

## **Canidia in the foreground of the *defixiones*: Curse tablets and Roman satire**

Canidia is perhaps the most interesting and difficult of Horace's female characters.<sup>i</sup> She is one of the few individuals—besides Maecenas, Augustus, and Horace's own *ego*—who appear in multiple Horatian works. She is present in two *Epodes*, in both books of the *Sermones*, and, by some interpretations, in the *Odes*. Horace's depiction of Canidia is complex, and the thematic and poetic roles that she plays are even more so. But most importantly for the topic of our conference, Canidia wields powerful magic, including what seem to be binding spells akin to the Graeco-Roman *defixiones*. My aim today is to take a closer look at Canidia in the first book of *Sermones*, to review the state of scholarship on the interpretation of her character, and to see how recent work on curse tablets can illuminate the role her magic plays in the poem. Canidia is a multivalent figure, as we will see. And I will argue that her actions, situation, and fate within the poem point, in a subtle way, to less famous, but nevertheless important, aspects of social change under Octavian and his new regime.

First, let me offer a brief overview of Canidia in Horace—in case we don't all have everything about her already committed to memory—and a review of the scholarship on her. Canidia, sometimes with her comrades Sagana, Veia, and Folia, takes center stage in *Epodes* 5 and 17, as well as in *Sermones* 1.8. She is mentioned by name as well in the third of Horace's *Epodes*, in *Sermones* 2.1 and 2.8, and possibly also she is referred to in poem 1.16 of the *Odes*.<sup>ii</sup>

The first explicit naming of Canidia comes in *Epodes* 3. In this poem, Horace's speaker responds to a practical joke that Maecenas has played on him: Maecenas has somehow tricked him into eating garlic, and so has given him indigestion. He compares the garlic to the blood of a viper, to the magical ointments Medea used to enchant Jason and later kill her rival for Jason's affection, to the vapor

of the Dog-Star Sirius, to the centaur's poison that caused Hercules' death—and, as you see in #1 on the handout, to Canidia's magic. "Or is it that Canidia has handled this evil meal?," the speaker cries.<sup>iii</sup>

Two poems later, in *Epodes* 5, Canidia is much more prominent. With her three companions, she has kidnapped a boy and is using him in a magical rite. They gather various exotic magical ingredients to burn in a fire, they bury the boy up to his neck and starve him, and they invoke the goddesses Diana and Nox. Their goal is to compel a certain Varus to become sexually attracted to Canidia, not to her rival; according to Canidia's invocation of the goddesses, she was unsuccessful in her previous attempts at erotic magic, which included ointment used to enchant Varus and Medea-like potions used to attack Canidia's rival.<sup>iv</sup> In this poem, the speaker describes Canidia as having, at #2 on the handout, "snakes tied into her disheveled hair," as having discolored teeth and uncut fingernails, and as, simply, impious. And in #3 on the handout, the boy first likens her to a "step-mother" and a "hunted beast," and later calls her and her compatriots to "vile old women." The poem ends with the boy cursing Canidia and the rest, but he does this from a position of weakness and imminent death. Canidia holds all the power.

And she still holds all the power in her next appearance, in *Epodes* 17, which is the final poem of the collection. In this poem, the Horace-speaker proclaims his surrender to Canidia, whose power has overcome him.<sup>v</sup> He begs her pardon, with plenty of mythological *exempla*, and offers her gifts of sacrifice, poetry, and falsehood. Her response is, simply put, no. In answer to his mythological *exempla*, she offers mythological punishments, and the promise of a long life of torment. Her final, rhetorical question—#4 on the handout, "shall I lament my skills' providing no means against you?"—ends the poem and the *Epodes*. Canidia is again triumphant.

Canidia appears twice in the *Sermones*. In *Sermones* book 1, poem 8, she and her comrade Sagana conduct an erotic binding spell in a garden built by Maecenas at the site of a cemetery on the Esquiline hill. The poem is narrated by a wooden statue of the god Priapus, who comments on his own ineffectiveness at his duty of scaring away interlopers, whether they are thieves, crows, or Canidia herself. Ultimately, Priapus cracks open his wooden rear-end, in this way creates a gigantic fart, and scares away the two women. Priapus first describes Canidia, at #5 on the handout, as bare-footed and loose-haired, dressed in a black cloak; both she and Sagana, according to him, are deathly pale. (This description, according to Habash, equates the women with the Furies.)<sup>vi</sup> As they run away from his fart, #6 on the handout, he observes with great amusement that Canidia's teeth are false and that Sagana is wearing a wig.

I will be spending more time with this poem in a few moments, and I will return in particular to the erotic binding magic that Canidia and Sagana perform. But for the time being I point out that, unlike in *Epodes* 5 and 17, in this poem, Canidia does not end triumphantly, but rather in flight. And, indeed, after this poem, she only shows up twice more in the *Sermones*, each time in only a single line. First, in the first poem of the second book of *Sermones*, the Horace-speaker compares his own art of satire to the poison or magic with which Canidia threatens her enemies, #7 on the handout. Second, in poem 2.8, the final poem of the *Sermones*, at #8 on the handout, a reference to the poisonous breath of Canidia brings an abrupt end to the book. Canidia is more ominous than powerful here. Although she still holds a semblance of power over the minds of the dinner-guests, she is nevertheless barely present, present only in a simile.<sup>vii</sup> At *Odes* 1.16—#9 on the handout—Sturtevant first proposed identifying the *mater pulchra* of *Odes* 1.16 as Canidia, whose daughter the Horace-character is now courting.<sup>viii</sup> It is possible, then, that Canidia is the

*mater pulchra* of the opening line. If so, she is not even named, and therefore she recedes into the background, if indeed she is present at all.

