

II. The Role of Faunus in Horace, *Carmina* 1.4

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Solvitur acris hiems, the fourth poem in Horace's first book of *Odes*, in conjunction with its obvious double *Diffugere nives* (4.7), has regularly been used as the type of Horace's theme of the inevitability of death.¹ The unexpected entrance of death in line 13,

pallida mors aequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas
regumque turris . . . ,

following on the attractive scenes of the reawakening of life after winter's freeze, is certainly designed to shock the complacent listener. It seems to come without preparation into a generally optimistic setting and to provide a dramatic reversal of considerable power. There is apparent contrast here with the unpromising mood of 4.7, where in short compass even in the scene of winter's departure a procession of words potentially foreboding in their context prepares the listener for *immortalia ne speres* in line 7 (*diffugere—redeunt, mutat . . . vices, decrescentia, praetereunt, audet*); instead 1.4 appears to have a long and light-hearted introduction of twelve lines and thereby to emphasize even more the break in continuity at 13.²

Examination of the first twelve lines of 1.4, however, demonstrates careful preparation for the warning to Sestius. These

¹ E.g. A. Kiessling, *Q. Horatii Flaccus. Oden und Epoden*,⁸ rev. by R. Heinze (Berlin 1955) 25, and L. P. Wilkinson, *Horace and his Lyric Poetry* (Cambridge 1951) 39–40.

² Miss H. C. Toll, "Unity in the Odes of Horace," *Phoenix* 9 (1955) 153–69, refers (156) to the bright picture of the beginning that is darkened without warning, only to be followed by comment on life's frivolities. She sees in the gloomy warning bracketed by two bright contrasting scenes a special focusing of attention on line 13. In "A Note on Horace 'Odes' 1.4," *CJ* 48 (1952–53) 262, William Sylvester suggests that both destructive and creative forces evident in lines 1–12 have hinted at the approach of death, whose entry brings not a change of thought but of feeling. Eduard Fraenkel, *Horace* (Cambridge 1957) 419–21, discussing the two odes, 1.4 and 4.7, under the heading of the latter, notes the similarity of theme and pattern and stresses the darker coloration of *Diffugere nives*. I consider the general effect of the concluding portions of both poems somewhat more similar than does Fraenkel. Pace Miss Toll, the whole of 1.4.14–20 is quite negative, and in spite of the light joys suggested, the suggestion is made only to be denied.

lines are remarkably bound together.³ Structurally, from the initial strong positions of *solvitur* and *trahunt* and the anaphora of *neque . . . nec* and *iam . . . iam* one is led certainly to *nunc . . . nunc* in 9 and 11 both by meaning and arrangement; within this quatrains the alternatives *aut . . . aut* and *seu . . . sive* further implicate the doubled *decet*.⁴ In thought, lines 1 and 4 belong to nature's changes; 2 and 3 to man's. The first four lines as a unit show the general effect of nature's changes on man's way of living; the next four express the same elements on a different plane in divine terms; lines 9–12 follow what is *already* happening with the particular statement of appropriate acts for a man under such circumstances. The intention of the poet to link 9–12 with the preceding is further evident in the repetition of *nunc . . . nunc* and the obvious echo of *solvitur . . . hiems* in *terrae solutae*. Finally, the sacrifice to Faunus in 11–12 and the god's function as protector of the flocks as they return to the pasture provide an association with lines 3 and 4 and *stabulis gaudet pecus*.⁵

The words *imminente Luna*, usually interpreted "with the moon hanging overhead," may harbor a double meaning. There is also in *imminere* a sense of threatening; if this is combined with the concept of the moon's waxing and waning, it serves as a reminder in the pleasant mood of spring that the winter which has just yielded will soon come again. By extension, man's life cycle is called to mind, and the combination of celestial, divine and

³ Interlocking or parallelism of word groups is intensive even for Horace. Nearly every line achieves some effect from these devices: (1) *acris hiems* is surrounded by verb and causes of its dissolution; (2) *siccus . . . carinas* surrounds *machinae*; (3) chiasmus in *stabulis . . . pecus . . . arator igni*; (5) *Cytherea . . . Venus* embraces *choros ducit*, as does (6) *iunctae . . . Gratiae decentes* the *Nymphis* and (7) *alterno . . . pede* the ground on which the dancing takes place; (7–8) *gravis . . . officinas* brackets its clause, and a notable positioning of adjective *b* (*gravis*), noun *a* (*Vulcanus*), adjective *a* (*ardens*) and noun *b* (*officinas*) results; (9) *viridi . . . myrto* encircles the head it is to adorn, and the order is adjective *a*, adjective *b*, noun *b*, noun *a*; (10) and (11) both separate noun and adjective, and the parallel doublet (12) *poscat agna . . . malit haedo* gains effect by the simple repetition of word order. The caesura is nicely employed in 2, 4 and 10 to associate noun and adjective.

