7

Grand Addressees in Odes *1–3 continued . . . Odes to Maecenas*

At the end of this chapter there is an appendix containing material on Maecenas' origins and career, Augustus' equestrian advisers, and other topics to which I shall have occasion to refer. One important assumption which I make in this chapter – and which is justified in the appendix – is that Maecenas maintained an important political role until the late twenties.

'Prima dicta mihi summa *non*-dicende Camena – for the last and honorific place is for *me*.' This was my blunt interpretation of Horace's *dispositio* in the matter of *Odes* 1.1 and 3.29: i.e. honour for Maecenas, but also self-assertion and self-praise for Horace. In 1.1, too, I showed how Horace, as well as paying tribute to his great *amicus* in the sense of patron-*amicus*, also alluded to the fact or hope that Maecenas was his *amicus* in the full and uneuphemistic sense of friend, too. If we look at all the Odes to Maecenas in Books 1–3 we shall find Horace continuing in the same rather ambiguous vein: juggling familiarity and self-assertion with deprecation, balancing declarations of gratitude with pronouncements and postures of independence. The sensitive, image-conscious Horace of the *Satires* is still very visible, but he is prouder and more confident: not proud and confident enough, however, simply to dispense with his problematical policy of social self-presentation.

One point to get clear straight away is that Maecenas evidently had a sense of humour, and could take a joke against himself. He was a big man, big enough to tolerate tolerable ribbing by his inferiors. This gives vital context to, and possible explanation of, Odes which may otherwise seem to us too close to the bone. Already in the thirties B.C., Horace's most cautious period, the poet felt able to allude amusingly to Maecenas' affair with an

actor named Bathyllus[1] (*Epod.* 14): arguably indeed this is the cheekiest poem to Maecenas of all.[2] Similarly in *Satire* 1.1 Horace felt free to tease the great man on the topic of his money (see Ch. 8). And we might begin our study of 'Maecenas Odes' with a glance at *Ode* 2.12. This is an amusing pastiche of the Elegists' 'recusatio' (see the appendix to Ch. 3 and cf. the discussion of *Ode* 1.6 in Ch. 6). I quote some important lines:

nolis longa ferae bella Numantiae (1)
nec durum Hannibalem nec Siculum mare
Poeno purpureum sanguine mollibus
aptari citharae modis . . .

. . . tuque pedestribus (9)
dices historiis proelia Caesaris,
Maecenas, melius ductaque per uias
regum colla minacium.

me dulces dominae Musa Licymniae (13)
cantus, me uoluit dicere lucidum
fulgentis oculos et bene mutuis
fidum pectus amoribus . . .

You would not wish to have the long wars of fierce Numantia nor harsh Hannibal nor the Sicilian sea red with Punic blood fitted to the soft measures of the lyre . . . You yourself in prose histories will better utter Caesar's battles and the necks of threatening kings led through the streets. Me the Muse has wanted to tell of the sweet singing of my mistress Licymnia, of her brightly flashing eyes and her heart well faithful in mutual love . . .

The Ode opens with a discreet example of Horace's familiar trick. Displeased or embarrassed by a public and political role, or its prospect, he presents his excuse: his *lyra* is naturally *iocosa* (*Ode* 3.3.69), his lyrics merely *ludicra* (*Epist.* 1.1.10).[3] Here, warfare does not suit the soft measures of the lyre, so Maecenas would not want him to essay an epic, would he (*nolis* . . .)? By now we are well aware that warfare, etc. doesn't

1. See Syme *The Roman Revolution* 342, J. Griffin 'Augustus and the Poets', in Millar and Segal *Caesar Augustus* 194, *Latin Poets and Roman Life* 25, Tac. *Ann.* 1.54 'Augustus countenanced these theatrical exhibitions, in complaisance to Maecenas, who had fallen violently in love with Bathyllus, *effuso in amorem Bathylli*', Dio 54.17.5. Note how Horace – after flaunting the name Bathyllus – carefully avoids any word that defines the sex of Maecenas' lover (*Epod.* 14.12–15) and uses as a comparison (the fire that burnt Troy) an image that brings Paris most particularly to mind (cf. Griffin loc. cit.). Griffin uses the word 'scandalous' of the affair, but it is interesting that both Dio and Tacitus imply, I think, that Augustus knew about it and was complaisant.
2. There is another tease concerning Maecenas' sexual indulgence in *Epod.* 3.19ff.
3. See p. 78.

suit him when it doesn't suit him; it does when it does. Here it doesn't and the trick is played. Maecenas of course will be as aware of Horace's game as you or I. The Ode therefore conveys a pleasing complicity between poet and grand patron.

The pastiche of elegiac 'recusatio' becomes especially evident in lines 13ff. The notion that Licymnia is Maecenas' wife is a fantasy of the scholia:[4] she is obviously presented as Horace's lover. But also his *domina*. And *domina* of course is the favoured word of the Elegist for his lover-mistress, the word that exposed the Elegist's characteristic servility.[5] Horace deploys it of women in erotic contexts very infrequently, and when he does so it is to bring to mind that humiliating elegiac resonance;[6] his own characteristically more relaxed attitude to love and women does not embrace servility.[7] So it must be in *parodic* vein that he here presents himself in the Elegists' humiliated posture – and he undermines any temptation on our part to take him very earnestly by a neat little bilingual pun.[8] Then, mimicking the 'recusatio', he presents a deity as urging one literary course of action, and, by implication, forbidding another: the *Musa* of line 13 plays the admonitory role originally played by Apollo in the 'recusatio' and expresses a desire for love poetry, and not (by implication) for epic.

All this is good fun, Horace mimics the Elegists, and Maecenas we assume has the humour to accept his parodied excuse for not writing about Augustus' military deeds.[9] But more reliance than this is placed upon the great patron's capacity for humour. According to Horace, it is not he, Horace, who should be recounting Augustus' battles, but Maecenas himself: in a prose history. The thought process here (from line 1 on), deemed difficult, is really quite clear. Nisbet and Hubbard II.192 have it exactly: 'Horace is saying "Just as the Numantine War and Gigantomachia are unsuitable for lyric, so too the battles of Augustus, which it will be better that you should describe in prose." But instead of using *ut* and *ita* he makes the two clauses coordinate (. . . *comparatio paratactica* . . .) . . . ; and he

4. See Syme *The Augustan Aristocracy* 390, Nisbet – Hubbard II.180f. (cautiously). Legions of commentators and writers have however believed Ps.-Acro, e.g. La Penna *Orazio e l'ideologia del principato* 126, Fraenkel *Horace* 219.
5. Cf. Prop. 1.1.21, 1.3.17, 1.4.2, 1.7.6, etc., Tibull. 1.1.46, etc.; Lyne *The Latin Love Poets* 80–81 with n. 23.
6. *Domina* in the *Odes*, besides 2.12.13, only at 2.8.19 of lover-mistresses; *Epist.* 1.2.25 graphically shows the power Horace feels in the word, used in erotic contexts.
7. Cf. Lyne *Latin Love Poets* 201ff. on the *Odes*. Note already the attitude displayed (more coarsely, suiting the genre) in *Sat.* 1.2.
8. Note the bilingual play on words *Musa Licymniae cantus*: *Licymnia – (g)lukhymnia – hymnos/cantus*, discreetly observed by Nisbet – Hubbard II.194. For further such bilingual plays in Hor. cf. *Odes* 1.4.17 *domus exilis Plutonia* (Ch. 5 p. 66 n. 14); cf. too 2.16.17 with Nisbet – Hubbard ad loc.
9. Nisbet – Hubbard II.182f. see Horace as playing particularly with Propertius' 'recusatio' in 2.1.

adds emphasis as well as variety by making Maecenas the subject of the sentence instead of putting him in a subordinate clause.' But why, we might ask, the emphasis on Maecenas? A kind of nuanced compliment? A touch of irony?[10] More than a touch, surely, and nothing to do with Maecenas' taste in poetry.[11] The notion of a prose history of Augustus' wars by Maecenas was laughably impossible: for Maecenas was notorious for his foppish and affected prose,[12] and Horace can but draw attention to its eccentricity by this risibly unpractical suggestion.[13] *Pedestribus*, conveying the notion 'prose', packs further jokes. As Nisbet and Hubbard say, the word has a military tone in our context ('foot-slogging'): a nice little joke. But it is also funny in a way that Nisbet and Hubbard do not see; for the last thing that Maecenas' prose was was foot-slogging: more humour. All humour at the expense of the literary Maecenas. Presumably it amused him.

In addition, the run of thought (as I see it) in lines 21ff. has amusing innuendo and implications – and not much ambiguity.[14] 'Surely,' says Horace, '<if you were in my shoes, as lucky as I am> you would not be willing to exchange any amount of fabulous wealth for a hair of Licymnia's head, *cum flagrantia detorquet ad oscula/ceruicem* . . . , "when she bends her kneck toward burning kisses . . .", etc.'.[15] Horace is implying that Maecenas is as susceptible to sexual charm as he is. And, too, he brings to mind Maecenas' excessive and politically unfashionable wealth. For *num tu quae tenuit diues Achaemenes/aut pinguis Phrygiae Mygdonias opes/ permutare uelis*, 'Surely *you*[16] would not exchange the possessions of rich Achaemenes or the wealth of fat Phrygia <in my shoes>' is a figure of speech with an edge to it, when addressed to the rich, *diues*,[17] Maecenas who did indeed possess fabulous wealth.

10. La Penna *Orazio e l'ideologia* 126: although Maecenas too was a poet of *paignia* he would be in a better position than Horace to celebrate the victories of Augustus. Syndikus *Die Lyrik des Horaz* I.414 canvasses the possibilities of a) genuine deference to Maecenas' literary qualities, b) irony, c) a gentle but pointed reminder that Maecenas' own literary production was not historical, but neoteric.
11. See note above.
12. It was so notorious that Seneca uses it as his type case of *talis hominibus fuit oratio, qualis uita*: *Epist.* 114, with fascinating quotations from Maecenas.
13. Plin. *Nat.* 7.148 recounting Octavian's inglorious activity after Philippi tells us of *fuga et triduo in palude aegroti et (ut fatentur Agrippa ac Maecenas) aqua subter cutem fusa turgidi latebra*. That, as Nisbet – Hubbard see (in their note on 2.12.10), need suggest no more than reminiscences by Augustus' two great adjutants.
14. Thus I believe Nisbet – Hubbard to be right at I.180f. ('On the other hand . . . one can even explain . . .'); but they hedge most unnecessarily.
15. In the last line read Bentley's *occupat*: see Brink 'Horatian Notes II' 27.
16. The insertion of *tu* is emphatic.
17. On *diues* and Maecenas see below p. 128.

The Ode therefore relies on, in a sense it advertises, a sense of humour in Maecenas: Maecenas could accept an elegant parody of the elegiac 'recusatio' instead of the epic which Augustus wanted, he could accept allusions to his awful prose, to his sexual susceptibility and to his money. None of this, presumably, annoyed him. On the contrary – presumably – he enjoyed being rallied in these ways.

The poem also advertises the fact that Horace is secure and intimate enough to rally him in these ways.

One wonders whether Maecenas minded the fact that this (2.12), his first Ode in Book 2, is displaced not only from the major honorific position (opening the book), but also from a position of lesser importance (beginning the second half of the book):[18] that minor honour is given to Quinctius (2.11) who displaces Maecenas (2.12) thence by one.

Of the seven Odes explicitly addressed to Maecenas in Books 1–3 (1.1, 1.20, 2.12, 2.17, 3.8, 3.16, 3.29), three may be classed as 'Invitation Poems' (1.20, 3.8, 3.29). In Book 1, thus, we first have the honorific 1.1 *Maecenas atiuis edite regibus*; then we have 1.20, also honorific: note line 5, *clare*[19] *Maecenas eques*, 'Maecenas, illustrious knight'. *Ode* 1.20[20] is honorific, but it is also an 'Invitation Poem', and that has interesting implications.

