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IF ONE WERE TO compile an anthology of "Reflections on the Kid of Bandusia," it would surely open with the lines from Ronsard's adaptation of *Odes* 3.13 entitled "A la Fontaine Bellerie" (2.9.11–14)—a poem to which we shall be returning later on:

> Voi ton poëte qui t'orne
> D'un petit chevreau de laict,
> A qui l'une et l'autre corne
> Sortent du front nouvelet.

The kid has indeed become an "ornament." All that is suggested by the Latin original of exuberant life, of death, and above all of sacrifice, has been suppressed. Its function has become merely to provide a pretty sight, a pleasing sound, and a conscious reminiscence of Horace—all important functions for the poets of the Pléiade as they participated in the Renaissance of the 16th century in France.

This happy escape from the offensive sight of blood in Horace's poem was not open to A. Y. Campbell, the twentieth-century Englishman. He has no alternative but to shut his *Odes* in revulsion and disappointment and put it away! The issue is one of humanity—*humanitas*. Quinn and West are, of course, right to castigate Campbell for such egocentricity:[1] we must recognise and (in West's phrase) "shed our local prejudices." We must try to "hear" the poet aright, in his own terms, in terms of his own humanity. But if culture is not to be divorced from life, we cannot, and should not seek to avoid the confrontation with our own humanity. We must first listen, and then respond, and seek—with proper tentativeness and humility—to evaluate and to integrate.

And so, 30 years after Campbell put the *Odes* firmly back in his pocket, Fraenkel comes to the rescue. He finds (*Horace* [Oxford 1957] 203) that "It is, perhaps, characteristic of Horace, the *ruris amator*, the deeply humane poet, that he cannot merely think of such a victim as a thing required for a sacrifice, but must see it before him and as it were feel it, a living thing, warm, pretty, and amusing in its youthful pranks, which only too soon will come to an end." What a shock it is after this to be recalled by Wilson, in his recent extended discussion of the poem,[2] to ". . . the scandal of the sacrificial kid, whose death is dwelt upon in the second

[1] See K. Quinn, *Latin Explorations* (London 1963) 76; and in splendid style, D. A. West, *Reading Horace* (Edinburgh 1967) 129, who quotes Campbell in full.

[2] John R. Wilson, "*O Fons Bandusiae*," *CJ* 63 (1968) 289–296. The quotation is from page 289.

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stanza with a cruel brilliance quite out of proportion to any decorative needs." Later we shall return to Wilson's discussion through Commager and his symbolic interpretation of the poem, which is no doubt now destined for common currency through Williams' new teaching edition of the third book of the *Odes*.[3]

Williams raises again at some length the problem of the little kid whose red blood is to stain Bandusia's cold waters on the day of the Fontinalia.[4] He claims that blood sacrifice was not a regular feature of this attractive celebration.[5] The wine and flowers would, he says, have been quite sufficient for ritual purposes; and this makes the taking of the kid's life seem like a gratuitous extra. In his own words, "Horace is arousing pathos for an animal which, by his own free decision, he destines to death. This cannot avoid being somewhat macabre." Is the "*ruris amator*, the deeply humane poet" just a slightly sentimental illusion?

Before pursuing the main line of the argument further, there is one point of information which has indeed been noticed already,[6] but which clearly needs stressing, just because Horace and his audience would have taken it for granted as a commonplace both of life and of literature. Both the place and the occasion—a pleasant spring and a private festive ritual—imply a meal: and, whatever else Horace may or may not need the kid for, he certainly needs it to provide the meat course for a special dinner, no doubt a small party.

There is an interesting passage, in this connection, in Hesiod's *Works*

[3]Horace, *Odes* Bk. III, edited by Gordon Williams (Oxford 1969)—a landmark in bringing the *literary* (as opposed to the grammatical and antiquarian) approach to classical poetry into the centre of general attention.

[4]K. Quinn, *op. cit.* (above, n. 1) 76, n. 1, would like to discount any link between Horace's celebrations and the Fontinalia on October 13th, and to take the Dog Star of verse 9 as giving a more appropriate dramatic date in high summer. But it seems clear that Horace does not intend his third stanza to refer to a single season, for the oxen who come to enjoy the delightful coolness of Bandusia are *fessis vomere tauris*, "oxen tired from the plough," and ploughing was done in spring and autumn, but surely never in the Dog days. So stanza 3, like stanza 4, has a timeless quality; and, knowing Horace's fondness for a specific occasion as his point of departure, or focus, the link with the Fontinalia seems natural and probable.

