Asking for the Moon: An Intertextual Approach to Metapoetic Magic in Augustan Love-Elegy and Related Genres

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Abstract

Asking for the Moon: An Intertextual Approach to Metapoetic Magic in Augustan Love-Elegy and Related Genres

Zara Kaur Chadha

This thesis offers a new perspective on the metapoetic use of magic in the love-elegies of Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid, a theme which, though widely acknowledged in contemporary scholarship, has so far received little comprehensive treatment. The present study approaches the motif through its intertextual dialogues with magic in earlier and contemporary texts — Theocritus’ Idyll 2, Apollonius Rhodius’ Argonautica, Vergil’s Eclogue 8 and Horace’s Epodes — with the aim of investigating the origin and development of love-elegy’s self-construction as magic and of the association of this theme with poetic enchantment, deceit, and failure throughout the genre. While previous commentators have noted lexical and thematic similarities between magic in love-elegy and in other Augustan and Hellenistic poetic genres, they seldom pursue these parallels or interpret them as evidence of literary interaction. By reading these correspondences as signs of intertextual relationships, this thesis provides fresh examples of magic’s metapoetic function in love-elegy — including practical rites alongside the recognised polysemy of carmina — which add to its status as a defining metaphor for the genre. This investigation tackles the subject through two complementary themes and two complementary genres. It first focuses on the relationship between magic and elegiac carmina, which develops in dialogue with Vergilian and Theocritean pastoral; it then explores magic and the beauty of the puella in her roles as narrative beloved and literary construct through its interaction with Horatian iambic. The study ends with a retrospective on elegiac love-magic via Ovidian erotodidactic elegy which unites both themes and in which the motif provides a “shorthand” for the genre. More broadly, this approach demonstrates that literary love-magic in its most recognisable form acts as an avenue for close and dynamic communication between poets.
Asking for the Moon:
An Intertextual Approach to Metapoetic Magic in Augustan Love-Elegy and Related Genres

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PhD

Classics and Ancient History

Durham University

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<td><strong>TLL</strong></td>
<td><em>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</em> (1900-), B.G. Teubner, Leipzig.</td>
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Introduction

“Poetry which speaks about magic carmina cannot help but reflect on itself.”¹

Propertius, Tibullus and Ovid each equate love-elegy with magic and its effects. This affinity between magic and poetry is a basic element of the Greco-Roman conception of both arts: in addition to sharing formal metrical and stylistic features, each relates to the belief that words exert a tangible effect in the world and can influence minds and emotions;² the Augustan elegists play on this inherent association to characterise their work as and through magic. My research explores the metapoetic function of this motif — its role in enacting elements of elegiac poetics in the narratives of individual poems — in Propertian, Tibullan and Ovidian love-elegy. This builds on and expands the initial work on elegiac magic in my MA dissertation;³ I also take inspiration from Sharrock’s treatment of the association of love-elegy with magic in Ovid Ars amatoria 2.99-108, and as Sharrock’s chapter provides the context for my present approach to this topic it will be useful to begin with an overview of her work.

Sharrock reads elegy as a deceitful and seductive spell which acts on the internal addressees and the extratextual audience while being “potentially most effective on the self-absorbed lover himself”. Sharrock observes that elegy “constantly poses as trying to create an opposition between [...] magic and poetry” but this is “already collapsed into an identification” through the multivalence of carmen — poem, song, spell or prayer. This multi-applicability of carmen allows Ovid to use magic as a “metaphor” [Sharrock’s emphasis] to surreptitiously illustrate the “seduction” enacted through his poem, characterising it as a spell and Ovid, as poet and as narrator, as a “seducer and a witch”.⁴ Sharrock’s primary focus is on Ars amatoria 2.99-108; she highlights selected passages of magic in Propertius’ and Tibullus’ work as background

¹ Sharrock 1994 p. 64.
³ Chadha 2008.
for her discussion of Ovid’s erotodidactic poem and illustrates the centrality of magic to the elegiac narrative and poetics through the paraclausithyron in Ovid Amores 2.1, where the narrator characterizes his verses as magic carmina capable of opening doors (23-28):\(^5\) despite these claims, the lover remains locked-out at the end of the poem, and is unable to overcome the ianitor with his poetry in Amores 2.2 and 2.3.\(^6\) As Sharrock states, magic reflects the generic aims and themes of love-elegy: enchanting and seducing beloveds, opening doors and deceiving husbands and guards;\(^7\) metapoetically, the lover’s inability to persuade his obstacles to move indicates the generically necessary failure of elegiac seductions, which, by maintaining the lover’s separation from his mistress, provides the poet with material and motivation for his compositions and ensures the continuation of the elegiac world.\(^8\) Sharrock’s discussion enables us to say that casting elegy as a spell highlights its enchanting nature and, consequently, the lover’s deception of his beloved: as deceit is an inherent characteristic of poetry, which manipulates the minds of its audiences, the lover’s poetic offerings to his beloved are fundamentally untrustworthy. In her reading of the duplicitous and enchanting nature of elegy and magic in Ars amatoria 2.99-108, Sharrock also foregrounds the effect of Ovid’s verses on the extratextual audience who, despite recognizing the magic of the verses in which Ovid purports to reject its use, are nevertheless enchanted by his work and “seduced” into reading on.\(^9\)

Sharrock’s focus on Ovid’s erotodidactic work naturally takes a retrospective view of magic in Propertian and Tibullan love-elegy, which Ars amatoria 2.99-108 reacts to and develops. I expand on Sharrock’s discussion by starting at the beginning of the Augustan elegiac tradition twice over to investigate the origins and development of love-elegy’s construction as magic and of the motif’s association with poetic enchantment, deception and failure throughout the genre; I return to Sharrock’s work and to Ovid’s erotodidactic elegies — particularly to the

\(^5\) Sharrock 1994 p. 64.
\(^7\) This is encapsulated in Propertius’ programmatic 3.3, where Calliope instructs the poet to write elegies whose effect she characterizes as enchantment: “ut per te clausas sciat excantare puellas, / qui volet austeros arte ferire viros” (49-50); cf. Marioni 1981 p. 27 and O’Neill 1998 pp. 62-65 and, conversely, Novara 2000 pp. 30-35. For love-elegy as werbende Dichtung: Stroh 1971.
\(^9\) Sharrock 1994 pp. 82 and 86.
Medicamina faciei femineae — in my conclusion for my own retrospective view on magic in the genre. Within the elegiac narrative, the lovers use amatory spells — practical rites and carmina — to attract their mistresses or to elude rivals; they also adduce witchcraft to explain their own shortcomings, including sexual failure, infidelity and their inability to resist the physical charms of their mistresses, which they align with erotic magic. carmina and the feats they can accomplish represent the powers of poetry; as we will see, the practical instruments and techniques the narrators employ also symbolise elegy and its composition. In addition to commenting on generic characteristics, I suggest that the spotlight which magic shines on deceit also illuminates the illusoriness of the elegiac world for the extratextual audience: elegiac first-person narration by a homonymous poet-persona implies that the poems relate genuine autobiographical experiences; presenting elegy as a spell indicates the false realism of its narratives, drawing attention to the poet’s power to create visions of impossible feats for his audience to “see” which, when expressed as magic, represent the composition of the text. More broadly, magic, as I hope to illustrate, acts as a locus for opening and maintaining literary dialogues — between the elegists, and between love-elegy and contemporaries and predecessors working in different genres. The deep-seated association of poetry and magic enchantment suggests that this is a natural employment of the theme: as poets use magic to reflexively comment on their chosen medium or generic concerns, it seems likely that the same metaphor should be used to comment on their work in relation to that of others. We can read the attribution of magic power to the mistresses’ beauty as working in the same way. In the fictional affair, the lovers’ implications that their beloveds have targeted them with erotic spells betray an ambivalence and resentment beneath their obsessive devotion and self-imposed servitium; implying that magic causes their condition suggests that their mistresses control them by illegitimate means, and that the girls’ physical “enchantments” are an illusion created by an

10 Gordon 2009 pp. 225-226 highlights “testing the power of poetic language” as one function of magic in Augustan poetry, illustrating this with Tibullus 1.2.45-54, which we discuss below. Gordon comments on magic expressing poetry’s influence over the external audience. This view is equally applicable to the internal addressees, though in their case the poetry continually fails to convince, while good poetry can successfully convince its audience of the realism of the feats it narrates. For Latin love-elegy as non-autobiographical fiction: Allen 1950a pp. 145-160 and Veyne 1988 passim.
artificial, external source of power. Metapoetically, the *puellae* embody elegiac poetics and composition, and the equation of magic and poetic *carmina* encourages reading the association of the girls’ beauty with magic as part of their representation of the elegiac text as fiction. This poetic element of the connection between the *puella*'s attractiveness and magic has been noted previously — by Sharrock and by Rimell — only in relation to Ovid’s erotodidactic work; as I will show by beginning from Propertius’ and Tibullus’ earliest collections, love-elegy foregrounds this aspect of its construction from the beginning of the genre.

To explore these suggestions, we approach this topic from an intertextual perspective, using a series of close readings of Tibullan, Propertian and Ovidian works which focus on their intrageneric relations and their interaction with earlier and contemporary texts — Theocritus *Idyll 2*, Apollonius Rhodius’ *Argonautica*, Vergil *Eclogue* 8 and Horace’s *Epodes* — in which magic also acts metapoetically to see how these can illuminate its role in love-elegy. I draw on Conte’s theory of the poetic tradition, particularly his discussion of allusion’s capacity to draw attention to the text as a work of art and to reflect on its differing levels of reality: those of the narrative fiction and of the extratextual poet and audience. The points of contact among passages of magic in extant Augustan poetry and in Alexandrian literature, together with the allusive and self-conscious nature of both traditions, make this a natural framework for our investigation. While it is possible that Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid might have been drawing on the common lexicon of magic in Roman and Hellenistic literature, the otherwise widely-recognised interaction between their works and those of their contemporaries and predecessors — and particularly following the intergeneric dialogue already initiated between Vergil’s *Eclogues* and Gallan elegy — encourages closer readings of the theme in the context of its relationship to this tradition.

From this perspective, the recurring features in magic — which develop in a particularly concentrated form in love-elegy — appear less as “stock” examples of a conventional theme, and

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11 Commentators predominantly read the elegists as contrasting beauty and magic favourably: see, for example, Luck 1962 pp. 39-40 and Fauth 1999 pp. 155-164; I give full references below in Chapter 3.

12 Sharrock 1994 pp. 74-76 notes the connection between beauty and magic in relation to Medea and Circe in *Ars amatoria* 2 which “highlights the enchantment of their physical attractions” and suggests that they cast “a more overtly erotic sort of spell” on their lovers, also commenting on this employment of the motif in Tibullus 1.5, Tibullus 1.8 and Ovid *Amores* 3.7; Rimell 2005 pp. 177-205.

rather as signs directing the reader to interpret the motif not only as a comment on the poet’s work but on the work in relation to a tradition; as we will see, the motif develops into a “shorthand” for love-elegy by Ovid’s later epistolary and didactic works.\footnote{For passages of magic in love-elegy as the handling of a “stock” theme: Putnam 1973 p. 66, Smith 1978 pp. 216-224, McKeown 1989 pp. 204-205, Stratton 2007 pp. 71-72, Gordon 2009 pp. 219 and 225, and Ogden 2009 pp. 124-125; cf. Bright 1978 p. 142. Graf 1997a p. 176 and Gordon 2009 pp. 211 and 213, who approach these texts as evidence for magic practices and discourse, do emphasise the intertextual and self-reflexive relationships between literary depictions of magic. For the fluidity of the poetic “tradition” and the potential for any text or author to create a new, “tendentious” literary history: Hinds 1998 pp. 99-144.}

There has been a considerable amount of scholarship on magic in Augustan love-elegy; as I aim to demonstrate, my present approach offers an alternative way of reading the motif across the genre.\footnote{I give full references where relevant in the following chapters.} Commentators regularly note the similarities between passages of magic in love-elegy and in Augustan and Hellenistic poetry; nevertheless, they seldom question the significance of these parallels or pursue them as evidence of literary interaction. Tupet’s book, which remains the most comprehensive study of magic in Augustan poetry, exemplifies this trend. Tupet provides detailed surveys of magic practices, instruments and techniques which recur throughout Greek and Latin literature and of the themes in the Greek and Republican “sources” for the Augustan poets; she then applies this material to close commentaries on individual passages of magic in Vergil, Horace, Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid which focus on identifying the actions and their purpose.\footnote{Tupet 1976; on Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid: Tupet 1976 pp. 330-417. Eitrem 1941 pp. 63-65 also reads the elegists as reflecting the realities of magic in contemporary Rome.} Though Tupet notes features which recur throughout these texts, she does not interpret these correspondences in terms of mutual poetic interaction. Sharrock’s work also remains one of the few detailed treatments of magic in love-elegy which develops the motif’s metapoetic potential. More commonly, commentators highlight this tangentially to their main topic, or otherwise focus on the ambiguity of carmen or on one or two key texts in the genre — most popularly, Propertius 3.3.49-50 and Ovid Amores 2.1.21-25. Marioni’s article on the magic power of love-elegy, for example, begins from this Propertian couplet and highlights only Ovid’s catalogue of the abilities of carmina as an explicit example elegy’s characterisation as magic; similarly, Fauth’s chapter on magic and elegiac carmina in his study of magic across Roman poetry offers general remarks about their affinity before focusing...
on *Amores* 2.1. Other commentators, including Eitrem, Luck, Tupet, and Novara, maintain a more simplistic view of the relationship between love-elegy and magic — and of that between the extratextual poet and his fictional narrator — and read the lovers as merely contrasting their poetry with magic and asserting the superiority of their art.

Prince’s recent PhD dissertation, “Magic, Love, and the Limits of Power: The Figure of Medea in Latin Love Elegy”, examines elegiac magic in connection with Medea and her presence as a mythological paradigm as a witch, lover, and forsaken woman. Prince briefly remarks on the equation of the lover’s *carmina* with magic in connection with Medea in Tibullus 1.2 and Propertius 1.1; the Colchian princess’s identity as a witch only forms one element of Prince’s wider investigation and, as her study omits *Heroides* 6 and 12, we discuss few of the same texts. Prince also considers the elegiac Medea against the background of her lengthy mythological tradition and does not pursue the intertextual methodology I adopt here; consequently, we arrive at alternative, though complementary, conclusions.

One area in which magic’s association with elegiac verse through a female figure is well-established is in connection with the *lena* and her metaliterary role as the alter- and counter-ego of the lover-poet. The elegiac *lenae* — Tibullus’ nameless procuress (1.5.47-60), Propertius’ Acanthis (4.5) and Ovid’s Dipsas (*Amores* 1.8) — are all accused of witchcraft by the narrators whose amatory relationships they obstruct. The Propertian and Ovidian lovers catalogue their rivals’ incantatory powers (Propertius 4.5.5-18; Ovid *Amores* 1.8.5-18) and in doing so betray the affinity of their *carmina* with those of the *lena* and draw attention to their own intimate connections with magic. O’Neill and Sharrock have treated the connection between magic and elegiac rhetoric in Propertius 4.5 and Ovid *Amores* 1.8 amply, and their works provide inspiration for my present research; as such I do not focus on these texts closely but introduce them where

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they illuminate other passages.\textsuperscript{21} The \textit{lena}’s intimate association with the poet and narrator parallels that between the poet and his \textit{puella}, providing a precedent for exploring the latter relationship more closely in terms of magic; as I will argue, recognising this connection between the personification of the elegiac text and magic opens an alternative route for interaction between poets which focuses around female embodiments of genre.

As I hope to demonstrate, intertextual investigations of magic in elegy can enhance our understanding of the theme’s centrality to and function in the genre. Within the narrative, the interaction with other texts illuminates the situation of the present elegy and augments the characterisation of the narrator, particularly highlighting his untrustworthiness and fallibility and his capacity for self-delusion.\textsuperscript{22} On the metaliterary plane, engagement with these models signals a poetic meaning to the magic imagery, alerting the reader to comments on generic poetics and drawing their attention to the fictive nature of the elegiac world and to the poet’s creative and enchanting powers. Reading elegiac magic intertextually also enables us to identify a wider range of examples and ways in which the motif is used in this way — including the practical rites and techniques which the poets invoke — and provides new evidence to reinforce and supplement existing scholarship. By developing and exploring the elegists’ use of magic in this way, we can further appreciate the prominence and importance of the theme in the construction and poetics of Augustan love-elegy as well as reading it as a medium for dynamic intra- and intergeneric literary dialogues.

Three criteria determine the elegiac passages we read in this study. Our focus on magic’s metaliterary role and our intertextual approach firstly lead us to include those which explicitly mention song or incantation in connection with this theme; secondly, those which display lexical and thematic evidence of relationships with other texts which feature magic; and thirdly, those which reflect contemporary magic practices or related terminology and vocabulary.\textsuperscript{23} These criteria cover all of the major passages of magic in the love-elegies of

\textsuperscript{22} For the narratological function of intertextuality and allusion in elegy: Lively 2012 pp. 417-418.
Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid.\textsuperscript{24} A degree of selectiveness is also necessary in our treatment of Ovid’s extant corpus, which covers a wide range of forms and genres. As I primarily concentrate on love-magic in amatory elegy, I restrict our focus to the Amores, Heroides, Medicamina faciei femineae, and Remedia amoris, though I acknowledge the strong intratextual links between these texts and Ovid’s later works.\textsuperscript{25} I omit a close reading of Ars amatoria 2.99-108 as Sharrock has treated this passage thoroughly; I will return to Sharrock’s work to introduce our discussion of Remedia amoris in Chapter 2, and again when we consider Ovid’s erotodidactic elegies more broadly in the conclusion. I predominantly follow Butler and Barber’s 1933 text for Propertius’ elegies, and I indicate textual problems or where I accept alternative readings; for Tibullus, I use Maltby’s 2002 text. I follow Kenney 1994 for Ovid’s Amores, Ars amatoria, Remedia amoris and Medicamina faciei femineae; and Knox 1996 and Bessone 1997 for Ovid’s Heroides 6 and 12 respectively. For Horace’s Epodes, I use Mankin 1995; I follow Gow 1950 for Theocritus’ Idylls, Race 2008 for Apollonius Rhodius’ Argonautica, and Clausen 1994 for Vergil’s Eclogues.

Reading intertextually also encompasses the relationships between texts and the culture in which they are produced, expanding the potential for the creation of meaning in the work beyond the literary tradition.\textsuperscript{26} A contemporary Roman audience would have brought their socio-religious as well as their literary background to readings of love-elegy; considering these texts alongside the practices and discourse of Greco-Roman magic can broaden our understanding of its use in the genre, as we will see in Chapters 2 and 3 in particular. It will be helpful to pause at this point and introduce some background to magic in antiquity, including erotic spells, the relevance of the extant evidence to Augustan Rome and the difference between everyday practice and magic in literature.

Magic was employed throughout the ancient world in all periods; its prevalence in Italy and Rome increased during the late Republic and 40s-30s BC as a consequence of the increasing

\textsuperscript{24} Isolated, passing references to herbs and poison include Propertius 1.12 and 4.7, Tibullus 2.4 and Ovid Amores 1.14. For metapoetic interpretations of Amores 1.14: Zetzel 1996 pp. 73-100, Boyd 1997 pp. 117-122 and Papaioannou 2006 pp. 45-69.

\textsuperscript{25} I exclude the Fasti, as the two instances of magic — the rite of Muta Tacita (2.571-582) and Cranae’s defence of Proca against the striges (6.101-182) — are non-amatory and do not evoke love-elegy; I omit the Ibis on similar grounds. Neither Tristia nor Ex Ponto feature magic.

\textsuperscript{26} Conte 1986 pp. 56-57; for an increased emphasis on the role of the reader’s context in intertextuality: Fowler 1997 pp. 25-26.
Hellenisation of Italian and Roman culture and the political climate of the period. In general terms, the practice can be expressed as rituals combining actions and incantations which were performed in secret to affect people or events by appealing to “supernatural” powers including deities, demons or spirits of the dead. Rites classified as “magic”, and communal and individual attitudes towards this category, varied among societies and among individuals involved in accusations of its use; at the same time, the development of practices or people “traditionally” associated with magic in the Greco-Roman cultural consciousness led to a degree of standardisation in accepted signs of magic. Amatory magic was always popular and was performed with a variety of aims: to attract a victim irresistibly to the practitioner (the agōgē spell); to separate a couple or to prevent their relationship (the diakopē); to constrain the will or actions of the victim, either to separate them from a current partner, to prevent potential rivals from entering into a relationship with the person desired by the practitioner, or to bind them forcefully to the practitioner (binding spells: curse-tablets or defixiones). The rites which the elegiac narrators employ and the effects they desire evoke those used in agōgai spells, which aimed to drag their targets to the practitioners by inflicting mental and physical torture — burning, madness, insomnia, starvation and thirst — upon them; the symptoms of elegiac love also correspond with the effects of these practices. There was significant overlap between these types of erotic spell, and their formulation and desired results displayed similarities with curses and prayers for other purposes: the violent language and imagery of agōgai spells, as Faraone highlights, bears a marked resemblance to non-amatory curses, while some amatory defixiones


share common features with prayers for justice and revenge; we encounter a literary example of such a hybrid curse in Ovid Heroïdes 6 in Chapter 2.\textsuperscript{30}

Evidence for Greco-Roman magic exists in spells and recipes on papyrus — now published as Papyri Graecae Magicae (PGM) and Papyri Demoticae Magicae (PDM) — and in examples of applied practice including curses on lead tablets and pottery fragments, and figurines. These texts and rites, as the locations of their discovery indicate, circulated widely around the Mediterranean and the borders of the Roman Empire. PGM and PDM are collections of magical texts of Egyptian provenance which are made up of handbooks of eclectic recipes and instructions for magic spells and ceremonies, as well as examples of short prayers and curses. The spells are primarily written in Greek and Demotic, incorporating a range of other languages and unintelligible voces magicae; the rites synthesise Greek, Egyptian, and Semitic religious practice and theology. The majority of these texts date to the third and fourth centuries AD; discoveries of texts and of evidence of applied practice which span from the fourth century BC through the Hellenistic period and which correspond to the recipes in these handbooks, and the textual traditions of the later papyri indicate that the collections transmit material with a far longer heritage.\textsuperscript{31} This lengthy tradition suggests that similar practices would have been known in Rome of the 40s-30s BC, enabling us to draw on this evidence in relation to Augustan poetry.\textsuperscript{32}

This leads us to the relationship between literary representations of magic and its everyday realities.\textsuperscript{33} As a literary motif, we encounter magic as an “ideological” concept whose role Gordon expresses clearly:

\textsuperscript{30} Faraone 1999 pp. 43-55 and 80-84.


\textsuperscript{32} Faraone 1999 pp. 32-38.

magic in the Graeco-Roman world became good to think with. Beneath the overt representations and images deeper questions are being raised, positions staked out: Where are we to locate the boundary between the possible, the marvellous, and the sheerly impossible, the fantastic? Between belief and credulousness? How far can we trust common sense? Can people control the inhabitants of the Other World? Can gods will harm? If so, ought they to do so? What are the limits of the power of utterance?  

This symbolic function makes magic a perfect image for exploring and staging the limitations and capabilities of poetry, as Sharrock and Gordon each highlight in relation to Augustan love-elegy. Literary representations of magic can also engage closely with contemporary practice, adapting these to the needs of their new poetic context; one well-known Augustan example is Horace’s Satires 1.8, in which Canidia’s ritual — which involves two figurines, one of wax and one of wool, with the woollen effigy dominating the waxen one which kneels before it like a slave — parallels the configuration of effigies prescribed in the fourth-century AD PGM IV 296-434, an amatory spell which was in circulation around the Mediterranean from the first century BC onwards. O’Neill’s treatment of magic in Propertius 4.5, which inspires my handling of the topic in relation to the poetic texts, offers an elegiac example of this approach: O’Neill argues that the lover performs a ritual to kill Acanthis, the lena whom he accuses of using love-magic against him (5-18) but who mentions no magic in her embedded monologue (21-62) and who urges the puella she addresses to avoid the behaviour of “improba” Medea (41-42). O’Neill highlights parallels from the PGM and defixiones for the lover’s sacrifice of doves and appeal to Venus (65-70), his curses on Acanthis (1-4; 75-78) and his catalogue of her magic skills which indicate the influence of contemporary magic practice on the poem and which, once this influence is acknowledged, prompt the reader to understand the lover as in the process of performing his ritual, and which open a fresh perspective on the linguistic idiosyncrasies of the text as reflecting the style of incantations. While it is essential to bear in mind that these works are not accurate, historical records of everyday rituals, recognition of the practices which the poets evoke can add to our reading of the poetic texts.
Magic as an idea further resonates in love-elegy, particularly its invocation in personal relationships and its social gendering. Accusations of magic played a role in the social dynamics of Greek and Roman communities. In amatory situations, for example, the suggestion that a person’s actions or a couple’s relationship was influenced by a hostile third party provided a narrative which could excuse or justify behaviour — including sexual failure, waning desire, excessive passion, or infidelity — and account for and redress asymmetrical power-balances in relationships, allowing the supposed victims to save face before their peers; the subjectivity of such accusations means that they reflect more on the accuser than on the target.\(^{38}\) Magic in the elegiac narrative echoes these social uses of the concept, especially the lover’s attribution of magic to his mistress which ultimately illustrates his own duplicity and fallibility, as we explore in Chapter 3 in particular.\(^{39}\)

Related to this is the social gender of magic. Though used by both men and women, and in hetero- and homosexual relationships, magic was gendered as “feminine” in Greco-Roman antiquity, defined as geographically and socially “foreign” or “Other” in opposition to the “legitimate” androcentric state religion and, as such, perceived as a menace to the established social norms.\(^{40}\) Augustan love-elegy reflects this fluidity and the male lovers’ recourse to erotic spells, including their own poetry, to influence and control their beloveds’ feelings adds another layer to their flexible gendered stance, underlying their “feminine” position in relation to their puellae; this is intertextually reinforced by their self-alignment with the female practitioners in their poetic models. The gender flexibility in magic can, I suggest, also apply on a metaliterary level: love-elegy defines itself and, by extension, its poet-narrator as mollis, soft and “feminine”;


\(^{39}\) Fauth 1999 pp. 129-149 — which condenses his earlier article, Fauth 1980 pp. 267-282 — also highlights the motif’s metaphorical role in illustrating the intensity, irrationality, and irresistibility of passionate love, and in providing a means of self-justification for, and rationalisation of, the elegiac lover’s amatory failures and misfortunes; Fauth, however, predominantly focuses on Ovid Heroides 6 and 12, treating Tibullan and Propertian passages less extensively.

its construction as magic carmina enhances this generic characterisation through its evocation of social discourse. This equally applies to the connection of magic with the embodiment of the poetic text: as we will see, only the appearance of the female elegiac beloveds is characterised as magic enchantment. Marathus, the Tibullan narrator’s puer delicatus in elegies 1.4, 1.8 and 1.9, is not associated with magic. Notably, however, the elegiac lover expresses the boy’s ability to deceive in terms which are strikingly reminiscent of the catalogues of the feats which duplicitous magic carmina can accomplish.41

Faraone also argues that erotic spells encompassed their own social constructions of gender, with spells to induce unbridled passion — those most explicitly associated with aggressive amatory pursuit — figuring their practitioners, male or female, as masculine.42 In love-elegy, this redresses the gendered balance in the relationship as the lovers covertly express their masculine role in courtship through these spells; this reversal is reflected intertextually as the female witches in their models adopt similarly masculine roles in their courtships, particularly Theocritus’ Simaetha.43 Metapoetically, this expression of the narrator’s masculine role through the discourse of love-magic mirrors the extratextual poet and his control over his text.

Over the course of this study we investigate elegiac love-magic in relation to two themes — magic carmina and the beauty of the puella — and this, together with my intertextual approach and my aim of chronicling the origins and development of the motif in Augustan love-elegy, determines the structure of my thesis. I divide the material into two parts, each of which treats one of our themes: the first half, which includes Chapters 1 and 2, treats the connection of magic with poetic carmina; the second, Chapter 3, focuses on the association of the mistress’ beauty with magic, approaching the relationship between magic and carmina through the puella’s role as a literary construct — this thread runs through our whole discussion, but we develop it

41 Tibullus 1.9.35-38: “illis eriperes verbis mihi sidera caeli | lucere et pronas fluminis esse vias. | quin etiam flebas, at non ego fallere doctus | tergebam umentes credulus usque genas.” Lee-Stecum 1998 pp. 253-254 highlights the similarity between Tibullus 1.9.35-38 and the powers attributed to witches though he does not comment on magic’s metapoetic significance or on Marathus as a personification of Tibullan love-elegy.
most fully at this point. The first half of our study includes two chapters as the quantity of the Ovidian material which relates to the theme of magic and poetic *carmina* is great enough to warrant an individual chapter. Each of our themes plays out from the very beginning of love-elegy as we have it, though each engages in dialogue with a different poetic genre. The construction of elegiac *carmina* as magic develops through the genre’s self-definition against Vergilian and Theocritean pastoral; the representation of the *puella*’s beauty as magic enchantment engages with Horatian iambic. Accordingly, each half opens from the start of the Augustan elegiac tradition and follows the theme chronologically through the genre; I postpone a discussion of the dating of Propertius’ and Tibullus’ first collections until Chapter 3, as it is most applicable to the dialogue between these books and Horace’s *Epodes*.

We begin the first half of our investigation in Chapter 1 by exploring the relationship of early Propertian and Tibullan love-elegy with magic in pastoral poetry, specifically in Vergil *Eclogue* 8.64-109 and Theocritus *Idyll* 2. I use close readings of magic in Propertius 1.1 and 2.4, Tibullus 1.2, Propertius 2.28 and Tibullus 1.8 to investigate how these elegists recall their predecessors’ metapoetic use of the motif to give it the same charge in their own work while adapting it to foreground the characteristics of elegiac verse — its capacity for deceit and illusion, and its failure to enchant the beloved in contrast with its effects on the fictional lover and on the poet’s extratextual audience — and to mark out the position of their work in the Neoteric and Alexandrian poetic traditions at Rome. Our second chapter builds on these readings to explore Ovid’s development of the motif in *Amores* 3.7, *Heroides* 6 and 12, and *Remedia amoris*. Approaching magic in these texts through their intra- and intertextual dialogues with one another and with Propertian and Tibullan elegy can reinforce, and highlight new, examples of the motif which situate these works, particularly Ovid’s epistolary and erotodidactic poems, in the elegiac tradition while reflecting on the ironies of the motif in the genre. In my discussions of *Amores* 3.7 and *Heroides* 6, I also combine evidence of Greco-Roman magical practice with Ovidian intratextuality to extend metapoetic readings of the motif.

In Chapter 3, the second half of the thesis, we again pick up from the beginning of Augustan love-elegy, this time to examine the characterisation of the *puella*’s beauty and its
effect on her lover in terms of magic. We firstly consider how this functions in the narratives of early Propertian and Tibullan elegy, and how the beloved’s status as an embodiment of the poetic text relates to the poet’s equation of his *carmina* with magic. Our initial survey of Propertian and Tibullan elegy also provides the basis for the rest of the chapter, in which the *puella*’s metaliterary association with magic forms the hub of an intertextual dialogue between Propertius’ and Tibullus’ first collections and Canidia, a witch and personification of iambic poetics, in Horace’s *Epodes* 5 and 17. These readings of Horace’s poems underline the prominence of magic and female beauty in early elegy, indicating that the theme was recognisable to a contemporary audience; they also illustrate an alternative use of magic to symbolise poetic interaction. We end this chapter by considering Propertius’ response to Horace’s “anti-Cynthia” in his elegy 3.6, and what the interaction between early love-elegy and the *Epodes* can add to our understanding of Canidia.

We conclude this study by briefly considering Ovid’s erotodidactic elegy as a genre which emerges from Augustan love-elegy and which, through its continual self-definition through and reflection on this tradition, can offer a retrospective look at the material which we consider in Chapters 1-3. The bulk of this discussion will focus on Ovid’s now-fragmentary *Medicamina faciei femineae*, an erotodidactic work which draws together magic, female beauty and elegiac verse in an extended illustration of elegiac poetics while it engages with Vergil’s *Georgics* to root Ovid’s new hybrid genre in the Augustan poetic canon.
Chapter 1. Magic between Pastoral and Elegy

We begin by considering elegiac interaction with magic in two pastoral texts: Vergil *Eclogue* 8 — the earliest extant treatment of magic in Latin poetry — and its model, Theocritus *Idyll* 2.¹ Both of these works narrate the performance of an amatory ritual, interweaving the recitation of the spell with the composition and recitation of the poem;² while commentators regularly cite both as parallels for magic in elegy, they rarely note or develop the implications of this metapoetic dimension for the elegiac texts. In this chapter, we look at magic in Propertian and Tibullan love-elegy which engages with these models to see how this interaction activates metapoetic subtexts in their poems, and how Propertius and Tibullus adapt their models to reflect the defining characteristics of their genre while using the background of these pastoral texts to augment the narratives of individual elegies. I firstly introduce Theocritus *Idyll* 2 and Vergil *Eclogue* 8, highlighting how magic functions in them and suggesting reasons why the elegists draw on these models; this provides a basis for the rest of the chapter, in which we explore elegiac interaction with these works through close readings of five elegies — Propertius 1.1 and 2.4, Tibullus 1.2 and 1.8, and Propertius 2.28. Before we begin, a word is needed about Cornelius Gallus, Propertius’ and Tibullus’ generic predecessor, with whom Vergil’s *Eclogues* already engaged in close intertextual dialogue and whose own love-elegy may have featured magic. It is, of course, possible that the later elegists recall Gallus’ work in their metapoetic use of this theme; the near-total loss of Gallan love-elegy makes this impossible to determine with


² By describing the rites as they are performed, the poem can be seen, too, as analogous to the spell which accompanies ritual action in magic.
certainty. As our readings in this chapter will show, however, the elegists’ detailed engagement with the Vergilian and Theocritean works suggests that positing a lost Gallan model or models for magic in Propertian and Tibullan love-elegy is unnecessary.

