

MEDIEVALISM AND PAGANISM:
INTERPRETATIONS OF THE *CARMINA BURANA*

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ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses interpretations of goliardic poetry, in particular the manuscript collection known as *Carmina Burana*, between 1884 and 1930.

The Introduction to the thesis discusses the different approaches and methodology available to the scholar in the field of medievalism, and explains how this study relates to them.

Chapter 1 discusses goliardic poetry in its original context, and explores a number of themes in the poetry which were to be taken up by its later interpreters. It also addresses the question of the goliards' identities, describing and evaluating some of the theories which critics have proposed.

Chapter 2 explores the development of a new kind of medievalism in the late nineteenth century, deliberately opposed to the more familiar 'chivalric' medievalism of writers like Tennyson. It then goes on to discuss the relationship of John Addington Symonds' *Wine, Women and Song* to this form of medievalism.

Chapter 3 deals with some possible links between the poetry of Rupert Brooke and goliardic lyrics. It also explores the development of Brooke's self-image, suggesting that Helen Waddell might have drawn on his posthumous myth when writing *The Wandering Scholars*.

Chapter 4 looks at Waddell's *The Wandering Scholars* in the context of the collective mourning for the dead of World War I, and the growth of the 'Lost Generation' myth. It suggests that Waddell made imaginative links between the young men of the 'Lost Generation' and the twelfth century goliard poets.

Chapter 5 offers an overview of post-1927 translations of goliardic poetry, and contains a brief discussion of Carl Orff's 1937 cantata *Carmina Burana*.

INTRODUCTION

In 1884, John Addington Symonds wrote diffidently that:

‘When I look back upon my own work, and formulate the impression left upon my own mind by familiarity with the songs which I have translated, the doubt occurs whether some apology be not required for having dragged these forth from antiquarian obscurity.’¹

It must occur to the reader of this thesis that some explanation, at the very least, may also be required for the even more dubious enterprise on which it embarks – not merely a study of obscure goliardic poems, but, as it were, a second-hand study of them – the study of other writers’ interpretations of the goliard poets in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The initial justification for dragging forth Symonds’ *Wine, Women and Song* and even Helen Waddell’s much better known *The Wandering Scholars* must lie in an understanding of the different possibilities which medievalism (by which I mean the study of post-medieval interpretations of literature, history and culture) has offered to the scholar in recent years.

1. Methodology

Two main approaches have been used by scholars in what is still a relatively new and developing field of study. The first, discussed below, is an older and perhaps more straightforward approach. It is in an exploration of the second methodology

¹ John Addington Symonds, *Wine, Women and Song: Medieval Latin Students’ Songs now first translated into English verse with an essay by John Addington Symonds* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1907: first edition 1884), p.190

that we can see how much is to be gained from its application to a study of 'medievalist' versions of the goliards.

The first approach is concerned with the achievements of individual authors, with the means by which they have transformed a medieval original into a modern text, and with the artistic merits of the results. Although most studies of this kind place the author's work in the context of contemporary medievalism, the writer's main concern is not to discuss the social and cultural factors which might have led to the author's choice of source material, but rather to examine the merits of what they produced having chosen it. The context into which the work is placed is often a biographical, rather than a historical or cultural one.

A recent study which utilises this methodology is Elisabeth Brewer's book on T. H. White's Arthurian tetralogy, *The Once and Future King*. Beginning her work with a brief biography of White, Brewer goes on to remark in her introductory chapter that:

The Once and Future King is probably the last major retelling of the story based on Malory, set in the Middle Ages and in the chivalric tradition... None has so lovingly and minutely evoked the medieval scene, or so painstakingly endeavoured to interpret *Le Morte d'Arthur* for his contemporaries, showing us not only how Arthur's tragedy unfolded, but also endeavouring to bridge the gap between medieval ways of thinking and our own.¹

Brewer's main aim in studying White is to assess the artistic merit of his transformed version of the Arthurian story, exploring in passing how accessible he makes the medieval material to modern readers. Throughout, her approaches are twofold: comparative and biographical. Large parts of the study compare the book to its major medieval source, Malory, discussing the points of similarity

¹ Brewer, Elisabeth, *T.H. White's The Once and Future King* (Cambridge: D S Brewer, 1993), p.18

and divergence, and assessing whether the changes have proved to be successful or otherwise. In the chapter 'White and Malory', Brewer offers a detailed comparison of the two authors. She draws attention, for example, to the fundamentally different interpretation which the two place on the Arthurian story: Malory sees the downfall of the Round Table as a political, institutional tragedy, while White is drawn to see the relationships between Arthur, Guinevere and Lancelot, and between Arthur and Mordred, as lying at the heart of the tragedy. She further draws our attention to issues such as White's infusion of Malory's entirely serious story with a consistent element of comedy¹.

The major part of the book, then, is a study of the ways in which White has transformed Malory and made a perhaps inaccessible medieval text into a popular modern novel. As Brewer writes:

The Sword in the Stone can dissolve the prejudices of those who believe that the medieval is dull, remote and irrelevant, as it creates interest in the Arthurian characters and draws the reader into the story, even if it does not present a veracious picture of medieval life.²

The qualities of the transformation, however, are seen as dependent on White himself, rather than on the cultural milieu in which he wrote, and this leads on to the second important element in the study – biography. Accounting for important themes in *The Once and Future King*, Brewer refers frequently to White's life and, in particular, to his relationship with his mother. In his characterisation of Guinevere, and even more so, of Morgause, she argues that White's difficult relationship with his mother was highly influential³. Elsewhere, she suggests that:

¹ Brewer, *The Once and Future King*, pp. 207 – 225 passim

² Ibid, p.207

³ Ibid, p.55

His genuine and sympathetic interest in young boys, and his life-long passion for both learning and teaching led him readily to cast himself as tutor in the shape of Merlyn¹.

This study, then, is precisely focused on an individual text and author. Explanations for the end result are sought in the artistic merits of the author, or in the facts of his biography. Although Brewer attends to the cultural context within which White was writing, she does so only in a very minor way. For example, she suggests that 'White was following a literary interest of the day in being consciously or unconsciously attracted to the mythic'². Her study of the wider cultural context is all directed towards the greater illumination of the individual work.

This methodology can, in some cases, be extended to cover a large number of texts, by surveying different interpretations of the same material, critically assessing the merit of the different transformations imposed on the work by each writer. One obvious example is in post-medieval treatments of Arthurian legend. This forms such an essential part of English literature and culture that the medieval material can almost be regarded as a blank canvas onto which each individual author can project their own interests and artistic abilities. Its popularity has remained constant, and many major authors have tried their hand at producing a version. Beverly Taylor and Elisabeth Brewer surveyed the results in *The Return of King Arthur*³. Again, although Taylor provides brief introductory chapters on the cultural context of the works which detail the rise and fall in popularity of Arthurian material, they are very far from being the main

¹ Ibid, p.22

² Ibid, p.19

³ Beverly Taylor and Elisabeth Brewer, *The Return of King Arthur: British and American Arthurian Literature since 1900* (Cambridge: D S Brewer, 1983)

focus of the study. Rather, the book is concerned with the process of transformation which the medieval texts have undergone, and with the artistic merits of the post-medieval results. The task of examining in depth the influences which led these authors to choose the Arthurian legends in the first place, or any fluctuations in the popularity of the material as a result of social and cultural factors, is left to a different kind of study. It is this second approach that will prove most fruitful in relation to this thesis.

This second methodology focuses mainly on the growth and popularity of ideas and concepts, and far less on a critical assessment of individual texts. It studies the social and cultural factors leading to a growth of interest in a historical period, a type of literature, or even a code of behaviour and ideas such as chivalry. It does not focus in detail on particular medievalist works, but examines a wide range. The artistic merit of each becomes largely immaterial: rather, the aim is to view and assess the works as a manifestation of widespread popular interest in the phenomenon under review. The word 'works' is used advisedly, since studies of this type do not draw their evidence solely from literary texts or even paintings: architecture, pageantry, records of social events, travel journals, scientific studies and military recruiting posters can all be cited as evidence of a general cultural fascination with a particular medieval idea.

Two studies which use this methodology to great effect are the justly well-known *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* by Mark Girouard¹, and the very recently published study by Andrew Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians: Inventing the Old North in Nineteenth Century Britain*. The reference to British culture in both these titles points the way to an understanding of their

¹ Mark Girouard, *The Return To Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981)

methodology. They describe, not the transformation of a single medieval text by an individual author, but the collective invention of an idea or concept by a society. In the introduction to his book, Andrew Wawn writes that:

In many ways, the Victorians invented the Vikings ...¹

Explaining that the word 'Viking' had not even been recorded in the Oxford English Dictionary until 1807, he then goes on to examine the many cultural dilemmas in Victorian England to which the 'invention' of English society's old northern progenitors provided a possible solution, and to explore the roots of the fascination with Viking culture and history, especially the Icelandic sagas, which he identifies in Victorian England. He identifies many factors, ranging from philological interest in a lost common Indo-European language to the growth of regional identity and the appropriation of Viking ancestry by the ancient 'Danelaw' regions of England, which were involved with and might have accounted for the unprecedented interest in the Old North in Victorian England².

Although Wawn's study does include chapters on individual writers such as Morris, his description of the invention of the Vikings represents an attempt to track a cultural phenomenon, rather than an examination of individual writers' work. Thus his early chapters offer an overview of English involvement with Iceland between the Middle Ages and the nineteenth century, the better to support his contention that the Victorian interest in Iceland amounted to nothing less than a widespread cultural invention. The following chapters lay the foundations for a description of the nineteenth-century phenomenon, by describing the scholarly work done on Icelandic history and literature during the

¹ Andrew Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians: Inventing the Old North in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Cambridge: D S Brewer, 2000), p.3

² Ibid, pp. 30 - 33

eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Wawn then builds on his early chapters with studies of the growth and reception of some of the most popular texts of Icelandic literature in Victorian times, and case studies of particularly important figures in the Viking revival – the philologist George Stephens and William Morris. He concludes his study by examining the phenomenon of travel to the Icelandic saga-sites in the nineteenth century. His book explores a general cultural fascination with the concept of the Vikings, which he shows to have manifested itself in a number of different ways. It is not the study of a particular author's transformation of his sources, but of the popular use of the medieval past as inspiration for a post-medieval cultural movement.

In *The Return to Camelot* Mark Girouard treats the development of the 'code of the gentleman' in a very similar way. Like Wawn, he is examining the growth of a social code and the extent to which it was inspired by ideas about medieval conduct, and, rather than focusing on specific texts, he studies the development of Victorian 'chivalry' as a diffuse, society-wide movement. In the concluding chapters he writes that:

By the end of the nineteenth century a gentleman had to be chivalrous, or at least if he were not he was not fully a gentleman.¹

He argues that the Victorian enthusiasm for the medieval had led to the permeation of chivalry throughout the upper classes of England, and that this phenomenon manifested itself in every possible way. His first chapter takes in, among many other diverse examples, the wreck of the *Titanic*, a children's play of 1912, and a mock-tournament organised by the ninth Duke of Marlborough.

¹ Girouard, *The Return to Camelot*, p.260

Girouard contends that all of these events can be read as indicators of what the code of chivalry had come to mean to the Victorians:

A thin but genuine thread connects the Duke of Marlborough in his suit of armour to Samuel Guggenheim in his dinner-jacket. The latter was dying like a gentleman, and how gentlemen lived and died was partly determined by the way in which they believed knights had lived and died¹.

Elsewhere in his introductory chapter, he makes it clear that his intent is to study the growth and development of a social movement:

...it was the product of a particular set of circumstances which no longer exist. What those circumstances were, how it happened that Bayard, the Black Prince, King Arthur and their companions came back from the days of chivalry to crowd into literature and painting, and influence the lives and characters of officers, gentlemen, schoolboys, lovers and Boy Scouts, is at least an interesting story.²

Girouard's last sentence demonstrates the vast range of material on which he is prepared to draw in describing the impact of medieval chivalry on Victorian society. In his words, his evidence includes not just 'literature and painting', but 'lives and characters', and to support his arguments about the permeation of the chivalric code through all levels of upper class society, he cites such examples as the courtship and marriage of Edwin Lutyens, the attitude of Victorian schoolmasters to their charges, or the letters of soldiers from the trenches. Artistic merit is clearly largely irrelevant in the case of much of this evidence. His study, as Wawn's, is not a study of the interaction of two works of literature, but of the re-invention of a real or imagined medieval cultural concept (chivalry) by another society (the Victorian upper class).

¹ Ibid, p.7

² Ibid, p.14

Two approaches to medievalism are, then, presently available to the scholar in the field. The first focuses on the transformation of texts by individual authors, while the second focuses on the re-invention of cultural or historical concepts by entire societies. The work included in this study is mostly based on the second methodology, although, as we shall see, it does owe something to the first.

Following the work of Wawn and Girouard, it seeks to identify the social and cultural factors which led to the post-medieval popularity of the goliards, and, like them, its main interest is in studying this development rather than in critically assessing any single transformation of a medieval text. It will, in Girouard's words, draw its evidence from 'lives and characters' as well as from 'literature and painting'. However, it begins from a rather narrower starting point than either of the two studies quoted above, examining the reception of a particular body of literature, and spends time in considering two major interpretations, those of John Addington Symonds and Helen Waddell.

It will explore nineteenth and twentieth-century images of the body of literature usually described as 'goliardic'. An exact definition of 'goliardic poetry' has eluded scholars for some time, and I offer my own contributions to the debate in Chapter 1. For the purposes of this study, the best known manuscript, and the major source of material (though by no means the only one) for most of the writers whom it will consider, is the manuscript known as *Carmina Burana*.

2. The Carmina Burana

The *Carmina Burana* was discovered in the Bavarian monastery of Benediktbeuern in 1803¹. Among manuscripts containing goliardic poetry, it is unique in its size and in the variety of its contents. More than half of the lyrics it contains are found in no other medieval manuscript. The poems, mainly in Latin with a sprinkling of German, include love lyrics, drinking and gambling songs, satirical poetry attacking the greed and corruption of the medieval Church, and parodies of the Bible and liturgy, but also feature a Crusaders' hymn, and a group of mystery plays at the back of the manuscript. While most of the lyrics resist attribution, a significant minority have been ascribed to well-known Latin poets of the twelfth century such as Walter of Châtillon, the Archpoet, Hugh Primas and Philip the Chancellor.

The date of *Carmina Burana*'s compilation is usually given as early to mid-thirteenth century: Bryan Gillingham, for example, suggests a dating between 1200 and 1250, and contends that the manuscript cannot be earlier than 1177². As the above paragraph suggests, however, a significant proportion of its contents are known to be the work of twelfth-century authors. The manuscript's contents therefore appear to date from a period slightly before its compilation, which would have a certain logic: there is often a lapse of time between the flourishing of a particular genre and the production of 'anthologies'. While the evidence of the script and the substantial number of German poems suggests that

¹ There have been various editions of the manuscript: the most recent complete edition, and the one mainly referred to in the writing of this thesis, is C.Fischer and H.Kuhn (eds), *Carmina Burana: Die Lieder der Benediktbeurer Handschrift* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1979). A facsimile edition of the manuscript was prepared by Bischoff in 1967 (see footnote 2 to page 11).

² Bryan Gillingham, *A Critical Study of Secular Medieval Latin Song* (Ottawa: Institute of Medieval Music, 1995), p.37

the *Carmina Burana* was produced somewhere in Germany¹, it has so far proved impossible to state whether or not it originated at Benediktbeuern itself, or to discover anything of its history before 1803. It is not listed in any records of the monastery library, which was a substantial one (in 1250 they possessed 247 manuscripts)², nor does it appear in eighteenth-century surveys of the collection³. Apparently it only came to light when the monastery was dissolved⁴, and more romantic scholars have speculated that it led a ‘kind of stowaway existence, hidden to save it from the censor’s gall’⁵. It was only made available to Victorian scholars in 1847, in an edition by J.A. Schmeller.⁶ Its size, its variety, and perhaps to a certain extent its attractively mysterious history, meant that it was the source to which the authors of this study turned most readily when producing their own translations or interpretations of the goliards.

In spite of their failure to track down the *Carmina Burana* itself, scholars and readers had been aware and made use of some goliardic poetry for many centuries prior to 1803 – first in the service of Reformation anti-Catholicism⁷, and later as a matter of antiquarian interest. There are records of both German and English scholars visiting the University Library at Cambridge to work on the manuscript collection known as the Cambridge Songs⁸, and Thomas Wright brought the force of Victorian antiquarianism to bear on the genre when he edited the collection of longer, anticlerical goliardic poems entitled *Latin Poems*

¹ Bernhard Bischoff, *Carmina Burana: Faksimile-Ausgabe der Handschrift Clm4660 und Clm4660a* (Brooklyn: Institute of Medieval Music, 1967), p.27

² Bryan Gillingham, *The Social Background of Secular Medieval Latin Song* (Ottawa: Institute of Medieval Music, 1998), p.110

³ *Ibid*, p.114

⁴ Bischoff, *Carmina Burana*, p.30.

⁵ Helen Waddell, *Medieval Latin Lyrics* (London: Constable, 1929), p.341

⁶ J.A. Schmeller, *Carmina Burana* (Stuttgart: Bibliothek des litterarischen Veriens, 1847)

⁷ Mathias Flacius Illyricus, *Varia doctorum piorumque virorum de corrupto Ecclesiae statu poemata* (Basle: Ludovicus Lucius, 1557)

⁸ Karl Breul, *The Cambridge Songs: A Goliard’s Songbook of the Eleventh Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915), pp. 30 –31.

*Commonly Attributed to Walter Mapes*¹. It might perhaps have been expected that Schmeller's initial 1847 edition would pave the way for a whole host of popular interpretations. However, in comparison to material such as the Arthurian cycle, the goliards have enjoyed only a brief and very anomalous incursion into the world of popular, non-scholarly literature. Their rise to fame began with the relatively cordial reception given in 1884 to John Addington Symonds' book of translations, *Wine, Women and Song*. It ends in literary terms with the runaway success of Helen Waddell's best-selling (and still well known) book *The Wandering Scholars*, and in more general cultural terms with the composition in 1935 of Carl Orff's cantata *Carmina Burana*. Since then, the goliards have gone into quiet retirement: while scholarly commentaries and even the occasional book of translations continue to be printed, no book has approached the phenomenal sales figures or the wild public adulation accorded to *The Wandering Scholars*. Though Orff's *Carmina Burana* continues to be a firm favourite for choral society performances, the attraction lies in the charm of the music rather than in any romantic fascination with the authors of the libretto. To borrow Wawn's description, Helen Waddell might have been said to have 'invented' the goliards, with the assistance of Symonds and others in preparing the way over the previous forty years. This study attempts to give an account of the background to, and the reasons for, such an invention.

Here a brief explanatory diversion is necessary. Despite the warm reception and lasting fame of Orff's cantata, I have not chosen to give substantial consideration to it in this thesis for a number of reasons, although I hope that this work might offer a platform for a future independent study. The first and most important

¹ Thomas Wright, *Latin Poems Commonly Attributed to Walter Mapes, collected and edited by Thomas Wright*, (New York and London: AMS Press, 1968, first edition 1841)

reason concerns culture and language barriers. This study is in all other respects an exploration of English literature and culture within a fifty-year period, and studies the impact of such major events as the 1914-18 war on English society and literature. To add a detailed study of a German cantata would require a similar study of the changes in German society over such a period, and in particular an explanation of the very different impact of the war on the losing side. Factors unique to German society would undoubtedly emerge, such as the goliards' distorted survival in students' songbooks.¹ It is not possible to give an adequate account of these within the restrictions imposed on a DPhil thesis.

Furthermore, the interpretation of the goliards offered by Orff is, of course, musical rather than literary. The kinds of expertise required for a detailed study of Orff are therefore those of the German cultural scholar and of the musician, and possessing neither, I have decided to confine this study to English interpretations of the goliards during the period mentioned (1884 – 1930), and have made only brief reference to Orff in the Conclusion. However, I hope that the themes and arguments presented in this thesis will be of relevance to any scholar contemplating a future study of *Carmina Burana*, or of medievalist aspects of Orff's music.

Returning to the material which I have been able to include, the discussion above has, I hope, explained the methodology which might most usefully be applied to 'medievalist' versions of the goliards. By tracking their fate over a fifty-year period, it may well be possible to discover a good deal about the cultural forces at work in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is also my belief that a study of their fortunes will expand our understanding of 'medievalism' as a

¹ See *Gaudeamus! Carmina vagorum in usum laetitiae*, ed. J.V. Scheffel (Leipzig: Teubner, 1877)

phenomenon, and will demonstrate that medieval material was used in the service of a much greater range of ideological positions than has hitherto been thought. The following section describes the potential of this approach in more detail.

3. Medievalism, morals, and 'personalities'

In *The Return to Camelot* Mark Girouard gives an excellent account of the development of what we might call 'chivalric' medievalism – the Victorian cultural appropriation of the code and trappings of medieval chivalry, and the matter of the Arthurian legends, in the service of nineteenth century establishment mores. This account of medievalism as an essentially conservative force, informed by the chivalric revival, has been dominant in most studies to date. Girouard writes that:

It was Tennyson's version of chivalry, "Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the King" which provided what might be called the establishment ethic of chivalry...¹

It is this establishment ethic which has largely occupied scholars to date, although even Girouard points out in his book that chivalry could be used for purposes which were very far from being conservative or acceptable to Victorian morality. However, some recent work has argued convincingly that we should see medievalism as a much more multi-faceted phenomenon, containing a significant proportion of socially or culturally radical elements. Scholars like

¹ Girouard, *The Return to Camelot*, p. 196

Paul Hardwick have explored the possibilities of a medievalism which rejected the conservative connotations of the chivalric revival and sought instead to find ways in which the medieval world could be harnessed to a more radical agenda. In his forthcoming work on Langland, Hardwick explores the way in which the medieval radicalism expressed in *Piers Plowman* was used by some nineteenth century writers as material which would support a progressive ideal of medievalism and offer a viable alternative to the essentially undemocratic ideals of chivalry. He writes of:

‘ “progressive medievalism”; that is, a medievalism which is not the “sham old” of superficial decoration, but a model for an ideal future state – a state which ... is necessarily socialist in character.’¹

Hardwick describes how those Victorians opposed to the effect of medievalist chivalry on their own society used alternative medieval models to challenge the validity of their opponents’ evidence and to justify their own aims.

In the course of explaining the goliards’ rise to fame, this study will describe another facet of nineteenth and early twentieth century medievalism, related to Hardwick’s, but far from identical to it. As Chapter 2 suggests, there was no place for the goliard poets within the boundaries of the ‘establishment ethic’ of chivalry which Girouard describes. Their growth in popularity required the construction of an entirely different medievalism, with an agenda quite opposed to the social and moral one which Tennyson and his followers provided. While describing the growth of this form of medievalism, it will also explore ways in which this form of medievalism contributed to the growth of a particular personality, or image, among nineteenth and early twentieth century society – one which manifested itself in ‘lives and characters’ as much as in art.

¹ Paul Hardwick, *Close to History: A Vision of Long Will* (unpublished paper)

The development of this personality is analogous to that of the 'chivalric' personality which Girouard describes in *Return to Camelot*. For him the story begins in the early nineteenth century and ends in the trenches of the First World War. He argues that the ideals presented to upper class young men of that period, on which they modelled their behaviour and morals, were those of chivalry. Thus the dominant image among the '1914 generation' was that of the chivalrous young knight. This, Girouard argues, was at the root of their disastrous enthusiasm for war.

The suggestion that many of the young men who died in the First World War were bitterly deluded by the ideals of chivalry has become an almost commonplace idea, and Girouard backs the idea up ably with the evidence of recruiting literature, soldiers' letters, and official language. He also points out how many of those who died were remembered in the language of chivalry. The grim realities of war, however, are pinpointed as the major factor in the demise of the chivalric ideal:

As a dominant code of conduct it [chivalry] never recovered from the Great War partly because the war itself was such a shatterer of illusions, partly because it helped produce a world in which the necessary conditions for chivalry were increasingly absent.¹

Girouard sees the chivalric character as the defining image of the upper class gentleman of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and the main, disastrous impulse behind the 1914-18 war as a chivalrous one. He writes that 'There are times when the Great War can seem like a nightmare parody of the Eglinton Tournament'².

¹ Girouard, p.290

² Ibid, p.289

However, just as medievalism is a broader phenomenon than has perhaps been suspected, so the range of social images available must be seen as a more varied one. In its charting of the goliards' progress over a period of time which substantially overlaps that dealt with in Girouard's book, this thesis explores an alternative model for young upper class 'lives and characters', and the contribution of medievalism to that model. Perhaps in passing it will also challenge the dominant view of the Great War as the Eglinton Tournament with machine guns.

The story of this different facet of medievalism, and of the personality it influenced, begins with a group of late nineteenth century writers directly opposed to the social and moral conservatism of 'establishment' chivalry. Swinburne, Pater and their associates based their distaste for the chivalric society on moral and philosophical beliefs. The subjective morality of Pater's *Renaissance* led his circle to object strongly to the coercive group ethic immortalised in Tennyson's *Idylls*. Chapter 2 of this thesis gives an account of how they drew on different medieval originals to create a vision of the Middle Ages designed to contradict and undermine the prevailing image of a golden era of chivalry. The chapter goes on to explore the relationship of Symonds' *Wine, Women and Song* to this 'anti-chivalric' medievalism. Chapter 3, and the beginning of Chapter 4, explore the ways in which, as in Girouard's account, the lives and characters influenced by this alternative to chivalry developed in the early twentieth century, and indicate important links with the Georgian movement. Chapter 3, in particular, gives an account of how Swinburne and Pater's philosophy developed in the work and self-image of Rupert Brooke – a self-image which is remarkably reminiscent of the goliards.

Chapter 4 seeks to add something to the account of the First World War as shattered chivalry, and by doing so to explain the success of *The Wandering Scholars*. It argues that in partnership with the chivalric impulse driving young men to volunteer, a 'Georgian' impulse was also at work, encouraging them to seek out intense physical and spiritual experience, and to satisfy their youthful, vagabond dreams of adventure. It then examines the ways in which the War dead were remembered, in particular through the myth of the Lost Generation, contending that the lost young men were remembered as free-spirited Georgians as often as they were hailed as perfect chivalrous knights. By examining this myth more closely, we finally see the reason for the *Scholars'* popularity: Helen Waddell had re-invented the medieval goliards as dead Georgians in a conscious or unconscious attempt to console a bereaved nation.

The application of Wawn and Girouard's methodology to the later interpretations of the goliards, then, can provide some rich insights into nineteenth and twentieth century cultural history. The story of the goliards' rise to fame is also the story of the growth, development, tragic death and subsequent remembrance of a particular character and image, and their various incarnations provide a mirror in which we can see that image reflected.

An essential prerequisite for this exploration, however, is an appreciation of the goliards and their writings in their 'natural habitat' – the literature and society of the twelfth century. Without such an appreciation we cannot hope to assess the faithfulness or otherwise of Symonds or Waddell's recreation. Chapter 1, which follows, attempts to fulfil this requirement.

CHAPTER 1

DICING ON THE ALTAR

To arrive at a just understanding of the role which goliardic poetry played in the society of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and to understand the reasons for their anomalous popularity, it is essential to understand how the cultural questions and debates in these societies created a context in which the goliard poets would be well received. Understanding the post-medieval context in this way provides the student with half the pieces in the jigsaw puzzle that is medievalism. However, to reach a full appreciation of the fit between post-medieval need and medieval material, it is equally essential to understand the medieval literature itself and the role which it played in society at the time of its creation. Without a thorough knowledge of what goliardic poetry *is* we will have no way of appreciating why it was goliardic poetry and no other medieval text that seemed so relevant to the reading public of 1927, when they bought *The Wandering Scholars* in droves. This chapter, then, is an attempt to fill in the other half of the puzzle through a discussion of the main characteristics of goliardic poetry, and of the role it fulfilled in its own time.

Such a task would, however, if fully carried through, encompass several theses in its own right, since even the apparently simple job of deciding what material we should define as 'goliardic poetry' has been the subject of intense scholarly debate. The enormous variety of literature contained within the *Carmina Burana* alone has proved very hard to confine to a single category: the poems range from naive spring songs to the complex satire of Primas, Walter of Châtillon, or the Archpoet, and from stinging anti-ecclesiastical diatribes to a recruiting hymn for the Third Crusade. Thus when modern scholars have come to such a compendium with the aim of producing a comprehensive definition of 'goliardic poetry', they have almost inevitably sought to exclude or devalue certain tranches of material in their attempts

to define a more coherent body of work. A.G. Rigg, for example, argues that the word 'goliardic' can only be correctly applied to those poems which appear with attributions to 'Goliard', 'Primas', or 'Archipoeta' in the surviving manuscripts. This would, as he points out, exclude nearly all songs of love, the tavern and general 'good life'¹. Allen, on a different but related tack, sees the goliards as a specific product of the twelfth-century schools, and argues that perhaps one-third of the 'erotic lyrics' in the *Carmina Burana* are attributable to a separate class of poets².

In contrast to this view of the goliardic tradition, other writers have sought to define goliardic poetry in terms of the lowest common denominator, focusing on the universal themes of love and good life which goliardic poetry shares with many other secular genres. Ignoring the intellectual and satirical complexities of the poems, E.D. Blodgett and Roy Swanson state that the major themes of goliardic poetry are:

1) The joys and sorrows of secular love, 2) the satisfaction of every kind of physical appetite, and 3) physical and moral insufficiency³.

This definition leaves no room for the clear evidence that many of the *Carmina Burana*'s authors were highly educated and trained churchmen, nor for their frequent demonstrations of moral commitment to a more humane vision of Christianity and to the exposure and vilification of corrupt ecclesiastical practices.

On the other hand, the approaches taken by scholars such as Allen and Rigg deny the goliards' affinities with other secular poetry, and while trying to give credit to goliardic authors for their genuine attempts to criticise and reform a corrupt Church,

¹A.G.Rigg, 'Goliard and other Pseudonyms', in *Studi Medievali* 3rd s.18 (1977), 65 - 109, p. 109

²P.S.Allen, *Medieval Latin Lyrics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931), p.283

³E.D.Blodgett and R.A.Swanson, *The Love Songs of the Carmina Burana* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1987), p.xiii

and to recognise their unique intellectual training, end up by apologising for the more raucously secular aspects of the collection: witness the efforts of Allen to disown responsibility for the 'erotic' lyrics in the manuscript.

Since the post-medieval writers discussed in this study were in many ways concerned with all the various aspects of goliardic poetry, it is not the role of this thesis to provide a cast-iron definition of what poetry may properly be considered goliardic. For Symonds and Waddell, indeed, it was perhaps the contradictions and complexities within the material of the *Carmina Burana* that enabled them to draw the images from it which fitted their nineteenth and twentieth century needs so precisely. The aim of this chapter, then, is rather to offer a brief consideration of the conflicting themes, styles and genres making up the literature which has been at one time or another labelled 'goliardic', and to offer a basic understanding of them in order that we may then proceed to an investigation of how such themes were used by post-medieval authors.

1. The tribe of Goliath

One of the scholarly debates, however, concerns the goliards' very existence, and thus it is difficult not to offer at least a provisional endorsement of one side or the other. The requirement is made the more pressing by the fact that for both Symonds and Waddell, their view of the controversy was absolutely central to their vision of the goliards.

In both *Wine, Women and Song*, and *The Wandering Scholars*, the author's vision of

who the goliard poets were and how they operated within medieval society was at least as significant as the literary translations of their work which accompanied this image. In Helen Waddell's case, the book which described the goliards, *The Wandering Scholars*, was published in 1927, while its companion volume of translations, *Medieval Latin Lyrics*, did not appear until 1929 and functioned rather like an appendix to the main, tremendously popular vision of the poets. As Waddell's biographer, Felicitas Corrigan suggests:

Her interest ... had been deflected from what the scholars did to who they were¹.

Likewise, although Symonds admits that:

It is easier to say what the Goliardi wrote about than who the writers were, and what they felt and thought than by what names they were baptised...²

much of his attraction to the goliards, and a good deal of the force of his introductory essay stems from his understanding of the important and subversive role which he believes them to have played in the society of the twelfth century. The question of who the goliard poets themselves were, if not by what names they were baptised, is, then, a debate which this chapter must consider and, if possible, resolve at least subjectively. Discussion of the controversies surrounding the question may serve to illuminate some of the more important qualities of goliardic poetry, and a provisional answer may help to determine the gap between historical reality and romantic imagination in the work of Symonds and Waddell.

The argument has centred on whether the goliards can be seen as a real spiritual, intellectual or political brotherhood. Did they, in other words, constitute any kind of cohesive social group which the people of the Middle Ages would have been able to

¹ Dame Felicitas Corrigan, *Helen Waddell: A Biography* (London: Gollancz, 1986), p.227

² John Addington Symonds, *Wine, Women and Song*, p.34

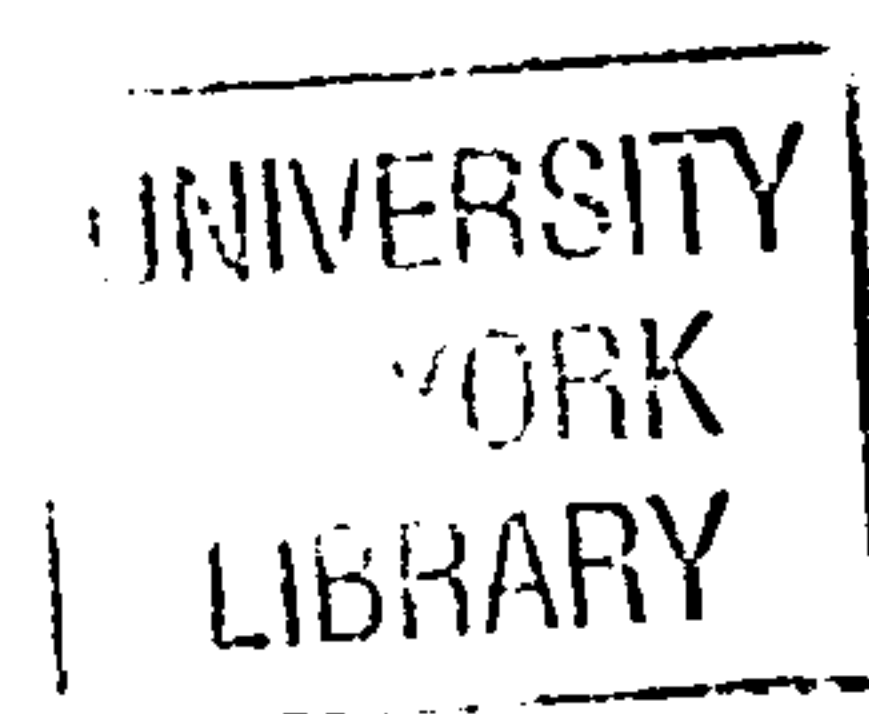
identify?

Helen Waddell offered the definitively romantic answer to this question in her depiction of the 'wandering scholars'. Here she identifies the *ordo vagorum* with the minor clerics of the twelfth century who, unable or unwilling to get a regular benefice, wandered over Europe in the pursuit of further learning and to the great annoyance of the medieval Church. This loose confederation, for Waddell, becomes 'a burlesque order, with Goliath for its legendary Grandmaster', and while even she hesitates to see the *ordo vagorum* as much more than a goliardic fantasy, she nevertheless argues that 'something of the kind must have existed, for the Church Councils speak of it as both an *ordo* and a *secta*'¹. Other scholars have seen the goliards as an identifiable social group in this sense, but have described it in rather different terms: P G Walsh, for example, has argued that Abelard himself was the original 'Goliath', the patron of the order, and that the name 'goliards' became attached to his disciples and supporters in the charges of heresy brought against him, and later, his admirers and imitators².

At the other end of the spectrum, goliardic poetry is seen as a product of the medieval Church establishment. Pointing to the presence of authors like Philip the Chancellor, who were known to be important figures in the Church, scholars have hesitated to give any credence to the *ordo vagorum* as a physical or social reality. In his recent work on 'goliardic' poetry, Bryan Gillingham has given an interesting twist to this argument. He suggests that the 'goliards' of which the medieval Church councils speak were in fact a troupe of actors who performed, and acquired an association with, the satirical poetry written by high-ranking members of a Church more tolerant than has hitherto been assumed. Of such satirical poetry, he writes:

¹Helen Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars* (London: Constable, 1927), p. 194

² P.G. Walsh, 'Goliath' and Goliardic Poetry', in *Medium Aevum* 52:1, 1983, p.7



Should not the medieval church until at least the twelfth century be considered a truly catholic and tolerant institution, which, even in its monastic life, would welcome recreational poetry which was not wholly religious?¹

The medieval cloister, Gillingham argues, is far more likely to have produced and disseminated goliardic poetry than the *ordo vagorum*.

Although Gillingham's arguments do not appear to be fully substantiated by the evidence, in particular in the rather unworkable divide proposed between author and performer, they are interesting in that they serve to demonstrate the range of scholarly opinion on the question. As can be seen, it is wide and varied, ranging from a romantic embracing of the *ordo vagorum* as a historical reality to a robust denial of its significance and firm location of the actual authors of goliardic poetry within the ecclesiastical fold.

Most contemporary evidence concerning the existence (or otherwise) of the goliards is to be found in the small collection of Latin documents, mostly from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which mention both 'Goliath' in person, the 'familia' or 'discipuli' Goliae, and, under various guises, the 'wandering scholars'.² The Church had condemned the vagrant or immoral cleric since the beginning of organised Christianity, and resolutions against this kind of behaviour are rife throughout ecclesiastical history. At the Council at Nicaea in 325 AD, for example, it was decreed that 'non oporteat ex civitate in civitatem migrare ... neque episcopus, neque presbyter neque diaconus'.³ [It does not befit either a bishop, a priest or a deacon to

¹ Bryan Gillingham, *The Social Background of Secular Medieval Latin Song* (Ottawa: Institute of Medieval Music, 1998), p.9

² A useful collection of the references to the goliards in Church Councils, and other relevant material, can be found in Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars*, pp. 244 - 270. Unless otherwise stated, the Latin originals of such documents are quoted from *The Wandering Scholars*, but the translations are my own.

³Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars*, p.244

wander about from city to city]. The Rule of St. Benedict criticises the monks which it names 'gyrovagus', who are 'semper vagi et nunquam stabiles, et propriis voluptatibus et gulae illecebris servientes' (always wandering and nowhere settled, serving their own desires and the lure of their gullets)¹. The condition of clerical immorality, then, was (unsurprisingly) a perennial problem for the Church. However, in thirteenth century Church councils, a new identity arises under which to classify subversive and immoral clerics. The earliest mention appears in the Provincial Council at Trèves in 1227²:

Item praecipimus ut omnes sacerdotes non permittant trutannos aut alios vagos scholares aut goliardos cantare versus super *Sanctus* et *Agnus Dei* aut alias in missis vel in divinis officiis.

[Item, we decree that no priests shall permit tricksters or other wandering scholars or goliards to sing verses upon the 'Sanctus' or the 'Agnus Dei' or other things in the mass or the divine Office.]

Such use and misuse of liturgical texts is a familiar feature of goliardic literature which will be discussed at more length later in the chapter. It is also interesting to note the different categories of miscreant which are included in this order. The 'goliardi' are clearly regarded as part of a general group of subversive troublemakers, along with the 'vagi scholari' and 'trutanni'. Nevertheless, they also appear to have a distinct niche of their own. The same phenomenon appears, writ large, in the Statutes of the Synod at Liège in 1287:

¹Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars*, p.246

² Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars*, p.260. I am here accepting the widely held belief that the reference to the *familia Goliae* in the Council of Sens in 913 is to be regarded as spurious, due to its verbatim repetition elsewhere in the records of Church councils.

The only other possible pre-1227 reference to a 'tribe' or 'order' of Goliath is in Sedulius Scotus (Carmen 41), where a thief is described as of the *gens Goliae*: however, the passage concerns the thief's terrifying appearance, and the epithet could well be derived directly from comparison with the Biblical Goliath.

For a fuller discussion of the significance of these two references, see P. G. Walsh, 'Goliath' and Goliardic Poetry', in *Medium Aevum* 52:1, 1983, pp.1 – 7 .

For the reference in Sedulius, see *Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini* vol. 3 (Berlin: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1896), p.205

xii. Item prohibemus, ne clerici exercent negotia turpia, et officia inhonesta, quae non decent clericos, qualia sunt haec ... officium cambitoris, carnificis, tabernarii, procenetae, fullonis, sutoris, textoris, nec sint histriones, joculatores, ballivi, forestarii saeculares, goliardi, thelonarii, unguentarii, triparii, molendinarii.¹

xii. Item, we forbid clerics to engage in disgraceful trades, and unworthy occupations, which do not befit clerics, which are the following: the office of money-changers, executioners, tavern-keepers, pimps, fullers, shoemakers, weavers: neither shall they be actors, jesters, bailiffs, secular foresters, goliards, tax-collectors, perfumers, tripe-sellers, millers.

Again, goliards are mentioned in the context of the general disgraceful behaviour of clerics, but once more the class known as goliards are clearly separated from the alternative possibilities for debasement. Interestingly, in this text the calling of 'goliard' is mentioned in the same context as professions such as 'shoemaker' and 'weaver', suggesting that it could be at least partially viewed as an occupation to which clerics could devote themselves.

A leader, 'Goliath', also finds his way into thirteenth century medieval sources. His most famous appearance is in the *Speculum Ecclesiae* of Giraldus Cambrensis, where he is stigmatised thus:

Item parasitus quidam, Goliath nomine ... literatus tamen affatim sed non bene morigeratus nec bonis disciplinis informatus, in papam et curiam Romanam carmina famosa pluries et plurima, tam metrica quam ridicula, non minus impudenter quam imprudenter evomit.

A certain parasite, Goliath by name ... possessed of skill in letters but not sufficiently obedient nor guided by good discipline, vomited forth, no less impudently than unwisely, a vast quantity of notorious songs against the Pope and the Curia, as ridiculous as they were rhythmical².

After about 1300, the frequent mentions of 'Goliath' and the 'goliardi' disappear from Church councils, although the strictures on appropriate clerical behaviour naturally remain.

¹ Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars*, p.266

² Ibid, p.283

Evidence that the 'goliards' referred to in these councils were organised into any kind of group, or mock-religious order, under their supposed leader, is more tenuous, although it has impressed other scholars besides Waddell. There are one or two references in the ecclesiastical documents: the Council at Salzburg in 1291, for example, makes reference to the 'secta vagorum scholarium'.¹ The internal evidence of the poems themselves is a little more persuasive. At least two surviving poems support the notion of some kind of organisation: one in which a goliard of England writes to headquarters in France, apparently recommending a fellow would-be goliard for membership of the order, and requesting guidance on certain matters of diet. Here the followers of Goliath are referred to as 'socii sanctae confratriae', and 'Goliae discipuli'. Again the distinction between the goliard and the universal vagabond is made: 'deprecor ... Goliardus fieri, non vilis harlotus' (I beg ... to be a genuine goliard, not a vile rogue)². This poem is the strongest literary evidence we have for some kind of 'ordo vagorum', particularly when taken in conjunction with another, better-known poem setting out the rules for the order, 'Cum in orbem universum'(CB 219)³.

The weight of this evidence does seem to suggest that certain people describing themselves, or described, as goliards, troubled the Church in a fashion distinguishable from the ordinary problem of clerical misbehaviour, during a defined historical period. The evidence for their organisation into a sect or order is less persuasive, and leaves us needing to determine exactly what the epithet 'goliard' told

¹Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars*, p.267

²Thomas Wright, *Latin Poems*, p.69. Translations from Wright my own.

³All references to and quotations from the *Carmina Burana* will be from the following edition: C.Fischer and H.Kuhn (eds), *Carmina Burana: Die Lieder der Benediktbeurer Handschrift* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1979). Lyrics will be referred to in the text by the number assigned to them in this edition.

twelfth century society about its bearer. Was it the mark of Waddell's *ordo vagorum*, a quasi-religious sect with its own rules and officials? Did it signify a commitment to a particular lifestyle, analogous to membership of a particular heretical sect such as the Cathars or Waldensians? Did it, as Walsh suggests, carry the implication of loyalty to the dissident figure of Abelard? Or was the title more loosely assumed by all who affected a subversive or irreverent attitude towards the ecclesiastical establishment?

