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WHAT WORDS CAN DO: HORACE, *C.* 3.13, "O FONS BANDUSIAE"

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Above everything else, poetry is words. . . . [A] poet's words are of things that do not exist without the words.

Wallace Stevens

O fons Bandusiae, splendidior vitro,
dulci digne mero non sine floribus,
cras donaberis haedo,
cui frons turgida cornibus

primis et Venerem et proelia destinat,
frustra: nam gelidos inficiet tibi
rubro sanguine rivos
lascivi suboles gregis.

te flagrantis atrox hora Caniculae
nescit tangere, tu frigus amabile
fessis vomere tauris
praebes et pecori vago.

fies nobilium tu quoque fontium
me dicente cavis impositam ilicem
saxis, unde loquaces
lymphae desilunt tuae.

O Bandusia's spring, more radiant than glass,
deserving of nice wine and some flowers too,
tomorrow you will be presented with a kid.
His brow bulging with its first horns

promises him a future of both erotic love and battles.
It cannot come true, for this child
of a playful flock will stain
your icy rivulets with his red blood.

You are immune to the cruel season of the fiery
Dog Star; you bring welcome freshness
to bulls worn out with plowing
and to the wandering herd.

You will come into being as another of the famous springs
whenever I say that an ilex is perched on hollow
rocks, from which your talking
waters leap down.[1]

I. Introduction

The entire text of Horace's *C.* 3.13, "O fons Bandusiae," is an elaborate, disjointed, riddling mimetic disguise for a simple, unexpressed literal proposition: "Poetry is words." The first part of the quotation from Stevens in the epigraph above is, by sheer coincidence, an expanded version of the same proposition; the second part, an explicit denial of referentiality to an existing world beyond the text (already implied by "Poetry is words"). Every part of "O fons" is directed to that same end, "self-referentiality." The poet makes his point, not by explication, but by a quintessentially "literary," that is, distorted, highly artificial, and obscure use of language.[2] By forcing the reader to participate strenuously in the construction of meaning, the poet makes him or her experience the significance as a revelation, instead of passively absorbing it.

Riffaterre's treatment of the kind of poetry marked by "literariness" provides a framework and an adaptable terminology for interpreting Horace's ode. For Riffaterre, "a poem says one thing and means another" (1). One may modify this to say that a poem can say two different things in the same words. For the poet, the starting point is an unexpressed literal concept, word, phrase, or sentence (called by Riffaterre the "matrix"), which is then disguised by a series of distorted variants; the sum of the variants, the text as a whole, is the all-encompassing variant, presenting a plausible impression of mimesis that represents something entirely unrelated to the matrix. As Riffaterre puts it, "The text functions something like a neurosis: as the matrix is repressed, the displacement produces variants all through the text, just as suppressed symptoms break out somewhere else in the body" (19).[3]

1. All translations in the article are mine; the text is Borszák's. I owe thanks to David Smith, Christopher Faraone, Spencer Edwards, and the anonymous referees of *Helios*.

2. The basic, often-quoted statement about "literariness" originated with the Russian Formalist critic R. Jakobson: "The subject of literary scholarship is not literature in its totality but literariness (*literaturnost*), i.e. that which makes of a given work a work of literature" (quoted in Erlich 172 and later also by Hawkes 61). Elsewhere, Jakobson expands and clarifies his definition of literariness: "The distinctive feature of poetry lies in the fact that a word is perceived as a word and not merely as a proxy for the denoted object or an outburst of emotion, that words and their arrangement, their meaning, their outward and inward form acquire weight and value of their own" (Erlich 183 and Hawkes 64). For a brief introduction to Formalist and related schools of criticism, see Hawkes 59-65, 71-77.

3. Chapter 1, "The Poem's Significance" (1-22), is worth reading as a clarification of Riffaterre's semiotic method. It should be understood that my intention here is not to throw light on Riffaterre's theory or on Jakobson's, but to use their methods and those of semiotic criticism generally, wherever relevant, to find alternative meanings in "O fons" not previously discernible.

The reader's role is to reverse the process. Starting from the text, the reader works back through the successive distortions—torn between almost inescapable assumptions of mimesis and rereferentiality, and a barely perceptible awareness of a contrary structure based entirely on linguistic relationships—until, if successful, he or she retrieves the original, but never directly expressed, matrix.

