3 *Aeneid* 6.460 notoriously echoes Catullus 66.39. There has been much discussion of this apparently surprising fact. See Russell (1979) 13; O. Lyne in *G&R* 41 (1994) 187.

4 Catullus wrote that he had no wish to please Caesar, nor to know even as much of him as his complexion; he did not flinch from woundingly direct attack – though the Dictator accepted the slur with good grace: Catullus 93, 57; Suet., *Julius* 73. Calvus, too, composed scandalous pieces about the Dictator's sex life: Suet., *Julius* 49. That was the way to write about politicians, if one did it at all.

5 Ever since they were written, people have wanted to know exactly how these poems relate to experiences of Virgil's own. Did he lose his family land? Did he get it back? The ancient *Lives* have a lot to say, most of it obviously guesswork. What does appear is that hereafter the poet is to be found, not near Mantua, but near Naples (*Geo.* 4, apart from less reliable snatches in the *Catalepton*). My guess is that he lost his ancestral land and was compensated elsewhere: an unpoetical story, which he could make into poetry only by stylising and darkening it.

6 It is worth remembering that Augustus returned the compliment: none of the poets whose work glorified him and his restoration of Rome was thought by that subtle tyrant (the phrase is Edward Gibbon's) to deserve mention in his own account of his career, the astonishing *Res Gestae*.

7 Cf. the fragments preserved in *FLP* 276–81. They include galliambics, in which he is the only poet to follow Catullus 63, and hendecasyllables: fragment 3, "ni te visceribus meis, Horati/ plus iam diligo. . . ." is closely modelled on Catullus 14, leading Courtney (*ad loc.*) to comment: "One wonders how Horace felt at being addressed in Catullan terms."

8 "The greatest triumph of Horace's achievement as a lyric poet," in the judgment of Fraenkel (1957) 381. Not everyone agrees.

9 Wimmel (1960) assembles the passages: Virgil, *Ecl.* 6.1–12; Horace, *Sat.* 1.10.31ff., 2.1.4ff.; *Odes* 1.6, 2.12, 4.2, 4.3, 4.15; *Epist.* 2.1.250ff.; Propertius. 2.10, 2.34.25ff., 3.1, 3.3, 3.9, 4.1; Ovid, *Amores* 1.1, 1.15, 2.1, 2.18. As we should expect, Virgil sounds the most serious, Ovid the most frankly frivolous, in declining to produce historical epic on request. See my discussion in Millar and Segal (1984) 189–218. The tact of the Princeps is emphasised by A. Wlosok, *RhM* 143 (2000) 83.

10 References on that: V. Buchheit in *RhM* 143 (2000) 139f.

11 *Odes* 3.6.33–44; it is a pleasing touch of cynicism, perhaps, or at least of distance, that only two poems later Horace is writing, on the occasion of the Matronalia festival that was celebrated jointly by wives and husbands, "what shall I do as a single man on the Kalends of March?" (*Martiis caelebs quid agam Kalendis. . . .?*).

12 For various views of the Augustan nature of the *Fasti* see Barchiesi (1997) and Herbert-Brown (2002).

14: Poets in the New Milieu: Realigning

Peter White

The two decades of civil war preceding the Augustan Principate did not extinguish poetic activity in the capital. Libretti continued to be produced for scenic festivals each year and verse in other genres was being written in the 40s (notably by Cornelius Gallus, Varius, and Vergil) and in the 30s (when Horace made his debut). But the wars took a toll. The poets Helvius Cinna, Cornificius, Cassius Parmensis, and Ticida met violent deaths, to say nothing of victims like the Ciceros for whom poetry was an avocation. Gallus succumbed to politics in the peace immediately afterwards. Wholesale proscriptions and confiscations caused a transfer of wealth that touched many who did not lose their lives, apparently including Vergil, Horace, Tibullus, and Propertius.[1] And it was not only the effects on poets that depressed literary culture. The wars bled the whole upper class that had consumed and fostered poetry. Twenty years would have sufficed to transform literary society in any case, but there can be no doubt that the wars accelerated the turnover. Of the many personalities celebrated in Catullus' poems, the only one still active when peace returned was Asinius Pollio.

The Post-War Literary Milieu

The 20s both revived a cultural life that had flourished earlier and brought opportunities that were new. In the first place, poets regained the peace and ease they idealized as *otium*. In Roman society, *otium* had long been recognized as the proper domain of literary activity, the time off from serious commitments that could legitimately be reserved to culture. But it was an ideal formulated in opposition to war as well as

to public and domestic business. In post-Actian Rome, the operative associations were the cessation of a protracted state of strife, the demobilization of thousands of officers and troops, and the prospect that property arrangements might finally stabilize and that society might again operate by settled norms (compare Velleius Paterculus, 2.89.3–4). *Otium* in this period often connotes feelings of relief, security, and entitlement. Tacitus thought that the mood was deliberately induced as Augustus "seduced all with the sweetness of ease" (*Annals* 1.2.1). One consequence was that Augustan Rome developed its own streak of Restoration license, well expressed by a poet who observed (apropos of Maecenas) that "a new ease softened the old standards. All things befit the victors when war subsides" (*Elegiae in Maecenatem*, 49–50).

Peace carried other consequences as well, the most important of which was improved longevity. The Augustan period acquired a distinctive literary character in part because so many of the leading players were able to sustain their roles. Tibullus died young, but in an era when life expectancy was typically lower, Vergil lived to almost his 51st birthday, Horace to almost his 57th, and Ovid to 58 or 59. Longevity created the possibility that poets could have careers. Vergil, Horace, and Ovid all remained productive over a span of 20 to 30 years or more. The great taste-makers of the age lived even longer than their protégés. Maecenas reached at least the age of 58, Messalla Corvinus 72, Augustus 76, and Pollio 80.

