LEE FRATANTUONO

Candida's Father on True and False Dreams: A Note on Maximianus, Elegy *4.43-6*

Sunto
I componimenti del poeta tardo-antico Massimiamo sono gli ultimi esempi del genere dell'elegia d'amore classsica latina. I versi di Massimiano abbondano di allusioni intertestuali ai suoi predecessori, incluso il poema epico Virgilio. Una analisi dettagliata della sequenza del sogno della quarta elegia rivelerà una stretta connessione con il passo sulle "porte del sogno" del IV libro dell'Eneide, e punti di contatto anche con il "fantasma di Cinzia" di Properzio IV 7.

Parole chiave
Massimiano - Virgilio - Properzio - Elegia - Intertestualit-

Abstract
The late antique poems of Maximianus are the last surviving examples of the genre of classical Latin love elegy. Maximianus' verses are replete with intertextual allusions to his predecessors, including the epic poet Virgil. Close consideration of the dream sequence from the fourth elegy will reveal a close engagement with the Gates of Sleep passage from the sixth Aeneid, and of the encounter with the ghost of Cynthia from Propertius, c. 4.7.

Keywords
Maximianus - Virgil - Propertius - Elegy - Intertextuality.

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The elegies of the sixth-century Tuscan author Maximianus are relatively obscure today even to many classical scholars, despite enjoying something of a noteworthy resurgence of critical interest in the last two decades (with no fewer than seven editions in less than twenty years), and before that a more or less steady stream of important publications (especially on the numerous textual problems).[1] The comparative neglect of Maximianus in our age stands in marked contrast to his popularity in earlier centuries; for some today, he is best known for the sixteenth-century, Venetian humanist forgery that ascribed his work to Cornelius Gallus.[2] The (probably?) six poems attributed to this shadowy late antique/early medieval figure offer what is essentially the last extant corpus of Latin love elegy;[3] after the monumental Augustan Age work of Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid, half a millennium passes before we arrive at half a dozen intriguing, difficult specimens of a genre not quite ready to give up the ghost.[4] It is perhaps no surprise that Pomponius Gauricus felt compelled to divide Maximianus' verses into an elegiac cycle of six poems that seemed to correspond to the work of a Propertius or a Tibullus:[5] an Ostrogothic Age elegist had arisen to inherit the mantle of his Augustan predecessors.

Various attempts have been made to explore the many mysteries posed by the poet's work, including the possible response of his elegies to the Christianity of his day and the question of Roman identity,[6] and a valiant

[1] For text, translation, and detailed annotations see especially Franzoi - Mastendrea - Spinazzè 2014, Juster 2018 and D'Amanti 2020. Maximianus is included Baehrens 1883, though the text reflects that editor's predilection for emendation and conjecture. The arguments made in the present study do not hinge on controversial or disputed readings.

[2] Essential reading here = White 2019.

[3] On the issue of whether or not we have a *carmen continuum*, see D'Amanti 2020, pp. LIX-LXII. The arguments made in the present study do not hinge on reading the elegies discretely.

[4] "Maximien est un poète bien mysterieux et fuyant, à l'image de son œuvre en perpetuel mouvement", Goldlust 2013, sommaire.

[5] See further here Wasyl 2007. For the question of the influence of earlier elegy on the poet, see Goldlust 2020.

[6] See here in particular the approach of Schneider 2003.

effort to read the elegies as a profoundly metapoetic reflection on the composer's craft.[7] Still other critics have explored the intertextual relationship of Maximianus with Ovid in particular, with the sixth-century elegist as conscious practitioner of the last exercise, as it were, of an old and venerable art.[8] All of this is apart from the aforementioned, fundamental question of authorial intention in dividing his poems; for centuries convention has spoken of six elegies, and for convenience's sake we shall as well.

It shall not be our purpose to engage in the appealing hunt for overarching analyses of the half a dozen poems, or to delve into the significant problems connected to the author's political career, or his relationship to Boethius.[9] Nor shall we consider the question of the elegist's possible engagement in satirical commentary, let alone the problem of whom he might be targeting with such (more or less pointed) invective.[10] Rather, we shall focus on a passage that offers a comment on several references from earlier hexameter and elegiac verse on the topic of the veracity and mendacity of dreams. We shall explore the question of what Maximianus' dream scene in his fourth elegy can tell us about the reception and interpretation of the Virgilian Gates of Sleep passage from the close of Book 6 of the *Aeneid*, and of the encounter of Propertius with the ghost of Cynthia in his c. 4.7. As an essential part of our investigation, we shall consider textual and interpretive problems that mark (not to say bedevil) Maximianus' brief and tantalizing oneiric reflection.

