I would like to thank my colleagues and fellow researchers who supported this article’s development. Most especially this includes my doctoral supervisors, Dr Tom Tolley and Dr Heather Pulliam, and my examiners, Dr Carol Richardson and Dr Alixe Bovey, as well as Fr Richard Copsey, O. Carm. and Johan Bergström-Allen, who supported me early in my thesis and stoked my interest in the Whitefriars of England. Finally my thanks to my anonymous peer reviewer, who offered helpful criticism and encouragement for developing this text.

The Missal was reconstructed by Margaret Rickert in the 1930s, in a slow and laborious process. The restored cuttings are mounted on sheets measuring 787 by 560 mm. The account of the destruction of the Missal and Rickert’s reconstruction of it can be found in Margaret Rickert, The Reconstructed Carmelite Missal: An English Manuscript of the late XIV Century in the British Museum (Additional 29704-5, 44892) (Chicago, 1952).

The Sherborne Missal has been cropped, but currently measures 536 x 380 mm. The Litlington Missal measures 525 x 360 mm. The Carmelite Missal was therefore a substantial book, a major investment on the part of its makers, and from its scale alone, a significant object in the patronage of late medieval material culture relating to the Mass.

Although it has suffered the near total loss of its text, including any inscriptions and written marks of patronage, the Missal holds a justifiably important place in the history of illumination in England in the decades c. 1400. Including work by three distinct illuminators, it presents traditional English illumination alongside work by the Carmelite-Lapworth Master, a highly capable member

1 The Missal was reconstructed by Margaret Rickert in the 1930s, in a slow and laborious process. The restored cuttings are mounted on sheets measuring 787 by 560 mm. The account of the destruction of the Missal and Rickert’s reconstruction of it can be found in Margaret Rickert, The Reconstructed Carmelite Missal: An English Manuscript of the late XIV Century in the British Museum (Additional 29704-5, 44892) (Chicago, 1952).

2 The Sherborne Missal has been cropped, but currently measures 536 x 380 mm. The Litlington Missal measures 525 x 360 mm. The Carmelite Missal was, therefore, only a hand’s width taller than these two books. Alternatively, centuries of copious trimming might mean either of the Litlington or Sherborne Missals were as tall and as wide as Rickert’s estimations of the Carmelite manuscript. My interest in these missals’ and others’ sizes stems from my doctoral thesis which considers these and other grand missals in late medieval England and France: Alexander Collins, ‘The Mass Magnified: Large Missals in England and France, c. 1350 – c. 1450’ (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 2017). For further information about how she estimated the size of the Carmelite Missal’s pages, see Rickert, The Reconstructed Carmelite Missal, pp. 23-4. For the Litlington Missal, see Lucy Freeman Sandler, Survey of British Illuminated Manuscripts: Gothic Manuscripts 1285-1385 (London, 1986), vol. ii, no. 150, pp. 172-4. For the Sherborne Missal, see Kathleen Scott, Survey of British Illuminated Manuscripts: Later Gothic Manuscripts 1390-1490 (London, 1996), vol. ii, no. 9, pp. 45-60.
of a generation of continentally trained or influenced artists who worked in England in this period. However, in the absence of clear patronal marks or inscriptions in the remains, the questions of who was responsible for the Missal’s manufacture, and for what particular reasons they had it made, remain obscure.

To perform her reconstruction, Rickert deduced that the Missal was of Carmelite Use, containing the unique liturgy of the order as practised in the later decades of the fourteenth century. Included among the fragments were text excerpts from the Carmelite feasts of the Conception of the Virgin. In addition, as the Missal contains the feasts of St Erkenwald, a London bishop, as well as St Martha’s liturgy, which originated in London, it was presumably commissioned for the London Carmelite friary. This makes a neat fit as London Whitefriars was the largest and most important convent of the order in England at the time. This makes it an ideal recipient for a work which has been termed by Nigel Morgan ‘enormous’ and ‘gargantuan’.