There is evidence to suggest that the 'Invitation Poem' had become a minor genre of literature by Horace's time. Originating, like all ancient genres, in a social occasion or requirement,[21] it had gained a life and momentum of its own. Poets, offering or inventing an invitation to a party,

18. See above p. 69.
19. The MSS reading *care* is at first sight attractive, and defended by Murray 'Symposium and Genre in the Poetry of Horace' 45 n. 20: Horace would be constructing a virtual oxymoron (a combination of familiar and formal) like *dulce decus* in 1.1.2. But the arguments of Nisbet – Hubbard ad loc. and Shackleton Bailey *Profile of Horace* 90 persuade me that Bentley was right to adopt *clare* from the *codd. deteriores*. There are 'oxymorons' in 1.20 but they are longer range than in 1.1 (*dulce decus*): e.g. *uile potabis . . . Sabinum . . . clare Maecenas eques*; see below.
20. On this poem, cf. Cairns in Woodman and Powell *Author and Audience in Latin Literature* 84–109, Macleod *Collected Essays* 226–9, as well as e.g. Syndikus *Die Lyrik* I.214–17. Cairns has interesting ideas about 'The Acclamation: its Occasion, Significance and Date', 91ff., and about the wines, 98ff. (see below n. 26). Macleod is good on the Epicurean ethics of the poem, and, in particular, has interesting ideas on the use of *temperant* in line 11 ('Maecenas drinks the grape "tamed" by the Calenian press: Falernian and Formian do not "master" or "control" Horace's cups. The public figure, then, dominates, and is dominated, by his wealth or fame; the poet is simply free.' In spite of this observation Macleod does not see the poem as being as self-assertive as I do).
21. Cf. Ch. 5 p. 59.

exploited the opportunity to exhibit wit, point or character.[22] We should note, however, that Horace seems inordinately fond of the genre. Besides the invitations to Maecenas, there is for example the invitation to Quinctius (2.11).[23] Why this fondness?

A neglected point in play here is the social implication of an invitation at Rome. Cicero in the *Pro Murena* offers a revealing glimpse into Roman social rules. He defends Murena's attendance by 'clients' during elections by observing that, while patrons can easily serve clients, it is not so easy for clients to repay the debt, *Pro Murena* 68–71, esp. 71: *ipsi denique . . . non dicere pro nobis . . . non uocare domum suam possunt*, 'they cannot plead in court for us . . . they cannot invite us to their houses'. So what else can they do to repay us (Cicero's argument runs) besides humble services like dancing attendance on us during elections? What should interest us here is *non uocare domum suam possunt*. Cicero is talking of humble clients (*homines tenues, tenuiorum amicorum, Mur.* 70); he reveals a fascinating social fact. Clients of lowly status could not invite their patrons to their own houses. To be able to invite one's patron to one's house therefore says something about one's relationship and social status in regard to that patron. To publish such 'invitations' is to advertise that relationship. This is I think the or a main reason why Horace is fond of the genre. Our socially sensitive and image-conscious poet (cf. Ch. 2) can show the world that he is sufficiently at home with grandees like Maecenas and

22. See Nisbet – Hubbard on *Ode* 1.20, Cairns in Woodman and Powell *Author and Audience* 86, with bibliography. A very good example is Philodemus, *Anth. Pal.* 11.44 (=Gow and Page Philodemus XXIII). Philodemus is a contemporary of Cicero. (Cairns *Author and Audience* 90 argues that *Ode* 1.20 is 'partly modelled' on this poem of Philodemus.) No surviving Hellenistic Greek examples can be pointed to (*pace* the assumptions of many scholars), but we may infer their existence from Philodemus, also from Catull. 13 which is clearly playing with an established genre. In Horace cf. too, besides those poems mentioned above, *Ode* 4.12 and *Epist.* 1.5. Cf. too a Greek epigram by Lucilius, *Anth. Pal.* 11.10. The genre is popular with Martial. See further Syndikus *Catull, Eine Interpretation* I.130; Williams *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* 7–10, 103–21, esp. 126–7; and there are interesting remarks in Murray 'Symposium and Genre' esp. 44–5, though he overestimates the evidence for the genre before Horace; and I cannot accept that Philodemus' poem, like Antipater *Anth. Pal.* 9.92=Gow and Page Antipater of Thessalonica II – a quite different sort of poem – is 'mediating . . . an appeal for assistance'. On the other hand see Murray's observant comment quoted n. 25 below.
23. Note too, besides the invitations to Maecenas, *Epist.* 1.5 to Manlius Torquatus and *Ode* 4.12 to 'Vergilius'. *Ode* 3.21 also (cf. above p. 94) carries the implication of an invitation to the great Messalla Corvinus, but, generically speaking, the poem is cast as a (parodic) hymn: a typical piece of Horatian *Kreuzung*. Here Horace has some fun at Messalla's expense (see Ch. 6 p. 94) – but the simple fact of his intention to invite him is socially suggestive (see above).

Messalla[24] to be able to invite them to parties – something a mere ordinary client simply could not do.[25]

Of course Horace in 1.20 is deferential to the great man: *clare Maecenas eques*, 'Maecenas, illustrious knight' (line 5). He also stresses the simplicity of the wine he offers (line 1 *uile Sabinum*, 'cheap Sabine wine', the 'light' as opposed to the 'noble' Sabine wine).[26] This sort of emphasis belongs to the conventions of invitation from the lesser to the great,[27] but Horace puts it to his own use. He openly and deferentially admits, we may infer, that he cannot hope to match the luxury to which the grand Maecenas is accustomed (the wines of 1.20.9–12).[28] Meanwhile the wine offered symbolizes gratitude,[29] loyalty and devotion: Horace had bottled it himself[30] at the time of Maecenas' recovery from illness, and dated it by the public acclamation of that event, rather than by the names of the consuls of the year as was normal (1.20.3–8).[31] So there is plenty of deference and devotion in the Ode. Nevertheless the important fact remains, we might say that it is advertised: Horace can invite his patron to his house. Horace can bring into our imaginations the picture of Maecenas downing wine *chez* Horace (*uile*

24. On *Ode* 3.21 see n. 23 above.
25. Cf. Murray loc. cit.: '<The Invitation Poem> becomes a celebration of the *ciuilitas* of the great man who will honour an inferior by being his guest; it also establishes the importance of the poetic host who has such a powerful friend . . . it enables the poet to suggest his acceptance by the great . . .' It is surprising how this latter aspect of the Invitation Poem is ignored by most scholars. Note e.g. Cairns in Woodman and Powell *Author and Audience* 85f. 'The implicit content of *Odes* 1.20 will turn out to have an unsurprising common thread – encomium of Maecenas which complements and confirms the ode's explicit praise of him.'
26. For the two Sabine wines, see Cairns in Woodman and Powell *Author and Audience* 87f.
27. Cf. Syndikus *Die Lyrik* I.215. The Horace of the *Odes* had better quality wines available to him (1.17.21, 3.21.5, etc.).
28. With some hesitation I have accepted Nisbet – Hubbard's interpretation of lines 9–12: ' "you can drink" (i.e. in your own house). The future is concessive . . .'; cf. further Fraenkel *Horace* 216 with n. 1; thus too, by implication, Macleod *Collected Essays* 229. Cairns in Woodman and Powell *Author and Audience* 99ff. argues that *bibes* in 10 is a 'future of invitation' like *potabis* in 1, thus that Horace offers Caecuban and Calenian to Maecenas (as well as Sabine), but not Falernian and Formian. His arguments are not to be dismissed lightly – and on any account the information he provides on all the wines (Caecuban, etc., and Sabine) is useful and interesting. Certainly I would agree with Cairns (*Author and Audience* 99) that *potabis* may simply be called a 'future of invitation' ('Come and drink'): cf. too Syndikus *Die Lyrik* 214, but contrast Fraenkel *Horace* 214 and the note of Nisbet – Hubbard ad loc.
29. 'Sabine' glances at Horace's position on his Sabine estate, given to him by Maecenas.
30. Note *ipse*, Macleod *Collected Essays* 227, Syndikus *Die Lyrik* I.216.
31. Cf. Nisbet – Hubbard on 1.20.3, Cairns in Woodman and Powell *Author and Audience* 92, Macleod *Collected Essays* 227.

potabis, 'come and drink[32] cheap Sabine wine, which I . . .'). An item of diction is important here: *poto, potabis* (line 1), also used in the Quinctius invitation (2.11.17). *Poto* is a lusty word, implying deeper drinking than *bibo* and containing greater familiarity of tone.[33] The flavour of the word emphasizes the underlying message: after all due deference, Maecenas and Horace are sufficiently on a level to be drinking buddies. With the lesser but still grand Quinctius, Horace can go further and talk not only of drinking with his buddy (*potamus*, 17), but calling in a tart, *scortum*.[34]

Underlying *Ode* 1.20, therefore, the second of the Odes to Maecenas in the whole collection, is another piece of image-management. The poem carries an emphatic social statement. 1.1.2 spoke of '*dulce* decus'. Now we see that – after all due deference – Horace is on friendly enough terms with the illustrious knight to invite him to his house, and to drink familiarly with him. Nor (to look at the choice of Sabine wine again, in another light) need he produce his best wine, although he had better wine available;[35] he can mutely recall Maecenas to the pleasure of simplicity;[36] he may presume that his friend will value a symbol of devotion more than materials to flatter his rank.

The other 'Invitation Poems' to Maecenas continue the policy, one which we may think of as slight self-assertion. *Ode* 3.8 is superbly and discreetly balanced. In Book 3 the first six Odes (the Roman Odes) may be thought to serve Maecenas' interests, but Maecenas himself has to wait until the eighth Ode – until after the sapping performed by the frivolous 3.7[37] – for an Ode actually to be addressed to him. And when we get to 3.8, it is a little while before we realize that it is in fact addressed to him.[38] The Ode begins thus:

> Martiis caelebs quid agam Kalendis,
> quid uelint flores et acerra turis
> plena miraris . . .

32. On the tense of *potabis* and its implication, see n. 28 above.
33. The *TLL* article collects some statistics, but context as well as sheer totals need to be scrutinized. See further Nisbet – Hubbard on *Ode* 1.20.1. Another statistic: Horace uses *poto* four times in the *Odes*, thirteen times in the more familiar hexameter works. The other two occasions in the *Odes* (the two besides the two mentioned above) are Horace's homily to Chloris 3.15.16 *non . . . decent . . . poti uetulam faece tenus cadi* and, at 4.13.5, his *pota* of the wretched, shamed Lyce. Both back up one's impression that *poto* implies deep and familiar drinking: suited to friends who are dedicated to having a good time – but ill-suited to or dangerous for, say, women.
34. On the word *scortum* see Lyne *Latin Love Poets* 197f.
35. See n. 27 above.
36. Cf. *Ode* 3.29 discussed pp. 111–16. With my remark here cf. Macleod *Collected Essays* 229, part of which is quoted above n. 20. But my Horace is more presumptuous than Macleod's.
37. See pp. 175–8.
38. This fact should not be obscure. The translation by Mandruzzato (in Traina e Mandruzzato) misleadingly *begins* 'Mecenate . . .'.

. . .
docte sermones utriusque linguae?

You marvel at what I, a bachelor, am up to on the 1st of March, what the flowers signify and the box of incense . . . , you who are learned in the speech of both languages?

It is 1 March, the feast day of married ladies (the *Matronalia*). Horace, a bachelor, is preparing to celebrate it. This is an odd action, which, we infer, has provoked surprise in his addressee.

Who, we may wonder, is this cultured friend of Horace's, who is stylish in both Greek and Latin?[39]

Whoever he is, Horace proceeds to explain why he is celebrating. It is the first anniversary of his miraculous escape from the falling tree (cf. *Odes* 2.13, 2.17). To celebrate it, and as part-fulfilment of a vow he made at the time of his escape (3.8.6–8), he will uncork an amphora of some remarkable vintage (9–12),[40] and the addressee is invited to share it (13f.): *sume, Maecenas, cyathos amici/sospitis centum* . . . , 'Lift up a century of cups to your friend's safety . . .'. The addressee turns out to be Maecenas. And Horace feels able not only to invite him to join in the celebratory drinks, but to make the assumption that he is regarded by Maecenas as a friend in the full sense (the context tolerates no lesser, technical sense in the word *amici*). He then proceeds to bid the great man put aside cares of state, *mitte ciuilis super urbe curas*; he justifies the suggestion with great reasonableness by appealing to the present stability of the empire, achieved by military and other means (3.8.18–24). And so (25ff.):

neglegens ne qua populus laboret
parce priuatus nimium cauere et
dona praesentis cape laetus horae ac
linque seuera.