In the following discussion, I hope to suggest that those who described themselves as 'goliards' and who wrote the 'carmina famosa' to which the name 'Goliard' became attached, shared a spiritual condition rather than a physical lifestyle, and that the persona of the goliard was used freely as a dramatic role which could be assumed for the purpose of satire. To answer the earlier question, medieval people might not, I would argue, have been able to recognise a 'goliard' on the street: but they would have recognised the voice of the goliard in satirical literature.

2. The Nemo-texts

We have seen how convincing the evidence for a real, physical 'familia Goliae' was for some scholars. However, it appears much less compelling if taken in conjunction with another, less well-known, anti-clerical phenomenon dating from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries - the *Nemo*-texts. These mock-saints' lives were a deliberately subversive manipulation of standard liturgical and Biblical texts, in which the Life of St. Nemo (St. Nobody) was constructed by reading all the references to 'Nemo' in the Bible as though 'Nemo' referred to an actual person (a pun which, in a different

language, goes back to the *Odyssey* and the story of the Cyclops). So, for example, the text *Nemo deum vidit* (John 1.18) receives the following treatment:

Qui, dum celum ascenderet, ut dictum est, deitatem puram et integram et insimul trinitatem vidit ibidem sanctissimus Nemo, sicut legitur: *Nemo deum vidit.*¹

[Who, when he ascended into heaven, as it is said, this same most holy Nobody saw the pure and undivided and complete threefold Godhead, as it is read: *Nobody has seen God.*]

The rest of the Life is in similar vein. Of more interest than the body of the text is the dedication at its close, with its invocation of the imaginary St. Nemo as the 'patron saint' of his followers:

Fugiat ergo omnis hostis iniquus beatissimi et gloriosissimi Neminis patroni nostri, et deleatur de libro viventium et cum iustis non scribatur, nec sit ulterius eius memoria super terram, qui glorioso operi nostro recalcitrare nititur, et corda fidelium nostrorum suis falsis suggestionibus nuperime credidit subornare...

Estote igitur viri fortes in agone, velut doctor noster Nemo, et robusti.

[Therefore let every wicked enemy of the most blessed and most glorious Nobody our patron flee, and be struck out of the book of Life and not recorded among the just, and let not the memory remain upon earth of him who strives to reject our glorious work, and who recently intended to infiltrate the hearts of our faithful with his deceitful suggestions....

Therefore be brave and strong men in action, like our teacher Nobody.]²

The condemnation 'cum iustis non scribatur' is also used in the goliardic poem 'In taberna quando sumus', to imply the elect nature of the group, while the same language, speaking of a 'patron', and an 'order' is used of Goliath and his disciples. Indeed, the goliardic poem 'Omnibus in Gallia', quoted above, ends with a very similar commendation of the order to divine protection:

¹Martha Bayless, *Parody in the Middle Ages: The Latin Tradition* (USA: University of Michigan Press, 1996), p.260. Translation mine.

²Ibid, p.264 -65

Summa salus omnium, filius Mariae,
pascat, potet, vestiat pueros Golyae!
et conservet socios sanctae confratriae,
ad dies usque ultimos Enoch et Helyae! – AMEN.¹

[So may the saviour of us all, Mary's son, feed, water and clothe Goliath's boys! And may he preserve all the members of that holy brotherhood, until the last days of Enoch and Elijah! AMEN.]

Just as the goliardic poem indicates the devotion of 'Goliath's boys' to their order's head, so the language of the Nemo-dedication – 'glorioso operi nostro', 'doctor noster Nemo' - suggests a sect dedicated to its master. However, we can clearly see that the use of the language of 'sects' and 'patrons' in the Nemo-text is not literal, but parodic and subversive. Just as the manipulation of the texts concerning *Nemo* reduces the notion of Biblical authority to its most ridiculous level, and thereby questions the authority of the Church, drawn from the Bible, so the dedication of the followers of Nemo to 'doctor noster' is a subversive parody of the dedication of the medieval Church to saints and Church Fathers as figures of authority. The writers of the *Nemo* texts are withdrawing their obedience from the Church establishment and giving it to a phantom figure. By declaring themselves the followers of a fantasy saint they are subverting the whole idea of obedience to Church authority. The *Nemo* texts do not take issue with the theology of the Church: rather, they mock its entire hierarchy and organisation. The *Life of St. Nemo* is an anti-authoritarian declaration, and an appeal to kindred spirits, but not the manifesto of a sect. The references in goliardic poetry to 'noster ordo' and the 'discipuli Goliae' must surely be read as serving exactly the same subversive function as do the Nemo-texts, and having no greater connection with physical reality.

Although ecclesiastical repudiation of the 'ordo vagorum', such as that at Salzburg, might suggest a more solid existence, even this can be paralleled by references to the

¹ Wright, *Latin Poems*, p. 70

'Nemo' phenomenon. A tract published in 1290 seems to deal with 'Nemo' as a real person rather as the Church Councils deal with the 'goliards' as a genuine order and profession: it is entitled 'Reprobatio nefandi sermonis ... de quodam Nemine heretico et dampnato'. Instead of attacking the obvious absurdity of the concept of 'Nemo', the writer of the tract, for reasons which are not entirely clear, treats 'Nemo' as a real person, condemning this fantastic creation as 'heretico et dampnato'¹. Perhaps the reaction of the Church Councils, and even of the indignant Giraldus, to 'Goliard' can be seen as analogous.

As we shall see, the notion of a physical *ordo vagorum* was very dear to both Symonds and Waddell. However, the *Nemo*-texts provide a persuasive analogy which suggest that no such sect existed. Rather, we should perhaps see Goliard and his tribe as a deliberately constructed piece of anti-authoritarian fantasy. Exploration of the nature of such a fantasy, though, and of its links with other forms of medieval parody, can provide some elucidation of the themes in goliardic poetry that its later interpreters were to find especially congenial.

3. The Feast of Fools

The opening dedication of 'Surianus' mock-Papal bull demonstrates the rich possibilities of the fantasy-authority figure for goliardic poets:

In nomine summe et individue vanitatis, Surianus diutina fatuorum favente demencia per Austriam Stiriam, Bawariam et Moraviam presul et archiprimas vagorum scolarium, omnibus eiusdem secte professoribus ...

¹Bayless, *Parody In the Middle Ages*, p.63

In the name of the supreme and undivided vanity, Surianus, by grace of the continuing insanity of fools prelate and archbishop of the Wandering Scholars throughout Austria, Styria, Bavaria, and Moravia, to all members, fellows and followers of that order ...¹

In these opening lines, we see the particular way in which the goliards set out to undermine and ridicule their ecclesiastical superiors. Ostensibly, 'Surianus' is setting out his own claims to high office and greeting his faithful followers in these opening lines. Yet we swiftly become aware that his vaunted authority is in fact no authority. He is 'presul et archiprimas', only 'by grace of the continuing insanity of fools', and more importantly, the higher power from which he draws authority for his actions is no more than 'the supreme and undivided vanity'. 'Vanitas' can here be interpreted in the broader medieval sense, carrying the senses of 'vain' and 'worthless', as well as those of its more restrictive modern definition. His authority is then based on folly and worthlessness, and by stating this in the language of conventional authority, he is subverting and criticising the exercise of all authority, including his own, rather than seriously promoting his own power. Surianus' order exists in an anarchic world where no authority holds good, because all authority is in the name of 'the supreme and undivided vanity'. Such a statement can be both a humorous release of steam which enables the establishment to continue unchanged, and a deeply subversive response to power from those with no other avenue of protest. The goliardic movement seems to have encompassed both in its literature. Its spiritual condition was that of the fool, vagabond and outcast, speaking truth because the innocent fool is the one figure who cannot be silenced, and holding up the forms of power to ridicule by reworking them in ludicrous guises. Shakespeare was to create a more famous version of such a persona in *King Lear*.

¹Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars*, p.239 (text and translation)

Before the time of Shakespeare, however, there was already a rich vein in medieval parody which dealt with the ridicule and negation of hierarchy and authority. The best known manifestation of this tendency is the popular medieval institution of the Feast of Fools. We can see the Feast as an inspiration to those who sought to cast themselves as anti-authoritarian satirists, and by a closer examination of it we may come to understand this element in goliardic literature more fully.

The Feast of Fools appears to have begun within the ecclesiastical domain, and to have remained popular right up until the Reformation. There is evidence that it eventually became absorbed into the secular urban scene rather than dying out completely. Records of the feast in the period of the goliards are somewhat scanty, but sufficient evidence exists to prove the feast's popularity in that period, and to give an idea of what went on. For more detailed accounts we must turn to thirteenth and fourteenth century texts, but it seems a reasonable assumption that the conduct of the feast was not so absolutely dissimilar in the twelfth as to make these sources unusable.

The feast was held over the New Year period, and was usually associated with the subdeacons, the lowest rank of Cathedral clergy. However, the Feast could also be associated with Holy Innocents' day, and had a less raucous parallel in the Feast of the Boy Bishop, in which the presiding 'bishop' was elected from the choirboys. This election almost always took place on Holy Innocents' Day. The Feast of Fools itself was a strange mixture of the ludicrous and the subversive. Much of it was characterised by ridiculous and excessive behaviour: the Officium for the day preserved at Beauvais (dating from the early thirteenth century) directs that the censuring during the service is to be carried out with black pudding and sausage. The rubric for the close of Lauds in the same office appears to specify a drinking bout in

the porch of the church, and in 1264, the ritual at St.Omer directs that the whole office shall be sung at the pitch of the voice, and interspersed with howls¹. A later ecclesiastical fulmination against the feast, although dating from 1445, may well give an accurate impression of the twelfth-century scene:

Priests and clerks may be seen wearing masks and monstrous visages at the hours of office. They dance in the choir dressed as women, panders or minstrels. They sing wanton songs. They eat black puddings at the horn of the altar while the celebrant is saying mass. They play at dice there. They cense with stinking smoke from the soles of old shoes. They run and leap about the church, without a blush at their own shame.²

It was descriptions of this kind of scene which led E.K. Chambers, the first and most complete cataloguer of the medieval records, to comment that the feast represented no more than 'an ebullition of the natural lout beneath the cassock.'³ It has also led more recent commentators such as Ingrid Gilhus to suggest that the feast was merely an enjoyable, carnivalesque diversion, pursued by the participants purely for their own pleasure and with no thought of subversion or rebellion⁴. Martha Bayless, in common with Bryan Gillingham, has also argued that the medieval Church's capacity to allow for and even celebrate humour was far larger than has been previously assumed⁵. All three commentators see the Feast as a harmless, relatively insignificant and uncontroversial phenomenon, and assume that it was acceptable to the structures of authority in the medieval Church. However, they do not seem to

¹E.K.Chambers, *The Medieval Stage*,(London: Constable, 1996: first edn 1903), vol 1, pp. 275 -331 *passim*

² Letter of the Faculty of Theology of Paris, 1445, quoted in Simonette Cochis, 'The Bishop of Fools', in *Fools and Jesters in Literature, Art and History*, ed. Vicki K.Janik (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), p.100

³Chambers, *The Medieval Stage*, p.325

⁴Ingrid Gilhus, 'Carnival in Religion: The Feast of Fools in France', in *Numen* 37:1, 1990, 24-52, p.45

⁵Bayless, *Parody in the Middle Ages*, p.182

make adequate allowance for the long line of ecclesiastical attempts to ban, reform, or suppress the Feast, first recorded in 1199, and continuing right up until the Reformation. Bayless suggests that 'the right hand often disregarded what the left hand was doing'¹, but offers little substantial evidence to support this contention. It seems more plausible that the ecclesiastical anxiety surrounding the Feast was caused by genuinely subversive elements in its appropriation and ridicule of the concept of authority. Two elements in the Feast smack of real subversion: the devaluing of authority in general, and the proclamation of the superior value of the meek, innocent and humble.

The devaluing of authority is analogous to that shown in the *Nemo*-texts and in the 'Surianus' document. Ingrid Gilhus has pointed out that the transfer of authority is far more complicated than merely allowing the lowly to take the reins of power:

... their elevation was the paradoxical elevation of lowness still being low, not of lowness becoming highness.²

The office recited with howls ridicules the whole structure of the Mass: it is not implied that the lowly should be allowed to take part in conducting the service. Rather, the service itself is made ludicrous. The Feast of Fools would be more accurately described as a mockery, not a transfer of authority. As in the proclamation of Surianus, the dedication of oneself to a debased and ludicrous form of authority demonstrates contempt for the entire power structure.

The various ecclesiastical attempts at reform suggest how powerfully subversive such an approach could be. While the general ecclesiastical tendency was to (reluctantly) permit the feast, they attempted to strip it of its more outrageous and anarchic tendencies. The reforming order for Notre-Dame, in 1199, for example,

¹Ibid, p.204

²Gilhus, 'Carnival in Religion', p.42

bans the use of songs and masks, and states that the lord of the feast is not to be led with singing or processions. He is simply to receive the precentor's staff of office, known as the *baculus*, and to lead the choir in the performance of the Office. The Office is to be sung as normal, and the canons and clerks are to remain in their stalls. The only concession made is that the Epistle may be 'farced' with appropriately ridiculous interpolations¹. The opportunity for subversive, anarchic behaviour has thus been reduced to the bare minimum. The aim of the reforming order has been to preserve intact the structure of the Office and hence the structure of authority. The lord of the Feast is to express his new role not through a ludicrous subversion of authority, but by a sober assumption of the normal role of the precentor. This order suggests that the main anxieties of the ecclesiastical establishment centred on the uninhibited expression of entirely anti-authoritarian tendencies, expressed through the presentation of authority as a ridiculous and powerless concept. They sought to draw the Feast's sting by preserving the structure of authority intact, simply allowing a lesser churchman to occupy the position of the powerful for a short time. The evidence suggests, though, that this was a long drawn out and ultimately unsuccessful battle.

A second important element of subversion was the presentation of the 'fools' of the feast as innocent yet wise figures. In contrast to the conceited and self-righteous figures of authority, their humble folly is perceived as the true route to salvation. This can be discerned from the central text of the Feast, the 'Deposit', from the Magnificat. The words, 'Deposit potentes de sede: et exaltavit humiles' (He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek) marked the crucial moment in the feast when the staff of authority was handed over from the

¹Chambers, *The Medieval Stage*, p.276

real precentor to the *precentor stultorum* (Bishop of Fools). It was a popular part of the feast - performed with such enthusiasm that the reforming decree of 1199 was compelled to order that the verse should be sung no more than five times, and then only in its proper place in the service¹. These words set the keynote for the position of the Fools. It is precisely because they are lowly that they are to be chosen and exalted, and the verse of the Magnificat is an expression of the superior value of their meekness and humility. The Feast does not, then, represent the rightful usurpation of authority by the repressed lower orders, but rather the denigration of temporal and ecclesiastical authority by the preferment of the meek and foolish above the powerful.

Other elements in the feast support this proposition – in particular, its well-documented association with the image of the ass. One of the feast's many alternative titles was the *asinaria festa*, the 'feast of the asses'², and there is evidence to suggest that live donkeys may have played an important part in it. The text known as the *Missel des Fous* (or *Officium circumcisionis*) probably used at Sens during thirteenth-century celebrations, contains a long *conductus* in praise of the ass, and uses the name *asinaria festa* in the opening lines of the Office³. Chambers also describes the very similar *Officium* used at Beauvais. This contains the same *conductus*, or 'Prose of the Ass', used at Sens, but here it is headed '*conductus, quando asinus adducitur*' (*conductus*, when a donkey shall be brought in). Though this evidence is not conclusive, Chambers quotes descriptions of earlier manuscripts, now lost, which point far more clearly to the donkey's starring role in many versions

¹ Ibid, p.277

² Ibid, p.275

³ Ibid, pp. 280 –2.

of the feast¹.

Donkeys make some important appearances in the Bible: the first and most obvious being the ass which carried Christ into Jerusalem. This has clear connotations of the humble being exalted : the most humble means of transport, a donkey, is chosen by Christ for his triumphal entry. Another appearance popular with medieval commentators occurs in the story of Balaam. When Balaam could not see the angel standing to bar his way, his ass could, and refused to go further. On the third refusal 'the Lord opened the mouth of the ass', who spoke to rebuke her master². Thus the story illustrates how wisdom can reside in the meek, humble, and foolish more than in the supposedly wise prophet, and suggests that divine instruction can be channelled through the most unlikely of instruments. The involvement of the ass in the Feast of Fools provides an opportunity to celebrate the mysterious wisdom inherent in humility and apparent foolishness.

Returning to the feast's human participants, the paradoxical innocence of the presiding fool was also emphasised. Although Holy Innocents' Day was more often the date on which the Boy Bishop was installed, it was not infrequently associated with the Feast of Fools as well, suggesting a connection with the innocent souls massacred on that day. Rather more bizarre supporting evidence comes from the direction which the chapter at Sens issued in 1444: among other reforms, their statute orders that no more than three buckets of water are to be poured over the *precentor stultorum* at Vespers³. This ludicrous ceremony could be construed as a mock-baptism, one which perhaps characterises even the leader of the feast as newly baptised into innocence and spritual grace.

¹ Ibid, p.285 – 7.

² Numbers 22: 21 - 31

³Chambers, p.298

Clearly goliard poetry and the Feast of Fools have a number of ideas in common, but how close an association should we envisage? P.G.Schmidt posits a direct historical link. Pointing out that it was traditionally permissible for songs attacking the higher clergy to be performed at the feast, and describing some of Walter of Chatillon's poems which make explicit reference to the Feast, he infers that the majority of goliardic poems may have been written as entries in a poetic competition there.¹ Schmidt identifies what he describes as a 'strange blend of abuse [of the higher clergy] and entreaty [for patronage]', in almost all of Walter of Chatillon's poetry and in many of the Goliard-poems, and seeks to attribute these directly to the occasion of the Feast².

Although the internal evidence of some of the poems certainly implies a connection with the Feast of Fools, I would argue that such a close historical link is unnecessarily restrictive, and would, rather, suggest that the goliard poets drew on the anti-authoritarian traditions in medieval parody, and on the many strands of meaning in the Feast of Fools, to create their own particular dramatic and satirical persona which, although it shares much with the fools of the Feast, is nevertheless distinguishable. Jacques Heers seems closer to the mark in his description of an imaginative, rather than direct, link with the Feast of Fools. He writes:

Les joyeux vagabonds, les Goliards, eux, se donnent vraiment en spectacle, pratiquent, non pas seulement quelques jours au creux de décembre, à l'occasion des fêtes du solstice, de la Fête des fous, mais à longueur d'années³

This imaginative link perhaps gives a clue to the goliards' unpopularity with the

¹P.G.Schmidt, 'The Quotation in Goliardic Poetry: The Feast of Fools and the Goliardic Strophe *cum auctoritate*', in *Latin Poetry and the Classical Tradition*, ed. Peter Godman and Oswyn Murray (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp.44 - 46

²*Ibid*, p.43

³Jacques Heers, *Fêtes des fous et Carnavals* (Paris: Fayard, 1983), p.35

authorities: while the Feast of Fools introduced the spectre of anarchic parody into the Church for only a few riotous days of the year, the goliards created a satirical voice which kept its presence permanently before the eyes of the medieval Church.

4. Hugh Primas and the Archpoet: fools in judgment

In the preceding section, we have seen how other forms of anti-authoritarian ecclesiastical parody, the *Nemo*-texts and the Feast of Fools, provide analogies which enable us to understand the themes of goliardic poetry more fully. Yet the goliards did more than simply replicate the semantics of the *Nemo*-texts or the antics of the Feast of Fools. The poems of Hugh Primas or the Archpoet mould their ideas into a flamboyant, compelling dramatic pose which was to capture the imagination of many later writers.

The pose, however, has not inevitably been seen as an assumed one. The appropriate recognition of the individual genius of Hugh Primas and the mysterious Archpoet, and the lively poetic recounts of their real or imaginary mishaps, has led critics down the path of biographical interpretation. Trying to uncover the historical lives which they perceive to be depicted in the poems, they have neglected to take account of the elements which the self-presentation of the two poets have in common, and to consider whether these might go to make up a goliardic 'persona'. A comparison of the work of the two writers demonstrates these common elements, and enables us to perceive their use of the same dramatic pose.

The most striking common element is in the image of the 'vagabond' - the poet presents himself as poor, outcast, and forced to beg for his very sustenance. One of the most powerful and humorous expositions of this concept occurs in the

Archpoet's:

stultus ego, qui penes te
nummis equis victu veste
dies omnes duxi feste
nunc insanus plus Oreste
male vivens et moleste
trutannizans inhoneste
omne festum duco meste;
res non eget ista teste.

[I a fool, who in your household reckoned each day festive with money, with food, with clothing, with horses, now, madder than Orestes, living poorly and tricking meanly and dishonestly, I reckon every holiday to be sad; this thing requires no witness.]¹

Attractive as this 'biographical' self-portrait appears, the humorous exaggeration and the claims of total destitution find close parallels in the poem of Primas, 'Dives eram et dilectus':

Dives eram et dilectus
inter pares preelectus:
modo curvat me senectus
et etate sum confectus.
Unde vilis et neglectus
a deiectis sum deiectus,...(p.50)

[I was rich and beloved, valued among my peers: now old age has bent me, and I am consumed by age. Therefore, poor and neglected, I am cast out from the outcast ones ...]

Both these passages have been subjected to narrowly autobiographical readings. Helen Waddell gave a charming potted sketch of the Archpoet taken from 'Fama tuba':

¹Fleur Adcock (ed.), *Hugh Primas and the Archpoet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.84. All further references to the poems of Hugh Primas or the Archpoet will be to this edition, and given by page number in the text. Translations my own.

In June or July, Reginald held a mighty hosting in Vienne. The whole herd of the jongleurs and the jugglers and the clowns came jiggling into town, breathless, to be there before the ninth day: but a greater poet in hiding watched them with despairing eyes. Only yesterday, the chancellor's favourite, a horse to ride, and money to spend, and Life going by like a festival: hot blood, and a scandal about a wench – 'they showed no mercy to themselves, for lust or for default' - and the Archpoet is fleeing on the roads
...¹

Although all of the images in this sketch are imaginative expansions of those in the poem, it nevertheless speaks of a commentator who is inclined to take the Archpoet's account of himself as the literal truth. Others have made similar attempts to construct a coherent biographical story out of the narrative of 'Dives eram et dilectus': C.J. McDonough offers a useful summary.² Examining the two poems side by side, however, it seems clear that they are both projections of a particular dramatic stance. Both emphasise the fall from riches and favour to poverty and neglect, and both humorously exaggerate the poet's total rejection by all civilised society. The Archpoet is a second Orestes, cast out as a matricide and pursued by the Furies, while Primas emphasises how he is refused the company of even the dregs of society. Both claim that their fall has forced them to beggary and dishonesty: further on in 'Dives eram' Primas begs for the charity of his brother churchmen, claiming that he has been compelled to beg from them:

... victum quero verecundus.
Verecundus victum quero.
Sum mendicus ...

[I beg for food, ashamed. Ashamed, I beg for food. I am a beggar ...] (p.54)

The repetition of 'Verecundus' emphasises the shameful position in which the poet finds himself and his entirely outcast status. The motif of shame, and the device of

¹Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars*, p. 153 - 4

²C.J.McDonough, 'Two Poems of Hugh Primas Reconsidered', in *Traditio* 39 (1984), 133-55

emphatic verbal repetition is also used by the Archpoet, in a different poem:

Mendicare pudor est, mendicare nolo

[It is shameful to beg, I do not wish to beg ...] (p.90)

It also seems that the self-presentation of these authors is far from consistent with the little historical evidence we have concerning them. We have no certain biographical information about the Archpoet other than his pseudonym and the name of his patron, but Dronke's suggestion seems plausible:

The Archpoet's picture of the vagabond-poet (whatever element of literal truth it may have contained) has been drawn for the sophisticated entertainment of that international set of diplomats and legislators, high-born scholars and prelates who surrounded the Emperor [Frederick Barbarossa], whose *lingua franca* was Latin, and among whom the Archpoet probably, by his birth and position, moved as an equal.¹

'Primas' has been reliably and consistently identified by scholars with the respected figure of Hugh Primas, professor of Orleans, a position unlikely to be consistent with the image of the man rejected even by the poorhouse. There does, therefore, appear to be a consistent element of self-dramatisation in their poems, and these presentations can be linked to similar portrayals in poems of more doubtful attribution.

The suggestion that the 'vagabond' image is a convenient self-dramatisation, and not a reflection of the speaker's actual status, is reinforced when we consider the spiritual implications of the image of the wanderer and outcast. These are illuminated in an interesting article by Francis Cairns, which compares the Archpoet's 'Confession' with twelfth-century penitential manuals. Cairns compares the overall structure of the poem with that of the manuals, but his most interesting comparison is between the opening stanzas of the poem and the description of the

¹ Peter Dronke, *The Medieval Lyric* (Boydell and Brewer: Cambridge, 1996: first published 1968), p. 21

penitent's state of mind in the devotional text 'Tractatus de Interiori Domo', the work of an unknown twelfth-century Cistercian. The thematic parallels between this text and the opening stanzas of the 'Confessio' are indeed striking. An extract given in Cairns' article reads as follows:

Solus solitudinem cordis me ingredior, et cum corde meo paulisper confabulor, ab ipso quaerens de ipso et de his quae circa ipsum sunt. Cor meum, cor pravum vanum et vagum omni volubilitate volubilius: de uno in aliud vago incessu transit, quaerens requiem ubi non est. In omnibus enim quae videntur, requiem quaesivi, et veram requiem in eis invenire non potui. Deinde rediens ad me, consistere in me ipso non possum: quoniam mens mea valde levis, multumque instabilis, vaga et profuga, ubique se variat, undique fluctuat; quia vult et non vult pigra, consilia mutat, voluntates alternat, similis folio quod a vento movetur et circumfertur. Inde est quod cogitationes meae vanae et importunae me trahunt ...

[Alone I enter the solitude of my heart, and I speak for a little while with my own heart, searching for itself from itself, and for those things which are round about it. My heart, my depraved, vain and wandering heart, fickle and full of inconstancy: it flits from one place to another, incessantly wandering, seeking rest where there is none. For in all things that appear, I sought rest, and I was able to find no rest in them. Then returning to myself, I am unable to remain in my own self: since my mind, greatly fickle, and very unstable, wandering and fugitive, alters everywhere, wavers on every side; it wishes and does not wish for sloth, it changes its counsels, it alternates its desires, like a leaf which is blown by the wind and carried all around. It is from thence that my vain and troublesome thoughts drag me...]¹

Apart from the obvious parallel simile of the withered leaf blown on the wind, the sinful soul is generally perceived as endlessly vagrant and fugitive. The strength and power of this comparison suggests that it was a popular one, and that when poets such as the Archpoet and Primas describe their outcast state there may be mental as well as physical implications. When the Archpoet writes of himself:

Lacrimarum fluit rivus,
quas effundo fugitivus (p.80)

[a river of tears flows, which I a fugitive, shed ...]

¹Francis Cairns, 'The Archpoet's Confession: Sources, Interpretation and Historical Context', in *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 15 (1980), 87-103, p.91. Translation mine.

he may be referring not just to a physical state of exile but also to the 'mens mea ... vana et profuga', of the sinner. Thus the role of the outcast and fugitive in which these poets cast themselves has deep spiritual overtones. It appears, rich with various implications, in the famous defence of Abelard in the 'Metamorphosis Goliae Episcopi':

Nupta quaerit ubi sit suus Palatinus,
cujus totus extitit spiritus divinus;
quaerit cur se subtrahat quasi peregrinus,
quem ad sua ubera foverat et sinus.

[The bride [Philology] seeks to know where her Palatine [Abelard] may be, whose spirit appeared wholly divine; she seeks to know why he has removed himself like a wanderer, he whom she cherished in her bosom.]¹

The word 'peregrinus' refers literally to Abelard's enforced retirement from the intellectual scene, yet in the context of the whole poem - a defence of Abelard following the heresy trial instigated by Bernard of Clairvaux - it carries many other connotations. 'Peregrinus' can be read as referring to Abelard's outcast condition: he is now a wanderer in the wilderness. But like many other theological dwellers in the wilderness, the clear implication exists that he has truth on his side which no-one is prepared to listen to. 'Peregrinus' is both a physical and a spiritual description, and suggests how rich the concept of the 'outcast' was in the goliardic persona. Like the bishop in the Feast of Fools, the outcast rejected from society has both the freedom to speak and the potential to speak truth.

The Archpoet demonstrates the dramatic richness of the 'peregrinus' idea in the succession of Biblical roles which he adopts for himself: Jonah, Job and Jeremiah. In 'Fama tuba dante sonum', the adoption of the Jonah-identity is explicit:

¹Wright, *Latin Poems*, p.29

Nomen vatis vel personam
manifeste non exponam,
sed, quem fuga fecit Ionam,
per figuram satis bonam
Ione nomen ei ponam. (p.81)

[I shall not clearly expound the name of this poet/prophet, but since his flight made him Jonah, I will give him the name of Jonah as a suitable alias.]

Jonah was the prophet who, attempting to flee his destiny, was cast overboard by the sailors and saved by God to preach the destruction of the Ninevites (and eventually to convert them). Dronke has pointed out frequent references to Job in the 'Confessio', and has suggested a less obvious allusion to Jeremiah in the phrase 'non sum puer' in 'Lingua balbus'¹. All three of these figures share the destiny of becoming outcasts from society, who, from that position, sinful, fallible and reluctant, nevertheless proclaim the Lord's power and condemn the sins of mankind. The Archpoet sees himself as one who, rejected by society, has become the mouthpiece through which corruption and hypocrisy are to be denounced. His use of the ambiguous Latin word 'vates', carrying the meaning of both 'poet' and 'prophet' points up these ideas².

Such self-characterisation can be found all over goliardic poetry - as well as the application of 'peregrinus' to the rebel Abelard, discussed above, an anonymous poet in the *Carmina Burana* adopts the role of John the Baptist:

Ecce sonat in aperto
vox clamantis in deserto (10)

[Behold, there sounds in the open space a voice, crying in the wilderness]

and the idea resurfaces in another Goliard-poem, now attributed to Walter of Châtillon:

¹Peter Dronke, 'The Art of the Archpoet: A Reading of 'Lingua balbus'', in *The Interpretation of Medieval Lyric Poetry*, ed. W.T.H.Jackson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), p.24

²For a fuller discussion of the significance of this term, see Dronke, 'The Art of the Archpoet', p.23

vox clamantis in deserto
'rectas vias facite'

[A voice crying in the wilderness 'Make straight the way' [of the Lord]]¹

The voice of the outcast and social reject can be transmuted into the powerful sound of the 'voice crying in the wilderness'.

This transmutation is evident in the slightly strange mixture of self-deprecation and fiery condemnation found in so many of the Goliath-poems, the most consummate example of which is the Archpoet's 'Lingua balbus'. This poem deserves attention also for the beautiful way in which the dramatic relationship between poet and audience is manipulated in order to achieve the transformation from fool to prophet. The Archpoet begins by stressing his own extreme foolishness and unsuitability to be attempting to address a sermon to his audience, whom we assume to be a collection of wealthy ecclesiastics (and potential patrons):

Lingua balbus, hebes ingenio,
viris doctis sermonem facio
sed quod loquor, qui loqui nescio,
necessitas est, non presumptio. (p.70)

[Dull of wit and with a stammering tongue, I deliver a sermon to learned men. But the reason I speak, I who do not know how to speak, is because I must, not because I presume.]

He then goes on to deliver his sermon, which, although it has been called a mock- or parody-sermon, in fact rings true as a genuine religious statement. As if to emphasise his own unworthiness and foolishness, he subtly lulls his audience into a sense of false security through clever flattery. His audience are at the top of the hierarchy both in this world and the next:

¹ Wright, *Latin Poems*, p.58. The version of the poem attributed to Walter of Châtillon (slightly different from that in the *Carmina Burana*) can be found in *Moralisch-Satirische Gedichte Walters von Châtillon*, ed. Karl Strecker (Heidelberg: UniversitätsBuchhandlung, 1929), p.4

Vos pascitis gregem dominicum,
erogantes divinum triticum,
quibusdam plus, quibusdam modicum,
prout quemque scitis famelicum

Decus estis ecclesiasticum;
cum venerit iudex in publicum,
ut puniat omne maleficum,
sedebitis in thronis iudicum. (p.76)

[You pasture the flock of the Lord, you pay out the divine wheat, more to some, to others a moderate amount, according to the hunger which you are aware of. You are the glory of the Church; when the Judge comes openly, in order to punish all sinners, you will sit on the thrones of judges.]

Yet suddenly, the roles of wealthy, powerful men and pitiful fool are startlingly reversed:

Verumtamen in mundi fluctibus,
ubi nemo mundus a sordibus,
que dicitis in vestris cordibus
compungendum est in cubilibus (p.76)

[But yet in the uncertainties of the world, where none is clean from contamination, what you say in your hearts must be repented in your chambers]

The humble flatterer of the clergy, in the space of one stanza, has been transformed into the condemnatory judge who is aware of 'que dicitis in vestris cordibus'. The final two lines are derived from the closing words of the service of Compline, as if the poet is suddenly setting himself up as priest and confessor to the audience previously hailed as divine judges. As Dronke has pointed out, 'Verumtamen' occurs in the Vulgate in the account of the Last Supper: 'Verumtamen ecce manus tradentis me mecum est in mensa' [But yet behold, the hand that shall betray me is with me upon the table]¹. The audience are thus aligned with the traitor Judas, who appeared to be among the chosen disciples (like these patrons, the disciples were to inherit judicial thrones on the Day of Judgement), but betrayed Christ for the sake of

¹ Dronke, 'The Art of the Archpoet' p.33

financial reward. Like Judas, it is implied, the wealthy churchmen betray their trust through greed. Having thoroughly unsettled his audience, the Archpoet points out that they could atone for their sins by donating some of their riches to the poor poet before them. The persona of vagabond, even rogue, is sustained in the impudent demand for money in the final lines, but this does not devalue the judgemental figure in the central part of the poem. Rather, the position of the fool, jester and vagabond, outside the social hierarchy, sustains and makes possible the figure of the judgemental prophet.

The same mixture of judge and fool can be found in other goliardic poets. In 'Dives eram et dilectus', Primas presents himself as the one just man, telling the story of how he alone confronted the greedy and amoral cleric who was harassing the lame inmate of a hospital. Despite Primas's avowedly humble and pathetic status, torrents of vicious invective are levelled at this individual:

Homo mendax atque vanus
infidelis et profanus
me deiecit... (p.51)

Quis haberet lumen siccum,
cernens opus tam iniquum,
sacerdotem inpudicum,
corruptorem meretricum,
matronarum et altricum,
sevientem in mendicum,
claudum senem et antiquum...

... qui, quod sacre datur edi,
aut inperit Palamedi,
aut largitur Ganimedi
aut fraterno dat heredi,
aut asportant cytharedi,
ut adquirat bonus credi. (p.58)

[A vain and deceitful man, a faithless and profane one, threw me out ...]

[Who could remain dry-eyed, observing such an iniquitous deed; an immodest priest, a corrupter of whores, of matrons, of children's nurses, madly enraged

towards a beggar, a lame old man ...

... who either shares what is given to him by the holy church with Palamedes, or lavishes it on his Ganymede, or gives it to his nephew and heir, or the lute-players carry it off, so that he may increase his good reputation.]

By the end of the poem, Primas has moved from the position of the outcast, ashamed, beggar, to become a figure who stands in righteous condemnation of this depraved cleric, demanding judgement from his (imaginary?) audience:

Modo, fratres, iudicate
neque vestro pro Primate
aberrantes declinate
a sincera veritate:
an sit dignus dignitate
vel privandus potestate
senex carens castitate
et sacerdos honestate,
caritate, pietate,
plenus omni feditate,
qui, exclusa caritate,
nos in tanta vilitate,
quorum fama patet late,
sic tractavit. Judicate!' (p. 58-60)

[Now, brothers, judge, not letting yourselves, for the sake of your Primas, deviate in error from the strict truth, whether an old priest lacking chastity, honesty, charity, piety, and full of all wickedness, should be worthy of high office or of the deprivation of his powers: he who, lacking all charity, thus treated me, whose fame is widely known, with such meanness. Judge!]

The shift from despised beggar to impassioned prosecutor is dramatic, startling, and exactly analogous to the reversal of roles in 'Lingua balbus'. The mixture of humility and judgement, then, is a constant element in the goliardic persona.

The moral weight which the figure of the outcast might have carried is increased when considered in the context of contemporary religious thinking. Clearly the goliards have no plausible connection with the major doctrinal heresy of the twelfth century, Catharism. There is no trace in their writing of the dualist beliefs which underpinned Cathar doctrine. However, as historians of the period make clear, the

twelfth-century Church also found itself dealing with a far more nebulous form of dissent which manifested itself not in major doctrinal differences, but in attempts to return to the true Christian ideal of apostolic poverty, and in a corresponding criticism of the present corrupt state of the Christian church. Herbert Grundmann writes that:

The driving idea of the heretical movement of the twelfth century was to live according to the model of the apostles, to renounce all the goods of this world in voluntary poverty, to renew Christian life and pursue Christian doctrine by ceaseless wandering and preaching¹.

The medieval Church pursued various uneasy negotiations with the various sects which this new ideal spawned. Some, like the Franciscans, were accepted into the fold and became important religious orders², as did the earlier movement of the *Humiliati*³. A more doctrinally divergent sect like the Waldensians, on the other hand, enjoyed a brief reconciliation under the title of the 'Catholic Poor' but eventually proved impossible to reintegrate⁴. During the thirteenth century, the ideal of the evangelical and apostolic life gradually became accepted as a normal part of the orthodox Church. During the twelfth, however, it remained a live and dangerous movement which must have added moral power to the goliards' adoption of the wandering, vagabond image, and to its strange juxtaposition with the unflinching pronouncement of sentence upon the corrupt elements in Church and Curia.

However, the Franciscans, the *Humiliati* or the Waldensians drew their right to judge corrupt churchmen, at least in theory, from the morally austere lifestyle which accompanied the voluntary poverty of the wandering preacher. The goliards lack this

¹ Herbert Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*, trans. Steven Rowan (Notre Dame, Indiana and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), p. 13

² Ibid, pp. 55 - 67

³ Ibid, pp.32 - 40

⁴ Ibid, p. 40 - 55

element in their persona, a fact which led Jill Mann to identify a strange paradox in their work in her article 'Satiric Subject and Satiric Object in Goliardic literature':

... if the Goliard wanted to voice satiric criticism of his society for failing to conform to orthodox values, why should he wish to associate it with the persona of the coarse and immoral buffoon? Why adopt an immoral persona in order to express moral criticism?¹

To answer this very valid question, we must turn from the Franciscans back to the themes of medieval parody demonstrated in the Feast of Fools, and to the second subversive strand identified in the Feast: the exaltation of humility and meekness over self-righteous and conceited authority. Referring to this idea, the goliard has the right to pronounce judgement on the ecclesiastical hierarchy, not because he is free from sin, but because he freely and humbly admits to his human frailty. This concept is extensively explored by the Archpoet in the 'Confessio', where he winds up his confession with the following lines:

Ecce mee proditor pravitatis fui,
de qua me redarguunt servientes tui.
Sed eorum nullus est accusator sui,
quamvis velint ludere seculoque frui.

Iam nunc in presentia presulis beati
secundum dominici regulam mandati
mittat in me lapidem neque parcat vati,
cuius non est animus conscius peccati. (p.118)

[Behold, I have been the betrayer of my own depravity, of which your servants accuse me. But none of them is his own accuser, however much they delight in gambling and in the pleasures of the world.

Now in the presence of the blessed prelate, following the rule set down by the Lord, let him who is not conscious of sin in his soul cast a stone at me, not sparing the poet.]

Here the Archpoet's honesty in confessing his sin is sharply contrasted with the

¹Jill Mann, 'Satiric Subject and Satiric Object in Goliardic Literature', in *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 15 (1980), 63 - 86, p.64

hypocrisy of his accusers, and is given powerful theological authority by the allusion to the parable of the woman taken in adultery. The Archpoet makes the point that he is not condemned by Christ any more than the woman was - it is the failure of his accusers to admit to their own faults which will condemn them, not his sins which will damn him. Earlier in the poem, a half-humorous allusion is made to two further Biblical parables of repentant sinners:

Tunc cantabunt letius angelorum chori:
Sit deus propitius huic potatori (p.116)

[Then the choirs of angels will sing joyfully: May God be merciful to this drinker]

This couplet carries potential echoes of two concepts: firstly, the promise that there shall be more joy in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety nine righteous ones, and secondly, of the cry of the tax collector in the parable of the sinful tax collector and the righteous Pharisee: *Deus propitius esto mihi peccatori* [God have mercy on me, a sinner]¹. The Archpoet represents himself as the frail, human, but honest sinner, who will eventually be more pleasing to God than the 'Pharisees' of the Church (perhaps here specifically represented by the 'moral majority' of Reginald's retinue). Representing oneself as a sinner is a paradoxical demonstration of innocence through weakness and humility, and provides a useful satirical contrast to the supposed righteousness of the Church. The same contrast is evident in the poem 'Dic Christi veritas', now widely attributed to Philip, Chancellor of the University of Paris. The poem opens with the question of where 'Christi caritas', the true love of Christ, is now to be found. Love itself replies:

¹ Luke 18: 13

de Iericho sum veniens,
ploro cum sauciato,
quem duplex Levi transiens,
non astitit grabato. (131)

[I am coming from Jericho, I weep with a wounded man, who the hypocrite of Levi,
passing by, did not assist from his lying place.]

The reference to the Good Samaritan suggests the potency of the idea that honesty and charity could be more readily found in the outcast ones of moral society than in the upright of the establishment. Furthermore, the reference to charity coming 'from Jericho' suggests a reference to the medieval interpretation of the journey from Jerusalem to Jericho in the parable as representing the human journey from the state of grace into sinful existence.¹ In placing 'caritas', as coming from Jericho, then, it is implied that it is making a journey from a place of sin, and thus the poem subtly suggests that the honest charity which condemns the hypocrisy of the self-righteous priests of Levi is actually to be found among sinners as much as among the outwardly righteous. Even within the ecclesiastical establishment, the image of the sinner who condemns the hypocrite was a powerful and resonant one, as it has always been in certain elements of the Christian tradition. The goliardic poets, drawing perhaps on such parodic institutions as the Feast of Fools for their inspiration, chose this dramatic role as a platform for their satire.

Elsewhere in the *Carmina Burana*, such sympathy for human frailty is seen as an essential part of the goliardic tradition, and is associated with divine mercy and pity.

In the poem which lays out the 'rules' of the order, its eclectic nature is stressed:

¹ A typical example occurs in Bonaventura, *Sermones dominicales* (Sermon 39):

Nam persona indigens ex miseria genus humanum quia in Adam peccante *descendit ab Ierusalem in Iericho* id est a paradiso in mundum *et incidit in latrones* id est in potestatem daemonum ...

Bonaventura, *Sermones dominicales*, ed. J.Bougerol (Grottaferrata: Collegio S.Bonaventura, 1977), p.403

Et nos misericordie nunc sumus auctores
quia nos recipimus magnos et minores
recipimus et divites et pauperiores
quos devoti monachi dimittunt extra fores... (219)

[And we are now the dispensers of mercy, since we receive the great and the small,
we receive both the rich and the destitute, whom the devoted monks put out at the
doors.]

There is more of the poem in a similar vein, and the famous list of drinkers in 'In taberna quando sumus' again embraces all qualities and conditions of people. The acceptance of all into the goliardic order provides a sharp contrast to the exclusiveness the poets portray as part of the ecclesiastical life. The goliards are the representatives of universal justice and humanity, receiving the destitute and the sinners whom the 'devoted' brothers will exclude. It is the same idea as 'Dic Christi veritas' : over and over again the goliards suggest that there is more humanity and true piety in those sinners who honestly indulge the pleasures of the flesh than in the hypocrites who claim to resist them. They deliberately apply the words of religion to themselves – 'misericordia', 'caritas', and claim themselves to be the very creators of divine mercy. Even their vagrancy and poverty has a religious aspect: they take upon themselves the Biblical injunction that anyone who has two coats should give one to someone who has none:¹

Ordo noster prohibet uti dupla veste
tunicam qui recipit, ut vadat honeste
pallium mox reiicit. ... (219)

[Our order prohibits the use of twofold garments. In order to remain honest,
whoever receives a tunic must give up his cloak.]

