In Taberna...

"Carmina Burana" (ca 1300)

In taberna quando sumus,
Non curamus quid sit humus,
Sed ad ludum properamus,
Cui semper insudamus.
Quid agatur in taberna,
Ubi nummus est pincerna,
Hoc est opus ut queratur,
Si quid loquar, audiatur.

Quidam ludunt, quidam bibunt,
Quidam indiscreete vivunt.
Sed in ludo qui morantur,
Ex his quidam denuantur,
Quidam ibi vestiuntur,
Quidam saccis induuntur.
Ibi nullus timet mortem,
Sed pro Baccho mittunt sortem:

Primo pro nummata vini,
Ex hac bibunt libertini;
Semel bibunt pro captivis,
Post hec bibunt ter pro vivis,
Quater pro Christianis cunctis,
Quinquies pro fidelibus defunctis,
Sexies pro sororibus vanis,
Septies pro militibus silvanis.

Octies pro fratribus perversis,
Nonies pro monachis dispersis,
Decies pro navigantibus,
Undecies pro discordaniibus,
Duodecies pro penitentibus,
Tredecies pro iter agentibus.
Tam pro papa quam pro rege,
Bibunt omnes sine lege.

Bibit hera, bibit herus,
Bibit miles, bibit clerus,
Bibit ille, bibit illa,
Bibit servis cum ancilla,
Bibit velox, bibit piger,
Bibit albus, bibit niger,
Bibit constans, bibit vagus,
Bibit rudis, bibit Magnus.

Bibit pauper et egrotus,
Bibit exul et ignotus,
Bibit puer, bibit canus,
Bibit presul et decanus,
Bibit soror, bibit frater,
Bibit anus, bibit mater,
Bibit ista, bibit ille,
Bibunt centum, bibunt mille.

Parum sexcente nummate,
Durant, cum immoderate,
Bibunt omnes sine meta.
Quamvis bibant mente leta,
Sic nos rodunt omnes gentes,
Et sic erimus egentes.
Qui nos rodunt confundantur
Et cum iustis non scribantur.
In The Tavern…
"Songs of Beuren" (ca 1300)

When we are in the tavern,
We do not think how we will go to dust,
But we hurry to gamble,
Which always makes us sweat.
What happens in the tavern,
Where money is host,
You may well ask,
And hear what I say.

Some gamble, some drink,
Some behave loosely.
But of those who gamble,
Some are stripped bare,
Some win their clothes here,
Some are dressed in sacks.
Here no-one fears death,
But they throw dice in the name of Bacchus.

First of all it is to the wine-merchant
The the libertines drink,
One for the prisoners,
Three for the living,
Four for all Christians,
Five for the faithful dead,
Six for the loose sisters,
Seven for the footpads in the wood,

Eight for the errant brethren,
Nine for the dispersed monks,
Ten for the seamen,
Eleven for the squabblers,
Twelve for the penitent,
Thirteen for the wayfarers.
To the Pope as to the king
They all drink without restraint.

The mistress drinks, the master drinks,
The soldier drinks, the priest drinks,
The man drinks, the woman drinks,
The servant drinks with the maid,
The swift man drinks, the lazy man drinks,
The white man drinks, the black man drinks,
The settled man drinks, the wanderer drinks,
The stupid man drinks, the wise man drinks,

The poor man drinks, the sick man drinks,
The exile drinks, and the stranger,
The boy drinks, the old man drinks,
The bishop drinks, and the deacon,
The sister drinks, the brother drinks,
The old lady drinks, the mother drinks,
This man drinks, that man drinks,
A hundred drink, a thousand drink.

Six hundred pennies would hardly
Suffice, if everyone
Drinks immoderately and immeasurably.
However much they cheerfully drink
We are the ones whom everyone scolds,
And thus we are destitute.
May those who slander us be cursed
And may their names not be written in the
book of the just

“In Taberna” from Carmina Burana
The largest collection of Goliardic poetry to date is the Benedictbeuern Manuscript, also known as the Codex Buranus, or modernly as Carmina Burana. The manuscript, instead of being an individual book, was actually a collection of at least three different collections of poetry, and was discovered at the Benedictine Monastery in Upper Bavaria in the early 19th century. The manuscript, filled with immoral and sacriligous thought “…seems to have lived in a kind of stowaway existence, hidden to save it from the censor’s gall…” (Waddell, MLL, pg. 330-31). At the time, such text would have been destroyed, but fortunately for us, some clever monks had the foresight to hide the illegal manuscripts, where they remained forgotten until two hundred years ago.

