

Lacemakers and Old Songs, in *Olney and Elsewhere*

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O, fellow, come, the song we had last night.
Mark it, Cesario, it is old and plain;
The spinsters and the knitters in the sun
And the free maids that weave their thread with bones
Do use to chant it

Duke Orsino, *Twelfth Night*, Act 2, Scene 4

As no doubt all readers of this journal know, the ‘free maids that weave their thread with bones’ were lacemakers. When Shakespeare wrote *Twelfth Night* (1601) lacemaking was actually a new technology in England, only introduced from the continent in the later sixteenth century.¹ (Nor was it much older in Dalmatia where the play is set.) It is odd then that lacemakers were already associated with ‘old and antique’ songs. Yet this association is well documented. Inspired by this passage, the Shakespearean Sidney Beisly enquired of the readers of *Notes & Queries* in 1868 whether ‘any of the songs which the lacemakers of times past sung are in existence’.² B.H. Cowper (probably Benjamin Harris Cowper, a Biblical scholar born in Wellingborough in 1822, but not, as far as I know, a relation of the poet) replied with the text of ‘Long Lankin’ heard in his youth. The eponymous hero of the ballad murders Lady Johnson and her baby with the aid of the family nurse.³ Although the earliest datable version was only recorded in 1775, (most) ballad scholars agree that the song is considerably older.⁴ Another Northamptonshire correspondent had anticipated Beisly’s query by sending in a version of ‘Little Sir Hugh’, which had been sung to him by his own nurse ‘as she rattled her bobbins over her lace-pillow’. This ballad relates the death of another child, Saint Hugh of Lincoln, who was supposedly ritually murdered by Jews in 1255.⁵ This blood libel contributed to both popular and judicial persecution of Jews and their eventual expulsion from England. Ballads on the theme were certainly circulating in the thirteenth century.⁶ As has often been observed, bloody murders seem to have had a special fascination for lacemakers.

One might suppose that singing was a widespread accompaniment to pre-industrial labour and that the production process was generally kept to time by song before machines, so there would be no need to turn to lacemakers specifically for old songs. However, recent research shows that this was not the case. There are numerous occupations ‘for which there are few or no references at all to singing at work – baking, milling, the metal crafts, carpentry and the building crafts being the most notable ones.’⁷ Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence but a revealing example is provided by the canal and railway navvies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Even though their activity was analogous to that of sailors or prison work-gangs in the United States (both well-known practitioners of occupational song), yet ‘spectators often remarked on the concentrated silence as a gang of navvies got down to their work’.⁸ This is not to say that there were no individual singing carpenters or bakers or navvies, but that these occupations had neither a shared repertoire of songs nor set occasions on which they were expected to sing. They had no particular song tradition. Nineteenth-century observers always cited the same handful of professions as propitious environments for singing: cobblers and weavers among the predominantly male trades; sewing, spinning, knitting and lacemaking among the female trades; the last three are the same as those named by Shakespeare three centuries earlier.

Why these occupations in particular? An obvious but perhaps misleading connection is their rhythmic quality. For example, songs about cobblers often made use of the idiosyncratic rhythms associated with their work, but the songs practitioners themselves are recorded singing did not.⁹ One must also distinguish between work songs, which are integrated into the working process, and the practice of singing at work, for pleasure, for escapism, for communal feeling. Although there is some evidence of the former for these occupations, there is more evidence of the latter. All were more-or-less sedentary and so were not that physically onerous: some energy was available for singing. And while skilled they were routine enough to allow the worker to engage simultaneously in other mental activity. Although each could be performed in isolation, in practice workspace was shared. Knitters and lacemakers would gather together in the streets on summer days, or in a single kitchen to share heat, light and conversation in winter. A further structural stimulus concerns training: lacemakers in particular learnt their craft over long years in a school-like environment where they could also acquire a common repertoire of songs and a common aesthetic preference for the 'antique'.

