would suggest that the decision to give the carols of Saint Thomas political status within this thesis is justified. Certainly, a carol to Saint Thomas of Canterbury is not out of place in a carol section that predominantly celebrates Christmas; St Thomas’ feast day lies on the 29th of December and would therefore have been celebrated within the same period as the Nativity and New Year carols, but its position within the carols makes it appear to be of greater interest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topos</th>
<th>Folio Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nativity</td>
<td>folio 49</td>
<td>Tibi laus tibi gloria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nativity/political</td>
<td>Ff 49v-50</td>
<td>Princeps pacis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nativity</td>
<td>ff50v-51</td>
<td>David ex progenie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nativity</td>
<td>f 51v</td>
<td>Novo profusi gaudio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nativity</td>
<td>ff53v-54</td>
<td>Novus sol de virgine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nativity</td>
<td>f. 54</td>
<td>Sol occasum nesciens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Stephen</td>
<td>f. 55</td>
<td>The holy martyr Stephen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nativity</td>
<td>ff. 55v-57</td>
<td>Qui natus est de virgine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nativity</td>
<td>ff. 57v-58</td>
<td>Ave rex angelorum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nativity</td>
<td>ff.58v-59</td>
<td>Cum virtus magnifica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivy</td>
<td>ff.59v-60</td>
<td>Illuminare Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ivy is good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What also makes Egerton’s large group of political carols of such interest is that it is the largest extant gathering of political carols in any one manuscript of the fifteenth century. In all other carol manuscripts, no more than three political carols exist per manuscript. This inclusion of such a large group at the heart of the carol section therefore suggests a strong political slant to any Christmas festivities within the establishment Egerton was designed for; an establishment where the celebration of English politics and English monarchs would have seemed wholly appropriate alongside carols of the Nativity and the New Year. But how and why would carols such as these have been included in Christmas festivities; or were they not?

Table 29: The order of carols in Egerton
Political Carols in the Ritson Manuscript: the Political Carol in the Celebration of Christmas

Ritson, ’the most important indigenous musical source between the Old Hall manuscript and the Eton Choirbook’ is one manuscript that goes a little way to helping us understand the inclusion of this genre of carol in the celebration of the Christmas period. It dates from between 1460-1510, and contains a total of 44 carols, which are found in the earliest layer of the manuscript, as well as 43 other polyphonic compositions from a later period. Only three of these 44 carols are either political in nature or shows strong affiliation to an English saint: ‘Jesu for thy mercy’, ‘Letare Cantuaria’ and ‘Clangat Tuba’.

What is of particular interest in the carol section of this manuscript is the labelling, contemporary to the musical notation, of each piece. Each carol is labelled either, ‘in die nativitatis’, ‘de sancto Maria’, ‘de sancto Johanne’, ‘de innocentibus’, ‘in die circumcisionis’, ‘Sancta Stephani’, ‘de nativitate Domini’, ‘de sancto Thoma’”Epiphanie’, ‘ad placitum’ and ‘in fine nativitatis’. Only one carol is given no label at all, Salve, sancta parens, a carol for the Virgin. Jesu for thy mercy, a political carol, which as Greene notes, ‘may refer to the danger to the English truce with Scotland in 1499’ or ‘Another possibility is that the carol is of earlier date, and that the strife of Lancaster and York is the subject’, is given the same instructions as those carols of moral counsel, and is clearly labelled ‘ad placitum’ translating as ‘at pleasure’. This labelling of the political carol within Ritson as ‘ad placitum’ may allude to the fact that there were no hard and fast rules for the inclusion of secular and indeed political, carols, that they were performed within the Christmas celebrations as the instruction reads ‘at pleasure’.

The two carols for the veneration of Saint Thomas are labelled as ‘de sancto Thoma’.

‘Letare, Cantuaria’, which talks of an English nation, with verse one reading ‘Gens Anglorum gaudeat in laudem pii martiris’ [‘Let the English nation rejoice in praising the holy martyr’], is

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404 Lane, Eleanor and Sandon, Nick, The Ritson Manuscript, liturgical compositions, Votive Antiphons, Te Deum (np,2001), i
405 For more discussion of provenance and dating see: Lane, Eleanor and Sandon, Nick, The Ritson Manuscript, liturgical compositions, Votive Antiphons, Te Deum (np,2001), Stevens, John, Mediaeval Carols (London, 1970), xxii and 125, and, Stevens, John, Early Tudor Songs and Carols(London, 1975), xvii-xix
406 Greene, R.L. The Early English Carol (Oxford, 1935), 443
situated between two carols for the Nativity, again suggesting the compiler of the manuscript thought a carol such as this was appropriate within the celebration of the nativity. 407

The non-musically notated manuscript GB-Lbl Additional 31042 (the London Thornton Manuscript), also offers a substantial, and important clue to the inclusion and performance of the political carol within Christmas celebrations.408 ‘The Rose es the fairest flour of alle’, a carol in which, ‘The allusion is to Henry V and the Agincourt campaign’409, is found with a heading that reads ‘A Carolle for Crystynmesse’, thus indicating very clearly that a political carol such as this was perfectly acceptable within Christmas celebrations, and that it was perhaps the form, one that most probably encouraged group singing with the constant repetition of a burden, that was important for performance in these celebrations and not necessarily the textual content.

The reference to an ‘English nation’ in the carol ‘Letare, Cantuaria’ is interesting, as minority of history scholars have claimed that England had developed no real sense of nation or nationalism until the late sixteenth century. Krishan Kumar for example, argues that:

> The medieval world was at once too cosmopolitan and too particular, too international and too local, to give rise to a strong sense of nationhood...It is the basis of the rejection...of the idea that anything like a real sense of English nationhood or English nationalism...existed, or could exist in the medieval period, from the seventh or eighth to the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries. However strong and well defined the English state became, that is a different matter from arguing that a complementary sense of common nationhood developed.410

Whether scholars such as Kumar are accurate in their assertion that a full sense of nationality had not truly begun to be formed in the sixteenth century, elements of the growth of such a nationhood seems to be appearing within the political carols of the

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407 For a full transcription of this carol see: Stevens, John, Mediaeval Carols (London, 1970), 84 , and for a full translation from Latin to English see: Stevens, John, Mediaeval Carols (London, 1970),145
408 For more detailed information on this manuscript see: Thompson, John, J., Robert Thornton and the London Thornton Manuscripts: British Library MS Additional 31042 (Cambridge, 1987)
410 Kumar, Krishan, The making of English National Identity (Cambridge, 2003), 90
fifteenth century; from the use of the phrase ‘English nation’ in Letare cantuaria, or the strong lyrics of the Agincourt carol with its burden repeating the words ‘Deo gracias Anglia, redde pro Victoria!’ ['England give thanks to God for victory']. The carol ‘Anglia, tibi turbidas’ has a burden and four stanzas which translates as:

**England, hope for light after the confusion of darkness**

The wickedness of conspirators
and the armed might of tyrants
are making a confused retreat;
with sure confidence, hope for light after darkness.

Let friendship increase
and justice take root;
Let false-dealing flee into exile;
With no sadness of mind, hope...

Let the glowing torch of greed
and the stinking dregs of lust be purged;
And, sweeping away enticements
with the briar of fear, hope...

Let the despoiling of poor persons
and crimes of robbery
seek eternal hiding-places;
And, solaced by the (good) things of old, hope...

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This carol, although not using the word nation, is still referring to England in some sense of unity, as something recognisable, as well as a unified force against tyranny and conspirators. McPeek describes it as applying:

quite as aptly to the period from 1429 to 1444 as to the Wars of the Roses. During that period, which started with the advent of Joan of Arc and ended with the betrothal in 1444 of Henry VI to Margaret of Anjou...the continental war went very badly for the English...From 1444 to the outbreak of the Wars of the Roses in 1453, England enjoyed comparative peace...Therefore the text applies either before late 1443...or after 1453.412

Whether the text refers to the aftermath of the continental war or indeed to the Wars of the Roses, it text is powerful and pleading; making a passionate plea for times of turbulence to now be passed, and for friendship to now be established, wither between supporters of the houses of York and Lancaster, or between England and Scotland.

In the carol ‘Benedicte Deo’, we also get a sense of England as a collective body in comparison to other nations, and perhaps even a sense of England as an ‘empire’ if one examines the text of the final stanza. The carol translates from Latin as:

Bless the Lord God;

Praise him in all generations.

Angels and heavens, powers and seas and all works,
bless the Lord

Sun, moon and stars, dew, fire and cold, darkness and lightening,
bless the Lord

All moving things that live in the world in your appointed stations,
bless the Lord

England and France, and all empires, throughout all climes, bless the Lord.413

Through just these few carols, we can see a collective idea of nationality starting to emerge in the use of phrase such as ‘English nation’ or the perhaps subtle reference to England as an ‘empire’, or even just in the addressing of England as though it is a definitive, collective body of people as in ‘Anglia tibi turbidas’ when it calls ‘England, hope for light after the confusion of darkness’; a call for peace and unification after the civil war.

**Henry V and Agincourt**

The most famous of the political carols is first found, chronologically, within the Trinity Roll, and then in the slightly later Selden manuscript. ‘Deo Gracias Anglia’ (popularly known as the ‘Agincourt Carol’), notated as the seventh carol of thirteen in the Trinity Roll, is the first extant polyphonic political carol in existence and as with the Egerton carols, sits at the heart of the manuscript. It contains a total of five stanzas that provide an account of the battle of Agincourt in 1415, celebrating the success of King Henry V. Agincourt and Henry V’s exploits proved to become a popular theme in the writing of the political carol with no less than three dedicated entirely to him, and one recounting the battle; three notated, and one without musical notation. Indeed, ‘Deo Gracias Anglia’ could be seen as the forerunner to the fifteenth-century political carols that followed. However, Helen Deeming notes that:

> If the surviving manuscripts are to be believed, the carol never achieved widespread fame within the carol repertory but perhaps that was inevitable, given its topical text.414

This sentiment may echo truly for the entirety of the political carol genre. ‘Deo Gracias Anglia’ is in fact the only extant political carol with notation to have a concordance in a

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414 Deeming, Helen, ‘The sources and origin of the “Agincourt Carol”’, *Early Music* 35 (2007), 34
second manuscript, and as Helen Deeming asserts, the topical content may indeed be to blame. To put this in context somewhat; of the 119 polyphonic carols of the fifteenth century (up to and including Ritson), 42 (35%) have musical concordances, and 28 (23%) have textual concordances. The transmission of carols amongst the fifteenth-century manuscripts therefore, is quite substantial. However, it may also be possible that this first rather extraordinary political carol recounting the important battle at Agincourt, may have been the inspiration for many of the other political carols that emerged in its wake; many of these recount, at some point within their texts, the battle of Agincourt and the merits of Henry V. The second two musically notated carols are both to be found in the same manuscript; Egerton. ‘Enforce we us’, discussed previously in terms of the political nature of Saint George in the carols, and the Latin carol ‘Exultavit Cor’ are found beside one another within the manuscript. ‘Exultavit Cor’ is the only fully Latin carol on this theme; ‘Enforce we us’ and ‘The Rose is the fayreste flour of alle’ are both written in the vernacular, and ‘Deo Gracias’ has a Latin burden juxtaposed alongside English/Latin verses. Like ‘Enforce we us’, ‘Exultavit cor’ is also written for two voices, with a single burden.

The only non-notated carol to Henry V ‘The Rose is the fairest flour of alle’ is allegorical, and never actually names Henry as its subject, referring to Henry V as the ‘Rose’ and France as the ‘Flour-de-Lyse’. In stanza two it clearly states the sentiment of English supremacy over France, stating, ‘Therefore me thynke the Flour-de-Lyse Scholde wirshipie the Rose of Ryse’.

Two other carols allude to Henry VI and his short reign, with one of these, A, perles pryns, to the we pray’ by John Audelay, celebrating the achievements of his father, Henry V, more than Henry VI himself; perhaps unsurprisingly, considering he was ten years old when he was crowned, and the subsequent disinterest in showed in the affairs of empire and warfare, but perhaps also due to this carol’s composition being early in his reign. The second carol, ‘Princeps serenissime’ is an offering in song to the King.

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415 For a full transcription of this carols see: Greene, R.L., The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1935), 290
The Political Carols of The Fayrfax Manuscript

It is not until c. 1500, and the contents of the Fayrfax Manuscript, that the next significant group of political carols is to be found. There are four carols in this manuscript that are political in content; ‘I love, I love and whom love thee’, ‘From stormy windes’, ‘This day day dawes’ and ‘Enforce yourself as Goddes knight’. The Fayrfax Manuscript really marks a change in style for the late medieval carol. There is less of the older melismatic style of writing, and more syllabic setting, and voice alternation is used more freely throughout the verses. There is also a return to the simpler single burden setting of the earlier carols.\(^{416}\) The manuscript itself, although its purpose is unknown, would most likely have been for use in courtly circles. It contains a variety of song types and carols. Three of the political carols are placed closely together in the manuscript, suggesting the grouping of a similar material; ‘From stormy windes’, ‘This day day dawes’ and ‘Enforce yourself as Goddes knight’. This echoes the grouping together of the political carols in Egerton too, perhaps suggesting they were deliberately placed in close proximity to one another. ‘From stormy windes’ is a carol calling for the protection of Prince Arthur (Henry VII’s son, who died in 1502). This carol really draws attention to the divine right of the English king to rule, not only England, but ‘Britayne...Castile and Spain’,\(^{417}\) due of course to his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, and is a perfect example of the belief of the English monarchy of their rights to rule abroad at this time.

The carol ‘Enforce yourself as Goddes Knight’ is of doubtful subject; the carol could be in homage to Henry VII or Henry VIII. Its close proximity in the manuscript to the carol ‘From stormy windes’ might however suggest it too is for Henry VII. Prince Arthur may be another possible contender for the subject of this carol, but due to the carol’s reference to the ‘sovereign’ rather than the Prince, it would seem unlikely. The text of this carol reads:

**Enforce yourself as Goddes knight**

**To strengthen your commons in their right**

**Enforce yourself as Goddes knight**

\(^{416}\) See Chapter 1: ‘The Late Medieval Carol: musical features and previous scholarship’ for a summary of musical style in the carols.

\(^{417}\) The full transcription of this carol can be found in: Stevens, John, *Early Tudor Songs and Carols* (London, 1975), 135-137
To strengthen your commons in their right

Sov’reign lord in earth
most excellent,
Whom God hath chose our guide to be,
With giftes great and evident
Of martial power
And also high dignity,
Sith it is so, now let your labour be,
Enforcing yourself as Goddes knight
To strengthen your commons in their right.

God hath gif you of his goodness
Wisdom with strength and sov’reignty
All misdone thinges to redress,
And specially hurtes of thy commonality,
Which cry and call unto your majesty.
In your person all their hopes is pight
To have recover of their unright.418

This carol reflects the changing style of the genre by the end of the fifteenth century and beginning of the sixteenth century. It employs only one burden, but this burden is shortened on its final performance after the second verse; a choice of structure echoed in a number of carols in this manuscript. The piece is in duple time, again typical of the change of style in carol form and structure at this time, a change that continues into the carols of the Henry VIII manuscript. As with the carols of Egerton, there is no marked difference in musical form or style between the political carols of the manuscript and any other carol. It is simply the choice of text that separates them.

418 This transcription is taken from Stevens, John, ed., Early Tudor Songs and Carols (London, 1975), 144-145, where a musical transcription is also available. For an alternative transcription of the text only, see: Greene, R.L., The Early English Carols, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1977), 266-267.
The final two political carols in this manuscript take the War of the Roses as their subject matter. ‘I love, I love and whom love thee’ celebrates the end of the war as well as the birth of Henry VII’s child, although it does not specify which child, although perhaps the carol for the protection of Prince Arthur could suggest that this too is for his birth. ‘This day day dawes’ is also in relation to Henry VII, this time celebrating his Queen, Elizabeth of York, describing her as ‘The lily white rose’. 419 This carol borrows material from a popular song. Stevens suggests this popular song is used in the burden. 420

Language in the Political Carols

Unlike the macaronic ‘Deo Gracias Anglia’ with its Latin burden and English stanzas, the majority of political carols are written in the vernacular. None of them use the French language and only two are macaronic; both employing Latin burdens and English stanzas. A break-down of the language of the political carols can be seen in Table 30. The Egerton political carols favour Latin, with five of the seven using the language, and only two in English. In fact, all the extant Latin political carols are only found in Egerton. Whether there was a particular reason for this choice is unknown, but if Stevens is correct in his proclamation that the carols were ‘an ornament in a ceremony’, 421 perhaps the choice of language in the political carols was in order to adorn that ceremony appropriately, and give these carols a higher status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political carols with musical notation</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Political carols with no musical notation</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deo Gracias Anglia</td>
<td>Macaronic</td>
<td>Hay, hay, hay, hay!</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latin B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English V</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

419 The full transcription of this carol can be found in: Stevens, John, *Early Tudor Songs and Carols* (London, 1975), 138-139
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin text</th>
<th>English text</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Princeps pacis</td>
<td>The rose is the fairest flour of alle</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglia, tibi turbidas</td>
<td>A, Perles Pryns, to thee we pray</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benedicte Deo</td>
<td>A, a,a Edwardus Dei gracia</td>
<td>Macaronic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Thomas honour we</td>
<td>Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforce we us</td>
<td>Now is the Rose of Rone grown</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exultavit cor</td>
<td>Though sum sayeth</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princes Serenissime</td>
<td>Sing ’vp’ hart</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesu, for they mercy</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letare Cantuaria</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clangat Tuba</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love, I love and whom love thee</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From stormy windes</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This day day dawes</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforce yourself as Goddes knight</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Though sum sayeth</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiles life or breath</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England, be glad</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 30: Language of the political carols

These ceremonies may have encouraged communal singing, particularly in the burdens of the carols. ‘Exultavit Cor’, a carol giving thanks to God for helping Henry V in battle, seems to encourage this with the burden exclaiming ‘My heart has rejoiced in the Lord; now let this assembly sing together’. This carol is only in two parts throughout and is written with a single burden which is common also to the two carols either side of it in the manuscript; ‘Enforce we us’, dedicated to St George and his preservation of the English in battle at

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422 English translation from: Stevens, John, ed. Medieval Carols (London, 1970), 144
Agincourt, and the serene and beautiful ‘Princeps serenissime’ which alludes to a dedication to Prince Henry VI. A call to sing is also evident in the burden of the fifteen-stanza carol found in IR-Dtc D.4.18 which gives a full account of the battle of Towton in 1461 from the point of view of a Yorkist supporter.\footnote{423} The burden reads:

Now is the Rose of Rone grown to a gret honoure;

Therefor sing we eurerychone, ‘I blessed be that floure.’\footnote{424}

This call to sing may give us reason to believe that the ceremonies or festivities these carols were being used in were inclusive of both performer and audience/participants. This could of course refer only to the members of the choir, but the possibility that it is a wider call to those present remains. Indeed, it is not only within the political carol genre that the call to sing together is evident, but across many others. What better way to nurture a sense of a unified culture and nation than to sing of such political events together?

One would perhaps assume that the political carols would favour the vernacular as a reflection of the growing connection between the English language and national identity. However, there is a chronological advancement of this seen in the manuscripts. Once we reach the political carols of the Henry VIII manuscript, the use of Latin has disappeared; perhaps an indication of the strength of the English language at this point of the early sixteenth century, or perhaps as a reflection of use. Ritson, for example, with its connection to Exeter Cathedral and its inclusion of sacred material for use in the liturgy would suggest ecclesiastical environments for performance, therefore the inclusion of Latin would be more appropriate than for the courtly entertainments of the Henry VIII manuscript. The compilers and composers of the music of Ritson too, men of the church, would be of a very different ilk to those compiling music for non-ecclesiastical performance at court; men such as William Cornysh. Cornysh was, ‘involved in the production and performance of ‘disguisings’ and pageants and revels in the reign of Henry VII and on into the reign of Henry VIII when he became Master of the Chapel.’\footnote{425} Although men such as Cornysh were composing sacred and secular music in both Latin and English, perhaps the use of English in the political carols

\footnote{423} For more detail see, Greene, R.L, ed. The Early English Carols, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1977), 477-478
\footnote{424} Greene, R.L, ed. The Early English Carols, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1977), 260
\footnote{425} Salter, Elisabeth, Six Renaissance Men and Women: Innovation, Biography and Cultural Creativity (Aldershot, 2007), 98
of the Henry VIII manuscript would suggest their use outside of religious ceremony or acts of worship.

