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# POETRY IN THE 'CIRCLE' OF MESSALLA

*By* CERI DAVIES

OUR views on literary patronage in the Augustan Age may be dominated to such an extent by the personality of Maecenas that other, contemporary, patrons are forgotten or, worse still, seen as pale reflections of the 'ideal' patron, Maecenas, and so best disregarded. Professor Ronald Syme, for example, in his notable chapter on Augustus' 'Organization of Opinion', writes that 'Augustus' chief of cabinet, Maecenas, captured the most promising of the poets at an early stage and nursed them into the Principate. Augustus himself listened to recitations with patience and even with benevolence. He insisted, however, that his praises should be sung only in serious efforts and by the best poets. The Princeps succeeded: other patrons of literature were left far behind.'[1] This article looks briefly at the work of those poets who were closely associated with one of these 'other patrons', M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus, and attempts to show that his patronage, and the poets' attitudes towards it, were essentially Republican in nature—a factor which should be kept in mind in making any comparison between Messalla's poets and those more directly concerned with the Princeps.

The chief extant representatives of the poets patronized by Messalla are the elegist Tibullus (whose sixteen love elegies were collected together in two books) and a number of minor *littérateurs* whose writings (the *Corpus Tibullianum*) were added as a third book to the collection of Tibullus' poems.[2] Tibullus emphasizes throughout the tight bond between himself and his patron; Messalla is the close friend that the poet imagines as coming to visit Delia and himself in his idealized country residence:

> huc ueniet Messalla meus, cui dulcia poma
> Delia selectis detrahat arboribus:
> et, tantum uenerata uirum, hunc sedula curet,
> huic paret atque epulas ipsa ministra gerat.
> (i. 5. 31–4)

[1] *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford, 1939), 460.

[2] It is a matter for speculation how the poems of the third book came to be collected together. G. Luck, *The Latin Love Elegy* (London, 1959), 95, cites the opinion of Lachmann (*Kleine Schriften*, ii. 150 ff.) 'that the *Corpus Tibullianum* was published from Messalla's "archives", as a kind of document or memoir; the bad and the mediocre together with the good. This edition must have been made at a time when there was still some interest in Messalla and his circle.' This third book was further subdivided by fifteenth-century scholars, the 'Lygdamus' elegies thereby forming in themselves the third book, and the remainder a fourth book, though there is no traditional authority for this subdivision.

Similarly in ii. 1, Tibullus longs for the company of his patron at the celebration of the rustic Ambarvalia: 'gentis Aquitanae celeber Messalla triumphis . . . huc ades aspiraque mihi' (33, 35).

Concrete information about Messalla as patron is also given by one who does not immediately come to mind as one of his protégés—the poet Ovid.[1] In his account of his childhood (*Tristia* iv. 10. 15–30) Ovid relates how he and his brother were sent young 'ad insignes urbis ab arte uiros' (16), and Ovid frequently attests in *Tristia* and the *Epistulae ex Ponto* to Messalla's place among these. Like Tibullus, Ovid writes of a close relationship between poet and patron; in writing to one of Messalla's sons he reminds him:

> nam tuus est primis cultus mihi semper ab annis
> (hoc certe noli dissimulare) pater,
> ingeniumque meum (potes hoc meminisse) probabat
> plus etiam quam me iudice dignus eram.
> (*Tristia* iv. 4. 27–30)

Messalla was the driving force that encouraged a young unestablished poet to make his work public—

> primus ut auderem committere carmina famae
> impulit; ingenii dux fuit ille mei—
> (*Ex Ponto* ii. 3. 73–4)

and this was coupled with the friendly hospitality extended to the young Ovid by Messalla in his home.

That Messalla should have encouraged a young love-poet is not surprising, as we know that he himself wrote poetry, particularly in the bucolic-amatory vein. The Younger Pliny, for example, includes his name in a list of writers of mainly light poetry.[2] Mr. Sherwin-White suggests that Pliny drew his list from a literary history:[3] most of those named are obscure as poets, and Pliny's reference might be held of little importance were it not that the pseudo-Virgilian *Catalepton* 9, a panegyric written in elegiacs for Messalla's triumph in 27 B.C. (and largely patterned upon the earlier *Panegyricus Messallae*), also suggests that Messalla wrote bucolic poetry in Greek, which the author of *Catalepton* 9 claims to have translated into Latin and included in his collection:

> pauca tua in nostras uenerunt carmina chartas,
> carmina cum lingua tum sale Cecropia, . . .
> molliter hic uiridi patulae sub tegmine quercus
> Moeris pastores et Meliboeus erant . . .
> (13–14; 17–18)

[1] Cf. L. P. Wilkinson, *Ovid Recalled* (Cambridge, 1955), 13.
[2] *Epp.* v. 3. 5. [3] *The Letters of Pliny* (Oxford, 1966), 317.

