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Madame d'Amours

SONGS, DANCES & CONSORT MUSIC FOR THE

Six Wives OF HENRY VIII

Cornyshe • Fevin • Capirola • Barbireau • Marbecke • Ashton • Henry VIII

Musica Antiqua of London
Philip Thorby, director

MADAME D'AMOURS

SONGS, DANCES AND CONSORT MUSIC FOR THE SIX WIVES OF HENRY VIII

I Catherine of Aragon
(1) Danza Alta - Francisco de la Torre (x, g, k, v)
(2) Whilles Lyfe or Breth - William Cornyshe (a, c, p, u, bb)
(3) …My Lady Wynkefylds Rownde - anon (m) (4) Nigra sum - Matthieu de Gascongne (a, c, o)
(5) Adew le companye - anon (a, e, r, w, bb)

II Anne Boleyn
(6) Blow thi horne - William Cornyshe (a, l, t, q, h, aa) (7) My Lady Carey's dompe - anon (m)
(8) Adiutorium nostrum - Antoine de Fevin (a, c, r, o) (9) La Gamba - anon (i, c, r, o, bb)
(10) Blame not my lute - anon (a, bb)

III Jane Seymour
(11) Gentil Prince - anon (x, g, k) (12) En vray amoure - anon (x, g, k, v)
(13) Kyng Harry VIII pavyn - anon (x, g, k, q, v) (14) Madame d'Amours - anon (a, w, f, r, o)
(15) Ricercar - Vincenzo Capirola (bb) (16) Duke of Somersett's dompe - anon (bb)

IV Anne of Cleves
(17) Ainxi bon Youre - anon (d, r, bb, n) (18) Een vroulic wesen - Jacques Barbireau (a, bb)
(19) La Danse de Cleves - anon (y)

V Catherine Howard
(20) Time to pas with goodly sport - Henry VIII (a, d, w, r, o, bb, m)
(21) Prince Edwarde's pavyn - anon (d, s, z, j) (22) Quam pulchra es - attrib Henry VIII (a, i, c)
(23) The Kynges marke - anon (w, c, m) (24) Adew madame - anon (a, m)

VI Catherine Parr
(25) Pavyn of Albart - anon (i, c, r, cc, o, b) (26) Galliard - anon (i, c, r, cc, o, b)
(27) A virgine and a mother - John Marbecke (a, c, o) (28) Ashton's maske - Hugh Ashton (i, c, r, o)

Total running time: [74:59]

Musica Antiqua of London - Philip Thorby, director - Jennie Cassidy, mezzo-soprano

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Set of five viols by West Dean Musical Instrument Workshop, England 2002
Bows by Alan Crumpler, Gerhard Landwehr and Roger Rose
Strings by Real Guts & Gamut
Set of four recorders by Carl Hanson after Virdung
Set of four crumhorns by Eric Moulder, England, 1980

Musica Antiqua of London is one of Britain's most exciting groups specialising in the performance of Renaissance music. The group is modelled on the court bands of the sixteenth century, with their blend of virtuosity and versatility—all the players are experts on a wide variety of Renaissance instruments, including viols, recorders, lute, guitar and harp as well as the more raucous crumhorns, rebecs, shawms and sackbut. This enables them to create 'whole consorts' (different sizes of the same instruments played together), and 'broken consorts' (mixed groupings of instruments from different families), which can include a number of other instruments of the period such as lute, guitar and harp or, on occasions where louder instruments are appropriate, shawms and sackbut.

Musica Antiqua of London is the first group in the world to commission and use late 15th–century viols and is the only group in Great Britain to play on matched sets of viols, crumhorns and recorders especially commissioned for the group, mostly copied from sixteenth century originals. This CD offers a rare opportunity to hear the very different sound these instruments make compared to their 'modern' counterparts from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Musica Antiqua of London usually performs together with one or more leading specialist early music singers, chosen to suit the programme. Concerts given by **Musica Antiqua of London** reflect the richness and variety of European Renaissance music—sacred and secular, popular and courtly—from England, France, Spain, the Netherlands and Italy. Programmes are meticulously planned to blend what are often miniature masterpieces into longer sequences, usually informally introduced from the platform by Philip Thorby, who is head of the Renaissance and Baroque Department at Trinity College of Music in London.

