

LATIN SONGS IN THE *CARMINA BURANA*: PROFANE LOVE AND SATIRE

Peter Dronke

The period 1100-1230 is a high point in European lyrical poetry and music, both sacred and profane, in Latin and in several vernaculars. For Latin, we have many testimonies of religious lyric from the very beginnings of Christian worship in the West in almost every century, but Latin secular songs were not often written down in earlier times. Secular songs in the European vernaculars must also have existed at all periods, yet they were scarcely written down at all before the twelfth century. There was no vernacular reading public, with the small exception of Anglo-Saxon England. The aristocracy, in so far as they learnt to read and write, learnt it in Latin.

Certainly we must reckon with much secular lyrical composition in the earlier centuries which is simply irrecoverable. Yet also, so much more has survived from the twelfth century onwards because secular and profane impulses among poets became so much more marked. It was an age of new openness to a wider world, an age of humanism, a 'Renaissance'. The expression 'the Renaissance of the twelfth century' is so often used, and it must certainly be qualified, yet there is an undeniable element of truth there.

For profane lyrical compositions of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, the *Codex Buranus* is our most spectacular witness. It has 238 pages, and was compiled in the first third of the thirteenth century, perhaps chiefly in the decade 1220-30, with occasional later additions. The older view had been that it was from as late as 1300, but I tried, in one of my earliest essays, in 1962, to show that the attempts to see influences of late *Minnesang* in the collection were imaginary; at the same time, the great medieval art historian, Otto Pächt, confirmed my intuitions about the poetry by writing to me as follows:

The style of the miniatures allows us to date the *Carmina Burana* manuscript safely within narrow limits. One of the best authorities on German illumination, Albert Boeckler (*Deutsche Buchmalerei vorgotischer Zeit*, Königstein, 1952, pl. 61) dates it first third of the thirteenth century, and no art historian with any training could possibly disagree with this opinion. It suffices to point to the type of the female figures which is paralleled by the famous statues of Ecclesia and Synagoge of Strasbourg, i.e. works of 1220-1230. A late thirteenth-century date is out of the question.¹

The significance of this is that the manuscript is uniquely close in time to the period of composition of many of the finest lyrics themselves. The great vernacular manuscript collections, by contrast, were mostly compiled many generations after the compositions.

The existence of bilingual texts in this manuscript, Latin/German and occasionally Latin/French, and again the many German strophes interspersed among the Latin ones, brings out graphically the interdependence of Latin and vernacular poets and composers, copyists and performers. The Latin lyrics are neither mere imitations, trailing behind the vernacular, as some scholars believed, nor are they always the source of inspiration, preceding the vernacular, as others have maintained. There was a fruitful give and take: exchanges between courtly and clerical and popular songs were an everyday occurrence and this codex is, in many ways, a record of such exchanges.

Where was it compiled? It was discovered in a monastery in Bavaria, Benedictobura, and so the collection became known as *Carmina Burana*, but it was not Bavarian, as the earlier scholars thought. In recent decades, the suggestions have been made of Southern Austria, somewhere above Trieste,² or again, nearer the Hungarian border, not far from Graz,³ but

¹ 'A Critical Note on Schumann's Dating of the *Codex Buranus*', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, LXXXIV (Tübingen, 1962), 173-83, at p. 181.

² Bernhard Bischoff, *Carmina Burana: Einführung zur Faksimile-Ausgabe der Benediktbeurer Liederhandschrift* (Munich: Prestel, 1967), p. 16 (suggesting Carinthia).

³ Bernhard Bischoff, *Carmina Burana I, 3: Die Trink- und Spielerlieder; Die geistlichen Dramen; Nachträge*, edited by Otto Schumann † and Bernhard Bischoff (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1970), pp. xi-xii (suggesting Seckau).

the most convincing proposal has been the most recent one, made in 1983, of Northern Italy, above Trento, quite possibly at a foundation of canons in Bressanone, or Brixen.⁴

Several things speak in favour of this. There are some typically Italian spellings (in the Latin texts, for instance, the use of *z* instead of *c*, common in a lot of North Italian manuscripts), and also the North Italian style of the neumes—the indications of the musical line—not, unfortunately, on staves, but indications that served to remind singers of the melodies.