Scholarship has accepted the London provenance of the book. However, its fragmentary nature has limited investigation of the likely lay persons who had it made. The identity of the two laymen represented on two illuminated pages of the original is problematic. The patrons’ decision to make such a massive missal has not itself been addressed before. The choice of such scale was deliberate and, with little known about who commissioned it, perplexing. Scholars have made suggestions in the past about who the patrons were, based upon who was contributing to London Whitefriars in the period. In this article, I shall expand on these and present an argument why Sir Robert Knolles (d. 1407), a generous patron to both London Whitefriars and numerous other sites, can be more conclusively identified with the Missal using the imagery that survives within it and his patronage elsewhere in late medieval England.

The Donor Portraits

In the fragments of the Carmelite Missal, there are two depictions of a lay man and woman, presumably a couple. These representations occur in illuminations that open the Mass of the Assumption (f. 132v) and the Votive Trinity Mass (f. 193v; fig. 3). Both of these pages provide, despite the anonymity of the lay figures, information about their devotions and even their identities.

On the page opening the Assumption Mass, the pair kneel in the left-hand border of the page, clasped in the pink and blue vine-like stems of the page’s partial frame border (fig. 1). The man wears a pink tunic beneath a blue mantle lined with red. The woman, situated below him, wears a blue dress and white headdress. The man bears a sheathed sword, and his mantle is studded

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4 Rickert, The Reconstructed Carmelite Missal; Richard W. Pfaff, Liturgy in Medieval England (Oxford, 2009), pp. 331–32. Scott, however, was more hesitant to accept London (Later Gothic Manuscripts, vol. ii, p. 29); however this was before Pfaff’s liturgical analysis of the book, which emphasizes the Missal’s London liturgy.


with buttons on the right shoulder; the woman’s dress is lined down the front with buttons (fig. 2). They are comparable to representations of fashionable and wealthy figures in funerary effigies from the late fourteenth century, such as the 1380 effigy of John Gour and his wife in St Mary’s Pembridge, in which the elegant administrator and his wife are wrapped in fine layers of clothing, and respectively the cape and coif, similar to the Carmelite Missal donors.7 A similar dress is seen in later fourteenth-century effigies, such as the brass effigy of Gloucestershire woolman William Greval and his wife in St James Chipping Campden. This brass was made in London and presumably reflects the capital’s fashions.8 The Carmelite Missal couple appear therefore to have been wealthy.

The man’s head is inclined upwards, and seems to be directed at the initial that opens the Assumption Mass. The woman stares forward into where the text of the page once existed, text which began with the initial. The initial itself contains four compartments, depicting scenes from the death of the Virgin, her assumption and coronation in heaven (fig. 1). The initial begins in the bottom left with Mary’s death, where she, a long crowned figure, reclines on a blue bed before the apostles. To the right the next scene shows the apostles carrying her coffin into the right descender of the initial, inside which the train of haloed heads inclines upwards into the next compartment. In this section the apostles pray around the sarcophagus of the Virgin in a grey-green landscape. Above, in the highest compartment delineated by a barrier of red and blue shells, is the coronation of the Virgin. Carried by three angels into a space under a castellated archway, she is crowned by God.

The artist of this page has created a variety of interactions between its composite elements, linking the patrons to the narrative of the Virgin. Notably, there is very little figurative ornamentation of the border in the entire missal, a deliberate design decision made by patron or artist.9 Within the initial, a cable runs from the mourning apostle in the bottom-left compartment, through the arms of the left-most apostle in the central scene, into the hand of the Virgin being crowned.10 In addition, the train of apostles joining the second and third scenes suggests the artist’s interest in making visual connections. Furthermore, the pink and blue stems which hold the border’s vignetted scenes are the very stems that make up the initial itself and these notably support the two lay persons, between the third and fourth vignettes. These lay persons were intended to be interpreted in relation to the feast of the Assumption, both its initial and also the now-missing text, expressing their devotion to the Virgin Mary to the Missal’s viewers.