Put out of your mind fears lest the people be in any way in trouble; be a private citizen,[41] and spare yourself excessive anxiety. Happily gather the gifts of the hour at hand, and leave serious matters.

39. Quinn ad loc. '*sermones* . . . i.e. writings on ritual'. I cannot see the justification for this.
40. It seems to be the general assumption that the vintage referred to is that of 66 B.C., the year before Horace was born (cf. Syndikus *Die Lyrik* II.106 n. 16, Quinn ad loc., Williams *The Third Book of Horace's Odes* 72). Would not the year 33 B.C., when Tullus, son of the consul of 66 B.C., was consul with Octavian, be a more immediate inference? Cf. Kiessling – Heinze.
41. I am assuming that *mitte ciuilis super urbe curas* confirms that Maecenas still plays an important political role (cf. the appendix on Maecenas at the end of this chapter item 3), and that *parce priuatus* is therefore proleptic.

The balance here is indeed superb. Horace compliments Maecenas on his culture, acknowledges his great political responsibilities, but suggests that it would not be inopportune now for him to take a break: the political situation, thankfully, is good. The great man is recognized in a range of capacities. But think too of the picture Horace presents of himself. He is a man in a position to invite Maecenas to join in a moment of intimate celebration;[42] a man who can assume Maecenas regards him as a friend; who can presume, tactfully, to advise him that it is opportune to relax from affairs of state. In addition, Maecenas is for him first of all a man of culture (*docte sermones* . . .), who requires from him no more particular introduction and no more formal or honorific address, whose identity can (as they are friends) be revealed as it were casually, when Horace feels like it, at a 'natural' point in the discourse . . . Maecenas is presented as the great man, but Horace presents himself as on intimate terms with the great. There is discreet flattery here for himself, as well as for his great addressee.

The third 'Invitation Poem' to Maecenas is 3.29, the poem to which Horace accords the carefully displaced honour of penultimacy. It opens with an honorific address closely related to that of 1.1: *Tyrrhena regum progenies* (3.29.1), 'Tuscan progeny of kings', picks up and balances the thought of *atauis edite regibus*, 'sprung from kingly ancestors'. Then, inviting Maecenas (identified swiftly, this time, in line 3) to a simple party, it carries, as 1.20 did, the – already not unambiguous[43] – contrast between Horatian simplicity and the luxury to which Maecenas is accustomed; and it urges the great man to set aside his political responsibilities, as 3.8 did. But on both these topics Horace is more self-assertive, and takes more liberties than in the previous poems. I very much doubt whether Horace is, in this poem, exactly encouraging the great man to adopt a position that he holds already, or thinks he holds.[44] The poem hardly seems designed to be quite as deferential as either 1.20 or 3.8. We must, of course, remember the sense of humour that Maecenas detectably possessed. But I would argue that Horace relies on it to take liberties – to be more self-assertive.

42. The astute reader will remember that Horace had seen in his escape from the falling tree an event which tied his fate to Maecenas': *Ode* 2.17 (on which see below). If we remember this, we may sense behind our Ode an 'unspoken' – unspoken, because between intimates the obvious need not be spoken – appeal to this conjunction: Maecenas should feel all the more behoven to join in his friend's celebration, since it was an escape which paralleled his own, and illustrated how their two fates were intertwined. If we readers pick up this 'unspoken' intimacy (actually of course it is 'spoken', because of the existence of 2.17 and its *dispositio*), we may get an even greater impression of Horace's familiarity with the great man.
43. Cf. above p. 109.
44. Cf. Nisbet – Hubbard II.3.

The first thing we notice is that the topic of luxury and simplicity is moralized, to the disadvantage of luxury. For example (9ff.):

> fastidiosam desere copiam et
> molem propinquam nubibus arduis;
> omitte mirari beatae
> fumum et opes strepitumque Romae.

Abandon cloying plenty and your pile close to the lofty clouds. Cease to marvel at the smoke and wealth and noise of opulent Rome.

This pictures wealth – which Maecenas is invited to leave – in a disadvantageous light (*fastidiosam*), it disparages the opulence of the city ('smoke and wealth and noise'), and refers to Maecenas' towering house on the Esquiline in words that allude (humorously, unnoticed by commentators)[45] to *topoi* on the perils of greatness. With Maecenas' 'pile close to the lofty clouds' cf. e.g. Horace's own moralizing stanza, 2.10.9–12:

> saepius uentis agitatur ingens
> pinus et *celsae grauiore casu*
> *decidunt turres* feriuntque summos
> fulgura montis.

More often it is the vast pine tree that is shaken by the winds, *lofty towers fall with heavier crash*, and lightning strikes the tops of mountains.

Nisbet and Hubbard's note on 2.10.9 gives further highly relevant documentation of the *topos*, particularly Herodotus 7.10.[46] Meanwhile, simplicity is given positive and pointed advertisement (13ff.):

> plerumque gratae *diuitibus* uices
> mundaeque paruo sub lare pauperum
> cenae sine aulaeis et ostro
> sollicitam explicuere frontem.

Very often change, pleasing to the rich, and simple meals at the small homes of poor men, with no tapestries and purple coverlets, have smoothed anxiety from their foreheads.

(Williams)

45. Fraenkel *Horace* 225 n. 3 'On l.10, *molem propinquam nubibus arduis*, the commentators say nothing . . .'. Fraenkel's own information is not very illuminating, nor have subsequent commentators filled the gap.
46. Nisbet – Hubbard on 2.10.9: 'the illustrations of the perils of greatness go back to Hdt 7.10 (the speech of Artabanus to Xerxes)'. E.g. Artabanus points out: 'You see how the god smites with his thunderbolt creatures of more than common greatness . . . but those that are small do not provoke him; you see *how it is always onto the tallest buildings . . . that he hurls his bolts*.'

Diues is the epithet that especially fits Maecenas:[47] simplicity has something to offer that people like him lack and need. There is, it must be stressed, nothing offensive here. But the contrast made between wealth and simplicity in 1.20 was more self-deprecating; here the term self-deprecating is hardly appropriate at all. And while we may be sure that the great man would be amused by such laudations of simplicity and disparagements of plenty, we may be nearly as sure that Horace is not parroting views that the lavishly luxurious Maecenas actually held:[48] it is indeed a more self-assertive utterance than, say, 1.20.1ff. and 9–12.

More self-assertive still is the way Horace urges the great man to set aside political responsibilities.[49] In *Ode* 3.8 he appealed to the stability of the empire: by Maecenas' own statesman's criteria, Horace implied, he was justified in taking a little time out. Here he (humorously) belittles any and all political preoccupation from a 'philosophical' standpoint (3.29.25ff.):

> tu ciuitatem quis deceat status
> curas . . .
> . . .
> prudens futuri temporis exitum (29)
> caliginosa nocte premit deus
> ridetque si mortalis ultra
> fas trepidat. quod adest memento
>
> componere aequus; cetera fluminis
> ritu feruntur . . .

You keep worrying about what arrangement will suit our state . . . prudently god hides the issue of time to come in blackness of night, and laughs if a mortal is anxious beyond what is right. Remember to make the best of the present moment with equanimity: the rest is carried along like a river . . .

Prudentia is a virtue that Horace elsewhere attributes to god (*Ode* 1.3.22) and a statesman (*Ode* 4.9.35).[50] Here it is attributed to god, who, according to Horace, counsels a course of action that no prudent statesman could possibly follow: don't think about tomorrow. A statesman who did not possess a sense of humour might find this description of *prudentia*, and this reason for taking time out, irritatingly inappropriate.[51]

47. See below, p. 128.
48. Maecenas fr. 1 Courtney *ingeritur fumans calido cum farre catinus* might seem to imply that Maecenas lauded simplicity, but the fragment lacks context – which is vital.
49. My arguments about the unity of Horace's Odes (Ch. 5) now start to become important.
50. These, with 3.29.29, are the only examples of *prudens* in the *Odes*. In the *Odes* there is no example of the subst. *prudentia*.
51. And Maecenas (we must keep reminding ourselves) was a statesman at this time: see the appendix to this chapter, item 3 also n. 52 below.

Horace makes his line of argument even more explicit later (lines 41ff.):

ille potens sui
laetusque deget, cui licet in diem
dixisse 'uixi: cras uel atra
nube polum Pater occupato

uel sole puro; non tamen irritum,
quodcumque retro est, efficiet neque
diffinget infectumque reddet
quod fugiens semel hora uexit.'

That man shall live as his own master and in happiness who can say each day: 'I have lived: tomorrow let the Father fill the sky with black cloud or clear sun; but he will not make null whatever is past nor will he alter and render undone what once the fleeing hour has carried away.'

A philosophy like this is all very well for the private, Epicurean citizen, musing quietly in his Epicurean garden. But it cannot possibly be a politician's wisdom.[52] Compared with the politically justified advice given in *Ode* 3.8, the thinking offered in 3.29 is loftily Horatian, amusingly unuseful to the actual statesman Maecenas.

And then, *Fortuna*. In *Ode* 1.35 this stern goddess had been asked to protect Caesar and the Roman legions in their expiating duty (lines 29ff.): an orthodox poem. In contrast to this we now learn, by implication, that Fortune makes the whole political system a game of chance (49ff.):

Fortuna saeuo laeta negotio et
ludum insolentem ludere pertinax
transmutat incertos *honores*,
nunc mihi, nunc alii benigna.

Fortune taking pleasure in her cruel job and stubborn at playing her high-handed game changes around her unstable honours, kind now to me, now to another.

(Williams)

The word *honor* is not of course confined to the honours of a political career, the *cursus honorum*, but it must inevitably bring them to mind. The stanza is a splendid reason for a man like Horace to abandon all political

52. 'Maecenas was an extremely conspicuous Epicurean', Cairns informs us (in Woodman and Powell *Author and Audience* 89), referring to J.M. André *Mécène: essai de biographie spirituelle* (Paris, 1967), Ch. 1; cf. too n. 61 below. It depends upon what you mean by Epicurean. Despite some hedging (cf. Fowler in Griffin and Barnes *Philosophia Togata* 120ff.), the Epicurean position on politics, public life and power was pretty clear: stay out of it. So, in the twenties – especially in a poem which *declares* Maecenas' political concerns (lines 25–8) – it would be dangerously misleading to call Maecenas an Epicurean: see the appendix to this chapter, item 3.

concerns and have a party; but it is pretty inappropriate to an active and serious politician like Maecenas, even if, for himself and for his own reasons, he eschewed the trappings of the *cursus honorum* itself.[53]

The stanza is also a great cue for Horace to end the poem with praise of his own ability to take good fortune or to leave it (53ff.):

laudo manentem; si celeris quatit
pennas, resigno quae dedit et mea
uirtute me inuoluo probamque
pauperiem sine dote quaero.

non est meum, si mugiat Africis
malus procellis, ad miseras preces
decurrere et uotis pacisci
ne Cypriae Tyriaeque merces

addant auaro diuitias mari.
tunc me biremis praesidio scaphae
tutum per Aegaeos tumultus
aura feret geminusque Pollux.

I praise her while she stays with me; if she shakes her swift wings, I give up what she has awarded me and I wrap my virtue close about me and go courting honest poverty that has no dowry. It is not my way, should the mast groan under African storms, to take refuge in pitiable prayers and bargain with vows that the merchandise of Cyprus and Tyre should not add wealth to the greedy sea: in those circumstances the breeze and twin Pollux will carry me through Aegean storms safe in the protection of the two-oared lifeboat.

