WRITINGS FROM THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD



Sedulius, *The Paschal Song and Hymns*

Translated with an Introduction and Notes by
Carl P. E. Springer

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SEDULIUS, THE PASCHAL SONG AND HYMNS

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SEDULIUS, THE PASCHAL SONG AND HYMNS

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SEDULIUS, THE PASCHAL SONG AND HYMNS

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Saepe belliger miles armis quibus assuetus est dimicare delectatur et ludere.
Sedulius's first letter to Macedonius (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 6)

Sedulius poeta christianissimus canit:
Beatus autor seculi seruile corpus induit, idque per totam ecclesiam.
Martin Luther, *De diuinitate et humanitate Christi* (*WA* 39.2:95)

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Preface

This project has been long in the conceiving and making, and there are many who have been directly or indirectly helpful in bringing it to completion. Michael Roberts's sage counsel, from the time we first discussed our mutual interests in biblical epics of late antiquity nearly thirty years ago to his conscientious and efficient work in editing this volume, has proven invaluable. He has saved me from many an error or misjudgment with his gentle but effective *correctiones fraternae,* and while it is not possible to acknowledge all of his contributions specifically in the notes, I am eager to recognize them in general here. I am also most grateful to Roger Green for his thoughtful responses to my previous work on Sedulius as they have appeared in reviews, as well as his constructive engagement with my ideas in the pages of his *Latin Epics of the New Testament.* I owe many thanks to the late Reinhart Herzog for his kind personal encouragement early on in my career, as well as to the late Father Eligius Dekkers, the founding editor of *Corpus Christianorum,* who helped to introduce me to the often mysterious ways of European manuscript libraries while I was on a Fulbright Research Fellowship at St. Pietersabdij in Brugge. For their academic hospitality during my stay at the University of Regensburg on a Humboldt Research Fellowship, Klaus Thraede along with his colleagues and students continue to occupy a warm spot in my heart. So do Mildred Budny, Tim Graham, and Ray Page, who welcomed me to the Parker Library at Corpus Christi College in Cambridge, with such memorable generosity. A timely grant from the American Philosophical Society helped to facilitate research on Sedulian manuscripts in Paris, Torino, and Rome. The late Virginia Brown took an active interest in my research on the commentary tradition of Sedulius and, with the aid of a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon foundation, supported my research at the Pierpont Morgan Library and the New York Public Library. My thanks also to the organizers of the conference, "Editing from Antiquity to the Enlightenment," held at The Ohio State University in 2003, to Ralph Mathisen and Danuta Shanzer for including me in a symposium, "Late Antiquity in Illinois IV," at the University of Illinois in 2008, and to Scott McGill and Joe Pucci for inviting me to participate in "The Classics Renewed: The Latin Poetry of

Late Antiquity," a conference held at the universities of Rice and Brown in 2011. The introduction to this volume has benefited considerably from the thoughtful responses of attendees at all three events.

To Southern Illinois University Edwardsville for granting me a sabbatical leave in 2011, which I used to complete the first draft of this manuscript in Rome, my ongoing appreciation. To the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's office as well as the Department of English Language and Literature for their moral and financial support over the years, I extend my gratitude. To the patient librarians at the Newberry Library, Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis University, Washington University, and Lovejoy Library at SIUE, my sincere thanks. Three of my Latin students, Jenelle Kypta, Nancy Staples, and Michael Toje deserve special mention for their unflagging assistance with this project. SIUE's Undergraduate Research Assistant Program helped to make student involvement possible. Finally, to my wife, Avery, above all, my deepest thanks for reading the translation with her critical eye and ear, and for everything.

Proferant igitur sua si qui carpere nitentur aliena. Promptius est omnibus iudicare quam facere.
— Sedulius's second letter to Macedonius (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 173)

Abbreviations

AJP	*American Journal of Philology*
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung.* Part 2, *Principat.* Edited by Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1972–.
Anth. lat.	*Anthologia latina.* Edited by F. Bücheler and A. Riese. Leipzig: Teubner, 1894–1906.
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum: Continuatio mediaevalis
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum: Series latina
CJ	*Classical Journal*
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum
DNP	*Der neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike.* Edited by Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider. 16 vols. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1996–2003.
GCS	Die griechische christliche Schriftsteller der ersten [drei] Jahrhunderte
HL	*Humanistica Lovanensiana*
IJCT	*International Journal of the Classical Tradition*
JAC	Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
MLN	*Modern Language Notes*
MGH.AA	Monumenta Germaniae historica. Auctores antiquissimi
MGH.PLMA	Monumenta Germaniae historica. Poetae Latini medii aevi
OCT	Oxford Classical Texts
OLD	*Oxford Latin Dictionary*
PC	*Paschale carmen*
PG	Patrologia Graeca. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. 162 vols. Paris: Migne, 1857–1886.
PL	Patrologia latina. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. 217 vols. Paris: Migne, 1844–1864.
PMLA	*Proceedings of the Modern Language Association*

PO	*Paschale opus*
RAC	*Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum: Sachwörterbuch zur Auseinandersetzung des Christentums mit der antiken Welt*. Edited by Theodor Klauser et al. Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1950–.
RBén	*Revue Bénédictine*
RE	*Realencyklopaedie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*
REL	*Revue des Études Latines*
RevPhil	*Revue de Philologie*
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
LXX	*Septuaginta id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes*. Edited by Alfred Rahlfs. Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1935.
SPCK	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge
TAPA	*Transactions of the American Philological Association*
TRE	*Theologische Realenzyklopädie*. Edited by Gerhard Krause and Gerhard Müller. 36 vols. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1976–2004.
Vulg.	*Biblia sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem*. Edited by Robert Weber. 3rd ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983.
WA	*D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. Weimar: Böhlau, 1883.
WS	*Wiener Studien*

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all biblical citations in English are taken from *The English Standard Version of the Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2001).

Introduction

A gratifying amount of scholarly attention has been paid in the last decades to late antiquity, a historical period that used to be dismissed as "decadent" but has lately come to be seen as a dynamic time well worth studying for its own sake, not simply as a postscript to the classical period or as a preface to the Middle Ages. It was also a time that was particularly favorable for the production of Latin poetry.[1] Recent scholarship devoted to this topic ranges from such broadly conceived studies as Michael Roberts, *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity*,[2] to highly specialized treatments of a single poet (Juvencus was particularly popular with Klaus Thraede and his students at the University of Regensburg in the 1990s). The emergence of a specifically Christian Latin poetry during this time is an important aspect of this larger topic. Christian Gnilka at the University of Münster and his students have devoted themselves to examining the relationship between Christian poets and the pagan culture they inherited.[3] Recent years have also witnessed a fair number of new critical editions, commentaries, and translations of individual Christian Latin poems of late antiquity, although the production of these scholarly resources

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1. For this point, see Alan Cameron, "Poetry and Literary Culture in Late Antiquity," in *Approaching Late Antiquity: The Transformation from Early to Late Empire* (ed. Simon Swain and M. J. Edwards; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 327-54. Greek Christian poetry of the same period has received relatively less attention, especially from English-speaking scholars, but see now Robert Shorrock, *The Myth of Paganism: Nonnus, Dionysus and the World of Late Antiquity* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011). On the accomplished Greek poetry of Gregory of Nazianzus, see Peter Gilbert, *On God and Man: The Theological Poetry of St. Gregory of Nazianzus* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001).

2. Michael John Roberts, *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

3. Several important collections of essays devoted to the subject have been published by E. J. Brill, including Jan Den Boeft and A. Hilhorst, eds., *Early Christian Poetry: A Collection of Essays* (Leiden: Brill, 1993) and Willemien Otten and Karla Pollmann, eds., *Poetry and Exegesis in Premodern Latin Christianity: The Encounter between Classical and Christian Strategies of Interpretation* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

has not kept pace with what we might call more "theoretical" literary scholarship, and there are still many lacunae in our knowledge that remain to be filled. Among the most conspicuous desiderata is a complete English translation of the works of one of the most popular and important of all of the Christian Latin poets of late antiquity, Sedulius. Throughout the premodern period, his poetry was widely copied in *scriptoria,* read in schools, and sung in churches; the brightness of the fifth-century poet's star only began to fade after the seventeenth century. Of his *Paschale carmen,* Max Manitius declares that it "enjoyed the greatest conceivable circulation and remained one of the primary models for all of the Latin poetry of the Middle Ages."[4] This volume is intended to help to fill the scholarly gap.

The book begins with an introduction that situates the poet and his works in historical and literary contexts, sets forth the translator's presuppositions and methodologies, and offers a fresh literary-critical analysis of Sedulian poetics. Most of its bulk consists of a lightly edited Latin text of Sedulius's poetic works, that is to say, his biblical epic in five books, the *Paschale carmen,* and two hymns, *A solis ortus cardine* and *Cantemus, socii, domino,* along with my own English translation, accompanied by notes. These annotations do not aim to be exhaustive, but focus on select items of linguistic, historical, and literary interest, and are designed to help readers, even those with little or no Latin and only some familiarity with the classical and biblical sources of the *Paschale carmen,* better to comprehend the Latin text and/or the English translation and lead them to a deeper understanding of Sedulius's unique, but not uncontroversial, poetic achievements. Appendices supply texts and translations of incidental related materials, including: (1) Sedulius's dedicatory letters to Macedonius, (2) representative excerpts from the *Paschale opus,* Sedulius's own prose paraphrase of the *Paschale carmen*, and (3) laudatory poems associated with Sedulius's works in manuscripts and early printed editions.

The Poet and His Works

While many questions about Sedulius himself cannot be answered with any degree of certitude, it is possible to glean a limited amount of biographical information from his own writings, especially his dedicatory letters. In the author's first letter to the bishop Macedonius, he mentions Jerome's habit of dedicating literary works to his female friends. This gives us an indisputable *terminus post quem* of the late fourth century (that is to say, the 380s or 390s, when Jerome

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4. Max Manitius, *Geschichte der christlich-lateinischen Poesie bis zur Mitte des 8. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1891), 309.

began the practice), for the composition of the *Paschale carmen*. As a solid *terminus ante quem*, we have a subscription preserved in the venerable Bobbio manuscript (Taur. E.IV.42; dated to the seventh century) that informs the reader of a certain Turcius Rufius Apronianus Asterius, Roman consul in 494, who issued an edition of *Paschale carmen* which he claims to have found in disarray (*inter cartulas suas sparsas*) and to have reorganized, sometime after his service as consul, most likely in the last years of the fifth century. It is possible to narrow these broad temporal parameters further, that is to say, to the second quarter of the fifth century, but such precision rests upon a less secure historical foundation, a biographical notice found in a number of somewhat later manuscripts (beginning in the ninth century), which states that Sedulius was a layman who studied philosophy in Italy and later taught epic meter and wrote "his books" in Greece during the reigns of Theodosius II and Valentinian III (they overlapped between 425 and 450).[5]

It is hard to say how many of these last biographical details are the products of a reliable oral or written tradition. They may reflect rather the ingenuity of medieval scribes who often drew upon the texts before them in the absence of other evidence as they tried to answer the kinds of questions that so often appear in the *accessus ad auctores*, such as: *Quis fecit? Quid fecit? Cur fecit? Quomodo fecit? Quando fecit? Ubi fecit?* Sedulius's references to the city of Athens (in the first book of the *Paschale carmen*) or the Cyclades (in his second letter to Macedonius) might appear to be possible clues as to where the author wrote his works. Unfortunately, the first reference has more to do with the philosophical heritage of Athens than the city proper, while the latter is embedded in an elaborate sailing metaphor that is certainly not meant to be taken literally (for the same image, see Quintilian's prefatory letter to his *Institutio oratoria*). It is unlikely, furthermore, as Roger Green has observed,[6] that there was much demand for instruction in Latin epic poetry in fifth-century Greece. The reference to Italy in the biographical notice, on the other hand, may be based on more solid evidence. According to an eighth-century poem

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5. As it may be found, for example, in Paris, Bibl. Nat., Lat. 18554 (f. 3v): *Incipit ars Sedulii poetae qui primo laicus in Italia philosophiam didicit. Postea cum aliis metrorum generibus heroicum metrum Macedonio consulente docuit. In Achaia libros suos scripsit in tempore imperatorum minoris Theodosii filii Arcadii et Valentiniani filii Constantii.* For fuller biographical background on Sedulius, see chapter 2 in Carl Springer, *The Gospel as Epic in Late Antiquity: The Paschale carmen of Sedulius* (Leiden: Brill, 1988). Johannes Huemer's *De Sedulii poetae vita et scriptis commentatio* (Vienna: Hoelder, 1878) is still worth consulting.

6. Roger Green, *Latin Epics of the New Testament: Juvencus, Sedulius, Arator* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 139–40.

attributed to Aldhelm, *doctiloquus Sedulius* was a native of the city of Rome.[7] The ninth-century Paschasius Radbertus also describes him as a *rhetor Romanae ecclesiae* (*De partu virg.* 2). An Italian or even Roman provenance for the poet does seem probable. However unorganized it may have been, his poetry was to be found in Rome at the end of the fifth century, as we have just seen. The first clear quotations of the text of Sedulius are by Cassiodorus, who founded his intellectual retreat, Vivarium, in the south of Italy near present-day Squillace in the sixth century. The *Decretum Gelasianum,* written quite possibly in early sixth-century Italy, praises Sedulius highly. In the *Paschale opus,*[8] Sedulius cites Virgil's reference to Rome in *Ecl.* 1.26–27 (*Et quae tanta fuit Romam tibi causa uidendi? Libertas....*) as he discusses the differences between the relatively disappointing "earthly city of mortal realms" and the heavenly Jerusalem. All of this evidence is circumstantial, to be sure, but taken together with theological positions Sedulius stakes out in the *Paschale carmen,* especially his consistent defense of the conduct of Peter, the patron saint of Rome, it suggests that he had a close affinity with, if not actual residence in, the spiritual capital of Latin Christianity of the period. We can be quite sure, at any rate, that Sedulius was not Irish, although he was famously confused, by Johann Trithemius (and others since), with the much later Sedulius, an Irish monk of the ninth century, named Siadhal in the Gaelic tongue, who eventually settled in Liège.[9] The latter is often called "Scotus" to distinguish him from the earlier Sedulius, with whose poetry we know that he was familiar.[10]

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7. *Quemadmodum mellifluis / Heroicorum uersibus / Illustris quondam poeta / Romae urbis indigena / Styli calamo stridulo / Charaxante persedulo / Sacris inserit schedulis / Doctiloquus Sedulius* (PL 19:509).

8. Johann Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia: una cum excerptis ex Remigii Expositione in Sedulii Paschale carmen: recensuit et commentario critico instruxit Iohannes Huemer* (ed. Victoria Panagl; Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2007; repr. *Sedulii Opera omnia: recensuit et commentario critico instruxit Iohannes Huemer. Accedunt excerpta ex Remigii Expositione in Sedulii Paschale carmen*; CSEL 10; Vienna: Gerold, 1885), 191.

9. The illustrations in a ninth-century manuscript now in the Plantin-Moretus Museum in Antwerp (M. 17.4) follow iconographic patterns commonly found in the Roman catacombs. See Carol Lewine, "The Miniatures of the Antwerp Sedulius Manuscript: The Early Christian Models and Their Transformations" (Diss., Columbia University, 1970). The manuscript was written in Liège.

10. Intriguingly enough, Sedulius's poetry was well known quite early on both in Ireland and Britain. See Richard Sharpe, "An Irish Textual Critic and the Carmen Paschale of Sedulius: Colman's Letter to Feradach," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 2 (1992): 44–54; Neil Wright, "Gildas's Reading: A Survey," *Sacris Erudiri* 32.2 (1991): 121–62,

From his description of himself as busied at an earlier stage of life with the study of worldly literature (*saecularibus … studiis occupatus*) in his first letter to Macedonius (if not as a student of philosophy per se, perhaps as a teacher of grammar or rhetoric), it is easy to see too how one might come to the conclusion that Sedulius was a layperson. From the same letter, however, we discover that Macedonius was himself a presbyter and that there was at least one *antistes* (most likely a priest or bishop) in his circle. Given Sedulius's close connection with clergy and his impressive familiarity with the scriptures and patristic theology, it is not surprising that in the later tradition he has himself ended up being described as a priest or even a bishop (see, for example, Alcuin, *Officia per ferias*). He is often referred to as Caelius Sedulius, but it is unclear whether "Caelius" should be considered an actual *praenomen* or an adulatory adjective assigned to him years later by an appreciative scribe (*caelius* means "heavenly"). Sedulius himself does not use it in his letters to Macedonius. He is sometimes referred to as *Sedulius poeta*, most likely to distinguish him from Sedulius Scotus, but this too is a designation that we do not find applied by Sedulius to himself.

We can speak more definitively about Sedulius's works and their reception than we can about their author's biography. His poetry continued to be in vogue for over a thousand years after the poet died, and his works survive in hundreds of manuscripts.[11] Sedulius's masterpiece is the *Paschale carmen*, a Latin poem in dactylic hexameters, divided into five books, the first of which is devoted to Old Testament miracles prefiguring the *clara miracula Christi*, which are the concern of the remaining four books. This paraphrastic poem is one of the earliest and most influential examples of what has often been termed "biblical epic."[12] Michael Roberts's *Biblical Epic and Rhetorical Paraphrase in Late Antiquity*[13] was a groundbreaking study that helped to draw serious scholarly attention in the English-speaking world to their existence. More recently Roger Green, in

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and the same author's "The *Hisperica famina* and Caelius Sedulius," *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 4 (1982): 61–76.

11. Over four hundred manuscripts containing some or all of the works of Sedulius are included in Carl Springer, *The Manuscripts of Sedulius: A Provisional Handlist* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1995), a listing that is by no means complete. Some of what follows draws directly or indirectly on the introduction to that book. For the poet's presence in the epigraphic tradition, see M. Muñoz García de Iturrospe, "Sedulio y la tradición epigráfica latina," in *De Roma al siglo XX* (ed. Ana María Aldama; Madrid: Sociedad de Estudios Latinos, 1996), 383–90.

12. On the meaning and tradition of "paraphrase," see J. F. Cottier, "La paraphrase latine, de Quintilien à Érasme," *REL* 80 (2002): 237–52.

13. Michael John Roberts, *Biblical Epic and Rhetorical Paraphrase in Late Antiquity* (Liverpool: Cairns, 1985).

Latin Epics of the New Testament: Juvencus, Sedulius, Arator,[14] has clarified the critical role that these ambitious poems played in helping Latin-speaking Christians to bridge the literary gap between the pagan epic tradition (e.g., Virgil and Lucan) and the biblical texts sacred to Christianity. Poems like Sedulius's, which are written in dactylic hexameters and owe "their narrative continuity to a biblical sequence of events,"[15] represent a "scarlet thread" running through the history of European literature from the fourth century to the seventeenth. John Milton's *Paradise Lost* could be said to be the most famous (and, for all practical purposes, final) representative of this literary tradition in the English language.[16] Of the Latin biblical poets of late antiquity who were regularly part of the medieval curriculum, including Juvencus, who wrote his *Euangeliorum libri* during the reign of Constantine, and the sixth-century Arator, whose *Historia apostolica* is heavily indebted to the author of the *Paschale carmen*, Sedulius enjoyed the widest circulation and most consistent popularity during the premodern period.[17] In fact, of the "patristic poets" in general, both Greek and Latin, only Prudentius can be said to match the popularity and influence that Sedulius's works enjoyed across the centuries. Manitius's partial listing of medieval collections containing a copy of Sedulius reveals the wide extent of the fifth-century poet's appeal to readers in the Middle Ages.[18] To judge from the evidence of manuscript production, there was a great flowering of interest in Sedulius during the Carolingian Age, which continued unabated during the rest of the Middle Ages and well into the early modern period. There are over eighty manuscripts of the *Paschale carmen* (not including fragments) still extant, dating

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14. Green, *Latin Epics*.

15. For this definition, see Roberts, *Biblical Epic*, 4, n.12.

16. For a fuller discussion of the problems involved in the study of this particular literary "genre," see Carl Springer, "The Biblical Epic in Late Antiquity and the Early Modern Period: The Poetics of Tradition," in *Antiquity Renewed: Late Classical and Early Modern Themes* (ed. Zweder von Martels and Victor M. Schmidt; Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 103–26. For studies of the biblical epic in general, in addition to those of Roberts and Green cited earlier, the reader is referred to Reinhart Herzog, *Die Bibelepik der lateinischen Spätantike: Formgeschichte einer erbaulichen Gattung I* (Munich: Fink, 1975), which does not cover Sedulius; Dieter Kartschoke, *Bibeldichtung: Studien zur Geschichte der epischen Bibelparaphrase von Juvencus bis Otfrid von Weissenburg* (Munich: Fink, 1975); and Wolfgang Kirsch, *Die Lateinische Versepik des 4. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1989).

17. On Sedulius's influence on Arator, see Neil Wright, "Arator's Use of Caelius Sedulius: A Re-examination," *Eranos* 87 (1989): 51–64.

18. Max Manitius, *Handschriften antiker Autoren in mittelalterlichen Bibliothekskatalogen* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1935), 268–72.

from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries.[19] The flood of early printed editions, beginning already in the 1470s and ranging from Lutheran Wittenberg to Catholic Salamanca, gives the reader some indication of just how widely popular Sedulius continued to be even after the introduction of the printing press.[20]

In the early Middle Ages, Sedulius's works were read and acclaimed by such important figures as the Venerable Bede, who used him as one of his principal models in his treatise on metrics, Alcuin of York, the influential advisor of Charlemagne and educational reformer, and Isidore of Seville, the Spanish churchman whose library included a copy of Sedulius, which came highly recommended for pious readers who had grown tired of the works of Virgil and other classical poets.[21] The fifth-century poet continued to be read and praised well into the early modern period. The Italian humanist, Petrarch, who punned on Sedulius's name (as well as those of Juvencus, Arator, and Prudentius) in his *Bucolicum carmen* (10.310–318), was familiar with him.[22] So was the early Oxford reformer and friend of Erasmus, John Colet, who recommended the "wisdome with clene and chast laten" of Sedulius's work for students attending St. Paul's School in London. Even more critical for the survival of Sedulius's fame to the present day was the attention the Latin poet received from the German theologian, Martin Luther, who created two of his famous chorales from one of Sedulius's hymns, and referred to its author as *poeta Christianissimus*.

One of the reasons, doubtless, for Sedulius's enduring popularity was the use of his *Paschale carmen* in medieval educational settings.[23] It can be no accident that the poem is so often found in the company of other texts which were used in medieval schools: "Cato's" *Distichs*, the epigrams of Prosper, and the fables of Avianus, as well as more theoretical treatises on grammar and style, such as Bede's *De arte metrica* and *De schematibus et tropis* and Priscian's *Institutio de nomine et pronomine et verbo*. The *Paschale carmen* continued to be used

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19. The distribution of manuscripts (not including fragments) of the *PC* by century is as follows: s. vii: 1; s. viii: 2; s. viii–ix: 1; s. ix: 19; s. ix–x: 4; s. x: 13; s. x–xi: 1; s. xi: 20; s. xi–xii: 3; s. xii: 23; s. xii–xiii: 3; s. xiii: 11; s. xiii–xiv: 1; s. xiv: 14; s. xv: 49; s. xv–xvi: 2; s. xvi: 8.

20. For a listing of over fifty early printed editions that appeared before 1600, see Springer, *Manuscripts of Sedulius*, 211–15.

21. Isidore's verses can be found in Charles H. Beeson, *Isidor-Studien* (Munich: Beck, 1913), 157–63.

22. See Thomas Goddard Bergin, *Petrarch's Bucolicum Carmen* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 172: *Huic comes, hinc prudens, hinc sedulus alter aranti / certabant rigido glebas confringere rastro.*

23. See A. Rigg and G. Wieland, "A Canterbury Classbook of the Mid-eleventh Century (the 'Cambridge Songs' Manuscript)," *Anglo-Saxon England* 4 (1975): 130.

as a school text well into the early modern period. The prefaces to many of the early printed editions make it quite clear that their editors expected this author to be used in schools. Aldus Manutius in Italy, Georg Fabricius in Germany, and Antonio Nebrija (or Lebrija) in Spain—all clearly believed that the poem offered the most salutary kind of pedagogical benefits for Christian school children.[24]

Sedulius's poem enjoyed a double good fortune in the Middle Ages; it was regarded not only as well suited for study in the schools, but accorded respect as a theological work as well. In Venantius Fortunatus, *Carm.* 8.1.59, Sedulius alone of the canonical Christian poets (cf. Fortunatus, *Vita Martini* 1.14–25), is included in the company of such distinguished ecclesiastical authorities as Athanasius, Basil, Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine. Although Ernst Robert Curtius dismissed Sedulius as a "grandiloquent" rhetor who had "nothing to say," his premodern readers apparently valued *what* this "most Christian poet" wrote as well as *how* he wrote it.[25] Sedulius's words were used by churchmen from Hincmar of Reims (*De una et non trina deitate*) to Martin Luther to illustrate doctrinal points and even to settle theological controversies.[26] Of the individual passages from the *Paschale carmen* that proved to be especially quotable, one of the best known was Sedulius's description of the four Evangelists (*PC* 1.355–358), as found, for example, in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 286, "the Saint Augustine Gospels." His lines in praise of Mary, the mother of God (*PC* 2.63–69), were transformed for use in the liturgy of the Roman Catholic church, guaranteeing an enviably wide and enduring audience for their author.

Also well known during the Middle Ages were Sedulius's other works, including the *Paschale opus*, a prose paraphrase of the *Paschale carmen*.[27] But the *Paschale opus* never enjoyed the same degree of popularity as the verse ver-

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24. On the use of Sedulius as a school text in early sixteenth-century Spain, see F. J. Norton, *Printing in Spain 1501–1520* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 127. See also the general overview of Sedulius's reception in Springer, *Gospel as Epic*, 135–50.

25. See Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (trans. Willard R. Trask; New York: Pantheon, 1953), 460–62.

26. In *De diuinitate et humanitate Christi* (*WA* 39.2:95) Luther cites Sedulius in support of the doctrine of Christ's full humanity and observes that the words of his hymn are known widely: "Sedulius, the most Christian poet, sings: 'The blessed maker of the world clothed himself in a slave's body,' and this throughout the entire church, although nothing is able to be said more heretically than that his human nature was the clothing of divinity. For clothing and body do not constitute a person, just as God and man do not constitute one person. But that Sedulius perceived this most piously, his other songs prove most clearly."

27. I prefer this ordering of the two words in the titles of both works, because, as we shall see, it is how Sedulius entitles them in his letters to Macedonius. In manu-

sion. We have only a handful of manuscripts which contain the work more or less in its entirety. While the *Paschale opus* failed to achieve such a wide and sustained popularity as its verse counterpart, Sedulius's *opus geminatum* served as an influential model, particularly for Anglo-Latin authors, a number of whom followed his example in producing double versions of the same work, in prose and verse.[28] Insofar as the *Paschale opus* is the poet's own reformulation and expansion of what he had to say in his poem, it can be of considerable use in helping us to understand difficult passages in the *Paschale carmen,* and there are frequent references to it in the notes accompanying the texts and translations below. A brief set of translated excerpts is provided in the appendix to this volume for the reader who may wish to analyze Sedulius's compositional strategies in verse and prose comparatively.

Despite authoring only two of them, Sedulius was highly regarded as a writer of hymns and is sometimes described in the Middle Ages, along with Ambrose, Prudentius, and Gregory, as one of the *quattuor principales auctores hymnorum*.[29] Both of his hymns display an unusual degree of literary virtuosity. One is an invitation in 110 lines to praise Christ, beginning *Cantemus, socii, domino*, written in elegiac distichs. The hymn is constructed in an epanaleptic format, which is to say that the first half of the first line of each distich is the same as the second half of the second line. In the first half of the hymn an Old Testament type is frequently found in the first line and its fulfillment in the New Testament in the second. While it alludes directly to biblical events and personages, the hymn mostly avoids the use of proper names (Christ, Mary, and Goliath are exceptions); as a result it has something of the same sort of riddling quality so often associated with the earliest Anglo-Saxon poetry. The hymn follows the *Paschale carmen* in many of the early manuscripts, including Taur. E.IV.42. When Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury from 959 to 988, was blessed with an ecstatic vision of a chorus of virgins, the heavenly music that he heard them singing was *Cantemus, socii, domino*. It was also one of the earliest poems to be printed in the "New World." In 1577, just a few decades after the introduction of the first printing press in Mexico City, Antonio Ricardo, a printer from Torino,

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scripts, early printed editions, and modern scholarship, the adjective is often made to follow the noun, in keeping with traditional Latin word order.

28. See Peter Godman, "The Anglo-Latin *Opus Geminatum* from Aldhelm to Alcuin," *Medium Aevum* 50 (1981): 215–29, and G. Wieland, "*Geminus Stilus*: Studies in Anglo-Latin Hagiography," in *Insular Latin Studies: Papers on Latin Texts and Manuscripts of the British Isles: 550–1066* (ed. Michael W. Herren; Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1981), 113–33.

29. See Marvin L. Colker, *Trinity College Library Dublin: Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval and Renaissance Latin Manuscripts* (Dublin: Scolar Press, 1991), 1, 493.

produced an anthology of poems at the newly founded Jesuit Colegio Máximo de San Pedro y San Pablo that contains this hymn (ff. 53v–55v).[30]

Sedulius's other hymn, beginning *A solis ortus cardine*, is an abecedary, an alphabetic composition, recounting in twenty-three stanzas the life of Christ from birth to ascension—or, if you like, from A to Z.[31] It is composed in iambic dimeter quatrains, the hymnic form popularized by Ambrose of Milan. The first seven stanzas (stanzas A–G) were excerpted for use during the Christmas season as an independent hymn, most often with a final doxology appended. It was included in ancient breviaries to be sung on Lauds of Christmas Day. The stanzas immediately following, beginning with the words *Hostis Herodes impie*, were frequently used as an Epiphany hymn. Both of these found their way into the Roman Breviary and are still included in Lutheran and Episcopalian hymnals in the United States. The entire hymn appears in some of the earliest manuscripts of the *Paschale carmen* (but not in Taur. E.IV.42) and can be found in shortened form in hymnaries as early as the tenth century. Lines 65–68 of the hymn (describing Jesus' healing of the woman with an issue of blood) were evidently used as a charm against bloodletting (cf. London, British Library, Royal 2 A. XX, f. 16v). The opening words of this hymn were so well known that medieval poets could expect their audience to recognize them when they were used to introduce other serious works or even for the sake of parody. As *Christum wir sollen loben schon,* Martin Luther's German version of *A solis ortus cardine* has been immortalized in settings by Johann Sebastian Bach and other Lutheran composers.[32]

A work sometimes attributed to Sedulius but generally agreed not to be his is a short cento often referred to as *De uerbi incarnatione* (Huemer, *Sedulii opera*

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30. See Carl Springer, "Ovid, Christianity, and Etiquette: The Uses of Latin Poetry in Colonial Mexico City," *The Annals of Ovidius University Constanta-Philology* 21 (2010): 145–57.

31. For further interpretation, see Carl Springer, "Sedulius' *A Solis Ortus Cardine*: The Hymn and Its Tradition," *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 101 (1986): 69–75, and H. Wiegand, "Ein Weihnachtshymnus aus dem 5. Jahrhundert," *Der altsprachliche Unterricht* 41 (1998): 82–89.

32. Bach's most famous setting is in the Cantata for the second day of Christmas (Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis, 121), but the hymn is also included in *Orgelbüchlein* (BWV, 611), and *Choralbearbeitungen in Kirnbergers Sammlung* (BWV, 696). Earlier composers such as Michael Praetorius, Hans Leo Hassler, and Samuel Scheidt also produced musical treatments of Luther's translation. Various sections of the hymn in Latin have been set to music by Guillaume Dufay, Palestrina, Orlando di Lasso, Francisco Guerrero, Johann Josef Fux, and Alan Charlton. See also John Rutter's setting of the first stanzas of the hymn in English translation, "From East to West."

omnia, 310–15). Versions of the popular hymn beginning *Salue festa dies* are also attributed to Sedulius in a number of manuscripts. Laudatory verse compositions frequently attached to the *Paschale carmen* in the manuscripts, but which were certainly not written by Sedulius, include two acrostic (and telestic) poems, whose initial and final letters spell out the words *Sedulius antistes*. A number of poems such as these are included in the appendices to this volume along with translations. There is also a verse preface often associated with the Virgilian cento of Proba (*CSEL* 16:568), which begins *Romulidum ductor clari lux altera solis*. Intriguingly, this dedicatory poem is found in a number of Sedulian manuscripts which do not contain Proba's cento (see Springer, *Manuscripts*, 15–16 n. 40). The poem mentions "the younger Arcadius" (lines 13–14), Theodosius II, one of the two emperors during whose reigns, as we have seen above (note 5), the *Paschale carmen* was supposed to have been written.

Observations on the Text, Translation, and Notes

As the basis for the Latin texts included in this volume I have adopted, with alterations, Johannes Huemer's critical edition of Sedulius's works, published in Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum 10 (*Sedulii Opera omnia*). While the Latin edition presented here is not intended to be a new critical edition complete with scholarly apparatus, it does offer a limited number of revisions to Huemer's text based on my own preliminary analysis of the evidence of manuscripts and early printed editions.[33] Among the hundreds of manuscripts not consulted by Huemer, there are many that are quite early, including the eighth-century manuscript, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 173, as well as the earliest witness to the *Paschale opus*, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Phillipps 1727 (written in Verona; s. viii–ix). There are over fifty separate early printed editions, including the *editio princeps* published in Utrecht around 1473, a number produced in Spain (e.g., Salamanca, Valladolid, Saragossa, Tarragona, Seville, Barcelona), as well as those of Jakob Thanner (Leipzig, 1494), Aldus Manutius (Venice, 1501–1502), and

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33. For specific criticisms of and emendations to Huemer's edition, see M. Petschenig's review in *Zeitschrift für die Österreichischen Gymnasien* 37 (1886): 187–90; the anonymous review in *Berliner Philologische Wochenschrift* 6 (1886): 361–63; E. Ludwig, "Präpositionales Retro," *Archiv für lateinische Lexicographie und Grammatik* 8 (1893): 294; Carl Weyman, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der christlich-lateinischen* Poesie (Munich: Hueber, 1926), 121–37; and C. Tibiletti, "Note al testo del *Paschale Carmen* di Sedulio" in *Forma Futuri. Studi in onore del Cardinale Michele Pellegrino* (ed. Michele Pellegrino; Torino: Bottega d'Erasmo, 1975), 778–85.

Georg Fabricius (Basel, 1564), to mention a few of them.[34] Modern editions predating Huemer's include those of Chr. Cellarius (Halle, 1704); Hendrik Jan Arntzen (Leeuwarden, 1761);[35] Faustino Arevalo (1794; reprinted in Patrologia Latina 19);[36] Johann Looshorn (Munich, 1879); and E. Ludwig (fifth book of the *Paschale opus*; Heilbronn, 1880).[37]

While Huemer failed to consider a number of early and important Sedulian manuscripts, he did recognize the central importance of two seventh-century manuscripts of Sedulius written in Bobbio, still extant. One of these, Taur. E.IV.42, was apparently once part of Columban's library and is now housed in the University of Torino's library. It is fairly complete. The other is a fragmentary palimpsest preserved in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milano, R. 57 Sup., written in Bobbio at around the same time. Some of the idiosyncrasies of Huemer's edition may be due in part to his zealous dedication to the Bobbio manuscripts, especially Taur. E.IV.42, his "*codex optimus.*" The manuscript certainly does deserve pride of place in any modern edition of Sedulius (it has a number of unique, viable readings), but it should be noted that some of its unique readings are impossible and its scribe was little concerned with orthographic consistency. Huemer's dedication to recording minor peculiarities leads to an overly cluttered and cumbersome critical apparatus, and his own edition's orthography can be as erratic and unpredictable as that of his favorite manuscript. For example, Taur. E.IV.42 has *posquam* at *PC* 2.9 and *postquam* at *PC* 2.105 (misrecorded by Huemer as *posquam*), and Huemer has *posquam* four times and *postquam* six times in the *Paschale carmen.* It is unlikely that the orthographic practices of early medieval scribes shed much light on Sedulius's own spelling some two hundred years or more earlier. For the purposes of this edition, I have

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34. On early editions of Sedulius printed in Barcelona, see Alejandro Coroleu, "Printing Sacred Texts in Early Modern Barcelona (1480–1530)," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 86 (2009): 743–50.

35. Arntzen included in his notes observations of Cellarius, Vonck, Gruner, and Wopkens; my personal copy used to belong to Nicolaas Scheps and contains his extensive handwritten notes.

36. See M. Hernández Mayor, "El Codex Arevalianus del Carmen Paschale de Sedulio," in *Koinòs Lógos: Homenaje al profesor José García López* (ed. Esteban Calderón Dorda et al.; Murcia: University of Murcia, 2006), 413–24.

37. Among the most helpful editions of the hymns are: Guido Maria Dreves, *Hymnographi Latini: Lateinische Hymnendichter des Mittelalters* (vol. 50 of *Analecta Hymnica*; 2nd series; Leipzig: O. R. Reisland, 1907), 53–60; Arthur Sumner Walpole, *Early Latin Hymns with Introduction and Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 151–58; Walther Bulst, *Hymni Latini Antiquissimi LXXV, Psalmi III* (Heidelberg: Kerle, l956), 71–73 and 187.

assumed that Sedulius himself would have been fairly consistent in matters of orthography. This confidence may be unfounded, but if Sedulius was a professional *grammaticus* or *rhetor,* as might be gathered from the evidence of the biographical note discussed above, one might reasonably suppose that he would have been more attentive to such considerations than many medieval scribes. Out of modern concerns for consistency and for ease of reading, therefore, the Latin text provided here regularizes variations between "oe," "ae," and "e," alternations between "t" and "d," "y" and "i," "t" and "c," consonant assimilations, aspiration or lack thereof before initial vowels, the spelling of proper names, the doubling or undoubling of letters, and other irregularities so commonly found in the manuscript tradition. Every "v" is written as "u" unless at the beginning of a line of poetry. Inspired by the same concerns for accessibility to contemporary readers and internal consistency, I have also tried to present the reader with a Latin text that has predictable punctuation (mine is based on more modern, less acoustical, principles than those guiding the medieval scribes or Huemer) and consistent, minimal, capitalization.

With a few exceptions, I observe the paragraph divisions for the *Paschale carmen* found in Huemer's edition, although Green's suggestions (*Latin Epics*, 223–24) for alternative paragraphing especially in the third and fourth books are worthwhile. Many of the manuscripts do include *capitula* for the individual pericopes. It is most unlikely, however, that these were authored by Sedulius himself, since they sometimes refer to the author in the third person; they are, therefore, omitted in my Latin text and translation. The number of books into which the *Paschale carmen* is divided varies widely. Often it is divided into four continuous books, with no break between what are the third and fourth books in Huemer's edition. A common system of book division in the manuscript tradition divides the *Paschale carmen* into five books, with the second book described as "the first book concerning the New Testament." Still other manuscripts divide the *Paschale carmen* into six books, often with 5.261–438 as the final book. The best evidence that the five-book format is Sedulius's own can be found in the conclusions of each of the books themselves. The final two lines of each of the five books sound conclusive. They are replete with assonance and rhyme, the kind of ringing homoioteleuta so often associated with the clausulae of Latin prose. They include *-es* and *-os* in 1.366–367: *mittentes … omnes / portantes nostros … maniplos*; *-a* and *-i* in 2.299–300: *… bona … torua cruenti / ora lupi uitaque frui … pascua Christi*; *-a* , *-ale*, and *-am* in 3.332–333: *parva … facta … curram / speciale … generale, reuoluam*; *-a*, *-o*, *-e*, and *-um* in 4.307–308: *obuia turba … domino … patre Christo / … aetherium … principe … regnum*; *-a*, *-us*, and *-os* in 5:437–438: *facta … totus … mundus / densos … uolumina … libros.* In addition to the sound of the final lines of each book, their sense also seems appropriately conclusive: book 1 concludes with a reference to the final harvest

when Christ will return, and believers will carry in the sheaves; the ending of book 2 refers to the heavenly pasture, where God's will is accomplished, and his sheep may enjoy themselves free from the threat of wolves; Sedulius finishes book 3 with a summary statement about his poetic progress thus far in light of his own authorial inadequacy; book 4 concludes with a doxology; at the end of book 5, Sedulius uses the conclusion of John's Gospel to serve as his own.[38]

Where I have made more substantive changes to the actual wording of Huemer's edition, these modifications, with justifications, are discussed in the notes. These are relatively few in number. My textual critical assumptions are fairly conservative. Given the strong likelihood that a *stemma codicum* will never be able to be developed for such widely circulated and frequently copied poems as these, I maintain a high degree of respect for the evidence of the manuscript tradition itself, especially the earliest Bobbio witnesses, combined with a distrust of the rampant conjectural emendation that often characterized the practice of earlier editors of Sedulius. Of Cornelius Vonck, for example, Gruner remarked that he was "swept away by a remarkable lust for innovation" (*mira innovandi libidine abreptus*). It is unlikely that such a charge will be leveled at this edition. *Lectio difficilior*, the notion that it is more likely that a copyist would have changed a reading that he found more difficult (or scandalous) to understand to one less difficult, rather than vice-versa, is a principle that I find particularly well suited for the textual study of a poet who delights in paradox as much as Sedulius. Otherwise, the textual critical principle memorably enunciated by J.B. Hall serves as my guiding star: "The truth is that only untrammeled eclecticism founded on a recognition of the inapplicability of stemmatics will permit full exploitation of the wealth of the tradition."[39]

The *Paschale carmen* has yet to be translated in its entirety into English. In *The Easter Song: Being the First Epic of Christendom by Sedulius, the First Scholar-Saint of Erinn*,[40] George Sigerson translated sections of the poem into English verse, but some passages he simply summarized. In addition, his trans-

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38. By contrast, there is no concluding sentiment readily apparent at 5.259–260, just before some manuscripts begin the final book of the poem. On this issue in general, M. Hernández Mayor, "La división de libros en el Carmen Paschale de Sedulio" in *La Filología Latina: Mil años más* (eds. Pedro Conde Parrado and Isabel Velázquez Soriano; 3 vols.; Burgos: Fundación Instituto Castellano y Leonés de la Lengua, 2005), 1071–87. Perhaps the variations in book (if not paragraph) division can be traced all the way back to the editorial work that Turcius Rufius Apronianus Asterius claims to have done.

39. L. D. Reynolds, *Texts and Transmissions* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), 144.

40.George Sigerson, *The Easter Song: Being the First Epic of Christendom by Sedulius, the First Scholar-Saint of Erinn* (Dublin: Talbot, 1922).

lations are often quite free and, indeed, sometimes bear only a loose resemblance to the original. Otto Kuhnmuench included prose translations of a limited number of selections (1.17–87; 1.242–247; 2.20–34; 2.49–72; 5.63–68) in his *Early Christian Latin Poets*.[41] Carolinne White's volume bearing the same name as Kuhnmuench's[42] includes her translations of selections from the first (136–59) and the fifth book (20–68 and 164–244) of the *Paschale carmen*. Roy Swanson translated the first book of the *Paschale carmen* into English verse in *Classical Journal* 52 (1957): 289–97. Francesco Corsaro's *Sedulio Poeta*[43] includes an Italian translation of the *Paschale carmen* and the hymns.[44] The opening verses of Sedulius's popular alphabetical hymn, *A solis ortus cardine*, have been frequently translated into English and German, but Sedulius's other hymn, *Cantemus, socii, domino,* as well as his dedicatory letters to Macedonius, have not (to my knowledge). The most famous translator of Sedulius is no doubt the influential sixteenth-century theologian and reformer of the church, Martin Luther. His German version of the first seven stanzas of *A solis ortus cardine* (with a doxology) appeared in the *Erfurt Enchiridion*, published in 1524, as *Christum wir sollen loben schon.* The translation of the following stanzas beginning with *Hostis Herodes* did not appear until later (1541) as *Was furchstu, Feind Herodes, seer.*[45]

As opposed to John Dryden and other distinguished translators according to whom a translation should be something of a brand new literary creation, my own philosophy of translation is much less ambitious, more attuned to the

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41. Otto Kuhnmuench, *Early Christian Latin Poets from the fourth to the sixth century, with an introduction, translation, commentary, and notes* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1929), 254–72.

42. Carolinne White, *Early Christian Latin Poets* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

43. Francesco Corsaro, *Sedulio poeta* (Catania: Istituto universitario di magistero, 1956).

44. There is also a translation of the collected works of Sedulius into Polish by Henryk Wójtowicz (Lublin, 1999) that I have not consulted.

45. See *WA* 35:431–33 and 470–71. Johannes Hutt, an Anabaptist from Augsburg, had produced a less literal translation of the first stanzas shortly before Luther's, but there were a number of other German versions long before his; see, e.g., Philipp Wackernagel, *Das deutsche Kirchenlied von der ältesten Zeit bis zu Anfang des XVII. Jahrhunderts* (vol. 2; Leipzig: Teubner, 1867), no. 562 and 756, and Günther Bärnthaler, *Übersetzungen im deutschen Spätmittelalter: Der Mönch von Salzburg, Heinrich Laufenberg und Oswald von Wolkenstein als Übersetzer lateinischer Hymnen und Sequenzen* (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1983). There have been over 20 English translations of the hymn, including John Mason Neale's and John Ellerton's. The latter is used in a recent American Lutheran hymnal, *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006), which leaves out three of the original stanzas (C, E, and F).

priorities of a scholar than a poet. It is my aim to find an English idiom that is fairly faithful to the original Latin, while not sounding too wooden. Especially when translating poetry, the preservation of metaphor is of critical importance, so I have tried to stay somewhat close to the language of the original without sacrificing clarity.[46] This said, the reader will discover that I have taken a number of liberties in this translation (e.g., shorter sentences; active for passive voice and vice-versa) which I have deemed necessary to ensure greater readability. Like other Latin poets, Sedulius allows himself a great deal of compositional flexibility, often for metrical considerations. The present tense may be used "historically" for the past; an abstract word may be substituted for a more concrete one; the singular may be employed for the plural or vice-versa. These distinctive features are almost always impossible to reflect literally in a fluent English rendering. As much as possible, allowing for the difference between English word order, with its strong preference for sentences that begin with the subject followed shortly thereafter by the verb, and the much greater flexibility found in Latin word order, I have tried to ensure that the lines of text and translation remain relatively close. The reader who has even a limited amount of Latin should have little difficulty in consulting the original language.

The most famous medieval commentary on Sedulius was written by Remigius of Auxerre (ca. 840–908), whose work serves as the basis for much subsequent glossing on the text of the *Paschale carmen,* but there are other glosses in Old English, Old High German, and Latin which may or may not be connected with Remigius's commentary. Extensive portions of it, based on select manuscripts, are included in Huemer's edition. The best known commentary of the early modern period is that of the great Spanish humanist and grammarian of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, Antonio Nebrija, first published in 1510 and reprinted 20 times in as many years.[47] It is much more thorough than the one prepared earlier by his student, Juan de Sobrarias, which first appeared

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46. I am impressed with Walter Benjamin's insistence on the importance of the principle of "transparency" for a good translation: "it does not cover the original, does not block its light, but allows the pure language, as though reinforced by its own medium, to shine upon the original all the more fully." See "The Task of the Translator," in *Illuminations* (transl. H. Zohn; New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968), 69–82.

47. See R. Manchón, "El Comentario de Antonio de Nebrija al poeta cristiano Sedulio," in *Humanismo y pervivencia del mundo clásico* (ed. José María Maestre Maestre et al.; Madrid: Ediciones del Laberinto, 2002), 943–54, and Antonio de Nebrija, *Comentario al Carmen Paschale y a dos himnos de Sedulio* (trans. Valeriano Yarza Urquiola; Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2011).

in 1500.[48] Modern commentaries which I have consulted include Nicolaas Scheps, *Sedulius' Paschale Carmen, Boek I en II: Ingeleid, Vertaald en Toegelicht*;[49] Michael Mazzega, *Sedulius, Carmen Paschale, Buch III. Ein Kommentar*;[50] P. W. A. Th. van der Laan, "Sedulius Carmen Paschale Boek 4. Inleidung, Vertaling, Commentaer";[51] and Daniel Deerberg, *Der Sturz des Judas: Kommentar (5,1–163) und Studien zur poetischen Erbauung bei Sedulius*.[52] Manfred Wacht's *Concordantia in Sedulium*[53] has proven to be an invaluable tool for close verbal analysis, although its title is somewhat misleading; it includes only the *Paschale carmen*. Roger Green's *Latin Epics of the New Testament* includes a thoughtful reading of the letters to Macedonius and the *Paschale Carmen* (154–209) as well as translations of select passages,[54] to which my own translation is sometimes indebted and with which my notes are frequently engaged.

Suffice it to say that for what follows I have drawn on all of the scholarly resources acknowledged above, although some have proved to be more useful for my purposes than others. In the interest of preserving a reasonable degree of brevity, however, it will not be possible to indicate my specific debt in every instance in the notes proper. It should be noted too that these annotations are not intended to be comprehensive in any way or to replicate the work already done in commentaries or other specialized studies. Sedulius is an exceedingly intertextual author and to list every possible borrowing from earlier or contemporary pagan or Christian Latin poets, for instance, would be unduly cumbersome in notes such as these, especially when the language borrowed is standard poetic phraseology and may function, as it sometimes appears to do, as little more than a kind of *Übersetzungsmedium*. Panagl's *Index fontium et locorum similium* is ten pages long and cites over seven hundred instances. Of these I

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48. See Charles Fantazzi, "Nebrija and the Horatius Christianus," *IJCT* 11 (2005): 620–28. *A solis ortus cardine* and *Hostis Herodes* were included along with over eighty other Latin hymns by Nebrija in his completely reworked *recognitio* of *Aurea hymnorum expositio*, reprinted ten times before 1520. See A. Moss, "Latin Liturgical Hymns and their Early Printing History, 1470–1520," *HL* 26 (1987): 112–37.

49. Nicholaas Scheps, *Sedulius' Paschale carmen, Boek I en II: Ingeleid, Vertaald en Toegelicht* (Diss., Delft, 1938).

50. Michael Mazzega, *Sedulius, Carmen Paschale, Buch III. Ein Kommentar* (Basel: Schwabe, 1996).

51. P. W. A. Th. van der Laan, "Sedulius Carmen Paschale Boek 4. Inleidung, Vertaling, Commentaer" (Diss., Oud-Beijerland, 1990).

52. Daniel Deerberg, *Der Sturz des Judas: Kommentar (5,1–163) und Studien zur poetischen Erbauung bei Sedulius* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2011).

53. Manfred Wacht, *Concordantia in Sedulium* (Hildesheim: Olms-Weidmann, 1992).

54. See, e.g., *PC* 1.17–28:162; 3.46–63:200; 3.219–228:194; and 4.125–141:187–88.

will focus only on unusually conspicuous cases of borrowing or where it seems likely that the poet is deliberately engaged in what has been called *Kontrastimitation* with the poetic forbears to whom he was so deeply indebted, such as Virgil, Ovid, Lucan, or Juvencus. Another disclaimer about the notes: Sedulius has had an enormous influence on the later literary tradition. It would be wearisome to enumerate all of the instances in which Sedulius's works are cited by later authors, to say nothing of offering an analysis of each. Panagl's *Index imitatorum* runs to nearly thirty daunting pages.[55] The list of authors and works apparently influenced by Sedulius includes: Abelard, Alain de Lille, Albert of Stade, Alcuin, Aldhelm, Amalarius, Arator, Avianus, Avitus, Bede, Bernard of Clairvaux, Cassiodorus, "Cato," Columban, Dracontius, *Ecbasis Captivi*, *Ecloga Theoduli*, Ennodius, Ermoldus, Eugenius of Toledo, Hincmar of Reims, *Hisperica Famina*, Hrabanus Maurus, Hrotsvitha, Isidore of Seville, Jean Gerson, John of Salisbury, Julianus Toletanus, Luitprand, Matthew Paris, Odo of Cluny, Paschasius Radbertus, Paulinus of Aquileia, Paulinus of Pella, Peter the Venerable, Remigius of Auxerre, Sedulius Scotus, Smaragdus, Tatwine, Theodulf of Orleans, Thomas à Kempis, Venantius Fortunatus,[56] Walafrid Strabo, Walter of Châtillon, and Wulfstan, among others. In my notes I offer only select examples where the poet's influence seems especially important and interesting.

Of course, Sedulius is a biblical poet, and he constantly refers to the scriptures, both as the basis for his narrative itself, and in support of his poetic explanations. While I have tried to indicate in the notes the most relevant biblical passages, there are many important and often vexed subsidiary questions that the reader will find less than fully addressed in the notes. Which version of the Bible did Sedulius use? Did he consult the Greek original? Did he use a version of the Vulgate or the *Itala* or both?[57] Did he have some kind of harmony of the Gospels before him as he wrote, or did he rely on his memory, or use some combination of both?[58] Upon what extrabiblical sources (e.g., apocryphal Gospels, contemporary art, oral catechesis and preaching, or his own fertile imagination), might he have drawn? Many of his biblical interpretations sound quite similar to those

55. Well over two hundred individual authors and anonymous works are listed.

56. See Michael John Roberts, *The Humblest Sparrow: The Poetry of Venantius Fortunatus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 321, for an assessment of "Fortunatus' unusual familiarity with the *CP* and the special status that the poem had for him." The fifth-century poet "is far and away the most influential Christian poet on his work" (31).

57. See the first Appendix to P. Van der Laan, "Sedulius Carmen Paschale," 204–12, which makes the case that Sedulius used the *Vetus Latina,* not the Vulgate.

58. See the detailed study of G. Moretti Pieri, "Sulle fonti evangeliche di Sedulio," *Atti e memorie dell'accad. tosc. di sc. e lett. La Columbaria* 39, NS 20 (1969): 125–234.

of patristic authors such as Origen, Hilary, Jerome, Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Augustine.[59] Since he never credits them, it is difficult to know how much he may have owed to them either directly or indirectly. Questions such as these are highly complex and have been analyzed at length elsewhere. To address them in each instance goes beyond my purposes here; the reader interested in greater comprehensiveness in this regard is urged to consult the relevant commentaries and specialized studies for more detailed considerations.

As for historical background, I have tried to provide in the notes, without overloading them, brief contextualizations that may help to establish the *Sitz im Leben* for Sedulius's paraphrase of the Gospel accounts, so very far removed, in time and space, from the cultural expectations of first-century Palestine. These are intended to give the modern reader a more vivid sense of what his words may have meant to his earliest readers, by concentrating on the world of thought, images, and events of the city, empire, and church of Rome in the fifth century. A listing of relevant primary and secondary sources is included in the select bibliography that concludes the volume.

"Pious Mirth"[60]

The critical responses to Sedulius as a poet have been quite varied. On the one hand, as a biblical poet working in the paraphrastic tradition, Sedulius's poetics do not fit comfortably with what Michael Roberts has called "the jeweled style," the highly worked verbal virtuosity so characteristic of the poetry of peers like Ausonius, Paulinus of Nola, and Prudentius. Of Sedulius and Arator, Roberts declares: "The jeweled style is largely avoided; narrative and interpretation are interfused to produce a poetry of commitment to the Christian message that refutes any accusation of self-serving stylistic virtuosity. But other poets were less rigorous in their avoidance of literary tours de force in the preferred style of late antiquity."[61] Indeed, it is possible to read the *Paschale carmen* as though it were a kind of pious midrash of the Bible (or even a missionary treatise) that just

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59. Ambrose and Augustine were probably the most influential (Green, *Latin Epics*, 235–36). Theodor Mayr, *Studien zu dem Paschale carmen des christlichen Dichters Sedulius* (Augsburg: Pfeiffer, 1916), 54–68, while dated is quite specific and still useful. For a comprehensive study of the doctrinal perspectives of the biblical epics of late antiquity, see Daniel Joseph Nodes, *Doctrine and Exegesis in Biblical Latin Poetry* (Leeds: F. Cairns, 1993).

60. Catherine Winkworth, the Victorian translator of Luther's hymns, describes the angels who sing at Christ's birth as filled with "pious mirth" in her translation of the German Christmas hymn *Vom Himmel Hoch*.

61. Roberts, *Jeweled Style*, 142–3.

happens to be written in verse. Not a few critics, on the other hand, have focused on the liberties this poet takes with the sacred text and how heavily he adorns its narratives with classical figures and tropes. According to Ernst Robert Curtius, the "grandiloquent" Sedulius was an "inflated, vain, soulless, and unintelligent rhetor" whose poetry demonstrates "only that even a recent convert could take over the frippery of the pagan school rhetor into his Christian life, could indeed make it over into Christian clothing and strut about in it" (460). How could the same poet's achievement elicit such disparate critical assessments?

Certainly, throughout the Middle Ages and beyond Sedulius was taken to be a serious religious poet, a *poeta Christianissimus* as Luther described him, whose verses were employed in theological controversy and embedded in the language of the liturgy. In the opening lines of the *Paschale carmen*, Sedulius himself lets his reader know that he is a poet who believes strongly in the truth of his poetry. He is a verse evangelist, not just another charming poet playing with trifles. Sedulius has serious ambitions, to be a *vates*, the old-fashioned kind of poet, like Homer or Hesiod (or Lucretius or Virgil), inspired by the Muses. As he indicates at the conclusion of his first letter to Macedonius, he intends the fruits of his poetic labors to be an offering to "our Lord Jesus Christ." What he has to say, as he explains to Macedonius, is substantial, salutary, useful, like medicine, and it is not always palatable without the sweet coating of verse. Without coming to faith in the *clara miracula* of Christ as they are retold in his poem, this polemical poet is convinced that everyone in the world around him—heretics, pagans, Jews—will never enjoy the fruits of Christian salvation.

At the same time, despite his "grand" poetic ambitions, like other contemporary Christian poets, Sedulius expresses great modesty about his own poetic abilities. This has struck readers like Curtius as proof of his insincerity, as there can be no doubt that Sedulius was a highly accomplished wordsmith. In fact, it would be surprising if Sedulius had not expressed some degree of authorial modesty in his prefatory remarks; it is a trait with very deep roots in a Christian ethos that tends to prize human humility and to give glory to God alone (cf., e.g., the Apostle Paul's description of himself in 1 Corinthians as an "earthen vessel" in which the rich treasures of the Gospel are stored).[62] Rhetorical "topoi" such as authorial modesty become so formulaic and predictable not because they do not map reality, but precisely because they so often do. It is, of course, highly unlikely that anyone forced Sedulius to write this fairly long and highly worked poem that required him to sail what he called "the immense sea of the paschal majesty," or, as Curtius cuttingly observes, its even longer and more

62. See A. Dihle, "Demut," *RAC* 3:735–78.

tedious prose paraphrase.[63] Just because the author appears to derive a great deal of enjoyment from the exercise of his considerable rhetorical gifts does not, of course, rule out the possibility that he may at the same time still feel overwhelmed by the literary task he has set himself. Since we have no actual textual evidence to suggest that Sedulius's expressed feeling of poetic inadequacy is any more insincere than his passionate outbursts against heretics and Jews or his not infrequent editorial expressions of personal piety and religious awe, conjectures in this regard may tell us more about the critic than the poet criticized.

The *Paschale carmen* is without question highly rhetorical, but so is much of the Latin poetry of authors such as Virgil, Ovid, and Lucan, if by "rhetorical" we mean highly worked and artificial. Sedulius may not be altogether to the taste of readers, in other words, who expect poetry to exhibit the kinds of spontaneous, natural freedom characteristic of Shelley's skylark who pours forth from its "full heart" its song "in profuse strains of unpremeditated art." Sedulius's style cannot really be judged to be "classical." Perhaps "baroque" (or "mannered"), if not "jeweled," would be appropriate adjectives. Certainly, the classic Horatian criterion, *simplex et unum*, is not a principle endorsed by Sedulian poetics. "Ornament" is clearly a high priority for the poet. Indeed, it would be unfeasible to note in each instance the figures and tropes Sedulius employs with such extravagant profusion throughout the *Paschale carmen*. These include: adnominatio, allegory, anaphora, antithesis, apostrophe, asyndeton, chiasmus, commutatio, ecphrasis, enallage, epanastrophe, exclamatio, geminatio, hendiadys, hyperbaton, hysteron proteron, irony, metaphor, metonomy, oxymoron, parataxis, polyptoton, praeteritio, rhetorical question, simile, synecdoche, transferred epithet, tricolon, variatio, and others. He writes with great vividness, using language that is sometimes shocking in its effect, and he is keenly aware of how his poetry sounds. His verse is filled with alliteration and assonance, internal and end rhymes, and "golden lines." Like Juvenal and other Roman satirists, he loves to offer witty, pointed *sententiae* in the most striking manner conceivable. He mixes styles with great freedom, juxtaposing extravagant outbursts with simple retellings of biblical narratives (cf., e.g., *PC* 3.8) and succinct theological summations (see, e.g., *PC* 5.404).

If Sedulius's poetic style is different from that of Virgil or Horace, that does not mean, of course, that it should be judged perforce as deficient or defective. It is possible to read his poetry not as a pale imitation of "better" poetic forbears in

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63. The expression of obligation is a trope that appears in many prefaces of the Christian literature of the time, but see Catherine M. Chin, *Grammar and Christianity in the Late Roman World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), especially chapter 2, on the connection between scholarly work and piety.

the Latin tradition, but as the trendsetting work of a poetic pioneer who helped to shape the aesthetic contours for Latin biblical epics and hymns for centuries to come. Sedulius is one of the first poets, for instance, to fully embrace the acoustic potential of rhyme that was to become such an important feature of European poetry in the following centuries.[64]

An element in his verse that has often escaped the attention of his theological or literary critics, but is perhaps the most vital poetological aspect to notice because it sets Sedulius apart from many other poets engaged in the same kind of literary-theological project, is its playfulness. All the biblical poets of late antiquity could be said, of course, to be ludic in some sense, even the meticulous Juvencus and the didactic Arator. The biblical centos of Proba and others who used lines and half-lines of pagan poets like Virgil and Homer to retell sacred narratives have an inherent virtuosic quality that made them a source of delight for some premodern readers but may have offended or upset others, like Jerome.[65] But Sedulius is even more self-consciously and explicitly playful. He uses the Latin verb *ludere* ["to play"] in his first letter to Macedonius. Sometimes, the poet suggests to the busy presbyter, it is pleasant "to take a tiny break from writings that are loftier and gladly enjoy humbler fare. The eagle does not always soar high above the clouds, but also descends to earth sometimes in easier flight. The battle-hardened soldier also often delights to play with the arms with which he is accustomed to fight." The doughty word of God, which Paul describes as the "sword of the Spirit," is not only useful for "instruction in righteousness," polemical theologizing, and converting hardened hearts, but can, according to Sedulius, serve as a source of literary delight.

Would Sedulius's first readers, including the pious Macedonius, have appreciated his poetic humor as applied to the Bible? The question of intended readership is quite complicated when it comes to a literary work like this that overtly addresses the question of faith. Who could Sedulius have conceived as his readers? Those who did not believe; those who said they believed but did not really; those who believed but still had doubts; those who believed but who believed wrongly; and, of course, those who were already devout believers—all were potential readers of a biblical epic such as Sedulius's, provided they had at least some preliminary grounding in Latin grammar. Conversion of the heathen, providing instruction to catechumens, building up the faith of immature

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64. See Jules Candel, *De clausulis a Sedulio in eis libris qui inscribuntur Paschale Opus adhibitis* (Tolouse: Societatis Sancti-Cypriani, 1904), on the thousands of *clausulae* in the *Paschale opus,* and Dag Ludvig Norberg, *An Introduction to the Study of Medieval Latin Versification* (ed. Jan Ziolkowski; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of Ameria Press, 2004), especially 31–32.

65. See my "Jerome and the Cento of Proba," *Studia Patristica* 28 (1993): 96–105.

or mature believers, refuting skeptics and heretics—all of these were undoubtedly authorial intentions to some extent or another for Juvencus, Sedulius, and Arator.[66] It is not at all unusual, of course, for authors to have more than one set of readers in mind as they write and to envision more than one purpose for their writing.

In the opening lines and elsewhere in his poem, Sedulius does express his interest in the conversion of pagans to Christianity. In fact, he addresses them directly in the second person plural, urging them to favor the truthful content of his biblical poem over the *mendacia* and *figmenta* of the *gentiles poetae.* They should leave the barren wasteland of Attic philosophy for the well watered pasturage of Holy Scripture. It would be unwise, however, simply to take Sedulius "at his word" here as Michael Mazzega recommends that we do[67] and suggest that this means that his primary or even sole intention as a poet was to make a contribution to "*der Dienst der Heidenmission.*" It is important that we try to distinguish as much as possible an author's stated "audience," which can be entirely fictional, from his or her potential or actual readers.[68] Just because Virgil gives farmers specific advice on how to raise cattle, tend vines, and keep bees, in his *Georgics*, for example, does not mean that he really imagined that illiterate farmers in rural Italy would be able to use his poem for practical purposes or even appreciate its artistry. He wrote it for his patron Maecenas and his group of well-educated Roman elites, including Augustus, to enjoy. From his dedicatory epistles to the presbyter Macedonius and his circle of devoutly Christian friends, it is clear that whatever he may say about and to pagan readers, Sedulius had a very specific group of Christian readers in mind as he wrote his poem. They were not novices to the faith by any means. Sedulius describes Felix, for instance, as one to whom the world is crucified, using language borrowed from the Apostle Paul's epistle to the Galatians. Syncletica, another member of Macedonius's circle, is described by the poet as a *sacra virgo* and *ministra.* Ursinus was an *antistes*. These were clearly not pagans. In fact, they were not even catechumens, still learning the first principles of the faith before being admitted fully into its mysteries. Sedulius may be directing his poem *against* or *to* pagans, among others, but he is writing it *for* Christians.

