



Ci commencent les leures monseigneur
saint loys roy de france. **A** matines.

Omnino labia mea aperies.
Et os meum annuncia
lut laudem tuam

Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts

CHRISTOPHER
DE HAMEL



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FRONTISPIECE: Saint Louis as a child being taught to read under the direction of his mother Blanche of Castile, as depicted in the Hours of Jeanne de Navarre, Paris, c. 1334. (See p. 396)

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CHAPTER EIGHT

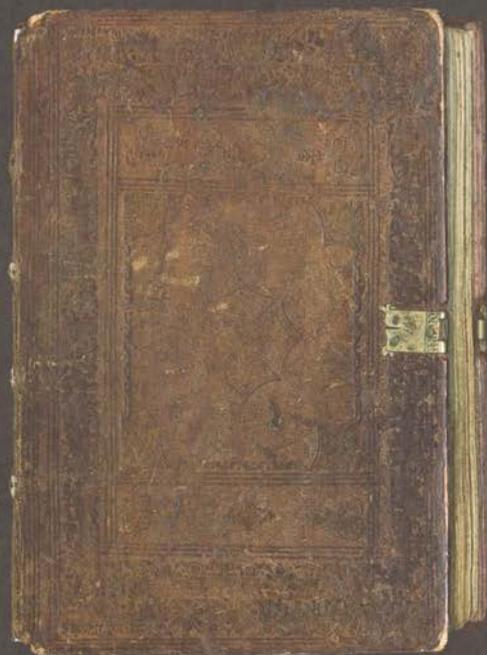
The *Carmina Burana*

first half of the thirteenth century

Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek,

Clm 4660

I took the Latin option at school, not because I had any particular aptitude for it (I hadn't), but because I was generally worse at nearly everything else. It was a local state school for boys, King's High School, in Dunedin, New Zealand, where, with hindsight, the curriculum was even then very old-fashioned. We struggled through the usual grammar and translation exercises. One day in the sixth form, our Latin teacher – he was called Mr Dunwoodie – imaginatively brought in a portable gramophone from home and a recording of the medieval *Carmina Burana* set to music by Carl Orff (1895–1982). It was unforgettable. We were all captivated by the haunting music and the sensuous rhythmical Latin lyrics about girls and drinking and the manifest unfairness of fortune. To a classroom of hormone-humming teenage boys, here was Latin which touched the soul as Caesar's *Gallic Wars* had never done. We urged Mr Dunwoodie to play it over and over again, assuring him that it was educational. To his credit, he did. We soon knew many of the Latin verses by heart, and some I still do: *o! o! totus floreo, iam amore virginali, totus ardeo!* – 'Oh! Oh! Oh! I am all in bloom, now I am all burning with first love', and so on. We were just the right age. This music was to us a seductive evocation of anarchic and amorous medieval students vagabonding their way in verse and song across twelfth-century Europe, with a free-spirited ethos very like that of the





mid-1960s. It is quite likely that Latin masters in schools elsewhere in the world sometimes also played the same record to their own classes at that time and our generation all shared familiarity with these songs of lust and rebellion in Latin, which for that purpose was still – just – serving as an international language.

Some years later as a graduate student in Oxford in the early 1970s I spent my summers with a rucksack and a camera, the latter borrowed from the Bodleian Library, travelling many of those same routes as the wandering scholars of the *Carmina Burana* had done 800 years earlier to Paris and around the cathedral cities of France and Germany and the monasteries of Austria, looking at medieval manuscripts in local libraries. I mostly stayed in youth hostels, or in a tent. It was a lonely but fascinating experience, but I rather enjoyed the self-image of brushing the grass and insects from my hair and making first for the washrooms of municipal libraries, where I shaved and cleaned my teeth, before presenting myself brightly at the inquiry desks with lists of precious twelfth-century books to see. Sometimes I met the same people in the reading-rooms of many libraries, and we all felt part of a kind of international confraternity of itinerant students from different universities working on our various doctoral theses. Once, when my German failed in a monastery in Austria, I resorted in desperation to Latin as the only common language.

I remember my first visit at that time to the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich. After homely and sleepy libraries of rural France, where schoolchildren and old men frittered away their afternoons in chatter and newspapers, Munich was seriously daunting. The state library is in the Ludwigstrasse, the great avenue which runs from the Siegestor, the monumental arch in the north of the city, down to the Odeonsplatz in central Munich. The library is an enormous classical building in brick and that ubiquitous central European yellow paint. It was opened in 1843. There are four sculpted giants seated on pedestals outside, Thucydides (history), Homer (literature), Aristotle (philosophy) and Hippocrates (medicine). You go up the steps from the street

LEFT: The great staircase in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, which, it is said, only King Ludwig I of Bavaria was permitted to ascend during his lifetime

and push through one of three big doors which open into a vast and high lobby. It is like the biggest bank you have ever entered. Before you rises a huge white marble staircase between classical pillars. The metal banisters are attached by tiny bronze lions. It is said that Ludwig I, king of Bavaria 1825–48, planned this to be the grandest staircase in Europe and that during his lifetime he was the only person allowed to use it. As I negotiated nervously up it in the 1970s, I felt about two inches tall. At the top are enormous statues of Albrecht V, duke of Bavaria 1550–79, who founded the library in 1558, and King Ludwig I himself. The library building is arranged around two quadrangles on either side of the staircase. For the general reading-rooms for printed books you would proceed straight ahead. To reach the rare book and manuscript department you turn right and right again, doubling back towards the front of the building, through the pillared Fürstenhall above the entrance, and then left along the corridor parallel to the Ludwigstrasse, past the door to the exhibition room for library treasures, through a turnstile, left once more (now continuing away from the street into the far side of this quadrangle), passing two spectacular sixteenth-century globes and the travelling library of King Ludwig, and finally into the reading-room. It has natural light from either side, tempered by net curtains. There are long tables occupied by grey-headed professors who look as though they have academic titles in German running to several lines. The issue desk is at the far end of the room. There are stairs in the centre leading up to book stacks on the mezzanine floor, with probably the most comprehensive open-shelf collection of reference books on manuscripts in the world (it will reappear briefly in Chapter Twelve). The setting is professional and intellectual, and the only sound is the industrious scratch of pencils. There is nothing sleepy or provincial about the Staatsbibliothek in Munich.

The original thirteenth-century manuscript of the *Carmina Burana*, and the source for the cantata of Carl Orff, has been here since 1806. It is called 'Burana' from the Latin name for the monastery of Benediktbeuern in Upper Bavaria, founded in the eighth century about forty miles south of Munich. The manuscript was discovered uncatalogued among the books in the library there after the suppression of the monastery



The monastery of Benediktbeuern in Upper Bavaria, closed in 1803, where the manuscript of the *Carmina Burana* was found and from which it takes its name

in 1803 during the Napoleonic reforms. It contains about 350 poems and songs, many of them unique, of which only about twenty pieces or extracts were eventually set to modern music by Orff. Most are in Latin, but the volume has scraps in various European languages and important pieces in Middle High German, which are among the oldest surviving vernacular songs. The manuscript of the *Carmina Burana* is by far the finest and most extensive surviving anthology of medieval lyrical verse and song, and it is one of the national treasures of Germany.

I owe my permission to see the manuscript to Wolfgang-Valentine Ikas, head of reference in the rare-book department in Munich, whom I had the good fortune to encounter at a conference in Tennessee. As I began to explain my request, I could sense him dreading that I was about to ask for the Gospels of Otto III, one of the most valuable and most supremely fragile books in existence, and his relief when I named the *Carmina Burana* was palpable. Nonetheless, it is too precious to be normally available. Even Dr Ikas himself had never actually seen the original. First of all, he had to consult the conservators from the Institut für Buch- und Handschriftenrestaurierung as to whether the

manuscript was in a fit condition to be consulted by a mere reader at all. After a few anxious days, consent was granted.

This visit was very different from those first student forays with the rucksack. They waived my need for a reader's ticket and I was taken straight through. I recognized several people in there already, including Berthold Kress from the Warburg Institute, who was photocopying an article in Russian on images of the prophet Daniel and did not seem the slightest bit surprised to see me, and Günther Glück, who had come to study beautiful books, of which he himself owns a very refined private collection. Necessary pleasantries were exchanged and I proceeded to the issue desk.

Because the *Carmina Burana* is classified as a 'Tresorhandschrift', the highest grade of importance in Munich, I was required to wear gloves, which they sell to readers and you may keep them afterwards (to be fair, they gave me mine). They are white with ribbed backs, trimmed with scarlet around the wrists: very stylish, even though the lines of bright colour make it look slightly as though your hands have been cut off. I was directed to a special roped-off table to the left of the supervisors' desk. They brought out blocks of wedge-shaped foam, draped with green baize. The manuscript and its separate supplementary leaves are kept in weighty hessian-covered boxes.

The book's binding is about 10 by 7 inches and the volume is around 1¾ inches thick. The thin wooden boards are eighteenth century, bevelled on their inner edges in the German manner, covered with blind-stamped brown leather. The style of the binding is identical to that of other manuscripts once at Benediktbeuern, and is now the only absolute evidence remaining that the book was ever in that monastery at all. The single clasp and catch are late medieval, and were presumably transferred from a previous binding. A strap is attached to the edge of the lower cover (again characteristically German: in a French or English binding it would be suspended instead from the upper cover). The strap, which is repaired, is of leather tawed white, which might therefore have been the colour of the book's medieval binding. The clasp at the end of the strap and the catch on the upper cover onto which it hooks are both of brass, engraved with the words in gothic script "ave"

and "ma[r]ja" (the 'r' obscured by the nail attaching the catch to the cover). There is now an unsightly conservation packet, like a medical dressing, tied around the clasp to protect it from scratching anything else. Devotional words such as 'Ave Maria' are quite common on medieval German book bindings and are not necessarily any indication of provenance, but they are entirely consistent with a text which we must assume was once bound for a religious community.

