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# FOUL TEETH AND POISONOUS WINDS
## The Clash between Canidia and Horace in the Satires and Epodes

Abstract: In the first book of Satires, one of Horace's main antagonists is the *scurra* from Satire 1.4. This article proposes that the witch Canidia is an elaboration of the concept of *scurrilitas* and as such, has a consistent and distinct metapoetic function as counterpart to the persona of Horace. This function explains all of her appearances within the Satires and Epodes. The consistency within the Canidia poems strongly suggests an embedded, metapoetic Canidia-narrative that encompasses all her appearances.

Keywords: Augustan poetry, Horace, Satires, Epodes, Canidia, sequential reading, narrative, metapoetic function

The witch Canidia is an enigmatic figure in Horace's early works. Although several attempts were made to explain her role in these poems, her full potential has not been recognized yet. In this article I contend that she has a consistent metapoetic function and that all her appearances together form a distorted narrative that spans over the two books of Satires and the collection of Epodes. This narrative also lapses over different fictional levels. Readers first encounter her in the eighth Satire of the first book, where she summons the dead on a graveyard and conducts love magic[1] with two puppets, before a fart of the frightened Priapus drives her out of his realm. In the second book of Satires, she is mentioned as a *venefica* in 2.1 and 2.8. The third epode shows her in the same function. The fifth Epode paints an even more terrifying picture: The witch, together with three companions, wants to starve a Roman boy to death in order to concoct a love potion from his dried liver: she wants to get her adulterous lover Varus back. The seventeenth

1) Compare M. Reif, De arte magorum. Erklärung und Deutung ausgewählter Hexenszenen bei Theokrit, Vergil, Horaz, Ovid, Seneca und Lucan unter Berücksichtigung des Ritualaufbaus und der Relation zu den Zauberpapyri, Göttingen 2016, 149–150.

and last Epode shows a plea of Horace to Canidia that she take her malign magic from him. She does not, however, grant that wish and blames Horace himself for spreading her name around town and making fun of her.

This essay explores the role of Canidia in the Satires and Epodes via sequential reading: special focus will be laid on the surrounding poems in order to establish her as an 'Anti-Horace', or rather, as an 'Anti-satiric poet', and for the Epodes as an 'Anti-jambic poet'. In establishing this anti-figure, Horace sheds light on his understanding of writing Satire and iambic poetry.

I further maintain that there is continuity in the figure of Canidia, insofar as she serves the same purpose in all her appearances: by means of sequential reading I will show that there is a Canidia narrative spanning from Satires I over Satires II to the Epodes. I maintain that the order, in which we must read the poems, is Satires I, Satires II, Epodes. There is strong evidence that the two books of Satires are composed as a unity, which leads to the conclusion that Sat. II is to be read before the Epode collection, although the two collections were published around the same time.[2]

Several attempts were made to bring Canidia and the motives of Augustan propaganda together: DuQuesnay (1984) sees a link between witchcraft and the war against Sextus Pompey who was associated with Pythagoreans, necromancy and sorcery around the date of composition of Satires I.[3] Recently Weeda (2019) read the clash between Priapus and Canidia as a reminiscence to Anthony and Cleopatra, but this reminiscence relies heavily on the figure of Priapus, Canidia's role stays rather obscure.[4] Holzberg sees Canidia

2) Compare O. Knorr, Verborgene Kunst. Argumentationsstruktur und Buchaufbau in den Satiren des Horaz, Hildesheim 2004, 168f.: The Epodes and Satires II are likely to have been published at the same time, but sat. 2.1 strongly suggests that the second book is a sequel to the first, so we must read the Canidia poems in the order sat. 1.8; 2.1; 2.8; epod. 3; 5; 17. Further evidence for this order will be laid out in this survey.

3) Compare M. Le DuQuesnay, Horace and Maecenas. The propaganda value of *Sermones* I, in: D. West / T. Woodman (edd.), Poetry and politics in the age of Augustus, Cambridge 1984, 19–59: 38f.

4) Compare L. Weeda, Horace's *Sermones* book 1. Credentials for Maecenas, Warsaw / Berlin 2019, 176ff. Canidia's role in the poem is hardly explained, except for the unspecific "Horace calls attention to the dangers of sorcery and magic not only for the mental and physical health of those who take part in it, but also for

as “weibliche Symbolfigur der Feinde Oktavians”, as her name is similar to P. Canidius Crassus, one of Octavian’s enemies.[5]

Oliensis (1991) pays special attention to the Epodes and the connection of Canidia, bitches (*canes*) and the dog star *canicula* with the result that Canidia is the perversion of hierarchies, insofar as her sexual appetite triumphs over men.[6] Henderson goes in the same direction by noticing that Priapus, who strips men off their masculinity, is stripped off his masculinity by Canidia.[7] He calls Canidia the “(anti-)Muse of the poetry of his [sc. Horace’s] youth”,[8] but without specifying how she inspires or consecrates (or desecrates?) his poetry.

Schlegel (2006) follows Anderson (1982) in suggesting a poetological reading of Canidia: Priapus is the harmless Satire of Horace and Canidia the malign Satire of Lucilius that harms people like Canidia’s sorcery.[9]

The only monograph on the witch Canidia by Paule (2017) maintains that Canidia is different in every poem, which makes a consistent analysis impossible: she comes as a ridiculous old hag in Sat. 1.8, as a child-killing demon in Epode 5 and as Empousa in Epode 17.[10] While many of Paule’s interpretations of the single

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the growing Eastern influence sapping the fortitude of Rome” (189). Compare also S. Sharland: Ghostly Guests and Venomous Snakes. Traces of civil war in Horace, Satires 2.8, Acta Classica 54 (2011) 79–100. She also sides Canidia with Cleopatra for Satire 2.8: She interpretes this poem as a dinner of those who have died in civil war, with Cleopatra (= Canidia) as the most prominent of them.

