

Carmen Paschale

Book One

Praefatio

Paschales quicumque dapes conuiuia requiris,
Dignatus nostris accubitare toris,
Pone supercilium si te cognoscis amicum,
Nec quaeras opus hic codicis artificis:
Sed modicae contentus adi sollemnia mensae 5
Plusque libens animo quam satiare cibo.
Aut si magnarum caperis dulcedine rerum
Diuitiasque magis deliciosus amas,
Nobilium nitidis doctorum uescere cenis,
Quorum multiplices nec numerantur opes. 10
Illic inuenies quidquid mare nutrit edendum,
Quidquid terra creat, quidquid ad astra uolat.
Cerea gemmatis flauescunt mella canistris
Conluentque suis aurea uasa fauis.
At nos exiguum de paupere carpsimus horto, 15
Rubra quod adpositum testa ministrat, holus.

Preface

You who seek this paschal banquet as a guest,
Having deigned to lean upon our couches,
Put your arrogance aside, if you think yourself a friend,
And do not look for the work of an artful book here:
But approach the solemnities of this modest table contently,
Wanting more to be filled in spirit than with food.
Or if you are taken with the sweetness of great things,
And, being delicate, love their richness more,
Then feast upon the brilliant fare of learned nobles,
Whose manifold riches cannot be counted.
There you will find whatever the sea nourishes for eating,
Whatever the land creates, whatever flies to the stars.
Waxen honey turns golden-yellow in sparkling canisters,
And golden vessels gleam in their combs.
But we have picked meagre greens from a poor garden,
Which are put before you in an earthen-red pot.

Carmen Paschale

Cum sua gentiles studeant figmenta poetae
Grandisonis pompare modis, tragicoque boatu
Ridiculous Geta seu qualibet arte canendi
Saeua nefandarum renouent contagia rerum 20
Et scelerum monumenta canant, rituque magistro
Plurima Niliacis tradant mendacia biblis:
Cur ego, Dauiticis adsuetus cantibus odas
Cordarum resonare decem sanctoque uerenter
Stare choro et placidis caelestia psallere uerbis, 25
Clara salutiferi taceam miracula Christi?
Cum possim manifesta loqui, Dominumque tonantem
Sensibus et toto delectet corde fateri:
Qui sensus et corda dedit, cui conuenit uni
Facturam seruire suam, cui iure perenni 30
Arcibus aetheriis una est cum patre potestas,
Par splendor, communis apex, sociale cacumen,
Aequus honor, uirtus eadem, sine tempore regnum,
Semper principium, sceptrum iuge, gloria consors,
Maiestas similis. Haec est uia namque salutis, 35
Haec firmos ad dona gradus paschalia ducit.
Haec mihi carmen erit: mentes huc uertite cuncti.

Hanc constanter opem laesis adhibete medullis,
Quos letale malum, quos uanis dedita curis
Attica Cecropii serpit doctrina ueneni, 40
Sectantesque magis uitam spirantis odorem
Legis Athenaei paedorem linquite pagi.
Quid labyrintho, Thesidae, erratis in antro
Caecaque Daedalei lustratis limina tecti?
Labruscam placidis quid adhuc praeponitis uuis 45
Neglectisque rosis saliuncam sumitis agri?

Book One

Since pagan poets are eager to parade their fictions
In lofty-sounding modes, and with their tragic wailing,
Ridiculous Geta or whatever other kind of singing,
They renew the savage contagions of unspeakable things,
And sing monuments of sin and, with ritual as a teacher,
Pass down more lies in their books of the Nile,
Why should I—accustomed to resounding odes of ten chords
In David's songs and standing reverently in the holy choir,
Singing psalms of celestial things in gentle words—
Be silent about the brilliant miracles of Christ the Saviour?
Why, since I can speak about these manifest things,
And since it pleases me to acknowledge the Lord Thunderer
With my senses and all my heart? It is He who gave wit and heart,
Whose creation it befits to serve Him alone, for Whom, by eternal law
In the ethereal citadels, there is one power with the Father,
Matching splendour, a common height, a shared pinnacle,
Equal honour, the same strength, a kingdom out of time,
Ever a beginning, an everlasting sceptre, a shared glory,
Similar majesty. And so, this is the way to salvation,
This leads firm steps to the paschal gifts.
This will be my song: Turn all your minds to this!

Lend this power to wounded hearts constantly,
Into whom creeps deadly evil, the Attic doctrine
Of Cecropian poison, which is given over to vain cares,
And following rather the scent of the law that breathes life,
Give up the stench of the Athenian countryside.
Why, children of Theseus, do you wander in that labyrinthine cave
And roam about the blind thresholds of that Daedalian hall?
Why still prefer the wild vine to mild grapes,
And pick the nard of the field, leaving the roses neglected?

