

AN ATTEMPT AT A PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF MAECENAS*

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This article attempts a psychological analysis of Caius Maecenas, the patron of Horace and Vergil and right-hand man to Augustus in the sphere of security. The psychoanalytical approach to scholarship runs counter to the persuasions of modern literary theorists. It is conceded that such a study readily lends itself to hostile criticism, but at the same time there is little doubt that it can help elucidate the issues unresolved by the strict adherence to the "new criticism". It is with such an aim that the study is undertaken and it is hoped that it will provide an insight not only into Maecenas' political career, but also into his personal relationships and his literary output.

Maecenas' relationship with his wife, Terentia, was taut and disturbed. This is seen in the fact that Maecenas had to endure the frequent refusals of his wife *morosae uxoris cotidiana repudia* (Sen. *Prov.* 3.10). Seneca does not say what the refusals refer to, but it seems that it is in connection with sex. This conclusion is drawn from the fact that *morosae* means "capricious" (*TLL* 8, 1502), and in light of Sen. *Ep.* 114.6 and the phrase *cotidiana repudia*, Terentia is described as *morosae* and this probably means that she had the habit of denying Maecenas his conjugal rights on the slightest pretext. *Repudium* can mean divorce, but in the context "daily divorces" does not make sense; "daily desertions" is, therefore, a better interpretation. This would mean that Terentia frequently left him. This state of affairs, and therefore the state of the marriage, is confirmed by a description of Maecenas as a man *qui uxorem milliens duxit, cum unam habuerit* [who married a wife a thousand times although he had but one] (Sen. *Ep.* 114.6) the *milliens* referring to the fact that she often left him. Both these statements by Seneca the Younger are probably exaggerations to ridicule Maecenas, but the separations were probably still frequent, though less so than Seneca says. The modern view is now against the idea that the "Licymnia" mentioned by Horace refers to Terentia; "to maintain this identity [of Terentia being Licymnia] the portrayal of this Roman matron has to be explained as mainly fantasy. Better, Licymnia is a hetaera." (Syme 1986:390); a similar view is held by Davis (1975:70) and Nisbet and Hubbard (1978:180-183). But the identification of Licymnia with Terentia is still considered correct by Putnam (1986:17). This can be confirmed by the fact that the description of Licymnia (Hor. *Od.* 2.12.17-28) conflicts with the description of Terentia as *morosae*.

It is known that Terentia was involved in an affair with Augustus, who was so obsessed with her that he held a beauty-contest between her and Livia and took her to Gaul with him from 16 to 13 B.C. (Dio. 54.19.3). If the "Terentilla" mentioned in Antony's letter to Augustus (Suet. *Aug.* 69.2) is Terentia, as has been proposed (Carter 1982:191), it follows that she had been Augustus' mistress from a time before the date of the letter, that is, since before Actium. But this statement by Antony must be viewed with circumspection since the letter was published at the beginning of the

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war between Octavian and Antony and Cleopatra, an opportune time to release information which might cause the loss of public support and create divisions within the ranks of Octavian's supporters. It was a notorious political practice to make comments or cast aspersions, by letter or otherwise, on a political opponent's sexual practices, true or not. Whatever the date of its inception, the affair still continued in 16 B.C..

Maecenas was involved in a homosexual affair with the *pantomimus* Bathyllus. Seneca the Elder uses the phrase *pro Bathyllo Maecenatis* (Sen. *Contr.* 10.Pr.8); Dio calls him a favourite τῷ Μακρίνῳ προσήκοντι [the one belonging to Maecenas] (Dio. 54.17.5), while Tacitus openly says *dum Maecenati obtemperat effuso in amorem Bathylli* [while he was submitting to Maecenas who was passionately in love with Bathyllus] (Tac. *Ann.* 1.54.3). There may even be a reference to it in the pro-Maecenatic *Elegia in Maecenatem 1*, when Maecenas is compared to Jupiter acquiring the services of Ganymede; the figure of Ganymede may represent Bathyllus (*Eleg. Maec.* 1.87-92). This may be recalling a reference to Ganymede in a poem by Horace; in this poem Horace says that Maecenas is in love, *ureris ipse miser* [you yourself burn with passion, wretched soul] (Hor. *Epod.* 14.13). The object of his love may be Terentia because

ureris ipse miser, quodsi non pulchrior ignis
accendit obsessam Ilium,
gaude sorte tua