The implication is that among these vagrants there is an honest poverty and a lack of cupidity that the rich ecclesiastics would do well to imitate.

The adeptness, but also the humanity of their attack on the Church, is also reflected

¹ Luke 3:11

in their dexterous manipulation of liturgical or Biblical language. This can be on the level of simple profane parody, as in the *Officium lusorum* (Gamblers' Mass):

Introitus:

Lugeamus omnes in Decio, diem mestum deplorantes pro dolore omnium lusorum: de quorum nuditate gaudent Decii et collaudant filium Bacchi. (215)

Versus:

Maledicant Decio in omni tempore; semper fraus eius in ore meo.

[Let us all mourn in Decius, bemoaning this miserable day on account of the sorrow of all gamblers: concerning whose nudity the Decii rejoice and greatly praise the son of Bacchus.

They curse Decius at all times; his deceit shall be always on my lips]

This simple parody of the Introit for the Advent service, 'Rorate caeli desuper, et nubes pluant justum' is comparable:

Tunc rorant scythi desuper
et canna pluit mustum
et qui potaverit nuper
bibat plus quam sit justum. (195)

[Then the wine cups drop down dew from above, and the pipe rains wine, and anyone who has drunk recently, let him drink more than is proper.]

Such happy profanity is rife in the collection, but the majority of liturgical references in the *Carmina Burana* are considerably more complex. Jill Mann has pointed out the ways in which goliardic satire uses the language of the Gospels themselves, taken out of context, to demonstrate the distinction between what should be, and what is¹.

The most famous example of this is the Gospel according to the Silver Mark:

In illo tempore: dixit papa Romanis:

"Cum venerit filius hominis ad sedem maiestatis nostre, primum dicite:

"Amice, ad quid venisti?"

At ille si perseveraverit pulsans nil dans vobis, eicite eum in tenebras exteriores. (44)

¹ Mann, 'Satiric Subject and Satiric Object', p.74

[At that time the pope said to the Romans: 'When the son of man shall come to the seat of our glory, first say to him: 'Friend, wherefore art thou come?'. But if he shall continue, knocking without giving anything to you, cast him forth into the outer darkness.']

This Gospel consists entirely of Biblical texts which have been strung together and slightly altered to create a narrative. The satirical import is therefore dependent on a writer and audience who are thoroughly familiar with the verses in their original contexts, and can appreciate the different purposes to which they are being put. 'At ille se perseveraverit pulsans', for example, is a reference to Luke 11.8 (Ask and it shall be given ... knock and the door shall be opened unto you), so the implication that the man who knocks at the door should be the one giving to those inside is particularly ironic. It also refers to the Biblical verse 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock' - a further implication that it is Christ himself whom the Pope is turning away, and, as with the Feast of Fools and the goliard 'persona', an association of the person of Christ with the poor and foolish. Likewise, in the final words of the 'money-gospel', the avarice of the Pope is contrasted with the humility of Christ:

Exemplum enim do vobis, ut, quemadmodum ego capio, ita et vos capiatis.
(44)

[For I have given you an example, that as much as I take, so much should you take also]

This is a distorted version of the words of Christ after washing the disciples' feet, 'For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you' (John 13.15), and thus the image of the Pope using his authority to fleece his flock and to encourage his clergy to do likewise, inevitably calls to mind the example of humility and service demonstrated by Christ, in theory the Pope's spiritual master, reminding us by how much the Curia is falling short of the Biblical ideal. The very language of the Church is thus turned against its wealthy and powerful masters.

We have already seen the goliard poets as writers who, on a human level, can shame and satirise the ecclesiastical establishment. Some of their poems go one step further, and suggest that the frail, humble and foolish goliards have acquired a peculiar spiritual blessing. Many poems hint at divine knowledge, which is sometimes granted for the betterment of mankind, or is perhaps revealed only to the goliard himself, but unfortunately kept secret from those less favoured. Like Balaam's ass, goliards can see angels where the ostensibly wiser and more righteous are blind to them. In 'Nocte quadam sabbati', the Archpoet describes how he was suddenly rapt into a vision of heaven, where:

Post hec ad archangelum loquens Michaellem,
qui regit per angelos populum fidelem,
ab eo sum monitus, ut secreta celem
et celi consilia nemini revelem

Unde quamvis cernerem de futuris multa,
que sunt intellectibus hominum sepulta,
celi tamen prodere vereor occulta ... (p.96)

[After this, speaking to the Archangel Michael, who reigns over the faithful through the angels, I was warned by him that I should not reveal the heavenly mysteries and the councils of heaven to anyone.

Therefore although I found out many things about the future, which are hidden from the minds of men, I shall fear to make known the secrets of heaven.]

The Archpoet, outcast and rejected as usual (in the closing stanzas he portrays himself as near to death from consumption), has nevertheless been granted a celestial vision. Although the humour in the poem is evident, as in his calm assurance that his patron's affairs are administered by a specially allotted angel, there is also a serenity in the Archpoet's vision of heaven which places the poem far beyond a profane or irreverent joke. Peter Dronke has taken issue with the description of the sermon in 'Lingua balbus' as a mock- or parody- sermon, pointing out that:

If these strophes had survived alone in manuscript, no one would have imagined that they were anything but sacred lyric. They combine an objective element, of hymnody, and a subjective one, of contemplation and emotional scrutiny, in a way that distinguishes the high achievements of medieval religious lyric ...¹

Likewise, the serene simplicity of the Archpoet's stanzas could hold their own with Abelard's 'O quanta qualia':

Non est ibi gemitus neque vox dolentis,
ubi sanctus populus immortalis gentis
liber a periculis, tutus a tormentis
pace summa fruitur et quiete mentis. (p.96)

[There there is no weeping or sorrowful voice, where the holy people of the immortal nation, free from dangers, safe from torments, rejoice in complete peace and quiet of mind]

The foolish, worthless and sinful goliard has turned out to be the possessor of divine wisdom. The theme is repeated in the anonymous 'Goliath' poem, *Apocalypsis Goliae Episcopi*. Like the Archpoet, the poet is caught up into a vision of heaven. Here his vision has a sharper satirical point: in a parody of Revelations, he is shown seven seals, which represent the various abuses of the Church. The echoes of Revelations emphasise the position of the author: he is a second St. John, God's chosen prophet. The parallel is explicitly drawn:

et dixit angelus qui mecum aderat,
"siste, videbis quae Johannes viderat."²

[And the angel said who was with me:"stand here, and you shall see what John saw.]

As with the Archpoet, the divine knowledge which he acquired on his trip to heaven unfortunately has to be kept a secret:

Hiis gestis deferor in summa nubium,

¹Dronke, 'The Art of the Archpoet', p.27

²Wright, *Latin Poems*, p.5

coelumque raptus sum usque ad tertium,
ubi mirabile vidi mysterium,
et ineffabile cuique mortalium...

...De coelo cecidi ut Cato tertius,
nec summi venio secreti nuncius
sed meus mihi quod inscripsit socius,
hoc vobis dicere possum fidelius.

O quanta dicerem et quam mirifica
de rebus superis et sorte coelica,
nisi papaveris coena sophistica
mentis vestigia fecisset lubrica.

[When these things had been explained, I was carried to the heights of heaven, I was rapt as far as the third heaven, where I saw a wonderful mystery, incomprehensible to one who is mortal.... I fell from heaven like a third Cato, but I do not come as the messenger of the supreme mysteries; but I am able to repeat faithfully to you what my friend wrote for me. O, if the subtle meal of poppy had not made slippery the traces of my mind, what great matters and what a mystery I could speak of!]¹

Again, there is the tantalising hint that vast and mysterious wisdom has been vouchsafed to the poet, which is not to be divulged to ordinary mortals: however, as the chosen of God, he has been charged to deliver a particular message. The concept of the holy innocent has been made part of the image of the fool. In connection with the Feast of Fools, Simonette Cochis quotes a passage from Erasmus' 'Praise of Folly':

Christ too, though he is the wisdom of the father, was made something of a fool himself in order to help the folly of mankind, when he assumed the nature of man and was seen in man's form; just as he was made sin so that he could redeem sinners.²

So the goliards' appropriation of both folly and sin is in some ways a pattern of the meekness and humility of Christ, and has deep spiritual implications as well as merely satirical ones.

¹Ibid, p.19-20

²Quoted in Cochis, 'The Bishop of Fools', p.103

Goliard poets, then, draw on the traditions in medieval ecclesiastical parody exemplified by the Feast of Fools and the Nemo-sermons, gaining moral power from the apostolic preaching movements of the twelfth century and intellectual ammunition from their ability to distort scriptural texts. They subvert the established ecclesiastical authority by its allegiance to ludicrous authority figures, by the deliberate elevation of folly above wisdom and power, and by proclaiming the superiority of the humble sinner to the self-righteous Pharisee. These elements come together to create dazzling satirical poetry in which the figure of the paradoxically moral rogue, rejoicing in his human frailty and sharply drawing attention to the hypocrisy of his superiors, looms large. Such a figure was to prove intensely attractive to later writers, and, as Chapter 2 will suggest, provided the goliards' main entrée into nineteenth century medievalism.

As I mentioned earlier, however, the *Carmina Burana* is a huge collection of immensely varied material, and it contains many other themes which merit exploration, even if more briefly. The most important secondary theme, which will be discussed in the following section, is the poets' treatment of human love, and their imaginative connection of it with the natural world. This theme was to be especially important, as we shall see, to Waddell's *The Wandering Scholars*.

5. Love and nature: the secular lyric tradition

The preceding discussion focused largely on the goliards as members of the Church, and on their satire in an ecclesiastical context. Turning to their treatment of human love and the natural world, we see far greater overlap with the secular lyric tradition. These links may suggest to us that at least some of those who wrote goliardic poetry

might have functioned as performers and entertainers as well as ecclesiastical subversives. The cleric as entertainer is not undocumented: one of the early Church councils condemns 'clericus inter epulas cantans'¹. Moreover, it also seems possible that the original *Carmina Burana* manuscript was arranged with the needs of an entertainer's repertoire in mind. It appears to be carefully arranged in various different sections, with love-songs, satirical poems, hymns to Fortune, and so on, gathered together as appropriate. Major sections have notes of their content - for example, the love-song section is headed *Incipiunt iubili* (Here begins rejoicing)². Neumes are provided to indicate the tunes to which many of the lyrics should be sung, and in other cases neumes were clearly intended to be added at a later stage, but never were. Though the manuscript does have illustrations, these are not of the frequency or quality that might be expected if the book were a deluxe edition compiled for a high-ranking ecclesiastic (as has been suggested). The incomplete nature of the musical notation, the clarity and lack of intrusive illumination in the script, and the number of hands in which additions were made after the original copying of the work,³ do suggest that the book might have been put to some practical purpose by an entertainer during its history, and thus that at least some of the poems' authors might have earned a living by performing its contents. Since the history of the manuscript's ownership before its discovery in 1803 is entirely unknown⁴, it is impossible to speculate further.

Turning back briefly to the argument of the previous section, we certainly find the role of the performer and entertainer making its way into the goliardic 'persona'.

There is an interesting example in Walter of Chatillon's famous 'Propter Sion non

¹ Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars*, p.247 'clericus inter epulas cantans, fidem non aedificans, sed auribus pruriens, excommunis fit' (7th century Irish Church canons)

² Bischoff, *Carmina Burana*, p.21

³ *Ibid*, p.29

⁴ Gillingham, *The Social Background*, p.114

tacebo', also included in the *Carmina Burana*:

Tunc occurrunt cautes rati,
donec omnes sint privati
tam nummis quam vestibus.
tunc securus fit viator,
quia nudus, et cantator
it coram latronibus. (41)

[Then the ships [of petitioners to Rome] often run upon the rocks, until they are stripped both of money and of clothing. Then the traveller who goes naked, and as a singer into the presence of the robbers, may be carefree.]

In this stanza, it is clearly implied that one of the ways to escape the attentions of Rome is to be a poor fool, and an entertainer, a singer. While poverty is an obvious disincentive to the Curia's greed, the protection afforded by being a 'cantator' is less immediately obvious. It appears to draw on the idea of the protection of the licensed fool and entertainer, who preserves a strange kind of innocence and neutrality in the face of politics and corruption. Like the fool, the entertainer is welcomed and licensed everywhere - so the persona of the poet is able to go, literally and metaphorically, where the apparently serious satirist would not be permitted. In the image of the poor vagabond poet, Christian poverty and humility are once again opposed to the conceit and greed of the wealthy ecclesiastics: because of his poverty and meekness, the poet need fear nothing. Thus the identity of the poet, and perhaps sometimes the profession of the entertainer, was also important to goliardic writers.

As entertainers, then, or as writers to whom the persona of the entertainer was important, it is perhaps less surprising to find overlap between the goliards' work and that of other secular performers. Particularly in a culture with a far greater level of oral transmission, it seems highly likely that the songs of one group of entertainers should become intermingled with the songs of another. Peter Dronke, indeed, has argued that all secular lyrics in the Middle Ages, including secular Latin lyric, form

part of a single tradition of profane lyric going back to classical times. He argues that lyrical poetry in many languages, from Portuguese to Arabic, must be regarded as 'a unity - though by no means an undifferentiated one'¹. This is an attractive idea, especially in the context of a medieval Europe where Latin remained the *lingua franca* of the educated, and where national boundaries were far more fluid than at present.

It is certainly possible to draw parallels between the poetry of the *Carmina Burana* and that of many other groups. Particularly clear ones seem to be evident with vernacular folk song, and also with troubadour poetry. Comparisons between goliard and troubadour lyric have been drawn by scholars elsewhere², and are of particular interest when examining later interpretations of the goliards, since those writers who took an interest in the goliards were generally also fascinated by the phenomenon of the troubadours. They have much in common, both historically and in their literary style. The most striking element, in spite of popular conceptions of the troubadour poems, is their direct sensuality. Both goliard and troubadour rejoice in the sensual expression of their love for their lady, although for both poets these joys may be deferred or denied. Cercamon, for example, ends a poem with:

.. . for I cannot stay here much longer
and live, or be cured elsewhere,
unless I have her next to me,
naked, to kiss and embrace
within a curtained room.³

This is surely directly comparable to the sensual longings of a goliardic poem such as 'Sic mea fata':

¹Dronke, *The Medieval Lyric*, p. 9

² Moshe Lazar, 'Fin'amor' in *A Handbook of the Troubadours*, ed. F.R.P. Akehurst and J.M. Davies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p.81

³Anthony Bonner (ed. and trans.), *Songs of the Troubadours* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1973), p.43.

si sua labra semel novero;
una cum illa si dormiero,
mortem subire,
placenter obire
vitamque finire
statim potero ... (116)

[If I could once know her lips; if I could sleep with her for one night, then let death come immediately. I would be able to die contentedly at once and to end life.]

The movement of the thought, and its direct sensuality, is exactly comparable. The distance of the lover from his beloved is also not, in fact, unique to the troubadour lyric. While Cercamon proclaims that he will die if he cannot have his lady, the anonymous goliard poet claims, in what is arguably an even more hyperbolic trope, that if he could only sleep with her once he would die happy. The troubadours and the goliards also find common ground in the strong presence of the natural world in their poetry, and in its connection with the lover's state of mind. For example, the description of the waning of Spring in 'Estas in exilium' (69), is contrasted with the despairing heart of the lover which, burning with love, is unaffected by the cold of winter. A more stark contrast is made in 'Terra iam pandit gremium' (140). If his lady will not be kind, 'iam hiems erit vere!' (now it will be winter in spring!). Elsewhere in the poetry, spring is constantly connected with the condition of love, and characterised as the season of lovers - the power which renews the earth can also renew lovers' hearts. Both of these ideas can be found throughout the poetry of the troubadours. William of Aquitaine, for example, can write:

With the sweetness of the new season
when forest leaves grow and the birds
sing, each in his own way
and in a new key, it is then
that men draw near
to what they most desire.

This thought could have come from many of the poems in the *Carmina Burana* -
'Tempus est iocundum' (CB179) is an example which comes immediately to mind.

Tempore brumali vir patiens,
 animo vernali lasciviens

[In the winter weather, a man is patient; with the coming of spring his spirit grows
 lascivious]

In the third stanza of the poem quoted above, William of Aquitaine explicitly
compares his love to the cycles of the natural world:

Our love is like
 the hawthorn branch
 which, at night, trembles
 beneath rain and ice
 until day comes and the sun spreads
 through the boughs and green leaves.¹

This explicit comparison between the flourishing of the spring and the flourishing of
love could be compared to the refrain in CB 179 – 'totus floreo', or to many other
lyrics in the collection. Both genres, then, share a sensitive awareness of the natural
world, and a connection of this awareness with sensual love.

Influence appears to have run in both directions: Dronke draws our attention to the
example of Peire Cardenal, who was trained as a cleric but who became a
troubadour, in whose poems Dronke sees 'an intensely religious plea against
religious fanaticism and persecution'². There appears, then, to be a fluid area of
overlap between the two genres, where concepts and images are held in common. To
those nineteenth century commentators who linked the two, if not in reality, there
was also a historical connection: the troubadour poets ceased to flourish after the war
against the Cathars in the south of France, while the goliards appear to drop out of

¹Ibid, 38-39

²Dronke, *The Medieval Lyric*, p.57

the mainstream of church records after 1300, suggesting some kind of ecclesiastical clampdown. Although, as we have seen, there was no connection between the Cathars and the goliards, nineteenth century writers tended to read one in, and to see troubadours, goliards and Cathars alike as brief rebellions against the establishment, effectively and sometimes brutally suppressed.

Simple folk song has also made its way into the *Carmina Burana*, where the quantity of macaronic or vernacular songs suggest that German folk song was an important influence on the collection. While references to the natural world in goliardic poetry are often complex and deep, as we shall see later on, in these lyrics they can be naively simple. One of the German lyrics in the collection demonstrates this:

Ich han gesehen, daz mir in dem hercen sanfte tut:
des grunen lovbes pin ih worden wolgemut;
div heide wunnelichen stat;
mir ist lieb, daz si also uil der schonen blumen hat. (144a)

[I have seen that which has done my heart good: the green leaves have made me cheerful, the meadow rests in splendour; I am delighted that it has so many lovely flowers.]

These lines completely lack the sophisticated links between the state of the natural world and the lover's state of mind that are shown both in troubadour and other goliardic poems: they contain straightforward, simple sentiments which could be repeated in any number of cultural contexts. The naivety of this German lyric has its Latin counterpart in CB 149:

Floret silva nobilis
floribus et foliis
ubi est antiquus
meus amicus?
hinc equitavit!
eia! quis me amabit?(149/I)

[The woods are flowering with noble flowers and leaves. Where is my old friend?
He has ridden away. Alas! who will love me?]

The Latin stanza is followed by a German translation, suggesting that the group of songs collected together in this particular section of the *Carmina Burana*, which all display this simplicity of sentiment, and often include material in the vernacular, were perhaps a part of a repertoire designed for less sophisticated audiences, who lacked Latin or did not fully understand it.

Thus goliard poetry deals with love and nature on many different levels. Later authors were confronted by the intense sensuality of the troubadour poems and the naivety of the vernacular lyrics – sometimes separately, but often, as we shall see, together. A third and more complex influence was to be provided by the schools of the twelfth century and by their exploration of pagan learning.

Some of the identifiable goliard authors such as Primas or Philip the Chancellor are known to have been closely connected with the twelfth-century universities, and a large proportion of the lyrics in the *Carmina Burana* bear the marks of the intellectual ‘renaissance’ of the twelfth century, which was particularly noted for a renewed interest in the classical pagan authors, and for the development and exploration of intellectual theories such as Neo-Platonism. Both of these elements can be traced in many of the goliard lyrics, and profoundly affect the ways in which the natural world is depicted in them.

A brief reference to the theories of the Neo-Platonists of Chartres reminds us that the careful delineation of the natural world which we see in the goliardic lyrics is not always as naïve and uncomplicated as we might think it. Earlier and more conservative theology tended to frown on taking interest in the natural world for its own sake, or on any scientific investigation of it. Hugh of St. Victor, for example, argued that since the created world could stand only as a reflection of God himself, the study of it (*theologia mundana*) was useless unless perceived through the light

of divine grace. The superior form of study, *theologia divina*, viewed the whole world in the light of the Incarnation, and understood the divine truth inherent in it but not visible without spiritual understanding¹. The physical world, then, serves merely as a reflection of God and not as an object of interest in its own right. In contrast to this approach, the Neo-Platonists of Chartres, through a Christian interpretation of Platonic theory, described the physical universe as created by God, and ultimately subject to him. However, the created world was ruled, under God, by the laws of Nature which were seen as binding and internally coherent. As the theory developed, these laws became personified in the figure of Natura or the World Soul. While Natura was inferior to God himself, she had total control over the processes of the physical world, and moreover, acted as a mediator between the spiritual and physical realms. Contemplating and reflecting divine grace, she infused the physical world with the awareness of it². The physical world thus becomes a self-sufficient entity worthy of contemplation in its own right, since every part of it is infused with God's grace by the World Soul, and the acceptance that it is governed by internally coherent laws encourages the scholar to examine the workings of those laws. Thus we see that the goliards' detailed observation of the natural world and evident delight in it suggests links with one of the important and controversial intellectual movements of the period.

Even clearer in many goliardic lyrics is the influence of their authors' new interest in classical mythology and literature. Peter Dronke has pointed out, for example, how adroitly the Archpoet balances Biblical and classical references in 'Lingua balbus'³. Many of the poems in the *Carmina Burana* retell the stories of Greek and Roman

¹ Winthrop Wetherbee, *Platonism and Poetry in the twelfth century: the literary influence of the school of Chartres* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p.52

² *Ibid*, pp. 33 – 35

³ Dronke, 'The Art of the Archpoet', p.23

myth – for example, the collection contains an account of the labours of Hercules, various poems drawn from the Trojan war, and descriptions of the flight of Aeneas and Dido's abandonment. Any random selection from the manuscript demonstrates how the lyrics are littered with references to the classical deities: the reference to Jove in 'Sic mea fata' has already been quoted, and to take another example, one of the most famous poems, 'Dum Dianae vitrea', invokes Morpheus, god of sleep, and Diana herself.

Such an awareness of pagan learning, and of the complexities of Neo-Platonic theory makes the treatment of love and nature in many of the lyrics a much richer and more complicated one than that in the naïve, folk-song influenced lyrics, or even the connections with human emotion made by the troubadour poets. Though 'Ecce gratum' opens with a simple celebration of spring, it closes with a triumphant panegyric to Venus:

Gloriantur
et letantur
in melle dulcedinis
qui conantur
ut utantur
premio Cupidinis
simus iussu Cypridis
gloriantes
et letantes
pares esse Paridis! (143)

[They glory and rejoice in the sweetness of honey, who venture to use the rewards of Cupid. Let us by the command of Venus, glorying and rejoicing, be equal to Paris!]

The references to the pagan gods and classical heroes are fleeting enough in this passage, but they give the impression of a spiritual endeavour which goes beyond the mere appreciation of spring and love. These poets are struggling for the reward of Venus, a sensual experience which approaches spiritual exaltation. They are no

longer simply enjoying the spring weather, but worshipping a powerful deity and reaping the rewards of that worship. This enhanced vision of love and of the natural world will be essential to Waddell's image of the goliards.

6. 'Si linguis angelicis' and 'Stetit puella'

The foregoing discussion cannot begin to scratch the surface of the complex and often contradictory material in the *Carmina Burana*. It has simply attempted to outline two themes which feature most prominently in the work of the collection's 'medievalist' interpreters. The first is the persona of the paradoxically moral rogue and vagabond, satirising the self-righteous hypocrisy of his ecclesiastical masters and deftly subverting the scriptures to his own ends. The second concerns the themes of human love and the natural world, matters in which the goliard poets are far more influenced by secular traditions such as troubadour lyric and vernacular folk song. It has so far, however, discussed these two themes as if they belonged to entirely separate groups of works. This is not infrequently true. However, the most dazzling goliard poems are those few which contain all these various themes and ideas, and in which the goliards' familiarity with the language of the Church and genuine (if unorthodox) spiritual fervour is fused with the world of pagan learning and the direct sensuality of the secular tradition.

One of the most accomplished examples of these is the poem 'Si linguis angelicis'. It opens with a slightly rearranged quotation from St Paul¹:

¹ 1 Corinthians 13, v.1. The text in the Vulgate Bible is 'Si linguis hominum loquar et angelorum ...'

Si linguis angelicis loquar et humanis,
non valeret exprimi palma, nec in annis,
per quam recte preferor cunctis Christianis
tamen invidentibus emulis profanis. (77)

[If I should speak with the tongues of men and angels, it would not be possible even in a year to express the wonderful glory through which I am rightly set above all Christians, to the envy, however, of my profane rivals.]

The sense of awe and wonder remains, but the phrase is given radically different implications. Paul's phrase is an essentially self-condemnatory one, warning against vainglory (If I speak with the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love ...) but here it is a glorious affirmation: though the poet might speak with the tongues of men and angels, they would not be sufficient to express the glory to which he has been elevated. While Paul encouraged Christians to strive for the prize, the writer implies that he has been awarded it already, in preference to all Christians, and moreover, implicitly equates his own human love with Paul's image of divine love. Paul tells us that the tongues of men and angels are useless without Christian, spiritual love: this writer tells us that he has achieved human, worldly love, and that the tongues of men and angels are quite inadequate to express it. Therefore, the language of religious awe is used to express the glory and wonder of human love. However, the awe usually associated with divine love remains attached to the language. It is not intended as a profane parody, but rather as an attempt to convey a simultaneous sense of spiritual and sensual, human fulfilment. Peter Dronke has commented that in 'Si linguis':

The poet attempts to convey an earthly experience and a transcendent one simultaneously - not because the one prefigures or symbolises the other, but because he truly sees the two as one.¹

To expand on Dronke's comment, the poets of the *Carmina Burana* use the language

¹Dronke, *Medieval Latin and the Rise of the European Love-Lyric* (Oxford, 1968), p.318

of the Vulgate and the liturgy not for purposes of parody or mere profane humour, but to imbue the realities of their human, sensual world with the awe and wonder which they genuinely believe also to belong to divine love. In 'Si linguis angelicis', the poet describes his meeting with his beloved, in the typical dream-garden of medieval literature. He greets his beloved in the language of Marian panegyrics:

Ave, formosissima, gemma pretiosa
ave, decus virginum, virgo gloriosa
ave, mundi luminum, ave mundi rosa
Blanziflor et Helena Venus generosa! (77)

[Hail, most beautiful one, precious jewel, hail, wonderful maiden, glorious maiden,
hail, the light of the world, hail the rose of the world, Blanche fleur and Helena, most
noble Venus!]

The joint appearance of Mary and Venus in this stanza is intriguing. 'Decus virginum' is a frequently used phrase in Marian hymns, as is the description of Mary as the 'rose of the world' (mundi rosa). Yet the invocation to the woman as 'Venus generosa' emphasises the immediate, sensual aspects of this love, and endows her with a second layer of sensual, pagan spirituality. We should also note the appearance of the medieval romance heroine, Blanche fleur, and the classical Helen of Troy in this multi-layered panegyric.

The woman confers spiritual exaltation and is constantly described in such terms: she is 'stella matutina' (another Marian phrase), 'rosa fulgida', 'florum florem'. Yet in combination with this spiritual awe, there is also a simplicity, immediacy and directness to the human experience of these lovers which anchors their love poetry and preserves it from idealisation or remoteness. While the traditional medieval love vision usually involves a figure of superior wisdom, who educates the dreamer, in whatever sphere, 'Si linguis angelicis' refers to a real, human love affair. The poet tells his mistress of the length of his love:

"Vulnera cur detegam, que sunt manifesta?
estas quinta periit, properat en sexta,
quod te in tripudio quadam die festa
vidi ... (77)

[Why should I display these wounds, which are obvious? The fifth summer has passed by, the sixth indeed is hastening on, since I saw you on a certain holiday in the dance ...]

The glorious maiden, described in the language of Venus, Mary, and the romances, is still linked to the familiar human experience of the *caroles*, the public dances that were so immensely popular in the twelfth century¹. If the sensuality and the pagan references are the sophisticated product of the troubadour lyrics and the schools, the almost naive immediacy of this stanza could be traced to the folk-song tradition.

In this poem, then, religious language and experience, pagan learning, and human love and affection have been fused until they are impossible to untangle. Spiritual exaltation has not been downgraded, but neither has human love become idealised or unrealistic.

The same combination is evident in the strange but compelling lyric, 'Stetit puella':

Stetit puella
rufa tunica
si quis eam tetigit
tunica crepuit.
eia!

Stetit puella
tamquam rosula:
facie splenduit
et os eius floruit.
eia! (177)

[A girl stood, in a red tunic. If anyone touched her, the tunic rustled. A girl stood, like a little rose: her face shone, and her mouth blossomed.]

Here, the mystery of the woman, and the spiritual awe of her appearance are

¹ Christopher Page, *The Owl and the Nightingale: musical life and ideas in France 1100 – 1300* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1989), p.111

powerfully conveyed - the tunic which rustles at a touch suggests the *Noli me tangere* of the resurrected Christ¹, as does the transfigured face, and again the Marian or mystic language of the rose is used to convey spiritual meaning – ‘tamquam rosula’.

In the final, macaronic stanza, however, the influence of both the sophisticated troubadour tradition and of the simple folk song seem to be at work:

Stetit puella *bi einem bovme*
scripsit amorem *an eime lovbe*
dar chom venus also fram
caritatem magnam
hohe minne
bot si ir manne. (177)

[A girl stood, beside a tree. She wrote her love upon a leaf: then Venus came forth;
great love, noble love, she gave to her man.]

The peculiar reference to the love which is written ‘upon a leaf’, could perhaps be related to the episode in Marie de France’s *Chevrefoil*, in which Tristan carves messages to Iseult on a hazel twig². This would clearly link the poem with troubadour and court poetry. The reference to Venus calls up the classical curriculum of the schools: yet the simplicity of the last two lines, and the use of the vernacular, evokes a real love affair and straightforward human affection.

The presence of all these competing and often contradictory influences in the poetry which is referred to as ‘goliardic’ makes it tremendously difficult to arrive at any single definition of a goliard or of his poetry. The heart of ‘goliardic’ literature must be regarded as the Goliard-poems, mainly those of ecclesiastical satire, which draw on the persona of the Feast of Fools, and proclaim the paradoxical elevation of the vagabond and outcast. This identity is firmly situated within the boundaries of the

¹ John 20:17

² Marie de France, *Lais*, ed. and trans. G. Burgess and K. Busby (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1999), p.109 (translation) and p.162 (original).

medieval Church, and depends on an intimate knowledge of its language, and of its abuses. It also displays an unorthodox, but intense concern for the true and honest practice of Christianity. Yet the persona of the vagabond is combined with a sophisticated treatment of human love and the natural world, influenced by a wider secular tradition. Later commentators on goliardic poetry were to be attracted by all of these various elements. They revelled in the sophisticated sensuality and paganism of the love songs, but also found the straightforwardness of the elements drawn from the folk song culture attractive. Perhaps the element which was to loom largest in their interpretation of the goliards, however, at least initially, was the image of the goliard as vagabond, outcast, and rebel against the ecclesiastical establishment. In a century dominated by the medievalism of Tennyson and his admirers, where the Middle Ages had become an ideological tool for the enforcement of social conformity, the goliards were brought out to play a vital part in the formation of a counter-medievalism, a medievalism centred on the image of the rebel.

CHAPTER 2

GODS IN EXILE

Goliardic poetry, to all appearances, timed its entry onto the nineteenth century scene to perfection. *Carmina Burana*, by far the most familiar manuscript to the authors discussed in this study, was discovered in the monastery of Benediktbeuern in 1803 – just as Scott’s novels were beginning to galvanise the medieval revival. Schmeller’s edition of the manuscript, which made the poems easily available to scholars (and was, indeed, the edition used by Symonds and Waddell), was published in 1847, ten years before the first *Idylls of the King* were brought out. The discovery and editing of this manuscript should, then, have been perfectly placed to tap into the full fervour of nineteenth century interest in all things medieval, and we might well expect to see goliardic poetry making an appearance in all kinds of nineteenth century literature. However, as the Introduction explained, the goliards’ rise to popularity was an unexpected one, and followed a period of almost complete literary neglect. The only small light on the horizon during the first half of the nineteenth century is Thomas Wright’s *Latin Poems Commonly Attributed to Walter Mapes*¹. This is an edition of the longer satirical poems, published in 1841, and drawn from the various medieval manuscripts containing such poems rather than from the *Carmina Burana* itself. While it demonstrates an awareness of some goliardic output (though not the manuscript with which this study is mainly concerned), Wright’s book is rather the last manifestation of an anti-Catholic tradition with which the goliards had been associated by scholars since the Reformation, than the beginnings of an appreciation of their poetry as literature. In 1557 Mathias Flacius Illyricus published a book of goliardic poetry entitled *Varia doctorum*

¹Thomas Wright, *Latin Poems Commonly Attributed to Walter Mapes, collected and edited by Thomas Wright* (London: AMS Press 1968: first edition 1841)

piorumque virorum de corrupta ecclesiae statu poemata [Various poems of learned and pious men concerning the corrupt state of the church]¹, which began the tradition of seeing the satirical goliardic poems as historical proof of the corrupt state of the Catholic Church, thus supporting the reformers' position. The extended version of his title makes it clear that he sees the poems as historical resources and not as literature: *ex quibus multa historica quoque utiliter ... cognosci possunt* [from which much useful history ... can be extracted]. The goliards, then, are a historical anticipation of the Reformation. Wright, almost four hundred years later, took up nearly the same attitude. He wrote that:

... the reformers were astonished and delighted to find that, between three and four centuries before, their ancestors had protested so strongly against the abuses which they had now succeeded in correcting ...²

The goliards are placed in a context which is clearly historical, connected by Wright with Wyclif and with a political reading of *Piers Plowman*. Going further, he sees them as the expression of 'the indignant patriotism of a considerable portion of the English nation against the encroachments of ecclesiastical and civil tyranny³'. Though these satirical poems offer interesting historical evidence of an early anti-Catholic tradition, there is no awareness in Wright's book of the *Carmina Burana* and its lyrics of love and good life, nor is there any suggestion that the goliards might be read for their literary merit. Wright also makes clear that his book is for scholarly, rather than popular, consumption, indicating that

¹ Mathias Flacius Illyricus, *Varia doctorum piorumque virorum de corrupto Ecclesiae statu poemata* (Basle: Ludovicus Lucius, 1557)

² Wright, *Latin Poems*, p.xxiv

³ *Ibid*, p.xxi

... it was his [Wright's] intention at first to give the work as much general interest as possible, by adding numerous popular notes, but want of time has hindered him from carrying this design into effect after a few of the first pages.¹

The concept of goliardic poetry as literature, let alone popular literature, had some way to go before it entered nineteenth century consciousness, and the central text of this study, the *Carmina Burana*, was entirely neglected. An early reviewer of Symonds' *Wine, Women and Song* demonstrated how little known or regarded the contents of this manuscript were in 1884, when the book was newly published:

No freak of the imagination could attribute to an Englishman a publication like 'Carmina Burana', on which Mr Symonds has largely drawn. It is a voluminous collection from manuscript sources of the medieval students' songs of the twelfth century... It is greatly to the credit of Mr Symonds' literary ingenuity that he should have found in this laborious volume the materials for his cheerful little book.²

Although the French and German scholars du Méril and Hubatsch were compiling enormous editions of medieval Latin poetry well before the publication of Symonds' work, little of this interest seems to have crossed the Channel³. Symonds' book is an entirely new departure, and is perhaps the more unusual in that it is the first ever book of translations from the *Carmina Burana* published in English – in other words, the first attempt to place the goliards before the public as literature rather than as historical or political documents, and to present them to an audience not necessarily versed in the classics. While far from being a runaway bestseller in the manner of *The Wandering Scholars*,

¹ Ibid, p.xxxvi

² 'Wine, Women and Song' (anonymous review), in *The Athenaeum*, Feb 21, 1885 (no 2991), p.244

³ O.Hubatsch, *Die lateinischen Vagantenlieder des Mittelalters* (Gorlitz, 1870), and Edelstand du Méril, *Poesies populaires Latines du Moyen Age* (Paris: F.Didot, 1847)

Wine, Women and Song enjoyed a modest level of success comparable to many other medievalist works of the period. By 1884, an audience was clearly available for translations of the goliards and other work based on them. This chapter attempts to explain why it took so long for the *Carmina Burana* to find its niche in nineteenth century medievalism, and to explore the cultural currents which finally enabled Symonds to bring goliardic poetry to the Victorian public.

The explanation of the goliards' somewhat chequered nineteenth-century career lies in the changing character of medievalism over the course of the century. As the Introduction suggested, medievalism must be regarded as a far more complex phenomenon than has been previously realised. In the early part of the century, the period covering the publication of Schmeller's edition, medievalist literature was dominated by socially and morally conservative ideals, of the kind described by Girouard, and the goliard poets would have been an acute embarrassment in such company. By 1884, however, while the image of the Middle Ages as an era of purity and chivalry still persisted, an alternative vision of the medieval world had begun to take shape in opposition to it. In this world, the general ideals of the Middle Ages – chastity and chivalry in particular – were characterised as ascetic, repressive and life-denying, but figures who rebelled against this orthodoxy were fêted as heroes. It was in the atmosphere of rebellion against chivalry that the goliards, in the form of Symonds' translations, were to find a natural home.

It thus becomes necessary to examine the nature of medievalism in the early part of the century, and to explore those conservative qualities which made it such an uncongenial environment for goliardic poetry. The conservative trend of what we might call 'chivalric' medievalism was heavily influenced by the desire for social harmony which many mid-Victorian writers demonstrate in their writings. In

revolt against the wholly pragmatic Utilitarian creed of 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number', and concerned by the growing demands of the industrialised working classes, they envisaged a society in which distinct but mutually dependent groups of people formed a harmonious whole. All parts of the whole being essential, no group need feel dissatisfied with their own social position. Elizabeth Barrett Browning made powerful use of this image at the end of *Aurora Leigh*:

Sweet shadow-rose, upon the water of life,
Of such a mystic substance, Sharon gave
A name to! human, vital, fructuous rose,
Whose calyx holds the multitude of leaves,
Loves filial, loves fraternal, neighbour-loves
And civic - all fair petals, all good scents,
All reddened, sweetened, from one central Heart!¹

This natural hierarchy, defying logic, requires no justification. Romney, the hero of *Aurora Leigh*, rejects his original, rational socialism - 'Less mapping out of masses to be saved/ By nations or by sexes ...' In his new vision, however, the removal of all social evils will precede the spontaneous growth of a divinely inspired order:

... whence, shall grow spontaneously,
New churches, new economies, new laws
Admitting freedom, new societies
Excluding falsehood: HE shall make all new.²

The poem's concluding image again invokes this mystic order:

... 'Jasper first' I said,
'And second, sapphire; third, chalcedony;
The rest in order - last, an amethyst.'¹

¹Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh*, ed. Kerry McSweeney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). Book IX, lines 883 - 890.

² Ibid, Book IX, lines 946 -9

Barrett Browning's chosen allusion is deliberately precise: in the vision of heavenly society, each element is to have its defined place – 'The rest in order'- and such order is essential to the proper functioning of the whole.

Girouard has demonstrated the ways in which the chivalric revival appealed to this need for a socially and morally ordered society². The benefits of the feudal system were appealed to as an alternative to the rise of large scale industry and the practical calculations of Utilitarianism. Feudal service was romantically seen as a perfectly ordered system, in which the loyal working classes and the chivalrous aristocracy were equally essential and mutually dependent. As John Manners, a member of the 'Young England' group put it:

Each knew his place - king, peasant, peer or priest,
The greatest owed connection with the least³

Medievalism was attractive to many writers and thinkers in the mid-nineteenth century because it supported their ideal of a mystically preordained society. The supposed mutual dependence of the landed aristocracy and the peasant labourers perfectly illustrated the central concept - that different groups combined to create the whole. The ideal of chivalry then became for many writers the code of conduct by which the modern equivalent of the aristocracy should be trained to carry out their duties within this harmonious feudal system.

Seen as a code of conduct to encourage correct behaviour, Victorian chivalry discouraged individuality and based itself on the reproduction of ideal patterns.

¹Ibid, Book IX, lines 963-6.

²Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot*, pp. 80 – 85.

³John Manners, *England's Trust*, quoted in Girouard, *The Return to Camelot*, p.83

One of the most popular books of this period, Kenelm Digby's *The Broad Stone of Honour*, is largely filled with lists of famous chivalric exemplars. Its author's mode of instruction is to urge his readers to emulate these heroes. For Digby and his followers, chivalry is a matter of instinct and not of rational conviction.¹ Rather as Romney's perfect order will 'grow spontaneously', the truly chivalrous man will know what to do in any situation without even thinking about it. As long as his spirit is in tune with that of his chivalric heroes, he will act in accordance with chivalric principles. Such a romanticised appeal to instinct is in fact a powerful means of social control, since it discourages individual intellectual enterprise, and advises people to copy models slavishly - almost to become those models as far as is possible.

Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* is the literary embodiment of such ideas. For Tennyson, too, chivalry is to be pursued by emulation of the ideal. The chivalry of the medieval legends was a code restraining outward behaviour, but Tennyson requires an inward reformation, which is controlled by the central figure of the King:

I made them lay their hands in mine, and swear,
To reverence the King, as if he were
Their conscience, and their conscience as their King ...²

In this vow, individuality is totally surrendered. Arthur represents the chivalric ideal, and the knights are required to make this ideal completely interchangeable with their own thoughts. As they strive to achieve this goal, they lose their

¹Kenelm Digby, *The Broad Stone of Honour* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1877: first published 1822)

² 'Guinevere', in *The Poems of Tennyson*, ed. Christopher Ricks (Longmans: Harlow, 1969), p.1725, line 464 – 466. All further references to the *Idylls of the King* will be to this edition, and will be given in the text by line number.

individuality completely. At moments of perfect unity, the Round Table is filled with physical and mental copies of Arthur. A watcher tells how at Arthur's coronation:

... I beheld
From eye to eye through all their Order flash
A momentary likeness of the King:
(‘The Coming of Arthur’, l.267-70)

In the ‘Holy Grail’, the monk Ambrosius compares the knights to coins:

Some true , some light, but every one of you
Stamped with the image of the King (‘Holy Grail’, l.26-7)

The great enemies of chivalry in the *Idylls* are those characters who trust to their own powers of rational thought and decision. Tristram, one of the lesser villains, is a mouthpiece for such views. His initial response to Arthur is all that Tennyson could desire - instinctive and absolute:

For once - even to the height- I honoured him.
‘Man, is he man at all?’, methought, when first
I rode from our rough Lyonesse, and beheld
That victor of the Pagan throned in Hall ...
... he seemed to me no man,
But Michael trampling Satan; so I sware,
(‘The Last Tournament’, l.658-68)

Such a response is based on his first sight of Arthur and not on any rational appreciation of him. When the knights begin to question the reasons for his authority over them, the rot within the Round Table has begun, as Tristram describes. The most powerful condemnation of Tristram in Tennyson's eyes is his assertion of his emancipation from Arthur's control:

... can Arthur make me pure
As any maiden child? Lock up my tongue
From uttering freely what I freely hear?
Bind me to one? The wide world laughs at it.
(‘The Last Tournament’, l.687-9)

By rejecting any form of control over his spirit, Tristram rejects what Tennyson saw as the central tenet of chivalry - the willingness to submerge individual desires and logical thought in the instinctive pursuit of an ideal. Tristram’s own death and the collapse of the Round Table follow as an inevitable consequence. Tennyson’s chivalry is supported by a species of medievalist thought police.