Carmen Paschale

Quid lapides atque aera coli, quid fana profana
Proderit et mutis animas damnare metallis?
Parcite puluerei squalentia iugera campi
Et steriles habitare plagas, ubi gignere fructum 50
Arida nescit humus, nec de tellure cruenta
Liuida mortiferis uellatis toxica sucis,
Tartareo damnata cibo: sed amoena uirecta
Florentum semper nemorum sedesque beatas
Per latices intrate pios, ubi semina uitae 55
Diuinis animantur aquis et fonte superno
Laetificata seges spinis mundatur ademptis,
Ut messis queat esse Dei mercisque futurae
Maxima centenum cumulare per horrea fructum.
Omnipotens aeterne Deus, spes unica mundi, 60
Qui caeli fabricator ades, qui conditor orbis,
Qui maris undisonas fluctu surgente procellas
Mergere uicinae prohibes confinia terrae,
Qui solem radiis et lunam cornibus implet
Inque diem ac noctem lumen metiris utrumque, 65
Qui stellas numeras, quarum tu nomina solus,
Signa, potestates, cursus, loca, tempora nosti,
Qui diuersa nouam formasti in corpora terram
Torpentique solo uiuentia membra dedisti,
Qui pereuntem hominem uetiti dulcedine pomi 70
Instauras meliore cibo potuque sacrati
Sanguinis infusum depellis ab angue uenenum,
Qui genus humanum praeter quos clauserat arca
Diluuii rapida spumantis mole sepultum
Vna iterum de stirpe creas, ut mystica uirtus, 75

Book One

What good is it for stones and brazen things to be revered
Or profane shrines, and to damn souls for mute metals?
Stop living on the squalid plots of the dusty plain
And sterile tracts of land, where arid earth does not
Know how to bear fruit, and do not pluck spiteful poisons
From the blood-soaked earth with their death-bearing juices—
That is the damned food of Tartarus. But enter pleasant groves
Of ever-flowering meadows through pious streams
And blessed seats, where the seeds of life are enlivened
By divine waters and the fruitful field is cleansed
By a supernal font, once the thorns have been removed,
So that God's harvest may be possible, and the hundredfold
Fruit of future reward may be gathered into the greatest storehouses.
Omnipotent eternal God, single hope of the world,
Who are the Architect of Heaven, the Founder of Earth,
Who keep the wave-resounding storms of the surging sea
From sinking the banks of the neighbouring land;
Who fill the sun with beams and moon with crescent horns,
And measure out each light for day and night;
Who number the stars, whose names, signs, powers
Courses, places, times are known to you alone;
Who formed the new land into manifold bodies
And gave living limbs to the torpid earth;
Who restore man perishing from the sweetness of the forbidden apple
With a better food, and, with the drink of sacred blood,
Dispel the poison instilled by the serpent;
Who recreate the human race from a single stalk,
Except those whom the ark had enclosed, buried by the swift
Mass of the foaming flood, so that your mystic strength

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Quod carnis delicta necant, hoc praesule ligno
Monstraret liquidas renouari posse per undas,
Totum namque lauans uno baptisate mundum:

Pande salutarem paucos quae ducit in urbem
Angusto mihi calle uiam uerbique lucernam 80
Da pedibus lucere meis, ut semita uitae
Ad caulas me ruris agat, qua seruat amoenum
Pastor ouile bonus, qua uellere praeuius albo
Virginis agnus ouis grexque omnis candidus intrat.
Te duce difficilis non est uia; subditur omnis 85
Imperiis natura tuis, rituque soluto
Transit in aduersas iussu dominante figuras.
Si iubeas mediis segetes arere pruinis,
Messorem producit hiems; si currere mustum 90
Vernali sub sole uelis, florentibus aruis
Sordidus impressas calcabit uinitor uuas:
Cunctaque diuinis parebunt tempora dictis.
Indicio est antiqua fides et cana priorum
Testis origo patrum, nullisque abolenda per aeuum
Temporibus constant uirtutum signa tuarum. 95
Ex quibus audaci perstringere pauca relatu
Vix animis conmitto meis, siluamque patentem
Ingrediens aliquos nitor contingere ramos.
Nam centum licet ora mouens uox ferrea clamet
Centenosque sonos humanum pectus anhelet, 100
Cuncta quis expediet, quorum nec lucida caeli
Sidera nec bibulae numeris aequantur harenae?

Book One

Might show that it is possible, with this cross as a leader,
To renew in flowing water what the sins of the flesh kill,
Thereby washing the whole world in one Baptism.

