

Roger P. H. Green

LATIN EPICS *of the* NEW TESTAMENT

Juvenius, Sedulius, Arator



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Humanity, University of Glasgow.

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ROGER P. H. GREEN

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To Anne

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Preface

This book explores some early works of Christian literature, those devoted to the New Testament in the 200 years or so after the rise of Constantine by Juvenius, Sedulius, and Arator. They have been somewhat neglected in the Anglophone world, at least, though there are notable exceptions among the small number of relevant monographs; it is important, especially in an increasingly interdisciplinary world, that they should be made accessible and their aims and methods carefully presented to readers. This book, it is hoped, will serve as an introduction for those new to the field, a companion for those who want to probe more deeply, an instrument of further study for specialists in this or related fields, and perhaps a rehabilitation of these authors for those who have been deterred by the lack of material or for any other reason. As well as the presentation of the necessary biographical detail, there are in it numerous critical questions, great and small (and of course answers to small questions often contribute to the solution of major problems), which need careful assessment or reappraisal; and, above all, it needs to be explained for all who are interested in the classical tradition, as well as to any doubters, why these works are legitimately called epic, how they relate to their Christian backgrounds as well as to classical epic, and what their value was to later centuries.

I have numerous acknowledgements to make, and hope that no one has been forgotten. My thanks for answering questions, for discussion, and for various kinds of help go to John Barclay, Donal Bateson, Philip Burton, Douglas Cairns, Leslie Dodd, Monica Gale, Alex Garvie, David Langslow, Jane Neil, Gideon Nisbet, David McOmish, Sarah Parvis, Karla Pohlmann, David Scourfield, Carl Springer, and Jiří Šubrt. And although they were possibly spared questioning, and are in no sense 'late', it has been a pleasure and a privilege in the years when this book was being written to have as close colleagues on the Latin side of the department such dedicated and enthusiastic scholars as Costas Panayotakis and Catherine Steel. There are two more good friends in the University of Glasgow to whom I have a

special debt of gratitude. Peter Walsh not only answered various questions about Augustine and others, but has been generous with support and encouragement in the forty years since we discovered our common interest in Paulinus of Nola. Graham Whitaker, Senior Assistant Librarian and Research Fellow of the university, has freely put at my disposal his immense bibliographical expertise and his experience of research methods to feed my illusions that I could compile a complete bibliography on even these three little-known authors, and has generally been of great help. A work of this kind could not have been undertaken without the excellent resources of a great library, and standing on its high eminence the library of the University of Glasgow has also helped to keep me fit. Awards from the University's Faculty of Arts and the Arts and Humanities Research Board enabled the work to gather momentum, which was further assisted by invitations and decisions to speak in Edinburgh (twice), Glasgow, St Andrews, Maynooth, and Wassenaar, and the comments of listeners. The referees consulted by the Oxford University Press have been most helpful, and so too its staff. Finally my warmest thanks go to my wife Anne, to whom this book is dedicated, for so many things, not least her patient understanding of the difficult conditions under which research has to be performed these days.

R.P.H.G

*Helensburgh
December 2005*

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Introduction

In the early fourth century, where the story of this book effectively begins, perhaps the two most widely studied books in the western Roman Empire were Vergil's *Aeneid* and the set of writings known collectively as the Bible. The *Aeneid* had long reigned supreme in education, and clearly it was read and reread long after formal education had finished; it stood at the summit of Rome's literary culture, its incomparable language carrying for devoted readers an inspiring view of eternal Rome and her ideals. The Bible, existing in a variety of Latin translations from the Greek or Hebrew, was read and studied, preached and proclaimed, as a supremely authoritative text for all Christians, its text and interpretation carefully guarded and enthusiastically debated. In the early centuries perhaps very few people were readers of both works, at least after their formal education. At the beginning of the fourth century, the emperor Diocletian required the surrender of bibles as an earnest of loyalty to the empire, but persecution certainly did not dent its popularity. Within a few years the emperor Constantine, eager to avoid displeasing any deity, was beginning to remove the disabilities of Christians, and the stage was set for the exciting developments of a century of dynamic change. From that point the Christian profile in society grew remarkably, though presenting its message to the world of classical learning proved one of its greatest challenges.

The two works came from very different traditions. The *Aeneid* went right back to Homer, blending into this an intense Roman patriotism, a vision of Roman ideals, and so much else. The books of the Bible were the scriptures of the ancient Hebrews, containing their own history and prophecy, together with a New Testament moulded into newer forms such as gospels, apostolic 'acts', and apocalypse. Rome and Italy, and the concerns of their rulers, are at the emotional and ideological centre of the *Aeneid*; Jerusalem and Palestine, and, as Christianity expanded, the Greek world, are the focus of the Bible. The subject of epic was construed as tales of wars and warlords; the message of the Bible as essentially an eirenic one.

These differences are accentuated, and aggravated, by their respective styles: broadly speaking, the gulf is between a 'high' literary style (highly polished and developed, and sometimes highly obscure in a learned way), that of Graeco-Roman epic, and the simpler style of the New Testament, evidently less polished but no less obscure in its own ways.

To a large extent this divergence originated in what was from the beginning a strong socio-cultural disparity. Although Paul could quote Aratus to the Athenians, his statement to the Corinthians that 'not many wise are chosen' and his *bouleversement* of wisdom and foolishness in the same passage is a favourite text of Christian writers (and will remain so, even when presented in an environment of elegant Latin). Both the rhetorical and the philosophical traditions of Greece and Rome are often conspicuously despised by Christians. In the early centuries we hear more of conflict than of symbiosis, more of competing cultures and indeed conceptions of culture than of smooth acculturation, more of mutual incomprehension than of moves or initiatives to bridge the divide.

The present book covers a little more than two centuries, beginning with Constantine and ending with Justinian; both emperors will enter the narrative. In this time the empire had refurbished itself, and had divided itself; it then lost one half, the Latin-speaking half, but by the end of the story the imperial army from Constantinople was seeking to regain at least Rome and Italy. Important in that episode is Pope Vigilius; the popes Celestine and Leo from the fifth century are also relevant to my narrative. Christianity changes remarkably: we move from the thought-world of Lactantius, who sheds light on his near-contemporary Juvencus, into one formed by Ambrose and Augustine, by whom Sedulius is strongly influenced, and whose influence remains strong in the time of Cassiodorus and Boethius, contemporaries of Arator. As well as theologians there are numerous poets (some are both), too many to mention here, as a fast and furious period of Christian experimentation with classical verse begins in the wake of Ausonius, Prudentius, and others.

The three poets in this book, Juvencus from the fourth century, Sedulius from the fifth, and Arator from the sixth, are a fascinating trio. Juvencus, we are told on reliable evidence, was an aristocrat and a priest, an intriguing double identity appropriate for the one who

first ventured to present the gospels in epic style. Almost certainly he worked in Elvira, the venue of a Church council in the early years of the fourth century known for its rigour; and he may have known Constantine's religious adviser, Osius, from nearby Cordoba. Behind what is in some ways a very conscientious paraphrase one glimpses the world of the traditional Roman aristocrat and administrator; significantly, and unlike the others, he is very lenient on Pontius Pilate. He has the confidence that a pioneer needs, even expecting the fame of his poem and its theme to outlive Vergil's, but anxiously hoping too that it will save him from hellfire.

Sedulius is less easy to connect, reliably, with the wider world. I incline to follow the evidence that makes him a priest who lived and worked in Italy, and the somewhat stronger indications of a date in the second quarter of the fifth century. He was well educated before joining what looks like a small Christian community, and is eager to put his skills to good use. At exactly the same time, perhaps, as Augustine in his work 'On Christian Teaching' is exploring the role of delight in Christian rhetoric, Sedulius makes a bold defence of its potential for winning over devotees of poetry. At the core of his 'Easter Poem' is an almost complete set of the miracles of Christ related in the gospels; in an uncompromising way he is harnessing the interest in the 'wonderful' which is never far from ancient writing. He is less of a paraphraser and more obviously an exegete than Juvencus, and his presentation of Christ is moulded by a very clear theological agenda.

Arator, the best-documented of the three, lived a privileged but turbulent life in Ostrogothic Italy. Educated in Milan and Ravenna, he became, like Cassiodorus, a respected official at the Gothic court. Some time after the death of King Theoderic (the persecutor of Boethius) he changed his allegiance, and at the time of writing his poem was a subdeacon in Rome, in the papal fold. It was evidently at the suggestion of Vigilius, his new patron, that he read his Christian epic—in full, but not all at one go—to an admiring audience of clerics and laymen in the church of St Peter ad Vincula in April and May 544. For his poem he chose the Acts of the Apostles, following closely its narrative of expanding Christendom but giving free rein to his theological convictions and grafting in homiletic material.

Perhaps it is no longer possible for Christian poetry in general to be covered in a single book, and this one certainly does not seek to do so. Latin poetry on the Old Testament, which follows its own interesting trajectory, receives here the briefest of mentions, and the attractions and versatility of Prudentius, though he is a considerable influence on Sedulius, will only be glimpsed. Nor should the reader expect a treatment here of the well-known, or notorious, Proba, who wrote a cento on the creation of the world and the life of Christ: her programme of assembling a poem from Vergilian lines and half-lines, stitching them together like a patchwork quilt, is emphatically not that of our poets, and her *Sitz im Leben* is in significant ways a different one. Whether one sees her work, traditionally, as just an aristocratic game (slightly less than aristocratic, perhaps, in the hands of Ausonius and Valentinian) or, as recently suggested, as a grim survival tactic to meet the crisis launched on the Christians by the emperor Julian, Proba does not belong in a history of Christian epic, even if her work can illuminate it from time to time.

It may be helpful to explain here the shape of my three large chapters that present these New Testament epics and their writers. (There is also a small one, giving a sketch of their later reception.) Juvenius has the most space; this reflects not only the size of his modern bibliography but the interest of particular issues such as his techniques of paraphrase, the nature of his epic remoulding of the gospels within such a tight compass, and the relevance to his style of the concept of Christian Latin. In general, the three chapters have the following structure. First, the information about the poets and their times will be given the careful sifting that is needed to make a full and judicious picture. Then the prefatory matter that each provides, in fascinatingly different ways, will be presented and probed. I then introduce the poems themselves and seek to illustrate the ways in which the material is treated and reconfigured, a study which in some cases shows up significant omissions or emphases and contributes to the task of divining their various purposes. Since, in the words of Widmann, *certat poeta cum theologo*, which I happily accept as a mantra if the verb is taken as 'strive' in the sense not of conflict but of synergy, it will be necessary to consider the element of exegesis in each poem as well as the various—more various, indeed, and more extensive than often thought—elements of epic. Vergil is the main

author, but Lucan comes up very strongly in the last furlong or two, as it were, and Ovid and Statius are more than also-rans. In a famous passage Jerome told Eustochium how he woke up one night in a cold sweat, having dreamt that before the judgement seat of God he was punished for being not a Christian but a Ciceronian; it is difficult to imagine that Juvencus, Sedulius (though a much-discussed passage might suggest a certain diffidence before his superior), or Arator had their sleep interrupted in such a way, devout and dedicated Christians though they indubitably were, or would mind being called Vergilians as well as Christians.

Chapter 4 gives a brief account of the vicissitudes of these three poets in the medieval and modern worlds. To give a long one, and to investigate and illustrate their receptions, readerships, and adaptations fully, would, I suspect, take many lifetimes, for even the task of winnowing the available secondary sources is no easy one. In some ways—this is no new phenomenon for the classicist—we know more about their readers in these later centuries, albeit sometimes dimly, than we do about their contemporary readers, or their target audiences or readerships. The question of the aims of our three epicists is not an easy one to answer, though one frequently and rightly asked. Obviously, they would have appeal only for the well educated, those who had an appreciation of classical epic. There is no evidence that they were written for educational purposes, for one's overriding impression is that Christians thought but little of a bespoke school curriculum (that was an idea of Julian, the so-called apostate), and that they might have thought twice about such a programme. It is hard, too, to imagine these epics being used for catechesis; granted that our knowledge of the workings of the catechetical process is small, it would be a bold bishop or priest who smuggled Vergil in. We know that the epics were not written for Jews, whether Christian or not: Juvencus apparently seeks to explain certain Jewish institutions for his reader, while Sedulius inveighs against the Jews in the contexts of Christ's passion and resurrection, and Arator shows intense animosity against the Jewish race and its religion. It may be assumed, too, that hard-line pagans would not be interested in epics that sought to give the status of epic hero to a character whom they may have regarded as a magician, a criminal, or a charlatan. There remains a large and rather undefined constituency consisting of

Christians of various kinds, with various degrees, no doubt, of dedication and commitment; there may have been lukewarm pagans, too, more or less curious about the faith. As has been well argued for Sedulius, it should not be assumed that pagans would be mesmerized, or bored, by allegory, or unable to appreciate the main Christian doctrines. These works were written for a potentially wide audience, the majority who in our sources are silent, concealed from our view behind the highly articulate ‘primary groups’. There is no particular niche market for which they were designed; they were written for the educated world at large, like so much Christian literature, whether mainstream or not. Their authors are not vapid rhetoricians showing off, and their desire to communicate and to engage is serious. It can be taken as certain that Juvencus, at least, wrote as he did to meet the objection that the style of the gospels was off-putting to those used to the style of classical literature. This problem did not, as is sometimes asserted, go away with the gradual appearance of the Vulgate, which was a conservative revision of earlier versions, but because Christian writing became familiar and what had been a stylistic barrier gradually became less forbidding to curious or circumspect minds.

In my Bibliography I have aimed to include almost all work written on these poets from angles relevant to this book; I have failed to see and use only a very small proportion of it. A relief map, giving the most prominent developments of the last fifty years, may be helpful here. A strong impulse was given to studies of this kind by the *Antike und Christentum* school, and the article ‘Epos’ contributed by Thraede to *RAC* (1962) has deservedly been much quoted over the years. At the same time came his article on Arator, the need for which was originally overlooked by its editors; Arator was still, as Leimbach complained in 1876, *ein Vergessener*. Thraede’s *RAC* article on Juvencus appeared in 2001. Among monographs pride of place must be given to Herzog’s *Bibelepik der lateinischer Spätantike 1: Formgeschichte einer Erbaulichen Gattung*. This is a brilliant but difficult work, which had reviewers pleading for an index in the projected second volume—which, most unfortunately, could not appear—and which scholars still quote with a caution made necessary by its opacities. The volume treats Juvencus, Proba, and Cyprian (who is not earlier than the end of the fourth century) and gives only the occasional glimpse of what a second volume might have

contained. As its subtitle shows, Herzog sought to privilege the edificatory aim of the genre, and to subordinate aesthetic considerations, including the epic element. Epic is dead, whether by incapacity, neglect, or 'destruction' by the Christians, and we must wait centuries for any 'belletristic' concerns. For Juvencus it supplies little more than an *Übersetzungsmedium*, serving as a kind of quarry for useful tags, although it also contributes, almost unbidden, to passages of emotional or devotional intensity. Christian poetry grew not from imitation of the great epic models but from the habit of prose writers who cite classical 'proof texts', a process which Herzog analysed with an almost Empsonian subtlety. Since Juvencus is presenting the Bible itself, and not a commentary or an adaptation of classical epic, Herzog approaches his poem from the perspective of Form Criticism, as applied to the gospels. The poem is for Herzog tantamount to a gospel that reflects the concerns of its own generation, adding 'Roman' material, for example, and displacing much of the Jewish background.

Roberts's work, *Biblical Epic and Rhetorical Paraphrase in Late Antiquity*, published ten years later, is as clear and accessible as Herzog's is intricate and demanding. Dealing very helpfully with all the biblical poets of this period, Roberts seeks to derive their poems from the scholastic exercise of rhetorical paraphrase. He begins by deriving a clear taxonomy of kinds of paraphrase from the ancient evidence and proceeds to argue that our poets work on their base-texts according to its methods of abbreviation, amplification, and transposition, using techniques common to an advanced schoolboy and a well-trained orator. Further evidence of Anglophone interest (it has not otherwise been conspicuous) is Springer's useful monograph on Sedulius, *The Gospel as Epic in Late Antiquity* (1988), which treated the man and his poem in depth. A similar job was done for Arator in two monographs on him in 1990, which, along with the very full commentary on Book 4 of Sedulius by Van der Laan, subjecting the diction to a detailed analysis but also making important contributions on major problems, marked an *annus mirabilis* for Christian epic, at least in comparison with the 1970s and 1980s. Arator's benefactors were Deproost and Schwind. This work of Schwind (there is also one of five years later, giving the reader valuable help with interpreting Arator's text) is the only one to attack

the description of epic, and will be discussed in due course. The work of Deproost, who has also written numerous articles, brings scholarship and eloquence to bear on the presentation of the apostle Peter as Arator's hero. The even fuller book of Bureau (1997) focuses on *Lettre et sens mystique . . . exégèse et épopée*, and stresses the *concordia apostolorum* in Arator. In between these came Hillier's specialized monograph (1993), a 'baptismal commentary' on Arator. The last decade or so has also seen a number of very valuable commentaries: on portions of Juvenecus' text by Flieger, Fichtner, and Röttger, all inspired by Klaus Thraede, and by Heinsdorff, and on the third book of Sedulius by Mazzega, with Christian Gnilka as his *Doktorvater*.

This study necessarily uses the texts of CSEL, which are often generous with supporting information, but flawed in various ways. A projected appendix examining textual problems was dropped for lack of time, and in any case Arator has been well served by reviewers of McKinlay, scholars mentioned above, and others. Few translations are available for these poets, and so in all cases a translation is here provided, in the text or in the notes as appropriate. The sole aim of these translations is to give the basic meaning; it is hoped that readers will find this helpful and not jarring. Certainly the achievement of these poets should not be judged by such unfamiliar renderings. They may surprise a modern reader used to a long tradition of elegantly simple translations of the Bible, but many in the ancient world will have found the new, metrical versions smoother and more pleasing than the simple and often inelegant versions to which they had access. Where biblical material is quoted it comes from the so-called European version of the OL, except in the case of Arator. My translations of it have been assisted by consultation of the Revised Standard Version.

Abbreviations

This list does not include abbreviations of the titles of ancient books, except in the case of Juvencus, Sedulius, and Arator, or the titles of periodicals.

AA	Auctores Antiquissimi
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
CLA	Codices Latini Antiquiores
CP	<i>Carmen Paschale</i>
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
EEC	<i>Encyclopaedia of Early Christianity</i>
ELQ	<i>Evangeliorum Libri Quattuor</i>
GCS	<i>Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller</i>
HA	<i>Historia Apostolica</i>
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
OCD	<i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i>
OL	Old Latin
OP	<i>Opus Paschale</i>
PG	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
PIR	<i>Prosopographia Imperii Romani Saeculi I, II, III</i>
PL	<i>Patrologia Latina</i>
PLAC	<i>Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini</i>
PLRE	<i>Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i>
RAC	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i>
RE	<i>Real-Encyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft</i>
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
TLL	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i>

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1

Juvenicus

WHO WAS JUVENCUS?

Our principal source of information about Juvenicus is Jerome, who mentions him in various places, and appears to be quite well informed. In chapter 84 of his work *On Famous Men*—a catalogue of Christian writers from the earliest times designed to present multifarious evidence of Christian achievement¹—he highlights the noble ancestry of Juvenicus and the accuracy of his work, and links him with the reign of Constantine. He also mentions various other works, no longer extant. The entry is as follows:

Juvenicus, nobilissimi generis Hispanus, presbyter, quattuor evangelia hexametris versibus paene ad verbum transferens quattuor libros composuit, et nonnulla eodem metro ad sacramentorum ordinem pertinentia. Floruit sub Constantino principe.

Juvenicus, a Spaniard of very noble birth, a priest, rendering the four gospels in hexameter verses almost word for word composed four books, and several things in the same metre pertaining to the order of mysteries. He flourished under the emperor Constantine.

As with Sedulius, his biblical epic was not his only work, but nothing is known of the various works on ‘the order of mysteries’, to which Jerome alludes vaguely. The meaning of the word *sacramentum* is very wide in Jerome’s time, and certainly not confined to what are known as the ‘sacraments’, for he uses it also of various secrets,

¹ Kelly (1975), 174–8.

symbols, and rites pertaining to the Christian faith.² For all we know, the title might cover themes as diverse as that of the poem on the Phoenix (*De Ave Phoenixe*) ascribed to Lactantius, which compared this bird to the resurrected Christ, at one extreme, or more straightforward treatises on Christian doctrine or practice at the other. But it emerges clearly that Juvencus was an ambitious and adventurous poet, and a committed pioneer³ who saw the potential of Christian verse for communication with an educated elite in a situation where curiosity and demand were rising steeply.⁴ Jerome also points to a fascinating double identity, as it were, which left its imprint on his work: as an aristocrat Juvencus may be assumed to have been very conscious of the traditions of Rome and the importance of its literary culture, while as a priest he will have been constantly aware of the needs of his Christian flock.

Jerome's comment on the noble ancestry of Caius Vettius Aquilinus Iuvencus—this name is derived from various manuscripts, which also give Iuvencus as his *signum*⁵—is supported by the evidence that one of the consuls of the year 286 had the name Vettius Aquilinus, and that a C. Vettius Aquilinus is attested in the time of Commodus (*PIR* 6. 2010).⁶ Our Juvencus is unlikely to be identical with the consul, although it is not totally impossible, but he could be his son or nephew. Whether these or other ancestors were Christian, we have no idea; he may just as well have been a first-generation Christian. In stating that Juvencus flourished under Constantine, Jerome's aim is simply to situate him chronologically, though there may have been more to the relationship with the emperor. According to Gregory of Tours,⁷ writing in the sixth century, the work was commissioned by

² Jerome used the word of the gifts of the Magi, in the passage where he quotes Juvencus 1. 250; see p. 8. The close but not exact parallel to his phrase in Tertullian, whose usage of the word is even wider, at *Apol.* 15. 8 *nostri ordinem sacramenti* ('the system of our religion'), helps little.

³ Juvencus may well have been preceded by Commodian; Di Bernardino (1988), 259–65 gives reasons for preferring the third-century dating to the fifth-century one, but see Kirsch (1989), 70 n. 80 on the great divergence of opinions. But Commodian is aiming at a quite different readership and using a very different style.

⁴ The aims of Juvencus are considered at pp. 126–34.

⁵ On the notion of *signum* in general, see *OCD*, ed. 3, 1025.

⁶ Stroheker (1965), 58–9; Barnes (1981), 246 and n. 9.

⁷ Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks* 1. 36 (*PL* 71. 179).

Constantine (*rogante . . . imperatore*), but this is surely a false inference from Jerome, whom he is quoting at this point, encouraged perhaps by the words of tribute to Constantine in Juvenicus' so-called Epilogue. (This will be examined below.) Gregory could be correct, but there it looks as if Juvenicus took the initiative, saluting and praising Constantine to dignify his work after its completion. Such an appeal had been made by the anonymous author of the short poem *Laudes Domini* (143–8) a few years earlier.⁸ Constantine was known to be favourable to writers, saying in a letter to Optatianus Porphyrius that 'those who write and speak in my age are welcomed by a supportive audience just like a soft breeze, and in due course the testimony deserved is not withheld by me'.⁹ Whether or not, as Barnes suggests, this is a manifesto from the emperor,¹⁰ Juvenicus could well have expected him to be interested, and his poem is very much a work of this *saeculum*, albeit in some ways unobtrusively, as we shall see.

Jerome is more precise about the date in his *Chronicle*, where he puts Juvenicus' poem under the year corresponding to 329:¹¹ *Iuvenicus presbyter natione Hispanus evangelia heroicis versibus explicat* ('Juvenicus, a priest of Spanish origin, sets forth the gospels in hexameter verse'). Attempts have been made to correct or refine Jerome's date, using evidence from his Epilogue. In this passage of eleven lines, in some ways broadly reminiscent of the closing lines of Vergil's fourth *Georgic*, Juvenicus comments directly upon his work and its circumstances, linking it to Christ's final command on earth (Matt. 28: 18–20). He rejoices in the peace of Christ, both spiritual and political, and the peace of the age, which is fostered by Constantine. This arresting coda, which also sheds light on Juvenicus' aims and his relationship to Constantine, must now be quoted in full:

Has mea mens fidei vires sanctique timoris
cepit et in tantum lucet mihi gratia Christi
versibus ut nostris divinae gloria legis

⁸ Van der Weijden (1967) and Herzog (1989), 330–1.

⁹ *saeculo meo scribentes dicentesque non aliter benignus auditus quam lenis aura prosequitur; denique etiam studiis meritum a me testimonium non negatur* (*Epistula Constantini* 6/7).

¹⁰ Barnes (1975), 173–86, at 185.

¹¹ Helm (1913), *ad loc.*

ornamenta libens caperet terrestria linguae. 805
 haec mihi pax Christi tribuit, pax haec mihi saeculi,
 quam fovet indulgens terrae regnator apertae
 Constantinus, adest cui gratia digna merenti,
 qui solus regum sacri sibi nominis horret
 imponi pondus, quo iustis dignior actis 810
 aeternam capiat divina in saecula vitam
 per dominum lucis Christum, qui in saecula regnat.

This power of faith and hallowed fear my own mind has put on, and to such a degree does the grace of Christ shine upon me that the glory of the divine law in my verses happily assumes the earthly embellishments of language. It is the peace of Christ that has bestowed this on me, and the peace of the age, graciously fostered by Constantine, the ruler of the wide world, who is deservedly visited by grace worthy of him, who alone of kings shudders that the weight of a holy name is placed upon him, so that becoming even more meritorious by his just acts he may receive eternal life throughout God's ages through Christ the Lord of light, who reigns for ever.

On the basis of the words *terrae regnator apertae* Marold maintained that the date is not before 332,¹² when the sway of Constantine was increased by his defeat of the Goths.¹³ Certainly the words *terrae... apertae* refer to widespread power,¹⁴ but there is no reason why they should not refer, especially in an encomiastic context, to any time after September 324, when Constantine secured his supremacy by defeating Licinius in the battle of Chrysopolis. Attempts have been made, notably by Fontaine, to derive a date from the statement that Constantine shuddered that 'the burden of a sacred name' was—or might be¹⁵—placed upon him, and many different

¹² Marold (1890), 329.

¹³ For this see Barnes (1981), 391 n. 47, and Heather (1991), 109 n. 76.

¹⁴ The phrase is best seen as analogous to the phrase *caelum apertum*, used by Juvencus in l. 11, 4. 145, 746, and frequently by other authors, and to various usages with *mare* (see *TLL* II. 223. 54–6); the suggestion that it refers to unwallled cities (Fontaine 1981, 68 n. 87) is over-literal, and difficult with *terrae*.

¹⁵ There is ambiguity here, since although the accusative and infinitive construction might be taken to indicate a state of affairs, one cannot rule out the possibility that the construction is used to indicate what it is feared may happen, not what is happening. In the case of *horreo* there is no single, standard usage (*TLL* VI. 3. 2981, 42–3 and 52–5). Compare the confusion, not uncommon in Late Latin, between fearing to do something and fearing that something is happening, in e.g. Ausonius, *Moselle* 147, 428.

identifications of this name or title have been suggested, to no avail. It is most unlikely to be that of *pontifex maximus*, as tentatively suggested by Kirsch,¹⁶ for it was over fifty years before an emperor would refuse this,¹⁷ or the regular name Augustus, though that certainly had religious overtones, or the appellation *divus*, given posthumously to emperors pagan and Christian. To Von Albrecht, it seemed to be *deus*;¹⁸ certainly Diocletian commanded that he be called *deus*, according to Jerome,¹⁹ but there is no evidence that it was an issue for Constantine, and it is unlikely. Fontaine's argument, in a typically rich and imaginative study of these lines,²⁰ is that Juvenicus referred to the titles of *invictus* or *comes solis* ('unconquered', 'companion of the sun'), both of them connected with the Sun cult, which Constantine seldom used after the year 324;²¹ and that by using the title *dominus lucis* of Christ, who is the Lord of all light, including the sun, he implied that such titles were inappropriate for the emperor. It may be objected that this interpretation, which would justify an inference that he wrote this before 324 or very soon afterwards, does not impose itself, and is perhaps too subtle even for minds attuned to the suggestions of panegyric.²² Perhaps it would be easier to assume that the title in question was that of *dominus* alone; the title *dominus noster* is in fact discontinued on coins from 324, although admittedly it continues in inscriptions, less easily subjected to central control.²³ To eschew the title of *dominus* was a measure likely to win fame and favour.²⁴ But in the immediate context, in view of the words *solus regum*,²⁵ the obvious title is that of *rex*, although implicitly rejected by scholars and indeed difficult at first sight. There

¹⁶ Kirsch (1989), 88.

¹⁷ Cameron (1968), 96–102.

¹⁸ Von Albrecht (1997), 1354: '(Constantine) does not want to be considered as God.'

¹⁹ Jerome, *Chronicon* a. 296 *Diocletianus adorari se ut deum iussit*.

²⁰ Fontaine (1984*b*), 131–41.

²¹ *Ibid.* 139 n. 57, noting that the title *comes solis* was common until 320, and thereafter used only at Antioch in the first issue of coinage after 324. Cf. Barnes (1981), 48 and 309 n. 47.

²² See also the comments of Röttger (1996), 131.

²³ Bruun (1966), 28 n. 1.

²⁴ *Scriptores Historiae Augustae, Alex. Sev.* 4. 1.

²⁵ Huemer's *regnum* has long been recognized as a misprint, although Santorelli (1986/7) at least begins by seeking to interpret it.

is no evidence that the title was offered to Constantine; the suggestion would be hardly less provocative than it was in the time of Julius Caesar,²⁶ and the general view in our period of Rome's early kings remains a negative one.²⁷ Although the epithets *regalis* and *regius* are commonly used in the sense of 'imperial' in Late Antiquity, the noun *rex* is not applied to emperors, except in the writings of Christians who are condemning emperors that they see as wicked or heretical, until well into the fifth century.²⁸ However, the title's improbability, indeed unthinkability, makes it ideal for a panegyric context, where speakers expand on what is entirely safe: of course Constantine, though the most powerful monarch in the world, would shudder to be called *rex*. He shows the unreadiness to be granted the honour, and the humility of one who considers himself unworthy, which is a commonplace of encomium.²⁹ It may be added, although this is a point more concerned with the epic configuration of the work which will concern us later, that this interpretation fits well with the dynamic of the whole poem, in which kingship is an important theme.³⁰ Constantine's humility reflects that of Christ, whose entirely justified claim to be called *rex* is underplayed, in Juvencus as in the gospels.³¹ Constantine is also implicitly contrasted with Diocletian, often called *rex* because he was a persecutor, in a way that mirrors the implicit contrast of Christ with a particularly wicked king, Herod.³² Juvencus certainly does not go as far as Eusebius will do when he compares Constantine and the *Logos*,³³ but the analogy at this point is clear.

²⁶ See Plutarch, *Caesar* 60.

²⁷ Cf. *Panegyrici Latini* (Mynors) 3. (11) 13 and 30.

²⁸ Add to the references in Demandt (1989), 221 n. 37 (all hostile until Possidius, *Life of Augustine* 13 (PL 32. 44) and Orosius (7. 28. 27), both of the fifth century), and Arnobius 4. 34, 35; Lactantius, *De Mortibus* 19. 6 (Diocletian the *veteranus rex*) and *DI* 4. 27. 5. Firmicus Maternus refers (*passim*) to the horoscopes of future *reges*, but he is in this context not thinking of emperors, a most dangerous occupation.

²⁹ To give but two examples (perhaps indeed a single one recycled): Paulinus of Nola c. 6. 93 *nec se meruisse fatetur* ('and he does not admit that he has deserved it'), and Claudian 17. 245 *non se meruisse fatetur*.

³⁰ See p. 67.

³¹ In Juvencus' earlier narratives the title is inconspicuous (cf. 1. 250, 2. 119, 3. 634); in the narratives of the passion, where Christ is called the king of the Jews (4. 647, 680), this is the mockery—made doubly ironical—of others. Sedulius is more ready to refer to Christ as *rex*. See also p. 67.

³² See p. 67; for the single Herod, see pp. 24–5.

³³ *Tricennial Oration*, sec. 2 (GCS 1. 199).

The chronological question, then, is not one to be solved in conventional historical terms,³⁴ and there are no grounds for doubting Jerome's date of 329. Marold drew attention to the fact that there are several dates around the time which refer to 'geistiges Leben';³⁵ presumably he and Orbán, who borrows his exact words,³⁶ imply by this observation that the precision may be deceptive. Jerome may have placed such dates where he felt they had most impact, and he has indeed been pronounced careless in this respect.³⁷ We may also legitimately wonder whether the date he gives is the date at which the work was begun, or the date when it became generally available; the poem will have taken some time to write. But, to sum up, there is no better dating than Jerome's, and Herzog's 'wohl nach 325' seems to err a little on the side of caution.³⁸

Two other pieces of evidence from Jerome, while not adding to our information, shed interesting light. First, a reference to Juvenicus in *Ep.* 70. 5 (CSEL 54. 707–8): *Iuvenicus presbyter sub Constantino historiam domini salvatoris versibus explicavit nec pertimuit evangelii maiestatem sub metri leges mittere* ('Juvenicus the priest under Constantine set forth the story of the Lord and Saviour in verses, and was not afraid to submit the majesty of the gospel to the laws of metre'). The context makes it unlikely that these words of Jerome imply an unfavourable criticism. In this letter Jerome is defending himself to Magnus, a rhetor, and showing the value of using *exempla* from secular literature in the service of Christianity. He justifies his own practice with reference to a long series of biblical and early Christian writers, including Cyprian and Lactantius. If he did have reservations about Juvenicus' endeavour, he conceals them here, and there is certainly nothing like the hostile criticism that he made of Proba, a Christian poet of a very different kind, for, as he put it, making Vergil speak of Christ.³⁹ Writing near the end of the fourth century, but before the full flourishing of new styles of Christian poetry

³⁴ As implied by Fontaine (1984*b*), 141 in the words *Adhuc sub historicis lis sit*.

³⁵ Marold (1890), 329.

³⁶ Orbán (1995), 334.

³⁷ Kelly (1975), 177.

³⁸ Herzog (1989), 332.

³⁹ See Green (1995), 553–4, and Introduction, p. xiv.

in Paulinus of Nola and Prudentius,⁴⁰ Jerome, no poet himself, found Juvencus a useful ally or precedent for his own use of the classics. Jerome admires his boldness in putting the gospels into metre, just as he admires his painstaking accuracy when, in the first passage quoted above, he describes his work of *translatio* (this word was also used of translation) as almost word-for-word (*paene ad verbum*).⁴¹ It is instructive, in passing, to compare the judgement on Juvencus' work made about a century after Jerome in the decree 'about works to be accepted and not accepted' traditionally attributed to Pope Gelasius: *Iuveni nihilominus laboriosum opus non spernimus, sed miramur* ('nonetheless we do not despise the painstaking work of Juvencus, but admire it').⁴² By this time the use of metre is unremarkable, and it is Juvencus' great industry that is singled out. Its approval by the compiler of this section is not in question, although there is perhaps a danger that it might be despised or overlooked. The final piece of evidence from Jerome is a quotation from Juvencus: in his commentary on Matthew he quotes line 1. 250.⁴³ The fact that he never uses more than this one passage should not be seen as a sign of disapprobation; it could equally well be construed as a particular tribute. As with most writers of antiquity, little store should be set on the fact that evidence of his immediate reception, whether positive or negative, is sparse: this is not at all unusual.

A further piece of external evidence must be mentioned, one which derives not from Jerome but from a marginal addition to a manuscript of his work *On Famous Men* in the cathedral library at Leon (ms. 22), in which Fontaine discovered the one word *Elliberitanus*.⁴⁴ There is no reason to question the correctness of this scribal addition, even if it was made some centuries later, or to postulate any intention to mislead;⁴⁵ and it may confidently be inferred that

⁴⁰ On Paulinus, see Flury (1973), 129–45, where there are frequent comparisons with Juvencus.

⁴¹ See pp. 43–6 for discussion of the phrase *paene ad verbum*.

⁴² For the *Decretum de libris recipiendis et non recipiendis* see Von Dobschütz (1912), and 47 *EEC* 1. 223–4. Sedulius has just been referred to, with warm praise; hence *nihilominus*.

⁴³ Jerome, *Comm. in Matt.* 1. 2. 11.

⁴⁴ Fontaine (1959), 8.

⁴⁵ In texts of Ausonius, XXIV. 82 the name *Hispalis* was replaced by that of *Emerita* (see Green 1991, *ad loc.*), perhaps a piece of cultural politics.

Juvencus was an inhabitant or native of Elvira. This city, close to medieval and modern Granada, was a place of considerable importance in the development of Christianity.⁴⁶ It was the venue of an ecclesiastical council in the early years of the fourth century, which, indeed, Juvencus could well have attended as one of the twenty-four priests known to have been present along with numerous bishops. It is possible to see in his work traces of its pronouncements.⁴⁷ Elvira was also not far from Cordoba, the seat of Bishop Ossius (Hosius), one of the most influential figures of Constantine's reign.⁴⁸ It was no backwater. In general it would be wrong to assume that Juvencus, the aristocratic priest, a man committed to poetry and committed to Constantine, was an insignificant or negligible figure in his generation.

Virtually nothing else is known, or said, about Juvencus in antiquity,⁴⁹ other than comments by such writers as Venantius and Isidore expressing general praise.⁵⁰ There is little to be gleaned from his text; biographical detail is not to be expected, and the Preface, though in one sense strongly personal, has a different orientation, as will be seen. Although the possibility cannot be ruled out altogether,⁵¹ it is very unlikely that he visited Palestine; there are geographical errors and inexactitudes, and, more importantly, ample evidence that topographical accuracy, even in a general way, is subordinate to other considerations.⁵² There is no trace in his verses of experience in Roman government or the viewpoint of an administrator, and little if any direct sign of the outlook of the elite to which Jerome assigns him. Such evidence is not to be expected, since he is closely following the words of the gospels themselves, and its absence is not significant. It is noteworthy that Mary's song of praise (*Magnificat*) severely reduces the rejoicing over the discomfiture of the

⁴⁶ *EEC* 1. 270.

⁴⁷ See Force (1993), 325–6, and the less cogent suggestion of Fichtner (1994), 35.

⁴⁸ De Clercq (1954). It is far from certain that this Ossius is the dedicatee of Calcidius' *Timaeus*; see Klibansky (1962), pp. ix–xvii.

⁴⁹ Nothing is added to the information in Huemer's edition by Norton (1962).

⁵⁰ See pp. 351–5.

⁵¹ On early pilgrimage see Hunt (1982), 4. According to Fichtner (1994), 21, Juvencus might have used commentaries or travel guides to the Holy Land.

⁵² Opelt (1975).

rich and powerful, but there may be other reasons for this.⁵³ But there are perhaps some indications of his status and interest. Although the use of words attested predominantly in legal texts may not be of significance in themselves, especially in a period when the amount of contemporary Latin literature for comparison is not great, one notes the rare word *aggressor* ('thief') at 2. 617. Acquaintance with the language of finance might be inferred from 3. 416, where the word *resedit* ('is unaccounted for') is used of a wandering sheep, and from 3. 441 *venali nomine sisti* ('to be placed on sale'); and a favourite usage of Juvencus *cedere pro* ('be equivalent to': 1. 218, 2. 494) is one that elsewhere is often, though by no means exclusively, found in the context of accountancy.⁵⁴ More interesting perhaps is a detail that suggests a socio-economic context significantly different from that of the gospels. In Matt. 24: 43 Christ makes the point that if he had known when a thief was coming a householder would have taken precautions, or at least 'watched'; for Juvencus (4. 180–1) these precautions would involve taking up arms against the thief and meeting him well outside the premises.⁵⁵ It is true that the word *procul* is not always equivalent to 'far',⁵⁶ but nonetheless this vignette envisages not a small Palestinian city but the more expansive, villa-based economy of the West.

Without doubt Juvencus was a learned man, who had benefited from a good education. He knows his Vergil extremely well, alluding copiously to the *Aeneid* as well as the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*. His borrowings are by no means restricted to the most famous parts; indeed, as we shall see,⁵⁷ in some ways he finds less colourful passages more serviceable. It is interesting to note that in 2. 142 his words *undasque coronant* imply a particular interpretation of Vergil's phrase *vina coronant* at A. 1. 724, as is clear from the following line.⁵⁸ The use of this interpretation does not of course make him a great

⁵³ 1. 96–102. For Juvencus' omissions and reductions, see pp. 31–6.

⁵⁴ *TLL* III. 732. 21–42.

⁵⁵ *obvia . . . ferret | arma procul* ('bear arms far outside to confront him').

⁵⁶ If it were, the picture of Mezentius at Vergil, A. 10. 835 sitting under a tree with his helmet hanging *procul* above him would be ridiculous.

⁵⁷ See below, pp. 54–7.

⁵⁸ *completis labiis lapidum* ('with the lips of the stone vessels full to the brim'). See Servius on A. 3. 525. The other relevant Vergil references are G. 2. 528 (*cratera*), A. 7. 147 (*vina*).

scholar—any more than a particular choice of biblical interpretation makes him an exegete of note⁵⁹—but indicates at least a lively continuing interest or a clear memory of a good early training. He understands and handles Vergil confidently, and, as will later be shown in detail, can emulate and adapt not only his diction but also his narrative and rhetorical structures and a host of stylistic features. There is a magnificently elaborate storm-scene in 2. 25–42, a passage which, though rather untypical in the abundant texture of its Vergilian material, shows what he might have done and how he holds himself back elsewhere.⁶⁰ A shrewd awareness of the wider concerns of epic may also be detected,⁶¹ served by a skilful use of wide-ranging allusion. He also has a high degree of competence in using the epic hexameter, although by the standards of Vergilian and post-Vergilian epic there are minor imperfections.⁶²

There is clear evidence of other poets, especially epic poets, though rather less of it.⁶³ Studies and surveys of Juvenicus, even the briefest, regularly state that he knew or had read a clutch of authors, each making slightly different permutations of the evidence which the edition of Huemer displays in between his text and the manuscript evidence.⁶⁴ Data of this kind, routinely provided in editions of this time, has proved very useful for subsequent scholarship, but some words of caution are necessary. To say nothing of a small number of seemingly false references in the old editions on which we still depend,⁶⁵ many such parallels are intrinsically doubtful, and not infrequently a careful comparison of the relevant words arouses strong reservations about the plausibility of arguing that Juvenicus derived a particular phrase from a specific author or passage. For example, Juvenicus has the phrase *consurgere in iras*, identical to one

⁵⁹ See pp. 90–4.

⁶⁰ Ratkowitzsch (1986). See pp. 61–2.

⁶¹ See pp. 63–71.

⁶² On this see the index in Huemer's edn., Hatfield (1890), 35–40, Kievitz's edn.

⁶³ Roughly speaking, allusions to Vergil outnumber allusions to all other writers combined by at least five to one.

⁶⁴ Among recent examples, Barnes (1981, 246) mentions Virgil, Ovid, Lucan, and Statius, Di Berardino (1988, 267) speaks of authors 'such as Plautus, Valerius Flaccus, Statius and Ovid', as well as Vergil.

⁶⁵ For Juvenicus and Sedulius no one has yet done what Schwind (1990, 19–20 and 1995a) has done for Arator, in correcting McKinlay's edn.

in Valerius Flaccus (*Argonautica* 1. 673) at 1. 499 and 2. 27 (and he has *consurgat in iras* at 4. 563). This is by no means a commonplace expression—it is rather less straightforward than English ‘rise in anger’—and direct imitation is at first sight an attractive explanation. But can we be sure that Juvencus had any knowledge of the work of Valerius Flaccus, a claim that must depend on a small handful of similarly uncertain candidates? Does a general similarity of context help to establish a connection? How significant is the identical metrical position? Could Juvencus’ expression rather owe something to the phrase *consurgere in auras* in the recently written poem *Laudes Domini* (118)—but again, did he know that work? Or did he find the phrase in an anthology or selection of some kind? Could Juvencus’ phrase have been suggested by a quite different author, no longer extant? Perhaps, indeed, the similarity of wording is coincidental (as one might say also of the phrase already discussed, *solus regum* in 4. 809, which happens to be identical to one in Lucan (8. 359))? Even if the possibility of coincidence is rejected, one is still some way from proving that author X or Y was read in a meaningful sense by Juvencus.⁶⁶

Reconstructions of his library must therefore proceed with caution. Claims that he knew or read Plautus and Terence (at least the former, for the latter we know to have been a school-author), or the love-poems of Propertius and the elegiac poems of Ovid, or the minor works ascribed to Vergil, may well raise learned eyebrows. On the other hand, one should not go to the other extreme and swing the razor too far.⁶⁷ There is a danger that perceptions of his reading may be unduly influenced by such well-known attacks on classical ideals as those of Augustine’s *Confessions* or Jerome’s account of the nightmare in which he was beaten for preferring Cicero to Christ,⁶⁸ comments which are not even typical of their authors. In the third century strongly divergent models of attitudes to classical culture were provided by Tertullian and Minucius Felix, and are indeed attested within a single author such as Cyprian.⁶⁹ Nevertheless,

⁶⁶ On Juvencus’ knowledge of Greek, see p. 385. It is unlikely that he read Greek literature.

⁶⁷ A possible case is in Ogilvie (1978), esp. 109–10.

⁶⁸ Jerome, *Ep.* 22. 30 (CSEL 54. 189–91).

⁶⁹ Cyprian, *ad Demetrianum* and the letter *ad Donatum*.

even if one confines significant imitations in Juvencus to what is a priori relatively uncontroversial, an impressive breadth of knowledge remains, one which is not much less than that of his younger contemporary Ausonius, who must have been on the threshold of his long career as a schoolmaster, and eventually imperial tutor, at the time when Juvencus wrote. He shares with Ausonius an enthusiasm for the Latin literature of the classical past, and however good his schooling may have been,⁷⁰ it is quite possible on this evidence that Juvencus was himself at one time a *grammaticus*. But perhaps he simply continued his private reading beyond his school-days, without embarrassment or compunction about living in both Athens and Jerusalem, or rather Rome and Galilee, at one and the same time.

Clear evidence of intellectual accomplishments in other fields—other than biblical knowledge, to be discussed later in this chapter—is sparse, as one would expect it to be in a close paraphrase of a relatively non-technical text. But in one such area, medicine, it is notable that Juvencus paraphrases with considerable care, not skimming over or referring vaguely to the various diseases mentioned, but seeking to match the particularity of detail in the gospels, and using technical terms and amplification where he judges it appropriate. In 1. 440–7 he is careful to include every disease mentioned in Matt. 4: 23–4; as in 2. 77 the healing of the *paralyticus* (the word is unmetrical) receives a non-technical periphrasis. In 2. 384–6 the woman's flux and its effects are described in detail, as is its healing ten lines later; so too the 'fever' in 2. 330–1 and the affliction of the 'dumb demoniac' at 2. 417–18.⁷¹ In 3. 359 the technical word *lunaticus* of the Bible versions is explained by etymology in the line *et cursus lunae natum mihi daemonis arte | torquet*;⁷² and especially interesting is 1. 446 *et lunae cursum comitata insania mentis*,⁷³ in which the word *comitata* makes a learned play

⁷⁰ Testard (1990), 26 refers to education received within the family.

⁷¹ Leprosy is mentioned in 1. 734 (*lepra*), and in 4. 409–10 Juvencus adds the explanation that Simon the leper, in whose house they were, had previously been healed by Christ.

⁷² 'and the course of the moon torments my son, through the Devil's agency'.

⁷³ 'and the disease of the mind that accompanies the course of the moon'.

on the technical term *morbus comitialis*, a kind of epilepsy. Here Juvencus, faced with the single word *lunaticus* of the Old Latin version,⁷⁴ demonstrates at once his interest in disease and his ability to manipulate a common Vergilian technique, known as the *figura etymologica*.⁷⁵ It was perhaps this that appealed to Isidore, who quoted the line at *Origines* 4. 7. 6.⁷⁶ It is of course true, as has been said of a different kind of poetry, that disease ‘was a familiar subject with a familiar vocabulary’,⁷⁷ and there is no need to assume that he had had specialist medical training; but his sensitivity is notable.

There are also traces of classical philosophy in his verses, although it would be rash to exclude the influence of Christian commentaries here, especially that of Origen.⁷⁸ In the episode at 1. 190–213 narrating Simeon’s encounter with the infant Jesus (known to many today as the *Nunc Dimittis*), the old man twice expresses his joy with a reference to the common neo-Platonic idea of the body as a prison⁷⁹ from which death liberates the soul (1. 192–3 *carcere corporis aegri | deposito* ‘having put off the prison of the body’) and 1. 202–3 *nunc, nunc me famulum dominus nunc liberat atris | corporis e vinclis* (‘now, now the Lord frees me his servant from the dark chains of the body’). There is a further such touch in 4. 68 *ast humilis claram liber conscendet ad aethram* (‘but the humble man, freed, will climb to the clear upper air’), which is an exegetical addition explaining in an eschatological sense the Bible’s *exaltabitur*. Further, and perhaps rather deeper, evidence of knowledge of philosophy, involving Epicureanism, Stoicism, and Platonism, is present in the Preface, which will now be examined.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ On the Latin versions of the gospels available to Juvencus, see App. 1.

⁷⁵ See Hansson (1948), esp. 113 f., Harrison on Vergil, A. 10. 115, and D. R. Williams on Vergil, A. 5. 2.

⁷⁶ The word *insania* should therefore perhaps replace *insidia* in Isidore, assuming that his phrase *insania daemonum* means something like ‘devilish insanity’ or ‘rage’. Isidore quotes Juvencus also at Orig. 3. 39 (3. 224–5) and 5. 27. 24 (1. 549); see Gasti (1999) and Fontaine (1959), 481 n. 2.

⁷⁷ So Langslow (1999), 200.

⁷⁸ See pp. 93–4.

⁷⁹ Courcelle (1965).

⁸⁰ See also Green (2004a), for a view of the Preface complementary to what follows.

JUVENCUS' PREFACE

Juvencus' work begins with a *praefatio* or proem separate in nature and content from the paraphrase that follows.⁸¹ In the editions of Marold and Huemer⁸² the reader will first meet a short prefatory piece, present in all manuscripts, which consists of a distich on each of the four evangelists, concentrating on their pictorial symbols. Though Sedulius makes use of these symbols in his poem (*CP* 1. 355–8), this piece is almost certainly not the work of Juvencus: it presents the evangelists in an order that may not have been the current one in Juvencus' day,⁸³ and would be arguably inappropriate to a work in which the gospels are mixed in very unequal proportions. What follows this, a passage of twenty-seven lines with the heading *praefatio* or *prologus*⁸⁴ in the manuscripts, may properly be called Juvencus' Preface, and he uses it to express some remarkable opinions before beginning his gospel narrative. To facilitate analysis it will be quoted in full.

Immortale nihil mundi compage tenetur,
 non orbis, non regna hominum, non aurea Roma,
 non mare, non tellus, non ignea sidera caeli.
 nam statuit genitor rerum irrevocabile tempus,
 quo cunctum torrens rapiat flamma ultima mundum. 5
 sed tamen innumeros homines sublimia facta
 et virtutis honos in tempora longa frequentant,
 accumulans quorum famam laudesque poetae.
 hos celsi cantus, Smyrnae de fonte fluentes,
 illos Minciadae celebrat dulcedo Maronis. 10
 nec minor ipsorum discurrit gloria vatam,
 quae manet aeternae similis, dum saecula volabunt
 et vertigo poli terras atque aequora circum
 aethera sidereum iusso moderamine volvet.
 quod si tam longam meruerunt carmina famam, 15

⁸¹ Kirsch (1989), 86 n. 121 reviews the manuscript evidence and other arguments for treating it as separate.

⁸² Marold (1886), Huemer's edn.

⁸³ Marold (1886), *prolegomena*, p. vii and n. ***.

⁸⁴ The term *prologus* is best kept for introductions to dramatic works.

quae veterum gestis hominum mendacia nectunt,
 nobis certa fides aeternae in saecula laudis
 immortale decus tribuet meritumque rependet.
 nam mihi carmen erit Christi vitalia gesta,
 divinum populis falsi sine crimine donum. 20
 nec metus, ut mundi rapiant incendia secum
 hoc opus; hoc etenim forsitan me subtrahet igni
 tunc, cum flammivoma descendet nube coruscans
 iudex, altithroni genitoris gloria, Christus.
 ergo age sanctificus adsit mihi carminis auctor 25
 spiritus, et puro mentem riget amne canentis
 dulcis Iordanis, ut Christo digna loquamur.

Nothing contained in the structure of the universe is immortal, not the world, not the kingdoms of men, not golden Rome, not the sea, not the earth, not the fiery stars of heaven. For the father has determined an irrevocable time at which the final searing conflagration will remove the whole world. But for innumerable men sublime deeds and the honour paid to virtue prolong their repute over long epochs, and their fame and praise are heaped up by poets. Some men are praised by elevated poems flowing from the fountain of Smyrna, others by the sweetness of Vergil, Mincius' son. And no less far extends the glory of the poets themselves, a glory similar to eternal glory, which remains as long as the ages hurry by and the whirling of the heavens turns the starry sky around the land and sea under divinely ordered governance. But if poems which attach falsehoods to the deeds of men of old have earned such a long-lasting repute, to me my assured faith will bestow the immortal glory of eternal praise for ever and ever and repay my service. For my song will be the life-giving feats of Christ, a divine gift to the peoples which is immune from the charge of falsehood. Nor do I fear that the conflagration of the world will snatch away this work with it; indeed it will perhaps rescue me from the flames at the time when Christ, the resplendent judge, the glory of the high-throned Father, descends in flame-belching cloud. Come then, may the sanctifying spirit, the inspirer of my song, be present, and may sweet Jordan flood my mind with its pure stream as I sing, so that I may utter things worthy of Christ.

This Preface is very different from other writings of the same name in Late Antiquity, with perhaps a single exception.⁸⁵ It has very little in common with the various prefatory writings of Ausonius, or with

⁸⁵ Kirsch (1989), 85–92, and esp. the very long n. 121, reviews its development in Late Antiquity; Felgentreu (1999, 13–57) examines the history of the Preface.

those developed by Claudian and Prudentius, short poems marked by a different metre from the poems they introduce, and often, especially in Prudentius, of an allegorical nature. The one exception is the introductory verse of Proba's cento a generation later, which is comparable in metre, in length, and in its forthrightness; no doubt she is influenced by Juvencus here. The prefaces of Martial, Quintilian, Statius, and others are different again, not only in their use of prose but in terms of their content and relative informality. Although Juvencus' Preface is obviously personal in one sense, it operates on a much higher plane. A more helpful approach is to consider his Preface as a development of the epic (and didactic) proem, and so the beginning of the poem itself and not an adjunct. The typical proem in the epic tradition gives a cleverly crafted and concise synopsis or foretaste of the poem's coverage, and makes an appeal for divine aid. But unlike Homer, Vergil, Lucan, Statius, and others, Juvencus does not offer a synopsis; not so much, perhaps, because the details were familiar—they may have been to some readers, at least⁸⁶—or because Juvencus is reluctant or unable to summarize them, as because he has something to say of greater weight. The main thrust of the Preface is a meditation (and perhaps also a manifesto) on fame, not a new topic by any means but one that he wishes to reconfigure. This takes precedence over the traditional invocation, which here comes at the end of the Preface and is thus less obtrusive than is usual in epic. Hence, perhaps, the fact that the common theme of the 'praise of the ruler' is not present until the Epilogue—though there is a danger of speaking as if Juvencus felt obliged to include all the usual themes and shunts them around more or less mechanically. The meditative nature of his main themes might be distantly related to elements of personal comment and questioning in the didactic tradition, in Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* and Vergil's *Georgics*, but it is not unreasonable of Kirsch to note that the nature of Juvencus' Preface finds its closest parallel in the introductory musings of Sallust.⁸⁷ Yet this *prima facie* surprising comparison perhaps indicates more than anything the difficulty of doing justice to the novelty of Juvencus' thought and treatment. The theme of

⁸⁶ See pp. 129–34.

⁸⁷ For a discussion of this, see Kirsch (1989), 88.

fame is a classical one, certainly, but the tone is strikingly different. It is not self-deprecating, as often in the tradition, but highly confident, because of the poet's assurance that it is the theme that can make the poet glorious and not the reverse, as is implied, for all their affectation of modesty, in the classical poets. At the same time, it is humble in a theological perspective when, with its remarkable importation of a point of reference that is non-aesthetic and otherworldly,⁸⁸ it speaks of the end of the world and the Last Judgement. As often in Juvencus and other Christian epic, literary and theological perspectives are combined.

The Preface opens with a ringing declaration that nothing is immortal in the *mundus*; not the world or the firmament, nor the kingdoms of men or golden Rome. It is striking that he should specify Rome herself in this context, but there is no need to question his patriotism and ascribe to him the belief that Rome is a 'prétention diabolique',⁸⁹ especially in view of his later praise of Constantine and the undercurrent of favour towards the Romans in narrating the life of Christ.⁹⁰ He thus subordinates Rome in his scheme of things but does not despise or reject her. All these things will be ended by fire at the time which the God who made them (*genitor rerum*) has already irrevocably decided. Human fame must be judged against this fact. Choosing his words carefully, he declares that the fame enjoyed by the *sublimia facta* of men and the glory of their virtue will be long-lasting but not permanent; so too the works of their poets, whose glory is similar to eternal glory—an interesting expression, eirenically presented—but will end with the end of the universe. But one who writes about Christ has a greater theme, and may thus confidently expect his glory to be truly immortal;⁹¹ his work will be immune from the fiery destruction, surviving the end of the world in the same way, one presumes, as the words of Christ, which 'will not pass away' (cf. Matt. 24: 35, rendered in 4. 161–2). It is Juvencus' certain belief that by writing he himself will gain eternal glory, and his earnest hope that it may even result in his own personal salvation from the wrathful flames on the Day of Judgement. With the help of

⁸⁸ Herzog (1989), 335–6, Thraede (2001a), 883.

⁸⁹ Paschoud (1967), 1–2. ⁹⁰ See pp. 111–12.

⁹¹ On this phrase, see Palla (1977).

the inspiring (literally, 'holy-making') Spirit, whom he now invokes, he hopes to achieve writing worthy of Christ.

This is uncompromising, especially towards various prime exponents of the ancient philosophical tradition. It has been linked with Lucretius in particular, whether positively or negatively. Lucretius states clearly that the world will pass away, a tenet on which Lactantius (*DI* 7. 1. 10) saw that there was common ground with the Epicureans; on the other hand, Lucretius believed in the immortality of atoms and void. In fact the Lucretian background of this passage has been overstated;⁹² if *immortale* (especially at this point in a hexameter) suggests Lucretius, another word in the first line, *compages*, is notably Stoic.⁹³ It could be argued that in line 3 he alludes to Lucretius' *triplex natura* ('threefold nature': cf. 5. 93), but this could have been inspired by Ovid (*M.* 1. 256–8 and 12. 40) or some other source. The emphatic words of line 4, so forceful with *statuit*,⁹⁴ and *irrevocabile*, and later *iusso* (line 14: a highly important word in Juvencus),⁹⁵ may be directed expressly against the demiurge of Plato's *Timaeus* who, in one version of a difficult passage, is said to be able to dissolve the world if he should choose (41A). If so, Juvencus is going in a different direction from Constantine, in *Oratio ad Sanctos* 3–10,⁹⁶ and Minucius Felix in 34. 4, who quote it approvingly.⁹⁷ Philosophical confrontation may also be embedded in the adjectives of the line following: the entire *mundus* will be destroyed (against Lucretius) and the conflagration will be final (and not cyclical, against the Stoics).

But if Juvencus strongly attacks, or brushes aside, the foundations of ancient cosmology here, his treatment of earthly fame is in some ways more positive than might be expected. There is no evident drive, at least in the language used, to depreciate great men or the best of the ancient poetry—Homer and Vergil are surely chosen as its outstanding representatives, and not as explicit pointers to Juvencus'

⁹² Carrubba (1993).

⁹³ For details see Green (2004a).

⁹⁴ Cf. Vergil, *G.* 1. 353 *ipse pater statuit*.

⁹⁵ The emendation *iusto* of Omeisius, noted in Arevalo's edn. (*PL* 19), has found little favour.

⁹⁶ Barnes (1981), 75.

⁹⁷ Further evidence of its prominence at this time would be to hand if it could be shown that Calcidius' translation was dedicated to Ossius, bishop of Cordoba, but see p. 9.

generic affiliation—that has been written about them; irony seems absent, and the epithet *Minciadae*, newly created (as far as we can tell) for Vergil and referring to his birthplace as mentioned in all three of his poems, shows a sensitive respect. The carefully chosen phrase ‘similar to eternal’ to describe their renown, and the poetic development of the theme that it will last as long as the universe,⁹⁸ shows further respect for, and indeed sympathy with, traditional poetry. But Juvencus’ theme is of a superior kind, for a number of reasons. First, it is true, whereas the praises of great men are traditionally adorned or supplemented with lies (the verb is *nectunt*, literally ‘tie’, ‘attach’). This idea recalls both Ovid, *M.* 9. 137–9, where *Fama* (Rumour) is described as adding lies to the truth, and the long tradition behind that,⁹⁹ and, perhaps more importantly, Lactantius’ view of *poetica licentia*.¹⁰⁰ Second, it is a new and recent theme; the epithet *veterum* in line 16 implies not only that traditional praises are old hat,¹⁰¹ but also that there was ample time for the tradition to be corrupted, and perhaps too that they were, in a Pauline sense (though Pauline doctrine appears seldom if ever in Juvencus), examples of ‘the old man’, unregenerate mankind. Furthermore, Christ’s deeds are concerned with life and not with death or conquest, which implies death. It is here, in the words *Christi vitalia gesta*, that we get the only possible statement in the Preface of the poet’s theme. But the words should not hastily be plucked out of their context in order to satisfy the search for classical ingredients, to serve as a thematic statement. As Nestler noted, they are somewhat wanting as a summary of the poem’s content, in which words are prominent as deeds, and teaching as prominent as action; this difficulty cannot be removed by pronouncing that they are simply equivalent to *vita*,¹⁰² for the meaning of the epithet *vitalis* as ‘life-giving’ in a soteriological sense (*pace* Carrubba,¹⁰³ who offers a

⁹⁸ Cf. Ovid, *Amores* 1. 15, and Lucan 9. 980–1.

⁹⁹ Thraede (1961–3), 4. 123 nn. 63 and 64.

¹⁰⁰ See p. 134 and Deproost (1998).

¹⁰¹ Compare its use in 1. 730 (= Matt. 7: 29) of the tradition of the scribes, compared with the teaching of Christ.

¹⁰² So Nestler (1910), 44; Roberts (1985), 69; but note Kirsch (1989), 102, ‘Kriegstaten’, Campagnuolo (1993), ‘imprese’, and Fontaine (1981) 74, ‘la geste vivifiante’.

¹⁰³ Carrubba (1993), 305 n. 7.

mixture of some five meanings) is central to the poem and clear in this instance. It may be relevant, too, that the noun *gesta* is used elsewhere by Juvencus only of Herod and Judas, whom he so heavily condemns.¹⁰⁴ We seem to have a deliberately one-sided description of what Christ achieved, to fit the context. His incarnate life provided more than *gesta*, but nonetheless these 'feats'—to consider them in this light for argument's sake—exceed those of ancient worthies. The word *gesta* is in fact, strictly speaking, rarely used in or of epic,¹⁰⁵ and one might suspect here an almost teasing, or at least competitive, attitude to traditional epic. Such an attitude has already been seen in the case of the term *rex*: the contrast between Herod and Christ is not so much the traditional epic contrast between the angry king and the *placidus rex* ('gentle, kindly, king') that can be traced from Homer to Statius, as one between the traditional, raging king, and the king of uncertain, or at least unclarified, status, a kind of problematizing inversion. Christ is *placidus... rex* according to prophecy (3. 634), but also perhaps so gentle that the word *rex* is inappropriate. The third aspect of his theme's superiority is that Christ's work was a gift (*donum*) to the peoples. It did not incur any charge of deceitfulness (*sine crimine*); and it was not death-dealing, or self-seeking, or in any way untrustworthy or unreliable.

Notwithstanding these great claims and ground-breaking contrasts, the closing invocation is notably similar in its articulation to the traditional type. The similarity is not merely superficial, and certainly not cosmetic. In the Epilogue, as we have seen, Juvencus spoke more directly of his application of what he calls the embellishments of earthly language, through the grace of Christ; here he stresses his dependence on the Holy Spirit and makes full use of the ancient imagery of inspiration without any sign of irony, perhaps indeed emphasizing some common ground with a sudden small burst of poetic compound adjectives in lines 23–5. Quadlbauer has shown how carefully elaborated this invocation is.¹⁰⁶ Inspiration is still seen as being performed through water, but the Christian poet adopts the language of baptism, a prominent theme of the poem,

¹⁰⁴ In 3. 42 and 4. 628.

¹⁰⁵ Unlike *res gestas* in Horace, *AP* 73, *Ep.* 1. 3. 7–8, 2. 1. 251.

¹⁰⁶ Quadlbauer (1974).

when he speaks of the water of the river Jordan as the organ of inspiration. The Jordan is a strong and flowing river, not a trickle—Callimachean poetics have been transformed with the aid of Horace¹⁰⁷—and it works not superficially on the lips, like the irrigation of the Muses in Propertius 3. 3. 51–2 and Ovid, *Amores* 3. 9. 25–6, but nourishingly on the mind. Its sweetness may be linked with both the ‘delight’ of classical poetics and Christian affection for what is good and wholesome. The description of the Jordan as ‘sweet’ supports the earlier reference to the *dulcedo* of Vergil in line 10; *dulcedo* is not a suspect quality, the lubrication for the entrance of satanic ideas as it is to Jerome¹⁰⁸ and many others, but something that may be accepted. Its presence here recalls a revealing and rather unexpected aside of Lactantius when he calls Ovid *poeta non insuavis* (‘a poet not without charm’).¹⁰⁹ In this invocation, which sympathetically adapts classical material but also presents Christian emphases (Quadlbauer duly draws attention to its ethical dimensions), the Muses themselves, in later poets a bone of contention or at least a bogey, are removed from the picture. The ‘sanctifying Spirit’ is hailed as the *carminis auctor*, a conception commonly used in classical verse of Apollo or other movers of poetic composition.¹¹⁰ He has the same role in Arator on occasion.¹¹¹

The aim of the poet’s invocation is, as he says, that he may speak things worthy of Christ. Though not signalled in the editions, there is surely some kind of significantly allusive relationship between Juvencus’ *ut Christo digna loquamur* and Vergil’s *Phoebo digna locuti* (*A.* 6. 662). Van der Nat has argued very convincingly that the similarity is not merely verbal,¹¹² and that Juvencus is here doing more than simply substituting Christ for the pagan god. His words should be read with close attention to the context to which they allude. Those *vates* (‘priests and poets’) who ‘have uttered things worthy of

¹⁰⁷ Horace, *Ep.* 2. 2. 120.

¹⁰⁸ Jerome, *Ep.* 21. 13. 4 (CSEL 21. 13. 4) *delectant et . . . animam quoque penetrant et pectoris interna devinciunt.*

¹⁰⁹ *De Ira* 20. 2.

¹¹⁰ Green (2004a), 216–17. On the significance of the presence or absence of the Muses, see Deproost (1998).

¹¹¹ See pp. 300–2.

¹¹² Van der Nat (1973).

Phoebus' are in Elysium, and although in Juvenecus there is no thoroughgoing assimilation of classical Elysium/Tartarus and Christian Heaven/Hell,¹¹³ the language of Vergil's Elysium is applied to Christian eschatology at least once.¹¹⁴ The allusion thus underpins Juvenecus' personal hope to escape from Judgment; but it also expresses his determination to utter things worthy of the new divine master. Juvenecus does not say that Christ is the new Apollo—he would probably have shrunk from doing so—but we recall that Phoebus was a god of prophecy, a god of healing, and a god of music. All these things, in their Christian contexts, are relevant to Juvenecus' poem. This allusion, along with the other contentions and implications of the Preface, may be taken as representative of Juvenecus' poetics. In the ultimate scheme of things the classical poets are inferior, and transitory; but here and now their aesthetic value is not negligible, and they are an integral contribution to his poetic appeal, part of the *ornamenta* which, as he claims in the Epilogue, the divine law willingly takes upon itself in his poem.

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Juvenecus' exploitation of classical *dulcedo* will be explored later; now, as a preliminary to this and other topics, it is appropriate to discuss his preparatory groundwork and the design of his epic. It is not difficult to reconstruct, in broad outline, how Juvenecus approached his task of presenting the gospel narratives in his four books. It seems that he did so in a very organized way, sketching out a version of the whole narrative of Christ's life that he would follow, and choosing where necessary which gospel text he would use as the basis for each episode. It is very unlikely that he used a pre-existing harmony of the gospels.¹¹⁵ That there are extensive similarities in some areas to the harmony compiled in the second century by Tatian is only to be expected, but

¹¹³ See pp. 94–5.

¹¹⁴ At 3. 10–16 (see p. 95).

¹¹⁵ On this issue see Nestler (1910), 31–8, Herzog (1989), 335, Fichtner (1994), 11, Boismard (1992), esp. 156.

after the narratives of Christ's nativity and early work of John the Baptist differences are more apparent. It is uncertain if a version of the *Diatessaron* was available in Spain,¹¹⁶ and most improbable that there existed a version of this harmony, or any other, that could have done this work for him in the way that he chose. It has been shown that very probably Sedulius, also, made no use of a harmony.¹¹⁷ The principal source for his home-made, consolidated narrative is Matthew, chosen no doubt because of the fullness of this account, and because this was the most widely distributed of the gospels.¹¹⁸ Matthew's emphasis on prophecy, with the apologetic potential of this theme, may have been an extra recommendation; but that Juvencus valued him for his anti-Jewish tone, as Fontaine suggests, is less certain.¹¹⁹ Mark, with his shorter narrative, is the least prominent of the gospels in Juvencus; occasional detail apart, only one continuous passage is used (5: 1–17), probably because it is the most colourful. Rather more use is made of Luke, especially in the narratives of the nativity, and there are three extensive passages of John. The integration of the material of these two evangelists posed a considerable challenge, and is performed not without skill, as a brief overview will show.¹²⁰

The poem begins with Luke's nativity narrative, which will go as far as Christ's presentation in the temple. There is a brief interposition of Matthew (1: 18–24:1. 133–43); but Juvencus holds back the birth of Jesus, and the name of Jesus, in order to present them in the Lucan context of the census which took Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem. He then follows Luke up to their return to Nazareth, the *patria* of l. 223. At this point Juvencus switches to the Matthean story of the Magi, followed by Herod's brutal reaction and the escape of Jesus and his parents. At the end of this passage it is notable that Juvencus conflates the two divine warnings, and makes no mention of the death of Herod (Matt. 2: 19–23). This may be purely for the sake of

¹¹⁶ Doignon (1975).

¹¹⁷ See pp. 183–4.

¹¹⁸ To Jerome he is *primus omnium Mattheus* (*Comm. in Matt.*, CCSL 77. 2. 26–7); this may refer to more than a supposed chronological primacy. Cf. Fontaine (1981), 77 ('le plus courant').

¹¹⁹ Fontaine (1981), 77. The question of Juvencus' attitude to Jewish culture and the Jewish race, and his alleged anti-Semitism, will be fully discussed (pp. 103–12).

¹²⁰ The problems are exaggerated by Braun and Engel (1998), and in the summary following their article.

economy,¹²¹ but dramatic considerations may underlie the second: unless he is simply confused by the two Herods,¹²² Juvencus may have wanted a single wicked tyrant to focus on. At line 278 Juvencus turns back to Luke and uses Luke's version for the prophecy that is being fulfilled by the Baptist and for the Baptist's address to the multitudes as yet unbaptized. Thereafter Juvencus clearly follows Matthew, giving an essentially Matthean version of the temptations, and reproducing Matthew's Sermon on the Mount untouched by material from Luke's 'Sermon on the Plain' or anything else. Matthew is then not left until early in Book 2 (43), where, as already noted, there is a switch to Mark.

The first of the three long passages from John, from chapters 1–4 (omitting 3: 22–36), begins with the call of Philip, and is neatly slotted in after the call of Matthew to discipleship at 9: 9. It might have been inserted no less neatly after Matt. 4: 22, where the two pairs of brothers have followed the call, but because of its strong Messianic claims it may have seemed more apt after the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5–7) than before it.¹²³ Juvencus follows John as far as the second miracle at Cana (though he is careful not to call it that). Presumably he considered John's story of the official whose son was ill (4: 46–53) and Matthew's story of the centurion imploring Christ to heal his paralysed servant (8: 5–13), already rendered at 1. 741–51, as distinct incidents.¹²⁴ After some four chapters of Matthew, Juvencus returns to John at 2. 637; ignoring the story of the healing by the pool in Jerusalem in 5: 1–18—perhaps in order to keep Jesus from Jerusalem—he welds the remainder of that chapter onto the discourse of Matthew 12 so that the scribes' comment at 2. 692–4, where Matthew becomes again the base text, comes as a reaction to the Johannine material. This is apt insofar as the theme is in fact

¹²¹ It is possible, as argued by Braun and Engel (1998), that Juvencus considered the warning to avoid Bethlehem unnecessary, given that their *patria* was already identified by Luke as Nazareth, a place irrelevant to the prophecy and so outside the scope of the massacre. So Thraede (2001a), 893.

¹²² See Colombi (1977a), 31–2 for examples of this confusion later in the fourth century.

¹²³ Braun and Engel (1998), 133.

¹²⁴ There is no need to charge him with inadvertently allowing a 'Dublette'—giving two accounts of the same story, as the historian Livy sometimes does—with Braun and Engel (1998), 124, followed by Thraede (2001a), 886. Ancient readers are unlikely to have thought that these were two versions of the same episode, any more than they thought of the two miracles of feeding the multitude as versions of a single episode.

Johannine as well as Matthean (cf. Matt. 16: 1–4). The sixth chapter of John, which contains much that is in Matthew, is not used, nor are the following more discursive and confrontational chapters. The third and last Johannine passage used by Juvencus is the dramatically powerful Lazarus episode of chapter 11, which is linked to Christ's journey to Jerusalem. By making this precede the Matthean version (26: 3–5) of the decision to arrest him, taken in a council with Caiaphas, Juvencus implicitly makes a connection that is explicit later in John, at 12: 10–11.¹²⁵ A final detail, albeit one concerned not with the dovetailing of different gospels but with the ordering of Matthean material, may be noted. Juvencus places the narrative of Judas's remorse and death (27: 3–10) after the condemnation of Christ (Matt. 27: 11–26), at 4. 626–41. Such a reconfiguration of material, here clearly made for dramatic impact and perhaps edificatory purposes, is unique, although as we shall see Juvencus likes to deploy the details of particular episodes in his own way.

It is tempting to assume, but difficult to maintain on close consideration, that the four books of Juvencus' version reflect four stages of Christ's life: the interpretation of Amatucci,¹²⁶ repeated by Rodriguez Hevia and Costanza,¹²⁷ that Book 1 presents the manifestation of Christ, Book 2 the demonstration of his *concessa potestas* ('the power granted to him'), Book 3 the splendour of his divinity, and Book 4 his sacrifice, is quite arbitrary, at least for the two central books. The four books themselves are not so neatly distinguished by content. It is also natural to assume that he presented four books to reflect the number of the gospels;¹²⁸ but this view does not impose itself, and might even be seen as a paradoxical decision for one who has created a single narrative, and one based on the gospels in such very different proportions. Jerome's remark that Juvencus set out the four gospels in four books (above, p. 1) could be read either as pointing out the obvious or as pointing to something that might be regarded as a happy coincidence. Numerology as such probably does not enter into this question; although Sedulius, whose treatment of the New Testament is given in four books (his first book being essentially prefatory)¹²⁹ is strongly influenced by it, Juvencus is not.

¹²⁵ Braun and Engel (1998), 134–5.

¹²⁶ Amatucci (1955), 121.

¹²⁷ Rodriguez Hevia (1980), 257, Costanza, (1985*b*), 748–9.

¹²⁸ Most recently by Thraede (2001*a*), 882.

¹²⁹ See pp. 161–72.

The fact that there are four *Evangeliorum Libri* may be secondary, a result of other factors, such as book length, which averages 800 lines and so recalls the epic norm.¹³⁰ One might even wonder if Juvenecus was aiming at exactly that figure, as the figures are so close; indeed had he moved the parable of the tares, and the material that immediately follows it, from the end of Book 2 into Book 3, reducing the distance between the parable and its explanation (which at Matt. 13: 36 follows with but a small break), there would be 794 lines in Book 2 and 809 in Book 3. If one asks why he did not follow this arrangement, the answer might be that in an early draft he had less in Book 2 or more in Book 3 than there now is.¹³¹ Although the indications of the passage of time at the beginnings of Books 2 and 3 are an important indication of his epic aspirations, they are of secondary importance in the configuration of the narrative.¹³² But whatever his initial aims may have been, the length of a book does seem a prime consideration,¹³³ and Juvenecus may have been more concerned with the length of each of his books than with their total number. Had he been more expansive in his paraphrase (and there are some suggestions that he initially was), there might have been five or six. This point adds to the improbability that he is following classical precedent in making this fourfold division; there are, to be sure, four books in Vergil's *Georgics* (and in his model, the *Aitia* of Callimachus),¹³⁴ but although Juvenecus makes much use of the *Georgics* it would be difficult to find a credible explanation of why

¹³⁰ Manitius (1891) 59, Thraede (1962), 1022. Herzog points out (1989, 332), that their length—respectively 797 (including Preface), 829, 773, and 812 (including Epilogue) lines in Hartel's edition—reflects the length of the first four books of Vergil's *Aeneid*, for which the figures are 756, 804, 718, and 705, which is broadly true. Juvenecus is certainly closer to Vergil than Sedulius and Arator in this respect.

¹³¹ If, for example, the verses Matt. 13: 44–52 had originally been part of his poem, Book 3 would not have been so short, and the discrepancy less obvious to him.

¹³² There is no such opening to Book 4, where the narrative is gathering intensity. On book divisions in general, see Thraede (1998).

¹³³ It is notable that the contemporary Lactantius, writing in prose, found it necessary (for no obvious reason) to limit the length of individual books in his *Divine Institutes*; see *DI* 1. 23. 6, 6. 20. 1, 7. 25. 1, even though each book has a clearly delineated theme to which he must do justice. It has also been pointed out that many of the poems of Ausonius are close to 100 lines long, suggesting perhaps that in these he worked to a target length: see Dilke (1969).

¹³⁴ And indeed the epic poet Apollonius Rhodius: Thraede (2001*b*), 13.

this particular model was chosen, especially as the epic style, and diverse features of the *Aeneid*, are so prominent. There is no sign that such a fourfold division was regarded as canonical or important in any way in contemporary didactic poetry.

At this point it will be helpful to present a synopsis giving the base-texts for each section of Juvencus' narrative, with very short summaries of their content. In the following tabulation omissions of single verses are not noted—they will be examined below—except where they occur at the beginnings and ends of biblical chapters.

Book 1

1–132	Luke 1: 5–80	Birth of John the Baptist; Mary's pregnancy
133–43	Matt. 1: 18–24	The angel's reassurance of Joseph
144–223	Luke 2: 1–39	Jesus' birth and presentation in the temple
224–77	Matt. 2	The arrival of the Magi, and Herod's massacre
278–306	Luke 2: 40–52	The young Jesus in the temple
307–36	Luke 3: 1–9 ¹³⁵	The harangue of John the Baptist
337–63	Matt. 3: 11–17	Jesus' baptism
364–451	Matt. 4	The temptations; call of the first disciples
452–730	Matt. 5–7	The Sermon on the Mount
731–70	Matt. 8: 1–15	Various acts of healing

Book 2

1–42	Matt. 8: 16–27	The storm on the sea of Galilee
43–74	Mark 5: 1–17	The healing of a madman
75–98	Matt. 9: 1–9	The healing of a paralytic
99–126	John 1: 43–51	Jesus with Philip and Nathaniel
127–76	John 2: 1–23	Miracle at Cana; Jesus visits Jerusalem
177–243	John 3: 1–21	The meeting of Christ and Nicodemus
244–346	John 4: 3–53	Jesus in Samaria and in Cana
347–429	Matt. 9: 10–38	Controversy and healing
430–508	Matt. 10: 1, 5–39	The mission of the twelve disciples
509–60	Matt. 11: 1–15, 25–30	Jesus and John the Baptist
561–636	Matt. 12: 1–15, 22–37	Various teaching and healing

¹³⁵ But lines 323–5 are based on Matt. 3: 4 or Mark 1: 6.

637–91	John 5: 20–46	Jesus teaches about his role
692–732	Matt. 12: 38–50	Controversy with the Pharisees
733–829	Matt. 13: 1–36a	Various parables
<i>Book 3</i>		
1–32	Matt. 13: 36b–43, 53–8	A parable explained; some reactions
33–132	Matt. 14	Feeding of the 5,000; walking on the water
133–220	Matt. 15	More controversy; feeding of the 4,000
221–315	Matt. 16	Various teaching
316–95	Matt. 17	The transfiguration and various sequels
396–458	Matt. 18	Teaching, including the parable of the debtor
459–549	Matt. 19	Various debates and teaching
550–621	Matt. 20 ¹³⁶	Parables and warnings of Jesus' death
622–736	Matt. 21: 1–43	Jesus' entry into Jerusalem
737–73	Matt. 22: 1–14	Parable of the king's marriage feast
<i>Book 4</i>		
1–51	Matt. 22: 15–46	Arguments with the Pharisees and others
52–85	Matt. 23: 1–13, 27–8, 37–9	Denunciation of scribes and Pharisees
86–196	Matt. 24	Prophecies of the end
197–305	Matt. 25	Parables of the Last Judgement
306–402	John 11: 1–5, 11–46	The raising of Lazarus
403–585	Matt. 26: 3–75	Jesus betrayed and taken before Caiaphas
586–742	Matt. 27	Jesus before Pilate; his crucifixion and death
743–801	Matt. 28	The resurrection

As implied by this synopsis, and remarks made earlier, it is a notable fact that Juvencus tends to adhere quite rigidly to one chosen source for each episode. There have been thorough searches for material derived from sources other than these principal ones,¹³⁷ but the results have been fairly meagre. Juvencus seldom leaves his main source for another, and the unconscious recollection of parallel

¹³⁶ Lines 613–21 are in fact based on Luke 14: 7–11, interpolated into Juvencus' text of Matthew.

¹³⁷ Notably by Fichtner (1994) for the temptations, Flieger (1993), for the trial, and Röttger (1996), for various passages where the motif of light is prominent.

narratives (as occurs at times in the manuscripts of the Latin and Greek New Testament) is surprisingly rare. (As we shall see, Sedulius certainly does not limit himself in this way, and Arator seems to range widely over scripture). In some places where another source has been detected, poetic creativity may be the explanation. At 1. 399 *fulgentia (regna)* ('shining kingdoms') there could be a glancing reminiscence of Luke, who at 4: 6 mentions 'glory', cf. OL *et gloriam illorum*) in an otherwise Matthean narrative; but the epithet could simply be one from the poet's rich repertoire. In the narrative of Christ's temptation (mainly Matthew), the introductory details of the wild beasts and the ministering angels at 1. 364–6 are clearly derived from Mark 1: 13; but it is less certain that the Marcan version of the healing of the woman with a flux of blood (5: 29 *et intellexit corpore suo quod sanata est*)¹³⁸ has affected the expression at 2. 396 *et mox restricto vigerunt sanguine venae* ('and soon, with the blood checked, her veins became healthy'). Röttger has suggested that at 1. 128–9, in his renegotiation of Luke 1: 77–9, Juvencus echoes John 1: 7 (noting *omnes* and *per illum*), and this seems likely.¹³⁹ Likewise in the narrative of the passion some switches of source are obvious, some less so. The fronds of palm with which the crowd greeted Christ's entry to Jerusalem (3. 638) derive from John 12: 13, not Matt. 21: 8, which has branches only. At 4. 616–17 there is clearly non-Matthean material in the people's allegation that Christ wanted to be king, and was no friend of Caesar: *qui regis nomen cuperet, qui Caesaris hostem | confessus sese proprio damnaverit ore* ('who desired the name of king, who confessing himself an enemy of Caesar condemned himself from his own mouth'). Braun and Engel are surely right to derive this from John 19: 12, part of a protest to Pilate, rather than Luke 23: 2, which is less close verbally, and from an earlier stage of the trial, and to argue that Juvencus reasoned that Pilate's question (Matt. 27: 23 'Why, what evil has he done?') needed an answer.¹⁴⁰ In his account of the crucifixion Juvencus adds another Johannine element at 4. 663 when he describes how Christ's seamless garment was not divided (19: 23); this is preferred to Matthew's briefer

¹³⁸ 'and she felt in her body that she was healed'.

¹³⁹ Röttger (1996), 26 n. 93.

¹⁴⁰ Braun and Engel (1998), 136.

version at 27: 35, which also lacks the reference to prophecy. Less clear cut are the suggestions of Flieger that at 4. 538 Juvencus' dramatizing use of *omnes* ('all') shows the influence of Mark 14: 53,¹⁴¹ and that the words *prosiliunt testes* ('witnesses jump forth') at 4. 546 are closer to Mark 14: 57 (*exsurgentes*: 'arising') than to Matt. 26: 60 (*venerunt*: 'came').¹⁴² The same might be said about 4. 565 (cf. Mark 14: 64b), but *omnes* is found in some manuscripts of Matt. 26: 66 too. All the above deviations from the main source, if such they are, seem to be chosen for extra intensity or colour, or for their explanatory value, but it has been suggested by Testard¹⁴³ that there is a theological motive behind the use (at 1. 362–3) of the addition present in some gospel texts, including most of the Old Latin translations, at Luke 3: 22 ('today have I begotten thee': from Ps. 2: 7). Perhaps the writer switches from Matthew here (assuming the addition was not in his text of Matthew) to make a doctrinally significant point. We will meet this passage later, in a different context (p. 118).

Close scrutiny of what we may call Juvencus' blueprint reveals numerous omissions, not mentioned above in the synopsis, and it is important to consider them, not only to appreciate how he worked but also to gain insight into particular purposes that he may have set himself. Again a similar degree of planning can be seen. Such a survey, which could not be conducted for the more wide-ranging works of Sedulius and Arator, will show how his practice is governed in the main by a few consistently applied objectives: economy is one, and the avoidance of metrical inelegance another. One can also see various kinds of artistic or dramatic reconfiguration: sometimes an item apparently omitted will appear in a different guise, sometimes a paragraph, especially if it involves dialogue, will be restructured. The procedure suggests that even if many of Juvencus' techniques may be derived from paraphrase, a conscious artist is at work; and, given his consistency, it is sometimes reasonable to point to particular theological agendas.

Although Juvencus begins by using Matthew and Luke virtually side by side, he cannot start where they do: Matthew's long genealogy of Christ is simply impossible for a poet to reproduce, while Luke's

¹⁴¹ Flieger (1993), 136.

¹⁴² Ibid. 145–6

¹⁴³ Fichtner (1994), 83–4; Testard (1990), 21.

statement of his reasons for writing would be inappropriate. Instead, as Thraede has well shown,¹⁴⁴ Juvencus begins with a strong contrast between Herod, the *rex cruentus* ('bloodthirsty king'), and Zechariah the priest and his wife Elizabeth, impressive in their humble piety and their united fulfilment of the demands of the law. Typical of Juvencus are the economy with which Zechariah's priestly role is described—there is no mention of the lot, or of the details of the sacrifice—and the remodelling of his and others' emotional reactions. Zechariah's stunned reaction on seeing the angel (Luke 1:12) is woven into the first two lines of Gabriel's speech (l. 14–15), and the brief spoken reaction of Elizabeth to the prophecy of her conception (Luke 1: 25) is not given. When the angel visits Mary, his salutation is incorporated into his main speech, and Mary's perplexed and fearful reaction to it, described by Luke in 1: 29, is not directly narrated, since it is implied in the angel's 'Fear not'. Lines 64 and 95, however, present speeches of a fearful Mary. Juvencus' abbreviated version of her praise of God (the Magnificat: l. 96–102) takes a more personal focus, with little of Luke's wider ethical and social resonances (l. 46–55). There are various omissions, too, in the interests of focus and speed, in the passage that leads into Zechariah's praise of the Lord (l. 105–29).¹⁴⁵ This passage also demonstrates a careful economy with names: Elizabeth (whose name fits the hexameter without difficulty) is in fact not named until line 82, and Jesus' name is omitted upon its first appearance (Matt. 1: 21).¹⁴⁶ In the rendering of this Matthean passage the giving of Jesus' name is postponed; so too is the report of his birth, and Matthew's earlier mention of Joseph's abstention from sex with his pregnant spouse, something which Juvencus may have thought could be taken for granted in the milieu for which he is writing.¹⁴⁷

Juvencus' representation of the visits by the shepherds and by the Magi provide further evidence of narrative remodelling, with a tangible epic tone. In describing the appearance of the angel he omits the detail of 'the glory of the Lord' (Luke 2: 9b) that shone around them, probably because a divine *nimbus* would be taken for

¹⁴⁴ Thraede (1993), 477–8.

¹⁴⁵ See pp. 76, 78–9.

¹⁴⁶ Deproost (2000), 131 observes the same postponement in 4. 306–42.

¹⁴⁷ Lactantius, *DI* 6. 23.

granted by readers attuned to epic.¹⁴⁸ After this the shepherds do not make a speech to announce their decision (Luke 2: 15); they just go (1. 176). Luke's comment (2:19) that 'Mary kept all these things in her heart' is not rendered, in order to keep the focus on the infant Jesus and the joyful shepherds; it should be noted that the similar verse at Luke 2: 51 figures later, at 1. 303–4. There is similar remodelling of the episode of the Magi. The spotlight falls strongly on Herod; hence the omission of the words 'and all Jerusalem with him' (Matt. 2: 3b; cf. 1. 233). None but Herod, the wicked tyrant, is worried. In the spoken interchanges that follow this, Herod's question about the time when the star appeared is omitted (Matt. 2: 7–8), and the amount of direct speech is notably reduced (see 1. 228–30, 235–6, 241–2). The passage gains gravity and speed from this, and the whole episode, from its ephrastic beginning to the terrifying epic dreams at the end (1. 251–2), has a notable epic colour,¹⁴⁹ which will in turn influence Sedulius (pp. 174–5).

Different considerations apply in discourses such as the Sermon on the Mount, but economy—in the sense of not saying something twice, or not elaborating a point that is sufficiently clear—is still a very visible consideration. The similitude of hiding a light under a bushel is not used at 1. 479 (Matt. 5: 15); this should not have been difficult to express, so perhaps Juvencus thought the point about a city on the hill clear already.¹⁵⁰ The same may apply to the omission of 6: 28, with its rhetorical question, 'Why are you anxious about your clothing?', and the detail at 7: 8, which is a repetition of 'Ask, and it will be given you' (7: 7). Other examples of how Juvencus treats biblical *parallelismus membrorum* are given by Roberts.¹⁵¹ But the reason for an omission is not always obvious. Marold suggested that Juvencus omitted Matt. 5: 47 ('Do not even the Gentiles do the same?')¹⁵² to

¹⁴⁸ See Green (2007a).

¹⁴⁹ For the contribution of eyes in general, see pp. 50–71.

¹⁵⁰ There is a similar kind of omission in Book 2, where the detail 'The hairs on your head are numbered' (Matt. 10: 30), which interrupts the argument about sparrows, is left out.

¹⁵¹ Roberts (1985), 133, following Widmann (1905), 36.

¹⁵² This verse is omitted in the African version of the OL; such an omission does not prove that Juvencus followed a particular version—see pp. 389–90—but the point should be made that there are small-scale omissions, whether by design or accident, in manuscripts of the Latin gospels too. The 'European' version omits the detail of the women at the mill in Matt. 24: 41; cf. 4. 170–6.

avoid giving offence to the Romans,¹⁵³ but this might not have worried Christian Romans of the fourth century.¹⁵⁴ Another interesting omission is that of the phrase ‘unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees’ (Matt. 5: 20), which would be expected after 1. 495. Juvencus is certainly not unready to cast the Pharisees in a bad light, and so dramatic design may be suggested as the reason for delaying their entry. Sometimes the possibility of a theological motive must be considered. So at 1. 500 (Matt. 5: 22), the concept of ‘anger without cause’ is not reproduced, and one wonders if this is to avoid an ethical question; but (assuming that Juvencus found the words ‘without cause’ in his original) the Latin words *odio fervente* (‘with burning hatred’) are perhaps meant to represent them. At 1. 586 Juvencus says not that ‘your Father knows that you need them’ (Matt. 6: 8) but that ‘he knows the anxiety of your heart’¹⁵⁵ (*trepidatio*): this reappraisal avoids the theological problem of why prayer to an all-knowing father should be necessary. Perhaps Juvencus meant it so, but such arguments should not be taken too far. In 1. 587–8 and 610 (Matt. 6: 6 and 18) there is nothing corresponding to the words ‘your father who sees in secret will reward you’, but it would be quite wrong to infer that Juvencus did not believe in rewards and punishments. That he did is clear from 3. 10–16.

In Book 2, besides the large sections already indicated, Juvencus has no need for John 2: 12, a short episode which breaks into the narrative, and he also omits the link verses at 4: 1–2, otiose in a version that lacks 3: 22–36. In Matt. 10 the names of all the disciples in verses 2–4 are dispensed with, and the ending of the chapter is pruned of various details. Chapters 11 and 12 are each shorn of a central passage. In the first case (11: 16–24) the poet may have been deterred by the names of some of the cities,¹⁵⁶ or perhaps he chose to avoid the ironically exaggerated reports about John and Jesus. Roberts argues that this is not an integral part of the gospel narrative,

¹⁵³ Marold (1890), 331.

¹⁵⁴ On the notion of Gentiles in Juvencus, see p. 111. He does not leave out Matt. 6: 32, where in *gentibus infidis* (1. 650) Romans are surely included.

¹⁵⁵ *scit . . . tui quae sit trepidatio cordis.*

¹⁵⁶ Their metrical difficulty also may account for his omission of such names as Bethsaida and Beelzebub (John 1: 44; Matt. 10: 25b and 12: 27–8) later.

but does not explain further.¹⁵⁷ The second passage (12: 16–21) includes Christ's injunction not to make him known after acts of healing, to which Matt. 8: 4, rendered at 1. 739, is rather similar; but it is not clear why he avoided the prophecy that follows, one of Matthew's longer quotations from Isaiah, since prophecy is in general important to him. But conceivably Matt. 12: 18 ('Behold, my servant...') seemed too similar to the declaration made at Christ's baptism (Matt. 3: 17, at 1. 362–3): this would be another example of economy. There are certainly small-scale examples of it in Book 2: two references to the spread of Christ's fame (Matt. 9: 26 and 31) can be reduced to a single one at 2. 416, and Matt. 10: 8 can be dropped, because the details recur in 11: 5 and are duly rendered at 2. 521–2. Finally, for Book 2, two intriguing omissions are John 2: 24–5 and 5: 19. The first of these passages comments on Jesus' distrust of those who believed in him as a result of his signs, and raises the characteristic Johannine concern of witness. Hilhorst has suggested that Juvencus may have wished to avoid the questions of 'seeming conversions' which were a feature of his own time.¹⁵⁸ The second one is not inherently difficult for a poet; perhaps Juvencus avoided a verse that suggested the inferiority of the Son.¹⁵⁹

Omissions in Books 3 and 4 follow the same general pattern. In Book 3, with the exception of Matt. 13: 44–52, a passage containing three similitudes explaining the nature of the Kingdom of Heaven, they are not extensive. A prophecy in Matt. 15: 8–9 is shortened, and in the recasting of Matt. 21: 41–3 a short prophecy is omitted.¹⁶⁰ The two verses Matt. 17: 22–3 are omitted, no doubt because a warning of Christ's death, from Matt. 16: 21, was given at 3. 290–2.¹⁶¹ Juvencus also leaves out Matt. 21: 45 and 46; but it is clear from 3. 586–9 and 4. 403–8 that the theme itself, that of plots to kill him, was not

¹⁵⁷ Roberts (1985) 109.

¹⁵⁸ Hilhorst (1993), 64.

¹⁵⁹ See, p. 119.

¹⁶⁰ So at 2. 153–62 a short and unspecified prophecy at John 2: 17 is ignored, and at 2. 315–20 the saying at John 4. 37. At 4. 48–9 a prophecy (Matt. 22:44) is only partly given, enough for the argument.

¹⁶¹ Other examples of such omissions are Matt. 18: 18, already said (to Peter) at 3. 283–7 (cf. Matt. 16: 19); Matt. 20. 29–34 (cf. 2. 408–16, rendering Matt. 9: 27–31, the story of two blind men), and Matt. 21. 12–13 (cf. 2. 155–62, which rendered the very similar verse in John, 2: 13–17).

avoided. In the latter case a more fluent story-line results. Book 4, with its rich combination of narrative and discourse, offers rather more. The teaching of Matt. 23: 10–11 need not be repeated after 3. 607–9 (20: 26); details like that of the fig-tree in Matt. 24: 32, the eagles gathered together in 24: 28, and the famines of 24: 7¹⁶² are dropped. Roberts has pointed out various simplifications to the narrative of the wise and foolish virgins (Matt. 25),¹⁶³ and there are various reductions within the story of Lazarus from John 11 (topographical details at 11: 18 and 30, and comments on the reactions of the Jews in 36 and 37), though it remains one of the best examples of extended dialogue in Juvencus.¹⁶⁴ Much of the Jewish detail which is so prominent in this book is abbreviated (for example, the series of condemnations in Matt. 23) or omitted, such as the phylacteries and fringes (Matt. 23: 5). Juvencus finds it necessary to omit various names: the names of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob at Matt. 22: 32a; the name Scarioth at Matt. 26: 14 (cf. 4. 423), and the names of the mothers at 27: 55–6 and 28: 1. There is surely no anti-Jewish agenda here; account must be taken of metrical demands, and in the last case there seems to be a significant epic allusion.¹⁶⁵ In the trial scene it is noteworthy that no mention is made of the motivation of Pilate's question ('for he knew that it was out of envy...') given in Matt. 27: 18, and that nothing is said about the second part of the soldiers' arrangement with the elders to protect them if these things came to Pilate's ears (Matt. 28: 14–15; cf. 4. 776–83). Juvencus' interpretation of the roles of Jews and Romans, and especially the figure of Pilate, will be considered in detail later (pp. 103–12).

QUESTIONS OF EXPANSION

It would be much more difficult to follow this conspectus of Juvencus' omissions with a survey of his expansions or supplementations of his original. On the one hand, he seldom adds extensively to his

¹⁶² Juvencus here (4. 104) emphasizes the *pestilentia* (*vel sim.*) found in a few manuscripts.

¹⁶³ Roberts (1985), 109–10.

¹⁶⁴ See p. 83.

¹⁶⁵ See p. 64.

text; but on the other it must be admitted that some kind of addition, often combined with adaptation, is pervasive, and an integral part of his method. In bare statistical terms, Juvenecus typically needs about twice the number of words in his original, and on average creates two-and-a-half hexameter lines for one verse of scripture.¹⁶⁶ Small-scale rewording of the originals is constantly evident, and the interpretation of the resulting nuances, whether stylistic or theological, is a major challenge to the critic. The difficulty of identifying and isolating additions as such may be illustrated by a detail taken from the overview of the poet's technique in 1. 346–63 made by Fichtner¹⁶⁷ in an attempt to show what are 'Zusätze' and what are 'Zulassungen'. Fichtner classifies as an 'addition' line 1. 349 *Tune meis manibus dignaris mergier undis* ('and do you deign to undergo immersion at my hands?'), which is part of the Baptist's reaction when he observes Jesus seeking baptism. This line and the following one render, with a change of order that is not uncommon, Matt. 3: 14 (*ego a te debeo baptizari*) *et tu venis ad me?* ('I ought to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?'). There is certainly new material here: Matthew's contrast between *tu* and *me* is moved to the beginning, and so further highlighted, there is juxtaposition of *tune* and *meis*, and the implications of Christ's seeking baptism are more fully brought out by using the phrase *dignaris mergier undis* for the simple *venis*. It could be argued that nothing is added to the sense, at least for a reader familiar with the original context; the expression is somewhat fuller, but would not strike a Roman reader as in any way exuberant. The additions here are not to be explained as providing information for readers unfamiliar with the notion of baptism, which the context makes clear enough.¹⁶⁸ It is a good example, one of very many, of the meeting of two styles and traditions, the synthesis of gospel spareness and simplicity with the traditional elevation and stylistic amplitude of Roman literature.

Juvenecus adapts and expands for a variety of reasons, which will gradually emerge, and does so constantly. He has metrical constraints, of course, but to see him as a mere versifier is to overlook

¹⁶⁶ The average is a little higher in Book 3.

¹⁶⁷ Fichtner (1994), 13–14.

¹⁶⁸ Such questions will be discussed later; see pp. 88–9, 101.

important aspects of his approach. Faced with the need to renegotiate the biblical originals, he takes the opportunity to rephrase them in poetic idiom, but without allowing himself more than a limited amount of freedom. In his entire work it is difficult to find expressions which closely match the wording of the biblical translations. He could seldom stick exactly to the original, even if he had wished to; few verses are as easy to versify as Matt. 6: 24a *nemo potest duobus dominis servire* ('no man can serve two masters'), which becomes *nemo potest dominis aequae servire duobus* (1. 625 'no man can equally serve two masters'), with a minor inversion of word-order and the simple addition of *aequae* ('equally'). Occasionally his model could provide or suggest half-lines to the poet, but they are rare—Nestler gives three examples where his model may have suggested to him how he began a line¹⁶⁹—and such off-the-peg offerings at the end of a line as he has at 3. 603 *dominantur eorum*, are even less common. Here, interestingly, there is a syntactically unclassical expression,¹⁷⁰ but the need to strive for the standard level of poetic diction is an important factor, along with the demands of the Latin hexameter.

It will be useful now to examine a typical short passage, one with no particular stylistic pretensions or other agendas, which clearly shows some of the commonest elements of Juvencus' paraphrastic technique:

sed si quis vestrum vestigia nostra sequetur
 abneget ipse sibi corpusque animamque recusans
 atque crucem propriam comitatibus addere nostris
 gaudeat, amissam redimet cui gloria vitam,
 nam servata perit terris possessio lucis.

(3. 303–7)

But if any of you will follow my footsteps let him deny himself, rejecting body and soul, and let him rejoice to add his own cross to my company; for

¹⁶⁹ These are 2. 531, 640, and 4. 137: Nestler (1910), 14.

¹⁷⁰ ('[They] lord it over them'). The use of *dominor* and the genitive case became frequent in Christian writing, but stands out in Juvencus. Other sudden changes in register—influenced by the OL—may be found at 1. 187 (*observare* followed by an infinitive), 4. 317–18 (*est* . . . *ducens* in place of the present indicative), and 4. 354 (*si* marking a question).

him glory will redeem his lost life. For the possession of light that is preserved on the earth dies.

This is very different from the Old Latin, which in the 'European' version of Matt. 16: 24–5 reads: *Si quis vult post me venire abneget se sibi et tollat crucem suam et sequatur me. Qui enim voluerit animam suam salvam facere, perdet eam.* ('If any man wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wishes to make his life safe, will lose it'.) Almost the only direct contact with the original vocabulary is in *abneget ipse sibi* (compare OL *abneget se sibi*). Typical of Juvenecus here are the infinitive *addere*, governed by *gaudeat*, and the abstract nouns *gloria*, *possessio*, and the difficult *comitatibus* ('company', but the Latin word is plural). The first two of these nouns relate to verbs in the original; though full of meaning in themselves, they may be identified as belonging to a set of metrically convenient abstract nouns.¹⁷¹ The third is used to amplify and explain the notion of taking up one's cross, and also exemplifies Juvenecus' regular variation in expression. He does not repeat the simple verb *sequi* ('to follow') which has already been used for OL *venire* in the first line of the passage. But there is slight expansion here too: the word *vestigia* (literally 'foot-marks') is favoured by Juvenecus for phrases such as 'follow', and there is in his work a whole host of other periphrases which make use of plural nouns such as *munera*, *penetralia*, *pectora*, *corpora*.¹⁷²

Naturally, his verses, like those of any epic poem, must meet the requirement of a specific rhythm at the end of the line, where, in technical terms, a dactyl followed by a spondee or a trochee is almost obligatory,¹⁷³ but a writer who aims to keep close to an original will feel this constraint particularly strongly. Hence various expedients exemplified above, notably the use of present active infinitives, which end in *-are*, *-ere*,¹⁷⁴ or *-ire*, often attached to prolative verbs such as 'want' or 'try', and the use of nouns, especially abstract nouns, that

¹⁷¹ Others are *gratia* and *substantia*. Theological significance need not be detected in the phrase *substantia panis* (1. 380, 595, 'substance of bread'); elsewhere there is no suggestion that the word has a special significance.

¹⁷² Cf. Vergil, *A.* 2. 18, 10. 662, 12. 328 (all *virum... corpora*).

¹⁷³ Juvenecus has only three lines ending in a double spondee, but is a little more free with four- and five-syllable words at the end of a line than classical epicists.

¹⁷⁴ The first *e* may be long or short, according to inflectional class.

end (for example) in *-tia*, *-tio*, or *-sio*,¹⁷⁵ which prove very useful in periphrases.¹⁷⁶ The pressure of metre is also felt in the rendering of relatively simple verbal ideas. So at 3. 205, for the simple notion ‘I pity the people’ (OL (European), *misereor huic turbæ*) in Matt. 15: 32¹⁷⁷ we find *plebis miseratio multa est* (‘there is much compassion for the people’). But in fact the usage of such periphrases goes wider: a simple idea such as ‘fear not’, not difficult in itself, and already present on occasion in metrically helpful forms (*nolite timere, ne timeas*) in the OL, will be made to fill a whole line as in 4. 753 *vestra pavor nullus quatiens nunc corda fatiget* (‘let no dismay shaking your hearts weary them’).¹⁷⁸ For the four words in Matt. 14: 27 *constantes estote, nolite timeri* (‘take heart, ‘have no fear’) Juvencus gives, in 3. 107–8, with a characteristic reversal of the phrases of the original, *timor omnis abesto, credentumque regat vegetans constantia mentem* (‘let all fear be absent, and may constancy animate and govern the mind of believers’). The subject-matter enhances the importance of abstract nouns, and this feature helps to universalize an exhortation or a description: as in 1.396 *audacia temptet* (‘let audacity [not] tempt’ for ‘you shall not tempt’, Matt. 4: 7); 1. 708 *multorum clamabit talia fletus* (literally, ‘the weeping of many will shout...’ for ‘many will say’ at Matt. 7: 22).¹⁷⁹ Such uses are somewhat less strange in Latin than in English—they occur notably in Propertius,¹⁸⁰ and later pullulate in courtly phrases of the kind ‘your majesty’ which are essential to panegyric and will have made the idiom more familiar by the fourth century—but their frequency in Juvencus is exceptional.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁵ A rarer, but interesting, metrical help, which also exploits the fact that by Juvencus’ time final *o* was regularly scanned as short, is the imperative in *-to* or *-ito*: *convellito* (1.524), *referto* (2. 90), *ponito* (4. 525).

¹⁷⁶ At 162–7 Fichtner (1994) provides a longer list than Huemer did in his index, s.v. *abstractum pro concreto*.

¹⁷⁷ In the African version, *contristatus sum super turbas*.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. also 4. 772, a little shorter, *mentibus absistat fidei pavor omnis...* (‘let dismay to your faith be absent from your minds’).

¹⁷⁹ Cf. also 2. 690 *vester si crederet error* (literally, ‘if your error were believing...’); 4. 40–1 *devotio... diligit* (‘let devotion love’).

¹⁸⁰ e.g. Propertius 1. 20. 15–16 (also, as it happens, with *error*); 2. 13. 22, and 2. 20. 31.

¹⁸¹ Cf. Fichter (1994), 159. Less common in Sedulius, they recur frequently in Arator, as noted by Roberts (1985), 173 n. 34.

Another indication of Juvencus' independence of the letter of the Old Latin versions is to be seen in his remarkable fondness for *variatio*, and in the prominence of other figures of speech, which are used both to embellish and to reinforce his point. Such variation appears very conspicuously in the first half of the Beatitudes (1. 454–9: Matt. 5: 3–6), where, although Matthew consistently uses the formula 'Blessed are the ...' (Lat. *Beati...*), and Juvencus could easily have fitted the close synonym *felices* into the initial position, as he subsequently does, he prefers to ring the changes, using phrases such as *his similes* ('similar to these') and *hoc modo* ('in this way').¹⁸² Almost too common to need comment is the reversal of elements in a verse or a passage: for example, at 2. 115–16 he switches the order of two details in John 1: 48 ('Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree ...'),¹⁸³ and at 1. 630–2 (Matt. 6: 25) he refers to food and drink after clothing and the body.¹⁸⁴

Alliteration, impossible unless the poet is prepared to be innovative in his choice of words, is common (1. 257, 410, 2. 65); there are notable examples in 2. 257–8... *et quis te sitiens putealia pocula poscat, tu potius peteres*, and 2. 490–1 *passeribus pretium nummi vix portio parva | proveniet*.¹⁸⁵ Anaphora—repetition of a word at the head of a phrase, as in 1. 414–15 *trans pelagus... trans et Iordanen* ('across the sea... and across the Jordan')—is prominent and often dramatically effective, as in 1. 289–90 *illum per vicos urbis perque abdita tecta | perque iteris stratas per notos perque propinquos*, where repeated *per* ('through') well describes Mary's anxious search for her son.¹⁸⁶ There is a flustered vigour here not present at Luke 2: 44.

¹⁸² Other examples of *variatio* can be seen in 1. 496–572—cf. Matthew's repeated 'you have heard' (*audistis*: Matt. 5: 21, 27, 33, 38, 43)—and in the summary of the commandments (Matt. 19: 18–19) in 3. 505–9.

¹⁸³ *cum te diffusae tegerent umbracula ficus | ante etiam quam te vocitarent verba Philippi*.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. also 1. 61–2, where the laudatory and prophetic details of Luke 1: 32–3 are rearranged, giving *natum, quem regnare Deus per saecula cuncta | et propriam credi subolem gaudetque iubetque* ('a son, whom God rejoices in and commands to reign for all ages and to be believed to be his own offspring').

¹⁸⁵ 'And [if you knew] who was asking you for water from the well, you would rather be asking...' and 'scarcely a small part of a penny will come as a price for sparrows'. On this figure, see also Simonetti Abbolito (1985).

¹⁸⁶ '[She sought him] throughout the parts of the city and throughout remote houses, and throughout the streets of their journey and throughout the homes of those whom they knew, and throughout the homes of neighbours.'

Another figure that he favours is polyptoton—repetition of a word in a different form—as in the much-expanded 3. 741 (Matt. 22: 3) *regales thalamos, regalis pocula mensae* ('royal chambers, the goblets of a royal table'); and, with a strong touch of epic, in 4. 103 (Matt. 24: 7) *gentibus et gentes et regibus obvia reges* ('peoples against peoples, and kings against kings').¹⁸⁷ Epic overtones are also heard in *magnus erit magnique feret trans sidera nomen* ('he will be great and will carry the name of "great" through the heavens') at 1. 495.

Another defining characteristic of Juvencus' style is his rich and prolific use of adjectives.¹⁸⁸ From a metrical point of view, they give support and flexibility to the poet, who can add epithets or vary between a wide range of synonyms, but the significance of their contribution is far greater than that. The importation of an adjective often makes it easier for the writer to present a sense unit as one line of verse; if such a unit includes two nouns each with an adjective, and a verb, it may well fill a hexameter line.¹⁸⁹ Juvencus seizes this opportunity constantly; to give a rather extreme case, in the passage 4. 478–510, containing some 180 words, Flieger counted four adjectives in the OL version as opposed to twenty-one in Juvencus.¹⁹⁰ Sometimes the additions will be thought to add little: the modern reader (at least) will not need to be told that the eye of a needle is narrow and a camel ungainly. But their contribution to the gospels' new idiom in Juvencus is a much wider one. They not only emphasize elements of the narrative or teaching but also serve as a major source of the intense unity of moral and emotional focus in the four books, importing what Herzog has called *Erbaulichkeit*¹⁹¹ or edification, and Kirsch *Psychologisierung*.¹⁹² Seen in rhetorical terms, they guide and intensify the emotions and reactions of the reader; while by presenting strongly delineated events, objects, and characters they act as an incentive to meditation. So, for example, sleep (*somnus*),

¹⁸⁷ See p. 67.

¹⁸⁸ In general, see Donnini (1973).

¹⁸⁹ And a line with a particular arrangement of epithets, such as 2. 152 *perpetuam stabili firmavit robore mentem* is termed a Golden Line, to the delight of scholars who search out such Drydenist delicacies. They are not uncommon in Juvencus. See also Roberts (1985), 164 and n. 11.

¹⁹⁰ Flieger (1993), 94.

¹⁹¹ See pp. 47–8, 377.