**The Henry VIII Manuscript and the Political Carol**

The Henry VIII manuscript has been explored within other chapters, most notably in chapter six; addressing the female-centred carols within it. There are however, a number of political carols within this manuscript, surviving with musical notations, which need to be addressed.

Deitrich Helms proposed that this manuscript could possibly have been an instructional manuscript for royal children.426 If this is so, then the choice of text would also have been of importance when selecting pieces to include. The political carols in this manuscript number three out of 12 carols.427 ‘Though sum sayeth’, ‘While life or breath’ and ‘England, be glad’. One carol is written by Henry VIII, ‘Though sum sayeth’, one is about Henry VIII through the eyes of his first wife, ‘While life or breath’ and the final one, ‘England be glad’ celebrates the invasion of France by England in 1513. These texts all portray Henry in an excellent light: as lover, warrior, composer and intellectual, thus painting him in a heroic light for any royal children studying the manuscript.

The carol ‘Though sum sayeth’ has provoked debate as to whether it is a carol or a refrain song. Greene classifies it as a carol, however, Stevens believes that he could be mistaken in this classification due to the confusion of signs given in the music in the original manuscript. Although its form has not been agreed upon by scholars, the possibility remains that it is in carol form, and therefore it will continue to be included in this study.428 The text of this possible carol, according to Greene, reads:

**Though sum sayeth that yougth rulyth me,**

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427 Of these twelve carols, six are classified by John Stevens as ‘modified carols’. The modified carols still retain a burden, but evidence for the repetition of this burden is lacking.

I trust in age for to tarry;
God and my right and my dewte,
Frome them shall I neuer vary,
Though sum sayeth that youg[t]h rulyth me.

Pastymes of youg[t]h sum
tyme among
None can sey but necessary;
I hurt no man; I do no wrong;
I loue trew wher l dyd mary.

I pray you all that aged be,
How well dyd ye your youg[t]h carry?
I think sum wars of ych degre
Therin a wager lay dar I!

Then some dyscusse that hens
we must;
Pray we to God and seynt Mary
That all amend, and here an end;
Thus sayeth the Kyng, the Eighth Harry.  

Although this piece alludes to being written by Henry, one must tread with caution and be wary in accepting evidence of his authorship as definitive. As in the exploration of the female-voiced carols, one can never be certain that voice in the text is the same voice as the writer. The use of ‘God as my right’ in the burden is a direct reference to England’s royal

430 Scholars believe that this piece could well be by Henry due to compositional similarities to other pieces assigned to him (such as phrasing).
motto which reads ‘Dieu et mon droit’.\footnote{Greene, R.L., The Early English Carols (oxford, 1935), 444} The use of this phrase reminds the listener, or reader, of Henry’s divine right to rule.

The second carol, one which scholars have not disputed its form, ‘While life or breath’ by Cornish, is conveyed through the eyes of Henry’s first wife, Catherine of Aragon.\footnote{For a full transcription of this carol with musical notation, see: Stevens, John, ed., Music at the Court of Henry VIII (London, 1962), 40} In this carol, Henry is portrayed as the chivalric lover, warrior and proficient horseman. He is described as a ‘chieften of a warriour’ and proficient in tournaments, apparently making ‘Six course at the ring...Of which four times he did take’. In terms of character, he is generously described as having a ‘cheerful countenance’ and ‘So many virtues of given of grace’ and we are to ‘Behold his favour and his face. His personage most goodliest!’. He is portrayed as perfect in every way, holding all the best attributes admired in a man. This carol, as with others within the manuscript, only has musical notation for the burden, not for the stanzas. It is fairly typical of the compositional style of the other carols in the manuscript; mainly syllabic text setting with short melismas at the ends of phrases, and particularly at the end. The music begins and ends in all three voices on G, and also concludes most of the phrases, with exception of the first phrase which ends of two D’s and an F in the top part. This use of unison or octave finals is common in the music of this manuscript, and works well in this piece, giving a sense of simplicity to a text that portrays a pure love by a woman for her King.
Example 4: ‘While life or breath’

The final political carol from this manuscript, ‘England, be glad’ survives with musical notation for both the burden and the stanzas, which could suggest this was a less familiar musical setting than other carols, or just perhaps that the compiler wanted to demonstrate this composition in its entirety for instructional reasons, if Helms’s conjecture that this manuscript was compiled as a tutor book for royal children is correct. The carol refers to the invasion of France in 1513 by Henry and his army. This invasion was a success for Henry, with the French fleeing and spurring their horses away from the battle, which could be the reason for the lines ‘With spears and shields on goodly horses light, Bows and arrows to put them all to flight to put them all to flight.’ Alternatively, due to its use of the present

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433 Stevens, John, Stevens, John, ed., Music at the Court of Henry VIII (London, 1962), 40
434 Greene does not include this carol in his compilation due to its modified form (the verse refrain consists of the second half of the burden).
435 This battle is commonly known as the ‘Battle of the Spurs’.
436 A full transcription can be found in: Stevens, John, ed., Music at the Court of Henry VIII (London, 1962), 74-75
tense, the carol could have been written before the battle. As Stevens notes, Henry was ‘accompanied by the Chapel Royal, travelling as part of the household’\textsuperscript{437} therefore, the carol could have been sung on route to France within the entertainments of the household; this would make the text of the burden a motivational device to the travelling Chapel Royal; the burden reads:

\begin{quote}
England, be glad! pluck up thy lusty heart!

Help now thy king, thy king,

And take his part, and take his part!\textsuperscript{438}
\end{quote}

We certainly know that Henry had a number of musicians with him on the 1513 campaign. Theodor Dumitrescu notes that due to Henry’s heavy involvement in the campaign (he personally led his troops), it meant:

the inclusion of a significant number of retainers in the journey; along with close to 600 household servants and a chapel of 115 persons, over ten minstrels and eight trumpeters attended on Henry during the war...an additional number of German drummers and fifers were hired, some of whom stayed on afterwards for years at the English court.\textsuperscript{439}

It is possible then, that a carol such as ‘England, be glad’ could have been performed on campaign to entertain the king and his household, and promote a sense of a unified purpose and national pride among the travellers. The text has an uplifting sentiment coupled with a rousing three voice musical setting, making use of imitative phrasing and fast moving melismatic phrase endings.

\textsuperscript{437} Stevens, John, ed., \textit{Music at the Court of Henry VIII} (London, 1962), xvii
\textsuperscript{438} Stevens, John, ed., \textit{Music at the Court of Henry VIII} (London, 1962), 74
\textsuperscript{439} Dumitrescu, Theodor, \textit{The Early Tudor Court and International Musical Relations} (Aldershot, 2007), 36
Example 5: England be glad

Stevens, John, ed., *Music at the Court of Henry VIII* (London, 1962), 74-75
There are no other carols that survive that address this same campaign, although there is another song, in canon form, within the same manuscript which does: ‘Pray we to God’. This canon also talks of the campaign in the present tense. It is set for three voices, and reads:

1. Pray we to God that all may guide
   That for our king so to provide
2. To send him power to his courage
   He may achieve this great voyage;
3. Now let us sing this round all three;
   Saint George grant him the victory!  

Example 6: Pray we us

This piece and the carol sit side by side in the manuscript, not I would imagine accidentally, and may even have been by the same composer (although both pieces are anonymous); perhaps written by a member of the chapel travelling with Henry or, although less likely, one of the ten minstrels also recorded as travelling with the household.  

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441 Stevens, John, ed., *Music at the Court of Henry VIII* (London, 1962), 75
442 Stevens, John, ed., *Music at the Court of Henry VIII* (London, 1962), 75
443 There is currently no evidence from this period of minstrels composing written polyphony.
Music of the Political Carols

The defining feature of the carol, that which sets it apart from other forms, is undoubtedly the use of a burden sung at the beginning of the piece and repeated after each stanza. The burdens, believed to be a remnant of the carol’s previous incarnation as a French dance song, are a matter of debate among scholars, many of whom have dismissed them, ‘believing them to add little to otherwise unified poems’. However, as Greene notes, their importance ‘is more than a irrelevant exclamatory chorus, such as it often is in folk-song, where its structural importance wholly overshadows its meaning’. Instead the burden is an integral part of the structure and ‘so well do they sum up the matter of the stanzas that a classification of the carols by subjects could almost be made from examination of the burdens alone’. They serve to create structure and indeed impact, re-enforcing musical and textual ideas.

Many carols, in particular the early ones, are written with a single burden, however the first notated political carol, ‘Deo Gracias Anglia’, is only one of two carols within the Trinity Roll, which contains thirteen in total, to have a double burden, a rarity it seems at this point in the development of the carol. Helen Deeming suggests that this use of a double burden may be a reference to:

An earlier monophonic version... incorporated into a three voice setting? This suggestion would explain the presence of the opening unison phrase-serving as a reminder of the original carol and the spectacular circumstances in which it had first been heard.

In the later carols of the Egerton manuscript however, we have seen that double burdens become increasingly more common and the later carols of the Ritson manuscript nearly all

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444 Garner, Lori Ann, ‘Contexts of Interpretation in the Burdens of Middle English Carols’, *Neophilologus*, 84 (2000), 467
447 Deeming, Helen, ‘The sources and origin of the “Agincourt Carol”’, *Early Music* 35 (2007), 30
contain double burdens, including ‘Jesu for thy mercy’. Table 31 illustrates the use of single and double burdens within the political carols of this period.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Carols with musical notation</th>
<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>Manuscript date</th>
<th>No. of Burdens</th>
<th>No. of Stanzas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deo Gracias Anglia</td>
<td>Trinity Roll 1400-1450 Selden b26</td>
<td>1425-1440</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princeps pacis</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Egerton 3307</td>
<td>1430-44</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglia tibi turbidas</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Egerton 3307</td>
<td>1430-44</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benedicte Deo</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Egerton 3307</td>
<td>1430-44</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Thomas honour we</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Egerton 3307</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforce we us</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Egerton 3307</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exultavit cor</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Egerton 3307</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princeps serinissime</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Egerton 3307</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesu for thy mercy</td>
<td>Add.5665 1460-1510 Add. 5465 c.1500</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I loure, I loure, and whom loure ye?</td>
<td>Add. 5465 c.1500</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From stormy wyndis</td>
<td>Add. 5465 c.1500</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforce yourself as Goddis Kyght</td>
<td>Add. 5465 c.1500</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This day day dawes</td>
<td>Add. 5465 c.1500</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Though sum sayeth</td>
<td>Add. 31922 c.1520</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiles life or breath</td>
<td>Add. 31922 c.1520</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England, be glad</td>
<td>Add. 31922 c.1520</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 31: Use of single and double burdens in the political carols

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448 A more detailed discussion of the use of single and double burdens is found within Chapter two: ‘The carol: an isolated genre?’
Whether with a single or double burden, the political carols, particularly in the quantity that we find them in Egerton, with their rousing texts and music, must have given performers and listeners alike a strong sense of the nationalist pride they were designed to convey; a sense of Englishness in song with the repeating single or double burdens and the continual re-enforcement of their message both textually and musically after each stanza. The rousing ‘Deo Gracias Anglia’ with its double burden, both of which can be seen in Example 7, declaring ‘England, give thanks to God for victory’ providing the perfect example of a political carol designed for maximum impact. This declaration, sung first in unison, is immediately followed by the repetition of the text sung to a second melody in three parts, both of which begin and end on D (as opposed to the verse which begins on D but ends on G). This structural device provides a potent musical impact, and would certainly have gained the attention of any listener. This use of a section of unison in the burden is unique to the carols of the fifteenth century; up to and including those of the Ritson manuscript.

Example 7: Burdens 1 and 2 of ‘Deo Gracias Anglia’ 450

449 Although the carols from GB-Lbl Additional. 5465 and GB-Lbl Additional 31922 are listed as having one burden, it is important to note that the burdens when repeated in these carols are often altered slightly in terms of melody or the distribution between parts, unlike the burdens of the chronologically earlier carols that repeat the burden as it was written the first time. Additionally, ‘To England be glad’ and ‘Whiles life or breath’ are modified carols; their burdens are not necessarily repeated at all, or material from the burdens are found elsewhere.

450 Deeming, Helen, ‘The sources and origin of the “Agincourt Carol” ’, Early Music 35 (2007), 27
Each stanza regales the listener with another part of the tale of the battle, ending with a thanks to God, and what could be seen as an invitation to sing with the final line of the last stanza reading, ‘Then may we call and safely sing’ before concluding with the final repetition of both burdens. 451

‘Anglia tibi turbidas’ also employs, like ‘Deo Gracias Anglia’, a double burden. The first burden is scored for two parts, followed immediately by a second burden using an identical text but scored for three parts; a similar musical scoring to ‘Deo Gracias Anglia’, and a musical structure that sees continually growing popularity within the carols throughout the fifteenth century. The burdens of ‘Anglia tibi turbidas’ can be seen in Example 8.

Example 8: Burden one and burden two of ‘Anglia tibi turbidas’ 452

In examining the political carols from a purely musical perspective, there is no evidence of any great difference in form or structure from any other carol genre. As we can see in Table 32, they tend to favour finals D, C, F and G, and mensurally the earlier carols are all in triple time, with the later carols of the Fayrfax and Henry VIII manuscripts in duple time, as would be expected. The earlier carols show no particularly outstanding differences in the

452 Stevens, John, ed., Mediaeval Carols (London, 1970), 45
employment of first and last notes, but the later carols start to display slightly more complexity, in line with other songs in the later manuscripts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Carols with musical notation</th>
<th>Start/end notes burden</th>
<th>Start/end notes stanzas</th>
<th>Mensuration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deo Gracias Anglia</td>
<td>B1 – D-D</td>
<td>D-G</td>
<td>Triple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B2 - D-D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princeps pacis</td>
<td>B1. C-C</td>
<td>G-F</td>
<td>Triple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B2. C-C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglia tibi turbidas</td>
<td>B1. C-F</td>
<td>C-F</td>
<td>Triple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B2. C-F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benedicte Deo</td>
<td>B. A-D</td>
<td>D-D</td>
<td>Triple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Thomas honour we</td>
<td>B1. D-D</td>
<td>D-D</td>
<td>Triple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B2. D-D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforce we us</td>
<td>G-D</td>
<td>D-D</td>
<td>Triple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exultavit cor</td>
<td>F-C</td>
<td>C-F</td>
<td>Triple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princeps serinissime</td>
<td>C-G</td>
<td>C-G</td>
<td>Triple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesu for thy mercy</td>
<td>B1. A-G</td>
<td>G-G</td>
<td>Triple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B2. A-G</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I loue, I loue, and whom loue ye?</td>
<td>C-G/C</td>
<td>G/B-G/D</td>
<td>Duple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From stormy wyndis</td>
<td>C-FCF</td>
<td>C/F-D</td>
<td>Duple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforce yourself as Goddis Kynght</td>
<td>G-F/A/C</td>
<td>C/E-C</td>
<td>Duple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This day day dawes</td>
<td>C-C/E/G</td>
<td>C/E-G/B/D</td>
<td>Duple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Though sum sayeth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiles life or breath</td>
<td>G-G</td>
<td>No Notation</td>
<td>Duple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England, be glad</td>
<td>FFC-CGE</td>
<td>G/D-F/A/C</td>
<td>Duple</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 32: Musical features of the political carols

It is only their texts, rather than the employment of any particular structural or musical content, that sets them apart from the non-political carols. Indeed, it may be this enduring
similarity of style to other carols types, such as the Nativity and New Year carols, that continue to reinforce the argument for their ready inclusion within Christmas ceremonies and festivities.

**Political Carols with no Musical Notation**

This chapter has predominantly focused upon the extant political carols that survive with musical notation. However, there are a number of other political carols that are extant without: seven in total. These carols are listed in Table 33.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carol</th>
<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hay, hay, hay, hay!</td>
<td>GB-Ctc-R.4.20</td>
<td>The death of Archbishop Scrope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rose es the fayreste flour of alle</td>
<td>GB-Lbl-Add. 31042</td>
<td>Henry V and Agincourt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A, Perles Pryns, to the we pray</td>
<td>GB-Obl Douce 302</td>
<td>King Henry VI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A,a,a, Edwardeus Dei gracia</td>
<td>GB-Lambeth 306</td>
<td>King Edward IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Add. 19046</td>
<td>War of the Roses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now is the Rose of Rone growen to a gret honoure</td>
<td>IRL-Dtc D.4.18</td>
<td>Battle of Towton (York)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syng ‘vp’ hart</td>
<td>GB-Lca 1.7</td>
<td>Coronation procession of Edward VI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 33: Political carols extant with no musical notation

Interestingly, with the exception of the carol ‘A, Perles Pryns, to the we pray’ in GB-Obl Douce 302 which contains over forty carols and, ‘Hay, hay, hay, hay!’ in GB-Ctc R.4.20 which contains two carols, the political carols with no musical notation survive in manuscripts where they are the only carol. They are also all concerned with different subjects.

Also of interest, is that more political carols survive with notation than without, which considering that the weighting is usually contrary to this, is unusual. On examination of the sources of these notated political carols however, one can observe that that the vast bulk of these carol survive in three main manuscripts: Egerton 3307 (containing six), the Henry VIII
Manuscript (containing three) and the Ritson Manuscript (containing four). This is contrary therefore to the single political carol with no musical notation found dispersed within a selection of manuscripts. These groupings of musically notated political carols were it would seem, as previously discussed, collected together in these manuscripts for use in appropriate establishments.

Conclusion

The exploration of the political carols, both with and without musical notation, within this chapter has thrown up a number of interesting conclusions. In particular, the realisation that in the late medieval period, it seems the form of the music rather than the textual content may have been what made it appropriate for celebration during the Christmas period; nativity and sacred texts were not, it seems the exclusive repertoire of this season. The grouping of so many political carols together in Egerton, although exceptional and unique within the manuscripts of the fifteenth century, has gone some way to showing the ready inclusion of the political carol within these celebrations, not to mention the evidence seen in the specific labelling of a political carol as a ‘carol for Christmas’.

The texts of the late medieval carol have been demonstrated within this chapter to be suggesting a growing sense of nationhood in England at this time, something that is perhaps reflected in the growing number of political carols from the second half of the fifteenth century; with the carols for St George and St Thomas challenging previously accepted definitions of what defines a political carol of this period.

The sheer volume of extant carols both with and without musical notation, demonstrates the importance of the genre in England in the late Middle Ages. Its simple, yet highly effective, repetitive form, makes it an ideal choice for the celebration, transmission and preservation of important political events, and as demonstrated in the carols for Henry VIII’s 1513 French invasion, a possible motivational device for those on campaign. What better a way to celebrate and commit to memory important events in English history than such an effective musical form as the carol with its repeating burden and opportunity for communal singing within ceremonies and celebrations?

453 One also survives in the Trinity Roll and one in Additional 5665
Chapter Seven

‘But here the greatest melody arises without any physical instrument, when the angels minister and sing to Christ’:\textsuperscript{454}

The Carol in Sermons and Late Medieval Worship.

This chapter will explore the possible uses for the carol within sermons and other forms of worship in the late medieval period, and will examine the concept of the carol as a preaching tool. The late medieval carol has long been believed to have had its first sacred incarnation in the hands of the Franciscan friars who took the vernacular musical form and lyrics for use in their worship.\textsuperscript{455} In keeping with this practice, there is much evidence to suggest the continuation of the use of the carol in the late middle ages within the church and monastic settings. There are a number of carol manuscripts that originate in the hands of clerics prior to taking orders, vicars or other levels of church employees and friars. These manuscripts also contain sermons, other instructional devices, and theological material. This chapter aims to explore the concept of the carol as a preaching tool, and its other possible uses within medieval worship.