The group has made three highly successful tours on the Early Music Network, and has appeared in the York, Bath, Norwich, Galway and Belfast festivals, as well as giving many other concerts in Britain and Europe, including a series in the major London concert halls. Musica Antiqua has made a number of radio broadcasts, including one nominated for three international awards.

MADAME D'AMOURS

SONGS, DANCES AND CONSORT MUSIC FOR THE SIX WIVES OF HENRY VIII

Henry VIII is the most instantly recognisable of English kings: the heavy, square face with its fringe of beard, the massive torso, arms akimbo, feet planted firmly on the ground. His character, too, is familiar: 'Bluff King Hal', gorging himself at the table, flagrantly promiscuous, cynically manipulating the Church to suit his marital aims, the very archetype of chauvinism.

But scholarship reveals a very different Henry. Larger than life, certainly (six feet two inches tall, a colossal height for the time); but, as a young man, clean-shaven and with a halo of red hair, his waist was a mere 35 inches and his chest 42 inches. His table manners were refined to the point of being finicky, and the conduct of his sexual liaisons was (according to the French ambassador) almost excessively discreet. Far from regarding the Church merely as an extension of his own power and wealth, Henry was devoutly religious and profoundly orthodox in his observances. (He would hear mass five times daily—though only three times if he was hunting!) As for his chauvinism, how can one defend his marital record: divorced, beheaded, died; divorced, beheaded, survived?

Clearly one cannot! But his personal conduct to his queens was respectful and often tender. During divorce proceedings he was meticulous in his dealings with Catherine of Aragon, acknowledging the respect due to a queen of England who was herself the daughter of two monarchs. And poor Anne of Cleves (who Henry claimed made him impotent) reported: 'When he comes to bed he kisses me, and taketh me by the hand and biddeth me "Good night, sweet heart"; and in the morning, kisses me and biddeth me "Farewell, darling". This courtesy does not excuse the cruel divorces, still less the executions; but such accounts show a side of Henry at odds with the boor of popular myth.

As with the king, so with his music. An irresistible figure to the twentieth century early–music revival, Henry is shown by numerous hyperbolic contemporary accounts to have been an expert singer (with a clear tenor voice and able to sing at sight); a player of lute, flute, recorder, cornett and virginals; and a composer of sacred and secular music. Inventories made at the time of his death show him as an avid collector of instruments (including recorders, flutes, cornetts, viols and bagpipes). And two musical sources, one sacred (The Eton Choirbook), the other secular (The Henry VIII Ms), proved rich in music as dramatic, colourful and exotic as the king himself.

But there is more to Henry's music than 'Pastime with Good Company' and the splendours of Eton's polyphony. Henry inherited a modest musical establishment from his father, but bequeathed a large 'Kynge's Musicke' to his heirs. He reigned for thirty–eight years: in his youth he danced basses–danses and heard the sacred music of Fayrfax—but he lived to dance the new Italian pavans,

and to employ Thomas Tallis. Both the choirbook and the songbook, whilst undoubtedly important, represent just one period, early in the long reign of this discerning royal patron.

Or, rather, **'these discerning royal patrons'**. For Henry's queens were no mere observers of the development of music at his court. Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn both owned song–books which show a strong Franco–Flemish presence in Tudor music; Anne of Cleves augmented her small band of minstrels by borrowing players from Prince Edward's household; improper relationships with musicians were cited in the cases against both executed queens; Jane Seymour's royal wedding was celebrated with shawms and sackbuts; and Catherine Parr danced to her own consort of viols (we even know the names of the players). In chapel and chamber, whether dancing, worshipping, singing, playing or listening, music was an important counterpoint to the lives (and sometimes deaths) of all of Henry's six wives.

This disc does not set out to offer a comprehensive survey of music under Henry and his queens: rather it is a subjective selection of music from many contemporary sources inspired by, and, we hope, illustrative of six extraordinary lives.