¹⁹² Kirsch (1989), 113–14.

when qualified by the adjective *segnem* (4. 486), becomes a metaphor for sluggishness, as it will be more explicitly, and typically, in Prudentius' hymn;¹⁹³ God, to whom Christ so urgently prays, must also be considered as *mitissime* ('most gentle': 4. 502). So, elsewhere, Mary is *pia* ('holy') at 1. 295, and humbly fearful (cf. 95 *suppressae* and *pavitantia*),¹⁹⁴ Peter is *praesolidus* (1. 422), *stabilis* (3. 271), and *fortis* (3. 273), 'rock solid', 'stable', and 'brave',¹⁹⁵ Herod *ferus* and *saevus*, the Pharisees *fallaces* or *dolosi*, Judas *amens*, and so on.¹⁹⁶ Juvencus knew from Vergil and others the power of a simple adjective, such as *horrendus* ('horrendous'), *dulcis* ('sweet'), *saevus* ('savage'),¹⁹⁷ but he also uses, and in some cases perhaps invents, rarer adjectives, notably compounds, such as *auricolor* ('gold-coloured'), *ignicomus* ('fire-tressed'), and *praedulcis* ('very sweet').¹⁹⁸ The first of these contributes to an impressive description of the heavens opening at Christ's baptism (1. 356), the second plays its part in the epic incipit of the third book (3. 1), and the third is used to notable effect, and not perhaps without a sensitive awareness of the filial relationship of its Vergilian context,¹⁹⁹ in 1. 305, where the close bonding of the Holy Family is resumed.

Juvencus, then, enjoys a considerable degree of independence and, before we turn to examples of restructuring on a wider scale,²⁰⁰ it must be asked why Jerome should have characterized Juvencus' rendering as *paene ad verbum* ('almost word for word').²⁰¹ Two scholars in particular have seen a problem here. Colombi began her valuable article on exegesis in Juvencus, which will be used and discussed later,²⁰² by complaining that critics have accepted this

¹⁹³ Prudentius, *Cath.* 1 (esp. line 18).

¹⁹⁴ These words ('subdued' and 'fearful') describe her speech.

¹⁹⁵ Juvencus plays on the name, following Matt. 16: 18 *tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram...* ('you are Peter, and on this rock...').

¹⁹⁶ Thraede (2001a), 893–904 gives neat descriptions of these and other characters' roles in the poem.

¹⁹⁷ Herzog (1975, 148) speaks of the epic *Affektschema* as contributing to *Erbaulichkeit*.

¹⁹⁸ For a study of *prae-* adjectives, see Thraede (2001b), 382.

¹⁹⁹ From Vergil, *A.* 11. 155, where Evander laments the death of Pallas. There it qualifies *decus* ('glory'), in Juvencus it qualifies *obsequiis* ([Christ's] obedience).

²⁰⁰ See pp. 71–83.

²⁰¹ See p. 1.

²⁰² See pp. 90–2.

although exegetical modifications or additions are not hard to find. It should be pointed out, however, that the presence of exegesis in itself may not be the problem, for (to anticipate a later argument) Juvencus generally makes such points concisely, and may not in fact be moving away from what he saw as the literal sense of a passage.²⁰³ If Jerome's summary is meant to indicate the level of closeness with which Juvencus follows his originals, its validity is not impugned by the demonstration of such miniature theological modifications. Certainly he does not add large paragraphs of exegesis as Sedulius and Arator do. The other scholar to find a problem is Roberts,²⁰⁴ who seeks to explain why Jerome describes the work as a grammatical paraphrase and not a rhetorical one. Why does Jerome palpably minimize the difference? We have seen that Juvencus is certainly attending to almost every verse of the base-model that he designed—allowing for the omissions indicated above, which amount to less than 5 per cent of the whole—but that is not what Jerome said. To him it was 'almost word for word', not 'verse by verse'. The work is certainly more faithful to the wording of the originals than the general run of later paraphrase, but this is to see it from a perspective that is not the perspective of Jerome, who was writing before these more expansive forms of biblical paraphrase began to flourish in the fifth century.²⁰⁵ At the time of writing his notice, in 393,²⁰⁶ he may not have seen Paulinus of Nola's short poem on John the Baptist, on which he commented in *Ep.* 53,²⁰⁷ which in some ways turns a new page. But surely Jerome's expression is in line with the traditional discourse of translation, to which, in his word *transferens*, Jerome assimilates Juvencus' procedure. When, for example, Terence at *Adelphoe* Prol. 11 claims to have translated a Greek model word for word (*verbum de verbo expressum extulit*), he is in all probability not making a word-for-word translation in the modern sense; to quote Martin: 'The Latin concept of an exact translation was a great deal freer than ours is.'²⁰⁸ It is instructive that in his

²⁰³ See pp. 91–2.

²⁰⁴ Roberts (1985), 75–6.

²⁰⁵ See pp. 147–52.

²⁰⁶ Kelly (1975), 174.

²⁰⁷ For the difficult chronology of these years, see Trout (1991).

²⁰⁸ Martin (1976), *ad loc.*

commentary on the wording of this line Donatus (actually the teacher of Jerome), though surprised by the verb *extulit* rather than the usual *transtulit*, is prepared to interpret it as signifying ornament, notwithstanding the words *verbum e verbo*.²⁰⁹ Roberts' problem loses its force when one realizes, first, that the evidence for such a distinction in antiquity is, frankly, rather tenuous—it is rather difficult to derive Roberts' taxonomy of paraphrase from the ancient evidence²¹⁰—and second, that Jerome's own terminology is somewhat fluid. Marti has shown²¹¹ that Jerome's critical comments on translation vary considerably. The truth seems to be that Jerome does not have a simple opposition between two kinds of paraphrase but, while being broadly consistent overall, reacts in different ways to different situations. In one passage, moreover, where he contrasts writing done *παραφραστικῶς* with something done 'word-for-word',²¹² he appears indifferent to such a formal distinction. If Jerome is not operating with Roberts' distinction, the case for imputing an apologetic motive to him here collapses.²¹³ It might further be asked whether, as Roberts asserts (p. 76), the paraphrase of Juvenecus was the sort of enterprise that was 'considered bold . . . in Jerome's day'. There is little evidence for critical voices of the sort that might reprehend Juvenecus' procedure. If, in Roberts' words, 'the voice of Christian asceticism is heard', it is only Jerome's own voice—one of his many voices, it might be added.²¹⁴ Jerome's correspondent, Magnus, to whom he is replying in *Ep.* 70, had complained of something rather different, probably the quotation of secular writers ('polluting the purity of the church with the dirt of the pagans'). If there were any critics of Juvenecus' work, their target would more probably be the use of verse or its rich epic colouring; they would not be pacified by words which implied precision and literalness, as Jerome's do, and it would have been inept of him to think that they might. Jerome's

²⁰⁹ *Donati Commentum in Terentium, ad loc.*

²¹⁰ In modern times the distinction was first made by Lehrs (1873), 49–50; in antiquity the distinction is at best implicit.

²¹¹ Marti (1974), 73–6.

²¹² Jerome, *Ep.* 57. 7 (CSEL 54. 520, lines 9–11) *non verbum expressit e verbo sed παραφραστικῶς*.

²¹³ Roberts (1985), 76.

²¹⁴ Another is that of the famous '*quid facit* . . . *cum evangelii Maro?*' (*Ep.* 22. 29: CSEL 54. 189).

description, then, is not special pleading. He comments on Juvencus just as he might have commented on a classical text that was the product of translation from another.

It was important for Roberts, who sought to locate the genesis of Juvencus' work in the ancient theory and practice of paraphrase as used in the educational context, to uphold the influence of rhetorical paraphrase; the other term of the supposed division, the grammatical paraphrase, was by comparison a very jejune kind of writing.²¹⁵ Juvencus, in almost any and every passage, goes further than that, and an explanation must allow for more. But is the notion of rhetorical paraphrase adequate? The evidence for a separate category of rhetorical paraphrase, distinct and with its own set of rules, is not strong; perhaps, indeed, paraphrase is a kind of activity which because of its very commonness eludes codification or theoretization.²¹⁶ It has also been hotly debated whether verse paraphrase was practised in the curriculum.²¹⁷ But it is no less important to ask whether Roberts' explanation goes far enough, whether it can explain all the features of biblical epic (all critics use this term, whatever their direction of approach). Certainly many periphrastic techniques—Roberts privileges abbreviation, transposition, and amplification, which he claims as the three basic modes recognized by 'paraphrastic theory'²¹⁸—have been seen to be present, and the notions of *amplificatio* and *ornatus* cover a great deal of ground. But there is much more to Juvencus. To take a small (or apparently small) example, the phrase in 1. 2, where Zechariah is described as *servator iusti templique sacerdos* ('keeper of righteousness and the temple'), is surely much more than an example of synonymic reduplication:²¹⁹ not only is the surface meaning of the added *iusti* very different from the word that it is supposed to duplicate, but it anticipates a notion that will be pervasive in the four books, that of justice, and the identification of Christians as 'the just'.²²⁰ Moreover, not

²¹⁵ Roberts (1985), 37–44.

²¹⁶ The sceptical comments of Burton (2000), 84 n. 14 on the idea that the study of translation is a 'science' are relevant here, though not completely analogous.

²¹⁷ Herzog (1975), 66–7, on the thesis of Golega (1930); Roberts (1985), 71–4, simply collapses the distinction between prose and verse.

²¹⁸ Roberts (1985), 29, 108.

²¹⁹ So *ibid.* 154.

²²⁰ See pp. 121–2.

only does it play its part in an imaginatively (and, one should say, spiritually or perhaps ideologically) reconstructed opening scene, as Thraede has shown,²²¹ but it foreshadows the progression marked in the poem from the Jewish past to the Christian present.²²²

It must also be asked whether Roberts' thesis does justice to other features of the work as a whole. As far as 'poetic reminiscences' are concerned, there are some illuminating comments on their use within paraphrases of particular concepts, notably (physical and spiritual) death.²²³ The matter of *aemulatio* in relation to classical antecedents is not raised, or at least seldom demonstrated, although there is some treatment of *aemulatio* within the writings of Christian poets.²²⁴ The main problem posed by Roberts' analysis is that of doing justice to the manifold wealth of intertextuality in Juvencus, and the apparent pervasiveness of allusion and structural influence.

One answer to this problem is provided, implicitly, by Thraede and Herzog. For Thraede the pagan, classical tradition of epic (especially, of course, Vergil), which is 'by definition' linked to war and gods, has in Juvencus shrunk until it is regarded as a reservoir of *Einzelzüge*—which he proceeds to enumerate.²²⁵ For Herzog—although he allows, on the basis of Juvencus' Preface, that Juvencus saw himself as a poet in the epic tradition²²⁶—classical allusions are mechanical, although he finds a tendency for them to flourish in passages which show a strong moment of edification.²²⁷ Epic allusion is subordinate to the spiritual aim that he sees as the defining feature of *Bibelepik*. The question of Juvencus' treatment of the Bible as epic is decidedly less important for him than the question of Juvencus' paraphrase of the Bible as an instrument of edification. The subordination of *Epos* to *Erbauung* precludes for Herzog the possibility of exploring common ground between them, whether in terms of the *utilitas* of classical poetics or the moral and emotional tones integral to classical epic. This fundamental move is justified neither by his reading of the

²²¹ Thraede (1993), 478–9.

²²² For Juvencus' treatment of the Jews and Jewish culture, see pp. 103–12.

²²³ Roberts (1985), 151–2.

²²⁴ *Ibid.* 174–5.

²²⁵ Thraede (2001*a*), 890.

²²⁶ Herzog (1975), 67–8.

²²⁷ *Ibid.* 105 and 148; Herzog (1989), 333.

spiritual orientation of parts of Juvencus' Preface nor, as we shall see by his interpretation of the meagre evidence of the reception of Juvencus' work before the Middle Ages (pp. 351–9; cf. Herzog (1975) xxxviii–ix, and xliii); nor does it emerge from his comparison of passages from Vergil, Silius, and Juvencus, which is one of the most opaquely argued and most rarely discussed passages of his book.²²⁸

The implicit devaluation of epic by these critics—at times, with typical exuberance, Herzog speaks of the 'destruction' of epic²²⁹—will be tested and contested in the pages which follow, especially in terms of allusion of various kinds, narrative structures, and the expression of Christian truths. Meanwhile it may be instructive to examine approaches to a particular passage (3. 390–5), to which both Herzog and Roberts draw attention:²³⁰

en maris undisoni rupes quae prodit in altum
scandatur tibi summa, Simon, hamusque profundo
stamine saetarum conexus praecipitetur,
haeserit et curvo qui primus acumine piscis,
huius pandantur scissi penetralia ventris;
illuc inventum duplex dissolve tributum.

Look, climb the peak of the rock which juts out into the depth of the wave-
resounding sea, Simon, and let your hook, attached to a knot of hairs, be
thrown into the deep, and take the first fish that impales itself on its curved
tip and cut open the entrails of its stomach. Pay the double tribute that you
will find there.

This renders OL (European) Matt. 17: 27... *vade ad mare et mitte hamum et eum piscem, qui primus ascenderit, tolle et aperto ore eius invenies staterem. tolle eum et da eis pro me et te* ('Go to the sea and cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up, and having opened its mouth you will find a shekel. Take it and give it to them for me and you.') Why does Juvencus add this detail, making Peter climb a rock to do his fishing? For Herzog this rock, this *locus aedificationis*, is set up as 'objektgewordene Erbauung', that is, an element of edification focused on a particular object, but what led Juvencus to do this is harder to explain; perhaps, he adds in a footnote, it was the contrast of

²²⁸ Herzog (1975), 69–97.

²²⁹ Ibid., p. lix, 156.

²³⁰ Ibid. 152 and n. 379, Roberts (1985), 206.

Peter, symbolized by the rock, and the dangers of the deep sea. Such an allegory—at least if it were in a more explicit form—would be readily understood a century later, but it is not in Juvencus' manner, as Herzog seems to allow by his hesitation. To Roberts, on the other hand, this passage is implicitly an 'insignificant detail', and it has 'no sanction in the original'. Like Herzog, he notes the imitation of Vergil *A. 10. 693 rupes... quae prodit in aequor* and Statius *Ach. 1. 198 undisonis... in rupibus*, describing the line in apparently pejorative terms as 'a poetic construct, a contamination' of these two lines, not without apparent embarrassment. For him the reminiscence of pagan epic 'restores to the biblical narrative something of that actuality of detail that tends to be excluded by the paraphrastic procedure of abbreviation'. The implicit notion of compensation here reflects Roberts' anxiety to subsume all additions or expansions under the rubric of *amplificatio*, as essentially a paraphrastic procedure which expands the basic sense, which is questionable (and will not work at all for Sedulius and Arator);²³¹ and in spite of the types of omission catalogued above, and Roberts' own illuminating example,²³² it could be debated how far actuality of detail does tend to be excluded. It seems that Juvencus has taken a rare opportunity—rare because he is strict on himself—to add detail about a pursuit that he thought apt for poetic elaboration, and which often had been elaborated by poets and in art. Fishing, the occupation of Simon Peter and Andrew, is also described at 1. 423–4.²³³ Other colourful expansions are essentially comparable. At 3. 460–1, Juvencus describes, with epic touches, the river Jordan: *qua pinguia rura silenter | agmine Iordanes viridis per-rumpit amoeno* ('where the green Jordan silently breaks through the rich countryside with its pleasant current': cf. Matt. 19: 1, simply 'beyond the Jordan'), and Opelt has gathered other such topographical passages.²³⁴ Another theme that attracts a degree of embellishment is wine (and viniculture): in describing the miracle at Cana (John 2: 1–10) Juvencus dwells on the detail of the jars being filled

²³¹ See Roberts (1985), 148, 161–2. The notion of the 'basic sense' needs considerable stretching in Sedulius' case.

²³² *Ibid.* 109–110.

²³³ See Green (2004a), 206–8.

²³⁴ Opelt (1975).

to the brim (2. 143–4),²³⁵ with notably poetic vocabulary in *oras* and *undis*. He begins the parable of the vineyard at 3. 550–1 by elaborating Matthew’s simple *vineam suam* (‘his vineyard’: Matt. 20: 1) with the words *sedulus ut ruris dominus, cui dulcia fundum | pinguibus in campis late vineta coronant*.²³⁶ In the first of these passages a Eucharistic reading could be given, though there is very little to encourage it; in the latter it is unlikely.²³⁷

The influence of epic is certainly present in edificatory passages, as Herzog well illustrates, and it is certainly an element of the paraphrase, as Roberts allows, but Juvencus’ predilection for epic-style expansion within his strict limits should be given greater weight. Vergil and other epic poets, such as Lucan and Statius, are an important part of contemporary culture, and well within the horizons of the learned reading public, and this factor should not be underestimated. Theological and spiritual purposes are certainly integral to Juvencus’ undertaking, and he is indubitably concerned to give a strictly faithful and thoroughgoing paraphrase, but these are not reasons to exclude him from the rank of epic poets.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF EPIC

The presence of epic in Juvencus’ work has already become apparent in various ways. A high regard for Homer and Vergil emerged from his Preface, even if his words fall slightly short of aligning him directly with the epic tradition. It also shows a sensitive awareness of classical poetics, and ends with a notable use of *Kontrastimitation*.²³⁸ The four books are comparable in length with epic, and they faithfully reproduce the epic metre; Books 2 and 3 are given epic-style incipits, and the beginning of Book 1 may directly echo the *Aeneid*.²³⁹

²³⁵ *completis labiis lapidum; tum spuma per oras | commixtas undis auras ad summa volutat* (‘... with the lips of the stone jars filled to the brim; then the foam spreads the air mixed with water upwards over the edge’).

²³⁶ ‘like a rural landholder, whose farm pleasant vineyards crown extensively in rich fields’.

²³⁷ Green (2007b).

²³⁸ Cf. pp. 22–3.

²³⁹ For the opening lines of Books 2 and 3, see p. 27; for the opening of Book 1, compare the opening of Vergil’s *maius opus* at A. 7. 45–6 *rex arva Latinus et urbes | ... regebat*.

The reader will already have noticed epic colouring in various examples of his expression, in certain figures of speech, and in the deployment of adjectives.²⁴⁰ The description epic is one common to all scholars, whatever their particular agendas; Herzog sees it at least as an *Übersetzungsmedium*, Roberts acknowledges its contribution as (rhetorically understood) *ornatus*, though there is much more to be said about what Juvencus referred to as his *ornamenta . . . terrestria* (4. 805).

The aims of this section are to give a fuller idea of the nature and extent of epic allusion and imitation, and indeed emulation, especially at the verbal and thematic levels, in Juvencus' poem.²⁴¹ He knew the Latin epics very well, and shows great variety and imagination in his responses to them. Vergil is certainly pre-eminent (his *Eclogues* and *Georgics* are used as well as the *Aeneid*), but there are frequent and unmistakable signs of Lucan, Statius—in particular his epics, but also some of the *Silvae*²⁴²—and of the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid (and occasionally other works of his).²⁴³ There are signs of Lucretius' didactic epic,²⁴⁴ an undertaking similar in its evangelistic zeal, perhaps, but one which made less of an impression on Juvencus than on his contemporary Lactantius, who went so far as to base his final exhortation to readers on Lucretius' praise of Epicurus.²⁴⁵ A caveat has already been given about paying too much attention to the lists found in standard editions,²⁴⁶ and this may be extended to the accumulations of detail in some more recent specialist works, but judged on reasonably rigorous criteria, and against our (variable) knowledge of what was available to the learned reader, Juvencus may be said to have ranged widely within classical epic and occasionally beyond it.

Many modern scholars have analysed the way in which a line or a phrase of Juvencus resembles or echoes numerous expressions of one

²⁴⁰ See above, pp. 40–3, 48–9.

²⁴¹ The contribution of epic to specifically Christian ideas will be examined separately below (pp. 93–7).

²⁴² e.g. at 2. 2 (*Silvae* 1. 6. 85 *caerula nox*).

²⁴³ e.g. at 2. 585 *pondus . . . inutile*; cf. *Amores* 3. 7. 15.

²⁴⁴ See Flieger (1993), 217, claiming that Lucretius' influence may have been understated.

²⁴⁵ Lactantius, *DI* 7. 27. 6, quoting Lucretius 6. 24–8.

²⁴⁶ See pp. 11–12.

or more classical poets. Rodriguez Hevia, for example, analyses various lines of Juvencus, and in one (1. 64) finds as many as six Vergilian passages laid under contribution.²⁴⁷ But this sheds more light on how Vergil, and other writers, worked on Juvencus than on how Juvencus worked on them. It would also be quite wrong to think of Juvencus' poem as a cento, as if his procedure was to sew together various phrases into a patchwork.²⁴⁸ The imitations or reminiscences are too scattered for that description to be remotely applicable; although, of course, the intensity varies, there is often not much more than one for every ten lines. As a rule, each imitation does not consist of more than two or three words—he never takes over a whole line of Vergil, as Ausonius, for example, will do in his *Moselle* and as Sedulius does from time to time²⁴⁹—and these words are not borrowed verbatim. It is also very rare for two separate passages to be combined together in one line, as in 3. 520 *deiecit vultum tristisque in tecta refugit* (A. 3. 320 *deiecit vultum* and 7. 500 *nota intra tecta refugit*); a looser example is at 2. 213 *accipite ergo novis quae sit sententia rebus*, where one may compare A. 3. 250 *accipite ergo animis* and 11. 314 *dubiae quae sit sententia menti*. The verbal changes made in these combinations are further proof, if it is needed, that Juvencus' technique should not be compared with the joinery of a centonist. There are some places where the remembered rhythm of a line clearly has an effect, as in 4. 521 *iniecere manum turbae Christumqueprehendunt* (cf. *iniecere manum Parcae telisque sacrarunt*, A. 10. 419) and in 2. 53 *isque ubi pergentem Christum per litora vidit* (cf. *isque ubi tendentem adversum per gramina vidit*, A. 6. 684), but these too are rare. It should also be said that there are times when Juvencus largely ignores a possible parallel, as in his description of the star of Bethlehem in 1. 243–5; here the similarity to the description of another portentous star in A. 2. 692–8 is small, though the range of epic words in the picture is plentiful.

²⁴⁷ Rodriguez Hevia (1980), a study designed to show Juvencus' originality. See also Flieger (1993), 103–4 on *numero stipante catervae* (4. 511), and Kirsch (1989), 110 on lines 1. 1–48.

²⁴⁸ See Colombi (1997*b*), 9 and Borrell (1991*b*).

²⁴⁹ See pp. 213–14.

Like many writers of Late Antiquity, Juvencus is happy to combine allusions from various poets, as the following example will show. Here Christ is speaking of weather-signs (3. 224–30: Matt. 16: 2–3):

Convexum quotiens claudit nox umida caelum,
 si ruber astrifero procedit vesper Olympo,
 dicitis 'adveniet ventura luce serenum'.
 Iamque sub exortu solis ubi tristia rubro
 nubila miscentur confusa luce colori,
 dicitis agricolis nautisque venire fragosam
 ventorum rabiem tempestatumque furores.

Whenever damp night closes the vaulted sky, if a red evening spreads itself over star-bearing Olympus, you say: 'calm weather will be here at the coming dawn.' And when at a reddish dawn gloomy clouds are mixed with its colour and the light is confused, you say that the crashing rage of winds and the fury of storms are coming for farmers and sailors.

cum serum factum fuerit, dicitis: 'serenum erit; rubicundum est enim cum nubibus caelum.' 3. *et mane dicitis: 'hodie tempestas; rubicundum est enim cum tristitia caelum.'*

When it is evening, you say: 'it will be calm; for the sky is red with clouds.' And in the morning you say: 'today it will be stormy; for the sky is red and gloomy.'

It is unusual for a passage of the gospels to show such a close similarity in content to a classical one, but it is not in Juvencus' manner to rush to seize such an opportunity. There is no direct allusion here to the weather-signs of Vergil, *G.* 1. 351–9²⁵⁰ except perhaps in the two words *agricolis nautisque*—but sailing and farming are in any case the two walks of life in which a knowledge of weather signs is vital. More surprisingly, Juvencus has made use of a half-line from Vergil's *Eclagues* (6. 86) *processit vesper Olympo*.²⁵¹ An exact model for *nox umida caelum* may be found in *A.* 3. 198 (Juvencus may also have remembered *A.* 2. 8 *nox umida caelo*), and in *convexum* he uses an epithet prominent in Ovid (*M.* 1. 26). The composition of the last line is particularly interesting: it alludes principally to the simile in Statius, *Theb.* 7. 810 *ventorum rabiem*...

²⁵⁰ The noun *fragor* is found in *G.* 1. 358, but is hardly enough to set up an allusion to the Vergilian passage.

²⁵¹ This is in fact Juvencus' only use of the classical term *Olympus*.

furorem, but the placing of *tempestatumque* recalls Vergil,²⁵² and for the connection of *furores* and *rabiem* in such a context one may compare A. 5. 801–2 *furores...rabiem...caelique marisque*. The epithet *fragosam* is also epic: compare Vergil, A. 7. 566 and Ovid, *M.* 4. 778.

But in the poem as a whole the influence of Vergil is overarching, and its extent and intricacy show the influence of a poet who was thoroughly studied as a school author, as well as being the unchallenged master of Latin epic. The vast spread of the evidence suggests that Juvencus had not simply a good memory, but a continuing devotion to the *maximus poeta*. It is certainly not a matter of seeking and recycling ‘tags’, or even *flores*, and there are not many examples of Juvencus using the same passage more than once. The most obvious case, that of the phrase *luminis oras* (‘the regions of light’), which he actually uses four times,²⁵³ seems to have been felt to offer a combination of poetic diction with the theological dimension of light which was so important in the articulation of his message.²⁵⁴ It may be assumed, notwithstanding its longer ancestry in Ennius and Lucretius, who was particularly fond of it, to have come to him from Vergil (G. 2. 47; A. 7. 660), especially in view of the contextual similarity of 1. 106 to the latter passage. In general there is an enormous variety to the imitations, and a notable freshness in their use.

In the words of Raby, one of the first British scholars to give Juvencus even a passing glance, the style of Juvencus is ‘thoroughly Vergilian, even to the imitation of the great poet’s characteristic archaisms’.²⁵⁵ There is much more to Juvencus’ Vergilianism than the imitation of archaisms—Raby was doubtless thinking of the frequent *olli* for *illi* (e.g. 1. 27) and *ollis* (e.g. 2. 410) and the solitary infinitive in *-ier* (*mergier* in 1. 349)—but they are typical of this extreme of the spectrum. There are forms such as *vestibat*—rather than the normal *vestiebat*—in 3. 331 (cf. Vergil, A. 8. 160), compressed clauses such as *quae proxima* (2. 736; A. 12. 388 ‘which [is] closest’), and (*inde*) *ubi perventum* (3. 320; cf. A. 2. 634 ‘then when

²⁵² G. 1. 27, A. 1. 80 and 3. 528.

²⁵³ At 1. 106, 2. 342, 3. 486, 4. 761. He uses the phrase *scelerata insania* (‘criminal madness’) twice (2. 467 and 4. 755).

²⁵⁴ Cf. pp. 122–3.

²⁵⁵ Raby (1953), 17.

they arrived'), narratorial interjections such as *mirabile dictu* (2. 44, 3. 18: 'amazing as it is to say so') and parenthetical *nefas* (3. 67: 'how wicked!'). There is a host of expressions denoting time (e.g. *volvenda dies* 1. 106: A. 9. 7 'the passing of the days'), *labentibus annis* (2. 384: A. 2.14 'as the years roll on'), *primaevo (in) flore* (1. 30: A. 7. 162 'in the first flower of youth'), or physical location or movement, such as *vertice caeli* (1. 614: A. 1. 225 'in the summit of heaven') and *rapido... cursu* (3. 237: A. 5. 291 'with rapid progress'). There is also an appreciable epic flavouring to the scenery in general, as Opelt has noted.²⁵⁶

Similes are very rare; given that Juvenecus generally abjured the practice of adding them, as at 1. 685–9 (see 84–6), opportunities are few. The similes introduced at 2. 50 *ut lanca fila* ('like woollen threads'), and at 2. 423 *ut ruris dominus* ('like the owner of a farm')²⁵⁷ could hardly be briefer, although capable of development by a more expansive writer. Longer ones, but still with little elaboration, are found in 3. 16 (Matt. 13: 43 'Then the righteous will shine like the sun...'),²⁵⁸ 4. 81–2 (Matt. 23: 37 'as a hen gathers her brood under her wings'), and 4. 265–7 (Matt. 25: 32), where the Last Judgement is compared to a farmer's separation of sheep and goats. (In these cases the fact that the speaker is Christ need not be significant: Juvenecus expands in accordance with his models.) Juvenecus has Vergil's interest in making learned allusions: as well as his explanation of *morbus comitalis*, already noted,²⁵⁹ and numerous plays on the significance of Peter's name, this technique is applied to the name Christ (literally, 'the anointed one') at 1. 361 *ablutumque undis Christum flatuque perunctum* ('Christ, washed by the waters and anointed with the Spirit').²⁶⁰

Epic influence is also prominent in the use of particles and various phrases that make the transition to a new episode. Juvenecus as a rule develops his transitions somewhat more than the gospels do, and finds the relative vagueness of some of Vergil's words useful. Such

²⁵⁶ Opelt (1975).

²⁵⁷ The same words introduce a parable at 3. 550.

²⁵⁸ See p. 95

²⁵⁹ See pp. 13–14.

²⁶⁰ Fichtner (81), citing Quadlbauer (1974), 198.

words or phrases are *iamque* ('and already'), *ecce* ('behold'),²⁶¹ *interea* ('meanwhile', or 'thereupon'), *haud mora* ('with no delay'), *et dicto citius* (literally, 'faster than speech', found once, at 1. 763). At 3. 33, where a paragraph begins *interea ad regem volitabat fama superbum* ('meanwhile rumour was flying to the proud king'), Juvencus is using a Vergilian motif, for which we may compare A. 7. 104 *volitans iam fama*, though this is not an introductory feature, and A. 9. 474 *nuntia fama ruit* ('rumour rushes to announce'), also imitated at 2. 342 *nuntia fama venit*. *Fama* had also been used by Vergil to herald a new episode at A. 4. 173. Another introductory device may be classed as ecphrasis, though it is for Juvencus a valuable way of presenting information for a new episode²⁶² rather than an opportunity for descriptive development.

The frequency of direct speech generates a need for phrases to mark the beginnings and ends of speeches, and Juvencus pays this aspect close attention. The visit of Gabriel begins, if the text is correct,²⁶³ *sed cum forte* ('but when, by chance' 1: 10): compare Vergil's *cum forte* at A. 3. 301 and other places and *sed tum forte* at 6. 171.²⁶⁴ It ends with *Haec ait et sese teneris immiscuit auris* ('He said this and removed himself into the thin air') at 1. 42; his second departure is signalled at 1. 79 *nuntius abscedens vacuis se condidit auris*. ('The angel, departing, hid himself in the empty air.')²⁶⁵ Juvencus follows Vergil prolifically, with such phrases as *et talia fatur* (seven times), *olli respondit* (2. 134 and 265), *compellat voce*,²⁶⁶ *talia dicta dedit* (3. 459, 693), *talibus infit* (4. 245: cf. A. 10. 860), *haec insuper addit* (2. 794: cf. A. 11. 107), *talia dicentem* (1. 728: cf. A. 4. 362). This last item illustrates a transition technique that is common in Juvencus in various contexts; it has Vergilian precedents²⁶⁷ as well as being a regular feature of the European version of the Old Latin.²⁶⁸ The introduction to a speech

²⁶¹ Fliieger (1993), 83–4 calculates that Juvencus' use of *ecce* is influenced by Matthew rather than Vergil, in a perhaps excessively fine distinction.

²⁶² See p. 87.

²⁶³ The correct reading may be *sorte* ('by lot'). Cf. Luke 1: 9 and see p. 32

²⁶⁴ These words introduce Juvencus' account of the Augustan census at 1. 144.

²⁶⁵ Cf. Vergil, G. 4. 499–500 and A. 4. 276–8; cf. Fontaine (1981), 78–9.

²⁶⁶ 4. 555; see the analysis of Fliieger (1993), 165–6.

²⁶⁷ As in A. 1. 102 *talia iactanti* ('as he cried out these words'), 12. 919 *cunctanti* ('as he delays'), 9. 691–2, and 11. 551.

²⁶⁸ See p. 390.

also gives a valuable opportunity to describe a character's emotion or reaction, as for example in 1. 410 *tristi compressit corde dolorem* ('[Christ] held down the grief in his sad heart': cf. A. 1. 209), 3. 577 *sedato pectore* ('with unruffled mind': cf. A. 9. 740), and 4. 51 *cuncti obstipuere silentes* ('all were silent and dumbfounded': cf. A. 11. 120, with *illi* for *cuncti*). When Juvencus adds the details of the dishevelled hair of the Tyrian woman at 3. 177–8²⁶⁹ and Mary's tearing of her hair in grief (4. 306 *scissos lacerata capillos*), he is drawing on a classical portrayal of female despair (compare Vergil, A. 2. 403–4, Ovid, *M.* 8. 527 and 14. 420) rather than anything in his base-texts.

Juvencus does not confine his epicisms to these relatively formal features, many of which are introductory or relatively unimportant, and so our attention should now be turned to the description of particular events, and ones of special importance. In his crucifixion scene (4. 687–713) Juvencus has the sun, which has risen to its zenith in a very Vergilian way (A. 8. 97 *medium... conscenderat... orbem*: the same words in 4. 687), flee from view like tragic Eurydice at G. 4. 499–500 *dixit et ex oculis subito, ceu fumus in auras | commixtus tenuis, fugit* ('she spoke, and suddenly, like smoke mingling with the thin air, fled from his eyes'); Juvencus' words in 4. 688 are *cum subito ex oculis fugit*, with the Vergilian *cum subito* linking the two allusions.²⁷⁰ The language of this most solemn scene continues with the description of Christ's actual death in the words (4. 702) *aetheriis animam comitem commiscuit auris* (somewhat literally, 'he united his soul in companionship with the upper air'), which alludes to A. 6. 761–2, where Anchises, speaking from the underworld, forecasts that Silvius *primus ad auras aetherias Italo commixtus sanguine surget* ('... will rise first into the upper air, blended with Italian blood'). Christ's dying cry in 4. 705 is inspired by *magno conamine misit* at Ovid *M.* 3. 60 ('he cast with great effort'); the context is Cadmus' slaying of the dragon. For the subsequent shaking of the earth Juvencus uses a rare half-line of Vergil, *concussa est pondere tellus* (A. 9. 752: 'the earth was shaken with the weight'). The context there is the death of Cacus. It is clear in general that Juvencus does not find it necessary to take into account the original contexts; certainly he

²⁶⁹ See pp. 77–8.

²⁷⁰ Vergil, A. 1. 509, 535, 3. 590.

does not fear any incongruity in these cases. The same may be said of another important scene, that of the transfiguration (3. 316–52: Matt. 17: 1–8). Some allusions or imitations in the passage have a more humble reference in Vergil: Juvencus' *fulgore corusco* in 321 suggests his phrase *fulgore coruscant* of the bees at G. 4. 98, and his *nivis candore* in 322 of Vergilian horses (A 12. 84 and 3. 538). On the other hand, the phrase *vestibat lumine* in 331 recalls Vergil's words of Elysium (A. 6640–1 *lumine vestit*). There is a further striking allusion in this episode: Christ is called by the voice from heaven *mea summa voluptas* ('my greatest pleasure', 3. 333).²⁷¹ Vergil had written *mea sola et sera voluptas* of Evander and his son Pallas (A. 8. 581), in a context of great foreboding. The allusion to the tragic Pallas greatly enhances the dignity of the passage. Though one must hesitate to extrapolate a reading of Christ's role as that of Pallas to his heavenly father's Evander or even as that of a sacrificial victim, there is certainly more here than what Herzog would call the Vergilian *Affektschema*, the palette of Vergilian emotions.

As in the case of similar allusions by one classical poet to another, the original context may or may not be exploited, and if it is, the exploitation may act in various ways. There is a danger, of course, that critical ingenuity may be misplaced; it is always possible to tell some kind of story linking two passages. It is tempting, for example, to take the reference in 1. 417 (*in mortisque illis umbra residentibus*, 'lying in the shadow of death') to the shade of Pastoral as presented in *Eclogues* 1. 1;²⁷² but should we see a Christian reading of Vergil in 2. 122 (*arborea quod te vidi recubare sub umbra*, 'Because I saw you reclining under the shade of a tree')? One could take *umbra* of (the shadow of) death, but this would not be in Juvencus' manner; he seldom resorts to allegory. Caution is also appropriate towards two suggestions of Testard in his study of 1. 346–63.²⁷³ Testard saw in Juvencus' words *fluminis undas* (1. 354) an allusion to Lucan 1. 222

²⁷¹ The word *voluntas* is found in all manuscripts according to Huemer, but could have been corrupted; *voluptas* would be a closer translation of *in quo mihi bene complacuit* ('in whom I am well pleased', Matt. 17: 5).

²⁷² Vergil's fourth *Eclogue*, which Constantine famously saw as Messianic, is alluded to at least twice: 1. 125 *at tu parve puer* and 3. 20 *virtutes patrias*; in both cases the reference is to Christ. The suggestion was made in Green (2002).

²⁷³ Testard (1990), 12–23.

that authorized a comparison between Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon and Christ's baptism, and indeed between the two heroes; but one wonders how many readers would react in this way, or consider the point plausible. He also suggested that the line-ending of 1. 357 *descendit ab alto*, of the dove-like Spirit descending to baptize Christ, bears an allusion to the same words in Verg. A. 8. 423 which paves the way (with the help of other references to scripture) to a comparison between the function of Christ's baptism and the arming of Aeneas through Vulcan's divine intervention.²⁷⁴ Leaving aside the question of the plausibility of the interpretation, there is a weakness here in the pivots or fulcra, so to speak, of the comparisons; the phrases are sufficiently ordinary or common, as Testard admits in the case of the first, to impugn the first critical step, that of identifying a relationship of allusion between Juvencus and his predecessors. The fact that an intertextual story can be told—sensible in this case, but not always—does not in itself validate such a link.

The feeling that some interpretations 'go too far' (a feeling perhaps no less important in criticism than the feeling that one must 'connect') in general, or seem to go far beyond demonstrable allusive practices of Juvencus, whether in terms of allegory or allusion to other parts of the Bible, should not, however, discourage the investigation of *Kontrastimitation* ('the taking over of collocations of words (*iuncturae*) with the aim of making contrary statements', in Thraede's helpful definition,²⁷⁵ or imitation showing meaningful contrast between two passages). This may be noticed frequently, and so too broader patterns based on it which are often seen as 'inversions'. We should begin by showing Juvencus' engagement with his classical models in the form of *aemulatio*, or rivalry. A good example of this, which does not go beyond the verbal level, is in 2. 799 *ecce sed ad fructum culmis cum spiceus horror | processit* with Vergil's *spicea iam campis cum messis inhorruit* (G. 1. 314).²⁷⁶ Vergil's

²⁷⁴ Huemer reads *discendit ab alto*, but the divergence is of no moment; in this and similar words the manuscript form need not have been retained.

²⁷⁵ Thraede (1962), 1039.

²⁷⁶ Vergil's line may be literally translated 'when the crop of corn-ears has already begun to bristle on the plains', and Juvencus' line 'when the bristling of corn-ears has progressed to fruition with its tips'; cf. Matt. 13: 26: *sed cum crevisset herba et fructum fecisset*, 'but when the plants had grown and borne fruit...'

phrase is striking with its rare adjective and expressive verb (to ‘bristle’); Juvencus goes one better by applying the adjective to the noun *horror*, literally ‘bristling’, in a subtle use of words that might aptly be described by that overused word ‘Alexandrian’ (overused for Late Antiquity, that is: were not all poets after Vergil in some degree ‘Alexandrian?’)²⁷⁷ Examples may reasonably be sought where the content is theological as well as stylistic. In the story of the feeding of the multitude, at line 3. 87 . . . *et dapibus mensas oneravit opimis* (‘. . . and loads their tables with sumptuous repasts’) there is an allusion, typically, to at least two passages of Vergil, *G.* 4. 133 *dapibus mensas onerabat inemptis* and *A.* 3. 224 *dapibusque epulamur opimis*. The paradox of comparing the sumptuous meals from Vergil with the meagre loaves and fishes given to the multitudes underlines the point that through Christ they make an excellent meal, both physically and spiritually. The similarity of language—with the uncommon word *opimis*, or rather perhaps its combination with *dapibus*, doing most of the work, so to speak—draws attention to the implied similarity of experience at the literal level, and so brings the reader to a perception of what is spiritually superior. Vocabulary again points to a meaningful contrast at 3. 281 *infernis domus haec non exsuperabile portis | claustrum perpetuo munitum robore habebit* (Matt. 16: 18 *et portae inferi (inferorum) non praevalent eius/vincent eam*, ‘and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it’),²⁷⁸ where the rare adjective *exsuperabile* recalls the (*non*) *exsuperabile saxum* of *G.* 3.39, the stone of the tormented Sisyphus which he could not prevent from careering downhill whenever he had rolled it up. In this pointed demythologization Juvencus refers explicitly to the rock (Peter) on which the impregnable church will be built. The rock, a symbol of hell, has been conquered, or at least rendered powerless, and indeed has become detoxified and Christianized into what Herzog would call an objectified focus of meditation and devotion. Although the critical term ‘correction’ is perhaps unfortunate—Vergil is said to ‘correct’ Homer, for example, when he turns him to another use—the term

²⁷⁷ Perhaps the phrase *caerulus horror* (the ‘grey turbulence’ of the sea) in Valerius Flaccus 1. 652 influenced him. Arator imitates Juvencus in 2. 1185.

²⁷⁸ Juvencus’ lines may be translated ‘this house, not impugnable by the gates of hell, will have its bulwark fortified with perpetual strength’.

would have some value here in encapsulating the procedure of the Christian poet.

Juvenecus' storm (2. 25–38), an episode which shows a high degree of rivalry at the poetical level, as well as an untypical degree of elaboration, is an excellent case of *Kontrastimitation*.²⁷⁹ For ease of comparison with the Vergilian models, certain phrases are picked out in bold:

Conscendunt navem ventoque inflata tumescunt vela suo, fluctuque volat stridente carina.	25
postquam altum tenuit puppis, consurgere in iras pontus et immissis hinc inde tumescere ventis instat et ad caelum rabidos sustollere montes; et nunc mole ferit puppim , nunc turbine proram,	30
inlisosque super laterum tabulata receptant fluctus disiectoque aperitur terra profundo. Interea in puppi somnum carpebat Iesus. Illum discipuli pariter nautaeque paventes evigilare rogant pontique pericula monstrant.	35
ille dehinc, 'quam nulla subest fiducia vobis! infidos animos timor irrui! ' inde procellis imperat et placidam sternit super aequora pacem.	

They embark onto the ship, and the sails filled with the wind billow, and the boat flies over the hissing waves. After the ship reached open water, the sea began to rise to anger and, with the winds let loose from all sides, to swell and to raise raging mountains to heaven; the storm now strikes the stern with a mass of water, now the prow with a hurricane, and the planking of the sides takes in the waves hurled against it, and the sea-bed is opened up as the depths are torn apart. Meanwhile in the stern Jesus was taking a sleep. In panic the disciples and the sailors together ask him to awake and point out the dangers of the sea. He then says. 'How there is no faith in you! Fear rushes into faithless minds!' Then he gives orders to the storm and spreads quiet peace over the waters.

Et ascendente eo in navicula, secuti sunt eum discipuli eius. 24. Et ecce motus magnus factus est in mare, ita ut navicula operiretur fluctibus, ipse vero dormiebat. 25. Et accesserunt discipuli eius et suscitaverunt eum dicentes: Domine, libera nos, perimus. 26. Ait illis: quid timidi estis,

²⁷⁹ Ratkowitsch (1986).

modicae fidei? Tunc surgens imperavit vento et mari, et facta est tranquillitas magna.

And as he got up into the boat, his disciples followed him. And behold, a great storm happened on the sea, so that the boat was overcome by the waves, but he was asleep. And his disciples went to up and woke him saying: Lord, save us, we are perishing. He said to them: why are you afraid, men of little faith? Then arising he gave orders to the wind and the sea, and a great calm was created.

This is a storm on the sea of Galilee (Matt. 8: 23–6)—which, significantly, Juvencus equates to the open sea—and Jesus and his disciples are crossing to the other side. After a necessary change to singular ‘ship’ in adapting Vergil’s *postquam altum tenuere rates*, A. 3. 192 (‘after the ships had taken the deep’), Vergil’s famous storm (A. 1. 81–123) that scattered the Trojan fleet is recalled in great detail: 1. 115 (*pontus*) *in puppim ferit*; 1. 107 *terram inter fluctus aperit*; also (less obviously) 1. 103 *fluctusque ad sidera tollit* in line 29; 1. 122–3 *laxis laterum compagibus omnes accipiunt inimicum imbrem* in line 31. The climax for Juvencus, Christ’s rebuking words *infidos animos timor irruit*, is clearly inspired by Vergil’s very conspicuous phrase *degeneres animos timor arguit* (‘fear shows up ignoble minds’) from the Dido narrative at A. 4. 13, but with a quite different point: whereas Dido’s words indicate her admiration of Aeneas’ courage, the disciples are rebuked for their fear and lack of faith. A further point, noted by Ratkowitsch,²⁸⁰ is that Jesus has far greater power, to do what Aeneas cannot. Moreover, he acts very differently from Aeneas: when woken from his sleep (for this we must compare Aeneas at Carthage in A. 4. 554–5 *in puppi...carpebat somnos*, again extremely close) he does not shout or panic, as Aeneas did both in the storm (A. 1. 94–101) and after Mercury’s second appearance to him in Carthage, but quietly asserts his authority. Finally, and from another part of the *Aeneid*, we may note the use of Jupiter’s anguished reply to his mother’s request at A. 9. 97 *cui tanta deo permissa potestas* to articulate the reaction of the fearful and wondering disciples at 2. 40 *quae tanta sibi et permissa potestas*.²⁸¹

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Respectively ‘to what god is such power given?’ and ‘[they marvel] what great power had been given to him’. This must be the sense; the text of the second passage seems corrupt, and there is no certainty about the remedy.

Such a striking example, as well as the smaller ones, encourages us to look elsewhere for cases of *Kontrastimitation*, or indeed the more thorough and pointed reappraisal of the thrust of an original that constitutes inversion; passages, that is, where the alluding poet follows or cites a predecessor closely in such a way as to signal a major alteration of significance, an almost total reversal in direction. Such an allusion has been seen by Fichtner²⁸² in the words *tantarum gloria rerum* in 1. 400, which exactly reproduce A. 4. 272 *tantarum gloria rerum* and conspicuously fill the same part of the line. The context is the temptation of Christ (Matt. 4: 8). In the Vergilian context Aeneas needs to be reminded by Mercury, he is insensitive, and has a struggle to decide his right course of action; whereas Jesus knows what he has to do and makes a firm decision. One might perhaps go further, led by the reference of the words themselves, and reflect that while the 'glory' for Aeneas is that of the future Rome which should inspire him, the glory in the case of Christ is the earthly glory that he must despise as temptation and distraction. The thought of glory should have an opposite effect in each case. A remarkable difference in ideology is apparent. Although the Romans are generally presented in a good light in Juvencus,²⁸³ such an 'anti-Roman' reading (or 'anti-Vergilian', if one so reads him) is in keeping with the warning in the second line of the Preface that 'golden Rome' is not eternal, that in the last analysis Rome is not a source of glory.

Another example of inversion, again clearly linked to and dependent on the verbal text, is in the depiction of Christ as captive, just before his trial. There is a very close resemblance between 4. 588–9 *Christum post terga revinctum . . . magno clamore trahebant* and Vergil's words on the capture of Sinon, the fake renegade, at A. 2. 57–8 *post terga revinctum . . . magno . . . clamore trahebant*.²⁸⁴ Moreover, the people at 4. 568 'compete in mocking him', just as they did in Vergil (cf. A. 2. 64 *certantque illudere*). These details of the alluding language serve to reveal, by their surprising exactitude, that Christ is the very opposite of Sinon, and his adversaries are the deceitful ones. He is not, like Sinon, prepared *seu versare dolos seu certae occumbere*

²⁸² Fichtner (1994), 148–9.

²⁸³ See pp. 111–12.

²⁸⁴ 'They dragged him, hands tied behind his back, with great shouting.'

morti ('either to ply his tricks or to succumb to certain death', A. 2. 62), but is aware only of the second. At the same time there is a vivid picture of Christ's painful and humiliating isolation among his many enemies. There may even be, in the words *comes additus* (4. 571, shortly preceding), a hint of Ulysses, the trickster who lay behind this ruse, for in A. 6. 528–9 *comes additus una | hortator scelerum Aeolides* ('joined with him, his companion Ulysses, inciter of crimes'); this phrase refers to Odysseus, to whom Peter, the *comes additus*, might fleetingly be compared.

At line 4. 714 the words *e speculis matres . . . tuentur* ('the mothers watch from their lookouts') begin an episode about the 'mothers'—Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee—and others who watch at Christ's grave. Most unusually, the same words, in a slightly different order, end the passage at 726; and the word *matres* is frequent in the whole context. They invite a comparison with A. 11. 877 *e speculis . . . percussae pectora matres* ('from the towers the mothers, beating their breasts . . .') describing women distraught at the danger to themselves and their families and raising a cry to heaven. Mothers, indeed, usually indicated as here by the single stark word *matres*, are frequent in the *Aeneid*: Trojan mothers whose city is sacked in Book 2 (489 and 766), the mothers who are torn 'between love of their present land and the fated kingdoms that are calling them' in Book 5 (654–6), the Latin mothers who answer the call of Amata in Book 7, and the same mothers who witness the downfall of their city in Books 11 and 12. In these passages, as often in the *Aeneid*, 'mothers' have a miserable fate; sometimes they are seen as disruptive. But in Juvencus, though sorrowful—one may note also the *matres* of 1. 265 who actually correspond to 'Rachel weeping for her children' in Matt. 2: 18—they are quiet, patient, and soon to be rewarded (4. 768). This contrast, highlighted by the simple word *matres* and Juvencus' allusive *e speculis* (the Marys were not exactly ensconced in watchtowers), captures a contrast of values between the male-oriented warfare of the *Aeneid* which subordinates women and makes victims of them and the more universal and internalized virtues that are highlighted, from the outset, in the gospel narratives. Christ is certainly engaged in a conflict, but it is one where the quiet virtues of faith, patience, and suffering are the victorious ones.

After Christ's resurrection (4. 793–4) the disciples are commanded to go out into the whole world. The words 'to all races' actually occur in both these lines, and the verbatim repetition is arresting.²⁸⁵ There is no such closeness at the verbal level to Vergil, but in the *Aeneid* the future emperor Augustus is conspicuous because all races come to him (8. 722 *incedunt victae longo ordine gentes*, 'conquered races parade in a long line'); he does not use the word 'all', but this is implied by the choice of remote and exotic races. As a sign of their defeat they present gifts (721). One may see an important reversal or inversion here, for Christ's followers, by contrast, take with them the gifts (*dona*) of salvation, the *munera* of the kingdom of Heaven (cf. 1. 419–20, and 3. 294–5 . . . *cunctisque dabit sua munera terris* ('and he will give his gifts to all lands', as a result of his resurrection)). The preaching of the gospel goes world-wide, *in cunctas terrae metas* (4. 117–18 'to all the ends of the earth'), just as, according to Jupiter's prophecy, the sway of the Romans would. Jupiter had given no limits (*metas*) to the empire, in space or time (*A.* 1. 278–9); but Christian outreach had overshadowed that proud claim, going even beyond the limits of the empire. And after preaching had gone to all nations—as it had by Constantine's time—the end of time would come, as Christ prophesied (4. 120: Matt. 24: 14); this recalls the Preface, where true eternity can only be predicated of God, the Christian kerygma, and its faithful messengers, and not of Rome or her poets.²⁸⁶

If there is a contrast between Christ and his disciples on the one hand, and Augustus and other makers of Rome on the other, what general relation between Christ and Aeneas may be perceived? Aeneas shares the same conquering impulses as those of Augustus, though with some obvious reluctance and distress on the way. Is he seen by Juvencus in the same light as Augustus, or more positively? Allusions to Aeneas in Juvencus seem to be surprisingly rare. Christ is never *pius*—at this time the word could refer to divine as well as human beings—or *fortis*. In an interesting article on this question²⁸⁷ Šubrt has drawn attention to hints of Aeneas in the emotions of Christ, of which the most striking is at 1. 410 *tristi compressit corde dolorem* ('he

²⁸⁵ *gentibus . . . cunctis* and *cunctas . . . gentes*.

²⁸⁶ See pp. 18–20.

²⁸⁷ Šubrt (1993), esp. 13–14.

suppressed the grief in his sad heart': cf. *A.* 1. 209 *premit altum corde dolorem*, with the same meaning). But on the other hand this is for Herzog a prime example of what he calls the *epische Affektschema*, the epic palette of emotions,²⁸⁸ and we might go beyond this and see in it an example of what Kirsch calls *Universalisierung*, transferred to Christ *qua* man (as he tends to be in Juvencus).²⁸⁹ Šubr also adopts Camps' view of Aeneas as man called to serve—but the similarity might be said to be embedded in the modern or pre-modern Christianizing interpretations of Aeneas.²⁹⁰ The aforementioned examples of *Kontrastimitation* offered by Fichtner and Ratkowitsch, though very persuasive in themselves, need not be taken to warrant a general comparison of the two heroes by the reader. There is not much Aeneas in Juvencus' Christ. It seems fair to conclude, even if pointed contrasts are made, that Juvencus does not go out of his way to align the characters. But that may be a great understatement of the position, given what we know of Christian attitudes to the figure of Aeneas. Although the evidence is meagre (this is in itself significant), it is clear not only from Tertullian but also from Lactantius, who in general had a much more positive valuation of classical poetry and thought, that he was seen as feeble and wicked.²⁹¹

This is not to say that Christ is not an epic hero. There are so many similarities in general with the traditional hero of epic—the ordeals and suffering as he engages in a particular action, helped or hindered by divine agency, often battling against forces greater than himself before attaining to eventual victory in his quest—that the answer may be taken for granted. His presentation is steeped in concerns that modern criticism has highlighted as integral to post-Vergilian epic,²⁹² such as sacrifice, substitution, and succession—these are already embedded in the biblical accounts, though not always given prominence²⁹³—and the poem clearly fits Aristotle's well-known

²⁸⁸ Herzog (1975), 148.

²⁸⁹ Kirsch (1989), 112–15.

²⁹⁰ Cf. Camps (1969), 23.

²⁹¹ See Opelt in *RAC Supplement-Lieferung* 1. 2, 88–94. Lactantius demolishes Aeneas' claims to virtue at *DI* 5. 10. 2–9.

²⁹² See in general Hardie (1993), *passim*; Quint (1992), esp. 50–96: Christ renews, the Jews repeat.

²⁹³ Juvencus does not, for example, include Caiaphas' statement that it is expedient that one man should die for the people (John 11: 50), for his narrative here is the Matthean one.

description of epic and the standard Augustan recipe of *reges et proelia*.²⁹⁴ King Herod is introduced in the first line of the book as *rex cruentus* ('a bloodthirsty king'); the words to some extent recall Vergil (A. 7. 45), but the tone is that struck by Statius.²⁹⁵ He was also concerned by the activities of Jesus (3.33–4: Matt. 14: 1), whence the flashback to the death of the Baptist, whom he thought had risen from the dead. This event saddens Christ in Juvencus more than it does in the gospel.²⁹⁶ In the massacre of the Innocents, the issue for Herod is a problem of succession, a possible conflict of kings. The contrast between Christ and Herod is clear enough, although often indirect, and although the question of whether Christ is a king is handled unobtrusively by Juvencus as in the gospels. Leaving aside the accusation and mockery of Christ as would-be king of the Jews at the time of his Passion, there are three places where he is called a king: at 1. 250, in the story of the Magi (in an exegetical addition); at 2. 119, where, as in John, Nathaniel gives him the title; and at 3. 634, where the prophecy of Zechariah is quoted. We may see in Juvencus the continuing distinction that runs through epic between the 'wild' (*ferus*) and the 'gentle' (*placidus*) king,²⁹⁷ taking in Achilles and Diomedes, Romulus and Numa, and, as already argued, Diocletian and Constantine.²⁹⁸ Herod also contrasts conspicuously with the skilfully drawn milieu of Jewish piety (Simeon, Anna, as well as Elizabeth and Zechariah)²⁹⁹ and quiet domesticity symbolized by Mary, whose virginity and innocence are heightened,³⁰⁰ which is the milieu in which Jesus clearly has his roots. Juvencus holds back none of his store of condemnatory adjectives in describing the *horribilis caedes* (1. 260 'horrible slaughter') of infants caused by Herod's fear of a successor. His *feritas* (3. 45 'savagery') is shown in the later episode, along with *luxuria* and *superbia* (3. 54, an addition), notwithstanding his regret for his daughter's wicked demand.

²⁹⁴ Vergil, *E.* 6. 3; Horace *AP* 73.

²⁹⁵ Cf. Statius, *Theb.* 8. 28, 12. 184 and 680 (Creon).

²⁹⁶ At 3. 70–2 Juvencus' account is notably more emotional than that of Matthew (14: 13).

²⁹⁷ Cf. Vergil, *A.* 7. 194, 11. 251 (Latinus and Diomedes), 8. 325 (Saturn as king of Latium), Ovid *M.* 8. 57 (Minos), 11. 282 (Ceyx), Statius, *Ach.* 1. 729.

²⁹⁸ See p. 21.

²⁹⁹ Thraede (1993).

³⁰⁰ Thraede (2001a), 896–9 and p. 81.

A battle which is for most of the poem conducted at a verbal level—but which is ultimately more dangerous to Christ—is his confrontation with the scribes and Pharisees. Although there are some interesting if slight divergences from the gospel accounts, this is not minimized. Juvencus delays its onset by avoiding Matthew's reference to Pharisees in the Sermon on the Mount and preferring Luke's account of the Baptist's harangue to Matthew's, but strong hostility is present by the beginning of Book 2, in line 18, *gentis molimina vestrae* ('the machinations of your tribe', referring to the scribes), which is an addition. It comes into the open in 2. 153–62, the episode of the 'cleansing' of the temple, which incurs ridicule and criticism, and the decision to 'trap' (and not, interestingly, 'destroy', as in Matt. 12: 14) Christ in 2. 598. After more devilish deceit³⁰¹ the decision to kill him is taken at 4. 406. The authorities and the people rage with fury (e.g. Caiaphas at 4. 550 and 561); Judas is *furens* ('frenzied', 514, 627), *amens* ('mad', 422)—in the gospel his treachery is his dominant feature—but also *infelix* ('miserable', 4. 628) just before his suicide.³⁰² But Christ's greatest battle, and his great victory, concern death itself. His suffering is, as in the gospel, not hidden in advance, and the achievement of overcoming death is not only underlined at the end of the book (4. 770 *victorem leti*, 'conqueror of death'; 4. 757 *devicta morte*, 'with death conquered'), but foreshadowed in various earlier additions, as at 2. 405 *leti victor vitaeque repertor*, and 3. 342 *in lucem referens mortis de sede tropaea*.³⁰³ This interpretation of Christ's death and resurrection is prominent in Patristic thought³⁰⁴ and is emphatically presented in Juvencus, in keeping with the emphasis on *mors* as spiritual as well as physical death throughout his work.

There is a further element in the conflict which deserves attention—*livor*, or Envy, which is prominent in the account of the Baptist's death. This cosmic force, often impersonal, but also acting through human minds, is important in the classical tradition and is

³⁰¹ Words such as *dolosus* (2. 586) are often used of both humans and the Devil.

³⁰² With a hint of Vergil's Pyrrhus (*A.* 2. 535) in 4. 436 *talibus ausis* ('for such deeds'). Dido is often *infelix*, among many others.

³⁰³ 'conqueror of death and author of life; bringing trophies from the abode of death into the light'.

³⁰⁴ Aulén (1970).

not disowned by Christians; in the *Life of Constantine* by Eusebius numerous problems are laid at its door.³⁰⁵ Juvencus makes it the motive force behind the people's 'offence' (Matt. 13: 57; OL uses the verb *scandalizo*) in 3. 21 *tunc livore gravi plebes commota suorum*, 'then the people, moved with strong envy of its own' (that is, of fellow Jews). Soon afterwards, as Herod shows his concern about John the Baptist, there is intervention by the Devil 'with envious heart', *liventi pectore daemon* (3. 37).³⁰⁶ The importance of this double reference to Envy is enhanced by its position, at the beginning of the poem's second half, which is where Vergil's *maius opus* began; the forces arrayed against John, and implicitly Jesus, increase in severity. In lines 39–42 Herod is visited by the *daemon*, now *saevissima pestis* and reminiscent of Vergil's Allecto, the chosen agent of the wrathful and envious Juno. Like the snake of Allecto thrown at the worried Amata in *A.* 7. 341–53, and Ovid's imitation,³⁰⁷ the Devil has no difficulty in entering the mind of Herod's daughter, inflamed (*accensa*, 3. 39) by the *damnis... malorum* ('deficit of evil') as a result of the Baptist's activity, rather as Juno was inflamed (*accensa*, *A.* 1. 29) by numerous slights and fears.

As well as the force of demonic *livor*, which might be said to take over from, and perhaps in a theological sense 'correct', the virulence of Vergil's Juno and her infernal ally, there is another force with which the hero must engage, one which, it may be argued, plays a part analogous to Vergil's ultimately positive Fate. Juvencus avoids such a description, and would doubtless have found it quite unacceptable, but this element may be said to create for its hero a tension comparable to that which Fate produces for Aeneas.³⁰⁸ As the story of Christ's death nears its climax, as Simon of Cyrene is carrying the saviour's cross, Juvencus adds two remarkable lines about the significance of the crucifixion: 4. 655–6 *quo dominum*

³⁰⁵ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 2. 61, 3. 1, and other places. In Juvencus note also at 4. 112 *livor erit terris*, in Christ's warning of terrible things to come (cf. Matt. 24: 10).

³⁰⁶ Cf. 1. 366–7 *livor daemonis* ('the Devil's envy') in the temptation narrative.

³⁰⁷ Ovid, *M.* 4. 495–8.

³⁰⁸ This feature, and its correspondence with Fate, is briefly mentioned by Fichtner (1994), 52–3; many of the passages that follow are discussed, but without making this comparison, in Thraede (2000).

*lucis iussis suffigere saevis | instans urgebat saeculi immutabilis ordo.*³⁰⁹ The ‘immutable order of time’ is presented as a fixed sequence of events which must be fulfilled, as in 1. 307 *interea veteris scripti per debita currens | omnia saeculorum series promissa trahebat*,³¹⁰ where Juvencus is taking the opportunity to replace Luke’s simple expression of time and invest it with cosmic significance. All this is part of an *ordo* or *series saeculorum* which extends from the beginning of the world through history to the Incarnation, and then until the end of time,³¹¹ an *ordo* which is reminiscent of Vergil’s *magnus ab integro saeculorum nascitur ordo*³¹² and the *ordo fatorum* (‘order of the fates’) of A. 5. 707.³¹³ The events of Christ’s life, such as the time of his baptism, are likewise determined; so too the period of his death, for he will rise *post tempora debita* (2. 173). Here there is a close verbal parallel with Vergil at A. 9. 107–8 *ergo aderat promissa dies et tempora Parcae | debita compleverant* (‘now the promised day was present and the fates had fulfilled the due times’), with the all-important omission of the word *Parcae*. Vergil’s context here is the fulfilment of a prophecy of help from Cybele, the mother of the gods; prophecy is also for Juvencus an important part of this overarching history of time. Hence Simeon can say, again in words reminiscent of Vergil, *Haec est illa salus* (‘this is that [promised] salvation’, 1. 123), hailing the fulfilment of prophecy.³¹⁴ The prophecies of the Old Testament are a vital part of what is ‘owed’ or predetermined, or, from another point of view, ‘ordered’.³¹⁵ The relationship is most fully expressed in

³⁰⁹ ‘on which the immutable order of time insistently demanded them, with its cruel commands, to fasten the Lord of light’. For similar adjectives to *immutabilis* in Juvencus cf. *irrevocabile* (Pref. 4), *inviolabile* 2. 223, and *irrevocatus* (2. 629).

³¹⁰ ‘meanwhile the series of ages running through all the things required by ancient scripture, was bringing its promises’. Cf. 1. 489 *omnia quin fiant digesto ex ordine saeculi* (‘so that all things should happen according to the arranged order of time’).

³¹¹ Cf. Preface, 4, and 4. 160 *donec cuncta sequens claudat sibi debita finis*.

³¹² Vergil, *E.* 4. 5 ‘The great order of the ages is beginning afresh’.

³¹³ Cf. also Vergil, *A.* 3. 375–6 *sic fata deum rex | sortitur volvitque vices, is vertitur ordo* (‘so the king of the God selects his fates, so the order revolves’).

³¹⁴ Cf. *haec est illa fames* (‘this is that [foretold] hunger’), Vergil, *A.* 7. 128. For the form of words cf. also Lucan 7. 254 *haec est illa dies*.

³¹⁵ Cf. 1. 313 and 412 (Isaiah); 1. 263–6 (Jeremiah); 2. 357–60 (Hosea); 4. 122 (Daniel). As in *Pref.* 14 it is God who commands. For this usage, much favoured by Juvencus, epic paternity at the verbal level might be claimed on the basis of Vergil, *A.* 10. 444 *aequore iusso*, where *iusso* is read (probably wrongly) by all manuscripts.

2. 825–6 *veteris quo possent dicta prophetae | ordine saeculorum iussis concurrere rebus* ('so that the words of the ancient prophet might accord with things commanded in the order of the ages').³¹⁶ As in this case, Christ's actions may fulfil prophecy without deliberate action on his part; but frequently Christ must strive to fulfil their words, as in 1. 353 *iustitiae consecrandus complebitur ordo* ('the order of justice is to be completed and will be fulfilled'). Not only must he obey scriptures (1. 405 *haereat ut semper nobis immobile iussum*),³¹⁷ but he must also perform his particular role (4. 530 *sed scriptura meis complenda est debita rebus*).³¹⁸ With typical variation, this sentence replaces what in Matthew is a question (26: 54),³¹⁹ a small sign perhaps of the earnestness with which Juvenecus presents this perspective of sacred history. The emphasis of this theme by repetition, and its expanded and solemn expression, dramatize the sense of Christ acting out divine providence in his heroic conflicts. The divine plan transcends Fate, and Christ transcends Aeneas, but it seems as if the Vergilian pattern has left some mark even here.

NARRATIVE AND DISCOURSE

Notwithstanding his careful unfolding of the Matthean narrative, Juvenecus' poem has often been criticized for its lack of continuity. Such critics' views may be summed up by the following comment of Roberts, on all three New Testament poets. It is characteristic of them, he says, 'to dissolve the biblical narrative into a series of disparate episodes with only the slightest temporal and local connection with what precedes and follows. This . . . undermines the sense of the biblical narrative as a sequence of events taking place in a chronological

³¹⁶ 1. 412 *ut dictum Esaiiae concurreret ordine longo* ('so that the saying of Isaiah might agree in the long order (of time)'), where prophecy is said to concur with event rather than the reverse.

³¹⁷ 'so that the command [he has quoted the Old Testament Law] must also stick fast to me, uncompromised'.

³¹⁸ 'but the scripture, which is due to my own life, must be fulfilled'; or perhaps 'but the appropriate scripture must be fulfilled by my life'.

³¹⁹ See p. 87.

continuum, in a definite cultural and geographical setting.³²⁰ The case of each poet must be taken separately; Sedulius, with his chain of miracles within a kind of biography, and Arator, with his organized commentary, are very different. Juvencus, the faithful paraphraser, keeps much closer to his originals. Where there is a strong narrative line, as in the narratives of Christ's birth, and in those of the Passion, he follows it with very little change,³²¹ and other passages can be pointed out (for example, at the beginning of Book 2) which belie the charge of discontinuity. In other places the narratives are, so to speak, dissolved already, and he treats the accounts as he found them, as disconnected islands of narrative and speech. It is a well-known phenomenon that the biblical pericopes are for the most part self-contained and themselves lacking in connection beyond the occasional 'and' or 'then'. The links are often opaque, or non-existent, and indeed it has been a major concern of scholarly criticism of the synoptic gospels to seek out possible reasons for the order in which they are presented.³²² As has been seen, Juvencus has a variety of simple connectives and modes of connection to match the evangelists, to whom he has chosen to stay close.³²³ He certainly does not dissolve or undermine the narrative, but on the whole follows it. It is not his policy (as it is for certain writers of Renaissance epic, or for subsequent writers of Late Antiquity like Avitus and Dracontius, who tend to take a particular theme, usually from the Old Testament) to intensify thematic continuity by the radical selection of material or by wholesale additions of his own, but he chooses to let scripture speak for itself.

With geographical data and indications of time, which are similarly very brief in the gospels, his strategy is broadly similar. Lacking extra knowledge, and certainly any desire to invent, he follows his models carefully, and again shows no wish to rupture such continuity as they provide. He does indeed cut down somewhat on difficult names, as we have seen,³²⁴ or take what might be thought a few

³²⁰ Roberts (1985), 180.

³²¹ Cf. p. 26 above.

³²² For a good survey of the problems, see Nineham (1963), 19–29.

³²³ See pp. 55–6.

³²⁴ See pp. 31–6.

liberties with the scenery,³²⁵ but what he retains—which is the greater part—shows concern for the original settings and contexts. As will be argued later, his reduction and modification of the geographical and cultural data is certainly not governed by any set purpose to obliterate Jesus' Jewish roots (Poinsotte and Orbán)³²⁶ or even to smooth them out (Herzog)³²⁷ or 'universalize' his narrative (Kirsch).³²⁸ It should also be appreciated that he is in a very different position from the writers of classical epic, who could expect their readers to understand exotic and indeed obscure place-names of the mythological world (known, or knowable, from the wealth of Graeco-Roman poetry and commentary to which they allude), or, in the case of Vergil, those of Italy. Much as Juvenecus might have wished to do the same for Palestine and Judaea—to develop or cherish a sense of feeling for a landscape with which his readers could particularly identify—there would have been considerable problems, due not only to the difficulty of versifying the material but to the ignorance of readers, and probably his own, about a distant land as yet little known to Western Christians.

But the situation is very different where creating a single episode is concerned. For someone steeped in classical Roman literature biblical pericopes are in many ways a most unusual form. They vary in length, and may be extremely short; the detail they give varies greatly, and there may be almost none; they often come without any kind of context, and may contain little more than a dark saying. In a typical episode there will generally be a particular point, whether it be a story of healing or some other miraculous event, or a verbal exchange or a study of an emotional reaction, to which the whole pericope leads up. The style, at least on the surface, may be simplicity itself, whether in the constant resort to 'and' (*et* or *autem* in the OL) and so extensive parataxis, or in the ubiquitous 'they said', with which the comments of characters are introduced. Again, Juvenecus has a variety of techniques, but in general it may be said that he sees his task as creating episodes of a more traditional kind. If he cannot regularly

³²⁵ Opelt (1975).

³²⁶ Poinsotte (1979), Orbán (1992). The matter of Juvenecus' treatment of Jewish culture and the Jews themselves will be treated on pp. 103–12.

³²⁷ Herzog (1975), 111–15.

³²⁸ Kirsch (1989), 114–15.

impose the overall unity and coherence that traditional epic seeks, he can at least aim to present his gospel episodes as possessing something of the tighter articulation of narrative and speech which is part and parcel of epic. This reconstruction may even involve the combination of episodes. An example of this is the end of the passage on the transfiguration (3. 316–53; Matt. 17: 1–9), where the disciples ask their question about Elijah not on the way down the mountain but earlier, as they arise from their terrified prostration. It is only after a further exchange that Juvencus mentions the descent, and this is used to round off the episode. Similarly, in Book 1 the angelic appearance is framed by epic-style lines at 42 and 79. Sometimes there is a combination of different speeches; the speech that begins at 2. 548 was in fact presented by Matthew (11: 25–30) as separate from what goes before. At 3. 303 Juvencus tacitly adds a speech made to the disciples to an address to Peter (Matt. 16: 21–8).

But it is within a passage that Juvencus' innovation is most far-reaching. We may begin by considering his strategies for dealing with parataxis, a feature indeed not alien to classical idiom, but one that he does not wish to dominate his discourse. An examination of 2.153–62 (John 2: 13–16) will show, among other things, how the extreme features of biblical parataxis are moderated, indeed exploited.

Inde ubi Iudaeis aderant sollemnia paschae,
 ad Solymos direxit iter temploque subibat.
 reperit hic populum venalia multa locantem: 155
 pars vendebat oves, pars corpora magna iuvenum,
 pars inhians nummis arti³²⁹ numerare vacabat.
 restibus hic Christus conecit verbera flagri
 et tales populos sancta proturbat ab aede,
 et mensas vertens aeris profundit acervos 160
 et super increpitat:³³⁰ 'procul haec auferte, profani,
 ut meus hic genitor, non sordida lucra colantur.'

³²⁹ A problem: this conjecture of Arevalo, printed by Huemer, is no improvement on the various manuscript readings.

³³⁰ This is my emendation for Huemer's *superincrepitans*, as a main verb is required by the preceding *et*; *vertens* above could be responsible for an error. It also makes better sense to separate *super* and *increpitat*.

Then when the Jews' festival of the Passover was near, he directed his path to Jerusalem and came to the temple. He found there the people selling many things: some were selling sheep, some the great bodies of oxen, some gasping for money were taking time to count it. Here Christ assembles the lashes of a whip from ropes and drives such people out of the sacred temple, and overturning the tables throws down the piles of money and moreover cries out: 'Take these things right away from here, you unholy men, so that my Father may be worshipped here, not filthy lucre.'

Et in proximo erat pascha Iudaeorum et ascendit Iesus in Hierosolymis. 14. Et invenit in templo vendentes boves et oves et columbas et nummularios sedentes ad mensas. 15. Et fecit quasi flagellum de restibus et omnes eiecit de templo oves quoque et boves et nummulariorum effudit aes et mensas eorum evertit. 16. Et dixit vendentibus columbas: 'Tollite ista hinc et nolite facere domum patris domum negotiationis.'

And soon there was the Passover of the Jews and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And he found people in the temple selling oxen and sheep and doves and money-changers sitting at their tables. And he made a sort of whip from ropes and threw them all out of the temple, the sheep and the oxen too, and poured out the money of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he said to those selling the doves: 'Take these away from here and do not make my house the house of commerce.'

The changes in the first part of this, though not obtrusive, are illuminating. The arrival of the festival is explained in a subordinate sentence, which is followed by two main clauses in line 154. In the second of these, *temploque subibat*, there is a significant change of tense from perfect to imperfect, which creates suspense.³³¹ The next action is expressed in the strongly placed verb *repperit*; the activity of those whom he finds is broken up into various details with *pars... pars...*, as for example in Vergil, *A. 4. 405–7*.³³² By making a triadic structure, the poet can climax with a line that puts the emphasis on the most important detail, the money-grubbing that had invaded the temple. In the next part of the narrative, by contrast, we find four clauses linked with simple *et* occurring at the beginning of the line, and no subordination, except in the participle *vertens*. Ending this long, or at least strung-out sentence in mid-line, Juvenecus makes a strong pause before the words of Christ, decked out with

³³¹ Cf. Vergil's *muroque subibant* (*A. 7. 161*), and *A. 9. 371*.

³³² Heinze (1993), 286–7.

a Vergilian allusion,³³³ and goes on to make his own version of the strong antithesis in the final verse. On this note he ends, dispensing with the disciples' comment in verse 17 on the prophecy thus exemplified but not disrupting the connection (or apparent connection) with what follows.

The articulation by means of repeated *et* is relatively unusual in Juvencus, and may be used here to create an atmosphere of urgent action. Structures with *-que*, or a mixture of both words, are commoner. Another way is simply (if that is the correct word, for once more we are dealing with a developed compositional technique of Vergil and later epicists) to dispense with the connectives, and as it were let the placing of key words do the work. (The storm scene of Vergil at A. 1.81–91 is a brilliant example.) By starting each phrase or sentence with an important detail or an expressive verbal action, and changing the grammatical subject or topic as necessary, the poet may build up a sentence or series of sentences with minimal use of formal connection. A few examples can be used to illustrate this without full quotation. So, after the birth of John the Baptist, introduced with something of a fanfare (this is, incidentally, in marked contrast to the birth of Jesus), at 1.105–7, the focus moves to the neighbours with *ad partus famam* ('on hearing of the birth'); then, after a snappy tricolon in the epic mould raising the issue of the name, successive sentences begin with verbs *abnuuit* and *placuit* (110, 111). The climax comes with a third sentence that begins *sed, pro mira fides...*,³³⁴ and Zechariah receives his voice back. Another good example of asyndeton is the feeding of the four thousand (3. 210–19; Matt. 15: 34–9). It contributes also to the most solemn and dignified portrayal of Christ's death and its immediate sequel (4. 701–13; Matt. 27: 50–4), where the rending of the veil is represented by the initial verb *scinduntur*,³³⁵ conveying something of the impact of Matthew's 'and, behold...', and other momentous happenings articulated through repeated *tum* (701, 707). These are summed up with the epiphonema *sic terrent omnia mundum*.³³⁶

³³³ Vergil, A. 6. 258 *procul o procul este profani*.

³³⁴ 'But, what marvellous faith!'

³³⁵ Cf. 1. 356 *scinditur*, as the heavens open at Christ's baptism.

³³⁶ Hence we need a full stop after 4. 710.

But Juvencus is also fond of developing an episode using a periodic style, of which a good example is 3. 176–84 (Matt. 15: 21–8):

haec ubi dicta dedit, pulcherrima rura Syrorum
 Sidonemque Tyrumque petit, cum femina fuis
 crinibus et precibus natam causata iacentem
 volvitur et tacitum non desinit anxia Christum
 orare ut mentem vexatam daemone saevo 180
 redderet et miserae tandem respirare liceret.
 tunc etiam precibus sectantum discipulorum
 respondit proprias genitoris malle bidentes
 cogere quas vanus late disperserat error.
 crebrius instanti tum talia fatur Iesus . . .

When he had said this, he was making for the beautiful country of the Syrians, and Tyre and Sidon, when a woman with dishevelled hair, pleading with prayers that her daughter lay ill, rolls in front of him and in her grief does not cease to beseech the silent Christ to restore her daughter's mind, ravaged by a cruel devil, and allow the wretched girl at last to recover. Then he replied to the prayers of the disciples following him that he preferred to gather his father's own sheep, which vain error had scattered far and wide. As she persisted even harder Jesus then spoke as follows . . .

Et egressus inde Iesus secessit in partes Tyri et Sidonis. 22. *Et ecce mulier Chananaea egressa a finibus illis clamavit dicens ei: Miserere mei, Domine, fili David; filia mea male a daemonio vexatur.* 23. *At Iesus non respondit ei verbum. Et accedentes discipuli eius rogabant eum dicentes: 'Dimitte eam, quia clamat post nos.'* 24. *Ipse autem respondens ait: 'Non sum missus nisi ad oves quae perierunt domus Istrahel.'* 25. *At illa veniens adorabat eum dicens: 'adiuva me domine.'* 26. *Ipse autem respondens ait . . .*

And having gone out from there Jesus went away into the parts of Tyre and Sidon. And behold a Canaanite woman who had left that territory cried, saying to him: 'Pity me, Lord, son of David; my daughter is badly troubled by a daemon.' But Jesus did not reply a word to her. And coming to him his disciples asked him, saying: 'Send her away, because she is shouting after us.' But he replying said: 'I am not sent except to the sheep of the house of Israel which have perished.' But coming to him she pleaded, saying: 'Help me, Lord.' Replying, he said . . .

In Juvencus' version the first two sentences of Matthew are linked by inverted *cum*, which may be paralleled, to give one example among many—it is a common device in many kinds of narrative—by Vergil

A. 9. 372. After the geographical detail in 3. 176–7—on this occasion no less full than that of the original, indeed adding material and replacing Matthew’s *secessit* (‘withdrew’; Matt. 15: 21)—this creates a strong impact, equivalent (it might be argued) to ‘and behold’.³³⁷ The narrative in this clause is heavily reworked. The weight falls in line 179, with its two verbs, and especially the vivid and strongly placed *volvitur* for Matthew’s ‘knelt before him’ (*adorabat*, v. 25), which came much later in his paragraph. The picture is enhanced by the added detail of *fusus crinibus* (177–8). Having brought her appearance to our eyes, Juvencus turns to the problem of her daughter’s illness. Her initial plea and its repetition are summed up in the second main verb (*non*) *desinit*, preceded by a brief description of the cause of her distress, built around *causata*, ‘pleading’, a word which has perhaps the added implication of excusing her persistence. The detail that Christ ‘answered her not a word’ is captured by the simple *tacitum*. In the statement of her daughter’s disability which follows, the words *mentem vexatam daemone saevo* reproduce quite closely what was given early in Matthew, in direct speech, while the next line conveys in a very different way from Matthew (‘Lord, help me’) her desperate wish for her daughter to be healed. Christ replies to his disciples in indirect speech, but directly to the woman, when she kept on (*crebrius instanti*). Then—this is outside the quoted passage—she replies, in a way that impresses Christ, who speaks again acknowledging her faith and performing the healing. (It may be added that at this point, rather unusually, Juvencus adds three lines of his own summing up the significance of the miracle for the daughter.) Juvencus has carefully structured his presentation of this scene, passing quickly over the initial speeches—no fewer than four are subordinated or elided—to heighten the picture of distress and emphasize the verbal exchanges, almost repartee, which form the climax of the story.

This passage has raised points that lead us to the consideration of discourse, both direct and indirect. Many more examples could be given of how Juvencus ignores or recasts short speeches, both by major characters and by onlookers. So the comment of the neighbours and kinsfolk at Luke 1: 61, ‘None of your kindred is called by

³³⁷ But Juvencus uses *ecce* (‘behold’) elsewhere: see p. 56.

this name', is omitted; the context is able to supply it. He takes no account of the two verses at Luke 1: 65 and 66 giving the reactions of the locals, which would weaken the focus on Zechariah.³³⁸ Non-verbalized reactions are similarly elided or, sometimes, treated in a different way: so in 1. 14–15 and 208 (cf. Luke 1: 12 and 2: 33) the speakers—the angel and Simeon—remark on them in their addresses.

Reactions of wonder, so frequent in the gospels,³³⁹ are not neglected but rather emphasized in various ways, whether with adjectives (especially *mirandus*) or by narratorial emphasis on *miracula*, a common word in Juvencus and one which anticipates Sedulius' interests. The purpose of such elisions or substitutions is to add pace to a narrative and reduce the need to interrupt its flow with minor speeches. There is an obvious tendency to concentrate on the most important comments or sayings, which tend to come at the end of a passage. A good example is the parable of the vineyard (3. 692–711), where several groups of men are hired at different times of the day and each given its own oral contract. Here Juvencus dispenses with the preliminary addresses, and saves direct discourse for the point of the parable at the end. Another very common expedient is to use indirect in place of direct discourse. It has been claimed by Herzog that this phenomenon is part of the 'gradation' involved in the intensification of edificatory material; Christ is privileged as against marginal characters (*Randfiguren*) such as the disciples and the various individuals who frequently come to him.³⁴⁰ The point, however, is perhaps a rather different one; Christ's response is what is important, and that is what Juvencus, more often than not, chooses to highlight. One of the examples in Herzog's list comes from Christ's conversation with the Samaritan woman (2. 273), which is embedded in a long series of direct discourse. In this lengthy dialogue, which will shortly be analysed, the point of this single piece of indirect discourse is more likely to be simply economy. That the significance is not one of hierarchy is suggested by the colourful episode where

³³⁸ Cf. John 11: 36 and 37, which describe the varied Jewish reactions to Jesus' weeping.

³³⁹ Cf. Herzog (1975), 147–8.

³⁴⁰ Ibid. 128 and n. 282.

Christ meets the demoniac in the country of the Gerasenes (2. 43–74, retelling Mark 5: 1–13). Here dialogue is made into a single speech—a speech by the wretched man; in Juvencus Christ actually says nothing. The speech takes over two separate interventions of the demoniac, the cry ‘do not torment me’ and the plea in indirect speech not to send them out of the country. Without being asked (as he is in Mark) he tells Jesus that his name was Legion, and explains it; he also draws to Christ’s attention (in Mark the narrator did this) the herd of pigs grazing nearby, and it is Legion too, not the spirits themselves, who suggests that they occupy the pigs instead. Christ’s role is limited to giving the orders for the spirits to move. The picture of the demoniac and his healing seems to have appealed to Juvencus: he takes care over the choice of his version, and gives a vibrant picture of the man, both before and after his healing.

Christ, then, may be the less prominent party to a conversation, and it is certainly the case that he uses indirect speech as well as direct. (Both are found in 3. 593–9). A notable example of indirect discourse in the mouth of Christ, extended and skilfully articulated, is at 3. 624–9 (Matt. 21: 2–3), where he instructs the disciples to fetch the ass and if necessary mention that they have his authority. Instead of the evangelist’s ‘Go... and you will find... untie them... and if anyone says... you shall say’, Juvencus bases his sentence on the single verb *iussit*: ‘ordered them to bring the ass... (that they had) found, and if anyone chose to ask the reason... to say that the master needed them for himself.’³⁴¹ This occurs at the beginning of an episode where there will be more important things to emphasize, in direct speech: the fulfilment of prophecy, the cries of the inhabitants, and the reply of Christ that closes the paragraph (3. 650–2).

An important consideration in the restructuring of narrative and the setting up of interplay between direct and indirect discourse is the need to avoid repetition of words corresponding to ‘he/she/they said’ that are so common in the gospels. Juvencus has a wide repertoire, of theological import but seemingly derived from epic, for this, and uses his opportunities to good effect.³⁴² Nonetheless, it could become

³⁴¹ *iussit... asinam... repertam | ducere, vel si quis disquirere vellet, | cur... trahantur | dicere tunc operam dominum sibi sumere velle.*

³⁴² See pp. 56–7.

tedious, especially as all but the simplest formulae take up at least half a line. In the case of the Canaanite woman, where, as shown above, the repartee is important, there is some point in the repetition of the formula *tum talia fatur* in order to spotlight what first the woman and then Jesus says, but more often this is avoided. Juvencus gives bite to an exchange with the *plebes Iudaea* (following the above-mentioned expulsions from the temple) not only by the strongly emotive *fremebat* (2. 163) when the Jews ask their first question, but by imaginatively (and poetically) recasting John's formulae at 2: 19 and 20, 'Jesus answered them' and 'The Jews then said'. These become respectively *ventura obscuris tunc Christus talia miscet* ('then Christ mixes the following prophecy in obscure words') and *illi inter sese tractantes murmure caeco* ('they thinking among themselves with blind murmurs')³⁴³—where *caeco* alludes to the point, made by John (2: 21) and Juvencus as narrators, that he had been misunderstood. There is similar characterization of the Pharisees in the mixture of direct and indirect discourse that begins at 2. 351–3 (Matt. 9: 11–13), and it is notable that instead of the Pharisees making their complaint to the disciples, as Matthew has it, they 'blame him with hidden laughter', though Jesus is well aware of it. Details of this kind, introducing a discourse and seeking to avoid a basic formula, may be a very eloquent pointer to character; early in the poem Mary is presented as speaking 'with fearful lips' (1. 64), and her Magnificat (1. 94–102) is introduced as 'the fearful words of a subdued voice'. Both these characterizations are additions to the original. In the first case it should also be noted that what she says, in Juvencus' version, reinforces the picture of a virgin hidden away at home, awaiting marriage to her betrothed: it is striking that rather than stating, as in Luke 1: 34, that she has no husband she tentatively says that 'they say no conception can happen without a spouse' (1. 65). In 2. 179 Nicodemus—Juvencus leaves him without a name³⁴⁴—also speaks 'in a subdued (*submissa*) voice'; this is contrasted with his elevated rank as one of the leading men of the Jewish community, anticipating

³⁴³ There are clear echoes of Vergil, A. 6. 100 *obscuris vera involvens*, 8. 452 *illi inter sese*, and 12. 591 *murmure caeco*.

³⁴⁴ This is best explained by its metrical difficulty, though for Herzog (1975), 126 it is a sign, as often, of a character's subordination to Christ.

a point with which Jesus will make some play (2. 205, following John 3: 10).

In his treatment of dialogue in general Heinze noted that it is very rare for Vergil in his epic to give more than one speech to each of two speakers,³⁴⁵ and this is also no doubt a contributory reason for Juvencus' restrictions. But in spite of this tendency there are some longer passages of dialogue, and this Johannine feature is one to which Juvencus devotes great care. At 2. 103–26 he gives in full the dialogues—one merges into another—between Philip and Nathaniel and then between Nathaniel and Christ (John 1: 43–51). Changes of speaker are indicated in the simplest ways—*ille refert* (2. 107), *Christus ad haec* (2. 121), and there is no hesitation in using the simple *inquit* for 'says'—except for one line, *talibus attoniti sequitur vox Nathanielis* (2. 118, 'The cry of Nathaniel, astonished by such things, follows'), which prepares the way for his confession of Christ's status as son of God and king of Israel. The next passage is a much longer one relating Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well (2. 244–94: John 4: 7–26), where, with the small exception mentioned above, the conversation is presented fully in direct speech. The passage is particularly noteworthy for the way in which Juvencus takes the opportunity—which would not have been appropriate in the preceding conversation with Nicodemus, who admits Christ's identity, albeit grudgingly (2. 180–3)—to use a variety of titles for Christ, introducing him in various ways as his turn comes to speak. So there is a progress from the simple *Christus ait* ('Christ says', 2. 252) and *servator ait* ('the saviour says', 256) to *olli respondit mundi regnator Iesus* ('Jesus, the ruler of the world, replies to her', 265), after she has asked whether Jesus is greater than Jacob. Then *tunc sic prosequitur mentis perspector Iesus* ('Then Christ, the one who sees into the mind follows up . . .', 274), and finally *et tum peccantis largus miserator Iesus* ('and then Jesus, the generous pitier of the sinner', 293): he is ready to forgive the sin she has confessed, but has a higher objective here, that of revealing himself, which he finally

³⁴⁵ Heinze (1993), 315–18. An interesting case in the present context is A. 12. 791–840, where Jupiter speaks twice, introduced by expansive descriptions in each case (791 and 829), and Juno once, with *summisso . . . vultu* (807). Its importance in Vergil's poem is often underestimated.

does in line 294. These carefully modulated descriptions, appropriate to their context as we have seen others to be,³⁴⁶ contrast effectively with the simple introductions provided for the woman's replies and interjections, where there is an unusual degree of brevity and ellipsis: *illa sub haec* ('To this she (says)', 259), *tum mulier* ('Then the woman (says)', 278), *illa dehinc* ('She then (says)', 291).

The Lazarus episode (4. 306–402: John 11) offers another opportunity for re-enacting an extensive conversation. Clearly an important passage for Juvencus, who plucks it from John to place it between the end of Christ's sayings in Matt. 25 and the beginning of the judicial process in Matt. 26, it foreshadows his own supremacy over death but also shows the depth of his tender relationship with Mary and Martha. While in the vicinity of Bethany—though Juvencus is here unconcerned with geographical detail, and so leaves out verses 6–10—Christ is told of the death of Lazarus, brother of Mary and Martha. The first exchange is with their messenger. Christ then speaks with his disciples, who do not immediately realize that he knows Lazarus to be dead, in a truncated version of John's narrative. The words of Thomas Didymus in verse 16—a rare intervention of an apostle other than Peter—seem to be a trace of the anxiety of the disciples as developed in the omitted verses: he fears that in Bethany, so close to Jerusalem, they will lose their lives *totiens quod gens Iudaea minatur* ('as the Jewish race threatens so often'). This is followed by conversations of Christ with Martha and then Mary. The many short speeches of this chapter are given in full, with the exception of a few, short and more or less functional items: the message of verse 3, already anticipated in the narrative, Martha's report to Mary of Christ's arrival at verse 28, Jesus' question about the location of the grave (v. 34), and his instructions in verse 39. We thus have an extended and sympathetic dialogue between Christ and the sisters, which retains the warmth and homeliness of detail, even down to Martha's concern about the likely smell, and fully represents the emotional support and the teaching of Christ. It also makes a contrast with the foregoing discourses and the acceleratingly threatening narratives that follow.

³⁴⁶ Pace Herzog (1975), 132 who sees these titles, the core of Juvencus' edificatory purposes, as inflexible and 'erbaulichen Konstanten'.

TEACHING AND EXEGESIS

Teaching is as important to Juvencus as narrative. He presents Christ's *dicta*, or *doctrina*, as well as his *facta*. To a degree the categories overlap, or indeed coincide, as in the case of parables; and pronouncements or debate may be embedded in the narrative of events. But Juvencus includes many of Christ's longest discourses, which occupy at least half of the poem. The Sermon on the Mount takes up most of the second half of his first book (1. 452–727), and various extensive discourses the second half of Book 2 (2. 433–508; 528–60; 611–91;³⁴⁷ 695–724; 738–823). Books 3 and 4 include a considerable amount, with the discourses of Matt. 24 and 25 looming large in the latter. There is also teaching which is not from the mouth of Christ but from other characters, especially Gabriel, Zechariah, and Simeon early on. The poet himself never teaches directly—as Sedulius and Arator manifestly and copiously do—but it is also possible to distinguish an exegetical contribution.

An introduction to some of the topics of this section, especially the texture of doctrinal passages, may be given by the following extract (1. 679–89), which corresponds to Matt. 7: 13–14:

Ite per angustam, iusti, super aethera portam. quam lata et spatiosa via est, quae limite laevo	680
praeruptum convolvit iter caligine mortis, innumeraeque illam penetrant per prona catervae. vitalis vastis stipatur semita saxis, celsaque vix paucos ducit per scrupea virtus.	
at si quos nimium fallax inlexque malorum	685
planities suasit deformi lubrica lapsu, arripit hos pronosque trahit velut impetus amnis, aut alacer sonipes ruptis effrenus habenis, aut rectoris egens ventosa per aequora puppis.	

Enter through the narrow gate to heaven, righteous ones. How broad and spacious is the way which on the left-hand side envelops the steep road in the darkness of death, and innumerable companies pass through it along

³⁴⁷ This is composite, linking material from both Matthew and John: see p. 25.

easy ways. The path leading to life is hemmed in by vast boulders, and lofty virtue leads but a few along rugged tracks. But if any are allured by the extremely deceptive and illicit plain of evils, hazardous with ugly error, it seizes them and carries them headlong like the current of a river, or an eager horse that has broken its reins and rushes free, or a ship bereft of its helmsman in the stormy seas.

intrate per angustam portam; quam lata et spatiosa est via, quae ducit ad perditionem, et multi sunt, qui intrant per eam; 14. quam angusta porta et arcta est via, quae ducit ad vitam, et pauci sunt qui inveniunt eam.

Enter through the narrow gate; how spacious and broad is the way which leads to perdition, and there are many who enter by it; how narrow is the gate and how cramped the way that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

In this passage one may distinguish three modes of presentation. The first two lines are relatively plain, and close to the original; the words used, and their order, reflect the original closely. At the same time, as Colombi has noted,³⁴⁸ the word *iusti* and the phrase *per aethera* add a degree of interpretation: the exhortation is given an eschatological perspective, and its focus is limited, in one sense, and universalized, in another, by Juvenecus' favourite word *iusti*.³⁴⁹ Then there is considerable embellishment—one path is steep and dangerous, the other strewn with rocks—to add vividness (in technical terms, *enargeia*) and persuasiveness to the contrast of the dangerous way of death with the path of life gained through virtue.³⁵⁰ The last five lines are, almost uniquely, free composition, with no equivalent in the original. Juvenecus has added to his model two lines of homiletic explanation, followed by three similes, clearly inspired by the epic tradition though not by its standards full-blown ones.³⁵¹ No doubt this passage was a favourite for homiletic use, as might be inferred from an imaginative expansion of it by Lactantius.³⁵² But this venture was not

³⁴⁸ Colombi (1977a), 26.

³⁴⁹ See pp. 121–2.

³⁵⁰ In *per scrupera* Weyman (1975), 27–8 has noted a possible imitation of a contemporary poet, Optatianus Porphyrius.

³⁵¹ For their expression, cf. Vergil, *A.* 11. 600, 6. 335.

³⁵² Lactantius, *DI* 6. 4. 6–8 *via vero illa caelestis difficilis et clivosa proposita est vel spinis horrentibus aspera vel saxis extantibus impedita, ut cum summo labore ac pedum tritu cumque magna cadendi sollicitudine sit cuique gradiendum* ('But that heavenly way set before us is difficult and steep, rough with bristling thorns and blocked with

repeated, and if this passage (and in narrative, the equally untypical storm scene) betrays an ambition to write on a grander scale, it was kept under a tight rein. Elsewhere there is nothing more developed than the colourful portrayal of Elijah's translation (3. 265–7; cf. Matt. 16: 14) in the appearance (*simulatio*) of a fiery chariot, or the description at 1. 580–3 (cf. Matt. 6: 5) of hypocrites who pray in ostentatious ways, decked out with the rare adjectives *praetumidus* ('very arrogant', 1. 581) and *multifluus* ('freely flowing', 1. 582) which suggest a touch of satirical mock-epic. In another slightly extended passage (3. 669–71) one might detect a (not surprisingly) unique touch of humour in the idea of the rocks and animals—not mentioned in the original comment on moving mountains (Matt. 21: 21)—being briefly airborne: *sed montis celsa revelli | credentum verbo poterunt undisque profundi | cum silvis pariter saxisque ferisque recondi* ('but the lofty peaks of a mountain will be able to be torn up by the word of believers and cast into the waves of the deep together with their forests and rocks and wild beasts').

Juvencus' normal style falls somewhere in between the extremes of the passage quoted above (1. 679–89). Expansion off his own bat is rare, and so too, at the other extreme, is absolute literalness, for reasons discussed already. In the latter regard, it is not clear that any passages receive special treatment; although Roberts suggested that some kinds of passage, notably Old Testament prophecies, the Lord's Prayer, and certain material that follows it, are unusually faithful to the biblical text,³⁵³ they do not seem to stand out. Some prophecies are indeed closely rendered (but it is not in such passages alone that the original syntax may be recognized),³⁵⁴ while others are not: for example, at 1. 277 the prophetic words 'Out of Egypt I have called my son' (Matt. 2.15*b*) become 'my offspring will come, will come, from deep Egypt, a light and salvation to the world',³⁵⁵ with the typical addition of Juvencus' universalizing message of salvation.³⁵⁶ Neither

jutting rocks, so that each person has to proceed with the greatest effort and wear to his feet and with great anxiety about falling'). And at 9 *prona et declivis est eorum via* ('their path is easy and downhill').

³⁵³ Roberts (1985), 135–7 and n. 76.

³⁵⁴ A criterion used by Roberts in n. 76.

³⁵⁵ *veniet, veniet mea proles | Aegypto ex alta terris lumenque salusque.*

³⁵⁶ See pp. 103–4.

does the Lord's Prayer (1. 590–600; Matt. 6: 9–13) receive particular treatment, showing as it does a generous use of abstract nouns and changes of syntax and meaning to such phrases as 'lead us not into temptation', which becomes, 'may the tempting of the Devil be absent'.³⁵⁷

Juvenecus goes in for considerable restructuring and clarification in other places, for various purposes. Many of the examples of modal variation assembled by Roberts may be explained by a desire for variety and emotional effect, and to hold the reader's attention:³⁵⁸ sometimes Juvenecus introduces exclamations, especially with *quam* ('how...!') as at 2. 426, where the base-text has statements, and sometimes he imports rhetorical questions, as in 1. 634–6 *aeris spectemus aves; num...?*³⁵⁹ Roberts has also drawn attention to Juvenecus' tendency to give the main point in advance, as in the parable of the sower (2. 739–40).³⁶⁰ Here, as in 4. 169–70, where the extra words *nec cunctos ille sub una condicione premet* show how the second coming will not find all 'in a single situation' (cf. Matt. 24: 40), the purpose is to maximize clarity. This may be compared in its purpose to his habit of helping to define the structure and significance of an episode by reassembling or providing necessary information at the outset.³⁶¹ And just as Juvenecus likes to signal the function or circumstances of a passage in advance, so he likes to bring home a point at the end of a discourse, often using antithesis for this purpose. In 2. 635–6 each of two contrasting lines begins with *verborum meritis* ('by the deserts of your words'), and so too at 4. 304–5, where there is emphatic anaphora of *aeternum* ('for eternity'). At 4. 36–7 a paragraph is completed with a pair of lines that each end with the phrases *sumere mortem* and *prendere lucem* ('to undergo death'; 'to take on light'), making absolutely clear the vital difference.³⁶² An important point may be emphasized or summed up by antithesis, as in the pair of contrasting phrases *saxosus ager / spinosus*

³⁵⁷ *procul temptatio daemonis absit.*

³⁵⁸ Roberts (1985), 141–2.

³⁵⁹ 'let us look at the birds of the air; surely they do not...'

³⁶⁰ Roberts (1985), 162–3

³⁶¹ See p. 56.

³⁶² Cf. 4. 72–3, where successive lines end with the phrases *per ardua lucis* and (*saevae*) *ad consortia flammae* ('to the lofty realms of light' and 'to the company of (savage) fire').

ager ('rocky ground', 'thorny ground') at 2. 785–6, and in the contrast of *agitatio* (*iuris*) ('exercise (of justice)') and *damnatio* ('condemnation') at 2. 230–3, within clauses that are themselves syntactically similar. This kind of antithetical structure, very important to Juvencus' didactic purposes, will be used prolifically by Sedulius and other writers later, to bring out the significance and striking nature of Christ's miracles.

Sometimes Juvencus deems it necessary to step in to clarify the argument. The unexpected opening of Gabriel's speech to Zechariah at 1. 32–4 may be intended to give a clearer reason for Zechariah's being struck dumb: if it was a mortal that had addressed him, his hesitation would be understandable. It is almost as if Gabriel feels slighted, as a classical deity might. There is a notably difficult passage in 2. 697–712, corresponding to Matt. 12: 38–42, where Christ declares that the Jews will be judged in some sense by Jonah, the men of Nineveh, and the Queen of Sheba. It is not the names that are the problem—with the exception of Nineveh, Juvencus takes them in his stride—but the idea of condemnation. Juvencus helps our understanding by adding two relatively simple lines at 706 and 712 on the disdain and stubbornness of the current generation. A concern for clarity (or perhaps a poetical difficulty) may also account for the replacement of the vivid 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth' (Matt. 5: 38) with the line (1. 549) 'let a similar punishment follow one who does harm'. Emphasis or reinforcement of a central point is noticeable at 1. 706–7, where instead of Matthew's simple phrase 'on that day' (7: 22) there is a couplet describing the significance of the Day of Judgement, a prominent theme; and at 2. 590, where instead of Matthew's 'on the sabbath' (12: 11)—the nature of the sabbath itself is by this point quite clear to any reader—Juvencus uses the phrases *transibitis otia legis*.³⁶³ At a verbal level, Juvencus explains the unfamiliar verb of Matt. 5: 41 *et quicumque te angariaverit mille passus* by rephrasing it as *si te forte aliquis passus per mille iubebit (ire)* at 1. 555.³⁶⁴ Other cases need careful consideration. It is less likely that the mode of expression in 1. 167 *qui populis lucem mox laetitiamque propagat* ('who may spread light and joy to the peoples')

³⁶³ 'you will go beyond the leisure enjoined by the law.'

³⁶⁴ Both phrases mean 'if perhaps someone orders you to go a mile'.

is an attempt to explain the scriptural word *salvator* ('saviour'); as Röttger rightly argued, this would not be necessary.³⁶⁵ Other characteristically Christian usages do not as a rule receive such treatment, and this word was surely clear enough to any reader. The same must be true, *mutatis mutandis*, at 3. 706, where the aim of the poet's apparent gloss of the word *meretrices* must be to edify, since explanation would hardly be necessary. Perhaps Juvencus indulges in a kind of *figura etymologica*, linking it with the verb 'earn'.³⁶⁶ An explanatory intent need not be postulated for his periphrasis for *prophetare* at 1. 116, for the noun is common; on the other hand, the possibility of misunderstanding the nature of the Jewish office denoted by 'scribe' may underlie 1. 234. Roman *scribae* were different.

It is interesting to see how in presenting Jesus' short meeting with the scribe at 2. 12–18 (Matt. 8: 18–20) Juvencus replaces the question and answer of the original with a direct statement by Christ.³⁶⁷ Why he does so is not entirely clear; but polemical material is certainly present in 2: 18 *gentis sic sunt molimina vestrae*,³⁶⁸ as Christ blames the 'race' for his homelessness. There are a few places where Juvencus' version of a difficult passage diverges markedly from the original, as at 2. 729–32, where a literal translation would run: 'here with me my mother lives, and with me the bodies of my kin live. For any person by whom the father's will is fulfilled joins his own body with my blood, and is regarded as under the name of my mother and my kin.'³⁶⁹ This renders Matt. 12: 49–50 ('Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister and mother'). It is not obvious that an exegetical point is being made; the word 'blood' (though it could be taken more loosely as 'kinship') could be understood as referring to the Eucharist, but this is far from obvious—nor is it, as Herzog says, 'skilful'.³⁷⁰ The explanation that Juvencus simply finds the

³⁶⁵ Röttger (1996), 31–2.

³⁶⁶ See pp. 13–14.

³⁶⁷ Herzog (1975), 130. Herzog treats the scribe as a *Randfigur*, but it is noteworthy that Juvencus highlights the emotion of his plea.

³⁶⁸ 'such are the machinations of your race'.

³⁶⁹ *Hic mecum genitrix, mecum germana residunt | corpora nam patria expletur cuicumque voluntas, | ille meo proprium conectit sanguine corpus, | et matris generisque mei sub nomine habetur.*

³⁷⁰ Herzog (1975), 121.

notion difficult to rephrase is just as likely. Such occasional difficulty is notable with negative statements of the ‘not until...’, ‘not unless...’, ‘except...’, variety. Although these are at times perfectly well managed, as at 4. 159–160 (Matt. 24: 34), others are less precise, as at 1. 192–6, where the prophecy as Juvencus gives it is made to state that Simeon would die when he had seen the Lord rather than that he ‘should not see death until he had seen the Lord’s Christ’ (Luke 2: 26), and at 3. 31 (cf. Matt. 13: 57). Other examples are 2. 193–5 (avoiding ‘unless’); 3. 233–5 (avoiding ‘except’), 3. 314–5 (avoiding ‘until’).³⁷¹ At other times one suspects that he is uncertain of the meaning: for instance, at 3. 429 *sit tibi diversae multatus nomine gentis* (‘let him [one who despises the views of other church members] be punished with the name of a different race’), which renders Matt. 18: 17 *sit tibi sicut ethnicus et publicanus* (‘let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-collector’). The *publicanus* is omitted for metrical reasons,³⁷² but what remains is not entirely clear.³⁷³ But in spite of these exceptions Juvencus generally gives an impression of care, competence, and concern for his reader that one would expect of a writer who also planned his work so well.

Much attention has been paid recently to the question of exegesis in Juvencus. Fichtner and Colombi in particular have collected numerous individual passages where allusions to various kinds of explanatory material may be detected.³⁷⁴ It is certainly true that Juvencus is prepared to offer explanation or exegesis, at least on a small scale, although there are some fine judgements to be made. Should the apparent exegetical intervention sometimes be seen as poetic colouring, perhaps, or part of the general techniques of expansion and edification? Did he have a choice between pre-existing versions of exegesis? Was he aware that he is adopting one interpretation and not another? We may begin with a few simple examples,

³⁷¹ Problems of a different kind, perhaps deserving the attention of the textual critic, occur at 2. 683–4 (where the articulation of *quem* as interrogative might help, making the previous clause conditional) and 2. 538 *sed minor hoc caeli fiet sublimior aula*.

³⁷² Note the periphrasis for it at 2. 348–9, where the wording is condemnatory but perhaps also explanatory. Cf. p. 114.

³⁷³ For the Gentiles in Juvencus, see p. 111. See also p. 131, with nn. 545 and 546.

³⁷⁴ Colombi (1997a) and Fichtner (1994), 201–4.

which at least show a desire to explain. At 4. 409–10 Juvencus explains how Jesus could be at the house of Simon the leper: Jesus had healed him (cf. Matt. 26: 6).³⁷⁵ At 1. 738 the words *attactu solo* ('by his touch alone') make the manner of healing perfectly clear (Matt. 8: 3), unless they are simple elaboration (or conceivably there is an apologetic purpose: it was not magic). At 3. 328 (Matt. 17: 4) the tents that Peter proposes to make are described as *frondis* ('of leaves'); this unobtrusive addition recalls the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, and Juvencus is presumably alluding to this, although, unlike Sedulius and Arator, he seldom refers to the Old Testament except where Matthew had done so already. Less clear is a problem posed by the beginning of his account of the transfiguration (3. 316–7), where he rather untypically expands Matthew's notice (17: 1) of the passage of time ('after six days');³⁷⁶ one wonders if the unexpected emphasis is meant to draw attention—in a kind of exegesis by allusion—to Origen's interpretation of the six days as a reference to the six days of Creation.³⁷⁷ Juvencus has also been credited with some problem-solving, of which Flieger has brought to light two examples from the Passion narrative. At Matt. 26: 42 Juvencus solves the apparent contradiction within the phrase 'if this cup cannot pass unless I drink it' by ignoring the second clause (4. 503); and when rendering Matt. 26: 45–6, faced with the problem that the disciples who are told to sleep are then immediately told to get up,³⁷⁸ he renders the first point but omits the second.³⁷⁹ If Braun and Engel are correct about the problem of the two warnings to Mary and Joseph mentioned above,³⁸⁰ then Juvencus showed similar skill in negotiating problems concerned with reconciling the narratives of Matthew and Luke about the return from Egypt.

It is important to preserve a distinction between positive exegesis where Juvencus makes an active and conscious contribution—not necessarily, of course, an original one—and where he simply follows a tradition that is familiar to him. It is unlikely that he made a choice

³⁷⁵ This is the explanation later given by Jerome, *ad loc.*

³⁷⁶ *passus bis terna dierum | lumina converso terras transcurrere caelo* ('having allowed six spans of daylight to traverse the earth as the sky whirls round').

³⁷⁷ Origen, *ad loc.* (PG 13. 1065–8).

³⁷⁸ Modern versions make a question of the first part, since the Greek verb-form is ambiguous.

³⁷⁹ Flieger (1993), 80–2.

³⁸⁰ See pp. 24–5.

between alternatives when in 1. 511–18 he understood the biblical ‘adversary’ in Matt. 5: 25–6 as the body; this will have surprised many later readers, but was a common interpretation at the time, as the commentaries of Hilary and Jerome attest.³⁸¹ The detail that Judas hanged himself from a fig-tree (4. 631: cf. Matt. 27: 5) seems not to be recorded before Juvencus,³⁸² but may likewise have been familiar to him. On the other hand, Juvencus may well make a particular point at 1. 595 *vitalisque hodie sancti substantia panis* (‘and today the life-giving substance of holy bread’, Matt. 6: 11); with the epithet *vitalis*—an important epithet for him³⁸³—he surely means more than literal bread. Not only is he getting away from the Old Latin version (it has *cottidianum*, ‘daily’), but there may well be a Eucharistic allusion here, as Herzog and Colombi believe.³⁸⁴ One must also take into account the exigencies, or opportunities, of a poetic paraphrase; there may be places in which a particular choice is recommended, if not enforced, by the constraints of his medium, or at least where the discussion or qualification that he might ideally have wished to provide is not possible. Conversely, a word or phrase seemingly added by the poet might be chosen not for some theological purpose but because it fits. Care is needed, for example, in interpreting 1. 358 (*descendit ab alto spiritus aeriam simulans ex nube columbam* (‘the Spirit representing an airborne dove from out of a cloud (descends from on high)’),³⁸⁵ where poetic interpretation might be a more germane consideration than theological exactitude. He is not seeking to adjudicate between different readings of this datum. Moreover, an invaluable point was made by Röttger when he distinguished between implicit exegesis and explicit exegesis.³⁸⁶ As he said (on 1. 123–4, but the point is a general one), the text of Juvencus often reflects an exegetical tradition, but Juvencus is not commenting on it; the exegesis enters his narrative almost surreptitiously as the biblical matter is explained from the point of view of his own time. Careful

³⁸¹ Hilary (SC 254, 138), Jerome, *Comm. in Matt. ad loc.* (CCSL 77. 29. 573–80).

³⁸² Colombi (1997a), 32 and n. 40.

³⁸³ See pp. 20–1.

³⁸⁴ Herzog (1975), 121, Colombi (1997a), 19–20. See also Fichtner (1994), 126 and n. 467.

³⁸⁵ Fichtner (1994), 72–8.

³⁸⁶ Röttger (1996), 17–18.

judgement on the basis of what is said or left unsaid is indeed required in this matter.³⁸⁷ Modern scholars possess an ability to analyse nuances of interpretation enhanced by a long tradition of commentary, heresy-spotting, and systematizing which had barely begun in Juvencus' time.