In lines 23 ff. of the same poem the author goes on to suggest that Messalla wrote erotic—and so, perhaps, Latin elegiac—poetry, though it is also possible, in view of the close affinities between bucolic and elegiac poetry, that the author is thinking of the same poetry in both references.[1] In any case, it is evident that Messalla shared the same literary interests as those poets who gathered around him, especially Tibullus, the most 'pastoral' of all the Latin love-elegists.

The background to such literary activity, on the part of the patron as well as his protégés, lies in a development in Republican poetry towards the end of the second century B.C. One thinks of the work of that group of poets gathered about the consul of 102 B.C., Q. Lutatius Catulus (himself a poet), with poetry very much the *vers de société* of noble households, written by gentlemen for gentlemen.[2] Everything in Messalla's background points to similar upper-class traditions of the Republic. Born in 64 B.C.,[3] he was of the *gens Valeria*, one of the patrician *gentes maiores*.[4] Not unnaturally for a man in his position he sided with Brutus and the Republicans in 43 B.C.; after Philippi, fortunate to have escaped with his life, he transferred his allegiance to Antony; soon he became disgusted with Antony's conduct, and joined Octavian—not turning his back on Republican ideals, but rather in the full hope that in Octavian there might be a restorer of the Republic and of normal life in Italy.[5]

We cannot tell precisely when, how, or where a group of people first came to be gathered around Messalla. Some have viewed such a group as being in the first instance of a particular political bias: thus J. Carcopino[6] suggests that in joining Antony after Philippi Messalla was proclaiming himself the leader of a nucleus of people politically opposed to the interests of Octavian. Whether or not there was a political motive behind the primary adherence of people to Messalla, it is certainly as a leading *literary* figure that we have him specially mentioned by Horace in a satire written about 35 B.C. *Satires* i. 10 is a reply by Horace to people who had criticized his writing in the genre, particularly his attacks on Lucilius in *Satires* i. 4. At the end he names those whose approval he as a poet hopes for: first he names a group of men (81–3) including Maecenas, Octavius, Virgil, Varius, and Valgius; then Pollio

[1] So R. E. H. Westendorp-Boerma, *P. Vergili Maronis Catalepton*, Part Two (Assen, 1963), 15 f. Cf. A. A. Day, *The Origins of Latin Love-Elegy* (Oxford, 1938), 76 ff.

[2] Cf. Luck, op. cit. 39 ff.

[3] On Messalla's dates and career, see Hanslik, *RE* viiiA. 1. 131 ff., and J. Hammer, *Prolegomena to an Edition of the Panegyricus Messallae* (New York, 1925), 5 ff.

[4] Constant allusion is made to the nobility of Messalla's birth; cf. Tibullus ii. 1. 33 f.; [Tibullus] iii. 7. 28–32; [Virgil], *Catalepton* 9. 39 f. See also Syme, op. cit. 10, 18.

[5] Dio xlvii. 33. 3–4; Velleius ii. 71. 1; Appian, *BC* iv. 38, 136. See also Syme, op. cit. 206.

[6] *RPh* xx (1946), 96 ff.

is named in isolation; finally (85–8) come Messalla and some men apparently connected with him about 35 B.C.:

> Messalla, tuo cum fratre, simulque
> uos, Bibule et Serui, simul his te, candide Furni,
> compluris alios, doctos ego quos et amicos
> prudens praetereo.

Now Horace's concern here is with his own literary reputation and he makes his appeal to these men as people of literary taste (*doctos*, 87) who would be well suited to judge his work. Whatever common political motivation may underlie their coming together, this cannot be explained in terms of an Antonian party in opposition to an Octavian party. By 35 B.C. Messalla was a supporter of Octavian; he had already fought for Octavian against Sextus Pompeius (36 B.C.)[1] and in 35–4 was in the Illyro-Pannonian War on Octavian's behalf.[2] The others named with Messalla varied in their political allegiance. L. Gellius Poplicola (the 'frater' of line 85) and Bibulus (86) supported Antony, while Furnius followed Octavian.[3] What this group of people does seem to have in common is that they were Republican supporters of Brutus and Cassius before committing themselves to either Octavian or Antony. Many of them are known to have been, like Horace, in Athens pursuing higher education when Brutus crossed over to Greece before Philippi,[4] and loyalty to the ideals of the Republic, arising out of family traditions and from coming into contact with Brutus, combines with *doctrina*, the interest in literature and learning which brought them to Athens in the first place, to characterize the people around Messalla at that time. The significance of the people named by Horace is that they seem to represent a period a little earlier than that represented by the writings of the poets of Messalla's circle.