II. The Text: First Reading

Any text must first be read at face value. The more "literary" the text, the more inevitable it is that either the mimetic content will lead the reader farther and farther astray into the extraverbal world of the referents, or it will be eventually cancelled—if the reader focuses on linguistic rather than referential clues—in favor of a unified, non-mimetic significance. This mimetic, heuristic reading cannot be bypassed, however, for it is the base upon which all further interpretive maneuvers are founded.[4]

From the onset, "O fons" gives every indication of being a conventional hymn, albeit to a humble deity. We have the customary apostrophe preceded by *O*, followed by two apparently laudatory epithets (1-2). But is it, in fact, laudatory to characterize the spring as *dulci digne mero non sine floribus*? On the basis of *donaberis* (3), this ode has generally been classified either as a dedication or as a hymn with elements of a dedicatory epigram, and most commentaries list wine, flowers, and a kid as promised offerings. A more attentive reading of line 2 can suggest a different interpretation, one that sets the reader off along a path that changes the shape of the entire poem. *Dulci digne mero non sine floribus* promises nothing. It is an epithet parallel to *splendidior vitro* and indicative of the spring's proper status among recipients of offerings. The operative word is *digne*, an indeterminate adjective: one can be deserving of much or little. The prediction in line 3 of a blood sacrifice (*cras donaberis haedo*) is not cumulative but adversative: the spring deserves only a libation of wine and a scattering of flowers, but tomorrow it will be given an offering far beyond its deserts—a blood offering of a kid.

An epigram by the Alexandrian poet Leonidas of Tarentum is one of several extant examples of epigram in which a definitive act of giving in the present tense is followed by a *votum*, the promise of a greater offering

4. Cairns 523-35 provides a perfect contemporary illustration of the mimetic, referential approach to poetic texts that once prevailed. His basic assumption is that the *fons* is a real spring on Horace's own estate, and that the poet is promising to sacrifice a kid to it in the manner of the Hellenistic dedicatory epigrams (*anathēmatika*) "most frequently exemplified in the sixth book of the Palatine Anthology." Cairns' article, in its concern with wide-ranging referential quests (e.g., the breeding patterns of goats as support for his identification of the festival at which the sacrifice is to be performed), could serve as an antithesis, and thereby perhaps as a helpful clarification, of the semiotic approach that I have adopted here.

contingent upon the granting of a request. The donor offers to the deity barley-cakes, olives, a fig, five grapes, and the dregs of a cup—altogether a most modest offering, comparable to a gift of wine and flowers. "But if you rescue me from hateful poverty as you have rescued me from sickness, expect a sacrificial kid."[5] This epigrammatic intertext expresses clearly what lines 2 and 3 of "O fons" imply in a veiled way: a blood sacrifice is far superior to a vegetal offering.

In reminding the Roman reader of the contrast in status between a vegetal and a blood offering, the intertext overdetermines the message that a careful reader may have deduced from lines 2 and 3 themselves. The more variously the poet says the same thing in non-obvious language, the more "overdetermined" the text becomes, and the more clearly the meanings thus determined hint that they are part of a linguistic structure of related meanings. Obscurity, intertextuality, and overdetermination are prominent among the distinguishing marks of "literariness."

It is appropriate here to give a basic definition of a dedication and, since the verb *donaberis* is in the future tense, of a *votum*. The essential feature of a dedication in its purest form (an inscription attached to an actual offering) is some version of the formula "X gives Y to Z." This sentence conforms to Austin's now-familiar term "performative utterance" (4-6): the utterance, in speech or writing, of the formula performs, in effect, the act of transferring ownership of Y from X to Z (usually a deity). Since the act of giving is effected by the utterance, the verb should be, strictly speaking, in the present tense. Furthermore, X, Y, and Z should be identified or identifiable.

A *votum*, on the other hand, is a promise of a future offering contingent upon the fulfillment of a request. The implied tense of the act of giving is future, and the request is a regular part of the *votum*.

A comparison of "O fons" 2-3 with Leonidas' epigram demonstrates that Horace is scrambling a familiar generic form of epigram: dedication followed by *votum*. The verb *donare* strongly hints at a dedication, but the passive voice artfully avoids naming the donor, who is nowhere identified (despite the almost universal assumption by readers that it is the poet himself). The future tense is proper, not to a dedication, but to a *votum*; but there is no request whose fulfillment will insure the giving of the gift. Line 3 is neither dedication nor *votum*, but an anomalous mixture of features of both. Riffaterre (2-4) calls such anomalies "ungrammaticalities,"[6] and presents them as signals of literariness, signs that the reader should beware of casual interpretation.

5. Leonidas, *Anth. Gr.* 6.300. For other examples of the dedication/*votum* form, cf. *Anth. Gr.* 6.146, 152 (Hellenistic); 190, 191 (imitations of 300), 231, 238, 321 (post-Augustan).

6. But Riffaterre's concept of "ungrammaticality" unfolds itself in so gradual and complex a way that a specific reference cannot be given. "Anomalies" may serve here as a reasonable equivalent.

If the spring is to be over-honored, as in stanza one, the kid is to be cheated of its rightful destiny (stanza two). Marked out by its budding horns for a normal goat's life of erotic love and battles, it is on the morrow to be sacrificed and its blood spilled into the spring. The contrast between *fons* and *haedus* with respect to the inversion of what is due and what is to be received—in addition to introducing the strong note of pathos so universally commented upon—plays an important role in the eventual decoding of an infratext.

Stanza three, a conventional hymnic aretalogy in praise of the spring's unfailing freshness, presents the reader with only the normal challenges of figurative diction. It is, one might say, an interlude of relaxation amidst three extraordinarily "literary," polysemic, riddling stanzas.

