Frédéric FAUQUIER, Brigitte PÉREZ-JEAN

(éd.), *Maxime de Tyr, entre rhétorique et philosophie au II^e siècle de notre ère*

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fondée sur les textes remis dans leur contexte d'origine. La pratique ascétique est certes peu compatible avec la possession d'esclaves ; encore faudrait-il démontrer que c'est bien elle que les auteurs étudiés, et en particulier Grégoire de Nysse, cherchent à étendre à l'ensemble de la société. Il semble bien plutôt que les arguments contre l'esclavage viennent de la réflexion sur la justice sociale, qui n'est pas nécessairement liée à une vie ascétique, laquelle est d'ailleurs loin d'être prouvée pour l'évêque de Nysse, tout comme pour Origène. Des entreprises plus modestes, consacrées aux textes eux-mêmes, comme les livres de S. Holman ou R. Klein déjà mentionnés, ou à une approche moins englobante, comme le récent volume de Ch. L. De Wet (*The Unbound God: Slavery and the Formation of Early Christian Thought*, London, New York, 2017), paraissent plus fructueux que la tentative trop peu structurée d'I. Ramelli.

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Frédéric FAUQUIER, Brigitte PÉREZ-JEAN (éd.), *Maxime de Tyr, entre rhétorique et philosophie au I^{er} siècle de notre ère*, Montpellier, Presses universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2016 (Mondes anciens), 214 p., ISBN : 978-2-36781-214-4.

Whole books devoted to the second-century philosophical (Platonist) orator Maximus of Tyre are not all that frequent, so when one does appear it is well worth pausing to ask what one might ideally hope from it. What are the really important questions to ask about his forty-one surviving discourses ('*dialexeis*'), and how they can best be used to illuminate the larger issues that we care about in the thought and culture of the ancient world (or at least, the thought and culture of the Greek-speaking world of the early Imperial period)?

Two obvious answers would seem to follow simply from the label 'philosophical orator'. If these are orations, what can examination of them tell us about the range of formal and stylistic options open to an orator of this period, and the extent to which they involved either perpetuating or departing from inherited classical patterns; does Maximus in his formal or stylistic choices present any notable features, or ones that stretch our sense of what was possible or accepted at the time? Equally obviously, if the themes of these orations are philosophical, what can they tell us about the state of philosophical thought and discourse in this period, which in the standard, broad-brush schema falls in between the heroic period of the foundation of the Hellenistic schools and the arrival of Neoplatonism – both in terms of the handling of particular questions and topics, and in terms of fashions for one or another overall doctrinal orientation? But this by no means exhausts the possibilities. One can ask fruitfully also about the interaction (is there any?) between the philosophical content and the formal and stylistic finish; about the idea of what philosophy as a whole is and does that is embodied in Maximus' work, and how this conception compares and contrasts with those on view elsewhere in the panorama of the times; and (a special favourite of my own) one can ask about the overall project on which Maximus was engaged – what kind of intervention in the culture and society of his time do his surviving texts embody?

It is a merit of the present volume – ten essays of varying length edited (and contributed to) by Brigitte Pérez-Jean and Frédéric Fauquier – that it ranges over a good many of these possible lines of enquiry. Issues of oratorical style are tackled by Juan Luis López Crúces (« La répétition dans les séries énumératives chez Maxime de Tyr ») and Pierre Chiron (« Le style de Maxime sur Socrate à la lumière des idées hermogénienes »), and Maximus's treatment of individual philosophical issues by

Paul Youm (« Contribution de Maxime de Tyr aux interprétations de la doctrine platonicienne de la réminiscence »), Andrei Timotin (« Le discours de Maxime de Tyr sur la prière (*Dissertatio V*) dans la tradition platonicienne ») and Joan-Antoine Mallet (« Note sur l'usage de la notion de *theia moira* chez Maxime de Tyr, Eschine de Sphettos et Platon »). Three contributions focus on his attitude to and use of authorities from the classical canon: Fauquier on his idea of the task of the interpreter of Plato (« Maxime, interprète de Platon ? »), Panagiota Daouti on his conception and use of Homer (« Homère chez Maxime de Tyr »), and Lucia Saudelli on his engagement with the Presocratics (« Maxime de Tyr, les Présocratiques et le médioplatonisme »). Finally, a broader view of Maximus' thematic preoccupations and overall project as a philosophical communicator is taken by Pérez-Jean (« Accords et désaccords chez Maxime de Tyr ») and Javier Campos Daroca (« Maxime de Tyr, Socrate et les discours selon la philosophie »).

What is a shade disappointing, however, is the relative lack of ambition shown by many, probably the majority of these contributions. They all of them have *something* well-conceived and intelligent to say, but few of them push this to the point of proposing any very substantial or decisive conclusions. Of the treatments of philosophical subject-matter, both Youm's and Mallet's – and one might add here Fauquier's on concepts of Platonic exegesis – offer elegant surveys, but with relatively little detail of how what we find in Maximus might relate interestingly to a larger synchronic or diachronic perspective. It is left to Timotin, on prayer as a philosophical topic, to show what such a project of relating Maximus' treatment to precursors, contemporaries and successors in the debate might look like; and even he ends his contribution without any final summary to draw conclusions and indicate what difference getting a clear view of Maximus' individual take on the issue might make. Much the same is true of the other two treatments of classical points of reference, by Daouti and Saudelli. Both of them are competently descriptive, but neither really explains what, if anything, might be interesting about Maximus' use of and engagement with either Homer or the Presocratics in a comparative perspective, or grounds its own contribution in a critical overview of existing scholarship on its topic. Saudelli, it is true, does offer the observation that of all the Presocratics it is Pherecydes who seems to play a foreground role in Maximus' text. But given that the basis for this is a grand total of three brief references, it is not overwhelmingly convincing; one might counter-propose that, in view of the colourful material that Maximus might have exploited (anecdotes of Thales, Pythagoras and Empedocles; the gnomic riches of Democritus) what is in fact remarkable is how modest a place the Presocratics occupy in his field of view, and how heavily mediated by their uptake by intermediate sources.