Tennyson’s evocation of ‘Arthur as a modern gentleman’ in ‘Morte d’Arthur’ is enough to show that he saw this view of medieval chivalry as highly applicable to the morals of his own day, as is his dedication of the completed *Idylls* to the Prince Consort¹. His interest in using the chivalric code as a means of training young Victorian gentlemen is indicated by Emily Tennyson’s comment that he wrote ‘Gareth’ to provide ‘a pattern youth for his boys’.² This comment, again, with its use of the word ‘pattern’, suggests the pursuit of excellence through the slavish imitation of an ideal exemplar.

If mid-nineteenth century chivalry represented a means of social control, the revival of courtly love acted as an equally powerful regulator of sexual relationships. Women commanded a separate sphere, from which they were supposed to guide and inspire the chivalric deeds of their lovers. In *Sesame and Lilies*, Ruskin describes the relationship of the knight and his lady as the *raison d’etre* of chivalry:

¹‘Dedication’, in *Poems*, p.1467

²Quoted by Christopher Ricks in *Poems*, p.1484

... the first and necessary impulse of every truly taught and knightly heart is this of blind service to its lady ... in this rapturous obedience to the single love of his youth, is the sanctification of all man's strength, and the continuance of all his purposes.¹

Like chivalry, courtly love is an instinctive impulse of the chivalrous mind, not subject to analysis or dissent. This made it a useful means of enforcing the purity and chastity that these writers saw as essential in sexual relationships, and in the chivalric life. Tennyson saw the courtly love relationship, properly conducted, as a crucial method of enforcing chivalrous behaviour:

... for indeed I knew
Of no more subtle master under heaven,
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
Not only to keep down the base in man,
But teach high thought, and amiable words,
And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
And love of truth, and all that makes a man.
(‘Guinevere’, l. 474-80)

Courtly love has two purposes: it fosters the chivalric spirit and encourages manly deeds, and also idealises chastity, thus discouraging sexual misbehaviour. It is hardly surprising that in the *Idylls* freedom of thought and enterprise, the enemy of chivalry, is intimately connected with freedom in love, the corrupter of sexual morals. Those characters who speak out most strongly in support of independence of thought, such as Tristram and Vivien, are also those who believe in the importance of physical delight. Asserting his freedom from Arthur's control, Tristram also draws attention to his physical power and beauty, and his capacity for sensual feeling:

For feel this arm of mine - the tide within
Red with free chase and heather scented air

¹John Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* ed. Sybil Wragge (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1920: first published 1865), p.108

Pulsing full man; ... ('The Last Tournament', 1.685-688)

Tristram embodies the rediscovered delight in sensuality which emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. For Tennyson, the medieval chivalric ideal provided an essential check on such disturbing tendencies.

As we saw in the previous chapter, however, the goliards would be emphatically on the side of Tristram. The proclamation of independence in the Archpoet's *Confessio* is unmistakable:

Cum sit enim proprium viro sapienti
supra petram ponere sedem fundamenti
stultus ego comparor fluvio labenti
sub eodem aere nunquam permanenti (p.114)

[For since it is appropriate for the wise man to place his foundation upon a rock,
I, a fool, may be compared to a flowing river, which never remains stable under
the same sky]

While Tennyson stresses the importance of extreme social conformity, sacrificing individuality to the ideal, the Archpoet presents himself as an outsider and a wanderer who will never be able to settle into any moral or social framework. The chivalric medievalist ideal maintains that each man must reform his inner nature in accordance with the true spirit of chivalry. The Archpoet maintains cheerfully that his own inner nature is not designed for chastity or self-denial, and further, that no inward or outward authority is able to alter its propensities:

Unicuique proprium dat natura munus: (p.116)
[Nature gives to each one an appropriate gift...]

Tennyson would have been disturbed by a single instance of such rebellion, but the imaginative concept of the *ordo vagorum* extends this freedom to all humanity. As we have seen, the goliardic model is one of anarchic inclusivity.

While Tennyson sees the Round Table as a group of knights growing ever more alike through their common aspirations, under the leadership of their charismatic king, the famous drinking song 'In taberna quando sumus' asserts that humanity is a mass of diverse individuals bound together by a common desire:

bibit ille, bibit illa,
bibit servus cum ancilla,
bibit velox, bibit piger,
bibit albus, bibit niger,
bibit constans, bibit vagus,
bibit rudis, bibit magus (196)

[He drinks, she drinks, the servant drinks with the serving maid, the swift drinks, the slow drinks, the white drinks, the black drinks, the stable drinks, the wanderer drinks, the fool drinks, the wise man drinks ...]

The goliards, then, were antithetical to the medievalist ideal of social conformity. Unsurprisingly, they were no more in tune with Victorian images of courtly love. As we saw in the first chapter, the direct expression of sensual desire is an important part of their poetry, and this was bound to disturb the adherents of Tennyson. Even more confusingly, however, they demonstrated themselves to be conversant with the language and concepts of courtly love while combining them with an awareness of the sensual possibilities of such love. Ruskin's comment that the medieval mistress, or her modern-day equivalent, 'must be enduringly, incorruptibly good; instinctively, infallibly wise...'¹, seems to be amply supported by the goliardic lyric below:

Iure Veneris orbata
castitas redintegrata
vultu decenti perornata,
veste sophie decorata ... (107)

¹Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, p.112

[...breaking the law of Venus, with renewed chastity, with a face ornamented
with beauty, garbed in the vestments of wisdom]

Yet the deliberate undermining of the Ruskinian image of woman as guide in
another lyric from the *Carmina Burana* might be enough to make its enthusiasts
feel mocked:

... tue reus, domina, dulcedini,
cuius elegantie non memini.
quia sic erravi,
sum dignus pena gravi,
penitentem corripe, si placet, in conclavi! (178)

[...[I am] your penitent, lady, whose sweetness and elegance I
have not remembered. Since I have erred thus, I am worthy of a
severe penance. Correct your penitent as you will, if it pleases
you, in your chamber.]

Such irreverence would have been reason enough for the adherents of mid-
Victorian medievalism to reject the goliardic love lyrics. Yet more disturbing,
though, are the lyrics which mingle images of courtly and sexual love in the
same poem, such as 'Sic mea fata canendo solor':

Felicitate Iovem supero,
si me dignetur, quam desidero
si sua labra semel novero,
una cum illa si dormiero ...

[I should congratulate (ie look down on) Jove above, if I might be found
worthy of what I desire, if I might once kiss her lips, might once sleep with
her...]

While this passage clearly refers to a dearly held Victorian belief that the love
and worship of one's mistress could ennoble the lover and inspire him to great
deeds, the lyric here makes it obvious that the means of that ennoblement will be
a sexual one. As we saw in the discussion of 'Si linguis angelicis' and 'Stetit
puella' in the first chapter, in many goliardic lyrics sexual fulfilment and spiritual

enlightenment are inseparable parts of the same experience, and the language of religion and of courtly love is pressed into service in order to try and express that experience. For writers like Ruskin and Tennyson, who saw courtly love as a useful way of keeping down 'the base in man', and of encouraging spiritual aspiration and pure, manly deeds, the goliardic lyrics were of doubtful assistance.

The unashamedly sensual and defiantly anti-authoritarian goliard poets could not, then, sit comfortably with a vision of the Middle Ages as an era of pure and selfless chivalry and divinely sanctioned order, as the mid nineteenth century 'chivalric' medievalists would have it. Towards the close of the century, however, writers such as Pater and Swinburne were to discover a new and largely untapped source of inspiration within medieval literature. This might be described as the literature of the medieval rebel. The interests of these writers turned to the subversive legends of Tristram and Tannhauser, to the romance of *Aucassin et Nicolette*, and to the songs of the troubadours. In the company of such renegade figures as these, the goliards were finally to find their niche within medievalist literature. Although John Addington Symonds was cautious in his relations with Pater and Swinburne, it is clear that the inspiration for his translations, published as *Wine, Women and Song* in 1884, comes from their new approach to the Middle Ages.

The roots of this approach lay in the ideas of the late nineteenth century 'aesthetic' movement, which was a direct and conscious rebellion against the values that Tennyson had glorified in the *Idylls*. Tennyson believed that all men should strive to see the world through the eyes of his ideal king, and to mould their experiences on his as far as possible. In contrast, Walter Pater, in the Conclusion to *The Renaissance*, argued that all experience is necessarily

subjective. Individual perceptions of the world are no more than a fleeting and subjective coalescence of the stream of random sensory data which constantly assails us.¹ Where Tennyson and his followers had seen chivalry as an objective ideal to be emulated, Pater finds himself incapable of suggesting how men should behave - he recommends only what they should feel. Experience is so subjective that it is impossible to define a single external moral imperative which will apply to all. In this amoral whirl, Pater argues that the only way to live is to seek out the most intense sources of experience. He writes that:

experience, fleeting and subjective, experience is the only thing we must seek...

and that:

The service of philosophy, of speculative culture, towards the human spirit, is to rouse, to startle it, to a life of constant and eager observation ... Not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the end ...²

While individual self-reliance is anathema to Tennyson, to Pater individual impulses are the only reliable source of guidance in a frighteningly uncertain world. He recommends that people should be directed solely by their individual desire for intense experience.

In the absence of external spiritual or moral authority, this experience must be based on the physical world. In this passage from the 'Conclusion', Pater rejects intellectual analysis of experience, and instead advocates the direct physical experience of 'seeing' and 'touching'.

¹Walter Pater, *The Renaissance*, ed. Adam Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986: first published 1873), p. 150 -151

²Ibid, p. 152

With this sense of the splendour of our experience and of its awful brevity, gathering all we are into one desperate effort to see and touch, we shall hardly have time to make theories about the things we see and touch¹.

Confined to our own impressions as a means of making sense of the world, we must try and maximise these impressions, Pater argues. The only way to do this is through physical and sensual experience.

This should not, suggest, however, that the philosophy of the late nineteenth century was a pragmatic one. Pater does not see sensual experience as the source of mere physical enjoyment. Rather, it is part of a complete experience which can also lift the mind and spirit to the highest possible pitch of delight. Pater touches on this when he speaks of 'the splendour of our experience and of its awful brevity.' Earlier in the Conclusion he remarks that:

To burn always with this hard, gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life.²

His use of the word 'ecstasy' indicates that the state of feeling described goes far beyond everyday pleasure. To experience the world in this sense is to live life entirely on an exalted spiritual plane. Appreciation of physical beauty and intense spiritual awareness are merged into a single, transcendent condition in which both soul and body are transfigured. Praising Blake's poetry, Swinburne elucidated this relationship:

Blake, as a mystic of the higher and subtler kind, would have denied this superior separate vitality of the spirit; but far from inferring thence that the soul must expire with the body, would have maintained that the essence of the body must survive with the essence of the soul: accepting thus ... in its most absolute and profound sense, the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Flesh.³

¹ Ibid, p. 152

² Ibid, p.152

³ A.C. Swinburne, *William Blake* (London: J.C.Hotten, 1868), p. 95

Swinburne regards Blake as a 'mystic of the higher and subtler kind' because he does not attempt to divide physical delight from spiritual ecstasy, nor to grant one superiority over the other. Sensual passion and the appreciation of beauty were meaningful to these writers as part of an experience which included spiritual exaltation as a necessary element. By implication, he suggests that poetry and life must be imbued with an awareness of more awesome powers than those visible in the everyday world. Although religious conformity is rejected, the experience which Pater advised his readers to seek encompassed continual spiritual awareness. It should not be surprising to find that Gerard Manley Hopkins, whose poetry combines intense love of physical beauty with passionate religious feeling, was a former pupil and devotee of Pater's¹.

Paganism became an increasingly attractive prospect to many of these writers. In the opening chapters of *Marius the Epicurean*, Pater describes it as:

A religion of usages and sentiment rather than of facts and belief, and attached to very definite things and places.²

In other words, paganism is a religion in which spiritual understanding can only be attained through an intense awareness of the physical world, such as Pater describes in the 'Conclusion'. Late nineteenth century writers argued that while Christianity is based on the denial of the flesh, in paganism spiritual power is mediated through the fleshly world. The pagan deities were also attractive because, unlike the Christian God, they imposed no moral imperatives. In their capriciousness and amorality, they demonstrate the existence of supernatural

¹ Robert and Janice Keefe, *Walter Pater and the Gods of Disorder* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1988), p.21

² Walter Pater, *Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations And Ideas* (London: Macmillan, 1885), p.4

powers, but do not attach this power to any moral structures. Paganism provided an ideology which combined sensual and spiritual experiences into a single whole, but was also sufficiently amoral and flexible to encompass the subjectivity and individual freedom of the aesthetic movement.

Symonds' name was frequently coupled by the Victorian public with those of Swinburne and Pater¹, and both his private memoirs and published writings reflect his initial sympathy with their views. In his discussion of religion in his memoirs, he affirms the essential need for spiritual understanding, while rejecting the conventional dogma of the Church:

To transcend, to circumvent, to transact with the law of the world, is impossible. To learn anything final about it is probably denied the human intellect. Yet the very consciousness of these limitations and disabilities forces the soul back on religion. It does not so much matter which faith a man adopts or what he fashions for himself. Yet scarcely can he live to any purpose without faith.²

Symonds' view of religion reflects the need for spiritual experience which Pater envisaged in *Marius the Epicurean*. However, as the rest of the chapter makes clear, this experience was drawn from an intense contemplation of the physical world. Symonds imagines a God present not outside the cosmos and controlling it, but within and illuminating it. For him, too, it is impossible to separate spiritual and physical experience:

¹ For example, Edward Lefroy could write of 'Pater-paganism and Symonds-sophistry' – see Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), p.116

² Symonds, *The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds*, ed. Phyllis Grosskurth (London: Hutchinson, 1984), p.249.

Some extracts from this memoir (omitting all references to Symonds' homosexuality) were published as part of a biography of Symonds by his executor, Horatio Brown, in 1895. The complete manuscript was deposited with the London Library on Brown's death in 1926, with a fifty year embargo on publication. It was thus neither read nor published in Symonds' lifetime. The manuscript was first made available to researchers at the London Library in 1954, and first edited and published in 1984.

Nothing but the bare thought of a God-penetrated universe, and of myself as an essential part of it, together with all things that appear in their succession – ether and organic matter passing into plants and creatures of the sea and beasts, rising to men and women unrealised by human reason – nothing but the naked, yet inebriated vision of such a cosmos satisfied me as a possible object of worship¹.

Like Pater, it is only the beauty of the physical world, and the determination to experience it as fully as possible, that can rouse in Symonds the sense of spiritual exaltation and religious faith that he considers so important to human existence.

The aesthetic circle often appeared to reject medievalism out of hand, associating it with everything they despised in mid-Victorian literature. Chivalry was associated the pettiness of Victorian morality, as when Swinburne remarked that the *Idylls* were 'rather a case for the divorce-court than for poetry'². Their major interests lay in the classical period, or in the Renaissance. Two of the most important works by writers of this period deal with the life and art of the Renaissance : Pater's *Renaissance* and Symonds' vast work, *The Renaissance in Italy*. In both, the freedom of the human spirit, the semi-paganism, and the sensual pleasures of the Renaissance are contrasted with the repressiveness, asceticism and narrow-minded Christianity of the Middle Ages. In the *Renaissance in Italy*, Symonds wrote :

Beauty is a snare, pleasure a sin, the world a fleeting show, man fallen and lost, death the only certainty, judgement inevitable, hell everlasting, heaven hard to win; ignorance is acceptable to God as a proof of faith and submission; abstinence and mortification are the only safe rules of life; these were the fixed ideas of the ascetic medieval Church.³

¹ Symonds, *Memoirs*, p. 246

² A.C.Swinburne, 'Under The Microscope', in *Swinburne Replies*, ed. C.K.Hyder, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1966), p. 57

³ John Addington Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy: The Age of the Despots* (London: Smith and Elder, 1898: first published 1875), p. 11.

Earlier, he suggests that Christianity, chivalry, and feudalism were the ruination of the classical pagan world. For both Symonds and Pater the Renaissance represents a period of intellectual enlightenment in which medieval repression is thrown off and society is at least partially returned to a pagan freedom. Echoing Pater's 'Conclusion', Symonds describes how a sense of spiritual awe was returned to the earliest artists of the Renaissance by their new appreciation of sensual experience. He describes them as:

... like boys in their capacity for endurance, their inordinate appetite for enjoyment. ... Their fresh and unperverted senses rendered them keenly alive to what was beautiful and natural. They yearned for magnificence, and instinctively comprehended splendour.¹

Religion is now a genuinely transfiguring experience, not merely a charade of dogma. Symonds commented that:

Henceforth God could not be worshipped under the forms and idols of a sacerdotal fancy; a new meaning had been given to the words: 'God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.'²

Pater suggests that the defining characteristics of the Renaissance were:

... the care for physical beauty, the worship of the body, the breaking down of those limits which the religious system of the middle age imposed on the heart and the imagination.³

Modern critics have pointed out how the contrast between repressive medievalism and the semi-paganism of the Renaissance, or of the classical period, became a commonplace in the late nineteenth and early twentieth

¹Ibid, p. 10

²Ibid, p.13

³Pater, *The Renaissance*, p.xxxii

century. Kathleen Verduin, for example, has shown how the central antithesis between chilly medievalism and vibrant paganism in Forster's *A Room with a View* has its roots in late nineteenth century thinking¹.

Though not perhaps principally medievalists, Pater, Swinburne and Symonds did develop an idiosyncratic version of medievalism which formed a small but important part of their work. While they rejected the moral and patriotic concerns with which Tennyson had associated Arthurian material, they seized with delight on a largely neglected body of material whose heroes and heroines rebelled against the orthodoxies of medieval religion and asserted the superiority of physical delights. These stories proclaimed the superiority of pagan sensuality over the repressive, life-denying demands of the chivalric code. To find such a contest in medieval literature itself was perhaps a more satisfying way of attacking chivalric medievalism, since it undermined the very foundation on which the nineteenth century code of morals had been constructed – the vision of the medieval period as one of chivalry, chastity and nobility. Scathing as Swinburne could be from a modern standpoint, his distaste was nothing compared to the discovery of a contemporary pagan resistance movement within medieval literature itself. Pater speaks of this 'resistance' most powerfully in the *Renaissance*:

One of the strongest characteristics of that outbreak of the reason and the imagination, of that assertion of the liberty of the heart, in the middle age, which I have termed a medieval Renaissance, was its antinomianism, its spirit of rebellion and revolt against the moral and religious ideas of the time. In their search after the pleasures of the senses and the imagination, in their care for beauty, in their worship of the body,

¹Kathleen Verduin, 'Medievalism, Classicism and the Fiction of EM Forster', in *Medievalism in the Modern World: Essays in Honour of Leslie Workman*, ed. Tom Shippey and Richard Utz (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998).

people were impelled beyond the bounds of the Christian ideal; and their love became sometimes a strange idolatry, a strange rival religion. It was the return of that ancient Venus, not dead, but only hidden for a time in the caves of the Venusberg, of those old pagan gods going to and fro on the earth, under all sorts of disguises.¹

In this passage, Pater demonstrates how he and others justified their interest in these medieval figures by categorising them as part of a 'medieval Renaissance'. They visualised them as the forerunners of the true Renaissance, whose attempts to free the human spirit from the shackles of the middle ages were only hindered by being somewhat before their time. This image undermines the popular nineteenth century vision of the Middle Ages as the ideal form of society, suggesting instead that this period of human history was a temporary aberration, and that paganism has always been the true condition of humanity. Swinburne speaks warmly of 'antinomianism' in *William Blake*, and links it to the twelfth century, which he describes as a 'pagan revival'. Its paganism is linked, for him, with a deeply spiritual worship of the physical, natural world:

One may remark also, the minute this pagan revival begins to get breathing-room, how there breaks at once into flower a most passionate and tender worship of nature, whether as shown in the bodily beauty of man and woman or in the outside loveliness of leaf and grass;²

In literature, Swinburne and Pater could see the power of the pagan resistance, and the expression of sensual desire, in the French romance of *Aucassin et Nicolette*. Andrew Lang translated it in 1872, Swinburne demonstrated that he knew it well in *William Blake*, and Pater devotes a whole chapter to it in *The Renaissance*. Interest focused particularly on the scene where Aucassin announces that he will willingly go to hell rather than give up his mistress,

¹Pater, *The Renaissance*, p.16

²Swinburne, *William Blake*, note to p.89

Nicolete. Heaven, to Aucassin, is nothing but a worn out company of ancient priests, while he asserts that Hell will certainly contain:

‘the good scholars ... and the actors, and the fine horsemen dead in battle, and the men of fashion ...’¹

Through his deliberate preference of sensual and earthly love to heavenly rewards, and clear acceptance of the moral consequences of that choice (and hence right to make his own decisions), Aucassin became a new anti-hero for the writers who were trying to undermine Tennyson’s moral vision. Pater not only praises Aucassin’s defiance of medieval religious orthodoxy, but draws approving attention to the ways in which he deviates from the ideal chivalrous hero of the Arthurian legends. In one episode of the medieval romance, Aucassin becomes rapt in thoughts of Nicolete during the course of a battle. Unconscious of the fight around him, he rides straight into the midst of his enemies. Pater writes of this unchivalric behaviour in approving terms. Aucassin represents the ‘ideal intensity of passion ... who has the malady of his love and neglects all knightly duties’². In direct opposition to chivalric medievalism’s view of courtly love, in which pure worship of a lady inspired the knight to manly deeds, the moral vision of Pater’s hero has been swamped by an excess of sensual delight. Pater emphasises this lack of manliness when he writes of the romance’s ‘faint air of overwrought delicacy, almost of wantonness ...’³. His Aucassin is a new type of medieval hero, overwhelmed by sensual experience and in conflict with the authoritarian structures of religion and chivalry.

¹Quoted in Pater, *The Renaissance*, p.19

² Pater, *The Renaissance*, p.15

³ Ibid, p.15

While Pater's chapter on *Aucassin et Nicolette* confined itself to literary criticism, the story of Tannhäuser inspired no less than four artistic works in England in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The story concerns a medieval knight who is held captive by the goddess Venus and lives as her lover inside the Venusberg. Finally escaping, he makes pilgrimage to Rome to ask for forgiveness from the Pope, but is denied - the Pope declaring that Tannhäuser shall obtain absolution when his dry pilgrim's staff shall blossom and bear green leaves. Tannhäuser departs from Rome in despair, but shortly after his departure the Pope discovers the staff blossoming. He sends messengers far and wide after Tannhäuser, who is not to be found. It is assumed that he has returned to the Venusberg, to rejoin his lover. In some versions of the legend the cruel Pope is damned instead of Tannhäuser, taking his punishment.

Although in Wagner's famous opera Tannhäuser's soul is redeemed at the last moment, for most of the late nineteenth century artists who dealt with the legend the attraction lay in its championship of Venus, pagan goddess of love, in the struggle between Christian chivalry and pagan amorality. Swinburne's poem, 'Laus Veneris' is perhaps the best known treatment of the legend, and clearly sets out the sense of struggle between the two sides. Although Swinburne is concerned to depict Tannhäuser's eventual defiance of medieval morality, he is also determined to match the powers of chivalry and of paganism and to demonstrate the overwhelming superiority of pagan sensuality and the shortcomings of chivalry and religion. Tannhäuser is depicted as the flower of Tennysonian chivalry before his seduction by Venus:

For I was of Christ's choosing, I God's knight,
No blinkard heathen stumbling for scant light;¹

and his wistful memories of the outside world are of the knights and maidens of
the chivalric revival:

Knights gather, riding sharp for cold; I know
The ways and woods are strangled with the snow;
And with short song the maidens sit and spin
Until Christ's birthnight, lily-like, arow. (l.85 – 8)

The outside world is the world of chivalry and Christianity, the world of Tannhäuser's captivity that of Venus and her pagan sensuality, and in the poem we see the two at war for the hero's soul. Fitting with the contention of Pater and Swinburne that paganism was the natural condition of man, we see in this stanza that Tannhäuser is rationally convinced of the rectitude of Christianity, but simply overwhelmed by the sensual power of Venus. Swinburne was to describe his hero as 'believing in Christ, but bound to Venus', and through his depiction of the power of that bondage, demonstrates which of the two represents man's true nature. In this passage, though Christianity has the theological arguments, Venus has the primitive, overwhelming sensual power:

Alas, Lord, surely thou art great and fair.
But lo! her wonderfully woven hair!
And thou didst heal us with thy piteous kiss;
But see now, Lord; her mouth is lovelier. (l.17-20)

Tannhäuser protests against the repression of natural sensuality by chivalrous morals, in his plaintive appeal to God himself:

She is right fair; what hath she done to thee?
Nay, fair Lord Christ, lift up thine eyes and see;
Had now thy mother such a lip – like this? (l.20 – 3)

¹ Swinburne, 'Laus Veneris', in *Selected Poems*, ed. L.M.Findlay (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1987), p.28, lines 209 – 10. Further references to 'Laus Veneris' given in text, by line number.

Though the early part of the poem depicts the struggle between the two powers, the latter part demonstrates the total victory of Venus over the Christian code. After his rejection by the Pope, Tannhäuser concludes that Venus is more worthy of his love than Christ:

For I came home right heavy, with small cheer,
And lo my love, mine own soul's heart, more dear
Than mine own soul, more beautiful than God,
Who hath my being between the hands of her – (l.385 –8)

He has laid aside all fear of eternal torment, and is content to suffer the pains of hell as a fair recompense for having enjoyed sensual love on earth:

Ah, love, there is no better life than this;
To have known love how bitter a thing it is,
And afterward be cast out of God's sight;
Yea, these that know not, shall they have such bliss

High up in barren heaven before his face
As we twain in the heavy-hearted place,
Remembering love and all the dead delight,
And all that time was sweet with for a space.(l.409-416)

The heroes of Swinburne's other medieval stories are also beset by struggle and inward torment. The battle which Pater outlined between the implacable power of the Church and the 'strange rival religion' of pagan sensuality takes place in their very souls, and often the characters are depicted as the unwilling captives of pagan powers, acting against their better judgement. It is only through such captivity that they come to realise the superiority of a sensual existence, free from the unnatural restrictions of the medieval code. In his long narrative poem *Tristram of Lyonesse* Swinburne was able to make the device of the love potion serve a similar dramatic purpose to the Venusberg in the Tannhäuser legend. Before the fatal potion is fetched, Swinburne writes:

... A live man in such wise
Looks in the deadly face of his fixed hour
And laughs with lips wherein he hath no power
To keep the life yet some five minutes' space.
So Tristram looked on Iseult face to face
And knew not, and she knew not. ...¹

The tragic power of the pair's love, then, is made to seem initially as implacable and unchosen as the forces of the Christian God. As in 'Laus Veneris', the two powers fight it out, in the monologue 'Iseult at Tintagel'. Like Tannhäuser, Iseult, tormented by her sin, contemplates repentance:

Shall I change also from this heart again
To maidenhood of heart and holiness?
Shall I more love thee, God, or love him less -
Ah miserable! though spirit and heart be rent,
Shall I repent, Lord God? shall I repent? (p.88)

Though Iseult contemplates her own repentance, and even the acceptance of her own damnation in order to save Tristram, she eventually, like Tannhäuser, finds divine love lacking in comparison to the human, sensual love she has enjoyed with Tristram:

Nay, but if not, then as we sinners can
Let us love still in the old sad wise of man.
For with less love than my love, having had
Mine, though God love him he shall not be glad.
And with such love as my love, I wot well,
He shall not lie disconsolate in hell: (p.90)

Tristram, likewise, imagines on his deathbed the approach of divine judgement, and sees himself defying the Almighty:

¹ Swinburne, *Tristram of Lyonesse and Other Poems* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1882), p.38. Further page references to *Tristram* in this chapter will be given in the text – in subsequent chapters they will be in the footnotes.

Though all thy heart of wrath have all its fill,
My heart of suffering shall endure, and say
For that thou gavest me living yesterday
I bless thee though thou curse me' ... (p.160)

For both of them, the fulfilment they have found in human, sensual love is worth defying God and suffering the torments of damnation for. The situation in *Tristram of Lyonesse* is further complicated by the character of Iseult of Brittany, Tristram's rejected wife. Like the Pope in 'Laus Veneris', it is her actions that awake the reader to Swinburne's view of Christianity as an implacable, punitive power. She has her own monologue, in which she calls on God to avenge her wrongs:

"How long, till thou do justice, and my wrong
Stand expiate? O long-suffering judge, how long?
Shalt thou not put him in mine hand one day
Whom I so loved, to spare not but to slay? (p.119)

In the final book of the poem, Iseult gets her wish, and appears as an avenging angel:

... and scarce with lips at all apart,
Spake, and as fire between them was her breath;
'Yea, now thou liest not: yea, for I am death.' (p.162)

Iseult's role in the poem, then, is to demonstrate the shortcomings of the Christian religion. To Swinburne, although God is a very present and judgemental force who condemns his heroes and heroines to eternal damnation, the superior fulfilment which they find in human, sensual love is enough to make them feel that their true nature is a pagan and sensual one and that they are willing to defy medieval morals in order to fulfil it.

This new view of the Middle Ages as populated by sensual rebels found favour with other writers and artists, even among those who had been adherents of 'chivalric' medievalism. The image of the imprisoned Tannhäuser inspired

Aubrey Beardsley's prose story 'Under the Hill'¹, and the story was more recognisably retold in Morris's 'The Hill of Venus', the poem which concludes *The Earthly Paradise*². Burne-Jones' lush, sensual painting 'Laus Veneris' takes its title and its subject from Swinburne's poem, and the edition of Malory illustrated by Beardsley demonstrates a potentially very different approach to the stories of chivalry.

Clearly, the goliards would be welcomed in the company of Tristram, Aucassin, and Tannhauser. Their sensuality, unashamed attacks on the Christian Church, and humane, inclusive morality, meant that they too could be seen as part of the upsurge of rebellious thinking in the twelfth century which Pater and Symonds were later to characterise as the 'medieval Renaissance'. Baudelaire, a strong influence on Swinburne and the aesthetic movement in general, was one of the first to take a real interest in goliardic Latin. In the first edition of *Les Fleurs du Mal*, a note to his pastiche medieval Latin poem expressed his enthusiasm for 'la langue de la dernière decadence latine' in these terms:

Dans cette merveilleuse langue, le solecisme et le barbarisme me paraissent rendre les négligences forcées d'une passion qui s'oublie et se moque des règles.³

It was the passionate and rebellious streak in medieval Latin poetry which attracted Baudelaire, and within the 'medieval Renaissance', the goliards were one of the most rebellious groups of all, in that they conducted their subversive

¹ Aubrey Beardsley, *Under The Hill and other essays in Prose and Verse* (London: Bodley Head, 1904)

² Morris, *The Earthly Paradise* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1886: 5 vols), volume 5, p.370

³ Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du Mal et autres poèmes* (Flammarion: Paris, 1964. First published 1857), p.176

activities from within the very structure of the Church. Symonds' first recorded comments on them are in this vein, made in *The Renaissance in Italy* in 1875:

... the songs of the wandering students, known under the title of *Carmina Burana*, indicate a revival of Pagan or pre-Christian feeling in the very stronghold of medieval learning.¹

This interest was followed up in 1884 by the book of translations, *Wine, Women and Song*.

Symonds, more than any of his contemporaries, had particular reason to wish that, in the struggle between pagan sensuality and Christian morals, the victory should go to the pagans. His private memoirs explain how he struggled with his homosexuality from an early age, convinced by his father and close friends that such a predisposition could, and must, be overcome. Such a struggle led to a sharp divide in his thinking between a moral and highly aestheticised form of love, and what he perceived as the bestial pull of his sexual desires. Describing his experiences at Harrow, he explains that:

Personally, I thought that I had transcended crude sensuality through the aesthetic idealisation of erotic instincts.

With hindsight, however, he adds that 'I did not know how fallacious that method of expelling nature is.'² The division, reminiscent of Tennyson, between 'crude sensuality' and 'aesthetic idealisation' was unsatisfactory for Symonds. While the ultimate aim of chivalric medievalism was supposedly the faithful marriage, which allowed for heterosexual fulfilment, no such socially sanctioned outlet existed for homosexuality. Symonds, like his contemporaries, could only see all homosexual desire as belonging to the realm of 'crude sensuality'.

¹ Symonds, *The Renaissance in Italy*, p.7

² Symonds, *Memoirs*, p.96

Referring to Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, Linda Dowling has suggested that the late nineteenth century was a time when homosexual men were beginning to define themselves as a distinct group, and to distinguish the identity of a 'homosexual' from the crude physical act of sodomy as defined by criminal law¹. If this is so then Symonds was undoubtedly deeply affected by this process of ideological change. In the early part of his life, he was unable to see his sexuality other than in repulsively crude physical terms. In unpublished early writing, he describes his desires as 'the beast within' and 'the wolf'. He vividly describes his images of his own inclinations in an unpublished poem:

Poisonous and loathsome both to touch and smell,
Rotten and rotting, wreaked the spawn of hell;
Emblems of lust unhallowed, foul desire,
Dry lust that revels in the fleshly mire
Of dreams that start from rancid thoughts to taint
The soul with fevered joy too rank to paint ...²

Yet in the *Memoirs* he can describe his first love affair with another boy by saying:

... He enabled me to realise an ideal of a passionate and yet pure love between friend and friend. All the 'rich foreshadowings of the world', which filled my boyhood with the vision of a comrade, seemed at the time to be made actual in him. He restored me to a healthy state of nerves by the sweet magnetism of his presence. In him too I found the final satisfaction of that dim aesthetic ecstasy which I called religion. Music and the grandeur of Gothic aisles, the mystery of winter evenings in cathedral choirs ... took from him a poetry that pierced into my heart and marrow.³

This passage suggests the way in which, for Symonds as for Pater or Swinburne, spiritual experience was deeply bound up and as one with an intense appreciation

¹ Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), p.3

²Symonds, *Memoirs*, p.178

³Ibid, p.105

of the physical world. The beauty of the cathedral, of its music and its architecture, and Symonds' emotional feelings for his lover, are the medium through which transfiguring spiritual experience can be transmitted. The only element which has not been assimilated into this experience in Symonds' memoirs is that of sensuality and sexual desire.

Clearly this omission could not exist for long without Symonds making an attempt to redress it. He was undoubtedly attracted to the paganism of Pater and Swinburne, in which sensual enjoyment is part of spiritual enlightenment. Classical paganism provided one means of achieving harmony between aestheticism and sexuality. He describes the effect of reading Plato's *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*:

For the first time I saw the possibility of resolving in a practical harmony the discords of my instincts. I perceived that masculine love had its virtues as well as its vice, and stood in this respect upon the same ground as normal sexual appetite. I understood, or thought I understood, the relation which those dreams of childhood and the brutalities of vulgar lust at Harrow bore to my higher aspiration after noble passion.¹

Greek literature provided one all-encompassing vision of sensual and spiritual life, which Symonds was to discuss further in his privately printed pamphlet, *A Problem in Greek Ethics*². Throughout his life, the classics were to suggest to him both a justification for practising homosexuality, and a pagan vision in which sexual experience was merely part of an all-embracing response to the world, which was sufficiently powerful and intense to also transfigure the spirit. Perhaps goliardic poetry, with its explicit thread of paganism, and its

¹Ibid, p.99

² Symonds, *A Problem in Greek Ethics* (privately printed, 1883)

reconciliation of basic sexual desire with sophisticated, aesthetic love and spiritual aspiration, could act in the same way.

As we have seen, Symonds was heavily influenced for much of his life by the philosophy of aestheticism and the work of Pater and Swinburne. We might then expect his translations and commentaries on the goliards to fully reflect the struggle between Christian and pagan which is so important in 'Laus Veneris' or in the early chapters of the *Renaissance in Italy*. However, *Wine, Women and Song* emerges as a confusing book, for while it shares many characteristics with the medievalist works under discussion, and while there is much evidence to suggest that Symonds felt a deep personal fascination with the goliards and connected them with the idea of the 'medieval Renaissance', there is also a marked sense of apology and concealment about the book - as if Symonds were trying to draw back from the full implications of allying himself with the Swinburnian camp of medievalists.

Symonds' first mention of the goliards is in *The Renaissance in Italy*, quoted above, where he characterises the goliards as part of the 'medieval Renaissance'. This description connects them with Pater's *Renaissance*, and it allies Symonds with those who see the Middle Ages in terms of rebellion and sensuality and not in terms of chivalry and self-denial. In Symonds' introductory essay to *Wine, Women and Song*, there is a strong echo of Pater's vision of pagan gods working underground :

... a certain breath of paganism, wafting perfumes from the old mythology, whispering of gods in exile, encouraging men to accept their life on earth with genial enjoyment, was never wholly absent during the darkest periods of the Middle Ages.¹

Like Swinburne and Pater, Symonds characterises the goliards as symbols of that sensual human nature whose demands will not be silenced even by the repression of chivalry:

This literature makes it manifest that the ineradicable appetites and natural instincts of men and women were no less vigorous in fact, though less articulate and self-assertive, than they had been in the age of Greece and Rome, and than they afterwards displayed themselves in what is known as the Renaissance².

This image of the goliards is reinforced by a letter which Symonds wrote to a close friend, Graham Dakyns, in 1879:

Latin in these satires, drinking songs, & lovely lyrics takes a wonderful new form akin to that of the great Hymns of the church: but with strange rhythms and monumental turns of phrase that give a high notion of the creative force of these nameless singers.³

In likening the goliardic lyrics to Latin hymns, Symonds' letter recalls the work of ecclesiastical scholars such as Archbishop Trench. In *Sacred Latin Poetry* Trench argued that the new form of verse that arose in the Middle Ages (the short, rhymed lyric) was the result of an upsurge of powerful religious emotion, which had demanded the creation of a new form of poetry in order to satisfy it. Trench wrote that:

There was a new thing, and that being so, it was of necessity that there should be a new utterance as well.⁴

¹Symonds, *Wine, Women and Song*, p.19

² Ibid, p.5-6

³Symonds, *The Letters of John Addington Symonds*, ed Herbert M. Schueller and Robert L. Peters (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1968, 3 vols), p.580

⁴Richard Trench, *Sacred Latin Poetry* (London, 1864: first published 1849), p.6

Symonds is implying that the pagan spirituality of the goliards was sufficiently strong to constitute a 'creative force', mirroring the upsurge of religious feeling in medieval Christianity, and that this, too, required its own poetic form. 'Strange rhythms and monumental turns of phrase' recalls Baudelaire's enthusiasm for 'le solecisme et le barbarisme' in medieval Latin. In these early comments on the goliards, Symonds is characterising them as the strange, pagan, awe-inspiring rebels of the Tannhauser legend or of *Aucassin et Nicolette*.

Elsewhere in *Wine, Women and Song*, however, the goliards receive very different treatment. Having given his readers an attractive image of them as pagan rebels in his introductory essay, Symonds also provides a concluding piece of writing in which he effectively denies the high estimation of their emotional power which the introductory essay and the letter to Dakyns might suggest.

In spite of novelty, in spite of historical interest, in spite of a certain literary charm, it is not an edifying product of medieval art with which I have been dealing. ...

The truth is that there is very little that is elevated in the lyrics of the Goliardi. They are almost wholly destitute of domestic piety, of patriotism, of virtuous impulse, of heroic resolve ... their general tone is egotistic.¹

What is particularly interesting about this passage is the extent to which Symonds has taken on the colours of the 'chivalric' medievalists. In commenting on the goliards' deficiencies, he has catalogued the qualities which Tennyson might have required medieval literature to inspire in men : domestic virtues, love of country, virtuous impulses, and manly deeds. It is almost a precis of the oath taken by the knights in the *Idylls*. His major criticism of them as 'egotistic'

¹Symonds, *Wine, Women and Song*, p.190

reminds us of Tennyson's demonisation of the freethinking, self-indulgent Tristram.

Later in the same conclusion, the goliards are again found wanting by the measure of chivalric medievalism. This time it is the virtues of courtly love that they lack. While Symonds admits a distaste for the full system of courtly love, he remarks nevertheless that:

... we are still bound to notice the absence of that far more human self-devotion of man to woman which forms a conspicuous element in the Arthurian romances ... This manly respect for women, which was, if not precisely the purest, yet certainly the most fruitful social impulse of the Middle Ages, receives no expression in the *Carmina Vagorum*.¹

Symonds' introductory essay, and the previous letter to Dakyns, clearly show him considering, and being attracted to, the goliards in the context of the 'alternative' medievalism of Swinburne and Pater. Yet in this conclusion he appears to be criticising and apologising for his subjects in the light of the chivalric medievalism which these writers rejected.

He was also to withdraw, in his choice of lyrics, from the picture of the goliards as rebels within 'the very stronghold of medieval learning' which he had drawn in *The Renaissance in Italy*. Declaring that 'It forms no part of my present purpose to exhibit the Wandering Students in their capacity as satirists'², he denies his collection the serious, intellectually sophisticated rebellion against authority which is found in the Archpoet, Walter of Châtillon, or 'Dic Christi caritas'. The anti-authoritarian edge which would have linked them more closely to Aucassin or Tannhauser has been blunted.

¹Ibid, p.192

² Ibid, p.180

There are two possible explanations for this extremely contradictory attitude to his subject. The first and most obvious concerns Symonds' need for self-protection. He had neither the temperament nor the friends to join Swinburne in open defiance of Victorian morals, and, desiring to be accepted in conventional society, he continually ran the risk of discovery and exposure of his sexuality. Joseph Bristow has suggested that Symonds' sexuality was something of an open secret, but this seems to have been the case only among his closest friends and some of his family (not, for example, his daughters)¹. He came very close to disaster on a number of occasions. The most disturbing incident erupted when Symonds was a probationary Fellow of Magdalen College in Oxford. Accused by a vindictive colleague of attempting to seduce Magdalen choristers, he was eventually found innocent of the charges. His health collapsed under the strain, however, and he had to resign his Fellowship, thus ruining his potential career as an Oxford don.² This was a warning of what might occur if proven accusations were made against him. Meanwhile, he was able to learn from the experiences of Swinburne, Pater and their associates. The painter Simeon Solomon, arrested for soliciting and exposed as a homosexual, was deserted even by his close friend Swinburne and died in poverty³. Pater lived under a continual cloud of suspicion and was at one point refused an important and normally automatic preferment within Oxford⁴. Later in Symonds' life the possibility of a criminal conviction loomed large. The infamous Labouchere Amendment was passed in 1885⁵,

¹ Joseph Bristow, *Effeminate England: Homoerotic Writing after 1885* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1995), p.128

²Symonds, *Memoirs*, p.130-3

³ Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality*, p.152

⁴Ibid, p.102-3

⁵Bristow, *Effeminate England*, p.1

criminalising all sexual activity between men, and two years after Symonds' death, Oscar Wilde was tried and sentenced. Allying himself too strongly with the camp of Swinburne and Pater would have meant increased suspicion for Symonds, which could well have led to damaging revelations.

Symonds also had to contend with the censorship of his friends and family. In an attempt to overcome his 'abnormality', he married and fathered four daughters. Protecting the respectability of his family - whom he undoubtedly cared for deeply - then became an important goal for him and his friends, who exercised an extremely thorough censorship over his work and behaviour. Symonds was in the habit of showing his friends poetry with a homosexual theme, and asking their opinion on publication. The response was generally strongly negative. On one occasion Symonds' friend Henry Sidgwick was so disturbed that he locked the poetry into iron boxes and threw the key into the Avon¹. His family were so concerned about the possible effect of Symonds' jointly authored study of homosexuality, published after his death, that they bought up the entire English edition to prevent it reaching the open market². Only a carefully expurgated edition of his private memoirs was published, and on the death of Symonds' executor, Horatio Brown, in 1926, the full manuscript was given to the London Library with a fifty year embargo on any publication.³ In 1939, a special committee had to be convened to decide whether Symonds' youngest daughter, Katharine Furse, (then aged 65) might read the manuscript.⁴

¹ Symonds, *Memoirs*, p.195

² Grosskurth, Introduction to *Memoirs*, p.21

³ Ibid, p.10

⁴ Howard J. Booth, 'Surpassing the Modernist Reception of Symonds', in *John Addington Symonds: Culture and the Demon Desire*, ed. John Pemble (Macmillan: London, 2000), p.162

Given this atmosphere of secrecy, it seems unlikely that Symonds would admit fully to his intense personal fascination with the goliards in print. Other contradictions support this view. The length of his interest in the goliards, for example, suggests a deeper preoccupation than might be imagined from *Wine, Women and Song*. In the 'Dedication' he remarks that the book had been his 'pastime through three anxious months' (his daughters being ill with typhoid)¹. The idea of a book dashed off in three months, while the author was preoccupied with family cares, suggests strongly to the reader that Symonds did not feel deeply involved with its subject. Yet the evidence belies this idea. He first mentions the goliards in 1875, in *The Renaissance in Italy*, at which point he clearly has a detailed enough acquaintance with their poems to identify them as central figures in the 'medieval Renaissance'. The letter to Dakyns was written in 1879 - also well before the publication of *Wine, Women and Song*.