However, at least as far as the women's trades are concerned, there were also ideological reasons why observers wanted to find a connection between work and singing. Textile work, in theory at least, was the ideal supplement to domesticity: women could contribute to the cottage economy while also performing household chores. Thus they remained under male authority of fathers and husbands, and were dissuaded from the promiscuity associated with factory work. Work discouraged idleness but necessarily encouraged cleanliness (especially in the case of lacemaking) and so punished vices and rewarded virtues. It was important, therefore, to present such work not as tedious, painful and unhealthy but as compatible with domestic contentment.¹⁰ This was particularly true of lacemaking – the most ideological of all textiles.

Unfortunately, folksong collecting did not really take off in England until the very end of the nineteenth century, too late to record spinners and knitters as their activity had long since been displaced by the factory. The image of the singing spinster was an established cliché, but the content of her songs went largely unrecorded. We cannot know, therefore, whether such women had their own distinctive tradition, expressive of an occupational identity. Historians usually deny this of women in the pre-industrial workforce; trade identities were reserved for men as only they possessed corporations with coats of arms, particular festivities and a history of proud and public self-assertion. Handmade lace manufacture did just about survive into the twentieth century, preserved from competition with the machines for ideological reasons, and Midlands lacemakers did have their own traditional holidays on Saint Catherine's or Saint Andrew's day, so might serve as a test case for a pre-industrial women's work culture. Unfortunately, Victorian and Edwardian folksong collectors preferred the southern and northern counties: the Midlands were largely ignored. Maybe B.H. Cowper's claim back in 1868 that 'It is probable that inquiry in the lace-making districts would produce copies of other old ballads', still held good in the nineteenth century but no serious folksong collecting was conducted in the lace-making districts until the 1960s when Fred Hamer was active around Bedford. By then handmade lace was all but finished as an industry, and although Hamer was married to a lace-teacher, he did not record any substantial repertoires from lacemakers.

He did, however, note down a handful of lace-tells, such as this one from Mrs White of Cranfield:

There's three pins I done today,
What do you think my mother will say?
When she knows I done no more,
She'll take and turn me out of door.
Never let me come in any more.¹¹

These rhymes were used in lace schools to speed-up the pace of work and to inculcate discipline in the children. 'Tellings' or 'tells' combined the process of counting pins stuck in the pillow with reassembled elements from ballads, round-dances and playground rhymes. The kind of simple lace net taught in schools was more amenable to rhythmic control than the complex patterns worked on by trained lacemakers. Tells are the one genre in English lacemakers' song repertoire that has been documented. Thomas Wright, the schoolmaster at Olney, noted several in the early twentieth century, as did others before and since both in Olney and elsewhere in the Midlands lace villages (though not, interestingly, in other English lace regions).¹² And tells did clearly express a trade identity:

With holes in her stockings and rags on her back
I'll be a lacemaker if ever so slack.
I'll turn over timber sticks,
Put in my pin of wire,
My wire pin is in,
I'm one the nigher.¹³

But tells were expressive of a particular identity in another way – as Gerald Porter explains, they were 'highly allusive... they assume close familiarity with working practices, often involving the use of dialect and detailed terms unknown outside the group'. Thus they create 'a sense of intimacy, inwardness and shared experience.'¹⁴ However, this was not a celebratory occupational identity stressing the dignity of labour: lace tells often concerned punishments, domestic violence, sexual murder and premature death induced by work. 'Tells' were not just a feature of the East Midlands lace industry: 'tellingen' were also sung, or rather chanted (the same distinction was made by B.H. Cowper observing lacemakers in Northamptonshire) in the workshops and lace schools of Flanders where, likewise, they were used to keep time in the making of lace net. Each line represented another pin done. These parallel traditions may offer some evidence for the frequently asserted but actually undocumented Flemish origins of the Midlands lace industry. ¹⁵ 'Tellen' in Flemish means both counting and narrating, just as 'to tell' does in English, but the stories being told in such rhymes were not obvious to outsiders because, just as with their English equivalents, 'tellingen' were bizarre composites of songs, hymns, prayers... Nonetheless, and despite the more overt religious imagery of Flemish tells, much of the content would have been familiar to Midlands lacemakers. The workers are hungry, exhausted, given mouldy bread, thrown in a hole... Mothers complain about their daughters' lack of work; fathers are even more threatening figures.¹⁶

Mijnheere, mij kinders en willen niet werken
Wat doe ik er al mee?
Steek ze al in een duister kot
En geef ze daar wat van haver en zop¹⁷
[Mister, my children do not want to work
What am I to do with them?
Stick them in a dark kennel
And give them gruel...]