Maximianus' fourth elegy commences with an announcement that it still remains for the poet to reflect or to brood again on other, shameful matters (c. 4.1 *restat adhuc alios turpesque revolvere casus*).[11] The elegist is old, and idle deeds are fitting to his age; *carmina vana* (c. 4.4) are apt as his work[12]. The theme of advanced years is central to Maximianus' poetry; an appreciable body of scholarship has developed around the implications of this emphasis.[13]

Maximianus asserts that *carmina vana* are appropriate for old age.[14] Thus far, the logic of the early movements of the elegy is easy to follow: the

[7] So Pappas 2022.

[8] Cf. Baroni Schmidt 2022.

[9] Foundational to this question is Wilhelm 1907.

[10] Cf. here Szövérffy 1968.

[11] The text is taken from Juster 2018; disagreements and textual controversies are discussed where relevant.

[12] What exactly *operi* means at c. 4.4 is open to debate.

[13] For a start to a vast topic, see Uden - Fielding 2010, pp. 439-60. On the poet's precise, quasi-clinical description of the physical effects of the passage of the years in his verse, note Neuburger 1947.

old are prone to silliness, and "vain songs" are the most fitting subject of the old poet's labor. The logic is straightforward; the objection that could be raised to the elegist's point that is that it is the young who are supposed to be liable to act foolishly, not the old.

What follows in the text is more problematic, but it offers a specific answer to the objection, beyond the poet's more general argument throughout this corpus is that as one grows older, one does not necessarily grow wiser: *sic vicibus variis alternos fallimus annos / et mutata magis tempora gratis mihi* (5-6).[15] The meaning would seem to be that thus (i.e., by the composition of *carmina vana*, and by the behavior that provides the source material for them) we deceive the alternate years by various changes, and the changed times are more pleasing to me. *Variae vices and mutata tempora* are essentially the same; with this use of *vices* we may compare the *gratae vices* of Horace, c. 3.29.13, a passage that may have been in Maximianus' mind.[16] The notion of "deceiving the years" is a conceit that may be paralleled, for example, in Horace and Ovid.[17]

Admittedly, even with such intertextual parallels the notion of "deceiving the years" is not entirely pellucid, at least not to the exclusion of critical commentary. Not surprisingly, perhaps, as we have observed some editors (following Webster) prefer to read *sic vicibus variis alterni fallimur anni*;[18] indeed, the apparatuses of Baehrens and others here record still other variants of verb and case, the likely result of critical efforts to grapple with the passage. But it is unclear what exactly the point would be of the shift of topic to how we are deceived by the changing seasons. We may indeed be more charmed by the advent of each new season; we may welcome spring after winter, or autumn after the heat of summer. But the train of thought seems intolerably disjointed after what precedes, and it could be argued that being pleased by the change of season is not synonymous with saying that we are deceived by the year's shifting cycle.

The poet's point, we would argue, is that the various erotic dalliances in which we engage, and our seemingly always fickle affections serve as means

[14] Throughout this study, we refer to "poet," "narrator," "lover," etc. as if they were one, for the sake of convenience; the arguments developed herein do not depend on such controversies as authorial voice, poetic persona, and quasi-biographical narrative.

[15] On this verse see Webster 1900, *ad loc.* The reading *fallimur* is Webster's, followed by Juster 2018, p. 56.

[16] Cf. here Woodman 2022, *ad loc.*

[17] Cf. Horace, *Serm*. 2.7.111-3 and Ovid, *Trist*. 3.3.11-2. D'Amanti 2020, p. 300 notes "L'aggettivo *vanus*, richiamando il precedente *ignava*, ripropone il *topos* della *vanitas* della poesia già formulato in 1,11 (*mendacia dulcia*)".

[18] So, e.g, Juster 2018.

to deceive or to cheat the years. The boredom and tedium of the passage of time is alleviated by new love. Related to this sentiment would be the idea that the chase is more appealing than the conquest; the early stages of infatuation and passion are more enticing than the pleasures of an established relationship. The key words are *vana* (to describe the poet's songs) and *fallimus* (of his means of deceiving the years); implicit to Maximianus' point is that nothing is satisfying indefinitely. And yet, while the new passion is at its height, its intensity is akin to a season at its zenith.

How do we "deceive the years"? By acting like foolish young people when our advanced years demand more mature, sober behavior. To the degree that we should be more sober and self-possessed as we age, we deceive the years by indulging in the foolhardy pursuits of youth.[19] At once (c. 4.7 ff.) we learn of one such example of silliness: the speaker's infatuation with the girl nicknamed "Candida" on account of her appearance, "an expert cymbal-player and dancer".[20] The chromatic name is richly evocative, bespeaking the girl's fresh and lovely appearance; in Virgil, it is applied both to the goddess of love and to the lovely Elissa.[21] For our purposes, we shall note now in passing that the Virgilian description of the Ivory Gate of false dreams highlights the attractive, seductive gleam of its white material: *altera candenti perfecta nitens elephanto*.[22] Candida is blinding, as it were, in her shimmering, dazzling brightness; certainly she has succeeded (at least for the moment) in utterly captivating her new admirer. She is ivory-like in appearance, with possible implications for the interpretation of the dream imagery associated with her.