The sources of the exegetical material present in Juvencus cannot be specified in any detail, but it is fairly clear, in spite of the obvious difficulty in specifying a particular source in any given case, and the great gaps in our knowledge,³⁸⁸ that he draws both on Origenist interpretations and on Latin traditions. No doubt he read and studied much (and perhaps his reading, as will be seen, included Greek);³⁸⁹ and the role of transmission by word of mouth, though totally unquantifiable, should not be ignored. The influence of Origen is clear in allegorical expressions such as *ures mentis* (2. 754) and *ures cordis* (2. 812, 3. 147): 'ears of the mind; ears of the heart', notwithstanding sporadic classical parallels to this kind of phrase, and probably too in the notion of the body as prison (1. 192, 1. 202–3).³⁹⁰ Particular details from the temptation story—the Devil's envy, the occurrence of many temptations, the absence of the notion that Christ was led (1. 364–408)—are anticipated by Origen and presumably derive from sections of his commentary now lost, as Fichtner has suggested,³⁹¹ while Flieger has listed various similarities to Origen within the passage 4. 478–565.³⁹² Details that originated with Origen could of course have been mediated in Latin works, and not necessarily exegetical ones. In 4. 528, for example, Flieger finds parallels to the phrase *caelestia castra* not only in Origen but also in Lactantius (*De Mortibus* 16. 9); Lactantius' context is different, but his Latin phrase might have appealed to Juvencus.³⁹³ No doubt Juvencus used various Latin commentators, too; our evidence for them is sadly defective (Tertullian and Cyprian are not commentators), but they

³⁸⁷ Fichtner (1994), 203–4.

³⁸⁸ Only a part of Origen's commentary on Matthew (on ch. 13–22) has survived; the later Latin translation is of little value for our present purpose. For other commentators see pp. 234–5.

³⁸⁹ See p. 385 (App. 1).

³⁹⁰ Colombi (1997a), 18–19.

³⁹¹ Fichtner (1994), 92–5; see also 220.

³⁹² Flieger (1993), 219–20.

³⁹³ *Ibid.* 131–2.

were numerous, as Hilary and others attest. Orbán has argued that Juvencus was a major influence on Hilary, but much of the material that he adduces—and his parallels are not always particularly close—is likely to come from earlier commentators known to both.³⁹⁴ A section of Colombi's useful article attributes a number of interpretations to the poet himself, but these cannot be confirmed.³⁹⁵ It would be unwise to attribute to Juvencus himself an important role in the development of scriptural exegesis. In this perspective his contribution is perhaps summed up by Jerome's solitary quotation of 1. 250 *tus, aurum, murram regique hominique deoque* ('incense, gold, myrrh, for the king, the man and the god': cf. Matt. 2: 11).³⁹⁶ The point is not likely to be original—Colombi indicates possible sources in Irenaeus, Origen, and Tertullian, and comments that Jerome could have made the point through Hilary³⁹⁷—but rather owes its citation to its mode of expression. Poetically attractive, and neatly mnemonic, it is a sign that the horizon of reception was more than purely theological, as Herzog contended.

In the words of Widmann, in his still useful study of Juvencus, *certat poeta cum theologo*: the poet vies with the theologian.³⁹⁸ Having seen in the last few pages something of the theologian, we should now ask whether the poet is present in this sphere of Christian teaching, as so evidently elsewhere. To what extent does Juvencus seek to give colourful expansion, with or without palpable classical assistance, to specifically Christian notions, as his successors will do?

One might expect vivid colouring in descriptions of heaven and hell, for which the gospels offer various opportunities. The most vivid is perhaps 4. 284–7:

at vos, iniusti, iustis succedite flammis,
et poenis semper mentem torrete malignam,
quas pater horrendis³⁹⁹ barathri per stagna profundis
daemonis horrendi sociis ipsique paravit.

³⁹⁴ Orbán (1995). The similarities with Hilary are also studied by Colombi (1977a), 22–6.

³⁹⁵ Colombi (1997a), 28–36.

³⁹⁶ Jerome, *Comm. in Matt.*, *ad loc.* (CCSL 77. 146–7).

³⁹⁷ Colombi (1997a) 15–16.

³⁹⁸ Widmann (1905).

³⁹⁹ The repetition betrays an error in the manuscripts as seen by Hays (1998).

but you, unjust ones, go down to the just flames, and for ever sear your wicked minds in the punishments which the father has prepared for the devil and his fellows in horrific deeps among the pools of the lower world.

Compared with the original, at Matt. 25: 41 *discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem aeternum, quem paravit pater meus diabolo et angelis eius* ('go away from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire that my father has prepared for the devil and his angels'), Juvenecus has in effect added two lines, one concentrating on the punitive, mental pains of hell and one elaborating the place of punishment, with touches of Vergil's Tartarus. He uses the classical word *barathrum* again in 4. 67–8,⁴⁰⁰ where there is also a distinction (as often) between sinking into *barathrum* and rising into *aethra*. In 1. 758–60 the horrors of the outer darkness, where men will weep and gnash their teeth, are intensified with Vergil's *horrendum stridens* (A. 6. 288). In 2. 629–30 the adjective *irrevocatis* (with *supplicis*, 'irrevocable punishments') from Statius⁴⁰¹ gives its solemn weight, enhanced by its position at the end of the line, to the proposition that there will be no forgiveness, 'either in this age or the age to come' (Matt. 12: 32). The word suggests Lucretius' *irrevocabilis*, while the tone in the context of hell is Vergilian. In a contrast of heaven and hell, where for once heaven is more vividly presented (3. 13–16, cf. Matt. 13: 41–3), there is an imitation of the Vergilian *secretosque pios* (A. 8. 670) in line 15 *secretisque piis veniet lux aurea vitae*⁴⁰² For once the word *pius* replaces Matthew's *iusti*, popular as that is with Juvenecus.⁴⁰³

There is a wealth of descriptions and titles for God—a constellation of familiar expressions, poetic phraseology, and striking innovations. The common classical words which carry no particular overtones, *deus*, *dominus*, *genitor*, *pater*, and *parens*, are all frequent. *numen*, which some later poets preferred to use,⁴⁰⁴ is found exclusively in the first half of Book 1—an interesting restriction, perhaps to be explained by the fact that Christ has not yet begun to reveal God more fully—and combined with *supernum* at 45 and *altum* at 1. 89.

⁴⁰⁰ Of the underworld in Statius, *Theb.* 1. 85, Valerius Flaccus 2. 192.

⁴⁰¹ Statius, *Theb.* 7.773, *Ach.* 1. 791.

⁴⁰² 'and the golden light of life will come to the holy, in a place apart'.

⁴⁰³ Cf. pp. 121–2.

⁴⁰⁴ Green (1973).

For the OL expressions *altissimi* and *in altissimis*, which are unmetrical, there is the new coinage *altithronus*, which appears in 2. 62 and 3. 409, and also in the Preface (24), while *supremus* is used at 1. 72 (Luke 1: 35) and 173 (Luke 2: 14). The biblical phrase *scrutator (cordis)*, especially relevant there, is used at 1. 579; the Vergilian *repertor* and *rector* once each, at 1. 35 and 4. 502 respectively.⁴⁰⁵ The classicizing *tonans* is found at 2. 795, 4. 553,⁴⁰⁶ and 4. 672 and 786, in the first case spoken by Christ himself. More expansive, and inventive, for they do not reflect their originals, are *immensi dominus mundi* ('Lord of the immense world') (1. 97) and soon afterwards *astrorum et terrae, pontique hominumque parenti* ('to the father of the stars and the earth, of the sea and of humankind') at 1. 118, where Lucan's Stoic *parens*, with *rerum* (2. 7) is made to govern a universalizing expression of the type characteristic of Vergil.

There is an even greater array of names and descriptions for Christ, the protagonist. As well as 'Son of God' (e.g. 4. 713) and 'Son of man' (Juvencus uses this term frequently, with various words for 'son': *filius, natus, progenies, suboles*) and the single terms *sanctus, magister, servator, salvator*, there is a remarkable variety of titles, usually fitted to context, as in the dialogue with the Samaritan woman in 2. 243–300.⁴⁰⁷ They are in themselves an important vehicle of teaching and edification; and rather than being 'edificatory constants' rigidly attached to their context, as Herzog claimed,⁴⁰⁸ they are more often than not carefully matched to it. At 2.405 Jesus is 'conqueror of death and discoverer of life' (*leti victor vitaeque repertor*), when he raises the ruler's daughter at Matt. 9: 25;⁴⁰⁹ at 2. 568 he is 'fulfiller of the Law' (*legum completor*), in the context of the sabbath, at Matt. 12: 1–8. With unexpected elaboration, perhaps, he is addressed by the demoniac of Mark 5: 7, with a Vergilian touch,⁴¹⁰ as *regnantis semper domini certissima proles* ('most certain offspring of the Lord who

⁴⁰⁵ Cf. Vergil's *hominum rerumque repertor* (A. 12. 829: creator of gods and men) with Juvencus' (*dominus caeli*) *terraeque repertor* ([lord of Heaven] and 'creator of the earth') at 1. 35.

⁴⁰⁶ Qualified by *summi* ('the supreme'), as in Valerius Flaccus 2. 560.

⁴⁰⁷ Cf. pp. 82–3.

⁴⁰⁸ Herzog (1975), 132.

⁴⁰⁹ Cf. *lucis vitaeque repertor* ('author of light and life'), at 4. 479, as his own death approaches.

⁴¹⁰ Cf. Vergil, A. 6. 322 *deum certissima proles*.

reigns for ever') at 2. 55, and by the father of the epileptic (Matt. 17: 15) as *Davidis suboles, hominum lumenque salusque* ('offspring of David, light and salvation of mankind') at 3. 356. Other titles are *terrarum gloria* (2. 134, added to John 2: 4, in the context of turning water into wine); *doctor (lucis)* ('teacher of light', 3. 109, an addition to Matt. 14: 27); ⁴¹¹ *sator aeternae . . . vitae* ('sower of eternal life' at 3. 161, cf. Matt. 15: 16); and there is a notable cluster in 3. 503, 521, and 530, as Christ replies to one who has asked him how to gain eternal life (Matt. 19: 16–22). By contrast, the range of descriptions of his adversary, the Devil, is much more restricted. There is no *diabolus* or *zabulus*, no Beelzebul or Satanus; Juvencus adheres to the word *daemon*, perhaps to encourage a single-minded focus on the enemy. The demoniac named Legion testifies to one evil being, *vis sola nocendi* (2. 59), which recalls the *mille nocendi artes* (Vergil, A. 7. 338) of Juno's hellish instrument Allecto. The Devil is also seen as a serpent with *venenum* (poison), as in 1. 547 *vis tetra veneni* ('the hideous might of poison') and 3. 369. The Ovidian epithet *venenifer* (M. 3. 85) is used at 2. 631. The Devil shows *livor* (envy, 1. 366 and 384) and is possessed of *vis horrida* ('awful energy', 3. 8), and may perhaps be seen behind 2. 539–40, where *vis* ('force') is arrayed against *regia caeli*, and *violentia* ('violence') against *caeli regnum*. The paraphrase here is fairly literal, but the words also have an Augustan tone.

Turning briefly to survey theological concepts in general, we see that Juvencus varies his expression, but does not avoid the commonest words or usages. (Note *credo* with *in* ('I believe in'), a specifically Christian coinage, at 4. 350.) For 'sin' he uses *error*, *peccatum*, and *scelus*; for 'forgive', *remitto*, *dimitto*, *dono*, *cedo*, *redimo*, *absolvo*; for 'pray' (to God), he uses *oro*, *precor*, and *rogo*. In expressing the vital concept of faith Juvencus shows considerable variety, with occasional elaboration. His normal word is the biblical *fides*, sometimes replaced by or combined with *constantia* (2.80, 395) or *robur*, as in 3. 191 and 4. 383. Notable expansions are at 3. 534 (*Petrus*) *fidei munitus moenibus* ('fortified by the defences of faith', Matt. 19: 27, an addition in keeping with the common descriptions of Peter),⁴¹² and 2. 220–3,

⁴¹¹ For this title, which is puzzling in its context, see Röttger (1996), 108–9.

⁴¹² See p. 43.

a finely developed piece of writing which, without any particularly close allusion, calls to mind classical idiom in various ways:

ut quicumque fidem mentis penetrabilibus altis
illius ad nomen statuit, sub turbine saeculi
proculcet pedibus letum et trans sidera surgens
sublimis capiat donum inviolabile vitae.

so that whoever has established faith on his name in the inner depths of their mind will trample death underfoot in the whirlwind of this age and arising through the stars will receive the imperishable gift of life.⁴¹³

We should also notice the development of a language of devotion in the variety of words for the Cross: *arbor* (4. 662), *lignum* (4. 654 and 681), *stipes* (4. 700);⁴¹⁴ and Juvencus plays some part, as Roberts rightly says, in the creation of a series of periphrases for recurrent Christian activities and concepts that later poets will use freely, phrases like *dona salutis* ('gift(s) of salvation') which accord with 'traditional criteria of poetic excellence'.⁴¹⁵

Juvencus' Christian vocabulary, then, is highly inclusive. Epic expressions are common, but not chosen to the detriment of ordinary Christian usages. This last point is an important one to make, given the thesis of Christine Mohrmann, who declared that Christian poetry sought to avoid everything, especially Christian expressions, that could destroy the illusion of classical poetry. In an article based upon a survey of short passages from various Christian writers (for Juvencus she chose 1. 10–13), Mohrmann claimed to have demonstrated a tendency in Juvencus, as in other early Christian poets, to avoid the familiar terms of Christian belief and practice.⁴¹⁶ Points already made suggest that this influential thesis—Herzog attributes to Juvencus a rigorous replacement of Christian *Sondersprache*⁴¹⁷—requires careful reconsideration. There are certainly numerous words integral to the narratives and teaching of the gospels which do not

⁴¹³ *Ut omnis qui credit (crediderit) in eum non pereat sed habeat vitam aeternam* ('so that every one who believes in him should not perish but have eternal life', John 3: 16).

⁴¹⁴ Roberts (1985), 200.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.* 152.

⁴¹⁶ Mohrmann (1958), criticized in another respect by Green (1973).

⁴¹⁷ Herzog (1989), 333.

appear in Juvenecus, of which a conservative list should include the following: *angelus*, *baptizo*, *benedico*, *blasphemo*, *ecclesia*, *elemosyna*, *ethnicus*, *evangelizo*, *hypocrita*, *misericordia*, *paenitentia*, *parabola*, *scandalizo*, *scandalum*, *synagoga*. The list might be extended to include such words as *caro* in the sense ‘flesh’, *mysterium* (‘mystery’), *phantasma* (‘ghost’); and there is also a surprising dearth, relative to the OL and other Christian prose, of verbs in *-fico*, with the single exception of *sanctifico*.⁴¹⁸ Many of these create insuperable metrical problems—*elemosyna*, *evangelizo*, *hypocrita*, *misericordia*, *paenitentia*,⁴¹⁹ *parabola*, *scandalizo*—for Juvenecus is not one to distort accepted prosody, either in Latin words⁴²⁰ or in Greek words, which he uses quite often.⁴²¹ Metre is a potential problem also with *angelus*, *ecclesia*, *ethnicus*, for in some grammatical cases they cannot be used in the hexameter; but this problem is easy to solve by keeping to the nominative singular, at least for the first two.⁴²² It is not, however, a metrical difficulty that causes him to use *nuntius* for *angelus* at 1. 12, 57, 67, 79, 161 or 4. 747, and *minister* at 1. 52.⁴²³ *Ecclesia* (which occurs only twice in the relevant OL portions) is easy to use in the nominative singular, and this could have been done at 3. 281 (Matt. 16: 18), but *domus* is preferred, and, with synonymic amplification, *aedes* in the preceding line.⁴²⁴ The verbs *baptizo* and *blasphemo* pose no obvious metrical problems, and the same is true of the word *benedico*, and its participle *benedictus* (‘blessed’). The verb *scandalizo* might have been avoided by a periphrasis involving *scandalum*, but this is not done. Finally, *synagoga*, commoner in fact than *ecclesia*, though not metrically problematic, is replaced by *conventiculum* at 2. 583, and at other times omitted.

Juvenecus does not avoid Greek words as such, for his work contains several, nor does he feel any embarrassment with them; the

⁴¹⁸ 1. 591 and 4. 450. See Burton (2000), 134–5.

⁴¹⁹ Often avoided by *paenitet*; for *misericordia*, cf. p. 40.

⁴²⁰ Hatfield (1890), 35–7, Huemer’s edn. index s.v. *metrica et prosodica*.

⁴²¹ Flury (1968).

⁴²² The plural notion ‘Gentiles’ can hardly be expressed using the singular of *ethnicus*.

⁴²³ Note also *custodes* (‘guardians’) at 3. 408, and *sociis* (‘fellows’, ‘accomplices’) at 4. 287 of bad angels.

⁴²⁴ At 3. 426 *concilium* (*plenum*) replaces it; perhaps a church council seemed a better idea at this point (Matt. 18: 17).

attempt by Flury to show that he tries to heighten the tone of words such as *lepra* or *alabastrum* is unconvincing.⁴²⁵ It certainly does not apply to the two Greek words that he uses very commonly, *daemon* and *propheta*. An aversion to Greek words cannot be the explanation; and *benedico* is not Greek. Nor does Juvencus make a practice of avoiding words which are common or familiar in Christian diction; witness the use of *oro* of prayer to the deity at 1. 591, 2. 288, and 4. 502 and the regular appearance of *fides*, *credo*, *peccatum*, mentioned above. There are occasional ‘Christianisms’ such as *lucror* (‘I gain’, 3. 422) and *ructo* (‘I utter’, 2. 828). These are admitted in spite of the fact that in some respects Juvencus aims at an elevated register, using *cerno* as often as *video* for ‘see’, for example, and *remeo* twice as often as *redeo* for ‘return’.⁴²⁶ Nor can the explanation be that the above words were seen as technical, and so inapplicable to epic,⁴²⁷ for we meet words such as *sabbata* and *pascha*, and, as already seen, many words integral to Christian belief.⁴²⁸ Since these general explanations are inadequate, it is necessary to consider each word individually.

Angelus: At the point where the word ‘angel’ is first required, there is considerable epic colour (e.g. at 1. 16–17 and 42), and Flury’s ‘purist tendency’, derived from Mohrmann, a tendency to maintain a level of diction in keeping with classical epic,⁴²⁹ may be operating here; but it is difficult to see why this common word should be avoided when *daemon* and *propheta* are not.⁴³⁰ Perhaps Juvencus set out with ‘purist’ intentions that he could not systematically maintain; but if so, he chose to retain his embargo on the word, frequent in the early narratives, right up to 4. 747. There is hardly likely to be a theological problem about *angelus*—there is no shadow of doubt that the angel is a ‘good’ angel in such a context—and it is doubtful that the term was in any way likely to be misunderstood.

⁴²⁵ Flury (1968), 39–40.

⁴²⁶ Words such as *vado* (‘I go’) and *edo/manduco* (‘I eat’) are also avoided, usually by periphrases.

⁴²⁷ For a study of technical words in general see Langslow (1999).

⁴²⁸ Simonetti Abbolito (1985) gathers a large number of words under this head.

⁴²⁹ Its replacement *nuntius* is not especially epic in this sense.

⁴³⁰ For *propheta* there was an alternative, fully classical, poetic, and metrically unproblematic term in *vates*, which Juvencus also uses a number of times in this sense (and also for ‘priest’).

Baptizo: Where one might expect this word there are paraphrases, using *lavacra* as in the very full periphrasis at 1. 310–12, and verbs for ‘wash’ at 1. 312, 338, 340, and 361 (*abluere*) and 3. 680 (*lavere*) and 4. 795–6 (both). *Baptismus*, like *baptizo*, does not appear; *Baptista* (‘the Baptist’) occurs once (2. 541). The use of the periphrasis when the notion first appears need not indicate that the term is thought to need explanation; perhaps Juvencus is taking the opportunity, as often, to add edifying detail. The word seems to have been in general use, and the glossing of it in Lactantius and Cyprian does not seem to be a sign of unintelligibility.⁴³¹ Before them Tertullian, also an African, had used *baptizare* and *baptismus*, but he also frequently used the verb *tingere* for ‘baptize’. No doubt the reception of Christian terms varied by period and locality, but in this case we are not restricted to Africa, from which so much evidence of Christian Latin derives. There is interesting data from Spain, and indeed early fourth-century Spain. Both *lavacrum* and *baptismus* are found in the canons of the Council of Elvira:⁴³² we find the phrases *post fidem baptismi salutaris* and *post fidem lavacri et regenerationis* in canons 1 and 2 respectively (but the heading in both cases includes the word *baptismus*), and both are used later (*lavacrum* in 10, *baptismus* in 11). It is impossible to divine a reason for these choices; they might simply indicate the preferences of their individual drafters or individual churches. Perhaps Juvencus found himself with an evenly balanced choice; his use of *Baptista* mentioned above might be taken to indicate that purism, in the sense of a preference for an expression that was not Greek, is not operative. The verb *baptizo* is, metrically speaking, a little more clumsy in most of its forms than the verbs mentioned above, which also gave the opportunity for elaborating the notion of cleansing from sin.

⁴³¹ Cyprian, *Ep.* 74. 6 *baptismo, id est lavacro* (but both words are frequent in this and other letters), Lactantius, *DI* 4. 15. 2 *baptismo, id est purifici roris perfusione*—a very flowery expression.

⁴³² Since Meigne (1975) argues that canons from other councils have been confused with the genuine canons of Elvira, the examples used above are taken from those that he deems certainly authentic. The canons in his group B (perhaps from Arles) also show variation (*lavacrum* in the headings of 30 and 31, *baptizatio* in 37, 38, 39, 42, 48).

Benedico, benedictus: This word is used some eleven times in the relevant parts of Matthew and Luke; in about one-half of these cases the notion, and sometimes the passage, is omitted by Juvencus, and in the others a synonym or periphrasis is given. So *felix... felicem* at 1. 86–7 (cf. Luke 1. 42), *sit gloria laeta* at 3. 640 (cf. Matt. 21: 9) and uses of the verb *precor* at 3. 85 (cf. Matt. 14: 19) and 4. 447 (Matt. 26: 26). There is no doubt that it is consciously avoided, and the reason may be that the Christian use of the word marked it out as different, but not so different that confusion might not occur. The biblical uses of the verb, which takes a direct object, refer to blessing God, and blessing bread, as well as blessing people, in contrast to classical senses of the word, which (with a noun in the dative case) meant ‘speak well of’, ‘praise’. The fact that, as Burton observes, it is rare after the republican period, and so can be classified as a revival in the Old Latin,⁴³³ should not have militated against Juvencus’ acceptance of it. Considerations of tone and register might also be relevant, though Juvencus’ readiness to use the word *peccatum*, a comparable word in that it lay outside the epic register and had changed its meaning but slightly in the Christian contexts, suggests not.

Blasphemo: this word, which might have been used on at least five occasions, is replaced by various expressions. Flury distinguishes a ‘milder’ sense in Juvencus at 2. 83–4 and 4. 562–3, where his enemies are complaining that Christ is ‘blaspheming’ (Matt. 9: 3 and 26: 65), from a stronger one, at 4. 668–9 (Matt. 27: 39), where passers-by rail at the crucified Christ. At 2. 623–5 (cf. Matt. 12: 31) Juvencus uses a very strong paraphrase for blasphemy against the Spirit,⁴³⁴ but denotes other blasphemies with the word *error* (‘sin’), and at 3. 172 (cf. Matt. 15: 19) he talks of *rapidae caelum pulsans vesania vocis*.⁴³⁵ The fact that he makes these careful distinctions does not mean that he avoided the word because he thought it ambiguous; but perhaps he thought that his expression would be more meaningful, and that he could make the sense more vivid (or, in the case of the complaints about Christ, milder) if he used periphrases. He may also have thought the word, like *baptizo*, rather cumbersome to use, since in

⁴³³ Burton (2000), 131–2.

⁴³⁴ *tantum ne spiritus umquam | vocibus insana laceretur mente profusis* (‘as long as the Spirit is not abused with words poured forth from an insane mind’).

⁴³⁵ ‘madness of the volatile voice that insults heaven’.

most forms it has at least four syllables. Avoiding it again gave the opportunity to elaborate usefully.

It seems that no single explanation will account for the absence of those words which were not excluded by metre. If there is a 'purist tendency' it is not very pronounced, but it may be a contributing factor. It would explain the absence of verbs in *-fico* such as *magnifico*, *honorifico*, calques which appear in the relevant parts of the Old Latin⁴³⁶ and ought to have been very useful in hexameter verse.⁴³⁷ But one must be wary of extending such an explanation too far; the absence of *ecclesia*, for example, may signify simply that in one passage, perhaps because of its perceived great importance, a periphrasis was preferred. Greekness in itself is not a factor, though many Greek words come into the category of Christianisms; and it does not seem that intelligibility is a problem, except perhaps in the case of *benedico*.

JEWES AND ROMANS

A prominent feature of epic, especially triumphalist epic such as the *Aeneid*, is the use of universalizing expressions, showing that the stage of the narrative is the whole world. In Juvencus, too, the worldwide claims of Christianity are very prominent. Among the most frequent additions made by him are expressions such as *terrae*, *homines*, *populi*, referring to the whole world or its inhabitants. They are conspicuous, as we have seen, in the multiplicity of titles that he devises for Christ (e.g. *terrarum lumen*, 'light of the earth', 2. 75), but there are many examples elsewhere, notably in the early narratives. In 1. 58 the salutation received by Mary runs *salve, progenie terras iutura salubri* ('Hail, you who will aid the world with your saving child'); in 1. 70–1, as Gabriel reassures her about the manner of his birth, it is stated that the noble child will be born for the peoples (*magnificum gigni populis*); in 1. 232 the divinity whom the Magi are seeking is

⁴³⁶ Burton (2000), 133–5.

⁴³⁷ Mary's song at 96–102 begins not with the word *Magnificat*, from which it takes its name, but with the adjective *Magnificas*.

exortum terris ('risen on earth'), rather than, as in Matt. 2: 2, a king of the Jews. At 1. 277 the word *terris* is one of the additions to the simple prophecy *ex Aegypto vocavi filium meum* ('out of Egypt I have called my son', Matt. 2: 15) that was quoted earlier (p. 86). This change of focus is not total: Zechariah's speech keeps its national focus at 1. 120 *en beat antiquam gentem* ('lo, he makes happy the old race', Luke 1: 68), and at 1.127 *populum* is to be similarly explained. The prophecy about Bethlehem in Matt. 2: 6 does not lose its strongly national tone in 1. 238–40 (note *sacram... plebem | Istrahelitarum*, 'the holy people of the Israelites'). Both perspectives are retained at 1. 206–7 (Luke 2: 32),⁴³⁸ and at 2. 119–20 Christ is called by Nathaniel both *rex inclite gentis* ('famous king of your race') and *tu populis manifesta salus* ('you the clear salvation for the peoples'). The original (John 1: 49) has *tu es filius dei, tu es rex Israel* ('you are the son of God, you are the king of Israel'). Juvencus, then, does not eliminate or dilute references to Jesus as the saviour of Israel, but adds in many places that he also has a mission to the world.

The question of Juvencus' attitude to the Jewish people and Jewish culture has attracted much study and debate. According to Marold,⁴³⁹ the long genealogy that begins the gospel of Matthew was omitted by Juvencus in order to conceal the fact that Jesus was a Jew from Roman readers; realizing the obvious objection that this material was virtually impossible to reproduce in verse, and apparently oblivious of passages such as 1. 121 and 3. 356, where Jesus' descent is clearly shown, Marold nonetheless maintained that he had identified the 'inneren Grund' of his work. He links this, again implausibly, with the omission of Matt. 11: 16–24, which, he claimed, refers to Jewish expectations of the Messiah. The notion of *Entjudaisierung* was introduced by Herzog.⁴⁴⁰ At the stylistic level, it is a renegotiation of certain idiomatic features, or *Applanierung*,⁴⁴¹ that is, the removal of material that was not understood or was deemed foreign to the poet's purpose, while at the theological level it is an attempt by the poet to 'Christianize' his material by replacing the national

⁴³⁸ On this difficult couplet, see Röttger (1996), 32–43.

⁴³⁹ Marold (1890).

⁴⁴⁰ Herzog (1975), 111–15.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.* 112 and n. 232.

orientation with explicitly Christian concerns. It is perhaps unfortunate that Herzog did not cite more examples: in the passage 1. 117–24, he argued that Zechariah's prophecy, addressed in its Juvencan form not to the 'Lord God of Israel' but to the 'father of the stars and the earth, of sea and mankind',⁴⁴² is made to fit Christian horizons, and this is certainly a good example of the point made above; but it is notable that the notion of *antiqua gens* (see above) is retained, even if it does take on a reference to the Christian elect as well. Herzog did not comment on the fact that the striking notion of the 'horn of David' in this passage is also retained.⁴⁴³ Kirsch cites three short passages in support of Herzog's perspective.⁴⁴⁴

A few years after Herzog wrote, a very detailed monograph by Poinsothe aimed to demonstrate, with a wealth of detail and forceful argumentation, that Juvenus' work is a polemic against the Jews, systematically and insidiously anti-Semitic.⁴⁴⁵ One of his claims was taken up by Orbán, who in a brief study of Juvenus' rendering of the first chapter of Luke⁴⁴⁶ reiterated Poinsothe's contention that the characters are removed from their Jewish context, and concluded that the poet's aim was to eliminate the Jewish background as far as possible. A similar but milder tone was taken by Hilhorst, who in his study of one particular episode, the passage where Christ expels the money-changers from the temple, argued that Juvenus was more strident in his condemnations than Matthew, and ascribed this not to a virulent personal hatred but to an anti-Semitism 'learnt at his mother's knee, in a tradition ultimately going back to the New Testament'.⁴⁴⁷ It would not be surprising if attitudes of this kind were held by a priest in early fourth-century Spain; Poinsothe showed that Jewish communities were numerous in Baetica, at least at a later date.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴² *astrorum et terrae, pontique hominumque parenti.*

⁴⁴³ 1. 120–1 *cornuque salutis | erecto indulget Davidis origine lumen*; for interpretation, see Röttger (1996), 11–15.

⁴⁴⁴ Kirsch (1989), 114. His points are that at 2. 246 Juvenus omits the reference to Jacob (John 4: 6); that at 2. 180 he replaces *Rabbi* (John 3: 2) by *Sancte*; and that he makes no reference to the objection that the name John would be new to the family (Luke 1: 61).

⁴⁴⁵ Poinsothe (1979).

⁴⁴⁶ Orbán (1992).

⁴⁴⁷ Hilhorst (1993), 68.

⁴⁴⁸ Poinsothe (1979), 23.

Measures against the Jews are certainly attested in the time of Constantine.⁴⁴⁹ But the question of Juvencus' stance is not a straightforward one, and certainly not as clear cut as it is in the cases of Sedulius and Arator.⁴⁵⁰ A vast amount of evidence has been assembled and investigated, but it will be useful to see this against the picture of Juvencus' methods that has emerged in the course of this study. It is also of course pertinent to consider if Juvencus is independent of his sources, especially Matthew, in this matter. So does he go to especial lengths to attack the Jews or to put them in an invidious light, and does he seek to remove or reduce the Jewish background of the gospels?

A major feature of Poinssotte's case is Juvencus' treatment of Jewish names, and his claims here are backed up with careful tabulations of the numbers of Jewish names present in the gospel passages used by Juvencus and of those actually reproduced in the paraphrase. Simple totals or proportions are in themselves unhelpful; it is more useful to look for patterns in his choices, and to suggest reasons. In the case of the New Testament there are some passages, though shorter than the genealogical passage of Matthew mentioned above (1: 1–17), that have accumulations of names virtually impossible to reproduce, notably the list of office-bearers in Luke 3: 1–2, with seven personal names and five place-names, and Matt. 10: 1–4, the list of Jesus' disciples. In various other contexts Juvencus names eight disciples, in ones or twos,⁴⁵¹ but to include all twelve at once, together with the necessary distinguishing names, was not an option. On the other hand he goes to some lengths to fit in the names of Simon Peter and Andrew, and John and James and their father Zebedee (1. 421–34).⁴⁵² Elsewhere the names Simeon and Anna are used, but not the names of Phanuel, Anna's father, Nicodemus, and (Mary) Magdalene: metrical considerations are presumably uppermost here.

The same point must be made for place-names: clusters are a problem, and individual names may be. But at 1. 413–15 we find

⁴⁴⁹ Gaudemet (1958), 625–8, Jones (1973), 92–3 and 944–50.

⁴⁵⁰ See p. 203 and pp. 316–17.

⁴⁵¹ Never mentioned are Bartholomew, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean.

⁴⁵² In 1. 430 *post fratres Iacobum Iohannemque marinis*, there is no central caesura; *Iacobum* (*pace* Huemer) must be three long syllables (cf. 2. 245), as *Iohannes* regularly is.

terra Zabulonum et regionis Naptala nomen ('land of Zabulon and the region named Naptala', Matt. 4: 15 *terra Zabulon et terra Neptalim*) with *Gaililaea* and *Iordanes* closely following. The name of Galilee, frequent in the narrative, is sometimes omitted—nothing in Juvenecus corresponds to Matt. 4: 12–13, in which Christ leaves Galilee for Nazareth and Capernaum—and at 1. 421 the sea of Galilee is rendered simply by *ponti per litora* ('by the shores of the sea'). In 1. 448–51 all the names of Matt. 4: 25 are given except that of Decapolis; in 3. 238 (*arva Philipporum*) and 3. 258 (*clara Philippaeo quae pollut nomine rura*, 'the noble country which rejoices in the name of Philip') the city of Caesarea Philippi is mentioned in periphrases.⁴⁵³ The name *Cafarnaum* is present at 3. 381 (cf. Matt. 17: 24), but there is nothing corresponding to Matt. 8: 5, where it is also mentioned; we are meant to infer from the verb *recedenti* ('going back') in 1. 741 that Christ was returning to his home in Capernaum, specified in 1. 411 simply as Zabulon. On the journey to Jerusalem Juvenecus avoids the names of Jericho (Matt. 20: 29) and Bethphage (Matt 21: 1) but describes the Mount of Olives at 3. 622–3 and again at 4. 91. The names of Gethsemane (4. 478) and Golgotha (4. 657) appear, but not that of Acheldemach; there is only a version of Matthew's paraphrase of the name at 27: 8 (4. 635–6). Jerusalem itself is mentioned a number of times, as *Solymi*. When the temple is mentioned *tout court*, as at 1. 189, this is surely not a sign of a disembodied narrative, still less a disrespectful one, but rather an acknowledgement of the temple *par excellence*. Nothing is said by Juvenecus of the Feast of Purification (John 2: 6), or of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Matt. 26: 17) or the Feast of Preparation (Matt. 27: 62). As we shall see, Juvenecus is not averse to contextualizing Jewish practices where necessary, but presumably decided that these were relatively minor details which in view of their metrical difficulty and unimportance to their particular narratives might be sidestepped.

Intensive attention has also been paid, from various aspects, to study of Juvenecus' treatment in 1. 1–132 of the first chapter of Luke, where the Jewish background is particularly rich and prominent.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵³ Opelt (1975), 195–6. The first of these shows a misunderstanding of the name *Philippi*, as if it were a tribal name ('the lands of the Philippi').

⁴⁵⁴ Poinssotte (1979), 58–69, Kirsch (1989), 105–10, Orbán (1992), Thraede (1993).

It is certainly possible to find omissions, but it seems improbable that they amount to a systematic policy of playing down the importance of Jesus' Jewish background. There is, indeed, no attempt to present a genealogy of Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth, but nothing except concern for literary design should be seen in the omission of Elizabeth's name (which appears later at 82).⁴⁵⁵ And although he does not exactly say that the priest had been chosen by lot,⁴⁵⁶ Juvencus has clearly given considerable thought to this (1. 3–4). We are not told that it was the 'hour of incense' (v. 10), but we do read that Zechariah is offering *odores* at the altar (1. 10), and Juvencus goes to some length to offer an appropriate picture of Jewish *proskynesis* in his parenthesis at line 13 (*cetera nam foribus tunc plebs adstrata rogabat*),⁴⁵⁷ with the unusual word *adstrata*.⁴⁵⁸ Nothing is said of John the Baptist's circumcision, but the circumcision of Christ is duly presented at 1. 181. It is very noticeable that the songs or, as they are sometimes called, 'Psalms' of this chapter of Luke (including what are now known as the Magnificat and Benedictus) are truncated: verse 17 is cut down, verses 54–5 are passed over, and verses 73–9 are shortened and rewritten. Here economy may not be the whole explanation, or a desire to simplify; but this need not be due to anti-Semitism. It would be a poor sign even of Herzog's *Entjudaisierung als Christianisierung*, for in the last passage Juvencus also says nothing of such Christian notions as the forgiveness of sins (v. 77), the mercy of God (v. 78), and the objective of peace (v. 79). In the passage as a whole it is certainly true, as both Poinsette and Orbán claim, that numerous turns of expression, such as 'after these days' and 'and it came to pass', disappear, to be replaced by phrases or particles that are more or less classical. (In fact modern scholarship is now less certain of the linguistic 'Semitisms' once plentifully identified.)⁴⁵⁹ But in the whole work there are

⁴⁵⁵ Cf. Juvencus' postponement of the names of John (1. 26) and of Jesus (1. 63) to the ends of speeches for effect, and for a classical example, Ausonius, *Moselle* 22. See also p. 32.

⁴⁵⁶ Unless *sorte* is read for *forte* in line 1. 10. See p. 56.

⁴⁵⁷ 'the rest of the people, prostrate at the doors, was then praying'.

⁴⁵⁸ Cf. Ovid, *M.* 2. 343 *adsternunturque sepulchro* and *Tr.* 1. 3. 43 *ante Lares... adstrata*.

⁴⁵⁹ See Dickey (2004), 523 and n. 100.

numerous Judaisms: of the Hebrew words used in the relevant parts of the gospels, *osanna*, *amen*,⁴⁶⁰ *gehenna*,⁴⁶¹ and the more familiar *pascha* and *sabbata*⁴⁶² are used, but not *raca*, *corban*, and *mammon*. The word *synagoga* is omitted or paraphrased (by *conventicula* in 2. 583), but so too is the word *ecclesia*.⁴⁶³

Among Old Testament names, it is noticeable that Juvencus never mentions Abraham, although he had six opportunities to do so. The references in both Luke 1: 55 and 73 are omitted, along with the whole verse that recalls God's promises or oath to the patriarch. At Luke 3: 8, where Abraham is named twice in John the Baptist's speech, the children of Abraham are simply *suboles*... *degener* ('degenerate offspring'). Jacob is named in the context of the Samaritan woman, twice, at 2. 245 and 2.263, following John 4: 6 and 12, but not in rendering Luke 1: 33 ('house of Jacob'). References to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob together aggravate the metrical difficulties; for Matt. 8: 11 we find *patribus nostris* at 1. 757, and the reference to them in Matt. 22: 32 (quoting Exod. 3: 6) is omitted. On the other hand, Juvencus often mentions Moses the lawgiver (seven times), David the ancestor and forerunner of Christ (eleven times: his name is actually added at 3. 356), and Elijah the prophet (six times). These characters may have held more appeal for Juvencus, or appeared to him as of especial importance, but as far as explaining the omissions is concerned there is surely no need to look beyond the constraints of metre. Another feature of Juvencus' use of the Old Testament as it appears in the New is the copiousness of prophecy; he has chosen a gospel in which this is a conspicuous feature, and he reproduces it in quantity as well as doing it justice in terms of accuracy.⁴⁶⁴ Juvencus presents the great majority of the prophecies that he found in his base-texts, and there is surely no significance either in the fact that many of them occur near the beginning of Matthew or in the

⁴⁶⁰ Poinssotte (1979), 78–83, showing the range of expressions, most of them involving the word *verus* ('true'), with which Juvencus replaces it.

⁴⁶¹ Juvencus does not use *gehenna* in any of the three places in his chosen texts where it appears, but adds it in an explanation at 1. 707 (Poinssotte (1979), 76 n. 244).

⁴⁶² *sabbata* seems to be explained at 2. 564; the descriptions of *pascha* (1. 282, 2. 153, 4. 428) probably do not amount to explanations.

⁴⁶³ See pp. 99, 103.

⁴⁶⁴ But Roberts (1985), 136 may go too far when he claims that Old Testament prophecies are rendered with special care. See p. 86.

fact that a few are omitted. The omission of Isaiah 42: 1–4, quoted by Matthew at 12: 18–21, with its references to a mission to the Gentiles, is not what one would expect of a writer with an anti-Semitic agenda. A few are omitted, as we have seen, because of their brevity.

A major point of Poinssotte's argument was that Juvencus anticipates the accusations of later anti-Semites by heightening the guilt of the Jews as a race, over and above anything that may be found in the gospel accounts. At 27: 25 Matthew has the people shout 'His blood be on us and our children'; for this Juvencus has *nos, nos cruor iste sequatur, | et genus in nostrum scelus hoc et culpa redundet* (4. 622–3).⁴⁶⁵ There is also, in the preceding line, the added clause (... *abluit*), *ut genti tantum macula illa maneret*.⁴⁶⁶ This is presumably intended to give Pilate's reasoning and not the poet's own, in view of Matt. 27: 24. The point is repeated, typically, but not developed or highlighted, as it will be by Arator (1. 188–201). There is a palpable heightening of dramatic effect in this episode of Juvencus, but neither this nor the panoply of condemnatory adjectives such as *trux* ('ferocious') and *efferus* ('savage') is sufficient to support the charge that he has gone beyond his normal practice. Such words are used widely by Juvencus, and, very clearly, against non-Jews in 3. 604.⁴⁶⁷ Certainly Juvencus does generally implicate the whole Jewish people in the persecution and death of Christ, and not merely a group such as the scribes or Pharisees. As the confrontation begins, Christ's bitter words addressed to a scribe at 2. 18 (added to the original, Matt. 8: 20), *gentis sic sunt molimina vestrae* ('such are the machinations of your race'), and the protests of the *plebes Iudaea* in 2. 163, offended by the cleansing of the temple, may be noted.⁴⁶⁸ On the other hand, he does not ignore the evidence of Jews more favourable to Jesus, such as the Jewish 'leaders' (*proceres*) in 4. 337,

⁴⁶⁵ 'let his blood follow us, us, and let this crime and guilt redound to our race'.

⁴⁶⁶ 'washed [his hands] so that that stain should await the race alone'.

⁴⁶⁷ Such language is strongly deployed against Herod, who in fact, although Juvencus may not have known this, was not a Jew. Readers might have inferred from the first line of the poem *rex fuit Herodes Iudaea in gente cruentus* that he was, but this may not have been the poet's intention. See Poinssotte (1979), 205–12.

⁴⁶⁸ The words *gens* and *plebes* generally refer to a whole race, although there are exceptions such as 2. 606 *Pharisaeae gentis* and 4. 70 *Pharisaeae plebis*, where *plebes* refers to a smaller group; cf. the apparent Christianity in 4. 52 *accita credentum plebe* ('summoning the body of believers').

who are friendly (John 11: 19), and Nathaniel, who addresses him in 2. 119 as *rex inclite gentis* ('famous king of the race', John 1: 49). Jesus' own Jewishness is acknowledged by the Samaritan woman in 2. 254, as it is in John 4: 9.

It cannot be maintained that Juvenecus disparages the Jews in comparison with other nations. Their neighbours the Samaritans, although their attitude may be presented as more positive than that of the Jews, are set in a poor light—and by Juvenecus, it seems, rather than Matthew—when Christ bids his disciples avoid the road trodden by the *gentes perfidiosae* ('faithless Gentiles') and *Samaritarum fraudis vestigia* ('the footsteps of the wicked Samaritans') in 2. 433–4 (cf. Matt. 10: 5–6). The Gentiles themselves are regularly condemned, as in 1. 650 *gentibus infidis* (Matt. 6: 32; Juvenecus' adjective means 'untrusting' or 'unbelieving') and 3. 602 (Matt. 20: 25), except where they include the Romans, in which case the reference, significantly, tends to be omitted.⁴⁶⁹ It does appear that Juvenecus shows partiality to the Romans, above all in his presentation of their role in Christ's trial and execution. Pilate, a colourless man, and unlike Christ's opponents not heightened by Juvenecus in any way, is overwhelmed by the vehemence of Christ's accusers: *denique vi victus detestatusque cruentum | officium*, 4. 618;⁴⁷⁰ (cf. Matt. 27: 24). His decision to free Barabbas is the decision of a 'defeated' man (*victus* again in 625). According to Juvenecus he had no option: the laws 'ordered' him (but in Matt. 27: 15 this was a custom of the governor) to release a prisoner (599–600). Pilate is not a subtle man in Juvenecus, who omits Matthew's explanation at 27: 18 ('for he knew it was out of envy that they had delivered him up . . .'), nor is he depicted as cruel, for there is no sign that he ordered a scourging (cf. Matt. 27: 26). Juvenecus also omits Matt. 28:14–15, perhaps to free Pilate from any suspicion of complicity in a cover-up. Poinssotte noted that the identity or nationality of the soldiers who carry out the punishment is not made clear (4. 643; cf. Matt. 27: 27: they are those of the governor), but went too far in implying that their ferocity and compliance in the crime was designed to highlight the Jews' own wickedness.⁴⁷¹ The Romans here are treated favourably, but this is

⁴⁶⁹ As in 2. 462 (Matt. 10: 18) and 3. 587 (Matt. 20: 19).

⁴⁷⁰ 'finally overcome by their vehemence and hating his bloody task'.

⁴⁷¹ Poinssotte (1979), 134–5.

not to say that the Jews are systematically blackened. As adversaries of Christ they receive a severe judgement, heightened as often happens in Juvencus with a typically vehement array of adjectives in a typically dramatized presentation, but Juvencus does not abandon or modify his policy of substantial fidelity to the gospel accounts.

JUVENCUS AND HIS OWN TIMES

Attention has already been drawn to a detail in Juvencus' presentation of an analogy involving burglary, in 4. 179–81: in his world, it seems, houses must be broken into (*ruptas*) and not dug into, as in the Greek and OL (*perfodiri*) at Matt. 24: 43, and Juvencus also imagines a rather different kind of pre-emptive action.⁴⁷² The setting is no longer a cramped street but a world of strong buildings and large estates, perhaps with a workforce able to protect them. Another kind of allusion to the built environment is made when Juvencus quotes Luke's version (3: 4) of the prophecy of Isaiah which is fulfilled by John the Baptist (1. 314–18): *amplas | instruite stratas, omnis sit recta viarum | semita . . . | corriget anfractus iteris bona linea recti*.⁴⁷³ There are technical terms here, in *instruite*, and *bona linea* (suggesting the work of a surveyor), and the road or street will also be well paved.⁴⁷⁴ The familiarity to English speakers of the word 'highway' for this, derived—in many cases, no doubt, via Handel's *Messiah*—from the Authorised Version of the Bible, should not be allowed to disguise the degree of upgrading here; Juvencus envisages a full-scale Roman road, cutting its impressive way through remote valleys as in a new province.

Such fascinating intrusions are not common or prominent. The presentation of the census from the nativity narrative of Luke,

⁴⁷² See p. 10.

⁴⁷³ 'build up wide paved streets, let every roadway be straight . . . let the good line of a straight road correct the twistings and turnings'.

⁴⁷⁴ For *instruo* as a synonym for the much commoner *munio* ('fortify' or 'build' a road), see e.g., Tacitus, *Hist.* 2. 22; for *bona linea*, where *bona* is equivalent to *recta*, cf. Caesar, *Bell. Gall.* 7. 235. This is one of the earliest attested uses of the word *strata*, which means literally 'paved'; hence 'street' as in Watling Street and Dere Street.

though still ascribed to Augustus by name (1. 145), is doubtless modelled on that of Diocletian, of which Juvencus may well have had experience. Joseph registers not only his name and his race (in a conveniently Vergilian phrase, *nomenque genusque*),⁴⁷⁵ but also his *vires*, his financial resources (1. 147–8). One might even infer from his words that it was necessary to register pregnancies in the census, as Joseph does in Juvencus;⁴⁷⁶ but the detail that Mary was pregnant at the time (from Luke 2: 5) may be the writer's way of re-emphasizing the paradox of her pregnancy or confirming that Joseph was not ashamed now to divulge it even to faceless bureaucrats (cf. 1. 133–43). A more certain sign of the times is that Herod, on hearing from the Magi the reason for their visit, is terrified because he thought that Christ was a potential successor; *at ferus Herodes sibimet succedere credit | quem callens astris quaesisset cura Magorum*, 1. 257–8.⁴⁷⁷ Juvencus presents him as a third-century emperor, fearful of astrology and constantly apprehensive of a rival.

Next in this inevitably mixed bag of hints of contemporary life is a comment on eunuchs. When Juvencus comes to Matt. 19: 12 he makes an interesting adaptation of Christ's comment on eunuchs ('there are eunuchs which have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven') that may well reflect current practice. According to Juvencus (3. 487–8), most, rather than some, men are made eunuchs by drastic surgery (*plerosque hominum vis ferrea sexu | exuit*), from which it is not unreasonable to infer that he is aware of the growing role played by eunuchs in Roman administration. Their increase may have begun in the late third century, as Hopkins has argued, with due regard for the fragility of written sources.⁴⁷⁸ They were apparently

⁴⁷⁵ Vergil, *A.* 10. 149.

⁴⁷⁶ There is no mention of such a requirement by Lactantius, *De Mortibus* 23, in his hostile account of the turbulent effects of Diocletian's census; but short of saying that children were ripped from the womb to be enrolled (such is the author's grim rhetoric), there was little scope for such a detail.

⁴⁷⁷ 'but savage Herod thinks that the one whom the diligence of the Magi, skilled in study of the stars, had come to seek was his successor'.

⁴⁷⁸ Hopkins (1978), 191–6 cites *Scriptores Historiae Augustae, Aurelian* 49. 8. and *Alex. Sev.* 23. 5, and Lactantius, *De Mortibus* 15. 2, where Lactantius denounces Diocletian for depending heavily on them.

not numerous—Hopkins suggested hundreds rather than thousands, even in their heyday—but Juvencus could well have known about them, especially if he had been an imperial administrator at some stage. In 9: 10 Matthew refers to ‘tax-collectors and sinners’ in the same breath (it is not difficult to see why); Juvencus gives an expansive description of *publicani* in the words *publica conductis qui vectigalia lucris | professi rapiunt alieno nomine praedam* (2. 348),⁴⁷⁹ and this raises an interesting question. The reason for the paraphrase is the fact that the word *publicani* (‘tax-collectors’) cannot be fitted to the hexameter, but since *publicani* seem to have been no longer an arm of Roman financial administration, there might also be an element of explanation, coloured, of course, by condemnation. Other villains, the scribes, are carefully glossed in 1. 234 *quique profetarum veterum praedicta recensent*,⁴⁸⁰ in a way appropriate to the context of Matt. 2: 4, to distinguish them from Roman scribes, whose function was less exalted.⁴⁸¹

Turning to theological matters, we have seen (see pp. 97–8 above) that to some extent Juvencus implicitly or explicitly modernizes what he found in the gospels, bringing in interpretations which were familiar to him and an integral part of his understanding of the relevant scriptures. These include Christian notions such as heaven, faith, virtue, salvation, error, and Christian ‘service’ assimilated to military service in the word *militia*. Other less general features of contemporary thought and practice seem to stand out or at least suggest themselves. It is clear from 1. 325 that Juvencus is influenced by the common practice of removing the locusts from the Baptist’s diet;⁴⁸² the later hand or hands responsible for the alternative line sought to reinstate them.⁴⁸³ The importance of Peter is suggested by various references to his name, already noted.⁴⁸⁴ Some of Jesus’ encounters with demons

⁴⁷⁹ ‘who claiming (to levy) public taxes after leasing this profitable business seize plunder under another name’.

⁴⁸⁰ ‘and those who examine the forecasts of the ancient prophets’.

⁴⁸¹ Cf. p. 89.

⁴⁸² Cf. Paulinus of Nola, c. 6. 233, and Gnilka (2001a), 503–5; and in general see Hopkins (1999), 292, who cites Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30. 13. 4.

⁴⁸³ On these ‘Plusverse’ see Thraede (2001a), 887 and references there. Herzog inclined to think them authentic (1975), 144 and n. 344, and 151, and (1989), 335; Gnilka (2001a) and (2001b) does not.

⁴⁸⁴ See p. 43 and Thraede (2001a), 901–3.

imply a situation where exorcism is common.⁴⁸⁵ In keeping with the reduced emphasis on an imminent *parousia*, reference to the coming of the Son of Man in Matt. 10: 23 ('before the Son of Man comes') is avoided in 2. 473 *nam vobis urbes semper superesse necesse est*.⁴⁸⁶ In Matt. 16: 28 ('there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom') he may have found a similar problem, for it is reinterpreted in 3. 314–15 *certos istic sub limine lucis | inveniam, caeli fulgens cum regna capessam*.⁴⁸⁷

References to the Eucharist have been detected by Herzog, especially in the account of the miracle at Cana.⁴⁸⁸ Juvencus interestingly amplifies 'my time is not yet come' (John 2: 4) into 'not yet does the time compel me to give such gifts for the sustenance of mankind' (*nondum me talia cogit | ad victus hominum tempus concedere dona*, 2. 135–6). There may also be a hint in the epithet *venerandus*, always a highly solemn word in Juvencus, used in 2. 146 (*ille ubi percepit venerandi dona saporis nescius*),⁴⁸⁹ but at 132 *laetitiae . . . liquorem* is probably without any such significance; if anything it is aimed against an ascetic aversion to the drinking of wine.⁴⁹⁰ In the narrative of the Last Supper, at 4. 445–56, there may be a Eucharistic reference in the *nova . . . vina* ('new wines') that Christ will drink in heaven, though it seems somewhat oblique. Certainly it cannot be held, as Herzog rather implies, that allusion to the Eucharist is a major concern of Juvencus.⁴⁹¹

It was suggested by Thraede⁴⁹² that a particular evaluation of the celibate and married states may be detected in various places in Juvencus' text. The marriage of Zechariah and Elizabeth lasted for a long time but brought them despair (1. 9: an additional comment by Juvencus); Anna's devotion to the temple and her worship of God were a substitute for marriage after the death of her husband, and she

⁴⁸⁵ Fichtner (1994), 102–7. Note especially the formula *effuge* (*TLL* V. 205. 8–13)

⁴⁸⁶ 'For it is inevitable that cities will always remain for you (to evangelize).'

⁴⁸⁷ 'certain people here I shall find at the threshold of light, when, in glory, I gain the kingdoms of heaven.'

⁴⁸⁸ Herzog (1975), 121–3.

⁴⁸⁹ 'when he, unaware, experienced the gifts of the venerable taste.'

⁴⁹⁰ This evidently alludes to Ps. 104 (103): 15.

⁴⁹¹ See also pp. 50, 89, 92 for other uncertain examples, and in general Green (2007b).

⁴⁹² Thraede (2001a) 898–9.

consequently received special illumination (1. 216–19). The chastity and virginity of Mary are strongly emphasized (1. 53–6 and 65–6). The language that Juvencus uses in 3. 479–81 for the disciples' comment at Matt. 19: 10 ('it is expedient not to marry') is very forceful: the law oppresses (*urget*), the marriage bond is a 'part of slavery' (*servitii . . . partem*), and the marriage bed is actually 'hateful' (*perosis*). Another possible influence is Constantinian legislation. When in Luke (1: 25) Elizabeth expresses her gratitude that the opprobrium of sterility has been taken away from her, and nothing in Juvencus corresponds, it is possible that this reflects a feature of Constantine's legislation, the removal of the old Roman penalties on celibacy, achieved by a law of 320; the law no longer gave its sanction to such a stigma.⁴⁹³ There are, naturally, other passages in Juvencus that deal with marriage, but they do not seem to relate to the legislation of this period. Certainly, in lines 1. 531–5, which deal with divorce, there is nothing relevant to the Constantinian legislation, which concerned the categories of women who can be accused of adultery and the categories of men who may bring the accusation.⁴⁹⁴ Juvencus is reasonably close to his original, though not so precise: for the gospel's *quicumque dimiserit uxorem suam excepta causa fornicationis facit eam moechari* ('whoever dismisses his wife except for the reason of adultery makes her an adulteress', Matt. 5: 32, European), Juvencus has *sola viri recte discedet adultera tectis* ('let only an adulteress rightly depart from the home of her husband'). It is notable that the second part of Christ's saying, that a man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery, is absent from his version.⁴⁹⁵ He again deals with divorce at 3. 476–8, following Matt. 19: 8–9, where Christ comments on the law of Moses in response to a question from the Pharisees: *nam temere exsolvet casti qui iura cubilis | alteraque illius thalamis sociabitur uxor, | crimen adulterii populo sub teste subibit*.⁴⁹⁶ The word *temere* ('rashly', 'without cause') has been

⁴⁹³ See Evans Grubbs (1995), 118–23.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 205–16.

⁴⁹⁵ It is also absent from the African version, but nothing should be inferred from this; cf., p. 33.

⁴⁹⁶ 'For whoever rashly unlooses the ties of a chaste marriage, and another wife is joined to his marriage-chamber, will incur the charge of adultery in the eyes of the people.' The addition 'and he who marries a divorced woman commits adultery' is again not present in Juvencus.

rightly linked with the eighth canon of the Council of Elvira, which is early evidence for the exception ('except for the reason of adultery') that is absent from versions of Matthew;⁴⁹⁷ but it is less easy to relate it to the law of 331, which stipulated among other things that a man should not be permitted to divorce his wife 'for just any reason whatever' (*per quascumque occasiones*).⁴⁹⁸ The word *temere* is certainly vague, but shares nothing but its vagueness with the legislation, of which in this case Juvencus may have known nothing when he wrote.

Another area of great theological importance which encourages speculation about Juvencus' attitudes is that of prayer. Here there are some striking omissions, not easily explicable on non-theological grounds. If we took them as significant evidence, we might conclude that he disagreed with the plain meaning of the following propositions: that God knows our needs before we ask (cf. Matt. 6: 8 and 1. 586); that 'if two . . . agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them' (Matt. 18: 19; cf. 3. 430–2); that nothing is impossible (Matt. 17: 20, a statement that in some versions is followed by a reference to prayer; cf. 3. 375–80); and, in the closely related statement, that 'whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith' (Matt. 21: 22; cf. 3. 672–3). Some of these points were clearly controversial in the Church. Jerome later addresses the view that God does not need to be informed of our needs, condemning it as a 'heresy' and a 'philosophical dogma';⁴⁹⁹ Origen, in his commentary on Matthew, is aware of problems over the third.⁵⁰⁰ It is surely likely that Juvencus was aware of the difficulties of this topic, but whether he bypassed them to avoid offence or controversy, or wished to take a positive stand, is impossible to determine.

There is another area in which a pattern of omissions deserves careful consideration, especially as we might well expect some sign of a burning issue that attained a high profile in the early years of Constantine's supremacy and was not to lose it for a hundred years: this is Arianism. (It might be objected that the -ism came

⁴⁹⁷ See above, p. 9, and Force (1993).

⁴⁹⁸ *Codex Theodosianus* 3. 16. 1; Evans Grubbs (1995), 225–32.

⁴⁹⁹ Jerome, *Comm. in Matt.* 6: 8 (CCSL 77. 36. 745–52).

⁵⁰⁰ Origen, *PG* 13. 1112.

latter, as debate increased and views hardened; but the title is convenient.) In spite of its importance, scholars have paid relatively little attention to this possibility. Testard suggested that it was a sign of his opposition to Arianism that Juvencus added his rendering of the words *ego hodie genui te* ('today I have begotten you') that appear in some versions of Luke 3: 22 at 1.362–3, in a passage which is otherwise Matthean.⁵⁰¹ These words imply that Christ was born, not created, and this is a central tenet of Nicene orthodoxy. As for the Holy Spirit, Juvencus' text includes the line 2. 198 *spiritus hic deus est, cui parent omnia mundi* ('this spirit is God, whom all things in the universe obey'), rendering the controversial verse John 3: 6 *quia | quoniam spiritus deus est*;⁵⁰² but it is not above suspicion of being interpolated, since it is relatively unadorned by Juvencus' standards. It has been argued, conversely, on the basis of his rendering of Matt. 28: 19,⁵⁰³ that Juvencus has no interest in the Nicaean development of Trinitarian doctrine.⁵⁰⁴ This verse, the foundation of the dogma of the Trinity according to one document submitted to the council, is versified by Juvencus, it is argued, in a way that suggests ignorance of this development. But to argue this from his manner of expression greatly underestimates his literary inclinations (especially towards *variatio*), and the argument could even be turned around: the elaboration of the second line might be interpreted as a sign of particular interest in the Holy Spirit as a member of the Trinity, and hence of anti-Arian orthodoxy.

At least four new passages must be taken into account. First, when he comes to Luke 2: 52 Juvencus says nothing about Christ increasing in wisdom, or in favour with God; he concentrates exclusively on the restoration and development of Jesus' loving relationship with his parents, which had been briefly jeopardized by his disappearance in Jerusalem. This is a passage of notable human warmth, and at the end of it, in 1. 305–6, he develops in his own way Luke's point about

⁵⁰¹ Testard (1990), 21.

⁵⁰² Ambrose later complained that the Arians removed it (*De Spiritu Sancto* 3. 10. 59; CSEL 79. 174).

⁵⁰³ 4. 796–7 *Nomine sub sancto patris natiq̄e lavate | vivifici pariter currant spiramina flatus* ('baptize in the holy name of the Father and the Son; let the breath of the life-giving Spirit operate equally')

⁵⁰⁴ Flieger (1993), 20, Fichtner (1994), 33 and 79.

Jesus' *gratia* . . . *apud homines* ('favour among men'), but avoids the matter of his relationship to God. Did he wish to avoid the implication that Jesus' favour with God was less at this early period of his life? Second, it has already been noted that at 2.637 Juvencus welds a section from John (5: 19–46) onto a Matthean discourse. In doing so he begins with the words 'for whatever he does, that the Son does likewise' (*quae genitor faciet sectabitur omnia natus*), and does not render the first part of John 5: 19, 'truly I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord . . .'. Did he fear that the words might be taken to imply that the Son was less powerful than the Father? Third, Christ's answer to his questioner at Matt. 19: 17 is much abbreviated (3. 504–9); nothing corresponds to the words *quid me interrogas de bono? unus est bonus, Deus*.⁵⁰⁵ Juvencus reduces Jesus' answer to an explanation of the laws that must be obeyed, and the apparent issue of Christ's goodness falls from sight. Fourth, when Christ is on the cross (Matt. 27: 46), Juvencus remarks that Christ called out in the Hebrew tongue (4. 693), but makes no attempt to give the words either in the Hebrew version—no easy task, admittedly—or in Matthew's paraphrase *Deus meus, deus meus, ut quid me dereliquisti?*⁵⁰⁶ In 1. 142 (Matt. 1: 23) he gave not the Hebrew name Emanuel, but the Latin interpretation *nobiscum deus*, and there is no obvious stylistic reason why he should not have attempted to render Matthew's version here. Was this done to remove the possibility of troublesome theological questions about the relationship of Father and Son?

In all these omissions a common thread may be detected. They are passages in which an interpreter might observe that Christ was in some way inferior to God the Father: he needed to grow up, like a normal boy, and later he was unable to do as many things as his Father, he was not good in the way that his Father was, and in some sense he was forsaken by his Father, or at least thought so, as he died. Matters of this kind, affecting the understanding of the status of Christ relative to God the Father, were of burning importance in the 320s, and the principal aim of the ecumenical Council of Nicaea,

⁵⁰⁵ 'Why do you ask me about what is good? One there is who is good, God.' Origen discusses this matter at some length in his commentary (PG 13. 1277–85).

⁵⁰⁶ 'My god, my god, why have you forsaken me?'

called in 325, was to concert a theological response to the views of Arius and others who were considered to give Christ an inferior status. The verses or parts of verses that Juvenicus omits, especially the first of the above, were prominent to a greater or lesser degree in later debates, which were of course not confined to the gospel data.⁵⁰⁷ It is impossible to tell whether Juvenicus or a close associate was present at Nicaea; few Spaniards were present, and it is rather unlikely. The Spanish bishop Ossius of Cordoba⁵⁰⁸ was indeed its chairman, but there is no evidence that Juvenicus was acquainted with Ossius, who as an adviser prominent in the counsels of Constantine will have operated in a different environment altogether.⁵⁰⁹ It cannot, however, be ruled out; since nothing is known of Ossius' movements or duties in the years after Nicaea it might reasonably be assumed that he was back in Cordoba, pursuing episcopal tasks. That Juvenicus knew Arius, who was an African, or any known supporters of Arius, is quite unlikely.⁵¹⁰ But even if he had little knowledge of Nicaea, or its main players, it is not unreasonable to believe that Juvenicus knew of such ideas, or was at least aware of the problems which they were intended to solve.⁵¹¹ It is not clear what his exact motive was; whether he found difficulties himself, or wished forthrightly to present a text shorn of such difficulties, or whether he was minded for whatever reason to side with the established orthodoxy, we can only speculate.

Twenty years before this strife the Christians were undergoing savage persecution, and it must be asked whether this experience has left any kind of imprint on the text of Juvenicus. Whether or not he had faced it himself, Juvenicus had lived through a period when persecution and rumours of persecution had been strong. Since Christ refers to persecution in various places, the theme is duly present in Juvenicus' text, but it is possible to detect a greater emphasis than there is in the gospels. In the Beatitudes Juvenicus gives especial

⁵⁰⁷ See Simonetti (1970), 50–60; Williams (2001).

⁵⁰⁸ See p. 9, and De Clercq (1954).

⁵⁰⁹ Kirsch (1989), 71 assumes that they were acquainted.

⁵¹⁰ See in general Williams (2001).

⁵¹¹ Testard (1990), 21 n. 64 mentions the Arianism of Potamius, bishop of Lisbon, who died in 360; whether Juvenicus knew of him, or his conversion to Arianism, is quite uncertain.

emphasis, not present in the original (Matt. 5: 11), to the final item, about persecution (1. 466): *felices nimium, quos insectatio frendens | propter iustitiam premit*.⁵¹² Later in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5: 44) is the injunction to pray for those who persecute. Juvencus' language (1. 565–6) is noticeably vehement, especially in the verb *excindere* ('to root out').⁵¹³ In Matt. 13: 21 Christ mentions persecution in his explanation of the parable of the sower:⁵¹⁴ those who succumb to persecution, fearful of death, immediately betray what has been entrusted to them (*continuo trepidi produnt sibi credita leto*). The wording suggests the Diocletianic persecution, when Christians were pressed to hand over the scriptures.

A less direct link with the experience of persecution may be seen in a salient feature of the *Evangeliorum Libri*, its ubiquitous identification of Christians as 'the just'.⁵¹⁵ The word is not, of course, absent from the gospels, and it is common in the Bible as a whole, but its frequency in Juvencus is remarkable. A few examples among many: at 1. 406 he writes 'the just man should . . .' for you shall . . .' (Matt. 4: 7); 'my burden is easy for the just' (2. 559) instead of 'my burden is easy' (Matt. 11: 30); 'seek the beginning of a just life' (2. 202) for 'be born again' (John 3: 3). At the end of the transfiguration scene (3. 334) Juvencus writes: *huius iustitiam iusto comprehendit corde*,⁵¹⁶ where the gospel has the two simple words *ipsum audite* ('hear' or 'listen to him').⁵¹⁷ The 'elect' are referred to as *lectos . . . iustos* at 4. 140 and as *iusti* alone at 4. 157–8. The word is also used to describe Christ (3. 652 and 4. 642) and John the Baptist (3. 263). Now the appellations 'just' or 'righteous' are of course used regularly in Christian discourse, but the question must be asked why Juvencus privileges it to such a great extent and so strikingly prefers it to other possibilities,

⁵¹² 'exceedingly happy are those whom raging persecution oppresses because of justice'.

⁵¹³ *qui nos excindere gaudent | adversisque truces animis odiisque sequuntur* ('who delight to root us out and fiercely pursue us with hostile minds and hatred'). In Vergil A. 4. 425 and 7. 316 *excindere* refers to genocide.

⁵¹⁴ *persecutio* in European versions, *pressura*—not unlike Juvencus' *strictura*—in the African.

⁵¹⁵ As noted also by Flieger (1993), 118–19.

⁵¹⁶ 'to take his justice in your just hearts'.

⁵¹⁷ Cf. the claim of Lactantius that Christ was sent to earth as a teacher of justice (DI 4. 10 and 13).

such as *fideles*, as used in the canons of Elvira, *electi, sancti, pii*, or *boni*, all of which offer possibilities of stylistic variation and metrical convenience but are seldom found. The term is also frequent in Lactantius, who builds his apologetic for Christianity around the concept of justice, and more than once equates the worshippers of God with ‘the just’.⁵¹⁸ This almost strident emphasis that the Christians were just and (at least by implication) their adversaries unjust may be one rooted in the experience of persecution, when the Christians complained that they were treated as criminals in spite of their innocence and that their persecutors were behaving unjustly. The appellation of ‘just’ acquired further utility once Christians were in government—Constantine is praised by Lactantius as one who restored justice⁵¹⁹—and it is much used by Optatianus Porphyrius in his *encomia* full of titles that Constantine could be expected to welcome.⁵²⁰ Thereafter it gradually becomes a standard description of the Christians in such writers as Jerome. Biblical support existed in Ps. 34: 19 (33. 20) ‘the afflictions of the just’, and it might be argued that the persecutions of the third century had the effect of enhancing this interpretation of ‘the just’ at the expense of other interpretations (such as that inscribed in statements like ‘the just shall live by faith’). Certainly when Juvencus wrote it was a very expressive marker of Christian identity.

Another motif which plays an inordinately great part in Juvencus, and for which an explanation might be sought in the particular circumstances of writing, is the motif of light. Again we find that a motif integral to Christianity and common in Christian discourse is singled out for a prominent role in the work. References in the gospels would in any case make it frequent, but it also tends to be combined with other paramount notions such as life and salvation. It is also added in places where Juvencus the poet (or theologian) is minded to amplify. So at 3. 109 Juvencus has *en ego sum, vestrae doctorem noscite lucis* (‘I am he, recognize the teacher of your light’), where OL (Matt. 14: 27) has simply *ego sum*. Thorough study has

⁵¹⁸ Cf. Lactantius, *DI* 2. 15. 3 *iustos, id est cultores dei* and 5. 1. 6 *cultores dei summi, hoc est iustos homines*. It is also used in the context of persecution in *De Mortibus* 9. 11.

⁵¹⁹ Lactantius, *DI* 1.1. 13.

⁵²⁰ See 2. 22, 7. 25, 8. 30, 11. 16, 12. 7, 14. 5, 15. 3, 16. 9 for *iustus* or *iustitia*.

been given to most of the various passages by Röttger,⁵²¹ who also briefly suggests some reasons for its prominence. Its importance for edification and personal meditation should not be underestimated, and perhaps it owes its dominance to its value as a symbol of private devotion to the poet. But it was a concept with very wide spiritual resonance, and one which, whether in a spirit of antagonism or one of inclusion, might make a particular impact upon those whose allegiance had been with *Sol Invictus*, the unconquered Sun, like so many at the time. Noting the importance of light also as a triumphal motif, Röttger shows that here the demands of contemporary propaganda and those of epic come together. Eusebius and Lactantius give prominence to Constantine's function as a bringer of light, an appropriate description of a ruler who was in many ways making a new beginning; and he is *redditor lucis aeternae* ('restorer of eternal light'), as a medallion describes him.⁵²² Juvencus' preoccupations in his spiritual and kerygmatic exercise should not be reduced to the political, but here as elsewhere the spirit and circumstances of the age do seem to exert some influence upon him.⁵²³

Although we may detect or suspect the influence of his times in all these various ways, Juvencus never, before the Epilogue, refers to the passage of time between the life of Christ and the reign of Constantine. His narrative is presented as scripture itself, not in the sense that he regards himself as rewriting scripture or creating an equivalent to scripture, but in the sense of faithfully interpreting, elucidating, and elaborating it. To this end he suppresses any indication of a gap between the past he narrates and the present time of writing. Certainly there is a tangible imprint, a particular voice perhaps, that can be identified as that of Juvencus, but it is not (like Vergil's, for example) the voice or viewpoint of a writer explicitly rooted in the present and who uses it to comment on or qualify the past events of his narrative. He is very conscious of Christ's various fulfilments of prophecy, and of the ongoing progress of sacred history, but does not explicitly reveal his own presence as a fourth-century Christian. Consequently, although it was common for his contemporaries,

⁵²¹ Röttger (1996).

⁵²² *CIL* 8. 7006, on his *adventus* at Londinium.

⁵²³ Fontaine (1981), 68 and 79, and (1984*b*) perhaps overstresses the political language of the work.

especially Eusebius, to see in their own time the fulfilment of biblical prophecies, this cannot be an overt concern of Juvencus. But there are places where one suspects that he might be impressed by particular resonances of scripture for his own time. He seems to do this in two ways: one is to link prophecies directed to an unspecified future time to the fourth-century present, the other to take comments made in the gospels to refer to his own time. In the nature of the case these must remain speculative, but the following passages deserve consideration.

The first is the well-known song of the angels at the nativity, which Juvencus presents as follows in 1. 173–4: *gloria supremum comitatur debita patrem; | in terris iustos homines pax digna sequetur.*⁵²⁴ This is based on Luke 2: 14 *gloria in altissimis deo et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis* ('glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of goodwill'). If the manuscripts do not mislead,⁵²⁵ Juvencus has made this into two statements (rather than wishes, as these verses are usually interpreted). In view of what has just been said about the word *iustus*, and the double meanings of *pax*, had now both been achieved—respite from persecution, and peace within the empire, as will be noted in 4. 806—one may be justified in seeing a reference here to Juvencus' own time. Juvencus' angel looks forward to the age of Constantine.

The second passage is at 2. 286–9:

et nunc instantis cursus iam temporis urget
cum veri sanctum genitorem errore remoto
cultores iustis armati legibus orent.

and now the course of the present time is already upon us, when true worshippers with error set aside pray, armed by just laws, to the holy Father.

(Cf. John 4: 23 *sed venit hora et nunc est, cum veri adoratores adorabunt patrem in spiritu et veritate.*)⁵²⁶ When allowance is made for the familiar amplification, this is close to Christ's prophecy about the superseding of worship at Jerusalem, except that the reference to laws

⁵²⁴ 'due glory accompanies the highest Father; on earth worthy peace will follow just men.'

⁵²⁵ Following them, Huemer reads *comitatur* (not *comitetur*) and *sequetur*.

⁵²⁶ 'but the time is coming and now is, when true worshippers will worship the father in spirit and in truth.'

and the metaphor of *armati* are unexpected here. These features encourage the supposition that Juvencus relates this rather unspecific prophecy to the time of Constantine, when power and legislation have confirmed the status of Christian *cultores*.

Third, 2. 611–13:

Si gemina regnum distractum parte dehiscat
et scissa adversum sese divisio pugnet,
disruptis propere labentur cuncta medullis.

If a kingdom torn by two factions gapes open and divisive conflict fights against itself, everything will quickly collapse with the very fabric shattered.

(Cf. Matt. 12: 25 *omne regnum divisum contra se desolabitur et omnis civitas vel domus divisa contra se non stabit.*)⁵²⁷ When writing these words, and taking over *regnum* from his model, did Juvencus have in mind the recent division of imperial power, seemingly eliminated in the year 324 by Constantine's defeat of Licinius?

Fourth, in Matt. 20: 25–6 Christ compares the pattern of authority in Gentile societies with the pattern that he envisages for the disciples. After three lines on the *gentibus infidis*, Juvencus writes (3. 605–7):

vos inter longe tranquillior aequora vitae
concordi sternit mitis moderatio pace
magnus et obsequiis crescit super alta minister.

But among you, much more quietly, gentle moderation overspreads the waters of life with harmonious peace, and a servant grows great to the highest places by obedience (or 'a great minister grows . . . by obedience').

(Cf. OL *non ita erit inter vos, sed quicumque voluerit inter vos maior fieri erit vester minister*, 'it will not be so among you, but whoever wishes to be greater among you, will be your servant'.) Unlike Matthew, Juvencus makes this refer to the present, and he also reconfigures the contrast that Christ made, so that the original comparison of Jew and Gentile may here be replaced by a distinction between Romans, led by the humble Constantine, and those outside

⁵²⁷ 'every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste and a society or house divided against itself will not stand'.

the empire, who are unbelievers. In other places, as we have seen,⁵²⁸ Juvencus has carefully omitted references to the Gentiles which might suggest Roman authorities who act against Christ; here there is no such danger, for Rome and the 'Gentiles' are clearly opposed.

THE PURPOSE OF *EVANGELIORUM LIBRI QUATTUOR*

Juvencus' epic poem ends, like the gospel of Matthew, with Christ's command to make disciples of all races and baptize and instruct them, and with his assurance that his presence will be with them until the end of time, which cannot come until this task of preaching is complete (4.120). The end of the poem—the last word of the paraphrase is actually *finis* (4. 801)—is thus also a beginning, just as the ending of the *Aeneid* could be said to be the beginning of Roman history, or the ending of *Paradise Lost* the beginning of the new era for Adam and Eve and their successors. Juvencus thus explicitly, and strikingly, locates his work within this evangelizing process. It is, at the same time, typical of Juvencus the poet that his concluding lines, the so-called Epilogue which has already been quoted,⁵²⁹ are articulated in a recognizably classical form, the *sphragis* or seal-poem, just as his Preface was a development of the epic proem.⁵³⁰ It recalls the short Vergilian *sphragis* at the end of the *Georgics*, where Vergil briefly sums up his topic and relates his work to the campaigns of the triumphant Octavian, with the difference that Constantine, more like Augustus of the *Aeneid*, has now brought peace.⁵³¹ The more monumental claims of Horace and Ovid⁵³² for their own works are not echoed, presumably because Juvencus has already addressed the issue of poetic claims for eternity in his Preface. It will be helpful to present the first four lines of the

⁵²⁸ See p. 111.

⁵²⁹ See pp. 3–4.

⁵³⁰ *OCD*, s.v. *sphragis*, and references there.

⁵³¹ Vergil, *G.* 4. 559–66.

⁵³² Horace, *Odes* 2. 20, 3. 30; Ovid, *Amores* 1. 15.

Epilogue again, leaving out those that refer to Constantine, which were discussed above:

Has mea mens fidei vires sanctique timoris
cepit et in tantum lucet mihi gratia Christi,
versibus ut nostris divinae gloria legis
ornamenta libens caperet terrestria linguae.

This power of faith and holy fear my own mind has put on, and to such a degree does the grace of Christ shine upon me that the glory of the divine law in my verses happily assumes the earthly ornaments of language.

Juvenecus' own mind has put on the same Christ-given power, 'a power of faith and holy fear', and he has also received the grace of Christ.⁵³³ This grace has brought him success, at least in this world; the word *libens* (a meagre indication, to be sure, when compared with the claims of the Augustans just mentioned) indicates his satisfaction at the way in which 'the glory of the divine law'—understanding this as the teaching of Christ, as shown in the gospels⁵³⁴—has taken, in his verses, earthly embellishment of language. This embellishment, as has been shown in the foregoing analyses, is much more than cosmetic, but extends to vocabulary, phraseology, themes, and various patterns of narration and presentation. It should not be thought of as something mechanical, or a feature which was a standard requirement of the Late Antique poet, or a necessary aid to composition. It is pervasive and integral, and not restricted to particular contexts, such as the passages of particular theological significance where, according to Herzog, it tends to cluster.⁵³⁵ One may admit its contribution to edification without denying the influence of epic-style empathy or what used to be called, by Heinze and others,

⁵³³ This essentially Pauline concept may be accepted here, outside the paraphrase proper, and is also to be understood five lines later, where *gratia digna* is said to be present with Constantine; the sense 'the attractiveness of Christ', more in line with his earlier uses of the word, would be less satisfactory here. Röttger (1996), 127 also notes Ovid, *Fasti* 5. 109 *gratia Pieridum nobis aequaliter adsit*, an emphatic case of *Kontrastimitation* if Juvenecus could count on readers' awareness of it.

⁵³⁴ The meaning of this is discussed by Röttger (1996), 128. The above interpretation is influenced by 4. 798–9 *nostra . . . praecepta*, and 3. 19 *iustitiae leges vitaeque salubria iussa* (of Christ's teaching), which recalls Lactantius' description of Christ as a 'teacher of justice' (*DI* 4. 10 and 13).

⁵³⁵ Herzog (1989), 333.

Affekt or *Gefühl*. It is not exclusive, seeking to debar Christian diction of the familiar kind, and it does not compromise Christian truth. As Juvencus seeks to activate what Šubrt has called ‘the epic potential immanent in the Bible’,⁵³⁶ the *fidus interpres* does not wish to vaunt his skills like many of the neo-Latin poets who address Christian topics in the Renaissance.

Although the superiority of an implicitly ‘heavenly’ language is clearly implied in the Epilogue, Juvencus’ attitude towards the classics is remarkably positive. No great negative charge should be seen in the qualification *terrestria*; when consulted by Nicodemus, Christ began by trying to explain things in ‘earthly’ language (2. 209: John 3: 12). As in the Preface, where the fame accruing from classical poetry was described as ‘similar to eternal’, not eternal, and the ‘sweetness’ of Vergil is acknowledged as well as the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the relation of classical poetry and Christian truth is not presented as one of polar opposition. The traditional ideas and language of rhetoric and poetry are respected, not demonized.

In linking this *sphragis* which modestly outlines his achievement with the commission of Christ’s disciples, Juvencus sets forth his wider purpose: that of enabling men and women to live eternal life (*ut vitam possint agitare perennem*, 4. 799). The disciples were going into a world largely ignorant of Christ and his teaching; Juvencus’ target is a different one, obviously, and this matter requires discussion. Clearly, it was directed to people possessed of the high degree of education required to appreciate and understand the metre, the style, and the allusions of his poem. It is very likely that he is seeking to address the same problem as was raised by Lactantius about twenty years before him, the problem that ‘... holy scripture lacks credibility among the wise and the learned and the leaders of this age’,⁵³⁷ because of its plain and ordinary style, addressed to ‘ordinary folk’, which earned the contempt of those who rejected anything not polished and eloquent. Lactantius’ answer is essentially the same as that applied by Lucretius (1. 936–42, 4. 11–17) four centuries before: ‘honey from heaven’ to sweeten the bitter medicine (*DI* 5. 1. 14). In

⁵³⁶ Cf. Šubrt (1993), 10.

⁵³⁷ *apud sapientes et doctos et principes huius saeculi scriptura sancta fide caret*, *DI* 5. 1. 15.

his verses Juvencus is applying what he earlier called the *dulcedo* of Vergil and others in the same way as Lactantius applied the eloquence of Ciceronian prose. Lactantius declares elsewhere that, 'although the truth can be defended without eloquence nonetheless it should be illuminated and somehow vindicated by brilliance and splendour of language so that it may steal more effectively into people's minds equipped by its own force and adorned by the embellishment of style...' ⁵³⁸ In the same way Juvencus, though he does not have Lactantius' philosophical programme, had embarked on a process of what Roberts has called 'improvement' of the gospel texts.

The ascendancy of Constantine, finally established in Juvencus' time, is a further factor to be taken into account. Christianity was becoming acceptable and perhaps indeed fashionable. It is impossible to tell how far the new policy of toleration and encouragement of Christians boosted their numbers ⁵³⁹, but it may certainly be presumed that curiosity about the new faith will have increased. Concerns with upward mobility, as well as mental openness and a desire for spiritual enlightenment, will have created great interest in the faith and a demand for further knowledge. A closer picture of his intended readers is difficult to attain; some of Juvencus' readers are known by name—Ausonius, Jerome, Paulinus of Nola, Prudentius, and perhaps Orosius ⁵⁴⁰—but just as we cannot gauge a writer's popularity from the evidence that remains, so it would be dangerous to treat this evidence as representative of the type of reader intended. It is not surprising that he appealed to poets, but he is certainly not writing specifically for them.

Against this general background a closer look should be taken at Juvencus' possible objectives. The long tradition of aggressive criticism of the Christian faith, and especially the Bible, penetrating beyond stylistic distaste to matters of substance, was still very strong. Well-informed critics such as Celsus and Porphyry focused to a large

⁵³⁸ (*veritatis . . .*) *quae licet possit sine eloquentia defendi . . . tamen claritate ac nitore sermonis illustranda et quodammodo adserenda est, ut potentius in animos influat et vi sua instructa et luce orationis ornata*, *DI* 1. 1. 10. See on these passages Roberts (1985), 67–9.

⁵³⁹ This is investigated by Salzman (2002).

⁵⁴⁰ Herzog (1989), 336 n. 11 claimed Orosius on the strength of *Oros.* 4. 20. 7 (*victoris laudes accumulare*), which verbally resembles Preface, line 8. For Ausonius see Green (1991), *Index Nominum*, s.v. Juvencus.

extent on one aspect that was particularly difficult, indeed offensive, for pagans: the figure of Christ, supposedly divine and human at once. The fact that Juvencus concentrates on Christ, and very much the Christ of the gospels, could in itself be regarded as an apologetic measure, but it is not easy to find evidence in his close paraphrase that he has an apologetic purpose and targets particular arguments. There are perhaps small hints of an apologetic presentation in two areas where the notion of Christ's alleged powers incurred some contempt—healing and teaching. As already suggested, the small addition to a miracle of healing that it was 'by touch alone' might be significant (1. 738); and it has also been noted earlier that at the end of another miracle of healing the narrator emphasizes the 'divine words' of the saviour (3. 192).⁵⁴¹ The aim would be to disallow suggestions of magic or charlatanry. As for Christ as teacher, there is certainly no attempt to hide or play down this role, but it is interesting that in two contexts where the gospel records call him 'teacher', Juvencus prefers the word *sanctus* or 'holy one' (2. 13, 176, 180: cf. Matt. 8: 19, John 3: 2). He is presented here as more than a mere teacher, for that title does not in itself raise him above the level of others. In general, Juvencus certainly makes much use of prophecy, a strong argument of earlier apologists, but it is not clear that he gives it a probative role. He may have chosen Matthew's gospel for other reasons, such as its fullness or its popularity.⁵⁴²

More may perhaps be achieved by considering the degree of explanation that Juvencus gives, and what he explains and what he does not. In general he does not explain things with the depth that would suggest a non-Christian readership, let alone a sceptical one. Certainly the simpler matters of Christian belief and practice seem to be taken for granted. We have seen that although he elaborates a word such as *salvator*, his *copia verborum* need not be seen as carrying with it an explanation, in the way that references to Jewish religion generally do.⁵⁴³ (It is from this, and not from any hostile tone in treating Jews and Jewish matters, that it may be inferred that he does not envisage a Jewish readership.) Juvencus' text also leaves many questions unanswered. A person completely new to Christianity

⁵⁴¹ See, p. 78.

⁵⁴² See, p. 24.

⁵⁴³ See pp 88–9.

would require to know, for example, why one should not throw pearls before swine (1. 664–7, Matt. 7: 6); why should pigs faced with pearls be aggressive? The saying is left highly opaque. A reader looking for guidance on a matter of ethical and social importance, such as divorce, might find the teaching unilluminating as it stands in the poem.⁵⁴⁴ Some renderings are obscure, such as the lines 3. 428–9 ‘but if he wildly despises the words of many, let him be punished in your eyes by the name of a different race.’⁵⁴⁵ Even allowing for a degree of occasional stylistic obscurity, and perhaps manuscript error,⁵⁴⁶ there are things which would not be clear without further help from within the Christian community. The hostile would be confirmed in their attitudes, and the curious baffled.

It seems to emerge that Juvencus is writing for Christians rather than non-Christians. It need not be assumed, however, that he is preaching to the converted; not because he is not preaching—though there are similarities, as suggested above, and sometimes perhaps one even glimpses favourite themes of Juvencus the pastor—but because the clear-cut distinction of converted and unconverted must be questioned, or at least the notion that their needs were systematically distinct. Juvencus the priest would know very well the variety of those in the Church. The ranks of those swelling the Church in the reign of Constantine would doubtless cover a whole spectrum: enthusiastic converts, sincere seekers after truth, half-hearted hangers-on, curious spectators, men and women attracted by the sense of community, and perhaps the upwardly mobile of many kinds. Lactantius was well aware that the understanding of some Christians was, in the felicitous words of the most recent translation of the *Divine Institutes*, ‘wobbly, and not firmly based on solid foundations.’⁵⁴⁷ As with their variety of knowledge and commitment, the social range of the new Christians, semi-Christians, and inquirers would be wide. Although the process

⁵⁴⁴ See pp. 115–17.

⁵⁴⁵ *sin et multorum contempserit efferus ora | sit tibi diversae multatus nomine gentis*. In fact this refers to a Gentile or a tax-collector (Matt. 18: 17). See also p. 90.

⁵⁴⁶ In the above-mentioned passage David Langslow has suggested to me the reading *multator*, a rare word which would mean a ‘collector of fines’.

⁵⁴⁷ Lactantius, *DI* 5. 1. 9; ed. Bowen and Garnsey (2003), 282.

cannot be clearly traced,⁵⁴⁸ Charlet may well have been right to draw attention to the fact that many ‘cultured nobles’ were converted to Christianity, and Juvencus must address their needs,⁵⁴⁹ but one should not stop at his own class. If Ausonius first read Juvencus when relatively young, he would be a good example of a non-senatorial, as well as perhaps a semi-Christian, reader;⁵⁵⁰ perhaps the same could even be said of the young Prudentius. Many sub-groups of the literary public might be thought to be potential beneficiaries of a work which offered instruction and edification, the insights that come from a new approach, and the diverting nature of the poetic medium, as well as pleurably demonstrating that the gulf between traditional writing and the seemingly rebarbative gospels could be bridged. Earlier readers had enjoyed a wealth of more or less novelistic compositions, at a lower level of sophistication, which provided, in parallel with the Bible, ‘stories that people want’;⁵⁵¹ later ones could turn to the new modes developed by such writers as Paulinus of Nola, Prudentius, and others. We should not underestimate the possible appeal of such ‘parallel’, parabiblical compositions, more or less based on biblical material, to a wide and varied constituency. Juvencus’ aims and target audience might be seen in a similar light, but with a new style, not a new storyline to savour.

Assessments of Juvencus’ purpose have often been expressed, rather narrowly, in terms of replacement. It is possible to read the important work of Herzog in this light; when he declares that Juvencus writes with the claim to present the Bible itself, or considers his work as the Bible itself and his own role as that of substitute evangelist,⁵⁵² he could be understood to be saying that Juvencus’ work is designed to replace the gospels for contemporary Romans, Christianizing and modernizing them for the fourth-century audience. As has been seen, he greatly exaggerated the extent of this process, and in any case the logic of his application of Form Criticism to *Biblepik* suggests that at the most this would be a kind of extra gospel, a gospel emanating from and moulded by a particular *Sitz im Leben*. Either interpretation would match Juvencus’ claim made in

⁵⁴⁸ Salzman (2002), seeks to trace the careers of Christian magistrates, who certainly do not overwhelm other categories in our sources.

⁵⁴⁹ Charlet (1988), 84.

⁵⁵⁰ Green (1993).

⁵⁵¹ See Cameron (1991), 89–119.

⁵⁵² Herzog (1975), 93 and 115.

the Preface that his work would be eternal, a claim which it is difficult to see as anything but greatly over-enthusiastic. That Juvencus could see no role, or saw a reduced role, for the canonical gospels, difficult and often problematic though they were, seems hard to credit.

It has also been suggested that there is an educational purpose, at least in the long term, and that Juvencus should be placed in the context of the establishment of a rival literature, whether for individual use or the use of the community. The 'conscious programme' of building up a 'literature of Christian content in antique form', postulated by Curtius,⁵⁵³ is surely an anachronism reflecting the later fifth century, when a substantial body of Christian literature had accumulated (though not in any perceptible 'programme'). The jerky development of Christian literature does not warrant such a notion. Nor is it plausible to see Juvencus' undertaking as directed principally towards educational needs;⁵⁵⁴ there is no evidence that the Christians thought at this stage, or before they were almost compelled to it by the emperor Julian, of designing a literary curriculum of their own.⁵⁵⁵ It is unlikely, too, that Raby's confident assertion that Juvencus wrote to replace Vergil in the affections of his individual readers, and to steer Christians away from the 'perilous beauties' of classical epic, is apt.⁵⁵⁶ No doubt Juvencus would have wished that readers would turn to him, and take some parts of Vergil with reservations; but the signs of his own affection and respect for Vergil certainly do not support the notion that he aimed to sideline the *Aeneid* altogether. Whereas Proba, writing in the time of Julian, can be thought to have tried to preserve Vergil's metre and diction from impending oblivion for Christian readers,⁵⁵⁷ Juvencus is much less close, and his technique is one of adaptation, which surely implies admiration of Vergil rather than a desire to replace him.

Juvencus is not, in a famous phrase of Augustine, engaged in spoiling the Egyptians, rescuing from classical civilization such intellectual material as might directly serve the Christian faith and neglecting the remainder; nor will Augustine's younger contemporary Sedulius or the later Arator see their work in that light. Classical

⁵⁵³ Curtius (1953), 459.

⁵⁵⁴ Cf. Mohrmann (1958), 1. 154.

⁵⁵⁵ Green (1995), 558–60.

⁵⁵⁶ Raby (1953), 17.

⁵⁵⁷ Green (1995), 554–60.

culture is not viewed as an oppressor, from whom its best parts must be wrenched or purloined with a view to converting them and putting them to their true use. It might even be better to envisage an *entente cordiale*, at least at the literary level, in the early fourth century. For Lactantius the poets spoke with a *licentia* which must be understood and respected; and he sees the authorities that he uses in a different spirit from later Christian writers, not of course accepting them uncritically, but calmly analysing what they offer. Juvencus, within the limitations of his paraphrase, similarly takes over what he can from Vergil and post-Vergilian epic in a way that shows respect, even affection, for Vergil and was intended to exploit, not expunge, his unparalleled claim on the affections of late Romans.

Sedulius

WHO WAS SEDULIUS?

In view of his great later reputation and very widespread diffusion it is perhaps surprising that of the three poets studied in this book Sedulius, as a historical figure, is the most obscure. Unlike Juvenecus, the aristocratic Spanish priest, and Arator, the high-ranking official in Gothic Ravenna and then sub-deacon in papal Rome, Sedulius eludes attempts to get even a basic picture of who he was and the circumstances of his life. His name is usually given as Sedulius *tout court*—a few manuscripts add Caelius, Coelius, Caecilius, or something similar¹—and there is no evidence of noble birth. Uncertainty surrounds his early life, his ecclesiastical rank, and the dating of his work, the *Carmen Paschale*. Like Juvenecus, he appears in a roll-call of ‘famous men’; but in this case it is a work of Isidore, written in the seventh century,² offering little more than a survey of its writer’s wide reading. Isidore may be correct to say that Sedulius was a priest (*presbyter*); it is unlikely, at least at the time when he wrote the poem, that he was a bishop (in spite of Alcuin’s and other medieval data),³ but other evidence, to be presented shortly, makes him a layman.⁴ His *patria* is discussed below. Our lack of reliable information

¹ Springer (1988), 29 and n. 22. Some modern scholars have confused him with the ninth-century Irishman Sedulius Scottus, with unfortunate results (Springer 1998, 28 n. 16): Sigerson (1922), for example, found in him early foreshadowings of medieval Irish poetry.

² Isidore, *De Viris Illustribus* 20 (PL 83. 1094).

³ For Alcuin see PL 101. 609. See also the acrostichs in Huemer’s edn. of Sedulius, 307–10, which spell out *Sedulius antistes*, with Springer (1988), 29.

⁴ The deferential tone with which he addresses the presbyter Macedonius (see p. 154) need not imply inferior ecclesiastical rank. Such expression of respect is normal.

about him is certainly not due to neglect or unpopularity as a writer; he was widely and appreciatively read.⁵ He is very honourably mentioned in the *Decretum Gelasianum*,⁶ where the judgement *insigni laude praeferimus*⁷ is rather more favourable than that gained by Juvenecus.

There is a potentially helpful source of information, in the form of a brief biographical notice, in many of Sedulius' manuscripts (at least thirty of them include it, according to Springer).⁸ In its original form this is not later than the ninth century, but the circumstances of its composition are not known. The various versions of it differ to some extent among themselves in their wording, and there is some evidence of interpolation and later expansions. The following version, from Paris BN Lat. 18554, may be taken as representative:

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.

Here begins the art of Sedulius the poet, who, first, as a layman, learnt philosophy in Italy. Later, along with other kinds of metres, he taught the epic metre at the suggestion of Macedonius. He wrote his books in Greece at the time when the emperors were the younger Theodosius son of Arcadius and Valentinian son of Constantius.

Some details in this thumbnail sketch seem to come from the poem itself, or from Sedulius' dedicatory letter to Macedonius,⁹ but whether we can divine the sources of the data or not, the evidence must be weighed with care. Springer is right to approach these reports with scepticism, but we need not be driven by the paucity of trustworthy data to pronounce the evidence 'difficult to discount'.¹⁰

⁵ See the edition of Huemer, pp. 361–71, and chapter 4, *passim*.

⁶ See p. 8.

⁷ 'we distinguish him with outstanding praise'. Comparison is not implied by either the verb or the context of the notice, in which Orosius precedes and Juvenecus follows him.

⁸ Springer (1995), *passim*.

⁹ See pp. 154–61.

¹⁰ Springer (1988), 23.

That he studied in Italy (some versions make him also a native of Italy) cannot be confirmed, but is perfectly reasonable; and there is early medieval evidence which makes him a teacher in Rome.¹¹ A different view, however, was put forward seventy years ago by McDonald.¹² Although adequately refuted by Springer it must be re-examined, in view of its uncritical reinstatement in an influential review,¹³ which goes on to found on it a bold statement of Sedulius' purpose in writing the *Carmen*,¹⁴ and its unqualified acceptance in various places, including a respected work of reference.¹⁵ McDonald began by dismissing this biographical notice as unreliable, because of the variation between manuscripts and the occasional error.¹⁶ He then pointed to two passages of Sedulius' poem in which he found evidence indicating a different region, that of southern Gaul (which quickly expands in the article to take in Spain and northern Italy). The first of these items is a gruesome detail in Sedulius' account of the massacre of the Innocents by Herod, where the gospel (Matt. 2: 16) says simply that he killed them (*occidit*). Sedulius in his account has their heads beaten on the ground, an interpretation paralleled in ivories from Marseilles and Provence, whereas depictions from other areas show the use of swords or lances. But in fact, as Springer says, Sedulius' detail is likely to derive not from this, or any other, iconographical tradition but from a vivid passage in which Prudentius describes the massacre (*Cath.* 12. 118–19 *illisa cervix cautibus | spargit cerebrum lacteum*).¹⁷ As we shall see, Prudentius is a strong influence on Sedulius in various ways,¹⁸ and surely we

¹¹ Aethilwald, of the seventh century, and Paschasius Radbertus, of the ninth; see Springer (1988), 27 and n. 14.

¹² A. D. McDonald (1933). Fontaine (1959), 839 n. 1 resurrects the guess of Norden that Sedulius was a Spaniard.

¹³ Ratkowitsch (1989).

¹⁴ See p. 201 and 242.

¹⁵ Dekkers (1995).

¹⁶ In fact the ascription of error was itself erroneous. The notice in question, in Cod. Vind. 85, does not claim Jerome as the source of its information as McDonald alleged, but as the writer who began the 'catalogue of famous men' which is given as the source: *sicut in catalogo illustrium reperimus, quem beatus Hieronymus inchoavit, Paterius vero discipulus eius perfecit* (Huemer (1878), 21). It is not known who Paterius is, or whether the name is corrupt.

¹⁷ 'a head dashed against the stones sprays milk-white brain'.

¹⁸ See pp. 148–50.

need look no further than that. McDonald's second detail is from the passage in which Sedulius relates the discovery of Christ's empty tomb in *CP* 5. 323–4 (*virgo parens aliaeque simul cum munere matres | ... venere gementes*).¹⁹ McDonald sees here the influence of monuments first produced in southern France which show three women at the scene. But it is clear from Sedulius' account that at this point he has switched from Matthew, who does not say that the women saw that the tomb was empty,²⁰ to the versions of Luke, and perhaps Mark. They mention more than two women.²¹ The iconographical parallel is not required; it is much more likely that Sedulius acted off his own bat in combining the accounts of the evangelists in this way, as he often does. Other points of McDonald may be quickly dismissed. The fact that in the Gelasian Decree Sedulius is accompanied by Juvenius (of Elvira) and Orosius (a native of Spain, who travelled widely) tells us nothing about where Sedulius wrote. Nor can anything about Sedulius' origins or location be inferred from the similarities in language between Sedulius and Paulinus of Pella, who lived most of his life in Bordeaux, Paulinus of Périgueux, or Petrus Chrysologus, a preacher from northern Italy, since (to say nothing of the uncertainty about such parallels and the direction of imitation)²² poems like this seem to become known quickly within a wide area. All that emerges is an interesting dearth of poets from central and southern Italy, compared with the vast area in which McDonald would prefer to place him.

Continuing with the biographical notice embedded in some of the manuscripts, we must now consider the statement that he studied philosophy. Nothing in the poem or the liminary material supports it—he names no Christian or secular philosophers, alludes to none of their tenets, and shows no particular liking or aptitude for philosophy—but it is at least compatible with material in the letter to

¹⁹ 'His virgin parent and other mothers together with her... came with offerings to the tomb, weeping.'

²⁰ Matt. 28: 1–2.

²¹ Luke 24: 3 and 10; Mark 16: 1–5. See also Moretti Pieri (1969), 194–6. Sedulius is also anxious to include the Virgin Mary among the mothers. See p. 208.

²² This data derives via *RE* n.s. 2. 1025 from *CSEL* 16. 171 and 315, where it may be seen to be weak, except perhaps in the case of Paulinus of Périgueux.

Macedonius which precedes the poem.²³ There he states that he was once busy with secular studies but felt it necessary to put his secular education to good use.²⁴ ‘God grieved that the stupid appreciation of worldly wisdom should be present any longer within me and seasoned with salt from heaven my absurd inclination to mortal knowledge.’²⁵ These words do not imply the study of philosophy, but it is not impossible that his secular studies included it. No doubt it was taught in various places and by various persons in Italy and elsewhere. It would be a misunderstanding of the words *propriae disputationis* (‘my own discussion’) found in the letter (p. 4, line 11) to take this as a sign of philosophy, but a biographer might conceivably have done so; or he might have been influenced by Sedulius’ attack on *Attica... doctrina* (‘Athenian teaching’) in *CP* 1. 40. But none of this adds up to a confirmation of the statement that he studied philosophy. As for his education in general, it is difficult to glean much from Sedulius’ work itself, except for the very obvious facts that he was well read in the classics and expert in the skills of rhetoric.

Another prominent item is highly surprising: the pervasive connection with Greece. The detail that Sedulius ‘taught a hexameter poem along with other metres’ is puzzling: have we come across a class in verse composition, or did he somehow ‘teach epic’ in the modern sense? The meaning is surely that he wrote a didactic poem, which must be the *Carmen* (obviously, his hymns cannot be meant). According to other versions of this, he actually taught secular letters. Whatever is meant here, the following notion that he ‘wrote his books in Greece’ (this refers to the *Carmen*, and perhaps the *Opus Paschale*)²⁶ is hard to swallow. The linguistic divide between Latin-speakers and Greek-speakers in the fifth century is very clear,²⁷ and few Latin speakers are attested in Greece. That he had personal reasons for going there, or did so in the pursuance of some duties totally unknown to us, whether administrative, legal, or military,

²³ See pp. 154–7.

²⁴ A point commonly made, and conventional; but the circumstances that elicited it were common.

²⁵ Huemer’s edn., p. 2, lines 9–12: *Deus... stultos in me mundanae sapientiae diutius haberi sensus indoluit ac fatuum prudentiae mortalis ingenium caelesti sale condidit.*

²⁶ See pp. 157–9.

²⁷ Jones (1973), 986–8.

cannot be ruled out; but it would be a strange place for such an accomplished user of the Latin language to write or teach. Some knowledge of the Greek language is indicated in his works, but it amounts to no more than Juvenecus had—even less if Juvenecus' use of certain loan-words is borne in mind—and could have been second-hand.²⁸ The fact that Sedulius' superior has the name Macedonius does not support the case; this was held by a number of Westerners in the fourth and fifth centuries. The names of the other people mentioned in the letter to Macedonius are largely Roman and do not suggest a Greek milieu: Ursinus (two of them may have this name),²⁹ Laurentius, Gallianus, Felix, and the sisters Perpetua and Syncletice. Syncletice has a name that is Greek, but the fact that (if the identification of *PLRE* is accepted)³⁰ she received a Latin translation of a work of Basil, the Greek theologian, rather points the other way.³¹ The others in this group seem to be quite unknown.

It is not likely, then, that this spiritual community was situated in the Greek world, or that Sedulius was active in Greece, but some explanation must be sought for this item. The idea of Ratkowitsch that the name Macedonius suggested it to the biographer is improbable,³² for the name, as stated above, was common in the West, and nobody, however ill-informed, would expect him to be a Macedonian or Greek. It is also unlikely that it was suggested to an interpolator by the preceding mention of philosophy; the reference to Greece seems an integral part of the biographical notice, with its antithetical structure of 'pagan studying philosophy in Italy' and 'Christian writing religious poem in Greece'. Surely the reference to Greece is a mistaken inference from *CP* 1. 38–44, where Sedulius addresses readers who are infected by the 'Attic learning of Athenian poison' and the 'filth of the Athenian village', and calls upon the descendants

²⁸ He notes at *CP* 1. 186–7 that only one letter differentiates the name of Elijah from the Greek word for 'sun'.

²⁹ But the second name is more likely to be Ursicinus; see p. 155, where more is said about these individuals.

³⁰ *PLRE* 2. 1048.

³¹ For this identification see Altaner (1940), 168. Augustine apparently used the work between 401 and 414, in *De Genesi ad Litteram*, which enables Springer (1988) 24, to give a *terminus post quem* for *CP*.

³² Ratkowitsch (1986).

of Theseus not to wander in a labyrinth.³³ These allusions to Athens and Athenians are metaphorical; they stand for pagan philosophical learning in general, as when Tertullian famously exclaimed: ‘What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?’³⁴ Some centuries later, the writer of the medieval *Ecloga Theoduli* (a poem which, as it happens, owes much to Sedulius),³⁵ who made his allegorical figure of Falsehood a citizen of Athens, was similarly misunderstood by various readers, including some moderns.³⁶ Sedulius, then, stayed where he was in the Latin-speaking world, perhaps Italy, and wrote for a local community, perhaps Italian, as well as a wider audience of well-educated Latin speakers.³⁷ He is well versed in the Latin classics, and in Latin poetic techniques, and his theological tenets fit in well, as we shall see, with a Western or Italian context.³⁸

The dating provided by these notices may be quickly accepted. Even without the details about their fathers, absent from many versions, the rulers would have to be Valentinian III (425–55) and Theodosius II (408–50). The possibility of another period when the Augusti were a Theodosius and a Valentinian (379–92) can be dismissed, for although it is much harder to glean references to current events or practices from Sedulius than from Juvencus, at least the theological background is clearer: it is inconceivable that a writer in that earlier period could have mentioned the doctrine of original sin, as Sedulius does.³⁹ The later date also fits in well with Sedulius’ clearly anti-Nestorian theological agenda,⁴⁰ for Nestorianism was strong, and a bone of great contention, between the outbreak of the controversy in 428 and the Council of Chalcedon in 451. As we shall see, Rome was involved in the year 430, when a council was convened by Pope Celestine to discuss an approach by Nestorius.⁴¹ If the

³³ The Latin of the passages translated is *Attica Cecropii serpit doctrina veneni; Athenaei paedorem linquite pagi*. See p. 164.

³⁴ Tertullian, *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 7. 9.

³⁵ See pp. 361–2.

³⁶ Green (1982), 52.

³⁷ For his target audiences, see pp. 244–7.

³⁸ See pp. 239–40.

³⁹ *OP*, p. 200, line 15/16 *peccatum nos... originale foedaverat*. Cf. *CP* 2. 34.

⁴⁰ See pp. 240–2.

⁴¹ Wessel (2004), 111 and p. 239.

compiler, whoever he was,⁴² arrived at his date on these theological grounds, it was a very reasonable inference.

Before leaving this discussion of the basic details of Sedulius' life, we must consider a piece of evidence which might be thought to support an alternative, later, date. This is a subscription in the oldest of the extant manuscripts and several others, in which the writer Turcius Rufus Asterius,⁴³ the well-attested consul of the year 494, claims that Sedulius' 'sacred work', identified as 'one book on the Old Testament and four on the New', which had been left among the poet's dispersed papers,⁴⁴ was brought together and unified by him.⁴⁵ This is puzzling. Were Sedulius' papers in chaos for some fifty years, and had anyone kept them that long? Had the poem fallen into oblivion, so that it needed to be presented again to the public, as Ebert suggested?⁴⁶ Or should Sedulius' date be moved to allow the hypothesis that Asterius worked on the papers soon after his death? This is impossible, for it clearly emerges from the second letter to Macedonius that *Opus Paschale* was written by Sedulius after *Carmen Paschale*⁴⁷ and follows it closely, and the differences between them are certainly not the result of a disordered state of the poem.⁴⁸ The disarray of his papers, and indeed their survival, is surprising if the poem had been published half-a-century before, but credible. Perhaps, as Roberts suggests,⁴⁹ Asterius had returned to the original drafts to settle certain problems. Or perhaps all he did was to make slight changes in the order of episodes. The distinguished man's intervention must also be seen in terms of ancient conceptions of editing. Claims of this kind are regularly made, in the context not

⁴² Gennadius was suggested by Huemer (1878), 18, appealing to evidence of Sirmond that his work was once more extensive than it now is. The fact that Gennadius uses this form of dating for another writer (see p. 151) is insufficient to reinstate this hypothesis. See also n. 16 above.

⁴³ Springer (1988), 25 and n. 7, exaggerates the degree of variation in the manuscripts. The only real uncertainty is whether he should be given a fourth name, Quintus.

⁴⁴ *quod Sedulius inter cartulas suas sparsas reliquit*. Other versions have *dispersum* for *sparsas*.

⁴⁵ *et recollecti adunatique sunt*.

⁴⁶ Ebert (1889), 373 n. 2.

⁴⁷ Springer (1988), 26; for the relation between *CP* and *OP*, see pp. 157–9.

⁴⁸ See pp. 157–9.

⁴⁹ Roberts (1985), 77–8.

only of classical authors but also Christian ones, not with any fraudulent intent, though a degree of pride or pretentiousness may be suspected, but to indicate that the writer of the *subscriptio* has in some way left his mark on the text.⁵⁰ Compared with the labours of a modern editor, this contribution may be minute. The same will be true of Asterius' recension of Vergil recorded in the Medicean manuscript, which will be mentioned later.⁵¹ His revision of Sedulius' *Carmen* should certainly not be considered to be a *de luxe* version for submission to the compilers of the *Decretum Gelasianum*—a sort of early assessment exercise—as was once thought.⁵²

BETWEEN JUVENCUS AND SEDULIUS

There is thus an interval of a hundred years or more between the probable date of *Carmen Paschale* and the more precisely definable date of Juvenecus' poem. In his overview of the development of Christian poetry Herzog made much of this long interval (though for him it was reduced somewhat by his inclusion of Proba) in his attempt to show that the paraphrastic programme of Juvenecus had entered a *Sackgasse* or dead end.⁵³ But this should not surprise. Such discontinuity is a frequent and familiar phenomenon in Roman literary history, and is seldom if ever considered to pose a problem in charting the development of a genre. It would be unwise to infer with Herzog that either Juvenecus' work or the project of Christian epic was unpopular or unsuccessful. The argument could indeed be stood on its head: the fact that no early followers of Juvenecus appear might be a sign of success, and of a feeling that such an industrious work on the gospels needed no revision or amendment. Among Christian writers there was as yet no dynamic of emulation, as there was to be in the Renaissance, with Latin-verse paraphrases of

⁵⁰ See Cameron (1977), 26–8 and Zetzel (1980), 56–7.

⁵¹ See pp. 352–3.

⁵² Huemer (1878), 35–7. Understanding of the *Decretum* has moved on; see p. 8 and n. 42.

⁵³ Herzog (1975), 166–7.

the Psalter, for example, following one another almost every year.⁵⁴ It is true that Juvencus is little quoted before the end of the fourth century, but considering the nature of Christian writing in the fourth century and its quite different concerns, that is no problem.

But if the hiatus between Juvencus and Sedulius is thought to need explanation, then one important factor in the response must be the impact of the emperor Julian's pagan reaction. In his brief tenure of power (361–3) Julian sought to rekindle belief in the old Greek gods, the traditional gods of literature, to secure for them their due respect, and to show, especially to those who denigrated or ignored them, that, so to speak, they had teeth. The strength of reactions, and not only Christian ones, to his famous edict on education, which had the effect of banning Christians from teaching the traditional curriculum, indicates that Christian teachers had not been particularly worried about the gods of classical literature and saw nothing untoward in studying it. They were false gods, to be sure, or puny and deceitful ones, but susceptible of edifying interpretation. Fictions could even be pleasant.⁵⁵ In an illuminating contribution to the understanding of the cultural dynamics of the fourth century Markus gathered a variety of evidence that tends to demonstrate, before Julian, a smooth symbiosis between pagans and Christians.⁵⁶ The Calendar of the year 354⁵⁷ combines Christian and traditional material, bishops and martyrs as well as consuls. According to Ammianus, Constantius himself had literary interests of a traditional kind.⁵⁸ The rhetor Prohaeresius, a Christian convert, was respected by the emperor Constans and the emperor Julian alike.⁵⁹ The sharp shock delivered to this world by Julian turned out to be a short one, but had a major effect in the longer term. It hardened Christian attitudes towards the pagan inheritance, so that old fissures opened up. Tertullian's 'What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?' is echoed now by Jerome's 'What has Horace to do with the Psalter? Vergil with the

⁵⁴ Gaertner (1956).