Peace also swelled the public that was prepared to attend to poetry. In the post-war period poets followed the example of rhetoricians and began to seek large, live audiences for their work. Since the Sophists of fifth-century Greece, teachers of rhetoric had trolled for custom by staging public demonstrations of their expertise. At Rome this practice culminated in the declamation, a speech improvised on a theme or situation drawn from a standard scholastic repertory. In the drought of genuine political oratory that set in with the end of the Republic, performances of show oratory began to attract new interest. The declamation moved out of the schools and became a successful form of entertainment, drawing grown-ups as well as students and educated enthusiasts as well as professionals.

The young Ovid became a habitué of the declamation circuit (Seneca, *Controversiae* 2.2.8–12). But a larger consequence was that the declamation model was adapted to performances of poetry. This crossover was a stroke by Pollio, a poet in his own right and an aficionado of declamation, who at some point in the 30s or 20s became "the first of

all Romans to recite his works to an invited general audience" (Seneca, *Controversiae* 4 *pr.* 2). The formal poetry recitation differed from the declamation in that a competitive element was absent and poets were not expected to improvise. The venue was also different. Recitations were most often held in the townhouses of the leaders of society, who could guarantee that a throng of their friends and dependents would attend. On such occasions poets played to much larger audiences than the groups of comrades or dinner guests to whom they read their work informally.

Tacitus coupled wealth with *otium* among the instruments of Augustan policy, and for poets the prosperity of the principate had effects as important as the effects of peace. The winner-take-all cycle of the civil wars had concentrated unprecedented riches in the hands of Augustus and his partisans – vastly more than Julius Caesar was able to amass in the early rounds. Poets saw that a boom was on (Propertius 3.9.27–28; Ovid, *Amores* 2.9.17–18, *Art of Love* 3.113–14) and the right use of wealth emerges as a concern in many kinds of verse.

Their concern was not purely abstract. Poets gained opportunities to tap the wealth of the new plutocracy directly if they established personal relationships that bore fruit in the form of benefactions or bequests. I will have more to say about these relationships shortly. But poets also had a stake in the enormous sums that were being expended publicly. Richard Beacham (Chapter 7, pp. 160–73) shows that theatrical performances were multiplied and subsidized more extravagantly than ever as new theaters and new festivals proliferated during Augustus' reign. How poets contributed to the stage is the least documented aspect of their activity in this period, but the fact of their involvement is not in question. Of eight sketches of poets that Suetonius is known to have written for the Augustan portion of his *On Poets* (*De poetis*), one was of the mime writer Philistion. Ovid judged that script writing in his time was uniquely lucrative ("a poet can make money from the stage," *Tristia* 2.507). Varius was paid one million sesterces for a tragedy produced at games celebrating Augustus' Actian victory, and the demand for material was strong enough that even non-dramatic poetry was adapted for theatrical performances.[2]

Apart from shows, other public observances sometimes featured verse and probably verse written for pay. The most famous case is the celebration of the Secular Games in 17 B.C., for which Horace composed the extant hymn. But poets also contributed to less exceptional events, as to dedication ceremonies for temples that were built or rebuilt in this period.[3]

Another area of lavish investment was libraries. Although Rome did not have a single public library before the 30s, in the span of about fifteen years it acquired three (in the Atrium of Liberty off the Forum, in the Temple of Apollo complex on the Palatine, and in the Porticus Octaviae in the southern Campus Martius). Libraries benefited Augustan poets in two ways. Much of Latin poetry (Ovid's *Metamorphoses* or *Fasti* would be good examples) was erudite poetry meant to display the writer's knowledge and transcendence of exemplars both Greek and Latin. Such poets needed books in order to compose and the new libraries offered them a readily accessible stockpile. Less than a decade after Augustus opened the library adjoining the Temple of Apollo, Horace assumed that a young poet friend would be taking advantage – excessive advantage, he feared – of "the writings which Palatine Apollo has gathered" (*Epistles* 1.3.17).

Because libraries established a new avenue of access to the public, the Augustan poets also wanted to make sure that their own works were represented there. Horace pokes fun at the "pride and intensity" of colleagues who "inspect the building space available to Roman bards" (*Epistles* 2.2.92–94). Ovid's works occupied a niche in the public collections before he was exiled in A.D. 8 (*Tristia* 3.1.65) and in one of his exilic poems he envisions that a new manuscript will trudge from library to library seeking entry (*Tristia* 3.1.59–74). The attraction of its library partly explains why the Temple of Apollo is mentioned more often in Augustan poetry than any other contemporary monument (cf. also Barchiesi, this volume).

Poems that readers could consult in libraries they could, of course, purchase in bookshops. Although bookshops were already operating in Rome by the time of Catullus and Cicero, during the Augustan period more is heard about them. They may have been given a boost by the libraries. With booksellers in command of trained copyists, it is hard to imagine them *not* involved in the drive to create three public collections within a decade and a half. In any case, Horace increasingly takes it for granted that new poems including his own will be available in bookstores (*Satires* 1.4.71–72; *Epistles* 1.20.2; *Ars Poetica* 345, 373). The fact that Ovid continued to launch work in Rome for eight years after being disgraced, exiled, and banned from the libraries also suggests the enterprise of booksellers (one of whom is probably to be identified as the recipient of *Tristia* 3.14).