(Hor. *Epod.* 14.13-15)

"you yourself burn with passion, wretched soul, but if no more
glorious a fire kindled beseiged Ilium, rejoice in your lot",

suggests a woman, possibly Helen in the context of the poem; there is a link between Helen and Terentia in that both left their husbands for another man. But there is an indication that the poem refers to Maecenas' love for Bathyllus. The whole poem refers to a Greek youth of early history called Bathyllus and the love for him by an older man; the reference to Troy (Hor. *Epod.* 14.9-10) may be a reference to Ganymede, which may have been the basis for Maecenas' being compared to Jupiter. Terentia's rejections of Maecenas may have been a natural reaction against this affair. Indeed, this involvement with Bathyllus may have caused not just her frequent denials of sex to Maecenas, but may have been the reason for her liaison with Augustus; she may have become involved with Augustus either to find solace from Maecenas' attraction to a youth or to show her anger and pique. This does not align well with the argument that Terentia had been Augustus' mistress for nearly two decades, but, as has been said, this view is dependent on suspect evidence and therefore carries little weight.

A final and equally acceptable cause of the marital difficulties is derived from Maecenas' control of security; Terentia may not have been able to forgive Maecenas for the death of her brother in 23 B.C., for which she may have held Maecenas responsible, even though Maecenas' actions during the conspiracy can be interpreted as an attempt to save Murena. Whatever the cause of the breakdown, the marriage ended in divorce (Dig. 24.1.64), which, according to Reckford (1950:198 n. 11), is referred to in *Elegia in Maecenatem 2* by *discidio* (*Eleg. Maec.* 2.7-10).

According to Seneca the Younger Terentia's rebuffs caused Maecenas to have a worried and anxious mind resulting in insomnia, *feliciorem ergo tu Maecenatem putas, cui amoribus anxio et morosae uxoris cotidiana repudia deflenti somnus per symphoniarum cantum ex longinquo lene resonantium quaeritur* [therefore, do you think that Maecenas was happier, he for whom, anxious with cares and tears for the daily separations of a capricious wife, sleep is sought through the music of concerts echoing from a distance] (Sen. *Prov.* 3.10). It was initial insomnia, that is, a difficulty in falling asleep (APA 1987:219 and 400). He attempted to alleviate it by drugging himself with *merum* and various other distractions to bring on sleep, *mero se licet sopiat et aquarum fragoribus avocet et mille voluptatibus mentem anxiam fallat* [although he lulls himself to sleep with unadulterated wine and diverts himself with the thunderings of waters and beguiles an anxious mind with a thousand pleasures] (Sen. *Prov.* 3.10). The use of wine as a cure for insomnia is mentioned by Horace,

irriguumque mero sub noctem corpus habento

(Hor. *Sat.* 2.1.8-9)

"let them arrange that a body be soaked with unmixed wine during the night".

Apparently these methods had no effect, *tam vigilabit in pluma quam ille in cruce* [he will be as much awake on a feather mattress as a man on a cross] (Sen. *Prov.* 3.10).

As Goetz (1902:10) says, the whole description by Seneca of some of Maecenas' unsuccessful attempts to counter the insomnia resulting from the rejection by the one he loves, through soft beds, music and running water, resembles too closely Tibullus' description of himself trying unsuccessfully to counter the insomnia brought on by Delia's rejection of him,

Adde merum vinoque novos compesce dolores
occupet ut fessi lumina victa sopor;
neu quisquam multo percussum tempora baccho
excitet, infelix dum requiescit amor.

(Tib. 1.2.1-4)

"Add undiluted wine and curb new griefs with wine in order that deep sleep may seize the subdued eyes of the exhausted man; and lest anyone may awaken him laid prone by much wine over a period while the unhappy pangs of love subside."