(Williams)

Horace takes his cue, and gives us three stanzas of self-praise. Of course there is humour – saving humour – in the picture of Horace snugly cloaked in his own virtue, and self-sufficient in his protecting dinghy; but behind this camouflage of humour there are suggestions of self-regard and independence. In fact, a succession of points needs to be noticed here. First, we should remember that the poem was cast as an invitation *to Maecenas*. The *Fortuna* argument developed, the fickleness of fortune was ostensibly adduced, to persuade Maecenas to join him in a party. It is an amusingly inappropriate argument to direct at the statesman – meanwhile it allows Horace to develop this engaging picture of his own self-sufficiency. An invitation to the great man concludes therefore with disingenuous misunderstanding of the great man's real preoccupations – and with much regard to the poet's own self-image. Secondly, a pointed detail, Horace may well cheerfully regard the loss of mercantile wealth, *diuitias*, as nothing to him,

53. On Maecenas' decision to stay an *eques*, see the appendix to this chapter, item 2.

but it would not be a nothing to the *diues* and mercantile Maecenas.[54] Finally, this 'Invitation to Maecenas', displaced from its position of ultimacy, but picking up the first poem (*atauis edite regibus/Tyrrhena regum progenies*), humorously pictures Horace as safe and sound under the protection, *praesidio* (62), of a dinghy carried by the breeze and the god Pollux. An astute reader might sense in this a rather pointed Horatian hint of independence from his great patron, the patron whom he had addressed in the first Ode as, precisely, his *praesidium* (1.1.2).[55] All in all *Ode* 3.29 is an 'Invitation Poem' that, compared with 1.20 and 3.8 (which carried their own measure of self-assertion) takes liberties, insinuates independence, relies on Maecenas' sense of humour, disingenuously asserts a philosophy and line of reasoning appropriate to Horace himself but pretty inappropriate to the great man: discreetly, indeed not so discreetly, it is a self-assertive poem.[56]

In Book 1, Maecenas receives the first and the twentieth Odes, discussed above; in Book 3, he receives three Odes, 8 and 29 (above) and 16 (below). In Book 2, we find two Odes addressed to him – and one other that concerns him. The second Ode, besides 2.12 (above), that is actually addressed to him is 2.17. It opens thus:

> cur me querelis exanimas tuis?
> nec dis amicum est nec mihi te prius
> obire, Maecenas, mearum
> grande decus columenque rerum.
>
> Why do you terrify me with your plaints? It is not the gods' wish nor mine that you die before me, Maecenas, great glory and support of my estate.

Maecenas, who suffered from frequent fevers,[57] laments to Horace. Apparently he is ill, and in fear for his life. The Ode is Horace's response. I

54. The poem actually of course conjures up a trader sailing on his own ship and this does not fit Maecenas. But the question of mercantile wealth brought by ship would concern him: see appendix to this chapter, item 1.
55. On Horace's (infrequent) use of the particularly-toned word, see p. 91 n. 92.
56. The Ode's hints of independence pick up, in particular, 3.16.22–4 (discussed below). In turn they are taken up in much more explicit vein by *Epist.* 1.7. It is especially interesting to see *Ode* 3.29.52ff. *si celeris quatit pennas, resigno quae dedit . . .* resurfacing, without the camouflage of *Fortuna*, in *Epist.* 1.7.34 *hac ego si compellor imagine, cuncta resigno.* (None of the independence of *Ode* 3.29 is, by the by, seen by e.g. Fraenkel (*Horace* 223–9), but he regards it as a 'masterpiece', a 'great and glowing poem'.)
57. Pliny *Nat.* 7.172 *quibusdam perpetua febris est, sicut C. Maecenati; eidem triennio supremo nullo horae momento contigit somnus.* Some exaggeration clearly; but Maecenas must have been not only sickly but 'of nervous disposition'. For his insomnia cf. too Sen. *Dial.* 1.3.10.

summarize, according to my understanding of the poem.[58] Maecenas' fear, says Horace, terrifies him, such, we infer, is his devotion, to such an extent can Maecenas' anxiety infect *him*. Then he proceeds further to exemplify his devotion, and to seek to reassure Maecenas. Horace so loves Maecenas that, should an untimely death befall him, he Horace will join him in death (lines 13–16). Their astrological signs are in incredible agreement, witness their joint escape each from a different danger at a previous but presumably recent time, dangers of which Horace has of course contrived neatly to inform us earlier in the collection[59] (17–29): therefore (I think we are supposed to gather) if Horace is not about to die, which he isn't, then neither is Maecenas. The Ode concludes by reminding Maecenas to make a votive offering, presumably for that recent escape – rather than, by implication, worrying unnecessarily about his present health; meanwhile Horace will make his own suitably modest sacrifice (30–33) for his escape: *reddere uictimas/aedemque uotiuam memento:/nos humilem feriemus agnam*, 'Remember to pay your votive offerings of sacrificial victims and a temple: I shall sacrifice a humble lamb.' The poem expresses great devotion, loyalty, and respect (I shall look at these topics below). It has a teasing tone too. This, one would imagine, is pitched to fit the amount of teasing Maecenas would like to take. Health and life are things we tend to take seriously, and jests on the subject have to be carefully gauged.

I look at some obvious signs of tease. *Querela* can be a serious word (*Ode* 2.11.52); it can also be used in mocking vein (*Ode* 2.9.18).[60] It was therefore a risky word to use unless Maecenas' laments about his health were something of a shared joke among his circle, a joke which even Maecenas shared, possibly rather queasily.[61] Then note the last stanza, quoted above.

58. The exact background supposed by the poem is not certain, and its sequence of thought harder to pin than some admit. Syndikus *Die Lyrik* I.461 thinks that the illness referred to in lines 1ff. is the same as the one whose cure was celebrated in the theatre (22ff); Maecenas, according to S., is simply not convinced of his cure. I infer from Nisbet – Hubbard's introduction to the Ode that this is something like their view. But my understanding is that Horace is referring to a separate illness and occasion from the present one, when he alludes to Maecenas' appearance in the theatre and talks of the (past) time 'when the thronging people three times broke into happy applause in the theatre'. The main, anyway surface, function of recalling that event is to support Horace's point about their supposed astrological congruence. As Quinn *Horace* on lines 22–32 says, 'The common destiny of Maecenas and H. is pointed to by the fact that each has *already* (my emphasis) had a narrow escape from death.' On the other hand this illness and escape cannot have long antedated Maecenas' present anxiety: for Maecenas is urged not to forget to show thanks for his cure (30–32).
59. *Odes* 1.20, 2.13 (also 3.8).
60. Besides the examples mentioned above, *querela* occurs in the *Odes* at 3.21.2.
61. We might infer something of the sort from Sen. *Epist.* 101.10–11. Seneca talks despisingly of 'the fear of death most pitiful (*miserrimus*) itself, and making all other things pitiful'. And he continues, 'thence came that most disgraceful of

The poem will of course in actual fact have been written *post euentum*: Horace would hardly have risked publishing such a poem when Maecenas was still ill. But the dramatic pretence is that it is written during the *querelae*, during that is to say the present illness. So Horace's concluding concentration on Maecenas' need to be thankful for a past and recent cure – rather than any return to his present plaints and anxiety – hints that this present anxiety is groundless and hypochondriacal. Horace, we infer, does not take, because he need not take, and Maecenas knows he need not take, Maecenas' fearful plaints too seriously. The poem, which is as I say both devoted and loyal, must also be seen as ribbing Maecenas for his fears over health – gently and acceptably, but ribbing him nonetheless. Lack of total seriousness is perhaps also implied *inter alia*[62] by the inflated votive offering (a temple!) that Horace tells Maecenas to remember to make for his previous recovery.

The stanzas on astrology have caused some perplexity. They run as follows (lines 17–30):

> seu Libra seu me Scorpios aspicit
> formidulosus, pars uiolentior
> natalis horae, seu tyrannus
> Hesperiae Capricornus undae,
>
> utrumque nostrum incredibili modo
> consentit astrum: te Iouis impio
> tutela Saturno refulgens
> eripuit uolucrisque Fati
>
> tardauit alas, cum populus frequens
> laetum theatris ter crepuit sonum:
> me truncus illapsus cerebro
> sustulerat, nisi Faunus ictum
>
> dextra levasset, Mercurialium
> custos uirorum.

prayers of Maecenas in which he does not refuse to suffer weakness, deformity and, as a climax, the pain of crucifixion, provided only that amidst these sufferings the breath of life may be prolonged.' He then quotes a poem by Maecenas (fr. 4 Courtney) in which the great man does indeed make such statements. But Seneca is surely being excessively po-faced (cf. Quinn *Horace* 231). A man who can write poems like that may indeed be morbid and fearful, but he is well-aware of his own weakness. A willingness to publish such weakness implies, in someone as sophisticated as Maecenas, a willingness to take the teasing consequences. A prose fragment of Maecenas preserved in Quint. *Inst.* 9.4.28 *ne exequias quidem unus inter miserrimos uiderem meas* is too cryptic and out of context for certain interpretation. But it looks to me as if it belongs to a sardonically humorous argument pro the Epicurean view of annihilation after death.

62. Cf. Fraenkel *Horace* 217f. on the fourth stanza, *me nec Chimaerae*. . . .

> Whether Libra or the fearsome Scorpio influences me as the more destructive aspect of my hour of birth, or whether it is Capricorn ruler of the Western wave, our two stars agree in an unbelievable manner: you the protection of Jupiter snatched from impious Saturn, shining in his face, and slowed the swift wings of Fate, at the time when the massed people thrice happily applauded in the theatre; me the tree-trunk, falling on my brains, had borne off, if Faunus, guardian of Mercurial men, had not lifted the blow with his right hand.

What among other things is faintly perplexing is that, on the one hand, Horace seems uncertain which astrological sign dominates his life,[63] on the other hand, he is absolutely certain that his and Maecenas' signs are 'in agreement'. This last statement itself is not clear;[64] presumably Horace means something like that he and Maenenas were marked out as fated partners by the signs of their birth. But that takes us back to the earlier problem: what *was* Horace's dominant sign? It also makes us look at Horace's 'proof' of his claim. This is that both he and Maecenas had marvellous escapes from danger: hardly very significant, we might think, since they are very different types of danger, and Horace does not even claim that their escapes were contemporaneous.[65]

I think that the answer to these astrological oddities soon emerges. The interest in astrology is *Maecenas'*,[66] and Horace is not taking it seriously:[67] it is another topic on which he feels able gently to rib the great man. A Horatian lack of seriousness explains his vagueness over his own signs, his inexactness of expression (*incredibili modo consentit astrum*), and the highly unconvincing 'proof' of their astrological congruence. Note too (a clinching point) how this 'proof' develops: 'Jupiter's protection (i.e. Jupiter as saviour planet)[68] saved you from impious Saturn . . . at the time when the people thrice applauded in the theatre; as for me, the tree-trunk had borne me off, had not . . .'. We wait, clearly, for the astrological power,

63. Cf. below n. 67.
64. Nisbet – Hubbard (on line 22) admit to finding it obscure.
65. Nisbet – Hubbard II.272 remark on the fact that in previous references to the two events (*Odes* 1.20, 2.13, cf. too. 3.8), Horace makes no mention of contemporaneity. Their conclusion is that 'Horace no doubt exaggerates the temporal coincidence to suit the astrological fancies of the present poem.' Horace does not actually claim temporal coincidence in this poem – it is a point worth noticing.
66. This is the inference of Nisbet – Hubbard II.273, Fraenkel *Horace* 218.
67. Nisbet – Hubbard II.273: 'It is clear that Horace did not himself take astrology seriously (cf. 1.11.1f.); if he had known his own horoscope he would not have offered us three alternatives (17ff.) with such indifference.' Cf. too Fraenkel *Horace* 218. Contrast Syndikus *Die Lyrik* I.460 (and bibliography cited by him) who believes that although Horace may have had no belief in astrology, he offers a genuine and comprehensible horoscope.
68. Jupiter, the saviour planet: see Nisbet – Hubbard on line 22.

corresponding to Jupiter, that saved Horace. Instead, Faunus. His saviour was the homely Faunus, more normally employed in protecting flocks (cf. *Ode* 1.17); Faunus averted the lethal blow. Horace's astrological discourse, Horace's astrological seriousness, suddenly evaporates, as he cites as *his* saviour a deity rurally down to earth, indeed no stranger to Horace's own homely Sabine country.