Whether cultural institutions predated the war years, like theaters and bookshops, or sprang up at the end, like formal recitations and libraries, the post-war surplus of wealth and leisure invigorated them

all. Poetic vocations multiplied. Vergil's *Eclogues* and Horace's *Satires* show both men engaged with a variety of colleagues and rivals even before the wars ended. Ovid names seven poets in the ascendant when he began in the late 20s (*Tristia* 4.10.41–52) and he lists thirty-one in a retrospect written at the close of his career (*Letters from Pontus* 4.16). We know of still other Latin poets whom he does not mention, as well as of Greek poets active in Rome who do not enter his purview at all.

For a critic seeking to generalize about Augustan poetry, the abundance of poets creates an obvious problem of extrapolating from five who are extant and knowable to some three dozen others who are not. But for the poets themselves, or at least for their poetry, it was probably salutary that there were so many of them. In the generation after the Augustans, Velleius Paterculus observed that Rome's greatest poets clustered in close proximity to one another (1.17.2), and he explained the phenomenon in terms of competition: "Emulation nourishes literary talents, and envy and admiration by turns incite imitation" (1.17.6, compare 2.36). The Augustan poets (to generalize) were competing as intensely with contemporaries as with the literary predecessors of whose influence we are most aware, and the currents of envy and admiration ripple often through their work.

Augustan Rome thus stimulated poetic activity in several ways. That is what can save from triviality even a minimalist definition of Augustan poetry as verse written in Rome between 27 B.C. and A.D. 14. However divergent in theme and politics, all poets of this era shared the advantage of writing in a milieu which was more supportive of poetry than ever before. Not the least important facts about Augustan verse are the quantity in which it was produced and the appetite for it.

SOCIAL ATTACHMENTS

That the Augustan poets enjoyed greater opportunities of cultivating a public than their predecessors comes out in a shift of attitude toward readers. Neither Tibullus nor Propertius nor Ovid echoed Horace's claim to write only for the discerning few (*Satires* 1.10.73–90), and Horace himself moved from decrying vulgar publication (*Satires* 1.4.71–72) to abetting it (*Epistles* 1.20.1–5). Yet it would be a mistake to think that their access to the public was unmediated. From almost the beginning of Roman literary history, poets are regularly associated with

more powerful members of society who champion them. Poems in the smaller genres often pay compliments to such persons and sometimes allow glimpses of the relationship. Vergil's *Eclogues*, for example, compliment men who were militarily active in the civil wars and who are said to have protected Vergil at that time and in that capacity (Pollio, Varus, Caesar Octavian, and Cornelius Gallus). Horace's *Odes* and *Epistles* advertise those who flourished in the subsequent peace. At least seventeen of the contemporaries whom he addresses are either senators or eminent knights (Maecenas and Sallustius Crispus), and the poems written for them are often spun out of situations that place poet and addressee in the same company, such as suppers and drinking parties, visits to country estates, and literary pursuits. Propertius addresses about a third of the poems in his first book (1, 5, 6, 10, 13, 14, 20, 22) to two young aristocrats whose pastimes he presents himself as sharing. Even the choice of genres reflects this background. Satire, love elegy, and the verse epistle all celebrate in different ways the intercourse which poets and their friends enjoyed outside the poetry.

The poems intimate that the poets stood on familiar terms with their society friends. Horace asserts as much in his boast that he had "pleased the first men of Rome at home and on campaign" (*Epistles* 1.20.23). This habit of intercourse with the élite draws attention to an important fact about the poets' background. Although poets of the period differ widely in status, ranging from freedmen like Melissus to great senators like Pollio and even to Augustus himself, the five who epitomize Augustan poetry for us all cluster at the threshold of the upper class. They are not outsiders or dependents like many of the early Latin poets. Tibullus and Ovid came from equestrian families (*Vita Tib.* p. 112 Luck; Ovid, *Tristia* 4.10.4–8). Propertius, who describes himself as a scion of "ancient Umbria with its well-known households," says that his family was prosperous up until the expropriations of the civil wars (4.1.121–30). Although Vergil's origins were humbler, he had sufficient resources to devote himself to a career of art and study in north Italy, Rome, Campania, and Sicily (Donatus, *Vita Verg.* 7, 13; Vergil, *Georgics* 4.563–64). Horace insists that despite his freedman parentage, he received the same liberal education in the capital that "any senator or knight would bestow upon his own offspring" (*Satires* 1.6.77–78) and in his early twenties he served as an equestrian officer in a Roman legion (*Satires* 1.6.48). Though none except perhaps Ovid would be counted rich by Roman standards, all five enjoyed the education, leisure, and respectability that fitted them to join in the amusements and cultural pursuits of Roman knights and senators.

In part it was because knights and senators were apt to be writers of verse themselves that they liked to associate with poets. The rise in vocations for poetry among the upper class can be and has been seen as one consequence of the establishment of the Principate. Augustus now directly or indirectly determined the fate of careers in oratory, politics, jurisprudence, and the military. Of the traditional paths to distinction, literature was the one over which he had the least sway, and perhaps for that reason, it became an attractive alternative. Whatever the reason, it lured many. Ovid almost immediately abandoned the quest for a Senate career in favor of poetry, saying that political ambition entailed too much stress (*Tristia* 4.10.37–38). Horace hints at a similar experience in *Satires* 1.6, and the *Ciris* poet confesses that he turned to poetry after failing at politics (1–4). Propertius says he opted for poetry rather than oratory (4.1.133–34). Half of the seventeen grandees to whom Horace addressed his *Odes* and *Epistles* wrote verse, a pursuit which he says had spread through capital society like a craze (*Epistles* 2.1.108–10).

