

READING

The eleventh and twelfth centuries CE witnessed the production of Latin poetry on a grand scale. Some of this poetry followed the conventions established by ancient Roman poets. Several medieval epics, such as the twelfth century *Alexandreis*, which narrates the exploits of Alexander the Great, closely resemble ancient Roman epics. Extremely popular in the years after it was written, the *Alexandreis* was read in schools along with Vergil's *Aeneid*.

But the poets of the twelfth century also developed a new kind of rhythmical verse with many similarities to the popular songs of the day, particularly because it contained rhymes. This rhythmical poetry includes all kinds of themes: religious and secular, amatory and mournful. Probably the best-known collection of medieval poems in this vein is the *Carmina Burāna*. These poems are preoccupied with love, wine, jealousy, power, poverty, the changeable nature of fortune, and generally the problems of scholars who wandered in search of money from powerful patrons in order to write and study. The Latin poets of this period performed their verses orally—frequently singing and chanting to musical accompaniment—to audiences of those educated in Latin, in cathedral towns, and in the increasingly splendid courts of bishops and other important churchmen.

One of the poets whose works are included in the *Carmina Burāna* was the Archpoet, probably given this name ironically, since he was attached to the court of the German archbishop Rainald of Dassel (died 1167 CE). Here are excerpts from the *Cōnfessiō Goliae*, perhaps the most famous Latin poem. It is a parody of the confession ritual—which involves the acknowledgment of sin, either by a congregation in the course of worship, or, more typically, by individuals speaking privately to a priest. Parts of the text have been transformed into prose.

CŌNFESSIŌ GOLIAE

- 1 Aestuāns intrīnsecus irā vehementī
in amāritūdine loquor meae mentī.
Factus dē māteriā levis elementī
Foliō sum similis, dē quō lūdunt ventī.
- 5 Similis sum flūminī, quod numquam manet, sed semper fluit; similis
sum nāvī sine nautā; similis sum avī.
Nōn mē tenent vincula, nōn mē tenet clāvis,
Quaerō meī similēs et adiungor prāvīs.
- Dīves nōn sum, sed pauper, quī nihil possidet. Nam fūr esse nōlō nec
- 10 agrōs colere cupiō. Rēbus sevērīs nōn dēlector; rēbus dulcibus dēlector
atque iocīs. Placet mihi dē pulchrīs puellīs cōgitāre atque amōrem colere.
Viā lātā gradior mōre iuventūtis,
implicō mē vitiīs immemor virtūtis.

- Nōn mihi placet cibīs bonīs egēre. Sī bene nōn comedō, carmina
 15 scribere nōn possum. Sī tamen bene comēderō et sī multum vīnī
 biberō, tam pulchra carmina scribere poterō quam scripsit Nāsō poēta.
 Meum est prōpositum in tabernā morī,
 Ut sint vīna proxima morientis ōrī.
 Rogātis cūr tam multa ā mē contrā mē sint dicta. Vīta vetus mihi iam
 20 nōn placet, sed mōrēs novōs habēre cupiō. Vītia iam nōn amō, sed
 virtūtēs amō. Haec omnia nārrāvī ut vītā meam mūtāre possem!
 Ōrō ut mihi parcātis.

READING VOCABULARY

adiungō, ere, adiūnxī, adiūnctum + *dative* = iungō

aestuāns – being in violent commotion, burning (*present active participle*)

aestuō, āre, āvī, ātum – to be in violent commotion, burn

amāritūdō, amāritūdinis, f. – bitterness

avis, avis, f. – bird

***bibō, ere, bibī, —** – to drink

***carmen, carminis, n.** – poem

***cibus, ī, m.** – food

clāvis, clāvis, f. – key

cōfessiō, cōfessiōnis, f. – confession

dē – from

***dulcis, dulce** – sweet

elementum, ī, n. – element

***flūmen, flūminis, n.** – river

folium, ī, n. – leaf

Golia, Goliae, m. – name of a wandering scholar

gradior – I walk‡

iam – any more

***immemor, immemoris** + *genitive* – forgetful of

implicō, āre, āvī, ātum + *dative* – to involve into, implicate

intrīnsecus (adv.) – on the inside

***iocus, ī, m.** – joke

***iuventūs, iuventūtis, f.** – youth

lātus, a, um – broad, wide

***levis, leve** – light

loquor – I speak‡

māteria, ae, f. – material

***mēns, mentis, f.** – mind, spirit

morī – to die‡

multum + *partitive genitive* – a lot of

Nāsō, Nāsōnis, m. – Ovid

***ōrō, āre, āvī, ātum** – to ask, entreat

***ōrō ut** – I ask that

***placeō, ēre, placuī, placitum** + *dative* – to please, be agreeable to somebody

prāvus, a, um – crooked, bad

prōpositum, ī, n. – plan

***proximus, a, um** – nearest

sint dicta – are said

taberna, ae, f. – wineshop‡

***tam . . . quam . . .** – so . . . as . . .

***vehemēns, vehementis** – violent, vehement

***vetus, veteris** – old

***vīnum, ī, n.** – wine

***virtūs, virtūtis, f.** – virtue, courage‡

***vītium, ī, n.** – vice

*Words marked with an asterisk will need to be memorized later in the chapter.

‡Additional information about the words marked with the double dagger will be in the **Take Note** section that follows the Reading Vocabulary.