**Theocritus *Idyll 2* and Vergil *Eclogue 8***

Theocritus *Idyll 2* and Vergil *Eclogue 8* associate poetry and magic through the narration of a magic ritual. Each poem raises the themes of deceit and self-delusion through magic and poetry which fail to control human emotions or the natural world: these themes are central to Latin love-elegy and recur throughout the metapoetic use of magic to comment on elegy and the character of the narrator. This discussion considers elements of the two texts which recur throughout this chapter; I introduce some particular points later as it will be more helpful to consider them alongside the individual passages they relate to. I summarise each work and outline their respective associations of poetry with magic, highlighting elements of deceit and failure, before commenting briefly on questions of genre.

Theocritus *Idyll 2* is the “dramatic monologue” of Simaetha, a young girl attempting love-magic, accompanied by her maid, Thestylos, to regain the affections of her unfaithful beloved, Delphis. The poem divides into two parts, each with a specific refrain: in the first section (1-63), Simaetha undertakes her fire-spells, punctuating each stanza by commanding her *iunx* to draw her man to her house (“ιὐγξ, ἕλκε τὸν τηρον ἐμὸν ποτὶ δῶμα τὸν ἄνδρα”); in the second (64-158), Simaetha tells the moon-goddess, Selene, the story of her love for Delphis, repeatedly exhorting Selene to perceive the origin of her love (“φράζεό μευ τὸν ἔρωθ’ ὅθεν ἱκετο, πότνα Σελάνα”). Following her preparatory rites, Simaetha reveals Delphis’ neglect and possible infidelity; she declares that she will confront Delphis the next day but now she will bind him with fire-spells (1-10). Simaetha begins her ritual by invoking Selene and Hecate, asking the latter to make her drugs as powerful as those of Medea, Circe or Perimede (10-16); she adds materials — including barley, bay, bran, and wax — to the flames, stating the sympathetic effect

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3 For the likelihood of magic as a theme in Gallus’ elegies: Cairns 2006 p. 202 n. 41.
4 Dover 1971 p. 94 and Goldhill 1991 p. 261 describe *Idyll 2* as a “dramatic monologue”.

24
she desires each to have on Delphis (17-29), and uses a bronze rhombus to draw him to her threshold (29-30). When dogs bark in the town she believes that they herald Hecate’s arrival and she orders Thestyris to sound the bronze (35-36). In the ensuing silence, Simaetha libates to Artemis and prays thrice for Delphis to forget her rivals (43-46); she uses hippomanes to make Delphis come madly to her (48-51) and burns a fringe of his clothing (53-56) before revealing her plan to prepare a wicked drink for him the next day (58) and ordering Thestyris to knead their magic materials into his threshold (59-61). On Thestyris’ departure, Simaetha laments her infatuation from her first sight of Delphis: she details the madness and the physical symptoms of her love (82-90) and augments her narrative by reporting four embedded speeches, including Delphis’ seductions, which emphasise his untrustworthy and fickle character in contrast to her own truthfulness and to the reliability of the gossip who informed her of his infidelity (145-154). In the final lines, Simaetha reveals that she possesses powerful Assyrian drugs to use against Delphis if her current incantation fails (159-162) before she resolves to bear her love as she has done until now and bids farewell to the departing moon and stars (163-166).

Vergil Eclogue 8 presents a singing-contest between two shepherds, Damon and Alphesiboeus, each performing a monologue in a first-person persona which is introduced by the external narrating poet. The poem blends four of Theocritus’ Idylls: Damon’s song combines Thyris’ song from Idyll 1 with the unsuccessful komos of Idyll 3 and Polyphemus’ song from Idyll 11; Alphesiboeus’ adapts Simeatha’s rites from Idyll 2.1-63. The narrator relates the powers of the shepherds’ carmina (1-5) and dedicates the poem to an anonymous addressee


25
Damon’s shepherd laments his love for the unfaithful Nysa, who now marries another (22-41). The shepherd declares Amor’s cruelty and his destructive effect on humans (43-50), expressing the turmoil of the world through a series of *adyrnata* before threatening to cast himself into the sea (52-61). The narrator invokes the Muses’ aid (62-63) before relating Alphesiboeus’ reply (64-109). Alphesiboeus’ witch narrates her performance of love-magic with her companion, Amaryllis, to draw home her beloved, Daphnis. After extolling the powers of *carmina*, the witch performs sympathetic rites to influence Daphnis’ feelings towards her — binding a figurine and leading it around her altar; weaving knots of Venus; adding wax, clay, and laurel to her fire; burying Daphnis’ clothes under her threshold (64-80) — before revealing her possession of Moeris’ Pontic herbs, the powers of which she witnessed (91-99). She orders Amaryllis to take the ashes of the burnt materials and toss them into the river, declaring that Moeris’ herbs will force Daphnis to her since he cares nothing for songs (101-105). In the concluding stanza the fire reignites and the dog barks at the threshold, signs the witch interprets as signalling Daphnis’ return (105-109); before ending her spell, however, she questions whether she can trust her senses or whether lovers only create dreams for themselves (108).

Theocritus *Idyll* 2 interweaves magic and poetry by drawing on contemporary magic practice. Simaetha’s materials and actions in the first half (1-63) parallel those in the *PGM*; her incantation reflects the structure, language and formulae of prayers in the *PGM* and *defixiones*,

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with her lament (64-158), as Petrović argues, comprising a prayer for justice such as found on curse-tablets. Faraone and Petrović highlight correspondences between *Idyll* 2 and a tradition of hexametrical incantations in magical and other ritual texts and in their poetic representations: Petrović suggests that Theocritus’ use of this tradition underlines the realism of Simaetha’s spell and promotes metrical incantation to the level of erudite poetry, making Simaetha a witch performing an incantation and a poet composing verses. The importance of song for Simaetha’s magic is reinforced by the first refrain (17-63) apostrophising the *iunx*, here signifying “charm” or “spell”. Petrović suggests that Simaetha’s declaration that she will sing her spells (“ἀλλά, Σέλανα, | φαίνε καλόν· τίν γαρ ποταέισοιμαι ἄσυχα, δαίμον | τὰ χρονιὰ θ’ Ἑκάτα”, 10-12) and “lament” (“δακρύσω”, 64) her tale to Selene indicates her appreciation of her status as a poet; nevertheless this self-awareness remains limited: Simaetha perceives her composition only as an incantation, unconscious that she is creating a poem, and so fails to cure her love through song or to influence Delphis through magic.

Hints in the idyll that Simaetha is neither an experienced nor a proficient witch indicate that her love-magic fails. The young woman’s reaction to the dogs’ barking (“ά θεός ἐν τριόδοισι· τὸ χαλκόν ὡς τάχος ἄχει”, 36) illustrates this: clashing the bronze dispels Hecate, whom Simaetha’s rites aimed to summon; her desire for Thestylis’ rapid action betrays her fear

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10 Petrović 2007 pp. 39-40; Faraone 1999 pp. 152-153 n. 74 suggests that Vergil’s substitution of “*iunx*” with “*carmina*” in the refrain of *Eclogue* 8.64-109 indicates that he considered Theocritus’ *iunx* to be synonymous with incantation; cf. Duncan 2001 p. 48 — Simaetha’s *iunx* works “at several levels: at the literal, to cast her spell; on the literary, to allude to other poets and enchantresses; and on the figurative, to accompany her song with music, as a poet accompanied himself with a lyre.” For the *iunx* associated with verbal persuasion and enchantment: Johnston 1995 pp. 177-206; conversely, Faraone 1993 pp. 1-19 examines the physical treatment of the *iunx* and wryneck bird in erotic magic.
and inexperience. Simaetha’s recollection of visiting every magically-skilled old woman for help with her infatuation (“ἡ ποίας ἐλπιῶν γραίας δόμον, ἅτις ἐπάδεν;”, 91) further implies her lack of expertise. Simaetha’s request that the goddesses enhance the potency of her drugs also suggests her ineptitude:

φάρμακα ταῦτα ἔρδωσα χερέινα μήτε τι Κύρκης μήτε τι Μηδείας μήτε ξανθᾶς Περιμήδας.

(Theocritus Idyll 2.15-16)

“Perimede” only occurs here and in Propertius 2.4.7-8, a couplet which recalls these lines. Simaetha likely means Agamede, described at Iliad 11.740-741 as blonde and skilled in all drugs (“ξανθὴν Ἀγαμήδην, | ἣ τόσα φάρμακα ᾔδη ὅσα τρέφει εὐρεῖα χθών”), a mistake which betrays her amateurishness and also her shortcomings as a narrator; her choice of Circe and Medea, who could not retain their lovers by magic, as models for her love-spell compounds this error, foreshadowing her spell’s failure to attract Delphis.

Simaetha’s questionable reliability as a narrator becomes more prominent in her lament to Selene. As a prayer for justice, Simaetha’s narrative aims to provoke the goddess’ sympathy and enlist her aid, as well as to explain her recourse to magic, by emphasising Delphis’ guilt and unjust treatment of her and her own innocence. Simaetha employs three main devices to influence the portraits of herself and Delphis. She characterises her beloved as heartless (“ὡστοργος”, 112) and herself as too trusting (“ταχυπειθής”, 138) framing Delphis’ reported

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13 Petrović 2007 p. 52.
speech to heighten the impression of his dishonesty.\textsuperscript{17} Literary allusions in her narrative reinforce these pointed adjectives: Simaetha evokes Odysseus’ deceitfulness at \textit{Iliad} 3.216-219 to illustrate Delphis’ dishonesty at the introduction of his seduction (112-113), and enhances her contrastingly genuine passion (106-110) by recalling Sappho fr. 31.7-13 L.P.\textsuperscript{18} Finally, Simaetha manipulates Homeric formulae to influence Selene’s perception of the four speeches embedded in her lament and to guide Selene towards those which convey the “true” impressions of Delphis and herself which she wishes the goddess to believe: Simaetha’s honest confession of her infatuation to Thestylis (“τὸν ἀλαθέα μυθον”, 94) and the mother of Philista and Melixo’s truthful report of Delphis’ infidelity (“ταῦτα μοι ἀξείνα μυθήσατο, ἐστι δ’ ἀλαθης “, 154).\textsuperscript{19} As narrator, Simaetha’s focalisation influences the content of these speeches, as verbal echoes in her monologue reveal: Simaetha’s description of her infatuation as no light matter (“ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲν ἐλαφρόν”, 92), for example, resonates in Delphis’ speech when he reports that his friends describe him as “ἐλαφρός” (124), fleet-footed and fickle.\textsuperscript{20} This echo enhances Simaetha’s presentation of Delphis’ guilt by contrasting his character unfavourably with her passion and illustrates her involvement in his reported speech, destabilising her trustworthiness as a narrator and her self-represented honesty. Simaetha’s prayer for justice makes the distortion of the truth integral to her magic, an element which resonates in elegiac magic. Simaetha’s magic also illustrates her self-deception: her final resolution to bear her love as she has done so far indicates that she remains convinced of its power to change Delphis’ feelings.\textsuperscript{21}


\textsuperscript{18} Segal 1984 pp. 201-208, arguing that Simaetha is ironically unconscious of her allusions; cf. Goldhill 1991 pp. 267-272, and Petrović 2007 pp. 46-47, who suggest that Simaetha is less naïve.


\textsuperscript{21} Petrović 2007 pp. 52-56 and cf. p. 65. For Simaetha’s self-deception through magic and poetic enchantment: Griffiths 1979 pp. 81-90, though Griffiths argues that Simaetha’s song eventually releases her from her infatuation.
Vergil Eclogue 8.64-109 modifies the realism of Idyll 2 to create a more “literary” representation of poetic composition and power. The first three stanzas and the refrain of Alphesiboeus’ song particularly emphasise the powers of poetry and incantation. These passages are key for the elegies in this chapter, and it will be helpful to consider them here.

Alphesiboeus’ witch introduces *carmina* as essential to her magic at the beginning of her rites:

\[
\text{effe aquam et molli cinge haec altaria vitta} \\
\text{verbenasque adole pinguis et mascula tura,} \\
\text{coniugis at magicis sanos avertere sacris} \\
\text{experiar sensus; nihil hic nisi carmina desunt.}
\]

(Vergil Eclogue 8.64-67)

Vergil removes the narrative of Simeatha’s abandonment by Delphis and her aim of confronting him the following day (8-9), concentrating the reader’s attention on magic and *carmina* as his witch’s tools and intensifying the focus on poetry. The refrain reinforces this emphasis (“*ducite ab urbe domum, mea carmina, ducite Daphnin*”, 68), with its repetition after each stanza affirming the centrality of poetry to the eclogue.

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24 This contrasts with Simeatha specifying fire as central to her magic (“*ἐκ θεών*”, 10): Tavenner 1942 pp. 33-37 compares the use of fire in Theocritus *Idyll* 2 and Vergil *Eclogue* 8 noting (p. 35) that in *Eclogue* 8 “no god is called upon […] the whole power lies in the *carmina* and the magic acts.”

25 Papanghelis 1999 p. 54.

The second stanza develops this theme, listing the powers of magic *carmina*:

\[
\text{carmina vel caelo possunt deducere lunam,}
\]
\[
\text{carminibus Circe socios mutavit Ulixi,}
\]
\[
\text{frigidus in pratis cantando rumpitur anguis.}
\]

(Vergil *Eclogue* 8.69-71)

deducere (69), used programmatically by Roman poets for the composition of refined Callimachean verse, indicates the connection between these magic *carmina* and poetry. Vergil employs the verb in this sense in *Eclogue* 6: in the adaptation of Callimachus’ *Aetia* prologue (3-5), Apollo tells Tityrus that a shepherd should rear a fat flock but sing a fine-spun song (“pastorem, Tityre, pinguis | pascere oportet ovis, deductum dicere carmen”, 4-5); Linus, handing Gallus the pipes of the Muses, recalls how Hesiod drew trees from the mountains with their singing (“ille solebat | cantando rigidas deductere montibus ornos”, 70-71).\(^27\) *Eclogues* 6 and 8 are the only poems in the collection which feature deducere; its explicit connection with poetry in the former affirms the association between magic and poetry in our text; an echo between *Eclogue* 8.69-71 and the introduction of the shepherds’ songs internally cements this:

\[
\text{pastorum Musam Damonis et Alphesiboei,}
\]
\[
\text{inmemor herbarum quos est mirata iuvenc}
\]
\[
\text{certantis, quorum stupefactae carmine lynces,}
\]
\[
\text{et mutata suos requierunt flumina cursus,}
\]
\[
\text{Damonis Musam dicemus et Alphesiboei.}
\]

(Vergil *Eclogue* 8.1-5)

The pastoral Muse (1) and its influence over animals and the natural world (2-4) — aligning the shepherds with Orpheus and Linus in *Eclogue* 6 (30 and 67-73) — characterise both singers’ *carmina* as poems.\(^28\) “muto” (4) describes the effect of Circe’s spells (“carminibus Circe socios mutavit Ulixi”, 70) signalling that these, too, represent poetry.\(^29\) The third stanza of Alphesiboeus’ song narrates the binding of a figurine with multi-coloured cords and instructs Amaryllis to weave and knot the strands (73-78): “necte tribus nodis [...] | [...] et ‘Veneris’ dic vincula necto’” (77-78). Weaving was an established metaphor for poetic composition, one


Weaving the threads in Eclogue 8.77-78 combines this metaphor with practical magic, illustrating that the witch’s spells dramatise poetic creation.

The witch expresses no doubt in the powers of carmina at Eclogue 8.69-71, nor in her corresponding description of the capabilities of Moeris’ herbs (95-99). The association of these powers with Circe (70) and Medea (“Ponto […] | […] Ponto”, 95-96) — evoking Simaetha’s pairing at Idyll 2.15-16 — introduces doubts about their efficacy for love-magic or love-poetry.\footnote{Solodow 1977 p. 759 and MacDonald 2005 p. 19 highlight Eclogue 8.70 as alluding to Idyll 2.15-16, without developing the connection I suggest.}

The penultimate verse of the poem makes these doubts explicit when the witch questions her belief in magic: “credimus? an, qui amant, ipsi sibi somnia fingunt?” (108).\footnote{Solodow 1977 p. 761 discusses the effect of Vergil “undercutting” his earlier presentations of the power of poetry here.}


Eclogue 8 also introduces deceit through poetry and magic, expressed as the self-delusion of lovers (108). Fingo connotes poetic composition; the witch’s doubt suggests that lovers create fantasies for themselves by composing poetic carmina which are as powerless and illusory as magic.\footnote{Segal 1987 p. 177 interprets “somnia fingunt” as raising “the inventive power of poetry”: he describes the witch’s “dominant characteristic” as “her credulity and naiveté about the power of magic”, only mentioning “self-delusion” in connection with Corydon in Eclogue 2; cf. Warden 1980 p. 102 on Propertius 4.1.135: “a common meaning of fingere is to devise something that is false and misleading […]” OLD s.v. fingere 6a; cf. OLD s.v. somnia 2.}

The closing line of the eclogue confirms this self-deception and poetry’s enchanting power over the poet: despite voicing her doubts in magic and acknowledging the dreams lovers weave, the witch
concludes her spell and poem by affirming her belief in its success. The elegists combine this element with Simaetha’s deception of her internal audience and of herself in their enchantment of themselves and their beloveds.

We can highlight further reasons for the elegists’ engagement with these Vergilian and Theocritean works, namely generic engagement and self-definition in the literary tradition. The *Eclogues* were a significant model for the love-elegy of Propertius, Tibullus and Ovid; as we noted in the introduction to this chapter, the collection had engaged in an intergeneric dialogue with the love-elegy of Cornelius Gallus, Vergil’s fictionalised version of whom is a central figure in *Eclogues* 6 and 10. Eclogue 8, too, blends elegiac love into the pastoral. Each song relates a first-person narrator’s unrequited love for an unfaithful or absent beloved: the “triangle” of Damon’s shepherd, Nysa and Mopsus evokes the elegiac dynamic of the lover-narrator, unfaithful beloved and successful rival. Nysa’s former affection is characterised as worthless and fickle (“indigno [...] amore”, 18), echoing in Gallus’ elegiac passion in Eclogue 10 (“Naides, indigno cum Gallus amore peribat”, 10); Damon’s shepherd describes himself as deceived by...
Nysa (“deceptus”, 18) and his song as a “lament” (“queror”, 19). The combined allusion to Theocritus’ Idylls 2.82 (“χῶς ἴδον, ὡς ἐμάνην, ὡς μοι τυρί θυμός ἱάφθη”) and 3.42 (“ὡς ἴδεν, ὡς ἐμάνη, ὡς ἐς βαθὺν ἅλατ’ ἐρωτα”) at Eclogue 8.41 (“ut vidi, ut perii, ut me malus abstulit error”) evokes the goatherd as exclusus amator from Theocritus’ pastoral paraclausithyron and the maddening love inspired by first sight of the beloved. Alphesiboeus’ witch similarly calls Daphnis “perfidus” (91) and her description of the clothing he left behind suggests his betrayal of his amatory vow (“pignora cara sui […] terra, tibi mando; debent haec pignora Daphnin”, 92-93), as does his disregard for the gods (“nihil ille deos […] curat”, 103). Daphnis’ infidelity is reinforced by his model, Theocritus’ Delphis, and his namesake Daphnis who, according to the Sicilian version of his myth, broke his oath of fidelity to a nymph. Daphnis’ presence in the city and his disregard for songs (“nil carmina curat”, 103) also associate him with the elegiac beloved.

These elegiac elements are set in a pastoral frame: the competition structure detaches the singers from the experiences of their personae and creates the impression of a dialogue which contrasts with love-elegy’s predominant first-person narration; the witch’s command that her songs draw Daphnis back from the city (“ab urbe”), elegy’s usual setting, reinforces the rural

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42 Coleman 1977 p. 249 highlights the “legal metaphor” in Eclogue 8.92-93.
location.\textsuperscript{45} Vergil’s christening of the witch’s beloved “Daphnis” emphasises his pastoral connections through his namesake, the mythical shepherd and often-accredited inventor of bucolic song whose death and resistance to love Thyrsis relates at Theocritus \textit{Idyll} 1.61-142.\textsuperscript{46} Elegiac engagement with \textit{Eclogue} 8 re-frames Vergilian pastoral in elegy, picking up the \textit{Eclogues’} intergeneric dialogue with Gallan love-elegy from the opposite side and underlining the urban location through their engagement with Theocritus \textit{Idyll} 2. Elegy removes the distancing frame of the pastoral song-contest with the result that the fictional lover-narrator, homonymous with the external poet, echoes the shepherds’ \textit{personae} in his own voice: just like Simaetha, a sole narrator with a self-conscious amatory lament. These adaptations assimilate the male elegiac narrators to the female Vergilian and Theocritean narrators and \textit{personae}: as we will see, this equates the elegies with their predecessors’ poetic spells and characterises the elegiac narrators in the light of these models. With this background established, we are equipped to consider the elegies. We begin with Propertius 1.1, a programmatic elegy which associates magic with poetry and which echoes throughout later metapoetic examples of the motif; taking this work as our starting point will provide a sound basis for exploring the rest of the texts in this chapter.

\textbf{Propertius 1.1}

Propertius 1.1 outlines the poetics and themes of Book 1.\textsuperscript{47} Commentators recognise the petition to magic at 1.1.19-24 as relating to Propertius’ poetry, particularly its inability to influence Cynthia’s affections, and cite lexical and thematic parallels with \textit{Eclogue} 8; few, however, explore these correspondences further. Ahl is a notable exception: commenting that

\begin{footnotesize}

\textsuperscript{46} Berg 1974 p. 121; Van Sickle 1978 pp. 216-217 suggests that Vergil’s selection of this name shows that he understood Delphis in Theocritus \textit{Idyll} 2 as a “complement” to Daphnis in \textit{Idyll} 1. For Daphnis as the creator of pastoral: Halperin 1983 pp. 79-80; cf. Segal 1981a p. 42.

\textsuperscript{47} Ross 1975 p. 60.
\end{footnotesize}
Propertius 1.1.19-24 “recalls” Eclogue 8.64-109, Ahl suggests that Propertius’ role as poet makes him “a practitioner of spells” similar to the witches — as “they may be able to draw down the moon, he may be able to lure Cynthia” — though he does not develop this observation. Ross and Heyworth each propose poetic interpretations of 1.1.19-24 with reference to Vergil Eclogue 6: Ross suggests that “deductae” (1.1.19) recalls Eclogue 6.70-71 (“[…] quibus ille solebat | cantando rigidas deductere montibus ornos”), with Propertius addressing Neoteric poets; Heyworth, developing Ross’s reading, proposes that Propertius appeals to poets (1.1.19) and to witches (20). I suggest, instead, that the context of magic and the similarity of 1.1.19 and Eclogue 8.69 indicates that we should read this passage as a condensed allusion to Vergil Eclogue 8 and Theocritus Idyll 2 through which Propertius introduces his elegiac poetics as an enchanting fallacia, expressing the duplicity of his poetic work and of the fictional world it creates, as well as establishing the failure of elegy to influence the beloved in the narrative. This suggests, in turn, that the “vos” to whom the narrator appeals are Alphesiboeus’ witch and Simaetha, literary witches whose magic symbolises poetry and its composition. We can also read 1.1.19-24 as the focal part of a structural allusion to Eclogue 8 across Propertius’ elegy which foreshadows the introduction of magic and, in the second half of the poem, enacts the construction of love-elegy as a spell. Propertius introduces his Vergilian model at the beginning of 1.1 — as this allusion introduces themes expanded in the appeal to magic, it will be useful to start here. I offer a brief overview of the poem before considering the passages central to our investigation.


50 This expands an initial discussion of Propertius 1.1.19 as an allusion to Vergil Eclogue 8.69 in my MA dissertation: Chadha 2008 pp. 36-40. As well as extending my previous consideration of the relationship between these poems and magic in elegy, my new interpretation differs in key points from that in my earlier thesis.
The narrator announces his infatuation — characterised simultaneously as magical enchantment, disease, and capture — with Cynthia (1-2).\(^{51}\) He describes his domination by his mistress and by Amor, who taught him to hate *castas puellas* and to live a chaotic life (3-6): his *furor* has now lasted for a year (7). The lover offers his addressee, Tullus, the *exemplum* of Milanion conquering Atalanta to illustrate the value of prayers and services for lovers of old (9-16), but stresses that now *tardus Amor* furnishes him with no *artes* and forgets the well-trodden paths. The second half of 1.1 expands the hopelessness of the narrator’s situation as he turns for aid to parties he presents as unable to help him: he demands that illusory magic force Cynthia to love him (19-24) and petitions friends for medical remedies or to accompany him to lands far from women (25-30). The narrator finally addresses happy lovers, contrasting their situations with his own bitter experience and urging them to heed his advice and avoid his curse or repeat his suffering in their turn (31-38).

Propertius firstly evokes *Eclogue* 8 to express Amor’s ruthless treatment:

\[
\textit{et caput impositis pressit Amor pedibus,}
\textit{donec me docuit castas odisse puellas}
\textit{improbus, et nullo vivere consilia.}
\]

(Propertius 1.1.4-6)

The combination of “Amor […] | […] *docuit*” (4-5) and “*improbus*” (6) recalls the brutality of love which Damon’s shepherd laments:\(^{52}\)

\[
\textit{saevus Amor docuit natorum sanguine matrem}
\textit{commaculare manus. crudelis tu quoque, mater.}
\textit{crudelis mater magis, an puer improbus ille?}
\textit{improbus ille puer; crudelis tu quoque, mater.}
\]

(Vergil *Eclogue* 8.47-50)

The “*mater*” (47) is Medea, whose abandonment and intense love drove her to infanticide.\(^{53}\) Propertius’ allusion to these lines concludes his programmatic adaptation (1.1.1-6) of Meleager’s pederastic epigram *A.P.* 12.101. Propertius’ modifications of *A.P.* 12.101 illustrate his elegiac

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amatory position: Propertius alters the gender of Meleager’s beloved, Myiscus; he replaces the
dialogue of the epigram with the single voice of the lover-narrator; and omits Meleager’s
grandiose comparison of his plight with Zeus’. These changes eliminate the generalising tone
of A.P. 12.101, highlighting the uniqueness of the Propertian narrator’s amatory experience and
reflecting his effeminising servitium to Cynthia. Propertius’ allusion to Eclogue 8.47-50
replaces the epigram’s final lines, complementing the adaptations of this work: Propertius
removes Damon’s expression of love’s destructiveness from the de-personalising pastoral frame
and the dialogue-form of the song-contest, presenting it in his single first-person voice; the
heterosexual love of Damon’s song underlines Propertius’ modification of the pederastic
epigram. Most significantly for our focus on magic, Propertius’ allusion to the Vergilian lines
swaps Meleager’s self-comparison with Zeus for Amor’s domination of Medea. This emphasises
the power of the god and of Cynthia, personalising the example further by making Propertius’
narrator the subject of Amor’s teaching (5); by replacing Medea in the Vergilian exemplum,
Propertius underlines his narrator’s violent, and potentially dangerous, passion and equates him
with the witch early in 1.1, echoing the sequence of his model to foreshadow the reappearance of
magic at the centre of the elegy.

54 Levin 1969 p. 228 calls Propertius 1.1.5-6 “quite distinct” from Meleager A.P. 12.101.5-6; cf.
Levin 1975 pp. 219-220 and Coutelle pp. 71-72 for Propertius’ Milanion-exemplum (1.1.9-16)
replacing the end of Meleager A.P. 12.101.
Fedeli 1980 pp. 61-62 proposes that Propertius follows Catullus’ adaptation of Meleager
Fantuzzi 2003 pp. 5-6 for Vergil’s “‘programmatic’ imitations” of Meleager A.P. 7.196 in
Eclogue 1.1-2.
56 Batstone 1992 p. 295 suggests that Propertius contrasts Damon’s “abstract and general” song
with his “personal narrative” and “implicit claim to an unchronicled experience”, though
Batstone does not mention Meleager A.P. 12.101.
57 Propertius’ removal of the singing-contest frame of Eclogue 8 also contributes to the elegiac
lover’s flexible gendered stance — at 1.1.4-6, echoing Damon’s male persona underlines the
reassertion of the lover’s masculinity after his opening statement of servitude to Cynthia;
equating himself with Medea immediately calls this reversal into question. In 1.1.19-24,
Propertius’ narrator aligns himself with Alphesiboeus’ female speaker — again associated with
Medea (24) — underlining his effeminised position alongside his recourse to a stereotypically
“feminine” power; his evocation of the socially “masculine” use of erotic magic in Eclogue 8,
and in Idyll 2, maintains the balance in the corresponding opening lines. For Propertius’
p. 759 highlights the references to Medea across Eclogue 8 in connection with magic: “The poem
begins with suggestions of magic, which become explicit only later.” For Medea as an
“abandoned lover” in love-elegy: Prince 2002 pp. 142-164. Propertius’s narrator makes himself a
cautionary exemplum to other lovers at 1.1.31-38.
Magic lies at the heart of 1.1:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{at vos, deductae quibus est fallacia lunae} \\
\text{et labor in magicis sacra piare foci,} \\
\text{en agedum dominae mentem converte nostrae,} \\
\text{et facite illa meo palleat ore magis.} \\
\text{tunc ego crediderim vobis et sidera et amnes} \\
\text{posse Cytiaeines ducere carminibus.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Propertius 1.1.19-24)

This passage forms a condensed allusion to Eclogue 8. As we have noted, Propertius’ appeal recalls Eclogue 8.69: “carmina vel caelo possunt deducere lunam”; deducere at 1.1.19 evokes Vergil’s use of magic as a metaphor for poetic composition, and this is enhanced by “deductae” (19) also recalling “deductum dicere carmen” at Eclogue 6.3. The concluding couplet (23-24) confirms this suggestion. carmina are introduced emphatically as the final word of the section (24), associated with guiding stars and rivers. The latter power evokes that of the shepherds at Eclogue 8.4 (“et mutata suos requierunt flumina cursus”), acknowledging the lexical connection between poetic powers and magic carmina (“mutavit”, 71); deducere (1.1.19) and ducere (24), connecting the opening and concluding lines, replicate this echo.58 “crediderim” (23) also recalls the penultimate line of Vergil’s work (“credimus? an, qui amant, ipsi sibi somnia fingunt?”, 108), concluding Propertius’ abridged adaptation of the poem. Structurally, “at vos” (19) echoes the Vergilian narrator’s central apostrophe to the Muses (“haec Damon; vos, quae responderit Alphesiboeus, | dicite, Pierides […]”, Eclogue 8.62-63), underlining Propertius’ transition to the connection between poetry and magic against the background of Alphesiboeus’ song, and the elegiac union of poet, narrator and witch-persona; “at vos” (19), “et vos” (25) and “vos” (31) at evenly spaced intervals throughout the second half of 1.1 create a stanzic arrangement which recalls the Vergilian poem and Theocritus Idyll 2, reinforcing the characterisation of Propertian love-elegy as magic.59

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59 Propertius 3.24.9-12, a passage which recalls 1.1.19-24 in Propertius’ final renunciation of Cynthia, reinforces the establishment of elegiac poetics through magic in our passage.
Concentrating Alphesiboeus’ song into six lines enables Propertius to foreground themes central to love-elegy: artifice and poetic powerlessness in love. 1.1.19 emphasises “fallacia”, deception and illusion, as a defining feature of Propertian elegy. Medea’s introduction alongside carmina (“Cytaeines […] carminibus”, 24) underlines this, opening a window allusion to Apollonius Rhodius’ Argonautica 4.59-60 where the Moon recalls how Medea often controlled her with “deceitful” spells (“δολίου ἀοδαίκ”, 59), a characteristic which Propertius picks up in “fallacia”. Propertius demonstrates that elegiac deception is directed three ways: towards Cynthia, towards his narrator, and towards his extratextual audience.

Lines 21-22 reveal the narrator’s intention of deceiving Cynthia with his elegies: his demand that his mistress’ face be paler than his own expresses his desire that she return his love to an even greater degree. As Bicknell highlights, “convertite” applies to the orbit of the moon, linking lines 21-22 with 19; “convertite” (21) also overlaps in sense with “avertere” (Eclogue 8.67) recalling the effect Alphesiboeus’ witch desired her carmina to have on Daphnis’ senses (“nihil hic nisi carmina desunt”, Eclogue 8.67) and indicating that the lover desires his elegies to enchant Cynthia with their fallacia as they enchant the moon. Cynthia’s name cements this

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62 Bicknell 1984 p. 69. OLD s.v. converto 5d and 7b; cf. OLD s.v. averto 1 and 2.
analogy: as the feminine of “Cynthius”, the Callimachean epithet for Apollo, it associates her with Diana, the earthly aspect of the *dea triformis* alongside chthonic Hecate and celestial Luna. This etymological connection replicates that between Daphnis and the laurel Alphesiboeus’ witch burns to affect him (“Daphnis me malus urit, ego hanc in Daphnide laurum”, Eclogue 8.83), and the similar association of Delphis’ name and the plant at Theocritus *Idyll* 2.23-26 (“ἐγὼ δ’ ἔπι Δέλφιδι δάφναν | αἴθω”, 23-24), replicating the persuasive analogies through which Alphesiboeus’ witch and Simaetha formulate their spells. These connections indicate that the lover will attempt to captivate and seduce Cynthia with poetic illusions, suggesting his own untrustworthiness in the process.