If this North Italian Tyrolese origin is right, then the range and provenance of the songs collected in the *Carmina Burana* is amazing.

A large number stem from Germany and Austria, but also a considerable range are French, especially from the cathedral school of Notre Dame in Paris, which, in the second half of the twelfth century, was a quite outstanding centre of polyphonic as well as of monodic music. Two at least of the songs stem from Spain (one of which is discussed in some detail below). One of the most famous songs in the codex, the Archpoet's 'Confession', this drinking song which is also an apologia for the Bohemian artist's way of life, was composed in North Italy, in Pavia, in 1163. This coexistence in a single manuscript of songs from all over the Continent is a dramatic illustration of the internationality of medieval lyric.

For whom was this manuscript copied? It is, with its eight miniatures, relatively a *de luxe* manuscript. It is not a *codex aureus*, a codex full of gold leaf, such as was presented at times to a king or emperor or pope,

⁴ Georg Steer, 'Carmina Burana in Südtirol. Zur Herkunft des Clm 4660', *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, CXII (1983), 1-37. Most recently, Olive Sayce, *Plurilingualism in the Carmina Burana: a study of the linguistic and literary influences on the Codex*, *Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik*, 556 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1992), has argued on linguistic grounds that, of the two principal scribes in the codex, the first 'is an Italian speaker, with some rudimentary knowledge of Old French and German, living in an area where German was spoken and German texts copied', and that 'the second scribe can be shown to be a Romance speaker, but in this case all the evidence, direct and indirect, indicates that his native tongue is the *langue d'oïl* of Northern France. There are, however, also distinct traces of an Italian influence' (pp. 62-63).

yet it is a precious, rather than everyday, manuscript. If we imagine the canons at Bressanone as the scribes, was it produced for their own pleasure or, as I think more probable, did they have a great patron—a humanistic, highly educated nobleman or a bishop with worldly tastes? The patron must have travelled widely, or have had many links with courts and cathedral schools throughout Europe, for so disparate a repertoire to be assembled.

The collection shows elements of careful ordering. The pages were misbound in more modern times and there are some anomalies in the original ordering as well. But basically, there were in that original design, first, some fifty or so of the songs that scholars call 'moral-satirical'—the songs which respond to topical and political situations, which can attack the problems and vices of the age, and attack venality: even the Pope and the Roman Curia are not spared. Many of these survive as well, with full music, particularly in Notre Dame manuscripts from Paris.

Then there are some one hundred and twenty love-songs, for Latin lyric by far the largest collection of these. A number of subsections can be seen here. There is a group which have to do with Troy—with Dido and Aeneas, for instance. There is a group of dance-songs, which are signalled by their refrains and, sometimes, by their allusions to dancing. Then there is a large group that are followed by a German stanza in the same form and melody as the Latin, technically a *contrafactum*. Often it is uncertain which is the earlier, whether the form and melody come from the vernacular or the Latin. These hybrid pieces were for performance in a milieu where not all the listeners or performers will have been familiar with the learned language. We must imagine a situation in which students, who had been schooled in Latin, and young women, who had not, would be singing and dancing and flirting in the context of performing these songs.

Then we have, thirdly, some thirty-five songs which are 'goliardic', in the sense that has been made popular since Helen Waddell's *The Wandering Scholars*: the irreverent parodies of hymns and prayers and liturgies, songs that celebrate drinking, gambling, and a riotous, anti-establishment way of life.

Finally, there are seven religious plays on New Testament themes. That last section, the only one which contains specifically religious material, makes one wonder whether, in parts of the manuscript which today are lost, there might have been a whole section of religious lyric; but there is no evidence for this, though it cannot be ruled out.

In addition, we have, among the lyrical verses, some in non-lyrical metres, like classical hexameters (not for singing but for reading or reciting), sometimes proverbial wisdom, sometimes mythography, sometimes satire. This is a very unusual feature in this manuscript. Quite often, again, there are some neumes over the lyrics, from which a melody can be reconstructed, or identified if it survives elsewhere in fully legible form.