This does not necessarily cast doubt on the use of *merum* as a drug, since, as can be seen from the extract from Horace (*Sat.* 1.2.8-9), the use of *merum* to induce sleep was obviously common, nor does it mean that the report that Maecenas suffered from a form of insomnia as a result of tension caused by friction between himself and Terentia is false. The most likely explanation is that Seneca copied Tibullus' description to describe the same cures tried by Maecenas for the same ailment. An alternative explanation is that Seneca accurately records the attempted cures for insomnia tried by Maecenas and the reason for the resemblance is that Maecenas was inspired to use the cures by Tibullus' poem. Conversely Tibullus may have known of Maecenas' problem and used it in his poem; however, this latter explanation is the most unlikely. But Goetz is right when he says "es dürfte demnach Thatsachen, deren Seneca Erwähnung thut, mit einiger Vorsicht gegenüber zu treten" [according to this

then one must deal carefully with some ostensibly notorious facts, which are mentioned by Seneca] (Goetz 1902:11).

This form of insomnia, a condition caused *inter alia* by stress or anxiety (Davison & Neale 1986:458), seems to have been or become an extreme type taking the form of, or, at least, giving the impression of, a fever, *quibusdam perpetua febris est, sicut C. Maecenati* [for certain people, the fever is continuous, such as for C. Maecenas.] (Pliny. *H.N.* 7.172). The length of the sickness is not stated but, since it is connected with his marital problems, it may have started with Terentia's affair with Augustus or with the death of Terentia's brother in 23 B.C.

In the ode which makes direct reference to Maecenas' illness, Horace states, in an astrological reference that

te Iovis impio
tutela Saturno refulgens
eripuit

(Hor. *Od.* 2.17.22-24)

"the gleaming guardianship of Jupiter snatched you from
reprobate Saturn",

and Saturn, the planet supposed to be affecting Maecenas, caused fevers (Nisbet & Hubbard 1978:273 and 283); so the sickness referred to in *Ode* 2.17 may have been connected with, and possibly a result of, the fever-like insomnia mentioned by Pliny the Elder. If this is so then it was troubling Maecenas earlier than 23 B.C. and Terentia's rejections were not caused by her brother's death. If the proposed date of the illness in 2.17 is correct, then Maecenas' marital problems started before 33 B.C. The actual source for the date is the year given by Horace as the date of the sealing of a jar of wine,

hic dies anno redeunte festus
corticem adstrictum pice dimovebit
amphorae fumum bibere institutae
consule Tullo

(Hor. *Od.* 3.8.9-12)

"when the year returns, this festal day will remove the cork
tightened with pitch of the jar set down to drink the smoke
during the consulship of Tullus"

There were two Tulli as Consul, L. Volcaci^{us} Tullus in 66 B.C. (Broughton 1968:151) and his son, L. Volcaci^{us} Tullus, in 33 B.C. (Broughton 1968:414). 66 B.C. is much too early as Horace says he bottled it himself and he was born in 65 B.C.; therefore, the jar must have been sealed in 33 B.C. (Ensor 1902:209-211). If this was the date of the wine, then from the fact that the jar was sealed on the day of Maecenas' recovery (Hor. *Od.* 1.20.3-4), the date of the illness was 33 B.C., which is compatible with the suggestion that it was during one of the periods of his administration. But it must be admitted that this date of 33 B.C. is based on tenuous and suspect evidence and is extremely speculative. Indeed, there may not be any link between the near-fatal illness and his insomnia in later life; the only connection is the possibly coincidental element of feverishness, which may have been an addition by

Pliny, inspired by Horace's ode. The insomnia mentioned by Pliny may in fact be common geriatric insomnia.

But, whatever the various ideas concerning the possible cause and date of the onset of the insomnia, it certainly lasted for the last three years of Maecenas' life, during which time it was particularly intense, *eidem triennio supremo nullo horae momento contigit somnus* [for in the final period of three years for not a moment of the hour did sleep touch on this man] (Pliny. *H.N.* 7.172); Pliny's statement is obviously an exaggeration, but, while it is certainly an error of degree, there is no indication that he is in error on the essential fact of the insomnia.