Adolphe Lootens recorded this and dozens of other tells in the mid-nineteenth century from his mother, Catherine Beyaert, who was born in Bruges in 1795 and who had spent her childhood and youth in the city's lace schools.¹⁸ He also recorded more than a hundred and sixty songs which were sung in the same venues, though without the same regulatory function. In Flanders, children were apprenticed to a lace mistress for five years, and 'heard the same pieces sung morning and evening for three or four years, under the strict surveillance of older workers who did not permit the slightest change in the way they were sung'. This helps explain the archaic quality of Beyaert's repertoire. Flemish lace schools were often overseen either by nuns or by lay pious women known as 'béguines' who, in addition to teaching lace skills, provided religious instruction. This was widely seen as the main purpose of girls' education before the mid-nineteenth century, and not just in Belgium. So it is not surprising that religious songs were the most prominent part of any Flemish lacemaker's repertoire. However, Beyaert also knew secular 'antique' ballads. Events long past were not only memorialized in song but seemed to have some contemporary relevance for her. She sang about the Governor of Zeeland who tried to seduce a woman by arresting her husband and promising his release if she surrendered to his desires (readers will recognize elements of the plot of Puccini's *Tosca*, but in this case the events were supposed to occur in 1469, not 1800). She sang about the poisoning of Duke Phillip the Handsome of Burgundy in Spain in 1509 (an unproven but persistent rumour). And, in another Anglo-Flemish link, she gave a long and accurate account of the botched execution of the Duke of Monmouth in 1685: it took Jack Ketch five blows of the axe to take his head off. Not surprisingly, given the staunch Catholicism of Flemish lacemakers, the sufferings of this Protestant hero were depicted as entirely deserved.¹⁹

Lootens's book was not just an act of filial admiration. In the nineteenth century ballad collecting was a political act. Possession of a ballad tradition implied possession of a common culture, a shared language and literature – albeit unwritten – which linked past, present and future generations. In other words a ballad tradition implied a nation, albeit one *in statu nascendi*. Song publications relating the deeds of popular heroes and their epic struggles accompanied nationalist and democratic movements across Europe, from Greece and Serbia to Norway and Finland. Songs themselves were great mobilisers of 'the people': Catherine Beyaert sang one such national hymn, the 'Patriotten Lied' recalling the Brabant Revolution of 1830 that led to the creation of an independent Belgium. Lootens was not necessarily a Flemish nationalist, but he was active in the fledgling Flemish movement; his revalorisation of the voice of the people was intended to shape a distinctive Flemish literary identity, albeit one with manifest connections to German, Dutch, French and British histories and literatures. He was not the only Fleming engaged in this activity: he took his cue from Edmond de Coussemaker, a judge in Lille but also the author of *Popular Songs of the Flemings of France* (1856).²⁰ He would be followed by Albert Blyau and Marcel Tasseel who would publish their *Ypres Old Song-Book* in 1897-8. In both cases they drew heavily on the repertoires of lacemakers. Coussemaker obtained a substantial proportion of his songs in the lace-schools of Bailleul; Blyau's work relied almost entirely on the memory of one old lacemaker, Madame Ingelaere, who provided more than two hundred songs. He did, however, also attend a lace-school in Poperinghe to hear lace tells in action: the one he recorded, 'Lisa's Terechtstelling' (Lisa's execution) was predictably gruesome.²¹ Recorded, edited and packaged as 'Flemish songs' by cultural activists, lacemakers' penchant for 'old and antique' songs became evidence of a distinct cultural identity, the Flemish people's unique cultural heritage.

