

Michael Marullus. *Poems*.

Ed. and trans. Charles Fantazzi. The I Tatti Renaissance Library 54. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012. xx + 476 pp. \$29.95. ISBN: 978-0-674-05506-3.

This most recent contribution to the I Tatti Renaissance library presents Michael Marullus's complete Latin poetry, translated in English for the first time by Charles Fantazzi. This means a huge step forwards in the study of this fascinating corpus of Latin poetry by a child of Byzantine refugees, who blended very well in the intellectual circles of fifteenth-century Italy while cleverly retaining his distinct image of an outsider.

For the Latin text this volume follows Alessandro Perosa's edition (Michaelis Marulli, *Carmina* [1951]), containing four books of epigrams, four books of *Hymni Naturales*, one book of *Neniae* (poems of lament), fourteen miscellaneous epigrams, the unfinished *Institutiones Principales* (education of princes), and an appendix of two letters. Fantazzi only deviates from Perosa, to whom he dedicates this work, in a few textual instances and in leaving out the three miscellaneous poems (one Latin, two Italian) that Perosa included at the end, regarding them (just like Perosa in a later publication) as spurious.

The text is preceded by a concise introduction about Michael Marullus's life, the publication history of his poetry, and an introduction to the two most substantial works in the volume, the epigrams and the *Hymni Naturales*. The text itself is accompanied by a very clear, readable, and elegant translation in English prose, in which Fantazzi maintains the specific wording of Marullus's Latin as much as possible: for example, epigram 1.16, 10, "it would be more of an onus than an honor," for "onerat quam honorat verius." Naturally, while in epigrammatic poetry the Latin is often purposefully ambiguous, the translation has to make a choice between alternatives. Although in such cases a note would have been welcome, one could also argue that, no matter how good a translation, epigrams are still best valued in the original language.

At the end follows a note on the text, in which the deviations from Perosa are explained in full. The subsequent notes on the translation offer mostly very useful biographical data on people mentioned in the poems, explanations of mythological figures or epithets, or conspicuous parallels with ancient texts. A bibliography, index of first lines, and general index covering both personal names and other relevant issues complete the volume. The *conspectus metrorum*, which is included in Perosa's edition, is left out, although in my opinion it would have been welcome for the readers of this volume all the same.

The availability of Marullus's poetry in English translation will definitely provide an impetus to the study of these texts by a broader scholarly public interested in Italian Renaissance culture, literature, and philosophy. This will probably have most impact on the epigrams, for which this volume presents the first integral translation in any language, whereas translations of the *Hymni Naturales* already exist in French, Italian, and German — two more than mentioned in the bibliography, one by Otto Schönberger (1996), one by Nikolaus Thurn, *Drei Neapolitanische Humanisten über die Liebe* (2002) — and of the *Institutiones Principales*, also in German (1997).

In part the present volume maintains, or rather reflects, this unevenness in scholarly attention for Marullus's two most substantial works, the epigrams and the hymns. This is most clear in the introduction, in which one page is dedicated to the epigrams, as opposed to almost eight pages for the hymns. Something similar goes for the bibliography, in which one or two articles specifically dedicated to the epigrams (most notably the one by Donatella Coppini, "Nimium castus liber," in *Poesia umanistica latina in distici elegiaci* [1999]) would have been welcome, especially since from now on this volume will

probably be the first to be taken at hand by students and scholars alike interested in Marullus.

However, we could not expect a volume in this series to fill the lacuna that current scholarship leaves open, as its scope is first and foremost to make available with English translation the most important Latin texts of the Italian Renaissance. And in doing so outstandingly this present volume may count as a great achievement.

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