There is the possibility that the manifestation of the eccentric part of Maecenas' character and, indeed, Maecenas' eccentricity as a whole and other aspects of his character may be connected with his relationship with Terentia and its physical and psychological results.

It is possible that Maecenas suffered from a mood disorder called depression. This is a term given to a sad mood which "persists over a long time interfering with ordinary functioning" (Papalia & Olds 1986:535) or, perhaps better, to a "depressed mood ... or loss of interest or pleasure in all, or almost all, activities, and associated symptoms, for a period of at least two weeks" (APA 1987:218). Events in his life and his writings suggest that Maecenas suffered from a bi-polar disorder. Evidence for the manic phase is seen in various ways. During a manic phase, the sufferer may display bizarre and flamboyant behaviour (Davison & Neale 1986:196), such as is seen in Maecenas' behaviour at public meetings, *hunc esse, qui in tribunali, in rostris, in omni publico coetu sic apparuerit, ut pallio velaretur caput exclusis utrimque auribus, non aliter quam in mimo fugitivi divitis solent* [that was he, who, on a tribunal, on the rostra, in every public meeting, would appear thus, his head was wrapped in a cloak, with both his ears exposed, no different from the way slaves running away from rich men are accustomed to behave in a comedy] (Sen. *Ep.* 114.6), in his sloppy dress when taking the password *nam etiam cum absentis Caesaris partibus fungeretur, signum a discincto petebatur* [for also when he was performing the functions of the absent Caesar, the password was being sought from a carelessly dressed man] (Sen. *Ep.* 114.6) and perhaps even in his general casual appearance, *non oratio eius aequae soluta est quam ipse discinctus* [has not his speech been equally loosened as he himself is slovenly] (Sen. *Ep.* 114.4) and as a man *qui solutis tunicis in urbe semper incesserit* [who always paraded in the city wearing loose-hanging tunics]. The unusual behaviour as a result and symptom of mania explains the conflict these actions create with his known great interest in his personal image, seen in his concern with the appearance of those near him (Hor. *Ep.* 1.1.94-97, 103-105). The conflict is resolved by the existence of the manic phase; the strange and flamboyant behaviour, so at odds with his interest in his image, was the result, therefore, not of an inconsistency of character, but of the mania. Another symptom of mania is the reduction in the amount of sleep required (APA 1987:215 and 217; Davison & Neale 1986:196), displayed by Maecenas in his going without sleep for a long time (Vell. Pat. 2.88.3).

These are symptoms of mania (eccentric behaviour and a reduced requirement of sleep). They coincide with, and may have therefore been relevant to, Maecenas' authority over Rome and Italy. There are two explanations for this. It could be that Maecenas' appointment was during an episode of mania, prior to depression, and, due to the increased self-esteem resulting from the manic phase in progress (Davison & Neale 1986:196; APA 1987:216), he was willing to accept the authority and make

himself successful; the depression may have been that caused by his marital problems and it is in this way that his eccentricity is connected with his relationship with Terentia. On the other hand, Maecenas' appointment to control Rome and Italy may have initiated a manic phase; responsibility would be enough of a psychological stressor (Sussman & Steinmetz 1985:10) for a manic episode to follow (APA 1987:216). Alternately, the idea of holding such public responsibility, especially when he had never done so, might have been enough to induce a phase of depression and the manic episode arose as a defence against this for as long as he held the position. If a position of responsibility was such a psychological stressor that it caused Maecenas to suffer depression, this may be an additional reason for his reluctance to be a senator.

The close resemblance between the speech characteristics of a manic person (Davison & Neale 1986:196; APA 1987:215) and the writing style called *cacozelia* introduces the idea that Maecenas' tendency towards this style may have arisen from his manic phase.

The eccentricity of Maecenas can be found in the reports of Maecenas' style of writing and speech made by Seneca the Younger. The style of speech is not a reference to Maecenas' inclination towards loquacity (Suet. *Aug.* 66.3). Seneca suggests that evidence for the eccentric character of Maecenas is to be found in three aspects of his style: faulty grammar and syntax; convoluted sentence structure; and the use of rare or florid and ornate vocabulary.