Now, from among nearly two hundred secular Latin lyrics, I must choose. I cannot hope to evoke the full imaginative and artistic range, but I hope that the five songs that I have chosen (three complete, two in extract only) will constitute an invitation to the *Carmina Burana*, and suggest why these songs are still so captivating today.

My first example is a love-song that reveals its secrets only gradually. It is copied twice in the *Codex Buranus* (the second time with elaborate neumes), and also in the early thirteenth century in a manuscript from Barcelona, where it has fully legible music and, interestingly, a different conclusion.⁵

⁵ For the citation of lyrics below, I have relied on the facsimile edition of the *Codex Buranus: Carmina Burana. Faksimile-Ausgabe der Handschrift Clm 4660 und 4660a*, edited by Bernhard Bischoff (Munich: Prestel, 1967), though taking account also of *Carmina Burana I, 2: Die Liebeslieder*, edited by Alfons Hilka † and Otto Schumann (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1941)—to which I refer readers for the extensive critical apparatus—and of *Carmina Burana: Texte und Übersetzungen*, edited by Benedikt Konrad Vollmann, Bibliothek des Mittelalters, 13 (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1987). The first piece (CB 85 in these two editions) occurs in the *Codex Buranus* (= B) fol. 36v and again on fol. 64r. The Spanish MS, which I use for the fourth strophe, is Escorial Z.II.2, fol. 287r. (This reads 'viterem' and 'exxilio', but, *pace* Hilka/Schumann, 'pro scribis' is written as two words rather than one). At 3, 2, both copies in B, but also the Spanish codex, read 'virgines'.

Veris dulcis in tempore
florenti stat sub arbore
Iuliana cum sorore.

Dulcis amor!
Qui te caret hoc tempore
fit vilior.

Ecce florescunt arbores,
lascive canunt volucres,
inde tepescunt virgines.

Dulcis amor!
Qui te caret hoc tempore
fit vilior.

Ecce florescunt lilia,
et virginum dant agmina
summo deorum carmina.

Dulcis amor!
Qui te caret hoc tempore
fit vilior.

'Si viderem quod cupio,
pro scribis sub Exilio,
vel pro regis filio!

Dulcis amor!
Qui te caret hoc tempore
fit vilior.'

In the time of gentle spring,
underneath a flowering tree,
Juliana and her sister stand.

Gentle love!
Whoever lacks you at this time
loses nobility.

Look how the trees begin to flower,
seductively the birds are singing—
with this the girls grow less cold.

Gentle love!
Whoever lacks you at this time
loses nobility.

Look how the lilies burst into flower,
and hosts of young girls offer up
songs to the highest of the gods.

Gentle love!
Whoever lacks you at this time
loses nobility.

'If only I could see the one I long for,
whom I'd exchange for all the scribes in Silos,
or even for the king's son!

Gentle love!
Whoever lacks you at this time
loses nobility.'

[In the *Codex Buranus*, the last strophe reads:

Si tenerem quam cupio
in nemore sub folio,
oscularer cum gaudio.

If only I could hold her whom I long for,
in the grove, under the leaves,
I would kiss her joyfully.]

The Spring opening for a love-song is very common, but very uncommon is the naming of the beloved, of the girl in love. The refrain—signalled 'Refl.' at the words 'Qui te caret [...]—brings us to one of the leitmotifs of courtly love poetry: that love has an ennobling power, that whoever lacks love lacks nobility. 'The highest of the gods' is not the Christian God but Amor. 'Carmina' may even have the suggestion, beyond 'songs', of 'spells'—magic

invocations of the god. I think the final strophe in the Spanish manuscript is an example of one of the songs these girls sing. Silos, at Burgos, was one of the great Spanish abbeys of the high Middle Ages. In the *Codex Buranus* there is a different ending and it is clearly a man who sings.

Which is the original ending? I think there can be little doubt. The whole of the first three strophes describes the awakening emotions of the two girls, Juliana and her sister. There is no mention of a man's love in these. The abrupt introduction of a strophe in which a man sings of love in the *Carmina Burana* version came about, I think, because the local allusion from Spain to the scribes of Silos was not understood in the Austrian or North Italian world when the song was written down, having made its way there.