Cynthia’s association with the poetic enchantment of the moon also illustrates Propertius the poet’s deceit of his external readers. Wyke demonstrates Cynthia’s status as a “*scripta puella*”, an embodiment of Propertius’ elegiac poetics and text as well as a fictional beloved in the narrative: I suggest that 1.1.19 introduces this in the context of magic. As we have noted, Cynthia’s name associates her with Callimachean poetics, while *deducere* depicts the composition of fine, Callimachean verse: 1.1.19 thus addresses *carmina* which have the *fallacia* of the drawn-out moon”, with Cynthia’s enchantment symbolising the composition of the elegiac text and its effect on the extratextual audience as well as its narrative aim. We can clarify this suggestion with reference to Propertius 2.13.3-8, a passage through which Wyke outlines Cynthia’s identification with Propertius’ elegy and one which echoes our lines. At 2.13.7-8, Propertius recalls that Amor ordered him to compose poetry not to move trees and beasts but to amaze Cynthia: “*sed magis ut nostro stupefiat Cynthia versu: | tunc ego sim Inachio notior arte Lino*”. Wyke argues that Cynthia’s amazement “is expressed in the same vocabulary as the spellbinding of *natura*”, illustrating “an analogous yet favoured form of poetic production”

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66 Wyke 1987 pp. 58-60 offers this explanation for how Cynthia’s “stupefaction” by poetry represents the composition of elegy at Propertius 2.13.
to that expressed in Eclogue 6.71 (“cantando rigidas deducere montibus ornos”). We can add that 2.13.7-8 recalls 1.1.19-24 through the wish to affect Cynthia’s mind; “magis [...] tunc ego sim” (2.13.7-8) also echoes “magis tunc ego crederim” (1.1.22-23). “stupefacio” at 2.13.7 replicates the effect of the shepherds’ songs at Eclogue 8.3 (“[…] quorum stupefactae carmine lynces”), recalling the dialogue with Vergil’s work which we have traced in 1.1.19-24. By alerting Propertius’ audience to Cynthia’s status as a poetic fallacia, 1.1.19 reveals the elegiac affair as being a literary construct. As we have highlighted, the first-person narration by a homonymous persona sharing Propertius’ profession implies that the poems relate genuinely autobiographical experiences; by representing his poetry as a magic trick Propertius expresses the fictitiousness of his elegiac world. Revealing Cynthia’s illusiveness by evoking the image of the drawn-down moon highlights Propertius’ dexterity as a poet by demonstrating the enchanting power of his verses which can persuade his audience of the realism of his poetic subjects, however fantastic.

The narrator’s appeal to magic despite his scepticism of its success also signals his capacity for self-delusion. “crediderim” (23) underlines this by recalling Eclogue 8.108 (“credimus?”): Propertius’ condensed allusion to Alphesiboeus’ song juxtaposes the positive affirmations of the powers of carmina with their final destabilisation, emphasising the mutual hopelessness of magic and poetry in love and so the elegiac narrator’s greater capacity for self-delusion. By transposing the end of Eclogue 8 to the middle of his elegy and continuing the poem for fourteen lines in contrast to the single closing refrain, Propertius expands Alphesiboeus’ witch’s conscious self-deception through magic and poetry, structurally illustrating the bewitching effect of poetry’s promises on the elegiac lover — the “fallacia” of the false hope of arousing Cynthia’s affections.

70 The lover’s self-delusions about the power of magic and poetry balance this failure, generating the hope which leads him to continue composing poetry. Cf. Caston 2006 pp. 275-276 for a similar balance between hope and amatory despair in elegy.
This scepticism also implies the failure of love-elegy to beguile the beloved, in contrast
to its power over the audience. The background of *Eclogue* 8 and *Idyll* 2 aligns Propertius’
elegies with love-spells which failed to influence their targets and associates Cynthia with
unfaithful beloveds immune to magic and poetry, adumbrating the failure of his narrator’s
carmina to win her affection; Medea’s inclusion in 1.1.19-24, as Prince highlights, reinforces
these ideas of magic and poetic failure in love.\(^\text{71}\) As we noted in the previous section, Medea
already foreshadows the failure of love-magic in *Eclogue* 8 and *Idyll* 2; Propertius’ concentrated
allusion to these models intensifies her significance. In addition to the reference to Apollonius
Rhodius’ *Argonautica* 4.59-60, Propertius’ introduction of sidera (1.1.23) to the powers of
carmina in *Eclogue* 8 suggests that his window allusion encompasses *Argonautica* 3.531-533,
Argus’ list of the feats Medea’s drugs can accomplish: as well as quenching flames, Argus claims
that Medea can stop rivers flowing (“καὶ ποταμοὺς ἵστησιν ἄφαρ κελαδεινά ρέοντας”, 532)
and immobilise the moon and stars (“ἀστρα τε καὶ μήνης ἱερῆς ἐπέδησε κελεύθους”, 533).\(^\text{72}\)
Through this dialogue with his predecessors, Propertius highlights Medea’s importance as an
ironic model for love-elegy, underlining his poetry’s lack of success in love.\(^\text{73}\)

Two examples from Propertius Book 4 support the suggestion that *fallacia* (1.1.19)
establishes the nature of Propertius’ elegy. In 4.1, love-elegy is described as *fallax*; the vates
Horos, attempting to dissuade Propertius from his new aetiological program, reports Apollo’s
past order that Propertius compose elegies — “at tu finge elegos, fallax opus” (135).\(^\text{74}\) The

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\(^{71}\) Prince 2002 pp. 71-72 reads Medea’s presence in Propertius 1.1.24 as implying the failure of
magic and, “by analogy”, Propertius’ poetry to influence his love affairs; Prince does not
comment on Propertius’ engagement with Theocritus *Idyll* 2 and Vergil *Eclogue* 8 and with
Medea in these models.

\(^{72}\) Hunter 1989 pp. 154-155 notes the influence of *Argonautica* 3.531-533 on magic in Latin
literature; Fedeli 1980 p. 82 cites *Argonautica* 3.531 as a parallel for 1.1.23-24.

\(^{73}\) Prince 2002 p. 69 discusses Medea’s association with treachery through magic but without
reference to Propertius’ elegies or narrator in 1.1. For Medea’s magic and deceitful, enchanting
speech in Apollonius Rhodius’ *Argonautica*, particularly 4.442-444; Hunter 1993 pp. 144-145
and 59-60 and Clare 2002 pp. 252-253; cf. Albis 1996 pp. 81-89 for a metaliterary reading of
Medea’s magic.

\(^{74}\) The dominant reading “*fallax*” (4.1.135) is disputed; Murgia 1989 p. 268 and Goold 1990
adopt “*pellax*”. For “*fallax*” and its interpretation: Butler and Barber 1933 p. 332, Camps 1965 p.
102, Stahl 1985 p. 174, Janan 2001 p. 103; cf. Sharrock 1994 pp. 82-83 (on Ovid *Ars amatoria*
2). For *fallax vates*, spoken by Apollo, cf. [Tib.] 3.5.49-50: “quare ego quae dico non fallax
catalogue of amatory topoi (136-146) indicates that “elegos” (135) are love-elegies; the echo of “fallere” for deception by a puella at the end of Apollo’s speech frames the list of elegiac subjects (“persuasae fallere rima sat est”, 146), affirming the artifice of the genre. Commentators read fallax (135) either as illustrating elegy’s aim of “deceiving” the beloved; as describing its allusiveness and technical complexity; or as highlighting the elegiac lover’s deception by his mistress and by his poetry, which proffers hope of winning the puella but rarely satisfies it: as in 1.1.19, all of these interpretations are appropriate together. Apollo’s speech also echoes Propertius’ earlier elegies: in particular, Stahl notes that 4.1.135-136 evokes 2.7, 2.10, and 3.1, works in which Propertius “attempts to define his own [poetic] position”. This cluster of allusions to elegies concerning Propertius’ poetics increases the likelihood of “fallax” recalling “fallacia” in 1.1.19 and enhances our suggestion that this noun characterises Propertius’ love-elegy in his inaugural poem. In addition, Apollo’s words are reported by Horos whose close connection with Propertius is signalled by his self-characterisation as vates (75) and his profession as an astrologer, a form of divination associated with magic in Greco-Roman tradition and, through the interpretation of heavenly bodies, particularly appropriate for Propertius’ elegiac association with the moon. Cynthia furnishes our second parallel: in 4.7, Cynthia’s ghost returns to condemn her lover’s infidelity to her spirit and his new beloved’s contempt for her memory and household. Cynthia begins by asking if Propertius has forgotten their nocturnal


77 Stahl 1985 pp. 274-275, with p. 375 n. 7.

78 Cf. Murgia 1989 p. 269 for 4.1.143 (“illiis arbitrio noctem lucemque videbis”) corresponding to 1.1.6 (“nullo vivere consilio”).

adventures (15-20) and laments the oath he has betrayed, his “fallacia verba” (20). Cynthia’s rebuke echoes “fallax opus” (4.1.135) but more precisely replicates “fallacia” at 1.1.19, the magical deceit which originally aimed to seduce and manipulate her.

The final point for us to address in relation to 1.1.19-24 is the identification of the narrator’s addressees with the Vergilian and Theocritean witches and how this contributes to the metapoetic nature of the passage and Propertius’ elegiac self-definition. As I suggested at the beginning of this section, Propertius’ close engagement with his pastoral models suggests particular literary identities for these figures, Alphesiboeus’ witch and Simaetha; the second line of the passage reinforces this association. “magicis sacra [...] focis” (1.1.20) recalls Eclogue 8.66 (“coniugis ut magicis sanos avertere sacrī”), evoking the witch’s preparatory rites and her aim and encompassing her “altaria” (64) and fire-spells (80-83); “focis” suggests a window allusion to Simaetha’s more prominent use of fire. Both women mistakenly associate Medea with their love-magic, foreshadowing its failure and highlighting their shortcomings as narrators. While the Propertian narrator’s scepticism indicates an awareness of Medea’s inappropriateness in this context and of his predecessors’ mistake, his own appeal to and conditional belief in these spells signal that he will repeat their error; the amplification of Medea’s presence suggests the greater extent of elegiac failure and deceit.

Propertius 2.4

Propertius 2.4.1-22 provides a parallel instance of elegy’s magic fallacia, emphasising the lover’s deception by his allusive verses, by expanding the engagement with Theocritus Idyll 2. In 2.4.7-8 the narrator states that magic is powerless in love; in 2.4.15-16 he recalls futile attempts to cure his infatuation. These couplets allude to Idyll 2.15-16 and 90-91 respectively; Propertius 2.4.15-16 also echoes 2.3.51-54, an earlier reference to the exemplum of the prophet
Melampus in the goatherd’s *komos* at Theocritus *Idyll* 3.43-45. As in scholarship on 1.1.19-24, commentators rarely pursue these allusions to Theocritus *Idyll* 2 further: Papanghelis suggests that Propertius evokes the mixture of desire and destructiveness in Simaetha’s witchcraft to illustrate his experience of love; Costanza reads 2.4.7 as evoking *Idyll* 2.10-15, including Simaetha’s refrain, to illustrate Propertius’ inability to escape love. I suggest that the poetic component to Simaetha’s spell and echoes of 1.1.19-24 and 2.3.51-54 in 2.4.7-8 and 15-16 encourage us to understand elegy as the magic which deceives and fails the lover here. I begin by summarising Propertius 2.4.1-22.

The narrator laments the torments a lover must suffer, particularly the frustration at his mistress’ rejection (1-4), and recalls futile attempts to win admittance to her: perfuming his hair and approaching carefully by foot are in vain, and magic has no power to influence love (5-8). Medicine cannot help either (11-12): lovesickness is a sudden blow from a concealed source against which none can guard themselves (9-14); the lover has often been prey to a deceitful prophet and has asked old women to interpret his dreams to no avail (15-16). For these reasons, the narrator wishes that his enemies should love girls; his friends, boys: loving boys is a smoother river to sail, while girls will barely be softened by their suitors’ blood (17-22).

The narrator lists love-magic among the unsuccessful attempts to seduce his *puella*:

\[
\text{non hic herba valet, non hic nocturna Cytaeis,} \\
\text{non Perimedaeae gramina cocta manus.}
\]

*(Propertius 2.4.7-8)*

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81 Papanghelis 1987 pp. 36-37; Prince 2002 pp. 78-84 suggests a similar interpretation of Propertius 2.4.7-8, focusing on Propertius’ reduplicated reference to Medea rather than on Theocritus *Idyll* 2; cf. Fauth 1999 pp. 143-144. Costanza 2009 p. 206 n. 32, also suggesting (pp. 205-206) that Propertius’ echoes of *Idyll* 2.15-16 and 90-91 illustrate his narrator’s servile debasement. Costanza notes that this echo of Simaetha’s words also aligns the lover with Theocritus’ witch; we can add that this colours the view of the lover as a narrator and poet as well as illustrating his amatory situation.
The Medea-Perimede pairing recalls Simaetha’s prayer to increase the potency of her love-spell (Idyll 2.15-16), implying that the lover similarly attempted magic to attract his beloved. Propertius’ narrator inverts Simaetha’s appeal which suggests his awareness of her inappropriate exempla and their detrimental effect on her love-magic. “Cytaeis” (7) duplicates “Cytaeines” at 1.1.24, recalling the deceitful carmina originally characterised as a fallacia: echoing this passage suggests that the lover now realises the ineffectiveness of his poetry for enchanting his mistress as well as the irony of its association with Medea. By echoing “Perimede”, however, the narrator indicates that he does not fully appreciate Simaetha’s inaccuracy and Propertius deepens Theocritus’ irony by indicating that the lover, despite his awareness of the failure of magic and poetry, is doomed to repeat his mistakes.

The second reference to magic extends this reading:

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nam cui non ego sum fallaci praemia vati?
quae mea non decies somnia versat anus?
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(Propertius 2.4.15-16)

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2.4.16 mirrors Simaetha’s question at *Idyll* 2.90-91: “καὶ ἐς τίνος οὐκ ἐπέρασα | ἣ ποίαι ἐλιπον γραίας δόμον ἰτις ἐπάδεν;”. 85 “decies” (16) also matches the days and nights Simaetha suffered lovesickness and sought a cure, including visiting these women, before attempting love-magic (“κείμαν δ’ ἐν κλιντῆρι δέ κ’ ἄματα καὶ δέκα νύκτας”, 86). 86 Following its hexameter, 2.4.16 underlines the magic’s ineffectiveness against love; recalling the context and purpose of Simaetha’s statement suggests an alternative view of the narrator’s question and a pattern emerges in the couplet which balances 2.4.7-8. To illuminate these points, we must first look at 2.4.15 and the poetic subtext activated by the combined echoes of 1.1.19 and 2.3.51-54.

In 2.4.15, the lover laments that he is prey to a *fallax vates*. This looks back to the *exemplum* of the prophet Melampus at 2.3.51-54; I summarise the textual problems with this passage and its relationship with 2.4.1-22 before discussing its significance for our argument. The division of Propertius 2.3 and 2.4 is contentious: scholars debate whether 2.3.45-54 belongs with 2.3.1-44, as the manuscripts transmit, or with 2.4.1-22. The predominant view is that 2.3.45-54 either begins 2.4.1-22 or is an earlier fragment of this elegy with the intervening lines lost. 87 Correspondences between the Melampus-*exemplum* and 2.4.1-22 support reading them together: alongside the echo of “*vates* […] *Melampus*” (2.3.51) in “*fallaci* […] *vati*” (2.4.15), “*praemia*” (2.4.15) reverses the profit Melampus refused (“*non lucra*”, 2.3.53); Murgia and Costanza also highlight Melampus’ healing skills in relation to medicinal cures for love at 2.4.11. 88 On the basis of these arguments, I accept 2.3.45-54 as an earlier section of 2.4.1-22; with this established, we can consider the *exemplum* in question.

86 Alternatively, Fedeli 2005 p. 166: “decies” is hyperbolic.
87 Butler and Barber 1933 p. 197 and Fedeli 2005 pp. 151-153 suggest that 2.3.45-54 is most likely a fragment of an otherwise lost elegy. Enk 1962a (see Enk 1962b p. 72), Rothstein 1966, Goold 1990, Murgia 2000 pp. 233-235 and Costanza 2009 pp. 200-213 begin 2.4.1-22 at 2.3.45; Camps 1967 p. 80 and Shackleton Bailey 1967 p. 67 keep 2.3.45-54 with 2.3.1-44. Richardson 1977 p. 218 advocates uniting 2.3.1-54 with 2.2; Heyworth 2007b pp. 124-125 suggests that 2.3.45-2.4.22 are “fragments drawn from a variety of original pieces, some […] possibly from the same poem, but with gaps intervening”. For poem division in Propertius Book 2: Heyworth 1995 pp. 165-185, esp. 165-171.
Propertius’ narrator uses Melampus to predict a happy union with his puella after his shameful servitium amoris:

\[
\begin{align*}
&turpia perpressus vates est vincla Melampus, \\
&cognitus Iphicl i surripuisse boves; \\
quem non lucra, magis Pero formosa coegit, \\
mox Amythaonia nupta futura domo. \\
\end{align*}
\]

(Propertius 2.3.51-54)

Fantuzzi highlights similarities between this passage and Theocritus Idyll 3.43-45, where Melampus is an exemplum in the goatherd’s unsuccessful komos to Amaryllis: Theocritus places Melampus’ undertaking alongside his brother’s marriage, eliding the reason for his quest to imply that Melampus endured torments because he loved Pero though she ultimately married his brother.\(^9\)

Melampus is one of three negative exempla the goatherd uses, each portending an unhappy outcome for his courtship which he fails to appreciate and comically illustrating his ineptitude as a lover.\(^9\) Fantuzzi highlights that Propertius replicates Theocritus’ irony: the oblique “Amythaonia [...] domo” (54) opens the possibility that Melampus did not ultimately marry Pero.\(^9\) The negative exemplum reveals the Propertian speaker’s shortcomings as a lover and narrator: his inability to appreciate the wider context of Melampus’ story — particularly as employed in Theocritus’ poem — blinds him to the unfortunate outcome he predicts for himself.

Payne makes an alternative interpretation of Theocritus’ exempla which supplements this reading. Payne emphasises that the goatherd’s exempla best apply to himself which suggests that they are designed to persuade him, not Amaryllis, and to ease his despair based on “what he sees” as their common element — amatory success.\(^9\) Propertius’ narrator similarly uses Melampus to persuade himself of a happy future through his poetry: like Theocritus’ goatherd, he aims to write himself his amatory reward without realising the negative implications of his exemplum.


This leads us back to the characterisation of Melampus anonymously as “fallax” at 2.4.15. Following his recognition of Simaetha’s ill-chosen mythological *exempla* (2.4.7-8), I suggest that Propertius’ narrator retrospectively acknowledges Melampus’ inappropriateness for his situation: applying “fallax” to “vates” broadens the applicability of the adjective, encompassing Melampus the false *exemplum*, the uselessness of magic to cure love, and, by echoing “fallacia” (1.1.19), the deceptive poetry which offers illusory hope.93

We are now in a position to consider the echo of *Idyll* 2.90-91 at 2.4.16 in relation to 2.4.15 and 2.4.7-8. In 2.4.7-8, the lover shows an awareness of the uselessness of love-magic and elegy to beguile his *puella* before repeating Simaetha’s “Perimede”, suggesting that he is destined to repeat his mistakes in love and poetry. This pattern underlies 2.4.15-16: acknowledging Melampus as a false paradigm, the narrator recognises elegy’s duplicity and its helplessness to soothe love or to win his beloved. Simaetha’s recollection of exhausting all magical assistance is, however, part of her spell, justifying her love-magic to Selene and contrasting her incurable passion with Delphis’ fickleness; in contrast to the inversion of Simaetha’s invocation at 2.4.7-8, the lover now repeats her question, implying that he is still attempting his own spell. As in the earlier lines, the echo of Simaetha’s inexperience in magic reinforces the ineffectiveness of the Propertian narrator’s poetry on his beloved, which he, too, does not recognise. The narrator’s realisation of Melampus’ deceptiveness as a happy model for his *servitium* appears doubly ironic in light of its hexameter — despite his momentary enlightenment, he is still victim of a *fallax vates*, namely himself.

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93 The references to profit in 2.3.53 and 2.4.15 reinforce this interpretation: in 2.3.53 Melampus offered his services for love, not material gain; Propertius’ reversal of Melampus’ motivation at 2.4.15 underlines that the example which the narrator once thought true for his situation was false. Camps 1967 p. 84 highlights the applicability of “vates” to soothsayers and poets, associating Melampus with Propertius in 2.351-54. Costanza 2009 p. 208 compares 2.3.51-54 with the Milanion-*exemplum* at 1.1.19-60; this underlines Melampus as a negative model for the Propertian lover, as well as furnishing a further parallel between 2.4.1-22 and Propertius 1.1.
Tibullus 1.2

Tibullus 1.2 demonstrates elegiac deceit and fantasy through a more extended example of the motif than we have seen so far. 1.2 is a paraclausithyron narrated by and focalised through the lover as exclusus amator. This framework gives the poem a purpose — the narrator must use his elegy to convince Delia’s door to open or Delia to deceive her guard and her husband. Tibullus introduces magic in the figure of a verax saga who, he claims, has written him a spell to manipulate the senses and belief of Delia’s coniunx (43-66); to convince Delia to perform the spell, the narrator stresses the witch’s honesty and lauds her powers. He also reports the ritual the witch performed to cure his passion, though he prayed that Delia reciprocate his feelings instead, complimenting her by affirming his devotion. This section works logically in the lover’s persuasion of Delia, though his elegy ultimately appears unsuccessful in influencing her. Commentators note the narrator’s close association with the witch; we can add to these observations by highlighting Tibullus’ engagement with Eclogue 8 and Idyll 2 to characterise his elegy through magic as we have seen in Propertius 1.1.19-24 and 2.4.1-22. I summarise 1.2 and outline how my reading supplements existing interpretations of Tibullus’ relationship with his saga before we focus on the passage in question.

The narrator demands neat wine to drown his sorrows and reveals that a locked and guarded door separates him from his puella (1-6); he addresses the door, cursing it to endure violent weather before retracting his abuse and praying that his curses strike him instead (7-14). The lover encourages Delia to deceive her guard, promising Venus’ aid and instruction (15-24). He describes the hardships being a lover protects him from (25-34) and warns witnesses to his suit to conceal what they see lest Venus punish them (35-42). This emphasis on secrecy

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95 Cf. Lee-Stecum 1998 pp. 73 and 77 for elegy as an essential instrument in the “power struggle” of the paraclausithyron.
97 Murgatroyd 1980 p. 90 and Maltby 2002 p. 172 read 1.2.65-66 as a “compliment” to Delia.
introduces the *saga* whose magic, the narrator claims, can prevent Delia’s *coniunx* from believing anything he hears about their liaison (42-43). The narrator details the witch’s powers (45-54) and reveals the spell she has composed for Delia to deceive her husband’s vision, stressing that he is the only lover it will conceal (55-60); he concludes this section by relating the witch’s attempt to cure his love, during which he prayed for Delia to reciprocate his affection instead (61-66). After favourably comparing himself as a suitor with a soldier and offering penance to Venus (67-88), the narrator predicts humiliation as elderly lovers for youths who mock him now (89-98) and begs Venus for mercy, asking why she punishes her devoted servant (99-100).

Commentators highlight associations between Tibullus and the witch: Lee-Stecum emphasises the focus on the witch’s voice, suggesting that her effective spells contrast with Tibullus’ failure to persuade Delia through poetry; the *saga*’s powers over the dead and her connection with Medea’s “*malas herbas*” (53) and Hecate’s “*feros canes*” (54), however, imply that her magic may be less trustworthy than Tibullus claims and unsuccessful, even destructive, in love. Prince reads Medea’s inclusion in the catalogue and the characterisation of her herbs as “*malas*” (53) as implying the “evil, deceitful, and destructive” nature of Tibullus’ *saga* and her magic’s uselessness for influencing love or tricking Delia’s *coniunx*, and as revealing Tibullus’ lack of faith in the witch’s powers with the result that “[i]f Tibullus has been trying to persuade Delia to use the witch’s charm, his persuasiveness lacks something”: Prince argues that the failure of the witch’s spells forces Tibullus to use his elegies to win Delia with the result that “one can suspect the efficacy of the poet’s *carmina*”. Putnam and Murgatroyd briefly comment on Tibullus’ closeness with the *saga* in 1.2.55 (“*haec mihi composita cantus quis fallere posses*”): Murgatroyd reads “*haec mihi*” as gesturing towards the intimacy between the two; Putnam notes that *compono* blurs the distinction between incantations and poetry.

We can provide new evidence to crystallise these associations by investigating Tibullus’ engagement with Theocritus *Idyll* 2 and Vergil *Eclogue* 8 in 1.2.43-66: we can highlight allusions

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98 Lee-Stecum 1998 p. 87.
to these works in the opening and closing couplets of 1.2.45-54, signalling the metapoetic element in the catalogue and aligning Tibullus’ saga with Alphesiboeus’ witch and, particularly, Simaetha. The central lines echo Tibullus’ elegies: following the allusive hint in 45-46, these echoes reveal that the saga and her incantations reflect Tibullus and his poetry. From a narrative perspective they underline Tibullus’ focalisation of the catalogue, highlighting its tendentiousness and suggesting that the witch may not exist beyond his drunken imagination — rather, she may be an illusion conjured to persuade Delia to trick her guard and husband (“haec mihi composuit cantus quis fallere posses; | ter cane, ter dictis despue carminibus”, 55-56) after Tibullus’ previous encouragement failed (“tu quoque, ne timide custodes, Delia, falle”, 15). Tibullus’ references to Theocritus Idyll 2 strengthen this suggestion: his report of the witch evokes Simaetha’s techniques for manipulating the narrative in her lament to Selene, implying his construction of the saga to influence Delia. As in Propertius 2.4, the Tibullan lover’s unconsciousness of Simaetha’s failure to persuade Selene renders him unaware that modelling his witch on Theocritus’ and replicating her narrative devices in his attempt to enchant Delia doom his elegy to failure. The same is true of the witch’s attempt to cure Tibullus’ love and his prayer that Delia should share his feelings: Simaetha’s inability to cure her infatuation reflects badly on the saga’s skills in this area, as well as on the efficacy of Tibullus’ request for mutual love. We begin with the catalogue at 1.2.45-54.

Tibullus introduces his witch through her honesty and her promise of deceiving Delia’s husband (“nec tamen huic credet coniunx tuus, ut mihi verax | pollicita est magico saga ministerio”, 43-44) before relating the wonders her spells can accomplish:

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102 With this reading I agree with the perspective on the saga’s existence Lee-Stecum 1998 p. 91 offers: Tibullus raises “the possibility that the whole tale of the witch has been made up […] as part of his argument to convince Delia not to fear the power of the coniunx.”
hanc ego de caelo ducentem sidera vidi;
fluminis haec rapidi carmine vertit iter;
haec cantu finditque solum manesque sepulcris
elicet et tepido devocat ossa rogo
iam tenet infernas magico stridore catervas;
iam iubet aspersas lacte referre pedem.
cum libet, haec tristi depellit nubila caelo;
cum libet, aestivo convocat orbe nives.
sola tenere malas Medeae dicitur herbas,
sola feros Hecatae perdomuisse canes.

(Tibullus 1.2.45-54)

The pairing of drawing the stars from heaven and reversing the flow of rivers (45-46) creates an allusion to Vergil Eclogue 8.64-109 which parallels that in Propertius 1.1.19-24. Juxtaposing these powers condenses Vergil’s alignment of the shepherds’ songs (Eclogue 8.4) and magic carmina (69-71); replacing Vergil’s “deducere lunam” (69) with “ducentem sidera” (1.2.45) perhaps parallels Propertius 1.1.23-24: “sidera et amnes | posse […] ducere”. Tibullus’ claim that he has witnessed these feats creates an Alexandrian footnote directing the reader to recognise the allusions: “ego […] vidi” (45) replicates the Vergilian witch’s validation of Moeris’ abilities (“ego […] | vidi”, Eclogue 8.97-99), perhaps applying it to the powers and the association between magic and elegiac carmina “witnessed” in Propertius 1.1.19-24.104

This poetic element in 1.2.45-46 invites a similar reading of the witch’s influence over the dead (47-50) and the weather (51-52). The witch’s command of the manes (“[…] manesque sepulcris | elicit”, 47-48) expands Eclogue 8.98 (“Moerim, saepe animas imis excire sepulcris”) to dramatise psychagogia, a term originally for necromancy which evolved to express poetry’s persuasive effects on human emotions and which, through necromancy’s association with ritual

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103 I discuss the dating of Propertius Book 1 and Tibullus Book 1 in Chapter 3; as both poets composed their first collections contemporaneously, mutual influence is likely. Murgatroyd 1980 p. 84: Propertius 1.1.23-24 “possibly inspired” Tibullus 1.2.45-46; cf. Wimmel 1983 p. 33 n. 52. Wimmel 1983 p. 36 equates “ducentem sidera” with “lunam deducere” (Tibullus 1.8.21).
The witch's hissing ("magico stridore"); 49 anticipates Cerberus' ("Cerberus ore | stridet", 1.3.71-72). The witch sprinkling the manes with milk to nourish and appease them ("aspersas lacte"); 50 parallels Tibullus' placatory offerings to Pales at 1.1.36 ("et placidam soleo spargere lacte Palem"); a corresponding which highlights Tibullus' focalisation of her actions and their metalinguistic identification, her command of the spirits enacting the poet's authorial control over his subject matter.

106 Murgatroyd 1980 P. 85 cites Vergil Eclogue 8.96 as a parallel for Tibullus 1.2.47-48. The witch's distinctive claims of his saga's meteorological powers reflect the conditions in 1.2.7, the cheerless ("tristi [..] caelo", 51) and the summer skies ("aestivo [..] orbe", 52) the saga commands echo those Tibullus describes at 1.1.49-56 ("tristes [..] pluvias") and 1.1.27 ("sed Canis aestivos ortus vitare sub umbra").


the reversal of the weather reflects this, and we may add that Tibullus’ endurance of snow on Delia’s threshold (1.2.31) ironically reflects on his wish for their shelter together during winter storms (“aut gelidas hibernus aquas cum fuderit Auster | securum somnos igne invante sequi”, 1.1.47-48). By using the witch’s powers to stage his creation of poetic fantasies Tibullus illustrates the association of magic, elegy and deceit; her preternatural abilities enact the elegist’s ability to create realistic visions in the imaginations of his audience whilst drawing attention to the fictitiousness of his poetic world and their complicity in creating it by inviting them to “see” the magic feats focalised through his eyes (“ego […] vidi”, 45).109

In the final lines, Tibullus introduces the saga’s rumoured possession of Medea’s herbs and the ability to tame Hecate’s dogs (53-54). “dicitur” (53) suggests a reflexive annotation complementing the introductory couplet, highlighting a combined allusion to Vergil Eclogue 8.64-109 and Theocritus Idyll 2.111 Tibullus 1.2.53 echoes the Vergilian witch’s possession of Pontic materials (Eclogue 8.95) and Simaetha’s request for herbs as powerful as those of Medea, Circe, and Perimede (Idyll 2.15-16); in light of the hexameter, 1.2.54 evokes the silencing of the dogs following Hecate’s dismissal at Idyll 2.35-36; these echoes of Idyll 2 perhaps encourage reading Tibullus’ emphasis on the witch’s singular skills (“sola […] sola”, 53-54) as associating

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110 Tibullus 1.2.45-54 enhances his demonstration of his poetic power through an ecphrasis of magic feats: the emphasis on sight and focalisation through the eyes of the narrator prompts the reader to visualise the scene (45); the present tense, sequential narration unfolds the scene “realistically”; the style and language — particularly the incantatory anaphora and the auditory vividness of stridor — complement the subject. Ecphrasis complements magic as a metaphor for poetic power, as it similarly works according to the perception of words exerting power over the minds and emotions of an audience. On ancient ecphrasis with particular emphasis on fiction and the imaginative participation of an audience: Webb 2009; Webb focuses on ecphrasis in rhetoric, but highlights the equal applicability of her discussion to poetic texts — on this point see, for example, Webb 2009 pp. 99-103 and 128-130. For Ovidian narratives of metamorphoses as ecphrases of the text as a work of art: Hardie 2002 pp. 173-179; for the metafictional function of ecphrasis in the Greek novel cf. Webb 2009 p. 185: “Ekphrases of all types of subjects, and not only those that present works of art, may therefore have a meta-fictional function […] causing the reader not only to reflect upon the nature of his or her experience of fiction but also […] making him or her experience in various ways the disjunction between the fictional world and reality”. For the “musicality” of Tibullus’ language in 1.2.45-54, which aids the visualisation of the magic powers: Wimmel 1983 pp. 86-88.