Squeeze the manuscript slightly to release the clasp, and open it up on the library's green baize book-rest. There is a paper flyleaf with various additions including "B Buran 160" in pencil (early nineteenth century, crossed through), an approximate date "s.XII-XIII" in red ink (also crossed through), and the current shelfmark "Clm 4660" in a large hand in purple chalk. This number is also on a paper label on the spine. In the Staatsbibliothek the letters 'Clm' stand for *Codex latinus monacensis*, 'Munich Latin manuscript', and so strictly it is tautology to write, as people often do, 'Munich MS Clm' such-and-such, for all that is subsumed in the three initials. The *monacenses* were numbered in order of accession. Those brought from Benediktbeuern are Clm 4501-4663; 4660 was thus the 160th in sequence, which explains the pencil number.

On the first page of the manuscript is the famous signature image of the Wheel of Fortune, depicting a king presiding at the top and then tumbling down as his crown falls from his head and finally lying crushed at the foot of the wheel. There is irony therefore in the indelible nineteenth-century black stamp slapped to the right above the picture of the falling king, "BIBLIOTHECA REGIA MONACENSIS", 'Royal library of Munich', since, with the turning of fortune, the royal kingdom of Bavaria was abolished in 1918 after the First World War. At the foot of the page, added in six tiny lines crammed into the lower margin, not even part of the manuscript as originally written, are the words rendered iconic by Orff's staccato drumbeats and clashes of cymbals, "O fortuna, velud luna, statu variabilis, semp[er] crescis aut decrescis, vita detestabilis ...", and so on, 'O Fortune, like the moon, ever changing, eternally you wax and wane, dreadful life ...'

Actually, this is not the real opening of the *Carmina Burana* at all.

The manuscript is quite easy to collate (even wearing gloves), for the parchment is generally thick and the sewing is clearly visible.* However, the book is not at all in its original state. The two leaves now at the start are nothing more than pages cut from elsewhere in the manuscript and transferred to the beginning, presumably during the eighteenth-century rebinding, to provide a decorative opening. Such cosmetic adjustment is not unusual in manuscripts owned by bibliophiles who hate to see a text glaringly imperfect on its first page. That is not all, however, for the sequence is still lamentably jumbled and incomplete.† Some of the missing leaves, including six of those from a quire lost near the end, were discovered by Wilhelm Meyer (1845–1917), professor in Göttingen, among the vast residue of miscellaneous loose leaves then unsorted in the Staatsbibliothek. These are now Clm 4660a, known as the *Fragmenta Burana*, accompanying the main manuscript but still in nineteenth-century paper folders, with notes by Meyer dated 1870, all in a portfolio tied with black ribbon and kept in a separate matching hessian box. It is a question which must have come up from time to time, whether to disassemble the indifferent eighteenth-century binding to restore all leaves to their proper sequence, including the loose leaves found later, for it is not easy to form a mental picture of the original manuscript and its content while it is in its present order.

Sometimes the very first impression of any manuscript can be unexpectedly informative. All manuscripts do not look like each other. Across the reading-room in Munich I could see people consulting

* As bound now, it runs: i², ii–vi⁸, vii⁸ [of 8, lacking vii–viii (2 leaves after folio 48)], viii¹ [of unknown number, a single leaf remaining (folio 49)], ix⁷ [of 8, lacking vii (a leaf after folio 55)], x–xi⁸, xii⁸*2 [a bifolium (folios 78–9) inserted after v], xiii–xiv⁸, then a whole quire missing, xv⁸, xvi⁸. The two leaves described as missing after folio 48 are those transferred to the beginning, now called quire 'i'.

† The original order of the gatherings, as numbered above, would once have been: vii+i, ii–vi, viii, xii, ix–xi, xiii–xvi, lacking at least a quire at the beginning and another quire between folios 98 and 99. In the numbering of the folios, this order would have been: [leaves lacking], 43–48, 1–42, 49, 73–82, 50–72, 83–98, [a quire lacking], 99–112.

RIGHT: The present opening page of the *Carmina Burana*, showing the Wheel of Fortune and the addition in the lower margin with the song 'O fortuna, velud luna'

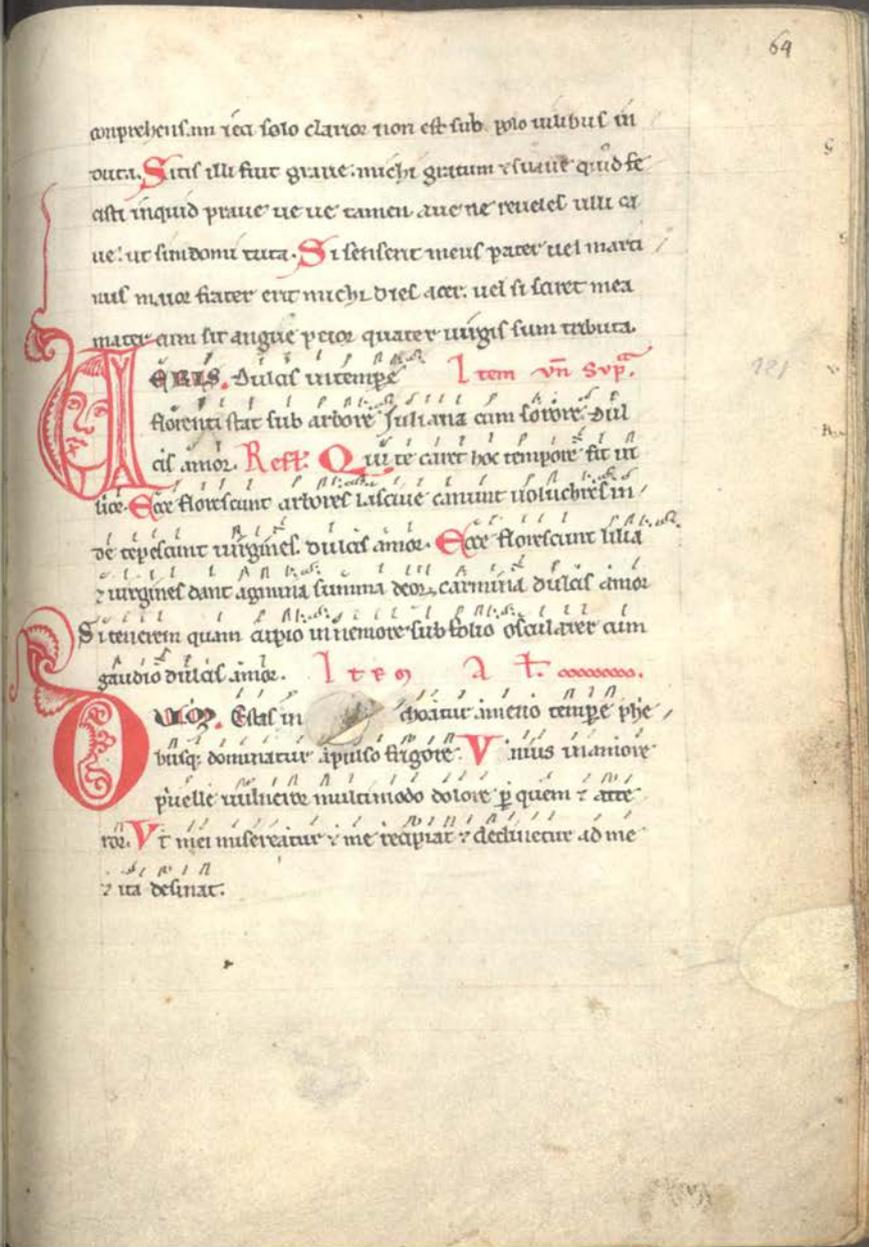


Fortuna uelut luna statu uariabilis temp' crescit aut' decrescit uita de
 restabilis nunc obduat - tunc curat ludo mentis aciem et estatem uoluntate
 dissoluit ac gratiam. **S**ed inuaniunt manus uita tu uoluntate. **H**anc manus
 unam salus semp' dissolubilis obundantiam reuelat in quocumque nunc primum
 uelut indumitro succelerat. **S**ed salutat - uirtutem in nunc uirtus e' afflicta et
 defecit temp' iangaria hac i' hunc sine mora uoluntate p' uirtute' dicitur fortis.

Ottonian liturgy, Italian law, and French Books of Hours. These are recognitions made entirely by format, size, appearance of script (without reading a word of it), and the scale and colour of ornament. Many of us make these judgements without really thinking. M. R. James (1862–1936), who in his time had probably handled more medieval manuscripts than anyone then alive (and who had first catalogued the Morgan Beatus in 1902), conveys something of this instinctive process in his ghost story *Canon Alberic's Scrap-Book*: “Even before the wrapping had been removed, Dennistoun began to be interested by the size and shape of the volume. ‘Too large for a missal,’ he thought, ‘and not the shape of an antiphoner’ ...”

If I had seen someone studying the *Carmina Burana* at some distance, I might have thought they were examining a Breviary. Without looking too closely, that is really what the manuscript looks like. A Breviary was (and for monks still is) the standard compilation of psalms and readings for the church year recited during the daily offices from Matins to Compline. It was used by the clergy and members of religious houses. A Breviary was an easily portable book, sometimes called a ‘Portiforium’ for that reason, compact and orderly, chunky and thick, often written in quite informal script (unlike a Missal). The earliest Breviaries in Germany date from around 1200, precisely the period of the genesis of the *Carmina Burana*. The resemblance is not merely in shape and size, but also in the page layout with nearly every sentence beginning with a red initial, like the verses of psalms, and the insertion here and there of specimen lines of musical notation above the script, as often in Breviaries. Some of the songs actually open with the same words as psalms familiar from Breviaries, such as “Bonum est” and “Lauda”. It is commonly noted that the love poems of the *Carmina Burana* follow a sequence from spring to autumn: so does the summer volume of a Breviary, from Easter to the last Sunday before Advent. I do not know whether any modern scholar of medieval literature or secular music has observed the parallel before, but the visual pun would surely have been noticed by anyone in the early thirteenth century.