Sermon Manuscripts

The evidence for the use of carols within preaching in the late medieval period comes primarily from the carol manuscripts themselves. There are ten manuscripts from the fourteenth to the early sixteenth centuries that contain carols, amongst other materials, that were used by canons and parish priests (such as sermons, instructions and theological material). Sermon manuscripts that contain carols are very different to the large collections of sermons that are often found collated together in large and impressive manuscripts in the late Middle Ages. The carols are not found in these extensive, ordered collections but

\textsuperscript{454} This quotation originates in a fifteenth-century sermon by John Felton for Easter Sunday and is quoted from Wenzel, Siegfried, \textit{Preaching in the Age of Chaucer} (Washington, 2008), 137. Wenzel includes a complete transcription of this sermon within this monologue.

\textsuperscript{455} For a more detailed discussion see Chapter 1: ‘The Carol: Musical Features and Previous Scholarship’
instead within smaller, random, and what could be classified as more personal, selections. Siegfried Wenzel writes:

The distinction between regular cycle and random collection concerns much more than the order of arrangement – it amounts to being a genuinely generic distinction. Cycles are quite evidently products of the scholarly study, systematic expositions of the lections for Sundays, feast days, or saints’ feasts in homiletic form, made to be consulted with ease. In contrast, in so far as one can generalize, random collections tend to gather ‘real’ sermons, which were actually preached.\footnote{Wenzel, Siegfried, \textit{Latin Sermon Collections from Late Medieval England} (Cambridge, 2005), 3}

It would certainly seem that these smaller, slightly more personalized manuscripts that ‘contain a good number of “popular” elements – such as proverbs, allusions to games, snatches of vernacular song... may indeed reflect actual preaching quite closely’,\footnote{Wenzel, Siegfried, \textit{Latin Sermon Collections from Late Medieval England} (Cambridge, 2005), 19} and would therefore be of greater value to the understanding of smaller scale preaching than the large collections of model sermons which are more suited as manuscripts for consultation rather than working documents. These ‘real’ sermon manuscripts (which might be better described as preacher’s notebooks) containing carols also are of such a size as to suggest their portability; the elements of wear and tear indicative of their movement around venues and congregations. They are not on the grand scale of books such as the large Breviaries containing the everyday Latin liturgical rites, or the impressive Antiphonaries with their clear purpose, and well thought out contents. The manuscripts in Table 34 which list the those that contain carols and preaching material, are instead compiled of seemingly random selections of material, without impressive illuminations and without any obvious order.\footnote{One must remember however, that these seemingly random compilations may have made perfect sense to the original compiler.} Wenzel categorizes the variety of extant manuscripts with a relationship to preaching containing English lyrics into six categories: ‘Sermon Collections’ (containing series of complete sermons), ‘Preaching Tools’ (to aid preachers in composing their sermons), ‘Preacher’s Notebooks’ (containing a variety of preaching material in no particular order), ‘Miscellanies’ (collections of texts and poems not set in the context of a sermon), and ‘Poetic Anthologies’ (collections of pieces in verse) and ‘Non-Preaching books’
(homogenous subject matter).\textsuperscript{459} Those containing carols fit most comfortably into the categories of preaching tool, notebook or miscellany.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ms</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>CAROLS\textsuperscript{460}</th>
<th>CONTENTS RELATED TO PREACHING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GB-Ed Advocates</td>
<td>1372</td>
<td>149a, 155a, 157d, 271</td>
<td>Theological and preaching material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.7.21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Ob Bodley 26</td>
<td>c. xiv</td>
<td>12a + possible second carol</td>
<td>Latin sermons and sermon notes. Religious treatise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Cul Additional</td>
<td>c.xv1/4</td>
<td>151c, 349, 149d, 451</td>
<td>Latin Sermons. Connection with archdeacon and Somerset vicars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5943</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Ctc R.14.26</td>
<td>c. xv 1/2</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>Latin Sermons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Cul ff.5.48</td>
<td>c. xv 1/2</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>Instructions for parish priests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Ctc 0.9.38</td>
<td>1450</td>
<td>161b,331a</td>
<td>Monastic affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Lbl Harley 5396</td>
<td>c. 1455</td>
<td>36b, 80, 136A</td>
<td>Latin sermons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Lbl Sloane 1584</td>
<td>c. xv 4/4</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>Theological material. Instructions for deacons and sub deacons. Easter sermon English sermons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Lbl Lansdowne 379</td>
<td>c. xvi 1/2</td>
<td>43, 94</td>
<td>Theological material. Instructions for deacons and sub deacons. Easter sermon English sermons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Lbl Cotton Vespasian A.XXV</td>
<td>c. xvi 1/4</td>
<td>95a, 472</td>
<td>Theological material</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 34: Carol manuscripts containing sermons, theological material or material in relation to members of the clergy.

The presence of carols in such a number of manuscripts, which span over a century, would suggest their value to those taking the time to preserve them. This coupled with their placement alongside sermons or other similar material, signifying their importance in some aspect of the work of a priest, cleric, canon or friar. The priest’s diverse duties in the community which consist of the coordination of up to 40-50 feast days a year, performing

\textsuperscript{459} Wenzel, Siegfried, \textit{Preachers, Poets, and the Early English Lyric} (Princeton, 1986), 4-7

\textsuperscript{460} Numbers correspond to their number in: Greene, R.L, ed. \textit{The Early English Carols} (Oxford, 1935)
birth, death and marriage duties and preaching on many different religious and moral
subjects, as well as general administration of his parish, echoes the diverse contents of the
manuscripts; collections of music, poetry, sermons, grammatical treatise, medical recipes,
accounts and letters.\footnote{For more detail on the role of a late Medieval vicar see: Horrox, Rosemary and Ormrod, W.Mark, \textit{A Social History of England 1200-1500} (Cambridge, 2006)} The cleric’s manuscript, such GB-Cgc 383/603, from Oxford circa 1450, would seem to be particularly relevant to one whose job it was to scribe in an
ecclesiastical setting for a living with its inclusion of theological material alongside examples
of letters and grammatical exercises; the addition of some of the lyrics and music might
then be for their own pleasure perhaps rather than for use in worship, sitting alongside
sacred pieces most probably encountered in their experiences of worship. The manuscript
GB-Ctc 0.9.38, a commonplace book from the Benedictine abbey at Glastonbury circa 1450
is also a good reflection of its origins as a monastic document as it ‘brings together work-a-
day monastic affairs... predictable monastic Latinity (an Epiphany hymn, the Agnus Dei) and
sets alongside these an extremely varied collection of English texts: a description of
gardening, several moral Chansons d’aventure, works of anti-feminist satire, collection of
proverbs, and a poem on the Paris pageant for Henry VI not to mention the two carols:\footnote{Wallace, David, \textit{The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature} (Cambridge, 2002), 326-7} the highly evocative planctus Mariae carol ‘Sodenly afraide’, a dialogue between narrator
and Mary cradling her dead son, and the carol ‘Y conceill yow, both more and lasse’, \footnote{Also found in GB-Obac 354 from the early sixteenth century.} which
advises against swearing by the mass and emphasises its importance in the saving of the
soul.

In some cases manuscripts were used by a succession of owners from different occupations:
GB-Cu 5943 being a perfect example. This manuscript started life as a student’s note book,
containing sermons and tracts in Latin until it became the property of Thomas Turke, ‘a
fellow of Winchester College intermittently between 1395 and 1401 before he became vicar
of Bere Regis in Dorset and eventually a Carthusian monk at Hinton Charterhouse in
Somerset’, \footnote{Duncan, Thomas Gibson, ed., \textit{A companion to the Middle English Lyric} (Cambridge, 2005), 15} who added a number of lyrics and music to the manuscript. The manuscript
was eventually owned by a minstrel, which is an interesting example of an overlap in the use
of the manuscripts contents by both clergy and laity. The manuscript eventually returned to
ecclesiastical use in the hands of John Morton of Devon, who was a rector and vicar in the 1420’s and 30’s.\textsuperscript{466} The use of such a manuscript with its sermons, lyrics and music in the hands of so many, displays the diversity not only of its contents, but of the uses of such contents.

The carols, more often than not, tend to appear un-notated in the manuscripts in Table 34, but this is certainly not to say they were never sung.\textsuperscript{467} As Peter Jeffery writes in the context of the mendicant friar:

there are references to music in medieval sermons, at least from the time of the mendicant orders (the thirteenth century and later) whose wandering friars incorporated popular singing and dancing into their preaching. In England some of these songs seem to have been related to the repertory of the Christmas carols, which often mixed passages in Latin and the vernacular.\textsuperscript{468}

Wenzel, a leading specialist in medieval sermons, although conceding that music was of importance to preachers and that ‘members of religious orders chanted a good deal, during and probably also outside the official liturgy’\textsuperscript{469} and that there is ‘some evidence that itinerant preachers would attract attention by singing a song’, \textsuperscript{470} argues that evidence is still lacking to prove one way or another whether the preacher (with or without the audience) sung from the pulpit. However, we do find a number of references to music in sermons of the late Middle Ages. An example taken from a sermon for the enclosure of a nun reads:

It once used to be said in a popular song: ‘We shall make a jolly castle On a bank beside a brim; Noe shall e’er come to it Unless he knows how to swim, or else he has a boat of love For to sail therein’\textsuperscript{471}

This example is particularly appropriate for this sort of sermon, implying the seclusion of the nun from the outside world, only to be visited by Christ. Essentially:

\textsuperscript{466} Duncan, Thomas Gibson, ed., \textit{A companion to the Middle English Lyric} (Cambridge, 2005), 15
\textsuperscript{467} As discussed in Chapter 4: ‘‘That we with merth mowe savely synge’: The fifteenth-century carol, a music of the people?, it is a very real possibility that non-notated carols would have been sung to lost popular melodies.
\textsuperscript{468} Jeffery, Peter, \textit{Re envisioning past Musical Cultures: Ethnomusicology in the study of Gregorian Chant} (Chicago, 1992), 74
\textsuperscript{469} Wenzel, Siegfried, \textit{Preachers, Poets, and the Early English Lyric} (Princeton, 1986), 17
\textsuperscript{470} Wenzel, Siegfried, \textit{Preachers, Poets, and the Early English Lyric} (Princeton, 1986), 17
\textsuperscript{471} Wenzel, Siegfried, \textit{Preaching in the Age of Chaucer} (Washington, 2008), 296
Nuns were the brides of Christ and had to maintain their virginity intact as a gift for their celestial spouse. Only if they died intact could their sacred marriage be consummated. Enclosure ensured their immaculate bodies would be preserved for ever.\(^{472}\)

Enclosure was believed to be essential for the ‘weaker sex’ who it was thought needed more protection from themselves than from others. The use of a vernacular song in this sermon context is nothing unusual. Nuns wrote lyrics, music and drama to be used on occasions throughout the year, indeed ‘Communal life, with its festivities and rites of passage, provided a variety of opportunities for creative expression. Key moments, such as the entrance of women into religious life, the clothing of the novices, and the profession of nuns were celebrated with readings of rhymes and theatrical events which took place in the convent’;\(^{473}\) their lives were not wholly constricted to work and prayer. Secondly, nuns were not always nuns, and would have been familiar with the popular song of the world outside of their enclosure. Vernacular lyrics also appear in many sermons and sermon manuscripts with no connections to nuns; this tradition was well established generally by the late Middle Ages.

‘Song’ is also mentioned a great deal in sermons. Wenzel notes in his examination of GB-WO-F.126 that:

> Among the Latin sermons occur nearly two dozen pieces with English material, even one fully macaronic sermon. They have preserved interesting vernacular sayings, including a reference to the song “Maiden in the Moor Lay” and some of them furnishing intriguing clues to the use of both languages in actual preaching.\(^{474}\)

Although Greene claims that the song ‘Maiden in the Moor Lay’ has been wrongly classified as a carol, Stevens disputes this in reference to Wenzel’s discovery of the song in a sermon from 1381 that refers to it as a ‘carole’. Even more importantly, this ‘carole’ may go some way to connecting dance and worship, as Stevens notes that:

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\(^{472}\) Evangelisti, Silvia, *Nuns, a History of Convent Life* (Oxford, 2007), 43


\(^{474}\) Wenzel, Siegfried, *Latin Sermon Collections from Later Medieval England* (Cambridge, 2005), 150
In 1986 Peter Dronke published an imaginative interpretation of the lyric as a dance-song with mime, based on a Germanic legend of a water-sprite: ‘she tends to appear at village dances in the guise of a beautiful human girl, and to fascination young men there, but she must always return into the moor at a fixed hour, or else she dies’. This...clinches the matter; the Middle English poem must be a dance-song, and indeed a *carole*.  

Sermons were the broadcasting service of the Middle Ages; a way to communicate religious, political and moral messages to all strata of society. The importance of the Church in the community in the Middle Ages was enormous. The lives of all strata of society revolved around the liturgical calendar, with important events such as births, deaths and marriages requiring church services. The *carol*, with its catchy repetitive lyrics and potential for audience participation would therefore be a welcome addition to a preacher’s repertoire. The variety of subjects we find the carols dedicated to attests to this versatility of use; we not only find carols for the feast days of the Saints, but also on subjects of death, marriage, childhood and moral and religious counsel, subjects that relate to the everyday lives of the parishioners. The *carol* ‘Thynk we on our ending, I red, I red, I red’ is found within GB-Ctc R.14.26, a manuscript from the early fifteenth century which contains, amongst other things, Latin sermons, treatises (one on music), and St Thomas Aquinas’ *De Ente et Essentia* (a thirteenth-century philosophical work on ‘Being and Essence’). The inclusion of such a carol within such a collection of sermons and other learned material, would suggest that it was of use to the compiler. The *carol*, which translates as ‘Think on our ending, I advise, I advise, I advise’, explores the inevitability of death, advising the listener not to put faith in earthly friends, but only in the mother of God. The *carol* is in the first person, and would work well within the context of a sermon as it speaks directly to the congregation. The burden is inclusive of the listener, imploring ‘Think we on our ending, I red, I red I red’ and gives a sense of authority to the speaker in his capacity to advise others. There appears to be erased notation both above and below this carol, something which is not recorded in any sources, but has recently been noted on the ‘Digital Imaging Archive of Medieval Music’ by

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475 Stevens, John, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages: Song, Narrative, Dance and Drama*, 1050-1350(Cambridge, 1986), 184

476 Marriages in this period did not necessarily have to be conducted within a church setting, but often were.


478 For a full transcription of this carol see: Greene, R.L., *The Early English Carols* (Oxford, 1935), 252
Ted Dumitrescu. The single line of music is placed above and below the carol and does not appear to exist under the carol text, which would suggest its addition after the carol lyrics were scribed. It cannot be said for certain as to whether the music was the carol melody or not, but it would seem likely. There is no other musical notation within this manuscript, nor any other carols. The carol with this faint musical notation can be seen in on the right hand folio in Example 1.

Example 1: GB-Ctc R.14.26, folios 20v-21r

The preacher’s battle for the attention of the audience could explain the presence of carols, particularly ‘inappropriate’ carols in manuscripts containing preaching material. As Alan Fletcher rightly notes:

The medieval preacher... had an uphill task. To begin with, while he urged familiar matter of eternal consequence, he did so through a necessarily ephemeral medium,

479 http://www.diamm.ac.uk/jsp/Descriptions?op=SOURCE&sourceKey=321
480 The faintness of the notation has made any attempt to reconstruct the music impossible from this image alone. Further examination of the manuscript under UV light will need to be undertaken at a later juncture.
481 Image provided by Cambridge Trinity College Library.
spoken words, that as soon as uttered, vanish on the air. If interest in familiar matter was to be rekindled, and if he was to turn his congregation’s recollection of it into salvific pleasure, the preacher must be memorable both in the moment of utterance and also in a way that outlasted the medium in which he worked.\footnote{482}

The use of the carol lyric therefore would seem an entirely effective way to engage an audience and have them remember the key message of a sermon. The use of carol lyrics, with their repeating burden would seem to be particularly effective in this context, and could even have been used as a responsorial device.

**A Carol Within a Sermon?**

The most significant manuscript in terms of extant evidence for the use of carols in sermons or indeed other forms of worship is GB-Ob Bodley 26. This late fourteenth-century manuscript is a compilation of ten manuscripts bound together, and totals over 208 folios. It is a small manuscript, and best suited to the category of ‘preacher’s notebook’ due to its eclectic contents. It contains, amongst other things, Latin sermons and treatises on the Gospels, Latin sermons, sermon notes by a member of the Franciscan community, fragments of an astrological nature and treatises on arithmetic and physiognomy, and most interestingly for the purposes of this chapter: a sermon on unlocking the heart of a sinner.\footnote{483}

In all the extant manuscripts, as detailed in Table 34, that contain sermons or other theological material alongside carols, the carols are not found within the body of the sermons, or so closely linked to a sermon as this one. What is interesting about this particular sermon in GB-OB BODLEY 26 however, is what appears to be the placement of the carol, ‘Honnd by honnd we schulle ous take’ either within a sermon, or between two sermons. The carol reads:

**Honnd by honnd we schulle ous take,**

\footnote{482} Fletcher, Alan, John, *Late Medieval Popular Preaching in Britain and Ireland* (Turnhout, 2009), 277. For more information on congregational distraction in the Middle Ages see: Fletcher, Alan, John, *Late Medieval Popular Preaching in Britain and Ireland* (Turnhout, 2009), 277-284
And joye and blisse schulle we make,
For the deuel of elle man haght forsake,
And Godes Sone ys maked oure make.
A child is boren amo[n]ges man,
And in that child was no wam;
That child ys God, that child is man,
And in that child oure lif bygan.

Senful man, be blithe and glad:
For your marriage thy peys grad
Wan Crist was boren;
Com to Crist; thy peis ys grad;
For the was hys blod ysched,
That were forloren.

Senful man, be blithe and bold,
For eune ys bothe boght and sold,
Euereche fote.
Com to Crist; thy peys ys told,
For the he yahf a hondrefo[l]d
Hy lif to bote.\textsuperscript{484}

Greene writes briefly on this piece and notes:

One of the earliest ‘Christmas carols’ extant, was probably used by a friar in connection with his preaching. It was written down before 1350 among some Franciscan sermon notes which also contain other rhyming lines in English.\textsuperscript{485}

\textsuperscript{484} Greene, R.L, ed. *The Early English Carols* (Oxford, 1935), 11-1
Unfortunately, Greene did not investigate this carol (or the preaching connection) in any detail, which is regrettable due to its clear demonstration of the use of the carol in preaching. The carol appears as though it is placed towards the very end of the sermon, and enclosed by the final concluding words which read 'Thema, 'Trisitcia vestra convertetur in gaudium', lohannis 16. Verba ista sunt Christi ad discipulos ...', which translates as 'Theme, 'Your sadness will be turned into joy', John 16. These are Christ's words to his disciples ...' 486

However, Alan Fletcher asserts that in fact these words could be the start of another sermon for Mass on the third Sunday after the Octave of Easter due to this portion of St John’s Gospel’s place in Sarum Use. Additionally, he claims that the body of the sermon appears to bear no relation to the text of the carol at all. The sermon:

starts with a reflection on the qualities that every preacher needs in order to be effective. After this, the theme 'Audi filia et vide' is repeated, and the sermon proceeds to its central matter. This matter is organized according to a systematically announced set of divisions: the preacher begins by saying that if we reflect on Christ's goodness to mankind in these three respects - a) with how great a love he joined himself with mankind, b) with how great a price he bought mankind, and c) with how great a reward he endowed mankind - it would not be surprising if Christ sought to direct mankind, saying the words of the theme, 'Audi filia et vide'. Each of these three divisions is then treated to further subdivisions, which are amplified and discussed, and from which the bulk of the sermon is generated. The divisions and subdivisions are announced in rhymed English, and the Latin theme, 'Audi filia et vide', also Englished, is repeated with a refrain-like insistence throughout the length of the sermon.487

He also writes that:

After the sermon, which ends in the middle of what appears to be fol. 201v ... there follows a set of theological notes on the topic of the five bars or impediments that shut the hearts of sinners (delight in sinning, shame in confessing, hope for a [some

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485 Greene, R.L, ed. The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1935), cxxv
486 This transcription and translation is provided by Professor Alan Fletcher via personal communication 23/10/2012 and is published with permission. There is no available published translation of this sermon to date, so my thanks go to Alan Fletcher for his summary.
487 Fletcher, Alan, Personal Communication, 13/10/2012. Published with permission.
word which I can't read] life, fear of penitence, and despair of eternal life). These notes continue until finally there comes the carol, 'Hand by hand we shall us take'. The carol seems unrelated to the sermon 'Audi filia et vide', and also to the theological notes that have immediately preceded it.488

He concludes that:

Consequently, I can't readily see how it fits with the carol at all, and I begin to suspect that the carol was simply copied into a spare space on the verso of the folio. When more parchment became available, the scribe started to copy the beginning of a new sermon on the theme 'Tristicia vestra', the remainder of which we now seem to have lost.489

It would seem however, despite his observation that the final words below the carol are indeed the start of a new sermon, that Fletcher may be incorrect in his assertion that there is no link between the carol and the sermon ‘Audi filia et vide’. He has overlooked the fact that the Latin theme ‘Audi filia’ refers to Psalm 44 from the Vulgate which is an ‘epithalamium’ wedding song that was interpreted as prophesying the mystical marriage of: God to Virgin Mary/God and Christ to the Church and to each individual Christian soul. 490

The carol, in stanza two bears the line ‘For your marriage thy peis ys grad [peace is proclaimed]’, which combined with the last line of the burden ‘And Godes Sone ys maked oure make’, which also refers to marriage (‘make’ can translate as ‘friend’ but in this case it would seem it may more likely refer to the alternative translation of either a married couple/mate/husband or Christ as a bridegroom), and would suggest a common theme between carol and sermon, both therefore showing a connection to the concept of the mystical marriage. This would suggest that there is indeed a link between carol and sermon in this case.