111 Cf. Lee-Stecum 1998 p. 88: dicitur perhaps implies “the powers of lines 46-52 were heard of at second hand by the poet”.

56
her primarily with Simaetha. The saga’s alignment with Simaetha and Vergil’s witch reinforces the association of her incantations with poetry, colouring both as deceptive and hopeless for aiding love. Maltby’s interpretation of “tenere” (53) as “understands” makes the Tibullan lover’s declaration of his saga’s proficiency doubly ironic: neither Simaetha nor Alphesiboeus’ witch understand Medea’s inappropriateness for their love-magic; the Tibullan lover fails to appreciate their error and misinterprets both witches as models for his successful enchantment of Delia. His re-formulation of the Theocritean lines betrays the tendentiousness of his catalogue and his misreading of his model: though claiming the witch’s mastery of Medea’s herbs and Hecate’s hounds attempts to heighten her power, Tibullus’ narrator selects two elements from Idyll 2 which reveal Simaetha’s shortcomings in magic and poetry, foreshadowing his inability to convince Delia through his elegy.

These echoes of Idyll 2 also make the curious introduction of the witch as “verax” more pointed: we noted in our discussion of Theocritus’ text that Simaetha highlights honesty, including her own, in her unsuccessful appeal to Selene, betraying her disingenuousness in her attempt to influence her addressee. Tibullus’ description of his saga as verax imports this irony into 1.2 — stressing his witch’s honesty aims to increase Delia’s faith in her magic; re-read in light of her association with Simaetha at 53-54, “verax” casts further doubt on her trustworthiness and capacity for deception. Recalling Simaetha’s emphasis on truthfulness also reflects back on Tibullus as a narrator, suggesting that he is replicating Simaetha’s devices for influencing Selene to persuade Delia to help him gain entry: “verax” also evokes Simaetha’s use of pointed adjectives and literary allusions to guide Selene’s response to her narrative, with Idyll 2 now employed as the model. Tibullus’ adoption of Simaetha’s narrative techniques now aligns him with Theocritus’ witch, reinforcing his untrustworthiness and capacity for deceit with an amatory

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112 Murgatroyd 1980 p. 87 highlights “sola […] sola” as emphasising the witch’s singular abilities.
113 Maltby 2002 p. 169; Putnam 1973 p. 68 emphasises tenere as “regulate” or “hold”.
114 Putnam 1973 p. 66 and Maltby 2002 p. 166 note the rarity of verax in elegy; Lee-Stecum 1998 p. 87 suggests that “verax saga” may be read as “a contradiction in terms”, especially (p. 87 n. 46) considering the untrustworthiness of witches like Medea or Circe.
115 Lee-Stecum 1998 p. 90 highlights that the success of Tibullus’ spell depends on Delia. The etymological association between Delia and Selene underlines their analogous positions as targets of deceit. For Delia’s association with Luna, and Hecate, through Diana: Bright 1978 pp. 112-113.
goal — perhaps confirming our suspicions about his saga’s existence — and foreshadowing his failure to deceive and enchant Delia.

Tibullus returns to Eclogue 8 to explicate his self-deception: after warning Delia that he is the only lover the spell will conceal (“tu tamen abstineas aliis, nam cetera cernet | omnia, de me uno sentient ille nihil”, 59-60), the narrator questions what he should believe and relates the witch’s spell to cure his infatuation:

\[
\text{quid credam? nempe haec eadem se dixit amores}
\text{cantibus aut herbis solvere posse meos,}
\text{et me lustravit taedis, et nocte serena}
\text{concidit ad magicos hostia pulla deos.}
\text{non ego totus abesset amor sed mutuus orabam, nec te posse carere velim.}
\]

(Tibullus 1.2.61-66)

“quid credam” (61) echoes the scepticism of magic at Eclogue 8.108 (“credimus?”), as in Propertius 1.1.19-24 (“crediderim”, 24). The question is placed strategically: following the lover’s reports of the saga’s magic and his prohibition against Delia using it with his rivals, it implies his disbelief — raised by the preceding warning (59-60) — in magic and poetry and in Delia’s fidelity; at the same time, it proleptically undermines belief in the lover’s cure. The ritual (63-64) parallels Tibullus’ imagined offerings to the Lares at 1.1.21-22 (“tunc vitula innumeris lustrabat caesa iuvenos, | nunc agna exigui est hostia parva soli”), continuing the revelations of Tibullus’ creation of elegiac fantasies and the witch as an extension of his poetry. The saga’s previous association with Simaetha destabilises her ability to heal Tibullus’ love and heightens the fruitlessness of his prayer for Delia’s reciprocal affection (65-66), a further attempt at love-magic which, following his scepticism, illustrates the extent of his self-deception. It also exposes Tibullus’ misleading of his audience about his relationship with Delia:


118 Lee-Stecum 1998 p. 92 notes that 1.2.63-64 echoes 1.2.21-22.
as Lee-Stecum notes, Tibullus’ prayer admits of his one-sided affection, jarring with the impression of reciprocal-but-obstructed love so-far maintained.119

Tibullus’ extended treatment of magic develops the motif into a performance of his elegiac capabilities: he creates an erotodidactic saga in his own image who, almost as a forerunner of the developed lenae Acanthis and Dipsas in Propertius 4.5 and Ovid Amores 1.8, is a counterpart of the poet with a role in constructing the puella — she, like Tibullus, will teach Delia to deceive.120 Ovid Amores 1.8 in particular supports this reading of our Tibullan passage: in the opening frame of the elegy (5-18), Ovid lists Dipsas’ magic powers, illustrating her rhetorical skills (“nec tamen eloquio lingua nocente caret”, 20) in anticipation of her monologue (23-108) which characterises her as an elegiac poet and narrator in Ovid’s image; Ovid hints at their affinity in the closing frame of the poem (“vox erat in cursu, cum mea prodidit umbra”, 109).121 Dipsas’ powers closely draw on those of the Tibullan saga at 1.2.45-54: Amores 1.8.9-10 (“cum voluit, toto glomerantur nubila caelo; | cum voluit, puro fulget in orbe dies”) replicates the anaphora of Tibullus 1.2.51-52 (“cum libet [...] | cum libet”), and the saga’s meteorological powers; Dipsas’ ability to extract blood from the stars (“sanguine, si qua fides, stillantia sidera vidi”, 11) echoes Tibullus’ “[...] sidera vidi” (1.2.45) in the same metrical position; the lena’s necromantic skill (“evocat antiquis proavos atavosque sepulcris | et solidam longo carmine findit humum”, 17-18) also corresponds with that of the Tibullan witch: “haec cantu finditque solum manesque sepulcris | elicit” (47-48).122 Ovid’s close engagement with the Tibullan passage suggests that he, too, identified a metapoetic subtext to the saga’s powers, and that he drew on this model to characterise his own love-elegy in a recognised imagery, programmatically aligning his poetry with the Latin elegiac tradition — we will explore Ovid’s development of this use of

119 Lee-Stecum 1998 p. 92 suggests that 1.2.66 undermines the reader’s trust in Tibullus and proposes that Tibullus’ “self-delusion” motivated his earlier presentation of the relationship.
120 This identification is reinforced in Tibullus 1.6.9-10, where the narrator tells Delia’s husband that he taught her to deceive her guard: “ipse miser docui quo posset ludere pacto | custodes”. On the metapoetic role of the elegiac lena: Myers 1996 pp. 1-21 and O’Neill 1998 pp. 63-64.
122 McKeown 1989 p. 204: Amores 1.8.5-20 is “influenced particularly” by Tibullus 1.2.45-54; Thill 1979 pp. 323-333 and Bonytes 2008b pp. 367-371, citing the above parallels, emphasise the correspondence between these two passages.
Commentators note that Dipsas’ powers correspond with those which Ovid attributes to his elegies in *Amores* 2.1.21-28, a passage which retrospectively cements the metaliterary affinity between the lover-poet and the *lena*; for the reader approaching *Amores* 1.8 sequentially, the evocation of Tibullus 1.2.45-54 allusively alerts them to the equation between Ovid’s elegiac rhetoric and the magic which he attributes to Dipsas.\(^{124}\)

The catalogue of the witch’s powers in Tibullus 1.2, in addition to sketching an avatar of the poet and lover through the interaction with literary models, illustrates Tibullus’ poetic ability to inspire marvellous sights in his audience’s imaginations, influencing them into “seeing” the sights he witnessed whilst his interaction with his Vergilian and Theocritean models maintains the failure of elegy within its fictional world. Tibullus 1.8, to which we turn next, offers a second example of the poet’s evocation of these models to activate a metapoetic subtext to the motif of magic.

**Tibullus 1.8**

In 1.8, the narrator plays *praecceptor amoris* to Marathus, a *puer-delicatus*-turned-elegiac-lover, and his beloved, Pholoe, who spurns Marathus for an older man. The narrator emphasises his expertise in love: he does not need divination to recognise a secret affair; Venus bound and flogged him until she educated him thoroughly (1-6). Marathus should stop pretending and admit his infatuation (7-8). Tibullus warns that cultivating his appearance is futile — a girl’s beauty pleases without cosmetics — (9-16) and offers magic as a reason for Marathus’ passion (17-22). Nevertheless, Tibullus admits, there is little point in blaming witchcraft — beauty does not need magic, physical contact enchants alone (25-26). Tibullus asks Pholoe to be kind to Marathus: she should demand gifts from a *canus amator* but appreciate the boy’s priceless youth (28-34). Venus enables clandestine affairs (35-38) and Pholoe should pursue love before youth and beauty pass and old age leaves her alone with her jewels (39-48); she should spare the lovesick Marathus (49-52). Tibullus illustrates Marathus’ distress by reporting his

\(^{123}\) On the “thematic importance” of *Amores* 1.8: Gross 1996 p. 119.

lament in direct speech (55-66), then tells the boy to curb his tears as Pholoe will not be broken (67-68). He concludes by warning Pholoe against pride, illustrating its consequences with Marathus’ own plight — he once mocked and spurned lovers but now hates pride and locked doors; Pholoe, too, will suffer if her arrogance continues (69-78).

Scholarship offers two interpretations of the Tibullan narrator’s role and motives in 1.8. The traditional reading is that the narrator attempts to facilitate Marathus’ affair with Pholoe despite his love for the puer. Bulloch and Booth, on the other hand, interpret him as acting on Marathus’ behalf only superficially while attempting to regain the boy as his beloved. I suggest that the early introduction of magic supports the latter reading. The favourable comparison of Pholoe’s attractiveness with witchcraft appears to admit its strength; nevertheless, lexical associations between the effects of magic and beauty slyly equate the two, detracting from Pholoe’s natural charms and implying that Marathus’ infatuation is the product of dangerous enchantment.

If Tibullus can convince Marathus that his passion is false and that Pholoe is attempting to manipulate him, Tibullus will be able to persuade the puer away from his new infatuation and back to himself. 1.8.19-22 reveals Tibullus’ intentions towards Marathus by alluding to Vergil Eclogue 8.69-71 to cast 1.8 as a love-spell to draw back an unfaithful beloved. The Vergilian witch’s failure adumbrates Tibullus’, proven in 1.9 when Pholoe and Marathus are together and sharing Pholoe’s canus amator; the catalogue also suggests that Tibullus’ strategy of discrediting Pholoe through magic aims to persuade himself that Marathus’ heterosexual infatuation is false. Nikoloutsos reads Tibullus’ curse against Marathus in 1.9.1-16 as a prayer for revenge after his attempt to win him back in 1.8 failed; this reinforces my reading of 1.8.19-22, balancing the first attempt at enchantment with a vengeful curse motivated by Tibullus’

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127 We expand on the connection of magic with Pholoe’s beauty in Chapter 3.
128 Bulloch 1973 p. 88 suggests that 1.8.17-26 provides “a generous explanation for Marathus’ infatuation”, removing his responsibility for it, before “the more damaging conclusion that physical pleasure was the cause”; McGann 1983 p. 1988 interprets the magic as revealing Tibullus’ “amused malice” at Marathus’ situation.
realisation of his poetic failure. Exploring Tibullus’ engagement with his Vergilian model will clarify these suggestions.

Tibullus associates magic most immediately with Pholoe’s beauty: his assertion of the girl’s natural attractiveness introduces the theme (“illa placet, quamvis inculto venerit ore | nec nitidum tarda compserit arte caput”, 15-16) and he follows it by admitting the enchantments of physical contact. This connection is an important element of 1.8, and one we will explore in Chapter 3; for now, our focus is the list of the powers of incantation at the heart of the passage:

\[
\text{num te carminibus num te pallentibus herbis} \\
\text{devovit tacito tempore noctis anus ?} \\
\text{cantus vicinis fruges traducit ab agris,} \\
\text{cantus et iratae detinet anguis iter,} \\
\text{cantus et e curru Lunam deducere temptat,} \\
\text{et faceret si non aera repulsa sonent.} \\
\text{quid queror heu misero carmen nocuisse, quid herbas?} \\
\text{forma nihil magicis uitur auxiliiis;} \\
\text{sed corpus tetigisse nocet, sed longa dedisse} \\
\text{oscula sed femori conservisse femur.}
\]

(Tibullus 1.8.17-26)

Lines 19-22 allude to Eclogue 8.69-71: the anaphora of “cantus” replicates that of “carmina” in the Vergilian catalogue; the feats combine those found in Eclogue 8.69-71 — controlling snakes and drawing down the moon — and 97-99, the enchantment of crops across fields. The recollection of Vergil’s catalogue synecdochically equates 1.8 with the love-spell to retrieve Daphnis; the detail of bronze influencing the moon (22) similarly aligns the elegy with Simaetha’s magic in Idyll 2. At this point in 1.8, no addressee has been specified; the evocation of Vergil Eclogue 8.64-109 and Theocritus Idyll 2 suggests that there is a beloved whom Tibullus targets with his persuasions, allusively supplementing the narrative in keeping with the gradual revelation of information. The allusion to Vergil’s poem also evokes the fantasies lovers create for themselves, raising the possibility that the narrator is attempting to persuade himself as much as Marathus that magic is behind the boy’s passion. The background of both models foreshadows the failure of Tibullus’ elegiac love-magic; by referencing Simaetha’s mistaken

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130 Nikoloutsos 2011 pp. 29-33.
133 For the possibility that the narrator is “deluded” about the power of magic here cf. Lee-Stecum 1998 p. 232.
desire for Thestylos to sound the bronze (1.8.22), Tibullus acknowledges the limitations of his narrator and his love-spell and the possibility of a physical counter-effect — in this case, the power of beauty — creating humour and irony as he continues his elegy for a further fifty lines.

We can reinforce this reading of 1.8.19-26 by looking back to the elegy’s first reference to magic, which also evokes Eclogue 8:

\[
\text{ipsa Venus magico religatam brachia nodo} \\
\text{perdocuit, multis non sine verberibus.}
\]

(Tibullus 1.8.5-6)

“Venus magico [...] nodo” (5) echoes Eclogue 8.77-78 (“necte tribus nodis […] | necte, Amarylli, modo et Veneris’ dic ‘vincula necto’”); “ipsa Venus [...] | perdocuit” (5-6) also evokes Eclogue 8.47 (“saevus Amor docuit […]”) in a manner similar to the exemplum of Medea educated by Amor which we met in Propertius 1.1.4-6. Tibullus’ combined allusion to both halves of Eclogue 8 is underlined by a reference to the opening lines of Callimachus’ tale of Acontius and Cydippe at Aetia 3 (fr. 67.1-3 Pf.), which begins by saying that Eros taught Acontius the art by which to win Cydippe, and which Vergil also incorporates into Damon’s song. Booth interprets this Callimachean echo as signalling that the “supposedly detached Tibullus […] will be manipulating the situation in his own amatory interest”; this, together with Tibullus’ allusions to Eclogue 8, anticipates the expansion of magical seduction and deception at 1.8.19-22. The evocation of Eclogue 8.77-78 (“necte […] | necte […] necto”) also foreshadows the metapoetic aspect of 1.8.19-22; in light of the later lines and the idea of magical and poetic failure in Vergil’s poem, Tibullus 1.8.5-6 suggests that Venus has educated the narrator in enchanting elegiac poetry, further underlining the impression of his duplicity and the unlikelihood of his amatory success through his verses.

136 Booth 1996 pp. 239-240. Tibullus here follows the arrangement and use of Vergil Eclogue 8 we outlined in Propertius 1.1: an oblique reference to magic in the opening lines of the elegy developed explicitly later in the poem. Cairns 1979 p. 140 notes that Tibullus 1.8.19-22 expands the magic in 1.8.5-6; Fauth 1980 pp. 276-277 suggests that Tibullus 1.8.5-6 styles Venus as a witch to foreshadow love-magic and the “internal” magic of beauty at 1.8.23-26.
Tibullus’ adaptation of Vergil’s lines transforms his suggestion that Pholoe magically enchanted Marathus into a poetic spell which reveals his continuing attraction to the boy and his intentions towards him; by adumbrating the futility of his poetry and motives at this point Tibullus infuses the following lines with irony. We return to 1.8 in Chapter 3, where we will explore Tibullus’ association of Pholoe’s beauty with witchcraft.

**Propertius 2.28**

Propertius 2.28.35-38, our final text in this chapter, evokes the Vergilian and Theocritean models, signalling a metapoetic dimension to the list of magic rites which the narrator attempts and allusively reinforcing his attempt to seduce, rather than to heal, his mistress; rather than implying the ineffectiveness of his enchantment by echoing *Eclogue* 8.69-71, Propertius inverts his models, narrating the failure of his poetic magic and revealing his deception of himself and his extratextual readers in the process. Propertius also contrasts his narrator’s failing *magicum carmen* with a *sacrum carmen* which he will dedicate to Jupiter; while the latter is usually read as successful, we can suggest that it is little different from his *magicum carmen* and destined to be equally ineffectual in love. Commentators debate the unity and theme of Propertius 2.28. These questions have implications for the presence and analysis of love-magic in the poem; as such, it will be helpful to summarise 2.28 and to review the differing interpretations of its theme and unity before we consider the magic more closely.

Propertius asks Jupiter to pity his afflicted beloved, warning him that he will be to blame if she dies; though he firstly suggests that the season’s heat endangers his *puella*, Propertius soon reveals that it is her perjury and repeated disrespect for the gods (5-8). Propertius suggests to his beloved that insulting Venus, Athena and Juno and Athena with her arrogance in her beauty harms her (9-14) but assures her that immortality will compensate for her suffering as it did for Io, Ino, Andromeda, Callisto, and Semele: one day, she will warn Semele of beauty’s hazards and will take first place among Homer’s heroines (15-30). Nevertheless, Propertius encourages his mistress that Juno will pardon her as even Jupiter’s wife cannot see such a girl perish (33-34). At this point, Propertius describes the failed magic rites (35-38); the dark omen concluding these
lines introduces his journey into the Underworld with his beloved (39-42). After asserting their joint fate, Propertius renews his appeal to Jupiter, promising him a *sacrum carmen* crediting him with the girl’s salvation: she will sit at Jupiter’s feet and tell him her trials (43-46). Propertius begs Persephone and her husband to be merciful as there is enough beauty in the Underworld already — attractiveness does not last and death is inevitable (47-58). In the final lines, Propertius advises his beloved to repay Diana and Isis, formerly Io, once she is free from danger — ten votive nights which will continue to keep them apart (60-62).137

Several editors — following the manuscript N which begins a second elegy at 2.28.35, the introduction of magic — divide 2.28 into either a pair or a cycle of three poems. The dominant view, however, is that 2.28 is a unified elegy with a gradually unfolding situation in the style of a mime, with key words and motifs connecting sections of the narrative and illuminating its central theme.138 Commentators traditionally read this theme as the *puella’s* literal illness; this leads them to interpret the magic as healing or purificatory to explain its presence.139 Hubbard proposes an alternative reading of 2.28 which several scholars supplement: the *puella’s* implied sickness results from an affair with Jupiter which has caused her to perjure her oaths to Propertius and has attracted Juno’s vengeance.140 The recurring motifs which unite the elegy support this interpretation: the ambiguous “medical” language (“affectae”, 1; “periculum”, 15, 27, 46, 59; “saucia”, 31; “salva”, 44); Jupiter’s prominent connection with the *puella’s* welfare (1 and 44); her disregard for the gods (6) and her perjury (7-8) as the causes of her illness; the emphasis on


her beauty (2, 27, 49, 51, 53, 57), the catalogue of heroines loved by Jupiter and punished by Juno (17-28) and the puella’s close relationship with Semele (27-28); the recurrence of Io and her transformation into a cow (18 and 61), Jupiter’s ploy to prove to Juno that he had not seduced the girl and which first established lovers’ vows as worthless.  

Acknowledging the amatory theme of 2.28 clarifies the presence of love-magic in the narrative. Exploring the effect of Propertius’ allusions to Theocritus Idyll 2 and Vergil Eclogue 8 in this section, to which we turn shortly, can add new evidence to supplement this reading of the poem; they also complement the puella’s infidelity and perjury, as Simaetha and Alphesiboeus’ witch undertook magic in response to their beloveds’ faithlessness. The puella’s illness is still central to this amatory reading — Yardley suggests that 2.28 draws on the myth of Acontius and Cydippe in Callimachus Aetia 3, where Cydippe’s violation of her vow to marry Acontius causes her recurring sickness. We can suggest that incorporating this tale allows Propertius to talk about his mistress’ perjury and affair with Jupiter while idealising their relationship by offering a reason for their estrangement; recalling a tale where amatory perjury causes physical illness, however, destabilises the puella’s fidelity through the device which her lover employs to preserve it, and this in turn has ramifications for the narrator’s reliability and the effectiveness of his carmina.

The puella’s perjury is tied with Jupiter’s presence in 2.28; this connection will recur when we discuss the poet’s carmina, so it is worth pausing to comment on it here. I suggest that  

Propertius presents Jupiter in an ironically double role: as an amatory rival and as the god who ensures that lovers’ vows are worthless and that breaking them goes unpunished. Both roles are indicated in 2.28.8 (“quidquid iurarunt, ventus et unda rapit”), which alludes jointly to Catullus 70.3-4 (“dicit: sed mulier cupido quod dicit amanti | in vento et rapido scribere oportet aqua”) and Tibullus 1.4.21-22 (”[…] Veneris periuria venti | irrita per terras et freta summa ferunt”), two lines which occur alongside references to Jupiter’s amatory roles. In Catullus 70.1-2, the narrator says that Lesbia would wed him rather than Jupiter (“nulli se dicit mulier mea nubere malle | quam mihi, non si se Iuppiter ipse petat”); in Tibullus 1.4.23-24, Priapus thanks Jupiter for ensuring that lover’s oaths are meaningless (“gratia magna Iovi: vetuit pater ipse valere, | iurasset cupidie quidquid ineptus amor”). Propertius’ combined allusion reveals Jupiter’s twin roles in our elegy: the Catullan context introduces Jupiter’s function as Propertius’ rival for his puella’s love; the Tibullan lines illustrate his involvement with lovers’ vows. The introduction of these dual roles at the beginning of 2.28 establishes the irony of Propertius’ appeals to Jupiter: the god whom Propertius petitions to protect his beloved from punishment for her perjury is the very god who has already guaranteed her safety by ensuring the worthlessness of amatory oaths; the same deity is also the rival whom the puella has attracted and whose attentions she can safely enjoy thanks to his protection of perjurous lovers. This also weakens the lover’s suggestion of his mistress’ sickness — if her vows are worthless, why would violating them affect her? — and indicates that the situation of 2.28 is not entirely as he presents it to his extratextual readers, demonstrating his desire to idealise his beloved and betraying his untrustworthiness as a narrator. We may even suggest that Propertius’ introduction of Jupiter as a rival attempts to fool himself and his readers by casting a successful mortal rival as king of the heavens; this perhaps plays on Catullus 51.1 (“ille mi par esse deo videtur”), in light of the allusion to Catullus 70.3-4 at 2.28.8.

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145 Alessi 1985 p. 42 notes the context of Catullus 70.3-4, arguing that Propertius expands this epigram to develop Jupiter as an amatory threat. Fedeli 2005 p. 786 compares Propertius 2.28.8 with Tibullus 1.4.21-22 without commenting on Tibullus 1.4.23-24. Jupiter features as the lover’s potential rival in Propertius 2.3: at 2.3.30, Propertius suggests that Cynthia’s beauty will make her the first Roman girl to attract Jupiter (“Romana accumbes prima puella Iovi”). Jupiter is associated with punishing perjury in Propertius 2.16: at 2.16.16, the narrator addresses Jupiter when his beloved leaves him for a rich praetor (“Iuppiter, indigna merce puella perit”), later warning the puella that Jupiter punishes perfidious girls (“non semper placidus periuros ridet amantes | Iuppiter [...] periurias tunc ille solet punire puellas”, 47-53). Hubbard 1974 p. 54 and Alessi 1985 p. 43 compare Jupiter in 2.28 with Propertius 2.3.
These suggestions about Jupiter’s roles are connected with the powers of magic and poetry, particularly Propertius’ *sacrum carmen* which we will explore after first considering the magic.

Propertius introduces magic towards the end of his first address to his *puella*:

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deficiunt magico torti sub carmine rhombi,  
et tacet extincto laurus adusta foco;  
et iam Luna negat totiens descendere caelo,  
nigraque funestum concinit omen avis.  
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(Propertius 2.28.35-38)

The lover’s *rhombus* (35) corresponds with Simaetha’s, spun to attract Delphis to her door (*Idyll* 2.29-30); the charred and silent laurel replicates that burnt by Simaetha and by Vergil’s witch to arouse passion in their beloveds (*Idyll* 2.23-26; *Eclogue* 8.82-83), also echoing Propertius 1.1.20 (“foci”). The emblematic enchantment of the moon evokes the power of *carmina* to influence it at *Eclogue* 8.69, alongside Simaetha’s lament to Selene and Propertius 1.1.19. These correspondences indicate that the love-magic the elegiac narrator uses to win back his *puella* symbolises his poetry, and Propertius signposts this in the opening adaptation of *Idyll* 2.29-30 (“χάως δινεῖθ᾽ ὅδε ῥόμβος [...] ἐξ ᾿Αφροδίτας, | ὣς τῆνος δινοῖτο ποθ᾽ ἁμετέραισι θύραισι”), substituting song (“magico [...] sub carmine”, 35) for the agency of Aphrodite which turns Simaetha’s *rhombus* (*Idyll* 2.29). The present tense narration creates the impression that the lover’s spells are failing as the lines are spoken or read, dramatising the powerlessness of his on-going elegy to convince his mistress to change her behaviour, end her

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148 “sub” (35) vacillates between the senses of “to the accompaniment of” and “under the power of” here: Fedeli 2005 p. 801. This implies that Propertius’ *carmen* lacks the power to turn the *rhombus* and evokes the commands to incantations in the refrains of Theocritus *Idyll* 2.1-64 and Vergil *Eclogue* 8.64-109.
affair with Jupiter and return to him.\textsuperscript{149} The love-magic clarifies the amatory theme after the ambiguity of the previous lines, dramatising the narrator’s waning deception of himself and of his audience about his beloved’s sickness and about their relationship.

The verbal echoes which unify 2.28 add to this reading. 2.28.35-38 recalls the beginning of the poem, particularly the description of puella’s condition in the narrator’s opening appeal to Jupiter (1-8): the charred laurel (“adusta”, 36) balances the scorching heat (“torridus”, 3); the moon’s refusal to descend (37) parallels “caeli” (5) and echoes the puella’s habitual disrespect for the gods (“quam totiens sanctos non habuisse deos”, 6); the moon’s defiance replicates her insult to Pallas (“Palladis aut oculos ausa negare bonos?”, 12). These connections reinforce Propertius’ use of magic to influence his unfaithful beloved by linking his description of her with the moon as a target of magic carmina; following 1.1.19, 2.28.37 illustrates the powerlessness of Propertius’ poetic composition by visualising the moon in the sky as usual.\textsuperscript{150} These links between the magicum carmen and Propertius’ first petition to Jupiter prepare for the relationship between this magic song and the sacrum carmen in his second appeal, which again concerns the god ironically as both the protector of perjurous lovers and Propertius’ rival.

Propertius promises Jupiter a sacrum carmen in exchange for his beloved’s welfare:

\begin{quote}
pro quibus optatis sacro me carmine damno:
scribam ego “per magnum est salva puella lovem”;
ante tuosque pedes illa ipsa operata sedebit,
narrabitque sedens longa pericla sua.
\end{quote}

(Propertius 2.28.43-46)

The parallel “sacro […] carmine” (43) and “magico […] carmine” (35) invites comparison between the two. Commentators who note this detail generally suggest that the sacrum carmen is successful in contrast to the futile magicum carmen.\textsuperscript{151} I propose, alternatively, that Jupiter’s roles as Propertius’ rival and as the guarantor of the worthlessness of lover’s vows, which we outlined above, indicate that Propertius’ sacrum elegy is as futile and misguided as his magic

\textsuperscript{149} Alessi 1985 p. 44 interprets “tacet”, “negat”, and “concinit” as “aorist”.

\textsuperscript{150} This corresponds to the description of Remedia amoris 249-260, which lists things which magic cannot do, as as “negative ekphrasis” by Gordon 2009 p. 219 n. 40.

verses; the link between the beloved and elegiac poetry in 2.28.37 also opens a new perspective on the *puella* in lines 45-46.

We should begin by establishing what Propertius desires to obtain with his offering. Under the reading of the *puella’s* illness, Propertius thanks Jupiter for his mistress’ health (“*salva*, 44). *salvus* can also signify that a legal defendant is “immune from punishment” or “safe”: in keeping with the theme of perjury and Propertius’ first appeal to Jupiter, we can suggest that he now asks the god to spare the *puella’s* punishment for violating her oaths. Line 44 (“*per magnum […] Iovem*”) also parallels Tibullus 1.4.23: “*gratia magna Iovi […]*”. As noted above, Tibullus’ line expresses gratitude to Jupiter for ensuring that lovers’ vows mean nothing; Propertius’ second echo of this sentiment links his two addresses to the god, reinforcing our reading of his request. The echo also undermines the usefulness of Propertius’ prayer and the premise of his mistress’ sickness — as Jupiter already guarantees her protection, she suffers no illness, making Propertius’ offering redundant.

The description of the *puella* in lines 45-46 suggests that Propertius’ *sacrum carmen* is unlikely to improve his romantic situation. These lines follow Propertius’ report of his *sacrum carmen* (44) and appear separate from this. The future tenses (“*scribam*, 44; “*sedebit*, 45; “*narrabitque*, 46) and the anaphoric “-*que*” (45-46), however, indicate a continuation between 2.28.44 and the *puella’s* actions which suggests that she and the *pericula* she will relate are part of Propertius’ offering, embodying the *sacrum carmen*. The girl’s position at Jupiter’s feet evokes Thetis’ supplication of Zeus in *Iliad* 1.498-502 and 1.512-513. Alessi highlights Zeus’ passion for Thetis prior to the *Iliad* and the danger for Zeus if he conceived a child by her which led him to end their relationship, suggesting that Propertius paints his beloved as Thetis to foretell

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153 Butler and Barber 1933 p. 241 describe 2.28.44 as Propertius’ “summary of the votive vows”, with 2.28.45-46 reflecting “the custom to remain awhile in the temple” following an appeal or offering; Fedeli 2005 p. 807 interprets 2.28.44 as a *sacrum carmen* separate from 2.28, which is not the *carmen* offered to Jupiter.
her platonic devotion to Jupiter and to warn of the risks of the affair.\footnote{Alessi 1985 p. 45.} We can extend this parallel: the \textit{puella}'s alignment with Thetis casts Propertius’ narrator as her mortal husband, Peleus, his appeal to Jupiter aiming to persuade the god to grant the union he desires between himself and his beloved. The recollection of Thetis’ resistance to her marriage, a displeasure she voices in the \textit{Iliad} (18.432-434), subverts the favourable outcome that the lover attempts to ensure and precludes his happiness with his mistress even if she should end her affair with Jupiter.\footnote{Murgatroyd 1980 p. 175 lists sources attesting Thetis’ danger to the Olympians and necessary marriage to a mortal: see esp. Pindar \textit{Isthmian} 8.27-48 and Apollodorus \textit{Library} 3.13.5. For Thetis’ resistance to Peleus and the unhappiness of the match: Pindar \textit{Nemean} 3.35-36, Pindar \textit{Nemean} 4.62-65, Apollonius Rhodius \textit{Argonautica} 4.866-879, and Apollodorus \textit{Library} 3.13.5. Cf. Godwin 1995 pp. 136-137 and Slatkin 1991 pp. 70-77. On Thetis’ attitude at Homer \textit{Iliad} 18.432-434; Slatkin 1991 pp. 55-56. Tibullus 1.5.45-46 — Tibullus’ comparison of Delia to Thetis travelling to her wedding with Peleus, implicitly casting himself as Peleus — provides a parallel for this reading of Propertius 2.28.45-46. On Tibullus 1.5.45-46: Murgatroyd 1980 p. 175 and Maltby 2002 pp. 252-253.} The lover’s \textit{sacrum carmen} illustrates his limitations as a narrator in a manner similar to that we traced in 2.4 and Tibullus 1.2; Propertius here heightens the irony of his narrator’s inaptitude as he offers his \textit{puella} to Jupiter as the song which he pledges to secure his own future happiness with her away from his rival. The portrait of the \textit{puella} as Thetis also picks up Propertius’ declaration that his beloved will be first among Homer’s heroines: “\textit{et tibi Maenonias omnis heroidas inter | primus erit nulla non tribuente locus}” (29-30). By fulfilling this promise, Propertius demonstrates to his extratextual audience the power of his \textit{carmen}, which can immortalise the \textit{puella} and make her an epic heroine in elegy: as the \textit{puella} here embodies Propertius’ poem, his ability to immortalise her ensures the immortality of his work and illustrates that while the lover’s verses are powerless to influence his beloved, Propertius the poet is the equal of Homer.