Stretch out a road for me along the narrow path,
Which leads but few to the city of salvation,
And grant the lantern of your word to light my feet,
So that the path of life may lead me to the sheepfolds of the country,
Where the good shepherd tends his pleasant flock, where, going forth in
White fleece, the lamb of the Virgin and the whole shining herd enter in.
With you as leader the way is not difficult;
All nature is subject to your commands, and freed of its ritual,
Nature changes to contrary figures by your dominating will.
If you bid the cornfields to wither in the midst of frost,
Winter makes a reaper; if you wish juice to flow
Beneath the vernal sun, the juice-stained vine-dresser
Will be trampling pressed grapes in the flowering fields.
And all the seasons will obey your divine utterances.
Ancient faith is evidence and the grey origin of former fathers
Is testimony, and the signs of your strength last the ages
Never to be abolished at any time.
About these things, I commit my soul not easily
To touch upon a few of them in this bold recital,
And walking through an open wood I strive to touch a branch or two.
For even if an iron voice moving a hundred mouths should cry out
And the human breast exhale a hundred sounds,
Who will [be able to] unravel everything, when neither heaven's lucid stars
Nor the porous sands of the sea are equal in number?

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[1] Primus abusque chao meritis uiuacibus Enoch
Multa per innumeros iam saecula contigit annos
Natura perdente modum: quem iure creandi 105
Terra tulit genitum, sed mors miratur ademptum.
[2] Saucia iam uetulae marcebant uiscera Sarrae
Grandaeuo consumpta situ, prolemque negabat
Frigidus annoso moriens in corpore sanguis:
Cum seniore uiro gelidi praecordia uentris 110
In partum tumuere nouum tremebundaque mater
Algentes onerata sinus, spem gentis opimae
Edidit et serum suspendit ad ubera natum.
Mactandumque Deo pater obtulit, at sacer ipsam
Pro pueri iugulis aries mactatur ad aram. 115
O iusti mens sancta uiri! pietate remota
Plus pietatis habens contempsit uulnera nati
Amplexus praecepta Dei, typicique cruoris
Auxilio uentura docet, quod sanguine Christi
Humana pro gente pius occumberet agnus. 120
[3] Loth Sodomae fugiente chaos, dum respicit uxor,
In statuam mutata salis stupefacta remansit,
Ad poenam conuersa suam: quia nemo retrorsum,
Noxia contempti uitans discrimina mundi,
Aspiciens saluandus erit, nec debet arator 125
Dignum opus exercens uultum in sua terga referre.
[4] Ignibus innocuis flagrans apparuit olim
Non ardens ardere rubus, nec iuncta calori
Materies alimenta dabat, nec torrida uiuens
Sensit damna frutex, sed amici fomitis aestu 130
Frondea blanditae lambebant robora flammae.

Book One

[1] Through his long-lived merits, Enoch was the first to escape the chaos;
He has already touched many an age over the course of countless years,
As nature loses its sway: the earth born him according to
The law of creation, but death marvels at his deliverance.
[2] The stricken womb of poor old Sara was already withered away,
Consumed with aged disuse, and her frigid blood,
Dying in her old body, kept denying her a child;
Her husband was older than she was when the insides
Of her icy womb swelled to new birth and the trembling mother,
Burdened of her cold belly, brought forth the hope of a fertile race,
As she held this late-come child up to her breast.
And the father offered his son to be sacrificed to God,
Though a ram was sacrificed in place of his boy's throat.
O, the holy heart of that righteous man! Putting pity aside
And having more piety, he turned his thoughts from his child's wounds,
Having embraced the precepts of God! And with the help of figural
Bloodshed he teaches what is to come, since a pious lamb
Would die for the human race by the blood of Christ.
[3] With Lot fleeing the chaos of Sodom, his wife looks back,
And there she remains, stupefied, turned to a pillar of salt,
Facing the source of her punishment, since no one who looks back,
Ignoring the harmful dangers of this contemptible world,
Will be saved; nor should the ploughman,
Seeing to his work, look over his shoulder.
[4] Once, flickering with harmless flames,
A bush not burning seemed to burn, nor joined to the heat
Did the wood feed the fire, nor the living bush
Suffer fiery harm, but the fawning flames
Licked the leafy wood in the warmth of that friendly tinder.

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[5] Mitis in inमिते uirga est animata draconem,
Per flexos sinuata globos linguisque trisulcis
Squamea colla tumens inimicos ore chelydros
Sorbuisset et proprii redit in uirgulta rigoris. 135

[6] Peruia diuisi patuerunt caerulea ponti
In geminum reuoluta latus, nudataque tellus
Cognatis spoliatur aquis, ac turba pedestris
Intrat in absentis pelagi mare, perque profundum
Sicca peregrinas stupuerunt marmora plantas. 140
Mutauit natura uiam, mediumque per aequor
Ingrediens populus rude iam baptismum gerebat,
Cui dux Christus erat, clamat nam lectio: multas
Vox Domini super extat aquas; uox denique uerbum est.
Verbum Christus adest, geminae qui consona legis 145
Testamenta regens ueterem patefecit abyssum,
Vt doctrina sequens planis incederet aruis.