5) Compare N. Holzberg, Horaz. Dichter und Werk, München 2009, 101.

6) Compare E. Oliensis, Canidia, Canicula, and the Decorum of Horace’s Epodes, Arethusa 24 (1991) 107–138: 110, 121, 127. Compare also Reif (n. 1) 170–177, who also unites the sexual and the political in seeing the sexually active, female outsider as a threat to Roman society. This reading is supported by Hor. epod. 16.36–44, that seeks to establish a new, better Roman society in another location, where neither snakes nor witches exist.

7) Compare J. Henderson, Satire writes ‘Woman’: Gendersong, PCPhS 35 (1989) 50–80: 60–61.

8) Ibid., 61; Holzberg (n. 5) 99, also calls her Horace’s muse and associates her with the poisonous qualities of iambic poetry. Compare also M. T. Paule, Canidia, Rome’s first witch, London 2017, 134 ff.

9) Compare C. M. Schlegel, Satire and the Threat of Speech. Horace’s Satires, Book 1, Madison 2006, 102 f. and W. S. Anderson, Essays on Roman Satire, Princeton 1982, 81, 83.

10) Compare Paule (n. 8).

poems are attractive and can be maintained also in this survey, his overall thesis needs to be questioned here, as the aim of this survey is to show the consistency of the figure of Canidia, even though single poems show her in different gestalts.

## *I. Canidia in the Satires*

The form and structure of the eighth Satire of the first book have received much attention so far, as well as the surrounding, in which Canidia conducts her magic: Fraenkel has shown the epigrammatic structure of the poem with its continuing opposition of *olim – nunc* (Hor. sat. 1.8.1/14),[11] "then and now", and its concentration towards the punch line *pepedi* (Hor. sat. 1.8.1.46), "I farted".[12] Anderson has interpreted this opposition as a clash "between the malevolent forces of the past (including the Lucilian tradition) and the creative spirit of Maecenas and his friends":[13] this is determined by the location, the former paupers' graveyard now turned into Maecenas' garden.[14] The actual magic rites of Canidia and her companion Sagana have received very little attention, even though these form the main part of the poem. Anderson sees the detailed description of the magic rites just as means to characterize the witches as repulsive.[15]

These rites, however, carry the main significance of the poem. Before the rites can be explained in greater detail, a little digression into the first book of Satires must be made: the persona of Horace seeks confrontations with other characters in Satire 1, 2, 3,

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11) For the Latin text, I follow Horatius, Opera, edidit S. Borzsák, Leipzig 1984, as long as no footnote indicates a digression from this edition.

12) Compare E. Fraenkel, Horace, Oxford 1957, 121 ff.

13) Anderson (n. 9) 83.

14) Compare Anderson (n. 9) 83.

15) Ibid. 78. Of course Reif (n. 1) 145–147 explains the rites in great detail, as the aim of his survey was to explain magic rites in Latin literature via Greek papyri on magic, but naturally, he does not take much of the surrounding poems of Satires I into consideration.

4, 6 and 10.[16] He speaks to them with 2nd person pronouns,[17] but also allows them to speak.[18] In the fifth, seventh and ninth Satire Horace himself does not confront others but stages confrontations and word-fights between other characters.[19] The eighth Satire is an anomaly in two respects: It is the only poem of the collection that is narrated by a distinct figure that is not a persona of Horace[20] and the only one that does not contain a battle of words. That Canidia does not battle with words and does not confront other characters, is of course due to her magic abilities – she does not need to confront others in order to get what she wants, because she is able to perpetrate her wishes from afar:

> *lanea et effigies erat, altera cerea: maior*
> *lanea, quae poenis compesceret inferiorem;*
> *cerea suppliciter stabat, servilibus ut quae*
> *iam peritura modis.*
>
> (Hor. sat. 1.8.30–33)

> There was a woollen figure and one waxen: The bigger was made out of wool that should dominate the smaller one with punishment. The waxen one was on its knees as if it would soon die a slave's death.

Reif describes the purpose of this puppet show as either harming or love magic,[21] that is, in essence, the manipulation of others from

16) The *avarus* in 1.1; one that cannot show moderation in sexual issues in 1.2; a rigid Stoic in 1.3; a *scurra* that criticizes Horace's Satire in 1.4; in 1.6 the parvenu Tillius and in 1.10 again a critic of Horace's Satires.

17) Hor. Sat. 1.1.40, *nil obstet tibi, dum ne sit te ditior alter* – "nothing holds you back, as long as no one is richer than you are".

18) Hor. Sat. 1.1.49b–51, *vel dic quid referat intra / naturae finis viventi, iugera centum an mille aret? / 'at suave est ex magno tollere acervo'* – "But tell me, what difference does it make for someone living within the limits of nature, whether he ploughs one hundred or one thousand acres? 'But it's nice to take from a big pile'."

19) In the fifth Satire the conflict between the *scurra* Sarmentus and Messius Cicirrus at the *cena Cocceiana*, in the seventh the legal proceedings between Rupilius Rex and Persius in front of the judge Brutus and in the ninth the famous vexing of Horace by the bore / pest.

20) Compare Paule (n. 8) 46; Schlegel (n. 9) 90. See also J. Zetzel, Horace's Liber Sermonum: The Structure of Ambiguity, Arethusa 13 (1980) 59–77: 61 ff., for a discussion of Horace's persona and its fictionality.

21) Compare Reif (n. 1) 149–150.

safe distance: the threat of the woollen figure towards the waxen one shows the relation of the harming Canidia towards her victim that is in another place.