The second appearance of a lay couple in the Missal occurs within the initial of the votive Mass to the Trinity (fig. 4). Composed of two registers only, the large initial’s upper level depicts the Trinity as Son and Father sitting on a rainbow and the Spirit between them as a dove, descending from the initial’s summit. In the lower register we see the Virgin in the centre. To her left is a lay male, depicted in similar fashion to the Assumption male, except here he is more heavily bearded and has long hair, and wears a heavy blue cloak without a sword. To the left of him, contained in the hollow descender of the initial, is a female saint with her hand resting on his shoulder – as she holds a small wheel as an emblem, she is clearly St Catherine. Opposite the lay man is a lay woman, dressed much like the similar figure in the Assumption border. To her right is a female saint with a processional cross – the identity of this saint is less clear, but I will argue who she is below. The two lay people bear the scrolls Pater de celis miserere nobis and Sancta Maria ora pro nobis. The man’s scroll speaks of the role of the Father, and the woman’s the role of the Virgin as intercessor between the faithful and God. Occupying the initial centrally, Mary is mediatrix and intercessor for the two lay folk.11 The monolithic Mary is central to the image, making her central to the figures’ prayers as she intercedes for them to God above.

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7 Gour is depicted as a civilian attired in accordance with medieval views, but his and his wife’s effigies are typical of such attire in the 1370s-90s. See Nigel Saul, English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages: History and Representation (Oxford, 2011), pp. 244-46, fig. 56.
8 Ibid., pp. 251, 262-66, fig. 58.
9 The other pages with figurative border decoration are the Mass of St Lawrence (with vignettes like this border) and the Mass of St Andrew.
10 Rickert, The Reconstructed Carmelite Missal, pp. 52-3.
The Carmelite Missal, lacking armorial identifiers or a self-identifying donor image, has been argued to be more a representation of the Carmelite friars’ concerns and identities. The two appearances of the couple are not the only possible donor image in the Missal; there is a Carmelite who kneels next to the feast of John the Baptist. This indeed reflects the Carmelite Order itself, and its identity and eremitic origins. Certainly, the Carmelite Missal’s illuminations do proclaim the intentions and beliefs of the mendicant order. Mary is depicted a further five times in the Missal unaccompanied by the two lay people. The Virgin’s visibility throughout the Missal attests to her centrality in Carmelite identity: they were, as their name makes explicit, the brothers of the Blessed Virgin of Mount Carmel (Frates Beatae Mariae de Monte Carmeli). Mary’s visual presence in the Missal seems generally an affirmation of a distinctly institutional Carmelite devotion. However, the lone Carmelite kneeling by the initial of John the Baptist has not been framed as a donor portrait. Perhaps it is more comparable to the Carmelites who loll around the initial for Corpus Christi beside two white dogs – this also an affirmation of Carmelite identity.

Yet the apparent donor images remain - intriguingly anonymous and distinctively located in the Missal. As Kathleen Scott has written, the patrons’ impact on the impressive manuscript cannot be discounted. Presumably one or both of the couple had a leading role in the book’s manufacture by financing it, which would have encompassed the dramatic choice of the book’s foremost physical feature, namely its great size. While it is disconcerting that there is no immediately accessible surviving lay self-identification in the Missal, to discount the patrons’ self-representations in the book is problematic. The lay persons, not the Carmelites, are set in a declared relationship to the Virgin, the most important Catholic saint and patroness of the order. This is critical for understanding the book, especially as the feast of the Assumption was of the utmost importance for the English Carmelites: this was the date of the opening of their provincial chapter, which was held more often than not at London Whitefriars. Presumably its lay patrons were situating themselves within that Mass, to be recalled during the most prestigious gathering of the leading figures of the English province.

