within the text itself and that the discussion had been less telescoped and easier to follow. Throughout the book there are a few 'blind quotes', quotations that appear in the text without immediate attribution, which force the reader to turn to the notes to find key sources informing Korda's argument. These are, however, the most minor of quibbles about a book of great importance to the economic history of women, to theatre history, and to early modern studies. Thanks to Natasha Korda's evocative picture of women's labour, we can now more fully imagine women's contributions to the theatre and to the economy at large.

Susan C. Frye

Robert Mullally. *The* Carole*: A Study of a Medieval Dance.* Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011. Pp xvi, 148.

In *The* Carole*: A Study of a Medieval Dance,* Robert Mullally brings together a wealth of fragmentary evidence about 'the earliest western European dance that can be performed with any degree of certainty' (91). The work is comprised of eleven short chapters on the history and etymology of the word 'carole' and related terms, on choreographic theories and descriptions, on lyrics and music, on iconography and images, and on the differences between these in French, Italian, and Middle English usage. Mullally supports his iconographic readings with several colour plates, and appendices provide musical examples, lyrics, and additional bibliographic information.

Mullally begins his study of the carole at the end, discussing the waning of the dance's popularity by the beginning of the fifteenth century as the basse danse gained dominance. He notes isolated references to the carole in fifteenth-century copies of the *Roman de la Rose* and in contemporary literary works, observing that the carole gained a second life in early modern dictionaries, in nineteenth-century lexicographical studies, and in etymological works up to the present day. He also gives a brief historiography of past work on the carole's choreographic, musical, and iconographic components. In the second and third chapters, he provides a detailed study of the term's origins and etymology.

The two chapters that focus on the carole's choreography and performance practices will be of particular interest to scholars of early theatre. Mullally

brings together scattered references to form a coherent choreographic description of the carole. The steps themselves were quite simple: a step on the left foot and a joining step with the right foot, then another step to the left, and so on. The dancers stepped à terre or with the full foot on the ground rather than on tiptoe, and the whole dance always circled to the left (47, 49). The author acknowledges the diversity of opinions as to whether the carole was a line, chain, or circle dance or was flexible in form but concludes that the surviving evidence points strongly to its having been a circular dance accompanied by singing. Indeed, Mullally asserts that 'the circular form was not simply a typical feature of the dance; it was its defining element' (44). The circle of dancers, joined together by holding hands, could form around an object such as a tree or could encircle an honoured person or singer during the dance.

We also learn who danced the carole. Dancers could be male or female, and we have evidence of both single-sex and mixed-sex groups dancing it. When both sexes danced together, men and women usually (but not always) alternated places around the circle. Dancers could be of any status, from ladies of the court to serving wenches, but although all ranks danced the carole they did not dance it together. Several references note dancers moving elegantly or gracefully, but this may have been a stylistic expectation for high status dancers rather than a characteristic of the dance itself. Mullally also clarifies a point of confusion stemming from references to a man and woman agreeing to dance the carole together. Some scholars have assumed that if a dance involved couples it must have featured a linear procession of them and thus that the carole must sometimes have been a processional dance. Mullally explains that a carole of couples was, in fact, still a circle dance; the couples simply came together to form a circle, all holding hands. Indeed, this is the most common image of the dance in paintings, manuscript illustrations, and other visual depictions that Mullally discusses in his chapter on iconography. The next most common image, of a line of dancers holding hands and stepping to the left, most likely depicts the very similar French medieval dance called the tresche rather than the carole.

The book's chapters on lyrics and music also contain useful observations for the historian of early theatre and performance. Mullally shows that a substantial archive of music and lyrics for accompanying the carole remains extant. Scholars have been slow to connect the carole's lyrical, musical, and choreographic components because the lyrics are often identified as rondeaux or virelais and the musical pieces as chansons or *chansonettes* rather than as caroles, since the term carole is only used to refer to the dance's choreography (at least in French). Further complicating matters, much of the music from

the medieval and early modern periods has been inaccurately designated as dance music when it may, in truth, simply share a common origin or similar form with the music that was actually used to accompany dancing.

