MAXIMIANUS AND HIS POETRY

FRANZOI (A.) *Le Elegie di Massimiano*. Testo, traduzione e commento. Note biografiche e storico-testuali. *Appendix Maximiani* a cura di P. Mastandrea e L. Spinazzè. (Supplementi di *Lexis* 68.) Pp. iv + 270. Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 2014. Paper, €60. ISBN: 978-90-256-1294-8.

This is the fifth edition of Maximianus to be published in the last 20 years, and one might reasonably wonder what more there is to say about a poet who has long appealed to textual critics and literary historians, but who has struggled to be taken seriously as a writer of literature. With any luck the present volume will encourage more attention to be paid to Maximianus' poetic qualities. The commentary is thoughtful, sensitive and insightful, but unfortunately there is a great deal elsewhere in the book that is extraneous or repetitive of previous scholarship. A collaborative work, the text, translation and commentary of Maximianus are by F. while M. contributes a translation and commentary on the *Appendix Maximiani* as well as an introductory chapter on Maximianus' life. S. treats the transmission of the text as well as noting instances of its reception in later European literature.

The first chapter is a very lightly-revised version of M.'s 2005 article on the chronology of Maximianus' poetry (acknowledged in a note on p. 28, but not cited in the book's bibliography, 'Per la cronologia di Massimiano elegiaco', in M.C. Díaz y Díaz & J.M. Díaz de Bustamente [edd.], *Poesía latina medieval (siglos V–XV)* [2005], pp. 151–79). M. valiantly argues that, although we cannot say for certain that the *Appendix* is the work of Maximianus, the two corpora do at least share a common origin in the literary world of the sixth century. Few would disagree with this, given that two of the poems of the *Appendix* can be securely dated to 534, but M.'s efforts to demonstrate a closer relationship, by means of a sort of intertextual triangle between

the *Appendix*, Corippus and Maximianus, are unconvincing. Some of the parallels he identifies are simply commonly-used words (e.g. *bellum* and *castra* in the context of military campaigns), while much is made of variations on the phrase *cuius sapientia mundo* (*App. Max.* 3.17) found in Corippus and Maximianus. Yet we find very similar phrases in Sedulius, Prosper and Fortunatus, and late-antique poets are especially fond of employing *sapientia* in the fifth foot of a hexameter.

Much more convincing is M.'s demonstration that Maximianus' political trip to Constantinople most likely took place in 535 (pp. 14–19), utilising evidence from Boethius to demonstrate that Maximianus' self-description as a *senex* and a *grandaevus* would not be completely unexpected in a man in his mid-forties (since M. suggests a date of around 490 for Maximianus' birth). The chapter is rounded out by the suggestion that the poet could be identified with the Maximinus who was appointed praetorian prefect of Italy by Justinian in 542 (*PLRE* III, s.v. *Maximinus* [2]). I at least was convinced by this (especially by M.'s explanation of how names ending in *-inus* and *-ianus* could be confused), but others may be more sceptical, especially if they do not subscribe to M.'s other theories about Maximianus' *vita*.

The section by S. looks at both material and literary evidence for Maximianus' *fortuna*. Much is made of the discovery of seven additional *recentiores* of Maximianus, which are described briefly. As S. notes, none of these have any major bearing on the text, but bear valuable witness to the poet's popularity in the fifteenth century. S. is comprehensive in her coverage of the misidentification of Maximianus as Gallus in the early modern era, though there is little that is new in her treatment. A fast-paced overview of Maximianus' reception in later authors provides a useful set of references for those wishing to trace this topic further.

The heart of the book, though, is the text, translation and commentary of F. The

text is, generally speaking, conservative, and the translation is reliable and clear. Disappointingly, no apparatus criticus is provided, and although F. does discuss some of the most difficult textual problems in his commentary, it is frustrating to turn from a detailed treatment of manuscripts in S.'s chapter (followed by a *conspectus codicum* reproduced from her own edition of the text for the Musisque Deoque website [www.mqdq.it]) to a bare text and translation immediately afterwards. The text of Maximianus has been especially badly-served in this regard, despite being notoriously problematic: only C. Sandquist Öberg's 1999 edition (*Versus Maximiani*) included an apparatus at all, and even that was relegated to the endnotes.

F. is largely convinced by the argument (most thoroughly put forth by W.C. Schneider, *Die elegischen Verse von Maximian* [2003], pp. 21–36) that Maximianus' poetry is a single *carmen continuum* and not six elegies, and offers some additional points in support of this hypothesis (pp. 72–3). Yet his text is nonetheless divided into six elegies, rather than being printed as a running poem (though continuous line numbering is provided). F. is particularly good on intratextual matters (see e.g. his long note on lines 515–20 [= 5.1–6]), and is convincing when he shows how internal correspondences make more sense if one conceives of the poem as a unity rather than as six distinct compositions. This makes it all the more disappointing that citations throughout the commentary are exclusively to the old numbering system.

The commentary is probably the best we have on Maximianus at present. F. is sensitive to questions of style and rhetoric, and is very thorough in his citation of parallels in contemporary and classical authors, above all Virgil and Ovid. Issues relating to metre are particularly well treated. Two examples will serve as representative of F.'s approach: at 495–6 (= 4.35–6), F. shows how Maximianus turns a commonplace of Roman colloquial language into something more elevated through judicious use of

repetition; the treatment of the infamous *Laus Mentulae* episode at 631–52 (= 5.117–58) is attuned to the ways in which Maximianus uses metrical, alliterative and clausular effects for comic effect (see especially the treatment of 637–48 [= 5.123–32]).

M.'s notes on the *Appendix Maximiani* are something of a contrast. The focus is primarily on the large number of parallels to be found for almost every line, and the commentary brings out just how different these verse exercises (if not actually written in the schoolroom, then not far removed from it) are from the more ambitious work of Maximianus himself. M. is very good on the author's methods of borrowing, and his notes will be of use to those interested in the mechanics of composition in the late Latin west.

Typographical errors are few. I noted 'manoscrittii' on p. 41; 'lengtht' on p. 71; 'Chaucher' twice on p. 65 (but spelled correctly in n. 186 on the same page). A reader seeking manuscripts of Maximianus at the British Museum (pp. 66–7 and *passim*) will be disappointed, since they have been housed in the British Library since 1973. References are occasionally incomplete or lacking: the Arator verses quoted on p. 15 are lines 19–22 of the *epistula ad Parthenium*, a missing reference to *PLRE* on p. 21 should be *PLRE* III, s. v. *Maximinus* (2), 865–6. The bibliography is fairly comprehensive, though misses the important collection of conjectures by J.T. Welsh, *ExClass* 15 (2011), 213–24. Two indexes, one of manuscripts and one of proper names, round out the book: an *index locorum* and subject index would have improved the book's utility.

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