[5]West, *op. cit.* (above, n. 1), notes a reference in Ovid's *Fasti*, 3.300, to King Numa sacrificing to a spring, and writes: "What is important is that the Romans were familiar with the notion of sacrificing animals to fountains." Perhaps we need rather more evidence to infer such "familiarity"; but, equally, we may wonder whether a blood sacrifice in the context of the Fontinalia (assuming that such it was) would really have been, as Williams says, "most surprising." Apart from the question of fact, it is not in Horace's manner to introduce an important and startling modulation into his opening theme, whether or not that theme is in itself surprising.

[6]So West, in a passage quoted in full below, mentions "the promise of a good supper," and Wilson, *op. cit.* (above, n. 2) 292, links wine, flowers, and meat, and among other parallels cites that with *Odes* 3.17, which is also quoted below.

and Days, to which *O fons Bandusiae* may owe, directly or by way of Hellenistic bucolic epigram, more than has (to my knowledge) been recognised. Here is *Op.* 582–596 in the translation of T. F. Higham:

> When the cardoon flowers, and the loud cicada sings,
> Perched on a tree, pouring from under his wings
> A flood of shrillest music, time and again:
> When summer is ripe, and the heat a burden of pain—
> Then are the she-goats fattest, the wine is best,
> The women most fain; but men are languidest,
> For Sirius parches the heads and the knees of men
> And burns their bodies with drouth. Oh, give me then
> The shade of a rock, with Biblis' wine set by,
> And bread of the best, and milk of goats drained dry!
> Then be that heifer chosen to make my meat
> That has not calved, but feeds in the greenwood yet,
> And firstling kids! Bright wine for my plenishment
> I'd drink, in the shade, when food has brought content;
> And there, as I sit, briskly the wind should blow,
> Meeting my brow; and from the unsullied flow
> Of some spring water for ever running past
> Three cups to the gods I'd pour: of wine a last.

Surely, Horace's kid is also going to provide his meat. The point does not, of course, depend on the reminiscence from Hesiod. It was quite normal for a sacrificed animal to perform a dual function—to honour the deity and to feed the worshippers. Characteristically, Horace provides himself with a kid: the heifer (assuming the reminiscence from Hesiod) is beyond his compass. This thought would link the kid with the little lamb at the close of *Odes* 2.17, and still more with the vivid evocation and the waiting destiny of the calf at the end of 4.2. In 3.22 the promise of a sacrificial boar which shall, once a year, commemorate the occasion of the poet's dedication of a pine-tree to Diana outside his villa, comes close in another way to the poem honouring his private spring at an annual festival.[7] It is important to note, for our present purpose, that in none of these cases is anything *said* about a meal. But it is otherwise in 3.17, where Lamia is urged to celebrate his birthday in the closing lines—also on the morrow:

> *. . . cras genium mero*
> *curabis et porco trimestri*
> *cum famulis operum solutis.*

Here is another young animal, and this time the dual function is virtually made explicit, which in the case of the others—the calf, the lamb, and our kid—goes literally without saying.

For Horace, then, and for his audience the killing of the kid (whether or not it was familiar on this particular occasion) was definitely not gratui-

[7]Assuming that 3.13 does refer to the Fontinalia (see n. 4 above), and that Bandusia was the spring of his farmstead (see n. 14 below).

tous. Does this remove the "scandal" of the second stanza? We return to Williams' interpretation. For him, the mock-heroic destiny of love and battles, the arresting *frustra* of verse 6, and the vividly visualised red blood in the cold water, create a pathos whose quality is that of a "detached, slightly callous irony," which contrasts with the sympathetic tone we associate with Virgil in the *Georgics* (especially in *G.* 3)—and which Fraenkel here also attributes to Horace. But, continues Williams' argument, "the use of this motif needs to be considered in relation to the Ode's structure. . . . The virtue of the sacrifice motif is that it not only adds another considerable element to the complexity, but it also introduces an emotional pathos that goes out beyond the main movement of the poem and adds a new dimension to it."