⁴ Striking instances of contrast and opposition of words and ideas throughout the poem are cited by Antonio Magariños, "Sobre Horacio C. I 4," *Emerita* 15 (1947) 155–60. Marcel Delaunoy, "Horace *Odes* I, 4: 'Le Printemps'," *Les études classiques* 25 (1957) 320–27, has noted the effective use of sounds, particularly in lines 1–4.

⁵ This sacrifice is not a part of Faunus' festival of February 13, celebrated at Rome on the island in the Tiber, but should come later in the spring, perhaps in April, as Pierre Defourny, "Le Printemps dans l'ode à Sestius (I, 4)," *Les études classiques* 14 (1946) 174–94, ably argues. It has a closer resemblance to the rural festival described for December 5 in C. 3.18.

human elements strikes the theme made more explicit in 4.7.13–16:

damna tamen celeres reparant caelestia lunae:
nos ubi decidimus
quo pater Aeneas, quo Tullus dives et Ancus,
pulvis et umbra sumus.

Pallida mors is not far off.⁶ One may also consider the reverse side of the attractive picture as a counterpoint to the positive joys of spring: harsh winter, the heavy machines and ships, the cold forcing man and beast to seek shelter, the heat of the Cyclopes' ponderous forges, land but now released from winter's grip, and the gloom of Faunus' woods.

It is in the choice of Faunus as the god to whom sacrifice should be made that Horace reveals his intention for the rest of the poem. Faunus may actually have been heralded by the entrance of Favonius as the thawing wind in line 1. Scholars have argued that both derive from *favere*, and have even suggested identification of Faunus with Favonius.⁷ Faunus is concerned with the *pecus* and *arator* of 3, and in his identification with Pan can readily be pictured with Venus and the nymphs in dance; in this latter manifestation there is also a tie with the festivities of 9–10.

But Faunus has another side to his character and another sphere of influence. Not only is he protector of crops and herds⁸ and a convivial and amorous Pan-like being,⁹ but he is also endowed with prophetic powers.¹⁰ This multiplicity of competencies is evidently quite beyond analysis by the time of the Augustan Age, when Faunus as king of the Latins, Faunus as one of a race of Fauni, Faunus as Pan and the Fauni as Satyrs, and the oracular Faunus or Fauni seem not to be separated clearly one from the other.¹¹ This is not to say that Faunus in a particular instance

⁶ M. Delaunois, *loc. cit.* (above, note 4) 323, has also noted the potential of *imminente Luna*, but he offers the definition of "imminere" as "regarder avec envie" and refers the words to the moon's envy at not being able to dance. This seems to me a less likely extension of the meaning.

⁷ See W. Warde Fowler, *The Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic* (London 1925) 259.

⁸ As he appears in 1.17 and also in 3.18.

⁹ Cf. the near-equation of Fauni with Satyrs in *AP* 244 and *Ep.* 1.19.4–5.

¹⁰ Vergil, *Aen.* 7.81 ff.; Ovid, *Fasti* 4.649 ff.; Cicero *ND* 2.6, 3.15; *Div.* 1.101; Dion. Hal. 5.16; Plut. *Numa* 15.3; Lact. *Inst.* 1.22.9; Serv. *ad Aen.* 8.314.

¹¹ Grattius, *Cyneg.* 18–20, is something of an exception when he cites Faunus, Pan, and Silvanus as clearly distinct deities. In the second chapter of her dissertation

may not have personalized characteristics and indeed individuality, as is the case with any divine or semi-divine figure with several areas of influence.¹² Rather it implies that Faunus as guardian of herds and the oracular Faunus need not be distinguished in the poet's mind. Such I believe is the case in the poem under consideration.

Vergil, Ovid and Calpurnius Siculus all describe in some detail situations in which Faunus provides oracular responses.¹³ The first two are instances of incubation with the god appearing while the questioner sleeps. Calpurnius has the oracle inscribed on a beech tree; this tree also figures in the Ovidian story. All picture a grove and a source of water. Vergil and Ovid require a sacrifice of sheep. Ovid describes Numa's preparation for incubation as including sprinkling of water on his head and then crowning it with beech leaves. Calpurnius and Ovid note a requirement of sexual continence. Vergil omits these details, but both he and Ovid have the sacrificant stretch out on the skins of the slain animals to sleep.

In *C.* 1.4 the addressee is invited to wreath his head, qualified as *nitidum*, with myrtle or with spring flowers.¹⁴ This obviously is suggested in part by the dancing of the nymphs and Graces with Venus in 5-7, and implies festive activity. I believe it also is to be associated in general terms with 11-12 and the sacrifice to Faunus in *umbrosis . . . lucis, seu . . . agna sive . . . haedo*. This is not a formal description of a ritual demanded by some local Faunus, but a very general statement blending the rustic qualities of the god with his prophetic abilities.¹⁵ The *nunc et* of 11, which adds

Faunus (Leiden 1946) 5-45, Miss Elisabeth C. H. Smits has assembled the references to Faunus in his various capacities. See also Georg Wissowa, *s.v.* "Faunus" in Roscher, *passim*.

