

REVIEW ARTICLE

*NOBILES AMICI: ART AND LITERATURE IN AN ARISTOCRATIC SOCIETY**

This book is the outcome of a conference that well illustrates the lavish patronage nowadays available for anyone who can come up with a plausible title. After an introduction by the editor, telling us how ancient patronage differs from modern and suggesting that she has not read much of the actual book (she thinks that "a Roman writer or artist received money from an individual who was usually concerned with having himself praised or his ideas disseminated"), the treatment is divided into two parts: first the "historical approach," then the "literary and artistic approach." In the first part, G. Williams offers a history of "political patronage of literature" in Rome from the beginning down to Nero; T. P. Wiseman discusses poets and patrons in the late Republic; P. White pursues the same theme through (roughly) the first century of the Empire; and B. Baldwin, who was apparently set the task of continuing where White left off and inevitably discovered (or, more probably, knew from the start) that the evidence does not permit anything like this, abandons his supposed theme and writes on "Literature and Society in the Later Roman Empire"—in fact, as he at once announces, the middle Empire, from Hadrian to Diocletian. With his usual lightness of touch, disguising an erudition that ranges through more genres and longer periods than that of most scholars I know, and with his usual skill at fitting disparate snippets of information into a striking picture, he gives us a sketch of literary taste and of the attitude of various emperors to literature that is one of the highlights of the book.

The second part opens with a paper by J. E. G. Zetzel on "The Poetics of Patronage in the Late First Century B.C.," in which he aims at "denying utterly the importance of patronage to Latin poetry" (though "not necessarily to the poets"). Next the editor herself contributes what must have originated as a graduate seminar paper on Propertius 3. 9: largely an *explication de texte* and a detailed commentary, with a paragraph of comparison with Horace to round it off. Finally (so one might think) J. Griffin, unfortunately not writing to the theme of this conference (as he so often and so brilliantly has done), rejects the application of the concept of "typology," which (we are told) is theological in origin, to the *Aeneid*, where it has led to such extravagant notions as the suggestion that Vergil was influenced by Jewish writers. He makes a good case for the view that just about everything in Vergil's life and ample reading went, in various ways, to shape his work and his characters; which is obvious once we start from common sense and common experience, and which (we might add, and he ought perhaps to have added) applies no less to (e.g.) Livy and Tacitus than to Vergil.

* *Literary and Artistic Patronage in Ancient Rome*. Edited by BARBARA K. GOLD. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982. Pp. xx + 187. \$27.50.

But this turns out not to be the end. An essay by E. Leach, on "Patrons, Painters, and Patterns," is added, even though it stands totally outside the rest of the book. It deals with wall-painting (particularly "the transition from the Second to the Third Style"), and thus fulfills the purpose of allowing the editor to include the important words "and artistic" in the title of the book.

The book has no index.

I

It might have been thought that, since Leach had the responsible task of representing the whole of art, she would have been allowed adequate plates—at least black and white, if color was impossible—to illustrate her essay. In fact the poor quality of the printing of the plates is matched only by the poor quality of the paper used for them, which suggests a commitment to art that was as reluctant and perfunctory as it was limited in scope. Reference to these illustrations is largely fruitless for those not already familiar with the works the author is discussing. However, the essay itself, modest and clearly up to date (it is the only one in the volume where references to works not by the author, which appeared after the date of the conference, were added), formulates for the nonexpert and brings into focus much that has for some time been implied about the variety in fact offered within the canonical "styles" that used to be thought of, when the canon was first enunciated, in terms of a few rooms at Pompeii and then on the Palatine. There is also much about the social background of the owners of the houses where those painted rooms have been found. On this, Leach follows the recent trend to see in most of these rooms examples of the taste of the wealthy classes below the aristocracy, eager to be seen to "share in the cultivated tastes" of their social superiors; and she tries (somewhat less successfully) to relate the changes in style to her conception of the changes in social ethos between the late Republic and the early Empire.

She still accepts the standard hypothesis that paintings in different Campanian houses can at times be attributed to the same workshop. In view of the smallness of our sample, this is difficult to believe. It reminds me of the claims by early numismatists, before the adoption of the stricter present-day standards, to recognize "die-links" between coins. But at least she resolutely discards that fancy outside Campania. Workshops must not be conceived of as large factories, and there must have been a good deal of competition for the money lavishly spent by a relatively large and prosperous upper stratum. The real aristocracy should not, in general, be thought of as employers of workshops: they no doubt employed their own *familiae* or imported artists from the East. As Leach reasonably suggests, a patron could surely make his choice from a pattern-book. The suggestion is by no means anachronistic: it can be shown that he could do so when ordering a tombstone. But pattern-books, ancient no less than modern, lend themselves to copying, and this makes the attempt to identify actual workshops a vain pursuit. However, Leach usefully stresses that, after the basic choice was made, much remained, within the framework of the general style dictated by the rulers of fashion, for the display of individual taste on the part of both patron and artist.

Her insistence, following our literary sources, that we must see the decoration as adapted to the use of the room is welcome. She knows her Vitruvius and, in the light of his treatment, sketches the principles of adapting the painted decor to the shape and the purpose of some of the rooms we now know. This greatly helps in promoting our emergence from a primitive era of *Kunstgeschichte*, when all the (then few) examples of wall decoration could be put into a single imaginary line of evolution and then "dated" to within a few years. Perhaps the new approach will set an example to students of Greek pottery, where some dissatisfaction with similar traditional principles is now beginning to be felt. Leach, however, still uses the language of the four "styles." We must hope that, since the approach which she in fact adopts shows that there is no such linear development as was implied by that classification, the use of "epicycles" to save the phenomena may ultimately be abandoned and the variety—local, functional, and social—of real life come to be embodied in new general hypotheses, in the light of further finds and further thoughtful analysis.