I – Catherine of Aragon (m.1509, div.1533)

The daughter of the 'Catholic monarchs' Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile, Catherine arrived in England in 1501 to marry Prince Arthur, the elder son of Henry VII. Her large entourage included minstrels whose repertoire was drawn from the Spanish court, though the **basse–danse** tenor 'La Spagna' (set by Francisco de la Torre as 'Alta'—**track 1**) was popular throughout Europe. Arthur died shortly after the wedding, and Catherine eventually married his younger brother Henry. Though it seems to have been a love–match as well as a political alliance, Catherine's security depended on one thing—the birth of a male heir. After one miscarriage, Catherine gave birth in February 1511 to a son, Henry. Celebrations included a tournament, in which the king triumphed under the name of **Coeur Loyal**'—Catherine's 'Sir Loyal Heart'. After the joust, a feast was held, at which a song in praise of Henry's prowess was sung on behalf of Catherine. Only the burden (refrain) of Cornysh's 'Whylles lyfe or breth' survives: for this recording we have derived a verse–melody from the tenor part of the burden **(track 2)**.

Ten days later the infant prince was dead. Catherine remained queen, and even acted as regent (while Henry fought abroad), waited on by, among others, Lady Wingfield. 'The short mesure off My Lady Wynkefield's Rownde' **(track 3)**, a round–dance for solo virginals, is named for Lady Wingfield, whose husband Sir Richard was one of Henry's most loyal courtiers, but despite her successful regency, Catherine's star was waning. Henry was already in thrall to the dark eyes and raven hair of Anne Boleyn. With what feelings might Catherine have heard Matthieu de Gascogne's 'Nigra sum', a three–part setting of words from the Song of Solomon taken from her own songbook **(track 4)**: 'I am black but beautiful …the

INSTRUMENTARIUM

Jennie Cassidy	(a)	mezzo-soprano
	(b)	drum
Philip Thorby	(c)	tenor viol
	(d)	descant recorder
	(e)	alto recorder
	(f)	tenor recorder
	(g)	alto shawm (Toru Sakamoto)
	(h)	drum & voice
John Bryan	(i)	treble viol
	(j)	bass recorder
	(k)	tenor shawm (John Hanchett)
	(l)	alto crumhorn
	(m)	spinet (Alan Gotto, 1993)
	(n)	drum
Alison Crum	(o)	bass viol
	(p)	harp (West Dean Musical Instrument Workshop, England)
	(q)	sackbut (Christopher Monk)
Roy Marks	(r)	tenor viol
	(s)	tenor recorder
	(t)	bass crumhorn
	(u)	lute (Oliver Wadsworth, 1993)
	(v)	drum
Ian Harrison	(w)	mute cornett (Serge Delmas, Paris)
	(x)	soprano shawm (Bernhard Schermer)
	(y)	bagpipe (Jonathan Swayne)
	(z)	tenor recorder
	(aa)	cow horn & voice
Jacob Heringman	(bb)	lute (Andrew Rutherford, USA, 1997)
	(cc)	tenor viol

(27) A virgine and a mother

A queene celestial as this day maketh exemplification
Bare our saviour Christ the Lord imperiall,
Who suffered death for our salvation,
It pleased him so to do for our transgression.
Wherefore with meek devotion sing we in the honour
Of his incarnation.
A mayde immaculate of al women the flower
Hath borne Christ Jesu our Saviour.

king has called me to his bed–chamber…'? And how distant the memory of the feasting celebrating the birth of her son, where 'Adew le companye' was sung, with its joyful cry 'Vive le Catherine et noble Henry! Vive le prince, l'infant rosary!' **(track 5)**

II – Anne Boleyn (m.1533, executed 1536)

Henry may indeed have called Anne to his bedchamber, but she resisted his call for a long time, determined to be not just a royal mistress but a queen. Educated at the French court (where she had learned to sing and to play the lute and other instruments) Anne had returned to England in 1521. She appeared at court, and set about capturing hearts, including those of Sir Thomas Wyatt the poet, and Henry. The king, his love kept on the boil by Anne's denial of sexual favours, began writing her passionate love–letters. In 1526 he accompanied one with a buck he had just killed, hoping that when she ate the deer she would think of the hunter. Hunting (whether real or acted out dressed up as 'fosters' [foresters] at a court masquerade) was a potent metaphor for courtship, and Cornyshe's 'Blo thi horne' captures this double–entendre perfectly **(track 6)**.