If Fletcher’s assertions are correct however, and the carol does not bear any relation to the previous sermon, the possibility still remains that the carol could instead be related to the now lost, sermon that follows it. Of course, the carol need not refer directly to the sermon,

488 Fletcher, Alan, Personal Communication, 13/10/2012
489 Fletcher, Alan, Personal Communication, 23/10/2012
490 A traditional poem, originating from Greece and written to accompany a bride to her marriage chamber.
and although Greene classes this as a Christmas carol, it also refers to Christ’s death, and could therefore also be appropriate during Easter and could consequently bear a connection to the Easter sermon that follows it; although this is difficult to establish with any certainty due to the missing folios. 491

Whether the carol can be definitively connected to the sermon preceding it, or whether the carol is indeed simply placed after it, it would seem indisputable that the carol is set between two sermons, therefore suggesting its use at some point in their preaching. The folio containing the carol can be seen in Example 2.

491 The ‘Audi filia’ and mystical marriage theme are liturgically more connected to Advent and Passiontide, and the Annunciation (25th March) and Assumption (15th August) than to Christmas and Easter although they could also be used for services for baptism/consecration of nuns and monks/taking of holy orders/and various saints days for virgin saints.
Example 2: Placement of the carol in GB-Ob Bodley 26, f.202v

The burden of this carol clearly suggests some sort of movement or activity (whether implied or actually undertaken) in its first line when it calls ‘Honnde by honnde we schulle ous take’. It would seem possible that this was a literal call to take hands and join together, but equally, it could be a metaphorical suggestion of mankind joining together as one to defeat sin and embrace Christ, or even merely as a reference to the forms of dancing and festivity that takes place outside of the Church. Greene notes that:
Particularly in a piece such as No. 12, one of the earliest written of any of our texts (about 1350), is there a suggestion that religious songs were danced to as well; the burden... being probably a close imitation of a secular dance song.’

If Greene is correct in his assertion here that the burden was indeed an imitation of a popular dance song, it could well be a representation of the Church’s attempt to incorporate popular song and dance traditions into the Church in order to exert control over a practice and engage the lay folk in the preachings of the Church. As Greene notes:

The conflict between the Church and these dances and songs was especially marked, but not merely because the performances themselves were accompanied by wanton words and gestures, but also because of the peoples’ habit of dancing on the eves of church festivals and in the hallowed precincts of the church-yard or even within the edifice itself. The clergy used hymns, psalms, and sermons in attempts to divert their attention, but the parishioners seem often to have preferred the more exciting pastime.

There would seem no reason to suppose that devices were not used in order to keep the attention of the parishioners in the form of song and dance within preaching. There are indeed accounts of ecclesiastical dancing, and one from the thirteenth century notes that:

‘The liturgical commentator Durandus...states that on the eve of St Stephen’s Day the deacons, to honour their patron saint, ‘joining together in dance sing an antiphon of St Stephen’....And in Limoges on the feast of St Martial there was dancing to psalms in the church; the singers and dancers concluded their psalm with the refrain.'

Craig Wright also gives evidence of dancing in French Cathedrals. He specifically notes the ritual dancing in the cathedral of Auxerre in the late medieval period:

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493 Although Robbins prefers the theory that the congregation were taking hands as in a church lullaby enacting taking hands around a crib. See: Robbins, Rossell Hope, ‘Middle English Carols as Processional Hymns’, *Studies in Philology*, 56 (1959), 576.
495 Stevens, John, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages: Song, Narrative, Dance and Drama, 1050-1350* (Cambridge, 1986), 179
Each year, from at least 1396 until 1538, the canons and chaplains of the cathedral of Auxerre gathered in the early afternoon of Easter Sunday around the maze situated in the nave of their church. Joining hands to form a ring-dance...they chanted antiphonally the sequence Praises to the Easter Victim (Victimae paschali laudes) as they danced on the labyrinth ...The remaining clergy joined hands and, singing and jumping for joy, danced around the maze.496

If the canons and chaplains are using such methods themselves, what better way for them to keep the attention of their flock on occasion too than with interludes of song and dance; and even better, religious lyrics set to the popular secular melodies of their everyday lives?497 As Fletcher notes:

Many Middle English lyrics were, of course, more heard as song than read on the page as literary events, and the prospect of a preacher’s sung delivery of at least some non-structural sermon lyrics which are known to have been set to music does not stretch credibility. Given the battle for the congregation’s attention that every preacher waged as soon as he stepped into the pulpit, music might have offered another welcome means of holding that attention; we know that the Friars... were widely known for their musical abilities.498

GB-Ob Bodley 26 has links to the Franciscan community, an order with well-established links to the carol tradition, and known as an order that engaged with the wider community, rather than hiding itself behind cloistered walls. The inclusion therefore of a carol within a sermon of this provenance being sung may seem entirely plausible, and may give an indication to the use of the carol form by the Franciscans in general.

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496 Wright, Craig, *The Maze and the Warrior* (USA, 2004), 140
497 For more detailed examples of the easily distracted medieval parishioner see: Fletcher, Alan, John, ‘Literature and Pulpit’ in *Late Medieval Popular Preaching in Britain and Ireland* (Turnhout, 2009). For further discussion of dancing and the church see: Page, Christopher, *Discarding Images* (Oxford, 1993)
498 Fletcher, Alan, John, ‘Literature and Pulpit’ in *Late Medieval Popular Preaching in Britain and Ireland* (Turnhout, 2009), 303
A Second Carol?

There is some dispute as to whether a second carol is also embedded within this same sermon. Rossell Hope Robbins has argued that this carol within sermon ‘Audi filia et vide’ has a burden that is found repeated a number of times within the texts, and that a complete stanza with burden can be found on folio 193b. This suggested carol reads:

My doȝter, my darlynnge,

Herkne my lore, y-se my thechyng.

How manke ende furst bygan,

In what manschepe now ys man,

What wykednesse man hat y-do,

What ioye and blisse man ys y-broȝ

Alan Fletcher disagrees with the inclusion of this carol and believes Robbins, incorrectly states that the sermon on the thema Audi, filia, et vide... has a carol embedded in it; rather, the suspected carol proves to be a rhymed English lines used to mark the sermon’s structural parts.

If, as Fletcher suggests, these rhymed lines are indeed structural points of the sermon, and the inclusion of vernacular structural pointers in Latin sermons is indeed an established tradition by this time, there seems no reason as to why these ‘rhyming lines’ could not also be in carol form; this would not only facilitate the recollection of the structural points of the sermon.


501 Fletcher, Alan, John, *Late Medieval Popular Preaching in Britain and Ireland* (Turnhout, 2009), 33
sermon for any preacher and his audience at a later date, but also would reflect the use of the carol placed so clearly towards the end of the sermon.

This possible carol can be seen in Example 3, on the right hand folio page. It is clearly placed within the text and bracketed in such a way as to indicate that it is indeed poetic or lyrical lines. The bracketing of the carol ‘Honnd by Honnd’ in Example 2 is very similar. That these ‘rhyming lines’ are also written in the vernacular within a Latin sermon, would also reflect the inclusion of the vernacular ‘Honnd by Honnd’.

Example 3: GB-Ob Bodley 26, f. 195v-196r. The right hand manuscript page showing the insertion of what could be a second carol within this sermon.
**Vernacular Carols within Latin Sermon Manuscripts**

The insertion of an English carol (possibly two) into a Latin sermon does at first seem inconsistent; one would naturally presume some uniformity of language within a sermon. However, evidence exists to suggest that although sermons were written down in Latin, it would not necessarily follow that they were orated in Latin. Wenzel notes that:

Conventional wisdom would have it that, at least in an earlier period, sermons to the lay folk were spoken in the vernacular, and sermons to the clergy in Latin. In the century with which this study is concerned, however, [15th century] this distinction clearly broke down, as is patently shown for instance in the licence to preach given in 1417 to the famous canon lawyer William Lyndwood allowing him, indiscriminately, “to preach the word of God to the clergy and the people in Latin or in the vernacular”… Moreover, in whichever language the sermons might have been preached, through the fifteenth century, the majority were written down in Latin.\(^{502}\)

There exists evidence of sermons that were reportedly delivered in English but still recorded in Latin; the sermon diary of Archbishop Fitzralph in which he reports his own sermons being a particularly good example as ‘even the sermons that he reports that he gave in the vernacular are written down in Latin’.\(^{503}\) It is entirely possible that this sermon was perhaps recorded from a model sermon manuscript and adapted for more practical use by its owner with the inclusion of vernacular lyrics.

It also seems that the language of a sermon is not necessarily an indication of audience. Many sermons have no evidence at all for audience within them, any ‘internal references often suggest that the audience was mixed, composed of both clerics and lay folk’,\(^{504}\) which would explain the inclusion of sacred carols with liturgical quotations in these manuscripts sitting alongside carols in the vernacular with more worldly subject matter; an issue discussed later in this chapter.

\(^{502}\) Wenzel, Siegfried, *Latin Sermon Collections from Late Medieval England* (Cambridge, 2005), 10

\(^{503}\) Wenzel, Siegfried, *Latin Sermon Collections from Late Medieval England* (Cambridge, 2005), 17

\(^{504}\) Wenzel, Siegfried, *Latin Sermon Collections from Late Medieval England* (Cambridge, 2005), 9
The ‘Ritson’ Manuscript: Understanding Carols in Worship

The manuscripts discussed thus far do not contain any carols with musical notation, except for the ‘ghost’ of a melody identified by Dumitrescu. However, the musically notated Ritson Manuscript, although it does not contain sermons, theological material or instructions for parish priests that are found in the manuscripts of Table 34, still has a place within this chapter in trying to understand the use of the carol in worship. The Ritson manuscript is of particular importance for a number of reasons: its connection to two named composers, Richard Smert and John Trouluffe; its varied collection of musical settings; and its large collection (44 in total) of carols. Although, as discussed previously in this thesis, the composer centred approach does not necessarily provide a balanced approach to understanding pre-classical music, in the context of this chapter, knowing the position of the composer within society and the church may help clarify who was composing the carol form, and for what purpose.

Ritson, dating from the second half of the fifteenth century, is a large notated manuscript which contains a total of 44 carols as well as settings of the mass, a Kyrie-Gloria pair, a macaronic Te Deum, Office hymn, processional hymns, twenty three motets, sixteen English and one French secular piece plus three sacred English pieces. In addition to the named composers Smert and Trouluffe, there are also works by William Cornysh, Pack, Norman, Mowere, Haute, Turges, Petyr and Henry VIII as well as composers identified by their initials only: T.B. and W.P.

Richard Smert (c.1400-1478/9), the eldest of the two composers, was ordained as a priest in 1427 and appointed vicar-choral of Exeter Cathedral from 1427 to circa 1430 and again from 1449 to circa 1478. In addition to the cathedral post, he was also rector of Plymtree in Devon, from 1435 to 1477, an indication of his privileged status. The church seems to

505 The significance of these named composers is discussed further in Chapter 3, ‘The Named Composer: an obstacle to understanding the late medieval carol?’
506 The validity of the composer-centred approach is discussed in Chapter 3: ‘The Named Composer: an obstacle to understanding the late medieval carol?’
have been prospering at the time of his rectorship, with the expansion of the building (the addition of a porch and south aisle) and records reporting Smert’s retirement on an annual pension of £4 collected from the ‘fruits of the parish church’.\(^{509}\) John Trouluffe (?-c 1473) however was not actually employed by Exeter Cathedral alongside Smert, but instead, ‘was a protégé of Edmund Lacy, Bishop of Exeter, who made him a canon of Probus, Cornwall, in 1448. He also became a canon of Crantock, Cornwall. Neither post required priestly status. Trouluffe, who died at about Christmas 1473, was probably a musician of Lacy’s chapel.’\(^{510}\) Despite the lack of evidence however, it is still possible that Trouluffe was a priest, and one would expect that he was almost certainly in minor orders.

Both men, Smert in particular in his post as rector of Plymtree, would have been required to contribute to worship, and would have been required to preach. His role as a vicar choral would also have meant his involvement in the day to day worship in the cathedral, standing in for the canons’ duties when required, and singing. Although the nature of the polyphonic music in Ritson is far too sophisticated for the idea of spontaneous use in the worship of a small parish church such as that in Plymtree, it would seem entirely suited for use in Exeter Cathedral, performed by trained singers such as the vicars choral.

Ritson contains headings at the top of each of its carols, which give instruction as to which liturgical event each carol is meant for. These headings for the carols composed by Smert and Trouluffe are listed in Table 35. Stevens and Libby write that ‘the headings like ‘in die nativitatis’, or ‘de sancto thoma’ appearing with certain carols are not necessarily prescriptive rubrics but indicate at least a strong sense of liturgical season.’\(^{511}\) However, these are indeed clearly specific days of the church year and would seem to be entirely prescriptive. The nativity falling on the 25\(^{th}\) of December, the feast for St Thomas of Canterbury on the 29\(^{th}\) of December, the feast of Mary on the first of January, feast of the Innocents on the 28\(^{th}\) of December and the feast of the Epiphany on the 6\(^{th}\) of January. Other headings are also indicative of feasts connected with the Christmas and New Year season. Although we can’t tell exactly how the carols were being utilised on these specific


days, they are being carefully categorised for specific purposes by the compilers of the manuscript.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carol</th>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>No. in MB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nowell, nowell: Dieu vous garde</td>
<td>in die nativitas</td>
<td>Smert</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man be joyful</td>
<td>in die nativitas</td>
<td>Smert</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ave, decus seculi(^{513})</td>
<td>de sancta Maria</td>
<td>Smert</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soli, Deo sit</td>
<td>in die nativitas</td>
<td>Smert and Trouluffe</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have mercy of me</td>
<td>in die nativitas</td>
<td>Smert</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O clavis David</td>
<td>in die nativitas</td>
<td>Smert and Trouluffe</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesu, fili virginis(^{514})</td>
<td>de nativitate</td>
<td>Smert</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesu, fili Dei</td>
<td>de nativitate</td>
<td>Smert and Trouluffe</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nascitur ex virgine</td>
<td>de nativitate</td>
<td>Smert</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus autem Hodie</td>
<td>Epiphanie</td>
<td>Smert and Trouluffe</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blessed mote thou be</td>
<td>de nativitate</td>
<td>Smert</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 35: Carols in the Ritson Manuscript attributed to Richard Smert and John Trouluffe.

Their prolific writing of carols in this manuscript could suggest Smert and Trouluffe’s interest in using them in their work as a canon, rector and vicar choral; Smert wrote a total of eleven carols, of which 4 were written in conjunction with John Trouluffe. The manuscript originally dates from 1460; the carols having been fully included by 1475 (Trouluffe’s contributions would have to have been composed by 1473, the year of his death). These carols may reflect the idea that the laity would have been present for their use in their prolific use of English, with any Latin being mainly reserved for the repetitive burden. Although a possibility rather than a certainty, one can imagine however, the message of the preacher


\(^{513}\) This carol is particularly interesting from a musical perspective as it is the only one in a fifteenth-century style to be written in duple time. Stevens suggests this may be Smert experimenting with the new compositional techniques being used in other church music of the time. See: Stevens, John ed. *Mediaeval Carols* (London, 1970).

\(^{514}\) Stevens does not list this as a carol by Smert in his Musica Britannica edition, Stevens, John ed. *Mediaeval Carols* (London, 1970), but it is clearly marked with his name in the original manuscript.
being easily remembered by the laity, and indeed the clergy too, in the repetitive carol texts and melodies.

It is entirely possible that the carols found in Ritson are in some way reflective of what may have been being used on a smaller musical scale in Smert’s parish of Plymtree. Smert was in his role at Plymtree from 1435-77, and was doubling up as vicar choral at the cathedral in the years 1449-77. This would have meant he was in this dual role at the time of the compilation of Ritson. Some of the carols therefore, may have been the product of smaller monophonic compositions for use in the parish church, and may also reflect some of the popular songs known by the parishioners. Certainly in the role of vicar choral (and indeed rector), Smert would have had the freedom to interact with the laity; a freedom that often earned the vicars choral a reputation for inappropriate behaviour. There is also evidence that connects the carols in Ritson to manuscripts without musical notation, with no less than nine of the carols having correspondences to literary sources. The most interesting of these, GB-Bbcm 123, places the carol ‘Alleluia: Now may we mirthes make’in the hands of rather the prebendary of a Parish church in Wales, or its perpetual vicar in 1471, shortly before the completion of the Ritson carols. This nativity carol contains no Latin in the Ritson version, yet the Bridgewater parchment has the burden ‘Letabundus exultet fidelys chorus, Alleluia’. This burden is appropriately (for a nativity carol) taken from the opening of the liturgical Laetabundus sequence. The carol is found on the back of a Latin indenture which is dated August 8th 1471. It is between Master Maurice, the prebendary of the church of Llangynllo, and Sir Hugh, the perpetual vicar of the church, and Thomas ap Rees ap Davyd of that Parish conveying to the latter parties the church for five years at a rent of twenty shillings per annum. Andrew Breeze suggests that the owner of the parchment must have been Master Maurice, the prebendary of the church, due to his connection with Exeter Cathedral and his educated status (a degree in canon law from Oxford), suggesting that it was more probable that an Oxford-educated canon lawyer like Master

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515 1478 was his last year of work, in which he only had the role of vicar choral
516 Number 14a in Greene, R.L., The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1935)
517 Greene names this village as Llangoullo, but he is mistaken as this village does not exist. It is in fact Llangynllo.
519 The role of the prebendary was one of church administration.
Maurice would have a taste for English religious verse than Sir Hugh or Tomas’. Breeze is underestimating the popularity of the carols in the Late Middle Ages amongst all strata of society, and indeed the impact of religion and religious verse among the laity. It is just as likely that the carol was noted down by Sir Hugh or Thomas as Maurice. Indeed, the probability of Maurice hearing the carol sung in the Cathedral may be higher than that of Hugh or Thomas, but the argument that Maurice would have had more interest in religious verse is unconvincing. Sir Hugh, the perpetual vicar, could well have noted the lyrics for use in parish worship at the time of nativity celebrations, whether set to a simpler musical version of that in Ritson, or set to popular melody. Indeed the second carol ‘Wele is him, and, wele schal be’ a cautionary tale warning the listener of the approach of the day of judgement, could have been used at any time of the liturgical year and complimented a sermon.

Whether or not the carol melodies contained any echoes of popular song is difficult to say, but the repetitive nature of the carols in their use of a burden, and their prolific use of English suggests they would have been effective in conveying the message to the laity. The fact that we know the place of these composers in the church, and can identify that these men were of similar status to those that we would perhaps expect to have had a hand in the non-notated sermon manuscripts of Example 1 (vicars, clerics and canons) might reveal the diverse musical work of men in such roles. Vicars and clerics were evidently active in different forms of carolling; the carols of Ritson being written by active members of the clergy for use in worship on an elaborate scale and less elaborate non notated carols such as those found in the manuscripts of example 1 indicative of their use on a smaller scale.

