O fons Bandusiae

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O FONS BANDUSIAE

BENEATH ITS CRYSTALLINE exterior, *O fons Bandusiae* (Horace *Odes* 3.13) conceals an apparent contradiction that has not yet been adequately defined, let alone resolved. In the final stanza, the poet turns from a hymnal praise of the spring to a vaunt about his own creative power. As Commager says,[1] "instead of dwelling upon the traditional concept of the spring as a source of inspiration, Horace inverts it. The waters of the spring do not create his poetry; rather, his poetry gives new life to nature." But why does he spend the first three stanzas praising Bandusia's powers in terms which suggest that it is indeed a source of inspiration and not just an object on which to exercise his virtuosity as poet? If the final stanza reverses the whole tenor of the first three stanzas, we must either satisfactorily interpret that reversal or recognize the incoherence of the poem.

Besides this major problem, there is also the scandal of the sacrificial kid, whose death is dwelt upon in the second stanza with a cruel brilliance quite out of proportion to any decorative needs. This problem, as we shall see, can be fully answered only in terms of the relationship between the poet and the spring.

Without the two problematical passages, the remainder of the poem (1-3, 9-12) reads as a fairly uncomplicated passage of hymnal praise:

O fons Bandusiae splendidior vitro
dulci digne mero non sine floribus,
cras donaberis haedo . . .

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

Since our reaction to the poem depends to a large extent upon sensing the hymnal nature of this passage, I repeat some of the observations made by Buchholz and Norden over half a century ago.[2]

The heightened vocative with *O* is itself characteristic of hymnal address, and the invocation *O fons Bandusiae* can be compared with the opening *O diva, gratum quae regis Antium* of 1.35 and *O Venus regina* of 1.30 and *O nata mecum* of 3.21.[3] True to the richly decorative style of a hymn, Bandusia is then given a descriptive (if untraditional) epithet *splendidior vitro*,

[1] Steele Commager, *The odes of Horace* (New Haven 1962) p.324.

[2] Kurt Buchholz, *De Horatio hymnographo*, Diss., Regimonti 1912, pp.52-3; Eduard Norden, *Agnostos theos*, Stuttgart 1923 (1st ed. 1912), pp.143-76. The two works, which appeared in the same year, are apparently independent of each other.

[3] Cf. also 1.26.6ff. *o quae fontibus integris/ gaudes, apricos necte flores,/ necte meo Lamiae coronam,/ Piplei dulcis*; 1.32.13ff. *o decus Phoebi et dapibus supremi/ grata testudo Iovis, o laborum/ dulce lenimen*; 3.25.14ff. *o Naiadum potens/ Baccharumque valentium/ proceras manibus vertere fraxinos*; 3.26.9ff. *o quae beatam diva tenes Cyprum et/ Memphin carentem Sithonia nive,/ regina*; 3.27.50f. *o deorum/ siquis haec audis*; 4.3.17ff. *o testudinis aureae/ dulcem quae strepitum, Pieri, temperas,/ o mutis quoque piscibus/ donatura cycni, si libeat, sonum*; 4.14.43f. (of Augustus in a hymnal passage) *o tutela praesens/ Italiae dominaeque Romae*; *C.S.* 1ff. *Phoebe silvarumque potens Diana,/ lucidum caeli decus, o colendi/ semper et culti*; *Epod.* 5.49ff. (beginning of prayer for epiphany) *o rebus meis/ non infideles arbitrae,/ Nox et Diana, quae silentium regis,/ arcana cum fiunt sacra*; *Sat.* 2.1.42f. *o pater et rex/ Iuppiter, ut pereat positum robigine telum.*