Anne's older sister Mary had already been Henry's mistress, before being married off to William Carey, and it is perhaps she who gives her name to 'My Lady Carey's dompe' **(track 7)**. Like 'My Lady Wynkefield's rownde', this **dump** is based on a simple harmonic ostinato bass. The virginals was a popular instrument at court, where one of its greatest exponents was Mark Smeaton, who would later be cited as a lover of Anne Boleyn at her trial for treason.

But, for the moment, Anne had achieved her goal of marriage to Henry. Like Catherine, she must secure her position by providing him with a male heir. 'Adiutorium nostrum' **(track 8)** is a plea to God to make the royal couple fertile. Originally composed for Louis XII of France and his queen Anne of Brittany, this motet appears in Anne Boleyn's own songbook with the name Lodovicus (Louis) changed to Henricus (Henry).

Anne was a renowned dancer, and had been Henry's preferred partner long before his marriage to Catherine of Aragon was annulled. It seems likely that the Venetian viol players newly imported to Henry's court would have brought with them the latest Italian dances to challenge the supremacy of the basse–danse. One such dance is the galliard 'La Gamba' **(track 9)**, which later appears as a lute accompaniment to the poem 'Blame not my lute' **(track 10)** by Anne's old flame Thomas Wyatt. It is easy to imagine Anne singing this to her own accompaniment—certainly its flirtatious, playful text strongly evokes 'La petite Boulaine' whose death, after three short years of marriage, Henry would decree.

III – Jane Seymour (m.1536, d.1537)

Henry's first wife had been Catholic, his second had leanings to reform. Catholics at court were determined that his next queen should return England to the old religion. Jane Seymour was their chosen candidate: pious

and deeply orthodox in her religion, quietly spoken and submissive, Jane could not have been a stronger contrast to Anne. After the turbulence of the last few years, perhaps Henry needed a rest—he certainly still needed an heir (his daughters Mary, by Catherine, and Elizabeth, by Anne, did not count). He fell for Jane and they were married, processing by water from Greenwich to York Place with 'shawms, sackbuts and drumslades playing also in barges … which was a goodly sound' **(tracks 11–13)**.

The king's shawms also combined with those of the City Waites in 1537 to announce the birth of Prince Edward (later Edward VI)—an heir at last! Jane's star was in the ascendant, and her family rose with her, her brother Edward being made Earl and later Duke of Somerset. The 'Duke of Somersett's dompe' **(track 16)** bears his name, but may not have been written for him. The version on our disc is taken from an Italian source (the Capirola Lute Book), where it is preceded by a prelude–like Ricercar **(track 15)**.

Henry was in love with the idea of courtly love, expressed to perfection in 'Madame d'Amours' **(track 14)** taken from his songbook. For a while, as his queen and as mother of his son, Jane had basked in that love. But when, only days after Edward's birth, Jane became ill and died, it is doubtful if he was even present.

IV – Anne of Cleves (m. and div. 1540)

For a while Henry remained unmarried, but both he and his advisers found this state unsatisfactory. The pendulum of religion had swung again, and at court reform was in the air. The two daughters of the Duke of Cleves were regarded as suitable consorts for Henry, and Holbein was dispatched to paint them both so that Henry might choose. He chose Anne, and she set off from her modest duchy to become the bride of one of Europe's most powerful and flamboyant kings.

On New Year's Day 1540 Anne had reached Rochester, and was astonished when six identically dressed gentlemen burst into her room. One of them advanced, kissed her, and began to talk in the English tongue she barely understood. Nonplussed, she did not respond. The gentlemen retired, and one of them re–entered, no longer in disguise: it was Henry, who, impetuous as ever, had decided to surprise his betrothed with an **estrenne** (or New Year's gift) of two jewelled sables. 'Ainxi bon youre' **(track 17)** is a basse–danse based on the melody 'Ainxi bon youre de la bel estrenne' (this is the good day of the fine New Year's gift). Its style is old fashioned for England in 1540, but it reflects Anne's more provincial tastes. The combination of pipe, lute and viol was favoured at the English court for intimate dancing.