Poetry in this milieu was not merely a common taste but in some degree a communal activity. Its devotees wrote together and read their work to one another, offered suggestions about possible subjects, and exchanged criticism of results.[4] Where the parties diverged – though they remained linked – was over their concern with publicity. Socialites desired to be celebrated in the verse of their more talented poet friends, whereas poets who were not themselves upper-class and not yet well-known counted on the prestige of their connections to help launch them professionally.[5] The practical consideration behind Horace's appeal to the few (*Satires* 1.4.73) was that whatever the leaders of society approved, others would soon embrace.

Poets who were taken up by the great were also in a position to benefit financially. Munificence had an important place in the ethic of friendship, and especially at the top of society. Since poets' relationships are known to us mainly through their poems, however, and since the poems maintain a certain reticence about material benefits, we know few specifics. But Horace assumes in *Epistles* 1.18 that an aspiring poet who establishes a tie with a rich man would normally profit from it, and gifts happen to be recorded for Vergil, Tibullus, Ovid, and Horace himself.[6] The pattern of munificence in Roman society suggests that although the gifts poets received from friends could be large, they would not have amounted to anything so reliable or steady as a pension. The most common form of benefaction was the inheritance or testamentary bequest (which is what inspired Horace to compose a satiric instruction about legacy-hunting in *Satires* 2.5).

Maecenas, Messalla, and Pollio

The society projected in Augustan verse is reminiscent in some ways of that seen a generation earlier in the poems of Catullus. Poets associate freely with aristocrats and other notables because they have some footing in the upper class in their own right, personal alignments are manifold and overlapping, and poetry is a widely-shared pursuit. What is different about the Augustan milieu is that three figures appear to play a disproportionate role in organizing it.

Maecenas, Messalla, and Pollio – Augustus will be considered in the next section – undeniably loom large in sources for the period. But the sources suggest that their relationships with poets differed from those of other magnates primarily in being more durable. In Latin sources they are normally characterized in the same way, as "friends" rather than as "patrons," and their demands for the companionship of poets were the most insistent. A fragment from an ancient life of Tibullus says that it was Messalla to whom Tibullus "showed his love ahead of others" (*Vita Tib.* p. 112 Luck). The implication is that Messalla was only one of Tibullus' connections, but the one he cultivated most attentively. The writer of the *Panegyricus Messallae* assured Messalla that he too would attend him faithfully.[7] Ovid's attachment to Messalla lasted for over two decades, from his own youth until Messalla's death. Vergil was associated with Maecenas for almost as long a period, from about 40 to 19 B.C. Horace's relationship continued even longer, from 38 to 8 B.C., and many passages in his work show that it involved him in a steady round of obligations (for example *Satires* 2.6.42–43; 2.7.32–35; and *Epistles* 1.7.25–28).

Those in society with whom poets developed close ties lasting over many years could be expected to reciprocate with more generous gifts than less intimate acquaintances. As three of the richest men to emerge from the civil wars, Maecenas, Messalla, and Pollio were well able to be generous, and all are in fact said to have made gifts to poets. Maecenas especially was lauded for his generosity in the accolades of poets who hailed him as "my stronghold," the "pillar" or "guardian of my estate," and the "enviable hope of my youth."[8] His liberality was the quality most often recalled by wistful poets of the following era as well.[9]

The after-image of Maecenas raises an incidental point that is relevant to our perceptions of the Augustan milieu. Of the three men who seem to dominate it, he is the only one whose fame as a supporter of poets outlived him. Testimony to Messalla's and Pollio's role is confined

mostly to contemporary sources and more particularly to the Tibullan corpus in the one case and the text of Vergil with its scholia in the other. Yet if the totality of Augustan verse were extant, it would surely enlarge and perhaps alter our sense of the social background. When Juvenal reviewed the great models of generosity to poets in times past, he listed Maecenas in first place. Of Messalla and Pollio, however, he made no mention, naming instead four others (Proculeius, Fabius, Cotta, and Lentulus) about whose activities very little happens to be recorded (*Satires* 7.94–95).

Lacunae in the record notwithstanding, the wealth and prestige of Maecenas, Messalla, and Pollio would certainly have put them in a position to outbid most of their peers for the attention of poets. How systematically they attempted to do that we are left to infer from indications which are meager and indirect. But vicarious literary glory does not appear to have been Pollio's ambition. Although he can be linked with Vergil and a couple of other poets down into the 30s, after that the only sign of active ties with anyone is a single poem of Horace (*Odes* 2.1). Pollio made himself a force on the literary scene by organizing the first public library, by pioneering the practice of recitation, and by promoting himself as a writer of both prose and verse and as a critic. But so far from indicating that he acted as a mainstay to other writers, anecdotes about him expose an abrasiveness that led one contemporary to call him "congenitally bloody-minded" (Seneca, *Controversiae* 4. *pr.* 4). It was his own work, not others', that he is said to have launched at recitations.

The situation is different with Maecenas and Messalla, each of whom cultivated ties with many poets. At least nine can be named who came within Maecenas' orbit: Domitius Marsus, Fundanius, Horace, Melissus, Plotius Tucca, Propertius, Varius, Vergil, and Viscus. As many or more can be associated with Messalla, though not all are identifiable by name: Horace, Ovid, Sextilius Ena, Sulpicia, Tibullus, Valgius, Vergil, and the anonymous authors of the *Panegyricus Messallae, Catalepton* 9, and the *Ciris* (if those poems are authentic products of the Augustan period). These are remarkable numbers, equaled elsewhere in Roman literary history only by Pliny's record of friendships among poets. The number alone would raise the possibility that Maecenas and Messalla set out to gather coteries around them.