'more shining than crystal,' and is further called *dignus*, 'worthy' of offerings of wine and flowers. *Dignus* may itself be a traditional word in prayers: certainly it reoccurs in the invocation to the wine jar (3.21), which Norden has shown to be a thoroughgoing parody of a true invocation for an epiphany.[4] The next phrase, *cras donaberis haedo*, is almost certainly of common occurrence in a *votum* or dedicatory prayer, for in Appel's *Romanorum precationum reliquiae* the only examples of *vota privata* (44-5) both present a variation of this phrase.[5] "*Domina Venus*," says the lecherous Eumolpus in Petronius' *Satyricon*, "*si ego hunc puerum basiavero, ita ut ille non sentiat, cras illi par columbarum donabo.*" When he succeeds in this venture, and pays off his vow (*ac me voto exsolvi*), he asks for greater and then still greater things. His final *votum* is an amplification of the first one: "*Dii . . . immortales, si ego huic dormienti abstulero coitum plenum et optabilem, pro hac felicitate cras puero asturconem Macedonicum optimum donabo, cum hac tamen exceptione, si ille non senserit.*" Of course part of the humor of the passage is that the gods who make this amorous exploit possible are not themselves rewarded with the *votum*, for it is the boy who will get the pair of doves and (so he hopes) the riding horse.

In the third stanza the praise of Bandusia is given a hymnal stamp by the repeated second person pronoun (Norden's "*du*"*-Stil*). This stylistic trait is frequent in passages which describe the powers of a god (or god-man), in this case the refreshing powers of Bandusia. I quote from 3.21, which resembles our ode in more than one respect:

> Tu lene tormentum ingenio admoves
> plerumque duro; tu sapientium
> curas et arcanum iocoso
> consilium retegis Lyaeo;
> tu spem reducis . . . .

Extended examples of the same style, always in a hymnal context, can be found at 1.10; 1.35.5-24; 2.19.17-32; 3.4.21-42; 3.11.13-16; 4.5.31-5; 4.14.33-52.

Thus, from a purely formal point of view, the first and third stanzas suggest that we treat Bandusia not as just a fountain but as the nymph that is immanent within it. This is, of course, confirmed by the content. For the first stanza promises an offering, while the third stanza expands on how the *fons* is worthy (*dignus*) of such honors.

The hymnal structure would be even clearer if the third stanza began with a connecting particle, such as *nam* ('I will sacrifice to you, *for* you provide shade in even the hottest days'). But the lack of a direct connection (in contrast to the painful explicitness of actual Roman forms of prayer) is deliberate, and parallels rather closely the little poem that dedicates a pine tree to Diana (3.22). In this poem we have, as Fraenkel points out,[6] the same combination of hymnal address, promise of sacrifice, and natural description as in the Bandusia ode. As in that ode, there is a striking preponderance of the hymnal over the descriptive, for the pine tree and its surroundings are disposed of in only three words (out of the thirty-two words of the poem): *imminens villae . . . pinus*. Fraenkel's comment is sensitive: "it is precisely the care given to certain apparently minor details which, together with the solemnity of the beginning and the implied feeling for beauty of the tree and its surroundings, produces an effect of great richness." In 3.22, as in 3.13, there is a deliberate vagueness in the relationship between cause and effect, between the *votum* and what produced it. The hymnal invocation to Diana, occupying the whole of the first stanza, and the picture of the eternally grateful celebrant, occupying the

[4] *Op. cit.* (n.2), pp.143-63.

[5] Georg Appel, *De Romanorum precationibus* (*Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten* ed. R. Wünsch and L. Deubner, v.7 pt. 2), Giessen 1909, p.28. The passages are from *Satyricon* 85 and 86.

[6] Eduard Fraenkel, *Horace* (Oxford 1957), p.202.

bulk of the second stanza, produce a strong emotional charge that cannot be completely explained and absorbed by the pine tree, but has nothing else to attach itself to. The excessive emotion attached to the pine tree which is thus dedicated gives to it a sharp reality which could not be attained by simple description and at the same time endows it with a transcendent value. The same is true of the Bandusia ode. The lack of extensive description in the first three stanzas is striking. All we learn is that the spring is *splendidior vitro*, that it has *gelidos rivos*, and that it provides a *frigus amabile*. Even this limited description is, as we shall see, conventional. But as with the pine tree, the emotional power of the hymnal context is in itself enough to bring the object, the *fons*, vividly to life. Again a transcendent value is suggested, with the important difference that the pine tree as a symbol is wholly private, while the *fons* has a recognized symbolic value as a source of inspiration (a point we shall discuss later). To this symbolic value the *fons Bandusiae* in particular inevitably adjusts.