Stanza four is the turning point. The spotlight of praise is diverted from the *fons* to the poet's craft, which will raise the status of the humble spring to the level of the famous springs known by name: *fies nobilium tu quoque fontium* (13).

Although this is the usual observation on line 13, another meaning of *fies*, in view of the vividness of the description that follows *me dicente*, suggests itself: "You will *come into being* as one of the famous springs every time I say . . . ," that is, "every time a reader reads this description and pictures it in his imagination." Such a reading takes full account of the temporal simultaneity (iterative future) of *fies* and *me dicente*. The *fons* does not become famous just once and then lie there on the page, famous forever; it requires an act of reading to renew not only its status but its very existence. This renewal is possible because the poet's mode of saying (*dicente*) is through the written word. Since he records what he means to say, he can repeat it endlessly, even long after he is dead. The focal point of this stanza, read in this way, is the miraculous phenomenon of writing.[7]

III. *Loquaces Lymphae*: Decoding Lines 14-16

Openmindednes about meaning comes into play elsewhere in stanza four in the phrase *loquaces lymphae*, usually understood as some variant on "prattling" or "babbling" waters. But as Quinn points out, "H.'s spring is fully articulate" (ad loc.). "Talking waters" can, once the limitations established by "prattling" are removed, be seen as an almost literal periphrasis for ink. The poet does not talk, but writes; the waters do not make meaningless sounds, but record the poet's words for posterity.

Loquaces lymphae can be supported by a close reading of the text. The phrase suggests a related alternative meaning for its near neighbor *cavis saxis*, for ancient inkwells were made of stone and often had multiple hollows for inks of different colors. In one way, then, *loquaces lymphae* and *cavis saxis* reflect upon and reinforce each other. And yet it is most unlikely that *cavis saxis* in itself would suggest "inkwell" as an equivalent, without the prior support of *loquaces lymphae*. There seems to be something like a fixed *order* of interpretation, in which each successively decoded semantic unit can support a more speculative meaning for a contiguous unit, because it is supported in turn by an increasingly overdetermined context.

Loquaces lymphae and *cavis saxis* are further overdetermined as being intertexts from a common source. Book 6 of the *Greek Anthology* is comprised almost entirely of dedicatory epigrams, most of them literary, that is, fictional and non-performative. Nine of them (6.62-68, 227, 295) purport to be dedications by a retiring scribe of the tools of his trade—inkwells, pens, rulers, eraser, and the like. Since their subject is so circumscribed, the same motifs are repeated through the centuries, with only minor variations; the object dedicated is literally named, while the epithet attached to it tends to be metaphorical.

Three tropes occurring among these scribal dedications, though all post-Augustan, provide plausible evidence of earlier intertexts, now lost, for the ink and inkwell lurking behind *loquaces lymphae* and *cavis saxis*.

Two of these tropes allude to a relationship between ink and the human voice: Anth. Gr. 6.67.5-6 speaks of pens and ink as "mystic purveyors of the human voice" (*μυστήρια φωνῆς / ἀνδρομέης*) and 68.5-6 of the inkstand and pens "by which Time preserves for those to come the voice of those who have departed" (*οἷσι φυλάσσει / αἰὼν ἐσσομένοις γῆρυν ἀποιχομένων*). As for inkwells, 6.64.5 has "ink long stored in hollow caverns" (*γλυπτοῖσι . . . ἄντροις*).[8]

7. Commager 322-24 first shifted the focus of criticism to a notable extent from the spring to stanza four and the power of poetry as words, without abandoning referentiality: "[Horace] had heard Bandusia's waters, to be sure, but he knew and quietly insisted that they were to speak most significantly through his own words" (324). Smith 822-26 and Vessey 383-92 both deny any role to referentiality: "[K]id and spring are text, script" (Vessey 387). For Smith, the reader is constantly reminded that he or she is looking at a medium for presenting images, and that "the materials themselves exist only as conditions granted by the author" (823). Both Smith and Vessey, each in his own way, interpret the various images as nonreferential metaphors or symbols of sex, death, time, and, in Vessey's case, the hierarchy of genres (on which see below, note 18).

8. In these two phrases, *loquaces lymphae* and *cavis saxis*, a distinctive kind of two-faced allusiveness to earlier texts becomes apparent. In scholarly commentary on "O fons," the traditional, "source studies" face is best exemplified by Pasquali 557-58, who identifies as Horace's models for stanza four specifically quoted passages, most of them epigrams from *Anth. Gr.* 9, featuring scenes from nature in which water, rocks, and trees appear in various combinations.