In fact, Symonds' attraction to the goliards appears to have been so strong that, in certain letters and papers, he almost identified himself with the figure of the wandering student. In a letter, also of 1879, to Horatio Brown (later his executor), Symonds quotes the refrain of a goliardic lyric at the close of the letter - *Velox aetas preterit studio detenta*.² As Symonds himself admits, the lyrics were hardly known outside a small circle at this point, so the quote is hardly likely to be a commonly recognised tag. Either the line was so familiar to Symonds that he worked it into his own writing without recognising it, or it was a private allusion shared between himself and Brown. In either case, he seems to be identifying with the goliards strongly enough to allow himself to speak in the

¹ Symonds, *Wine, Women and Song*, p.xi

² Symonds, *Letters*, p.597

person of a 'wandering student'. A volume of his own poetry, published in the same year as *Wine, Women and Song*, also gives this impression. The volume is entitled *Vagabunduli Libellus*, or 'songs of a wanderer'. Symonds makes a direct connection between this title and the wandering students when he says in his introduction to *Obmittamus studia* :

This has the true accent of what may be called the *Musa Vagabundula*, and is one of the best lyrics of the series.¹

Obmittamus studia is the lyric which Symonds quoted in the letter to Brown mentioned above, which suggests a whole network of connections in his mind between the wandering scholars, and his own identity as a wanderer. The book itself was dedicated to Brown in the following terms:

Vago cuidam
Vagabunduli Libellum
Vagus Poeta
donum dedit

[A wandering poet gave this gift, the book of a wanderer, to a certain vagabond]

and Symonds adds 'and therefore, though specially designed for you, [the book] will be dedicated to every Vagabond Soul'.² Here, then, Symonds is casting himself in the role of wandering student, and his friends as his vagabond comrades. He is also perhaps touching on the spiritual vagrancy, the individuality and rebelliousness, inherent in late-nineteenth century medievalism, and appropriating this role for himself.

¹Symonds, *Wine, Women and Song*, p.99

²Symonds, *Letters*, p.678

The dedication of *Wine, Women and Song* itself, though less explicit, makes similar connections. Dedicating the book to Robert Louis Stevenson, Symonds writes:

To you, in memory of past symposia, when wit (your wit) flowed
freer than our old Forzato, I dedicate this little book ...¹

The dedication suggests an allusion to the songs of drinking and male companionship in the *Carmina Burana* - *O potores exquisisti*, for example. It is also interesting that Stevenson was later to acquire a reputation as one of the 'vagabond poets' whose work incorporated a love of the natural world, the open road, and sense of spiritual freedom. Symonds seems to have created an image of himself as the centre of a group of 'wandering scholars' - himself, Brown and Stevenson, and perhaps others. The lyrics of the goliards appear, in fact, to have had deep personal relevance to him.

It certainly seems possible from the public response to his work that one reason for the half-apologetic retreat from what appears to have been Symonds' true appreciation of the goliards' accomplishment was the impulse towards self-protection. There was a level of mild disapproval among the critics of *Wine, Women and Song* which perhaps indicates that a more unvarnished portrayal of the sensual aspects of the goliards would not have found favour with them. While the lyrics themselves made the book, as the *Athenaeum* put it, 'an unsuitable present for young ladies', the reviewer nevertheless congratulated Symonds on his lack of prudery. Far less acceptable, apparently, was the hedonism implicit in the title *Wine, Women and Song* (which was, ironically

¹Symonds, *Wine, Women and Song*, p.xi

enough, translated from a saying of Martin Luther). Gosse commented in his review that:

We are afraid that the general reader will not be attracted by the name, and that the serious student of literature will hardly suspect that a book with such a title is a serious contribution to the history of literature.¹

As long as Symonds cloaked the sensual paganism of goliardic poetry in the guise of a scholarly enterprise, the book was acceptable, but a title which advertised the work as other than scholarly in its interests was clearly not. A female reader of Symonds was even less robust. Symonds wrote to her:

I am sorry to find that the title of my last volume... has given a great deal of offence - and as I see, has not approved itself to you. I regret that I cannot therefore beg you to accept a copy of it.²

To Gosse he remarked ruefully: 'The fact is that this title for English readers is wrong.'³ Had he been more outspoken about the intensity of his emotional response to the lyrics, perhaps the public outcry would have been far more dangerous to his reputation.

Though self-protection was one possible cause of the clear distance between *Tristram of Lyonesse* and *Wine, Women and Song*, another important aspect to consider is the alteration in Symonds' personal circumstances which had occurred by 1884. Suffering from severe TB, he was ordered to the Swiss Alps in 1877. Though a complete cure was never possible, his health improved and he made his home there for the remaining sixteen years of his life. While in

¹Edmund Gosse, 'Snatches of Medieval Jollity', in *Pall Mall Gazette* XXXIX, Nov 1 1884 (London, 1884)

²Symonds, *Letters*, p.958

³*Ibid*, p.961

Switzerland, he began to pursue open relationships with other men – in particular a local Swiss farmer, Christian Buol, and some years later a Venetian gondolier. Joseph Bristow argues that Symonds' difficulties were resolved by these affairs, and that liaisons with working class men enabled him to realise an ideal of universal male comradeship, unaffected by social division¹. Certainly they influenced his thinking to the extent that he moved away from the aestheticised view of love which characterises the early part of his memoirs, and began to imagine male love as a mixture of straightforward comradeship enlivened by healthy, freely accepted sexual attraction. The emotional agony and ecstasy which is such an integral part of Tannhauser's or Tristram's struggles has receded somewhat, to be replaced by a simple enjoyment of natural attraction. Symonds' description of his first sight of Christian Buol demonstrates the changes in his image of himself and his relationships:

When he came towards me ... driving four stout horses at a brisk trot down a snow slope, I seemed to see an ancient Greek of the Homeric age, perfect in ... unassuming power. 'That is a man, ' I felt within myself. And I also felt obscurely that my ruling passion had reached a new and better stage, devoid of sentimentality, devoid of sordid appetite, free from the sense of sin. It was indeed impossible to think of Christian Buol and of sin in the same moment.²

The 'dim aesthetic yearnings' of Symonds' earlier attraction have given place to an appreciation of primitive masculine strength and of an innocent, uncomplicated approach to life in which Symonds now feels himself to be a participant. With this alteration in Symonds' personal philosophy, there was an inevitable and corresponding diminution in the strength of his ties with Swinburne and the aesthetic circle. Phyllis Grosskurth has documented how the

¹ Bristow, *Effeminate England*, p.140 - 141

² Symonds, *Memoirs*, p.263

initially close friendship between Swinburne and Symonds began to falter in 1882 when Symonds reviewed *Tristram of Lyonesse* unfavourably, and mounted to a decisive quarrel in 1887¹. Similar mutual disenchantment seems to have occurred between Symonds and Pater: in 1885, the year after *Wine, Women and Song* was published, Symonds described Pater's style as having 'a peculiarly disagreeable effect upon my nerves – like the presence of a civet cat'.² Swinburne's unkind characterisation of Symonds only a year after his death in 1893 as 'the Platonic amorist of blue-breeched gondoliers who is now in Aretino's bosom' suggests the eventual state of their relationship. By the mid-1880s it was already faltering.

The influence of these changes in Symonds' outlook are also to be found in the commentary of *Wine, Women and Song*, and can be traced in later portrayals of the goliards. In the passage quoted above, we can discern Symonds' new attraction to the image of the straightforward Swiss farmer, rejoicing in his primitive physical strength and with an uncomplicated attitude to sensual enjoyment. This new image was to lead to a certain characterisation of the goliards as rustic and 'natural' young men. He writes at one point that:

It breathes of healthy open air, of life upon the road, of casual joys and wayside pleasure, snatched with careless heart by men whose tastes are natural.³

Such a portrayal of the goliards as jolly vagabonds, enjoying the simple pleasures of the natural world, although it belies the intellectual sophistication

¹Phyllis Grosskurth, 'Swinburne and Symonds: An Uneasy Literary Relationship', in *The Review of English Studies*, XIV, August 1963

²Alex Potts, 'Symonds, Pater and Michelangelo', in *John Addington Symonds: Culture and the Demon Desire*, p.105

³Symonds, *Wine, Women and Song*, p.36

with which Symonds must credit one of the participants in the 'medieval Renaissance', reflects his new interest in the simple and rustic. His description of the women in the love lyrics reinforces this impression, as he claims that:

... the sweethearts of our students seem to have been mostly girls of the working and rustic classes, sometimes women of bad fame, rarely married women. In no case that has come beneath my notice is there any hint that one of them aspired to such amours with noble ladies as distinguished the Troubadours.¹

As we saw in the first chapter, it is almost impossible to determine the likely social position of the goliards, and hence it is equally difficult to place their mistresses - although their lyrics show a familiarity with the language and concepts of courtly love, and one German poem suggests that Eleanor of Aquitaine was the distant object. In this new phase of his life, however, Symonds was particularly attracted to men 'of the working and rustic classes', and perhaps his assignation of suitable sweethearts to the goliard poets was a reflection of his new outlook on life.

The portrayal of the goliards in *Wine, Women and Song* was affected in other ways by Symonds' new enthusiasms, one of the most important being in its idealisation of masculine youth and of male comradeship. The idealisation of youth in the book was influenced both by Symonds' admiration for primitive, Homeric masculine beauty, and by the prevailing interest of the aesthetic movement in young men as physical objects of admiration. Whereas the youths of the *Idylls of the King*, Gareth or Galahad, are remarkable for their humility, obedience and unusual martial prowess, young men in Pater's or Swinburne's writing are admired for their perfect physical beauty and simply for their delight

¹Ibid, p.42

in being young. Compare Tennyson's 'pattern youth' Gareth, for example, with Pater's rhapsody over the person of Aucassin in the first chapter of the *Renaissance*:

It is the very image of the Provençal love-god, no longer a child, but grown to pensive youth, as Pierre Vidal met him, riding on a white horse, fair as the morning, his vestment embroidered with flowers.¹

In reaction against the inner spiritual perfection of Gareth or Galahad, 'alternative' medievalism focuses on the outer loveliness of young men, the effect intensified by their youth.

Both youth and beauty found their way into Symonds' portrayal of the goliards.

In his Introductory Essay, he defines the lyrics as:

... the spontaneous expression of careless, wanton, unreflective youth.²

His translations, too, emphasise their authors' youth, even when it is not specifically mentioned in the original. The opening line of the lyric, 'Exul ego clericus', for example, arguably the speech of an old reprobate, is translated by Symonds as 'I, a wandering student lad'. The 'lad' defines the youth of the speaker, where the original leaves the matter open. Symonds also focuses on physical beauty, making the goliards not just young, but idealised as well. In *Obmittamus studia* he emphasises this in the refrain when he writes of 'Tender youth and ruddy'.

Symonds' belief in the importance of comradeship between men (with or without sexual attraction) also made an important appearance. He suggested in his

¹Pater, *The Renaissance*, p.15

²Symonds, *Wine, Women and Song*, p.193

memoirs that it was this sense of comradeship which made sexual relationships between men so beneficial both to the participants and to society at large. This was another belief which had a place in the medievalism of the later nineteenth century. In the chapter of the *Renaissance* which praises *Aucassin et Nicolette*, Pater discusses at length the French romance *Amis et Amile*, in which two male friends are so devoted that one is willing to kill his own children to heal the other's leprosy¹. Drawing on both ideas, Symonds emphasises the elements of comradeship in the goliardic lyrics. He treats the vexed question of the *Ordo Vagorum's* existence with comparative seriousness, suggesting that he was attracted to the ideal of comradeship which the 'Order' presented. The first lyric of the book is the description of the rules of the order, and in his introduction to it he says:

The argument runs as follows. Just as commission was given to the Apostles to go forth and preach in the whole world, so have the Wandering Students a vocation to travel, and to test the hearts of men wherever they may sojourn².

By comparing the goliards to the Apostles, Symonds suggests that the close knit bonds which prevailed among the disciples were also present in the *Ordo Vagorum*.

All three of these ideas were to have important repercussions on later portrayals of the goliards - their youth, their sense of comradeship, and their straightforward delight in the natural world became important qualities which differentiated them from Pater's heroes with their 'faint air of overwrought delicacy'. However, as we have already seen, Symonds' dissociation from aesthetic writers, and from

¹Pater, *The Renaissance*, p.6-7

² Symonds, *Wine, Women and Song*, p.49

their rebellious images of medievalism, was far from complete. The roots of the goliards portrayed in *Wine, Women and Song* clearly lie in the alternative model of medievalism pursued by Swinburne and Pater. The book as a whole, both in its commentaries and in Symonds' translations, changes between the rebellious sensuality of this medievalism, an apologetic half-withdrawal from its more radical implications, and a more naive approach springing from Symonds' new interest in the primitive and rustic way of life. The result, though interesting, is often confusing and self-contradictory, but the various approaches do allow the reader to see the ways in which the ground was being laid for future portrayals of the goliards.

When we turn to Symonds' translations, we find that a number of them reflect his new interest in the rustic life in their attempts to make the lyrics as 'jolly' and straightforward as possible. In Symonds' favourite, *Obmittamus studia*, the Latin of the first stanza demonstrates the swiftness and elegance of the metre in the original:

Omittamus studia,
dulce est desipere,
et carpamus dulcia
iuventutis tenere!
res est apta senectuti
seriis intendere,... (75)

[Let us forget study, it is sweet to play the fool! And let us seize all the sweetness of our tender youth! It is appropriate for the old to consider serious matters ... (2 lines missing in MS)]

In Symonds' translation, however, his scholarly insistence on reproducing the exact metre has reduced the compact Latin to something more like English doggerel.

Cast aside dull books and thought,
 Sweet is folly, sweet is play:
 Take the pleasure Spring hath brought
 In youth's opening holiday!
 Right it is old age should ponder
 On grave matters fraught with care;
 Tender youth is free to wander,
 Free to frolic light as air.¹

Where the Latin will compact a line into three or four words, Symonds has had to use many more to fill out the metre. As a result, the English becomes overloaded with both words and ideas. The implications of the simple phrase 'Omittamus studia' are drawn out at length in 'Cast aside dull books and thought' so that the movement of imagery and ideas in the poem is ponderous. As a result the poem loses the attraction of the Latin - its sophisticated ability to pack complex ideas and allusions into a simple phrase. Moreover, he has supplied the missing final couplet with lines of his own invention, which more or less repeat the concepts expressed in the first six lines, and reinforce the impression of the poem as a simple, rather repetitive jingle.

Helen Waddell conveyed the swiftness and cleverness of the original much more faithfully by departing from the original metre, and ignoring the lacuna:

Let's away with study,
 Folly's sweet.
 Treasure all the pleasure
 Of our youth:
 Time enough for age
 To think on truth.²

Where Symonds does alter the metre of his translations, the effect is not infrequently to lessen the subtleties of the poem, and to create a more rustic,

¹Ibid, p.99

²Helen Waddell, *Medieval Latin Lyrics*, p.202

simple flavour. His translation of *Dum estas inchoatur* translates the poem into long rhyming couplets, inevitably creating doggerel instead of a relatively sophisticated and compact metre and rhyme scheme. Entitled "Modest Love" by Symonds, the poem's final stanza:

Ut mei misereatur
ut me recipiat,
et declinetur ad me
et ita desinat!

[If only she would have mercy on me, if she would receive me, and condescend to me, and so remain!]

becomes:

Take thou pity on my plight!
With my heart thy heart unite!
In my love thy own love blending,
Finding thus of life the ending!¹

The alteration to a direct personal address negates the sophisticatedly neutral plea of the original, while the expansion into longer lines and rhyming couplets, and especially the feminine ending of the final couplet, re-emphasises Symonds' tendency to turn the poems into jingles.

His handling of the imagery of his originals also displays a desire to discard those images which would suggest a more subtle reading of the goliardic poems.

Describing the Archpoet's *Confessio*, Waddell says of the Archpoet:

... it is the first defiance by the artist of that society which it is his thankless business to amuse: the first cry from the House of the Potter, 'Why hast thou made me thus?'²

¹Symonds, *Wine, Women and Song*, p.88

²Helen Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars*, p.154 - 5

The line which supports this reading of the *Confessio* most strongly is the poet's description of himself as 'Mortuus in anima' - dead in soul, when he writes:

voluptatis avidus magis quam salutis,
mortuus in anima curam gero cutis. (p.114)

[Much more eager for fleshly delight than for salvation, dead in my soul, I take care of my own skin.]

These lines suggest a poignant awareness of his own damnation even while he chooses to defy eternity and rejoice in the world of the flesh - a notion peculiarly appropriate to Swinburne's *Tristram and Iseult*, for example. Symonds, however, in his translation of the *Confessio*, passes over the important phrase and translates the lines as:

Eager far for pleasure more
Than soul's health, the sooth is,
For this flesh of mine I care,
Seek not ruth where ruth is.¹

An almost meaningless line has replaced one of the most significant phrases in the poem. Symonds seems generally concerned to tone down the subtle, sensual or rebellious aspects of the poem, and his image of the Archpoet is very different from Waddell's. He suggests that the *Confessio* describes:

... his vagrant habits, his volatile and indiscriminate amours, his passion for the dice-box, his devotion to wine, and the poetic inspiration he was wont to draw from it.²

This summing up emphasises the jolly aspects of the *Confessio*, and suppresses some of the aspects which might have allied Symonds more firmly with the Swinburnian camp. We can perhaps read into such an alteration both the desire

¹ Symonds, *Wine, Women and Song*, p.67

² *Ibid*, p.64

of Symonds to dissociate himself from the more indefensible moral aspects of Swinburne's poetry, and his genuine change of heart and new attraction to a simple rustic lifestyle.

However, it is still more than possible to discern the influence of the anti-chivalric medievalism which this chapter initially identified. In Symonds' opening essay and discussion of the poems, we can see how he balances the two influences, when he writes:

It is love of the sensuous, impulsive, appetitive kind, to which we give the name of Pagan.¹

The characterisation of goliard love as 'impulsive' and 'appetitive' recalls the rather more basic, straightforward passions associated by Symonds with the rustic. However, the description of it as 'sensuous' and the explicit association of it with paganism links the goliards to the more sophisticated ideas of Swinburne and Pater.

One of the more striking examples of such links occurs in his translation of *De Pollicito*. The first lines of the final stanza read:

Totus Veneris
uror in camino (171)

[I am all burnt in the fire of Venus]

which Symonds translates as:

Burning in love's fiery flood,
Lo, my life is wasted!²

The description of sensual passion as the 'fiery flood', and the implications of suffering which it carries clearly derive from Swinburnian notions of sensual

¹ Ibid, p.37

²Ibid, p.94

love as an overwhelming force, at once tormenting and irresistible. It is interesting to note that the phrase 'fiery flood' is used by Tennyson as well as Symonds, but the radically different contexts in which it appears indicate the different affiliations of the two writers. The phrase first appeared in Tennyson's poetry in an early unpublished part of 'Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere'. Lancelot's song includes the lines:

Bathe with me in the fiery flood,
And mingle kisses, tears, and sighs...¹

Concern for Tennyson's reputation meant that this song remained unpublished. The phrase was then to resurface in 'Balin and Balan', published shortly after *Wine, Women and Song* in 1885. There, it becomes part of the song sung by Vivien, the embodiment of amoral sensuality and the villain of the piece. She sings:

And starve thou not this fire within thy blood,
But follow Vivien through the fiery flood!
The fire of Heaven is not the flame of Hell!
(*'Balin and Balan'*, l.447-450)

Tennyson makes Vivien the mouthpiece for the Swinburnian point of view - that intense sensual experience is spiritually transfiguring in its own right. In the context of the *Idylls*, such selfish, amoral sensuality is a dire threat to the stability of the Round Table. Vivien and Tristram, its two exponents, are the eventual destroyers of Arthur's kingdom.

It is highly unlikely that Symonds was aware of Tennyson's use of the phrase before he published his translations, although it is tempting to speculate. Ricks

¹Tennyson, *Poems*, p.505

attributes it to Shelley's *Mont Blanc*, which may be a common source¹. However, Symonds' use of it in a diametrically opposed context to that of the *Idylls*, in which he approves wholeheartedly of the sensual passion of the 'fiery flood', suggests the residual attraction to Swinburnian philosophy in *Wine, Women and Song*.

The final lines of *De pollicito* also suggest that Symonds saw the sensuality of goliardic poetry as a more powerful and disturbing force than the rustic jollity which he promotes in other parts of the book. The final stanza quoted above continues:

donis Cereris,
satiatis vino
presto ceteris,
et cum superis
nectare divino
fruor fruoris! (171)

[The gifts of Ceres [grain], and their fill of wine, I give to others: with the gods
above I shall enjoy divine nectar]

Here sexual passion is accorded the dignity and intensity of an experience which carries men far beyond the world of ordinary mortals. Symonds has intensified this element in the poem in his translation, giving it a more 'Swinburnian' flavour:

Such the fever of my blood,
That I scarce have tasted
Mortal bread and wine, but sup
Like a god love's nectar-cup.²

¹Ibid, p.505

²Symonds, *Wine, Women and Song*, p.93

The Latin original suggests a conscious and voluntary renunciation of the earthly world in favour of the divine. With the simple substitution of 'Like a god' for 'with the gods', and with his relation of this to the 'fever' of passion, Symonds suggests a causative relationship: experiencing intense sensual passion transforms men almost involuntarily into gods. Compare Symonds' translation with these lines from *Tristram of Lyonesse*::

Soul-satisfied, their eyes made great and bright
With all the love of all the livelong night,
With all its hours yet singing in their ears
No mortal music made of thoughts and tears
But such a song, past conscience of man's thought,
As hearing he grows god and knows it not. (p.42)

Another echo is heard when, supplying a missing stanza for a lyric which was left incomplete in the *Carmina Burana* manuscript, Symonds pays homage to the masochistic image of love as captor and tormentor:

Wherefore dost thou draw my life,
Drain my heart's blood with thy kiss?
Scarce can I endure the strife
Of this ecstasy of bliss!
Set, O set my poor heart free,
Bound in icy chains by thee,
Chains by thee.¹

Though Symonds declines to translate the whole of 'Si linguis angelicis', remarking coyly that it is 'too long for translation and in some respects ill-suited to modern tastes', he gives an account of the poem, noting the religious implications, and translates what he describes as 'the paean of victorious passion' from near the close of the poem. He chooses to quote some of the lines

¹Ibid, p.128

which, rather like those quoted in the first chapter, demonstrate a combination of physical and spiritual fulfilment:

paradisi gaudia nobis inducuntur,
cuncteque deliciae simul apponuntur (77)

[The joys of Paradise were displayed to us, and all manner of delights offered up together]

which he translates faithfully as:

The joys of Paradise were ours
In overflowing measure
We tasted every shape of bliss
And every form of pleasure.¹

This elevation of passion recalls Tristram or Tannhauser, while Symonds' obvious interest in the poem, although expressed with characteristic tentativeness, suggests an attraction to the less straightforward of the goliardic poems. The initial inspiration of Symonds' book is far from redundant, though sometimes well covered up.

The reaction of the reviewers to *Wine, Women and Song* reflects Symonds' rather confused and contradictory output in the volume. Generally, it was seen as a marginally entertaining antiquarian exercise. The *Carmina Burana* itself was classified as a product of the outdated medieval ideology that Symonds himself had been so eager to dismiss in *The Renaissance in Italy*. As the *Athenaeum* reviewer comments:

The ordinary English historical student would think it as irrational to seek real amusement in any form of twelfth century literature as in a statistical Blue-book of our own day.²

¹ Ibid, p.123

² 'Wine, Women and Song', in *The Athenaeum* no 2991, Feb 21, 1885, p.243

Symonds is described as having created a 'cheerful little book' out of unpromising materials through his own ingenuity, and the review goes on to tell us that the translations are:

replete with graces, which challenge comparison with the characteristic features of the most cultivated of modern light literatures.¹

Edmund Gosse entitled his review 'Snatches of Medieval Jollity' categorising Symonds' translations, like the *Athenaeum* reviewer, as superficial light verse².

Both reviews have clearly fastened on the simple love-lyrics of the collection, and ignored the hints of a deeper agenda inspired by anti-chivalric medievalism.

Perhaps this was what Symonds had always intended should happen. The book enjoyed a modest success among the reading public, but it was to take a surer and more consistent touch to turn the goliards into the heroes of the bestselling *The Wandering Scholars*.

We must, then, attribute the entry of the goliards onto the stage of nineteenth century literature to the anti-chivalric medievalism which was so important to Swinburne and Pater. Without such a movement, it is most unlikely that they would ever have attracted the attention of Symonds, but within it, they found the essential niche which enabled them to be placed before the reading public. However, though the inspiration for *Wine, Women and Song* clearly lies in Swinburne and Pater's work, allowances must be made for the rather different approach which Symonds took to his material, born both of the development of his philosophy away from the aesthetic movement, and of his constant fear of exposure as a homosexual and hence caution in associating himself with such

¹Ibid, p.243

²Gosse, 'Snatches of Medieval Jollity', in *Pall Mall Gazette XXXIX*, Nov 1 1884 (London, 1884)

interests. As a result of these different influences, Symonds' goliards are an intriguing mixture. They possess the sensuality, sophistication, and defiant anti-authoritarianism of Swinburne and Pater's medieval rebels. However, they also appear as straightforward, 'natural' young men, with a naive love of nature and a simple, cheery approach to the world. All of these elements were to reappear in *The Wandering Scholars*.

The Introduction discussed the development of a personality similar to that described by Mark Girouard, but influenced by 'anti-chivalric' medievalism, and like Girouard's chivalry, finding its death in the cataclysm of the First World War. It is that personality, I will argue later in this thesis, that is celebrated and elegised by Helen Waddell in 1927.

The next chapter, therefore, represents an attempt to examine the ways in which that personality is demonstrated in the work and self-image of one of the more influential literary figures of the early twentieth century, Rupert Brooke, and in the culture shared by the two circles of friends which he dominated, the Neo-Pagans and the Georgians. While there are possible direct links between Brooke's work and the goliards, suggesting that he had particular knowledge of their poetry, the chapter's main aim is to establish why Helen Waddell's mind should have formed such obvious links between Brooke and his twentieth century circle, and the still relatively obscure twelfth-century goliards.

CHAPTER 3

VAGABOND SPIRITS

Goliardic poetry achieved a modest literary success in the context of 'anti-chivalric' medievalism, thanks to Symonds' efforts in *Wine, Women and Song*. However, the runaway success of Helen Waddell's *The Wandering Scholars*, published in 1927, requires a different explanation. The almost universal popularity of the book's rather obscure subject matter suggests that something in it struck a chord in the society of the 1920s. As the Introduction suggested, the secret is perhaps that the book reminded those bereaved by the First World War of a particular image or personality type – of the prevailing character traits of a group of young men who had perished in the trenches. Why, though, was there such a strong and obvious link for Helen Waddell, and perhaps for many others, between twelfth-century goliards and twentieth-century young men? This chapter discusses the ways in which a social 'image', analogous to that described by Girouard, grew up in the pre-war years. In particular, it examines the role of that personality within the self-image of Rupert Brooke, one of the dominant artistic figures in these years. The image which Brooke created of himself, this chapter argues, is one which contains many parallels with the goliard poets. Moreover, he was potentially influenced by goliardic poetry itself. Thus there was a natural link for Helen Waddell between the wandering scholars of her study and the 'lost generation' of young men with whom she had grown up.

The roots of Rupert Brooke's self-image, and hence of the 'personality' described, lie in the late nineteenth century philosophy of Swinburne and Pater. As a very young man he was fascinated by the 'aesthetic' circle - we know, for example, that he read *Les Fleurs du Mal*,¹ and scandalised his sixth form literary society with a paper on 'Atalanta in Calydon'². The influence of these writers is evident throughout

¹Christopher Hassall, *Rupert Brooke* (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), p.97

²Ibid, p.75

his work. 'Tiare Tahiti', one of his last poems, is a mature and powerful exposition of Pater's maxim that 'experience, fleeting and subjective, experience is the only thing we must seek'. In its opening lines, Brooke offers a mock-serious exposition of the Platonic philosophy which states that subjective, fragmentary experience will eventually be absorbed into the universal, abstract, ideal:

Then, oh! then, the wise agree,
Comes our immortality. ...
...Never a tear, but only Grief;
Dance, but not the limbs that move;
Songs in Song shall disappear;
Instead of lovers, Love shall be;
For hearts, Immutability; ...¹

In the following half of the poem, however, he proclaims the crucial importance of fragmented and imperfect human experience:

Snare in flowers, and kiss, and call,
With lips that fade, and human laughter,
And faces individual,
Well this side of Paradise!
There's little comfort in the wise. (p.27)

The intensity of this sensual experience, Brooke makes clear, gives it a spiritual character. Like Pater and Swinburne, he pursued immediate sensual experience not for hedonistic pleasure, but because he believed it to be an essential route to spiritual awareness. 'Dining Room Tea', for example, describes how enhanced awareness of an ordinary scene transforms mundane experience into spiritual vision:

Till suddenly, and otherwhence,
I looked upon your innocence.
For lifted clear and still and strange
From the dark woven flow of change

¹Rupert Brooke, *The Poetical Works of Rupert Brooke*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London: Faber and Faber, 1946), p.25. All further references to Rupert Brooke's poems will be to this edition, and given as page references in the text.

Under a vast and starless sky
I saw the immortal moment lie. (p.110)

The experience has not changed, but acute awareness of it has revealed its potential for spiritual enlightenment. Brooke's perpetual enemy was the state of mind which was rooted in mundane and limited experiences. His almost hysterical fear of such an attitude is evident in the grotesque second sonnet of 'Menelaus and Helen'(p.125) or in the more witty 'Sonnet Reversed'(p.89). Brooke's philosophy required its followers to try and maintain the heightened sense of the world which is revealed in 'Dining Room Tea', and is undoubtedly a development of Pater's maxim that 'To burn always with this hard, gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life.'¹

Although Brooke inherited and developed the ideas of Swinburne and Pater, the personality and self-image which emerged was not a purely aesthetic one. Important differences between Brooke and his models are revealed in a comparison of Brooke and Swinburne's work, and it is in these points of divergence that we can see more marked similarities between Brooke and the goliards.

Brooke's 'The Great Lover' and the Proem to Swinburne's *Tristram of Lyonesse* have somewhat similar themes, in that they both deal with the potential of earthly objects and people to guide the observer to a higher plane of spiritual awareness. In 'The Great Lover', Brooke describes how everyday experiences have acted as guides into a spiritual realm:

Shall I not crown them with immortal praise,
Whom I have loved, who have given me, dared with me,
High secrets, and in darkness knelt to see
The inenarrable godhead of delight? (p.30)

¹Pater, *The Renaissance*, p.152

In a similar way, Swinburne imagines that the women of 'Love's calendar' will be vessels through which the awesome might of the supreme being, Love, will be revealed:

Hath he not bid relume their flameless flowers
With summer fire and heat of lamping song,
And bid the short-lived things, long dead, live long,
And thought remake their wan funereal fames ...¹

Though both poets take a similar idea as their starting point, their choice of experiences, and the language in which they describe them, diverge radically. Swinburne's calendar of Love is filled with the most famous lovers of legend and history. These figures are described in the grandiose, exotic language which characterised the earlier quotations:

And like an awful sovereign chrysolite
Burning, the supreme fire that blinds the night,
The hot gold head of Venus kissed by Mars,
A sun-flower among small sphered flowers of stars,
The light of Cleopatra ...²

The list of loves that Brooke will make 'Golden for ever', by contrast, are the most prosaic imaginable, and are described in bare, simple, language:

These I have loved:
White plates and cups, clean-gleaming,
Ringed with blue lines; and feathery, faery dust;
Wet roofs, beneath the lamp-light: the strong crust
Of friendly bread; and many-tasting food; (p.30)

Swinburne creates an overwhelming, exotic atmosphere, suitable to the superhuman powers which are ascribed to Love in *Tristram*. Brooke, however, manages to imbue the simplest elements of everyday life with an intense spiritual dimension. It

¹ Swinburne, *Tristram of Lyonesse*, p. 6

² *Ibid*, p.7

is not the nature of the physical experience itself which matters, his poetry seems to argue: rather, it is the passion with which you experience it. A letter of 1910 to his college friend Ben Keeling elucidates this idea:

It's the same about the things of ordinary life. Half an hour's roaming about a street or village or railway station shows so much beauty that it is impossible to be anything but wild with suppressed exhilaration. And it's not only beauty, and beautiful things. In a flicker of sunlight on a blank wall, or a reach of muddy pavement, or smoke from an engine at night there's a sudden significance and importance and inspiration that makes the breath stop with a gulp of certainty and happiness. It's not that the wall or the smoke seem important for anything, or suddenly reveal any general statement, or are rationally seen to be good and beautiful in themselves - only that *for you* they're perfect and unique.¹

Swinburne and Pater considered the inherent beauty of an object to be an important factor when assessing its ability to inspire aesthetic experiences. Indeed, Pater identifies 'aesthetic' criticism in *The Renaissance* as the type of criticism which discriminates between works of art by investigating the kinds of experience which they produce in the beholder.² Brooke, seeking essentially the same goal, pursues the opposite path. In this letter, he describes a way of looking at any object, which makes even the most everyday or unprepossessing experience a potential guide to the spiritual realm. Thus in the poetry of Brooke and his contemporaries, prosaic subject matter, simple, almost naive language, and intense emotion are peculiarly blended.

A similar contrast emerges if we compare Brooke and Swinburne's treatment of human love. As the previous chapter demonstrated, Swinburne describes love as an awe-inspiring, superhuman force, utterly removed from any recognizable human experience. Human beings do not consciously experience love: they are unwillingly

¹*Letters of Rupert Brooke*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes, (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p.259. Letter to Frederic ('Ben') Keeling, fellow undergraduate and head of the Cambridge Fabian society.

²Pater, *The Renaissance*, p.xxx

overwhelmed by it. In 'Laus Veneris', in particular, the vision of the goddess of Love as a tormenting jailer reinforces this impression. The Swinburne-Pater group saw love as an awesome, bewildering experience. In Pater's words, it was 'a strange idolatry, a strange rival religion'. Love and passion are seen as spiritually exalted and intense, but also strange, inhuman, and dangerous. Swinburne, Pater, and to a lesser extent Symonds, as we have seen, were attracted to the Aucassin driven out of his mind by love, to the chivalrous knight imprisoned by the fatally sensual pagan goddess, or to the doomed passion of Tristram and Iseult, forced on them by the magic potion. Love, for these writers, must shatter ordinary human lives, and thus must be stranger, more compelling, and more painful to endure than any other experience.

Brooke's view of love, however, combines the power and intensity of the late nineteenth century vision, with a concentration on the everyday and familiar. A line in 'Kindliness' demonstrates this characteristic blend. As with Swinburne, sensual passion is described as a transfiguring, quasi-spiritual experience - a caress is 'a flame / All heaven sang out to'. In the last lines, however, the poet writes of lost love:

And infinite hungers leap no more
In the chance swaying of your dress;...(p.109)

The combination of the extraordinary passion implied in 'infinite hungers' with the simple commonplace observation of 'the chance swaying of your dress', creates a blend of the profound and mundane which is entirely characteristic of Brooke. It is seen in its most attractive form in one of the most honest and uncomplicated love poems Brooke wrote in the whole of his brief career:

In your arms was still delight,
Quiet as a street at night,

And thoughts of you, I do remember,
Were green leaves in a darkened chamber, ... ('Retrospect', p.28)

The 'still delight' which Brooke finds in his beloved inevitably suggests the profundity, and the sensuality, of the late nineteenth century, and this is reinforced throughout the rest of the poem in his references to her. She is the fount of spiritual wisdom:

O haven, without wave or tide!
Silence, in which all songs have died!
Holy book, where hearts are still!
And home at length under the hill!(p.29)

In these lines, the beloved is a benign version of Swinburne's Venus, holding the key which admits her lover into the profound spiritual mysteries of passion. Indeed, the 'home ... under the hill', is perhaps a glancing reference to the Tannhauser story, taking the reader back to Morris's 'Hill of Venus' and Beardsley's *Under The Hill*. Yet the 'still delight' of the first line is conveyed through the almost bathetic image of a street at night, or green leaves. The language is likewise deliberately bare and unadorned. While Swinburne is determined to overawe his readers with exotic language and grandiose imagery in his efforts to convey the grandeur and terror of sensual passion, Brooke sees it as a light which illuminates everyday experience and raises it to new levels.

This combination of ordinary human experience with extraordinary passion is peculiarly reminiscent of the most accomplished goliardic lyrics. In Chapter 1, we saw how 'Stetit puella', could describe a very straightforward situation in the simplest of language, and yet evoke the most profound emotions through its mysterious association of the girl with Christian saints and pagan goddesses. Likewise, 'Si linguis angelicis' combines the most extravagant reverence for the beloved with its reference to the *caroles*, reminding us of the human context of the

love affair. Brooke's attention to the everyday gave him a new link with the goliards which his adherence to aesthetic philosophy could not have provided.

Neither could Brooke have drawn from Swinburne and Pater the second element in his work which is reminiscent of the goliards – its humour. In Chapter 1 we saw the many varieties of humour in goliardic poetry. Most evident in that discussion were their mockery of the structures of authority and their calculated irreverence in the most apparently serious matters. Yet in addition to this dangerous, anarchic humour there is a strain of simple buffoonery, as in the lament of the roasted swan in the serving dish (*Olim lacus colueram* [130]) or the solemn denunciation of watered wine (*O potores exquisisti* [202]).

Neither of these varieties of humour, especially not the second, impinged upon Swinburne and Pater's characterisation of the 'medieval Renaissance'. For them, the sensual rebellion of the twelfth century was strange, exotic, and beguiling. Although Swinburne gives a light-hearted description of Aucassin choosing between heaven and hell, and 'deciding of course dead against the former on account of the deplorably bad company kept there'¹, he approves of Aucassin primarily because he sees him as a rebel against medieval religious repression. He compares *Aucassin et Nicolette* to a passage in the medieval *Court of Love* in which monks and nuns are expressly punished for their 'contenance and holiness of life and compelled after death to an eternity of fruitless repentance for having wilfully missed of pleasure and made light of indulgence in this world'². For Swinburne and Pater the rebels of the twelfth century were torch bearers, serious rebels whose fight against the medieval church mirrored the later writers' struggle against Victorian repression and morality.

¹ Swinburne, *William Blake*, p.89

² *ibid*, p.89

The exuberant sense of comedy which goliardic poetry can often display had little to do with the late nineteenth century image.

Brooke, however, was far more in tune with this aspect of the poetry. Helen Waddell wrote that 'Mediaeval parody is graceless, even blasphemous ...'¹, and so, to many contemporary readers, was Brooke's sense of humour. The public objected violently to the comic comparison of love and seasickness in 'Channel Passage', originally to be titled 'The Seasick Lover'². More acceptably, the serious wistfulness of 'The Old Vicarage, Grantchester', has its Neo-Pagan intensity broken up by the long and condemnatory list of all other Cambridgeshire locations:

And Royston men in the far South
Are black and fierce and strange of mouth;
At Over they fling oaths at one,
And worse than oaths at Trumpington,
And Ditton girls are mean and dirty,
And there's none in Harston under thirty ...
... And Coton's full of nameless crimes,
And things are done you'd not believe,
At Madingley, on Christmas Eve. (p.70)

The essentially simplistic humour of this list, and the device of the list itself, might perhaps remind the reader of the enumeration of types of drinkers in *In taberna quando sumus*. The comedy of much of Brooke's poetry divides him from late nineteenth century medievalism and brings him, again, one step closer to the goliards.

Brooke's self-image and work, though to a large extent built on late nineteenth century aestheticism, are reminiscent of the goliards in ways which exponents of the 'medieval Renaissance' could never have understood. Is there any evidence, however, that he knew of the goliards himself? Some suggestions that he did, and a

¹Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars*, p.150

² Hassall, *Rupert Brooke*, p.293

clear exposition of the various strands of thought which informed his character, can be seen in an address which he gave to the Cambridge society he founded, the 'Carbonari', and also to the literary society at Rugby, 'Eranos', in 1907, his first year at Cambridge. The address was entitled 'The Vagabond in Literature', and as well as providing the earliest evidence available that Brooke knew and appreciated goliardic poetry, it gives important clues to ways in which his self-image would develop. It is based on an appreciation of the vagabond life, but in Brooke's definition of the true vagabond, we can see both his modification of Swinburne and Pater's creed, and the beginnings of his own 'Neo-Paganism', as Virginia Woolf would later define it. In his opening preamble, Brooke announces that his talk will be based on a work by Arthur Compton-Rickett, 'The Vagabond in Literature'.¹ Compton-Rickett's book, as Brooke perceptively points out, deals mainly with the physical joys of the open-air vagabond, describing two of the three main characteristics of the vagabond as 'Restlessness - the wandering instinct', and 'A passion for the earth'. The nearest Compton-Rickett comes to a more metaphysical view of the vagabond is to name his third defining characteristic as 'A constitutional reserve whereby the Vagabond, though rejoicing in the company of a few kindred souls, is put out of touch with the majority of men and women'.² Brooke cites as his other inspiration an anthology of poetry compiled by E.V.Lucas entitled 'The Open Road', which is a loose collection of poetry which again concentrates on the jolly, simple pleasures of the open road.³ Brooke is aware that actual travelling, as he puts it, 'colours a grey age', but declares himself determined to explore the deeper spiritual implications of the wandering

¹Cambridge, King's College, Rupert Brooke Archive, MS P/3, pp.108 - 122

²Arthur Compton-Rickett, *The Vagabond in Literature* (London: J M Dent and Co, 1906), p.8

³E.V.Lucas, *The Open Road: a little book for wayfarers* (London: Grant Richards, 1899)

instinct.

The talk clearly shows the influence of late nineteenth century medievalism, and an interest in the texts which it enthused about. Ideas, descriptions and even phrases hark back to the concept of the 'medieval Renaissance'. Brooke remarks that 'The Renaissance and all its spring spirit woke strange tides in the heart.', recalling Pater's 'strange rival religion'. Like Pater, he sees the roots of these 'strange tides' in the Middle Ages themselves, and here we have the first real evidence that Brooke was conversant with goliardic poetry:

Indeed, all through the Middle Ages, those dark ages we so despise, a certain happy nomad habit was rife. The Troubadours, the Jongleurs, the wandering Latin students, have all a touch of the vagabond; ...¹

In the context of the foregoing sentences, Brooke's invocation of the troubadours, the jongleurs, and the goliards all in one breath suggests that he had read the goliards in the context of Swinburne and Pater's medievalism. Given his interest in late nineteenth century writers, and his recorded reading of other works by Symonds², it does not seem unreasonable to conjecture that he had read *Wine, Women and Song*. Although he expresses the reservation that some of the group were a little too 'unthinking, too healthy, some might say,' to be true vagabonds, he also asserts that 'without wide reading, one can pick out many a real vagabond in those days'. The reminiscences of Swinburne and Pater continue: the true vagabond, Brooke asserts, is 'neither for God nor for his enemies'³, recalling Pater's famous description of the Botticelli Madonna in the *Renaissance*.

¹Ibid, p.111

²Brooke's very incomplete diary of 1905 has copied quotes from what he describes as Symonds' 'Diary' (presumably the autobiography published by Horatio Brown). It also notes his reading of Symonds' *In the Key of Blue*. King's College, Rupert Brooke Archive, MS M/21.

