

## THE MAECENAS ODES

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The relationship between Horace and Maecenas has long fascinated scholars because of its unusually copious documentation and its intrinsic human and literary interest.<sup>1</sup> Although it is generally agreed that the personal element outweighed the professional in their friendship, interpretation of Horace's poems to Maecenas must nonetheless take some account of the realities of patronage in the Augustan age.

The old view of Maecenas as "Minister of Propaganda" and of the poets around him as paid agents of the regime was put to rest long ago.<sup>2</sup> Among literary critics, biographical reconstruction has given way to an appreciation of the formal, possibly even fictive, nature of the texts. Thus, *recusationes* are now explained not only as refusals of actual patronal requests for epic but also, and primarily, as manifestos of Callimachean aesthetics.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, there is increasing recognition that a patron's external role (if any) in occasioning a poem is far less important than his literary role within the larger poetic design.<sup>4</sup> On the historical level, too, there has been a significant revaluation. It is well known that as *equites*, most of the poets did not need regular financial support.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Different versions of this paper were presented at the Columbia University Symposium on Roman Patronage in April 1981 and at the APA meeting later that year. I wish to thank Professors S. Commager and M. Putnam and the editor and referees of *TAPA* for helpful criticism and suggestions.

<sup>2</sup> See A. Dalzell, "Maecenas and the Poets," *Phoenix* 10 (1956) 151–62; K. J. Reckford, "Horace and Maecenas," *TAPA* 90 (1959) 195–208.

<sup>3</sup> See W. Wimmel, *Kallimachos in Rom*, Hermes Einzelschriften 16 (Wiesbaden 1960); W. Clausen, "Callimachus and Roman Poetry," *GRBS* 5 (1964) 181–96; P. L. Smith, "Poetic Tensions in the Horatian Recusatio," *AJP* 89 (1968) 56–65; and, for a different view of the reality behind *recusationes*, see J. Griffin, "Augustan Poetry and the Life of Luxury," *JRS* 66 (1976) 104 with note 243.

<sup>4</sup> See J. E. G. Zetzel, "The Poetics of Patronage in the Late First Century BC," in B. Gold (ed.), *Literary and Artistic Patronage in Ancient Rome* (Austin 1982) 87–102; D. F. Bright, *Haec Mihi Fingebam: Tibullus in His World*, Cincinnati Classical Studies n.s. 3 (Leiden 1978) 38–65.

<sup>5</sup> See L. R. Taylor, "Horace's Equestrian Career," *AJP* 46 (1925) 161–70; eadem, "Republican and Augustan Writers Enrolled in the Equestrian Census," *TAPA* 99 (1968) 469–86; C. Nicolet, *L'Ordre équestre à l'époque républicain* 1 (Paris 1966) 441–56.

Recent study has further clarified their material and social position by showing that literary patronage was but one aspect of a much larger institution, *amicitia*, by which Roman society at all levels was organized into a network of reciprocal exchanges.<sup>6</sup>

These various approaches agree in deemphasizing the uniqueness and completeness of the poet's dependence on his patron. Although questions of personal, political, and artistic integrity were bound to arise, given the expectations of both sides, the poets were able to cope by devising ingenious strategies of independence. These ranged from Tibullus' habitation of an insulated pastoral-erotic landscape to Propertius' outright refusal to celebrate the new regime.<sup>7</sup> Horace had other, more subtle, ways of reconciling his need and affection for Maecenas with his own autonomy. Critics have generally focussed on the most obviously relevant works, the *recusationes*, and poems like *Sat.* 2.6 and *Epist.* 1.7 which can be labelled declarations of independence. But Horace's most comprehensive attempt to define his relationship with Maecenas is represented by the eight poems addressed to him in the first collection of *Odes*. Although they have been studied individually, the group as a whole has not received sufficient critical attention. And yet it can be demonstrated that here, as so often in Augustan poetry, the whole is more than the sum of its parts.