⁵⁵ Lactantius, *De Ira Dei* 20. 2 calls Ovid *poeta non insuavis*, quoting *M.* 3. 135–7.

⁵⁶ Markus (1974).

⁵⁷ See Salzman (1990).

⁵⁸ Ammianus 21. 16. 4.

⁵⁹ Bowersock (1978), 64.

Gospel? Cicero with the apostle?'⁶⁰ In the same letter he portrayed himself condemned as a Ciceronian, and no Christian.⁶¹ Paulinus of Nola addressed a withering reply to his former teacher Ausonius.⁶² Augustine, more consistent on such matters than either Paulinus or Jerome, made a scathing attack on traditional aims and methods of education in his *Confessions*. While it may be too much to say that the process of assimilation of classical culture by Christians went into reverse,⁶³ for the picture has become much richer and more nuanced in the last thirty years,⁶⁴ there were at least judders and jolts along the way. Even when allowance is made for the rhetorical flourishes of Christian writers, and the overreaction of modern critics to them, there was still a strong element of antipathy and conflict.⁶⁵ Any impulse towards classicizing poetry would be highly suspect. The most notable Christian verse of the period is the hymns of Hilary and Ambrose.

Significantly, it is in the work of a writer with his roots in the first half of the century, the versatile Ausonius of Bordeaux, that the beginnings of a return to the earlier state of symbiosis may be detected. To some he may still be an uncertain or a pale Christian,⁶⁶ but against that there is a mixture of clear *prima facie* evidence and circumstantial detail.⁶⁷ There is no good reason to question his authorship of the poem known as the *Oratio*,⁶⁸ a poem uncompromising in its presentation of doctrine, impressively sonorous in its invocation of the deity, and sensitive and well informed on matters of Christian behaviour and ethics. There are in it occasional quotations both of scripture and of classical authors. Written in the early

⁶⁰ Jerome, *Ep.* 22. 29 (CSEL 54. 189) *Quid facit cum psalterio Horatius? cum evangelii Maro? cum apostolo Cicero?*

⁶¹ The observations of Adkin (1984), 119–26, do not greatly affect the normal view of this passage.

⁶² See Green (1991), 708–17.

⁶³ Markus (1974), 5.

⁶⁴ To mention just two recent examples, Davidson in Rees (2004) and Deproost (1998).

⁶⁵ Various papers in Rees (2004) give a good statement of modern positions.

⁶⁶ Fontaine (1981), 106–8

⁶⁷ Green (1993), 39–48.

⁶⁸ Green (1991), 250. The recent attempt of Turkan-Verkerk (2003, 156–65) to deny it to Paulinus is not convincing.

380s, it was important enough in later decades to be adapted for theological purposes,⁶⁹ and it also influenced Prudentius⁷⁰ and Merobaudes,⁷¹ as well as Sedulius.

A very important role is played by Paulinus of Nola, the pupil and protégé of Ausonius until he famously shook off the yoke and left Bordeaux and his mentor for good in about 390. Much is made of this reaction,⁷² quite rightly, and no less in recent years, when scholars have given more attention to the pressures on Paulinus and the nature of their correspondence than they used to. Oddly, Paulinus the convert who gave such a spectacular brush-off to his classics teacher will show more interest than Ausonius ever did in entering into dialogue with the classical genres.⁷³ His early work, which can only be quickly surveyed here, provides abundant evidence of an interest in developing Christian poetry without deserting the classics. He makes much use of Vergil in the early *natalicia* 12, 13, and 14. His involvement with Jovius and Licentius shows him seeking to direct and manage their notions of poetry in a Christian context. His poem and prose letter to Jovius have been much studied for their evidence of new Christian poetics;⁷⁴ in passing, we may note how Paulinus raises the question of cosmological themes and gives at least one interesting example of the possibilities of paraphrase.⁷⁵

The three paraphrases by Paulinus, all of Psalms, are of particular interest in the present context. It is not possible to date them closely, or to situate them in a narrative of his spiritual or poetic development with any certainty, but it is reasonable to place them among his early writings, with Hartel.⁷⁶ Whatever the exact circumstances—they may have followed Jerome's comment in a letter to him (the one in which he castigated Proba) that for the Christian David was at

⁶⁹ Green (1991), 252.

⁷⁰ Charlet (1980), 281.

⁷¹ MGH AA 14. 19–20.

⁷² See Witke (1971), 3–74, Green (1991), 647–9 and references there, and Trout (1999), 53–77.

⁷³ On Paulinus see Green (1971); cf. the study of Ausonius' *Moselle* in Green (1989).

⁷⁴ See Witke (1971), 75–101, Trout (1999), 140–3.

⁷⁵ At c. 22. 54–9 he paraphrases John 1: 1. See also lines 139–40.

⁷⁶ Hartel (1999). On this period of Paulinus' life see Trout (1999), 78–103.

once Simonides, Pindar, Alcaeus, Horace, Catullus, and Serenus⁷⁷—it seems an unsurprising move to have sought an outlet for his talents in Psalm paraphrase.⁷⁸ In these three works he shows great fidelity to the original without eschewing small changes such as the addition of adjectives and minor variations in word-order, just like Juvencus, but there is an important difference, and one which foreshadows *in parvo* later developments of epic, in that several lines of each poem are explicitly devoted to exposition. In Poem 7, on Psalm 1, Paulinus takes up the point of sin and judgement, explaining how salvation is possible in spite of damnable deeds, and in Poem 8, on the second Psalm, he briefly elaborates on the message of the Psalm to ‘kings, and those who govern men’s hearts and hold power’ in lines which hold allusions to Lucan, Vergil, and Juvencus.⁷⁹ For his third paraphrase (Poem 9) he chose Psalm 137 (136), for reasons which are far from clear,⁸⁰ and devotes much of his version to an allegorical explanation of the drastic statement in the last verse, ‘Happy is he who takes your little ones and dashes them against a rock.’⁸¹ But Paulinus did not pursue his interest in paraphrase, and paraphrase of scripture of any kind is very rare in the *natalicia*, where perhaps he reckoned that putting scripture in verse form would not be helpful to his audience of rejoicing (and sometimes over-merry) worshippers. He reserves it for individuals such as Nicetas in Poem 17 and Martinianus in Poem 24.⁸²

There is a more extensive negotiation of the possibilities of paraphrase in what may well have been another early work of Paulinus, the *Laus Sancti Iohannis*.⁸³ It is, as Paulinus implies in lines 7–8,

⁷⁷ Jerome, Ep. 53. 8 (CSEL 54. 461. 6–8).

⁷⁸ Perhaps the only ones from antiquity that anticipate the Renaissance fashion, see pp. 143–4.

⁷⁹ *reges et quicumque hominum famulantia corda | iudicio regitis, rerumque tenetis habenas*. Imitations and allusions are well presented in the new edition (Hartel 1999).

⁸⁰ Perhaps the opening verses (‘By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept... we hung up our lyres’) are somehow appropriate to his situation; but he did not stop writing poetry.

⁸¹ *Beatus qui tenebit et adlidet parvulos tuos ad petram*.

⁸² e.g. at 17. 89 and 171–2, and 24. 515–9, in a small catena of quotations.

⁸³ Turkan-Verkerk (2003), 155–66 speculatively assigns it to Drepanius Pacatus; the attribution to Paulinus is indeed less than secure, but its apparent theological shortcomings are not an objection.

essentially a paraphrase of Luke 1; in places it is close enough to invite a detailed comparison with Juvencus' rendering, but elsewhere shows extensive freedom in its expansion of the original and in copious digression. In some ways we may agree with Trout that it links the New Testament paraphrases of Juvencus and Sedulius, if not, as he says, 'adroitly';⁸⁴ there are, for example, passages of strong panegyric,⁸⁵ of 'debate' (with the Jews, 163–72), and of meditative praise of God (276–302). An opening invocation of some weight (1–26) humbly situates Paulinus in the footsteps of the prophets and other writers, especially David, who set to music the words of the prophets;⁸⁶ he sees his function as 'relaxing the minds of readers'.⁸⁷ He also highlights that his cheap praise is the sincere service (*meritum*, 13) of a sinner (25–6), perspectives that were present in the Preface of Juvencus.⁸⁸ The poem as a whole is productively examined by Herzog, albeit against the background of his contention that epic is virtually extinct.

The poetry of Paulinus' close contemporary Prudentius, which is in some respects even more varied, was very influential on Sedulius, and in some noteworthy ways. In his *Cathemerinon*, which take the form of lyrically conceived hymns inspired by different occasions but designed for personal meditation rather than liturgical use, he likes to present biblical narratives so as to develop the symbolism inherent in the occasion of the poem or enhance his frequent moral exhortations.⁸⁹ So in *Cathemerinon* 5 (*Hymnus ad Incensum Lucernae*, 'Hymn for the lighting of the lamp') we find stories of the burning bush, then the light that guided the Israelites, then their crossing of the Red Sea and their nourishment in the desert, composed in a relatively free style of paraphrase (31–80) and arranged in series so as to present a varied, vivid, and cumulatively powerful spiritual

⁸⁴ Trout (1999), 99.

⁸⁵ Emphasized in Herzog's study of this poem (1975), 212–23.

⁸⁶ Sedulius will argue (*CP* 1. 23–5) that his experience of singing the Psalms qualifies him to write verse. See pp. 162–3.

⁸⁷ Such an aim, seldom articulated so clearly in Christian verse, deserves more attention than it has received.

⁸⁸ See also Costanza (1985*a*), for a study of the influence of Juvencus and Paulinus on Sedulius.

⁸⁹ On Prudentius in general, see Fontaine (1981), 177–227.

message. Likewise in Hymn 7 (*Hymnus Ieiunantium*, ‘Hymn for those who fast’) the *exempla* of Elijah, Moses, John the Baptist, Jonah, and finally Jesus (26–195) are expressed in the poet’s own words and with various modes and degrees of expansion; this too may have helped to mould Sedulius’ treatment of the Old Testament episodes (*CP* 1. 103–237), although in this case Sedulius imposed strict brevity on himself. But it is another hymn (*Hymnus Omnium Horarum*, ‘Hymn for every season’)⁹⁰ that deserves special attention, and not only for its striking opening lines,⁹¹ in which Prudentius calls to his slave for his plectrum so that he may sing the *gesta Christi insignia*—the famous deeds of Christ, whom alone his Muse (*Camena*) and lyre should sing. The *gesta* of Christ will recall Juvenius,⁹² but it has more in common with the celebration of miracles on which Sedulius based his poem. Prudentius’ hymn is very much, in metre and setting, a lyric poem, written in the trochaic metre and articulated in stanzas of three lines, but presents, in quick succession, almost half the number of Christ’s miracles that are presented in Sedulius’ hexameters. Just as in Sedulius, there is considerably more than the dominical miracles in the strict sense, for Prudentius begins by celebrating the work of creation and explaining the divine economy in the provision of salvation through the child of Mary; and he ends, again like Sedulius, with a sustained account of Christ’s passion, death, and ascension. The variety of Sedulius’ approach in his own series of gospel scenes may owe something as well to Prudentius’ remarkable fertility in his modes of re-enacting the narratives and his constantly changing focus from one cameo to the next.

Developments of gospel narratives of miracle also play a major role in one of Prudentius’ theological poem-tractates, *Apotheosis* (‘Divinity of Christ’). Its central sections include descriptions of the stilling of the storm, the healing of the blind man by the pool of Siloam, the feeding of the multitude, and the raising of Lazarus (650–781), narrated most vividly and vigorously; and the treatment of the birth of Christ which precedes this (563–649) is in a high

⁹⁰ Or ‘every hour’, ‘every season’, perhaps even ‘every moment’.

⁹¹ *Da, puer, plectrum choreis ut canam fidelibus | dulce carmen et melodum, gesta Christi insignia.*

⁹² See pp. 20–1.

rhetorical style, like that of Sedulius in Book 2. Elsewhere there are shorter quotations of scripture, as in his other poetic tractate, *Hamartigenia* ('The Origin of Sin'); in lines 506–11, for example, there is a short version of Rom. 8: 20–2, followed by quotations from another letter, in a rather more elevated style.⁹³ This foreshadows both the use of proof texts and the poetic development of a biblical passage, common in Sedulius and Arator.⁹⁴ No disharmony is perceived between close paraphrase and literary embellishment. There are occasional paraphrases, allusive or summarizing rather than exact, in the sequence of lyric poems on various martyrs (*Peristephanon*), especially in the long Poem 10, at lines 18–20 (Matt. 10: 19), where the poet brings assurance to the persecuted that they will receive words to speak. (This is important in a poem where the martyr's tongue will be ripped out halfway through his speech.) Similarly, at 10. 38–40 (Matt. 8: 28) and 10. 839–40 the boy and his mother face death singing Psalm 116 (115): 15, rendered very closely in Prudentius' iambics as *pretiosa sancti mors sub aspectu Dei | tuus ille servus, prolis ancillae tuae*.⁹⁵ This summary review of possible influences on Sedulius has not included what is perhaps Prudentius' best-known work, the *Psychomachia*, or 'Battle in the Soul', a fact which may seem at first sight surprising; it is very much a mini-epic, but closely modelled on a Vergilian-type battle scene, which is not a path Sedulius needs to follow. But setting aside the carefully crafted military detail, one can see many verbal features which will be part and parcel of Sedulius' narrative style.⁹⁶

In the wake of Paulinus of Nola and Prudentius, Christian poetry in the fifth century shows great inventiveness, and the space occupied by Christian Latin verse expands remarkably. Experimental poems contemporary with Paulinus, and in some cases linked with circles in which he moved, such as the pastoral poem of Endelechius,⁹⁷ the

⁹³ Eph. 6: 12, 2: 2.

⁹⁴ At *Hamart.* 182–3, there is what seems a highly tendentious use of John 1: 3.

⁹⁵ 'Precious in the sight of God is the death of a holy one . . . he is your servant, the offspring of your servant.' The words of the Psalm (in the translation of the Septuagint version) are *pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum eius. . . ego servus tuus et filius ancillae tuae*.

⁹⁶ The influence of epic upon Sedulius is examined at pp. 209–26.

⁹⁷ See Green (2004*b*).

work *De Cereo Paschali* ('on the wax taper of Easter') now firmly linked with Drepanius Pacatus,⁹⁸ and various kinds of rough-hewn apologetic literature,⁹⁹ are followed by works more ambitious in aim and scope such as the paraenetic *Commonitorium* of Orientius and the theological polemics ascribed to Prosper of Aquitaine, or the autobiographical *Eucharisticos* of Paulinus of Pella and an important work of hagiography in Paulinus of Périgueux' *Life of Martin*.¹⁰⁰ From the first half of the fifth century there are two works that warrant a brief mention here: the *Heptateuchos* of Cyprian and the *Alethia* of Claudius Marius Victorius. As Roberts says in his very useful notices of these two writers,¹⁰¹ almost nothing is known of Cyprian, and even his name is not beyond dispute; he is inclined to agree with Herzog that we have a poem that has been attributed *faute de mieux* to the much earlier bishop Cyprian of Carthage.¹⁰² The other poet's name is not quite so hazy, but scholarly preference for the name Victorius rather than Victor, which gains some help from the notice of Gennadius' notice of the rhetor from Marseilles, has been established only relatively recently.¹⁰³ Their dates are also uncertain: Cyprian seems to make a resounding imitation of Claudian at *Exodus* 474–6 which puts him after 397,¹⁰⁴ while Victorius, according to Gennadius, died during the reigns of Theodosius II and Valentinian III.¹⁰⁵ It is not impossible on this evidence, even if we accept the general but tenuously supported opinion that Cyprian wrote before Victorius, that neither of these two epic works pre-dated Sedulius' *Carmen Paschale*, but in any case their value in the present context lies not in their power to reveal or suggest a relationship with Sedulius¹⁰⁶ but to show in a very general way how various

⁹⁸ Turkan-Verkerk (2003).

⁹⁹ On the most prominent of these see Fontaine (1981), 216–20, Döpp (1988).

¹⁰⁰ See, respectively, CSEL 16. 191–261, *PL* 51. 617–38, CSEL 16. 291–334 and 17–190.

¹⁰¹ Roberts (1985), 92–9.

¹⁰² Herzog (1975), pp. xxv–xxxii.

¹⁰³ Hovingh's edn. of Victorius, *Alethia* (1955), 15–16, using the evidence of the manuscripts and Gennadius, *De Viris Illustribus* 60.

¹⁰⁴ The date is that of Claudian's panegyric for the third consulate of Honorius, and the reference 7. 97–9 Hall. He may also echo Claudian 8. 118 Hall. It is not impossible that Cyprian is much later; Herzog (1975), 53–60.

¹⁰⁵ See p. 42.

¹⁰⁶ The parallels offered by Mayr (1916), 74–5 are not particularly cogent.

possibilities of Bible-based epic are being taken up. The difference between these two in approach could hardly be greater. In his rendering of the Heptateuch, Cyprian is close to Juvencus in the degree of his literalness—so much so that Herzog treated them together, in spite of the difference in time—though more selective, which is hardly surprising for one who tackled not only the Heptateuch but later books to boot.¹⁰⁷ Victorius, on the other hand, takes great freedom in applying theological reasoning to his topic, the first half of Genesis. He develops issues explored by Augustine, as Sedulius will do to some extent, but does so in an independent way;¹⁰⁸ he seems to operate in the broad theological space of semi-Pelagianism. Finally, mention should be made of a handful of smaller poems, mostly anonymous or pseudonymous, of which the details have been usefully collected by Springer.¹⁰⁹ Some of these show similarities to Sedulius, but given the current obscurity of these and other Christian poems of Late Antiquity, it would be rash in the extreme to venture a statement of their relationship to Sedulius. They may have been known to him when he wrote, or on the other hand they may be testimony to his influence. So Springer's *prima facie* valid parallel between a phrase of the short poem *Miracula Christi*¹¹⁰ might show that its author imitated Sedulius, but it might also be an independent essay on the popular, and at least originally apologetic, topic of Christ's miracles.¹¹¹

Sedulius, then, is the beneficiary of new conceptions of Christian poetry and striking new developments in the preceding fifty years or so, especially those of Paulinus of Nola and Prudentius. He was also indebted to the proliferation of exegetical writing and doctrinal debate, and it is possible in some cases to point to a writer or even a work that he used.¹¹² It is also relevant that—partly as a result of this profusion of Christian discourse in the *Christiana tempora* and partly as the result of the Christianization of society, however

¹⁰⁷ See CSEL 23. 209–11 for fragments of other books ascribed to him.

¹⁰⁸ Hovingh (1955), and, for a complete text, CCSL 128. 117–93.

¹⁰⁹ Springer (1988), 58–60.

¹¹⁰ MGH AA 10. 412–13.

¹¹¹ Cf. Tertullian, *Apology* 21. 17, and (with reservations about his date, see p. 2 and n. 3) Commodian, *De Duobus Populis* 635–60 (CCSL 128. 96–7).

¹¹² See pp. 234–6.

gradual—the Bible was becoming better known and its style more familiar. Even if many at the time would not agree with Augustine that obscurity demonstrates wisdom and eloquence, and solecisms and barbarisms are unimportant,¹¹³ the Bible is a fixture, and a prominent one, and at least to that extent less of a stylistic problem for new readers. It is not correct to say that the production of the Vulgate translation had made the Bible less open to criticism on such grounds,¹¹⁴ for Jerome's revision was a cautious one, keeping many old features,¹¹⁵ and it was adopted only very slowly.¹¹⁶ But because books of the Bible were better known, among Christians and non-Christians, and people in the middle, indeterminate ground, it was possible for Sedulius to do things with scripture that would not have been suitable to Juvencus a hundred years before. Where Juvencus paraphrased *paene ad verbum*, and in a manner which for all its fascination of detail is largely uniform, Sedulius can assume many things to be known to his audience or at least not completely novel or potentially absurd to them, and spread his rhetorical and even theological wings somewhat. It was perhaps for his great rhetorical resourcefulness that later writers saw him as 'sweet', among other things; and by these standards Juvencus may have appeared dry. Sedulius may have seen matters in these terms, but is not necessarily seeking to replace Juvencus, for whom he seems to have a high regard. In the rare cases where their descriptions show a clear inter-relationship, as in the episode of the Magi (*CP* 2. 73–82), Sedulius follows respectfully, and there is no cause to see rivalry beyond normal poetic emulation. Similarly, if Sedulius seems at times to correct Juvencus (for example, in the chronological arrangement of the nativity episodes) he need not be passing a judgement on his predecessor. The heroes, the Christs, of the two poets are in some ways different, but here one of the main reasons for the divergence is Sedulius' particular theological agenda.¹¹⁷ In the new atmosphere of the fifth century he saw new possibilities, choosing to focus his epic on the *miracula Christi* rather than a full biography of Christ.

¹¹³ Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* 2. 44–5, 4. 25–30.

¹¹⁴ Roberts (1985), 110; Deproost (1997), 18.

¹¹⁵ See Sparks (1970).

¹¹⁶ See Burton (2000), 7.

¹¹⁷ See pp. 248–9.

THE LETTERS TO MACEDONIUS

Fuller discussion of Sedulius' aims must await closer acquaintance with the poem itself, including its very rich introductory book, and the liminary material. This consists of two letters to Macedonius, one preceding *Carmen Paschale* and one preceding *Opus Paschale*, which will require some discussion, and a short poetic Preface. The letter which presents the poem to him yields interesting information about the aims and methods of Sedulius and the circle in which it was written. Nothing else is known of Macedonius; it is quite unlikely that he is to be identified with any other attested holder of the name.¹¹⁸ He is addressed as 'holy and most blessed father',¹¹⁹ but this and the general deference of the letter need not be taken to indicate a gulf in status between him and Sedulius; such expressions of reverence are not unusual in Christian letters, even between equals. It may make it a bit less likely that Sedulius is a bishop, but does not help us decide whether he was a layman or a priest.¹²⁰ Humility is at a premium in such a context, as indeed in the classical tradition of such prefaces, whether in verse or prose. Macedonius is clearly the head of the community, and the sense of his seniority and authority that pervades both letters may be due in some measure also to age and experience, and perhaps a strong personality. Details in the second half of the letter make it possible to reconstruct an outline of this community. With notable tact (p. 6, line 9) Sedulius imagines Macedonius asking why Sedulius chose to present the poem to him in particular, and takes the opportunity to give brief honorific descriptions of his fellow men and women. First he mentions Ursinus, *antistitem plenum reverentiae sacerdotalis*, probably another presbyter, but perhaps a bishop,¹²¹ and 'full of solemnity', a Christian from an early age who had lived a devout life among barbarians, 'a peaceful man amid wars'.¹²² Then there is Lawrence, a priest with

¹¹⁸ See *PLRE* 1. 526–7 and 2. 697–8.

¹¹⁹ *sancto ac beatissimo patri*.

¹²⁰ See p. 135.

¹²¹ The words *antistes* and *sacerdotalis* could refer to either priest or bishop.

¹²² *inter bella pacatus*. The wars are no doubt real wars; which ones, we cannot tell.

whom 'it is difficult to make a comparison',¹²³ who had distributed his property to the churches and to needy individuals, a man wise as a serpent and kind as a dove.¹²⁴ Another priest, Gallianus, was not 'erudite in secular books' but one who taught 'the rule of catholic learning'¹²⁵ by deeds and not words. Another Ursinus, or probably an Ursicinus,¹²⁶ also a priest, is praised for the steadfastness of old age and his youthful energy,¹²⁷ and there is Felix, an enemy of this world and truly happy, as his name implies. There are also women; Sedulius would not be ashamed, he says, to follow the example of Jerome in passing on the results of his own thinking to them. The virgin and deaconess Syncretica was of noble birth, which she enhanced by her humility, a candidate for adlection to the senate in Heaven¹²⁸ and a fit temple for the Lord because of her fasting, her prayers, and her purity. She would have made a good teacher, if not disqualified by her sex. Her younger sister Perpetua was her equal in all respects except that her marital status, albeit chastely realized, wins her the second prize for virginity.

Sedulius also explains why he undertook to write his poem, with a humility that befits a member of such a Christian community but also accords with the classical tradition of seeking the reader's sympathy through a display of modesty (p. 4, line 15–p. 6, line 6). He begins by anticipating a rebuke for entering the great sea of 'paschal majesty'¹²⁹ in a small skiff.¹³⁰ His answer is that while occupied in secular studies he had devoted the energy of his unsatisfied mind not to the good of his soul but to an empty life, and made his academic knowledge serve not its creator but the frivolities of unproductive

¹²³ *difficili comparatione*.

¹²⁴ Matt. 10: 16.

¹²⁵ *catholicae regulam disciplinae*: for the last of these words the meaning 'learning' rather than 'discipline' seems preferable in this context.

¹²⁶ Huemer's text has *Ursinus*, which is not well attested in the manuscripts and looks to be the result of scribal perseveration, due to *Ursinum* above.

¹²⁷ For this topic in Christian and classical literature, see Curtius (1953), 98–101.

¹²⁸ See Jones (1973), 541. A rare use of the terminology of secular government in Sedulius.

¹²⁹ For 'majesty' (*maiestas*) which is virtually a technical term of theology, see p. 240 and Arator 1. 15 in a strongly Sedulian passage (pp. 268–9).

¹³⁰ A common classical trope: cf. Horace, *Odes* 4. 15. 3–4, Vergil, *G.* 2. 41 (with Mynors' note), Statius, *Theb.* 12. 809.

labour; but when God enlightened him, he thought it a sin to deny the services of his learned mind to the truth. As well as repaying his debt of learning to Macedonius, he should not abstain from a form of Christian giving that does not involve losing.¹³¹ A further incentive was that having invited others by the exhortations of truth to the fruits of a good harvest he would fortify himself against any attacks of human weakness. Returning to it, as well as writing it, would be a spiritual exercise.

He then explains, in a short passage immediately following, why he chose to write in verse. The medium of verse had been rarely used, and there were many who preferred the pleasures of poetry and were less attentive to material in prose. As Roberts has shown,¹³² the point is not so much that verse makes rote learning easier, but that the charm of verse will induce the reader to keep returning to a poem. The tastes of contemporary readers should not be dismissed or ignored; individuals must be won for God in an appropriate way, of their own free will.¹³³

It is not necessary to see in this manifesto any disparagement of the achievement of Christian poetry to date, or to conclude that it had passed Sedulius by. He was certainly aware of Juvencus, Paulinus of Nola, and Prudentius, and probably of much poetry unknown to us, but Christian prose was far more plentiful. This certainly applied in the context of what he called the 'vast sea of the paschal majesty', the *pelagus paschalis maiestatis*, and its great wealth of exegetical and paraenetical potential. What is most interesting about his championing of verse is the way in which he is prepared to harness the element of delight, to which Augustine (who never mentions Christian poetry of the classicizing kind) gave a somewhat inferior position in the final book of his *De Doctrina Christiana*, which was contemporary with Sedulius. In the context of verse epic Kirsch has very appropriately mentioned the comment of a Christian polemicist of this period,¹³⁴ who writes to a senator in verse because 'you have always liked poetry'.¹³⁵ Juvencus, too, at least by implication, shows a positive

¹³¹ Cf. Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* 1. 2.

¹³² Roberts (1985), 86.

¹³³ *ut quisque suo magis ingenio voluntarius acquiratur Deo* (p. 5, lines 12–13).

¹³⁴ This anonymous tract, *Carmen ad quandam senatorem*, went under the name of Cyprian, but this is not either of the Cyprians mentioned above (pp. 151–2).

¹³⁵ *quia carmina semper amasti* (CSEL 23. 227, lines 3–4). Kirsch (1989), 72.

valuation of *dulcedo*;¹³⁶ Paulinus of Nola, as noted above, wrote his panegyric of John the Baptist ‘to relax the minds of readers’,¹³⁷ and although the preface of Prudentius makes no such point, his valuation of poetry is implicit in every page of his vivid and carefully crafted verse.

But in fact, for all his apparent coolness about the virtues of prose, Sedulius did write a prose work on the ‘paschal majesty’, *Opus Paschale*. Although this reconfiguration of his poem is not part of the present study—it is occasionally useful for interpretative purposes but otherwise is mainly interesting as an example of Late Antique prose style in a very elaborate form, and for the lexical and stylistic remodelling of the verse into prose—the letter to Macedonius that precedes it has raised questions that are very relevant to discussion of his poetics and his personal situation. Sedulius begins by saying that Macedonius has ‘commanded’ (*praecepisti*) him to transfer into prose the *Carmen Paschale*, which, a work of pure devotion, he had offered to him to read, and then goes on to speculate on the reasons for this injunction or request. His words here need to be quoted: *Utrum quod placuerit, ideo geminari volueris, an quod offenderit, ut potius arbitror, stilo censueris liberiore describi, sub dubio videor fluctuare iudicio* (‘I seem to waver with uncertain judgement whether you wanted this text to be duplicated (*geminatum*)¹³⁸ because you liked it, or, as I rather think, whether you thought that it should be set out in a freer style because it displeased you’). This interpretation follows that of Roberts,¹³⁹ but the words have also been taken so as to give a very different reason for Macedonius’ command, with the second limb meaning, ‘or, as I rather think, you thought they were set out in a too free style, something which displeased you’. The interpreter has a choice between two common uses of the verb *censeo*.¹⁴⁰ It may be used to express a statement of fact or a judgement about what should be done, but if the former sense is pressed here, then the parallelism of the two limbs of the sentence is lost, and the words *quod offenderit* are otiose.

¹³⁶ See p. 22.

¹³⁷ See p. 148.

¹³⁸ For the development of this form see Godman (1981), and p. 356.

¹³⁹ Roberts (1985), 79.

¹⁴⁰ They have roughly equal column inches in *TLL*, s.v.

There is also a choice between two interpretations of the comparative form of *liberiores*, which may mean either 'freer' or 'too free', according to sense and context. But there are difficulties in the sense 'too free', for the medium of prose is regularly described in Latin as 'free discourse'¹⁴¹ and in fact *Opus Paschale* is no less free than *Carmen Paschale* in comparison with the biblical originals, and occasionally more so, where it gives fuller exegesis. Roberts rightly dismisses the alternative to his interpretation, making the point that the claim to have been imperiously commanded to write by a demanding judge was typical of literary prefaces in the classical world. This is certainly the case,¹⁴² but what Sedulius says need not for this reason be dismissed as a fiction, as it is by Roberts.¹⁴³ Perhaps Macedonius really did disapprove of the use of verse, and was not impressed by Sedulius' justification for it in the earlier letter. The quotation of Vergil, *E. 1. 26*¹⁴⁴ quite early on in 1. 27 (p. 191, lines 23–4) would in that case seem rather provocative, but other poetic allusions are paraphrased away or simply omitted in *Opus Paschale*. Alternatively, Macedonius, without objecting to the verse, perhaps thought that a prose version would be easier for his fellow Christians to study. The prose of Sedulius shows a degree of verbal and structural elaboration exceptional even in an age which produced the intricate prose of Ammianus Marcellinus, the bombast of the Theodosian Code, and the involved letters of Paulinus of Nola, to give but a few examples, but a contemporary might well have deemed it fit for the purpose.¹⁴⁵ Or Macedonius may have wanted rather more by way of edifying comment, as Herzog suggested.¹⁴⁶ The prose version only fitfully

¹⁴¹ The description of prose as *oratio libera* is far less common than the standard term, *oratio soluta*, but the sense is the same.

¹⁴² See White (1993), 266–8, and Curtius (1953), 83–5.

¹⁴³ Roberts (1985), 80. Before him Curtius (1953), 462 n. 43 had taken the same line, but with the very different aim of damning Sedulius as an inveterate show-off.

¹⁴⁴ '*et quae tanta fuit Romam tibi causa videndi?*' '*Libertas...*' ('And what was your great reason for seeing Rome?' 'Freedom...'). Sedulius here calls Vergil *poeta saecularium... litterarum* ('the poet of secular letters'). Rome and its 'freedom' compared unfavourably with the 'city of the heavenly kingdoms' (*caelestium... civitatem regnorum*).

¹⁴⁵ Modern English prose may be going the same way, as an instrument of governance, more concerned (for whatever reason) with domination than with communication.

¹⁴⁶ Herzog (1975), p. xli.

achieves that aim, for much of it, with notable exceptions in Book 2, does no more than give a literal paraphrase of the poetry, but that is not to say that edification was not what Macedonius wanted. Whatever reaction on his part underlies the words *quod offenderit*, and there may indeed, as Roberts held, be none, it seems inadvisable to infer from this passage, as Herzog does, that a hostile reaction to the poem was typical of contemporary readers; there is much to suggest otherwise—the imitation of Sedulius by various poets, but not, apparently, prose authors, of the fifth and later centuries, the absence of any mention of *Opus Paschale* from the biographical data discussed above,¹⁴⁷ and the edition of Asterius.¹⁴⁸

Another issue of possible relevance to the present study emerges from this letter. Having explained his intention to make a prose version, Sedulius wonders with apprehension whether by avoiding the compression imposed by the poetic form he has laid himself open to criticisms that the trustworthiness of the paraphrase has been compromised (*fidem translationis esse corruptam*).¹⁴⁹ After a polemical reference to the prologue of Terence's *Andria*,¹⁵⁰ he defends his point by adducing the practice of the lawyer Hermogenianus and the theologian Origen, who both produced three editions of their works;¹⁵¹ they did not incur criticism in their endeavour to give fuller instruction. It is one thing, Sedulius argues, to change what has been written, another to supplement what is not complete.¹⁵² His comparison of the 'space of the divine law' to the sea, which is never filled, makes it plain that he deems the latter acceptable, the former

¹⁴⁷ See pp. 136–42.

¹⁴⁸ See pp. 142–3.

¹⁴⁹ Roberts (1985), 83. One must of course agree with Roberts that *translatio* means 'paraphrase' here and not 'translation'.

¹⁵⁰ Line 17 *faciuntne intellegendo ut nihil intelligant?* This quotation may be derived from Jerome, *Ep.* 57. 5 (CSEL 54. 508. 8), but this is not the case with the looser quotation of *Andria* 11–12 a few lines later (p. 173, lines 3–4) *nec impares argumento vel ordine, sed stilo videntur et oratione dissimiles* ('nor do they diverge in subject-matter or order, but they seem different in style and diction'). Sedulius, interestingly, has added the words 'or in order' as he adapts this line to describe his procedure in making the prose version.

¹⁵¹ Other evidence of these revisions, and the works to which they refer, seems to be lacking. With Terence they form an interesting triad.

¹⁵² *aliud namque est mutare composita et aliud integrare non plena* (p. 172, lines 17–18).

not. Both Herzog and Roberts treat this statement as revealing in the wider context of paraphrase, but in opposite ways. Herzog, in a rather cryptic note, stated that it was important for 'das literarische Selbstverständnis der Bibeldichtung'; because, apparently, it differentiates the process of *mutare composita*, which without further ado he equated with rhetorical paraphrase, from the process of *integrare non plena* or *Überarbeitung*, reworking, as (in his view, it seems) the later poets aspired to do.¹⁵³ Roberts maintained by contrast that the distinction is between making alterations to the sense of an original, which a paraphrast should never do, and supplementing the original, which is acceptable. For Herzog the passage points to a new view of biblical paraphrase, transcending the old rhetorical paraphrase; for Roberts it confirms his thesis that ancient theory allowed considerable supplementation. But the relevance of this controversy to theories of epic as paraphrase, or *Bibelepik*, is in fact dubious. Sedulius' comment may not be concerned with paraphrase theory in general, but confined to the question of the integrity of his prose version as compared to his verse, which critics might censure. In spite of what Roberts says and Herzog implies, no evidence is given that *fides translationis* is a technical term,¹⁵⁴ and so the wider theoretical relevance of this matter is doubtful.

Before turning to the poem itself, a brief mention must be made of the Preface to *Carmen Paschale*—again the manuscripts use both *praefatio* and *prologus*¹⁵⁵—which is shorter and much slighter than that of Juvencus. It is again a mixture of the Christian humility and the affected modesty¹⁵⁶ that was part of the *captatio benevolentiae* of classical authors. In form its closest parallels seem to be not the prefaces of Prudentius or Claudian, but certain prefaces of Ausonius and Martial; the tone is naturally rather different. The reader, who is here constructed as someone seeking a Paschal feast, attracted by the poem's title, perhaps, should lower his haughty eyebrows¹⁵⁷ and not

¹⁵³ Herzog (1975), p. liii and n. 170. Here and in a few other places one can discern outlines of what Herzog might have said in the second volume of his work.

¹⁵⁴ Roberts (1985), 83, and Herzog (1975), who in n. 170 refers to p. 60 of his book.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. p. 15.

¹⁵⁶ Roberts (1985), 80.

¹⁵⁷ *pone supercilium* (which Prudentius had not scrupled to use in his *Psychomachia* 287, probably drawing on Ausonius rather than the opening of the *Priapea*). It is rendered in *OP*, with typical woodenness, as *erectum supercilii depone fastigium* ('set down the erected summit of your eyebrow').

expect an artistic book (*codex artifex*), or a rich meal. If he does, and if he is drawn by the delight of great things (*magnarum dulcedine... rerum*), he should go elsewhere, presumably to more sophisticated theological teaching from expert Christians. These are 'the elegant meals of noble doctors'.¹⁵⁸ What Sedulius offers is by comparison a small cabbage on humble Samian ware.¹⁵⁹ Addressing the general reader, as he does here, Sedulius seems even more diffident than he was to Macedonius, and far more diffident than his pioneering predecessor Juvencus; but the impression is misleading. His long introductory book will show a mix of diffidence about his own powers and confidence in his theme.

BOOK 1

At the end of the first letter to Macedonius Sedulius described his work as consisting of four books (*quattuor mirabilium divinatorum libellos*), in which he has assembled 'a few things out of many', bringing together the four discourses of the gospels;¹⁶⁰ there is also an introductory book, equal in length to the others. In the manuscripts, carefully catalogued and described in Springer,¹⁶¹ the fivefold division predominates, but divisions into two, three (mentioned in Isidore),¹⁶² four, and even six books are also found, as well as a few versions with no book divisions. Sedulius' books are relatively short, the first four having fewer than 400 lines, the last one 438, and copyists may have found it convenient to combine them in some cases; negligence may also have played a part, although with the possible exception of Book 4 it is clear enough where a new book begins.¹⁶³ In the following analysis Books 3 and 4 will be taken together for the sake of convenience, but the other books separately.

¹⁵⁸ *nobilium nitidis doctorum vescere cenis*, line 9.

¹⁵⁹ Isidore will quote the line (16) at *Etym.* 20. 3. 6 to explain what Arretine vessels are.
¹⁶⁰ p. 12, lines 4–5.

¹⁶¹ Springer (1995).

¹⁶² See p. 135.

¹⁶³ See pp. 176 and 182.

Book 1 fulfils the functions of a proem or preface, but also many roles that a reader of Juvencus or Prudentius or other Christian poets would not be expecting. It is, in this light, very long, and its contents very diverse. For ease of analysis it may be divided into five main sections: lines 1–59 present his reasons for writing; lines 60–102 make a prayer for divine aid; lines 103–241 survey the Old Testament evidence of Christ's power; lines 242–333 are mainly polemical, against pagans and heretics; and lines 334–68 form the conclusion.

The poem begins with a vigorous and colourful denunciation of classical literature, and a firm statement of his justification for writing. If Gentile (i.e. pagan) poets present their fictions with great ado, why should Sedulius not sing of the clear miracles of Christ the saviour? Exposition will be simpler if the first twelve lines—part of a very long first sentence—are quoted:¹⁶⁴

Cum sua gentiles studeant figmenta poetae
 grandisonis pompare modis, tragicoque boatu
 ridiculove Geta seu qualibet arte canendi
 saeva nefandarum renovent contagia rerum 20
 et scelerum monumenta canant, rituque magistro
 plurima Niliacis tradant mendacia biblis,
 cur ego, Daviticis adsuetus cantibus odas
 cordarum resonare decem sanctoque verenter
 stare choro et placidis caelestia psallere verbis, 25
 clara salutiferi taceam miracula Christi,
 cum possim manifesta loqui, dominumque tonantem
 sensibus et toto delectet corde fateri . . .¹⁶⁵

Since pagan poets strive to magnify their fictions with high-sounding phrases, and with tragic bellowing or with a comic Geta or any kind of poetry re-enact the savage contagion of wicked deeds and laud memorials of crime, and in the traditional manner pass on many lies in their books of Egyptian papyrus, why should I, who am accustomed to make the ten strings resound with the songs of David, and to sing of heavenly things in gentle words, keep silent about the miracles of Christ who brings salvation, when I can speak of things that are clear, and rejoice to confess the thundering Lord through my senses and with my whole heart . . .

¹⁶⁴ Huemer did not number the short preface separately, and so this book begins with line 17.

¹⁶⁵ The sentence is some 18 lines long; the punctuation above aims to reflect the syntax and not, like Huemer's, to indicate possible breathing spaces.

His targets here are the fictions of pagan poets, especially tragedy and comedy.¹⁶⁶ The reference to Geta points to the comedies of Terence,¹⁶⁷ which may have been known to him to some extent,¹⁶⁸ while the reference to tragedy is surely quite general. Seneca, *qua* tragedian, was not well known, and if Sedulius knew of Greek tragedy, it was only by repute.¹⁶⁹ To write like this he need not, of course have read a single line. Lactantius made a similar denunciation of comedy and tragedy, drawing on a common apologetic theme.¹⁷⁰ There is, notably, no singling out of epic, notwithstanding its similarities to tragedy, either to condemn it or, as in Juvencus' Preface, to give it qualified acceptance. What Sedulius deprecates is the glorification and perpetuation of evil things, including no doubt murder and illicit sex; his own theme, recalling the *Christi vitalia gesta* of Juvencus' Preface,¹⁷¹ is the miracles of (literally) 'salvation-bearing Christ', which are clear (that is, indubitably true), whereas the words of pagan poets are lies. Unlike Juvencus, Sedulius says nothing about the incentive of fame; there will be much evidence of humility later, as in lines 85 and 98. His qualifications are his experience of the Psalms, or 'songs of David', which are 'gentle'; this word highlights the difference between the character of scripture and the savagery of what is celebrated in classical literature. Writing in the footsteps of David will be a pleasure; this recalls, in a markedly new context, the joy of Lucretius and Vergil.¹⁷² He will not hide his classical learning: a small but significant sign of this is a prominent use of the word *tonantem* to describe Christ in line 27, which may even have theological significance here, in keeping with his insistence that Christ is truly God.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁶ As can be seen from *OP*, *ad loc.*, *ridiculi Getae comica foeditate* ('the comic foulness of absurd Geta'), the reference is not to Hosidius Geta who compiled a cento known as *Medea*, as suggested by Springer (1988), 77.

¹⁶⁷ *Adelphoe* and *Phormio*.

¹⁶⁸ See p. 159 and n. 50, and p. 211.

¹⁶⁹ Conceivably this comes via Juvenal. Sedulius' opening is structurally not unlike the beginning of his first Satire, and Sedulius had considerable interest in Juvenal (see pp. 211–13).

¹⁷⁰ Lactantius, *DI* 6. 20. 27–8.

¹⁷¹ On 'the life-giving deeds of Christ', see pp. 20–1.

¹⁷² Lucretius 1. 927–34, Vergil *G.* 2. 475–89.

¹⁷³ See pp. 239–42.

Sedulius' long opening sentence culminates in a presentation of the Godhead in lines 31–5, developing from the notion of confession in *fateri* in line 28. The expression, as often, is highly manneristic, but its purpose one of vital importance in this 'salvific' epic: the equality and co-eternity of Father and Son is stressed because in a soteriological context the saviour must be truly and fully God, as well as man. This way salvation lies; this way leads resolute steps to the 'paschal gifts', and this will be his song (36–7). Readers who hear an allusion in line 35 (*via namque salutis*) to Vergil's words *via prima salutis* and the 'Greek city' (A. 6. 96–7) that would assist Aeneas may connect this with Sedulius' own 'Greek city' (40–4), which is emphatically not the way of salvation: a notable reversal. The notion of 'the way' is of central importance in this book, as we shall see; but it 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. With a Vergilian phrase (*mentes huc vertite cuncti*)¹⁷⁴ Sedulius now calls all people to turn their minds to it. He targets in particular those infected by the 'Attic teaching of Athenian poison',¹⁷⁵ and urges them to leave the labyrinthine cave, the maze of Daedalus, where they aimlessly wander. They are characterized as *Thesidae* ('descendants of Theseus') following Vergil, G. 2. 382–3, building on the highly derogatory reference in the previous line to *Athenaei... pagi*: 'they must leave the stench of the Athenian village.' That this refers to pagans in general, as argued earlier,¹⁷⁶ is surely confirmed by the two lines of anti-pagan polemic (47–8) that ridicule the worship of stones and senseless things. Boldly changing the imagery, he appeals to them not to prefer the wild vine (*labrusca*) to gentle grapes (Christ is 'the true vine'),¹⁷⁷ and the Celtic nard (*saliunca*) of the field to roses. These are clear references to motifs in Vergilian pastoral;¹⁷⁸ but they must not be allowed to obscure the simultaneous allusion to a passage from the prophet Isaiah, complaining that a vine expected to bring forth grapes had brought forth wild grapes (*labruscas*).¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁴ Cf. Vergil, A. 8. 440 *et huc advertite mentem*, 'and turn your minds to me', where Vulcan addresses the giants labouring beneath Etna.

¹⁷⁵ *Attica Cecropii... doctrina veneni*.

¹⁷⁶ See pp. 140–1.

¹⁷⁷ John 15: 1–6.

¹⁷⁸ Vergil, E. 5. 7 and 17.

¹⁷⁹ Isaiah 5: 2 and 4.

Unbelievers are summoned from a life of sterility in the dusty plains (49–50) to the *amoena virecta* | *florentum semper nemorum sedesque beatas*.¹⁸⁰ Vergil's famous description of Elysium (A. 6.638/9) has been adapted with little change; there may be no great significance in the replacement of his word *fortunatorum* ('of the fortunate'). It is less obvious that the places with which it is contrasted derive from his *Georgics*, but they may well do. Sterility is a major problem in the first *Georgic*; perhaps, too, Sedulius' exhortation 'not to pick black poisons'¹⁸¹ exploits one of the negative statements in the *laudes Italiae* which extol the natural advantages of Italy: *nec miseros fallunt aconita legentis* (G. 2. 152).¹⁸² This world seems also immune to snakes (G. 2. 153–4), a prominent theme in Sedulius, where the serpentine image of the Devil is prominent.¹⁸³ Fleetinglly, Italy, Vergil's almost make-believe Italy, is set against Sedulius' metaphorical Greece. The abode of the blessed, the Christianized *amoena virecta*,¹⁸⁴ is entered through baptism (*latices... pios*), anticipating a major concern of Arator.¹⁸⁵ The agricultural metaphor of the earlier lines is further developed, with an indubitable allusion to Christian parables, but there is a hint of Vergil again, in the phrase *laetificata seges*. Although the verb may have become familiar to Sedulius through the Psalms,¹⁸⁶ this also recalls the first line of the first *Georgic*, *Quid faciat laetas segetes...*, 'What makes crops fertile?' Sedulius has clearly given his own, spiritualizing, answer.

Sedulius now (60–102) launches into a very formal and elaborate prayer, which in some ways resembles the opening prayer of Victorius' *Alethia* but is most obviously indebted, in the ambitious structure of its address to the Godhead, to the *Oratio* of Ausonius. Its careful construction repays analysis. First, a small point that might escape the attention of a reader not yet attuned to the amount of paradox in Sedulius: in the words *qui caeli fabricator ades, qui*

¹⁸⁰ 'The pleasant green places of ever flourishing woods, and the happy abodes.'

¹⁸¹ *nec de tellure cruenta* | *livida mortiferis vellatis toxica sucis* (1. 51–2).

¹⁸² 'Nor do poisons deceive the poor people who pick them.'

¹⁸³ Note esp. *squameus anguis* ('the scaly snake') in CP 4. 145 and Vergil, G. 2. 154.

¹⁸⁴ Prudentius appropriates this phrase twice, at *Cath.* 3. 101 and *Hamart.* 795, in the latter case pejoratively.

¹⁸⁵ See pp. 310–1.

¹⁸⁶ Ps. 19 (18): 9, 21 (20): 7, 104 (103): 15. Also Lucan 3. 49, not an agricultural context.

*conditor orbis*¹⁸⁷ there is a typical paradox centring on *ades*, the point being that the mighty creator, here described, as the Christian creator often is, in largely classical wording,¹⁸⁸ is actually present to the Christian.¹⁸⁹ After that line seven longer ones begin with the relative pronoun *qui* and are most carefully articulated: in one half there are four clauses, of two lines each, describing earth and sky, chiasmically arranged (earth, sky, sky, earth); then there are two clauses, one of three lines and one of six, which describe the way of salvation for humankind through the sacraments of the Eucharist (70–2) and of Baptism (73–8), which recapitulate the Fall and the Flood respectively. The substance of his petition, introduced in line 79 with the verb *pande* ('make open')—the same verb that Ausonius used to structure his own series of petitions—is that God will reveal a way to the *salutaris urbs*, the city of salvation, a complex and richly evocative symbol to which Sedulius will return.¹⁹⁰ The goal is also expressed through the image of the rural sheepfold where the good shepherd preserves his flock.¹⁹¹ The way, meaning now the poet's path, is not difficult with Christ as guide (85), for he is all-powerful over nature; as in miracles, nature may take other shapes at his command. In line 87, *transit in adversas iussu dominante figuras*, it is possible to see an allusion, and a correction, to a line in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (8. 730), *sunt quibus in plures ius est transire figuras* ('there are those for whom it is right to take other shapes'). Here Sedulius' additions, in the words *iussu dominante*, are all-important: these things (Sedulius thinks of the created world)¹⁹² happen, if at all, by God's command.¹⁹³ There is plentiful evidence of his power in the Old Testament (*indicio est antiqua fides et cana priorum | testis origo patrum*),¹⁹⁴ like a forest from which the poet can only touch a few

¹⁸⁷ 'Who, maker of heaven, creator of the world, are present.'

¹⁸⁸ Cf Ovid, *M.* 1. 57 *mundi fabricator* ('maker of the world').

¹⁸⁹ Cf. 2. 131–2.

¹⁹⁰ See p. 171.

¹⁹¹ At first sight the word *caulae* ('sheepfold') could be claimed as a Vergilianism here on the strength of its appearance at *A.* 9. 60, and its rarity in classical Latin; but in fact although Ambrose and Augustine, evidently its first users, show some awareness of the Vergilian allusion it becomes very common among Christian writers.

¹⁹² There is further Vergilian colouring in lines 88 and 89: cf. *G.* 1. 230 and 316.

¹⁹³ A prominent theme of Juvenecus; see p. 19.

¹⁹⁴ 'as witness the ancient faith and the early fathers of old'. There may be an allusion to Vergil's *cana fides* (*A.* 1. 292), albeit split between two phrases.

branches (cf. Vergil, *E.* 8.40), and to which he could not do justice even with a hundred mouths.¹⁹⁵

There has been a movement in these lines from the presentation of miracles as a sign of God's power to their use to inspire the poet to a more general celebration of his might. The Old Testament miracles that now follow are not miracles of Christ in the sense intended in his programmatic statement in line 26 (*salutiferi . . . miracula Christi*), though Sedulius believed that Christ was involved (1. 291–3), but are designed to show the power of the Godhead through history.¹⁹⁶ They follow the order of the books in which they occur, and presumably Sedulius excerpted them for himself. The seventeen miracles related are as follows: the translation of Enoch; Sarah and her son Isaac (a double miracle); Lot and his wife; the burning bush; the change of the rod to a snake; the crossing of the Red Sea; the feeding with manna and quails in the wilderness; the provision of water from the rock; Balaam's ass; the sun standing still at Gabaon; the life of Elijah; the reign of Hezekiah; the adventure of Jonah; the children in the fiery furnace; the punishment of Nebuchadnezzar; and the saving of Daniel from punishment.¹⁹⁷ Most of these are expressed in very summary form, and with little if any commentary, but some of the methods of exegesis used later by Sedulius are anticipated. Enoch's translation is explained by his *meritis vivacibus* ('lively merits', 103), and Elijah's name, being so close to the Greek word for sun, is, as Sedulius notes in lines 186–7, highly appropriate. There is considerable use of typology and allegory: the ram substituted for Isaac prefigures Christ (118–20); the manna and the water in the wilderness, as well as the rock,¹⁹⁸ were Christ (159). Interpretation is assisted by the quotation of other passages of scripture at 143 (here the *lectio* or 'reading' referred to is Ps. 29 (28): 3, which helps to

¹⁹⁵ For this commonplace, used also by Arator, see Courcelle (1955) and Angelucci (1985), 47–9.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. *virtutum signa tuarum*, 'signs of your powers' (1. 95). The Trinitarian implications of Old Testament and New Testament miracles are briefly treated in lines 1. 291–6.

¹⁹⁷ The references are, in order: Gen. 5: 24; Gen. 17 and 22; Gen. 19: 26; Exod. 3; Exod. 7: 10–12; Exod. 14; Exod. 16; Exod 17: 1–6; Num. 22: 21–35; Josh. 10: 12–14; 1 Kgs. 17: 6 and 2 Kgs. 2: 11; Isa. 38: 5; Jonah 1: 17 and 2: 10; Dan. 3: 19–30; Dan. 4: 28–33; Dan. 6.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. Paul, 1 Cor. 10: 4.

construct the crossing of the Red Sea as a kind of baptism),¹⁹⁹ and at lines 123–6 the moral significance of the death of Lot's wife is brought out with a paraphrase of Luke 9: 62.

These stories are recounted as self-contained nuggets (the poet could hardly do otherwise in such a small compass), in a way that recalls Prudentius' series of unconnected miracles in *Cath.* 9. 28–60²⁰⁰ and his sequence of short poems known as the *Dittochaeon*.²⁰¹ Some lines, such as 106,²⁰² recall the summarizing brevity of Ausonius' *Caesares*. Paradox is plentiful. Abraham has more *pietas* by setting *pietas* aside (116–17); Lot's wife turns into her own punishment (123); Jonah has a living tomb (193–4).²⁰³ Vergil is less prominent here, but he is not by any means avoided or excluded. Describing the miracle of the burning bush, Sedulius' wording, with *frondea . . . lambabant robora flammae* (131), recalls Vergil's description of another miracle, one of course less significant to Sedulius, the blazing of Iulus' hair in *A.* 2. 684 *lambere flamma comas*.²⁰⁴ Sedulius uses phrases of Vergil effectively when he describes Sarah and her child in 112–13,²⁰⁵ and in his description of the snake at 133–4. In line 180 he seems to be engaging in dialogue with Ovid, who notoriously refers to the prints of the wheels of Phoebus' chariot in *M.* 2. 133 ('you'll see them quite clearly');²⁰⁶ Sedulius says very explicitly that Elijah's light wheels left no furrows.²⁰⁷ He also neatly redeploys Ovid's *dexterior* from *M.* 2. 138, so that Phoebus' prosaic direction 'keep to the right' is now used in the other sense of the word, 'more favourable', to describe Elijah's destination.²⁰⁸ He is happier than Phaethon, who was misled by his demonic father.

¹⁹⁹ As Arator does; see pp. 310–11.

²⁰⁰ See p. 149. There is also at least one verbal echo of Prudentius (*Hamart.* 725) at 121.

²⁰¹ This refers to a set of scenes from the Old and New Testaments, perhaps as depicted on the walls of a church.

²⁰² *terra tulit genitum, sed mors miratur adeptum* ('the earth produced him at his birth, death marvels at his translation').

²⁰³ *vitale sepulchrum*.

²⁰⁴ Sedulius: 'flames licked the leafy strength'; Vergil: 'flames (were seen to) lick his hair.'

²⁰⁵ Various references are noted by Huemer.

²⁰⁶ *manifesta rotae vestigia cernes*.

²⁰⁷ *levis aërios non exprimit orbita sulcos* (line 180).

²⁰⁸ Another allusion to this tale (*M.* 2. 45 *me tribuente feras*) is made in the temptation narrative (2. 189); Van der Laan suggests that in such references Sedulius construes pagan gods as demons. See p. 249.

This rapid-fire survey of divine power, superior to nature, summed up with a remarkable piece of virtuoso writing by which he summarizes all seventeen in a single sentence (220–41), leads Sedulius to a triumphal outburst against pagan worshippers, introduced with an echo of Lucan.²⁰⁹ Pagans worship what they have made, and as often in this most hackneyed theme of Christian apologetic Egyptian religious practice is used to typify paganism. They have some amusing gods: a bird, an ox, a twisted serpent, and a half-human dog.²¹⁰ Worship of the sun and moon is perhaps more respectable—at least they earn a mention in Augustine’s schematic survey of types of worship—²¹¹ but have the disadvantage of regularly disappearing from sight. People who worship water have obvious problems when it comes to sacrificing with fire, and those who worship wood in some form may as well seek guidance from the beams that support their houses or light their fires. As for vegetables, why should one worship gods that can be transplanted?

But enough of such ridicule, or lamentation (280–1);²¹² the poet recalls us to the path to the city which is ‘the resource of liberty’ (284). A brief attempt to articulate the nature of the Trinity inspires him to polemic against heretics, especially Arius (299–333). Later opponents of this much-detested heresiarch enjoy recounting the story of his agonizing death in a public lavatory,²¹³ but Sedulius is relatively restrained with his conceits that Arius was as devoid of his senses as he was of his bowels, stomachless as well as senseless. Arius made the mistake of seeing the relation between Father and Son in the light of human relationships—a point which Sedulius manages to express (305–6) using the language of Vergil’s condemnation of

²⁰⁹ Cf. Lucan 4. 382 *Heu miseri, qui bella gerunt!* and CP 1. 242 *Heu miseri, qui vana colunt!* Line 245 of Sedulius, *Quis furor est! Quae tanta animos dementia ludit!* (‘What madness this is! What great foolishness beguiles their minds!’), uses two Vergilian motifs: A. 5. 670 and 465.

²¹⁰ For explanation of the details, see Clarke’s commentary on Minucius Felix, 323–5.

²¹¹ Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* 1. 15.

²¹² The self-conscious manner of this transition recalls passages such as Paulinus 6. 173–4 and 19. 714–5, and Victorius 1. 405–6 and 3. 210, which Roberts (1985), 97 n. 145 notes as a sign of conscious literary artistry.

²¹³ For references see Schwind (1990), 110 and n. 59.

the giant Salmoneus at A. 6. 590–1.²¹⁴ Sedulius continues his strongly Nicene position (*de lumine lumen*)²¹⁵ with a quotation from John 10: 30 (*ego et Pater unum sumus*).²¹⁶ Here, he says, Arius should have known that the word ‘one’ must appear in any confession,²¹⁷ whereas the Latin word for ‘we are’ should have been part of the confession of Sabellius. (Sabellius was another favourite target of the orthodox, attacked for his reduction of the Trinity; he is now no less helpfully described as a Monarchian Modalist).²¹⁸ These and other heretics resemble philosophers, who don’t know whether to walk or stand, laugh or cry.²¹⁹ The wisdom of this world is foolishness to God.

The journey resumes (333–4). It is presented on the analogy of Aeneas’ walk with Evander around Pallanteum, the future Rome: there is a clear echo in line 333 of Vergil, A. 8. 309 *viam sermone levabat*.²²⁰ A further verbal similarity, in the following line, suggests a bold allegorizing of a later walk of Evander. The dogs which accompany Evander become the theological virtues of Hope and Faith.²²¹ Allegory of such a bold kind is rare in Sedulius, and seldom applied to the classics, but details like this, which add to the realism, or the impression of realism, in the original narrative, are just what allegory thrives on, at least in later writers. The evocation of Aeneas in Pallanteum points to deeper *Kontrastimitation*. Aeneas walked through the humble settlement, full of wonder; here, to Sedulius, a greater vision appears. Unlike Evander’s citadel, and indeed most of Vergil’s citadels, which tend to be incomplete, or doomed, this city is already well built and well fortified. Sedulius has, as it were, replaced

²¹⁴ *Demens, perpetui qui non imitanda parentis | iura caducorum gradibus simulavit honorum*, where the words in bold closely recall words of Vergil; the rhythms are also similar. (‘Madman, who assimilated the unique privileges of the father to the grades of human titles.’) Two Vergilian half-lines, from E. 4. 7 and G. 4. 209, are used in line 311 to explain the nature of Arius’ mistake.

²¹⁵ ‘light from light’. Cf. Auson. II. 3. 82.

²¹⁶ ‘I and the Father are one.’

²¹⁷ Cf. Arator, who in 1. 449 complains that Arius divides the Trinity.

²¹⁸ For Sabellius see Young *et al.* (2004).

²¹⁹ The last two examples may derive from Juvenal; see pp. 211–13. Of course nothing here strengthens the possibility discussed above that Sedulius studied philosophy.

²²⁰ ‘lightened the walk with conversation’. Sedulius’ words are close: *viam sermone levamus*.

²²¹ *gressumque canes comitantur erilem*, Vergil, A. 8. 462.

*maxima Roma*²²² 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' *Psychomachia* than the more conceptual City of God of Augustine). He has also reconstructed the Vergilian interplay between past, present, and future. The city is already built, on the basis of the 'stone which has become the head of the corner' (1. 288–90: Ps. 118 (117): 22–3, and various New Testament applications to Christ), and Sedulius seems to have arrived there in line 336. But he has yet to enter, and his journey is not yet ended, for in one sense the journey is his poem (1. 85), and perhaps indeed his life. He is a part, a very small part, of God's militia, and his fighting is not yet over, whence another prayer (345–8), and one in which further close allusions to Vergil are notable. When Sedulius prays *hic proprias sedes, huius mihi moenibus urbis, | exiguam concede domum*²²³ he invites a comparison with the wanderings and pleas of the Trojans, who (A. 3. 85) asked Apollo for a home of their own,²²⁴ and to whom (A. 3. 167) the Trojan gods announce that they will have their own settlement.²²⁵ Arrived in Italy (A. 7. 229), Aeneas again requests a tiny abode.²²⁶ The contrasts between the precarious quest of the Trojans and the confident arrival of the poet and his readers at the heavenly city are obvious. It is interesting, also, to compare Sedulius' request for a 'small home' inside the heavenly city with a similar passage of Prudentius. Prudentius ended his *Hamartigenia* with a prayer which includes the words: *non posco beata | in regione domum*.²²⁷ It is enough for him if his soul is not plunged into the depths of Tartarus and devoured by the flames. Juvenus is likewise in fear of the final judgement.²²⁸ Sedulius seems to set his sights higher than Prudentius, even if his words *grandia posco* ('I ask for great things', 349) are to some extent a rhetorical ploy, for such a request is great only in comparison with his deserts.

²²² Cf. A. 7. 602–3 *maxima . . . Roma* and 8. 99 *Romana potentia*.

²²³ 'Here grant me my own abode, in the walls of this city grant me a small home.'

²²⁴ *da propriam, Thymbraee, domum*.

²²⁵ *hae . . . propriae sedes*.

²²⁶ *dis sedem exiguam patriis . . . rogamus*. Cf. also A. 4. 212 (the *urbem exiguam* of Dido). The very common line-ending *moenibus urbis* (cf. A. 12. 116) adds to the Vergilian ambience.

²²⁷ Prudentius, *Hamart.* 953–4 'I do not ask for a home in the heavenly region'.

²²⁸ See p. 18.

The book ends with some more examples of the interaction of classical and biblical intertextuality which are typical of Sedulius' work. As he expresses his confidence in the evangelists, there seems to be a recollection, in line 355 *hoc Matthaeus agens*, of A. 8. 678 *hinc Augustus agens* (the context is the battle of Actium). When, a few lines later (362: *fulget apex*), he speaks of the 'crown' of the twelve apostles, this recalls the shining helmet (*ardet apex*) of Aeneas in A. 10. 270. The light from his helmet is then compared to the lugubrious glow of a comet or the heat of the dog-star, with baleful results for humankind;²²⁹ there is a clear contrast with Sedulius, who sees the apostles as symbolizing the year, which 'in all things wages war for God', and helps with his beneficent purposes.²³⁰ Finally, the trajectory of his poem is plotted in accordance with a quotation from Ps. 126 (125): 5: those who sow in tears will reap with joy.²³¹ He will begin by telling the 'origins of the old death',²³² the Fall of Adam, and move towards the joys of Christ's victorious resurrection and ascension, in a poem which will be not only an epic journey but a meditative exercise.

BOOK 2

Book 2 is not principally concerned with miracles in the strict sense; it concentrates on narratives of Christ's birth, youth, and early ministry. It is essentially biographical, as Book 5 will be, although they certainly contain much that can excite devotional wonder, enhanced as always by Sedulius' resources of paradox and vivid description. Indeed, the overall structure of the *quattuor mirabilium divinatorum libellos* reflects to some degree one plan favoured by ancient biography and panegyric (the categories intertwine),²³³ in which, typically, an account of lineage and birth is followed not by

²²⁹ Vergil, A. 10. 271–5.

²³⁰ *fulget apex, numero menses imitatus et horas, | omnibus ut rebus totus tibi militet annus.*

²³¹ *qui seminant in lacrimis in exultatione metent.*

²³² *veteris recolens exordia mortis.* Vergil used the word *exordia* in his so-called second proem, at A. 7. 40 *et primae revocabo exordia pugnae.*

²³³ Whitmarsh (2005), 74–9 and references there.

a more or less chronological series of the person's achievements but by a structured presentation of virtues, with achievements to illustrate them.²³⁴ Christ's virtues are admittedly not separated out, as those of a statesman or general might be; as we shall see, in Books 3 and 4 the poet speaks generally of the *virtus* ('virtue' or 'power') and the *pietas* ('pity') shown in the miracles. But he has moved some way from the gospel structures, which although they recognize particular virtues from time to time, tend to adopt a more anecdotal and in places desultory approach.²³⁵ To some extent he has used his role as commentator to bring out various threads in the narrative which point to particular qualities of Christ, all of course subservient to his general role, that of *salutifer*, announced in 1. 26.

Book 2 begins by celebrating the coming of salvation through Mary, and the purpose of Christ in giving the Lord's Prayer, with which it ends, is described as being to 'confer quick salvation' (231). At the end of the first book Sedulius seemed to promise a treatment of 'the beginning of the old death',²³⁶ but there is no question of anything approaching either the Vergilian *exordia* announced in his so-called second proem at A. 7. 40, quoted above, or a Miltonic exploration of how paradise was lost. There is only the briefest of recapitulatory references to Adam's expulsion when the book begins. Its first line announces Adam's ejection from Eden ('the most savage serpent had expelled the first-born')²³⁷ and mankind's consequent loss of immortality. For this both Eve and the serpent were to blame, as the poet argues not with a theological discussion but with a deft use of a passage from Vergil's *Eclogues* (8. 49–50).²³⁸ What is the value of a long life, he then reflects, if it is finally overtaken by 'the irreparable condition' of death? Here his expression is clearly inspired by the Vergilian passage (A. 10. 467–8)²³⁹ that relates Jupiter's

²³⁴ See in general the articles 'Biography, Greek' and 'Biography, Roman' in *OCD* 3rd edn.

²³⁵ The link with classical biography is strongly argued by BurrIDGE (2004).

²³⁶ *veteris recolens exordia mortis* (1. 364).

²³⁷ *expulerat primogenitum saevissimus anguis*.

²³⁸ *crudelis mater magis, an puer improbus ille? improbus ille puer, crudelis tu quoque, mater*. 'Was it more the mother's cruelty or the boy's wickedness? The boy was wicked; you too were cruel, mother.' Cf. too Lucan 7. 675 *sed tu quoque coniunx* ('but you too, wife of mine').

²³⁹ *stat sua cuique dies; breve et irreparabile tempus | omnibus est vitae* ('everyone has his day; for all there is a brief and irretrievable span').

dejected reaction to Pallas' prayer to Hercules to be saved; there is a crucial difference between Jupiter, who can console but not intervene,²⁴⁰ and the Christian God, 'the compassionate creator',²⁴¹ who can and did. Concerned for what he had created in his own image, he prepared a fitting solution, starting from the situation in which it arose. Like a rose from a thorn bush, Mary, a *nova virgo* from the stock of Eve, came to expiate the crime of the 'old virgin' (*virginis antiquae facinus*), enabling humankind to be reborn with Christ's birth.

This was duly prophesied, the angel visited Mary, and the divine child grew in Mary's womb. Mary rejoiced, *paritura parentem*.²⁴² The Latin phrase here highlights, with its conspicuous alliteration and *annominatio*, a point of supreme theological importance: Sedulius is expressing in his own way the Greek word *theotokos*.²⁴³ He does not attempt to present the familiar narratives of Luke, which take second place to the celebration of Mary and the praise of Christ's self-abasement. The details of his birth are in fact folded into a series of contrasts within this joyful meditation (54–62): the creator who clothed the world had to take on swaddling-clothes, and God in his full majesty lay in a narrow manger. The experiences of the shepherds are tacked on briefly at the end (70–2), and as for the story of Zechariah being struck dumb, with which Juvencus, like Luke, began, that is summarized later in an analepsis in lines 144–8, in the context of Christ's meeting with the Baptist.

Unlike Juvencus, who is perhaps tacitly corrected here, Sedulius presents Matthew's narrative of the Magi more or less simultaneously, as is marked by a line in the epic manner.²⁴⁴ But Sedulius is indebted to his predecessor for various details: for the use of extended reported speech, not very common in his writing, in the report of the Magi to Herod (76–8), for the word *progenitum* which begins line 77 (as it does line 1. 230 of Juvencus), and for the

²⁴⁰ See Harrison, *ad loc.*

²⁴¹ *pius ille sator* (*sator* is another traditional poetic word).

²⁴² 'being about to give birth to her parent'.

²⁴³ 'Bearer of God'. See p. 239.

²⁴⁴ *Talia Bethlaeis dum signa geruntur in oris* ('While such signs are performed in the land of Bethlehem'). Cf. such passages as Vergil, *A.* 9. 1 *Atque ea diversa penitus dum parte geruntur* and Ovid, *M.* 3. 316 *dumque ea per terras fatali lege geruntur*.

subsequent explanation that Herod was afraid of a successor (79). Again like Juvenecus, Sedulius explains the significance of their gifts; but he also asks, like a preacher or commentator, why they were three in number. The answer is that they symbolize the Trinity (cf. 168–74), and also time past, present, and future. Another characteristic Sedulian innovation is seen in lines 104–6: as the Magi returned to their homeland, so must ‘we’ (that is, Sedulius and his fellow Christians),²⁴⁵ if we wish to come to our holy *patria*, avoid returning to evil after seeing the saviour. With the departure of the Magi the cruel and heartless king who lacks compassion (*pietas*) and has already decided to kill Christ is unable to control his anger, so making himself unworthy of the name of king (108–9); this is a Stoic touch, broadly reminiscent of Seneca among others.²⁴⁶ This is followed by a tirade that demonstrates the poet’s rhetorical resources and the depth of his epic armoury. First, a simile in the Vergilian manner,²⁴⁷ comparing Herod to a lion, but one enraged not by hunger, or a wound, but by the lamb that escaped. There is also an apposite recollection of Lucan (2. 108 *crimine quo parvi caedem potuere mereri?*) in lines 117–18.²⁴⁸ Most remarkably, in lines 127–30 there is an extended adaptation of Vergil, A. 4. 408–11, where the poet transforms Vergil’s sympathizing question to the anguished Dido into an indignant reproach of Herod.²⁴⁹ The passage ends on a devotional and coldly encouraging note, perhaps suggested by the fact that Christ and his parents had already made their escape (an episode omitted by Sedulius). Christ was absent from the suffering innocents, but is present to all sufferers in the sense that he takes up ‘holy dangers’ and feels the pain of others in his body (131–3). Homily of this kind is a frequent and distinctive feature of Sedulius’ thought and writing, and of Arator’s after him.²⁵⁰

After this episode comes a brief passage on Christ in the temple (134–8), a small vignette rather than the extended story with the

²⁴⁵ For this kind of intrusion see pp. 232–4.

²⁴⁶ See e.g. Seneca, *Thyestes* 344–68.

²⁴⁷ See pp. 217–18 for similes in Sedulius.

²⁴⁸ ‘With what crime could the little ones have deserved this slaughter?’ Sedulius’ words are *quo crimine simplex turba perit* (‘with what crime does the innocent multitude die?’).

²⁴⁹ See pp. 214–15.

²⁵⁰ See further pp. 232–4 (Sedulius) and 298–309 (Arator).

human colour of a real family that Juvenecus created.²⁵¹ Sedulius' Christ, now 12 years of age in terms of his human span,²⁵² is 'senior to the seniors' (or elders) and 'among the teachers of the law a teacher emeritus'.²⁵³ This leads on to the narrative of his baptism. Juvenecus had introduced this event in two impressive lines (1. 307–8); Sedulius operates rather differently. He uses the epic formula of transition *nec mora* . . . ('without delay'), but unexpectedly questions it (what delay could there be as the world 'flies through time?'). Then, unlike Juvenecus, who largely avoided the problems of his baptism, Sedulius explains the paradoxes of the situation: why Christ should receive baptism, how he could take away the sins of the world, and, with notable vividness and élan, how he cleansed the river in which he was baptized (157–161). It is in accordance with Christ's strongly proactive role, perhaps, that when the Spirit descends in the form of a dove there are no accompanying and confirmatory words from heaven, but rather an exhortation to the gentleness and meekness that it symbolizes. The voice of the Father is, however, used to draw out a representation of the Trinity (a favoured theme and one already closely linked to baptism), which must be seen as one by all who are worthy of it (173–4). A notable exegetical move is his quotation of Ps. 113 (112): 5, seen as prophetic and quoted closely, as the Psalms often are: *namque propheta canens 'quidnam est mare, quod fugis,' inquit, | 'et tu Iordanis, retro quia subtrahis amnem?'*²⁵⁴ The river flees, conscious of Christ's power.

Next, as in the synoptic gospels, come the temptations. Sedulius follows the gospel narratives quite closely, but also elaborates; he is also quite happy to switch between gospels. In 175–7 he begins with Matthew (4: 2, mentioning forty nights as well as forty days), but switches to Luke (4: 1, cf. *sacro spiramine plenum*, 'full of the holy spirit'), and then with *temptator adit* ('the tempter approaches') goes back to Matthew (4. 3). This is typical of him, though his workings are not always so clear.²⁵⁵ No less typical is the way in which his

²⁵¹ See p. 41.

²⁵² For the significance of this kind of comment, see pp. 240–1.

²⁵³ *senioribus esse | corde videbatur senior legisque magistros | inter ut emeritus residebat iure magister.*

²⁵⁴ *Quid est tibi mare quod fugisti et tu Iordanis quia conversus es retrorsum?* ('Why is it, sea, that you have fled, and you, Jordan, that you have turned back?')

²⁵⁵ See pp. 183–4.

presentation is punctuated by authorial intrusions (at 180–3, 190–5, 208–14), as he makes scornful but edifying comments on each of the tempter's vain assaults. Having had his say (with an epic *dixerat* in 215), the Devil flees lamenting, 'pierced by the spearpoint of the mighty word'. This last phrase, with its echoes of epic diction²⁵⁶ cheek by jowl with the Christian notion of 'the word', typifies the general inclusiveness of the poet's language, as does the use in the same line (205) of the Christianity *scriptura* and the epicism *Tonans* in the Devil's quotation of it. It will be obvious from lines 218–19 that Sedulius has no problem with the word *angelus* or derivatives:²⁵⁷ *caelicolae adsistunt proceres coetusque micantes | angelici Christo famulantur rite ministri*.²⁵⁸ The abundance of expression is typical, and there may be a theological undertow: it was not just a few ordinary angels that attended to one who was fully God.

There follows a short passage (220–30) on the choosing of the first disciples, whom, unsurprisingly, Sedulius does not name. Christ's promise that they will be 'fishers of men' is not paraphrased away, as it is by Juvencus (1. 427),²⁵⁹ but is expressed literally²⁶⁰ and explained by allegory, with the sea standing for 'slippery joys' and 'confusing uncertainties'. The new disciples, as fishermen, typify the simplicity and humility of those who are made fit for eternal life; they are not fine speakers²⁶¹ or men of noble blood, for God chooses the foolish and the weak.²⁶²

The appearance of the disciples, or at least four of them, in this brief account of Christ's earlier life is not particularly surprising. But it is interesting to note that elsewhere in the poem the disciples receive an arguably disproportionate prominence. They are often omitted completely where we might expect them (3. 242–50, 295–312, 4. 45–56), but, on the other hand, there are some passages that deserve particular consideration. In the first of these (3. 158–75, rendering Matt. 10: 5–10) Sedulius keeps quite closely to his model,

²⁵⁶ Cf. Lucan 3. 620 *confixus cuspidē*, Statius, *Theb.* 9. 108 *convulsae cuspidē*.

²⁵⁷ For this word in Juvencus, see pp. 98–100.

²⁵⁸ 'Heavenly leaders stand by him and shining throngs, angelic servants duly serve Christ.'

²⁵⁹ See also Green (2004a).

²⁶⁰ *humanas piscari animas* ('to fish for human souls').

²⁶¹ On *sermo piscatorius* see Bartelinck (1960).

²⁶² 1 Cor. 1: 27–8 is closely quoted.

but as well as paraphrase and some detailed exegesis (169) adds the purpose behind their commissioning by Christ: it was so that ‘doctrine, flowing from these teachers with himself as their authority could run down through the rest of time’.²⁶³ The disciples are a vital conduit, just as in 5. 434, at the end of the poem (this follows Luke 24: 48) they are the witnesses and writers of the divine *virtus*. A second such passage is at the end of Book 3 (320–39), where there is no miracle (notwithstanding the fact that Christ is introduced here as *doctor mirabilis*, ‘marvellous teacher’),²⁶⁴ but an account of the disciples’ debate about which of them will be greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 18: 1–4). As in the gospel Christ puts before them a young boy and commends him as a picture of humility; the book ends with a strong statement of this theme. Although the authenticity of the last two lines of this book are much disputed,²⁶⁵ it is possible that there is a link between their apparent reference to his poetic aims and the earlier praise of humility. Another surprising inclusion is the passage where Christ gives advice to ‘the seventy’ in Luke 10: 1–4 and 19–20, treated at some detail in 4. 150–71.

These passages, prominently placed—two at the centre of their books,²⁶⁶ one at the end of Book 3—call for explanation. It seems that just as Juvencus had linked his own task with the commission given by the risen Christ to the disciples,²⁶⁷ so Sedulius may be making a connection between himself and the apostles, who are important not for their miracles but for their teaching. There may thus be a discreet element of self-reflexivity on the writer’s part. A contradiction could be seen, admittedly, between his condemnation of *loquendi gloria* at 2. 225–6 and his own accomplished style, but Sedulius sees himself, at least in the Preface,²⁶⁸ as a writer of little

²⁶³ *ut ab his iam sese auctore magistris | in reliquum doctrina fluens decurreret aevum* (3. 171–2).

²⁶⁴ ‘wonderful teacher’.

²⁶⁵ See Mazzega (1996), *ad loc.*

²⁶⁶ Springer (1988, 100–2) made much of the argument from its absolute centrality in developing his thesis that the picture of the Good Shepherd is thus given special importance. Mazzega (1996) is rightly sceptical (on line 169) and underestimated the scepticism of one reviewer of Springer, who was concerned to show that there were various possible ways to calculate the poem’s centre.

²⁶⁷ Juvencus 4. 790–801.

²⁶⁸ See pp. 160–1.

merit; he also, by implication, contrasted his poetic style with the pomp of classical writing in the opening lines of the poem. Another accomplished Christian stylist did not hesitate to pillory the ostentatious show-offs produced by the rhetorical profession.²⁶⁹

The final episode of Book 2 is a detailed exposition in some seventy lines of the Lord's Prayer, no doubt included as an indispensable instrument of the Christian life. Ratkowitsch maintained that it is part of the anti-Arian agenda that she saw as fundamental to the poem: the Son teaches how to pray because only he, as truly God, can do so.²⁷⁰ But her explanation of the theological agenda is far from certain, and the exposition that Sedulius gives here seems in this perspective doctrinally neutral, as does the longer and rather different version in *Opus Paschale*. When Sedulius seeks to explain how God can be our Father,²⁷¹ he shows no embarrassment, and certainly no anxiety to explain the nature of Christ's own sonship. This brief commentary, which will be considerably extended in *Opus Paschale*, stands in a long tradition, which includes Tertullian and Cyprian in the Latin West, and a study of its affinities and sources cannot be attempted here.²⁷² In one respect at least, Sedulius' version is exceptional, and that is its inclusion of Vergil, who is yet again present. Having explained how Christ might lead us into temptation (but in fact he does no such thing), the poet urges Christians to enter the narrow gate of Matt. 7: 13–14, which is a *tenuis semita* in the language of Vergil.²⁷³ More Vergil follows, for the next sentence includes a verbally exact reprise of one-and-a-half lines of Vergil: *at laeva malorum | exercet poenas et ad impia tartara mittit* (A. 6. 542–3).²⁷⁴ As often, the two paths of Vergil's underworld are assimilated to the two paths that, according to Matt. 7: 13–14, lead respectively to destruction and life.²⁷⁵ Since Vergil's description of the latter cannot

²⁶⁹ Augustine, *Confessions* 1. 18 (28).

²⁷⁰ Ratkowitsch (1989).

²⁷¹ His answer, in a word, is *baptismate* ('by baptism'). The explanation in *OP* is different, and much longer.

²⁷² See Hamman (1951).

²⁷³ Cf. A. 11. 524 *tenuis qua semita*, and 1. 418 *qua semita monstrat* ('where the path indicates').

²⁷⁴ 'But the left-hand path applies the punishments of the evil and sends them to wicked Tartarus.'

²⁷⁵ Courcelle and Courcelle (1984), 1. 442–5.

be used, this becomes the *dextra semita* which calls the just to the bosom of Abraham (Luke 16: 22–5). The book ends by recalling the imagery of cruel wolf and safe sheep, both scriptural and Vergilian.

BOOKS 3 AND 4

Books 3 and 4 were designed as a whole, and will be taken as a whole in what follows. They contain almost all the gospel miracles, at least forty of them, and little that is not a miracle in the strict sense. Exceptions are the passages about the disciples examined earlier, and the unusually long discussion about wealth with which Book 4 begins, though that is ushered in by a short miracle (4. 1–4). Rather than a discursive summary, which would be very long, a synopsis will be given here, together with an identification of the biblical texts that underlie each section. Because the relation of Sedulius to scripture is often not a close one, the designation of his model is not always a clearcut issue, and in what follows more than one scriptural text is sometimes given. Where one can distinguish a principal model from other, partial or less probable models, the latter are identified by ‘cf.’ This should not be taken to imply that these are also demonstrably used (or not used) by Sedulius in his version; in some cases this is so, but in other cases the synoptic parallels are given for completeness’ sake.²⁷⁶ When Sedulius brings in biblical quotations or references from outside the narratives of the miracle in question, whether from other passages of the gospels or, as is more usual, from elsewhere in the Bible, these are signalled by the marker ‘with’.

Book 3

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 1–11 | Changing of water into wine (John 2: 1–11) |
| 12–22 | Healing of an official’s son (John 4: 46–50: cf. Matt. 8: 5–13, Luke 7: 1–10) |
| 23–5 | Acts of general healing (Matt. 4: 23–5) |

²⁷⁶ For full discussion of the sources for the various accounts the reader is referred to the commentaries of Mazzega (1996) and Van der Laan (1990).

- 26–32 Healing of a leper (Matt. 8: 1–4)
- 33–9 Healing of Peter's mother-in-law (Matt. 8: 14–15; cf. Mark 1: 29–31, Luke 4: 38–9)
- 40–5 Casting out of spirits (Matt. 8: 16; cf. Mark 1: 32–4, Luke 4: 40–1)
- 46–69 Stilling of the storm (Matt. 8: 23–7; cf. Mark 4: 35–41, Luke 8: 22–5)
- 70–85 Healing of two demoniacs (Matt. 8: 28–34; cf. Mark 5: 2–13, Luke 8: 26–33)
- 86–102 Healing of a paralytic (Matt. 9: 1–8; cf. Mark 2: 1–12, Luke 5: 18–26)
- 103–42 Healing of a ruler's daughter and a woman with flux (Matt. 9: 18–26; cf. Mark 5: 21–43, Luke 8: 41–56)
- 143–51 Healing of two blind men (Matt. 9: 27–31)
- 152–7 Healing of deaf and dumb demoniac (Matt. 9: 32–3)
- 158–75 Sending out of the twelve (Matt. 10: 5–10; cf. Mark 6: 7–13, Luke 9: 1–3)
- 182 (*sic*)²⁷⁷–8 Healing of man with withered hand (Matt. 12: 9–13; cf. Mark 3: 1–5, Luke 6: 6–10)
- 189–98 Healing of blind and dumb demoniac (Matt. 12: 22–3)
- 199–206 Healing of paralysed woman (Luke (*sic*) 13: 10–17)²⁷⁸
- 207–18 Feeding of five thousand (Matt. 14: 13–21; cf. Mark 6: 30–44, Luke 9: 10–17, John 6: 1–14)
- 219–35 Walking on the water (Matt. 14: 22–33; cf. Mark 6: 45–52, John 6: 16–21)
- 236–41 Healing at Gennaseret (Matt. 14: 34–6)
- 242–50 Healing of Canaanite woman's daughter (Matt. 15: 21–8; cf. Mark 7: 24–30)
- 251–6 Various acts of healing (Matt. 15: 29–31)
- 257–72 Feeding of four thousand (Matt. 15: 32–9; cf. Mark 8: 1–9)

²⁷⁷ Lines 183–7 are spurious, as Huemer indicates *ad loc.*

²⁷⁸ For the problem of its placing, see p. 184.

- 273–92 Transfiguration of Christ (Matt. 17: 1–8; cf. Mark 9: 2–8, Luke 9: 28–36)
- 293–312 Healing of epileptic (Matt. 17: 14–18; cf. Mark 9: 14–27, Luke 9: 37–43)
- 313–19 Peter’s discovery of a coin while fishing (Matt. 17: 24–7)
- 320–39 Disciples’ discussion of who is the greatest (Matt. 18: 1–4; cf. Mark 9: 32–6, Luke 9: 46–8)
- Book 4*
- 1–30 Healing of large crowds; discussion of wealth (Matt. 19: 1–2, with Matt. 19: 23–6, 6: 20, 25: 36–40)
- 31–9 Healing of two blind men (Matt. 20: 29–34)
- 40–4 More healing, and Christ’s departure (Matt. 21: 14 and 17)
- 45–56 Cursing of the fig-tree (Matt. 21: 18–22, with Matt. 3: 10 and 7: 19, Ps. 91: 13 (92: 12))
- 57–63 Healing of dumb demoniac (Luke 11: 14; cf. Matt. 9: 32–3, 12: 22)
- 64–81 Woman’s washing of Christ’s feet (Luke 7: 36–8; cf. Matt. 26: 6–13, Mark 14: 3–9)
- 82–89 Healing of demoniac at Capernaum (Mark 1: 21–6, 32–4; cf. Luke 4: 31–5)
- 90–8 Healing of various sick and possessed (Mark 1: 32–4; cf. Matt. 8: 16, Luke 4: 40)
- 99–105 Healing of deaf and dumb man (Mark 7: 31–7)
- 106–8 Healing of blind man by spitting (Mark 8: 22–6)
- 109–24 Teaching from boat; miraculous catch (Luke 5: 1–7)
- 125–41 Raising of dead man at Nain (Luke 7: 11–17)
- 142–9 Healing of Mary Magdalene (Luke 8: 2)
- 150–71 Appointment and briefing of new disciples (Luke 10: 1–4, 19–20, with Matt. 7: 23)
- 172–88 Healing of man with dropsy (Luke 14: 1–6; with Mark 2: 27)
- 189–209 Healing of ten lepers (Luke 17: 11–19, with Gen. 14: 18, Ps. 109 (110): 4)
- 210–21 Healing of Bartimaeus (Luke 18: 35–43; cf. Mark 10: 46–52, with Luke 11. 5–8)

- 222–32 Discussion with the woman of Samaria (John 4: 1–26)
- 233–50 Debate over the woman taken in adultery (John 8: 1–11, with Matt. 7: 3–4, Prov. 26: 11)
- 251–70 Healing of man blind from birth (John 9: 1–12)
- 271–90 Raising of Lazarus from the dead (John 11: 1–44)
- 291–308 Entry into Jerusalem (John 12: 12–19; cf. Matt. 21: 1–11, Mark 11: 1–10, Luke 19: 29–38)

It is clear that after beginning with the two miracles of John which the evangelist designates as the first and second miracles Sedulius follows the order Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and usually takes the miracle narratives in the order in which the gospel presents them. This arrangement strongly suggests, though it does not prove, that he did not make use of a harmony of the gospels. As noted in the case of Juvenius, it is not known how common or popular harmonies such as the *Diatessaron* of Tatian were,²⁷⁹ and the evidence for them, as well as being frustratingly incomplete, is extremely diverse,²⁸⁰ coming in different languages and from different periods, mostly later than Sedulius. The best evidence from the West is the *Codex Fuldensis*, written in the sixth-century for Victor of Capua, but in its structuring of episodes it does not match Sedulius at all closely: he was not, then, following a tradition from which this derived. The detailed investigation undertaken by Moretti Pieri of the *Codex Fuldensis* and a tenth-century Arabic version based on a ninth-century Syriac version, in which she collated them with Sedulius' poem in the many places where he could have used more than one gospel, shows the latter version to be the more likely source of the two;²⁸¹ but the degree of convergence between this version and Sedulius' accounts is not great, and Moretti Pieri's treatment of the difficulties inherent in her methodology do not give confidence. It is of course necessary to examine what she calls the 'intreccio di fonti', the interlacing of items to form a composite episode, in other words

²⁷⁹ There is no hint that a harmony was consulted by Augustine when he wrote *De Consensu Evangelistarum*, in which he sought to explain discrepancies between the gospel accounts.

²⁸⁰ Wikenhauser (1958), 110–14.

²⁸¹ Moretti Pieri (1969).

to identify the gospel from which Sedulius' verses or smaller units derive and then compare his ordering of them with that of the putative models. This would often be difficult even if Sedulius were operating mechanically, but he demonstrably reserves the right to be independent, varying the expression and even introducing classical echoes, a fact that Moretti Pieri recognizes only intermittently. In this and other ways there is a suspicion of special pleading at various points. The outcome, moreover, is a fuzzy one: Sedulius uses Matthew as well as the Syrian version, but his exemplar, she argues, was partly incomplete, and so could not be used for much of Book 4. Moretti Pieri was happy to concede that he worked independently in Book 5, arguing that he would have known the narratives of the passion, resurrection, and ascension very well, but it is surely highly likely that he knew the rest of the gospels very well too, especially given his membership of a devout community and his acquaintance with the liturgy.²⁸² It will be assumed in what follows, therefore, that Sedulius worked directly from the gospels themselves.

There is one egregious anomaly in the order of the episodes: the placing of Luke 13: 10–17 at 3. 199–206, which has not been satisfactorily explained. Springer believed that it is put there because it is concerned with the sabbath and the synagogue, like the two miracles that immediately precede;²⁸³ but, as Mazzega points out, the correct place for it would then have been after line 188, for it is the healing of the man with the withered hand that takes place in a synagogue and not the miracle that stands at lines 189–98. Van der Laan argued that it is placed there because of a similarity between the debate that in Matthew follows the healing of the blind and dumb demoniac (3. 189–98, Matt. 12: 22–3) and the debate that follows a similar healing in Luke 11: 14–23; this led Sedulius to insert the next Lucan narrative (this is 13: 10–17) at this point in his Matthean series. This is most implausible, not only because of the material intervening between the passages in Luke, but, as Mazzega says, because the healing miracle of Luke 11: 14–23 is used by Sedulius later in 4: 57–63; if this healing is kept back until Book 4 it is highly unlikely that the material that follows it in Luke will have influenced Book 3.

²⁸² Cf. *CP* 1. 23–4.

²⁸³ Springer (1988), 51 n. 8.

Two other passages based on Luke are out of place, albeit a little less conspicuously, at 4. 57–63 and 64–81, where they separate Matthean from Marcan material. In all these cases the problem may simply be an editorial one. Because of Sedulius' relative indifference to context, and the frequent lack of contextual marking in the gospels themselves,²⁸⁴ it would be easy for passages to become misplaced, whether by their author during composition, or perhaps by an editor. Oversight is also the most likely explanation for the omission of the miracle related by John at 5: 2–15, the healing of the invalid at the pool of Bethesda. Unless the manuscript tradition is responsible, it seems that Sedulius overlooked it altogether; or perhaps he made a version, only to lose sight of it among his papers. Another omission is the miracle at Matt. 8: 5–13, the healing of the centurion's servant, but this was surely deliberate. It is very similar to the healing of the official's son, which Sedulius has at 3: 12–22 (John 4: 46–50). Both of these were included by Juvencus (1. 741–66, 2. 328–46), and, as Mazzega shows, they were considered separate miracles by Origen, Ambrose, Augustine, and John Chrysostom, though there are some signs in the last named of a desire to conflate them.²⁸⁵ But Sedulius, although he is not hasty in diagnosing duplication (cf. 3. 143–51 and 4. 31–9, healings of blind men from Matt. 9: 27–31 and 20: 29–34), has decided not to include both. Mazzega dismisses the idea that artistic considerations underlie this decision, arguing that he could have changed one or both of them considerably if he had wished. Certainly he includes both stories of the feeding of the multitudes (3. 207–18 and 257–72), distinctively presented.

In presenting the miracle narratives Sedulius generally gives himself more freedom than Juvencus did, and it is seldom that Jerome's formula of *paene ad verbum* could be applied. There is usually a clear divergence between the practice of the two poets. At one extreme is the eight-line elaboration of the short clause in which Luke described Mary Magdalene, *de qua daemonia septem exierant* (8: 2), at 4. 142–9.²⁸⁶ A more typical pattern—described by Springer as to 'retain, omit, condense, expand'—emerges very well from his analysis

²⁸⁴ See pp. 221–3.

²⁸⁵ Mazzega (1996), 75.

²⁸⁶ 'from whom seven demons had gone out'.

of Sedulius' treatment of the first miracle.²⁸⁷ In John (2: 1–11) there is a carefully developed story, beginning with specification of time and place, and proceeding to the detail that Jesus' mother, Jesus himself, and also the disciples were invited. The miracle happens after an exchange between Jesus and his mother, who lets him know that the wine has run out. Meanwhile the narrator tells us that there were six stone jars for the Jewish rites of purification. Water is poured into them at Christ's command. The miracle then accomplished is seen principally through the eyes of the amazed steward, who makes an explicit comment to the (perhaps equally amazed) bridegroom. What do we have in Sedulius' eleven lines? There is a minimum of background detail; we are told merely that Christ is a guest at a wedding and, as John says at the end of his account (verse 11), that this is the first of his signs. There are no characters other than Christ, and no dialogue. His power, and his motivation in attending, and the wonder of what happens, are the concerns of the first three lines. Sedulius then concentrates on the change itself, though not on what leads up to it, or (as Ovid might have done),²⁸⁸ the actual process of change; the filling of the jars (verses 7 and 8) is represented by the single word *fusas* ('poured'). Instead of the various colourful preliminaries in John, Sedulius makes a simple statement that he changed water into wine (*in vinum convertit aquas*) less than halfway into the episode. There is then an entirely new emphasis: the water rejoices at the change, and its joy is described twice over. Sedulius does not say so here, but it is a case of the elements being aware of the presence of their Creator.²⁸⁹ Two further details follow. The point that Christ filled six jars with this 'nectar'²⁹⁰ is not to restate the miracle but to emphasize the number; Sedulius here leaves it at that, but in Arator, who follows Sedulius in many ways, this would certainly have been made the springboard for numerology and further exegesis. Then when he closes the miracle with a brief exposition of Christ's claim to be the Vine (John 15. 1–2), he makes an allusion of obvious relevance

²⁸⁷ Springer (1998), 111–16.

²⁸⁸ The closest Sedulius' changes come to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is in the very brusque transformation, informed by allegory, of 3. 249 *de cane fecit ovem* ('from a dog he made her a sheep').

²⁸⁹ See pp. 195 and 201.

²⁹⁰ *implevit sex ergo lacus hoc nectare Christus*, line 8.

but also perhaps intended to explain the water's enthusiasm. The exegesis, though compressed, is explicit. Sedulius' version of the story would have meaning for a reader unfamiliar with scripture, but its original detail and articulation have been greatly pruned or modified; he keeps his eye on a few, important points.

It should not be concluded that Sedulius has no interest in detail, or in the storytelling of the gospels. This will emerge clearly from another passage (4. 125–41), his retelling of the story of the raising of a dead man in the city of Nain, from Luke 7: 11–16, which is much closer to the base-text than the passage just analysed. The Latin of the 'European' version is also given:²⁹¹

Talibus insignis virtutibus ibat in urbem,	125
quae sit dicta Naim, populo vallatus opimo	
et grege discipulum, miserum cum comminus ecce	
conspicit efferri iuvenem gelidumque cadaver,	
pluribus exsequiis et inani funere passum	
triste ministerium, cuius sors invida matrem	130
iamdudum viduam gemina viduaverat urna.	
nec remorata diu pietas, inimica doloris,	
auxilium vitale tulit tactoque feretro	
'surge' ait, 'o iuvenis'; parensque in tempore dicto	
mortuus adsurgit, residensque loquensque revixit	135
atque comes genetricis abit: nam funere torpens	
et licet amissae passus discrimina vitae	
non poterat famulus Domino clamante tacere	
nec vita praesente mori. mox agmine verso	
deponens trepidum recidivo tramite luctum,	140
candida felicem revocavit pompa parentem.	

Conspicuous for such powers, he was going to a city which was called Nain, surrounded by a dense crowd and the group of his disciples, when lo, close by he saw a young man being brought out, a cold corpse, who in many rites and a vain funeral had undergone a sombre ceremony, whose mother, already for a long time a widow, unkindly fortune had bereaved with a second burial. Divine compassion, the enemy of grief, did not hesitate long, but brought life-giving aid; touching the bier he said 'young man, arise'. And obeying the words at once the dead man arose and lived again, sitting up and

²⁹¹ Van der Laan (1990), 204–12 demonstrates Sedulius' use of OL, not the Vulgate. It is likely that a 'European' version was used.

speaking, and went away together with his mother. For although stiff in death, and having suffered the ordeal of losing his life he, a servant, could not be quiet when the Lord called nor could he die while Life was present. Soon, reversing its march, putting aside its frightened grief now that the path to life was restored, the radiant procession brought back the happy mother.

Et factum est deinceps ibat in civitatem quae vocatur Nain, et ibant cum illo discipuli eius multi et turba copiosa. 12. et factum est cum adpropiaaret portae civitatis et ecce efferebatur defunctus filius unicus matris suae. et haec vidua erat. et turba multa cum illa. 13. quam cum videret Dominus misertus est super eam et dixit illi, 'noli flere'. 14. et accessit et tetigit loculum; hi autem, qui portabant. steterunt. et ait, 'adulescens, tibi dico, surge'. 15. et resedit qui erat mortuus et coepit loqui. et dedit illum matri suae. 16. accepit autem omnes timor et magnificabant Deum.

And it happened next that he was going to a city called Nain, and many disciples and a large crowd were going with him. And when he was approaching the city gate, behold a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a great crowd was with her. When he saw her the Lord pitied her and said to her 'do not weep', and he approached and touched the coffin. Those who were carrying it halted, and he said 'young man, I say to you, arise'. And the man who had been dead sat up and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother. All were seized by fear, and they magnified God.

Sedulius begins with a resumptive statement highlighting Christ's miraculous power, but then follows the original closely (avoiding, like Juvencus, the storyteller's *et factum est*) to depict the journey to the city called Nain. Rather than matching Luke's paratactic collection of short sentences, Sedulius, in the manner of epic storytelling, employs subordination, using a participial construction (*vallatus*) to manage the description of the disciples and evoking the appearance of the funeral procession in a closely linked clause with 'inverted' *cum*. From the beginning the funeral procession is seen through the eyes of Christ, with no lack of impact; it is still marked by *ecce* ('behold'), and enhanced by alliteration.²⁹² The detail of the city gate is not present in Sedulius; it might detract from the concentration on the mother's grief. Her sad situation, bereaved once more, and the gloom and apparent futility of the funeral are developed in

²⁹² Of which Huemer's *ecferri*, tacitly corrected above, is not a part; a modern editor, or indeed any editor who followed the manuscripts, would write *efferrī*.

three lines of Sedulius' own devising. There is an allusion to Vergil (A. 6. 223, *triste ministerium*) in line 130, and in *sors invida* a commonplace of epitaphs;²⁹³ in the following line the play on words (*viduam... viduaverat*) and the conceit of the 'second urn' or 'burial' show typical embellishment. Christ is described by Sedulius not as compassionate, but as compassion itself; this in place of the statement 'do not weep'. The poet feels no need to say that the bearers halted, but, maintaining his single focus, adds that Christ 'brings life-giving aid'. Now, in the centre of the passage, Christ touches the bier and addresses the young man. The moment of resuscitation is signalled by various verbs (*residens* takes up the verb *resedit*, unusual in this sense; his *revivo* is also rare, perhaps specifically Christian). Brought back to life, like a servant being called by his master, the young man goes away 'as his mother's companion'; Christ does not, in Sedulius' version, 'give him to her', for now the spotlight is on the young man. The implicit contrast between the four lines (136–9) describing how he comes back to life and the earlier lines portraying the sadness of the scene (129–31) is eloquent, and Sedulius' almost amusing picture of the procession's about-turn mirrors it neatly. In sum, Sedulius' version of scripture keeps close to the original, sometimes even verbally, but bears the imprint of a considered rethinking and reworking of the original in a more rhetorical and poetic idiom. Sedulius has his own gifts, and his own perspectives on the sacred story, and uses them to articulate the episode in an attractive and forceful way.

In presenting a miracle narrative Sedulius follows no set procedure, but it is easy to outline what are typically the main contents. They include, most commonly, a description of the problem; the plea of the victim, if his or her plight is not obvious; Christ's (often immediate) reaction; the effect of his intervention; and sometimes theological or devotional comment. Generally Sedulius omits the reactions of spectators, as Juvenecus does,²⁹⁴ whether spoken or unspoken: those in Matt. 9: 8, Matt. 15: 31, and Luke 7: 16, for example, are ignored.²⁹⁵ At 3. 141–2 he emphasizes the joyful surprise of the

²⁹³ *TLL* VII. 2. 210, 79–84. Sedulius may have read it at Lucan 4. 503.

²⁹⁴ See pp. 78–9.

²⁹⁵ The corresponding passages of *CP* are respectively 3. 86–102, 251–6, and 4. 125–51.

parents but omits the ridiculing of Christ a few verses earlier (Matt. 9:24). There is no hint of an ongoing conflict with the Pharisees or any others (except, of course, the Devil); references to the Pharisees at 4. 64 and 172 are quite neutral, and the treatment in 4. 233–50 of the story of the woman taken in adultery seems to move away from the group of the Pharisees (*Pharisaea manus*), who accused her, to everyman. The added quotation of Mark 2: 27, almost verbatim, at 4. 183–4 shows that he is fully aware of the controversy surrounding sabbath observance, but there is little sign of controversy. The narratives at 3. 86–102, 182–8, and 4. 74–6 leave out Jewish questionings of the miracles. Narratorial additions in the form of prophecy, especially those of Matthew, are generally omitted, as in 3. 33–9 (cf. Matt. 8: 17). Before embellishing his narratives, Sedulius strips them down, as it were, to the bare miracle.

Dialogue, and direct speech in general, are conspicuously scarce. Juvencus felt free to reduce them, but Sedulius goes much further. The tendency to cut down on dialogue noted above in Juvencus' story of the Canaanite woman (3. 242–50) is even more conspicuous in Sedulius, who here has only indirect speech; the confrontation is dominated by the emblematic emphasis on the dogs to which she compares herself.²⁹⁶ The story of Christ and the two demoniacs (3. 70–85) is told without any direct speech; the divine command to the evil spirits is expressed tersely and indirectly with the words *exire iubentis*,²⁹⁷ and their plea omitted in favour of a description of their porcine affinities. At 3. 16–17 the quality of the man's faith is emphasized without any spoken exchanges,²⁹⁸ as is 'the importunate faith' of Bartimaeus at 4. 216–17. There is true dialogue perhaps only in 3. 28–9, where there is just one word from Christ; at 4. 194 and 197 there is one line from the lepers and one from Christ, but it is hardly an exchange.²⁹⁹ In marked contrast to Juvencus' practice, Sedulius'

²⁹⁶ Something of Juvencus' narrative technique in that passage (see pp. 77–8) enters into 4. 64–81 (Luke 7: 36–8).

²⁹⁷ 'ordering (them) to leave'. Cf. 4. 258–9 *voce iubentis | accepta* ('following the words of (Christ) ordering (them)').

²⁹⁸ *velocem comitata fidem*: Christ's power 'accompanies swift belief' in words that recall Mary's reaction at 2. 37.

²⁹⁹ In the poem as a whole the best example would be the temptation narratives: Roberts (1985), 138. Direct speech of any kind is rare in Book 5.

account of Christ's meeting with the woman of Samaria has no direct speech in it at all (4. 222–32), and the story of the raising of Lazarus (4. 271–90) a mere three words, albeit the vital ones *Lazare perge foras* (284).³⁰⁰

This general reduction of dialogue and direct speech, in favour of a narrative driven by affective description and the highlighting of divinely inspired restoration, does not exempt the words of Christ. In two early miracles particular emphasis is given to his words; at 3. 20 Sedulius, like a precise commentator, underlines an important verbal point,³⁰¹ insisting that Christ said not 'he will live' but 'he does live',³⁰² and at 3. 29 there is an impressive emphasis on the single word *volo* ('I do wish'). Roberts argues that at 3. 98–9 the close paraphrase of Christ's words *surge tolle grabatum et vade in domum tuam* (Mark 2: 11, Matt. 9: 6)³⁰³ draws particular attention to the passage.³⁰⁴ One could compare 4. 134 *surge, ait, o iuuenis* from the passage quoted above, and 4. 74 *vade, fides, mulier, tua te salvavit . . .*³⁰⁵ (what follows there is free composition).³⁰⁶ But sometimes the rendering of his words is less close, as in 3. 136–7.³⁰⁷ Christ has no monopoly of closely paraphrased words: at 4. 85 the spirit cries out *quid nobis et tibi*, and in the next line, *perdere nos heu, Christe, venis* and *scio denique qui sis*.³⁰⁸ The pleas of those who seek Christ's healing are often elaborated. At 3. 108–13 the *verba precantia*³⁰⁹ of the ruler of the synagogue are extended for the sake of

³⁰⁰ 'Lazarus, come forth.' For Juvencus' use of these episodes, see pp. 82–3.

³⁰¹ Cf. 1. 322–3, in the refutation of Arius and Sabellius.

³⁰² Greek and Latin versions have the present tense, but it is not impossible that Sedulius' comments are based on a variant text, which has the future tense. Many modern versions use the future here.

³⁰³ 'arise, take up your bed and walk'. Sedulius' version is *surge, ait et proprium scapulis attolle grabatum*: "arise", he said, "and take your bed on your shoulders."

³⁰⁴ Roberts (1985), 138. The word *grabatum* is used by OL in Mark, and a few versions of it in Matthew.

³⁰⁵ Cf. Luke 7: 50 *fides tua te salvam fecit . . .*

³⁰⁶ Cf. also 4. 16–17 and 48–9 (Matt. 19: 26 and 21: 19), where the syntactical structure is closely followed but in different words.

³⁰⁷ *hic sopor est . . . nec funus adesse | credite, nec somno positam lugete puellam* ('this is sleep . . . do not think that death has come, and do not mourn the girl who is just sleeping'). Cf. Matt. 9: 24 *recedite; non est enim mortua puella sed dormit* ('depart, for the girl is not dead but asleep').

³⁰⁸ Luke 4: 34.

³⁰⁹ Cf. Vergil, *A.* 7. 237; Ovid uses the phrase *precantia verba* several times.

pathos; at 3. 295–304 there is a similar plea, again reinforced by verbal repetition,³¹⁰ and preceded and followed by very strong epic colouring.³¹¹ The blind men are given a two-line speech in 3. 144–6, which is actually longer than anything Christ says in the course of a miracle. Sedulius, then, takes the opportunity of developing strong rhetorical effects from time to time, especially in describing those who suffer; it is important for his picture of Christ that the intensity of suffering and the despair of individuals be foregrounded.

The silence or terseness of Christ, on the other hand, underlines his *virtus* ('power'), which along with *pietas* ('compassion') is very prominent. It is emphasized that he does not delay (4. 35 and 132), or rather that his *pietas* does not delay. The compassion is instinctive and immediate, almost automatic; though there is emotion, as in 4. 181 *non tulit hanc speciem*,³¹² it is not elaborated. Similarly in 4. 255, where another aspect of his motivation is also revealed: 'he did not suffer the limbs of his own handiwork to be imperfect for long.' The Creator has a consistent³¹³ and immediate urge to put things right, shown again in 3. 155–7, when he at once banishes a demon from one possessed.³¹⁴ Sometimes he only needs to see (*conspicit...*, 3. 143, 4. 128; *senserat*, 3. 126). The reduction in Christ's speaking-parts means that Sedulius cannot follow in the wake of Juvencus and scatter epic-type introductions to speeches to present different characteristics of Christ.³¹⁵ When he does speak the introduction is often minimal. But additions of the Juvencan kind are quite common when describing the actions of Christ: for example, at 3. 113–14 he is *auctor lucis* ('the author of life'; the girl is reported dead);³¹⁶ at 3. 196 *lux nostra et sermo parentis* ('our light and the word of his Father', in connection with a man blind and dumb); and at 4. 253–4 *sanguinis ille | conditor humani mundique orientis origo* ('the creator of human

³¹⁰ *unus mihi filius, unus...* Cf. *miserere* in 3. 108–9 and 3. 60–1 (the disciples in the storm).

³¹¹ See p. 214.

³¹² Cf. Vergil, *A.* 2. 407. 'He did not tolerate this sight...'

³¹³ 3. 188 *sicut semper agit, nil tollit et omnia reddit* ('as he always does, he takes nothing away and restores all').

³¹⁴ See Mazzega (1996) on *ordine sacro*, 155.

³¹⁵ See pp. 82–3 and 96–7.

³¹⁶ Similarly, in 3. 148 the blind men realize that Christ is *lucis viam* 'the path to light'.

blood and the origin of the newly created world'). In 3. 313, in the context of paying tribute to Caesar, Christ is presented, with none of Juvencus' subtle ambivalence on this theme, as king of kings (*rex regum*). The point of the question that Christ posed in the gospel being obscure to him (as to most readers), Sedulius may have taken the opportunity to present Peter—and by implication himself, perhaps—as a law-abiding taxpayer.

The single most obvious feature of these episodes is their vivid descriptions. The approach is strongly visual, and the writing abundantly colourful. An extreme case is the description of a man with dropsy (4. 172–88), which in its boldness and richness approaches the satirical, and may, indeed, have been indirectly inspired by it.³¹⁷ Other notable descriptions are those of the paralytic of 3. 86–102 and the paralysed woman of 3.199–206;³¹⁸ there is also the description of the effects of leprosy in 3. 26–32 and of the high fever of Peter's mother-in-law in 3. 33–9. In the case of the blind, deaf, or dumb there is less scope, but the healing, or its effects, may be vividly presented, as in 4. 31–9 and 103–5. The fascinating process of the healing of the blind man in 4. 251–70 (cf. John 9: 6–7) receives an explanation in figurative terms. Considerable attention is also paid to portrayals of the serpentine adversary. At 3. 189–95 Sedulius describes how *ille chelydrus* ('that well-known serpent') rejoices to fatten himself on human decay and spread his poison. At 4. 93–8 the perspective is historical: the Devil, who has known Christ since the earliest days, when he was thrown down from the heights of heaven with his retinue and allies and the whole array of his wicked army, is strongly personified here, and we see the outlines of a Miltonic Satan and his host of rebel angels. The conflict between Christ and the Devil is also re-enacted in the episode that the poet builds from Luke's remark about Mary Magdalene, from whom Christ had cast seven devils (4. 142–9).

But it is not true that the Devil, or the illnesses for which he is responsible, has all the best descriptions. Like Juvencus (and many other ancient writers and artists), Sedulius enjoys himself elaborating

³¹⁷ See pp. 211–13.

³¹⁸ Note esp. the string of epithets at 200: *tremebunda, gemens, incurva, caducis | vultibus*: 'trembling, weeping, bent double, with downcast face...'

a fishing scene, such as that on the Sea of Galilee (4. 109–22).³¹⁹ The lake itself is first described by the common poetic word *stagna* (112), but three lines later is, as often, compared to the open sea (*pelagus*). Christ teaches from an *alnus* (small boat),³²⁰ after which he bids the disciples go fishing and Simon pursues the ‘watery tribes’ (*aquosis gentibus*). There is also a fine description of a seascape in the evening twilight (again, in fact, the Sea of Galilee, which is a lake) at 3. 219–30, which is the setting of Christ’s miracle of walking on the water, which Peter emulates. Nothing, as Roberts says,³²¹ is more characteristic of epic than poetic periphrases of time. The theme may be hackneyed, but great care is devoted to subtlety of variation. Sedulius’ picture deserves to be quoted, again with the scriptural base (Matt.14: 23–5):

Iamque senescentem gelidi ³²² sub caerulea ponti	
Oceano rapiente diem, cum pallor adesset	220
noctis et astriferas induceret Hesperus umbras,	
discipuli solo terris residente magistro	
undosum petiere salum, fluctuque tumentis	
torva laborantem iactabant aequora puppem:	
adversus nam flatus erat. tunc noctis opacae	225
tempore calcatas Dominus superambulat undas	
et vasti premit arva freti, glaucisque fluentis	
circumfusa sacras lambebant marmora plantas.	