³King's College, Rupert Brooke Archive, MS P/3, p.119

As the talk develops, we can see the increasing importance of various images, which were to provide Helen Waddell's imaginative link between Brooke and the goliards. The interplay between a simple delight in the natural world, and a more profound, semi-pagan awareness of it, is found in Brooke's apocryphal story of an 'eminent stockbroker' who unwisely left his London office one April morning:

And there, among the buses and clerks and policemen, he must have been taken off his guard by some sudden madness in the spring breezes, or some vision of primroses upon April hills. At any rate, he did not come back to his office or his house in Upper Tooting that day or for many more.¹

Superficially the story is humorous pastoral - the vision of 'spring breezes' and 'primroses upon April hills' is simply an attractive rural fantasy placed alongside the urban realities of 'buses and clerks and policemen'. Yet even here, there are hints of a deeper pagan spirituality in the attraction of the country landscape: the 'sudden madness in the spring breezes' is surely intended to evoke the wild, exultant madness of the maenads in *The Bacchae*.² This idea is brought out ever more strongly as Brooke goes on:

There are few who have died so early in life that they do not run some risk of hearing thus suddenly Pan's flute in the distance, and falling victim to the divine madness, the wizardry of unrest.³

The 'divine madness' is unmistakably a reference to the Bacchic frenzy, and in combination with 'Pan's flute', adds the dimension of deep spiritual experience to the simple, escapist fantasy of vagabond existence which Brooke took from Compton-Rickett and Lucas.

¹King's College, Rupert Brooke Archive, MS P/3, p.109

²Euripides, 'The Bacchae', in Euripides, *Three Tragedies*, ed. David Grene and Richmond Lattimore (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1959)

³King's College, Rupert Brooke Archive, MS P/3, p.109

The invocation of pagan gods in order to introduce a more profound spirituality to a straightforward rustic idyll brings us back once again to the goliards. Brooke's introduction of Bacchus and Pan into his picture of the stockbroker among the primroses has some similarity to the goliardic lyric below, which begins by describing a pretty spring scene:

Letabundus rediit
avium concentus
ver iocundum prodiit,
gaudeat iuventus,
nova ferens gaudia!
modo vernant omnia,
Phebus serenatur,
redolens temperiem,
novo flore faciem
Flora renovatur.

[The chorus of singing-birds happily returns: spring comes forth joyously. Let youth be joyful, now rejoicing anew; all things flourish. Phoebus, shining brightly, spreads pleasant weather, the face of Flora is renewed with fresh flowers.]

It then, however, brings in a full cast of pagan spirits:

Estum vitant Dryades,
colle sub umbroso
prodeunt Oreades,
cetu glorioso,
Satyrorum contio
psallit cum tripudio
Tempe per amena,
his alludens concinit,
cum iocundi meminit
veris, philomena. (74)

[The Dryads are now spending the summer on the hillsides in the shade. The Oreads wander in glorious company. The gathering of Satyrs sing in the dance, through the lovely Tempe: the nightingale sings, while these play, remembering the gladness of spring.]

The arrival of the pagan figures gives a new depth to the pleasures of the spring day, just as an impulsive flight from the City appears more significant when inspired by 'Pan's flute in the distance'.

Brooke's relish for the humorous side of vagabond existence is evident in his brief biography of the Welsh poet Dafydd ap Gwilym, who dates from a similar period to the goliards and perhaps has something in common with them. Describing one of Dafydd's escapades, he reveals his own taste for the outrageous exploits of the goliards:

At the age of 15 he was driven from home because he persisted in composing irritating and libellous satires of great skill upon his parents. ... His boast was that at one time he was in love with 48 ladies, and they with him. He arranged with each separately to meet him at the same hour beneath a certain tree. All 48 kept the tryst. Only the Bard was unfaithful. He hid in the bushes hard by and observed the scene: which grew animated as it dawned on each what the other 47 portended.

Even in this knockabout mood, however, Brooke will not deprive his hero of the capacity for deeper feelings:

It was his way to make one song about each of his loves, kiss her, and pass on: and yet - and here is the notable point - twice he loved with a great and sincere passion. To one of these ladies he made 140 separate love-songs: yet married her.¹

Carefree humour, intense emotion, and dazzling artistic talent are all essential elements of the vagabond heroes whom Brooke lionises in his talk. He repeats these images elsewhere, as when Villon is described as 'Student, Housebreaker and Poet'². Benvenuto Cellini, to Brooke's mind, had 'no respect for society, and very little for honour and decency', and is finally described as 'a shameless villain, very lovable'³. This image of the educated, witty rogue, who is nevertheless capable of deep and powerful feelings, is an image which Brooke identified with and admired all his life. It is also a passably convincing characterisation of the goliards, and one which Helen

¹Ibid, p.112

² Ibid, p.111

³Ibid, p.111

Waddell was to popularise in *The Wandering Scholars*.

Brooke, then, had an image of himself as vagabond, wanderer and rogue which had much in common with the goliards. This much might be enough to explain the connection clearly made by Waddell in 1927. However, there is further evidence in Brooke's work to suggest that he experimented with medievalist writing and produced at least one direct imitation of goliardic poetry. By 1907, his address on 'The Vagabond in Literature' suggests that he was already intelligently aware of the goliards' existence. It also seems likely that he came into direct contact with their poetry on a trip to Munich which he made in 1911. He wrote to his mother that he had been hearing the German students' songs:

The students' songs were great fun. They have a book with about a thousand in, new and old: and every quarter of an hour we all sang one, Professors and all.¹

The students' songbook which Brooke describes here may well have included goliardic verses: Symonds' interest in the goliards was originally provoked not by the *Carmina Burana* itself, but by a nineteenth century collection, *Gaudeamus*, which was used by German students². Waddell records that 'Some of the gayer choruses are still shouted in German Universities'.³ The goliardic lyrics certainly survived (if somewhat transmuted) in the form of German students' drinking-songs well into Brooke's lifetime, and exposure to them in Munich might perhaps have kindled a latent interest, present since 1907. Brooke's poetry of 1912, after his return from Germany, suggests that it did. Throughout his short life, he tended to adopt the style and the manner of other writers. He has been perceptively described as an

¹*Letters*, ed. Keynes, p.275

² J.V.Scheffel (ed), *Gaudeamus! Carmina vagorum in usum laetitiae* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1877)

³Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars*, p.217

incurable self-dramatist, and his poetry seems to adopt different 'poses' at different times. 'The Funeral of Youth' (p.46), for example, is a quite uncharacteristic essay into the allegory of the eighteenth century, while 'It's not going to Happen Again'(p.56), also shows the adoption of an unfamiliar tone of voice, which almost anticipates Auden. Two of the poems written in 1912 suggest that Brooke was flirting with a medievalist voice. The first poem, 'Mary and Gabriel' is remarkable because both its choice of subject matter and the details of its treatment suggest an unusual interest in medievalism. The setting of the Annunciation in a garden perhaps suggests the significance of the garden in medieval literature, while the 'April day' of the poem creates the idea of a medieval rather than Biblical Annunciation, since it inevitably calls up the memory of medieval lyrics such as 'I sing of a maid'. Gabriel's iconography is medieval: initially he is white-robed, and later:

He knelt unmoved, immortal; with his eyes
Gazing beyond her, calm to the calm skies ...
.. His sheaf of lilies stirred not in the wind. (p.63)

The sudden visual detail of the bunch of lilies is a strong reminder of the many medieval paintings of Gabriel where lilies are the inevitable symbol of the Annunciation. Brooke's use of them here gives the sudden impression of such a painting. Much of the poem is a modern psychological study, but the details suggest a medievalist mind at work. The combination is similar to Morris's 'Defence of Guenevere' in which a sympathetic modern intelligence is applied to a medieval legend. 'Mary and Gabriel' has little to do with the goliards, of course, but the sense it gives that Brooke was involved with, and interested in, medieval material, is an interesting one.

Of far more relevance is Brooke's poem, 'Song,' also written in 1912. This poem has a surprising amount in common with the actual goliardic lyrics, both in subject

matter and in form. It is sufficiently slight to quote the entire lyric:

All suddenly the wind comes soft,
And spring is here again;
And the hawthorn quickens with buds of green,
And my heart with buds of pain.

My heart all Winter lay so numb,
The earth so dead and frore,
That I never thought the Spring would come,
Or my heart wake any more.

But Winter's broken and earth has woken,
And the small birds cry again;
And the hawthorn hedge puts forth its buds,
And my heart puts forth its pain. (p.65)

Compare this poem to *Levis exurgit zephyrus*, a poem from the 'Cambridge Songs', dated rather earlier than the *Carmina Burana*:

Levis exurgit zephyrus,
Et sol procedit tepidus;
Iam terra sinus aperit,
dulcore suo diffluit ...

Tu saltim, Veris gratia,
exaudi et considera
frondes, flores et gramina;
nam mea languet anima.

[The west wind blows softly, and the warm sun shines; now the earth shows her bosom, and her sweetness flows forth.

Do thou, O gracious spring, listen to and consider, the branches, the trees and the meadows; my soul alone is weary.]¹

,the comparison of the awakening earth in Spring with the awakening of the heart to, for example, *Tempus est iocundum*:

Tempore brumali vir patiens
animo vernali lasciviens (179)

¹Waddell, *Medieval Latin Lyrics*, p.156

[In the winter, a man is patient; with the coming of spring his spirit grows lascivious]

,or to similar thoughts in the lyric *Terra iam pandit gremium* (140). The birdsong is a familiar goliardic image, as is the sense of the earth having 'woken', and the power of winter being 'broken'. Compare such a thought with :

Clauso Cronos et serato
carcere ver exit (73)

[Time is shut up and Spring has broken forth from the barred prison]

and with many others. The form of the lyric recalls goliardic poems, as does its mixture of superficial simplicity and intense feeling. The general comparison of the lover's state with the state of the natural world is to be found throughout the poems in the *Carmina Burana*. This poem suggests strongly that Brooke had encountered goliardic literature on his trip to Munich in 1911, and, that, in experimental mood, he was using the goliardic lyric as a model for his own poetry.

Brooke's work and self-image do appear to have many similarities to his goliardic predecessors, and there is evidence to support the speculation that he had an intelligent interest in their poetry. Yet the opening paragraphs of this chapter describe the development of a personality and self-image which was common to large numbers of educated young men. To trace the development of such a phenomenon, we must look at the ways in which Brooke's ideas were diffused, and how he came to be a leader in his own generation. Over his lifetime, Brooke was a central figure in two groups, both of which achieved some public notoriety, and both of which contained elements which went to make up Brooke's own self-image, that peculiar combination of pastoral naivety and intense spirituality. The first major influential group was the circle of friends whose formation and subsequent history

has been impressively described by Paul Delany in *The Neo-Pagans*.¹ Delany describes how the circle was formed of young men and women who were either studying at Cambridge or closely associated with it, and points to the complementary influences of Cambridge intellectualism and of the progressive boarding school, Bedales, on the group. Bedales encouraged its pupils to work on the land, and cultivated an ideal of rural simplicity. The Bedalians were also given to outdoor camps in the school holidays, involving long tramps through the countryside and nude bathing. The Bedalian vision of a life close to Nature was, however, informed by moral restraint and a sense of purpose: the aim of the curriculum was in part to make the pupils suitable for colonial service, not, in the fashion of the public schools, as administrators, but as agricultural producers. Delany points out that Badley, the headmaster of Bedales, returned to Nature 'for *discipline*', and describes his enthusiasm for the hearty conformism of the Boy Scout movement (founded in 1908). Bedales was one of the first co-educational boarding schools, and tried to cultivate a wholesome, comradely treatment of the opposite sex.² Mixed nude bathing was an accepted school activity until the age of thirteen. Rupert, and the Neo-pagan group, imported many of these attitudes into their own philosophy. The group set up their own summer 'camps', modelled on those at Bedales, and congregated around Rupert at Grantchester for open air activities which earned them the nickname of the 'dew-dabblers'. They strove towards an intense involvement with nature, and a strong sense of purpose, high ideals, and comradely chastity.³ This input was modified by the intellectualism of the Cambridge circle, and the strong

¹Paul Delany, *The neo-pagans: Friendship and Love in the Rupert Brooke Circle* (London: Macmillan, 1987)

² Ibid, pp.13-17

³Ibid, pp.63-69

early influence of the late nineteenth century poets upon Brooke. The influence of Bedales modified the overwhelming sensuality of Swinburne and Pater, as did the contingent of Fabians in the group. Fleeting and subjective aesthetic experience was to be put to the service of high ideals and the wilder sensual fringes of *Tristram* or *Laus Veneris* were to be subjected to Badley's wholesome pastoral morality, and a healthy, chaste sense of comradeship. However, the deep influence of the earlier writers upon Brooke, and probably upon many others among the Neo-Pagans, was to add a depth and intensity to their visions of the natural world, and a yearning after transfiguring spiritual experience, which earned them the name of Neo-Pagans.

Like Brooke himself, the group in general were fascinated by the wandering instinct and the idea of the vagabond. The ultimate product of the varying influences described above can be seen in the 'Basle Station' plan. In this plan, a Neo-Pagan group which included Brooke himself, his close friend Jacques Raverat, and Ka Cox, agreed to meet on Basle Station on May Day, 1933. The intention was to disappear from society - effectively to fake suicide- and to take up a wandering, vagabond life¹. Writing to invite Jacques Raverat to the gathering, Brooke produces what Delany describes as a Neo-Pagan manifesto:

We'll show the grey unbelieving age, we'll teach the whole damn World, that there's a better heaven than the pale serene Anglican windless harmonium-buzzing Eternity of the Christians, a Heaven in Time, now and for ever, ending for each, staying for all, a Heaven of Laughter and Bodies and Flowers and Love and People and Sun and Wind, in the only place we know or care for, ON EARTH.²

Here again, the constituents of Brooke's chosen heaven are simple to the point of naivety. Yet he imagines a deeply spiritual, pagan world, in which these simple

¹Ibid, pp.71 - 2

² *Letters*, ed. Keynes, p.194

objects are the sensual experiences which go to make up a spiritual 'Heaven' far better than the religious experiences of Christianity. His vision of the life which would open up to him in 1933, following in the same letter, shows similar paradoxes at work. Brooke imagines that the world will be supposing Rupert Brooke to be dead, :

And R.B. will be fishing for tunnies off Sicily or exploring Constantinople or roaring with laughter in some Spanish inn or fitting up a farmhouse or two, with some friends, in America, or rushing wild-haired through Tokio, pursuing butterflies, or very sick on an Atlantic tramp. What does it matter? Only – we'll be *living*.¹

Again, the life envisaged is simple, wholesome, pastoral, and deeply connected with the natural world. Yet the final line of the paragraph 'Only – we'll be *living*' , with its desperate avoidance of the mundane or humdrum, recalls Pater's dictum that 'to burn always with this hard, gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life'², and suggests that Brooke's wandering instinct is more profound than a simple desire for outdoor adventure.

The Neo-Pagan group, then, Brooke's band of chosen comrades, shared many of his ideas and enthusiasms. An attraction to the healthy outdoor life, a firm agnosticism, and the fixed ideals of Fabian socialism had modified the intensity of the 'decadent' poets to produce that blend of the simple and the profound which is so marked in Brooke's work.

Brooke broke decisively with his Neo-Pagan friends after his difficult affair with Ka Cox and nervous breakdown, and appeared to become more and more involved with the fashionable London literary circle headed by Edward Marsh. In partnership with Marsh, he edited the volume of 'Georgian Poetry' which appeared in 1912. Many critics have suggested that the Georgians wrote merely self-indulgent, escapist

¹Ibid, p.195

²Pater, *The Renaissance*, p.152

pastoral. William Tindall commented that 'They withdrew from reality, not to an ivory tower, but to an oast-house.'¹ Brooke has been variously characterised as everything from a true Georgian to a precursor of modernist writing who mistook his literary allegiances. The definition usually makes a negative evaluation of 'Georgian Poetry', and is thus based on the critic's desire to exculpate or condemn Brooke himself. Both Robert Ross and Myron Simon, however, have attempted to rescue the Georgians from the critical wilderness and to define their *raison d'être*. Simon and Ross distinguish between the poets of the first two volumes of 'Georgian Poetry', and the 'Neo-Georgian' contributors to the last three². Especially when this distinction is brought into play, it appears that Brooke did in fact have a great deal in common with many of the Georgian school, patchy and uneven as the quality of their poetry was, and that his posthumous myth could realistically symbolise a whole generation of poets.

Simon discusses the influence of the philosophers Moore and Russell, whom Marsh befriended at Cambridge in 1891, on the Georgian school. These philosophers were extremely concerned with analysing and understanding concrete experience, but also felt that there was an imaginative and intuitive side to those experiences which could not be ignored³. Such a combination is strongly present in Brooke's poetry. He is faithful to the small details of everyday experience, as his letter to Ben Keeling (quoted on page 149) suggests, but is nevertheless aware of the awesome spiritual heights towards which these everyday experiences can guide him. This combination is also an essential element in Georgian poetry. Many critics have pointed out that,

¹Quoted in Myron Simon, *The Georgian Poetic*, (California: University of California Press, 1975), p.5

²Robert H.Ross, *The Georgian Revolt* (London: Faber and Faber, 1967),p.243: Simon, *The Georgian Poetic*, p.12 - 13

³Simon, *The Georgian Poetic*, p.20 - 26

despite their reputation for insipid pastoral subjects, the Georgians actually contemplated some startlingly unpleasant pictures. 'The Heap of Rags', for example, a poem by Davies, describes a drunk and raving rough sleeper¹, while the verse drama by Gordon Bottomley, 'King Lear's Wife', contained a song for the corpse-washers which was considered so revolting by the Censor that it was not permitted in the stage version of the play². Brooke himself shocked polite readers with 'Channel Passage', and with the reference to a woman's 'remembered smell', in 'Lust'³. Simon points out that this was not, as is sometimes thought, the result of a rebellious determination to distress their readers, but rather the result of 'an intense contemplation of reality'. He describes the Georgians' engagement with reality very accurately:

Confirmed pluralists who discounted the availability of any overarching transcendent truth, the early Georgians wished to engage reality item by item: to feel its shapes and textures, to perceive its distinctive forms, to grasp its essential meanings as fully and directly as their sensibilities would allow⁴.

Brooke shared this aim, yet he also perceived the spiritual depth of the reality he described, as did the earlier Georgian poets. The later Georgian poets are rightly condemned for insipidity, since the scenes they describe are not related to actual reality, and the spiritual depth they draw is false and contrived. But the early contributors, along with Brooke, had a strong sense of the spiritual dimension inherent in ordinary experiences.

Brooke and the Georgians also shared much in point of style. Their perceived enemy was the High Victorianism of Tennyson, continued into the early twentieth

¹W.H. Davies, 'The Heap of Rags', in *Georgian Poetry 1911-12*, ed. Edward Marsh (London: The Poetry Bookshop, 1920: first published 1912), p.62

²Ross, *The Georgian Revolt*, p.152

³Hassall, *Rupert Brooke*, p.293-294

⁴ Simon, *The Georgian Poetic*, p.53

century by such minor figures as William Watson and Alfred Austin. Their enemy in style was thus grand, poetic, overblown verse. Their aim, therefore, was to use a simple, unadorned, diction, which would distance their work as far from the self-consciously 'poetic' as was realistically possible.

Simon and Ross's defence notwithstanding, not all the Georgians are like Brooke: some poets slip easily into the mode of insipid pastoral, as in Davies' 'Days too Short':

When primroses are out in Spring,
And small blue violets come between;
When merry birds sing on boughs green,
And rills, as soon as born, must sing;¹

Davies' poem has the simplicity of diction and the close observation sought by the Georgians, but has entirely missed the quasi-religious sense that the paganism of Brooke or the goliards would bring to it. Many of the Georgians were striving to achieve a sense of significance in their poetry, but in the first 'Georgian Poetry' anthology, this is usually separated from observation of reality, so that the work of other poets in the anthology becomes heavily philosophical, or acquires a sense of eerie rather than spiritual depth. The poetry of Wilfrid Gibson or Walter de la Mare conveys a sense of the fantastic and other-worldly, but not of the deep worship of the everyday sensual world that came with Brooke's paganism. In 'The Hare', or 'Devil's Edge', the pastoral setting and story is given depth, not by a sense of spiritual experience, but by odd, supernatural happenings. In 'Devil's Edge', for example, the inexplicable loss of a young sailor drives his widow to wander by night among the mountains like a ghost: the sense of other-worldly experience comes from the description of the sailor's disappearance:

¹W.H.Davies, 'Days Too Short', in *Georgian Poetry 1911 -1912*, p. 60

... and coming up they found,
The deck was empty, Philip gone ...
... Yet not another boat in sight ...
And not a ripple on the sea.
How he had vanished, none could tell.
They only knew the lad was dead
They'd left but now, alive and well ... ¹

The significance is vague, and the mysteriousness is part of the attraction of the poem. Walter de la Mare's famous poem, 'The Listeners', included in this anthology, is another example of the genre². The experience in 'The Listeners' is disturbing precisely because of its unanswered questions: who is the Traveller, and where is he going, and when? Most importantly, who are the strange 'phantom listeners' and what world do they come from? Rather than mediating these experiences through the recognisable and everyday, the poets evoke a fantasy world which is beyond reality.

Curiously enough, it is the poet D.H. Lawrence, not usually associated with the Georgians, who seems to come closest to realising their ideal in his poem, 'Snapdragon'.³ Marsh obviously recognised the quality of Lawrence's work, since despite his marked distaste for modernist poetry, he regularly included contributions from Lawrence in the 'Georgian Poetry' anthologies. In 'Snapdragon' the Neo-pagan and Georgian ideals are recognised in that an intense awareness of an everyday experience brings about an almost spiritual awareness of the world and of a particular moment. The setting is mundane and everyday, yet the walled flower garden is described with Georgian exactitude:

¹ Wilfrid Gibson, 'Devil's Edge', in *Georgian Poetry 1911 – 1912*, pp.93 –105

² Walter de la Mare, 'The Listeners', in *Georgian Poetry 1911 – 1912*, p.71

³ D.H. Lawrence, 'Snapdragon', in *Georgian Poetry 1911 – 1912*, p.113

She bade me follow her to her garden where
The mellow sunlight stood as in a cup
Between the old grey walls; ...

But the experience is described with the sensual intensity of Swinburne's *Tristram*:

... and I longed to turn
My heart's red measure in her cup,
I longed to feel my hot blood burn
With the lambent amethyst in her cup.

Then suddenly she looked up
And I was blind in a tawny-gold day
Till she took her eyes away.

As with Brooke, the passionate sensuality that becomes spiritual awareness is mediated through the simplest of everyday experiences. The simplicity of 'Then suddenly she looked up' is the introduction to the awe-inspiring 'blindness', implicitly compared to the blindness provoked by staring into the sun, produced by the woman's gaze. The woman's hand becomes 'My grail' with all the spiritual connotations of that phrase. Lawrence's poem is a development of Brooke's vision of 'infinite hungers' in the chance swaying of a woman's dress. Lawrence, too, seems to have inherited some of the same influences as Brooke : the final line of 'Snapdragon', 'And death I know is better than not-to-be' is strongly reminiscent of Pater's search for experience, and Brooke's subsequent semi-hysterical rejection of the tedious and humdrum.

Though Brooke emerges as a dominant and exceptional figure in both the Georgian and Neo-Pagan circles, many members of both groups were clearly strongly committed to many of the ideas that emerge from his life and poetry. This is an important point to bear in mind when considering Waddell's characterisation of the goliards in *The Wandering Scholars*. For her, the goliards are a generation of scholars, and the sense in which they typify an era is essential to her book. Although Brooke may have had a closer connection with the goliards than some of his

associates, it was the personality to which the entire group tuned themselves that inspired *The Wandering Scholars*. It is an elegy for a generation, not for an individual.

As I have already suggested, Waddell used Brooke's affinity with the goliards to (consciously or unconsciously) create an image of the wandering scholars that was strongly reminiscent of the generation of young men lost in the First World War, and particularly of the Neo-Pagans and the Georgians. The difficulty with this theory lies in the assumptions which are often made about Brooke's life after 1912, 'Georgian Poetry', and, in particular, the War sonnets of 1914. Clearly, the references in *The Wandering Scholars* must be inspired by Brooke's posthumous legend, and this myth was largely built on the Brooke who wrote the 1914 sonnets. Taking the standard critical view, it is difficult to connect this character with the Brooke who admired the goliards and modelled himself on them. This is because Brooke's enthusiasm for the goliards springs from his Neo-Pagan beliefs, and it is generally believed that Brooke made a decisive break with everything about the Neo-Pagan group following his disastrous affair with Ka Cox¹. It is also suggested that this break led to Brooke's attitudes becoming increasingly conservative, and that this was reflected in his poetry. Brooke himself testifies to the contempt in which he began to hold many of his former Neo-Pagan friends, and in particular the Bloomsbury circle with which the group had been closely associated:

One of the less creditable periods of my life enmeshed me with the intellectuals. I hover on their fringes yet: dehumanised, disgusting people. They are mostly pacifists and pro-Germans. I quarrel with them twice a day.²

The break with his former friends was clear, as was the different political character

¹ See Delany, *The Neo-Pagans*, p.203 - 8

²*Letters*, ed. Keynes, p. 613

of his new associates. Instead of attending Fabian Society summer schools, Brooke was now becoming close friends with Winston Churchill and the Asquith family. The relative conservatism of his new acquaintances is usually projected by critics onto his most famous poetry, the War sonnets, and it is assumed that, just as Brooke's new social circle represents a reversion to conservative, establishment values, so the philosophy of the war sonnets suggests a complete rejection of the Neo-Pagan philosophy that informs his earlier writings. Adrian Caesar, for example, writes that the mention of God in 'Peace' represents a reversion to Victorianism and to 'the Puritanism and chauvinism at the bedrock of his psyche'¹. John Lehmann alleges that the War sonnets suffer from the 'fundamental shallowness and inadequacy of the sentiments expressed'².

The veneer of jingoistic patriotism present in the 1914 sonnets is undeniable, but there is also a thread of Neo-Pagan philosophy in the poems which is consistent both with Brooke's earlier work and with his association with 'Georgian Poetry'. Brooke's belief in the spiritual possibilities inherent in the sensual world was one of his few constant and central beliefs, and was not necessarily affected by a change in political or literary allegiances. This belief can be traced in all the sonnets and perhaps particularly in 'Safety', which is often ignored by critics. This sonnet contends that death is not to be feared, since the soldiers have filled their minds and memories with sensual experience. The list of experiences is comparable to that in 'The Great Lover': simple, naive, and deeply associated with the natural world:

We have found safety with all things undying,
The winds, and morning, tears of men and mirth,

¹Adrian Caesar, *Taking It Like A Man: Suffering, Sexuality and the War Poets* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), p.52

²John Lehmann, *Rupert Brooke* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), p.134

The deep night, and birds singing, and clouds flying,
And sleep, and freedom, and the autumnal earth. (p.20)

What is noticeable about this list is the entire absence of the abstract notions of honour, nobility or sacrifice which were undoubtedly present at one level in Brooke's mind, and which are intrusively present, to the modern reader, in other sonnets of the sequence, such as 'The Dead'(Sonnet III), and 'Peace'. In this list, however, the writer is consoled not by any sense of a just cause, but by the feeling that even if he should die, he has already experienced the heaven on earth that Brooke described to Raverat, made up of intense experience and love of the physical world. Through these experiences, the poet has lived as fully as he will ever do, and thus feels content to die, just as the poet of 'The Great Lover' will achieve a kind of immortality through the things and experiences which he has loved. Such a passionate belief in sensual experience as the highest form of transfiguring experience available to humans is a deeply Neo-Pagan one, and suggests that Brooke had hardly altered his fundamental beliefs, even if he had changed his political colours.

It is also true, both for Brooke and his contemporaries, that a Neo-Pagan or Georgian philosophy was entirely compatible with the enthusiasm for war which the modern reader finds so hard to comprehend except in terms of establishment coercion. This is clearly demonstrated in 'The Soldier'. Brooke's constant invocation of England created a patriotic image which had a compelling effect on the readers of 1914, but his vision of his country was nevertheless a Neo-Pagan one. The mind of the soldier has been shaped, not by noble impulses, but by intense sensual experience:

Gave once her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home. (p.23)

This list of experiences could well be compared with that from which Brooke proposed to make up heaven in his 'Basle Station' letter: 'Laughter and Bodies and Flowers and Love and People and Sun and Wind'. And his image of the soldier's immortality is entirely in keeping with the philosophy of his earlier poems. Brooke imagines that the intense love with which he has experienced the sensual world will somehow survive him, and that it is this which will create a kind of afterlife. In the same way he imagines in 'Dust', a poem of 1910, that the spirits of the two lovers will in some way be able to roam the world, 'Still sentient, still unsatisfied', and that when the two spirits meet future lovers will somehow experience 'the shattering ecstasy of our fire'. In 'The Great Lover', too, he imagines that the love which he has borne towards the physical world will endure, and be passed on to succeeding generations. 'The Soldier' repeats this idea:

And think this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given ... (p.23)

Despite the extreme success of the War sonnets, it is worth noting that their popularity was initially qualified by establishment figures. Although Dean Inge of St Paul's was sufficiently moved by 'The Soldier' to read it out at his Easter sermon of 1915, he qualified this praise with the point that 'it fell somewhat short of Isaiah's vision, and still more of the Christian hope', since a Christian must believe in a rather more clearly defined afterlife than that visualised by Brooke¹. The 'Neo-Pagan' thread in the War Sonnets can also be identified by comparing them with some of the other poetry written around the outbreak of war. John Freeman, for example, did not write of a sensual, pagan love of the land, but instead invoked the

¹Ibid, p.144

idea of national destiny and identity:

There is not anything more wonderful
Than a great people moving towards the deep
Of an unguessed and unfeared future; nor
Is aught so dear of all held dear before
As the new passion stirring in their veins
When the destroying dragon wakes from sleep.¹

W.N. Hodgson, in a true reversion to Victorianism, produced a catalogue of manly virtues:

Free in service, wise in justice,
Fearing but dishonour's breath;
Steeled to suffer uncomplaining
Loss and failure, pain and death;
Strong in faith that sees the issue and in hope that triumpheth.²

Brooke was unfortunately capable of including these sentiments in the War sonnets as well, but the element of Neo-Paganism in them is quite absent from Hodgson or Freeman's writing.

Brooke's 'Neo-Pagan' attitude to the war was also that of a significant number of his generation. There were as many Georgian vagabonds as chivalrous knights signing up for the trenches. Julian Grenfell's 'Into Battle' demonstrates their ideas:

The naked earth is warm with spring,
And with green grass and bursting trees,
Leans to the sun's gaze glorying,
And quivers in the sunny breeze;
And life is colour and warmth and light,
And a striving evermore for these;
And he is dead who will not fight,
And who dies fighting has increase.

The fighting man shall from the sun
Take warmth, and life from the glowing earth ...³

¹John Freeman, 'Happy is England Now', in *Up the Line to Death*, ed. Brian Gardner (London: Methuen, 1976), p.8

²W.N.Hodgson, 'England to Her Sons', in Gardner, *Up the Line to Death*, p.10

³'Into Battle', in Gardner, *Up the Line to Death*, p.34

Grenfell links intense sensual experience, 'colour and warmth and light', with a powerful love of the natural world. War, to him, is simply another way of gratifying his desire for this type of passionate experience. The Georgian writer Edward Thomas would express sentiments similar to this and to 'The Soldier' not in poetry, but in conversation: asked what he was fighting for, he is said to have lifted up a handful of earth, and said, 'Literally, for this'¹. The relationship of the fighting man, not to an abstract image of national identity, but to the substance of the earth itself, is a Georgian and Neo-Pagan idea which was only coincidentally related to the Victorian images of patriotic duty and self-sacrifice which propelled many men into battle. The two ideas could, of course, easily become confused: for one thing, many, though not all, of the men who formed the Georgian and Neo-Pagan cliques had been subjected to the kind of public-school and university education which still promoted Victorian ideals. However, a party of Georgians and Neo-Pagans was clearly distinguishable at the outbreak of war, and despite the homage which Brooke's War Sonnets pay to the alternative ideal, they place him within that party. In that sense, the poems on which his myth is founded are once again characteristic of a distinct group of young writers and are perfectly consistent with the philosophy which he followed throughout his life, despite superficial changes of friends and associates.

Brooke's poetry and self-image, then, bring him surprisingly close to the goliards, and at one period in his career the parallels are close enough to suggest that he had direct experience of their poetry and was using them as a literary model. The social 'personality' he projected, and which linked him with the goliards, was shared by

¹ Peter Parker, *The Old Lie: The Great War and the Public School Ethos*, (London: Constable, 1987), p.195

groups of young people within which Brooke was a dominant figure, but not an isolated one. The War Sonnets he wrote in 1914, and on which his posthumous reputation has largely been founded, were entirely consistent with the rest of his work. In the late 1920s, therefore, when the literary response to the growing myth of the Lost Generation was at its height, it should perhaps come as no surprise that, at some level of consciousness, Helen Waddell connected Brooke and the goliards, and that *The Wandering Scholars* emerged as an elegy for Rupert Brooke and his contemporaries. The following chapter will examine the growth of the 'Lost Generation' myth, and its contribution to the incredible success of Waddell's book.

CHAPTER 4

ETERNAL APRIL

Although, as we have seen, it was Symonds' *Wine, Women and Song* which first brought the goliards before the reading public, the reviews quoted in Chapter 2 show how very far it was from being any kind of popular success. It was Helen Waddell's *The Wandering Scholars*¹ and its companion volume *Medieval Latin Lyrics*², published in 1927 and 1929 respectively, which suddenly and quite unaccountably transformed goliardic poetry into the material for a major bestseller. Nobody, least of all Waddell herself, anticipated the book's success - her publishers, Constable, issued the book in a limited print run because they expected demand to be so small³.

However, the reality surprised everyone. Only three days after the publication of *The Wandering Scholars*, the book held second place in the best-sellers' lists⁴. In *The Morning Post* it was listed among the six best books of the week, as it was in other national papers⁵. By the end of the year, the *Times* summary of the year in literature put it among the five best books of that year, while the Manchester Guardian, as Waddell proudly pointed out, mentioned it all by itself⁶. The sales continued to build on this early promise - Waddell wrote that:

Blackwell's has been sold out again and again, and the manager in Bumpus (the big bookshop in Oxford Street) took it home to read, and sat up most of the night to finish it ...⁷

¹ Helen Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars* (London: Constable, 1927). All further references to *The Wandering Scholars* in this chapter will be by page number, given in the text.

² Helen Waddell, *Medieval Latin Lyrics*, (London: Constable, 1929). Further references to *Lyrics* in this chapter will be by page number, given in the text.

³ Corrigan, *Helen Waddell*, p.235

⁴ Stanbrook Abbey, OT 8. Unpublished letter to her sister Meg, 1927. All extracts from Helen Waddell's unpublished letters are taken from the collection of her papers held at Stanbrook Abbey. Dates are given where possible, but her letters are often undated.

⁵ Stanbrook Abbey, OT 1 and OT 41. Letter to Meg, 1927

⁶ Stanbrook Abbey, OT 1. Letter to Meg, 1927.

⁷ Stanbrook Abbey, OT 16. Letter to Meg, 1927.

By October 1928, *The Wandering Scholars* was on its fourth edition¹, and was to go through six editions before 1932. Helen Waddell became the first woman to be awarded the A.C. Benson Foundation silver medal by the Royal Society of Literature². The press reviews were ecstatic. A review in the *Irish Statesman*, in particular, hinted charmingly at the appeal which the book was to have for all kinds of readers, not merely academics:

Some books one begs to be allowed to review - and is refused; some are thrust upon one - they obviously belong to one's subject; others fall between these stools, you read the book, long to praise it but its subject lies outside your knowledge. This is the case with *The Wandering Scholars*. It is packed with scholarship, packed with knowledge of the medieval world, of the centuries we call 'dark' but far darker than them is the reviewer's knowledge of that period. Of course the honest thing to do is to return the book, it is the only way of being just to Miss Waddell and just to the readers of this paper. But in this case, honesty is thrown to the winds, justice is stifled, the book is simply too good to be let go.³

This breadth of appeal is a characteristic feature of the book's success: it was found and enjoyed everywhere from Buckingham Palace library to a prison bookshelf. As Waddell wrote later:

That the book was read by men in factories, and that it reached a very much wider public than the one it was written for, delighted and amazed both myself and my publishers.⁴

Felicitas Corrigan, like many of Waddell's later readers, is at a loss to account for this extraordinary phenomenon. She pays tribute to the breadth of Helen Waddell's scholarship, and to her intoxicating style, but ends her discussion with an unanswered question:

¹ Stanbrook Abbey, OT 41. Letter to Meg, 1927.

² Corrigan, *Helen Waddell*, p.235

³ 'The Torch-Bearers' (anonymous review), in *The Irish Statesman*, July 23, 1927, p.476

⁴ Corrigan, *Helen Waddell*, p.234

Even so, none of this really answers the question - what precisely was it that appealed so powerfully to twentieth century readers?¹

It might be argued that this question is phrased too broadly, for the wild enthusiasm of the 1920s and 1930s has not persisted into the present day. While Waddell's writings are admired and enjoyed by Latin scholars, there is little awareness of them among the general public. Her fluent style, as the example quoted below suggests, makes the prose delightful reading and abundantly demonstrates Waddell's infectious enjoyment of her subject. However, for many modern readers its elliptic nature makes it hard to follow, and even in academic circles she has more recently been criticised for a lack of scholarly rigour and an excess of romantic enthusiasm. Peter Dronke, reviewing the collection of her translations posthumously published in 1977 (*More Latin Lyrics*), writes that the choice of verse in *Medieval Latin Lyrics*:

... might well suggest to the non-specialist an operetta world rather than the immense range of Latin poetic art at this time².

David Parlett described the *Scholars* as 'long on style and enthusiasm, short on texts and specifics'³, which to the modern reader can too often appear an accurate description. Waddell's style forms a dense web of literary and historical allusion which can only be penetrated by the already initiated:

'Integrescit ex integro, pulchrescit ex pulchro, sic exemplari suo aeternatur aeterno.'

'Perfect from the perfect, beautiful from the beautiful, eternal from the eternal: from the intellectual world the sensible world was born: full was that which bore it, and its plenitude fashioned it full.' The war between the spirit and the flesh has ended in a Truce of God, even as the Last

¹Ibid, p.237

² Quoted in J.B. Lyons, *What Did I Die Of? The Deaths of Parnell, Wilde, Synge and Other Literary Pathologies* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991), p.207

³ Ibid, p.207

Judgement of the Western rose-window in Chartres melts into 'heaven's own colour, blue.' St. Bernard of Clairvaux spoke of the dungheap of the flesh: Bernard Sylvestris saw in their strange union a discipline that made for greatness, and the body itself a not ignoble hospice for the pilgrim soul. ... His Adam is the Summer of Chartres Cathedral, naked, fearless, and unbowed. He saw him as Michael Angelo did, wistful, beautiful, potent for evil or for good, already prescient of the travail that God hath given to the sons of men that they may be exercised in it. 'He hath made everything beautiful in his time,' continues the voice of Ecclesiastes which John of Salisbury found so strangely poignant, 'Also He hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.' (*Scholars*, p.122)

To understand Waddell's arguments in this passage the reader must be alert to every passing reference to John of Salisbury, to Bernard of Clairvaux, to Ecclesiastes, even to William Morris. They must tease out from the seamless style the points at which she is referring to these other writers, and those at which Bernard Sylvestris himself is quoted. They must be familiar with Chartres Cathedral, and with the Sistine Chapel.

To the few who do possess such a range of knowledge, or who have read *The Wandering Scholars* several times and looked up the references, paragraphs such as this one provide a rich and fascinating experience. Waddell draws writers and artists together from all times and places, and allows the reader to see the essential connections between them. Rather than confining herself to a narrow definition of her subject, she places it in the context of all the other artists she knows and loves, so that the reader sees it in a new way. Waddell's sudden leaps between writers and centuries eventually become exhilarating and illuminating, but for most modern readers their esoteric nature is initially off-putting. It might be assumed that they would prove equally difficult to the 'lay' reader of 1927 (indeed, this was clearly Constable's pre-publication assumption). From the sales figures themselves, though, and Waddell's letter quoted above, we can see that the book must have been bought and read by thousands of readers who had had

no acquaintance with medieval Latin writers before or since their contact with the Scholars. The book's immense and prolonged success in the bookshops make it impossible to reach any other conclusion.

The book's career might perhaps be compared to that of a bestseller like Dava Sobel's *Longitude*¹ - a non-fiction book whose unlikely subject enthralled millions of readers, topped the publishers' lists, and was recently made into a television film. As an enthusiastic but rather bemused reviewer from the *New Scientist* put it:

Sobel has done the impossible and made horology sexy².

Although a claim that Waddell had 'made medieval Latin sexy' might not have been the language of choice for the 1920s reviewer, she clearly worked a comparable magic on the esoteric subject matter of her book. In both cases, we should perhaps look beyond the talent of the writer (an obvious prerequisite) and suggest that in some way the society of the time provided a peculiarly receptive audience. Something, somewhere in *The Wandering Scholars* struck a powerful chord with many of the readers of 1927. This chapter, in attempting to answer Felicitas Corrigan's outstanding question, will suggest that that mysterious element lies in the response of English society to the cataclysmic events of the First World War.

Earlier chapters raised the possibility that *The Wandering Scholars* emerged as some kind of response to the intense bereavement felt by post-First World War Britain. To understand the scale of this sense of loss, we must turn to the work of social historians such as Jay Winter, Adrian Gregory and David Cannadine, who have all recently published extensively on the process of mourning which the

¹ Dava Sobel, *Longitude* (London: Fourth Estate, 1996, first published 1994)

² Marcus Chown, 'For those in peril on the sea' (review of *Longitude*) in *New Scientist* 2004, 18 November 1995, p.68

British population underwent in the interwar years. Moving their attention away from the extensively studied experiences of the front-line soldier, they have concentrated instead on the experience of the bereaved civilian population, and of the ways in which those who lost sons, brothers, friends and husbands, managed to cope with the shattering sense of loss. As writers like Winter and Cannadine have pointed out, very few families were immune from loss, whether it was of a brother, a father, a husband, a friend or cousin. Bereavement had become a more universal experience than ever before. As Adrian Gregory puts it:

Britain during the 1920s and 1930s was a country with millions of its population trying to come to terms with the death of loved ones¹ ...

And it was not only the sheer number of casualties in the war - Winter estimates that 700,000 men were killed in the First World War², as opposed to the estimate Cannadine makes of 270,000 in the Second³ - that contributed to that experience of bereavement. The demographic spread of those casualties also had a marked effect. Both by age and social class, the losses in the First World War were disproportionately skewed toward the young social élite. In *The Great War and the British People*, Winter examines this distribution of casualties. 37% of those who died, he suggests, were aged between 20 and 24. Those between 25 and 29 accounted for 22%, while boys between 16 and 19 (who were supposedly too young to enlist at all) formed nearly 12% of the total. Only 15% of those who died, therefore, were over 30⁴. Cannadine's figures are similar⁵. More startling

¹Adrian Gregory, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day 1919- 1946* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1994), p.23

² J.M. Winter , *The Great War and the British People* (London: Macmillan, 1986), p.68

³ David Cannadine, 'War and Death, Grief and Mourning in Modern Britain', in *Mirrors of Mortality: Studies in the Social History of Death*, ed. Joachim Whaley (London: Europa, 1981), p.230

⁴Winter , *The Great War and the British People*, pp.69 – 85.

⁵Cannadine , 'War and Death, Grief and Mourning', p.197

than the age distribution of losses, though, was the heavy slaughter among elite social groups, which may be deduced statistically from the casualty figures for such institutions as the universities and the public schools. 19.2% of all Oxford men serving in the war were killed, and 18% of those from Cambridge¹. The proportionate losses among young Oxbridge men were even higher. Of those matriculating at Oxford between 1910 and 1914, who would thus have been between 18 and 22 at the outbreak of war, almost 30% of those serving were killed. Cambridge lost 26% of the same age group². None of these figures, of course, take numbers of wounded veterans into account - yet the mental and physical scars of many of the men who returned formed another part of the experience of bereavement suffered by the civilian population.