The arrangement of these poems is usually explained in terms of static patterning.<sup>8</sup> The compliment Horace elsewhere bestows on Maecenas—*Prima dicte mihi, summa dicende Camena* (*Epist.* 1.1.1)—can almost serve as a statement of this principle, for when the epilogue is excluded, the first and last odes are addressed to the patron (*C.* 1.1, 3.29). Also, the center of each book is occupied by a rededication to him (*C.* 1.20, 2.12, 3.16). Finally, Maecenas closes Book 2 (*C.* 2.20) and opens Book 3 at the first practical opportunity after the Roman odes (*C.* 3.8).<sup>9</sup> But this symmetry at beginnings, middles, and ends is not exact. *C.* 2.17, for instance, is addressed to Maecenas but stands outside the scheme, and it ought also to be noted that while Maecenas occurs at the midpoint of each book, that position is calculated roughly by line totals in Book 2 (*C.* 2.1–11 = 288;

<sup>6</sup> See P. White, "Amicitia and the Profession of Poetry in Early Imperial Rome," *JRS* 68 (1978) 74–92; and, more generally, see P. A. Brunt, "Amicitia in the Late Roman Republic," *PCPS* 11 (1965) 1–20; R. P. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge 1981) 7–39 on the language and ideology of patronage.

<sup>7</sup> See M. S. Santirocco, "Poet and Patron in Ancient Rome," *Book Forum* 6.1 (1982) 56–62.

<sup>8</sup> On arrangement generally see M. S. Santirocco, "Horace's *Odes* and the Ancient Poetry Book," *Arethusa* 13.1 (1980) 43–57, with full bibliography.

<sup>9</sup> The only position closer to the beginning of the book was reserved for a poem marking both a break and a transition from the Roman Odes: see F.-H. Mutschler, "Kaufmanns liebe: Eine Interpretation der Horazode 'Quid fles Asterie' (*C.* 3.7)," *SO* 53 (1978) 125–26.

12–20 = 284),<sup>10</sup> but in Books 1 and 3 by the total number of poems. In any case, static symmetry is not the only or the most important principle of arrangement. The Maecenas odes are also dynamically disposed to chart the poet's gradual movement toward greater independence.

C. 1.1 dedicates the entire collection. "The worst in the book, excepting the second," was Landor's savage judgment.<sup>11</sup> Landor objected to the fulsome praise of Maecenas, as others have complained that its insertion only at the beginning and the end of the ode is mechanical and gratuitous.<sup>12</sup> But these objections ignore the patron's function in the larger structure of the poem. On one level, this is a poetic testament, retrospective in affirming moral continuity with the *Satires*, and programmatic in establishing new generic expectations.<sup>13</sup> The patron's role in this process may perhaps be clarified by comparison with Catullus' first poem. Catullus proclaims his Alexandrianism not to distinguish himself from Nepos but, rather, to exploit some striking resemblances between himself and his friend. Both men, as writers, are innovative (*novum*, 1 = *ausus* . . . *unus*, 5); the works of both are refined (*pumice expolitus*, 2 = *doctis* . . . *et laboriosis*, 7); and, finally, both compose on the small scale (*libellum*, 1, and *nugas*, 4 = *tribus* . . . *cartis*, 6). In other words, Catullus sets up an analogy between himself and Nepos by implying that they share an allegiance to Callimachean literary standards.<sup>14</sup>

Although Horace does not compare himself with his patron, his poetic programme is also inseparable from, and indeed accomplished by, the personal dedication. Deferential and dependent, it is framed by effusive compliments for Maecenas. The opening address extols the nobility of his Etruscan lineage in grandiloquent language, and the flattery is enhanced by the likelihood that it stretches the truth.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> This is reinforced by the arrangement of the poems: see W. Ludwig, "Zu Horaz, C. 2,1–12," *Hermes* 85 (1957) 336–45; H. Eisenberger, "Bildern die Horazischen Oden 2.1–12 einen Zyklus?," *Gymnasium* 87 (1980) 262–74.