There are, doubtless, simple, straightforward poems, which deserve simple and straightforward readings, but this is surely not one of them. To illustrate

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66. Sedulius mentions only Arius and Sabellius by name in his poem, but it is quite possible that he was aware of more recent heretical controversies, including Nestorianism; see Springer, *Gospel as Epic,* 33–44 and Green, *Latin Epics*, 239–44.

67. Mazzega, *Sedulius, Carmen Paschale*, 16.

68. Walter J. Ong, "The Writer's Audience Is Always a Fiction," *PMLA* 90 (1975): 405–27.

this point with just one example: when Sedulius assures us in his preface that as our host he will be serving up a simple, rustic paschal meal, not featuring the fancy kind of food served by the pagan culinary competition, his metaphorical declaration itself is hardly simple or straightforward. It is the height of sophistication to claim lack of sophistication. His own sophisticated rhetoric undercuts what he is saying. We cannot simply take this poet "at his word" without ignoring his words themselves. Equal caution is required when we read Sedulius's addresses to the *gentiles populi* (e.g., 4:304). The fact that he addresses pagans and unbelievers does not necessarily mean that he thinks that they are going to be reading his poem. Throughout the course of the *Paschale carmen,* Sedulius apostrophizes a whole cast of biblical characters including Eve, Mary, Herod, and Judas, all of them long dead before the author's time. He also addresses non-human elements such the Jordan River and nature and death. Such apostrophes are a common poetic convention, but they most certainly should not be taken literally. Nobody could seriously imagine that Sedulius expected Judas or the Jordan River to be in a position to read his poem or hear his poetic voice, just because we find him addressing his words to them in the poem.

Now it may be that Juvencus, a contemporary of Constantine, the emperor who famously converted to Christianity in the first quarter of the fourth century, did write his verse paraphrase of the Gospels, the *Evangeliorum libri*, in order to help an educated pagan audience who were put off by what many considered to be the relatively unpolished style of the scriptures better to appreciate the sacred narrative, once it was recast in a more aesthetically pleasing form. And, of course, there were still adherents of paganism left in Sedulius's time, a century or so later.[69] But the last pagan temple in Rome (dedicated to Venus and Rome) was closed in 391, and Theodosius prohibited pagan worship the following year. Given the historical realities of his own times, it is most unlikely that the conversion of pagans represented as pressing an issue to the fifth-century poet as it had to the earlier Juvencus, with whose work he was doubtless familiar. But even if the *Paschale carmen* is trying to emulate what Juvencus had already done a hundred years or so earlier, we should not be misled into simply assuming that its author is trying to do nothing more than replicate Juvencus—any more than Juvencus is trying to do nothing more than replicate the original evangelists. The fifth-century poet's hexameter retelling of the life of Christ is a very different kind of poem from Juvencus's. Its narratological focus is not on simply retelling the reader what happened in another way, but on accentuating the wonder of what happened. In his account of the multiplication of the

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69. See now, in general, Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

loaves and fishes, Sedulius tells us that he is adding the biblical detail about how much was left over so that his readers might marvel even more (*plus ut mireris*, 3.267). Sedulius's poetic theme is the *clara miracula salutiferi Christi.* This is a poem about "the wonderful." Nature's laws are routinely broken. The Red Sea becomes a pedestrian traffic route. The lions surrounding Daniel in the den learn not to be hungry. Water changes to wine and blushes on the table at the wedding of Cana. The virgin Mary stares at her swelling stomach in amazement. A dead man is raised from the grave, and Lazarus becomes his own successor. These marvels begin already in the Old Testament, the first book of his poem, and culminate in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and his ascension into heaven in the final book.

Not every biblical account that Sedulius retells is as wonderful on the face of it as those in the long series of Jesus' miracles he recounts in the third and fourth books. There is much that is inherently miraculous in the passion story, retold in the fifth and final book of the poem, but there is also much that is not. But even when Sedulius is retelling an episode in the story of Christ's betrayal, his trial and beatings, his crucifixion, which is not explicitly miraculous, he is never content simply to retell it. He uncovers for his reader the paradoxical, the unexpected, the significant in what could justly be considered mundane or insignificant, and then revels in it. There is a wild abundance of poetic figures of speech: antithesis and chiasmus, metaphor and simile, allegory and paronomasia, as the poet elaborates and emotes about what the evangelists (or Juvencus) narrate simply and succinctly (or ignore): the shape of the cross, the day of the week that he rose from the dead, the fact that his mother Mary is the first to whom he appears. His readers will not only be informed or convinced or instructed, but also, and above all, delighted. His poem is not supposed to be a synoptic overview of the Gospels in verse like Juvencus's. Nor is it as comprehensively exegetical as Arator's more prosaic *Historia.* It is a *carmen.* One could even go so far as to translate its title as "The Easter Charm."[70]

Could not well-educated pagans who were already generally familiar with scriptural narratives or Christian doctrines, but hostile or indifferent to them, have appreciated this kind of poem? Might they not have been delighted and charmed too? Possibly. But the answer would certainly depend a lot on the level

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70. See Ambrose, *Epistulae*, 75A, 34, for this meaning of the word *carmen.* On the power of the "marvelous combined with astonishment" to prevail "over the persuasive and pleasant because persuasion for the most part is in our own power, while the marvelous and astonishing exert invincible power and force and overwhelm every hearer," see the preface to Longinus, *On Sublimity*, as translated in George Alexander Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (2nd ed.; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 134.

of their familiarity with Christianity. Some pagans (e.g., Origen's Celsus) were indeed well versed in the Christian scriptures and their allegorical interpretations. It is interesting, however, to note how seldom Sedulius bothers to give any kind of background at all for fairly obscure biblical names (e.g., Baal and Barabbas in 5.147). It is difficult to imagine readers with some Virgil or Ovid in their educational background, but with only a superficial knowledge of the Christian scriptures, really comprehending a metaleptic passage such as the following from the fifth book of the *Paschale carmen* describing the rending of the veil of the temple on the occasion of Jesus' death on the cross:[71]

> Illud ouans templum, maioris culmina templi
> Procubuisse uidens, ritu plangentis alumni
> Saucia discisso nudauit pectora uelo,
> Interiora sui populis arcana futuris
> Iam reseranda docens, quia lex uelamine Moyse
> Tecta diu Christo nobis ueniente patescit. (5.270–275)
>
> [The great temple paid its respects as it saw that the roofs of the greater temple
> Had succumbed. Just like a foster-child in mourning,
> It bared its wounded breast and tore its veil, in order to teach us
> That its inner secrets were now to be revealed to the peoples from that point on,
> Because the law covered so long by the Mosaic veil
> Lies opened to us now that Christ has come.]

Sedulius makes a complicated reference here to the great temple of Herod, describing it as the *alumnus* (or foster-child, if you will) of an even greater temple and suggesting that it is rending its veil in mourning. The "greater temple" is Jesus himself, who refers to his body as "this temple" in John 2:21. Sedulius's pagan readers would probably have been familiar with the notion that there was once a great temple in Jerusalem (Herod's) whose underpinnings are visible to this day. Some of them might even have heard of Solomon's earlier temple. But would they have been aware that the veil of the temple was rent on Good Friday, an event to which Sedulius makes a most oblique reference here? And even if they had read all of the poem up to this point, is it likely that pagan readers would have been able to make a connection between the greater temple

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71. On Paul's use of metalepsis, see Richard Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scriptures* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

described here and Jesus' own reference to his body as a temple in John's Gospel, not mentioned by Sedulius heretofore in his poem? Readers already thoroughly familiar with the Gospels, of course, would be afforded a shock of delighted recognition, something akin to the pleasure that can be derived from solving a difficult clue in a crossword puzzle. It is not supposed to be readily apparent; in fact, it is disappointing if it is too easy, but the cognoscenti can figure it out eventually. Such a difficult and ultimately frustrating exercise could hardly have delighted novices to the faith. Complicated allegorical interpretations of the scriptures, unabashedly emotional expressions of intense love of God and deep hatred for his human and spiritual enemies, obvious devotion to the sacraments, the virgin mother of God, and the good shepherd and his heavenly paradise—all are, on the face of it, aspects of the poem more likely to provide compelling reading for devout Christian readers than for skeptical pagans.[72]

For devout Christians there is no biblical story more central, no subject matter more serious than that of the passion of Christ. So it is striking that it is precisely in his treatment of this subject that we see Sedulius at his ludic best. Consider, for instance, his treatment of Judas's betrayal of his master:

Tune cruente, ferox, audax, insane, rebellis,
Perfide, crudelis, fallax, uenalis, inique,
Traditor immitis, fere proditor, impie latro,
Praeuius horribiles comitaris signifer enses?
Sacrilegamque aciem, gladiis sudibusque minacem
Cum moueas, ori ora premis mellique uenenum
Inseris et blanda dominum sub imagine prodis?
Quid socium simulas et amica fraude salutas?
Numquam terribiles aut pax coniurat in enses,
Aut truculenta pio lupus oscula porrigit agno. (5.59–68)

[You bloody, savage, impudent, crazy, rebellious,
Faithless, cruel, deceitful, venal, evil,
Heartless traitor, savage betrayer, disloyal thug,
Are you their standard bearer, marching in front of the bristling swords?
As you bring up the unholy line that threatens him with swords and staves,
Do you press your lips to his, slip poison into the honey,

72. See G. de Nie, "What Mysteries Miracles May Teach Our Souls," *Studia Patristica* 48 (2010): 273–88.

And betray your Lord, using the guise of a friendly gesture?
Why do you pretend to be his ally and greet him with congenial deceit?
Never does peace conspire to use dreadful swords;
Never does a wolf offer fierce kisses to a holy lamb.][73]

Note what Green calls "a torrent, albeit a smoothly structured one, of ten virulent epithets, with three more neatly attached to nouns"[74] in Sedulius's lines. By contrast, Juvencus assigns just one fairly cool participle to Judas here (*dissimulans*). The emotional impact of the asyndeton in the *Paschale carmen*, the sheer, angry force of the repetitive epithets, is unmistakable. The author, it seems, cannot stop from inserting himself into the objective narrative and addressing his characters in the second person at such a tense and dramatic moment in the story. Sedulius's anger at Judas has a passionate quality which would readily fuel the fires of faith for an already devout, probably anti-Semitic, readership, but it is hard to imagine that this would be very convincing in a missionary tract. At the same time, even at such a diatribic moment, it is clear that the Christian poet has not forgotten the art that he knows so well. His language is not only deeply insulting but also highly metaphorical.[75] He highlights the antithesis between

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73. For the sake of contrast we may consider Juvencus's earlier, more emotionally reserved treatment of the same biblical event in his *Evangeliorum libri:*

Cum dicto Iudas numero stipante cateruae
Aduenit procerum iussu populique ferocis.
Pars strictis gladiis pars fidens pondere clauae
Signa sequebatur Iudae promissa furentis.
Oscula nam pepigit sese contingere Christi,
Quo facile ignotum caperet miserabile uulgus.
Ille ubi dissimulans blanda cum uoce salutat,
Attigit et labiis iusti uenerabilis ora,
Continuo Christus: "Totum conplere licebit,
Huc uenisse tuo quaecumque est causa paratu." (4.511–520)

And here is Arator's much briefer treatment of Judas' betrayal in his *Historia apostolica* (1.100–103), which is heavily dependent on Sedulius (written a century or so later after the *Paschale carmen*):

… cuius tuba saeva cruentum
Est exorsa nefas, qui signifer oscula fingens
Pacis ab indicio bellum lupus intulit agno.

74. Green, *Latin Epics*, 204.

75. Even what appear to be severe insults can, in the right literary context, perform a ludic function, "in lightening a heavy discourse with a licensed release of aggression," as Peter Matheson, *The Rhetoric of the Reformation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 8 n.6, observes. With roots that extend as far back as Aristotle, insulting

violence and peace in this situation with vivid images: honey and poison, the wolf and the lamb. The ludic coup de grace is Judas's kiss. Here we see a much lighter touch on Sedulius's part. The elision of the words *ori* and *ora* replicate the physical meeting of the mouths of the Savior and the traitor. They literally and acoustically "kiss." Arator uses the word *oscula*, but there is no similar wordplay.

To pick just one other example of how Sedulius weds the light and the serious: when rendering into Latin verse the *titulus* placed over Jesus' head as he was being crucified, he uses only spondees: *Scribitur et titulus: "Hic est rex Iudaeorum"* (5.196). This is an important official pronouncement, and the poet assigns each syllable equal weight. The unusually steady beat at the end of a dactylic hexameter line (normally it concludes with a dactyl in the fifth foot) has a hammering quality that may be meant to evoke the manner in which Jesus was affixed to the cross; his executioners pounded his body to the cross with nails (see John 20:25). There is something about this kind of poetics that resembles the compositional style often associated with baroque music. One thinks of the wildly colorful effects of Vivaldi's music or the tone-painting that characterizes the works of Johann Sebastian Bach. In fact, we find precisely this kind of slow repetitive effect in Bach's Mass in B Minor in the methodical *Crucifixus*, which listeners have suggested is intended to replicate the effect of the relentless pounding of nails. This, or the euphuism associated with the Elizabethan court in England of the 1580s, is perhaps a more apt analogy to use as we try to describe Sedulius's extravagant style than the *fin-de-siècle* aesthetics associated with the name of J. K. Huysmans,[76] or with the elaborate, minute, verbal artistry that Michael Roberts describes as "the jeweled style."

Sedulius explains his use of verse in the first epistle to Macedonius in terms of honey (used then as now to help make the medicine go down).[77] There is a difference between verse and prose, and that was clear even in the ancient world. Poetry is "made," if we go back to the basic meaning of the Greek root. It is more

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"is the fruit not only of a quick intellect but of *urbanitas*." Even though they appear to be "angry, emotion-laden outbursts," the primary rhetorical purpose of some literary insults may be not so much to offend as to teach and delight.

76. Sedulius is included in the library of the eccentric hero, Des Esseintes, of J. Huysmans, *Against the Grain* (*A Rebours*) (trans. Havelock Ellis; New York: Illustrated Editions, 1931).

77. See Gwendolyn Mae Gruber, "Medium and Message in Lucretius' Honey Analogy" (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2009). Sedulius may also be thinking of Prov 16:24: "Gracious words are like a honey-comb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body." The title of Judah Messer Leon's Hebrew study of the rhetoric of the Old Testament (couched in classical rhetorical terms) is *The Book of the Honeycomb's Flow*; see Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, 143.

highly wrought than other forms of discourse. Prose can have its rhythms, to be sure, and is certainly not without its own sophisticated artistry, especially as employed by the great Attic and Roman orators. But verse has even more capacity for sweet playfulness. With its metrical shape, its capacity to incorporate many poetic figures, its matching of sound and sense, it has a uniquely attractive power not only to delight aesthetically but also to move the heart and help it to retain words deep in its memory, as Sedulius explains to Macedonius.[78] This kind of poetic purpose seems rather ill suited for the purposes of missionary work, but it makes perfect sense if its intention is to edify and amuse Christians who have already embarked on the process of spiritual development in the faith and may be charmed by a poet's ludic skills into paying even more attention to, or renewing their interest in, what they thought they already knew.[79]

It is not Sedulius's playfulness, nor his piety, by themselves, but their uncomfortably close proximity, one suspects, that has confounded critics who are used to encountering one or the other but not both of these characteristics together, especially in Christian contexts. Curtius condemns the biblical epic because it is a "hybrid" genre. It is so displeasing aesthetically to him precisely because it combines elements that were never intended to be put together.[80] We should be careful to note, however, that such a close juxtaposition of earnest and playful, high and low, simple and grandiloquent, modest and ambitious, appears not to have offended all of Sedulius's readers over the ages. High rhetoric and flamboyant verbal effects combined with simple declarations of biblical truths may have little appeal for many readers of poetry today, but we should remember that for centuries Sedulius was considered one of the great literary *auctores* of the ancient world. A shrewd student of language and literature once observed that a text's identity rests "in its destination, not its origins."[81] The attempt to adapt scriptural stories to dactylic hexameters may be judged from modern critical

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78. See Reinhart Herzog, "Exegese-Erbauung-Delectatio: Beiträge zu einer christlichen Poetik der Spätantike," in *Formen und Funktionen der Allegorie. Symposion Wolfenbüttel 1978* (ed. Walter Haug; Stuttgart: Metzler, 1979), 52–69.

79. It is not, of course, unknown, for such believers to have doubts about the faith they have embraced, to crave deeper meaning in the sacred texts in which they already are immersed, to want reassurance about supposed sureties. That Sedulius is aware of these readers and their needs seems clear in his description of the encounter of doubting Thomas with the risen Jesus, whom Sedulius describes as *dubitantis amicus* (*PC* 5.386).

80. See K. Smolak, "Die Bibelepik als verfehlte Gattung," *Wiener Humanistische Blätter* 41 (1999): 7–24.

81. Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image, Music, Text* (trans. Stephen Heath; New York: Hill & Wang, 1977), 148.

perspectives as destined from the beginning to be a *genre faux* that would inevitably fail to do full justice either to Virgil or to the Gospels. What is impossible to dispute, however, is that this fifth-century poet's "mirthful" renderings of sacred narratives, apparently designed to edify and at the same time amuse, enjoyed the kind of long-lived appeal with his premodern readers that would be the envy of all those authors who hope, secretly or not so secretly, that their works will come to be regarded as a "monument more lasting than bronze." It is the hope of the translator that a new text and translation of this poet's works may assist modern readers to understand, if not appreciate, some aspects of what made Sedulius once so popular and help to send his poems a little farther along their way to wherever their ultimate textual "destination" may be.

Paschale carmen

Sedulii paschale carmen

Praefatio

Paschales quicumque dapes conuiua requiris,
Dignatus nostris accubitare toris,
Pone supercilium si te cognoscis amicum,
Nec quaeras opus hic codicis artificis,
Sed modicae contentus adi sollemnia mensae
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.
Illic inuenies quicquid mare nutrit edendum,
Quicquid terra creat, quicquid ad astra uolat.
Cerea gemmatis flauescunt mella canistris,
Collucentque suis aurea uasa fauis.
At nos exiguum de paupere carpsimus horto,
Rubra quod appositum testa ministrat holus.

Liber Primus

Cum sua gentiles studeant figmenta poetae
Grandisonis pompare modis, tragicoque boatu
Ridiculoue Geta seu qualibet arte canendi
Saeua nefandarum renouent contagia rerum
Et scelerum monumenta canant, rituque magistro
Plurima Niliacis tradant mendacia biblis,
Cur ego, Dauiticis assuetus cantibus odas
Chordarum resonare decem sanctoque uerenter
Stare choro et placidis caelestia psallere uerbis,
Clara salutiferi taceam miracula Christi,
Cum possim manifesta loqui, dominumque tonantem

Sedulius, The Paschal Song

Preface

O dinner guest, whoever you are, who have come to partake of my paschal feast,
    Having deigned to recline on my dining couch,
Do not be scornful, if you acknowledge yourself to be my friend,
    And do not seek here a literary masterpiece,
But contentedly approach the solemnities of a modest table,
    And delight more to fill yourself with things of the mind than with food.
Or, if you are more taken with the sweetness of great things,
    And you are a voluptuary who prefers riches,
Feed yourself on the splendid meals offered by noble men of learning,
    Whose vast wealth cannot be calculated.
There you will find to eat whatever grows in the sea,
    Whatever the earth brings forth, whatever flies up to the stars.
Waxen honey gleams in jeweled containers,
    And golden vessels glow with the same color as the honeycomb within.
But I have picked a few greens from a poor man's garden,
    And placed them for serving on a red earthen potsherd.

Book 1

Since pagan poets try to trick out their fictions
With pompous phraseology, and use tragic bombast,
Or the comic Geta, or any other style of singing
To re-create the cruel contagions of wicked deeds
And memorialize criminals in song, in the traditional way,
Passing on multiple lies in books of papyrus from the Nile,
Why should I, who am used to sound out in the songs of David
The psalms for the ten-stringed lyre, standing in awe
In the holy choir and singing with gentle words of heavenly things,
Keep silent about the famous miracles of Christ the Savior,
When I can speak the plain truth, and it is my wholehearted delight

Sensibus et toto delectet corde fateri,
Qui sensus et corda dedit, cui conuenit uni
Facturam seruire suam, cui iure perenni
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.
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,
Sectantesque magis uitam spirantis odorem
Legis Athenaei paedorem linquite pagi.
Quid labyrintheo, Thesidae, erratis in antro
Caecaque Daedalei lustratis limina tecti?
Labruscam placidis quid adhuc praeponitis uuis
Neglectisque rosis saliuncam sumitis agri?
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
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
Diuinis animantur aquis, et fonte superno
Laetificata seges spinis mundatur ademptis,
Vt messis queat esse Dei mercisque futurae
Maxima centenum cumulare per horrea fructum.

Omnipotens aeterne Deus, spes unica mundi,
Qui caeli fabricator ades, qui conditor orbis,
Qui maris undisonas fluctu surgente procellas
Mergere uicinae prohibes confinia terrae,
Qui solem radiis et lunam cornibus imples
Inque diem ac noctem lumen metiris utrumque,
Qui stellas numeras, quarum tu nomina solus,
Signa, potestates, cursus, loca, tempora nosti,

To confess the thundering Lord with all my senses?
He it is who gave us senses and hearts, and him alone
It is fitting for his creation to serve. His power by eternal right
Is one with his Father's in the vaults of heaven.
His is an equal glory, a shared supremacy, a mutual elevation.
His respect is equal, his power the same, his kingdom without end,
His rule eternal, his scepter perennial, his glory shared,
His majesty alike. This, you see, is the way of salvation.
This path leads our steps steadily on to the paschal gifts.
This will be my song. Everyone, turn your attention here!
Apply this remedy continually to your damaged hearts
Into which a deadly evil, obsessed with idle questions,
Attic philosophy, filled with Cecropian venom, has crept,
And pursue instead the aroma of the law that breathes life,
Leaving the filthy stench of the countryside of Athens behind.
Why wander around the cavernous labyrinth, you sons of Theseus,
And haunt the dark doorways leading into Daedalus's building?
Why still prefer the wild grapes to the sweet,
Or pick wild nard in the field and ignore the roses?
What good is it to worship stones and bronze, unholy holy things?
And why condemn your souls for the sake of speechless metal?
Stop living in the waste tracts of dusty land
And barren fields, where the parched soil
Knows not how to grow fruit, and from the gory ground
Do not reap grimly poisonous plants with deadly juices,
Food fit only for Tartarus. Enter instead into pleasant glades
Via sacred streams, a happy dwelling place
With ever flowering groves, where the seeds of life
Are nourished with divine water, and where the glad fields
(Minus thorns) are cleansed from a celestial fountain,
So that God may have a harvest, and the fruit of future reward
May pile up one hundred-fold in huge barns.

O almighty and everlasting God, only hope of the world,
You were there as architect of the heavens, founder of the world,
The one who stopped the tempestuous sea swells, with their rising surge,
From encroaching on the borders of the neighboring land.
You filled the sun with its rays and the moon with its crescent horns.
You measured out the light for both day and night.
You numbered the stars, whose names you alone know,
As well as their signs, powers, movements, positions, and times.

Qui diuersa nouam formasti in corpora terram,
Torpentique solo uiuentia membra dedisti,
Qui pereuntem hominem uetiti dulcedine pomi
Instauras meliore cibo, potuque sacrati
Sanguinis infusum depellis ab angue uenenum,
Qui genus humanum (praeter quos clauserat arca),
Diluuii rabida spumantis mole sepultum,
Vna iterum de stirpe creas, ut mystica uirtus
Quod carnis delicta necant, hoc praesule ligno
Monstraret liquidas renouari posse per undas,
Totum namque lauans uno baptismate mundum.
Pande salutarem paucos quae ducit in urbem
Angusto mihi calle uiam uerbique lucernam
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
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
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.
Ex quibus audaci perstringere pauca relatu
Vix animis committo meis, siluamque patentem
Ingrediens aliquos nitor contingere ramos.
Nam centum licet ora mouens uox ferrea clamet,
Centenosque sonos humanum pectus anhelet,
Cuncta quis expediet, quorum nec lucida caeli
Sidera nec bibulae numeris aequantur harenae?

Primus abusque Chao meritis uiuacibus Enoch
Multa per innumeros iam saecula contigit annos
Natura perdente modum, quem iure creandi
Terra tulit genitum, sed mors miratur ademptum.

You took the fresh earth and made it into various bodies,
And you endowed sluggish soil with living limbs.
You restored dying man after he ate the sweet forbidden fruit
By providing him with better food; with a drink
Of holy blood you expelled the serpent's venom.
The human race, which was, except for those the ark enclosed,
Buried beneath the swirling mountain of the foaming flood,
You recreated from one root, so that your mystic power might show
(With this wooden ship as prototype) that what fleshly sins kill
Can be reborn by the power of fresh water,
For you bathed the whole world in one baptism.
Show me the way which leads the few to the city of salvation
By the narrow path and cause the lamp of the word
To shine before my feet, so that the trail of life
May lead me to a rustic sheepfold where the good shepherd
Watches over his happy flock, where the lamb with white fleece,
Born of a virgin ewe, leads the way, and all his shining flock enters.
With you as guide the way is not hard; all nature is subject
To your rule and, with its usual protocol relaxed,
Everything changes into just the opposite at your lordly command.
If you order wheat to ripen in the midst of frost,
Winter produces a reaper. If you want new wine to flow
While the spring sun is shining, in the flowering fields
A purple stained vintner will turn the grapes under his feet to juice.
All the seasons, too, will obey your divine decrees.
To this the faith of the ancients is witness, the hoary antiquity
Of the earlier fathers is testimony, and, never to be eclipsed
By time, the signs of your powers endure forever.
To touch on a few of these in the course of my presumptuous retelling
Is a task I can barely undertake to do. It is a vast forest
That I enter, and I aim to touch but a few branches.
For even if I had an iron voice and shouted with a hundred tongues,
And even if the human breast could breathe forth a hundred sounds,
Who could set forth all of his signs, whose number not even
The stars shining in the sky or the sand in the thirsty deserts can rival?

After Chaos, thanks to his enlivening merits, Enoch was the first
To be given many lifetimes to live over countless years,
As nature lost its usual control. He was created in the regular way,
As a child of the earth, but to the amazement of death he escaped its grasp.

Saucia iam uetulae marcebant uiscera Sarrae
Grandaeuo consumpta situ, prolemque negabat
Frigidus annoso moriens in corpore sanguis.
Cum seniore uiro gelidi praecordia uentris
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.
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.

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
Dignum opus exercens uultum in sua terga referre.

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
Frondea blanditae lambebant robora flammae.

Mitis in immitem uirga est animata draconem,
Per flexos sinuata globos linguisque trisulcis
Squamea colla tumens inimicos ore chelydros
Sorbuit et proprii redit in uirgulta rigoris.

Peruia diuisi patuerunt caerula 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.
Mutauit natura uiam, mediumque per aequor
Ingrediens populus rude iam baptisma gerebat,
Cui dux Christus erat, clamat nam lectio: "Multas

The enfeebled uterus of old Sarah was already withering,
Worn out by long inactivity, and the chilly blood,
Moribund in her ancient body, was denying her a child.
Her husband was even older than she, when the insides of her cold belly
Began to swell to give new birth, and the trembling mother,
Grown heavy in her freezing womb, produced hope for a fertile race
And held a late-born son up to her breasts.
His father brought him to God to sacrifice, but instead, a sacred ram
Was slaughtered, and the boy's throat was spared right at the altar.
What a holy mind this righteous man had! His devotion set aside,
With greater devotion he ignored the wounds of his child,
Embracing God's commands, and, with the aid of symbolic bloodshed,
He taught us of things to come, namely, that by the blood of Christ,
A devoted lamb would lay down his life for the human race.

When Lot was escaping the chaos of Sodom, his wife looked back.
She was changed into a saline statue and stayed there, stock still,
Transformed into salt as her punishment, because no one
Who shuns the harmful dangers of the contemptible world
And then looks back again will be saved, nor should the plowman
Who is doing his job properly turn around to look over his shoulder.

Once a bush burning with ineffectual flames appeared
To be on fire when it was not on fire. The wood did not
Give fuel to the heat, nor did the living trunk of the tree
Feel the deadly temperature. The timber, though heated, was unharmed,
And the flames licking the leafy wood were kindly intentioned.

A harmless stick was made alive, turned into a harmful serpent.
Curved with sinuous coils and three-forked tongue
And swelling with scaly neck, it swallowed up the hostile snakes
In its mouth and returned to its proper shape, a stiff rod.

The dark blue waves of the deep divided and opened up,
Rolled back on both sides, and the earth was exposed,
Deprived of its familiar water. As the band of walkers
Stepped into a waterless body of water and passed through the depths,
The dry sea was amazed to feel the strange soles of their feet.
Nature changed its way, and, as the people stepped through
The midst of the main, they were already undergoing an early form of baptism.
Christ was their leader, as the scripture lesson proclaims:

Vox domini super extat aquas." Vox denique uerbum est.
Verbum Christus adest, geminae qui consona legis
Testamenta regens ueterem patefecit abyssum,
Vt doctrina sequens planis incederet aruis.

Quid referam innumeras caelesti pane cateruas
Angelicos sumpsisse cibos, nimbisque superni
Nectaris aeria populum dulcedine pastum
In pluuiis habuisse dapes et in imbribus escas?

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

Angelicis tremefacta minis affatur asella
Sessorem per uerba suum, linguaque rudenti
Edidit humanas animal pecuale loquelas.

Sol stetit ad Gabaon mediique cacumine caeli
Fixit anhelantem dilato uespere lucem,
Insolitus frenare diem, nec luna cucurrit
Ordine pigra suo, donec populantibus armis
Feruidus ingentem gladius consumeret hostem
Coniurante polo. Iam tunc famulata uidebant
Sidera uenturum praemisso nomine Iesum.

Heliam corui quondam pauere ministri
Praebentes sine more dapes, alesque rapinis
Deditus atque auido saturans caua guttura rostro
Tradidit illaesam ieiunis morsibus escam.
Nunc bonus Heliae qui perfidus antea Noe
Abluit in terris quicquid deliquit in undis.
Plenus at ille Deo postquam miracula terris
Plura dedit meritisque suis succedere dignum
Haeredem propriae fecit uirtutis amicum,
Aurea flammigeris euectus in astra quadrigis,

"The voice of the Lord is above many waters." Now the voice is the word.
As the word, Christ was present. The one governing the harmonious testaments
Of the double law exposed to light the abyss of earlier times,
So that the doctrine that followed might proceed on level ground.

Why should I recall the countless throngs who ate bread from heaven,
Dining on angelic fare, and the people who were fed
From the clouds on the airy sweetness of ethereal nectar,
Feasting on the rains and getting their sustenance from the showers?

Again, when the army of people grew thirsty in the arid desert,
A place where it was far too dry, where the poor land had long lain
Destitute of water, where the hope of drinking
And living had been removed, from a parched stone
All of a sudden they drank water. Liquid flowed from the barren rock,
And the thirsty boulders spewed forth a fresh beverage.
So already then Christ was providing his holy gifts in three forms:
Christ was the bread; Christ was the rock; and Christ was in the water.

An ass, terrified by an angel's threats, spoke to its rider,
Using words. Employing its braying tongue,
The farm animal uttered human speech.

The sun stood still at Gibeon. At the height of the sky at noonday,
It stopped its scorching light—the evening was put on hold—
Even though it was not accustomed to rein back the day.
Nor did the idled moon run its usual course until with ravaging arms
The burning sword devoured the huge enemy host
With the heavens' cooperation. Already then the subservient stars could see
That Jesus, who would assume his precursor's name, was to come.

Once there were ministering ravens who fed Elijah,
Offering him food, which is contrary to their custom. The bird
Given to theft and eager to fill its empty gullet with its greedy beak
Brought him a meal undamaged by hungry peckings.
The raven who before had betrayed Noah proved useful now to Elijah
And on land washed away his guilt for the wrong he committed at sea.
But after he had performed many miracles on earth, filled with God,
Elijah chose a friend, worthy in his own right to follow him,
To be his successor and to inherit his own power.
Up to the golden stars he was carried away in a flaming chariot,

Qua leuis aerios non exprimit orbita sulcos,
Siderum penetrauit iter curruque corusco
Dexteriora petens spatio maiore triumphum
Duxit et humani metam non contigit aeui.
Quam bene fulminei praelucens semita caeli
Conuenit Heliae! Meritoque et nomine fulgens
Hac ope dignus erat, nam si sermonis Achiui
Vna per accentum mutetur littera, sol est.

Vltima labentis miseratus tempora lucis
Ter quinos quondam regi Deus addidit annos
Vsus iure suo, patefactaque limina claudens
Mortis ab occasu uitam conuertit in ortum.

Ionas puppe cadens, ceto sorbente uoratus
In pelago non sensit aquas, uitale sepulchrum
Ne moreretur habens, tutusque in uentre ferino
Depositum, non praeda fuit, uastumque per aequor
Venit ad ignotas inimico remige terras.

Cum spirante Deo Babylonia sacra negarent
Tres una cum mente uiri durumque subirent
Exitium saeui Chaldaea lege tyranni,
Cuius Achaemeniam rabies accenderat iram
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.

Digna sed immitem 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
Omnibus hirsutus siluis et montibus errans.

Nec minus et Darii furuerunt iussa tyranni,
Hebraeumque decus Danihel decernitur insons
Ieiunis cibus esse feris. Sed belua iusto
Mitis facta uiro, sanctos ne laederet artus,

Whose featherweight progress left no tracks in the air.
He set off on a starry journey, and in his sparkling vehicle,
Seeking more favorable realms of greater extent, he led
A triumphal procession and never reached the finish line of human life.
How well suited the glittering paths of the flashing sky
Were to Elijah! He was shining in deed and name.
This reward was fitting for him because, in the Greek language,
If one letter and the accent of his name is changed, it means "sun."

Once God took pity on a man's final hours, as his light faded,
And he added fifteen years to the king's life.
Using his own prerogative, he closed the gaping doorways
Of death and changed the sunset of his life to dawn.

Jonah fell off a ship and was swallowed up by a voracious whale.
Even in the sea he did not get wet, for he was in a living tomb,
So that he would not perish. Safe in the wild beast's belly,
He was its charge, not its prey, and over the great expanse of the sea,
Rowed by an unfriendly oarsman, he arrived in unfamiliar lands.

When three men inspired by God, of one accord, denied the religion
Of the Babylonians, and the heavy penalty of death
Was imposed upon them under Chaldean law by the harsh tyrant,
Whose mad fury had raised the temperature of his Achaemenian wrath
Hotter than his own furnace, they were forced right into the flames,
But their pyre dared not harm them. Their hearts were warm with so much love
That they overcame the conflagration of their putative punishment
With the fire of the soul. Oh, how great was the glory of these believers!
The flame of the furnace was quenched by the flames of their glowing faith.

But soon the ungentle king was punished appropriately.
For since in his madness he had abandoned human propriety,
He became a companion of the cattle who eat the grass of the fields,
Exchanging his regal feasts for a diet of hay.
He stooped down to drink from the streams, and for seven years
Unkempt, he wandered aimlessly over all the woods and mountains.

No less raving were the orders of the despot Darius.
He decreed that Daniel, the pride of the Hebrews, innocent though he was,
Be fed to hungry wild animals. But when they faced this righteous man
The beasts turned mellow and, lest they harm his innocent limbs,

Coepit amare famen. Rabies mollita furorem
Deposuit, saeuisque in faucibus ira quieuit,
Et didicere truces praedam seruare leones.

Dic ubi sunt, natura, tuae post talia leges?
Qui totiens 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
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,
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
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.

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,
Vt uolucrem turpemque bouem tortumque draconem
Semihominemque canem supplex homo plenus adoret?
Ast alii solem caecatis mentibus acti
Affirmant rerum esse patrem, quia rite uidetur
Clara serenatis infundere lumina terris
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,

They began to love being hungry. Their fury subsided as they ceased raging,
And the wrath in their fierce gullets grew still,
As the savage lions learned to preserve their prey.

Tell us, O nature, where are your laws in light of such events?
Who deprived you of your rights so often? Who ordered Tartarus
To ignore a man removed from its grip? Who made a barren old woman
Fruitful for her husband? Who ordered an animal to approach the holy altar
Of its own accord? Who transformed the limbs of a woman
Into a statue of salt? Who kept branches that had been set on fire
From burning? Who turned a rod into a snake?
Who dried up a path through the sea? Who rained from the clouds
Wondrous manna? Who brought forth water from deep within a rock?
Who made a four-footed beast speak plainly?
Who lengthened the speeding hours as the elements stalled?
Who permitted birds to feed a man and, with a brilliant team of horses,
Carried him off to heaven? Who added fifteen years
To the life of a man already weighed down by death? Who rescued a man
Shipwrecked in the mouth of a pirate fish? Who preserved faithful men
In a fiery furnace with dew? Who pastured a king
In the fields like a hairy beast and ordered the lions' maws
To forget their anger, even though hunger was goading them on?
It was the creator, of course, of whatever is seen
Or lies hidden, whose word is the constructive force of the universe.
Him all his creation serves and follows its commander's
Sovereign will wherever his thought directs it by his nod.

Oh, how pitiable, those who worship empty things! With wayward hearts
They fashion religious images for themselves,
As they flee their own maker and fear what they themselves have made.
What is this madness? What great insanity deceives their minds
To think that one who is fully human should prostrate himself to worship
A bird, an ugly cow, a twisted reptile, or a dog that is half man?
Still others, led astray by their blinded minds, declare the sun
To be the father of all things, because it is regularly seen
To shed its bright rays on the illuminated earth
And to traverse the entire sky, although it is clear from these
Movements that this unsteady fire, with its swift runnings back and forth,
Is a functionary, not God. According to a fixed schedule,
Now it rises, and now it is sent off to the western reaches,
To be replaced in turn by night. The sun is not always everywhere,

Nec lumen fuit ille manens in origine mundi,
Cum geminum sine sole diem nouus orbis haberet.
Sic lunae quoque uota ferunt, quam crescere cernunt
Ac minui, stellisque litant quae luce fugantur.
Hic laticem colit, ille larem, sed iungere sacris
Non audent inimica suis, ne lite propinqua
Aut rogus exiguas desiccet fortior undas,
Aut ualidis tenues moriantur fontibus ignes.
Arboreis alius ponit radicibus aras
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
Ardua pendentis sustentent culmina tecti,
Aut subiecta focis dapibus famulentur edendis.
Nonnulli uenerantur holus mollesque per hortos
Numina sicca rigant uerique hac arte uidentur
Transplantatorum cultores esse deorum.
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.
Iam satis humanis erroribus addita monstra
Risimus aut tales potius defleuimus actus.

Nunc coeptam iuuat ire uiam montemque per altum
Nitentes firmare gradus; properemus in urbem,
Libertatis opem, radians ubi regia fuluis
Emicat aula tholis, ubi dantur digna petenti,
Quaerentem 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.

Per digesta prius ueteris miracula legis
Rettulimus, sancti coniuncto spiritus actu
Quae genitor socia nati uirtute peregit.

Nor was its light present at the beginning of the universe,
Since the new world existed for two days without it.
So, too, they offer prayers to the moon, which they see waxing
And waning, and they pray to the stars, which flee the light of day.
One worships liquid water, another the fire of the hearth, but they dare not combine
These opposing elements in their sacred rites, lest, in competitive proximity,
Either the fire prove more powerful and dry up the evaporating water,
Or the flickering flames be doused by the overwhelming water.
Yet another one sets up altars at the bases of trees
And offers banquets to the boughs and with his tears entreats them
To oversee his children, his beloved home and precious fields,
His wife's fidelity, his slaves, and his income.
You blockhead! You pray to blocks of wood. You are seen to shout to the deaf.
You seek answers from the dumb. Wood exerts control over your house
Only in this way, if it is cut down by the blows of an ax
And supports the high roof above your well-poised dwelling,
Or, if put on the hearth, it provides fuel to cook your supper.
Some people worship vegetables and in their lush gardens
Water the thirsty deities growing there and thus appear
To be truly cultivators of their transplanted gods.
It is shameful to adduce more examples and in a sacred song
To condemn wickedness for too long, lest I chafe soft lilies with brambles,
Or lest, among the violets growing in their purple field,
Thistles and thorns with their sharp prickles should spring up.
We have already laughed long enough at the monstrosities
Of human mistakes, or, I should rather say, wept over such actions.

Now it is our pleasure to proceed on the way we have begun
And struggle to find our footing up the high mountain. Let us hurry to the city,
The provider of our freedom, where the royal halls radiantly
Shine with domes gleaming, where the one who asks is given worthy responses,
Where a sure hope awaits him who seeks, where the locks are removed,
And the welcoming doorways lie open to the knocking heart.
Here is that stone which was rejected but is now at the top,
The corner stone that shows wondrous things to our eyes,
Whose burden is light, whose yoke is sweet to bear.

Earlier we went through a brief list of miracles of the old law,
Which, with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit,
The Father accomplished in partnership with the power of the Son.

Per digesta rudis necnon miracula legis
Dicemus, sancti coniuncto spiritus actu
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
Flectere nisus iter, foueam delapsus in atram
Corruit et taetri mersus petit ima profundi;
Tam uacuus sensu, iustae quam tempore poenae
Visceribus fusis uacuus quoque uentre remansit.
Demens, perpetui qui non imitanda parentis
Iura caducorum gradibus simulauit honorum!
Namque homines inter natum genitore minorem
Lex carnalis habet, quoniam pater ipse parentis
Filius ante fuit, mox et qui filius est nunc
Assolet esse pater; sic per genus omne nepotum
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;
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.
Sic ait ipse docens: "Ego in patre et pater in me."
Rursus: "Ego atque pater unum sumus." Arrius "unum"
Debet scire, "sumusque" Sabellius esse fatendum.
Iste fidem ternam, hic non amplectitur unam;
Ambo errore pares, quamquam diuersa sequentes.
Qualiter assueti uarias producere sectas
Impugnant sua dicta uiri, qui brachia nudis
Ostendunt exserta humeris, nil tradere docti
Sed tantum certare cati, prudentia quorum
Stulta iacet, quia uana Deo est sapientia mundi.
Hic loquitur nimis, ille tacet; hic ambulat, hic stat;
Alter amat fletus, alter crispare cachinnum.
Diuersisque modis par est uesania cunctis.

Now we shall also review briefly the miracles of the fresh testament,
Which, with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit,
The Son has accomplished in partnership with the power of the Father,
So that, always remaining one form of the eternal God,
The united may be triune, and the triune may be united.

This is the true faith. This is the salvation
Spurned by unhappy Arius, who tried to bend into trackless confusion
The straight way, and in his fall he plunged into a dark pit
And descended to the lowest parts of the black depths,
As empty of sense as he was emptied of bowels
At the time of his just punishment when his guts were spilled out.
Insanely, he likened the authority of the eternal Father,
Which is unique, to the degrees of fleeting glories!
Among humans, to be sure, a son is considered less than his father
According to carnal law, since the father himself
Was the son previously of a father, and he who is now a son
Regularly becomes a father later. Thus, through every generation of descendants
A new set of offspring comes along, and ancestors pile up on ancestors.
But the Lord Christ is the word, the strength, the wisdom,
And the shared totality of his Father, light from light,
Only one from only one, not less than the Father in any way,
Nor does the one who was begotten grow in any way, since he was not created;
He himself is the beginning. For just as he is glorified,
Remaining in the Father, so also the Father is glorified,
Remaining in him, and the one God is head of all things everywhere.
Not that the Son is *who* the highest Father is,
But that the Son is *what* the highest Father is.
As he himself teaches: "I am in the Father and the Father in me."
And again: "I and the Father are one." The "one"
Is what Arius should acknowledge, and Sabellius should confess the "we are."
The one fails to embrace the triune faith; the other the one faith.
Both are equally wrong, although they follow different paths.
They are like men devoted to promoting different sects,
Who attack each other's words. With shoulders bared,
They stretch out their arms, trained to teach nothing,
But clever enough when it comes to arguing. Their foolish intelligence
Is ineffectual, because the wisdom of the world is folly to God.
One speaks too much, another is silent. One walks, another stands.
One loves to weep, another loves to launch into loud laughter.
They are all, in their different ways, equally insane.

Interea dum rite uiam sermone leuamus,
Spesque fidesque meum comitantur in ardua gressum,
Blandius ad summam tandem peruenimus arcem.
En signo sacrata crucis uexilla coruscant,
En regis pia castra micant, tuba clamat erilis,
Militibus sua porta patet; qui militat intret.
Ianua uos aeterna uocat, quae ianua Christus.
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
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.

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;
Marcus ut alta fremit uox per deserta leonis;
Iura sacerdotii Lucas tenet ore iuuenci;
More uolans aquilae uerbo petit astra Iohannes.
Quattuor hi proceres una te uoce canentes
Tempora ceu totidem latum sparguntur in orbem.
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
Gaudia longa metam; nam qui deflemus in Adam
Semina mittentes, mox exultabimus omnes
Portantes nostros Christo ueniente maniplos.

Meanwhile, as I duly lighten the way with my words,
And hope and faith accompany my progress to the heights,
I make my way more easily to the topmost citadel at last.
Behold, the sacred standards gleaming with the sign of the cross.
Behold, the shining camps of the holy king. The lordly trumpet blares.
The city gates open to its soldiers. He who fights may enter.
The eternal door calls you—Christ is that door.
You will receive the golden reward of eternal life,
You who bear the arms of the Lord with all courage,
And his glory has been stamped on your forehead. Your glorious arms,
Good king, I carry as I bring up the rear of your army.
Grant me my own lodgings here, within the city walls,
A little house, where I, your resident, may deserve
To dwell in this holy place and, even though last,
To have my name written on the list as a citizen forever.
Yes, I am asking for great things, but you know how to give great things.
You are more insulted by those whose hope grows lukewarm.

Christ, incline to hear my prayers, you who consented to bring
The world, prostrate in death, back to life, and who once sought out earth,
Coming down from heaven, and deigned to take on human form,
Assuming another's in such a way that you might not abandon your own.

Dealing with this topic, Matthew plays the role of the whole human race;
Mark roars like the loud voice of a lion through the wilderness;
Luke holds the office of the priesthood with the face of an ox;
Flying like an eagle, John reaches for the stars with his word.
These four princes with one voice sing of you,
In number, just like the seasons, they spread over the wide world.
So also the epitome of apostolic honor, the number twelve,
Is forever radiant as it imitates the number of months and hours.
The result is that the entire year is in your service in every way.
So, from the review here of the causes of ancient death,
I shall hasten on to new life, and, even while sowing tears
Shall harvest enduring joys, for we who weep in Adam,
As we sow our seeds, shall soon all shout for joy,
Carrying in our sheaves at Christ's coming.

Notes for Preface and Book 1

1–16: The preface or prologue to the poem. (The title varies in the manuscripts.) It is distinguished from the rest of the poem because it is written in a different meter, elegiac distichs. The poet extends the metaphor embedded in the title, as though he is a chef inviting the reader to partake in a Passover/Easter feast. See 1 Cor 5:7–8: "For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the festival…."

2: *nostris accubitare toris*: Eating in the ancient Greco-Roman world was regularly done while reclining on couches. See, e.g., Virgil, *Aen.* 1.708; Juvencus, *Euang.* 1.757.

3: *Pone supercilium*: In typical Christian modesty, Sedulius advises his potential reader/dinner guest against entertaining high expectations for an artful book/sumptuous feast. On not arching your eyebrows, see Martial, *Epigr.* 1.4.2 and Prudentius, *Psych.* 287. Formulaic expressions of affected modesty were commonly used by Christian authors in late antiquity and the Middle Ages as a form of *captatio benevolentiae*. See Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (trans. Willard R. Trask; New York: Pantheon, 1953), 83–85.

5–6: "filling yourself with things of the mind": On the satisfying nature of spiritual sustenance, see Jesus' rebuke to Satan's temptations in the wilderness: "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4). For the metaphor of the divine word as food, see Ezek 3:2 and Rev 10:10.

7–9: "the sweetness of great things": cf. Juvencus, *Euang., Praef.* 10: *dulcedo Maronis.* The poet will not be serving grand poetic fare. If the reader is looking for a splendid meal, he is advised to seek out "noble men of learning" whose larder and intellectual resources are more abundant than the humble Christian poet's.

11–13: Three lines of the preface are devoted to an extravagant description of what will *not* be served. Christian poetic fare, the poet claims, is simple and unimpressive. On the tripartite division of the universe into earth, sea, and sky and the corresponding division of the animal kingdom into beasts, fish, and birds, see K. Smolak, "Der dreifache Zusammenklang (Prud. *Apoth.* 147–54):

Vorstudien zu einem Kommentar zur Apotheosis II," *WS* 84 (1972): 180–94, and Roberts, *Jeweled Style,* 29.

15: *de paupere horto*: an echo of Virgil, *Ecl.* 7.34: *custos es pauperis horti.* The poor in the ancient world often could afford only a vegetarian diet. Roman poets (cf. Martial, *Epigr.* 10.47–48) frequently extolled the virtues of simple dining (*sine arte mensa*). In *Odes* 1.20, Horace invites his wealthy patron Maecenas to dine with him but advises him that the wine will not be up to his standards, because it is made from his own grapes.

16: *rubra … testa*: See 2 Cor 4:7: "But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us." For a similar application of this Pauline metaphor to Christian poetry, see Prudentius's "Epilogue," especially lines 13–30.

17–59: The lines of the preface are not numbered independently in Huemer's edition, so book 1 begins at line 17. The first sentence, a lengthy rhetorical question, does not end, strictly speaking, until line 35. (My translation breaks it up into more manageable sections.) Sedulius attacks pagan poetry and defends his own poetic project. The former is fictional, filled with violence, and based on Greek philosophy. Sedulius's poem, by contrast, is true and will lead the reader to salvation, not perdition. For an analysis of this and other attempts to justify Christian poetry in late antiquity, see Thomas Gärtner, "Die Musen im Dienste Christi: Strategien der Rechtfertigung christlicher Dichtung in der lateinischen Spätantike," *Vigiliae Christianae* 58 (2004): 424–46.

19: "Geta": A slave with this name is featured in Terence's *Adelphoe* and *Phormio.* Here the word refers to comedy as a poetic genre in general, in contrast with tragedy (which is mentioned in the previous line). It is probably not an allusion to the cento of Hosidius Geta; see G. Salanitro, "Osidio Geta e Sedulio," *Sileno* 20 (1994): 411–12. Sedulius does not explicitly challenge the epic genre here, unlike Juvencus, who singles out Homer and Virgil in the preface to his biblical epic (lines 9–10). While Sedulius borrows heavily throughout his poem from Virgil and other Latin epic poets, there are only four references to Seneca's tragedies listed in Panagl's index and only three to the comedies of Terence and Plautus. Lactantius likewise gives comedy and tragedy special negative attention, "drawing on a common apologetic theme" (Green, *Latin Epics*, 163).

21–22: By the fifth century the parchment codex had begun to replace "the traditional way" of producing books in the ancient world, using scrolls made of papyrus, the tall flowering plant that grows abundantly in the Nile river valley in Egypt. See C. Roberts and T. Skeat, *The Birth of the Codex* (London: Oxford University Press, 1987). Sedulius may be suggesting that the pagan poems he knows so well, like Virgil's *Aeneid* or Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* are as out of date as the papyrus scrolls on which they were so often written.

22: *mendacia*: the same word used by Juvencus in his prologue (line 16) to refer to the fictional subject matter favored by pagan poets in contrast with his own factual story line. A poet more or less contemporary with Sedulius, Claudius Marius Victorius, entitled his biblical epic simply (and confidently), *Alethia*, "the truth."

23–26: *cur ego … taceam*: See the opening, programmatic lines of Juvenal's *Satires* (1.1–19) for a similar justification, as the cranky Flavian poet asks why, in the light of all the bad poetry already under production, he should not write his own corrective verse.

24: *chordarum … decem*: a reference to the liturgical tradition of singing the Psalter. Many of the psalms were ascribed to David who was renowned for his skill with the lyre (1 Sam 16:16). For the harp "with ten strings," see Ps 144:9.

27: *manifesta*: in the sense of "manifestly true," in contrast to the *mendacia* of pagan poetry mentioned in line 22.

28: "thundering Lord": *Tonans* is an epithet frequently used of Jupiter by Latin poets (e.g., Ovid, *Metam.* 1.170). See Manfred Beller, *Jupiter Tonans. Studien zur Darstellung der Macht in der Poesie* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 1979). The representation of Christ enthroned in the apse mosaic of Santa Pudenziana in Rome (late fourth century), surrounded by his togate apostles, has a magisterial quality reminiscent of Jupiter's iconography. See Ps 29:3–9 for an extended reference to the thundering quality of God's voice. *Toto … corde* is a reference to the Torah's (and Jesus') injunction to love God with all one's heart (see Matt 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27; and Deut 6:5).

30: *seruire*: an echo of Jesus' response to Satan's temptation in the wilderness (Matt 4:10; see also Luke 4:8 and Deut 6:13).

30–35: The synonymous expressions emphasize Christ's equality with God the Father. They sound somewhat creedal, coming as they do, after the poet's expression of his desire to "confess" his thundering Lord in line 28. The lack of conjunctions heightens the effect.

35: *uia namque salutis*: most likely an allusion to Virgil, *Aen.* 6.96. Green (*Latin Epics*, 164) observes that the image of the way that leads to salvation "is combined here with the notions of help or healing (*opem*, 38), and a sweet smell (*odorem*, 41), in an almost medieval richness of metaphor." On the use of the word "way" as a designation for the Christian movement in its earliest days, see Acts 9:2.

37: *mihi carmen erit*: probably a reference to Juvencus's preface, line 19: *Nam mihi carmen erit Christi uitalia gesta*. Sedulius's "paschal song" will have a tighter focus on the miraculous deeds of the Savior than Juvencus's more strictly paraphrastic and thematically diffuse poem.

40: "Attic philosophy, filled with Cecropian venom": The city of Athens, in the territory of Attica, was the home of many of the best known Greek philoso-

phers, including Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Plato's famous Academy was only closed during the reign of the Emperor Justinian, in 529. Cecrops is the name of a legendary founder of Athens who was half-man, half-snake.

42: *Athenaei … pagi*: a slur on one of the most advanced cities of the ancient Mediterranean world as well as a reference to paganism (inhabitants of the *pagus*, or countryside, were slower to convert to Christianity than city dwellers).

43: "sons of Theseus": Theseus was an early hero and later king of Athens famous for his defeat of the Minotaur on the island of Crete. His "sons" are those who prefer pagan religion and traditional Greco-Roman philosophy to Christianity.

44: "Daedalus's building": Daedalus was an Athenian craftsman who built the labyrinth on Crete to house the monstrous offspring of Minos's queen, the Minotaur. He later escaped with his son on wings that he himself fashioned, although Icarus flew too close to the sun and perished.

46: See Virgil, *Ecl.* 5.17: *puniceis humilis quantum saliunca rosetis.* On the vineyard of the Lord that produces only wild grapes and is then turned into a wasteland filled with "briers and thorns," see Isa 5:1–7.

47: *fana profana*: an oxymoron that underscores the poet's point about the folly of idol worship (cf. Isa 46:6–7).

53: *Tartareo … cibo*: Tartarus was the name given to the deepest, gloomiest part of the ancient Greek (and Roman) underworld. See Karin Schlapbach, "Tartarus," *DNP* 12/1 (2002): 38–39.

53–54: Sedulius's description of a lush Christian landscape is adapted with very few changes from Virgil's well-known description of the Elysian fields: … *amoena uirecta / fortunatorum nemorum sedesque beatas* (*Aen.* 6.638–639).

54: "via sacred streams": a reference to baptism, the sacrament through which Christians enter the kingdom of heaven (see John 3:5–7 and Rom 6:4).

57: *Laetificata seges*: a possible echo of the opening question of Virgil's *Georgics*: *Quid faciat laetas segetes?* Sedulius may be offering his own spiritualized answer to the question of what makes crops flourish (see Green, *Latin Epics*, 165).

59: "one hundred-fold in huge barns": A veritable cascade of agricultural images, extending for ten lines, reaches its climax in the last two lines of this section. For hundred-fold harvests, see Matt 13:23; Mark 4:8; Luke 8:8.

60–102: The poet addresses God, the creator of the world and its redeemer, in the opening section of this prayer (lines 60–78) before proceeding with his passionate petition for divine assistance in support of his ambitious poetic undertaking (lines 79–102). This section is marked off in many manuscripts and entitled variously as the poet's *precatio*, *oratio*, *inuocatio*, *deprecatio*, or *praefatio*. It bears comparison with Ausonius's *Oratio* (see Green, *Latin Epics*, 165).

60–61: For God as cosmic engineer, see Ps 8:3. The word *conditor* is used to describe the creative activity of God in the first line of Ambrose's morning hymn, *Aeterne rerum conditor.* Ovid uses the expression *mundi fabricator* in the

opening lines of the *Metamorphoses* (1.57). On the presence of the divine word of God at creation, see John 1:1.

62–69: Two lines (62–63) describing the demarcation of earth and sea (see Gen 1:9–10) are followed by four lines (64–67) devoted to celestial phenomena, sun, moon, and stars (see Gen 1:14–19), capped by two lines (68–69) which describe the creation of life from the earth. I understand the verbs in lines 60–67 as historic presents, describing events from the Genesis account of creation, but it would be possible to take them as referring to God's continuing governance of the universe rather than to his initial creative activity.

66: "you numbered the stars": See Ps 147:4.

67: *signa … tempora*: For the use of heavenly bodies as signs to demarcate times of day and seasons of the year, see Gen 1:14.

70: *qui pereuntem hominem*: The relative pronoun applied to God occurs eight times in this section. At this point, the poet turns his attention from the creative activities of God in the natural world to his development of a plan of salvation for fallen humanity.

71: "better food": an allusion to the Eucharist. On the forbidden fruit offered to Adam and Eve by the serpent in the garden of Eden, see Gen 3.

73–78: If the Eucharist is God's way of correcting the deleterious effects of the fall, the sacrament of baptism recapitulates the flood. On the connection between these last two, see 1 Pet 3:20 and Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 15.26.

73: "those the ark enclosed": Noah's ark was frequently viewed by early Christians as a figure for the church. See Franz-Joseph Dölger, "Zur Symbolik des altchristlichen Taufhauses," *Antike und Christentum* 4 (1934): 153–87. A painting of Noah's ark in the Catacomb of Peter and Marcellinus features the dove prominently.

74: *rabida*: Huemer reads *rapida* along with most manuscripts, but some of the oldest manuscripts have *rabida,* including Taur. E.IV.42. The confusion of "p" for "b" is not uncommon. The prose paraphrase (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 179: *repentina surgentis inundatione diluuii mersum*) favors *rapida.* On the other hand, Sedulius is quite fond of applying emotional attributes to inanimate nature, and Juvencus uses this same adjective to describe foaming water in *Euang.* 2.29.

76: *ligno*: The adjective "wooden" refers here to the ark, but the poet may also be thinking of the wooden cross on which Jesus was later to be put to death.

78: "one baptism": See Eph 4:5 as well as the formulation in the Nicene Creed: "I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins."

79: *salutarem … urbem*: The description of heaven as a city appears again at the end of the first book. See Heb 11:16 as well as Revelation, *passim.* The triumphal arch of S. Maria Maggiore in Rome has a mosaic representation of the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem standing open before a flock of sheep. On this church,

whose present structure dates to the 420s or 430s, see Victor Saxer, *Sainte-Marie-Majeure: une basilique de Rome dans l'histoire de la ville et de son église, ve-xiiie siècle* (Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 2001).

80: *Angusto … calle*: For the "narrow path" that leads to salvation, see Matt 7:14. Sedulius borrows the specific language from Virgil, *Aen.* 4.405 as he now proceeds to make the actual petition of the prayer whose address he began nearly twenty lines earlier.

81: *lucere*: See Ps 119:105.

82: "the good shepherd": On God as shepherd in the Old Testament, see Ps 23 and Ezek 34:11–24. In John 10:1–18 Jesus applies the title to himself. The good shepherd is a very common image in early Christian art, prominently featured on sarcophagi and catacomb painting (see Theodor Konrad Kempf, *Christus der Hirt: Ursprung und Deutung einer altchristlichen Symbolgestalt* [Rome: Officium Libri Catholici, 1942]). There are two well-preserved statuettes of a youthful shepherd with a lamb draped around his neck in the Pio Cristiano collection in the Vatican Museum.

83: "the lamb with white fleece": See Rev 7:15–17. The mosaics in the apse of San Clemente in Rome depict the same paradoxical scene: the lamb of God is shepherding a flock of sheep. See Ps 100:3 for the metaphor of God's people as "the sheep of his pasture."

85: *te duce*: See Virgil, *Ecl.* 4.13. The Lord of nature guides the believer on the difficult path through life that leads to salvation. The poet also needs divine assistance as he undertakes his daunting literary task.

87: *in aduersas … figuras*: possibly a reference to Ovid, *Metam.* 8.730. The marvelous changes that will be described in this poem all happen at Christ's "lordly command." In his poem about amazing transformations, by contrast, Ovid often leaves the question of agency unaddressed.

88–92: An impressive series of *adynata* (impossibilities) continues the agricultural imagery. For this stylistic device, see Galen Rowe, "The *adynaton* as a Stylistic Device," *AJP* 86 (1965): 387–96. On detailed descriptions of the seasons of the year in other Latin poets, see Roberts, *Jeweled Style*, 43, note 20.

89–91: Vines and scenes of vintage are commonly found in early Christian art. In the mausoleum built in Rome by the eldest daughter of Constantine (Santa Costanza) there are depictions of vines heavily loaded with grapes ready for harvest on the mosaics on the vaulting of the ambulatory.

93: *antiqua fides*: For *cana fides* ("hoary faith"), see Virgil, *Aen.* 1.292. Sedulius is referring here to the patriarchs and other Old Testament heroes of faith (cf. Heb 11).

96–98: It is not only the path to salvation that Sedulius has in mind but his own poetic progress through the "vast forest" of the Bible. On authorial mod-

esty as a conventional literary topos, see Curtius, *European Literature*, 83–85. For *contingere ramos*, see Virgil, *Ecl.* 8.40.

99–100: The idea that even a poet blessed with an iron tongue and a hundred voices would be unable to do justice to such a weighty subject is a commonplace among Latin poets from Virgil (*Aen.* 6.625–7) to Arator (*Hist. apost.* 1.460).

102: *sidera … harenae*: See Catullus, *Carm.* 7.3–7, for a similar allusion to the countless stars in the sky and sand in the desert in order to indicate an impossibly large number.

102–103: A significant transition point, as Remigius observes (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 324): *Post inuocationem suam facit narrationem.* The prefatory section of the poem has concluded, and the actual narration of Old Testament miracles begins. Christ is responsible for them too, as a member of the triune Godhead, although in a different way than the miracles of the Gospels. Many of the manuscripts have a major break at this point.

103–106: Enoch is taken by God (see Gen 5:21–24). This is the first in a succession of miraculous examples of God's control over nature drawn from the Old Testament. The Genesis account is mysteriously silent about the specific reasons for Enoch's amazing exemption from death. For the idea that it was a divine reward bestowed upon him in light of his faith, see Heb 11:5.

103: *abusque Chao*: Chaos is originally a Greek word that means "yawning gap" (see Hesiod, *Theog.* 116). The Vulgate's version of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31) employs the word to describe the vast distance between heaven and hell. It can also be used, as Sedulius does a few lines later, to describe the kind of total devastation that overwhelmed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Here the word is used in the Hesiodic sense.

107–113: The birth of Isaac (see Gen 21). The implicit paradoxes in the Genesis account are accentuated by Sedulius as he emphasizes the extreme old age of his mother, who is trembling as she attaches her child to her breasts.

114–120: The sacrifice of Isaac (see Gen 22).

116–117: *pietate remota*: See Lucan, *Phars.* 6.155. Here, as in the *Aeneid*, the word *pietas* means a highly developed sense of devotion or duty, although elsewhere in the *Paschale carmen* it is often best translated as "pity" or "mercy," especially when applied to Jesus' actions. Paradoxically, it is only by abandoning the natural piety that would prevent him from killing his own son that Abraham is able to have a greater piety, that is to say, obedience to God's command to kill his son.

118–120: "symbolic bloodshed": The sacrifice of Isaac by his father and the substitution of the ram in his place was interpreted typologically (as a prefigurement of Christ's vicarious sacrifice) by early Christians (see, e.g., Origen, *Hom. Gen.* 22).

121–126: Lot's wife (see Gen 19). Sedulius links her fate with Jesus' warning that anyone who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is not fit for the kingdom of God (Luke 9:62). For the treatment of the doomed city by other poets of the period, see Ralph Hexter, "The Metamorphosis of Sodom: The Ps.Cyprian *De Sodoma* as an Ovidian Episode," *Traditio* 44 (1988): 1–35, and D. Kriel, "Sodoma in Fifth-Century Biblical Epic," *Acta Classica* 34 (1991): 7–20.

123: *Ad poenam conuersa suam*: The reading in the prose paraphrase (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 182: *mutata salis remansit in statuam … pro poena*) suggests that *ad* is used here in a final sense. Green (*Latin Epics*, 168) takes the phrase *ad poenam* to mean that Lot's wife was turned "into her own punishment."

127–131: Moses and the burning bush (see Exod 3:1–6). The vocabulary and images here are Virgilian (see *Aen.* 1.176 and 2.684).

128: *non ardens ardere*: The repetition of the same verb (with and without a negative) in such close proximity emphasizes the paradoxical nature of a burning bush that is not burned up.

132–135: Aaron's staff becomes a serpent (see Exod 7:8–13).

132: *mitis in immitem*: The word play here underscores the contrast between the snake and the stick. The latter is rigid but not poisonous, while the former is supple but lethal. Here and elsewhere in the poem, Sedulius draws on Virgilian language for his description of snakes (see *Georg.* 1.244; 3.415; 3.439 and *Aen.* 2.381; 2.475).

136–147: The Israelites safely cross the Red Sea (see Exod 14).

