

# Isolated Jottings? The Compilation, Preparation, and Use of Song Sources from Thirteenth-Century Britain

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Among the musical sources to survive from thirteenth-century Britain, there is not a single manuscript dedicated entirely to non-liturgical music. Though complete notated books of liturgical chant are extant, and some surviving fragments imply that large collections of liturgical polyphony once existed, music not bound to liturgical performance is instead preserved only in miscellany manuscripts, whose contents are largely not musical at all. Typically, such sources preserve one or two songs (or—very occasionally—untexted pieces), sometimes incorporated into the manuscripts from the earliest stages, in other cases added to the compilations later, on pages originally left blank. The lack of any trace of a songbook-copying culture akin to the tradition of *chansonniers* in contemporary northern France may be an accident of survival, but could also suggest that such a tradition never existed north of the Channel, and the transmission of music of this kind remained largely oral at this period. The nature of their dispersal among apparently unrelated sources has contributed to the neglect of the songs themselves, and—until very recently—most have remained unavailable in published editions.<sup>1</sup> The transmission of songs in miscellany manuscripts, rather than in dedicated music books, is interesting from a number of perspectives,<sup>2</sup> but the present article focusses on what we can learn of the manuscripts' compilation and preparation, how their scribes went about including music within a largely non-musical codex environment, and what the implications of this might be from the point of view of how the books and their songs were used by their medieval owners.

The nature of these sources renders them especially illuminating as documents of the scribal process, for several reasons. Firstly, the manuscript space was not usually

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<sup>1</sup> The songs in these sources are now assembled and edited in Helen Deeming (ed.), *Songs in British Sources, c. 1150-1300*, Musica Britannica 95 (London, 2013), hereafter *MB 95*.

<sup>2</sup> The broader textual contents of the miscellany manuscripts containing song are charted in the Introduction to *MB 95* (pp. xxxi-xxxiv), and dealt with at greater length in Helen Deeming, 'Songs and Sermons in Thirteenth-Century England', in *Pastoral Care in Medieval England*, ed. Peter Clarke and Sarah James (Farnham, forthcoming 2014), and eadem, 'Record-keepers, Preachers and Song-makers: Revealing the Compilers, Owners and Users of Twelfth- and Thirteenth-century Insular Song Manuscripts' (in preparation).

designed with music in mind, so scribes adapted that space, by adjusting the number and width of columns, modifying or replacing existing ruling, and so on. Secondly, as the scribes were generally copying only a few musical items in each manuscript, they did not have the opportunity to develop the consistent styles or techniques (of mise-en-page, or of notation) that those who copied fully musical books were able to employ, especially if working in an atelier responsible for preparing many musical sources. Consequently, it is often possible to observe in the miscellanies music-scribes solving problems as they occur, generating unique solutions to individual dilemmas, rather than thoroughgoing methods. This same feature makes it impossible to make clear comparisons between manuscripts, and there are certainly no overall patterns across the sources in this respect, but in studying the mise-en-page issues in one particular source in detail, many of the observations I will make in the present article find resonances in other thirteenth-century English miscellanies containing music.<sup>3</sup>

The case-study to be considered here is London, British Library, Arundel MS 248 (hereafter Arundel 248), a collection of sermons, theological treatises, extracts from scriptural and patristic texts, and exempla for teaching the vices and virtues.<sup>4</sup> Its contents seem to point to a use in practical ministry and preaching, and on those grounds it has sometimes been connected to the Franciscan friars, although members of many of the other religious orders were also engaged in such activities and could have made use of such a book. Its contents were compiled by several scribes, over a period of time in the second half of the thirteenth century, and some of its different sections may have been prepared separately, as booklets, before being brought together as a whole. The sections of the manuscript containing music exemplify copying procedures that are at work throughout the volume, including the filling-up of spaces originally left blank between the end of one text and the start of another, the book's production as a series of separate codicological entities (or 'booklets'), and the subsequent addition, by later scribes, of material to the once-empty final versos of

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<sup>3</sup> For some further observations on similar matters in other twelfth- and thirteenth-century manuscripts, see Helen Deeming, 'Observations on the Habits of Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Music Scribes', in *Scriptorium* 60 (2006), 38-59.

<sup>4</sup> A detailed catalogue record is available at <<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=7289&CollID=20&NStart=248>> (accessed 27 November 2013); images of all the folios containing musical notation may be found on DIAMM (subscription required) at <<http://www.diamm.ac.uk/jsp/Descriptions?op=SOURCE&sourceKey=411>> (accessed 27 November 2013).

quires. The first group of Arundel 248's songs are found together on fols. 153r-155r, the second, third, and fourth folios of a four-folio quire (see Table 1 for a complete list of the musical items in Arundel 248). A text on Biblical names occupying the two previous quires comes to a close on fol. 153r, at that point leaving the remainder of that leaf and the two following leaves (recto and verso) unoccupied. A subsequent music-scribe, probably working towards the end of the thirteenth century, filled this fairly substantial space with the ten songs, but in doing so, had to contend with pages that were pre-ruled for unnotated text. After struggling to accommodate the music to the text-based ruling, the music-scribe eventually abandoned it in favour of a new layout more suited to his materials (as detailed below). The text-scribe's leaving of five and a half folios of parchment blank, and the music-scribe's experimentation with, and ultimate abandonment of, the ruling pattern, both suggest an *ad hoc* writing environment, in which the book was assembled item by item, with neither careful planning of the overall contents, nor expert supervision of the work of different scribes.