In comparison to 3.22, our poem gains an additional dynamism from a happy ambiguity between spirit and spring. In 3.22 Diana is largely discrete from the tree that is dedicated to her, so that the description of her threefold nature is, as far as the tree is concerned, mainly decorative. Horace, the pine tree and Diana have a three-way relationship, in which both Horace and the tree are outweighed by the powerful goddess. But Bandusia is both divine presence and natural object. The powers of the Nymph are inherent in her waters, so that for example the bloodying of the limpid stream by the sacrificial goat has a mysterious ambivalence unlike the bloodying of the pine tree by the boar in 3.22. Furthermore, at the end of the poem the waters even come to life, they are *lymphae loquaces*, so much so that I would capitalize *Lymphae* to bring out the *double-entendre Lympha-Nympha* (that Horace subscribes to this etymology can be seen from *Sat.* 1.5.97, where he talks of the angry *Lymphae*).[7]

The electrifying effect of the hymnal form in 3.13 can be gauged by comparison with the genre of bucolic epigram to which, as Reitzenstein saw,[8] 3.13 is closely related. In many of these poems from the Hellenistic period and later, the site of a spring is celebrated in verses that give it all the attributes (and more besides) that Horace gives to Bandusia. Its waters are cool[9] and pure,[10] it provides shade,[11] it offers relief from the overpowering midsummer heat.[12] Even Horace's final stanza, which presents an individual picture, is made up of traditional elements. Horace presents an ilex on a hollow rock, *cavis impositam ilicem saxis*, out from which flow the chattering waters of the spring, *unde loquaces Lymphae desiliunt*. The sound of waters[13] and the solitary tree[14] are common features of the epigrams. The rock, too, with water trickling down, appears more than once.[15] Leonidas speaks (*A.P.*9.326) of water "springing down from a split rock," which is virtually translated by Horace's *saxis cavis . . . lymphae desiliunt*. In fact about the only commonplaces of these bucolic epigrams not to be found in Horace are the address to the

[7] On the popular connection of *lympha* with *nympha*, which presumably caused the change in spelling from the original *lumpa*, see Walde-Hofmann, *Lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg 1938) s.v. *lumpa*.

[8] Richard Reitzenstein, *Aufsätze zu Horaz* (Darmstadt 1963) p.9 = *Horaz und die hellenistische Lyrik* (Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum 21 [1908]), p.89.

[9] Cool water: Anyte G-P (= *The Greek Anthology, Hellenistic epigrams*, ed. by A. S. F. Gow and D. L. Page, 2 vols., Cambridge 1965) 17, 18; Leonidas G-P 5, 86; Nicarchus G-P 1.

[10] Pure water: Leonidas G-P 86 (quoted in next paragraph). In Nicarchus G-P 1 κρυσταλλινα may mean 'icy' (thus falling into the topos of the previous note); or it may mean 'glassy' or 'crystalline' (which could have suggested Horace's *splendidior vitro*). For the same ambiguity cf. Theocritus 22.39.

[11] Shade: Hermocrates G-P 1; Mnesalces G-P 15; cf. *A.P.* 9.374; *A.P.* 10.13.

[12] Heat: Anyte G-P 3, 16, 17; cf. *A.P.* 10.13; 9.374. *A.P.* 10.12 and *A. Pl.* 227 mention specifically the heat of the Dog Star, as in Horace.

[13] Sound of water: Leonidas G-P 86; cf. *A. Pl.* 13 and Theocritus 1.7ff.

[14] Solitary tree: Anyte G-P 16; Leonidas G-P 3, 86; Hermocreon G-P 1.

[15] Spring and rock: Leonidas G-P 3, 5, 86; *A.P.* 10.12 (cf. *Odyssey* 17.209f.).

traveler urging him to relax,[16] the cooling breeze (a significant omission, as we shall see),[17] and the sound of rustling leaves.[18]

But though the elements are similar, the total effect is quite different. As a typical example of the genre, I quote the following by Leonidas:[19]

> Traveler in the wilds, do not
> Drink this roiled, muddy, warm water,
> But go on over the hill where
> The cows are grazing, and by the
> Shepherds' pine you will find a
> Murmuring spring, flowing from the
> Rock, cold as snow on the North Wind.