139–140: Following the principle of *variatio*, widely used by Latin poets like Virgil and Ovid, to avoid monotony, Sedulius employs four different words (*pelagi, mare, profundum, marmora*) within the space of two lines to describe one and the same object, the Red Sea.

140: *plantas*: Best translated literally as "soles" here and not as "feet" (White, *Early Christian Latin Poets*, 107) to capture the unique perspective of the sea floor on this unusual situation. Unlike ordinary ground that is used to being pressed by human feet, the floor of the sea is quite unfamiliar with the phenomenon. Swanson's translation, "exotic plants," based on the English cognate, is clearly wrong.

142: *rude iam baptisma*: The typological connection between the flood and baptism was already being made in the first century (see 1 Cor 10:2).

143–144: "As the scripture lesson proclaims": The language here closely resembles that of Ps 28:3, the biblical passage which serves as Sedulius's *lectio*. Like a preacher, the poet supports his assertion that Christ was leading the people of Israel as they crossed the Red Sea with a ringing scriptural proof passage.

145: "As the word, Christ was present": Scheps (*Sedulius' Paschale carmen*, 113) suggests that in this context "*adest = est*." It is more likely, however, that Sedu-

lius uses this compound form of the verb "to be" to denote the actual presence of God in the midst of his people as Immanuel ("God with us" in Hebrew). On Christ as the divine *logos*, see John 1:1–18.

145–147: "the harmonious testaments": By using typological interpretation, Sedulius is able to bring the presence of Christ in the Old Testament to light in this first book of the *PC*. There is no hermeneutical gap for the Christian exegete between the earlier and later books of the Bible. The following four books will be devoted to the miracles Christ performed as described in the New Testament (*doctrina sequens*).

148–151: Manna in the wilderness (see Exod 16).

148–149: *angelicos cibos*: For the notion that the manna the Israelites ate in the wilderness was angel food, see Ps 78:24–25 (cf. Paulinus of Nola, *Carm.* 26.244: *angelico plebem de caelis pane cibauit*).

150: "ethereal nectar": the traditional drink of the Olympian deities. See, e.g., Cicero, *Tusc. disp.* 1.26.65.

151: For the comparison of manna with rain, see Tertullian, *De patientia* 5.24.

152–159: Water from the rock (see Exod 17:1–6).

152–153: For his vivid description of the barren wilderness of Sinai through which the "thirsty army" (see Lucan, *Phars.* 4.336) spent forty years wandering before their entrance into the promised land, Sedulius draws on the language of Virgil, *Aen.* 3.141–2.

157: "fresh beverage": The adjective *nouus* can mean not simply "new," but something more like "unheard of" or even "wonderful," as in Ambrose's description of the *nouum lumen* that shines in the stable on the night Christ was born, in the last stanza of his hymn *Veni redemptor gentium*. Taur. E.IV.42 and many other manuscripts read *pontum* ("sea") instead of *potum* ("drink"). It would have been quite easy for a scribe to miss the small horizontal line over the "o" that so often was used to indicate an "m" or "n" following, and it would be quite a nice, Sedulian touch to have an alternative sea created here to serve as a counterbalance, as it were, to the recently dried up Red Sea. On the other hand, seas are usually salty and do not offer the best drinking water, and the earliest manuscript of the *PO* (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Phillipps 1727) also reads *potum*.

159: "Christ was the bread": From his prose paraphrase (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 184), it is clear that Sedulius has the Eucharist in mind here: *his tribus ergo rebus iam magna sui nuntians sacramenta mysterii Christus erat in pelago, Christus in pane, Christus in saxo.* See John 6:35 for Jesus' description of himself as "the bread of life." In 1 Cor 10:3–4, Paul specifically identifies the "spiritual rock" from which the Israelites drank as Christ. For Jesus' connection with "the water of life," see John 4:13–14 and 7:37–38. The threefold repetition of *Christus* in this final line of the section verbally echoes the three *qua*'s in its opening lines.

160–162: Balaam's ass (see Num 22:22–30).
162: "farm animal": *Pecuale* is an uncommon adjectival form of the word *pecus* ("cattle"). It is used again later by Venantius Fortunatus in *Vita Mart.* 2.146. Sedulius's description of the ass in the prose paraphrase (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 184) is more colorful: *uile pecus et stolidum* ("a dirty beast and stubborn").
163–169: The sun stands still at Gibeon (see Josh 10:12–14).
165: *Insolitus frenare diem.* The dominant metaphor here reminds the reader of the traditional Greco-Roman depictions of the sun (Helios) and the moon (Selene) as charioteers who used reins to control their steeds as they guided their fiery chariots across the sky. In Ps 104:3 the Lord God "makes the clouds his chariot."
168–169: "The subservient stars": For the notion that the stars serve the Lord, see Ps 104:4. The language here is close to Claudian, *Carm. min.* 31.35.
169: *Iesum*: The Latin transliteration is itself based on a Greek transliteration (of the Hebrew *Yeshua*). In Greek, the name of Joshua, the son of Nun, or Jeshua (see Neh 8:18), is Ιησους. See Remigius (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 362): *Iesusnaue et Iosue idem est et interpretatur Saluator.*
170–175: Elijah is fed by the ravens (see 1 Kings 17:2–6). In *Paradise Regained* (2.267–9), Milton makes the same point as Sedulius about the change in the birds' usual behavior: "… the Ravens with their horny beaks / Food to Elijah bringing Even and Morn, / Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what they brought."
174–175: See Gen 8:7 for the raven who flew out of Noah's ark after the waters of the great flood had subsided and failed to return. Presumably the scavenger bird found plenty of carrion available in the deluge's aftermath.
176–187: Elijah is transported to heaven in a fiery chariot (see 2 Kings 2:11–12).
179: For the language here, see Ovid, *Metam.* 7.193: *aurea cum luna succeditis ignibus astra,* and Juvencus, *Euang.* 2.546: *flammipedum rapuit simulatio quadriiugorum.*
180: "no tracks in the air": Green (*Latin Epics*, 168) suggests that the poet "seems to be engaging with Ovid, who notoriously refers to the prints of the wheels of Phoebus's chariot in *Metam.* 2.133 ('you'll see them quite clearly'); Sedulius states explicitly that Elijah's light wheels left no furrows."
181: Cf. Paulinus of Nola, *Carm.* 5.41: *raptus quadriiugo penetrat super aera curru.*
182: *dexteriora petens … triumphum*: For the first two words, see Lucan, *Phars.* 2.421. The "triumph" that Elijah leads may refer to Old Testament saints who are to be delivered (centuries later) from the *limbus patrum* after Christ's resurrection and descent into Hell (see 1 Pet 3:19) and led in a great procession to heaven (as in the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus). The subject was quite pop-

ular among Neo-Latin poets, including Erasmus. For a fuller discussion, see my "Macarius Mutius' *De Triumpho Christi*: Christian Epic Theory and Practice in the Late Quattrocento," in *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Torontonensis* (ed. Alexander Dalzell, Charles Fantazzi, and Richard Schoeck; Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1991), 739–46.

183: "the finish line of human life": The phrase itself comes from Virgil, *Aen.* 10.472: *fata uocant metasque dati peruenit ad aeui,* although Sedulius may also be thinking here of Paul's description of his own Christian life as a race (Phil 3:12–14).

187: *per accentum*: Nebrija (*Comentario al Carmen Paschale*, 148) explains succinctly: *accentus acutus in penultima transfertur in antepenultimam.* The Greek word for sun (*helios*) is accented on the antepenult, while the Greek version of Elijah's name as it appears in the New Testament is accented on the penult.

188–192: King Hezekiah's life is lengthened (see 2 Kings 20:1–7; Isa 38:1–7; and 2 Chr 32:24–26).

188: The first two words and the last of this line are the same as in Juvencus, *Euang.* 3.564: *ultima labentis restabat portio lucis.*

192–196: Jonah is swallowed by a sea monster; see Jonah 1–2. For a thoroughgoing treatment of Jerome's commentary on the book of Jonah and its literary context, see Yves-Marie Duval, *Le livre de Jonas dans la littérature chrétienne grecque et latine: Sources et influence de Commentaire sur Jonas de saint Jérome* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1973).

192: "a voracious whale": In the Hebrew original, the sea creature that swallows Jonah is described simply as *dag gadol* (a big fish). The Latin word *cetus* (borrowed from the Greek) is used to describe Jonah's unusual sea transport, but it means something more like a sea creature or a sea monster, not necessarily a whale. Tyndale's translation of Matt 12:40 is one of the first to put Jonah into the belly of a "whale." In the manuscript illustration found in Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum 17.4 (f. 10r), the body of the sea monster looks more like a serpent with three gigantic loops. Its head, however, is "mammalian," and it has a long, fishy tail (see Lewine, "Miniatures of the Antwerp Sedulius," 53–54). The image of Jonah emerging from the whale's mouth is found frequently on late antique sarcophagi.

193: *uitale sepulchrum*: Sedulius uses an oxymoron here to highlight the paradoxical nature of the situation. Jonah has fallen into the sea, but he is not wet (cf. Claudius Marius Victorius, *Aleth.* 1.273). The whale/tomb is alive, as is the human cargo it devoured.

194: *tutus*: Taur. E.IV.42 reads *totus* (later corrected to *tutus*). Whether Jonah is "safe" or "intact," either reading makes good sense here. The manuscripts of the *PO* all read *tutus.*

197–205: The three men in the fiery furnace (see Dan 3:8–30).

198: *Tres una cum mente uiri*: The Jewish men are identified by their Babylonian names in Dan 3:12 as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. In the *Paschale opus* (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 186), Sedulius describes them as *pueri* ("boys"). The three young men standing unscathed in the midst of flames appear with some frequency in early Christian art as, for instance, in the Catacomb of Priscilla in Rome. By juxtaposing the Latin words for three and one, Sedulius emphasizes the inner unity that inspires the three individuals. The poet frames *una cum mente* with *tres* on one side and *uiri* on the other as he creates a verbal image of the spiritual and physical binding of the youths (cf. Dan 3:21).

199–200: "the harsh tyrant": The Chaldean king referred to here is Nebuchadnezzar (605–562 B.C.E.), son of Nabopolasar. His wrath was not really "Achaemenian," since that adjective refers to the Persian empire (Darius, Xerxes, etc.) which began after Cyrus (a Mede) overthrew the Chaldean regime in 539 B.C.E. (see Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.189–91). Cf. Claudian, *De raptu Pros.* 3.264: *cuius Achaemenio regi.*

202: *nil audente rogo:* Many manuscripts have more predictable readings: *urente* (burning) or *ardente* (glowing), but Huemer's *audente* must be correct. Even though it is a natural element, fire is personified here; it is not bold enough to go against God's will (cf. Dan 3:27). There is no indication in the biblical account that a pyre was lit to punish the three men instead of a furnace or oven (cf. Vulg. Dan 3:19: *fornax*). In Cyprian Gallus, *Hept., Ex.* 1144, it is a *caminus*, a word that Sedulius uses a few lines later (*PC* 1.205).

203: *imagineae … poenae*: Nebrija takes the adjective here to refer to the image that the king had set up before which the three men refused to fall down and worship (*Comentario al Carmen Paschale*, 152). The three men were paying the ultimate price for not worshiping the image. It is better, however, to interpret the word as referring to the penalty that the king and his advisors imagined would be quite painful but in fact was not.

204: "Oh, how great": In his exclamation here, Sedulius uses the present tense, but it is unclear whether it is the historical present, referring to the three men in the furnace, or a more general kind of aphoristic statement that would apply to the glory that accrues to martyrs for the faith in all ages. The poet might have in mind the deaths of Christians during the persecutions in the third and fourth centuries under Decius, Diocletian, and other Roman emperors.

205: "flame … flames": The repetition emphasizes points of contrast and comparison between the physical heat generated by the furnace and the metaphorical warmth of the three believers' faith (see Acts 2:3 for the "tongues of fire" that appeared at Pentecost).

206–211: The madness of Nebuchadnezzar (see Dan 4:28–33). See, in general, Matthias Henze, *The Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar: The Ancient Near Eastern Origins and Early History of Interpretation of Daniel 4* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

207: *pietate recessit*: a phrase found in Lucan, *Phars.* 9.1056, where it describes Caesar's forced tears when presented with the severed head of his adversary, Pompey.
210: "seven years": literally, "seven periods of time." In late Latin, *tempus* can mean simply "year." There is, for example, an early Christian inscription that reads: *vixit in pace tempora III* (Scheps, *Sedulius' Paschale carmen*, 120).
211: *montibus errans*: a Virgilian phrase (cf. *Ecl.* 6.52 or *Aen.* 3.644).
212–219: Daniel in the lions' den (see Dan 6:1–28).
213: An additional line, *Ecce etenim sceleri scelus addidit ira furentis*, missing in many manuscripts and included in Huemer's edition only as a note, is retained in the numbering of lines. It is possible that a scribe made up the line and inserted it after consulting the prose paraphrase (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 187): *Nec minus Darii postmodum regnatoris dum praeteritam furor imitatur insaniam*. On the other hand, the line could have been Sedulius's own, which was dropped later only when a thoughtful scribe noticed that line 213 appeared to ascribe two wicked deeds to Darius (throwing three men into the fiery furnace and Daniel into the lions' den) when he was only responsible for the latter.
219: "the savage lions learned": Sedulius may be borrowing here from Prudentius's poetic description of the fall into sin and the disastrous effects on nature. In *Hamartigenia* 221 (*occiso pastore truces didicere leones*), the earlier poet describes how formerly docile lions learned how to kill herdsmen and then fall on the untended cattle. In both instances, the language used suggests that the untutored lions had to go through some kind of educational process in order to learn how to kill and later how not to kill. Sedulius may also have in mind biblical passages like Isa 11:6–9.
220–241: The poet recapitulates breathlessly all of the miracles which he has just taken over one hundred lines to recount.
220: *Dic ubi sunt*: a rhetorical question that becomes a virtual topos in the Middle Ages; see James W. Bright, "The *ubi sunt* Formula," *MLN* 8 (1893): 187–88. On the depiction of Nature as a goddess in Latin poetry "from Ovid to Claudian," see Curtius, *European Literature*, 106–27. The line is imitated by Arator, *Hist. Apost.* 1.826: *Dic ubi sunt mundana tuae sapientia leges?* There are biblical precedents for a series of rhetorical questions beginning with *ubi* (see 1 Cor 1:20 and 15:55).
232: *iam morte grauato*: Sedulius may be drawing here from a line in Ovid, *Metam.* 4.145, that describes the reaction of the mortally wounded Pyramus on hearing the name of his beloved Thisbe.
235: "… with dew": Here Sedulius takes literally the Septuagint's description of the cooling of the fiery furnace, included in the expanded version of the third chapter of Daniel (*et fecit medium fornacis quasi ventum roris flantem*; Vulg. Dan 3:50), but not found in the Hebrew manuscripts.

237: *instimulante fame*: Claudian, *De cons. Stilich.* 3.341, uses a similar phrase (*stimulata fames*) to describe lions who avoided capture by resisting the allurements of a tethered goat even though their hunger was aroused.
238–239: "the creator of whatever is seen or lies hidden": a poetic rendering of the familiar words of the Nicene Creed (325) describing God the Father. The Latin liturgical version is *factorem caeli et terrae, uisibilium omnium et inuisibilium.* On the council of Nicaea and its famous creed, see Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
239: *rerum machina*: The phrase may owe something to the language used by Claudian's Pluto to explain to his captive, Persephone, the extensive power of his will (*De raptu Pros.* 2.280: *ille ego Saturni proles cui machina rerum*). Here it is God's word that is the "machine of things." See Heb 1:3: "He upholds the universe by the word of his power."
241: "Sovereign will … by his nod": The phrase combines *imperium*, a term that is regularly associated with Rome's military power (see Virgil, A*en.* 1.279) and *nutu,* a word often used by poets to describe the gracious assent of the powerful Olympian gods (see *Aen.* 9.106). *Trahit sententia* is close to the language of Claudian, *In Rufinum* 1.1.
242–281: This is the dramatic point led up to in the previous section: a passionate outcry against those who would worship the forces of nature instead of the God who is above the natural world that he created.
242: *Heu miseri, qui uana colunt*: The first three words may owe something to Lucan's description of the unhappy Roman soldiers not released from military service in *Phars.* 4.382: *heu miseri qui bella gerunt*; the next two are close to Cyprianus Gallus, *Hept., Ies. Nav.* 551: … *noceant ne uana colentes.*
244: *Factorem fugiunt et quae fecere uerentur!* See Rom 1:25: "and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator." The distinction between creator and the created is frequently made in Augustine's *Confessions* (e.g., 13.2), as well as elsewhere in his writings.
245: *Quis furor*: a common exclamation that occurs frequently in Virgil and other Latin poets (see Scheps, *Sedulius' Paschale carmen*, 124).
246–247: The Egyptian god of wisdom and writing, Thoth, was frequently represented with the head of the ibis, a wading bird with a prominent beak. Apis was an Egyptian god of male fertility often given the shape of a bull. The "twisted reptile" is probably a reference to the serpent curled around the caduceus of Aesclepius and Hermes. *Semihominem canem* is the dog-headed Anubis, the Egyptian deity of death (and embalming). Sedulius contrasts the object of worship with the worshiper whom he describes as *homo plenus.* Even though himself fully human, he is (incongruously) worshiping something that is only half human. Many manuscripts read *homo pronus*. The worshiper may indeed

be lying prostrate as he adores Anubis, but Sedulius's point here is that he is *homo integer membris* ("a man with all of his members intact") as the prose paraphrase (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 189) makes clear.

248–257: In these lines Sedulius discounts the worship of the sun. The celestial bodies are somewhat more respectable candidates for divinity than monstrous animals, but they are not omnipresent, one of the traditional attributes of deity. The sun plays a prominent role in ancient Mediterranean religious systems and is frequently associated with Jesus in patristic interpretations of passages like Mal 4:2 and Ps 19:5–6. For the possible connection between *Sol Invictus* and Christmas, see S. Hijmans, "Sol Invictus, the Winter Solstice, and the Origins of Christmas," *Mouseion Calgary* 3.3 (2003): 377–98. There is a third-century mosaic depicting Apollo (or Helios) found under St. Peter's Basilica in Rome that may have been implicitly connected with Christ. On the mausoleum of St. Peter's in general, see Angelus A. De Marco, *The Tomb of Saint Peter* (Leiden: Brill, 1964).

249: *rite*: not in the sense of "rightly" or "by due plan" (Swanson's translation), but "regularly" (the prose paraphrase [Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 189] has *non cessat*). It is the repetitive nature of the sun's office that Sedulius is stressing here, not its legitimacy.

251: *lustrare*: In this context the verb means something more like "traverse" than Swanson's "bring day to." Sedulius is not simply repeating the point about the sun's brilliance that he made in line 250, but is adding another reason why the sun might be worshiped: its range extends over the entire sky.

254: "sent off to the western reaches": The sun is represented here as a bureaucratic functionary who, once his official duties have been performed, is being sent away, as it were, until his services are needed again. An alternative reading (*demissus* instead of *dimissus*) would present us with a sun that is (more prosaically) "setting" now, just as earlier in the line it had risen (*oritur*). Arevalo's edition has *horas* (hours) instead of *oras* (shores), a reading that is supported by the prose paraphrase (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 189): *nunc ad occasum horis uergentibus inclinatus uices cum nocte partitur.*

256: *origine mundi*: For this common expression, see Virgil, *Georg.* 2.336; Ovid, *Metam.* 1.3.

256–257: The poet is thinking here of a theological issue that emerged in the hotly debated Arian controversy. If there was a time when he was not, the argument went, then the Son of God could not possibly be equal to his Father. The orthodox response was to assert the coeternality of the first two persons of the Christian godhead: "There was *not* a time when he was not." So too the sun cannot be divine since it did not exist at the beginning of creation (cf. Gen 1:14–19).

257: *geminum sine sole diem*: The sun and the moon and stars were created on

the fourth day, according to the account in Gen 1, not on the third as Sedulius seems to believe. Perhaps he is not counting the first day or is simply mistaken. *Genitum* is an alternative reading for *geminum* (attested in Taur. E.IV.42 and other early manuscripts), but the idea that the day was "begotten" makes little sense, as Arevalo observes (*non enim placet*), and the reading in the prose paraphrase (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 189) argues strongly against it: *nisi peracto sine sole die iam gemino prouidus eum genitor a tertiae lucis instituisset radiare principio.*

258–259: The moon too was a common object of veneration and associated with divinity among the Greeks (Artemis, Selene, Hecate), Egyptians (Isis), and Romans (Diana). Sedulius's point is that neither the moon nor the stars are constant: the moon waxes and wanes, and the stars are only visible at night. Again, they fail to meet one of his implicit criteria for divinity.

260–263: Water and fire are incompatible elements. Neither is able to claim, as true divinity must to Sedulius's way of thinking, a power that would be invulnerable to any other's. Lar was the Roman tutelary deity of hearth and home. The vestal virgins were responsible for keeping the fire in the circular temple of Vesta in the Roman forum lit at all times. Fire plays a central role in Zoroastrianism. Streams, rivers, seas, and oceans were regularly considered divine by the ancient Greeks and Romans.

263: *fontibus ignes*: See Virgil, *Aen.* 2.686.

264–272: The ironic polemic here probably owes something to Old Testament passages such as Isa 44:9–20 and 46:6–7. Sedulius has in mind the worship of sacred trees themselves (common in Canaanite religion) as well as poles or statues of gods made from wood (*Asherim*) and located in groves or on high places (see, e.g., 2 Chr 14:3). On trees as object of worship, see O. Hagemayer, "Baum," in *RAC* 1 (1954): 22–4, and T. Klauser, in *RAC* 2:15–9 and 22–33.

268: *Lignee, ligna rogas*: For the idea that those who worship idols become like them, see Ps 115:8.

271: *culmina tecti*: cf. Virgil, *Aen.* 2.695.

273: Juvenal mocks the devotion to garden deities in similar terms in *Sat.* 15.10–11: *O sanctas gentes, quibus haec nascuntur in hortis numina*. The Athenians planted "gardens of Adonis" with quickly maturing plants like fennel and lettuces for an annual festival held in honor of the short-lived god. Roman gardens regularly featured a statue of Priapus, an obviously male symbol of fertility.

275: *cultores*: an ambiguous word whose range of connotations includes not only agriculture but, by semantic extension, religion. A *cultor* is someone who tends the fields or the gods. The adjective *ueri* suggests that Sedulius is aware of the root meaning of the word.

279: The entire line is borrowed (with only a change in the mood of the verb) from Virgil, *Ecl.* 5.39: *carduus et spinis surgit paliurus acutis*. See also Cyprianus

Gallus, *Hept., Gen.* 121. The biblical *locus classicus* for "thorns and thistles" is Gen 3:18. *Paliurus* is also known as "crown-of-thorns"; its botanical name is *Eupohorbia milii.*

281: *risimus … defleuimus*: Sedulius quickly corrects his response here. His treatment of pagan idolatry has been humorous, but the reader should not be misled into thinking that he takes a light-hearted approach to these grievous errors. For a possible biblical reference, see Eccl 7:3: "Sorrow is better than laughter." In the canonical Gospels, Jesus is portrayed as weeping, but never laughing.

282–290: The poet's journey. For his description of the heavenly Jerusalem, Sedulius borrows from biblical passages like Rev 21:10.

282–283: "the city, the provider of our freedom": See Gal 4:26: "But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother." The association of Rome with Jerusalem in the prose paraphrase (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 191) is suggestive. As Scheps observes (*Sedulius' Paschale carmen*, 129), *opem* should be translated as "*bewerkster*," equivalent to the prose paraphrase's *auctorem*.

285–287: Sedulius moves from a description of the city itself to one of its splendid buildings (perhaps with John 14:2 in mind) to which access is sought, imitating the triadic structure of Jesus' saying in Matt 7:7–8: "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened."

288–289: The *caput anguli* of the building in question is Christ. Sedulius is drawing on a familiar biblical theme. The stone which was originally discarded by the builders as inappropriate to serve as a chief cornerstone turns out to be the very one that is best suited for that role. See Ps 118:22–3; Isa 28:16; Matt 21:42; and 1 Pet 2:4–8. It could refer to a stone set just below the roof of a building or a capstone in an arch; see Johanna Kramer, "Du eart se weallstan: Architectural Metaphor and Christological Imagery in the Old English Christ 1 and the Book of Kells," in *Source of Wisdom: Old English and Early Medieval Latin Studies in Honour of Thomas D. Hill* (ed. Charles D. Wright, Frederick M. Biggs, and Thomas N. Hall; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 94–5.

289–290: The reference here is to the idea that believers are "living stones" built into "a spiritual house" (1 Pet 2:4–5). Lest anyone think that the capstone might rest too heavy on these individual stones beneath it, Sedulius adds a reassuring verse based on Matt 11:30: *Iugum enim meum suave est, et onus meum leue.*

291–298: The poet's statement of Trinitarian faith. While the Trinity is a doctrine not explicitly articulated in the Bible (but see Matt 28:15 and 2 Cor 13:13), it was one of the most frequently discussed and debated theological topics during the patristic period.

298: *triplicabile simplet*: *Triplicabilis* is a neologism. The usual word would be *triplicis* (cf. Merobaudes, *De Chr.* 28: *et toties unus triplicique in nomine simplex*).

Simplet is also an unusual word. The verb does not occur elsewhere in extant Latin literature before Sedulius (Scheps, *Sedulius' Paschale carmen*, 130). Some manuscripts read *simplex*, but the more difficult reading is to be preferred.

299–333: A spirited defense of orthodox Catholic beliefs against heresies such as Arianism and Sabellianism.

300–304: Arius (c. 260–336) was the most celebrated of the heresiarchs of the early church. His teachings were condemned at the Council of Nicaea. Sedulius is relatively restrained in his description of Arius's death. Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 2.29, and Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 1.38, go into more gruesome detail. As Arius relieved himself in a public lavatory in Constantinople, he hemorrhaged extensively, losing internal organs in the process, and died soon thereafter. The parallels with the death of Judas, the betrayer of Jesus, are clear; see Acts 1:18.

306: *simulauit*: Following Scheps (*Sedulius' Paschale carmen*, 131), I take this verb to be transitive, but it could be understood as an intransitive verb introducing an indirect statement, as Swanson does, especially in light of the prose paraphrase (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 193): *demens, qui paternae diuinitatis iura … caduci putauit gradibus conparari inter homines.* As Green (*Latin Epics*, 169–70) points out, Sedulius depends here on Virgil's description of the giant Salmoneus who pretended to be Zeus by flinging torches and making noise with his chariot in order to imitate the thunder and lightning of the great Olympian (*Aen.* 6.590: *demens qui nimbos et non imitabile fulmen*).

310: *assolet*: The manuscripts all have some variation of *afforet* which is hard to construe in this context. *Adsolet* is a conjectural emendation proposed by Petschenig. This reading also seems to correspond better with the prose paraphrase (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 193): *et qui filius esse nunc cernitur, eum patrem fieri posse non habetur ambiguum.*

311: A Virgilian line; see *Ecl.* 4.7: *iam noua progenies caelo demittitur alto*, and *Georg.* 4.209: *stat fortuna domus et aui numerantur auorum.*

312: *Uerbum, uirtus, sapientia*: For the association of these terms with Christ, see John 1:1 and 1 Cor 1.24.

313: *de lumine lumen*: The Nicene Creed's expression in Latin (*lumen de lumine*) needs to be altered only slightly to fit into the dactylic hexameter line. For the same metrical rendition of the creedal phrase, see Paulinus of Nola, *Carm.* 5.82 and Prudentius, *Apoth.* 278.

315: "begotten … not created": Another cardinal tenet of Nicene orthodoxy; Jesus is not part of the creation itself but an integral component of the Godhead responsible for creation.

316: *principium:* Here as in 1.34, Sedulius assigns this attribute to Jesus. He not only was "in the beginning with God" (cf. John 1:1), but was himself the beginning (see Augustine, *Conf.* 11.8–9).

318: *rerum caput*: Probably a reference to Eph 1:22: "And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church."
319–320: A fine but critical doctrinal distinction. The key pronouns in the translation are italicized to make the point clear. The Son is of the same substance as the Father, but he is a different person of the Godhead.
321–322: Sedulius includes Scriptural proof passages here (with minimal tweaking *metri causa*) to support his argument: *in me est pater et ego in patre* (John 10:38) and *ego et pater unum sumus* (John 10:30).
322–323: In contrast with Arius who failed to appreciate the significance of the unity of divine Father and Son, the third-century theologian Sabellius's name is associated with a doctrine that treated the Father and Son as simply different modes (or operations) and not as individualized persons, sometimes referred to as modalist monarchianism or Patripassionism. In his *Tract. in Ioh.* 36.9, Augustine also juxtaposes the two contrasting heretical positions and compares them with the binary dangers presented to ancient sailors by Scylla, on the one hand, and Charybdis, on the other. There is also a treatise by Gregory of Nyssa on the Father and the Son, directed "against Arius and Sabellius." Centuries later, these two heretics in particular were still being featured prominently among the many condemned by Thomas Aquinas in a fresco in the "Capella Carafa" of S. Maria sopra Minerva in Rome.
326–333: Sedulius compares the dramatic differences between these two Christian heretics with the notorious divergencies of pagan philosophy. However different from each other these philosophers and heretics may appear to be in some respects, one commonality is that they are all insanely convinced (see line 333) that their wisdom is superior to God's.
327–328: " … with shoulders bared, they stretch out their arms": Ancient philosophers were sometimes represented with a bared shoulder and arm (see, e.g., the sculpture of a seated philosopher, perhaps Aristotle, in the Galleria Spada in Rome). It was not uncommon for early Christians to adopt similar garb; Tertullian wrote a treatise *De pallio* in which he explains why he adopted the philosopher's cloak. Ancient rhetors would extend their right arm when delivering an address (see the bronze sculpture of the so-called "Arringatore," from the second century B.C.E. in the Museo Archeologico in Florence). Alternatively, Sedulius may mean that the clothing is doffed and the arms thrust forth in preparation for a more physical kind of competition like wrestling, in which case the expression should be understood metaphorically, since the context here is clearly that of a *logomachy*.
329–330: See 1 Cor 1:20: "Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?"

331–333: As he approaches the end of the first book of the poem, Sedulius resumes and sharpens the attack on *Attica doctrina* which he alluded to earlier in the book (line 40). Other than the philosopher who "talks too much," a critique which could be applied to a number of ancient wise men, Sedulius probably has specific philosophers in mind. Followers of Pythagoras famously observed the practice of *echemythia,* a rule of silence strictly enforced. Aristotle is well known to have walked as he taught his peripatetic students. In Plato's *Symposium* (220), Socrates is described as standing for a long time in one place.

332: *crispare cacchinum*: To describe the philosopher who "creates coruscating laughter" (Green's alliterative translation), Sedulius modifies a line from Persius, *Sat.* 3.87: *ingeminat tremulos naso crispante cachinnos*. He is probably also dependent here on Juvenal, *Sat.* 10.28–35, where a contrast is drawn between Democritus, "the laughing philosopher," and Heraclitus, who, according to Seneca, never went out of doors without weeping. See also Cyprianus Gallus, *Hept. Gen.* 592.

334–350: The poet journeys heavenward. Like Juvencus before him, Sedulius links his own personal salvation with his poetic enterprise.

334: A clear reference to Virgil, *Aen.* 8.309: *ingrediens uarioque uiam sermone leuabat.* As Green (*Latin Epics*, 170–71) suggests, "Sedulius has, as it were, replaced *maxima Roma*, which looms behind the seventh and eighth books of the *Aeneid*, with his own holy city (one more like the new Jerusalem constructed at the end of Prudentius's *Psychomachia* than the more conceptual City of God of Augustine)."

335: The difficult journey becomes easier the closer Sedulius gets to his goal. It is not always clear whether it is the ambitious poem that is getting closer to realization or the Christian life nearing its heavenly end (or both) that the poet has in mind.

337: The cross was a readily identifiable symbol of Christianity as early as the Apostle Paul (see, e.g., Gal 6:14), but it was only after Constantine's famous vision in connection with the battle at the Milvian Bridge in 312 that it began to be associated with military standards (*vexilla*). For the same connection (between cross and banner) see Paulinus of Nola, *Carm.* 19.655: *uexillumque crucis super omnia sidera fixit*, and, much later, the popular hymn of Venantius Fortunatus, *Vexilla regis prodeunt*.

339: The military imagery predominates here and in the following lines. There is some precedent in the New Testament; see, e.g., 2 Tim 4:7: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day."

340: See John 10:9: "I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture."

341: *praemia uitae*: See Lucretius, *De rerum nat.* 3.899 and 5.1151; Claudius Marius Victorius, *Aleth.* 3.671.
343: "stamped on your forehead": On marking the forehead of believers with a sign, usually the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, "tav," equivalent to the Greek letter "tau" (roughly the same shape as the *crux commissa* or St. Anthony's cross), see Ezek 9:4. On marking the forehead with the name of God, see Rev 3:12 and 7:3. For the mark on the forehead or hand of those who "worship the beast and its image," see Rev 14:9.
343–344: "glorious arms … I carry": a reference possibly to the cross, using hendiadys; literally "I carry glory and arms." See the first line of Virgil's *Aeneid*: "I sing of arms and the man"; i.e. the armed man.
345–346: Like the thief on the cross (Luke 23:42), Sedulius asks for a place for himself in Christ's kingdom, but in language reminiscent of that used by Aeneas and the Trojan exiles as they seek a permanent home for themselves in Italy (*Aen.* 3.167 and 85). Like Aeneas in *Aen.* 7.229, Sedulius is not presumptuous. He asks only for an *exiguam domum.* In *Sat.* 2.6.1–6, Horace talks about his preferred living arrangements in equally modest terms. Prudentius concludes his *Hamartigenia* with a minimalistic demand (953–954): *Non posco beata / in regione domum.* He simply wants to avoid going to hell. Sedulius's petition for a small house in heaven sounds somewhat less modest when compared with Prudentius's request.
347: *alboque beati ordinis*: that is, according to Remigius (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 331), *in caelesti libro*. Scriptural references to having one's name written in God's book are plentiful; see, e.g., Exod 32:32; Ps 68:29; Phil 4:3; Rev 3:5 and 20:12.
348: *Extremus … ciuis*: Sedulius may be alluding here to Paul's well known self-deprecation as the last of the apostles to whom the risen Christ revealed himself, "as to one untimely born" (1 Cor 15:8). On citizenship in the heavenly kingdom, see Phil 3:20.
350: "hope grows lukewarm": On God's rejection of those who are "neither hot nor cold," see Rev 3:15–16. Sedulius may be thinking here of King Ahaz who when invited to ask for a sign from God "as deep as Sheol or high as heaven" declined to do so, in order not "to put the Lord to the test" (Isa 7:11–13).
351–354: The poet's prayer to Christ as incarnate God. Sedulius recapitulates many of the chief points of Christian doctrine in terms reminiscent of the Pauline summary in Phil 2:4–8. Even though he was "in the form of God," Christ became a lowly human. The most difficult word in the prayer is the last one, *posses,* which might be taken to mean that Jesus was unable to abandon his divinity and could not have sinned even if he had so desired. From Heb 4:15, however, it is clear that Jesus was genuinely tempted "in every respect." Many manuscripts read *nosses*. The best solution is to consider *Ut nec linquere*

posses as a periphrasis for *ut nec relinqueres* (see Scheps, *Sedulius' Paschale carmen*, 137).

355–367: The four evangelists are presented as Sedulius's sources as he prepares the reader for the most important part of the poem, the evangelical content that is to follow in the next four books.

355–358: These four Sedulian lines (without enjambment) are among those most frequently cited in the Middle Ages, often in connection with artistic depictions of the evangelists (see, e.g., Francis Wormald, *The Miniatures in the Gospels of St. Augustine* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010], and Robert Favreau, "Épigraphie et miniatures: les vers de Sedulius et les évangélistes," *Journal des Savants* 1993: 63–87). For the biblical basis of "the four living creatures," see Ezek 1:10, 10:14, and Rev 4:6. The association with the evangelists begins as early as Irenaeus of Lyons. It is Jerome's ordering and explanation of the four symbols, however, that Sedulius appears to follow here. By contrast, the prefatory poem often attached to Juvencus's *Euangeliorum libri* connects Mark with the eagle and John with the lion. The representations of the four *animantia* in the early apse mosaic in S. Pudenziana in Rome are particularly memorable. While the precise connection between the respective beasts and evangelists is not made explicit in Sedulius's account, the implicit reasoning would seem to be as follows: Matthew's gospel begins with a genealogy that traces Jesus' human lineage back to David, so he plays the role of a man; Mark's begins with a voice crying in the wilderness (where lions tend to roam), so he sounds like a lion; Luke's gospel begins with a description of the sacrificial duties of Zacharias, and since the ox was a beast frequently used for sacrifice in the ancient world, Luke has the face of an ox; John's gospel reaches theological heights that are above the Synoptic Gospels, so he soars like an eagle.

355: *Hoc Matthaeus agens*: Cf. Virgil, *Aen.* 8.678: *hinc Augustus agens.*

356: *uox per deserta:* See Mark 1:3: *uox clamantis in deserto.*

359–360: *quattuor … una*: That the four Gospels, despite their differences, all declare a single truth, is a doctrine that owes much to Irenaeus of Lyons and other early church fathers. Reconciling the Gospel of John with the three Synoptic accounts represented a particular challenge. Sedulius draws an analogy with the diversity of the four seasons that make up a single year. The prologue to Pseudo-Jerome, *Expositio IV Euangeliorum* (dated to the seventh or eighth century), makes ingenious connections between the four evangelists and the four primordial elements (earth, sky, fire, and water), as well as the four most important liquids for the Mediterranean diet other than water (honey, milk, oil, and wine).

361–364: *duodenus*: For the poet, the similarity of numbers for the evangelists and the seasons is not accidental; nor is the number of the apostles which matches the number of months in the year and the hours in the Roman day (12).

Both numerological coincidences demonstrate the subordination of the natural year in service to its supernatural commander.

365–368: Sedulius prepares the reader for the transition from book 1 to book 2. The latter begins with a recounting of Adam and Eve's fall into sin as the poet sets the stage for the advent of the second Adam, Christ.

366: *Gaudia longa metam:* a phrase that occurs in the poetry of Sedulius's early contemporary, Paulinus of Nola, *Carm.* 31.452.

366–368: The imagery is drawn from Ps 126:5–6: "Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him."

Liber Secundus

Expulerat primogenitum saeuissimus anguis
Florigera de sede uirum blandique saporis
Illecebris letum misero portarat amarum.
Nec solus meritam praesumptor senserat iram
Mortali sub lege iacens, sed prorsus ab ipso
Humanum simul omne genus. Heu noxia coniunx!
Noxia tu coniunx magis an draco perfidus ille?
Perfidus ille draco, sed tu quoque noxia coniunx.
Pro dolor! Aeterni fuerant duo. Crescere postquam
Coepit origo, perit clademque a semine sumpsit.
Quid numerosa dies, quid tempore proderat illo
Cernere nongentos ultra feliciter annos
Progeniemque senum decimam spectare nepotum
Iamque suum nescire genus, cum uicta supremis
Cursibus extremae sors irreparabilis horae,
Sera licet, uentura foret, longumque per aeuum
Vita breuis nihil esse diu cum fine doleret?
Nec reducem spes ferret opem primique sepulchrum
Terrigenae caeca sorberet fauce nepotes,
Ni pius ille sator culpas ignoscere promptus,
Reddere difficilis, sua ne factura periret
Quaeque Deo similis uiuens astaret imago
Dissimilis de morte foret, ueniale misertus
Instauraret opus pomisque uetaret acerbis,
Quae mandere patres, natorum horrescere dentes
Donaretque suis semper placatus, ut unde
Culpa dedit mortem, pietas daret inde salutem,
Et uelut e spinis mollis rosa surgit acutis
Nil quod laedat habens matremque obscurat honore,
Sic Euae de stirpe sacra ueniente Maria
Virginis antiquae facinus noua uirgo piaret,
Vt quoniam natura prior uitiata iacebat
Sub dicione necis, Christo nascente renasci
Possit homo et ueteris maculam deponere carnis.

Book 2

The savagest of snakes had driven the first born man
Out of his flowery home and with sweetly flavored enticements
Had brought bitter death to the miserable wretch.
Nor did this reckless man alone feel the well-deserved wrath
When subjected to the law of death, but descending straight from him,
The entire human race was affected as well. Alas, guilty wife!
Were you, wife, or that faithless serpent more to blame?
That serpent was faithless, but you also, wife, were to blame.
How sad! The two would have been eternal. No sooner was there
A beginning than it perished, and it inherited its ruin from its seed.
What good was long life? What advantage at that time
To see nine hundred and more years pass happily,
To watch the tenth-generation grandchildren grow old
And no longer recognize one's own family, as long as the fate
Of the last irretrievable hour, caught up with in the final lap of the race,
Though late, would come? No matter how long it lasted,
Brief life would complain that nothing was long that had to end.
Nor would hope offer restoration, and the grave of the first man
Born on earth would still be swallowing grandchildren in its blind maw,
Had not that merciful creator, quick to forgive sins
And slow to repay them, lest his creation be destroyed,
And the living image, which was to stand up like God,
Be unlike him because of death, had he not, in pity, begun
His work of forgiveness and forbidden the bitter fruit
Which the fathers ate to set the teeth of their children on edge;
Had he not granted, always pleased with his own, that
From where sin brought death, his mercy would bring forth salvation.
And just as the delicate rose emerges from sharp thorns,
Having nothing that harms, and eclipses its mother in honor,
Even so, insofar as holy Mary came from the stock of Eve,
The latter virgin was to atone for the misdeed of the earlier one,
So that since man's previously marred nature lay
Under the sentence of death, thanks to Christ's birth
He could be reborn and set aside the stain of his old flesh.

Haec uentura senes postquam dixere prophetae,
Angelus intactae cecinit properata Mariae,
Et dictum comitata fides, uterumque puellae
Sidereum mox implet onus, rerumque creator
Nascendi sub lege fuit. Stupet innuba tensos
Virgo sinus gaudetque suum paritura parentem.

Iamque nouem lapsis decimi de limine mensis
Fulgebat sacrata dies, cum uirgine feta
Promissum compleuit opus: uerbum caro factum,
In nobis habitare uolens. Tunc maximus infans
Intemerata sui conseruans uiscera templi
Illaesum uacuauit iter; pro virgine testis
Partus adest, clausa ingrediens et clausa relinquens.
Quae noua lux mundo, quae toto gratia caelo?
Quis fuit ille nitor, Mariae cum Christus ab aluo
Processit splendore nouo? Velut ipse decoro
Sponsus ouans thalamo, forma speciosus amoena
Prae filiis hominum, cuius radiante figura
Blandior in labiis diffusa est gratia pulchris.
O facilis pietas! Ne nos seruile teneret
Peccato dominante iugum, seruilia summus
Membra tulit dominus, primique ab origine mundi
Omnia qui propriis uestit nascentia donis
Obsitus exiguis habuit uelamina pannis;
Quemque procellosi non mobilis unda profundi,
Terrarum non omne solum, spatiosaque lati
Non capit aula poli, puerili in corpore plenus
Mansit, et angusto Deus in praesepe quieuit.

Salue, sancta parens, enixa puerpera regem,
Qui caelum terramque tenet per saecula, cuius
Nomen et aeterno complectens omnia gyro
Imperium sine fine manet; quae uentre beato
Gaudia matris habens cum uirginitatis honore
Nec primam similem uisa es nec habere sequentem.
Sola sine exemplo placuisti femina Christo.

Tunc prius ignaris pastoribus ille creatus
Enituit, quia pastor erat, gregibusque refulsit

After the prophets of old declared that this would happen,
An angel prophesied the impending events to Mary inviolate.
Her faith followed upon the announcement, and a starry burden
Soon filled the womb of the girl. The creator of all things
Was subject to the law of being born. The unmarried virgin stared in amazement
At her swollen belly and rejoiced to be about to give birth to her own Father.

And soon when nine months had passed (on the threshold of the tenth),
The blessed day dawned, and the virgin became a parent,
As the promise was fulfilled. The word was made flesh
And was willing to dwell among us. Then the great baby,
Keeping the inner sanctum of the womb inviolate,
Emerged without doing harm to his mother. For Mary's virginity
This birth stands as witness: her son entered a closed womb and left it closed.
What new light was this for the world? What was the thanksgiving in the whole sky?
What was that shining when Christ came forth from the womb of Mary
In fresh brilliance, just like a triumphant bridegroom
From his splendid marriage chamber, more handsome in his pleasant form
Than the sons of men, from whose radiant figure
More winning grace was suffused on his beautiful lips?
O easy mercy! In order that the yoke of slavery not hold us
Under the dominion of sin, the most high Lord
Assumed the bodily members of a slave. He who has clothed all things born,
From the very beginning of the world, with their unique endowments,
Was himself covered with tiny swaddling clothes as his garment.
He whom the shifting waves on the stormy deep,
The expanse of the whole earth, and the vast extent
Of the wide sky could not contain was fully enclosed in a boy's body,
And God took his rest in a narrow manger.

Hail, holy mother! In childbirth you have brought forth a king,
Who governs heaven and earth throughout the ages.
His name and dominion embrace all things in their eternal compass,
And they continue without any limit. In your blessed womb
You have the joy of motherhood along with the honor of virginity,
You are seen to have no equal before or since;
Alone of women, without compare, you have found favor with Christ.

Then did he shine forth for the first time, to unwitting shepherds,
Because he was a shepherd. The lamb shone in splendor upon his flocks,

Agnus, et angelicus cecinit miracula coetus.

Talia Bethleis dum signa geruntur in oris,
Eoi uenere magi, saeuumque tyrannum
Grandia sollicitis perturbant nuntia dictis:
Iudaicis nuper populis orientis ab axe
Progenitum fulsisse ducem, hoc caelitus astra,
Hoc stellam radiare nouam. Ferus arbiter aulae
Aestuat Hebreae ratus hunc succedere posse
Mox sibimet, qui primus erat. Tunc fronte serena
Nubila mentis alens clam mandat ubique requiri
Sicut adorandum, quem tractat fraude necandum.
Quid furis, Herodes? Christum sermone fateris,
Et sensu iugulare cupis, legemque legendo
Neglegis et regi regum tua regna minaris.
Ne tamen insano careant tua nomina facto,
Patrandum sub honore crucis (sed crimine gentis)
Herodes alius quod tu molire uidebit.

Ergo alacres summo seruantes lumina caelo
Fixa magi sidusque micans regale secuti
Optatam tenuere uiam, quae lege futura
Duxit adorantes sacra ad cunabula gentes.
Thesaurisque simul pro religione solutis,
Ipsae etiam ut possint species ostendere Christum,
Aurea nascenti fuderunt munera regi.
Tura dedere Deo, murram tribuere sepulchro.
Cur tria dona tamen? Quoniam spes maxima uitae est
Hunc numerum confessa fides, et tempora summus
Cernens cuncta Deus, praesentia, prisca, futura,
Semper adest semperque fuit semperque manebit
In triplici uirtute sui. Tunc caelitus illi
Per somnum moniti contemnere iussa tyranni
Per loca mutati gradientes deuia callis
In patriam rediere suam. Sic nos quoque sanctam
Si cupimus patriam tandem contingere, postquam
Venimus ad Christum, iam non repetamus iniquum.

Ergo ubi delusum se comperit, impius iram
Rex aperit (si iure queat rex ille uocari,

And the angelic hosts sang of his miracles to them.

While such marvels were taking place around Bethlehem,
Magi came from the east, and their great tidings alarmed
The harsh tyrant with disturbing statements to the effect
That recently there had blazed forth in the eastern sky
A new born leader for the Jews; the constellations on high
And a new star were radiating this news. The fierce lord of the Hebrew palace
Grew furious, reckoning that this one would soon be able to challenge
His own primacy. But then, even as he maintained a calm expression,
He nurtured a beclouded mind and secretly ordered him to be looked for
everywhere,
As though he was going to worship the one he was deceitfully planning to kill.
Why do you rage, Herod? You confess Christ with your words,
And yet in your heart you desire to cut his throat. Even though you read the law,
You neglect it and use your kingship to threaten the king of kings.
Lest this senseless deed fail to be connected to your name,
By means of the glorious cross (but with his people to blame),
Another Herod will see accomplished what you plan to do.

So, watching the light fixed high in the sky before them,
The wise men made haste to follow the star with its royal twinkling.
They kept close to the hoped for road which under a subsequent
Dispensation has led adoring gentiles to the holy cradle.
And when together they had opened their treasures in reverence,
So that the precious objects themselves could point to Christ,
They poured out gold as a present fit for a new born king;
They gave him frankincense, a gift for a god; they offered him myrrh for his grave.
But why three gifts? Because the greatest hope we have in life
Is the faith which testifies to this number, and the most high God
Who distinguishes all times, past, present, and future,
Always is, always was, and always will be possessed
Of this triple power. Then the magi, warned from on high
By a dream to despise the commands of the threatening tyrant,
Changed their itinerary, and, proceeding by alternative routes,
Returned to their homeland. Thus we also,
If we wish to reach our holy homeland at last,
After we have come to Christ, should no longer return to the evil one.

Now when he discovered that he had been deceived, the impious king
Revealed his wrath (if you could properly call anyone a king

Qui pietate caret, propriam qui non regit iram)
Ereptumque gemens facinus sibi ceu leo frendens,
Cuius ab ore tener subito cum labitur agnus,
In totum mouet arma gregem manditque trahitque
Molle pecus, trepidaeque uocant sua pignora fetae
Nequiquam et uacuas implent balatibus auras,
Haud secus Herodes Christo stimulatus adempto
Sternere collisas paruorum strage cateruas
Immerito non cessat atrox. Quo crimine simplex
Turba perit? Cur qui uixdum potuere creari
Iam meruere mori? Furor est in rege cruento,
Non ratio; primosque necans uagitus et audens
Innumerum patrare nefas puerilia mactat
Milia plangoremque dedit tot matribus unum.
Haec laceros crines nudato uertice rupit,
Illa genas secuit, nudum ferit altera pugnis
Pectus, et infelix mater (nec iam modo mater)
Orba super gelidum frustra premit ubera natum.
Quis tibi tunc, lanio, cernenti talia sensus?
Quosue dabas fremitus, cum uulnera feruere late
Prospiceres arce ex summa uastumque uideres
Misceri ante oculos tantis plangoribus aequor?
Extinctisque tamen quamuis infantibus absens,
Praesens Christus erat, qui sancta pericula semper
Suscipit et poenas alieno in corpore sentit.

Ast ubi bis senos aetatis contigit annos,
Hoc spatium de carne trahens, aeuique meatus
Humana pro parte tulit, senioribus esse
Corde uidebatur senior legisque magistros
Inter ut emeritus residebat iure magister.
Nec mora (quas etenim uolitans per tempora mundus
Nouit habere moras?) usus maiore iuuenta,
Sex quasi lustra gerens placidam Iordanis ad undam
Venit ut acciperet hoc, quod dare uenerat ipse.
Hunc baptista potens ut uidit ab amne Iohannes,
Quem matris dum uentre latet nondumque creatus
Senserat obstruso iam tunc sermone prophetes
Vt muto genitore fluens, cui munera linguae
Post noni taciturna diu spiramina mensis

Who lacks piety and is unable to govern his own wrath),
Groaning over the criminal deed snatched from him, like a voracious lion
From whose mouth a tender lamb suddenly slips free,
And who then launches an assault on the entire flock and mauls and rends
The soft animals, as the new mothers all a-tremble call for
Their offspring in vain and fill the empty breezes with their bleatings,
Even so Herod was provoked because Christ had been taken away from him,
And he kept on dashing to the ground and slaying masses of infants,
Fierce in his unwarranted murder. For what crime did this innocent
Multitude have to perish? Why did those who had barely begun to live
Already deserve to die? There was rage in the bloodthirsty king,
Not reason. Killing them at their first cries and daring to
Perpetrate wickednesses beyond number, he slaughtered boys
By the thousands and gave a single lament to many mothers.
This one tore out her mangled hair from her bare scalp.
That one scored her cheeks. Another beat her bared breast with fists.
One unhappy mother (now a mother no longer!)
Bereft, pressed her breasts to her son's cold mouth—in vain.
You butcher! What did you feel then as you watched such a sight?
What growls did you utter when you spied from your high citadel
The wounds seething far and wide and saw an enormous sea of blood
Forming before your eyes, intermingled with such tears of lamentation?
Even though he was not among the children whose lives were snuffed out,
Christ was present all the same. He always takes up his saints' dangers
And feels the punishments inflicted on another's body.

Now when he had gotten to be twelve years old
(This number is based on the years he lived in the flesh;
He experienced the divisions of life in his human part),
He seemed older in his heart than his elders. Among the teachers of the law
He took his seat by right as one who was a veteran teacher.

Without any delay (for as it hurtles through the ages
What delays can the world have?), when he had reached maturity,
Thirty years, more or less, he came to the waters of the gentle Jordan,
So that he might receive the baptism which he himself had come to give.
Mighty John the baptizer saw from the river the one whom,
While hiding in his mother's enveloping belly, still uncreated, he had recognized.
(Already then he was a fluent prophet, though his speech was blocked off,
While his father, to whom the gifts of the tongue
Were restored only after nine long, silent months

Parto redduntur nato, mox praedicat: "Agnus
Ecce Dei ueniens peccatum tollere mundi."
"Tollere" cum dicit, quod non habet, hoc mihi tollit,
Non mala ut ipse gerat, sed ut ipse nocentia perdat.
Qualiter in medias cum lux praeclara tenebras
Funditur et proprium non obfuscata serenum
Decutit expulsas illaesis uultibus umbras,
Sic delicta fugans saluator nostra gerendo
Tersit et adtactu procul euanescere iussit.
Tunc uada torrentum simplex ingressus aquarum,
In se cuncta lauat nostrae contagia uitae
Ipse nihil quod perdat habens, sanctoque liquentes
Corpore mundauit latices famamque beauit
Gurgitis et propriis sacrauit flumina membris.
Senserunt elementa Deum, mare fugit, et ipse
Iordanis refluas cursum conuertit in undas.
Namque propheta canens: "Quidnam est mare, quod fugis," inquit,
"Et tu, Iordanis, retro quia subtrahis amnem?"
Ergo ubi flumineum post mystica dona lauacrum
Egrediens siccas dominus calcauit harenas,
Confestim patuere poli, sanctusque columbae
Spiritus in specie Christum uestiuit honore
Mansuetumque docet multumque incedere mitem
Per uolucrem quae felle caret, natoque uocato
Voce patris triplici Deus ex ratione probatur,
Quod pater et natus, quod spiritus est ibi sanctus,
Quo manet indignus qui non numerauerit unum.

Inde quater denis iam noctibus atque diebus
Ieiunum dapibus, sacro spiramine plenum
Insidiis temptator adit doctusque per artem
Fallaces offerre dapes: "Si filius," inquit,
"Cerneris esse Dei, dic ut lapis iste repente
In panis uertatur opem," miracula tamquam
Haec eadem non semper agat, qui saxea terrae
Viscera frugiferis animans fecundat aristis
Et panem de caute creat. Hac ergo repulsus
Voce prius hominem non solo uiuere pane
Sed cuncto sermone Dei, labefactus et amens,
Altera uipereis instaurans arma uenenis

At the birth of his son, was mute.) He proclaimed at once: "Behold the lamb
Of God, who is coming to remove the sin of the world."
By "remove," he is saying that he removes from me what he does not have,
Not to take on evils himself, but to destroy what is harmful himself.
Just as when a bright light spills into the midst of shadows,
Without having its own usual clarity obscured,
But shakes off and scatters the shade with no harm to its own features,
Even so the Savior put to flight our sins and in taking them on
Scrubbed them clean and ordered them to vanish far away at his touch.
Then in his innocence he stepped into the shallows of the rushing waters
And washed off on himself all the infections of our life,
For he himself had nothing to destroy, and with his holy body
He cleansed the flowing water and made blessed the reputation
Of the stream, consecrating the river with his own limbs.
The elements felt the presence of God, the sea fled,
And Jordan itself reversed its waves to flow backwards,
As in fact the prophet sings: "Why," he asks, "are you fleeing, sea,
And why, Jordan, are you directing your stream backwards?"
So emerging from his river bath, after the mystic gift,
As the Lord was treading upon the dry sands,
At once the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit
In the form of a dove clothed Christ with glory,
Teaching us that he moves in mildness and great gentleness
By means of a bird who lacks gall, and, as the Son is addressed
By the voice of his Father, God is demonstrated in three ways,
Because Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are present at this spot,
Of whom he is unworthy who does not count them as one.

From there, after he had gone on for forty days and nights,
Empty of food, but filled with the Holy Spirit,
The tempter approached him with traps and, skilled in the art
Of offering false feasts, said: "If you are seen
To be the Son of God, tell that stone quickly
To turn itself into bread," as though Christ were not
Always performing these very same miracles. He brings to life
The rocky interior of the earth, making it teem with fruitful wheat,
And creates bread from flint. So, defeated first by this
Utterance that man does not live by bread alone,
But by every word of God, weakened and beside himself,
He prepared other weapons, using his serpentine poisons.

Cum domino montana petit cunctasque per orbem
Regnorum monstrauit opes: "Haec omnia," dicens,
"Me tribuente feres, si me prostratus adores."
Quantum peruersus, tantum peruersa locutus;
Scilicet ut fragilis regna affectaret honoris
Qui populis aeterna parat, monstrumque nefandum
Pronus adoraret, cuius super aethera sedes,
Terra pedum locus est, quem nullus cernit et omnis
Laudat in excelsis submissa uoce potestas.
Christus ad haec: "Tantum dominum scriptura Deumque
Iussit adorari et soli famularier uni."
His quoque deficiens congressibus audet iniquus
Ter sese attollens animo perstare superbo,
Terque uolutus humo fragili confidere bello.
Tunc assumpsit eum sanctam sceleratus in urbem,
Et statuens alti supra fastigia templi:
"Si natum genitore Deo tete asseris," inquit,
"Impiger e summo delapsus labere tecto.
Nam scriptura docet de te mandasse tonantem,
Angelicis subuectus eas ut tutior uluis,
Ad lapidem ne forte pedem collidere possis."
O quam caeca gerit nigro sub pectore corda
Mens tenebris obscura suis! Hunc ardua templi
Culmina et erectae quamuis fastigia pinnae
Credidit in praeceps horrescere, maxima summi
Curuauit qui membra poli caelosque per omnes
Vectus in extremae descendit humillima terrae,
Inferiora petens et non excelsa relinquens.
Dixerat et ualidi confossus cuspide uerbi,
Quod temptare suum dominumque Deumque nequiret,
Victoris fugit ora gemens. Tunc hoste repulso
Caelicolae assistunt proceres coetusque micantes,
Angelici Christo famulantur rite ministri.

Protinus ergo uiros ex piscatoribus aptos
Humanas piscari animas, quae lubrica mundi
Gaudia sectantes tamquam uaga caerula ponti
Caecaque praecipitis tranant incerta profundi,
Discipulos iubet esse suos talesque supernae
Conciliat uitae, quos non uentosa loquendi

He headed for the mountains with the Lord and showed him all the wealth
Of kingdoms throughout the world. "These all," he said,
"You may take as a gift from me, if you bow down and worship me."
As perverse as he is, so perversely did he speak;
As if, I suppose, he who prepares eternal realms for his people
Would aspire to kingdoms of tenuous glory and fall down to worship
The wicked monster, when his throne is above the heavens,
And the earth is his footstool, when he is visible to no one,
And every power on high praises him with humble voice.
To this Christ responded: "Scripture has ordered that only the Lord God
Is to be worshiped and that he alone is to be served."
Failing in this attempt too, the evil one dared to persevere
(Three times raising himself with his arrogant spirit
And thrice being turned back to the soil) and to trust in fragile war.
Then the wicked one took Christ up into the holy city,
And standing him on the very top of the lofty temple, said:
"If you maintain that you are the Son of God your Father,
Take a tumble, without hesitating, from the top of this roof.
For scripture teaches that the thunderer gave command concerning you,
That you would go on your way supported quite safely on angel arms,
Lest by chance you might dash your foot against a stone."
Oh, what a blind heart he carried around deep in his black breast,
His mind darkened by shadows of its own creating!
He believed the steep peak of the temple and of a high pinnacle,
Ever so lofty, would make Christ shudder at the thought of a headlong fall,
Christ, who bent the vast expanse of the highest sky into shape and through all
the heavens
Was himself transported in his descent to the lowliest regions of distant earth,
Seeking out the lower places and yet not abandoning the upper ones.
He finished speaking and was then transfixed by the point of the powerful word
That forbade him to put his Lord and God to the test.
He fled from the voice of the victor with a groan. Once the enemy was repelled,
Heavenly princes came to attend Christ, and the shining hosts,
Angelic servants, ministered to him as they are accustomed to do.

Then, straightway, he commanded fishermen, well suited
To fish for human souls, which pursue the hazardous joys of the world
As if they were swimming through the unreliable blue expanse of the sea,
Through the dark, unmarked waters of the dangerous deep,
To be his disciples, and it is men like these whom he dedicates
For a heavenly life, whom neither the windy glory of eloquence,

Gloria nec uana de nobilitate superbus
Sanguis alat sed fama tacens, humilique refulgens
Mente nitor caelo faciat de plebe propinquos.
Namque stulta potens elegit et infima mundi
Fortia confringens Deus et sapientia perdens.

Quin etiam celerem cupiens conferre salutem
Orandi praecepta dedit, iudexque benignus
Indulgenda peti breuiter iubet, ut cito praestet,
Sic dicens: "Orate patrem," baptismate nostrum,
Iure suum, propriumque homini concessit honorem
Et quod solus habet cunctos permisit habere.
Qui dominum caeli patrem memoramus, in ipso
Iam fratres nos esse decet nec origine carnis
Germanum tractare odium, sed spiritus igne
Flagrantes abolere doli monumenta uetusti
Atque nouum gestare hominem, ne forsan ab alto
Degenerent terrena Deo, cui nos duce Christo
Fecit adoptiuos caelestis gratia natos.

Sanctificetur ubi dominus, qui cuncta creando
Sanctificat, nisi corde pio, nisi pectore casto?
Vt mereamur eum nos sanctificare colendo,
Annuat ipse prior, sicut benedicier idem
Se iubet a nobis, a quo benedicimur omnes.

Adueniat regnum iam iamque scilicet illud,
Morte uacans et fine carens, cui nulla per aeuum
Tempora succedunt, quia nescit tempus habere
Continuus sine nocte dies, ubi principe Christo
Nobile perpetua caput amplectente corona
Victor opima ferens gaudebit praemia miles.

Hoc iugibus uotis, hoc nocte dieque precemur,
Illius ut fiat caelo terraque uoluntas,
Qui nusquam uult esse nefas hostemque nocentem
Vtque polo sic pellat humo, ne corpora nostra
Tamquam uile solum saeuus sibi uindicet hydrus,
Sed qui cuncta fouet plena pietate redundans
Omnipotens animas pariter conseruet et artus;
Altera pars etenim caeli sumus, altera terrae.

Nor their blood-line, boasting of its meaningless nobility, sustains.
It is rather a quiet reputation, a splendor shining forth from a humble mind,
That makes them, though ordinary folk, kinsmen of heaven.
For the mighty God chose the foolish and weak things of the world
To break into pieces the strong and to ruin the wise.

Indeed, in his desire to offer them speedy salvation,
He gave the disciples instructions for praying, and the kindly judge
Ordered them to make their petitions short, so that he might respond quickly.
This is what he said: "Pray to the Father," ours now by baptism,
But by right his own; he has given his own privilege to mankind
And has allowed everyone to have what he alone has.
For those of us who call the lord of heaven our Father, it is fitting
Now that we be brothers in him, not, in keeping with our fleshly origin,
To practice fraternal hatred, but with the fire of the spirit burning
To do away with the reminders of ancient deceit
And to put on the new man, lest by chance earthly things
Prompt defection from the high God, to whom Christ has led us,
And of whom heavenly grace has made us adopted children.

Where should the Lord be hallowed, who hallows all things in creating them,
If not in a pious heart, if not in a pure breast?
Let him agree first that it is proper for us to hallow him by our worship,
Just as he orders himself to be blessed by us,
When it is he by whom we are all blessed.

Let that kingdom of his, of course, come right now!
It has no room for death and lacks an end. Never will it be overtaken
By time, because keeping time is something unknown
To eternal day without night, where, with Christ as ruler,
The triumphant soldier will rejoice, his noble head crowned
With a permanent wreath as he reaps his splendid rewards.

We should pray with constant entreaties, night and day,
For this, that his will be done on heaven and on earth.
Let the one who wants evil to exist nowhere drive off the harmful enemy
On high, as he also does here below, lest the savage serpent
Claim our bodies, as though they were foul earth, for himself.
But let the one who cares for all things, abundant in ample mercy,
The all-powerful, preserve alike our souls and limbs,
For one part of us is of heaven, the other of earth.

Annonam fidei speramus pane diurno,
Ne mens nostra famem doctrinae sentiat umquam
A Christo ieiuna, suo qui corpore et ore
Nos saturat simul ipse manens uerbumque cibusque.
Dulcia nam domini nostris in faucibus haerent
Eloquia exsuperantque fauos atque omnia mella.

Debita laxari qui nobis cuncta rogamus,
Nos quoque laxemus, proprii nam cautio uerbi
Spondentes manifesta tenet, grauiusque soluti
Nectimur alterius si soluere uincla negemus;
Incipietque pius decies millena talenta
Dimittens dominus, si nos affligere propter
Denarios centum conseruum senserit ullum,
Tradere confestim tortoribus, inque feroci
Carcere constricti non permittemur abire,
Donec cuncta breuem reddamus adusque quadrantem.