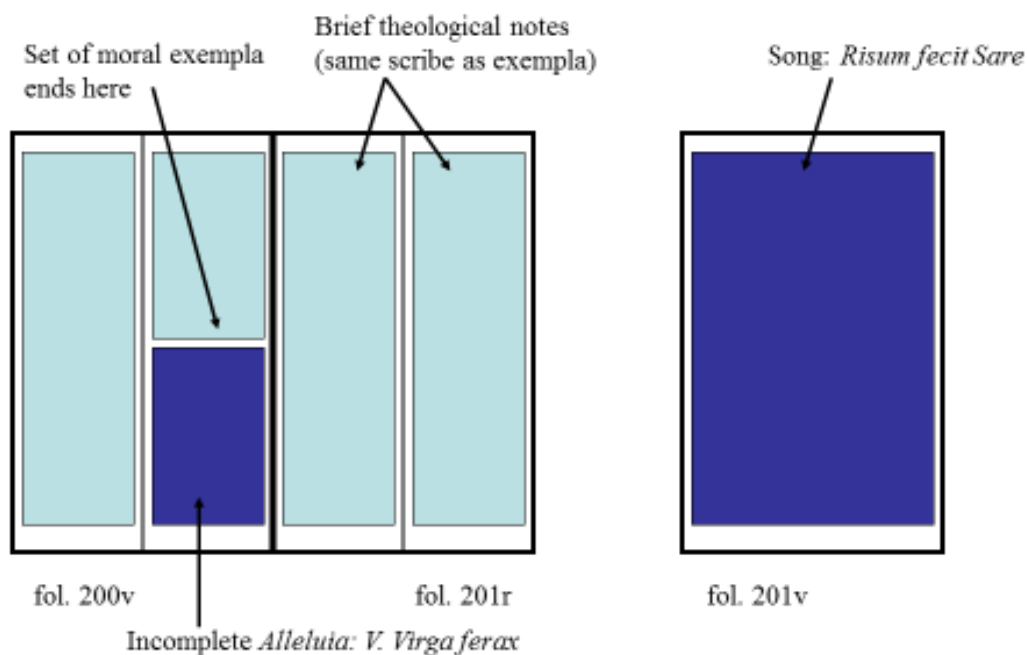
**Table 1. The songs of London, British Library, Arundel MS 248**

folio	incipit(s)	no. in MB 95	language(s)	theme	no. voices	musical form
153r	<i>O labilis, O flebilis</i>	67	Latin	Transience of earthly life	2	through-composed
153v	<i>Magdalene laudes plene</i>	68	Latin	Mary Magdalen	1	sequence
153v	<i>Flos pudicitie / Flur de virginité</i>	69a / 69b	Latin / French	BVM	1	lai
154r	<i>Angelus ad virginem / Gabriel fram evene king</i>	70a / 70b	Latin / English	Annunciation	1	strophic
154r	<i>Pe milde Lomb</i>	71	English	Crucifixion	1	strophic
154r	<i>Worldes blis ne laste no throwe</i>	72	English	Transience of worldly joys	1	strophic

154v	<i>Spei vena, melle plena</i>	73	Latin	Mary Magdalen	1	sequence
154v	<i>Jesu Cristes milde moder</i>	74	English	Crucifixion	2	sequence
155r	<i>Salve virgo virginum / Veine pleine de duçur</i>	75a / 75b	Latin / French	BVM	3	strophic
155r	<i>Bien deust chanter</i>	76	French	BVM	1	strophic
200v	<i>Alleluia: V. Virga ferax (incomplete)</i>	-	Latin	BVM	2	-
201r	<i>Risum fecit Sare</i>	77	Latin	BVM	2	sequence

In the manuscript's twenty-seventh quire, two much smaller spaces between non-musical texts have been filled with music. The quire's main text, a set of moral exempla, finishes in the second column of the penultimate verso (fol. 200v), and is immediately followed by a piece of music (the two-part *Alleluia: V. Virga ferax*) copied in a hand of a similar date (see Figure 1). The text-hand of the exempla, however, resumes for the next recto, on which are copied some further theological notes, before another music-scribe added the song *Risum fecit Sare* to the quire's final verso. It is not possible to determine the order in which the items after the quire's main text were added, although the incomplete copying of the *Alleluia* on fol. 200v may imply that the text on fol. 201r was already present before this music-scribe began his work. Unlike the first set of musical additions, however, here the scribes involved in producing Arundel 248 were working with a very small amount of available parchment, and seem to have chosen short items (two pieces of music and a brief text) specifically to fit in these once-vacant gaps.