RIGHT: Much of the *Carmina Burana* appears at first sight to resemble a thirteenth-century breviary, with red initials, readings, apparent rubrics and short sections of musical neumes



FLOREBAT. Olim studium. nunc uertitur
in tedium. iam scire diu uiguit. s; ludere p[re]ualuit.
Iam pueris astutia contingit ante temp[or]a. qui
p[er] malivolentiam excludunt sapientiam. **P**er retro
actis seculis uix licuit discipulis tandem nonagerium
quiescere post studium. **A**t nunc decemnes pueri de
casso iugo liberi. se nunc magistros iactant. ceteros
p[er]cipitant. **I**n plumes aues uolitant. brunelli cordas in
citant. boues in aula salutant. sine precones militant.
In taberna gregorius iam disputat in glorius. seueritas
Jeronimi partem causatur obuli. **A**ugustinus de sege
te. benedictus de uagere. sunt colloquentes elanculo.
et ad macellum seculo. **M**ariam grauat sessio. nec
marthe placet actio. iam ipe uenit sterilis. Rachel lype
scit oculis. **A**tonis iam rigiditas auertitur ad gane
as. et castitas lucretie turpi seruit lasciuie. **Q**ue pri
or etas respuit. iam nunc clarius claruit. iam calidum
in frigidum. et humidum in aridum. **V**irtus nigrum
in uicium. opus transit in otium. nunc cuncte res de
bita orbitant a senuta. **V**ir prudens hoc consideret.
eos munder et exoneret. ne frustra dicat esse in ultra

A few generations later, the Franciscan troubadour Matfre Ermengaud called his collection of secular verse the *Breviari d'amor*, the Breviary of Love, making the same pairing in its name.

Once the leaves of the manuscript are reconceived into their original order, there are four clear sequential clusters of text. They are usually classified as moral and satirical poems; love songs, opening with the heading "*Incipiunt iubili*", 'Songs begin' (that is, on folio 18v); drinking and gaming songs; and religious dramas. Let us take each in turn.

Many of the satirical poems are on the eternal themes (not unique to our own or any age) of the corruption of morality in modern times, such as "*Ecce torpet probitas*" ('See how decency is moribund'), and how the world is no longer governed by virtue but by money instead, now the greatest king on earth, "*In terra nummus rex est hoc tempore summus*". There are poems on the harshness of fortune, including "*Fortuna plango vulnera*" ('I sing the wounds of fate') and the famous "*O fortuna, velud luna*" already mentioned, both of which are additions in blank margins. Some are on the decline of learning, such as that on folio 44v:

Florebat olim studium
nunc uertitur in tedium,
iam scire diu uiguit,
s[e]d ludere p[re]ualuit.
Iam pueris astutia
contingit ante temp[or]a,
qui p[er] malivolentiam
excludat sapientiam ...

('Scholarship once flourished, now it is turned into boredom; for a long time knowledge was esteemed, but now playing is preferred. Now the cunning of a boy takes hold before its time, and through mischief it eliminates wisdom ...')

There is a fascinating mock Gospel reading beginning on folio 11r, with a heading "*Ewangelium*" in red (the 'w' is a Germanic spelling),

LEFT: The poem 'Florebat olim studium' on the eternal theme of the decline of learning in our own time, in contrast to the esteemed scholarship of the past

intended to look at first glance like a normal Gospel lection from Saint Mark in a Breviary or Missal, until one realizes that it refers to the currency, silver marks, “INITIUM s[an]c[t]i e[van]g[e]lii se[cu]nd[u]m marcas argenti, In illo t[em]p[or]e dixit papa ...” It is a scurrilous prose narrative about the pope and his cardinals refusing to admit anyone unless they pay hugely for the privilege. The text is made up almost entirely from thirty-one authentic quotations from the Latin Bible reassembled utterly out of context, snipped and pasted from words of the Epistles, Gospels, Job, Psalms, Zephaniah, Acts, Jeremiah, Deuteronomy, and so on. It reminds me of a joke sermon an ordinand at Knox College once taught to me late at night, which began, “Behold, there came two wise men, and their names were Adam and Eve, and they went out into a field to sow, and they fell upon a fertile woman, and their tribe numbered many ...”, and much more (after several beers I think I can still do most of it), where the humour depends on knowing the Bible intimately. Although the satire here is harshly critical of the papal Curia, it is only comprehensible in a religious context.

The love songs form the longest and most famous section of the *Carmina Burana*. There are about 188 of them, depending rather on how they are divided. They are almost all copied out as if they were blocks of consecutive prose (unlike lines of verse in the Leiden *Aratea* or the Hengwrt Chaucer, which begin on a new line each time), and rhyme patterns here are hardly noticeable until you start to read the texts aloud. Some poems describe love affairs of history, such as that of Aeneas and Dido, but most pretend to recount personal experiences of romantic encounters or unrequited passion. Many begin with descriptions of springtime when young men’s thoughts turn to love. That was a common convention in the first lines of medieval secular poetry. (The opening of the *Canterbury Tales* “Whan that Aprill ...” was humorous, for, instead of love, as the fourteenth-century reader would expect in April, Chaucer’s motley heroes lust for pilgrimage instead.) In the *Carmina Burana* there are many pastoral maidens in sunny meadows and randy lads seizing opportunities, or pining in vain. A good

RIGHT: The mock Gospel, ‘Ewangelium’, constructed from authentic biblical phrases reassembled to form a satire on the corruption of the papal court

11

Linguet mundus ope. **S**er cum sit plena ius cedat his
 uicta premanur orbe leto tristi spiro iure fixo pellan
 tur. **H**ruit spes estuans duntur nitare. secula iam pere
 unt diuacillitate. ordo principatus mentis discrepanti
 uoluitur in serie. mundo non piata. falso quoque uerita
 tas conuincitur augurio. nec alius est in istabel fidem
 claus centurio. **Ewangelium**

Initioz sci evglu. scdm marcas argenti. **N**ullo
 tpe dixit papa romanis. Cum uenert filius homini
 ad sedem maiestatis nre primum dicere. Amice ad
 quid uenisti. At ille si p se uenuerit pulsans nil dant
 uobis. eicite eum in tenebras exteriores. factum est au
 ut quidam paup clericus ueniret ad curia dñi pape.
 et exclamauit dicens. Miseremini mei saltem uos hos
 turu pape. quia manus paupertatis tetigit me. Igo no
 egonus et paup sum. ideo peto ut subueniatis calami
 tati et miserie mee. Illi aut audientes indignati sub
 ualde. et dixerunt. Amice paupertas tua tecum sit in
 peltione. Vade retro sathanas. quia non sapis ea que
 sapunt nummi. Am am dico tibi. non uirabis i gau
 dium dñi tui. donec dederis nouissimum quadran
 tem. Paup uero abiit et uendidit pallium et tunicam.
 et uniuersa que habuit. et dedit ayctimilib; et hostia

VUCIS. Ouo syder. exit uirgo pter. **1^{te}.**

Et uenit oues uilla reger baculo pastorali.

Sol effundens radium dat calorem minimum uirgo
spectata solem trahit uerum sub arbore frondosa. **D**um p
ado partulum lingue solus unguis salue regie digna
audi queso seruitum esto michi benigna. **Q**uor salutat
uirginem que non nouit hominem ex quo fuit nata sa
at deus ueniam inueni p bec pra. **P**ortet lupus ade
rit quem famel expulerat guttauril auar. oue rapta p
perit cupient lacuar. **D**um puella ceciderit quod sic o

uen pderit pleno clamat ore siquis ouem redderet me
gaudeat uxore. **M**ix ut uaxem aucto denudato gladio
lupus immolatur ouis ab exiis redempta reparatur.

VERE Dulci mediante. **Item at**

Non in malo paulo ante lucis solis radiance uirgo
uilla eleganter fronde stabat sub uernante canent
am acata. **I**lluc ueni fato ante. nimpha non est forme tante
equi pollens eius plante. que me iusto festinante grege fugit
am balante. metu dissoluta. **C**lamant' tendit ad ouile hinc
sequendo prece site. preces spunt' mouit. michi amant
hostite. quod ostendi tenet uite uirgo sic locata. **Q**uam uel
trium. inquit uolo. q. pleni estis dolo. rle sic descendit uolo.

example opens half-way down folio 63v and ends towards the top of the next page:

Vere dulci mediante,
non in maio, paulo ante,
luce solis radiante,
uirgo vultu elegante
fronde stabat sub uernante,
canens cum cicuta.
Illuc ueni fato dante,
nimpha non est forme tante,
equi pollens eius plante,
que me viso festinante
grege fugit cum balante
metu dissoluta ...

(‘In the middle of sweet springtime, not in May but a little before [this is an accepted conjecture, for the manuscript actually says “non in malo”, which makes less sense], as the bright sun shone, a maiden with a pretty face stood under the green foliage playing a pipe. I came there assigned by fate. No nymph has such beauty, or is worth the equal of her bare foot. When she saw me hurrying [another conjecture, for the scribe wrote “que me iusto festinante”], she fled with her bleating flock [she was evidently a shepherdess], overcome by fear ...’) During the course of the next verses he catches up with her, offers her a necklace, which she scorns, but he nevertheless pins her to the ground and kisses her, or more, and afterwards her only concern is that her father and brother should never know, and especially not her mother, who, as the girl says, is worse than a serpent (“angue peior”). As folk songs (and teenage experiences) go, it is fairly normal.