<sup>11</sup> Messalla at the end of "Tibullus and Messalla" in the first series of *Imaginary Conversations*.

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., N. E. Collinge, *The Structure of Horace's Odes* (London 1961) 108: "The first and last couplets certainly look to be outside the general scheme; they might be read continuously, were it not for the *quodsi*, which takes account of what intervenes."

<sup>13</sup> See H. J. Shey, "The Poet's Progress: Horace, Odes I,1," *Arethusa* 4 (1971) 185–96 for the continuity with satire; and E. Fraenkel, *Horace* (Oxford 1957) 230 for verbal anticipation of subsequent odes.

<sup>14</sup> See F. Cairns, "Catullus I," *Mnem.* 22 (1969) 153–58; P. Levine, "Catullus c. 1: A Prayerful Dedication," *CSCA* 2 (1969) 209–16; D. Singleton, "A Note on Catullus' First Poem," *CP* 67 (1972) 192–96; T. P. Wiseman, *Clio's Cosmetics: Three Studies in Greco-Roman Literature* (Leicester 1979) 167–74. For a different view, however, see J. P. Elder, "Catullus I, His Poetic Creed, and Nepos," *HSCP* 71 (1966) 143–49.

<sup>15</sup> On Maecenas' dubious ancestry see L. A. MacKay, "Notes on Horace," *CP* 37 (1942) 79–80.

Maecenas atavis edite regibus,  
o et praesidium et dulce decus meum. (1-2)

The priamel that follows enumerates a number of the occupations in which men glory (*palma* . . . / *euehit ad deos*, 5-6; *honoribus*, 8) or take delight (*iuuat*, 4; *gaudentem*, 11; *iuuant*, 23). But Horace has already indicated that his glory and delight (*dulce decus*, 2) is Maecenas, and so we are prepared for the end of the ode where the proclamation of the poet's superiority prompts the patron's reappearance:

quodsi me lyricis vatibus inseres,  
sublimi feriam sidera vertice. (35-36)

At the end of his first poem, Catullus had prayed that the Muse allow his poetry to survive "for a century or two" (*plus uno maneat perenne saeclo*, 10). While Horace's hope for immortality in the canon of lyric poets is surely more audacious, it is also qualified by being contingent upon the approval not only of the Muses (32-34) but also of the patron, who is the recipient of his prayer and the agent of his apotheosis.

Maecenas next appears in C. 1.20 where Horace invites him for a drink. The poet's tone has already become less formal and more familiar. The encomium, for instance, is no longer direct as in C. 1.1, but oblique. Thus, Maecenas' Etruscan heritage is only hinted at as the Tiber, whose source is in Etruria, is dubbed his "paternal river" (*paterni* / *fluminis*, 5-6). Similarly, the title *eques* (5) becomes, in context, an oblique compliment, for it alludes to the privileged seating enjoyed by the knights at the theatre. Even the wine which Maecenas is offered is invested with indirect encomiastic significance. Its modesty (1-2) sets up an honorific contrast with the luxurious vintages to which the wealthy Maecenas is accustomed (9-12). Its bottling by the poet when Maecenas' recovery from illness was applauded in the theatre attests to the public and private devotion the great man inspires. And that the wine is Sabine (2) implies the poet's gratitude as well, for it alludes to the gift of the Sabine farm. Finally, the very image of Italian wine in a Greek jar (*Graeca* . . . *testa*, 2) calls to mind Horace's descriptions of his poetic achievement as a synthesis of Greek and Roman elements (e.g. C. 3.30.13-14; *Epist.* 1.19.21-34), and the vocabulary (e.g. *conditum*, 3) and motifs here are often calculated ambiguities, applying to poetry as well as to wine.<sup>16</sup> The drink is ultimately suggestive of Horace's own poetry which Maecenas, as it guarantor, is invited to imbibe.