That "O fons" alludes to such epigrams can hardly be denied; they are part and parcel of the ode's mimetic disguise. Little more than imitations of the earlier passages, these allusions mask and distort other, more illuminating intertexts that provide vital clues to a different meaning. In stanza four of "O fons"—specifically in the phrases *loquaces lymphae* and *cavis saxis*—these hidden intertexts belong to a context having to do with the material aspects of writing. Johnson, writing in a context of modern poetry and criticism, makes a distinction between the kind of "borrowings" so thoroughly researched by Pasquali and a more modern,

Where there are ink and an inkwell, a pen is at hand. Although there is no recognizable intertext in this instance, the ilex *must* be a pen, however unlikely this equivalence would be in isolation. The procedure at this point becomes a matter of justifying an enforced speculation. An ilex is a tree, and by metalepsis can be substituted for *arbor*. *Arbor* means "trunk" as well as "tree," and by metaphorical extension, "oar," "mast," and "post." Although none of these attested meanings solves the present problem, they do allow the observation that in a figurative context a tree can be any columnar wooden object of any size, including "pen." Once ink and inkwell are connected, every unit that coalesces with the "writing" nexus must be reduced to a consonant scale.

Before the transformation from ilex to "pen" can be complete, the relative positions of *ilicem* and *cavis saxis* must be reimagined: the pen is not "situated on" (*impositam*, 14) but "dipped into" the inkwell; the inherent ambiguity of the prefix has been put to the service of polysemy. Even more than the change from ilex to pen, the change of position and the introduction of movement based on *impositam* show that the metamorphosis here depends not on any metaphorical figure related to a parallel content, but entirely on an independently developing linguistic nexus that separates itself from the original referential content of a static landscape, in order to create a new and separately existing plane of significance.

Desiliunt aptly portrays the movement by which ink is carried to the page by a pen, with a slight rise before the descent. Pen and inkwell taken together are the source (*unde*, 15) from which the ink "leaps down."

The crucial term in this riddling complex is *tuae*, the final word of the ode, for it alludes to the addressee, the *fons Bandusiae*. If *your* talking waters are the waters of the spring to which the poem is addressed, then that spring, the *fons Bandusiae*, must have a second identity belonging to the same linguistic nexus as ink, inkwell, and pen. Certainly it must be the sheet of papyrus on which this text is being inscribed.

That the *fons* as spring is to be imagined as a stream rather than an underground source could have been deduced in the third stanza from its role as a provider of refreshment for the herds and flocks that frequent it. But it must also be imagined in its alternative incarnation: a flat horizontal surface with parallel edges, with visible ripples or rivulets running along it, susceptible to metamorphosis through the reader's imagination into an unrolled sheet of papyrus currently being inscribed with words—the alter-

less obvious kind of intertext that Johnson calls "violations of property." Although this term is irrelevant to a reading of "O fons," Johnson's description of the non-traditional kind of intertext can well be applied to "O fons," not only to stanza four but to the rereading of stanzas one and two that we are about to undertake: "When read in its dynamic intertextuality, [such a] text becomes differently energized, traversed by forces and desires that are invisible and unreadable to those who see it as an independent, homogeneous message unit, a totalizable collection of signifieds" (265).

native *tu* of this ode. The ink (*loquaces lymphae tuae*) belongs to the *fons*/manuscript because the *fons* is its ultimate and permanent destination. The overdetermination of this passage (14-16)—in which *loquaces lymphae* is cumulatively reinforced by *cavis saxis*, *ilicem*, *impositam*, *unde*, *desiliunt*, and finally *tuae*, with each word fitting snugly and immovably into a newly forming verbal structure, without the slightest disturbance of the already existing structure—qualifies this passage as, to use Riffaterre's term, "monumental."[9]

What term may be used to characterize lines 14-16? It is not an extended metaphor: the two levels of meaning do not resemble each other, nor does one illuminate the other in any direct way. If anything, we have here an extended pun, or allegory: pure wordplay, whose effect is to divert the reader's attention from content to form, to interrelationships between words rather than between their referents, including the absence of any relationship such as metaphor between the two levels of meaning.

Taken as a unit, the descriptions of the leaping waterfall and the act of writing in exactly the same words may be termed a revelation—a revelation of which both readings, otherwise unrelated to each other except in their sequence of words, are necessary components. The reader's imagination has been seeing a tree perched upon hollow rocks, above a waterfall. Working through the text—and this text is accessible only to those who *can* read to themselves[10]—the reader becomes aware of what he or she is actually seeing: markings of ink made with a pen on a page, which have been rendered virtually invisible by the illusion they engendered. Tree, rocks, and water exist only because the text exists.[11]

9. Riffaterre describes the relationship between monumentality and overdetermination as follows: "[Overdetermination confers] upon the literary text its monumentality. it is so well built and rests upon so many intricate relationships that it is relatively impervious to change and deterioration of the linguistic code" (21).

10. Should it be objected that ancient readers *listened to* poetry rather than perusing a text, see Knox, who presents convincing evidence that "ancient books were normally read aloud, but there is nothing to show that silent reading of books was anything extraordinary . . . " (435).

11. Hawkes' summary of the Russian Formalist V. Shklovsky's statement of the function of poetry is apropos here:

> According to Shklovsky, the essential function of poetic art is to counteract the process of habituation encouraged by routine everyday modes of perception. We very readily cease to see the world we live in, and become anaesthetized to its distinctive features. The aim of poetry is to reverse that process, to "defamiliarize" that with which we are overly familiar, to "creatively deform" the usual, the normal, and so to inculcate a new, childlike, non-jaded vision in us. The poet thus aims to disrupt "stock response," and to generate a heightened awareness: to restructure our ordinary perception of "reality," so that we end by *seeing* the world instead of numbly recognizing it. . . . (62)

The perception that is "restructured" in stanza four is, I suggest, the reader's perception of the nature of poetry: it is not looking through a window at something outside the text; it is looking at words written or printed on a page, and experiencing their effect upon his imagination.