Canidia is described by the narrator Priapus in the following way:

*vidi egomet nigra succinctam vadere palla*
*Canidiam, pedibus nudis passoque capillo,*
*cum Sagana maiore ululantem.*

(Hor. sat. 1.8.23–25)

I saw her invade, girdled with a black cloak, Canidia, with naked feet and loose hair, lamenting with Sagana, bigger[22] than her.

Paule sees in the loose hair and the black cloak a moaning woman that fits to the graveyard where the scene happens.[23] He interprets Canidia as "extra-generic elements":[24] the garden / graveyard, realm of Priapus, represents Roman Satire, threatened by Canidia, as epic, bucolic and iambic elements invade with her: all these genres dealt with magic and witchcraft before Horace.[25] This is of course true, given the nature of Horace's Satire as a mix of genres.[26] But with Canidia, another intra-generic element enters the garden, that has not been detected before, that is, Horace's antagonist from Satire 4:

*absentem qui rodit amicum,*
*qui non defendit alio culpante, solutos*
*qui captat risus hominum famamque dicacis,*
*fingere qui non visa potest, commissa tacere*

22) E. Gowers, Q. Horatius Flaccus, Satires Book 1, Cambridge 2012, 274: "perhaps 'bigger' is preferable to 'elder'; Priapus is doing everything he can to exaggerate a tall story (cf. 9.52 *magnum narras, vix credibile*) and justify his fears". Apart from that, how should the hidden bystander Priapus be able to decide in the dark, which of the two hags is older?

23) Compare Paule (n. 8) 29.

24) Ibid. 39.

25) This relation, however, is very general, so that the focus should really be laid upon Canidia as intra-generic element, that is, the *scurra*.

26) Compare S. J. Harrison, Generic Enrichment in Virgil and Horace, Oxford 2007, 75–104, and for sat. 1.8 especially F. Felgentreu, Horaz, Satiren 1,8 und die Vielfalt der Einfalt, Hyperboreus 5 (1999) 257–282.

*qui nequit: hic niger est, hunc tu, Romane, caveto.*[27]
(Hor. sat. 1.4.81–85)

He who bites those who are absent, who does not defend a friend when another blames him, who catches loose laughter of the people and the reputation of a joker, who can imagine things not seen, and cannot be silent over things secretly told to him: He is black, Roman, beware of him!

The antagonism of the fourth Satire is between *scurrilitas*[28] and Horatian Satire: while the latter labours on confrontation of different positions and always hears both sides, the *scurra* badmouths people who are absent and therefore cannot defend themselves, and in consequence destroys their reputation. The parallels to Canidia are thus: she comes in with a *nigra palla*, and the only black thing in the book of Satires apart from her is the *scurra*, who is repeatedly described as black.[29] She comes with loose hair, girdled with the cloak, while the *scurra* catches for loose, unrestricted laughter. The blackness of Canidia and the *scurra* stands in opposition to the *animae candidae*, which Horace uses as epitheton for Virgil and Varius in sat. 1.5.41: the blackness of the *scurra* is contrasted with the moral qualities of the members of Maecenas' circle.[30] In Canidia's case, her blackness refers to the color of her cloak,[31] of course, and not to moral faults, but not only the descriptions of Canidia and the *scurra* match, also their deeds do: both do damage to absent people. The *scurra* badmouths people, so that their reputation is damaged, while Canidia conducts puppet magic to harm her victims. *Absentem qui rodit* could thus be also, in the female form, an epitheton to the witch.

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27) Borzsák has these lines delivered by the *scurra*, for no good reason; F. Klingner, Horati opera, Leipzig 1959, gives them to Horace, which seems more reasonable.

28) Compare P. Corbett, The scurra, Edinburgh 1986, 62: a semi-professional joker that earns his living by entertaining banquets of the rich.

29) Hor. sat. 1.4.100: *hic nigrae sucus lolliginis*, "this is black juice of a squid". In sat. 5.30, Horace smears *nigra collyria*, "black ointment" in his eyes; this stands in contrast to the city of Anxur, positioned on white rocks, and the arrival of the flamboyant Maecenas. There is no moral judgement; also the deeds of Horace in sat. 5 do not resemble those of a *scurra*.

30) Compare Gowers (n. 22) 196.

31) Compare Gowers (n. 22) 273.

Canidia and the *scurra*, and with them the fourth and eighth Satire of the collection, unite an old law from the Twelve Tables that both lead to capital punishment:[32] *QUI MALUM CARMEN INCANTASSIT…* (8, 1a), "who derides others in poems / songs", and, *QUI FRUGES EXCANTASSIT…* (8, 8a), "who damages crops [by song]". The deeds of the *scurra* and of Canidia are likened to each other by the Law of the Twelve Tables: Horace takes these two crimes, backbiting and magic, and shows them as one and the same in his book of Satires, and with that, sheds light on his own satirical practice: he neither backbites nor is he a magician and his Satire is not a magic spell. He does no harm to people. We also learn from Satire 4 that he merely follows the footsteps of his father in portraying vices, not delinquents.[33] Canidia, the *scurra* and their practices are thus the antagonists of Horatian Satire.

We must note, however, that the narrator Priapus is powerless against the evil deeds of Canidia. Even though he scares her off with his fart in the end, she can bring her ritual to a successful end: *imagine cerea / largior arserit ignis* (Hor. sat. 1.8.43–44), "and the fire burnt higher with the waxen puppet". Just as the wax melts, so does Canidia's victim burn in pain (or in love). Also the Horace of Satire 4 stands quite powerless in front of the *scurra* that has already discredited his Satire as malevolent before Horace can even react to this reproach:[34]

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32) Compare R. Düll, Das Zwölftafelgesetz, Berlin / Boston 1995, 8, 1b: Cicero, de re publica 4.12: *XII tabulae cum perpaucas res capite sanxissent, in eis hanc quoque sanciendam putaverunt: si quis occentavisset sive carmen condidisset, quod infamiam faceret flagitiumve alteri*. "While the Twelve Tables put capital punishment not on many things, they nevertheless believed that it is to be put on the following: If someone sings songs of mockery in public or writes ridiculing poems, that bring shame to someone or discredit a person." Also 9: Plinius, nat. hist. 18.3.12: *frugem … aratro quaesitam … pavisse ac secuisse puberi XII tabulis capital erat suspensumque Cereri necari iubebant*. "Stealing crops from an acre or cutting them out led to capital punishment due to the Law of the Twelve Tables: They ordered the delinquent to be hanged at a tree sacred of Ceres."