**Figure 1. London, British Library, Arundel MS 248, end of quire 27**



Such copying procedures, not limited to the musical portions of this volume, but found throughout Arundel 248 and other insular miscellanies containing song, are usefully examined in the light of recent codicological analysis of composite or ‘non-unitary’ book production in the Middle Ages. The evidence suggesting that different sections of Arundel 248 (including the set of three quires in which the text on Biblical names appears, followed by the first section of music) were produced independently, by different scribes at various times, is reminiscent of what has been termed ‘booklet’ compilation (though scholarly usage of this term has been contested in some recent literature).<sup>5</sup> Classification and comparison of materials added to a manuscript after the

<sup>5</sup> Pamela Robinson coined the term ‘booklet’ to describe ‘a small but structurally independent production containing a single work or a number of short works’ in her articles ‘The “Booklet”: A Self-Contained Unit in Composite Manuscripts’, in *Codicologica 3: Essais typologiques*, ed. Albert Gruys and J. Peter Gumbert, *Litterae textuales 7* (Leiden, 1980), 46-69, and ‘Self-Contained Units in Composite Manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Period’, in *Anglo-Saxon England 7* (1978), 231-38. The term was widely taken up, especially to denote the entities produced speculatively and sold by late medieval booksellers, but Robinson’s use of the term was broader in application. Ralph Hanna’s critique of Robinson’s work, which suggests that the codicological features she identified as evidence of booklet production may also be found in other kinds of composite codices, may in fact be more justifiably levelled at subsequent scholars’ appropriations of Robinson’s term rather than the original work itself; see Ralph Hanna III, ‘Booklets in Medieval Manuscripts: Further Considerations’ in his

first phase of its writing has been greatly facilitated by terminology coined by Peter Gumbert, including the terms ‘monogenetic’ (copied by the same scribe), ‘homogenetic’ (those that originated around the same time in the same circles), and ‘allogenic’ (produced under entirely separate conditions).<sup>6</sup> Such distinctions are of clear importance, because they help to distinguish situations in which a number of scribes deliberately worked in parallel, compiling a book gradually, from those in which additions to a volume were not envisaged by the book’s first compilers and were made under entirely unrelated circumstances. As is especially clear in quire 27, Arundel 248’s music may be described as mono- and homogenetic with the manuscript’s other texts, rather than utterly unrelated to them in terms of copying, and consequently its appearance may be understood as part of the normal practice of composite book production, in which short items were selected to fill vacant spaces, especially when once-separate booklets were assembled together.. Strikingly, across the spectrum of song sources from thirteenth-century Britain, it appears that songs were especially prone to incorporation in these ways, apparently lending themselves more naturally to this type of written transmission than to assembling into dedicated music codices.

Turning in more detail to the specific mise-en-page issues raised by the songs in Arundel 248, a wide range of approaches to musical layout becomes apparent. Beginning on fol. 153r, the scribe of the music had most of the right-hand column available. He chose to copy the two-part polyphonic song *O labilis, O flebilis*, ruling each stave individually—they are not of equal gauge—and copying the music continuously, without attempting to start new sections of music at line-breaks. As the musical structure is irregular (it sets a poem whose lines are not of constant length) a lineated approach would have been less neat and involved more wasted space. This song was easily accommodated within the column, leaving blank space at the foot to which another scribe subsequently added some short unnotated verses.

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*Pursuing History: Middle English Manuscripts and Their Texts* (Stanford, 1996), 21-34, especially 30-34 (a revised version of his article of the same title originally published in *Studies in Bibliography* 39 [1986], 100-111).

<sup>6</sup> ‘Codicological Units: Towards a Terminology for the Stratigraphy of the Non-Homogenous Codex’, in *Il codice miscellaneo: Tipologie e funzioni*, ed. Edoardo Crisci and Oronzo Pecere, Segno e Testo 2 (Cassino, 2004), 17-42, at 27. Other recent work that has helped to refine the analysis of composite manuscripts includes Birger Munk Olsen, ‘L’élément codicologique’, in *Recherches de codicologie comparée: La composition du codex au moyen âge en orient et en occident*, ed. Philippe Hoffmann (Paris, 1998), 105-29; Marilena Maniaci, ‘Il codice Greco “non unitario”: Tipologie e terminologia’, in *Il codice miscellaneo*, ed. Crisci and Pecere, 75-107; and Erik Kwakkel, ‘Towards a Terminology for the Analysis of Composite Manuscripts’, in *Gazette du Livre Médiéval* 41 (Autumn, 2002), 12-19.