Mullally helpfully highlights what can be determined about the music and lyrics for the carole. The music usually boasts a trochaic rhythm that is quite similar for both the tresche and the carole. The dance's steps lend themselves to duple time. Therefore, Mullally argues that although it was not originally written in mensural notation, music for the carole should be played in 6/8 time (83). Carole lyrics are very short, usually only two or three lines long, and are often misinterpreted by editors who do not recognize the form.

Mullally also gives helpful details about the musicians who accompanied the carole. The dancers themselves provided the most typical and iconic accompaniment for the carole, singing. However, the author disputes the common scholarly assumption of a group chorus and instead argues that 'a succession of solo singers' is a more probable scenario (87). Singers could be men or women. Among high status dancers singing provided the only musical accompaniment; instruments such as horns, drums, or bagpipes might accompany lower status dancers. Since the majority of visual depictions of dancing in this period include instrumentalists, Mullally concludes that 'the artists allowed their fancy to roam free in deciding what instruments to represent on the page and where to represent them' (100). Although illustrations of dancing add 'beauty and value' to manuscripts and artworks, he believes, they are 'mostly unreliable' as historical evidence, especially as compared to written sources (100).

The bulk of this study examines French literary and artistic depictions of the carole. The final chapters of the work, however, compare the French carole with the Italian *carola* and the Middle English carole. Mullally argues that the Italian term *carola* was used quite differently than the French term carole. The former did not refer to a specific dance, as did the latter, but was used by authors such as Dante and Boccaccio as an elegant French borrowing to denote dance in general. Another difference the author identifies based on an analysis of two well-known frescos is that Italian artistic renderings of dance were more choreographically accurate than French images, which tended to follow narrative descriptions regardless of their accuracy.[1] Although other scholars have described the dance portrayed in the Italian frescos as the carole, Mullally suggests that both frescos may depict the *ridda,* a meandering circle or line dance that included dancers passing under an arch made by other dancers' arms and that was accompanied by both singing and instrumental music. The relationship between the French and

the Middle English carole is less transparent. Whereas in French the term was only used to describe the choreography of the dance, in Middle English it can refer to both the dance and the accompanying song. By the end of the fourteenth century, moreover, the English frequently used the term to refer to a lyric type unrelated to dancing, the 'burden-and-stanza form' still used in Christmas carols (117).

Given Mullally's extensive study of the secondary literature on the carole, it is surprising that he does not mention Karen Silen's essay 'Dance in Late Thirteenth-Century Paris' in *Dance, Spectacle, and the Body Politick, 1250–1750,* edited by Jennifer Nevile (Bloomington, 2008). Silen contends that the carole could be danced in a line or procession as well as in a circle. She looks at a different body of sources (sermons and university records) than Mullally does, but since her conclusion disagrees with his assertion that the French carole was always a circle dance a discussion of this apparent disparity would have been helpful.

A more central criticism is that while Mullally provides a wealth of details and corrects inaccuracies in other scholars' discussions of the carole the larger significance of his observations is difficult to assess without an interpretive framework. This may be partially by design; Mullally states in the introduction that his intention is simply to pin down 'precisely what kind of dance the *carole* was' based on 'a comprehensive study of the different primary sources' (xv). He accomplishes this goal, providing a definitive summation of the carole's etymology, choreography, lyrics, music, and iconography and offering a fuller, more detailed picture of the carole than has previously been available. However, an interpretive framework would have broadened the appeal of *The* Carole. Most scholars will find a few chapters of interest, rather than the book as a whole.

Emily F. Winerock

Notes

1 The Italian frescos Mullally examines are Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Gli effetti del buon governo* (The Effects of Good Government) on the wall of the Sala della Pace at the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena and the fresco painted by Andrea di Bonaiuto in the Cappellone degli Spagnoli in the convent of Santa Maria Novella in Florence (105). Both date from the fourteenth century and depict small groups of girls or women dancing.