It is also reassuring to see that the romantic desire to identify the owners of the villas we happen to have with eminent persons (M. Agrippa, Agrippa Postumus, et al.) has subsided. As Leach notes, the work of historians like J. H. D'Arms has much to do with this. There was never any more basis for this game than for the "villa of Cicero" at Tusculum. Recent recognition of the fact that all these villas were *villae rusticae* with an agricultural base does not in itself exclude aristocratic ownership, for the economic background of the Roman aristocracy was largely agricultural. But appreciation of the smallness of the number of genuinely aristocratic families, within the large upper economic stratum that ranged from *equites Romani* and local notables down to leading freedmen (not all to be thought of as resembling Trimalchio in taste), leads to a recognition of the corresponding smallness of our statistical chance of finding an aristocrat's house: only positive identification should permit the claim that we have done so.

For the historian, who has tended to look on art history as a stylized art form unrelated to the life that he himself is trying to explain, papers like Leach's help to open up the possibility of a real meeting between two historical disciplines in the interpretation of social history. In this respect, too, she brings into focus much that has been beginning to happen.

II

We may now turn to what, in the eyes of the editor,¹ really seems to matter. She appears to belong to the order of "literary critics" now found in many of our Classics Departments who limit their interests to literature and define literature as poetry—indeed, sometimes certain *kinds* of poetry. With this narrow focus, they dismiss as outside their sphere not only the greater part of what has throughout the history of mankind been written and accepted as literature, but, in particular, they ignore the major portion of what has survived from Greece and Rome and was regarded as literature there. This attitude is inappropriate to

1. In the light of the acknowledgments I throughout assume the identity of the editor of the volume with the organizer of the conference.

the span of classical, and above all of Roman, civilization. In the present volume, philosophy, history, oratory, and rhetoric, as literature, receive almost no mention.² Not that they are regarded as irrelevant to patronage (in which case the question of whether or not they are ought still to be discussed): they are simply not regarded at all. Baldwin is the only contributor to break out of this mold. He reminds us that "poetry was never so solidly respectable at Rome as in Greece" and that it was likely to be subject to "the central charge" of uselessness. Only the narcissism of one or two poets around the turn of our era, and perhaps of those who study them and their models to the exclusion of almost everything else, could fail to appreciate the importance of this. It is misleading to posit "an inversion of values," an exaggeration to think in terms of even one generation of poets who "seem to regard poetry as a way of life itself" (Zetzel, p. 92).

Or rather: important distinctions must be made. Catullus was a *municipalis eques*, of a class traditionally entitled to cultured *otium* if they chose to pursue it, whether in poetry, in philosophy, or (for that matter) solely or additionally as patrons. Few men of his kind, as a proportion of their total number, entered politics; though many, like Catullus himself, were eager enough to share in the spoils of empire without responsibility. The aristocrat Calvus, Catullus' dearest friend, combined being a leading *doctus poeta* with brilliant activity as a political orator. Had he lived, it is clear that he would have had a stormy political career, and that poetry would have increasingly become what (if we ignore the image of him presented by Catullus) it already was for him: essentially a leisure-time occupation, fitting (as such and only as such) for a Roman aristocrat. Even Cornelius Gallus, not of senatorial birth, felt the same about his poetic activity: his principal aim was the pursuit of power and glory. And let us note that this did not diminish the admiration and friendship felt by the "professional" poets for these men. No one ever suggested that Calvus, or even Gallus, was to be blamed for *not* abandoning traditional Roman standards of importance so as to make poetry "a way of life." Those who had made this choice, as appropriate for *them*, always agreed that other things were in fact more serious for those whom they concerned, by inherited status or through legitimate ambition. The writing of poetry had long been an accepted form of cultured *otium* in which, as early as around 100 B.C., even aristocrats like Q. Catulus or C. Caesar Strabo could indulge. That generation was already remote, in respect of both pursuits, from the days when (as the elder Cato reminded his contemporaries) their ancestors had called those who indulged in banquets or in poetry vagabonds (*grassatores*). The shift from that attitude, through client status, to the minor legitimacy shared with other cultural pursuits, is an important phenomenon, and so is the emergence of one or two men of equestrian standing who made poetry their sole pursuit. But the limitations of the phenomenon are as important as its occurrence. Whatever the games poets

2. In the "historical" part, where such mention ought to be obligatory, the two papers on the classical period are expressly limited to poetry, and Williams, in his general introduction of twenty-one pages of text, which does claim to embrace "literature," allots about twenty-five lines, scattered over pp. 20–22, to orators and historians, almost entirely in connection with book-burning. Both Wiseman and White, incidentally, while omitting most of literature from their consideration, give interesting and valuable discussions of social life and the various facets of clientship as a way of life.

played on themes like equating love and war, no one seriously thought that it was the duty of the political aristocracy to devote itself to love to the exclusion of war and government. Propertius reminds the noble Volcacius Tullus that it is his duty to come back and seek office in Rome (3. 22).³ Nor was it ever doubted that one could be a *doctus poeta* while pursuing the proper aims of a Roman aristocrat. Ovid is the only attested case of a man who turned down a political career for the sake of poetry and the pursuit of pleasure. He, however, was not born to be a senator. He merely refused to have that status thrust upon him.

The misconceptions about some basic and well-documented facts of Roman life that appear in this book and in some of its contributors can be found outside its covers. A whole generation of classicists is in danger of being indoctrinated with them. It is interesting to observe, by contrast with the tradition of classical studies, that the "literary" contributors to this volume are ill at ease with history. It is not perhaps surprising that Zetzel makes Plancus consul in 27 B.C. (p. 95), since in his view historical facts are irrelevant to the poetry he is discussing. But it is disturbing to find Griffin, who is known for stressing the relationship of life and literature and whose failure to do so here, perhaps in reply to Zetzel, is one of the disappointments of the volume, distinguishing "a Gnaeus Piso . . . expected to be hard and proud" and "a Lucius Piso [expected] to be cultured and civilized" as representatives of different *gentes* (p. 124). Some errors are more deep-seated. Thus, in the "historical" part, Williams again repeats the error of taking Propertius 2. 7 as referring to a supposed rejection of attempted marriage legislation by Octavian in 28 B.C. (p. 16)—a major misapprehension with a long history in scholarship, of which he has become the main proponent in our generation and which has led him far astray in the interpretation of social history.⁴

III

Williams is at his best in delineating the status of the classical poet, and his brief survey of the early Empire makes some useful points. But he is less interested in the pre-classical poetry of the Republic, and in the men who wrote it. So unimportant (socially) was poetry at that time that no good record of their lives survived. The process of mythopoeia in the lives of the Greek poets has been effectively studied by M. Lefkowitz. No such study yet exists on the Latin side, where the process seems to have started around 100 B.C.

