‘SONGES OF THE FRERE AND THE NUNNE’: AN UNRECORDED AMOROUS CAROL IN A CAMBRIDGE INCUNABLE

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Abstract
In a masterly study published in The Review of English Studies in 1981, P. J. Croft reconstructed the original context and early history of four late fifteenth-century English lyrics, collectively known as the Bradshaw Carols. Carol 3, a ribald set of macaronic verses detailing the seduction of a nun by a friar 'lusty proper and yong', has been until now the unique manuscript witness to a genre of 'merie song' that, according to sixteenth-century sources, had a wide circulation. This article presents a newly discovered witness to the genre and explores the context in which it was recorded.