The epigram is straightforward and businesslike, and does not have the intensity and complication of Horace's poem, which is to a large extent a product of its hymnal form. Horace communes with his spring in an I-thou relationship which is established from the opening invocation to Bandusia. The epigram, purporting to be a public monument, states its message to all and sundry, and is necessarily more remote, in that it functions merely as a signpost.

We are now ready to examine the real problems of the poem, beginning with the elaboration on the *haedus*. In the opening lines, the mood is festive. Flowers and wine are elsewhere conjoined in honor of that most intimate of gods, one's Genius: *piabant / floribus et vino Genium memorem brevis aevi* (*Epist.* 2.1.143f.). With one's Genius more than with any other spirit the reference to the passage of time acts as a spur to present enjoyment, rather than a dampener of it. In our poem the mention of wine, flowers, and meat are all an incitement to present pleasure. The immediacy of it is not really blunted by *cras*, which is also used elsewhere by Horace to refer to a coming festivity along with an injunction to enjoy it.[20]

In contrast, the *haedus* and his coming death are described in the following ruthless manner (4-8):

> cui frons turgida cornibus
> primis et venerem et proelia destinat;
> frustra: nam gelidos inficiet tibi
> rubro sanguine rivos
> lascivi suboles gregis.

The *haedus* is proverbially lustful and vigorous. In this description, the lust and vigor of the animal are evoked both at the beginning and at the end of the passage. The horns are beginning to protrude from his brow, and he is thinking of love and its battles. But this incipient virility (*cornibus primis*) is all for nothing, *frustra*. The cutting short of his life is rhythmically mirrored in the breaking movement of *frustra*, which is found in a similar position twice elsewhere in Horace (*Od.* 3.7.17ff., *Sat.* 2.7.114f.), and in both cases is followed by an explanatory *nam*. Closest in its grim compulsion is the passage from the *Satires*, in which the poet seeks to escape anxiety by drink or sleep:

> iam vino quaerens, iam somno fallere curam:
> frustra—nam comes atra premit sequiturque fugacem.

The isolated disyllable *frustra* brings him back to reality after his attempt at escape. So with the *haedus*, the world of love and its rivalries for which the hot-blooded animal was getting ready is abruptly cut short by the cold reality of death. For in this sequence death is the initial association of *gelidos*,[21] where the chill waters implicitly contrast with the warmth of the blood, just as the redness of the blood contrasts with the purity of the spring (*inficiet*

[16] Imperatives to traveler: Anyte G-P 16, 18; Leonidas G-P 86; Nicias G-P 5; Hermocreon G-P 1; *A.P.* 9.374; 10.12; *A. Pl.* 13, 227.

[17] Breeze: Anyte G-P 16, 17, 18; Hermocreon G-P 1; *A.P.* 10.13; *A. Pl.* 13.227. The breeze is a Zephyr except in Anyte 17 and 18.

[18] Rustling leaves: Anyte G-P 18; *A. Pl.* 13, 227 (cf. Theocr. 1.1ff.). The commonplaces of the bucolic epigram also occur in the bucolic idyll, and indeed are fully developed in the setting of Plato's *Phaedrus* (230b-c). An attempt to trace this complex of topoi from Homer to Horace has been made by Gerhard Schönbeck in *Der locus amoenus von Homer bis Horaz*, Diss. Heidelberg 1962. See especially pp.15-60 for a valuable listing of topoi with references.

[19] G-P 86 = *Poems from the Greek Anthology*, tr. Kenneth Rexroth (Ann Arbor 1962), p.59.

[20] Cf. 3.17.13f. *dum potes, aridum/ compone lignum: cras Genium mero/curabis et porco bimestri*; *Epist.* 1.5.9f. *cras nato Caesare festus/ dat veniam somnumque dies.*

[21] Cf. 2.8.11f. *gelida . . . divos/ morte carentis.*

rubro sanguine). Syntactically, the deathly purity of *gelidos . . . rivos* encases the impure but vital blood. Finally, the concentrated phrase *lascivi suboles gregis* evokes once again the ideas of youth and incipient lust that were expressed more elaborately at the opening of the description.