Accius, probably head of that characteristically Roman institution, the guild of *scribae* and poets, got the date of the first "new" poet, Livius Andronicus, wrong by a whole generation, transposing his arrival in Rome from the First to the Second Punic War. This was rejected by Cicero, who knew Varro's studies, but it seems to have been taken over by Suetonius and reached Jerome. No one now accepts the wrong date, yet myths and errors from the same sources are still being retailed. Out of seven items of information that Jerome gives about Ennius,

3. See also, at random, Tib. 1. 1. 53, 2. 5. 113–20; Prop. 1. 6, 3. 4 (and much other praise of Augustus' victories).

4. For an approach to the correct interpretation, see (succinctly) L. Ferrero, *Greatness and Decline of Rome*, vol. 4 (London and New York, 1908), p. 156, n. *—as far as I have been able to check, universally ignored, except for a mention in a bibliographical collection. I have now treated this problem, with a brief account of its history in scholarship, in *Philologus* 129 (1985): 82–98.

four are demonstrably wrong and only one is demonstrably correct. Williams, in the few sentences he devotes to Ennius, repeats one of the errors and adds one that may be Cicero's.⁵ Yet Ennius deserved fuller treatment. He is a splendid study of the client poet in the second century B.C., basic to the whole of this theme.⁶ Ennius not only knew his station, and thus rose to the greatest eminence that one of his kind could expect, but he made sure others would know that he knew it: thus he inserted, with a tactful transposition in time, what was recognized as a self-portrait into a famous passage concerning a consul of the First Punic War (lines 234–51V.²: the book number should not be emended)—a portrait of the ideal, humble, intellectual friend of the great man, who is his constant companion and recipient of his secrets:

haud malus, doctus, fidelis,
suavis homo, facundus, suo contentus, beatus,
scitus, secunda loquens in tempore . . .
multorum ueterum leges diuomque hominumque
prudentem, qui dicta loquique tacereue posset.

These were the qualities that got a purveyor of culture to the top of his profession at the time, and many of them are recognizable in Horace. The noble Porcius Licinus, writing about the same time as Accius, collected fanciful myths about Terence, who lived only a generation before. The tales of Terence's poverty and degradation make the image of the poet in second-century Rome clearer than facts could.

Concentrating on the well-known Archias, Williams exaggerates the disappearance of the client-poet in the last generation of the Republic, thus distorting the picture of that generation and breaking the link with Triumviral times. Q. Catulus' prose account of his deeds, addressed to his friend A. Furius (probably, as is usually thought, the *uetus poeta* of Gellius [*NA* 18. 11], Furius Antias), was no doubt meant to provide material for an epic that never came; hence he had to make do with Archias. Zetzl rightly draws attention to Varro of Atax (mentioned in passing by Williams), and rightly hesitates to believe his biography as transmitted. We might also note the satires of Pompeius Lenaeus (*RE* Suppl. 9 [1962]: 385–90), *inter alia* attacking Sallust, who had maligned his dead patron Pompey. Horace mentions many names of literary men, whether grammarians or poets (or, quite probably, both: Valerius Cato is not the only such case), about whom we know nothing. There is enough to attest a whole *littérature inconnue*, with only a few men emerging from the shadows. As Wiseman once more insists (pp. 35–36), it is to this stratum that Lucretius seems to

5. He retails without comment the ancient myth that Ennius was brought to Rome from Sardinia by Cato, which Cicero (who must have known it) ignores; and he repeats Cicero's statement (*Brut.* 79) that Ennius got his citizenship from the son of the *triumphator* M. Fulvius Nobilior, whom he had accompanied on his campaign in Greece, in 185 B.C. That son, Q. Fulvius Nobilior (*cos.* 153), would be about ten years old in 185. For the poor information at Cicero's disposal regarding the details of eminent families and their careers even around 150 B.C., see the correspondence with Atticus regarding L. Mummius' commissioners (*Att.* 13. 4–6 and 30–36). The details of the award of citizenship to Ennius could not (like the matters there discussed) be checked in official documents.

6. See my study "Ennius and his Friends," in *Ennius*, *Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique* 17 (Geneva, 1972), pp. 149–99. This study is not noted by any of the contributors to this volume who might have used it, hence also not listed in the bibliography, which collects the items cited in the essays.

belong. In a society about which we are relatively well informed, he cannot be connected with any member of the cultured aristocracy except for one named patron.

Against some views presented even in this book, Williams commendably notes the dependent status of Vergil, Horace, and Propertius, whom it is misleading (though, later in their lives, true) to describe as *equites* of independent means. Unless we go to extremes in denying all relevance of all poetry to real life, we can see that it was client poetry that gave them the means to independence, which for a long time (in a sense, all the time) they had to work hard to maintain. And this is true no matter what their original background. We have no reason to postulate any major difference between Horace and the others in this respect, even though Horace profusely tells us all (or nearly all) about himself.⁷ As Williams shows, these men were ripe for the picking by the discerning Maecenas. We might contrast the *eques* T. Livius of Patavium, who had never fallen upon hard times and who had no need to be anyone's client and never was. To some extent (although the different traditions of the two genres perhaps had even more to do with it) this helps to account for the difference between poetry, safely assimilated by the new regime and never a threat to it, and history, which long retained an uncomfortable and precarious independence. But that is a major story in itself.