The first two elements of his style of writing are stated by Seneca as being evidence for his eccentricity, *haec verba tam improbe structa, tam neglegenter abiecta, tam contra consuetudinem omnium posita ostendunt mores quodque non minus novos et pravos et singulares fuisse*. [these words arranged so wrongly, thrown down about so carelessly, placed so contrary to contemporary usage, show that his character also was no less unusual, perverse and eccentric] (Sen. *Ep.* 114.7). Seneca, within the same letter, has shown difficulty assigning motive to this tendency; he says that Maecenas' style was deliberate, *si non vitasset intellegi*, [if he had not avoided being understood] (Sen. *Ep.* 114.4), but later says that the words were arranged faultily and set down carelessly, implying absence of deliberation, *haec verba tam improbe structa, tam neglegenter abiecta*, (Sen. *Ep.* 114.7). Whatever the cause, the strange grammar and syntax, resulting in ambiguity, is evident, though only in two examples of Maecenas' quotations, one example for each type.

Ambiguity of grammar is seen in

nexisti retia lecto

(Diom. Art. Gramm. IGr. Lat. I 369,21 sq K)

"you have fastened nets to the couch"

The form of *lecto* creates the difficulties of translation. In the area of syntax, there is ambiguity in *feminae cinno crispat et labris columbatur incipitque suspirans, ut cervice lassa fanantur nemoris tyranni* [he adorns himself with lady-like locks, lightly kisses with his lips and begins to sigh, just as the lords of the woods are worshipped with a drooping neck] (Sen. *Ep.* 114.5) due to the use of the participle with *incipit*. It seems that this example is a mixture of two possible constructions, either *incipit* or the present participle of *incipio* and the infinitive of *suspiro*, with the result that the mixture lacks the certainty of the two more orthodox phrases.

Maecenas' construction of sentences was unusual for the lack of order in the sentences and even of groups. Seneca describes Maecenas' style of speaking as *eloquentiam ebrii hominis involutam et errantem et licentiae plenam* [the wrapped up eloquence, both wandering and full of licence, of a drunk man] (Sen. Ep. 114.4), and as having words *tam contra consuetudinem omnium posita* [positioned so contrary to the usage of everyone] (Sen. Ep. 114.7) and *verba transversa* [words laid criss-cross] (Sen. Ep. 114.8); describing Maecenas, with reference to Maecenas' style of speaking, Seneca says *est ergo tanti ulla potentia, ut sit tibi ebrius sermo* [therefore, is there any power of so great a person that his conversation with you is so drunken] (Sen. Ep. 19.9). An example of this, *inter sacra movit, aqua fraxinos* [the sacred water moves amongst the ash-trees] (Quint. Inst. 9.4.28), has the adjective *sacra* totally separate from the corresponding noun, while the preposition *inter* appears to govern *sacra*, a contradiction which appears to require the editorial conjecture and insertion of *se* as the word governed by *inter*, based on the idea that the verb appears to govern *fraxinos* resulting in *inter <se> sacra movit aqua fraxinos* [the sacred water moves the ash-trees amongst itself]; in fact the verb is not transitive, but intransitive, thus eliminating *fraxinos* as the direct object and *se* as governed by *inter*, and the preposition and *fraxinos* form an extended hyperbaton. Certainly the word order in the sentence is capable of causing confusion and of giving the impression that the speaker is drunk.

A final element of eccentricity in Maecenas' writing is the penchant for either rare or unusually florid words or ideas in his sentences as decoration. Seneca the Younger criticizes it in saying that Maecenas' reputation was spoilt by *istis orationis portentosissimae deliciis* [those deplorable pretensions of unnatural speech] (Sen. Ep. 114.7). Maecenas' literary ornamentation is referred to in *Dialogus* by Tacitus where his style is compared with other notable authors in which it is called *calamistros Maecenatis* [excessive ornamentations of Maecenas] (Tac. Dial. 26).