It is not, however, just in the oblique and sometimes symbolic quality of its encomium that C. 1.20 differs from the first ode. It also introduces a

<sup>16</sup> See S. Commager, *The Odes of Horace: A Critical Study* (New Haven 1962) 325-26; M. C. J. Putnam, "Horace C. 1.20," *CJ* 64 (1969) 153-57; W. H. Race, "Odes 1.20: An Horatian Recusatio," *CSCA* 11 (1978) 179-96.

number of motifs and themes that will recur in undeniably self-assertive odes farther along in the sequence. These include the patron's recovery from illness (cf. C. 2.17), his equestrian status (cf. C. 3.16), the invitation to drink (cf. C. 3.8, 29), the Etruscan river (cf. C. 3.29), and the social and material disparity between the rich man and the poet (cf. C. 2.17; 3.16, 29). When they recur in subsequent poems, these elements will be exploited to establish the poet's independence from his patron. As yet, however, they have only the honorific function that has been observed. The Maecenas odes are an ordered sequence, and while C. 1.20 facilitates the distancing process, we can read too much into the poem by reading too far ahead.<sup>17</sup>

Basically, then, the first book of *Odes* acknowledges, directly in C. 1.1 and obliquely in C. 1.20, Horace's respect for and dependence on Maecenas. In Book 2, however, this deferential and dependent stance is much qualified. It is significant that Maecenas does not open the volume (C. 2.1 is for Pollio), and that his first appearance is in a *recusatio*, C. 2.12. Horace's strategy here is to coopt his patron to his own position. This is accomplished by the very first word, *nolis*: Horace refuses to write heroics not because he is unable to do so (the usual gambit, as in C. 1.6), but because Maecenas is unwilling. Other details contribute to the cooptation of the patron. For example, when Maecenas is urged to take on the literary task himself—an unlikely eventuality in light of his neoteric tastes—he is portrayed as writing not in poetry but in prose (*pedestribus* / . . . *historiis*, 9–10). Similarly, the rest of the poem (13–28) celebrates Maecenas' love for a certain Licymnia who may be a cover for his wife, Terentia, but who, in any case, has a symbolic function. Her name is a Greek translation, from *ligys* and *hymnos*, of a phrase in the poem, *dulces* . . . *cantus* (13–14). Licymnia, then, incarnates an alternative to politics and political poetry—for Maecenas love, and for Horace love poetry.<sup>18</sup>

This analogy between poet and patron which Horace exploits to assert his independence is further developed, and then broken down, in the sequence of four poems with which Book 2 closes.<sup>19</sup> In C. 2.17 Horace calms Maecenas' fears of death. As evidence that their stars are linked (*consentit astrum*, 22) two biographical details are adduced:

<sup>17</sup> But for the other view, see Race (above, note 16).

<sup>18</sup> For full discussion of these points see M. S. Santirocco, "Strategy and Structure in Horace, C. 2.12," in C. Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* 2, Coll. Latomus 168 (Brussels 1980) 223–36.

<sup>19</sup> Connections have been seen, not just between the last two odes (e.g. E. T. Silk, "A Fresh Approach to Horace, II,20," *AJP* 77 [1956] 255–63, who views them as prelude to the Roman Odes), but also among the last four: see W. Wili, *Horaz und die augusteische Kultur* (Basel 1948) 233ff., on the poet's triumph over death, and Commager (above, note 16) 311–12 who notes briefly their movement away from Maecenas but does not pursue it beyond these four odes.