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12 This is the argument of Valerie Edden, who argues that the donors ‘allowed the recipients of their generosity a free hand in determining the contents of the manuscript.’ Subsequently she writes that the ‘patron of the Carmelite Missal […] seems remarkable for his self-effacement. We shall never know his motive; we may speculate about a genuine concern for his own soul (and that of his wife). He apparently handed over the supervision of its preparation to a Carmelite house who used the manuscript to make an eloquent statement about the identity and history of the Brothers of Blessed Mary of Mount Carmel.’ Edden, ‘A Fresh Look’, pp. 116, 119.
14 She appears also in her particular feasts of her Purification (f. 93), the Annunciation (f. 99), and her Nativity (f. 138v) as well as the Vigil of the Assumption (f. 131) and All Saints (f. 152v). See Rickert, The Reconstructed Carmelite Missal, plates ix, x, xiv, xvii and xx.
16 Alluding to John Wyclif’s castigation of a Carmelite friar as a ‘white dog’. Ibid., pp. 112, 116.
18 The emergence of the Carmelites’ devotion to Mary is a central theme in Jotischky, Carmelites and Antiquity, esp. pp. 140-3, 158.
19 The provincial councils that administered the English province would usually occur in the week of the feast of the Assumption (15 August), which was the patronal feast of the English province. Unsurprisingly, London Whitefriars was host to more provincial chapters than any other house, holding twenty-one of the fifty-two meetings from 1267 to 1512. The donor portraits would be consciously visible during this Mass to its celebrant, presumably a high-ranking Carmelite. Copey, ‘Thomas Netter’, p. 51; Jens Röhrkasten, The Mendicant Houses of Medieval London, 1221-1539 (Münster, 2004), p. 500.
Possible Patrons

It remains unknown who the couple were, even though their identity is important for understanding the Missal. Potential suggestions may be deduced from the most detailed account of who was buried in the friary in John Stow’s late sixteenth-century account of London. However, Stow’s account is short and lacks detail; it is only an incomplete list of names. Among its most prestigious fourteenth-century donors are Hugh Courteney, Earl of Devon (d. 1377) who rebuilt the church from 1350; Sir Hugh Courteney, his grandson (d. 1374); Elizabeth, Countess of Athol (d. 1375); and John Mowbray, Earl of Nottingham, (d. 1383). Yet these do not fit the 1390s date of the manuscript’s liturgy and artistic style.

A more likely patron – found also in Stow – has been suggested by Kathleen Scott and Valerie Edden, namely Sir Robert Knolles (or Knollys, d. 1407). Knolles, a famous knight and general in the Hundred Years War, was one of the most important patrons of London Whitefriars in the late fourteenth century and early fifteenth century. Stow calls him the ‘great builder’ of London Whitefriars in the ‘reign of Richard II, and of Henry IV’. Knolles was instrumental in the construction of Whitefriars’ new nave, which was about 46 m in length in seven bays. His wife, Lady Constance, died in 1389 and was buried in the church. When Knolles himself died in 1407, his body was taken from his manor of Sconethorpe (also called Sculthorpe) in Norfolk to Whitefriars for burial alongside her. Their marble and alabaster tomb was described in 1530 by Thomas Hawley in his visitation of the churches of London:

> Whereas lies buried Sir Robert Knolles with right honour in the body of the church, where he bears upon his surcoat his arms: this is to say, gules on a chevron silver three roses on the field. And upon his helm on a wreath gules and silver, a ram’s head cup, on the last. And beside him lies his wife, both lying pictured in alabaster on a tomb of marble right honourable. The said Knolles was the vigorous man of war in France.

Hawley described an impressive monument of alabaster effigies on a marble tomb chest. Whether the tomb was in the nave or choir is not known. Hawley goes on to say, ‘And also in the choir of the...