This use of rare words can be found in the following examples of Maecenas' writing quoted by Seneca the Younger (Ep. 114.5). In one sentence, *feminae cinno crispat et labris columbatur incipitque suspirans*, Maecenas uses *columbatur*, a word extant in no other writer (TLL 3. Fasc. 8, 1734); the word *crepacem* in the sentence *tenuisve cerei fila et crepacem molam* [the threads of the slender wax-torch and the noisy millstone] is of equal rarity (TLL 4. Fasc. 5, 1166). In the sentence *focum mater aut uxor investiunt* [the mother or the wife surrounds the fireplace] the word *investiunt*, while present in other works, is not found amongst extant prose authors; the other works containing the word are poetical (TLL 7.2 Fasc. 2, 169).

This same passage also contains examples of the other notable quality of Maecenas' style, extreme decoration. The sentence *alveum lintribus arent versoque vado remittant hortos* [they may plough the stream-bed with boats and, after the stream had been furrowed, they produce gardens] not only has a word order contrary to the normal layout of a sentence, recalling the comment by Seneca the Younger, *tam contra consuetudinem omnium* (Ep. 114.7), and exhibits preciousness, but also contains a metaphor which is so unusual and florid as to verge on the bizarre. Equally bizarre is the image used in the sentence *inremediabilis factio rimantur epulis lagonaque temptant domos et spe mortem exigunt* [an implacable group, they conduct investigations at feasts and attack homes with the wine-cup and, by hope, exact death]. Even better and unequivocal examples of this florid style and vocabulary are found in

quotations both of Maecenas and of his most famous mimic, Augustus. The following is a quotation by Maecenas, addressed to Horace:

lucentes, mea vita, nec smaragdos
beryllos mini, Flacce, nec nitentes
nec percandida margarita quaero
nec quos Thynica lima perpolivit
anulos neque iasprios lapillos.

(Isidorus. *Etym.* 19.32.6)

"Flaccus, my life, I seek for myself neither shining emeralds nor glittering beryls, nor shining white pearls nor rings nor jasper gems which Thynican polishing has smoothed."

While his reference to wealth is typically poetic - by listing jewels one would expect to find among a rich person's possessions or would form the basis of a person's affluence rather than by a single phrase or an abstract idea which would sum up the entire concept - what is typical of his peculiar style is the use of precious, exotic Greek words, such as *smaragdos*, *beryllos* and *margarita*, and geographical epithets, such as *Thynica*.

The quotations from Augustus are examples of Augustus' friendly mocking of Maecenas' style by imitation, a frequent occurrence (Suet. Aug. 86.2); since the humour depended on close imitation, it can be accepted that the passages closely resemble Maecenas' style. The first is *in primis Maecenatem suum, cuius "myrobrechis", ut ait, "cincinnos" usque persequitur et imitando per iocum irridet*. [in first points his Maecenas, whose "myrrh-soaked curled locks", as he says, he imitates and, by copying, ridicules through a joke] (Suet. Aug. 86.2) in which Augustus both describes Maecenas' highly decorative style and displays Maecenas' use of neologisms, *myrobrechis* being a word unique to Maecenas (*TLL* 8.1-2, 1746), and satirizes both; the second quotation in which Augustus achieves the same object by the same technique is when *in epistula ad Maecenatem familiaris plura in iocos effusa subtexit*: "Vale, mi ebum Medulliae, ebur ex Etruria, lasar Arretinum, adamas Supernas, Tiberinum margaritum, Cilniorum smaragde, iaspi Iguvinorum, berulle Porsenae, carbunculum Italiae, [in a letter to Maecenas a friend connected more extravagances into jokes: "Farewell, my ebony of medullia, ivory from Etruria, Arretine lasar, Supernan diamond, Tiberine pearl, emerald of the Cilni, jasper of the Iguvini, beryl of Porsena, carbuncle of Italy] (Macr. *Sat.* 2.4.12). This passage is possibly based on and mimics a passage by Maecenas (Isidorus. *Etym.* 19.32.6), and must illustrate Maecenas' partiality for long florid lists filled with exotic vocabulary all linked by a theme.