\section*{Conclusion}

From the very beginning of the genre, Augustan love-elegy adopts the imagery and formulation of magic as it appears in Theocritus \textit{Idyll} 2 and Vergil \textit{Eclogue} 8, pastoral models in which love-magic dramatises poetic composition and its enchanting effects. Propertius’ and
Tibullus’ allusions to these works alert their extratextual readers to metapoetic subtexts in the motif, synecdochically constructing individual elegies, and the genre as a whole, as enchanting love-spells but also as fraudulent: the elegists’ claims to enchant their puellae through their poetry are as much a self-deluding fallacia as the witches’ claims to draw down the moon from heaven. The elegists’ abbreviations of these works, particularly in early, programmatic poems such as Propertius 1.1 and Tibullus 1.2, foreground key elements of love-elegy and its fictional narrative: deception, enchantment, and failed seduction; at the same time, magic draws attention to the poet’s artistic power and to the fictitiousness of his work by undermining the realism of the elegiac world he has persuaded his audience to believe in and by illustrating the composition of the poetic text. Propertius’ and Tibullus’ swift introduction of magic and their engagement with these models through this motif indicates that it was integral to their generic self-definition and to the construction of their fictional homonyms, whose (self-) alignment with Simaetha and with Alphesiboeus’ witch allusively develops their identity as witches. This intertextual dialogue also integrates pastoral elements into love-elegy, enriching the genre and, particularly through the metaphor of magic, underlining the illusoriness and literariness of the elegiac world. Looking beyond Propertius’ and Tibullus’ early collections, we can read the common features which elegiac magic takes on through its intertextual relationships with Eclogue 8 and Idyll 2 as the emergence of a distinctive means of characterising and speaking about love-elegy and its relationship to the wider literary tradition. Ovid’s close engagement with his elegiac forerunners — especially with Tibullus 1.2.43-66 — in his introduction of magic in Amores 1.8.5-18 supports this interpretation, indicating that this form and imagery had already become a recognisable symbol of the genre; in Chapter 2 we explore the development and use of the motif in Ovid’s later love-elegies.
Chapter 2. *Aeaea carmina: Ovid’s Magic Words*

Ovid develops the association of magic with elegiac poetry. Beginning his poetic career when the genre was established in Rome, Ovid sees and reacts to it as a tradition which he continues as well as experimenting with and developing it. As I highlighted in the introduction, Ovid’s extant work displays a range of forms and genres; for the purposes of this study I limit my readings of Ovid’s work to his amatory elegies in which love-magic features metapoetically — the *Amores*, single *Heroides*, *Medicamina faciei femineae*, * Ars amatoria* 2, and *Remedia amoris*; I touch on *Amores* 1.8 and * Ars amatoria* 2 only tangentially as scholars have treated magic in these works amply. In the present chapter, we explore love-magic in *Amores* 3.7 — a poem which dramatises Ovid’s declining interest in love-elegy and his imminent departure to tragedy — before investigating Ovid’s treatment of the motif in connection with Medea and her role as an elegiac *exemplum* in *Heroides* 6 and 12, and magic’s metapoetic significance in *Remedia amoris*. The epistolary and didactic poems offer alternative perspectives on the elegiac genre and fictional world through narrators distinguished from the traditional male *ego*, creating an extra dimension of irony and humour as they play with, deconstruct and parody elegiac conventions, and develop and expand the generic boundaries more overtly than in the *Amores*. In these poems, magic engages closely with the form and imagery of the motif in earlier love-elegy; I suggest that by reading these correspondences through an intertextual lens we can interpret magic in Ovid’s epistolary and didactic works as an emblematic “shorthand” for love-elegy, affirming their place in this genre as well as evoking the works in which magic previously appeared in order to cast a new light on its role there. Ovid’s treatment of magic in these works also affirms the theme’s fundamental affinity with love-elegy and its importance for the genre’s construction. *Medicamina faciei femineae* displays a similar relationship with magic in earlier love-elegy; we

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will consider this work in the conclusion of the thesis as it will be most relevant after we have considered the connection of magic with the *puella*.

First of all, *Amores* 2.1, a poem which commentators frequently highlight as illustrating the characterisation of elegiac *carmina* as magic, offers an introduction to magic and poetry in Ovid which will be useful for our present chapter and as magic in this elegy continues the intergeneric dialogue with Vergilian pastoral it provides a useful transition from our readings in Chapter 1; we pause briefly on it here — focusing tightly on the passage of magic rather than treating the poem in depth — to highlight some of the themes and images which we will encounter in the following sections. The narrator, advertising his credentials as a love-poet to his young readership, remembers giving up his gigantomachy when his beloved locked him out (1-17); he dropped Jupiter and his thunderbolts and picked up his elegies — poetry praising a mistress’ beauty is more useful for winning her than songs of the Trojan War (17-34) and Ovid now commands beautiful *puellae* to turn to the *carmina* Amor bids him compose (35-38). When Ovid resumes his elegiac *carmina*, he lists their magic powers in familiar terms:

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blanditias elegosque leves, mea tela, resumpsi:
mollierunt duras lenia verba fores.
carmina sanguineae deducunt cornua lunae
   et revocant niveos solis euntis equos;
carmine dissiliunt abruptis faucibus angues
   inque suos fontes versa recurrit aqua;
carminibus cessere fores, insertaque posti,
   quamvis robur erat, carmine victa sera est.
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(Ovid *Amores* 2.1.21-28)

Commentators note that Ovid styles his elegies as magic and that this catalogue evokes the structure and content of Vergil *Eclogue* 8.69-71 and Tibullus 1.8.17-22; they do not develop these relationships to suggest that Ovid engages in an intertextual dialogue with these models and
uses magic to characterise his carmina within the tradition of love-elegy. Ovid’s allusions to his pastoral and elegiac predecessors underline the lexical connections between the powers of his flatteries and light elegies to open doors (21-22) and of the carmina he styles as magic (27-28) and present his verses as love-spells directed, internally, towards his beloved and the puellae he addresses in the final couplet (37-38) as well as towards his extratextual readers. The allusions to these models intertextually expand his elegy’s characterisation as “blanditiae” and “leves” (21) — hinting that the lover and narrator is similarly deceitful — and forecasts its failure in love despite the skill he extols. The conflict between the foreshadowed failure to win over the beloved and Ovid’s expressed confidence in his poetry indicates the narrator’s self-deception through his verses: the end of 2.1 increases this conflict when Ovid apparently remains excluded from his beloved despite confidently commanding girls to turn to his carmina. His unsuccessful cajoling and threatening of the ianitor, Bagoas, in the paraclausithyra of Amores 2.2 and 3 dramatises the powerlessness of his elegy to persuade its fictional addressees. Scholarship on the Amores reads 2.1 as a poem which, in the Amores’ meta-narrative of Ovid’s evolution into a love-elegist, presents him as a fully-fledged elegiac lover and poet; under this reading, we can suggest that Ovid’s presentation of his elegies as magic carmina in form and imagery familiar from his predecessors indicates that the motif had become recognisable as a generic marker of Latin love-elegy.

In Amores 3.7, love-magic is linked with Ovid’s literary progression from elegy to tragedy — his Medea — a programmatic theme of Amores 3 which the narrator’s encounter with the anthropomorphised Elegy and Tragedy in 3.1 establishes, and which culminates in Ovid

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4 For the Amores incorporating a narrative thread of Ovid’s development as a love-elegist: Boyd 1997 pp. 132-164 and Booth 2009 pp. 74-75.
announcing his tragic project in 3.15. Our discussion of Amores 3.7 also provides a foundation for reading Heroides 6 — magic in the earlier poem overlaps in a rare detail with Hypsipyle’s claims that Medea captivated Jason with witchcraft, and I offer a new interpretation of this point which prepares for reading magic in Heroides 6 as a metapoetic reflection on elegy and as anticipating Ovid and Medea’s transition to tragedy in Heroides 12. I firstly summarise Amores 3.7.

**Useless Wood: Amores 3.7**

Ovid recalls his impotence with a beautiful girl: despite their mutual desire and the girl’s physical and verbal efforts to arouse him, Ovid’s body remained slack and useless (1-16). He expresses his shame and recalls other girls he satisfied repeatedly (17-26) before considering whether magic caused his condition (27-36). Ovid praises the puella’s revitalising talents, lamenting his inability to enjoy her company and comparing his situation with Tantalus’ (39-54), and describing her seductiveness as powerful enough to move oak, adamant or stone (55-60); he recalls the ways he imagined their liaison and curses his body’s deceitful promises and the humiliation it caused (63-72). Ovid relates his puella’s failed attempts to stimulate him by hand and reports the outburst this final insult provoked: the girl sarcastically repeated his suggestion of magical enchantment before she accused him of exhausting himself elsewhere (73-80). She leapt from the bed, barefoot and tunic unbound, and covered the shame with water to prevent her maids from suspecting that anything was amiss (81-84).

Scholars read Ovid’s impotence as commenting on elegy and as embodying his wavering dedication to the genre. Sharrock interprets Ovid’s condition as dramatising “writer’s block” and meditating on elegy’s reliance on separation and frustrated desire for its production: Ovid relates his impotence in vocabulary connoting sexual and poetic activity and describes his beloved in terms which characterise her as an elegiac Muse. Sharrock also reads a poetic element

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5 See esp.: Amores 3.1.67-70 (“exiguum vati concede, Tragoedia, tempus! | tu labor aeternus; quod petit illa, breve est” | […] teneri properentur Amores, | dum vacat; a tergo grandium urget opus”); Amores 3.15.17-19 (“corniger increpit thyroso graviore Lyaeus; | pulsanda est magnis area maior equis | inbelles elegi, genialis Musa, valete”). For Elegy and Tragedy in Amores 3.1 embodying their respective genres: Wyke 1989b pp. 113-143 (esp. 118-124).
in Ovid’s suggestion of magical enchantment; we return to this when we consider the passage in question. Keith similarly suggests that the puella embodies Ovid’s poetry, interpreting her inability to arouse her lover as representing his waning interest in elegy and her final departure (“decuit nudos proripuisse pedes”, 82) as signalling his imminent withdrawal from the genre.

These readings dovetail well: Ovid’s impotence can at once express elegiac failure and his declining interest in the genre. My analysis of magic in Amores 3.7 adds to these interpretations by focusing on the practical rites at lines 29-30; I quote the passage in full and summarise Sharrock’s metaliterary reading before expanding on my suggestion.

Magic is the first explanation the narrator offers for his impotence:

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num me Thessalico languent devota veneno
corpora, num misero carmen et herba nocent,
sagave poenicea defexit nomina cera
et medium tenues in iecur egit acus?
carmine laesa Ceres sterilim vanescit in herbam,
deficiunt laesi carmine fontis aquae;
illicibus glands cantataque vitibus uva
dedicit et nullo poma movente fluant.
quid vetat et nervos magicas torpere per artes?
forsitan impatiens fit latus inde
huc pudor accessit fact: pudor ipse nocebat;
ille fuit vitii causa secunda mei.
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(Ovid Amores 3.7.27-38)

Sharrock reads the catalogue of carmina (31-34) as reflecting elegiac failure, suggesting that it inverts Amores 2.1.23-28, Ovid’s “more confident” list of poetry that is still unable to open his puella’s door. Sharrock also interprets poetic significance in Amores 3.7.35-36: echoing the nervi of Amores 1.1.18, which associate the elegiac couplet with the penis, “nervos” (35), “torpere” (35) and “impatiens […] latus” (36) indicate that Ovid’s literary capacity is diminished as well as his sexual potency. We can also draw on this parallel between Amores 3.7.31-34 and 2.1.23-28 to reinforce Keith’s reading of Ovid’s declining elegiac inspiration. Ovid attributes to his puella’s blanditiae (“illa graves potuit quercus adamantaque durum | surdaque blanditis

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saxa movere suis”, 3.7.57-58) powers similar to his own (“blanditias elegosque leves”, 2.1.21) over the door: “carminibus cessere fores, insertaque posti, | quamvis robur erat, carmine victa sera est” (2.1.27-28). The previous representation of Ovid’s blanditiae as magic suggests a connection between the puella’s flatteries and the harmful carmina in our passage, associating her attempts to arouse Ovid with the magical cause of his sexual and poetic impotence: elegy’s detrimental effect on Ovid’s literary prowess reflects his decreasing motivation to compose his Amores.9

I propose that the metaliterary implications of lines 31-37 invite a similar reading of the preceding couplet (29-30). The red wax of the suspected defixio parallels the colour of the wax on the writing-tablets which are the focus of Amores 1.11 and 12 (“at tamquam minio penitus medicata rubebas:| ille color vere sanguinule erat”, 1.12.11-12), a pair of elegies which stage poetic composition, voice and limitation.10 I suggest that we can build on this echo and read the colour of the wax at Amores 3.7.29 as alluding back to Ovid’s earlier diptych, adding to the poetic associations of the magic by transforming the writing-tablets into a curse-tablet. Scholarship on Amores 3.7 and on ancient magic highlights the distinctiveness of the practices in lines 29-30: Ovid offers rare ancient testimony for wax curse-tablets and is unusual in specifying a colour; Faraone, approaching Amores 3.7.29 as testimony of magical practice, suggests that writing-tablets covered by red “gum lac” may explain the shade of Ovid’s defixio.11 Piercing a figurine (30) is virtually unique in extant literary representations of magic — it only otherwise occurs in Heroïdes 6.92.12 As I hope to illustrate, Ovid’s intratextual echo provides the key to interpreting these idiosyncrasies; it will be helpful to review Amores 1.11 and 12 before suggesting how they apply to our passage.

In Amores 1.11, the narrator entrusts his tablets — their wax inscribed with messages to his beloved (“cetera fert blanda cera notata manu”, 14) — to the hairdresser, Nape, the perfect

9 Cf. Amores 3.1.59 (“prima tuae movi felicia semina mentis”), Elegy’s claim that she made the seeds of Ovid’s mind fertile, which perhaps resonates in our passage.
10 Hardie 2002 p. 242 notes this correspondence between Amores 1.12.11 and 3.7.29.
12 For piercing a figurine: Tupet 1976 p. 388 and Knox 1995 p. 190; wax and effigies are otherwise melted, manipulated and/or bound in Theocritus Idyll 2.28-29, Vergil Eclogue 8.80-81, Horace Satires 1.8.30-33 and 43-44 and Horace Epode 17.76.
person to convey them to his mistress, gauge her reaction, and persuade her to respond (1-22). The narrator hopes that the tablets will bring a favourable reply, for which he will dedicate them in Venus’ shrine (23-28). In *Amores* 1.12 the tablets return with a rejection (1-2). The narrator admonishes Nape for tripping on the threshold as she left (4) and condemns the tablets: he accuses their wax and wood of impurity (7-22) and the tablets of being “*duplex*” in name and nature (27), finally cursing them to be eroded by old-age and their wax to become white with neglect (29-30).

Scholarship on this pair interprets the writing-tablets as representing the elegies which the lover uses to woo his *puella*, poetic raw material and/or the poet himself, and Nape as a metaliterary construct — either a substitute poet-figure or identified with the tablets to embody the elegiac text. ¹³ Roman interprets writing-tablets in Latin poetry as symbolising the material medium of poetic production, the loss of which the poet curses — as in Catullus 42 and 50 and Ovid *Amores* 1.12 — or laments — as in Propertius 3.23 — but which ironically enables him to demonstrate the capacity of his work and voice for survival independent of a written form; this irony underpins Sharrock’s interpretation of *Amores* 3.7: though sexual and poetic impotence rendered the narrator physically unable to perform or compose, he still produces an elegy on his incapacitation. ¹⁴

I suggest that the red wax of *Amores* 3.29 recalls the accursed tablets which embody the poet’s elegies in the earlier diptych and that, through this allusion, Ovid combines the metapoetic devices of writing-tablets and magic, literalising the equation of poetic and magic *carmina* in the wax of his curse-tablet. We can identify further correspondences between *Amores* 3.7 and 1.11 and 12 which underline their thematic relationship and reinforce my interpretation. The narrator’s remembered impotence in 3.7 enacts absence and failed seduction, analogising his body to the earlier writing-tablets: he characterises both as useless wood (“*truncus iners iacui, species et inutile pondus*, 3.7.15; “*inutile lignum*, 1.12.13) and compares his physical condition

to the effects of hemlock-poisoning ("tacta tamen veluti gelida mea membra cicuta | segnia propositum destituere meum", 3.7.13-14), echoing his accusation against the wax of the ineffective writing-tablets ("quam, puto, de longae collectam flore cicutae | melle sub infami Corsica misit apis", 1.12.9-10). The writing-tablets’ duplicity ("ergo ego vos rebus duplices pro nomine sensi", 1.12.27), which mirrors that of elegy’s illusory promises and of Ovid as poet and lover, resonates in Amores 3.7 when the narrator berates his penis for similarly betraying his trust ("tu dominum fallis, per te deprensus inermis", 71). These evocations of the earlier diptych also tie with Keith’s reading of Amores 3.7 as illustrating Ovid’s departure from love-elegy: Roman suggests that allusions to Propertius 3.23 in Amores 1.11 and 12 intertextually foreshadow the conclusion of the Amores; we can add that recalling this pair in a metapoetic context at the centre of Amores 3 bookends the collection, underlining its imminent end.

Ovid’s suggestion that the witch has pierced his liver with a needle (30) reinforces my interpretation of Amores 3.7.29. The liver was believed to be the seat of the emotions, particularly sexual passion, in Greco-Roman culture, making it an appropriate spot for disabling a love-poet. Additionally, Hardie notes that the acus (30) plays on a love-poet’s stylus. In light of the allusion to Amores 1.11 and 12 in line 29, we can read the acus as writing Ovid’s harmful elegies, whose power the following catalogue details (31-34).

Towards the end of Amores 3.7, the puella witheringly reiterates the suggestion of magical involvement and proposes an alternative cause of Ovid’s impotence:

'quid me ludis?' ait 'quis te, male sane, tubebat
invitum nostro ponere membra toro?
aut te traiectis Aeaea venefica lanis
devovet, aut alio lassus amore venis.'

(Ovid Amores 3.7.77-80)

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15 Wood symbolises “literary raw material” to be crafted and shaped and to bear the poet’s words: Roman 2006 p. 352. The echo of Amores 1.12.9-10 in Amores 3.7.13-14 underlines that the puella’s sweet elegiac blanditiae now harm Ovid physically and poetically.
18 For the liver as the seat of desire: Ingallina 1977 pp. 132-134.
19 For the liver as the seat of desire: Ingallina 1977 pp. 132-134.
The puella introduces a new detail: an “Aeaea venefica” (79). Aeaea, an epithet for Medea and applied to Ovidian elegy at Amores 1.8.5 (“Aeaeaque carmina”), gains additional significance in Amores 3 where Ovid’s switch from elegy to his Medea is a dominant concern.\(^{21}\) The epithet can cut both ways here: following the implication that elegiac carmina no longer inspire Ovid (27-38), the girl’s suggestion ironically admits that her enchanting blanditiae are causing his impotence; her accusation also implies that Ovid has been bewitched by his tragic Medea, with her realistic explanation (80) suggesting that he has been two-timing her with his new literary endeavour.

The puella’s introduction of the Aeaean witch maintains the metapoetic element of the magic in Amores 3.7, evoking Medea in her epic, tragic, and elegiac roles in connection with Ovid’s amatory and literary activities elsewhere. Both passages in our poem resonate in Heroides 6: our interpretation of Amores 3.7.29-30 will reinforce the metapoetic reading I offer of Hypsipyle’s allegations against Medea and raise the possibility of the Lemnian queen’s letter becoming an elegiac writing-tablet bearing a potent prayer which will impel Medea and Ovid towards tragedy; on this note, we turn to the Heroides. I give a general introduction to the collection and its relationship to previous love-elegy before considering 6 and 12.

Sealed with a Curse: Heroides 6 and 12

The single Heroides cast mythological heroines as elegiac lovers and poets composing letters to male beloveds. The metre, the close focus on the first-person narrator’s relationship and emotions, the subordination of all other concerns to love, and the generic motifs and vocabulary threading through the epistles characterise them as elegiac.\(^{22}\) The heroines differ from the


generic elegiac ego, a fictional male lover homonymous with the extratextual poet: as female narrators with independent literary histories in epic and tragedy they are clearly distinguished from the poet Ovid. The mythological narratives distance the epistles from elegy’s contemporary Roman setting, placing them in a more overtly fictional environment chronologically prior to Latin love-elegy. 

The letters are also set in or alongside specific epic or tragic literary texts which provide their narrative and character background; the elegies supply the extratextual reader with clues to their chronological position within or in relation to these texts. This is usually at a critical point in the narrative, a gap in the text into which Ovid inserts an elegy which has no influence over the outcome of events but which alters the audience’s perception of the narrative and of the heroine by presenting her first-person, love-driven perspective; the contrast between the heroine’s limited point of view and the information available to readers familiar with the background-texts of her letter creates irony and tension in the elegy. 

The letters also influence the audience’s perception of the elegiac genre by reworking its conventions and motifs in new contexts: the female narrators embody the “feminine” posture of the male lover; the tragic and epic mythological narratives and locations provide the potential for literalising elegiac metaphors and motifs such as servitium and militia amoris and, most relevant for us, magic. The majority of the heroines are mythological exempla in earlier elegy: the Heroides expand these characters into lovers and narrators enacting the situations and metaphors they previously illustrated in the contexts of their epic and tragic narratives, offering new, often ironic and frequently funny, views on the elegiac genre and on the male narrator and his employment of the heroines as exempla.

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24 For the single Heroides indicating their position in specific literary texts: Kennedy 1984 pp. 416-422.
25 Barchiesi 2001b pp. 30-31. This powerlessness in love enhances the letters’ affiliation with elegy. For the heroines’ letters as powerful and effective poetry as they augment their narratives: Fulkerson 2005 passim.
We focus on *Heroides* 6 and 12, the letters of Hypsipyle and Medea to Jason, in which love-magic is most prominent.\(^{28}\) These epistles engage in a close intratextual dialogue: in addition to sharing an addressee, they are set against the same literary texts and echo one another in the themes and content of their narratives, in the heroines’ self-presentation and character progression, and in specific lexical points which create the impression of a dynamic relationship between them.\(^{29}\) I offer some background to the letters and to their relationship which is relevant for our discussion before I introduce their use of magic; after this, we treat each poem individually in greater detail, beginning with *Heroides* 6.

*Heroides* 6 and 12 unfold against Apollonius Rhodius’ *Argonautica* and Euripides’ *Medea*. Hypsipyle’s letter picks up from the end of the epic: her narrative encompasses her relationship with Jason in *Argonautica* 1 and his adventures on Colchis in *Argonautica* 3 — focusing on his illicit affair with Medea — and foreshadows Medea’s tragedy at the conclusion of Euripides’ play.\(^{30}\) *Heroides* 12 is poised on the brink of Euripides’ drama and likely Ovid’s lost *Medea*: the heroine recalls her love for Jason against the events of *Argonautica* 3 and their aftermath until Jason’s new wedding, which passes her house as she writes; as her letter...
progresses, she foreshadows her revenge against her husband and his young bride. Each woman presents the events of the Argonautica through the elegiac lens of her passion for Jason and its concomitant emotions: fear and hatred of a rival (6.81-82, 95-108, 127 and 149; 12.178-182), betrayal and anger (6.41, 146; 12.91-92, 119-120, 207-210) at Jason’s deceit and infidelity (6.63, 109-110; 12.12, 19, 72). Each offers herself to Jason as a slave or suppliant (6.118; 12.185), and recalls her labours on his behalf to compare herself favourably with her replacement and persuade him to return (6.55, 73-74, and 129-138; 12.53 and passim).

With the aim of influencing Jason’s present actions, the heroines alter details of the epic narrative, illustrating the facility for verbal deception which characterises each woman in the Argonautica: Apollonius’ Hypsipyle uses artful, persuasive words (“μύθοισι [...] αἵμυλίοισιν”, 1.792), despite assuring Jason that she will be honest (“κακότητα δὲ πᾶσαν | ἐξερέω νημερτές”, 796-797), to conceal the massacre of the Lemnian men and to persuade the Argonauts to help repopulate the island; Medea speaks deceitfully to her sister (3.686-692) and to her handmaidens (3.902-911), and plots to betray her father by helping Jason (3.741-743) and to ensnare Apsyrtus (“μέγαν δόλον”, 4.421). Medea’s false speech is also associated with magic in the epic: as we noted in Chapter 1, the Moon describes her incantations as deceitful (“δολίῃσιν ἀοιδαῖς”, 4.59); Medea enhances the beguiling power of her untruthful message for Apsyrtus with drugs whose powers match those of Orpheus’ poetry (“τοῖα παραιφαμένηθελκτήρια φάρμα’ ἔπασσεν | αἰθέρι καὶ πνοιῆσι, τά κεν καὶ ἄπωθεν ἐόντα | ἄγριον

In the *Heroides*, this capacity for deceit, particularly linked with magic, aligns Hypsipyle and Medea with the male elegiac narrators and their poetry. As we saw in our reading of Propertius 1.1.19-24, Argus’ list of the capabilities of Medea’s drugs (*Argonautica* 3.531-533) and the Moon’s recollection of Medea’s deceitful spells (4.59-60) resonate in the powers of Propertius’ poetry, characterising elegiac *carmina* as false and incapable of successfully influencing love, and the lover-narrator as fallible and untrustworthy with a dormant potential for bitter vengeance. The heroines’ self-represented credulity (“*credula res amor est[…]*, 6.21; “*puellae | simplicis*, 12.89-90 and “*tu fraudis poenas, credulitatis ego*, 120) underlines this resemblance: the male lover claims “*credulitas*” and “*simplicitas*” for himself, as well as finding these qualities attractive in a *puella*. The lover is neither as gullible nor as artless as he claims: his credulity is the carefully contrived result of his self-delusions about his mistress and their relationship and a part of his calculated appeal to his beloved’s pity or blame for her treatment of him, making it an element in — and ironically highlighting — his deceit and persuasion.

Medea’s magic is central to the heroines’ attempts to influence Jason in the *Heroides*. Hypsipyle claims that Medea captured Jason with love-magic — charming and subduing him as she did Aeetes’ bulls and the snake guarding the Fleece (“*scilicet ut tauros, ita te iuga ferre coegit | quaque feros anguis, te quoque mulcet ope*, 6.97-98) — and lists her powers and activities (83-94); the Lemnian queen ends her letter by demanding that Jupiter punish Medea for

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33 For *simplex* (*Heroides* 12.90) indicating Medea’s revision of her character: Cecchin 1997 p. 75 and Lindheim 2003 pp. 130-131, and cf. Töchterle 1998 p. 163; Jacobson 1974 p. 118 notes that Medea’s self-presentation as *simplex* is unique in the *Heroides*. For the elegiac lover’s credulity: Propertius 1.15.34 (“[…] saepe mihi credita perfidia est”); 2.25.21-22 (“*tu quoque qui pleno fastus assumis amore, | credule, nulla dia femina pondus habet*”); Tibullus 1.9.37-38 (“*quain etiam flebas, at non ego fallere doctus | tergebam umentes credulus usque genas*”); Ovid *Amores* 1.3.13-14 (“*et nulli cessura fides, sine crimine mores | nudaque simplicitas purpureaque pudor*”); *Amores* 2.9.43 (“*me modo decipient voces fallacias amicce*”); *Amores* 2.11.53-54 (“*omnia pro veris credam, sint ficta licebit: | cur ego non votis blandiar ipse meis?*”); *Amores* 3.14.30 (“*et liceat stulta credulitate frui*”).
her amatory crime (151-164). Medea presents her magic undertakings as the *labores* which saved Jason’s life and earned his love; inverting her predecessor’s claim, she laments her powerlessness to influence Jason’s love or her own with witchcraft (12.163-172): “*serpentes igitur potui taurosque furentes, | unum non potui perdomuisse virum*” (163-164). Commentators highlight *Heroides* 6.83-94 and 12.163-172 as a point of dialogue between the epistles — Medea refuting Hypsipyle’s charges — and as echoing magic in prior love-elegy; an element of these earlier passages which remains unremarked in scholarship is their metapoetic function.34 Fulkerson’s recent study of the *Heroides* does highlight the prominence of magic in connection with elegy, commenting that the heroines are “inextricably linked to the supernatural […] because] they write *carmina*” and suggesting that some of the women associate themselves with magic to enhance their status as poets: “magic […] may be read metonymically for the women’s desire to assert authorial control”. Fulkerson’s consideration of magic and poetry in the *Heroides* focuses primarily on the letters of Deianaira (9) and Laodamia (13); she also suggests that Medea may have “ghostwritten” magic into these epistles or that Hypsipyle’s curse may ricochet into them after hitting *Heroides* 12.35 Fulkerson focuses on the collection’s intratextual relationships, however, and omits the letters’ contact with specific passages of magic, or Medea’s place, in earlier love-elegy.

We approach magic in *Heroides* 6 and 12 intertextually: building on our investigations in Chapter 1, I hope to offer a new reading of the motif in these epistles as a commentary on the male lovers’ characterisation of their elegy as magic associated with Medea. Each letter independently comments on the connection of Medea’s magic with love-elegy; their dialogue intensifies the irony of this connection by offering distinct but complementary perspectives on it: in the mythological world of the *Heroides*, Medea is Hypsipyle’s amatory rival in *Heroides* 6 and


an elegiac lover in *Heroides* 12, roles which dramatise the ironies of her presence as an *exemplum* for the power of elegiac love-poetry and the character and amatory experience of the narrator. *Heroides* 6 presents the elegiac lover’s inapposite connection of Medea with seductive love-magic and elegy when Hypsipyle accuses the witch of successfully enchanting Jason with poetry before revealing her own employment of an elegiac spell; *Heroides* 12 explicates and reflects back on Medea in elegy and on Hypsipyle and her accusations when the witch asserts the powerlessness of her love-magic while demonstrating her poetry’s ineffectiveness on her beloved.36

This reading supplements scholarship which notes metaliterary aspects of the letters. Commentators highlight the tension between tragedy and elegy in Medea’s epistle, which comes to the fore when she characterises her elegiac supplication of Jason (183-206) as words “too small” for her spirit (“animis […] verba minora meis”, 184) and in her closing lines (207-212) when she anticipates her revenge on her husband and Creusa.37 Tragic language in lines 207-212 coupled with allusions to a Propertian comment on generic elevation (2.34.65-66) and Ovid’s programmatic statements of his progression from elegy to tragedy in *Amores* 3.1 and 3.15 create the impression that Medea is leaving elegy for her tragic text; Barchiesi and Bessone suggest that *Heroides* 12.211 presents Medea as a tragic poet as well as a dramatic character.38 Reading a metapoetic element to Medea’s magic in *Heroides* 12 which amplifies her status as a negative *exemplum* for elegiac poetry enhances the strain between genres in her letter; alongside the echoes of *Amores* 3.1 and 3.15, Medea’s move from elegy to drama parallels Ovid’s transition from elegy to his Medea in *Amores* 3. *Heroides* 6 ends with Hypsipyle imagining taking violent revenge on Medea as if she were the witch herself (“Medeae Medea forem! […]”, 151) and praying to Jupiter for her rival’s punishment (151-164), detailing the events of Euripides’ *Medea*

which begin unfolding in *Heroides* 12; commentators highlight this thread between the letters, suggesting that Hypsipyle’s curse can be read as “causing” Medea’s later life and advancing her towards her tragic text.  

Identifying a metapoetic element in *Heroides* 6.83-94 adds to this transition — in her description of her rival’s powers, Hypsipyle presents her as an elegiac poet before outlining her tragic identity in lines 151-164, prefiguring Medea’s development in *Heroides* 12. With this background, we can now treat each work separately: I begin with *Heroides* 6, offering an overview of the letter and then focusing on the role which magic plays in its narrative.

**Heroides 6**

Hypsipyle congratulates Jason on reaching Thessaly with the Golden Fleece; she complains that he did not send the letter she deserved but let rumour and a messenger convey news of his deeds on Colchis and of the *barbara venefica* who has replaced her in his bed (1-40). Hypsipyle contrasts her legitimate marriage to Jason with his clandestine affair with Medea and recalls the Argonauts’ stay on Lemnos: Jason remained for two years before he was dragged away, bidding her farewell with tears and false promises of fidelity (40-72); she offered prayers and vows for his safety — now that Medea will benefit, she is loath to fulfil them (73-78). Medea could not have won Jason by beauty or merits — she must have used love-magic, enchanting him like the beasts on Colchis (83-104). Hypsipyle demands to be Jason’s wife again, stressing her lineage and offering him her kingdom, and reveals that she has borne twins; she had planned to send them to Jason but fear of Medea prevented her (109-128). Hypsipyle contrasts her filial loyalty and patriotism with Medea’s treachery, reiterating that witchcraft caused Jason’s infidelity (129-138). The queen now understands how passion provoked the Lemnian massacre and she imagines what she would have done if the guilty pair had drifted to Lemnos: her gentleness would have spared Jason; her mercilessness towards Medea would have matched Medea’s own (139-150). Hypsipyle petitions Jupiter to make Medea suffer the injuries she perpetrated against others, finally damning the marriage-bed the witch shares with Jason (151-164).