Juliana, or her sister, cannot see the man she longs for—only the scribes in Silos, or possibly the king's son. Silos, at Burgos in Castile, was very close in the later twelfth century to a royal convent of Cistercian nuns called Las Huelgas, which served not only for the aristocratic nuns but also for well-born girls, who would go there for a time as a kind of finishing-school, before returning to secular life.

We have, from a later period, c. 1325, a great musical manuscript, the *Las Huelgas Codex*, which includes not only lyrics from Notre Dame, such as we have in the *Carmina Burana*, but also local songs, both profane and sacred, satirical and religious, which were composed most probably by the women of Las Huelgas themselves. So this song, though it survives isolated in a much earlier codex, was quite possibly composed by a woman poet in the convent of Las Huelgas, perhaps using the reference to the scribes in Silos in order to tease Juliana and her sister, who are not heroines from a romance but will probably have been members of the community there.

One other feature of this song, I believe, indicates its Spanish provenance. In Mozarabic Spain, for several centuries, women had sung, in Arabic or Hebrew, songs known as *muwashshahs*, in a form which is quite similar to that of this Latin song. Strophes with triple structure and rhyme go on to a verse which leads into the refrain and then the refrain itself, which rhymes with that earlier verse. I know

that in Northern Europe there are similar forms (the *virelai* in France, the *carole* in England), but the *muwashshah* had one very unusual feature: it had a final strophe, known as the *kharja*, and this strophe was one in which the girl who performed the song sang in her own person and sang something which was amorous, witty, piquant, irreverent in some way, provocative. I would suggest that the final strophe here is, we might say, Juliana's *kharja*. It is a witty Latin counterpart to the closing strophes of the Mozarabic songs.

From this world of amorous springtime make-believe and urbane wit, let us turn to a more complex lyric, the savage song of a jealous lover who has lost his beloved. The melody does not survive.

Rumor letalis
me crebro vulnerat
meisque malis
dolores aggerat;
me male multat
vox tui criminis,
que iam resultat
in mundi terminis.
Invida Fama
tibi novercatur:
caucius ama,
ne comperiat!
Quod agis, age tenebris,
procul a Fame palpebris!
Letatur amor latebris
cum dulcibus illecebris
et murmure iocoso.

The deadly gossip
wounds me over and over:
it piles new sorrows
on my calamities;
it hurts me badly,
the talk of your lewd fault,
now echoing
to the ends of the earth.
Envious Rumour
is a stepmother to you:
be more cautious in your loving,
lest it be divulged!
Whatever you do, do in darkness,
far from the lids of Rumour's eyes!
Love delights in hidden places,
with its soft lures
and playful murmuring.

Nulla notavit
te turpis fabula
dum nos ligavit
amoris copula,
sed frigescente
nostro cupidine,
sordes repente
funebri crimine!

You weren't marked
by any base slander
while we were bound
by the bond of love;
yet as soon as our
desire had grown cold,
at once you demean yourself
in deadly vice!

Fama, letata
novis hymeneis,
irrevocata
ruit in platheis.
Patet lupanar omnium
pudoris in palatium,
nam virginale lilium
marcet a tactu vilium
commercio probroso.

Rumour, thrilled
by your new matings,
beyond recall
rushes through open streets.
A brothel for all encroaches
on the palace of innocence,
for the virginal lily
is withered by the touch of vile men
in their traffic of shame.

Nunc plango florem
etatis tenere,
nitidiorum
Veneris sydere,
tunc columbinam
mentis dulcedinem,
nunc serpentinam
amaritudinem.
Verbo rogantes
removes hostili,
munera dantes
foves in cubili.
Illos abire precipis
a quibus nichil accipis—
cecos claudosque recipis,
viros illustres decipis
cum melle venenoso.⁶

Now I weep for the flower
tender in years,
more radiant
than Venus's star,
weep for her mind's
dovelike sweetness then,
weep for her serpentine
bitterness now.
Men who ask for love
you drive off with a harsh word,
men who bring you gifts
you warm in your bed.
You order them to go away
if you get nothing from them—
you welcome the blind and the lame
and delude illustrious men
with your poisoned honey.