In his poetry Maecenas seems actually to have followed the style of the "neoterics" of a previous generation, the sort of person ridiculed by Horace (*Sat.* 1.10.18-19); he seems, from his use of unique or rare words either in prose or during his time, of neologisms, of strange, unusual metaphors and of poetic vocabulary in prose structure, to have aimed at a poetic style and vocabulary in prose. A certain eccentricity may be detected in Maecenas' tendency to handle serious matters in a careless, almost light-hearted way, *quod inter haec pessimum est, quia in re tristi ludit compositio* [which is the worst point among these because, in a sad matter, the arrangement plays about] (Quint. *Inst.* 9.4.28).

The idea has arisen that Maecenas was a hypochondriac (Nisbet & Hubbard 1978:273). The indication of Maecenas' hypochondria is not confirmed by, but only found in, *Ode* 2.17; Nisbet and Hubbard were right to say that "if interpreted with discretion, the ode may reveal a little more about Maecenas' temperament" (Nisbet & Hubbard 1978:273). The indicator is not the illness, but the purpose and the content of the ode, that is, to give reassurance to Maecenas about his (Maecenas') health and to deal with "Maecenas' obsession with death" (Porter 1987:139). As regards the purpose of the ode, the illness from which Maecenas has suffered appears to be over and to have been in the past and Maecenas appears to have recovered fully, seen by the reference to the sacrifice (Hor. *Od.* 2.17.30-33; Nisbet & Hubbard 1978:139). Yet Horace is still having to reassure him; this point on its own suggests that Maecenas was over worried about his health. This view is confirmed by the language of the first line

Cur me querelis exanimas tuis?

(Hor. *Od.* 2.17.1)

"Why do you trouble me with your complaints?"

Although keeping to a convention of poetry (Nisbet & Hubbard 1978:274) it suggests impatience on the part of Horace, "the poem begins on a note of gentle reproach, in which there can be heard, perhaps, a slight impatience" (Fraenkel 1957:217) and it seems to be "a reproach rather than a genuine question" (Nisbet & Hubbard 1978:274). This impatience indicates that Maecenas' inquiries to Horace for reassurance about his health were not only frequent but also unnecessary. Both points supply evidence for the theory of hypochondriasis. The frequency indicates he is constantly seeking reassurance because either he is indeed ill and close to death or he is obsessed and worried about his health. The first possibility can be ruled out. The frequent requests for reassurance were before 23 B.C. and he died only in 8 B.C.; the fact that he lived for such a long time, although, as far as he was concerned, he was near death, suggests that his beliefs in his severe ill-health were unfounded and were the result of hypochondriasis. The fact that the inquiries were unnecessary indicates that his frequent requests for reassurance were caused by needless worry, not actual illness. The fact that Maecenas had to be reassured that he would not die before Horace shows the doubt and concern Maecenas had about his health and the support he needed in this connection.

Hypochondria, now called hypochondriasis, is a form of mental disorder called a Somatiform Disorder (APA 1987:255). It is defined as being different from another form, Somatization Disorder (Briquet's Disease) (APA 1987:261) which invalidates the opinion of Davison and Neale that with the difficulty of differentiation it is probably best to regard the two disorders as one (Davison & Neale 1986:148). Hypochondriasis is accompanied by other problems and "anxiety and depression and interpersonal problems, such as ... marital difficulties" (Davison & Neale 1986:148); and marital difficulties in turn can lead to anxiety (Davison & Neale 1986:148-150), the anxiety about the marriage then being displaced into anxiety about health, so that the body and health become a substitute for the marital problems, the actual cause, and thus take the sufferer's mind off them. Maecenas suffered from anxiety caused by marital problems (Sen. *Prov.* 3.10) and it seems that Horace's remark (Hor. *Od.* 2.17.1), which is an exaggeration of Horace's annoyance, but does not mean that such irritation did not exist, suggests possible strained relations, which is a symptom of hypochondriasis (APA 1987:260). Maecenas' psychological disorder does not conflict

with his sickness (Hor. *Od.* 2.17.22-24) and his vow (Hor. *Od.* 2.17.30-31), if, indeed, he ever made the latter. The hypochondriasis theory is not a denial that he ever had a sickness or that the sickness was near-fatal. On the contrary, the sickness is perfectly in accord with the theory because it provides a definite object of complaint for Maecenas rather than vague protestations about his health; indeed, hypochondriasis is probably all the stronger in a person who has recovered from a real malady than in a person who has never been sick, because the former has a factual, albeit cured, sickness to act as a substitute for the actual source of his anxiety instead of creating one or several (APA 1987:260).