[7] Quid referam innumeras caelesti pane cateruas
Angelicis sumpsisse cibos, nimisque superni
Nectaris aëria populum dulcedine pastum 150
In pluuiis habuisse dapes et in imbris escas?

[8] Rursus in exustis sitiens exercitus aruis,
Qua nimium loca sicca, diu qua terra negatis
Aëgra iacebat aquis, qua spes ablata bibendi
Viuendique fuit, subitas arente metallo
Hausit aquas, sterilique latex de rupe manauit, 155
Et ieiuna nouum uomuerunt marmora potum.
His igitur iam sacra tribus dans munera rebus,
Christus erat panis, Christus petra, Christus in undis.

[9] Angelicis tremefacta minis adfatur asella 160
Sessorem per uerba suum, linguaque rudenti
Edidit humanas animal pecuale loquellas.

Book One

[5] A harmless rod was enlivened to a harmful snake—
Curved with coils and a three-forked tongue—
Swelling, its scaly neck swallowed the hostile
Serpents in its mouth, then turned back to a staff of proper stiffness.

[6] A road lay open through the cerulean waters of the parted sea
Which rolled back into a double flank, and the naked earth
Was stripped of its usual waters, as a host of foot-soldiers
Entered a sea without water, and throughout the deep
The dry bedrock marvelled at their foreign tracks.
Nature changed its way, and walking into the midst of the sea,
The people underwent a rudimentary baptism,
With Christ as their leader; for the Scriptures proclaim:
The voice of God stretches over many waters; in the end,
The voice is the Word. The Word is Christ, who, ruling
The harmonious Testaments of a twin law, laid open the old abyss,
So that a following doctrine might go forth over the open plains.

[7] Need I repeat how countless crowds ate
Angelic food from heavenly bread, how people were fed
By the airy Sweetness of supernal nectar from the clouds
And had feasts and showering meals rain down upon them?

[8] Again, as that troop was thirsting in the barren wilderness,
Where the earth was exceedingly dry, where the land long lay
Parched for the lack of water, where the hope of drink
And life was lost, he drew unexpected waters from
A dry stone, and a spring poured forth from a sterile rock,
As parched boulders gushed new drink.
Therefore, granting His sacred gifts on these three occasions,
Christ was the bread, Christ the rock, Christ was in the water.

[9] Frightened by angelic threats an ass addressed
Its rider in words and with braying tongue
The barnyard beast made human speech.

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[10] Sol stetit ad Gabaon mediique cacumine caeli
Fixit anhelantem dilato uespere lucem,
Insolitus frenare diem, nec luna cucurrit 165
Ordine pigra suo, donec populantibus armis
Feruidus ingentem gladius consumeret hostem
Coniurante polo: iam tunc famulata uidebant
Sidera uenturum praemisso nomine Iesum.
[11] Heliam corui quondam pauere ministri 170
Praebentes sine more dapes, alesque rapinis
Deditus atque auido saturans caua guttura rostro
Tradidit inlaesam ieiunis morsibus escam.
Nunc bonus Heliae, qui perfidus antea Noe,
Abluit in terris quidquid deliquit in undis. 175
Plenus at ille Deo postquam miracula terris
Plura dedit meritisque suis succedere dignum
Heredem propriae fecit uirtutis amicum,
Aurea flammigeris euectus in astra quadrigis,
Qua leuis aerios non exprimit orbita sulcos, 180
Sidereum penetrauit iter curruque corusco
Dexteriora petens spatio maiore triumphum
Duxit et humani metam non contigit aeu.
Quam bene fulminei praelucens semita caeli
Conuenit Heliae! meritoque et nomine fulgens 185
Hac ope dignus erat: nam si sermonis Achiui
Vna per accentum mutetur littera, sol est.
[12] Vltima labentis miseratus tempora lucis
Ter quinos quondam regi Deus addidit annos
Vsus iure suo, patefactaque limina claudens 190
Mortis ab occasu uitam conuertit in ortum.