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24 The houses of the four main mendicant orders in London grew to be astoundingly large, and by the early fifteenth century were the largest churches on the city’s skyline with the exception of Old St Paul’s. The Carmelite church was the second largest, being 78 m long, with the Franciscan church was the largest, at 94 m, the Augustinian house was about 70m long and the Dominican church around 69.5 m long. It has been pointed out that Whitefriars’s 46 m-long nave is only ten metres shorter than Wren’s nave for St Paul’s (which is 57.3 m long). Christopher Thomas and Bruce Watson, ‘The Mendicant Houses of Medieval London: An Archaeological Review’, in Nicholas Rogers (ed.), The Friars in Medieval Britain: Proceedings of the 2007 Harlaxton Symposium (Donnington, 2010), p. 290. See Röhrkasten, Mendicant Houses, pp. 508-9 for specific details of the reconstruction of Whitefriars.
26 ‘Whereas lythe beryd Sr Robert Knolys right worschiply in the body of the Cherge, wheras he beryth upon hymne in his Cote-Armour hys Armes: that ys to say, gylsy on a Chevron sylver three [roses on] Roses on the Feyyd: And apone hys helme on a Wrethe gylsy and sylver, a Ramse Head cupe, on the laste. And by side hymne lythe hys wyffe, both lying in Pykter of Alybaster on a Towme of Marbyll right onerable. The said Knolles whas the joly mane of Ware in France.’ Translation mine. Steer, ‘Royal and Noble Commemoration’, p. 125.

said friary, lie diverse great estates." John Stow writing later in the century said the Knolles’ tomb was ‘the body of the said White Friars Church, which he had newly built.’ This suggests the nave, whereas Hawley’s use of ‘also’ suggests the choir. Hawley visited thirteen parish churches and religious houses as well as old St Pauls, yet noted only twenty-five tombs in any detail. He was struck by the ‘right Honourable’ design of the marble and alabaster monument, suggesting possibly the aesthetic or impressive quality of Knolles’s patronage. He notably describes the armorials of Knolles, which are absent from the Missal; however, the Missal itself uses other iconography associated with him as discussed below.

Reconstructing Sir Robert Knolles’s Patronage in the Missal

Although the Knolles were substantial patrons of London Whitefriars, more evidence is required to connect them to the Missal. For this, the saints beside the donor images are useful, as well as other non-standard iconographies. In the Votive Trinity initial, the male figure is accompanied by St Catherine and the lady by a second female saint (fig. 4). The inclusion of St Catherine in the Votive Trinity may at first seem to reflect the saint’s popularity. However there is a personal connection to Robert Knolles. In the initial, Catherine holds a miniature version of her wheel. Whilst the arms found on his tomb and elsewhere were three red roses on a white chevron against gules, at a number of sites another device was used to represent Knolles. Namely, these were a ‘fess engrailed between three Katherine wheels’. The second armorial of Knolles with the wheels of Catherine were found together at churches in Harpley, Cromer Church, North Barsham, and Sculthorpe. According to Bridge, Sculthorpe’s roof formerly had twenty-one coats of arms, including Knolles marked out four times with (i) his chevron arms, (ii) his Catherine wheel arms, (iii) Knolles within a border with prayer roll, and (iv) with his wife’s Beverley arms. Blomfield in his History of Norfolk notes Cromer had Knolles, his ram’s head crest, and Catherine wheels.

Of the churches which were marked with Knolles’s arms, only the armorials at Harpley St Lawrence are still extant (fig. 6). On the battlements of the south side of the church, armorials are featured. These include Constance’s Beverley arms; his own and on the tenth battlement from the left, a device which also seems to have been used by Robert, a fess engrailed between three Catherine wheels. Knolles reputedly rebuilt the church, with the church marked also by his wife’s Beverley arms and his own. Interestingly, the initial for the Mass of St Lawrence is one of the largest initials in the Carmelite Missal, at six lines in height (fig. 7).