33) Hor. sat. 1.4.105–140.

34) Compare Knorr (n. 2) 146–149, and Felgentreu (n. 26) 261 f. for further parallels between Horace and Priapus.

*'faenum habet in cornu: longe fuge! dummodo risum*
*excutiat, sibi non, non cuiquam parcet amico,*
*et quodcumque semel chartis inleverit, omnis*
*gestiet a furno redeuntis scire lacuque*
*et pueros et anus.'*

(Hor. sat. 1.4.34–38)

He has hay on his horns, get away from him! While he catches for laughter, he does not spare himself nor anyone of his friends, and wants everyone to know about whatever he once smeared on his tablets, those who come back from the well and the oven, all the slaves and all the old women.

The damage is done, what is left for Horace is to defend his satirical writing against this reproach in the course of the fourth Satire. We must note here that the *scurra* does exactly what Horace later describes as defining *scurrilitas*: he badmouths the absent Horace in front of others, which can be seen in the imperative *fuge*, directed to the victims of Satire, and the third persons *excutiat*, *parcet*, *inleverit*, and *gestiet*. Our satirist, on the other hand, speaks directly to the *scurra* and answers immediately *agedum pauca accipe contra* (Hor. sat. 1.4.38), "Come on and hear something against that claim". This little dialogue once more shows the antagonism of the whole book: the *scurra* badmouths others and is likened to the evil sorcery of the witch Canidia, whereas Horace directly confronts his opponents.

The Canidia of the second book of Satires is in line with what we found out about her deeds so far. Horace, however, has grown from being powerless against the false claims of the *scurra* to a powerful opponent when attacked:

*at ille,*
*qui me conmorit (melius non tangere, clamo),*
*flebit et insignis tota cantabitur urbe.*
*Cervius iratus leges minitatur et urnam,*
*Canidia Albuci, quibus est inimica, venenum,*
*grande malum Turius, siquid se iudice certes.*
*ut, quo quisque valet, suspectos terreat, utque*
*imperet hoc natura potens, sic collige mecum.*
*dente lupus, cornu taurus petit*

(Hor. sat. 2.1.44–52)

> But he who touches me – Better not touch me, I cry – will weep and eminently be mocked around town. Cervius, when angry, threatens with laws and with ballots, Canidia with Albucius' poison threatens those to whom she is an enemy, Turius with big disadvantages, if you lead a case about something with him as a judge. Just like anyone, however he can, frightens the suspect and like mighty nature tells him to do, so think with me: The wolf attacks with his teeth and the bull with his horn.

Horace threatens that he will satirize people who attack him, and that the whole city will read it: we have seen in his first book of Satires, in the argument with the *scurra*, that his way of satirizing people is to create the illusion that he is confronting them face to face. His first example to show that he is just one among many to defend themselves is a certain Cervius, who threatens to sue people who attack him – that is, confronting those people face to face in court. Canidia, however, threatens with poison:[35] poisoning people is the exact opposite of confronting them. Apart from that, the real meaning of the line seems to have escaped former commentators:[36] it does not say that she threatens with poison those who are hostile to her, but those to whom she is hostile. This is an offensive and aggressive Canidia, that stands opposite to the defensive Horace. The next examples again involve face-to-face interaction as a means of defense: Turius also sees his enemies in court, and wolves and bulls naturally have to defend themselves with their natural weapons in physical combat. The line of examples here is some kind of "sort the odd one out", with various examples of defensive strategies and one aggressor, or with various examples of face-to-face confrontation and one attack from behind.[37] The association of Canidia with poison is exclusive to her minor appearances,[38] in which poisoning others is her main trait.

Further light on Horace's practices are shed in the last lines of the first poem, Sat. 2.1.82–86:

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35) See Paule (n. 8) 145, for possible explanations of Albucius' poison.

36) Compare F. Muecke, Horace, Satires Book II, Warminster 1993, 108: "analogues of the satirist".

37) Oliensis (n. 6) 117, states that the analogy between them is superficial: Horace makes the impression that he illustrates his satirical practice with Canidia's deeds, but really stands in opposition to "malignant biters" like Canidia.

38) Compare Paule (n. 8) 142.

*'si mala condiderit in quem quis carmina, ius est*
*iudiciumque.' 'esto, siquis mala; sed bona siquis*
*iudice condiderit laudatus Caesare? siquis*
*opprobriis dignum latraverit, integer ipse?'*
*'solventur risu tabulae, tu missus abibis.'*

"If someone sings *mala carmina* against someone else, there is law and a trial." "This should be the case, yes, if someone sings *mala carmina*; but what if someone sings *bona carmina*, and is praised in Caesar's judgement? What if he barks at someone who deserves reproach, but is faultless himself?" "If the charge dissolves itself in laughter, you will be free."

There is a trial for singing malign songs against someone – or for conducting magic spells.[39] But if someone deserves them, malign songs are allowed, as long as they trigger laughter. Following this rule, we must assume that Canidia is on the wrong side of the law and Horace on the right. The Epode book stages a battle of *mala carmina* between Horace and Canidia that applies exactly the rule that is laid out here: this makes it even more plausible that we must read Satires I–II and then the Epode collection in order to grasp the Canidia narrative.