We note too that Horace's Faunus, protector of flocks, is here described as the guardian of *uiri Mercuriales*. There may be a residual astrological reference in this;[69] but more importantly it revives a favourite Horatian insinuation. He frequently plays with the idea that he is favoured by Mercury. What he is alluding to on these occasions is, I think, the favour of Augustus and of Maecenas himself.[70]

Thus Horace's earnest preoccupation with astrology disappears, to be replaced by powers more credibly Horatian: Faunus and (covertly) Augustus and Maecenas himself. Maecenas' presumed interest in the force of the stars receives gentle banter, gently disrespectful treatment (as does the hypochondria which gives Horace his excuse to introduce it). But the professions of loyalty, partnership and concern are not thereby removed.

Let us sum up what we have so far: a poem in which Horace is seen to profess concern for, and devotion to, the great man; but a poem, too, in which he can rib, and be seen to rib, the great man on a couple of his preoccupations. Deference and postures of liberty are balanced.

And deference and familiarity are balanced, with great agility, when Horace handles the topics of loyalty and friendship (*amicitia*) themselves. He represents himself as Maecenas' *amicus* in not just two ways, which we have come to expect, but three (at least). First, the honorific *grande decus columenque rerum* ('great glory and support of my estate') is, like the *praesidium* and *decus* of *Ode* 1.1, the utterance of a patronized *amicus* to the *potens amicus*. On the other hand (lines 5–8):

> a! te meae si partem animae rapit
> maturior uis, quid moror alteram,[71]
> nec carus aeque nec superstes
> integer?

69. Cf. Nisbet – Hubbard on 2.17.29; their first observation, however, is that 'Horace humorously calls himself a *uir Mercurialis* because he is a poet.'
70. The most relevant references are as follows: as well as *Ode* 2.17.29f., *Sat.* 2.6.4f. *nil amplius oro,/Maia nate* uttered with reference to the estate given to him by *Maecenas*; *Ode* 1.2.43f.: the saviour of Rome is *filius Maiae patiens uocari/Caesaris ultor*, i.e. Augustus (on which see Ch. 4 p. 48); *Ode* 2.7.13: Horace was saved from Philippi by Mercury (an allusion which surely includes, though it is not exhausted by, a reference to his acceptance and 'rescue' by the party of Octavian). In this light, one might wish to give more thought to *Odes* 1.10 and 3.11.
71. Burman's emendation is supported by Nisbet – Hubbard ad loc.

> Ah! If a too timely force snatches you away, you who are one part of my soul, why delay I the other part, neither [any more] equally dear to myself, nor wholly surviving?

These are the lines of a friend in the full and equal sense, as the poem to Vergil swiftly shows (*Ode* 1.3.8 *serues animae dimidium meae*). And lines 8–12, developing 5–8, suggest further types of 'friendship' in a declaration that is at once a profession of extreme devotion and a piece of defusing humour:

> ille dies utramque
> ducet ruinam. non ego perfidum
> dixi sacramentum: ibimus, ibimus,
> utcumque praecedes, supremum
> carpere iter comites parati.

> That day will bring in both our falls. I have not sworn a false oath: whensoever you go on ahead, we[72] shall go, we shall go <too>, prepared to travel the final journey as your companion.

Horace swears to die at the same time as Maecenas; it is no idle oath: he is prepared to be the ultimate companion, even unto death. First, we may be reminded of the devotion of lovers.[73] Already, therefore, some hints of humorous hyperbole? Humour clarifies as the picture clarifies. Maecenas leading, Horace following on the journey as *comes*: what is brought to mind is the 'praetorian cohort' of well-to-do subordinates that a provincial governor chose to take out with him to his province. Well known to us from poems of Catullus (10, 28, 46) and from Horace himself (*Epist.* 1.3), the members of this chosen entourage (*cohors*) were known as, among other things, the governor's *comites* (cf. Catull. 28.1, 46.9) or *amici* (Catull. 28.13).[74] Horace swears loyalty unto death, but amusingly and defusingly uses the picture of a governor going out to his province as an image of the journey to Hades.[75] Meanwhile, behind the humour, he arrogates to himself the status of 'proconsular or propraetorian *amicus*' in relation to Maecenas the 'proconsul' or 'propraetor'.

72. Nisbet – Hubbard take this as a true plural. I should prefer to see it as ambiguous between true plural and plural for singular. When we first read *ibimus, ibimus*, we do indeed get a sense of a true plural, Maecenas and Horace together. When, however, the image of the provincial governor and his *comites* impinges (see below), we must sense a disjunction of Horace the *comes* and Maecenas leading the way.
73. Cf. e.g. Prop. 2.20.18, Syndikus *Die Lyrik* I.458.
74. For the institution and the use of the term *amici* of it see Gelzer *The Roman Nobility* 101f.
75. Horace's *supremum carpere iter comites parati* may echo Catull. 11.1ff.; Catull. 11 likewise alludes, I think, to the institution of proconsular or propraetorian *amici*, with ironic humour.

All in all, therefore, we have a masterpiece of juggling: deference to the great man is combined with discreetly flattering self-presentation (Horace his *amicus* in all senses); expressions of concern, devotion and loyalty sit alongside stanzas which exhibit Horace's ease with Maecenas, and his right to tease him.

Maecenas' *Ode* 3.16 has the honour of opening the second half of Book 3. Honouring Maecenas by its position and by much of its content, it is also, arguably, more self-assertive than the Odes we have looked at so far, even 3.29.

One action it performs is to convey gratitude to Maecenas for the Sabine estate. It does so in an interestingly austere manner. These are the last five stanzas (the first of them starts in mid-sentence):

> . . .
> contemptae dominus splendidior rei
> quam si quidquid arat impiger Apulus
> occultare meis dicerer horreis,
> magnas inter opes inops.
>
> purus riuus aquae siluaque iugerum
> paucorum et segetis certa[76] fides meae
> fulgente[77] imperio fertilis Africae
> fallit sorte beatior.
>
> quamquam nec Calabrae mella ferunt apes
> nec Laestrygonia Bacchus in amphora
> languescit mihi nec pinguia Gallicis
> crescunt uellera pascuis,
>
> importuna tamen pauperies abest
> nec, si plura uelim, tu dare deneges.
> contracto melius parua cupidine
> uectigalia porrigam,

76. Nisbet 'Footnotes on Horace' 89f. doubts this reading. 'Land has "certa fides" when it can be relied on to pay the proper interest . . . *certa* is applicable to few estates . . . and surely not to Horace's.' Nisbet suggests *curta* ('i.e. his estate yielded short weight'). This may very well be right. *Certa* is high praise, and ill sits with *paucorum*; on the other hand, *curta* perhaps ill sits with the following generous praise, and it may be that the 'sure reliability' of what we infer to be a *small* crop is not such high praise. If we are persuaded by Nisbet, then my comments below about the 'austerity' of Horace's expressions of gratitude and his praise of his estate are redoubled.
77. Thus Bentley for the MSS *fulgentem*. The emendation is supported by Nisbet at 'Footnotes' 90.

> quam si Mygdoniis regnum Alyattei
> campis continuem. multa petentibus
> desunt multa: bene est, cui deus obtulit
> parca quod satis est manu.

more splendid as the owner of property that others despise, than if I were said to hide away in my barns all the produce of the vigorous Apulian's plough, poor amidst great wealth; a river of pure water and woodland of a few acres and the sure[78] reliability of my crop are more blessed in their portion than the lustrous command of fertile Africa, though they escape notice as such. Although Calabrian bees do not bring me honey, nor Bacchus grow tempered for me in Laestrygonian jars, nor rich fleeces grow in Gallic pastures, troublesome indigence is lacking, nor, if I should want more, would you refuse to give it to me. I will better extend my small revenues by contracting my wants, than if I were to join the kingdom of Alyattes to the Mygdonian plains. To those who seek much, much is lacking: with him is it well, upon whom god has conferred, with thrifty hand, what is enough.

'More splendid as the lord of property that others despise[79] . . . troublesome indigence is lacking, nor, if I should want more, would you refuse to give it to me. I will better extend my small revenues by contracting my wants, than . . .' This says 'thank you', and lauds the Sabine estate after a fashion. But it is indeed after a fashion, and indeed austere. In *Satire* 2.6 Horace had struck a masterly balance between thanking Maecenas for his bounty and not appearing offensively enriched (above p. 20). If I were Maecenas, I might prefer that early Satire to this severe, moralized acknowledgement of an unambiguously small property. I might especially prefer that early Satire in view of the fact that the moralizing of our present Ode is aimed at the rich ('poor amidst great wealth', 'to those who seek much, much is lacking', etc.) – and I, Maecenas, am exceedingly rich. But perhaps my sense of humour is working and tolerant. Horace certainly relies on it. This is a poem that, besides austerely thanking Maecenas, preaches lavishly against wealth, his patron's conspicuous characteristic. Horace allows himself to assume an independent voice, and to rib Maecenas quite elaborately.

I quoted the last five stanzas above. The first five are almost completely taken up with a diatribe against money and its misuse. It is not until line 20, in fact, that it emerges that this is indeed a poem to Maecenas – and five stanzas abusing money hardly lead one to expect such a revelation. But what one must not miss in these stanzas is the humour; and humour of course lessens any cutting, critical edge.

78. See n. 76 above. If we read *curta*, we may translate 'imperfect'.
79. It should be noted that I am giving as tactful (from Maecenas' point of view) a translation of *contemptae* ('despised') as possible.

Humour is particularly evident in the first two stanzas, on the Danae-Acrisius myth:

> Inclusam Danaen turris aenea
> robustaeque fores et uigilum canum
> tristes excubiae munierant satis
> nocturnis ab adulteris,
>
> si non Acrisium uirginis abditae
> custodem pauidum Iuppiter et Venus
> risisset:[80] fore enim tutum iter et patens
> conuerso in pretium deo.

Brazen tower and the doors of oak and the gloomy guard of watch-dogs had kept the imprisoned Danae sufficiently safe from nocturnal adulterers, if Jupiter and Venus had not laughed at Acrisius, timid guardian of the hidden girl. For they knew that the route would be safe and open once the god had been turned into a bribe.

Horace is the first poet we know to present this funny and cynical version of the story.[81] The old myth had Jupiter contriving entrance to Danae in the form of a shower of gold. Horace interprets this to mean that Jupiter, chortling with Venus at their joint ruse, bribed the guard set over Danae – with gold – and thus accomplished his 'adultery'. This revamped version of the myth is not only cynical and funny, it is quite risqué in its phrasing: adultery is not a thing one takes lightly in the Rome of Augustus.

The last of the five stanzas, which finally mentions Maecenas, gets very close to the bone as far as the great man is concerned, but saves itself with another dose of wit:

> crescentem sequitur cura pecuniam
> maiorumque fames. iure perhorrui
> late conspicuum tollere uerticem,
> Maecenas, equitum decus.

Anxiety follows money as it accrues, and a hunger for yet greater things. Rightly have I shunned raising my head so that it is widely conspicuous, Maecenas, glory of the knights.

Money and its misuse have been Horace's target for four stanzas. Finally, we hear a very typical piece of Horatian, private moralizing against it: money brings anxiety and desire for more in its train. Hence, says Horace, his own lack of interest in pursuing prominence . . . '*Maecenas*'. The impact of the name, the name of the exorbitantly moneyed Maecenas, is

80. For the reading *risisset* rather than *risissent* see Brink 'Horatian Notes III' 34.
81. Surviving parallels, e.g. *Anth. Pal.* 5.31.5f., are all post-Horatian. Fraenkel *Horace* 229 n. 2 and Syndikus *Die Lyrik* II.160 n. 14 assume a Hellenistic source, I do not know whether correctly.

electrifying, and, surely, tactless. But Horace has his masterstroke to deliver – a masterstroke *if* you have a sense of humour.