The surprise visit was a disaster: according to the rules of Henry's admired courtly love, Anne should have seen through his initial disguise, recognising him both as king and as lover. She had failed, and, worse still, he found her physically repulsive. He left, taking the sables with him.

The marriage went ahead—there was no way out—but Anne remained isolated by both custom and language.

manch wunder da wie ich umscha
gilt es mir gleich in allem reich
kum war ich well kein glet kein gsell
doch tu ich mich nit nennen.

The same happens to me in every country.
No matter where I go, I find neither shelter
nor a lover,
but I will not tell you who I am.

(20) Tyme to pas with goodly sport

Tyme to pas with goodly sport
Our sprites to revive and comfort.
To pipe, to sing, to dance, to spring
with pleasure and delight,
to follow sensual appetite.

(22) Quam pulchra es

Quam pulchra es et quam decora charissima,
in deliciis.
Assimilata est palmae et ubera tua botris.
Caput tuum ut Carmelus collum tuum sicut turris
eburnea.

Vene delecte mi e grediamur in agrum
videa si flores fructus parturiunt
si floruerunt mala punica.
Ibi dabo tibi ubera mea.

How beautiful thou art and how comely, my
dearest, in thy delights! Thy stature is like to a
palm–tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.
Thy head is like (Mount) Carmel, thy neck as a
tower of ivory.

Come my beloved, let us go forth into the field
Let us see if the flowers be ready to bring forth fruits,
if the pomegranates flourish:
there will I give thee my breasts.

(24) Adew madame

Adew madame et ma mastres.
Adew mon solas et mon joy.
Adieu iusque vous reuoye.
Adieu vous diz per graunt tristesse.

Farewell madame, my mistress,
Farewell to my solace and my joy.
Adieu till we meet again.
Adieu I say to you with a heavy heart.

(14) Madame d'Amours

Madame d'Amours
Madame d'Amours,
All tymes or ours
From dole dolours
Ower Lord yow gy;
In all socours
Unto my pours
To be as yours
Untyll I dye.

And make you sure
No creatur
Shall me solur
Nor yet retayne;
But to endure
Ye may be sure,
Whyls lyf endur,
Loyall and playne.

(18) Ein frölich wesen

Ein frölich wesen hab ich erlesen
und seh mich um wo ich hin kum
in fremde land wird mir bekant
mer args dann gut durch senens flut
gleich heur als ferd auf dieser erd
tu ich mich gleich erkennen.

Wo ich dann lend lang als behend
mit grosser gir begegnet mir

I have been blessed with a cheerful nature
and look about me; wherever I go in foreign lands I
encounter more bad than good from excessive
lovesickness.
Just as I know that this year follows last on this earth.

Wherever I stay, whether for a long or a
short time,
I invariably encounter strange things when I
look around.

'Een vroulic wesen' **(track 18)**, one of very few songs in the Henry VIII ms. whose words she would have understood, can not have cheered her, with its references to lovesickness in foreign lands. Perhaps the anonymous 'Danse de Cleves' (here played on bagpipes, of which Henry owned about nine) illustrates her loneliness, as she began her new divorced life as Henry's 'sister' rather than his queen **(track 19)**.

V – Catherine Howard (m.1540, executed 1542)

A member of the great and ambitious Norfolk dynasty, Catherine had impeccable catholic credentials, a pretty face, a fine plump figure, courtly accomplishments, and a flirtatious nature. She had, after the death of her mother, been sent to the household of her step–grandmother the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk, where she lived with other girls in the 'Maidens' Chamber'. The Dowager kept a loose house, and Catherine took full advantage: in particular she is suspected of having taken one Henry Manox, employed to teach her to play the virginals, as a lover. Certainly she passed her time in 'goodly sport' **(track 20)**.