IV. Decoding Lines 2-8

Identifying the addressee of the poem as a manuscript demands a rereading of the ode from its beginning, and a testing of its validity. Lines 3-11 are devoted, on the mimetic level, to the sacrifice of a kid to the *fons*, its red blood mingling with the chill waters of the spring. A kind of two-faced allusiveness to earlier texts has already been pointed out (see note 8 above): the "borrowing" from Greek epigram so thoroughly documented by Pasquali served as a mimetic mask for the second kind of allusion, whose decoding transformed a scene from nature (on both the Horatian and the epigrammatic levels) into an act of writing.

For the blood sacrifice in stanzas one and two, Pasquali has noted as a "source" Theocritus' *Epigram* 1 (= *Anth. Gr.* 6.336), in which the blood of a sacrificed goat will stain the altar. But we should also determine whether the kid-sacrifice in these stanzas, like the tree, rocks, and water of stanza four, conceals a riddling intertext, featuring the *fons* as a manuscript.

If we glance over the first two stanzas for clues to a manuscript-related context, our eye is caught by the words *frons* and *cornua*, which, often used in conjunction, have secondary meanings related to manuscripts: they are, respectively, the outer surface (*frons*[12]) of the papyrus scroll, and the *cornua*, the protruding ends of the rolling rod. *Rubro sanguine* (7) could be a fairly obvious metaphor for red ink, but the immediate context of these three terms seems to have nothing to do with texts or writing, nor is there any evident way of connecting them metonymically. Thus, the *haedus* stubbornly clings to its identity as a young goat, referred to again in line 8 as *lascivi suboles gregis*.

Fortuitously, considerable evidence of a topos alluding to the outer appearance of a deluxe copy of the ancient Roman papyrus scroll has survived. Details of the topos vary somewhat, but the staples are: the *frons*, or the outer surface of the scroll, understood in the context of the deluxe-copy topos as being smoothed and polished with pumice; the *cornua* (= *umbilici*), or the protruding ends of the rolling rod, in deluxe copies painted or adorned with knobs; the *index*/*titulus* (the two terms are typically interchangeable), or a strip of papyrus (the *index*) glued to the upper end of the rolled scroll so as to be visible when the roll is either lying on a shelf or standing in its storage box, and inscribed with identifying marks in red ink (the *titulus*); and the *membrana*, or an outer wrapping (often dyed purple or saffron) made of the skin of a kid, calf, or lamb. These four (and a fifth, the oiling of the papyrus with cedar oil, which is not alluded to in Horace's poem) were adornments that the ordinary manuscript did not normally possess.[13]

12. The definition of *frons* given in *OLD*, s.v. *frons*[2] 9 ("the exposed surface, outer side of anything"), covers the word in a general way, but two different uses of it in the special terminology of manuscripts must be distinguished: *frons* can denote either the entire outer surface of the rolled papyrus scroll or (*OLD*, s.v. *frons*[2] 8b) "either of the flat ends (of a papyrus roll)." The former meaning, "the entire outer surface," is the one relevant to our reading of "O fons." Yet this usage as a specific book-term is curiously neglected in *OLD* and in English-language accounts generally; this gives the unwary researcher the impression that in book-terminology the word denotes only the flat end of the roll. The most usable definition I have encountered is that of Besslich 47: "In der Buchterminologie kann *frons* zweierlei heissen: die Schnittfläche oder die Aussenseite."

In the metonymic, manuscript-centered context of stanza four, and now of *frons*, *cornibus*, and *rubro sanguine*, and with the indispensable help of the deluxe-copy topos, *cras donaberis haedo* (3), addressed to the *fons* as papyrus manuscript, can now be read as "Tomorrow you will be presented with a kidskin wrapper." *Haedo* is here synecdochic (the whole kid for its skin), as indeed it is in the overt reading also, where only the blood of the kid, not its carcass, is to be spilled into the spring. The new identity of the *haedus*, since it now has an intelligible metonymic context related to the book scroll, provides a good—in fact, the only possible—point of entry into this riddle, which continues through line 8, its demands on the reader's ingenuity becoming ever more exigent.

In scanning the overt, mimetic reading, we noted the generally overlooked contrast implied by lines 2 and 3, where the spring is to be given an offering far beyond its deserts: a blood offering of a kid, rather than the wine and flowers it is entitled to. In the context of *fons* as manuscript, it is to be presented with a *membrana*, a mark of high prestige and a presage of permanence, instead of merely being read aloud, as it deserves, at a symposium in an ambience of wine and garlands. An expectation is aroused in the reader: as the manuscript is to be over-honored, the *membrana* will be cheated of its due. The analogy, based on a hierarchy of gifts, between the first and second readings provides a tool to decoding—a tool, however, to be used with some care, since the linguistic ambiguities and disguises become less and less predictable.

