

HORACE AND THE WOLF

BY

J. C. YARDLEY

Namque me silva lupus in Sabina
dum meam canto Lalagen et ultra
terminum curis vagor expeditis
fugit inermem

(*Odes* I 22, 9-12)

Horace's personal experience is adduced as proof that the man who is *integer vitae scelerisque purus* (1) need have no fear of violence to his person wherever he may go. The view that Horace's escape from the wolf was a real occurrence has not surprisingly taken some hard knocks in recent years, but even Nisbet and Hubbard feel compelled to comment that "Horace may have glimpsed a wolf shambling off in the middle distance, but the incident was a trivial one at best" ¹⁾. The question which should be asked, however, is not whether Horace actually saw a wolf but why he decided to use the event, whether real or fictitious, in this poem.

The poem, as scholars generally agree, is not to be taken seriously. This is apparent from this third stanza where Horace, after the solemn statement in the first eight lines of the inviolability of the man who is *integer vitae scelerisque purus*, gives as an example his own escape from the wolf while singing a love song in the woods, and it is difficult to imagine that the poem was ever taken seriously

1) R. G. M. Nisbet - M. Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace: Odes Book I* (Oxford 1970), 263 f. Fraenkel similarly comments: "It is by no means improbable that Horace on one of his walks in the Sabine hills should have seen a wolf—we are not told at what distance—but, whatever happened in reality, in his poem he mockingly magnifies the monstrosity of the beast" (*Horace* [Oxford 1957], 186). So also Pasquali: "O egli ha inventato la storiella, o, se gli è capitata davvero, ha fatto del suo meglio per darle un aspetto terribile, che in verità non le conviene" (*Orazio Livico* [reprinted Florence 1966], 471). Pasquali goes on to suggest that Horace wants to make his readers think of the story of Battus from whom lions fled (cf. Pindar *Pyth.* 5, 57).

(and by scholars of the calibre of Reitzenstein at that ²). Not only is the lover equated with the man who is *integer vitae scelerisque purus* but the reader is also invited to see in the *Sabina silva* an equivalent to the traditionally hazardous Syrtes and Caucasus, and the distant Punjab ³). The theme, as scholars have noted, is connected with the theme found in Roman Elegy that a lover enjoys divine protection, and it is this which furnishes the key to a proper understanding of the poet's purposes.

Nisbet and Hubbard (*o.c.*, *ad loc.*, p. 262) state that "Horace is applying to himself, not without amusement, the elegists' commonplace that the lover is a sacred person under divine protection", and they quote in support of this Prop. III 16, 11 ff., Tib. I 2, 27 ff., Ovid *Am.* I 6, 13 ff., *AP* V 213, 3 f. (Posidippus), *AP* XII 115, 4 (Anon.) and Longus 3, 5. However, these are not all valid parallels, and they should be examined with some care. Longus simply claims that Daphnis is ready to face a long and dangerous journey through the snow, and he adds: ἔρωτι δ' ἄρα πάντα βάσιμα, καὶ πῦρ καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ Σκυθικὴ χιῶν. There is no suggestion that the lover is the recipient of divine protection, only that he is emboldened to face hardship or danger. One may compare Plutarch *Amatorius* 762 e where the man in love is described as fearing nothing and ready to brave even Zeus' thunderbolts: cf. also Musaeus 247-50, Aristaenetus II 17, 9-12, Prop. II 27, 12. The theme may originally be derived from the komastic situation in which the lover, on the way to his girl's doors, is often described as being prepared to brave the elements, including the thunderbolts of Zeus: cf. *AP* V 64 (Asclep.), V 168 (Anon.), XII 117 (Mel.) ⁴). Posidippus, the Anonymous *AP*

2) R. Reitzenstein, *Philologische Kleinigkeiten*, *Hermes* 57 (1922), 357-63. In general see the remarks of Fraenkel, 184 f. A further clue to the poem's tone (if a further clue is needed) is the fact that the poem's addressee, Fuscus, is the wag who refused to rescue Horace from the bore (*Sat.* I 9, 60 ff.).

3) For the Syrtes and Caucasus as notoriously dangerous places, and the Hydaspes as representative of a distant place, see N-H *ad loc.* (265-7).

4) Traces of the komastic origin of the theme are perhaps to be seen not only in Plutarch's lover being ready to face Zeus' thunder but also I think (despite the caution of K.-H. Kost, *Musaios: Hero and Leander* [Bonn 1971], 452) in Musaeus 246 τὸ δ' ἔρωτος ἐμὲ φλέγει ἐνδόμουχον πῦρ, which is reminiscent of the komastic epigram of Valerius Aedituus (fr. 1 [Gell. XIX 9, 12 = Morel, FPL 43], 1-2 *quid faculam praefers, Phileros, quae* (var. lect.