Catherine appeared at court as a lady in waiting to Anne of Cleves, where a courtier noted: 'The King's Highness did cast a fantasy to Catherine Howard the first time that ever his Grace saw her'. Anne was divorced and Henry married Catherine. For a short time the atmosphere at court might be summed up musically by dances such as those named for Henry ('The Kynge's marke' – **track 23**) and his son ('Prince Edwarde's pavyn' – **track 21**); and by the coolly sensual three part setting of 'Quam pulchra es' (How beautiful thou art) attributed to the king **(track 22)**. (Although this attribution is almost certainly wrong, the motet was clearly composed during Henry's reign.)

Alas, the idyll did not last. Catherine was indicted for immorality perpetrated with the virginals player Manox—**before** her marriage to the king! 'Adew madame' **(track 24)** is based on the same melody as 'Time to pas with goodly sport' **(track 20)** and may be taken to illustrate her downfall, and the choice of virginals to accompany it recalls the part played by Henry Manox.

Early in 1542 the French ambassador wrote: 'She has taken no kind of pastime but kept in her chambers. Before, she did nothing but dance and rejoice: now, when the musicians come they are told there is no more time to dance'.

Catherine was executed on February 13th, 1542.

VI – Catherine Parr (m. 1543) [Henry dies 1547]

Once again the pendulum swings: the young, flighty Catholic Catherine Howard is dead, and Henry, now ageing and in constant pain, selects the thirty-one-year-old reform–minded intellectual Catherine Parr as his new wife. Having already buried two ageing husbands, Catherine had been attracted to the rakish Thomas Seymour, younger brother of Edward (later Duke of Somerset – **track 16**). But she was, she

wrote, 'overruled by a higher power', and married Henry on 12th July 1543.

Catherine was cultured, educated, and set out to be a mother to Henry's children. Her household included her personal viol consort—Alexander and Ambrose from Milan, and Vincent and Albert from Venice. In 1543 she danced to their music, in the Queen's Presence Chamber, with the envoy of Charles V (Pavyn of Albart, Galliard – **track 25, 26**). Catherine's reform opinions led to occasional friction with the orthodox Henry, and her circle of humanists and Protestant sympathisers made her vulnerable at court. She survived because of Henry's increasing dependence on her, but others had a more difficult time. John Marbecke, organist of Windsor chapel, was imprisoned and narrowly escaped being burnt to death for his beliefs. Compare the simple, largely syllabic setting of 'A virgine and a mother' **(track 27)** with the melismatic counterpoint of earlier Latin motets (eg. **tracks 4, 22**).

With her liberal reform views, her broad education, and her care for the future Edward VI, Catherine was ideally suited to oversee the continuation of the Tudor line when, in 1547, Henry died, paying the tribute in his will to 'the great love, obedience, chastity of life and wisdom being in our … wife and queen'. A year later Catherine finally married Thomas Seymour, her fourth husband and the only one of her choosing. Within another year she died in childbirth.

So a story which begins heralded by Catherine of Aragon's shawm band ends with Catherine Parr's consort of viols. 'Ashton's maske' **(track 28)**, one of the most extended of early Tudor consort pieces, clearly points the way to the glories of the Elizabethan and Jacobean fantasias.

Philip Thorby, May 2004

N.B. The original sources include many inconsistencies of spelling. These have been maintained in the titles, texts and notes.

Then tho my songes be some what plain
And tocheth some that vse to fayn,
Blame not my lutte.

My lute and strynges may not deny
But as I strike they must obay;
Brake not them than soo wrongfully,
But wryeke thy selffe some wyser way;
And tho the songes whiche I endight
To qwytt thy chainge with Rightfull spight,
Blame not my lute.

Spyght askyth spight and changing change
And falsyd faith must nedes be knowne.
The faute so grett, the case so strange,
Of right it must abrod be blown:
Then sins that by thyn own desartte
My soinges do tell how trew thou artt,
Blame not my lute.

Blame but thy selffe that hast mysdown
And well desarvid to have blame;
Change thou thy way so evyll bygown
And then my lute shall sownd that same;
But if tyll then my fyngeres play
By thy desartt their wontyd way,
Blame not my lutte.

Farewell, vnknowne, for tho thow brake
My strynges in spight with grett desdayn
Yet have I fownd owt for thy sake
Stringes for to strynge my lute agayne.
And yf perchance this folysh ryme
Do make the blush at any tyme
Blame not my lutte.