And already, with the Ocean snatching the declining day beneath the blue-grey billows of the sea, when the pallor of night had come and the evening star was bringing in the starry darkness, while their master stayed on land the disciples sought the surging sea, and with swelling wave the wild waters were tossing the toiling ship; for the wind was against them. Then in the depth of dark night the Lord walked over the waves and trod the expanse of the vast waters, and the surrounding sea licked his holy feet with its blue-grey waves.

³¹⁹ Other examples in Sedulius are 5. 394–5 and 2. 220–3.

³²⁰ A poetic use found in Lucan, Silius, and others, but not Vergil’s *Aeneid*.

³²¹ Roberts (1985), 208.

³²² The word *calidi* is read here by Huemer; it would be surprising in such a context.

Vespere autem facto solus erat ibi. 24. navicula autem in medio mari iactabatur fluctibus; erat enim illis ventus contrarius. 25. quarta autem vigilia noctis venit ad eos Iesus ambulans supra mare.

And at evening he was alone there; the ship was being tossed by the waves in the middle of the sea; for the wind was against them. At the fourth watch of the night Jesus came to them walking over the sea.

With variations on traditional themes and expressions, the poet evokes the encircling ‘Ocean’ receiving the spent or literally ‘ageing’ day in its waters. He follows this with a well-judged description of the pallor of night, in an observation deriving ultimately perhaps from the much-admired words of Vergil in *A. 6. 272 rebus nox abstulit atra colorem*.³²³ (Sedulius will have also known the description of Juvenecus 2. 1–3, where the poet refers to the *palla* or ‘cloak’ of night, and the more matter-of-fact, even Lucretian, words of Prudentius at *Hamart. 883–4*.)³²⁴ The epithet *astrifer* recalls Lucan, and the actual combination with *umbras* is matched in Valerius Flaccus 6. 752. After a line neatly enclosed by the words *discipuli* and *magistro* the poet turns more obviously to Vergil, with close reference to *A. 4. 313 per undosum peteretur classibus . . . aequor* and *A. 7. 810 fluctu . . . tumentis*. The latter passage is from Vergil’s description of Camilla’s ability to travel over the waves with dry feet, with what is surely pointed *Kontrastimitation*. The period is neatly ended with a short sentence which closely follows the words of the biblical model. After Christ’s arrival, the line which describes the distress of the ship in the waves (224) is neatly picked up by a half-line *lambabant marmora plantas* (228)³²⁵ which mirrors the structure of the preceding words *iactabant aequora puppem*. It is reasonable, given other evidence of Sedulius’ imaginative ways of articulating Christ’s relationship with his creation,³²⁶ to see in *lambabant* a hint of dogs serving their master. In 4. 138, analysed above, the dead youth behaved like a slave before his master; such boundaries can easily be crossed in a context of miracle. The lake is later described in words that apply both to land

³²³ ‘dark night took away the colour from things’. See e.g. Austin, *ad loc.*

³²⁴ *nostris nempe omnes pereunt sub nocte colores | visibus* (‘for at night all colours are lost to our sight’).

³²⁵ ‘the sea’s marble surface licks his feet’.

³²⁶ See p. 186.

and, in the high style, to the sea—*arva* in 227 and *campos* in 235—to reinforce the paradox and so emphasize the miracle.³²⁷ Peter, who later walks with evidently no hesitation but total confidence,³²⁸ becomes *pelagique viator*, a wayfarer on the sea, in line 234.³²⁹

Since most such descriptions occur in Books 3 and 4, it will be appropriate to mention here an article by Opelt on *Die Szenerie* in Sedulius.³³⁰ Opelt came to some trenchant conclusions about the realization of the geographical settings of Sedulius' narratives, comparing him unfavourably with Juvencus.³³¹ She finds him 'more blind to the landscape' and unconcerned with geographical detail, and argues that he valued *Dekor* only for allegorical purposes. (The passage quoted above was criticized by Opelt as 'diverse' (*vielfältig*) 'but conventional and general').³³² Her charges need to be answered individually. As for the first one, his supposed insensitivity to landscape, in fact few opportunities for a fuller or more vivid description of scenery are presented by the gospels, and Sedulius' choice of miracles reduces them further, so that he has less scope than Juvencus. We may assume that, like Juvencus, he had little notion of the features of the Holy Land, whether from autopsy or the reports of others, and he may have been reluctant to let loose his imagination on the landscapes when the evangelists are so reticent. He might in any case have regarded the elaborate description of landscape as a luxury, given the small compass of his individual narratives and their narrative economy.

The second point, Sedulius' indifference to geographical precision, is in fact the main thrust of Opelt's article, rather than scenery. In one respect he can be reasonably charged with error: he has Christ visit Tyre and Sidon more than once. At 3. 242–50 Christ encounters the Canaanite woman in that region, but later performs a miracle on his return from there (4. 99–108). This is a result of Sedulius' uncritical

³²⁷ For *arva* (*Neptunia*) cf. Vergil, *A.* 8. 695; *campi* is rather commoner. Both may go back to early Latin epic, though Sedulius would hardly be aware of that.

³²⁸ Sedulius does not mention Peter's fear, and Christ's rebuke to him; cf. Matt. 14: 30.

³²⁹ Cf. Prudentius, *Perist.* 5. 480 *vasti viator gurgitis* ('a wayfarer on the vast deep'), of Christ walking the waves.

³³⁰ Opelt (1976).

³³¹ Opelt (1975).

³³² Opelt (1976), 113.

way of combining the narratives of the evangelists; he did not notice, or more probably ignored, the fact that the story of the importunate woman pleading for her possessed daughter is common to Matthew and Mark.³³³ This difficulty would hardly have misled readers, and the repetition might even be welcome to those who knew nothing of Palestine except the maritime ports of Tyre and Sidon. There is a problem of a different kind at 3. 87, where Sedulius understood Matthew's reference to 'his own city' (9: 1, *civitatem suam*) as referring to his birthplace (*natale solum*). It is not clear whether Nazareth, his *patria* in the gospels (cf. 3. 88), or Bethlehem or even Capernaum is meant. Mazzega rules out Capernaum, on the basis of the reference in *Opus Paschale* (p. 260, line 10), where there is no such elaboration,³³⁴ and if he is right then there is a clear conflict with Mark, who sets the same miracle in Capernaum (2: 1), and Sedulius could reasonably be accused of overlooking the point.

Opelt also complained of the rarity of place-names. Simply to list them, as she does, is rather misleading: they need to be set against the evidence given by the evangelists, Matthew in particular. If this is done, few omissions appear. In Book 3 perhaps only one relevant geographical detail is lost, namely the detail in Matt. 15: 29 that Christ passed along the Sea of Galilee, where Sedulius mentions only mountains (3. 251), with no hint of where these might be. At 3. 236 and 242 Sedulius is faithful to Matthew's indications. In Book 4, where the available detail is more copious, he is generally at one with the various evangelists. There he retains the Jordan (1), Bethany (43 and 271), Capernaum (82), Tyre and Sidon (99), Nain (126), Galilee (189), Samaria (222), and Siloam (259). Few names are left out; the reason may be metrical in the case of Bethsaida (Mark 8: 22, cf. 4. 106–8), which Juvencus also omits, and Jericho (Matt. 20: 29, cf. 4. 31–2). In the latter case, the result is a certain vagueness (*dum quoddam transiret iter*),³³⁵ albeit of a kind matched elsewhere in Luke.³³⁶ In 4. 99, 189, and 222 Sedulius cuts down on the amount

³³³ Matt. 15: 21–8, Mark 7: 24–30.

³³⁴ Mazzega (1996), *ad loc.* He does not refer to 4. 82 *Cafarnea... urbis*.

³³⁵ 'While he was travelling a certain road.'

³³⁶ Cf. Luke 17: 12 *cum ingrederetur quoddam castellum* ('when he was entering a certain village') in some OL versions.

of topographical detail, as Juvencus sometimes did,³³⁷ for reasons which are essentially metrical: there is no absolute metrical impossibility, but the presence of more than one name aggravates the problem.

Other criticisms of Opelt may be quickly answered. It is not the case that Sedulius omits to mention Bethlehem as the birthplace of Christ: an adjective *Bethlaeus* is devised at 2. 73. It is true that readers are not told that the episode of 4. 109–24 took place on the lake of ‘Gennaseret’ (or Sea of Galilee: Luke 5: 1), but they might remember the lake, large enough to be called a sea, from 3. 46–69. It is surely captious to complain that the city into which Christ rode in 4. 291–308 is not named;³³⁸ few readers, surely, would not have known or assumed that it was Jerusalem.³³⁹ (The same applies to earlier episodes at 2. 134–8 and 201.) In view of this it cannot be argued that Sedulius’ reason for giving Jerusalem no name is that he is more concerned with allegories, such as those of the heavenly city in 1. 336–48, or paradise in 5. 222–6, and it is even less plausible to take this as paradigmatic of his policy towards place-names in general.

Sedulius, then, has provided almost as much detail as his sources provided. It is not appropriate to require of him a wealth of information that goes not only beyond them but also beyond the amount of such background that epic and even historiography normally supply. Exotic place-names posed a big challenge for Latin poets in general. It is related by Servius (whether truly or not does not matter for this purpose) that Vergil was put off the idea of writing on the Alban kings by the recalcitrant (*aspera*) words;³⁴⁰ Pliny appreciates the problem faced by his correspondent Caninius in versifying the *barbara et fera nomina* (‘wild, barbaric names’) of Dacia (*Ep.* 8. 4. 3).³⁴¹ It was very important for the Christian poets, nonetheless, to introduce into verse names from Palestine which for many of their readers will have held a devotional appeal; they are doing something akin to what Vergil did when he so copiously brought into epic the names of places and landmarks of the Italian peninsula. Vergil’s

³³⁷ See pp. 106–10. ³³⁸ Opelt (1976), 110.

³³⁹ Cf. also 4. 42–3: ‘David’s city’ was near Bethany.

³⁴⁰ On Vergil, *E.* 6. 3.

³⁴¹ Paulinus gets special praise from Ausonius for the way in which he versifies the names in Suetonius’ *De Regibus* (quoted in Ausonius, *Ep.* 17).

reasons for so doing can be described, broadly speaking, as patriotic;³⁴² Sedulius' purpose is to enhance familiarity with the scriptures and through that their meditational and edificatory value. Like Juvencus, he does so with a perceptible element of economy, but certainly does not see the narratives as stories without any spatial or scenic context.

A fortiori, Sedulius does not sacrifice geographical precision to the needs of allegory. The extent and methods of his allegorical interpretation will be examined later,³⁴³ but one episode will be taken now, a passage where Opelt alleges that the allegorical motivation of his work 'breaks through the topographical frame'.³⁴⁴ This is the description of the storm on the Sea of Galilee (3. 46–69). The comparison with Juvencus is a small part of Opelt's argument, but reference in the short comments below will also be made to Juvencus' presentation of it in 2. 25–42, and also to the article in which Ratkowitsch, comparing the two storm scenes,³⁴⁵ ventilated the question of allegory as well as examining its poetic qualities. The scriptural passage is Matt. 8: 23–6:

Inde marina petens arentes gressibus algas pressit et exiguae conscendens robora cumbae aequoreas intravit aquas; dominumque sequentes discipuli placido librabant carbasa ponto.	
iam procul a terris fuerat ratis actaque flabris sulcabat medium puppis segura profundum, cum subito fera surgit hiems pelagusque procellis vertitur et trepidam quatiant vada salsa carinam. perculerat formido animos, seseque putabant naufra ga litoreis iam tendere brachia saxis.	50 55
ipse autem placidum carpebat pectore somnum, maiestate vigil, quia non dormitat in aevum qui regit Israel neque prorsus dormiet umquam. ergo ubi pulsa quies cunctis lacrimantibus una voce simul, 'miserere citus, miserere, perimus, auxilio succurre pio', nil vota moratus, exurgens Dominus validis mitescere ventis imperat et dicto citius tumida aequora placat.	 60

³⁴² See Jenkyns (1998), *passim*. ³⁴³ Cf. 230–2.

³⁴⁴ Opelt (1976), 112.

³⁴⁵ Ratkowitsch (1986).

From there, seeking the sea, he walked over the dry seaweed and climbing onto the timbers of a small vessel launched into the waters; and following their master the disciples hoisted their sails on the placid sea. Already the ship was far from land, and propelled by the breeze it was ploughing through the deep without concern, when suddenly there arose a wild storm and the sea was churned by the winds and the salt waters thrashed the trembling boat. Fear had struck their minds, and they thought that, shipwrecked, they would be stretching out their arms towards the rocks on the shore. The master was enjoying gentle sleep, awake in his divine majesty, because he who rules Israel does not ever slumber and will never sleep. So when his rest was broken by them all lamenting with a single voice, 'have pity on us, quickly, have pity, we are perishing, help us with your holy assistance'; not waiting for their prayers the Lord arose and ordered the mighty winds to calm down and, almost before he had spoken, assuaged the tumid sea.

Et ascendente eo in navicula secuti sunt eum discipuli eius. 24. et ecce motus magnus factus est in mari ita ut navicula operiretur fluctibus. ipse vero dormiebat. 25. et accesserunt discipuli eius et suscitaverunt eum dicentes 'domine, libera nos, perimus'... 26b. tunc surgens imperavit vento et mari et facta est tranquillitas magna.

And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. And they went to him and awoke him saying, 'Lord, save us, we are perishing'... Then he rose and commanded the wind and the sea and there was a great calm.

Sedulius begins with four lines (as opposed to two in Juvenecus (25–6): he has more context to give)³⁴⁶ that describe the embarkation and departure.³⁴⁷ Sedulius' vessel is driven by winds but 'without concern', and there is no hint of danger, as there may be in Juvenecus, who has the boat flying along with billowing sail. In Sedulius the storm itself takes two lines; compared with Juvenecus' tempest, at this point highly charged with Vergilian allusions, it is rather lifeless.

³⁴⁶ Juvenecus had already mentioned the decision to cross the lake, in connection with an episode that Sedulius omits.

³⁴⁷ Ratkowsch (1986) draws attention to the four-line beginning in Ovid, *M.* 11. 474–7, and also to Prudentius, *Apoth.* 664–7, of which at least the second would be in Sedulius' mind.

Although it is a 'savage storm', and although the sea (or lake) is turned over by the storms, what strikes the hull is only the Vergilian *vada salsa* of *A.* 5. 158 (in the context of the boat-race).³⁴⁸ Curiously, Juvencus and Sedulius seem to have changed roles here. Sedulius is the fairly close paraphraser, Juvencus the developer of description. Perhaps Sedulius saw no need for pyrotechnics. There is no cause to argue that he plays down the force of the storm in the interests of allegory, to show that the disciples' fears (or, by extension, the Christian's fears) were groundless, because in the lines that follow his picture of the disciples is much more vivid; they are terrified that they will soon be shipwrecked and swimming for their lives,³⁴⁹ whereas in Juvencus they just fear. Their impassioned plea to the sleeping Christ is also much stronger than what we have in Juvencus, where the disciples 'asked their master to wake up and showed him the dangers of the sea' (2. 35).³⁵⁰ In this crisis Sedulius' theological concerns come to the fore. Christ was not fully asleep,³⁵¹ for, as the Psalmist said, the keeper of Israel does not sleep.³⁵² His protection of the disciples was assured. Furthermore, as Sedulius explains in lines 64–9, the storm was not the intractable wildness of a savage sea but the action of perhaps over-enthusiastic elements producing turbulence through sheer joy at their Lord's presence. The presence of this explanation gravely weakens the case for reading this episode as allegory, whether in a relatively strong form as in Ratkowitzsch—the opposition consists of heretics such as the Arians³⁵³—or in Opelt's weaker, less specific form, though undoubtedly there is an implied message to the Christian. Sedulius, following Matthew (8: 18 and 24),

³⁴⁸ It is interesting that at this point *OP* has an extra Vergilian detail, albeit prosaically expressed, in *OP* (p. 235, line 13): the sailors confessed their skills unequal to the crisis (cf. Vergil, *A.* 3. 201–2). There Sedulius has taken the opportunity of a slight expansion.

³⁴⁹ This interpretation is based on *OP*; in *CP* there might be an allusion to the traditional prayers of the shipwrecked in literature.

³⁵⁰ *evigilare rogant pontique pericula monstrant.*

³⁵¹ Cf. pp. 240–1.

³⁵² Ps. 121 (120): *4 non dormitabit neque dormiet qui custodiet Israel* ('he that keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep').

³⁵³ See pp. 242–3. Christians, theologians and lay, certainly did fear heretics, but they hardly sat back and looked to divine aid.

has chosen not to specify or portray the location in any way, but that does not make his setting a 'Niemandsland', suitable only for allegory. For all its epic ambience—though indeed this is less than in Juvenecus and Arator³⁵⁴—it is a particular story in a particular, though unspecified, place, and Sedulius, who is in general not loath to give his readers guidance, offers no hint that it is allegory.

BOOK 5

The last two episodes of Book 4 were in an obvious way preparatory to the story of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection in Book 5. The raising of Lazarus (4. 271–90), though less full of the foreboding of Juvenecus and the evangelist John, is an anticipation of Christ's own resurrection and includes some powerful writing (4. 284–8) which anticipates later poems on his 'harrowing of hell'. Christ's entry into Jerusalem in 4. 291–308 makes an important affirmation not only of the humility of Christ, but also of his kingship, which will shortly be proclaimed and vindicated. Book 5 begins by looking back to all the miracles of the previous two books,³⁵⁵ and then announces its subject from a theological perspective as the putting off of Christ's mortal flesh and its subsequent resumption after he has been to hell (2–5). Miracles in this book are not lacking—from the restoration of the slave's ear (69–72) to the 'great miracles' (*grandia miracula*, 363) of the resurrection itself—but the function of the book is to provide a continuous narrative, albeit one often punctuated with plentiful comment, of these momentous events. In the articulation of this narrative prominence is given to three days: that of the Passover (1–2), that of the trial and crucifixion (113–14), and that of the resurrection (315–16). There is a rich variety of tone: devotional and meditative comment plays a profound role, and so too do impassioned argument and great pathos.

³⁵⁴ See pp. 61–3 and 333–7.

³⁵⁵ *Has inter virtutis opes* ('amidst this wealth of miraculous power'); cf. Vergil, A. 11. 225 *hos inter motus*, also in a transitional context.

In lines 6–19 Christ prays that the Father will glorify him, and is answered from heaven with a heavenly endorsement *ab ore Tonantis*,³⁵⁶ which, as Sedulius argues following John (12: 27–9), could not be natural thunder or the voice of an angel. The Jews are castigated for their failure to accept this testimony, in the first of many apostrophes in this book: Sedulius pointedly mentions the whole race (*gens*) at lines 115, 144, and 260,³⁵⁷ and makes little attempt to distinguish the various elements of Jewish society. The Jewish race clearly bears the principal guilt for Christ's death, although Pilate is also guilty (156–63). Schwind argues that these are conventional denunciations in the context of the passion,³⁵⁸ common they may be, but that does not reduce their significance. They are certainly less strident than many in Arator, but nonetheless bear the stamp of passionate indignation. Passages such as lines 351–8, where Sedulius writes off the Jewish religion, appear remarkably vehement. It is true that there has been little condemnation of Jews earlier in *Carmen Paschale* (even if Herod was deemed a Jew, he is not linked with the race), but that is because Christ's controversies with the scribes and Pharisees are not an integral part of the miracles. Sedulius is beyond doubt more hostile to the Jews than Juvencus was.³⁵⁹

Before the Last Supper begins, Christ washes the disciples' feet, as in John (13: 1–6). Peter's request to be exempted is not mentioned, but Sedulius says that Christ did not leave Judas out, thus highlighting the betrayer already. He goes on to link him with the Jews in general by describing him as 'a whitewashed sepulchre' (Matt. 23: 27) in lines 29–31.³⁶⁰ During the meal, whose continuity with the Eucharist is made very clear,³⁶¹ Christ passed the bread to Judas, thus with a poignant reversal 'betraying the creator of the coming

³⁵⁶ 'from the mouth of the Thunderer' (line 17).

³⁵⁷ Cf. also 297 (*generatio fallax*, 'deceitful generation'); 254 *plebe nefanda* and 375 *plebis apostolicae*.

³⁵⁸ Schwind (1990), 177 and n. 40.

³⁵⁹ See pp. 103–12.

³⁶⁰ For Judas' depiction as a typical Jew, see Poinssotte (1979), 219–25.

³⁶¹ *postquam duo munera sanxit | atque cibum potumque dedit, quo perpete numquam | esuriant sitiantque animae sine labe fideles* ('after he had sanctified the two gifts of his body and blood and given them the food and the drink, with the continuance of which faithful souls without stain would never hunger and thirst').

crime'.³⁶² Then the 'evil spirit' enters Judas, where *livor* ('envy') had its seat,³⁶³ and he accepted the thirty pieces of silver. Sedulius makes a notable move here: often, though certainly less than Arator, he cannot resist an opportunity to spotlight a significant number in scripture, but here he makes the point that even the whole world would be an unequal payment for Christ, who caused the world, and even Judas himself, to be made. Further condemnation of Judas is expressed in a torrent, albeit a smoothly structured one, of ten virulent epithets, with three more, neatly attached to nouns, in lines 59–61, and a tirade on his hypocrisy in greeting Christ with a kiss. Embedded in all this one can detect the detail of 'swords and clubs' from the narrative of the betrayal in the synoptic gospels,³⁶⁴ rather in the way that details of the nativity were allowed to infiltrate Sedulius' powerful rhetoric. The death of the *vir apostolicus, nunc vilis apostata factus*,³⁶⁵ who descended from the stars of heaven to the depths of Tartarus, is narrated in lines 113–38.

Christ, the holy Creator (*operator sanctus*, 69), continues his compassionate work of healing when he restores the ear of the servant and orders the sword to be put away (77). Human revenge is not suitable for one who could ask the Father for more than twelve angelic legions;³⁶⁶ and Christ came to give his life, not to take it away. Peter's hasty action—as in John (18: 10), he is mentioned by name—is then contextualized by a flashback to Christ's warning that Peter would deny him three times.³⁶⁷ That prophecy, Sedulius explains, did not deny his faith, but predicted his fear (82). As in the account of the actual denial, later that night (104–12), and of Peter's repentance with 'bitter' tears that create 'sweet pardon', the apologetic element is obvious.³⁶⁸ The trial of Christ before Caiaphas,

³⁶² *scelerisque futuri | prodidit auctorem*. The verb *prodo* may mean 'reveal' as well as 'betray'. There is a similar play on the verb *trado* in the words immediately following: *panem cui tradidit ipse qui panis tradendus erat* ('Christ who is to be given as bread, himself gives the bread').

³⁶³ For *livor* see pp. 68–9.

³⁶⁴ *gladiis sudibusque*, 63; cf. *cum gladiis et fustibus* in OL. The Vergilian *sudibusve* (A. 7. 524) replaces the scriptural *et fustibus*.

³⁶⁵ 'the apostolic man, now become a worthless apostate'.

³⁶⁶ Matt. 26: 53.

³⁶⁷ Matt. 26: 34–5, Mark 14: 30–1, Luke 22: 33–4.

³⁶⁸ According to *OP*, p. 280, lines 17–18, Peter simply forgot; the denial was not deliberate.

the chief priest but also the chief criminal (84–5),³⁶⁹ follows, and is vividly re-created; as he sits in the *pestifera cathedra* of Psalm 1,³⁷⁰ the council blazes and falsehoods fly, but to no avail. When guile fails they turn to fury, and the mad crowd lays mad hands on him. The narrator himself sheds tears in lines 94–6 as he tries to relate the terrible physical abuse then meted out to Christ, in a passage which recalls the intrusion of Lucan at the climax of his seventh book and the climax of the *Civil War* itself. There the poet declares that he will not waste tears on ‘the death of the world’³⁷¹ by relating individual deaths or seeking to know the manner of these deaths (617–31). Both poets write on the edge of tears; Lucan can weep no more, Sedulius breaks down.³⁷² Both poets intrude frequently into their narrative, but seldom so strikingly as this.³⁷³

One is again reminded of Lucan by the coming of the new day which will see the great crime: it is ‘sadder than the gloom of night’.³⁷⁴ When his adversaries can find nothing against the *Dominus patiens* (‘suffering Lord’), who stands like a lamb led to slaughter,³⁷⁵ he is taken to Pilate. They use the truth as a charge against him, alleging that Christ had claimed to be a king (142). They had always ignored his *imperium*, preferring their idols, and they now preferred Barabbas. (Here Sedulius assumes knowledge both of Baal and Barabbas, explaining neither.) Pilate also receives blame, for his many crimes in this one act of judgement: punishing an innocent man, putting a king on trial before a mere *praeses* (‘governor’), preferring human matters to divine, sending Christ to death with many wounds (156–63). The famous detail that he washed his hands is placed in a baptismal context: he needed the washing of forgiveness in his whole body.³⁷⁶ Sedulius certainly does not cover up Pilate’s guilt, as Juvenecus did.

³⁶⁹ *ille sacerdotum fuerat tunc denique princeps | et princeps scelerum.*

³⁷⁰ ‘the seat that brings destruction.’

³⁷¹ *impendisse pudet lacrimas in funere mundi* (7. 617).

³⁷² It is less noteworthy when an internal narrator feels this way: cf. Vergil, A. 2. 3–8 (Aeneas).

³⁷³ For Sedulius, see Springer (1988), 90–2.

³⁷⁴ In Lucan 7. 1–6 the sun is more sluggish than ‘eternal law’ called it to be: *segnior Oceano, quam lex aeterna vocabat | luctificus Titan... | egit equos.*

³⁷⁵ Cf Isa. 53: 7. This is the second quotation from this chapter of Isaiah; verse 5 was used at 101–3.

³⁷⁶ For baptism in Sedulius, see pp. 238–9.

The poet's presentation of the crucifixion (164–231) is a powerful narrative, but also notable for its frequent explanations of the significance of particular details. The cloak that Christ is made to wear is red, so that the whole picture should be a *mortis imago*.³⁷⁷ The crown of thorns (168–9) signifies that he took upon himself the *spineta nostrorum malorum*.³⁷⁸ The reed placed in his hands (170–1) signifies earthly power—unstable, weak, fragile, empty, insubstantial; another series of epithets underlines the point. The fact that he took his own clothing back after this mockery in alien garb (171–2) signifies that he would, in death, put off the 'covering of human flesh' and so bear nothing changeable when he rose in his own, permanent, majesty.³⁷⁹ Nor was it without divine governance (177) that he refused the wine after briefly tasting it: he would experience death for a short time, but then despise it and return. Then raised upon the cross (182–95), he blessed this form of torture, making it a sign of salvation. It is also a valid object of worship; Sedulius adds, perhaps with a touch of polemic,³⁸⁰ that the cross deserves worship not only because it bore the Lord but because the image of the crucifix brings together four corners of the known world. The creator's head represents the east, his feet the west; his right hand holds the north, and his left the middle of the world. The whole of nature 'lives from the limbs of the creator', and Christ rules the world from the cross.³⁸¹ The purpose of the inscription on the cross, 'This is the king of the Jews', is that 'no indication of his divine status should be lacking',³⁸² and its three languages signify the threefold nature of this king (196–199). Finally, the point of the detail that lots were cast for his tunic—Sedulius in his very brief narrative (200–1) does not mention that the other garments, not being seamless, were divided³⁸³—was to forbid

³⁷⁷ Cf. Vergil, *A. 2.* 369. 'a picture of death'.

³⁷⁸ 'The painful thickets of our sins'.

³⁷⁹ The two senses of the word *proprius* 'one's own' and 'permanent' are exploited here. For the Christological implications of this passage, see pp. 241–2.

³⁸⁰ Note the wording of 188 *neve quis ignoret speciem crucis esse colendam* ('and so that no one should be unaware that the form of the cross deserves worship').

³⁸¹ There may be a reference here to the Christian addition to Ps. 96 (95): 10 *dominus regnavit a ligno*, 'The Lord reigns from the tree', which whether from Jerome's Vulgate or the OL will have been familiar to Sedulius.

³⁸² *quo nihil a deitate vacet*, 197.

³⁸³ John 19: 23–4

schism. This is a command deriving from Christ himself,³⁸⁴ and is of obvious relevance to Sedulius' own time.

The episode of the robbers crucified together with him (202–31) gives a neat illustration of Sedulius' favourite teaching of the two ways,³⁸⁵ even though each has committed an act of great violence; one goes to hell, the other has made off with the kingdom of heaven, adding it to his stolen goods.³⁸⁶ Then, as the Latin scripture has it (Matt. 27: 45), *tenebrae factae sunt per universam terram*. Sedulius makes a powerful version of the supernatural darkness that covered the earth as Christ died, not only by his copious and varied description of it (232–6), but also through a remarkable use of focalization. The story is seen through the eyes of the cosmos, of the elements which so empathize with Christ, and their raw emotions are now revealed.³⁸⁷ Deprived, indeed bereaved, of their father's help,³⁸⁸ they now appropriately share this awful scene. There was light at his birth, there is now darkness and sadness at his death. The earth, too, witnessing such things—this passage is an addition by Sedulius³⁸⁹—trembled from its foundations; nature feared its time had come, and that the world would follow its creator into Tartarus. The hyperbolic vision of collapse and chaos here evoked in a few lines has the power of a Lucretius or a Lucan, although so remarkably focused on the divine.³⁹⁰ But Christ was hastening to the shades below (*pietas immensa vagas properabat ad umbras*), to restore what was lost, not to destroy what was sound.³⁹¹ It is not at first sight obvious that this fleetingly resembles the underworld of classical epic, with its wandering shadows, as in Ovid. *M.* 4. 443 *errant...*

³⁸⁴ *ut sacra vestis | intemerata manens a Christo schisma vetaret.*

³⁸⁵ See pp. 179–80.

³⁸⁶ Raby (1953), 108–9 was clearly amused by this; one may well be, but it is hardly representative of the poet's manner, as there implied.

³⁸⁷ Similarly, after Christ dies, the temple 'sees' that the 'building of the greater temple' has fallen, and tears its robe like a lamenting acolyte (270–2).

³⁸⁸ Note *orbata* (238); Christ is their *pater*.

³⁸⁹ Matthew's picture of the upheaval that followed Christ's death (27: 51–3) follows in 265–75.

³⁹⁰ Cf. Lucretius 5. 95–6 and 344–7 on the *exitium... terrarum caelique* ('the ruin of earth and heaven'), and 6. 567 *incumbere molem*; and for Lucan, the various passages on cosmic dissolution assembled in Lapidge (1979).

³⁹¹ *Sed pietas immensa vagas properabat ad umbras | perdita restituens, non consistentia perdens.*

umbræ, and Vergil A. 6. 451 (Dido, among others), rather than the sleeping dead of Christian belief. This actually enhances the contrast that may be drawn with Aeneas, whose own mission is encapsulated in the line (A. 6. 403–4) *Troius Aeneas, pietate insignis et armis, | ad genitorem imas Erebi descendit ad umbras*.³⁹² But the dissimilarities are obvious, and Aeneas, terrified by the shadows in A. 6. 290–4, seems puny in comparison: Christ is hastening purposefully on a mission to restore what is lost, to raise the dead; his *pietas* (in any case different from that of Aeneas), like his task, is *immensa*, and reaches to millions in the underworld; his *genitor* is in heaven, not, like Anchises, trapped in the underworld. As Christ overcomes death and hell in his descent, so Sedulius' Christ outdoes Aeneas on his own ground.

The section ends with an impassioned apostrophe of death, following Paul;³⁹³ the one thing not created by Christ—its creator is guilt, arising from the serpent's work³⁹⁴—it dies now that mercy reigns (284–5). From the pathos of the passion there emerges a triumphalist attitude which will inspire Sedulius to issue angry and passionate challenges to the killers, apprehensive that the body might be stolen (305–9), to the guards of the body, whose cover-up story he demolishes (339–48), and then to the Jewish people itself, replaced by the Church (351–8). Sedulius is strongly concerned to demonstrate the truth of the resurrection, and gives the relevant narratives and arguments in some detail. When, after such a sad sabbath, the joyful new day dawns—the day, prefigured in Genesis as the first of all days—the scene at the empty tomb is carefully presented. The Virgin Mary, whom Sedulius, diverging from the scriptural accounts, includes among the women who come to the empty tomb,³⁹⁵ is a witness of Christ's return, just as she had been the route of his arrival (363–4, taking up 323–6). Sedulius then details the various appearances of the risen Christ. As in Luke (24: 30–1) he appears in the breaking of bread and later shares a meal, thus proving his human nature (365–74). He appears to Thomas and proves his identity

³⁹² 'Trojan Aeneas, distinguished in piety and warfare, descends to his father in the deepest shades of Erebus.' Cf. *CP* 4. 285 for Erebus.

³⁹³ 1 Cor. 15: 55.

³⁹⁴ *Semine vipereo culpa genetrice crearis.*

³⁹⁵ See p. 237.

(John 20: 26–9); his very openness is a good argument (375–91). He makes himself known to Peter (the other named persons of John 21 are omitted) when he is fishing (392–404). After the meal³⁹⁶ Christ purges Peter of the recent guilt of his denials, and commends to him his sheep and lambs (409–15).

The final episode gives more examples of a conflation of sources of the kind that has been apparent throughout this book; here the mixture includes, for the Ascension, the Book of Acts (1: 9 and 2: 33–5). The verse from John (20: 26) in which Christ gives his peace is juxtaposed with the Matthean passage (28: 19–20) in which he gives the apostles his authority to baptize and make disciples (416–21). But there is also epic and other colouring. Line 425 combines *aetherias... in oras*³⁹⁷ with *sublimis abit* (Vergil, *A.* 1. 415), and in 430 Christ is, like Daphnis of Vergil's fifth *Eclogue*, above the clouds.³⁹⁸ A conspicuous phrase from Lucan is used in the same line: *tractusque coruscus* (2. 270). The disciples, and their follower Sedulius, are thus faithful witnesses of the divine power. They wrote down a small part of the 'innumerable good things', or miracles, that they witnessed; if they had all been written down, the whole world would not be large enough to contain them.³⁹⁹

EPIC

Among the classical authors used by Sedulius Vergil is supreme. This was very evident in Book 1, where we found him used, for example, to characterize Sedulius' target audience (37–46), to embellish the Old Testament vignettes (103–219), to condemn the heretic Arius (305–11), and to describe the heavenly citadel (334–50). In the later books the presence of Vergil continues to be strong, with a markedly greater concentration on the *Aeneid*. Other writers of epic also

³⁹⁶ For *postquam victa fames* cf. Vergil, *A.* 1. 216, 8. 184 *postquam exempta fames*.

³⁹⁷ 'to the heavenly regions'. Cf., with *auras*, Vergil, *A.* 7. 557, 6. 761–2, 4. 445–6 (= *G.* 2. 291–2).

³⁹⁸ Vergil, *E.* 5. 57 *sub pedibusque videt nubes* ('and beneath his feet he sees the clouds'); note also *alacris... voluptas* in *E.* 5. 58 and *alacri* (of the disciples' joyful hearts) in 432. See also Fontaine (1982), 63–5.

³⁹⁹ John 21: 25.

contribute, notably Ovid and Lucan. The meagre, though sometimes incautious, provision of *loci similes* in Huemer's edition does not tell the whole story about these two epicists: Mayr and others⁴⁰⁰ have made significant additions. In the case of Ovid it is not the process of metamorphosis itself that attracts Sedulius, for the transformations in the *Carmen Paschale* are much more benign, and the prime focus is on the contrast of the victim's condition before and after divine intervention, not the causes and processes by which it comes about. That would be to detract from the miracle. Ovid's language and idiom are used in sufficient volume to suggest quite close familiarity, and various cases of *Kontrastimitation* have been noted. The influence of Lucan may be seen not only in various elements of Sedulius' language but in his vigorous style of debate and in the frequent intrusion of emotional or devotional comments from the narrator, as in the presentation of Christ's trial.⁴⁰¹ Statius seems to be used much less. Huemer sees a reference to *Thebaid* 1. 413 in 1. 328,⁴⁰² and a few more may be considered, albeit with reservations.⁴⁰³ Vestiges of other writers of epic, and of didactic epic, are few and certainly not indisputable. Huemer's one supposed imitation of Valerius Flaccus must be discarded, for at 3. 297 *supplexque manus et bracchia tendit* there is a closer resemblance to Vergil, *A.* 3. 592 *supplexque manus ad litora tendit* than to Valerius 4. 648 *supplexque manus intendit*.⁴⁰⁴ While Valerius 2. 288 *per opaca silentia noctis* gives the closest fit to *CP* 4. 219—an exact one, in fact—his predecessors contain possible models for this too.⁴⁰⁵ The identical combination of *astriferas* and

⁴⁰⁰ Mayr (1916), Van der Laan (1990), *passim*.

⁴⁰¹ See p. 205.

⁴⁰² Statius has *exsertare umeros*, Sedulius *exerta umeris*.

⁴⁰³ Cf. *Theb.* 6. 46 *conticuit stupefacta domus* and 3. 229 *miratur stupefacta cohors*, a largely 'auditory' parallel; *Theb.* 4. 365 *ore cruentata* and *CP* 4. 296 *ore cruentatum* (but Ovid, *M.* 4. 104 *ore cruentato* may be the inspiration here); *Theb.* 11. 55 *fugit in vacuas iam spiritus auras* and *CP* 4. 89 (*et in vacuas fugiens evanuit auras*), where although other models could be found for the wording Statius' *spiritus* provides a link with the Sedulian context.

⁴⁰⁴ Huemer's reference to Prudentius, c. *Symm.* 2, *pref.* 28 *tendit suppliciter manus*, though probably known to Sedulius, is verbally much less close.

⁴⁰⁵ Cf. Ovid, *M.* 7. 184 *per muta silentia noctis*; also Vergil's *per amica silentia lunae* (*A.* 2. 255) and *silentia noctis* in Lucretius (4. 460). In cases like this the degree of similarity should not necessarily be the arbiter; it is always possible that identical phrases are reached by independent adaptation (or invention).

umbras in Valerius 6. 752 and *CP* 3. 221 deserves attention, and there may well be more to discover. Similarities with Silius Italicus have escaped critics so far, although that is not so in the case of Arator, as will be seen.⁴⁰⁶ There are possible reminiscences of Lucretius: Sedulius has the rare word *naviger* at 3. 230 (cf. *Lucretius* 1. 3), *membra poli* at 2.212 (cf. *Lucretius*' *membra mundi*, 5. 243–4 and 380–1), *mundique orientis origo* at 4. 254 (cf. *Lucretius* 5. 1212 *mundi genitalis origo*), and *succumbere molem* at 5. 248 (cf. *Lucretius* 6. 567 *incumbere molem*). The word *terrigenae* at *CP* 2. 19 recalls *Lucretius* 5. 1411 and 1427, but the word is found in Christian writing independent of *Lucretius*.⁴⁰⁷

Evidence of imitation of other authors and genres is rather rare. Sedulius' parenthetical *nec iam modo mater* at 2. 125 seems on available evidence to be modelled on Ovid's parenthetical comment *nec iam pater* at *AA* 2. 93 (there might, of course, be an intermediary), and his words *monumenta vetusti* at 2. 240 are identical to those of Ovid, *Fasti* 2. 301. There is no need to imagine Sedulius a voracious reader of Ovid's *Art of Loving* (of which allegories did not yet exist) or even his *Festivals* or other Ovidian works to which similarities may be found, but direct acquaintance should not be ruled out. The same may be said of Tibullus and Horace: note the use of *irriguis... aquis* at *CP* 5. 224 and Tibullus 2. 1. 44, and the similarity of Horace, *Epod.* 4. 11 *sectus flagellis* to *sectus terga flagellis* at *CP* 5. 153. On *CP* 4. 56 (*vertice sidera tanget*) Huemer's parallel from *Odes* 1. 1. 36 *feriam sidera vertice* can be ignored in favour of Ovid *M.* 7. 61 *vertice sidera tangam*. Drama has yielded virtually nothing of intertextual interest, and given the opening words of Book 1 this is not very surprising. One may note the similarity of Sedulius' *obsitus... pannis* at *CP* 2. 58 to the phrase *pannis annisque obsitum* in Terence, *Eunuchus* 236, but Jerome quotes it twice, and the phrase (without *annis*) seems to have lived a life of its own, so to speak, in Late Antiquity.⁴⁰⁸

Satire, however, is a different matter, surprising as this might appear at first sight. Persius, a well-known author to judge from

⁴⁰⁶ See 331–2.

⁴⁰⁷ It is used, for example, in *Ps.* 48: 3 (LXX), and by Jerome (*In Ier.* 6. 38. 4) and Augustine (*De Civ. Dei* 16. 4).

⁴⁰⁸ *TLL* IX. 2. 191, 50–60.

both pagan and Christian evidence,⁴⁰⁹ is used at *CP* 1. 332, and in an interesting way. Here Sedulius has made a striking phrase *crispare cachinnum* ('to create coruscating laughter', with a kind of internal accusative) out of Persius' line *ingeminat tremulos naso crispante cachinnos* (3. 87).⁴¹⁰ Sedulius is referring here to Democritus, the 'laughing philosopher', whom he probably met in Juvenal 10. 28–35.⁴¹¹ There is much more Juvenal to note. Perhaps Huemer was right to signal an allusion at 3. 69 *moverunt avidas ventorum gaudia pinnas* to Juvenal 5. 101 *dum sedet et siccat madidas in carcere pinnas . . .*, where the unusual notion of the winds' wings or feathers is common to both passages.⁴¹² Juvenal may also be detected at *CP* 3. 216 *quodque magis stupeas* (compare in Juvenal 6. 87 *utque magis stupeas*) in a narratorial addition in the very different context of Christ's feeding of the multitude, and perhaps at *CP* 4.8 *natura negat* (compare Juvenal 1. 79, but there are similar phrases in other authors).⁴¹³ Formally speaking, there are other possible intertexts for the phrase *implevit captura sinus* at *CP* 4. 120,⁴¹⁴ but the fact that Sedulius is speaking of catching fish makes a direct allusion to Juvenal 4. 41 *implevitque sinus* more likely. At *CP* 4. 292 the words *curribus altis* recall the tenth satire, where Sedulius, writing polemically of the rich and pompous, seems to recall Juvenal's vainglorious praetor (10. 36)—with a hint of the Late Antique *adventus*, to be sure—in his picture of Christ's humble entry into Jerusalem. Further evidence of what may be a partiality for classical satire may be seen in an echo of Juvenal's fifteenth satire (15. 10–11) at *CP* 1. 274–5, where Sedulius ridicules the worship of gods who grow in gardens. One has the same impression from a passage like *CP* 4. 175–80 where, with due compassion but also an abundance of description unusual even for him, Sedulius describes the appearance of a man afflicted with

⁴⁰⁹ Augustine quotes him some ten times (Hagendahl 1967, 472–4), and Jerome twice as often (Hagendahl 1958, 284). There is also the evidence of Jerome, *Adv. Rufinum* 1. 16 (CCSL 79, p. 15).

⁴¹⁰ 'He redoubles rippling laughter with curling nose.'

⁴¹¹ Note *cachinnum* here too, in line 30.

⁴¹² Respectively 'joy moved the eager wings of the winds' and 'while it [the South wind] sits and dries his wet wings in his prison'. Ratkowsch (1986), 55 points to Ps. 104 (103): 3 *ventorum pinnas*.

⁴¹³ See Van der Laan (1990), *ad loc.*

⁴¹⁴ e.g. Vergil, *A.* 4. 30 *sinum . . . implevit*.

dropsy;⁴¹⁵ perhaps he is influenced by the tradition in popular philosophy of comparing the avaricious with those afflicted by *hydrops*.⁴¹⁶ There seems to be no clear evidence of Martial, who was less well known at the time; Sedulius' penchant for epigrammatic expression, noted by Mazzega,⁴¹⁷ did not derive from him. Of later writers, the non-religious work of Ausonius does not show up,⁴¹⁸ but Claudian appears several times and should be reckoned as an important model.⁴¹⁹

One distinctive manifestation of the supremacy of the *Aeneid*, and of Sedulius' high valuation of it, is a small but very conspicuous number of cases where Sedulius takes over a whole line, with little or no alteration. (These are all, in fact, from its first six books.) Borrowing of this particular kind is an unusual feature in late Latin poetry (except in the context of the cento, where the rules and expectations are quite different), and Sedulius goes further than most. Although the new contexts of these borrowings are important ones, his object does not seem to be the highlighting of a climax, as in Ausonius' *Moselle* (460: A. 8. 63), and perhaps Paulinus of Nola (18. 127: cf. A. 6. 487, which is slightly altered),⁴²⁰ where the mortal remains of St Felix are revealed.⁴²¹

We have already seen how Vergil's line about the two ways in the underworld (A. 6. 543) is reproduced at *CP* 2. 296–7.⁴²² Vergil's line *septem ingens gyros, septena volumina traxit* (A. 5. 85)⁴²³ is exploited in the description of the state of Mary Magdalene when possessed by

⁴¹⁵ In *OP* (p. 265, line 12) he goes beyond this, describing the man as a bag (*utris*) rather than a stomach (*uterus*) and referring to his 'pregnant immensity' (*praegnans . . . immanitas*).

⁴¹⁶ See Nisbet and Hubbard on Horace, *Odes* 2. 2. 13.

⁴¹⁷ Mazzega (1996), 45–9.

⁴¹⁸ Unless the similarity of *sectabor iter* (XIV. 19. 1) to *CP* 4.2 *sectatus iter* is significant. For the important influence of his *Oratio*, cf. pp. 145–6.

⁴¹⁹ Mayr (1916), 70–1.

⁴²⁰ The form of Vergil's line *nec vidisse semel satis est: iuvat usque morari* is slightly altered to *nec satis est vidisse semel: iuvat usque morari*.

⁴²¹ Prudentius has an example in the first line of his *Psychomachia*: *Christe graves hominum semper miserate labores* ('Christ, who have always pitied the grave toils of mankind'); cf. Vergil, A. 6. 56 *Phoebæ, gravis Troiae semper miserate labores*. Phoebus is replaced with Christ and Troy with mankind.

⁴²² See pp. 179–80.

⁴²³ 'huge, it dragged seven coils, seven folds'.

demons in *CP* 4. 149; the strength of the Devil, seen, as often, in his serpentine guise, is a major theme of Sedulius' epic. He finishes his representation of the storm (*CP* 3. 63) with *A.1. 142 sic ait et dicto citius tumida aequora placat*, but with a significant change of *sic ait* to *imperat*.⁴²⁴ Christ is master of the elements, as they readily acknowledge. Two more examples are found in elaborations of pleas to Christ. At *CP* 3. 305–6, after copious use of Vergil in the description of the suppliant, the words *dixerat et genua amplectens genibusque volutans | haerebat* recall almost exactly the plea of Achaemenides in *A. 3. 607–8*.⁴²⁵ At 5. 218–19 the penitent robber on the cross beside Christ is portrayed like Sinon at *A. 2. 405 (tendens) lumina, nam teneras arcebant vincula palmas*.⁴²⁶ Sedulius makes small but necessary changes to his model, replacing *teneras* ('tender') with *geminas* (Sedulius' captive was a hardened criminal) and *vincula* with *vulnera*, as the robber was nailed, not bound. Vergil's *frustra* ('in vain') in the previous line, not suitable to the forgiving Christ, is replaced by *tantum* ('only').

The most striking use of this phenomenon concerns Herod, against whom Sedulius is no less vituperative than Juvenecus was. At the climax of the massacre of the Innocents, after an epic simile, a protest against the king's *furor*, and a description of the mourning and self-laceration of the bereaved mothers, Sedulius apostrophizes Herod in 2. 127–30, using the four lines *A. 4. 408–11*:

Quis tibi tunc, **lanio**, cernenti talia sensus?
 Quosve dabas **fremitus**, cum **vulnera** fervere late
 Prospiceres arce ex summa **vastumque** videres
 Misceri ante oculos tantis **plangoribus** aequor?⁴²⁷

Here Sedulius has made small changes, as indicated by the words in bold, without making this famous passage any less recognizable. The word *lanio* ('butcher') replaces the name of Dido; *fremitus* ('roars'),

⁴²⁴ See Ratkowsitch (1986), and pp. 199–201. 'So he speaks, and almost before he spoke he assuages the tumid sea.'

⁴²⁵ 'He spoke, and embracing our knees and grovelling at our knees he clung.'

⁴²⁶ '(lifting) his eyes, for the chains bound his two hands.'

⁴²⁷ 'What feeling was there in you then as you watched, you butcher, and what roars did you give, when from your citadel on high you saw carnage raging far and wide and the vast plain filled before your eyes with such lamentation?'

suggesting savagery, replaces *gemitus* ('lamentation'); *vulnera* ('wounds') replaces *litora* ('shores'); *vastum* ('vast') *totum* ('the whole'); and *plangoribus* ('lamentation') *clamoribus* ('shouts'). The word *aequor*, used for 'sea' as so often, both in Vergil and in Sedulius, is retained and given the sense of 'plain' or 'open space'. This appropriation of Vergil is unique in Christian epic in its extent and boldness. Sympathetic readings of Dido are not just a medieval and modern perspective, and the remarkable change of context may well have shocked early readers, even if they were aware of an earlier, albeit more restricted, use of this motif by Prudentius, at *Per.* 5. 421–2, where he applied it to another tyrant, in this case a persecutor: *quis audienti talia | Datiane, tunc sensus tibi?*⁴²⁸

The narrative of Dido is again recalled in a surprising context at *CP* 2. 199–200, the temptation of Christ. The Devil, rapidly tiring in his endeavour and almost despairing of success, tries one more time: *ter sese attollens animo perstare superbo, terque volutus humo...*⁴²⁹ What Sedulius does here is to replicate and adapt two successive half-lines about the dying Dido (*A.* 4. 690–1). Readers who thought Dido a temptress may have found this less of a problem than the passage just discussed; but that is not the point. The poet feels entitled to redeploy the language of the classical poet in any way he chooses, and in whatever context he chooses. He might indeed believe that his use is the more legitimate one, and that he is putting the language to its proper use.⁴³⁰ So when Sedulius uses the half-line *magna stipante caterva*, which referred to Dido's entourage in *A.* 4. 136,⁴³¹ at *CP* 4. 236 in the line *ecce trahebatur magna stipante caterva*,⁴³² there is

⁴²⁸ 'What were your feelings then, Datianus, on hearing such things?' (referring to the frustration of his attempt to abuse the martyr's corpse).

⁴²⁹ 'raising himself three times (he dares to) continue with his proud spirit, creeping on the ground three times...'

⁴³⁰ Mazzega's commentary is a good example of the '*usus iustus*' school of thought applied to the Christian practice of appropriation, which in general fails to do justice either to the breadth of borrowing or to its blending in a new context. At p. 36 n. 81 Mazzega surprisingly criticizes Van der Laan for entertaining the possibility of unconscious imitation (see p. xxx), something which is surely very common.

⁴³¹ Cf. *A.* 1. 497, of Dido's first entry.

⁴³² 'Behold, she was being dragged with a great crowd thronging her.' Lines such as this may recall the technique of the cento, but the phenomenon is even rarer in Sedulius than in Juvenius.

no particular meaning to be gleaned from comparison of the contexts and no story needs to be told about the continuities or discontinuities between them.⁴³³ The new context is the case of the woman taken in adultery; the context of the original, however we might construe it, is not evoked. The context of the first half of this line, which is part of Vergil's picture of the captive Cassandra at *A.* 2. 403, is likewise irrelevant. (The exclamation of the internal narrator in the previous line, though a sentiment that Christians might well applaud, would have little point in its new context.)⁴³⁴ Sedulius sometimes blends phrases from various Vergilian contexts: an example is the line *CP* 3. 296 *vir humilis maesto deiectus lumina vultu*.⁴³⁵ Huemer drew attention to *A.* 12. 930 *ille humilis*; he could have added *A.* 6. 862 *deiecto lumina vultu* and *A.* 6.156 *maesto defixus lumina vultu*. We are not, of course, meant to think of a composite Turnus–Marcellus–Aeneas figure looming behind the epileptic of the gospel story.

A striking example of such a composite passage is the description of richly caparisoned horses at *CP* 4. 293–6, contrasted with the ass on which Christ rode as he entered Jerusalem. Following on from the 'mortal pomp' of the Juvenalian allusion mentioned above, Sedulius uses Vergilian and to some extent Ovidian language to enhance the sense of ostentatious worldliness: *nec terga frementis | ardua pressit equi, faleris qui pictus et ostro | ora cruentatum mandentia concutit aurum*.⁴³⁶ In the first part of this we hear Ovid's *terga premebat equi* (*M.* 8. 34), but the epithet is Vergilian (*A.* 12. 82 *equos... frementis*); and the description of the horse combines a blend of *A.* 5. 310 *phaleris insignem* and *A.* 4. 134 *ostroque insignis et auro* with a detail from the horses of Latinus in *A.* 7. 279 (*fulvum mandunt sub dentibus aurum*).⁴³⁷ Then, adding an expression from Ovid (or perhaps Statius), as mentioned above,⁴³⁸ Sedulius brings in the detail of the

⁴³³ Van der Laan (1990), p. xlii sees in the second part of the above line mockery of the Pharisees, which is not, however, in Sedulius' manner (see pp. 189–90).

⁴³⁴ *Heu nihil invitis fas quemquam fidere divis* ('Alas! It is not right for anyone to trust in the unwilling gods.')

⁴³⁵ 'A humble man, his eyes cast down in grief.'

⁴³⁶ 'nor does he sit on the lofty back of a snorting horse, which bright with trappings and purple cloths crunches its jaws which bite on bloodied gold.'

⁴³⁷ 'conspicuous with its trappings', 'conspicuous with purple and gold'; 'they bite the tawny gold under their teeth.'

⁴³⁸ See p. 210. and n. 403 Ovid, *M.* 4. 104, Statius, *Theb.* 4. 365.

horse's mouth to complete, and possibly, in this case, to compromise, his picture.

Another good example of conflation is the relatively extended simile at *CP* 2. 110–4, from the massacre of the Innocents. Herod is compared to a lion attacking lambs:

ceu leo frendens
 cuius ab ore tener subito cum labitur agnus
 in totum movet arma gregem manditque trahitque
 molle pecus, trepidaeque vocant sua pignora fetae
 nequiquam, et vacuas implent balatibus auras.⁴³⁹

The main model is *A.* 9. 339–41:

impastus ceu plena leo per ovilia turbans
 (suadet enim vesana fames) manditque trahitque
 molle pecus mutumque metu, fremit ore cruento;⁴⁴⁰

but there is also *A.* 12. 6 *movet arma leo*, while the bleating derives from two Vergilian similes in *A.* 9. 61–2 and 565–6. There is also a line-ending from Lucan, in a very different context (6. 456 *pignora fetae*). None of these sources, however, has the detail of the lamb that escapes; Herod's rage at Jesus' escape is central. This is by far the most ambitious of Sedulius' similes,⁴⁴¹ which, although more frequent than in Juvenius, are usually quite short. Some have inspiration that is primarily biblical and theological: in *CP* 2. 152–5 Sedulius compares the way in which Christ makes sin disappear by mere touch with the way that darkness is banished by light, alluding to John 1: 5. Some of the allegorical explanations in Book 5 are, formally speaking, similes, as at *CP* 5. 242–4 and 257–9. The simile at 5. 56–8, referring to Judas, re-enacts the description of the unjust, scattered like dust, from the first Psalm.⁴⁴² There is a touch of the unexpected

⁴³⁹ 'Just as a growling lion, from whose mouth a tender lamb suddenly falls, moves his attack to the whole flock and gnaws and drags the weak animals, and in panic the ewes call their offspring, but in vain, and fill the empty air with their bleating.'

⁴⁴⁰ 'like a starving lion, creating havoc in the full pens of sheep (mad hunger drives it on), gnaws and drags the weak animals dumb with fear, and roars with its bloodstained mouth.'

⁴⁴¹ See also Springer (1998), 79 on this passage.

⁴⁴² Ps. 1: 4 *tamquam pulvis quem proicit ventus* ('like the dust which the wind blows away'). Sedulius retains the original language and then expands the notion.

(at least if one expects the mention of fire to convey something irresistible) about the simile in *CP* 5. 89–92, where the point is the destruction of fire by the flimsiness of dry stubble; it burns itself out like the lies of the people traducing Christ. Later in the same book the impenitent thief who reviles Christ is compared to a hairy goat gnawing the beautiful vine (*CP* 5. 215–16), in a simile which, in Sedulius' realization, takes its idea from scripture (Christ as vine) and its wording from Vergil's *Georgics*.⁴⁴³ The choice description of paradise in *CP* 5. 220–6 begins as a simile with the words *ceu pastor ovem*,⁴⁴⁴ but in what follows there is a blending of tenor and vehicle, and of the literal and the tropical, for Christ is the shepherd in a real sense, and the *locus amoenus* more than a topos. Here the shepherd⁴⁴⁵ leads his sheep from the *deserta . . . arva* ('desert places') to 'pleasant groves' (there is a hint in *memorumque voluptas* of Vergil's *fortunatorum nemorum* (*A.* 6. 639), adapted by Sedulius earlier at 1. 53–4) and the *gramineus . . . ager* ('grassy field') gradually becomes a fruitful garden, with the serpent lamenting the reinstatement of its former cultivator. Literary charm and theological teaching are at one.

When commenting on one of Sedulius' shorter similes, *lumina defuso ceu torpens ignis olivo* (3. 149),⁴⁴⁶ Mazzega noted how the vocabulary used in the comparison of light arising in the blind men's eyes to the sudden blazing of fire when olive oil is applied is that of 'high poetic diction'.⁴⁴⁷ This observation illumines an important fact. A host of examples could be given: *gressus* (for 'steps', of walking); *sulcare* ('to plough', of travel by land and by sea); *amnis* and *fluentum* for 'river'; *pelagus* for 'sea'; *poli* for 'heaven'; *alvus* for 'boat'. In the rendering of Christ's first miracle Sedulius used the word *thalami* for wedding, *latices* and *unda*, besides *aqua*, for 'water', *lacus*, *nectare*, and *pocula* for 'wine'. There is a wealth of periphrases to denote death, as in 3. 104 (*superas moriens amiserat auras*), and

⁴⁴³ Note in particular the word *venenum* ('poison') at *G.* 2. 378, alluding to the goat in line 380, from which Sedulius derives his epithet *venenoso* ('poisonous'), and *G.* 3. 312 for the *setiger hircus* ('hairy goat'). For Christ as the vine, cf. John 15: 1–2, and *CP* 3. 9–11.

⁴⁴⁴ 'as a shepherd (does) his sheep'.

⁴⁴⁵ For this important image see Springer (1988), 100–5.

⁴⁴⁶ 'their eyes, like sleeping fire when olive-oil is poured upon it'.

⁴⁴⁷ Mazzega (1996), *ad loc.*

4. 137 (*amissae passus discrimina vitae*), as well as the single words *letum*, *mors*, and *nex*; and a typical abundance of words in the high style describing lamentation may be found in 3.129–35. Sedulius' repertoire includes various adjectives of characteristically epic form, and in some cases exclusively epic: *astrifer* (3. 221), *floriger* (2. 2), *fluctivagus* (5. 395).⁴⁴⁸ But at the same time he does not avoid words in common Christian use. Words denoting faith, such as *fides*, and *credo*, or salvation, such as *salvator*, *salus*, *salvare*, and *orare* ('pray') and *peccatum* ('sin') are very common; for hell we find the biblical *gehenna* as well as *infernus*, which is common in classical poetry as well as in ecclesiastical Latin; for 'heaven' the characteristic Christian plural *caeli* (2. 212, qualified by *omnes*, 'all'), and *paradisus* (5. 222). He uses *angelus* freely, and where necessary its adjective *angelicus*; similarly *daemon* and *daemonicus*; and the words *ecclesia*, *sabbata*, *Pharisaeus*, and *synagoga*. We find both *baptisma* and *lavacrum* (the former is the more common), and the verb *lavo* of baptism (but not the clumsier *baptizo*); *benedico*, avoided by Juvencus; and a variety of verbs in *-fico* (*clarifico*, *sanctifico*, *vivifico*). Although the Bible is seldom quoted exactly, we can see the direct influence of the biblical passage in *grabatum* (3. 98; cf. Mark 2: 11); *mundare* (3. 29; cf. Matt. 8: 2); *maior* for 'greatest' (3. 321; cf. Matt. 18: 1).⁴⁴⁹ There is but a small tendency to replace words of low register, such as *vado* ('I go'; cf. 4. 74), although the more elevated *pergo* is frequent, or *video* ('I see'), which is twice as common as the more elevated *cerno*. *manduco* ('I eat') is avoided, or at least not used—it is a clumsy word for the hexameter—and Sedulius prefers the verbs *pasco* and *vescor*, and the noun *cena*. It is an indication of the distance that Christian Latin discourse has progressed since Juvencus that van der Laan can point to a layer of liturgical words, such as *mereri*, *dignari*, *praestare*, *libamen*, *largiri*, *mysticus*, *trames*;⁴⁵⁰ and there is also a layer of more or less technical theological terms, such as *venialis* (2. 23), *perditio* (2. 283), and *immaculatus* (5. 293), whose meanings, except for *veniale*

⁴⁴⁸ Respectively, and literally, 'star-bearing', 'flower-bearing', and 'wandering in the waves'.

⁴⁴⁹ At 5. 256 the biblical word *manzeribus* (Deut. 23: 2, of a bastard) is a surprise; describing the Jewish peoples (*sic*: is the plural intended to condemn them as vulgar, or as Gentile?) it could be polemical abuse of the upholders of Jewish law.

⁴⁵⁰ Respectively, 'deserve', 'deign', 'offer', 'offering', 'bestow', 'mystic', 'way'.

which here means 'merciful', remain the same today. Sedulius' vocabulary shows an unselfconscious inclusiveness, with input from a variety of sources and registers. It follows that there are difficulties in making inferences from particular usages, as when Roberts says that the use of *caro* ('flesh') of the Incarnation (as at 4. 97 and 5. 173) 'can only underline its remarkable nature';⁴⁵¹ in fact, even if it is right to designate it as an unpoetic word in classical times, it does not stand out in the context of Sedulius' highly variegated, and consistently variegated, lexical register.

The epic elements of his style are legion, and it is impossible to give an overview of the numerous and varied ways in which Vergil and other epicists are used, or the diverse areas to which they are applied. As with Juvenecus, there is a whole host of expressions, within which only a few categories can be isolated. Many relate to time, space, and to human reactions: *tertia lux* ('the third day', 3. 258), *inde pedem referens* ('moving away from there', 3. 143), *obstipuere animis* ('they were amazed in their minds', 3. 141). These are unremarkable: and that, here, is the point. They are the stock-in-trade of epic poets, the one element that could perhaps be described with Herzog as mere *Übersetzungsmedium*.⁴⁵² But it may be helpful to present a basket of miscellaneous items⁴⁵³ which attest a very attentive, and retentive, reader of Vergil, and there are worse places to begin than with Raby's comment on Juvenecus, that he was 'thoroughly Vergilian, even to the imitation of the great poet's characteristic archaisms'.⁴⁵⁴ Sedulius uses the passive infinitive in *-ier*: 3. 250 *vescier*, 2. 197 *famularier*, 2. 247 *benedicier*; otherwise archaisms are fewer than in Juvenecus, but one may note the genitive plural *discipulum* in 4. 127. The metrically expert reader of 5. 93–4 will note the rhythm of these lines with their diaereses at the end of the fourth foot, the first recalling A. 1. 405.⁴⁵⁵ In prosody Sedulius does not entirely conform to Vergil, or to his more regular classical successors, but he is at least as careful as

⁴⁵¹ Roberts (1985), 152 n. 119.

⁴⁵² Herzog (1975), 93.

⁴⁵³ Another, complementary, list may be found in Mazzega (1996), 51.

⁴⁵⁴ See p. 54.

⁴⁵⁵ *et vera incessu patuit dea* ('and she was revealed as a true goddess by her movement').

Juvenicus.⁴⁵⁶ In an unusual kind of verbal and auditory echo Sedulius' phrase *linea claustra* (4. 119) calls to mind Vergil's *pineae... claustra* (A. 2. 258–9). At 3. 326, when Christ commends a small boy as an example of humility there is a neatness in the articulation of the parenthesis that may bring to mind Vergilian parentheses at A. 6. 406 and 11. 891–3. The tricolon at 4. 275–6 (*flebant germanae, flebat populatio praesens, flebat et omnipotens...*)⁴⁵⁷ has something of the sadness of A. 7. 759–60 *te... te... te liquidi flevere lacus*. Lines such as 4. 89 *et in vacuas fugiens evanuit auras* are palpably epic, though combined (to some extent unconsciously, no doubt) from various passages. Perhaps the changes we see in the creation of a line such as 3. 129 *ventum erat ad maesti lugentia culmina tecti* are not so much a sign of *aemulatio*, as Roberts asserts, but the instinctive working of a mind steeped in the idioms of epic.⁴⁵⁸ There is a place for such analyses, but they should not be allowed to dominate our understanding of how a poet worked on his Vergilian inheritance.

An aspect of Sedulius' narrative style which links him firmly with epic is his use of connective words. There is a wide variety: *inde* and *interea* (with the Vergilian *nec minus interea* at 3. 158) are perhaps his favourites, but he also uses *ecce autem*, *ergo*, *exin*, *forte*, *iamque*, *quin etiam*, as well simple *et* or *-que*, or a form of the word *talīs*.⁴⁵⁹ In a handful of places (3. 12, 4. 57, 64, 172) he uses the word *post*, which is unusual as a simple connective meaning 'after that' or 'next', unless a word such as *primum* ('first') has preceded, or there is a tacit order of events.⁴⁶⁰ Sedulius' usage in 3. 12 follows the normal pattern; this is (for him and John) the second miracle, the first being clearly marked at 3. 1. But a similar explanation cannot be given at 4. 57 and 64, and it is notable that these two episodes are among the very few where it is difficult to see what principle of arrangement Sedulius has followed. Perhaps Sedulius used the word as a stopgap; had he returned to them, he might have remoulded the transition. Line 4. 172 is in

⁴⁵⁶ Huemer (1878), 65–110 and the index of his edition, under *Metrica et prosodiaca* (pp. 394–5).

⁴⁵⁷ 'his sisters wept, the people present wept, omnipotent God wept'.

⁴⁵⁸ Roberts (1985), 174–5.

⁴⁵⁹ 'And look', 'therefore', 'then', 'by chance', 'and already', 'moreover', 'and', 'such'.

⁴⁶⁰ As for example in Vergil, A. 5. 362 and 507. Note also Prudentius, *Cath.* 9. 103, from which Sedulius may well have derived the usage.

some ways similar to 4. 64, and may have been triggered by it. Conversely, an interesting case of a different kind, which helps to show the care with which the poet operates, is the use of *nec mora* at 2. 139–40. As already noted,⁴⁶¹ it is qualified by a statement to the effect ‘what delay could there possibly be?’⁴⁶² which is not a facetious quibble but a serious comment on the certainty of the divine revelation within human time. God is the master of time, and his plans do not linger, as Juvenus had said in more stately language at 1. 307–8, and the march of time cannot be delayed, as Vergilian Fate might be.⁴⁶³

But notwithstanding this array of connectives, appropriately and variously used, Sedulius may be considered to lie open to the charge of fragmentation. It has already been pointed out that the gospels provide a very fragmented source,⁴⁶⁴ but it might be answered that an epic poet, especially one like Sedulius who is less concerned with close paraphrase than Juvenus, could have sought to reduce this effect. The issue will recur with Arator.⁴⁶⁵ One possible line of defence would be to point out how discontinuity and fragmentation are salient features of much classical epic, and ones which have received great attention in recent years, as Ovid has been smoothly reinstated, after a period of doubt, in the pantheon of epicists and Apollonius and Lucan have, as it were, come in from the cold.⁴⁶⁶ It is not felt that the digressions and other examples of desultory progression in Apollonius and Lucan detract from the coherence of their poems, and they are accepted as an important and enriching facet of epic. The work of Bartsch in particular directs itself to the criticism that ‘individual scenes in the epic [Lucan’s] are notoriously episodic in nature, leading to a sense of narrative fragmentation . . .’⁴⁶⁷ But nonetheless the reader finds a constant jerkiness about Books 3 and 4, intensified by their brevity, which might suggest that Sedulius has

⁴⁶¹ See p. 176.

⁴⁶² *quas etenim volitans per tempora mundus | novit habere moras?*

⁴⁶³ Cf. A. 7. 315, 8.396–9, and Fordyce, *ad loc.*

⁴⁶⁴ See pp. 71–2.

⁴⁶⁵ See pp. 337–41.

⁴⁶⁶ For Ovid, see Myers (1999); for Lucan a series of writers from Ahl (1976) to Bartsch (2001); for Apollonius, Hunter (1993) and others.

⁴⁶⁷ Bartsch (2001), 64. Cf. also Quint (1992), 140–7.

not succeeded in putting aside the effects of the highly miniaturized treatment of miracles in the lyric medium of Prudentius.⁴⁶⁸

To a large extent this impression is due to the layout of the modern text, which for almost all readers is of necessity that of Huemer, who follows Arevalo.⁴⁶⁹ The element of discontinuity in his series of miracles is exaggerated by the presentation of each miracle in a separate paragraph.⁴⁷⁰ This is not the only possible manner of articulation, as the following comments will show, and the effect of repunctuation could be considerable.⁴⁷¹ Future editors might well make a single paragraph of 3. 12–45, putting together numerous miracles of healing, in which Christ heals an official's son, various people from Galilee and elsewhere, a leper, and Peter's mother-in-law and some others. This would do no injustice to the biblical narrative, and Sedulius may well have envisaged it in this way. At least the two miracles of lines 23–32 evidently occur in the same geographical location, which is that of the Sermon on the Mount (absent from Sedulius except for the completely uncontextualized Lord's Prayer). The first of the four, for which Sedulius has chosen the Johannine rather than the Matthean version,⁴⁷² is linked with these not only in terms of place (Capernaum, John 4: 46; cf. Matt. 8: 5)⁴⁷³ but in that the Matthean version of the miracle (Matt. 8: 5–13) comes very soon after the Sermon on the Mount. The final miracle of this group seems to have the same location as the preceding ones. We have a group of episodes closely linked in time, as far as Sedulius could tell, and probably in space too, with a kind of bunching that is not essentially different from what has been detected in Matthew.⁴⁷⁴ The newly created paragraph forms a unity of the kind that editors have created or happily inherited in epic and that readers have found comfortable. The fact that words and phrases like *ecce autem*, *forte*, and *quin etiam*

⁴⁶⁸ See p. 149 for Prudentius, *Cath.* 9.

⁴⁶⁹ *PL* 19. 550–751.

⁴⁷⁰ In one case (4. 218–21) he puts into a separate paragraph a passage which does not present a new miracle but is intended to support the argument that precedes it.

⁴⁷¹ The reading of Arator has demonstrably been affected by an editorial decision; see pp. 270–3.

⁴⁷² See p. 185.

⁴⁷³ The Mount of the sermon has usually been located in the region of Capernaum, but has not been conclusively identified.

⁴⁷⁴ Beare (1981), 201–2.

now occur in mid-paragraph is no problem; they regularly do so in classical epic.

This paragraph is followed by one that takes place on the sea (or lake), encompassing lines 46–69, as in Huemer, which is a single narrative; as are the next two, which are set in the vicinity. No change is needed. But at 129 it is not appropriate to begin a new paragraph, for, with one miracle here placed within another, this is the sequel to 103–14. The next paragraph in the text as it stands (lines 143–51) should have taken in lines 152–7, for the two items are closely connected in Sedulius as in Matthew.⁴⁷⁵ A single paragraph might easily, and quite appropriately, be created out of lines 182–206, to include three healing miracles, two of them in close succession, in Matthew and one, exceptionally,⁴⁷⁶ from Luke. There is no reason why a paragraph should not be formed from 207–41, where the three narratives are linked in time and place, and another from 242–72, where the last two of the three episodes are closely linked. After the episode of the transfiguration (273–92),⁴⁷⁷ a final paragraph should be made of the remainder of the book; its episodes centre on the disciples.⁴⁷⁸ A similar process may be applied to Book 4, demonstrating that the narrative proceeds with similar intelligent grouping, attributable to Sedulius. A totally different impression would be created. Faced with the fact that the evangelists provide little linkage between episodes, Sedulius did not try to intervene, except for a little theological commentary about the transfiguration; but he moved further in the direction of epic structuring than his current text implies.

The multiplicity of miracles in these two books is balanced by the tight unity imposed by the strongly emphasized theme of the poem: salvation. The word *salus* means both ‘salvation’ and ‘health’, and for Sedulius the latter clearly implies or points to the former; and as we have seen salvation is often seen as restoration, both physical and spiritual. After announcing his theme clearly as the *salutiferi miracula Christi* in 1. 26, an expression that neatly combines the multiplicity

⁴⁷⁵ Cf. *His ita dimissis* in Sedulius and *egressis autem illis* in Matthew.

⁴⁷⁶ For the problem see p. 184.

⁴⁷⁷ Cf. Green (2007a).

⁴⁷⁸ Sedulius leaves out the detail that the disciples were found unable to help (Matt. 17: 16) in 3. 293–312, but will have been aware of it.

and the unity, and their close connection, Sedulius proceeds to show the nature of the God who in his threefold form provides salvation. The so-called 'economy' of salvation, by which Christ, born of Mary, repairs the damage of Adam and Eve, is clearly set out early in Book 2, as Sedulius sets out on his endeavour to chart his 'path'—a path which mirrors the 'path of salvation'⁴⁷⁹—through the earthly life and 'paschal' suffering of the divine Christ. The work of salvation and restoration (humankind is reborn through his birth, 2. 33) is shown through the numerous miracles of Books 3 and 4, whose variety, as in the gospels, shows forth the breadth of *salus* now available, and the completeness of God's power and readiness to provide it. Following Mazzega, who uses the notion of the *Kollektivgedicht*,⁴⁸⁰ a broad parallel in terms of structure may be drawn, *mutatis mutandis*,⁴⁸¹ with Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and it becomes a closer one if one sees the essential purpose of Ovid's work as being to emphasize the ineluctable and incomprehensible pain of mortal life, with Ratkowitsch;⁴⁸² the various episodes serve to instantiate and build up the general theme. In this light the possibility emerges of reading Sedulius as a stark contrast, and even counterblast, to Ovid's gloomy story of ubiquitous divine irresponsibility. If, on the other hand, one sees the *Metamorphoses* more as a work of entertainment and, as it were, of wonder for wonder's sake,⁴⁸³ then one may read Sedulius' episodes as the rebuttal, in a narrative that like Ovid's aims at *delectatio*, of fictions by truth and of the glorification of wickedness by the celebration of good (cf. *CP* 1. 17–28). On a smaller scale, the same basic structure is seen in an episode of Lucan's *Civil War*, the sea-battle off Massilia, which is presented as a series of miracles, or 'wondrous forms of diverse deaths', presented to the sea.⁴⁸⁴

It is true of course that in Sedulius the solution of human distress is presented in the individual cases of healing as a foregone

⁴⁷⁹ Book 1. 35, 85, 334, 364–5.

⁴⁸⁰ Mazzega (1996), 37–9.

⁴⁸¹ One such difference is of course the nature of transitions, notoriously contrived in Ovid, but simple in Sedulius.

⁴⁸² Ratkowitsch (1989), 200. Cf. Kenney in his introduction to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, p. xviii: 'People, and how they react under stress, were what interested Ovid.'

⁴⁸³ Wheeler (1999).

⁴⁸⁴ Lucan 3. 633–4 *multaque ponto | prae buit ille dies varii miracula fati*.

conclusion, and in place of the conflict or confrontation that we might expect in epic we find a series of virtually uncontested walk-overs. There is little opposition, whether from the victims' lack of faith or the scorn of the authorities, and little resistance even from the Devil himself: for all his guile in Eden, and for all the horror of serpents so prominent in Latin epic,⁴⁸⁵ he is a weak adversary. The greater victory is over Death itself, in the stronghold of the evil power, and it is there most obviously that Christ is seen in all his heroic stature. Christ has an all-conquering catabasis, which is brief but puts Aeneas totally in the shade, and an ascent to heaven—here available epic parallels are few, as can be seen from studies by Fontaine and Deproost⁴⁸⁶—which is also a true *nostos* or 'return', and one accompanied, unusually, with the spoils of war.⁴⁸⁷ These spoils, as Arator especially will envisage them, are the souls of the dead, prefigured in the previous book by Lazarus (*CP* 4. 283–8), and again the result of a work of restoration (*CP* 5. 251). As foreseen by God in his mercy, the lot of mankind is not irreparable (*CP* 2. 15), and so a happier one than that of Vergil's Pallas (and behind him Homer's Sarpedon);⁴⁸⁸ and Christ, who is very much a king in Sedulius, has done what Aeneas, or for that matter Theseus or Hercules, never did. Questions must be asked about the contribution of the Vergilian hero to *CP*, but not before we have made a brief survey of Sedulius' theological concerns of various kinds, and in particular the prominent role of divine *maiestas*.

EXEGESIS

It is quite clear that Sedulius' approach to the question of exegesis is vastly different from the approach of Juvenecus.⁴⁸⁹ Juvenecus aspired,

⁴⁸⁵ Examples may be seen in the stories of Laocoon in Vergil, Cadmus in Ovid, Cato in Lucan, and Opheltes in Statius.

⁴⁸⁶ Fontaine (1982), 63–5, Deproost (1989), and (1990*a*).

⁴⁸⁷ Arator will draw on this theme, and Sedulius' expression of it, at the opening of his poem. See p. 268.

⁴⁸⁸ See pp. 173–4.

⁴⁸⁹ On Fichtner's tendency to play down this difference (1994, 196–204), see Green (2007*b*).

in Herzog's words, to reproduce the Bible itself in some sense, and to a certain extent substituted himself for the biblical narrator;⁴⁹⁰ accordingly exegesis was inconspicuous and for the most part thinly spread.⁴⁹¹ In Sedulius, by contrast, there are constant incursions or intrusions by the poet into his narrative, and the impulse to explain and expand, rhetorically and theologically at once, is clear on almost every page.⁴⁹² A strong element of doctrinal allegiance is also very apparent; even before his treatment of Christ's life and miraculous works begins, Sedulius has made no secret of his own theological emphases and set out his position.

In the face of this pervasive exegetical thrust it is difficult to see how Sedulius' recipe for Christian epic can be derived from paraphrase. Quite simply, there is, as Van der Laan put it, too much added material.⁴⁹³ What we find in Sedulius is also qualitatively very different from the adornment of rhetorical literature, and much more than what Roberts calls 'extensive amplifications'.⁴⁹⁴ There are certainly many signs of the various figures used in ancient paraphrase, such as *abbreviatio* and *amplificatio*, but these figures in themselves belong to writing of many kinds; they may resemble procedures inherent in 'paraphrastic theory', but are not clear evidence of it. Nor can 'the narrative thread' be neatly separated from the exegetical input. Roberts' argument that 'the sense of the base text' is retained in Sedulius—in his words, 'what might be expressed in a meagre prose outline', or the 'bare narrative content'⁴⁹⁵—is dubious given the poet's distinctive way, now expansive, now reductive, nearly always highly selective, of representing a particular miracle. The Christian gospels were scrutinized, interrogated, and discussed in a way that perhaps no classical text was, so that the relation between them and the activity of commentary became far too close to be reduced to a model of base-text and elaboration of it.

This overview of exegesis in Sedulius will begin with some examples of more or less small-scale explanation. Sedulius often finds it necessary to supplement or adjust the narrative, answering or anticipating problems for the reader. We have already shown how he

⁴⁹⁰ Herzog (1975), 115.

⁴⁹² Springer (1988), 90–2.

⁴⁹⁴ Roberts (1985), 161.

⁴⁹¹ Green (2007*b*).

⁴⁹³ Van der Laan (1990), p. xxxiii.

⁴⁹⁵ Roberts (1985), 162.

raises more questions than Juvenecus did about the gifts of the Magi, and their significance, and how he explains the storm as the joyful and exuberant reaction of the elements to the presence of Christ which causes the water to 'rage with obedience'.⁴⁹⁶ In the episode after that, the confrontation with Legion, the demoniac, in 3. 70–85, there is an explanation of why the evil spirits should want to end up in a herd of pigs: the animal, with a love of mud appropriate to its nature,⁴⁹⁷ is uniquely suited to them. In 3. 96–7, before telling the paralytic to pick up his bed and walk, Christ cleanses him of his sins, which had 'produced an increase to his misfortunes';⁴⁹⁸ with this quick interpretation he thus bypasses the controversial question raised in the biblical text of Christ's right to forgive sins and the relation of this to healing (Matt. 9: 2). In the transfiguration narrative Sedulius explains why it was that Christ appeared between Elijah and Moses (3. 285–90).⁴⁹⁹ Examples of this practice of giving explanations, and with them edifying lessons, could easily be multiplied.

One very common procedure of Sedulius—and here he is quite different from Juvenecus, in whom it was difficult to detect even a vestige of scriptural detail from outside the evangelists⁵⁰⁰—is to add to the passage before him a quotation from another part of the Bible, in other words, to interpret scripture by scripture. There is an obvious example (and most of them are obvious) in the first miracle (3. 1–11), where Sedulius alludes to Christ's later claim that he is the vine. At 4. 161–2, where in Luke 10: 20, his base-text, Christ assured his disciples that their names are 'written in heaven', Sedulius tacitly imports the notion of 'the book of life' from Rev. 17: 8. No doubt the two passages were linked in his mind. To the narrative of Bartimaeus (Luke 18: 35–43) he adds the short, non-miraculous narrative of Luke 11: 5–8 in order to illustrate the value of importunity in prayer (4. 218–21). The letters of Paul are sometimes used in this way, but not often; lines 2. 229–30 paraphrase 1 Cor. 1: 27. Unlike Arator, Sedulius does not mention Paul by name, perhaps for stylistic reasons.

⁴⁹⁶ *obsequio fervere* (3. 68)—a typical oxymoron.

⁴⁹⁷ Cf. Lactantius, *DI* 4. 18–21 and Prudentius, *Cath.* 9. 56 *sordida spurcamina*; see Mazzega (1996), 123 for references in classical literature.

⁴⁹⁸ *quae generant augmenta malis*.

⁴⁹⁹ Green (2007a).

⁵⁰⁰ See pp. 29–31.

The Psalms are particularly favoured. There is a verbatim reference to Ps. 121 (120): 3–4 in the storm scene, at 3. 57–8 (God does not sleep); and the *lectio* ('passage', literally 'reading') of Ps. 29 (28): 3 at 1. 143–4 is quoted in the account of the crossing of the Red Sea, in which Sedulius seeks to demonstrate the presence of Christ. A quotation from Ps. 114 (113): 5, introduced as the words of the prophet (*propheta canens*), helps to explain the nature of Christ's baptism at 2. 164–5: the elements themselves thus testify to the anomalousness of Christ's baptism, and confirm his divinity and majesty. There is less use of the Old Testament prophets than in Juvencus, and references to them are less clearly signalled. Christ's birth is foretold by the prophets in general (2. 35); at 5. 101–3 and 140 Isaiah's prediction of his sufferings is clear, and probably derived from exegetical tradition, but the prophet is not named.⁵⁰¹ Clearly the probative value of prophecy is relatively unimportant to Sedulius, who is not seeking to demonstrate Christ's status as Messiah but rather his divinity. It is less important in the stories of miracles. But there is no sense that he relegates the Old Testament, as Arator tends to do. As he says in 1. 145–7, the 'Testaments of the twofold law' are in harmony, with Christ the Word governing them, so that 'doctrine proceeds along level fields'. A level playing field is not the impression that emerges from Arator's treatment of the Old and New Testaments.

The quotations of such passages are often very close, in contrast to the relative freedom of what surrounds them. The story of the healing of the man with dropsy at 4. 172–88, based on Luke 14: 1–6, is presented very freely, yet it includes an almost verbatim quotation of Mark 2: 27 at lines 183–4.⁵⁰² It is noteworthy in the narration of Christ's nativity that although the details of Luke appear only fleetingly there is a close quotation of John 1: 14 *verbum caro factum* ('the word made flesh'), moulded into the syntax of the phrase (2. 43–4).⁵⁰³ A few lines later there are, similarly embedded, very close quotations of Ps. 19: 5 (18: 6) and 45: 2 (44: 3), to be understood Christologically. This precision contrasts with the way in which

⁵⁰¹ Isa. 53: 5 and 7. There are also references to Jer. 31: 29 at 2. 25 and to Joel 3: 13 at 5. 156.

⁵⁰² See pp. 212–13 and p. 190.

⁵⁰³ In Huemer's edition the quotation is highlighted but its function as the subject of the sentence obscured.

Sedulius treats his gospel base-texts; here verbal exactitude is rarely sought and only occasionally exploited, as in 3: 20–1, where an important point is made to ride on the tense of the verb.⁵⁰⁴ This is exceptional, and we have seen that quotation of the exact words of the miracle narrative is rare; but precision in quoting the confirmatory passages, especially those from the Psalms, is clearly of great importance, as it would be in a typical commentary or homily on biblical texts. He seems to assume that the text imported from outside will be less well known, and in this may be influenced by liturgical practice, where the text underlying the sermon would have preceded. The poet is free to mould the gospel stories in whatever way he wishes, but is stricter with himself when it comes to other scriptures.

A very conspicuous feature of Sedulius' exegesis is the principle that scripture has more than one sense. In this he conforms closely to the expository practice of the fourth and early fifth centuries, founded upon the work of Origen in the third. The fact that Origen divided the interpretation of scripture into three senses is almost as well known, in the words of Hanson,⁵⁰⁵ as the fact that Caesar divided Gaul into three parts; but as he also notes, it is clear that Origen sometimes writes as if there were only two senses of scripture, the literal and the spiritual. This vacillation is reflected at *OP* p. 224, line 2,⁵⁰⁶ where Sedulius is commenting on the phrase 'daily bread' in the Lord's Prayer. He begins by announcing that the 'tripartite sense of interpretation' is present (adding, in a rather unexpectedly prescriptive manner, 'although all the divine scriptures ought to be thus treated'),⁵⁰⁷ but in what immediately follows he operates with a distinction of literal (*secundum litteram*) and spiritual (*spiritaliter*). Nonetheless there are places in the poem where the third sense, the moral or psychological, is present. It may or may not be combined with the spiritual sense, and in the *Carmen Paschale* tends to take a paraenetic or exhortatory form, as will be seen shortly.⁵⁰⁸

Within the category of 'spiritual', or, to use a term found in Augustine and later Arator,⁵⁰⁹ 'figurative', interpretation, we may

⁵⁰⁴ See p. 191. ⁵⁰⁵ Hanson (1959), 235.

⁵⁰⁶ This corresponds to, but is markedly different from, *CP* 2. 263–8.

⁵⁰⁷ *tripartitus intellegentiae sensus aperitur, quamquam scripturas divinas sic oporteat omnes adverti.*

⁵⁰⁸ See pp. 232–4.

⁵⁰⁹ All three senses are named at Arator 2. 891.

distinguish between what Sedulius normally calls 'typical' interpretation and 'mystical' interpretation, though the terms overlap.⁵¹⁰ By 'type' (*typus*) is meant a passage which is interpreted, with no detriment to its literal meaning and historical context, as prefiguring another, more important event at a higher level. So the blood of the ram that Abraham sacrificed in place of Isaac (1. 118) refers to something literally true, but also looks forward to the blood of Christ, the lamb of God. Moses' feeding of his followers in the desert, narrated in Exod. 16, was a 'type' of the feeding of the five thousand (3. 208), and Christ is a *typicus Moses*, the antitype of Moses. The comparison that follows, which highlights the paucity of the foodstuffs available to Christ, shows something of a tendency to disparage the older event, a tendency encouraged by this mode of interpretation⁵¹¹ and which will also have been fostered by the rhetorical practice of *synkrisis* or comparison so frequent in ancient secular panegyric.⁵¹² The expression 'true prophet' used of Christ in 208 is not intended to attribute falsity or falsehood to Moses, though as we can see from elsewhere—in the rending of the temple veil in 5. 274–5, for example—Sedulius, like all Christians, regarded the law of Moses as both revealed and superseded with the coming of Christ.⁵¹³ Typology is a function not only of the relation of the two Testaments; the nets that Peter casts in 5. 392–4 are to be understood *per typicam . . . viam*, 'in a typological way', as 'the clear precepts of God', by which mortals are caught and brought to Christ (5. 396–9). Peter's fishing experience foreshadows the experience of the Church, as it will do very markedly in Arator. This is combined, as typology often is, with a further figurative link: the fact that these fish were caught on the right-hand side of the boat points to the doctrine of the two paths.⁵¹⁴ There may be other, implicit, cases of typology, or allegory, implicit in Sedulius' narrative, though, as argued above against Ratkowitsch, not in the storm.⁵¹⁵ Certainly the combating of heresy is an explicit

⁵¹⁰ Cf. *OP*, p. 182, line 9 and *CP* 1. 118; the blood of the ram is both 'mystery' and 'type'.

⁵¹¹ Hillier (1993), 164–5 gives some examples.

⁵¹² e.g. 'Hercules and Bacchus were great, but Augustus was greater', from Vergil, *A.* 6. 801–5.

⁵¹³ Cf. 4. 205–9.

⁵¹⁴ See pp. 179–80.

⁵¹⁵ Ratkowitsch (1986), 53–6

theme of Book 1 (299–333) and a strong undercurrent in the remaining books, but her typological or allegorical equation of the turbulent lake and the stormy winds with heresy does not sit well with the fact that Sedulius offers their joyful exuberance as the cause of this local difficulty. Heresy, as seen by those claiming to be orthodox, is not the outcome of the recognition of Christ and excessive joy.

Sedulius' common term *mysticus* is used in the main to denote what we may call sacred symbols, as opposed to events or persons. The *mystica dona* ('mystical gifts', 2. 166) dispensed by Christ at his baptism evidently cover not only his 'beatification' of the river Jordan, but also his washing of human sins. So in the development of the analogy between ark and cross—the ark of course is also a type—Sedulius refers to the *mystica virtus* ('mystical power', 1. 75) of wood, which in both cases brings salvation. When in 4. 251–70 Christ heals a blind man by anointing his eyes with mud and bidding him to wash in the pool of Siloam, we are told that all must learn from this 'mystical miracle' that Christ, taking human form, became or was made (269–70) *terra salutaris* (literally, 'saving earth'), which when washed by the fountains of baptism opens up the clear passages of reborn light.⁵¹⁶ Such a mystical meaning is often attached to numbers, especially three and four,⁵¹⁷ though without the dedication to numerology that will be seen in Arator at every turn. The figurative interpretations of the numerous details in the crucifixion narrative are carefully presented by Sedulius as lessons of important spiritual truth; they have a divinely ordained purpose (cf. 5. 177 and 188), which the poet is anxious to make clear.

The moral sense of scripture is seldom signalled as such; it does not need to be. It is most prominent in Sedulius' exposition of the Lord's Prayer, but in the narratives exhortation is also frequent, usually addressed directly to 'us', the poet, his community, and his readers. This kind of intimate address is another feature which recalls the sermon or commentary. Moralizing in the epic tradition is

⁵¹⁶ *quae fontibus abluta sacris | clara renascentis reserat spiramina lucis*. The word *spiramina* may mean 'passage' or 'breath', and there is surely here a reference to the Holy Spirit's activity in baptism.

⁵¹⁷ e.g. 1. 359–60, where the four gospels signify the four seasons and 5. 241–2, where the three hours signify the three days of Christ's death.

seldom so direct, either in its advice or its mode of address, preferring a comment, or at times declamation against particular evils. At one point Apollonius comments: ‘we tribes of suffering men never tread firmly on the path of delight’ (4. 1165–6); Vergil (or his internal narrator) expostulates *quid non mortalia pectora cogis, | auri sacra fames!*⁵¹⁸ In Sedulius the range of such exhortation may reflect the outlook of the spiritual community to which he belonged. He reinforces Christ’s own warning to the disciples on humility at 3. 322–37, making it very clear that the purpose of Christ in showing them a child (Matt. 18: 1–4) is ‘that we may follow the nature of tender youth’,⁵¹⁹ and developing the notion with tacit reference to biblical passages, including Luke 14: 8–10 and Ps. 113 (112): 7–8. Warnings about the dangers of wealth are no less prominent than warnings about pride, and often combined with them, as in 4. 291–302 (Christ’s entry into Jerusalem). The passage at the beginning of Book 4, more developed than most, expounds the point that it is difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 19: 23–30) with an unusual array of other passages (Matt. 7: 14, 6: 20, 25: 36–40 and 19: 26). A sign of such an attitude to wealth may be detected in 2. 93, where the Magi give their treasures *pro religione* (‘in accordance with their veneration’); the important thing (it is implied) is not their treasures but the spirit in which they were offered. On the subject of prayer, there is an interesting contrast with attitudes detected in Juvencus; Sedulius is much bolder.⁵²⁰ Readers are rebuked at 4. 122–4 for shrinking from prayers that are easily granted,⁵²¹ and assured at 4. 216–17 that ‘honest prayer alone secures things denied by a difficult situation’.⁵²² There is apparently a reference to sexual ethics in 5. 287–94, a tenuous and perhaps solitary

⁵¹⁸ A. 3. 56–7 ‘To what lengths do you not drive mortal hearts, accursed hunger for gold!’ There is moralizing of a sort in Ovid, as at *M.* 1. 414–15 *inde genus durum sumus experiensque laborum | et documenta damus, qua simus origine nati* (‘hence we are a hard race and experience toil, giving proof of our origin’).

⁵¹⁹ *scilicet ingenium teneri sectemur ut aevi.*

⁵²⁰ See p. 117.

⁵²¹ The word *propensa* may also mean ‘weighty’, which is implied by the phrase *maxima... gaudia* (‘very great joys’) that precedes, but the sense given above is confirmed by *OP*, p. 262, line 17.

⁵²² *quidquid res dura negarit | sola frequens votis oratio praestat honestis.*

one; in his chaste community Sedulius will not have thought it an issue. In discussing the significance of the blood and water which came from Christ's side, Sedulius underlines the importance of 'keeping our temple immaculate,' explaining that through baptism and the Eucharist the body of the worshipper is reckoned the temple of the deity.⁵²³ If that is indeed the point here, it is the only such exhortation in the poem, excepting perhaps the treatment of the woman taken in adultery (4. 233–50), the thrust of which is, as in the original (John 8: 2–11), a warning against hypocrisy. This story also gives opportunities to stress the importance of repentance, as does the episode of the woman of Luke 7: 37–8 (4. 72–3) with its sudden, direct reference to 'us' in the middle of a narrative.

The task of identifying the sources of Sedulius' exegesis is as difficult as it was for Juvenecus, but in this case the difficulty results to some extent from the abundance of Christian discourse, rather than its paucity. It can be taken as certain that Sedulius does not depend exclusively on any one known source; there is some reason to believe that at times he is independent, but this is probably unusual. Thanks to the researches of Mayr, Moretti Pieri, and Van der Laan—though they need qualification at various points, usually in the direction of caution—an outline picture can be put forward with some confidence. Sedulius may have been competent in Greek, though the evidence for this is even less than in Juvenecus' case, but there is nothing to suggest that he used Greek writers directly. Though the possibility is entertained by Mayr,⁵²⁴ he is unlikely to have read Hippolytus, and Mayr's parallels do not alter that presupposition. As for Origen, there are general similarities, as mentioned above,⁵²⁵ and particular ones—for example, he spoke of Judas wishing to sell the one who wanted to redeem the whole world⁵²⁶—but the widespread diffusion of his methods and detailed interpretations warn against postulating direct consultation, though translations

⁵²³ 5. 292–3 *templum deitatis habemur, | quod servare Deus nos annuat immaculatam*, referring to 1 Cor. 3: 16–17.

⁵²⁴ Mayr (1916), 55–6.

⁵²⁵ See p. 230. Origen anticipates Sedulius in some of the interpretations of detail in the crucifixion narrative.

⁵²⁶ PG 13. 1727, on 5. 129–30.

into Latin did exist. Mazzega and Van der Laan cite parallels with John Chrysostom at various points, but these are not close enough to commend the possibility of a direct relationship. One must also set aside three Latin expositors whom Jerome mentions in the prologue to his commentary on Matthew:⁵²⁷ Victorinus of Pettau, since only his commentary on Revelation is extant; Fortunatianus of Aquileia, because the *Expositio IV Evangeliorum* which was ascribed to him in Mayr's day is now known to be of the eighth or perhaps seventh century;⁵²⁸ and Hilary, because nothing of his has come to light that cannot be paralleled in later writers, such as Ambrose and Augustine.⁵²⁹

Ambrose and Augustine are much more likely candidates, not only because of the clear presence of distinctive doctrines such as the perpetual virginity of Mary⁵³⁰ and original sin,⁵³¹ but also because of particular detail. It does seem that Sedulius used Ambrose's commentary on Luke and Augustine's *Tractatus in Iohannem*.⁵³² The former may have supplied the reference to the divine *pastor* in the context of the shepherds who watched their flocks in 2. 70–1, as Mayr suggests, though Ambrose's point at 2. 50 is a slightly different one, and the explanation of Christ's baptism in 2.158 ('in himself he washed away the contagion of our life') might be derived from Ambrose at 2. 91 ('Christ washed himself for us; no, he washed us in his body'),⁵³³ though the similarity is not quite exact. However, the importation of the doctrine of the two paths into the Herod story, where the Magi depart (*CP* 2. 105–6; Ambrose, at 2. 46), and the point made in the storm narrative about Christ sleeping and not sleeping (*CP* 3. 56–7; Ambrose, at 6. 42) are more convincing evidence, hingeing as they do on the combination of distinct passages. A detail of Augustine's *Tractatus in Iohannem* has been detected by

⁵²⁷ CCSL 77. 5.

⁵²⁸ Dekkers (1995), 631. Perhaps Sedulius is in fact a source.

⁵²⁹ Mayr (1916), 60–1

⁵³⁰ Cf. *CP* 2. 47 and Ambrose, *De Institutione Virginis* 35 (*PL* 16. 328).

⁵³¹ See *OP*, p. 199, line 3 and p. 200, lines 15–16, and *CP* 2. 34, which is as close as metre allows.

⁵³² CCSL 14 and 36 respectively.

⁵³³ Sedulius: *in se cuncta lavat nostrae contagia vitae*; Ambrose: *pro nobis Christus lavit, immo nos in corpore suo lavit*.

Moretti Pieri⁵³⁴ in her detailed analysis of 5. 33–4; his interpretation of Christ as *panis traditorem* ('betrayed of Christ, the bread of life')⁵³⁵ is similar to *CP* 5. 34 *qui panis tradendus erat* ('who (himself) was to be handed over, as bread'), explained in terms of *OP* p. 275, line 6–7 *panis ipse tradendus ad necem*.⁵³⁶ She argues too that Sedulius recalls Augustine in relating Peter's threefold confession at Lake Tiberias (5. 414–15) to his threefold denial in Jerusalem.⁵³⁷ Van der Laan, with parallels of varying cogency, concludes that Augustine was used *passim*.⁵³⁸ Jerome must certainly be included; it was absurd of Mayr to neglect him on the grounds that he gave a cold reception to Ambrose's work.⁵³⁹ There are some interesting parallels in *Carmen Paschale* to his commentary on Matthew. Like Sedulius he spoke of Christ sanctifying the waters of the Jordan (on 3: 14; cf. *CP* 2. 161); on 17: 24 he mentions the tribute to Caesar but not the temple (so too *CP* 3. 314–15), and he too linked the point of the camel and the needle's eye with that of the narrow way (on 19: 24–6; cf. *CP* 4.11–12). No significance can be drawn from the fact that Sedulius does not use the story of the sterile fig-tree (*CP* 4. 45–56) to pass a comment on the Jews, as Jerome does, on 21: 18–22;⁵⁴⁰ an argument from silence would be particularly weak when the borrower is as eclectic as Sedulius seems to be.

Further research may well come up with more examples, and better signs of close correspondence with these and even other Latin Church Fathers. The picture given above of Sedulius sitting down with a commentary on each gospel, though plausible, may prove to be too neat if the search is significantly widened. And it is always possible, of course, that a commentator indicated as a source drew his material from an earlier writer, though the more that can be found in Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome, the less likely this will be. There will remain the question of how exactly he accessed them. Such material could in

⁵³⁴ Moretti Pieri (1969), 185.

⁵³⁵ *Tractatus in Iohannem* 62. 4. 5.

⁵³⁶ 'himself bread, to be handed over to death'.

⁵³⁷ Moretti Pieri (1969), 198. Augustine, at *Tractatus in Iohannem* 123. 5, also refers to Peter's fear at the time of his denials, as Sedulius does in *CP* 5. 82.

⁵³⁸ Van der Laan (1990), pp. xxiii–xxiv.

⁵³⁹ Mayr (1916), 64.

⁵⁴⁰ So too Ambrose, in his commentary on Luke, at 7. 161.

fact have come to him orally, and one should not discount the phenomenon of exegesis orally transmitted.⁵⁴¹ Sedulius, in his devout circle, is likely to have heard as much exposition and exegesis as he read, and both communal discussion and personal meditation may have contributed. He may, too, have accessed sources not in the mainstream, or drawn on popular belief, which might account for such elements as the ass present at Christ's birth (4. 301–2), and the Virgin Mary's presence at the empty tomb (5. 323). These might have been mediated orally, as has been suggested, but again we cannot tell.⁵⁴² The categories of oral and written exposition, like those of popular and ecclesiastical belief, are not hard and fast.

It would be rash, or at least premature, to claim Sedulius as an original contributor to Christian exegesis. There are strands of thought which seem distinctive, or at least unusual, such as his frequent emphasis on the relation of Christ to the elements of the created world, but they need not have originated with him. Theologically speaking, however, he may be thought the most interesting of the three poets, for all Arator's breadth of learning. He is able to link passages from various parts of the scriptures, and to raise matters of the highest importance. We find in him pronouncements on issues (many of them Augustinian) such as Christology (1. 312–18) and the nature of what only metre prevented him from calling the Trinity (2. 171–4), the relation between the Godhead and time (3. 22), the nature of the divine creating will (4. 13–15), and the uncreatedness of death (5. 281–3). He also has distinctive perspectives on Mary and Peter, not at all like those of Juvencus. Both, in a word, appear to be less personal but more divine. In Mary's case this is achieved by reducing the detail surrounding the annunciation, conception, and birth of Jesus (2. 35–40), by removing her anxious role in locating him in the temple as a 12-year-old (2. 134–8), and by omitting her from the first miracle at Cana (3. 1–11). She is, rather, the divine answer to Eve, and the faithful mother of Christ, and so of God (2. 20–34). The Church is radiant with Mary's glory (5. 359).⁵⁴³ Peter's role has also

⁵⁴¹ Cf. Green (2007*b*), on Juvencus.

⁵⁴² For the former, cf. Augustine, *Tract. in Ioh.* 44. 1–2, and cf. Jerome, *Ep.* 108. 10; the latter story is found in Ambrose, *De Virginitate* 3. 14 (*PL* 16. 283).

⁵⁴³ *haec est conspicuo radians in honore Mariae.*

changed significantly; in Sedulius he does not ask questions which might incur the divine rebuke (5. 20–7; cf. 3. 283–7), he does not fear when trying to walk on water (3. 230–5), and he is not criticized for lack of faith (5. 82). He is a man of particular dignity, singled out by Christ for his august task (5. 411–15), and well on the way to being the authoritative leader of the apostles and forerunner of the popes that he will be in Arator.

There is a vast difference, too, to be noted between Juvenus and Sedulius in their treatment of the Eucharist and of baptism. In Juvenus, indeed, it was uncertain whether the Eucharist was alluded to at all, and certainly not as obvious as it seemed to Herzog.⁵⁴⁴ Interestingly, the question does not arise in the case of a passage of Sedulius where it might be expected, the changing of water into wine (3. 1–11), but the Eucharist is firmly presented by him early on, at 1. 70–2, and mentioned very clearly in the exposition of the Lord's Prayer (2. 265–6).⁵⁴⁵ Its institution is duly described at 5. 34–7. A similar point is made in the context of one of the post-resurrection appearances (Luke 24: 30) The recognition of the physically resurrected Christ in 'the breaking of bread' (5. 365 *in fragmine panis*) typifies the worshipper's acknowledgement, made possible by the grace of faith, of the transformed living body of Christ in the sacrament (5. 366–8).

The sacrament of baptism, too, is assumed from the beginning of the poem. Unbelieving readers are called to the heavenly places 'through the sacred waters' of baptism (1. 55).⁵⁴⁶ Baptismal solemnities are indicated in the picture of the *grex candidus* at 1. 83–4, in Sedulius' prayer; no doubt baptized himself, he seeks to enter in due course where the baptized will enter. A history or prehistory of baptism, as it were, is provided by the Red Sea experience (1. 142), which typologically interpreted (as often) gave a *rude baptisma* ('provisional baptism'), and by Christ's own baptism in the Jordan (2. 139–65). Unlike Arator, who is constantly seeing and interpolating references to baptism,⁵⁴⁷ Sedulius has few opportunities to introduce baptismal themes in his narrative, but does so at 4. 230–2, when relating the request of the Samaritan woman for water (John 4: 15).

⁵⁴⁴ Green (2007b).

⁵⁴⁵ See pp. 179–80.

⁵⁴⁶ *per latices intrate pios.*

⁵⁴⁷ See pp. 310–12.

Pontius Pilate's dire need of baptism (5. 159–60) has already been noted.⁵⁴⁸ Both sacraments are mentioned together in Sedulius' interpretation of the wound in Christ's side (5. 289–94), which develops a detail from Augustine's exposition and goes on to influence Arator.⁵⁴⁹

Sedulius, then, gives prominence to the emphases of the contemporary Christian Church, to its methods of theological interpretation, and to some of its most important doctrines. He insists on belief in the Trinity (2. 171–4), speculates on the application of this, 'the true faith' (*vera fides*), to his chosen field of Old and New Testament miracles (1. 291–9), and refutes heretics by name in 1. 319–25. Early in this chapter it was assumed that the poem addresses the issues involved in what became known as the heresy of Nestorianism, and this must now be explored.⁵⁵⁰

The controversy began in 428 when Nestorius, the newly appointed bishop of Constantinople, expressed in a forthright sermon his dissatisfaction with the title *theotokos* ('bearer of God') used of Mary. This title was not new, and that or similar ones had been happily accepted in various churches for some time,⁵⁵¹ but he was vigorously opposed, especially by Cyril of Alexandria, who showed himself an energetic, articulate, and implacable adversary.⁵⁵² At an early stage Nestorius appealed to Rome, but was not supported by Pope Celestine or in the council called by the pope in 430. He was condemned in two further councils, convened within one year of it, at Alexandria and Ephesus. Although the centre of gravity in this controversy was always the Greek-speaking world, John Cassian of Gaul wrote a lengthy attack on Nestorius,⁵⁵³ and Leo, a later pope, contributed less polemically with his so-called *Tome*. Acrimonious debate continued until some sort of agreement was reached at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, but that was not the end, and debate

⁵⁴⁸ See p. 205.

⁵⁴⁹ See Hillier (1993), 176 and 179. The passage of Augustine is *Tractatus in Iohannem* 120. 2.

⁵⁵⁰ For a detailed account see Wessel (2004).

⁵⁵¹ In the West, note e.g. Ambrose, *Hexaemeron* 5. 65 (CSEL 32. 188).

⁵⁵² Russell (2000). Wessel (2004) interestingly explores the rhetorical resources used by Cyril.

⁵⁵³ *De Incarnatione Domini contra Nestorium*, in CSEL 17.

and schism were prolonged, albeit with significant mutation.⁵⁵⁴ This is not the appropriate place to delve into theological detail, even of the early phase, or to narrate the development of solutions; a full account would also need to examine the clash of personalities and the strong influence of local dogmatic traditions. Few if any controversies were more heated, and there was much oversimplification and distortion. Cassian accuses Nestorius, for example, of saying that Christ was not the Son of God but a mere man.⁵⁵⁵ Issues which now may seem abstruse were considered to be of literally vital importance to believers; innovation, or challenges to accepted notions, or even attempts to attain greater precision were suspected of compromising the essential point that if Christ was not God, he could not be an effective saviour. The protagonists saw themselves as striving to protect the essentials of everyman's faith.

Against this background we should now consider various salient emphases in *Carmen Paschale* (and generally reproduced in *Opus Paschale*). We saw in the storm scene (3. 57–8) that although Christ was asleep in the boat he was, according to the poet, 'awake in terms of his majesty', as confirmed by the Psalm. In 4. 222–5, when Christ was thirsty on his way through Samaria he stopped at a well so that he could drink, 'insofar as he was a physical body' (*qua corpus erat*); he needed water *qua* human. The allusion to his two 'natures'—but the insufficiency of both Greek and Latin vocabulary was a major problem in the controversy—is very clear in 4. 277–8, where Christ wept for the dead Lazarus, 'but in respect of his body, not his deity' (*sed corpore, non deitate*), and grieved for his friend's limbs 'in respect of the part in which he himself would die'.⁵⁵⁶ After suffering on the cross, and when he had 'dismissed his holy breath from his body' (562), he was both alive and dead; God did not die, but his limbs died in him (5. 263–5).⁵⁵⁷ The reader of Book 5 is left in no doubt that he genuinely died; it is said at the outset that he laid down his flesh but took it again (5. 3). That he was truly human is also shown

⁵⁵⁴ Frend (1972).

⁵⁵⁵ See also the evidence from Cyril's letter to Celestine in Wessel (2004), 105.

⁵⁵⁶ In *OP*, p. 273, lines 5/6 (the beginning of Book 5) it is said that 'he was distressed a little by the approach of death, as a man afraid' (*turbatusque pauxillulum mortis vicinia* [the less suitable *vicina* is also read] *ut homo formidans*).

⁵⁵⁷ *quia mortuus idem | idem vivus erat, membris obeuntibus in se, | non obeunte Deo.*

by his various human activities such as eating—this is no appearance, as one theologian argued.⁵⁵⁸ Sedulius emphasizes this in 4. 173; Christ's aim in attending the meal was not simply to eat. In 3. 2–3, where Sedulius says that he attended the wedding party to feed, not to be fed, the point is that he would provide the wine, not that he had no need to ingest what was on offer at the party. After the resurrection he is seen to eat on several occasions, thus proving that it is genuinely the living Christ that is present.

But Sedulius' main thrust is that Christ was not only a man; he is God too. This is brought out in various places in the poem: the point is made when he is a baby in the manger (2. 57–62), and when he is being tempted by the Devil (2. 175–219). Elsewhere he is portrayed as well known to the Devil from earlier days (4. 96–8), and he is recognized by the elements as their creator (3. 64–9). The episode of the transfiguration is made to testify clearly to the fact that he was God (3. 273–92). In another way, his mode of entry into Jerusalem (4. 291–308) testifies by its very unconventionality, as he intended (4. 291–2), to his being God.⁵⁵⁹ As Springer points out,⁵⁶⁰ he is more often *deus* than *vir* or *homo*; and he is also more often referred to as Christ than Jesus, a name that Sedulius uses but twice. The point of all this emphasis is not to reduce or hide his humanity. The fact that Sedulius speaks of his human 'covering' (*tegminis humani*, 4. 267–9) and the 'veiling of the flesh' (*velamine carnis*, 4. 97) and, after the transfiguration, describes 'his power returning to his bodily limbs and covering his form with the veil of the flesh' (3. 293–4),⁵⁶¹ should not be pressed too far; the language is admittedly unsophisticated,⁵⁶² but it was notoriously difficult even for established theologians to express such points about the divinity and humanity of Christ. The humanity of Christ is not in question, for the whole poem shows him

⁵⁵⁸ Hilary, *De Trinitate* 10. 24, quoted by Springer (1988), 41.

⁵⁵⁹ There is no reference in Sedulius here to the fulfilment of prophecy, as mentioned in Matt. 21: 5.

⁵⁶⁰ Springer (1988), 47.

⁵⁶¹ *postquam corporeos virtus regressa per artus | texit adoratam carnis velamine formam*; the above translation leaves out Huemer's *adoratam*, for here lies a textual problem.

⁵⁶² It is a covering in the sense that his divine majesty is usually hidden from imperfect mortal view; cf. Heb. 10: 20.

interacting with men and women on earth and sharing their existence, and it is the divine side that must be emphasized. It is important also to note that Sedulius, as far as he can, is not merging the human and divine in Christ or creating a single, superhuman, personality. He may be, as Springer says,⁵⁶³ ‘a fiercely independent and self-sufficient character’ (though he seems to enjoy human company and not keep himself to himself), and remarkably tough, like a holy man of Late Antiquity, but these are human traits. It is not true that ‘Christ actually does very little suffering at all’; at his trial the impression is given, by the poet’s own tearful intervention, that he suffers great physical and psychological distress (5. 94–100). Springer notes too that he never loses his temper, but in a biography based on the miracles of the gospels there are few places where he might do so.⁵⁶⁴

Sedulius, then, is concerned to stress the two natures of Christ, without mixing them, and to show that his hero was truly God as well as being fully human. His target is therefore not Arianism.⁵⁶⁵ The Arian controversy was certainly concerned with the nature of Christ, or at least his status, but it focused in particular on Christ’s relation to the Father, and on such questions as whether he was equal and co-eternal with the Father (whence Juvencus’ reluctance to mention any passages that might suggest his inferiority),⁵⁶⁶ and the nature of his coming to be.⁵⁶⁷ Sedulius’ work cannot be seen in this context; it does not allude to the Christological issues raised over the past hundred years, nor to the more contemporary Arianism championed by the Goths now settled in France and Spain.⁵⁶⁸ The problem addressed by Sedulius came into prominence after Arianism, with attempts to work out formulae that captured the fact that Christ was at once both human and divine, and to show how these ‘natures’ or

⁵⁶³ Springer (1988), 46.