A much finer piece of literature is the great poem opening on folio 23r:

Dum Diane vitrea
sero lampas oritur,

LEFT: The opening of the song ‘Vere dulci mediante’, on the writer’s romantic encounter with a pretty shepherdess in the sweet springtime

non equis legibus dampnandus. mirum est in neis verbis.
Certe si quis tam deuoto iudum inuicatur. huius rei testis octo.
cholus cuius rigit glorio. quod sepe nudaat. Causa ludi sepe
nisi sunt mei consorte. dum sic prestem sup. uestem meam
mutantur foret. **H**eu p. ludo sepe nudo dat uestem sacul. sed
dum penas mortis uenat. dat nescire bachus. Tunc salutar
pedantium. et laudant tabernaculum. excludunt denarius pro
ferris sermo uariat. d. eusal. m. i. r. belcher. deum. tunc cum
oficiatur. wir. enahren. n. h. u. f. deum. et bacho fatulamur.
Tunc romane d. h. y. de sup. et canna pluit mustum. et qui potat
sit n. y. bibat. ptul. quam sic uisum. Tunc postulantur. tel.
et specul. iactantur. nec de furore boree. quicquam premeditat.

In taberna quando sumus. Item de eodem.

In taberna quando sumus. non curamus quid sit humus. sed ad iudum peruenimus.
Cui semper insidiamus. quid agatur in taberna ubi num
mus est pignus. hoc est opus ut queatur. si quid loquar au
diant. Quidam ludunt quidam bibunt. quidam indolent
et uiuunt. et intudo qui moriuntur. ex his quidam deuidant.
quidam ibi uestiuntur. quidam sacul. induuntur. ibi nul
lus querit mortem. et p. bacho nutant forem. **P**rimo p. uon
mactantur. ex hac bibunt liberant. semel bibunt p. caput.
post iter bibunt. et p. uunt. quater p. p. m. f. cunctis. quinq.

et a fratris rosea
luce dum succeditur,
dulcis aura Zephiri
spirans omnes etheri
nubes tollit, sic emollit
vi chordarum pectora
et immutat cor quod nutat
ad amoris pignora ...

This is the moon rising at dusk, lit by the setting sun: 'When the crystal lamp of Diana rises late and when it is ignited by the rose-coloured light of her brother, the sweet blowing breath of the west wind carries all clouds from the heavens, and so too it softens souls by the power of its musical strings and it transforms the heart faltering from the efforts of love ...' It is a poem about drifting gently into sleep, after the exertions of love. The poet's eyes close to the sound of nightingales and the wafting scent of rose petals under a tree. Say what you like about Carl Orff's music, but this is beautiful.

With the drinking songs we are shaken awake with the thump of beer mugs and the slapping of lederhosen. There are famous songs like "In taberna quando sumus / non curamus quid sit humus ...", 'When we are in the tavern we are not concerned with the nature of the earth ...', but rather with money for drinking: one drink for captives, three for the living, four for all Christians, five for the dead, six for sexy sisters, seven for sylvan soldiers, eight for naughty brothers, nine for scattered monks, ten for sailors, eleven for quarrellers, twelve for penitents, and thirteen for travellers; and much more, increasingly inebriated. This song is on folio 87v of the manuscript, which is quite badly damp-stained, and maybe the manuscript was used in the pub. Other songs are on gambling ("Tessera, blandita fueras michi ...", 'Dice, you were pleasing to me [once] ...'), and on chess ("Qui cupit egregium scachorum nosce ludum ...", 'Whoever wants to know the famous game of chess ...', actually a quite accurate explanation in verse of the moves of the pieces on the chessboard). One of the longer songs opens "Cum

LEFT: The drinking song 'In taberna quando sumus', the most damp-stained page of the manuscript, perhaps damaged during actual use in the tavern

in orbem universum ...”, the scriptural injunction to go out into the world (Mark 16:15), but it is turned here into a call for all the disaffected of Europe to defy the rules and to join the joyful and carefree life on the road, eating, drinking and gambling. Revellers are summoned from all points of the compass – Italians, Bavarians, Saxons, Austrians.

The fourth group of texts in the *Carmina Burana* comprises religious dramas. These appeal to scholars different from those interested in secular songs, for they are devotional. Such texts are the ultimate medieval predecessors of all modern theatre. Liturgical plays are known from the early tenth century onwards, based around the themes of the major festivals of the church year, including saints’ days. The first drama here is a Christmas play, a tradition which still survives today, at least in nursery schools. The script in the *Ludus de nativitate domini* in the *Carmina Burana* manuscript opens on folio 99r with stage directions in red. It is very graphic and easy to envisage on a stage. It requires a large cast. Saint Augustine is to be seated in front of a church flanked by Isaiah, Daniel and other Old Testament prophets. The Archisynagogus (or high priest) enters from the left with further Jews. Isaiah sings, “Ecce virgo pariet sine viri semine / per quod mundum abluet a peccati crimine ...” (“Behold a virgin will give birth without the seed of man, by which the world will be cleansed from the stain of sin’, loosely from Isaiah 7:14). Daniel too chants a warning: “O iudea misera, tua cadit unctio ...”, about the Jews being seated in darkness. The Erithraean Sibyl points to a star and interprets it as a sign that the saviour of the world will be born through the conception of a virgin. Aaron enters and places his flowering rod on the altar, the only one which blossoms among the twelve rods of the tribes of Israel (cf. Numbers 17:8), and he too sings. Balaam comes in riding on an ass – the audience must have loved this bit – and reports that a star will arise from Jacob (cf. Numbers 24:17). The Archisynagogus stamps his foot and argues the logical implausibility of this, saying to the Jews that a man can no more descend from a virgin than a camel can from an ox. They all bring their dispute to Augustine, who rules that the prophecies cannot be wrong. The Archisynagogus

RIGHT: The *Ludus de nativitate domini*, the script of a play about Christmas, showing stage directions and the opening songs

99

Primo ponatur sedes Augustino in fronte ecclesie: Augustinus
habebit a dextera parte ysaiam et danielum: talios ipsas. A sinistra
autem archisynagogum et suos iudeos. Postea singulis ysaias cum ipse
tra sua sic. Ecce virgo pariet sine viri semine. per quod mun-
dum abluet a peccati crimine. de venturo gaudeat iudea mi-
sera. et nunc ceca fugiat ab erroris lumine. Postea. Ecce virgo
conspicitur. Iterum canter. Dabit illi dominus sedem dextris.
Postea daniel procedat. prophetam suam expriment. O iudea
miseria. tua cadit unctio. cum rex regum veniet ab excelsis solio.
cum veniens floride castroas istis. virgo regem pariet. felix puer
perio. iudea misera sedens in tenebris. repelle maculam relicta tu-
nebris. et leo gaudio partus tam celebris. erroris mantine cedat!
illucet tuis. Postea canter. Aspicietis in usum necis. et. Tercio lo-
co sybilla gesticulose procedat. que inspiciendo stellam. cum gestu
mobili canter. Hec stelle novitas fert novum nuntium. quod
virgo natiens viri comeritum. et virgo permanens post puer-
perum. salutem populo pariet filium. Caelo labitur veste sub-
streta. nova progenies maris ad ubera. beata faciens illius uiscera.
que nostra meruit purgare solem. In mare gremium fletus no-
vis ventet. cum virgo filium intacta pariet. qui hosti huic
minas eximit. et nova secula rex novus faciet. Caelo uertit

mutters and shakes his head, unconvinced. Then the archangel Gabriel enters with Mary and announces the coming birth. A star appears, and the choir chants, “Hodie xpistus natus est” (‘Today the Christ is born’, the antiphon for Vespers on Christmas Day). The three kings arrive and discuss the meaning of the star with King Herod, who is then mischievously advised by the Archisynagogus (more humour here). The shepherds dispute with the Devil as to whether the news can be true. They all converge on the Child in the stable in Bethlehem. Herod orders the killing of the Holy Innocents. He is eventually eaten alive by worms and he topples from his throne and devils carry off his body (cheering from the audience). Joseph takes Mary and the Child to safety in Egypt. At times it is not so different from a modern Christmas pantomime.

Other plays here are about the King of Egypt during the Holy Family’s sojourn there and about Pontius Pilate. What becomes a saucy German song of a call girl asking the merchant for rouge to paint her face, when it was set to music by Orff (“Chramer, gip die varwe mier ...”), is actually part of the Pilate play and is sung in the manuscript by Saint Mary Magdalene: it occurs on folio 107v.

A curious thing about being made to wear white gloves in the reading-room – you will think I am obsessed with this topic – is that by now they had become really dirty, having evidently picked up 800 years’ worth of dust clinging to the pages, even though I was extremely careful to touch only the corners of the margins. Far from me soiling the manuscript with my hand, the transference of dirt was actually the other way round. In turn, blackened gloves surely themselves become a hazard if one then touches clean pages. There is a sad addendum to this. I carefully brought the gloves home as a precious souvenir, stained by the *Carmina Burana*, and my shocked wife found them and put them straight into the wash.