Enough summary of the poems themselves. Let's take a look at what scholars have said about Canidia. First, her unusual name: besides the scholiasts' spurious identifications of Canidia with a certain real-life "Gratidia,"<sup>ix</sup> various reminiscences or derivations have been offered, #10 on the handout. *Canis*, dog, and the doggedness of the genres of satire and iambic; *canities*, old age; *canere*, sing poetry or cast a magical spell; and *Canicula*, the Dog-Star Sirius, source of heat and out-of-control female sexuality and male debility.<sup>x</sup>

Scholars have found intertextual connections between Canidia and a host of other female magic-users in Greek and Roman verse. Tupet and Ingallina both examine Horace's descriptions and depictions of magical practice and belief.<sup>xi</sup> Bushala, Barchiesi, and others connect Horace's monstrous, erotically dangerous Canidia with Catullus' monstrous, erotically dangerous Lesbia<sup>xii</sup>, in what Bushala considers to be a preview of, quote, "the enclosed, absurd, and morbid world of the Roman erotic elegy,"<sup>xiii</sup> unquote. Barchiesi links the Canidia of *Epode* 17 with Iambe, the woman of myth who consoled Demeter during her wanderings after the rape of Persephone.<sup>xiv</sup> Manning compares the Horatian invective against Canidia with the tone of Archilochus, the depiction of magic in Theocritus, a lost play of Menander attested by Pliny the Elder, and Vergil *Eclogues* 8.<sup>xv</sup> Bushala further argues that the mythological *exempla* in *Epodes* 17 put the Horace-character into a state of "amatory servitude," a *labor* that associates him with Aeneas, Hercules, Stoicism, and Odysseus; consequently, Canidia is to be associated with Circe.<sup>xvi</sup>

Furthermore, according to an argument made earlier this year by Teitel Paule, Canidia in *Epodes* 5 is portrayed as a *strix* or a Lamia: a child-killing demon. But Horace's Canidia is nonetheless profoundly original. In fact, as Schons remarks,

quote, “[t]he characterization of the witch as a hag is an exclusively Roman innovation containing some correlations to invective against old women...In his descriptions of Canidia and her companions, Horace provides the first extant view of the hag-witch in Roman poetry,”<sup>xvii</sup> unquote. This, I believe, helps explain just why Horace associates Canidia with the child-killing demon Lamia: to enhance Canidia’s horror, and to cement his new creation, the new stock type of the hag-witch.

Oliensis points out that, where the *Epodes* and *Sermones* each began with an address to Maecenas, the final poem of the *Epodes* and the final installment of *Sermones* book 2 both end with Canidia. Canidia thus serves as a kind of Anti-Maecenas.<sup>xviii</sup> And, Oliensis says, quote, “[i]f Horace’s subjection to Canidia perverts the proper order of things, his amicable subordination to Maecenas is an instance of the kind of coupling which holds Roman society together,”<sup>xix</sup> unquote. But where the works begin with Roman society and patron-client relationships intact, the works end in disorder and disarray. The theme of the *Epodes*, in Porter’s assessment, becomes one of plans unfulfilled, of collapse and darkness, of the failure of poetic *carmina* in the face of magical *carmina*—of the iambic poet overcome by the iambs of Canidia.<sup>xx</sup>

Indeed Canidia reflects on the Horace-*ego* himself, as both Oliensis and Moore point out. As Moore puts it, Horace and Canidia “are,” quote, “most intimately connected by their shared role as makers and producers of poetry,”<sup>xxi</sup> unquote. In other words, Horace’s verse is a kind of *carmen*, and so also is Canidia’s magical spell: they are two sides of the same coin.<sup>xxii</sup> Horace touches on the likeness between himself and Canidia in *Sermones* 2.1, as we have seen, when he compares his satire to her magic—a comparison that implies, as Schlegel has argued, that satire itself can be a menace, a force for ill.<sup>xxiii</sup> This likeness between Canidia and Horace, moreover, can be a sort of metapoetic statement, as Porter points out:

quote, “[t]he words Horace scripts for Canidia also underscore the fact that this Canidia is Horace’s creation,”<sup>xxiv</sup> unquote.

I focus now on *Sermones* 1.8, the Priapus poem, and on Canidia’s role within it. As for the poem’s intertextual relationships: van Rooy considers the poem a parody of one of the *Carmina priapea*, while Anderson connects Horace’s talking statue of Priapus to the talking Herms of Callimachus *Iamboi* 7 and 9, and to epigrams more broadly; Habash believes that the poem parodies the genre of the Hymn.<sup>xxv</sup> Pagán links the poem with both ancient, Aristophanic comedy, and with the Bacchanalian conspiracy at Rome in 186 BCE.<sup>xxvi</sup> Where Anderson identifies Priapus primarily with Maecenas, and only tentatively speculates that Priapus may represent Horatian satire, Habash argues for an outright identification of the statue with the poet-speaker, and Schlegel treats the Priapus-statue as a clear metaphor for Horatian satire’s turn away from the harsher invective of his predecessors Archilochus and Lucilius.