The emphasis on the gleam that gives Candida her name is accentuated by the mention of her "snow-white" (c. 4.11 *niveis*) fingers as they pluck the strings of her instrument;[23] the musically inclined girl seduces her prey by means of the *varii modi* (c. 4.14) of her playing, with the language echoing the *diversae partes* of her performance (c. 4.13), the *multiplices soni* of her *cymbala* (c. 4.10), the *diversi modi* of her appearance (c. 4.8) and, ultimately, the *vices variae* by which the poet noted that we deceive the years. One (cf. c. 4.13 *una*) girl captivates the speaker by means of a

[19] For the "sentimental journey into the idyllic land of youth," see Wasyl 2011, p. 145.

[20] So Ellis 1884, pp. 1-15. With the cymbal-playing femme fatale, D'Amanti 2020, p. xxxiv compares the *Quintia of Priapea* 26.

[21] Cf. *Aeneid* 5.571 and 8.608, with Edgeworth 1992, pp. 114-116.

[22] *Aeneid* 6.895.

[23] On such stylized description of beautiful women in medieval literature, see Gerbrandy 2016, with useful commentary relevant to the verse of earlier centuries.

dazzling display of visual and auditory charms; Candida is the newest infatuation, and like all new obsessions she is attractive in countless ways. The elegist's language is especially rich in this sequence, with a marvelous nod backward to the manner in which he commenced his reflections.[24]

The speaker is smitten, and his wounds are pleasing (c. 4.16 *vulnera grata*); once again the language recalls the initial, general commentary of the poet: the pleasing wounds correlate with the pleasing nature of the changed times (c. 4.6). The pinnacle of the poet's (implicitly fleeting) passion is reached when he imagines that he sees and hears his beloved, even when she is absent:

saepe velut visae laetabar imagine formae
et procul absenti voce manuque fui
saepe velut praesens fuerit mecum ipse loquebar
cantabam dulces quos solet illa modos

The imperfects are frequentative, underscoring the intensity of the feeling; the lover is enchanted by an *imago*, since the girl is not physically present. He talks to her as if she were present, and he sings the sweet melodies that have rendered him so beguiled.

The lover is enraptured, and in Candida's absence he has her image. The *imago* is simultaneously true and false; Candida is not there, but the speaker remembers both her appearance and the sound of her voice. There is no indication that his recollection is faulty. Needless to say, talking to oneself is perceived as evidence of madness:

o quotiens demens, quotiens sine mente putabar!
nec, puto, fallebar: non bene sanus eram.

Key language recurs, again with textual controversy. The manuscript reading *fallebar* should probably be retained, *pace* Baehrens (who conjectured *fallebat*).[25] What is clear in this distich is that the speaker was thought mad, and he agrees that he was. Reading *fallebar* would mean that there was no deception on the part of the accusers; they were correct in their verdict of insanity. The close of the first hemistich of the pentameter echoes the end of the preceding hexameter. The difference in context between *fallebar* and *fallebat* is not very great; on the whole it is easy to see why

[24] On the poet's verbal dexterity note Altamura 1981, pp. 818-827.
[25] "fallebat (sc. ita putantes) scripsi …"

some have been tempted to think that Baehrens' *fallebat* is better (not least after *puto*).[26] In either case, the implicit contrast in the couplet is between the "putantes" (who are rational and not subject to deception), and the "amator" (who is indeed crazy).

Candida is an expressive color name; for the narrator, *pallor* and *rubor* (c. 4.29) are what betray his obsessive love. The paleness results from his being lovesick; the blush is indicative of his embarrassment, especially on discovery.[27] The midpoint of the elegy notes that the (contrasting) white and red color that silently express his emotions do the work of the voice (c. 4.30).

At this juncture, as the elegy commences its second half, the narrator turns to the question of another, more revealing source of evidence of his infatuation, namely his dreams:

nec minus ipsa meas prodebant somnia curas 31
somnia secreto non bene fida meo

The anaphora of *somnia* serves to highlight the focus on dreams that sets the tone for the rest of the poem.[28] Dreams betray the lover: while he was awake, it was his paleness and his blush that revealed his inner thoughts; while asleep, his emotions are given voice, as he speaks involuntarily. There is an elegant balance: the cry of the lover is for Candida to hasten to him, for Candida not to delay; the bright light of the dawn (c. 4.36 *lux inimica*) is approaching.[29] "Candida" contrasts with the light that is inimical to lovers. The light that matters to the lover is the gleam of the source of his passion; nature's morning light is his enemy. The elegiac convention takes on special force given the girl's name and the reason for it.

The audience for the narrator's impromptu revelations is none other than Candida's father:

proximus ut genitor mecum comitatus amatae 37
virginis herbosa forte iacebat humo[30]

[26] The present active *puto* is effective after the imperfect passive *putabar*; *fallebar* immediately after *puto* may seem harsh. The form may have been erroneously introduced under the influence of *putabar*. Certainty is impossible.