The manuscript has eight pictures, skilfully drawn but rather carelessly coloured. We will look at them in the order in which they appear, which is not quite their original sequence. On the present opening page is the famous Wheel of Fortune, relentlessly turning clockwise. On the left is a young man clinging to the rim of the wheel as he rises up, with the word “regnabo”, ‘I will rule.’ At the top he has become a

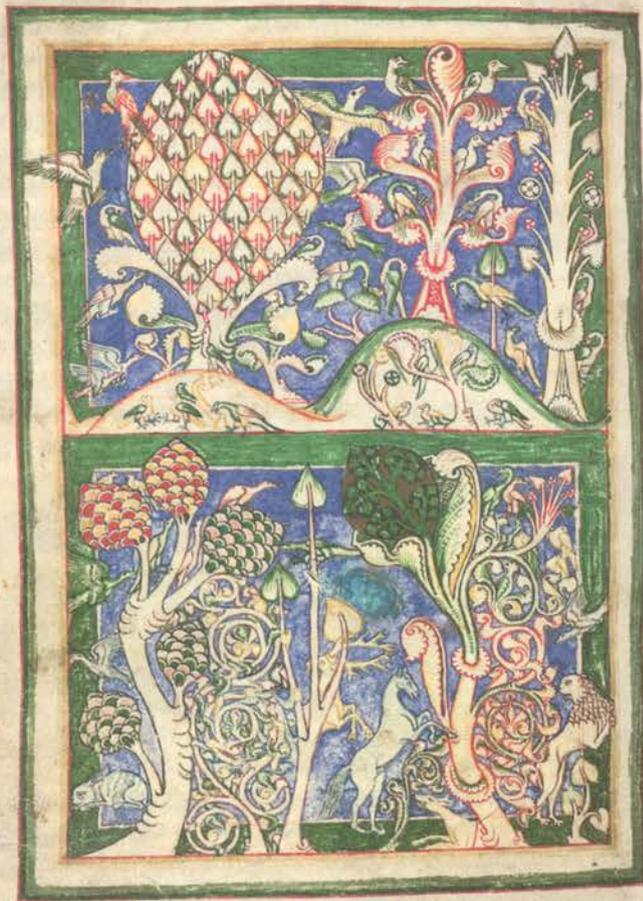
king, “Regno”, ‘I am ruling’; on the right he falls from the wheel and loses his crown, “regnavi”, ‘I have ruled’; and at the foot he lies crushed, “sum sine regno”, ‘I am without kingship.’ The six-spoked wheel is a perfect circle, nearly 3 inches across, but there is no trace of a compass hole in the centre, as in the orbits drawn in the Leiden *Aratea*, and the outline was perhaps traced around a disc or the edges of a glass or jug. The central figure seated on the wheel is interesting. This is always described as a representation of Fortuna herself, but notice two odd features. First, the figure is not actually turning the wheel from a position of independence but is actually seated within it, and so is presumably subject too to the revolution of fate. Stranger still, the figure looks like a man, with a pronounced shadow of a beard and growth on the upper lip. Fortuna, made famous in the *Consolatio Philosophiae* of Boethius (c. 480–c. 524), is invariably female. Staring at this picture, I suddenly realized that this is surely the regnant king himself in maturity, wearing the same crown as his little picture at the top and draped in the same green and white cloak as he wears when he comes tumbling down on



The great seal of Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor 1220–50, which probably provided the model for the figure seated on the Wheel of Fortune in the *Carmina Burana*

the right. This, probably the most widely reproduced image of Fortuna in all of medieval art, does not show Fortuna at all, who is nowhere in the picture. We have all been misled by the poem ‘O Fortuna’ in the lower margin, which is a later addition anyway.

Furthermore, the source of the image is probably identifiable and it was certainly male. It must have been noticed by art historians (although I do not recall having seen this mentioned in anything I have read) that the crowned figure here is modelled on the common image



of an enthroned king on the obverse of a medieval royal seal or imperial bulla. Among all the great seals of Europe at the time, the closest in composition is that of Frederick II as Holy Roman Emperor, which he became in 1220. The drawing and the emperor's seal are almost exactly the same size. Both designs show the same forward-placed left knee, the arms raised, and dangling folds of garments hanging from the neck. The crown and hair are virtually identical. If the figure is indeed copied directly from a charter of Frederick II, this may localize the production of the manuscript to some institution prominent enough to have received or had access to an imperial charter, and, more importantly, it dates it to not earlier than 1220.

The second picture fills the whole page of folio 64v. It shows two scenes in a verdant woodland. This must be a prime candidate for the earliest pure landscape in all of medieval art. It is generally assumed to represent springtime, the setting of many of the love poems, but this too is perhaps wrong. One poem opposite begins, "Ab estatis floribus amor nos salutat ...", "From the flowers of summer, love greets us ...". The picture is in two registers. In the upper level, the forest is full of birds. In the lower compartment, the forest includes animals, a crouching hare, a deer, a prancing horse, a creature in the undergrowth (perhaps a hound) and a lion. The clear separation of birds from animals is reminiscent of the cycles of creation miniatures in Romanesque Psalters and Bestiaries, for, according to Genesis, trees were made on the third day, birds on the fifth day, and animals not until the sixth day. The inclusion here of a lion is much more appropriate for the Garden of Eden than for a familiar spring day in the German woods. There are actually two poems on folio 56r which list, in the first, all the birds in nature (sparrowhawk, capon, stork, woodpecker, magpie, bee-eater, mew, ibis, turtle-dove, owl, jackdaw, vulture, parrot, dove, wood pigeon, raven, crow, hoopoe, fig-pecker, partridge, robin, and very many others) and, in the second, the animals, opening with the lion, as Bestiaries do also, and including "leopardus" (glossed "liebart" in German), "elephantus" (glossed "elephant"), and "ursos" (glossed "ber"), and others.

LEFT: Forests and woodlands as created by God, with birds above and animals below, including the hare, deer, horse and lion

campanum cum lyra. **D**o er zu der linden chom dar se
 deamit. diu minne twanch seze den man ludum faciam.
Er graif mir anden wiben lip. non absq. timore. et sprach
 ich mache dich ein wip dulcst et cum ore. **E**r war mir
 uf dar hemdelin. coepe detecta. et rante mir iudaz pur
 gelin. cuspide erecta. **E**nam den chocher unde den togen.
 bene uenabatur. der selbe herte mich betrogen. iuduz coeleat.
Suscipe flos florem quia flos designat amorem.



Ille de flore nimis sum capax amorem.
Hanc florem flos dulcissima semper odori.
Nam uelut aurora fiet tua forma decora.
Florem flori uide quem dum uideat michi ride.
Flore florem tuam uox amant philomene.
Oculi del flor rubro flos conuenit ori.
Flos in pictura non est flos in uita floris.
Qui pingit florem non pingit floris odorem.

The woodland scenes are representations of nature as it was created by God rather than simply pastoral springtime of the Middle Ages.

The next two illustrations are more explicitly on love. The one on folio 72v is long and narrow, and you need to turn the manuscript sideways to see a tall standing young man in red giving a flower to a girl in a long green dress, tied with a red and white waistband. The line of text immediately above opens, "Suscipe flos florem quia flos designat amorem ..." ("Flower, receive a flower, for a flower represents love ..."), a theme still promoted by florists on Valentine's day. The Virgin Mary holding a flower became a distinctively German theme in religious iconography in the thirteenth century. The picture on folio 77v is of doomed love and betrayal. It too is in two registers, although not quite in narrative sequence. Above, Dido meets Aeneas outside Carthage, she watches his departure from a high window, and then she stabs herself and falls off the battlements into a fire. Below, Aeneas and his companions gather on the shore, they are taken out in a little boat to their ship, and there Aeneas stands in the prow as he sails away.

The four remaining pictures illustrate drinking and gaming. On folio 89v is another long narrow miniature, showing three men drinking and a fourth making the sign of the cross over a cup, mimicking the Mass. It is above the song which starts, "Potatores exquisiti ..." ("Excellent drinkers ..."). Two gambling tables with men throwing dice are shown on folio 91r. This is above the poem "Tessera blandita fueras ...", cited above. On the next page two men are shown playing backgammon, as another brings in a drink. It is doubtless set in a tavern. The final picture shows a pastime which we might now regard as cerebral and commendable rather than as a frivolous vice: two people playing chess. It is above the poem on the rules of the game, also already mentioned. Very unusually in art, the chessboard in the illustration is laid out with an utterly credible disposition of the pieces. I have experimented with my own set. I can reach this exact position on a board in fifteen moves, if black begins. Whoever drew the picture knew how to play chess and has represented a moment in an actual game.

LEFT: A pair of lovers shown sideways, with a young man entreating the girl to accept a flower as a symbol of love

Non has hostes, tu rumpis fedem pacis

Et qui nulla sciunt omnia scire facit

Malus clausa sent tibi pandit archa thimae

Tu das ut deus, ut dare posse facit

Das aeo ut sum, das claudis curia scilicet

Specteris esse deus, hec quia amela facit

Ergo bibamus, ne sicamus, mas replamus

Quisquis suoz posterior, siue prior

Sic finis cura, moxer, sanuta, repetamus

Pone metum, et catos, perat, quinquena, curet

Baculus cur, cupit, unguis, tenax, apus

Noluit ergo, dicit, dicit, esse, tuus

Est mandant, dicit, unguis, tuus

Et sic, sic, sic, sic, sic, sic, sic, sic



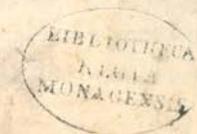
POTATORES, Equitibus, licet

sius sine sin, et brant, expectat, et cyphoz, inobtin, cyph

cebro, repent, non dormiant, et sermones, inaudita, pro

stant, **Q**ui, vane, non, prestis, sic, par, ab, his, factis, non, est, bo

hic, modest, uter, leas, mol, agrestis, modestus, et, sius, certus, restit



Although the pictures are all finely drawn and are of the same general date as the script, it is fairly clear that they were afterthoughts in a manuscript not originally designed to be illustrated at all. They fall at odd places in the text, sometimes at the very end of the groups of poems on the theme depicted. That is not normal in a medieval manuscript. The strange shapes of the spaces cannot have been intended. The cruciform outline of the Wheel of Fortune miniature is compressed badly out of shape at its foot and it still overlaps the first line of neumes below. The subject of Fortune is suitable for the song "O Fortuna" on the same page, but that song is an addition in the margin and is not integral either; it is not obvious which suggested which, the picture or the song. The image of the lovers is so cramped that it had to be inserted sideways. The scenes of Dido and Aeneas, however, do not fill the space available. The illustration of men drinking overlaps not only the last line of text above but also part of the red initial 'P' below the picture. The frame of the drawing of the backgammon players is painted over the line of text beneath. The only explanation is that the pictures, like many of those songs added into blank spaces and lower margins, were ongoing refinements not originally intended when the copying was begun or present in the manuscript's exemplar. The significance of this is that the manuscript was not a routine duplicate of a similar and comprehensive illustrated exemplar, but was an evolving work-in-progress which the scribes were adapting and upgrading as they went along. This, in short, is the original anthology, and not a copy.