On the following page (Figure 2a), however, the music-scribe encountered some difficulties with the two-column format. Evidently beginning *Magdalene laudes plene* (in the left-hand column) with the intention of starting each new stanza on a new line, the first nine enlarged initials are neatly stacked adjacent to the left margin. But because—just as in *O labilis, O flebilis*—each stanza varies in length, the text and music sometimes has to spill into the central margin. By the ninth system of the page, the stanzas have become so long that fitting them each on a single system is no longer possible, and enlarged initials for the following two stanzas are placed mid-line on systems 10 and 11. Despite finishing *Magdalene laudes plene* two systems before the foot of the column, the scribe began the second song on this page at the top of the right-hand column, perhaps aiming for the elegance of containing each piece within a separate column. But by the end of *Flos pudicitie*, it was clear that the entire music could not be fitted in this single column and, rather than continue on the following leaf, the scribe crossed back to the left-hand column, copying the final system of the song right across the two columns at the foot of the page. The layout intentions implied by the scribe's approaches to these two songs seem to have been unsuccessfully carried out, and therefore it is perhaps unsurprising that he abandoned the two-column format for the subsequent music in this gathering, returning to it only when unnotated texts were resumed.

The second song on fol. 153v raises further *mise-en-page* questions. The Latin text, *Flos pudicitie*, is accompanied by a French contrafact text, *Flur de virginité*, copied immediately below it. The requirement to fit two lines of text below each line of music has necessitated the use of wider systems than in the left-hand column, and perhaps it was this that led to the scribe's miscalculation regarding its overall length: the song would certainly have fitted in the right-hand column alone had only one text been underlaid to the music. At the outset the two texts are quite well aligned, each new stanza in the French beginning directly below each new one in the Latin, but as the song progresses, they gradually become misaligned, as the French text consistently occupies more horizontal space than the Latin. Towards the end of the song, the French is no longer aligned with the Latin at all (and therefore not with the music either), and in fact it is one whole stanza shorter overall. It is tempting to speculate that this was a practical decision: the scribe ran out of room for any more French verses here and simply left one out. On the other hand, the French text reaches a satisfactory conclusion at the end of the poem as it stands here (and there are no

concordances to compare it to) so there is no way to determine whether or not there is any missing text.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure 2: London, British Library, Arundel MS 248. Reproduced with permission of the British Library Board.**