XII 115, an 213, 3 f.) do by Eros wh *AP* XII 115 thunderbolt komastic ac that is not persons un Ovid *Am.* I Posidippus) Cupid remo

In fact, "elegists' co I 2, 27 ff. ar are connect Tibullus. A *quisquis an quisquis am* that both sacrosancti common, ar 'accursed' c 'sacrosancti tus, and in it refers to fluence on objection to Propertius 23 B.C. and

qua) nil opus (Powell, *Lys* καιόμενον.

5) For the II 1, 75-8.

6) See F. *Virgil, Philo die Tradition*

7) Horace 'publication

it only
risque
va an
s, and
s con-
enjoys
proper

ace is
com-
ion",
27 ff.,
15, 4
allels,
laims
ough
ὄδωρ
the
face
762 e
ly to
ene-
ived
his
the
ep.),
AP
-63.
em's
ssee,
I 9,

and
5-7).
en
I
in
is
IX
lect.

XII 115, and Ovid are not good parallels either. Posidippus (*AP* V 213, 3 f.) does indeed contend that he was guided through footpads by Eros while he was on his *komos* to Pythias, and the author of *AP* XII 115 on his *komos* does have love as a shield against Zeus' thunderbolts, but both of these claim protection only during their komastic activity (while they are on Eros' errand, as it were) and that is not the same as claiming that they are, as lovers, "sacred persons under divine protection". Nor is there such a claim in Ovid *Am.* I 6, where the *exclusus*⁵⁾ *amator* again only asserts (like Posidippus) that love directs the komast's feet and adds that Cupid removed his fear of the night.

In fact, Nisbet and Hubbard's evidence for this theme as an "elegists' commonplace" consists really of two examples, Tibullus I 2, 27 ff. and Propertius III 16, 11 ff. These two passages, moreover, are connected with each other: Propertius is certainly imitating Tibullus. Apart from the clear verbal similarity of Prop III 16, 13 *quisquis amator erit, Scythicis licet ambulet oris* to Tib. I 2, 27-8 *quisquis amore tenetur eat tulusque sacerque qualibet*⁶⁾ it is striking that both poets use the word *sacer* in reference to the lover's sacrosanctity (Tib. 27, Prop. 11). *Sacer* used personally is not common, and when it does occur it nearly always bears the meaning 'accursed' or 'wicked', but in both these examples it clearly means 'sacrosanct'. Indeed, this is the only personal use of *sacer* in Propertius, and in Tibullus it occurs only once elsewhere (II 5, 114, where it refers to the poet's sacrosanctity), so the case for Tibullan influence on Propertius is very strong. But an even more serious objection to Nisbet and Hubbard's view is the strong probability that Propertius III 16 had not been 'published' when *Odes* 1-3 appeared in 23 B.C. and so the likelihood is that it postdates Horace's *Ode*⁷⁾.

qua) nil opus nobis? ibimus sic: lucet pectore flamma satis) and Frag. Grenfell. (Powell, *Lyr. Adesp.* 1) 15-16 Συνοδηγὸν ἔχω τὸ πολὺ πῦρ/τοῦν τῆ ψυχῆ μου καίόμενον.

5) For the protection or aid given to the lover on a *komos* cf. also Tib. II 1, 75-8.

6) See F. Solmsen, *Propertius in his Literary Relations with Tibullus and Virgil*, Philol. 105 (1961), 278, H. Tränkle, *Die Sprachkunst des Propertius und die Tradition der lateinischen Dichtersprache* (Wiesbaden 1960), 99.

7) Horace could, it is true, have seen a copy of Propertius' poem before 'publication': see R. Haywood, *Integer vitae and Propertius*, CJ 37 (1941-2),



What Horace seems to be doing, in fact, is not parodying an elegists' commonplace but gently mocking a passage of Tibullus. Tibullus starts from the epigrammatic theme that the lover enjoys the protection of a divinity concerned with the erotic sphere while he is engaged in komastic activity (which is surely the reason for his worried wandering through the city at night), but he goes further than the epigrammatists by asserting that the lover enjoys sacrosanctity wherever he goes:

En ego cum tenebris tota vagor anxius urbe
 — — — — —

Nec sinit occurrat quisquam qui corpora ferro
 Vulneret aut rapta praemia veste petat.
 Quisquis amore tenetur, eat tutusque sacerque
 Qualibet: insidias non timuisse decet.

(Tib. I 2, 25-30)

The coincidences between these lines and Horace's stanza are quite striking. Both poets are making an appeal to personal experience for the veracity of their statements (Horace's *namque me* = Tibullus' *en ego*)⁸). Note, too, the occurrence of the verb *vagor* in both poets (Tib. 25, Horace 11), and Horace's *curis . . . expeditis* (11) is probably meant to recall Tibullus' *anxius* (25).