'Anxiety follows money . . . Rightly have I shunned raising my head so that it is widely conspicuous, Maecenas, *glory of the knights*.' When we first encounter the name Maecenas, we will surely infer that Horace's moralizing about money has acute implications for Maecenas, rather more acute implications for Maecenas, in fact, than for Horace himself; and we will naturally infer that the prominence that Horace shuns is the prominence that money brings. But then comes the masterstroke: we can leave the stanza concluding that Horace's avoidance of prominence is not at odds with his patron's mode of living, but actually based on it. For 'glory of the knights' brings to mind Maecenas' famed refusal to accept the prominence of Senatorial status. Of course we have to forget that this refusal, though presented as a matter of modesty, was not a matter of modesty, but of political discretion – one could even say ambition: it gave him one sort of power and not another, and perhaps a more effective power than he might have gained by a more orthodox career;[82] we also have to forget that Horace led us to believe, as we entered the sentence *iure perhorrui* . . . , that he was talking about the prominence that money provides; for that sort of prominence Maecenas indubitably possessed. But, playing a game that Propertius was to play,[83] Horace rescues the stanza and its apparent critique of his moneyed patron by producing his ace: *equitum decus*. 'I have shunned raising my head so that it is widely conspicuous, Maecenas, *following your modest example*': on quitting the stanza, that is the flattering inference we are invited to make.

Of course the joke is patent, and the stanza, like much of the Ode, teases the great man on the topic of his wealth. Maecenas, we assume, can accept such teases. But Horace is showing us – quite forcefully – that he is in a position to make them.

The situation is similar with Horace's expression of gratitude, sparely made, in the last five stanzas. Maecenas, we assume, is not offended by the lofty, rather minimal thanks that the poem vouchsafes. But we should not miss Horace's clear demonstration that he may talk like this, that no grovelling gratitude is expected of him: his status allows him to offer the austere and philosophical acknowledgement of an unbedazzled gentleman. The poem, like so many of those to Maecenas, balances a measure of thanks with teasing, and much management of Horace's image; but, in this poem, we may think that the last facet predominates, and quite toughly. Thus lines

82. See appendix on Maecenas pp. 133–5.
83. Prop. 3.9.21–30. Cf. too *Eleg. Maec.* 1.31–2. Macleod *Collected Essays* 227 misinterprets both Prop. 3.9.21–30 and Hor. *Ode* 3.16.18–20 by discounting Maecenas' political calculativeness in remaining an *eques*, and by discounting the fact that Horace and Propertius would be well aware of such calculation – and Maecenas would know that they were.

23f. must be a humorous overstatement (*transfuga diuitum/partis linquere gestio*, 'I long to abandon, a runaway, the party of the rich'), but the jocular implication that Horace is prepared or actually wants to leave the circle of the *diues*[84] Maecenas insinuates a hard suggestion which *Ode* 3.29.52ff. and (most emphatically) *Epistle* 1.7 pick up.

Following *Ode* 2.17, addressed to Maecenas, is a poem (2.18) which, as it turns out, has an addressee: line 17 directs itself to a *tu*; but this *tu* is not specifically identified. If nothing spoke against it, we might assume he was the *Maecenas* of 2.17: for if nothing explicitly changes the addressee, continuity is the natural inference. In fact much speaks for it. Nisbet and Hubbard put the position mildly:[85] 'editors do not observe that . . . our poem . . . seems to some extent to be hinting at Maecenas . . .'. Then, citing cogent details in the poem (which it would be superfluous to repeat), they make the case unquestionably: praising simplicity and forcefully denouncing wealth, the poem is inescapably directed at the great man.[86] It is worth quoting in full, for once certain points have been made, others will speak for themselves:

non ebur neque aureum
mea renidet in domo lacunar,
non trabes Hymettiae
premunt columnas ultima recisas
Africa, neque Attali
ignotus heres regiam occupaui,
nec Laconicas mihi
trahunt honestae purpuras clientae:
at fides et ingeni
benigna uena est, pauperemque diues
me petit: nihil supra
deos lacesso nec potentem amicum
largiora flagito,
satis beatus unicis Sabinis.
truditur dies die,
nouaeque pergunt interire lunae:
tu secanda marmora
locas sub ipsum funus et sepulcri
immemor struis domos

84. On *diues*, see below p. 128.
85. II.289. One editor who still does not observe the point Nisbet – Hubbard make is Quinn. Cf. too n. 91 below (where even Nisbet – Hubbard unnecessarily prevaricate).
86. They equivocate more than is necessary, however, about *tu* in line 17. See below n. 91.

marisque Bais obstrepentis urges
summouere litora,
parum locuples continente ripa.
quid quod usque proximos
reuellis agri terminos et ultra
limites clientium
salis auarus? pellitur paternos
in sinu ferens deos
et uxor et uir sordidosque natos.
nulla certior tamen
rapacis Orci fine destinata
aula diuitem manet
erum. quid ultra tendis? aequa tellus
pauperi recluditur
regumque pueris, nec satelles Orci
callidum Promethea
reuinxit[87] auro captus. hic[88] superbum
Tantalum atque Tantali
genus coercet, hic leuare functum
pauperem laboribus
uocatus atque non uocatus audit.

Neither ivory nor golden panel shines in my house, nor do Hymettian (marble) beams rest on columns quarried in furthest Africa, nor have I as an unknown heir of Attalus gained possession of a palace, nor for me does an honourable female retinue trail robes of Laconian purple. But I have integrity and a generous vein of talent, and I, a poor man, am sought out by a rich man: I worry the gods for nothing more than this, nor do I ask of my powerful friend greater lavishness, sufficiently blessed in my unparalleled Sabines. Day is driven on by day, and new moons hasten to wane. You on the eve of your very funeral contract for the cutting of marble and forgetful of the tomb pile up houses, and press to push aside the inshore waters of the sea that thunders by Baiae, insufficiently rich in the continuous coastline. What of the fact that you progressively uproot the boundary-marks of neighbouring territory and in greed jump over the borders of your clients? Husband and

87. The vulgate reading is *reuexit*. But *reuinxit* is suggested by one branch of the MSS tradition and cogently supported by Nisbet – Hubbard ad loc.
88. Nisbet – Hubbard ad loc. take the emphatically repeated *hic* (religious language, 'Er-Stil') to be referring to Mercury, the *satelles Orci*; most editors (according to N – H) refer it to Orcus himself. Nisbet – Hubbard are surely right: *Ode* 1.10.17ff. is a fairly clinching parallel. (Some, e.g. Quinn ad loc., refer *hic* to Charon, but it seems perverse to suppose that this emphatic pronoun is referring to someone quite other, when the text offers two candidates in the previous sentence.)

wife are driven off bearing in their arms their household gods and wretched children. And yet no hall more certainly awaits the wealthy lord than the destined bourne of greedy Orcus. Why do you strive further? Earth opens up fairly for the poor man and for the sons of kings, nor did Orcus' courtier (Mercury) bribed by gold untie clever Prometheus. He (Mercury)[89] constrains proud Tantalus and the sons of Tantalus, and, summoned or unsummoned, lends an ear to alleviate the poor man who has performed his labours.

Let us consider some implications and emphases in, e.g., the important and impressive lines 9–14: 'But I have integrity and a generous vein of talent, and I, a poor man, am sought out by a rich man: I worry the gods for nothing more than this, nor do I ask of my powerful friend (i.e. my patron) greater lavishness, sufficiently blessed in my unparalled Sabines.' Although the reference at this point is in the third person, *potens amicus* surely puts the identity of *tu* in line 17 beyond reasonable doubt. Maecenas, who is of course this 'powerful friend' (i.e. patron),[90] can hardly be other than the rich *tu* whom the Ode, as we learn in line 17, is addressing;[91] he must also be the *diues*, one and the same as the *potens amicus*, who seeks out the 'poor' Horace, contrary to social norms, in 10f.; this fact helps *inter alia* to establish *diues* as a particularly 'Maecenas' word.[92]

The lines, and the poem, are therefore directed at Maecenas. The statements made in the lines are striking. They are greatly prouder versions of points made in *Satires* 1.6 and 2.6,[93] their pride only slightly muted by the

89. See previous note.
90. Cf. Mandruzzato (in Traina e Mandruzzato) on *amicum* in line 12: 'Questo *Amico* (così si chiamava eufemisticamente il patrono) era Mecenate, ma senza che fosse proprio detto. La mancanza di articolo favoriva l'elegante ambiguità.' Nisbet – Hubbard's note is in similar vein. See further p. 15.
91. Nisbet – Hubbard are excessively coy, I think, about *tu* (II.290): 'Horace cannot be rebuking his patron, but after all he is not directly addressing him; he exploits the ambiguity of *tu* (17) to shift from the real Maecenas to the conventional plutocrats of *diatribe* (perhaps with an element of affectionate mockery). One might compare *epist.* 1.1. . . .' One might indeed, but Horace exploits, he scarcely hides in, the ambiguity of *tu* in *Epist.* 1.1: see Ch. 8 pp. 146–50. For Syndikus (*Die Lyrik* I.465) the *tu* of 17ff. is simply 'undefined', the 'sogenannte Diatriben-Du'. (Syndikus' observation of the nearness of the Ode to the style of the *Epodes*, particularly its metre, bears thinking about – I am not sure to what effect, however.) Quinn on 2.18.15–28: 'tu] . . . we might suppose from hints in lines 10 and 12 that Maecenas is meant here also, but lines 23–8 preclude that; presumably, the unspecified adversary of satirical writing'. Why? Why exclude the fascinating implications of lines 23–8 for Maecenas in a poem which we cannot dissociate from Maecenas? As even the cautious Nisbet – Hubbard say (II.290), 'confiscated estates are likely to have contributed significantly to Maecenas's vast wealth'. On lines 23–8 see further below.
92. Cf. too 3.29.13 *plerumque gratae diuitibus uices* . . . which clearly associates the epithet *diues* with Maecenas.
93. The passages in the *Satires* are discussed in Ch. 2.

pretence of anonymity drawn over the addressee. With *at fides et ingeni/ benigna uena est, pauperemque diues/me petit*, 'but I have integrity and a generous vein of talent, and I, a poor man, am sought out by a rich man', compare *Satire* 1.6.61ff.:

> reuocas nono post mense iubesque
> esse in amicorum numero. magnum hoc ego duco
> quod placui tibi, qui turpi secernis honestum,
> non patre praeclaro sed uita et pectore puro,

Nine months later you invite me back and bid me join your group of friends. For me the great thing is that I won the regard of a man like you who discriminates between the base and the honourable, not by having a distinguished father, but by the decency of my heart and way of life.

With *nihil supra/deos lacesso nec potentem amicum/largiora flagito/satis* . . . etc., 'I worry the gods for nothing more than this, nor do I ask of my powerful friend (i.e. my patron) greater lavishness . . .', compare *Satire* 2.6.1ff. *hoc erat in uotis: modus agri non ita magnus// . . . auctius atque/di melius fecere. bene est. nil amplius oro,/Maia nate*, 'This is what I prayed for. A piece of land – not so very big . . . Something better and more abundant have the gods accomplished for me. I ask for nothing more ample, son of Maia.' In *Ode* 2.18 Horace's contentment with his lot is vastly more condescendingly stated (cf. too 3.16, 3.1.41ff.),[94] and, in particular, his statement of why Maecenas wants his 'friendship' (his native qualities) is vastly more proudly presented, than in the earlier hexameter works. The largest single jump, I suppose, is from *reuocas* and *iubes* to *petit*. Then, in the rest of the poem, he proclaims the virtue of simplicity, and the folly, indeed the incredible immorality (lines 23ff.) of his addressee's wealth and the route to it, with amazingly more bite than in *Ode* 3.16 to Maecenas, discussed above.[95] But, of course, *Ode* 2.18 is not explicitly to Maecenas . . . In all but the letters that comprise his name, it patently is. This is a challenging and provoking poem. Particularly provoking, we might imagine, for Maecenas.

'Incredible' and 'amazing': are we really to imagine that Horace refers to expropriations *by Maecenas* in lines 23ff.?[96] My answer has to be that, with deft protective measures, Horace does indeed do so.

94. On 3.16 see above pp. 122–6; on 3.1.41ff. see Ch. 9 p. 162.
95. Syndikus *Die Lyrik* I.467 discusses how the immorality of the great man's expropriation is compounded by the fact that he expropriates his clients (line 25); how too the piety of these refugees (26f.) throws the impiety of the rich man into prominence. But Syndikus, like Quinn, does not think the poem has any reference to Maecenas: see above n. 91.
96. The question is asked by implication by Quinn ad loc. and regarded as self-answering: no. See above n. 91.

