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## Godric's Songs

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# Godric's Songs

Three monophonic religious songs of the mid-12th century ("Sainte marie viergene," "Kirieleison: Crist and sainte marie," and "Sainte Nicholas Godes druth") that are the earliest English-language lyrics to survive with their melodies; found in a number of manuscript sources, including three with music, they are also known as Godric's Hymns. Their composer, St. Godric (ca. 1070/80–1170), wrote them some time after he retired to a hermitage at Finchale, north of Durham, following a career as a merchant trader and ship's captain. Godric's life as a hermit was one of ascetic hardship, punctuated by visions in which the songs were taught to him; he later sang them to his future biographers. In respect to style the settings are reflective of certain contemporaneous Latin hymns in rhyme, meter, and melody.

Peter M. Lefferts

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