What, then, was the compilers' source of the poems and songs? This may be the unique collection gathered together for the first time, but the individual pieces were culled from earlier lives. Specialists in medieval music and literature have worked themselves into frenzies of speculation on poems' origins and dates, arguing righteously with each other. These are dangerous waters of academia into which I am reluctant to dip as much as a toe. Scott Schwartz, a practising lutenist, calls these the 'Carmina Piranha' with good reason. Where the texts can be found elsewhere, as some can, almost all belong in the twelfth century, upwards of

LEFT: The opening of the drinking songs, 'Potatores', with men drinking at a bar and mimicking the sacred blessing of a chalice in the Mass

a generation earlier than the manuscript here. A few pieces cite specific dates. One poem describes the Peace of Venice between Pope Alexander III and Frederick Barbarossa in the summer of 1177, opening “Anno xpisti incarnationis ...” Another refers to the defeat of the French in the Crusades in 1187 and bewails the fall of Jerusalem to Saladin in the following year: “Heu, voce flebili cogor enarrare / facinus quod accidit nup[er] ultra mare / quando Saladino concessum est vastare / terram quam dignatus est xp[istu]s sic amare ...” (‘Alas, in tearful voice I am obliged to relate the crime which recently happened beyond the sea, when Saladin was allowed to devastate this land which Christ thought worthy of [his] love ...’). The verses report that the valiant Christian knights were outnumbered in battle 300 to one. It is easy to envisage a troubadour strumming this song around the courts of Europe, part news bulletin, part heroic romance. The latest absolute date seems to be the poem “Dum philippus moritur ...” on folio 52r, deploring the death of Philip of Swabia, youngest son of Barbarossa, murdered in Bamberg by the jealous count palatine of Bavaria. That took place on 21 June 1208.

Only one poem includes the name of its composer, “Versa est in luctum cythara walteri ...”, “The lute of Walter is turned to mourning ...” (an allusion to Job 30:31), on the widespread decline of religion and law. A pointing finger drawn in the inner margin of the manuscript approvingly commends this edifying verse, which is on folio 51v. The writer here is accepted as being Walter of Châtillon (1135–1204, he died of leprosy), French theologian and author of a popular epic on Alexander the Great. Others are attributed with greater or lesser certainty to Hugh of Orléans (c. 1093–c. 1160), of Paris and elsewhere, nicknamed ‘Primas’; Peter of Blois (c. 1130–1212), clerical lawyer and civil servant, secretary to Henry II of England; Philip the Chancellor (c. 1160–1236), chancellor of the cathedral schools of Notre-Dame in Paris from 1217; the enigmatic ‘Archpoet’, as he called himself, member of the household of Rainald of Dassel, archbishop of Cologne 1159–67; and to others. A much disputed question is whether the *Carmina Burana* could include verses by Peter Abelard (1079–1142), charismatic

RIGHT: The poem commemorating the devastating defeat of the French in the Crusades in 1189, “Heu, voce flebili ...”, naming Saladin as the victor

15
 ti. p re qucem subu. quare non subiti. hanc loco peniten
 tpe. uade iam peristi. Ergo ferent lacharus ducatur in
 exemplum. digne penitentib; ut sit eis templum. in quo

Huirus habitat sine passionis. hanc impleat et munit
 ipse suis donis.

QV. voce flebili cogor enarrare. facinus quod acci
 dit nup ultra mare. quando saladino concessum est uas
 tare. terram quam dignatus est xpe sic amare. **H**eu
 te timo anno post milleno. centum et octoginta tunc
 ti cum septeno. quo respexit dñs mundum sorde ple
 no. erigent de paupe paupem a ceno. **M**alus comes tri
 poli mentem ferent ream. magna cum ruiuude te
 nent tyberiam. turco suis frauctib; ducit in iudeam.
 atq; primū occupat totam galileam. **S**aladinus con
 uocat barbaros p gñum. habitantes phrigia. pontum
 usq; tyrum. agarenos populos araben et syrum. ab
 egypti finib; usq; in epirum. **G**emunt hircomili.
 turgio et edite. mauri atq; getuli barbari et scite. fi
 lii maub amon et isinahelute. atq; cum his omnib;
 sunt amalechite. **T**urcos ac massageras precipit ad
 esse. karari atq; sarmates nolunt hinc abesse. cur
 runt quadrianduli. medi atq; perse. undiq; conue
 niunt gentes sic diuis se. **T**erram intrant inlicitam

philosopher and first truly outstanding teacher in the schools of Paris. One candidate is the poem on folio 68r which begins:

Hebet sydus leti visus
cordis nubilo,
tepet oris mei risus,
carens iubilo ...

(‘My happy face’s star is dimmed by a cloud of my heart, the smile of my mouth grows cold, lacking joy ...’) It is a heart-rending lament of a lover who is cruelly banished from the company of his beloved, a position in which Abelard found himself in 1118, separated for ever from Héloïse, both by judicial ruling and by unspeakably cruel castration. The attribution hinges on a play on words in which the author describes his love as having a name like Phoebus, “cuius nomen est a phebea” (itself a correction in the manuscript), lighting up the world. Phoebus was the sun god, *helios* in Greek, which does sound a bit like Héloïse. It stretches plausibility but it is just possible, as a kind of intimate joke among lovers schooled in the classics.

The *Carmina Burana* were assumed by Carl Orff to be the informal songs of wandering minstrels and ‘goliards’ (the word derives from the name of Goliath and means those beyond the edges of society), but, where sources can be identified, they are often unexpectedly scholastic and even clerical. The manuscript is peppered with classical and biblical allusions. In the previous chapter we watched the breaking of the old monopoly of learning once held by the Benedictine monasteries, and the rise of new orders of clerics, such as the Augustinian canons (which included the Victorines), living in cities and interacting with the secular world, as the early monks tried not to do. There were huge changes to society and literacy in the twelfth century. The urban cathedrals, also staffed by canons rather than monks, increasingly too became centres of learning, reaching out to new audiences. Schools in French cathedrals such as Chartres, Orléans, Montpellier and Laon attracted students entirely on the reputation of those who were currently teaching

RIGHT: The poem “Hebet sydus leti visus”, describing the cruel separation of a pair of lovers, possibly composed by Abelard on his loss of Héloïse

bilib' uenul' amouil, dea me tibi subiao auxilio egeus
tuo iam cales q' pereo in ea. **Collaudate** meam pudicam
delectabilem amabilem amo frequenter eam p' quam
melius uigeo & gaudeo. illam pre cunctis diligo & uene-
ro ut deam. **Da** grinet auer' diu heide mit grüneme
lobe stat der wate der wider chate wan chli sere beide diu
ze var sich uerwandeloc ein senediu noc. manc nich an
der gäzen von der ih ungerne scheide. **Vnde supra.**

HEBET Sydus leti uisus cordis nubilo tepet
oris mei risus carens iubilo iure merito, occultat
nam p'pinq' cordis uigor floret in qua uoluit heruo.
In amois hec chorea cunctis p'uenit cuius nomen hec chorea p'p'he
bea tuccetuer & p'p'ualo feruit solo illam colo eam uolo mi-
ni solo inigo seculo. **T**empus quere cam diuine solitudinis
quo furabar in nocturne p'p'itudinis oris basia a quo stillat
cynamomum & uinatur cordis domum dulcis castia. **T**acet
illa tamen caret spet solaci. uinculit flos exaret tana spaci.
incausto annull' eam ut secura aduinculit p'fester uita hec
diuifio. **R**oter munt wie du dich swachelt. la din lachmeln
sehene dich swennt du so lachest. nach deme schaden din
delt nich wolgetan owi so veräner' stunde sol von minne
chlichen munde solich unminne ergan. **Item At.**

there. The Wheel of Fortune raised masters and scattered them too. The most enduring were those of Paris, capital of France and seat of the royal court. There Peter Abelard and Peter Lombard (d. 1160) taught in the schools of Notre-Dame, and Hugh of Saint-Victor (d. 1142) and his successors attracted students to the school on the left bank at the Augustinian abbey of Saint-Victor, where the Copenhagen Psalter might have been made, twenty minutes' walk south-east of the cathedral. These and other halls of study gradually coalesced over the course of a hundred years into what by the first half of the thirteenth century had become the university of Paris.

It was very international. Students converged from all across Europe. Relative peace and stable economies made this possible. Language was no problem, for all teaching and intellectual conversation was still in Latin. For much of the twelfth century, before the universities became corporate entities, many would-be students probably drifted opportunistically from one urban school to another. Sometimes they may have followed masters who were themselves itinerant. On returning home, a former student might set up his own school. In so far as wandering scholars were a reality, they belong to this period. They doubtless shared the romantic and high-spirited nature of all young people away from home for the first time, but they were not, by and large, rebels or anarchists. Many were clerics, or at least in minor orders, intent on one of the new careers in political or religious administration, and some were highly educated.