Horace was not the first to contrast the vigor of the sacrificial animal with his imminent doom. Pasquali[22] draws attention to an epigram of Theocritus (*A.P.* 6.336) which describes a kind of tableau in three couplets, the third of which pictures a sacrificial animal: "This white horned goat will bloody the altar: he is now eating the topmost bough of the terebinth tree." By describing his imminent death, Theocritus contrives a pathos for the animal's greedy last nibblings. Like Horace, Theocritus seems to have in mind a color contrast, in this instance the blood on the altar against the whiteness of the goat. But in Theocritus the contrast is picturesque and decorative in a manner which, if we may judge from its appearance in Catullus, was typically Hellenistic.[23] As we have already seen, Horace's contrast is both more extensive and more serious, involving not only color, but the opposites hot and cold and (by extension) life and death. For to the young goat newly aware of his lust and power, the *gelidos rivos* can signify only the coldness of death.

We see, then, that the second stanza sets up an ambiguity in the meaning of the spring, which was at first so inviting and is now both cruel and sinister. In descriptions of springs and groves, *gelidus* is a "good" word, connoting a refreshing coolness. In the programmatic opening ode, Horace claims (1.1.30f.) that what separates him from the crowd is the *gelidum nemus / nympharumque leves cum Satyris chori*. More concretely, the adjective is applied to the river which runs through his Sabine farm (and whose source is probably Bandusia itself): *me quotiens reficit gelidus Digentia rivus* (*Epist.* 1.18. 104). But here, in a deliberate paradox, the limpid cool clarity of the water is at once dangerous and inviting. It promises refreshment, but seems to offer death.

The tensions set up by the second stanza are partially resolved in the hymnal lyricism of the third. It is a pleasant coolness, a *frigus amabile*, that greets the weary livestock. What is for the cattle a relief from the searing heat of the Dog Star is for us a relief from thoughts of death. The disturbing antithesis of warm red blood and cold pellucid water, developed so intricately in the second stanza, is resolved into the beneficent one of heat and coolness, exhaustion and repose. Reinterpreted in these terms, the *gelidos rivos* are no longer to be feared.

But even apart from its meaning in the context of death, the intense heat outside and the pleasant cool of the spring with its shade offer more than the traditional contrast of the bucolic epigram. For Horace, the Dog Star is a symbol of its own, as will become clear from a comparison with 3.29 and 1.17. In 3.29.17ff. a whole stanza is devoted to a description of the midsummer heat in sinister astral terms, with the "pre-Dog-Star" Procyon standing in as herald for the Dog Star itself:

> iam clarus occultum Andromedae pater
> ostendit ignem, iam Procyon furit
> et stella vesani Leonis,
> sole dies referente siccos.

This passage follows close upon injunctions to Maecenas to enjoy the moment and shake off anxious care. For associated with the season of unbearable heat, the *atrox hora Caniculae* in our poem, is its counterpart, soothing rest in the cool shade. This is made clear by the anaphora of *iam* in the next stanza (21ff.), which thus acts as a counterweight to the sinister restlessness of what went before:

> iam pastor umbras cum grege languido
> rivomque fessus quaerit et horridi

[22] Giorgio Pasquali, *Orazio lirico, studi* (Florence 1920; reprint 1964), pp.557-9.

[23] Cf. J. André, *Études sur les termes de couleur dans la langue latine* (Paris 1949), pp.346f.

dumeta Silvani, caretque
ripa vagis taciturna ventis.