This astonishing fantasy of love and hate conjoined is unlike anything else in the love-lyrics of the age. I would see it as a dramatic creation, depicting the progression of the disappointed lover into delusion, hysteria, and paranoia. The first stanza moves from self-pity and wild hyperbole ('your shame has gone to the ends of the earth') to ironic advice ('Be more cautious—do it in the dark!').

⁶ CB 120: B fol. 50v; I have also collated a photo of Stuttgart HB I 95, fols 77v-78r.

In the second strophe, the poet shows up through his persona the hypocrisy, the double standard in love for women and men ('It was fine as long as it was with me. With others, you're just a prostitute.'). The man can choose freely, the woman, if she chooses, at once becomes sordid, 'sordes repente'.

The final strophe begins nostalgically, sentimentally we might say, but ends in paranoia. The poet uses two biblical allusions in a parody that is not humorous, but ferocious. Christ (Matthew 10.16) told his apostles they should be doves in their innocence but also serpents in their cunning. Here, the woman is seen as the dove who has become the serpent. The traditional paradox, as old as Sappho, that love is bitter-sweet (γλυκύπικρον), both poison and honey, is here turned against her—she who welcomes the blind and the lame for money yet drives away 'illustrious men' (and by this the enraged lover clearly means himself). But do the blind and the lame really have money to spend on prostitutes? I think here too we see the hint of madness in the hyperboles, and here again the allusion is a grim biblical parody. It was Christ who welcomed the blind and the lame, but the poet depicts his faithless mistress as a parody of Christ, as Buñuel in his film depicts Viridiana, welcoming into her house the cripples and beggars, whose orgy is portrayed as a wild echo of the Last Supper.

My third example is from Song 165 in the *Carmina Burana*, the opening verses of a love-lyric that begins as a prayer to the god Amor or Cupid:

Amor, telum
es insignis Veneris,
voluntates
mentis gyrans celeris,
amantum afflictio,
cordis fibras
elicis et conteris!
Vultu sereno
clarior pre ceteris,
me tibi subicio [...]⁷

Amor, you are the weapon
of wondrous Venus,
you who swiftly whirl about
the intentions of the mind,
torment of lovers,
you pluck out and then destroy
the fibres of the heart!
You, serene of countenance,
more radiant than the other gods,
I subject myself to you [...]

⁷ B fol. 66v (with 'est' for 'es' in the second verse cited).

The love-songs in the *Carmina Burana* are filled with the gods of pagan classical mythology, and especially Amor and Venus feature again and again. The songs as a whole seem to avoid allusions to the Christian God. As a great scholar from the beginning of the century, Wilhelm Meyer, said: 'the medieval poets created a freer path for themselves by setting their love-songs in the realm of ancient mythology.'

But was this a purely rhetorical freedom, a playful use of something learnt in the schools? Or was there an element of belief as well? Certainly, medieval intellectuals regarded the planetary gods, Jupiter, Venus, Mars, Mercury and the rest, as Intelligences moving the spheres, and therefore as angels or messengers of the supreme Christian God, bringing down his influences on the sublunary world. Again, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, we have many magic spells and incantations which are copied, especially ones to Venus, and they are not set down out of antiquarian or folkloristic interest: they are clearly copied for practical purposes, to be used for persuading a reluctant girl to yield.

I think that in the *Carmina Burana* songs the degrees of play and of belief, in Venus or Amor or other pagan gods, can vary, and yet that there can also be an underlying serious insight. The prayer to Amor here, for instance, conveys the paradox of the lover's desire. While the arrows of his love, his *tela Veneris*, are aimed at his beloved, they afflict him within himself just as painfully. He is both an Amor Cupido, a personified love and desire, and the victim of Amor Cupido. In desire, there is an element of responsibility, but also of helplessness—just as in Euripides, in the *Hippolytus*, for instance, Aphrodite is both the force of passion within Phaedra herself and a force greater than herself that makes Phaedra suffer remorselessly and dooms her.