Hypochondriasis does provide a solution for Horace's remarks and attitude displayed in Ode 2.17. If the illness was as serious as it appears or as Maecenas made out, not only must another explanation for the message of the ode be found, but also Horace showed himself to be uncharacteristically inconsiderate; however, the suffering of hypochondriasis on the part of Maecenas both explains Horace's remarks and excuses his attitude.

It may therefore be postulated that Maecenas suffered from a major depressive episode brought about by the breakdown of his marriage. Terentia's frequent rejections of him may have caused Maecenas to enter such an episode; this may have resulted in Maecenas' attempt to prove himself sexually attractive, if not to women, at least to youths, by his affair with Bathyllus. This would explain the affair in spite of his obvious love for Terentia. The insomnia from which he suffered, intensely in the last three years of his life, was caused by the tension between him and Terentia (Sen. *Prov.* 3.10) and probably by the final divorce; indeed, the divorce may have been the reason for the intensity of the insomnia. This accords well with the proposed theory of Maecenas' major depressive episode, since it fulfils not only the requirement that the depressive period must persist "over a long time", but also the requirements that such major depressive episodes can be caused by the end of a love affair (Papalia & Olds 1986:535) and have, as an associated symptom, insomnia (APA 1987:219); the length of time of the episode and the insomnia, three years, is not impossible since, if not treated, an episode may last for as much as two years (APA 1987:220-221) and it may have been only his fear of dying which stopped him from committing suicide (Sen. *Ep.* 101.10-11 and Quint. *Inst.* 9.4.28). Associated features of a major depressive episode are anxiety (APA 1987:220), suffered by Maecenas (Sen. *Prov.* 3.10), and hypochondriasis (Davison & Neale 1986:195; APA 1987:220).

It cannot be determined for certain whether the hypochondriasis from which Maecenas suffered was an associated feature of the major depressive episode caused by his marital problems or of the one connected with his manic episode.

Maecenas' relationship with Terentia was definitely strained and this resulted in Maecenas' enduring a severe case of anxiety. It is possible, therefore, that Maecenas, suffering from anxiety about the state of his marriage with Terentia, directed the anxiety at his health, as a substitute (Davison & Neale 1986:148, 150 and 457).

Alternately if one accepts the date suggested by *Ode* 2.17 the example of hypochondriasis seems to have occurred after Maecenas' period in a position of authority and, since this accords well with the process of bi-polar disorder and the idea that Maecenas underwent a manic phase during his control of Rome and Italy, it is possible that, once Maecenas was relieved of his position, and the manic phase was no longer needed as a defence, he suffered a period of extreme depression with the hypochondriasis as an associated feature.

There are, therefore, two conclusions regarding Maecenas' psychological health, which are not only not contradictory, but are also possibly overlapping. Due to the breakdown of his marriage Maecenas suffered from a major depressive episode displaying such associated symptoms as insomnia and anxiety; probably due to the final dissolution of his marriage, the insomnia became most intense during the last three years of his life. During his period of administration of Rome, either in 36 B.C. or 31-30 B.C., Maecenas was also affected by a bi-polar disorder, consisting of a manic episode followed by a depressive one. This disorder was possibly connected to the depression caused by his marital problems, the manic episode being a defence against the depression, which eventually affected him. Or, more likely, the bi-polar disorder was the result of his appointment to a position of great public authority, which either initiated a manic episode, which was followed by depression, or induced a depressive episode which the mania resisted temporarily. The hypochondriasis resulted either from the major depressive episode or from the depressive episode of the bi-polar disorder.

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