**“Jolly Jankin”**

**By Anonymous (c. 1450AD)**

‘Kyrie’, so ‘kyrie’,  
*Jankin syngeth merie  
With ‘aleyson’.*

As I went on Yole day  
In our prosessyon  
Knew I joly Jankin  
Be his mery ton:  
*Kyrieleyson.*

Jankin began the Offis  
On the Yole day,  
And yet me thynketh it dos me good,  
So merie gan he say  
‘*Kyrieleyson’.*

Jankin red the Pistil  
Ful fair and ful wel,  
And yet me thinketh it dos me good,  
As ever have I sel.  
*Kyrieleyson.*

Jankin at the *Sanctus*Craketh a merie note,  
And yet me thinketh it dos me good –  
I payed for his cote.  
*Kyrieleyson.*

Jankin craketh notes  
An hundred on a knot,  
And yet he hakketh hem smaller  
Than wortes to the pot.  
*Kyrieleyson.*

Jankin at the *Angnus*Bereth the pax-brede,  
He twynkeled, but sayd nought,  
And on myn foot he trede.  
*Kyrieleyson.*

*Benedicamus domino*,  
Crist fro schame me schilde.  
*Deo gracias* therto –  
Alas, I go with childe!  
*Kyrieleyson.*

**Glossary**

Jankin – Little John

Kýrie, eléison (Gk.) – “Lord, have mercy.”  
Aleyson – woman’s name, Allison, punning on “eleison”  
Yole – Yule, Christmas  
Be his mery ton – by his merry tone  
Offis – the office, the Introit to the mass  
Pistil - epistle  
As ever have I sel – as I hope always to be happy  
Craketh a merrie note – sings divisions, quick short notes  
On a knot – in a phrase or cluster  
Wortes to the pot – herbs for the pot  
Pax-brede - a silver disc, kissed during the mass  
Twynkeled – winked  
Benedicamus Domino – “Let us bless the Lord”  
Deo Gracias therto – “Thanks be to God” as well.

**Source:**Richard L. Greene. *The Early English Carols*. Oxford 1977, pp.278-279.

**Translation**

Kyrie, so kyrie,  
Jankin sings merrily,  
with Alison.

As I went on Christmas day  
in our procession,  
I knew jolly Jankin  
by his merry voice.  
Kyrie eleison.

Jankin began the Service  
on Christmas day,  
and yet it seems to me it does me good  
so merrily he began to say,  
'Kyrie eleison'.

Jankin read the Epistle  
very pleasingly and well,  
and yet it seems to me it does me good  
as for ever I gain eternal reward,  
Kyrie eleison.

Jankin at the Sanctus  
trills a merry note  
and yet it seems to me it does me good -  
I paid for his coat,  
Kyrie eleison.

Jankin trills notes  
a hundred at a time,  
and yet he hacks them smaller  
than herbs in the pot,  
Kyrie eleison.

Jankin at the Agnus  
carries the pax-board:  
he winked but said nothing,  
and on my foot he trod,  
Kyrie eleison.

Let us bless the Lord,  
Christ shield me from shame,  
thanks be to God as well -  
alas! I am with child,  
Kyrie eleison.