A most treacherous syntactical ambiguity occurs in line 4: in the first reading, the innocent-looking pronoun *cui* is grammatically ambivalent, with *haedo* used twice as its antecedent, once as a dative of reference or possession with *frons* ("the kid, whose brow gives it promise") and as indirect object with *destinat* ("the kid, to which its brow gives promise"). Either way, *cui* refers to the kid. Once the *haedus* becomes a *membrana*,

13. The principal passages are assembled in Kenyon 125-26 and are reproduced in the Appendix. I owe special thanks to Susan Stephens for invaluable guidance in the maze of book-related terminology.

Many incomplete allusions to the topos occur in Latin verse; cf., e.g., Martial 1.66.10-11: "Don't try to plagiarize from a book that's in circulation. You're safe if you find one that hasn't yet got a pumiced *frons* or a *membrana* and *umbilici*."

cui must shed its possessive function, because the *frons*, along with its *cornua*, is part of the manuscript, not of the *membrana*.

Cui becomes an indirect object only: "You (the manuscript) will be presented with (or to) a *membrana*, to which your *frons* and *cornua* give promise of erotic love and battles." The *frons* and the *cornua* (honorific attributes of the papyrus scroll) hold out the possibility of glory, and that possibility is being, or appears to be, offered to the *haedus/membrana*, which can now be understood as a recipient as well as an offering. One could say that *haedo* functions as both ablative (as before) and dative, that manuscript and wrapping are presented to each other (an ambiguity that was not possible in the case of a spring and a kid); but insofar as the prize is love and battles, it is the *membrana* that stands to gain. In this respect, the dative function of *haedo* prevails: the manuscript is to be presented to the *membrana*.

As the kid in the mimetic reading was destined for love and battles but was cheated of its destiny, the vellum wrapping too—the new incarnation of the *haedus*—is cut out for *et Venerem et proelia*, and we can be reasonably sure, thanks to *frustra* (6), that that destiny will not be fulfilled.

Erotic love and battles—*et Venerem et proelia*—as promised by a manuscript scroll to its prospective *membrana* can only refer to the content that the *membrana* is destined to enwrap. *Both* erotic love and battles are the distinctive subject-matter of epic, the most illustrious of genres. But clearly, as in the first reading, that expectation is to be cheated (*frustra*, 6). Something less is in store for the *membrana*.

If we postulate, with every good reason, that *rubro sanguine* is the red ink (*coccum* or *minium*) of the *titulus* still to be inscribed, and *rivos* the already inscribed rivulets of ink, we find ourselves halfway through a metamorphosis that demands completion. The two resisting elements are *inficiet* and *lascivi suboles gregis*.

Almost any compound verb is susceptible to dismantling and reinterpretation (especially in a context of wordplay), often with the consequence that the prepositional prefix governs a dative. Since *inficiet* is comprised of *in* and *facio*, *tibi* (originally a dative of reference) can now be governed by the prefix *in*: "*Lascivi suboles gregis* will make on you fresh rivulets with red ink." This is clearly an allusion to the inscribing of the *index*, which can properly be addressed as *tibi*, since, being itself made of papyrus, it is glued to the upper edge of the papyrus sheet and hence is part of the manuscript. This is the last of the four elements of the deluxe-copy topos not previously incorporated into this miniature allegory.[14]

14. Cf. Riffaterre on a passage of French poetry that is similarly dependent on an intertext: "Thus the correct, that is, the complete interpretation of the poem is made possible for the reader only by the intertext. This neatly frees us of any temptation to believe that in such a poem there can be referentiality to a nonverbal universe: *the poem carries meaning only by referring from text to text*" (149-50; emphasis in original).

Lascivi suboles gregis can no longer denote the *haedus* (now a *membrana*), and thus the "scion of a wanton flock" needs a new identity. Certainly he can be no other than the poet himself, who elsewhere describes his lyric Muse as *procax* (*C.* 2.1.37) and *pervicax* (3.3.70), and his lyre as *iocosa* (3.3.69).[15] The lyric poet's signature and/or title on the *index* will seal the doom of the *membrana*: although the manuscript's *frons* and *cornua* hold out a promise of epic, and although the content of the rolled scroll is invisible, it will be clear, thanks to the *index*, that it is a far cry from the *Aeneid*.[16]

The two key images of the poem (14-16 and 2-8, each referring to an act of writing) overdetermine each other to produce an undeniable effect of monumentality. The term "monumental" implies, above all else, unalterable stability. When a large proportion of the words have two different meanings, and these meanings are linked in a complex way with other words in the same nexus so that nothing can be changed without destroying the structure, translation or paraphrase becomes impossible. A poetic monument is a passage whose intentionality cannot be denied.