¹² *C.* 1.10, *Mercuri, facunde nepos Atlantis*, addresses the god in a complex series of references to his divine responsibilities and his mythological activities. Mercury as patron of thieves and Mercury as guide to dead souls are no less oddly joined than Faunus as guardian of herds and Faunus as oracle.

¹³ Cf. above, note 10. Calp. *Ecl.* 1.

¹⁴ The use of myrtle should not be considered limiting. Pliny, *HN* 12.3, lists myrtle as sacred to Venus, but in the same passage implies a general responsibility for the woods to Faunus: *quin Silvanos Faunosque et dearum genera silvis ac sua numina tamquam e caelo attributa credimus*. Vergil's passage specifies no particular trees; Calpurnius speaks of pine and beech; Turnus takes his stand at a wild olive sacred to Faunus in *Aen.* 12.766 ff.

¹⁵ Faunus as rustic deity seems to call for amorous activity (*C.* 3.18.6-8) while the oracular Faunus demands abstinence in Ovid and Calpurnius. The presence of Venus and dancing in lines 5-7 and the preparation for celebration in 9-10 need not

the injunction to sacrifice, rather suggests a second act than one directly consequent on the preparation for banqueting or dancing. But from the rustic celebration of the return of life-giving spring Horace passes quite easily to the propitiation of a deity both closely associated with spring and capable of giving an answer to the ever-present question implicit in the long scene of change: what will tomorrow, or the next season, or the next year bring for men who seem to have found happiness in the coming of this spring? Even the alternative sacrifice, whether lamb or kid, suggests that Horace does not make a distinction between Faunus, protector of herds, to whom a goat is offered in 3.18, and Faunus giver of oracles, to whom sheep are the sacrifice in Vergil and Ovid.¹⁶

If we accept this mixed picture of Faunus as including several of his functions, then lines 13 and 14 become part of the first section of the poem. They are indeed the response of the oracular Faunus to the sacrificant of 11–12. Characteristically, as befits the work of a poet who often enjoins his audience and his friends *not* to seek to know the future, the response is limited: for practical purposes, the only answer to such a question is that death must come in the future to all men. A dramatic device is introduced to strengthen further the effectiveness of Horace's theme, which is thus announced by Faunus himself. The lines themselves become considerably more significant if spoken by Faunus, and point is given to the abrupt incursion of *pallida mors*. 13 and 14 need not be explained limply as a sharp change of pace for change's own sake or as an idiosyncrasy of the poet.

Two additional sides of the character of Faunus can, with this rule out the possibility of approach to the oracle. We have only limited reference to specific rites applied to the seeking of Faunus' oracles, and Horace is here generalizing in a few lines without detailed consideration of any religious act. M. Delaunoy, *loc. cit.* (above, note 4) 324, has remarked that after preparation for the festivities "Horace reste cependant prudent et passablement superstitieux: il se gardera de négliger Faunus (Pan), ce dieu si secondaire mais ultra-dangereux." The sequence and the intent here seem in good part right, although I would question Horace's superstition.

¹⁶ Calp. *Ecl.* 5.16 ff. does not name the animal to be sacrificed to Faunus and other deities when the flocks are sent out to spring pasture. Salted meal is offered on a sod altar, then a victim (*hostia*) first is used to purify the sheepfolds and afterwards is sacrificed; immediately both sheep and goats are let out. To Faunus Horace will sacrifice a lamb at the end of the semi-serious ode to Maecenas (2.17) *Cur me querelis exanimas tuis?*, since Faunus caught the blow when the tree nearly killed the poet (2.13), and Faunus is *Mercurialium custos virorum*. For the proper astrological significance of this last phrase see Fraenkel, *op. cit.* (above, note 2) 218 and the articles of Fr. Boll cited there in note 3. Neither of the two pertinent responsibilities of Faunus is here in question.

