by Horace or by anybody else, we must at first arrest any mental patterns of our own which are clearly different from the patterns of our poet and his contemporary readers. Campbell's criticism of the *Bandusia Ode* (3 13) is a clear example of this egocentricity.

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

primis et uenerem et proelia destinat–
frustra, nam gelidos inficiet tibi
rubro sanguine riuos
lasciui suboles gregis.

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

fies nobilium tu quoque fontium
me dicente cauis inpositam ilicem
saxis, unde loquaces
lymphae desiliunt tuae.

O fountain of Bandusia, sparkling like crystal,
you well deserve your offering of sweet pure wine and flowers.
Tomorrow you will receive a kid,
the first horns

swelling on its forehead, marking it out for love and war.
In vain, for it will stain your cold current
with its red blood,
this lusty young goat.

The pitiless hour of the scorching dog-star
makes no difference to you; you offer welcome coolness
to bulls weary of the plough
and to the grazing[76] *flocks.*

D. West Reading Horace
(Edinburgh, 1967)

1967

You too will be one of the famous fountains,
for I am singing of the oak growing in the hollow
of the stones from which your water
leaps down chattering.

'Suppose it actually *were* the dog-days; that you were tired and hot and thirsty, and no drink available; but, suppose, at the same time, that you had a pocket Horace; in the search for *some* refreshment, you might naturally turn to that. Any purely beautiful poem might be expected to serve you as in some measure a restorative; but if your eye then chanced to fall on the beginning of this very ode, it would seem welcome not alone as poetry but as poetry on an appropriate theme. "O fountain of Bandusia, more glittering than glass, worthy of sweet wine, not without flowers"–so far, all well. But now what follows? "To-morrow thou shalt be presented with a kid, whose brow, now swelling with his sprouting horns, gives promise of his loves and battles. Vain promise! for he shall"–to-morrow, that is–"stain thy cool waters with his red blood–he, the offspring of the wanton flock."

. Who wants a drink out of the fountain of Bandusia after that?

You would return your Horace to your pocket, and bear up again as best you could.'

A. Y. Campbell *Horace* 1–2

So modern taste does not like blood in running water. This is neither here nor there. What is important is that the Romans were familiar with the notion of sacrificing animals to fountains (e.g. *fonti rex Numa mactat ouem*, Ovid *Fasti* 3 300). The critic must shed his local prejudices. The day is hot, the spring is cool and clear. When you cut a kid's throat over the water the spurts of thick warm blood are instantly diluted, as the colour spreads through the running water:

gelidos inficiet tibi rubro sanguine riuos.

The language has a density and vividness rare in any poetry, 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 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 (cf. page 112). The sensory precision of this and also its rich emotional overtones help to make a great Horatian poem, and it is a pity to have it spoilt by critics who are unwilling to let Horace be different from themselves.

This plea for the understanding of Horace first of all in his context, leads us to the political element in his poetry. His political career was varied. In his early twenties after the assassination of Caesar, he joined the tyrannicides, the republicans, and fought against Octavian in the battle of Philippi, 42 BC. By the time of Actium, 31 BC, he is reconciled to Octavian and has accepted his place in the new regime. So when Horace writes in praise of Octavian at the end of his second ode, Nisbet (*CE* 213), comments 'As for Horace's talk about the avenger of Caesar, one can only ask him, "What were you doing at Philippi?"'

Horace's political record is easy to sympathise with. As a young man he followed the republican flag, but he soon realised that his own future and the future of his war-torn country lay with Octavian. As Augustus entrenched himself more and more securely as the redeemer of Rome from her sins and the wars which they had occasioned, and as the guarantor of peace, prosperity, and settled government, Horace's enthusiasm and gratitude increased too. He became friendly with Octavian but never his tool. He persists in offering serious advice to the princeps, in the Roman Odes, for instance. On the other hand he never dissembles or rejects his republican past,[77] and *Odes* 2 7 shows how he was prepared to honour it:

O saepe mecum tempus in ultimum
deducte Bruto militiae duce,
  quis te redonauit Quiritem
    dis patriis Italoque caelo,

Pompei, meorum prime sodalium,
cum quo morantem saepe diem mero
  fregi coronatus nitentis
    malobathro Syrio capillos?

tecum Philippos et celerem fugam
sensi relicta non bene parmula,
  cum fracta uirtus et minaces
    turpe solum tetigere mento:

sed me per hostis Mercurius celer
denso pauentem sustulit aere,
  te rursus in bellum resorbens
    unda fretis tulit aestuosis.

ergo obligatam redde Iovi dapem
longaque fessum militia latus
  depone sub lauru mea nec
    parce cadis tibi destinatis.

obliuioso leuia Massico
ciboria exple, funde capacibus
  unguenta de conchis. quis udo
    deproperare apio coronas

curatue myrto? quem Venus arbitrum
dicet bibendi? non ego sanius
  bacchabor Edonis: recepto
    dulce mihi furere est amico.
  Odes 2 7