The fact that Messalla came of a noble Roman family, with all the traditions attached to such nobility, influenced much of the work written by poets connected with him. R. Hanslik[5] has shown that many of the panegyrical poems of Tibullus and the *Corpus Tibullianum*—poems usually conceived on a much more limited scale than, for example, Horace's odes concerned with Augustus—are to be understood as coming within the Republican tradition of conventional praise to a military leader. An important example is the *Panegyricus Messallae*

[1] Appian, *BC* v. 102 f., 109, 112.

[2] Cf. [Tibullus] iii. 7. 107 ff.

[3] On Poplicola, see Syme, op. cit. 269 and n., 296; also Münzer, *RE* vii. 1003 ff. On Bibulus, see Syme, op. cit. 268; on Furnius, Syme, op. cit. 299. Uncertainty remains about Servius (line 86); he is probably the son of Cicero's jurist friend S. Sulpicius Rufus: see below on Sulpicia. Nothing is known about his loyalties.

[4] Cf. Syme, op. cit. 198; B. L. Ullman, *AJP* xxxiii (1912), 164.

[5] 'Der Dichterkreis des Messalla', *AAWW* lxxxix (1952), 22 ff.

([Tibullus] iii. 7), a poem written in hexameters by an unknown poet. Professor Momigliano[1] has demonstrated that this *Panegyricus* was certainly written for our M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus (not for his son), and that its probable date is 31 B.C., the year of Actium, when Messalla was joint consul with Octavian. The tradition of such poetry extends back to the sacred ties of patron and client in early Republican Rome; the author of the *Panegyricus* implies in 177–91 that he is a client of Messalla's, a landowner who had known changes of circumstance. The *Panegyricus* is a turgid piece, full of rhetorical embellishment and strained mythological reference, praising Messalla's ancestry and his achievements as orator and soldier:

> nam quis te maiora gerit castrisue foroue?
> nec tamen hic aut hic tibi laus maiorue minorue . . .
> (39–40)

Its true significance is that it represents a genre of Roman poetry going back to Ennius,[2] who accompanied his patron Marcus Fulvius Nobilior on his campaign against the Aetolians (189 B.C.), and celebrated the campaign in the poem *Ambracia* and in his epic on Roman history, the *Annales*.

We cannot tell if the author of the *Panegyricus* in fact accompanied Messalla on his campaigns or not. It seems almost certain that the best-known of the poets closely associated with Messalla, Tibullus, did accompany his patron, and therein fulfilled a role not unlike that of Ennius in relation to Fulvius Nobilior. The third poem of Book I commemorates Messalla's services in the East, with Tibullus himself accompanying the patron on his campaigns; Tibullus travelled as far as Corcyra where, however, he fell sick and was obliged to stay behind:

> Ibitis Aegaeas sine me, Messalla, per undas,
> o utinam memores ipse cohorsque mei.
> (1–2)

Again, i. 7 is a celebration of Messalla's triumph *ex Gallia* after his victory over the Aquitanians (27 B.C.) and is an effective laudatory poem of a client to his patron. Tibullus proclaims that he himself had a modest share in the success of the campaign: 'non sine me est tibi partus honos' (9). The special significance of i. 7 will be considered later; there are marked differences in its method of panegyrizing Messalla from that of the *Panegyricus*, but a basic element in its composition is the praise given by a client to a member of the aristocracy, congratulating him on a military success.

[1] *JRS* xl (1950), 39–41.

[2] Cf. Gordon Williams, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (Oxford, 1968), 38 f.