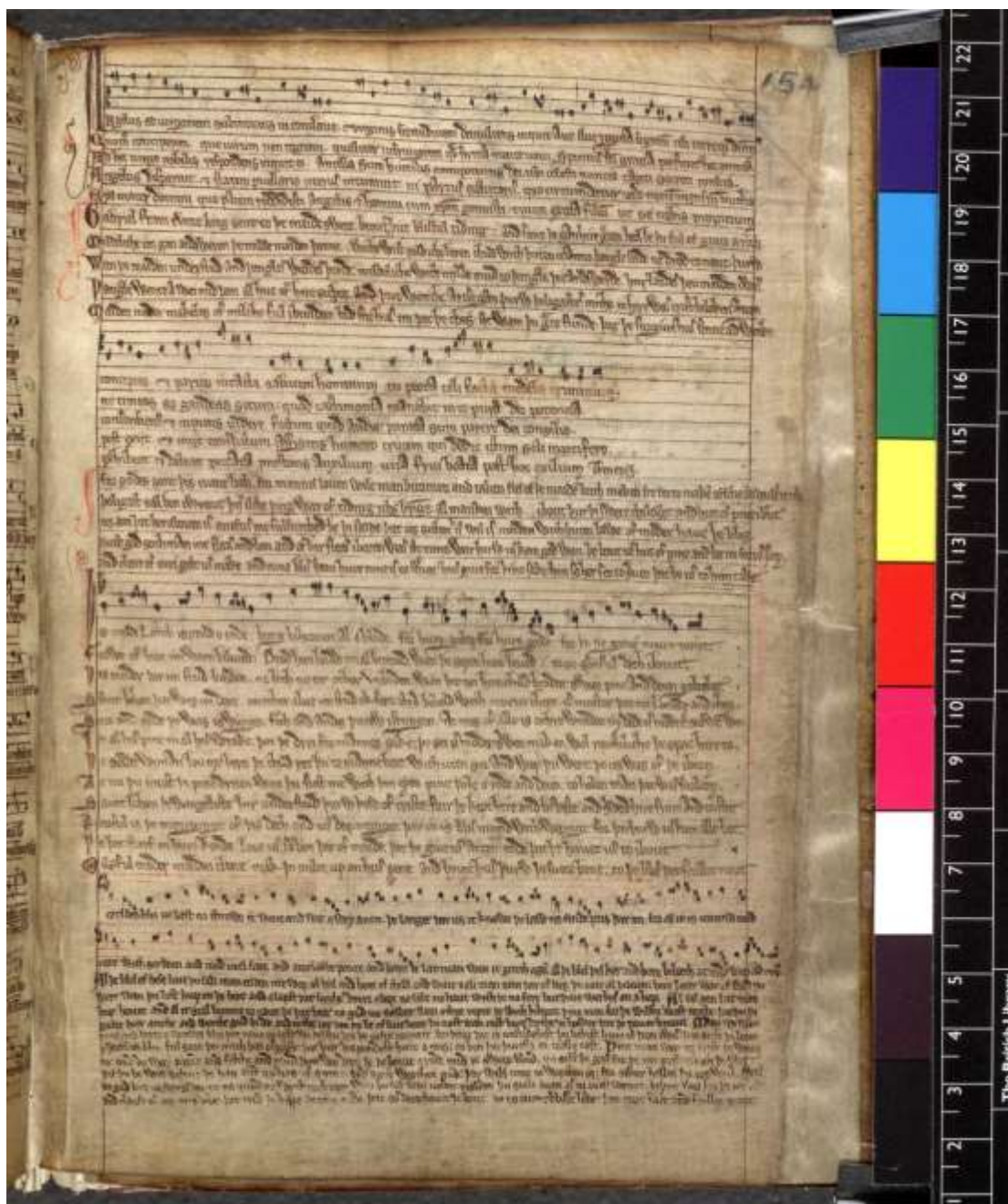
**a. Fol. 153v**



<sup>7</sup> See Deeming, 'Observations', 55-57, for discussion of the tensions between poetic/musical form and the use of *litterae notabiliores* in this piece.



b. Fol. 154r



The next page—now ruled in long lines—begins with another song underlaid with two alternative texts, the Latin *Angelus ad virginem* and the English *Gabriel fram evene king* (Figure 2b). Both the Latin and the English texts have five stanzas to be sung to the same tune, so a total of ten lines of text are stacked beneath the melody (though alignment of words to notes is—understandably—abandoned by the scribe

after only a few of these). Just as in *Flos pudicitie / Flur de virginité*, the vernacular text occupies much more horizontal space than the Latin, and carries on well beyond the end of the music and into the margin. The same procedure of multiple-verse underlay was adopted in the next song, *Pe milde Lomb*, where twelve stanzas are stacked below the melody. Since the melody here occupies only one system, this text-layout allows for the elegant alignment of all the enlarged initials to the left of the inner guide-rule, though had he wished to save space, the scribe could surely have done so by writing stanzas 2-12 without lineation and slightly more compressed. This is the procedure adopted with the final song on this page, *Worldes blis ne last no throwe*, whose first stanza alone is underlaid, and the remaining ones written—really quite cramped—in a block afterwards. Perhaps this was another practical decision as the scribe was approaching the end of the page and wanted to complete the song here rather than spilling over, just as he apparently did with *Flos pudicitie* on the previous page. Certainly he seems to have been keen to complete the music on two systems (rather than beginning a third), by allowing the end of the song to finish in the outer margin. We cannot be certain whether a need to save space, or a desire to maintain some elegance in *mise-en-page* by completing the song within the page itself, or perhaps a combination of both of these factors, lay behind the scribe's choices here. But the range of approaches to layout in different songs, as well as the evident thought and planning that has gone into *mise-en-page*, seem especially striking in this *ad hoc* manuscript-production situation that might be dismissed as casual jottings.

Fol. 154v opens with *Spei vena melle plena*, which is followed by *Jesu Cristes milde moder*, an English dialogue between Mary and Christ on the Cross. These two songs (though otherwise unrelated musically and textually) share exactly the same verse-form of 'Victorine stanzas', that is three lines of eight, eight, and seven syllables respectively, rhyming aab:

Spei vena melle plena / collaudetur Magdalena / cordis oris iubilo.

Jesu Cristes milde moder / stod biheld her sone o rode / þat he was ipined on.

Though this verse-form is fairly common among the songs preserved in insular sources of the thirteenth century, the appearance of two adjacent examples here, especially in two different languages, invites the speculation that their shared verse-form was the prompt for their inclusion together here, the scribe being reminded of