Much of the scholarly conversation about this poem has centered on the two prominent aspects of Priapus: first, that his primary characteristic—a huge, erect penis—goes unused in the poem; and second, that the way he scares away Canidia and Sagana is by a noisy fart caused by the ripping open of his backside.<sup>xxviii</sup> In the first line of the poem, #11 on the handout, Priapus describes himself as having previously been “useless wood,” *inutile lignum*. This phrase is generally taken to refer not only to Priapus’ status prior to being carved into a statue, but also to the fact that he does not use his erection for its intended purpose: namely, to punish trespassers, thieves, and other interlopers with sexual violence, usually with anal rape. In poem 1.8, rather, Priapus interrupts Canidia’s magical spell by farting. Hallett claims that this fart is intentional, while Anderson, Oliensis, Hill, and Schons con-

sider it a reflexive response to Priapus' fright at the women and their magic rites.<sup>xxix</sup>

That Priapus' main weapon in poem 1.8 is his anus, not his penis, constitutes a paradox. It is an important inversion of normal expectations and associations. In Schons' words, quote, "[a]lthough Priapus regains control at the end of the poem, he does not do so deliberately,"<sup>xxx</sup> unquote. Anderson says that this inversion is comic, and points to a thematic contrast between a more violent past and a more genial present.<sup>xxxi</sup> Hallett, on the other hand, argues that it highlights, in the context of revenge-violence, the gruesome bodily harm that priapic rape can cause. Meanwhile, the production of Priapus' fart itself causes damage to his own body, which now has either suffered a the kind of harm that rape can cause, or is vulnerable to such anal penetration.

His loss of virility, then, is twofold: his *inutile lignum* does not perform its normal priapic purpose, and leaves him powerless against Canidia and Sagana, until he ultimately deters them at the expense of his own physical integrity and safety, at the risk of being not the penetrator, but the penetrated. In Schlegel's interpretation, the removal of Priapus' phallic menace represents Horace's removal of satiric menace from his persona in the *Sermones*.<sup>xxxiii</sup> Pagán goes one step further and applies this inversion to the reader of the poem, a poem that itself, in her words, quote, "will always, every time, put the reader in an awkward position," unquote.

Perhaps most provocatively, Henderson interprets poem 1.8 in civic or political terms, as representing the, quote, "surrender of *some of* the masculinity of the male myth...in return for a male bond of willing subordination under cover of solidarity (= 'friendship'),"<sup>xxxv</sup> unquote. In other words, the de-masculinization of Priapus serves as a marker for the fact that Roman elite males have yielded some of their *libertas*, their political authority and autonomy, to Octavian, in "willing subordina-

tion,” in exchange for both *amicitia*, friendship or political alliance, and political stability. The anal expulsion of Priapus, therefore, quote, “metaphorizes the processes of purging, Caesarian cleansing, [and] ordering for civilization,”<sup>xxxvi</sup> unquote, that are necessary to restore domestic tranquility under the new regime.

It is at this point that I would like, at long last, to bring in some recent scholarship on the *defixiones* in order to make my main point. The magic that Canidia performs in *Sermones* 1.8, #12 on the handout, is an erotic binding spell, a φιλτροκαταδεσμός, as Faraone has shown in connection with the recipe for a love spell surviving in the *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, and as Zimmermann Damer has suggested in relation to the elegy of Propertius.<sup>xxxvii</sup> In 4<sup>th</sup>-century BCE Athens, as our own Werner Rieß has shown, the commissioning and depositing of a curse tablet offered ordinary Athenian citizens an avenue of self-help for their feelings of anger, violence, and victimization—in parallel to, sometimes concurrent with or even in replacement for, judicial proceedings. In Rieß’ words, quote, “the healing function of [the binding] ritual lay in its capacity to restrain anger and wrath by giving these feelings a special form, thus hedging them in,” unquote. In poem 1.8 of Horace’s *Sermones*, however, we see Canidia’s binding curse fail, or rather interrupted and shut down. Horace shows magic failing. And this result, I believe, serves on some level as a sign that the avenues for Romans to help themselves are being curtailed under the new reign of Octavian.

In the first, this curtailing of modes of self-help is evident on a literal level, when it comes to magic itself. As Schons points out, witches—and therefore, I add, witchcraft or magic more generally—were a problem for the Roman ruling elite, because magic such as binding spells constituted boundary violation and violence unsanctioned by Roman society or the Roman state.<sup>xl</sup> Magic designed to harm another person’s body or livelihood had been outlawed in Rome since the

time of the Twelve Tables, and, as Rives has shown, both the Twelve Tables and the later *Lex Cornelia de sicariis et ueneficiis* treated poison, *uenenum*, as nearly identical to magical spells, *carmina* or *cantiones*.<sup>xli</sup>

Moreover, the practice of magic was in effect an alternate route for contact with divine powers, a path different from the state-sanctioned religion. So it was a threat to the Roman state in the same way that the Bacchanalia were, and later the Christians would be. This threat, in fact, is what leads the narrator in *Epodes* 5 to try to delegitimize witchcraft through his attack poem, as Manning argues.<sup>xlii</sup> And finally, according to the testimony of Dio Cassius, Agrippa expelled magicians from the city of Rome in 33 BCE, and advised Octavian to do so again four years later, in 29 BCE. Under Octavian, then, we may see a tightening of restrictions on the practice of magic at Rome—in other words, a foreclosure on magic as a means of non-judicial conflict resolution between Romans.<sup>xliv</sup>

But I also believe that we should also read the failure of magic in poem 1.8, and the constraints on Roman behaviors it implies, metaphorically. Before Canidia's magic fails, her φίλτροκαταδεσμός overtakes both Priapus and the poem as a whole. From the start, Priapus acts as a witness to Canidia's magic, and explicitly describes himself as such on #12 on the handout, in the second-to-last line. The statue of a god becomes the audience to a καταδεσμός, much like the intended readers of curse tablets were the chthonic gods and restless dead.<sup>xlv</sup> Though Priapus is not chthonic, and is not a normal recipient of καταδεσμοί or prayers for justice, he is nevertheless in this poem a liminal figure: for he serves as the custodian of what was once a burial ground. He is a guard watching over the locus of transition between the realm of the living and the realm of the dead.