Just what we are being offered here becomes even clearer from Commager's approach to the problem (*The Odes of Horace* [New Haven 1962] 322). His discussion of *O fons Bandusiae* is to be found—significantly—not in his chapter on "The World of Nature," but in that entitled "The World of Art." "Readers have often been repelled," he writes, "by the details of the kid's sacrifice. Perhaps the description is not there for its realistic effects alone. Destined for love and battle, the 'offspring of the wanton flock' epitomises life's comprehensive vitality, and as his warm blood mingles with the lucid water,[8] it is easy to sense a suggestion of the transformation of life into art"—and he recalls Yeats' phrase about a poem "as cold and passionate as the dawn." This suggestion about the role of the kid is of a piece with Commager's overall view of the poem (now adopted by Williams): its true focus is not the spring, but Horace's own poetic power for whose expression the spring offers a happy occasion.

This line of interpretation is pursued further still in Wilson's discussion, to which we have already referred (see n. 2). From the very beginning, he feels, everything in the poem must be understood in terms of this true focus. The whole idea hinges, of course, on the two words *me dicente* in the closing stanza: *fies nobilium tu quoque fontium/me dicente* . . . . Wilson finds here a complete turn-about in the poem which needs definition and justification; and the form of the justification is to relate everything in the poem to this closing motif. He points out, for example, that the earlier three stanzas taken together contain little enough in the way of physical description of the spring—without noticing that it is precisely in the final stanza that the most vivid and memorable physical evocation of Bandusia

[8]Williams is here more careful than Commager, emphasising that *splendidior* in verse 1 highlights the reflecting quality of the water, not its limpidity; and in verses 6–7 the blood is red, not warm, and the water cold, not clear. Or does the coldness of the water *imply* the warmth of the blood, and the redness of the blood imply the limpidity of the water, as Kiessling-Heinze will have it?

occurs.[9] The ode in fact exhibits the common type of ring-structure, opening in the first line with the spring's waters:

O fons Bandusiae, splendidior vitro,

and again returning to that same water in the closing words:

. . . unde loquaces/lymphae desiliunt tuae.[10]

Again, Wilson discusses at length the hymnic form into which Horace has cast his celebration of the spring,[11] blending this with reminiscences of Hellenistic bucolic epigram. But he insists that the hymnic tone created, for instance, by the recurring *tibi*, *te*, *tu*, *tu*, *tuae*, is a deceptive formal appearance through which we must discern—from the one *me* of verse 16—that the real theme of the whole poem is Horace's assertion of his own poetic power. Under the appearance of being, conventionally, the source of Horace's poetic inspiration, Bandusia is "made out to owe everything to the poet."[12]

"Everything" is here an extrapolation from the promise of fame which the poet makes to the spring. For fame means permanence and immortality, the antithesis of transience and death, the thought of which dominates the earlier lines about the kid. Wilson believes that this thought is particularly strongly evoked by the word *gelidos* in verse 6, and that the third stanza, with its *frigus amabile* speaks with answering relief. And so "in the fountain of Bandusia and its calm surroundings, passion meets its death and is replaced by a transcendent peace."[13] This peace arises from

[9]See n. 2 above. While I hope that I have fairly represented this discussion's main outcome, I certainly have not been able here to do proper justice to its complex and often vivid and felicitous formulation.

[10]Wilson refers, *op. cit.* (above, n. 2) 294, to the obvious onomatopoeia of verses 15–16 as part of a deliberate demonstration of poetic control and self-assertion over the spring by Horace: the play of sound is not there to highlight the spring for us, but to display the poet's power. This does seem to strain the interpretation, especially as there is some danger of circular argument: the dearth of physical description helps to prove that the poem is really not about the spring but about poetry; and when the best descriptive moment finally arrives, it is already prejudged as not being really descriptive in intention.

[11]Wilson considers that there is a happy ambiguity in Horace's address to Bandusia as both physical spring and as spring-deity or nymph (quoting the *nympha/lympha* etymology). I find the masculine gender of *fons*, underlined by *digne* in verse 2, a difficulty in thinking of a nymph, and each reference to the spring remains physically concrete. In 3.22.5–9 we note that the pine-tree is dedicated to the goddess, but the yearly boar seems to be a gift to the tree (*quam* in verse 6 goes naturally with *pinus*; to make it depend on *tua* is very strained). Against all this, however, the poet of the *pervigilium Veneris* was later to write (50–51): *ruris hic erunt puellae vel puellae fontium/ quaeque silvas quaeque lucos quaeque montes incolunt.*

[12]*Op. cit.* (above, n. 2) 294. If we go all the way with this line of interpretation, we might complain that it was perverse of Horace to let *tuae* be the last word of the poem.