By way of more anecdotal evidence, writers like Winter demonstrate what these figures meant to particular institutions. Gregory tells us that 20% of Etonians serving in the war were killed³. Winter suggests that 48% of the male members of the peerage born between 1880 and 1939 died violent deaths (and that most of these would have been in the war)⁴. C.F.Kernot's book *British Public School War Memorials* gives us a further idea of the tremendous losses suffered by most British public schools. 3,000 from Charterhouse served, of which 686 were killed - about one-fifth of the total, as at Eton⁵. Winter quotes a horrifying 31% death

¹ Winter, *The Great War and the British People*, p.92

² Winter, 'Britain's 'Lost Generation' of the First World War', in *Population Studies* 31: 3 (1977), p.461

³Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, p.213

⁴Winter, 'Britain's 'Lost Generation'', p.465

⁵C.F.Kernot, *British Public School War Memorials* (London: Roberts and Newton Ltd., 1927), p.138

rate for the cohort of Oxford undergraduates who matriculated in 1913¹. To a particularly articulate and socially visible group, therefore, the war was to bring an even more devastating experience of bereavement than the bare figures might suggest.

Indeed, the popular belief arose that the generation of young men who had reached manhood in 1914 had been not simply reduced in numbers, but annihilated, and it is in the growth of this myth that we can perhaps trace the origins of Waddell's popularity. The particular social derivation of the majority of casualties created the legend that the young men of most promise - the potential movers and shakers of the next generation - had been the ones to die in greatest numbers, and that the difficulties of the 1920s and 30s were due to the inability of the 'second-rate' survivors to handle the situation. As the war receded into the background, this belief did not diminish : in fact, it intensified. Adrian Gregory, in his study of Armistice Day celebrations, has pointed out how the early commemorations were deeply imbued with the language of patriotic sacrifice, and of the celebration of victory, despite the overwhelming cost. As the years wore on, however, it became increasingly apparent that the victory for which the soldiers had died was a hollow one. As Gregory writes:

The main distinction between the earlier and later interpretations of the war is that in the former analysis peace is an achievement of heroism and victory, whereas from the late twenties it is a lesson to be learnt from suffering and disillusionment. In the immediate post-war period it was believed that the British soldier had established peace principally by winning.²

Poets like Owen and Sassoon had, of course, drawn the public's attention to the futility of the soldiers' sacrifice ever since the later years of the war itself, but it

¹ Winter, 'Britain's 'Lost Generation'', p.463

²Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, p.36

was not until the twenties that their point of view began to gather major popular support. The myth which gradually took hold was that of the 'Lost Generation': the notion that there was, in effect, a gap in the generational succession of young men, in particular among the brightest and best of the nation's youth, and that it was this lack which was responsible for the nation's present malaise. The earliest inklings of the idea are to be found in C.F.G. Masterman's social study of 1922, *England After War*, in which he describes the sense of bereavement felt by the middle class parents who, relying on the pre-war increase in contraceptive practice and significant decline in infant mortality, had limited their families to an only son, in whom they had invested their hopes for the future. Masterman gives this powerful description of the results:

Every spare farthing had been spent on his upbringing since childhood. He was to be the pride and assistance of his parents when they attained old age. Then from all the terraces and villas which occupy the hills around great cities came the news that no blood sprinkled on the lintel or door post had been of any avail against the Angel of Death. A house had been left henceforth forever desolate¹.

Masterman's allusion to the death of the first-born indicates the extent to which the casualties of war are already beginning to be seen as a shared, national catastrophe. In his introduction, he describes the war as 'the greatest secular catastrophe which has tormented mankind since the fall of Rome'. The war is already beginning to be seen not as a political event, but as a random, almost inexplicable apocalypse, and the sense of bereavement is correspondingly great. Along with the loss of youth, for Masterman, goes a loss of national innocence and happiness. The image of the golden pre-war world is clearly emerging in his description of:

¹C.F.G. Masterman, *England After War* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1922), p.79

... a world which was crowning itself with flowers and calling itself immortal, only six years before it was utterly destroyed.¹

The youth and promise of the coming generation is magnified in proportion to Masterman's awareness of its eventual fate:

And all the time the boys were growing up, expensively educated, with all the fond hopes of the family fixed upon what often seemed a secure and brilliant future; who, before they were to attain manhood, were to perish like dumb animals in this most insensate of all attempts made by man to destroy his fellow men.²

The individual losses begin to merge into one great generational catastrophe, in which the whole nation shares:

And all the time with their bodies 'blown about the desert dust' or sunk in 'the deep's untrampled floor' or gathered into great companies where the memory of each particular grave is gradually forgotten, the flower of the nations rests in silence ...³

In Masterman's book, we can see how he has begun to delineate the major components of the 'lost generation' myth, which we will later be able to trace in *The Wandering Scholars*. They are as follows: the loss of so many young men in the war was equivalent to the loss of the brightest and best of a generation, and is a bereavement from which the whole country will suffer in the years to come. Such bereavement is felt as a random tragedy, without justification or meaning, and is related to a pre-war innocence, happiness, and security bordering on complacency. Many, rightly or wrongly, write as if the intrusion of war into their prelapsarian world was an entirely unforeseen event, and one completely beyond their control. In the years following the publication of *England After War*, the

¹Ibid, p.x

²Ibid, p.xi

³Ibid, p.15

myth was to gather power and to become almost a commonplace of public rhetoric and literature. In 1926, Stanley Baldwin wrote that:

There is nothing in the first twenty years after the war that can make good to this country the loss of so many young men of that age.¹

Reviewing Siegfried Sassoon's *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*, published in 1930, Herbert Read wrote:

He is a sensitive member of a generation destroyed by the greatest catastrophe in modern history; and because it was so destroyed, this generation cannot ever justify itself. A realist might object to this manner of speaking as fanciful: he would point out that although ten million men were killed, a fair number survived, and that surely some of them had a very jolly time. But in the affairs of the spirit we do not count heads, and it was the spirit or vital faith of a generation that perished, not its bare existence².

Here, the idea of the numerical or eugenic depletion of a generation has been seamlessly mingled with the idea of a generation bereaved of its prewar innocence, loyalty and ideals. Both are vitally important to the 'Lost Generation' myth. Those who died, died betrayed by the older generation, while those who survived ceased to be young, innocent or idealistic. As the civilian population gradually realised, the soldiers returning from the war were 'lost' in a different sense, but an equally powerful one. Vera Brittain wrote of the loss of innocence in the classic 'lost generation' work, *Testament of Youth*. She quotes her own poem, 'May Morning', which concludes:

Often I wonder, as I grieve in vain,
If when the long, long, future years creep slow,
And War and tears alike have ceased to reign,
I ever shall recapture, once again,
The mood of that May Morning, long ago.

¹Cannadine, 'War and Death', p.199

²Samuel Hynes, *The Auden Generation : Literature and Politics in the 1930s* (London: Bodley Head, 1976), p.39

Brittain provides a bitter answer to her own question:

The concluding speculation is answered now - not only for me but for all my generation. We never have recaptured that mood; and we never shall¹.

Bereavement and betrayal, then, are the two distinguishing features of the 'lost generation' legend, and these two characteristics were to affect the ways in which the generation itself was portrayed. The myth itself, as we can see from Read's article, did not die away in the 1920s, but in fact intensified. As Gregory points out, the growing availability of knowledge about the realities of the war, and, in particular, the rash of war memoirs in the late twenties, made people more aware of the futility of the sacrifices which had been made. Consoling themselves in 1919 with the idea that peace had sprung from victory, however hardly won, they began to realise in the late 20s and 30s that peace was very far away and indeed, that another war seemed entirely possible. The war was kept very much in mind by the publication of many of the most famous soldiers' memoirs in the late 20s. In 1929, the peak year, were published *All Quiet on the Western Front* (in translation), *Death of a Hero* (Richard Aldington), *Goodbye to All That* (Robert Graves), *Journey's End* (R.C. Sheriff - this was also, of course, produced on the stage to great acclaim in this year), *A Farewell to Arms* (Hemingway), and *A Subaltern's War* (Charles Carrington). In the next few years, a sample of publications would include *Testament of Youth* (Vera Brittain), *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* (Sassoon), *Patriot's Progress* (Henry Williamson), *The Lost Generation* (Ruth Holland), *Her Privates We* (Frederic Manning), and *Undertones of War* (Edmund Blunden). There was no danger, then, of the war

¹Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth*, (London: Virago, 1978: first published 1933), p.269

dropping out of public memory, and the ready market which was found for war memoirs testifies to the strength of the legend throughout the twenties.

The real strength of the 'lost generation' legend is seen in the extent to which its language and imagery infiltrated the work of those who were overtly indifferent or even hostile to the idea. Charles Carrington, in his memoir *A Subaltern's War*, attacks the pessimistic notions of the war put forward by those writers whom he refers to as 'défaitistes' and describes those who protest against the horrors of the trenches as comfortable folk, 'whose motto is Safety First'¹. He answers Owen, Sassoon and Rosenberg thus:

To die young is by no means an unmitigated misfortune; to die gaily in the pursuit of what you believe to be a righteous cause is an enviable and not a premature end².

Despite these fulminations, Carrington still manages to let the sense of a prelapsarian Georgian world infect his work. His story opens:

The war caught up the author of these memoirs out of a country vicarage, with a garden full of delphiniums which seemed to go on flowering week after week in that splendid summer of 1914. A boy of seventeen, I lay in a hammock and ate plums - too many plums. We started a grand offensive (there was a family) against wasps' nests, and were not very brave³.

Almost certainly entirely unconsciously, Carrington has fallen into the style of war memoirs in which the prewar world is depicted as 'crowning itself with flowers', unmindful of its imminent destruction. The innocence of the youth, the pastoral occupation of plum-eating, the apparently endless summer, the innocent and harmless 'offensive' which was so soon to acquire a much grimmer meaning

¹Charles Carrington, *A Subaltern's War* (London: Peter Davies, 1929), p.201

²Ibid, p.202

³Ibid, p.15

- all these are images used by writers whom Carrington despises, in their attempts to convey the shattered innocence of the 'lost generation'. We might compare this passage to the early pages of *Memoirs of A Fox-Hunting Man*:

Looking back across the years, I listen to the summer afternoon cooing of my aunt's white pigeons, and the soft clatter of their wings as they flutter upward from the lawn at the approach of one of the well-nourished cats ... The large rambling garden, with its Irish yews and sloping paths and wind-buffeted rose arches, remains to haunt my sleep. The quince tree which grew beside the little pond was the only quince tree in the world¹.

In the same way, although C.F. Kernot's *British Public Schools War Memorials* ostensibly speaks the language of military honour, patriotism and sacrifice, its preface pays tribute to the alternative myth:

Our dead lie buried on the Mount of Olives, from Zeebrugge to Coronel, from Dunkirk to the wilderness of East Africa. They girdle the earth - a generation of manhood².

Despite the patriotic tone of Malvern College's war memorial, at its dedication the Bishop of Worcester told his audience that 'The loss sustained by the War can only be described as the wiping out of a generation...'³

The influence which the myth exerted over popular thinking about the war can be seen in the ways in which lost young men were remembered. Perhaps surprisingly, the sense of the loss of youth and innocence does not feature largely in the memoirs of the soldiers themselves, although it is of course inescapable in the poetry of the trenches. However, when the war memoirs of the twenties were published, the dominant motives of the veterans seemed to be a desire, not to

¹Siegfried Sassoon, *The Complete Memoirs of George Sherston* (London: Faber and Faber, 1935), p.23

²Kernot, *British Public Schools War Memorials*, Preface.

³Ibid, p.136

elegise their dead comrades, but to convey the 'experience' of the war - that experience which they had so rapidly found it impossible to share with the civilian population. The dominant emotion in their memoirs is a bitter, uncomprehending pragmatism. Trapped indefinitely in a nightmare world, the soldiers' instinct is simply to survive, and this is the idea which predominates - the necessity of endurance and the likelihood of violent death. Frederic Manning catches the mood in *Her Privates We*, when a soldier remarks:

... and if our luck holds we'll keep moving out of one bloody misery into another, until we break, see, until we break¹.

In *Goodbye To All That*, Graves describes his response to a request to speak at a Memorial Service.

I also suggested that the men who had died, destroyed as it were by the fall of the Tower of Siloam, were not particularly virtuous or particularly wicked, but just average soldiers, and the survivors should thank God they were alive, and do their best to avoid wars in the future².

The attitude of exhausted relief, and determination to avoid the same catastrophe in the future, coupled with a feeling that the experience which they had undergone in the war was more real and vital than anything before or since, tended to mean that the memoirs of the soldiers themselves show only a minimal sense of bereavement, either for their comrades or for their own lost prewar world. The more prevalent feeling is a sense among the ex-soldiers that they have never really left the trenches, even in returning home, and that their dead comrades are more vividly present to their minds than their living companions. Blunden's poem, 'The Watchers' is typical. In its ending, the poet imagines

¹Frederic Manning, *Her Privates We* (London: Peter Davies, 1964: first published 1930), p.4

²Robert Graves, *Goodbye To All That*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1929), p.400

finding his place among his fallen comrades:

It seems, as now I wake and brood,
And know my hour's decrepitude,
That on some dewy parapet
The sentry's spirit gazes yet,
Who will not speak with altered tone,
When I at last am seen and known¹.

Robert Graves' 'Two Fusiliers' is similar. The overwhelming sense of loss and mourning, as Adrian Gregory has suggested, was pre-eminently a civilian phenomenon, and this could perhaps be expanded by the suggestion that this civilian population was suffering the loss, not only of the dead, but also of the veterans who were 'lost' to them through the intensity of their war experiences which they believed the civilians could not share. In *The Lost Generation* Ruth Holland describes her heroine's marriage to a war-wounded soldier:

He had attacks of nerves, long days of pain from his leg. He shouted in his sleep, and woke sweating, and she held and comforted him in her arms ... There was so little that she could do for Philip; he was so self-contained, wanted so little of her in actual life. He was away somewhere inside himself fighting a battle and she could do nothing to help him².

It is not in the memoirs of the trench veterans, then, but in the writings of those whom they left behind, that we should look for a literary expression of the intense loss and bereavement which social historians such as Winter and Gregory describe. The writings seem to fall into two rough groups - the generation of men who did not fight themselves, but who lost their sons, such as Rudyard Kipling (whose only son was killed at Loos), and the young women who lost their friends, brothers and lovers, such as Vera Brittain, Ruth Holland, the author of

¹Martin Taylor (ed), *Lads: Love Poetry of the Trenches* (London: Constable, 1989), p.218

²Ruth Holland, *The Lost Generation* (London: Gollancz, 1932), p.216

The Lost Generation, or Rosamond Lehmann, author of *Dusty Answer*(1927). It is in these books and writings that we find the most powerfully expressed grief and nostalgia for the 'lost generation' and their world – the grief and nostalgia which *The Wandering Scholars*, published at a similar time, would be able to tap into.

Catherine Reilly's invaluable collection of women's war poetry, *Scars Upon My Heart*, gives a fascinating insight into this sense of bereavement. Some female poets, of course, were the equivalent of Charles Carrington - the white-feather brigade. However, in many others the sense of loss, in particular the loss of innocence, is powerful and moving. May Wedderburn Cannan's 'Lamplight' is one of the better known war poems in the book. As with the novels of the period, it focuses on the potential of the young couple, on what they had planned and dreamed of before the catastrophe of war:

We planned to shake the world together, you and I
 Being young, and very wise;
 Now in the light of the green shaded lamp
 Almost I see your eyes
 Light with the old gay laughter; you and I
 Dreamed greatly of an Empire in those days ...

The last stanza echoes Vera Brittain's bitter comment on 'May Morning', emphasising the irreparable loss of such potential:

We shall never shake the world together, you and I
 For you gave your life away;
 And I think my heart was broken by the war,
 Since on a summer day
 You took the road we never spoke of ...¹

The opening of the stanza emphasises that the poet's grief is not just for her own

¹Catherine Reilly (ed.), *Scars Upon My Heart : Women's Poetry and Verse of the First World War* (London: Virago, 1981),p.16

loss. It is for the things that would have been done, for the dreams that have not been made reality, while the bleak, quiet finality of 'And I think my heart was broken by the war', suggests the shattering of her own lost faith and idealism, 'Being young, and very wise'. The loss of ideals is as powerful a theme in civilian post-war poetry as is the loss of life. Kipling's 'A Dead Statesman' picks up this theme of betrayal:

I could not dig: I dared not rob:
Therefore I lied to please the mob.
Now all my lies are proved untrue
And I must face the men I slew.
What tale shall serve me here among
Mine angry and defrauded young?¹

The resonant word in this bitter poem is 'defrauded': the young of the 'lost generation' have been denied not just their life, but their promise, their potential, their ideals and abilities. It is perhaps this deep sense of betrayal which explains why it was quite so hard for the post-1914 population to rebuild their world again after the war. The living were as lost as the dead. This idea persists even in modern times, so that Larkin could famously write in 1964:

Never such innocence,
Never before or since,
As changed itself to past
Without a word ...²

The prewar world, then, became an idealised realm of youth and innocence. As the previous chapter suggested, the influence of Georgian literature and ideas on the poets of the First World War was profound, and many of those who enlisted did so as much out of a 'Georgian' desire for passionate experience as out of a

¹Gardner, *Up The Line to Death*, p.148

² Philip Larkin, 'MCMXIV' in Martin Stephen (ed), *Poems of the First World War: 'Never Such Innocence'* (London: Everyman, 1991), p.320.

public-school bred belief in patriotic sacrifice. Martin Stephen has pointed out the intense influence of Georgianism on the poetry which trench writers like Owen and Sassoon went on to write. Unsurprisingly, then, the picture of the prewar world is heavily influenced by Georgian ideas and images. Sometimes the world is a generalised vision of the naive world in which we are all 'young and very wise', sometimes it is a public-school cloister, as in Nora Griffiths' poem 'The Wykhamist', but often it is a Georgian paradise. Marjorie Wilson's poem to a dead soldier's son, presents the dead in an identifiably Georgian context:

There was a man once loved green fields like you,
He drew his knowledge from the wild birds' songs;
And he had praise for every beauteous thing,
And he had pity for all piteous wrongs ...

A lover of earth's forests - of her hills,
And brother to her sunlight - to her rain -
Man, with a boy's fresh wonder. He was great
With greatness all too simple to explain.¹

The kinship with the natural world and the simplicity of language and emotion are key characteristics of Georgian poetry, and must surely remind the reader of the Georgian war poetry of Brooke's 'Peace' or Grenfell's 'Into Battle'. Wilfrid Gibson, going against the generalisation that veterans didn't write poetry of bereavement, movingly wrote of the impossibility of recapturing the prewar world, in 'A Lament':

A bird among the rain-wet lilac sings -
But we, how shall we turn to little things
And listen to the birds and winds and streams
Made holy by their dreams,
Nor feel the heart-break in the heart of things?²

¹Reilly, *Scars Upon My Heart*, p.130

²Stephen, '*Never Such Innocence*', p.304

Chesterton associates the war dead, not with patriotic sacrifice, but with an intense, Georgian love of the English landscape:

For these were simple men who loved with hands and feet and eyes,
Whose souls were humbled to the hills and narrowed to the skies,
The hundred little lands within one little land that lie,
Where Severn seeks the sunset isles or Sussex scales the sky.

And what is theirs, though banners blow on Warsaw risen again,
Or ancient laughter walks in gold through the vineyards of Lorraine,
Their dead are marked on English stones, their lives on English trees,
How little is the prize they win, how mean a coin for these -
How small a shrivelled laurel-leaf lies crumpled here and curled:
They died to save their country and they only saved the world¹.

This vision is the logical outcome of Edward Thomas and his clod of earth, or of the intense love of the land displayed in 'The Soldier'. Chesterton sees the motivation of the dead as lying in their intense love for the physical substance of their country - 'they died to save their country' and contrasts this with the primarily political ends to which he believes those ideals have been put - 'they only saved the world'. Like Kipling, Chesterton's principal feeling is one of betrayal. The simple ideals of a youthful, Georgian generation have been cynically exploited and betrayed by an older generation of politicians, and hence the generation has been 'lost' in two ways. Eugenically, the population has been robbed of its finest potential stock, but in addition the ideals and faith of a generation have been exploited and destroyed, leaving it without the will to govern the country. Both of these ideas were to take powerful hold of the popular imagination.

Britain's autobiography, *Testament of Youth*, and Ruth Holland's novel *The Lost Generation*, mentioned above, use a similar framework which both describes the

¹Ibid, p.295

experience undergone by many young women of the 'lost generation', and suggests some of the ways in which they conceptualised those experiences. Waddell's experience of the war years, as we shall see later in the chapter, was not so very far removed from Brittain's or from that of Holland's fictional heroine, and she must certainly have met many women like them. Brittain's book is autobiographical, but just as the soldiers have in their memoirs, she has a particular story to tell which reflects the ways in which she thought about her war experience. While Holland's book is a novel, its dedication *To the memory of A.I.E. Killed in action in France, 1917*, suggests at least that its author had some personal experience of bereavement through the war. Brittain's and Holland's books both, then, contain elements of fiction and autobiography, and are in some ways comparable descriptions of the ways in which bereaved civilians (especially women) experienced the war and its aftermath, and tried to come to terms with their losses. For both authors, the vision of the prewar world is powerful and compelling, and the delineation of their experiences before the war at least as important as the description of the war itself. Indeed, in Holland's novel, the treatment of the actual war years is almost perfunctory - the real focus of the book is on the idyllic world before and the chaos afterwards. In both autobiography and novel, the potential of the prewar world is stressed. As in the Cannan poem, the young men and women are contemporaries, looking forward to the construction of a new world together. Here is Holland's description of Jinnie and her cousin Eliot, shortly after the outbreak of war:

They had come to the end of their childhood, and an unknown life lay waiting for them, as strange and undiscovered as America to Columbus. They were straining eagerly towards it. They felt completely grown up already... and they were full of plans for reforming the world. Putting up her hair lay before Jinnie; she felt that it would be the

beginning of the end. She could not imagine how anyone would want to live after they were twenty¹.

Essential to this description is the huge sense of possibility, and the idealised vision of youth. Jinnie and Eliot are on the brink of discovering new worlds, but because of the war will never do so. Also emphasised are the social possibilities of the pair - 'they were full of plans for reforming the world'. Jinnie and Eliot have the abilities to change society, perhaps for the better, but will never accomplish their plans. In a book whose setting is the Welsh mining valleys, and whose secondary focus is the industrial post-war depression, the social facets of the 'lost generation' myth become especially important.

We can also begin to see the influence of the Georgians on this picture. Jinnie's reflection that 'She could not imagine how anyone would want to live after they were twenty' is a particularly 'Georgian', Brooke-style idealisation of youth, recalling the mocking renunciation of old age in 'Grantchester'.

The mountain walk that this passage describes is given central significance in the novel, and made to stand for all the lost days of prewar innocence. For Britain, the same function is served by the summer Speech Day at Uppingham:

The lovely legacy of a vanished world, it is etched with minute precision on the tablets of my memory. Never again, for me and for my generation, was there to be any festival the joy of which no cloud would darken and no remembrance invalidate².

The foreboding in Britain's concluding sentence is also found in Holland's description of Eliot and Jinnie. Later in the chapter, Holland writes:

The war was not going to last long, of course, and then they would be back once more in the old happy life, with a shining future

¹Holland, *The Lost Generation*, p.83

²Brittain, *Testament of Youth*, p.91

before them. They had not realised, and would not realise for a long time, that the morning had fled¹.

The devastation of war, then, is contrasted with the beauty and potential of the prewar paradise - and as in the poems quoted above, for both Britain and Holland that paradise is distinctly Georgian. As Holland describes the relationship of Jinnie with her cousin through childhood, the emotions it inspires recall Brooke's letter of 1910, and his poem 'The Great Lover':

When Eliot was there, the long narrow back garden became magnified, lit up. Jinnie realised that the sun was shining, shadows of trees and clouds were passing over the garden, birds were flying and singing through the air; it was all a happiness, she was glad about it, and wanted to shout.

The whitened trunks of the wall fruit-trees shone out glaringly, and behind them there were all sorts of colours in the stone wall-patches of velvet moss, glistening lines where snails had crawled. The gravel path was made up of tiny many-coloured pebbles where they might find something really precious. The tiled edging to the border was a rampart over which battles were fought by the ants, who hurried and scurried in and out of their underground world. Amazingly large dewdrops sat on the nasturtium leaves, and caterpillars curled up and looked at them ...²

This passage describes the sort of Georgian pleasure in the minutiae of the everyday world (and especially of nature) which Brooke praised so highly in his poetry. It is not the objects themselves that are so magnificent, but the way in which they are regarded which inspires intense delight. Eliot inspires Jinnie and makes it possible for her to see the world in this way. After his death in the war, such a vision no longer seems possible. After the war, Holland describes Jinnie's thoughts:

Jinnie knew that she was holding onto the past, regretting it, feeling that nothing would satisfy her but the return of that old happiness.

¹Holland, *The Lost Generation*, p.94

²Ibid, p.37

It was like trying to get back into an old skin.¹

The literature of the 1920s expresses an intense sense of bereavement and a nostalgia for the destroyed, Georgian, prewar world. Helen Waddell seems to have shared the feeling that 'nothing would satisfy her but the return of that old happiness'. In *The Wandering Scholars* she consciously or unconsciously attempted to assuage its loss by creating goliards who replicate the lost young men of Brittain's or Holland's narratives, and whose world recalls the Georgian poets at every turn, whether by the constant allusion and quotation which is seamlessly woven into the body of the work, or by the many Georgian ideas which become defining concepts in the characters of Waddell's young heroes. As Brittain and Holland are all too well aware in their contemporary narratives, the prewar paradise is lost forever. Waddell, by projecting its essential qualities onto a far older body of literature, and creating a twelfth-century analogue to the 'Lost Generation', was perhaps making another, more unusual attempt to 'get back into an old skin' and to imaginatively revisit the world of 1914.

It is clear that the war years did have a profound impact on Waddell and on her immediate circle. Although it might be suggested that her Irish nationality protected her from the full experience of devastating loss that England, Scotland and Wales experienced (since conscription was never introduced in Ireland), the figures and Waddell's own letters contradict this idea and suggest that many factors in her own particular situation caused her experience of the war to be as painful as either of the two British writers'.

Including expatriate Irish recruited in England, just over 130,000 Irishmen served in the British Army during the war. This represents 12.3% of the eligible

¹Ibid, p.198

population, as opposed to 46.2% in England and Wales.¹ Although this significantly lower proportion reflects the fact that conscription was never introduced in Ireland, it is hardly insubstantial. Many Nationalist Irishmen were, in fact, eager to join up, believing that their commitment to England's cause would be rewarded by the granting of Home Rule, and were to be bitterly disappointed in the post-war years.² Helen Waddell herself, however, came of the group of Irish inhabitants who fought and died in perhaps the greatest numbers, most notably on the Somme - the Ulster Protestants. In 1916 she wrote:

Mother and I went down to the service on the anniversary of the war (so different from last year's. Last year they spoke and prayed as if the war were on the outskirts of their ways. But this year - well, July 1st had come in between - and it was good to hear them.)³

This letter clearly reflects the devastating effect that the Somme offensive had on the population of Ulster. The Ulster Division, Philip Orr notes, were the fourth most heavily hit division of all those taking part - 5,000 men killed or wounded in those two days alone⁴. Orr quotes the reaction of one Ulsterman:

There is hardly a house in Hill Street in which at least one member of the family has not been killed or wounded. It is terrible, terrible hard news to bear with equanimity, for however just and right a cause it may be, the death of so many young men leaves our land that much the poorer.⁵

Proportionately, the casualty rate among Irishmen of all backgrounds who did serve was comparable to the English one, and it might fairly be assumed that it

¹Winter, 'Britain's 'Lost Generation' , p.463

²Cf Waddell's own comment in a letter of 1918: 'Ireland, given a Home Rule Parliament when the electorate of the three kingdoms decreed it, would have given its blood like water.' Quoted in Corrigan, *Helen Waddell*, p.184

³Stanbrook Abbey, CA 52, August 8th 1916. Letter to Dr Taylor.

⁴ Philip Orr, *The Road to The Somme: Men of the Ulster Division tell their Story*(Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1987), p.199.

⁵ Ibid, p.198

was greater amongst the middle and upper classes, Waddell's contemporaries. Winter records that 15.1% of those who served from Trinity College, Dublin were killed, in comparison to 18% at Cambridge or 16.6% at Manchester.¹ From the school which Helen Waddell's brothers attended, Campbell College in Belfast, 610 served, of which 125 were killed - a proportion, if not a number, similar to the large public schools of England. The war memorial at the college is a substantial outdoor sculpture, more imposing than some of the English school war memorials, testifying to an equal attention to the memory of the fallen².

Waddell herself had two elder brothers serving in the war - one in India, and another in Salonika, where she writes that he has 'adopted a baby tortoise that he nearly tramped on'³. Though these brothers returned unscathed, she lost two other, much-loved brothers in the war years - one in an accident at sea⁴, and the second, George, to an unexpected heart attack at 22, just after his ordination as a Presbyterian minister⁵. These years represented loss, grief and anxiety for her, and her letters also reveal how often she was involved with the bereavements of others. One letter describes 'pastoral work' for a bereaved mother in her brother-in-law's congregation:

I have a letter overshadowing me that must be written tonight. It's to the mother of a boy who went down with H.M.S. 'Natal'. Mr. Taylor is an elder in J.D.'s congregation, and his wife is one of those women that you know are the mothers of many children just by looking at them ... Her whole heart was in them, and Nathan was her eldest son.⁶

¹Winter, *The Great War and the British People*, p.92

²Kernot, *British Public Schools War Memorials*, p.267

³Stanbrook Abbey, CA 118, 17th May 1916. Letter to Dr Taylor.

⁴Corrigan, *Helen Waddell*, p.120

⁵Ibid, p.118

⁶Stanbrook Abbey, Jan 4th, 1915. Letter to Dr Taylor.

During the retreat of 1918, we find her consoling the father of her great friend, Maude Clarke, whose two sons were involved in the fighting, and she writes movingly of her mentor Gregory Smith's anguish:

Poor Gregory is in despair. His son - his only son, and the only creature on earth he cares about - goes to Sandhurst for three months, tonight, and after that - Gregory says he knows what. The boy was nominated by the headmaster of Rugby last year, but he was too young, and has spent this year chafing, and drilling, and doing munitions. Now he's off, wild to go, and sure that he'll be in France in three months. And Gregory told Symmers it is the beginning of the end for him.¹

Her distress is reflected in her angry dismissal of Theosophy:

If it is an evolution, what about the people who begin so fair, so near the top, nice boys, with the kingdom of heaven just across the threshold - and end in dust and ashes and disfigurement.²

Always acutely sensitive to other people's suffering as well as her own, Helen Waddell had ample exposure to the bereavement and loss caused by the war. Moreover, she spent the early 1920s in post-war Oxford, one of the institutions most glaringly affected by war casualties, and then in Paris, capital of bereaved France. She must have shared her years at Somerville with Vera Brittain - Waddell went up to Oxford in the autumn of 1920, formally joining Somerville in January of 1921, the year in which Brittain graduated. Like Brittain and the fictional Jinnie Elliott, she was one of the educated, middle-class young women of the '1914 generation' who had to deal with the suffering and death of a vast proportion of their male contemporaries and the shattering of their plans and ideals.

Her letters and writings suggest that the manner in which she thought about this experience partook of the 'lost generation' myth, and she did not forget the war

¹Stanbrook Abbey, CA 127, Oct 24th 1916. Letter to Dr Taylor.

²Stanbrook Abbey, CA 161, Nov 25th, 1917. Letter to Dr Taylor.

after the Armistice. In 1919 she wrote to Taylor:

I wonder are you become like me, that the war is a greater horror now that it is past than when it was with us? It's like remembering a night when you were feverish or sick: and the very sight of your room in the morning is hateful to you.¹

Her memorial to her friend Meta Fleming, who died in 1917, mourned a social as well as a personal loss:

Too much of the glory and honour of the nations, too much of the youth of the world, has gone down to death of late for us to think of it as final any more.²

Much later, her preface to *The Desert Fathers* (1936) seems to have been influenced by the language and imagery of the myth:

Leaving aside the annihilation of a whole generation in four years, not more than a quarter of a century ago ...³

A letter of 1918, in its comments on women's suffrage, expresses the sense of a decisive break, and of the terrible grief which the world was now undergoing:

For power without responsibility is a terrible thing: and on the way these new 'makers of life' will use their power, the new civilisation depends. God send it may be different from that other which is passing, with its power of inflicting pain... They may not have left a world set free, as we count freedom: but if they have left - and I think they have - a grieving world, a world grown tender of heart, the labour and the wounds were not in vain...

... So many of them, mere children, have had their youth saddened by watching other people's pain: and if bearing the yoke in their youth will make them more careful of laying on the yoke afterwards, it may make the world a better place to live in ...⁴

¹Stanbrook Abbey, CA 198, January 5th, 1919. Letter to Dr Taylor.

²Corrigan, *Helen Waddell*, p.139

³Helen Waddell, *The Desert Fathers* (London: Constable, 1936), p.25

⁴Stanbrook Abbey, CA 178, June 16th 1918. Letter to Dr Taylor.

This passage has many of the elements of the 'lost generation' myth - the sense of a fundamental difference in outlook between the older and younger generations, of a shadow cast on the world's youth, and above all, of a society in mourning for its losses.

Helen Waddell, then, seems to have been alive and sensitive to the national sense of bereavement in both England and Ireland, and to the concept of the lost generation. These influences can be traced in *The Wandering Scholars* in three ways. First and most overwhelming is the character in which the goliard poets, the 'wandering scholars' are portrayed. Youth is one of the most persistent elements in the character in which she portrays them. She writes that:

The secret of the scholar's lyric is not in Ovid, but rather in the 'wish' copied at the back of a vocabulary of Guillaume le Breton, 'And I wish that all times were April and May, and every month renew all fruits again, and every day fleurs de lis and gillyflower and violets and roses wherever one goes, and woods in leaf and meadows green, and every lover should have his lass, and they to love each other with a sure heart and true, and to everyone his pleasure and a gay heart.' If that world ever was, it is between the folios of the manuscript of Benedictbeuern ...(*Scholars*, p.201)

The vision of this lovers' spring seems very close in its happiness and innocence to the prewar paradise depicted in the war memoirs. The goliards partake of an idealised vision of youth and innocence, which extends to all around them.

Waddell even writes of those women beloved of the goliards that:

... if their women are its light o'love, there is little trace of it in their verse: they have youth lambent about their heads. Primas himself, scurrilous dog that he is, broke his heart when Flora left him at the time of flowers, though she was all men's stale. (*Scholars*, p.213)

The insistence on prelapsarian youth is sometimes carried through against much of the literary evidence: the Primas, for example, to whom she attributes such emotional sincerity, was the same poet who was to write a worldly-wise and

highly obscene satire on the shortcomings of prostitutes. As with Brooke in his discussion of Dafydd ap Gwilym, Waddell is determined to portray her goliards as young, innocent and sincerely loving, however the evidence may seem to point to the contrary.

Even their humour is given an innocent, undergraduate edge. Waddell's goliards are young, carefree, but fundamentally civilised. 'Even at his wickedest', she writes, 'he is never *louche*: he is only *magnus trutannus et magnus trufator*, like Salimbene's crow' (*Scholars*, p.190). Her picture of the Paris students on Maundy Thursday puts the goliards' antics firmly in the camp of high-spirited undergraduate pranks:

These are the happy spirits who went to Mass at St.Remy on Maundy Thursday in procession, each clerk leading a herring on a string, the object being to step on the herring of the man in front, while guarding your own herring from the assault of the man behind. (*Scholars*, p.150)

These young men, then, are comparable to the war casualties in that they form a social and intellectual élite. She writes in the *Scholars* that 'the *Carmina* are not only the last flowering of the Latin tongue: they are, like the Cavalier lyric, the poetry of an aristocracy of privilege.' (p.208) The sense of a group of young men socially and educationally elevated above their peers seems to invite comparison with the élite who were slaughtered in the war. The heaviest casualties of the 'Lost Generation' were among those young men of the public schools and universities, who, from long acquaintance with the classical curriculum, felt themselves to be as deeply involved with the persons and heroes of Greek and Latin literature as those of their own time. The response of many of those who were sent out to the Dardanelles, the legendary site of the Trojan war, speaks for itself. Patrick Shaw-Stewart's poignant poem suggests how the heroes of

classical legend appeared to have as much reality and relevance as the authors of his present situation:

O hell of ships and cities,
Hell of men like me,
O fatal second Helen,
Why must I follow thee?

Achilles came to Troyland
And I to Chersonese;
He turned from wrath to battle,
And I from three days' peace.

Was it so hard, Achilles,
So very hard to die?
Thou knowest and I know not -
So much the happier am I.

I will go back this morning
From Imbros over the sea;
Stand in the trench, Achilles,
Flame-capped, and shout for me.¹

Shaw-Stewart is writing here out of a sensibility which has been steeped in classical literature until he feels that he can directly compare his own position with the story of Achilles, and quite logically address the legendary hero in conversation and request his support. In the same way, Waddell lays emphasis on the extensive engagement with classical literature and learning of her goliards - indeed the link with the pagan past is one of the central arguments of her book, the famous opening of which is as follows:

There is no beginning, this side the classics, to a history of medieval Latin; its roots take hold too firmly on the kingdoms of the dead. The scholar's lyric of the twelfth century seems as new a miracle as the first crocus; but its earth is the leafdrift of centuries of forgotten scholarship. (*Scholars*, p.ix)

She attributes to them an imaginative engagement with this literature very similar

¹Gardner, *Up The Line to Death*, p.59

to Shaw-Stewart's:

But Dido they took to their hearts, wrote lament after lament for her, cried over her as the young men of the eighteenth century cried over Manon Lescaut. St. Augustine broke his heart for her; and the schoolboy Alcuin, waking at night and watching the devils nip the toes of the other monks in the dormitory, called anxiously to mind that he had scamped the Psalms to read the Aeneid. (*Scholars*, p.xxiii)

At the close of the book, the goliards are represented as the torchbearers of classical learning, carrying forward the flame of their imaginative engagement with Virgil or Ovid through the cultural darkness of medieval Europe:

But these others, who served a ruinous altar and got a scanty living by it: the grammarians of Toulouse sitting up at nights to argue the frequentative of the verb to be: Rahingus of Flavigny filling his scanty leisure with copying Virgil: Froumund of Tegernsee collating manuscripts of Persius with chiblained hands: Primas shivering and mocking in his shabby cloak, writing a lament for Troy with Bacchanalian tears: the Arch-poet coughing his heart out on the Lombard roads; a century of nameless vagabonds; on these the iniquity of oblivion hath blindly scattered her poppy. They kept the imagination of Europe alive: held untouched by their rags and poverty and squalor the Beauty that had made beautiful old rhyme. (*Scholars*, p.220 -1)

Her scholarly elite of young goliards, conserving the imaginative soul of Europe, must surely call to mind that elite of classically educated young men who had fallen in the trenches, and who to many represented the lost cultural potential which the war had destroyed.

It is not too difficult to perceive links between Waddell's goliards and the 'Lost Generation'. However, there seem to be more specific comparisons at work in the *Scholars* - the world and the young men which Waddell evokes are peculiarly Georgian in their character. Guillaume de Breton's vision, quoted above, evokes a blend of youth, love, and spring which is distinctively Georgian. Elsewhere in the book, there is a sense of intense kinship with the natural world which recalls the Georgian poets, and the prewar experience evoked by many

writers of 'lost generation' literature. This passage gives an additional intensity to the association of the goliards with spring:

It is the background of wild earth, of rain-washed April, that gives their earthiest passion its amazing cleanness. ... That, he knows, belongs to the youth of the world, *le beau temps de jadis*, when Venus herself went straying to the fields. But for these, *le beau temps de jadis* is come again, with the memory of a thousand springs in the blood. (*Scholars*, p.204)

Here, as with so much of Brooke's poetry, sexuality is subsumed into a greater, amorphous sensual awareness of the natural world, and becomes part of an intense but general appreciation of beauty. In the same way, Waddell suggests that the goliards' vivid awareness of nature and their pursuit of sexual passion are part of a wider quest for beauty. As with the Neo-Pagan camps, the innocent, youthful and naive implications of 'wild earth' and 'rain-washed April' coexist with an intense, pagan sensuality born of ancient knowledge - 'when Venus herself went straying to the fields', and 'the memory of a thousand springs in the blood'.

Waddell's emphasis on the goliardic need to reconcile a genuine spiritual commitment with the full enjoyment of the sensual world also recalls the Georgian attempts to illuminate the mundane world of physical experience with spiritual striving. In one of her earliest chapters, she writes that the problem addressed in the lyrics:

is no fight with dragons, of ugly lusts conquered by ugly things, but the harder problem for the artist, the strife between Beauty and Beauty, the one destructive of the other. (*Scholars*, p.21-2)

This problem was familiar to most Georgian poets, as we can see in Brooke's letters to his friends - one of Brooke's sonnets is even entitled 'Beauty and Beauty'.

The association with the pagan poets, as I have already suggested, conjures up the classically educated young casualties - but it also evokes, more specifically, the Georgian attraction to paganism as the source of sensual freedom. Waddell was able to write that:

The Latin poetry of the twelfth and thirteenth century scholars is pagan, as Keats is pagan ... Something has unshackled it from gauging the whole of life by measuring right and wrong. It does not defy heaven and hell: it is unaware of them. (*Scholars*, p.116)

This passage evokes Brooke's determination, expressed in his letter to Jacques Raverat, to create his heaven out of temporal sensual experience: a Heaven of 'Laughter and Bodies and Flowers and Love and People and Sun and Wind, in the only place we know or care for, ON EARTH.' We may also remember Brooke's story of the stockbroker who escaped from his City office, driven by the divine madness of Bacchus. For Waddell, too, the pagan deities symbolise an escape from social confines:

But, again like Milton's folk, they escape from the mirk: and the scholars even in broad sunlight see the Dryads slip from the bark of a linden tree of Touraine ... (*Scholars*, p.202)

Here the paganism of the book creates a specifically Georgian atmosphere. As Girouard points out, some memories of the dead would be cast in the language of chivalry, reflecting the guiding ideals of those who had fought¹. Waddell's book, instead, recalls those who had been sent to war by the philosophy of Brooke and the Georgians.

The image of the vagabond is as important to the *Scholars* as that of the pagan, as the book's very title would suggest, and Waddell's depiction of the vagabond is deeply reminiscent of the Georgian attraction to the wandering life, and in

¹ Girouard, *Return to Camelot*, p.292 - 3

particular of Brooke's essay on the 'Vagabond in Literature', discussed in the previous chapter. 'First and last', Waddell writes of goliardic poetry, 'it is the life of the road'. And such vagabondage, as it did for Brooke and his companions, encompasses a spiritual as well as an intellectual freedom. Waddell writes:

Some are born wanderers; some have it thrust upon them; but the word *vagus* denotes often a mental quality, as well as the physical condition. ...(*Scholars*, p.174)

...The *vagus* is born, not made: none shall be accounted fit, say the 'new decretals' of the Ordo Vagorum who is not of an inconstant and jocund mind, a world's wanderer. (*Scholars*, p.179)

This recalls Brooke's evocation of 'the divine madness, the wizardry of unrest'. The characterisation of the vagabond spirits is also often comparable. The Archpoet is delineated thus:

Droll, shameless, spendthrift and importunate, he is inscrutable still. Now and then comes a gleam of the dangerous agate knife-edge of genius, a gesture of the singing robes about him, and for a moment he stands head and shoulders above the great Chancellor. (*Scholars*, p.154)

This image of the ragged genius recalls Brooke's summing up of Villon as 'Student, Housebreaker and Poet' and as 'a thorough rogue, and one of the greatest poets France ever bore.' As I suggested in Chapter 3, Brooke's characterisation of the rogue Dafydd ap Gwilym, who yet loved twice 'with a great and sincere passion' seems very close to Waddell's Primas, who, villain as he was, 'broke his heart' for Flora. The Wandering Scholars, then, might well have evoked for many the Wandering Georgians, whose spiritual vagrancy had been so brutally interrupted.

