

## 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 flaescunt mella canistris  
Conlucentque 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 recline upon our couches,  
Put your arrogance aside, if you think yourself a friend,  
And do not look here for the work of an artful book:  
But come to 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.  
We, however, have picked meagre greens from a poor garden,  
Which are put before you in a red earthen pot.

## Carmen Paschale

Cum sua gentiles studeant figmenta poetae  
Grandisonis pompare modis, tragicoque boatu  
Ridiculoue 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 rhythms, 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 then should I—accustomed to ringing 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 am able to speak about these manifest things  
And since it pleases me to acknowledge the Lord Thunderer  
With all my sense and heart? He is the one who gave sense and heart,  
Whose creation should serve Him alone, for Whom, by eternal law  
In the ethereal citadels, there is one power with the Father,  
A matching splendour, a common height, a shared pinnacle,  
An equal honour, the same strength, a kingdom without time,  
Ever a beginning, an everlasting sceptre, a shared glory,  
Similar majesty. This, then, is the way to salvation,  
This leads firm steps to the paschal gifts.  
This will be my song: Turn all your minds to this!

Keep lending your power to wounded hearts [O Lord],  
Into whom creeps deadly evil, the Attic doctrine  
Of Cecropian poison, which is subject to idle 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 the labyrinthine cave  
And roam about the blind thresholds of that Daedalean hall?  
Why still prefer the wild vine to mild grapes  
And pluck the nard of the field, when the roses are 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 tending stones and brazen gods? What good  
Are sacrilegious shrines and damning souls for mute metals?  
Stop living on the squalid plots of the dusty plain  
And sterile tracts of land, where arid earth has no idea  
How to bear fruit, and do not pluck the livid poisons  
With their death-bearing juices from the blood-soaked earth—  
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,  
You 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 the light for every 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 lifeless earth;  
Who restore man dying from the sweetness of the forbidden fruit  
With a better food, and with the drink of sacred blood,  
Dispel the poison injected by the serpent;  
Who recreate the human race from a single stalk,  
Except those whom the ark enclosed, buried by the brisk  
Mass of the foaming flood, so that your mystic strength

## Carmen Paschale

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  
Vernali sub sole uelis, florentibus aruis 90  
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,  
And so washing the whole world in one Baptism.

Stretch out a road for me along the narrow path  
That leads but few to the city of salvation,  
And give 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.  
The way is not difficult, so long as you are the leader;  
All nature is subject to your commands, and freed of its ritual,  
Nature changes into contrary forms according to your will.  
If you should bid the cornfields to wither in the midst of frost,  
Then winter makes a reaper; if you want juice to flow  
Beneath the vernal sun, the juice-stained vine-dresser  
Will be trampling pressed grapes in the flowering fields.  
Moreover, all the seasons will obey your divine pronouncements.  
Ancient faith is the proof, and the grey origin of former fathers  
A witness, and the signs of your strength last the ages  
Never to be abolished at any time.  
About these things, I commit my soul not without effort  
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 should exhale a hundred sounds,  
Who could unravel it all, when neither heaven's lucid stars  
Nor the porous sands of the sea are equal in number?

## Carmen Paschale

[1] Primus abusque chaos 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] First from the chaos with long-lived merits was Enoch.  
He has already known many ages over countless years,  
While nature has lost its sway; the earth gave life to him  
According to the law of creation, but death marvels at his escape.  
[2] The wounded womb of old Sara was already withered away,  
Worn by a lifetime's neglect, and her frigid blood,  
Dying in a year-filled body, kept denying her a child.  
Though her husband was even older, the insides of Sara's  
Icy womb swelled to new birth, and the trembling mother,  
Laden with a cold belly, brought forth hope of a fertile race  
And held that late-come child to her breast.  
The father offered the boy to be sacrificed to God,  
Yet a ram was sacrificed in his place at the altar.  
Oh, the holy conscience of that righteous man! Pity aside,  
And having more piety, he disregarded injuries to his child,  
Having embraced the precepts of God, and with the help of a  
Figural bloodshed, teaches us what was to come—that a pious  
Lamb would die for the human race by the blood of Christ.  
[3] As Lot flees 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; for no one who looks back,  
Ignoring the harmful dangers of this contemptible world,  
Will be saved; neither 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 friendly tinder.