I was wery of the game,
I went to tavern to drynk;
Now the construccyon of the same –
What do yow meane or thynk?

Here I leve and mak an end,
Now of this hunter's lore;
I thynk his bow ys well unbent,
Hys bolt may fle no more.

(8) Adiutorium nostrum

Adiutorium nostrum in nomine Domini.
Orat, plorat et exoret
Anna sibi fac ut cito adiuvemur per tuam clementiam.
O regnate tam beate
Henricus clamat ad te
Audi queso vocem nostram.

Our help is in the name of the Lord.
She begs, she weeps, and may she obtain her prayer;
Anne, cause us to be swiftly helped by thy clemency.
O reign so blessedly,
Henry calleth to thee.
Hear our voice, I beg.

(10) Blame not my lute

Blame not my lute for he must sownd
Of thes or that as liketh me.
For lake of wytt the lutte is bownd
To gyve suche tunes as plesithe me.
Tho my songes be sume what strange
And spekes such words as toche they change,
Blame not my lutte.

My lutte, alas, doth not ofend
Tho that perfors he must agre
To sownd such teunes as I entend
To sing to them that hereth me;

(2) Whilles lyve or breth is in my brest

Whilles lyve or breth is in my brest
My soverayne lord I shall love best.

My soverayne lorde for my poure sake
Six coursys at the ryng dyd make,
Of which four tymes he dyd it take;
Wherfor my hart I hym beqwest,
And of all other for to love best
My soverayne lorde.

My soverayne lord of pusant pure
As the chefteyne of a waryowere,
With spere and swerd at the barryoure
As hardy with the hardyest,
He provith hymselfe that I sey best,
My soverayne lorde.

Above all other as a kyng,
In that he doth no comparyng
But of a trewth he worthyest
To have the prayse of all the best;
My soverayne lorde.

My soverayne lorde when that I mete,
His cherfull contenance doth replete
My hart with joe that I be hete
Next God but he and ever prest
With hart and body to love best
My soverayne lorde.

So many vertuse gevyn of grace
Ther is none one–lyve that have;

Beholde his favor and his face,
His personage most godlyest!
A vengence on them that loveth nott best
My soverayne lorde.

The soverayne lorde that is of all,
My soverayne lorde save principall!
He hath my hart and ever shall.
Of God I ask for hym request,
Off all gode fortunes to send hym best;
My soverayne lorde.

(4) Nigra sum

Nigra sum sed formosa, filiae Hierusalem
Ideo dilexit me Rex et introduxit me in cubiculum suum.
Nolite me considerare quod fusca sim quia decoloravit me sol;
posuerunt me custodem in vineis.
Fulcite me floribus, stipate malis, quia amore langueo.

I am black but beautiful, O ye daughters of Jerusalem.
Therefore hath the king loved me and led me into his bedchamber.
Do not consider me that I am brown because the sun hath altered my colour; they have made me the keeper in the vineyards.
Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples: because I languish with love.

(5) Adew, adew, le companye

Adew, adew, le companye,
I trust we shall mete oftener,
Vive le Katerine et noble Henry!
Vive le prince, l'infant rosary!

(6) Blow thi horne, hunter, and blow thi horne on hye!

Blow thi horne, hunter, and blow thi horne on hye!
Ther ys a do in yonder wode; in faith, she woll not dy:
Now blow thi horne, hunter, now blow thi horne, joly hunter!

Sore this dere strykyn ys,
And yet she bledes no whytt;
She lay so fayre, I cowde nott mys;
Lord, I was glad of it!

As I stod under a bank
The dere shoffe on the mede;
I stroke her so that downe she sanke,
But yet she was not dede.
There she gothe! Se ye nott,
How she gothe over the playne?

And yf ye lust to have a shott,
I warrant her barrayne.

He to go and I to go,
But he ran fast afore;
I bad hym shott and strik the do,
For I myght shott no mere.

To the covert bothe thay went,
For I fownde wher she lay;
And arrow in her haunch she hent;
For faynte she myght nott bray.