In Satires II she shows up again at the very end of the collection, in a poem narrated by Fundanius, a friend of Horace, who tells us of a dinner party he and some friends attended:[40]

*quem nos sic fugimus ulti*
*ut nihil omnino gustaremus, velut illis*
*Canidia adflasset peior serpentibus Afris.*
(Hor. sat. 2.8.93–95)

We fled him and took revenge in not trying any of the food, as if Canidia breathed at it, worse than African snakes.

The context is that the host Nasidienus was being tedious,[41] so that Horace's friends fled the party without trying the elaborate dishes. The fact that Fundanius mentions Canidia and thus repeats an old

39) Compare Oliensis (n. 6) 117.
40) Compare Muecke (n. 36) 227.
41) Ibid. 238 f.

joke of Horace suggests that the first book of Satires is known to the members of Maecenas' circle.[42] Another aspect not sufficiently commented on is the verb with which she is introduced here: *adflasset*, 'she breathed her poisonous breath at the dishes'. This creates a balance between Satire 1.8 and 2.8, as in the first poem she is driven out by a fart, that is, a bad or poisonous wind, and now she enters the Satires again with a bad wind. Why should Fundanius' joke not go so far as to suggest that she breathed at the dishes with her ass? Could Fundanius imply that she farted at the food with a smell more poisonous than African snakes? In creating balance between his two books of Satires, I believe that he implies exactly that.

## *II. The Canidia of the Epodes*

In the Epodes, Canidia, who has her big appearances in the fifth and seventeenth Epode, interacts with the metapoetic and programmatic poems of the collection just as in the Satires. These show us a persona of Horace that parallels that of the Satires. A good starting point for contrasting Horace's persona with Canidia is the sixth Epode:

*Quid inmerentis hospites vexas, canis*
*ignavus adversum lupos?*
*quin huc inanis, si potes, vertis minas*
*et me remorsurum petis?*
*nam qualis aut Molossus aut fulvos Lacon,*
*amica vis pastoribus,*
*agam per altas aure sublata nives,*
*quaecumque praecedet fera;*
*tu, cum timenda voce complesti nemus,*
*proiectum odoraris cibum.*
*cave, cave, namque in malos asperrimus*
*parata tollo cornua,*

42) Compare R. J. Baker, Maecenas and Horace *Satires* II.8, CJ 83 (1988) 212–232: 231 f.

*qualis Lycambae spretus infido gener*
*aut acer hostis Bupalo.*
*an, siquis atro dente me petiverit,*
*inultus ut flebo puer?*

(Hor. epod. 6)

Why are you vexing undeserving friends, you dog, cowardly against wolves? Why don't you direct your empty threats to me, if you even can, and attack me, who will bite back? Because I am a friendly force to the shepherds like a Molossian, like a red Spartian, I will search the high snow with keen ears, whatever beast procedes. Yet you sniff for the food that is thrown to you, after filling the forest with terrible barking. Beware, beware, for I am the hardest and I hold my ready horns against the malevolent like the scorned son-in-law of Lycambes and the harsh enemy of Bupalos. Or should I cry like an unrevenged boy, if someone with black teeth attacks me?

Horace likens his persona to that of two iambic poets, Archilochos and Hipponax, in declaring that he will react with irreconcilable strength against those who provoke him.[43] The same holds true for the book of Satires and the book of Epodes: Horace's character seeks to confront others directly, even though the Epode book has significantly less dialogue than the book of Satires.[44] In the sixth Epode Horace confronts – much like in the fourth Satire – someone who attacks undeserving friends but is cowardly against equal opponents. The persona of Horace changes between defense (*remorsurum*) and offense (*agam per altas aure sublata nivis / quaecumque praecedet fera*)[45] and thus cements the limits of the Epode book: Offense and aggression take place only if someone makes the first attack, and the aggressive passages directly confront the enemy instead of mocking him in the 3rd person. This can be seen in the many scornful questions that leave no room for the opponent to answer.

In Epode 3 Horace complains about a dish served by Maecenas with too much garlic in it and comically states that the dish was

43) Compare L. Watson, A Commentary on Horace's Epodes, Oxford 2003, 263.

44) Other examples for direct confrontation of others in the Epode book are 4, 7, 8, 12, 15.

45) Compare Watson (n. 43) 255.

worse than hemlock. He then goes on by asking *an malas / Canidia tractavit dapes?* (Hor. epod. 3.7–8), "Or did Canidia mess with the bad food?" We must, again, note the verb here: *tractavit*. Canidia is portrayed in the fifth Epode as gnawing her nail with a black tooth, and also in Epode 6 Horace challenges an enemy with a black tooth. *tractare* involves physical contact to the object, whereas *adflare* from Sat. 2.8 does not:[46] the verb very much suggests that she took a bite with her foul tooth, thereby poisoning the food, just as she gnawed her own nail. Here we see again an instance of the in-joke playing out, as the poem is directed at Maecenas, who must have known the Canidia poems and therefore also Canidia.

But the in-joke does not just consist of everyone in Horace's environment seeming to know Canidia: as we have seen, the witch leaves the impression that she can do harm over distance, or at least seems to believe that she can do so. Horace plays on that, when he has her crop up in various contexts that actually have nothing to do with her: that Canidia is suggested to breathe or fart at food at a dinner party and to have access to Maecenas' kitchen and take a bite of food there, implies that she is capable of cropping up everywhere she wants. After all, she is a magician that can harm people by throwing waxen figures in the fire and summon her lover back with a love potion – so she seems to believe. Of course Horace spoofs her magic when he has her pop up in every unsuspecting context, thereby exaggerating her magical powers.