Furthermore, the initial for St Catherine is also one of the largest non-Marian examples in the Missal, being five lines high. The scale of the initial makes even more sense if Catherine, who brings the patron to the attention of the Virgin in the Votive Trinity initial, was indeed the

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27 ‘And also in the Qwere of the said Frers, lythe dyvers great Astates.’ The full text of Hawley’s account of Whitefriars is reproduced in A. R. Wagner, Heralds and Heraldry in the Middle Ages: An Inquiry into the Growth of the Armorial Function of Heralds (London, 1939), p. 141.
30 For an exploration of Katherine’s cult in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see Katherine J. Lewis, The Cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in Late Medieval England (Woodbridge, 2000).
32 Ibid., pp. 224-8.
33 Ibid., pp. 227-8.
36 John Chambers, A General History of the County of Norfolk, Intended to Convey All the Information of a Norfolk Tour (Norwich, 1829), p. 401.
patron’s chosen saint. As shown here, it is this saint that strikingly features in Knolles’s public patronage and self-identifying representations.

As Catherine matches Robert, the second saint in fact matches Constance. Holding a processional cross and wearing a crown or chaplet on her head, it is probable that the saint is Helena, discoverer of the True Cross and mother of Constantine, whom Constance emulates in name.37 Further, Helena as a visualization of Constance’s devotion helps explains one of the most unusual iconographies in the Missal, found at the Mass of the Exaltation of the Cross (fig. 5). The five-line initial N shows at the fore a crowned emperor on horseback, holding a cross sceptre and gesturing and looking upwards. Behind the emperor, the initial is filled with his army and courtiers on horseback, most of whom look up at the sky where the lower part of a red mandorla is suggested. The scene has been identified as the Emperor Heraclius riding with his army.38 But the image of Helena and a play on the name of Constance means that the initial more likely represents another imperial figure – namely, Constantine and his army. The upward gaze of the Emperor and his soldiers suggests the famous vision of Constantine, who when marching to the Milvian Bridge looked to the sky and saw the cross.39 The use of an image of Constantine in the Carmelite Missal contrasts with other missals’ images for the Exaltation, such as images of the cross in glory.40 The use of the Constantine iconography is distinctive and personal to the Knolles. Most likely Robert had chosen an iconography that invoked the memory of his wife Constance through her namesake, whilst also relating to his own military history and leanings.

That the sword-bearing man in the Votive Trinity image is shown with St Catherine, and the lady with St Helena, supports the identities of Robert and Constance as the lay patron figures. Furthermore, the choice of the Votive Trinity also relates to the Knolles, in a direct manner. Their devotion to the Trinity is evident at two other locations. Knolles founded a hospital and collegiate chapel at Pontefract dedicated to the Trinity in 1385. The emblem of the hospital was a rose and the Trinity.41 Secondly at Norwich Cathedral in the cloister there is a posthumously made boss (dated to c. 1420) showing Sir Robert and Lady Constance kneeling to either side of a Throne of Mercy Trinity (fig. 8), with the ram livery emblem of Sir Robert below.42 Conspicuously, the armorial devices of Knolles – his own coat of arms, his wife’s and the Catherine wheel arms – are missing from the boss. It is the ram that identifies him, suggesting the Missal, although lacking armorials, may have been cogently understood as Knolles’s patronage.

Indeed, perhaps one further subtle visual allusion to Sir Robert may exist among the Missal’s fragments. Situated beside the Dedication of the Church is a strange animal with a column on its back, surmounted by a tiny idol (fig. 9). While the gold idol has received attention in scholarship, the unusual animal has been sidestepped.43 In Hawley’s account of the Knolles’ tomb, and in the Trinity

37 Her iconography, as well as position opposite St Catherine, means that she is unlikely to be a personification like Ecclesia.
40 For example in Lyon, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS. 5124, f. 236, of the late fifteenth century. As if to concede to this iconography of a cross triumphant, Rickert has inserted a pen-line initial with a cross in glory within it next to the historiated initial.
image that survives at Norwich, the couple are attended by the aforementioned ram. The creature at the Dedication may have not very pronounced miniature ram’s horns – and given Knolles’s patronage of the church’s body, it even makes sense that a ram representing the patron was set next to this Mass. The warlike idol surmounting the column itself may have served as an affirmation of Knolles’s own military identity, as well as an allusion to his wealth. However, this is hard to tell and the animal, with its elongated neck and long tail, may be a camel or another such beast rather than a ram.