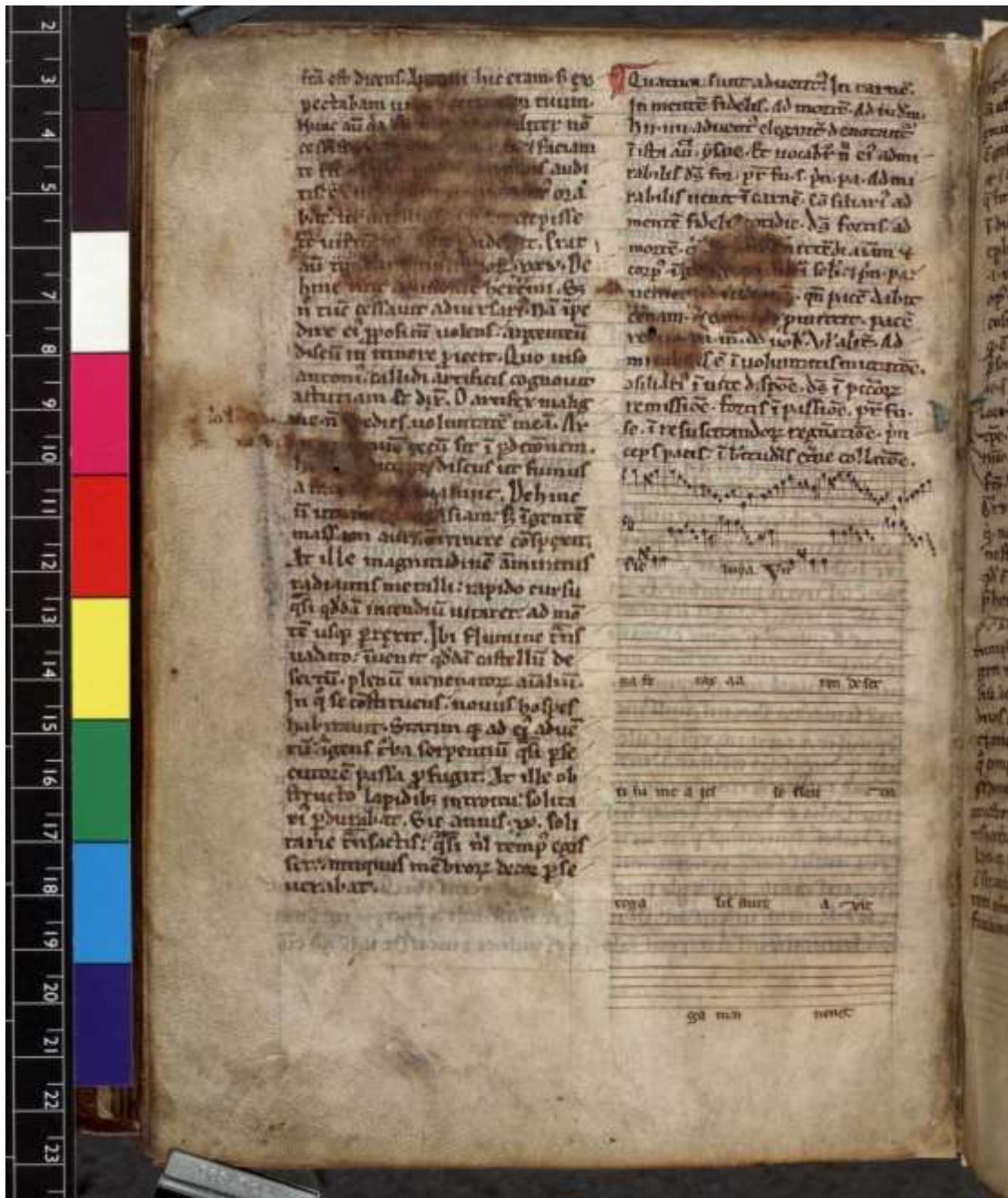
one in the sound and rhythm of the other. These two songs, along with two others in Arundel 248 (*Magdalene laudes plene* and *Risum fecit Sare*), take the musical form of the sequence (i.e., AABBC etc). Because every musical block in a sequence is sung twice, scribes could in theory economize on space and effort by copying the music only once and underlaying both versicles of each pair to it: this is what has been done here for *Jesu Cristes milde moder*. However, in the vast majority of cases (including the other three sequences in Arundel 248), scribes wrote out all of the musical repetitions in full. Often, there are very slight musical differences between the repetitions, usually having only a tiny effect on the musical substance. (Typical examples include the addition or removal of a passing or repeated note, and the replacement of a liquescent with a ‘full’ note, or vice versa.) It is intriguing that these variations were considered significant enough to be worth copying all the musical repetitions out in full. This is the norm in song sources during the thirteenth century (not only from Britain, but from across Europe), but Arundel 248 presents an especially interesting case, because the scribe was clearly familiar with the possibility of multiple-underlay to avoid writing out musical repetitions, which makes his choice not to use it in certain songs, such as *Spei vena melle plena*, all the more telling.

The final recto of this quire (fol. 155r) concludes the previous song, and adds three more: the three-part Latin *Salve virgo virginum*, immediately followed by a French version of it, *Veine pleine de duçur*, whose music is essentially the same as the Latin, but extended through an additional repetition of one of its phrases: the musical construction AAA'B in the Latin version becomes AAAA'B in the French. Unlike the other song-pairs copied so far (*Flos pudicitie / Flur de virginité* and *Angelus ad virginem / Gabriel fram evene king*), the scribe has here chosen to write these out as separate songs, which raises the question of whether he envisaged insuperable layout difficulties had he tried to fit both texts below the music, or whether the extent of the musical differences here represents what, for the scribe, was the conceptual breaking-point between what could be regarded as one song and what as two. In each case, three stanzas of text are underlaid to the music, though for the final song in this quire, the French *Bien deust chanter*, the scribe reverts to the more conventional *chansonnier* layout with a single stanza underlaid and the remaining stanzas written in a block at the end. This layout allows him to complete the song neatly at the foot of the page, leaving the verso blank: another text-scribe subsequently wrote some

meditations on the Blessed Virgin on this verso, re-adopting the two-column layout that the music-scribe had given up on earlier.