Non quia nos dominus, lucis uia, semita pacis,
In laqueos temptantis agat, sed cum mala nostra
Deserit, ire sinit. Nam quisquis retia mundi
Deliciosa sequens luxus et gaudia blandae
Perditionis amat, Deus hunc, uirtutis amator,
Linquit, et ingreditur qua se temptatio ducet.
Ab hac ergo pedem retro faciamus et artum
Corde petamus iter, tenuis qua semita monstrat
Ire per angustam regna ad caelestia portam.

Si cupimus uitare malum, debemus adire
Sectarique bonum; hic quia liberat, ille trucidat.
Hic alit, ille necat. Nam quantum sidera terris,
Ignis aquis, lumen tenebris, concordia bellis,
Vita sepulturis, tantum bona longius absunt
Dissociata malis. Dextrum quicumque necesse est
Aut laeuum gradiatur iter. Sed dextra bonorum
Semita conspicuos uocat in sua gaudia iustos
Inque tuos, patriarcha, sinus. At laeua malorum
Exercet poenas et ad impia Tartara mittit.
Ergo agnis ouibusque Dei est haec sola uoluntas
Et bona libertas: euadere torua cruenti
Ora lupi uitaque frui per pascua Christi.

We hope for the sustenance of faith with our daily bread,
Lest our minds experience a famine of teaching,
If we ever are starved of Christ, who with his body and voice
Fills us with himself, remaining word and food at the same time.
For the sweet utterances of the Lord linger in our throats,
And they surpass honeycomb and all sweet things.

Those of us who ask that all our debts be forgiven us
Should ourselves also forgive, for the stipulation of our words clearly
Binds us when we make a pledge, and when released
We are tied more tightly if we refuse to loose another's bonds.
And the merciful master who forgave a debt of ten thousand talents,
If he discovers that we are harassing any one
Of our fellow slaves on account of a hundred denarii,
Will take steps to hand us over to the torturers at once,
And confine us in a terrible prison, nor permit us to leave
Until we have paid everything, down to the last farthing.

Not that the Lord, the way of light, the path of peace,
Would lead us into the snares of the tempter, but when he abandons our evils
He lets us go our way. For whoever loves the pleasing snares of the world
And goes in pursuit of luxury and the joys of delicious destruction,
This is the one whom God, the lover of virtue, abandons,
And he proceeds wherever temptation will lead him.
So, let us turn our steps back from this temptation
And seek in our hearts the straight road, where a narrow path shows
Us the way to go through the strait gate to the heavenly realm.

If we desire to avoid the evil one, we should draw near to and pursue
The good one, because the latter brings freedom, while the former slaughters;
The latter nourishes, while the former kills. For as far as the stars from the earth,
As far as fire from water, light from darkness, peace from wars,
Life from burials, so far removed is good from the company of evil.
Of necessity, everyone must take a path that goes
Either right or left. But the right path of those who are good
Calls the righteous in their glory into its joys
And into your bosom, O patriarch! But the left path of those who are bad
Exacts punishments and sends them to wicked Tartarus.
So for God's lambs and sheep this alone is their intention
And their welcome freedom: to escape the grim jaws
Of the bloody wolf and enjoy life in the pastures of Christ.

Notes for Book 2

1–34: Sedulius situates the narratives surrounding Jesus' birth, childhood, baptism, and early ministry which he retells in this book in their broadest possible theological context, beginning with the fall into sin (cf. Gen 3).

1: Jesus is the second Adam, sent to earth to repair the damage done by his prototype, the *primogenitus*. See Rom 5:14–21.

2: "flowery home": the garden of Eden (cf. Gen 2:4–17).

3: *portarat*: A number of manuscripts have *potarat* or *potabat*. This is a possible reading since *poto* can be used with a causative force (cf. Vulgate, Ps 68:22). The biblical account of the temptation in the garden, however, has Adam and Eve eating, not drinking, of the forbidden fruit. Perhaps *potarat* was introduced into the manuscript tradition because of the reading in the prose paraphrase (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 197): *et inlecebris blandi saporis absconditam mortem gustare fecerat mox amarum*. The verb Sedulius uses in the prose paraphrase (*gustare*, meaning "to taste") may have inspired a scribe who was consulting the *PO* to drop the first "r" in *portarat*.

4–6: On the doctrine of original sin in Sedulius, see H. Wójtowicz, "Grzech pierworodny w twórczości Seduliusza," *Vox Patrum* 17 (1997): 277–89.

6–8: Inspired, no doubt, by Virgil, *Ecl.* 8.47–49: *crudelis tu quoque mater. / crudelis mater magis, an puer improbus ille? / improbus ille puer; crudelis tu quoque, mater.* Both serpent and wife are mutually responsible for the fall into sin. In the Genesis account, Adam blames Eve, and Eve blames the serpent.

7: *tu coniunx*: For the language of Sedulius's apostrophe to Eve, see Lucan, *Phars.* 7.675: *sed tu quoque, coniunx*. The practice of switching from the third person to the second person is one that Sedulius uses often and to great effect. It is as though he is so involved in the story that he has become a character himself, addressing other characters directly. There is ample precedent both in the Old Testament as well as in the Greco-Roman epic tradition. Psalm 23, for example, begins with a description of the Lord as shepherd in the third person ("He makes me lie down in green pastures") and then shifts abruptly to address the shepherd in the second person ("Your rod and your staff, they comfort me"). Homer and Virgil also frequently use the device. See Gian Biagio Conte, *The*

Poetry of Pathos: Studies in Virgilian Epic (ed. S. J. Harrison; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), chapter 3.

8: *perfidus ille draco*: A phrase possibly indebted to Prudentius, *Apoth.* 454: *perfidus ille Deo,* where it is a reference to Julian the Apostate, the short-lived emperor (361–63) who tried to restore paganism to its former position of influence in the Roman state. On Eve and the snake in the biblical epic of Avitus (c. 470–523), the bishop of Vienne, whose poem deals at length with creation and the fall into sin, see Siegmar Döpp, *Eva und die Schlange: Die Sündenfallschilderung des Epikers Avitus im Rahmen der bibelexegetischen Tradition* (Speyer: Kartoffeldruck, 2009).

12: "Nine hundred and more": See the fifth chapter of Genesis for the extremely old ages at which the first descendants of Adam and Eve died. Methuselah was the oldest of them all when he died at the age of 969.

13: *senum … nepotum*: "old grandchildren," an oxymoron, at least for grandparents with ordinary life spans.

14–18: The poet gives a twist to a time honored biblical and classical motif: the brevity of life (see, e.g., Ps 90:3–12 and Homer, *Il.* 6.146–49). The point here is that no matter how long one's life may last, it will always seem short as it gets close to the end. The language is indebted to Virgil, *Aen.* 10.467–68: *breue et inreparabile tempus / omnibus est uitae.*

20: For the description of God as "slow to anger," see Ps 103:8; Joel 2:13.

22: *imago*: On the creation of humans in the image of God, see Gen 1:26. The importance of erect human posture is not mentioned in the biblical account of creation, but it is highlighted in Ovid, *Metam.* 1.85–86: … *caelumque videre / iussit et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.*

24–25: For the complaint that children must bear the consequences of their parents' actions, expressed in terms of the effects of sour grapes on one's teeth, see Jer 31:29 and Ezek 18:2.

26–27: *mortem … salutem*: The connection between the primary roles played by Adam and Jesus respectively in the story of salvation is made in Rom 5:17: "For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ."

28: "the delicate rose": A possible scriptural source for this particular simile is Song of Songs 2:1 ("I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys"). The association of virgins with flowers is not uncommon in early Christian thought (cf. Cyprian, *Hab. virg.* 3). One of the most famous later uses of the same simile occurs in Dante's *Paradiso* 23.73–74: "*… la rosa in che il verbo divino / carne si fece.*" The Sedulian line owes much to Virgil, *Ecl.* 5.39: *carduus et spinis surgit paliurus acutis.*

30: *Euae … Maria*: The negative typological connection between the two important biblical mothers, Eve and Mary, appears frequently in the patristic

writers, as early as Justin Martyr. See Irenaeus, *Adv. haereses* 3.22, for another early example.

31: *Virginis antiquae*: The biblical account does not state explicitly that Eve remained a virgin or that she had marital relations with her husband before the expulsion from the garden (Gen 4:1).

35–40: The annunciation and Mary's pregnancy (see Luke 1:26–38).

36: *cecinit*: This verb usually means "sing," but it also is regularly applied to prophecy, as it is, for example, by Virgil, *Aen.* 6.99, and Juvencus, *Euang.* 1.122.

38–39: "the law of being born": For a parallel, although not equivalent, Pauline expression describing the incarnation in terms of subjection to the law, see Gal 4:4. The language here is reminiscent of Ovid, *Metam.* 2.650: *omnibus ut maneas nascendi lege creatus.*

40: "Her swollen belly": For the same idea, see Ambrose, *Intende qui regis Israel*, line 13: *aluus tumescit virginis.* Sedulius's language is similar to Claudian, *Carm. min.* 32.8–10. The expression "starry burden" appears in Claudian, *De iv cons. Hon.* 570.

40: *paritura parentem*: This phrase suggests that the poet was familiar with the main issues of the Nestorian controversy that was raging in his lifetime (Green, *Latin Epics*, 174). The Nestorians refused to describe Mary as the mother of God (*theotokos*), referring to her instead as *Christotokos.* The heresy became the occasion for the meeting of the Council of Ephesus in 431 and was ruled on decisively at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. A synod in Rome to refute Nestorianism had been convened by Pope Celestine in 430. Sedulius's contemporary, John Cassian (fl. 415–430), wrote a lengthy treatise on the incarnation directed against Nestorius, *De incarnatione contra Nestorium.* For a fuller discussion of Sedulius's possible anti-Nestorianism, see the second chapter of Springer, *Gospel as Epic*, and Green, *Latin Epics*, 239–44. On how "Nestorian" Nestorius himself really was, see Carl E. Braaten, "Modern Interpretations of Nestorius," *Church History* 32 (1963): 251–67.

41–62: The birth of Jesus (see Luke 2:1–7).

43: *uerbum caro factum*: Sedulius stays as close as poetically possible to his Gospel exemplar (John 1:14), as he uses the kind of scriptural quotation commonly found in Christian preaching.

44: *maximus infans*: The adjective can be understood in a physical sense as referring to the baby's size, not only to his status. Sedulius may be influenced by Ambrose's hymn *Intende qui regis Israel* in applying the imagery of Ps 19:5–6 to the huge deity to whom Mary miraculously gave birth:

Procedat e thalamo suo,
pudoris aula regia,
geminae gigas substantiae
alacris ut currat uiam.

The notion that Christ was gigantic may derive ultimately from a mistranslation. The authors of the Septuagint's translation of the Hebrew word *gibor* chose to use the Greek word γιγας. The Hebrew word, however, should probably be translated as something like "strong warrior" and does not necessarily imply that such a warrior is preternaturally large. The word used to describe Og and the giants of Gath, like Goliath, by contrast, is *rapha* which means "fearful." The Latin translation of the Septuagint has *gigas,* but Jerome's translation of the Psalms (*Iuxta Hebr.*) has *fortis*, which is more accurate. The reading of *gigas* turned out to be far more popular, however, and the verse was frequently applied to Jesus by theologians in the patristic period and beyond. On the importance for later poetry of Sedulius's delineation of the paradoxical difference between the small size of the infant in the manger and the immensity of God, see Thomas Gärtner, "Ein christologisches Paradoxon in der Gattungstradition der lateinischen Bibeldichtung," *Sacris erudiri* 42 (2003): 87–95. Cyril of Alexandria explores the paradoxical nature of the incarnation in his controversy with Nestorius (PG 76:252).

47: *clausa ingrediens et clausa relinquens*: The doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary, while nowhere to be found in the canonical Gospels, became popular in the fourth century. See David G. Hunter, "Helvidius, Jovinian, and the Virginity of Mary in Late Fourth-Century Rome," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1 (1993): 47–71. For the language itself, see Ezek 44:2–3.

49: *Quis fuit ille nitor?* This may be a literal application of a text such as Isa 9:2 ("The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light") or even John 1:5 to the Lucan narrative where mention is made of miraculous illumination in connection with the appearance of the heavenly host to the shepherds but where there is no reference to a light inside the stable in Bethlehem in which Mary is giving birth to "the light of the world." Such a light emanating from within the stable or even from the manger itself seems to be hinted at by Sedulius; it is explicit in the last stanza of Ambrose's hymn *Intende qui regis Israel: praesepe iam fulget tuum / lumenque nox spirat nouum*. There is also quite an elaborate description of the same phenomenon in the Latin Infancy Gospel (in the Arundel manuscript) which describes "a great light like a brilliant flash of lightning" coming directly from the eyes of the smiling baby. See Montague Rhodes James, *Latin Infancy Gospels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), 68–70. The radiant light is also described in the vision of St. Birgitta, the late medieval Swedish mystic (*Revelationes* 7.21). In Renaissance poetry the notion reoccurs in Vida's *Christiad* (3.574–82), and in later artistic representations of the nativity a supernatural light coming from within the stable is used with especially striking effect by such masters of chiaroscuro as Correggio ("La Notte," c. 1530; Dresden, Gemäldegalerie), Rembrandt ("Adoration of the Shepherds," 1646; Munich, Alte Pinakotek), and many others.

52: *Prae filiis hominum:* Again Sedulius practically quotes verbatim from a scriptural source, in this instance Ps 45:2: "You are the most handsome of men; grace is poured upon your lips." On *natis* instead of *filiis*, the reading in most of the manuscripts, see Tibiletti, 782. See Isa 61:10 for a reference to the splendor of a bridegroom's appearance. On Christ as bridegroom, see Rev 19:6–8.
54–55: For the power of sin expressed in terms of slavery, see Rom 8:12–15.
55–56: "Assumed the bodily members of a slave": The most memorable Pauline expression of the exchange of divine glory for human humility is Phil 2:6–7.
56: *ab origine mundi*: For this phrase, see Virgil, *Georg.* 2. 336; Ovid, *Metam.* 1.3.
57: For the idea that God "clothes" the lilies, see Matt 6:30.
58: *Pannis*: A word that is used in classical Latin, but rarely, if ever, applied to an infant deity.
59: The sweeping description of divine areas of control (sea, land, and air) is contrasted with the limited scope of the manger. See Claudian, *Carm. min.* 32.14–15.
62: *Deus in prasesepe*: The last line sums up the paradoxical and possibly polemical point of the preceding lines in the most succinct and pointed way imaginable. Sedulius's Jesus is already fully God at birth and does not wait, as the Nestorians taught, to assume his full godhead until his baptism. By failing to incorporate *Deus* in his translation of this phrase, Kuhnmuench misses Sedulius's emphasis of the paradox: "He in the fullness of all his power remained in the small compass of a child's body and rested quietly in a manger" (*Early Christian Latin Poets*, 264).
63: *Salue, sancta parens*: The first three words of the address to Mary as mother come from Virgil, *Aen.* 5.80. On the transformation of *PC* 2.63–69 for use in the liturgy, see Carl Weyman, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der christlich-lateinischen Poesie* (Munich: Hueber, 1926), 121–25, and Antoon A. R. Bastiaensen, "L'Antienne *Genuit puerpera regem:* Adaption liturgique d'un passage du *Paschale carmen* de Sedulius," *RBén* 83 (1973): 388–97. The first lines were adapted as the Introit for the Common of feasts of Mary, and the last line was used in the Magnificat antiphon on the feast of the Presentation of Mary. The second antiphon of Christmas Lauds includes lines 67–68. See Joseph Connelly, *Hymns of the Roman Liturgy* (New York: Longmans, 1957), 57. On the importance of the figure of Mary in the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore in Rome, see Gerhard Steigerwald, "Die Rolle Mariens in den Triumphbogenmosaiken und in der Weiheinschrift der Basilika S. Maria Maggiore in Rom," JAC 51 (2008): 137–51.
64–65: The language in these two lines is heavily indebted to that of classical epic; see Virgil, *Aen.* 6.235, and Lucan, *Phars.* 4.79 and 189.
66: *Imperium sine fine*: a memorable application of the language of empire from

Virgil's *Aeneid* (1.279) to the rule of Christ, reminiscent of the Nicene Creed's formulation: "whose kingdom shall have no end." Sedulius may be thinking here as well of the angel's declaration to Mary in Luke 1:33 or of Isa 9:7. For the notion that a mother's womb can be blessed because of her offspring, see Luke 11:27.

67: As a virgin mother, Mary is in a position to enjoy the blessings of both conditions. Sedulius combines in one line two phrases from Claudian: *De cons. Stil.* 2.344: *gaudia matris*, and *De raptu Pros.* 3.280: *uirginatis honos.*

70–72: See Luke 2:8–20 on the angels and the shepherds at Bethlehem. Sedulius pays relatively little attention to either group and instead focuses on the fact that the new born baby was himself both shepherd and lamb (see John 10:7–18 and John 1:29).

73–106: The visit of the magi (see Matt 2:1–12). As elsewhere in the poem, Sedulius gives no indication that he is transitioning from one Gospel's account to another (in this instance from Luke to Matthew), nor does he suggest that any time may have elapsed between Christ's birth and the visit of the magi. For an analysis of this passage, see A. Nazzaro, "Poesia biblica come espressione teologica: fra tardoantico e altomedioevo" in *La scrittura infinita* (ed. Francesco Stella; Florence: Società internazionale per lo studio del Medioevo latino, 2001), 119–53.

76–78: One of the not infrequent examples of indirect speech in Sedulius's poem. The magi, traditionally three in number, were often given individual names (Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar) and understood to represent the three major geographical divisions of the known world, that is to say, Asia, Europe, and Africa. Remigius also connects them (without explanation) to the three "natural" disciplines of physics, ethics, and logic (see Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 333).

80–81: *fronte serena / nubila mentis:* For similar meteorological imagery, see Virgil, *Aen.* 4.477. Remigius (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 333) suggests that *nubila mentis* means *tristitiam* (sadness), but the expression probably refers to the haze of paranoia that clouded Herod's judgment.

83: "Why do you rage, Herod?" In his alphabetical hymn, Sedulius addresses Herod with a similar rhetorical question: *Hostis Herodes impie, Christum uenire quid times?* For the expression *quid furis,* see Venus's admonition to her son Aeneas to fight on for the city of Troy in *Aen.* 2.595 after the Greeks had entered the city and begun to sack it.

84–85: For the same etymological pun, see the preface to the *Disticha,* a popular medieval school text attributed to Cato: *Igitur praecepta mea ita legito ut intelligas: legere enim et non intelligere, neglegere est.*

88: "Another Herod": The Herod who ordered the slaughter of the innocents would have been Herod the Great, appointed by the Romans as king of Judea, whose reign lasted until 4 BCE. His namesake, Herod Antipas, the tetrarch

assigned to Galilee, who was in power until 39 CE, was the Herod connected with the crucifixion, according to the Gospel accounts. See Nikos Kokkinos, *The Herodian Dynasty: Origins, Role in Society, and Eclipse* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998).

89: *Ergo alacres*: See Virgil, *Ecl.* 5.58.

91–92: "the road … to the holy cradle": perhaps a reference to the pilgrimages to the Holy Land that became so popular after luminaries like Helena, the mother of Constantine, and Jerome made a point of visiting and worshiping at well-known biblical sites, including Bethlehem. One of the best known descriptions of such a pilgrimage is the *Peregrinatio Egeriae* from the 380s. See John Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travel* (3d ed; Warmington: Aris & Phillips, 1999). "The subsequent dispensation" refers to the New Testament and its inclusion of gentiles (like the magi) into the spiritual family of Israel (see Rom 3:29).

97–101: "But why three gifts?" The gifts are significant, according to the poet. Gold indicates that Christ will be a king; incense is a fitting gift for a deity; and myrrh is an herb whose aroma helps to disguise the odor of death. This hoary explanation can still be found in the popular nineteenth-century American carol, "We Three Kings of Orient Are." See Juvencus, *Euang.* 1.249–51 for a similar (albeit briefer) explanation. Sedulius concludes his allegory with a rhapsody on the eternal trinity using language reminiscent of the familiar liturgical phrase that concludes the *Gloria Patri:* "as it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be, world without end."

102–106: The poet applies Matt 2:12 anagogically, that is to say, by making a connection with the ultimate realities beyond this life, namely, heaven and hell. *Iniquum* here must mean not just "evil" but "the evil one," if we follow Sedulius's own interpretation in the *PO* (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 209): *minime reuertamur ad huius mundi principem.* For the connection of the altered route of the Magi on their return trip with what Green calls "the doctrine of the two paths," see Ambrose, *In Lucam* 2.46.

107–133: The slaughter of the innocents (see Matt 2:16–18). While Sedulius only alludes in passing to the flight to Egypt (Matt 2:13–15), he provides an extraordinarily graphic depiction of the slaughter of the innocents, a scene described more succinctly and less emotionally in Matthew.

107–109: Kings were expected by Stoic philosophers and others to be able to control their emotions, especially their anger. The philosopher Seneca, who served for a time as Nero's advisor, wrote a treatise *De ira.* For Jesus' (rare) anger in the canonical Gospels, see Mark 3:5. On Paul's advice "to be angry" but without sinning, see Eph 4:26.

110–115: In this elaborate epic simile, Herod acts just like the roaring lion/devil of 1 Pet 5:8 who roams around seeking easy prey to devour. His furor against the flock is aroused specifically by the fact that one of the lambs has escaped.

The language is indebted to Virgil's description of Turnus as a hungry lion who ravages the full sheepfolds in *Aen.* 9.339–341 (see also the bloody-mouthed lion in *Aen.* 12.7–8).

117: While the Gospel account does not specify how the children were slaughtered, Sedulius does. The innocents are not speared or slashed with swords, as they are depicted in the illustration in the Antwerp manuscript (Plantin-Moretus Museum, 17.4; f. 16r), but smashed (*collisas*) on rocks or the ground. The suggestion of A. D. McDonald ("The Iconographic Tradition of Sedulius," *Speculum* 8 [1933]: 150–56) that contemporary depictions of the slaughter (without swords or spears) in ivories from the areas of Marseilles and Provence prove that Sedulius must have hailed from that general vicinity, continues to attract adherents, but as Green observes (*Latin Epics*, 137–38), McDonald's theory has been "adequately refuted." In fact, there is an ivory in the Bode Museum für byzantische Kunst in Berlin (Inv. 2719), dating from the first third of the fifth century, depicting a soldier dashing a child to the rocks (in the presence of Herod while a mother mourns nearby), that comes from the areas of Rome or Milan. Furthermore, this is also the way in which the children's deaths are described by Prudentius (*Cath.* 12.117–20), a poet by whom Sedulius was deeply influenced. The last line of Psalm 137 may be the ultimate literary source of influence.

117–119: *Quo crimine?* Sedulius intrudes into the narrative here to ask a poignant question of Herod regarding the sheer injustice of the situation, borrowing from the language of Ovid, *Metam.* 15.116–17 and Lucan, *Phars.* 2.108–9.

123–126: The poet pays a great deal of attention to the pathetic plight of the mothers, whose lamentation at the loss of their children he describes most vividly in a lengthy ecphrasis.

127–130: Another set of intrusive, rhetorical questions again asked of Herod, this time adapting language used by Virgil to address the hapless queen of Carthage, Dido (*Aen.* 4.408–11).

131–132: *absens/praesens*: On a paradoxical and pious note, the poet calmly ends one of the most emotionally charged passages in the poem. Even though he was in Egypt at the time, Christ is, in fact, present everywhere and vicariously suffers when others suffer. (For the same words in reverse order, see Terence, *Eunuchus* 192.) The ubiquity of Christ did not become a controversial doctrine until the time of the Reformation in the dispute between Lutherans and the Reformed regarding the question of the "real presence" of Christ's body in the sacrament. For a thoroughgoing treatment, see Hermann Sasse, *This is My Body* (rev. ed.; Adelaide: Lutheran Pub. House, 1977).

134–138: The boy Jesus in the temple (see Luke 2:41–52). In contrast with the protracted description of the slaughter of the innocents, this vignette is quite concise. In short, swift verbal strokes the poet plays up the contrast between the youth, wise beyond his years, who sits down (as was the custom in the ancient

Greco-Roman world) to teach the teachers of the law, all of them much older than he. On this paradox, see Teresa C. Carp, "*Puer senex* in Roman and Medieval Thought," *Latomus* 39 (1980): 736–39. There is a small free-standing sculpture of Christ seated with a scroll in his hand, evidently prepared to teach, in the Palazzo Massimo collection of the Museo Nazionale Romano.

139–174: Jesus' baptism (see Matt 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22).

139: *Nec mora*: a common epic opening (cf. Virgil, *Aen.* 5.368 and 458; Juvencus, *Euang.* 4.394). Despite any possible reservations he might have or express about the meaningfulness of the epic phraseology, Sedulius continues to use it.

144–148: An elaborate parenthesis describing John the Baptist's first encounter with Jesus when both were still in the womb (see Luke 1:39–45). Sedulius suggests that John has a lot in common with his father Zechariah. Both were prophets who for nine months were unable to use their tongues: John could not speak because he was not yet born; his father was rendered mute after he questioned the angel's prediction that he would have a son in his old age.

147: A more literal translation of the Latin: "After silent breathings for a long while, lasting until the ninth month."

148–149: Sedulius practically quotes verbatim a scriptural passage (John 1:29) by way of illustration or verification.

150–156: A bit of exegetical clarification. Even though bearing the sins of the world, Christ was himself no sinner. To back up this theological insight, Sedulius provides an epic simile: when light shines in darkness, its illuminatory power always prevails over the forces of night (see John 1:5).

160–161: "the reputation of the stream": The Jordan is not one of the longest or widest of the world's rivers and would certainly not be well known if not for its religious associations (see Naaman's initial negative reaction to Elisha's command to wash himself in the Jordan in 2 Kings 5:12). Here the situation is reversed, according to Sedulius, and the one who is being washed in the river ends up washing the river. The Jordan river is featured prominently in the apse mosaic of the church of Ss. Cosmas and Damian in Rome. In his commentary on Matthew (3:14), Jerome speaks of Christ sanctifying the river (Green, *Latin Epics*, 236).

162–165: Sedulius applies Ps 113:5 and Ps 76:17 not only figuratively but literally to the Gospel narrative, as he describes the Jordan River flowing backwards on this occasion. The evangelists say nothing about the Jordan River doing anything different in connection with Christ's baptism. Nor do they cite the Psalm verses in question or the crossing of the river in Josh 3:15–17 to which the Psalm passages undoubtedly allude. We can find parallels for Sedulius's personification of the river, however, in early Christian art where the Jordan is sometimes represented as a river god in scenes depicting the baptism of Christ, as, for example, in the cupola of the Arian baptistery of Ravenna (ca. 500),

where the Jordan is shown as a human or divine figure observing the baptism. There are also sixth-century ivory reliefs from Egypt in which the Jordan appears to be holding up his hands, averting his gaze, and retreating from the scene, just as Sedulius suggests here (see Gertrud Schiller, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst* [vol. 1; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1966], 133–35 and figs. 355–61). Sedulius might also have been influenced by contemporary liturgical practices; according to Schiller, the two psalms cited above "were incorporated into those prayers in the baptismal ritual which were meant to exorcise Satan." See also S. Schrenk and G. Rexin, "Erstaunen oder Furcht? Zur Darstellung des Jordan in den spätantiken Bildern der Taufe Jesu," *JAC* 50 (2007): 180–98.

171: "a bird who lacks gall": The dove was an apt bird to represent the meek and mild nature of the Holy Spirit. It lacks a gall bladder, and, according to the doctrine of the four humors taught by Galen (followed by physicians well into the modern era), the yellow bile produced by the gall bladder was supposed to produce a "choleric" temperament. See Tertullian, *Bapt.* 8.

172–174: Sedulius follows the lead of many of the patristic writers as he highlights the Trinitarian significance of the passage in a way in which the Gospels themselves do not. Remigius observes (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 335): *Probatur Pater in uoce, Spiritus sanctus in specie columbae, Filius in persona hominis, qui baptizabatur.*

175–219: Christ's temptation in the wilderness (see Matt 4:1–11; Mark 1:12–13; Luke 4:1–13). Sedulius moves back and forth between the accounts of Matthew and Luke. His reference to forty days *and* nights at the outset suggests that he is following Matthew, but the order of the temptations, culminating with the challenge on the pinnacle of the temple, follows Luke's account. For a comparative analysis of the treatment of the episode in Latin biblical epics through the ages, see B. Rolling, "Zwischen epischer Theologie und theologischer Epik: die Versuchung Christi in der lateinischen Bibeldichtung von Iuvencus bis Robert Clarke," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 40 (2006): 327–82. See also H. Homey, "Irdisches Geschehen und göttliche Wirklichkeit (Sedulius *Carm. Pasch.* 2.175–219)," *Hermes* 139 (2011): 51–78.

180–183: For this and the following temptations, Sedulius offers his own "scornful but edifying comments" (Green, *Latin Epics*, 177). In light of Jesus' rejection of Satan's "phantom feast" (Sigerson's alliterative rendering), the poet explains that it would not have been difficult for him to make bread from stone because God brings forth wheat from the ground all the time.

185: *Instaurans arma*: Here and elsewhere in the passage, Sedulius uses martial imagery as he describes the contest between Christ and Satan (see also lines 200 and 217).

190–195: *scilicet*: This word imparts an ironic tone to the extended authorial aside.

193–194: See Isa 66:1 (cf. Acts 7:49) for a similar description of natural elements such as the sky and the earth serving as a sort of divine furniture for God's personal use.
200: "back to the soil": Sedulius makes the most of the contrast between the high position that God occupies in the universe as opposed to the lowly position of the snake, an animal that crawls on the face of the earth. The language here is indebted to Virgil's description of the dying Dido in *Aen.* 4.690–91: *ter sese attollens cubitoque adnixa leuauit, / ter reuoluta toro est ….*
205: *Tonantem*: an appropriate use of the traditional epic epithet for Jove, the thundering god, given the physical setting here, high on a pinnacle of the temple. The devil demonstrates that he too can quote the scriptures, citing Ps 91:12.
209: "Darkened": a traditional scriptural metaphor for lack of spiritual understanding; see Eph 4:18.
211–213: Cf. Ps 18:9–10: "He bowed the heavens and came down; thick darkness was under his feet. He rode on a cherub and flew; he came swiftly on the wings of the wind."
215: *Dixerat*: The pluperfect tense of the verb is employed here as this verbal encounter comes to an end, a traditional epic locution. The foe is dispatched by the divine word, a sharp spiritual weapon (cf. Eph 6:17). *Cuspide* often appears in the second to the last foot of a dactylic hexameter line (cf., e.g., Lucan, *Phars.* 3.620).
220–230: Jesus calls his first disciples (see Matt 4:18–22; Mark 1:16–20; and Luke 5:1–11).
221: *Humanas piscari animas*: Sedulius expands the metaphor implicit in Jesus' command to his disciples to become "fishers of men" and makes it an allegory. The human soul pursues its "slippery joys" (Sigerson's translation of *lubrica gaudia*) in this world, as though it were swimming through deep and uncharted waters.
223: *praecipitis*: I follow the reading in Taur. E.IV.42 (instead of Huemer's *praecipites*) and take the adjective to modify *profundi*.
225–228: "windy … eloquence": Their lack of formal verbal training will not impede the former fishermen as they pursue their evangelical activities. See G. Bartelinck, "Sermo piscatorius. De visserstaal van de apostelen," *Studia Catholica* 35 (1960): 267–73. On the new kind of rhetoric that will characterize Christian discourse, featuring the *sermo humilis*, see the fourth book of Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*. See also the fourth chapter of Gillian Clark, *Augustine: The Confessions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). The poet's use in line 228 of *plebe*, a word designating the lowest of the traditional Roman classes, is telling. *Sermo plebeius* (or *vulgaris, popularis, publicus*) was a term often used to describe "substandard" Latin.
227: *fama tacens*: a striking oxymoron.

229–230: A close reformulation of 1 Cor 1:27–28 in verse.
231–300: The Lord's Prayer (see Matt 6:8–18 and Luke 11:1–4). Its inclusion (and at such length) in a poem devoted more to Jesus' life and miraculous deeds than his teachings has been much discussed. Perhaps Sedulius felt that he could simply not omit it because of its central importance to contemporary Christian worship and life. See Roy Hammerling, *The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church: The Pearl of Great Price* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) for a general discussion of the prayer itself and its significance. There is no real evidence that the Lord's Prayer has much of a role to play in Sedulius's anti-Arian agenda, as Ratkowitsch maintains (see Green, *Latin Epics*, 179). In fact, the poet's approach here and in the *PO* is fairly objective, resembling more the tone of early commentaries on the Lord's Prayer than that of a polemical treatise. Many manuscripts include the actual biblical petitions (e.g., *Sanctificetur nomen tuum*), often rubricated, at the beginning of each of the verse versions respectively. It is most likely that these are scribal additions like the other capitula (see Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 147–54) and that Sedulius himself expected his readers to be so familiar already with the petitions that it was unnecessary to state them in prose before offering his own restatement and explanation of them in verse.
234–235: See John 20:17 where Jesus explicitly extends the paternity of his own heavenly Father to Mary Magdalene and the disciples: "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."
238: *fratres*: The necessity for men to be brothers if God is their Father was a virtual commonplace with Stoic philosophers; see also Tertullian, *Apol.* 39 and Cyprian, *De or. dom.* 11.
239: "fraternal hatred": The prose paraphrase (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 221) makes it clear that Sedulius has in mind the demise of the archetypally vexed relationship between the first brothers, Cain and Abel.
241–243: Sedulius adopts Pauline language here to describe the "new man" in faith and the "adoption of sons" that happens through baptism (Rom 6:1–6 and 8:15).
244: *Sanctificetur*: The poet begins the first petition with the same word that is used in the Vulgate's familiar translation, but turns it into a rhetorical question. The point that Sedulius makes—namely, that while God's name is always holy in an absolute sense, it also needs to be made holy in the individual human heart—has been frequently made by other theologians, from Cyprian to Luther.
249: *Adueniat*: As he did with the first petition, Sedulius starts out his poetic version of the second petition with the same first word used in the familiar *Pater noster. Scilicet* often has an ironic tone, but not here. Instead, the word indicates that the request is, and should be, self-evident.
253–254: For the idea of the triumphant spiritual warrior receiving his well-deserved rewards, including a crown, in the kingdom of God, see 2 Tim 4:8 and

Wis 4:2. Notice the fine balance between the two words, *victor opima*, that begin the line and the two, *praemia miles* (cf. Lucan, *Phars.* 3.130; 5.246), that end it.
255: "night and day": For continual prayer at all hours of the day, see Ps 1:2; Rom 12:12; and 1 Thess 5:17.
259: As in lines 199–200 above and elsewhere in the poem, the poet uses serpentine language to refer to the devil (cf. Gen 3:14).
263: *pane diurno*: In the prose paraphrase (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 224), Sedulius seems open to more than one interpretation of this petition (*tripartitus intellegentiae sensus aperitur*). Taken literally, "daily bread" must refer to the produce of the field that is needed to sustain the body on a regular basis. Sedulius's interpretation suggests that the petition is to sustain the believer's faith with spiritual food, not simply to fulfill the body's need for nourishment.
266: *Ipse manens uerbumque cibusque*: Here Sedulius probably has biblical passages such as John 6:35 and the Eucharist itself in mind. In the Vulgate's translation of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew, the adjective describing bread is not *cotidianum* (as it is in Luke), but *supersubstantialem.* The precise meaning of the Greek word, *epiousion,* in both Gospel accounts, has been much disputed.
267–268: On the sweetness of the word of God, see Ps 19:10 and 119:103. Ezekiel eats a scroll given to him by the Lord and discovers that it is as "sweet as honey" (Ezek 3:3).
269–278: Sedulius illustrates the petition with references to the parable of the master who forgave a servant who owed him ten thousand talents. After the servant's debt was forgiven, he himself refused to overlook a debt to him of a hundred denarii. When the master found out about it, he sent the ungrateful servant to jail (see Matt 18:23–35).
273: "ten thousand talents": an enormous amount of money. One talent was worth about twenty years' wages. A denarius, by contrast, was a typical day's wages.
276: *tortoribus*: Sedulius uses the Vulgate's word here (Matt 18:34), a literal translation of the Greek. Remigius (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 337) suggests that this is a reference to *demonibus*, but it is more likely that human jailors adept at the arts of physical torture are meant here.
278: *breuem … adusque quadrantem*: Sedulius adapts an expression from elsewhere in Matthew (5:26) to indicate that the ungrateful servant will be in jail until he has paid the entire debt, down to the "uttermost farthing" (the Authorized Version's rendering). The *quadrans* was a coin of very small value, worth one quarter of an *as*; see C. King, "Quadrantes from the River Tiber," *Numismatic Chronicle Seventh Series* 15 (1975): 56–90.
279–287: Sedulius devotes most of his exegesis of the "sixth petition" to arguing that God does not tempt anyone, even though the wording of the petition itself might lead one to assume that he does. See James 1:13 and Tertullian, *De or.* 8:

Ceterum absit ut Dominus temptare videatur. The same caveat appears also in the explanation offered in Luther's *Small Catechism.*

284: *ducet*: I follow the reading in Taur. E.IV.42 which has the future tense of the verb. This appears to fit the sense as well as the present tense (*ducit*) found in most other manuscripts; it is also somewhat less predictable, another argument in its favor.

286: *tenuis … semita*: Sedulius has already employed this biblical image (see Matt 7:13–14) once before (1.80–81). The language itself is indebted to Virgil, *Aen.* 1.418: *Corripuere uiam interea, qua semita monstrat* and 11.524: *urget utrimque latus, tenuis quo semita ducit.*

288–289: *malum … bonum*: Sedulius appears to have in mind not an evil or good thing, but an evil or good person. The Latin adjectives, which can be construed as masculine or neuter, allow for either possibility. Scheps (*Sedulius' Paschale carmen*, 172) opts for the latter and cites in support of his decision Matt 19:17: "There is only one who is good." The pronouns (*hic* and *ille*) make it clear that the reference is to persons, not things.

290–93: To play up vast discrepancies and distances is a commonplace in Latin poetry. See Lucan, *Phars.* 8.487–88; Claudian, *De vi cons. Hon.* 480; and Prudentius, *C. Symm.* 2.125–128. This same kind of piling up of widely separated examples can also be seen in Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 5.17.

292: *Vita sepulturis*: For this fundamental contradiction, see Lucan, *Phars.* 2.152; Seneca, *Oed.* 949–50; Claudian, *De raptu Pros.* 2.221–22.

294: "right or left": a distinction made in Matt 25:31–46 between those who will be on Jesus' right hand (the sheep) and his left (the goats) on the day of judgment.

296: *Inque tuos, patriarcha, sinus*: The interpretation of the final petition turns anagogical, as Sedulius refers to the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:22–23). The "patriarch" is Abraham.

297: The entire line (and the second half of the previous one) is taken verbatim from Virgil's famous description of the two routes through the underworld (*Aen.* 6.542–43). For Jesus' teaching on the two paths, see Matt 7:13–14.

300: "the bloody wolf": The Lord's Prayer has no doxology, at least as it is found in the Gospels. Sedulius omits it too, ending with a simple reference to one of his favorite images, that of Christ as shepherd (cf. Psalm 23), protecting his flock from the wolf. In ancient Palestine, the wolf was a notorious enemy of sheep. When Isaiah describes the pair as dwelling together (11:6), it is as a situation that is contrary to nature. References to wolves in the New Testament (e.g., Matt 10:16, Luke 10:3, John 10:12, and Acts 20:29) frequently depict them as hostile and ruthless foes of the flock of Christ. By contrast, for ancient Romans, the wolf was often a positive iconic symbol of Rome and its power. On perceptions of wolves in ancient Greek thought, see Richard Buxton, "Wolves and Were-

wolves in Greek Thought" in *Interpretations of Greek Mythology* (ed. Jan Nicolaas Bremmer; London: Croom Helm, 1987), 60–79.

Liber Tertius

Prima suae dominus thalamis dignatus adesse
Virtutis documenta dedit conuiuaque praesens
Pascere, non pasci ueniens. Mirabile! Fusas
In uinum conuertit aquas. Amittere gaudent
Pallorem latices, mutauit laeta saporem
Vnda suum largita merum, mensasque per omnes
Dulcia non nato rubuerunt pocula musto.
Impleuit sex ergo lacus hoc nectare Christus.
Quippe ferax qui uitis erat uirtute colona
Omnia fructificans, cuius sub tegmine blando
Mitis inocciduas enutrit pampinus uuas.

Post regulus nato quidam moriente rogabat
Flebilis et supplex dominum, quo uiseret aegrum
Febre laborantem puerum trepidamque uetaret
Labi animam de sede sua. Tunc larga potestas,
Credenti quae nulla negat nec dona retardat,
Velocem comitata fidem, sermone salutem
Concedens facili: "Viuit iam filius," inquit,
"Perge, tuus." Quantum imperii fert iussio Christi!
Non dixit "uicturus erit," sed "iam quia uiuit,"
More Dei, qui cuncta priusquam nata uidendo
Praeteritum cernit quicquid uult esse futurum.

Inde salutiferis incedens gressibus urbes,
Oppida, rura, casas, uicos, castella peragrans,
Omnia depulsis sanabat corpora morbis.
Ecce autem mediae clamans ex agmine turbae
Leprosus poscebat opem uariosque per artus
Plus candore miser: "Si uis, domine," inquit, "ab istis
Me maculis mundare potes." "Volo" Christus ut inquit,
Confestim redit una cutis, proprioque decore
Laeta peregrinam mutarunt membra figuram,
Inque suo magis est uix agnitus ille colore.

Book 3

The Lord deigned to attend a wedding and there gave the first
Evidence of his power. As a guest he came to the feast
To feed, not to be fed. How amazing! He changed
The dispensed water into wine. The liquids rejoiced to lose
Their pale color, and the happy wave changed its own flavor,
Producing pure wine, and on all the tables
The sweet cups blushed, filled with new, unnatural, wine.
So it was that Christ filled six vats with this nectar.
For he who was the fruitful vine, with his power as cultivator,
Was making all things to bear fruit. Under his kindly shade
The supple vine brings forth never failing grapes.

After that, a certain ruler whose son was dying implored the Lord,
Weeping as he knelt before him, to come and visit
His boy who was suffering from a fever and forbid his fading life
To slip away from its place. Then Christ's generous power,
Which refuses no gifts to the believer and is not slow with them,
In company with the man's swift faith, granted health
With ready words: "Your son is already living," he said,
"Go on your way." How much power Christ's command has!
He didn't say "Your son will live," but "He is already living."
This is God's way, who sees all things before they happen
And perceives as past whatever he wants to happen in the future.

From there, proceeding with salvific steps, he passed through
Cities, towns, farms, smallholdings, villages, settlements,
And driving out their sicknesses, he healed all their bodies.
But behold, a leprous man in the midst of a crowd of people, cried out,
Begging for help. Because of the whiteness spread over his motley limbs,
He was the more to be pitied. "If you wish, lord," he said,
"You can make me clean from these spots." When Christ said "I do wish,"
Immediately his skin became one in color, and his bodily members,
Happy to look as they should, changed their strange aspect,
And, with more of his own color, the man was hardly recognizable.

Forte Petri ualidae torrebat lampadis aestu
Febris anhela socrum, dubioque in funere pendens
Saucia sub gelidis ardebat uita periclis,
Immensusque calor frigus letale coquebat.
At postquam fessos domini manus attigit artus,
Igneus ardor abiit, totisque extincta medullis
Fonte latentis aquae cecidit uiolentia flammae.
Quin etiam rabidas nigrorum depulit iras
Spirituum, ne flatus atrox laceraret iniqua
Peste homines operisque Dei uexaret honorem,
Quem norat non esse Dei, passimque cateruas
Vt pius innumeras pulso languore saluti
Reddidit et uaria populos a clade leuauit.

Inde marina petens arentes gressibus algas
Pressit et exiguae conscendens robora cumbae
Aequoreas intrauit aquas, dominumque sequentes
Discipuli placido librabant carbasa ponto.
Iam procul a terris fuerat ratis, actaque flabris
Sulcabat medium puppis secura profundum,
Cum subito fera surgit hiems, pelagusque procellis
Vertitur, et trepidam quatiunt uada salsa carinam.
Perculerat formido animos, seseque putabant
Naufraga litoreis iam tendere brachia saxis.
Ipse autem placidum carpebat pectore somnum,
Maiestate uigil, quia non dormitat in aeuum
Qui regit Israhel neque prorsus dormiet umquam.
Ergo ubi pulsa quies cunctis lacrimantibus una
Voce simul: "Miserere citus, miserere, perimus;
Auxilio succurre pio," nil uota moratus,
Exsurgens dominus ualidis mitescere uentis
Imperat et dicto citius tumida aequora placat.
Non erat illa feri pugnax audacia ponti
In dominum tumidas quae surgere cogeret undas,
Nec metuenda truces agitabant flamina uires,
Sed laetum exsiliens Christo mare compulit imum
Obsequio feruere fretum, rapidoque uolatu
Mouerunt auidas uentorum gaudia pinnas.

Interea placido transuectus marmore puppim

By chance, a fever with the intensity of a powerful torch was burning up
Peter's mother-in-law and making her pant as she teetered on the brink of death.
Her wounded life, in danger of soon growing cold, was aglow;
The great heat was cooking up a lethal chill.
But after the hand of the Lord touched her exhausted limbs,
The fiery heat abated, and the flame raging through all her innermost being
Was extinguished, put out by a fountain of hidden water.
And what is more, he cast out the raving wrath caused by black spirits,
Lest their terrible breath with its evil pestilence
Mangle mankind and damage the glory of God's work,
For he knew this breath was not God's doing. Countless multitudes everywhere
He mercifully restored to health, and, routing their diseases,
He relieved the crowds of their various calamities.

From there, heading to the sea, crunching the dry seaweed
Under foot, he climbed on board a little boat
And launched out onto the watery expanses, and, following their Lord,
The disciples hoisted up the sails on the quiet sea.
The vessel was already far from shore, and, driven by the breezes,
The ship was effortlessly plowing through the midst of the deep,
When all at once a fierce storm arose, and the sea was upturned by the winds.
The salty waters shook the shivering vessel.
Terror had stricken their minds, and they began to imagine they were
Already shipwrecked, stretching their arms to the rocky shore.
But he himself in his human heart was enjoying a quiet sleep,
Watchful in his sovereignty, because he who governs Israel
Does not ever sleep, nor will he ever slumber at all.
So when his repose was shattered by all of them weeping at the same time
With one voice: "Quickly have mercy on us; have mercy, we perish.
Rescue us with your merciful help," the Lord was not slow to respond to the entreaties,
But stood up and gave orders to the powerful winds to cease
And, even before he finished speaking, made the swelling seas subside.
This belligerent boldness of the wild sea was not such
As to compel the roiling waves to rise against the Lord.
The winds were exercising their fierce force but were not to be feared;
Rather, the sea in happy exaltation was compelling
Its depths to boil up in obedience to Christ. In their swift flight
It was the joy of the winds that moved their eager wings.

Next, after he had been carried across the calm sea, he disembarked

Liquerat et medios lustrabat passibus agros,
Cum procul e tumulis gemino stridore ruentes
Prosiluere uiri, quos non ala daemone pauco
Sed legio uexabat atrox, nexuque cruento
Saeua catenatis gestantes uincla lacertis
Angebat quoque poena duplex. Heu dura furoris
Condicio! Qui uim patitur magis ille ligatur.
Tunc domini praecepta tremens exire iubentis,
Spiritus infelix hominem non audet adire.
Effigiem reddit quam Christum cernit habere.
Sed pecus, immunda gaudens lue, semper amicum
Sordibus atque olido consuetum uiuere caeno
Pro meritis petiere suis, tristesque phalanges
Porcinum tenuere gregem. Niger, hispidus, horrens,
Talem quippe domum dignus fuit hospes habere.

Hinc alias dominus pelago delatus in oras
Intrauit natale solum, quo corpore nasci
Se uoluit, patriamque sibi pater ipse dicauit.
Ecce aderant uiuum portantes iamque cadauer
Bis bina ceruice uiri lectoque cubantem
Vix hominem, cui uita manens sine corporis usu
Mortis imago fuit, resolutaque membra iacebant
Officiis deserta suis, fluxosque per artus
Languida dimissis pendebant uincula neruis.
Hunc ubi uirtutum dominus conspexit egentem
Robore, peccatis primum mundauit ademptis,
Quae generant augmenta malis, miseroque iacenti:
"Surge," ait, "et proprium scapulis attolle grabatum,
Inque tuam discede domum." Nil iussa moratus,
Cui fuerat concessa salus, uestigia linquens
Tandem aliena suis laetatur uadere plantis
Vectoremque suum grata mercede reuexit.

Principis interea synagogae filia clauso
Functa die superas moriens amiserat auras.
At genitor, cui finis edax spem prolis adultae
Sustulerat, sanctos domini lacrimansque gemensque
Corruit ante pedes, uix uerba precantia fari
Singultu quatiente ualens: "Miserere parentis

And began to make his way across the countryside,
When from afar, rushing out of a graveyard with twin shrieks,
There sprang forth men tormented by no small squadron of demons,
But rather a terrible legion of them. Bound by a bloody bond,
The men were carrying harsh chains on their shackled arms,
And a double punishment constrained them. Ah, how hard the conditions of the mad!
Though the victim of violence, he is all the more subjected to bonds.
Then, trembling as the Lord issued commands for him to leave,
The unhappy spirit did not dare to enter a man.
He gave up the human form which he perceived Christ had taken.
Rather, it was the animal who rejoices in the unclean mud, always fond
Of what is filthy and accustomed to living in smelly sties,
Whom the dire phalanxes sought as their just reward.
They occupied a herd of swine. Black, bristly, and shaggy,
They were, to be sure, a fitting home for such a guest.

From here carried by the sea to other shores, the Lord
Entered his native land, where he had chosen to be born in a body.
The Father himself designated this to be his fatherland.
Behold, four men approached him, carrying on their shoulders
A living man who was already a corpse, lying on a bed,
Hardly a man. His life, lingering on without the use of his body,
Was the picture of death. The relaxed limbs were lying there
Deprived of their functions, and throughout his slack members
The frame of his body was hanging limp, owing to his flaccid sinews.
When the Lord saw the man lacking the strength of his faculties,
He cleansed him first by taking away his sins,
Which only increase suffering, and to the wretch lying there
Said: "Rise, take up your own cot on your shoulders,
And return to your home." He did not delay to carry out the command.
He had been granted health, and, no longer relying on the feet of others,
He rejoiced to walk at long last, using the soles of his own feet.
In grateful repayment he carried the bed which had carried him.

Meanwhile, the dying daughter of a synagogue leader
Had left the upper world behind at the close of her life's daylight.
But her father, whom her destructive end had deprived
Of hope for grown-up offspring, with weeping and groaning,
Fell before the holy feet of the Lord, hardly able to produce words of entreaty
As he shook with sobbing: "Take pity on a bereaved father;

Orbati, miserere senis, modo filia," dicens:
"Vnica uirgineis nec adhuc matura sub annis
Occidit et misero patris mihi nomen ademit.
Affer opem lapsamque animam per membra refunde,
Qui totum praestare potes." Haec inquit, et auctor
Lucis ad extinctae pergebat funera gressum
Vix populo stipante mouens, permixtaque turbis
Ibat inundantem mulier perpessa cruorem,
Quae magnas tenuarat opes, ut sanior esset,
Exhaustaque domu nec proficiente medella
Perdiderat proprium pariter cum sanguine censum.
Ast ubi credentis iam sano in pectore coepit
Diues adesse fides, mediis immersa cateruis
Nititur auersi uel filum tangere Christi.
Posteriusque latens subitam furata salutem
Extrema de ueste rapit, siccisque fluentis
Damnauit patulas audax fiducia uenas.
Senserat ista Deus, cuius de fonte cucurrit
Quod uirtus secreta dedit, furtumque fidele
Laudat et egregiae tribuit sua uota rapinae.
Ventum erat ad maesti lugentia culmina tecti
Deflentemque domum, moriens ubi uirgo iacebat
Extremum sortita diem, trepidusque tumultus
Omnia lamentis ululans implebat amaris,
Funereosque modos cantu lacrimante gemebant
Tibicines, plangorque frequens confuderat aedes.
"Ponite sollicita conceptos mente dolores;
Hic sopor est," saluator ait, "nec funus adesse
Credite, nec somno positam lugete puellam."
Dixerat, et gelida constrictum morte cadauer
Spiritus igne fouet, uerboque immobile corpus
Suscitat atque semel genitam bis uiuere praestat.
Obstipuere animis inopinaque uota parentes
Aspiciunt uersisque modis per gaudia plangunt.

Inde pedem referens duo conspicit ecce sequentes
Caecatos clamare uiros: "Fili inclite Dauid,
Decute nocturnas extinctis uultibus umbras
Et clarum largire diem." Quam credere tutum,
Quam sanum est cognosse Deum! Iam corde uidebant
Qui lucis sensere uiam. Tunc caeca precantum

Pity an old man," he said. "Just now my only daughter,
Not even yet grown up, still in her virgin years, has died
And deprived me, wretched man that I am, of the name of father.
Bring help and pour back her spilled life into her limbs.
You are able to grant every request." Thus he spoke, and the author
Of light began to make his way to the funeral of the deceased,
Barely able to move through the throngs of people. Mixed in with the crowd
Came a woman who was suffering from an issue of blood.
She had spent great quantities of riches to be healed,
And now her resources were drained, and no remedy had worked.
She had been losing her own money right along with her blood.
But when wealthy faith now began to appear in the healthy heart
Of the believer, immersed in the midst of the multitude,
She tried to touch just a thread of Christ's clothing as he was turned away.
Lurking behind him she stole quick health by seizing it
From the hem of his garment. The flow dried up,
And her bold faith blocked up her open veins.
God, from whose source there flowed what his hidden power
Bestowed, felt this, and he praised the pious theft
And granted this virtuous act of plundering what it sought.
As he arrived at the grieving roofs of the sorrowful structure,
The mourning house where the dying maiden lay,
Having reached her last day on earth, the crowd, disturbed
And wailing, was filling everything with their bitter laments.
The flute players were wailing out funereal strains in tearful song,
And their repeated lamentation threw the house into disarray.
"Dismiss the grief you feel from your worried minds;
This is deep slumber," the Savior said. "Don't think death is near.
Don't mourn for a girl who has been laid down to sleep."
So he spoke, and her spirit warmed the corpse, rigid in cold death,
With its fire, and he raised the unmoving body
With a word and offered one born once the chance to live twice.
Her parents were astonished to see the fulfillment of a hope beyond hope
And, changing their tune, began to weep for joy.

Returning from there, behold, he saw two blind men following
And shouting to him: "O glorious son of David,
Scatter the shadows of night from our darkened faces
And bestow on us the light of day." How wholesome it is to believe!
How healthy to acknowledge God! They could already see in their hearts,
Because they had perceived the way of life. Then, just like a feeble fire

Lumina defuso ceu torpens ignis oliuo
Sub domini micuere manu, tactuque sereno
Instaurata suis radiarunt ora lucernis.
His ita dimissis alius produciter aeger,
Multiplici languore miser, qui uoce relictus,
Auditu uacuus, solo per inania membra
Daemone plenus erat. Hunc protinus ordine sacro
Curauit uersis Deus in contraria causis,
Daemonio uacuans, auditu et uoce reformans.

Nec minus interea proprios iubet omnia posse
Discipulos totisque simul uirtutibus implens.
"Ite," ait, "et tristes morborum excludite pestes,
Sed domus Israhel (quia necdum nomine gentes
Auxerat hoc omnes), caelorum dicite regnum,
Daemoniis auferte locum, depellite lepram,
Functaque subductae reuocate cadauera uitae.
Sumpsistis gratis, cunctis impendite gratis."
Ac uelut hoc dicens: "Ego uobis quippe ministris
Seruandos committo greges; ego denique pastor
Sum bonus et proprios ad uictum largior agros.
Nemo meis ouibus quae sunt mea pascua uendat."
Haec in apostolicas ideo prius edidit aures
Omnipotens, ut ab his iam sese auctore magistris
In reliquum doctrina fluens decurreret aeuum,
Qualiter ex uno paradisi fonte leguntur
Quattuor ingentes procedere cursibus amnes,
Ex quibus in totum sparguntur flumina mundum.

Exin conspicuam synagogae ingressus in aulam,
Aspicit inualidum, dimenso corpore mancum,
Seminecem membris, non totum uiuere, cuius
Arida torpentem damnarat dextera partem;
Imperioque medens gelidam recalescere palmam
Praecipit et reduci diuino more saluti,
Sicut semper agit. Nil tollit et omnia reddit.

En iterum ueteres instaurans lubricus artes
Ille chelydrus adest, nigri qui felle ueneni
Liuidus humano gaudet pinguescere tabo,
Quodque per alternos totiens disperserat aegros

When oil has been poured on it, the blind eyes of the petitioners
Began to sparkle under the hand of the Lord, and at his bright touch
Their faces were restored and shone with their own illumination.
Likewise, when these were sent away, another miserable man was led forth,
Suffering from a complex disease. He had lost his voice,
And he could not hear. His empty limbs were filled
Only with a demon. At once, in accordance with the sacred order,
God healed him, and his condition was reversed.
The demon left him, and his hearing and speech were renewed.

Meanwhile, Christ instructed his own disciples to do everything he did,
Filling them at the same time with all of his powers.
"Go," he said, "and drive out the baleful pestilence of diseases,
But only from the house of Israel (because he had not yet
Glorified all the nations with this title), speak of the kingdom of heaven,
Banish the demons from their place, drive out leprosy,
And call back dead bodies to the life they have lost.
You have received freely; now give to all men freely."
It was as if he was saying this: "To you indeed as my servants
I entrust my flocks to tend, for I am the good shepherd,
And I provide my own fields for pasturage.
Let no one sell the pastures that are mine to my sheep."
This the almighty uttered first to the apostles' ears,
So that then his instruction would flow from these teachers,
With himself as its author, and run its course for the rest of time,
Just as from one source in paradise, it is said,
Four huge streams go forth in their coursings,
From which rivers spread out into the whole world.

After that he entered into the splendid hall of a synagogue
And caught sight of a sick man, crippled in half his body,
Half dead in his limbs, not completely alive.
His dry right hand had condemned that part of him to inactivity.
Healing him with a command, Christ ordered the cold hand to warm up
And to be restored to health, following his divine practice,
Just as he always does: he takes nothing and gives all.

Look, there, back to his old tricks once again
Is the slippery serpent! With the bile of black venom,
The malicious one rejoices to grow fat on human putrefaction.
The poison which he had so often infused into different sick people

Virus in unius progressus uiscera fudit,
Cui uocem lumenque tulit, triplicique furore
Saucia membra tenens mutum quatiebat et orbum.
Tunc dominus mundi, lux nostra et sermo parentis,
Sordibus exclusis oculos atque ora nouauit,
Verbaque per uerbum, per lumen lumina surgunt.

Venerat et mulier morbo contracta uetusto
Non senio, tremebunda, gemens, incurua, caducis
Vultibus et solam despectans cernua terram,
Quae domino miserante iuges post octo decemque
Membra leuat messes caelumque ac sidera tandem
Cernit et ardentem solis reminiscitur orbem,
Totum erecta uidens, quia quos malus opprimit hostis
Ima petunt, quos Christus alit sine labe resurgunt.

Cumque dehinc populum sese in deserta secutum
Vt typicus Moyses uerusque propheta uideret
Antiquam sentire famem, maioribus actis
Antiquam monstrauit opem. Tunc alite multa
Carnis opima dedit, geminis modo piscibus auxit;
Sufficiens tunc manna pluit, modo panibus amplum
Quinque dedit uictum per milia quinque uirorum.
Cetera turba latet, numero nec clauditur ullo
Maxima paruorum legio uel maxima matrum.
Quodque magis stupeas, cophinos ablata replerunt
Fragmina bis senos, populisque uorantibus aucta
Quae redit a cunctis non est data copia mensis.

Iamque senescentem calidi sub caerula ponti
Oceano rapiente diem, cum pallor adesset
Noctis et astriferas induceret hesperus umbras,
Discipuli solo terris residente magistro
Vndosum petiere salum, fluctuque tumenti
Torua laborantem iactabant aequora puppim,
Aduersus nam flatus erat. Tunc noctis opacae
Tempore calcatas dominus superambulat undas
Et uasti premit arua freti, glaucisque fluentis
Circumfusa sacras lambebant marmora plantas.
Miratur stupefacta cohors sub calle pedestri

He now proceeded to pour into the insides of one man.
He took away his voice and sight and with a triple madness
Took possession of his wounded limbs, shaking the dumb and blind man.
Then the Lord of the world, our light and the word of the Father,
Removed the pollution from him and renewed his eyes and mouth.
And the man's words came back through the word, his lights through the light.

A woman also had come to him, bent over with a disease of long standing,
Not with age, trembling, groaning, curved, with her face down.
And, stooped fowards, she was looking only at the ground.
The Lord took pity on her. After eighteen consecutive harvests,
She raised her limbs and finally saw the sky and the stars.
And she remembered the burning ball of the sun,
Erect now, seeing everything, because those whom the evil enemy oppresses
Look to the lowest places, but those whom Christ sustains rise without falling.

And when the people had followed him from there into the wilderness,
Like Moses who foreshadowed him and like the true prophet he was, he saw
That they were feeling the old hunger pangs, and, though his deeds were greater,
He performed for them the old miracle. Then with a great flock of birds
Moses gave them rich supplies of flesh; now Christ provided an abundance
with two fish.
Then manna rained down in plenty; now he gave full nourishment
For five thousand men in the form of five loaves of bread.
The rest of the crowd was uncounted, and no number encompasses
The many legions of children or the many mothers.
And, what may astonish you more, they filled twelve baskets
With the fragments they picked up; as the people were eating,
What was left from all the tables became more than what had been supplied.

Already the ocean was snatching away the day as it grew old
And descended below the blue of the warm sea as pale night approached,
And Hesperus was beginning to usher in the starry shadows,
When, as their master remained behind on land by himself, the disciples
Sought out the wave tossed billows, and, as the surge swelled,
The savage seas began to buffet the struggling ship about,
For the wind was contrary. Then at the hour of darkest night
The Lord took a walk over the waves, treading them under foot,
And pressed down the fields of the huge swelling; with gray currents
The marble surface, spread around him, lapped at his holy feet.
His group was dumbfounded and marveled that shipping routes

Nauigeras patuisse uias, at Petrus amicam
Doctus habere fidem Christumque agnoscere semper
In medias descendit aquas, quem dextra leuauit
Labentem domini, nil tanto in gurgite passum,
Cui portus fuit illa manus, pelagique uiator
Libera per uitreos mouit uestigia campos.

Genesar inde soli domino ueniente coloni
Infirmos traxere suos, ut fimbria saltem
Vix attacta Dei morbis mederetur acerbis,
Et quotquot tetigere iugem sensere salutem.
Quam pretiosa fuit quae numquam uendita uestis
Ipsa omnes modici redimebat munere fili!

Hinc Tyrias partes Sidoniaque arua petentem
Anxia pro natae uitio, quam spiritus atris
Vexabat stimulis, mulier Chananaea rogabat,
Se canibus confessa parem, qui more sagaci
Semper odoratae recubant ad limina mensae,
Assueti refluas dominorum lambere micas.
Vox humilis, sed celsa fides, quae sospite nata
De cane fecit ouem gentisque in sentibus ortam
Compulit Hebraei de gramine uescier agri.

Alta dehinc subiens montis iuga plebe sequente,
Milia caecorum, claudorum milia passim,
Leprososque simul populos, surdasque cateruas,
Inualidasque manus, et quicquid debile uulgi
Venerat, in priscum componit motibus usum
Et reuocata suis attemperat organa neruis.

Dumque medens aegrum refouet uirtute tumultum,
Tertia lux aderat, sterilique in caespite nullum
Contigerat plebs tanta cibum, nimiosque labores
Nutribat geminanda fames, si saucia callem
Turba per ingentem dapibus ieiuna rediret.
Qua flexus pietate Deus, qui semper egentum
Panis adest uictumque locis sine fructibus infert,
Pisciculis paucis et septem panibus agmen
Pauit enorme uirum, praeterque infirma secundi
Sexus et aetatis saturauit quattuor illic

Permitted foot traffic, but Peter, who had learned
To have devoted faith and always to acknowledge Christ,
Went down into the midst of the water, but the right hand of the Lord
Lifted him up as he was sinking, unharmed even in such deep water.
That hand was his harbor, as the traveler of the sea
Made his feet move freely over the glassy fields.

From there, when the Lord came to Gennesaret, the inhabitants of the land
Brought out their sick, so that even if they just barely touched
The fringe of God's clothing, it might give healing to their harsh diseases.
And as often as they touched it, they experienced permanent health.
How valuable it was, the robe which, though never sold,
Itself bought back all men with the gift of a little thread!

From here, as he headed for the Tyrian region, the land of Sidon,
A Canaanite woman, worried on account of her daughter's affliction
(A spirit was tormenting her with black goads), asked for his help,
Confessing herself no better than the dogs, who shrewdly
Always lie down in close proximity to a fragrant table
And routinely lick up the crumbs which their masters let drop.
Her voice was lowly, but her faith exalted, and once her daughter was saved,
Faith made a sheep of a dog and moved one born
Amongst gentile thorns to pasture in the grass of the Hebrew field.

Climbing up from here the high ridges of a mountain, followed by people,
Thousands of the blind, thousands of the lame all about him,
And leprous people as well, and crowds of mutes,
And those with useless hands, with whatever ailment the masses
Had come, he restored them all to their former useful mobility
And brought the recovered faculties into harmony with their muscles.

And while he was reviving the crowds of the sick with his healing power,
The third day had arrived, and many people in the barren field
Had not had a bite to eat, and redoubled hunger would have fueled
Excessive sufferings, if the vulnerable crowd had had
To return home by an extremely long route, deprived of food.
God, who always is present as the bread of those in need
And provides food to places without produce, was swayed by mercy,
And with a few tiny fishes and seven loaves, he fed
The enormous crowd, and, in addition to the weaker sex
And the children, he filled four thousand diners there.

