With her commentary on pseudo-Quintilian's Major Declamation 3, Miles Marianus, Catherine Schneider (hereafter S.) has provided a valuable addition to the series of commentaries initiated in 1999 at the University of Cassino (Italy). The nineteen Major Declamations (hereafter DM) are the only extant complete and unabridged controversiae or mock-forensic speeches, a genre that was hugely popular in rhetors' schools and literary salons alike throughout Roman antiquity. It is probably their lurid subject-matter and bombastic style, denounced in the ancients' habitual complaints about the decay of rhetoric, which must be held accountable for the near-systematic neglect of these texts by classical scholars. From the 1970s onwards, however, scholars have begun to appreciate that Roman declamation not only reflects contemporary views on social and family relationships, on law, education and literature, but also deserves to be read in its own right as a literary genre full of allusions to classical literature, but with a structure very much of its own. For the DM, Haakanson's excellent 1982 Teubner edition provided the initial impetus, followed by commentaries on DM 6,8 and 12.¹

DM 3, the subject of S.'s work, is a rarity within the genre in that it treats a genuine historical case of which the outcome was well-known. In the year 104 BCE, the great Roman general Marius had his nephew Caius Lusius serving under him as a military tribune in the Cimbrian war. Lusius had become obsessed with a young soldier, Trebonius. One night he summoned him to his tent and tried to rape him, but the young man drew his sword and killed his assailant. Accused of murder he was tried before Marius, who far from punishing him rewarded him with a crown normally reserved for great exploits. DM 3 consists of Trebonius' defence, supposedly pronounced by an advocatus.

S. begins her commentary with a short introduction. After a brief statement of the facts of the case, based on Plutarch, Marius 14,3-9 (p. 13), there follow four chapters which, though concise, provide the reader with an adequate context in which to read the fictitious defence of the Miles Marianus. Chapter 1, Le Miles Marianus dans la tradition rhétorique (pp. 14-17), describes how the anecdote about the young soldier became a useful exemplum for orators and rhetors alike. Cicero in Pro Milone adduced it as an instance of legitimate self-defence (cf. Quint. Inst. 5,11,15); both he (Inv. 2,124) and Quintilian (Inst. 3,11,14 use it to explain the concept of relatio criminis (a line of defence under the constitutio qualitatis), which is used to argue that the victim of a given crime has himself to blame. It also occurs in V. Max. 6,1,12 (de pudicitia) and the spurious letter to Octavian ascribed to Cicero, and, finally, we possess the excerpt of a second declamation on the subject by Calpurnius Flaccus.

The second chapter, L’élaboration littéraire du texte (pp. 17-25), gives a lucid overview of the declamation's conventional rhetorical structure in four partes orationis (exordium, narratio,
argumentatio, peroratio) and their content. S. rightly observes that language and style roughly fit within the tradition of Silver Latin, but does not elaborate her point. Instead she describes a number of deviances prompted by the essentially rhetorical character of the text: numerous vocatives and exclamations, terseness, a loose paratactic structure characteristic of spoken Latin, and for better impact an abundance of superlatives, insistent interrogationes, emphasis by means of repetition and pleonasm, litotes, paronomasia and personification. Literary influences (Sallust, Cicero, Livy, Vergil [sometimes through Lucan, Statius, Silius Italicus]) are frequently mentioned, but given ample attention in the commentary.

Chapter 3, La problématique sexuelle dans le Miles Marianus (pp. 25-34) argues that it is pointless and anachronistic to approach a case such as that of Lusius and Trebonius in terms of homosexuality vs. heterosexuality: the actual division ran between active and passive sexuality, between those who penetrated -- free Roman men -- and those who were penetrated -- women and slaves. Basing herself on literary and especially legal texts as well as a wealth of modern secondary literature, S. convincingly argues that the tribune's assault put the soldier in the unbearable position of a woman -- or worse, of a prostitute.