Layout challenges are even more present in the group of musical items found in Arundel 248's twenty-seventh quire. . On fol. 200v, with only half of the right-hand column available, the music-scribe attempted to copy a two-part liturgical *Alleluia* setting (Figure 3). Firstly, it seems, the scribe drew the staves and spaced out the syllables of the complete text. When the notator (whether he was the same scribe or another) came to supply the music, he discovered that insufficient space had been allowed between each syllable of text for the melismatic setting, and despite continuing far into the margin for the music above the syllable 'Vir-', he was forced to abandon the copying of the music before even reaching the system. What is interesting about this example of miscalculation is that the scribe responsible for the text evidently had some idea of the requirements of melismatic music in general, and this piece in particular, since the syllables are separated from one another and the space left between them is roughly proportional to the relative length of the melismas at different points in the musical setting. This suggests either that he was copying from an exemplar, but did not take enough care to match the length of the intra-syllable spaces there, or—perhaps more likely—he was writing down the music from memory, attempting to judge without a visual guide how much space would be needed. The abandoned copying of the *Alleluia* setting raises further questions about the scribal process in this quire: it may suggest that the text on the following recto had already been completed before the music scribe began his work, since—had the next leaf been blank—he could have erased the pre-written syllables, and continued the music onto the next folio, re-placing the syllables of text in the correct positions once it was clear how the music was to be fitted in.

Figure 3: London, British Library, Arundel MS 248, fol. 200v. Reproduced by permission of the British Library Board.



The final verso of quire 27 contains the last song, the two-part *Risum fecit Sare*. Despite the staining and scuffing to this leaf caused by later usage, it is still possible to appreciate that a high degree of elegance has been generated in the mise-en-page here. The song is another sequence form, with matching a and b versicles, and the scribe has taken the trouble to line up the starts of all the b versicles at the centre of

the page, so that their enlarged initials form something of a line, akin to the initials at the left-hand margin. The style of the initials is also interesting—they have been drawn very tall and thin, so that they encompass the entire height of the two-stave system: consequently, they function partly as stave-braces, linking the two polyphonic parts together, as well as initials. Red divider lines have been drawn between the staves to keep the two voice-parts distinct, something that was occasionally a problem in the polyphonic pieces earlier in the manuscript, which do not have this red line. In these ways, this last song is one of the music-scribe's best efforts, and perhaps we can detect here some evidence of him learning by experience, encountering difficulties earlier on in his work that he was able to resolve more satisfactorily later.

The songs preserved, at first glance fortuitously as 'isolated jottings', on the leaves of Arundel 248 and other insular song sources, yield intriguing insights into the processes of gathering song in thirteenth-century Britain. Despite their *ad hoc* and superficially inelegant presentation, considerable care has often been taken by the scribes responsible for writing them down. Within Arundel 248 alone are examples of scribal concern for neatness in mise-en-page, of economy to avoid wasted parchment, of the careful copying-out of musical repetitions, perhaps to preserve tiny nuances of variation between them, and of experimentation with different layouts to make best use of space, whilst drawing attention to songs with several alternative texts. Certain aspects of the collection suggest something of an 'archival' inclination on the part of at least one of the music-scribes: he seems to have had a special interest in songs with texts in more than one language, and his selection—though varied—does show some particular thematic concerns (the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, and the Crucifixion). This in turn implies that the compiler had access to a larger stock of music than that represented here, if he was indeed able to select particular pieces to match thematic or musico-poetic interests of his own. Likewise the apparent choosing of pieces of suitable lengths to fit in particular spaces in the book (albeit not always successfully) again suggests that a larger repertory of music may have been available to the scribe. What precise form that larger stock took is not recoverable, but the variety of layout types used in Arundel 248 would seem to indicate a number of exemplars employing different mise-en-page strategies, as well as some operation of musical memory in the process of inscription. These observations are especially significant in the context of the musical repertory of thirteenth-century England, since the surviving sources comprise a very high proportion of *unica*, meaning that there is

very little sense of what common repertory (if any) there may have been, and to what extent pieces circulated from place to place, by written or oral means. Likewise, Arundel 248's tactics of compilation seem to speak against the prevailing assumption that music was copied into such miscellanies indiscriminately, the scribes including pieces merely because they happened to know them or have access to an exemplar of them.