Maecenas' recovery from illness (22–26) and the poet's own miraculous escape from death when a tree nearly fell on his head (27–30). These salvations were introduced independently at C. 1.20 and 2.13 respectively, but their conjunction here in the same poem expresses the closeness of the association between the two men. And yet, there are already some discrepancies. Although Maecenas is called, in words that recall the opening of C. 1.1, the glory and prop of the poet's existence (*meorum / grande decus columenque rerum*, 3–4), his anxiety and constant requests for reassurance which prompt this ode (*cur me querelis exanimas tuis*, 1) belie the compliment and anticipate the role reversals we shall observe in Book 3 in which the patron becomes dependent on his client for support. Even more interesting are the details of salvation. It was great Jupiter who rescued Maecenas from illness (22–25), whereas Horace was protected from the falling tree by the minor woodland deity Faunus (28–30). Similarly, Maecenas is advised to build a votive shrine in thanksgiving (30–31), but Horace can only sacrifice a humble lamb (*humilem . . . agnam*, 32). Though appropriate to the rustic context here, Faunus elsewhere in Horace is suggestive also of the poet's literary inspiration,<sup>20</sup> and the "humble" lamb is transparently Callimachean, a conflation of the *Aetia* prologue's fat sacrifice and slender Muse (fr. 1.23–24 Pf.), and so represents (as elsewhere in Horace) the poem itself.<sup>21</sup> At the end of an ode ostensibly comparing poet and patron, these contrasts are also a subtle indication of where the resemblance ultimately breaks down.

This is made explicit in the very next ode. C. 2.18 is not strictly a Maecenas ode since the patron is not addressed by name and *tu* (17) is ostensibly an unspecified second person. Nevertheless, Nisbet and Hubbard argue very strongly for the ambiguity of *tu*, noting a striking number of possible covert allusions to Maecenas in the poem. Thus, the mention of the heir of Attalus (5–6) conjures up not only Maecenas' wealth but also his Etruscan heritage (since Attalus' Lydian realm was the alleged origin of the Etruscans), the rich man's clients trail Etruscan-style garments (7–8), the luxurious architecture (17–28) calls to mind the *turris Maecenatiana* (which will be mentioned openly in C. 3.29), and the emphasis on death and the underworld (18–19, 29–40) is appropriate to Maecenas' own morbid preoccupations.<sup>22</sup> It might be added that the change in addressee

<sup>20</sup> See Commager (above, note 16) 348–52; I. Troxler-Keller, *Die Dichterlandschaft des Horaz* (Heidelberg 1964) 108–18.

<sup>21</sup> E.g. C. 1.19.13–16 where the *hostia* parallels the poem in that both are offered to Venus; C. 4.2.53–60 where the contrast between the two sacrifices recapitulates the earlier contrast between Horatian and Pindaric lyric.

<sup>22</sup> For other indirect references to Maecenas in this and other poems, see R. G. M. Nisbet and M. Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace: Odes Book II* (Oxford 1978) 289–90. For discussion of second person pronouns generally and of the function of addressees as a

from Maecenas in *C.* 2.17 to *tu* in *C.* 2.18 is paralleled by the internal structure of several individual poems (e.g. *C.* 1.1; *S.* 1.1, *Epist.* 1.1) which move from Maecenas to an unspecified second person who suggests both the general reader and the patron.

Finally, whatever view we take of the second person, there are unmistakable third-person allusions to Maecenas in one passage. Having rejected wealth, Horace proclaims that his riches are invested elsewhere:

at fides et ingeni  
     benigna vena est pauperemque dives  
 me petit: nihil supra  
     deos laccio nec potentem amicum  
 largiora flagito,  
     satis beatus unicis Sabinis. (9–14)

In so personal a passage, references to a rich man who pursues Horace, to a powerful friend who grants his request, and, finally, to the Sabine farm can only point to Maecenas. Here, as in the preceding poem, there is a hint of role reversal, as the rich man seeks out the poor client: *pauperemque dives / me petit*.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, the contrast between poet and patron which was symbolized in *C.* 2.17 by their different tutelary deities and thank-offerings is now made explicit, specified as the difference between material wealth and the spiritual and poetic riches that infinitely surpass it.