What are the dangers Tibullus would face in the city at night? One of them is presented in 27-8, the footpad, traditional enemy of the komast. Another traditional enemy is the guard dog, who appears frequently in komastic epigrams and elegy, cf. *AP* V 30, 4 (Antipater), V 242, 8 (Eratosthenes Schol.), Tib. I 6, 32, II 4, 31 ff., Prop. IV 5, 73-4, Ovid *Am.* II 19, 40, Horace *Odes* III 16, 2. Indeed, it seems not unlikely that Tibullus' missing line 26 contained a reference to the dog, for Propertius in his imitation of this passage

28-32, who sees *Odes* I 22 as a "persiflage . . . aimed at the expression of the idea in the sixteenth poem of Propertius' third book". J. Sullivan now suggests the reverse, that Propertius' poem is a "hit at Horace" (*Propertius: A Critical Introduction* [Cambridge 1976], 17-18). It seems to me more likely that both poets are imitating Tibullus.

8) This correspondence has been noted by A. W. J. Holleman (*Horace's Lalage* [Ode I 22] and Tibullus' Delia, *Latom.* 28 [1969], 576), who also believes Horace's poem is directed against Tibullus.

mentie
the foo
is corre
notion
as the
meant
in par
Horace
when l
passage
think
later in
his frie
should
country
(*urbis* c
1-21)]?

Univer

9) Fo
Horace
F. Cair
1972), 1
10) S

it parodying an
age of Tibullus,
the lover enjoys
the rustic sphere while
the reason for
(t), but he goes
the lover enjoys

ce's stanza are
to personal ex-
ace's *namque m*
f the verb *vaga*
vis . . . expeditis
(25).

e city at night:
additional enemy
guard dog, who
; cf. *AP V* 30, 4
5, 32, *II* 4, 31 ff.,
II 16, 2. Indeed,
26 contained a
1 of this passage

e expression of the
Sullivan now sug-
race" (*Propertius*
ems to me more

olleman (*Horace's*
), 576), who also

mentions the lover's immunity to dog-bites immediately before the footpad (Prop. III 16, 17-8). But whether or not this hypothesis is correct it is very likely that Horace, to mock playfully Tibullus' notion of the lover's inviolability, is amusingly setting himself up as the rustic equivalent of the urban komast⁹). The reader is meant to recall the komastic situation and its attendant dangers, in particular the guard-dog, and he is invited to believe that Horace faces equivalent danger and receives similar divine help when he is in the country. In particular (especially if the Tibullan passage originally contained the guard-dog) he is meant to think of Tibullus' grandiose claim to sacrosanctity. As he does later in the book (*Odes* I 33; cf. *Ep.* I 4) Horace is gently teasing his friend Albius¹⁰), and what could be more apt than that he should claim to enjoy the elegist's 'city' protection while in the country in an ode addressed to Fuscus, that lover of the town (*urbis amatorem Fuscum salvere iubemus / ruris amatores* [*Ep.* I 10, 1-21])?

University of CALGARY, Alberta

9) For such transference of typical urban situations to the countryside Horace had a good Alexandrian precedent in Theocritus *Id.* 3 and 11: see F. Cairns, *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry* (Edinburgh 1972), 144-5.

10) See M. C. J. Putnam, *Horace and Tibullus*, CP 67 (1972), 81-8.

ILL record updated to IN PROCESS

Record 30 of 46

PER P-A 9 mg

ILL pe

Record 30 of 46

CAN YOU SUPPLY ? YES NO COND FUTUREDATE

:ILL: 9803519 :Borrower: VZS :ReqDate: 20010726 :NeedBefore: 20010825
:Status: IN PROCESS 20010726 :RecDate: :RenewalReq:
:OCLC: 1189611 :Source: OCLCILL :DueDate: :NewDueDate:
:Lender: *NAM,NAM,XBM,VJA,XLM

:CALLNO:

:TITLE: Mnemosyne.

:IMPRINT: Lugduni Batavorum : E. J. Brill,

:ARTICLE: Yardley, Keith; Horace and the wolf

:VOL: 32 :NO: :DATE: 1979 :PAGES: 333-337

:VERIFIED: OCLC ISSN: 0026-7074

:PATRON: Curley, D DEPT: classics STATUS:fac

:SHIP TO: ILL/Skidmore College Library/815 No.Broadway/Saratoga

Springs/NY/12866/

:BILL TO: Same

:SHIP VIA: Fastest at no chg. :MAXCOST: \$0 IFM :COPYRT COMPLIANCE: CCL

:FAX: (518)580-5540 *** ARIEL ADDRESS 141.222.170.254

:E-MAIL: ILLDESK@skidmore.edu

:BORROWING NOTES: SUNY/OCLC Deposit Account# w/ UMI:D#800108 Oberlin Grp.

Mem/CANNOT PAY INVOICE WITHOUT COPY OF REQUEST We do not charge for ILL services. Please reciprocate.

:AFFILIATION: SUNY/OCLC, Oberlin Grp., LVIS

:LENDING CHARGES: :SHIPPED: :SHIP INSURANCE:

:LENDING RESTRICTIONS:

:LENDING NOTES:

:RETURN TO:

RETURN VIA .