**Liturical quotations in the Carols of the Ritson Manuscript**

The use of liturgical texts and musical quotations within the carols of Ritson is particularly striking. In her research on liturgical quotations in the late medieval carols, Beth Anne Zamzow discovered that eighteen of the 44 carols in this manuscript contained liturgical elements in both the music and text. She writes that:

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of those eleven carols in Ritson inscribed with the name of Richard Smert or Smert together with John Troulouffe, five incorporate liturgical music in some form; this represents 45 percent of an admittedly small sampling.  

A small sampling it may be, but still an important selection. These small portions of Liturgical musical and textual material repeated in the burdens of these carols would have been easily recalled by members of the congregation as they are continually repeated within the song structure. Bearing in mind the duty of the clergyman was to feed the masses the word of God, and save their souls, a method of repeating a message to the congregations in an engaging and memorable fashion would have been invaluable. The liturgical quotations found within Ritson carols can be seen in Table 36.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. in MB</th>
<th>First Line of Burden</th>
<th>Textual Quotation</th>
<th>Musical Quotation</th>
<th>Burden</th>
<th>Verses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Sing we to this merry company</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>English/Latin</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>Johannes assecreatis divine sophie</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Sonet laus cula</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>Latin/English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>English/French</td>
<td>English/French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Marvel not Joseph, on Mary mild</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>Man, be joyful, and mirth thou make</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Make us merry this New Year</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>Salve, sancta parens</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>Ave, decus seculi</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>Regi canamus glorie</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>O radix Jesse</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>O clavis David</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

521 Zamzow, Beth Ann, *The Influence of the Liturgy on the Fifteenth-Century English Carols* (PhD from University of Iowa, 2000), 394
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Carols</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Latin/English</th>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>English/Latin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>Pray for us that we saved be</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>Worship we this holy day</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Te Deum laudamus</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Latin/English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>Letare, Cantuaria</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>Now make we joy in this fest</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>English/Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Jesu, fili virginis</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>English/Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Spes mea in Deo est</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>English/Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Jesu, fili Dei</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>English/Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>Tidings true there buth come new</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>Nascitur ex virgine</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>Do well and dread no man</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>Alleluia</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>Pray for us</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>Latin/English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>Proface, welcome</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>Latin/English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>Jesus autem hodie</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>Clangat tuba</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>Latin/Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>Man, assay</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>Jesu, for thy mercy endless</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td>The best song as it seemeth me</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>English/Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>Pray for us thou prince of peace</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>English/Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117</td>
<td>The best rede that I can</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>Blessed mote thou be, sweet Jesus</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>English/Latin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 36: Liturgical quotations in the carols of the Ritson Manuscript

There seems no particular distinction between the English or Latin carols in respect of liturgical quotations or musical quotations. Liturgical quotations, both textual and musical,

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523 Summarised from research in: Zamzow, Beth Ann, The Influence of the Liturgy on the Fifteenth-Century English Carols (PhD from University of Iowa, 2000)
although particularly prominent in Ritson, are also found amongst many of the other carols. Beth Zamzow in her doctoral dissertation writes:

> In my estimation, approximately 35 percent of the repertory surviving with music has some type of musical resonance with the liturgy [quotation of chant]. The examples offered in this paper, ranging from the certainties to the questionable, occur in the later carols with more frequency:

- 2 of the 13 carols in the Trinity Roll, or 15 percent
- 11 of the 28 in the Selden manuscript, or 39 percent
- 14 of the 32 in the Egerton manuscript, or 44 percent
- 18 of the 44 in the Ritson manuscript, or 41 percent

In addition, of those eleven carols in Ritson inscribed with the name of Richard Smert or Smert together with John Troulouffe, five incorporate liturgical music in some form; this represents 45 percent of an admittedly small sampling.524

Zamzow describes these musical quotations of chant as appearing as direct quotations, amplified paraphrases or reduced paraphrases, and defines a quotation as ‘the presence of four or more chant pitches incorporated into any voice part and at any location of a carol where the text of the chant has been incorporated’.525 It would seem the most popular placement of textual and musical quotation is in the burdens and refrain lines, although quotations are found in many places within the carol structure. Zamzow identifies the carol ‘For all Christen soules’ from the Ritson Manuscript as containing a direct quotation of a Sarum chant: the introit ‘Requiem aeternam’. Zamzow’s reduction of this is shown in Example 4.

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524 Zamzow, Beth Ann, The Influence of the Liturgy on the Fifteenth-Century English Carols (PhD from University of Iowa, 2000), 394
525 Zamzow, Beth Ann, The Influence of the Liturgy on the Fifteenth-Century English Carols (PhD from University of Iowa, 2000), 367
Example 4: Zamzow’s reduction of ‘For all Christen soules’ showing its direct quotation of the introit ‘Requiem aeternam’.  

This inclusion of liturgical quotations in the late medieval carols by composers such as Smert and Troufluffe who, living the liturgy every day of their lives would have had an excellent understanding of it and would have easily drawn on it within their writing, could suggest the use of carols by those learned in the church liturgy on both a musical and textual level in worship, perhaps challenging the commonly perpetuated view that the carols were only used in situations outside of worship, at feasts and other secular occasions. The inclusion of these small sections of chant and textual references to the liturgy and other acts of worship within a predominantly vernacular lyric could act as subliminal prompts to the listening or indeed participating, congregation (both laity and clergy) in a semiotic sense. The prescriptive nature of the liturgy perhaps makes the inclusion of them unlikely in formal

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526 Image taken directly from: Zamzow, Beth Ann, *The Influence of the Liturgy on the Fifteenth-Century English Carols* (PhD from University of Iowa, 2000), 257
worship, but it is worth consideration. Parishioners would spend their entire lives immersed in the sights and sounds of liturgical worship. As Duffy notes:

Ecclesiastical law and the vigilance of bishop, arch-deacon, and parson sought to ensure as a minimum regular and sober attendance at matins, Mass, and evensong on Sundays and feasts, and annual confession and communion at Easter. But the laity expected and gave far more in the way of involvement with the action and symbolism of the liturgy than those minimum requirements suggest.\(^{527}\)

Adding some of these familiar snippets of chant, and indeed liturgical lyric, would connect them through these carols back to the familiar ritual of liturgical worship for both the clergy and the laity.

**The Use of Latin and Liturgical Quotation in the Carol/Sermon Manuscripts**

Of the manuscripts in Table 34, only three of the ten contain carols with Latin lines; this can be seen in Table 37. Of the total number of carols contained within all ten manuscripts approximately eighteen percent contain Latin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ms</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Carols(^{528})</th>
<th>No. With Latin Lines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GB-Ed Advocates 18.7.21</td>
<td>1372</td>
<td>149a, 155a, 157d, 271</td>
<td>0 of 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Ob Bodley 26</td>
<td>c. xiv</td>
<td>12a + possible second carol</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Cul Additional 5943</td>
<td>c.xv1/4</td>
<td>151c, 349, 149d, 451</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Ctc R.14.26</td>
<td>c. xv 1/2</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Cul ff.5.48</td>
<td>c. xv 1/2</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Cgc 383/603</td>
<td>c. 1450</td>
<td>114b, 187A, 418, 441, 452, 453, 455, 470, App., No. ii</td>
<td>2 of 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Lbl Harley 5396</td>
<td>c. 1455</td>
<td>36b, 80, 136A</td>
<td>2 of 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Lbl Sloane 1584</td>
<td>c. xv 4/4</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Lbl Lansdowne 379</td>
<td>c. xvi 1/2</td>
<td>43, 94</td>
<td>1 of 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^{527}\) Duffy, Eamon, *The Stripping of the Altars* (Yale, 2005), 11

\(^{528}\) Numbers correspond to number in: Greene, R.L, ed. *The Early English Carols* (Oxford, 1935)
The lives of lay people in the late Middle Ages was dictated around the ebb and flow of the liturgical year, as well as other events of worship in the local church i.e. births, deaths and marriages. The local parishioner’s belief in salvation would have been a very real concept. The importance of regularly attending church and participating in the mass in order to reduce their time in purgatory after their death was a very real fear for those living in the medieval period. The inclusion of sacred subjects and lines from the liturgy found in carols would therefore seem perfectly understandable. Even if the parishioner did not necessarily understand the meaning of the Latin text, they would certainly have been able to remember the key repeated phrases they heard on a daily basis and relate them to certain services and liturgical events. We can see the depth of the lay knowledge of the liturgy in documents detailing the provision of masses to be sung after their deaths, and the level of detail that they employ in these instructions. Of course, these observances may have been written with the aid of a clergyman in order to ensure the correct choice of masses and fasts, but nevertheless show the importance that the laity placed on ensuring that particular parts of the liturgy were performed on their behalf after their death.529

As with the musically notated carol manuscripts, the majority of Latin is found in the carols from the middle of the fifteenth century onwards. Latin throughout the fifteenth century was beginning to lose its exclusivity as the language of the educated alongside the slowly increasing literacy of the laity and ‘as the number of laymen able to read grew in many communities and even in many households, so too did demand for reading matter, and well-to-do households and larger bodies such as guilds acquired collections of material which might include both entertainment and uplift, romances...alongside saints’ lives and sermons’.530 One of the most popular of these books were ‘Books of Hours’; so popular they were mass produced in vast numbers with the advent of the printing press.531 As Duffy notes, ‘What is so remarkable ... is that we are dealing here not with an English but with a

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529 Duffy, Eamon, The Stripping of the Altars (Yale, 2005)
530 Duffy, Eamon, The Stripping of the Altars (Yale, 2005), 69
531 The printing press was invented in 1440. By the end of the fifteenth century printing was widespread across Europe and well established in England.
Latin book’. The lay person was not only familiar with the sound of the Latin he was hearing and repeating in public worship, but an increasing number were now able to access it in written form in their private devotions; how much of the Latin was actually understood is debateable, but their association with it in public worship could have given them at least a basic comprehension of meaning. The circulation of such material would have begun to enhance the literate laity’s relationship with the Latin language throughout the fifteenth century, and may therefore have been a contributing factor in its inclusion in the later carols.

Interestingly, the carol 157d in GB-Ed 18.7.21, ‘Maiden and Moder, cum and se’ appears in a further two manuscripts, and one early printed source. The chronologically latest source, ‘Huntington Library, Christmas caroles newely Inprynted’ contains the same carol but with a modified burden with Latin lines. The burden reads ‘Gaudeamus synge we In hoc sacro tempore; Puer nobis natus est Ex Maria virgine’. This inter-changeability between English and Latin in this carol demonstrates the flexibility of language in the Middle Ages, particularly the flexible use of Latin. It may also be an indication of performance context; the inclusion of Latin giving the carol more gravitas for use in worship than the use of the vernacular. The Latin lines within these carols are as illustrated in Table 38.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ms</th>
<th>Carol535</th>
<th>Latin Lines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BL, Harley 5396</td>
<td>36b (Nativity)</td>
<td>Burden: Puer nobis natus est De virgine Maria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Last line of stanzas:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S1. Dicam vobis quia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S2. Sua morte pia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S3. Sua mente pia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S4. Teste profecia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S5. Tua prece pia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL, Harley 5396</td>
<td>80 (Nativity)</td>
<td>Burden: Christo paremus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

532 Duffy, Eamon, The Stripping of the Altars (Yale, 2005), 213
533 This carol discussed in the Chapter 4: ‘‘That we with merth mowe savely synge’: The fifteenth-century carol, a music of the people?’
534 This source is a collection of printed pamphlets, five in total. Pamphlet one is complete and contains four carols. It was printed in London by Richard Kele (d.1552) and dates from c. 1545. The other four incomplete pamphlets contain a further 19 carols between them. For a facsimile of the complete collection see: Bliss Reed, Edward, Christmas Carols Printed in the Sixteenth Century (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1932), and for further information on the carols and the pamphlets composition see: Greene, R.L, ed. The Early English Carols, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1977), 340-341
535 Numbers correspond to the numbering in: Greene, R.L, ed. The Early English Carols 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1977), 340-341

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A Benedicamus Substitute and Processional Hymn?

One area of worship already suggested as a potential situation for the inclusion of carols is in the role of Benedicamus substitute. F.L. Harrison advanced a theory in the 1950s that the sacred carols superseded the role of the conductus, acting as a substitute for the Benedicamus on a number of festivals.⁵³⁶ He argued that:

‘The disappearance of the conductus in the second half of the fourteenth century and the appearance of the votive antiphons make it clear that this could not have been the main function of the votive antiphon... the words of some polyphonic carols... make it likely that the sacred carol of the fifteenth century took over from the conductus the role of Benedicamus substitute on certain festivals’.⁵³⁷

The Benedicamus Domino was an integral part of medieval devotion, concluding each of the hours of the office so ‘At least eight or nine times during the course of daily worship, the

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versicle Benedicamus Domino (“Let us bless the Lord”) sounded from the choir and corridors of a medieval church… along with its response Deo gratias (“Thanks be to God”). This ‘Deo Gratias’ response was another confirming element of Harrison’s theory. This response is found often within the carol texts (mainly those for the Christmas season). He writes:

The texts of some polyphonic carols strongly suggest that this was their function. The famous ‘Agincourt’ carol Deo Gratias Anglia has the refrain-line Deo gratias. The Latin carol Deo gratias persolvamus in the Selden manuscript ends with Benedicamus Domino, Deo gratias... both the burden and the last verse of Novo profuse gaudio... end with Benedicamus Domino...

Of these examples, all are extant with musical notation and are preserved in three separate manuscripts: GB-Ctc 0.3.58, GB-Ob Bodley 26 and Lbl Egerton 3307. All three manuscripts contain a number of carols, but only one with the ‘Deo Gratias’ is found in each. Harrison’s discovery of the carols in 9-E-19, a manuscript from the middle of the fourteenth century, advanced his theory. The manuscript contained a cluster of seventeen Benedicamus settings, followed by four carols, leading Harrison to believe that they were included as Benedicamus substitutes in this setting. Where Harrison’s theory falls down, is in the labelling of the material within this manuscript. The seventeen Benedicamus settings are labelled as so, but the carols are labelled as carols, and at no point do they refer in their texts to any element of the Benedicamus. Harrison therefore seems to have two conflicting arguments; he argues for the Benedicamus substitution of carols on the basis that textual references are made to this section of the liturgy, yet conflicts this by arguing that despite there being no textual references to the Benedicamus in 9-E-19 the carols would still have been used for this purpose. Unfortunately no other clusters of carols in juxtaposition with Benedicamus settings are extant in order to confirm Harrison’s theory. In Ritson we find headings for specific seasonal uses for the carols, and Egerton reveals an underlying organisation demonstrated in its grouping together of political carols, but no clusters of

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539 The hours of the office are: vespers, compline, matins, lauds, prime, terce, sext, none
540 Harrison, F.L., Music in Medieval Britain (London, 1963), 417
carols with the distinctive ‘Deo Gratias’ ending. Harrison’s argument, whilst compelling, requires more primary evidence.

Rossell Hope Robbins made a strong case for the carol as a processional hymn based on his examination of the polyphonic carol manuscripts. Robins believed that the placement of the carols within these manuscripts may provide evidence of their use, noting that:

With the exception of the Trinity roll, the three other polyphonic manuscripts include Latin antiphons from the Sarum and other processions. In Egerton MS.3307, the Latin processional hymns are grouped together in one part of the manuscript, but in MS. Arch. Selden they are interspersed among the English carols. The juxtaposition in MS. Arch. Selden is strong presumptive evidence that the compilers made little distinction in use, else the items would certainly have been rearranged for more convenient handling in choir practice. In the Ritson MS., the hymns are intermingled with secular songs... almost all of the balance of the manuscript can be explained by its relation to processional rites.541

He also cites the carols’ quotation of hymn texts in their burdens or refrains as further evidence of their processional use in the manuscripts: Ctc 1230, Ob 26, Lbl 5665, Lbl 2593, Ob.e.1, Obac 354 and Cu Ee.1.12. The carol may well have been used in processions during worship, and the evidence certainly points towards it, but as Stevens notes, ‘the earliest carols...were written as ‘popular litanies’ for use in ecclesiastical procession, but any procession, civic or courtly, provided a suitable setting.’542

The use of headings found within Ritson coupled with Harrison’s evidence, the liturgical quotations, Robbins’ compelling evidence for the use of the carol as a processional hymn and with the text and music identified by Zamzow, seems to suggest a place for the carol within the liturgy, but as Steven’s notes, we must be cautious as ‘until more evidence becomes available the question must remain open as to whether the medieval carol was admitted into the liturgy or kept peripheral’.543 The evidence however, certainly seems to

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541 Robbins, Rossell Hope, ‘Middle English Carols as Processional Hymns’, Studies in Philology, 56 (1959), 562
point towards its inclusion in some areas of the liturgy, particularly responsorial sections 
and processional elements.

The ‘Unsuitable Carol’ in Sermon Manuscripts

We must also remember that liturgical quotations are also found in what could be termed 
as ‘unsuitable’ carols for liturgical substitution. The words ‘Deo Gratias’ for example are 
found in the burden of the Agincourt Carol, which due to its political text would be 
inappropriate for use as a Benedicamus Domino substitute. The ‘Deo Gratias’ phrase would 
have been well known, so its use in carols not intended for use in worship would not seem 
unusual. Even some of the secular carols use Latin phrases, as in ‘Kyrie so Kyrie’ from the 
manuscript GB-BL-Sloane 2593 for example.544 This carol is narrated in the female voice, and 
tells the tale of the narrator’s dalliance with Jankyn, which inevitably ends with her 
pregnant. Greene classifies this carol as amorous, but the cautionary element of the tale 
lends to it a moralistic tone. The carol cleverly follows the order of the Mass, and may have 
been a cleric’s humorous way of remembering the key points. As Duffy notes:

> Men and women who could not read, sought to remember the saints’ days and 
other festivals by which the year was mapped out, and resorted to mnemonic 
devices to imprint the pattern of the year in their minds, The most common of these 
deVICES was the “Cisio-Janus”, a series of nonsensical rhymes, at first in Latin but 
later in English, which listed the major feasts of each month.545

This carol could in some way be in homage to this mnemonic tradition. The transcription of 
the carol reads:

> ‘Kyrie, so kyrie,’
> Jankyn syngyt merir
> With ‘aleyson.’

> As I went on Yol Day in owre prosessyon,

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545 Duffy, Eamon, *The Stripping of the Altars* (Yale, 2005), 49
Knew I joly Jankyn be his mery ton.

Kyrieleyson

Jankyn began the Offys on the Yol Day,
And yyt me thynkjt it dos me good, so
Merie gan he say,
‘Kyrieleyson.’

Jankyn red the Pystyl ful fayre and ful wel,
And yyt me thinkt it dos me good, as
Eure haue I sel [good fortune].

Kyrieleyson.

Jankyn at the Sanctus crakit a merie note,
And yyt me thinkt it dos me good:
I payid for his cote.

Kyrieleyson.

Jankyn crakit notes, an hunderid on
A knot,
And ytt he hakkyt hem smallere than
Wortes to the pot.

Kyrieleyson.

Jankyn at the Agnus beryt the paxbrede;
He twynkelid, but sayd nowt, and on
myn fot he trede.

Kyrieleyson.
Benedicamus Domino: Cryst fro schame
Me schylde;
De gracias therto: alas, I go with chylde!
Kyrieleyson.\textsuperscript{546}

The carol not only speaks in layers of liturgical function, morality and amusement, but also gives the reader an insight into musical practice. The burden repeatedly tells us that Jankyn sung merrily with ‘aleyson’; aleyson most probably being the girl’s name ‘Alison’ and therefore a pun on the Latin ‘Eleyson’.\textsuperscript{547} In stanza two, we are told that Jankyn is recognisable ‘By his merry ton’, in stanza four we are told that ‘Jankyn at the Sanctus crakit a merie note’, and in stanza five Jankyn crakit notes, an hunderid on a knot’. The prowess of Jankyn and his ability not only to trill a merry note, but also to be able to trill a hundred at a time, is conveyed as an impressive skill, and makes him even more of an attractive prospect to the young women.\textsuperscript{548} Although this carol has no extant musical notation, its prominent musical theme running throughout may suggest its association with a musical setting.