By the end of the poem, however, Priapus' more comic associations return. With his great big fart, he turns the ritual (for which he is the divine audience) into a comedy (in which he is a participant).<sup>xlvi</sup> He perverts the ritual, he undoes the

magic, he sends Canidia—an outsider, herself a liminal figure—running, ironically, back to the safety of the City.<sup>xlvii</sup> And these inversions are inscribed upon his own body, with the reversal of his normal means of vengeance, from penile to anal retaliation.

And yet: before he manages to interrupt the ritual and thus undo the magic, Priapus also describes himself as overcome with fear: take, for instance, the final line of #12 on the handout, where Priapus “shudders at the words and deeds of” Canidia and Sagana. And he is, himself, as a statue, bound, immobile, fixed. Canidia’s erotic binding spell—another reversal, since the normal direction of love magic is, as Winkler has shown, by males against females<sup>xlviii</sup>, and her domination a-  
tion—<sup>xlix</sup>Canidia’s spell is not targeted at Priapus, but Priapus nevertheless becomes a victim—<sup>l</sup>and his characteristic erection becomes useless, it turns back into useless wood, *inutile lignum*. And we might compare this *inutile lignum* with the ψυχρὸς μόλυβδος, the cold lead, mentioned in a number of Greek curse tablets that call for their victims’ genitals to become cold and useless. As Schons writes, quote, “the witches violate the statue’s authority and negate his apotropaic function,”<sup>li</sup> unquote. Priapus’ literal and figurative impotence compels him to take action with his anus instead of his phallus, and this action creates in him a sexual vulnerability.

I propose that we read this magically-induced sexual vulnerability figuratively—sort of like how Reckford reads the “wet dream” of *Sermones* 1.5 as a metaphor for the Roman citizen male’s loss of political power under the Triumvirate, and how Freudenburg engages in political readings of the satirists more broadly.<sup>lii</sup> By this interpretation, I suggest, Priapus symbolizes the archetypal Roman male, or the Roman state. For Roman citizen men, the proper sexual role was that of penetrator, and to be penetrated was shameful. It was a sign of effeminacy or of servili-

ty or of foreign-ness. So the male citizen is associated with the penetrative power of Priapus' phallus, and the sexual vulnerability to anal penetration that Priapus develops at the end of the poem is also a social vulnerability. The status of Priapus, then, figuratively represents the status of the Roman elite male under the new order that Octavian ushers in: the Roman male loses his political power, his true independence and self-determination, his manliness, and becomes subject to the threat of violence from a more powerful male—Octavian himself.

Welch writes that poem 1.8, quote, “contains undercurrents of the tension between Horace’s poetry and his patron,”<sup>liii</sup> unquote. Indeed, as I am proposing, the poem subtly exhibits ambiguity over the changes under Octavian. And not only through the status of the Priapus-statue, but also through the magic of Canidia. The new regime brings domestic tranquility—symbolized by Canidia’s loss of her dark powers—<sup>liv</sup>but the regime has also circumscribed the ways in which citizens can participate in society, religion, and self-help—symbolized, once more, by the failure of Canidia’s magic, but also by the impotence and sexual vulnerability of Priapus.<sup>lv</sup> Magic has been outlawed for the elite Roman male just as much as it has been outlawed for liminal stereotypes like Canidia. Under Octavian, Roman civic life and civic discourse has become constrained, transformed; and perhaps for some Romans it has even made as radically different as Maecenas’ gardens have made the former site of a graveyard on the Esquiline.<sup>lvi</sup>

Let me now say a few words in conclusion. Horace’s Canidia is a masterful wielder of magic, whose erotic binding spells are potent and frightening, particularly in *Epodes* 5 and *Sermones* 1.8. In poem 1.8 of Horace’s satires, Canidia attempts a powerful φίλτροκαταδεσμός that renders Priapus, otherwise quite virile, impotent and bound fast to the earth. Only by opening himself up—literally—to violence from another, more powerful male, can Priapus disrupt Canidia’s magical

rite and send her and her companion Sagana fleeing back to the city of Rome. I have argued that, among the many interpretive levels offered by this poem, our attention to the role that curse tablets played in negotiating civic discourse and mediating political violence in classical Athens has suggested a political reading of this satire, as well: as in real life Octavian curtailed the practice of magic, so in this poem the suppression of magic is subtly equated to the loss of citizen rights and opportunities, including the use of magic as an alternative to violence or the law. While the new civic order has, like the renovations of the Esquiline by Maecenas, brought new life and peace to the city, the power and influence of the male citizen elite has been lessened and, like Priapus, is now vulnerable, threatened.