Unfortunately, the available data disclose little more than that they had contacts with poets, rarely what the contacts were like. In the case of Messalla, for example, we learn that Horace and the authors of the *Ciris* and of *Catalepton* 9 addressed poems to him, that Horace and

Vergil were cast with him as interlocutors in a literary dialogue by Maecenas, that Sextilius Ena gave a recitation at his house, that Valgius was acquainted with him and the author of the *Panegyricus* wanted to be better acquainted, and that his ward Sulpicia found him an obstacle to visiting her lover. Only Tibullus and Ovid testify to an ongoing relationship, and not in much detail. The one literary pair who do emerge in the round are Maecenas and Horace, thanks both to Horace's poetic focus on the everyday and to a biographical sketch of Horace that Suetonius composed. But even in this case the evidence is one-sided. No letters of Maecenas and only fragments of his other writings survive. The sort of first-person testimony that exists to back up Pliny's claim to be a friend of letters a century later is wholly unavailable for the Augustan period.

What sort of influence Maecenas and Messalla exercised over the work of poets they took up therefore remains a mystery. The people around them may well have formed relatively stable and coherent groups. Horace once asserts that Maecenas' literary friends were organized in this way (*Satires* 1.9.43–56), and the Tibullan corpus has been seen as a relic of the coterie that flourished around Messalla. It consists of verse by Tibullus and (seemingly) four other writers, most of whom obviously do, and all of whom may, have ties to Messalla. It is the only Latin collection known in which the social affiliation of the poets appears to have determined the selection.

But for those around Messalla and around Maecenas alike, it is uncertain whether social coherence also implies ideological coherence. Sources for all periods describe Latin poets and their society friends as collaborating in the writing process, and throughout Latin literary history poets alternately make claims to be writing at the behest of friends and maneuver to evade their impositions. In *Epodes* 14, for example, Horace claims that he is under pressure from Maecenas to finish his iambics, and in *Epistles* 1.1 that he is under pressure to produce more love lyrics. Propertius intimates that Maecenas urged him to compose an epic (3.9). Vergil says that he wrote his agricultural poem at Maecenas' bidding (*Georgics* 3.41). It is open to debate, however, how far such hints of direction make Maecenas' entourage comparable to those literary circles of the Renaissance and afterwards in which the impetus of a leader or a shared agenda is crucial. Nothing that the poets say about Maecenas' literary role distinguishes it from the role played by other Roman magnates before and after him.

Modern readers who have nevertheless suspected that Maecenas and Messalla did provide ideological leadership point to a difference

in the orientation of their protégés. None of the writers represented in the Tibullan corpus ever mentions Augustus, whereas poets who can be tied to Maecenas – Horace, Vergil, Propertius, and Varius – are responsible for most of the contemporary panegyric on Augustus. That disparity has suggested that Maecenas was recruiting talent for the regime, while Messalla may have been a counter-force toward whom oppositional poets gravitated.

Although neither of these inferences can be confirmed or disproved, the latter has less to commend it than the former. The silence regarding Augustus in the Tibullan corpus is after all a silence. The poets say nothing either negative or positive, and their apparent obliviousness of Augustus can be explained as a consequence of their absorption in concerns of private life. Except for the author of the *Panegyricus*, they all kept to love poetry. Moreover, it is arbitrary to take into account only the evidence of the Tibullan corpus and to disregard Messalla's links with Horace and Vergil. But the most improbable part of this interpretation is its presentation of Messalla as a leader of the opposition. Although he had opposed the future Augustus early in the civil war, he soon rallied to him. He made propaganda against Antony in the 30s, fought for Augustus at Actium, and amassed honors, offices, and riches all through his reign. It was Messalla who in 2 B.C. proclaimed that Augustus merited universal recognition as the "Father of His Country."

Nothing, on the other hand, tells against the possibility that Maecenas might have encouraged verse in praise of Augustus. In the Roman milieu it was not unusual to solicit favors, including literary favors, on behalf of one's friends as well of oneself. For their part, poets were well aware that Maecenas was close to Augustus, and they may indeed have thought to use him as a stepping-stone.[10] But Maecenas made too exuberant a splash to have been acting *simply* as the agent of Augustus. He aspired to celebrity in his own right as a poet and prosateur, and so far as the extant fragments show, his works did not have a political orientation. Though several of his protégés wrote enthusiastically about Augustus, the particular poems which Maecenas is said to have encouraged – Horace's iambics and love lyrics and Vergil's *Georgics* – are not the most fervent portions of their oeuvre. Some members of his group, like the comic playwrights Melissus and Fundanius, may have written nothing political at all.

Maecenas' implication in the panegyrical slant of Augustan poetry is likely. But evidence of it is too scanty to be interpreted except in context of a broader argument about Augustus' own role. In any

case, politics would be but one dimension of Maecenas' engagement. It should not prevent us from seeing that he fits the conventional profile of dilettante, impresario, and benefactor as perfectly as anyone in Roman literary history.

Augustus

Augustus, too, exhibited some of the characteristic behaviors of a friend of letters. According to Suetonius, "he encouraged the literary talents of his day by every means. He generously and patiently listened to recitations, not only of poems and histories but also of speeches and dialogues" (*Augustus* 89.3). But his relationship to poets and poetry is too complex to be understood in those terms alone. And while the very complexity of his relationships resists efforts to analyze them, we cannot get along without recourse to some sorting tools. Here it will be useful to distinguish three contexts in which Augustus could engage with contemporary poets: as a personal friend or acquaintance, as a head of government, and as an emblem of society and nation.