The involvement of these poets with Messalla *himself* may perhaps best be seen by comparing Tibullus with his fellow love-elegist Propertius, who felt an obligation to address Maecenas in his work (although we have but very little ground for regarding him as a client of Maecenas). Both poets share similar themes, largely dictated by the conventions of their particular literary genre; but whereas Tibullus can both panegyrize his patron and write love-elegy without feeling any tension between the two roles (as, for example in i. 5. 31–4, quoted above), Propertius was aware of the difficulty of fulfilling his obligation to praise Augustus and celebrate patriotic themes within the context of his chosen medium. He resorts to the popular literary device of *recusatio*; thus in ii. 1, for example, he addresses Maecenas:

> quod mihi si tantum, Maecenas, fata dedissent,
> ut possem heroas ducere in arma manus,
> non ego Titanas canerem, non Ossan Olympo
> impositam, ut caeli Pelion esset iter . . .
> bellaque resque tui memorarem Caesaris, et tu
> Caesare sub magno cura secunda fores.
> (17–20; 25–6)

The poet then proceeds to give examples of Augustus' feats before returning, perforce, to the theme of his love. By the very act of enumerating the deeds of Augustus which he, the love-elegist, is incapable of adequately praising, he finds a means of giving that self-same praise.[1] Now it seems significant that nowhere does Tibullus feel it incumbent on him to apologize in this way for not introducing contemporary themes connected with Augustus into his elegies. This does not mean that Tibullus was not affected, as he was bound to be, by the blessings brought about through Augustus: his treatment of the themes of *pax* and *rura*—as well shown by F. Solmsen[2]—amply displays this. This is only natural since, as we have seen, Messalla had become a close associate of Augustus, was joint consul with him in 31 B.C., and had played a prominent part after Actium—both in the East and in Gaul—to further Augustus' military and civil settlement. Even so, Tibullus celebrates Messalla's deeds and victories *as Messalla's*, without reference to Augustus. Elegy ii. 5 might be regarded, at first sight, as an exception to this. The poem contains themes of national interest that we know from the *Aeneid*, dwelling at great length on the Sibyl's oracle to Aeneas predicting the future glory of Rome. Implied in this is the contemporary glory of the Augustan settlement ('Roma, tuum nomen

[1] On the *recusatio* convention, see Gordon Williams, op. cit. 46 ff. The Augustan poets gave the *recusatio* an ulterior purpose which its Callimachean prototype (*Aitia*, fr. 1) did not have.

[2] *Hermes* xc (1962), 295–325.

terris fatale regendis', 57), supported by references to the Julian family and to the comet that marked the anniversary of Caesar's death (71). These factors, however, are only incidental to the *raison d'être* of the elegy, which shows that ii. 5 is in fact the exception which proves the rule. For the poem is very closely linked with Messalla and his family: its purpose is to celebrate the accession of Messalinus, Messalla's elder son, into the number of the *quindecimuiri sacris faciundis*. So although Augustanism plays a significant part in the elegy, much more important is the way in which the poem vitally concerns Messalla's family:

> Phoebe, sacras Messalinum sine tangere chartas
> uatis . . . (17–18)

The event is seen in the context of the traditional festival of the Palilia, with Tibullus himself in the conventional guise of the lover-poet and Messalla, the patron, introduced into the celebration:

> tunc Messalla meus pia det spectacula turbae
> et plaudat curru praetereunte pater.
> (119–20)

It is in terms of this close bond between patron and client that the panegyrical poetry of Messalla's protégés can be adequately understood.

This same bond characterizes many of the short, unambitious poems of the *Corpus Tibullianum*. Yet the writing of such poetry (as in the group around Q. Lutatius Catulus) marked a new departure in Republican poetry, away from the 'practical' purpose of panegyric and historical epic. This new interest lived side by side with the panegyrical tradition in the work of the Messalla poets. Such *vers de société* was doubtless the kind written by Messalla himself; earlier we have glimpses of the playful delight of such poetry in Catullus, as in his celebrated fiftieth poem, addressed to Licinius Calvus:

> Hesterno, Licini, die otiosi
> multum lusimus in meis tabellis,
> ut conuenerat esse delicatos.
> (1–3)

This is the respectable pastime of composing light poetry, uncommitted to any political or ideological standpoint; its justification rests merely in the fact that it affords refined amusement to the people who practise it and to those who listen to it.