Milia uescentum. Plus ut mireris, et auctas
Disce fuisse dapes; epulas nutriuit edendo
Vulgus, et attritae creuerunt morsibus escae.
Reliquiasque suas, sportarum culmina septem,
Expauit fugitiua fames, ubi fragmine sumpto
Vidit abundantem modico de semine messem.

Nec tamen humano quamuis in corpore Christum,
Matris ab occasu mortalia membra gerentem,
Clam fuit esse Deum, quia non absconditur umquam
Vrbs in monte sedens, modio nec subditur ardens
Lychnus, anhelantem sed spargens altius ignem
Cunctis lumen agit, radians nam testibus amplo
Discipulis fulgore tribus uelut igneus ardor
Solis, in aetheriam uersus splendore figuram,
Vicerat ore diem, uestemque tuentibus ipsam
Candida forma niuis domini de tegmine fulsit.
O meritum sublime trium, quibus illa uidere
Contigit in mundo quae non sunt credita mundo!
Quid quod et Heliam et clarum uidere Moysen?
Ignotos oculis uiderunt lumine cordis,
Vt maior sit nostra fides: hunc esse per orbem
Principium ac finem, hunc α uiderier, hunc ω.
Quem medium tales circumfulsere prophetae,
Alter adhuc uiuens, alter stans limite uitae.
Sidereoque sono, "Meus est hic filius," aiens,
Ostendit uerbo genitum uox patria Christum.

Postquam corporeos uirtus regressa per artus
Texit adoratam carnis uelamine formam,
Seque palam dominus populis dedit. Ecce repente
Vir humilis, maesto deiectus lumina uultu,
Procedit supplexque manus et brachia tendit
Imploratque gemens: "Unus mihi filius, unus
Est, domine, horrenda lacerat quem spiritus ira
Nec linquit, nisi mergat aquis aut ignibus atris
Opprimat atque animam dubia sub morte fatigat.
Hunc, precor, expulso miseratus utrumque furore
Redde mihi (uel redde sibi), ne caeca potestas
Expellat trepidam subtracto lumine uitam."
Dixerat et genua amplectens genibusque uolutans

So that you might marvel more, learn too that the meal
Was multiplied; the crowd fed the feast as they ate,
And the food increased by being consumed in their mouths.
Their leftovers, heaped up in seven baskets, frightened
Hunger so much that it fled when the fragments were collected
And it saw a flourishing harvest resulting from a little seed.

Even though Christ was in a human body, endowed
With mortal limbs from the time his mother gave him birth,
It was nonetheless no secret that he was God, because a city
Sitting on a mountain is never hid, nor is a burning lamp
Placed under a bushel, but spreading its flickering fire higher
It gives light to all. For shining in full brilliance
Before three disciples as witnesses, just like the fiery glowing
Of the sun, he took on his heavenly shape in splendor.
His face shone brighter than the day, and, for those who viewed his clothing,
The white appearance of snow flashed from the Lord's garments.
O lofty merit of you three, who were privileged to see
While in the world those things which are not entrusted to the world!
And what of their seeing Elijah and famous Moses?
They saw men unknown to their eyes with the eyes of their heart,
To increase our faith that throughout the world he is
The beginning and the end, that he is seen to be the alpha and omega.
On either side of him glowed these great prophets:
One was still living; the other had reached the longest extent of life.
With a starry sound the Father's voice said, "This is my Son,"
And with this word he showed that Christ was begotten by him.

After the Lord's divine power returned into his body's limbs,
He cloaked his venerable form with a veil of flesh
And showed himself openly to the people. Behold, all of a sudden,
A humble man with downcast eyes and a morose expression
Approached him, knelt before him, holding out his hands and arms,
And with groans besought him: "I have one son, lord, only one.
A spirit with terrible anger tears him and does not leave him alone,
But tries to drown him in water or destroy him with black fire
And wearies his soul, leaving his life hanging in the balance.
I implore you, have pity on him and me both, remove his madness
And return him to me (or rather to himself), lest this blind force
Drive out his precarious life, taking his light away from him."
Thus he spoke, and bending his knees he threw himself to the ground

Haerebat, dominusque pio iam pectore uotis
Annuerat. Tunc praedo furens ac noxius hostis,
Cui possessa diu est alieni fabrica iuris,
Peruasa migrare domo compulsus, in iram
Tollitur accensam correptaque carpere membra
Nititur et frustra domino prohibente laborans
Fugit in obscuras puero uiuente tenebras.

Rex etiam solus regum et dominus dominantum
Non dedignatus Petro piscante tributum
Soluere Caesareum, medii de gurgite ponti
Hamum ferre iubet gerolum didragmatis aurei.
Incola mox pelagi pendentia fila momordit,
Iussa tributa ferens, grauiorque onerante metallo
Vilis honor piscis pretio maiore pependit.

Discipulisque suis se percontantibus, aulae
Caelestis regni quis possit maior haberi,
Vt Deus et doctor mirabilis: "Omnibus," inquit,
"Celsior est humilis cunctisque potentior ibit
Qui cunctis subiectus erit seseque minorem
Demissa ceruice feret, uelut iste uidetur
Paruulus" (et monstrat puerum consistere paruum).
Scilicet ingenium teneri sectemur ut aeui
Non annis, sed mente iubet, quia mollior aetas
Nil pompae mundalis amat, non ambit honorem,
Nec resupina tumet; sic purae semita uitae
Quantum prona solo, tantum fit proxima caelo.
Mens etenim uergens altum petit altaque uergit,
Inferiorque gradus quo uult discendere surgit.
Ecce humilem dominus de stercore tollit egentem
Et facit egregios inter residere tyrannos,
At contra tumidum pugnaci mente rebellem
Praecipitem caelo sub Tartara iussit abire.

Parua loquor, si facta Dei per singula curram
Et speciale bonum, cum sit generale, reuoluam.

And was clinging to Jesus' knees. The Lord with his merciful heart
Had already assented to his prayers. Then the raving brigand, the harmful enemy
Who so long occupied the building rightly belonging to another,
Was compelled to leave the house he had infiltrated, and he rose up
With kindled wrath and strove to tear at the limbs he had possessed.
After struggling in vain against the Lord's resistance,
He fled into the dark shadows, and the boy survived.

Also, when Peter was fishing, the only King of kings
And Lord of lords did not disdain to pay
Caesar's tribute; from the depths of the high sea
He ordered a hook to catch a carrier of a gold didrachma.
Soon one of the dwellers of the deep bit on the dangling line
And brought him the tribute he had ordered. Thanks to the metal's weight
The inexpensive fish was heavier and worth a greater price.

As his disciples asked him who would be considered
Greatest in the court of the heavenly realm,
As their God and wonderful teacher, he said:
"He who is humble is loftier than all, and the one who will be subject to all
And conducts himself as the lesser with bowed neck,
Just as this little one is seen to be, will be more powerful than all";
And he showed them a small boy standing there.
He orders us, you see, to strive for the innocent disposition of the young,
Thinking in terms not of their years, but of their mind,
Because their tender age does not love earthly pomp, does not strive for glory.
Nor does it arrogantly swell with pride. Thus the closer the path
Of pure life is to the ground, the nearer is it to the sky.
For the mind that sinks low seeks the heights, but the high mind is sunk,
And the one in a lower station rises when willing to descend.
Behold, the Lord raises the humble man in need from the dung hill
And makes him sit down among the mighty rulers.
But, on the other hand, the rebel swelling with combative mind
He has ordered to leave heaven and go directly to Tartarus.

I say but little as I rehearse the individual deeds of God,
And I recount particular bounty, though that bounty is universal.

Notes for Book 3

1–11: Jesus changes water into wine at Cana (see John 2:1–11), the "first" of his miraculous signs, according to the evangelist. For a comparative treatment of this passage by other Latin poets of late antiquity, including Juvencus, *Euang.* 2.127–152, and Prudentius, *Dittochaeon* 125–128, see Springer, *Gospel as Epic*, 110–27.

2: *pascere, non pasci ueniens*: The guest at the wedding feast, paradoxically, also turns out to be the host.

3: "How amazing!" The poet intrudes into the narrative account with an arresting parenthesis. For more on this figure of speech, see Michael von Albrecht, *Die Parenthese in Ovids Metamorphosen und ihre dichterische Funktion* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1964).

4–5: *gaudent … laeta*: See Mazzega (*Sedulius, Carmen Paschale*, 68) for other examples of the "pathetic fallacy" in pagan and Christian poetry.

9: *uitis erat*: Christ is described as the vine later in the Gospel (John 15:1–8).

11: For the language here, see Virgil, *Georg.* 1.448. The episode ends impressively, with a "golden line." The two adjectives that begin the line are separated from the two nouns they modify at the end of the line by the verb that stands between them. The so-called golden line appears with much more frequency in Sedulius's verse than in that of earlier hexameter poets such as Virgil, Ovid, or Statius. There are four in the first ten lines of book 1 of the *Paschale carmen* (1.17–26). On Sedulius's distinctive hexameters and their possible influence on the later poetic tradition, especially Aldhelm, see Neil Wright, "The Metrical Art of Bede" in *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge* (ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe and Andy Orchard; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 166.

12–22: Jesus heals the son of an official (see John 4:46–54; cf. Matt 8:5–13 and Luke 7:1–10).

16–17: The placement of *nec … retardat* and *uelocem* at the end of one line and the beginning of the next respectively helps to emphasize the father's swift faith and Jesus' equally swift response.

18: "with ready words": On Jesus' ability to heal disease with his word only, see Arnobius, *Adv. Nat.* 1.48.

19: "Go on your way": On the relatively limited use of direct speech in the *PC*, see Roberts, *Biblical Epic*, 138.
21–22: The poet makes a familiar point about divine omniscience (see, e.g., Vulgate, Dan 13:42: *Deus aeterne … qui nosti omnia antequam fiant*) and links it to Christ's omnipotence. He knows what is going to happen before it occurs and also wills it to be so.
22: *praeteritum … futurum*: The two contrasting and rhyming Latin words for "past" and "future" are aptly positioned at the beginning and end of the line respectively.
23–25: Jesus heals many (see Matt 4:23–25).
24: *casas*: In earlier Latin *casa* usually referred to a hut or shack, but later on it came to mean a farm or even an estate.
26–32: Jesus heals a leper (see Matt 8:1–4); translated in Roberts, *Humblest Sparrow*, 207.
28–29: *si uis … ab istis / me maculis*: The repetition of the vowel "i" may be intended to reproduce vividly the cries of the pathetic leper (Mazzega, *Sedulius, Carmen Paschale*, 89).
30–32: Sedulius's brief description of the healing of the leper itself follows the biblical wording fairly closely. More poetic attention is devoted to the *interpretatio* of the event which is laid out in a lengthy tricolon (Roberts, *Biblical Epic*, 156).
33–39: Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law (see Matt 8:14–15; cf. Mark 1:29–31 and Luke 4:38–39).
34–38: *febris anhela … frigus letale … igneus ardor*: poetic phraseology borrowed from Virgil, *Georg.* 3.497, Ovid, *Metam.* 2.611, and Claudian, *Carm. min.* 9.7.
35–36: *gelidis … ardebat … calor frigus*: Sedulius highlights the paradoxical nature of a fever: its heat can produce chilly death.
39: "fountain of hidden water": The second antithesis (fire and water) complements the first (heat and cold). Sedulius may have in mind the Gospel of John's metaphor of Jesus as the water of life (cf. John 4:14 and John 7:37–38). The water that puts out the fire of the fever is not applied externally, but comes from a hidden source within. On the importance of antithesis for Sedulius, see Roberts, *Biblical Epic*, 165–66.
40–45: Jesus drives out evil spirits (see Matt 8:16–17; cf. Mark 1:32–34 and Luke 4:40–41).
40–41: *nigrorum … spirituum*: On the significance of the color black and its association with diabolical forces, see Mazzega, *Sedulius, Carmen Paschale*, 96. Remigius (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 339) connects it with the Greek word for "dead" (νεκρός).
42: "the glory of God's work": Sedulius explains that demonic possession dimin-

ishes the stature of humankind, originally created in the image of God (cf. Gen 1:26–27) and "crowned with glory and honor" (Ps 8:5).

46–69: Jesus stills a storm on the Sea of Galilee (see Matt 8:23–27; cf. Mark 4:35–40 and Luke 8:22–25). The description of a storm at sea was practically *de rigeur* in the pagan epic tradition. The best known example is Virgil's description of the storm that wrecks the Trojan fleet near Carthage in *Aen.* 1.34–156. Lucan, Silius Italicus, Valerius Flaccus, and Statius all followed the Augustan poet's lead. For a detailed study, see C. Ratkowitsch, "Vergils Seesturm bei Iuvencus und Sedulius," *JAC* 29 (1986): 40–58.

46–47: "crunching the dry seaweed under foot": This graphic description of Jesus walking on the beach reinforces one of Sedulius's favorite theological points: Jesus is truly human, not just a divine phantasm.

49: *placido librabant carbasa ponto*: The serenely slow spondees in this line (as in 51) help to convey the sense that the sea is quite still.

51: *profundum*: Sedulius employs an extraordinary number of different nouns here to refer to the Sea of Galilee. In addition to *profundum*, there is *marina* (46), *aequoreas … aquas* (48), *ponto* (49), *pelagus* (52), *uada salsa* (53), *aequora* (63), *undas* (65), *mare* (67), and *fretum* (68).

53: *carinam*: Like other epic poets, Sedulius avoids the usual, but prosaic, word for ship (*navis*) altogether. For the last three words of the line, see Virgil, *Aen.* 5.158.

55: *tendere brachia saxis*: While it is not stated explicitly here, in the *PO* (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 235) it appears that the panicked disciples were afraid that they would have to end up swimming ashore.

58: See Ps 121:4: To judge from the *PO* (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 236), Sedulius apparently understood this passage from the Psalm to be a direct prophecy of this specific event: *secundum Dauiticam prophetiam*: "*non dormitabit* …." For the point "about Christ sleeping and not sleeping" (Green, *Latin Epics*, 235), see Ambrose, *In Lucam* 6.42.

59: *lacrimantibus*: Many manuscripts read *clamantibus*, as does the prose paraphrase, but Huemer follows Taur. E.IV.42 here (as should we, on the principle of *lectio difficilior*). In this context, it is easier to imagine that the poignant *lacrimantibus* would have been replaced by the more predictable *clamantibus* than vice-versa.

60: *miserere citus, miserere*: The gemination adds a sense of pathos to the disciples' urgent plea for help.

63: Almost the entire line is taken from Virgil, *Aen.* 1.142.

67–69: "in happy exaltation … the joy of the winds": a striking example of Sedulius's personification of nature. The violent activity of the natural elements, he assures the reader, was not an expression of hostility, but rather an overly enthusiastic response to the Lord of nature's presence in their midst. For biblical

descriptions of trees "rejoicing" or the sea "clapping its hand," see Psalms 96 and 98. Although some have been tempted to read this passage allegorically in light of the church's battle with heretics such as the Arians, see Green's sensible caveat (*Latin Epics*, 201–2).

70–85: Jesus and the Gadarene demoniacs (see Matt 8:28–34; cf. Mark 5:1–20 and Luke 8:26–39). Sedulius omits any reference to Matthew's "country of the Gadarenes." On the relative lack of geographical or topographical details in the *PC*, see Ilona Opelt, "Die Szenerie bei Sedulius," *JAC* 19 (1976): 109–19.

73: *ala*: Huemer follows Arevalo and the manuscripts in reading *mala*, but Vonck's conjecture of *ala*, a wing of cavalry or a squadron of limited size, in contrast with *legio* in the next line (over 5,000 soldiers), makes splendid sense here (see Mazzega, *Sedulius, Carmen Paschale*, 119–20).

75: "shackled arms": Matthew's account makes no mention of chains, but see Mark 5:4 and Luke 8:29.

76–77: *heu dura furoris / condicio*: The powerful exclamation *heu* in this poetic outburst of sympathy is difficult to translate literally into modern English. "Alas" or "woe" are conventional, but somewhat old-fashioned possibilities.

79: "the unhappy spirit": The legion of evil spirits is now represented in the singular. The same variation in number is also present in the accounts of Mark and Luke. On the evil spirit's fear that Christ would torment him, see Luke 8:28.

83: "phalanxes": by way of contrast with the Roman *legio* (line 74, above), a Greek word describing a massed array of heavily armed warriors.

84: See Columella, *De re rustica* 7.9.2, for a discussion of various types of pigs, including those with "very hard and thick and black bristles."

84–85: On the preference of evil spirits for animals over humans, see John Chrysostom's *Homilies on Matthew* 28.3.

86–102: Jesus heals a paralyzed man (see Matt 9:1–8; cf. Mark 2:1–12 and Luke 5:18–26). Sedulius follows the Matthean account which does not mention that the paralytic man is let down through the roof.

86: *delatus*: Huemer hews too closely here to Taur. E.IV.42. The reading *dilatus* makes little sense in this context.

88: *patriamque sibi pater ipse dicauit*: For the paradoxical notion that the heavenly Father of all things would claim for himself a "fatherland" on earth, see Sedulius's contemporary, Peter Chrysologus of Ravenna, *Sermo* 50.3.

89: *uiuum … cadauer*: The startling oxymoron is elaborated in fuller detail in the lines that follow.

97: "Which only increase suffering": In the Gospel accounts, Jesus does not explicitly offer this explanation for forgiving the paralytic's sins before healing him. But see 1 Cor 11:28–30 and *PC* 2.1–6 for the idea that sin produces sickness and death.

98: *grabatum*: See Mark 2:12. Sedulius uses this colorful Greek word for the paralytic's cot instead of the more refined *lectum* (cf. Catullus, *Carm.* 10.22 and Martial, *Epigr.* 6.39.4).
102: The final line provides a light, even humorous, perspective on this particular miracle of healing. It is as though the paralytic has developed such a close relationship with the personified bed on which he had been carried for so long that he now wants to return the favor.
103–42: Jesus heals Jairus's daughter and the woman with a bloody issue (see Matt 9:18–26; cf. Mark 5:21–43 and Luke 8:41–56). Like Matthew, Sedulius indicates that the daughter of Jairus is already dead at the beginning of the account. In the accounts of Mark and Luke, she is in the process of dying. Lines 115–128 are translated in Roberts, *Humblest Sparrow*, 227.
103: *Principis … synagogae*: Sedulius follows Luke here. The "chief of the synagogue" was responsible for the physical arrangements for worship services. See, in general, Lee I. Levine, ed., *The Synagogue in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1987).
104: *superas … auras*: A metaphorical expression (lit. "the upper breezes") used by Virgil (*Aen.* 6.128; *Georg.* 4.486) to contrast the world of the living with the lower realm of the dead to which Aeneas and Orpheus must travel.
106: *lacrimansque gemensque*: The poet uses Virgilian language to describe the father's appeal (see *Aen.* 11.150 and 7.237). He is sobbing so hard that he can hardly get his words out.
109: The repetition of the vowel "i" may be an attempt to replicate the sound of high pitched lamentation (see Mazzega, *Sedulius, Carmen Paschale*, 136).
111: "the name of father": The father only has the one child, so his daughter's death means that he no longer has her, but is also no longer a father. Cf. Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew* 31.1.
114: *extinctae pergebat funera*: The heavily spondaic line helps to convey the impression of deliberate movement on this solemn occasion.
125: *damnauit*: The Latin verb is used here in connection with the oxymoron (*siccisque fluentis*) at the end of the previous line. The wetness is made miraculously dry through the corrective power of faith.
127: *furtum fidele*: an alliterative paradox. Mark and Luke represent the woman as "fearful and trembling" when her act is discovered, but they do not describe her uninvited appropriation of Jesus' saving powers in terms of theft.
129–134: A remarkable combination of pleonastic expressions for grief with epic language (see *Aen.* 2.695), as the poet describes Jesus' arrival at the house where Jairus's daughter lies. The repetition of the vowel sound "u" in *lugentia culmina* may be meant to reflect the common practice of ululation at such mournful events (see Mazzega, *Sedulius, Carmen Paschale*, 146).

134: *plangorque frequens*: On the physical form that mourning in the ancient world often took—such as: beating the chest, tearing out hair, covering oneself with ashes, scratching one's face, etc.—see Leo Koep, Eduard Stommel, and Johannes Kollwitz, "Bestattung," *RAC* 2 (1954): 203–4. The church fathers discouraged excessive rituals of this type, especially in light of the doctrine of the resurrection. See, e.g., Chrysostom's *Homilies on Matthew* 31.3 and Augustine, *Conf.* 9.12.

136: *sopor:* a word that can have the connotation of heavy, even drugged, sleep. The metaphorical comparison of sleep with death goes back at least as far as Homer (*Il.* 11.241) in the classical tradition (see also Catullus, *Carm.* 5.5). In the Old Testament too, the patriarchs and kings of Israel and Judah are said to "sleep with their fathers" when they die. Here, the Savior's miraculous power over the usual forces of nature permits him to revive the corpse with a word.

141–142: Now it is the daughter's astonished parents' turn to make some noise. The last word in the passage picks up *plangor* from line 134, but they are weeping for the sake of joy, not grief. For the phrase *obstipuere animis,* see Virgil, *Aen.* 8.530.

143–151: Jesus heals two blind men (see Matt 9:27–31).

143: *pedem referens*: a common poetic periphrasis (see, e.g., Virgil, *Georg.* 4.85; *Aen.* 10.794; Ovid, *Metam.* 2.439).

144: "glorious son of David": *Inclite* is an elevated term, mostly found in poetry. The blind men address their potential healer in the highest possible terms.

145–146: The men describe the conditions of blindness and sight in terms of night and day.

146–147: Even though blind, Sedulius observes that the men can recognize Jesus, the way of life (cf. John 14:6).

148–151: Sedulius alludes to the idea that the eye is the light (*lucerna*) of the body (see Matt 6:22), as he applies to the healing of the blind men the simile of the smoldering fire set ablaze by the addition of oil. As applied to Jesus' healing touch, the adjective *sereno* conjures the image of a clear sky, suggesting that Jesus has removed "clouds" from the blind men's vision.

152–157: Jesus heals a deaf and dumb man (see Matt 9:32–34). It is clear that Sedulius here is not following the Vulgate, according to which the man is only mute, but a version of the *Vetus Latina.*

153–155: The poet piles up the afflictions of the man with *multiplici languore.* Three words for "empty" (*relictus, vacuus, inania*) are followed by the word for "full" (*plenus*).

158–175: Jesus sends out the twelve disciples (see Matt 10:1–11; cf. Mark 6:7–13 and Luke 9:1–3). Even though this is not strictly a miracle, it is possible that the poet wanted to include the two commissionings of Jesus (the twelve in this passage and the seventy or seventy-two in *PC* 4.150–71) in this collection of

miracles because of the important role that the followers of Jesus would have in preaching the Gospel and performing miracles (see Arnobius, *Adv. Nat.* 1.50–51). The twelve, sometimes represented as sheep, can be found in late antique art, as, for example, in the apsidal mosaics of Santa Pudenziana in Rome (on the meaning of these mosaics in general, see Fredric W. Schlatter, "Interpretation of the Mosaic of Santa Pudenziana," *Vigiliae Christianae* 46 [1992]: 276–95).

160: *Ite, ait*: an emphatic expression borrowed from *Aen.* 11.24 in which Aeneas instructs his leaders to arrange for the burial of their fallen companions.

165: Lines 166–69 offer the poet's own explanation of what it means to "give to all men freely." The issue of simony was to become an important issue in the apostolic church (see Acts 8:9–24) and beyond.

167–68: *ego denique pastor/sum bonus*: a metaphor introduced into this context from John 10:11. Jesus is sending out the twelve disciples to tend the flock of which he is the good shepherd. On the disciples themselves as sheep, see Matt 10:16. On the overarching importance of the image of the good shepherd for the structure of the entire poem (it occurs in the central line of the 333 lines in the central book of the poem), see Springer, *Gospel as Epic*, 100–102. The figure shows up frequently in paintings in the catacombs (e.g., Praetextatus, Priscilla, and Lucina) and on sarcophagi, where it also is often featured centrally.

173–175: On the four rivers that flowed from the Garden of Eden, see Gen 2:10–14. While patristic writers frequently drew comparison with the four Gospels (see Mayr, *Studien*, 58), Sedulius does not make the connection explicit here. For a vivid representation, see the mosaics in the apse of Ss. Cosmas and Damian in Rome.

176: Hereafter, for the rest of the third book, the line numbering will be six behind Huemer's edition. The reason for the discrepancy is an inserted passage that appears only in one late manuscript (fifteenth century; see Springer, *Handlist*, 45) whose authenticity has been rejected by most scholars. It is most likely the work of an especially thorough reader or scribe who felt the absence in the *Carmen* of the extended discourse on simony that follows this pericope in the prose paraphrase (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 244). While Huemer rejected the six lines, confusingly enough, he did not change the numbering of the subsequent lines in his edition.

176–182: Jesus heals the man with a withered arm (see Matt 12:9–14; cf. Mark 3:1–6 and Luke 6:6–11).

180–181: Dactyls predominate in the lines that explain how the healing took place, a nice contrast with the slow spondees in the previous lines describing the invalid's condition.

182: Paulinus of Nola makes the same point about the positive use to which Jesus consistently put his miraculous powers (see *Epist.* 30.4): *In euangelio docemur illum multis caecis uisum redonasse, nemini sustilisse.*

183–92: Jesus heals a blind and dumb man (see Matt 12:22–23).
183: *En*: The particle here adds to the sense of heightened pathos, as Sedulius portrays the devil, as he so often does, in extravagantly serpentine terms.
187–189: The *Paschale opus* describes memorably the three ailments of the man so completely possessed by the devil: *cui mentem rapuit, uocem clausit, lumen extinxit* (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 245). He is triply afflicted with insanity, dumbness, and blindness.
192: *Verbaque per uerbum, per lumen lumina*: an elegant concluding chiasm that picks up on *lux* and *sermo* in line 190. It makes sense to the poet that a man in the power of the devil who was both dumb and blind should be healed by "the light of the world" (John 8:12) and "the word of God" (John 1:1). *Lumina* ("lights") refers to the man's eyes.
193–200: Jesus heals a paralyzed woman (see Luke 13:10–17). As is often the case, Sedulius provides even less contextual detail than the Gospel accounts. Luke tells us that the miracle happened while Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.
196: "eighteen harvests": a metonymic expression ("harvests" = "years"). Sedulius makes the situation as dramatic as possible: the woman finally gets to see the sky and the stars. And she is able to refresh her memory about what the sun looks like.
200: "Look to the lowest places": For *ima petunt* see Virgil, *Aen.* 9.120. Mazzega (*Sedulius, Carmen Paschale*, 191) argues that the phrase refers to the general decline and eventual ruin of those in the devil's power. Remigius suggests that the stooped woman is an allegory for all those "who are oppressed by the weight of sin and delight in earthly riches" (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 341). The line's last phrase may refer to Ps 145:14: "The Lord upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down."
201–212: The feeding of the 5000 (see Matt 14:13–21; cf. Mark 6:30–44; Luke 9:10–17; John 6:1–14).
202: *typicus Moyses uerusque propheta*: Jesus follows the example set by Moses who helped to provide the starving multitudes in the wilderness with food. Jesus is not just another prophet, many of whom were false (see, e.g., 1 Kgs 22:23), but the true prophet "who is to come into the world" (John 6:14). See also Deut 18:15: "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen," and Augustine, *Tract. in Joh.* 24.7.
203–204: *antiquam … antiquam*: The repetition of the same word at the beginning of the two lines, the rhymes (*famem* and *opem*), and the same metrical pattern (SSDS) reinforce the parallels between the mass feedings undertaken by Moses and Christ. Salient differences (birds not fish; manna not bread) are made clear in lines 205–6.

210–212: *magis stupeas*: Sedulius borrows these words from Juvenal, *Sat.* 6.87. What makes the miracle all the more astonishing is that the food continued to increase even as it was being diminished (*uorantibus aucta*). The twelve baskets of leftovers collected after everyone had eaten enough was far more food than they had before anyone started eating. The language of the last line is compressed and somewhat obscure, but the meaning is clearer in the prose paraphrase (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 246): *nec tanta fuit copia cum daretur, quanta fuit in reliquiis.* Ambrose makes the same paradoxical point in his hymn *Illuminans altissimus.*

213–229: Jesus walks on the water (see Matt 14:22–33; cf. Mark 6:45–52; John 6:16–21). Only Matthew's account describes Peter walking on the water.

213–215: As Roberts notes (*Biblical Epic*, 208), there is hardly any feature more characteristic of epic than such elaborate "poetic periphrases of time." It takes only three Latin words to set the same temporal stage in the Vulgate: *vespere autem facto.* For *astriferas umbras*, see Valerius Flaccius, *Arg.* 6.752.

214: The Sea of Galilee is actually a lake, not a sea, and it is certainly no "ocean."

215: *Hesperus*: a Latin transliteration of the Greek name for the "western star," the planet Venus in the evening sky.

216: *Discipuli … magistro*: a nice, balancing effect at the beginning and end of the line that helps to emphasize the difference between the teacher on the land and his disciples at sea.

217: *fluctuque tumenti:* an apt reference to *Aen.* 7.810, in which Virgil describes the uncanny speed of the warrior woman Camilla who ran fast so fast across the waves that her feet didn't get wet.

219: *Aduersus nam flatus erat*: Sedulius culminates his elaborate description of the storm at sea with a very simple summary.

222: *lambebant marmora plantas*: This half-line describing the reaction of the Sea of Galilee to Jesus corresponds neatly to the second half of 218: *iactabant aequora puppem*. While the disciples' ship is tossed about by the furious sea, the pacified waves (as calm as the surface of marble) lick or kiss their Lord's feet like docile puppies (see Green, *Latin Epics*, 195).

223: "His group was dumbfounded and marveled": The Gospels speak of the terror of the disciples and not their wonder.

224–229: Sedulius glosses over the fact that, according to Matthew, Peter grew afraid once he was out on the water and cried out for help as he began to sink. Instead he emphasizes Peter's faith and his acknowledgment of Christ (see, e.g., Mark 8:29). The reader's last glimpse of Peter in Sedulius's version of the story is as a fearless *pelagi uiator* striding confidently over the glassy surface of the water. In Matthew, by contrast, he is being hauled out of the water by Jesus who rebukes him for his lack of faith. Given Peter's importance as the first bishop of Rome, it is likely that the poet is uninterested in accentuating aspects of Peter's

depiction in the Gospel accounts that do not help to underscore his leadership qualities. Along with Paul, who was also supposed to have been martyred in Rome, Peter figures prominently in the ecclesial art of the city, often flanking Jesus on his right hand. On the connection between the apostle and the city in general, see Daniel William O'Connor, *Peter in Rome: The Literary, Liturgical, and Archaeological Evidence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

230–235: The healing at Gennesaret (see Matt 14:34–36; cf. Mark 6:53–56).

233: *tetigere iugem sensere salutem*: a remarkable double rhyme to conclude the narrative proper.

234–235: In these last two lines, the author reacts to the miracle with an exclamation on the power of such a small part of a garment to facilitate such great acts of healing. On the decision of the soldiers at the foot of the cross to cast lots for Jesus' garment rather than divide it, see John 19:25.

236–244: The Syro-Phoenecian woman (see Matt 15:21–28; cf. Mark 7:24–30).

236: "Tyrian region, the land of Sidon": As in the Gospel accounts, the geographical location is emphasized here because Jesus has moved outside territory traditionally associated with the Jewish people. Sidon was the mother city of Tyre, associated with the name of Dido in *Aen.* 1.613.

239–241: Sedulius extends the canine analogy for three lines. Dogs were regularly seen as unclean in contemporary Jewish culture, and, as Jesus declared, it would be inappropriate to give them the children's food. The Canaanite woman, interestingly enough, embraces the disgraceful categorization, since dogs, after all, do get to eat what is left over. The poet's vivid description of dogs' powerful sense of smell, their propensity to hover around the periphery of human dining spaces, and their inclination to lick up even the smallest fragments of food, suggests a personal interest or at least experience with dogs on Sedulius's part. See, in general, Douglas J. Brewer, Terence Clark, and A. A. Phillips, *Dogs in Antiquity: Anubis to Cerberus* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 2001).

242–244: The poet expands on the metaphors in the original and creates another allegory as he describes the remarkable reversal of the Canaanite woman's outcast status. The bold faith of the humble woman ends up turning her from a heathen dog roaming around the weedy fields of paganism (see 1.49–53 above) into a sheep who can now graze in the pasturage of that venerable chosen people, the Hebrews.

245–250: Jesus heals the multitudes (see Matt 15:30–31).

246: *Milia caecorum, claudorum milia passim*: The repetition of *milia* without a conjunction emphasizes the large number of people surrounding Jesus. The spondaic words *caecorum* and *claudorum* may represent the slow progress of the blind and the lame who have come to Jesus in search of healing.

251–266: The feeding of the 4000 (see Matt 15:32–39; cf. Mark 1:1–10).

252: *tertia lux*: See Virgil, *Aen.* 3.117.

257: *fructibus*: I follow the reading in Taur. E.IV.42 here instead of Huemer's *frugibus*. There is no great change of meaning.
258–259: The miracle itself, while told in very few words, is adorned with a conspicuous series of words beginning with the same consonant as the Latin word for bread (*panis*).
265: *fugitiua fames*: The dramatic personification here is reminiscent of Prudentius's treatment of similar abstractions in the *Psychomachia* (see, e.g., 432–435 and 629–632). There is, we may suppose, no more distasteful and disorienting experience for "hunger" than to be in the presence of vast surpluses of food.
267–286: The transfiguration (Matt 17:1–13; cf. Mark 9: 1–12; Luke 9:28–36).
267–269: The poet uses the lines leading up to the transfiguration of Jesus to inform (or remind) the reader that on earth Christ was truly human as well as manifestly divine. Such explicit theologizing is absent from the Gospel accounts.
269–272: Sedulius follows closely the description of the city set on a hill and the lantern that sheds its illuminating light broadly when not placed under a basket in Matt 5:14–15.
280: For "the eyes of the heart" see Eph 1:18.
281: *nostra fides*: Mazzega (*Sedulius, Carmen Paschale*, 240) points out correctly that *fides* here is objective not subjective, *Glaubwürdigkeit* not *Glauben*, but misses the import of the first person plural. He argues that this should be translated not as "our faith," but rather "our credibility," in keeping with his understanding of the poem's readership as heathens; they would be convinced by testimony such as this handed down by the eyewitnesses to subsequent generations of Christian evangelists. Given the relative scarcity of pagans in the second quarter of the fifth century, it seems more natural to take it as a reference to an increase of faith on the part of the faithful, a request that the first disciples made for themselves (cf. Luke 17:5).
281–282: cf. Rev 1:8. The threefold repetition of *hunc* highlights Christ as the object of *fides* with Trinitarian overtones. That he is the beginning and the end of all life, is suggested to Sedulius by the fact that he stands between a man who is still alive (Elijah was carried off to heaven) and another man (Moses) who reached 120 years of age (cf. Gen 6:3).
282: α … ω: The meter requires that the second Greek letter be pronounced as "o" not "omega" (as in the first stanza of the late medieval Christmas hymn *In dulci iubilo).*
286: *uerbo genitum*: According to the Latin version of the Nicene Creed, Christ was not *factum* ("made"), but "begotten." Sedulius may also be explaining how that divine begetting took place, namely, verbally. For the application of the title *uerbigena* to Christ, see Prudentius, *Cath.* 3.2.
287–306: Jesus drives out a demon (see Matt 17:14–21; cf. Mark 9:20–29 and Luke 9:38–42).

288: *adoratam*: preferable to *adumbratam* (Basel, Univ. Bibl. O.IV.17) or the conjecture *adoptatam* (see Mazzega, *Sedulius, Carmen Paschale*, 243–44). Epinal, Bib. Mun. 161, and several other manuscripts read *adornatam*.
291: The language describing the father's approach to Jesus is decidedly Virgilian, especially this line which is taken, for the most part, from *Aen.* 3:592. For the last three words of 290, see *Aen.* 6.862.
292: "only one": Sedulius adds even more pathos to his description of the father's anguish by repeating *unus* at the end of the line.
297: *redde mihi (uel redde sibi)*: See Claudian, *Carm. min.* 22.43. The repetition and rhyme intensify the urgency of the father's appeal and his self-correction.
299–300: Sedulius draws heavily on Virgil's description of Aeneas's encounter with Aechemenides, a Greek warrior who has suffered grievously at the hands of the gigantic Cyclops (*Aen.* 3.607–8). The reference to the evil spirit who is afflicting the son as *caeca potestas* (297) may be an allusion to Polyphemus, the Cyclops who was famously blinded by Odysseus.
303: *migrare domo*: The imagery of an evil spirit taking up residence in a house, that is to say, possessing a human being, is drawn from Matt 12:43–45.
304: "tear at the limbs": again, quite possibly a reference to the cannibalistic Cyclops who devoured many of Odysseus's companions.
307–313: The coin in the fish (see Matt 17:24–27).
307–308: "King of kings and Lord of lords": familiar biblical phraseology used in Rev 17:14 and 19:16 as well as 1 Tim 6:15. While a sovereign ruler himself, Sedulius's Jesus submits to the requirements of Caesar.
309: "Caesar's tribute": In Matthew's account, the tax required here appears to be the temple tax (cf. Exod 30:13–16) and not the tribute to Caesar. The latter is the subject of discussion between Jesus and the Pharisees in Matt 22:15–22.
310: *didragmatis aurei*: Jesus is asked to pay a didrachma, but according to the Gospel account, the fish which Peter catches contains a stater, a silver coin worth about four drachmas. On coinage in early Christianity in general, see Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (3d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 90–95.
313: Then, as now, fish were sold by their weight, so the fish that contains the golden didrachma is presumably worth more because it weighs more.
314–333: The greatest in the kingdom of heaven (see Matt 18:1–11; cf. Mark 9:32–36 and Luke 9:46–48).
316: *doctor mirabilis*: an accolade frequently assigned, much later, to Roger Bacon. Although Sedulius ordinarily concentrates on Jesus' miracles, he concludes this book with one of his teachings, on humility. It is fitting, given the lofty aims of the work and the poet's own expressions of modesty at the outset, to remind the disciples and the reader of the oft expressed biblical teaching that God exalts the humble and demotes the proud.

319: *demissa*: I follow the reading preferred by Arevalo and most of the manuscripts here, as it is difficult to make nearly as good sense of Huemer's *dimissa* in this context.

321: *scilicet*: The poet himself becomes the teacher as he addresses his readers (using the first person plural) and draws out for them the moral lesson from Jesus' vivid illustration of childlike humility.

326: *mens … uergens altum … altaque uergit*: The chiastic arrangement is effective as Sedulius plays with the ambiguity inherent in the Latin adjective *altus*; it can mean either high or low.

328–329: For the elevation of the poor from the ash or dung heap, see Ps 113:7–8 and 1 Sam 2:8 (cf. Luke 1:52).

332–333: The concluding couplet is an independent unit that is not closely connected to the preceding episode. Instead, the lines seem to represent a self-conscious, poetological reflection on the part of the author as he reaches the end of one book of Jesus' miracles and prepares to begin another. The poet wants to assure the reader that even though he is in the process of going through the miracles seriatim (many of them quite similar to each other), he has not forgotten how these specific divine actions (books 3 and 4) fit into the larger whole of Jesus' ministry and, indeed, all of salvation history (books 1, 2, and 5). Mazzega believes that the lines were added by an interpolator interested in showing how Sedulius's own poetic practice illustrates the concept of humility. If so, he must have also composed and inserted the paraphrase of the lines in the *PO*, as well, which seems, on the face of it, unlikely.

Liber Quartus

Iam placidas Iordanis item transgressus harenas,
Iudaeae sectatus iter. Sine nomine mixtum
Vulgus et innumeras releuans a clade cateruas
Suscipit infirmos et dat discedere sanos.
Nil igitur summo de se sperantibus umquam
Difficile est conferre Deo, cui prona facultas
Ardua planare et curua in directa referre,
Et quicquid natura negat se iudice praestat.
Namque foramen acus sicut penetrare camelus
Membrorum pro mole nequit, sic diues opima
Fertilitate tumens tenuem non posset adire
Caelestis regni ducentem ad limina callem,
Ni genitor rerum (qui mundum lege coercet
Et nulla sub lege manet, cui condere uelle est,
Quem frons nulla uidet, sed totum conspicit ipse),
"Hoc impossibile est homini," dixisset, "at alto
Possibile est ius omne Deo," multisque molestum
Diuitibus tandem faceret mitescere censum.
Nam proprias bene tractat opes caeloque recondi
Thesauros uult ille suos, ubi quicquid habetur
Non mordax aerugo uorat, non tinea sulcat,
Nec male defossum famulatur furibus aurum,
Ieiunis qui ferre cibum, sitientibus haustum,
Hospitibus tectum, nudis largitur amictum,
Solatur nexos in carcere, perfouet aegros,
Atque aliis largus, sibi tantum constat egenus.
Nec dubie in caelum substantia peruenit illa,
Quae Christo collata datur sub paupere forma,
Quae damnis augmenta capit, quae spargitur ut sit,
Quae perit ut maneat, quae uitam mortua praestat.

Praeterea geminos dominus considere caecos
Dum quoddam transiret iter comitante caterua
Conspicit, exstinctae poscentes munera formae

Book 4

Now once again he crossed the sands of the placid Jordan
And made his way into Judea. Relieving of their diseases
A motley and nameless crowd and unnumbered throngs,
He received them as weak and sent them away healthy.
It is never difficult, you see, for the most high God to bestow anything
On those who put their hopes in him, because his inclination
Is to level the lofty and to make the crooked straight,
And whatever nature denies, he accomplishes as he himself deems just.
For just as a camel is unable to pass through the eye of a needle
Because of the size of its limbs, even so a rich man,
Puffed up with lavish abundance, could not take the narrow path
That leads to the threshold of the heavenly kingdom,
Unless the procreator of all things (who rules the world with his law
And is himself subject to none; whose will is no sooner said than done;
Whom no face ever sees but who himself sees everything),
Unless he had said: "This is impossible for a man, but for the high God
Every kind of power is possible," and in the end made wealth,
A burden for many rich men, easier to endure.
For the one who handles his personal resources well and chooses to have
His own treasures stored up in heaven, where consuming rust
Does not devour whatever he has, and the moth does not corrupt it,
And where thieves do not help themselves to the gold he has foolishly buried,
Is the one who takes care to bring food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty,
Provides shelter for guests and clothing for the naked,
Comforts those bound in prison, sustains the sick,
Is generous to others and parsimonious only when it comes to himself.
That is the substance, doubtless, that makes it to heaven,
Gathered and given to Christ in the person of a poor man.
It increases when it experiences losses; it is scattered that it might exist;
It perishes in order to survive; it offers life when it is dead.

After that, while he was on a journey accompanied by a crowd,
The Lord spied a pair of blind men sitting on the ground,
Begging him to restore facial functions now grown dim

Flebilibusque uagas implentes uocibus auras.
Nec cunctata solens pietas inferre salutem,
Quae sentit flagrare fidem, mox lumina tangens
Euigilare iubet, quae somnus presserat ingens,
Atque diu clausas reserans sub fronte fenestras
Ingrediente die fecit discedere noctem.

Hinc repetita sacri gradiens per moenia templi
Lumina caecatis dedit et uestigia claudis.
Talia Dauiticam post facta reliquerat urbem
Bethaniae uicina petens, eademque reuersus
Clarescente die properabat uisere tecta.
Ecce autem mediis astans sublimis in aruis
Frondea ficus erat, cuius in robore nullum
Repperit esuriens lustrato stipite pomum,
Arboreisque comis: "Iam nunc ex germine uestro
Nullus," ait, "fructus reliquum generetur in aeuum."
Confestim uiduata suis ficulnea sucis
Aruit et siccis permansit mortua ramis,
Omnis enim quicumque Deo nil fertile nutrit,
Ceu sterilis truncus lignis aequabitur ustis.
At iustus palmae similis florebit amoenae,
Semper habens frondes et tamquam Libana cedrus
Multiplicandus adest et uertice sidera tanget.

Post oblatus ei uirtutem sensit erilem
Insanus sermone carens, quem faucibus artis
Angebat uis clausa mali uitiumque tacendo
Prodiderat, sed cuncta solens infirma leuare
Conditor obsessa pepulit de fauce latronem
Et uoci patefecit iter, nexuque soluto
Muta diu tacitas effudit lingua loquelas.

Post dominus Pharisaea petens conuiuia cenae
Orantis dapibus sese impertiuit amici.
Tunc mulier, quam fama nocens et plurima uitae
Mordebant delicta suae, clementia supplex
Corruit amplectens uestigia, quaeque profusis
Irrigat incumbens lacrimis, et crine soluto
Nec tergere sacras nec cessat lambere plantas
Vnguento flagrante fouens, sententia donec

And filling the vagrant breezes with their tearful cries.
Without delay his mercy, accustomed to provide health
When it discovers faith afire, touched their eyes at once
And ordered them to awake from the deep sleep which had oppressed them,
And opening the long-closed windows of their faces,
He made night disappear for them as day entered.

Returning from here and walking around the walls of the holy temple,
He gave light to the blind and power to walk to the crippled.
After such great deeds, he left the city of David
And headed for neighboring Bethany. Daybreak found him
Hastening back to visit the buildings of that same Jerusalem.
But, behold, towering in the middle of a field
There stood a leafy fig tree, in whose entire growth
He found no fruit after hungrily searching the branches.
And to the tree's foliage he said: "Now may no fruit
Ever be brought forth from your stock for all time."
Bereft of its sap, the fig tree at once withered up
And remained standing there dead with dry branches.
For everyone who produces nothing fruitful for God,
Like a barren tree trunk, will be likened to wood that is burnt.
But the righteous man will flourish like a lovely palm tree,
Always in leaf, and, just like the cedar of Lebanon,
He will grow tall and touch the stars with his crown.

Afterwards, an insane man, unable to speak, was brought to him
And experienced his sovereign power. The man's throat was pressed tight,
Constrained by the clenching power of the evil one, and in keeping silence,
He proclaimed his deficiency. But the creator, used to relieving all infirmities,
Drove off the robber from the throat he had occupied
And opened a pathway for the voice. Once the knot was untied,
The mute tongue poured forth its eloquence so long silenced.

After this, the Lord attended the festive dinner party of a Pharisee
And partook of the meal of a friend who had invited him.
Then a woman who was being tormented by her pernicious reputation
And the many transgressions she had committed during her life,
Fell down in supplication and embraced his merciful feet,
Which she washed as she hovered over him with her spilt tears
And kept on wiping with her loosened hair the holy feet and kissing them,
Anointing them with shining oil, until God's verdict

Lata Dei, quem ferre manum non paenitet umquam,
Si nos paeniteat ueterem quaesisse ruinam,
"Vade, fides, mulier, tua te saluauit ab omni,"
Dixisset, "quodcumque mali gessisse uideris.
Vtere pace mea." Magna est medicina fateri
Quod nocet abscondi, quoniam sua uulnera nutrit
Qui tegit et plagam trepidat nudare medenti.
En polluta diu, modicum purgata recessit
Per gemitum propriique lauans in gurgite fletus,
Munda suis lacrimis redit et detersa capillis.

Iamque Capharneae synagogam intrauerat urbis
Rite docens populos, quem cum uidisset iniquus
Humano sub corde latens clamore proteruo
Spiritus infremuit, "Quid nobis et tibi?" dicens,
"Perdere nos, heu Christe, uenis? Scio denique qui sis,
Et sanctum cognosco Dei." Nec plura locutus
Imperio terrente tacet hominemque reliquit
Pulsus et in uacuas fugiens euanuit auras.

Sic etiam uariis finem languoribus esse
Fecit et exclusos semper reticere coegit
Daemonas ac talem prohibet se pandere testem.
Olim quippe ferox et nigrae mortis amator
Ille nocens anguis, deiectus culmine caeli
Cum pompis sociisque suis omnique nefandae
Agmine militiae, Christum, quem nouerat illic,
Conspicit in terris, uelamine carnis opertum,
Et gemit esse homini dominum uirtutis amicum.

Dumque Tyri transgressus iter, Sidonia rursus
Arua legens, placidas dominus calcaret harenas,
Curauit gemino miserum spiramine clausum,
Qui uocem non ore dabat, non aure trahebat,
Sidereaeque manus ruptis penetralibus omnes
Attactu patuere fores, laetusque repente
Audirique loquens meruitque audire loquentes.

Tu quoque uirtutis sensisti munus erilis
Procumbens oculis, cuius in lumine Christus
Exspuit et speciem simulatae mortis ademit.

Was delivered, who never regrets stretching out his hand,
If only we regret the pursuit of our ancient downfall:
"Go, woman," he said, "your faith has saved you
From all of the evil you are seen to have done.
Accept my peace." It is a great remedy to confess
That which harms us to hide, since he who conceals his hurt
And trembles to expose it to the doctor only aggravates his wounds.
See, she who was soiled for so long was purged by a little lamentation,
And bathing herself in the torrent of her own weeping,
She left washed by her own tears and wiped clean by her own hair.

And now he had entered the synagogue of the city of Capernaum
And was teaching the people in his usual way, when an evil spirit
Hiding in a human heart caught sight of him and with violent shouting
Raged against him: "What have we to do with you?
Alas, Christ, have you come to destroy us? I do indeed know who you are,
And I recognize the holy one of God." He said no more,
But at Christ's terrifying command he fell silent and left the man,
And taking flight in defeat, he vanished into thin air.

So, too, he put an end to a variety of ailments
And forced the demons he drove out to keep silence forever,
Forbidding such a witness to spread forth his fame.
Indeed, the ferocious devotee of black death,
That dangerous snake, once cast down from the heights of heaven
With his retinue and allies and his whole troop
Of abominable soldiers, caught sight of Christ on earth,
Whom he had known in heaven, covered with a veil of flesh,
And he groaned because the Lord of goodness is a friend to man.

And while he crossed through Tyre, seeking out Sidonian territory again,
As the Lord was treading the calm sands under foot,
He cured a wretched man who suffered obstructions in two passageways:
His mouth could utter no word, and his ear could receive no sound.
But the heavenly hands broke wide the inner chambers
And opened all the doors at his touch, and suddenly the man
Was happy to be heard when speaking and able to hear those speaking.

You also experienced the gift of the Lord's power
Being brought to bear on eyes, as Christ spat on your sight
And removed from you the counterfeit appearance of death.

Hinc maiora docens populos caelestia uerum
Se reserat sermone Deum turbasque frequentes,
Quae nimis irruerant, cupiens uitare parumper
Stagna petit paruaque sedens in Simonis alno,
Litore sistentem firmabat ab aequore plebem.
Et dictis iam finis erat. Tunc altius actam
In pelagus iubet ire ratem uastoque profundo
Retia demitti piscantia, quae nihil omnem
Claudere per noctem uacuo potuere labore.
Simon paret ouans et aquosis gentibus instans
Linea claustra iacit tantumque immanis apertos
Impleuit captura sinus, ut praeda redundans
Turbaret geminas cumulato pisce carinas,
Nam socia istic puppis erat. Sic maxima saepe
Gaudia non ferimus propensaque uota timemus;
Quodque Deo facile est homines optare nec audent.

Talibus insignis uirtutibus ibat in urbem,
Quae sit dicta Naim, populo uallatus opimo
Et grege discipulum, miserum cum comminus ecce
Conspicit efferri iuuenem gelidumque cadauer
Pluribus exsequiis et inani funere passum
Triste ministerium, cuius sors inuida matrem
Iamdudum uiduam gemina uiduauerat urna.
Nec remorata diu pietas, inimica doloris,
Auxilium uitale tulit tactoque feretro,
"Surge," ait, "O iuuenis," parensque in tempore dicto
Mortuus assurgit, residensque loquensque reuixit
Atque comes genetricis abit, nam funere torpens
Et licet amissae passus discrimina uitae,
Non poterat famulus domino clamante tacere
Nec uita praesente mori. Mox agmine uerso
Deponens trepidum recidiuo tramite luctum,
Candida felicem reuocauit pompa parentem.

Nec tibi parua salus domino medicante, Maria,
Multiplici laesum curari uulnere sensum,
Quam fera septenis rabies inuaserat armis,
Daemonico cuneata globo, sed squameus anguis
Imperiosa sacri fugiens miracula uerbi
Corde tuo depulsus abit uolucresque per auras

Then, instructing the people further in heavenly matters,
He revealed himself in his words as true God, and, out of desire
To avoid for a little while the crowds which had pressed in too close,
He headed for the water and, sitting in a small boat of Simon's,
Began to edify from the sea the people standing on the shore.
And once he was finished speaking, he ordered the skiff
To be put out farther to sea and the fishing nets let down
Into the huge deep. They had been able to catch nothing
The whole night; their work had been in vain.
Simon joyfully complied and in pursuit of the watery denizens
Threw in the linen nets, and such a great catch
Filled their extended confines that the booty overflowed
And threatened to capsize two keels with the pile of fish,
For there was a companion vessel right there. Thus often
We cannot endure the greatest joys and fear the granting of prayers,
And what is easy for God, men do not even dare to hope for.

Gaining fame because of miracles such as these, he entered
A city called Nain, encircled by a swelling crowd of people
And a flock of disciples, and, behold, near at hand
He caught sight of the cold corpse of a wretched young man
Being carried out, undergoing a sad ceremony complete with the rites
Of a meaningless funeral. His unkindly lot had left his mother,
Long since a widow, widowed now by a second funeral urn.
Nor did Christ's mercy delay for long, hostile to grief as it is,
But offering his vivifying assistance he touched the bier
And said, "Rise, young man," and obediently, in the time it took to speak,
The dead man raised himself up, and sitting up and speaking came back to life,
And went off alongside his mother. For even though he was motionless in death
And had experienced the crisis of losing his life,
The servant could not keep silent while his master was calling,
Nor could he die, while life was at hand. Soon the procession
Turned around and set aside their anxious grieving, as they retraced
Their steps and brightly recalled the happy mother home.

And with the Lord as your doctor, Mary, it was no minor healing
For your mind, damaged by many a wound, to be cured,
You, whom the harsh fury of the devil with a seven-fold army,
Drawn up in demonic formation, had attacked. But the scaly snake,
In flight from the imperious miracles wrought by the holy word,
Was driven away from your heart and through the rushing breezes

In chaos infernae lapsus penetrale Gehennae
Septem ingens gyros, septena uolumina traxit.

Neue redundantem cumulato germine messem
Exiguis dominus sineret languere colonis,
Discipulosque alios, quorum mens conscia recti
Puraque simplicitas numero meritoque refulgens
Aurea libra fuit, uelut agnos praecipit inter
Sanguineos properare lupos: "Assumite," dicens,
"Iura potestatis, nullum metuatis ut hostem,
Vipereasque minas et scorpion atque inimicae
Omnia uirtutis sensu calcate fideli.
Nulla meis famulis feritas aduersa nocebit.
Nec tantum hoc gaudete, uiri, quod spiritus ater
Subiaceat uobis, quantum quod nomina uestra
Scribat in aeterno caelestis littera libro."
Ius est quippe Dei uitam praeponere factis.
Nam merito cessante bono miracula nil sunt,
Quae faciunt plerumque mali, quibus arbiter orbis,
"Nescio uos," dicturus erit, "discedite cuncti
Artifices scelerum, rebus qui semper iniquis
Diuinum simulastis opus." Sic tempore Moysi
Carminibus quidam uanae Memphitis in oris
Signa dabant; non sponte Dei, sed imagine falsa
Visibus humanis magicas tribuere figuras.

Post Pharisaeorum cuiusdam principis intrat
Clarificare domum, non escam sumere tantum,
Ad quam tunc facili conuenerat ille precatu.
Hic homo perspicuo distentus uentre tumebat
Plenus aquae, grauidamque cutem suspenderat aluus,
Inclusam paritura necem. Iam membra fluebant
Accrescente sinu, miserosque infusa per artus
Turgida perflatum macies tenuauerat aegrum,
Inque uteri spatium totus conuenerat hydrops.
Non tulit hanc speciem mundi pater, et sua transit
Sabbata non curans, hominem curare paratus
Quem uoluit magis esse suum. Nam sabbata propter
Condita sunt hominem, non est homo sabbata propter.
Tunc pius umentem siccata corporis unda
Iussit abire luem. Fluuidus mox uiscera morbus

Fell into the innermost abyss of deep Gehenna, outsized,
Dragging his seven twisting coils, his seven-fold body, behind him.

And lest the abundant harvest with its prolific growth be allowed
To go unattended because there were too few farmers,
The Lord ordered other disciples with minds that knew the right,
Whose unalloyed pureness, resplendent in number and worth,
Was like a pound of gold, to hasten just like lambs
Into the midst of bloody wolves, saying: "Take up
Your rightful power, so that you are afraid of no enemy.
Crush underfoot the vipers that threaten you, the scorpion,
And all things that serve the enemy's power, with the confidence of faith.
No wild savagery directed against you will harm my servants.
And do not rejoice as much in this, men, that the black spirit
Is subject to you, as that your names are written
In the eternal book with heavenly letters."
It is God's rule, of course, to prefer the manner of life to great deeds.
For if real goodness is absent, miracles are worthless;
Evil men too perform them frequently, to whom the judge of the world
Will say: "I do not know you. Depart, all of you
Workers of iniquity who have constantly used evil means to pretend
To be doing divine work." So in the time of Moses,
In the region of deceitful Memphis, there were some who used incantations
To create signs. Not according to God's will, but rather under a false guise,
They presented magical apparitions before people's eyes.
Afterwards he entered the house of a leader of the Pharisees

To make it illustrious, not just to partake of food,
Where, needing little persuasion, he had come to visit at that time.
Here there was a swollen man, his huge belly visibly distended,
Full of water, and like a womb the pregnant flesh had swelled up,
About to give birth to the death inside it. Already his limbs were flowing
As the paunch grew, and, spreading throughout his suffering joints,
A swollen wasting had enfeebled the bloated invalid,
And dropsy had taken over completely the area of his abdomen.
The Father of the world was not indifferent to what he saw, but broke
His own Sabbath unconcernedly, concerned to cure a man
Whom he wanted to be his own more than his Sabbath;
For the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.
Then the merciful one ordered the waves occupying his body to dry up
And the liquid infection to depart. Soon the flowing sickness abandoned

Deserit, et uacuae resident in pectore fibrae,
Carnalemque lacum pestis lymphata reliquit.

Coeperat interea dominus Galilaea per arua,
Transgrediens sancto quoddam pede tangere castrum.
Hunc procul ut uidere decem maculosa gerentes
Leprosi portenta uiri, quos corpore foedo
Discolor obscenis turpabat poena figuris,
"Praeceptor, miserere, potes namque omnia, Iesu,"
Clamantes dixere simul. Tunc flexa potestas,
Quae numquam pietate uacat, clementior infit:
"Ite, sacerdotum conspectibus ora referte."
Cumque uiam peterent, subito mundata uicissim
Mirantur sua membra uiri uariumque tuentes
Esse nihil sese pariter speculantur et omnes
Explorant proprias alterno lumine formas.
Ex quibus ut grates ageret pro munere tanto,
Vix unus reduci conuersus tramite planta
Sternitur ad terram dominum uirtutis adorans,
Atque sacerdoti uero sua protulit ora.
Denique pontificum princeps summusque sacerdos
Quis nisi Christus adest, gemini libaminis auctor
Ordine Melchisedech, cui dantur munera semper
Quae sua sunt, fructus segetis et gaudia uitis?

Cum residens caecus Timei filius illud
Propter iter, dominum per quod cognouerat ire,
Vociferans crebro lumen clamore petisset
Nec populo prohibente tacens, accedere iussus
Ad dominum palpante manu, uisumque recepit
Et nullo ducente redit. Quam fortiter instat
Importuna fides! Quicquid res dura negarit,
Sola frequens uotis oratio praestat honestis.
Vnanimum panem sic ille petebat amicum,
Qui foribus clausis per opaca silentia noctis
Obnixeque diu confidenterque neganti
Vocibus assiduis precibusque extorsit anhelis.

Praeteriensque uiae dominus loca Samaritanae
Humanam flagrante sitim collegerat aestu,
Fonsque perennis aquae modicam desiderat undam,

His inner parts, the entrails (now drained) resumed their place in his stomach,
And the watery disease abandoned the corporeal lake.

Meanwhile the Lord had crossed through the plains of Galilee
And set his holy foot in a certain town,
When ten leprous men saw him from afar,
Wearing monstrous stains, their bodies made repulsive
By a discoloring punishment that marred them with disgusting shapes.
"Teacher, have pity, for you are able to do all things, Jesus,"
They all cried out at the same time. Then his power,
Which never lacks mercy, was swayed, and he said kindly:
"Go, show your faces for the priests' inspection."
And as they went on their way the men took turns marveling
At how suddenly their bodies had been cleansed, and as they examined themselves
They all saw that their motley color was no more
And explored their own appearance through each other's eyes.
To give thanks for such a great gift, just one
Of these men retraced his path with backward steps
And threw himself to the ground to adore his powerful Lord
And presented his face to the true priest.
After all, who is the head of the pontiffs and the chief priest
Other than Christ, the founder of the double offering,
According to the order of Melchizedek, to whom gifts are always given
Which are his own, the fruit of the grain and the joy of the vine?

When the blind son of Timaeus was sitting along the side of that road
By which he had learned the Lord was travelling,
He called out to him with many a shout and asked for illumination,
Not keeping silent even when the crowd forbade him. Summoned to approach
The Lord, feeling his way with his hands, he received his sight
And departed with no one to guide him. How bold and insistent
Is urgent faith! That which harsh reality would deny,
Repeated prayer alone with earnest entreaties provides.
Just so the man who kept asking for bread from a close friend
Throughout the dark silent stretches of night, despite the closed doors,
Obstinately and audaciously, though denied for a long time,
By dint of persistent cries and breathless entreaties, wrested it from him.

As he made his way through the region of Samaria, the Lord
Experienced human thirst due to the burning heat,
And the eternal source of water needed a little water

Vt biberet qua corpus erat. Tunc accola gentis
Stans mulier, paruum puteo quae traxerat haustum,
Cum dare cunctatur perituraе munera lymphae,
Agnoscens propriam numeroso coniuge uitam,
Orat inexhausti tribui sibi dona fluenti,
Aeternam positura sitim, qua nemo carere
Dignus erit, domini nisi mersus gurgite Christi
Percipiat placidas animae, non corporis undas.

Dumque sui media residens testudine templi,
Ore tonans patrio directi ad peruia callis,
Errantem populum monitis conuertit amicis.
Ecce trahebatur magna stipante caterua
Turpis adulterii mulier lapidanda reatu,
Quam Pharisaea manus placido sub iudice sistens
Cum damnare parat, plus liberat, omnibus illis
Nam simul e turbis proprio sine crimine nullus
Accusator erat, saxum qui missile primus
Sumeret obscenae feriens contagia moechae.
Nec poterat quisquam fistucam uellere paruam
Ex oculo alterius, proprio qui lumine grandem
Sciret inesse trabem. Profugus sic ille recessit
Impetus et clemens donat sententia culpam,
Iam non peccandi sub condicione solutam.
Nam uomitum quicumque suum canis ore relambit,
Nec ueterem studet hic ueniam nec habere futuram,
Huius damna tenens, huius compendia perdens.

Inde means genitum cernit considere caecum,
Qui male praegnantis dilapsus uentre parentis
In lucem sine luce ruit. Tunc sanguinis ille
Conditor humani mundique orientis origo,
Imperfecta diu proprii non passus haberi
Membra operis, natale lutum per claustra genarum
Illiniens hominem ueteri de semine supplet.
Nec uisum tamen ante capit, quam uoce iubentis
Accepta domini Siloam uenisset ad undam
Et consanguinei tutus medicamine limi
Pura oculos fouisset aqua. Mox ergo gemellae
Vultibus effulgent acies tandemque merentur
Ignotum spectare diem. Cognoscite, cuncti,

To drink, insofar as he was a body. At that same time, a native woman
Was standing there, who had drawn a small draught from the well.
When she hesitated to give him the gift of perishable water,
Mindful of her own life spent with so many husbands,
She asked that the gift of ever flowing water be given her,
To quench eternal thirst, which no one will be able to avoid,
Unless, immersed in the flood of Christ the Lord,
He receives the quiet waters of the spirit, not the body.

While sitting in the middle of his own temple building,
Thundering out the words of the Father, he recalled his wandering people
To the way of the straight path with his friendly warnings.
Behold, accompanied by a great thronging crowd, a shameless woman
Was being dragged before him, to be stoned on the charge of adultery.
The Pharisees' hands put her under the jurisdiction of a gentle judge,
But in setting out to condemn her, they freed her instead.
For among all of those who happened to be there in the crowd
There was no accuser without his own sin who could be the first
To pick up a stone to strike the polluted, foul adulteress.
Nor was there anyone able to pluck a small mote
From another's eye, since he knew that in his own
There was lodged a huge beam. So that furious onslaught
Gave way, and his kindly sentence forgave her fault,
Absolved on the condition that there be no more sinning.
For whoever licks up his own vomit again with the tongue of a dog,
Is eager neither for his old sins nor those in the future to be forgiven,
Retaining the guilt for the former, losing the pardon for the latter.

Making his way from there he saw seated a man born blind,
Who had emerged from the womb of his unfortunate pregnant mother,
Propelled into the light of day without light. Then that founder
Of the human race and the source of the emerging world
Did not long allow this part of his creative work to remain imperfect,
But smearing the mud from which the man had been born on his eyelids,
He made him whole, using his ancient element.
But the blind man did not recover his sight before he heeded the bidding
Of the Lord's voice and went to the water of Siloam,
Where, made whole by the medicine of the kindred mud,
He flushed his eyes with clear water. At once, then, two eyes
Sparkled in his face, and at last they were equipped
To see the unfamiliar light of day. All of you, recognize

Mystica quid doceant animos miracula nostros.
Caeca sumus proles miserae de fetibus Euae,
Portantes longo natas errore tenebras.
Sed dignante Deo mortalem sumere formam
Tegminis humani facta est ex uirgine nobis
Terra salutaris, quae fontibus abluta sacris
Clara renascentis reserat spiramina lucis.