[27] The subject of "external signs of emotion" in Latin elegiac and amatory verse from the earliest extant examples is a vast one; cf. Clark 2008.

[28] On the question of dreams and dream representations in Roman elegy note Scioli 2015 and especially Bouquet 1996.

[29] The emphasis on light continues semantically at c. 4.41 *omnia collustrans*, as the awakened father surveys the entire scene closely.

We are plunged at once into a provocative *mise en scène*: Candida's unnamed sire is at hand, in repose next to the lover on the grass. We are not told why they are together, or the extent of their knowledge of each other. The father reacts to the name of his daughter; he assumes at first that she is present (c. 4.39-40). At once, he addresses his apparently guilty companion:

vana putas an vera? sopor ludibria iactat
an te verus ait pectoris ardor habet?

The manuscripts here offer *putas* or *putat*. Here, Baehrens' suggestion of *putabo* is worthy of some consideration, though again the resultant difference in meaning is not appreciably consequential for our purposes. The key contrast is between that is which *vanus* and that which is *verus*; in *vana* there is a pronounced echo of the poet's *carmina vana* from c. 4.4. The question is one of reality *versus* illusion; Candida's father wonders if his companion's dream revelations are false or true. Is his daughter involved with this man, or is the dream an expression of the man's fantasy?

Baehrens conjectured *serus* for *verus*, a brilliant idea that plays on the fact that the lover is an older man. But *verus* should probably be allowed to stand here.[31] The couplet is carefully constructed, with effective expression that is expanded at once in what follows. The dream has led the lover to think that his beloved is just within earshot, though the fact that she is not within his grasp is a reminder that she is, after all, a nocturnal phantom. The dream apparition is false, and it teases and deludes the lover. That said, one may have a dream about someone and not actually be affected by true ardor for them; again, at the root of the reflection is the fact that Candida's father does not know if his daughter is merely an object of infatuation, or a participant in an affair.

As he concludes his remarks, the distressed parent reveals that he does have an opinion on dreams and their reliability as betrayers of emotion:

credo equidem assuetas animo remeare figuras,
et fallax studium ludit imago suum.

[30] The textual controversies of this couplet do not much affect the meaning; see further Juster 2018, *ad loc*.

[31] The repetition so soon after vera is no serious problem; the ancients were not nearly so bothered by such iteration, and the poet is focused on emphasizing his theme of the reality and/or falsity of appearances.

Figures or images that we are familiar with recur in our mind; the sentiment follows on the narrator's details about how he conversed with Candida even when she was absent, about how she always seemed to be present to him (c. 4.19-24). The enthralled lover thought that Candida was with him, in what amounts to a description of a diurnal hallucination or waking dream; the girl's father offers the commonplace observation that we tend to dream of that which especially familiar to us, of that which is most on our mind. This fact about dreams is true regardless of the reality or unreality of an affair; Candida is on the sleeper's mind in either scenario.

The *fallax imago* of the pentameter introduces an interesting twist on the reflection. The *assuetae figurae* recur to the mind that is fixated on them, but the image that appears is deceptive and false, because it is not real. The lover is zealous for the object of his infatuation; his studium is for the girl who haunts his waking and sleeping mind. Candida's father thought that his daughter was at hand; he was wrong, but the girl's *figura* has also deceived her lover into thinking that she was present. We recall the *imago* of the girl that inspired the waking lover to talk and to interact with a quasi-phantom of his beloved.

Additional textual problems mar the pentameter of the next couplet, and render definitive interpretation impossible. Nevertheless, the sense is reasonably clear. The father wishes to know more; he tries to hear and to interpret every utterance of the slumbering, dreaming lover (c. 4.47 *stat tamen attonitus perplexaque murmura captat*). The adverb is important; the father has an accurate sense already of the situation, but he remains fixed and attentive, since he is not aware of every detail, and the revelations resulting from the lover's dream are the best means in the moment for learning additional information. Dreams, after all, can offer clues as to what has transpired.

The following verse apparently describes the father seeking more information, hopeful, as it were, that the loquacious dreamer will betray more confidences.[32] There will be none; the vignette closes abruptly, as the narrator makes general observations that commence with a statement recapitulating how his sins were revealed (c. 4.49-50).[33] Dreams have been his undoing; the inadvertent, subconscious declaration has made him

[32] Juster 2018, *ad loc*. summarizes the textual debate. We agree that *tacitis precibus* works better than *tacitus strepitu*; the picture makes more sense if the father is anxious not to rouse his companion from sleep. The excitement is palpable as he makes his prayer that there will be further involuntary revelations.