With my fourth example, poem CB 131, we turn from *Amor* to *Caritas*, the Christian love of neighbour, and from love-songs to one of the most passionate of the satires in the *Carmina Burana*. This is not humorous satire, it is harsh, even elegiac. We know who the poet was: Philip the Chancellor, Chancellor of Notre Dame in Paris, embattled defender of the University of Paris against the friars, who wanted to take it over, and against the Archbishop of Paris. Philip went even as far as Rome to try and persuade the Pope of the justice of his

cause, though Rome gave him no satisfaction. There, as he puts it, the Pope thunders fulminations, denunciations. His priests leave the wounded man to bleed to death. In the house of Romulus, that is in the papal Curia in Rome, charity is not to be found:⁸

Dic, Christi veritas, dic, cara raritas, dic, rara caritas, ubi nunc habitas?	Tell me, you truth of Christ, tell me, loved rareness, tell me, rare love, where do you live now?
Aut in valle visionis, aut in trono Pharaonis, aut in alto cum Nerone, aut in antro cum Timone?	In the valley of vision, or on Pharaoh's throne, or on high with Nero, or with Timon in his cave?
Vel in viscella scyrpea cum Moyse plorante?	Or is it in the bulrush basket, with Moses crying?
Vel in domo Romulea cum Bulla fulminante?	Or in the house of Romulus, with the Pope's Bull fulminating?
Respondit caritas: 'Homo, quid dubitas? Quid me sollicitas? Non sum quod usitas, nec in euro nec in austro, nec in foro nec in claustro, nec in bysso nec in cuculla, nec in bello nec in bulla: de Iericho sum veniens, ploro cum sauciato, quem duplex Levi transiens non astitit grabato.' ⁹	Love answered: 'Man, why do you have doubts? Why do you harass me? I am not what you meet every day, neither in the East nor South, not in marketplace or cloister, not in fine linen or in cowl, not in war or papal Bull: I am coming from Jericho, weeping with a wounded man, whom a pair of priests, passing by, did not help to find a bed.'

⁸ B fol. 54r-v (interspersing strophes of CB 131a). The song also survives in eight other MSS, and in three sixteenth-century printed anthologies of Flacius Illyricus. It is only Flacius who preserved (or restored) the correct reading in st. 1: 'aut in antro cum Timone', and not 'cum Theone', as is printed by the modern editors. Both Schumann/Bischoff and Vollmann identify this 'Theon' as a holy hermit called Theonas—but that Philip should have accused such a holy man, along with Nero, of lack of charity is hardly credible. Philip will have known about Timon of Athens especially from Cicero's *De amicitia* (23, 87), but his copyists, less learned than he, must soon have garbled the verse.

In the first strophe, the impassioned rhetorical questions rise to a crescendo. All the places, all the people show where charity is not. The 'valley of vision' is Isaiah's terrifying image of slaughter and treading underfoot; Pharaoh and Nero are the high and mighty arch-oppressors; yet the misanthropic Timon of Athens, skulking in his cave, has no more charity than they. If the exposed baby Moses, crying, roused pity in Pharaoh's daughter, the fulminating Pope is pitiless. All this is stressed again by the personified Charity in her answer, and yet that answer, at the close, also implies a gleam of hope: even if the priests, devoid of charity, pass the wounded man by, the audience knows that there was a Samaritan, one of that race whom the priests despised, who behaved differently.

My final example, *Stetit Puella*, is a brief, enigmatic song that includes some words of German amid the Latin. We have looked at songs celebrating *amor*, erotic love, and just now at a song celebrating *caritas*, love of neighbour. *Stetit Puella* brings *amor* and *caritas* together. No medieval melody survives, but the first two strophes have been set by Carl Orff.

Stetit puella rufa tunica— si quis eam tetigit, tunica crepuit—eia!	A girl stood in a red dress— if anyone touched it, the dress crackled—eia!
Stetit puella tamquam rosula: facie splenduit et os eius floruit—eia!	A girl stood like a little rose, radiant of face and her lips flowering—eia!

⁹ The third strophe ('O vox prophetica [...]') is not cited here: it is filled with rather complex topical allusions, about which I offer some notes in the booklet to Sequentia's recording *Philippe le Chancelier* (RD77035, Harmonia Mundi, 1990), in which the song can be heard complete.