Horace's use of Canidia and Sagana—women—to enact this theme itself draws upon the Roman cultural phenomenon whereby the female body is equated with the male body politic.<sup>lvii</sup> (So, for instance, the rape of Lucretia showed that Roman citizens were unable to protect their women from bodily harm, and were thus not true men—and hence inspired the expulsion of the Etruscan kings.) In Moore's words, quote, "[a]nxieties about civil war were high, and women gave Horace a tool to manage those anxieties," unquote. The equation between female body and male body politic is present in poem 1.8 in two ways. First, since *φίλτροκαταδεδεσμοί* are properly the realm of men, Canidia's use of one both threatens male hegemony and masculinity,<sup>lix</sup> and constitutes sexual misconduct, which in turn reflects negatively on Roman society and morals.<sup>lx</sup> Second, in the end, as Schons writes, quote, "Canidia's false teeth and Sagana's wig fall off, revealing the old and vulnerable women,"<sup>lxi</sup> unquote. The women become vulnerable bodies when their magical power is taken away from them—just as Roman men, with the coming supremacy of the man who will soon be named Augustus, have, with the loss of their political power become vulnerable.<sup>lxii</sup> Canidia, then, even in flight, remains an Anti-Maecenas figure: where he represents the successes of the regime

of Octavian and the Roman elite's hopes for the future, Canidia represents civic worries and the dangers of the changes attendant upon the new autocracy.

## NOTES

<sup>i</sup> So Mankin (2010: 100): “*Epode 5* and the other works featuring Canidia...are among the strangest and most baffling poems in Latin or, perhaps, any language, but it seems best to take them as largely, if not entirely, symbolic.” Cf. also Schlegel (2010) 269 n. 18: “Canidia is one of the old women necromancers of *Satires* 1.8, and has a curious role to play in the satires, appearing a third time in the last line of the last poem (2.8.94–5), breathing poisonously over the banquet of satire and of this satire’s story, and over the end of Horace’s *Satires*.”

<sup>ii</sup> Mankin also suggests that Canidia may be the victim of the speaker’s iambic fervor in *Epodes* 8: “Horace pauses, as it were, to discharge his own fury against a nasty old hag (Canidia?) who has tried to seduce him (*Ep.* 8)” (2010: 102).

<sup>iii</sup> Cf. Mankin (2010) 100: “[i]t seems to be no accident that Canidia is mentioned in *Ep.* 3, where the silliness of Horace’s overreaction to a prank by Maecenas is given a serious, threatening aspect by its comparison with the vengeful acts of another witch, the powerful and murderous Medea, with the manhood-sapping hot winds of Apulia, and the poisonous gift that destroyed the mighty Hercules (*Ep.* 3, 9–18).”

<sup>iv</sup> Cf. Drew (1923) 25: “Canidia in saying ‘quid accidit?’ cannot be expressing emotion at any failure of her ointment which takes place after the time at which the *Epode* opens. The whole plot of the piece depends precisely upon her foreknowledge of that failure.”

<sup>v</sup> As Bushala (1968: 7) points out, in *Epodes* 17, “[i]t is quite clear that he [the Horatian speaker] has been forced by the efficacy of Canidia’s magic to become the witch’s lover,” with reference additionally to Hahn (1939) 221–222.

<sup>vi</sup> Habash (1999) 291.

<sup>vii</sup> Freudenburg (1995) reads the mention of Canidia backwards across the entire poem. Nasidienus’ feasts have an intertextual relationship with Canidia’s magic rites elsewhere in the Horatian corpus, and call up associations with magical and sacrificial rituals; thus Nasidienus himself becomes like Canidia, trying gustatory incantations to attract the love/friendship of Maecenas (1995: 209–215). Nasidienus can also, however, be read once more as reflecting on the Horace-*ego* (216–217). Ultimately, according to Freudenburg, “[t]hat the host is cast as ‘witch-like’ in his efforts makes clear that there are serious questions being raised here concerning the uses of food and feasting in Roman social life as a means to friendship and power; how prestige is negotiated and social connections formed (or ruined) in a world where all persons, from the lowest slaves to the highest magistrates, attained some sense of their place in society by the manner in which they took their meals.” (1995: 216).

<sup>viii</sup> Sturtevant (1912). Hahn views *Odes* 1.16 as a genuine palinode, in contrast to the “ironical palinode” of *Epodes* 17 (1939: 221).

<sup>ix</sup> Pseudo-Acro on Horace *Sermones* 1.8.24; Porphyrio on Horace *Epodes* 3.7, 5.43; *Satires* 1.8.13. Cf. Ogden (2002) 120–121, no. 95. Hahn (1939: 214–216 n. 11) half-endorses the view of Frank (1936: 159–162) that Canidia was a pseudonym for Caecilia Metella, daughter of the famous Clodia.

<sup>x</sup> Cf. Oliensis (1991) 110–135 on *canis*, *canities*, *canere*, and *Canicula*; and also Mankin (2010) 100: “There have been many suggestions as to precisely what Canidia and her activities symbolize, but her name seems to point to two associations, with the “dog” (*canis*) and the furiously “dogged” genre of *iambus* (cf. *Ep.* 6), and with “old-age” (*canities*) and the decrepit im-

tence not only of the poet, but of Rome as it collapses into ruin (*Ep.* 16, 1–2) under the weight of its ancient curse (*Ep.* 7, 17–20).”

<sup>xi</sup> Tupet (1976) 284–329 and Ingallina (1974).

<sup>xii</sup> Bushala (1968) 8; Barchiesi (1995) 342; Oliensis (1991) 115; Moore (2009) 3.

<sup>xiii</sup> Bushala (1968) 10.

<sup>xiv</sup> Barchiesi (1995) 339, who further connects an etymology of *Iambe* and *iambus*, ἰὸν βᾶζειν, with the magical meaning of *Epodes*, ἐπωδαί.