The shepherd in these lines, like the bulls in 3.13, is deliciously weary, *fessus*, as Maecenas in all humanity ought to be. The repeated *iam*, of course, besides connecting the two stanzas, emphasizes the here and now of immediate enjoyment, which even Maecenas cannot afford to neglect. The consequences of such neglect are hinted at in the characterization of the heat as insane (*iam Procyon furit / et stella vesani Leonis*).[24] So, too, in 1.17 Tyndaris is invited into the magic world of Horace's Sabine farm where she, too, will avoid the searing heat (*hic in reducta valle Caniculae vitabis aestus*) and will enjoy music and harmless wine in the shade. Interestingly enough, she will also avoid the battles, *proelia* (24), of aggressive and jealous love, the same battles in which the *haedus* of 3.13 was so anxious to be involved. It would seem that in the Tyndaris ode the insane heat of the dog days is to be associated with the unmusical world of worry, desire and aggression outside the charmed circle of the poet's own domain (*hic in reducta valle*). Comparable is the injunction to the weary soldier friend, returned late from the civil wars (2.7.18f.)

longa . . . fessum militia latus
depone sub lauru mea

or the refreshment that the war-weary Augustus finds in the cave of the Muses (3.4.37ff.)

vos [Camenae] Caesarem altum, militia simul
fessas cohortis abdidit oppidis,
finire quaerentem labores
Pierio recreatis antro.

The symbolism of the *locus amoenus* is enhanced by its stillness. From a practical viewpoint, a breeze is clearly just as important as shade and running water in the summer heat, and indeed a refreshing breeze or zephyr is, as we have seen, an almost constant feature of the bucolic epigram. But at 3.29 the preternatural stillness of the midday scene is specifically pointed out (23f.): *caretque ripa vagis taciturna ventis.* In other passages the stillness is there by implication. The Sabine valley is remote (*reducta*), Bandusia is untouchable (*nescit tangere*).[25] Literary parallels to such inviolate peace are the calm on Olympus (*Odyssey* 6.43-5) which "is never shaken by winds or soaked by rain or covered by snow, but always a brightness without clouds extends over it," or even more the undisturbed sanctity of the grove at Colonus in Sophocles (*O.C.* 674ff.), where the nightingale haunts the fruitful grove of the god, "untrodden by man, not penetrated by the sun, becalmed in every storm." So, too, in the fountain of Bandusia and its calm surroundings, passion meets its death and is replaced by a transcendent peace.

But at this point, three quarters of the way through the poem, the spring which offers so much is itself made out to owe everything to the poet (13-16):

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

Formally, the hymnal *tu* links the stanza with what precedes, but in fact the praise of the spring has given way in *me dicente* to a strong self-assertion. The poet takes control, and as though to show his mastery, paints a verbal sound picture of the trickling waters of the spring. Now the spring, which in the first part of the poem was the benefactor, seems to be only an object on which the poet can display his technique. How can we explain this complete and sudden turnabout, and in what sense is it an effective climax to the poem?

[24] See Viktor Pöschl, *Die grosse Maecenasode des Horaz (c. 3,29)* (Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, 1961, Heidelberg 1961), p.16. Cf. also *Epist.* 1.10.15f. *est ubi plus tepeant hiemes, ubi gratior aura/ leniat et rabiem Canis et momenta Leonis.*

[25] Of course in a more realistic presentation Horace may mention the cooling breeze, as in the passage quoted in n.24.

In a sense, Horace's poem can itself be considered an offering to the spring, along with the conventional wine, flowers and animal sacrifices. It is his greatest gift, and is therefore reserved for the climax.[26] We must also recognize that when a man commemorated the fulfillment of his *votum*, he invariably brought in his own name (everyone would then know that he was now free of this quasi-legal obligation). But Horace, far from being the grateful mortal, is himself the bestower of immortality. In his relationship to Bandusia he is going even further than the Great King Darius in the grandiloquent stele he set up to the river Tearos in Thrace, whose thirty-eight springs, Herodotus tells us (4.91), issued from a single rock. "The source of the river Tearos provides the best and noblest water of all rivers: and to it in his march with an army against the Scythians came the best and noblest of all men, Darius, son of Hystaspis and king of the Persians and all the mainland."