The first relationship is represented in its most intimate form by his ties with Vergil and Horace, which lasted for over two decades. He exchanged letters with them, solicited poems from them, and lavished presents on them.[11] He attended private readings of the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid* and received a presentation copy of the *Odes*.[12] He took Vergil into his entourage during a trip abroad and invited Horace to assume a secretarial position in his household.[13] He was named heir in both their wills and he pressed for publication of the *Aeneid* when it lay unfinished at Vergil's death.[14] Apart from one dubious story that he made Vergil rewrite part of the *Georgics*, we know no more about efforts on his part to prescribe poetic content than we know in the case of Maecenas or anybody else.[15] But his attentions would have established a powerful claim on the poets' good will.

The intimate relationship that Vergil and Horace established with Augustus put them on a different footing from all other poets, with the possible exception of Varius. That it was unique is part of what makes it difficult to interpret, and it was doubly unique. Not only were Vergil and Horace in a privileged position among three dozen or more poets of their own day, but their experience was never repeated afterwards. Although many of Augustus' successors had literary tastes, none formed comparable literary attachments. Augustus himself made no new move in this direction during the two decades following Horace's death.

Even with Vergil and Horace, however, Augustus did not form the same kind of relationship as did other Roman gentlemen. One reason was practical. He was absent from Rome and Italy for more than half of the two decades after the battle of Actium, and with the exception of an invitation to Vergil to join his entourage when they once encountered each other abroad, we never hear that he took poets along on his trips. Even during periods when he was resident in the capital, his responsibilities impeded the sustained contact that was normal in friendships between poets and the great. None of Horace's occasional poems points to dinners or visits with the emperor, and a fragment from one of Augustus' letters confirms that Horace was not a regular at the palace (Suetonius, *Vita Hor.* 297.26 Roth).

But a more fundamental complication of the relationship was that personal acquaintance did not supersede the other two dimensions of Augustus' influence. The great friend of Vergil and Horace was also their de facto ruler – formally at least, Horace's commission to compose the *Carmen Saeculare* emanated from the government rather than the man – and the most conspicuous symbol of Roman sovereignty on their horizon.

Augustus' power as symbol was the most tenuous of his three forms of influence over poets but it was the most pervasive; there was probably no poet of his day on whom he failed to make some impression. The emergence of a paramount *princeps* had completed a teleology at work in Rome since long before the civil wars. The figure who now stood at the apex of society became a model of style and behavior from whom others took their cues, as Tacitus observed (*Annals* 3.55.4). The emperor engrossed the field of politics as well as social performance. Since there was no aspect of political life to which he was irrelevant, he quickly became an emblem of the state. In the perceptive word-play of Ovid, *res est publica Caesar* – "Caesar is public property" and "Caesar is the Commonwealth" (*Tristia* 4.4.15).

Augustus' ascendancy drew a more engaged response from poets than simple acquiescence, and here again their social standing is relevant. The poets of this period were as proud of their place within the bourgeoisie as they were of their consecration by the Muses. Civic and patriotic themes, many related to Augustus, appear in the work of every one of the five who are extant. Horace in several of his pieces goes so far as to claim the role of spokesman for the entire citizen community.[16] Even Tibullus and Ovid, who are not thought to have stood in close proximity to either Augustus or Maecenas, contributed praise of the new imperial Rome then under construction. Though Augustus is not

named in Tibullus' long poem on the induction of Messalla's son into the priestly College of Fifteen (2.5), for example, he is an inescapable point of reference for it. Messalinus was a fellow-priest whom Augustus appointed. In that capacity, he was charged with consulting Sibylline prophecies which Augustus had authenticated, in a ritual performed in the Temple of Apollo which Augustus had built. The poem for the occasion hints at Apollo's role in vanquishing Antony at Actium and gives pride of place to a Sibylline prophecy about Aeneas and his son that parallels the plot of Vergil's epic.

Critics have had notable success in examining those themes, traits, and tendencies of Augustan poetry which can be interpreted as collective responses to the new milieu. Galinsky (1996) and Zanker (1988), for example, describe both ideological and formal convergences of artistic production during the period. But if it is true that Augustus' power was at its most diffuse when it was projected as symbol, reactions by individual poets should diverge as much as they overlap. Galinsky stresses that responses to Augustus do vary from poet to poet and even from poem to poem by the same poet, and most critics have acknowledged the distinctive features of Vergil's response. But not all poetry about Augustus has received an equally empathetic reading. When he is the focus, critics have often hesitated to proceed on the normal assumption that a poem is an autonomous exploration of an inviting material, worked out in terms specific to that piece.

Attention to individual poetic responses has been displaced by a preoccupation with the second dimension of Augustus' influence. Augustus could exert effects on poets not as friend and enthusiast or as symbol only, but also as government. In some cases he used governmental power to benefit them, when, for example, he showcased work by his friends Varius and Horace at public festivals. But there were also poets who fared badly under his rule. The elegist Cornelius Gallus found himself with no options but suicide after he gave offense in an office to which Augustus had appointed him (Dio 53.23.5–7; Suetonius, *Augustus* 66.2), and the tragedian Gracchus is probably the Sempronius Gracchus later exiled for an affair with Augustus' daughter (Ovid, *Letters from Pontus* 4.16.31; Tacitus, *Annals* 1.53.3). While Gallus' and Gracchus' downfall would seem unconnected with verse they had written, Ovid maintains that *he* was exiled in part for having written the *Art of Love* (*Tristia* 2.207–12). During Augustus' last decade in power, when another species of verse incurred his ire, he began prosecuting the authors of defamatory lampoons for treason (Suetonius, *Augustus* 55; Tacitus, *Annals* 1.72).