And so, the next ode, *C.* 2.19, is a hymn to Bacchus which attempts to convey through Dionysiac imagery the essence of this poetic experience, its isolation, excitement, and mystical power. But this excludes Maecenas who is not a poet and who is neither addressed nor mentioned here. He does, however, receive the final ode in the book, *C.* 2.20. The poet has moved from inspiration to immortality, from cause to effect. Although the imagery of a bird metamorphosis is humorous, the conception behind it is basically serious and striking: the poet, soaring aloft on newly sprouted wings, leaves his patron grounded far below:

non ego, pauperum  
 sanguis parentum, non ego, quem vocas,  
     dilecte Maecenas, obibo  
     nec Stygia cohibebor unda. (5–8)

In *C.* 2.17, we recall, Horace had announced that he and Maecenas would die together. By *C.* 2.20 the analogy between the two men has

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metaphor for the reader, see now W. R. Johnson, *The Idea of Lyric* (Berkeley 1982) *passim*, esp. 1–23 and, on Horace, 127.

<sup>23</sup> In patronage contexts *peto* usually signifies the client's role: to the references in Nisbet and Hubbard (above, note 22) 299, add *Cat.* 28.13 (*pete nobiles amicos*); *Laus Pis.* 218–19 (*dignare tuos aperire Penates, / hoc solum petimus*); *Hor. C.* 3.16.22–23 (*nil cupientium / nudus castra peto*), on which see further below.

broken down completely, and Horace boasts that, as a poet, he will not die at all: *non ego / . . . obibo* (6–7).

After such a bold assertion, Book 3 fully develops a role reversal in its portrayal of the patron-client relationship, as Maecenas becomes spiritually dependent on Horace.<sup>24</sup> This had been anticipated, as we have seen, in Book 2 where a role reversal is implicit in the context of several poems, in the patron's requests for reassurance at *C.* 2.17.1, and in the rich man's active pursuit of the poet at *C.* 2.18.10–11. Now, however, role reversal is accomplished by the poem's content, as Horace extends the paraenetic function of ancient lyric by venturing not only advice but also explicit criticism, and by setting himself up as a model for Maecenas.

*C.* 3.8 is a drinking song like *C.* 1.20. But whereas that poem was honorific, this is playful. Horace teases his patron in the opening address for his useless learning (1–5), and even the language may parody Maecenas' precious literary style:<sup>25</sup>

Martiis caelebs quid agam kalendis,  
quid velint flores et acerra turis  
plena miraris positusque carbo in  
caespite vivo,  
  
docte sermones utriusque linguae:  
voveram dulcis epulas et album  
Libero caprum prope funeratus  
arboris ictu. (1–8)

In *C.* 1.20 Maecenas had been invited to drink in celebration of his own escape from death, but now in *C.* 3.8 he is to toast his client's health. In a similar reversal, the wine which was honorific in *C.* 1.20 now takes on a hortatory significance,<sup>26</sup> for Horace advises Maecenas to enjoy life and to cease worrying about the state:

mitte civilis super urbe curas  
.....  
neglegens, ne qua populus laboret,  
parce privatus nimium cavere et  
dona praesentis cape laetus horae:  
linque severa. (17, 25–28)

In light of this injunction, the setting and mode of address are not only humorous but also programmatic. *Docte sermones utriusque linguae* (5): though "learned in the lore of both tongues" (i.e. Greek and Latin),

<sup>24</sup> Reckford (above, note 2) observes a role reversal in the relationship, but he sees it only in biographical terms and not also as an artistic principle organizing a sequence of poems.

<sup>25</sup> See A. Bradshaw, "Some Stylistic Oddities in Horace, Odes III 8," *Philologus* 114 (1970) 145–50.

<sup>26</sup> As often: see S. Commager, "The Function of Wine in Horace's Odes," *TAPA* 88 (1957) 68–80.