However, rather than thinking of songs as belonging to a region or an ethnicity (which is how folksongs are most often labelled), it may make more sense to think of these repertoires as relevant to a particular occupation. That does not mean that lacemakers alone sang them, or that they only did so while making lace, but that this was the milieu in which a tradition of old songs was maintained, and where their aesthetic charms were most appreciated. One support for this argument is that the same themes that occupied Flemish lacemakers were also sung about by their French counterparts. Two years before Lootens published his mother's repertoire, Emile Legrand was recording the songs sung by his mother, Catherine Legrand, and her neighbours as they worked their lace pillows in the village of Fontenay-le-Marmion near Caen in Normandy. Emile Legrand was France's leading expert on medieval and early modern Greek: he collected and published texts, both those discovered in the libraries of monasteries, and those recorded from the voices of singers and storytellers. He was the first to demonstrate that the folk ballad hero Digenes Akritas was one and the same as the hero of the twelfth-century Byzantine epic 'Digenes Akrites', an important discovery. His interest in Greece derived from his time as a trainee priest in a seminary, but it is at least worth speculating that his taste for this kind of archaic popular culture was fired by listening to his mother's songs as she worked.²² He recorded no 'tells' (there appears to be no French equivalent to this genre) but his collection was distinguished by the number of old ballads it contained, such as the song 'Marianson', sung by his mother's neighbours and co-workers, Adélaïde Le Paulmier and Marie Roger. Marianson is foolishly persuaded to hand over her rings which a false knight then uses to convince her husband, returning from the wars, that she has been unfaithful to him. Her husband, Duke Renaud, takes her infant from her and smashes his skull on the pavement. He ties Marianson to his horse's tail and drags her behind him from Paris to Saint-Denis, while her mother runs after crying:

'Beau Renaud, rends-moi mon enfant!
 Si tu ne me rends pas la peau,
 Rends-moi seulement les pauvres os;
 Si tu ne m'en rends pas le sang
 Rends-moi les os tout sanglants.
 Petits oiseaux d'amont les chants
 Mangez la chair de mon enfant.'

['Handsome Renaud, return my child to me!
 If you don't return the skin
 At least return the bones to me;
 If you don't return the blood
 Give me back the bloody bones.
 Little birds singing above
 Eat the flesh of my child. ']²³

Renaud the woman-killer is a character frequently encountered in French lacemakers' songs, just as 'the Fox' threatens their English counterparts: 'The Fox did look, the Fox did see/ I saw the hole to bury me.' As Thomas Wright observed in Olney, so too in France, lacemakers songs 'abound in allusions to coffins, shrouds, corpses, bones, lightning flashes, sardonic laughter, hyena-like cries, and other lurid, gruesome, clammy or grizzly terrors'.²⁴ The Normandy lace districts, however, are a bit like the English Midlands in that they were little visited by folksong collectors in the nineteenth century, so Legrand's is the only record of the lacemakers' song repertoire from the region. Further south, in the Velay region of the Haute-Loire, collectors were more active in the period when pillow-lace manufacture was