Five manuscripts containing theological material or sermons are found to contain carols that would perhaps seem unexpected alongside sacred material, and would perhaps seem unsuitable for use in any area of worship, let alone as a ‘Benedicamus Domino’ substitute. Table 39 shows these manuscripts and their carol contents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ms</th>
<th>CAROLS\textsuperscript{549}</th>
<th>CONTENTS RELATED TO PREACHING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GB-Lbl 1584</td>
<td>446- Amorous</td>
<td>Theological material. Instructions for Deacons and Sub deacons. Easter sermon. Misc. material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Lbl A.XXV</td>
<td>95a-Nativity</td>
<td>Theological material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>472- Humorous (later addition to the manuscript)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{546} Greene, R.L, ed. *The Early English Carols* (Oxford, 1935), 309
\textsuperscript{547} ‘Eleyson’ translates as ‘Mercy’
\textsuperscript{548} Kurath, Hans, *Middle English Dictionary*:C.6 (Michigan, 1960), 706, describes the meaning of ‘crakit’ as ‘To utter (words, speech, etc)...to trill, quaver; trill (a note); also sing’.
\textsuperscript{549} Numbers correspond to their number in Greene, R.L. *The Early English Carols* (Oxford, 1935). Carols are also labelled as of Greene’s classifications for consistency.
GB-Cul 5943
151c - Lullaby
349-Moral Counsel
149d-Lullaby
451 –Amorous.

GB-Cul ff.5.48
456- Amorous
Instructions for parish priests

GB-Cgc 83/603
114b-Nativity
Misc. contents suggesting a cleric’s book prior to taking orders.
187A-Virgin
418-convivial carol
441-Amorous
452-Amorous
453-Amorous
455-Amorous
470 -Humorous
App., No. ii-Nativity

Table 39: Sermon manuscripts containing secular carols

GB-Cul 5943, a manuscript that was, by 10th December 1418, the property of a Carthusian monk from the Priory of Henton in Somerset, but originally in the possession of the vicar, Thomas Turke. Thomas is noted to be the ‘former’ perpetual vicar of Biere (also in Somerset). The manuscript contains, alongside the carols and some French, Latin and English songs: a variety of Latin sermons, a Latin poem, Latin religious tracts, Richard Rolle’s *Emendatio Vitae* and *Melum Contemplativorum*, eclipses of the sun and moon between the dates 1415 and 1462, Latin theological material, memoranda, accounts that relate to an archdeacon and a number of Somerset vicars and a Latin and English note. The manuscript includes two lullaby carols and a carol on how to conduct oneself with discretion; all three of these can easily be seen as suitable for a manuscript of this kind, sitting comfortably alongside the Latin sermons. The inclusion of the carol ‘Would God that

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hyt were so’ on the other hand, seems rather out of place; the text being in the female
voice, and speaking of unrequited love.551

The lullaby carol ‘Lullay, lullay: as I lay’ found on f. 169, is the only one that is notated
within this manuscript. The carol starts to convey a story; story telling is so often found in
carols and often overlooked in academic writing.552 This carol would seem entirely
appropriate in worship due to its sacred text. It is in a different hand to the polyphonic
music within this manuscript. It is, as would be expected, in triple time; the burden
beginning and ending on C, with the verse beginning and ending on D. This carol shows a
particular musical connection with the lyrics. In this short and mainly syllabic piece there is a
glimpse of sympathetic writing. The only prominent melismatic phrases come on the words
‘my longing’ and ‘child rocking’; the sense of rocking created by the final cadential
melismatic figure may be entirely accidental, but the syllabic nature of the rest of the piece
would suggest otherwise. The emphasis on the ‘longing’ felt by the singer is also an effective
musical device.553 Both these phrases can be seen in Example 5.

![Example 5: ‘Lullay, lullay’](image)

There are an additional eighteen notated pieces, not in carol form, within this
manuscript.555 Amongst these items are a number of other songs in French, English and

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552 See Chapter 4: ‘That we with merth mowe savely synge’: The fifteenth-century carol, a music of the
people?’ for further discussion of these ideas.
553 One cannot compare whether the words of subsequent verses took on such significance with the melodic
line, as only this verse survives.
554 Transcription as found in, Stevens, John, ed. *Mediaeval Carols* (London, 1970), 110
Latin, and interestingly a number of erotic traditional songs in English. What makes the carol form stand out amongst these however, is its participatory nature, which suggests the communal singing and enjoyment of such pieces. Many carols seem to encourage participatory singing and revelry. The carol by Smert, ‘Nowell, nowell: Die vous garde’ for example seems to encourage singing. It calls at the end of each of its verses respectively: ‘Which causeth you for to sing’, ‘Wherefore sing we all at-a-braid’ and ‘And sing with us now joyfully’.  

It is not only in the notated carols that we find these references to participatory singing, other carols call ‘Nowe lete us syng and mery be!’\(^{557}\), ‘Syng we to the Trinite!’\(^{558}\), and ‘Alle ye mowen of joye synge’.\(^{559}\) In Ritson, ‘Sing we to this merry company’ seems to epitomise a sense of communal enjoyment, and participation through its exclamations at the end of each verse respectively: ‘Therefore we sing to thee’, ‘Right causeth us all to sing to thee’ and ‘With joy and gladness sing we to thee’.\(^{560}\) These calls to those that are within this so called ‘merry company’ suggest a sense of informality despite the complex polyphony and setting of worship.

This eclectic mix of material in GB-Cul 5943 shows a working, ever evolving manuscript where material that needs to be remembered, for whatever reason, is recorded. The supposed connection of this manuscript to Thomas Turke, the vicar of Biere, assumes the importance of this material to him in his life and work, and the inclusion of the erotic songs and amorous carols alongside the Latin sermons suggested a clergy that was well aware of life beyond the church, and the need to connect with the laity on base levels. It could be argued that the erotic and amorous material was there merely for the vicar’s personal pleasure, but would it then seem appropriate to hand a manuscript such as this on to a Carthusian monk? The Carthusian order was one of solitude and confinement from the outside world, which could initially make the gift of this particular manuscript with its ‘worldly texts’ to a Carthusian friar seem an odd choice. However, there is a danger of forgetting that monks were men first and foremost and their sacred duties and choice of


\(^{556}\) Stevens, John, ed. *Medieval Carols* (London, 1970), 67


\(^{559}\) Greene, R.L, ed. *The Early English Carols* (Oxford, 1935), 139

lifestyle did not eradicate their personalities and memories of life before taking holy orders. The gift of some erotic and amorous material may therefore have been a welcome gift. The other contents would have been more appropriate however and may have had some value in this monastic setting.\textsuperscript{561}

The manuscript GB-Gc 383/603, is particularly interesting in regard to the inclusion of ‘unsuitable’ preaching material. As discussed previously,\textsuperscript{562} it seems to have been ‘intended for the use of clerks proceeding to orders since the scriptural and liturgical sources are very numerous.’\textsuperscript{563} The manuscript holds a total of eight carols; the sacred carols outnumbered two to six. Why would the compiler favour these secular lyrics? Scholars have often described carols as written by clerics for their own amusement; however, placing them in a manuscript alongside instructional material seems to lend them more significance. Rather than presuming they are only for the amusement of the clerics, perhaps there is a possibility that they have heard these in the context of preaching and committed them to paper or perhaps due to the often cautionary tales of resulting pregnancy after indulging in carnal pleasures, they may have served as subtle warnings to these young men.

The carol ‘Alas, als, the wyle!’; seen in Example 6 within the original manuscript, and beginning a third of the way down the page, is one of four carols with similar subject matter within this manuscript.\textsuperscript{564} It tells the story of a maiden being seduced by Jack (a commonly used name for such a character), narrated in the female voice, and concludes with her pregnancy. The carol is graphic in its carnal detail and would again raise the question of its suitability for inclusion in a cleric’s manuscript alongside Latin sermons and theological material. The carol reads:

\begin{quote}
Alas, als, the wyle!
Thout Y on no gyle,
So haue Y god chence.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{561} For more information on the Carthusian Order, see: Luxford, Julian, M., \textit{Studies in Carthusian Monasticism in the Late Middle Ages} (2009, np)
\textsuperscript{562} See Chapter 5: ‘Women in Late Medieval Carols’.
\textsuperscript{563} Miner, John Nelson, \textit{The Grammar Schools of Medieval England: A.F. Leach in Historiographical Perspective} (Canada, 1990), 139
\textsuperscript{564} A discussion of a second carol of similar subject is found in Chapter 5: ‘Women in late Medieval Carols’, and can be seen preceding ‘Alas, als, the wyle!’ on the manuscript page in Example 6.
Alas, ales, the wyle
That eur Y cowed daunce!

Ladd Y the daunce a yssomur Day;
Y made smale trippus[light steps], soth for to say.
Jak, our haly-watur clerk com be the way,
And he loked me vpon; he thout hit was gay.
Thout yc on ne gyle.

Jack oure haly-watur s clerk, the yong Strippelyng,
For the chesone of [because of] me he com to the ryng [circle of the carole],
And he tripped on my to and made aTwymkelyng;
Euer he can ner; he sparet for no thynge.
Thout Y on no gyle.

Jak, ic wot, preyede in my fayre face;
He thout me ful werly [cautious], so haue Y god Grace;
As we turndun owre dance in a narw place,
Jak bed [offered] me on the mouth; a cussyne ther was.
Thout Y on no gyle.

Jack tho began to rowne [whisper] in my ere:
‘Loke that thou be priuey, and graunte
That thou the bere;
A peyre with glouus ic ha to thyn were.’
‘Gramercy, Kacke!’ was myn answere.
Thoute yc on no gyle.
Sone after euensong [sunset] Jak me mette:
‘Com hom aftur thy glouus that I the yhette.’
Wan ic to his chamber com, doun he me sette;
From hym mytte Y nat go wan we were mette.
Thout Y on no gyle.

Schetus and chalonus [blankets], ic wot, a were yspredde;
Forsethe tho Jak and yc wenten to bedde;
He priked, and he pransede; nolde he neuer lynne [ceased];
Yt was the murgust nyt that eur Y cam ynne.
Thout I on no gyle.

Wan Jak had don, tho he rong the bell;
Al nyght ther he made me to dwele;
Of trewe we haddun yserued the reaggeth [ragged] deuel of helle;
Of othur smale burdus kepY nout to telle.
Thout Y on no gyle.

The Monday at prime Y com hom, as ic wene;
Mwth Y my dame, coppud [peevish] and kene:
‘ey, thou stronge strumpeth, ware hastu bene?
Thy trippyng and the dauncyng, wel it wel be sen.’
Thout Y on no gyle.

Euer bi on and by on y damme reched me clot [clout];
Eur Y ber it priuey wyle tha I mouth,
Tyl my gurdul aros, my wombe wax out;
Eul therinne es ern eur it wole out.
Despite its raw narrative, it is essentially a tale of morality rather than the ‘amorous’ label that it is given by Greene. It displays an awareness of the human condition and a connection to the life of the laity and a sense of connection to the reality of their lives. Whether moralistic tales such as these would have been used merely for the amusement of clerics, or as narratives to warn a listening congregation of the resulting consequences of immoral actions; the fact remains that alongside sacred theological and sermon material sit lyrics such as this carol.

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It is not only in these two manuscripts with connections to monastic houses, priests or containing preaching or theological material that we find ‘unsuitable’ carols. This is also the case in GB-Lbl 1584, which contains the carol ‘So well ys me begone’ which is written in the hand of John Gysborn, the canon of Coverham. The carol is written in the female voice and tells of her love for a soldier. Interestingly, the only other piece of prose in this manuscript is
also a song of love in English. The inclusion of two love songs in a manuscript predominantly occupied with theological material and instructions for Deacons and subdeacons and an Easter sermon and written by a canon would initially perhaps seem at odds; one would wonder what use the love songs would have been to a compiler of such academic sacred material, but as demonstrated through the exploration of the manuscripts in this chapter, the juxtaposition of such diverse material is commonplace.

### Conclusion

There can be no doubt that the late medieval carol was indeed a tool for worship in some context; the carol ‘Honnd by Honnd’ positioned between two sermons with its possible link in content to the preceding sermon, provides clear evidence that carols were considered appropriate to place alongside sermon material and were perhaps used as a preaching tool. The considerable number of sermon manuscripts that also contain carols within in them in some context would also suggest this. Thanks to Zamzow’s research, evidence of liturgical elements in the carols is shown to be abundant. The carols were evidently closely connected with the ritual of worship from a textual perspective, if not in practice. The liturgy seeped into every aspect of the lives of the lay person and the clergy just as it seeps into the body of many of the carols.

The use of the carol in the liturgy is less clear however. Harrison’s exploration of the carol as a Benedicamus Domino substitute is viable theory, although more primary evidence is required in order to prove that this was common practice. The liturgical quotations found within the Ritson manuscript, combined with its clear classification of the carols into liturgical seasons, goes some way to connect the carol with the liturgy and use in worship, particularly the Christmas season, rather than the more commonly held notion of carols as merely devices for entertainment at feasts or the personal amusement of clerics, and Robbins’ compelling theory of the carol as processional hymn adds yet another possibility for the carol’s place within ecclesiastical ceremony. Despite these possible uses, and fragments of evidence however, more evidence is still required in order to understand the role of the carol, if any, in liturgical practice.
It would appear that the time for assuming the late medieval carol was merely an amusement for clerics or simply a Christmas entertainment is now over; this genre needs to be appreciated for its diversity of use in the fifteenth century, and musicologists need to now look beyond the stereotypes at greater possibilities of use for this diverse genre.
Conclusion

The dominant theme throughout this thesis is undoubtedly the need for the late medieval carol to be contextualised within a wider research framework than it has been previously in order to reassess its role and importance in late medieval society and show its diversity as a genre; demonstrating its use in all strata of society, rather than the popular view of the form as a simple amusement for educated clerics. This study has addressed the subject by engaging not only with the carols extant with musical notation, the main musicological approach to the genre in previous published research, but also with those carols that survive without music, thus valuing them as equally important in terms of understanding the genre as a whole. Both those carols extant with and without musical notation have been placed within significant English social, political and religious contexts in order to create a fuller picture of this important insular musical form of the late Middle Ages. In order for this to be successfully achieved, a combination of several research methodologies has been applied to the research: a traditional empirical method in order to define the genre, an ethnomusicological approach in order to understand the form in wider social, religious and political contexts, and a process of approaching text and music from a gender perspective in order to better understand the place of women within the carols. This new, combined methodological approach allows the carol to be viewed from a variety of angles within one study, thus revealing its multifaceted nature.

Combining these methodologies has shown the carol to be a far more diverse genre than has previously been portrayed: often thought of as a form created and nurtured by educated male clerics, this thesis has demonstrated through the exploration of individual carols and manuscripts that the carol was much more than this, having a far more diverse place in late medieval society than has previously been portrayed. The exploration of carols in manuscripts such as Egerton, Fayrfax and Henry VIII for example, has established the carol as a high-minded genre with a place within the royal court and other aristocratic circles, being penned by prolific composers such as Cornysh with his four carols of the Fayrfax and Henry VIII manuscripts: ‘Woefully arrayed’, ‘Hoyday, hoyday, jolly rutterkin’, ‘You and I and Amyas’ and ‘Whiles life or breath’, and Browne with his two carols of the Fayrfax manuscript.
‘Margaret Meek‘ and ‘Woefully arrayed’. Equally as important as these carols originating from an aristocratic cultural sphere however, we find through the study of monophonic carols such as ‘Nova, nova’ with its dance-style melody or secular carols in the vernacular without extant musical notation, that the carol was also a form that used popular melodies and would seem to have existed just as comfortably within an oral framework as a written one. The carols have been shown within this thesis not to have existed exclusively for the educated and monastic classes in society, but shared by all social classes in their various polyphonic and monophonic forms in a much freer way than has previously been thought. ‘Nova, nova’ also demonstrated the connection between carols and drama with its use of several speaking voices, showing itself to be a mini liturgical drama; indeed, many carols are plays in themselves. The carol genre has been shown in this thesis to have possible uses in liturgical plays, whilst also being equally at home in the dramas and maskings of the royal court of Henry VIII.

A manuscript such as Ritson with its classification of the carols into liturgical seasons has shown tantalising possibilities for connection to the liturgy, and the manuscripts such as GB-Ob Bodley 26 and GB-Cul Additional 5943 that contain both carols and sermons could point to their use within other aspects of worship. Their appearance in non-musically notated pocket-book style manuscripts rather than large monastic or royal manuscripts, seem to point to a lost body of monophonic carol melodies that leaked into all strata of society thus again demonstrating that carols were not exclusively for the monastic and educated classes, but shared by all social classes in their various polyphonic and monophonic forms.

The insular nature of the genre, alongside its lack of named composers, has, perhaps unfairly, discouraged scholars from undertaking substantial detailed, published research. This, coupled with the apparent completeness of both Stevens’s and Greene’s editions, seems to have almost suspended further detailed research for a number of decades, suggesting a finality in terms of carol research. This study has demonstrated that this is far from the truth. Greene’s publication, although an important resource, is very much a product of its time, and a fresh approach to some of his categorisations is timely in order to reassess the classifications of female centred and political carols in particular; both genres that have been demonstrated in this thesis to be more complex than has previously been portrayed. This study has established for example, that Greene’s classifications of carols
concerning women were too generalised. The carols of women have instead been
demonstrated in this thesis to be far more multifaceted than Greene presents; existing in a
number of sub-categories rather than, for example, large groupings of ‘amorous carols’ or
‘carols of women’. The range of carols identified within this chapter that: speak directly to
women, speak in a female voice, are about women or contain an amount of female
narrative, are testament to the involvement of women in some capacity, whether as
subject, audience, performers or composers in the world of the medieval carols. The extent
of the involvement and significance of women in the context of the medieval carol should
not, in face of this evidence then, be underestimated.

The classification of political carols has also been challenged in this research and is shown to
be more complex than previous portrayals; the inclusion of carols addressing the Saints
George and Thomas of Canterbury within this grouping, for example, was a very necessary
adjustment in order to better understand their inclusion, and indeed placement, within the
manuscripts. The importance of the placement of the political carols was particularly
apparent in the significant observation of the close grouping of the political carols within the
Egerton manuscript which had, nestled at the heart of them, a carol to Saint Thomas.
Previous scholarship had not noted the close grouping of political carols in this manuscript,
an aspect that might strengthen suggestion of its use in an establishment with strong
political connections, and perhaps even with royal connections. It also showed that these
carols were categorised together as a sub-genre by those in the late medieval period. These
political carols have also revealed the beginnings of a growing sense of nationhood in
England in the fifteenth century with their subject matter and use of terminology such as,
‘English nation’, ‘England be glad’ and ‘England, raise up thy lusty hearts’; a concept that
some scholars have argued was only in its infancy in the sixteenth century.

The carol, although treated in isolation from other genres in previous research, has been
shown here to be a musical form that grew and developed in structure and style alongside
other music of the period, something clearly seen when it was examined alongside the
motet of the fifteenth century. It was also, importantly, demonstrated to be a genre
integrated into a broader musical spectrum of forms and styles; one set in manuscripts
alongside sacred, secular and liturgical continental and English music, often borrowing lines
from hymns, and musical and textual quotations from the liturgy. This confirms that as a
genre, it was clearly assimilated with other musical forms of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and as result of this observation, should now be seen, and performed to advantage, in context alongside these other genres today (indeed the carols need to be performed far more than they are currently whether alongside other genres or not, as apart from some of the popular Christmas repertoire, they are rarely heard).