An example, among many, is Peter of Blois, who went first to the cathedral schools in Tours in the 1140s, studying literature and rhetoric under Bernard Silvestris, then on to Bologna in Italy, to learn Roman law with Umberto Crivelli and others, and finally in the 1160s to Paris, for the study of theology, where he subsidized his own attendance by taking pupils himself. He afterwards became successively tutor to the infant king of Sicily, secretary to the archbishop of Rouen, chancellor of the archbishop of Canterbury, archdeacon of Bath, letter-writer to Henry II, participant in the Third Crusade, and finally archdeacon of London. In his later life he received a letter from an old friend, now a monk of Aulnay abbey, asking him for memories of their rumbustious

youth together. Peter of Blois replied that he thought it appropriate to leave out the naughtier songs ("omissis ergo lascivioribus cantilenis") and instead he enclosed a couple written in what he calls his more mature style, to cheer his gloomy friend and to alleviate his boredom. By comparison with the style of those songs, up to about half a dozen of the *Carmina Burana* are now commonly attributed to Peter of Blois, including "Dum prius inculta / coleret virgulta / estas iam adulta..." on folio 36r ('When summer, now fully grown, occupies the bushes previously left bare ...'). It narrates how the singer spies under a green lime tree a pretty maiden named Phyllis, and he follows her across the meadows, led by hope. When in her youthful innocence she resists his advances, he forces himself fully into her ("me totum toti insero", frankly, this is rape) and afterwards he suffers the death pangs of an exhausted lover. That, by any definition, is a *lascivia cantilena*. It is not necessarily a record of an actual experience in the life of Peter of Blois, a supposedly celibate cleric, but it is a song of youthful bravado and imagination, no doubt originally sung to raucous cheers and applause. The name of Phyllis is a classical one, the daughter-in-law of Theseus, known in the twelfth century from the *Heriodes* of Ovid. It conveniently sets the scene in an acceptably fictional world.

Classical verse was very well-known to twelfth-century scholars. Virgil's *Aeneid* was the source for the songs about Dido and Aeneas. They did not need explaining as it was assumed that everyone would be familiar with such tales. Ovid is mentioned by name several times in the *Carmina Burana*. His *Ars Amatoria* and some epigrams of Martial were quite as explicit and raunchy as anything in the *Carmina Burana* and were common in medieval monastic libraries. (Catullus was not widely rediscovered until the fourteenth century.) There was one major difference. Classical verse is written in formal quantitative metre, with the words arranged into traditional and recurring patterns of long and short syllables, which have to be learned. The majority of the poems in the *Carmina Burana* are in simple rhythmical metres, like most modern verse, usually with rhymes at the end of each line or even within the lines. The pattern probably developed for writing hymns, a popular genre in the twelfth century. It is a form which lends itself to the beat of drums

est omnibus qui uolunt beari quedam excellentē p̄sō
solari ut amēt & faciat auarū. **S**üziu vrouw min la
mih del genēsen du bist min ogen schin. venul wi mih
scheiden nu la mih chēnigēn. dāer minne rēden.
ra nēmag mih nūmēer dā uerdēsen. **I** Te o y.

BONA Spel & dubia p̄mixta timore. soluit
in suspiria mentem animam dolore. que iam ducta
in uia manet in amore nec tamen mestum pel
lo dolorem. **H**ec aut est physica paupertas parum. & lo
a diuersitas dixerunt inuicem. quam p̄e amicitia car
tas cordis habet eas. omnis largus odit auarum. **I**n hoc
loco stringitur. nodus absq̄ nodo. nec ullus recipitur mo
dus in hoc modo s̄ qui nunquam soluitur p̄t̄ amicitia
git nodo. Lo ducunda iocunda. **H**anc amo p̄ce
tent. quam non uincat uola. quam p̄ferre poterit auarū
nec p̄sa. nec uoce nec uirtutē quam sit speciosa. flos in
amore sp̄rat odore. **T**e rogo sup̄pliciter. dea p̄bitat. la
sum in me uinculum fac amicitia. ne morat p̄t̄ulum
sit merat p̄t̄at. laus tibi soli laus tibi soli. **R**oseam
gerit facem formosa p̄t̄at. curat amore curat. ig
nēsq̄ si amicitia gerit etat sentio stimulum amorū
p̄t̄ amorū p̄t̄ amorū. **T**no p̄t̄o laudat. hēlio stu

and the rhythms of marching or dancing, exploited dramatically in the settings by Orff, where the rhymes are so insistent that they sound like repetition. As much as anything, the catchy metre of the songs probably disseminated them along the trade routes and into the repertoires of crusaders, courtiers and students travelling across Europe in the twelfth century. Poems which perhaps began as private statements of passion or moral teaching, often quite local or earnest, became universal by endless recitation along the road and after dinner in hostleries. That widespread migration of oral literature tells us much about conditions and routes of travel at the time. It may also explain some of the jumbled wording of the manuscript, which many scholars dismiss as having been carelessly assembled by the scribe. Any text transmitted by memory will gather small variants as it travels, and the compiler of the *Carmina Burana* may in fact have been meticulously conscientious in recording the exact wording of lyrics as they reached his ears.

Since Latin was the language of international literacy, verses composed in France were just as understandable in London, Cologne, Rome or Salzburg, at least by educated men. When the poems had lost their context so far that they had been reduced to dance songs in which women participated, however, extra verses were sometimes added in the German language. Many of the earliest records of vernacular languages of Europe are associated with women, who were at that time generally less Latinate than men. About forty of the love poems of the *Carmina Burana* have refrains in German, in the same metre as the Latin. These were probably supplied when the songs were used as rounds, with the different languages to be sung simultaneously by male and female voices. About a dozen other poems in the manuscript are partly or entirely in German. This is extremely early in the survival of any vernacular literature. Some German verses in the *Carmina Burana* are addressed to women, doubtless in the guise of admirers supposing that their suits might be more successful if the lady understood what was being asked of her. Examples are "Süziu vrouw min ...", 'My sweet woman ...', imploring her to enjoy the darts of Venus, and "Selich wip,

LEFT: Verses in the German language at the top of the page, including "Süziu vrouw min", 'My sweet woman', enticing her into love

vil süziz wip ...”, ‘Lovely lady, most sweet lady ...’, describing how the writer has sent her a love letter. Others are set in the voices of women themselves, addressed to men. There is a charming poem on folio 72r in which a woman is whispering to her lover who has secretly stayed all night, “Ich sich den morgen sterne brehen ...” (‘I see the morning star breaking ...’), urging him to slip away without being seen. It is reminiscent of Shakespeare’s Juliet to Romeo at dawn, “O, now be gone! More light and light it grows” (Act III, scene V). In one famous five-line verse in German in the *Carmina Burana* the protagonist gladly offers to sacrifice the wealth of the entire world to lie in bliss in the arms of the queen of England. In fact, in the manuscript itself the scribe originally wrote ‘king of England’ – “chunich van engellant” – which was crossed out and later altered to ‘the queen’ (“diu chunegin”). It seems to me in reality to make better sense as the wish of a woman, speaking German. The formidable Eleanor of Aquitaine (c. 1122–1204), queen of England 1152–89, was an unlikely object of male fantasy, but her son, the dashing Richard the Lionheart, was unmarried and nearby, a prisoner in Austria in 1192–4. This would furnish a plausible date and general locality for the composition of the German text.

It is generally accepted that the manuscript of the *Carmina Burana* was not compiled at Benediktbeuern itself, but probably somewhere further south in what is now Austria, then part of greater Bavaria. The script has pronounced Italianate features, as often in Austrian books, and the smooth pages have a southern feel to the touch, unlike the more suede-like texture of German parchment. (This is a judgement impossible to make from a photograph, or while wearing gloves.) If the figure on the Wheel of Fortune is indeed based on a seal of Frederick II, as suggested above, the manuscript is not earlier than 1220. However, the script begins ‘above top line’, as palaeographers call it. This needs explaining. Before writing a page of any manuscript, a medieval scribe generally ruled a precise grid of lines to keep the script straight and tidily circumscribed. Before about 1230, the scribe wrote his first line of text above the top horizontal line. After about 1230, scribes dropped

RIGHT: Verses in German, including (in line 2) the woman beseeching her lover to leave her bedroom, since she can see the morning star breaking

gualto pail cetio. **F**ir ludul ineffabil. meubris desertul
 labul. **I**ch sich den moegen sterne brehen in heit la dich nuht
 gerne sehen ul liebe deit min rat fuer wogentichen mit
 net wie tugentlich dar ster da fruntschaft hure hat. **I** **R.**
W **IRGO.** Quedam nobilis diu gratia zeholger umbe ul
 do si die buude do gebant. **R.** **Est.** **E**ia heia wiesi
 lanch. arha agra wie sifnach vincula vincula vin
 aila nunpebat. **V**entur quidam iuuenis pulcher zama
 bilul der demant ir den brul. **E**r uenich si bi der wizen hant.
 er fure si in dar uogel lanch. **V**entur fue aquilo der wart
 si verre in einen loch er wart si verre inden wart. **J.**
R. **Q** **U** **E** **L.** wal ein chint so wolgetan. ir ego dum flo
 rebam do brist mich du weest al. omnib; place
 bam. **R.** **H** **O** **R** **O** **C** **E** **M** **E** **D** **E** **C** **E** **N** **T** **E** **R** **R** **H** **E** **R** **E**
 iuxta uitam polite. **I**a wolde zhan die wifen gan. florel adu
 nare to wolde mich ein ungetan ibi deslorare. **E**r nam mich
 bi der wizen hant. **E** non uideceuter. er wil mich du wil
 lanch valde fraudulenter. **E**r gualt mir an das wize ge
 want. valde uideceuter er fure mich bi der hant multu
 uolenter. **E**r sprach vrowe gewer bal. nemur est remouu.
 dure wech der habe har planu z hoc coram. **I**z stat ein
 lunde wolgetan. non pail auita tu hab wh mine herphelan

their script below that line. We do not know why the change took place, except as part of a general trend towards compressed neatness in gothic design, but it happened extraordinarily fast and consistently right across Europe. There must be fluctuations in local practices but, as a rule of thumb, it is a remarkably useful dating guide for manuscripts from the first half of the thirteenth century. On that basis, a date of around 1220 to 1230, perhaps with slight flexibility into the early 1230s, seems justifiable.