[13]Interesting are Wilson's comparisons with the ethereal Olympus of *Odyssey* 6 and the

the assurance of continuance and immortality, which on the surface belong to the spring (or the deity of the spring; see n. 11 above), but in reality to Horace's poetry. The argument culminates with the thought that Bandusia, an unimportant local spring, has, through Horace and like Horace, become *ex humili potens*, to take its place beside the famous literary fountains of Greece, just as Horace will rank with the great names of the Greek Lyric canon. The spring thus becomes almost a symbol of Horace himself, so that "in praising the spring he is almost praising himself." Just as it belongs physically to Horace's private haunts,[14] so it has become in the realm of poetry his "internalised inspiration," and the hymn to Bandusia is a hymn to his own poetry. For "the world of art, in which each poet has to find his own private voice (his private spring) is the only one which remains untouched by change and death."[15] And so the key to the ode is *me dicente* in verse 16 with its preceding *fies nobilium tu quoque fontium*; everything else is related to this; and in particular the sacrifice of the kid provides the motif of death which is the necessary foil to that of immortality.

Yet if we hear the poem through, from the beginning, in just the way that Horace presents it and intends us to hear it, we cannot know that it is "really" about poetry, and not about a spring. Of course Horace expected his friends to hear his poems over again: yet we need to be extremely wary of exercising this kind of hindsight in responding to a poem—not so much because we may import into it what is not "really" there (in this case, the thought of poetry and its permanence are certainly there); but because this is a sure way of getting wrong the tone and balance which are nowhere more decisive than in a Horatian ode. In *O fons Bandusiae*, Horace carefully reserves the motif of poetry and abiding fame to be the crowning thought. It has an element of surprise about it which would be spoiled by anticipating it. It is certainly not (*pace* Wilson) a disconcerting "turn-about" which makes us think that we must have been missing the point so far, or else that it is a bad poem. On

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Grove of Colonus in Sophocles' *O.C.* Lines 17–24 of *Odes* 3.29 are also fully and suggestively discussed. But in the case of 1.17 Horace's invitation to Tyndaris to share his peaceful retreat must surely not be taken too transcendentally! (Cf. L. P. Wilkinson on *Odes* 3.28 in *Horace and his Lyric Poetry* [Cambridge 1951] 148 f.)

[14]Traditionally, Bandusia is believed to be the spring on Horace's Sabine farm. But in the poem neither this precise fact, nor any vaguer sense of its privateness, is stated or implied, let alone stressed. By all means let us think it was so; but how much should we make of it?

[15]Perhaps I may record that, on reaching this point on the final page of Wilson's article, I expected him to go on to suggest that, just as the life-force of the spring in stanza 3 somehow symbolises the life-force of Horace's poetry, so the sacrifice and pathos of the kid somehow symbolise the "death" of the mortal Horace—himself once *calidus iuventa*. This step is not taken, but it seems to lie in the logic of Wilson's argument.

the contrary, Horace blends this new and special thought most skilfully and unobtrusively with the elaborate consummation of the *laudes Bandusiae* in the closing stanza. One might tentatively use the analogy of a painting, say of the Fontinalia celebrations at Bandusia, in which, unobtrusively and quite off-centre, the artist has created a section of rainbow with the effect of suggesting that it passes over the spring. The power and the appeal of this transcendent symbol would lie, as it surely does in Horace's poetic boast, precisely in the fact that it is not central, not dominant, but a happy and unexpected afterthought. The visual analogy just offered would, in fact, be closer if instead of a painting we thought of a film sequence of the Fontinalia, in the last shot of which a rainbow stood over a lingering close-up of the waters bubbling from the tree-crowned rocks.

In this connection, Ronsard's adaptation is again most interesting.[16] Here the theme of poetry and poetic fame is most certainly central. It is introduced in the very first of the five stanzas; and, by the time he reaches the third stanza, the poet is already proclaiming that, beneath the willows—themselves one of the best original touches—which shade his idle solitude, he is composing

> Je ne sçai quoi, qui ta gloire
> Envoira par l'univers,
> Commandant à la mémoire
> Qui tu vives par mes vers.