Canidia from the fifth Epode however, is very different to that: Paule notices that she is no longer the superstitious old woman of Satires 1.8, but rather a child-killing demon.[47] Considering her deeds and her fierce expression, this is undeniably true. The poem opens with the terrified plea of a boy to Canidia, who is not named (1–10): *per liberos te* […] / […] *precor* (Hor. epod. 5.5–7), "By your

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46) See P. G. W. Glare, Oxford Latin Dictionary, Oxford 1982, s. v. tracto 2d: "to treat manually".

47) Compare Paule (n. 8) 65–79: This chapter contains detailed descriptions of other child-killing demons, namely Lilith, Strix and Lamia, and compares their features with those of Canidia with the result that she is one of them. Paule maintains that Epode 5 is an answer to Vergil's fourth Eclogue, in which a *puer* brings a new golden age to the world. In the fifth Epode, however, the boy is captured and tortured to death, which is a commentary on the ongoing civil war.

children I beg you". Following this plea, the narrator sheds light on the surrounding that hears the boy's words:

*ut haec trementi questus ore constitit*
*insignibus raptis puer,*
*inpube corpus, quale posset inpia*
*mollire Thracum pectora,*
*Canidia, brevibus inligata viperis*
*crines et incomptum caput,*
*iubet sepulcris caprificos erutas,*
*iubet cupressos funebris*
*et uncta turpis ova ranae sanguine*
*plumamque nocturnae strigis*
*herbasque, quas Iolcos atque Hiberia*
*mittit venenorum ferax,*
*et ossa ab ore rapta ieiunae canis*
*flammis aduri Colchicis.*

(Hor. epod. 5.11–24)

The boy stood there, uttering these words with trembling lips, his clothes were taken from him, with immature body that could even move the ruthless hearts of Thracians. Canidia, with short snakes woven into her hair and with an unkempt head, orders fig trees, pulled out of tombs, cypresses, the grave-trees, eggs, smeared with blood from a repulsive toad, feathers of a nightly owl, herbs that have been sent from Iolcos and Hiberia, wild with venom, and bones, stolen from a hungry bitch's mouth, be burnt in Colchian flames.

The narrator closes the boy's speech with the recapitulating *questus*, "this he has lamented", and then comes immediately to Canidia, also with a verbum dicendi: *iubet*, "she orders". This is not related to the words of the boy, but to the magic rites to be performed around him: she is totally unimpressed by the boy that could even move Thracians, she ignores his words and does not answer to him. This repeats itself as the poem goes on: The magic deeds of Canidia, Sagana, Veia and Folia are narrated (Hor. epod. 5.25–49) and it is revealed what is supposed to happen to the boy: His body should be buried with his head standing out and he should die of hunger in view of food. Then follows a speech of Canidia (Hor. epod. 5.49–82). She does not speak to people in the room but ap-

peals to *o rebus meis / non infideles arbitrae, / Nox et Diana* (Hor. epod. 5.49–51), "Faithful referees of my work, Nox and Diana". Next, she speaks to the intended victim of her sorcery, her adulterous lover Varus: *non usitatis, Vare, potionibus / o multa fleturum caput / ad me recurres* (Hor. epod. 5.73–75) "You will come back to me by force of unusual potions, Varus, who will have to cry a lot".[48] Once again, the boy does not exist to Canidia, while her companions receive orders without direct speech. Her direct utterances are directed to entities not physically present, who she believes to reach with her magic. In the end, the boy gives one more speech, but this time he curses the witches and swears vengeance:[49] *diris agam vos* (Hor. epod. 5.89), "I will haunt you with curses". The poem closes with the boy's curse, and once again Canidia is silent and thus also silences the boy. This implies that he is not to survive the magic ritual.[50] Twice the boy speaks to Canidia and confronts her, twice she does not respond: in the first instance she ignores his plea and instead gives orders to her companions, then she prays to goddesses and prophesies the fate of her lover, who, at the time these events take place, "walks around freely": *solutus ambulat* (Hor. epod. 5.71). The last speech of the boy is not answered as the poem ends. Canidia flees from the conflicts that are right around her and does not confront people surrounding her by words: she is capable of doing harm over distance, and so she need not carry out her conflicts by word: just as her magic harms over distance, she believes that she is able to speak to entities not physically present. In the fifth Epode, she shows the same behaviour as in the eighth Satire. The Horace of the Epode book once again is the one that confronts his opponents and battles face to face with words, whereas the iambic Canidia works over distance with magic.

One parallel between the fifth and the sixth Epode is remarkable: she is displayed as *hic inresectum saeva dente livido / Canidia rodens pollicem* (Hor. epod. 5.47–48), the savage Canidia, gnawing her uncut nail with her black teeth. In the last lines of Epode 6, Horace tells us that he will not cry like a boy when he is attacked with a black tooth: *an si quis atro dente me petiverit, / inultus ut*

48) Compare Watson (n. 43) 238: *caput* as a metonym for man, human.
49) Compare Paule (n. 8) 88.
50) Ibid. 64.

*flebo puer?* (Hor. epod. 6.15–16). The pronoun *quis* is masculine as well as feminine, thus it could also be translated as "some woman with a black tooth". These lines seem to suggest that Horace already expects Canidia to attack him, or challenge her, but, unlike the boy from Epode 5, Horace will not cry and die unavenged.[51] This is in line with the verb *tractavit* from Epode 3.

We have seen two poems so far, in which Canidia triumphs over her victims without verbal battles, and now Horace, the warrior of words, challenges her directly.