[33] With *proditus* at c. 4.50 cf. 31 *prodebant*.

wretched.[34] In a text already noteworthy for numerous problems of text and interpretation, c. 4.51 ff. provide still more difficulties, as the poet expands on his reflection about the miseries that have resulted from his revelation. The point seems to be that now (i.e., in the wake of his dream revelation) the lover is without offense or wrongdoing:

et nunc infelix tota est sine crimine vita 51

Baehrens sought to emend *sine* to *in*, a not unintelligent idea to try to make logical sense of a difficult passage. The key, however, is to try to understand what happened in context. The lover reveals his infatuation; Candida's father presumably puts an end to the dalliance. The very abruptness of the transition from the recollection of the fateful day on the grass to general comments is an enactment of how suddenly a dream ends when one wakes from sleep; on another level, it is indicative also of how the relationship ended swiftly now. The lover has been detected, and so his reputation is besmirched; he cannot, however, indulge in his passion to his full satisfaction, since we must assume that he will now be separated from his cymbal-playing object of passion (cf. c. 4.52 *et peccare senem non potuisse pudet*).[35]

Some have argued that the elegy closes here, and that the following eight verses should be assigned to what follows.[36] But the subsequent sentiments come naturally after what precedes: *deserimur vitiis, fugit indignata voluptas* (c. 4.53): the speaker's point is that despite being mired in a state of ill repute, his very vices have deserted him, and pleasure has fled. Despite this, the lover is incapable of not wanting what he is not able to do: *nec quod non possum non voluisse meum est* (c. 4.54).[37]

There has also been support for taking c. 4.55 as the start of a new elegy.[38] As in all such questions in the corpus, we are working essentially in the dark; we do not know if Maximianus intended any such divisions at all, and ultimately the question is one of subjective judgment. The sen-

[34] Another problem lurks here: at c. 4.50, we would prefer to read *indicio*, not *iudicio* or *et vitio*. The point is that the *indicium* of the dream has doomed the lover. Some of those who prefer et vitio have engaged in debate on the question of the lover blaming himself for his misery, with intertextual comparison to the same issue in the Augustan elegists. The narrator does take the blame for his lot, but the blame originates in the dream confession.

[35] The pentameter seems to have a more biting, pointed sense if we do not accept Baehrens' emendation in the preceding line.

[36] Cf. Spaltenstein 1983, *ad loc.*

[37] *Pace* Juster 2018 *et al.*, the initial negative is essential for the logical development of the argument; reading *et* spoils the straightforward sense.

[38] Cf. here especially Welsh 2011, p. 222.

timents of c. 4.55 ff. are difficult to explicate, in any case, because of what may amount to the most controversial textual problems of the poem.[39] While the problems of these verses once again do not affect the interpretation of the elegy's dream passage, it may be profitable to offer a brief appraisal of the closing lines. We would argue in favor of the following text:

hoc etiam meminisse licet, quod serior aetas
  intulit, et gemitus, quos mihi laeta dedit.
si quis has possit naturae adtingere partes,
 gnarus cur sapiens noxia saepe velit.
interdum rapimur vitiis trahimurque videntes,
  et quod non capiunt pectora bruta volunt.

A glance at any apparatus will reveal the plethora of problems, of variants and conjectures. The various choices of readings result in a range of interpretations of appreciably different import. The import of what may be the conclusion of the elegy is that whether we are old or young, we are subject to the same passions. One might think that the older man would be in a better position to avoid the sorrows of love and the serious crises that so often result from indulgence in passion. But we walk into our own destruction; we see plainly what confronts us, and we are snatched and dragged off all the same. The reading *videntes* is a likely sound conjecture of Baehrens; *volentes* is less likely the correct participle before *volunt*.

The sequence of thought is carefully delineated: first, we are invited to remember that a *serior aetas* has brought the sighs and groans of a happy, more youthful time of life.[40] The noun *gemitus* offers a classic entry in the elegiac lexicon; of polyvalent import, it evokes the passion and the turmoil of affairs that are destined for disaster. The mention of memory also relates to the emphasis on old age; notwithstanding any stereotypical enervation of the ability to remember as the years advance, it is readily apparent that age does not bring immunity from elegiac entanglements.[41]

Second, if someone understands this basic fact of human nature, he would understand why a wise man often willingly embraces harmful things (c. 4.57-8). We would argue that verse 58 is the most problematic

[39] It is understandable that Juster 2018, *ad loc.* comments on how the problems of this couplet rival the challenges posed by the entirety of the rest of the elegy.

[40] *Laeta* is almost certainly right; Baehrens' *lingua* is a characteristically learned conjecture that follows on the telltale oneiric voice of the narrator, but it reads awkwardly in context.

[41] For the theme of memory cf. c. 4.42.

of a challenging six lines; the text printed above is that of Baehrens, which has the benefit of both good sense and logical development of thought.[42]

Sometimes, we are snatched away by vices, and we are dragged off in full awareness, or willingly.[43] The last line offers a final problem; *capiunt* or *cupiunt*? Both verbs have respectable attestation and give plausible sense. *Capiunt* is probably the better choice here.[44] Once again the point is the truth of the paradox that wanting something can be intensely desirable, even in the absence of possession; indeed, it can be more pleasurable to crave something than to obtain it. *Pectora bruta* offers something of a small surprise at the end; essentially, human beings are brute beasts when it comes to the matter of transient, intensely passionate affairs. Whether one is older or younger, the same animalistic traits and tendencies are at hand; one is prone at any age to walk with eyes open into a familiar source of peril, and to behave in the manner of lower animals.