The character in which Waddell paints the goliards, then, evokes both the entire 'lost generation' of young men, and, specifically, the band of Georgians led by Rupert Brooke. For the proposition that she had the Georgian poets in mind

when writing, however, there is the additional evidence of literary allusion. The book is full of specific verbal echoes of their poetry, often at the most significant points. For example, the closing words of the book, 'O no man knows/ Through what wild centuries/ Roves back the rose' are a direct quotation from Walter de la Mare. The honour of being the ultimate development of goliardic rhythm is accorded to Housman's *Shropshire Lad*:

... that as early as the twelfth century the loveliest of all rhythms was shaping itself in three languages to its last and absolute perfection:

By brooks too broad for leaping
The light foot boys are laid,
The rose-lipt girls are sleeping
In fields where roses fade. (*Scholars*, p.214)

Writing of Abelard and Heloise, a subject always particularly dear to her heart, Waddell writes that some anonymous lyrics may have caught the 'shattering ecstasy of their fire', surely an oblique allusion to Brooke's poem 'Dust'. As in the poem, the passage in the *Scholars* refers to the passion of two lovers enduring as a kind of abstract force to influence and inspire others after their death. That Waddell was indeed thinking of this line is strongly supported by the evidence of a letter to Dr Taylor, in which she quotes approvingly George Saintsbury's comments on Brooke:

"How young poor Brooke was! He wrote one splendid line quite early – 'the shattering ecstasy of our fire'. That is very nearly right ..."¹

Significantly, none of these quotations is acknowledged, let alone footnoted. Rather, they form part of the imaginative background of the book, and create a diffuse atmosphere which evokes the Georgians at every turn. To quote the

¹Stanbrook Abbey, CA 120, Sept 12th, 1916. Letter to Dr Taylor.

Georgian poets was not simply an intellectual habit of Waddell's, fond as she was of tags, stray lines of poetry, and wide-ranging allusions. In the preface to *The Desert Fathers*, for example, although the allusions range over Keats, Gibbon and Shakespeare, there is no more than a single reference to Housman's poetry. The heavy presence of the Georgians in the allusive fabric of *The Wandering Scholars* seems to suggest a definite connection, whether deliberately drawn or not, between goliards and Georgians. At the very least, Helen Waddell found that many quotations from Georgian poetry served her well as a means of expressing her thoughts about their twelfth-century predecessors.

The constant allusion to the Georgians is reinforced by the style of Waddell's translations. Some of these appear within the text of the *Scholars*, but many of the more complete ones appeared in the companion volume, *Medieval Latin Lyrics*. Waddell's translations seem to nudge the style of the Latin originals into a more recognisably Georgian language and style. One of the most extended examples of this is in her translation of the famous lyric, 'Dum Dianae vitrea'. This appeared within the text of *Scholars*, and was then reprinted in *Medieval Latin Lyrics*. The shift of subject in the passage beginning 'dulcis aura zephyri' is interesting in its effect. The passage is given below, with literal translation:

dulcis aura zephyri
spirans omnes etheri
nubes tollit;
sic emollit
vis chordarum pectora,
et immutat
cor quod nutat
ad amoris pignora. (62)

[The sweet air of the west wind, wandering over all the heaven, takes away the clouds; thus it softens the power of the heartstrings, and changes the heart which falters to the assurance of love.]

In the original Latin, then, it is the west wind itself which is the subject of the sentence, and it is the wind itself which softens hearts and emotions. Waddell's translation, however, significantly alters this syntax, as follows:

Little straying west winds
Wander over heaven,
Moonlight falleth,
And recalleth
With a sound of lute-strings shaken,
Hearts that have denied his reign
To love again. (*Lyrics*, p.148 - 50)

Here, the west wind has been removed from its position as subject and, instead, it is moonlight that 'falleth/ And recalleth' hearts to love. The 'little straying west winds' have been demoted to a piece of pastoral scene-setting, and the image of moonlight has been introduced. In 'The Georgian Poetic', Myron Simon identified moonlight as a classic staple image of Georgian poetry, pointing especially to poems like Squire's 'The Lily of Malud'. It becomes particularly inescapable, he suggests, in the poetry of the later Georgian anthologies¹. Even when considering earlier poems the eerie moonlight in 'The Listeners' springs instantly to mind. The whole stanza, therefore, has been subtly shifted into a Georgian pastoral mode. Further on in her translation, Waddell demonstrates her tendency to subsume the sexual into the general love of Beauty - which is, as I have already suggested, a defining Georgian trait. The Latin and literal translation of this passage run:

suave est quiescere,
suavius ludere
in gramine
cum virgine
speciosa. (62)

¹ Simon, *The Georgian Poetic*, p.86

[It is sweet to rest, but it is sweeter to play on the grass with a beautiful maiden.]

Waddell's translation of these lines is:

Most sweet to lie at ease,
Sweeter to take delight
Of beauty and the night
On the fresh springing grass.

Where the Latin is unambiguous about the activity in question, Waddell has expanded the image of making love so that it encompasses an intense awareness of the night, the grass, and a vivid sensual awareness of all beauty. As in Brooke's poetry, sexual love has become an integral part of an all-encompassing sensual experience springing from an overwhelming response to physical beauty. The atmosphere of youth and innocence has been reinforced by the fact that the translation removes the specific allusion to lovemaking, evoking the 'amazing cleanness' that Waddell finds in the *Carmina Burana* and that was a distinctive and paradoxical element of the Neo-Pagans' activities.

This tendency in the translation is strengthened by Waddell's often unacknowledged cuts in the original poems. In 'Estas in exilium', she omits the final stanza and slightly alters her translation of the second, so that the poem concludes thus:

eia, si me sanare
uno vellet osculo,
que cor felici iaculo
gaudet vulnerare! (69)

[Ah, if she would consent to heal me with one kiss, with what a fortunate weapon my heart would rejoice to be wounded]

Waddell's translation:

I suffer, yea, I die,
Yet this mine agony
I count all bliss,
Since death is life again
Upon her lips! (*Lyrics*, p.272)

The translation of this stanza removes the specific reference to the 'one kiss', and heightens the effect which it would have on the lover - he would not merely be glad to be wounded, but he would be restored from death to life by it. Waddell has then omitted the final stanza, which gives a very different tone to her translation. The opening part of this stanza runs:

Lasciva, blandi risus,
omnes in se trahit visus,
labia
Veneria
tumentia
- sed castigate - dant errorem
leniorem
dum dulcorem
instillant, favum mellis, osculando,
ut me mortalem negem aliquando (69)

[Wanton, charming laughter, which attracts all glances to itself, lips of Venus, full – but slender – inspire gentle sinfulness, while they instill sweetness, so that, being kissed, a honeycomb of honey, I may deny that I was ever mortal.]

Moving from the vision of the bare woods to this precise evocation of the beloved's lips, the sexuality of the poem is intensified. By omitting it, Waddell retains a much closer link between the desolation of the woods and the despair of the lover, and by her heightening of the second stanza she makes the response to the dead woods and the passionate need to be saved by his beloved part of an intense craving for all beauty, not just for the love of a specific person. The cuts are not necessarily the result of prudery or the desire to see her subjects in a moral light: Waddell admits of the goliardic lyric that 'there is no disguising that its end is possession', and does not shrink from translating the lyric 'Sic mea fata

canendo solor'. Indeed, she has chosen to add a third stanza, found in other manuscripts but not in the *Carmina Burana*, , which reads:

Ubera cum animadverterem
optavi manus, ut involverem,
simplicibus mammis ut alluderem
sic cogitando sensi Venerem,
sedit in ore
rosa cum pudore,
pulsatus amore
quod os lamberem
hei lamberem, hei lamberem, hei lamberem,
luxuriando per characterem.

Waddell's translation is:

Innocent breasts, when I have looked upon them,
Would that my hands were there,
How have I craved, and dreaming thus upon them,
Love wakened from despair.
Beauty on her lips flaming,
Rose red with her shaming,
And I with passion burning
And with my whole heart yearning
For her mouth, her mouth, her mouth,
That on her beauty I might slake my drouth. (*Lyrics*, p.268)

Waddell has not shied away from the passionate sexuality of this passage (although it was open to her to choose a different variant of the poem), but she has expressed it, again, as part of a greater, more abstract awareness of physical beauty. This shows perhaps most clearly in her choice of translation for 'sic cogitando sensi Venerem'. Literally translated as 'thus the sense of Venus is awakened', the phrase hovers between pagan worship and sexual arousal. Waddell has moved towards the first, taking the abstraction of 'Love wakened from despair'. Again, her translation of 'sedit in ore/ rosa cum pudore', as 'Beauty on her lips flaming' makes the beloved an incarnation of all beauty, by its use of the capital and the abstraction - a common treatment of sexual passion in Brooke's love poems. Sexuality, in Waddell's translations, must be part of a

Georgian response to a higher, more abstract notion of beauty, and in the cases when she cannot immediately achieve this with the full text, her subtle cuts in the lyrics sometimes bring about the desired effect.

The choice of lyrics, too, must give the selection in *Medieval Latin Lyrics* a particular flavour. Waddell's selection generally encompasses those poems which reflect Georgian style in their language and philosophy. She chooses the poems of youth and love, but on the whole rejects the less complex ones which appear to owe a greater debt to vernacular folk song. Her image of a social and intellectual elite requires the more complex lyrics to form the basis of her selection. Moreover, those few lyrics which, in her words, reflect 'the speech of the braggart or the libertine', are omitted. There is no place, for example, for the lyric describing a near-rape ('Grates ago Veneri'). Perhaps more surprisingly, the satirical poetry is under-represented, as are the longer poems - a matter which may be due to their length alone, or may reflect an unwillingness to endow her young and innocent heroes with too much worldly cynicism.

The archetypal goliard of the *Scholars*, then, emerges as a young, scholarly, mentally and physically vagabond poet - an image which can easily be related to the 'lost generation' and to Brooke and the Georgians. Whether Waddell was aware of the comparison must remain an unanswerable question, but one factor which strongly suggests that she was is the poignant note of remembrance which pervades the book, and contrasts with her earlier work. The closing epigraph of *Lyrics from the Chinese* reads:

Their memory is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished.¹

¹Helen Waddell, *Lyrics from the Chinese* (London: Constable, 1913), p.41

The lyrics remain, but the poets, their lives and personalities, are consigned without distress to the oblivion of a remote past. In the *Wandering Scholars*, on the other hand, the closing lines are an exhortation to venerate the memory of these long-dead poets:

... there remains the stark simplicity of Terence - 'In truth they have deserved to be remembered of us.'*(Scholars, p.221)*

This quotation is particularly moving once the reader is aware of Helen Waddell's letter after her young brother George's death:

And if I miss him - well, there's a line in Terence that haunted me long after I read it - 'In truth, he hath deserved to be remembered of you'¹

There are snippets in Waddell's letters which suggest the possibility that she may have had the memory of her brother in mind as she wrote, and perhaps have appealed without knowing it to the remembrance of many other dead brothers. Describing his photograph, two months after his death, she writes '...there is such a promise of summer about him'², and there is a brief hint of her goliards when she writes 'sometimes I am glad that this very gay grasshopper never saw the winter, and never needed to go to the Ant ...'³.

This sense of the transience of carefree youth is constantly present in the *Scholars*. She writes of 'Surianus' [see Chapter 1] that:

Surian, parodist of Eberhard II, Archbishop of Salzburg, knew the brevity of that summer day, the swallow's restlessness ...*(Scholars, p.191)*

and her description of the Archpoet's death, which she imagines as an early one,

¹Stanbrook Abbey, CA 103, June 23rd, 1915. Letter to Dr Taylor.

²Corrigan, *Helen Waddell*, p.119

³Stanbrook Abbey, CA 125, undated. Letter to Dr Taylor.

is equally poignant:

Reginald von Dassel died on that plague-stricken plain, and the news cast its shadow even in Paris ... So too Eberhard, Bishop of Spire: there is no room for a vagabond poet among such great ones. Better to go from St. Martin's cloister, St. Martin who was notoriously kind to vagabonds, to find again the country of the laughing, and this time to come no more out. (*Scholars*, p.158)

Her choice of the quatrain from Housman as the 'perfection' of goliardic rhythm, with its grief for lost lads and girls, is indicative of the mood of the whole book.

At the end of the passage in which she defines the spirit of goliardic poetry, there is another call to remembrance, another sense that, unlike the Chinese lyricists, the goliard poets have made their personalities and their world immortal through their lyrics:

... and if too many of the writers had forgotten Hildebert's warning, have

'Lost the eternal April for the sake of a passing spring,'

they have left another April, eternal in another fashion, between its stained and wrinkled pages. (*Scholars*, p.201)

These exhortations to remembrance, and the poignant sense of the brevity of the goliards' young lives, suggest that the goliards, through their lyrics, have left us an eternal reminder of their world. To those mourning the young men of the Lost Generation, the *Scholars* must also have provided a way of remembering the young men whose youth and innocence had also been tragically short. The 'eternal April' of the book serves as an elegy for their loss, and for all those who read it in the 1920s and early 30s, it perhaps provided a glimpse of the world they were all desperately longing to recapture - the Georgian paradise of the prewar years.

CHAPTER 5

ON THE VILLAGE GREEN

1. After the *Wandering Scholars*: English interpretations

So far, this thesis has described the growth of a cultural phenomenon - the creation of the 'Georgian' self-image, its dissemination among the young men of the early twentieth century and the destruction of most of its idealistic exponents in the First World War. The preceding chapter discussed Helen Waddell's reinvention of the goliards as a nostalgic image of the slaughtered Georgians. But what became of goliardic poetry and its authors after Waddell's book ceased to be a best seller, and once the collective mourning for the war dead had begun to fade?

In English culture, the *Scholars* represents the peak of cultural interest in the goliards. There has never again been a treatment of them, either in translation or criticism, which has displayed the literary talent, or achieved the disproportionate popular success, of Waddell's book. The *Scholars* had what might be described as two later 'spin-offs' - the companion volume of translations, *Medieval Latin Lyrics*, and the novel *Peter Abelard*, which utilised many of the themes and images which had made the *Scholars* such a success, and featured the goliardic lyrics which Waddell had translated. Both, unsurprisingly, soared to the top of the bestseller lists¹. No other author, however, was able to replicate Waddell's popular acclaim in the years which followed, and indeed, the *Scholars* and *Peter Abelard* are now as likely to produce confusion as admiration among modern readers.

¹ Corrigan, *Helen Waddell*, p. 269

After the *Scholars* and *Peter Abelard* had gone through their seventh or eighth reprint, popular interest in the goliards reverted to the state in which it had been before the publication of Symonds' book. That is to say, the goliards never disappear entirely as an object of scholarly study, and even attract the occasional attempt at literary translation aimed at a wider audience, but the range of readers which such translations attract is predictably narrow and well-defined. Goliardic poetry, and its authors, have returned to their customary position in the far background of English literary culture. It is interesting, however, to take brief note of the changing character of those translations which do appear, and the way in which the 'Georgian' gloss which Helen Waddell placed on her translations is gradually eroded in favour of a determinedly unromantic and fundamentally rather unappealing and uninteresting image of the goliards. It is rather as if later reactions against Waddell's undoubted romanticisation of the goliard poets have resulted in an inability among translators to appreciate the intellectual and emotional subtlety that is an important part of so many of the lyrics.

The collections of translated lyrics that have appeared in the last thirty years demonstrate a marked tendency toward colloquial and unvarnished language, and an inclination to point up the boisterous simplicity of the lyrics rather than the subtlety of concept and allusion. It is possible to demonstrate something of a progression from the earliest collections after Waddell's to the most modern. G.F. Whicher's *The Goliard Poets*, published in 1949, appears to participate to some degree in the Georgianism of the *Scholars*. However, the move away from Waddell's cultured goliards is already evident when he writes in his introduction:

The best and most characteristic Goliardic poems are those dedicated to waywardness, either a simple sensuous delight in spring and the satisfaction of love, or an almost frenetic ecstasy in the joys of the tavern . . . The paganism of Horace bears the burden of pagan

melancholy, the *carpe diem* note, from which most Goliardic writing is exempt.¹

The goliards are already undergoing a process of demotion: from the 'aristocracy of privilege' whom Waddell portrayed in the *Scholars* as the guardians of the flame of paganism and of classical learning, they are becoming a band of jolly vagabonds whose sole aim in life is the achievement of 'simple sensuous delight'. As the variety of poetry discussed in Chapter 1 may demonstrate, it would be possible to support either of these contentions by an appeal to different parts of the literary evidence. But in the overall assessment of the goliards and their poetry, the balance is swinging away from the first interpretation and towards the second.

Nevertheless, Whicher's translations still partake of some of the same level of subtlety as Waddell's, even if they lack their literary genius. They attempt to convey the genuine paganism of the originals, and some of their subtlety. They do, however, demonstrate the emerging trend on occasion in their attempts to convey the 'simple sensuous delight' of the Latin by the use of rather jarring modern colloquialisms, and by a failure to encompass the complexity of the imagery. Whicher's version of 'Stetit puella' displays this tendency. A full Latin original and literal translation of this lyric is given in Chapter 1 (page 78 - 9).

Whicher's translation is as follows:

There stood a girl, in red she was gowned,
Her dress if you touched it made a
Swishing sound.
Eia!

Like a little rose-tree there she stood
Her cheeks blown roses
And her mouth a bud.

¹ G F Whicher, *The Goliard Poets* (Norfolk, Connecticut: New Directions, 1949), p. 6

Eia! ¹

Whicher has here, at least, managed to retain some of the sense of mystery attached to the girl in red by the Latin author. While his translation of 'os . . . floruit', does not quite convey the startling idea of the 'blossoming', or 'flowering' mouth suggested in the Latin, it does refer back to the 'rosula' of the first line, so that the Marian allusions are maintained.

Although some sense of mystery is retained, at the same time the translation's simple, almost colloquial language, and deliberate alteration of more complex imagery, detracts from the layers of subtlety present in the original. The shining face has become simply a physical attribute of rosy cheeks, while the translation of 'rosula' (little rose) as 'rose-tree', reduces the associations of the description with the Marian imagery of *rosa mundi* and instead creates a rather rustic association with a floral, pastoral world. Whicher's tendency toward the colloquial is further suggested in his translation of the final lines of 'In taberna quando sumus': 'Qui nos rodunt, confundantur/ Et cum iustis non scribantur!'. He gives the translation:

They sponge on us? We treat? Not much!
Good fellows, listen! *This is Dutch.*²

The Latin original offers a distinctive, and deliberately blasphemous, allusion to Christian salvation - those who call down the drinkers will be struck out of the roll of the just. In place of this subtlety, Whicher has substituted a rollicking, slangy reference to paying for the drinks. As we saw in Chapter 1, poems like 'In taberna' offer both a simple celebration of tavern pleasures, and on a more sophisticated level, suggest a more inclusive, humane alternative to medieval

¹ G F Whicher, *The Goliard Poets*, p.220.

² *Ibid*, p.229

Christianity. Whicher has begun to eschew the more sophisticated layers of meaning in favour of a superficial, boisterous jollity, and to move away from Helen Waddell's learned, neo-pagan and Georgian image of the wandering scholars and towards a rather less interesting picture of a band of loose-living buffoons.

Edwin Zeydel's collection of 1966 reinforces this trend. It indicates even by its title the character of its translations: *Vagabond Verse*¹. Both in the volume's choice of lyrics, and in the style of their translation, the book emphasises 'jolly fun' at the expense of subtler emotions. The development of the tendency described above can be demonstrated by comparing Zeydel's and Whicher's translations of the same poem. Here, then, is Zeydel's version of the first two stanzas of 'Stetit puella':

There stood a maid
In a tunic red
Whenever you touched the girl
The tunic gave a swirl

A maid I could see
Like a rose was she
With a countenance rare
And lips so red and fair²

The overall effect of this translation is to reduce the mysterious, almost mystical implications of the poem, and to bring it down to the level of an everyday encounter. The use of the deliberately rustic 'maid' to translate 'puella' contributes to this effect, as does the rather dogged attempt to preserve the rhyme scheme at all costs. The second stanza reduces many of the religious or Marian

¹ E Zeydel, *Vagabond Verse* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1966)

² Ibid, p.165

associations of the poem: although 'tamquam rosula' is preserved with its comparison to the mystic *rosa mundi*, the closing two lines are severely watered down. 'Facie splenduit', 'her face shone' becomes simply a 'countenance rare'. The almost supernatural image of the shining face has become simply the features of a pretty girl, while 'os eius floruit', 'her mouth blossomed', which should refer back to the image of the rose, is simply 'lips so red and fair'. Thus a lyric which, as we have seen, combines mystical and possibly Marian imagery with the paganism of the final stanza, has been transmuted into a simple rhyme about a pastoral encounter with a pretty maiden. This tendency to rusticise these rather intellectual lyrics through the use of deliberately over-colloquial language is also evident in Zeydel's translation of 'Si puella cum puellula'. This lyric begins in a deliberately formal style which rather gives the impression of a mock-scientific investigation:

Si puer cum puellula
Moraretur in cellula-
Felix coniunctio!

[If a youth should happen to meet with a young girl in a small room – a happy encounter!]

Zeydel's translation, entitled *A Sport with Endless Charms*, opens

If Meg should chance to meet with Harry
In any room where both can tarry¹

The use of 'Meg' and 'Harry' conjures up a world of Shakespearean rustics, rather than the cleverness of the original, just as the addition of the title means that the elaborate and sophisticated reference, later in the poem, to 'amore succrescente' becomes a more boisterous sport. The humour of the Latin poem lies in the fact that elaborate, scholarly Latin is being used to describe the

¹ Zeydel, *Vagabond Verse*, p.163

operation of a universal and extremely unscholarly attraction, whereas Zeydel's translation has obliterated this layer of irony in order to make the poem into a simple rhyme celebrating such widespread emotion. It should also be evident even from the short extracts quoted that Zeydel's translations are far from possessing the literary polish of Waddell's. Waddell's translations, it must be admitted, have a tendency to improve on the literary quality of the goliardic lyrics, introducing new subtlety of meaning and emotion: Zeydel's, by contrast, diminish the poems.

The most recent translations of the goliardic poems are those by E.D. Blodgett and Roy Swanson (1987)¹ and Fleur Adcock's collection, *The Virgin and the Nightingale*, published in 1983². Blodgett and Swanson approach the text with an academic eye. Their text belongs to the Garland Library of Medieval Literature, whose stated aim is 'to make available to the general reader modern translations of texts in editions that conform to the highest academic standards.' Although their work reflects the tendency described above, their primary intention has been to provide a literal working translation of the love poems in the *Carmina Burana*. While they have certainly achieved this aim, their enterprise has clearly been an academic, rather than a literary one.

Adcock's book, though also informed by high academic standards, is the more interesting in that it represents the only real attempt since 1927 by a professional writer (rather than an academic) to present literary translations of the goliards to the general public. However, *The Virgin and the Nightingale* hardly represents a possible successor to *The Wandering Scholars*, and in general reflects the much

¹ E.D. Blodgett and R.A. Swanson, *The Love Songs of the Carmina Burana* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1987).

² Fleur Adcock, *The Virgin and the Nightingale* (Newcastle: Bloodaxe Books, 1983)

reduced public profile of the goliards and the general desire to debunk the romanticised image which proved so popular with Waddell's readers.

Although not comparable with the occasionally heightened versions of Helen Waddell, Adcock's translations reflect a considerably greater degree of sophistication than many of the modern versions discussed above. It is in the poems which she chooses to form a representative selection that the anti-romanticism of her attitude to the goliards becomes fully apparent. The slight nature of that selection is in itself one of the book's drawbacks: while Symonds and Waddell translated fifty or sixty lyrics, in addition to critical material, Adcock's selection contains only twenty-two, with very minimal critical notes. The small selection of poems stands on its own, therefore, without the highly coloured vision of the goliardic lifestyle which was of such vital importance to *Wine, Women and Song* or to the *Scholars* and its companion volume.

The poems fall into three sections, entitled 'Birds', 'Songs by Peter of Blois' (mostly love-songs), and 'Anonymous Love-Songs'. Already, therefore, the goliards are restricted to two rather simplistic categories, while the sharp division between nature ('Birds') and love-songs belies the often very complex connections between human love and the natural world which were discussed in Chapter 1. It is the selection of the love-songs, in both sections, however, which creates a picture of the goliards fully consistent with modern trends. It follows the tendency of translators such as Whicher to simplify the portrayal of sex in goliardic literature, seeing it as forthright and basic at best, predatory and distasteful at worst. Adcock's selection seems markedly skewed towards this image and away from the romance of the *Wandering Scholars*. For example, two or three of the poems she chooses suggest a sexual interest in very young girls,

while another poem, 'Grates ago Veneri' is admitted by Adcock herself to come 'suspiciously close to rape'.¹ Out of the thirteen love-poems in the book, such a proportion creates a noticeably skewed image of the goliards.

There are certainly a number of goliardic poems that would support the modern notion of their authors as amoral sexual predators. However, an equal, probably greater number, would justify the gentler vision of *The Wandering Scholars*. Given the diversity of the *Carmina Burana*'s contents, the choice is as much a question of fashion as of anything else. It is perhaps unsurprising that Adcock's selection, which follows the modern trend of emphasising the 'physical and moral insufficiency' of the goliard poets, and diminishing or ignoring the intellectual and moral complexities of their work, has attracted less interest than the certainly romantic, but far more appealing vision of Helen Waddell.

The English literary history of the goliards, then, has been unremarkable since *The Wandering Scholars*. The modern trend has been to demote the goliards from the romanticised pedestal of *The Wandering Scholars*, and this has provoked less, rather than more interest in their poetry. The cultural 're-invention' of the goliards has not persisted (unlike the Victorian image of the 'Vikings', which still has an important place in modern culture). It was a short-term phenomenon driven by particular social and cultural factors, which did not prove to be sustainable.

Such is the English history of goliardic poetry. However, it would be impossible to write a complete history of their interpretation without giving some attention to what is perhaps the most widely known artistic work of all based on them - Carl Orff's choral cantata *Carmina Burana*, which was first performed in June

¹ Adcock, *The Virgin and the Nightingale*, p.94

1937¹. I set out some reasons for not giving a full treatment of Orff's work in the Introduction to this thesis, the major one being the widely different cultural background from which it emerged. However, since the continuing popularity of Orff's work has been one of the major contributing factors to the enduring popular profile of the goliards, even though at a very low level, the cantata merits, at the very least, the rather cursory treatment which I am able to give it.

2. Carl Orff and *Carmina Burana*

In many ways, Orff's interpretation of the goliards bears little resemblance to the cultural phenomenon which has been under discussion in this thesis. Whether it can be linked to German society's reaction to the same course of events, in particular the First World War, is an intriguing question which may well be better answered by scholars of German music and history.

Orff differs substantially from the writers who have been considered in this thesis in that he was neither a medievalist, like Helen Waddell, nor a scholar, like John Addington Symonds. His interest in the goliards was as a practising musician and composer, and his attraction to the lyrics of the *Carmina Burana* manuscript was driven as much by the musical and emotional potential of the lyrics as by any scholarly appreciation of their context. His inspiration was a copy of the original Schmeller edition of 1847, so that he bypassed the mediating

¹ Andreas Liess, *Carl Orff* (translated by Adelheid and Herbert Parkin), Calder and Boyars: London, 1966, p.27

interpretations of Symonds or Waddell¹. Although the trilogy was not completed for many years, Orff always meant to make *Carmina Burana* one of three linked pieces, in which it would be the only one with a medieval libretto. *Carmina Burana* was the first to be written: *Catulli Carmina*(1943)², a series of settings of the poems of Catullus, and *Trionfo di Afrodite*(1950)³, setting poems by both Sappho and Catullus, followed. In 1953 the three cantatas were first performed as a trilogy, *Trionfi*, in Milan. The entire trilogy was designed to provide a reflection, as one of Orff's critics puts it, on:

‘a new, elemental experience and understanding of the divine and worldly powers of love, in different places, times, and stages.’⁴

Taken as part of *Trionfi*, then, it becomes apparent that Orff's interest in the goliards sprang not from the scholarly knowledge of their world that we see in Waddell or Symonds, nor from an attraction to their world and their medieval context. Rather, his consideration of them alongside classical texts reflects his view of them as an incarnation of unchanging, universal emotions. Inevitably, this leads to a rather different image of the goliards from that offered in the English texts.

Orff was continually concerned to make his music, and the emotions which it evoked, as primitive as possible. Liess writes that ‘The sounds of primitive magic ring through the texture of all Orff's music’⁵. This characteristic is reflected in the extreme simplicity of the music of *Carmina Burana*. Like many of Orff's other works, it is based on rhythm rather than melody. The voices are mainly in unison or in the most simple harmony, hardly ever becoming

¹ Ibid, p.83

² Ibid, p.98

³ Ibid,p.125

⁴ Wolfgang Schadewaldt, quoted in Liess, *Carl Orff*, p.127

⁵ Liess, *Carl Orff*, p.37

contrapuntal. Thus rather than relying on complexity of harmony or orchestration, the work concentrates on creating a strong percussive rhythm. This bias can be perceived in the scoring. In addition to the usual strings, woodwind and brass, and two pianos, *Carmina Burana* is scored for 3 glockenspiels, xylophone, castanets, bells, tubular bells, bass drum, gong, 5 timpani, triangle, and various kinds of cymbals¹. Such an oversized percussion section is required to delineate the powerful rhythms which give the piece its character. In the very opening chorus, 'O Fortuna' for example, the orchestra is simply playing chords which follow the vocal line, reinforced with gigantic cymbal crashes. The whole conveys distinctly more primitive emotions than we would find in Waddell, or even Symonds.

The semi-staged character of Orff's cantata also reduces its emotional complexity. The music is now almost always performed as a concert piece, which in fact detracts from its original design. Orff was fascinated by the connections between music, speech and drama, and *Carmina Burana* was designed as a deliberate 'interdisciplinary' performance piece, in which the choir's singing, which is designed to be as close to rhythmic speech as possible, is accompanied by staged mime with performers in costume and scenery². The piece is in fact more like a mini-opera than a concert cantata, as photographs of the original production make clear³. The connections between music, speech, and dramatic performance are illuminated in Orff's given subtitle for the piece:

Cantiones profanae cantoribus et choris cantandae comitantibus
instrumentis atque imaginibus magicis

[Profane songs with singers and choirs singing, accompanied by instruments and magical images]

¹ Carl Orff, *Carmina Burana: Cantiones profanae* (London: Schott & Co, 1937)

² Ibid, p.64-5

³ Ibid, p.80

Instrumental music, song, drama, dance and tableaux then, are all to play vital roles in Orff's creation. Rather than being simply a musical interpretation, it is a dramatic event which partakes of many different art forms. Inevitably, allowing for dramatic, often comic performance, while it may not necessarily be less true to the originals, diminishes the intellectual subtlety of the pieces and transforms the goliards into far less romantically attractive figures than the heroes of the *Scholars*. Through song and mime, the pieces are reduced to their simpler elements. 'Estuans interius', for example (the setting of the Archpoet's 'Confessio') is set as a semi-spoken recitative. Chanted over an accompaniment of dotted rhythms from the strings, it becomes a fast-moving, jaunty piece which contrasts strongly with Helen Waddell's interpretation of it as '... the first cry from the House of the Potter "Why hast thou made me thus?"'. The two interpretations of the poem place it in radically different settings. Waddell, following the internal evidence of the poem, interprets it as a self-justification by the Archpoet in his patron's presence, having been arraigned for his misbehaviour. Orff, on the other hand, uses it to open the section of the tavern scenes, 'In Taberna'. Omitting most of the second part of the poem, it is now the self-revelation of an old reprobate. It is followed by the patently ridiculous setting of the roasted swan's lament ('Olim lacus colueram', CB 130), set for strangled tenor, and by the comic recitative-setting of 'Ego sum abbas Cucaniensis' (CB 222). In Waddell's goliardic universe, the poem is a bravura intellectual performance by a poet on trial for his livelihood - the Archpoet is desperately using all his powers of wit, versification, knowledge of theological subtleties and both Biblical and classical allusion, to regain his place with his

noble patron. In Orff's vision, it is a table-top declaration of depravity set in an atmosphere of drunkenness and buffoonery.

Orff's cantata is often, indeed, more in tune with the grotesque humour of the Feast of Fools than with the intellectual cultivation of the *Wandering Scholars*.

The setting of 'Estuans interius', for example, is marked by glissandos at the end of each phrase, giving a wavering, drunken, comic effect. The most comic piece in the whole cantata, perhaps, is the lament of the swan, which is set for such a high tenor that it must be sung falsetto and in a forced, strangled tone of voice. The whole is marked *lamentoso (sempre ironico)*, and is followed by the recitative 'Ego sum abbas', in which the direction given is *libero e improvisando, gesticolando e beffardo assai*. The performer of this piece is thus given full licence for as much buffoonery and slapstick as he can pack in. The choir of men accompanies with rhythmic cheers and shouts.

Likewise, in the setting of 'Veni, veni, venias'(CB 174), where Helen Waddell, considering the refrain 'hyrca, hyrca, nazaza, nazaza, trillilivos!', wrote in pastoral mood that 'the nightingale needs no interpreter', Orff sets it as a kind of football chant. A double choir is used at this point, and while one choir, accompanied by percussive chords on the piano, sings the words of the lyric, the second interjects with the refrain, and then interrupts the melody of the second stanza with rhythmic shouts of 'nazaza!', sung *forte* and *staccato*. The general effect suggests that they are cheering the first choir on in their raucous praise of the beloved's beauty - anything less like a nightingale would be hard to imagine.

'Tempus est iocundum' (CB 179) provides another case in which the romantic content of the lyric is overtaken by the rowdiness of its setting. Frenetic rhythmic

singing of the verses is followed by a rich, beery *rallentando* in the refrain, leading on to frantic acceleration on the repeated notes of 'quo pereo'.

Perhaps the lyric which produces the greatest contrast in interpretation is the German 'Uvere diu werlt alle min'(CB 145), a declaration that the writer would give up the world for the Queen of England (possibly Eleanor of Aquitaine). Waddell suggests that the lyric must have been written by a German student, catching a single glimpse of Eleanor, and 'perhaps as surely her slave as Bertrand de Born'¹. The picture is quintessentially Georgian: it is dreamy, romantic and passionate, based on a romanticised image of one of the most alluring heroines of the Middle Ages, who is seen as an overwhelmingly seductive female personification of love. By contrast, Orff opens his setting of it with a cheerful *fortissimo* fanfare of trumpets, and continues with the choir singing in unison with brass accompaniment and rising to a triumphant *rallentando* on the crucial words 'an minen armen'. The number winds up with further trumpet fanfares, and a raucous shout of 'Hei!' from the whole choir. The general effect is not of *amour de loin* but of *lésè-majèste*.

Orff's goliardic world, then, is rowdy, humorous, and primitive, while Waddell's is gentle, sophisticated and aristocratic. Even more influential, perhaps, on the character of *Carmina Burana* is the 'rustic' flavour provided by Orff's disproportionate choice of the German or macaronic lyrics. Five vernacular or macaronic lyrics form a coherent section of the piece, making up a fifth of the twenty-five numbers. Moreover, this section is given a distinctly rustic character, being titled 'Uf dem Anger' (On the Village Green). By his introduction of this section, Orff is giving much more credence than Waddell to the image of the

¹ Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars*, p.216

goliards as unscrupulous clerks, probably of the less aristocratic classes, who spent their time enjoying simple songs and dances with the local village maidens. This is a part of the goliardic scenario which the *Wandering Scholars* chooses to gloss over to a certain extent. It reflects the coarser humour of a scenario like Chaucer's *Reeve's Tale*, in which the slightly better educated clerks exploit the local population sexually and financially. There are certainly lyrics in the *Carmina Burana* (both Latin and vernacular) which would justify such an approach, but Orff's selection of so many of them inevitably skews his interpretation.

The character of these 'German' goliards is entirely different from the picture created in the *Wandering Scholars*. Its emphasis is on primitive, basic emotions, and on the lyrics as elements of a dramatic performance. Rather than exploring the intellectual subtleties in the poetry, it brings out the grotesque humour and the rustic jollity of the lyrics, with a strong emphasis on the vernacular poems which can be described as 'folk' poetry. Clearly, the work does not partake of the inspiration which Helen Waddell drew from the Georgian movement. An intriguing question to explore in a future study, however, might concern its possible links with the ideology of Nazism, which itself has roots in the German reaction to the First World War. Critics such as Lisbet Koerner have discussed the important role which medievalism played in bolstering and reinforcing Nazi ideology, and the strong emphasis on the 'folk' lyrics in *Carmina Burana* suggests that it might have appealed to the Nazi interest in German folk arts and music¹. In the space of this thesis it can only be the briefest of conjectures, but might it be possible that the quite different German reaction to the catastrophe of

¹ Lisbet Koerner, 'Nazi Medievalist Architecture and the Politics of Memory', in *Medievalism in Europe*, ed. Leslie Workman (Cambridge: D S Brewer, 1994)

war, engendering as it did the rise of Nazism in response to the perceived injustice of the Treaty of Versailles, helped to produce a vision of the goliards which was far more primitive, 'folk' and rustic than Waddell's, but nevertheless was not entirely unrelated? A curious letter of Waddell's in 1935 remarks on the extreme popularity of *Peter Abelard* in Germany, since 'you can't say its doctrines are peculiarly Nazi'.¹ I would agree with this judgement of *Peter Abelard*, but was there something in the goliardic image which appealed to Nazi Germany, and which Orff's cantata picked up and reworked? It is a subject which might be taken up by another scholar at a future date.

Returning to the English career of the goliards, the wide popularity of Orff's cantata has clearly had some influence on post-Waddell translations. Its 'rustic' character, with its emphasis on the boisterous and somewhat grotesque humour of the poems, and on simplicity rather than intellectual sophistication, has influenced the character of the recent collections. The phenomenon of the 'Georgian' goliards, though, seemed to reach its peak of popularity with the *Wandering Scholars* and thereafter, to disappear from English cultural life. In the years after the publication of the *Scholars*, *Medieval Latin Lyrics* and *Peter Abelard*, the goliards became more rustic, more simple and straightforward, less sophisticated and consequently less interesting to the reading public. The anomalous popularity which they had enjoyed for the previous fifty years was at last at an end.

¹ Monica Blakett, *The Mark of the Maker: A Portrait of Helen Waddell* (London: Constable, 1973), p.108

CONCLUSIONS

As I suggested in the Introduction to this thesis, our exploration of the phenomenon of medievalism has to date has been somewhat limited. While we have achieved a good understanding of the 'chivalric revival' of the nineteenth century, thanks to the work of writers such as Girouard, the suggestion that medievalism was a many-faceted phenomenon in which many different sorts of medieval material were used for many different artistic, social and cultural ends, has been largely neglected. In this thesis, I have described the growth of one of these facets.

In addition, I have attempted to show how the growth, rise in popularity and eventual decline of a medieval text can be used as a yardstick by which to measure social and cultural undercurrents in the society which uses, reads and re-invents them. The twelfth-century poetry of the goliards has provided an interesting case study by which proof of the usefulness of this methodology can be made. By examining the fluctuating fortunes of the goliards in nineteenth and twentieth-century literature, it is possible to reach a better understanding of the development of a particular cultural phenomenon which emerged in the late nineteenth century and coloured the years following the First World War.

We have seen in books such as *The Return to Camelot* descriptions of the effect of the revival of chivalry on the regime of honour and bravery in upper class public schools and universities at the turn of the century. The tragic effect which this code of behaviour had on the way in which the war was 'spun', on the eagerness of thousands of young men to join up, and on their conduct when they got there – even on the way in which they were remembered thereafter – has become a matter not so much of history as of popular mythology, so widespread is it. The notion that the young warriors of 1914 were fatally deluded by their

society's obsession with the trappings of medieval chivalry has become a well established and, indeed, a well supported one. However, examining the career of the goliards over a later period, but one which overlaps that of the chivalric revival, it becomes obvious that another 'medievalist' phenomenon played an important part in encouraging recruitment to the war, and, even more so than chivalry, became a central image in the myth that emerged in response to the devastating sense of loss and bereavement which beset the country in the post-war decade.

The goliards have an essential role to play as part of the medievalism which fostered the growth of the 'Georgian' character. They find a place first of all in the 'anti-chivalric' medievalism of Swinburne and Pater, and from the first we are able to see the traits that will characterise this different vision of the medieval world. The heroes of these medievalist texts are rebels, outcasts, individualists. They have no room in their moral codes for the conformist demands of Victorian chivalry. Yet at the same time, in spite of their intense dislike for moral or religious strictures, and determination to carve out their own anti-authoritarian path, they have a sensitive, almost spiritual appreciation of the natural world and of sensual experience, drawn from the paganism of Pater's *Renaissance* and grafted into the characters of the medieval heroes whom Swinburne, Pater and Symonds admired. It was in these late nineteenth century writers, then, and their 'alternative' vision of medievalism, that the intertwined roots of the goliards' popularity and of the 'Georgian' character lay.

Rupert Brooke and his Neo-Pagan friends built on the foundation which the aestheticism of Swinburne and Pater had laid down. They retained, in particular, the sense of intense sensual experience as a guide to spiritual understanding. Yet

Brooke developed the philosophy of the late nineteenth century in such a way as to produce a self-image, in his life and in his poetry, that was strongly reminiscent of the goliard poets. In particular, his concentration on the spiritual potential of everyday experience was to be of major importance. Although direct evidence in his unpublished papers and circumstantial evidence from his poems suggests that he had particular acquaintance with goliardic poetry, the similarity between the 'personality' which he and his generation fostered and goliardic poetry, is of most interest in connection with *The Wandering Scholars*.

These similarities were to become important in the aftermath of the First World War. As we saw in Chapter 4, a goodly part of the enthusiasm for the First World War was driven not by chivalrous, but by Georgian ideals. Undoubtedly many young men were driven to volunteer by chivalric, public school images of duty, honour and self-sacrifice for the common good. Yet as many, the literary and historical evidence suggests, were of Brooke's 'Neo-Pagan' temper, and were inspired by almost existential dreams of intense sensual experience – which, as the Neo-Pagans often argued, would be the only possible route to a kind of earthly paradise. As Georgians and Neo-Pagans, then, they joined up, and it was as Georgians and Neo-Pagans that they were remembered. Their links with the medieval rebels made it only natural that in the terrible aftermath of the war, as the mythology of the Lost Generation grew up, Helen Waddell should turn to the authors of the goliardic poems in an attempt to produce some kind of memorial for the thousands of young men who had fallen in the war.

After the inter-war decades, as we have seen, the goliards reverted to the unremarkable level of popularity which they had enjoyed between 1803 and 1885. Even in the crucial fifty years which this thesis has discussed, the

interpretations of them which were produced have not endured in the way that the artistic landmarks of the chivalric revival have done. Though Rossetti and Burne-Jones' paintings or Tennyson's *Idylls* are still familiar cultural currency, Waddell's book, which captivated the reading public of her day, is now found puzzling and dense by many modern scholars, never mind non-academic readers. Though her translations are more truly 'poetry' and undoubtedly display more literary merit than do the efforts of anyone else who has tried to render the lyrics since, they have also been justly criticised for over-romanticisation of the lyrics and for an unjustified freedom of translation.

The nineteenth and twentieth century visions of the goliards cannot be treated as worthy of study because of their inherent artistic merit. Rather, they should command our interest because of the insight which they offer into the prevalent social and cultural factors in late nineteenth and early twentieth century society, and because of the illumination which they bring of the growth and development of the 'Georgian' phenomenon and of the impact of the First World War on English society. Works of medievalism have been used to study the process of artistic transformation. Only recently have they begun to be used as tools to examine the mores and preoccupations of the society which created them. The tendency to imaginatively recreate all kinds of artistic and cultural models in an image reflecting their particular needs is a very common one among human societies. This thesis has attempted to discuss and illuminate the circumstances surrounding a temporary but powerful need for the goliard poets.

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