One more note of overdetermination may be drawn from an incidental fact in the *OLD*'s definition of *coccum*: the ilex was the source of *coccum*, the red ink of the titulus.[17] This information provides a unifying link between the two acts of writing alluded to in the riddling "monument." When the poet, addressing the *fons*, says "You will come into being as one

15. For other allusions to the playfulness of lyric verse, cf. *C.* 1.32.1-4: *si quid vacui sub umbra lusimus tecum, . . . barbite*; and also *Epist.* 1.1.10: *nunc itaque et versus et cetera ludicra pono*. On the concept of poets as forming a flock or band, cf. *Serm.* 1.10.67 (*poetarum seniorum turba*) and 1.4.141 (*multa poetarum manus*). The mimetic text requires some such noun as *grex* from the store of synonyms and metaphors denoting groups.

16. Cf. *C.* 1.6.17-19: *nos convivia, nos proelia virginum . . . cantamus*. This ode as a whole provides a close parallel to the contrast implied in "O fons" between *et Venerem et proelia* (5, epic) and *lascivi suboles gregis* (8, the lyric poet) as alluding to opposite ends on the hierarchic scale of genres. *C.* 1.6 is a *recusatio* in which, in the first three stanzas, the poet eschews epic themes with the excuse that they are forbidden him by modesty and his unwarlike Muse: *dum pudor imbellisque lyrae Musa potens vetat* (9-10). *His* subjects—the subjects of lyric verse—are such trivial matters as banquets and lovers' quarrels. The ironic combination *proelia virginum* (17), despite the apparent epic implications of *proelia*, widens rather than closes the chasm between epic warfare interspersed with erotic affairs and the spats of feisty maidens attacking their young men with pared fingernails (*sectis unguibus*, 18).

Here again an intertextual topos—the manuscript unworthy of its trappings—offers a further element of overdetermination. Catullus' Suffenus (22.4-8) writes endless worthless verses, not *in palimpsesto* as they deserve, but on fine papyrus, decked out with *membranae*. Horace's own Crispinus (*Serm.* 1.4.19-21) writes thousands of verses that are like air enclosed in a leather bellows (*conclusas hircinis follibus auras*), surely a metaphorical *membrana*.

17. Cf. *OLD*, s.v. *coccum* (Greek: κόκκος) 1: "The insect *Coccus ilicis* . . . or the scarlet dye obtained from it." Pasquali 556 raises the reasonable question why the poet chose an ilex rather than the pine, plane, or poplar that are usual in epigram and in Horace's own poems. Pasquali's answer is referential: "Poiché sul fonte di Bandusia sorgeva un elce, un elce egli canta."

of the famous springs, every time I say that a pen (the ilex) has been dipped into an inkwell . . . ," he refers not just to any act of writing, as in lines 14-16, but to its equivalent in lines 6-8, because it is the red ink coming from the ilex/pen that evokes the pathetic image of the kid's blood staining the cold waters. That image above all else creates the spring, repeatedly, frequently, and everlastingly.[18]

V. Beyond the Monument: Stanza Three and Line 1

The poem as a whole cannot be described as monumental. Stanza three and line 1 must each be interpreted in a way consonant with the "monument," but they both lie outside it in the sense that in neither case does their language form a complex and inalterable structure.

I suggested above that stanza three—a conventional hymnic aretalogy in praise of the spring—provides a restful interlude between two extraordinarily taxing passages. In the light of the monument, stanza three has acquired, not a second significance, but an alternative application: it can now be understood as praise not only of the spring, but concomitantly of the lyric poetry that is the unseen content of the *fons*/manuscript. Lyric too, like the spring, is an unfailing source of refreshment, a sentiment expressed elsewhere by Horace, as in *C.* 1.32.15, *O laborum dulce lenimen*, addressed by the poet to his lyre. The almost literal language and tone of the praise of the spring become metaphorical when applied to the manuscript: the stifling dryness of life without poetry and readers weary with their labors and aimless wandering are the context of the thirst for lyric verse.

This new, metaphorical reading of stanza three counters the derogatory allusion to lyric implied at the end of stanza two. The poet here springs to the defense of his own preferred genre: lyric verse may not in the common view be deemed worthy of a *membrana*, but life would be unspeakably dreary without it. There is characteristic Horatian irony in the juxtaposition of these two attitudes toward lyric poetry.[19]

18. Vessey 391 similarly, though in the course of a very dissimilar argument, associates the description of the kid with the subject-matter of epic (*et Venerem et proelia*), and the *fons* with the smaller forms, including lyric: "The death of the kid . . . would be . . . the death of poetic overreaching in epic vein."

19. Commager 159 refers to the "double vision that characterizes the Odes": "[Horace's] mind runs to intricate structural contrasts and correspondences, to puns and oxymorons, to allegory and parody. . . . His songs of triumph become elegies, his pastorals, satires; his most grandiloquent Odes collapse, and his most modest disclaimers become grandiloquent."

Nowhere is Horace's double vision better exemplified than in this straightforward lyric stanza in praise of lyric poetry, coming as it does in the midst of three ostensibly lyric stanzas whose subtext stands on its head the usual concept of lyric verse as *dulce lenimen laborum*.