At any rate, Williams notes how poetry was at once ready to be used for political purposes when called upon by Augustus after Maecenas' disappearance. Maecenas, while preparing it to be thus ready, had in a sense shielded his poets, leaving them safely to belabor the old *topoi* of *otium*, agricultural, erudite, or erotic. The myth of the poets as a "counter-culture," hinted at in this book and too often found outside, owes its genesis to the reaction against the Second World War and its development to the 1960s, in Western Europe and the United States. It bears no relation to the facts of the age of Augustus. We shall have more to say about one of its chief arguments, the *recusatio* poem, so often

7. It deserves (but nowhere in this book receives) comment that Horace never alludes to the purchase of his *scriptus*, in spite of his loquacity about his origins and the battle of Philippi (see E. Fraenkel, *Horace* [Oxford, 1959], pp. 12–13). Yet he had returned after the battle, a *libertini filius* who had risen above his station on the losing side, to find his father's *lar et fundus* confiscated. It is inconceivable that he not only gained a full pardon, but had enough money of his own left for that purchase. The number of these posts was strictly limited (thirty-six, it seems), and the rewards, for those who got one, considerable, both in economic and in social terms. There were good opportunities for enrichment and the office was one of the few recognized avenues of social advancement, for sons of *libertini* were freely accepted (even some freedmen are known), and a *scriba* could expect to rise to equestrian rank. (Cicero, on Verres' notorious *scriba*, provides ample background. For full discussion, see Klingmüller, s.v. "Scriba," *RE* 2A [1921]: 850–53.) Thus the price must be assumed to have been high and the post in any case to have been available only through patronage. When the younger Cato tried to discipline one of his *scribae*, he found that the man's patron was no less a man than Q. Lutatius Catulus, who managed to save his client (Plut. *Cato Min.* 16, 3–4). Since Horace is not elsewhere reticent about his benefactors, his silence about his patron who secured him his office (and perhaps his pardon as well) must be deliberate. The only reason conceivable is that the man later fell into disgrace and could not be mentioned. Since we have no relevant information, names cannot confidently be suggested. But it is clear that the patron cannot have stood on the side of the Republic (aristocrats who had were, at that time, themselves afraid for their lives and properties): he must have been well connected on the Triumviral side. An obvious candidate would be Salvidienus Rufus, at the height of his power after Philippi and sent to his death by M. Antonius' betrayal in 40. But we know of no connection with Horace. However, the answer may be simpler: an Antonian connection would also be best forgotten, at the time when Horace was writing his autobiographical poems.

fondly paraded in this book. But let us note here that, when Ovid was banished, it was not for his verses: even he does not really expect us to believe this. It was for his life and his deeds. Forgiven for refusing to accept the gift of the *clauus* and an official career, he made himself guilty of an unpardonable *iniuria* against the person of the princeps; though his attempts to diminish his guilt and his fear of relating the real facts have made it impossible for us to know the full details.

IV

Wiseman, with his profound knowledge of social realities in classical Rome, paints a vivid picture of the "Hogarthian" society in which patrons and clients moved, with the client investing some or even all of his time in first capturing patronage and then performing humble services for a great man or more than one—a picture well illustrated by Horace's *Satires* and *Epistles*. He shows how Greeks, whatever their original status, easily fitted into that scene, in view of the long experience of the East. The guild of *scribae* and poets is a crucial, though to us mysterious, fact in all this. Wiseman points out (what some would like to forget or to deny) that it has now been shown to have existed in early Augustan times, when P. Cornelius P. l. Surus was at one time its *magister*. Horace surely belonged to it, even if we have our doubts about Ovid. Accius—a member and perhaps president around 100 B.C.—was expected to rise when its patron, the patrician noble and dilettante poet C. Caesar Strabo, entered. Accius, known as a crotchety old mannikin, refused, and got away with it. He was given the fool's license.⁸ Unfortunately we do not know the guild's membership and procedures a generation or two later. Perhaps those who belonged to it were not eager to tell us so. But the *libertinus* P. Cornelius Surus provides a splendid, though isolated, document.

White, taking up earlier work, shows that poets in the Empire did not get paid for "piece-work": it would have been demeaning to write for pay. They made an ample living if they could attach themselves to rich and powerful *amici*, who might secure their livelihood and even perform special services for them. As Wiseman shows for the preceding period, this could increasingly become a full-time career, requiring tact and patience. The social purpose of the poet was "to improve the leisure of the rich"—and to give them a chance of worthily displaying generosity. Horace and Juvenal bear ample witness.

White very properly insists that the words "patron" and "client" are not used for this relationship. (Of course, that is no reason why we should not use them to describe it.) That terminology would have been painful to both parties. It was avoided in social no less than in international relationships. Indeed, the parallel is striking. The proper term was always *amicus* (internationally also

8. For Accius' character and the amusement it caused, see (e.g.) Pliny *HN* 34. 19. For the scene between him and Caesar, cf. my "Ennius," p. 190 (apparently not known to Wiseman). N. Horsfall's vision ("The *collegium poetarum*," *BICS* 23 [1976]: 82) of the patrician and the *libertinus* meeting in a *collegium* of poets on perfectly equal terms around 100 B.C., although supported by Valerius Maximus' interpretation of the incident (3. 7. 11), seems to me, at the least, anachronistic. It is refuted by the very fact that the poets were expected to rise when Caesar entered. Horsfall admits that Valerius Maximus is "notoriously unreliable" even in his facts, but judges it "unsubstantiated scepticism" not to follow him. To the historian, however, there is much to substantiate skepticism about that author's interpretation of improving incidents from Rome's rosy past, and more, as we have seen, in this particular case.

amicus et socius)—a fact of linguistic and social propriety that has made scholars unfamiliar with this whole complex surprisingly unable to recognize the existence of client relationships, which lie at the basis of Roman society and foreign policy.

White demonstrates how young men eagerly sought such attachments by the crudest flattery, and sometimes succeeded; though, as Horace's attitude to one who thus tried shows (*Sat.* 1. 9), those already "in" had every reason to keep others out, except for those whom they themselves had picked (as Vergil had Horace) as socially and personally reliable. The over-eager promises of the character in *Satires* 1. 9 quite rightly aroused Horace's suspicions. That poem also reveals the intrigues that filled the courts of those *reges* (as they were by now called), no doubt often encouraged by them for their own gratification: it is called *uix credibile* that, according to the loyal Horace, such things did not go on in Maecenas' circle. As White has noted, Martial is full of references to *maligni*, and it has often been noticed that Martial and Statius, moving in the same circles, never mention each other. Horace, too, of course, complains of *maligni*, though he was asking for it (see below). These *reges* with their courts parallel the court of the princeps at the top of the pyramid, in which (if they were eminent enough) they themselves played parts not unlike those played in their own houses by their client *amici*, and competed for power and for favor where the stakes were higher.