<sup>xv</sup> Manning (1970) 396–397. The reference to Pliny the Elder is to *Naturalis Historia* 30.7. Manning further argues that Horace’s depiction of Canidia was based on actual contemporary magical practice within the city of Rome, and compares Pliny the Elder *Naturalis Historia* 30.12, 32.49–52, and Tacitus *Annales* 2.69.

<sup>xvi</sup> Bushala (1968) 8–9.

<sup>xvii</sup> Schons (1998) 4. Cf. also Manning (1970) 398: “[w]hat cannot be found in the literary tradition is far more important to an understanding of the Canidia poems than what can. Neither in Theocritus or Virgil are the sorceresses treated unsympathetically. They may be tortured, even demented creatures, but physically they are not ugly.” For another indicator of Horace’s originality in associating iambic invective against old women with female magic use, see Rives (2010) 68–69, on the word-group *magus*, *magicus*, and *magia*: “instead of reference to the ethnographic traditions about Persian magi, we find associations with folk beliefs and literary commonplaces about witches. It is interesting, however, that Horace never makes use of this word-group in his treatment of the witch Canidia and her cronies, because it is precisely in stereotyped descriptions of witches that later poets most commonly employ the adjective *magicus*.”

<sup>xviii</sup> Oliensis (1991) 110: “Canidia is thus a structural counterpart to Maecenas, who is invoked at the beginnings of both collections.”

<sup>xix</sup> Oliensis (1991) 127. For further subversion, cp. Porter (1995) 115 n. 21, who sees in *Epodes* 17, “Canidia as *eques*, establishing her power over the earth (17. 74–75).”

<sup>xx</sup> Plans unfulfilled, Porter (1995) 113: “[t]hat the *Epodes* end with Canidia’s rejection of Horace’s plea relates directly to a central theme, that of hopes, plans, illusions that are shattered, unfulfilled, unattainable.” Collapse and darkness, Porter (1995) 120: “[t]hat the *Epodes* conclude in Canidia’s world of fire, *furor*, and *dementia* underscores this sense of collapse; the powers of darkness are now in control (17. 2–3).” The poet overcome, Porter (1995) 124: “The poet who prided himself on the destructive force of his iambs now finds himself the victim of Canidia’s iambs.” Cf. Oliensis (1991) 108: “[t]he female body in itself violates Horatian notions of order and unity,” and further (1991) 110: “[i]f the opening of the *Ars [Poetica]* stages the interdependence of manliness and decorum, the *Epodes* enact, in defiance of the author, their simultaneous collapse. One privileged form of the indecorous here is sexual, but the upheaval is general and encompasses all spheres of life.”

<sup>xxi</sup> Moore (2009) 36. Cf. Oliensis (1998) 100, and also (1991) 118: “Canidia’s venomous music provides a foil for Horace’s socially useful art. But there are difficulties with this, the ‘authorized’ version of the story. The excoriated ‘other’ tends to bear an uncanny resemblance to Horace himself.” Cf. also Barchiesi (1995) 341, who asks if Horace portrays Canidia as “un maschile travestito, una voce contraffatta dal suo censore giambico?” Hahn argues that the boy kidnapped in *Epodes* 5 is a stand-in for Horace (1939: 213), who has been used figuratively to gin up Varus’ jealousy (218).

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<sup>xxii</sup> See, for instance, Schlegel (2005) 102: “Canidia’s power derives partly from her magical speech, from her *carmina* and the *sermo* she compels, and therein lies her allure for the satirist, although [in *Sermones* 1.8] the allure is denied and Canidia exposed as powerless.” And so also Canidia’s corporeal decay can be mapped onto the Horace-*ego* himself, as Oliensis writes: “the old age written in Canidia’s name is only a screen for Horace’s own debility” (1991: 120).

<sup>xxiii</sup> Schlegel (2010) 261.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Porter (1995) 127. Cf. also Porter (1995) 128: “Canidia, powerful though she be, is but an illusion called forth by the craft of her victim.” And contrast Porter (1995) 119—“in 17 the female divinities of Canidia’s world hold sway (17. 2–3)”—with (1995) 130: “in so ending the book Horace joins himself—literally—with those potent animal and female forces so strongly associated with Canidia throughout the *Epodes*.”

<sup>xxv</sup> Parody of *Carmina priapea*: van Rooy (1971) 84. Connection to Callimachus *Iamboi*: Anderson (1972) 6 n. 8. To epigrams: Anderson (1972) 6. Parody of the Hymn genre: Habash (1999) 285.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Ancient comedy: Pagán (2006) 49. In Habash’s estimation, furthermore, the grounds refer metagenetically to satire’s origins in Old Comedy (1999: 289), and the witches represent literary critics and social ladder-climbers (1999: 291). Bacchanalian conspiracy: Pagán (2006) 45.

<sup>xxvii</sup> On Priapus and Maecenas, see Anderson (1972) 10: “Although his notorious shape and the special personality given him by Horace make him superficially comic, Priapus also acquires associations from his connection with Maecenas.” For Anderson’s speculation about Priapus and Horace: “I shall not go so far as to call Priapus a comic version of Horace, although I would not reject such a suggestion” (1972: 12), and further: “Master of the scene after the hasty retreat of Canidia, he [Priapus] almost invites us, it seems to me, to view him as a humorously distorted image of Horatian satire itself” (*ibidem*). For the outright identification of Priapus with Horace, see Habash (1999) *passim*. On Priapus as metaphor for Horace’s new style of satire, cf. Schlegel (2005) 100: “Priapus is drawn by Horace, his real *faber* (poet and *faber* both mean ‘maker’), to recall but not explicitly express his old Priapic self. This suggests to me that Priapus’s old self, menacing and powerful, is appealing to Horace, just as the genre of satire in its older, Lucilian, distantly Archilochean, invective shape has enough appeal that Horace writes inside that genre, though all the while denying its nature.”