still the single most important employment locally for female labour. When Victor Smith, a commercial judge at Saint-Etienne, set off on his song-collecting tours through the Velay in the 1860s and 1870s, over 100,000 women were still making lace by hand in the region. As in Flanders, and to a certain extent in Normandy, the Catholic Church took a role in the organisation of the lace industry. In addition to numerous convent lace schools, in the highlands of the Velay members of a lay Franciscan sorority known as ‘béates’ (akin to the Flemish béguines) oversaw production in communal workrooms while teaching the youngsters their catechism. On sunny days the lacemakers would instead gather in the street or under the shade of a tree, and it was there that Smith heard their songs. In his field notes he frequently commented on these collective work practices and the song traditions they supported: ‘In spring, in April and May, the lacemakers grouped in front of their house, are all willing to sing you what they know. A song is started, the rosary is unwound and they sing for whole hours with lots of spirit and with all the grace in the world.’²⁵ Smith collected hundreds of songs in consequence of these encounters in the lace towns and villages of the upper Loire valley such as Roche-en-Régnier, Vorey, Chamalières and Retournac. Although the majority of the songs recorded by Smith were in French, the daily language of the region was an Occitan dialect, and most of the songs were known in both Oc and Oïl variants. The Velay was on the fringes of a female song tradition that followed an arc around the Mediterranean from Italy to Catalonia and beyond. As in Flanders, religious songs made up a substantial part of Velay lacemakers’ repertoire, though they chose to emphasise certain, sometimes heterodox, elements of their Catholic culture. In addition to songs about those female saints who achieved martyrdom through defiance of their fathers (Saint Catherine above all) they also knew a whole cycle of songs on the ‘Dives and Lazarus’ theme of ‘bad rich people’, and a fair number that recalled religious conflict with Huguenots. This religious repertoire was likewise full of ‘gruesome, clammy or grizzly terrors’. In one of the songs about a ‘mauvais riche’ a miser trapped in his counting-house is forced to eat his own hands; in another a priest’s servant refuses charity to a beggar and then falls down dead – when the priest returns to the beggar he finds instead a crucifix and the room bathed in blood (a frequent sign of supernatural intervention not just in French lacemakers’ songs but in Flanders too).²⁶

Lacemakers in the Velay also knew secular ballads which could be remarkably bloody. Husbands, lovers, mothers, mothers-in-law and brothers all posed deadly threats to lacemakers’ heroines:

Ne furent pas à bord de l’eau
 La belle n’a demandé boire.
 ‘Avant de boire ce vin blanc,
 Mie, faut boire votre sang.’

[Just as they reached the water’s edge
 The girl asked for a drink.
 ‘Before drinking this white wine,
 Darling, I must drink your blood.’]

In this case Madelon avoids death by kicking her false lover into the river; she then urges the eels and fishes to feast on his flesh. Other girls are not so lucky: in a song sung by a béate, a brother attempts to rape his sister:

Le poignard à la main, dans son sein il l'enfonce,
Dans son sein il l'enfonce pendant cinq à six fois,
Un mouchoir à la bouche lui fit perdre la voix.

[A dagger in hand, he drove it in her breast,
In her breast he stabbed her five or six times,
A handkerchief to her mouth silenced her.]²⁷

Violence, often with a sexual component, is a recurrent feature of these southern lacemakers' songs. Just before the First World War the future novelist Henri Pourrat also made a collection of tales and songs among the lacemakers of the Livradois region in Puy-de-Dôme. (This might be considered a northern extension of the Velay lace 'fabrique'.)²⁸ Marie Claustre from Valeyre, who was seventy-eight in 1912, sang him six songs: one related the punishment of a young man who, when drunk, killed his mother and father. Reproached by his sister he cut her throat too. The song ended with the moral:

Per's et mèr[es] qui avez des enfants,
Ne perdrez pas de temps!
Châtiez-les dans jeunesse.
C'est ce joli sigeur [sic]
Qui a causé mon malheur

[Mothers and fathers who have children,
Don't waste any time
Punish them when young.
It was lack of this rigour [?]
That was the cause of my unhappiness.]

The one historical song sung by Marie Claustre was the lament of the Duke of Berry, the son of France's last Bourbon king, stabbed by a Bonapartist as he left the Paris Opera in 1820. Lacemaking regions were often distinguished by their royalist politics as well as their uncompromising Catholicism.