Stetit puella
 bi einem boume,
 scripsit amorem
 an einem loube:
 dar chom Venus also fram.
 Caritatem magnam,
 hohe minne
 bot si ir manne.¹⁰

A girl stood
 beside a tree,
 she wrote her love
 upon a leaf:
 then at once Venus came.
 Great charity,
 high courteous love
 is what she gave her man.

Here 'eam' in the first strophe can mean 'if anyone touched *it*' or 'if anyone touched *her*'. Likewise 'manne' in the third may mean her lover, but it could just as easily mean her husband.

The sound 'eia' can be tender, as in a lullaby, or melancholy, like a lover's 'heigh-ho', or exultant, like 'hurrah', in drinking songs. It can be used to represent the hee-haw, the donkey's bray in the processional of the ass in the medieval feast of fools; or again, it can express awestruck admiration, as I think it does here. Today the equivalent of this 'eia' might be 'Wow!'

The first strophe suggests to me that the girl in the red dress, which crackles if it, or she, is touched, is sensually alluring and that, even without meaning to, she arouses the desire of men who see her and, seeing, long to touch. Yet the second strophe shows that she is not trying to be provocative: she is in love with someone, and that love flowers in her radiance.

Filled with ardour, she writes her love, or her lover's name, on a leaf, and the writing brings Venus, erotic love, forth: we might say, it liberates the feelings that had blossomed within. And those feelings are, inseparably, *caritas* and *hohe minne*, charity and the height of courtly love, which, thanks to the grace of Venus, the girl in the red dress can bestow upon 'her man'—quite possibly her husband.

The song as we have it stems from a highly educated poet and a refined world. Yet it alludes to and draws upon two quite different

¹⁰ CB 177: B fol. 70r. In the twelfth verse, B has 'an eimē lovbe'.

traditions. Scholars have seen the first strophe as an early example of a widespread German riddle, and indeed even as a small child in Germany I was still taught to sing a version of such a riddle:

Ein Männlein steht im Walde
 ganz still und stumm;
 es hat von lauter Purpur
 ein Mäntlein um [...]

A little man stands in the forest
 all still and mute;
 he wears a little cloak
 of purple red [...]

In the next verses comes the question: 'Who can he be, this little man who stands all alone on one leg in the forest with his little purple red cloak?' The answer, in the riddle I was taught, was that it is a reddish mushroom, the one that the French call *petit rouge* or the Germans *Rotkäppchen*; some scholars have suggested that in the Latin text it was an onion: if the red dress is something that crackles to the touch, it could well be an onion skin. Yet the second strophe in the Latin song shows that this allusion, even if it is present, cannot be the poet's principal intention—that it is a girl, and not a mushroom or an onion, that he has in mind. We cannot interpret the whole song, as some scholars have tried to do, as an example of the riddle.

Similarly, the third strophe has been interpreted as the girl's performing of a piece of love magic, writing on a leaf so as to conjure up Venus and win a man. There are good parallels in magical texts, especially from Late Antiquity, and again, the poet may well be aware of such connotations. Yet he insists that *this* girl does not need such magic. She has got 'her man'—she has already won him, and Venus is the force, within her as much as outside her, that enables her to show him that love uninhibitedly.

It is the nature of the love evoked that is the most remarkable aspect of this song. A friend of mine in Yale, Ingeborg Glier, Professor of Medieval German there, once began a lecture on courtly love, which I do not think she has ever published, by pointing out that this song breaks all the rules that modern scholars have laid down about medieval love.

The cliché goes that medieval men and women were taught that *amor* and Venus were evil, and were the very opposite of *caritas*; and

medievalists assure us that high courtly love was incompatible with married love, and just as incompatible with Christian charity. If this poet had sat an exam on courtly love poetry today, he would undoubtedly have failed! Yet all the loves that the scholars enjoin us to keep separate, this poet wanted to bring together. He refused to see them as incompatibles. It is because of this that his little song is profound as well as delightful; it also means that in a few words this lyric can evoke for us something of the whole gamut of what desire and love could mean in the world of the *Carmina Burana*.