Bethaniaeque solum repetens intrarat, ibique
Lazarus occidua tumulatus sorte iacebat,
Iam quarto sine luce die claususque sepulchri
Marmore corruptum tabo exhalabat odorem.
Flebant germanae; flebat populatio praesens;
Flebat et omnipotens, sed corpore, non deitate
Exanimosque artus illa pro parte dolebat
Qua moriturus erat. Lacrimis impleuit amicum,
Maiestate Deum. Quid credere, Martha, moraris?
Quidue, Maria, gemis? Christum dubitatis, an unum
Possit ab infernis hominem reuocare cauernis,
Qui dabit innumeras post funera surgere turbas?
Ergo ubi clamantis domini sonuit tuba dicens,
"Lazare, perge foras," magno concussa pauore
Tartara dissiliunt, Erebi patuere recessus,
Et tremuit letale Chaos, mortisque profundae
Lex perit, atque anima proprias repente medullas
Cernitur ante oculos uiuens astare cadauer.
Postque sepulchralem tamquam recreatus honorem
Ipse sibi moriens et posthumus exstat et haeres.

Vtque caduca uagi contemnens culmina saecli
Monstraret se rite Deum, non curribus altis,
Qui pompae mortalis honor, rapidisque quadrigis
Puluereum sulcauit iter nec terga frementis
Ardua pressit equi, faleris qui pictus et ostro
Ora cruentatum mandentia concutit aurum,
Sed lento potius gestamine uilis aselli
Rectori suffecit honos, leuis ungula cuius
Vt tanto sessore decus mirabile portans
Nobilior sub fasce foret, non illius impar,
Qui patulo Christum licet in praesepe iacentem
Agnouit tamen esse Deum. Plebs omnis adorans

What lesson this mystic miracle is teaching our souls:
We are blind offspring from the brood of wretched Eve,
Carrying with us shadows born of our long wandering.
But since God has deigned to take on our mortal form,
The covering of a man, there has been created from the virgin
A land of salvation for us, washed clean by sacred springs
And opening up clear channels of reborn light.

Heading back to the soil of Bethany, he entered the town,
And there Lazarus, who had met his end, was lying in the tomb.
Enclosed in a marble grave for four days already without light,
He was giving off the foul aroma of decay.
His sisters were weeping; the people there were weeping;
And the all-powerful one was weeping. But it was in his body, not his deity,
That he grieved for the lifeless limbs, in that part of himself
In which he was about to die. He fulfilled the role of friend with tears,
But the role of God with his glory. Why do you hesitate to believe, Martha?
Or why do you groan, Mary? Do you doubt that Christ
Is able to call back one man to life from the clefts below,
When he will cause unnumbered throngs to rise after death?
So as the trumpet of the Lord sounded forth, declaring,
"Lazarus, come forth," shaken with great dread,
Tartarus was split apart, the recesses of Erebus gaped,
And deadly Chaos trembled. The law of encompassing death
Was destroyed, and as the soul crept back into its own innermost being,
A living corpse was seen standing there in full view.
As if reborn after his sepulchral solemnities,
Though he himself died, he survived both as his own successor and heir.

And, despising the fickle fame of this transitory world,
In order to show himself rightly God, he did not plow through the dust
On a lofty chariot, a mark of distinction in a mortal parade,
Drawn by a swift team of four horses, nor did he sit on the high back
Of a snorting horse, decked out in trappings and purple
And champing with its mouth against the bloodied gold bit.
No, rather, for this rider the glory of a lowly ass,
With its leisurely gait and humble carriage, sufficed,
So that, by carrying a passenger of such remarkable distinction,
It was ennobled by its burden, not unlike the ass
Who, even though Christ was lying in an open manger,
Nonetheless recognized that he was God. The entire populace worshiped him

In solido molles subiecit tramite uestes.
Dicite, gentiles populi, cui gloria regi
Talis in orbe fuit? Cui palmis compta uel umquam
Frondibus arboreis laudem caelestibus hymnis
Obuia turba dedit, domino nisi cum patre Christo,
Qui regit aetherium princeps in principe regnum?

Laying down their soft garments on the hard path.
Tell us, O pagan nations, what worldly king
Ever had such glory? Whom did a crowd, 305
Bearing palms or tree branches, ever go out to meet,
To render their praise in heavenly hymns, except the Lord Christ
Who, with his Father, rules his heavenly kingdom, the first with the first?

Notes for Book 4

1–4: Jesus heals the multitudes in Judea (see Matt 19:1–2). *Placidas* refers to the Jordan River itself, strictly speaking, and not to the sands on its banks (see above, 2.141).

2–3: *sine nomine*: an expression found frequently in Latin epic (cf. Juvencus, *Euang.* 3.760; Virgil, *Aen.* 2.558 and 9.343; and Silius Italicus, *Punica* 8.508 and 12.317). The phrase underscores Jesus' dedication to helping those with little social standing. For the expression *innumeras cateruas*, see Claudian, *Olyb.* 44.

5–30: An expansive reflection based largely on Matt 19:23–26 in which Jesus discusses how difficult it is for a wealthy man to enter heaven. He concludes by assuring the concerned disciples that with God all things are possible. The fact that Sedulius gives this particular teaching such prominence in this book of miracles suggests that this may have been a lively question for his readers, some of whom belonged to monastic communities and one of whom (Laurentius) may have been wealthy. The question of how rich Christians can go about using their resources to be saved rather than damned is the topic of the famous sermon, *Quis dives salvetur*, attributed to Clement of Alexandria.

7: For the reference to "leveling the lofty" and "making the crooked straight" see Isa 40:4 (quoted in Luke 3:5).

8: *natura negat*: For this phrase, see Ovid, *Met.* 15.63; Juvenal, *Sat.* 1.79; Claudian, *De raptu Pros., praef.* 4. For Sedulius, God is clearly above nature, but as the Lord of nature, his actions are not always contrary to it, but coordinated with it, or complementary.

9–12: For the comparison of a rich man's difficulty in entering heaven to a camel struggling to get through the needle's eye, see Matt 19:24; Mark 10:25; Luke 18:25. The "needle's eye" may have been the name given to a particularly narrow gate in Jerusalem, it has been suggested, and not a literal reference to an actual needle.

11: *Fertilitate tumens tenuem*: The rich man is so large that he cannot squeeze himself onto the narrow path leading to salvation (see Matt 7:14).

13–15: *qui … cui … quem*: a polyptoton exalting God as the governor of the world, whose will is to create, and who is unseen even as he sees all (for this

last point, see John 1:18, 6:46; Col 1:15; Heb 11:27; 1 Tim 1:17). For comparable ideas and language from a pagan perspective, see Lucan, *Phars.* 2.7–11.

19–22: For "treasure in heaven," safe from voracious moths and marauding thieves, see Matt 6:20.

23–25: *cibum … haustum … tectum … amictum*: Sedulius draws on Matt 25:35–36 for his rhyming delineation of charitable deeds.

28: *sub paupere forma*: On the identification of Jesus himself with "the least of these my brothers," see Matt 25:40.

28–30: Sedulius concludes this passage with an impressive string of five relative clauses that he uses to express the paradoxical truth that Christians gain only by losing; it is only by dying that they may live.

31–39: Jesus cures two blind men (see Matt 20:29–34).

32: *comitante caterua*: a common Virgilian phrase that neatly fits the end of a dactylic hexameter line: cf. Virgil, *Aen.* 2.40, 2.370, 5.76; Valerius Flaccus, *Arg.* 5.342.

35: *pietas*: the abstract for the concrete (= *pius Christus*).

36: "faith afire": Writers of the patristic period commonly use this metaphor to describe the activity of faith (see, e.g., Jerome, *Epist.* 95.3; Prudentius, *Psych.* 899–900).

38: "the windows of their faces": *Fenestra* is often associated in later Latin with the openings of the body, in particular the eyes (see, e.g., Prudentius, *Per.* 10.434 and Jerome, *Epist.* 64.1).

40–41: Jesus heals in the temple (see Matt 21:14–17).

42–56: The withered fig tree (see Matt 21:18–22; cf. Mark 11:12–25).

52–53: For the comparison of barren faith with a tree that bears no fruit, see Matt 3:10 and 7:19; Luke 13:6–9.

54–56: The growth of the righteous man is compared to the Lebanese cedar tree in Ps 92:12. In the first psalm, famously, the righteous man is compared to a tree whose "leaf does not wither."

56: *uertice sidera tanget*: To "touch the stars" is a macaristic expression in Latin poetry meaning that one experiences such complete bliss that he feels equal in stature to the immortal (and tall) gods. This is probably the conceptual background behind the best known example of the expression, Horace's coyly expressed wish for poetic greatness in the first book of his odes (*Carm.* 1.1.36): *quodsi me lyricis vatibus inseres, / sublimi feriam sidera vertice.* In fact, it is an Ovidian formulation of the phrase and not Horace's which most likely serves as Sedulius's direct model. In her debate with herself as to whether she should follow Jason and leave her family in Colchis behind, Medea expresses the hope that if she marries Jason she will be supremely happy (*Metam.* 7.60–61: *quo coniuge felix / et dis cara ferar et vertice sidera tangam.* Both the word order of

the expression as it appears in Sedulius and the choice of verb suggest that Sedulius is more indebted here to Ovid than to Horace.

57–63: Jesus heals a mute man (see Luke 11:14–16; cf. Matt 9:32–33).

59–60: *uitiumque tacendo prodiderat*: Sedulius contrasts the *uirtus* of Christ in line 57 with the *uitium* of the dumb man, who declares his deficiency the only way he can, by maintaining silence. Cicero is alert to the rhetorical possibilities of the same paradox (*Cat.* 1.8.21: *cum tacent, clamant*).

64–81: Jesus' feet are anointed (see Luke 7:36–50; cf. Matt 26:6–13, Mark 14:3–9, and John 12:1–8).

65: "friend": There is nothing in the synoptic accounts to suggest that this Pharisee is a friend of Jesus, other than the fact that he invites him to be a guest in his house, a friendly gesture. It may be that Sedulius is thinking here of Simon the leper who serves as Jesus' host in Matt 26:6–13.

67: *mordebant*: More literally translated, the past sins of the woman were "eating" her up or "consuming" her.

69: *crine soluto*: Sedulius uses an expression from Ovid, *Metam.* 13.584 to describe this typical expression of feminine consternation and grief in ancient Mediterranean culture.

71: *flagrante*: "r" is often confused with "l," as the erratic manuscript readings attest. Taur. E.IV.42 has *flagrante* and Huemer follows it here. *Fragrante* would refer to the powerful aroma of the perfumed oil (see John 12:3), while *flagrante* would describe the sheen that the *unguentum* leaves on the surface of the skin after it has been applied. The latter is the more difficult reading.

76–78: Sin is frequently represented as disease and forgiveness of sin as healing both in the Old Testament (see, e.g., Pss 32 and 51) and the New (e.g., Matt 9:12; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:31). The imagery appears in pagan authors too (see, e.g., Seneca, *Ep.* 53.8 and 56.10). Only by submitting to the painful indignity of the physician's treatment can the patient be made better. Wounds fester when left untreated (see Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 4.1066; Virgil, *Georg.* 3.454–56; and Severus Sanctus Endelechius, *Mort. boum* 7–8).

79–81: Sedulius concludes the pericope with a description of the repentant woman's baptism, as it were. Her tears serve to wash away her sins while her hair is used to dry off afterwards.

82–89: Jesus drives out an evil spirit (see Mark 1:21–28; cf. Luke 4:31–37).

82: "Capernaum": For a historical overview of this city, see Moshe Fischer, "Kapharnaum: Eine Retrospektive," *JAC* 44 (2001): 142–67.

87–89: *in uacuas … euanuit auras*: Sedulius may be especially mindful here of Virgil, *Aen.* 4.276–78 and *Aen.* 9.656–68. In both passages Virgil describes a deity (Mercury and Apollo) who has finished speaking and leaves, disappearing into "thin air." The association of the pagan gods with the demons of the Bible

was commonplace in the early church (see, e.g., Tertullian, *Spect.* 12; Sulpicius Severus, *Dial.* 2.6).

90–98: Jesus commands the demons to keep silence (see Mark 1:32–34).

93–96: Sedulius describes the devil in serpentine terms elsewhere, but here he also portrays him as the leader of demons who plunged from heaven (Luke 10:18) along with his followers (Rev 12:9). It is possible to detect in these lines the dim "outlines of a Miltonic Satan and his host of rebel angels" (Green, *Latin Epics*, 193).

95: *cum pompis*: The word *pompa,* associated with processions and their spectacular displays, in early Christian writers is also frequently connected with the devil, as in the early baptismal formula: *renuntio diabolo et pompae et angelis suis* (see, e.g., Tertullian, *Spect.* 4; *Cor.* 13).

99–105: Jesus heals a mute and deaf man (see Mark 7:31–37).

102: *non ore dabat, non aure trahebat*: The phonetic similarities between the Latin word for mouth and ear help to create a memorable line.

106–108: Jesus heals a blind man using his spittle (see Mark 8:22–26). Sedulius makes no mention here of the two stages of the miracle as it is described in Mark: according to the evangelist, Jesus first spits into the eyes of the blind man after which he can see but only in a blurred fashion ("I see men, but they look like trees, walking"); after Jesus lays his hands on his eyes again, however, he is able to see everything clearly. In the prose paraphrase (see Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 262), Sedulius uses the word *ilico* ("then and there") to describe the recovery of the blind man's sight, suggesting even more clearly that the poet has forgotten or is deliberately ignoring the sequential nature of this miracle.

106: *tu quoque*: Apostrophes, which occur frequently in the *PC* (as also in Lucan's *Pharsalia*), often serve, as they do here, to heighten the sense of pathos. On the figure in general, see A. Halsall, "Apostrophe," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik* (ed. Gert Ueding, Gregor Kalivoda, and Franz-Hubert Robling; Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1992), 830–36.

109–124: A miraculous catch of fish (see Luke 5:1–7).

112: "a small boat of Simon's": *Alnus* means literally the alder tree, whose timber was frequently used for ship making in the ancient world. Sedulius uses four different words for "boat" in this passage (*ratis, alnus, carina, puppis*), none of them the common "prosaic" Latin word for "boat" (*navis*), which is never used in the *PC*.

118: "the watery denizens": Cf. Virgil, *Georg.* 4.430: *gens umida ponti.*

120: *impleuit captura sinus*: Cf. Juvenal 4.41: *impleuitque sinus.*

122: *istic*: Huemer's edition has *stic,* following the orthographic lead of a number of early manuscripts, including Taur. E.IV.42, but it is easier to imagine how the first vowel in the word following *socia* might have been omitted in the process

of manuscript transmission than to suppose that the author himself came up with such an unusual spelling. The initial "i" is elided with the final "a" that precedes it.

122–124: "thus often we cannot endure": Sedulius uses the first person plural here to offer a tropological (moral) interpretation. Christians at prayer are like the boats in this story, unable to bear the unexpected bounty of answered petitions. He concludes with the axiomatic observation that God can more easily fulfill requests than humans can dare to hope (cf. Terence, *Phormio* 757–58: *quam saepe forte temere / eveniunt quae non audeas optare*). While Sedulius's Peter simply and "joyfully" obeys Jesus' command to let down his nets, in Luke's version of the event he sounds somewhat dubious, as, before doing so, he offers Jesus the information that he and his companions have been fishing all night without catching anything.

125–141: The raising of the son of the widow of Nain (see Luke 7:11–17).

128: *gelidumque cadauer*: *Corpus* would be the preferred word in classical Latin poetry; *cadaver* was mostly used to describe the bodies of "ignoble" personages.

130: "meaningless funeral": Sedulius anticipates the outcome of the story. In the Latin this is an especially grand line, whose opening words come from Virgil, *Aen.* 6.223 (Aeneas and his companions make preparations to cremate the body of Misenus). *Sors inuida* is similar to Lucan, *Phars.* 4:503: *fors inuida*. Green translates *sors* as "fortune" (*Latin Epics*, 187), but the practice of casting lots could just as easily be understood to belong to the domain of fate or destiny rather than to fortune. The latter is usually considered to be random and not necessarily foreknown, while the former is more strictly predetermined. Van der Laan ("Sedulius Carmen Paschale," 94) points out a grave inscription from the first century (*Carm. Epigr.* 974.1) that has the same formulation: *invida sors fati rapuisti Vitalem.*

135: "came back to life": This critical verb is reserved for the end of the line, only after Sedulius has already stated that the young man has risen, is sitting up, and speaks. Obviously, the young man must have come back to life before he rose, sat up, or spoke.

138: *famulus domino clamante tacere*: For the same play on the antithesis of servant and master in a specifically Christian context, see Juvencus, *Euang.* 1.202, and Prudentius, *Per.* 3.27. Cicero sets the two verbs in strong contrast in *Cat.* 1.18.21.

139: "nor could he die while life was at hand": another striking antithesis.

141: *candida pompa*: Sedulius adds a colorful note here that supplements the evangelist's account as he describes the parade that leads the once grieving mother joyfully home, a neat contrast with the funeral procession at the beginning of the pericope.

142–149: Mary Magdalene and the seven demons (see Luke 8:2). On her impor-

tance for the later tradition in general, see Helen Meredith Garth, *Saint Mary Magdalene in Medieval Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1950).

143: *curari*: Huemer reads *curauit* with many of the manuscripts, but Taur. E.IV.42 and Milano, Bibl. Ambr. R. 57 sup. both read *curare*. While the active infinitive makes little sense here, the passive infinitive does convey meaning and is preferable to Huemer's reading.

148: "Gehenna:" the opposite of the kingdom of heaven, a place where body and soul are destroyed after death (Matt 10:28) with "unquenchable fire" (Mark 9:43).

149: The entire line is lifted intact from *Aen.* 5.85. Virgil's descriptions of snakes are memorably horrifying. *Squameus* (see line 145) is an adjective applied in the *Georgics* (2.154) to an *anguis*. The fact that Virgil's snake has as many coils (seven) as the number of demons that were cast out of Mary Magdalene makes the Virgilian application here especially congruous.

150–171: Jesus commissions the 72 (or 70; see Luke 10:1–20).

152: *mens conscia recti*: a Virgilian tag (*Aen.* 1.604).

153: *numero*: While Sedulius provides no exact number here, he does in the prose paraphrase (72). The Greek manuscripts of Luke have either 70 or 72. See Bruce Manning Metzger, *Historical and Literary Studies, Pagan, Jewish and Christian* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 67–76.

154: "pound of gold": The *libra* is a pound, divided into twelve ounces. In the fourth century, a new gold pound, the *solidus*, was established by Constantine, with the standard gold coin based on 1/72 of its weight. See J. Postgate, "The Ultimate Derivation of Essay," *AJP* 6 (1885): 462–71. In purity of character and in their number, the disciples Jesus sent out, therefore, are like one of these golden pounds (unalloyed and consisting of 72 parts). Alternatively, *libra* could be translated as "scale," as van der Laan prefers, but that would make less obvious sense in this context.

154: *agnos*: This reference to the "lambs" whom Jesus sends out in the midst of wolves falls precisely in the middle of the fourth book of the *PC* (308 lines long). As van der Laan ("Sedulius Carmen Paschale," 108) observes, the central position of the good shepherd here may help to support the theory that the poet's description of Christ as good shepherd sending out his twelve apostles is intentionally situated at the central line of the third book too. (For the initial discussion, see Springer, *Gospel as Epic,* 100–102; for reservations, see Green, *Latin Epics*, 178.) While numerological arguments such as these must necessarily proceed from silence (absent any explicit authorial indication), it is unlikely that Latin poets in Antiquity were entirely unaware of the number of lines in their poems, and further study along these lines might prove rewarding.

162: *caelestis littera*: See György Heidl, *Origen's Influence on the Young Augustine: A Chapter of the History of Origenism* (Piscataway: Gorgias, 2003), 253–54, n. 39.
163: *uitam … factis*: Both words are used in a pregnant sense. "Life" here really means "the good Christian life" while "deeds" are "miraculous deeds" such as those which the 72 followers of Jesus will be performing.
166–167: This quotation from Matt 7:22–23 regarding the punishment of those who work iniquity balances out the poet's description in the previous lines of the heavenly recognition that will be accorded Jesus' faithful followers.
167: *artifices scelerum*: For the phrase, see Seneca, *Ag.* 983 and *Med.* 734.
168–171: A reference to events described in Exod 7:11–12 (cf. 2 Tim 3:8).
169: *uanae Memphitis*: See Lucan, *Phars.* 8.477–78 for a similar metonymic use of Memphis, an important city situated between the upper and lower regions of ancient Egypt, to refer to the entire country.
170: *signa dabant*: a common expression in Latin verse (e.g., Virgil, *Georg.* 1.439, 471; Ovid, *Metam.* 3.705; Lucan, *Phars.* 2.2), as is *imagine falsa* (e.g., Ovid, *Metam.* 1.754; Ovid, *Fasti* 6.489). Here the word "signs" means, as it often does in Christian contexts, "miracles" (see John 2:11).
172–188: Jesus heals a man suffering from dropsy (see Luke 14:1–6).
175–180: The graphic description of the disease may owe something to Horace, *Carm.* 2.2, although Sedulius's wording lacks altogether the restraint so characteristic of the Augustan poet. The poet's use of terms like *grauida* and *uterus*, usually employed to describe pregnancy, is an extravagant conceit.
178: *per artus*: a common poetic phrase; cf. Virgil, *Aen.* 6.726; Lucan, *Phars.* 9.56; Statius, *Theb.* 1.416.
179: "swollen wasting": an oxymoron that helps to heighten the paradoxical nature of this particular illness. Unlike most wasting diseases, this one puffs up the sufferer rather than emaciating him.
181: *non tulit hanc speciem*: a half-line taken from Virgil's *Aen.* 2.407.
183–184: The "Lord of the Sabbath" (see Mark 2:27–28) prefers to break "his own" Sabbath in order to heal this sick man and make him his own on the traditional Jewish day of rest.
189–209: Jesus heals ten lepers (see Luke 17:11–19). On leprosy, see Annette Weissenrieder, *Images of Illness in the Gospel of Luke* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), especially Chapter 6.
194: *miserere, potes namque omnia*: These words are taken from Virgil, *Aen.* 6.117, where they are addressed to the prophetess of Apollo, the Cumaean Sibyl.
199–200: *Mirantur* is a term commonly found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (e.g., 14.388–89). For the phrases *membra uiri* and *speculatur in omnes*, see *Metam.* 3.731 and *Metam.* 1.667.

206: *pontificum*: This is the only time in the poem that Sedulius uses the word. *Pontifex maximus* was the title given in ancient Rome to the chief priest of the college of pontiffs and eventually was also used to describe the Pope. In the *PO* (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 267), Jesus is described as *pontifex pontificum*.
208: Melchizedek was the king of Salem who assisted Abraham and blessed him (cf. Gen 14:18; Ps 110:4). He is discussed at length as a prototype of Christ in Hebrews, chapters 5 and 7.
208–209: *munera:* On the eucharistic connotations of this word, see van der Laan, "Sedulius Carmen Paschale," 136. "Fruit of the grain" and "joy of the vine" are metonymic references to bread and wine. The passage is reminiscent of Teiresias's description of the salutary benefits of wine in Euripides, *Bacchae* 279–81, but it is more likely that Sedulius is thinking of Ps 104:15: "and wine to gladden the heart of man."
210–221: Jesus heals a blind man (see Luke 18:35–43; the name Bartimaeus appears in Mark 10:46). "Bar" is an Aramaic word meaning "son"; Timaeus is a Greek name and the title of of one of Plato's best known dialogues, in which sight and insight are prominent. See Mary Ann Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 189–92.
214–215: *palpante manu*: Sedulius adds vivid detail here to describe the blind man's plight. He has to "feel" his way toward Jesus using his hands (the same phrase is found in Paulinus of Nola, *Carm.* 18.349). In the prose paraphrase (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 267), interestingly enough, Sedulius suggests that Bartimaeus is guided to Jesus' side by someone else's hand (*aliena manu*). As he leaves the presence of Jesus once his sight is restored, in both the verse and prose versions he needs no one to lead him.
216–217: On the efficacy of fervent prayer, see James 5:16.
218–221: Sedulius draws the closing analogy from Luke 11:5–8. With his frequent (*crebro*) cries for Jesus to heal him, Bartimaeus is like the insistent petitioner in Jesus' parable who keeps on asking his friend for bread.
219: *opaca silentia noctis*: a particularly poetic description of night (indebted to Valerius Flaccus, *Arg.* 2.288).
220–221: *-que … -que … -que:* The repetition of the enclitic helps to reinforce the petitioner's persistence (perhaps intended to sound like knocking). Sedulius piles up adverbs in line 220 (*obnixe* and *confidenter*) and adjectives in 221 (*assiduis* and *anhelis*) as he emphasizes the point.
222–232: See John 4:1–26. This is the first exclusively Johannine pericope in the *Paschale carmen* since the beginning of Book 3.
223: *humanam … sitim*: Sedulius follows church fathers such as Augustine and John Chrysostom in observing that Christ's appetites (thirst, hunger, etc.) are not part of his divine nature, which is not subject to human drives and passions (see van der Laan, "Sedulius Carmen Paschale," 148).

224: *perennis … modicam*: The poet emphasizes the incongruity of the situation. Jesus, himself the source of eternal water, is requesting just a "little" water. For the Ovidian language in the first part of the line, see Ovid, *Fasti* 2.820. The word *fons* is commonly used by Christian authors to refer to the sacrament of baptism (Augustine, *Epistulae* 54.10 and 127.7, and Gregory the Great, *Registrum epistularum* 9.196).

226: *stans mulier*: See Prudentius, *Ham.* 744. The depiction of the woman as standing may suggest that Jesus is sitting. This is the way in which both figures are depicted in a painting in the Catacomb of Callixtus (Josef Wilpert, *Die Malereien der Katakomben Roms* [Freiburg: Herdersche Verlagshandlung, 1903], *taf.* 29.2).

231: *mersus gurgite Christi*: The phrase has a Virgilian ring (see *Aen.* 10.559), but is clearly a reference to baptism. Tertullian uses the same verb in *Bapt.* 7.2.

233–250: Jesus and the adulterous woman (see John 8:1–11). On the authenticity of this pericope, see Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies, 1971), 219–22.

233: Using heavily Virgilian language (cf. *Aen.* 1.505–6: *tum foribus diuae media testudine templi … resedit*), Sedulius makes the point that Jesus is sitting down to teach in the middle of his own temple (see Mal 3:1: "The Lord whom you seek shall suddenly come to his temple").

234–235: *Ore tonans*: Jesus' teaching is authoritative (see Mark 1:22), so it is not surprising that as he does so his voice thunders. His words are no different from his Father's (see John 15:24). On the importance of correcting those who err, see James 5:19.

236: Another Virgilian line (see *Aen.* 2.403: *ecce trahebatur*, and *Aen.* 4.136: *magna stipante caterua*), as Sedulius describes the adulterous woman being dragged by a crowd of accusers before Jesus.

240: *proprio*: the reading in all the manuscripts I have consulted, including Taur. E.IV.42. Where Huemer's reading (*proprie*) derives from is unclear.

243–245: Sedulius applies to this situation Jesus' colorful teaching in the sermon on the mount (Matt 7:3–5) about withdrawing the beam from one's own eye before trying to remove a mote from another's.

246: *impetus*: Sedulius describes the Pharisees' "onslaught" against the adulterous woman in military terms.

247: A line which draws on legal language and specifically Christian terminology to paraphrase John 8:11: "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."

248: For this vivid biblical illustration, see Prov 26:11 and 2 Pet 2:22.

251–270: Jesus heals the man born blind (see John 9:1–12). There are many parallels between the language here and Prudentius, *Ap.* 675–703.

253: *In lucem sine luce*: A nicely phrased oxymoron with different usages of the Latin *lux* ("light of day" as opposed to "vision") paired with different prepositions (*in* and *sine*).
253–257: Sedulius makes a connection here between the mud which Jesus uses to heal the man's eyes and the *natale lutum* from which Adam was created in Gen 2:7.
256: "eyelids": lit. "the gateways of the cheeks."
263: *cognoscite, cuncti*: Sedulius addresses his readers now as a teacher-poet, as he expands on the allegorical significance of this healing. In line 265, he switches from the second person plural to the first person plural.
265–268: Sedulius draws a typological contrast between the mother of mankind, Eve, and the virgin Mary, mother of God who deigned to take on mortal form (see Phil 2:6–8). The darkness that pervaded the world is made light by the advent of the Savior.
269: *terra salutaris*: There are a number of analogies here: the mud used to heal blind man's eyes and the new salvific land; the water from the pool of Siloam and the sacred springs; the blind man's restored vision and the light that bathes the salvific land.
271–290: Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead (see John 11:1–44). See Roberts's (*Biblical Epic*, 166–69) close analysis of Sedulius's paraphrastic technique in this passage. I have drawn on his translation of lines 284–90 for my own (see Roberts, *Humblest Sparrow*, 151).
271–274: This narrative passage offers a succinct rendering of most of the essential details but becomes much more expansive when focusing on the most salient facts of Lazarus's death and burial.
275–282: Rhetorical figures abound here as the poet emphasizes the emotional impact of the situation.
275: *flebant germanae, flebat*: The spondees at the beginning of this deliberate line help to convey a sense of solemn grief.
275–278: "weeping … weeping … weeping": The sisters weep; everyone present weeps; even the all-powerful Jesus weeps. Sedulius is careful to qualify the last point, however, as he explains that Jesus wept only insofar as his human nature is concerned, as Lazarus's friend, not as God.
279–282: A grouping of three rhetorical questions, with the last one much longer than the first two which are addressed to the sisters individually.
283: "the trumpet of the Lord": See Rev 1:10 (cf. Matt 24:31 and 1 Cor 15:52).
284–286: Sedulius uses terminology more often found in pagan literature than the Bible to describe the underworld whose power is broken by the omnipotent Lord. For comparable language, see Virgil, *Aen.* 8.242–46.
286–287: On the connection between the law and death, see 1 Cor 15:55–56.

288: *uiuens … cadaver*: The poet highlights the implicit paradox with an oxymoron.

290: This living dead man is, uniquely enough, his own son and heir. Thomas Browne, *Religio medici,* part 1, section 21, uses the same terms as he asks why Lazarus did not "raise a Law-case, whether his Heir might lawfully detain his inheritance bequeathed unto him by his death, and he, though restored to life, have no Plea or Title unto his former possessions." See also Manfred Hoffmann, "Lazarus als wiedererstandener Phönix: Sedulius, *Carmen Paschale* 4.290," *Philologus* 147 (2003): 364–66.

291–308: Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (see John 12:12–19; cf. Matt 21:1–11; Mark 11:1–10; Luke 19:29–38).

292–296: A veritable riot of images connected with the ceremony and display of processions, so often connected with social status by Romans in late antiquity. See Sabine MacCormack, "Change and Continuity in Late Antiquity: The Ceremony of *Adventus*," *Historia* (1972): 721–52. Sedulius draws on familiar literary passages such as Virgil, *Aen.* 4.134–35: *ostroque insignis et auro stet sonipes ac frena ferox spumantia mandit;* and Ovid, *Metam.* 8.33–34: *purpureusque albi stratis insignia pictis / terga premebat equi spumantiaque ora regebat.* See the discussion in Green, *Latin Epics*, 216–17.

297: "A lowly ass": In the prose paraphrase (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 272) Sedulius heightens the contrast by using the superlative (*uilissimi aselli*). In Aesop's fables, the ass consistently plays a subordinate role to other, "nobler," animals, in particular the horse, who does not usually serve as a beast of burden. Even the mule is in a superior position to the ass insofar as he is at least half-horse. Babrius tells a fable (#62) that makes much of the distinction between ass and mule. For a study of the ass's low social status, see J. Gregory, "Donkeys and the Equine Hierarchy," *CJ* 102 (2007): 193–212. On the wide range of attitudes toward animals in the ancient Mediterranean world in general, see Ingvild S. Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans: Changing Attitudes to Animals in Greek, Roman, and Early Christian Ideas* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

298: *ungula*: lit. "hoof," but by metonymy "carriage."

301: *patulo Christum in praesepe iacentem agnouit*: According to the apocryphal but widely read *Protevangelium of James,* the pregnant Mary rode to Bethlehem from Nazareth on an ass, and the humble beast is almost always present at the manger of the infant Jesus, along with the ox, in late antique and medieval representations of the nativity. Origen and other early Christian exegetes made a typological connection between Jesus' birth and Isa 1:3: "The ox knows its owner, and the ass its master's crib: but Israel does not know, my people does not understand." There is no mention of either animal in Luke's account, the only one of the four evangelists who describes the manger in Bethlehem. The adjec-

tive *patulus* (lit. "open") is used here in a pejorative sense, with the connotation of "public" or even "poor" (see Horace, *Ars poetica* 132).

309: *Cui sanctus semper congregnat spiritus aeque*: This line, found in some manuscripts, is most likely a Trinitarian addition made by a scribe eager to provide a full doxological ending to the fourth book. The reference to the Holy Spirit is absent in the *PO* (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 272).

Liber Qvintvs

Has inter uirtutis opes iam proxima paschae
Coeperat esse dies, domini cum gloria uellet
Ponere mortalem uiuamque resumere carnem,
Non aliam, sed rursus eam, quam munere plenam
Lucis ab infernis releuans ad sidera duxit.
Exclamansque palam: "Pater ista memet ab hora
Saluifica, sed in hanc ideo ueni tamen horam.
Clarifica," dixit, "nomen tuum." Magnaque caelo
Vox resonans uenit per nubila, "Clarificaui,
Clarificemque iterum." Quid apertius est patre teste,
Caelo assertore? Ac nec sic agnoscere Christum
Gens uoluit Iudaea Deum; pars esse ferebat
Hoc tonitrum, pars angelicam crepuisse loquelam.
O gens caeca oculis, O gens durissima corde!
Num tonitrus potuit Christum, seu angelus ullus
Auctorem generasse suum, qui nomine patris
Audito responsa daret? Sed ab ore tonantis
Natum agnoscentis, populus quo crederet astans,
Vox emissa suo respondit consona uerbo.

Annua tunc sacrae celebrans per munera cenae
Paschales ex more dapes humilemque magistrum
Se faciens et grata suis exempla relinquens
Assurgit famulisque libens famulatus et omnem
Linteolo accinctus tantum inclinauit honorem,
Discipulis ut sponte lauans uestigia cunctis.
Nec Iudam exciperet, quem proditionis iniquae
Nouerat auctorem. Sed nil tibi gloria, saeue
Traditor, illa dabat pedibus consistere mundis,
Qui sensu pollutus eras uelut omne sepulchrum
Exteriora gerens albae uelamina formae,
Sordibus interius foedoque cadauere plenum.

Nec dominum latuere doli, scelerisque futuri

Book 5

In the midst of these ample demonstrations of power, the day of Passover
Had now begun to draw very near, when the glory of the Lord consented
To lay aside mortal flesh and to take it on again invested with life,
The same flesh again, not a different one, which, filled with the gift of light,
He lifted up from the depths and led to the stars.
And he cried out in public: "Father, save me from this hour.
But still it is for this reason that I came to this hour.
Glorify," he said, "your name." And a loud voice
Came echoing from the sky through the clouds: "I have glorified it,
And let me glorify it again." What is clearer than the Father's witness
Or heaven's advocacy? But even so the Jewish people did not
Choose to recognize Christ as God. Some said that this was thunder;
Others said that it was the garbled voice of an angel.
O you people with blinded eyes! O you people with most hardened hearts!
Could thunder or any angel have sired Christ,
Their own progenitor, so that when the name "Father" was heard,
They responded? No, rather, it was from the mouth of the thunderer,
As he recognized his Son, that the voice issued forth and responded,
In harmony with his own word, so that the people standing there might believe.

Then as he duly celebrated the paschal feast with the yearly gifts
Of the holy meal, he made himself into a humble master
In order to leave behind a pleasing example to his own.
He rose up and willingly served his servants and, girt
With a little towel, lowered his entire dignity so much
That he voluntarily washed all of the disciples' feet.
Nor did he omit even Judas, who was the one responsible,
As he well knew, for his wicked betrayal. But this honor, O heartless traitor,
Did not permit you to stand there with clean feet,
You who were contaminated in your mind like any sepulcher;
Its outward covering has a white appearance,
But inside it is full of decay and a foul corpse.

His deceits did not elude the Lord, who disclosed him as the one

Prodidit auctorem, panem cui tradidit ipse
Qui panis tradendus erat. Nam corporis atque
Sanguinis ille sui postquam duo munera sanxit
Atque cibum potumque dedit, quo perpete numquam
Esuriant sitiantque animae sine labe fideles,
Protinus in Iudam, sedes ubi liuor habebat,
Spiritus intrauit taeterrimus armaque sumens
In dominum seruile dedit consurgere bellum,
Pactus grande nefas quauis mercede. Neque illi
Culpa datur pretio, sed inhaerent crimina facto.
Tantundem sceleris ter dena nomismata sumens
Argenti paruo caecatus munere gessit,
Quantum cuncta simul terrarum regna marisque
Diuitias omnemque uagis cum nubibus aethram
Si caperet, gesturus erat, neque enim bona mundi
Sufficerent magni fuso pro sanguine Christi,
Qui pater est mundi, qui fecerat hunc quoque nasci.
Atque utinam sterili damnatus uentre nequisset
Natalem sentire diem, nec luminis huius
Hausisset placidas flabris uitalibus auras
Aeterno torpore latens, miseroque fuisset
Sors melior nescire datam quam perdere uitam,
Aut male fusus humo confestim munera lucis
Perderet ut puluis, quem uentus proicit ingens
A facie terrae rapidisque uolatibus actus
Spargitur in uacuas nebulis obscurior umbras.

Tune cruente, ferox, audax, insane, rebellis,
Perfide, crudelis, fallax, uenalis, inique,
Traditor immitis, fere proditor, impie latro,
Praeuius horribiles comitaris signifer enses?
Sacrilegamque aciem, gladiis sudibusque minacem
Cum moueas, ori ora premis mellique uenenum
Inseris et blanda dominum sub imagine prodis?
Quid socium simulas et amica fraude salutas?
Numquam terribiles aut pax coniurat in enses,
Aut truculenta pio lupus oscula porrigit agno.

Traditus ergo uiris operator sanctus iniquis
Consuetam non linquit opem pueroque reuulsam
Ense Petri, ne qua pius a pietate uacaret,

Responsible for the coming wickedness, the one to whom
He handed the bread, though he, the true bread, was himself to be handed over.
For after he had sanctified the two gifts, his own body and blood,
And given them food and drink, so that ever thereafter
Faithful souls without defect might never hunger or thirst again,
A most loathsome spirit immediately entered into Judas,
Where spite was keeping its residence, and taking up arms
Caused a slave war to rise up against the master.
It was a great wickedness he contracted to perform, whatever its price.
The price did not condemn him; the crime was in the deed itself.
He took thirty coins, blinded by a small reward of silver,
And committed as much of a crime as he would have
If he could have gotten all the kingdoms of the earth,
The riches of the sea, and whole sky with its wandering clouds.
For all the goods of the world would not compensate
For shedding the blood of the great Christ,
Who is the Father of the world, who caused Judas too to be born.
And, oh, that he had been doomed to an infertile womb,
Unable ever to see his birth day, and had not drunk in
The calm breezes of the light of day with their life-giving winds,
Lying unknown in everlasting inaction! A better lot for the wretch
Would have been not to know life at all, rather than losing it once given,
Or, that at birth, ill-delivered on the ground, he might have lost
Immediately the gift of light, like dust which a great wind sweeps
Off the face of the earth and, driven by the swift breezes,
Is scattered, murkier than mist, into the empty shadows.

You bloody, savage, impudent, crazy, rebellious,
Faithless, cruel, deceitful, venal, evil,
Heartless traitor, savage betrayer, disloyal thug,
Are you their standard bearer, marching in front of the bristling swords?
As you bring up the unholy line that threatens him with swords and staves,
Do you press your lips to his, slip poison into the honey,
And betray your Lord, using the guise of a friendly gesture?
Why do you pretend to be his ally and greet him with congenial deceit?
Never does peace conspire to use dreadful swords;
Never does a wolf offer fierce kisses to a holy lamb.

So even when betrayed to wicked men, the worker of holiness
Did not abandon his accustomed aid but restored the boy's ear,
Torn off by Peter's sword, lest in any way his mercy

Reddidit auriculam. Nec enim uindicta tonanti
Conueniens humana fuit, qui milia patrem
Angelicas sibimet legiones poscere posset
Plus duodena dari, si mallet sumere poenas
De meritis quam sponte suas ignoscere plagas.
Tunc parci mucrone iubet, quia uenerat ipse
Ponere pro cunctis animam, non tollere cuiquam.

Namque Petro clara iamdudum uoce fatenti
Cum domino se uelle mori: "Prius aliger," inquit,
"Quam gallus cantet, hac me ter nocte negabis,"
Non reprobando fidem, sed praedicendo timorem.

Continuo ad tristes Caiphae deducitur aedes.
Ille sacerdotum fuerat tunc denique princeps
Et princeps sclererum. Namque hoc residente cathedra
Pestifera falsis agitatum testibus ardet
Concilium, iam iamque uolant mendacia mille
In dominum, uanis hominum conflata fauillis,
Et pereunt leuitate sui, uelut ignis oberrans
Arentes stipulas, uires cui summa cremandi
Materies infirma rapit, uictoque furore
Labitur inualidae deformis gloria flammae.

Postquam nulla dolis patuit uia, brachia tolli
Armat in insontem saeuus furor. Heu mihi quantis
Impedior lacrimis rabidum memorare tumultum
Sacrilegas mouisse manus! Non denique passim
Vel colaphis pulsare caput, uel caedere palmis,
Aut spuere in faciem plebs exsecranda quieuit.
Ille tamen patiens subiecto corpore totum
Sustinuit nostraeque dedit sua membra saluti.
Namque per hos colaphos caput est sanabile nostrum.
Haec sputa per dominum nostram lauere figuram.
His alapis nobis libertas maxima plausit.

At senior, cui cuncta potens praedixerat auctor
Quae uentura forent (quoniam transire nequiuit
Infectum quod Christus ait), se prorsus adesse
Ipsius ex sociis semel ac bis terque negauit.
Et gallus cecinit. Completa est sanctio Christi,

Lack mercy. For human vengeance was not seemly
For the thunderer, who was able to ask his Father
To give him more than twelve thousand legions of angels,
If he wanted to exact punishment on those who deserved it,
Rather than freely to forgive the injuries done him.
Then he ordered Peter to spare the sword, because he had come
To lay down his life for all men, not to take anyone's away.

And, indeed, to Peter, who was declaring for some time now with ringing voice
That he wanted to die with the Lord, he said: "Before the feathered
Cock crows, you will deny me three times this night,"
Not by way of reproaching his faith, but rather predicting his fear.

Without delay he was escorted to the baleful house of Caiaphas.
That man was head of the priests, as it turned out, at this time,
And head of the wicked conspiracy, for as he sat on the throne
Of corruption, the council grew heated, aroused by false witnesses,
And again and again a thousand lies went flying
Against the Lord, kindled by futile sparks lit by human accusers,
Which came to nothing because of their own lack of substance,
Like fire moving aimlessly through a field of withered stalks,
Whose inadequate kindling saps its capacity to burn even their heads,
And once its fury is overcome, the marred splendor of the weak flame fails.

After they could find no path open for their deceits, harsh madness
Provided arms to wield against the innocent one. Ah, how many tears
Forestall me as I attempt to tell how the furious crowd
Laid their unholy hands on him! For the accursed rabble on all sides
Did not cease either to beat him with blows to the head,
Or to strike him with their palms, or to spit in his face.
Nonetheless he patiently endured it all, submitting his body,
And he dedicated his limbs to our salvation.
For on account of these blows our heads can be healed;
This spittle washed our features on account of the Lord;
With these slaps the greatest freedom rang out for us.

But the elder disciple, to whom the powerful creator had prophesied
Everything that was going to happen (since what Christ had said
Could not pass undone), flatly denied that he was one
Of that man's friends, once, twice, and three times.
The rooster crowed, Christ's prediction was fulfilled,

Et sensus rediere Petri. Memor ille malorum
Immemoris damnauit opus, gemituque sequente
Culpa fugit, cedunt lacrimis delicta profusis,
Et dulcem ueniam, fletus, generastis, amari.

Iamque dies aderat, nocturna maestior umbra,
Flagitium uisura nouum, tenebrisque remotis
Pandebat populis Iudaeae crimina gentis.
Mox igitur dominum Pilati ad moenia duci
Nexibus astrictum Iudas ut uidit iniquus,
Deriguit scelerisque sui commercia reddens
Incassum, facti pretium, non facta reliquit.
Quidnam etenim prodest, illic trepidare timore,
Nullus ubi timor est? Aut quae confessio taetro
Lucet in inferno, cum iam demersa securis
Arboris infandae radicibus, exitialem
Quae peperit fructum, feralia germina uertat
Funditus et dignis pereant mala robora flammis?
Continuoque trucis correptus mente furoris
Se quoque morte petit, quamquam tunc sanior esset,
Cum scelus ulcisci procurreret, ipsaque dirae
Guttura uocis iter, cuncti quae uendere mundi
Ausa redemptorem, nodatis faucibus angens
Infelicem animam laqueo suspendit ab alto.
Lenior ira quidem tanto pro crimine culpae,
Cunctorum cui nulla foret par poena malorum.
Exitus hic mortis tamen et sublime cadauer
Ostendit populis, quanto de culmine lapsus
Pridem discipulus qui nunc reus alta relinquens
Sidera Tartareum descenderit usque profundum,
Tunc uir apostolicus, nunc uilis apostata factus.

At dominus patiens cum praesidis ante tribunal
Staret, ut ad iugulum ductus mitissimus agnus,
Nil inimica cohors insontis sanguine dignum
Reperiens, regem quod se rex dixerit esse
Obicit, et uerum mendax pro crimine ducit.
Nec mirum si iura Dei gens perfida uitet
Imperiumque neget, lucos quae semper amauit,
Idola dilexit, simili nam more furentes
Tunc coluere Baal, nunc elegere Barabban.

And Peter returned to his senses. Recalling to mind his wrongdoings,
He condemned what he had done mindlessly, and, contrition ensuing,
Guilt fled. His transgressions gave way to tears shed freely,
And you, his bitter lamentations, produced sweet forgiveness.

And soon day arrived, gloomier than the dark of night,
As it was about to witness fresh villainy, and once the shadows left,
It exposed to all peoples the crimes of the Jewish race.
Soon, therefore, when wicked Judas saw his Lord led
To Pilate's walls, bound in fetters, he was scared stiff,
And tried to return the payment for his crime,
But to no avail, for he had abandoned the deed's price, not the deed.
What advantage, tell me, is it to tremble for fear there,
Where there is no fear? Or what confession sheds its light
In gloomy hell, when the ax has already been plunged
Into the roots of the abominable tree which bore
Deadly fruit, and utterly overturns its fatal growth,
And the rotten trunk is destroyed by the fire that it deserves?
At once his mind was seized by grim madness, and he set out
To kill himself too (although he was acting more sanely than before
By rushing to avenge his crime). Strangling his own throat,
The organ of the baneful voice with which he dared to sell
The redeemer of the whole world, constricting the passageway,
He hitched his unhappy life to a high hanging noose.
Indeed, the penalty was rather mild for such a heinous crime,
For which a punishment involving every torment would be inadequate.
Nonetheless, this way of dying, with his corpse hanging up high
Did serve to show people from what a height
One who had previously been a disciple, but was now guilty, had fallen,
Leaving the high stars and descending all the way to deep Tartarus.
Then he was an apostle, but now he had become a worthless apostate.

But when the Lord stood patiently before the governor's tribunal,
Like a lamb most mild that is led to the slaughter,
The hostile throng, finding nothing worthy of death in the innocent one,
Threw up the charge that he, a king, said that he was a king,
And in their falseness presented the truth as an accusation.
It is no surprise that this faithless people avoided the authority of God
And denied his rule. They have always loved their groves
And cherished their idols. And, in fact, in a similar sort of madness
In the past they worshiped Baal; now they have chosen Barabbas.

Damnatoque pio conseruatoque proteruo
Mutauit per utrumque uiam sententia iustam.
Auctor mortis erat iussus qui sumere lucem,
Auctor lucis erat iussus qui sumere mortem.
Credite iam Christum, pro cunctis credite passum.
Quid dubitatis adhuc? En sectus terga flagellis,
Subditus opprobriis, poenas amplectitur omnes,
Ne dignus sentire necem uel latro periret.

Heu falx torua patrum, segitem caesura nepotum!
Heu facinus, Pilate, tuum! Quot gesseris uno
Crimina iudicio, uigili si mente notares,
Non solas lauisse manus, sed corpore toto
Debueras sacrum ueniae sperare lauacrum.
Corripis insontem, sistis sub praeside regem,
Praeponis humana Deo. Qua morte teneris,
Quod dominum numerosa cruci per uulnera figis?

Cumque datus saeuis ad poenam sanctus abiret
Militibus, uilem rubri subtegmine cocci
Vestitur chlamydem, species ut cuncta cruenta
Mortis imago foret. Spinis circumdedit amplum
Nexa corona caput, quoniam spineta benignus
Omnia nostrorum susceperat ille malorum.
Implet arundo manum, sceptrum quia mobile terrae,
Inualidum, fragile est, uacuum, leue. Moxque alienos
Deponens habitus, proprium suscepit amictum,
Scilicet humanae positurus tegmina carnis
Et sumpturus item, nil iam ut mutabile ferret
Post mortem propria cum maiestate resurgens.

Nec sine diuino constat moderamine gestum
Quod uinum cum felle datum, tristemque saporem
Suscipiens tetigit labiis et ab ore remouit,
Quippe necem paruo degustaturus amaram
Tempore, quam reduci contemnere carne pararet.

Protinus in patuli suspensus culmine ligni,
Religione pia mutans discriminis iram,
Pax crucis ipse fuit, uiolentaque robora membris
Illustrans propriis poenam uestiuit honore

By condemning the good man and preserving the life of the violent man,
Their sentence has perverted the way of justice for both alike.
The author of death was ordered to receive light;
The author of light was ordered to receive death.
Now believe in Christ, believe that he suffered for all.
Why do you still hesitate? Behold, his back was scored with whips;
He was subjected to insults and embraced every punishment,
Lest even a thug, who deserved to feel death, should perish.

Alas, grim scythe of the fathers, what a harvest you will reap for your descendants!
Alas for your wicked deed, Pilate! If only your mind had been alert,
And you realized how many crimes you committed with one verdict,
You would have needed not only to wash your hands, but to hope
For a holy washing of forgiveness for your whole body.
You chastised an innocent man. You set a king under your jurisdiction.
You placed the things of man above God. What kind of death bound you
For inflicting multiple wounds on the Lord and nailing him to a cross?

And when the holy one was delivered to the rough soldiers
And went off to his punishment, he was clothed with a cheap cloak
Made of a red fabric, so that his whole appearance
Might represent the bloody image of death. A crown woven
Of thorns encircled his broad head, since he graciously
Had taken upon himself all of our thorny sins.
They filled his hand with a reed, because the scepter of the world is fickle,
Weak, breakable, empty, insubstantial. And soon, putting off
The vestments of others, he put on his own clothing,
Since, you see, he was about to set down the covering of human flesh
And take it up again, so that he would no longer wear anything perishable
After his death, when he rose again in his own glory.

Nor did it happen without divine oversight
That wine with gall was given to him. Accepting the bitter flavor,
He touched it to his lips and then removed it from his mouth,
For in a short while he was about to taste bitter death,
Which he was getting ready to put to scorn with his resurrected flesh.

Suspended forthwith from the pinnacle of the spreading wood,
Transmuting with kindly piety the anger that inspired his peril,
He was himself the peace of the cross, and, embellishing the violent oak
With the limbs of his own body, he cloaked his penalty in glory

Suppliciumque dedit signum magis esse salutis,
Ipsaque sanctificans in se tormenta beauit.
Neue quis ignoret speciem crucis esse colendam,
Quae dominum portauit ouans, ratione potenti
Quattuor inde plagas quadrati colligat orbis:
Splendidus auctoris de uertice fulget Eous;
Occiduo sacrae lambuntur sidere plantae;
Arcton dextra tenet; medium laeua erigit axem.
Cunctaque de membris uiuit natura creantis,
Et cruce complexum Christus regit undique mundum.

Scribitur et titulus: "Hic est rex Iudaeorum,"
Quo nihil a deitate uacet, nam caelitus actum
Hoc Hebraea refert, hoc Graeca Latinaque lingua.
Hoc docet una fides unum ter dicere regem.

Huius in exuuiis sors mittitur, ut sacra uestis
Intemerata manens a Christo schisma uetaret.

Quin etiam insonti latere ex utroque cruentos
Constituere uiros, meritum licet omnibus unum
Non faciat similis quamuis sententia. Namque
Inter carnifices sancto pendente latrones
Par est poena trium, sed dispar causa duorum.
Hi mundo sunt quippe rei pro crimine multo,
Huic reus est mundus, saluatus sanguine iusto.
Suppliciisque tamen rerum dominator in ipsis
Iura potestatis non perdidit. Aequus utrumque
Iudex namque tuens hunc eligit, hunc reprobauit,
Amborum merita praecelso examine pensans.
Vnus enim, quem uita ferox nec morte reliquit,
In dominum scelerata mouens conuicia dictis
Mordebat propriis et tamquam setiger hircus
Ore uenenoso uitem lacerabat amoenam.
Alter adorato per uerba precantia Christo
Saucia deiectus flectebat lumina, tantum
Lumina, nam geminas arcebant uulnera palmas.
Quem dominus ceu pastor ouem deserta per arua
Colligit errantem secumque abducere gaudet
In campos, paradise, tuos, ubi flore perenni
Gramineus blanditur ager, nemorumque uoluptas

And turned his punishment into a sign of salvation.
Hallowing the very tortures inflicted on him, he blessed them.
Lest anyone forget that the form of the cross which carried the Lord
In triumph is to be cherished, with cogent reasoning let him
Infer from it the four regions of the four-cornered world:
The shining east gleams down from the head of its creator;
The soles of his holy feet are licked by the western star;
His right hand holds the north; and his left raises up the southern heaven.
All nature derives life from the limbs of its creator,
And Christ rules a world everywhere embraced by the cross.

And as his superscription it was written: "This is the king of the Jews,"
So that nothing might be missing from the divine; for it was heavenly inspired
That it be recorded in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin tongues.
In this way the one faith teaches how one is to be called king in three ways.

Lots were cast for the clothes stripped from him, so that the holy garment
Remaining unsundered might serve to forbid schism from Christ.

And, what is more, they set up bloodthirsty men on either side
Of the innocent one, although, however similar their sentence was,
It did not mean that they all shared one desert in common.
For with the holy one hanging between butchering brigands,
The punishment of the three was the same, but the reasons for two were different:
These men were guilty, of course, of great crimes before the world,
While for him the world was guilty, but saved by his righteous blood.
Nonetheless the sovereign of the universe, in the very midst of afflictions,
Did not lose the exercise of his power. The equitable judge
Looked at them both and chose the one while condemning the other,
Weighing the just deserts of both on his lofty scale.
For the one, whose violent way of life did not quit him even in death,
Hurling profane abuse against the Lord, was assailing
Him with his own biting words and, like a shaggy goat,
He was tearing at the pleasant vine with his poisoned mouth.
The other, adoring Christ with words of supplication,
Humbly turned to him his wounded gaze. He moved his eyes only,
For injuries prevented him from stretching out his two hands.
The Lord gathered him in, as a shepherd does a sheep
Wandering through lonely fields, and joyfully led him off with himself
Into your domain, O paradise, where the grassy field
Allures with its eternal flowers, and the pleasure of the groves

Irriguis nutritur aquis, interque benigne
Conspicuos pomis non decipientibus hortos
Ingemit antiquum serpens habitare colonum.
Ambo igitur uarium diuerso calle latrones
Aggressi facinus uiolentum grande patrarunt.
Infernas adit ille fores; adit iste supernas.
Ille profunda sequens penetrauit claustra Gehennae;
Abstulit iste suis caelorum regna rapinis.

Interea horrendae subito uenere tenebrae
Et totum tenuere polum maestisque nigrantem
Exequiis texere diem. Sol nube coruscos
Abscondens radios, taetro uelatus amictu,
Delituit tristemque infecit luctibus orbem.
Hunc elementa sibi meruerunt cernere uultum,
Auxiliis orbata patris, laetata per ortum,
Maesta per occasum. Nam lux ut tempore fulsit
Nascentis domini, sic hoc moriente recessit,
Non absens mansura diu, sed mystica signans
Per spatium secreta suum. Quippe ut tribus horis
Caeca tenebrosi latuerunt sidera caeli,
Sic dominus clausi triduo tulit antra sepulchri.

Nec tellus sine clade fuit, quae talia cernens
Funditus intremuit, dubioque in fine supremum
Expauit natura modum, ne cogeret omnem
Summus apex inferna petens succumbere molem,
Auctoremque sequens per Tartara mundus abiret.
Sed pietas immensa uagas properabat ad umbras,
Perdita restituens, non consistentia perdens.

Nulla tamen tanti metuerunt signa pericli
Qui dominum fixere cruci, quin insuper haustum
Cum peteret sitiens, unus de plebe nefanda
Peniculo infusum calamo porrexit acetum.
Manzeribus populis in deteriora uolutis
Conueniens liquor ille fuit. Nam dulcia uina
Sicut in horrendum cum conuertuntur acetum,
A mensis proiecta iacent, ita tempore prisco
Gens accepta Deo, nunc est odiosa propago.

Is nourished by refreshing streams of water. There, among innocently
Attractive gardens in which there is no fruit that deceives,
The serpent groans that the husbandman of old is dwelling.
So both thieves attempted different crimes in different ways,
And each committed an act of great violence:
The one went to the gates below; the other to those above.
The one pursued infernal things and breached the portals of Gehenna;
The other carried off the kingdom of heaven with his thievery.

Meanwhile, all of a sudden, terrifying shadows came up,
And they spread over the whole sky and covered
The day in black for the gloomy funeral. The departing sun,
Veiled in a dark cloak, hid its flashing rays in a cloud
And afflicted the sad earth with its grieving.
It was only right for the elements, deprived of their Father's help,
To see this sight for themselves. They had been joyful at his rising,
But were now sorrowful at his setting. For just as the light gleamed forth
At the time the Lord was born, so also it withdrew when he died,
Not to remain away for long, but indicating mystic secrets
By the length of its absence. You see, just as for three hours
The blinkered stars were hidden in the darkened sky,
So for three days the Lord endured confinement in a closed grave.

Nor did the earth avoid disaster, but seeing such things,
It was shaken to its foundations, and, in doubt about its end,
Nature feared that this was its last stage and that the topmost point
Would fall to the depths and force the whole mass to collapse,
And that the world, following its creator into Tartarus, would perish;
But his enormous mercy was hastening to the uncertain shadows
To restore what had been destroyed, not to destroy what persisted.

Nonetheless, those who fixed the Lord to the cross were unafraid
Of the signs of such great danger, and, in fact, when from above
He asked for a drink in his thirst, one of the abominable crowd
Stretched up to him a sponge on a reed, soaked with vinegar.
For an illegitimate people who had turned to the worse,
This was an appropriate beverage. For just as sweet wine
When it turns to distasteful vinegar is cast forth
From the table and spurned, even so the people accepted by God
At an earlier time was now a hated offspring.

Ergo ubi cuncta boni completa est passio Christi,
Ipse animam proprio dimisit corpore sanctam,
Ipse iterum sumpturus eam, quia mortuus idem,
Idem uiuus erat membris obeuntibus in se,
Non obeunte Deo, cuius uirtute retrorsum
Infernae patuere uiae, ruptaeque fatiscunt
Diuisa compage petrae, rediuiua iacentum
Corpora sanctorum fractis abiere sepulchris,
In cineres animata suos, subitoque fragore
Illud ouans templum, maioris culmina templi
Procubuisse uidens, ritu plangentis alumni
Saucia discisso nudauit pectora uelo,
Interiora sui populis arcana futuris
Iam reseranda docens, quia lex uelamine Moyse
Tecta diu Christo nobis ueniente patescit.

Dic ubi nunc tristis uictoria, dic ubi nunc sit
Mors stimulus horrenda tuus, quae semper opimis
Insaturata malis cunctas inuadere gentes
Poenali dicione soles? En pessima, non tu
Peruenis ad Christum, sed Christus peruenit ad te,
Cui licuit sine morte mori quique omnia gignens,
Omnia constituens te non formauit ut esses.
Semine uipereo culpa genetrice crearis
Et uenia regnante peris. Iam spiritus artus
Liquerat ad tempus, patulo iam frigida ligno
Viscera pendebant, et adhuc furor arma ministrat.
Cuspide perfossum uiolat latus, eque patenti
Vulnere purpureus cruor et simul unda cucurrit.
Haec sunt quippe sacrae pro religionis honore:
Corpus sanguis aqua tria uitae munera nostrae.
Fonte renascentes, membris et sanguine Christi
Vescimur atque ideo templum deitatis habemur,
Quod seruare Deus nos annuat immaculatum,
Et faciat tenues tanto mansore capaces.

Ergo ubi depositi thesaurum corporis amplum
Nobilis accepit domino locus ille iacente,
Nobilior surgente tamen, generatio fallax
Augebat sub corde nefas, quod nocte silenti
Discipuli Christum raperent et abisse referrent

So when the passion of the good Christ was completely finished,
He himself sent his holy soul away from its own body.
He himself was going to take it up again, because even though dead
He was at the very same time alive, for his bodily parts were dying,
But God was not dying. Thanks to his power, behind him
The passageways to the underworld opened up, the broken rocks gaped
As their structure was split, and the bodies of the holy dead
Emerged from the broken graves where they lay, revived,
As life was breathed into their ashes. And with a sudden crash
The great temple paid its respects as it saw that the roofs of the greater temple
Had succumbed. Just like a foster-child in mourning,
It bared its wounded breast and tore its veil, in order to teach us
That its inner secrets were now to be revealed to the peoples from that point on,
Because the law covered so long by the Mosaic veil
Lies opened to us now that Christ has come.

Tell us, bristling death, where now is your baleful victory, where now
Your sting? Never sated, even with a great supply of evil doers,
You keep right on afflicting all people with your
Punishing sovereignty. See here, you most evil one,
You do not come to Christ, but Christ comes to you,
For he could die without death, and the one who creates all things,
Who constitutes all things, did not bring you into being.
You were brought forth by our mother's fault from serpent seed,
And now that forgiveness reigns, you perish. His breath had been gone
From his body's limbs for some time already. Already cold, his flesh
Was hanging from the spreading tree, but rage still kept on providing arms.
Rage pierced his transfixed side with a spear, and from the gaping
Wound, purple gore came running out, along with water.
These, of course, serve to bring glory to our holy religion:
Body, blood, and water, the three gifts of our life.
From this fountain we are renewed; by Christ's body and blood
We are nourished. For this reason we are considered to be
The temple of divinity. May God grant us to keep it unspotted,
And, small though we be, enable us to host so great a guest.

So, when that place, made noble because of the Lord lying in it,
Received the rich treasury of his body that was laid to rest
(It was even more noble because he rose from there), the deceitful generation
Was increasing the impiety within their hearts. In the dead of night, they said,
The disciples would steal Christ's body and claim that he had gone away

Ter redeunte die, sicut praedixerat ipse.
Quo stimulante metu uigilum munimina poscunt
Plura dari saeuaque locum obsidione teneri.
Si nondum post uincla crucis, post uulnera ferri,
Post obitum mortis numerosa caede cruentum,
Carnifices, implestis opus nec creditis illum,
Qui totiens imis animas produxit ab umbris,
Posse suam reuocare magis, peioribus aptos
Consiliis armate dolos, signate sepulchrum,
Ponite custodes, monumento aduoluite saxum.
Quis poterit seruare Deum, cui cardine rerum
Cuncta patent? Undis habitat, per Tartara regnat,
Et caeli de nube tonat. Quid, saeue tumultus,
Excubiis deperdis opus? Quid niteris illam
Explorare fidem, cui non uis credulus esse?

Coeperat interea post tristia sabbata felix
Irradiare dies, culmen qui nominis alti
A domino dominante trahit primusque uidere
Promeruit nasci mundum atque resurgere Christum.
Septima nam Genesis cum dicit sabbata, claret
Hunc orbis caput esse diem, quem gloria regis
Nunc etiam proprii donans fulgore trophaei
Primatum retinere dedit. Hoc luminis ortu
Virgo parens aliaeque simul cum munere matres
Messis aromaticae notum uenere gementes
Ad tumulum uacuumque uident iam corpore factum,
Sed plenum uirtute locum. Nam missus ab astris
Angelus amoti residebat uertice saxi,
Flammeus aspectu, niueo praeclarus amictu.
Qui gemina specie terrorem et gaudia portans
Cunctaque dispensans, custodibus igne minaci
Venerat, in forma Christum quaerentibus alba.
Illae igitur dominum calcata uiuere morte
Angelica didicere fide. Perterritus autem
Miles in ancipiti retinet discrimine uitam,
Deserta statione fugax testisque timoris
Vera refert gratis. Postquam data munera, fallit
Discipulumque globum placidi sub tempore somni
Clam sibi nocturna Christum abstraxisse rapina
Compositus simulator ait. Fare, improbe custos,

When the third day arrived, just as he himself had foretold.
Motivated by this fear, they asked for a large contingent of guards
To be provided and for the place to be kept under strict surveillance.
If, after the bonds of the cross, after the wounds inflicted by an iron spear,
After a bloody death and following many a beating,
If you have not yet discharged your office, you butchers, and do not believe
That he who so often has brought forth souls from the deep shades
Is the more able to recall his own, arm yourself with stratagems
In keeping with your evil counsels, seal the sepulcher,
Set sentries in position, roll a rock in front of the tomb!
Who will be able to keep in the Lord, for whom all things in the limits
Of the universe lie open? He dwells on the waves, rules through Tartarus,
And thunders from the clouds in the sky above. Why, fierce rabble,
Do you waste your effort on watchmen? Why do you strive
To test that faith which you are unwilling to believe?