<sup>xxviii</sup> Rudd points out that figwood is fissile in the sun, and posits that there might actually have been in Maecenas’ gardens on the Esquiline a statue of Priapus “with an oddly warped posterior” that inspired this poem (1966: 70–72).

<sup>xxix</sup> Hallett (1981) 342; Anderson (1972) 6–7; Oliensis (1991) 122, (1998) 73; Hill (1993) 258; Schons (1998) 41.

<sup>xxx</sup> Schons (1998) 41.

<sup>xxxi</sup> Anderson (1972) 6–8, esp. 8: “an important theme of the entire Satire emerges in the contrast between once and now. The former times are associated with a useless piece of figwood, a paupers’ graveyard, and evil witches; the present times offer instead a genial and well-behaved Priapus and a delightful garden which is in his care. The plot of the Satire focuses on this opposition, the threat to present values from former evils, and the miraculous defeat of this menace.” Cf. Hill’s statement that the role of Canidia and Sagana in poem 1.8 is “to reinforce the theme that creates unity within the satire, the theme of the upstart” (1993: 260).

<sup>xxxii</sup> So Hallett (1981) 345: “to a Roman audience the word *ficus* would have had unmistakable associations with the anus, especially the anus deformed through penile penetration; Horace’s

readers would have equally good grounds for connecting *ficus* with the anus slated for disfigurement in an act of revenge by the phallic, and invariably menacing, god Priapus”; also (1981) 347: “Perhaps he wanted the anus for once to have *its* revenge, by serving, in lieu of the phallus, as Priapus’ justly vengeful implement.”

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Schlegel (2005) 98: “Priapus is pointedly deprived of the characteristics of menace he enjoys boasting of in his other Priapic roles, just as Horace takes the menace away from his own satiric persona in the *Satires*.” Also (2005) 101: “As a version of Horace the satirist, this Priapus represents the satirist Horace has chosen to be and what he has lost in that choice—(phallic) menace.”

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Pagán (2006) 63, who offers additional metapoetic interpretation of poem 1.8: “[t]he explosive ending of the poem reminds the reader that conventions are at work: the talking statue is but a wooden object; the poem is but a written document” (2006: 49).

<sup>xxxv</sup> Henderson (1999) 191.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Henderson (1999) 190, more fully: “metaphorizes the processes of purging, Caesarian cleansing, ordering for civilization which conjure a new live ‘now’, a ‘sunny’ tomorrow, from putrid, poisonous (r)evil(ed) ‘then’.”

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Faraone (1989; 2002: 338) connects *Sermones* 1.8 in method and in gender structures to *Papyri Graecae Magicae* 4.296–434, a recipe for a magic love spell that calls for the placement of a Rachepuppe “beside a tomb together with an inscribed lead *defixio*” (1989: 298); Zimmermann Damer (2010) 162.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Cf. Rieß (2012) 173: “it may be possible that a curse promised more success to many Athenians than a trial.” Also (2012) 176: “to the underprivileged, curse tablets may have been the only method readily at hand to ward off an opponent. Hence, members of the lower classes primarily understood the curses as an extra-judicial means of conflict resolution.”

<sup>xxxix</sup> Rieß (2012) 184.

<sup>xl</sup> Schons (1998) 220–232.

<sup>xli</sup> Rives (2002, 2006), who points out specifically that there is direct evidence for an association of *cantiones* with *uenena* at Cicero *Brutus* 217 and *de Oratore* 129 (2006: 54), that “[t]he justification becomes common in the Augustan poets’ descriptions of witchcraft” (2006: 54 n. 29), and that the Twelve Tables themselves likely linked *carmina* and *uenena* under the category of magical means for stealing another’s agricultural fertility for oneself (2002: 273–279). Anderson connects the tale of revenge against Canidia in *Sermones* 1.8 to poem 1.7, the scene of courtroom revenge against the *uenenum* of Rupilius Rex (cf. 1.8.19, *carminibus atque uenenis*).

<sup>xlii</sup> Manning (1970) 400, and further: “witchcraft gave to the sorceresses a false sense of proximity to the divine powers” (*ibidem*). Cf. also Barchiesi, writing in general about magic in classical poetry, starting with Theocritus: “[I]a voce maschile del poeta invita il lettore — sto usando il maschile con intenzione — a dominare la superstizione e l’ingenua speranza chiusa nel cerchio di luce del rito magico. Ma questa superiorità non può esistere senza complicità” (1995: 337).

<sup>xliii</sup> 33 BCE: Dio 49.43.5; 29 BCE: 52.36.1–3, both with Pagán (2006) 46. Anderson attributes the expulsion of 33 BCE to Octavian himself (1972: 7 n. 12).

<sup>xliv</sup> Cf. Rieß (2012: 164): “The deposition of a curse tablet was a highly performative act, and the various magic formulas invoked were often viewed as a means of conflict resolution, regardless of the fact that malign magic could potentially exacerbate a conflict.”

<sup>xlvi</sup> Cf. Rieß (2012) 187: “the intended readers were the chthonic gods and goddesses as well as the dead themselves.”

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<sup>xlvi</sup> Note that both magic and comedy are contained within ritual contexts: cf., e.g., Rieß (2012) 178: “Although depositing a curse tablet was very different from conducting a lawsuit or staging a drama, not least because of the lack of an audience, the person cursing an opponent followed many ritual patterns.” Canidia’s ritual does indeed have an audience, Priapus.