There is little power left in this motif, therefore, when it duly appears in the closing lines which correspond to Horace's last stanza:

> Tu seras faite sans cesse
> Des fontaines la princesse,
> Moi celebrant le conduit
> Du rocher persé, qui darde
> Avec un enroué bruit,
> L'eau de ta source jazarde
> Qui trepillante se suit.

There are, of course, very good reasons why the sixteenth-century French poet could not wait till the end to adore his muse. The comparison is hard on him, but it highlights the structural craftsmanship in the Latin poem which eschews the anticipation of this motif.

Which brings us back to the kid—*qua* kid! D. A. West writes, *op. cit.* (above, n. 1) 130: "The language has a density and vividness rare in any poetry"—a bold claim—"and what is described is a complex stimulus—the life-blood spurting from an animal's jugular, an ancient religious observance of your race, the promise of a good supper, good wine and good

[16] I give the full text of Ronsard's Ode at the end of this article. There are a number of variants, but they do not affect the points that have arisen in this discussion.

company, perhaps with some music and love, and the canonisation of this little Italian spring for all time along with the great poetic fountains of Greece, Hippocrene, Castalia, and Arethusa." As we saw, we are on firm ground when we exclude the idea that Horace sacrifices his kid just "for effect." West and Quinn both rightly castigate Campbell for his modern squeamishness: Horace's humanity remains in touch with the fact that, if one eats meat, an animal must be killed, and with the way this is done. We may still feel it to be "somewhat macabre" that he dwells on the ceremonial without naming its more concrete purpose, and invests it with a half-playful pathos.[17] Certainly, Williams' "detached, slightly callous irony" seems to come nearer the mark than Fraenkel's "deep humanity," if by the latter we mean that quality of sympathy and compassion which we associate with Virgil. But, if there is macabreness here, it arises naturally from the ordinary way of the world, the world of man-in-nature in its unredeemed state. For it is one thing to observe and even to highlight life's natural cruelties with a certain half-ironic detachment; and quite another either gratuitously to add to those cruelties, or else to relish them in order to assert one's own sense of power or superiority over them—even if one does so in the name of Art.

The difference is a delicate one, but it may be crucial for the encounter between Horace's humanity and our own, which it is not the business of criticism to side-step, but rather to clarify. It is the difference, first, between thinking of the kid's sacrifice as Horace's peculiar invention or as a natural element in the life-situation he is handling; and, secondly and more subtly, between thinking of his evocation of this pregnant little life and its destruction as being, at least centrally, intended as a celebration of the kid and so of Life, or as being there to the greater glory of Art, by lending a greater poignancy to Horace's almost narcissistic sense of satisfaction and fulfilment as a poet. Devotee of the Muse that he was, Horace might yet have been distressed to think that the kid of Bandusia would be seen as his symbol for the true relationship between Life and Art.

A la Fontaine Bellerie

O déesse Bellerie,
Belle déesse cherie
De nos Nimphes, dont la vois
Sonne ta gloire hautaine,
Accordante au son des bois,
Voire au bruit de ta fontaine,
Et de mes vers que tu ois.

[17] Actually Horace's phrase: . . . *nam gelidos inficiet tibi/rubro sanguine rivos* is a good deal more restrained than West's "life-blood spurting from an animal's jugular," whose clinical exactness would quite certainly have made any poem macabre!

Tu es la Nimphe éternelle
De ma terre paternelle,
Pource en ce pré verdelet
Voi ton poëte qui t'orne
D'un petit chevreau de laict,
A qui l'une et l'autre corne
Sortent du front nouvelet.

Sus ton bord je me repose,
Et là, oisif, je compose
Caché sous tes saules vers
Je ne sçai quoi, qui ta gloire
Envoira par l'univers,
Commandant à la mémoire
Qui tu vives par mes vers.

L'ardeur de la Canicule
Toi, ne tes rives ne brule,
Tellement qu'en toutes pars
Ton ombre et epaisse et drue
Aus pasteurs venans des parcs,
Aus beufs las de la charue,
Et au bestial epars.

Tu seras faite sans cesse
Des fontaines la princesse,
Moi celebrant le conduit
Du rocher persé, qui darde
Avec un enroué bruit,
L'eau de ta source jazarde
Qui trepillante se suit.

[Ronsard 2.9]

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