Meanwhile, after the sad Sabbath, the happy day began to dawn
Which derives the eminence of its lofty name
From its lordly Lord and earned the right to be the first
To see the world born and to see Christ rise from the dead.
For when Genesis calls the seventh day the Sabbath,
It is clear that this day is the head of the world, and the king's glory
Now also bestows upon it his own gleaming trophy
And permits the day to retain its position as first. At this day's dawn
The virgin parent in the company of other mothers,
With offerings of a perfumed harvest, came in grief to the familiar tomb
And saw that the place had now been emptied of his body,
But was full of power. For an angel sent from the stars
Was sitting on top of the stone which had been moved aside,
Flaming in his appearance, brilliant in his snow-white cloak,
Who, in a two-fold manifestation, bringing with him terror and joy
And deploying all his powers, had appeared to the guards
With threatening fire, but in white garb to those searching for Christ.
So they learned that the Lord was alive, death trampled underfoot,
From the angelic testimony. A terrified soldier, however,
Who remained alive even as danger was threatening
By deserting his post and fleeing, bore witness to his fear
And told the truth for nothing. After bribes were given, he lied
And said that a troop of disciples at the time of peaceful sleep
Had secretly carried Christ away in a nighttime raid;
So said the suborned liar. Tell us, you worthless guard,

Responde, scelerata cohors, si Christus, ut audes
Dicere, concluso furtim productus ab antro
Sopitos latuit, cuius iacet intus amictus?
Cuius ad exuuias sedet angelus? Anne beati
Corporis ablator uelocius esse putauit
Soluere contectum quam deuectare ligatum?
Cum mora sit furtis contraria, cautius ergo
Cum domino potuere magis sua lintea tolli.
Mentita est uox uana tibi. Tamen ista figuram
Res habet egregiam: Iudaeis constat ademptum
Quem nos deuoto portamus pectore Christum.

Plange sacerdotes perituros, plange ministros
Et populum, Iudaea, tuum pro talibus ausis.
Non tuba, non unctus, non iam tua uictima grata est.
Quaenam bella tibi clanget tuba rege perempto?
Qui tuus unctus erit, quae uerum amiseris unctum?
Victima quae dabitur, cum uictima pastor habetur?
Discedat sygnagoga suo fuscata colore,
Ecclesiam Christus pulchro sibi iunxit amore.
Haec est conspicuo radians in honore Mariae,
Quae cum clarifico semper sit nomine mater,
Semper uirgo manet. Huius se uisibus astans
Luce palam dominus prius obtulit, ut bona mater
Grandia diuulgans miracula, quae fuit olim
Aduenientis iter, haec sit redeuntis et index.

Mox aliis conuiua potens in fragmine panis
Agnitus enituit, quia uerus panis apertis
Semper adest oculis, fidei quos gratia claros
Efficit, ut dominum uiuentem cernere possint.
Saepe dehinc proprios diuersi temporis horis
Discipulos manifestus adit, uescentibus illis
Extemplo nunc ora ferens, nunc piscis obusti
Atque faui mandens epulas, quo rite doceret
Corporeas res esse dapes seseque uideri
In membris, quibus ante fuit. Formidine rursus
Plebis apostaticae, dominum quae caeca negasset,
Cum foribus clausis resideret turba fidelis,
Pace salutantis sese intulit atque foratas
Expediens palmas nudat latus. Ast ibi Thomas,

Answer, you evil cohort, whether Christ, as you dare
To say, was stealthily carried out of the sealed cave
Without your noticing, as you slept, when his cloak is lying inside,
When an angel sits beside his clothing? Or did the robber of the blessed
Body think that it would be faster to loosen his coverings,
Rather than to carry him away bound up in them?
Since delay is contrary to the thief's nature, the clothes
And their owner could have been carried out more securely together.
Your false statement is filled with lies. Nonetheless this thing
Does have an excellent figural meaning: it means that Christ,
Whom we carry in our pious breasts, was taken away from the Jews.

Mourn for your priests who are going to perish, mourn for your servants
And your people, O Judea, for such audacious deeds.
No trumpet, no anointing, no sacrificial victim of yours is any longer pleasing.
For what wars will your trumpet sound, once your king has been killed?
What anointing will be yours, when you have lost the true ointment?
What victim will be offered now that your shepherd is considered a victim?
Let the synagogue depart in darkness, her appropriate color.
Christ has joined the church to himself in beautiful love.
She is shining with the illustrious glory of Mary,
Who, even while always a mother, endowed with that famous title,
Always remains a virgin too. Before her eyes the Lord first stood
And presented himself openly in the light, so that his good mother,
Spreading abroad the news of his great miracles, the one who was
The way by which he once came to us, might also signal his return.

Soon, as a powerful guest, he was recognized in his radiance by others
In the breaking of bread, because the true bread is always present
For opened eyes (the grace of faith makes them clear sighted),
So that they might be able to discern their living Lord.
From then on, at various times of day, he often approached
His own disciples openly: now, as they were dining,
Suddenly showing himself to them; now, himself eating
A meal of broiled fish and honey, so that he might properly teach them
That feasts are corporeal things and that he was appearing to them
In the bodily members which he had before. Again, when
Out of fear of the apostate people who had blindly denied the Lord,
The faithful flock was sitting behind locked doors,
He came in with a salutation of peace and bared
His side, showing them his pierced hands. But Thomas

Cui Didymo cognomen erat, cum fratribus una
Non fuerat dubiamque fidem sub corde gerebat,
Donec rursus eo pariter residente ueniret
Qui numquam subtractus erat. Tunc limine clauso
Constitit in medio, non indignatus apertum
Discipulo monstrare latus tactuque probari
Vulneris et mentem patienter ferre labantis,
Agnitus hinc potius, quod sit dubitantis amicus.
Quisquis enim artifices caeca sub imagine fraudes
Instruit et uanas cupit exercere figuras,
Non uult agnosci, non uult sua facta requiri,
Vt lateat sub nube doli, nebulaque recludens
Omnia sollicitos odit simulator amicos.

Gnarus item dominus Petro piscante per aequor
Cum sociis captum esse nihil dimittere lina
In dextras hortatur aquas. Mox gurgite clauso
Pendula fluctiuagam traxerunt retia praedam,
Per typicam noscenda uiam, nam retia dignis
Lucida sunt praecepta Dei, quibus omnis in illa
Dextra parte manens concluditur ac simul ulnis
Fertur apostolicis domini ad uestigia Christi.
Nec piscis prunaeque uacant et panis in uno
Discipulis inuenta loco. Quisnam ambigat unam
His rebus constare fidem, quippe est aqua piscis,
Christus adest panis, sanctusque spiritus ignis.
Hinc etenim abluimur, hoc pascimur, inde sacramur.
Tunc epulis praeceptor eos inuitat edendis
Alloquiis de more piis, mensamque petentes
Vnanimes nota domini bonitate fruuntur
Et Christum sensere suum. Modicoque paratu
Postquam uicta fames et surrexere relictis
Rite toris, an corde Petrus se diligat alto
Explorat dominus. Petrus annuit. Ergo nitentes
Pastor amans augere greges operario in omni
Parte bono commendat oues, commendat et agnos.
Haec terno sermone monens, ut terna negantis
Culpa recens parili numero purgata maneret.

Inde sequenda docens: "Pacem omnes," inquit, "habete.
Pacem ferte meam, pacem portate quietam,

Whose name was Didymus, had not been there with his brothers,
And kept on nursing a skeptical faith in his heart,
Until he came again, the one who had never been taken away,
When Thomas was sitting with them. Then, although the door was closed,
He stood in their midst, not refusing to show his gaping side
To his disciple, and to be tested by a touch of his wound,
And to put up patiently with the reservations of the waverer;
He was more recognizable because he was friendly to the doubter.
For whoever sets up contrived deceits using obscure images,
And whoever desires to employ delusive shapes,
Does not want to be recognized, does not want his deeds to be investigated,
In order to hide under a cloud of deceit. Enclosing everything in fog,
The imposter hates for his friends to be inquisitive.

Likewise, as Peter was fishing in the sea with his companions,
The Lord was aware that he had caught nothing and ordered him
To let down his lines on the right side. Soon the dangling nets,
Enclosing the waters, brought up the sea-wandering booty.
This needs to be understood in a figurative way, for the nets
Are the clear commands of God to the worthy, by which
Everyone remaining on the right side is enclosed, and all together
Are carried in apostolic arms to the feet of the Lord Christ.
Nor were fish and coals lacking for the disciples; bread too was
Found in one and the same place. For who could doubt
That our one faith is founded on these things: the fish, you see,
Is water; the bread is Christ; and the fire is the Holy Spirit.
With the one we are washed, with the other fed, with the last sanctified.
Then the teacher invited them to eat of the feast
With kindly entreaties as usual, and, going to the table
With one accord, they enjoyed the familiar goodness of the Lord
And recognized their Christ. After hunger was overcome
By the modest repast, and they had duly risen and quit
Their dining couches, the Lord asked Peter whether he loved him
With all his heart. Peter said that he did. Then the shepherd who loves
To increase his sleek flocks, entrusted the sheep in every respect
To the good workman, and he entrusted his lambs to him too.
He gave him these admonitions three times, so that the recent offense
Of his triple denial might be removed by the same number.

Then he taught what needed to be followed: "Be at peace," he said,
"All of you. Take up my peace; carry the calmness of peace.

Pacem per populos monitis dispergite sanctis
Et mundum uacuate malis, gentesque uocari
Finibus e cunctis, latus qua tenditur orbis,
Iussis mando meis omnesque in fonte lauari."

Haec ubi dicta pio dominus sermone peregit,
Bethaniae mox arua petit, coramque beatis
Qui tantum meruere uiris spectare triumphum,
Aetherias euectus abit sublimis in oras.
Et dextra sedet ipse patris totumque gubernat
Iure suo, qui cuncta tenens excelsa uel ima,
Tartara post caelum penetrat, post Tartara caelum.
Illi autem laetis cernentes uultibus altas
Ire super nubes dominum tractusque coruscos
Vestigiis calcare suis ueneranter adorant
Sidereasque uias alacri sub corde reportant,
Quas cunctos doceant, testes nam iure fideles
Diuinae uirtutis erant, qui plura uidentes
Innumerabilium scripserunt pauca bonorum.
Nam si cuncta sacris uoluissent tradere chartis
Facta redemptoris, nec totus cingere mundus
Sufficeret densos per tanta uolumina libros.

Spread my peace throughout the nations with holy instruction
And rid the world of its ills. I order you to call people
From all the ends of the earth, as far as the wide world stretches,
And I command you to wash all of them in the font."

When this was said, the Lord's holy address to them was complete,
And soon he sought out Bethany's fields. In the presence of blessed men,
The only ones who deserved to view such a triumph,
He was carried away on high and left them for celestial realms.
And he himself is seated at his Father's right hand and governs everything
With his authority, controlling all things whether high or low.
He penetrated hell after leaving heaven and heaven after leaving hell.
With happy faces, moreover, they watched their Lord as he went
Above the high clouds, trampling the bright expanses of the air
Below his feet, and they worshiped him reverently
And brought back with eager hearts the story of his path to the stars,
Which they were to teach to all men. For they were reliable witnesses
Of his divine power, these men who saw a great many
And wrote down a few of his countless good actions.
For if they had wanted to entrust to their holy pages
All the redeemer's deeds, the whole world would have been
Unable to contain the thick books, so many would be the volumes.

Notes for Book 5

1–19: Jesus' last hour approaches (see John 12:20–41). Lines 1–5 provide a link between the miracles which Sedulius has described in the two previous books and the passion, death, and resurrection that will be the subject of the fifth book of the poem.

1: *proxima paschae*: It is possible to translate (with Deerberg, *Der Sturz des Judas*) "Pascha" as "Easter." The word certainly is used in many later contexts (as, e.g., in the title to Sedulius's poem) to refer to this later celebration of Christ's resurrection. Here, however, it is just as likely that Sedulius is thinking of the historical Jewish Passover celebration that Jesus is about to celebrate with his disciples.

2: "glory of the Lord": abstract instead of concrete. For this periphrase of "glorious Lord" using the *genitivus inversus*, see Deerberg, *Der Sturz des Judas*, 55–57.

3: For Christ's ability to lay down his life and take it up again, see John 10:17.

4: Sedulius's point is that Christ's body after his death and resurrection is the same as it was before.

7: The preponderance of dactyls (DDDS), may suggest agitation on Jesus' part (see John 12:27). The point is made explicit in the prose paraphrase (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 273): *turbatusque pauxillulum mortis uicina ut homo formidans* .... Taur. E.IV.42 originally had *ista* (amended to the more emphatic *istac*). Huemer prefers the latter.

8: *tuum*: The two vowels should be pronounced as one. The spondaic character of this line (DSSS) is all the more striking because it follows a heavily dactylic line. As he speaks, Jesus seems to achieve a degree of inner resolution.

10: *clarificemque*: Deerberg reads the future (*clarificabo*) here, but Huemer is right to follow Taur. E.IV.42 and many of the older manuscripts which have the subjunctive. It is the more difficult reading in a context in which the poet is "quoting" the divine voice that comes from heaven. It is easier to imagine a pious scribe making the change to the indicative mood (to match the Vulgate or the prose paraphrase) than it is to conceive of how the reverse process might have taken place. When heavenly voices are heard elsewhere in the Bible, it is the indicative mood (or the imperative) that is normally expected, not the subjunctive.

10–11: "witness … advocacy": The imagery here is of the courtroom. Jesus is on trial, as it were, and his heavenly Father is testifying on his behalf and providing legal support.
13–15: *tonitrum … tonitrus*: Spelling the word with two u's (as Huemer does) creates metrical difficulties in both instances.
14: See John 12:40. References to spiritual blindness and hardness of hearts are plentiful in the New Testament; they often quote (directly or indirectly) Isa 6:10.
19: *suo uerbo*: On the identification of the word of God with his Son, see John 1:14. Walter Ong comments on what he calls the "classic theological logion," *Eo uerbum quo filius*, in *The Presence of the Word* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 13.
20–31: Jesus washes his disciples' feet (John 13:4–20).
21: *humilemque magistrum*: Foot washing in the ancient world was a ceremony regularly performed for superiors (husbands, masters, teachers) by those occupying subordinate positions in life (e.g., wives, slaves, students). See B. Kötting, "Fusswaschung," *RAC* 8 (1972): 743–47. The paradoxical point that Sedulius is emphasizing here was obscured in the later manuscript tradition when the word *ministrum* was regularly substituted for *magistrum*, thereby eliminating the oxymoron. For the persistence of this inferior reading, see the translation in Marvin W. Meyer, *Judas: The Definitive Collection of Gospels and Legends about the Infamous Apostle of Jesus* (New York: HarperOne, 2007), 120. For the phrase *ex more dapes,* see Virgil, *Aen.* 8.186.
22: *exempla*: On Jesus' foot washing as a paradigm for discipleship, see Augustine, *In psalm.* 92.3.
23: *famulisque … famulatus*: the same striking paradox as in 21: the master serves the servants, that is to say, his disciples.
24: *linteolo*: The diminutive here helps to underscore the humility of Christ. It is simply *linteum* in the Vulgate and in the prose paraphrase (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 274).
25: *uestigia*: literally "footsteps." Here as elsewhere in the poem the word is used metonymically to refer to the feet themselves.
29–31: For the reference to "whitened sepulchers," see Matt 23:27.
32–58: Jesus' last supper with his disciples (John 13:21–30; cf. Matt 26:21–29; Mark 14:10–25; Luke 22:15–23) and the poet's imprecation of Judas.
32: *nec … latuere doli*: an apt appropriation of a phrase from *Aen.* 1.130, in which Virgil describes Neptune's awareness of the plot against Aeneas.
33–34: Sedulius plays on the idea that just as Jesus handed the bread to Judas so he will be handed by Judas over to the authorities to be put to death. G. Moretti Pieri ("Sulle fonti evangeliche," 185), points out similarities with Augustine, *Tract. in Johannem* 62.4.5.

36–37: "might never hunger or thirst again": There are a number of New Testament passages where this promise is given (e.g., Matt 5:6; John 6:35; Rev 7:16). For the *Sitz im Leben*, see Deerberg, *Der Sturz des Judas*, 103–7.
37: *sine labe*: For this qualification, namely, that believers may enjoy the spiritual benefits of the sacrament provided they do not slip back into sin, see Lactantius, *De ira* 24.9.
38: *liuor*: Translated as "envy" by Green (*Latin Epics*, 68–69), who points out the importance of this "cosmic principle" in the classical tradition and in Juvencus. While it is possible that Judas was envious of his master's powers, it is not clear from Sedulius's account that it was anything more than sheer ill-will or spite that motivated him to betray his master.
39–40: The poet uses martial language here to describe Judas's conspiracy against Christ. In keeping with the metaphorical frame of reference established in the foot washing ceremony, it is a "slave-rebellion." See also Virgil, *Aen.* 8.637: *consurgere bellum.*
42: *culpa … pretio … crimina facto*: a neat contrast, reinforced by *homoioteleuta*, between crime and punishment, deed and reward. The gravity of the crime is not so much the relatively modest (30 pieces of silver) monetary amount involved, but its great cosmic cost.
45–46: "earth, sea, and sky": Sedulius adduces these same three cosmic elements in his *Praefatio* (lines 11–12) to convey a sense of comprehensive totality.
49: "Judas too": Taking advantage of Latin's capacity for pronominal specificity, Sedulius mentions Judas's name only three times in the poem (Peter is named nine times by contrast). For greater clarity here I have supplied the proper name to avoid possible confusion for the reader. As one with his Father, Jesus himself is the Father of the entire world, including Judas. The forceful *quoque* in the line makes it clear that *hunc* refers to Judas, not the world, a point that is missed in the translation of the passage in M. Meyer's *Judas*: "the father of the world, who made *it* and gave *it* life" [emphasis added].
50: *sterili damnatus uentre*: The central word consists only of long syllables and is preceded and followed by a long syllable. The sequence of five long syllables dramatically slows the line, as the poet solemnly pronounces sentence on the guilty Judas.
55: *Aut male fusus humo*: Arntzen points to the ancient Roman custom of paternal recognition by lifting the new born child from the ground (see Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 4.11), and this does seem to be the context that Sedulius has in mind here (for this meaning of *fundo*, see *OLD* 4c). The grim alternatives, never to have been born at all, or to die as young as possible, were proverbial in the ancient world. The chorus in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* (1224–27) pessimistically suggests that the former is superior, with the latter "second best."

56–58: A vivid application of Ps 1:4 (the ungodly are "like chaff which the wind drives away") to Judas's desperate moral situation.
57–58: A total of eight dactyls in two lines. The pell-mell pace of the verses reinforces the image of dust scattered by the swiftly blowing wind.
59–82: The betrayal and arrest of Jesus (see Matt 26:47–56; cf. Luke 22:47–53 and John 18:1–12).
59–62: An impressive apostrophe, with nary a conjunction to link the ten adjectives in the first two lines and three adjective and noun pairings in the third line. Such extravagant asyndeton is not without precedent in Seneca's tragedies (e.g., *Oed.* 960 and *Herc.* 32) as well as the New Testament (see Mark 7:21–22 and Gal 5:20–21), and examples are frequent in late Latin poetry. The apostrophe is followed by a series of indignant questions which the poet addresses to Judas.
62–63: Martial imagery abounds in these two lines. *Signifer* is a *terminus technicus*. For *horribiles enses* see the first line of Tibullus, *Carm.* 1.10.
64: *ori ora*: As previously discussed (in the introduction), the mouth of Judas and the mouth of Jesus are not only positioned next to each other in the line (cf. Virgil, *Aen.* 8.486 and Ovid, *Metam.* 10.291–92), but when the line is read aloud must be joined by elision to each other in order to scan, in a virtual kiss, as it were. Instead of saliva, the moisture usually associated with kissing, Sedulius associates this kiss with honey and venom. For this latter image, see Ambrose, *In Ps.* 35.14 and 39.17. On honey, see Böcher, O. "Honig," *RAC* 16 (1994): 433–73.
68: "fierce kisses": Christ is represented as a lamb in the New Testament (especially Revelation) and in early Christian art. A miniature on f. 33r of the illuminated Antwerp manuscript (after verse 48) depicts Jesus as a lamb and Judas as what appears to be a wolf. The latter image is hard to make out today because the head has been scratched away (perhaps by hostile readers), but the claws are still clearly visible (see Lewine, 194–216). On wolves who disguise themselves as sheep in order to gain access to them, see Matt 7:15. Here Sedulius presents the traditional tension between the two animals as an *adynaton* (cf. Isa 11:6). On the vocabulary of kissing in Latin, see Peter Flury, "Osculum und osculari. Beobachtungen zum Vokabular des Kusses im Lateinischen," in *Scire litteras: Forschungen zum mittelalterlichen Geistesleben* (ed. Sigrid Krämer and Michael Bernhard; Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, in Kommission bei C.H. Beck, 1988), 149–57.
69: *operator*: a *vox ecclesiasticorum*, a post-classical Latin word used here to describe the gracious activity of Christ as he continues to work for human salvation, even as his time on earth for such beneficial action is approaching its end (cf. John 5:17).
71: *pius … pietate*: Here again Sedulius uses the word so often associated with Virgil's hero, Aeneas. For its later use, see M. Gerwin, "Pietas," *Lexikon des Mit-*

telalters 6 (1999): 2141–42. Jesus' dedication to doing good continues even in the midst of a difficult personal crisis.

72: *Auriculam*: not a real diminutive here, but simply a way of referring to the external ear, as in Mark 14:47.

75–76: The contrast between the *ira* that Virgil's *pius Aeneas* feels towards his enemy Turnus whom he dispatches at the end of the *Aeneid* and the merciful behavior of Sedulius's Jesus is striking (see Deerberg, *Der Sturz des Judas*, 162–64). On Proba's "angry Jesus" who swears vengeance on his enemies while on the cross, see Opelt, "Der zürnende Christus," 106–16.

77: *mucrone*: Literally, the Latin word refers to the point of the sword.

79–81: For Peter's protestations of loyalty and Jesus' prediction of his denial, see Matt 26:30–35; Mark 14:29–31; Luke 22:33–34; and John 13:36–38.

79: *clara … uoce*: Lucretius uses the same adjective to describe the rooster's piercing morning cry (*De rerum nat.* 4.710–11).

80–81: *aliger … gallus*: The noun is more commonly found in Latin comedies than epic. The poet gives the barnyard bird a splendid adjective to describe its appearance more impressively (see Virgil, *Aen.* 12.248–249, et al.).

82: Unlike the deceit practiced by the treacherous Judas, Peter's lapse was apparently unpremeditated. Here as elsewhere in the poem, Sedulius seems eager to put the chief of the apostles' failings in the best possible light. In the Gospel accounts Peter's fear is not explicitly offered as an excuse, either during the act of denial itself or when he is confronted by Jesus after his resurrection.

83–103: Jesus' trial in the palace of Caiaphas and his abuse (see Matt 26:57–68; cf. Mark 14:53–65; Luke 22:54–71; and John 18:13–24).

85–92: This passage is couched in language (e.g., *consilium* and *cathedra pestifera*) as well as moral categories (the insubstantial and impermanent qualities of the ungodly) drawn from Psalm 1:1: *Beatus uir qui non abiit in consilio impiorum … et in cathedra pestilentiae non sedit* (*Vulg. iuxta Sept.*).

89: A dactylic line whose unusual speed may reflect the charges against Christ flying so rapidly during the trial.

93: See Virgil, *Aen.* 8.452: *illi inter sese multa ui bracchia tollunt.*

94: *Heu mihi*: a highly charged exclamation, as the poet finds himself on the verge of tears. The most dramatic part of the Gospel story must now be told. As Green observes (*Latin Epics*, 205), an authorial intrusion of the same type is found also in Lucan, *Phars.* 7.617, at the epic's climax. For a comparative analysis of authorial presence in three biblical epics of late antiquity, see N. Hecquet-Noti, "Entre exégèse et épopée: Présence auctoriale dans Juvencus, Sédulius, et Avit de Vienne," in *Lateinische Poesie der Spätantike* (ed. Henriette Harich-Schwarzbauer and Petra Schierl; Basel: Schwabe, 2009), 197–215.

97: *colaphis*: a colloquial word, found in Roman comedy.

97–98: Sedulius describes Jesus' head being struck, his cheeks slapped, and his face spat upon. The three components are repeated again in the last three lines of the pericope (101–103), but not in the same order.
100–103: The idea here derives ultimately from Isa 53:5. The suffering endured by Jesus has a salutary effect for "us." Each of the lines has a different form of the first person personal pronoun or pronominal adjective (*nostrae*, *nostrum*, *nostram*, *nobis*).
103: *libertas*: Sedulius makes a reference to the Roman custom of boxing slaves on the ears when they were manumitted (see Deerberg, *Der Sturz des Judas*, 197–99). *Alapa* is a colloquial word, perhaps onomatopoeic in origin.
104–112: The denial of Peter (see Matt 26:69–75; cf. Mark 14:66–72; Luke 22:56–62; and John 18:25–27).
104: Literally *senior* means "older," but in this context it is more likely that Sedulius is referring to Peter's preeminent position among the disciples (see Matt 16:18–19) than to his physical age.
105–106: The parenthesis offers another exonerating explanation for Peter's behavior not explicitly provided in the Gospels themselves. The chief of the apostles had no choice but to deny Jesus, Sedulius seems to suggest, once his powerful and prophetic Lord had predicted that it would happen. In the prose paraphrase (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 280) the poet explains, not entirely convincingly, that Peter did not seek to deny Christ but that in his naiveté and ignorance, it was simply a case of forgetfulness: *Igitur et Petrus apostolus Christum negare non studuit, sed in obliuionis casum simpliciter et ignoranter incurrit.* It seems most unlikely, however, that Peter would have suddenly forgotten that he knew the remarkable rabbi with whom he had spent so much time together during the last years.
109–10: *memor … immemoris*: For a similar play on the adjectives, see Ovid, *Pont.* 4.6.43, Paulinus of Nola, *Carm.* 15.173–74, and Ambrose, *Noe* 20.74.
112: "bitter lamentations": an apostrophe to the tears of Peter. There is no hint in the Gospel account of *dulcem ueniam* at this point, but Sedulius is thinking no doubt of Peter's eventual forgiveness after Jesus' resurrection as well as of the later ecclesiastical practice of confession of sins and absolution.
113–138: The poet's denunciation of Judas. The figure of Judas gets special, sustained attention from Sedulius in his account of the passion, far more extensive than is to be found in the canonical Gospels.
113–115: The emotional description of day break has an expansive epic tone (cf., e.g., Lucan, *Phars.* 7.1–6) especially in comparison with the brief temporal indication in Matt 27:1 (*mane autem facto*). See also Lucan, *Phars.* 1.233 (*iamque dies*) and 8.45 (*tenebrisque remotis*).
115: *populis Iudaeae … gentis*: For anti-Semitism in early Christian Latin poetry, see Jean Michel Poinsotte, *Juvencus et Israel* (Paris: Presses universitaires de

France, 1979) and H. Schreckenberg, "Juden und Judentum in der altkirchlichen lateinischen Poesie. Commodianus, Prudentius, Paulinus, Sedulius, Venantius Fortunatus," *Theokratia* 3 (1979): 81–124. Johannes Schwind (*Arator-Studien* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990], 177), points out that such denunciations of the entire Jewish race are commonplace in early Christian descriptions of the passion. Green (*Latin Epics*, 203) observes that while he is not as stridently anti-Semitic as Arator, Sedulius is "more hostile" to the Jews than Juvencus.

118: *Deriguit*: a rare poetic verb, which appears only in the perfect, describing the process of growing stiff, often with terror (see Lucan, *Phars.* 1.246).

121: *Nullus ubi timor est:* See Ps 53:5: "There they are, in great terror, where there is no terror!" In the *PO* (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 279), it is made even clearer that it is too late at this point for Judas to feel fear for the consequences of his deed. For *prodest* instead of Huemer's *prodeest,* see Deerberg, *Der Sturz des Judas*, 220, n. 3.

121–122: *confessio … in inferno:* See the Vulgate's Ps 6:6 *[iuxta Hebr.]: In inferno quis confitebitur tibi?*

122–125: For the image of the unproductive tree that is cut down, see Matt 3:10 and Luke 3:9.

127: *quoque:* The point here is that this is Judas's second attempt to kill someone. His first victim was Jesus, now it is himself.

128–129: Judas's attempt to make satisfaction for what he has done wrong is more rational than committing suicide, but his contrition is still a far cry from the tearful repentance of Peter (see Ambrose, *In Luc.* 10.93).

129: *guttura*: Sedulius finds it fitting that Judas should commit suicide in such a way that the vocal medium by which he betrayed his Lord, namely his throat, would be severely damaged.

132–138: While no punishment could atone for such a crime, Judas's hanging of himself does help, the poet suggests, to provide a vivid illustration of the difference between an apostle and an apostate. For a discussion of Judas's suicide as *talio analogica,* see Deerberg, *Der Sturz des Judas*, 226.

132: "penalty": For this translation of *ira,* see Deerberg, *Der Sturz des Judas*, 234.

134: *sublime cadauer*: Corpses are ordinarily on the ground or buried in them. Judas's hangs up high in the air for all the world to see.

136–137: *Tartareum … profundum* serves as a nice contrast to *alta … sidera.*

138: "apostle/apostate": For a similar play on two words that sound so much alike but have such different meanings, see Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 4.5: *facilius apostaticum inuenias quam apostolicum.*

139–163: Jesus' trial before Pilate (see Matt 27:11–26).

140: *mitissimus agnus*: another allusion to Isa 53 (verse 7); for the same image see also Jer 11:19. Moses is described as *mitissimus* in Num 12:3.

141: *inimica cohors*: Technically a *cohors* was the tenth part of a legion or three maniples. For more on the Roman army in general, see Pat Southern, *The Roman Army: A Social and Institutional History* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006).
143: *uerum mendax*: The juxtaposition of these two words is striking. The charge that is brought by false witnesses against Jesus, namely, that he said that he would destroy the temple and build it up in three days, is true on the face of it, but, according to the Gospel of John (2:19–21), Jesus was referring to the metaphorical "temple" of his body.
145–147: The conflict between temple worship of Yahweh and the worship of Baal and other local Canaanite deities, often in groves or on mountain tops, is mentioned frequently in the Old Testament. See T. Klauser, "Baal," *RAC* 1 (1950): 1066–68. For the contest on Mount Carmel between the Lord God of Israel and Baal, when the prophet Elijah challenged the people to pick one deity or the other, see 1 Kgs 18:18.
146: *Idola*: a specifically Christian word, used only here in the poem.
147: *Tunc … nunc*: The homoioteleuton here (see also *coluere* and *elegere*) underscores the connection between the Old Testament Baal and the New Testament Barabbas. Both are chosen by the faithless people instead of the true God.
148: *pio … proteruo*: The rhyme helps to link acoustically the judicial treatment accorded Barabbas and Jesus (both sentences are unjust).
150–151: A striking case of *chiasmus*. Death comes first in the first line and second in the second; light comes second in the first line and first in the second line. The contrast between Judas and Jesus, their accomplishments and their just deserts, is what the poet wants to emphasize.
152: Sedulius addresses all who "still continue to be unbelievers" (*hactenus manetis infidi*), as the prose paraphrase puts it (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 283).
153: *Quid dubitatis adhuc?* Augustine uses this same phrase in *In psalm.* 147.17. The demonstrative *en* may be meant to match Pilate's famous words uttered as he introduced Jesus to the crowds: *Ecce homo!* (John 19:5).
154: *amplectitur*: Jesus does not simply suffer passively, according to Sedulius, but rather actively embraces his abusive treatment as a necessary part of his mission of salvation. In one of the earliest representations of the crucifixion on the wooden doors of S. Sabina in Rome too, there is no trace of the excruciating agony so prominent in later artistic depictions of the crucifixion (see, for example, the altarpiece of Matthias Grünewald in Colmar) in the facial expression or physical attitude of Jesus' body.
156: *Heu falx torua*: This apostrophe is addressed to a sickle directly, but indirectly to the Jewish people of Jesus' generation whose descendants will pay for their ancestors' misdeeds (cf. Matt 27:25). For the sickle metaphor, see Joel 3:13.

157–163: A lengthy address to Pilate. For the opening words, cf. Lucan, *Phars.* 8.604: *heu, facinus ciuile tibi.*
159: On the significance of hand washing in the ancient world, see Deerberg's extensive discussion (*Der Sturz des Judas*, 276–79).
160: *sacrum lauacrum*: a reference to the sacrament of baptism and its power to forgive sins.
161: *sistis sub praeside*: technical language used of court proceedings.
162: For the preference of "the things of man" to "the things of God," see Matt 16:23. There were a number of apocryphal legends that arose concerning the death of Pilate (see, e.g., Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.7), hence Sedulius's rhetorical question beginning *qua morte*. After exile to Gaul, Pilate is supposed to have committed suicide in Vienne. For the ancient evidence for Pilate's life and death, see J. Lémonon, "Ponce Pilatus: documents profanes, Nouveau Testament et traditions ecclésiales," *ANRW* 2.26.1:741–78.
164–175: Jesus is mocked by the Roman soldiers (see Matt 27:28–31; Mark 15:17–20; John 19:1–15).
165: *subtegmine cocci*: Huemer and other editors divide the first word thus: *sub tegmine* (lit. "under cover"). In the earliest Latin manuscripts, often written in rustic capitals, like Taur. E.IV. 42, there are usually no such divisions between words, and it makes more sense to join the two words here as the Latin word *subtegmen*, meaning "thread" (cf. Claudian, *De raptu Pros.* 1.259). The *coccum* is a red berry produced by the scarlet oak. A variety of dark colors ranging from blue to red have been associated with royalty from ancient times to the present. "Tyrian purple," derived from the murex, was among the most expensive of ancient dyes. See R. Lillie, "The Red Dyes Used by Ancient Dyers: Their Probable Identity," *Journal of the Society of Dyers and Colourists* 95 (1979): 57–61.
166–167: As the synoptic Gospels represent it, the red (or purple) cloak given Jesus to wear by the soldiers was intended to mock the idea that he was a king. Sedulius gives the color another, allegorical, significance: red is the color of blood and death, and Jesus clad thus is now an *imago mortis*.
168–171: The thorns signify Jesus' generous endurance of pain on humans' behalf, while the reed representing a scepter in his hand means that kingly power on earth is ephemeral (cf. Isa 36:6), a perspective that the poet emphatically reinforces with five synonymous adjectives uninterrupted by conjunctions.
171–175: A fairly minor detail in the Gospel account, namely, that his "royal" garb was removed from Jesus and that he was dressed again in his own clothes (see Matt 27:31 and Mark 15:20), reminds the poet of Jesus' relationship to his body during the course of his death and resurrection.
174: Contrary to a popular view held by Gnostics and other contemporaries that only the soul was immortal, according to traditional patristic theology Jesus was resurrected physically and, even after ascending to heaven, remains true God

and man, with a transfigured body. This doctrine is reflected in the wording of the so-called Apostles' Creed: "I believe in the resurrection of the body."

176: *Humano ponens mortalem tegmine carnem*: This line is missing in many of the manuscripts, including Taur. E.IV.42, and is included in Huemer's edition only in the notes, although the line numbering is maintained as though it were in the text. The idea seems to be that after his resurrection from the dead, Christ possessed only his spiritual body, not his human, natural, body (cf. 1 Cor 15:44).

177–181: Jesus is offered wine with gall (see Matt 27:34; Mark 15:23; Luke 23:36). While the evangelists do not explain why Jesus refused the narcotic, many commentators suggest that it was because he wanted to experience his suffering fully. Sedulius draws a connection between the notorious bitterness of gall and death.

180: *degustarus*: For the application of the sense of "taste" to death, see Heb 2:9: "But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone."

182–195: The crucifixion (see Matt 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:33; John 19:18).

186: *signum salutis*: While the evangelists do not comment on the significance of the cross, Sedulius does. Originally it was a mark of opprobrium, an indication of a humiliating and painful public execution, reserved by the Romans for the most egregious malefactors. See Martin Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977). For Sedulius's Christian contemporaries the cross had begun to lose its primary pejorative connotation and was well on its way to becoming accepted as a cosmic symbol that represented Christianity's growing acceptability and power. Throughout the Middle Ages, the cross was carried in solemn processions, adorned the interiors and exteriors of church buildings (often themselves cruciform), and served as the object of hymns, devotion, pilgrimage, and calligraphy (see, for instance, the elaborate illustrations in Hrabanus Maurus, *In honorem sanctae crucis*).

190–195: The cross's distinctive shape serves as an indication of Christ's rule over the four directional areas of the world: east (at the top), north (right hand), west (at the bottom), and south (left hand). Each of the cross's four extenders stretch out in four different directions, but they also lead back to the central point at which the two beams of the cross intersect (cf. Paulinus of Nola, *Carm.* 19.639–42). The idea that the cross centrally embraced the entire world became a commonplace and quite literally influenced later Christian *Weltanschaung*. Medieval maps often put Jerusalem at the center of a circular world enclosing a T-shape that divides Europe from Asia and Africa. See D. Woodward, "Medieval Mappaemundi," in *The History of Cartography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 1:286–370. With the adjective *quadrati*, it seems that Sedulius

envisions the world as a square with corners (cf. Rev 7:1 and the "Cottoniana," a square Anglo-Saxon map from the late tenth century). See also the first lines of John Donne's seventh *Holy Sonnet*: "At the round earth's imagined corners blow / Your trumpets, angels…."

193: *medium axem*: Here *medius* refers to the position of the sun in the middle of the sky at midday, that is to say, in the southerly direction (as in French and other Romance languages), not "the middle of the world," as Green (*Latin Epics*, 206) translates; cf. Lucan, *Phars.* 2.586.

195: The idea that the crucified Christ rules the world appears in the fourth stanza of Venantius Fortunatus's hymn, *Vexilla regis: regnavit a ligno Deus*; cf. also the Itala version of Ps 96 (95):10.

196–199: The superscription on the cross (see Matt 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38; John 19:19–20). Only in the Gospel of John is it said to have been written in multiple languages.

196: *Hic est rex Iudaeorum*: While the first part of the line is dactylic, beginning with the superscription proper there are only spondees, even in the fifth (regularly dactylic) foot of the line. The slow spondees help to reinforce the importance of each word in the short superscription.

199: The fact that the superscription is written in three languages is given a Trinitarian "spin" by the poet, a theological note that is absent in the Gospel accounts.

200–201: The division of Christ's garment (see Matt 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34; John 19:23–24). In the synoptic Gospels the soldiers divide the garment immediately before the superscription is placed above his head, an ordering that Sedulius follows in the prose paraphrase (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 286). Here he follows the sequence in John.

200: *exuuiis*: a word loaded with military significance, often used to describe the armor stripped off a fallen warrior (see *Aen.* 2.275).

202–231: Two criminals are crucified with Jesus (see Matt 27:38–44; Mark 15:27–32; Luke 23:39–43).

206–208: The injustice of the situation is made vivid with a series of antitheses: *par* is balanced with *dispar*; *poena* with *causa*; *trium* with *deorum* in line 206. In lines 207–8, the poet points out that the thieves have committed crimes against the world while the world is guilty of crimes against its savior.

210–212: Sedulius's Jesus does not simply suffer passively as he hangs suspended on the tree. He is still hard at work being the *salutifer*. Insofar as the arms of the Latin cross (the *crux ordinaria*) are shorter than the stem, with the section above the crossbar shorter than the section below it, the effect can be seen as resembling some sort of huge scale. Even in his final agony the *dominator rerum* does not lose his power to judge. One of the criminals next to him is ushered into paradise; the other goes to hell. Sedulius's Jesus on the cross

is a judge, weighing out (*pensans*) the punishment for the just deserts of the criminals surrounding him, rendering judgment even as he himself is hanging (*pendens*) from his lofty scale (*praecelso examine*).

213–216: The thief who reviled Jesus is described as a hairy goat devouring a vine (cf. Virgil, *Georg.* 3.312 and John 15:1), while the other thief is likened to a lamb. The poet applies Jesus' description of the separation of the people in the last judgment in Matt 25:32–33 in terms of sheep and goats who will be placed on the left and the right sides of the Son of Man. The goat was often associated with the devil, whose iconography owes much to the Greek goat-god Pan; see Patricia Merivale, *Pan the Goat-God: His Myth in Modern Times* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969).

219: *arcebant uulnera palmas*: The thief is unable to stretch out his arms in his appeal to Jesus for mercy because they have been nailed to the cross. Much of the language is taken from Virgil's description of Cassandra in *Aen.* 2.405–406.

220–226: Heaven is the ultimate *locus amoenus*; for this term, see Curtius, *European Literature*, 192–202, and Karin Schlapbach, "The Pleasance, Solitude, and Literary Production: The Transformation of the *locus amoenus* in Late Antiquity," *JAC* 50 (2007): 34–50. The depiction of Christ as good shepherd tending his followers (see Luke 15:5–6) in this kind of peaceful bucolic setting with its *ver perpetuum* is found frequently in early Christian art. For the rejoicing in heaven when one lost sheep is found, see Luke 15:7. The seductive snake who enjoyed initial success in the Garden of Eden is so upset now that man has been restored to paradise that he groans in frustration (see Rev 12:7–9).

227–231: The comparison of the two thieves and their respective destinies continues. Line 229 begins with *infernas* and ends with *supernas*. One criminal breaks into hell; the other's "crime" consists of taking the kingdom of heaven by force (a good thing; see Matt 11:12).

232–244: The sky is darkened (see Matt 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44).

234–236: Just as the elements rejoiced to see their creator during the storm on Lake Galilee, here too they are in dark mourning clothes, as they grieve the death of Jesus.

237: "Deprived of their Father's help": A reference to Jesus' despairing cry, quoting Ps 22: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (see Matt 27:46; Mark 15:38).

238–239: "Joyful at his rising … sorrowful at his setting": a strong contrast between the light that shone at Jesus' birth (see Luke 2:9) and the darkness on the face of the earth at his death. *Ortum* and *occasum* are terms normally applied to the sun, but they refer here to Jesus' birth and death. Jesus was often, as we have seen, associated with the sun in early Christianity. (See the notes to *PC* 1.248–257 above.)

244: *triduo tulit antra*: The sun was darkened for a total of three hours (Matt

27:45), a number that corresponds, the poet observes, to the three days that Jesus will spend in the grave. In classical Latin poetry the word *antrum* often means cave or grotto. It is also used in this sense in the Vulgate (e.g., Gen 23:20). Later its meaning expands to include any kind of cavity (e.g., Prudentius, *Psych.* 774).

245–251: The earth quakes (see Matt 27:51–53).

247: *expauit natura*: Personified nature fears that the whole world will follow its creator to the underworld.

250: *pietas immensa*: This could be a case of the abstract being substituted for the concrete (*pietas* = *pius*). Jesus was often represented as larger than life in the Middle Ages. In the "Tiberius Psalter's" depiction of the harrowing of hell (British Library, Cotton Tiberius C. vi, f. 14r), for example, Christ is so tall that he has to stoop way over just to avoid bumping into the top part of the picture frame. See William Travis, "Representing Christ as Giant in Early Medieval Art," *Zeitschrift für Kuntsgeschichte* 62 (1999): 167–89. For Christ's size, see also the discussion in the notes to *PC* 2.45–51 above.

251: A complex line. The first and last words are from the same root (*perdo*) but have different cases, genders, and numbers (accusative neuter plural and nominative masculine singular respectively). The words on either side of the medial *non* come from the same root (*sisto*) but have different prefixes (*re-* and *con-*) as well as different cases, genders, and numbers. The same general idea, expressed with less sophisticated concision, can be found in John 3:17: "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

252–260: Jesus thirsts and is given vinegar to drink (see Matt 27:48; Mark 15:36; and John 19:28–30).

256: *Manzeribus*: A bold adaptation of a rare Hebrew word that means "bastard" in Deut 23:3 or "foreigner" in Zech 9:6.

259–60: Sweet wine that has turned into sour vinegar is no longer suitable for drinking at table. Sedulius explains its significance as follows: the people of Israel were once acceptable in God's eyes but have now become an illegitimate offspring (see Rom 9:30–10:21).

261–275: Jesus' death and the tearing of the temple veil (see Matt 27:50–53; Mark 15:37–38; Luke 23:44–46; John 19:30). In a number of manuscripts (e.g., Angers, Bib. Mun. 522) this is marked as the beginning of the final book of the poem.

262–263: *Ipse*: The intensive pronoun's repetition and prominent positioning in these lines is no accident. Even at this moment when he might appear to be most passive, Sedulius's Jesus is himself still very much in charge of the process of his death.

263–264: The repetition of *idem* ("the same") at the end of one line and imme-

diately again at the beginning of the next helps to emphasize the doctrinal point. Jesus is the same person before and after death.

265: *Non obeunte Deo*: Sedulius makes it clear that he is no Patripassionist, an adherent of a heresy which argued that Christ's divine and human nature were so closely united that the Father, too, suffered when the Son did.

269–275: A challenging reference to the great temple of Herod, described here as the *alumnus* of an even greater temple (Jesus), greeting the death of its adoptive parent with mixed emotions, not only saluting (*ouans*) this climactic moment in the history of salvation, but rending its veil in mourning (see Matt 27:51). In order to make this connection it is necessary for the reader to be familiar already with Jesus' own reference to his body as a temple earlier in the Gospel narratives (John 2:21). For a general discussion, see Nicholas Perrin, *Jesus the Temple* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010).

276–294: Apostrophe to death; the piercing of Jesus' side (see John 19:31–37).

276–277: The first lines of Sedulius's impassioned and lengthy apostrophe to death ask the same rhetorical questions that Paul does in 1 Cor 15:55: "O death, where is your victory? O death where is your sting?" See also Tertullian, *De resurr.* 54.

278: *insaturata*: On the idea that death has an insatiable appetite which can never be appeased no matter how many generations of humans it consumes, see Virgil, *Georg.* 2.492, and Statius, *Theb.* 4.474.

280: A line filled with repetitions; the repeated verb, adjective, and proper noun help to make the opposition between Christ and death clear.

282: For the observation that the creator of all things did not create death, see Wis 1:13–14: *mortem non fecit … creauit enim, ut essent omnia.*

284: On the "reign" of grace that replaces that of sin and death, see Rom 5:21: "So that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness …."

286: The last three words of the line come from Virgil, *Aen.* 1.150.

290–294: The piercing of Jesus' side represents three important aspects of the Christian faith-life: water = baptism; blood = the Eucharist; Christ's body = the believer's body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19).

295–314: The burial of Jesus and the guarding of the tomb (see Matt 27:57–66; Mark 15:42–47; Luke 23:50–56; John 19:38–42).

297: *generatio fallax*: see Matt 17:17.

303–304: *post … post … post*: The anaphora indicates the growing intensity of the poet's emotions as he once again addresses the folly of those who believe it possible to keep the giver of life in the realm of the dead.

308–309: *armate … signate … ponite … aduoluite*: The poet is so confident that nothing will avail to keep Jesus in the tomb that he issues repeated and sarcastic challenges to the guards to do their very best to make his escape impossible.

310: For the metaphorical expression in the second half of the line, see Virgil, *Aen.* 1.672: *cardine rerum.* As Walpole observes (*Early Latin Hymns*, 151), the word often translated as "hinge" might be better rendered as "pivot" since it was the point on which the door swung.
311–312: *undis … Tartara … caeli*: The poet delineates what *cuncta* means: all aspects of the ancient universe which were less hospitable to humans than the earth proper, the sea, the sky, and the underworld.
314: A line indebted to Lucan and Virgil (cf. *Phars.* 8.582: *explorate fidem* and *Ecl.* 9.34: *non ego credulus illis*).
312–314: The apostrophe concludes with two rhetorical questions addressed to the *saeue tumultus* who refuse to believe.
315–350: The empty tomb on Easter Sunday (see Matt 28:1–8; Mark 16:1–8; Luke 24:1–12; John 20:1–10).
315–322: A rhapsody in praise of Sunday. Its appellation as "the Lord's Day" (as it is still designated in Romance languages such as French and Italian) is appropriate, because it was the day that was the first to see both the newly created world (after the creator rested on Saturday; cf. Gen 2:1–3) and Jesus' resurrection (after he lay in the tomb on Saturday).
323: *Virgo parens*: Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus, is not specifically mentioned in any of the canonical Gospel accounts among the women who come to the tomb on Sunday morning. Matthew mentions Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary." Luke mentions Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, but not Mary the mother of Jesus.
332: *calcata … morte*: a vivid description of Christ trampling death underfoot (see Gen 3:15).
339–347: A lengthy *interrogatio,* in which Sedulius argues that it is unlikely that a thief in a hurry (as thieves generally are) would have taken the time to unwrap Christ's body and leave the clothes in the tomb rather than just taking the wrapped body.
351–358: An extensive digression, with three rhetorical questions in a row, using vehement language reminiscent of Joel 1:13. The contrast between *ecclesia* and *synagoga* is a commonplace in the later medieval artistic tradition (e.g., the Fürsten Gate of the cathedral in Bamberg). For the wording in line 352, see Virgil, *Aen.* 2.535: *pro talibus ausis.*
354: *tuba*: A straight trumpet, as opposed to the curved *cornu* or *bucina* (see Josh 6). On the importance of trumpets in warfare, see Num 10:9: *Si exieritis ad bellum … clangetis tubis.*
356: "sacrificial victim": On Christ, the "single sacrifice for sin," as the fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrifices, see Heb 10.
359: *in honore Mariae*: It makes sense to Sedulius that the one who brought Jesus into the world should be the one to declare that he has returned to life.

(See Weyman, *Beiträge zur Geschichte*, 125, for other early biblical exegetes who shared this point of view.) While Mary does not play a prominent role in the canonical Gospels or in the Acts of the Apostles after Jesus' resurrection, given the emphasis on her role as *Deipara* in the fifth century, the extra attention she receives here would most likely not have surprised Sedulius's Roman readers.

361: *Semper uirgo manet*: See 2.46–47, above; a final reminder of Mary's perpetual virginity.

363: *Grandia miracula*: The poem includes many miracles, but Jesus' resurrection from the dead is the climactic one from a theological perspective.

365–368: The Emmaus disciples recognize Jesus (see Luke 24:13–35).

366: *verus panis*: See John 6:22–59. The poet makes a connection between this dinner and the Eucharist where the true bread "is always present" for the faithful.

370–382: Jesus appears to the ten disciples in Thomas's absence (see Luke 24:36–43; John 20:19–23).

373: *corporeas … dapes:* For this phrase, see Ovid, *Metam.* 15.105.

382–391: Jesus appears to the eleven disciples (with Thomas present) (see John 20:24–29).

392–408: Jesus appears to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias (see John 21:1–14). None of the other disciples mentioned in the Gospel account is named here; Sedulius focuses on Peter.

394: Mostly unbiblical language: see Virgil, *Aen.* 11.298: *clauso gurgite murmur;* Ausonius, *Mosella* 331: *huic proprium clausos consaepto gurgite pisces.*

395: *fluctiuagam*: a rare, post-Augustan, poetic word (see Statius, *Silvae* 3.1.84).

397: See Ps 18:9: *praeceptum Domini lucidum.*

400: *piscis prunaeque … panis*: Three alliterative elements are allegorized in the following lines: the fish represent the water of baptism; the bread is the body of Christ in the Eucharist; the fire is the Holy Spirit.

407: *domini bonitate fruuntur*: See Ps 34:8: "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good."

408–415: Jesus' conversation with Peter (see John 21:15–23).

412–413: *in omni parte*: an indirect reference, perhaps, to the Roman see's claim to unique, universal supremacy.

409: See Virgil, *Aen.* 1.216; 8.184: *postquam exempta fames.*

410: *Rite toris*: elevated language that contrasts strongly with the humble fare being served. It is unlikely that Jesus and his disciples were reclining on the kinds of "couches" commonly found in Roman *triclinia* as they enjoyed their outdoor picnic on the shore. Whether such "Romanizations" would have struck any of Sedulius's readers as incongruous or not is hard to guess.

414–415: Augustine, too, connects the triple confession here with Peter's previous triple denial (Green, *Latin Epics*, 236).

416–421: The great commission (see Matt 28:16–20).
416–418: *Pacem … pacem … pacem*: a triple repetition, probably reflecting the Trinitarian formulation in Matt 28:19. The expression of peace itself comes not, however, from the conclusion of Matthew's Gospel but from Jesus' farewell to his disciples before his betrayal and crucifixion (see John 14:27).
418–419: On the charge to the disciples to free the world from evils, see Mark 16:16–18.
421: *in fonte lauari*: This periphrasis for "to baptize" is drawn from Virgil, *Ecl.* 3.97.
422–434: Jesus ascends into heaven (see Luke 24:50–52; Acts 1:9–10).
422–425: There are Virgilian echoes in these lines. For *Haec ubi dicta* (422), see Virgil, *Aen.* 1.81; for *abit sublimis* (425), see *Aen.* 1.415. On the influence of Virgilian imagery on descriptions of the ascension in Christian Latin poetry in general, see Jacques Fontaine, "Images virgiliennes de l'ascension céleste dans la poésie latine chrétienne," in *Jenseitsvorstellungen in Antike und Christentum: Gedenkschrift für Alfred Stuiber* (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1982), 55–67.
430–431: Daphnis sees the clouds beneath his feet in Virgil's fifth eclogue (58): *sub pedibusque uidet nubes et sidera Daphnis.*
435–438: There is no separate epilogue to the poem that might match the highly self-conscious *praefatio* with which the *PC* begins. It is not uncommon for ancient epics simply to end with the conclusion of the narrative proper and to lack a poetic summary (see, e.g., the ending of the *Aeneid*). Here it is noteworthy that Sedulius, who is not at all reticent elsewhere when it comes to inserting his own explanations or reactions, simply adopts the concluding words of the Gospel of John (21:25): "Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written."

Hymnus I

Cantemus, socii, domino; cantemus honorem.
Dulcis amor Christi personet ore pio.

Primus ad ima ruit magna de luce superbus:
Sic homo cum tumuit primus ad ima ruit.
Unius ob meritum cuncti periere minores:
Saluantur cuncti unius ob meritum.
Sola fuit mulier, patuit quae ianua leto:
Et qua uita redit, sola fuit mulier.
Frater iniquus erat iustum qui perculit olim:
Damnator Christi frater iniquus erat.
Transitus ille monet, quid prima amisit origo:
Quid uentura parent, transitus ille monet.
Arca leuatur aquis, homines ut perderet aequor:
Ne pereant homines, arca leuatur aquis.
Sume, pater, populos pro nati uulnere cunctos:
Cum tradis Christum, sume, pater, populos.
Hostia summa patris, tacitis signata figuris:
Quam reserat Christus, hostia summa patris.
Claudicat ecce uidens dominum, dum praeualet, haeres:
Aspera gens Christum claudicat ecce uidens.
Reppulit ille famem, uenitus crimine fratrum:
Venditus est Christus, reppulit ille famem.
Perfide, corde peris, dum uastant omnia plagae:
Dum cessant plagae, perfide, corde peris.
Agnus ab hoste sacer reuocauit sanguine patres:
Sanguine nosque refert agnus ab hoste sacer.
Obruit unda nefas populo gradiente per aequor:
Nunc populis mundi obruit unda nefas.
Murmurat impietas, manna ueniente refecta:

The Hymns

Hymn 1

Let us sing, my companions, to the Lord; let us sing his honor.
Let the sweet love of Christ resound from our pious mouths.

The first one plunged to the depths, in his pride, from the great light:
Even so, when man swelled up, the first one plunged to the depths.
Because of one man's deserts, all his descendants perished:
All are saved because of one man's deserts.
It was the woman alone who was the open door to death:
And the one by whom life returned was the woman alone.
A wicked brother once struck down a righteous one:
The one who doomed Christ was a wicked brother.
That passing reminds us of what our first original nature has lost:
Of what is prepared for us yet to come, that passing reminds us.
The ark was lifted up on the waters so that the sea could destroy the human race:
Lest the human race be destroyed, the ark is lifted up on the waters.
Receive, Father, all the nations, for the wound given to your Son:
When you hand over Christ, receive, Father, all the nations.
A father's supreme sacrifice bore a hidden figural meaning:
Christ makes plain his Father's supreme sacrifice.
Seeing the Lord, behold, the heir limps, even as he prevails:
The fierce race, seeing Christ, behold, limps.
That one banished hunger after he was sold by his criminal brothers:
Christ was sold; *he* has banished hunger.
Faithless one, you perished in your heart when the plagues destroyed everything:
When the plagues cease, faithless one, you perish in your heart.
The holy lamb with its blood rescued our forefathers from the enemy:
We too are brought back from the enemy by the holy lamb with its blood.
The waves submerged evil as the people walked through the sea:
Now for the world's peoples the waves have submerged evil.
The wicked murmured even as they were refreshed when manna came:

Panis adest Christus, murmurat impietas.
Plebs sibi dura caput terrae cultoris adoptat:
Abstulit, heu, Christum plebs sibi dura caput.
Lex dedit indicium ueteris de crimine poenae:
Quodque salus ueniat, lex dedit indicium.
En lapis irriguus, satiare, incredule, fonte:
Qui Christum reprobas, en lapis irriguus.
Carpitur igne sacro munus uotumque piorum:
Seditiosa tribus carpitur igne sacro.
Regna beata patris legis non contigit haeres:
Iesus dispensat regna beata patris.
Destruit arca Dei, muros dum circuit, hostem:
Sic hostem mundi destruit arca Dei.
Area uellus habet, madido sed uellere sicca est:
Siccum tota madens area uellus habet.
Vincis honore Dei promisso in munere gentes:
Affectum natae uincis honore Dei.
Tu decus omne tuis, qui sternis caede Goliam:
Qui uincis mundum, tu decus omne tuis.
Maxima dona Dei cuncti cecinere prophetae:
Impleuit Christus maxima dona Dei.
Pondera dura tulit mandatum legis et iram:
Gratia mandati pondera dura tulit.
Virgo Maria nitet, nullo temerante pudore:
Post partum pueri uirgo Maria nitet.
Filius hic hominis fit maxima quaestio mundi:
Nobiscum Deus est filius hic hominis.
Gaudia magna Dei mundus percepit et ambit:
Respuit, heu, mundus gaudia magna Dei.
Signa mouent populos, cernunt magnalia caeci:
Nulla tamen duros signa mouent populos.
Aspera mors populis ligno deducta cucurrit:
Aufertur ligno aspera mors populis.
Ipse tulit dominus pro poenis munera seruis:
Pro seruis poenas ipse tulit dominus.
Vita beata necem miseris auertere uenit:
Pertulit a miseris uita beata necem.
Lumen adesse Dei persensit Tartarus ingens:
Nec cernunt homines lumen adesse Dei.
Mors fera per hominem miserum sibi subdidit orbem:
Subdita congemuit mors fera per hominem.

Christ is present as bread, but the wicked murmur.
The hardhearted people took as their head one who grazed the earth:
Alas, Christ was removed as their head by the hardhearted people.
The law gave evidence of the ancient punishment for crime:
And, that salvation was to come, the law gave evidence.
Behold, a rock running with water; take your fill, unbeliever, from its spring:
You who reproach Christ, behold, a rock running with water.
The sacred fire snatched up the offering and the prayer of the pious:
The rebellious tribe was snatched up by the sacred fire.
The blessed kingdoms of the Father were not attained by the heir of the law:
Jesus bestows the blessed kingdoms of the Father.
The ark of God destroyed the enemy while it circled the walls of the city:
Thus the enemy of the world was destroyed by the ark of God.
There was a fleece on the threshing floor; it was wet though the surface was dry:
The whole surface was wet, but the fleece on the threshing floor was dry.
You overcame, for God's honor, the hostile peoples with a promised offering:
Your feelings for your daughter you overcame for God's honor.
You are the entire glory of your people, you who cut down Goliath:
You who conquer the world are the entire glory of your people.
The greatest gifts of God were sung by all the prophets:
Christ fulfilled the greatest gifts of God.
Harsh was the burden and the anger that the commandment of the law imposed:
Grace removed the commandment's harsh burden.
As a virgin Mary was resplendent and had no shame to disgrace her:
After the birth of her boy, Mary was resplendent as a virgin.
This Son of Man became the greatest test in the world:
God is with us as this Son of Man.
The great joys of God were recognized and sought out by the world:
Alas, the world rejected the great joys of God.
His miracles moved the people; the blind saw his mighty works:
Still, the hardened people was moved by none of his miracles.
For humans harsh death came on, derived from a tree:
From a tree harsh death is removed for humans.
The Lord himself brought gifts for his slaves instead of punishments:
For his slaves, punishments were removed by the Lord himself.
Blessed life came to turn away death from wretched men:
At the hands of wretched men, a blessed life endured death.
That the light of God was present was sensed by vast Tartarus:
But humans did not see that the light of God was present.
Fierce death overcame the poor world through a man:
Overcome through a man, fierce death groans aloud.

Suscitat ecce genus morti pater ille profanus:
Ad uitam Christus suscitat ecce genus.
Hic populus dominum dura ceruice negauit:
Suscepit primus hic populus dominum.
Sanguine laeta redit fuso gens impia Christi:
Gustato Christi sanguine laeta redit.
Crimina cuncta suis terrenus contulit auctor:
Dissoluit Christus crimina cuncta suis.
Libera corda sibi facinus deuinxerat olim:
Nunc reficit Christus libera corda sibi.
Fortia uincla dedit peccati saeua potestas:
Dulcis amor Christi fortia uincla dedit.
Iam super astra sedet, cuncti exultate fideles:
Perfide, quid saeuis? Iam super astra sedet.
Mortuus ille tonat, caelum terramque subiecit:
Quid facient hostes? mortuus ille tonat.
Pellitur umbra die, Christo ueniente figura:
Christus adit gentes, pellitur umbra die.
Te properare docent et signa et saecula prima:
Nos sacra quae gerimus te properare docent.
Unicus adueniens firmauit uota priorum:
Vota dedit nobis unicus adueniens.
Passio, Christe, tui compleuit munera legis:
Munera nostra replet passio, Christe, tui.
Hic homo qui Deus est spes est antiqua priorum:
Spes in fine piis hic homo qui Deus est.
Munus erit fidei toto credentibus aeuo:
Qui dedit ut credant, munus erit fidei.
Te ueniente, Deus, mundanus concidit error:
Occidit hic mundus te ueniente, Deus.
Gratia plena Dei est, quae totis gentibus exstat:
Abscedant sectae, gratia plena Dei est.
Sola columba redit, quae totum circuit orbem:
Discedant corui, sola columba redit.
Adueniet dominus dare digna piis, mala prauis:
Credite iam, miseri, adueniet dominus.
Visio, Christe, tui tormentum et poena malorum est:
Gloria cuncta bonis uisio, Christe, tui.

Gloria magna patri, semper tibi gloria, nate,
Cum sancto spiritu gloria magna patri.

Behold, a race was begotten by that unholy father for death:
It was for life that Christ, behold, begat a race.
This people with their stiff necks denied their Lord:
Their Lord was first received by this people.
After Christ's blood was spilled, the impious folk returned home joyfully:
The return home is joyful after Christ's blood is tasted.
All guilt was bequeathed to his descendents by their earthly ancestor:
To his own Christ has given pardon for all guilt.
Their hearts were free but wickedness had bound them fast once:
Now Christ restores to himself hearts that are free.
Strong chains were forged by the harsh power of sin:
The sweet love of Christ has forged strong chains.
Now he sits above the stars; rejoice, all you faithful:
O faithless one, why are you furious? Now he sits above the stars.
Though dead he thunders; he has overcome heaven and earth:
What will his enemies do? Though dead he thunders.
Shadows are dispelled from the day, as the figure of Christ appears:
Christ approaches the nations; shadows are dispelled from the day.
That you were hastening to come, the early signs and times taught us:
The holy rites we perform teach us that you are hastening to come.
A single man's advent answered the prayers of those who came earlier:
The answer to our prayers was given to us by a single man's advent.
Your passion, Christ, fulfilled the offices imposed by your law:
Our offices are made complete by your passion, Christ.
This man who is God has long been the hope of those who came before:
The hope for the pious at their end is this man who is God.
He will be the reward for faith forever for those who believe:
He who makes their belief possible will be the reward for faith.
At your coming, God, worldly error ceases:
This world is destroyed at your coming, God.
The grace of God is undivided, which exists among all the nations:
Away with schisms; the grace of God is undivided.
The dove alone returned, which traversed the whole world:
Let the ravens depart; the dove alone returns.
The Lord will come to give just rewards to the pious, evils to the wicked:
Believe now, miserable people, that the Lord will come.
Christ, the sight of you is torment and punishment for the wicked:
For the good it is all glorious to catch, Christ, the sight of you.

Great glory to the Father, eternal glory to you, the Son;
With the Holy Spirit, great glory to the Father.