This leads us to Epode 17, the plea from Horace to Canidia:

> *Iam iam efficaci do manus scientiae,*
> *supplex et oro regna per Proserpinae*
> […]
> *Canidia, parce vocibus tandem sacris*
> *citumque retro solve, solve turbinem.*
> (Hor. epod. 17.1–7)

> Now I surrender to the powerful art, and I beg on my knees by the realm of Proserpina, […] Canidia, spare your (un-)holy voices and turn back, turn the magic spinning wheel.

He has provoked her and now he feels her power over him. He did not believe in her power and now has to acknowledge it:

> *ergo negatum vincor ut credam miser*
> *Sabella pectus increpare carmina,*
> *caputque Marsa dissilire nenia.*
> (Hor. epod. 17.27–29)

> Now I am persuaded, though I did negate it, poor me, I believe that Sabellian curses invade the heart and Marsian spells can make the head burst.

Her spells have taken Horace's youth, have drained him of his bodily fluids and have made his hair white. This he tells Canidia, whom he

51) Ibid. 136: Paule reads the closing lines of Epode 6 as a self-deprecating foreshadowing to Epode 17, with the rhetorical question ironically implying that, yes, Horace will weep in the end.

calls *amata nautis multum et institoribus* (Hor. epod. 17.20),[52] "you, much loved by sailors and salesmen" Then he goes on and promises that his *mendaci lyra* (Hor. epod. 17.39), "lying lyre", will sing songs of praise to her. The following song calls Canidia *pudica* and *proba* (Hor. epod. 17.40) but this, of course, is played on a *mendax lyra*, so really the opposite is true and Horace further insults her.[53] Canidia then finally raises her voice to answer Horace: she triumphantly declares that she will never take her curses from him (54), thus tormenting him until the end of his life, because Horace has spread her name around town:[54] *et Esquilini pontifex venefici / inpune ut urbem nomine impleris meo?* (Hor. epod. 17.58–59) "So that you with impunity filled the town with my name like a priest of the venomous Esquilin?" The mention of the Esquiline here is a hint to Satire 1.8:[55] she knows the poem, in which Horace first mentioned her name.

Coming back to the *mala carmina* from the Twelve Tables, and with the other Canidia poems in mind, Epode 17 can be interpreted as a final duel between Horace and Canidia, that comes after two rounds of 'shadow-boxing': Canidia sings her *mala carmina*, her magic spells, on two occasions: the first time on the Esquiline in Satire 1.8 and the second time in Epode 5; Horace then writes the Satire and the Epode, which are, in Canidia's eyes, *mala carmina*, malevolent poems about her: from Horace's point of view, however, these poems are no *mala carmina*, because he himself does not say anything about her: the first poem is narrated by Priapus and the other by an omniscient narrator that does not comment on or judge any of the dreadful things Canidia commits. There is no indication in both poems that the persona of Horace is speaking any of these lines. And above that, as Sat. 1.8 dissolves in laughter, Horace cannot be charged (cf. Sat. 2.1). Of course, as author, he shows her *mala carmina* around.[56] As revenge, Canidia curses him and

52) Ibid. 104–107: the *amata nautis* is a variation on Catullus 8.5, where he calls his Lesbia *amata nobis*, but states that she is promiscuous. With this verbal echo, Horace also marks Canidia as a promiscuous woman.

53) Ibid. 107–108.

54) Compare Watson (n. 43) 534.

55) Ibid. 573 f.

56) Compare Paule (n. 8) 128 ff., for a proof that Canidia seems to know the works of Horace: She quotes them on many occasions during her speech.

Horace directs a plea to her, which is the only real *malum carmen* by Horace: as we have seen, Horace always seeks to confront his opponents verbally, and so he confronts Canidia in order to taunt and mock her. He directly calls her promiscuous and shameless, which has not taken place in the two previous poems. His lines are full of scorn and mockery, but they are directed to her, not spoken about her in the 3rd person. The illusion is that Horace directly speaks with Canidia, so his words are no *malum carmen* liable to prosecution by the Twelve Tables. But as a malevolent poem, the lines deserve to be called *malum carmen*. Horace revenges Canidia's *mala carmina* with the *malum carmen* within Epode 17 – Canidia's answer to it then is no real riposte, but only states the obvious: you have directed *mala carmina* against me. Horace may seem not to be able to compete with her in magic affairs, but he has the high ground in verbal duels. Canidia is mocked and ridiculed and seems not to notice it.[57] She answers by stating obvious things and in her last words, leaves Horace an open goal to abandon her:[58]

> *vectabor umeris tunc ego inimicis eques*
> *meaeque terra cedet insolentiae.*
> *An quae movere cereas imagines,*
> *ut ipse nosti curiosus, et polo*
> *deripere lunam vocibus possim meis,*
> *possim crematos excitare mortuos*
> *desiderique temperare pocula,*
> *plorem artis in te nil agentis exitus?*
>
> (Hor. epod. 17.74–81)

> I will come in riding on my enemies' shoulders and the world will cede to my boisterousness. Or should I, who can move waxen puppets, as you curious man know, who can rip the moon from the sky with my voices and can summon buried dead from their graves, I can mix potions of love, should I moan the end of my art that does no longer affect you?

57) Compare A. Kiessling / R. Heinze / E. Burck, Quintus Horatius Flaccus, Satiren, Zürich ⁵1957, 556.

58) Compare Watson (n. 43) 541.