<sup>xlvii</sup> Schons (1998) 40–41: “[n]ot only do the hags flee in absurd terror, but they seek refuge within the city on whose outskirts they had been performing their black magic. While they were located on the outside of the city, they were able to inspire fear. But their own fear causes them to seek the safety offered by the constructions of society, and abandon their role as witches. Their voluntary retreat into the physical boundaries of civilized society dramatically confirms the loss of their status as frightening outsiders, for their re-entry into the boundaries of society occurs at the moment of their transformation from horrifying monsters to the butts of a joke.” Perhaps this transformation of Canidia and Sagana is one that reflects on the way Octavian is transforming Roman society and the City? Cf. also Schons (1998) 86: “[t]he crone emerges as an independent female who possesses tremendous power and operates with impunity outside the boundaries of civilized, patriarchal society.” I note also that the interplay between identities as insider and as outsider is important also for those who enact curse tablets: binding magic is an avenue for self-help that is not a sanctioned part of society *per se*, but that is nonetheless, paradoxically, a part of society.

<sup>xlvi</sup> Winkler (1991) 215: “the norm for such procedures is male agency and female victimage” (p. 215). Cf. also Winkler (1991) 228: in literature, the female magic-user is “a Rorschach blot onto which men projected facets of their own behavior.”

<sup>xlix</sup> So Schons (1998) 28: “[t]he ritual they {Canidia & Sagana} perform uses symbolic and powerful imagery of slavery and domination to describe the erotic relationship between the female master and the subservient male lover.”

<sup>i</sup> Note that at *Epodes* 17.76, Canidia describes herself as skilled in “handling wax figurines” (*mouere ceras imagines*), an intratextual cross-reference to the wax effigy in *Sermones* 1.8; and note also that Priapus, too, is an *imago* of sorts, and so Canidia may in this respect have some uncanny power over him, as well.

<sup>li</sup> Schons (1998) 41.

<sup>lii</sup> Reckford (1995); Freudenburg (2001).

<sup>liii</sup> Welch (2001) 185.

<sup>liv</sup> For the idea of the female wielder of magic as an outsider who poses a threat to (male-dominated) Roman society, see my closing comments, and additionally Schons (1998) 22–23: “The witch plays a central role in the texts in which she is constructed, but her role revolves around her location as an outsider...[and her] transgression of the feminine in ways which threaten to | undermine, upset or destroy the order, literal and symbolic, of the Roman patriarchal system.”

<sup>lv</sup> Cf. Schlegel (2005: 161 n. 11): “the poem admits too much dissenting material from the “old” Rome and “old” satire to allow us take Horace as an unambivalent backer of “new” power. The exercise of power in any form seems too much under suspicion in *Satires I* to completely justify this view.” So also Pagán (2006) 56: “Symbolically, Priapus drives off the bugbear of civil war and grotesque warfare. As the mass burial ground is transformed into a garden, so the Republic is transformed by the triumvirate, from civil war to reconciliation. *Satire* 1.8 reflects a diffidence in the permanence of that transformation. Just as the garden still bears the bones of its

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former existence, so one need not scratch too deep beneath the surface of the new order to find the skeletons of civil war.”

<sup>lvi</sup> Cf. Pagán (2006) 51: “the social function of gardens and of cemeteries intersect; both are places where status is deeply embedded in the landscape.” As Rieß points out, the deposition of a *defixio* at a grave was important for the social efficacy of the magical rite, which ultimately found a mortal audience via the family of the person whose grave was the site of deposition: “[w]hen the relatives of a deceased person visited a grave, at the least, they would have discovered that someone had tampered with the integrity of the tomb” (2012: 182). Is it possible to see the renovations of Maecenas as in a certain way tampering with the integrity of the tombs? In Pagán’s words, “the poem expresses an anxiety over a rapidly transforming landscape whose transformations only serve to trigger further transgressions; however, Horace obscures this disturbing political worry in a cloud of flatulence” (2006: 50). The Esquiline recurs in the Canidia poems: besides its importance as the setting for the action in *Sermones* 1.8, we see “wolves and birds of the Esquiline” at *Epodes* 5.99–100 (*lupi | et Esquilinae alites*), and Canidia herself calls the Horace-*ego* “the religious leader of Esquiline poison/magic” at *Epodes* 17.84 (*Esquilini pontifex uenefici*).

<sup>lvii</sup> Cf. Oliensis (1991) 125: “a traditional theme which attributes the decline of Rome to the sexual misconduct of Roman women.”

<sup>lviii</sup> Moore (2009) 4, citing Oliensis (2007) 225.

<sup>lix</sup> Moore (2009) 18, quoting Oliensis (2007) 226: “Female figures in Horace’s works, with their ability to cause *impotentia* in the males around them, show ‘masculinity under threat,’ a threat that the poet attempts to combat with expulsion, as such expulsion would leave the ‘*virtus* of the men’ remaining behind.”

<sup>lx</sup> Cf. Oliensis (1991) 126: “Canidia’s tricks threaten the integrity of the family.”

<sup>lxi</sup> Schons (1998) 40.

<sup>lxii</sup> For a more personal, poetic take on how the female body reflects on male identity, see Moore (2009) 3: “Ironically, in both Catullus and Horace’s attempts to control and suppress the voracious female, the two poets unwittingly adopt characteristics peculiar to the two females, showing the attempt to impose masculine dominance to be ultimately insufficient and contradictory.”

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