Inspection of this is important in shedding light on the structure of Roman society at this period. The imposition of the princeps at the top had created a model of organization that was bound to radiate downward. Here as elsewhere, what was incipient and formless under the Republic can be seen assuming set forms. Although much, in Martial and Statius, still reminds us of Ennius' cultured client, the establishment of these "courts" is new. Of course, we must not imagine them isolated from one another—quite the contrary. It was only the princeps who had a monopoly. But these men of (sooner or later) equestrian standing, clustering around the great as the latter clustered around the princeps, show more than a change in the status of poetry (insofar as they do show that): they embody the change in the organization of Roman society. Their own literary slaves and freedmen, who clearly still existed in their households and formed the next tier of the pyramid, are normally no longer spoken about, as the slave and freedmen *grammatici* and literary advisers had been under the Republic. The whole picture, as far as it is socially visible, seems to have been transposed upward by one level, with the arrival of the princeps to form its top.

V

Zetzel's paradox, of denying that patronage influenced poetry, is the classic example of a heresy: a partial truth pushed to extremes. It is distressing to realize that the resulting falsehood is nowadays often regarded as wholly true, indeed orthodox. One need only read the journals to see it. Zetzel, of course, recognizes the world of Wiseman and White: he is no real extremist. He knows that the poet expected the patron's support at various levels and paid for it in client verse. But by introducing the "image" of the poet, as distinct from the

facts of the poet's life, as the true content of relevant poetry, he can forbid us to use poetry for disengaging "mere historical information."

Now, sometimes this is obviously true. Poetry is never strict autobiography. But Zetzel will not concede that we may apply the commonsense principle neatly set down by Servius in his note on *Eclogues* 1. 1, as quoted by Griffin (p. 119—oddly enough with disapproval, even though his own method turns out to come to much the same thing): to accept Tityrus as being Vergil, but only where *ratio* requires it. The judgment is difficult, but probably no more so than the judgments that historians must constantly make about their sources.

Zetzel claims that the major poets (he specifies Catullus, Vergil, Horace, and Propertius) were free from the need for patronage. As we have seen, Williams notes that this is properly true only of Catullus. It was only in 30 B.C., after about nine years of acquaintance, that the long-promised gift of the farm (a point on which we have no reason to disbelieve the poet) released Horace from the worst miseries of a client's life. As we have already seen, the fact that we have no such data on Vergil and Propertius gives us no reason to postulate that their experience was essentially different. In Vergil's case, some of it can still be glimpsed. Propertius never talked about it at all. Neither chose to write in a genre where full description would be appropriate. Zetzel contrasts these poets with Ennius, who "certainly needed financial support." The difference should not be exaggerated. By the time he acquired a residence on the Aventine, as the *uicinus* of the patrician Sulpicii Galbae,⁹ Ennius, too, was not poor, although not wealthy (of course) by their standards, any more than the Augustan poets were wealthy by the corresponding standards of their own day, when society and wealth had moved upward as a result of empire.

Zetzel's main point is to deny that the addressee of a poem is in any sense personally honored by it. This abolishes client-poetry, since he is then by definition not a patron of the poet. Thus for Zetzel the addressee, although a well-known man, becomes, in a sense, a poetic fiction: a function of "the subject and the style of the poem." There is little evidence to support this. The statement, in a poem, that it was written at the addressee's request was no doubt often a conventional formula, not expected to be believed.¹⁰ But it is a long way from this to denying that the addressee considered himself honored. Whether Horace's addressees were "grateful" for the philosophical advice that "their" poem usually contains (Zetzel seems to deny it) is neither ascertainable nor relevant. The point

9. See my "Ennius," pp. 163, 167 ff.

10. Zetzel draws attention to the well-known (yet by no means clear) incident of Javolenus Priscus at the recitation by Passennus Paullus (Pliny *Epist.* 6. 15), which, incidentally, was surely not a recitation of a whole organized book. He follows the *communis opinio* in its interpretation, and this may well be correct. On the other hand, even the identity of the Priscus addressed with Javolenus is not certain (though probable enough, since the men are said to have been friends). The cognomen is common and there are other candidates, especially (perhaps) Cornelius Priscus, *cos. suff.* ca. 104, obviously a man of literary interests: it is to him that Pliny addressed the letter (*Epist.* 3. 21) announcing the death of Martial. As for Javolenus' reaction to the phrase "Prisce, iubes," he presumably either did not recognize it, or pretended not to recognize it, as the opening of a poem, but took it as a question addressed to him, perhaps on whether he wanted the performance to begin. His answer ("ego uero non iubeo") might well be understood to mean, "No, I'm not asking you to (begin?)." Pliny's suggestion that Javolenus was not quite sane (which is what Pliny seems to mean) is not to be taken seriously, since many years later he was still able to teach the lawyer Salvius Julianus, hardly before ca. 120.

of the address was surely that it immortalized them, whatever the content of the poem.

Worse still is the argument that "in the case of organized poetic books there is no reason to assume that the individual poem ever had an independent existence prior to the creation of the whole" (p. 89); from which it follows that no such poem can have been "sent to the addressee as a separate work." No one would claim, of course, and no one was ever expected to think, that (e.g.) Vinus (cf. *Epist.* 1. 13. 2) actually carried *Odes* 1. 6 to Agrippa, any more than the Muse personally carried Martial's book to Pliny (see *Mart.* 10. 19). But to deny such poems an independent existence is to contradict one of the principal facts we know about Roman literary society. The practice of recitation suffices to refute Zetzel. It is one of the most characteristic cultural activities of the age, comparable to our concerts or recitals. Horace himself, whose published books are as "organized" as any, several times refers to his reciting—not, of course, to the vulgar crowd (he had no need to), but to the circle of his friends and to Augustus, who no doubt invited his own friends to listen.¹¹ We cannot imagine that such recitations consisted, in each case, of a whole "organized book." After all, we know that Vergil recited parts of his unfinished *Aeneid* to similar audiences, and Horace makes it clear that the poet expects helpful comments on his unpublished work. It must have been precisely individual poems (perhaps a few at a time) that were recited before the book took shape, just as passages of a major poem were. The addressee, certainly invited if he happened to be in Rome, would as certainly feel honored; and most of the addressees were no doubt available. But even if he was away in (say) Cyzicus, word was sure to reach him in due course.