At its heart, apart from the poet's pervasive fixation on the problems of advancing age and the fact that the old and the young are both susceptible to degrading, embarrassing fits of passion, Maximianus' fourth elegy is centered on the problem of the reliability of dreams.[45] According to the logic of the poem, dreams may seem to be simultaneously both false and true. First, we dream of that which is on our minds; to the degree that one is obsessed with a given girl, there is an increased likelihood of dreaming about her. Dreams may occur by night or by day; in the latter case, there is always a risk that one will reveal information about one's peccadilloes, while diurnal dreams may pose a risk of making one seem to be demented: talking to someone who is not there is liable to elicit mockery and accusations of madness. One could parse the question of oneiric veracity, and ask if all dreams are false in that they lack substance, or if the only important matter is whether what one dreams of is imaginary or real. If one dreams of a situation that is really occurring, then one may be tempted to call it true.

[42] Juster 2018, *ad loc.* offers a good example of how to try to make sense of other possibilities; clarus seems impossible, and efforts to identify the sapiens are misguided. There is no reason to imagine that Maximianus was deliberately unintelligible, or that his couplets were linked together with no thought for the progression and development of thought.

[43] C. 4.59 volentes or videntes; with our without the emendation, the point is much the same. Baehrens' reading has the advantage of emphasizing the visual element, following on the emphasis on dreams.

[44] It is something of a difficilior lectio; see further Juster 2018, *ad loc.* for the shades of meaning.

[45] Harris 2003, pp. 18-34 is helpful for general background here on the religious and cultural aspects of the problem.

But it is certainly false in that no matter how closely the dream reflects reality, it is a mere *simulacrum* without substance.

In Homer and Virgil, dreams emerge from either the Gate of Horn or the Gate of Ivory; the point of transit is determined by the veracity of the vision.[46] One may, after all, dream of something that has never occurred, and never will. The dream gates make additional appearances in extant imperial Greek epic, in intertextual *hommage* certainly to Homer.[47] There was also lore that concerned the hour when dreams were sent forth; according to Moschus, true dreams were seen at the third watch of the night.[48] In both folkloric scenarios, the salient issue is how to determine whether a given vision is worthy of credence; the matter is of prime importance in the case of prophetic dreams.

In Roman elegy, Propertius references the image of the *Somni portae*, though with an interesting twist:

> nec te sperne piis venientia somnia portis:
> cum pia venerunt somnia, pondus habent. (c. 4.7.87-8)[49]

The speaker is the ghost of Cynthia; this is a case where the gates are mentioned by the dream figure, with assurances about trustworthiness. Presumably the *piae portae* refer to the Gate of Horn, but Cynthia's shade emphasizes the quality of *pietas*, which is not exactly the same thing as making an explicit declaration of truth *versus* falsehood.[50] The shade speaks of substance (*pondus*), which echoes the opening of the elegy (c. 4.7 *Sunt aliquid Manes*). It is made clear by the vision that such apparitions travel by night, not by day (c. 4.7.89-92).[51] Immediately after, the ghost utters a chilling prophecy: *nunc te possideant aliae: mox sola tenebo: / mecum eris et*

[46] *Odyssey* 19.560-9 and *Aeneid* 6.893-9.

[47] Cf. Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* 34.89-90 and 44.46 ff., and Colluthus, De Raptu Helenae 318-327.

[48] *Europa* 1-5; the Hellenistic poet influenced Horace's depiction of Europa's lament about false dreams from the Ivory Gate at c. 3.27, 40-2, where see Nisbet - Rudd 2004, *ad loc.* For the idea that the hour a dream occurs is important, note Horace, *Serm*. 1.10, 31-3 and Ovid, *Her*. 19, 195. For more on this lore and its appearances in classical literature, see Fratantuono 2023, pp. 249-62.

[49] The text is from Fedeli 2006.

[50] See further here Rothstein 1924 (1966), *ad loc.*, with extended commentary on the Vorleben of the passage.

[51] The other dreams mentioned by Propertius are at c. 2.26 and 3.3, first of Cynthia's shipwreck, and then of the poet on Helicon; the second is a familiar supernatural description, in the tradition of both Callimachus and Ennius. At c. 1.3.27-30, Propertius is worried that the sleeping Cynthia might be disturbed by nightmares, or that she might be dreaming of some rival imposing himself on her.

mixtis ossibus ossa teram. When one experiences this sort of eerie nightmare utterance, one naturally wonders if it is true or false. Cynthia clarifies that she is from the *piae portae*, with the mention of pietas emphasizing the problem of their reciprocal dealings. But one may wonder if her clarification is trustworthy. In any case, Propertius' allusion to the *Somni portae* does not contradict Virgil; the elegist merely invites reflection on the implications of his predecessor's passage.