The Virgin’s role in the Missal reflects not only the Carmelite friars’ devotions to her, but also the Marian devotion of the laity who patronized the friars. There was at London Whitefriars a guild of the Virgin. In his study of John of Gaunt, perhaps the order’s most important lay patron in the late fourteenth century, Anthony Goodman argued how for Gaunt and his retainers, including Knolles, who patronized the Carmelites, the Marian devotion of the order was central to the laity’s patronage of it. The laity were not passive in patronizing the order, nor in expressing their adoration of the Virgin, but were in fact highly active. An example of this active patronage is the Carmelite Missal, here argued to reflect as much the Knolles as it does the order who received and used it. More so, the originators of the Carmelite Missal presumably knew the exceptionality of their missal, as illuminated books of its scale across all book genres appear to have been extremely rare in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century London production.

In the late 1380s and 1390s Knolles was a Lancastrian retainer, and had been since early in his career. In 1355 Edward III had ordered that him to submit to the then Duke of Lancaster, Henry of Grosmont, alongside other knights and men-at-arms. The following year Knolles, then a captain, would command 300 men-at-arms and 500 archers for Duke Henry. Knolles’s fealty would be inherited six years later by Henry’s son-in-law, John of Gaunt, upon his accession to the Duchy. Subsequent to the siege of Saint-Malo in 1378 Knolles received an annual fee from Gaunt. From the 1380s onwards, Knolles would expend his huge wealth accumulated from his decades of warfare on various projects. These included the bridge and chapel on the Medway in Rochester which he built with the third Lord Cobham, the collegiate church and hospital of the Trinity he founded at Pontefract, and in London the building of the massive nave of Whitefriars to the north of the old nave. Indeed, Knolles’s connection to the Carmelites may have been due to Gaunt, who was a notable patron of the order.

John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster (1340-98), was one of the most important patrons of the Carmelites in England in the medieval period, and the Lancastrian support for the Whitefriars was carried on by his son, Henry IV, grandson, Henry V, and for a while, the government of

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46 A point made by Nigel Morgan, who found comparisons only in the very different literary miscellanies such as the Vernon Manuscript. Morgan, ‘Books for Liturgy and Private Prayer’, p. 301.
48 Jones, ‘Knolles, Sir Robert (d. 1407)’.
his great-grandson, Henry VI. He is an axial point to which many ascribe Carmelite patronage during the period, and certainly his patronage of the order was spiritual, political and, it would seem, artistic. Gaunt was a career soldier, European politician and cultural patron. He was known in the 1370s as favouring higher clerical taxation and supported Wyclif and his followers. Nevertheless, throughout that time he also supported the Carmelites. Goodman suggested that John Grey, sixth Baron of Codnor (d. 1392), was perhaps the communicator of Carmelite devotion to Gaunt. As noted above, John Grey was a vigorous patron of the order in Aylesford, where he rebuilt the friary, and was close to Carmelite bishops and retained Carmelite chaplains. Goodman suggests that Gaunt and Grey met at the latest by 1355, when Grey was a companion of Duke Henry. By 1359 Grey was a member of Gaunt’s retinue. It may also be the associations of the Carmelites, through their liturgy and their histories, with the crusades and the orient which drew the Duke and other military men. The religiosity of Gaunt in the intervening decades can be discerned in his patronage, in his close association to Carmelites in the confessional and use of them as administrators, and also his will. He asked that if died away from London, his body be interred in Whitefriars for requiem Mass, before proceeding to St Paul’s Cathedral the next day. He also had numerous Carmelite confessors, including the early 1390s Prior of London Richard Maidstone and Walter Dysse, the Prior of Norwich. Gaunt features in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* entries of several London Carmelites, including the prior in the 1390s, Richard Maidstone. Others include William Badby (d. 1380/1), John Kenningham (d. 1399), Walter Diss (d. c. 1404), Nicholas of Lynn (d. after 1411) and Stephen Patrington (d. 1417). All were senior clergy in the order, with advanced degrees and leadership positions at local or national levels. It is possible that through Gaunt or his other knights that Knolles came to be such a prominent patron of the order.