Nor, to look at the converse of the argument, is it always true that the addressee is selected to fit the style or the subject of the poem. As to style, we can hardly argue. But as to content, Zetzel has to misinterpret Horace in an implausible manner for the sake of his paradox. Thus he claims (pp. 94–95) that the subject matter of *Satires* 1. 1 is meant to apply to Maecenas: he is included in the category of the greedy, and "the picture . . . is of an importunate cynic buttonholing the great man in the street." It takes a good deal of imagination to see that picture. Less imaginative readers will look at social realities and understand that Maecenas could on no account have been called greedy by Horace, even a Horace "writing in the (supposed) persona of a street philosopher." Here as elsewhere, the addressee receives his ritual tribute, and then the poem turns to the general reader. The addressee is honored by the address itself—especially if, as here, it comes at the head of a whole book—as enhanced by the immortality of the poet and all he writes. After all, until Zetzel called him greedy, Maecenas had not done too badly out of his patronage of the right kind of poet.

This is not to deny that there may be a connection of subject. Cases can be found, and Zetzel suggests some. But again, we must not forget Servius' *ratio*: Tityrus is not everywhere Vergil, although he *sometimes* is. The addressee does not always fit the subject, even if he *sometimes* does. Poets are simply less

11. See, e.g., *Epist.* 1. 19. 43–44; cf. 2. 1. 228, *Sat.* 1. 4. 70–71.

inflexible than Zetzel seems to think. In any case, even if *Satires* 1. 1 might be taken Zetzel's way—for the *Satires* are funny, as Zetzel somewhat reluctantly recognizes (p. 95: "There is much humor in the book. . .")—there is no doubt about the *Odes*. The *Odes* are serious, and so (therefore) is Zetzel's error. It is socially inconceivable that anyone would have understood (e.g.) *Odes* 2. 2 as suitable for Sallustius Crispus because it was on greed (thus p. 93). Greed is not mentioned as one of his faults in Tacitus' elaborate obituary (*Ann.* 3. 30), and Crinagoras (admittedly not an impartial witness) particularly praises him for generosity (*Anth. Gr.* 16. 40). Indeed, the opposite argument might be advanced: that Sallustius was chosen as addressee because it would be known that he could not *possibly* be accused of the vice that the poem castigates. That would at least make sense, in terms of tact and social reality. Yet I suspect that the answer is simpler: Sallustius was probably chosen because it was time he had a poem addressed to him. Quite probably, no one saw any relevance, positive or negative, in it—though it must certainly have been important to a poet to choose someone who could not by any stretch of malice be regarded as the target, in view of the well-attested tendency of Romans to see malicious allusions everywhere. Ancient poets (we must never forget) lived in a real world.

Finally, even Horace's words can be tendentiously misinterpreted for the sake of the thesis. *Odes* 3. 30 was arrogant on any count, as Horace well knew (cf. line 14) and as others did not fail to make clear to him (cf. *Epist.* 1. 19. 44–45). But it is simply false to say that he calls himself "poetic *princeps*" or that he paints "an image of the poet as conqueror and *princeps*"; let alone that "from the company of nymphs and satyrs he has moved to that of the pontifex on the Capitol" and that he now "commands" the Muse herself (see p. 96 for all these statements). We must resist attempts at substituting the critic's vision for what the poet obviously intended. The critic should be content to disengage and interpret, and then to comment on, what the poet actually meant. He is not a writer of romance. Horace is not in the company of the pontifex: the pontifex and the Vestal Virgin are used as a measure of eternity: they are, to Horace, simply the institutions least likely ever to perish. (In this, as it turned out, he was no prophet: he has survived them by a good few centuries.) As for *princeps*, all that Horace actually says is that he was the first to transplant certain types of Greek verse to Rome (which, of course, he thinks a great achievement). Zetzel's implication that he actually calls himself the *princeps* of poets is incongruous. For the meaning of *princeps* here (not that it is hard to see) we fortunately have Horace's own restatement in the more pedestrian strain of *Epistles* 1. 19. 21–24:

libera per uacuum posui uestigia princeps
 . . . Parios ego primus iambos
 ostendi Latio.

Nor does he "command" the Muse. He prays to her. The imperative (on which Zetzel's misinterpretation is presumably based) is accepted in the language of prayer and invocation, even in the humbler tradition of Jewish-Christian prayer. Horace is clearly a little uneasy about his *superbia* (a word that is always at least somewhat ambivalent, even when applied to triumphs, and suggests *hubris*). He would have been as shocked to be told that he had commanded the Muse to

accept it as Milton would have been to hear himself accused of commanding the Lord to avenge the bones of His slaughtered saints.

Thus can straining after paradox lead to fiction. Yet no one would ever seriously maintain that the "patriotic odes," or similar effusions by Propertius, are evidence for "denying utterly the importance of patronage to Latin poetry." The paradox is hardly worth the effort. It is much more reasonable to acknowledge (as, in this volume, Williams does) that some patrons were more demanding than others, on the literary as on the personal level, and that Maecenas was perhaps unusually tactful. After all, his name has become a byword as no one else's has. He was apparently more content than others to be merely immortalized.

Yet, from another point of view, it may be said that he was perhaps merely more fortunate in "his" poets, and knew it. It is difficult to exclude all autobiographical reference in Horace's descriptions of the relationship between patron and client. We cannot seriously refuse to believe that the Sabine farm was the reward for many years of assiduity in personal attendance. Horace well describes the development of the relationship: the stately formality of the introduction; the uncertainty of the long waiting-period, during which, we must imagine, the poet's life and whatever work he had to offer were under careful scrutiny; then the solemn moment when *amicitia* is formally conferred, as it might be by Senate and People on a small client city; after this, the increasing intimacy of the connection, with increasing demands for company on the client;¹² until the reward of the farm, after nearly eight years from the formal reception into *amicitia*, releases the client from the most onerous duties of attendance. We recognize the "Hogarthian" world described by Wiseman. Even after his formal "emancipation" through the gift of the farm, the client does not seem to be totally released from his duties: certain demands appear to continue, if only (perhaps) to preserve the patron's claim. Even if *Epistles* 1. 7 is not strictly autobiographical (which is not worth arguing about), it will be agreed that it shows the sort of world in which poet and patron moved. It was Horace's success and fame that gave him what freedom he attained. Personal services could now be largely redeemed by dedications and addresses, with the patron accepting the assurance of immortality in exchange for company and attendance.