⁵⁶⁴ Springer (*ibid.* 47) cites Mark 3: 5 and John 2: 13–22.

⁵⁶⁵ As suggested by Ratkowitsch (1986).

⁵⁶⁶ See pp. 117–20.

⁵⁶⁷ See also Wessel (2004), 128 on the differences between Arian and Nestorian Christology.

⁵⁶⁸ Sumruld (1994). Ratkowitsch (1986) supported her anti-Arian interpretation with the thesis of McDonald, discussed above (pp. 137–8), but even if Sedulius did live in southern Gaul would he have addressed the barbarians in hexameter verse?

‘characters’ or ‘hypostases’—there was little agreement on the validity of these words—were ‘joined’ or ‘united’ or ‘conjoined’.⁵⁶⁹

It is true that Sedulius names Arius, along with Sabellius, in his first book (1. 300, 322–3), but this does not justify the conclusion that either of them was a main target. A roll-call of heretics is common in anti-heretical writing; in his refutation of Nestorianism Cassian gives a long list of earlier heretics,⁵⁷⁰ and, in the case of Prudentius, according to Rank,⁵⁷¹ the heretics mentioned in his *Apotheosis* are not his true target. Arius and Sabellius are actually mentioned together (as *tineae*, or destructive worms, eating their way into orthodoxy from different sides, as it were) in Ambrose’s commentary on Luke,⁵⁷² a work evidently known to Sedulius,⁵⁷³ and both men are cited, though not together, in Cyril of Alexandria’s commentary on John, written shortly before his intervention against Nestorius. In the remainder of *Carmen Paschale* it would be inappropriate for Sedulius to mention names; and indeed names are sometimes withheld in controversy,⁵⁷⁴ whether because it seemed better to attack the doctrine and not the man, or, more probably, because the identity of the adversary could be taken for granted.

It is sometimes said that Westerners were less interested in this controversy than the Greeks.⁵⁷⁵ Perhaps Pope Leo had less enthusiasm for detailed debate when he wrote his *Tome* than when, as archdeacon, he urged John Cassian to write his refutation of Nestorius. Certainly, Western theologies go into less detail.⁵⁷⁶ But Nestorius’ appeal to the Roman see, and the contribution of the Gallic Cassian, will have ensured that the issues became widely known in the West. It cannot be determined whether Sedulius was closely involved with the opinion-formers on this issue; he might have been, especially if he was an inhabitant of Rome,⁵⁷⁷ or in some way close to Cassian or to members of the papal council. In any case, his anti-Nestorian leanings add to the picture of a Christian strongly involved with matters ecclesiastical and doctrinal, and of a poem which is, as Springer

⁵⁶⁹ There are good accounts in Kelly (1977), 310–23 and Young *et al.* (2004).

⁵⁷⁰ *De Incarnatione* 1. 2 (CSEL 17. 237).

⁵⁷¹ Rank (1966), 28.

⁵⁷² Ambrose, *Expositio in Lucam* 1. 13.

⁵⁷³ See p. 235.

⁵⁷⁴ Springer (1988), 43.

⁵⁷⁵ Frend (1972), 134.

⁵⁷⁶ Kelly (1977), 334–8.

⁵⁷⁷ See p. 137.

claims, not an anti-heretical tract but a positive expression of the author's view of Christ. It hardly needs saying now that there is no good reason to doubt the seriousness of the poet's commitment to his religion or to argue that his evident enjoyment of the poetic challenge that he set himself is a sign of less-than-sincere commitment.⁵⁷⁸

SEDULIUS' AIMS

The anti-Nestorian tenor of Sedulius' poem is clear. It is vital that the message of salvation is not undermined by an unsatisfactory presentation of Christ. But the establishment of this message and the refutation of beliefs that appeared to compromise, indeed remove, the way of salvation need not be seen as the poem's main purpose. If it had been, it might well have been more prominent, and perhaps even more explicit, in the *Opus Paschale*, where there is more room to develop theological themes; the point is certainly present there, in the passages which correspond to the Christological passages of *Carmen Paschale*, but it is not an overriding concern. If Sedulius had wished to devote a poem to setting out the case against Nestorius, he could have followed the models that Prudentius had given, in *Apotheosis* and *Hamartigenia*, poems that he knew well; but he makes his points in a quite different way. His poem is a narrative of Christ's life on earth which concentrates on miracles, and the function of the miracle stories is not to refute Nestorius, which by themselves they could hardly achieve, but to show Christ's saving power. This is quite clear from the first letter to Macedonius. It does not detract from the doctrinal importance that Sedulius placed upon his refutation of Nestorius to say that to answer him was not the primary purpose of the poem.

Sedulius' message was one of universal importance; but the nature of the target audience or audiences of his remarkable poem, and so his overall aim, needs discussion. Is he celebrating salvation to the

⁵⁷⁸ Curtius (1953), 460; Mohrmann (1958), 1. 154-5.

world at large, or seeking to confirm the confidence and faith of Christians, or writing to evangelize and win converts to Christianity? In line 1. 37 *huc vertite cuncti* he calls 'all people' to attend to his theme, the way of salvation,⁵⁷⁹ and what follows in the next twenty lines is a vehement plea to pagans to leave their false gods and their 'Athenian' teaching, and then be baptized and become a fruitful harvest.⁵⁸⁰ This passage should be more significant than the common run of apostrophes which is part and parcel of Sedulius' rhetorical and polemical technique,⁵⁸¹ and should be taken seriously. Mazzega cites two passages from *Opus Paschale* which make explicit exhortations to *idola colentes* and *infidi* where the address to pagans is not obvious from the *Carmen*.⁵⁸² But the matter is not straightforward. The beginning of the poem, giving Sedulius' personal reasons for writing the poem, and suggesting that rivalry with classical poets or the praise of God is his primary concern, might seem rather oblique if the aim is to convince unbelievers, but given the need for Christian poets to present their poetic credentials this is perhaps not a problem. But the ridicule of various kinds of pagan worship in l. 242–81, following on from a very brief plea in 47–8, is poorly calculated to convince anyone who worshipped the traditional gods; it is at the level of the crudest apologies of early Christianity. The comments on classical philosophy in l. 326–33, although their main purpose is to discredit the heresies of Arius and Sabellius, would not influence anyone interested in *Attica... doctrina*, however loosely that might be interpreted. The attack on Arius would arguably be out of place in an evangelistic poem. One is drawn to agree with Springer,⁵⁸³ who sees an element of 'posturing'; such an approach suggests that Sedulius has in mind a complicit audience of Christians, to whom such an ostentatiously hardline approach would appeal. While allowing that 'there were still pagans left in the first half of the fifth century', and that Sedulius may have hoped that such unbelievers would embrace

⁵⁷⁹ Cf. 4. 263 *cognoscite cuncti* ('learn, all of you').

⁵⁸⁰ See p. 164.

⁵⁸¹ Van der Laan (1990), p. xiv, compares pleas to the Jews such as 5. 340–2 and 351–8.

⁵⁸² *OP*, p. 246, line 5 and p. 283, line 17; cf. *CP* 3. 205–6 and 5. 152. The Latin means 'worshippers of idols' and 'unbelievers'.

⁵⁸³ Springer (1988), 31.

his message, Springer's view is that Sedulius 'preserves the traditional appeal to a pagan audience even though he pitches his poem at a level which only a well informed Christian could appreciate'. His principal audience is one of 'devoted and knowledgeable believers', like the circle of Macedonius, but the poem is directed also at 'nominal Christians', a constituency which he does not try to define (are they 'nominal', for example, out of mere ambition, or are they seekers not yet fully committed?) but which was no doubt a large one.⁵⁸⁴ Such a broad and multiple target reflects, though with different emphases, the justification for using metre that Sedulius gave in his letter to Macedonius: he thus made his work attractive so that 'each person might be won for God, in terms of his own talents or nature (*ingenium*), willingly'.⁵⁸⁵

Springer more than once makes the point that most pagan readers would have failed fully to understand the poem, and Van der Laan goes so far as to argue that the poem would be unintelligible to a pagan audience, because of its complicated allegories and its theological depth.⁵⁸⁶ It is not easy to get an impression of what pagans might or might not comprehend, especially in an age when Christianity was the dominant voice; there is a danger of constructing them as Galens or Porphyries, or even as late Victorian or twentieth-century rationalists, and as always it is hard to see through to what was typical. But pagans had been used to allegory for centuries; this tradition was as old as the traditions of allegory by which Christian allegory was influenced.⁵⁸⁷ The allegories in Sedulius are not particularly difficult; they are certainly more straightforward than those of Arator, and less frequent. Mazzega, addressing Van der Laan's position, adduced the evidence of the treatise *De Catechizandis Rudibus*, in which Augustine seeks to explain to a catechist how to instruct candidates for the catechumenate.⁵⁸⁸ These may be of many

⁵⁸⁴ Springer actually gives as examples Ausonius, Licentius, and Jovius. For Ausonius see pp. 145–6 for the others see Trout (1999), 134–43.

⁵⁸⁵ p. 5, lines 12–13. The phrase 'won for God' need not indicate complete conversion as it might in some quarters today.

⁵⁸⁶ Van der Laan (1990), pp. xii–xiv.

⁵⁸⁷ See 'allegory, Greek' in *OCD*, and, for types of allegories which influenced the Christians, Hanson (1959).

⁵⁸⁸ Mazzega (1996), 15–33, using sections 12 and 13 of the treatise.

kinds, but three main kinds may be distinguished: those who are well educated and have a high degree of motivation and may have studied Christianity already; those who come from the ordinary schools of grammar and rhetoric;⁵⁸⁹ and the uneducated, Augustine's *idiotae*. With the last class we are not concerned, but they seem to be included among those who successfully receive instruction and are then told that some things in scripture require to be understood as 'spiritual' or allegorical. But Augustine has a special use for allegory in connection with the second group, consisting of people from the ordinary schools, and so presumably quite large. Because they are in danger of greeting the Bible with boredom or disdain as a result of the intensely rhetorical nature of their education, there is a utility in the unveiling of secret meanings to whet their interest. Allegory is a valuable tool, one that has some novelty value but is not beyond the comprehension of the average student. Although there is room for doubt about the extent to which catechumens such as Augustine describes are representative of the whole body of non-Christians, clearly we hear the voice of Augustine's experience in this treatise. Of course studies of Christian allegory would be valuable also to Christians, to refresh their knowledge, and to that extent Mazzega agrees with Van der Laan. His valuable study ends with a recognition, based on Augustine,⁵⁹⁰ that the categories of catechumens and the faithful, of those about to be baptized and those already baptized, need not be observed as a hard-and-fast rule in all situations. One might go a little further and suggest that the question of Sedulius' target readership should not be seen starkly as a choice between pagans and Christians, and that his spiritual aims need not be expressed in a dichotomy between the conversion of the former or the edification of the latter.

Broader similarities between the task of the catechist and the content of Sedulius' poem are brought out by Mazzega—the emphasis on creation, the destruction of belief in the old gods, the detailed, chronological account of the life of Christ, for example—but it is most unlikely that Sedulius himself saw a close parallel, much less that he saw himself as providing a kind of verse catechesis. Many

⁵⁸⁹ *quidam de scholis usitatissimis grammaticorum oratorumque venientes.*

⁵⁹⁰ From *De Fide et Operibus* 7. 11 (CSEL 41. 48).

aspects of the organization and practice of catechesis are unclear and unattested, but it is hard to imagine that something so essentially ecclesiastical might be seen as open to such an experiment. Attitudes to classical literature were not so enlightened as to admit such a work at such a pivotal stage of Christian instruction. It is time to return to the epic aspect of the poem, and to attempt a summary of its appeal to the educated elite who will have read it.

Our study of Sedulius' anti-Nestorian agenda will have made it even more clear that his Christ is far more potent than Aeneas. Sedulius, much more so than Juvencus, has taken the opportunity to present not only an all-conquering hero but a being of full divine majesty. There are very few places where a comparison is implied, and scepticism is in order when the case is at all doubtful: for example, is there a comparison between the *pietas* of Aeneas and that of Christ? The difference between the Vergilian concept of *pietas*, of which the primary significance is not 'pity', though it may sometimes include it, and that of Christ is in itself a reason for doubt, and the general Christian tendency at this period to denigrate, if not completely ignore, Aeneas can only increase it.⁵⁹¹ When Leo, in the same period, referred in a sermon on Peter and Paul to Romulus the founder of Rome, he had more reason to make a link with Rome's past, but did not hesitate to dismiss him with a reference to his fratricide.⁵⁹² Against this background, this moral gulf, it is difficult to see why Springer should have maintained that Sedulius modelled his hero on Vergil, as he does in the words, 'just as Aeneas leads his group of Trojan followers to a safe political haven and a promising future in Italy, so Christ gives his followers freedom (from sin and death) and leads them to a blissful new home (heaven)'.⁵⁹³ One could object to the wording (freedom is not a particularly prominent concept in *Carmen Paschale*, and it is not obvious who Christ's followers are),⁵⁹⁴ but the important point is that there is a great gulf, which Sedulius very rarely, if at all, tries to bridge. Sedulius' *Aeneid*—and this may have applied to many of his contemporaries—

⁵⁹¹ See p. 66.

⁵⁹² Sermon 63 in SC, 82 in CCSL.

⁵⁹³ Springer (1988), 80.

⁵⁹⁴ Van der Laan (1990), p. xxxvi suggests that they are in fact readers, which complicates the parallel.

is an *Aeneid* without Aeneas. Appreciating this, Van der Laan constructed the poem as a subtle attack on the traditional gods of Rome. Aeneas does not come up to the level of Christ, but at least the gods might make an instructive comparison? Van der Laan sees an element of ridicule and demonizing accomplished by the way in which Sedulius from time to time ascribes to the Devil language which originally issued from the traditional epic gods—demons, as the Christians often saw them.⁵⁹⁵ The reading of Sedulius will influence the reading of Vergil. Some of the Devil's language in the temptations (notably at *CP* 2. 189)⁵⁹⁶ recalls Apollo; the language describing the departure of the evil spirit in 4. 89 recalls Vergil's line *A.* 4. 278 that refers to Mercury, and the identical *A.* 9. 658, which refers to Apollo. The first of these is fairly clear; for Sedulius' line 4.89 other parallels might come to the reader's mind for this almost standard phrase. It is not clear that there is a coherent design here. Van der Laan also draws attention to various kinds of *Kontrastimitation*, comparing, for example, *CP* 4. 13–14 with Lucan 2. 7–10 on creation and *CP* 4. 285–6 with Vergil *A.* 8. 242–6, which may be classed as Christian 'corrections'. Other cases of *Kontrastimitation* are visible from time to time, without adding up to a particular trajectory of thought; this indeed for the most part seems to be Sedulius' method, with no particular overall strategy except the rather general one of stressing that Christ and Christian belief are superior to pagan gods and pagan belief.

It is not obvious that Sedulius seeks to pose a 'challenge' (the word is Springer's) at the ideological level; the point that Christ is superior to Aeneas and his gods is implicit throughout but seldom foregrounded. What is clear is his immense debt to the manner, style, and diction of Vergil, and overwhelmingly to the epic Vergil; this he goes out of his way to emphasize, as in the numerous allusions of his first book, the quotation of whole lines, the use of similes in a way that Juvenecus could only dream of, and the concentration on description. It is at this level, the level of delight, that as a poet (the motto *certat poeta cum theologo* of course still holds) Sedulius principally operates, just as he indicated in his letter to Macedonius when he declared that metre was to be his special resource in acquiring

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. xlii, and 242 (*Zusammenfassung*).

⁵⁹⁶ For the similarity with Ovid, *M.* 2. 45, and its context, see p. 168 and n. 208.

people for God. On the smooth surface of the poem Vergil is not an adversary, but a contributor of what we might call, in a slightly different sense from Roberts,⁵⁹⁷ jewels to an already accomplished style. Sedulius is in a sense spoiling the Egyptians, though not necessarily with the notion that they are now being put to their 'true use'; the attempt of Mazzega to show the applicability of this formula and its three aims or modes of borrowings, the missionary aim, the polemical aim, and the theocentric aim,⁵⁹⁸ results in a rather austere picture. The last of these aims, admittedly, allows for a strong aesthetic element, but the theory seems to allow too little for the element of engaging the educated reader through an attractive—and also adventurous—appropriation of epic resources and of using them as a potent tool for celebration, edification, or preaching.

⁵⁹⁷ Roberts (1989).

⁵⁹⁸ The theory emerges clearly at Mazzega (1996), 10–11 (citing Gnilka 1984, 16) and 74.

3

Arator

WHO WAS ARATOR?

With good reason, accounts of Arator usually begin with his *annus mirabilis*, the year 544.¹ In that year he completed his epic poem on the Acts of the Apostles, usually known as *Historia Apostolica*,² and prefaced to it a verse letter gratefully dedicating the work to Pope Vigilius. On Wednesday, 6 April, ten days after Easter, a public presentation was made to the pope, in the presence of many bishops, priests, and deacons, and a small part of it was read. It was then entrusted to Surgentius, a high official,³ and placed in the Church's archives.⁴ The pope was asked unanimously by the learned audience to commission a public reading, which he did. A week later Arator gave a public recitation on the steps of St Peter ad Vincula in Rome, before a large company of clerics and laity, the latter including both nobility and much of the populace. The response was extremely enthusiastic; three more recitations followed, on 17 April, 8 May, and 30 May; it seems that because of the applause less was read in each session than anticipated, but it was eventually completed. These and other details of this remarkable event are recorded in a document which is itself remarkable, preserved in a *subscriptio* present in several manuscripts of the

¹ So Schwind (1990) and Hillier (1993), among the most recent.

² Schwind (1990), 9 and n. 1, McKinlay's edn., pp. vii–viii, Manitius (1911), 165. The manuscript evidence largely favours the title here adopted.

³ His title was *primicerius scholae notariorum*. For these and other details of the Latin see App. 2. There is a good discussion of various ecclesiastical details of the record in Châtillon (1963a), 75–128.

⁴ At this point there is serious divergence between the manuscripts, and the exact role of Surgentius is uncertain; see App. 2.

poem, which presumably goes back to a report made at the time, a kind of laudatory minute of what took place.

This performance recalls the practice of public recitation in the heyday of Roman literature, but no such performance is known for Late Antiquity.⁵ Public rhetorical displays for various purposes continued, in the forum at Rome and elsewhere, but Arator's poem was recited in, or perhaps outside, a church, and at the bidding of the pope. There is evidence that parts of the Acts of the Apostles were read in churches between Easter and Pentecost, as one would expect,⁶ but this poetic performance was not embedded in the liturgy, and as the dates suggest the relation to it was not close. Although the *natalicia* of Paulinus of Nola were apparently recited on the feast days of St Felix⁷ the practice of reading *passiones martyrum* seems to have been unacceptable in Rome.⁸ In any case, the feast day of Peter and Paul, who are celebrated in the poem, is almost three months away, on 29 June. The poem may be considered, at least by implication, a panegyric of Vigilius,⁹ but the performance did not coincide with the anniversary of his accession to the papacy on 29 March, when an appropriate celebration would occur.¹⁰ In her detailed study of the nature of the occasion Sotinel offers a parallel from Africa, but to compare the reading of Dracontius' *De Laudibus Dei* to the offended King Gunthamund is not helpful; Dracontius, after the failure of his *Satisfactio*, also in verse, addressed to the king, was seeking release from prison.¹¹ In general, of course, public speeches for emperors were a thing of the past, as indeed emperors themselves were in the Roman West. The event was a quite exceptional occasion, and an important aspect of it is well captured by Hillier when he describes it as a 'literary launch', a 'party, albeit in ceremonial guise';¹² and it was a great tribute to the subdeacon Arator himself as well as the pope. It would be interesting to have further knowledge of the *mise-en-scène*,

⁵ Schwind (1990), 9 n. 3. See also Sotinel (1989).

⁶ Hillier (1993), 18–19.

⁷ Trout (1999), 160–97.

⁸ Sotinel (1989), 812 n. 24.

⁹ See pp. 320–1.

¹⁰ Sotinel (1989), 816.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 815–16.

¹² These descriptions are from Hillier (1993), 1 and 2.

and of the speeches that were doubtless made, but on this and on many other aspects we can only speculate. How was the poem divided up for recitation? How was the great and varied crowd assembled? Were advance texts or some other kind of support provided? Was there any attempt to explain at least some of the difficult passages that are not uncommon in the poem as transmitted? But the above mentioned applause attests that the organizers had met no insuperable problem in making this a grand occasion.

Nothing is known of Arator's life after this triumph. Hillier speculates about his fortunes in the darker days soon to come, when Pope Vigilius and the Eastern emperor Justinian fell out openly over theological questions, and when the renewed hostilities of a Gothic king led to a second siege of Rome, which was captured and plundered in 546.¹³ The atmosphere at the end of the year 544 was already much less euphoric than it had been in the spring, and quite possibly Arator died of famine or plague in Rome soon afterwards. Even if he survived those, it cannot be assumed that amidst the military, social, and theological turmoil of the mid-sixth century he enjoyed a quiet and honoured retirement. His reaction to the various later tribulations of Pope Vigilius, about which Hillier speculates somewhat gloomily,¹⁴ is not known; nothing can be inferred from the silence.

About Arator's early life we are relatively well informed. The sources are three verse letters of his own, preserved with the *Historia Apostolica*, a letter written by Cassiodorus on behalf of the Gothic king Athalaric,¹⁵ and various writings of Ennodius, the well-connected Christian rhetorician and man of letters whose abundant and varied writings shed so much light on life in northern Italy in the early sixth century.¹⁶ It emerges from Cassiodorus' letter that Arator was born in Liguria;¹⁷ this was probably in the last decade of the fifth century. The family was noble, and Arator was *vir clarissimus* from an early age.¹⁸ His father was well educated, or at least very eloquent.¹⁹ After being orphaned (but not, it seems, before his father had been

¹³ Ibid. 11–12.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ *Variae* 8.12.

¹⁶ See Kennell (2000).

¹⁷ *Variae* 8. 12. 7.

¹⁸ He is so designated in Ennodius, *Dictio* 18, dating from his early schooldays.

¹⁹ Cassiodorus, *Variae* 8. 12. 4.

able to pass on some of his eloquence), Arator was brought up by Laurentius, bishop of Milan, and educated there in the school of the learned grammarian Deuterius.²⁰ One of his contemporaries in this school, which he evidently entered in 504,²¹ was a nephew of Ennodius, Parthenius,²² for a short time before Parthenius left to study in Rome. Ennodius showed interest in both of them, and was close enough to Arator to send him birthday wishes (the year is uncertain) and to write epigrams about his whip (*flagellum*) of silver and gold—not necessarily a toy, for Ennodius speaks of *vulnera pulchra*.²³ He later urged Arator to marry²⁴ and have children, rather than prolong his dalliance with the frivolities of verse composition in ‘the camp of the Muses’, but there is no sign either of human offspring or of poetic creation from this period. Ennodius was to claim that Arator owed to him ‘whatever knowledge he generously imparted from his riches with God’s help’;²⁵ this learned activity, whatever it was, must date from Arator’s early life, and probably before Ennodius became bishop of Ticinum (Pavia) in 514, and is otherwise quite unattested. There is no doubt that Ennodius contributed greatly to his development.

There was a crucial contribution from at least one other source, the Parthenius to whom Arator later wrote a letter in verse, dedicating and promoting his poem.²⁶ Scholars have tended to assume that this cannot be the Parthenius mentioned above,²⁷ and when one reads this quite intimate letter it is rather surprising that no early experiences in Milan are mentioned, as one might have expected; but such an argument from silence should yield to the arguments from the arena of prosopography, which Bureau has recently entered with a thoroughgoing reappraisal of the evidence.²⁸ The matter is still *sub iudice*. This Parthenius—generally identified as grandson of the Avitus

²⁰ For Deuterius, see Kennell, *passim*, and Riché (1978), 25. The source here is the ninth *dictio* of Ennodius, who was present in Milan.

²¹ For the date, see Anastasi (1947).

²² Ennodius, *Dictio* 10.

²³ ‘beautiful wounds’. See Kennell (2000), 116–17.

²⁴ Ennodius, *Ep.* 9. 1.

²⁵ Ennodius, *Dictio* 22 *de nostro hausit quicquid deo amplificante de scientia opum largus effuderit*.

²⁶ See pp. 259–65.

²⁷ See *PLRE*, Parthenius 3.

²⁸ Bureau (1998).

who had briefly been emperor in 455–6, and the son of Agricola from the circle of Sidonius Apollinaris²⁹—seems to have been an established member of the Gothic administration, commending himself according to Arator to the Ostrogothic king Theoderic in an embassy from his homeland, the Auvergne.³⁰ He will have been a powerful patron to Arator in Ravenna, and was certainly an effective teacher. Arator recalls how he read with him Caesar's 'histories';³¹ not one of the commoner texts in Late Antique curricula but hardly a surprising choice. They also read some unspecified secular poets ('poets with gentle and sweet charm but also deceitful artistry and proud display': lines 41–2),³² but also certain 'truthful poets', 'whose metres the faith drew into its own jurisdiction'.³³ These included the 'Hyblaeen' hymns of Ambrose,³⁴ the works of a certain Decentius (some have preferred to read the name of Dracontius here),³⁵ and the poems of Sidonius.³⁶ From his boyhood Arator was a keen writer of verse,³⁷ albeit vain and frivolous (line 52), as he says in retrospect; it was Parthenius who urged him to turn to the praises of the Lord and live up to his name ('ploughman': this is the first of many plays on the name)³⁸ by producing a real harvest. Hence this interesting poem, dedicating

²⁹ Harries (1994), 31–2.

³⁰ Arator, *Ep. Parth.* 19–30.

³¹ Arator's comment, 'which he composed as notebooks for himself' (*quas ut ephemeridas condidit ipse sibi*), identifies them as *Commentarii*. Several manuscripts of Caesar's *Gallic Wars* bear the *subscriptio* of one Flavius Licerius Firminus Lupicinus (Reynolds 1983, 35), nephew of Ennodius and perhaps cousin of Parthenius himself (see Bureau 1998, 394).

³² *cantabas placido dulcique lepore poetas | in quibus ars fallax pompa superba fuit.*

³³ *quorum metra fides ad sua iura trahit* (44).

³⁴ The adjective derives from Vergil, *E.* 7. 37, and alludes to the story that bees descended onto the lips of the infant Ambrose (Paulinus, *Vita Ambrosii* 3. 3; see McLynn 1994, 33).

³⁵ This emendation, first made by Ebert (1889), 517, was tentatively revived by Fontaine (1981), 261, and accepted without reserve by Deproost (1990*b*), 28. There is little sign of Dracontius in the *HA*, but that is also true of Sidonius. Arator certainly read Sedulius, whose name was suggested by Manitius (1911), 164, but this is less close to the *cursus litterarum*.

³⁶ The restoration of the line *Arvernisque canis, Sidoniana chelys* (the mss have for the fourth word only *niana*) is not in doubt; '(... and [as] you, Sidonian lyre, sing to the Arverni').

³⁷ From the words *assiduum... melos* in 49 one need not infer a mythological epic with Roberts (1985), 88.

³⁸ Lines 57–8. See pp. 351 and 360.

the *Historia Apostolica* to him, which will be considered in more detail below.³⁹ Parthenius had relatively little time to enjoy Arator's epic, for in 548, as a servant of the discredited Theodebert, he was lynched inside a church in Trier.⁴⁰

With such a good education and background Arator flourished, no doubt with some more helpful ploughing from Parthenius and Ennodius. The letter of Cassiodorus makes it clear that his performance on an embassy from Dalmatia to the Ostrogothic king Theoderic had made a good impression. This may have happened early in his career, though not quite so early as Hillier's words might suggest.⁴¹ Cassiodorus, who himself became quaestor (an office for which eloquence was essential) in his early twenties,⁴² notes that Arator was young when he became an advocate. Arator remained a trusty member of the court under Theoderic's successor, his grandson Athalaric, as may be inferred from Cassiodorus' letter, usually dated to 526.⁴³ The exact function of this letter is not entirely clear, but must refer to one of the two high administrative positions mentioned in another source, namely the *subscriptio* in a Reims manuscript, now lost.⁴⁴ This states that the codex of the *Historia Apostolica* was offered⁴⁵ by Arator *inlustri ex comite domesticorum, ex comite privatarum, viro religioso, subdiacono sanctae Romanae ecclesiae*.⁴⁶ The uncertainty about the exact purpose of the letter is aggravated by some corruption of the text at a crucial point. In the latest edition this reads: *hinc est quod te comitiis domesticorum illustratum isto honore decoramus*.⁴⁷ The manuscript denoted B in the CCSL edition points to *comitiis*, the others to *comitiva*, but the sense is not affected; a more serious problem is that only B has the word

³⁹ See pp. 259–65.

⁴⁰ Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*, 3. 36.

⁴¹ Hillier (1993), 7: 'the years subsequent to Theoderic's annexation of the province in 504.'

⁴² O'Donnell (1979), 22–3.

⁴³ Thraede (1961), 187, following Leimbach (1873), 227, considers the later date. Deproost (1990b), 23 has no doubt about 526.

⁴⁴ This was known to Sirmond; see Schwind (1990), 11 and n. 10.

⁴⁵ *oblatus*, not *ablatus* as in *PLRE*, which also fails to note the source.

⁴⁶ 'the illustrious former *comes domesticorum*, former *comes privatarum*, sub-deacon of the holy Roman church'.

⁴⁷ 'We decorate you, adorned with the office of *comes domesticorum*, with this honour.'

isto. What is not clear is whether the position mentioned in the letter, that of *comes domesticorum*, is the position that is being bestowed upon Arator. Mommsen believed that it was, and that the letter is an affirmation of a title given by Athalaric's predecessor;⁴⁸ while *PLRE*, noting from *Variae* 6. 11 that the rank was honorary and assuming that this still obtained after Theoderic's death, argues that the honour was the rank of *comes privatarum*, which is nowhere specified in the letter but presumably, if this interpretation is correct, would be made known by other means to the recipient. This procedure seems rather oblique, if not, as Hillier has it, obtuse.⁴⁹ It is also not impossible, but harder to derive from the Latin, that the title of *comes domesticorum* is being awarded for the first time. Whatever the exact purport of the letter, Arator was an official of great distinction; tenure of the office mentioned marked its holder as one of the *illustres*, whom Jones describes as a kind of inner aristocracy.⁵⁰ The fact that such nobly born men as Arator should be active in the Ostrogothic court should occasion no surprise; there were many like him. The most famous of them was Boethius, but the well-known problems of Boethius in the last years of Theoderic were perhaps not typical.⁵¹ Arator, at least, must have flourished.

His political career cannot be followed further, and may have ended with Athalaric's death in 534, if not sooner. Probably within ten years of receiving the letter Arator was evidently in Rome, and under siege from the Gothic king Vitigis in 537/8. This seems to be the context invoked by the first couplet of his dedicatory letter to Pope Vigilius:⁵² *moenibus undosis*⁵³ *bellorum incendia*⁵⁴ *cernens | pars ego tunc populi tela paventis eram*. Having left the Gothic court, he entered the Church, transferring to the untroubled snow-white

⁴⁸ Mommsen (1910), 403–5.

⁴⁹ Hillier (1993), 8.

⁵⁰ Jones (1973) 528.

⁵¹ See also Moorhead (1987).

⁵² This will be described below (p. 264).

⁵³ 'From the stricken walls seeing the fires of war, I was part of the people in terror of missiles.' The word *undosis* is difficult; there is no suggestion that the city is in any sense seen as a ship, which could explain it. Hillier (1993), 10 offers 'storm-tossed'. Châtillon's *undisonis* (1963a), 30 n. 47 would suggest a maritime city, and so is not appropriate.

⁵⁴ A clear recollection of Juvenecus 4. 99 *bellorum incendia*.

sheepfolds of Peter.⁵⁵ The circumstances of this move to Rome cannot be determined. Hillier suggests two possible contexts in which Arator might have visited Rome,⁵⁶ and for such an accomplished ambassador there may have been others. He may be assumed to have known the city and its important people well, and not only the roué Parthenius.⁵⁷ But whenever it happened, and whatever the precise circumstances, the decision may not have been as easy as his letter retrospectively implies. It was not obvious that Ravenna would be taken by Belisarius for Justinian in 540, or what the victorious emperor's treatment of the loyal servants of his Gothic opponents would be. The 'shipwreck' that Arator mentions in the letter to Vigilius (line 9) may well be more than an expression of mere worldly tact or a spiritual commonplace, but of particular causes of friction or personal difficulty we know nothing. Faced with the same decision as Arator, but with many more years of service behind him, Cassiodorus retired from public life, perhaps in 537,⁵⁸ and again there is only a retrospective expression of relief to go on.⁵⁹

As Hillier says, 'the sacred and secular Arator might just as well be two separate people, so little do we know of the path that led the poet to Rome'.⁶⁰ One appreciates the point (though he is likely to have been a Christian already in Ravenna), but it is worth noting that this might have been found to apply to many eminent Christians had fortune given us different and somewhat fuller evidence. It might be a good description of the lives of Juvencus and Sedulius: in the case of Sedulius we can point to a decisive break with his earlier studies, while Juvencus could well have started out not only with a good education but also perhaps in the service of the state.⁶¹ Prudentius in his Preface presents a life dedicated first to imperial service and then to writing devout Christian poetry, and Paulinus, for whom we happen to be fairly well informed about the crucial years around

⁵⁵ *transferor ad niveas Petri sine turbine caulas* (line 11). For *caulae* and *niveae* cf. Sedulius, *CP* 1. 82–4. The words *sine turbine* are to be taken adjectivally, and do not describe the change itself.

⁵⁶ Hillier (1993), 11 n. 19.

⁵⁷ Kennell (2000), 61.

⁵⁸ See O'Donnell (1979), 103–5.

⁵⁹ See the preface to Cassiodorus' *Exposition of the Psalms*.

⁶⁰ Hillier (1993), 6.

⁶¹ See pp. 9–13.

such a turning-point, presents his life of two halves.⁶² The careers of Ambrose and Augustine show a similar sharp dichotomy. The pattern need not be attributed to the effects of literary convention; when due allowance is made for individual circumstances and the various ways in which authors present them, the underlying situation is common enough.

APPROACHING THE *HISTORIA APOSTOLICA*

Why did Arator choose the Acts of the Apostles? A manuscript of the tenth century, cited by McKinlay,⁶³ states that he did so because he reflected that Juvencus and Sedulius had 'written the evangelical Acts' and he did not wish to do so again. This is an eminently reasonable conjecture as far as it goes. Arator himself makes no comment on this point, but he knew his predecessors' work well, especially that of Sedulius, and may well have wished to tread new ground. There is some indication in his letter to Parthenius of how he came to his decision, and it will assist discussion if a relevant passage, lines 69–78, is quoted. The reasons for changes to the punctuation of McKinlay will emerge from the discussion below.

Namque ego, Romanae caulis permixtus amoenis ecclesiae, tonso vertice factus ovis,	70
pascua laeta videns et aprica volumina Christi quaerebam gustu tangere cuncta meo.	
et nunc Davidicis assuetus floribus odas mandere, nunc Genesim mens cupiebat edax.	
cumque simul violas et lilia carpere mallet,	75
quae vetus atque novus congeminavit odor, incidit ille mihi, quem regula nominat Actus, messis apostolicae plenus in orbe liber . . .	

For once joined to the pleasant sheepfolds of the Roman Church, and made one of the flock by taking the tonsure, seeing fertile pastures and the warm volumes of Christ, I sought to taste everything with my lips. And now,

⁶² Prudentius, *Praefatio*; Paulinus c. 10 and 11, and 21. 416–59.

⁶³ McKinlay's edn., p. xxx. The ms. is Orléans 295.

accustomed to David's flowers I wished to feed on his odes, and now my mind desired Genesis. And as I preferred to crop violets and lilies together, which an old and a new perfume united, there came to me the book that is called Acts by our canon, full of the apostolic harvest in the world.

Arator explains here how on coming to Rome he had followed Parthenius' exhortation and undertaken writing on Christian themes. Now a sheep in the sunlit uplands, he wished to take advantage of his new situation. By this he probably means not simply reading the Bible, but writing, and the spiritual meditation associated with it, for poetic composition is the focus of the letter. He sought sustenance in the *volumina Christi* (71), which Roberts is probably right to take as referring to the whole Bible;⁶⁴ Genesis and Psalms are 'volumes' or 'books of Christ' in that they are essential for the full understanding of the work and status of Christ, as is clear from quotations and references in Sedulius, and Arator's own usage.⁶⁵ The general context of the letter, and a reference in the letter to Vigilius (line 24), where he mentions the 'lyrical metres' of the Psalms, point again to composition, notwithstanding the echo of Sedulius in line 73.⁶⁶ It is not impossible that he contemplated verse paraphrases of the Psalms, as Paulinus briefly did.⁶⁷ As for Genesis, he may, as suggested by Thraede, have sought to create a *Hexaemeron*,⁶⁸ but there were many other possibilities. He will probably have been aware of the recent work of Avitus, four of whose books are inspired by themes from Genesis,⁶⁹ and Dracontius, who draws heavily on Genesis for the three volumes of his *De Laudibus Dei*, a poem on the mercy of God.⁷⁰ But no sign of any poetry on the Old Testament from Arator remains.

The couplet that includes the metaphor of feeding on both violets and lilies, with their mixture of old and new scents, requires careful interpretation. Roberts is surely right to contest Thraede's

⁶⁴ Roberts (1985), 89 n. 109.

⁶⁵ For Sedulius, see pp. 229–32, for Arator, pp. 304–5.

⁶⁶ Cf. Sedulius, CP 1. 23 *Daviticis adsuetus cantibus odas | cordarum resonare decem*.

⁶⁷ See pp. 147–7.

⁶⁸ Thraede (1961), 188.

⁶⁹ They are entitled *De Mundi Initio*, *De Originali Peccato*, *De Sententia Dei*, *De Diluvio Mundi*.

⁷⁰ Vollmer's neat list of *loci similes* (p. ix) is more convincing than that in McKinlay's edn. (p. 236) (MGH AA 14, Berlin, 1905; repr. Munich, 1984). For an overview of Avitus and Dracontius, see Roberts (1985), 99–106.

interpretation of this image⁷¹ as referring to a theme that is both contemporary (*novus*) and historical (*vetus*).⁷² As a description of Acts, this is not impossible, though it greatly exaggerates the contemporary aspect of the work; but it is much more likely, especially in this context, that the *novus odor* is that of the New Testament, since it would be paradoxical to refer to the New Testament as ‘old’. But it would also be strange if by these words Arator meant that Acts, the New Testament work that he chose, combined the scents of both Testaments, as Roberts claims.⁷³ The *Historia Apostolica* does indeed treat the Old Testament, but this is not a major feature: to go no further, three quotations of Old Testament passages from the second chapter of Acts are omitted. And stressing the Old Testament side of the poem would be a poor way to refer to the poem’s strongly allegorical bent, for there are other sources of allegory in Arator’s poem.⁷⁴ It is, moreover, difficult to relate the ‘old law’ which, as Roberts says, Arator often disparages, to a sweet-smelling flower. Rather than making lines 75–6 refer to Acts, then, they should be taken as a restatement of his desire to assimilate the attractions of both Testaments (and not only the Old). The word *incidit* in the next line gives the unlikely impression that he stumbled upon Acts in the course of his wide reading; perhaps his attention was in fact drawn to its potential. He had surely known it for some time. No unfamiliarity should be inferred from the phrase *quem regula nominat Actus*, which is simply a metrical periphrasis.

The importance of Acts, as he goes on to say, is that it celebrates Peter the fisherman through whom ‘God raised us from the sea and allowed the Gentiles to assuage their hunger’, and these are indeed important themes in the poem.⁷⁵ The role of Peter in Acts—it is his narrative (*huius ab historia*) from which Arator has produced his poem, and he is Arator’s shepherd⁷⁶—is emphasized here (83–4) as it will be in the poem itself.⁷⁷ It is clear from the letter to Vigilius too

⁷¹ Thraede (1961), 189.

⁷² Roberts (1985), 89.

⁷³ *Ibid.* 89–90.

⁷⁴ See pp. 304–8.

⁷⁵ Line 82 (*Dominus . . . dedit . . .*) *gentibus assumptis exsaturare famem*.

⁷⁶ Lines 83–4.

⁷⁷ See pp. 317–21.

that Arator's gratitude to the successor of Peter played an important role. 'I could be guilty, if I cease to give thanks',⁷⁸ as he says, immediately after the dramatized account of his escape from Ravenna in lines 3–14. He then declares emphatically that he has a burning desire—the word *ardor* used here is exceptional in the context of poetic inspiration—to celebrate the work of those by whose voice the faith made its worldwide journey⁷⁹ (this includes Paul, as the great traveller). There follows a simple statement of his purpose in the poem, one that has caused unnecessary difficulty (lines 19–22):

versibus ergo canam quos Lucas rettulit Actus,
 historiamque sequens carmina vera loquar.
 Alternis reserabo modis quod littera pandit
 et res si qua mihi mystica corde datur.

In my verses I will sing of the Acts that Luke related, and following his narrative I will compose true poems.⁸⁰ I will reveal in alternate passages⁸¹ what the letter reveals and any mystical sense that is vouchsafed to me in my heart.

It is very doubtful, as Roberts makes clear in opposition to Herzog,⁸² that this refers to a mixture of prose and verse; the prose summaries that we find in McKinlay's edition are unlikely to be the work of Arator.⁸³ In these lines he is doing no more than to allude, with elegant chiasmus, to the literal truth, the historical sense; though poetry, it is also *historia*. Paulinus of Nola made a similar claim about his narratives of St Felix: *historica narrabo fide*.⁸⁴ There is perhaps a hint of the point made vigorously by Juvencus and Sedulius that what

⁷⁸ Line 15 *esse reus potero, grates si reddere cessem*.

⁷⁹ Lines 17–18 *sensibus ardor inest horum celebrare labores | quorum voce fides obtinet orbis iter*.

⁸⁰ The word *canam* is arguably overstressed by Hillier (1993), 16. Since it is a standard word for poetic narration in Arator and epic in general, the full sense of 'highlighted and celebrated' cannot be plausibly claimed for a particular passage, as Hillier does here. In the next line, if Roberts misses the point of *vera*, as Hillier says (1993), 16 and n. 37, I am happy to join him, for reasons that will emerge.

⁸¹ In line 21 the word *modis* cannot have its normal reference to poetry or poetic rhythms; since Arator uses the hexameter throughout, the word here can only denote passages.

⁸² Roberts (1985), 90–1; Herzog (1975), p. liv and n. 174.

⁸³ See pp. 270–3. Roberts (1985), 90, and Hillier (1993), 16 n. 7.

⁸⁴ Poem 20. 28–30: 'I will narrate this with a historian's reliability.'

they write is the truth, but for them the comparison is not with poetry in general but with the *figmenta* or *mendacia* of the pagans. He then goes on to a new point: to *historia* he will add allegorical interpretation, and this will alternate with narrative. What we have in these lines, then, is a simple summary of how Arator will operate in the poem, somewhat grandly described by Roberts as a ‘systematization of paraphrastic procedure’.⁸⁵ A similar point may be seen in a couplet of his letter to Florianus, where he speaks of his theme as *pinguia gesta* (‘rich exploits’): his subject-matter at least is full of meaning, but he is interested also in *gesta*.⁸⁶

The three letters that accompany the *Historia Apostolica*, to Florianus, Vigilius, and Parthenius, have so far been used to illustrate various issues in Arator’s life and writing, but it is now time to present them rather more systematically. In McKinlay’s edition, and in all the manuscripts described by him in its introduction, the letter to Florianus precedes that to Vigilius. Presumably this reflects the fact that the poem was presented to different people at different times.⁸⁷ Of course Vigilius was the more important dedicatee, and it is unlikely that the de luxe version for the papal archives did not begin with that letter. At some stage in the early transmission of Arator the letter presenting the poem to Florianus will have been tacked on at the front. The salutation refers to Florianus as an abbot, and as ‘spiritually erudite in the grace of Christ’;⁸⁸ the poem’s elegiac couplets present him as a man of great learning, surrounded by many large books.⁸⁹ Indeed, this short poetic letter, which in its humble tone and general manner is not unlike Sedulius’ short *praefatio*,⁹⁰ is cast as a plea to allow a little time for Arator’s shorter book, making its case with a series of graceful but conventional two-liners in the manner of the elegiac Ovid (11–22). The name Florianus is a common one, and two identifications have been made (and occasionally

⁸⁵ Roberts (1993), 91.

⁸⁶ Lines 7–8 *ieiuno sermone quidem, sed pinguia gesta | scripsimus, ac pelagi pondere gutta fluit*. They are a drop in the ocean.

⁸⁷ As happens in the case of Ausonius; but it has never—one notes with relief—been suggested in Arator’s case that they also reflect different states of the text; his manuscripts are far too homogeneous for that.

⁸⁸ *in Christi gratia spiritaliter erudito*.

⁸⁹ Arator seems to have been impressed by large numbers of books; cf. 1. 438.

⁹⁰ See pp. 160–1.

combined): the Florianus who received *Epp.* 1. 15 and 1. 16 from Ennodius, and the Florianus who wrote two letters to Bishop Nicetas of Trier. Kennell favours the first, and Sotinel the second.⁹¹ Our abbot could be a younger relative of the Floriani (or Florianus, if they are in fact a single person) of *PLRE* 2 and 4. Arator's rather strained attempts to play on his name using the commonplace conceit of flower and fruit in fact suggest that he is not young,⁹² and he is likely to be a contemporary of Arator. The letter to Vigilius, which is slightly longer (thirty lines to twenty-four), is formally speaking a dedication of the common kind, and functions rather like Sedulius' first letter to Macedonius.⁹³ It pays grateful tribute to Vigilius' protection of Arator in particular, as we have seen, but also refers to him in line 3 as *publica libertas* ('a general source of freedom') in time of war.⁹⁴ A notable feature of the letter, immediately following the outline of his topic and method analysed above, is his claim that the Psalter was written in lyric metre and the Song of Songs, Job, and Jeremiah in the hexameter metre. This is derived directly or indirectly from Jerome, who in *Ep.* 30. 3 analysed the Lamentations of Jeremiah and the *canticum* in Deuteronomy, and certain other works, in terms of classical metres, and who made similar comments in the prefaces to his translation of Eusebius' *Chronicle* and to his commentary on Job.⁹⁵ The fact that Arator wrote the letter in metre suggests that he was more confident of his addressee's approval than Sedulius was, and rightly so, as it proved.

The letter to Parthenius, 'the most magnificent and exalted Parthenius, master of the offices and *patricius*',⁹⁶ is also a dedication. The first part is enthusiastically panegyric in tone, lauding his ancestry (but, as always, this is outshone by character), and his expertise in teaching and public speaking, known in the valleys of

⁹¹ Kennell (2000), 63; Sotinel (1989), 807.

⁹² The first line exploits the 'young in years, old in wisdom' motif (Curtius 1953, 98–101), but in the third line the past tense *dedisti* ('you gave') and the phrase *primaevus adhuc* ('while still young') point in the other direction.

⁹³ See pp. 154–7.

⁹⁴ Literally, 'public freedom', perhaps meaning a public source of freedom. The following line, with its allusion to the power of loosing and binding of Matt. 16: 19, suggests that freedom from sin is meant.

⁹⁵ Jerome, *Ep.* 30. 3 (CSEL 54. 244–5), *PL* 27. 223–4, and *PL* 28. 1140 A/B.

⁹⁶ See *PLRE*, Parthenius 3.

Rhone and Rhine and in Germany. In Ravenna he influenced king and people alike. Arator's poem, a small pool taken from the glistening sea, is formally offered to his former teacher in lines 65–8, and then, in a less self-deprecating way, in line 89. His aim is clearly one of self-promotion. Arator imagines the work as having particular acclaim in 'studious Gaul' (*Gallia studiosa*), with its many good bishops. He singles out Firminus, whose praises have reached Italy.⁹⁷ Since the poem has proved acceptable to the pope—Arator proudly mentions that it is now in the papal archives—(87–8) Parthenius need not worry that it will disappoint such experts; it will also bring him fame, if this dedication is publicized along with it. He and Arator will go together wherever the book goes, and the glory of Parthenius will always be in people's mouths.⁹⁸ It is not surprising that this letter had a different kind of transmission from the others. In fact it occurs in only two of McKinlay's manuscripts—one of these places it before the other two verse letters, the other at the end of the *Historia Apostolica*⁹⁹—but there is no good reason to doubt its authenticity.¹⁰⁰ Châtillon gave no reason why the facts he presented about the poem—that there are verbal resemblances with the other letters, and that some seventy words occur in it which are not used in the poem—should be regarded as significant, or why his observation that the letter read like an exercise should, in the context of the sixth century, be considered a good argument against authenticity rather than for it.

These dedicatory letters, addressed to pope, abbot, and official,¹⁰¹ are informative and interesting in various important ways, but, it will be clear, do not yield much in the way of poetological reflection. Even the statement of his theme is very brief. It is noteworthy that there is

⁹⁷ Line 93. Firminus was perhaps related to Ennodius, for the name is common in Ennodius' family. There seems to be a touch of the patronizing in this letter; cf. 17–18, where Parthenius' own fame as a rhetor is deemed comparable to the fame of some who teach in Rome.

⁹⁸ Line 102 *Partheniumque decus semper in ore foret*. For *foret* as a future tense see Schwind (1995a), 75 and HA 2. 1119.

⁹⁹ BN Par. Lat. 9347 and Par. Lat. 2773, on pp. x and xii of McKinlay.

¹⁰⁰ Châtillon (1963a), 51–68. Bureau (1991, 140) considers the question unresolved.

¹⁰¹ The point is made by Fontaine (1982), 260 and n. 550, who wonders if the aim was thus to reach a large public.

no preface or proem. So instead of what might be called the 'view from the beginning', the standpoint of the writer setting out on the poem, which is most obvious in Juvencus' Preface but also clear in the first part of Sedulius' opening book as he sets out on his path, we find liminary material that shows Arator more concerned with presenting the finished product. He adopts the form of dedicatory verses which, in classical poetry, is actually more typical of light poetry (Catullus, Ausonius), and eschews the kind of approach which stresses the rigours of the poetic task and seeks encouragement in various ways, whether from a prayer for divine help, an appeal to precedents in the literary tradition, or an accumulation of reasons or justifications for writing. In the liminary material that we have surveyed there is almost nothing about inspiration except the confident statement in line 85 of the letter to Parthenius that 'his shepherd' (Peter)¹⁰² gives new words to him as he writes (*canenti*).¹⁰³ Broadly speaking, among the great variety of approaches among Christian writers to the articulation of prefatory material, it is Prudentius who is most similar to Arator, in that he begins, albeit in a *praefatio*, not a letter, by looking back over his life and his completed poetry. In complete contrast, Paulinus of Nola has no single preface but blends statements about his inspiration into his various works, written at different times. Victorius and Dracontius offer lengthy passages of theological reflection; Avitus makes a prose dedication (this procedure recalls Sedulius), with serious discussion of poetics. Arator's own choice reflects his own particular circumstances, which at the time of the poem's first delivery were uniquely favourable. Notwithstanding concessions to traditional expressions of incompetence,¹⁰⁴ his letters show considerable confidence, and he is proud of his poem, which, after papal approval, he is eager to spread into Gaul. He is not launching it onto an unsuspecting public, but has written it, no doubt, with direct or indirect encouragement from the pope himself. The work which he sends out has already passed the test of recitation with flying colours.

¹⁰² Cf. *HA* 1. 771–2, 896–8.

¹⁰³ *largius auxilio qui fert nova verba canenti*.

¹⁰⁴ Such as the self-description as *tiro* in *Ep. Vig.* 29 and *Ep. Parth.* 83.

It is noteworthy that Arator makes barely a mention of pagan literature, which was so prominent in the prefaces of Juvencus and Sedulius. There is a passing condemnation of *ars fallax* and *pompa superba*,¹⁰⁵ but in the context of his long-gone education, not the present poem. It is unlikely that old suspicions of the pagan literary tradition had entirely evaporated, as Roberts held;¹⁰⁶ even such expressions as ‘truthful poems’ and ‘truthful poets’¹⁰⁷ still have meaning, even if their polemical intent is blunted. When Arator comes to Troas in the course of Paul’s missionary journeys (2. 754), he declares that its new triumphs through Paul’s ministry shine greater in this *verus actus* (‘true achievement’) than the wars ‘which resound from the pompous buskin’.¹⁰⁸ The Trojan war and its aftermaths are, it seems, less important to him, because less edifying, than the revival of a sleepy lad who falls out of a third-storey window. A tension remains, and it may be premature for Roberts to declare ‘the gap between the two cultures . . . closed’.¹⁰⁹ More study of literary culture in the sixth century is required, so that a fuller picture or set of pictures may be constructed of this crucial period, in all its regional and social diversity, from Ennodius’ triflings with the Muses (but how significant is the symbolism of the Muses?),¹¹⁰ via Boethius’ banishment of them as ‘theatrical tarts’¹¹¹ and Venantius’ talk of a ‘second Orpheus’,¹¹² to Pope Gregory’s famous and much-discussed reprimand of the bishop Desiderius for teaching secular subjects.¹¹³

There is, then, no preface or prologue or proem in Arator, and no reason to suspect that anything has been lost. To describe any part of the *Historia Apostolica* as a preface (with or without the word

¹⁰⁵ ‘deceitful art’ and ‘proud pomp’; *Ep. Parth.* 42.

¹⁰⁶ Roberts (1985), 224.

¹⁰⁷ *Ep. Vig.* 20, *Ep. Parth.* 43.

¹⁰⁸ (*triumphos*) | *qui magis ex vero fulgent tibi clarius actu | quam quae pomposo reboant tua bella cothurno*. The language and tone recall the opening lines of Sedulius, and Arator’s reference to the buskin of tragedy may show the same desire to exculpate epic.

¹⁰⁹ Roberts (1985), 224.

¹¹⁰ See Deproost (1998).

¹¹¹ On the Muses in the *Consolatio*, see O’Daly (1991), 21, 39, 59–60.

¹¹² George (1992), *passim*.

¹¹³ See Riché (1978), 154–5, and Herrin (1989), 181–2, and Markus (1997), 188–202.

‘véritable’) is little more than a rhetorical flourish. Arator actually begins the poem with a short paragraph of recapitulation, linking his narrative quickly with what has gone before.¹¹⁴ Luke began by recalling Christ’s appearances to the disciples after his resurrection, and his ascension; Arator concentrates in these twenty lines on the significance of Christ’s death, and in particular how he descended to hell and opened the way to heaven for the dead. But this passage is more than ‘the story so far’. In a sense he plunges *in medias res*. These twenty vigorously triumphalist lines create the essential background to the confident preaching of the apostles, and indeed in their general thrust are not very different from two verses in Peter’s speech at Acts 2: 23–4, which Arator renders very vigorously in 1. 175–87, and verses elsewhere. They also point strongly to Sedulius in various ways; it is as if Arator, unable to point to an earlier work as Luke does in Acts (1: 1), refers his readers to Sedulius. Arator’s debt to Sedulius in the *Historia Apostolica* is nowhere more prominent than here.¹¹⁵ The first line announces a theme which is very conspicuous in the poem: the Jews (*Iudaea*, as often in Arator),¹¹⁶ who are here polluted ‘by the blood of their own crime’.¹¹⁷ In *CP* 5. 29 Judas was polluted, just like the ‘whitewashed sepulchres’ to which Matthew’s Christ had likened the Jews.¹¹⁸ Christ, in line 2, is *rerumque Creator* (‘creator of the world’), as he is in *CP* 2. 38, and the words immediately preceding those (*complevit opus*, ‘completed [their] work’), are to be found in the same passage (2. 43). With a grim irony, the phrase used to greet Christ’s birth and the fulfilment of prophecy by the Word made flesh is referred to the Jews’ execution of him. Their work was completed; but his work was not terminated by them, as he returned from death in majesty—literally he is referred to as ‘his majesty’, using the word by which Sedulius designated his divinity *tout court*—and ascended to heaven. In his death he deigned to

¹¹⁴ There is a heading *In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti beato domino Petro adiuvante* (the same formula as precedes the ‘minute’ of the public recitation (‘In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit with the assistance of the blessed Saint Peter’).

¹¹⁵ For Sedulius in Arator see Wright (1989) and Schwind (1990), 161–79.

¹¹⁶ See pp. 316–17, and Châtillon’s series of articles under the title ‘Arator, déclamateur antijuif’.

¹¹⁷ *sceleris Iudaea sui polluta cruore*.

¹¹⁸ See p. 203.

‘touch the depths of hell, while not leaving the heights of heaven’.¹¹⁹ The expression recalls such passages as *CP* 1. 354 *sic aliena gerens, ut nec tua linquere posses* and 5. 427 *qui cuncta tenens excelsa vel ima*;¹²⁰ but, unlike Sedulius (*CP* 5. 428), Arator seems to have Christ in heaven and hell at one and the same time, with a significant ‘correction’. Likewise, when he died, Nature, though terrified by Christ’s cross, did not fear total destruction as in Sedulius (*CP* 5. 247) but rather was eager to suffer with him (*vult pariter natura pati*, line 9). Death perished by its very victory and the weight of its triumph (9–10); the conceit is different from *CP* 5. 284 (‘Death perishes as mercy reigns’), but the language is similar, though not so closely imitated as a phrase of Lucan is.¹²¹ The last line of Arator’s passage (20) recalls the beginning of Sedulius’ narrative, where he quickly presents the loss of Eden, and marks this with Sedulius’ word *floriger* (*CP* 2. 2). With another typical variation, Paradise now receives back, not its old ‘gardeners’ (*CP* 5. 226) but its own and proper plants (*germina*).

Interleaved with this rich stratum of Sedulian allusion, there is a strong contribution from classical writing. Vergilian conceptions of the underworld underlie the *umbrae* (‘shadows’) of hell, and the mud, in the intriguing phrase *ab exsule limo*.¹²² The image of mud had, as it happens, been used by a literal exile, Ovid, in *ex Ponto* 4. 2. 17–19; if Arator had ever read this passage, which refers to the dulling of Ovid’s poetic inspiration, he might instinctively have spiritualized it. But it is a common Christian image.¹²³ When, in line 7, Arator speaks of Christ’s descent bringing daylight to the *Manes* or ‘dead souls’, he is using a specifically classical conception, rarely taken over by Christian poets.¹²⁴ The darkness of hell in the previous line recalls Statius’ evocation of Oedipus’ blindness and living death at the

¹¹⁹ Lines 4–5 *dignatus ut ima | tangeret inferni, non linquens ardua caeli*.

¹²⁰ Respectively ‘bearing what belonged to others without leaving your own’ and ‘holding all, the heights and the depths’.

¹²¹ Sedulius wrote *et venia regnante peris, Arator se vincente perit*, with an adaptation of Lucan 5. 267 *te vincente perit*.

¹²² ‘by the mud of exile’. For the mud of the underworld, cf. Vergil, *A.* 6. 416 (*limo*), and for Arator’s phrase *umbrarum de sede*, *A.* 6. 390 (*umbrarum hic locus est*). There is also a striking and exact imitation of Vergil’s words at *A.* 7. 371 (*repetatur origo*) in line 17.

¹²³ *TLL* VII. 2. 1430. 11–25.

¹²⁴ It is used, with ethical reference, by Ausonius II. 3. 57 (the *Oratio*).

beginning of his *Thebaid* (1. 47), reversing its thrust; his darkness was eternal.¹²⁵ An allusion to Lucan—one of many near the beginning of the *Historia Apostolica*—has already been noted.

After this introduction, so theologically and intertextually imposing, the poetic rendering of Acts itself begins. The reader of McKinlay's text (the few others are much less accessible) will find it divided into sections by short digests in prose, all beginning with the words *De eo ubi*, 'about the passage where...'. These give short summaries of the narrative ground covered in Arator's verse.¹²⁶ There has been much discussion of their authenticity, and this is an important matter, since their presence has generated particular interpretations of Arator's work as a whole. As we have seen, Herzog related them, most implausibly, to the *alterni... modi* mentioned in the letter to Vigilius.¹²⁷ Thraede stated that they presented excerpted and abbreviated texts from Acts (implicitly, from Arator's own hand),¹²⁸ and Fontaine that Arator excerpted pericopes from Acts and made a précis of them, reserving for himself the liberty of turning them into verse.¹²⁹ McKinlay himself believed that they were not Arator's work,¹³⁰ but printed them because of their potential utility to the reader. In so doing he may have given a very false impression of the poet's intentions and procedures. These *capitula*¹³¹ are certainly not summaries of Acts itself; their content is based on the material chosen for the verse passages. They are present in some, but by no means all, of the medieval manuscripts.¹³² Much weight has been put on the fact that they are not present in the oldest of our

¹²⁵ Statius: *merserat aeterna damnatum nocte pudorem*; Arator: *solvit ab aeterna damnatas nocte tenebras*. Vergil, *G. 1. 468* is recalled in *aeterna nocte*.

¹²⁶ And very occasionally also the exegetical element, as in what precedes 2. 913–91.

¹²⁷ See p. 262.

¹²⁸ Thraede (1961), 188.

¹²⁹ Fontaine (1981), 262.

¹³⁰ McKinlay (1932), 123 and his edition, pp. ix and 155.

¹³¹ This is the term used by most scholars, but in Deproost and Haelewyck (1993) the term *tituli* is preferred (p. 583 n. 2). No generic name for them can be derived from the manuscripts, and both terms are in fact used for something quite distinct, namely the tables of the contents of *HA* that precede the texts. McKinlay gave these on pp. 6 and 7 under the conspicuously printed title *tituli*; the continuing use of the term *capitula* in what follows ('digests' above was a temporary, neutral, term) will reduce the possibility of confusion. See also Schwind (1990), 32 n. 6.

¹³² Details in Schwind (1990), 34.

manuscripts, Bodl. E Mus. 66, which was written in the seventh century,¹³³ and so perhaps not more than a hundred years after Arator wrote. The four pages of this fragment, which has lines 32–63, 85–122, 647–81, and 684–724, all from Book 1, are enough to show that there are no *capitula* in three places where other manuscripts have them. Nor are there gaps in the text where they might have been meant to go. This is not in itself, however, conclusive evidence that the *capitula* were not in existence at the time; there could have been variation in seventh-century texts (no others are extant), just as there is in later ones. A notable contribution has been made by Deproost and Haelewyck, who show clearly in their article that the biblical source was not the Vulgate but an Old Latin text or texts. They judge that a sixth-century source is by no means impossible, though given the continued general use of Old Latin versions the date need not be early. At the other extreme, it is even possible that an Old Latin translation was available in the Carolingian period, although by then Vulgate versions were prevalent, and, as they say, a writer would not have gone searching for an older version.

As Schwind points out, the general style of these pieces is not what one would expect from such a well-trained writer as Arator.¹³⁴ There is certainly an element of grammatical difficulty in his verse,¹³⁵ but this results in the main from the problems of expressing complex ideas in hexameter verse. Presumably Arator's prose style (of which no examples exist) was normally as carefully constructed as that of contemporaries such as Avitus, Cassiodorus, and Ennodius. It is true that the stylistic ambitions of summaries of this kind—such as the *Periochae* of Homeric books attributed to Ausonius¹³⁶—are much lower, but the *capitula* also show a frequent clumsiness in grammatical structure. Although the writer aims to write in short periods in the manner of epitomators, he sometimes, for example, leaves phrases hanging as if uncertain what the grammatical subject should be; or he halts between two constructions, as in the *capitulum* before the section 2. 1156–205, which includes the sentence *De eo ubi*

¹³³ See Ker *et al.* (1944), 52.

¹³⁴ Schwind (1990), 34–6. He leaves aside lexical evidence, inevitably less cogent, except at 35 n. 20.

¹³⁵ Schwind (1995a), 45–76.

¹³⁶ Green (1991), 677–95.

sanctus Paulus in Melite insula, dum foco sarmenta congregaret, manum eius vipera tenuit ('About the passage where St Paul in the island of Malta, while he was collecting wood for the fire, a viper bit him').¹³⁷ A well-educated and rhetorically experienced person would never have written like this. It is conceivable that the *capitula* were created for Arator by a less expert contemporary, perhaps even for the ceremony of their first recitation, to give some help to the listeners, though we would have expected something more grand; but it is unlikely that Arator would have wanted work of such poor Latinity in his finished product, especially one presented to such an august patron.¹³⁸

There are also apparent contradictions in important detail between the *capitula* and the poem. In l. 931 a passage begins by stating clearly that Peter learnt what his vision was (i.e. 'signified');¹³⁹ the *capitulum* states that he was uncertain (*dubius*) about the vision (cf. Acts 10: 17). Sometimes a detail is given in the *capitulum* to which nothing corresponds in the poem: so the detail in the heading to section 1. 244–92 *apprehensa manu* ('taking his hand'; cf. Acts 3: 7) is at odds with Arator's main point, the power of Peter's voice (l. 255–6). It is less certain that the *capitulum* before l. 119–59, where we read *qui mox linguis variis sunt locuti magnalia dei*, betrays a misunderstanding of Arator;¹⁴⁰ Deproost and Haelewyck argue, against Schwind,¹⁴¹ that Arator refers to various languages in lines 123 *linguarum populosa seges* ('a varied crop of tongues') and 128 *numerosa* ('multiple'), which in the context is surely contrasted with *una* in the following line.¹⁴² Arator seems to refer to both one and many languages, in a paradox typical of him. They were many, but also variants of a new, spiritual type of language.

¹³⁷ An example of the first kind of problem is present in the *capitulum* before l. 455–514, where an English translation of the hanging participle would not be illuminating.

¹³⁸ Deproost and Haelewyck (1993), 601 argue that it would have been incongruous for the poetry readings and the applause to have been continually interrupted by these 'prosaic interludes', but they are brief, and perhaps the amount of applause was not foreseen.

¹³⁹ *comperit accitus quae sit sua visio Petrus*.

¹⁴⁰ 'who soon in various tongues spoke the praises of God'.

¹⁴¹ Schwind (1990), 35.

¹⁴² Deproost and Haelewyck (1993), 601 n. 27.

The upshot of this discussion is that Arator cannot have provided the *capitula* himself, and also that they are unlikely to have been designed for the recitation. They were added by a writer who had more thought for the convenience of readers than for the elegance of the finished product.¹⁴³ This person, working at the latest in the early ninth century, sometimes misread the text, or hastily added elements from his memory of Acts, or even elsewhere.¹⁴⁴ The *capitula*, therefore, should not be allowed to colour or inform readings of the *Historia Apostolica*, and readers and critics must shake off the influence that is indubitably exerted by the division of the text into separate sections, reasonable though the divisions themselves are. If McKinlay had had the courage of his convictions, or (to be kinder to a critic often faulted for the sheer bulk of the supportive material he provided) less desire to help the reader to penetrate the text with which he himself had wrestled over many years, perceptions of Arator's epic could have been significantly different.

RE-ENACTING ACTS

The *Historia Apostolica* is a long poem—600 lines longer than the *Carmen Paschale* and three-quarters of the length of the *Evangeliorum Libri*—but is divided into just two books, of 1,076 and 1,250 lines. This corresponds to a division, also somewhat unequal, in Acts,¹⁴⁵ where Peter is pre-eminent in chapters 1–12 and Paul in chapters 13–28. Paul is only occasionally present in the first half, as Saul, the persecutor and convert, but Peter is active in Book 2, and is indeed the only speaker in Arator's version of the crucial debate about the necessity of circumcision and other requirements of the

¹⁴³ No close parallel has come to light. The prose passages in Book 2 of Prudentius' *Contra Symmachum* or the biblical texts in Jerome's commentary on Isaiah or the *tituli* in Augustine's *City of God* are not closely comparable.

¹⁴⁴ The point that Cornelius was the first Gentile to be baptized (in the *capitulum* before l. 846–930) is not in *HA* or Acts. It would be more appropriate, if anywhere, before the next section, but it looks like a later gloss.

¹⁴⁵ It is not, of course, the only possible division: Alexander (2001) divides the works into four acts (in the dramaturgical sense of the word).

Jewish law (2. 259–80; cf. Acts 15). Earlier in the book (2. 4) Peter is given the role of sanctifying Paul for his mission (cf. Acts 13: 2–3), and at the end (2. 1119–250) he shares the glory of the poem's climax with Paul after Arator's narrative has brought him to Rome. These passages will be discussed further, as will two comparisons that are made between Peter and Paul in Book 2 (207–18 and 565–8).¹⁴⁶

The following synopsis will make use of the sections which are marked by the *capitula* and familiar from McKinlay, although as we have seen there is no absolute need to do so. Perhaps, for example, the story of Peter's dealings with Cornelius might be presented as a single item (in which case the editor's embargo on paragraphing would need revisiting even more urgently), but it seems likely that Arator had a fairly strict notion of how long a section should be. When he divides Paul's speech in Acts 13: 16–42 into two sections he carefully adds an incipit at 2. 96–7 so as to make the second half into a separate sermon.¹⁴⁷ In what follows only the base-text from Acts will be given; Arator often refers to other passages in his exegesis, but his breadth of allusion could not be represented in a summary.

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 1. 1–20 | Introduction |
| 1. 21–68 | Christ's ascension to Heaven (Acts 1: 1–14) |
| 1. 69–118 | Peter's speech after Judas' death, election of a successor (Acts 1: 15–26) |
| 1. 119–59 | Pentecost (Acts 2: 1–13) |
| 1. 160–210 | Peter's sermon and its outcome (Acts 2: 14–41) |
| 1. 211–43 | The believers' common life (Acts 2: 43–7) |
| 1. 244–92 | Peter's healing of a lame man (Acts 3: 1–11) |
| 1. 293–334 | Peter's protest against the ban of the authorities (Acts 4: 1–23) |
| 1. 335–82 | The believers' prayer and the earthquake (Acts 4: 24–31) |
| 1. 383–416 | The unanimity of the believers (Acts 4: 32–5) |
| 1. 417–54 | The conviction and deaths of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5: 1–11) |
| 1. 455–514 | The healing of the sick by Peter's shadow (Acts 5: 14–16) |

¹⁴⁶ See pp. 275–9 and 347–50.

¹⁴⁷ The *capitulum* follows suit, taking care to place it 'in the same synagogue'.

1. 515–51 The imprisonment and release of the Apostles (Acts 5: 17–23)
1. 552–85 The appointment of seven deacons (Acts 6: 1–7)
1. 586–623 The stoning of Stephen (Acts 7: 54–8.1)
1. 624–71 Peter's confrontation with Simon Magus (Acts 8: 14–23)
1. 672–707 Philip's ministration to the Ethiopian (Acts 8: 26–39)
1. 708–53 Saul in Damascus (Acts 9: 1–25)
1. 754–800 Peter's healing of a lame man in Lydda (Acts 9: 32–5)
1. 801–45 Peter's raising of Tabitha (Acts 9: 36–42)
1. 846–77 The angel's command to Cornelius (Acts 10: 1–8)
1. 878–930 Peter's vision (Acts 10: 9–16)
1. 931–65 Peter's baptizing of Cornelius (Acts 10: 17–48)
1. 966–1006 Peter's justification for baptizing Gentiles (Acts 11: 1–18)
1. 1007–76 Peter's release from prison by the angel (Acts 12: 4–15)

2. 1–39 Paul and the magician in Paphos (Acts 13: 2–12)
2. 40–95 Paul's preaching at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13: 14–25)
2. 96–155 Paul's second sermon and its result (Acts 13: 26–49)
2. 156–241 Paul's healing of lame man in Lystra (Acts 14: 6–18)
2. 242–306 The meeting of apostles in Jerusalem (Acts 15: 1–29)
2. 307–82 Paul's summons to Macedonia (Acts 16: 6–10)
2. 383–442 Paul, at Philippi, meets a soothsayer and is imprisoned (Acts 16: 12–34)
2. 443–505 Paul in Athens (Acts 17: 16–34)
2. 506–68 Paul in Corinth (Acts 18: 1–10)
2. 569–622 Paul's baptizing of disciples in Ephesus (Acts 19: 1–7)
2. 623–87 Paul's meeting with exorcist in Ephesus (Acts 19: 8–20)
2. 688–752 The uproar of silversmiths in Ephesus (Acts 19: 23–40)
2. 753–825 Paul's raising of Eutychus in Troas (Acts 20: 6/7–12)
2. 826–912 Paul's departing speech in Miletus (Acts 20: 17–38)
2. 913–91 Paul's experiences in Jerusalem (Acts 21: 27–22: 29)
2. 992–1066 The conspiracy of Jews against Paul (Acts 23: 12–25: 12)
2. 1067–155 The storm, shipwreck, and arrival in Malta (Acts 27: 13–28: 1)
2. 1156–205 Paul's encounter with a snake (Acts 28: 2–6)
2. 1206–50 Paul leaves Malta and reaches Rome (Acts 28: 7–16)

A notable similarity to the contents of Books 3 and 4 of Sedulius may be detected here. The number of episodes from Acts chosen by Arator is forty-three; and if one sets aside, on grounds of content, various passages in Sedulius that focus on the disciples,¹⁴⁸ and his accounts of Jesus' encounter with the woman of Samaria and of his entry into Jerusalem, and takes the treatment of the miracles in *CP* 3. 103–42 as a single episode (one being boxed inside the other, as in the gospel),¹⁴⁹ there are forty-three also in Sedulius. They are divided, moreover, between the two books in the same proportion; Sedulius has twenty-four in Book 3 and nineteen in Book 4. Given Arator's interest in numerology and his deep knowledge of Sedulius, this configuration is likely to be deliberate. But it is not an overriding consideration; there is no sign of contortion or distortion to produce the match. Broadly speaking, Arator chooses the major episodes from Acts, according to their narrative importance and the possibilities of presenting speeches from the main players; he also gives the more general summaries of the development of the Christian communities that we find in Acts 2: 43–7 (1. 211–43), on the common life, and in Acts 4: 32–5 (1. 383–416) on the unanimity of the believers. In the words of a modern commentator, we have 'passages which show a fast-forward blur' as well as 'slow paced dramatic episodes'.¹⁵⁰ As well as choosing passages which are interesting and important in their own right, and ones which often make their points vividly and clearly, he takes care to maintain the momentum of the whole story and its most important features as he sees them. It is not only the longer episodes of Acts that he favours; he is quite capable of making an episode out of a relatively undeveloped detail in his base-text. The section 1. 211–43 is virtually built on a single verse (Acts 2: 44), as is one of the longest sections of the whole poem, 2. 307–82 (Acts 16: 9). At 1. 455–514 a whole section, and a relatively long one, is devoted to extolling and explaining the healing effect of Peter's shadow, and corresponds to a single verse in Acts (5: 15). (Was this section perhaps intended to form the final passage in the first recitation?) The story within a passage need not be the main point; the narratives involving Aquila at Corinth (2. 506–68) are not in

¹⁴⁸ See pp. 177–9.

¹⁴⁹ See p. 181.

¹⁵⁰ Dunn (1996), 39.

themselves conspicuous, and Arator goes into edifying detail based on the man's name and his profession of tent-maker, which he shared with Paul. Arator can make much from a little, but does not always choose to do so; he omits, for example, the story that one Joseph of Cyprus sold a field and presented the apostles with the money (Acts 4: 36–7), and he ignores the story of the prophet Agabus who foretold a famine (Acts 11: 27–30), and so made possible the relief of Christians in Judaea, a theme which could easily have been developed.

Schwind has calculated that of slightly more than 1,000 verses in Acts Arator reproduces about 70 per cent,¹⁵¹ but he also remarks that this figure would be smaller if account were taken of Arator's omission of many individual verses within these passages. Compared with Juvenecus he would, as a pure paraphraser, come off poorly; but not so if he were compared with Sedulius. As in Sedulius, there is much highlighting of selected detail, a considerable degree of remoulding, and frequent omission of contextual detail considered unnecessary. Exegesis is important to both, though in Arator it is more copious and has greater depth and range. The episodes of Arator are for the most part much longer than those of Sedulius—the average length in Book 1 is forty-four lines,¹⁵² and in Book 2 half that again—and he allows himself plenty of room for speeches, virtually absent from the *Carmen Paschale*. Readers unfamiliar with the Book of Acts, while not being informed of every detail, would receive a good overview of this initial phase of the Christian Church, while Christians familiar with Acts—perhaps a minority, to judge from the lack of commentaries and the relative scarcity of quotation in Late Antiquity—would miss certain details but be able to enjoy and be edified by the re-enactment of the narratives, by the speeches, and by Arator's exegesis.

It is not always clear why Arator omits a particular passage. The obscurity of the characters involved and the brevity of the episode may sometimes contribute; but it is clear that he is not put off by detail per se. In theological matters he is ready to explain difficult questions, and seems to relish it;¹⁵³ while in matters of metre he is

¹⁵¹ Schwind (1990), 39.

¹⁵² Two episodes have more than 50 lines: 1. 455–514 (the healing of the sick by Peter's shadow) and 1. 1007–76 (Peter's release from prison).

¹⁵³ See p. 300.

quite inventive, so that he is, for example, happy to scan words in an unusual way.¹⁵⁴ The principle of economy is evident even in themes dear to him, such as the censure of the Jews or the admission of the Gentiles. More than one speech directed against the Jews is omitted, like Peter's speech in Acts 3: 13–26, and in Peter's dealings with Cornelius Arator omits both a sermon and report (Acts 10: 34–43, 11: 4–18). On a smaller scale, having mentioned Solomon's portico at 1.289 (cf. Acts 3: 11), he ignores the reference to it at 5: 12–13. And since Arator's account concentrates on particular episodes, it is not surprising that various individual verses, such as 8: 25, linking two episodes, and 9: 31, summarizing the growth of the Church, are omitted.

But not all omissions from the narrative of Acts are so easily explained. Arator makes no use of the passage 5: 24–42, which relates how the apostles are released from prison and hauled before the council, and which includes a short speech by Peter before the high priest and one by Gamaliel, a Pharisee, advising caution. Many details here might have been used, extending the section 1. 515–51 or if necessary adding a new one. Perhaps Arator judged the release from prison an effective place to end; it stands about halfway through the book and also foreshadows the book's climactic ending, Peter's own escape from the chains which gave their name to the church. (Perhaps the second recitation began here and ended with the end of Book 1.) Alternatively, Arator might have ignored this passage in order to avoid the depiction of a moderate Jew, just as he later ignores another counsel of moderation, or perhaps in this case indifference, that of the Roman Gallio (Acts 18: 12–17). His picture of the Jewish hostility to the growing Christian Church is from the beginning, as we have seen, a strongly coloured one, and in some ways more monolithic and less nuanced than Luke's.

The omission from Book 1 of some other passages of Acts, such as those that concern Stephen and Philip, members of the seven appointed in Acts 6: 1–7 (1. 552–85), is easier to understand. The death of Stephen, the first martyr (Acts 7: 54–60), makes a dramatic and edifying episode, and receives a full and vigorous treatment in

¹⁵⁴ Such as Samaria (1. 626) and Aquila (2. 511). See McKinlay's edn., 154 and 215 (*Index grammaticus*, s.v. *prosodiaca*).

1. 586–623;¹⁵⁵ but the great wonders and signs performed by him in Samaria, the issues that led to this confrontation, and other material from Acts 6 are not mentioned. Nor does Arator make any attempt to present the enormous speech that Luke put into the mouth of Stephen in Acts 7; he is prepared to recast or drastically reduce a speech, but perhaps this one was a bit too much. As for Philip, there is no mention of his movements before or after his encounter with the royal official who was travelling back to Ethiopia (Acts 8: 26–38: 1. 672–707). His earlier successes in Samaria in Acts 8: 4–8, and his subsequent preaching in various towns (Acts 8: 39 and 40), are ignored by Arator, who has chosen to concentrate on a single striking and emblematic episode. Similarly with Saul: his role in the death of Stephen (Acts 8: 1) is not concealed in 1. 617, but otherwise there is just the account of his conversion, at 1. 708–53 (Acts 9: 1–25). Later episodes from the first half of Acts involving him are ignored; there is nothing on his persecution of the Christians (8: 3), his arrival in Jerusalem after his conversion (9: 26–9), or his work with Barnabas in Antioch (11: 25–6).

An overriding consideration in Book 1, and an important one in Book 2, is the position of Peter, and the poet spares no effort to give great weight to his power and leadership and to his extension of the mission to the Gentiles. Apostles other than Peter hardly appear in the book. Arator explains the importance of the number twelve at 1. 110–18, but makes no attempt to reproduce the list of the whole eleven in Acts 1: 13. The election of Matthias to replace Judas is narrated in 1. 104–10 (the other candidate, Joseph the Just, is also named there), with typical explanation of his name; but there is no sign in Arator of either James the Elder, who was killed by Herod in Acts 12: 2, or James the Younger, named in Acts 12: 17 in the sequel to the release of Peter. He might have had a speaking part in the second book, following Acts 15: 13–21, but is absent, completely eliminated in favour of Peter, who is central in Arator's account of the debate on the admission of the Gentiles (2. 259–74). The apostle John is mentioned twice (1. 246 and 625), both times simply as Peter's companion, as he is on eight occasions in Acts; in neither Luke nor Arator does he have any independent function or activity.

¹⁵⁵ See pp. 290–1 for an analysis.

Schwind finds it surprising that Arator names John at all.¹⁵⁶ It seems unlikely that the name is included to fill out the verse, as he suggests in the first case, for whereas metrical difficulty might be used to explain an omission, metrical convenience can hardly explain why something is present. In the second case the allegorical explanation is certainly typical of Arator,¹⁵⁷ but its brevity is not; the appeal of allegory therefore seems an inadequate reason. The explanation might be that a constant companion adds to Peter's status, so that John matches Silas, who accompanies Paul (2. 405). Each has one companion; this symmetry might account for the omission of Barnabas in Book 2. Timothy and John Mark are dropped also, whether to maintain a balance between Peter and Paul or because the story of dissension in Acts 15: 30–16: 5, which involves them, struck Arator as unedifying and so inadmissible.

In general, a variety of considerations can be seen to operate: allegory helps in the case of Aquila (2. 506–68),¹⁵⁸ while in certain narratives the names of central characters, such as Ananias (1. 716) and Cornelius, could hardly be passed over. The episodes with Demetrius (2. 688–752) and Eutychus (2. 753–825) would be the poorer without their names. The name of the lame man in 1. 754–800, Aeneas, perhaps proved irresistible to the poet, though he refrains from comment: no *Kontrastimitation* is apparent or sensibly imaginable. Sapphira and Priscilla, wives of (the other) Ananias (1. 417) and Aquila respectively, are not named; nor, in Book 2, are Drusilla, the wife of Felix (Acts 24: 24) or Damaris, the woman identified along with Dionysius the Areopagite as a convert of Paul in Athens (Acts 17: 34; cf. 2. 482). The Roman officials who enter the story towards the end of Acts are named—Felix in 2. 1048, Festus in 2. 1050 and 1056, Lysias in 2. 1018, and Publius in 2. 1207—but not necessarily because of their office; Arator has no obvious partiality for Romans in government, over and above what is evident in Luke. A host of minor figures, such as Sceva the agitator (19: 14), Tertullus

¹⁵⁶ Schwind (1990), 43.

¹⁵⁷ *Ecclesiae quia virgo placet*, 'because a virgin pleases the church', or 'because the virgin of the church pleased him'. For Arator's use of names in this way, see p. 307 below.

¹⁵⁸ See p. 307.

the rhetor (24: 1 and 2), and various owners of safe houses such as Jason (17: 5) and Mnason (21: 16), fail to appear in Book 2.

A few place-names are left out in Book 1 (for example, Azotus and Caesarea in 8: 40, Joppa in 9: 43), but there is a striking number of omissions in Book 2, at least if one is looking for a full account of Luke's version of Christian expansion and the places that were visited. Paul's missionary journeys (modern scholars question that there were three, as every schoolboy and many of his reference books used to believe)¹⁵⁹ are, as it were, scaled down to three itineraries with three cities to each:¹⁶⁰ Paphos, Antioch, and Lystra; Philippi, Athens, and Corinth; Ephesus, Troas, and Miletus. (In fact this last place is not specified by Arator; Paul's valedictory speech takes place 'on a shore familiar to him',¹⁶¹ and the detail enhances the sadness of this scene rather than locating it.) More than three times that number of place-names are omitted; but, as Alexander says, it is a characteristic of Luke's style that 'the journeying process itself is foregrounded by the use of redundant placenames'.¹⁶² In some of these places, admittedly, there are serious happenings, as in Iconium (14: 1–5) and Thessalonica (17: 1–15), where Christians are attacked. Unless the names themselves are the problem here, Arator seems to assume that the hostility of the Jews to the Christians is a constant, and a familiar—indeed normal—occurrence, and that nothing is lost by the omissions. For the same reason there is no mention in Arator of the Jews' attempt to influence Gallio, the proconsul of Achaea (18: 12–17); no account of Paul before the high priest Ananias (Acts 23: 1–10), and a complete omission of Paul's long speech before Agrippa and Bernice (Acts 25: 13–26: 32). Arator makes a very eloquent *praeteritio* at 2. 1051–4: 'here I leave aside, lest they delay our joy too much—come to Latium, Paul, now!—the struggles repeatedly made in the forum and the many Jewish schemings which, we read, kept flowing.'¹⁶³ The poet wishes to avoid the detail of these constant

¹⁵⁹ Alexander (2001), 1048, Dunn (1996), 212.

¹⁶⁰ Schwind (1990), 40–1

¹⁶¹ *in litore noto*, 2. 828. Miletus is specified in Acts 20: 17.

¹⁶² Alexander (2001), 1052.

¹⁶³ *Linquimus hic, nimium ne gaudia nostra morentur |—ad Latium iam, Paule, veni!—certamina crebro | quae fuerint agitata foro quantique legantur | Iudaici fluxisse doli.*

harassments (he stops just short of calling them tedious), and speed his narrative. In any case they pale into insignificance in the light of Paul's coming to Rome, which he now achieves by appealing to Caesar (2. 1055–6). As Arator's narrative accelerates—in this part about a quarter of Luke's entire narrative is put into some 300 lines—it is not surprising to find more simplification or elision of important journeys: not only the journey from Troas to Miletus, which, as Alexander says, 'adds almost nothing to the plot and could have been summarized in a dozen words',¹⁶⁴ but also the journey from Miletus to Jerusalem (Acts 21: 1–14) and the first part of the fateful journey from Jerusalem to Rome.

NARRATIVE

Arator's narrative framework, then, keeps close to the outline and order of Acts, but shows considerable autonomy in the selection of episodes. Narrative is treated in various ways, though seldom if ever as closely as in Juvencus. Sedulius' modes of presentation are clearly an influence, whether those of the much shorter miracle episodes or those of larger passages of celebration or condemnation, such as the treatment of the nativity, in which details such as the story of the shepherds occupy a small place, or the betrayal by Judas.¹⁶⁵ Arator's selection of detail from an episode, and sometimes its deployment, may lead to a demand on the reader, but not one that is more severe than those posed by classical poets. Some narratives are not wholly clear, such as the story of the process of Saul's 'conversion' (1. 708–53), but his Christian readers would have known the details of this even if they were not well acquainted with the whole storyline of Acts. It might be difficult for a complete outsider to reconstruct, though the details of his collapse and blindness are there, and Ananias is mentioned as the one who 'cast out his fury'. Someone still puzzled would be enlightened by Paul's own account in 2. 924–53 in his speech to the Jews in the temple.¹⁶⁶ Elsewhere Arator is generally

¹⁶⁴ Alexander (2001), 1053.

¹⁶⁵ *CP* 2. 41–72 and 5. 38–68.

¹⁶⁶ See Schwind (1990), 52 n. 30.

clearer, combining a degree of faithfulness to scripture with purposeful elaboration. Sometimes this elaboration could be claimed as exegesis, but the term is best reserved for the distinct passages which, in the majority of cases, follow the narratives, and which will be studied separately below.¹⁶⁷

The following passage will illustrate the degree of his fidelity to scripture and some of his ways of embellishing a narrative. It is 1. 754–64, corresponding to Acts 9: 32–4, which is provided in the Vulgate translation:¹⁶⁸

Pervigil excubiis commissi Petrus ovilis	
postquam cuncta videns lustravit in ordine sanctos,	755
per Lyddae tulit arva gradus, ubi moenibus adstans	
respicit Aeneam defunctis vivere membris	
atque anima, nodis laxata mole solutis,	
non moriente mori, 'surgens, paralytice,' dixit	
'vectorem compone tuum nec reddere tardes	760
officium, portate diu.' quo munere vocis	
stringitur in solidum qui fluxerat antea nervis.	
tunc iterum formatus homo longique cadaver	
temporis extinctos ad vitam surrigit artus,	
seque levans vacui linquit monumenta cubilis.	765

Peter, very vigilant in guarding the fold entrusted to him, after he had duly visited the saints, seeing everything, made his way through the territory of Lydda. Here, standing by the walls, he saw Aeneas living with dead limbs and dying with his soul undying, because the joints in his limp body were slack, and said, 'Arise, paralytic, and put together your conveyance and do not delay in repaying your obligation to it; you have been carried for a long time.' Presented with these words, the man who had previously been powerless in his sinews was strengthened and made whole. Remade after being a corpse for so long, he raised his dead limbs to life and supporting himself left behind his bed, like a memorial, at last empty.

factum est autem Petrum dum pertransiret universos devenire et ad sanctos qui habitabant Lyddae. 33. invenit autem ibi hominem quandam nomine Aeneam,

¹⁶⁷ See pp. 299–303.

¹⁶⁸ Arator may well have used the OL, as certain details in Deproost and Haelewyck (1993), *passim*, and Schwind (1990), 27 and n. 74, suggest, but a thorough critical edition for Acts is not available.

ab annis octo iacentem et in grabatto qui erat paralyticus. 34. et ait illi Petrus, 'Aeneas, sanat te Iesus Christus; surge et sterne tibi'; et continuo surrexit.

And it happened that Peter, while he passed through them all, went down also to the saints who lived in Lydda. And he found there a man by the name of Aeneas who had been bed-ridden for eight years and who was a paralytic. And Peter said to him, 'Aeneas, Christ Jesus heals you; arise and make your bed'; and he immediately arose.

Arator keeps quite closely in sense to the first sentence of Luke's account, but weaves into his version praise for Peter's vigilance and a reference to his mandate to watch over Christ's sheep, a common theme in Arator;¹⁶⁹ the second line moves in the same direction with the phrase *cuncta videns*, implying rather more than *dum pertransiret universos* of his original. The word *lustravit* may mean little more than *pertransiret*; its common meaning, as in 2. 569 (*lustratis finibus*),¹⁷⁰ is 'traverse, review, visit'. Hillier rightly rejects the sense of 'purify' (Peter is not engaged here in baptizing, but visiting established saints), but his translation 'illuminated' is questionable, since in this sense the word usually refers to heavenly bodies, which is hardly the intention here.¹⁷¹ Strict criticism might object that Arator loses the reference to the Christian community that existed already in Lydda, but this is taken for granted. As he stands by the walls (a small addition) Peter sees the enfeebled Aeneas, unable to move. For the time being Arator ignores the words *grabatto* and *paralyticus*, to concentrate on description. The mannered elaboration of Aeneas' infirmity through antitheses is typical of him, as it is of Sedulius, with its contrast of body dead, soul alive (also 764). His rhetorical *copia* is used to evoke sympathy for the sheer frustration of such an existence. This long but well-controlled sentence climaxes in Peter's words, and focuses on the bed. There is a clear and striking tribute to Sedulius (3. 102 *vectoremque suum grata mercede revexit*)¹⁷² in the reuse of the word *vectorem*, and perhaps a hint of his *grata mercede* ('with grateful recompense') too, in Arator's phrase *reddere... officium*; the long relationship with his bed—a 'memorial', almost a 'monument', in line 765—has given rise to what can be seen as a moral obligation.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. *Ep. Vig.* 5–12 and frequently in the poem; see Deproost (1990b), *passim*.

¹⁷⁰ 'Having visited the territory.'

¹⁷¹ Hillier (1993), 123. Peter is not likened to a heavenly body before 2. 1219.

¹⁷² 'and he carried away his conveyance, in a grateful recompense.'

Peter's speech omits the name of Aeneas (Arator saw the opportunity for the Bible's word *paralytice* here) and, more significantly, the words *sanat te Iesus Christus*: Peter is able to heal on his own account. If Luke had any reservations about Peter's powers, Arator has not.¹⁷³ The man's reaction to Peter's words are expressed with further elaboration, in words which clearly contrast with the earlier description of his immobility; the technique recalls Sedulius' description of the funeral at Nain.¹⁷⁴ The detail of the eight years of lameness is reserved for the exegetical portion, which will use the detail to move to the discussion of circumcision and bring in material from John's gospel. In the narrative the biblical core has been well preserved, with colourful and edifying expansion, and nothing of significance lost. Arator cannot be said, without gross exaggeration, 'almost entirely to ignore the surface meaning of the text'.¹⁷⁵

There is a similar passage in 2. 156–73, which may be dealt with without quotation. Paul has come to Lystra, where there was a man (unnamed, as in Acts 14: 7) lame from birth; as Arator says with typical conceits, his death began with his birth. Like Peter in the previous passage, Paul receives a tribute of his own, one suitable to his role as preacher ('with whose admonition pious minds move towards the stars'),¹⁷⁶ and as he speaks the lame man, although physically quite immobile, chooses to follow, in spirit, his divine instruction. Addressing the man directly in an apostrophe, Arator congratulates him on his faith, and this addition informs a further elaboration. In Acts, Paul, looking intently at him can 'see that he had faith to be made well' (Acts 14: 9); but in Arator this becomes: 'seeing what he contained in the depth of his heart, and that the believing lame man's love already stood fast in the word of God.'¹⁷⁷ Arator's Paul then gives the command to rise on his own two feet in words quite close to Luke,¹⁷⁸ and also reproduces closely Luke's phrase

¹⁷³ On Peter in general, see Deproost (1990*b*) and pp. 317–21.

¹⁷⁴ See pp. 187–9.

¹⁷⁵ Hillier (1993), 124–5.

¹⁷⁶ *quo monitore piaē tendunt ad sidera mentes* (2. 161).

¹⁷⁷ Arator's words are *Paulus speculatus in imo | pectore quid caperet claudique fidelis amorem | in verbo iam stare dei* (2. 165–7); cf. Acts 14: 9 *intuitus eum et videns quia haberet fidem ut salvus fieret*.

¹⁷⁸ *surge citus rectusque tuis imponere plantis* (168); cf. Acts 14: 10 *surge super pedes tuos rectus*.

magna voce ('with a loud voice') with his *clarius* ('clearly'). Vigorous description of his enjoyment of this new ability follows, realizing with notable empathy the man's joy which leads him to beat the ground and run everywhere, albeit not without some fear of falling; this expands in four lines a few words of Acts (*exilivit et ambulavit*).¹⁷⁹ In this episode, quite clearly, the original is not ignored, or quickly passed over; nor can the charge of stereotyping be brought, *pace* Schwind.¹⁸⁰

A very different passage will now be used to illustrate the same underlying fidelity to the original. This is the description of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, from l. 672–84 and 687–90, and corresponding to Acts 8: 26–8 and other verses from 31–8:

Angelus alloquitur plenum virtute Philippum australem celebrare viam, qua spado ¹⁸¹ iugatis Aethiopum pergebat equis, qui fidus in aula reginae servabat opes. volat axe citato	675
gaudia fixa petens curruque merebitur ipso errorum iactare rotas. O quanta bonorum semina percipies qui tam pretiosa lavacri sumere dona venis sterilique in corpore condis	680
quod fructu meliore metas! impone Philippum, cor oris quod Hebraeus ait, qui mentis honorem nomine teste probat; iuvat hunc audire magistrum discipuli quia iure docet. dabit ipse prophetae de quo verba sonent . . . ¹⁸²	684
.	
conspectis properanter aquis ardescere coepit eunuchi fecunda fides, qui gurgite mersus deposuit serpentis onus plastroque cucurrit Heliae meditatus iter.	687

An angel tells Philip, full of power, to visit the south road, where a eunuch of the Ethiopians was proceeding with a team of horses, a man trusted at court, who kept the wealth of a queen. He flies along in his fast-moving chariot

¹⁷⁹ 'He jumped up and walked.'

¹⁸⁰ Schwind (1990), 56–7.

¹⁸¹ The first syllable of this word is, anomalously, treated as long.

¹⁸² The short passage omitted is not narrative. (For an explanation of its difficult Latin, see Schwind (1995a), 95).

seeking immovable joys, and will in the chariot itself succeed in rejecting the wheels of error. O how many seeds of blessings will you see, you who come to take the precious gifts of baptism and store in your sterile body what you may harvest with a better fruit! Give a lift to Philip, who shows the honour of his mind by the testimony of his name—which in Hebrew means ‘heart of the mouth’;¹⁸³ it is pleasant to hear this teacher because¹⁸⁴ he teaches with the right of a disciple; he himself will bestow the one about whom the prophet’s words speak . . . Seeing some water the fertile faith of the eunuch quickly begins to warm, and immersed in its flood he put off the serpent’s weight and travels on in his chariot imitating the journey of Elijah.¹⁸⁵

angelus autem domini locutus est ad Philippum, dicens ‘Surge et vade contra meridianum ad viam quae descendit ab Hierusalem in Gazam.’ haec est deserta. 27. et surgens abiit. et ecce vir Aethiops eunuchus potens Candacis reginae Aethiopum qui erat super omnes gazas eius venerat adorare in Hierusalem. 28. et revertebatur sedens super currum suum legensque prophetam Esaiam. 29. dixit autem spiritus Philippo. ‘accede et adiunge te ad currum istum’ . . . 31b. rogavitque Philippum ut ascenderet et sederet secum . . . 36. et dum irent per viam venerunt ad quandam aquam. et ait eunuchus, ‘ecce aqua; quid prohibet me baptizari?’ 38. et baptizavit eum.

And the angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying ‘arise and go to the south to the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza’. (This is a desert road.) And he arose and went. And behold, an Ethiopian eunuch, a powerful minister of Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasures, had come to worship in Jerusalem and was returning, seated in his chariot and reading the prophet Isaiah. And the spirit said to Philip, go near and join yourself to that chariot . . . and he asked Philip to come up and sit with him . . . and as they went along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, ‘here is water’: what prevents me from being baptized? . . . And he baptized him.

Arator’s version begins in a very similar way to Luke’s, with the angel’s address, which, however, he puts into indirect speech. Philip, who is new to Arator’s narrative,¹⁸⁶ is given a very short description,

¹⁸³ The intended meaning of Arator’s interpretation is unclear, although the following clause is probably a comment on it. See also p. 307.

¹⁸⁴ Or perhaps ‘who’, if *qui* were to be read.

¹⁸⁵ Schwind (1995a), 95–6 correctly explains this phrase. Having (by baptism) reduced its load, the chariot flies faster, and, in a spiritual sense, ascends like Elijah’s. It is notable that Elijah’s chariot is mentioned by all three poets: cf. Juvenecus 3. 265–7, Sedulius, *CP* 1. 179–182. Its popularity in art was doubtless an influence.

¹⁸⁶ See p. 279.

as if to sum up what Arator omitted earlier (8: 5–8). There is no detail of the route, except *australem... viam*; the reader needs to know only that it is from Jerusalem, where the preceding episode in Arator is assumed to have taken place, and leads to Africa.¹⁸⁷ (If it occurred to Arator that a play could be made with the place-name Gaza—the Latin word *gaza* means ‘treasure’—then he thought better of it.) The queen’s name is omitted, but the more exotic details that he was a eunuch and Ethiopian are given early. Some edifying comment is focused on the chariot, contrasting its swift movement with the permanence of the joys that he sought, and, less successfully perhaps, on the instability of ‘the wheels of error’ (suggesting the wheel of Fortune, or the variability of false doctrine). The rhetorical exclamation *O quanta...* which follows exemplifies one of Arator’s favourite methods of comment. The narrative now takes a vividly dramatic turn, as the narrator, with a common figure, exhorts the eunuch to do what he actually did do, and take Philip into his chariot. It is pleasant (the narrator’s address continues: in Luke the Ethiopian beseeches Philip at this point) to hear a magisterial explanation from the disciple, and he will receive from Philip, first by exposition of the passage, and then by baptism, the one to whom the prophet refers, namely Christ. Although Arator is certainly not averse to citing or quoting scripture, details of the particular passage the eunuch was reading, which are given in some detail in Acts (8: 30–4), are omitted as unnecessary; they might slow the narrative. The details of Philip’s miraculous departure are also omitted; otherwise the narrative is well preserved, albeit in lively rhetorical garb.

A further example that shows Arator faithfully following the narrative outline of a passage, and in spite of temptations to foreground allegory, is 2. 1156–60 (Acts 28: 1–6), the story of the snake that bit Paul but was safely shaken off into the fire. When the narrative starts the reader already knows from Arator that the setting is the island of Malta and that the natives are friendly (2. 1126–7; cf. Acts 28: 1, 2a). Because it was cold and wet (1156–7 and 28: 2b) Paul gathered brushwood for a fire, and a viper attacked his hand (1157–9; 28: 3). There are antitheses which play about the heat of the fire and

¹⁸⁷ In fact the incident may have occurred where the road to the south from Samaria, where Philip had been, joins the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, near Eleutheropolis (Alexander (2001), 1039; Talbert (2000), 70 F2).

the chilling effect of poison (1158–60, and 1173–7), and the mention of brushwood produces an argument based on the meanings of *lignum* (wood, tree, cross) in line 1166. Arator also launches into an expostulation against the serpent. But as well as these edifying comments, he faithfully reproduces the focalization of the Acts narrative, as Paul is seen through the eyes of the nearby ‘barbarians’ or rustics (1167; Acts 28: 4). They mutter that he must be guilty of murder (1167–71; Acts 28: 4) and expect him to swell up and collapse (1182–3; Acts 28: 6), but then, amazed, change their minds and decide that he is a god (1191–2; Acts 28: 6). The untaught locals (*rudis incola*, 1192) then receive a lesson about God’s power, though they could hardly be expected to understand that Paul had lost his own scales (1184–5) and had been made immune to the serpentine foe by the cleansing of baptism.¹⁸⁸

Sometimes Arator performs more extensive remodelling, but even where he rearranges the base narrative the underlying scriptural version is clear, as two highly developed passages will show. In the first of them, 1. 21–68 (Acts 1: 1–14), it is not unreasonable to speak of tidying up a passage which has caused some perplexity.¹⁸⁹ Arator builds his own very coherent version from largely non-consecutive verses, in lines 21–9, as a quick comparison with this first chapter of Acts will show. Over forty days Christ had given signs (1. 21–2; from v. 3) to those who are to be his witnesses (23–4; from v. 8). (Brief comment follows, in lines 24–6, on the miraculous proof given by eating, which is how human bodies attest their life.) Christ goes to the Mount of Olives (27–8; in v. 12, Luke tells us they returned from there), and there, after they have received the Holy Spirit (31–2; cf. v. 5) he is raised to heaven (33; cf. v. 9). Arator meditates on Christ’s choice of place (29–31), and his triumphal ascension (34–42). The disciples are amazed (43–4; v. 10); they are addressed by men ‘conspicuous and with gleaming faces’.¹⁹⁰ Arator identifies them as angels in 1. 52.¹⁹¹ Nothing is said about Christ’s return (v. 11).

¹⁸⁸ This is a good example of how Arator likes to introduce a mention of baptism at any opportunity. See pp. 310–2.

¹⁸⁹ As attested by Alexander (2001), 1030–1.

¹⁹⁰ *ore corusco | perspicui dixere viri.*

¹⁹¹ In the words *angelicis . . . affatibus*. The words *angelicus* and *angelus* are not rare in Arator, who also uses the synonyms *nuntius* and *minister*. (Cf. 99–100 and 177.)

After this meeting they return to the city, a sabbath day's journey, which Arator explains as one mile (l. 53–6; v. 12), where they find Mary (56–7; v. 14). Arator then develops the contrast of Mary and Eve, just as Sedulius had done,¹⁹² before ending with his favourite theme of the flesh of the ascended Christ (68). He does not mention the disciples (named by Luke in v. 13), or the intense continuing activity of prayer (v. 14).

The second passage concerns the martyrdom of Stephen (l. 586–623; Acts 7: 56–60). As pointed out above,¹⁹³ Stephen has not entered Arator's narrative before this; in the opening words *emicat hic* ('at this point [Stephen] stands out') there may be a reference to him as a distinguished member of the recently appointed deacons (l. 552–85). In a powerful and intensely emotional opening Stephen, the proto-martyr (586), is cheered on by the poet to join battle and win the glory foreshadowed in his name (close to the Greek word for 'crown') and eternal life. The focus changes to the Jews, described in l. 593–5 as *Iudaea rebellis* (with an allusion perhaps to Stephen's complaint of their recalcitrance in Acts 7: 51–2), *lymphata* ('lunatic'), and, like the stones that they throw at him, *saxea* ('stony-hearted'). Stephen, accepting his role as soldier, and proceeding steadfastly to heaven, meets the storm of stones with prayers for the people (603–5), prayers which Luke mentioned just before his death (7: 60a). To the repeated point that Stephen will be victorious in spite of their missiles, Arator adds an image, remarkable in the context, from viticulture: Stephen is sowing an example in which his death will be the cultivator of Christ's vineyard (l. 607–9). The blood of the martyrs is the wine of the Church.¹⁹⁴ Now Arator turns to Stephen's vision (l. 610–11), so the event which Luke placed in 7: 55–6, much earlier in his narrative, and seems to have seen as the cause of the Jews' rage, immediately precedes Stephen's death. Christ rises to him as a sign of his support.¹⁹⁵ Arator's final point from this passage is the detail that the Jews laid their garments at the feet of Saul, mentioned

¹⁹² CP 2. 28–31.

¹⁹³ See pp. 278–9.

¹⁹⁴ *qui fine colono | seminat exemplum quo surgat vinea Christi | et calicem Domini convivio festa coronent.*

¹⁹⁵ The question of why Christ was not sitting, as the Christian confession asserted, is addressed by Arator in l. 611–16.

by Luke in verse 58 along with the stoning. This permits a final contrast between those who go to hell (Sheol), which Saul's name evokes, and those who go to heaven, with the martyr. To summarize: in Acts, Stephen's vision seems to provoke the stoning, the exit from the city which it entails, and the subsequent placing of the assailants' garments at Saul's feet; Stephen prays as he dies. In Arator the conflict begins with the stoning, for which no location or judicial preliminaries are given, and the stoning is linked closely with the prayers; Stephen has the vision of Christ as death approaches. Luke's version, as often pointed out, is partly modelled on the death of Christ; to some extent Arator's bears the imprint of martyrdom narratives.

SPEECHES

Acts is a book of preaching, and also one of legal speeches. As 'cameos', in the words of Dunn,¹⁹⁶ they are, at least in length, well suited to epic-style treatment, and Arator takes his opportunities enthusiastically. Very few are dropped, except in the later part of the book, where Arator accelerates the narrative; otherwise the main omissions are the sermons of Peter in 3: 12–26 and 10: 34–43, and his report of his vision at 11: 4–18, and Stephen's speech at 7: 2–53. In general, Arator's speeches, like his narratives, preserve the gist and thrust of their models, and sometimes their actual words and structures; but he retains the right to expand or abbreviate, and generally remould his base-text. There is no attempt to situate his speeches in the idioms and conceptual contexts of the early Christians and their world, nor does he attempt to divest himself of sixth-century ideas or convictions. He would have been a remarkable scholar if he had been able to distinguish clearly between early Christian beliefs and the sophisticated theological structures of his time, which he doubtless believed were implicit in the early writings, and perhaps an even more remarkable one if he could have found it in himself to articulate such distinctions in pre-Nicene thought-forms. No doubt, as Schwind complains, Peter's contemporaries (assuming for

¹⁹⁶ Dunn (1996), *passim*.

the sake of argument that they knew Latin and were able to construe Arator) would not have understood a word, but that is not the point.¹⁹⁷ As for other areas, such as those of law and administration, no obvious anachronisms have come to light; Arator is not greatly interested in such detail, whether Jewish or Roman, but follows Acts or abbreviates it. Peter and Paul are certainly not hauled before Gothic or papal-style courts.

Like his narratives, Arator's speeches vary in their closeness to the originals. One of the closest is also his longest speech (at forty-nine lines): Paul's final farewell or *perpetuum... vale*¹⁹⁸ on the 'well-known shore' (2. 831–79).¹⁹⁹ A short introduction effectively presents the intense emotion of the event. Words like *cupiens* ('desiring') and *caro* (Paul's heart is 'dear' to his audience) indicate the close bond of sympathy between Paul and his hearers, who, in Arator, are not simply the local elders and those of Ephesus, but 'holy people' whom he has summoned from all around (2. 826–30). The opening lines of the speech are highly charged, in marked contrast to the simple *vos* ('you') of Acts 20: 18: *O dilecta manus quae Christi militat armis! O summo plebs nata Deo!*²⁰⁰ In the body of the speech Luke's detail and his ordering of it is followed quite closely, although not everything is present; the statement that Paul worked among them for three years is reserved for development in the exegetical portion (888–91). Luke's reference to 'the trials which befell me through the plots of the Jews'²⁰¹ becomes a claim to have withstood *gentilia... agmina* ('the serried ranks of the Gentiles') and *Iudaicos... furores* ('the raging attacks of the Jews').²⁰² And in the same sentence Paul does not say that he worked 'both in public and from house to house' (*publice et per domos*, Acts 20: 20), but that he laboured so that 'no one should be unaware of the faith preached among the people'.²⁰³

¹⁹⁷ Schwind (1990), 77.

¹⁹⁸ *vale* is used as a noun here.

¹⁹⁹ For its location see p. 281.

²⁰⁰ 'O beloved congregation, militant in the armour of Christ! O congregation born to the greatest God!'

²⁰¹ *et temptationibus quae mihi acciderunt ex insidiis Iudaeorum.*

²⁰² Note the addition of the Gentiles to his opponents; Arator does not show here the apologetic presentation of the Romans seen in Acts (Dunn 1996, p. xiii), or that of Juvenius.

²⁰³ *nullumque lateret | in populo narrata fides* (2.835–6).

Paul's assertion of his past devotion to his tasks and his clear conscience (832–44: Acts 20: 18–21 and also 26, a detail which is placed at the head of this section) is largely elaborated in Arator's own words, but there is a hint of biblical phrasing in line 845 *vado videre crucis venerandam gentibus urbem*.²⁰⁴ The determined and emphatic *vado* is taken from Acts 20: 22, and reinforced with alliteration, so that the whole passage presents a confident and resolute attitude to the coming *agon*. In line 848 Arator combines the word *cursum* ('course') of Acts 20: 24 with a verbally exact allusion to the poet Lucan in *mitissima sors est*.²⁰⁵ After exhortation to beware of internal dissension (858–60; cf. verse 30a, but the danger is heightened), with a string of epigrammatic points, Paul returns to his own past role (868–79; 20: 33–5), affirming his indifference to wealth in language which is at one point (870–1) very close to that of Acts: compare Arator's *me scitis ut istae | cum sociis pavere manus* with *ipsi scitis quoniam ad ea quae mihi opus erant et his qui mecum sunt ministraverunt manus istae* (20: 34).²⁰⁶ The speech ends with a short homily on wealth, returning to the parable of the talents and alluding to Christ's command to help the poor. The sequel to the speech presents a scene of overwhelming sadness, as the ship, lit by the sunlight which passes through the clouds, gradually disappears from view.

Arator's care in articulating his speeches could be demonstrated in a host of examples. We have seen that he divides Paul's long speech from Acts 13: 17–41,²⁰⁷ taking his cue perhaps from the statement of Luke immediately after this speech that the people wanted more, but also seeing the possibilities of a fuller presentation both of Old Testament history and of the significance of Christ's coming and resurrection. Another example could come from Peter's speech at his trial before the Roman governor Felix, at 2. 1033–47 (Acts 24: 10–21).

²⁰⁴ 'I go to the city of the cross, which is to be venerated by Gentiles.'

²⁰⁵ 'The state of punishments which prayers bring is the gentlest.' In Lucan the following line (8. 453) begins with the words *regnum sub rege novo* ('the condition of kingdoms is most gentle under a new king'); interestingly, Arator's next line brings in the notion of God's kingdom and Christ's kingship. This is not untypical of his use of Lucan, for which see pp. 321–7.

²⁰⁶ Arator: 'you know that these hands fed me along with my colleagues'; Luke: 'you yourselves know that these hands ministered to what was needed by me and by those who are with me.'

²⁰⁷ See above p. 274.