interpretation, be reflected in 13 and 14. Porphyryon, commenting on 3.18, states that Faunus is said to be *deum inferum ac pestilentem*; hence Horace's prayer that the god pass lightly through his fields. The scholiast also notes the gloomy grove and foul-smelling spring pictured by Vergil as the haunt of Faunus to which Latinus goes in search of advice from his prophetic father. Faunus has his dark, even terrifying side, which can be cited in conjunction with the Pan-like reference to his pursuit of the nymphs.¹⁷ If this aspect of Faunus is kept in mind, the harshness and abruptness of the response reminding the questioner of the inevitability of death for men of all stations is not overly surprising.¹⁸ Furthermore, an early source calls attention to the poetic usage of Faunus and the Fauni. Varro, *LL* 7.36, after quoting Ennius

versibus quos olim Fauni vatesque canebant,

explains, "Fauni dei Latinorum, ita ut et Faunus et Fauna sit; hos versibus quos vocant Saturnios in silvestribus locis traditum est solitos fari, quo fando Faunos dictos."¹⁹ In the heavy alliteration, the accompanying tendency to stress and the obvious onomatopoeia in the use of *p*, *t*, *d*, *b* to simulate death's kicking at the door, Horace is suggesting this archaic verse form appropriate to an oracular response by Faunus. Horace himself is not averse to alliteration but seldom allows it to such an extent.²⁰ Ennius, Naevius and other early poets are known to have experimented broadly with alliterative effects, and the mute consonants offered special opportunities.²¹ There is no question of the direct

¹⁷ The joking, frightening, and terrifying side of Faunus is noted in Ovid, *Fasti* 4.667, Pliny, *HN* 25.29, 30.84, Calp. *Ecl.* 1. 89-91, and especially Dion. Hal. 5.16. Lucretius (4.580 ff.) in explaining the voice and particularly echoes mentions the superstition that Fauni, satyrs, and nymphs are the cause of woodland noises; he mentions no resultant terror.

¹⁸ Ovid and Calpurnius (see above, note 17) both record terror besetting the questioner after the god has given the oracle. This is most likely religious awe inspired by the presence of the god, but might reflect, in the case of Ovid's Numa, actual fright.

¹⁹ Cf. Festus page 325, *versus antiquissimi, quibus Faunus fata cecinisse hominibus videtur, Saturnii appellantur*.

²⁰ Another extreme of *p* is found in *S.* 1.6.57, where Horace describes with amusement his stammering when he first was introduced to Maecenas: *infans namque pudor prohibebat plura profari*.

²¹ E.g. Naevius, *libera lingua loquimur ludis Liberalibus* (113 Ribbeck); *qui hic ante porta patria peregre prodigunt?* (84); *domos patres patriam ut colatis potius quam peregrī probra* (93); Ennius, *Brundisium pulcro praecinctum praepete portu* (*Ann.* 488); *procede, gradum proferre*

imitation of a Saturnian; the greater Archilochian is both too long and of too many syllables to allow that, no matter what analysis of a Saturnian is attempted. Horace merely implies some of the characteristics of early Latin verse within the framework of his own meter.

The second part of the ode should begin, then, not with *pallida mors* but with *O beate Sesti*. The introduction of the consul brings to an end the rustic scene established in the first lines and continued through Faunus' reply. Drawing on this response Horace proceeds to apply the message to an urbane life. The directness of the application to Sestius (whether more than a literary gesture or not) sharpens since *beate*, normally an adjective of happy import, is made quite hollow by the preceding *regumque turris*. After the entrance of Sestius, Horace returns to the rustic scene only by indirection with echoes, surely intentional in the work of a poet so demonstrably conscious of such devices: the sequence *iam . . . nec . . . nec . . . nunc* (recalling *neque iam . . . nec . . . iam . . . nunc . . . nunc*), *regna vini* (the suggested banquet of 9–10), *calet iuventus* (*gaudet . . . arator igni* and *Vulcanus ardens* in particular), *virgines* (*choros . . . nymphis Gratiae*), *tepebunt* (recalling the warmth of line 1 and a contrast with *albicant* in 4).

There remains only to mention the apt conclusion of the poem with the reference to the springtime of life for young men and women; it had begun with nature's spring. In an interlocking of ideas winter (death in nature) is followed by spring; so *pallida mors* is followed by the spring of life. Both sequences move from death to life, but change is inherent in both. The reference to the spring of life is set in a negative sentence denying the possibility of lasting youth; it thereby follows logically the shattering utterance of Faunus, a god to whom Horace as quasi-rustic poet turns as both appropriate to spring and endowed with oracular powers.²²

pedum (213—Iphigenia); Pacuvius, *tu mulier, tege te et tuta templo Liberi* (298); *cedo tuum pedem <mi>*, *lymphis flavis fulvum ut pulverem | manibus isdem, quibus Ulixi saepe permulsi abluam | lassitudinemque minuam manuum mollitudine* (244–46).

²² Close parallel in Horace to such an oracular response by a woodland deity seems not to be found. Prophecies do exist (cf. the humorous warning by the old woman in *S.* 1.9.31–34, Nereus' singing of the fates to Paris, *C.* 1.15, and Chiron to Achilles, *Epod.* 13.12–18), but there is little to be compared. As an example of another affected archaism of somewhat similar nature, see *S.* 1.4.85, *hic niger est, hunc tu, Romane, caveto*.