## Carmen Paschale

[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 baptismata 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,  
Ut doctrina sequens planis incederet aruis.

[7] Quid referam innumeras caelestis 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, sterilisque 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 turned into a harmful snake;  
Curved with coils and a three-forked tongue,  
Its swelling, scaly neck swallowed the hostile serpents  
In its mouth and returned to a staff of proper stiffness.

[6] The cerulean waters of the parted sea opened a road;  
They rolled back into a twin flank, and the naked earth  
Was stripped of its usual waters. A troop on foot even  
Entered the waterless main, and all through the deep  
The dry bedrock gaped at their foreign tracks.  
Nature changed its way, and as the people walked  
Through the sea, they experienced a rudimentary baptism  
With Christ as their leader; so 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 the  
Angelic food of celestial bread, how those people, fed  
By the airy sweetness of supernal nectar from the clouds  
Had feasts and showering meals rain down on them?

[8] In turn, that troop grew thirsty in the barren wilderness,  
Where the earth was intensely dry, where the land long lay  
Parched for the lack of water, where the hope of drink  
And life was lost; there he drew unlooked for waters from  
A dry stone, and a spring poured forth from a sterile rock,  
As parched boulders gushed with new drink.  
And so, 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.

## Carmen Paschale

[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 above Gibeon and fixed its panting  
Light at the height of heaven's midst; evening was delayed,  
Unused to bridling the day, and the sluggish moon  
Did not run its course until a flaming sword  
In league with heaven consumed its mighty foe.  
Already then attendant stars discerned  
The coming of Jesus in that herald's name.  
[11] Once, ministering ravens fed Elijah,  
Offering him feasts against their nature, and a bird  
Given to pillaging handed over untainted 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 performed many miracles  
Upon the land and made his friend [Elisha] an heir to his might,  
Who was also worthy to advance through his merits.  
Carried off to the stars in a flame-bearing chariot,  
Whose gentle trail left no airy tracks,  
Elijah struck a starry road in his shining cart  
And drove to victory, pursuing higher honours on a  
Greater track, and he did not pass the finish-line of human age.  
How well that bright path to glittering heaven  
Suited Elijah! He was worthy of that favour,  
Shining in merits and name: for if one letter [of his name] is changed  
According to the accent of the Argive tongue, it becomes 'Helios.'  
[12] Taking pity on the final hours of his fading light,  
God once gave fifteen more years to a king,  
According to His own judgment, and closing the open  
doors of death, He turned that king's life from sunset to sunrise.

## Carmen Paschale

[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 truduntur 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, swallowed by a gulping whale,  
Jonah did not feel the waters in the sea, having a living tomb  
To save him from death; and safe within the belly of the beast,  
He was the deposit, not the plunder, and he came across the vastness  
Of the ocean to unknown lands, rowed by that unfriendly whale.  
[14] When by God's inspiration three men of one mind  
Rejected the rites of Babylon and submit to cruel  
Death according to the Chaldean tyrant's law,  
Whose madness inkindled his Achaemenian wrath  
More than his own furnace, they are cast into the midst of the flames,  
Though the pyre dares do nothing, and heated only by the fire  
Of their hearts, they overcome the blaze of that illusory trial  
By the flame of their souls. O, how great the glory of those believers!  
The furnace flame was checked by the flames of ardent faith.  
But worthy vengeance soon struck down the ruthless king.  
Because that madman abandoned human pity,  
He became the companion of beasts in the wild,  
Exchanging courtly banquets for chewed-up hay.  
Stooping, he drank from the river and roamed for seven years,  
Wandering, 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 on crime,  
And the innocent Daniel, glory of the Hebrews, was sentenced  
To be food for starving beasts. But the brute, made gentle  
By that just man, that it might not harm his holy limbs,  
Began to love hunger; its madness soothed, the lion  
Put its fury aside and its wrath rested in its savage throat,  
And fierce lions learned to protect their prey.