Book One

[10] The sun stood toward Gibeon at the height of mid-heaven
And fixed its panting light as evening was delayed.
It was not used to holding back the day, nor did the sluggish moon
Run its course until, in league with heaven,
A burning sword consumed its mighty foe.
Already then the attendant stars saw
The coming of Jesus in that promised name.
[11] Once, ministering ravens fed Elijah,
Offering feasts against their nature, and a bird
Given to pillaging handed over unspoiled food
In tiny morsels, filling its hollow throat with an eager beak.
Now good to Elijah what was unfaithful to Noah before,
The raven redeemed on land what it had forsaken on the waters.
Filled with the Lord, Elijah later worked many miracles in those lands
And made his friend [Elisha] an heir to his might,
Who was also worthy to advance by his merits!
And carried to the stars in a flame-born chariot,
Whose gentle trail left no airy tracks,
Elijah struck a starry road in his glimmering cart,
And drove to victory, seeking better things on a greater course;
Nor did he cross the finish-line of human age.
O, how well that bright path to glittering heaven
Suited Elijah! He was worthy of that power,
Shining in merit and name: for if one letter [of his name] is changed
According to the accent of the Argive tongue, it is 'Helios.'
[12] Having taken pity on the final hours of his fading light,
God once gave fifteen years more to a king,
Using His own judgment; and closing the open doors of death,
He turned that king's life from sunset to sunrise.

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[13] Ionas puppe cadens, coeto sorbente uoratus
In pelago non sensit aquas, uitale sepulchrum
Ne moreretur habens, tutusque in uentre ferino
Depositum, non praeda fuit, uastumque per aequor 195
Venit ad ignotas inimico remige terras.
[14] Cum spirante Deo Babylonia sacra negarent
Tres una cum mente uiri durumque subirent
Exitium saeui Chaldaea lege tyranni,
Cuius Achaemeniam rabies accenderat iram 200
Plus fornace sua: medios trudentur in ignes
Nil audente rogo, tantumque ardore calentes
Cordis imagineae uincunt incendia poenae
Igne animi. O quanta est credentum gloria! flammis
Ardentis fidei restincta est flamma camini. 205
Digna sed inमितem mox perculit ultio regem.
Nam quod ab humana uecors pietate recessit,
Agrestes pecudum consors fuit ille per herbas
Aulica depasto mutans conuiuia faeno.
Pronus ab amne bibit, septenaque tempora lustrat 210
Omnibus hirsutus siluis et montibus errans.
[15] Nec minus et Darii furuerunt iussa tyranni,
Ecce etenim sceleri scelus addidit ira furentis
Hebraeumque decus Danihel decernitur insons
Ieiunis cibus esse feris. sed belua iusto 215
Mitis facta uiro, sanctos ne laederet artus,
Coepit amare famem; rabies mollita furorem
Deposuit saeuisque in faucibus ira quieuit,
Et didicere truces praedam seruare leones.

Book One

[13] Falling from his ship and swallowed by a gulping whale,
Jonah did not touch the waters of the sea, having a living tomb
To save him from death. And safe within the savage belly,
He was the deposit, not the prize, and he came across the vast
Surface of the sea to unknown lands by means of that hostile rower.
[14] With God inspiring them, three men of one mind
Spurned the rites of Babylon and were sentenced
To harsh ruin by the savage law of the Chaldean tyrant,
Whose rage enflamed his Achaemenian wrath
More than his own furnace. They are thrust into the midst of the flames,
But death dares nothing; and heated only by the fire of their hearts,
They overcome the blaze of that imaginary torment with the soul's flame.
O, how great is the glory of those believers!
The furnace-flame was held back by the flames of ardent faith.
Yet worthy vengeance soon struck down that ruthless king.
For because that madman abandoned human pity,
He was the companion of beasts in the wilderness,
Exchanging courtly banquets for chewed-up hay.
And, prone, he drank from the river and roamed about for seven years,
Wandering about, all hairy, through the mountains and the woods.
[15] And no less mad was the bidding of the tyrant Darius.
Look here! The wrath of that madman piled crime upon crime,
And innocent Daniel, the glory of the Hebrews, was sentenced
To be the food of starving beasts. But the brute, made gentle
By that just man, so that it might not harm his holy limbs,
Began to love hunger; with its madness soothed,
It put aside its fury and anger rested in its savage throat,
And fierce lions learned to protect their prize.

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Dic, ubi sunt, natura, tuae post talia leges? 220
Qui quotiens tibi iura tulit? qui tartara iussit
Translatum nescire uirum, sterilemque marito
Fecundauit anum, sacram praecepit ad aram
Sponte uenire pecus, muliebres transtulit artus
In simulacra salis, ramos incendia passos 225
Non ardere dedit, uirgultum soluit in anguem,
Per pelagus siccauit iter, mirabile nimbis
Manna pluit, saxo latices produxit ab imo,
Quadrupedem fari plano sermone coegit,
Suspensis rapidas elementis distulit horas, 230
Per uolucres hominem pasci dedit atque coruscis
In caelum transuexit equis, iam morte grauato
Adiecit tria lustra uiro, praedonis in ore
Naufragio fundauit opem, flagrante camino
Seruauit sub rore pios, per pascua regem
Pauit ut hirsutam pecudem, rictusque leonum 235
Instimulante fame iussit nescire furorem?
Nempe creatori, cuius quaecumque uidentur
Seu quaecumque latent et rerum machina sermo est,
Omne suum famulatur opus sequiturque iubentis
Imperium quacumque trahit sententia nutu. 240

(a) Heu miseri, qui uana colunt, qui corde sinistro
Religiosa sibi sculpunt simulacra suumque
Factorem fugiunt et quae fecere uerentur!
Quis furor est? quae tanta animos dementia ludit, 245
Ut uolucrum turpemque bouem tortumque draconem
Semihominemque canem supplex homo plenus adoret?