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Hypsipyle’s claims that Medea bewitched Jason function logically in persuading the hero to leave his new wife: her emphasis on Medea’s negative love-magic — which dominates men (“scilicet ut tauros, ita te iuga ferre coegit | quaque feros anguis, te quoque mulcet ope”, 97-98) rather than inspiring true affection — contrasts with her genuine love and the pious services (“preces castas”, 73) she undertook to protect Jason, implanting the suspicion that his passion for the witch is false while presenting herself favourably. As the queen’s letter progresses, her situation and character grow to parallel Medea’s until she imagines becoming her rival — “Medeae Medea forem” (151) — and turns to the magic she had condemned. Commentators read Hypsipyle’s curse (151-164) as completing her identification with and transformation into Medea, either, as Lindheim and Fulkerson suggest, to enhance her attractiveness for Jason or, as Verducci argues, showing her real character — her “suppressed […] potential for vindictive rage and hatred” behind her affected gentleness and decency. These three interpretations all focus on Hypsipyle altering her self-presentation and adapting the truth to win Jason with words and on the connection of these strategies with magic: we can develop these common factors by approaching magic in *Heroides* 6 from its intertextual dialogue with prior Latin love-elegy and by highlighting parallels with Greco-Roman magic to suggest an alternative reading of Hypsipyle’s relationship with witchcraft over her poem.

As we have noted, *Heroides* 6.83-94 draws on passages in love-elegy where magic functions metapoetically, indicating that Hypsipyle styles Medea as an elegiac poet whose *carmina* bewitched Jason; her connection of Medea’s *carmina* with magic associates her own poem with witchcraft, revealing that she is composing a spell to enchant her beloved — these correspondences destabilise Hypsipyle’s claims about her rival and her self-presentation, and foreground the irony of Medea’s generic association with elegiac love-magic. Hypsipyle’s appeal to Jupiter (151-164), which introduces a second internal addressee of her letter, evokes prayers for justice in Greco-Roman magic which require validation for the target’s punishment.

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While the majority of the punishments Hypsipyle requests match Medea’s crimes and anticipate her tragic future, Medea’s sabotage of Hypsipyle’s marriage with love-magic is unique to the queen’s letter. Verbal links associate Hypsipyle’s prayer with her rival’s amatory magic: I suggest that Hypsipyle’s fabricated claims are part of her spell, legitimating her magic and persuading Jupiter to fulfil her prayer by heightening the justice of Medea’s punishment and her own innocence. Hypsipyle’s false allegations also parallel diabolai (“slander-spells”) where the practitioner maligns their target before a god to persuade the deity to punish them; the two extended examples of diabolai in the PGM, IV.2441-2621 and VI.2622-2707, are primarily agōgai spells though VI.2622-2707 can be adapted to other ends, including targeting enemies (“ἀγαιρεί ἓχθροις μεταστρέφοντι τόσο σου τὸν λόγον”, 2625-2626). It is characteristic of diabolai that the contrived accusations and blasphemies relate the practitioner’s actions, making both, as Winkler observes, “a version of [the performer’s] own truth” — this chimes with Verducci’s interpretation that Hypsipyle’s Medea is “a figment of what she, Hypsipyle, is”.

Under this reading, Hypsipyle is engaging in poetic magic against Jason and Medea throughout her letter, deceiving and enchanting her beloved, extratextual readers and divine addressee with poetry to ensure her successful seduction of Jason or, failing this, her vengeance against Medea. Propertius 4.5 furnishes an elegiac parallel for the diabolē: the lover accuses the lena, Acanthis, of targeting him with magic and catalogues her powers (5-18), presenting himself as his amica’s husband and unjustly victimised by Acanthis’ witchcraft (“posset ut intentos astu caecare maritos, | cornicum immeritas eruit ungue genas”, 15-16); Acanthis’ monologue, however, mentions no magic. In the elegy’s final frame, Propertius sacrifices doves to Venus and describes Acanthis’ death (65-74), actions which, O’Neill argues, reveal the narrator as the true practitioner of magic: his false accusations against Acanthis aim to gain Venus’ support for his spell as in a diabolē, though Acanthis’ monologue reveals the tendentiousness of his allegations and characterise him as deceitful, vicious and petty. We consider each passage in Heroides 6 sequentially. Two allusions to earlier elegies which signal that Hypsipyle is misleading her

audiences and which alert us to her knowledge of magic, preparing us for reading lines 83-94 as part of her spell, precede this section; it will be useful to consider these first.

After relating the Argonauts’ departure, Hypsipyle recalls her prayers for Jason’s safety:

\[\textit{adde preces castas immixtaque vota timori, nunc quoque te salvo persolvenda mihi. vota ego persolvam? votis Medea fruatur?}\]

(Ovid \textit{Heroides} 6.73-75)

Hypsipyle’s services evoke the elegiac lover’s \textit{labores} for his beloved, as an allusion to Tibullus 1.5 underlines: the Tibullan lover relates the magic (“\textit{ipseque te circum lustravi sulphure puro, carmine cum magico praeceinisset anus}”, 11-12) he performed to save Delia’s health only for a rival to enjoy her company:\(^{44}\)

\[\textit{vota novem Triviae nocte silente dedi omnia persolvi: fruitur nunc alter amore, et precibus felix utitur ille meis.}\]

(Tibullus 1.5.16-18)

The narrator fantasises a rural life with Delia (19-36) before re-introducing his rival as a source of harm to his relationship (“\textit{haec nocuere mihi quod adest huic dives amator. venit in exitium callida lena meum}”, 47-48) and cursing an unnamed \textit{illa} (49-56): the demand that dogs chase \textit{illa} from the crossroad (“\textit{e triviis}”, 56) echoes the location of his prayers (16), connecting his performance of the curses with his former aid.\(^{45}\) Evoking Tibullus 1.5.16-18 underlines Hypsipyle’s devotion to Jason; she omits the Tibullan lover’s involvement with magic, maintaining her contrast with Medea, but the allusion to the Tibullan poem recalls that the lover’s aid for Delia was magic which he also performed more viciously, undermining Hypsipyle’s self-presentation. Her self-alignment with the Tibullan narrator raises the possibility that she knows more witchcraft than she claims; her suppression of this element of her model indicates her attempt to deceive Jason, her extratextual audience and presumably Jupiter. Hypsipyle recalls

\(^{44}\) Rosati 1992 p. 82; Bessone 1997a p. 232, noting that Hypsipyle’s curse completes the parallel with Tibullus 1.5.\(^{45}\) On magic in Tibullus 1.5.49-56: Tupet 1976 pp. 332-334, Murgatroyd 1980 pp. 176-181 and Wimmel 1987 pp. 231-248. In my MA dissertation I cite parallels from the \textit{PGM} which underline the erotic nature of these curses, suggesting that the obscure identity of the target implies that they are an \textit{agōgē} spell directed at Delia rather than the \textit{lena}: Chadha 2008 pp. 44-50. For debate over whether “\textit{haec}” (1.5.47) refers to the \textit{lena} and the rival or to Delia’s beauty: Smith 1978 p. 301 and Murgatroyd 1980 p. 176.
Tibullus 1.5.47 immediately before she introduces Medea’s love-magic (“Argolidas timui: nocuit mihi barbara paelex”, Heroides 6.81): by evoking the Tibullan lover’s curses, this echo destabilises her contrast with Medea when she stresses it most strongly, prefiguring her concluding prayer and hinting that her accusations are connected with this.

The opening line of Hypsipyle’s accusations against Medea (“nec facie meritisque placet, sed carmina novit”, 83) reinforces these suggestions: Heroides 6.83 recalls Propertius 3.6.25, a neglected puella’s assertion that her rival conquered her lover with magic rather than character: “non me moribus illa sed herbis improba vicit”. The Propertian puella details the other woman’s activities (26-30), indicating her own familiarity with magic and destabilising her opposition to her rival. The girl’s monologue concludes with a curse on her lover’s bed (“putris et in vacuo textetur aranea lecto: | noctibus illorum dormiet ipsa Venus”, 33-34) which echoes her anger over his neglect (“gaudet me vacuo solam tabescere lecto?”, 23), punishing him appropriately to his crime. Hypsipyle’s letter parallels this sequence, following the list of her rival’s practices by cursing the bed her unfaithful beloved shares with Medea; the allusion to Propertius 3.6.25 at line 83 combines with those to Tibullus 1.5 to undermine Hypsipyle’s contrast between herself and Medea before her accusations, alerting the reader that the practices and powers she details reflect her own and anticipate her curses.

Hypsipyle expands her suggestion that Medea has bewitched Jason by listing her skills:47

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46 Rosati 1992 pp. 80-81 highlights that Heroides 6.83 parallels Propertius 3.6.25; Rosati 1992 pp. 89-90 n. 47 notes the corresponding catalogues, the focus of Propertius’ puella and Hypsipyle on the beds their unfaithful beloveds share with their rivals, and their final curses. We explore Propertius 3.6.25-30 more fully in Chapter 3.
47 Cf. Tupet 1976 pp. 387-388 who discusses the suggestion that Heroides 6.91-92 is interpolated.
Medea’s abilities match those representing poetry in love-elegy and Vergil Eclogue 8: drawing down the moon (85), reversing rivers (87) and obscuring the sun (86), which echoes Amores 2.1.24 (“et revocant niveos solis euntis equos”) — where it is similarly paired with controlling the moon (23) — as well as Amores 1.8.9 (“cum voluit, toto glomerantur nabila caelo”) and Tibullus 1.2.51-52 (“cum libet, haec tristi depellit nabila caelo; | cum libet, aestival convocat orbe nives”). Hypsipyle echoes the powers Argus attributes to Medea at Argonautica 3.531-533 — immobilising rivers (532) and the moon (533) — which we have seen underline the association of elegiac carmina with the Colchian witch. Moving rocks and stones (88) recalls the effect of the puella’s elegiac seductions at Amores 3.7.57-58 (“illa graves potuit quercus adamantiaque durum | surdaque blanditiis sasa movere suis”), as well as the powers of Orpheus’ poetry as, for example, in Argonautica 1.26-31. Medea’s physical activities have a similar poetic undertone: “[…] tepidis colligit ossa rogis” (90) evokes elegiac enchantment in Tibullus 1.2.48 (“[…] tepido devocat ossa rogo”); fashioning wax figurines and piercing the liver parallel Amores 3.7.29-30 in which, as we have seen, elegiac wax-tablets refashioned as a defixio

48 Knox 1995 pp. 188-189, Cecchin 1997 p. 80 and Michalopoulos 2004 pp. 103-104 highlight that Heroides 6.85-87 draw on Apollonius Rhodius Argonautica 3.531-533. Knox 1995 p. 188 also suggests that “carmina” (83) allude to those with which Medea charmed the snake guarding the Fleece, while “dira pabula” (84) evoke the drugs which defended Jason from the bulls’ flames; we can add that evoking these powers in connection with Medea’s love-magic underlines Hypsipyle’s mistaken application of Medea’s powers in the Argonautica to love-elegy.


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represent harmful poetic enchantment. The initial emphasis on *carmina* directs the reader to understand these as the power behind, and illustrated by, Medea’s achievements, particularly as “[…] *carmina novit*” (83) replicates the line-ending of *Amores* 1.8.5 (“[…] *Aeaeaque carmina novit*”).

Hypsipyle’s claims allusively draw Medea as an elegiac poet, suggesting that she bewitched Jason with poetry; the passages she evokes — most notably, Ovid *Amores* 1.8 and 3.7 and Tibullus 1.2 — characterise elegy as deceitful magic ill-suited to enchanting the beloved through their reference to Medea and her powers. Rather than using Medea as an *exemplum* illustrating elegy, Hypsipyle accuses the witch of successfully employing the love-poetry which she herself brands as ineffective for winning a beloved. In doing so, Hypsipyle amplifies the irony of Medea’s association with elegy by undermining her statements as she makes them and prompting humour through her exaggerated and plainly false claims. This feeds back into the elegiac passages which Hypsipyle’s catalogue evokes, enhancing the irony and comic value of Medea’s presence as her entertainingly incongruous claims resonate for the extratextual audience re-reading prior love-elegy.

*Heroides* 6.83-94 illustrates how Medea’s association with love-elegy reflects onto the elegiac lover as a narrator through Hypsipyle herself. The queen’s accusations unwittingly connect her poetry with Medea’s magic, characterising her letter as a love-spell which aims to deceive and persuade Jason, and also foreshadowing its failure in this endeavour; Hypsipyle’s unconsciousness of this error illustrates her fallibility as a lover and narrator. At the same time, Hypsipyle’s catalogue illustrates elegy’s creative power and capacity to deceive its extratextual audience: the description she offers of the Colchian princess’s feats begins the Apollonian Medea’s transformation into an elegiac witch and poet in the minds of her audience. This expansion of the earlier mythological *exemplum* into an elegiac witch and poet playfully implies the greater powers of invention and persuasion of Hypsipyle’s, and Ovid’s, elegy to that of their

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predecessors; it also balances the tragic Medea whom our narrator forcefully sketches in her concluding lines and the precarious union of the two in *Heroides* 12. Hypsipyle’s invocation of Jupiter reveals a second internal addressee whom we may suspect has been listening all along: while her portrait of Medea fails to convince Jason or her extratextual readers, the intratextual success of her curse suggests that the image she conjures is vivid and persuasive enough to convince the divine recipient of her prayer.

It is to Hypsipyle’s prayer that we now turn. As we noted above, this evokes prayers for just vengeance and lines 83-94 help to validate the queen’s appeal and increase its efficacy.\(^{52}\) The allusion to *Amores* 3.7.29 (“sagave poenicea defixit nomina cera”) at lines 91-92 enhances this suggestion: while Hypsipyle omits writing on wax in favour of piercing waxen *simulacra* (91), the possibility remains that she inscribes her epistle on elegiac wax *tabellae*. Curse-texts and prayers on lead tablets were occasionally styled as letters from the practitioner to the spirits or deities they invoked; evidence suggests that such tablets were atypical, but *Heroides* 6 perhaps modifies the practice to Ovid’s epistolary collection, evoking the realities of magic ritual to literalise Hypsipyle’s poetic spell and its effects.\(^{53}\)

Hypsipyle requests that Jupiter justly punish Medea according to her crimes:

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\(^{52}\) Michalopoulos 2004 p. 112 notes that *Heroides* 6.151-152 corresponds with prayers for justice but does not develop this parallel.

\(^{53}\) For curse-tablets referring to themselves as letters: Faraone 1991a pp. 4-5 (DTA 102 and 103, both fourth-century BC), and Graf 1997a pp. 130-131 (second or first century BC); Versnel 1991a pp. 64-65 includes *DTA* 102 and 103 in the “border area” between *defixiones* and prayers for justice. Cf. Johnston 1999 p. 92 n. 24, noting *DTA* 102 and 103 as “two curse tablets that read a bit like letters insofar as they open with an address like that used in a letter” but stressing that these appear to be the only examples so far discovered.
Hypsipyle’s supplicatory address of “iustus […] Iuppiter” (151-152) and her emphasis on just reprisal for Medea’s crimes evokes the category of curse-texts which Versnel terms “judicial prayers”, “prayers for legal help”, or “prayers for justice”, and which, though distinct from revenge-curses, seek justified vengeance for the practitioner for wrongs committed against them by their target. These prayers for justice are distinct from amatory or competitive defixiones: in the latter, which cannot justify the curse beyond the target’s status as the practitioner’s rival, the aim is to bind or restrict the target’s will or actions through the agency of the practitioner (“I bind […]”); the former entrust the enactment of the retribution to a deity and provide validation for the victim’s punishment. At the same time, these categories overlap in content, language, and formulation to the extent that “hybrid” texts combining elements of the defixio and the prayer for justice are the norm; erotic curses seeking to attract a target (agōgai) often emphasise the victim’s injustices towards the practitioner to gain divine support for the spell. This blurring of distinctions allows space to read Hypsipyle’s prayer as a literary adaptation of a prayer for justice in an amatory elegiac letter which combines a love-spell directed towards Jason and an appeal to Jupiter for the deserved punishment of Medea and the hero: the Lemnian queen’s primary focus is the damage to her marriage with Jason (153-156; 163-164), making her prayer one of revenge

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54 Versnel 1991a pp. 60-72 and Versnel 1998 pp. 263-264; cf. Faraone 1999 pp. 43-55 and 80-84 for the similarities between erotic magic and prayers for justice. Hypsipyle omits a request for protection from the effects of her magic, a flaw which perhaps cements the future which parallels her rival’s. Petrović 2007 pp. 41-51 discusses unrequited love as an injustice in amatory defixiones, arguing that Simaetha’s portrait of her relationship with Delphis in Theocritus Idyll 2.64-158 is a literary representation of this practice; considering Tibullus’ and Propertius’ interaction with Idyll 2, the Hellenistic work may provide a precedent for Hypsipyle’s depiction of Medea and of her relationship with Jason in relation with magic. Versnel 1998 p. 264 n. 131 contrasts injustice in amatory spells with “legal” prayers for justice.
for an amatory injustice; her curse on the bed indicates that her desire for retribution now outweighs her wish to motivate Jason’s return.

Hypsipyle validates Medea’s punishment by listing her misdeeds (153-162); verbal echoes link these lines with earlier points in the letter at which Hypsipyle highlights the legitimacy of her own position or the moral wrongs of her rival, reinforcing the justification for her revenge and indicating that her whole letter is part of her magic ritual.55 “subnuba” (153) balances the queen’s legitimate wedding to Jason (“non ego sum furto tibi cognita; pronuba Iuno | adfuit”, 43-44); her abandonment with her twin sons (153) recalls their introduction as pledges of Jason’s loyalty (“felix in numero quoque sum prolemque gemellam | pignora Lucina bina favente, dedi”, 121-122); Medea’s betrayal of her family (159) picks up Hypsipyle’s contrast between her filial devotion and Medea’s actions (135-136), and the description of Apsyrtus’ murder (129-130). The queen’s demand that Medea wander in exile (162) and her curse on the couple’s bed (164) echo her list of Medea’s love-magic powers: “per tumulos errat passis distincta capillis” (89); “devovet absentes simulacrae cerea figit” (91). The other alterations to the narrative of Argonautica 1 reinforce this reading: Hypsipyle extends Jason’s stay on Lemnos to two years (“hic tibi bisque aestas bisque cucurrit hiems”, 56) and emphasises their formal marriage (43-44) in contrast to the Argonauts’ relatively brief sojourn in Argonautica 1 (861-862) and Jason’s parting refusal of her kingdom (902-903);56 she also emphasises his reluctance to leave Lemnos (56-65), inverting his haste to board the Argo in Apollonius’ epic (Argonautica 1.910; “ultimus e sociis sacram conscendis in Argo”, Heroides 6.65). Hypsipyle’s revisions emphasise the legitimacy of her relationship with Jason and exaggerate the injustice of Medea’s actions, attempting to increase the efficacy of her final prayer.57

55 Jolivet 2001 p. 282 notes that Medea’s punishments suit her crimes. PGM XL, a fourth-century BC prayer for justice which demands that the target suffer the same pains he caused to the female practitioner and her children before requesting that he perish on land or sea, closely parallels the formulation of Heroïdes 6.151-164; for PGM XL: Versnel 1991a pp. 68-69.
56 For Jason’s refusal of Lemnos in Argonautica 1: Knox 1995 p. 172.

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Hypsipyle’s evocation of prayers for justice in her final lines aims to give her own use of magic an element of legitimacy and to distance her from Medea’s punishment by placing it Jupiter’s hands. The echoes of her earlier catalogue of the abilities of Medea’s love-magic (89 and 91) undermine this impression of validity, however, as her extratextual readers know that these claims have been entirely fabricated and that, as in the _diabolē_, they reflect Hypsipyle’s own use of elegiac _carmina_ to influence Jason rather than her rival’s actions. Hypsipyle’s inability to recognise her error illustrates the fallibility of the elegiac lover, and it is symptomatic of the Lemnian queen’s myopic, elegiac view of Medea that she includes the witch’s heinous actions towards her family, which do deserve punishment, only to extend the range of her crimes and bolster her amatory sins; ironically, it is these details which give her curse its force.

_Heroides_ 12 dramatises the next step in Medea’s journey. Medea presents the irony of her association with elegy from the perspective of the lover and poet, lamenting her magic’s powerlessness in love while demonstrating her elegiac inability to charm Jason. _Heroides_ 6.83-94 prepares the extratextual audience to recognise this metapoetic element in the magic in _Heroides_ 12, which retrospectively deepens the irony of Hypsipyle’s accusations. I summarise _Heroides_ 12 before concentrating on the magic.

**Heroides 12**

Medea recalls listening to Jason’s appeal for help and declares that she should have died then, asking why the Argo came to Colchis and why she delighted too much in the hero’s appearance and deceitful speech — if she had not, he would have faced Aeetes’ tasks without magic and her misfortunes would have been spared. Medea will enjoy her last pleasure from Jason: reproachfully reminding him of her services (1-22). She recalls the Argonauts’ arrival and her immediate infatuation with their leader (23-38) and describes the tasks her father set — including capturing the Fleece (39-50) — and her sleepless night imagining them (57-60). Medea met with Jason and his false words and tears captured her innocent heart (61-92) —

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58 Commentators who note the echoes of lines 89 and 91 in 162 and 164 suggest that they underline Hypsipyle’s identification with and metamorphosis into Medea: Lindheim 2003 p. 124 and Michalopoulos 2004 pp. 112 and 114 n. 114.
protected by her drugs, he accomplished his trials (93-100); she charmed the snake and retrieved the Fleece (94-108), betraying her family and abandoning her land, now deserving divine punishment and death (109-128). In Corinth, Medea and her children hear Jason’s wedding (129-152); Medea describes her violent reaction (153-158), declaring herself justly punished for her crimes (159-162). She bewails her powerlessness to inspire or cure love with magic and laments that her services for Jason benefit a paelex, vowing revenge for her mockery by the new couple (163-182). Medea begs Jason to take her back, presenting her aid and his life as her dowry (183-206); she breaks off predicting his punishment, resolving to follow her anger — her mind compels something greater, she does not clearly know what (207-212).

Medea repeatedly dwells on Jason’s tasks and her magic’s role in his success (“ars mea”, 2; “praemedicatus”, 15; “devota […] manu”, 46; “aliqua […] arte”, 50; “medicamina”, 97; “medicato […] somno”, 107; “quaeque feros pepuli doctis medicatibus ignes”, 165), presenting her achievements as the labores which earned his love in contrast to Jason’s new bride, Creusa, the dives amator (“quam pater est illi, tam mihi dives erat”, 26) her efforts benefit.59 Like Hypsipyle, Medea evokes the lover’s services in Tibullus 1.5: her indignation at aiding a rival (“quos ego servavi, paelex amplecitur artus | et nostri fructus illa laboris habet”, 173-174) and her assertion that her only joy will be detailing her services for Jason (“hac fruar, haec de te gaudia sola feram”, 22) echo the Tibullan lover’s frustration: “omnia persolvi: fruitur nunc alter amore, | et precibus felix utitur ille meis” (1.5.17-18).60 In Tibullus 1.5 and Heroides 6, the lovers’ emphasis on their aid precedes their vengeful curses on the beloved and the obstacle to their affair when their poetic persuasion fails; each remains within elegy, taking revenge through words — although Hypsipyle’s effective prayer for revenge draws her closer to Medea, she only imagines adopting her rival’s physical actions (“Medeae Medea forem”, Heroides 6.151) and only becomes the elegiac Medea she constructed. In Heroides 12, this pattern foreshadows Medea’s violent retribution (“dum ferrum flammaeque aderunt sucusque veneni, | hostis Medeae

nullus inultus erit”, 181-182) in the dramatic genre capable of physically expressing her anger; her venenum (181) proleptically literalises her use of magic for revenge. Medea’s focus on her witchcraft throughout her letter illustrates its formidable power, intensifying the contrast with its helplessness in love (163-172); recognising a metapoetic level to Medea’s powers, particularly at 163-172, magnifies her role as a negative model for love-elegy — whilst answering Hypsipyle’s accusations — by associating her poem with her non-amatory magic.

Ovid incorporates echoes of earlier elegiac love-magic into Heroides 12 before lines 163-172: it will be helpful to begin with these as they introduce the conflict between Medea’s non-amatory magic in the Argonautica and her association with love-elegy and the character of the lover-narrator. One example is Jason yoking Aetes’ bulls and ploughing the earth: “iungis et aeripedes inadusto corpore tauros | et solidam iusso vomere findis humum” (93-94). “solidam […] findis humum” (94) recalls Dipsas and the saga of Tibullus 1.2 — both associated with Medea’s carmina and herbae — cleaving the earth with song (“et solidam longo carmine findit humum”, Amores 1.8.18; “haec cantu finditque solum […]”, Tibullus 1.2.47); “inadusto” (Heroides 12.93) echoes Heroides 12.13-14 (“isset anhelatos non praemedicatus in ignes | immemor Aesonides oraque adusta bovum”) associating Medea’s magic with Jason’s achievement and with the love-poetry of the elegiac sagae and poets. A second example is Medea recalling that Jason enchanted her with his beauty and his eyes: “et formosus eras et mea fata trahebant: | abstulerant oculi lumina nostra tui” (35-36). Medea’s experience parallels Propertius’ characterisation of his love for Cynthia in 1.1.1 — “Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis” — shortly preceding his self-equation with Medea (4-6) through the allusion to Vergil Eclogue 8.47-50. By echoing Propertius’ first image of his passion, Ovid inscribes his Medea into the tradition of elegiac love and Propertius into the tradition of Medea’s infatuation,

62 Bessone 1997a p. 158 notes that Heroides 12.94 parallels Amores 1.8.18 but does not pursue the correspondence.
elegiacising the Heroidean Medea and reinforcing, and retrospectively sharpening the irony of, Propertius’ initial application of her powers to his poetry (1.1.19-24).\(^{64}\)

We can identify a third instance in Medea’s focus on the snake. In the Argonautica, Medea captivates and subdues the dragon with incantations (“οἴμῃ θελγόμενος”, 4.150; “ἀοιδαῖς”, 157) and drugs (“ἀκήρατα φάρμακ”, 157), allowing Jason to take the Fleece (162); Ovid amplifies Apollonius Rhodius’ characterisation of the creature as a guardian (“φρουρὸν ὀφιν”, Argonautica 4.88), styling it, I suggest, as an elegiac custos and aligning its enchantment with the paraclausithyron.\(^{65}\) Medea introduces the beast in elegiac terms:

\[
\text{lumina custodis succumbere nescia somno, ultimus est aliqua decipere arte labor.}
\]

(Ovid Heroides 12.49-50)

The description of the reptile as an unsleeping guardian (49) recurs through the letter: “pervigil anguis” (60); “insopor […] vigil” (101).\(^{66}\) In love-elegy, “custos” calls to mind the beloved’s sharp-eyed guard;\(^{67}\) “pervigil” (60) characterises the ianitor of Ovid’s first paraclausithyron, Amores 1.6: “pervigil in mediae sidera noctis eras” (44). The elegiac lover employs poetic deception to elude or sway the guard: Tibullus bids Delia to deceive her custodian (“[…] custodes, Delia, falle”, 1.2.15); in Amores 3.1, Elegy recalls teaching Corinna to do the same: “per me decepto didicit custode Corinna” (49). Tibullus claims that the saga’s spell will deceive the eyes of Delia’s vir: “ille nihil poterit de nobis credere cuiquam, | non sibi, si in molli viderit ipse toro” (57-58); this resonates in Medea’s emphasis on the eyes of the snake (49). Evoking the paraclausithyron in Medea’s successful enchantment of the reptile juxtaposes her non-amatory incantations with elegiac carmina through a motif central to the genre; the fantastic

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\(^{64}\) I draw here on the reading which Hinds 1993 pp. 23-24 offers of the allusion at Heroides 12.33 to Vergil Eclogue 8.41; its effect is “to write the Virgilian Damon’s words into [Hinds’ emphasis] the myth against which the Virgilian Damon had measured his own experience of erotic infatuation and embitterment.”


\(^{66}\) Cf. Heroides 6.13; “pervigilem […] draconem”.

\(^{67}\) Tibullus 1.2.5 and 15; Propertius 2.6.37 and 39; Ovid Amores 1.6.7, 2.2.9, 3.4.1, and 3.8.63.
alignment of the house-door or ianitor with a gigantic snake points to the comic potential of the witch’s association with the elegiac lover and his verses.68

Medea’s direct answer to Hypsipyle’s suggestion that she captivated Jason as she did the bulls and snakes draws together and explicates these metapoetic hints:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{serpentes igitur potui taurosque furentes,} \\
\text{unum non potui perdomuisse virum;} \\
\text{quaeque feros pepuli doctis medicatibus ignes,} \\
\text{non valeo flammis effugere ipsa meas.} \\
\text{ipsi me cantus herbaeque artesque relinquunt;} \\
\text{nil dea, nil Hecates sacra potentis agunt.} \\
\text{non mihi grata dies, noctes vigilantur amarae,} \\
\text{et tener, a! miserae pectora somnus habet.} \\
\text{quae me non possum, potui sopire draconem:} \\
\text{utilior cuivis quam mihi cura mea est.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Ovid Heroides 12.163-172)

Echoes of Tibullus 1.2.45-66 associate Medea’s ineffective love-magic with elegiac poetry.69

The rare “perdomuisse” (164) and the description of the flames as “feros” (165) recall 1.2.51-52 (“sola tenere malas Medeae dicitur herbas, | sola feros Hecatae perdomuisse canes”), as does Medea’s itemisation of the expertise which fails her (167-168); pello (165) evokes the Tibullan saga’s control over clouds (“haec tristi depellit nubila caelo”, 1.2.51), a skill which Hypsipyle attributes to Medea (“nittit et tenebris abdere solis equos”, Heroides 6.86).70 Medea’s failure to cure her passion with magic (169-172) parallels Tibullus’ unsuccessful attempt to remedy his love for Delia with magic or elegy (1.2.61-66). Hypsipyle draws on Tibullus 1.2.45-66 to characterise her rival as an elegiac poet; echoes of the Tibullan lines highlight the metapoetic level of Medea’s pendant lament. Heroides 6 presents the association of Medea’s witchcraft with love-elegy from the perspective of an elegiac lover and poet mistakenly associating the Colchian princess’s skill with love-magic. As an elegiac lover, poet and narrator in Heroides 12, Medea

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69 Bessone 1997a pp. 220-221 suggests that Heroides 12.163-174 fuses Medea’s myth with elegiac magic by echoing Tibullus 1.2.51 and 59-60, Propertius 2.4.7ff., and Theocritus Idyll 2.15ff.
70 Bessone 1997a pp. 224-225 compares Heroides 12.164 with Tibullus 1.2.51-52. For the rarity of perdomuisse: Murgatroyd 1980 p. 87 and Maltby 2002 p.169. “pepuli” (165) is an emendation for the transmitted “repuli”; Bessone 1997a p. 225 and Heinze 1997 pp. 194-195. Bessone 1997a p. 225 also compares “perdomuisse” (Heroides 12.164) with “domuisse” at Propertius 1.1.15; this evokes the contrast between the powerlessness of the lover’s Cytherea carmina to seduce Cynthia and the success of Milanion’s physical labores in conquering Atalanta (1.1.9-16), underlining Medea’s inappropriateness as an exemplum for elegy’s seductive power.
embodies this connection between her magic and love-poetry; unlike the generic elegiac lover, Medea knows the limitations of her powers and states them openly, consciously expressing the irony of which the elegiac lovers, including Hypsipyle, are partially aware at best. While this partial awareness condemns the lovers to repeat the mistake of invoking the witch as an exemplum for their poetic power, Medea’s understanding of her magic’s flaws allows her to break free of her ill-suited generic confines to find a more effective, dramatic stage for her revenge.

**Fool Me Twice: *Remedia amoris***

Our final text in this chapter is Ovid’s erotodidactic elegy, *Remedia amoris*. The metre, amatory subject-matter, language and motifs of Ovid’s erotodidactic works align them with the elegiac genre, and the praecceptor-narrator identifies himself as an elegiac lover who draws on his experiences — often those documented in the *Amores* — to illustrate his precepts.71 Like the *Heroides*, these works offer a distanced view of love-elegy: the didactic form makes the narrator an instructor on love and love-elegy rather than an active participant in an affair: he dissects the feelings, situations, and actions of his students and the objects of their attentions to advise on arousing love and navigating the elegiac relationship (*Ars amatoria* 1-3 and *Medicamina faciei femineae*) or on extricating oneself from destructive passion (*Remedia amoris*). The translation of elegiac subject-matter into the didactic form inverts the generic situations and motifs, foregrounding the calculating guile behind the lover’s actions and poetic seductions and shattering his pose of “sincerity” and true love as the praecceptor outlines the motives behind his seductions of his beloved.72 The erotodidactic works incorporate a metapoetic level, commenting on the art and skill of the extratextual poet distinct from the homonymous praecceptor as well as on elegiac conventions; pertinent to our discussion is the use of magic to highlight poetic deception — by the praecceptor of his students, the students of their beloveds, prospective lovers

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71 For Ovid’s erotodidactic work blending elegiac and didactic genres: Dalzell 1996 pp. 136-146 and Boyd 2009 pp. 115-118.