The inclusion of Bandusia in the group of famous springs suggests, as many have seen, that we connect it with those other sources of poetical inspiration, Hippokrene, Permessos, Arethusa and the like. Horace was no stranger to this symbolism of fountains (already stereotyped in Lucretius), as can be seen from the exclusively allegorical *fons* of 1.26.6ff. In that poem the Muse is said to rejoice in *fontes integri*, i.e. in literary genres that are as yet unassayed. Its opening words, *Musis amicus*, find an echo in that hymnal expression of his poetic confidence that occupies the first half of the fourth Roman ode (3.4.25): *vestris amicum fontibus et choris*. In 4.3 allegorical fountains and groves give way to the specific landscape of Tibur, whose waters and dense groves will make the gifted poet (i.e. Horace) famous in Aeolian song. This last example, in its localism, is close to our poem in that inspiration is attributed to the surroundings of Tibur in particular, the description of which wavers between the natural and the symbolic.[27]

And yet in all other passages where nature is the source of inspiration, the relationship is never reversed. *Nil sine te mei / prosunt honores* (1.26.9f.); *non sine dis animosus infans* (3.4.20); *di me tuentur, dis pietas mea / et Musa cordi est* (1.17. 13f.); *quae Tibur aquae fertile praefluunt et spissae nemorum comae / [poetam] fingent Aeolio carmine nobilem* (4.3.10ff.). The poet is always the passive partner, and does not claim himself to ennoble the landscape the way Horace ennobles Bandusia.

A clue to the problem can be found in the very insignificance of the name Bandusia. So unknown is it that we are not even sure whether it belongs to Horace's Sabine farm or to his Apulian boyhood or both.[28] It is in the same class as those other private names Lucretilis, Ustica, Acherontia, Bantia and Forentum, obscure names from the Sabine world and Horace's native Apulia which decorate 1.17 and 3.4, two poems that passionately assert the uniqueness of his background and surroundings as the breeding ground for his poetry. The humble simplicity both of his birth and of his country life are directly connected with the mystery of his poetic inspiration. The obscurity of his background is inversely related to the greatness of his achievement, and Horace takes a pride in stressing the contrast (*Epist.* 1.20.20ff.):

> me libertino natum patre et in tenui re
> maiores pennas nido extendisse loqueris,
> ut quantum generi demas virtutibus addas.

Like the poet himself, Bandusia is *ex humili potens* (3.30.12). Previously unknown, it is, like the other local names in Horace's poetry, raised into significance as

[26] See Retzenstein (*op. cit.* n.8), p.9 (= p.89), n.2: "Wie das Opfer wird auch das Lied (wie oft im alexandrinischer Dichtung) nur angekündigt; in beiden Teilen wird kunstvoll das eigentlich Zusammengehörige zerlegt."

[27] On this whole topic see especially Irene Troxler-Keller, *Die Dichterlandschaft des Horaz* (Heidelberg 1964).

[28] On the name "Bandusia" see A. Mayer, "*O fons Bandusiae*," *Glotta* 25 (1936) 173-82.

part of a poetic world. That the source of his inspiration is Bandusia and no public fountain expresses the uniqueness of his poetic voice. The proud ringing tone of *me dicente* in the Bandusia ode belongs with those passages in which he claims immortality for himself as poet in spite of his obscure origins (2.20.5ff.):

> non ego pauperum
> sanguis parentum, non ego quem vocas,
> dilecte Maecenas, obibo
> nec Stygia cohibebor unda.

We can now see that the self assertion of the final stanza does not contradict the devotional attitude of the first three stanzas. Bandusia, as a piece of Horace's private landscape, is both a source of inspiration and a subject of it. There is a deep interrelationship, almost an identity, between the spring and the poet, so that in praising the spring he is almost praising himself. Bandusia is internalized as a source of inspiration, so that humility and pride interlock. He owes everything to poetry, which he duly exalts in hymnal form, but poetry is existentially a part of him, his immortal part, with all its stubborn individuality, which he also exalts. We have already explored some of the connotations of the third stanza in relation to the anxieties about death in the second stanza. We can now better understand the phraseology of *te flagrantis atrox hora Caniculae / nescit tangere.* The world of art, in which each poet has to find his private voice (his private spring), is the only world that remains untouched by change and death. It is in fact the only transcendence Horace recognizes, and it is to be found within him. The turnabout in the final stanza, far from being incoherent, expresses an identification of the poet with his inspiration (3.30.6f.):

> non omnis moriar, multaque pars mei
> vitabit Libitinam.

The poet, *ex humili potens*, acts as the proud spokesman of the Muse that lives within him and which finds its appropriate symbol in a private *fons*.

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