In her final chapter, La datation du texte (pp. 34-38), S. makes a case for dating the DM to the fourth rather than second century CE. This is a topic on which she has already published a number of articles. She argues that Hierius and Domitius, the two rhetors who, as we learn from the two subscriptiones accompanying DM 10 and 18, compiled and edited the collection, belonged to the group of pagan intellectuals around Symmachus, who were involved in the final campaign of pagan civilization against Christianity. A weighty argument is the fact that Jerome knew the DM at least in 384, whereas Lactantius apparently had never heard of them. In her other publications S. offers more arguments, many of which are based on the ideological bias of DM 3. S.'s evidence is ingenious and well-considered, but as yet does not prove that the DM were actually composed, or even given their current form, in the fourth century. Their language and style as well as the prominence of some of their themes for the present still point to the second century.

After the introduction comes the text (largely based on Haakanson's) faced with a translation (pp. 40-69) which is eminently readable, yet stays close to the Latin original. The notes, which make up the largest section of S.'s book (pp. 71-245) are unfortunately linked to the translation rather than the Latin text, but there are 358 of them (for 18 BTL pages!) and they offer all the information any classicist, historian or student of rhetoric could possibly want about the Miles Marianus. They contain, for example, some sound textual criticism, sometimes harking back to such veterans as Reitzenstein and Helm, but often the final word is spoken by Stramaglia per litteras (e.g. nn. 85, 270, 273, 345). The only change I cannot endorse is the rejection of Haakanson's conjecture in Section 18, 'Certe nihil minus committendum, quam ut <non> ulciscaris hoc flagitium', which is translated as 'Il n'y a vraiment rien à gagner en vengeant cet acte scandaleux'. The flagitium is the attempted rape, ulcisci means 'punish', and committere here (and in Section 9, where it also gets somewhat lost in the translation) is synonymous with permettere or admittere (TLL 1912,38-76; DM 3,9 mentioned at 1912,71).

Where S. calls attention to linguistic and stylistic characteristics of DM 3, she usually bases her analyses on the small number of early twentieth-century studies on the subject. Her commentary is not exhaustive but gives a good overall picture both of the declamation's distinguishing features and of their relevance and function. I would hesitate, however, to characterize exempla as directly contributing to syllogistic argument; they are first and
foremost a means to reason from species to species. An important feature that has remained somewhat underexposed is the abundance of all types of sententiae, which greatly enhance the argumentative force of the text.

Though far above average in all respects, the best parts of the commentary are those dealing with the purely rhetorical aspects of DM 3. Ample attention is given to the function and impact of the several partes orationis and especially to the arguments used by the advocatus. S. demonstrates convincingly, for example, how the relatio criminis is brought to bear, how the speaker cunningly capitalizes on Marius' sense of responsibility and his self-esteem, and why the peroratio is particularly effective because it lacks pathos, but also how the author is not above the exploitation of trite loci such as the opposition of virtus and fortuna. All these aspects are without exception considered in the light of both historical reality and the relevant rhetorical precepts as expressed in, usually, Cicero's De Inventione, the Rhetorica ad Herennium, and Quintilian's Institutio Oratoria. Especially instructive is S.'s emphasis on the significance of a set of concepts that are central to the declamation's argument, such as virtus, pudor, pudicitia, libido and furor. For notes concerning intertextuality, S has obviously made frequent but judicious use of the electronic Teubner corpus. The many literary parallels she cites are never irrelevant and always shown in their context.

A final aspect of the commentary that deserves mention is the enormous amount of historical and legal background material. Information from both ancient and modern sources can be found on such diverse topics as contemporary education, politics, sexual mores, civil, criminal and military law, and armour.

The volume closes with a full bibliography (pp. 249-77), conveniently arranged under several headings. The only thing I missed in this excellent commentary is an appendix -- however brief -- on the spurious DM 3B, the speech for the other side.

Notes:

1. Thomas Zinsmaier, Der von Bord geworfene Leichnam. Die sechste der neunzehn großer pseudoquintilianischen Deklamationen: Einleitung, Übersetzung, Kommentar (Frankfurt, 1993); Antonio Stramaglia, [Quintiliano] I Gemelli Malati: un Caso di Vivisezione, Declamazioni maggiori, 8 (Cassino, 1999); Antonio Stramaglia, [Quintiliano] La città che si cibò dei suoi cadaveri, Declamazioni maggiori,12 (Cassino, 2002).