Consideration of Augustus' reach as head of a government has not been limited to these obvious cases. Political motives are widely thought to be the key to his interactions with poets generally, and to interactions via Maecenas as well. The Augustan Principate introduces a new framework for thinking about the relationship of literature to the state. For the first time since the regal period, Rome had a stable, decades-long administration centralized in one man. It was now possible to pursue political programs more systematically than before, and in the particular regime instituted by Augustus, programs were not necessarily overt. The blurring of the distinction between public and private roles is a hallmark of the Principate. It is therefore not unreasonable to suspect that Augustus may have manipulated literary interactions which for other aristocrats would have belonged to the realm of the apolitical.

The problem has been to decide how it could be verified that Augustus made poetry an object of policy and how he went about implementing it if he did. Having nothing comparable to archives for the Principate – or any other period of Roman history – we know relatively few details of his administration. Furthermore, all that we do know suggests that if he had a literary policy, it would have been improvised over the course of his reign and would not have looked the same by the end as at the beginning. Both factors limit the chances of discovering a consistent pattern in his relations with poets.

Interpreters have tried to overcome the dearth of primary evidence by drawing from explanatory models. The suggestion that Augustan poetry is a kind of court poetry, for example, or that Augustus encouraged some poets to create propaganda for his regime and censored others rests on ideas borrowed consciously or unconsciously from more transparent systems. Yet it is implicit in the term that any model inevitably stands at some remove from the phenomena it is called upon to organize. One reason that Augustan poetry is rarely discussed as court poetry nowadays is that royal courts have become alien to our experience. But even if that were not so, the model would be inadequate because Augustus went out of his way to dissociate his regime from contemporary monarchies and because Roman poets who might have wished to represent him as a monarch lacked an established idiom in which to do so. Another idea whose explanatory value has waned is that Maecenas functioned as Augustus' Minister of Propaganda. Distortions occur at both focal points of this model. For all his influence with Augustus, Maecenas took no actual role in government after the 30s. And as Eich (2000) most recently has insisted, our notions of propaganda are so tied up with political institutions and techniques of the last two centuries that

they cannot easily be projected back upon the operations of the Roman state. Eich has criticized the applicability of the concepts "censorship" and "publicity" for similar reasons. But new models for understanding Augustus' influence over poetry continue to be proposed and debated. In the wake of Foucault, critics have begun to study Augustan texts as part of a discourse conditioned by circumambient and saturating power, an approach of which Kennedy (1992) may stand as an articulate early example.

Many of these ideas, including some which have been criticized as inadequate, do serve to clarify aspects of Augustus' role. Although Vergil and Horace may not exactly qualify as court poets, for example, it cannot be fortuitous that for centuries afterwards, their tropes and language were borrowed by poets who did have occasion to address monarchs. Nor is censorship a wholly inappropriate label for Augustus' action in publicly denouncing the *Ars Amatoria* and having it removed from the state libraries. But thinking with models always carries the risks that we may allow the model to distract us from data it is unable to account for, or worse, allow it to mask or substitute for non-existent data. In any case, no model has yet succeeded in becoming standard. Scholars are probably less close to agreement about the proper framework in which to understand Augustus' relationships with poets than at any time since the debate began.

Understanding can still be improved at a lower level of abstraction, however. As noted earlier, many poems of Horace, Propertius, and Ovid that focus on Augustus deserve further scrutiny. By way of closing, let me suggest four other areas that might repay investigation:

(1) Conclusions about poetry under Augustus have been based predominantly on the five canonical Latin poets. But in the flotsam of unattributed, pseudonymous, and minor poems that have come down to us are several which speak about Augustus and which are probably contemporary (epigrams of Domitius Marsus, the *Consolatio ad Liviam*, and the *Elegiae in Maecenatem*, for example). Second-rate productions are apt to be more revealing in proportion as they are less accomplished. The *Consolatio* in particular seems an important witness to the Augustan milieu, regardless of who wrote it.

(2) In addition to Latin verse, there is a not inconsiderable corpus of epigrams by Greek poets (some resident in Rome) who celebrate the imperial house but position themselves differently than Latin poets. These poems, too, need to be integrated into our understanding of the Augustan literary climate.[17]

(3) Any account of the relationship between government and literature under Augustus should prepare us to understand the sequel. In general, the structures that Augustus introduced remained in place and the emperors who followed him also had sophisticated literary interests. If Augustus made poetry a target of policy, what became of that policy under his successors?

(4) Suetonius was uniquely placed to know the role of poetry under the Principate. He served as a palace secretary under Trajan and Hadrian, he wrote sketches of Latin poets, versions of which are extant for Vergil and Horace, and he wrote biographies of emperors in which literature was a regularly featured rubric. Apart from the details for which he is cited, does Suetonius offer us any framework for understanding poetry in relation to the Principate?

Every advance in our understanding of Augustus' interactions with poets is likely to induce some alteration in our understanding of Augustan politics generally. The historical attrition that destroyed most other contemporary writings about the new regime happened to leave much of the testimony by poets intact. Through default they are our primary record of Augustan discourse.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Good bibliographies for individual Augustan poets are available in many recent studies devoted to them, especially as the relevant volumes in the *Cambridge* and *Brill's Companion* series become available. In addition to the titles listed throughout this volume, the following are worth consulting for broad perspectives on the Augustan literary environment:

H. Bardon, *La littérature latine inconnue* (Paris 1952). This useful complement to conventional literary histories seeks to recuperate and place in context those Latin authors known only by fragments or as mere names. The first third of volume 2 surveys lost literature of the Augustan period.

E. Fantham, *Roman Literary Culture: From Cicero to Apuleius* (Baltimore and London 1996). Conceived as a social history of Latin literature rather than as a literary history, this study emphasizes institutional elements that conditioned literary production: schooling, libraries, booksellers and book technology, aristocratic patronage and Greek intellectual dominance, and the power of the emperor.