In Maximianus, there is no explicit mention of such lore, either of the dream gates or of the hour of the night. The closest that we come to anything like the aforementioned dream folklore is to be found in the chromatic implications of the name Candida, which as we have observed may evoke the gleam of the Ivory Gate (*candens* in Virgil). As for his elegiac predecessor, Propertius was clearly thinking of the lately dead Cynthia; beyond this easy enough explanation for why he would be dreaming of her, there is the fact that the nocturnal vision is private: there is no impact on his reputation. As in Virgil, there is a prophetic declaration. In Propertius, Cynthia associates herself with the "pious gates," while in the *Aeneid*, we have the celebrated, provocative enigma of Anchises' shade sending Aeneas and the Sibyl through the Ivory Gate. Scholars have wrestled extensively with the Virgilian puzzle; it is noteworthy that Cynthia's shade may be lying about her own point of transit.

In the absence of any clear allusion to such lore, one might be tempted to wonder if Maximianus were influenced by Lucretius' extended, philosophical/scientific treatment of dreams.[52] While there are some verbal echoes of Lucretius in Maximianus' verse,[53] one struggles to find clear indication that Lucretius was especially on the elegist's mind in the matter of dreams.

Candida is the key to understanding the poet's purpose in his oneiric reflections. First, she has a bewitching quality.[54] This is expressed effectively in the celebrated distich of c. 4.25-6, the passage that Gauricus omitted because it names Maximianus, thus spoiling his Gallus forgery dreams. The polyptoton of *cantat, cantantem Maximianus amat* (26) describes how the lover has succumbed to her spell; Webster notes *ad loc.* that "each word has the idea of witchery in it." When the lover was apart from the girl and imagined and hallucinated that she was present, he kept singing the songs

[52] *De Rerum Natura* 4.722-1036. There is useful commentary Segal 1990.

[53] See Webster 1900, pp. 104-5, e.g., the use of *illius ad nomen* as line-opening at c. 4.34-52 and *De Rerum Natura* 4.1062.

[54] Alongside the chromatic associations of Candida's name, Maximianus may have intended for the reader to think of the witch Canidia from *Serm*. 1.8 and *Ep*. 5 and 17 (cf. also *Serm*. 2.1.48, 2.2.95, and *Ep*. 3.8).

that he knew from her renditions (22 *cantabam*); the almost eerie clanging of her cymbals, and her melodic voice and mastery of music combine to conjure an effective spell. The lover is complicit in the recital of the very spells that enchant him.

What are the salient features of her spell? The captivated lover is trapped in a never ending dream, one in which he thinks that Candida is constantly present. Both his waking and his sleeping hours are consumed by his obsession. Diurnal dreams result in mockery and accusations of delirium; everyone knows he is under the spell of the *de facto* sorceress. Nocturnal dreams would seem to be safer, were the dreamer to be alone. One might imagine that notwithstanding the degree of his obsession, he would be more cautious around Candida's father (presuming he knew his identity). But while he is asleep, his infatuation poses the risk that he will involuntarily reveal his *crimen*; such is the degree of his fixation on the girl.

Looming over all this is the fact that Maximianus is willingly or unwillingly fickle; his other *amours* include Aquilina and an unnamed *Graia puella*.[55] We have noted that we do not know the exact circumstances of the end of his dalliance with Candida; the most plausible conclusion is that her father ensured that the relationship would end. In the midst of the involvement, the lover is utterly entrapped in the snare; it as if every new girl poses the ultimate erotic quest. As girl of the hour, Candida is intensely longed for when she is not present; the poet-lover ardently hopes to grasp her and to make tangible contact, but he is frustrated by her absence. When the relationship ends, the once supreme girl is replaced seemingly at once by a new obsession; Maximianus' amatory persona does not brood over lost loves. The lover wakes from sleep; the end of the dream is simultaneous with the end of the affair.

Given these features of his purported romantic history, we may offer some analysis of the elegist's use of dream imagery. Candida enchanted her lover by both visual and auditory stimuli; when she was absent, the obsessed lover recreated the image that so enticed him by means of his memory. The enchantment was powerful enough to exercise influence even without the lover's active will, as in dreams. Candida's father asks if he is hearing *vana* or *vera*; he does not know the full story of his daughter's involvement with his companion. According to the logic of epic dreams, *vana*, we might conclude, would come from the Ivory Gate, *vera* from that of horn.