One protective measure is that most meagre of covers: *tu*. More substantially, he is protected by our instinctive reaction: 'amazing', '*incredible*'. Such immorality is incredible for Maecenas; or, at least, it is incredible that Horace should draw attention to it.[97] If we find it incredible on either of these counts, if Maecenas chooses to think that we must, surely, find it incredible, he and we may retire happy, with an untroubling indefinite *tu* and a 'diatribe' poem. If, however, we choose to believe what Horace is saying, if we choose to believe that in all but the letters of Maecenas' name he is imputing impious immorality to Maecenas, we shall have to accept an interesting and troubling poem. And Horace makes this option abundantly available: it is indeed, prejudgements aside, the most obvious interpretation. (If we look at the facts behind Maecenas' wealth [appendix, item 1], what is imputed to him is far from unbelievable; cf. too the cautious comment of Nisbet – Hubbard in n. 91 above.)

Lines 29ff. are also worth special notice. 'No hall more certainly awaits the wealthy lord than the destined bourne of greedy Orcus. Why do you strive further? Earth opens up fairly for the poor man and for the sons of kings . . .' (i.e. death awaits both, impartially). Here the key epithet *diues* (see above) presses the relevance to Maecenas. So does the way Horace chooses to phrase the opposite pole to *pauperi* in line 34: *regumque pueris*, not the most obvious selection in non-regal Rome.[98] What it does is recall Horace's opening flattery to Maecenas, which will be repeated in the penultimate poem of the collection: *Ode* 1.1.1 *Maecenas atauis edite regibus*, 3.29.1 *Tyrrhena regum progenies*. Horace's patron, of regal descent, is not to be missed among the *pueri regum*. And consider the sentiments of 32ff., presented pointedly in lines 17ff. too: 'You on the eve of your very funeral contract for the cutting of marble and forgetful of the tomb pile up houses . . . Why do you strive further? Earth opens up for rich and poor alike . . .' We might say: these are the same sort of sentiments as those uttered to the consul Sestius in *Ode* 1.4, conventional and therefore, in effect, anodyne. They are conventional and anodyne within a sympotic context, the context which *Ode* 1.4 establishes; they are conventional within the sympotic genre.[99] They are not so expected in a poem which, like ours, sermonizes on wealth without clear generic definition, without therefore leading us to expect *topoi* on death which will strike us as mere *topoi*.[100] They are not so anodyne in a poem to Maecenas, who could take

97. Cf. the reactions of Nisbet – Hubbard II.290.
98. Cf. too however 1.4.13f., 2.14.11f.
99. On *Ode* 1.4, and and *topoi* of death within sympotic contexts, see Ch. 5 p. 66.
100. Note however an allusion to the brevity of life in a ?non-sympotic? context of ambition at *Ode* 2.16.17, with Nisbet – Hubbard ad loc. (But perhaps 2.16 does adumbrate a sympotic setting? Is the fourth stanza suggesting a contrast with the rich Grosphus' entertainment? [cf. lines 7f.] Note also 3.1.14–16 where the poem eventually includes the accoutrements [lines 41ff.] if not the occasion of a symposium.)

a joke on his morbid fear of death – but who does seem to have suffered from a morbid fear of death (*Ode* 2.17 discussed above). This is a poem with, arguably, a distinct cutting edge to it. Proudly assertive of Horace, his social standing, and his values, it unambiguously denounces values imputed with only slight ambiguity to Maecenas. With only slight ambiguity it directs arguments to Maecenas founded on thoughts which he may have preferred to avoid (the imminence of death).

Maecenas must have been of quite extraordinary temper to rise above these sorts of insinuations and digs. *Ode* 2.18 tests the great man's tolerance in quite a different degree from skilfully balanced poems like 3.8 or even 3.16 and 3.29.

Appendix

Maecenas, Some Facts and Conjectures

The modern bibliography is large, ancient comments abound, and the biography is fascinating. Cf. e.g. RE 14.206–29, A.J. Woodman's note on Velleius' character sketch at 2.88.2,[1] the indexes to Syme's books and papers (but Syme has a simplistic view of Maecenas' relationship to the poets, and of the poets' function under him, e.g. *Roman Revolution* 253 'Maecenas hoped to employ Virgil's art in the service of Caesar's heir'; note too the whole chapter 'The Organization of Opinion'),[2] also the splendid notes of Mayor on Juvenal 1.66 and 7.94. For Maecenas' luxuriousness and his prose style, see Sen. *Epist.* 114.

I here pick out some important or neglected facts.

1) *Maecenas' origins; the source of his money.* Maecenas' ultimate descent from Etruscan kings is parroted everywhere (see above). His immediate forebears are equestrians distinguished enough to be figures in history (if we are making the right identifications), but not much more than that (cf. RE 14.1.208.35–209.33). Maecenas' grandfather was probably the C. Maecenas among the *uiros fortes, equites Romanos, . . . illa robora populi Romani* who opposed M. Livius Drusus in 91 B.C. (Cic. *Clu.* 153). His father's *praenomen* is identified as Lucius by *CIL* VI 21771=Dessau *ILS* 7848, and Nicolaus of Damascus[3] tells us of a Lucius Maecenas among

1. This passage suggests, as Dio 51.3.5 states, that Octavian left Maecenas in charge of Rome in 31 B.C. On this problem see the summary of Woodman *Velleius Paterculus. The Caesarian and Augustan Narrative* 238 n. 1, also Nisbet in Woodman and West *Poetry and Politics in the Age of Augustus* on Hor. *Epod.* 1. If Maecenas was in charge of Rome in 31 B.C., it has implications for *Epod.* 1.
2. For a view of Maecenas' relation to the poets which errs in the opposite direction to Syme's, see White *Promised Verse* 134–8.
3. *Vita Caesaris* 31; text in Dindorf *Historici Graeci Minores* Vol. 1 (p. 134, line 24).

Octavian's advisers in 44 B.C.: that Maecenas' father should have advised the young Octavian, and that Octavian grown greater and older should have then been advised by the son is a believable scenario.

Equestri, sed splendido genere natus, says Velleius 2.88.2. *Splendidus* is probably justified by Maecenas' royal origins, for these recent forebears scarcely seem to merit the epithet.[4] One thing they do not exhibit, at least there is no sign of it, is immense wealth. And immense wealth is one of the great patron's particular hallmarks. Where does it come from? The inference has to be made: Maecenas, like other adherents of Augustus, profited hugely from being on the winning side. Cf. Syme *Roman Revolution* 380–81 'Augustus and his partisans inherited the estates, the parks and the town-houses of the proscribed and the vanquished', with documentation. Cf. too Rostovtzeff *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* 57; in particular note Rostovtzeff on Augustan Egypt, 292: 'Thus the development of the landowning class . . . started afresh. The most characteristic and interesting new feature of this development was the rapid growth of large estates in the hands of Roman capitalists.' One such capitalist enriching himself in this way in the new province was Maecenas. For these Egyptian estates (*ousiae*), see Rostovtzeff 669ff.; the evidence for Maecenas' participation is on p. 671. The source and colour of Maecenas' money should be borne in mind in some of Horace's Odes.

2) *Equestrian status and political power.* Ancient sources remark frequently on Maecenas' decision to stay in the equestrian order: Velleius 2.88.2 *non minus Agrippa Caesari carus, sed minus honoratus (quippe uixit angusto clauo . . . contentus)*, Tacitus *Annales* 3.30, Dio 55.7.1 and 4, etc. Velleius implies a certain modesty in this decision (see below). Nevertheless he and all other authorities bear witness to Maecenas' immense political power, in spite of his modest status. Augustus' decision in 31 B.C. (Dio 51.3.5–6) to give to Maecenas as well as to Agrippa a duplicate of his seal – so that they could read his letters to the senate, change what they wished, and then re-seal them – is, *qua* symbolic of the trust Augustus put in him, as indicative of his power as any of the famous commissions he executed for the *princeps*. Cf. too e.g. Tacitus *Annales* 3.30 below.

4. Except perhaps his grandfather who opposed M. Livius Drusus. *Splendor* (*splendidus*) is on the one hand a particularly equestrian attribute, but, on the other, suits the very top bracket, a small minority, of equestrians: cf. Hellegouarc'h *Le vocabulaire latin des relations et des partis politiques sous la république* 458–61, Nicolet *L'ordre équestre à l'époque républicaine* 98, 214–24; for Velleius' use in connection with Maecenas, *L'ordre équestre* 224. Nicolet argues that *splendidus* implies involvement in the life of the city (hence Velleius may be thinking not just of Maecenas' royal ancestry but of his grandfather; Nicolet notes too *Sat.* 1.6.3f. *auus tibi maternus fuit atque paternus/olim qui magnis legionibus imperitarent*).

The question arises: Why did Maecenas stay in the equestrian order? It could actually cause problems. Dio 51.3.5 reports on Augustus' reaction to seditious veterans in 31 B.C. thus: 'Caesar, being suspicious of them, and fearing lest Maecenas, to whom he had entrusted Rome and the rest of Italy at that time, might be despised by them because he was a knight, sent Agrippa to Italy, supposedly on some other mission.' Here some pages of Nicolet in Millar and Segal (*Caesar Augustus* 104–7) are important. E.g. from p. 106:

> Augustus was quite naturally torn between his desire to restore the Senate to its traditional pride of place in the state and his fear of seeing the emergence of rivals, which caused him to fall back on the 'friendship' of men he could rely on, honourable men, but who, in a sense, remained private ones and therefore both more dependent on himself and more independent of the Senate. Whence, the cohort of the *princeps*' 'knightly friends': Sallustius Crispus, Maecenas, and plenty more.[5]

Tacitus refers to these equestrian advisers when discussing Claudius' proposal to promote the authority of his procurators at *Annales* 12.60: *Matios posthac et Vedios et cetera equitum Romanorum praeualida nomina referre nihil attinuerit, cum Claudius libertos, quos rei familiari praefecerat, sibique et legibus adaequauerit*, 'it would serve no purpose to mention a Matius or a Vedius or the other too powerful names of Roman Knights who came thereafter <advising Augustus, as similar men had advised Julius>, when the freedmen whom Claudius had placed in charge of his personal property were now raised by him to an equality with himself and the law.' M. Griffin 'Claudius in Tacitus' 489–93 argues persuasively that this whole chapter is 'an elaborate and not entirely successful attempt by Tacitus to sabotage *Claudius*' (my emphasis) argumentation . . . by combining editorial comment with a summary of the original speech' (p. 491).[6] Thus the last sentence on Claudius' 'freedmen' is a pejorative way of putting Claudius' proposal on his procurators, which Tacitus had in fact put more fairly at the opening of the chapter:[7] 'Several times in the year, the emperor was heard to remark that judgements given by his procurators ought to have as much validity as if the ruling had come from himself.' Among the procurators looking after the emperor's property freedmen were indeed to be found, but they were not all freedmen: that is Tacitus' malice. Griffin also reckons (p. 492) that Tacitus' reference to Augustus' influential equestrian

5. Cf. Nicolet *L'ordre équestre* 711–12 on Maecenas and C. Proculeius. One might infer from Nicolet *L'ordre équestre* 710–11 that Julius Caesar cultivated the same policy of 'knightly friends' (C. Oppius, C. Matius), though Nicolet himself does not quite make the inference. Cf. too Syme *Augustan Aristocracy* 80.
6. In literary critical terms, the chapter is 'free indirect discourse'.
7. I.e. he is not here referring to the freedmen secretaries like Pallas and Narcissus.

advisers is a distorted version of a Claudian argument, and she comments, interestingly for us: 'No doubt Claudius mentioned more respectable friends of Augustus than Vedius Pollio . . . : Maecenas and Sallustius Crispus spring to mind.'

Augustus' appointment of *equites* to important administrative offices, procuratorships and prefectures (one thinks especially of the prefecture of Egypt; Nicolet in Millar and Segal *Caesar Augustus* 104f., Stein *Der Römische Ritterstand* 441–8) seems to many scholars a public example of caution in the face of senatorial power, Augustus' preference for a class that might have expertise without political ambition.[8] But his decision to rely on untitled equestrian advisers, equestrians content to remain equestrians, is a less obtrusive but perhaps no less significant example. I say 'content to remain equestrians . . .'. But these *equites* on the inside might actually have more effective power, more interesting power, than senators – or knights – in showy prefectures.