Book One

Tell me, Nature, where are your laws after this?
Who has overthrown your laws so many times? Who bade Tartarus
Not know a man had been spared? Who made a barren
Old woman fertile for her husband? Made a ram
Come freely to the sacred altar? Turned womanly limbs
To the likeness of salt? Made branches
Suffering fire not burn? Turned a staff to a snake?
Dried a path through the sea? Miraculously rained manna
From the clouds? Drew streams from the depths of a rock?
Made a four-footed beast speak in plain speech?
Held off the rapid hours with the elements in check?
Made birds feed a man, then carried him to heaven
On shining steeds? Gave fifteen years to a man
Already weighed down by death? Brought help to a castaway
In a robber's mouth? Saved pious men
From the furnace, protected by dew? Fed a king who became a hairy beast
In the wilderness? And commanded lions' jaws—
Driven by hunger—not know their fury?
The Creator, of course. All his work serves him,
Visible or invisible, and his word is the working of things,
And his work follows the will of the one commanding it,
Wherever his thought draws it with his nod.

O wretched men who worship idle things,
Who sculpt religious effigies with sinister heart
And shun their own creator and revere the things they have made!
What madness is this? What great dementia plays upon their souls,
So that a whole man lowers himself to worship a misshapen bird or bull,
A contorted snake or half-man-dog?

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(b) Ast alii solem caecatis mentibus acti
Adfirmant rerum esse patrem, quia rite uidetur
Clara serenatis infundere lumina terris 250
Et totum lustrare polum: cum constet ab istis
Motibus instabilem rapidis discursibus ignem
Officium, non esse Deum, quique ordine certo
Nunc oritur, nunc occiduas dimissus in oras
Partitur cum nocte uices. nec semper ubique est, 255
Nec lumen fuit ille manens in origine mundi
Cum geminum sine sole diem nouus orbis haberet.
(c) Sic lunae quoque uota ferunt, quam crescere cernunt
Ac minui, stellisque litant quae luce fugantur.
(d) Hic laticem colit, ille larem, sed iungere sacris 260
Non audent inimica suis, ne lite propinqua
Aut rogi exiguas desiccet fortior undas,
Aut ualidis tenues moriantur fontibus ignes.
(e) Arboreis alius ponit radicibus aras
Instituitque dapes et ramos flebilis orat, 265
Vt natos caramque domum dilectaque rura
Coniugiique fidem, famulos censumque gubernent.
Lignee, ligna rogas, surdis clamare uideris,
A mutis responsa petis, quae iura domorum
Hac ratione regunt, si caesa securibus actis 270
Ardua pendentis sustentent culmina tecti,
Aut subiecta focus dapibus famulentur edendis.
(f) Nonnulli uenerantur holus mollesque per hortos
Numina sicca rigant uerique hac arte uidentur
Transplantatorum cultores esse deorum. 275

Book One

Some, driven by their blinded hearts,
Proclaim the sun to be the father of things, for it seems (and rightly so)
To spread its brilliant light upon the illuminated lands,
And brighten all the sky: but since, by its very motions,
It is an inconstant flame of rapid ups and downs,
It only serves a function; it is not God. It rises in
Due course then changes places with the night,
Sent off to the western shores. And it is not always everywhere,
Nor was it there at the beginning of the world,
Since the new earth had two days without the sun.
In the same way, they offer up gifts to the moon, which they see
Wax and wane, and worship stars that are then chased off by the light.
This one worships a spring, that one a hearth; but they dare not join
Their enemy's rites to their own, lest in close contention,
The stronger fires should dry the waters up,
Or the tender flames should die by the mighty fonts.
Another one sets up altars with arboreal roots,
Institutes feasts and tearfully begs to the branches,
That they should rule over his children, his beloved rural home,
The faith of his spouse, his servants and wealth. You blockheads!
You are begging to blocks of wood, barking at deaf limbs,
Seeking answers from mute beams, which only have the sense
To rule the needs of your house: they can hold up your lofty rafters,
If cut down by driven axes, or, tossed in the fire,
They can help cook your food for eating.
Many others worship vegetation and in their tender gardens
Water their dry divinities, and so are shown to be
True cultivators of transplanted gods!