Maecenas is at a loss to explain why his friend, a bachelor, should be celebrating March first, the Matronalia. But Horace informs him that he is not observing that public holiday but rather a private anniversary that just happens to coincide with it, his deliverance from the falling tree. And this is precisely what Maecenas must learn to do, to put aside public matters (*civilis . . . curas*, 17) and become a private citizen (*privatus*, 26). Horace functions, then, as a model for his patron to emulate.<sup>27</sup>

The middle poem of the book, C. 3.16, goes further, taking as its subject not the cares of state but rather the cares which are engendered by wealth and which are equally burdensome. Drawing from myth (Danae, 1–11), heroic legend (Amphiaraus, 11–13), Greek history (Philip, 13–15), and recent Roman history (if *navium* / . . . *duces*, 15–16, alludes to Menas who was twice enticed by money to desert from Sextus Pompeius to Octavian), Horace illustrates not just the destructive power of wealth but also its capacity to produce anxiety and greed, and then he dissociates himself from this way of life:

crescentem sequitur cura pecuniam  
maiorumque fames: iure perhorrui  
late conspicuum tollere verticem,  
Maecenas, equitum decus. (17–20)

Here too the mode of address is functional: alluding to Maecenas' equestrian status, Horace implies that his own preference for the simple life resembles his patron's lack of worldly ambition. This looks at first like the old strategy of cooptation. But what follows is problematic:

quanto quisque sibi plura negaverit,  
ab dis plura feret: nil cupientium  
nudus castra peto et transfuga divitum  
partis linquere gestio,  
contemptae dominus splendidior rei. . . . (21–25)

As the "glory of the knights," *equitum decus* (20), Maecenas would presumably qualify for inclusion among the rather vaguely expressed *nil cupientium* (22) whom Horace seeks out. And yet, as a very rich man, he is at least a potential member of the camp from which Horace deserts. R. J. Shork has demonstrated, for instance, that the examples of flawed wealth with which the poem opens are all at least marginally relevant to Maecenas. All are cases of fraternal, dynastic rivalry and involve the use of money for political bribery. Maecenas' wealth must have recommended itself to Augustus for similar reasons in the years of

<sup>27</sup> But C. 3.8 functions also in another group of poems: see M. S. Santirocco, "The Two Voices of Horace: *Odes* 3.1–15," in R. Winkes (ed.), *The Augustan Age: The Rise of Imperial Ideology*, *Archaeologia Transatlantica* 4 (Providence and Louvain 1984), forthcoming.



Just as the patron's cloying wealth (*fastidiosam . . . copiam*, 9) recalls the theme of C. 3.16, so his political anxieties here are familiar from C. 3.8. It is, of course, honorific to show Maecenas concerned with affairs of state. But in C. 3.8 his anxiety was shown to be groundless (18–24), and now in C. 3.29 Horace states explicitly that it is impious as well, for it runs counter to the intent of the god who has shrouded the future in darkness:

prudens futuri temporis exitum  
caliginosa nocte premit deus  
ridetque, si mortalis ultra  
fas trepidat. (29–32)

This leads to an almost perfunctory injunction to enjoy life, which is tailored to Maecenas by means of one striking and strategic image:

quod adest memento  
conponere aequos: cetera fluminis  
ritu feruntur, nunc medio alveo  
cum pace delabentis Etruscum  
in mare, nunc lapides adesos  
stirpisque raptas et pecus et domos  
volventis una, non sine montium  
clamore vicinaeque silvae,  
cum fera diluvies quietos  
inritat amnis. (32–41)

To convey the changeability to which Maecenas should be immune, Horace evokes the erratic course of the Tiber, identified as the river “flowing into the Etruscan sea” (35–36). The rare hypermetron whereby the word *Etruscum* does indeed flow into the next line's *in mare* is not just a neat mimetic trick but also alerts us to the significance of the description.<sup>30</sup> In the opening address Maecenas had been reminded of his Etruscan lineage (*Tyrrhena regum progenies*, 1), and in C. 1.20 the Tiber was, for this reason, called his “paternal river” (5–6). The river image in C. 3.29, then, gives point to the opening address and personalizes the injunction by implying that Maecenas should learn from his heritage. And perhaps not only the Etruscan but also the regal aspect of that heritage is exploited in the very next words:

ille potens sui  
laetusque deget, cui licet in diem  
dixisse ‘vixi.’ (41–43)