Turning to the treatments of the verbal and stylistic finish of the *Dialexeis*, one again finds promising thoughts and interesting analysis cut short too soon. Lopez Crúces offers precise and circumstantial analysis of the enumerative style that is indeed such a striking and distinctive feature of Maximus' verbal texture, with some welcome statistics, and rightly observes that it is a characteristic that suggests careful written composition rather than the improvisation in live performance that has sometimes been seen as the origin of our text. But once more, where is the larger perspective – if this is what is distinctive of Maximus, where then do we place him in our larger stories of oratorical style and modes of philosophical communication? It is all the more disappointing not to be told in that Lopez Crúces himself comments on the 'near poeticism' of some of Maximus' enumerative sequences; surely this is an invitation to relate him to the longer story of the negotiations of prose oratory with verse that runs, in his own era and subsequently, through the works of (at least) Dio Chrysostom, Aelius Aristides and Himerius. Pierre

Chiron, for his part, advances the intriguing proposal of reading Maximus – in the specific example of the ending of *Or.* 3, on Socrates' (supposed) refusal to defend himself in court – in the light of the rhetor Hermogenes' stylistic categories ('forms', *ideai*); but he allows himself the luxury of stopping with a brief preliminary sketch, in which the proposal is made, but not developed in any detail or tested with any rigour. It remains only a guess that *semnotes* might be the appropriate Hermogenic category to apply to the final paragraph of the oration, and a good deal of contrary evidence (for instance, Hermogenes' insistence that *semnotes* demands generalization rather than particularity) is simply sidestepped.

Of the two contributors who tackle overall issues of sensibility and strategy, Pérez-Jean is the briefer and more allusive, meditating in broadly Heraclitean vein on various aspects of unity and diversity at play in the *Dialexeis*. The really purposeful and coherent discussion – indeed probably the most ambitious and successful in the whole volume – is Campos Daroca's reading of the whole surviving corpus of Maximus' work as a sustained and conscious exercise in philosophical protreptic, centred on the model of Socrates, and involving theoretical reflection as well as practical performance. The protreptic tone of much of Maximus' discourse is not in doubt, particularly – in good preacher's style – towards the end of each individual oration, but also (though Campos Daroca does not choose to dwell on this particular aspect) more systematically in the very first piece in the collection. Equally, I think it is quite right that Maximus is attempting, at least some of the time, to live up in his own performance to the theoretical standards of inspiring philosophical discourse that he articulates in *Or.* 22 and 25. And it is also right to underline the central importance of Socrates to the *Dialexeis*, not only as an illuminating focus for discussion and a key moral exemplar, but also (with whatever degree of mediation through his literary representations) a stylistic model. I do however have some reservations about the closeness with which Campos Daroca wishes to draw these elements together, and about the overall picture of Maximus' communicative intentions that emerges.

That Socrates can serve directly in some cases as a model for protreptic utterance, on the strength of the *Apology*, the closing pages of the *Gorgias*, and, above all, the *Clitophon*, is clear: we see how this works itself out, as Campos Daroca observes, in Dio Chrysostom's *Or.* 13. But although Socrates's activity as a teacher (and protector) of the young is acknowledged by Maximus, he is not normally in the *Dialexeis* presented as a protreptic preacher, or indeed any kind of orator; the focus is much more regularly on his status as moral paragon, example of enlightened virtue in action. There is indeed a Socratic register included in the range of styles Maximus brings into play, but this is a matter of turns of phrase echoed from Socratic dialogue, not of protreptic flow. I thus doubt that it is Socrates that Maximus has uniquely, or even primarily, in mind when he constructs his models of ideal philosophical eloquence in *Or.* 22 and 25, or depicts the ideal philosophical preacher in *Or.* 1. On the larger point about Maximus' overall project in the *Dialexeis*, I am not wholly convinced by Campos Daroca's conclusion that we can see here a genuine, first-order exercise in philosophical protreptic – that is to say (if this is not putting words into his mouth) a work by a philosophical professional, deliberately simplifying his discourse in the interests of more effective communication. On the one hand, I think that the question of the depth of Maximus' philosophical knowledge and expertise is a more open one than that, and on the other (as I have perhaps tried to say too often in print already), I think it is possible to see Maximus' project more as one of the domestication and containment of philosophy than as a straightforward crusade for its propagation.

There is clearly much more that could be said on both sides of this issue. I close instead with the thought that it is on this level of discussion, which Campos Darocas' essay takes us to more clearly and constructively than most of the others in the present collection, that some of the best hopes for future scholarship on Maximus and his idiosyncratic products seem to me to lie.

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