The carol has been revealed to be a far more complex, multifaceted genre than previous scholarship has shown; something that has been successfully redressed in this thesis. It has been revealed as an important, indigenous musical form that has the potential to give a far greater insight into its place in medieval society, and indeed medieval society itself, than has formerly been understood. This thesis has challenged previous academic thought and revealed a number of possibilities for the carol’s use: as a tool for worship, a vehicle for English nationalism, a dramatic device and a popular song, as well as a genre that provides us with a window into lost vernacular melodies and the perception of women in fifteenth-century England. This thesis has advanced the understanding of the place of the English carol in late medieval society and provides a strong foundation for the development of further research in this area. The carols are found in approximately 138 manuscripts, of which this study has addressed 38. A continuing research project that allows a thorough examination of all of these manuscripts using the combined methodologies utilised within this thesis and building on the research from within this study, would undoubtedly produce further valuable evidence that would enable the carol to be placed in even clearer social, political and religious contexts than this constraints of this thesis allows.
Appendix

Bibliography of Primary Sources
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<tr>
<th>Full Manuscript Reference</th>
<th>Sigla</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Musically notated carols</th>
<th>Contents, Layout and Structure</th>
<th>Carols and the first line of verse one</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridgwater Corporation Muniments, 123</td>
<td>GB-Bbcm 123</td>
<td>15th century</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Structure: one length of parchment, measuring 76 x 254 mm. Layout and contents: recto contains 'A Latin indenture, dated 8 August 1471, between one Master Maurice, prebendary of the prebendal church of Llangoullo, in the diocese of St. Davids, and Sir Hugh, perpetual vicar of that church, and one Thomas ap Rees ap Davyd of that parish...Scribbles in the hand of the carols: 'hay hay w...'/ 'a and...'.</td>
<td>14a: Now well may we myrthys make 362: A domusday we schull ysee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, Manuscript 383/603</td>
<td>GB-Cgc MS 383/603</td>
<td>MS 383/603</td>
<td>14th-15th century</td>
<td>Structure: Paper. 108 folios, measuring 225 x149 mm. Layout and contents: Written in two hands, with all the carols in the same hand. 'The MS is a trilingual student’s exercise and commonplace book, with forms of letters in French and Latin. There are many memoranda and much penmanship practice. The carols are written in odd spaces in the same fashion as other notes and memoranda. Two of the English carols appear with a French carol between them...Other contents include: Latin grammatical notes and verses. 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 'Qui emptores terrarum'. Accounts ion French. Instructions for keeping accounts, with specimens. An English verse-riddle...The MS. is from Oxfordshire and very probably the work of an Oxford student.'</td>
<td>114b: Lestenytgh, lordynges, both grete and smale 187a: Alle ye mouwen of joye synge 418: Wan ic wente byyonde the see 441: Myne owned ere ladi fair and fre 452: Al this day ic han sough 453: Ladd Y the daunce a Myssomur Day 455: Y louede a child of this cuntre 470: I am sorry for her sake APP., No. ii: Mari mulde hath boren a chylyde</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1 This numbering corresponds to Greene, R.L. *The Early English Carols*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1977) unless otherwise stated. The first line of verses have been chosen instead of the first lines of burdens to ensure continuity of reference between Greene, the most comprehensive compilation of the carols in publication, and this table. Those carols referenced in either: Stevens, John, ed., *Mediaeval Carols* (London, 1970) or Stevens, John, ed., *Music at the Court of Henry VIII* (London, 1962), are listed with the first lines of their burden to ensure continuity of reference between these editions and this table.


| Cambridge, St John’s College, S.54 | GB-Cjc S.54 | Late 15th century | x | Structure: Paper, 146 x 105mm. i+15 leaves. Layout and contents: Two main scribes (Greene claims there are four, but the most recent work on this manuscript suggests there are only two). Contains...the English song ‘Qwan Crist was borne in Bedlem’...The MS. is certainly from East Anglia, but cannot be placed more exactly. | 83:X for Crites himself was dyth 90: Jhesu restyd in a may 125B a: Now ys the Twelfth Day com 139: Ouer all gatis that I haff gon 142a: A child ys born, ewys 148B: The child was borne this endyr nyth 149b: Als I lay vpon a nith 232a: A pryncypal poynth of charyte 18a: In Bedlem this berde of lyf 19: This babe to vs that now is bore 21C: In Bedleem, in that fayr cete 22: Now God Almythy doun hath sent 98: Of this marter make we mende 103Aa: To the now, Cristes dere derlyng 117b: A babe is borne of hye natewre 173: Ther is no rose of swych vertu 234A: As I lay vpon a myth 235b: The Holi Goste is to the sent 338b: Abyde, Y hope hit be the beste 426b: Owre kynge went forth to Normandy |
| Cambridge Trinity College, 0.3.58 | GB-Ctc O.3.58 | Trinity Roll | v | Structure: Parchment roll, consisting of three sections sewn together, measuring 2207 x 178mm in total. Layout and contents: Musical content on recto in white mensural notation with additional red colouration. Verso contains Latin Offices. Thirteen anonymous carols on front side of roll in one hand, Latin Offices on the reverse in a second hand. The Latin Offices are in a later hand. | 17b: A pryncypal poynth of charyte 18a: In Bedlem this berde of lyf 19: This babe to vs that now is bore 21C: In Bedleem, in that fayr cete 22: Now God Almythy doun hath sent 98: Of this marter make we mende 103Aa: To the now, Cristes dere derlyng 117b: A babe is borne of hye natewre 173: Ther is no rose of swych vertu 234A: As I lay vpon a myth 235b: The Holi Goste is to the sent 338b: Abyde, Y hope hit be the beste 426b: Owre kynge went forth to Normandy |

4 Greene, R.L. *The Early English Carols* (Oxford, 1977), 326 claims there are four hands. Daniel Wakelin however, suggests only two in: Wakelin, Daniel, *Cambridge, St John’s College Library, MS S.54* (nd,np)

| Cambridge Trinity College, O.9.38 | GB-Ctc O.9.38 | Ctc O.9.38 | 15th century/second half (carol layer) | x | Structure: Written on paper, 300 x 110mm, v + i (original binding) + 1-61, 62-87 (amended to 63-88) 90, 88 (amended to 89), i.¹⁶
|-----|-----|-----|-----------------|---|-------------------|
|     |     |     | | | Layout and contents: Written in several hands, but ‘Main scribe T (presumably a Glastonbury monk) was responsible for most of its contents’¹⁷
|     |     |     | | | 161b: With faoure in hir face ferr passing my reason
|     |     |     | | | 331a: The Masse ys of suwich dygnyte

| Cambridge Trinity College, R.4.20 | GB-Ctc R.4.20 | 15th century/second half | x | Structure: Parchment. 254mm x 184mm. 172 folios.
|-----|-----|-----------------|---|-------------------|
|     |     | | | Layout and contents: Two main hands (but various others present). Carols in second, later hand. Contains ‘Mandeville’s Travels in English. One complete and several partial copies of an English love letter...Lydgate’s Siege of Thebes. English poems... ‘A gentyll fortune’; ‘I have nowe sett myn herte so hye”; Advice in verse from a
|     |     | | | 181: That was Jhesu oure Saueour
|     |     | | | 425: The Bysshop Scrope, that was so wyse

¹⁸ Greene, R.L. The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1977), 327-328
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Accession Number</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Layout and Contents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Faint musical notation exists above and below the carol text on folio 21r.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge University Library, Additional 5943</td>
<td>GB-Cu Additional 5943</td>
<td>15th century/ first quarter</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>Structure: Parchment and paper. 218 x144mm. 182 folios (156-158 lost).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Layout and contents: Many hands, but principally in one. ‘Latin sermons for various Sundays and feast-days throughout the year…Latin poem, ‘Urbanus’. Latin tracts on religious subjects, confession, the Holy Spirit, Articles of the Faith…Richard Rolle’s Emendatio Vitae and Melum Contemplativorium…Reckonings of eclipses of the sun and moon from 1415-1462, with diagrams…Latin theological material on fly-leaves (cent. XVI). Various accounts and memoranda. On f. iii v. a quaint Latin and English note: ‘Muncy, tumpha, myfmaffemofe’. A Latin note on f. penult. V records that the book is the property of John…now (10 December 1418) a Carthusian monk at the Priory of Henton, Somerset, to whom it has been given by Thomas Turk, formerly perpetual vicar of ‘Biere’ (Beer, Somerset).’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge University</td>
<td>GB-Cu Ee.1.12</td>
<td>c. 1492</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>Structure: Paper and parchment. v paper +110 parchment + iv paper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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9 Greene, R.L. *The Early English Carols* (Oxford, 1977), 328
10 Greene, R.L. *The Early English Carols* (Oxford, 1977), 328
Library, Ee.1.12

Folios. 200 x 142 mm.

Layout and contents: Poetry by Jacobus Ryman, with polyphony: 1 hymn (without text), 1 motet (without text), 1 unidentified textless piece

56: The Faders Sone of Heuen Blys
61: The Faders Sonne of Heven Blis
62: The Sonne of God and King of BLis
63: The Sone of God do full of myght
65: Bothe tongue and olde, take hede of this
66: Beholde and see how that nature
67: The prophesy fulfilled is
70: Thus it is seide in prophecye
71: A mayden myelde hath borne a chielde
72: This is the stone kut of the hille
74: Out of youre slepe arrayse and wake
75: Vpon a nyght an aungell bright
76: Whene Criste was borne, an aungell bright
81A: Now in Betheleme, that holy place
82: To the shepeherdes keeping theire folde
84: Mankyende was shent abd ay forlore
88: Auctor of helthe, Criste, haue in myende
92: Thou art solace in alle our e foo
127: Thre kings on the Twelfth Daye
128: On Twelfthe Day came kings thre
129: On Twelfthe Day this sterre so clere
130: Nowe this tyme Rex Pacificus
154: That mayden mylde here childe did kepe
156: O my dere Sonne, why doest thou soo?
159: When fals Judas her Son had solde
160: In orophesy thus it is said
174: To this roose Aungell Gabriell
189: Beholde and see, O lady free
192: O closed gate of Ezechiel
193: O closed gate of Ezchiel
194: Haile, perfecte trone of Salamon

12 http://www.diamm.ac.uk/jsp/Descriptions?op=SOURCE&sourceKey=333 (accessed 3 January 2014)
195: O queen of grace and of confort 
196: Sith thy Sonne is both God and man 
197: Sith Criste hath take both fleshe and blode
198: Sith of right thou mayst not forsake 
199: O queen of mercy and of grace 
200: O heunly sterre so clere and bright 
201: Haile, full of grace, Criste is with the 
202: Haile, spowse of Criste oure Savioure 
203: As Aaron yerde withoute moistoure 
204: O queen of blisse, thy Son Jhesus 
205: O queen of pitee and of grace 
207: Hayle, oure lod sterre bothe bright and clere 
208: O Jesse yerde florigerat 
209: O strong Jufith so full of myght 
210: O fayre Rachel seemly in syght 
211: Adam and Eve, thatte were vnwise 
212: O prynces of eternall peas 
214: Perle prynces of euery place 
215: CHildryn of Eve, bothe grete and small 
216: O flour of all urginite 
217: O Jesse yerde florigerat 
218: Regina celci, letare 
219: Sith thou hast born the Kyng of Grace 
220: O moder mylke, maybe vndefylde 
221: O uirgyn chast both furst and last 
222: O lyly flower of swete odowre 
223: O spopwsesse most dere, most bright, most clere 
224: O trycln of the Trinite 
225: O spowsesse of Crist and paramour 
226: O meke Hester so mylde of mynde 
227: O blessed mayde, moder and wyffr 
228: Sith thou hast born the Kyng of Grace 
229: O sweete lady, O uirgyn pure 
243a and b: The aungell seyde of high degree
244: The aungell seide of high degree
Hayle, full of grace, Criste is with the
As long before prophesy seyde
The high Fader of blisse aboue
That archaungell shynyng full bright
Thus to her seide an aungell tho
An angelle, thatte was fayre and bright
An angelle bright came downe with light
O man of molde, mekely behold
An angelle came vnto thatte mayde
An angelle seide to thatte meyde so fre
An angelle came with fulle grete light
Thus seide Mary of grete honoure
Josephe wolde haue fled fro that mayde
Come, my dere spowse and lady free
Haue myende for the how I was borne
Yf thou thy lyfe in synne haue ledde
Haue myende howe I mankyende haue take
O sweete Jhesu so meke and mylde
O King of Grace and Indulgence
O orient light shynyng moost bright
O loue a lourer that loueth me well
Adam and Eve did geve conceit
O Lorde, by whome al thing is wrought
O Fader withoute begynnyng
Thy creatures terrestrial
O God and man sempiternall
O Fader of high majeste
Fader and Sonne and Holi Goost
The High Fader of blisse aboue
Of a mayde Criste did not forsake
O Fader of Eternall Blys
O endless God of Mageste
Fadere of Blisse omnipotent
294: O endless God of Majeste
295: The Sonne of God, thatte all hath wrought
296: O endless God of Majeste
297: O sweete Jhesu, we knowledge this
298: O Fader of high majeste
299: The Sonne of God, oure Lorde Jhesus
300: The Faders SOnne of Heuen Blis
301: The Sonne of God hath take nature
302: To Crist Jhesu, thatte Lorde and Kyng
303: Eternall God, Fader of Light
304: O endless God, bothe iii and One
305: O highe Fader of Heuen Blys
318: This brede geveth eternall lyfe
352: I hadde richesse, I had$my$helthe
360: That holy clerke, Seint Augustyne

Cambridge University Library, Ff.5.48
GB-Cu Ff.5.48
15th century/first half
x
Structure: Paper. 135 folios (one lost). 203 x 140 mm.
Layout and contents: 'Written in two hands...Myrc's Instructions for Parish Priests...The ABC of Aristotle. The Northern Passion. Signs of Death. Remedies for the Seven Deadly Sins. A tale in verse of an incestuous daughter. A tale of King Edward and the shepherd. Dialogue between a nightingale and a clerk. A verse fabliau of a basin. The Tournament of Tottenham. The tale of the adulterous squire of Falmouth. Two lamentations of the Virgin. A prayer of the five joys of the Virgin. St. Michael and the Annunciation, from the South-English Legendary. Part of The Southern Passion. 'The mourning of a hare'. Weather prophecies...Verses on provisions for a feast. Robin Hood and the Monk... The colophon to The Northern Passion is in the name of Gilbertus Pylkynton.'
456: The last tyme I the wel woke

13 Greene, R.L. The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1977), 322

Edinburgh National Library of Scotland, Advocates 18.7.21
GB-En Advocates 18.7.21
1372
x
Structure: Parchment. 174 x 111mm. i + 166 folios.
Layout and contents: Written throughout by the Franciscan Johan
149a: Als I lay vpon a nith
155a: Lullay, lullay, litel child
157D: Mary moder, come and se
271: Thou sikest sore
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library</th>
<th>MS Number</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>ϕ</th>
<th>Structure: Paper with parchment flyleaves. 290 x 210 mm. iv+148+ii folios</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Glasgow University Library, Hunterian 83 | GB-G, Hunterian 83 | 1475-1500 | ✓ | Layout and contents: List of 'alle the kynges in the worlde', fols iiiir-iv verso. A carol on the Annunciation with musical score, 'Nova, Nova, Ave fit ex Eva' (refrain), begins, 'Gabriell off hyc dege'...Prologue and Prima Pars of the Fructus Temporum, copied from the St. Albans edition of the Chronicles of England, fols 1-9r; a table of contents to the Fructus Temporum material is penned on fols 10r-v. This table takes account of the subsequent Brut text, 'Explicit tabula prime pars Et segmentum secunda pars regm Brytaine.' A carol (uniquely preserved in this MS.) with musical score beginning, 'Nowe well & nowe woo/ Nowe frend and nowe foo'...Carol with musical score beginning, 'Salue sancta parens Alle heyle Mary and well you be madynne & moder wt outyn offens', a final verse to this carol has been penned in a different hand...Brut Chronicle, fols 15-140v; scribe A continues on from scribe B's text in fols 128-140v, taking material from Caxton's Chronicle of England, and his Liber Ultimus. "Warkworth's" Chronicle, begins imperfectly (lacks first leaf); it is poss. that this manuscript preserves the first composition of the text.  

| London College of Arms, 1.7 | GB-Lca 1.7 | 16\textsuperscript{th} century (carol layer) | ✗ | Structure: Paper. 349 x 273mm. i+ 92 folios. Layout and contents: 'Written in several hands...Forma Coronationis Regum et Reginariae. An account in English of the funeral of Queen 438: Sur, songe in tyme past hath ben 'downe-a-downe' |

\[14\] Greene, R.L. The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1935), 346 (This edition has been used rather than the later one as it provides more detail).

| Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 1393 | GB-Ob Ashmole 1393 | Ashmole 1393 | 15th century/first half | v | Structure: ix paper + 70 paper and parchment + ix paper folios, 146 mm x 100 mm. Composite of five unrelated manuscripts later bound together. | 170: Thys wynde be reson ys callyd tentacyon |
| Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 26 | GB-Ob Bodley 26 | Bodley 26 | 14th century | x | Structure: Parchment. 149 x 101 mm. ii + 208 folios. | 12a: A child is boren amonges man |

Elizabeth, wife of Henry VII. An account on the coronation of Henry VIII. A proclamation by Edward VI. A description of the procession through the City to Westminster on the occasion of the coronation of Edward VI, including: A song (not a carol) at the conduit in Cheapside...An account of the funeral of the Earl of Oxford. An account of the funeral of the Bishop of Westminster, A.D. 1500. An account of the coronation of Queen Mary. An account of the coronation of Charles I as King of Scotland at Holyrood, A.D. 1633. A note on f.1 r. reads: ‘A booke of the forme of coronation and burial of diuers estates belonging to thomas hawlay rex Clarenceuex. Gyuen to Clarenceuex...by wyll...’  


http://www.diamm.ac.uk/jsp/Descriptions?op=SOURCE&sourceKey=486 (accessed 3 January 2014)


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20 Greene, R.L. The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1935), 337
virgine natus, CHriste, es sine macula'; 'Psallimus cantantes'. English songs: 'Herfor, and therefor, and therfor I came'; 'Now ys wele and all thing aryght'; 'Wold God that men might sene'; 'Tydynges I bring you for to tell'; 'Man be war, or thou knyte the fast'; 'Man upon mold, whatsoever thou be'; 'Holvyr and Heyvy mad a gret party'... 'The best tre if ye tak entent' (macaronic English and Latin).

Recipe: 'A good medycyn for sor eyen'.''

Music on 40v and 41v, text at the bottom of 40v and on 41.


41: "In porta latina in misses ed..."

41v: "Nowell nowell nowell this is the salutacyon of the ang[ell] gabryell..." 22

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21 Greene, R.L. The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1935), 338
22 http://www.diamm.ac.uk/jsp/Descriptions?op=SOURCE&sourceKey=515 (accessed 3 January 2014)
|------|------------------------------------|------------------|--------|------------------------|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|

34: That Lord that lay inasse stalle
69: This worle wondreth of al thynge
73: A newy werk is come on honde
117 c: A babe is borne of hye atewre
176: This rose is railed on a rys
179: Worshype be the birth of the
182: Lo, Moises bush shynynge vnbrent
185 B: Holy maide, blessyd thou be
190 A: Thow holy doughter of Syon
234 B: As Y lay upon a nyght
235 a: The Holi Goste is to the sent
337 a: Holy Wryt seyght, which nothing ys sother
338 a: Abyde, Y hope hye be the beste
359 A b: Man, haue in mynd how herebeforn
426 a: Owre kynge went forth to Normandy

The following carols are in: Stevens, John, ed., *Mediaeval Carols* (London, 1970)

22: Deo gracias persolvamus
28: Alleluia, pro virgine Maria
37: Ecce, quod natura
41: Veni, Redemptor gencium

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Oxford, Balliol College, GB-Obac 354

16th century/first third

Structure: 292 x 114 mm. 256 folios. Paper. 'Well written in small current hands, the headings and first letters of verse-lines being marked with red chalk. Contemporary foliation in in roman figures, which begins on the fifth leaf, uses lxxxviik twice, skips cxxxvi, and ignores quire xii...thenceforward the leaves have been renumbered in Arabic figures. Old limp vellum wrapper.'

Contents and Layout: This is the Commonplace book of Richard Hill, a citizen and grocer from London. A quote from the MS reads: 'A Boke of dyueris tales and balettes and dyueris Reconynges etc'.