Notes for Hymn 1

1–2: A short invocation. Many (but not all) of the couplets that follow in the first half of the hymn allude, however cryptically, in their first line, to an Old Testament "figure" that is fulfilled in the second line. A rough chronology prevails. Beginning with line 51, in the second half of the hymn, the diachronic sequencing gives way to a series of typological relationships between the first and the second lines of each distich as the dialectical rhythm continues.
3–4: The first one who fell "in his pride" from heaven was Lucifer (Isa 14:12), who is contrasted in the next line to Adam, the first man to fall into sin.
5–6: For the connection between Adam (5) and Christ (6), see Rom 5:12–21.
7–8: Eve is the Old Testament figure for Mary (cf. *PC* 2:30).
9–10: Cain and Abel are the referents in line 9; Judas and Jesus in line 10.
11–12: *Transitus ille*: a reference to Enoch's deathless end of life in Gen 5:22. For what Christians may expect that God has "prepared" for them, see 1 Cor 2:9. Cellarius incorrectly takes this to be a reference to the fateful *transitus in agrum* of Cain and Abel (cf. Gen 4:8).
13–14: The reference to the refuge Noah's ark provided in the flood is followed by a line that alludes to the church's salvific role in the present (on the correspondence between the ark and baptism, see 1 Pet 3:20–21).
15–16: The "father" in the first line is Abraham, who is to be "the father of a multitude of nations" (see Gen 17:4 and 22:16–17). The "Father" in the second line is God the Father of Christ, "before whom every knee shall bow" (Phil 2:10).
17–18: Isaac is the *hostia* in the first line and Abraham is the father prepared to make the supreme sacrifice (see Gen 22). The "hidden meaning" probably refers to the ram who is substituted for Isaac at the last minute, a type of Christ.
19–20: *haeres*: Jacob receives a better inheritance from his father Isaac than his brother Esau (Gen 27). When he later wrestles with God, he is lamed (Gen 32:25), so he limps, as do his descendants the Israelites, for whom Christ is a stumbling block (see 1 Cor 1:23).
21–22: Jacob's son, Joseph, helped to stave off the effects of a drought in Egypt after he was sold into slavery by his brothers (Gen 41:53–57). Christ, the bread of life (see John 6:35), was sold by Judas for thirty pieces of silver.

23–24: A stanza about the plagues visited upon Pharaoh and the hardness of his heart (Exod 7–11). The second line may refer to the devil, although it is somewhat unclear.
25–26: The historic Passover (Exod 12) is featured in the first line of the couplet; Christ the paschal lamb in the second (see 1 Cor 5:7).
27–28: The crossing of the Red Sea (Exod 14) is followed by a reference to baptism.
29–30: The Israelites tired of manna in the wilderness (Exod 16). Christ, who called himself the bread of life, was also the object of grumbling (see John 6:41).
31–32: "the head of an earth grazer": a reference to the golden calf (Exod 32); for this locution, see Ovid, *Fasti* 5.515.
33–34: *ueteris … poenae*: For the witness of the Old Testament to Christ, see, *inter alia*, John 5:39.
35–36: On the identification of the rock from which water flowed in the wilderness (Exod 17) with Christ, see 1 Cor 10:4.
37–38: The rebellious Korah and his family were swallowed up by the earth, and 250 Israelites were consumed by fire that "came out from the Lord" (Num 16:35).
39–40: "The heir of the law": Moses, often regarded in the early church as a prototype of Christ, the new lawgiver, did not himself enter into the promised land (see Deut 34:5); nor did most of the rest of the first generation of Israelites who had left Egypt with him.
41–42: The walls of Jericho fell down after the Israelites marched around them carrying the ark of the covenant and blowing on rams' horns (see Josh 6)
43–44: God gives Gideon a sign that he is with him. First, a fleece on a threshing floor is wet while the floor is dry. Then the situation is reversed (see Judg 6:36–40).
45–46: A reference to Jephtha who sacrificed his own daughter after he swore a hasty oath to offer to God the first thing he saw upon returning home from battle victorious (see Judg 11:29–40).
47–48: David slays Goliath (the latter is one of the few biblical characters referred to in the hymn to be named explicitly). David is a prototype of Jesus, "great David's greater son."
49–50: "All the prophets": Sedulius does not attempt to detail any of these familiar prophecies.
51: *Pondera dura*: perhaps a reference to Isa 53:4–6.
54: An allusion to the perpetual virginity of Mary (cf. *PC* 2:45–46), both before and after the birth of Jesus.
55: *Quaestio*: the issue in a debate. Possibly a reference to 1 Cor 1:22–23: "For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles."

57: "great joys": Presumably these are Jesus' miracles.
58: *Respuit*: a strong word whose literal meaning is "spit back."
61–62: *ligno*: The tree in the Garden of Eden which proved fatal for Adam and Eve is contrasted in the second line with the wooden cross.
67: "Tartarus": a Hesiodic word that Sedulius uses to designate the underworld frequently (ten times) in the *PC*.
69–70: "Fierce death": Death, which conquered the human race through Adam's fall, is overcome by the God-man, Christ. On this last concept see Reinhold Glei, "Jesus als Gottmensch in lateinischer Bibelepik," in *Gottmenschen. Konzepte existenzieller Grenzüberschreitungem im Altertum* (ed. Gerhard Binder, Bernd Effe, and Reinhold Glei; Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2003), 133–54.
71–72: Adam and Christ are again contrasted. One begets mortals, the other immortals.
73–74: The "stiff-necked" Israelites deny the Lord, but they are also the first to accept him.
76: "After it tastes Christ's blood": a reference to the Eucharist. In general, see A. Ström, "Abendmahl I," *TRE* 1 (1977): 43–47.
77–80: More contrasts between Adam and Christ.
83–84: "above the stars": Cf. Ps 108:5: "Be exalted, O God, above the heavens!"
85: *subiecit*: This reading makes more sense than Huemer's *subegit*. The reading in Taur. E.IV.42 (*subgecit*) is impossible as it stands.
88: "Christ approaches the nations": See Matt 25:31–32: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations."
90: "you are hastening to come": See Rev 22:20: "Even so come quickly, Lord Jesus."
94: "Our offices": perhaps a reference to the liturgy.
100: On the fiery end of the world at the Lord's return, see 2 Pet 3:10: "… the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire."
102: "Away with schisms": A common concern in the early Catholic church was the question of unity. See, e.g., Augustine's concerns about the sectarian consequences of the Donatist heresy in North Africa as expressed in his *Psalmus contra partem Donati* and elsewhere. See the discussion in C. Springer, "The Prosopopoeia of the Church as Mother in Augustine's *Psalmus contra Partem Donati*," *Augustinian Studies* 18 (1987): 52–65. Remigius (Huemer, *Sedulii Opera omnia*, 358) suggests that *sectae* are the same as heresies, but the two terms are frequently distinguished. Here Sedulius seems to have in mind the divisive effect of heterodoxy rather than its false teaching per se.
103–104: "The dove … the ravens": See Gen 8:6–12. The dove returned to Noah's ark (the church) after the flood, unlike the raven who went his own way.

105–106: The second advent of Christ in judgment figures prominently in the popular medieval hymn beginning, *Dies irae, dies illa.*
109–110: The concluding couplet with its doxology to the Trinity provides a neat "bookend" to the hymn whose first couplet was an invitation to praise Christ. The word *gloria* appears three times in two lines. On the word's evolution in early Christian Latin, see Antonius Johannes Vermeulen, *The Semantic Development of Gloria in Early-Christian Latin* (Nimwegen: Dekker & van de Vegt, 1956).

Hymnus II

A solis ortus cardine
Adusque terrae limitem
Christum canamus principem,
Natum Maria uirgine.

Beatus auctor saeculi
Seruile corpus induit,
Vt carne carnem liberans
Non perderet quod condidit.

Clausae parentis uiscera
Caelestis intrat gratia,
Venter puellae baiulat
Secreta quae non nouerat.

Domus pudici pectoris
Templum repente fit Dei,
Intacta nesciens uirum
Verbo creauit filium.

Enixa est puerpera
Quem Gabrihel praedixerat,
Quem matris aluo gestiens
Clausus Iohannes senserat.

Faeno iacere pertulit,
Praesepe non abhorruit,
Paruoque lacte pastus est,
Per quem nec ales esurit.

Gaudet chorus caelestium,
Et angeli canunt Deum,
Palamque fit pastoribus
Pastor creatorque omnium.

Hymn 2

From the extremity where the sun rises
Right up to the earth's outer limit,
Let us sing of Christ our leader,
Born of the virgin Mary.

The blessed maker of the world
Clothed himself in a slave's body,
So that by freeing flesh with flesh
He might not annul what he created.

Heavenly grace entered
The womb of an unpenetrated parent.
The belly of the girl was weighed with
Secrets which she did not know.

The home of her chaste breast
Suddenly became the temple of God.
Untouched, not knowing a man,
By the word she brought forth a son.

She labored and gave birth
To the one whom Gabriel predicted.
Enclosed in his mother's womb,
John recognized him and jumped for joy.

He put up with lying in the hay.
He did not shun the manger.
And he was fed with simple milk,
Who does not allow even a bird to hunger.

The heavenly choir rejoiced,
And the angels proclaimed God in song,
And to the shepherds was revealed
The Shepherd, the Creator of all.

Hostis Herodes impie,
Christum uenire quid times?
Non eripit mortalia
Qui regna dat caelestia.

Ibant magi qua uenerant,
Stellam sequentes praeuiam.
Lumen requirunt lumine;
Deum fatentur munere.

Katerua matrum personat,
Collisa deflens pignora,
Quorum tyrannus milia
Christo sacrauit uictimam.

Lauacra puri gurgitis
Caelestis agnus attigit,
Peccata quae non detulit
Nos abluendo sustulit.

Miraculis dedit fidem,
Habere se Deum patrem,
Infirma sanans corpora
Et suscitans cadauera.

Nouum genus potentiae:
Aquae rubescunt hydriae,
Vinumque iussa fundere
Mutauit unda originem.

Orat salutem seruulo
Nixus genu centurio,
Credentis ardor plurimus
Extinxit ignes febrium.

Petrus per undas ambulat
Christi leuatus dextera.
Natura quam negauerat
Fides parauit semitam.

O you enemy, impious Herod,
Why did you fear Christ's coming?
He does not take away earthly realms,
Who bestows heavenly ones.

The wise men made their way following
The star ahead of them by which they had come.
They sought out the light with a light;
They acknowledged God with their gift.

A crowd of mothers cried out,
Lamenting their smashed offspring,
Thousands of whom the tyrant
Sacrificed as victims for Christ.

Into the bath of the pure river,
The heavenly Lamb entered.
The sins which he did not bear
He took from us by his washing.

With miracles he provided proof
That God was his Father.
He was healing sickly bodies
And raising corpses from the dead.

A new kind of power!
The jugs of water reddened,
And when commanded to pour as wine,
The waves changed their original nature.

A centurion prayed for his young slave
To be healed, as he knelt on bended knee.
The blazing heat of his faith
Extinguished the fever's fire.

Peter walked through the waves,
Held up by Christ's right hand.
The path which nature denied,
His faith provided for him.

Quarta die iam fetidus
Vitam recepit Lazarus,
Mortisque liber uinculis
Factus superstes est sibi.

Riuos cruoris torridi
Contacta uestis obstruit,
Fletu rigante supplicis
Arent fluenta sanguinis.

Solutus omni corpore,
Iussus repente surgere,
Suis uicissim gressibus
Aeger uehebat lectulum.

Tunc ille Iudas carnifex
Ausus magistrum tradere,
Pacem ferebat osculo,
Quam non habebat pectore.

Verax datur fallacibus,
Pium flagellat impius,
Crucique fixus innocens
Coniunctus est latronibus.

Xeromurram post sabbatum
Quaedam uehebant compares,
Quas allocutus angelus
Viuum sepulchro non tegi.

Ymnis uenite dulcibus,
Omnes canamus subditum
Christi triumpho Tartarum,
Qui nos redemit uenditus.

Zelum draconis inuidi
Et os leonis pessimi
Calcauit unicus Dei
Seseque caelis reddidit.

On the fourth day, already stinking,
Lazarus recovered his life,
And free from the chains of death,
He became his own heir.

Rivers of hot gore were stopped
By the touch of his garment.
The flowing tears of the suppliant
Dried up the torrent of blood.

A sick man paralyzed in his whole body,
When ordered suddenly to rise,
Began to carry his own bed
Instead of being carried, as he walked away.

Then Judas, that executioner,
Dared to betray his master.
The peace which he was offering in his kiss,
He did not have in his heart.

The truthful one was given to the liars,
The wicked scourged the good,
The innocent one was fastened to the cross,
In the company of thieves.

After the Sabbath some women joined together
And were bringing him dried myrrh.
To them the angel declared
That the living one was not buried in the tomb.

Come, with sweet hymns,
Let us all sing of the vanquishing
Of Tartarus by Christ's triumph,
Who was sold, but redeemed us.

The ferocity of the envious serpent
And the mouth of the evil lion,
The only Son of God has trampled underfoot
And restored himself to the heavens.

Notes for Hymn 2

1: *A solis ortus cardine*: One of the best known lines of Latin hymnody, frequently quoted and even parodied in the Middle Ages. See, e.g., the first stanza of the anonymous lament for Charlemagne: *A solis ortu usque ad occidua / littora maris planctus pulsat pectora* (*MGH PLAC* 1, 435–36). From a later date, we have a parody directed against the Hussites that begins: *A solis ortus cardine precessit solis radius*, etc. (see Walther, *Initia*, 88). For another example of parody involving first lines of other famous Latin hymns, see the macaronic drinking song, *Jubilus Bibulorum* (Hermann Ühlein and Elisabeth Gensler, "Liturgie und Parodie: Tagzeitengesänge in feucht-fröhlicher Runde," in *Liturgie und Dichtung: Ein interdisziplinäres Kompendium* [ed. Hansjakob Becker and Rainer Kaczynski; St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag Erzabtei, 1983], 1:642–44). Ford Madox Ford used the words as the title for a poem on World War I, which begins: "Oh, quiet peoples sleeping bed by bed / Beneath grey roof-trees in the glimmering West, / We who can see the silver grey and red / Rise over No Man's land—salute your rest." The line is also included in William Walton's musical setting of "Make We Joy Now in this Fest," a fifteenth-century macaronic carol; see Hugh Keyte and Andrew Parrott, eds., *The Shorter New Oxford Book of Carols* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1993), 198–99.

2: *Adusque terrae limitem*: For the idea of universal praise directed to God, from the rising of the sun in the east all the way to the western horizon beyond which lay only the ocean, see Ps 113:3; Isa 45:6; Mal 1:11.

6: "Clothed himself in a slave's body": See Phil 2:6–7: "Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men."

7: … *carne carnem*: Only by becoming flesh can God "free flesh." See Prudentius, *Cath.* 11.45.

10: See *PC* 2.44–46 on the closure of Mary's womb both before and after birth. For Sedulius, Mary is *semper virgo*, and he does not shy away from graphic language, less commonly found in later hymnic literature, to make that point vividly clear.

14: *Templum repente fit Dei*: See Mal 3:1: "And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple."
15: "Untouched, not knowing a man": Mary makes this observation of herself in her response to the angel (see Luke 1:34).
16: "By the word": that is, by the word spoken to Mary by the angel. *Creauit* is an unusual word in this context, where we would ordinarily expect a reference to "birthing," not "making," but see Virgil, *Aen.* 10.551 and *PC* 2.144.
17: *Enixa est*: The hiatus between the two words is avoided in the Roman breviary version by emending the first word to *Enititur*. The noun and the verb both occur in *PC* 2.63.
19–20: "John … jumped for joy": For this prenatal episode in Christ's life, see Luke 1:41.
21: "lying in the hay": a homely touch. The Gospel account makes no mention of hay, although the full manger is often featured in nativity art through the ages. It is the last word of the first stanza of the popular American Christmas carol, "Away in a Manger."
22: "He did not shun the manger": See Luke 2:12. For a similar use of the same verb, see the *Te Deum* 16: *non horruisti uirginis uterum.*
23: "simple milk": *Paruo lacte* means literally, "a little milk," another realistic detail, not mentioned in Luke.
24: "Who does not allow even a bird to hunger": See Matt 6:26: "Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them."
25–28: For "the heavenly choir" and its song of praise, see Luke 2:13–18. This is the last of the first seven stanzas of the hymn (A–G) found in so many ancient breviaries, to be sung at Lauds on Christmas Day as a self-standing hymn.
27–28: On the revelation of the divine "shepherd" (cf. 1 Pet 2:25) to shepherds, see *PC* 2.70.
29: *Hostis Herodes*: For metrical reasons, Erasmus changed the first words of what had become an Epiphany hymn to *Herodes hostis*. The Roman breviary has the more quantitatively correct *Crudelis Herodes.* As Walpole notes, however, it is possible even in classical Latin versification to take metrical liberties with proper names. And, as he adds, "Sedulius's prosody was not that of Horace" (*Early Latin Hymns*, 153). The observation applies particularly well to this hymn, where quantitative concerns (measuring the length of syllables) seem to be giving way to the kind of qualitative emphasis (accentual versification) which characterizes much subsequent Latin and vernacular poetry.
30: "Why did you fear Christ's coming?" A rhetorical question addressed to Herod (cf. *PC* 2.83).
31–32: Some typically Sedulian antitheses: *eripit* is contrasted with *dat*; *mortalia* with *caelestia*.

33–34: Many manuscripts read *Ibant magi quam uiderant*, following Matt 2:9, but the reading in the text does make sense if we understand *qua* as a relative pronoun which precedes the noun it modifies (*stellam*).
36: "They acknowledged God with their gift": See *PC* 2.96. Of the three gifts, frankincense is the one associated with an offering fit for a deity.
37: *Caterua*: If it were not for the alphabetical context, we would expect *Caterva*, but the letter "K" disappeared from the Latin alphabet early on and is found later only in rare instances. Quintilian (*Inst.* 1.7.10) and other grammarians argued that it should be used, as it is here, for initial "C" before "a." For *personat*, see Jer 31:7: *personate et canite et dicite*.
39: *deflens*: More intensive than simple weeping (*flens*); cf. Venantius Fortunatus, *Carm.* 4.6.17.
41: "the pure river": a reference to the Jordan River and its capacity for spiritual purification, not its physical cleanliness.
43: *Quae non detulit*: A few manuscripts read *qui mundi tulit* (see John 1:29). It is more likely that the latter, biblical locution has crept into the text of the hymn (because of its familiarity to monastic scribes) than that the former did. The biblical formulation also eliminates the Sedulian antithesis: the one who himself bore no sin, took up ours instead. Given the poet's passion for this particular figure, it seems more prudent to stick with the majority reading.
45–48: *fidem … patrem … corpora … cadauera*: Sedulius uses end rhymes, like Ambrose before him, frequently but not regularly. This stanza and several others in the hymn anticipate what was to become practically an obsession with end rhyme in European verse that continued well into the twentieth century.
49–52: The wedding at Cana (see John 2:1–11). The "first of his signs," that is to say, turning water into wine at the wedding at Cana, was considered one of three distinctive manifestations of Jesus' divinity. This pericope along with the visit of the magi and the baptism of Jesus served as Gospel lessons on successive Sundays during the season of Epiphany. Stanzas H, I, L, and N were separated off from the preceding and following stanzas and sung as a self-standing hymn at Matins and Vespers on January 6.
50: *rubescunt*: a colorful verb to describe the transformation of water into wine, as in *PC* 2.7. The same word is used much later by Richard Crashaw: *Lympha pudica Deum vidit et erubuit* (W. White, *Notes and Queries* 8, no. 202: 242). On the theological significance of the color change, see Maria Grazia Bianco, "A proposito di *aquae rubescunt hydriae*," *Augustinianum* 33 (1993): 49–56.
54: "On bended knee": a vivid detail not present in the Gospels' accounts (see, e.g., Matt 8:5–13). The centurion begged for his servant to be healed, but there is no mention of kneeling.
56: *ignes febrium*: Sedulius makes a paradoxical point: burning faith can quench a burning fever. A fever is not mentioned in the Gospel accounts.

60: *fides parauit semitam*: The poet fails to mention that Peter was at first afraid and began to sink. In fact, he was only saved after Jesus reached out his hand and asked: "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" (see Matt 14:28–33).
61: "already stinking": a relatively minor point in the context of the lengthy Gospel account (John 11:1–44). By contrast, this detail occupies a significant portion of this miniature treatment of the raising of Lazarus.
64: *superstes … sibi*: Cf. *PC* 4.289–90. Venantius Fortunatus makes the same point of a dead man raised by Martin of Tours (*Vit. Mart.* 1.176): *ipse iterum post se uiuens, idem auctor et heres.*
65: *torridi*: The gore is either "dry," proleptically, or "hot," that is to say, fresh.
69–72: Another miracle (the healing of the paralytic; see Matt 9:1–8). In this hymn, even more so than in the *PC,* Sedulius's narrative features Jesus' life and deeds rather than his teachings. The latter take up many chapters in the canonical Gospels.
73: "Judas, that executioner": *Carnifex* is a technical word, often used to designate those whose office it was to put to death foreigners and slaves, not Roman citizens. Sedulius may have its literal meaning in mind here, intended as a strong term of abuse.
77–80: A stanza filled with startling antitheses: *uerax* and *fallacibus* in the first line; *pium* and *impius* in the second, *innocens* and *latronibus* in the third and fourth. McGill suggests that in this stanza and the previous one, Sedulius may be borrowing from Augustine's sermons.
81: *Xeromurram*: An unusual Greek word, unattested elsewhere, referring to the form in which myrrh was usually exported, namely, dried. The other textual possibility, attested in some of the printed editions is to read *Christo myrrham,* and have the stanza begin with the traditional Chi Rho abbreviation for Christ. (The Greek "chi" looks like the Roman "x.") *Altus prosator*, a later alphabetical hymn, does use Christ's name in this position in its alphabetical sequence. It is hard, however, to imagine a scribe substituting the Greek word for "dry" for the sacred name of Christ, so it seems more prudent to stick with the *lectio difficilior*.
85: *Ymnis*: Latin can omit the aspirate when it borrows Greek words such as this one, so here the ypsilon appears without the aspirate (as the Roman alphabet's "y") for the sake of filling out the alphabet at the end, where there are far fewer words at the poet's disposal. Hilary of Poitiers followed the same procedure in one of his alphabetic hymns. Augustine's *Psalmus contra partem Donati* simply stops at "T."
88: *Tartarum*: One of Sedulius's favorite words for the underworld (see Hymn 1, line 67).
89–91: "serpent … lion … trampled underfoot": See Ps 91:13 ("You will tread on the lion and the adder; the young lion and the serpent you will trample

underfoot") and Gen 3:15 ("He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel"). The stanza in which Jesus, "the alpha and the omega," ascends to earth from heaven provides a suitable ending for this hymn. Alphabetical psalms and hymns need not end with a doxology because the literary format itself offers the reader (or singer) a clear sense of comprehensiveness and closure. Everyone knows that the poem is finished when the final letter of the alphabet is reached. On the lack of doxologies in general in Latin hymns before the sixth century, see Josef Szövérffy, *Die Annalen der lateinischen Hymnendichtung* (Berlin: Schmidt, 1964), 34–35.

Appendix A
Sedulius's Letters to Macedonius

Epistola ad Macedonivm 1

Sancto ac beatissimo patri Macedonio presbytero Sedulius in Christo salutem. Priusquam me, uenerabilis pater, operis nostri decurso uolumine censeas et ritu[1] forsan seueritatis obiurges, utpote qui nulla ueteris scientiae praerogatiua suffultus tam immensum paschalis pelagus maiestatis et uiris quoque peritissimis formidandum parua tiro lintre cucurrerim, huius apud te facti causas expurgem, ut cum me non audacem fuisse probaueris sed deuotum, in pectoris tui portum blanda tranquillitate recipias, quem gubernante Deo laetaberis nulla pertulisse naufragia. Cum saecularibus igitur studiis occupatus uim impatientis ingenii, quod diuinitatis in me prouidentia generauit, non utilitati animae sed inani uitae dependerem, et litterariae sollertia disciplinae lusibus infructuosi operis, non auctori seruiret, tandem misericors Deus, rerum conditor, clementius fabricam sui iuris aspexit et stultos in me mundanae sapientiae diutius haberi sensus indoluit ac fatuum prudentiae mortalis ingenium caelesti sale condiuit. Moxque ut cordis oculos interior caligo deseruit, per sentes dumosi ruris errantia in herbam florei caespitis reuolui uestigia totoque nisu melioris arbitrii cultum illustrati pectoris Deo dicaui, non praesumptione uirium sarcinam tantae molis arripiens, sed onus Christi, quod leue nimis est, humili pronus deuotione complectens, culpa me scilicet arbitratus silentii non carere si studiosae mentis officium, quod uanitati detulissem, ueritati denegarem, cum et diuina reuerenter asseri et humana possint honeste tractari. Angebar alia rursus animi procella turbati et aegros anhelitus illa mihi saepe ratio commouebat, qua me noueram uel tua, pater beatissime, uel aliorum, quos gratia similiter caelestis illustrat, quiddam profecisse doctrina. Quamquam ipsi cuncta monstrantes aliquem credatis igniculum in me posse lucere; sed torpor cordis obtunsi

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1. I read *ritu* with the majority of the manuscripts instead of Huemer's *rite*. Otherwise it is necessary to emend *seueritatis* to something like Petschenig's conjectural *temeritatis* to make sense of the passage.

First Epistle to Macedonius

To the holy and most blessed father, Macedonius, the presbyter, Sedulius extends his greetings. Venerable father, before you review my volume and judge it, and with a show of severity scold me as someone who, though buttressed by no claim to extensive knowledge, as a novice in a little skiff,[1] has sailed across the ocean of paschal majesty, so huge that it is feared even by the most learned men, let me explain to you the reasons behind my undertaking, so that when you discover that I am not so much bold as devout, you may receive me into the harbor of your heart in comforting tranquility, rejoicing that I have suffered no shipwreck with God serving as my pilot. While I was applying to secular studies the energies of my restless intellect, which divine providence engendered within me, and was paying attention not to my soul's good, but to my useless career, and while my skills in literary studies were devoted to playing fruitless games, not serving *the* author, at long last the merciful God, the creator of the universe, regarded with compassion me, his rightful creation, and was troubled that my senses had been so long attached to worldly wisdom and seasoned my insipid taste for human knowledge with heavenly salt.[2] And as soon as the inner fog was cleared from the eyes of my heart, I turned my feet which had been wandering through the briars of a thorny countryside back onto the grass of the flowery turf and dedicated to God the use of my illuminated mind with all the effort of a better intention, not trusting in my powers to pick up the baggage of such a great load, but subserviently in humble devotion embracing the burden of Christ which is very light [cf. Matt 11:30], having reckoned, you see, that I would be blamed for my silence if I were to deny to the truth the services of a studious mind which I had devoted to vanity, when it is possible for divine things to be proclaimed with reverence and for human things to be treated honorably. I was distressed by yet another storm in my troubled mind, and this thought was frequently arousing bitter sighs within me, namely, that I knew, most blessed father, that it was owing to your instruction, as well as that of others equally illuminated by heavenly grace, that I had made a certain degree of progress. Although you yourself have been the one teaching me everything and believe that some little fire could

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1. As Green observes (*Latin Epics*, 155 n. 130), this is a common poetological metaphor (see Horace, *Carm.* 4.15.3-4, Virgil, *Georg.* 2.41, and Statius, *Theb.* 12.809).

2. See Col 4:6 for "speech seasoned with salt."

tamquam silicis uena scintillam tenuem uix emittit, et id ipsum parui fomitis nutrimentum, quod in me potuit doni caelestis oleo permanere, nefas esse pensabam muti tenacitate silentii cum nullo partiri, ne unius talenti creditam quantitatem dum nitor cautius custodire, culpa defossae pecuniae non carerem. Inuidiae siquidem maculam de sese non abluit qui alteri conferre denegat, quod cum dederit non amittit. Inter diuersas tamen anxiae trepidationis ambages ad iaciendum huius operis fundamentum ob hoc maxime prouocatus accessi, ut alios exhortationibus ueritatis ad frugem bonae messis inuitans, si quando infirmitatis humanae uitiis forsitan lacessitus impugner, uerbis propriae disputationis ammonitus metuam, et qui furta prohibui fur uideri uerear, et qui rectae soliditatis iter ostendi procliuioris lubrici periculosa sectari, et clipeo dominicae protectionis armatus inimicae iaculationis tela facili repulsione contemnam.

Cur autem metrica uoluerim haec ratione componere, non differam breuiter expedire. Raro, pater optime, sicut uestra quoque peritia lectionis assiduitate cognoscit, diuinae munera potestatis stilo quisquam huius modulationis aptauit, et multi sunt quos studiorum saecularium disciplina per poeticas magis delicias et carminum uoluptates oblectat. Hi quicquid rhetoricae facundiae perlegunt, neglegentius assequuntur, quoniam illud haud diligunt, quod autem uersuum uiderint blandimento mellitum, tanta cordis auiditate suscipiunt, ut in alta memoria saepius haec iterando constituant et reponant. Horum itaque mores non repudiandos aestimo sed pro insita consuetudine uel natura tractandos, ut quisque suo magis ingenio uoluntarius adquiratur Deo. Nec differt qua quis occasione imbuatur ad fidem, dum tamen uiam libertatis ingressus non repetat iniquae seruitutis laqueos, quibus ante fuerat irretitus. Hae sunt, pater egregie, nostri operis causae, non superuacuae, sicut didicisti, sed commodae, quae si

flare up in me too, the dullness of my hardened heart, as if a vein of flint, hardly gives forth a tiny spark, and I was thinking that it would be wrong of me to keep persistent, close-mouthed silence, and not to share with anyone else that same flicker of scant light that could remain in me from the oil given by heaven, lest while striving to carefully preserve the value of the one talent entrusted to me, I incur the fault of buried money.[3] After all, a person does not wash the stain of ill repute off himself if he refuses to entrust to somebody else that which he does not lose by giving it away. Nonetheless, among the various winding mazes of nervous hesitation I undertook to lay the foundations of this work, inspired mostly because by inviting others with admonitions of the truth to enjoy the fruits of the good harvest, if ever perhaps I should be assaulted by the faults of my human infirmity, I would be warned by the words of my own treatise and grow apprehensive (as one who had denounced theft would fear to seem to be a thief, and as one who had pointed out the straight, firm road would fear following the dangers of the slippery way leading downward), and so, armed with the shield of the Lord's protection, I would despise with an easy resistance the darts hurled by the enemy.[4]

But I will not put off explaining briefly why I chose to compose this work in metrical form. Best father, as you also know from your tireless experience in reading, only rarely has anyone turned the gifts of divine power into a composition of this type, and there are many for whom instruction in worldly letters is all the more attractive because of the delights of poetry and the pleasures of verse. These readers pay slighter attention to whatever they read in the way of oratorical eloquence, since they take hardly any pleasure in it; but what they see honeyed with the allurement of verse they take up with such eagerness in their hearts that by repeating it again and again they become sure of it and store it up in the depths of their memory.[5] So, I think that these readers' habits should not be disregarded but handled in accordance with their established customs and nature, so that each of them should be won for God of their own will in greater accord with their own disposition. Nor does it matter by what occasion someone is initiated into the faith, as long as once he has set off down the road of liberty he does not seek out again the snares of wicked slavery in which he had been previously trapped. Excellent father, this is the rationale for my work; it is not a frivolous one, as you have learned, but appropriate; if its plan is worthwhile and does

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3. A reference to the parable of the talents (see Matt 21:33-41). For a similar application of the parable to literary activity, see John Milton's sonnet on his blindness: "And that one talent which is death to hide / lodged with me useless...."

4. For "the flaming darts of the evil one," see Eph 6:16; see also Roberts, *Biblical Epic*, 84 n. 92.

5. Roberts, *Biblical Epic*, 85, translates *rhetoricae facundiae* as "rhetorical prose."

probabili ratione non displicent, benignitatis tuae donentur fauore, quo paululum ab scripturis celsioribus uacans humilioribus te quoque libenter impertias. Non semper aquila supra nubes elata peruolitat, sed etiam remissioribus aliquando pennis[2] descendit ad terram. Saepe belliger miles armis quibus assuetus est dimicare delectatur et ludere.

At forsitan ut ab hac te molestia perlegendi carminis in occultis abducas, talibus me blandae orationis uocibus alloqueris: "Cur," inquiens, "affabilis amice, quem gratia purae dilectionis amplector, dum me profusius niteris uenerari prae ceteris et fidi propositi sedulitate sectaris, alios tamquam neglectos offendas, qui dum sint doctrina non impares et una mecum soleant religiosae fidei societate coniungi, me potissimum ac solum eligas uel secernas, cui deuotionis tuae dicta committas? Habes antistitem plenum reuerentiae sacerdotalis Vrsinum, qui ab aetatis primaevae tirocinio regis aeterni castra non deserens uixit inter barbaros pius, inter bella pacatus. Accepit testimonium beati iam meriti euangelicae sacramento doctrinae. Legimus enim: "Beati pacifici, quoniam ipsi filii Dei uocabuntur." Habes Laurentium difficili comparatione presbyterum, qui substantiam sui patrimonii sic amauit, ut ecclesiis et egenis uniuersa distribuens tanti census effusione nihil perderet, sapientia peruigil, lenitate placabilis, quo et serpentis astutiam cum lege custodiat et columbae simplicis animum non amittat. Habes quoque meum Gallianum aeque presbyterum, non in libris saecularibus eruditum sed placida bonitate mitissimum, catholicae regulam disciplinae factis potius edocentem quam sermone monstrantem. Quid Vrsini dicam quoque presbyteri annosam patientiam et in Christi famulatu non deficiendo iuuenalem senectam? Quidue Felicem referam uere felicem, saeculi huius inimicum, cui crucifixus est mundus? Sunt et alii memorabiles uiri quam plurimi, quos ad hoc suscipiendum idoneos esse constat officium. Nec Hieronymi, diuinae legis interpretis et caelestis bibliothecae cultoris, exemplar pudeat imitari atque ad generosas quoque feminas et praeclarae indolis fama subnixas, in quarum mentibus sacrae lectionis instantia sobrium sapientiae domicilium collocauit,

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2. Huemer (413) changes to *pinnis*, but most of the manuscripts have *pennis*; it is only an orthographic variation and does not affect the meaning.

not displease you, I hope that it may be given the favor of your kindly approval, so that you may take a tiny break from writings that are loftier and gladly enjoy humbler fare. The eagle does not always soar high above the clouds, but also descends to earth sometimes in easier flight. The battle-hardened soldier also often delights to play with the arms with which he is accustomed to fight.

But in the secret hopes of getting out of the unpleasant task of reading my poem, you will perhaps address me in flattering words, saying something like this: "Why, kind friend, whom I embrace with pure affection, in seeking to show respect to me more than others and pursuing me zealously with single-minded purpose, should you offend others as though they were beneath your consideration, when they are my equals in doctrine and are accustomed to be joined with me in the community of our religious faith, and select, or rather, single me out alone, above all others, to whom to entrust your pious poetry? You have a bishop filled with priestly reverence, Ursinus, who, already as a raw recruit at an early age did not desert the camps of the eternal king but lived a holy life among the barbarians, at peace in the midst of war. He has now received the attestation of blessed worth through the sacrament of the Gospel's teaching. For we read: 'Blessed are the peacemakers, since they will be called the sons of God.'[6] You have Laurentius, a priest beyond compare, who loved the substance of his inheritance so much that he distributed it in its entirety to the churches and to the needy, and he lost nothing in expending such a fortune; he is watchful in his wisdom, pleasantly kind, so that he preserves the cunning of a serpent with the law and does not lose the spirit of the innocent dove.[7] You have my Gallianus as well, also a priest, not erudite in worldly books, but the gentlest of men in his goodness and charity, teaching the rule of catholic doctrine with his deeds rather than demonstrating it in his words. What shall I say about the long-lived patience of Ursinus, also a presbyter, and his service of Christ, not failing in his youthful old age?[8] Or why should I bring up Felix who is truly happy, an enemy of this generation, to whom the world is crucified?[9] There are a great many other men who are thought well suited to take up this kind of task. Nor should you be ashamed to follow the example of Jerome, the interpreter of the divine law and student of heaven's library, and entrust the written evidence of your argument also to noble women who are well known for their excellent disposition, in whose minds the practice of reading sacred texts has constructed a modest little

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6. A quotation from the Beatitudes, Matt 5:9.

7. On the serpent and the dove, see Matt 10:16.

8. The phrase *iuuenalem senectam* is a nice oxymoron.

9. Sedulius puns on the meaning of Felix's name ("the happy one"). On being "crucified to the world," see Gal 6:14.

propriae disputationis documenta transmittere. Quis non optet et ambiat eximio Syncletices, sacrae uirginis ac ministrae, placere iudicio, quae superbi sanguinis nobilitatem sic humilitate prouexit ad gloriam, ut in caelestis patriae senatu fieri mereatur allecta? Vere dignum in quo dominus habitet templum, ieiuniis castigatum, orationibus refectum, puritate mundissimum. Scripturas autem ecclesiastici dogmatis ita sitiens epotauit, ut nisi sexus licentia defuisset posset et docere, licet in membris feminei corporis animus sit uirilis. De cotidianae uero misericordiae dispensatione reticeo, quam sic exercet ut sileat, sic largitur ut lateat. Indicat tamen eius habitus pauper ubi census proficiat diues. Et ut magnitudo tantae prudentiae gemina resplendens lampade plus luceret, habet germanam nomine meritoque Perpetuam, annis imparem, factis aequalem, aeuo teneram, probitate grandaeuam, quae dum nominis sui dignitate pascitur, sic uiuit ut nequeat amittere quod uocatur. Illustris maritali potentia, illustrior religione diuina, proximam uirginitatis continet palmam in coniugii foedere manens pudica. Cetera, praeter conspicuos utpote nuptae conuenientes ornatus, quae de sorore diximus, in huius quoque moribus inuenimus."

Ad haec ego congrua rursus ita responsione perfungar: ne quaeso, domine mi pater, quem diligere te profiteris abicias, quem fouere assoles inuidiose deterreas. Nullum siquidem ex his omnibus uito, de nullius meritis aut instructione diffido, sed in te cunctos aspicio. Quosdam collationibus assiduae disputationis ad meliora uexisti; quosdam placidae maturitate doctrinae desiderio sanctae conuersationis implesti; quibusdam exemplum factus es ad salutem; alios intra saepta tui gregis aspiciens oues fecisti; alios enutristi; omnia omnibus factus es, ut omnes saluos efficeres. Cesset, obsecro, plurimorum iactura uerborum; cessent longae deinceps excusationis ambages, nec pigeat post tanti gurgitis emensa discrimina fluctuanti adhuc paginae auctoritatis tuae ancoram commodare. Quattuor igitur mirabilium diuinorum libellos, quos ex pluribus pauca complexus usque ad passionem et resurrectionem ascensionemque

house for wisdom.[10] Who would not choose and desire to please the outstanding mind of Syncletica, a holy virgin and deaconess, who has so humbly advanced the nobility of her high blood to glory that she has deserved to be chosen to serve in the senate of the heavenly fatherland?[11] Truly she is a temple worthy of the Lord's habitation, disciplined by fasting, restored by prayer, most spotless in purity. But with such thirst has she drunk in the writings of the church's teaching that if permission were not denied her sex (although in her case there is a masculine mind present in the members of a female's body), she could also teach. But I say nothing about the exercise of her daily acts of mercy which she so practices that they are unspoken of, dispensed in such a way that they are unnoticed, yet her poor attire shows where her wealth yields more profit [see Matt 6:19-21]. And so that the extent of her wisdom might shine the brighter, illuminated by a double lamp, she has a sister who is named, rightly, Perpetua, not her equal in years, but in deeds (youthful in age, but aged in goodness), who, while she is supported by the nobility of her name, lives in such a way that she is unable to lose what she is called. Illustrious because of her husband's power, more illustrious because of her godly piety, she holds the palm that is next to virginity: remaining chaste in her marital union. The other attainments which we have mentioned in connection with her sister, except for the outstanding adornments appropriate specifically to a married woman, we have also found in this one's character."

To these observations in turn I offer a fitting reply: my lord father, do not, I beg, cast away the one whom you claim to cherish, do not frighten off the one whom you are used to nurturing. Indeed, of all of these I avoid none; I question the worthiness and education of none; but in you I see them all. Some of them you moved to better things by discussion and serious debate; some you filled with yearning for the holy way of life with seasoned and calm teaching; for some you became a role model for salvation; on seeing others you made them sheep in the fold of your flock; others you fed; you became all things to all, so that you might make them all safe.[12] Stop wasting so many words, I beg you; stop at long last the mazes of endless excuse making, and after the enormous dangers posed by such a great sea, do not still grudge to offer your authoritative anchor to my storm tossed pages. So I entrust to your protection against all critics four little books of divine miracles, which I have put into order, including a few things selected from many, up to the passion and resurrection and ascension of our

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10. On the house built by wisdom, see Prov 9:1.
11. *Allecta* is a technical term; see Green, *Latin Epics*, 155; Tertullian, *Monog.* 12.
12. On being "all things to all people," see 1 Cor 9:22.

domini nostri Iesu Christi quattuor euangeliorum dicta congregans ordinaui, contra omnes aemulos tuae defensioni commendo. Huic autem operi fauente domino paschalis carminis nomen imposui, quia pascha nostrum immolatus est Christus, cui honor et gloria cum patre et spiritu sancto per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Epistola ad Macedonivm 2

Sancto ac beatissimo patri Macedonio presbytero Sedulius in Christo salutem. Praecepisti, reuerende mi domine, paschalis carminis textum, quod officium purae deuotionis simpliciter exsecutus uobis obtuli perlegendum, in rhetoricum me transferre sermonem. Utrum quod placuerit, ideo geminari uolueris, an quod offenderit, ut potius arbitror, stilo censueris liberiore describi, sub dubio uideor fluctuare iudicio. Sanctis tamen iussionibus non resultans iniunctam suscepi prouinciam et procellosis adhuc imbribus concussae ratis uela madentia tumentis pelagi rursus fatigationi commisi per emensos cursus reuoluti discriminis et Cycladas ingentes, quas praecipitanti formidine celerius ante transiueram, longa maris circuitione discurrens, ut illos portus et litora, quae dudum praetereundo lustraui, diligentius opera nunc uiserem tarditatis. Siquidem multa pro metricae necessitatis angustia priori commentario nequaquam uidentur inserta, quae postmodum linguae resolutio magis est assecuta, dederimus hinc aliquam forsitan obtrectatoribus uiam, dicentque nonnulli fidem translationis esse corruptam, quia certa uidelicet sunt in oratione quae non habentur in carmine. Si qui tamen istud obiciant, "faciuntne intellegendo, ut nihil intellegant?" Nam si aut saeculares litteras assecuti aut diuinis uidebuntur libris instructi, debent exempla ueterum recensere nec similia lacerare conentur iniuste. Cognoscant Hermogenianum, doctissimum iurislatorem, tres editiones sui operis confecisse, cognoscant peritissimum diuinae legis Origenem, tribus nihilominus editionibus prope

Lord Jesus Christ, collecting together the words of the four gospels.[13] Moreover, with the Lord's blessing, I have assigned the work the name of "Paschal Song" because Christ our passover[14] has been sacrificed, to whom be honor and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

Second Epistle to Macedonius

To the holy and most blessed father, Macedonius, the presbyter, Sedulius sends greetings in Christ. You ordered me, my reverend lord, to translate into oratorical prose the text of my paschal song which I offered to you to read through, as a simple act of pure devotion. Whether you wanted it to be so duplicated because it pleased you, or, as I am more inclined to think, you decided that it should be written in a freer manner because it displeased you, I find myself wavering between these two opinions. Nonetheless, I do not recoil from your holy injunctions, but have undertaken the task assigned me and have again committed the sails of my shaken raft, dripping wet from the still stormy rains, to the turbulence of the swelling ocean, running in a long sea passage over the distance already covered, with its renewed dangers, and between the looming Cyclades islands,[15] which, driven by fear, I had previously passed rather quickly, so that those ports and harbors which up until now I had skipped in my travels, I might visit more thoroughly by virtue of slowness. If indeed, as it seems, many things were not included in my first treatment owing to the strictness of metrical necessity, which have been added after the freeing of my language,[16] I will perhaps in this way provide an avenue for my detractors, and some will say that the fidelity of my paraphrase has been spoiled because of course there are some things in the prose which are not contained in the poem. If, nevertheless, any do raise this objection, is it not the case that "by trying to understand they cause themselves to understand nothing?"[17] For if they want to be seen as devotees of secular literature or trained in the divine books, they ought to review the examples of their elders and not try unfairly to rip to shreds like practices. They should know that Hermogenianus, the most learned of legal minds, produced three editions of his own work.[18] They should know that Origen, though very

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13. Green, *Latin Epics*, 161, translates this phrase as "bringing together the four discourses of the gospels."

14. See 1 Cor 5:7.

15. Lying between modern Turkey and Greece.

16. That is, when rewritten in prose.

17. Terence, *Andr. Prol.* 17.

18. Aurelius Hermogenianus was a famed jurist who served as *magister libellorum* to the emperor Diocletian at the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century.

cuncta quae disseruit aptauisse. Nec eorum quispiam mordacis linguae laceratur iniuria, cum potius inde laudis consequantur augmenta, quod prouectibus uberioris ingenii diligentiore posteros fide noscendae ueritatis instruxerint. Aliud namque est mutare composita et aliud integrare non plena. Quamuis spatia diuinae legis immensa, quibus dicta semper adiciuntur et desunt, uelut mare fluuiorum penitus incrementa non sentiens, nullis terminari sensibus queant, nullis explicari linguis eualeant, sic et nostri prorsus ab sese libelli non discrepant, sed quae defuerant primis addita sunt secundis. Nec impares argumento uel ordine, sed stilo uidentur et oratione dissimiles. Proferant igitur sua si qui carpere nitentur aliena. Promptius est omnibus iudicare quam facere et de castrensi munimine pugnantium pericula securo uultu conspicere. Credo tamen, pater egregie, nullum fore quamuis impudenter obliquum,[3] si meruero dextrum tui pectoris adipisci iudicium. Faue primus ut alii faueant, et omnium mentibus sententia se probatae iugiter auctoritatis infundat. Tu facies ut delectet euasisse discrimina, cum serenior coeperis aperire tranquilla. Nauigaui prius in aequore, nunc in portu iam nauigem; tandem aliquando post undas calcare liceat nos harenas! Tetigimus montes ex pelago; tangamus montes ex saxo et infirmos aquis irruentibus gressus nauali positos statione firmemus. Priores igitur libri, quia uersu digesti sunt, nomen paschalis carminis acceperunt, sequentes autem in prosam nulla cursus uarietate conuersi, paschalis designantur operis uocabulo nuncupati. Utramque uero materiem uobis orantibus, domino nostro Iesu Christo, qui uota non recusat humilium, congrego supplicanter et offero, cui uirtus, honor et gloria cum patre et spiritu sancto per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

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3. *Obliquum* is the reading in the MSS, and the adjective makes just as much sense here as the rare *obloquium,* which is used as a noun in Sidonius, *Ep.* 7.9, or Huemer's *obloquum*.

well versed in the divine law, nonetheless, wrote nearly everything that he produced in three versions.[19] And neither of them was cut to ribbons by a biting tongue, since they were commended all the more on this account that they instructed future generations with more scrupulous authority in the knowledge of the truth by using the advances in their increased abilities. For it is one thing to change things that have been written and quite another to flesh out things that are not complete. Although the vast, expansive stretches of the divine law, to which words are always being added and from which they are absent (just as the sea is completely unaware of the rivers flowing into its depths and increasing it), are unable to be limited by human senses or exhausted by any human language, even so there are absolutely no discrepancies between our books, but that which was missing in the first has been supplemented in the second. Nor do they seem at odds in what they have to say and how that is organized, but they are different when it comes to their style and the nature of their discourse. So if there are any who are bent on offering criticism of the work of others, let them produce something of their own. It is easier for anybody to criticize (rather than to produce something) and to gaze with serene countenance from a protected fortification on the dangers of those who are engaged in battle. Nonetheless, I believe, excellent father, that nobody, however shamelessly contrary, will object if I manage to gain the favorable judgment of your heart. Be the first to approve it, so that others may follow, and, at the same time, let the verdict of your continually demonstrated authority inform the minds of all. You will make me glad to have left my hazards behind when you begin calmly to open up tranquil waters ahead of me. Before I sailed on the open sea; now let me sail in the harbor; now after the waves may I at last go walking on the beach! I touched mountains made by the deep; let me now touch mountains made of rock and let me regain my balance, made unsteady by the force of the waters, by coming to rest in the dock. So, while the first books were entitled "Paschal Song," because they were composed in verse form, the subsequent ones, rendered with no variation in sequence into prose, are called by the name "Paschal Work." Indeed, at your request, I bring both of the works together and offer them as a suppliant to our Lord Jesus Christ, who does not refuse the prayers of the humble, to whom be power, honor, and glory, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

His monumental *Iuris epitomae* survives in over one hundred excerpts included in Justinian's *Pandects*. See S. Brassloff, "Hermogenianus 2," PW 8.2:881–82. See also Elio Dovere, "Ermogeniano, Origene, Sedulio: attività parafrastica tra età epiclassica e Tardoantico," *Cassiodorus* 6–7 (2000-2001): 161–67.

19. Origen of Alexandria (ca. 185-253) was a prolific theologian and biblical scholar, much of whose controversial body of work has not come down to us.

Appendix B

Excerpts from the *Paschale opus*

Paschale opus 2.3–5[1]

Nonus interea mensis effluxerat et decimi lumen immortale radiabat claruitque fetu uirgineo spiritalis gratiae manifesta promissio, "et uerbum caro factum est et habitauit in nobis," id est, habitauit in homine, cuius se dignatus est carne uestire. Infans namque paruus ac maximus, membris scilicet exiguus, deitate praecelsus, per hospitalis templi sinceram defluens castitatem, non laesit corpus abscedens, quod non laeserat cum uenisset. Vere diuinae generationis est hoc secretum: testis uirginis partus ostenditur qui materni pudoris custos ingressus clausis uisceribus et conceptus est et creatus. Quae nouae lucis illa tunc claritas mundi totius oras impleuit! Quae caelo laetitia! Quis ille nitor effulsit, cum Christus splendore sidereo, uelut sponsus procedens de thalamo suo, Mariae processit ex utero! Cuius ita species diuina uidebatur gratia praenitere, ut Dauiticus ipsum psalmus ita pronuntiet: "speciosus forma prae filiis hominum diffusa est gratia in labiis tuis," et cetera. Bene autem prae filiis hominum speciosum forma definuit, quia licet humanae susceperit incarnationis effigiem filiumque hominis in euangelica praedicatione saepe se dixerit, peccatum nos tamen originale foedauerat, quod ipse non habuit qui suae nos natiuitatis puritate mundauit. O pietas clemens et facilis ad salutem! Ne nos iugum diuturnae premeret seruitutis pro condicione peccati, dominus serui membra suscepit. Audiamus uocem Pauli dicentis apostoli: "semet ipsum exinaniuit et formam serui suscepit," et cetera, quique cuncta uestit ab origine mundi nascentia pannis inuolui sua passus est membra, et cui caeli paruus est limes, terra deficit, maris unda non sufficit, plenus mansit in corpore puerili, modico Deus recubans in praesepi.

Salue, parens optima, tanti regis puerperio consecreta, qui supernis ita iugiter dominatur et infimis,[2] ut eius imperium, potestas et nomen nec initium nouerit habere nec finem, quae beati uentris honore conspicuo simul et mater

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1. Huemer, 199–201

2. I read *infimis* with the best manuscripts of the *PO*, including Berlin, Staatsbibl. Zu Berlin-Preuss. Kulturbesitz, Phil. 1727, instead of Huemer's *infernis*.

Paschale opus 2.3–5: The Nativity[1]

Meanwhile the ninth month had slipped by, and the eternal light of the tenth was shining, and the clear promise of spiritual grace shone in the virgin's progeny, "and the word was made flesh and dwelt among us" [John 1:14], that is to say, it dwelt in a human being, in whose flesh he deigned to clothe himself. For the baby was small and very large, little in his limbs, to be sure, but towering high in his deity; as he came into the world with the chastity of the temple that housed him preserved intact, in his exit he did not harm the body which he had not harmed when he first entered it. Truly this is the secret of the divine birth: the one who was the guardian of his mother's chastity, who entered into her closed womb and was conceived and created, is shown to be the witness to her virgin birth. How great was that brilliance, then, the remarkable light whose radiance filled the whole world! What joy there was in the sky! How bright was that light that flashed when Christ in heavenly splendor, "just like the bridegroom coming forth from his wedding chamber" [Ps 19:5], came forth from the womb of Mary! His divine face seemed to shine with grace beyond compare, so that David's psalm prophesies of him: "More handsome than the sons of men; grace is poured upon your lips, etc." [Ps 45:2]. Moreover, the phrase "more handsome than the sons of men" is well chosen, because even though he assumed the form of a human incarnation and often called himself the Son of Man in his preaching of the gospel, nonetheless, the one who cleansed us by the purity of his birth did not himself have the original sin which had soiled us. O goodness, merciful and quick to save! Lest the yoke of long slavery oppress us because of our sin, the Lord assumed the body of a slave. Let us hear the voice of the apostle Paul as he says: "He emptied himself and took on the form of a slave, etc." [Phil 2:7], and he who clothed all things from the beginning of the world allowed his limbs to be wrapped in swaddling clothes, and the one for whom the limits of heaven are small, for whom the earth is insufficient, whom the waves of the sea do not satisfy, rested in his full being in the body of a baby boy, God lying in a little manger.

Greetings, excellent parent, made holy by giving birth to such a king, who is continually in charge of places high and low, so that his rule, power, and name know neither beginning nor end, you who are proven to be at one and the

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1. Cf. *Paschale carmen* 2.41–72.

esse probaris et uirgo. Cui nulla penitus aequalis femina reperitur, quae tuum decus similiter praecesserit aut sequatur; sola placens singulariter Christo nulli compararis exemplo.

Paschale opus 4.21[3]

Bethaniam deinde sollicitus salutiferis gressibus clementer aduenerat, ubi Lazarus humana finem condicione sortitus sepulchrali sub lapide quartae iacebat lucis cursu iam fetidus. Cuius ad tumulum domino ueniente collectae flebant pio luctu germanae, flebat turba consistens, fleuit et ipse simul omnipotens, non deitate sed corpore, qui frigentes artus exanimis, qua parte moriturus fuerat, hac dolebat. Impendit namque lacrimas ut amicus, ostendit gloriam suae maiestatis ut Deus. Quid adhuc, Martha, non credis? Et tu, Maria, quid ingemis? Quae Christum dubia trepidatione cunctamini, an unum possit ab inferis hominem suscitare, qui totius mundi turbas innumeras rediuiua faciet animatione resurgere. Igitur dominus ut imperiosae uocis iussu mirabili dixit exclamans: "Lazare, prodi foras," magna repente formidine Tartara patuere concussa, inferni penetrale contremuit, letale Chaos expauit, et lex profundae mortis abscessit; animaque sui corporis iterum fibris infusa rupto monumenti tutamine uiuum cernitur cadauer astare. Postque iusta sollemnia, post impletam funeris sepulturam, tamquam denuo fuerit editus et creatus, ipse sibi moriens et posthumus exstitit et superstes abscessit.

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3. Huemer, 270–72.

same time both mother and virgin, because of the amazing honor given to your blessed womb, to whom no woman at all is found to equal your glory, either before or since; you alone uniquely are pleasing to Christ, and no one else can compare with the example you set.

Paschale opus 4.21: The Raising of Lazarus[2]

Then, out of merciful concern, he directed his saving steps to Bethany, where Lazarus had met his end in accordance with the human condition and was lying under the sepulchral stone, already smelling after four days. When the Lord approached his tomb, the sisters gathered there began to weep in pious grief; the crowd standing around was weeping; and even the omnipotent one himself wept, not in his godhead but in his body, grieving for the chilled limbs of the lifeless man with that part of himself which was about to die. For he shed tears as a friend, but he showed the glory of his majesty as God. Why, Martha, do you still not believe? And you, Mary, why are you groaning? You hesitate with doubtful foreboding whether Christ is able to raise one man from the dead when he is the one who will cause countless throngs from all over the world to rise again in resurrected vigor. So as the Lord cried out and spoke, with his imperious voice giving a marvelous command: "Lazarus, come forth" [John 11:43], Tartarus was shattered at once and gaped wide in great terror, the depths of the underworld trembled, fatal Chaos shuddered with fear, and the law of encompassing death retreated; the soul of the dead man was poured back again into the fibers of his body now that the security of the grave had been broken, and his living corpse was standing there for all to see. And after the usual solemn ceremonies, after the burial of the corpse had been completed, as though he had been begotten and created anew, the dead man succeeded himself and walked away as his own survivor.

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2. Cf. *Paschale carmen* 4.271–290.

Appendix C

Miscellaneous Poems Connected with Sedulius Found in Manuscripts and Early Printed Editions

Turcii Rufi Asterii carmen[1]

Sume, sacer meritis, ueracis dicta poetae,
    Quae sine figmenti condita sunt uitio,
Quo caret alma fides, quo sancti gratia Christi,
    Per quam iustus ait talia Sedulius.
Asteriique tui semper meminisse iubeto,
    Cuius ope et cura edita sunt populis.
Quem quamuis summi celebrent per saecula fastus,
    Plus tamen ad meritum est, si uiget ore tuo.

The Song of Turcius Rufus Asterius

You who are sanctified by your virtues, accept the verses of a truthful poet,
    Composed without falling into the sin of falsehood,
A fault absent from the faith that sustains us and the grace of our holy Christ,
    Thanks to which, righteous Sedulius composed this work.
And bid your Asterius be always remembered,
    By whose aid and diligence this work was given to the people.
Even if lists of highest office-holders should record his memory through the ages,
Nonetheless it is more to his credit if he thrives because of your words.

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1. Huemer, 307.

Versus Bellesarii scholastici[2]

Sedulius Christi miracula uersibus edenS
Emicat, inuitans paruae ad solemnia mensaE
Dignum conuiuam, non hunc, qui carperet illuD
Vix quod nobilium triplici fert aula paratU
Laetum quod ponit sub aurea tecta tribunaL
In quo gemmiferi totque aurea uasa canistrI
Viuida pro modico portant sibi prandia uictV,
Sed quod holus uile producit pauperis hortuS.
At post delicias properant qui sumere magnA,
Nituntur paruum miserorum spernere germeN:
Tutum quod nihil est (tutum nil uentre tumesciT),
Insidias membrisque mouent animaeque ludentI.
Si tamen his dapibus uesci dignantur egeniS,
Temnat diuitias animus paucisque quiescaT
Exemplo assumptus domini, qui milia quinquE
Semotis cunctis modicis saturauit ab esciS.

Verses of Bellesarius the Rhetorician

In rendering into verse the miracles of Christ, Sedulius shines
As he invites a deserving guest to the solemnities of his modest table,
Not the one who would enjoy the kind of food
Which halls of nobles can scarcely serve in three courses,
Placed on a joyful board under golden roofs,
On which jeweled baskets and many golden goblets
Contain abundant feasts instead of humble food,
But rather, the cheap vegetables produced by a poor man's garden.
And after these delicacies, those who hasten to assume high status
Tend to look down at the humble race of the wretched;
There is nothing healthy in this (no swelling in the stomach is healthy),
When they do harm to their bodies and their sportive souls.
If, however, they think it right to feed on these scant meals,
Let their minds despise riches and be content with a little,
Taking their lead from the Lord, who satisfied five thousand,
When they were all in the wilderness, with modest food.

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2. Huemer, 307–8; *Anth. Lat.* §492

Versus Liberati scholastici[3]

Sedulius domini per culta noualia pergenS
En loca prospexit multo radianta florE;
Discurrit per prata libens, quo gramine DauiD
Vidit diuino modulantem carmina cantV.
Laudabili psallente uiro refluit cythara meL.
Ille ubi grandisoni captus dulcedine plectrI
Vritur et celeri graditur per lilia passV
Sacratosque iterum late conspexit amoenoS,
Aeterna Christi fluuios quos abluit undA,
Nec passus torpere diu doctoris acumeN,
Tunc sua Dauiticus delectus plectra poposciT
Irrita polluti contemnens numina mundI
Signa crucis fronti ponit breuiterque triumphoS
Tangit, Christe, tuos numerosaque praemia libaT.
Ergo dum uario decorat sua rura colorE,
Stabunt hi garrula dicti testudine uersuS.

Verses of Liberatus the Rhetorician

As Sedulius proceeded through the well plowed tilth of the Lord,
Behold, he saw ahead of him areas blossoming profusely with flowers;
He raced through the meadows joyfully, and in its grassy field
He saw David as he played his tuneful poems with godlike singing.
Honey flowed down from his lyre as the man sang psalms of praise.
When he was captivated by the sweetness of the high sounding melody,
He was set aflame, and paced through the lilies with quickened step,
And again surveyed the beautiful sacred rivers flowing far and wide
Which the everlasting water of Christ washes clean,
Nor did he allow his zeal for teaching to languish for long,
But then the chosen one of David asked for his instruments,
Despising the vain divinities of the corrupted world.
He placed the sign of the cross on his forehead and briefly touched
On your triumphs, O Christ, and sampled your countless benefactions.
Therefore, as long as he adorns his countryside with various embellishments,
These verses proclaimed by his babbling lyre will stand.

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3. Huemer, 309–10; *Anth. Lat.* §493.

Miscellaneous Epigrams Found in Manuscripts and Early Printed Editions of Sedulius

I.[4]

Haec tua perpetuae quae scripsi dogmata vitae,
Corde, rogo, facias, Christe, manere meo,
Ut, tibi quae placeant, tete faciente, requirens,
Gaudia caelorum, te duce, Christe, metam.

These your teachings of eternal life which I have written,
I ask, O Christ, that you cause to remain in my heart,
So that seeking what is pleasing to you, as you bring it about,
I may reap the joys of heaven, with you as my leader, O Christ.

II.[5]

Scripsit Sedulius carmine nobili
Laudes, Christe, tuas gestaque caelica
Lucani similis versibus arduis.
Iam cedant veteres, nam superat nouus;
Hic, hic Sedulius carmine nobili,
Dum te, Christe, canit, optime, maxime,
Qui cum patre tenes regna perennia,
Cum sancto pariter flamine iugiter,
Cui sit laus et honor saecla per omnia.

In his noble song Sedulius wrote of
Your praises and heavenly deeds, O Christ,
In exalted verses like Lucan's.
Let the ancients now yield, for a new one is victorious;
Here, here is Sedulius with his noble song,
While he sings of you, O Christ, the best and the greatest,
Who with the Father govern eternal realms,
With whom is joined equally the Holy Spirit,
To whom be praise and honor for ever and ever.

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4. PL 19:771–72.
5. Bibl. Ambros. Milan. I. 35 Sup. f. 4r.

III.[6]

Perlege Sedulii magnum sine murmure vatis
Delectum carmen, lectio digna Deo,
Nam iuuenum reficit mentes redditque beatos,
Et sua doctorum fama per ora uolat.
Non Thais, aut Sapho, non est hic Lesbia uirgo,
Sed Christi castus cum pietate timor.

Read through the great and remarkable song of the poet Sedulius
Without demur; it is reading worthy of God,
For it refreshes the minds of the youth and makes them blessed,
And his fame flies on the lips of the learned.
Here is no Thais, or Sappho, or Lesbian virgin,
But the modest fear of Christ along with piety.

IV.[7]

Si carpisse iuuat ueteri de lege medullam
Atque noua, eximium perlege, frater, opus,
Quod si te oblectant uel carmina uel sacra Christi
Gesta, tuo cordi consona digna feres.
Fac ergo hoc doceat pueros praeceptor amatos
Libro. Lasciuis nam caret ecce modis.
Tam bene (crede mihi) conducent nostra legenti
Quam si uel relegant dulce Maronis opus.
Huic omnes cedant uati, qui mollia fingunt
Carmina, quae Venerem saepe ciere solent.

If you enjoy picking out the marrow of the Old Testament
And the New, read through this outstanding work, brother,
Because if either the songs or the sacred deeds of Christ
Give you delight, you will find fitting matter, in harmony with your heart.
See to it, then, that the master teaches his dear boys
From this book. For, behold, it lacks erotic content.
Believe me, our subject matter will be as useful for the reader,
As if they read even the sweet work of Maro.

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6. Huemer, *De vita*, 58.
7. Huemer, *De vita*, 59.

To this one let all the poets give place who fabricate soft verses,
Which are often accustomed to arouse Venus.

V.[8]

Nam puerorum studio,
Scientium solatio,
Monasticho enchiridio,
Plus fiet his facilius.
Reddetur et honestius
Multoque lectu dignius,
Quam sit salax Ouidius,
Grandiloquus Virgilius,
Urbanus et Therentius.

For, as a textbook for boys,
A source of comfort for those who know,
And a handbook for monks,
Sedulius will be much easier than these.
He will be recited more decently
And is much more appropriate to read
Than is the lewd Ovid,
The grandiloquent Virgil,
And the sophisticated Terence.

VI.[9]

Haec tibi Sedulii, si te sacra lectio ducit,
Dulcia diuini carmina uatis eme.

If the holy scripture attracts you, buy for yourself
These sweet songs of Sedulius, the divine poet.

VII.[10]

Haec legite, O iuuenes, diuini carmina uatis,

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8. Huemer, *De vita*, 59.

9. PL 19:477.

10. Arius Lusitanus's dedicatory poem to Nebrija's commentary; Nebrija, *Comentario*, 77.

Haec uersate pia nocte dieque manu.
Non hic monstra canit priscis conficta poetis,
Non hic centauros, oedipodasue leges.
Vera salutiferi narrat monumenta tonantis.
Et sacrum e sancto defluit ore melos.
Quae quoniam Antoni ingenio patefacta uidere
Quisque potest, laetus perlege quisquis ades.

O youths, read these poems of the godlike poet,
Turn these pages day and night with respectful hand.
He does not sing of the imaginary monsters of the ancient poets;
You will not read of centaurs or of Oedipuses.
He tells of the true deeds of the thundering Savior,
And a lofty melody flows from his holy mouth.
Since everyone can see these poems made available by Antonio's effort,
Whoever you are, read them joyfully.

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