

If Death Is Nothing To Us, Then Life Is Everything to Us

Post by “Cassius” of October 7, 2023 at 5:47 AM

Do we already have Maecenas in our list of later Epicureans? If we don't I am wondering if we shouldn't, because the more I read the more Epicurean he sounds. And I would bet that some people are denying that he is Epicurean because of his preference for luxury, and the ascetic-version of Epicurean philosophy (which I think is wrong) prevents them from accepting that he was in fact pursuing Epicurean philosophy as he thought appropriate under his circumstances, somewhat like Atticus.

EDIT: Yes i see Nate has him listed - good work @Nate!

CAIUS TREBATIUS TESTA (84 BCE – 4 CE) a friend of Cicero who supported Julius Caesar
CALPURNIA CAESARIS (c. 75 BCE – 00s BCE) Daughter of Pubo
PUBLIUS VIRGILIUS MARIUS (70 – 19 BCE) student of Siro at the Garden of Naples
GAIUS CILNIUS MAECENAS (70 – 8 BCE) political advisor to Octavian/Augustus
QUINTUS HORACE FLACCUS (65 – 8 BCE) Conced carpe diem or "seize the day!"
CAIUS STALLIUS LAURANUS (1st-century BCE – 1st-century CE) a student in Naples
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Introduction

Maecenas, a descendant of Etruscan kings and a friend of Emperor Augustus, was a leading figure in both the late Roman Republic and the early Empire. During the civil wars that followed Julius Caesar's death, he acted as a diplomat, a close adviser to the future Augustus, and for a time was even in charge (with Agrippa) of the government of Rome and Italy. He is also believed to have played a major role in the emergence of the imperial regime. Although rarely present on the battlefield, he is often seen as Caesar the Younger's right-hand man. Above all, from the late 40s BCE, he was the patron of some of the most famous Latin poets. He symbolized from very early on the golden age of literary patronage and it is mainly to this activity that he still owes his fame today: for example, Virgil's *Georgics* and *Aeneid*, Horace's *Odes* or Propertius's *Elegies* were composed under his aegis. He also left behind the image of a bon vivant with an unusual, one might even say eccentric, personality, and of an epicurean who preferred staying in the shadows to the limelight. The very limited and scattered data from ancient sources (even his date of birth is uncertain) derives in part from opponents who did not appreciate the fact that a simple knight, who had refused to be a magistrate and privileged his personal relationship with Caesar the Younger, played a leading role in Rome at a time when the city was in the throes of transformation. The singularity of his behavior, in a very normative society, accentuated certain misunderstandings. Thus, Maecenas left a controversial image which is still widely debated today. In all likelihood, if he became involved in Roman politics, alongside the future Augustus during the civil wars, it was out of duty, as he was probably convinced that troubled times required action. After Caesar the Younger's victory over Antony and Cleopatra, in 31–30 BCE, he felt the need to regain his freedom and, at the end of what was a political epiphany (Maecenas remained in the political limelight for only a few years), only

retain his role as a discrete personal advisor. He also continued to spearhead a movement to turn Rome not only into a political and military power, but also a cultural one. The death of this faithful and loyal companion in 8 BCE was experienced by Augustus, his friend, as an irreparable loss.

General Overviews

The political and cultural context explains to a large extent, despite Maecenas's oddities, the modalities of his political action and cultural work. Rome changed profoundly at the time of Augustus's Principate and, even though a political culture endured, institutions and society underwent transformations that distinguished it in part from Republican Rome. In this framework, the personality of the prince, Augustus, friend of Maecenas and man of literature, was pivotal ([Le Doze 2020](#)). Because of his authority and the accumulation of powers, all eyes were on him. His reformist policies, including their traditionalist dimension that should not be overlooked, shaped a new Rome after the civil wars ([Hurlet and Mineo 2009](#), [Rivière 2012](#)). However, others than the prince contributed to the transformation of the empire's capital ([Morrell, et al. 2019](#)) and to the profound developments of this period, which are not limited to institutional changes ([Galinsky 1996](#), [Galinsky 2005](#), and [Wallace-Hadrill 2008](#)). The triumviral period ([Osgood 2006](#), [Pina Polo 2020](#)), which preceded the establishment of the Principate, generated a lot of anxiety, and created a context that influenced poetic production. [Zanker 1988](#) is an excellent introduction to the debates that surround Maecenas, for the author studies how the values advocated by the Augustan regime permeated Roman society through images: similarly, historians have often suggested that Maecenas exploited poets to serve Augustus's interests.

[Maecenas](#)

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