## Carmen Paschale

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 pasqua 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 proposed laws for you so often? Who made hell  
Unconscious of a man's deliverance? 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 into a snake?  
Dried a path through the sea? Wondrously 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 fleeting 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 bade lions' jaws—  
Driven mad by hunger—to forget their fury?  
The Creator, of course. All of His work serves Him,  
Visible or invisible, and His word are the workings 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 likenesses with a sinister heart  
And shun their creator and revere the things they have made!  
What madness is this? What 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?

## Carmen Paschale

(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 rogas exiguas desiccet fortior undas,  
Aut ualidis tenues moriantur fontibus ignes.  
(e) Arboreis alius ponit radicibus aras 265  
Instituitque dapes et ramos flebilis orat,  
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

Still others, incited by their blinded hearts,  
Profess the sun to be the father of things, for it seems (and rightly so)  
To pour its brilliant light upon the illuminated lands  
And brighten all the sky: but since, by its very motions,  
It is an inconstant light of rapid ups and downs,  
It only serves a function—it is not God. It rises in  
Due course, changes places with the night, then is  
Sent off to the western shores. Nor is it always everywhere,  
Nor was it there at the beginning of the world,  
Since the new earth had two days without the sun.  
So they also offer up gifts to the moon, which they see  
Wax and wane, and worship stars 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 up the waters,  
Or the tender flames should die by the mighty fonts.  
Another one sets up altars with arboreal roots,  
Establishes 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 pleading with blocks of wood, barking at deaf limbs,  
Looking for answers from mute beams that rule the needs of your  
House with this rationale: they can hold up your lofty rafters,  
If they are 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  
They water their dry divinities, and thus 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 praebebat 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 profundi:  
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 wrong to say more and, in holy song, to condemn  
Sinning for too long, lest I bruise soft lilies with briars  
Or the thorn and thistle rise up among  
The violets of the purple field with their pointed barbs.  
I have ridiculed these things enough now—or rather,  
I have lamented the monstrosities of human error.  
Now I would like to set out on the road I have begun,  
And direct my steps toward the lofty mount; let us hasten to the city,  
The wealth of liberty, where a shining royal court gleams  
With golden domes, where honours come to the seeker,  
And sure hope awaits the supplicant; 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 in our eyes:  
Its weight is light; its yoke is mild to bear.  
We have described with various miracles of the Old Law  
What the Father did with the allied strength of the Son,  
Joined by the action of the Holy Spirit.  
We shall likewise describe with various miracles from the  
New Law 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; luckless 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 his bowels  
At the time of his punishment, when his entrails poured out.  
He was a madman who mimicked the laws of the perpetual  
Father—laws not to be imitated—with steps of faltering respect.

## 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 crispare 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 who is the Son  
Will become the Father: so it is with every kind of lineage—  
The new generation comes and ancestors of ancestors are counted.  
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 should know *unum*,  
And Sabellius should acknowledge *sumus*—  
The one does not embrace the three-fold faith, the other not the one.  
Both are alike in their error, though they follow different paths.  
Likewise, men who are 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 who bear God's arms with all your might  
Will receive the golden honours of eternal life,  
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 the earth from heaven,  
Having deigned to take up human form,  
Thus bearing foreign limbs, that you might not forsake your own.  
Guiding man, Matthew covers all of this broadly,  
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 a single voice,  
Spreading like the seasons over all the earth.  
And so the peak of apostolic honour, twelve-fold in number,  
Ever 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 to 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.