Carmen Paschale

Plura referre pudet, sanctoque in carmine longum
Vel damnare nefas, ne mollia sentibus uram
Lilia, purpurei neu per uiolaria campi
Carduus et spinis surgat paliurus acutis. 280
Iam satis humanis erroribus addita monstra
Risimus aut potius tales defleuimus actus.
Nunc coeptam iuuat ire uiam montemque per altum
Nitentes firmare gradus; properemus in urbem,
Libertatis opem, radians ubi regia fuluis
Emitat aula tholis, ubi dantur digna petenti, 285
Quarentem spes certa manet, claustrisque remotis
Peruia pulsanti reserantur limina cordi.
Hic est ille lapis, reprobum quem uertice gestat
Angulus atque oculis praebet miracula nostris:
Cuius onus leue est, cuius iuga ferre suaue est. 290
Per digesta prius ueteris miracula legis
Rettulimus, sancti coniuncto Spiritus actu
Quae Genitor socia Nati uirtute peregit.
Per digesta rudis necnon miracula legis
Dicemus, sancti coniuncto Spiritus actu 295
Quae Natus socia Patris uirtute peregit,
Semper ut una manens deitatis forma perennis
Quod simplex triplicet quodque est triplicabile simplet.
Haec est uera fides; hanc spreuit habere salutem
Arrius infelix, qui curua per auia rectum 300
Flectere nisus iter, foueam dilapsus in atram
Conruit et tetri mersus petit ima profundum:
Tam uacuu sensu, iustae quam tempore poenae
Visceribus fuis uacuu quoque uentre remansit.
Demens, perpetui qui non imitanda parentis 305
Iura caducorum gradibus simulauit honorum!

Book One

It is a shame to gone on and condemn such enduring sin
In this holy song, lest I bruise the soft lilies with briars
Or thorn and thistle rise up among
The violets of the purple field with their pointed barbs.
I have mocked these deeds enough now—or rather,
Lamented the monstrosities of human error.
Now I would like to set out on the road I have begun,
And fix my steps toward the lofty mount; let us hasten to the city,
The wealth of liberty, where a shining royal palace gleams
With golden domes, where honours are given to one who beseeches,
And sure hope awaits the one who searches; with their locks removed,
Heaven's open doors invite the heart that pounds upon them.
Here is that rejected stone, the one the corner bears
At the top, and is wondrous to our eyes:
Its weight is light, its yoke is sweet to bear.
Through various miracles of the Old Law, we have described
What the Father did with the allied strength of the Son,
Joined by the action of the Holy Spirit.
And through various miracles of the New Law,
We shall also describe what the Son has done
With the allied strength of the Father, joined by the action
Of the Holy Spirit, since they are ever one form of the eternal deity—
The one is threefold and the threefold is one.
This is the true faith; wretched Arius refused to accept this salvation,
Who strove to bend a straight path through the crooked wilderness;
Slipping, he fell into a darkened pit,
And sinking, sought the depths of the foul abyss:
He was as empty of sense as he was of his bowels
At the time of his punishment, when his entrails spilled out.
He was a madman, who mimicked with steps of failing honour
The laws of the perpetual father which are not to be imitated!

Carmen Paschale

Namque homines inter natum genitore minorem
Lex carnalis habet, quoniam pater ipse parentis
Filius ante fuit, mox et qui filius est nunc
Adforet esse pater: sic per genus omne nepotum 310
It noua progenies et aui numerantur auorum.
At Dominus, uerbum, uirtus, sapientia, Christus,
Et totum commune Patris, de lumine lumen,
De solo solus, cui nec minus est Patre quicquam,
Nec quo crescat habet, genitus, non quippe creatus: 315
Ipse est principium. nam sicut clarus habetur
In genitore manens, genitor quoque clarus in ipso
Permanet, et rerum caput est Deus unus ubique.
Non quia qui summus Pater est, et Filius hic est,
Sed quia quod summus Pater est, et Filius hoc est. 320
Sic ait ipse docens: 'ego in Patre et Pater in me'.
Rursus: 'ego atque Pater unum sumus'. Arius 'unum'
Debet scire 'sumus'que Sabellius esse fatendum.
Iste fidem ternam, hic non amplectitur unam:
Ambo errore pares, quamquam diuersa sequentes. 325
Qualiter adsueti uarias producere sectas
Impugnant sua dicta uiri, qui brachia nudis
Ostendunt exerta umeris, nil tradere docti.
Sed tantum certare cati, prudentia quorum
Stulta iacet, quia uana Deo est sapientia mundi. 330
Hic loquitur nimis, ille tacet; hic ambulat, hic stat;
Alter amat fletus, alter crispere cachinnum:
Diuersisque modis par est uesania cunctis.
Interea dum rite uiam sermone leuamus
Spesque fidesque meum comitantur in ardua gressum, 335
Blandius ad summam tandem peruenimus arcem.
En signo sacrata crucis uexilla coruscant,