Further, as I have argued here, it would seem that another part of Knolles’s patronage was the impressively sized *Carmelite Missal*, given to the mendicant church he had substantially rebuilt and in which his wife was buried.

Conclusion

If this hypothesis is correct, then the most probable donor of the *Carmelite Missal* was Robert Knolles. In such a case, the book matches other representations of his and his late wife’s devotions, and serves to commemorate her and, after his death, him. Furthermore, it suggests a new devotion for the couple – St Helena – and endorses a revision of understanding the Exaltation of the Cross initial, seeing it as a striking representation of Constantine at the Milvan Bridge. Although the identification of the patron of the Missal remains purely speculative given the dearth of records that survive London Whitefriars, nevertheless the iconography of the Missal’s donor portraits, as well as the treatment of other initials in it, endorse my argument for Sir Robert.

If so, then the *Carmelite Missal* is another facet of personal magnificence in Sir Robert’s later life. Knolles and his wife were already significant patrons of the Carmelites by 1389, when Lady Constance passed away and was buried at the London convent they had been rebuilding. The Missal may more likely have been completed from the mid-1390s owing to the presence of the Carmelite-Lapworth Master, whose miniatures reflect the cosmopolitan illuminations of 1390s and early 1400s London. Yet the artistic inconsistency of the Missal, which features three very distinct styles, may represent the patron’s desire for a speedy completion, with the separate quires of the Missal given to the different artist workshops to finish. If so, this could have occurred as a result of Constance’s death, or later events in Sir Robert’s life. With a military career that began in 1346, he was by the 1390s a very old man. Perhaps he may have been anticipating his own demise and the need for his

54 Jones, ‘Knolles, Sir Robert (d. 1407)’. 
Sir Robert Knolles and the Patronage of the *Carmelite Missal* (Add. MSS. 29704-5, 44892): Assessing the Visual Evidence

Fig. 1. *Carmelite Missal*, London, BL., Add. MSS. 29704-5, 44892, f. 132v, Opening of the Mass of the Assumption.
Fig. 2. Carmelite Missal, London, BL., Add. MSS. 29704-5, 44892, f. 132v, Opening of the Mass of the Assumption: Detail of the lay patron portraits.
Fig. 3. *Carmelite Missal*, London, BL., Add. MSS. 29704-5, 44892, f. 193v, Opening of the Votive Mass of the Trinity.
Fig. 4. Carmelite Missal, London, BL., Add. MSS. 29704-5, 44892, f. 161v, Opening of the Mass of St Catherine.
Sir Robert Knolles and the Patronage of the *Carmelite Missal* (Add. MSS. 29704-5, 44892): Assessing the Visual Evidence

**Fig. 5.** *Carmelite Missal*, London, BL., Add. MSS. 29704-5, 44892, f. 140r, Initial opening the Mass of the Exaltation of the Cross.

**Fig. 6.** Harpley, St Lawrence, south façade (Position of Knolles’s Catherine Wheels highlighted); Photo. by kind permission of Geoff H. Robinson.
Sir Robert Knolles and the Patronage of the *Carmelite Missal* (Add. MSS. 29704-5, 44892): Assessing the Visual Evidence

*Fig. 7. Carmelite Missal*, London, BL., Add. MSS. 29704-5, 44892, f. 130r, Initial opening the Mass of St Lawrence.

*Fig. 8. Norwich Cathedral, cloister, boss with the Knolles in adoration of the Trinity, c. 1420. Photo: the author.*
Fig. 9. *Carmelite Missal*, London, BL., Add. MSS. 29704-5, 44892, f. 68v, Initial opening the Mass of the Dedication of the Church.