11: Lett no man cum into this hall
20: This babe to vs now is born
21A: In Bedlem, in that fayer cyte
27C: In this tymge God hath sent
35B: This nyght ther is a child born
45: A virgin pure
46: Mary, flowr of flowers all
47: Glorious God had gret pyte
48: For his love that bowght vs all dere
49: The Son of the Fader of Hevyn Blys

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24 http://image.ox.ac.uk/show?collection=balliol&manuscript=ms354 (accessed 3 January 2014)

230 a: Gaude Maria, Cristes moder
232 C: Mary, for the loue of the
233: Gaude, to whom Gabryell was sent
234 D: As I me lay on a nyght
237 B: Gabryell, that abgell bryght
238 A: Gabriell of high degre
239 c: Tydynges trewer be cum new
240: From hevyn was sent an angell of light
241: I shall you tell a gret merayll
273: O worthy Lord and most of myght
319: Man, that in erth abydyd here
321: On Cristes day, I vnderstond
322 A: He bare hym vp, he bare hym down
331 b: The Masse ys of suwch dygnyte
345: Be mery and suffer, as I the vise
346: An old-said sawe, ‘Onknownen, onkyste’
350: I was with pope and cardynall
351: Yf God sent the plentuowsly riches
355 b: Pryde is out, and pride is inne
359 A a: Man, haue in mynd how herebeforn
361: Att domysday, whan we shall ryse
370 b: As I went in a mery morning
372: Illa iuventus that is so nyse
373: O marcyfull God, maker of all mankynd
374: In twenty yere of age, remember we eurychon
386 b: Vcyce be wyld and vertues lame
389 b: Vnder a forest that was so long
399 a: In eury place ye may well see
401 A a: Sum e mery, and sum be sade
402 b: When nettuls in winter bring forth rosys red
408: A lytyll tale I will you tell
410 a: Many a man blamys his wyffe, prede
413 A: I wold fayn be a clarke
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Date/Century</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lambeth Palace, 306</td>
<td>GB-Lip 306</td>
<td>15th century/second half (carol layer)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Structure: Paper. 295 x230 mm. Written in a number of different hands.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| London, British Library, Sloane 1584 | GB-Lbl 1584 | 15th century | x         | Structure: 135 x 85 (105 x 80 (variable)). Paper and parchment. ff. 96 (+ 2 unfoliated parchment leaves after f. 82 + 2 unfoliated paper flyleaves at the beginning and at the end). One hand; John Gysborn.  
|                              |          |              |           | Layout and contents: "Theological material, including instructions for deacons and subdeacons, questions to be asked in confession, prayers, &c. Medical recipes…A sermon for Easter. Directions for making colours, enamelling, &c. A history of confession. English love-song: ‘Greusys my sorowe.’ On f. 12r. is written: Scriptum per me Johannes Gysborn Canonicus de Couerham. On f.26 v. is a drawing of Christ’s wounds, on ff. 27r.-28 r. alphabets of initials, on f. 28v. a conventional design, and on f. 83 v. a drawing of a gaily dressed man dancing."  

419 A a: I shall you tell a full good sport  
420: Is ther any good man here  
421: Jentill butler, bell amy  
424 A: At a place wher he me sett  
471: I sawe a doge seothyng sowse

401 B: Sum be mery, and sum be sade  
429: Sith God hathe chose the to be his knyt  
446: Off seruyng men I wyll begyne

---

26 Greene, R.L. The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1935), 334  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>MS Number</th>
<th>Scribe/Author</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Layout and Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>London, British Library,</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Additional 5465</td>
<td>Fayrfax</td>
<td>c.1500</td>
<td>Structure: Parchment and paper. 297 x 215 mm. Two scribes: Most likely Robert Fayrfax plus one anonymous scribe responsible only for the organ work at the start of the manuscript. Layout and contents: Sacred and secular English songs, some with named composers: Banastre, Browne, Cornyshe, Davy, Fayrfax, Hampshire, Newark, Philips, Sheryngham, Turges, Tudor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional, 5465</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London, British Library,</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Additional 5665</td>
<td>Ritson</td>
<td>c.1460-1510</td>
<td>Structure: Parchment and paper. 258 x 180 mm. Eight scribal hands. The carols all in one hand. Layout and contents: The first part of the MS contains Carols...The remainder of the NS, which contains only music except for a few legal documents, consists of masses, motets and secular songs, the principal composer being a Sir Thomas Pakke of whom nothing is known. Many of the motets belong to the Sarum Processional. There is no reason to doubt the customary attribution of this MS to the West Country, suggested by certain deeds on ff. 61, 69v, 70. Richard Smert, whose name, sometimes coupled with that of John</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Trouluffe, appears against several carols, was rector, from 1435 to 1477, of Plymtree, a village near Exeter.  

91 A and B: Jhesu, of a mayde thou woldest be born
96: O blesse God in Trinite
99: In this vale off wrecchednesse
103 A D and E: To the now, Cristes dere derlyng
109: Dic, Erodes impie
110: When God was born of Mary fre
111: Herode, that was bothe wylde and wode
116: Oute of the chaffe was pured this corne
118: Gabriell, bryghther then the sonne
131 a: When Jhesus Criste baptyzed was
133: The borys hede that we bring here
186: Benyng lady, blessed mote thow be
259: I, Josep, wonder how hit may be
277: Glorious God in Trinite
306: I haue ysoghte in many a syde
307: O God, we pray to the in specyall
330: When lordechype ys loste
337 c: Holy Wryt seyght, which nothing ys sother
348: The hyere men clemmeth, the sorere ys the falle
354: Now to do well how shalt thou do?
359 B: In synne yf thou lyffe haue ledde
367: This worlde ys but a vanite
375: While Y was yong and hadde carage
387: God sende vs pese and vnite
435: Jhesu, for thy wondes fyff
446.1: Your light greuans shall not me constrayne

The following carols are in: Stevens, John, ed., *Mediaeval Carols* (London, 1970)

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Catalogue Details</th>
<th>LIBRARY</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Century</th>
<th>Structure:</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>London, British Library,</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Additional</td>
<td></td>
<td>Early 15th</td>
<td></td>
<td>'ii paper + i parchment [= former front cover] + 22 paper</td>
<td>77: Johannes assecretis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional 5666</td>
<td>5666</td>
<td></td>
<td>century</td>
<td></td>
<td>+ i paper folios, 136 x 97. Two systems of new foliation: first</td>
<td>78: Sonet Laus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(ink), 1-21, begins with first original paper folio and omits</td>
<td>84: Salve, sancta parens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>stub between 4/5; second (pencil), 1-22, begins with parchment</td>
<td>86: Ave, decus seculi</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>folio, includes stub, and omits blank folio following f. 8.</td>
<td>87: Soli Deo Sit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(References hereafter are to second foliation). Only ff. 2'-3',</td>
<td>89: Regi canamus glorie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4'-5, and 8' contain music; remainder contain miscellaneous</td>
<td>91: O clavis David</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>notes and accounts of one John White, dated 12 Henry IV (= 1411).</td>
<td>96: Letare, Cantuaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New (1960) covers of maroon cloth and leather on boards,</td>
<td>16A: How shall I please?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>with inscription tooled in gold on spine.'</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Contents and layout: 'A fragment of a lullaby, much faded...Song,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'Now has Mary born'...Treatise of Latin grammar, in Latin prose.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Expense accounts of John White, dated 12 Henry IV (1411)...'</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The name 'Robertus brouuham' is also found within the ms and a</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>note that suggesting Friar John Brackley of Norwich was</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>responsible for its compilation, although this claim seems to</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>be false; the script does not match other known to be by</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brackley. The volume also contains a few lines of French verse</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and a hand drawn tree with a pierced heart containing the words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'pur vere amur je su mort' and 'Fuit homo'.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London, British Library,</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Additional</td>
<td></td>
<td>15th century</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Paper. 216 x 5149 mm. 132 Folios. A number of scribal</td>
<td>151 B: This ender nithgt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional 19046</td>
<td>19046</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>hands.</td>
<td>144: I saw a swete semly syght</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Layout and contents: 'The one carol is in the hand which wrote</td>
<td>App. No. viii: This ender day wen me was wo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the English glosses in the margins of ff. 65r-73 r., and the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>scribbls on f. 82 v. The name John Hones of Carmarthen is</td>
<td></td>
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<td>signed to several of the</td>
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<td></td>
<td>430: Tyll home sull Wylekyn, this joly gentyl schepe</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>London, British Library, Additional 31042</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Additional 31042</td>
<td>Mid-15th century</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Paper and parchment (mainly paper – 4 folios only in parchment: 1, 2, 182 and 183). 183 folios. 270 x 190 mm. In the main, one hand: Robert Thornton from Ryedale, North Yorkshire.</td>
<td>Latin and English rules of grammar. 'De regimine vocum.' Latin verses giving the names of familiar objects. Lydgate's <em>Stans Puer ad Mensam</em>.</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London, British Library, Additional 31922</td>
<td>GB-Lbl Additional 31922</td>
<td>c.1510-20</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>Paper + ii parchment + ii paper + i parchment + 127 parchment + ii parchment + i paper folios, 309 x 211. Modern pencil pagination, 1-250, with errors, crossed out and replaced by modern pencil foliation, 1-130. Original ink numbering of pieces, i-xxii, generally includes only texted works. Modern covers of maroon leather and cloth on boards. Original index on ff. 2'-3 lists only pieces having original ink numbering (inaccurate after #49). Copied by a single scribe, except for two slightly later additions (f. 90 and ff. 124'-128), each in a different hand.</td>
<td>English, French and Flemish secular songs (although mainly English). 49 pieces for instruments only. There are a number of named composers: Cornish, Cooper, Daggere,</td>
<td>427: The Rose it es the fairest flour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

34 http://www.diamm.ac.uk/jsp/Descriptions?op=SOURCE&sourceKey=1238 (accessed 3 January 2014)

14: Alone, I live alone
Dunstable, Farthyng, Fayrfax, Floyd, King Henry VIII, Kempe and Pygott plus continental arrangers of non-English songs. 35

472: A...upon the straw

London, British Library, Cotton Vespasian A.XXV

GB-Lbl Cotton Vespasian A.XXV

$16^\text{th}$ century/first quarter

Structure: Paper and parchment. 209 x 155 mm. 205 folios. Sections of a number of manuscripts bound together. A number of scribal hands.

Layout and contents: ‘Carol No. 472 is written on one of two parchment leaves...which did not originally belong with the other material. It is in a hand of cent. XVI (early), which appears only on these two leaves.'36 A number of names (and notes) also appear on these two leaves: Wyllum Covsien, Thomas a belton and Rychard cartar.

‘The...English poems in the MS., including several labelled as carols, were written after 1550...Other English songs and verses. Miscellaneous material in English and Latin, principally theological.'37

London, British Library, Egerton 3307

GB-Lbl Egerton 3307

c. 1450

Structure: Mainly parchment (88) with three paper folios. 292 x 213 mm. Mainly in the hand of one scribe, with two additional contributors.

Layout and contents: ‘The MS is divided into two parts: the first part contains mainly processional music for Holy Week, the second contains Carols. 44-75 (all in the same hand except the last two); the

23 C: Holy Chyrch of hym makyth mynd
39.1: Omnes gentes plaudite
101C: I schal yow tell this ilk nyght
115.1: Al Holy Chyrch was bot a thrall
125.1: Hayl, most mighty in thi werkyng
125.2: Hys signe ys a ster bryth
139.1: luy is both fair and gren
175.1: Hayle be thou, Mary most of


36 Greene, R.L. The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1935), 325

37 Greene, R.L. The Early English Carols (Oxford, 1935), 325
| London, British Library, Harley 5396 | GB-Lbl Harley 5396 | Harley 5396 | c. 1455 | V | Structure: Parchment and paper. 311 folios. 216 x127 mm. Several hands (carols and poems in one). Three manuscripts bound together. Layout and contents: ‘Latin sermons, collected by J. Felton, Vicar of
London, British Library, Harley 5396’ b: Lystenyt, lordyngus more and lees
80: When Cryst was born of Mary fre
136 A: Holy stond in the hall, fare to behold |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| refrain song No 15A; an isorhythm drinking song, O potores exquisite; and a motet Cantemus Domino. | honowr
190B: The holy doghter of Syon
279.1: Fader and Son and Holy Gost
311.1: Worschip of vertu ys the mede
337B: Holy Wret seth – nothing ys sother
The following carols are in: Stevens, John, ed., *Mediaeval Carols* (London, 1970) |
| 44: Tibi laus, tibi Gloria
45: Princeps pacis
46: David ex proginie
47: Novo profusi gaudio
49: Sol occasum nesciens
53: Cum virtus magnifica
56: Anglia, tibi turbidas
57: Benedicte Deo
58: Johannes. Jesu care
61: Exultavit cor
62: Princeps serenissime
63: Ecce quod natura
67: Verbum patris
68: Illuxit Leticia
69: Alleluia: Diva natalicia
70: Omnes caterva fidelium
71: Comidentes convenite
72: Gaudeamus partier
73: Parit virgo filium
74: Textless Carol
75: Lauda salvatorem
| 38 Stevens, John, ed., *Mediaeval Carols* (London, 1970), 125. Within this quotation, Stevens is referring to the numbering of the carols in this edition, not the numbering of the carols in Greene.
Oxford. Holkot’s (?) treatise Convertimini. An antidotary, arranged alphabetically...English poems...A hymn at the elevation of the Host; A hymn to the virgin; A tale against wedlock-breaking; ‘Our Lady’s Song of the Child that sucked her Breast’; The Ten Commandments; A Pennyworth of Wit...Good Rule Is Out of Rememberance; Turn Up Her Halter and Let Her Go; Our Lord’s Exhortation; The Bysom Leads the Blind; How The Wise Man Taught His Son; The ‘Long Charter of Christ’ (A-text); The Tournament of Tottenham; Alas, That Any Kind Man Wants Good; A Tale of King Henry II...Accounts, apparently of a Midlands merchant.\(^{39}\)

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London, British Library, Lansdowne 379
GB-Lbl Lansdowne 379
Lansdowne 379
16\(^{th}\) century/first half
x
Structure: Paper. 193 x 133mm. 86 folios. Several scribal hands (carols in one hand).

Layout and contents: ‘Oration D. Johannis Damasceni, in Greek and Latin verse (cent. XVII). English sermons on the Eucharist, for Easter, and for All Saints. A copy of Bishop William Lyndwode’s Constitutiones Provinciales printed by Wynkyn de Wrode, imperfect at beginning and end, the deficiency at the end supplied in MS...Prescriptions for the stone, toothaches, &c. Notes on the temperaments of the body and the four elements. Notes on chronology. English prayers (imperfect) by a member of the Charterhouse, London.’\(^{40}\)

London, British Library, Sloane 2593
GB-Lbl Sloane 2593
Sloane 2593
15\(^{th}\) century/first half
x
Structure: Paper with one parchment folio. 149 x 111 mm. 37 folios. Part of a larger, now lost, MS.

Layout and contents: ‘Three Latin songs: ‘Procedenti puero’; ‘Non pudescit corpore’; ‘Meum est propositum in taberna mori.’...English songs: ‘I syng of a mayden’; ‘I have a gentil cook’; ‘I haue a newe gardyn’; ‘Robin lyth in grene wode bowdyn’ (ballad); ‘As I wnet throw a garyn grene’; ‘Be the way wandering as I went’; ‘Seynt Steuene was a clerk’ (ballad); ‘Aue maris stella’; ‘If I syng ye wyl me

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\(^{39}\) Greene, R.L. *The Early English Carols* (Oxford, 1935), 328

\(^{40}\) Greene, R.L. *The Early English Carols* (Oxford, 1935), 328 -329
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Column</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>'Enmy Herowde, thou wokkyd kyng'; 'As I me lend to a lend'.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>114 a</td>
<td>Lestenytgh, lordynges, bothe grete and smale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>122 B</td>
<td>A babe is born al of a may</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>123 B</td>
<td>Out of the blosme sprang a thorn</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>124 A</td>
<td>Jhesu was born in Bedlem Jude</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>125 A</td>
<td>Now is the Twelthe Day icome</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>143</td>
<td>I saw a fayr madyn syttyn and synge</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>145 b</td>
<td>As U v pros in a morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>148</td>
<td>A: The Fader of Heuene his owyn Sone he sent</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>157</td>
<td>C: Mary moder, cum and se</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>168</td>
<td>Man, if thou hast synnyd owth</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>169</td>
<td>Jhesu of his moder was born</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>175</td>
<td>: Lestenyt, lordynges, bothe elde and yynge</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>180</td>
<td>B: It wern fowre letterys of purposy</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>185</td>
<td>A: Holy maydyn, blyssid thou be</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>188</td>
<td>Mary is a lady bryght</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>231</td>
<td>The ferste joye, as I vou telle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>234</td>
<td>C: As I lay vpon a nyght</td>
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<td>236</td>
<td>'Nowel, el,' bothe eld and yng</td>
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<td></td>
<td>242</td>
<td>Mary moder, be not adred</td>
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<td>312</td>
<td>A newe song I wil begynne</td>
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<td></td>
<td>315</td>
<td>Seynt Nicholas was of gret poste</td>
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<td>316</td>
<td>In Patras, ther born he was</td>
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<td>317</td>
<td>It is bred fro heune cam</td>
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<td></td>
<td>320</td>
<td>Qwete is bothe seemly and sote</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>329</td>
<td>Every day thou might lere</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>336</td>
<td>In the vale of Abraham</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>339</td>
<td>Thi tunge is mad of fleych and blod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>341</td>
<td>Ther is non gres that growit on ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>355 a</td>
<td>Pryde is out, and pride is inne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>356 a</td>
<td>Thow thou be kyng of tour and town</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>357</td>
<td>Thynk, man, qwerof thou art wrout</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>363</td>
<td>Yyng men that bern hem so gay</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>365</td>
<td>This word, lordingges, I vnderstonde</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

368: I am a child and born ful bare
381: If thou serue a lord of prys
383: Gyle and gold togedere arm met
384: Semenaunt is a wonder thing
385: A man that xuld of trewthe telle
390: Quan I haue in myn purs inow
392: Peny is an hardy knyght
395 b: Wymmen beth bothe goud and schene
403: Loke er thin herte be set
405: Ynyg men, I warn you euerychon
416: We bern abowtyn non cattes skynnys
417: Lestenit, lordynges, I you beseke
457: As I went on Yol Day in owre prosessyon

Dublin, Trinity College, IE TCD MS 432
(Formerly known as:
Dublin, Trinity College, D.4.18)

Structure: Vol 1 : fols. 1-58 (vellum; binding measures 204 x 155mm); vol 2: fols 59-121 (paper; binding measures 223 x 159mm) vol. 3: fols. 122-155 (paper; binding measures 222 x 160mm).
Measured formerly as 187 x 135mm

Layout and contents: 'Carol in volume 2 which also contains: A dialogue between Palamon, Emlyn and Eryse (verse); Story of Robert of Sicily, of king Palaan, of the seven scoles (told by 'Doctor'), etc (verse); The vii stoles; A story of kynge Palaan; A miracle of our lady done to sir Amery knight; A story of an onhappy boye; A lamentacion of our lady for severing; On the battle of Northampton; On the policy to be observed by the Yorkists; Besechyn benynely eny creature; Warwyf; On the Yorkist lords; These ben the crystyn kynges that reyne under god and the lawues and after the conqueste , with addenda to 1509: A play with characters Deus, angelus, Abraham, Sara, Isaac; mostly Abraham, Isaac and Sara; coats of arms of 12 French bishops, drawn in ?after, or ?before the play was copied; Hic sunt Maiiores et Ballivi de North[ampton] a primo anno regni Regis Ricardi usque in hunc diem, ie 1381 ad 1461 [to Ao xxxviii of Henry VI a few short notes on battles of that year , continued in another hand to 1 Edward IV]; Golden years or some such chart; How men that be in helt shulden visite sike folk ... how a man schulde be confortid agens the nachinge in sekenesse ye

431: I warne you euerychone
secunde co, with pentrials; pencil pentrials; [Richard Rolle], Twelve chapters beg: Tary not for to turne the to God;here enden the xii chapters of Ric heremyte of Hampole.¹⁴²

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