To judge by later collections made in the same region, there was some softening in lacemakers' culture over the course of the twentieth century. Between 1958 and 1962 Jean Dumas, a schoolteacher, recorded 178 of the 210 songs that a lacemaker, Virginie Granouillet, claimed to know. Most of these songs are now available to listen to online.³⁰ Granouillet, known as 'La Baracande', was born in the hamlet of Le Mans, Roche-en-Regnier (Haute-Loire), in 1878. She would certainly have known and sung with many of the lacemakers recorded nearly a century before by Victor Smith. But her repertoire was more playful, with fewer religious songs and bloody ballads but many more love songs and comic numbers. And by and large this seems true of the other singing lacemakers recorded by Dumas. However, the gruesome tradition was not entirely extinct: La Baracande's longest ballad (128 lines) concerned a soldier returning from the colonies; it usually went by the title 'La femme du Perrier'. After meeting his sister, the eponymous wife of Perrier, he goes on to his parents' inn to stay the night. He does not reveal his identity and his parents do not recognize him. In those days when service was for a minimum of seven years and the poor had no photographs to recall their loved-ones, this situation was plausible. The reason for this incognito is not explained but strangely, to judge by their memoirs, many real eighteenth- and nineteenth-century soldiers did behave in exactly this way – either to test how they stood in their families' affections or to prepare them gently for the shock of recognition.³¹ The

soldier entrusts the small fortune he is bringing back from Africa to his hostess, and this proves too much of a temptation. During the night she kills her son and buries his body in the cellar. In the morning her daughter arrives, expecting to find a scene of joyous reunion; instead she is obliged to denounce her own parents to the authorities.³²

This narrative has been resurrected many times, the events updated for every war and relocated all over Europe. Its first documented appearance was in 1618, when the murder supposedly took place in Penryn in Cornwall. It was still circulating in the twentieth century; Meursault reads the story in a newspaper while awaiting his execution in Albert Camus' *The Outsider*.³³ Virginie Granouillet's song version opens and closes with an address to listeners, a format typical of broadside ballads sold by market-singers, and this text was certainly being hawked around France by pedlars in the nineteenth century (at the very end of Dumas' recording Virginie Granouillet mentions that she bought it for two sous, that is ten centimes). In consequence one did not have to be a lacemaker to either hear or sing this song. Nonetheless its theme was in keeping with other ballads which found a home in this occupational culture, taking its place among numerous infanticides, patricides and other homicides. Victor Smith recorded a different song on the same theme from Mariannette Vincent of Chamalières, probably a lacemaker.³⁴

Although Jean Dumas took pictures of la Baracande making lace she does not appear to have been doing so while he made his recordings. To actually see and hear lacemakers singing while simultaneously working one needs to turn to a short film made in 1978 by the French Institut de l'Audiovisuel (INA) entitled 'Les dentellières de Montusclat', which features three women from a mountain village in the Haute-Loire, the youngest of whom was seventy-five.³⁵ In the opening sequence they are shown working together on their pillows in the evening ('en veillade' in the local dialect), while singing the following song:

Sur mon carreau je fais de la dentelle
Dès le matin, jusqu'à la fin du jour.
De mon carreau la garniture est belle,
Rubans, velours la bordent tout autour.

[On my pillow I make lace
From morning to the end of the day.
My pillow is beautifully decorated,
Ribbons and velvet surround it on all sides.]

This is a rather rare example of lacemakers actually singing about their work. The song was written in the late nineteenth-century by a prominent lace wholesaler from Le Puy, Hippolyte Achard.³⁶ At the time he was trying to defend handmade lace from machine-made competition and one means he employed to achieve this end was to emphasise the desirable domesticity of lacemakers. They were shown as simple but satisfied, unlike those flashy young women in the burgeoning cities whose perverse appetites – political as well as sexual – were leading France to perdition. (I'm extrapolating a lot from Achard's text, but this is certainly an argument he, along with other lace merchants, used.) For the benefit of the future generations of France, this mother and homemaker needed the protection of the state. The campaign, it should be said, was only partially successful, but the image lingered. It was taken up by the tourist industry and used to market not only lace but the region in which it was produced. What is striking is that lacemakers themselves had taken up elements of this romanticised portrait and incorporated them into their work culture.

Achard's song ends with the verse:

Avec les mains, la langue aussi travaille.
On prie, on chante, on dit son petit mot,
Sur l'oeil voisin dont on cherche la paille,
Et du pied droit on berce le marmot.

[As the hands work, so does the tongue.
We pray, we sing, we gossip,
We look for the mote in our neighbour's eye,
And with the right foot we rock the baby's cradle.]