In C. 2.18 Horace thanked, but set himself apart from, his *potentem amicum* (12), and in C. 3.16 wealth's destructive power (*potentius*, 10) is

<sup>30</sup> See H. Mørland, “Wortbrechungen und Hypermetra in den Oden des Horaz,” *SO* 41 (1966) 108–14; S. Commager, “Some Horatian Vagaries,” *SO* 55 (1980) 59–70.

rejected by Horace who has thereby become its master (*dominus*, 25). Liberated from materialistic associations, the word *potens* takes on a new, more spiritual meaning in C. 3.29. Maecenas claims regal descent, but true power is not that wielded by kings over their subjects, but that exercised over oneself, *potens sui* (41).

At this point the patron disappears from the poem, the rest of which consists of a long monologue by one who has achieved this mastery of himself. His impassioned advocacy of a life of simplicity and acquiescence to Fortune is not consistent with the previous negative picture of Maecenas. But it is a familiar Horatian theme, and the first person narrator is inevitably identified by the reader as Horace himself.<sup>31</sup> The poem then concludes with one final, charming image:

tunc me biremis praesidio scaphae  
tutum per Aegaeos tumultus  
aura feret geminusque Pollux. (62–64)

This subtle modulation from patron to poet imitates the movement of the entire collection. In the very first ode, Maecenas had been characterized as the poet's support, *praesidium* (C. 1.1.2). Now, in the last poem addressed to him, Maecenas gradually fades away and the word *praesidio* (62) describes the poet's own small skiff which enjoys divine protection. A transition to the epilogue is thus accomplished. *Potens sui* (41) leads up to *ex humili potens* in C. 3.30.12, just as *vixi* (48) is taken one step further by *non omnis moriar* in C. 3.30.6. The poet has moved from the satisfaction of having lived fully in this world to the assurance of life beyond it in his poetry. This was the prayer for immortality which Horace had addressed to Maecenas in the first ode (C. 1.1.35–36). Now it is finally answered, but it is not Maecenas who grants it, but the Muse, Melpomene, an emblem of the poet's *own* creative power.<sup>32</sup>

In conclusion, this brief survey of the Maecenas odes has necessarily been schematic, focussing on only one aspect of the poems. But though the complexity of the individual odes has thereby been simplified, their dramatic progress as a group is now apparent. In Book 1 Horace is deferential and dependent, emphasizing the material differences between himself and his patron. In Book 2 these acquire a spiritual dimension as Horace's poverty becomes symbolic of the artistic riches which set him apart from others, including Maecenas. Finally, in Book 3 the distinction between the two men is mainly philosophical, the superiority of Horace's very way of life to his patron's anxiety-ridden existence. Their roles are

<sup>31</sup> The point is unaffected by punctuation, whether *vixi* alone or the entire passage, 43–fin., is enclosed by quotation marks.

<sup>32</sup> For other points of contact between the epilogue and C. 1.1 see Zetzel (above, note 4) 95–97; on the epilogue's relationship to C. 3.29 and the other poems in the second half of Book 3, see M. S. Santirocco, "The Poetics of Closure," *Ramus* 13 (1984) forthcoming.

reversed as Horace becomes, in a sense, the spiritual patron of Maecenas. Since this order of publication does not seem to coincide with that of composition, it is not possible to trace in this sequence of poems the history of the relationship. Their clear movement toward independence may be based on an historical or psychological development, but is ultimately an aesthetic effect. While consistently affirming Horace's sincere affection for Maecenas, these odes, by their dynamic disposition, also create a certain distance and enable their author to maintain a high degree of personal and artistic freedom.