This speech is concise and clear, an exemplary specimen in miniature of what a speech of self-defence might be. In this short address of fifteen lines Paul begins with a *captatio benevolentiae*, an attempt to gain his listener's favour, praising Felix for his justice, which gives him confidence to speak plainly (1033–6). It is followed by a simple and dignified rebuttal of the charge, and then, in another two lines, a brief *narratio*, which corresponds to the next two verses in Acts (verses 11 and 12), reversing their order. Paul argues that he has certainly not profaned the temple; if it was wrong to do what he had done, everyone would be guilty (1041). The real point at issue is the resurrection, and yet his accusers should have no problem with this: traditional Jewish worship itself entails such a hope. It is a calm and irenic speech, except for the three last lines, in which the risen Christ is uncompromisingly seen as the creator of all. Felix is dumbfounded (1048) by this speech (so much so that Arator says he lost his name),²⁰⁸ and he might well be, for in Arator's cameo as well as the original it carries artful but simple conviction.

Another passage of exemplary neatness may be mentioned here, although it is not a speech but a hymn (as Arator calls it in 1. 337) or prayer, uttered by the Jerusalem Church after Peter and John had successfully defied the authorities in Acts 4: 23–30. Arator's development of this (1. 338–69) is too long to be conveniently quoted, but its structure may be easily described. The invocation, of some ten lines,²⁰⁹ shows the strong effect of Sedulius and Ausonius before him,²¹⁰ as with impressively articulated relative clauses he stresses the role of each member of the Godhead in creation. The body of the hymn is built around the evil of Herod²¹¹ and Pilate who gathered together against Christ. With great rhetorical power, and no less passion than Juvencus and Sedulius before him, Arator describes the massacre of the Innocents (347–56), and as for Pilate, who can speak

²⁰⁸ *obstipuit Felix amisso nomine*, 1048. The following line makes clear that Arator does not exculpate him, or put his apparent procrastination down to a desire to do the Jews a favour (Acts 24: 27).

²⁰⁹ Possibly a line or more has been lost after 340, for there is no main verb for the opening *tu*, 'you'.

²¹⁰ See pp. 145–6, 165–6.

²¹¹ It was Luke who included Herod in the passion narrative (Luke 23: 6–12); he there suggested that they were in league.

without tears or groans of his wickedness, which even the elements lamented (356–64)?

One example of Arator's skill must be quoted, however, and the obvious candidate is the speech of Demetrius the silversmith, at 2. 693–710, a composition of great vigour and once again well adjusted to the narrative situation. This is Demetrius' outburst against the effect of Paul's ministry in Ephesus, developing Acts 19: 23–7:

Ingemit et vanas his vocibus excitat iras:
 'non pudet, o socii, nostram cecidisse Dianam
 quam mundi suspexit honor? mortalibus ultra
 quae speranda salus si non per saecula possunt 695
 fine carere dei? quae nunc simulacra sacellis,
 quae poterunt dare tura focus, quos advena Paulus
 territat et quicquid gerimus pro nomine divum
 muta metalla vocat, quorum discedit ab urbe
 religio pulsique fugam petiere Penates? 700
 ei mihi, iam video subitis lapsura ruinis
 condita fana diu, templi quoque nobilis aedem
 in cineres stragemque dari! quam prendimus arcem
 quamve tenemus opem, quibus interclusa facultas
 est operum crimenque foret fecisse Dianam? 705
 pergit! tempus adest, labor ultimus omnia secum
 si desperat, habet; sola est via vincere victis
 formidare nihil; restat sors certa triumphi
 pro superis movisse manus. insurgite telis,
 et, quam vota deam celebrant, hanc arma repossant!' 710

He groaned, and aroused their vain anger with these words: 'Are you not ashamed, colleagues, of the demise of our Diana, whom the respect of the world looked up to? What salvation are mortals to hope for if gods cannot avoid mortality through the ages? What images will they be able to give to shrines, what incense to hearths? This newcomer Paul terrifies them and calls mute metal whatever we hold as sacred; their worship has left the city, and the household gods, repulsed, have taken to flight. Alas, I now see that long-established shrines will fall in sudden ruin, and the edifice of a noble temple be overthrown and burnt! What stronghold do we occupy, or what help do we have, to whom the prospect of work is barred, for whom it is a crime to have created Dianas? Come, the time is at hand! A final effort, if desperate, carries everything with it; the only way for the conquered to conquer is to fear nothing; there remains for us an assured condition of

triumph, to have bestirred ourselves for the gods. Rise with weapons and let arms demand back the goddess whom our prayers celebrate!

Arator has developed this forceful speech from the short, businesslike speech in Acts. Demetrius there reminds his colleagues of the profitability of their profession and the trend away from manufactured gods caused by Paul's activities in Asia, climaxing with the assessment that 'there is a danger that our trade will fall into disrepute and Diana lose her magnificence'. Arator's version, which begins with three rhetorical questions, is much more vehement throughout, and indeed more suited to produce the angry riot that immediately ensues. Schwind compares it to the speech of a military commander from Lucan urging his troops to one last desperate effort.²¹² There is also allusion to Vergil, with hints of Turnus seeking his bride through war, of Juturna rousing the Rutulians (*non pudet, o Rutuli...*, A. 12. 229), and of Aeneas rousing the Trojans (A. 2. 354).²¹³ The anguished question *quem prendimus arcem?* of line 203 derives from A. 2. 322. Demetrius begins by declaring immediately that Diana's fall has actually happened; it is not just a danger. Indeed, all traditional gods are threatened if they are prevented from being immortal²¹⁴ by the disappearance of their images and censers. Not for Demetrius a carefully weighted presentation of the threat, and even the commercial arguments are secondary (703–5). Drastic action is needed. Notwithstanding the undertow of Christian triumphalism—the gods are dumb metal (as indeed Paul says they are in 2. 180–2 and 465–9, when speaking to the inhabitants of Lystra and of Athens),²¹⁵ and the Penates have fled—the speech has a raw strength well designed to evoke the furious atmosphere of a riot. No less deftly, Arator dismisses the sequel, when the uproar in the theatre ceases at once,²¹⁶ with a simile of smoke vanishing into thin air.²¹⁷

²¹² Schwind (1990), 75 n. 60, gives references to Vergil and Lucan. At the end of the note there is a rare slip: Vergil at A. 3. 560 wrote *insurgite remis*, not *insurgite telis*.

²¹³ Elements of Vergil's line *una salus victis nullam sperare salutem* are used in 2. 695 and 707.

²¹⁴ For the phrase *fine carere*, used of the Christian God, cf. Ausonius II. 3. 3, with Green's note.

²¹⁵ A very common criticism; see CP 1. 47–8.

²¹⁶ Arator omits the speech from the town-clerk counselling moderation (Acts 19: 35–40).

²¹⁷ Cf. Vergil, A. 12. 592.

Just as he likes to retain the speeches of Acts, so Arator retains, almost invariably and certainly more so than his two predecessors, the short snippets of direct speech in his model. Some examples of this may be found in the reactions or comments of various characters. Luke's words reporting Athenian reactions to Paul at Acts 17: 18 *quid vult seminiverbius hic dicere?* are rendered by *quibus, inquit, ab oris | verborum fluit iste sator?* (2. 446–7),²¹⁸ but Arator can be more flowery: the summons to Paul from Macedonia (*transiens in Macedoniam adiuva nos*, Acts 16: 9)²¹⁹ becomes strongly Vergilian in its colouring (2. 314–5): *miserere, precamur, | Illyricos dignare sinus.*²²⁰ More surprisingly, the *barbari* in Malta who expect Paul to die from snakebite, assuming him to be a murderer, are given quite elevated words (but probably without irony: this is the kind of elegant language that all Arator's characters speak): *satis est ex crimine fusi | sanguinis iste reus, nullis iam tutus in oris | cui pelagus tellusque furent* (2. 1169–71).²²¹ Sometimes there is direct speech in healing miracles, where at least the biblical word *surge* ('arise') is traditionally retained, as in 2. 168 and 1. 831 (*surge, Tabitha*). This is not used, however for the divine voice at 1. 911–12, where Arator's *claviger aethereus* ('heavenly keyholder') is not in a trance (cf. Acts 10: 10) or prostrate, as the divine command would imply (*surge... occide et manduca*, Acts 10: 13). In general, however, Arator does not seek to render closely the words of the original, even when they are those of Christ (as is sometimes the case in Acts), as may be seen from 2. 516–18 (Acts 18: 9–10) and 2. 951–3 (Acts 22: 21). There is little or no dialogue, in the usual sense. Acts 16: 17 and 18, to which 2. 385–6 and 392–3 correspond in Arator, hardly constitute dialogue. Finally, we should note the presentation of Paul's appeal to Caesar and Festus' acceptance of it at 2. 1055–7 (Acts 25: 11–12). This is a vital part of the narrative, leading to Paul's arrival in Rome,

²¹⁸ 'What is this word-spreader trying to say?'; 'from what shores does this sower of words come?'

²¹⁹ 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.'

²²⁰ Cf. *miserere precamur* (cf. A. 6. 117; 10. 598) and *Illyricos... sinus* (A. 1. 243).

²²¹ 'This man is guilty of the crime of bloodshed, and safe on no shores, for sea and land rage against him.' There is a small Vergilian allusion in *tutus in oris*: cf. A. 8. 323. The words of Acts at 28: 4 are *utique homicida est homo hic. qui cum evaserit de mari ultio non sinit vivere* ('This man is a murderer. He has escaped from the sea but justice does not allow him to live').

which will be the climax of the poem,²²² and the style is not unworthy of it:

nam talia Paulus
 ‘Caesaris ad solium vos provoco; Caesaris’, inquit,
 ‘appello Romanus opem’. Cui Festus, ‘abibis
 ut cupis, Augusti citius visure tribunal.’²²³

In Acts 25: 12 this encounter is concisely and forcefully expressed; in Arator the expression is considerably more elevated, with the imposing name Augustus as well as the repeated name of Caesar, two distinct expressions for ‘I appeal’, and the awesome words *solium* (‘throne’) and *tribunal*.

EXEGESIS

Exegesis is a major concern for Arator. In many ways he is the complete opposite of Juvenecus, whose inconspicuous exegesis often seems incidental, even accidental.²²⁴ Arator has much in common with Sedulius, who is in various ways an inspiration for him,²²⁵ but applies exegesis more fully and consistently, and has a wider coverage. Exegesis is as important as narrative to Arator, and some would say much more so. (This question will require discussion later.) Another calculation of Schwind provides a useful jumping-off point: exegesis, excluding various kinds of reflexion and other kinds of comment embedded in the narratives, takes up about two-fifths of the poem.²²⁶ Many sections are divided half and half, but often the exegesis is the larger element. Clearly, Arator’s poem is more than a paraphrase, as Roberts recognizes when he concedes that the notions of forensic *argumentatio* and rhetorical *amplificatio* do

²²² See pp. 346–7.

²²³ ‘For Paul said, “I appeal to the throne of Caesar; as a Roman I call on Caesar’s aid”; to whom Festus replied, “you will go, as you wish, and see the tribunal of Augustus.”’

²²⁴ Green (2007*b*).

²²⁵ Schwind (1990), 161–79, and Wright (1989).

²²⁶ Schwind (1990), 95.

not give enough explanatory space for what Arator does, and distinguishes two roles for the poet, that of *praedicator* (preacher or commentator)²²⁷ and that of *narrator*.²²⁸ *Theologus* and *poeta* combine or compete in a rather different way from before. Arator's poem is, however, more than a 'verse commentary', as it is often called.²²⁹ The central problem of this bland formula—why write a commentary in verse?—and its implicit demotion of narrative and the elements of creativity in Arator's presentation²³⁰ are matters which will be discussed later, after an account of his exegesis, and then his epic qualities, have been given.

Unlike Juvencus and Sedulius, Arator tends not to make small-scale exegetical comments or additions to his narrative as he goes along. This is because when presenting narrative he is more selective, and in general allows himself more space; he can avoid questions if he chooses, or save them for separate discussion. This does not mean that he is indifferent to the detail of Acts; we have seen that his interest in what he calls *historia* ('narrative') and his commitment to *historica fides* ('faithfulness to the literal truth') are strong, and that he makes good use of the narrative detail of his model. Within a narrative section exegetical clarifications of the narrative are less frequent than reflective and often rhetorically expressed comment. In the episode of the man lame from birth, for example, Arator develops the description of someone walking for the first time;²³¹ this should not be dismissed as a rhetorical ploy or an attempt to display his stylistic gifts but understood as his way of embellishing and reinforcing the theological point that no one is too old to begin a new life. The story of Eutychus, who fell asleep while Paul was preaching at Troas and fell from his window-ledge (2. 753–825), gives numerous opportunities for such enhancement. Arator develops the statement in Acts (20: 7–8) that it was night, and the lamps were on ('so that the faithful might shine by the light of the word');

²²⁷ Commentary was an important function of preaching, as witness Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos* and *Tractatus in Iohannem*.

²²⁸ Roberts (1985), 179.

²²⁹ Leimbach (1873), 231, and others mentioned in Roberts (1985), 179 and Hillier (1993), 14.

²³⁰ As shown in Roberts' fine analysis of l. 801–45 on pp. 172–9.

²³¹ See p. 286.

then, progressing the story, he highlights the danger of sleepy hearts, not alert to God (2. 761–7), and the importance of avoiding the empty space (*chaos*) of the window when he could rest in Christ and enjoy the (spiritual) door with the rest of the baptized flock (767–75). Such matters are here regarded as edificatory rather than exegetical, but the distinction is not always an easy one to make.

The range of questions raised in the exegetical portions is wide. There are some matters which modern commentators would, as it were, take in their stride, but also much broader ones. In the first category, why did Stephen in his vision see Christ standing, and not sitting, as held by *confessio nostra* ('our creed', 1. 611–16)? How to explain the apparent contradiction between the statement in the narrative of Saul's conversion that his companions heard the voice (Acts 9: 7) and the statement in Paul's account (Acts 22: 9) they did not (2. 976)? This is described as a *nota querela* ('a well-known complaint'), which it may well have been; the word suggests that Arator had an apologetic purpose here, and perhaps the accounts of Saul's conversion had been seriously challenged on grounds of inconsistency. Considerable space is devoted to these questions, especially the latter (2. 976–91). But Arator also poses some broader questions that he derives from, or links to, his base-text. Why—to give what he calls 'a frequently asked question'²³²—was Paul summoned to Macedonia in particular, when Christ came to save the whole world, and, by extension, why do some people receive blessings and others not (2. 321–5)? (The answer is a lengthy one, continuing to 2. 382.) Why did an earthquake occur after Peter's preaching (1. 370–82)? Why did Peter's shadow have the exceptional power of being able to heal (1. 488–514)? Why, when the intellects of Athens had been overcome, did the Stoics and Epicureans stir up 'wicked wars' against Paul's teaching (2. 489–505)?²³³

In sections like these, where narrative and exegesis are not blended or interleaved but separately presented, the exegetical section is carefully and formally introduced, and it is instructive to analyse some examples of how this is done. The first example is simple, but

²³² *quaestio crebra sonat.*

²³³ There is an improved punctuation and interpretation of line 490 in Schwind (1995a), 104.

typically formal and deliberate: *haec quoque lux operis quid praeferat edere pergam* (1. 112).²³⁴ Soon after this, another question, the question of why the Spirit was given in flames at Pentecost, but as a dove at the Jordan when Christ was baptized, is introduced in a similarly formal way with the words *res maxima cogit | non reticere diu*.²³⁵ The poet also acknowledges his need to seek the inspiration of the Spirit itself, who knows these things much more closely; as Milton was to put it in *Paradise Lost* (1. 19) of his own theme: 'Instruct me, for thou knowst, thou from the first wast present.' (One recalls too how Vergil's Muses and Ovid's gods had privileged knowledge of their themes.)²³⁶ The poet will sing of the matter and fulfil his promises, if the Spirit brings gifts of inspiration.²³⁷ A more elaborate invocation is made in 2. 579–81, perhaps in keeping with the particularly important discussion of the issue of second baptism, and the awareness of possible adversaries (577–8):²³⁸ *tu nunc mihi largius ora | Spiritus alme riga... | tu vocis iter, tu semita linguae, tu dicture veni*.²³⁹ This recalls the invocation of Juvencus,²⁴⁰ but also seems to be making a more ambitious theological point, based on the literal meaning of *spiritus* as 'breath'. Perhaps the same point underlies the expression in 1. 226, where Arator asks for the Spirit to come, for he cannot otherwise be spoken of.²⁴¹ A similar inspiratory role is assigned to Peter at 1. 772, who has just healed through his voice, and in 1. 896–7 the poet asks Peter to loosen his gift of speech (*qui solvere nosti*), with an allusion to Peter's God-given powers of binding and loosing.²⁴² Schwind speaks of Peter as Arator's Muse;²⁴³ one's instinctive feeling is that this is not Arator's way of seeing things (he

²³⁴ 'What function this light reveals I shall proceed to set forth.' (The light is that of the 'celestial chorus', the zodiacal constellations, which is likened to the twelve apostles.)

²³⁵ Lines 1. 138–9: 'A very important matter compels me not to be long silent.'

²³⁶ Vergil, *A.* 7. 645; Ovid, *M.* 1. 2–3.

²³⁷ *quod tunc rite canam promissaque debita solvam, | si sua dona ferat.* The promises are those of *Ep. Vig.* 21–2.

²³⁸ See pp. 312 and 316.

²³⁹ 'Now water my lips more plentifully, gentle Spirit... you are the channel of my voice, you are the path of my tongue; come to speak.'

²⁴⁰ Cf. Juvencus, *Praef.* 26, and the discussion at pp. 18–22.

²⁴¹ *Spiritus alme, veni! sine te non diceris unquam.*

²⁴² Matt. 16: 19.

²⁴³ Schwind (1990), 256.

certainly never refers to a Muse), but perhaps he would not have strongly disapproved of the expression.²⁴⁴

In some of these introductory formulae a direct effect of classical models and expressions of inspiration is quite plain. In another early passage (1. 221) Arator uses a direct quotation from the proem of Vergil's *Georgics* (*hinc canere incipiam*, 1. 5)²⁴⁵ as he undertakes to explain the origin of the moral goodness of the early Church. It would be rash to build on this alone a programmatic reference to the *Georgics* as a model for Arator's *Lehrepos*, which, as with Juvencus, would be very hard to sustain, but certainly the allusion cannot be denied. If Vergil has the primacy in Arator (and it may be only statistical),²⁴⁶ Lucan is not far behind: in 1. 488 *quaerite, quos agitat tanti reverentia facti* there is a clear allusion to Lucan 1. 417 *quaerite, quos agitat mundi labor*.²⁴⁷ Unlike Lucan, Arator does not use the phrase to be dismissive; Lucan set aside learned speculation, but Arator's own explanation will begin with discussion of a scientific question, namely the relation of a shadow to the object that casts it. This whole section is an important one for Arator; it deals with a power uniquely possessed by Peter. The narrative section of this passage (1. 459–61) was introduced by the poetic commonplace of wishing for a hundred mouths, made famous by Vergil²⁴⁸ and much imitated.²⁴⁹ Among all these imitations, it can be seen that Arator is closest to Sedulius (they both speak, for example, of a hundred sounds, not mouths), but Arator will certainly have been aware of its Vergilian pedigree.²⁵⁰

Arator, then, shows both stylistic pretensions and theological earnestness in expressing his own role. As well as showing a humble dependence on the Holy Spirit and Peter, he occasionally addresses his readers, as in 1. 403–6 *nunc aspice partes, | lector docte, pias et*

²⁴⁴ See the important article of Deproost (1998).

²⁴⁵ 'From here I will begin my poem'. The exact import of *hinc* in Vergil is unclear (Mynors' edn., *ad loc.*), but the phrase is well suited to its new context.

²⁴⁶ See pp. 321–7.

²⁴⁷ 'inquire, those of you who are moved by reverence for such a fact' (Arator); 'inquire, those of you moved by the workings of the universe' (Lucan).

²⁴⁸ Vergil, *G.* 2. 43–4 and *A.* 6. 625–7.

²⁴⁹ See Courcelle (1955), Angelucci (1985), 48, and Austin on Vergil, *A.* 6. 625–7.

²⁵⁰ Schwind (1990), 169.

tecum mente sagaci | volve quid esse putes . . .,²⁵¹ where he asks them to work out why the monetary proceeds from the sale of estates was placed at the apostles' feet and not in their hands. He then answers the question for them; presumably the recitations were not structured as interactive learning sessions. One passage is addressed specifically to the baptized: *laeti documenta figurae | discite, qui liquido meruistis fonte renasci* (1. 1027–8).²⁵² Perhaps this is related to the fact that the climax of the first book, where Peter is released from prison, is approaching. He reminds listeners of their assured status through baptism, before exhorting them in a rousing finale to rejoice in the power provided by Peter's actual chains, present and powerful in the church of St Peter ad Vincula.

An essential element of Arator's exegesis, especially in the full-blown passages where he expands on an issue at some length, is the use of a *figura*. This powerful instrument adds an extra dimension to his explanations, enabling him to answer questions or find extra significance by making links with other passages of scripture, or to confirm basic tenets of the faith through the demonstration that they are embedded in the passage being examined. When he brings in a figure, which he does very deliberately and carefully, Arator's aim is to add illumination by appealing to what he calls the secrets (*arcana, sacramenta*) or the teaching (*documenta*), or most commonly the underlying meaning or core (*causa*) of the figure.²⁵³ A phrase such as *sed et altera nobis | res aperit quod causa gerit*²⁵⁴ (1. 261–2) indicates by the very ordinariness of its language how fundamental the theme is: and sometimes the verb *gero* ('carry', 'contain') alone indicates that the argument is essentially figural.

²⁵¹ 'Look at this holy episode, learned reader, and consider in your wise mind why you think . . .'

²⁵² 'joyfully learn the teaching of this figure, you who have deserved to be reborn in the watery fountain.'

²⁵³ It is misleading to speak of the 'cause' of a figure, or a 'proof' of a figure, as Hillier does (93 and 141, translating lines 1. 690–1, 2. 281). In these cases the genitive forms could be treated as equivalent to an adjective (such as 'figural' or 'figurative'), which would be more difficult to accommodate in verse; as carefully explained by Schwind (1990), 105, they are technically speaking examples of the *genitivus inhaerentiae*.

²⁵⁴ 'But another thing too opens up what the matter holds.'

Like Sedulius, Arator acknowledges the threefold sense of scripture formulated by Origen;²⁵⁵ this is done explicitly in the following couplet (2. 890–1), part of the exegetical comment attached to Paul's farewell speech. Here, in Latin a little less clear than it might be, he states: *qui canit Ecclesiae tria dogmata saepius edit | historicum, morale sonans, typicumque volumen.*²⁵⁶ The word *moralis* is not used by Arator elsewhere, but the *sensus moralis* is widespread; there are clear signs of it in the moralizing use of 'we' and 'us'.²⁵⁷ But for the most part Arator, like Origen and Sedulius before him, operates with a twofold system of literal and figurative. They are closely conjoined; when he says in 2. 141–2 *convenior . . . historiae pulsare fidem*²⁵⁸ he is seeking not only to draw attention to the story but to make an allegorical interpretation of Rebecca's children Jacob and Esau as a type of the Church.

The Old Testament is a very rich source of figures which can be used to shed light on Acts. Arator goes so far as to say that every single letter in it has a figure.²⁵⁹ (The exaggeration may be due to the obscurity of the passage he is using at that point, Exod. 28, which concerns the sacred vestments prescribed by the law.) More typical figures are the lameness of Jacob (1. 263–4), which brings with it a reference to the nation of Israel, or the ark built by Noah (2. 803–15), which 'carries teaching about the Church'.²⁶⁰ The New Testament may also supply figures: so in 1. 992 the sea, in which Peter used to fish, 'was' the world.²⁶¹ Peter's thirst, mentioned in 1. 890–1, recalls

²⁵⁵ See pp. 230–5.

²⁵⁶ 'He who sings the three teachings of the Church often produces a volume which resounds with the historical [or 'literal'], the moral, and the typical [or 'figurative'] meaning.' Schwind (1995a), 108–9 argues that the adjectives of line 2. 891 depend on the word *dogma*, understood from *dogmata* in the preceding line; alternatively, as his translation suggests, and the above translation assumes, they may all be taken as amplifying *sonans*, which qualifies *volumen*. The *tria dogmata* surely refer to the Trinity, in which (Arator would maintain) the whole of Christian teaching is enshrined.

²⁵⁷ e.g. 1. 666, 870, 2.153, 440, 558.

²⁵⁸ 'I am obliged to consult a historical narrative', following the interpretation of Hudson Williams (1953), 93. A more literal understanding of *pulsare* is possible, following Matt. 7: 7, Luke 11: 9 *pulsate et aperietur vobis* ('Knock, and it will be opened to you').

²⁵⁹ *qua sine nulla vetus subsistit littera* (2. 362).

²⁶⁰ *ecclesiae documenta gerens* (2. 804).

²⁶¹ *nam mare mundus erat*.

Christ's thirst in Samaria (John 4: 6), since it happened at the same hour of the day, and in 1. 1058–62 his escape from prison is first announced by a woman (in fact a maid named Rhoda, Acts 12: 13), just as Christ's resurrection was. Although these last two passages do not include the word *figura* or any equivalent, it is not absurd that Christ should be the type and Peter the antitype;²⁶² but it seems strange, because with most of the examples involving the Old Testament Arator regularly emphasizes the inferiority of the figure to what is prefigured.²⁶³ Sometimes a figure is seen in what we might be tempted to call incidental detail from the passages of Acts themselves, such as the basket in which Paul was rescued (1. 741–4). This was made of rushes, which signify the water of baptism, and of palm leaves, which point to the martyr's crown; each of these things 'helps the Church', as Paul was to do.²⁶⁴ This last point is reached by a complementary route, for there were seven baskets remaining after the feeding of the 4,000, as related in Matt. 15: 32–8 (Mark 8: 1–10), and seven branches of the Church in the Book of Revelation (1. 4 and 11). So Paul was protected by a *species* (a visible sign; the word is also used for 'figure') of the Church for which he would strive.²⁶⁵ More simply, the silver so important to Demetrius (2. 723–52) may be shown through Old Testament passages²⁶⁶ to signify eloquence—whence perhaps the stylistic vehemence of the speech analysed above.²⁶⁷ Figures may be found in non-scriptural material too, though they are normally used in close connection with it, as in 1. 562–3 and 585 (the seven planets), and 2. 1152–5 (the phases of the moon). Many figures, he says in 2. 1223, could be provided by the Roman empire itself, or Rome's supremacy within it. Arator also derives a figurative, or 'typical' meaning from the accusation of drunkenness that is launched against the disciples at Pentecost (1. 148–50); this is a 'truthful error' (*error verus*) in that 'they are, in a typological way, influenced by wine' and 'full of the intoxicating

²⁶² Schwind (1990), 87.

²⁶³ Hillier (1993), 163–9.

²⁶⁴ *iuvat ecclesiam baptismatis unda | martyriique cruor.*

²⁶⁵ *protegit ergo virum species cui militat ipse.*

²⁶⁶ Ps. 12: 6 (11: 7), combined with Exod. 25: 3.

²⁶⁷ See pp. 295–6.

heavenly teaching drawn from the new source'.²⁶⁸ The word *typicus* is rather rare in Arator, but is used again in a passage which shows the interchangeability of his technical terms. Explaining the effect of Peter's shadow in 1. 488–514, he begins by raising the question *quid typicum res ista ferat* (489),²⁶⁹ then asks his readers to see *quaeve sub hac specie lateant documenta* (491),²⁷⁰ and finally explains that the Church seen on earth is a *figura*, pointing to the eternal one in heaven.

A favourite method of establishing links between different parts of scripture, closely related to and often combined with figures, is the use of numbers. Arator uses all numbers from 2 to 10, and the numbers 14 (2. 1130), 40 (1. 268; in fact his model in Acts 4: 22 speaks of 'more than 40'), 3,000 (1. 202), and 50,000 (2. 672).²⁷¹ He also slips in a reference to the lame man of John 5: 5 at 1. 787, who had lain at the pool of Bethesda (but he actually mentions Siloam) for thirty-eight years, by saying simply 'another precisely specified number'.²⁷² At 2. 892 he gives the volume of the jars as three *metretae*, unlike John (2: 6), who had given their capacity as two or three *metretae* apiece.²⁷³ Arator has no need for the agility of his contemporary Cassiodorus, who sought to explain the significance of the number of each Psalm in his commentary.²⁷⁴ In fact, as Schwind has shown, Arator follows Augustine closely.²⁷⁵ As was usual in ecclesiastical writers, and many non-Christian writers, some numbers possessed especial power; Arator speaks of the 'mystical power' (*mystica vis*) of the number 12 (1. 210), and celebrates the same number as 'holy and blessed' (2. 620).²⁷⁶ The number 1,000 denotes perfection (1. 207), and the number 3 the true faith.²⁷⁷

²⁶⁸ *hos etiam musto typica ratione moveri | error verus ait, quos ebria fonte recenti | complevit doctrina poli.* He is thinking of the Ambrosian notion of *sobria ebrietas* (Lewy 1929).

²⁶⁹ 'what type this matter holds'.

²⁷⁰ 'what teaching lies behind this phenomenon'.

²⁷¹ Schwind (1990), 107–8 gives the full details.

²⁷² *signatis etiam numero paralyticus annis.*

²⁷³ The context is the three senses of scripture; Origen used this passage to justify his vacillation between two and three senses.

²⁷⁴ For a sensitive study of Cassiodorus' speculations, see O'Donnell (1979), 163–6.

²⁷⁵ Schwind (1990), 112. It follows that critics should be chary of assuming that he has a wide choice: see Hillier (1993), 41, citing Leimbach (1873), 235.

²⁷⁶ *O sacer et felix numeri modus.*

²⁷⁷ See p. 314.

Another important source of meaning for Arator is names, usually personal, but occasionally place-names.²⁷⁸ As he notes in 2. 522–4, the scriptures have declared that proofs or arguments are often drawn from a name; he then applies this to the name Aquila, but generally he follows scriptural precedent. So he uses the two explanations seemingly given for the name Noah at Gen. 5: 29 and 6: 9, *requies* ('rest') and *iustus* ('the just'), and follows scripture in stating that the name Eve meant 'life' (1. 1037; cf. Gen. 3: 20).²⁷⁹ Solomon is, by etymology, a peacemaker (*pacificus*), following 1 Chron. 22: 9; while Paul's description as *lupus rapax* (1. 717, 2. 485) derives from Gen. 49: 27, where his ancestor Benjamin is so described. The etymology of Peter's name implied by Matt. 16: 18²⁸⁰ is used at 1. 1013–15, but so is an etymology based on Hebrew, at 1. 933, where Arator states explicitly that in the Hebrew tongue Peter means 'one who recognizes or acknowledges' (*agnoscens*). Arator is happy to use both explanations, and there is no sense that both cannot be correct; it is more a matter of using what fits and maximizing the available evidence.²⁸¹ This is essentially the same methodology as Augustine used and recommended (admittedly, perhaps, as a fallback) in the face of what he termed 'unknown signs', such as Greek words of uncertain meaning.²⁸² Philip's name is explained at 1. 681 as equivalent in Hebrew to *cor oris*;²⁸³ a Greek derivation is never offered. There is no evidence that Arator understood Greek or Hebrew, and he probably relied on others for his etymologies. McKinlay routinely makes reference to Jerome's *De Nominibus Hebraeis*,²⁸⁴ but this is not followed regularly by Arator; it could not have provided his interpretations of the names Ananias

²⁷⁸ So *Porta Speciosa* ('the beautiful gate') at 1. 270, and Bethsaida at 1. 1003.

²⁷⁹ Adding 'if there had never been sin', with conceivably a hint of Vergil, *E. 6. 45 et fortunatam, si numquam armenta fuissent* (Pasiphaë: 'happy, if there had never been herds of bulls').

²⁸⁰ *tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram...* 'You are Peter, and on this rock...'

²⁸¹ Further characterization of Peter is drawn from his patronymic Barjonah (1. 667) and the name of his home town of Bethsaida (1. 1003–4).

²⁸² Cf. Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* 2. 39, especially the phrase *sed tamen ex utroque magnum aliquid insinuat scienter legentibus* ('yet both convey something important to those who read intelligently').

²⁸³ Literally 'the heart of the mouth/face', which is far from clear.

²⁸⁴ For this work 'On Hebrew Names', see Kelly (1975), 153–5.

(1. 716–18),²⁸⁵ Saulus (1. 617–18), Matthias (1. 106), or Philip. As Augustine tells us, there were by his time numerous works on biblical names by experts in Hebrew,²⁸⁶ and in the century after him others will have drawn upon or even added to these, but further precision seems unobtainable. There are occasional etymological arguments based on common nouns, as those from *homo* / *humus* in 1. 374–5 (*limumque parentem | nomine prodit homo*),²⁸⁷ and, less directly, 1. 409–10, where the gold is cast on the ground, *e quo terrenae veniunt ad pectora curae | consimili iactatur humo*.²⁸⁸ At 2. 1196–7 the word *mors* ('death') is derived from *morsus* 'bite':²⁸⁹ 'the serpent is the origin of death.'²⁹⁰

Etymologies, then, but especially the use of numbers, are powerful exegetical tools for activating the explanatory power of other scriptures, to enable Arator to follow the fundamental principle of interpreting scripture by scripture. If evidence were needed of his great respect for scripture, one indication could be provided by what can only be described as an inconspicuous but significant correction of Sedulius. When at 1. 1061–2 Arator writes that Christ, risen from the tomb, speaks not to his mother but 'to the sex that his mother held',²⁹¹ he is surely making a deliberate departure from the account of Sedulius which included Mary, his mother, among the witnesses of the empty tomb.²⁹² In general Arator quotes scripture profusely, usually but not always in his own words. At 1. 434–6 the rendering of his chosen parts of Acts 5: 3 and 4 is fairly close, notwithstanding the epic tag in *talia fando*,²⁹³ though since his aim is to prove that the Holy Spirit is God he has not selected from this passage as aptly as he might have done.²⁹⁴ At 1. 565–6 the meaning is changed

²⁸⁵ But Arator's interpretation ('sheep') is found in Jerome, *Ep.* 69. 6. 7 (CSEL 54. 691), where it is also linked with Saul, the ravening wolf.

²⁸⁶ Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* 2. 58.

²⁸⁷ 'Man shows by his name that mud was his parent.'

²⁸⁸ '... cast on the ground, from which, being similar, earthly cares visit the heart.'

²⁸⁹ *anguis origo necis*.

²⁹⁰ For these etymologies see Maltby (1991), 281 and 393 respectively. The latter is exclusively Christian.

²⁹¹ *loquitur redeuntis gloria carnis | ad sexum quem mater habet*.

²⁹² *CP* 5. 323; see p. 208. Arator's words can hardly be merely a periphrasis for 'the female sex', as Schwind argued (1995a), 6 n. 6.

²⁹³ Vergil, *A.* 2. 6.

²⁹⁴ Interestingly, he seems to place more weight on the instruction that comes from 'many books' (1. 438).

considerably, for his point is not that the task of ‘serving tables’ should be removed from the apostles, but that all Christians should be more interested in feeding off the word than off their tables.²⁹⁵ Various quotations are made from the gospels in direct speech; some are quite close paraphrases, as in 1. 278–9, *porta ego sum vobis; qui per me intrare recusat | fur erit ille nocens*;²⁹⁶ compare two passages of John, 10: 7 (*ego sum ostium verum*) and 10. 1 (*qui non intrat per ostium, ille fur est*). In his three quotations from Matthew (Matt 16: 19 at 1. 507–9; 7: 6 at 2. 334–6; 5: 41 at 2. 902–4) he shows no evidence of having used Juvenius; this is not surprising, for he was well able to do it for himself. In one case one might say that Juvenius was out of date on a point of detail, for a rendering of the Petrine commission at Matt. 16: 19 two centuries later could hardly fail to use the word *ligare* (‘to bind’).²⁹⁷ Arator also quotes from various letters of Paul, making a relevant connection with the situation in Acts to which he applies them and not using them simply as proof texts.²⁹⁸ From the Old Testament, Genesis and the Psalms are, as with Sedulius and many other writers, the most prominent (as well as often reproducing references to the Psalms from Acts, Arator adds others), and they are often directly quoted, as in 2. 283–6 (Gen. 17: 9–11) and 2. 548–9 (Ps. 103(102): 5). At 2. 1215 (cf. 1. 698–9) the reference is to Ps. 126 (125): 4, and not Ezekiel, as McKinlay implies. There are brief references to the Song of Songs at 1. 698 *quae fuscum pulchramque vocant* (cf. S. of S. 1: 4 (5) *nigra sum sed formosa*)²⁹⁹ and at 1. 1027 *dormio corde vigil* (cf. S. of S. 5: 2 *ego dormio et cor meum vigilat*).³⁰⁰ There are numerous other references to the Old Testament, many of which derive from sermons, as Schwind has shown,³⁰¹ and should not be adduced as testimony to wide reading of the scriptural texts.

²⁹⁵ *verbi potius nos convenit omnes | quam mensae captare cibos.*

²⁹⁶ Respectively, ‘I am the door for you’; ‘he who does not enter through me will be a guilty thief’. There is also a contribution from Lucan; see p. 322, n. 366 and Schwind (1995a), 78.

²⁹⁷ Juvenius used *solvere* for ‘loose’ but *nectere* and *nodare* rather than *ligare* for ‘bind’; at 3. 283–7.

²⁹⁸ At 2. 83 (1 Cor. 10: 4), 2. 499–500 (Gal. 5: 17), 2. 821–3 (Eph. 5: 14), 2. 919–21 (2 Tim. 2: 9). Arator refers simply to *epistola* or *epistula Pauli*.

²⁹⁹ ‘Which call her dark but beautiful’ and ‘I am black but beautiful’.

³⁰⁰ ‘I sleep, wakeful in mind’ and ‘I sleep but my heart is awake’.

³⁰¹ Schwind (1990), 179–201, and (1995b), and see pp. 343–4.

The rest of this chapter will treat some of the most salient themes in the *Historia Apostolica*, namely baptism, the Arians, the Jews, and the role of Peter. The aim of these very brief surveys is not to elucidate the poem's theological content—it would be impertinent for a non-theologian to attempt this—but to relate these aspects of the poet's exegesis to Arator's purposes in writing. Baptism has been the subject of a fine study by Hillier.³⁰² Notwithstanding the author's disclaimer,³⁰³ one of the most important services of this book is in the area of *Quellenforschung*, at least in the wider sense of detecting influences that contributed to Arator's thought and charting the development of particular themes. Together with, for example, an essay on Patristic interpretations of the raven, with whom Simon Magus is compared (ch. 4), a review of attitudes to circumcision (ch. 6), and an overview of the baptismal interpretations of the story of the crossing of the Red Sea (ch. 7), Hillier presents important data about the sources of particular detail. Ambrose and especially Augustine are the main sources, as one might expect, and it is assumed that Arator read them directly. There is one very probable case of a significant borrowing from Sedulius, who, like Arator, explained the blood and water that flowed from Christ's side in terms of 'the three gifts of life'.³⁰⁴ At one point Hillier presents the case that Arator used a very different kind of source, namely the *Physiologus*, the popular collection of stories and other lore from natural history, which may have already been available in a Latin translation.³⁰⁵

Hillier's monograph illustrates well the pervasive presence of the theme of baptism within the poem. At first sight his thesis that Arator was particularly concerned to emphasize and explain the role of baptism might seem dubious. One of the most significant baptisms in Acts, that of Saul, is mentioned only in an oblique way, if at all; it is not mentioned in Arator's narrative (though clear enough in Acts 9: 18), and in the exegetical portion the rushes of the basket by which he was rescued from prison signify the water of baptism in general rather than the baptism of Saul in particular (1. 741–5). The baptism

³⁰² Hillier (1993).

³⁰³ *Ibid.* 17.

³⁰⁴ CP 5. 290 *tria vitae munera nostrae*; HA 2. 92 *quod vitae tria dona daret*.

³⁰⁵ Hillier (1993), 184–91.

of Lydia (Acts 16: 14–15) is also omitted from the poem, perhaps, as Hillier argues,³⁰⁶ because it was unexceptional, even though as an individual she was highly interesting, and Arator may have felt that he could make little of it. Other themes from the Philippi narrative are preferred. But within the poem as a whole the central importance of baptism is undeniable. As well as noting baptisms recorded in Acts, such as those of the 3,000 at 1. 198–210 (Acts 2: 38–41), and of the Samaritans at 1. 625–8 (where the model, Acts 8: 15–16, is somewhat more complicated),³⁰⁷ Arator envisages others. The 5,000 are clad in white baptismal garb at 1. 293–4 (cf. Acts 4: 4); Paul's success in Ephesus is highlighted by a vivid picture of mass baptism at 2. 664–7 (cf. Acts 19: 17–18), perhaps to emphasize the positive side of the renunciation of magic. Baptism is signalled at the outset as a vital function of Peter. Though called to discipleship from his nets he has not given up fishing; he now seeks *lucra*—human gains or profits, as Juvenecus put it (1. 427)³⁰⁸—through the waters of baptism (1. 79; cf. 2. 565–6).³⁰⁹ Baptizing and being baptized, then, are a vital and continuing part of the life of the Church, and the theme is worked into various contexts. Arator sees a reference to the rest provided by baptism in the story of Christ's encounter with the woman of Samaria from John 4: 7–26 (1. 886–90); in 2. 1005–6 the Jews who band together against Paul are said to prefer blood to water; in 2. 1186–90 the purging waters of baptism were Paul's antidote to snakebite. Baptism is a symbol as well as a seal of the new dispensation: when grace overcame the (Jewish) law, it dissolved the sabbaths and 'drove people to the fountain' (1. 796–7).

It is not obvious why Arator gave such a prominent role to the topic of baptism. Certainly, it is essential to any account of the growth of the Church; it is also a theme united very closely through the baptismal formula to the doctrine of the Trinity, which is ubiquitous in his work. But, as Hillier says, it seems that Arator sees Acts

³⁰⁶ Ibid. 23 n. 2.

³⁰⁷ In that 'they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus', and not the Holy Spirit (Acts 8: 16).

³⁰⁸ See Green (2004a) and p. 100 above.

³⁰⁹ The word used here is *latices*, from the high poetic style; the words *fons*, *aqua*, and *baptisma* are also used, and a correspondingly varied set of verbs, such as *lavo*, *mergo*, *renascor*.

through baptism, rather than the reverse.³¹⁰ It is not its relative prominence in Acts that generates the emphasis, but his own interest in it. To some extent baptism functions as a badge of identity, marking off the early Christians against the world, and sixth-century Christians against the heretics, and as an assurance of ultimate security. In his time Juvencus' constant description of 'the just' functioned similarly. But the reason for the choice of such an identity marker must be sought. Hillier points to a dearth of catechetical instruction now that infant baptism was much more common,³¹¹ but even if we could see the poem's purpose as the provision of catechetical instruction (as with Sedulius, it would be a bold move to use verse as the medium for this), it must be said that some of the problems he tackles, such as the anomaly that Cornelius was righteous before baptism (1. 848–50), or the relation of John's baptism to that offered by Paul (2. 569–622), are complex ones which an average adult catechumen would not require. Nor is it easy to explain his choice of issues in terms of topical concern. The question of rebaptism and the possible justification of heretical baptism by Acts 19: 1–7, which Arator debates in 2. 569–622, had been important matters in the controversy with Donatism, but in spite of some references in Cassiodorus,³¹² this may not have been a contemporary problem, for all Arator's bellicose words (2. 577–8).³¹³ A few letters of Pope Vigilius relate to baptismal topics,³¹⁴ and one may assume that the papacy was much occupied with theoretical and practical questions arising from baptism. Arator may have been involved—subdeacons were not necessarily at the bottom of the pile—and might even have been one of his advisers. He was well informed for his time. But certainly, if we are looking for a major doctrinal issue to which the poem was directed, which played a role analogous to the Christological concerns of Sedulius, we would better look elsewhere, to Arator's attitudes to Arianism, which are as open as those of Juvencus were stealthy.³¹⁵

³¹⁰ Hillier (1993), 198.

³¹¹ *Ibid.* 197.

³¹² *Trans. Walsh*, i. 11, 519.

³¹³ To judge from Markus (1997) it was a problem to Italian churchmen, rather than the Africans themselves.

³¹⁴ Hillier (1993), 197. The archive is very incomplete.

³¹⁵ See pp. 90–4 and 117–20, and Green (2007*b*).

There are two direct references to Arius in Arator. The first occurs in the episode concerning Ananias and Sapphira, who were punished for withholding some of the proceeds of the sale of their property (1. 417–54). After arguing that the issue is not greed, but the reneging on an obligation,³¹⁶ Arator introduces a new point, calling on *vera fides* ('true faith', i.e. true believers) to consider Peter's words and seeking to prove, rather clumsily,³¹⁷ that the Holy Spirit is God. Then there is a general exhortation to those rightly baptized to stand fast, which has in the past caused some uncertainty.³¹⁸ Lurking behind much of all this is a strong anti-Arian thrust, which comes into the open when he addresses both Ananias and Arius as *divisor amare* ('a harsh divider'). Both men divided what they should not have divided, and both met death in most unpleasant ways: Ananias collapsed and died (the first word of Arator's section is the dramatic *decidit*), and Arius met an unpleasant fate in a public lavatory, as Sedulius and many others relate.³¹⁹ Arator also links this with the fate of Judas, referring back to his earlier narrative.³²⁰ Like Judas, Arius attacked the honour of the deity with his words; one betrayed, the other divided (1. 448–9).³²¹ Arius did not see the glory of the creator and wrongly thought that the maker of all things was himself made (1. 453–4).

The other reference to Arius by name is at 1. 918–19, where it comes rather suddenly in the context of Peter's vision of the sheet let down to earth (Acts 10: 11). The thrice-repeated voice which urged Peter to kill and eat the animals, reptiles, and birds which he saw signified the Trinity, according to Arator; it was against this that Arius fought and fell, denying that the one God was three persons. Here, as in Sedulius, he keeps company with Sabellius who, according to Arator, confessed one God, but his God (though he might be called also Son and Spirit) was the Father only. In words that echo the contrast of Arius and Judas, Arius divided the oneness of the Trinity, Sabellius ignored it (1. 923).³²²

³¹⁶ As explained by Schwind (1995a), 92.

³¹⁷ Cf. p. 308.

³¹⁸ See Schwind (1995a), 92 for the interpretation (and punctuation) of 1. 440–1.

³¹⁹ CP 1. 303–4; for other references see Schwind (1990), 110 n. 59.

³²⁰ Cf. 1. 92 *viscera rupta cadunt*, following Acts 1: 18.

³²¹ *maiestatis honori | vulnus ab ore parant; hic prodidit, ille diremit.*

³²² *hic dividit, ille relinquit.*

The number 3, as Schwind says, is a most powerful weapon in Arator's hands,³²³ and it is brandished constantly. *Trina fides*³²⁴ is mentioned already in 1. 114, in conjunction with baptism ('in this name the world is washed in the fountain'),³²⁵ and in 1. 157–8 the deeper meaning of 'the third hour' at which the gifts of Pentecost were given is that 'the one God has this number, being a single substance distinguished by three persons'.³²⁶ At 2. 897 the three loaves which were given to the importunate neighbour (Luke 11: 5) are explained as an exhortation to teach that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one God, and that their single substance 'triplicates' the number.³²⁷ In the same passage (at 2. 902–8) the injunction to go the second mile, and not just one (cf. Matt. 5: 41), is used for the same purpose. One plus two is three, obviously. There is no doubt that Arator is passionately concerned to present the doctrine of the Trinity at every possible moment, and that he does so to combat Arianism. The same objective accounts for the great emphasis on the divine attributes of Christ, which the Arians were accused of denying. Christ is presented as the creator of the world, and as God, from the very beginning of the poem, as we have seen, and again at 1. 57 (*creantis*), and 1. 165. (In this last passage it is interesting to compare the brusque *deus* of Peter's speech with the Christology of the original description 'Jesus of Nazareth, attested to you by God' in Acts 2: 22.)³²⁸ Peter continues with paradoxes in the Sedulian manner: *qui temporis expers | principium de matre tulit* (166–7) and *opifex hominum pars esse* (168).³²⁹ In a similar passage near the beginning of the second book, Mary was to give birth to God,³³⁰ and it was the Creator who, as prophesied, entered the virgin's womb (2. 72–3).

³²³ Schwind (1990), 215.

³²⁴ 'Threefold faith.' In the words of Châtillon (1963*a*), 19 the word *fides* is a 'cri de guerre'.

³²⁵ *quo nomine fonte lavatur*.

³²⁶ *Hunc numerum Deus unus habet, substantia simplex | personis distincta tribus*.

³²⁷ *et numerum triplicat substantia simplex*. This shows clearly the influence of Sedulius' enigmatic line *quod simplex triplicet quodque est triplicabile simplex* (CP 1. 298).

³²⁸ *Iesum Nazarenum virum adprobatum a Deo in vobis*.

³²⁹ 'although outside time he took a beginning from his mother'; 'although creator became a part of mankind'.

³³⁰ Cf. Arator's *paritura deum* (1. 66) with Sedulius' *paritura parentem* (2. 40).

This language recalls Sedulius, but the target is not the same. Sedulius' subject-matter required him to describe an incarnate Christ on earth, but his concern was to dispel thoughts that at the same time he was not truly God. As argued above,³³¹ he emphasizes his deity in order to engage with what he considered a misleading emphasis on human attributes on the part of Nestorius. Arator, on the other hand, describes a Christ ascended, but considers it essential to hammer home the doctrine that he was, and continued to be, incarnate. He carried his real flesh to heaven in his triumph over death (1. 68, 319) and thus appeared to Stephen as *caro iuncta Tonanti* ('flesh joined to deity') in a poet's inevitably simplified words (1. 613). Each poet, from his different angle, must safeguard the power of the God-man to be a complete saviour,³³² and neither aspect (once again we come up against the difficulty of using non-controversial language)³³³ must be subordinated. It may be, as Hillier suggests,³³⁴ that in various places where he emphasizes Christ's flesh Arator is giving voice to Vigilius' fears about Monophysitism, which, in disagreement with the formula of Chalcedon,³³⁵ insisted on a single, divine nature in Christ. Only a few months before the poem's recitation the Roman emperor Justinian had issued a condemnation of the so-called 'Three Chapters' which, seeking to assuage Monophysite doctrinal difficulties by anathematizing three tracts helpful to the Nestorian viewpoint, had the effect of creating dissension between pope and emperor, Rome and Constantinople, and a long-standing schism within Italy itself.³³⁶ But it was not yet a conspicuous issue, and perhaps Vigilius and his poet would not have been minded to oppose or offend Justinian, their military bulwark, while the situation of Rome was militarily so precarious.

It does, however, make good sense to see the Arians as his main opponents. In the year 544 the Goths, who were Arians, may not

³³¹ See pp. 239–42.

³³² Cf. 2. 478 *sic caro iuncta deo carnales expiat actus* ('so flesh joined to God expiates the deeds of the flesh').

³³³ Cf. pp. 242–3.

³³⁴ Hillier (1993), 46 n. 43.

³³⁵ See pp. 239–40.

³³⁶ See Sotinel (2005), 240–2, and in general Frend (1972). Hillier (1993), 12 calls it 'the most determined assault yet on the primacy of the papal see', but it was not yet seen as such.

literally have been at the gates of Rome, but they recently had been and would be there again in 546. When serving the generally tolerant Theoderic back in Ravenna, Arator may have taken a pragmatic attitude to their beliefs, but in the present situation this was not an option. The enemy were heretics, and the heretics were more than usually the enemy. He does not write to convince or convert; amidst the hostilities there was no question of achieving this. Nor does he take up any points of belief or practice other than the central dogma of the Trinity. Arator's discussion of valid and invalid baptisms in 2. 569–622 was applicable to Arian Christians, but to debate the matter with them, except perhaps for the occasional renegade or convert, was quite impractical in the circumstances. Schwind points out that the practice of priestly celibacy, presented as part of an argument in 2. 358–9, was not something that the Arians observed;³³⁷ but this is not presented in an aggressive or disputatious way. Arator's generalized anti-Arian stance has more to do with the confirmation and assertion of identity than with spreading the faith. Through the proud affirmation of a long-accepted orthodoxy, which he could find inscribed in Acts and upheld by Peter and the early Church, Arator forcefully reiterates a claim to the theological high ground. He wrote to strengthen the morale of the orthodox by attacking its enemies.

The Arians were often linked with the Jews, for their credal deficiencies in orthodox eyes were similar.³³⁸ One of the Trinitarian passages mentioned above (2. 897–908) ends with a complaint that *Iudaea*,³³⁹ the sterile fig-tree of Luke 13: 7, disdained to take the Bible in a threefold sense and so 'give Christ tribute in the numbers of the faith'.³⁴⁰ But the disagreement is not only theological. As already noted on 1. 446–50, Arius was linked with Judas, deemed the archetypal Jew. The word *Iudaea*, which Arator uses of the whole race with almost no distinction between political, legal, and religious spheres, or between the Jews of Jerusalem and those of the diaspora, is the second word of the whole poem, and from then on recurs constantly, in the context of expostulation or condemnation. One need not read

³³⁷ Schwind (1990), 219.

³³⁸ *Ibid.* 222–3.

³³⁹ *Iudaea*, Arator's favourite word for the Jews, is certainly not a geographical term.

³⁴⁰ *in fidei numeris nescit dare munera Christo.*

the running commentary of Châtillon in his six articles under the general title 'Arator, déclamateur antijuif' to realize this.³⁴¹ The Jewish race is *dura* (2. 87, 246), *ferox* (2. 659), *nocens* (2. 958; this refers back to their choice of Barabbas);³⁴² they are associated with savagery (*feritas*, 1. 709), deceit (*doli*, 2. 244, 1054), and mad rage (*furores*, 2. 834). They belch poison more cruelly than the deaf snake of Ps. 58: 4 (57: 5), the snake of *perfidia* (both 'faithlessness' and 'treachery') which hisses in the cave of the synagogue (1. 733–5). Peter's speech at 1. 191–8 is to a large extent an elaboration of Matt. 27: 25 *sanguis eius super nos et super filios nostros*.³⁴³

All this goes far beyond anything in Acts, or the need to present the Christian belief that the laws and institutions of the Old Testament had now been superseded. It is hard to believe, as Schwind argues, that the purpose is to attack the Arians, or even to add indirectly to his invective against them.³⁴⁴ Nor is it likely that Arator writes as he does simply because of his anger at the Jewish role in the recent siege of Naples, when the Jews had fought hard to assist the Gothic resistance to Belisarius in 536.³⁴⁵ In assessing the difficult matter of anti-Jewish animosity it is easy to misinterpret detail (as in the case of Juvenecus),³⁴⁶ or to underestimate the force of what might be a literary convention (as in the case of Sedulius),³⁴⁷ but in Arator's case there is undeniably, for whatever reason, great hatred and bitterness.

Mention has already been made of the role of Peter in the *Historia Apostolica*, in both books, and although this is perhaps the most important theme to Arator for theological, political, and indeed personal reasons, this treatment may be brief, not least because of a very thorough and eloquent account by Deproost.³⁴⁸ Peter is prominent from the beginning, or almost the beginning,³⁴⁹ and Arator

³⁴¹ Châtillon (1963*a*, 1963*b*, 1964, 1968–77, 1969–78, 1979).

³⁴² The adjectives signify 'hard', 'violent', and 'harmful'.

³⁴³ 'His blood be on us and on our children.'

³⁴⁴ So Schwind (1990), 222–3.

³⁴⁵ Procopius, *Bell. Goth.* 1.8. 41, 1. 10. 24. See Deproost (1989*a*), 136 n. 4.

³⁴⁶ See pp. 103–12.

³⁴⁷ Schwind (1990), 176–7, esp. n. 40; see p. 203.

³⁴⁸ Deproost (1990*b*).

³⁴⁹ Bureau (1997) sees lines 21–68 as part of the prologue (p. 158), and as unimportant (pp. 141–2) and separate from the action (p. 182); but they represent the first episode of Acts, and are an integral part of the poem.

could hardly have been more direct than he is in 1. 69–71, where Peter first appears: *Primus apostolico, parva de puppe vocatus, | agmine Petrus erat.*³⁵⁰ Peter was the first apostle to be called by Christ, and his humble origins are recalled with simple but effective alliteration, but he is also the leader of the apostles. This is not the emphasis of Acts, where he is at most *primus inter pares* and stands *in medio fratrum* (1: 15), but that of Pope Leo, who called him *apostolici ordinis princeps*, ‘the leader of the apostolic order’.³⁵¹ The next passage of the poem in which Peter appears will begin with the words *Primus at ille Petrus* (1. 160).³⁵² As well as the story of his calling (1. 75–8), Arator refers in this first Petrine episode to other passages on this theme: Peter loved to bring his catch to shore (Luke 5: 6–7);³⁵³ now he fishes in a better place (John 21: 6, alluding to the right-hand side of the boat where Christ bade him try). In the brief comparison with Paul at 2. 564–8, he is again the fisherman. But at the same time he is also responsible for Christ’s sheep (following John 21: 17), and indeed eager to add to their number, in which task he is supreme (line 81).³⁵⁴

In this episode Arator also comments in his manneristic way that ‘the hand that held the hook was transferred to the key’ (1. 74–5). This point is in fact integral to the understanding of the poem, as the foundation of papal power and jurisdiction. The passage from Matthew’s gospel in which it occurs (Matt. 16: 16–19) is used by Arator several times, and it will be helpful to quote it, again in the Vulgate:

... *respondens Simon Petrus dixit, tu es Christus filius Dei vivi. 17. Respondens autem Iesus dixit ei, ‘beatus es Simon Bar Iona quia caro et sanguis non revelavit tibi sed Pater meus qui in caelis est. 18. et ego dico tibi quia tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam et portae inferi non praevalent adversus eam. 19. et tibi dabo claves regni caelorum et quodcumque ligaveris super terram erit ligatum in caelis et quodcumque solveris super terram erit solutum in caelis.*

³⁵⁰ ‘First in the apostolic order was Peter, he who was called from a small boat.’

³⁵¹ This is Sermon 82. 3 (CCSL 138A, 519–22), or 69. 3 (SC 200. 50–2).

³⁵² ‘But Peter, the leader.’

³⁵³ The two boats of this passage are allegorized in 1. 979: Christ is in Peter’s boat, the other is the synagogue.

³⁵⁴ Cf. 2. 259–61 for his skill in increasing the flock.

Replying, Simon Peter said, 'You are Christ the Son of the living God.' Replying then, Jesus said to him, 'You are blessed, Simon Barjonah because flesh and blood did not reveal it to you but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to you, that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of Heaven and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.'

Peter, with the keys, is the doorkeeper who gives access to the true temple, into which the lame Israel could not be brought (1. 281–3: Arator is allegorizing the story of the lame man brought to the Beautiful Gate). The door to which the Jews have been brought by the prophets ('Isaiah, Daniel, and the prophets like them', 1. 275), who can take them no further, has been entrusted to Peter, who in confessing Christ showed what he knew, and not, like a prophet, something whose fulfilment lay in the future.³⁵⁵ This refers to his confession of Matt. 16: 16. Later, in the passage where Arator meditates on the healing effect of Peter's shadow, a gift given to no one else, he goes so far as to say (1. 505–9) that Peter rules both the earthly Church and the heavenly one which it foreshadows, basing this on an explicit quotation of Matt. 16: 19.³⁵⁶ Having his own keys, the *claviger aethereus* ('heavenly keyholder', 1. 899) has immediate access to heaven in prayer, as in 1. 825. An important passage in the narrative of Peter's meeting with Cornelius, leading to the admission of the Gentiles, also refers back to the Matthean episode quoted above (1. 976–7): the relevant gift was given to Peter when Christ 'granted him to enjoy the glory of his kindly name, Peter, whom he mandated to wield the powers of his Church'.³⁵⁷ The solemn promises of Christ's commission to Peter also underpin the climax of the first book, which describes Peter's rescue from prison by the angel (1. 1007–76), and draws magnificently confident conclusions. Having a name derived from the word for 'rock' (1013), Peter is a

³⁵⁵ *Haec ianua Petro | credita, qui Christum confessus cognita monstrat, | non ventura sonat.*

³⁵⁶ *'Quod solveris', inquit | 'Quodque ligas terris sic vinctum sive solutum | aethere perdurat'* ('What you loose, he says, and what you bind on earth endures, thus bound or loosed, in heaven').

³⁵⁷ *cum nominis almi | huic Christus dat laude frui, quem iura locavit | ecclesiae portare suae.*

strong foundation for a Church that will never fall (Matt. 16: 18). He is divinely appointed as the guard (though in prison!) of the heavenly court, and making him the summit of his Church God orders him to overcome hell (1056–7). The focus gradually turns to the chains themselves, which guarantee Rome's safety. Here one should imagine a scene of great excitement in the church to which they gave its name, as Book 1 moves to its triumphalist ending (1074–6):

Haec invicta manu vel religiosa triumpho
moenia non ullo penitus quatentur ab hoste.
Claudit iter bellis qui portam pandit in astris.

These walls, unconquered by force of arms and holy in their triumph, will never at all be shaken by any enemy. He who opens the gate in heaven closes the way to wars.

Rome will be protected as surely as Peter was, and just as hell will not prevail against the Church, so the walls of Christian Rome will never be overcome.

When discussing the *Historia Apostolica* it is important to see it in its original context, a poem written for a specific situation. Châtillon surely overstated his point when he likens Arator to an agitator or an 'indefatigable tribune';³⁵⁸ we should rather imagine a dignified occasion with no little ceremony. The exact role of Vigilus himself can only be guessed (he may have needed to plead pressure of other business, as Châtillon suggested, but when he did attend he might not have disdained to pass through the crowded Subura on his way to the church), but we should surely assume at the very least that he was present for much of the reading. If not a time for panegyric, the event would be a ceremony that enhanced his authority. Not knowing what praises and deference greeted him, the modern reader must be guided by Arator's letter to Pope Vigilus which was prefaced to his poem, in which he expressed his gratitude for the safety in time of war and doubt. After his 'shipwreck' (line 9),³⁵⁹ a safe haven was prepared for him 'by the one who had a dry path through the middle of the waves' (13–14). Christ had walked on the waves (Matt. 14: 25), but so too had Peter, and Sedulius had shown how this episode could

³⁵⁸ So Châtillon (1963*a*), 123.

³⁵⁹ See p. 258.

be used without any mention of Peter's fear.³⁶⁰ Arator described his gaining of the pope's protection as being transferred 'to the sheepfolds of Peter' (11), and Peter's responsibility for the Christian sheepfold is a prominent image in the poem (1. 754, 1011–12). Peter and Vigilius are virtually assimilated, and this would be taken for granted by the enthusiastic listeners. Peter is the leader of the Church, and in this office throughout the *Historia Apostolica* he foreshadows the popes, in keeping with the doctrines of papal jurisdiction developed by Vigilius' predecessors, especially Damasus and Leo.³⁶¹

EPIC

At the very beginning of his illuminating study of Peter, Deproost highlighted the importance of both Peter and Vergil.³⁶² We have seen Peter awarded a position of priority over Paul, although Paul's role is certainly a strong and a vivid one,³⁶³ and no more need be said here about that question; but a similar point could be made about the relation of Vergil and Lucan in Arator's poem. Previous chapters have clearly shown that in Juvenius and Sedulius Vergil is the dominant influence from classical poetry; this chapter will begin its study of the epic qualities of Arator's poem by setting out the claims of Lucan. Although on a crude (but not uncritical) calculation, based on the data of McKinlay, Vergilian intertexts—there are a few from the *Georgics*, almost none from the *Eclogues*—outnumber those of Lucan by something like 3 to 2, Lucan makes a very significant contribution, with prominent appearances in many contexts. In the words of Carl Hosius, an editor of Lucan, Arator treads almost

³⁶⁰ CP 3. 230–2. Arator refers briefly to Peter's walking on the water in 1. 160, where the text is surely corrupt. McKinlay gives *cui servit in aequore gressus* ('whom walking on the sea served'); better sense would be given by *quem servat in aequore gressus* ('whom his walking preserved on the sea'), an expression not too contorted for Arator.

³⁶¹ See Ullmann (1960), and Deproost (1990b), 101–21.

³⁶² Deproost (1990b), 9: 'deux espérances se rappellent à elle [Rome] par la voix d'un poète [Arator]: Pierre et Virgile.'

³⁶³ See pp. 273–4.

constantly in Lucan's footsteps.³⁶⁴ His influence is conspicuous right from the beginning of the *Historia Apostolica*. Early on, as already noted, Lucan is present in Arator's development of the theme 'the death of death': his expression (*mortisque potestas*) | *se vincente perit*³⁶⁵ is closely modelled on Lucan's phrase at 5. 267 *te vincente perit*.³⁶⁶ In line 34 Arator's phrase *nova pompa triumphi* ('a new celebration of triumph')—Christ's triumph is a very important theme in the poem—recalls Lucan's phrase *pompa triumphi* at 1. 286.³⁶⁷ Three lines later God, welcoming his son in heaven, is called *rector Olympi*:³⁶⁸ this occurs in Lucan 2. 4 and 5. 620, but not at all in Vergil, who prefers the phrase *regnator Olympi*.³⁶⁹ Another such classicizing title (also post-Vergilian, it seems) appears in line 49: *tonans*, 'the thunderer'. This is not unusual in itself, for Juvencus, Sedulius, and other Christian poets had no problem with it;³⁷⁰ what is notable is that the word is found within a phrase which by its identical rhythm and placing recalls Lucan's words *suo servire Tonanti* at 1. 35–6. Lucan envisaged heaven as 'serving its God' (in this case Nero);³⁷¹ Arator declares that the elements do not cease to serve their God (referring in particular to the star followed by the Magi and the cloud which enveloped the ascending Christ). The Neronian context recurs at lines 62–3: just as Lucan deemed the chaos and destruction of the civil wars worthwhile if they led to Nero's rule, so Arator (in almost exactly the same words)³⁷² declares that the disasters that

³⁶⁴ *Lucani perpetuus fere pedisequus*, quoted in Deproost (1990b), 286 from Hosius (1907), 7.

³⁶⁵ 'and the power of death perishes even as it conquers'; lines 9–10. See also p. 269.

³⁶⁶ Following Ansoerge (1914), 58–9, Schwind (1995a), 78 includes this in his category of 'concessions to epic language', passages where borrowing has left its mark on Arator's syntax, but this explanation is not needed. Cf. *Petrus... se duce* in 2. 261. Nor is the syntax in Arator's borrowing of Lucan 1. 203 at 1. 279 *fur erit ille nocens* anomalous.

³⁶⁷ The theme of triumph is discussed further at pp. 326–7.

³⁶⁸ 'ruler of Olympus'. Given Arator's usage, it is unlikely, *pace* Hillier (1993), 145, that the use of *Olympus* is meant to suggest obsolescence in 2. 289 or elsewhere.

³⁶⁹ Vergil, A. 2. 779, 7. 558, 10. 437.

³⁷⁰ Hagendahl (1958), 388–9. Avitus may be an exception, as argued by Roberts (1980).

³⁷¹ There is no sign in Arator of an ironic reading of the dedication to Nero, and it is unlikely.

³⁷² Lucan 1. 37–8 *scelera ipsa nefasque | hac mercede placent* ('for this recompense even crime and evil are acceptable'). Arator adds *potius* ('rather').

followed the *mala criminis Evae* ('the woes of Eve's crime') were welcome, for with the world's redemption a better state emerged. In Arator the word *scelera* refers to the crimes committed against Christ by the Jews, as in his opening line (indeed both he and Lucan refer back to their opening lines here) and often elsewhere. There are many more allusions to Lucan throughout Arator; but this concentration early in the first book is quite remarkable.

Lucan's rhetoric also leaves a notable imprint. Arator is an accomplished user of rhetoric, thanks to his education in Milan and his administrative experience in Ravenna,³⁷³ but reading of the poets is another source, and one whose importance should not be underestimated. Phrases such as *O quantum* (1. 108; see 4. 385), *O numquam* (1. 527; see 9. 222), and *utinam* (2. 1107; Lucan uses this four times)³⁷⁴ are common in many kinds of writing, and he will have found them elsewhere too, but given the alternation of narrative and reflection which are such a strong feature of Arator it is reasonable to assume Lucan's inspiration. It is clear that in the exclamation at 1. 248 Arator's line-ending *quam saepe gravatos* ('how often men weighed down . . .') follows Lucan 5. 808 (*somno quam saepe gravata* ('how often weighed down (by sleep)')). Another rhetorical ploy is to guide or challenge the reader or listener with a command or exhortation, such as *discite* ('learn') in 1. 1028 and 2. 194.³⁷⁵ Such a word is in itself quite unremarkable; but closer examination of the context in which Lucan uses the word at 4. 377 reveals that the passage was in Arator's mind. He makes use of it when he builds an extended apostrophe which includes the words *prodige rerum* and *ambitiose* at 1. 393 and 395.³⁷⁶ Lucan's whole sentence (4. 373–8), with its apostrophe to wasteful luxury and an ostentatious hunger for delicatessen (the context is the eagerness of Afranius' thirsting soldiers to refresh themselves even with muddy water; typically, Lucan goes to the other extreme), must have impressed Arator as a forceful exhortation to material contentment, and so he recalls it in his picture of the early Church having all things in common. Another

³⁷³ See pp. 253–7.

³⁷⁴ 2. 306, 4. 509, 8. 88, 306.

³⁷⁵ For the imitation of Lucan 1. 417 in 1. 488 *quaerite* . . ., see p. 302.

³⁷⁶ These adjectives mean 'prodigal' and 'ostentatious', respectively.

rhetorical passage of Arator with a knot of allusions to Lucan is in 1. 439–40. The first of these lines ends with the words *quo tendimus ultra* ('where' or in effect 'why do we proceed further') and the next with *qui iure venitis* ('those who come rightly...'): compare the words in the plea of Rome to Caesar's soldiers in Lucan 1. 190–1 *quo tenditis ultra?... si iure venitis, | si cives, huc usque licet*.³⁷⁷ Rhythm plays an important part here too, and the similar rhythm underlines the similar syntax.³⁷⁸ The contexts diverge, as often, and it is not helpful to devise stories to link them; Arator surely does not intend to suggest an integral connection between the plea to Caesar to stop at the Rubicon and Peter's exhortation to stand fast on doctrinal matters.³⁷⁹

But the influence of Lucan may go still deeper. It is possible to discern a pervasive relationship between the *Apostolic History* and the *Civil War*, based on a pattern of inversions. Arator may be seen to adapt important structural aspects of Lucan for his own purposes. Both Lucan and Arator have two main heroes (or 'protagonists', if that term is preferred for Lucan), who are in some ways equally matched, in others not. In each poem the heroes are contrasting characters: one might apply Bureau's distinction of the 'statisme' of Peter and the 'dynamisme' of Paul,³⁸⁰ but the point here is not to compare the characters in any detail.³⁸¹ The point is that each poem has two contrasting heroes; at the moral level one pair is deeply flawed, the other of outstanding holiness. Whereas Caesar and Pompey are destructive and in total opposition to each other, Peter and Paul direct their parallel skills and energies towards processes totally beneficent; and whereas Lucan's poem develops a trajectory of

³⁷⁷ 'Where are you going beyond this? If you come legally, if you come as citizens, you may come this far and no further.'

³⁷⁸ In the following line of Arator another rhythmical echo of Lucan has been detected: cf. *HA* 1. 441 *hoc state loco*, 'stand in this place' with Lucan 6. 133 *quo stare loco*, 'in the place where they (must) stand'.

³⁷⁹ It would be bizarre (if easy) to link the waters of the Rubicon with those of baptism, which Arator implies. For the interpretation of 1. 440–1 as an authorial explanation, see Schwind (1995*a*), 92 and Deproost (1990*a*), 77–8.

³⁸⁰ Bureau (1991), 151 and (1997), 114, 153.

³⁸¹ There are certain touches of Caesar's urgency and indefatigability in Paul, and even verbal hints—cf. *HA* 2. 242 *iam rabidas... Paulus superaverat iras* and Lucan 1. 183 *iam gelidas Caesar... superaverat Alpes*—but it is not suggested here that Caesar 'is', or even is like Paul, or that Pompey 'is' or resembles Peter.

increasing conflict between Caesar and Pompey, Arator presents, and at the end celebrates, a picture of synergic harmony, the *concordia apostolorum*. Caesar and Pompey both leave Rome, the former after a contemptuously short visit in Book 3, while Peter and Paul choose (*delegisse*; the word is Arator's) to come to it. The narrator, as eager as Lucan's was gloomy, intervenes to welcome both.³⁸² By the end of Arator's poem the city of Rome has become the centre of things, not a city left to its own devices.

Arator's triumphalist finale actually exploits the executions of Peter and Paul which happened under Nero; Arator doubtless knew that the Caesar, the *tyrannus* to whom he refers,³⁸³ was the Nero whom Lucan seems, and will have seemed to Arator, to praise. The emperor, though 'no small enemy' (*non parvus... hostis*, 2. 1236), is easily overcome. Contrasted with Rome in both epics is the land of Egypt, a countervailing presence, a sinister 'other', or at least a rival. It was fatal to Pompey, and almost fatal to Caesar (10. 541; this is the final episode of the poem), whereas Peter and Paul are compared to Moses and Aaron—who are, implicitly, their 'types'—who led the Hebrews out of Egypt.³⁸⁴ In Lucan the loss of *libertas* (together with the Republic) is often lamented;³⁸⁵ Arator greets the freedom brought by Christ or his representatives to the Christian people.³⁸⁶ Lucan regrets the repudiation of the law (1. 2, 175–6) and the perverted ethics and behaviour of civil war; Arator rejoices that the requirements of the Jewish law, with their fatal consequences, as in 2.126–7 and 269–70,³⁸⁷ have been replaced.

Within this extensive scheme of inversions, or reversals, two particular themes occupy an important place: Christ's descent to hell, and his triumph over death. When Christ descended to hell, as described at the very beginning of the poem, he 'moved the enlivened corpses'³⁸⁸ and made them part of his triumph. Lucan's witch

³⁸² 1. 1017 and 2. 1052.

³⁸³ 2. 1234.

³⁸⁴ 2. 1237 *Aegyptus mundi formam gerit* ('Egypt contains the sense of the world'). In other words it is a figure.

³⁸⁵ Ahl (1976), 55–7 and *passim*.

³⁸⁶ As in 1. 365, 2. 105, 1136, 1242.

³⁸⁷ The new situation is presented in Arator as a situation of no law (but one of grace), or a new law.

³⁸⁸ 1. 12 *animata cadavera movit*.

Erichtho, who could have overcome the laws of hell and resurrected a whole army, according to Lucan (6. 633–6), chooses to enliven one corpse and whips it into life using a live serpent: *verberat immotum vivo serpente cadaver* (727). She is clearly in league with the serpentine Devil, if confirmation were needed. There may be hints of this passage in Sedulius' treatment of the Lazarus episode, as Van der Laan thought,³⁸⁹ as there is at *CP* 5. 250. With less to go on, Šubrt suggested a catabatic reading of the healing of Lazarus in Juvenecus.³⁹⁰

The second theme, one also present from the beginning of the *Historia Apostolica*, is that of triumph. Death had a triumph, but was overwhelmed by it (1. 10),³⁹¹ and the construction of Christ's ascension as a triumph in 1. 13–16 is made explicit, as we have seen, with an allusion to Lucan in the words *nova pompa triumphi* (1. 34). This triumph underlies the message of the apostolic preaching: in 1. 164 Peter, in his sermon on the resurrection of Christ, 'explains to his marvelling audience the heavenly triumphs'.³⁹² In Lucan's civil, and evil, war, by contrast, there can be no triumphs (1. 12). Arator plays down human, secular, triumphs. One example of this can be seen in the desperate rhetoric of Demetrius—compared by Schwind to that of a general in Lucan, as we saw³⁹³—*restat sors certa triumphi | pro superis movisse manus* (2. 708–9).³⁹⁴ Man fights to protect the gods; the scorn of the passage³⁹⁵ is enhanced by an echo of Lucan's *movisse manus* (2. 261), which happens to be closely preceded by an example of his common ironic apostrophe to the gods, *o superi*, in the mouth of Brutus. Demetrius' triumph is a figment of his own heated imagination. The distance between Christian triumphs and traditional ones may also be seen in the passage where Arator refers to the illustrious past history of Troas or Troy (2. 753–4). He begins by calling upon the city to bring her titles of fame into his poem and 'add to her glory triumphs which shine more clearly from true

³⁸⁹ Van der Laan (1990), 186 (on lines 4. 277–88); note esp. the phrase *exanimisque artus* (*CP* 4. 277, Lucan 6. 721)

³⁹⁰ Šubrt (1993), 15.

³⁹¹ *pondere mersa triumphi*.

³⁹² *rettulit aethereos populo mirante triumphos*.

³⁹³ See p. 296.

³⁹⁴ 'there remains for us an assured condition of triumph, to have taken up arms for the gods above'.

³⁹⁵ See p. 296.

actions.³⁹⁶ Christ's triumph as shown in the saving of Eutychus is greater than any triumph by or over the ancient Trojans. Another triumph of Christ is seen in 2. 653–4: the reaction of the evil spirit who, to their great discomfiture, denies knowledge of the Jewish exorcists, but not of Jesus or Paul, provides a 'spectacle for the people, and a triumphal crown through the Lord's victory'.³⁹⁷ In the stirring ending to Book 1 Arator is confident that Rome's walls are *invicta manu* ('unconquered'), but stresses that, military conflict notwithstanding, this is no secular triumph; the walls are also *religiosa triumpho* ('holy in their triumph').

The above Lucanian, or rather anti-Lucanian reading—which could be seen as a solution to the twin problem identified by Deproost³⁹⁸ of Lucan's pessimistic view of heroes and the inadequacies of Vergil's Aeneas—is suggested as an alternative to a reading recently put forward by Bureau.³⁹⁹ Bureau's reading is exclusively Vergilian (as far as classical literature is concerned), and one firmly based on the figure and roles of Aeneas, whom he ingeniously sees replicated in Arator's two heroes.⁴⁰⁰ Aeneas is chosen because he is a founder. Bureau takes us back to the programmatic couplet in the letter to Vigilius (lines 17–18), where Arator declared his eagerness to celebrate the *labores* ('efforts', 'labours') 'of those by whose voices the faith secured its journey throughout the world'.⁴⁰¹ These *labores*, prominent in this context but not (it should be said) in the *Historia Apostolica* itself,⁴⁰² are read by Bureau in terms of the proem to the *Aeneid*,⁴⁰³ where Aeneas is introduced as a man forced by Juno to undergo so many disasters and tackle so many 'labours' in founding the Roman race. The word *labores* provides the 'thématique

³⁹⁶ *et laudibus adde triumphos | qui magis ex vero fulgent tibi clarius actu.*

³⁹⁷ *quae tunc spectacula plebi | quamve triumphalem Domino vincente coronam | contigit inde geri.* The notion of a spectacle is fundamental to Christian discourse of various kinds, and to Lucan (Leigh 1997).

³⁹⁸ Deproost (1990*b*), 309.

³⁹⁹ Bureau (1997).

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.* 127.

⁴⁰¹ Or, perhaps, 'maintains its world-wide progress'. The Latin is *sensibus ardor inest horum celebrare labores, | quorum voce fides obtinet orbis iter.*

⁴⁰² Unless the plural *labores* should be read at 2. 949. In any case the word is qualified by the adjective *vacui* ('empty').

⁴⁰³ Vergil, *A.* 1. 8–11.

fondatrice' of Arator's poem.⁴⁰⁴ This similarity between Vergil and Arator at this point 'tends to prove' that Lucan, for all his prominence, is not a source.⁴⁰⁵ Aeneas is a suitable hero also because he comes from the East (Troy—but as has just been shown, ancient Troy received short shrift from Arator),⁴⁰⁶ and because he prefigures *Roma Christiana*. There is a kind of figural relationship here; in the *Historia Apostolica* we have the accomplishment of a reality figured, or pre-figured, by Aeneas' arrival (p. 106). (Later Bureau, who takes a very strong view of the allegorical or figural tendencies of Arator, claims that the relation of Augustan Rome, as seen through Vergil, to Christian Rome resembles the relation of Old Testament to New with 'perfect coherence').⁴⁰⁷ Aeneas also prefigures the role of Peter: like Aeneas, he brings with him a promise—in his case, to be the head of the Church⁴⁰⁸—and an election—he has been chosen—for this role, and, also like Aeneas, he offers 'un recours salutaire par l'intégration des compagnons'⁴⁰⁹ as well as 'une fonction séparatrice', for certain people must be eliminated or separated from the Christian body. These parallels between Peter and Aeneas do not seem particularly close, nor are the concepts of 'médiation' and 'affirmation' that the two heroes are supposed to embody concepts that immediately strike the reader. If there were strong reasons a priori to expect a Christian hero to be moulded in the image of Aeneas, comments such as these might have more force, but as we have seen it should not be supposed that Aeneas was even respected as a hero in Christian circles. One can agree that Arator is 'extremely independent' of the letter of Vergil, whom he 'summons according to his needs', but not that his poem is essentially Vergilian in conception.⁴¹⁰

For Bureau a verb that sums up Peter's role is *rego* ('rule', 'govern'), prominent in the exegesis of the effect of Peter's shadow, in l. 505 and

⁴⁰⁴ It is used also in Silius 1. 3, but this is not 'foundation epic'; Bureau (1997), 107.

⁴⁰⁵ Bureau (1997), 107.

⁴⁰⁶ See pp. 267 and 326.

⁴⁰⁷ Bureau (1997), 489. This is one of the themes in Deproost's critique (2001); another is the idea of the double hero.

⁴⁰⁸ Matt. 16: 16–19, quoted above (p. 318).

⁴⁰⁹ Aeneas perhaps has fewer chances to integrate people, and seems not to have Peter's great zeal to do so (1. 81, 2. 259–61).

⁴¹⁰ Bureau (1997), 157.

511;⁴¹¹ it encapsulates the organizing activity mentioned in the *Aeneid*.⁴¹² Verbs that characterize Paul, on the other hand, are *certare*, *vincere*, *superare*.⁴¹³ These sum him up quite well in some respects, but say nothing, for example, about his role as teacher (this is singled out in 2. 567–8 and 1231–2, both times in comparison with Peter).⁴¹⁴ It is also difficult to appreciate the cogency of Bureau's treatment of the words *primus* and *princeps*, applied to Peter (1. 69, 160, 2. 1225). The word *primus* from the first line of the *Aeneid* may indeed underlie the word's emphatic use to connote Peter's primacy as the first disciple to be summoned by Christ, but there is no need to infer at the same time some kind of primacy 'of value' from this allusion, if such it is. The claim to be first, chronologically speaking, is one often made in antiquity. Of course, Arator may develop the idea in various ways (as Deproost says, chronology influences hierarchy),⁴¹⁵ but it is another thing to claim that the notion of special leadership qualities or moral superiority is embedded in the Vergilian context.⁴¹⁶ The word *princeps* resists such treatment even more strongly. In the *Aeneid* it is used of Turnus, Gyas, Palinurus, Massicus, Asilas, and Cybele, and so does not seem to have strong connotations of leadership or pre-eminence. Arator seems certainly to use it as equivalent to *primus* in 2. 1225, of Peter's role, but this fact has no relation to Vergil's use of the word. Rather than wishing to maintain that there is 'une véritable remise de perspective',⁴¹⁷ one senses that this is not a Vergilian perspective at all.

Vergil and Lucan, then, are supreme, with Lucan perhaps having the more prominent role. What about other poets? McKinlay collected a wide variety of '*testimonia et fontes*', based on the earlier researches of Anson, Schroedinger, and Manitius,⁴¹⁸ which is at

⁴¹¹ Ibid. 118–19; also in Bureau (1991), 149.

⁴¹² 1. 153 (the statesman quelling the crowd); 1. 230 (Jupiter); 1. 340 (Dido); 4. 336 (the living breath in the human body). The verb is not applied to Aeneas himself.

⁴¹³ The verbs mean 'to strive', 'conquer', 'overcome'. *Certare* is used of Paul only once in a positive sense (2. 847); *superare* is used also of Peter in 2. 1234.

⁴¹⁴ It would be difficult to relate their teaching role to Aeneas, who often receives instruction.

⁴¹⁵ Deproost (1990b), 185–6.

⁴¹⁶ A sceptic might ask why a particular context is privileged; why not, for example, the reference to Turnus in *A.* 12. 33 *quantos primus patiare labores?*

⁴¹⁷ Bureau (1997), 116.

⁴¹⁸ Anson (1914), Schrödinger (1911), Manitius (1891).

first sight wider than what Huemer assembled for Juvenecus and Sedulius. But although the classical references are more helpful than the references to Patristic writers which occupy the same space beneath the text,⁴¹⁹ caution is necessary. Different scholars will approach the task of evaluating such similarities in different ways; in the present study, it may be helpful to say, McKinlay is not followed when the resemblances are obviously inexact, or consist of commonplace words; or when the words involved, even if two authors present them in exactly the same form and in the same part of the hexameter, are ones inherently likely to be used together, such as *contagia morbi* ('the infection of disease') or *litore navis* ('ships on the shore'). Such phrases could easily have been chosen independently; and the same may be true when different inflections of common words are involved (e.g. *pulsae... tenebrae* at *HA* 1. 1021 and *pulsis... tenebris* at Ovid, *M.* 7. 703). The use of 'auditory' parallels, such as *sine crimine*, cited by McKinlay from various writers as (presumably) a *fons* for *sine semine* at 1. 3, will also give rise to some doubt, though if three words or more are involved the probability of dependence is greater, as with many of Schwind's additions to the pool.⁴²⁰ There will also be disagreement about the significance attached to such allusions, imitations, or echoes, especially where a whole passage is concerned. When, for example, Roberts seeks to draw a pattern of imitation or *aemulatio* from similar passages from the three New Testament epicists, he is appealing to very small-scale changes which some critics might regard as insignificant in this regard.⁴²¹ When, in his study of Arator's portrayal of the death of Judas, Deproost constructs an ambitious mosaic of allusion or intertextuality, he does so by making ingenious links between a wide variety of passages whose intrinsic probability, at least on the criteria implicit in the contributions of McKinlay and Schwind, could be disputed.⁴²²

Ovid and Statius are apparent, but Ovid less so than Statius. Attention has already been drawn to a Statian allusion early in

⁴¹⁹ See the criticism of Schwind (1990), 20–1, esp. n. 55.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.* 20 n. 53, and more clearly Schwind (1995a), 77–87 and 112–18.

⁴²¹ Roberts (1985), 174–5. The passages are *ELQ* 4. 334–5, *CP* 3. 129, and *HA* 1. 811.

⁴²² Deproost himself (1990a, 285) admits some surprise when he seeks to present a general picture of Ovidian influence on Arator.

Arator,⁴²³ and some other notable ones may be mentioned. At 1. 88 *permisit membra furori*, Arator applies to Judas a phrase which Statius uses in *Thebaid* 10. 609 of Tiresias, about to declare the need for human sacrifice;⁴²⁴ and at 1. 776 *saucius infans* Arator describes the circumcised child in a phrase which Statius used of Opheltes, the child killed by the serpent (*Theb.* 6. 39).⁴²⁵ Deproost ventures that an allusion to Statius' *Achilleid* at *HA* 1. 1071 (1. 191 *circumdata nexu*) makes it possible to connect the chains of Peter that protect Rome with the defeat of the Minotaur by Theseus.⁴²⁶ At 2. 1067 there is a very close similarity to Statius, *Ach.* 1. 20 *Solverat Oebalio classem de litore pastor*: Arator writes *solverat Eoo classem de litore vector*.⁴²⁷

The reader of McKinlay's *testimonia* will also find numerous references to Valerius Flaccus and Silius Italicus, particularly the latter, who (on a crude and uncritical count) seems indeed to outscore Ovid. Many will instinctively share the doubt of Schwind about the validity of these, whether they know Silius or not (and most do not); and circumspection is indeed necessary, not only when McKinlay, as he often does, cites a passage from Silius after providing a much more likely one, usually from Vergil,⁴²⁸ but also when Silius is given as the main or the only source for a phrase. Silius was a little-known author in Late Antiquity; indeed Sidonius, writing in fifth-century Gaul, classed him in the immediate company of others of whom almost no trace now remains⁴²⁹ Though Claudian and Ausonius seem to know him,⁴³⁰ there is little sign of him in the sixth century; a recent survey makes unspecific references to the *Latin Anthology* and to the *Carmina Epigraphica*,⁴³¹ seldom datable, and also cites

⁴²³ At 1. 6; see pp. 269–70.

⁴²⁴ See Deproost (1989a), 146.

⁴²⁵ For ancient views of circumcision, see Hillier (1993), 127.

⁴²⁶ Deproost (1990b), 210.

⁴²⁷ In his line ('the captain had unmoored his fleet from the eastern shore') Arator has replaced just two words: 'Spartan' and 'shepherd'.

⁴²⁸ In these cases it is generally reasonable to take the first one, and ignore those introduced with the words *sic etiam*.

⁴²⁹ Sidonius, c. 9. 260–1, with Gaetulicus, Marsus, and Pedo, but also Tibullus.

⁴³⁰ For Claudian, see Cameron (1970), 339–40; for Ausonius, the index of Green (1991) raises some possibilities.

⁴³¹ Bassett *et al.* (1976).

Corippus, whose career, in Africa and Constantinople, followed a very different trajectory from Arator's.⁴³² But although corroboratory evidence that Silius was available to Arator is weak, the possibility should not be entirely ruled out that he had at some time read a text of Silius in northern Italy or Rome, and left signs of this in up to a dozen places.⁴³³ Some of the resemblances cannot simply be dismissed as superficial or involving 'phrases that had long been the stock-in-trade of any versifier'.⁴³⁴ It is, however, always possible that similar adaptations of common epic language had occurred independently to Silius and Arator, and that similarities are coincidental. The voluminous output of Silius makes it rather more likely, and this point can also be made about similarities between Arator and the prolific Martial or the various elegiac works of Ovid. But it should not be assumed without very good reason—and our patchy knowledge of manuscripts is not justification enough—that these and other works which seem at first blush to be at variance with the likely interests of a sixth-century subdeacon were not known to him.

As for other classical authors, no convincing or even plausible echoes or imitations of Lucretius have come to light, but the revelations in an article of Smolak on a poem of pseudo-Hilary, conceivably as late as Arator, seem to warn against hasty conclusions.⁴³⁵ There is a clear similarity between 2. 1072 *incanduit undis* and Catullus 64. 13, where we find the rare *incanduit*, the reading of the archetype, followed by *unda*.⁴³⁶ There is at least one echo of Horace (not necessarily, of course, the fruit of direct reading): his *bimarisve Corinthi | moenia* (*Odes* 1. 7. 2–3) is used at 2. 507–8.⁴³⁷ Imitations of Juvenal may be seen at *HA* 1. 163 *populo mirante* (cf. Juvenal 2. 67—there is also an exact parallel at Silius 16. 502), and at 1. 675 *volat axe citato*, where the eminent Ethiopian is described in words that originally described Juvenal's boy racer (1. 60 *pervolat axe*

⁴³² See Amann (1885 and 1889), which I have been unable to consult. At *Iohannis* 5. 28 a line from the proem of Valerius Flaccus seems a more likely model for the unusual phrase *cursus rumpere* than a line in the middle of Silius (7. 568).

⁴³³ Cf. also the parallels offered by Ansorge (1914), 69–72.

⁴³⁴ Laistner (1954), 212.

⁴³⁵ Smolak (1973).

⁴³⁶ See further p. 336. The words quoted together seem to mean 'the waves grew white'.

⁴³⁷ 'or the walls of Corinth on its two seas'. Arator has *-que* ('and') for *-ve*.

citato). Among Late Antique authors whom Arator knew and used, we may confidently number Claudian, Prudentius, and above all Sedulius.⁴³⁸

After this survey of the contribution of classical poets to Arator, both in overall structure and in detail, it is now appropriate to examine a particular episode, and the obvious one to choose is his storm description. Juvenius was bound to include the storm in his epic, and Sedulius saw theological potential in it, as well as something of the miraculous; Arator, though somewhat more selective, probably had no hesitation about introducing this adventure on Paul's journey to Rome, especially as his subsequent encounter with the poisonous snake in Malta had obvious attractions. Relatively little of this episode (2. 1067–155)—about one-third—is exegesis, but as well as being an arresting piece of narrative it sheds interesting light on Arator's purposes, and it is interesting to see how he uses Vergil, his *modello codice* or code-model in Conte's terminology, and various exemplary models. In the following short analysis of lines 1067–92, at which point reflective comment briefly takes over, it is not proposed to examine other interpretations, but reference must be made to studies by Deproost and Bureau.⁴³⁹

Solverat Eoo classem de litore vector	
Austri nactus opem, cuius spiramine laeta	
crebrescente via velique patentibus alis	
aequora findebat puppis. sed mite quid umquam	1070
ventorum tenuere doli? mox flatibus Euri	
rupta quies pelagi, tumidisque incanduit undis	
caerulei pax ficta maris; furit undique pontus	
attollensque suas irato gurgite moles	
denegat abreptae vestigia certa carinae,	1075
quae suspensa polis deiectaque iungitur arvis	
terrarum caelique sequax. caret artis amicae	
praesidiis manus apta rati, gelidoque pavore	
deponunt animos nigroque sub aere caeci	
nafragium iam iamque vident, clausoque profundo	1080
mortis imago patet. vastas percurrere syrtes	
historica ratione vocor lacerosque rudentes	

⁴³⁸ Schwind (1990), 162–5, Wright (1989).

⁴³⁹ Deproost (1992) and Bureau (1997), 47–57.

et clavi fragmenta sequi, sed non ego linguam
 tam fragilem committo vadis, rapidasque procellas
 aufugiam temptare diu, ne forte canenti 1085
 obruat exiguam violentior unda loquellam.
 tangere pauca refert;⁴⁴⁰ tutas conabor arenas.
 praeuia fluctivagae latuerunt sidera puppi,
 nec solis radiis sub nubibus emicat axis,
 cumque dies multos iam rite peregerit orbis, 1090
 in pelago nox una fuit, quo tempore nullis
 indulsero cibis.

The captain had unmoored his fleet from the eastern shore. Gaining the help of the south-east wind, and encouraged by its breath as the journey continued and the sail's wings unfurled, the ship clove through the ocean. But what kindness does the treachery of the winds ever have? Soon the quiet of the sea was broken by the blasts of the east wind and the feigned peace of the blue sea grew white with rising waves; the sea rages on all sides and raising its mass from the angry depths it denies a sure path to the disoriented ship, which hanging on high is joined to the heavens, then sinking down is joined to the land beneath, following heaven and earth. The ship's expert crew lacks the protection of its helpful skill; and cold with fear and low in spirit, though blind in the black atmosphere, they see shipwreck ever closer. The deep is closed to them, and a picture of death yawns open. I am called by my narrative method to run over vast sandbanks and to tell of shredded ropes and fragments of rudder, but I do not entrust my weak tongue to the shallows and will flee for a long time from tackling the violent gales, lest perhaps a more violent wave overwhelm my tiny voice as I sing my poem. It is appropriate to touch but a few things; I will try the safe sands. The guiding stars hid from the wave-wandering ship, nor did the world gleam with the rays of the sun beneath the clouds, and although the world had duly passed through many days, there was a single dark night on the sea, in which time they enjoyed no food.

In Acts 27: 1–8 and 9–12, with which the passage shows very little verbal similarity, there is a profusion of detail relating to the voyage. At Myra in Lycia Paul and his companions had picked up a ship bound for Italy, and were now sailing from Fair Havens near the city of Lasea on the southern coast of Crete to the more suitable winter harbour of Phoenix further west,⁴⁴¹ when they were caught by a

⁴⁴⁰ This word is not to be derived from *refero*; Arator's prosody is misleading.

⁴⁴¹ See Talbert (2000), 60, C3 and B2.

strong northeaster, or *Euraquilo* (v. 14). Like Juvenicus and Sedulius before him, Arator needs no such detail (Crete itself is only mentioned later, in line 1108, and his reference to the *Syrtes* is purely metaphorical). Arator describes a mighty storm on an open sea, as in effect they did.

As in Juvenicus and Sedulius, there is a quiet opening with little or no hint of what is to come,⁴⁴² but Arator's rhetorical question gives voice to the lurking danger. There is no need, and it would not be apt, to seek a deeper meaning in this feature, and in the *pax ficta* of the following sentence; *doli* are associated with the Jews (e.g. 2. 244, 1054), but they are no longer part of the story. A general reference to Paul's sufferings (assuming that the question had the function of seeing the situation through Paul's eyes) would be uncharacteristic; nor is it likely to be an expression of Arator's personal feelings. It is certainly true that Arator often uses words for their symbolic value, but Bureau's thoroughgoing application of allegory—he develops this episode as part of his demonstration of how Arator uses the external world as allegory⁴⁴³—runs the risk of removing the *historicum*, the literal sense, from Arator altogether. Again, it is tempting at first sight to see in Arator's description of the ship as 'following heaven and earth' (1077) a theological significance, especially in the contrast of *polis* and *arvis*, which often have such a meaning. But this would be out of place: Arator does not see the Christian Church, or individual Christians, as tossed between heaven and earth, and such a conception would go against his view of the efficacy and importance of baptism.

The description of the storm is a rich intertextual mosaic, with Vergil and Lucan again prominent. Arator does not take as his focus a particular storm from any one predecessor, as Juvenicus had done, and he also likes to use his own words, or at least his own choice from a varied palette. Originality in such a set piece is hardly to be expected, but there are signs of certain traits of his own: the use of abstractions, such as the *pax ficta*, 'the feigned peace' of the bluish sea that grew white, and the rising mass of the sea that takes away the ship's sure pathway.⁴⁴⁴ There is also a typical paradox as the voyagers

⁴⁴² See pp. 199–202, esp. 200.

⁴⁴³ Bureau (1997), 46–57.

⁴⁴⁴ There is no direct mention of the helmsman being at his wits' end, a common feature, as in Vergil, *A.* 3. 201–2.

see only shipwreck and death in the pitch blackness. The picture of the ship hanging in the sky at one moment and plumbing the depth at the next is based on Vergil's storm in *A.* 1. 106–7, and there is a small detail from Vergil's next line in *abreptae* (not in McKinlay, who notes only Bede at this point). Luke's Euraquilo suggested to Arator Vergil's *flatibus Euri* (*G.* 2. 339), and there are some other allusions to different Vergilian contexts.⁴⁴⁵ The presence of Lucan's grand storm is also apparent: through 5. 442 *saeva quies pelagi*, (cf. 1. 239 *rupta quies populi*), and 5. 570 *ferit undique pontus*. There is also the phrase *laceros... rudentes* from 5. 594: the detail, without the epithet, is originally Vergilian (*A.* 1. 87). The one echo of Catullus mentioned above occurs here. With the word *incanduit* (long since rejected by Catullus' textual critics in favour of *incanuit*) Arator must surely have intended the sense 'became white', unparalleled though it may be, rather than 'became fiery', which would be simply out of place and is hardly defensible by talk of a baroque, and Ovidian, mixture of fire and water.⁴⁴⁶ Statius may be part of the mixture (cf. *manus apta* in *Theb.* 3. 306), but Juvenal is probably not, and McKinlay's note, pointing to 10. 50 *crassoque sub aere nasci*, a weak kind of auditory parallel at best, offers a misquotation by accidentally repeating Arator's words.

In the middle of this the poet makes a very surprising confession of his inadequacy to treat the theme. This can hardly be called a *recusatio*, like the conceit in, for example, Horace, *Odes* 4. 15. 3–4 (Apollo's warning not to set sail on the open sea), for the simple reason that fourteen lines of description have preceded. He is 'called' by his narrative method to describe vast sandbanks, shredded ropes, and bits of rudder,⁴⁴⁷ but unwilling to trust his tongue in such a storm. This plea is an ingenious artifice, suggesting both confidence, because of its placing, and diffidence. What deters him is not, of course, the prospect of representing these and other details, but a feeling of modesty in face of the literary tradition, of which he has

⁴⁴⁵ These may be found in Deproost (1992). In passing, the comparison of Arator's *attollensque* (2. 1074) and *attollitque* as used by Vergil in the context of Mt Etna throwing its flames (*A.* 3. 574) seems rather strained. Ansorge (1914), 15 pointed to Vergil, *A.* 1. 134, to be followed by McKinlay, and 1. 103.

⁴⁴⁶ Deproost (1992), 486.

⁴⁴⁷ For the expression cf. *convenior ratione loci* (2. 141).

just shown a very deep knowledge. He again toys with the reader when he pretends that he will play for safety—but in fact he goes on with his description. Following Acts (27: 20), he describes the darkness of the scene, not without epic resonance: the Statian *fluctivagae*,⁴⁴⁸ and perhaps Vergil's *nox* (A. 1. 89: 'night' brought by the storm-clouds), which settled on the sea. He does not desert the *historica ratio*, and the answer to the problem of the sudden confession of inadequacy is clearly not that he is happier with allegory.⁴⁴⁹ The figural portion comes some fifty lines later, at 2. 1131, where the detail of the fourteen days is chosen for exegesis. The elaborate and skilful picture of the storm demonstrates Arator's commitment to the *historica ratio*, his respect for epic tradition, including that of his Christian predecessors, but he chooses to present the storm, in a way that they could not, as the high point of the apostolic *labores* and *orbis iter* that he announced as his chosen theme in lines 16 and 17 of his letter to Vigilus.

But is Arator's poem really an epic? In recent years there have been strong challenges to this way of reading it, notably by Schwind and Hillier, which must now be examined. Herzog, in the few words he was able to devote to Arator,⁴⁵⁰ seems to have seen him as the culmination of the drive towards commentary in a genre which for him was already but little affected by epic 200 years before. Roberts, as we have seen, speaks of the poem as a verse commentary,⁴⁵¹ and Deproost as a 'véritable commentaire poétique', while allowing that epic remains beneath after the invasion of allegory and exegesis and regularly treating the poem as epic in his exposition.⁴⁵² Bureau, too, treats the work as certainly epic;⁴⁵³ he and Deproost do not present arguments against the sceptical case, but to some extent help to answer it by following through their assumption.

I begin with the most recent, and perhaps most trenchant criticism, that of Hillier. 'To examine the *Historia Apostolica* as an example

⁴⁴⁸ *Theb.* 1. 271, *Silv.* 3.1.84; but it may have come straight from Sedulius, *CP* 5. 395.

⁴⁴⁹ Deproost (1992), 482.

⁴⁵⁰ Herzog (1975), p. liv.

⁴⁵¹ See p. 299.

⁴⁵² Deproost (1990*b*), 78.

⁴⁵³ Note in particular his starting-point, at (1997), 101.

of a “Christian epic” . . . is to end up condemning the poet for his lack of narrative drive, for his inability to offer detailed descriptions of time and place, and for his failure to present the apostles as heroic characters impelled by divine destiny (or even failing to give them any kind of character at all).⁴⁵⁴ To these three points, which will be taken individually, and in reverse order (since the first two overlap and to some extent coalesce with points made by Schwind, which must also be addressed), he adds an observation of Kartschoke: ‘the fact that a poem was written in hexameters no longer guaranteed an epic content.’⁴⁵⁵ This is certainly true, and perhaps always had been. The hexameter is the favourite metre of Late Antiquity, and one especially popular among its various Christian poets; it is used for a wide variety of purposes and in a variety of genres, and often in short poems. If one was suddenly faced by a new, extensive fragment of hexameter verse from this period, it would be wrong to claim it as part of an epic on the basis of metre alone. (The same would apply, it may be noted in passing, to its vocabulary; although this criterion has not been used—rightly so, for the variety of Arator’s diction is greater than that of Sedulius, and as foregoing analyses have shown⁴⁵⁶ varies from being highly literary at one extreme to sporadic adherence to biblical wording at the other—it would not be a good one).⁴⁵⁷ Hillier goes on to say that analyses of the incidence of dactyls and spondees in Latin poets⁴⁵⁸ show that Arator’s hexameters are not, as they are often described, ‘Vergilian.’⁴⁵⁹ There is a poor statistical match between Arator and Vergil in this regard, and also between Arator and Lucan, who resembles Vergil to a large extent. Since Arator in fact ‘reveals a fondness for metrical forms which owe more to Ovid [Ovid of the *Metamorphoses*] than to Vergil’, one could

⁴⁵⁴ Hillier (1993), 13.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid. 13 and n. 27, appealing to Kartschoke (1975), 80.

⁴⁵⁶ Words not mentioned earlier include *scenifactor* at 2. 514 (cf. Acts 18: 3) and *semicinctia* (2. 630; cf. Acts 19: 12).

⁴⁵⁷ If there ever was an identifiable element of specifically epic diction in Latin literature, in the strict sense of a vocabulary exclusive to epic, then it spread quickly into many other kinds of writing, and the concept can certainly not be applied here.

⁴⁵⁸ Duckworth (1969), esp. 100–2 and 132–4.

⁴⁵⁹ Hillier (1993), 13 n. 27. Deproost (1989c), 377 speaks of Arator’s Vergilian rhythms in general.

claim Ovid as a model, though this would be hard to support on other criteria. But perhaps such analyses have little to tell us about a poet's generic affiliations or intentions.⁴⁶⁰

According to Hillier, the apostles are not 'heroic characters', and not 'impelled by divine destiny'. There is, certainly, little on the surface about divine destiny. It is not a force which impels, or chastens, the protagonists, as it did Aeneas and even perhaps, in Juvencus, Christ himself.⁴⁶¹ Peter and Paul are not in the Vergilian mould of fated heroes; they are, however, guided in various ways, albeit ones which do away with the need for reflection and the heart-searching experienced by Aeneas. Peter is helped by an angel in prison (1. 1019–27), and led by the Holy Spirit to consecrate Saul (2. 1–3); and Paul is called to Macedonia by a vision (2. 313–15). But in numerous ways epic constantly revises and problematizes its notion of a 'hero'. Jason of Apollonius' *Argonautica* is very different from any of the Homeric heroes (and thus from 'the Homeric hero', if indeed that is a useful concept), as is Vergil's Aeneas; Lucan's Caesar and Pompey are different again, and so too are the Christs of Juvencus and Sedulius. Peter and Paul, the twin heroes or protagonists of the *Historia Apostolica*, are certainly leaders, with responsibility for companions or followers, facing constant physical and verbal attack from their opponents, and meeting challenges of ecclesiastical management or problems of conscience. They are also to some extent personalities, especially in the case of Paul, who is described as unable to rest⁴⁶² and 'the church's warrior',⁴⁶³ but without being incapable of pity.⁴⁶⁴ It is not difficult to see them as heroes in some sense.

Hillier's point that Arator is unable to offer detailed descriptions of time and place may be taken with similar charges made by Schwind, who believes that the lack of detail in the poem, compared with Acts, fatally weakens the interconnection between episodes and

⁴⁶⁰ If they did, then the suggestion of Deproost (1990b, 275) that Arator's favourite configuration of dactyls and spondees (DSDSDS) has a Trinitarian explanation might begin to be credible.

⁴⁶¹ See pp. 69–71.

⁴⁶² *nescius interea curis laxare quietem* (2. 307).

⁴⁶³ *bellator ecclesiae* (2. 20).

⁴⁶⁴ See 2. 390, and Acts 16: 18, where the word is *dolens*, signifying 'pain' or 'grief'. Some modern versions have 'annoyed'.

the coherence of individual ones.⁴⁶⁵ The evidence in the case against Arator is perhaps stronger than the evidence in Opelt's charge against Sedulius, where careful examination of the details provided by the evangelists does not confirm a significant deficit of place-names.⁴⁶⁶ But here too there is more than a suspicion that the criticism is caught up with a judgement on Arator as paraphraser and an unwillingness to allow him the freedom of a creative writer. It is almost as if Lucan's poem were to be judged on its treatment of historical sources.⁴⁶⁷ Arator certainly omits many details, but the policy underlying his selection and presentation is fairly clear: he wishes, *inter alia*, to avoid detail for detail's sake, to sharpen the appearance of constant opposition to the Christians, to preserve the balance between Peter and Paul.⁴⁶⁸ The narrative certainly gives the *Hauptlinien* of Acts, and has the *Handlung* that Schwind demands of an epic poem. Perhaps one should not worry over the omission, for example, of the fact that Peter visited Joppa immediately after Lydda, and that he was summoned there by the disciples (Acts 9: 38).⁴⁶⁹ Or is it important for a sixth-century audience in Rome to know all the places in Greece or Asia Minor that Paul visited, or to be given the names of unimportant individuals involved on each occasion? The omission of minor figures is not a problem for the reader who reads the poem as epic, rather the reverse, for epic tends to have a small number of characters except in scenes that set forth the *mêlée* of battle. The elision of time at various points in the narrative need not cause problems, either; the omission of Luke's 'many days' in Joppa (Acts 9: 43) or the interval of three hours before Sapphira faced Peter in Acts 5: 7 are, from this point of view, trivial. And where one episode follows another in Arator it need not be assumed that it does so immediately. If Arator's narrative makes sudden jumps from

⁴⁶⁵ Schwind (1990), 46: 'stellt sich die Frage, ob der Dichter dennoch eine kontinuierliche Erzählung entwickeln kann, die wenigstens die Hauptlinien der App [Apostelgeschichte] nachzeichnet, und, falls nicht, ob bei ihm denn überhaupt die Absicht, eine wie auch immer geartete zusammenhängende Handlung zu schaffen, erkennbar wird.'

⁴⁶⁶ See pp. 197–8.

⁴⁶⁷ This is in fact seldom done: for an example see Lintott (1971).

⁴⁶⁸ As suggested in pp. 273–4. See Bureau (1991), 144–7 and Dunn (1996), p. xv.

⁴⁶⁹ Arator simply says *fiducia Petrum | evocat*, and later adds about 'prayers' (1. 806–7).

day to day, or from place to place,⁴⁷⁰ the demands on our imagination are no greater than those regularly posed by writers in the epic tradition. There is a danger, arguably, that the reader's perception of causality, something important to epic (though to be sure many things are signalled as happening by chance), may be affected. Schwind argues (1990, 47) that Arator's omission of Peter's speech in Acts 3: 11–26 leaves unclear the reason for the growth of the Christians' numbers to about five thousand (Acts 4: 4); but no causal connection with the speech is made by Luke. Perhaps Arator assumes, and expects his readers and listeners to assume, that the growth was due to an ongoing process of miracle-working and preaching.

Now for the question of 'narrative drive'. It may be admitted immediately that in the sense of formal linkage between one episode and the next Arator provides even less than Sedulius chose to provide between his assorted episodes from the gospels, and certainly less than in Juvenecus.⁴⁷¹ Linking particles appear at the beginnings of rather more than one-half of the sections, in the form, almost always, of *iamque*, with a verb in the imperfect or pluperfect tense,⁴⁷² or *interea*.⁴⁷³ More explicit or elaborate openings to an episode, such as the temporal clause of 1. 335–7 (corresponding to Acts 4: 23), or the *te quoque | tu quoque* ('you too...') clauses of 1. 801–2 and 2. 753–4, are unusual.⁴⁷⁴ In the case of *iamque* and *interea* Schwind speaks of a 'pretence' both in Arator and in Sedulius, demanding something more informative to show 'a real interest in epic'.⁴⁷⁵ It is true that sometimes Arator could have provided supporting material—there is material in Acts 7 which sheds light on Stephen's

⁴⁷⁰ Schwind (1990), 50, on 2. 569–70.

⁴⁷¹ There can, of course, be tacit connection between episodes, as in *HA* 1. 931 *comperit accitus quae sit sua visio Petrus*, which leads the story on from Peter's vision to his action; but this is rare in Arator.

⁴⁷² So e.g. at 2. 242 *iam rabidas hominum Paulus superaverat iras* ('already Paul had overcome the mad rage of men').

⁴⁷³ This word, normally 'meanwhile', is often in the poets a transitional formula equivalent to 'and now' (Austin on Vergil, *A.* 1. 180, *TLL* VII. 1. 2183, 52–73). Schwind's criticism that in 1. 211 (*funditur interea*) Arator fails to use it of simultaneous events is valid only insofar as the auditory parallels in Vergil, *A.* 10. 1 (*panditur interea*) and 2. 250 (*vertitur interea*) invite the translation 'meanwhile'.

⁴⁷⁴ *Te quoque... Ioppe, canimus; tu quoque... Troia.*

⁴⁷⁵ Schwind (1990), 174.

plight, and some in Acts 8 which illustrates Philip's rise to prominence—but it is not obvious that his procedure is unepic. Lucan and Silius are in some ways demonstrably economical with the full historical truth. Arator wishes to present the main outline, and perhaps, on occasion, thereby to avoid problems which would arise for himself and his readers if he simply moved difficult questions, as it were, further back. Philip's activity followed the scattering of the Christians to Samaria, but if that had been fully narrated as it is in Acts, a question might arise about why the apostles were able to stay in Jerusalem.⁴⁷⁶ Arator thus avoids a question that he knows he cannot solve. Another place where Schwind finds the narrative wanting in epic quality is in the transition to the episode that begins in 1. 1007, where no reason is given for Peter's imprisonment.⁴⁷⁷ Arator has nothing corresponding to Acts 12: 1–4, and has omitted to mention Herod's outburst against some of the Christians. Faced with the problems of explaining this, and perhaps too of rendering some of the detail, he has reasonably left his readers to assume that the constant state of hostility between Jews and Christians which his narrative so often implies offered sufficient explanation.⁴⁷⁸ In sum, Arator avoids getting drawn into great detail (and occasionally metrical difficulty) but presents an account which follows the narratives of Acts closely. His omissions are seldom, if ever, misleading. His writing may be 'unhistorical' in places, but is not 'unepic'.