Other aspects of this 'music collection in miniature' imply a compiler with a profound sensitivity to musical and poetic detail. Not only does he seem to have selected pieces of unusual types (such as double-texted songs, and *contrafacta*) but there is some evidence of his grouping pieces according to less obvious criteria, such as the shared verse-form of the adjacent songs *Spei vena melle plena* and *Jesu Cristes milde moder*. It is surely no coincidence that two pairs of non-adjacent songs also share some lines with very similar wordings. The text of versicle 3b in *Magdalene laudes plene* is strongly reminiscent of that of 4a in *Spei vena mella plena*:

*Magdalene*, 3b:

Quod, dum flevit, ipsa flente,  
fratre vivo resurgente,  
patet satis.

(While he [Jesus] wept, with her [Mary]  
weeping, and with her living brother [Lazarus]  
rising again – which is clear enough.)

*Spei vena*, 4a :

Pie flevit cum hac flente,  
fratre suo resurgente,  
Christus mundi gaudium.

(With her [Mary] weeping, with her brother  
[Lazarus] rising, Christ the joy of the world  
wept piously.)

Similarly, versicle 5b of *Flur de virginité* and stanza 2 of *Veine pleine de duçur* share notably related text-phrases:

*Flur de virginité*, 5b:

Char e sanc prist  
duz Jesu Crist  
de tei, virge pure,  
dunt rançon fist  
e pur nus mist  
a mort aspre e dure.

(Sweet Jesus Christ took flesh and blood from you, pure virgin, by which he made redemption and [which] he put to grievous and harsh death for us.)

*Veine pleine de duçur*, 2:

Wus portastes Jesu Crist,  
virgne entere pure,  
cil ki ciel e terre fist  
e toute creature,  
char e sanc dedenz vus prist  
sanz point de blesmure,  
k'il pur nus en la croiz mist  
a mort aspre e dure.

(You bore Jesus Christ, pure virgin intact, the one who made heaven and earth and every creature, he took flesh and blood within you without spot of blemish, that he put to grievous and harsh death for us on the cross.)

Though the implications of these poetic connections cannot be established definitively, they may indicate that the compiler recognized, remembered, and deliberately sought out these pieces for his book. They may even be evidence of shared authorship, and—since all of these pieces are unique to this manuscript—it is possible that the compiler was himself their composer or was at least in close contact with him.

The two songs found on fol. 153v of Arundel 248 (*Magdalene laudes plene* and *Flos pudicitie / Flur de virginité*) are each prefaced with a rubric identifying them as contrafacta of other songs, not preserved here. In one sense, these rubrics are redundant in a context in which the music is written out in full: they seem only to serve the function of drawing attention to the contrafact relationship.<sup>8</sup> But another

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<sup>8</sup> The relationship of *Magdalene laudes plene* to *Letabundus exultet fidelis chorus*, and the implications of contrafact relationships in insular song more generally, are explored in more depth in Helen Deeming, 'Music, Memory and Mobility: Citation and Contrafactum in Thirteenth-Century Sequence Repertories', in *Citation, Intertextuality and Memory in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Vol. 2: *Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Medieval Culture* ed. Giuliano Di Bacco and Yolanda Plumley (Liverpool, 2013), 67-81.



possibility is that the two songs were copied by the Arundel music-scribe from text-only exemplars, in which the rubrics served as the primary (indeed only) indication of the melodies to which the songs were to be sung. This suggestion may be reinforced by the particular *mise-en-page* difficulties encountered by the music-scribe on this folio: if his exemplar had only the texts of the songs, and he were relying solely on his memory to supply the music, it is understandable that his layout intentions were partly unsuccessful on this folio. But the possible involvement of the compiler's musical memory in the process of copying these songs (and perhaps also the abandoned *Alleluia* on fol. 200v) again suggests the work of someone engaging actively in the music of the songs he wrote down, and not merely duplicating materials verbatim from another source.

If the compiler of the songs in Arundel 248 can be shown to have had an archival bent, his concerns in presenting the songs were nonetheless performative in orientation. The scribe's writing-out of large-scale repetitions in most of the sequence-form songs, preserving nuances of musical detail, has already been mentioned; his notational practices, too, display both a clarity and a finesse that seems geared to the requirements of singers. His music-hand is well spaced and capable of being easily read, and in occasional places where the alignment of words and notes went astray, or where notes have been accidentally misplaced on the staff, he has taken the trouble to erase and re-write the passage to correct the problem.<sup>9</sup> This is not to claim that Arundel 248 was designed as a performance manuscript, in the sense usually understood by that term—its size and non-musical contents render it unsuitable for singing from—but the care taken over the notation and the musical layout strongly suggest that performative aspects were important to the compiler. Whatever uses he envisaged for the musical copies in this source, which might have included pre-performance preparation (or post-performance reflection), preservation of musical materials that might otherwise be forgotten, individual or collective reading, or *sotto voce* singing, the trouble that has been taken to make these written records of songs is a marker of their value to one medieval scribe, and to the community of scribes and readers of which he formed part.

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<sup>9</sup> For these details, see the commentary to the Arundel 248 songs in *MB* 95, 197-203.