The aim of this article has been to demonstrate that elements of this domestic idyll can be sustained historically. Lacemakers, whether in Olney, Flanders, Normandy or the Velay, sang over their pillows. However, the songs they chose were often grisly and macabre, undermining the Arcadian associations of music at work. The 'romance of the lace pillow' is simultaneously confirmed and challenged. Singing together has been a means to establish workplace solidarities in many contexts, but the similarities, not only in the practice of singing but in the content of lacemakers' songs, across these regions suggest that they encapsulated something about their peculiar predicament. Lacemakers were almost always poorly remunerated, their trade associated with ill-health, and because they worked at home they remained subject to masculine authority. Poor, dispersed, and excluded by their sex from the public sphere, they had few mechanisms through which to seek redress. But in song they found their voice, and in harmony with their compeers, perhaps some solace for their situation.

Notes

- 1 G.F.R. Spenceley, 'The Origins of the English Pillow Lace Industry', *Agricultural History Review* 21:2 (1973), pp. 81-93. Persistent Midlands traditions associate the craft with Catherine of Aragon and her sojourn at Ampthill, but these have proved impossible to substantiate.
- 2 Sidney Beisly, 'Lacemakers' Songs', *Notes and Queries*, 4th series II (August, 1868), p. 178.
- 3 B.H. Cowper, 'Lacemakers' Songs: "Long Lankin"', *Notes and Queries*, 4th series II (September, 1868), p. 281.
- 4 How old is a matter of debate: see Anne Gilchrist, 'Lambkin: A Study in Evolution', *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society* 1:1 (1932), pp. 1-17. It is, of course, possible that the ballad was a product of the Gothic revival and its archaisms deliberate.
- 5 J.L.C., 'A Lacemakers' Song', *Notes and Queries*, 4th series II (July, 1868), p.8.
- 6 Joseph Jacobs, 'Little St. Hugh of Lincoln: Researches in History, Archaeology, and Legend', reprinted in Alan Dundes (ed.) *Blood Libel Legend: A Casebook in Anti-Semitic Folklore* (Wisconsin UP, 1991), pp. 41-71.
- 7 Marek Korczynski, Michael Pickering and Emma Robertson, *Rhythms of Labour: Music at Work in Britain*, (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 58-9.
- 8 T. Coleman, *The Railway Navvies*, (London, 1972), p. 140: quoted in Korzynski et al, *Rhythms of Labour*, p. 58.