In general, Arator has chosen to present Acts as a series of self-contained episodes. They tend to begin not with some connection with what has preceded but with the name of a leading participant or divine agent, or, especially in Book 2, a place-name, and there is often a main verb presenting some decisive action. In the characteristically eloquent words of Fontaine they are 'médaillons', but his reading of them as 'un recueil de petits poèmes suivis' arises from what we have seen to be an erroneous understanding of the *capitula*, which are not Arator's work and should not be allowed to influence our conception of the poem.⁴⁷⁹ This feature—the similarity to a set of medallions—

⁴⁷⁶ A difficult problem: Dunn (1996), 104.

⁴⁷⁷ Schwind (1990), 49.

⁴⁷⁸ As they might well do, even if they suspected from Acts 12: 3 or some other source that Herod was not a Jew.

⁴⁷⁹ Fontaine (1981), 262. See pp. 270–3.

may helpfully be seen as showing Hellenistic influence, but Fontaine clearly goes too far in comparing them to the *Greek Anthology* or *Garland of Meleager*; whatever they are, they are not epigrams. In place of the notions of 'miniaturization' (Hillier)⁴⁸⁰ or of influence from the so-called epyllion (Deproost),⁴⁸¹ it may be more helpful to think in terms of the *carmen perpetuum* that is Callimachus' *Aetia*, or the succession of episodes and digressions in parts of Apollonius' *Argonautica*—or even, *mutatis mutandis*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* without the famously contrived transitions. Roberts, in a valuable summation of Arator's approach, draws attention to 'the cult of the episode', which is a feature of post-Vergilian (and indeed to some extent Vergilian) writing.⁴⁸²

Hillier considers that the influence of liturgical practices is likely to be more revealing than the influence of Hellenistic poetics, drawing attention to the liturgical use of biblical narratives fragmented into pericopes; he also refers to the lifting of short passages of scripture from their contexts as texts for an interpretative sermon. It is certainly possible that a churchman such as Arator might have been influenced by these practices, a regular feature of his life, but there is considerable distance between the *Historia Apostolica* and any attested kind of liturgical observance, and it must be kept in mind that the poem, however episodic it may appear, is a historically based sequence. It may be accepted that 'a commentator whose aim is to disclose the inner meaning of a text has no need . . . to maintain a continuous narrative', as he says, but Arator certainly does so.⁴⁸³

An important contribution to the ecclesiastical or liturgical background of Arator's poem has been made by Schwind, who has drawn attention to several remarkably close similarities in content between some of Arator's portions of commentary and certain sermons of Origen, preserved in the Latin translations of Rufinus, Augustine, and others.⁴⁸⁴ Repeated and extensive similarities of detail leave little doubt that they were before him as he wrote, or else very well remembered. Two examples out of many are the use of the argument

⁴⁸⁰ Hillier (1993), 15.

⁴⁸¹ Deproost (1990*b*), 74, following in the footsteps of Fontaine.

⁴⁸² Roberts (1985), 180, drawing attention to Williams (1978), 246–53.

⁴⁸³ Hillier (1993), 15.

⁴⁸⁴ Schwind (1990), 179–201, and (1995*b*).

from the Levitical vestments in 2. 340–74, and the explanation of the significance of the twofold coming of the Holy Spirit at 1. 221–43.⁴⁸⁵ Schwind goes on to suggest (pp. 202–4) that a major aim of the poem was to provide, not a narrative of some sort based on Acts, but sermons (or commentaries: the categories overlap to a large extent) with teaching and edification in mind and at the level of advanced learning (*Wissenschaft*), perhaps for the training of the clergy via the catechumenate (pp. 208–11). But the use of earlier sermons and their learning does not prove that Arator has the same aim as the original writers: they could be seen as sources rather than models for the poem. And although the employment of various verbal techniques of the sermon, such as the use of questions, seen occasionally in Sedulius, is common, this does not prove that Arator sees himself as giving sermons; he is introducing into poetry methods with which he was familiar from the ecclesiastical context. His poem, moreover, would be very unfit for its supposed purpose, for its style is notoriously difficult to understand, as the work of Schwind and others reveals.⁴⁸⁶ Doubtless Arator did not intend this, though he, and his listeners, would surely have noticed it, if only at the recitation stages.⁴⁸⁷ (Indeed, meaningful recitation of certain passages is not easy to envisage: one problem is the order in which the components of an argument are sometimes placed.)⁴⁸⁸ There are in the *Historia Apostolica* some short and snappy expressions of important theological points, which Schwind plausibly sees as having a mnemonic purpose;⁴⁸⁹ these would be most helpful, but it is not clear why Arator should have embedded them in hexameters of great complexity. It would have been a gross misjudgement to present them as *Volkspredigte*, even in the sophisticated theological culture of Rome. Writing in metre, however popular to learned ears and minds, would inevitably complicate the task of exegesis. If there was a crisis in the

⁴⁸⁵ Schwind (1990), 185–6 and 194–5.

⁴⁸⁶ Schwind (1995a) is devoted to such problems; see also Hudson Williams (1953), 89–97.

⁴⁸⁷ The *natalicia* of Paulinus of Nola, also recited to a varied audience, are at times long-winded and rambling but at least make some concessions to the unlearned. See Green (1971), 34.

⁴⁸⁸ See e.g. Schwind (1995a), 95 ('die verquere Anordnung der Satzglieder'). Such difficulties can hardly be due to corruption in transmission.

⁴⁸⁹ Schwind (1990), 209–11.

training of the clergy, for which Schwind sees some evidence,⁴⁹⁰ 2,000 rather difficult hexameters might not help. And if a commentary on Acts was required, this would not meet the need.⁴⁹¹

Contemporary practice sheds light on Arator's deployment of exegesis, then, but does not establish it as the dominant aim of the poem. The narratives are not just a framework, or a series of pegs on which to hang theological commentary. The description 'verse commentary' gives too much weight to this, and not enough to the narrative. It is customary for scholars to play down the narrative and concentrate on the exegesis. According to Deproost, a new 'figurative coherence' replaces a narrative coherence, chronological continuity disappears, and we are left with a narrative that is 'atopique, achronique, intemporel'.⁴⁹² On the contrary, Arator follows Acts closely, and certainly in chronological order, and presents a good impression of the contents of the whole book. It is certainly interrupted by figural interpretation,⁴⁹³ but the argument cuts both ways; the exegetical portions are interrupted too. The fact that this is seldom remarked, indeed, argues a lack of coherence between the exegetical portions, and in fact many of Arator's most important edificatory points are presented through narrative. Certainly, the poem is strongly episodic—even when due allowance is made for the distorting effect of the prose *capitula*—but it is a single *historia* with a clear progress and narrative drive. This is not the same drive as the *Aeneid* has, with a series of challenges complicating the quest for its clearly stated goal, or the drive of Lucan's *Civil War*, whose basic thrust is surely towards the victory of Caesar (even if Lucan had some surprises in store in subsequent books), or the gradual movement of Statius to the crucial duel. Acts is a very different sort of book, containing elements of history, biography, and the novel,⁴⁹⁴ and it is more difficult for Arator to draw out what has been called 'epic potential' from Acts than it was for Juvencus and Sedulius to do so

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid. 208–9.

⁴⁹¹ Schwind (ibid. 203) points out that Acts was rather neglected by commentators. Cassiodorus (*Institutiones* 1. 9) almost twenty years later mentions that 'friends' of his translated John Chrysostom's homilies on Acts.

⁴⁹² Deproost (1990*b*), 77.

⁴⁹³ Roberts (1985), 180.

⁴⁹⁴ Alexander (2001), 1029–30.

from their base-texts, concentrating as they do on the life and death of Christ.

The ending of Acts posed a major problem, and not only in its apparent lack of potential for generating narrative drive within the poem. It ends on a noticeably downbeat and quiet note, with Paul, safely ensconced in Rome, debating with the Jews and preaching the gospel without let or hindrance. (There is no mention in Acts of Peter's arrival in Rome; this is one of few details in Arator from outside scripture.) There is no possibility therefore even of a climax such as Juvenecus' paraphrase provided, in an inevitably muted form, let alone one to match Sedulius, whose triumphal catabasis Arator recalled at the beginning of his poem, a kind of foundation-stone. But how does Arator end his epic?

The last passage of narrative, beginning at 2. 1206, is a short one, and compared with its base-text (Acts 28: 7–31), highly selective. Paul and his companions leave Malta on a glorious spring day, to which the poet devotes an unprecedented degree of lyrical description. Vegetation burgeons, and the earth becomes young again, with the 'moroseness' of frost banished;⁴⁹⁵ the south wind almost literally carries the ship and creates 'winged waves'.⁴⁹⁶ One may be reminded of the placid journeys of Aeneas as he approached the Tiber mouth, and then rowed up the Tiber for his preview of Rome, so to speak, at Pallanteum;⁴⁹⁷ but Arator actually recalls, in a characteristic inversion, a context in Lucan, taking the phrase *velis cedentibus*⁴⁹⁸ from the first line of his third book, where the anguished Pompey is leaving Rome. No less prominent an intertext is Psalm 126 (125): 4⁴⁹⁹ (*converte Domine captivitatem nostram*) *ut torrens in austro*, where Arator understands *torrens* as a symbol (*species*) of faith.⁵⁰⁰ (He may also have pondered that this journey ultimately contributed to the

⁴⁹⁵ *Pullulat interea nitidi coma frondea veris | quo iuvenescit humus senio fugiente pruinae* (2. 1210–11). The combination of the words *coma* and *pullulat* may derive from Avienus, *De Orbe Terrarum* (1114).

⁴⁹⁶ The Latin here paraphrased is *suscipiensque ratem velis cedentibus auster | praebuit aligeras placidas in fluctibus undas* (2. 1212–13).

⁴⁹⁷ Vergil, *A.* 7. 25–8 and 8. 90–6.

⁴⁹⁸ 'with the sails yielding' (to the wind).

⁴⁹⁹ Correctly identified by Schwind (1995a), 111; it is not, as McKinlay thought, from Ezekiel.

⁵⁰⁰ 'transform our captivity, Lord, like a torrent in the East wind'.

removal of Christian captivity.) Details of the itinerary, such as the earlier landfalls at Syracuse and Rhegium, and the passage from Puteoli to Rome via the Three Taverns (Acts 28: 12–15), are elided, and Paul's party reaches *excelsae sublimia moenia Romae*.⁵⁰¹

Not unlike Aeneas, the apostles have reached Rome, but the story has not yet arrived (to use the words of Ovid) *ad mea . . . tempora*.⁵⁰² As we have seen in various places, the sixth-century present is a crucial part of Arator's poem, just as the Augustan present was of the *Aeneid*, and the exegetical portion that follows his short travelogue brilliantly solves the problem of introducing it at the climax. With typical deliberation, he declares: 'the order of things demands, at a deeper level, that I state that the two lights of the world came together here, and that this place was chosen from so many regions by those who make serene the earth⁵⁰³ with the power of their faith, to unite their effulgences.'⁵⁰⁴ There is an echo here of Vergil, *G.* 1. 5–6 *mundi | lumina* and perhaps a glancing reference to Lucan's fulsome address and advice to Nero for his eventual translation to the skies (1. 45–62). This event (*causa*) is implied by many figures (2. 1223–4), but Arator will be brief:

Petrus in Ecclesiae surrexit corpore princeps;	1225
haec turrata caput mundi circumtulit oris;	
conveniunt maiora sibi, speculentur ut omnes	
terrarum dominae fundata cacumina sedes.	
gentibus electus Paulus sine fine magister	
aequius huic praesens oris diffundit habenas	1230
quae gentes praelata monet; quodque intonat istic	
urbis cogit honor, subiectus ut audiat orbis.	

Peter arose as the first in the body of the Church; she, clad with her towers, carried his authority around the shores of the world; this greater position is appropriate to him, so that all may see the seat of the mistress of the world,

⁵⁰¹ 'the high walls of lofty Rome'.

⁵⁰² Cf. Ovid, *M.* 1. 4 *ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen* ('Lead my continuous poem up to my own times').

⁵⁰³ *arva*, echoing perhaps 1. 509, on the Church on earth, *culta haec quam cernimus arvis* ('this Church, revered on earth, which we see').

⁵⁰⁴ *altius ordo petit duo lumina dicere mundi | convenisse simul tantisque e partibus unum | delegisse locum, per quem sua sidera iungant | omnia qui fidei virtutibus arva serenant.*

and their well-established peaks.⁵⁰⁵ Paul, appointed as master for the Gentiles, is present more rightly in this city which, in its supremacy, admonishes the nations, and spreads afar the guidance of his teaching; and what he thunders forth here the status of the city compels the subject world to hear.

The first line, expressing the primacy of Peter, is deliberately ambiguous: just as Peter rose, apparently the first apostle to do so, 'among the disciples' in Acts 1: 15,⁵⁰⁶ so he has also arisen to a position of primacy in the Church of Rome. As Deproost puts it, hierarchy follows chronology.⁵⁰⁷ Rome with her towers—the allusion could be essentially iconographical, though a reference in Vergil is probably also involved⁵⁰⁸—has carried him round the shores of the world;⁵⁰⁹ this exalted status enables all to see the papal seat and Rome's symbolic peaks. Essentially the same point is made in the sermon of Pope Leo in *Natale Apostolorum Petri et Pauli* given on their feast day of 29 June in the year 441:⁵¹⁰ 'Peter, the most blessed leader of the apostolic order, was destined for the citadel of Roman power, so that the light of truth that was revealed for the salvation of all races might show itself more effectively through the whole body from the head.'⁵¹¹ Likewise the teaching of Paul, the *magister gentium* (2 Tim. 1: 11), the teacher of the Gentiles, sounds forth more

⁵⁰⁵ Reading *sedes* and construing it as an accusative in apposition to *fundata cacumina*, a rough imitation of the Vergilian arrangement seen e.g. in *densos umbrosa cacumina fagos* (E. 2. 3).

⁵⁰⁶ 'Peter stood up with the eleven and was bold.' (A revised translation: this paragraph was written on the day that England won the Ashes, 12. 09. 05.)

⁵⁰⁷ Deproost (1990b), 189.

⁵⁰⁸ Vergil, A. 6. 785 *turrita*, from the comparison with Cybele which Austin calls 'bold and even startling'. The word will have been absorbed into propaganda, perhaps, with no recall of the original context. Cf. also, with *turriger*, Lucan 1. 188 and Rutilius Namatianus 1. 117. Cf. also Deproost (1990b), 212 n. 673.

⁵⁰⁹ A difficult line, often quoted but seldom discussed. It is tempting to take the words *caput mundi* together, as Schwind does in his paraphrase (1990, 231), but *mundi* must surely be linked with *oris*. It is not the capital of the world which is carried around, but the authority of its head. The sense 'surrounds', given by Schrader in his edn. (1987), *ad loc.*, seems impossible.

⁵¹⁰ This sermon is number 69 in the edition of Dolle (SC 200. 46–58) and number 82 in the edition of Chavasse (CCSL 138A. 519–22).

⁵¹¹ *beatissimus Petrus princeps apostolici ordinis ad arcem Romani destinatur imperii, ut lux veritatis quae in omnium gentium revelabatur salutem efficacius se ab ipso capite per totum mundi corpus effunderet*. In the same sermon Rome is described as *mundi dominam*, 'mistress of the world', as in 2. 1228 (*terraram dominae*).

effectively from the capital city, to the 'subject world', the world now subject to Christianity, and will ever continue to do so.⁵¹²

Rome has also provided the two apostles with 'worthy material' for their crowns of martyrdom (2. 1233): they have overcome the threats of 'Caesar' (the emperor Nero), and revealed heavenly justice in the tyrant's citadel; they have won a victory over the highest (secular) tribunal through their *agon*.⁵¹³ Arator's story does after all re-enact the gospel framework of life, death, and power after death. They benefit Rome in their lives and their deaths. They have freed the people entrusted to them, just as Moses and Aaron freed the Hebrews from Egypt, releasing them from the idols which had been assembled in the world subdued by ancient Rome.⁵¹⁴ Again, Arator's words recall those of Leo, who in section 3 of his sermon speaks of Rome as the place where 'everything that was ever instituted by vain error was assembled by the most thoroughgoing superstition'.⁵¹⁵ Through the means of baptism (foreshadowed by the Red Sea experience) the two apostles have provided heavenly food, a clear reference to the sacraments. The deaths of Peter and Paul, on the same day but, unusually, not in the same year,⁵¹⁶ were glorious deaths, standing in stark implicit contrast to the death of Pompey in Lucan and the deaths of the brothers Eteocles and Polynices in Statius' *Thebaid*, to whom the poet gives a sour farewell, adding that the day on which they died deserves to be thoroughly forgotten (11. 574–9). Ovid, too, provides an interesting parallel, with his account of divine support, ascent to the stars, and the promise of a new reign (*M.* 15. 843–51).⁵¹⁷

There is, in general, a parallel of sorts with the function of Aeneas in the *Aeneid*, though Arator might have given him the same short

⁵¹² This recalls one of Vergil's most famous lines, *imperium sine fine dedi* ('I have given dominion without end'), *A.* 1. 279, but without any reference to Rome's power.

⁵¹³ The word is also used of Stephen in 1. 586.

⁵¹⁴ Elsewhere in *HA* idols are a rare theme; cf. 2. 400–1 *Romanis obvia sacris | sacra* ('rites that challenge Roman rites'), corresponding to Acts 16: 21.

⁵¹⁵ *ubi diligentissima superstitione habebatur collectum quicquid usquam fuerat variis erroribus institutum.*

⁵¹⁶ Schwind (1990), 93 and n. 95; cf. Von Dobschütz (1912), 255–7.

⁵¹⁷ There is little to link the metaphorical twins Peter and Paul with the Dioscuri, as Deproost does without argument: Deproost (1990*b*), 183–4. Reasons for doing so are suggested by Bureau (1991), 142. The use of *astra* for the Christian heaven is common in Christian writing.

shrift as Leo gave to Romulus in his sermon: the founder was morally unworthy.⁵¹⁸ But although Aeneas and Peter are similar in the way they span the centuries and point to the present situation, one to Augustus and one to Pope Vigilius, Peter implicitly converts a city, already powerful, and further sanctifies and supports it by his death. The deaths of Peter and Paul, and the *socialis gratia* and *aeterna palma* arising from them,⁵¹⁹ have a lasting effect, which may be seen in terms of aetiology, a mode developed in Hellenistic writing and subsequent epic. The ‘choice’ and consecration of Rome, in accordance with the divine *ordo*—an important word in all three Christian epicists—is the *aetion* and beginning of Roman ecclesiastical supremacy. Peter’s primacy has become the primacy of the popes, and the heart of the old empire is now the heart of the Gentile Church. Book 2 does not end with the same triumphalism as Book 1, but strikes the same note of confidence, in a wider perspective and with less anxiety, which is in keeping with the end of Acts and indeed the apparent optimism of the Augustan epicists. The great applause which greeted the recitations will not have been won solely by Arator’s delighting of his audience,⁵²⁰ much as they will have appreciated his skilful re-enactment of Acts in a new guise, but also by the morale-boosting messages of Christian identity, apostolic power, and divine governance which his work strives to present. *Laetificat poeta cum theologo.*

⁵¹⁸ *is qui tibi nomen dedit fraterna te caede foedavit* (‘the man who gave you your name disgraced you with his fratricide’).

⁵¹⁹ ‘combined grace’ and ‘eternal prize’.

⁵²⁰ So Schwind (1990), 241.

Reception and Influence

LATE ANTIQUITY

About thirty years after Arator left Ravenna, another well-educated north Italian writer left it, in this case for Gaul. This was Venantius Fortunatus, who was to use his poetic and diplomatic talents first in the Frankish court at Metz and later in a monastery at Poitiers.¹ He was no writer of epic, but as well as occasional poetry of many kinds wrote a *Life of Saint Martin*, and in the proem to this work, composed in the 570s, he mentions all three of our poets among the illustrious predecessors whom he reveres (1. 14–23): Juvencus, the *primus*, the pioneer, who ‘sang the work of majesty in the art of metre’;² Sedulius, the ‘outstanding’ Sedulius, whose tongue drew on the same source of the gospels;³ Arator, who ‘ploughed with flowing eloquence through the deeds and acts, as they are called, of the apostolic mission.’⁴ The seven poets that he praises here—the others are Avitus, Orientius, Paulinus of Périgueux, who had taken the same theme, and Prudentius (a prudent man who wrote prudently)—probably do not reflect an established canon, but there is at work a process of selection and prioritizing from among the many Christian writers of the previous two or three centuries. Such groupings will appear frequently in the next thousand years; our three New Testament

¹ George (1992).

² *primus enim docili distinguens ordine carmen | maiestatis opus metri canit arte Iuvencus.*

³ *hinc quoque conspicui radiavit lingua Seduli.*

⁴ *sortis apostolicae quae gesta vocantur et actus | facundo eloquio sulcavit vates Arator.*

poets are always prominent, with a supporting cast that varies somewhat. Commenting on Isidore, Fontaine has spoken of a *quadriga*, consisting of our three poets plus Prudentius—to which Avitus and Prosper (a writer of epigrams) have the best claim to be outriders or reserves.⁵

By Venantius' time all three New Testament epicists were widely read. The general picture is clear, in spite of some uncertainties of dating and the variability in persuasiveness of the ostensible allusions, imitations, or unconscious borrowings on which this kind of study depends.⁶ (As we have seen, the attempt to find Sedulius' homeland relied too much on tenuous data of the kind which needs to be reassessed and above all contextualized in the light of modern knowledge.)⁷ Juvencus was certainly read by Sedulius and Arator, and there is no sign that he went out of date. He is praised in the *Decretum Gelasianum*, albeit less so than Sedulius.⁸ Sedulius, called *poeta veritatis* ('poet of truth'), was also praised by Cassiodorus in his commentary on Psalm. 113: 12; and quoting lines 1. 349–50 in his *Institutiones* (1. 27), Cassiodorus calls them 'well-known', as they certainly were to his contemporary Arator. In another of his poems (8. 1. 57–9) Venantius mentions Sedulius in a long list of Church Fathers, sandwiched between Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine who precede him, and Orosius and Caesarius; he also calls him 'sweet' Sedulius. His poem was appreciated not only for its theological value but also for its poetic charm.

Two further and more unusual tributes point to the popularity and esteem that Sedulius was already enjoying. As already mentioned, there was an edition of him by the consul of the year 494, Asterius,⁹ who is also known as an editor of Vergil himself.¹⁰ Here we discern the beginnings, at least, of a pairing with Vergil which becomes very clear 200 years later in the work of Aldhelm. Roberts declares that the texts were thought of as complementary, and claims for Sedulius the rank of a Christian Vergil (whatever this resounding title might mean in such an age of transition);¹¹ but nothing points to the existence of

⁵ Fontaine (1981), 287; Deproost (1990*b*), 305.

⁶ Especially those of Manitius (1891, 1911, 1923, 1931).

⁷ See p. 138.

⁸ See p. 8 and n. 42, 138.

⁹ See pp. 142–3.

¹⁰ Reynolds (1983), 434.

¹¹ Roberts (1985), 77–9.

a unified programme, and it is a guess that the editions were made at almost the same time. In any case, this kind of 'editorial' activity involves relatively little intervention from the reader who leaves his mark, and what is worthy of note is perhaps only that they should have recorded their input at all. It is also perhaps notable, but hardly surprising at this time, that the devoutly Christian Asterius was an enthusiastic reader of Vergil.¹²

The other early sign of his prestige emerges from Lewine's study of an illustrated manuscript of Sedulius written in Liège in the ninth century, now in the Plantin-Moretus Museum in Antwerp.¹³ In her study of its miniatures Lewine argued, on stylistic grounds, that they may well derive from a Late Antique exemplar, perhaps brought from Rome by the British bishop Cuthwine, and copied in Northumbria; we have what Henderson, suggesting a more precise date, says 'may represent a Carolingian copy of an English copy of a late fifth-century exemplar'.¹⁴ This manuscript is something of a de luxe object, and is conspicuous for the strong Petrine presence in the miniatures: although Sedulius, as we have seen, does not as a rule signal the presence of the disciples at Christ's miracles, four of the eleven miniatures referring to New Testament scenes give prominence to Peter, and he is present in another four. Although Arator certainly needed no such inspiration to give Peter his leading role in the *Historia Apostolica*, it is not impossible that he had access to this very manuscript when in Rome, or before that in northern Italy.

VISIGOTHS, IRISHMEN, AND ANGLO-SAXONS

About a century after these editions of Sedulius, there is noteworthy testimony to Juvencus' popularity in southern Spain, his homeland. His influence may be clearly seen in the extended fragment of Books 8–10 of the New Testament paraphrase discovered in Trier in 1967, which is beyond reasonable doubt to be attributed to the Severus,

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Lewine (1970). The ms. is M. 17. 4, and described in Springer (1995), 32–4.

¹⁴ Henderson (1994), 253.

bishop of Malaga, mentioned in a ninth-century Lorsch catalogue.¹⁵ To go no further, the first eighty lines of this fragment, on the raising of Lazarus, are replete with Juvenicus' influence, which goes beyond the verbal echoes, strong and clear as these are. This passage shows the Juvenican type of ecphrasis at the beginning of an episode, which begins *est ager antiquus*... ('there is an ancient field...'); it follows Juvenicus in omitting various geographical detail but retaining the speech of Thomas,¹⁶ and it presents a full conversation between Christ and his sisters, as well as closely following the narrative. There is nothing of the triumphalism that Sedulius shows at this point, but Sedulian Christology may underlie Christ's *humanos sensus* in 8. 56. This phrase recalls Sedulius' insistence on the saviour's human 'nature', and indeed may also be a comment on his emotionality, with allusion to the issue—not closed by the Greek original or the Latin versions—of whether Christ was actually angered by the ravages of death. The words immediately preceding, *sub corde volutans* ('turning over in his heart...'), are typical of Vergil. The gospels have been drawn out to the length of the *Aeneid*, in twelve books, but the length of the one complete book, 406 lines, recalls Sedulius. Sedulius' vocabulary and phraseology are not absent; and there are significant similarities to Arator as well.

This work, which has no title other than *In Evangelia Libri XII*, was according to its editors written in the late sixth century. Their arguments include doctrinal points, further evidence of the importance of theological matters in Christian epic. It is thus contemporary with Isidore of Seville, who, as already mentioned,¹⁷ left a sketch of Sedulius in his *De viris illustribus*, and occasionally quoted Juvenicus. The verses about his library mention Prudentius, Avitus, Juvenicus, and Sedulius, recommending them to readers horrified by Vergil, Horace, Ovid, and Persius, or bored with Lucan and Statius. (Many people will have had little if any opportunity to read these, but in the context of a library they are not inappropriate.) Juvenicus and Sedulius, 'being equal in style, and flourishing with verses, both bring large cups from the gospel's fountain'.¹⁸ They are equal, too, in their

¹⁵ Zwierlein (1994). ¹⁶ See p. 83.

¹⁷ See pp. 14 and n. 76, 135.

¹⁸ *Versus in bibliotheca* 10. 2–7. PL 83. 1110A. See also Fontaine (1959), 738–41.

contributions to the post-Isidorian grammatical treatise *De Dubiis Nominibus*, which draws on them to illustrate the genders of various words, as Huemer's edition of Juvencus conveniently illustrates.¹⁹ Further evidence that Juvencus and Sedulius, if not Arator, were familiar in Visigothic Spain is to be seen in a good number of citations by Eugenius of Toledo;²⁰ also in the mid-seventh century Braulio of Saragossa quotes a line of Juvencus' Preface²¹ when explaining why he writes the life of Aemilianus.²² (The line will be used for a similar purpose by Alcuin.) There is a brief but warm summing up of Sedulius' qualities among the writings ascribed to Bishop Ildefonsus: *bonus ille Sedulius, poeta evangelicus, orator facundus, scriptor catholicus*.²³

It may be that the close connection of Sedulius and Vergil seen by Roberts first emerges in Ireland, though they will certainly have both been read on the Continent.²⁴ In his drastic revision of the question of the likely reading of Columbanus, Lapidge has concluded that knowledge of quantitative Latin verse in sixth- and seventh-century Ireland may go no further than these two.²⁵ The traces are tenuous, certainly, but perhaps one from Châtillon should be added.²⁶ Wright has shown the strong influence of Sedulius in the amazing writings known as the *Hisperica Famina*, whose provenance Herren has set in seventh-century Ireland;²⁷ this is clear both in the faminators' vocabulary and, it would seem, in the structure of the verses: the so-called Golden Line is prominent.²⁸

¹⁹ See Huemer's edn., pp. x–xii.

²⁰ See Manitius (1886b), 626–8.

²¹ 1. 22 *hoc opus, hoc etenim forsitan me subtrahet igni* ('for this work perhaps will rescue me from the fire').

²² PL 80. 702.

²³ 'That good Sedulius, the gospel poet, an eloquent orator, a catholic poet.' See Huemer (1878), 52.

²⁴ In Gaul, for which we are less well informed, we are told by Gregory of Tours (*History of the Franks* 5. 44) that King Chilperic tried to compose like Sedulius, but with poor results. There are two seventh-century mss. of Sedulius from Bobbio: Taurinensis E. IV. 42, and Ambrosianus R. 57 Sup., a palimpsest of Cicero. (Springer 1995, 100 and 153–4 and references there.)

²⁵ Lapidge (1987), 281. Line 1. 9 of Juvencus is quoted in the Life of Columban by Jonas, written in Bobbio in the seventh century.

²⁶ Châtillon (1965).

²⁷ Herren (1974).

²⁸ Wright (1982).

Throughout the Middle Ages and early modern worlds thousands of young learners, in many parts of Europe, will have read our three authors as part of their education, and nowhere were they more valued for this purpose than in Anglo-Saxon England, offering texts that were spiritually edifying as well as grammatically useful.²⁹ Aldhelm makes considerable use of them in his work *De Metris et Aenigmatibus*, quoting several passages from each one by name.³⁰ In his thorough study of Sedulius and Arator in Aldhelm, it has been shown by Orchard³¹ that Aldhelm has a minute knowledge of the *Carmen Paschale*, and that Sedulius is the most important influence in his works after Vergil. It may be significant that Sedulius is sometimes identified simply by the term *poeta*, as Vergil had long been.³² Citing him in the prose version of *De Virginitate*, Aldhelm calls Sedulius ‘an outstanding poet endowed with metrical eloquence’.³³ Bede tells his readers that Sedulius was the source of Aldhelm’s *opus geminatum*; by writing a prose version of *Carmen Paschale* Sedulius originated the common fashion of writing a work in both prose and verse.³⁴ Aldhelm’s pupil Aethilwald, in a poem cited above for a different purpose,³⁵ praises Sedulius in that favourite adjective of Late Antiquity, which he would have appreciated, as *doctiloquus* (‘learned-speaking’). Bede, like Aldhelm, quotes from all three poets in his treatises *De Arte Metrica* and *De Orthographia*;³⁶ he makes use of Arator in his commentary on Acts, quoting directly in several places, and he also shows his high regard by borrowing or lightly adapting various lines of Arator in his poem on St Cuthbert, included by McKinlay in his apparatus of *imitationes* beneath the text as well as in his introduction.³⁷ Bede praises eight lines of Sedulius’ ‘beautiful’ verse on the cross in his exposition of Luke’s gospel.³⁸ For Bede as well

²⁹ For an overview see Ogilvy (1967).

³⁰ For Arator in this context, see McKinlay’s edn., p. xxvi.

³¹ Orchard (1994). ³² *Ibid.* 165.

³³ MGH AA 15. 232. 4.

³⁴ Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5. 18; Godman (1981).

³⁵ See p. 137 and n. 11.

³⁶ Manitius (1886a), *passim*.

³⁷ ed. McKinlay, pp. xlviii–xlix. The reader should be warned, since it is far from obvious, that in McKinlay’s introduction there is separate treatment of *testimonia* and *imitationes*.

³⁸ CCSL 120. 401; Springer (1988), 130.

as for Venantius, Sedulius and Arator are not only supports for education and exegesis but attractive poets.

The combined evidence of such citation and imitation, of existing booklists,³⁹ and of manuscripts is good evidence, not only of the widespread use of the texts in early Anglo-Saxon England, but of the existence of a 'school canon', a collection consisting of, or at least including, these three epics and designed for the purpose of teaching.⁴⁰ Godman goes so far as to posit a 'tradition of late Biblical Epic that was diffused both North and South of the Humber', citing a bifolium of Juvencus of the seventh century⁴¹ and a manuscript of Sedulius written in Kent in the eighth.⁴² Extending the chronological span, we can follow this canon on the Continent, through the manuscripts Paris BN Lat. 9347, written in Reims in the early ninth century,⁴³ and Ambr. C 74 Sup., of the ninth or tenth.⁴⁴ In the former our three epicists are accompanied by Prosper and Fortunatus; in the latter Sedulius is not present, but Paulinus of Nola is.⁴⁵ Another manuscript of the many that include all three is the former Cluny manuscript of which Leiden Voss. Q 86 and Rome Vat. Reg. Lat. 333 are now separate parts.⁴⁶

All three poets were present in the library of Alcuin, as described in his poem on the bishops, kings, and saints of York. There, in lines 1551–3, he names eight Christian poets, including Juvencus and Sedulius, who come first (this may be purely for metrical convenience), and Arator.⁴⁷ If we compare this with Venantius' list we see that Prudentius and Avitus are again present, as they are in Isidore, Orientius and Paulinus of Périgueux are absent (Alcuin's Paulinus is certainly Paulinus of Nola),⁴⁸ and Venantius himself is added,

³⁹ See Lapidge (1985). ⁴⁰ Glauche (1970).

⁴¹ Godman (1982), pp. lix–lxx. According to Lowe (CLA VIII 1172), it was 'presumably written in Ireland, possibly in Northumberland'. For the oldest manuscript of Juvencus, see Thoma (1950). Like the Bodleian ms. of Arator, it was used to bind something quite different. The ms. of Juvencus, Corpus Christi Cambr. 304, of the seventh or eighth century, is from France or Spain.

⁴² Godman (1982), pp. lix–lxx. CLA II. 123.3.

⁴³ Springer (1995), 84.

⁴⁴ McKinlay (1943), 112–13. Cuzzi (1936) favours the later dating.

⁴⁵ Godman (1982), p. lxxi notes the closeness to Alcuin's list.

⁴⁶ As shown by Rand (1923).

⁴⁷ Alcuin, *Versibus de Patribus Regibus et Sanctis Euboricensis Ecclesiae*, 1151–3.

⁴⁸ Godman (1982), pp. lxx–lxxxiv.

together with Lactantius, presumably here as the author of the poem on the phoenix, *De Ave Phoenixe*. As Godman notes,⁴⁹ Alcuin's knowledge of classical poetry is almost confined to the epic; an appropriate accompaniment to the Christian poets he cites, and perhaps even a sign of their influence on his and others' classical reading. All of our epic triad also leave their verbal imprint in the York poem, Sedulius and Arator slightly more often than Juvenius. As Huemer has noted, Alcuin quotes Juvenius in various other contexts.⁵⁰ The first of these, being the comment on the gifts of the Magi used by Jerome,⁵¹ might not be a direct borrowing, but there is no doubt about the others. In *Ep.* 186, attributing it to *quidam poeta*, he quotes the line of Juvenius' Preface that expressed his hope that at the Last Judgement he will be saved by his poetry; he uses this again, quirkily remoulding it for his own purposes, in *Ep.* 225, to Theodulf of Orléans. The authority of Juvenius (from whom he quotes 1. 60–2) is brought in to counter the Christological ideas of Felix and Elipandus in his treatises against them,⁵² in the latter case reinforced by the authority of fellow Spaniard and fellow *scholasticus* Isidore. Alcuin makes various citations of Sedulius. In a short metrical prayer before sleep (c. 122) he calls upon 'the one who slept in a boat with quiet heart', in words clearly derived from Sedulius' storm (*CP* 3. 56–62), as are the words *exurgens ventis... imperat*.⁵³ As for Arator, it is true that Alcuin's quotation in *Ep.* 237 very probably derives from Bede's *Life of Cuthbert*, but there may be independent references to Arator in the inscriptions written by Alcuin for a church of Peter and the twelve apostles.⁵⁴

Before we leave England with Alcuin for the Continent, a word must be said about the vigorous school of Anglo-Saxon religious poetry, which included work on the New Testament, such as *Christ and Satan*, the so-called *Christ* of Cynewulf, and the *Descent into Hell*, as well as various works on the Old.⁵⁵ The absence of hard detail to substantiate a close link and the apparent failure of scholars to detect actual allusion—this is no easy matter where such different languages

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, lxxii.

⁵⁰ ed. Huemer, pp. xv–xvi.

⁵¹ See p. 8.

⁵² *Contra Felicem* 2. 6 (*PL* 101. 152), *Contra Elipandum* 2. 8 (*PL* 101. 266).

⁵³ *PLAC* 1. 350, c. 122. See Huemer (1878), 53–4.

⁵⁴ *PLAC* 1. 335; see 1. 1 and 2; 2, 1 and 3; 3. 1 and 5.

⁵⁵ Kartschoke (1975), esp. 163–8.

are concerned—should not be a deterrent to stating the real possibility, or rather probability, that the English tradition is in a real way inspired, or certainly authenticated, by Juvenius and his Latin followers.⁵⁶ It is only to be expected that their outstanding popularity in Anglo-Saxon England would generate an enthusiasm to do likewise in the vernacular, notwithstanding Bede's delightful tale of the gifts of Caedmon.⁵⁷

MAINLY CAROLINGIANS

Theodulf of Orléans, a member of the circle of scholars assembled with and to some extent by Alcuin at the court of Charlemagne, presents us with another significant grouping of Christian poets, in a poem (XLV) on books that he has read.⁵⁸ Here our three keep much the same company as they did in the library at York, though Lactantius and Prosper are absent.⁵⁹ Theodulf gives pride of place to his compatriot Prudentius; the couplet containing the others' names begins with *Sedulius rutilus* and ends with *Iuence tonans*. The meaning of the epithet that distinguishes Sedulius is not exactly, as Springer has it, 'brilliant',⁶⁰ if that is understood as a tribute to exceptional skill or acumen; it is more like 'gleaming' or 'resplendent', describing his style. Juvenius 'thunders', perhaps because he is close to the gospels and the words of Christ. The important, if not groundbreaking, statement for which this small poem is most famous, that 'beneath a false covering true things are hidden'⁶¹—it is applied by Theodulf to Vergil and Ovid—contrasts markedly with the less liberal view expressed in the poem of an otherwise obscure and

⁵⁶ See *ibid.* 182–3 on Sedulius, and Martin (1982), 75–6 very briefly on Arator and Caedmon. Evans (1968), 141–2 argues for the influence of Avitus and Dracontius on the poem known as *Genesis B*.

⁵⁷ Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 4. 24.

⁵⁸ *PLAC* 1. 543. 14.

⁵⁹ Prosper will recur in a long list of poets whom Ermoldus Nigellus tells Louis the Pious that he cannot rival (*PLAC* 2. 5), a humble inversion of what Curtius calls the panegyric theme of 'outdoing' all comers (Curtius 1953, 163).

⁶⁰ Springer (1988), 131.

⁶¹ *plurima sub falso tegmine vera latent*, p. 543, line 20.

somewhat later figure, the teacher John of Fulda. John, intent on turning to the Muse (Thalia) of Arator, compares the chaff of Vergil with the corn that Arator provides (the pun on his name seldom disappears for long). One author was taken by Cerberus and suffers torment along with Jupiter, the other, taken by Michael, reigns in heaven. One praised Venus; the other prayed for the presence of the mother of God. One said that Aeneas was often victorious in war, the other related how Paul conquered the world. Doubtless some read, and taught, their authors in this vein, but such outbursts as this are not (as often thought) typically medieval.⁶²

Interesting evidence of how our texts were taught has been gleaned from various glossed manuscripts. Wieland has shown, by a close study of various details in such manuscripts, that they should be interpreted as teachers' copies rather than manuscripts used for private reading by monks.⁶³ After dictation of the text in appropriate portions the oblates could expect explanation of morphology and syntax, a measure of interpretation, some labelling of figures of speech, and the provision of lexical equivalents to enhance comprehension and word-power (or *copia*). (Glosses of this essentially 'stylistic' kind markedly outnumber devotional or edifying glosses.) The best-known set of glosses, and a very complete one, ascribed to Remigius of Auxerre (an ascription that has been increasingly mistrusted),⁶⁴ is printed in Huemer's edition of Sedulius. These are in Latin, but there are many glosses in Old English,⁶⁵ and many in Old High German.⁶⁶ In a mid-ninth-century manuscript from Laon (486), much discussed for its cultural significance, a glossed text of *Carmen Paschale* follows a commentary on Vergil.⁶⁷ Wieland calculated that if there were 300 days for teaching per year (assuming that teaching occurred on every day except Sundays and feast days: modern timetables are less generous) the teacher and his class could work through Vergil's *Aeneid* in one year, and Juvenius, Sedulius, and Arator the next. The intensity of study, and the liberal nature of the curriculum that is implied, or has been inferred by modern scholars,

⁶² PLAC 1. 392. 13.

⁶³ Wieland (1985).

⁶⁴ Dolbeau (1988).

⁶⁵ Springer (1995), 28 and n. 58.

⁶⁶ Schwind (1990), 11–12.

⁶⁷ Laon, *Bibliothèque Municipale*, 468. See Springer (1995), 138–9, and references there.

may not have been typical. Attitudes varied. Rabanus Maurus, in his work on the education of clergy, pronounced that study of the use of metre by the ancient writers can help with the reading of Christian poets—his list, incidentally, is very similar, even in detail, to that of Alcuin, his teacher, but omits Prosper and Lactantius—but was an apostle of the *quantum satis est* school; not too much.⁶⁸ A similar view can be traced much later in Vincent of Beauvais.⁶⁹ Later in the ninth-century, when writing to Solomon, bishop of Constance, Notker rejects poems about the *gentiles fabulae*, ‘pagan stories’, instead commending Juvencus, Sedulius, and Arator as well as Prudentius, Avitus, and the hymns of Ambrose.⁷⁰

As one would expect, the influence of our three writers persisted far beyond the schoolroom. They are valued both as theologians and, in various ways, as poets. Springer quotes the statement of Paschasius Radbertus that Sedulius’ description of the virgin birth (*CP* 2. 41–72) was as clear as anything said by ‘holy teachers’ (*sancti doctores*), in other words, presumably, the Church Fathers; Paschasius quotes two lines of Juvencus’ first book.⁷¹ (It is the case with many works that their first book is quoted most often, for obvious reasons.) Gottschalk quotes Sedulius (1. 324) on the Trinity, but so too does his opponent Hincmar of Reims, who, when necessary, uses the reasonable argument that Sedulius (and sometimes Arator) was subject to metrical necessity.⁷² Florus of Lyon wrote three hexameter poems,⁷³ one each on the gospels of Matthew and John, and one that is ‘a prayer with the mention of ancient miracles’; even allowing for his editor’s generosity with his testimonies—particularly obvious, perhaps, in the case of Walafrid Strabo in the same volume—it is clear at various points that Florus was familiar with our poets, especially Sedulius. In the anonymous verse *Life of St Leger*, also from the ninth-century, Sedulius and Arator are imitated frequently, and, one feels, with some discrimination.⁷⁴ A remarkable development of Sedulius is made, probably a century or so later, in the anonymous *Ecloga Theoduli*, a Vergilian contest or ‘flyting’, where the quatrains of the Christian spokeswoman

⁶⁸ *De Institutione Clericorum* 3. 18 (*PL* 107. 396A).

⁶⁹ ed. McKinlay, p. xliv.

⁷⁰ Curtius (1953), 463, accidentally omitting Arator.

⁷¹ ed. Huemer, p. xviii.

⁷² Springer (1988), 132; ed. McKinlay, pp. xxxiii–xxxiv.

⁷³ *PLAC* 2. 509–30.

⁷⁴ ed. McKinlay, p. lii.

(Alethia, aka Truth) derive from the short *digesta* of Old Testament miracles in the first book of *Carmen Paschale*.⁷⁵ When the flagging Pseustis (Falsehood) is confronted with the possibility of an even lengthier debate, using the New Testament, he finally caves in. The many readers who knew their Sedulius, where the Old Testament portions are but a small part, would appreciate this amusing touch. In the *Ecbasis Captivi* all three writers have been detected, and in some numbers; Arator may be less frequent, but imitations of him are rather more striking.⁷⁶ The list could be greatly extended, quarrying the suggestions of the indefatigable Manitius, but using with due caution his suggestions and those of editors who tend to follow various sets of tacit criteria when they are not following his.

A work of greater note than many, though perhaps not greater popularity, is the long poem of Otfrid of Weissenberg, who had been a disciple of Rabanus at Fulda.⁷⁷ This poem, normally called *Evangeliorum Liber* (it treats all four gospels and has a better claim to this title than Juvencus), is more than twice the length of Juvencus' poem, and divided into five books.⁷⁸ It can be dated quite precisely, to the years between 863 and 871. Written in the Franconian dialect to make it more accessible to the average monk, it is of great linguistic interest; it is fascinating too for its use of rhyming verse, and for the indications of musical accompaniment.⁷⁹ In the prefatory letter to Archbishop Liutbert of Mainz, written in Latin, Otfrid explains that he wrote the work at the request of various brethren, and a 'reverend lady' (*venerandae matronae*) called Judith; they complained that Vergil, Ovid, Lucan, and many others 'had adorned the deeds of their own people', and pointed out the examples of Juvencus, Arator, and Prudentius and many others, who in their own tongue had fittingly adorned the saying and miracles of Christ.⁸⁰ The Franks

⁷⁵ Green (1982). ⁷⁶ Strecker (1935).

⁷⁷ See in general Kartschoke (1975), 271–339, and for more detail Kleiber (1978).

⁷⁸ For a study of the difficult sentence in which Otfrid seeks to explain the relation of this to the four gospels, see Magoun (1978). It is possible, though not obvious, that the division into five books was inspired by *CP*.

⁷⁹ Much of Kleiber (1978) is devoted to these topics.

⁸⁰ ... *quod gentilium vates, ut Virgilius, Lucanus, Ovidius caeterique quam plurimi, suorum facta decorarent lingua nativa... nostrae etiam sectae probatissimorum virorum facta laudabant, Iuveni Aratoris Prudentii caeterorumque multorum, qui sua lingua dicta et miracula Christi decenter ornabant.*

had been slow to seize the opportunity of using their mother tongue, but hopefully its *dulcedo* ('sweetness'—this recalls Juvenecus' appreciative description of Vergil) would overcome the appealing sounds of useless frivolities that offended serious men. Otfrid takes this advice, but in his own adventurous way. It is, naturally, difficult to determine how closely Juvenecus, Arator, and Prudentius are followed, and especially so for a non-Germanist. Marold was able to document an extended list of similarities,⁸¹ but some of these indicate not the influence of a Latin poet but simply the similarity of the subject-matter.⁸² Even closely matching expressions might, in such a field, arise independently. The reference to our poets in the introductory letter does not present them as models, as Marold presupposed.⁸³ It is interesting to note that Otfrid's endeavour raises questions similar to those asked in the foregoing pages about Juvenecus, Sedulius, and Arator. He has problems of selection, and even at such length found it necessary to make omissions; as he declares, he decided to leave out many parables and miracles. Narrative here is certainly subordinated, and exegesis organized into three explicit categories, *spiritaliter*, *mystice*, and *moraliter*, reflecting, together with the surface meaning, the development of a fourfold interpretative model.⁸⁴ Important sources are the commentaries of Rabanus Maurus on Matthew, Bede's on Luke, and Alcuin's commentary on John. Although Otfrid chose not to use Latin, he wrote for the well educated, and not for the people at large as Erasmus and Luther later aspired to do. Whether because of its bulk, or subsequent linguistic developments, or for some other reason, this industrious work does not seem to have been popular before the sixteenth century, but it does show that the example set by the Latin epicists exercised a strong motivation for extending *Biblepik* to another *Muttersprache* of Christendom.

⁸¹ Marold (1887a).

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ In the words of Kartschoke (1975), 278, *Vorläufer* should not be identified with *Vorbilder*.

⁸⁴ On this see Von Ertzdorff (1978), who also comments on Otfrid's exegesis of the miracle performed at the wedding at Cana (John 2: 1–11); the six jars are the six ages of the world. Readers of Old High German could compare this with the numerous Latin ones helpfully analysed by Springer (1988), 121–7.

THE HIGH MIDDLE AGES

How far the many medieval renderings of the Bible into Latin verse—such as the twelfth-century *Aurora* of Peter Riga or the work of Alexander of Ashby and many others⁸⁵—were inspired by our New Testament poets could also be debated, but there is no doubting that their general popularity continued well into the High Middle Ages, and was in evidence throughout Europe. McKinlay made an interesting attempt to derive from the hundred-odd manuscripts that he listed some indication of Arator's place in medieval culture, and the company they keep in composite manuscripts is certainly interesting. But most often he is associated with Christian poets, including, as well as Juvenius and Sedulius, Prosper and Prudentius and others.⁸⁶ Manuscripts were numerous and widely spread. Schwind counts eighty monasteries that possessed them, and notes that Cluny is known to have had eight manuscripts of Arator in the twelfth century, and Canterbury, according to a fifteenth-century catalogue, seven.⁸⁷ The spread of monasteries holding one or more copies of Arator is impressive, and Arator is not necessarily the most popular of the three.⁸⁸ Further testimony to our poets' popularity comes from the late eleventh-century Winrich of Trier and from Aimeric of Angoulême (the latter in his *Ars Lectoria* or 'recommended reading-list' of 1086). A little later Conrad of Hirsau provides *accessus* to all three authors—simple interactive tools that aim to provide basic details about an author's contents and aims.⁸⁹ Except in a very simple way, the historical context of our poets is not a major concern of such works, but we can see from the diverse sources accumulated in McKinlay's edition that something was known of Arator's circumstances: that he wrote when Rome was under siege from the Goths (sometimes the Lombards or Vandals are wrongly added), and that he was a contemporary of Cassiodorus, Justinian, and the monk Dionysius who was responsible for making the

⁸⁵ See Dinkova-Bruun (2007).

⁸⁶ McKinlay (1942), 104–18.

⁸⁷ Schwind (1990), 11 n. 12.

⁸⁸ McKinlay (1942).

⁸⁹ See Curtius (1953), 466–7 for an overview. Also Huygens (1953).

Christian Era the basis of ecclesiastical chronology. There are occasional blips, as when Arator is said to have recited his poem before Caesar and the senate.⁹⁰ This is found in a manuscript notable as one of two that give a full commentary.⁹¹

A long list of scholars and writers who quote our authors, and so might be assumed to have read them, could be assembled. To skim the surface, John of Salisbury quotes Sedulius in his *Policraticus* (1. 66–7),⁹² Giraldus Cambrensis quotes Arator,⁹³ and Hugh of St Victor all three.⁹⁴ More valuable, in the fullness of time, as in any study of the medieval reception of an ancient author, would be a study of these citations in their contexts and a fuller appreciation of the nature of the writer's access. Honorius 'of Autun' mentions Juvenecus, but, as Huemer makes clear, he is actually repeating the notice of Jerome;⁹⁵ Alexander Neckham quotes Arator's line about the lyric metres of the Psalter, but, as McKinlay hints, he could have taken this from an earlier writer. (There are several candidates.)⁹⁶ In the thirteenth century Vincent of Beauvais quotes Juvenecus,⁹⁷ and Roger Bacon praises all three as 'Christian poets, or, better, very learned authorities' praised by the Church (he knows of Jerome and Bede);⁹⁸ they are valuable for the teaching of metre.⁹⁹ In the amusing but seriously topical 'Bataille des set arts' of Henri d'Andeli, Sedulius and Arator (with Prudentius and Prosper) fight along with Homer, Terence, and the classical satirists and epic poets on the side of the grammarians of Orléans against the logicians of Paris.¹⁰⁰ Although from time to time one of the Christian poets may fail to appear in such combined references, it would be unsafe to conclude that he was in decline. Juvenecus fails to appear in the *Laborintus* of Eberhard the German, who lists curriculum authors in the early

⁹⁰ In the Trier ms. 1093/1469, of the year 1048; McKinlay's edn., p. xxxix. But the Caesar seems to have been Justinian.

⁹¹ The other is London Ms. Royal 15. A. V., also of the eleventh century. See Esposito (1928/9).

⁹² Springer (1988), 134. ⁹³ ed. McKinlay, pp. xlii–xliii.

⁹⁴ *PL* 176. 786. ⁹⁵ ed. Huemer, pp. vi–vii.

⁹⁶ ed. McKinlay, pp. lv and liv. ⁹⁷ ed. Huemer, pp. xxii.

⁹⁸ *poetas Christianos, sive, ut melius dicam, auctores doctissimos.*

⁹⁹ Cited by Huemer in his edn. of Juvenecus, pp. xxii–xxiii.

¹⁰⁰ Lines 211–12.

thirteenth century,¹⁰¹ but duly reappears in the *Registrum* of Hugh of Trimberg compiled in about 1280.¹⁰² It is difficult to detect with any certainty a falling-off in their general popularity. Huemer saw a decline in Juvenecus manuscripts as early as the tenth century,¹⁰³ but this now seems a premature verdict; for Arator McKinlay provisionally traced a decline in the thirteenth century,¹⁰⁴ but the numbers of extant manuscripts show only a small dip. As for Sedulius, Springer, with over 400 manuscripts, makes no comment other than to underline his great popularity.¹⁰⁵ In his brief paragraph on the reception of Juvenecus, Herzog pointed to lines of the poet and satirist Sextus Amarcus as an early piece of unfavourable criticism:¹⁰⁶

Alcimus, Arator, Sedulius atque Iuvenecus
non bene tornatis apponunt regia vasis
fercula. miror eos, non audeo vituperare.¹⁰⁷

As Karl Manitius, his editor, says, Amarcus here chooses his words carefully in this comparison of ancients and moderns;¹⁰⁸ he praises what they offer, but not their form or style. Now that his *floruit* is placed at around 1100,¹⁰⁹ it seems that he could be contradicting Winrich of Trier, mentioned above, who described Arator's verses in the same Horatian terms¹¹⁰ as well-turned.¹¹¹ Amarcus very occasionally quotes Arator and Sedulius, but Prudentius is his favourite among Christian poets.

RENAISSANCE AND REGRESSION

The carefully qualified criticism of Arator in Amarcus is not unlike a comment of Petrarch in his tenth *Eclogue*, which dates from the mid-fourteenth century. In his extensive review of poets and other

¹⁰¹ Curtius (1953), 50–1.

¹⁰² Ibid. 51.

¹⁰³ Huemer's edn., p. xxi.

¹⁰⁴ McKinlay (1952).

¹⁰⁵ Springer (1995).

¹⁰⁶ Herzog (1989), 336.

¹⁰⁷ *Sermones* 3. 270–2: 'Avitus, Arator, Sedulius, and Juvenecus serve royal meals on poorly turned earthenware. I wonder at them, I dare not criticize . . .'

¹⁰⁸ ed. Manitius (1969), *ad loc.*

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 16–17.

¹¹⁰ Cf. *Ars Poetica*, 441.

¹¹¹ ed. McKinlay, p. xlii.

writers from the Greek and Roman world that forms the core of this long poem, Petrarch includes Prudentius, Arator, Sedulius, and Juvenicus, in a colourfully symbolic poetic vision, at lines 311–26, of which the first eight lines will be quoted. The text is Bergin's, the translation my own:

Longe ibi trans fluvium, regum inter busta seorsum
 unus erat rutilus divini ruris arator
 qui pinguem scabro sulcabat vomere campum.
 huic comes, hinc prudens, hinc sedulus alter aranti
 certabant rigido glebas confringere rastro.
 terra ferax, fessique boves et laurea nusquam,
 nusquam hederæ, aut mirtus, viridis non gloria serti,
 non studium Muse, fragilis vox.

Far away, over there across the river, among the tombs of rulers, apart, there was a well-tanned cultivator of the divine countryside who was ploughing the rich plain with his feeble ploughshare. Accompanying him as he ploughed, there was on the one hand a prudent man, on the other a sedulous one; they strove to break the turf with rigid hoe. The land is fertile, but the oxen weary, and nowhere was there a laurel, or ivy, or myrtle; there was no tribute of a green garland, no enthusiasm for the Muse, and a faltering voice.

In this vivid picture of the writers who inhabited and cultivated Petrarch's cultural landscape Arator comes first; his name, with the familiar pun, nicely fits the agricultural metaphor that informs the poem. Like his two companions, Prudentius and Sedulius, he does not lack knowledge or commitment, but although the earth is rich and potentially fertile the implements are in a poor state. The oxen tire, and nothing worthwhile is achieved; not here the makings of a wreath. Nor is there zeal for the Muses, and their voice is brittle—clearly a reference to their style. Juvenicus has not yet appeared: he is pictured a few lines later, with a play on his name, obvious but apparently rare, as *Hispanum nostra modulantem voce iuencum*.¹¹² Juvenicus the ox becomes an animal in the stable of the nativity, but also takes his place with the symbols of the evangelists, mentioned in the previous line. After this short Christian interlude, both respectful

¹¹² 'A Spanish ox singing in our language.'

and regretful, Petrarch resumes, and mentions Persius, Claudian, Lucan, and others. The somewhat disparaging picture of the four Christian poets need not be taken as a comment on the Middle Ages in general, or, as Bergin has it, the Dark Ages; Petrarch is referring to the four poets (Fontaine's *quadriga*, in fact) who might, because of their rich material, have provided inspiration for him in his grief, but for their poor style.

By 1500 Sedulius was in at least his sixth printed edition, and Juvencus and Arator not far behind. The Christian epic poets were becoming well known, though many readers of Sedulius will have been misled or confused by Trithemius' entry for Sedulius in his catalogue of ecclesiastical authors, dating from 1494 and often printed in editions. This notice in effect rolls into one the Sedulius who is clearly the Irish scholar Sedulius Scottus with the conventional picture of our Sedulius,¹¹³ who supposedly worked in Greece and then flourished in Rome. Readers of this time will often have come upon Petrarch's passage too, but also what might well be a refutation of it, from the apologia of Mantuan in his *Parthenicae*. Disagreeing with Petrarch the laureate, Mantuan actually awards a laurel to Juvencus, whom he presents as 'a man initiated in sacred mysteries, crowned with laurel, surrounded on all sides by Muses, holding a lyre'.¹¹⁴ He urges readers to run to this great spectacle and to desist from criticism of the poet who (and here he recalls Jerome) 'included the majesty of the law in epic verses'.¹¹⁵ Erasmus, too, champions the Christian poets: in a letter of 1496 he regrets that they are spurned as models, commending Juvencus, Prudentius, Paulinus of Nola, and Ambrose.¹¹⁶ The poet Macarius Mutius recommends Sedulius in his *De Triumpho Christi* of 1499;¹¹⁷ but in fact neither man—Erasmus also wrote a poem on Christ's descent to hell¹¹⁸—makes obvious use of early Christian epic, nor, it seems,

¹¹³ See pp. 139–41.

¹¹⁴ *Videte virum sacris initiatum mysteriis, lauro coronatum, musis undique cinctum, lyram tenentem . . . laudatur ab Hieronymo: hic igitur immensam Evangelicae legis maiestatem verbis includit heroicis.*

¹¹⁵ See p. 7. ¹¹⁶ *Ep.* 49. 85–9.

¹¹⁷ Springer (1988), 139–41, (1991). For this theme see also Greene (1963).

¹¹⁸ Reedijk (1956), 189–201.

does Mantuan. Sannazaro expresses admiration for the three poets,¹¹⁹ but does not seek to imitate. His style is spectacularly different.

The educational possibilities of our poets are, however, explored thoroughly. In the years 1501–4 Aldus Manutius produced a very full edition of Late Antique Christian poets, to fill the place of ‘pagan tales’; this indeed encompassed far more poets than were known or at any rate familiar in the Middle Ages. Around the turn of the century Erasmus’ friend, the poet and scholar Fausto Andrelini, chose to lecture on Juvencus in Paris. John Colet, in his instructions about the teaching in St Paul’s School (1518), mentions Sedulius and Juvencus beside Lactantius, Proba, Prudentius, and Mantuan and various classical authors, eager that the school provide models of ‘true laten speech’ and proper literature rather than what he calls modern ‘blotterature’.¹²⁰ Baldwin argues that they were no longer read there forty years later,¹²¹ but Sedulius and Prudentius are certainly mentioned in the statutes of the schools of Southwark (1562) and St Bees (1583), along with the modern writers Palingenius and, in the latter case, Mantuan and George Buchanan. Arator seems to have been less popular in Britain,¹²² but he is very often printed, with the commentaries of Nebrija and also Arius Barbosa, in Spain.¹²³ His companions in the curriculum there were Vergil and, intriguingly, Persius.¹²⁴ Spain seems to show no such interest at this time in the Spaniard Juvencus; he was evidently not boosted by his Spanishness, in the way that Ausonius was in the same period boosted in France by his Gallic identity.¹²⁵

In general, our poets hold their place in educational curricula for the sixteenth century and much of the seventeenth. They are frequently printed,¹²⁶ and in many countries, but with greater competition do not retain the popularity and the centrality that they enjoyed in Middle Ages. There are some early signs of coolness: Erasmus’

¹¹⁹ In letter 37; Kennedy (1983), 184.

¹²⁰ Clark (1948), Baldwin (1944), 128.

¹²¹ Baldwin (1944), 129.

¹²² Binns (1990), 88–9, quoting passages which include several names, and in which one would expect Arator to appear if he were well known.

¹²³ Norton (1978), *passim*. For Barbosa see also Schwind (1990), 13.

¹²⁴ Norton (1966), 127.

¹²⁵ Green (1991), p. xxxvii.

¹²⁶ Binns (1990), 86 and 486 n. 41.

interest declines, and in *De Ratione Studii* is concentrated on Prudentius,¹²⁷ though his interest in even him should not be overestimated.¹²⁸ There is a restraint in the rather defensive comments of Vives, too, if one reads between the lines of his *De Ratione Studii Puerilis*, on the education of the Princess Mary. He mentions our triad and also Prudentius, Paulinus, and Prosper, ‘who might compare with any of the ancients—I speak of the elegancies of verse’, and ‘are neither crude nor contemptible in speech’. ‘They have many passages in which, by their eloquence and charm of verse, they vie with the ancients. Some even think they surpass them.’¹²⁹ Such tactics can be noted even in prefaces to editions, as in what Springer calls the prefatory puff of Reinhard Lorichius in the edition of Poelmann, after 1537: Juvencus and Sedulius will keep pupils out of ‘stinking stews’ (or in today’s more restrained language, off the streets).¹³⁰ This is not high praise, although the authors are given laurels of a sort.¹³¹ Lorichius also declares that ‘if they do not hold first prize they are not among the last’,¹³² in the language of unambitious apologia. Another tack may be seen in the introduction to the Lyons editions of all three poets, published in 1553 and 1566; the dedication begins with complaints against the constant thrust for novelty and the neglect of what is old. Poetic taste is changing.

The Christian epicists of Late Antiquity are overtaken by a new style, more expansive and ornate, in the course of the sixteenth century, notable in the poems of Sannazaro on the virgin birth and Vida’s *Christiad* and countless other Humanist and Neoclassical poets.¹³³ In describing the virgin birth, for example, Sannazaro takes nine lines to describe the coming of night, borne on its tardy chariot, and immediately before parturition Mary gives a speech that is rhetorically quite magnificent, but no *Magnificat*. Vida, presenting the death of Christ, forfeits much of Sedulius’ cosmic and spiritual vigour but has the saviour breathe his last with a conspicuous double-spondee ending to

¹²⁷ Baldwin (1944), 85.

¹²⁸ Green (2000), 309–18.

¹²⁹ Translations from Baldwin (1944), 187 and 191.

¹³⁰ Springer (1988), 136.

¹³¹ *laurigeris compta tempora laeta comis*, ‘their joyful brows adorned with the foliage of laurel’.

¹³² Springer (1988), 138.

¹³³ Analysed in some detail by Lewalski (1966).

line 1000 of his fifth book.¹³⁴ There may have been controversy about Muses, Neptunes, and Nymphs, or councils in Heaven and the furniture of classical hell—how far should one go?—but epic has clearly taken a quite new turn. The poets of Late Antiquity are happily accepted as precedents in the grand tradition—and it is now very grand—but no more. Probably even the most careful searches would reveal at best only occasional similarities in detail, and small pockets of enthusiasm.

It is within this tradition, as Lewalski has thoroughly documented,¹³⁵ that John Milton wrote *Paradise Lost* and the shorter, four-book *Paradise Regained*. Milton stands near the end of the long story of biblical epic, and for all his intense religious commitment (his positions are in many ways close to those of Arius and Nestorius),¹³⁶ it is most unlikely that he consciously adapts ideas or motifs taken from his reading of Juvencus, Sedulius, or Arator. There has been discussion of the possibility that as a boy he might have been directed to study the first two: it seems unlikely.¹³⁷ Of course, he may have read them off his own bat, but there is no direct evidence that he did. *Paradise Regained*, a study of Christ's temptations, is closer than *Paradise Lost* to the gospel narratives, but dramatized in a way that Sedulius' version, with its scathing narratorial comments on the Devil,¹³⁸ is not. Two suggestions of significant similarity have been put forward by Springer.¹³⁹ At *Paradise Regained* 4. 220, when after 'slipping from his Mothers eye' (4. 216; a nice touch, worthy of Juvencus) Christ goes to the temple and is described as 'teaching, not taught', the point recalls the small knot of Sedulian paradoxes in *CP* 2. 136–8. Second, following Lewalski, Springer wonders if the tempter's sumptuous banquet in *Paradise Regained* 2. 337–67 might conceivably have been fostered by the *fallaces...dapes* of *CP* 2. 178 ('false banquets'). There Sedulius surely refers, grandiosely, to the temptation to turn stones into bread, but the phrase might conceivably have pointed Milton in the direction of his prominent banquet motif. Springer is surely right to reject the suggestion that Milton's comparison of Christ's victory over the serpent with that of Hercules over Antaeus in *Paradise Regained*

¹³⁴ These are items 97 and 170, respectively, in the anthology of Perosa and Sparrow (1979). See also Springer (1991), 743–4 for tendencies already apparent in Mutius, and Greene (1963) for another strand of classicizing verse.

¹³⁵ Lewalski (1966).

¹³⁶ Lewalski (1966), 133–63.

¹³⁷ Clark (1948), 126.

¹³⁸ See pp. 176–7.

¹³⁹ Springer (1988), 143–4.

4. 563–8 owes anything to *CP* 2. 198–200, where the tempter at one moment rises up and at another lies down on the ground.¹⁴⁰ Sedulius' Devil does this because he is, from the time of his Edenic doom, consistently serpentine and ground-loving. His lowliness, indeed, is one thing that distinguishes his operations from those of Milton's arrogant and hyper-confident Satan in *Paradise Lost* and the suavely devious operator of *Paradise Regained*.

The same conclusion must apply to the German writer Klopstock as to Milton. In his *Messias*, of which Klopstock produced the first three cantos in 1748, to be followed by seventeen more by 1773, there is no claim of inspiration from Late Antique Latin poetry, and little if any convincing sign of it in his distinctive poetic style. If he knew of these poets at all, it was through the scholar-poet I. J. Pyra's *Der Tempel der wahren Dichtkunst*, in a passage which Herzog used as an epigraph;¹⁴¹ Sedulius, the only one of our three to be mentioned there, receives a single, dry line, which contrasts markedly with the livelier portrayals of Renaissance poets that precede, and the reference to Prudentius' martyr poems that follows. He stands at the end of the long tradition of *Bibelepik*, but Oh! How chang'd!

Our brief survey may fittingly come to a conclusion with a poet infinitely inferior to Klopstock, his contemporary, the Lutheran pastor J. J. Gottlob Am-Ende. This rather obscure personage, whom Châtillon brought to the attention of scholars, wrote a hexameter version of the Book of Acts in 264 quarto pages.¹⁴² Echoes and imitations are very common, and range from Vergil to John Owen, but in spite of the common subject-matter there seems to be no Arator; and if the indefatigability of Châtillon unearthed nothing few will rush in to try their hands. As the poetic and educational influence of Juvencus, Sedulius, and Arator comes to an apparent end, modern scholarship begins. We have reached the period that sees useful editions of Juvencus (1792, by Arevalo), Sedulius (1761, by Arevalo), and Arator (1769, by Arntzen), which in the nineteenth century, complete with their useful introductions and commentaries, are taken into Migne's *Patrologia Latina*.¹⁴³ These are the ancestors, indeed parents, of the editions in the Vienna corpus by Huemer and McKinlay, which have necessarily underpinned scholarly study of Christian epic and have yet to be replaced.

¹⁴⁰ With a reminiscence of Dido: see p. 215.

¹⁴¹ Herzog (1975), pp. xiii–xiv; see also p. xviii.

¹⁴² Châtillon (1969–78).

¹⁴³ *PL* 19 and 68.

Conclusion

By the eighteenth century, then, the influence of our three epics is barely a trickle. To learners, readers, and poets alike they are as good as unknown, and are beginning to be the exclusive preserve of scholars, which they have remained. Gaining the attention of even a scholarly readership has been a long process, not only because of entrenched attitudes that tended to see the occasional metrical awkwardness as automatic disqualification from the canon, or even the feeling of an Amarcus or Petrarch that the verses are not 'well turned', but also perhaps because of an unease or embarrassment with such a conflation of two strenuously competing world-views and the difficulty of giving due weight to each. But in an interdisciplinary age, and with the fuller and more nuanced approach to Late Antiquity of recent years, there need be no such anxiety; hence the present book, which will now be concluded with a quick summary and an attempt to locate its findings on what in my Introduction I called a 'relief map' of notable recent criticism.

While we cannot be absolutely certain that Christian Latin epic was not attempted before Juvenius, it is overwhelmingly likely that he was indeed the pioneer. The new atmosphere of toleration under Constantine was highly favourable, and also held out the prospect of increasing interest in Christianity. To Christian writers Constantine seemed a promising patron, and one who could perhaps be further encouraged by judicious dedication of Christian poems. Juvenius' purpose can be seen in the light of Lactantius' statement of perhaps twenty years before, that the stylistic 'roughness' of the scriptures (in particular that of the prophets, who are his primary concern, for he writes here on justice) was a major reason for their failure to carry

conviction.¹ Lactantius avowed his intention to present Christian discourse in the polished and elegant style required by the educated elite; Juvenius, though he is not putting forward a case in the same sense, decided to present his material in a new style that might attract and retain unconverted and uncommitted readers but also edify Christians, and not necessarily just Lactantius' 'wobbly' category.² He seeks, like Sedulius and Arator after him, to take advantage of the delight of poetry, and harness not only the heroic metre but the manifold charms of epic as a whole.

His work is also a work of paraphrase, and it is instructive in various ways to approach it from this perspective. It has emerged that he approached his task with a clear and consistent methodology. First, he created a kind of harmony (something not difficult to do for oneself); this follows Matthew for the most part but switches from time to time to the other gospels, though with almost no combination of parallel accounts. He works painstakingly through, with an eye for what is difficult or impossible to render in verse, but also for small-scale opportunities of economy or dramatic or didactic reconfiguration. The many speeches or discourses that his blueprint includes are presented along the same lines as his narrative, and with little rhetorical influence. (Sedulius and Arator will react to the challenge of direct discourse in very different ways.) There is little direct intrusion by the author into his text—here too his followers will diverge notably—though his own role is certainly not an invisible one. The development of an exegetical position is rare, and his most significant exegetical move is his unobtrusive sidestepping of the topical issues raised by Arius. In general, Jerome's statement that he is pretty literal (*paene ad verbum*) is broadly acceptable, and the implicit comparison with the translator's art made in that passage (though Juvenius almost certainly works exclusively from a Latin text) is illuminating.

In composing his *Libri Evangeliorum* Juvenius may well have put to use skills learned and practised during his education, or even ones taught by him, if he was ever a teacher; though it must be said that the influence of the schools is remarkably inconspicuous elsewhere, even in his speeches. It is not clear whether in the educational context he would ever have been called upon to paraphrase prose into verse,

¹ Lactantius, *DI* 5. 1. 15–21.

² See p. 131.

and he will certainly not have dealt with biblical prose; and it is not easy (or perhaps one should say, since they are vague, too easy) to slot his own kind of enterprise into the broad interstices of ancient theory. He could have acquired the skills of abbreviation, transposition, and amplification, as identified by Roberts, in other ways: good students learn as much from immersion in reading Latin authors as they do from formal teaching. Moreover, paraphrase in various shapes and sizes was part and parcel of Juvencus' task as priest, and something that he might have performed for many years (as Monsieur Jourdain did with prose) without reflecting on the fact. As Augustine said, one walks without thinking how exactly to do it.³

But to make the initial approach to Juvencus from the perspective of paraphrase, however conceived, is useful in fixing our attention on the process of creating the new narrative, or reclothing the old, and the inherent difficulties of this. As any composer of Latin poetry knows, some things simply cannot be expressed adequately in the tight medium of quantitative verse. Names, and the occasional constellations of names in the gospels, are an obvious example. From this perspective, disquiet may be aroused by the attribution to Juvencus of a programme of cutting back on Hebrew names and other details in order to remove Jesus and others from their Jewish background;⁴ this does not seem fully justified by the evidence of his text, where many such names remain, and the Jewish background is clearly seen. A closer look shows that Juvencus' negotiation of the challenge is affected by the demands of metre, in a way that cannot be captured by statistics such as Poinsette's, useful as they are.⁵ To omit such material is not to reject what it stands for; nor is their elimination, as Roberts held, a guiding principle of Juvencus' economy.⁶

Although a number of carefully detailed and often incisive commentaries on his work now exists, the understanding of Juvencus' aims and methods has suffered somewhat from a rather generalizing approach. This is most obvious in the context of Herzog's application of Form Criticism. There is no doubt that, in comparison with

³ Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* 2. 134.

⁴ This is prominent in Orbán (1992).

⁵ Poinsette (1979), *passim*.

⁶ Roberts (1985), 109.

Matthew, Juvenicus' version shifts the centre of gravity somewhat from the Palestinian ambience and the first-century concerns of the gospel to the world of fourth-century Christianity, but particular differences should not be exaggerated. As I have argued elsewhere, it is far from clear that Juvenicus ever refers to the Eucharist, as Herzog contends.⁷ His formula of *Applanierung*, or removal of material deemed foreign to the poet's purpose⁸, also goes too far. Likewise, in the treatment of a complementary process, the creation of *Erbauliche Relief*, we have seen exceptions to Herzog's generalization that the poet concentrates single-mindedly on the figure of Christ and on Christ's words: there is sensitive variation in, for example, the carefully presented figure of the Canaanite woman, the fully developed dialogue with the woman at the well, and the meeting with Nicodemus. These are not simple *Randfiguren*.⁹

But if such levelling out should be resisted, and (in terms of New Testament critical terminology once more) the insights of Redaction Criticism and the individuality of the author re-emphasized against those of Form Criticism, Herzog's insight that Juvenicus aims to present the Bible itself, and not a distinctive version of it, and certainly not a commentary, and even 'substitutes himself to some extent for the biblical speaker or narrator', eliding the difference, is well made.¹⁰ This helps to explain not only the relative lack of exegesis but also the remarkable confidence of the assertion in Juvenicus' Preface that his work will endure, unlike those of Homer and Vergil, however he himself may be judged at the last assize. He expects his work to be carried into eternity, as it were, on the wings of scripture, the word which will not pass away.¹¹ This chosen stance may also explain why the notion of biblical authority, and fears of infringing or compromising it, never seem to arise in Juvenicus' mind. As a clear and conscientious paraphrase, his work actually *is* (so Herzog again) the Bible, and even if, in the words of Jerome, the *maiestas* or majesty of the gospels is subjected by the poet to 'laws', it remains *maiestas*. As Juvenicus says in his Epilogue, his function is

⁷ Green (2007b).

⁸ Herzog (1975), 108 and 124–5.

⁹ Ibid. 124–30.

¹⁰ Ibid. 93 and 115.

¹¹ See p. 18.

that of adding *ornamenta* to the *divinae gloria legis*. While not competent to replace existing translations of scripture, which remain the source of authority and the final court of appeal, his work is not thought to diminish or challenge that authority, which is necessarily conceived in Late Antiquity in ways that leave room for imprecision in biblical translation and interpretation.

These *ornamenta*, which Juvencus claims that scripture has taken on ‘willingly’ (in other words, he has been successful, or at least has met no great problems), are more plausibly seen with Herzog as various elements of epic—albeit growing, so to speak, under the shadow of *Erbaulichkeit* or edification in its various modes¹²—than as exclusively rhetorical *ornamenta*, as they are by Roberts.¹³ But, as we have seen, Juvencus’ appropriations and adaptations of Vergil go far beyond the mechanical quarrying of an *Übersetzungsmedium*; that is just one end of the spectrum. As well as the multitude of phrases to which—as may be seen from his typology of citations of prose authors¹⁴—Herzog restricts the presence of Vergil, there is the re-design of sentence structure and dialogue, the occasional aspiration to fuller description, and the frequent evidence of intelligent remoulding and purposeful inversion. Such things are underestimated, or ignored, by Herzog, who privileges *Erbauung*. This concept is certainly helpful and illuminating, and indeed (although it should not be simply reduced to some by-form of the *utile* of classical poetics) not so foreign to the classical tradition as it might at first seem. (The related notion of *Andacht* and *Andachtsbilde* (‘meditation’ and ‘symbols of meditation’), which Herzog derives from art criticism,¹⁵ is perhaps more striking, at least when used to characterize the elaborate storm scene.) Why *Erbauung* should be given the primacy over the epic element is not made entirely clear. Certainly, Herzog’s repeated contention that epic was dead in the period between 280 and 370 must be questioned. In fact Nemesianus and Proba tell us of their own epics—the former projected by this African would-be Vergil, the latter completed some years before her cento—and Ausonius mentions one without surprise when celebrating his former colleague Attius Tiro Delphidius in XI. 5. The death of epic seems to have been greatly

¹² So Herzog (1989), 333.

¹³ Roberts (1985), 70.

¹⁴ Herzog (1975), 188–200.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 45.

exaggerated. More importantly, in this period as in others, Vergil was there, all ready for use, and frequently read and expounded, his influence in so many areas still plain to see. The genesis of Juvencus' epic format is not to be seen in the varying strategies of citation employed in prose writers such as Tertullian and Lactantius, which would not even explain the strictly verbal imitations. It is true that much of the poetry of this era shows a fascination with smallness of scale, and it is also true that the presence of a strong tradition of writing epic can be a great boost (as in the later Renaissance); but there is no reason to deny writers of Juvencus' time the capacity to return to their Vergil and boldly proceed from there.

A century later, perhaps exactly, Sedulius writes in a different world, one in which Christian poetics and hermeneutics have developed enormously. Christian poetry now has high status, and a definite and sizeable readership. Sedulius does not ignore Juvencus by any means, but is indebted above all to Prudentius, whose elegantly lyric presentation of Christ's miracles may have pointed him to his novel way of presenting the gospels. Sedulius also benefits from the work of Western theologians, and especially Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine. Nestorius, whose reinterpretation of Christology was seen to pose a grave challenge, not only on the strictly theological front but also to Christian faith and hope in general, and against whom Sedulius' tone is so insistent, is surely a contemporary. Methods and presuppositions of exegesis have moved on remarkably since Juvencus wrote. Sedulius does not hesitate to comment freely and to intrude on his narrative, and allegorical interpretations are common, sometimes leading to homily. Old Testament figures are introduced as types of Christ; Sedulius marvels at the healing power of a single thread of Christ's garment; the restoration of the horribly bent-over old woman is made a symbol of the way in which 'we' should not be directed towards Tartarus.

His verse medium is, as he explains in his first letter to Macedonius, an evangelistic tool, designed to attract the educated elite who could be expected to lap up anything in verse. Macedonius' reaction, as Sedulius reports or imagines it in the second letter, does not bear the weight of Herzog's contention that he found the poem in need of supplementation.¹⁶ Even if that interpretation were correct,

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xli.

Macedonius would remain a single voice, and attractive as it is as almost the only evidence of exactly contemporary reception, it would be a leap of faith to assume this reaction to be typical of the Christian reading public. The exegesis in *Opus Paschale* is in some ways fuller than that of the *Carmen Paschale* (though not consistently so), but this is not necessarily an acknowledgement that Sedulius thought his poem wanting. It is not a *zweite verbesserte Auflage*.¹⁷ On the contrary, Arator and others embrace the *Carmen*, while the *Opus Paschale*, which Herzog apparently identified as a sign that the genre is moving towards 'heteronomy' (by this Herzog usually implies greater independence of the biblical text and more exegesis), seems to be the *Sackgasse*. Admittedly, the prose work led to the medieval tradition of the *opus geminatum*, but it was evidently not greatly esteemed in itself.

When Sedulius speaks of the *metrica ratio* of his work, he was thinking of more than metre. The first book is bursting with Vergil, variously used: he construes his audience as pagans of Athens, and calls them away from a landscape of sterility to a pastoral pleasance; he exploits Vergil to some extent in his Old Testament vignettes, perhaps trial runs for the later miracles, and even contrives to express a refutation of Arianism in Vergilian terms. He also conceives the four-book narrative on which he is engaged as a journey; as presented in his prefatory book, it is reminiscent more than once of Aeneas' long travels, and in particular of the tour of Pallanteum or proto-Rome, short but so full of significance, which evoked Aeneas' wonder. The poet and his readers 'lighten the path with talk'; this *sermo*, in its Sedulian dress, may be seen as referring to his varied commentary, or even the presence of Christ, the *sermo* and *logos*, himself. In Books 2–5 Vergil is prominent in a more formal way, as in the whole lines which, either totally or with minimal alteration, are folded into the texture at appropriate points. There is considerable, but less obvious, evidence of other writers, especially Ovid and Lucan.

These books may be broadly described as narrative, even biography. Sedulius keeps strictly to the order of events from the gospels, even, as far as he is able, when presenting the miracles which are the

¹⁷ Ibid., p. liii.

inner core and mainspring of his work. There is some evidence of purposeful grouping, but he respects the discontinuity of the gospel narratives, or at least accepts it *faute de mieux*. The treatment of Christ's early life, eliminating most things that are not obviously miraculous, is clearly uneven, but subserves the general plan, in which Books 2 and 5 explain God's saving design and Christ's achievement of salvation, while Books 3 and 4 give evidence of Christ's power and willingness to meet and heal all kinds and conditions of men and women. Individual episodes are rethought and recast much more than in Juvencus; Sedulius is more selective, and focuses more closely on the essential transaction of a miracle scene. To this end he drops all but the smallest snatches of direct discourse. Unlike Juvencus, he is prepared to cite material from elsewhere in the Bible, notably the Psalms, to develop exegetical points, for which, especially in Books 2 and 5, he gives himself ample room. The exact wording of the biblical texts, especially the Psalms, which are for Sedulius the main vehicle of Old Testament prophecy, is conspicuous enough in places, but with Sedulius we are surely beyond paraphrase. A better analogy is the now well-established biblical commentary; and some kinds of comment within a narrative, though not of course full-blown exposition, are not exactly unknown to epic. Book 5, which relates Christ's passion and death, his resurrection, and ascension, presents a different pattern again, with the punctuation of the narrative—in this case a narrative built up from more than one gospel—by the exposition of symbolic detail, the intrusion of intense devotional responses, and the delivery of impassioned argument for the credibility of the resurrection stories.

Sedulius' language and style were much imitated by Arator in his *Historia Apostolica* of a hundred years or so later, and this is nowhere more obvious than in the flashback with which his epic begins, in which Sedulius' brief but forceful picture of Christ's descent to hell—his Harrowing of Hell, as it was to be called by an Old English poet—is brought home to the reader. Christ's crushing victory over the power of death makes plain the salvific energy of this catabasis, far beyond that of earlier epic, and his triumphant exit likewise contrasts resoundingly with the low-key exits of Aeneas and Pompeius in the sixth books of the *Aeneid* and *Civil War*. Such a beginning provides the power-centre of Arator's work, and it will be echoed in some of

Peter's preaching and the general triumphalism of the history of Christianity as it expands from Jerusalem through the eastern Mediterranean to Rome. Arator builds his own narrative from Acts, not without some of Juvenecus' criteria; but the selectivity is more obvious, and with his more expansive style he has few worries about the confining effects of metre. Like Sedulius, he enjoys developing certain features that he considers especially important or vivid. Speeches, such an important feature of Acts, are not avoided, and often receive particular elaboration. At the same time, there is a gradual diminution of narrative compared with his predecessors. Arator's exegetical additions, now that the provenance of many of them is known, may seem today like off-the-peg sermons welded more or less neatly onto the text, but although their coherence with one another has been exaggerated one should not undervalue their importance for their age (Augustine, we may recall, saw nothing wrong in using the sermons of others, at least in the pulpit),¹⁸ or Arator's determination and resourcefulness in presenting some remarkably complex arguments.

Such passages, and indeed many others, will have been quite a challenge to their audience, unless (but there is no suggestion of this) they were abridged, simplified, or expounded in some way. It is possible, though there is no direct evidence to support this supposition, that they were not originally intended for recitation; Arator was an established poet when he came to Rome, and, as Roberts suggests, his choice of Acts may have been purely his own, a natural way of employing his talents.¹⁹ But it also fits well with the needs of the situation, being both a public tribute to Vigilius and a morale-booster for the threatened population of Rome. Perhaps Arator was even in some way being paraded as a convert to orthodoxy or as an acquisition from the Goths. The series of recitations is a very clear tribute to the appeal and the power of poetry, and an unusual and unusually important cultural statement, but there are other conspicuous agendas too. The two-book division was the obvious one to adopt, and so the first book was bound to end with the rescue of Peter from prison; but this is developed into a rousing celebration of

¹⁸ Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* 4. 160–1.

¹⁹ Roberts (1985), 88.

the divine protection afforded to Peter and by extension to the new Rome. The backcloth, as it were, to this powerful orchestration is nothing less than Peter's chains themselves, surely on prominent display in the church of St Peter ad Vincula at this point in the performance. The later chapters of Acts belong to Paul, but in Arator's version we are not allowed to forget the achievements of Peter for long; and the second book ends, more gently perhaps, but no less triumphantly, with the appearance of the two heroes in Rome, and a proclamation of their functions and achievements, their trials and martyrdoms, and their eternal glory. In Roman epic, and much earlier epic, the world is famously too small for two heroes; one of them, or sometimes both, must lose. Acts has both Peter and Paul, and even if one eventually leads the way to heaven, the poet cannot entirely subordinate Paul to Peter. The *Aeneid* is not, in spite of the efforts of Bureau, equal to this double demand, but Lucan, notably prominent in the epic, comes to the rescue: as there were two losers in his *Civil War*—two losers who between them signify pagan Rome, and perhaps too both the republican and the imperial phases of the old city—so there are two victors in the new and, as Arator might have said, truly eternal Rome.

This matter leads to reflection about the presence of Aeneas in New Testament epic as a whole. Following on from the study of particular allusions, attempts have often been made to link Christ and Aeneas, and to postulate a systematic comparison between them. But the rhetoric of such comparison, of praise through contrast with possible rivals, demands recognizably outstanding comparators, as so often happens in encomium; and, as already stated, it is difficult to find Christian evaluations of Aeneas that are remotely positive. Even his peculiar virtue of *pietas* has acquired significantly new connotations. But was Aeneas not esteemed by the non-Christian enthusiasts for poetry whom our poets are trying to meet on their own ground? It is not clear that he was. If Hamlet without the prince would be nothing, *Aeneids* without Aeneas, in which Aeneas disappears from view (or becomes a faceless founding father, or is universalized to 'everyman') may have been constructed by patriotic readers; the identity or character of the conquering leader and ktistic hero is unimportant. It could indeed be argued that for readers of Late Antiquity Aeneas as hero of the *Aeneid* has given way to Rome—Rome, which is

dismissed as early as the second line of Juvenicus' Preface, to return only in renewed form in Arator's grand finale. Hence the fact that in this book relatively little attention has been paid to readings which conclude, or assume, that the poets are at pains to stress (as, for example, in the storm scene) that Christ is superior to Aeneas: he is indeed, to Christian writers, but, for the reasons firmly but respectfully stated in Juvenicus' Preface, the gulf between the heroes needs no emphasis. *Kontrastimitation* is constantly implicit in poems such as these, but not necessarily a guide to their underlying agendas.

That said, it is probably Juvenicus' Christ that is the nearest to Aeneas. Following Matthew quite closely, he gives his hero a notably submissive role (though it is less so than that of Milton's almost Arian Christ) as he pursues a predetermined path; and it is only in Juvenicus that we can, for example, imagine temptations to discouragement or even hesitation on Christ's part. And Juvenicus' play with the title of *rex* (again, largely but not entirely Matthean) shows him considering the status of Christ by playing with earthly titles, in a way unimaginable in Sedulius and Arator. A crucial difference is imported by the strong Christological thrusts of Sedulius' Christ, incarnate on earth, and Arator's, who is incarnate in heaven and to some extent less prominent for that reason. Their Christs are very clearly part of a Trinity, and this theological agenda serves further to remove Aeneas from view. But great as the difference is between Christ and Aeneas, there is no need to deny that Christ is a hero, except perhaps in the case of Arator; in Juvenicus and Sedulius he works very much in a divine-human plane, performs a clearly defined role in achieving salvation for his followers, and endures conflicts (albeit non-military, but of course life-threatening) and numerous ordeals, so that he fits ancient notions of epic heroism very well. There are important differences, such as the interiorization or other modifications of epic virtues, but these may be seen as developments consonant with the wide range of variation in epic and essentially in harmony with the problematization of the hero that classical epic continually practises.

It has often been said, in various ways, that there is a deep incompatibility between classical epic and the gospels. Modern readers familiar with the simplicity of the originals (to which modern translations still manage to adhere) may feel this strongly when

becoming acquainted with the epic style of these three New Testament epicists; it appears at first sight that there is a desertion of the simple dignity of the originals which has become so firmly entrenched among the ideals of modern English style. But, on the contrary, our poets are moving from the rebarbative and unpolished towards a style saturated with prestige and tradition. The views of the once-influential critic E. R. Curtius, and his notorious dismissal of Christian epic as a *genre faux*, which may be detected behind even Herzog's work in the attempt to play down the influence of epic and also to outline a trajectory leading to a 'heteronomous' Christian literature, have been deliberately passed over in this book. Curtius believed that the 'powerful, unique, authoritative expression' of the Bible is falsified by the classical genre and its concomitant linguistic and metrical conventions;²⁰ they 'falsify', in his view, because scripture is thus tied to a paganism (like the victims of the tyrant Mezentius, perhaps?) with which Christianity increasingly had no truck in political and social contexts and which was demonized or reduced to harmless fables. And for Curtius this 'falseness' is very clear. Sedulius, the writer who takes the brunt of Curtius' attack, is for him an impossible show-off who having said nothing at length in verse feigns the authority of Macedonius in order to write yet another version. But ancient rhetoric is no longer in itself a turn-off to the critical reader, nor is the recourse to traditional epic ornament a reason to condemn. All the epicists had much to say, and deemed it of burning importance. Christian Latin epic is not to be seen as a compromise reluctantly made by a Christian society which would ideally part company completely with Rome's literary past but feels obliged to match classical literature with an ecclesiastical literature; it is rather an attempt by many writers over many years to seize the opportunity to instruct, delight, and move a highly educated audience in a bold programme of discriminating appropriation and sensitive adaptation.

²⁰ Curtius (1953), 461–2.

APPENDIX 1

Juvenecus and the Text of the New Testament

It is sometimes stated with confidence that Juvenecus worked directly from the Greek New Testament, but the matter is far from clear-cut. Juvenecus uses a considerable number of Greek words,¹ without apparent difficulty; some of these, though by no means unknown to Latin, may have been supplied by the Greek NT. He has *thronus* at 1. 101 (with the Greek at Luke 1: 52; the Latin versions have *sede/-ibus*) and 1. 482 (nothing in the Greek/Latin at Matt. 5: 16);² *machaera* at 1. 212, 4. 522 (corresponding to Greek NT at Matt. 26: 52 but not Luke 2: 35, where the Greek is *ῥομφαία*; the Old Latin versions have *gladius* (var. lect. *famea* [*sic*] both times); and at 4. 732 *planus* (as in the Greek, at Matt. 27: 63: the Latin versions give *seductor*). He also uses Greek case-endings—*Moysea* (4. 15, where the OL has the nominative case of the name) and *Salomona* (1. 644 and 2. 710, where the accusative case is in the OL)—but these need not have become known to him from a Greek source. Our knowledge of languages other than Latin in the Roman West is very patchy,³ and it would be wrong to rule out direct knowledge of Greek;⁴ but the matter can only be decided by examination of Juvenecus' Latin and the Greek and Latin originals. Where he has not followed the Latin closely, and is close to the Greek, the hypothesis that he used the Greek at that point should be entertained, but allowance must be made for his wide repertoire of synonyms. The results of such investigations have been meagre, and the position has not changed a great deal since Marold.⁵ Of the suggestions made in the commentaries of Kievitz and De Wit, some were intrinsically weak, while others have been overtaken by the systematic study of the Old Latin versions, or by the increased knowledge of late Latin usage. The precariousness of the *communis opinio*⁶ can be seen from a study of the following passages gleaned from the various scholars since Gebser who have addressed this question, where the case for Juvenecus' use of the Greek

¹ Flury (1968).

² At 1. 539 we find *sedes* in Juvenecus where the Greek NT has *θρόνος*.

³ See e.g. Green (1990).

⁴ But Madoz (1953/4), who is followed by Fichtner (1994), 189, is surely too sweeping when claiming widespread knowledge of Greek in Spain.

⁵ Marold (1890).

⁶ As claimed by Röttger, (1996), 10 n. 12.

New Testament seems at its strongest. The ‘European’ text (Jülicher’s *Itala*) will be given as usual.

1. 87: (*felix, o femina salve*) | *felicem gestans uteri sinuamine fetum* (‘hail, o blessed woman), bearing in the curved space of your womb a blessed offspring’).

OL (Luke 1: 42): (*benedicta tu inter mulieres*) et *benedictus fructus ventris tui* (‘you are blessed among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb’).

Greek: *εὐλογημένος ὁ καρπὸς τῆς κοιλίας σου*: ‘blessed (is) the fruit of your womb’).

According to Kievitz, Juvencus’ rendering is closer to Greek *κοιλία* than to the OL *ventris tui*. But in fact *uteri* is a close rendering of the OL, given that Latin has no word for ‘womb’ cognate with *cavus* (‘hollow’), as Greek does; *sinuamine* refers to shape, not hollowness, and this poetic word,⁷ part of a typical periphrasis, does not establish an awareness of the Greek version.

1. 200–1: *tremantibus ulnis* | *accepit puerum* (‘with trembling arms he took the boy’).

OL (Luke 2: 28): *et ipse accepit eum in manibus* (var. lect. *in manus*).

Greek: *καὶ αὐτὸς ἐδέξατο αὐτὸ εἰς τὰς ἀγκάλας αὐτοῦ* (‘and he himself received him into his arms’).

Ulnis (‘arms’) is closer to the Greek than to *manibus* (‘hands’); but again it might have been chosen as a poetic variant on *manibus*. It is common in classical Latin poetry, and Juvencus used it again at 3. 497 *ulnis portare parentum* (a detail not in Matt 19: 15, where Jesus blesses the children, in some ways a similar context).

1. 202: *nunc, nunc me famulum Dominus nunc liberat atris* | *corporis e vinclis*. (‘now, now the Lord frees me his servant from the dark chains of the body’).

OL (Luke 2: 29): *Nunc dimitte (dimittis) servum tuum, domine* (‘Now, Lord, (you) let your servant depart’).

Greek: *νῦν ἀπολύεις τὸν δοῦλόν σου, δέσποτα* (‘now you release your servant, Lord’).

Is Juvencus’ verb *libero* closer in meaning to the Greek than to *dimitto*, as Röttger suggests?⁸ A close call, perhaps; and *liberat* might have been prompted by *liberavit* in the OL in Luke 1: 71, although Juvencus there (1. 124) used a different verb. It may also have seemed more appropriate to the notion of the chains of the body which he imports into the passage.

1.339: *cuius vincla pedum non sum contingere dignus* (‘the straps of whose footwear I am not worthy to touch’).

⁷ He also uses it of the female body (3. 56).

⁸ Gebser (1827), and Röttger (1996), 35.

OL (Matt. 3: 11): *cuius non sum dignus calciamenta portare* ('whose shoes I am not worthy to carry').

Greek: οὐδ' οὐκ εἰμὶ ἱκανὸς τὰ ὑποδήματα βαστάσαι ('whose shoes I am not sufficient to ?bear').

Juvenus' *contingere* (a word he uses elsewhere with the sense 'touch') is not close to the Greek *βαστάσαι* . . . , which can mean 'lift up', 'bear', 'carry', 'carry off' (= *tollo* in John 20: 15), and—but only in tragedy, according to LSJ—'touch'. He could perhaps have chosen it in preference to *portare* under the influence of the version in the other gospels (*solvere corregiam*, 'stoop down and unloose': Luke 3: 16, Mark 1: 7, John 1: 27), as a simplifying alternative. Use of the Greek is certainly not proven.

1. 356: *scinditur auricolor caeli septemplicis aethra* ('the golden-coloured atmosphere of the sevenfold heaven is torn').

OL (Matt. 3: 16): *et ecce aperti sunt ei caeli* ('and, behold, the heavens were opened for him'); Mark 1: 10 has *vidit caelos apertos* ('he saw the heavens opened').

Greek (Mark 1: 10): εἶδε σχιζομένους τοὺς οὐρανοὺς ('he saw the heavens torn').

Fichtner argues that the verb *scinditur* was suggested to Juvenus by the Greek participle used in Mark's version;⁹ such a switch is possible, as we have seen. But in classical Latin verse *scinditur* in this position is not uncommon.¹⁰

1. 552: *mox aliam vultus partem praebere memento* ('remember to offer the other part of your face soon').

OL (Matt. 5: 39): *praebere illi et alteram* (var. lect. *sinistram*) ('offer him the other/left (cheek)').

Greek: στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τήν ἄλλην ('turn the other one to him too').

Juvenus cannot use the form *alteram* in hexameter verse (though in the nominative case it would be possible); for the change to *aliam* he did not need the prompting of the Greek, since the use of *alius* where *alter* might be expected is well established.¹¹

2. 551: *parvulaque infantum vis haec comprehendere corda* ('and you wish the very small hearts of infants to understand these things').

OL (Matt. 11: 25): *revelasti ea parvulis* ('you have revealed these things to the very small').

Greek: ἀπεκάλυψας αὐτὰ νηπίοις ('you have revealed them to infants').

⁹ Fichtner (1994), 62–4.

¹⁰ Vergil, *A.* 2. 39, 6. 182; Ovid, *M.* 15. 739; Lucan 1. 551, 3. 638.

¹¹ *TLL* I. 1648. 70 ff.

The hexameter does not allow the form *parvulis*, and Juvencus has, characteristically, gone for a paraphrase using the form *parvula* with the noun *corda*, and a genitive case (*infantum*). It is doubtful that he required the Greek word for ‘infants’ to suggest this last item to him.¹²

2. 707: *et regina Noti vitales surget in oras* (‘and the queen of the South rises to the shores of life’).

OL (Matt. 12: 42): *et regina austri resurget (surget)* (‘and the queen of the South will arise’).

Greek: βασιλίσσα νότου ἐγερθήσεται (‘the queen of the South will arise’).

At first sight a clear translation from the Greek, but a Latin source, or a paraphrase known to him, might have come up with *noti*; but since it is a common Latin word, and one favoured by poets, he might have devised it for himself, perhaps for metrical reasons.¹³

4. 81: *ales uti dulces solita est sub corpore pullos... fovere* (‘as a bird is accustomed to cherish its sweet chicks beneath its body’).

OL (Matt. 23: 37): *quemadmodum gallina congregat pullos suos* (‘as a hen gathers her chicks’).

Greek: ὅν τρόπον ἐπισυνάγει ὄρνις τὰ νοσσία ἑαυτῆς (‘in the way that a bird gathers together her young’).

Juvencus prefers *ales*, which is a generic word for ‘bird’, as is the Greek ὄρνις, to the more specific and workaday *gallina* of the Old Latin. It is not the commonest Latin word, and again a search for poetic diction is apparent. Greek influence is not certain.

4. 794: *vestrum est cunctas mihi iungere gentes* (‘it is your task to join all races to me’).

OL (Matt. 28: 19): *docete omnes gentes* (‘teach all races’).

Greek: μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη (‘make disciples of all races’).

Juvencus’ paraphrase seems to go to some lengths to give the sense ‘make disciples of’, which the Greek probably means here (cf. Acts 14: 21).¹⁴ This is perhaps the most impressive case.¹⁵

More candidates may come to light, especially from Book 3, hitherto the least studied, but it seems quite illegitimate to say with Ermini¹⁶ that

¹² Cf. Colombi (1997a), 35.

¹³ By using *noti* he can bring a dactyl into the line, although he does not avoid lines largely or even entirely composed of spondees (Hatfield 1890, 37–8).

¹⁴ At Matt. 13: 52, however, the meaning of μαθητευθεῖς is closer to *doctus* and *eruditus* of the OL.

¹⁵ Fichtner (1994), 31 and Röttger (1996), 125.

¹⁶ Ermini (1960), 182.

Juvenius often consulted the Greek, and unwise even to claim the Greek New Testament as part of his library, as Fichtner does.¹⁷ The above passages are not only few in number and precarious; they are also rather scattered, which enhances the probability that Juvenius did not make systematic use of the Greek NT. Details of Greek readings could have come through exegesis or by word of mouth, or, as some of the above cases show, the creative drive for poetic vocabulary may be responsible. Juvenius may well have understood Greek, and may be aware of interpretations from the Greek original, but it remains to be proved that it played any part in the process of paraphrase.

His principal model was certainly a Latin version. This is shown not only by the various kinds of verbal evidence accumulated by Widmann and Nestler,¹⁸ but also in a general way by passages where he follows what may be called the Latin tradition rather than the Greek. This seems to be the case at 1. 414 (cf. Matt. 4: 15), where the word *via* occurs in the nominative, as in the Old Latin, but the accusative case is used in Greek. The line *Spiritus hic deus est, cui parent omnia mundi* testifies to the Latin tradition (2.198; John 3: 6) but not the Greek;¹⁹ at 3. 582–3 he has the addition ‘many are called but few are chosen’, which all Latin witnesses but few Greek ones have at Matt. 20: 16;²⁰ and at 3. 612–20, as we have seen,²¹ he has the passage from Luke that is added after Matt. 20: 28 in Latin but not Greek versions.

In spite of much effort it has not been possible to specify which of the Old Latin (i.e. pre-Vulgate) versions he used, or even which of the two families, termed ‘European’ and ‘African’ from their provenance, his exemplar belonged to.²² Marold presented a number of passages where he claimed that Juvenius showed affinities with certain manuscripts or manuscript groups representing the European tradition;²³ in response Sanday²⁴ pointed out various places where he detected a greater affinity with the African. Marold’s findings were quantified by Nestler,²⁵ and some are repeated by

¹⁷ Fichtner (1994), 189.

¹⁸ Widmann (1905), 6–11; Nestler (1910), sec. 1.

¹⁹ Ambrose later accused the Arians of removing this line (*De Spiritu Sancto* 3. 10. 59), and it is found in Hilary (*De Trin.* 7. 14). But it is possible that it is an interpolation, or later addition, in Juvenius, as it is a single line and rather simpler than his usual style.

²⁰ Cf. 3. 772–3 (Matt. 22: 14), where in spite of his normal practice of economy Juvenius repeats the point, albeit in different words.

²¹ See p. 29.

²² See Burton (2000), 14–15 on the terminology.

²³ Marold (1990), 338–41.

²⁴ Sanday (1892).

²⁵ Nestler (1910), 27–30.

Orbán.²⁶ Other criteria might be considered: Juvencus omits Matt. 6: 13b with most versions of the European, Matt. 12: 47 with the African; he renders Matt. 17: 21, which the European has but not the African. But the significance of omissions must not be exaggerated; Juvencus leaves out material for his own reasons, as we have seen, and so such evidence has no diagnostic value. Appeal might also be made to stylistic preferences of the Old Latin versions; it is notable, for example, that where the African prefers the *cum* + subjunctive construction to express the notion ‘when/after (e.g.) he had done/was doing this’, the European prefers to use a participial construction.²⁷ Juvencus has a marked fondness for the participle in such situations, but this choice may be one result of the strong epic colouring of his work. Scholars have also considered his use of simple and compound verbs, and his use of tenses and moods relative to possible exemplars, but here too Juvencus is demonstrably his own man. No doubt the range of such investigations could be extended, but this might prove to be unprofitable labour, not only because the number of extant versions is but a small proportion of what must have existed, and probably a correspondingly poor reflection of the kinds of admixture of relevant features, but also because account must always be taken of Juvencus’ working methods and above all of the relative freedom, at least in matters of style, that he allows himself.²⁸

²⁶ Orbán (1995), 334–40, who confuses the issue by referring to the Vulgate as well as the OL.

²⁷ As in Matt. 8: 18 *videns autem Iesus/cum vidisset autem Iesus*; Matt. 14: 15 *vespere autem facto/cum serum autem factum est (esset)*; Matt. 15: 21 *et egressus/cum autem exisset*.

²⁸ Thraede (2001a), 887.

APPENDIX 2

The Official Record of the Presentation of the *Historia Apostolica*

This is a version of the notice or ‘minute’ found in several manuscripts describing how Arator offered his work to Pope Vigilius and later read it to a large gathering of people in St Peter ad Vincula. It is based on the text given in Châtillon (1963*a*, 73), which he took from Arntzen, and which uses three manuscripts (Voss. Q 15 and Q 86, and Vat. Pal. Lat. 1716). Schwind (1990, 11) mentions eleven extant manuscripts, and one lost one, over and above these three. There are important variants in the texts, as can be inferred from Châtillon’s data. V (the Vatican manuscript) talks of seven days of recitation, which is obviously a mistake; and later, in spite of its *septem*, has it that half of the poem was read in each session, while the *Vossiani* say ‘a small part’. More seriously, the manuscripts do not agree whether the order for it to be placed in the archives was given by Surgentius or to him (and so, by implication, by Vigilius), for his name and the words describing him are in the nominative case in V but the dative case in the *Vossiani*. (I have adopted the latter reading here, without any great certainty about which is more probable.) In his edition, where it is to be found among a variety of *testimonia* on p. xxviii, sandwiched between quotations from Bede, McKinlay gave almost nothing by way of critical apparatus.

Beato domno Petro adiuvante, oblatu est huiusmodi codex ab Aratore subdiacono sanctae Ecclesiae Romanae et sancto atque apostolico viro papae Vigilio, et susceptus ab eo die VIII Id. Apr. in presbyterio ante confessionem sancti Petri, cum ibidem plures episcopi, presbyteri, diaconi, et cleri pars maxima pariter interesset. Quem cum ibidem legi mox pro aliqua parte fecisset, Surgentio, viro venerabili, primicerio scholae notariorum, in scrinio dedit ecclesiae collocandum. Cuius beatitudinem literati omnes doctissimique continuo rogaverunt ut eum iuberet publice recitari; quod cum fieri praecepisset in ecclesia beati Petri quae vocatur ad Vincula, religiosorum simul ac laicorum nobilium sed et e populo diversorum turba convenit, atque eodem Aratore recitante, distinctis diebus ambo libri quatuor vicibus sunt auditi, cum in una die modica pars libri tantummodo legeretur propter repetitiones adsiduas

quas cum favore multiplici postulabant. Eadem ergo recitatio facta est his diebus: prima, id. April., secunda, XV kal. Mai., tertia VIII id. Mai., quarta vero die III kal. Iun., tertio anno post consulatum Basilii V. C., indictione septima.

With the aid of the blessed saint Peter, a manuscript of this kind was offered by Arator the subdeacon to the holy Roman church and to the holy and apostolic Pope Vigilius, and received by him on 6 April in the presbytery before the confession of St Peter, in the company of many bishops, priests, and a very large portion of clergy also. When, in the same place, soon afterwards, he had caused it to be read in some part he gave it to Surgentius, the *primicerius* of the school of notaries, to be placed in the archives of the church. All the lettered and most learned men immediately asked his blessedness to order it to be recited publicly; when he had given orders for this to be done in the church of St Peter which is called ad Vincula, a crowd assembled of both religious and lay but also of various people from the congregation, and with the same Arator reciting on specified days the two books were heard in four tranches, since in a single day only a small part of a book was read because of the constant repetitions that they demanded with manifold applause. So the recitation was made on these days: the first on 13 April, the second on 17 April, the third on 8 May, and the first on 30 May, in the third year after the consulship of the *vir clarissimus* Basilius, in the seventh indiction.

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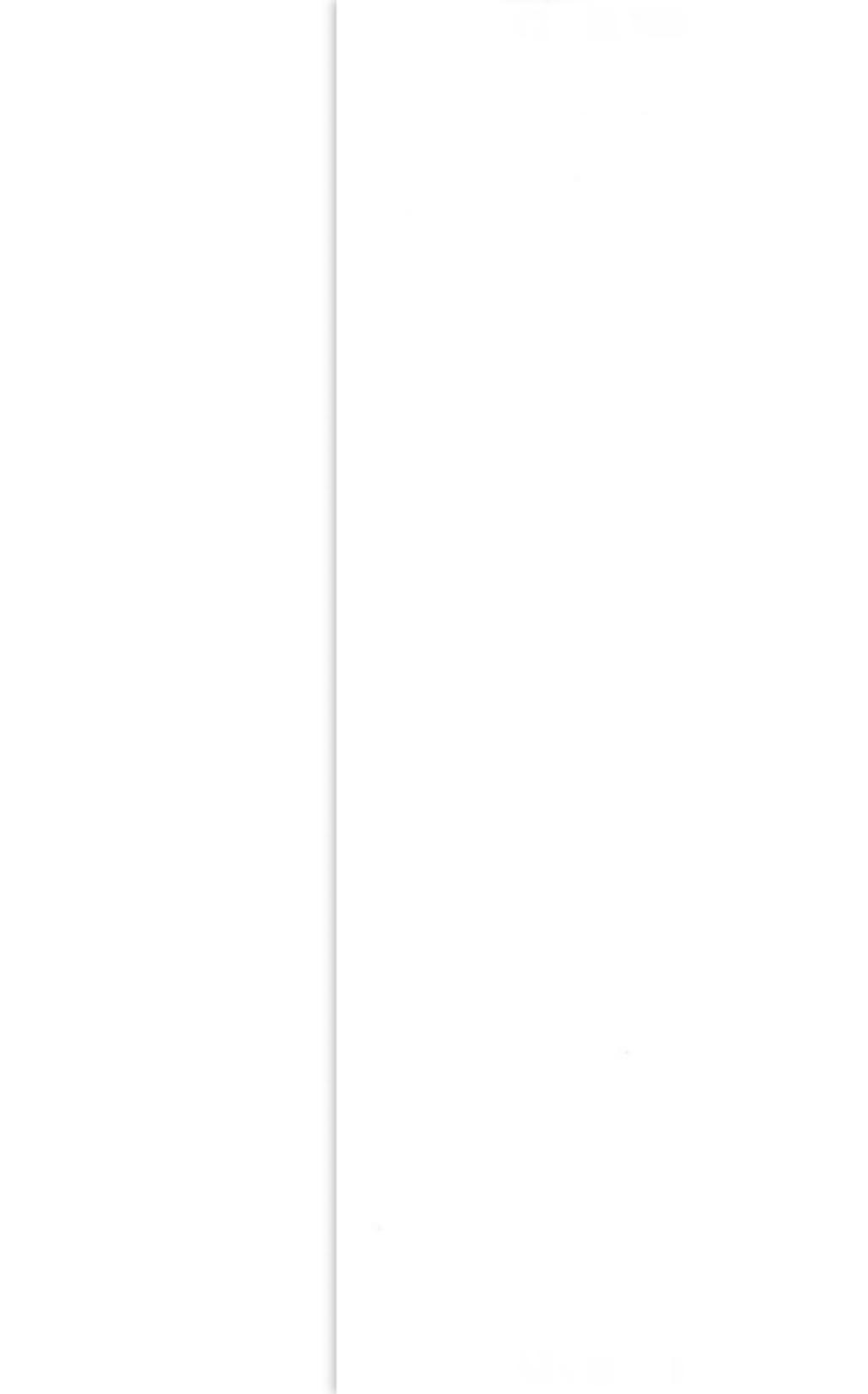
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REVELATION



This pioneering study explores the phenomenon of Christian Latin epic in Late Antiquity. Roger Green carefully examines the poems of the three writers Juvencus, Sedulius, and Arator, who were among the leaders in a tradition of Bible epic that went on to include such poets as Milton and Klopstock. The importance of these early Christian epics lies in the fact that they attempted to present books of the New Testament in terms of the epic tradition, and so bridge the gap between the time-honoured works of the Graeco-Roman literary heritage, with their gods, heroes, and glorification of war, and the sacred texts of Christianity, available then to Latin readers only in a style that seemed the antithesis of all that Romans valued. Green reveals in detail the depth and variety of epic language, epic themes, and epic design, developed from Vergil, Lucan, and others, in these new but generally faithful presentations of the biblical books; but he also gives due weight to the fact that these authors are committed to particular agendas of the developing and expanding Christian Church. Since each author wrote in a different century (fourth, fifth, sixth), they also illuminate developments in the Roman Empire as a whole. Juvencus, Sedulius, and Arator formed a regular part of the medieval curriculum (nowhere more so than in Anglo-Saxon England), and their works also inspired original poems in Latin, German, and English.

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