This brings us to the well-known convention of the *recusatio* poem, the chief argument advanced, by Zetzel as by others, to deny the effect of patronage on actual poetry. Again and again, the poet tells someone he addresses that he will not write what he has been expected (or even asked) to write, but will instead write what he feels able to. The theme is variously embroidered, best and most amusingly perhaps in Propertius 3. 9 (extensively treated by Zetzel), where the poet points out to Maecenas what Maecenas no doubt liked to hear: that he (Maecenas), although well qualified for a military and political career, has chosen to remain an *eques*. Of course, after the initial commonplace of sticking to what one can do, Propertius carefully avoids telling his patron that he would not be *fit* for high office and command—quite the contrary. He therefore (perhaps

12. See *Sat.* 1. 6. 54–64, 2. 6. 40–62; cf. (more explicit precisely because not professedly autobiographical) *Epist.* 1. 18 (note the epigrammatic summary lines 86–87).

uniquely) ends by "admitting" that he, the poet, *could* rise to high themes but (like his patron) has chosen not to try. The sophisticated twist to the theme was no doubt welcome. Both poets and patrons must have been getting tired of the stale formula.

But why is it so common? Zetzel, who is so unwilling to regard poetry as related to autobiography, here comes close to accepting the convention as actual fact. He seems to suggest that the *recusatio* shows that the poets "were well aware of the social expectations of patronage but deliberately flouted them." (It is not quite clear whether he actually endorses this interpretation.) The facts are very different. As we have seen (and Williams makes it clear), it soon became obvious that the game of *recusatio*, like other games that poets conventionally played, was all right as long as it remained a game, but that a really serious request had to be honored.

I would suggest that *recusatio* in fact had its proper place in the new order. It demonstrated the poet's freedom. He was not under any central direction; to employ a modern analogy, there was no Union of State Writers, no Central Committee, dictating "policy" on subject and treatment; if there were requests, he was free to ignore them. The importance of this in the early years of the Principate, when the return to Republican *libertas* was a major part of the official image, is obvious. Freedom could demonstratively be granted where the whole of the educated class would be aware of it—and where it could do no political harm. Maecenas was personally much involved with this early period and its policies. In the great debate in Dio 52, even though he—the descendant of kings—is the proponent of monarchy and his advice is accepted, the monarchy he is made to propose is in fact an idealized Principate, in which the upper classes are constantly consulted and honored and only the mob and demagogues are prevented from doing harm. It is, in principle, the image of the Augustan state.¹³ In his obituary of Maecenas (55. 7), Dio stresses Maecenas' gentleness in treating people, and his influence to that effect on Augustus.

The short-lived popularity of the *recusatio*, like so much else in the history of poetry, must be seen against its social and political background. Encouraged to proclaim their freedom of choice, for the benefit of the *optimus status*, poets naturally did so. As they no doubt realized, it was the complement of the praise of the regime which was both expected and provided, and which was enhanced by it. We might perhaps compare the well-known scene of the Senate debate after Augustus' death (Tac. *Ann.* 1. 8), when

addebat Messalla Valerius renouandum per annos sacramentum in nomen Tiberii; interrogatusque a Tiberio num se mandante eam sententiam prompsisset, sponte dixisse respondit, neque in iis quae ad rem publicam pertinerent consilio nisi suo usurum, uel cum periculo offensionis.

The early Augustan poets had not gone quite as far as that. But they also proclaimed their freedom of choice, by implication (at least) *uel cum periculo offensionis*—and obeyed when the order came. The critic will disdain "mere historical information" at his peril.

13. Whether, as is often argued, the debate in Dio 52 has programmatic relevance to his own time is irrelevant. His characters, like Cicero's, speak in character.

VI

In her introduction the editor states: "The essays in this volume cover all the important concerns related to patronage"—a large claim, and the client critic quoted on the dustjacket chimes in: this is "easily the best work now available on this topic and likely to remain so for a long time."

The first part of this statement is true, alas. The important topic of patronage in literature, art, and philosophy has so far not received anything like the comprehensive treatment it deserves, and there is little competition; though more has been done, at least in the field of art, than the bibliography suggests. But the second part of the statement seems excessively pessimistic. Much remains to be done before a large-scale synthesis becomes possible,¹⁴ but it may surely be hoped that a worthier treatment than the topic here receives will not be too long delayed. Even now, it would not be difficult to improve on the narrow focus here displayed as regards "literature"—a sad comment on what can pass for comprehension and exposition of the Roman world in our day—and to make a genuine effort to include some aspects of art.

Oratory and history in fact presented the only serious challenge to the new Republic of Augustus. The taming of oratory was urgent, and became immediate policy; for as Tacitus later insisted, it was the life-blood of a free society. Despite Augustus' well-attested literary taste, he and his *amici* encouraged and busily attended the developing *declamationes*. Augustus, Tiberius, and the whole court are an integral part of the salon society of declaimers portrayed by the elder Seneca. Indeed, Augustus had attended local *declamationes* as early as his Spanish campaign, while in camp at Tarraco (Sen. *Controv.* 10 *pr.* 14: a fever for the new art had seized the whole province). The embarrassing scene, about 17 B.C., described in *Controversiae* 2. 4. 12 was obviously not the first time that Augustus himself and the major figures at his court attended such a function: we must take it that it was part of their routine, even if not many orators could expect all of them to attend as they did on that occasion. In this way oratorical ambition was channeled into a harmless outlet, and *libertas* was removed from the Forum. It was not long before the effect confirmed the success of the policy: the greatest of the declaimers could not perform in the real world. They were now accustomed to an environment where "nemo ridet, nemo ex industria obloquitur, familiares sunt omnium uultus" (*Controv.* 9 *pr.* 3). The famous Porcius Latro could not cope with a provincial court in Spain (*ibid.*), and Cestius Pius, whom his admirers would have set up as superior to Cicero if they had dared, could be scared out of his wits by a few simple legal tricks, through total ignorance of real Roman law (*Controv.* 3 *pr.* 17). Although one orator in the end had his works burned, that was the exception.