Book One

For among men carnal law holds that the child is lesser
Than the father, since the father himself existed before
The son of the parent, and soon he that is the son
Will become the father: so it is with every kind of descendant—
The new generation comes and ancestors of ancestors are numbered.
But the Lord Christ—the word, might and wisdom,
And every feature of the Father, light of light,
One God of one alone—is nothing less than the Father,
And he has nothing from which he may grow, for he is begotten not made:
He is himself the beginning. For just as that bright One is held
To reside in the Father, so the bright Father remains in Him,
And one God is the head of all things everywhere. This is
Not because He who is the highest is the Father and the other is the Son,
But because what the highest Father is the Son is that as well.
So He himself says: *ego in Patre et Pater in me*.
And again: *ego atque Pater unum sumus*. Arius ought to know *unum*,
And Sabellius should acknowledge *sumus*—
The one does not embrace the three-fold faith, the other not the one.
Both are equal in their error, although they follow different paths.
In the same way, men given to forming sects of various kinds
Deny their own words and, with their uncovered arms
Exposed to the shoulders, they are taught to teach nothing.
They are only clever enough to argue, whose foolish wisdom
Is nothing, since knowledge of the world is worthless to God.
This one speaks too much; that one says nothing at all. This one walks;
That one stands still. One loves weeping; another loves
Bursting out in laughter. In different ways their madness is the same.
Meanwhile, as we pause from our journey with these words,
And hope and faith accompany our steps to the heights,
We come more gently to the highest citadel at last.
Look! The holy standard shimmers with the sign of the cross.

Carmen Paschale

En regis pia castra micant, tuba clamat erilis,
Militibus sua porta patet: qui militat intret,
Ianua uos aeterna uocat, quae ianua Christus. 340
Aurea perpetuae capietis praemia uitae,
Arma quibus Domini tota uirtute geruntur
Et fixum est in fronte decus. Decus armaque porto
Militiaeque tuae, bone rex, pars ultima resto.
Hic proprias sedes, huius mihi moenibus urbis 345
Exiguam concede domum, tuus incola sanctis
Vt merear habitare locis alboque beati
Ordinis extremus conscribi in saecula ciuis.
Grandia posco quidem, sed tu dare grandia nosti,
Quem magis offendit quisquis sperando tepescit. 350
Christe, faue uotis, qui mundum in morte iacentem
Viuificare uolens quondam terrena petisti
Caelitus, humanam dignatus sumere formam,
Sic aliena gerens, ut nec tua linquere posses.
Hoc Matthaeus agens hominem generaliter implet, 355
Marcus ut alta fremit uox per deserta leonis,
Iura sacerdotii Lucas tenet ore iuueni,
More uolans aquilae uerbo petit astra Iohannes.
Quatuor hi proceres una te uoce canentes
Tempora ceu totidem latum sparguntur in orbem. 360
Sic et apostolici semper duodenus honoris
Fulget apex numero, menses imitatus et horas,
Omnibus ut rebus totus tibi militet annus.
Hinc igitur ueteris recolens exordia mortis
Ad uitam properabo nouam lacrimasque serendo 365
Gaudia longa metam: nam qui deflemus in Adam
Semina mittentes, mox exultabimus omnes
Portantes nostros Christo ueniente maniplos.

Book One

Look! The king's pious camps glimmer; the master's horn calls out,
The gate lies open to the troops: he who fights may enter.
The eternal gate beckons you—and that gate is Christ.
You will receive the golden honours of eternal life,
Who bear God's arms with all your might,
And His glory is fixed upon your brow. And I bear arms and glory
In your land, my good king, standing firm in the outermost rank.
Grant me a place of my own here, some humble dwelling
Within the walls of this city, that I, your citizen,
May deserve to dwell in this holy place and be written
Last on the white roll of the blessed order of this city forever.
I know I ask a great deal, but you know how to give a great deal,
You, who are more insulted by the one who becomes indifferent to hope.
Christ, favour my prayers, you who, wanting this dying world
To be reborn, once sought out the earth
From heaven, having deigned to assume human form,
So bearing foreign limbs, that you might not forsake your own.
Guiding man, Matthew covers all this in general,
Mark, the lion's lofty voice, roars out in the wilderness,
Luke holds the laws of priesthood in the mouth of bull,
John, soaring like an eagle, flies to the stars with his words.
These four noble men sing your praises with one voice,
Spreading like the seasons over all the earth.
And so the peak of apostolic honour, twelve-fold in number,
Always shines in imitation of the months and hours,
So that each year does service to you in everything.
Therefore, remembering the origins of ancient death,
I shall hasten from here toward new life, and by sowing tears
I shall reap lasting joys: for we who lament in Adam
As we sow our seeds, shall soon exalt every one,
When we carry our harvest at the coming of Christ.