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of themselves, and the extratextual poet of his audience — and failure.⁷³ We presently focus on the intertextual relationship of *Remedia amoris* with magic in earlier love elegy; we will return to Ovid’s erotodidactic elegies in the conclusion to the thesis to investigate its role in *Medicamina faciei femineae* and to briefly consider *Remedia amoris* 249-290 in the context of its dialogue with *Ars amatoria* 2.99-108.

*Remedia amoris*, Ovid’s last erotodidactic elegy, illustrates the power of his magically enchanting poetry. Following *Ars amatoria* 1-3, the title of the *Remedia* promises its students cures for love caused by following the instructions in these works.⁷⁴ Ovid’s opening dialogue with Cupid, who has read the title as a declaration of war against love, reveals that the *Remedia* will not unravel the elegiac world (“nec te, blande puer, nec nostras prodimus artes, | nec nova praeteritum Musa rexit opus”, 11-12) but only intends to prevent lovers’ suicides.⁷⁵ Scholarship on the *Remedia* highlights its unsuitability for curing love: the majority of the “cures” metaphorically illustrate amatory pursuit; Ovid’s advice frequently focuses on love, sex and the *puella*’s body, preventing his students from forgetting love as he instructs them to, and he recommends the *Ars amatoria* for pupils seeking new affairs to remedy the old (“quaeris ubi invenias? artes tu perlege nostras: | plena puellarum iam tibi navis erit”, 487-488).⁷⁶ The elegiac metre is also inherently associated with seduction, as Ovid emphasises in his defence of his “Musa proterva” (362) against his critics (357-396) and his warning that reading elegy endangers the cure (757-766).⁷⁷ Rather than heal love completely, Ovid’s *Remedia* deceives its students into believing that they are being cured (“ad mea, decepti iuvenes, praecepta venite, |...”

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quos suus ex omni parte fefellit amor”, 41-42) while it prepares them to return to the Ars amatoria to continue their pursuit of elegiac love.78

Early in the poem Ovid warns his students to beware magic carmina as remedies (249-260). He lists magic feats which his leadership will not produce and illustrates the uselessness of witchcraft with the exempla of Medea and Circe, reporting Circe’s fruitless persuasions of Ulysses in direct speech. Ovid relates that Circe rushed back to her “accustomed arts” without success before repeating his exhortation against trusting potions and carmina. Remedia 249-260 communicates closely with the parallel warning about retaining love with magic at Ars amatoria 2.99-108: the opening line of Ovid’s caution in the Remedia (“viderit, Haemoniae siquis mala pabula terrae”, 249) and his first line after Circe’s monologue (“ardet et assuetas Circ ad artes”, 287) echo the introduction to the pendant section (“fallitur, Haemonias si quis decurrit ad artes”, Ars amatoria 2.99); Circe’s speech expands the earlier statement that she could have held Ulysses if magic really aided love — “[...] Circe tenuisset Ulixem, | si modo servari carmine posset amor” (Ars amatoria 2.103-104).79 Sharrock’s discussion of Ars amatoria 2.99-108 illuminates Ovid’s use of magic in this passage as a metaphor for his elegy: as Sharrock’s work provides a springboard for my reading of Remedia amoris 249-290 I summarise her analysis before we continue.

Sharrock argues that magic at Ars Amatoria 2.99-108 metaphorically illustrates the poem’s enchantingly seductive nature. While Ovid rejects witchcraft, the language of his condemnation evokes incantations, dissolving the opposition between his Ars amatoria and deceitful arces Haemoniae: he warns his readers against trusting magic carmina to hold puellae

but gives his advice through a *carmen*; the equation between elegy and magic shows that Ovid is seducing his readers into trusting the very means he cautions them against. At the same time, Sharrock notes, Ovid’s exploitation of the double-sense of *carmen* cuts both ways: “if love cannot be kept by song, then it cannot be kept by the *Ars*” and Ovid “humorously undercuts the strength of his erotodidaxis.” Nevertheless, Ovid’s poetic enchantment and the promise of the *puella*, encapsulated in Calypso’s *fallax figura* (143), are powerful enough to hold the reader and lead him through the illusory promises of Ovid’s instructions. Sharrock highlights the same identification of magic and elegy in the *Remedia*: though Ovid denounces magic as a cure for love, his “rejection is problematized by the essential connection between magic and medicine […]. The unhappy lover will be saved by *sacro carmine* […] not by *infami carmine* […]. The two are only as different as the two sides of the pharmacological coin.”

We can build on the association of magic and elegiac *carmina* in this work. The caution against trusting to magic to heal love alerts Ovid’s students that the *Remedia* will not cure their passions as they believe and warns them of the elegy’s duplicitous agenda. This early warning, I suggest, is a test for his pupils — if they recognise the identification between the *Remedia* and “old” elegy they will follow Ovid’s advice and beware his poem. Veiling the warning against the *Remedia* as one against magic illustrates the deceptive, enchanting force of Ovid’s poetry, persuading his students to keep reading even as he tells them not to. Ovid’s confidence in his elegiac captivation allows him to offer this warning early, certain that fewer students will abandon his teachings than will be seduced into finishing the poem and returning to the *Ars*. As I highlighted above, we return to consider this relationship between these erotodidactic works in the conclusion; in our present discussion, we focus on the *Remedia*’s intertextual engagement with earlier Tibullan elegy and Ovid’s *Amores*. The introductory catalogue (249-260) inverts Ovid *Amores* 1.8.5-20 and Tibullus 1.2.45-54, as well as drawing on magic throughout elegy. Furthermore, the arrangement of *Remedia amoris* 249-290 replicates *Amores* 1.8 — the male

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81 Sharrock 1994 p. 56. Sharrock 2002 p. 160 characterises the *Remedia* as a “seductive song” which entices the reader through its teachings, though without reference to magic; cf. Luck 1962 pp. 58-59: *Remedia amoris* 249-260 rejects magic but reveals the poet as the true magician whose art can subdue love.
82 For an alternative interpretation of Circe’s monologue as a test for Ovid’s students: Brunelle 2002 pp. 56-68.
narrator reports an embedded monologue in direct speech by a female character, introducing her words with a catalogue of magic powers. Pursuing these correspondences can highlight how the warning against magic creates a warning against the *Remedia* which maintains the presentation of its subject matter through metaphors for elegiac love, and can suggest a new perspective on how Circe’s monologue relates to this advice. I begin by reviewing the *Remedia*.

*Remedia amoris* opens with two proems: the first (1-40) reassures Cupid that, despite the title, the *Remedia* will not undo Ovid’s previous amatory works; the second (41-78) addresses Ovid’s prospective students, promoting his healing abilities. After this, Ovid delivers his remedies for unhappy love: resisting infatuation from the outset or treating it quickly (79-134); occupying oneself with war, agriculture or business (135-224); travel (237-248); self-deception and deceiving the beloved about one’s feelings (211-212, 291-356, 491-522); bad or excessive sex (399-488, 529-542); focusing on other worries (543-574); avoiding solitude (579-608) and reminders of or contact with the beloved (621-740). Students should also avoid friends who talk about love (609-614) and arts which include or stimulate passion, including elegiac poetry (751-766). Ovid concludes by assuring his pupils that they will dedicate votive offerings to the poet whose song has assisted them (813-814).

Ovid’s caution against magic contrasts the *Remedia* with magic’s *infame carmen*:

\[
\text{viderit, Haemoniae siquis mala pabula terrae}
\]
\[
et magicas artes posse iuavre putat,}
\]
\[
\text{ista veneficii vetus est via; noster Apollo}
\]
\[
\text{innocuam sacro carmine monstrat opem.}
\]
\[
\text{me duce non tumulo prodire iubebitur umbra,}
\]
\[
\text{non anus infami carmine rumpet humum,}
\]
\[
\text{non seges ex aliiis alios transibit in agros}
\]
\[
\text{nec subito Phoebi pallidus orbis erit.}
\]
\[
\text{ut solet, aequoreas ibit Tiberinus in undas;}
\]
\[
\text{ut solet, in niveis Luna vehetur equis.}
\]
\[
\text{nulla recantatas deponent pectora curas,}
\]
\[
\text{nec fugiet vivo sulphure victus amor.}
\]

(Ovid *Remedia amoris* 249-260)

The powers of this *infame carmen* parallel those we have seen associated with elegy throughout the previous poems; the closest models for structure and content are Ovid *Amores* 1.8.5-20 and
The opening couplet (253-254) foregrounds this, replicating Amores 1.8.17-18 (“evocat antiquis proavos atavosque sepulcris | et solidam longo carmine findit humum”) and echoing Tibullus 1.2.47-48 (“haec cantu finditque solum manesque sepulcris | elicèt”); the meteorological power (256) evokes Ovid Amores 1.8.9 (“cum voluit, toto glomerantur nubila caelo”) and Tibullus 1.2.52 (“cum libet, aestivo convocat orbe nives”). In the final couplet (257-258), Ovid reverses Tibullus’ paired enchantment of rivers and the heavens (“hanc ego de caelo ducentem sidera vidi; | fluminis haec rapidi carmine vertit iter”, 1.2.45-46), echoing the anaphoric structure of both the earlier catalogues which evokes the style of incantations. These allusions identify the infame carmen with earlier elegy, opposing it to Ovid’s new work; the close relationship with Amores 1.8 and Tibullus 1.2.45-54, however, recalls the false opposition between Ovid and Dipsas and the identification between Tibullus and his saga, leading the reader to suspect Ovid’s current protestations. The evocation of magic in earlier love-elegy continues the reminders of amatory metaphors and topoi which ensure that Ovid’s students remain focused on love; it also evokes love-elegy itself, eliding the distinction between the Remedia and the “vetus via veneficii” Ovid now presents as harmful to his students, indicating that his new work is no different from the poetry he cautions them against.

Ovid promotes the Remedia over the infame carmen by advertising the lack of effect it will have — spirits will not be summoned; heaven and earth will continue as normal. This emphasis on the poem’s ineffectiveness, however, suggests that it will not remove love, just as magic in earlier love-elegy indicates the powerlessness of poetry to win it. The end of the

83 Geisler 1969 p. 270 notes the structural and stylistic similarity between Remedia amoris 251-258 and Amores 1.8.5-20; cf. Henderson 1979 p. 73 for Tibullus 1.2.43-52 [Henderson uses these line numbers].
87 Sharrock 1994 pp. 85-86 highlights the affinity between Dipsas in Amores 1.8 and Ovid, “a seducer and a witch”, in Ars amatoria 2; Brunelle 2005 pp. 149 and 157 nn. 19 and 20 compares Ovid in the Remedia to the lover and thelena in Amores 1.8.
passage confirms this suspicion: “nulla recantatas deponent pectora curas” (259). The identification between love-elegy and magic makes this a statement that the *Remedia* will not help lovers set down their cares: *recano* underlines this by echoing *retexo* in Ovid’s assurance to Amor that his *Remedia* will not unweave his earlier elegies — “nec nova praeteritum Musa retextit opus” (12). Ovid repeats his caution against having faith in *carmina* in the last couplet of the section:

> ergo, quisquis opem nostra tibi poscis ab arte,  
> deme veneficiis carminibusque fidem.  

(Ovid *Remedia amoris* 289-290)

On the surface, these lines encourage abandoning faith in magic to gain help from Ovid’s art; the collapsed opposition between the two forces reveals Ovid frankly telling his students to beware the *Remedia*. Conveying this message through a warning against magic screens its openness with the metaphor which expresses elegiac duplicity. By demonstrating the magically enchanting power of his verse as he admits its ineffectiveness as a cure, Ovid captivates his students and dupes them with the promise of a remedy; for the reader who recognises Ovid’s revelation, the charm of his verses will inspire them to keep reading.

The central *exemplum* of Circe expands these clues. Commentators debate the relationship of Circe’s monologue to the framing warnings: her speech contains no magic and when Ovid resumes his commentary on her actions he recalls that she rushes back to her accustomed arts in vain. Sharrock and Davisson each posit an association between Circe’s words and poetry. Sharrock highlights the similarity between elegiac and magic *carmina*, questioning “where does Circe’s magic end and her non-magical fascination begin?” and commenting that “the *ars* of words having failed she tries the *ars* of spells” which are “not so very different after all”. Davisson suggests that the sharp transitions from magic to unsuccessful poetry blur the distinction between the two, perhaps making the final instruction to abandon magic *carmina* 88 “*me duce*” (253) echoes Ovid’s promise at *Remedia amoris* 69-70 (“*me duce damnosas, homines, compescite curas | rectaque cum sociis me duce navis eat*”), linking the warning against ineffective magic to Ovid’s teachings in the *Remedia*; cf. Pinotti 1988 p. 169, who suggests, on the other hand, that this echo captures the poet’s distance from the witch. 89 Pinotti 1988 p. 171 highlights the equivalence of *recano* and *retexo*; cf. Rosati 2006 p. 150. 90 Davisson 1996 pp. 251-252 makes a similar point in connection with Circe’s speech, which I note below.
We can sharpen these observations by pursuing the close relationship between *Remedia amoris* 249-290 and Ovid *Amores* 1.8 introduced in the opening catalogue. As noted above, *Remedia amoris* 249-290 matches the structure of the earlier elegy. In *Amores* 1.8, the catalogue of Dipsas’ powers, including her “*Aeaeaque carmina*” (5), characterise her as an elegiac poet and narrator in Ovid’s image while he attempts to establish her opposition to himself; her speech underlines their identification by echoing the narrator’s words in the *Amores* and the erotodidactic elegies. The matching structure of *Remedia amoris* 249-290 produces, I suggest, the same relationship between Ovid’s poem, magic and Circe’s *Aeaea carmina* — the preceding catalogue associates the *Remedia* and its effects with earlier amatory elegy and Circe’s speech with the same medium, inverting *Amores* 1.8 with Ovid now in the primarily didactic role framing a monologue by a female elegiac lover.

This suggestion is reinforced by Circe’s monologue expanding *Ars amatoria* 2.103-104 and by parallels with Ovid’s *Heroides*. Despite recognising links between Circe’s speech and the *Heroides*, commentators rarely note that this makes Circe a counterpart for the male lover and poet with Ulysses as the indifferent beloved: Davisson, for example, reads Circe as a negative model for female students of the *Remedia*; Brunelle interprets Ulysses as a “positive” model for male pupils to follow, successfully conquering his passion by enacting Ovid’s later instructions and ignoring his beloved, while Circe is a negative example — she reflects the *Remedia*’s uselessness for female pupils in particular and her speech represents the *puella*’s appeals which male students must ignore (687-698). We can add to these suggestions by taking a cue from

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93 *Amores* 1.8.1-2 (“*est quaedam (quicumque volet cognoscere lenam,) audiat est quaedam nomine Dipsas anus*”) introduces Ovid in a didactic role, underlining his affinity with Dipsas.


110
Sharrock’s interpretation of Calypso as representing both the didactic narrator and the elegiac puella in *Ars amatoria* 2.123-144 — each drawing the student and the extratextual audience into the poem — and read Circe as an analogue for the didactic narrator and the male lover, both roles which match Ovid’s relationship to Dipsas in *Amores* 1.8 and which Ovid highlights in Circe’s monologue and the preceding catalogue.\(^95\)

Circe’s passion indicates that she represents students of the *Remedia*, male and female. She tried everything to retain Ulysses and to assuage her love but it persisted (“*longus in invito pectore sedit Amor*”, 268); this statement echoes Ovid’s advice that applying remedies late will make love harder to remove: “*et vetus in capto pectore sedit amor*” (108).\(^96\) Parallels with the *Heroides* underline Circe’s equation with the elegiac lover. Commentators predominantly note Circe’s correspondences with Dido in *Heroides* 7;\(^97\) the witch’s pairing with Medea (261-264), however, suggests reading her monologue alongside her niece’s letter and *Heroides* 6, and verbal and thematic echoes link Circe’s speech with these letters.\(^98\) Presenting Circe as an elegiac lover underlines the association of Ovid’s present elegy with magic and illustrates the inability of “*Aeaea carmina*” to maintain love as well as the *Remedia*’s lack of intention of curing it.

\(^{95}\) On Calypso: Sharrock 1994 p. 82. Cf. Brunelle 2002 p. 60 n. 18: “in her own way, Circe is just as humorously unsuccessful as the narrator of the *Amores*”.


Ovid the narrator points to his similarity with Circe by echoing the contrast between her power to physically transform men into thousands of shapes and her failure to change her spirit ("vertere tu poteras homines in mille figuras; | non poteras animi vertere iura tui", 269-270): he claims that he can vary his advice to suit any spirits and that there are as many remedies as diseases — "nam quoniam variant animi, variabimus artes; | mille mali species, mille salutis erunt" (525-526). Like Circe, the narrator cannot change his own nature ("[…] ego semper amavi, | et si, quid faciam, nunc quoque, quaeris, amo", 7-8), even with the remedies he offers his students: "curabar propriis aeger Podalirius herbis | (et, fateor, medicus turpiter aeger eram)" (313-314). Such statements cast doubt on the narrator’s proficiency as praeceptor amoris and healer of love and reinforce his proclaimed identity as an uncured elegiac lover; following the equation of Ovid’s elegy with ineffective magic, Circe’s inability to influence love through carmina reinforces the doubts in the Remedia to do the same.  

The instruction not to trust magic precedes Ovid’s later, unambiguous advice on avoiding pantomimes, the theatre, and love-elegy:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{eloquar invitus: teneros ne tange poetas;} \\
\text{summoveo dotes impius ipse meas.} \\
\text{Callimachum fugito, non est inimicus amori;} \\
\text{et cum Callimacho tu quoque, Coe, noces.} \\
\text{me certe Sappho meliorem fecit amicae,} \\
\text{nec rigidos mores Teta Musa dedit.} \\
\text{carmina quis potuit tuto legisse Tibulli} \\
\text{vel tua, cuius opus Cynthia sola fuit?} \\
\text{quis poterit lecto durus discedere Gallo?} \\
\text{et mea nescioquid carmina tale sonant.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Ovid Remedia amoris 757-766)

Ovid adds his own elegies, including the Remedia, at the beginning and end of the catalogue of dangerous love-poets (758 and 766) and identifies their effects with those of his predecessors’ work: "et mea nescio quid carmina tale sonant" (766). As Brunelle remarks, this helpful

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99 Cf. Davisson 1996 p. 257: “while the immediate context indicates that the adsuetas ... artes (287) and carmina (290) […] were magic spells, the passage may also warn us against expecting either techniques or poetry to change our own nature.” For the praeceptor’s fallibility illustrating the artistic control of the extratextual poet throughout Ovid’s erotodidactic elegies: Durling 1958 pp. 157-167, Wright 1984 pp. 1-15, Myerowitz 1985 esp. pp. 37 and 92-97 and Watson 2007 pp. 337-374; for a contrasting interpretation of the competency and success of the Ovidian praeceptor: Volk 2002 pp. 188-195 and cf. 159-166.

advice comes late — only when his students are approaching the end of the work does Ovid openly say that avoiding his poem would have been a better cure for love.\footnote{Brunelle 1997 p. 120 and Brunelle 2000-2001 p. 132.} I suggest that these lines about the danger of his poetry and its ineffectiveness for curing love explicate the earlier warning given through the identification of his Remedia with magic carmina. Through this equation, Ovid reveals the seductive deceptiveness of the Remedia and advises his students to beware; the guise of magic obscures this warning, rendering it another instance of elegiac duplicity and misdirection even as the identification with magic carmina reveals the trick.

**Conclusion**

Ovid’s use of magic throughout his amatory elegiac corpus illustrates the emblematic status of the motif for Augustan love-elegy. Heroides 6 and 12 and Remedia amoris demonstrate this particularly clearly: both the epistolary and erotodidactic works develop and expand the genre through the integration of new generic forms and conventions, though Ovid indicates that they remain firmly grounded in love-elegy. Both of the Heroides and the Remedia continue the same form and imagery of magic as in the Amores and in Tibullian and Propertian elegy; more than this, each example engages self-consciously with specific passages of the same theme in Ovid’s earlier work and that of his predecessors. This close intertextual bond with a key metapoetic theme highlights the identification of these works with love-elegy, and links them into the wider tradition which extends back through to Vergilian and Theocritean pastoral; this use, which Remedia amoris 249-290 particularly exemplifies, allows us to read magic as an established shorthand for love-elegy which was recognisable to contemporary audiences, and which was synonymous with poetic flair and creativity as much as with amatory deceit and failure. Ovid’s interaction with magic in earlier love-elegy also acts reciprocally, as Heriodes 6 and 12 illustrate well. By offering new perspectives on the genre in a mythological world chronologically “prior” to Augustan Rome, Ovid integrates his heroines into elegy’s literary background, preparing them to become exempla for the male narrators. In addition to elegiacising the heroines, for our purposes this causes Heriodes 6 and 12 to intensify the fallibility of the Tibullian and Propertian lovers as they now provide clear elegiac examples of
Medea’s inapplicability both to love and to the genre. More than this, this new elegiac heritage for the genre’s characteristic style of love-magic creates a literary tradition for the motif “independent” of Vergil and Theocritus, one which amplifies the genre’s affinity with magic and with Medea.\textsuperscript{102} This brings us to the end of our focus on the explicit connection of magic carmina with elegiac verses. In Chapter 3, we return to the beginning of the genre to pick up the second theme of our study: the Tibullan and Propertian lovers’ construction of their mistresses’ attractiveness through magic enchantment.

Chapter 3. Fairest of them all? Magic and the *puella*

In our final chapter, we turn to the elegiac lover’s association of magical enchantment with his mistress’ beauty. We encountered this theme in relation to Tibullus 1.8 at the end of Chapter 1; here, we investigate this use of the motif to consider how the lover’s suggestion that magic inspires his attraction to his mistress reflects on his presentation of their relationship and on his character and reliability as a narrator. I took initial steps in this area in my MA dissertation;¹ I now explore the relationship between the narrator’s association of his *puella’s* physical charms with witchcraft and her metapoetic status as the Muse and embodiment of the elegiac text and its composition. We can identify this association from the earliest Tibullan and Propertian collections: while commentators note the elegiac lovers’ comparison of their mistresses’ beauty with magic, they predominantly read this as elevating the girls’ attractiveness above witchcraft and any metaliterary relationship between the *puella’s* bewitching loveliness and the elegiac text remains unremarked.

We begin by highlighting the association of the *puellae* with magic and poetry in Propertius 1.1, 1.5 and 2.1 and Tibullus 1.5 and 1.8. Our consideration of the *puella’s* association with magic in Propertius’ and Tibullus’ first collections lays the groundwork for the second half of this chapter. Here, I suggest that we can identify a contemporary acknowledgement of the motif’s role in these books by exploring magic and Canidia in Horace’s *Epodes* 5 and 17 as parodically inverting and literalising the metaphorical association of the elegiac *puella’s* looks with witchcraft, offering new readings of the Horatian poems as engaging in dialogue with early Propertian and Tibullan elegy through the metaphor of magic.² Allusions to *Epode* 5 in Propertius’ later 3.6 — our final text in this chapter — demonstrate, I suggest, the elegist’s response to Horace’s critique of the *puella’s* characterisation through magic.

¹ Chadha 2008 pp. 3-52, esp. 5-20.
² The competition between Elegy and Tragedy in Ovid *Amores* 3.1, which we noted in our reading of *Amores* 3.7, is a comparable use of female personifications of genres used to negotiate poetic choices.
The metaphorical association of the puella’s appearance with magic is most prominent in the first collections of Propertius and Tibullus, where the lovers indicate that witchcraft is behind their mad and debilitating passion. As we have seen in our readings so far, both poets employ the same metaphor to speak about their poetry. Scholarship increasingly understands the elegiac puellae in Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid as personifications of the poets’ texts; it seems natural, therefore, to read a triadic relationship between magic, the puella and elegy in these works, whereby the enchanting power of the girls’ physical beauty reflects the same feature of the poet’s carmina. In this section, we look at how the mistresses’ connection with magic functions in the fictional and metapoetic narratives simultaneously in Propertius’ and Tibullus’ first books. I highlight the prominence of the girls’ beauty as a source of attraction for the elegiac lovers and as a device for commenting on the style and composition of the text before focusing on examples of this combination to see how recognising this interlacing of magic, poetry and beauty can enhance our understanding of the motif in these two collections.

The elegiac narrators mention a variety of attributes which attract them to their beloveds — including, especially in Propertius’ work, negative character traits such as spite, jealousy, anger and violence — but they foreground beauty as the primary inspiration for their love. Propertius’ first book begins with the lover attributing his infatuation to Cynthia’s eyes (1.1.1-2) and in 1.4 the narrator follows a description of Cynthia’s charms (5-10) by saying that she has other, more attractive features, only to focus immediately on her physical beauty once more (“haec sed forma mei pars est extrema furoris; | sunt maiora […] | ingenuus color et multis decor artibus […]”, 11-13); Tibullus’ narrator introduces Delia (“me retinent vinctum formosae vincla puellae”, 1.1.55) and Pholoe (“illa placet, quamvis inculto venerit ore | nec nitidum tarda

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3 In Tibullus 2.4.55-60, the sole instance of magic in Book 2, the narrator associates Nemesis with the concoction of potions — the drugs of Circe and Medea (55), Thessalian herbs (56) and hippomanes (57-58) — which he claims his willingness to drink if this would inspire his mistrees’ favour (“si modo me placido videat Nemesis mea vultu, | mille alias herbas misceat illa, bibam”, 59-60); Tibullus does not, however, mention Nemesis’ beauty in connection with magic as he does Delia’s and Pholoe’s.

4 Cf. Lilja 1965 pp. 111, 117 and 119-132 for beauty arousing love in elegy; Lilja 1965 pp. 110-155 reviews the “sources” of the narrator’s love.
Both lovers illustrate the irresistible force of their attraction by favourably comparing their mistresses’ appearances with magic; the terms in which they draw these comparisons, however, collapse the distinction between these forces, implying that their puellae bewitch them magically after all.\(^6\)

At first glance, this favourable comparison of beauty and magic compliments the girls; aligning the effect of their good-looks with magic, however, suggests that it originates from a source external to the puella, justifying the lover’s excessive amatory servitium and removing his responsibility for it by implying that it stems from a supernatural force beyond his control, rather than from physical attraction to a pretty girl. The elegiac amator’s implicit characterisation of his beloved, her attractiveness and his love for her in terms of magic betrays an ambivalence towards his mistress and his passion for her which lurks beneath his overt flatteries and supplications and his ostensibly willing servile devotion which is, ironically, self-imposed and from which he seldom attempts to remove himself: connecting his mistress with an illegitimate, artificial and potentially harmful source of power suggests a resentment of his situation and an awareness of a need to justify it to himself and to his peers.\(^7\) The introduction of magical enchantment into his amatory relationship ultimately reveals more about the lover than about his beloved, highlighting his capacity for self-deception and for justifying his actions to himself and to his readers — both of which extend to constructing the image of his mistress best suited to his current needs — and illustrating his fallibility and untrustworthiness as a narrator.\(^8\)

Metapoetically, the mistress’ association with witchcraft unites the characterisation of elegy as magic carmina and the puella’s role as the embodiment of the text. The physique and charms of the Tibullan and Propertian puellae illustrate elegiac poetics and aesthetics and

\(^{5}\) Lilja 1965 p. 134.


\(^{7}\) For the social function of accusations of love-magic for rationalising or justifying behaviour in Greco-Roman culture: Gordon 1999 pp. 194-204; in non-amatory situations: Graf 1997b pp. 104-109; cf. Evans-Pritchard 1937 pp. 63-83 for a parallel function among the Azande.

\(^{8}\) For accusations of magic revealing more about the accuser than their target: Winkler 1991 p. 215.
showcase the artistry of the poet’s work. Propertius 1.2 is the best-established, and perhaps the clearest, example of this in early love-elegy: the narrator encourages Cynthia to eschew artificial adornments and cosmetics and to let her natural beauty shine (1-8). He offers examples of the uncultivated beauty of nature (9-14) and of mythological heroines (15-24) and stresses that if Cynthia — whom Apollo, Calliope, Venus, and Minerva decorate — renounces gratuitous cosmetics she will ensure his devotion (25-31). Though the narrator emphasises simple, unconstrained beauty in the central exempla (“litora nativis persuadent picta lapillis | et volucres nulla dulcius arte canunt”, 13-14; “[…] succendit […] | Pollucem cultu non Hilaira soror”, 15-16; “nec Phrygium falsa traxit candore maritum | […] Hippodamia”, 19-20), he speaks of heroines who were as naturally beautiful as if the artist Apelles had coloured them (“sed facies aderat nullis obnoxia gemmis | qualis Apelleis est color in tabulis”, 21-22). This hints at the highly sophisticated artifice behind the beauty of the exempla, signalling that the “natural” look the lover desires for his beloved results from great artistic skill. As the narrator constructs Cynthia’s beauty through his verses, her “simply” shimmering appearance illustrates his literary artistry, which creates convincingly lifelike images through a clear and unaffected poetic style. Connecting this appearance with love-magic gives another dimension to the enchanting power of the poet’s carmina by expressing this element of his verses through his mistress’ physical attributes; the illusoriness of the puella and the poetic labor masked by her apparently simple appearance reflect elegy’s fallax nature. This level to the bewitching force of the puella’s beauty adds humour to the narrator’s self-serving association of his beloved with witchcraft, as the source which enables the puella’s hold over him is none other than his own poetry.

We can explore these suggestions by looking at love-magic in Propertius 1.1, 1.5 and 2.1, and Tibullus 1.5 and 1.8. The first line of Propertius 1.1 (“Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis”) foregrounds Cynthia’s beauty as the instrument behind the narrator’s infatuation and enslavement, whilst implying that she has captivated him with magic wielded through her

10 For 1.2 illustrating Propertius’ literary skill by presenting Cynthia’s “natural” beauty as a work of art, including the significance of Apelles and his particular painting technique: Ross 1975 pp. 58-60 and 102, Sharrock 1991 pp. 39-40 and McNamee 1993 pp. 224-225 and cf. Curran 1975 pp. 1-16; Zetzel 1996 pp. 89-90 suggests that 1.2 makes a statement about Propertius’ elegy by illustrating “how not to write” poetry [Zetzel’s emphasis].
eyes.\footnote{On Cynthia captivating Propertius with magic in 1.1.1: Fauth 1980 pp. 277-278 and Sharrock 1994 p. 57; cf. Richardson 1977 p. 146 and Fauth 1999 pp. 140-141. For the multivalence of capio in 1.1.1: Kennedy 1993 pp. 47-48.} Beginning his programmatic first elegy with magic indicates that this is fundamental to Propertius’ puella and his work, and encourages his audience to associate Cynthia, and his narrator’s love for her, with enchantment throughout his subsequent poems. The narrator’s appeal to magic at 1.1.19-24 develops this subtext; the metapoetic significance of this passage, which we discussed in Chapter 1, reveals that Cynthia represents Propertian elegy and its composition as well as the object of his narrator’s affections. This invites the reader to reinterpret the opening line of 1.1 as illustrating the poet’s fascination by the enchanting realism of the work and the mistress he has created, alongside the lover’s captivation by his beloved.\footnote{For the elegiac lover and poet seduced by the woman he creates and by the process of her creation, without reference to magic: Sharrock 1991 pp. 36-49.}

Propertius next connects Cynthia and her effect on him with magic in 1.5, likening his infatuation to drinking Thessalian potions: “et bibere e tota toxica Thessalia” (6).\footnote{For Propertius 1.5.6 illustrating his experience of love: Luck 1962 p. 39 and Fauth 1980 pp. 279-280; for 1.5.6 contributing to Cynthia’s characterisation as a “magical spirit” in 1.5: Zetzel 1996 pp. 92-97, though Zetzel argues that Propertius opposes witchcraft and Cynthia’s magical effect on her lovers to his poetic enchantment which emerges between 1.8A and B and 1.10. Lyne 1974 p. 263 highlights Cynthia’s alignment with a goddess in 1.5.} The narrator warns Gallus (31) against pursuing Cynthia: his beloved is angry, insensitive to prayers, and constantly tortures suitors (1-10); insomnia, disorientation, pallor and emaciation result from devotion to the jealous and possessive girl who will defame unfaithful lovers (11-26). Propertius can offer his friend no cure, only the promise of comfort and a warning to cease enquiring about his mistress (27-32). The comparison of loving Cynthia with the effects of witchcraft features early in 1.5, raising the association between the following descriptions of the lover’s maladies and the effects of agōgai spells and presenting Cynthia as a practitioner of erotic enchantment.\footnote{Cf. Zetzel 1996 p. 95, who compares the symptoms of love in 1.5 with those in an agōgē spell, PGM IV.1508ff. and 350ff.} 

The position and addressee of 1.5 prompt us to read a poetic element to Cynthia’s association with love-magic: “Gallus” evokes Propertius’ elegiac predecessor Cornelius Gallus, particularly following Propertius’ polemical response to the iambographer, Bassus, in 1.4; the introduction of Gallus’ name is delayed until the end of 1.5, encouraging the reader to elide the division between this poem and 1.4 and to understand 1.5 as still addressing Bassus, making him the victim of her
Propertius does not introduce Cynthia’s appearance in 1.5, but the poem’s initial implicit continuation of 1.4 carries over the previous emphasis on her charms (1.4.5-14). 1.5 thus tightens the connection of Cynthia’s magic power with her introduction as a bewitching artistic creation and style of poetic composition in 1.1, reinforcing the centrality of the theme to Propertius’ elegy in his first book.