History, although it had shown signs of becoming a client discipline in the late Republic, proved tougher. Livy, as we have seen, was nobody's client, and his official employment as tutor to the young Claudius led to embarrassing results

14. See now, for a good start, K. Quinn, "The Poet and his Audience in the Augustan Age," *ANRW* 30. 1 (1982): 75–180—covering poetry, with allusions to other kinds of literature, in detail, without exaggerated claims. Further *Vorstudien* of this kind in other fields will be needed before a synthesis can reasonably be attempted.

(Suet. *Claud.* 41). He had already received a warning of possible displeasure when the princeps called him *Pompeianus* for his account of the Civil War; after what was clearly a very frank account of the Triumvirate and the proscriptions in Book 120, he preferred to stop publishing and retired to his native Patavium, from where (no doubt) the rest of his history was published after Augustus' death (cf. *Per.* 121 *tit.*). Perhaps he stayed long enough to witness the punishment of T. Labienus and the burning of his offending history (see Williams, p. 20): we cannot tell, since we have no chronological information on either that event or Livy's departure; but they cannot have been far apart, since Livy was probably still in Rome when he was called *Pompeianus*.

As to patronage in art, that would be an excellent subject for a comprehensive study, well worth attempting and perhaps already possible, despite the lack of interest shown in this book. Architecture, for instance, is totally ignored. Yet, in a society like that of Rome, it was the most important of the visual arts. At first commissioned by the Roman People, it became a favorite way of advertising the glory of *principes uiri* in the course of the second century B.C.—at first at public expense, then paid largely out of their triumphal booty—to their own benefit and the lasting advantage of their families, which came to take a proprietary interest in the ancestral buildings.¹⁵ One striking case deserves brief mention even here. The *basilica Fulvia* was built by the censor M. Fulvius Nobilior in 179. Since his colleague M. Aemilius Lepidus was a much better-known man (he became one of the most powerful men in Rome), the building became known as the *basilica Fulvia et Aemilia* or even *Aemilia et Fulvia*. By the first century, when the Fulvii were no longer there to assert a claim, it was the *basilica Aemilia*, and L. Aemilius Paullus felt that, as aedile and as consul, it was his obligation (and a good political investment) to restore it with due splendor. In 50, when he was consul, he is said to have joined Caesar's cause after receiving millions for this purpose from him (see App. *BCiv.* 2. 26. 100 ff.; Plut. *Caes.* 29). The story has an ironic ending. The restoration was in fact only finished under the Empire, when it no longer paid political dividends.

As for the architects employed for such works, we know much less than we should like. Interest naturally centered on the patron, and since architects (unlike sculptors and—at times—painters) did not sign their works, the antiquarian curiosity of a Pliny found it difficult to collect information. But men like Hermodorus of Salamis changed the face of Rome in the space of less than a generation, in the second century B.C. He put up the great temple complex of Q. Metellus Macedonicus, notable for the first large-scale use of marble and of a portico around a sacred building in Rome, and a worthy monument to that family's most glorious days.¹⁶ He also built a temple of Mars in *Circo Flaminius*, lavishly decorated with statues, for his patron D. Junius Brutus Callaicus. And it was he who, this time probably working for the Roman People, constructed the notable *naualia* which Cicero mentions in the same breath with the famous

15. For a brief but useful survey, a short sketch of Republican public building over two centuries, see D. E. Strong, "The Administration of Public Building in Rome during the Late Republic and Early Empire," *BICS* 15 (1968): 97–109.

16. The discussion by M. G. Morgan, "The Portico of Metellus: A Reconsideration," *Hermes* 99 (1971): 480–505, is basic and provides a model for how such things may be done.

dockyards of Philo at Athens (*De or.* 1. 62) and which so impressed Rome that Tiberius Gracchus, speaking (no doubt) soon after their completion, put the crime of burning them down on a level with the destruction of the Capitoline Temple (Plut. *Ti. Gracch.* 15. 3).

On sculpture and painting, Pliny provides a wealth of information, much used for the history of art, but still not fully exploited in our context. Note, at random, the eminent Arcesilaus, *familiaris* (we know how to interpret the term) of L. Lucullus, for whom he did some work (*HN* 35. 155–56). Like the poets who are called *amici* of a particular aristocrat, he had other patrons as well, especially as in this sphere piece-work was no disgrace: the artists mentioned were mostly Greeks. Arcesilaus sold Varro a group consisting of a lioness with putti holding a drinking-horn for her and putting sandals on her feet—all (it is proudly recorded) made out of a single block of marble (*HN* 36. 41). Caesar asked him to produce the Venus Genetrix for his new Forum, but in the end was in such a hurry to perform the dedication that the statue was set up unfinished. Arcesilaus was apparently the most expensive sculptor of the time (*HN* 35. 155). Caesar also paid eighty talents (an immense sum—enough to provide the capital to qualify nearly five men as *equites Romani*) to Timomachus of Byzantium, the most eminent painter, for two paintings to be placed in front of the temple. One of them was again put up unfinished (see *HN* 7. 126, 35. 136; cf. 145). Caesar clearly had little interest in the visual arts (although a great deal in literature): he merely had to be seen to have the best, and to be known to have paid handsomely for it. A history of Roman taste, as well as of patronage in the arts, remains to be written, with the surviving works fitted into this framework.

And then there is the history of client philosophers. We come across one quite early, together with a painter for use in triumphal art, in an anecdote about L. Aemilius Paullus in Athens (*HN* 35. 135), and they soon become an expected part of an aristocratic household. While a necessary addition to the story of client literature and art, this leads well beyond it, to the development, by Greeks, of client philosophies for their Roman masters, which is part of the history of philosophy in its social function.

Of none of this will the reader of this book get any glimpse. As we have seen, it contains some interesting essays on particular topics and certainly has its limited use. But the pretentious title and the sweeping claims made on its behalf merely accentuate the extent to which it falls short of the promises it sells. It is to be hoped that others will now be stimulated to do better. The gain for social history, and for a fuller understanding of the Roman world, would be immense.

E. BADIAN
Harvard University