But Candida's father offers his own, key conclusion about dreams: *Credo equidem assuetas animo remeare figuras, / Et fallax studium ludit imago*

[55] Cf. c. 3 and 5.

suum (c. 4.45-6).[56] The statement is a forceful assertion, with the adverb underscoring the personal affirmation of belief. The dream image is *fallax*, and it plays games or toys with one's desire. The noun that the narrator uses for his dream = *somnia* (c. 4.31); if one were to accept the definitions of the various types of dreams offered by Macrobius in his commentary on the *Somnium Scipionis*, what we have in our elegy is a case of "an enigmatic dream needing interpretation."[57] Macrobius' definition of the action of a *somnium* as *tegit figuris et velat ambagibus*[58] does fit with the question of Candida's father about the situation alluded to by the dream; the narrator's inadvertent nocturnal revelation is ambiguous and obscure, since it does not clarify whether Candida is involved in an actual relationship, or is merely the object of the dreamer's fantasizing. It is not a prophetic dream, or one of warning. It is an indicator of a true state of affairs, one that merits question and elucidation of detail.

Candida's father offers something approaching a scientific, philosophical approach to dreams that implicitly comments on both Virgil and Propertius; it is not exactly Lucretian, but it presents an innovative analysis that incorporates allusions to all three poets. Regardless of whether the dream references things that are *vana* or *vera*, the *imago* that the lover sees is *fallax*. Candida's name may recall the ivory associated with false dreams, and her image is certainly deceptive. As perfect a replica as the dream apparition of Candida may be, the *imago* is deceptive because the real Candida is absent. Precautions may be taken to avoid being caught with the reality, but the illusion can condemn a man (waking or sleeping) by virtue of its seductive ability to mimic the real thing.

The shade of Propertius' Cynthia urged her *quondam* lover not to spurn dreams that are sent via the *piae portae*, since such dreams have substance. Propertius opened his dream elegy by declaring solemnly that ghosts are real;[59] Cynthia's ghostly shade made a connection between *pietas* and veracity, but in the end her assertions were proven to be false: she slipped from his embrace (c. 4.7.96 *inter complexus excidit umbra meos*). The end of the elegy harks back to the opening, where we heard of how a shade had escaped the flames of a conquered pyre: *luridaque evictos effugit umbra rogos* (c. 4.7.2). The dream is deceptive in that it has no *pondus*, nothing that can be grasped; it flees the lover's embrace the way it fled the flames. Assertions

[56] It is inexplicable that Webster 1900, *ad loc.* omits any comment on this couplet.
[57] So Davenport 2004, p. 194.
[58] *Comm. in Somnium Scipionis* 1.3.15.
[59] See here Hutchinson 2006, *ad loc.*

of *piae portae* are irrelevant; the imago is *fallax*. There is no mention of horn or of ivory; Cynthia imposes a moral judgment on dreams that are not only implicitly veracious, but also exemplars of virtue and loyalty. In Virgil the narrator's voice describes the *Somni portae* and the use of the Ivory Gate; in Propertius it is the dream apparition itself which is made to reference the gates.

Maximianus follows in the elegiac footsteps of Propertius, in a different context and to diverse ends. Now the dream image serves as the mechanism for self-indictment; the smitten lover gives evidence against himself by his dialogue with a dream, by his engagement with the fallacious image. Propertius did not respond verbally to Cynthia's shade; Maximianus implores Candida to hasten to him, thus betraying his emotions no less than when he spoke to himself in broad daylight, again as if she were present. Maximianus' dream reflection makes explicit what was suggested in Propertius; all dreams, ultimately, are deceptive, false images, regardless of what they say, or of how closely or impeccably they resemble reality. All dreams are false and deceptive, even if they present praiseworthy, sympathetic views that exhibit *pietas*. Only the real girl has substance; the memory of her may inspire dreams, and the dreams may be the lover's undoing. But they are not real. Candida's father voiced a theory about dreams; his theory offers a correct analysis of the scenario with the lover and his dazzling girl, even if he lacks full information about the affair. The end result is the same: the affair is now abruptly at an end; the *fallax imago* has done its work (however inadvertently), and Candida is now consigned forever to the realm of memory and dreams – a grim twist on the notion that the lover is in a perpetual dream state.

Virgil's allusion to the Gates of Sleep blends the expression of conventional oneiric lore with a mysterious surprise; Aeneas and the Sibyl are not dream figures, and presumably they could have been dismissed from the underworld by either gate. The choice of the Ivory Gate may contribute to a sense of disquiet as the first half of the epic concludes; whatever the rationale for the poet's inclusion of the detail, it is not about dreams *per se*. In Propertius, the same lore is used in a nightmarish context, one in which the dream is the entire focus of the scene; the Augustan elegist presents the dream portals almost as if they were sentient, with the piae portae providing transit for ghosts that one deserves to see.[60] The last extant elegist of Roman literature offers his own twist on conventional lore, presenting the

[60] Cf. the different scenario of c. 1.3, where Propertius comes upon the slumbering Cynthia, who wakes up and reports on her activities before sleep overcame here.

bright, alluring Candida as a ***fallax imago***, a paradoxical dream figure that seems to incarnate the insubstantial, even as it relegates the lover (both waking and sleeping) to a never ending, deceptive dream.

Lee Fratantuono
Maynooth University (Ireland)
lee.fratantuono@mu.ie

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