- 9 Ginette Dunn, *The Fellowship of Song: Popular Singing Traditions in East Suffolk*, (London, 1980), p. 105. See also Gerald Porter, 'Cobblers All: Occupation as Identity and Cultural Message', *Folk Music Journal* 7:1 (1995), pp. 43-61.
- 10 Emma Robertson, Michael Pickering and Marek Korczynski, "'And Spinning so with Voices Meet, Like Nightingales they Sung Full Sweet": Unravelling Representations of Singing in Pre-Industrial Textile Production', *Cultural and Social History* 5:1 (2008), pp. 11-31.
- 11 Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, Fred Hamer MS 4/4/125.
- 12 Thomas Wright, *The Romance of the Lace Pillow* (Olney, 1919), Chap XIV 'The Lace Tells and the Lace-Makers' Holidays'; E. Wilson, *Olney and the Lace-Makers* (London, 1864), pp. 66-70.
- 13 *Old Songs Sung in Bedfordshire*, (Bedford, 1904?), p. 3. Submitted by Mrs W. Curtis of Oakley. In fact domestic service was better paid than lacemaking in the second half of the nineteenth century.
- 14 Gerald Porter, "'Work the Old Lady out of the Ditch": Singing at Work by English Lacemakers', *Journal of Folklore Research* 31:1-3 (1994), p. 44. See also: Mary-Ann Constantine and Gerald Porter, *Fragment and Meaning in Traditional Song: From the Blues to the Baltic*, (Oxford, 2003), chap. 2, 'Singing the Unspeakable'.
- 15 Spenceley, 'The Origins of the English Pillow Lace Industry', p.89.
- 16 Isabelle Peere, 'Comptines de dentellières brugeoises (1730-1850): entre travail, école et jeu, colère et prière', *Acta ethnographica Hungarica* 47: 1-2 (2002), pp. 111-126.
- 17 Adolphe Lootens and J.M.E. Feys, *Chants Populaires flamands avec les airs notés et poésies populaires diverses recueillis à Bruges* (Bruges, 1879), p. 282.
- 18 Lootens never names her in the book, the identification is made in Isabelle Peere, 'Chants populaires flamands (1879): A Scholarly Field Collection and an Early Individual Repertoire', in Thomas McKean (ed.) *The Flowering Thorn: International Ballad Studies* (Logan Utah, 2003), pp. 265-84.
- 19 'De Gouverneur van Zeeland', 'Dood van Philippus den Schoone', and 'De Hertog van Monmouth', in Lootens and Feys, *Chants populaires flamands*, pp. 73-78.
- 20 Edmond de Coussemaker, *Chants populaires des Flamands de France* (Ghent, 1856).
- 21 Albert Blyau and Marcellus Tasseel, *Iepersch Oud-liedboek. Teksten en melodieën uit den volksmond opgeteekend* (Brussels, 1962: 1st ed., 1900), pp. 23-27, 156.
- 22 Hubert Pernot, 'Notice sur la vie et les oeuvres d'Emile Legrand', in Emile Legrand (ed.), *Bibliographie hellénique ou description raisonnée des ouvrages publiés en grec par des grecs aux XV et XVIe siècles*, 4 vols (Paris, 1885-1906), vol. 4, pp. vii-xxiv.
- 23 Emile Legrand, 'Chansons populaires recueillies en octobre 1876 à Fontenay-le-Marmon, arrondissement de Caen (Calvados)', *Romania* 10 (1881), pp. 365-96. Here p. 377.
- 24 Wright, *The Romance of the Lace Pillow*, pp. 183, 180.
- 25 Although Smith published a number of songs during his lifetime, mostly in articles in the journal *Romania*, the bulk of the collection remains unpublished. It is contained in thirty-two manuscript volumes divided between the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal and the Library of the Institut Catholique in Paris. This note, for example, can be found in Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Ms 6859, fonds Victor Smith, vol. 26, f. 27.
- 26 These religious songs are explored in David Hopkin, *Voices of the People in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, 2012), chap. 6, 'The Visionary World of the Vellave Lacemaker'.
- 27 Victor Smith, 'Chants populaires du Velay et du Forez: vieilles complaintes criminelles', *Romania* 10 (1881), pp 194-211, here 199, 201-2.
- 28 Bernadette Bricout, *Le Savoir et la saveur. Henri Pourrat et Le Trésor des contes* (Paris, 1992), pp. 131-2.

- 29 Centre Henri Pourrat, Clermont-Ferrand, Fonds Henri Pourrat, 111.9 f. 21, 111.9 f.17.
- 30 <http://patrimoine-oral-massif-central.fr/spip.php?article101>
- 31 David Hopkin, *Soldier and Peasant in French Popular Culture, 1766-1870* (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 329-338.
- 32 <http://patrimoine-oral.org/dyn/portal/index.seam?page=alo&aloId=15556&fonds=3&menu=&cid=109>. Recorded 9 September 1959. Agence des Musiques des Territoires en Auvergne, Fonds Dumas, Fiche 183.
- 33 For a history of this theme's circulation and treatment, see Maria Kosko, *Le fils assassiné (AT 939A): étude d'un thème légendaire* (Folklore Fellows Communications 198, Helsinki, 1966).
- 34 Smith, 'Vieilles plaintes criminelles', p. 209.
- 35 'Les dentellières de Montusclat', <http://www.ina.fr/video/LXC01008465>
- 36 Victor-Eugène Ardouin-Dumazet, *Voyage en France: 34ème série, Velay — Bas-Vivarais — Gévaudan* (Paris, 1904), pp. 63-4.