Based on the evidence found, the collection is thought to have been written near the end of the thirteenth century, probably in the Bavarian region. The monastery of Benedictbeuern itself can be found today in Germany, the state of Bavaria, region of Oberbayern, in the Bad Tölz district. During the thirteenth century, this area was part of the Holy Roman Empire.

Inside of the Carmina Burana, there are more than two-hundred poems and songs, including approximately forty-three that are meant to be sung (Waddell, MLL, pg. 331), “…but the melodies – have unfortunately been lost…” (Zeydel, pg. 34). Those poems, which also included about fifty lyrics in German (Waddell, WS, pg. 236), have been divided up by the scholars over the years into different categories of work.

The first type is the moral and satirical poetry. These consist of poems about decaying morality and social problems, especially within the church, and lessons about how to improve upon these problems. Next there came religious dramas, more serious and acceptable stories written with the consent and approval of the church. Third is the largest selection, the love songs, something that the average churchman should have no knowledge of. Finally, and most well known of the series, is the drinking and gambling songs, celebrating drunken debauchery and decadence. These last two form the bulk, and the infamous reputation, of the manuscript. “…the immortality of the Carmina is in the love songs and the drinking songs…” (Waddell, WS, pg. 233).
The drinking songs specifically are what makes the Carmina Burana legendary, and describes the spirit of the goliards most closely. “…nowhere does the spirit of vagabondage emerge more patently than in the songs of the tavern…” (Zeydel, pg. 19). These songs not only embody the rebellious nature of the vagabonds, in their urge to practice hedonism against the will of the church, but they also give the authors a chance to mock the very same church. “…Bacchus, the ‘lofty deity’, is addressed with all the reverance due an omnipotent god…” (Zeydel, pg. 83). Even the last line of In Taberna, “…et cum iustis non scribantur…” (may their names not be written in the book the just), this is a verbatim quote from common clerical prayers, and is used in this reference to blasphemy those beliefs.

For the specific basis of my study, I examined the tavern song called In Taberna. In Taberna was a drinking song, meant to put into words what everyone was feeling and experiencing while they were at the bar drinking. The sin of gambling was very often associated with drinking, so they two activities were often placed together in the eyes of the vagabonds. “…hand in hand with the bibulousness of the tavern goes worship of another god, Decius, the deity of gambling…” (Zeydel, pg. 19). The worship of ancient and forsaken gods was a slap in the face of the Catholic Church, treating their sanctity as something to laugh at and emulate. “…gods like Bacchus and Decius celebrated as though they were truly divine…” (Zeydel, pg. 25).

The poetic form of In Taberna appears to be iambic quadrameter, lines containing eight syllables, with the odd-numbered syllables being accented over the even-numbered. The poem contains fifty-six lines, which are divided into seven verses of eight lines each, with each verse following an A-A-B-B-C-C-D-D pattern. The third and fourth verses are counting off drinks to different groups, and verses five and six follow a simple formula of describing different people drinking. These verses start to sound repetitious when read as a regular poem, but if you were actually reciting names of people and groups around you, it would make the performance nice and personal.
“Wheel of Fortune”

This image is a copy of the cover page from the “Carmina Burana” manuscript discovered at the Benedictine Abbey in Germany. This image represents the Wheel of Fortune, and fortune is the main theme of the poem “O Fortuna”, made famous by 18th century composer Carl Orff.
“Drinking Party”

Here is a typical page from the “Carmina Burana” manuscript, which has the calligraphed Latin text, and an illuminated image of a group of drinking, presumably alcoholic beverages in a tavern. This image and others help support the idea of goliards gambing and drinking instead of more serious tasks like work and prayer.
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