Line 1 has two distinct parts, which can be interpreted in either order. Let us begin with *splendidior vitro*. The phrase is a simile in which the *fons* is compared to an expanse of glass radiating light. In the manuscript-centered context of our second reading, the phrase defines and clarifies the relationship between physical text and poem, and at the same time the lack of a relationship between poetry and reality. The text is like an expanse of glass; the light shed by it is the poem, an illusion generated by the text alone, yet of a different order of existence from the text. As a brilliant light can obscure its source, so a poetic illusion renders the written manuscript invisible.

Some might be tempted to apply other, widely-used metaphors of reading to this phrase, but inappropriately so, for *splendidus* does not imply either transparency, as in the notion of poetry as a "window on reality," or reflectiveness, as in the common image of literature as a mirror held up to the world. *Splendidus* means "radiant," "shedding brightness," and the only source of the radiance is the text. The relationship between text and poem, as between glass and radiance, is one of emanation and dependence. A poem is words; a poet's words are of things that do not exist without the words.

"*O fons Bandusiae*," "O source of All-Being": a Greek neologism, παντουσία, here invented by Horace, is disguised, by a simple change of its two unvoiced consonants into voiced ones, as a Latin-sounding name with south Italian mimetic resonances of two places near the poet's birthplace: Bantia, near Venusia—telescoped into Bant(iaVen)usia?—and Pandosia, in Bruttium, whose Greek form might hint that a similar Greek word could serve the poet's purposes.

Such is my reading of the opening apostrophe. I have no way of defending this reading, because it is not monumental: it is not overdetermined, I know of no intertext to support it. The reading does express the significance that the monument requires; a poetic text can create anything. Furthermore, it accounts for a prominent but generally ignored Riffaterrean "ungrammaticality," the genitive form *Bandusiae*: "Der Genitiv *Bandusiae* ist freilich nicht mit Sicherheit zu erklären . . . " (Kiessling-Heinze 316).

One thing is sure: "O fons Bandusiae" cannot stand as an apostrophe to a real spring. The emphatic point is not that the spring does not exist. It does exist, and is everlastingly regenerated—but only because of the poet's words on a page. The infratext remains invisible and unreadable—decodable but not readable—even when one knows it is there. The manuscript-centered subtext is a special testimony—a sort of time capsule—to the few who will penetrate, or accept this account of, the text's mimetic disguise; but poetic illusion can be strong enough to triumph even over the revelation of a truth. The poet prophesied truly when he said *fies nobilium tu*

quoque fontium. Every time the words are read, the spring is born again, never twice in the same form—and never, I warrant, in the form of a manuscript that is promised a vellum wrapping.

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APPENDIX:

The Deluxe-Copy Topos

Horace, *C.* 3.13.3-8, according to the thesis advanced in this article, should now be added to the three passages assembled by Kenyon, as an extant full-blown example of the deluxe-copy topos. Neither Horace's riddling, almost impenetrable version, nor Ovid's negative one, in which the essential adornments of a deluxe copy of a manuscript are defined by their absence or by the absence of their characteristic color (for the book, sent to Rome from exile, is to display none of the adornments of a deluxe copy), can be the earliest instance of the topos. A distorted or negated version of a topos must be based on a straightforward one. The passages below are presented not as intertexts but as later evidence of at least one earlier straightforward lost intertext, which Horace and Ovid adapted to their own ends. The topos is almost certainly Latin from the beginning: rudiments of it appear in Catullus, 1.1-2 and 22.4-8. In all the following excerpts, except the Tibullus/Lygdamus passage, the addressee is the manuscript. The terms relevant to the topos are printed in bold-face type.

Horace, *C.* 3.13.3-8:

cras donaberis **haedo**,	(*membrana*)
cui **frons** turgida **cornibus**	(*frons, cornua*)
primis et Venerem et proelia destinat.	
frustra: nam **gelidos inficiet tibi**	
rubro sanguine rivos	(*titulus*)
lascivi suboles gregis.	

Ovid, *Tr.* 1.1.5-8:

nec te purpureo velent vaccinia fuco—	(*membrana*)
non est conveniens luctibus ille color—	
nec **titulus** minio nec cedro charta **notetur**	(*index/titulus*)
candida nec nigra **cornua fronte** geras.	(*cornua, frons*)

Tibullus 3 (Lygdamus).1.9-14:

lutea sed niveum involvat **membrana** libellum	(*membrana*)
pumex et canas tondeat ante comas;	(the pumicing of the *frons*)
summaque praetexat tenuis fastigia chartae	
indicet ut nomen littera facta tuum;	(*index/titulus*)
atque inter geminas pingantur **cornua** frontes.	(*cornua*)
sic etenim comptum mittere oportet opus.	

Martial 3.2.7-11:

cedro nunc licet ambules perunctus	
et **frontis** gemino decens honore,	(*frons*)
pictis luxurieris **umbilicis**	(*umbilici = cornua*)
et **te purpura delicata velet**	(*membrana*)
et **cocco rubeat superbus index**.	(*titulus/index*)