Which makes us think of another angle to all that we have been saying: an equestrian who wished to exercise real power, interesting power, inside power – to be one of the *princeps*' 'knightly friends' – would *need* to remain equestrian. Maecenas' decision, far from modesty, can be interpreted as one of prudent political ambition. Velleius' judgement on his '*lack* of ambition' compared with Agrippa is therefore superficial, one based on the externals of power: 2.88.2, picking up the quotation above, . . . *angusto clauo . . . contentus) nec minora* <sc. than Agrippa> *consequi potuit sed non tam concupiuit*.[9] Tacitus, commenting in the first place on Sallustius Crispus, is more acute.[10] There are excellent comments on the political value of appearing *un*ambitious, indeed *otiosus*, etc. in the principate, in Woodman *Caesarian and Augustan Narrative* 242, which are exceedingly relevant to men like Maecenas and Sallustius Crispus.

8. This is e.g. Stein's view, *Der Römische Ritterstand* 442, and Syme's *Augustan Aristocracy* 80. Brunt 'Princeps and Equites' documents equestrian procuratorships and prefectures under Augustus and later emperors, but he challenges the thesis that Augustus and his successors considered it a policy to establish a kind of imperial civil service of reliable equestrians (51); he also challenges the whole idea that the *principes* liked to rely on *equites* because they distrusted senators (52ff.). His remarks on, for example, the prefecture of Egypt (61) are thought-provoking. Not a professional historian I find it hard to judge this; but I am still persuaded that *equites* were appointed to high public positions because they might be considered politically safer, less politically ambitious. And it was surely the unpolitical, unambitious status of equestrians content to remain equestrians which made them so attractive as private imperial advisors. (Brunt does not deal with these inside equestrian *amici*, except in passing.)
9. This is not to deny that many men chose to remain knights *and* live a quiet life: some are documented in Woodman's note on Vell. 2.88.2 in his item (1).
10. *Ann.* 3.30 *quamquam prompto ad capessendos honores aditu* . . . quoted in full and translated below.

3) *Maecenas' political career post 29 B.C.* Reckford 'Horace and Maecenas' 195–7 gives a detailed account of Maecenas' political career from 44 B.C. to 29 B.C.; one of his late very important political actions was the suppression of the plot of Lepidus, son of the triumvir (Velleius 2.88.3), 'while Caesar was putting the finishing touches to the Actian and Alexandrian war', i.e. in 31 or 30 B.C. Reckford concludes (196–7): 'Octavian's return in the summer of 29 put an end to the special powers of the man who has been called his First Minister. There is not a single fact to support the idea that Maecenas' political career continued after 29.... there is no evidence that he held any position of state or continued to advise Augustus in any official capacity....' (Like most scholars he dismisses the Agrippa-Maecenas debate in Dio 52.1–41, supposedly in 29 B.C., as an invention of Dio's, a vehicle for Dio's own dialectic.)

I would put little weight on this absence of evidence of public activity. In the principate the most effective political power might be wielded behind the scenes, by those who advised the monarch – by his 'knightly friends' (see above). Whether the advice of a Maecenas or a Sallustius Crispus can be called advice in 'an official capacity' matters not. The equestrian *amici* were powerful political men of the new order. And certainly in this capacity, in this respect – as a 'knightly friend' – Maecenas' political career continues – until at least the late twenties. Tacitus *Annales* 3.30 bears witness to it (see next paragraph), likewise Horace *Odes* 3.8 and 3.29 themselves, far from negligible evidence.

4) *Maecenas' eclipse in the late twenties.* Cf esp. Brink III.523ff., esp. 527–32.

The question of Maecenas' losing influence, falling from favour in the late twenties, once taken for granted, has recently been disputed. One should distinguish between (a) a loss of *political* influence with *Augustus*, for which the main evidence is Tacitus *Annales* 3.30.3–4 (quoted below) and Suetonius *Augustus* 66.3 (also quoted below): Maecenas' indiscretion in the Murena affair which Suetonius mentions would provide a reason for the loss of power to which Tacitus testifies; and (b) a loss of 'control' of, or influence with, the poets. For (b) there seems no doubt. Horace *Odes* 1–3 (published 23 B.C.) and the *private* book of *Epistles* 1 (published in 20 B.C.), are addressed/dedicated to Maecenas (as had been *Serm.* and *Epod.*) but no books thereafter are. There is a graceful and moving tribute tucked away in *Ode* 4.11; otherwise Book 4 (published in 13 B.C.) seems to respond clearly and directly to Augustus' own directives – when it is not practising the art of 'sapping', or by other means devoting itself to the discreet amusement of Quintus Horatius Flaccus. Similarly Propertius (though of course his *amicitia* with Maecenas was a less dependent one than Horace's): Book 3, published soon after Horace *Odes* 1–3, contains an important poem to Maecenas (poem 9), Book 2 had in a sense been dedicated to Maecenas (but in Book 1 there had been no association; the

book had been addressed to an *amicus* of comparable status), but Book 4, whose latest datable reference is to the year 16 B.C. (4.6.77), has no association with Maecenas at all. While absorbing these facts, we must remember that Maecenas does not die until 8 B.C., the same year as Horace. It seems to me likely – at least it is an economical explanation – that (b), which is certain, is caused by (a), which is virtually certain. This is Brink's view and is shared by Williams in *Tradition and Originality* 4–5, 86–8, Syme *Augustan Aristocracy* 389 (see below), *Roman Papers* 526f.; but Williams changed his mind in *Between Republic and Empire*, ed. Raaflaub and Toher 258–75. Another view in White 'Maecenas' Retirement': Augustus interfered all the time, and Maecenas played second fiddle all the time.

Texts: a) Tacitus *Annales* 3.30 on Sallustius Crispus and Maecenas. I quote the material referring to Sallustius as well as to Maecenas, since it is needed for the previous chapter.

> Crispum equestri ortum loco C. Sallustius, rerum Romanorum florentissimus auctor, sororis nepotem in nomen adsciuit. atque ille, quamquam prompto ad capessendos honores aditu, Maecenatem aemulatus, sine dignitate senatoria, multos triumphalium consulariumque potentia anteiit, diuersus a ueterum instituto per cultum et munditias copiaque et affluentia luxu propior. suberat tamen uigor animi ingentibus negotiis par, eo acrior quo somnum et inertiam magis ostentabat. igitur incolumi Maecenate proximus <sc. Sallustius>, mox praecipuus, cui secreta imperatorum inniterentur . . . aetate prouecta speciem magis in amicitia principis quam uim tenuit. idque et Maecenati acciderat, fato potentiae raro sempiternae, an satias capit aut illos cum omnia tribuerunt aut hos cum iam nihil reliquum est quod cupiant.

> Crispus, a knight by extraction, was the grandson of a sister of C. Sallustius, the brilliant Roman historian,[11] who adopted him into his family and name. And he, although the avenue to political office lay clear, emulated Maecenas and without holding senatorial rank outstripped in power many who had won a triumph or the consulate. But by his elegance and refinement he was quite different from the old Roman school, and in the affluence and scale of his household approached luxuriousness. Nevertheless under it all lay a mental energy equal to enormous tasks, all the more effective from the display he made of somnolence and idleness. Thus, next to Maecenas, while Maecenas lived, and later next to none, he it was who sustained the burden of the secrets of emperors . . . <a ref. to the killing of Agrippa Postumus follows> but as he grew older he retained the appearance of power rather than power itself in the friendship of the emperor <Tiberius>. The same lot had fallen to Maecenas also – whether because it is the fate of power to be

11. No surprise that we are getting a classic Sallustian snap biography cum character sketch.

rarely perpetual or because satiety takes hold either of the one party (i.e. the rulers) when they have no more to give or the others when there is nothing left for them to desire.

There may seem a contradiction between Tacitus' statement that Crispus was 'next to Maecenas, while Maecenas lived, and later next to none' and his remark that Maecenas' power waned during his lifetime. Tacitus probably means that Maecenas retained the appearance of Augustus' chief advisor without, after a certain date, real power – just as Crispus did with Tiberius. Only after Maecenas' death could Crispus occupy the position of chief advisor visibly as well as in practice.

b) Suetonius *Augustus* 66.3: *desiderauit enim nonnumquam, ne de pluribus referam, et M. Agrippae patientiam et Maecenatis taciturnitatem, cum . . . hic (Maecenas) secretum de comperta Murenae coniuratione uxori Terentiae prodidisset*, 'He occasionally found Agrippa lacking in patience and Maecenas in the gift of silence since . . . he betrayed to his wife Terentia the secret of the discovery of the conspiracy of Murena.' I.e. Maecenas told his wife Terentia that her brother Murena's involvement in the conspiracy of Caepio was discovered and this brought Augustus' displeasure on him. On the conspiracy and its dating (early 23 B.C.), on the identity of the Varro Murena involved (L. Terentius Varro Murena, Maecenas' brother-in-law, who does *not* = the consular Aulus Terentius Varro Murena of 23, apparently revealed by the Fasti Capitolini), on the assumed effect on Maecenas' power, and on the non-relevance of Hor. *Ode* 2.10, see Syme *Augustan Aristocracy* 387–91.

It should however be noted that just before this passage Suetonius says that, besides Salvidienus Rufus and Cornelius Gallus, all the rest of Augustus' *amici* 'continued to enjoy power and wealth to the end of their lives . . .' But there are degrees of power, and my inference from Tacitus' text was that Maecenas retained the outward appearance of it until the end of his life, losing real influence at some point. Suetonius' text is consistent with this picture – and provides a date and reason for the loss of real power.

5) An interesting question is: Vergil is clearly in the patronage of Maecenas in *Georgics*. Is he in the *Aeneid*?[12] If he was, how would he signify that he was? In Book 6, in the parade of Roman heroes? Even more plausibly, in the catalogue of Etruscan forces in Book 10.163ff., where for example he makes room for 'Manto' who gave her name to Mantua (10.199)?

12. I owe this thought to Ian Du-Quesnay.

8

Hexameters to Maecenas: Satire *1.1*, Epistles *1.1, 7 and 19*

In the thirties B.C., Horace was careful about his own image and status, but his deference to Maecenas in, say, *Satire* 1.6 was manifest. We saw nothing of the kind of self-promotion and self-assertion that we find in the Odes of the twenties. It is something of a paradox therefore to find that the lyric poem which, arguably, most cheekily teases Maecenas is not an Ode, but a thirties poem: *Epode* 14.[1] Of course, as we saw, Horace ribs and criticizes Maecenas in the Odes as well as asserts himself, and sometimes in what seems a barbed manner. But his procedures in these poems strike me as more careful, certainly less candid. One misses the lack of inhibition that *Epode* 14 cheerfully displays (*Ode* 2.12 may be an exception to this). In the lyric poems therefore disinhibition is contemporaneous with deference (*Epodes*), self-assertion is accompanied by more concealed and artful strategies (*Odes*).

The situation is, I think, similar over the hexameter works. *Satire* 1.6 may patently defer to Maecenas' greatness, but *Satire* 1.1, from the same thirties period, seems to me cheekily and cheerfully to rib him, with little inhibition. *Epistles* 1.1 and 7 on the other hand, from the twenties, which in turn tease and take issue with Maecenas, do so with less lack of inhibition – more carefully, more tensely, we might say: they lack the candid cheek of *Satire* 1.1. Meantime, while *Epistle* 1.1 does grant Maecenas the honour of opening the book, *Epistle* 1.19, also to Maecenas, is artfully circumscribed in its deference. Its content is self-assertive, and Maecenas has the unexpectedly hedged honour of *pen*ultimacy.[2]

There could be many reasons for this phenomenon (the growing inhibition, the greater artfulness). One might be as follows. In the thirties, Horace was sensitive about his image, but he allowed himself fewer pretensions. He and Maecenas therefore had a clear idea of their respective positions: Maecenas was the great man, Horace a dependent inferior – a

1. See Ch. 7 pp. 102–3 with n. 1.
2. See above Ch. 6 p. 72.