Local allusions in the texts are consistent with an origin in the county of Tyrol or in the duchy of Styria (Steiermark), to the east of the Tyrol. One song, cited above, names the neighbouring states as being the Italian marches, Bavaria and Austria (Vienna). Another extols the unequalled hospitality of the provost of Maria Saal, identifiable as Heinrich, appointed bishop of Seckau in Styria in 1232, and it is often argued that the manuscript may have been compiled in the episcopal court of Seckau, perhaps under the patronage of Heinrich's predecessor Karl, prince bishop of Seckau 1218–31. This was the tentative conclusion of the great Munich palaeographer Bernhard Bischoff in his essay for the facsimile edition of 1967. Since then, Georg Steer of the university of Göttingen has argued in a massively exhaustive article in 1983 that the precise dialect of the German verses points further west, to the region of the south-west Tyrol, across from Styria. By linguistic parallels which I can neither fault nor confirm, he suggests a likely provenance in the Augustinian house of Neustift, just north of Brixen, founded in the 1140s, between Innsbruck and Salzburg, approximately fifty-five miles south-east of Munich. Saint Augustine, patron of the order, was shown presiding over the play about the nativity of Christ.

It is sometimes suggested, especially from an indignant Protestant perspective, that the *Carmina Burana* are merely coarse songs to be giggled over irreverently by smutty-minded monks. That was absolutely not their original purpose. An Augustinian community or episcopal household would expect engagement with the foibles of the secular world. They might interpret the cruder poems as allegorical or even pastoral, on the modest sins of the laity encountered daily in hearing confessions. More than that, however, we should see the *Carmina Bur-*

ana as product of that great twelfth-century shift from exclusively monastic learning to the migration of knowledge into the streets outside. Monks read books slowly from end to end, memorizing and ruminating meditatively; the laity and secular clerics, in contrast, consulted books and looked information up. This is strikingly represented in new kinds of manuscript. In the decades on either side of 1200 we find a mass of recent encyclopaedias, anthologies, florilegia, compendia and summaries, together with popular distillations of knowledge on traditional monastic subjects such as theology (Peter Lombard), biblical interpretation (the *Glossa Ordinaria*), biblical history (Peter Comestor), canon law (Gratian) and, not least, liturgy (Breviaries and Missals), all new forms of book. Even the texts of the Scriptures, hitherto known by lifetimes of study and memorization, were restructured and divided into numbered chapters for ease of consultation. It was as if the old knowledge was seen to be vanishing. The shallowness of the modern world is a recurring theme in the *Carmina Burana*. Remember that initial observation that the manuscript has the semblance of a Breviary, which is relevant here. They are tellingly similar books. The verses and songs were previously oral texts, as the daily psalms and prayers had been to monks, and these were all now being gathered into unified portable anthologies encompassing what was no longer known by heart. Many of the poems in the *Carmina Burana* had been transmitted aloud for up to a hundred years. The urge to commit them to writing emerged partly from a desire of people like the friend of Peter of Blois to recapture and record the joy of their distant youth (a common enough wish as generations pass), but especially from the new fashion for gathering up and documenting the world. The manuscript is an encyclopaedic handbook, an ordered anthology of secular and scholarly verse, entirely in keeping with the religious spirit of the early thirteenth century.

There is nothing visible in the manuscript to show how or when it eventually reached the Benedictine monastery at Benediktbeuern. If I had to guess, I might suppose it was not necessarily there before the eighteenth century, when the south German monastic libraries became universal repositories of books and served almost as public reference collections. When ecclesiastical property in Bavaria was secularized in

1803, the official responsible for inspecting Benediktbeuern was Johann Christoph, Freiherr von Aretin (1773–1824). He wrote that he found there a hidden cache of forbidden books, which, at least in the Protestant interpretation above, might have included songs considered to be inappropriate for monks. Von Aretin is said to have been so enchanted with the manuscript that he afterwards carried it about with him – like a priest with a Breviary, in fact – during the rest of his commission. In 1806 the library from Benediktbeuern was transferred to the state library in Munich, and von Aretin himself became its principal librarian.

In October 1843 the volume of the *Carmina Burana* was in an exhibition of treasures at the Staatsbibliothek when it was seen by chance by Jacob Grimm (1785–1863), one of the two anthologizing brothers now best known for collecting fairy stories. He returned to examine it and he persuaded the then librarian, Johann Andreas Schmeller (1785–1852), to publish an edition of the text in 1847, which they called *Carmina Burana, Lateinische und deutsche Lieder und Gedichte einer Handschrift des XIII. Jahrhunderts aus Benedictbeuern auf der K. Bibliothek zu München*, a title which conferred its modern name on the anthology. This edition, for all its faults, is still in print, although it is academically superseded now by the far greater multi-volume text edited by Hilka Alfons and Otto Schumann published from 1930 to 1970.

In 1934 a copy of the fourth edition of Schmeller's text, Breslau, 1904, was offered by a second-hand bookseller in Würzburg, Helmut Tenner, of Frank's Antiquariat, for the modest price of 3.50 Reichsmarks, and it was ordered by the relatively little-known composer Carl Orff, of Munich. It arrived on 29 March: "a truly memorable day for me," Orff afterwards recalled; "I opened it and on the very first page I found the famous depiction of 'Fortuna with her wheel' and underneath were the lines 'O Fortuna / velut luna / statu variabilis ...' The picture and the words enthralled me." You and I know, from looking at the manuscript, that this was not correctly the opening page at all, and that the 'O Fortuna' poem is in any case a scribal addition, but Orff neither knew nor cared. He was captivated. He began sketching music for the words immediately. He took the title of Schmeller's book to be that of the medieval text. A week later he wrote to his friend Michel Hofmann

(1903–68), archivist in Bamberg, asking what 'Burana' could mean, as he was unable to find the word in his Latin dictionary. Hofmann told him about the manuscript in the Staatsbibliothek, but there seems to be no evidence that Orff was interested in seeing it, or even in using the new and better edition of its text by Alfons and Schumann. Orff and Hofmann were soon in regular correspondence over the rapidly evolving cantata, one writing the music and the other advising on text. They took to signing themselves as 'Buranus' (Orff) and 'Carminus' (Hofmann). The composition was finally completed by Orff in August 1936 and the first performance took place in Frankfurt on 8 June 1937.

Munich in the mid-1930s cannot be considered now without reference to politics. Hitler came to power in 1933. How far Orff's setting of the *Carmina Burana* is or is not a piece of conscious Nazi propaganda is a hugely debated question. At one level, it is everything that the Nazis stood for – a great medieval Germanic text, unique in Europe, celebrating youth and masculine prowess, crusades and chivalry, transformed into a mighty massed spectacle with hypnotic drum beats and insistent rhythm. On the other hand, although Orff selected a disproportionately large number of the poems in German, Latin was regarded with suspicion and the originality of the music was seen by some among the Nazis as dangerously modern and foreign. One critic from the Reichsmusikkammer notoriously called it "bayerische Niggermusik". Orff's own political allegiances were deeply ambiguous. To his shame, he agreed in 1938 to rewrite the music for Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, to replace that of Felix Mendelssohn, then vilified as a Jew. The *Carmina Burana* were performed in Germany throughout the War, in Dresden, Essen, Cologne, Mainz, Stuttgart, Görlitz, Frankfurt, Göttingen, Hamburg, Aachen, Münster, Munich and doubtless elsewhere. The music and presentation rather than the words of the ancient manuscript certainly caught the spirit of the time. Joseph Goebbels wrote about Orff in his diary on 12 September 1944: "... 'Carmina Burana' exhibits exquisite beauty, and if we could get him to do something about his lyrics, his music would certainly be very promising. I shall send for him on the next possible occasion." As far as is known, that meeting never took place. After the War, Carl Orff – he

was by no means alone in this – reimagined himself as having been a secret opponent of Nazism, protesting innocence, probably untruthfully. When the *Carmina Burana* were first staged in Britain at the new Royal Festival Hall in June 1951, the music critic of *The Times* dismissed them as still politically sensitive, “simplicity itself – rum-tum rhythms, carolling in thirds, strophic tunes, German beer-garden and student song stuff ... naively Teutonic”. The association of the *Carmina Burana* with Hitler’s Germany never occurred to us at King’s High School when we heard the music played in our classroom fifteen years later, and we imagined it was all authentically medieval.

The settings of the *Carmina Burana* are now among the most widely performed pieces of all modern music. The opening four notes of ‘O Fortuna’ are perhaps as immediately recognizable as any since Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony. Listening to it now, it is clear that the music

A production of Orff’s *Carmina Burana* in the Württemberischer Staatstheater in Stuttgart in 1941, with a Wheel of Fortune at the back of the stage



Carl Orff (1895–1982), photographed in 1938, shortly after the completion of the score of his version of the *Carmina Burana*

of Orff has nothing whatsoever to do with actual medieval song. The samples of original musical notation in the manuscript itself bear no relation to the vast orchestral confections created around the words in the mid-twentieth century. The editing and reordering of the verses to suit the music has produced a text utterly unlike anything ever hummed in the 1100s by Walter of Châtillon or Peter of Blois. Nonetheless, the words of the *Carmina Burana*, a quaintly named compendium, now Munich, Clm 4660, inspectable by approved readers among the *Tresorhandschriften* in the reading-room of the *Staatsbibliothek*, have, thanks to Carl Orff, reached more people than medievalists could ever imagine. The figures will undoubtedly change utterly even before these words are in print, but, at time of writing, if you type ‘*Carmina Burana*’ into a general on-line search engine, you get approximately 2,600,000 hits; write ‘*Book of Kells*’ and up come 1,180,000; ‘*Très Riches Heures*’, 100,000; and ‘*Spinola Hours*’, under 6,000. Fortune’s Wheel has its surprises yet.