Canidia here recapitulates her deeds from Satires 1.8 and Epode 5.[59] But if we take a closer look at the corresponding passages, we will find that there actually is nothing to brag about: she can move waxen puppets, meaning that she can exert power over them.[60] But in Satires 1.8 we have seen that the puppet is merely thrown in the fire, which is a very unmagical way of "moving" it. She can bring the moon down from the sky: in Satire 1.8 it is suggested that the moon hides himself in order not to witness the witches' deeds (36), and in Epode 5 it is reported that the population of Naples believes that the witch Folia is able to bring the moon down from the sky – it is not said that she really does it. She further brags about summoning dead people, but in Satire 1.8 only *serpentes atque* […] / *infernas* […] *canes* (Hor. sat. 1.8.34–35) "snakes and otherworldly dogs roam around the garden" – animals that would roam a garden by night also if there were no witches.[61] Her last skill she boasts with is her ability to mix love potions – but we only know about her trying to concoct a love potion after several failed attempts (Hor. epod. 5.71–72). The effect of the potion in Epode 5 is unknown to us. In her last line – and in effect in the last line of the Epode book – she asks whether her magic should cease to exert control over Horace. This is an instance of metaleptic communication, the violation of boundaries between fictional levels:[62] here, we have Canidia communicating with her author Horace. She cannot know this, of course,[63] as she is a creation of Horace, and foolishly asks whether she should abandon Horace, who, in turn, abandons her by not answering. He silences her in a very 'Canidian' fashion, that is, being silent himself.[64] After that, Horace does not mention her again in his poetry. He clearly has won the duel with her and with his silence gives Canidia the last, lethal blow. In correspondence with Epode 5, we can safely assume that Horace got rid of Canidia by not answering her, just as Canidia got rid of the boy in

59) Compare Paule (n. 8) 131.

60) Compare Watson (n. 43) 581.

61) Felgentreu (n. 26) 260.

62) Compare I. De Jong, Metalepsis in Ancient Greek Literature, in: J. Grethlein / A. Rengakos (eds.), Narratology and Interpretation – The Content of Narrative Form in Ancient Literature, Berlin / New York 2009, 87–115: 89.

63) Compare Ibid. 89.

64) Compare Paule (n. 8) 137.

Epode 5. The silence implies that the boy / Canidia do not survive the scene.[65]

We have seen that Horace is the one confronting people, whereas Canidia does not do this, because she effects people with her magic from afar (at least she believes that she is able to do that). The only time Horace stages a direct battle of words with her, he makes sure that he wins it by portraying her as foolish:[66] after all, she cannot even win at all, as she is his creature.

As a conclusion, I will briefly reconsider the plot of the Canidia narrative: in Satire 1.8 Canidia makes her first entrance and is being introduced with a metapoetic function, that is, being the anti-Horace, or, generically speaking, the anti-Satirist, by harming over distance like a *scurra* and not confronting her opponents. Next, we have her as a well-known *venefica*,[67] that is mentioned en-passant two times in Sat. 2.1 and 2.8 as if she were known to all people surrounding Horace (and in fact, she is, as all those people must have been familiar with Satires I).[68] So far we have not seen any results of her magic. This builds up a threat as there is yet no reason to believe that her magic is actually bogus – everyone mentions her as if she really is capable of harming people with poison and magic.

Then the Epode collection mentions her in Epode 3, again as a well-known *venefica*. Next comes Epode 5: in this poem, she is portrayed as an evil, demon-like figure,[69] so the threat, that was built up by mentioning her three times, pays out. Apart from that, she again functions as an anti-Horace, or anti-jambic Poet, as she again flees verbal battles and seeks to harm over distance. In the poems leading up to Epode 17 Canidia is the emblem of non-ver-

65) Compare Paule (n. 8) 64.

66) We can observe the same strategy also in other verbal duels that Horace stages, e. g. the duel with the rigid stoic in Satire 1.3: Horace elaborately explains contradictions in rigid stoics, and the stoic answers rigidly with a quote from Chrysippus, thereby not confronting Horace's arguments but just parroting other stoics (120–133).

67) Compare Paule (n. 8) 141 ff.

68) Satires 2.1 is a dialogue with the lawyer Trebatius who is on good terms with Octavian; 2.8 is narrated by Fundanius, member of Maecenas' circle (compare Muecke [n. 36] 99, 227) and Epode 3 is directed to Maecenas himself.

69) Ibid. 74 ff.

bal conflict. She is challenged in Epode 6 to turn against Horace, who says that he is an equal opponent to her. She then has her last appearance in Epode 17: the backstory to this poem is that she has accepted the challenge and – typically for a witch – cursed Horace instead of confronting him. Therefore, Horace sings his *malum carmen* against her, ridicules her and mockingly describes the harm she has done to him with her magic. Her last appearance is also the first that shows her interacting with words, but she loses this battle of words against Horace: she states that she cursed him for spreading her name around town. This retroactively gives meaning to the preceding Canidia poems, as Horace has introduced her to the public with these poems: they show that her name is known to Horace's friends. It also shows that the harm to her is already done and explains why she exerts vengeance. She is silenced by Horace in the end. He dissolves the illusion by showing that she is only a fiction of the author that can be beaten by just not mentioning her again in his works.[70]

The quarrel of Canidia and Horace is a quarrel between fictional levels, as her author, Horace, is also a character in the fiction of Canidia, but in the end, he reveals himself to be the author, and thus, is able to set himself free of the curse of Canidia and to get rid of her. Their quarrel is also a quarrel of invective in Iambus and Satire: Horace is the one that uses invective to confront other people with their vices, whereas Canidia and the *scurra* use magic / invective to harm people over distance. Horace clearly distinguishes these two forms of invective, and by getting rid of the wrong kind of invective at the end of Epode 17, he also leaves his very own style of invective, to further compose odes, a genre that does not need opponents.

Göttingen Florian Langbein

70) Satires I shows a similar ending with the verse *i, puer, atque meo citus haec subscribe libello* (Hor. sat. 1.10.92), "Go, boy, and quickly add these lines to my book". With this ending, Horace dissolves the fictional levels of the book: He portrays himself dictating the poems to his slave (first level), in the poems he is shown in conversation with Maecenas (second level), and within these conversations he confronts fictional characters in verbal duels (third level).