In the case of the Messalla poets we are particularly fortunate to have considerable documentation for this substratum of poetic activity. The six elegies of the unknown Lygdamus, whatever may be their exact

connection with Messalla,[1] point to the same kind of social background as the other poetry of the *Corpus Tibullianum*. By far the most interesting poems of the *Corpus* for illuminating relations with Messalla within the household, and also for giving us a picture of poetic activity on an uninhibited, unambitious level, are those written by and connected with the name of the girl Sulpicia. She calls herself 'Serui filia Sulpicia' (iii. 16. 4), and was almost certainly the daughter of a S. Sulpicius Rufus (son of Cicero's friend) who married Messalla's sister Valeria:[2] it appears that her father died when she was young, and it is implied (in iii. 14) that she was now Messalla's ward. The longest of the six 'elegidia' written by Sulpicia herself consists of only five couplets, but her little poems are all of considerable importance for appreciating the poetry written in Messalla's circle and for understanding the way in which the concerns of Messalla's household affected the nature of the poetry composed. Sulpicia sings of her love for a certain Cerinthus, but the treatment is in no way academic, and the 'elegidia' are important representatives of that light poetry which was popular in Republican upper-class households. Sulpicia seems to have had the reputation of being a *docta puella* (iii. 12. 2),[3] and so she may well represent the cultural élite to which women like Propertius' Cynthia belonged. But essentially the six 'elegidia' are in-poetry, embedded in the relations and reactions to each other of people who knew each other intimately, so personal and non-universalized in their relevance that they are fully comprehensible only within the circle of the household.

Sulpicia's 'elegidia' are also the point of departure for [Tibullus] iii. 8–12. These five elegies are the work of an unknown author (clearly familiar with the affairs of Messalla's household), who has observed the relationship between Sulpicia and Cerinthus and has subtly arranged the treatment of his theme. In the first, third, and fifth elegies the unknown author stands outside his chosen subject and comments objectively upon it. In the second and fourth elegies the author is objective in a different way: he still deals with Sulpicia's love-affair, but now assumes Sulpicia's words, and the two poems are passed off as hers.[4] These five elegies are again essentially in-poems, and we are just allowed to peep in from outside at what goes on.

It would be a mistake to regard the Messalla poets as working in an

[1] Messalla is nowhere named in the six elegies, and there is considerable difficulty concerning their precise dating, especially with reference to [Tibullus] iii. 5. 15–20. See B. Axelson, *Eranos* lviii (1960), 92–111, 281–97; K. Büchner, *Hermes* xciii (1965), 65–112, 503–8.

[2] Jerome, *adv. Iovian.* 46. Cf. E. Bréguet, *Le Roman de Sulpicia* (Geneva, 1946), 28 f.

[3] Cf. J. P. V. D. Balsdon, *Roman Women* (London, 1962), 273, and n. 62 (p. 330).

[4] This is much in the manner of, e.g., Propertius iv. 3.

isolated coterie, or to suppose that they aimed at nothing other than the writing of poetry as a leisurely pastime. Messalla and his friends were the friends of Virgil and Horace, and the poetry of Tibullus (like Ovid's) transcends mere dilettantism. The interest of Messalla's poets in occasional *vers de société*, and the manner in which Tibullus transcends such writing (while retaining the marks of the circle upon him) can perhaps best be seen by looking at one literary form which was particularly popular with these poets—the genethliacon or birthday-poem.[1] Within the comparatively small literary output of Tibullus and the poets of the *Corpus Tibullianum* there are no fewer than six genethliaca—it is clearly a literary form that lends itself well to the intimate concerns of a closely woven circle—and the rest of this article will concern itself with their use of this form.

Two of Sulpicia's 'elegidia' (iii. 14, 15) are poems concerned with birthdays. In iii. 14 she states that 'inuisus natalis adest' (1)—'inuisus' because Messalla plans to take her to the country on that day, which means that she will be deprived of Cerinthus' company. She appeals to Messalla to stay in the city:

> iam nimium Messalla mei studiose, quiescas;
> non tempestiuae saepe, propinque, uiae.
> hic animum sensusque meos abducta relinquo,
> arbitrio quam uis non sinit esse meo.
>
> (5–8)

Sulpicia does not make it absolutely clear whose birthday is involved, but it is surely natural to see here a reference to her own, with Messalla planning to give her a celebration treat. In the following 'elegidion' (iii. 15), which one takes to be addressed to Cerinthus, she rejoices that Messalla has called off a journey and hence 'natali Romae iam licet esse *tuo*' (2). The coincidence of situation is remarkable and it is tempting to follow Huschke in reading 'meo' for 'tuo' in order to ensure that the one poem caps the other. In either case, Sulpicia's predilection for the birthday-poem as a literary form stands undisputed. The unknown 'Auctor de Sulpicia' also gives examples of birthday-poetry in two of his five elegies. In his fourth poem (iii. 11) Sulpicia herself is made to celebrate Cerinthus' birthday:

> Qui mihi te, Cerinthe, dies dedit, hic mihi sanctus
> atque inter festos semper habendus erit.
> te nascente nouum Parcae cecinere puellis
> seruitium et dederunt regna superba tibi.
>
> (1–4)

[1] See E. Cesareo, *Il carme natalizio nella poesia latina* (Palermo, 1929). There were some Greek antecedents for this type of literature, but it was in Rome of the first century B.C. that a separate literary form was made of it. Virgil (*Ecl.* 4—though hardly typical), Propertius (iii. 10), and Horace (*Odes* iv. 11) have one example each.

This is complemented in the fifth poem (iii. 12), which is written in honour of Sulpicia's birthday:

> Natalis Iuno, sanctos cape turis aceruos,
> quos tibi dat tenera docta puella manu.
> (1–2)

Sulpicia, in her little poems, and the more polished 'Auctor de Sulpicia', are not the only writers of birthday-poems among Messalla's protégés. Tibullus includes two genethliaca in his total extant output of sixteen elegies. The second poem of Book II is a conventional genethliacon, in which Tibullus addresses his married friend Cornutus on his birthday, wishing him well in his marriage and progeny. The seventh poem of Book I, however, is the really striking poem among the genethliaca of Tibullus and the *Corpus Tibullianum*:[1] in it Tibullus far transcends the ephemeral dilettantism of Sulpicia and the 'Auctor de Sulpicia', while retaining an essentially 'Republican' client's concern for the affairs of his patron. Thus, as we have seen, the poem celebrates Messalla's triumph of 27 B.C. But it does much more: it is a highly complex elegy which does not fit neatly into one literary category, but is rather a conflation of many traditional themes into one poetic whole. The centre of the poem contains the themes of triumphal ode and religious hymn (here addressed to Osiris, and subtly introduced by reference to Messalla's exploits in Egypt), but the *framework* of the elegy is provided by its celebration of Messalla's birthday: it may be—as K. F. Smith suggested[2]—that Messalla's triumph and his birthday fell on, or near, the same date. Thus the elegy opens:

> Hunc cecinere diem Parcae fatalia nentes
> stamina, non ulli dissoluenda deo;
> (1–2)

and the closing section of the poem (49–64) returns to the birthday theme, with its invitation to the god Osiris to take part in Messalla's birthday celebrations; a prayer for Messalla's offspring (55–6) leads, through a reference to Messalla's work in repairing the Via Latina, to a final prayer addressed to Natalis:

> at tu, Natalis multos celebrande per annos,
> candidior semper candidiorque ueni.
> (63–4)

This poem far transcends the poetic exercises of the *Corpus Tibullianum*: yet within the poem are skilfully intertwined elements

[1] For detailed analyses, see Cesareo, op. cit. 66 ff.; Luck, op. cit. 77 ff. Also now, Julia H. Gaisser, *CPh* lxvi (1971), 221 ff.

[2] *The Elegies of Albius Tibullus* (New York, 1913), 35.

that are all-important for understanding the nature of poetry in Messalla's circle as a whole. The poem looks back to the tradition of a client's panegyric in praise of his patron's military exploits; Tibullus sees Messalla's achievements as glorious in themselves, not as part of the wider military programme of Augustus. Furthermore, in the way he introduces Messalla's birthday, Tibullus again appears as the poet intimate with his patron and closely concerned with his interests and those of his family; apart from Horace, those who looked to Maecenas for their support seem to have lived a life remarkably independent of him.[1] Tibullus and the poets of the *Corpus Tibullianum*, in accordance with traditional attitudes, looked in towards their circle, and towards the individual patron. Messalla himself inspired the panegyrical poetry written by his clients; less tangible, but as significant, he created within his household an atmosphere in which poets of every grade were enabled to give expression—however dilettantish—to their experiences. Doubtless they would all have readily echoed Ovid's words, written in exile, that Messalla was 'hortator studii causaque faxque mei'.[2]

[1] Cf. A. Dalzell, 'Maecenas and the Poets', *Phoenix* x (1956), 151 ff.

[2] *Pont.* i. 7. 28. I am much indebted to Mr. A. S. Hollis, Keble College, Oxford, and to Professor L. A. Moritz, University College, Cardiff, for advice and criticism at different stages in the preparation of the material contained in this article.