R. Gurval, *Actium and Augustus: The Politics and Emotions of Civil War* (Ann Arbor 1995). Gurval analyzes the ideological meaning of Augustus' victory at Actium, arguing that it was constructed less by the government than by poets, and that the poets took divergent views of it.

Raaflaub and Toher (1990). This volume, comprising almost a score of essays, is dedicated to Ronald Syme and pursues a number of issues that are associated with him. Six papers discuss Augustus' impact on contemporary writers.

P. White, *Promised Verse: Poets in the Society of Augustan Rome* (Cambridge, Mass. 1993). A more detailed argument along the lines of the preceding essay.

T. Woodman and D. West (eds.), *Poetry and Politics in the Age of Augustus* (Cambridge 1984). The eight papers range from close readings to broadly framed essays; they also take an instructive range of positions on the nature of the influence Augustus exerted and on the way poets responded to it.

NOTES

* I am grateful to Robert Kaster and Karl Galinsky for suggesting improvements at several points in this essay.

1 Donatus, *Vita Verg.* 19–20 Hardie; Horace, *Epistles* 2.2.46–51; Tibullus, 1.1.19–20 and 41–43; Propertius, 4.1.128–30. The author of the *Panegyricus Messallae* testifies to a similar reverse in lines 181–90.

2 Varius' honorarium: H. D. Jocelyn, *Classical Quarterly* 30 (1980) 387–400. Adaptations: Donatus, *Vit. Verg.* 26 Hardie (Vergil); Ovid, *Tristia* 2.519–20, 5.7.25–28 (Ovid).

3 Ovid, *Tristia* 2.23–24. Origins in performance have occasionally been hypothesized for other Augustan poems on the basis of internal indications, as for example Horace, *Odes* 1.37 and Propertius, 4.6.

4 Communal reading and writing: Horace, *Odes* 2.9.17–20; Ovid, *Letters from Pontus* 2.4.13–14, 3.5.39–40; *Ciris* 19–20. Suggestions: Vergil, *Eclogues* 6.9, 8.11–12; Horace, *Epistles* 2.2.58–64; the *Ars Poetica* is an extended suggestion to the Pisones. Shared criticism: Ovid, *Letters from Pontus* 2.4.17–18, 4.12.25–26.

5 The poet confers glory on those he names: Vergil, *Eclogues* 6.6–12, Horace, *Odes* 1.26; Ovid, *Tristia* 3.4.67–68; *Letters from Pontus* 4.12.1–3; *Panegyricus Messallae* 1–7, 24–27, 177–211; *Ciris* 35–41. The poet himself derives fame from the prestige of his connections: Vergil, *Georgics* 2.40; Propertius, 2.1.74; *Panegyricus Messallae* 27.

6 Gifts to Vergil: Donatus, *Vita Verg.* 9 and 13 Hardie (from Pollio and unspecified others); to Tibullus: *Vita Tib.* p. 112 Luck (from Messalla); to Ovid: *Letters from Pontus* 4.5.37–38 (from Sextus Pompeius); to Horace: *Odes* 2.18.12–14 with scholia; *Epistles* 1.7.15 and 39 (from Maecenas).

7 Lines 192–9. The application to join a great man's entourage became a literary convention. The *Panegyricus* has an analog in *Catalepton* 4, and Horace produced

a variation on the form at *Satires* 1.6.45–62 – which did not discourage a pseudepigrapher from concocting a prose letter in which Horace introduces himself to Maecenas (Suetonius, *Vita Hor.* p. 298.25–26 Roth).

8 Horace, *Odes* 1.1.2, 2.17.3–4; *Epistles* 1.1.103; and Propertius, 2.1.73 respectively.

9 *Laus Pisonis* 230–48; Martial, *Epigrams* 1.107, 8.55, 11.3, 12.3; Juvenal, *Satires* 7.94.

10 For poets' awareness of the relationship between Maecenas and Augustus, see for example Horace, *Satires* 2.6.40–56; *Odes* 2.12.9–12; Propertius, 3.9.27–34; *Elegiae in Maecenatem* passim; and Calpurnius, *Eclogues* 4.157–63.

11 Correspondence: Tacitus, *Dialogus* 13.2; Donatus, *Vita Verg.* 31 Hardie; Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.24.11; Suetonius, *Vita Hor.* p. 297.24–34 and p. 298.13–19 Roth; requests for poems: Donatus, *Vita Verg.* 31 Hardie; Suetonius, *Vita Hor.* pp. 297.35–298.7 Roth; gifts: Horace, *Epistles* 2.1.245–47; Servius on Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.862; Suetonius, *Vita Hor.* p. 297.34 Roth.

12 Donatus, *Vita Verg.* 27 and 32 Hardie, and Horace, *Epistles* 1.13.

13 Donatus, *Vita Verg.* 35 Hardie, Suetonius, *Vita Hor.* p. 297.17–23 Roth.

14 Donatus, *Vita Verg.* 37 and 41 Hardie, Suetonius, *Vita Hor.* p. 298.31–33 Roth.

15 In his commentary at *Eclogues* 10.1 and *Georgics* 4.1, Servius reports that a tribute to Cornelius Gallus was removed from book 4 after Gallus' disgrace (3: 118.4–9 and 320.6–10 Thilo).

16 Most clearly in *Epodes* 7 and 16, and in *Odes* 1.2, 3.6, and 3.24.

17 One relevant text that has recently received near-monographic attention from Barbantani (1998) is *Supplementum Hellenisticum* 982, celebrating Augustus' triumphant arrival in Egypt in 30.