Propertius 2.1 reinforces this reading of Cynthia’s beauty, magic, and poetry in Book 1. The narrator focuses on his beloved’s physical attractions from the beginning (“sive illam Cois fulgentem incedere cogis | totum de Coa veste volumen erit”, 5-6); though he details Cynthia’s accomplishments, his focus on her body and movement — on her forehead as well as her artfully arranged hair (“seu vidi ad frontem sparsos errare capillos, | gaudet laudatis ire superba comis”, 7-8); on her hand and fingers when describing her musical ability (“sive lyrae carmen digitis percussit eburnis, | miramur facilis ut premat arte manus”, 9-10); on her eyes as she sleeps (“seu compescentis somnum declinat ocellis”, 11) — betrays these as the source of his fascination. These attributes also inspire the narrator’s elegies (“non haec Calliope, non haec mihi cantat Apollo: | ingenium nobis ispa puella facit”, 3-4; “invenio causas mille poeta novas”, 12), characterising Cynthia as his Muse as well as his literary creation; as Sharrock highlights, the detail of the girl’s ivory fingers (“digitis […] eburnis”, 9) draws attention to her status as a work of art.

At the centre of the poem, the narrator connects his love for Cynthia with magic:

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16 My comments on Propertius 2.1 revise my discussion of this elegy in my MA dissertation where I highlighted the connection of Cynthia’s appearance with magic but did not incorporate the puella’s connection with the elegiac text: Chadha 2008 pp. 11-15. For 2.1 recalling magic in 1.1 and 1.5: Papanghelis 1987 pp. 30-33.
Commentators offer various interpretations of this passage and of the witches — Phaedra, Circe, and Medea — Propertius includes; most relevantly for our purposes, Luck suggests that Propertius associates Cynthia’s attractive appearance and accomplishments with magic to create a contrast between her “internal” enchantment and the “external” practical witchcraft.\(^\text{18}\) I differ from Luck in that, rather than opposing internal and external magic, I suggest that Cynthia’s inclusion in the catalogue of witches aligns her with them, equating her physical enchantments with the spell which ensnares her lover’s senses; the balancing anaphora of 2.1.5-16 and 51-56 encourages this link.\(^\text{19}\) Cynthia’s association with art and Propertius’ poetry in the previous lines now aligns with her association, as in 1.1.19-24, with magic either inappropriate for love (2.1.53-54) or openly unsuccessful in achieving it (51-52).

Tibullus associates female beauty with magic in 1.5 and 1.8. In 1.5, the narrator, having sworn to renounce Delia, recalls his impotence in the arms of another woman (39-40); when the girl blames Delia’s witchcraft for his condition, the narrator claims that Delia’s charms are so great that she does not need spells:

\[
\begin{align*}
tunc me, discedens, devotum femina dixit, 
\quad heu pudet, et narrat scire nefanda meam. 
\quad non facit hoc verbis; facie tenerisque lacertis 
\quad devovet et flavis nostra puella comis. 
\end{align*}
\]

(Tibullus 1.5.41-44)


\(^{19}\) Miller 2002 p. 185 notes that the anaphora of 2.1.51-56 “directly recalls” 2.1.5-16.
Despite this protest, repeating devoveo (41 and 44) equates the effects of Delia’s beauty with those of magic and presents his infatuation as resulting from witchcraft.\textsuperscript{20}

This reading explicates a suggestion of magical enchantment in the opening lines of the elegy when the narrator, regretting his earlier harshness and his separation from Delia (1-2), compares his present state with a whipped top:

\begin{quote}
\textit{namque agor ut per plana citus sola verbere turben quem celer assueta versat ab arte puer.}
\end{quote}

(Tibullus 1.5.3-4)

Commentators predominantly read the \textit{turbo} (3) as a spinning-top and interpret the simile as expressing the narrator’s physical and mental agitation. \textit{Turbo} can also signify a magical instrument synonymous with the \textit{rhombus} Simaetha uses to draw Delphis to her door at Theocritus \textit{Idyll} 2.30-31 (“\textit{χῶς διειθ’ ὅδε ρόμβος ὁ χάλκεος ἐξ ᾿Αφροδίτας, ἃς τῆνος δινοῖτο ποθ᾽ ἁμετέραισι θύραισιν”).\textsuperscript{21} Horace \textit{Epode} 17.7 (“\textit{citumque retro solve, solve turbinem}”) provides a unique contemporary parallel for \textit{turbo} as a magical instrument — we return to the relationship between this text and Tibullus 1.5 in the second half of this chapter. A closer look at Theocritus \textit{Idyll} 2.30-31 can reinforce this reading of our Tibullan couplet:

Simaetha’s incantation uses persuasive analogy to compel Delphis to replicate the action of her \textit{rhombus}; the Tibullan narrator inverts this formula and presents himself as the victim of love-

\begin{flushright}
\footnotesize

\end{flushright}
magic by comparing his action with that of the *turbo*, suggesting that a spell, not his own desire — or, as we learn at 39-44, his impotence — induced his return to his beloved.\(^{22}\) This inversion allusively aligns him with Theocritus’ Delphis and his addressee with the witch, Simaetha; the *puer* (4) stands for Cupid, whose control over the *turbo* echoes Aphrodite’s agency at *Idyll* 2.29 (”ἐξ ᾿Αφροδίτας”).\(^{23}\) The introduction of Delia’s doorstep as the setting of Tibullus 1.5 (“[…] nec verbis victa patescit ianua […]”, 67-68; “[…] quidam iam nunc in limine perstat”, 71; “[…] et ante ipsas exscreat usque fores”, 74) retrospectively underlines the lover’s self-equation with Delphis and his implicit characterisation of Delia as Simaetha. The narrator’s allusive hint of a magical element at work in his return to Delia’s threshold excuses his behaviour, suggesting that he is not acting independently; the later, explicit connection of his beloved with witchcraft (41-44) builds on the earlier couplet, reinforcing Delia’s association with magic to justify his romantic incapacitation as well as his return to her after he had sworn to renounce her (1-2). By echoing the Theocritean lines, Tibullus also recalls the wider context of Simaetha’s incantation, underlining the metapoetic connection between his elegy and magic; the following association of magic with Delia’s physical attractions (41-44) explicates the suggestion that she controls the *turbo* in lines 3-4, associating her beauty, like that of her Propertian counterpart, with the magic of Tibullus’ text which was illustrated in 1.2.45-54.\(^{24}\)

The narrator of 1.8 suggests that magical enchantment has caused Marathus’ infatuation with Pholoe;\(^{25}\)

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\(^{22}\) The narrator’s curses on the *lena* (1.5.49-56) expand the characterisation of elegiac verses and magic *carmina*.

\(^{23}\) “*ab arte*” is a rare, poetic form of ablative of manner, first extant in Tibullus 1.5.4: Smith 1978 p. 291, Murgatroyd 1980 p. 162 and Maltby 2002 p. 242; the syntax maintains the echo of Theocritus *Idyll* 2.30.

\(^{24}\) Combining Delia’s beauty, magic and poetry in the force which compels the narrator to return to her, we can perhaps read the *discidium* with which the poem opens (1.5.1) as a literary one, especially considering the previous poem on Marathus (1.4) and Tibullus’ elegiacisation of Homer’s *Odyssey* in 1.3 which separates him geographically and generically from Delia’s elegiac threshold. For “asper eram” (1.5.1) as a direct contrast for the generic elegiac “*mollis*”: Cairns 1979 p. 178 and Lee-Stecum 1998 p. 156.

\(^{25}\) Bright 1978 pp. 242-243 notes the similarity between 1.8.17-24 and 1.5.43-46.
The narrator appears to elevate Pholoe’s charms above witchcraft (23-26); repeating noceo (23 and 25) equates the effects of physical contact with a girl who is naturally beautiful (“illa placet, quamvis inculto venerit ore | nec nitidum tarda compserit arte caput”, 15-16) with magic. We previously discussed lines 19-22 as characterising Tibullus’ elegies as magic carmina by alluding to Vergil Eclogue 8.64-109; the seamless transition to the enchanting powers of Pholoe’s attractiveness encourages us to understand her, too, as a scripta puella whose bewitching, “natural” beauty is an extension of the poet’s art. Bright interprets 1.8 as a distanced treatment of Tibullus’ relationship with Delia mediated through Marathus and Pholoe; Drinkwater extends this suggestion to read the poem as “a microcosm of male-female elegy within the male-male frame of the speaker’s own suffering”, in which Marathus develops into an elegiac lover and poet as the narrator grants him an embedded lament (1.8.55-66). Pholoe’s connection with the elegiac text through magic in our passage provides an additional indication of the metaliterary thread in the narrative of 1.8, anticipating Marathus’ role as an elegiac lover and poet enchanted by his textual beloved; that Pholoe appears here as an extension of the narrator’s carmina rather than of the boy’s maintains the gradual revelation of the narrative and balances Marathus’ immediately preceding introduction as a scriptus puer (1.8.9-14), signalling to the reader that the young couple are both literary constructs guided by Tibullus the poet — just as his narrator attempts to influence their affair — to present an objective reflection on elegiac poetics.


These examples illustrate that the triangular relationship between magic, elegiac poetry, and the beauty of the puella recurs in Propertius’ and Tibullus’ early works. In Propertian elegy, Cynthia’s connection with the poet’s carmina is given particular prominence in the opening poems of each of his first two books, and in each text the effect of her physical appearance on her lover — and that of love-elegy on the extratextual audience — is represented in terms of erotic enchantment. This association of magic with the beauty of Cynthia, Delia and Pholoe as well as directly with poetic carmina further indicates that the theme was fundamental to the construction and self-representation of Augustan love-elegy, in this case for illustrating its power to enchant and delight an audience. Within the narrative the same association of the puella’s beauty with magic continues to highlight the elegiac lover’s capacity for self-deception and justification — as well as his ambivalence towards his mistress and the, ironically self-imposed, amatory servitude which he claims to be willing to submit himself to — as he transfers the blame for his situation away from his own susceptibility to a pretty face by characterising his beloved as a practitioner of erotic magic. The expression of this ambivalence in the guise of a compliment to the puella’s incandescent beauty highlights the elegiac ego’s untrustworthiness both as a narrator and as a lover, and his readiness to adjust his attitude towards and representation of his beloved according to his own needs and circumstances.

These observations now prepare us to begin the second half of this chapter, in which we explore a contemporary response to Propertius’ and Tibullus’ association of magic with the puella: Horace’s Canidia, a witch with a metaliterary function whose appearance and association with magic in Epodes 5 and 17 similarly illustrate her connection with the poet’s work. Canidia, I suggest, parodies the elegiac puellae, as well as embodying Horatian iambic: her age, white hair and unkempt appearance invert the bewitching youth and natural loveliness of the elegiac mistresses, leaving her with only practical magic to bind suitors to her. Horace’s caricature targets the lover’s willing subservience to a woman whom he presents as forcefully arousing and controlling his desires, and enables him to define his iambic poetics against the elegiac. This provides another example of magic as an avenue for intergeneric dialogue through its inherent link with poetry and the women who embody it. Before we continue, we must first confront the issue of relative chronology: according to the customarily accepted sequence of publication, the
Epodes predate Propertius’ and Tibullus’ first collections. Several possibilities exist for the connection of magic and the elegiac beloved appearing in Horace’s Epodes and in early Propertian and Tibullan elegy: Gallus’ work might have provided a common source for all three poets; social and professional interaction might have facilitated their contact during the composition of their collections. A further possibility for us to consider is the earlier public release of Propertius’ and Tibullus’ work, placing them chronologically closer — even prior — to the publication of the Epodes, and I here expand on the criteria for dating the collections.

A Question of Priority

Horace’s Epodes were published between late 31-30 BC. The book is dated by the Battle of Actium of 2nd September 31 BC, which provides the context for Epodes 9 and 1 and furnishes the latest date in the collection. Propertius Book 1 and Tibullus Book 1 are traditionally dated to 29-28 BC and 27-26 BC respectively, based on the internal evidence of Propertius 1.6 and Tibullus 1.7. Recent scholarship demonstrates that the criteria for dating Propertius 1.6 and Tibullus 1.7 remain open to interpretation, and foregrounds the possibility of earlier dates for the publication of each elegist’s first collection.

In 1.6, Propertius declines to accompany his addressee, Tullus, on a mission to Asia (“Asiae”, 14):

\[
tu patrui meritas conare anteire secures \[\text{\footnotesize (Propertius 1.6.19-20)}
\]
et vetera oblitis iura refer sociis.

Tullus’ uncle (19) is L. Volcacius Tullus (cos. 33 BC); “secures” (19) alludes to his proconsulship in Asia. Epigraphic evidence (Ehrenburg-Jones 1955 no. 98) confirms Volcacius Tullus’ proconsulship, but this inscription dates to approximately 9 BC and does not provide a date for his office. Commentators relate Propertius 1.6.20 to the period following Actium, suggesting that the mission to Asia aimed to restore order to the province in the wake of

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28 For magic as a likely theme in Gallus’ elegies: Cairns 2006 p. 202 n. 41.
Anthony’s administration, and so date L. Volcacius Tullus’ proconsulship to 30 or 29 BC. Accordingly, Propertius 1.6.19-20 traditionally provides a *terminus post quem* of 29-28 BC for Book 1. In a recent article, Heslin emphasises that Propertius looks forward, rather than back, to Tullus’ mission to Asia and his uncle’s proconsulship and that 1.6 provides a *terminus ante quem* for Propertius collection, rather than a date after which the book must have been published. Heslin suggests that Propertius’ silence with regard to Actium in Book 1 indicates that the collection is better understood as published prior to this battle, and argues that 1.6.19-20, with its veiled criticism of Antony’s conduct in the East, better applies to the political context of 33 BC than of late 31 BC. As a result, Heslin proposes a new date of composition for 1.6 “most probably in the early months of 33”, with the completed book published shortly afterwards.

Heslin’s revised dating of Propertius Book 1 harmonises with that suggested by Luther, who offers M. Licinius Crassus’ Balkan campaigns of 30-29 BC as a new *terminus ante quem* for the collection based on Propertius’ reference to this undertaking at 2.7.18 (“*gloria ad hibernos lata Borystenidas*”) in relation to his own literary fame. These arguments for re-dating Propertius Book 1 convincingly suggest that the collection was published in advance of Horace’s *Epodes*, allowing greater opportunity for dialogue between the two books during their composition.

Tibullus 1.7 opens by commemorating Messalla’s triumph for ending a revolt by Celts in Aquitania:


31 Butler and Barber 1933 p. xxvii (cf. pp. xxv and 162-163), Enk 1946 pp. 16-17, Richardson 1977 pp. 7-8, Fedeli 1980 p. 168 (cf. pp. 9-10); Batstone 1992 pp. 301-302 suggests possible publication in August 29-spring 28 BC, with 1.6 providing a *terminus post quem* of “spring 30 (or […] 29)”; Lyne 1998b p. 523 suggests 28 BC as an “approximate” publication date. Camps 1961 pp. 6-7 dates 1.6 to 30-29 BC according to L. Volcacius Tullus’ proconsulship, but relates Book 1 as a whole to 30 BC; Barsby 1974 p. 128 n. 5 gives 1.6 an “approximate” date of 30 BC.

32 Heslin 2010 pp. 54-61 (quotation: p. 61).


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hunc fore Aquitanas posset qui fundere gentes,
quem tremeret forti milite victus Atur.
evenere: novos pubes Romana triumphos
vidit et evinctos bracchia capta duces;
at te victrices lauros, Messalla, gerentem
portabat nitidis currus eburnus equis.

(Tibullus 1.7.3-8)

The Fasti Capitolini record Messalla’s triumph as 25 September 27 BC (“727 M. Valerius M. f. M. n. Messalla. A. DCCXXVI | Corvinus procos. ex Gallia VII k. Oct.”).\(^{34}\) As Tibullus presents the celebration as a past event, 1.7 provides the terminus post quem for Book 1, suggesting its publication between late 27 BC-26 BC.\(^{35}\) In a recent article, Knox, beginning from Ovid’s sequence of the Roman love elegists at Tristia 4.10.51-54 and 2.445-268, argues for an earlier terminus post quem for Tibullus 1.7 and for the final issue of the completed Book 1.\(^{36}\) Knox highlights the indeterminate chronology of Messalla’s career between 31-27 BC, particularly of his Aquitanian proconsulship and his Syrian activities. Emphasising that the precise dates of these undertakings are unknown, Knox argues in favour of the view that Messalla was in Aquitania “the year after Actium”, before his time in Syria, rather than in 28-27 BC immediately preceding the recorded date of his triumph; accordingly, Knox proposes that Tibullus’ reference to Messalla’s Aquitanian victory offers a terminus post quem of 30 BC for 1.7.\(^{37}\) Messalla’s Aquitanian campaign may arguably have occurred in 30 BC; however, this has no immediate impact on the dating of Tibullus 1.7, as the dominant reading of “portabat” at 1.7.8 presents Messalla’s triumph as a past event. Knox advocates reading “portabit” and emending “at” (1.7.7) to “ac” so that Tibullus foreshadows the postponed triumphs of Messalla and his

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\(^{34}\) CIL I.i p. 50.


Knox highlights two further criteria for dating Tibullus 1.7 — the reference to Messalla’s repairs on the Via Latina (1.7.57-62), and the hymn to Osiris (1.7.29-48). Tibullus 1.7 provides the only evidence for Messalla’s roadworks, leaving their location and date unknown: Knox suggests that Messalla is more likely to have financed the repairs during his consulship in 31 BC than during Augustus’ later attempts to involve celebrators of triumphs in maintenance works. Knox also argues that the hymn to Osiris indicates an earlier date for Tibullus Book 1, as Augustus forbade worship of Egyptian divinities in Rome in 28 BC. Based on these criteria, together with his reading of Ovid Tristia 4.10.51-54 and 2.445-268, Knox proposes 29 BC for the publication of Tibullus Book 1.

Knox’s interpretation of the criteria for dating Tibullus 1.7 is noteworthy as it highlights the instability of these details and illustrates the potential for considering earlier publication of Tibullus Book 1. Tibullus’ presentation of Messalla’s triumph as a past event, however, remains an obstacle to accepting Knox’s argument unreservedly. Accepting Knox’s emendations of Tibullus 1.7.7-8 also makes it necessary to consider the question of how far in advance a triumph would have been publicly confirmed, as it is unlikely that Tibullus would publically commemorate an honour for his patron which was as yet unguaranteed. The fact of postponed triumphs contemporary to Messalla’s — namely, those of Marcus Licinius Crassus in 27 BC for his Balkan campaigns in 29 BC, and of C. Carrinas and C. Calvisius Sabinus, who both celebrated in 28 BC for victories in Spain in 31 and Gaul in 30 BC, respectively — reinforces the possibility that Messalla’s honour may have been announced earlier than it was finally awarded. If Messalla indeed accompanied Octavian to Rome for the triple triumph in 29 BC it is perhaps possible that his own was announced then, though this raises the further question of Octavian

38 Knox 2005 pp. 208-209.
41 Knox 2005 p. 216.
42 Knox 2005 p. 209 n. 24 acknowledges that poetic predictions of triumphs were “presumably made with some assurance of their likelihood”.

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allowing the declaration of future awards to distract from his glorious occasion. Nevertheless, even if Knox’s arguments for the emendation of Tibullus 1.7.7-8 do not convince, it is highly probable that Tibullus could have gained fame by releasing single elegies before publishing Book 1, providing just one way for Horace to encounter his work well in advance of 27 BC. Lexical and thematic links between Epodes 5 and 17 and elegies in Tibullus’ first book indicate Horace’s knowledge of Tibullus’ early work, as well as of Propertius’ first completed collection.

Even if we maintain the traditionally accepted dates for Propertius and Tibullus Book 1, Horace will surely have encountered poems from each elegist’s first book prior to publication. Horace compiled his Epodes over approximately ten years between 42-30 BC; Propertius and Tibullus likely worked for comparable periods on their collections, and as such all three poets will have been composing their works contemporaneously. Poets’ interaction with one another’s work pre-publication was central to Roman literary culture in the 30s BC. The intermingling of the “circles” and networks around central patrons such as Maecenas, Messalla, and Pollio — as particularly illustrated by Horace Satires 1.10.81-90 — allowed poets to disseminate work widely among peers by reciting early compositions and exchanging written drafts for feedback, and through recitations or publication of finished poems before the completed book. Socialising and resources such as Rome’s public libraries would also have


45 Cf. Maltby 2002 p. 131: the “most immediate model” for Tibullus 1.1.27-28 is “probably Hor. Epod. 2.23-5 […] although in an age when poets would have heard each other’s work at private recitations before actual “publication” it is difficult to establish priority.”

facilitated contact between poets. These avenues would have granted Horace, Propertius and Tibullus ready access to each other’s work and opportunities for mutual creative involvement during its composition. Commentators regularly acknowledge the importance of literary interaction through such pre-publication circulation of poetry: Watson and Maltby, for example, respectively commenting on Horace’s Epodes and Tibullus Books 1 and 2, each cite this as a means of Horace and Tibullus alluding to Vergil’s Georgics and Aeneid before the publication of the Vergilian works. What, then, should prevent the same means of interaction between Horace’s Epodes and the first books of Propertius and Tibullus?

We are now prepared to examine Horace’s engagement with Propertian and Tibullan love-elegy more closely. I begin by introducing Horace’s recognised dialogue with this genre in Epode 11 and then summarise relevant interpretations of Canidia.

Black Mirror: Horace’s iambic puella

Horace uses love-elegy as a foil for defining his poetics throughout his career, regularly focusing on the elegists’ emotional excesses and obsessive devotion to beautiful but unattainable, cruel, and unfaithful beloveds. Epode 11 is well-established in scholarship as an iambic parody

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48 Maltby 2002 pp. 39-40: “Possible echoes of Virgil’s Aeneid in Tib. 2.5 need not mean that book two was composed after the publication of the Aeneid, but simply that T. had heard pre-publication recitations of parts of the work.” Watson 2003 pp. 76-77: “That the Georgics were published after the Epodes proves nothing […] it seems virtually certain that Horace, as a fellow poet and close friend, was party to the occasional recitations which […] Vergil gave […] and that in consequence Horace was acquainted with the Georgics long before their formal publication.”

of love-elegy. Horace’s narrator adopts the persona of the elegiac lover, lamenting that composing versiculi is of no use in his love for Lyciscus (1-4): he relates his former infatuation with Inachia, which made him a source of gossip throughout the city, and recalls his laments at her door, to which he was constantly carried back only to beat himself against it in vain (5-22). Now love for soft Lyciscus binds him, though passion for another boy or girl will one day release him from this, too (23-28). Epode 11 maintains an iambic meter, and the narrator’s distinction between former and present affairs and his final assertion that future beloveds will replace the current object of his affections distinguishes his iambic perspective on love from the elegiac fixation on a single beloved, dramatising Horace’s differentiation between iambic and contemporary elegiac poetics. Horace’s engagement with love-elegy in this poem also exemplifies the multiplicity of genres which he incorporates into his iambic.

Commentators illustrate Horace’s engagement with elegy using lexical and thematic parallels from Propertian and Tibullan works; nevertheless, they predominantly consider Horace to be reacting to Cornelius Gallus. Lyne and Heslin propose, instead, that Epode 11 responds to Propertius Book 1. Lyne highlights correspondences between Epode 11.15-16 and 23-27 and Propertius 1.1.25-28, suggesting that Epode 11 is a “cynical and amusing” pastiche of Propertius’ elegiac servitium amoris to a single beloved. Heslin begins from Propertius 1.4, in which the elegist warns an iambographer, Bassus, against praising women besides Cynthia to him: the elegiac narrator details the attractions of Cynthia’s beauty and accomplishments, warns that she will slander Bassus to all the girls of Rome, and outlines the efforts she will make to retain her lover; he ends by reaffirming his attachment to Cynthia and commanding Bassus to leave them be. Heslin argues that “Bassus” is a pseudonym for Horace, mocking his “low” poetic genre as well as his equally low height and birth, and that part of the irony of 1.4 is that Bassus’ praise of


female beauty picks up Horace’s peculiarly intense invective against ugly women in *Epodes* 8, 12, 5 and 17. In *Epode* 11, Heslin suggests, Horace allows Bassus — “an iambic poet who has become the would-be victim of elegiac womanhood” — to respond, reflecting the iambic variety of sexual partners and deflating the threat that Cynthia’s slander will prevent him from enjoying Rome’s girls through his infatuation with Lyciscus (23) and by affirming his equal enjoyment of boys and girls (27-28), pointed responses to Propertius’ programmatically heterosexual adaptation of Meleager *A.P.* 12.101 at 1.1.1-6. “Inachia” may also be a pseudonym which comments on the elegiac lover’s devotion to a single mistress: Heslin suggests that “Inachia” evokes the Danaids, making Horace’s beloved “one of fifty interchangeable” sisters rather than a special girl worthy of his unconditional, unswerving devotion.54 We can build on these analyses and supply new evidence for Horace’s engagement with early Propertian and Tibullan work by identifying elegiac elements in *Epodes* 5 and 17, beginning from the lovers’ attachment of magic to the beauty of their *puellae* and their representation of this power as the cause of their irresistible attraction and self-proclaimed willing *servitium* to them. Canidia strips the elegiac *puellae* of their youth and beauty and replaces these with practical witchcraft, literalising the metaphor of magical enchantment as she employs love-magic to bind unwilling men to her; amplifying the elegiac subtext into a main narrative element exposes the lovers’ double-edged association of magic with their mistresses to present a vision of how the lovers’ amatory situation would be if their *puellae* really were witches rather than supernaturally lovely.55

My readings of magic and Canidia in *Epodes* 5 and 17 align with scholarship on the metapoetic roles of the witch and her spells in the *Epodes* and in *Satires* Books 1 and 2 which has been gaining increasing dominance over biographical readings of Canidia as Horace’s lover — a Neapolitan perfume-maker named Gratidia — or as a real practitioner of magic whom he knew in

55 Cf. Heslin 2011 p. 59: “the ugliness of Canidia has almost as prominent a rôle to play in Horace’s early work as the beauty of Cynthia has in Propertius; they might even be considered mirror images.”
Oliensis and Barchiesi discuss Canidia’s role as a “Muse” of Horace’s iambic collection, highlighting her identity as a witch and her etymological associations with singing (“canere”), dogs (“canis”) and advanced age (“canities”) as elements of her character which associate her with the iambic poet and text. Oliensis suggests that Canidia’s association with magic and song defines her as “a target and a producer of poetry” and a personification of “an indecorous poetics against which Horace tries to define his own practice” but with which he shares a deep affinity, making her an “anti-Muse” who stimulates his creative output. Barchiesi adds that Canidia embodies iambic poetics: her use of snakes and poisons evokes the genre’s etymological origins in “poisonous speech”; her age aligns her with its eponym, Iambe, the old woman whose lewd language and behaviour elicits laughter from her audience; her spells foreground the iambic characteristic of “illocutionary” speech which aims to achieve a direct result. Barchiesi reads the *Epodes* as engaging with various models, predecessors and etymologies of iambic, and *Epode* 17 in particular as a literary “myth of origins”, in which Canidia’s magic makes the narrator into the image of an iambographer and a reflection of herself — white-haired, old, filled with bile and venom (17.21-23) — before the “reversal” at the end of the poem suggests that she is a costume for the poet whose verses incorporate elements of magical incantation and who, as her creator, supplies and controls her voice; Barchiesi cites Lesbia, Lycoris and Cynthia as parallel metaliterary constructions who can further our understanding of Canidia and her role.

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Barchiesi suggests that we can use Propertius’ Cynthia to support his reading of Canidia. I argue the opposite, beginning from the triangle of magic, poetry and the *puella* in elegy and the iambic-elegiac dialogue already underway between Horace and Propertius to propose that these textual women are not simply analogous literary constructions but that they are, instead, light and dark sides of the same coin. Canidia, like Cynthia, unites erotic enchantment and the poetic text in a female form; illuminating an anti-elegiac element in her construction complements Barchiesi’s reading as well as extending Horace’s iambic interaction with elegy and the intertextual potential of magic in Roman poetry. Reading an element of elegiac parody in *Epodes* 5 and 17 further supplements the interpretations of these poems which I reviewed above: Horace’s iambic representation of the elegiac *puella* in Canidia, particularly one drawn in response to Propertius’ equally tendentious treatment of iambic, introduces an extra level of humour in the poems which augments the “blame-narrative” of *Epode* 5, defining Horace’s poetics from those of a contemporary genre whose praise-abuse ratio contrasts with that most immediately associated with iambic. This interaction between early Latin love-elegy and Horace’s *Epodes* may be read from the opposite direction; it seems more probable, however, that Horace comically amplifies this subtextual element of early elegy.60 Readers returning to the elegies in light of Horace’s works would no doubt bring an extra awareness of the subtext and a new dimension to their view of the *puellae* and the elegists’ treatment of them which is coloured by Canidia; I highlight Propertius 3.6 as acknowledging Horace’s treatment of Cynthia at the end of this chapter. We begin with *Epode* 5.

**Epode 5**

*Epode* 5 relates Canidia’s preparation of a love-philtre for her unfaithful beloved, Varus: the witch and her accomplices have kidnapped a Roman *puer* whom they will bury alive and starve before extracting his organs to use in the love-philtre. The poet narrates the scene, which includes direct speeches by the boy (1-10; 83-102) and Canidia (47-60). The epode opens with

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60 Commentators who maintain the predominantly accepted chronology of the *Epodes* and Tibullus Book 1 do suggest that the lover’s curses at Tibullus 1.5.49-56 draw on *Epode* 5.83-102: Luck 1962 pp. 50-51 and Wimmel 1987 pp. 239-241. Perelli 2006 pp. 181-184 reads Tibullus 1.5 as responding to *Epode* 15. For *Epode* 5 as a “blame-narrative”: Mankin 2010 pp. 96-97.
the boy praying by gods, children, and the emblems of his citizenship to know who his captors are and why one stares at him like a step-mother (1-10). The narrator reports that the sight of the child stripped of his clothes and insignia would soften the heart of an impious Thracian, but Canidia, her hair bound with vipers, ignores him and demands materials for her fire — grave-yard trees, eggs, toad’s blood, the feathers of a strix, herbs from Iolchos and Hiberia, and bones ripped from the jaws of a dog (11-24). Sagana purifies the house; Veia digs the ditch for the boy, whose torture the narrator describes (25-40); Folia of Ariminum is also present, famous across Italy for enchanting the heavens with her voice (41-46). Canidia prays to Night and Diana for help against Varus, her elderly lover whom her powerful magic nardum failed to keep from the Subura (47-60); she demands to know why Medea’s drugs have been unsuccessful for her — she obtained the remotest plants, and Varus slept on a bed imbued with her potion which should have made him forget all rivals; a more powerful witch must be working against her (61-72). Canidia vows to prepare a stronger potion to steal Varus’ sanity and force him to return burning with love for her (73-82). Her prayer makes the boy realise that soft words will not influence her and he unleashes Thyesteas preces — after death his spirit will haunt the witches by night; the mob will chase them through the street with stones; wolves and birds will drag away their unburied corpses and his parents will witness the spectacle (83-102).

I suggest that Canidia’s practical love-magic parodies the elegiac narrator’s representation of his desire for, and servitium to, his puella as the result of enchantment, literalising the elegiac metaphor of magical beauty and presenting a vision of the amator’s situation as if his mistress really controlled his desire with witchcraft. The details of Canidia’s ceremony draw on contemporary magic practice and popular superstitions attached to it, adapting these to construct a tendentious portrait of the elegiac relationship within the bounds of magical credibility; I highlight parallels from the PGM and defixiones to illustrate Horace’s realistic treatment of literary material. In the following discussion, I focus on selected elements of Epode 5 which highlight Horace’s interaction with love-elegy, particularly the boy’s burial and starvation (32-40). This torturous death, I suggest, caricatures the elegiac lovers’ subtextual representation of their servitium and fidelity as resulting from their mistresses’ enchanting appearance, amplifying this as part of a magic ritual; the torture also represents the amatory
sufferings of the elegiac lover as the explicit result of erotic spells. We can identify additional points of dialogue with early Propertian elegy — particularly 1.1 and 1.4 — in the character of Folia (41-46), and in Canidia’s monologue and her unsuccessful Colchian love-magic.

This reading also offers an alternative perspective on the contrasting descriptions of the puer and his words at either end of the epode: his pitiful appearance and soft words (“mollire”, 14; “mollibus | lenire verbis impias”, 83-84), and his vengeful curses (“Thyestae preces”, 86; “humanam vicem”, 88).61 The curses’ stated aim of revenge and the emphasis on their active effect (“diris agam vos”, 89) mark them as iambic.62 Oliensis reads the child’s speeches as illustrating the “origins of invective in impotence”, with Epode 5 enacting the “symmetrical progression” between Canidia’s carmina and those of the iambic poet as “one vengeful speech (Canidia’s against Varus) begets another (the little boy’s against Canidia)”; Johnson charts a similar progression, though he associates the rage and violence of the puer’s reaction to Canidia with the “Archilochean-Lykambid invective” which Horace later denies for his Epodes (Epistles 1.19.19-25).63 I suggest that the clear definition of the child’s curses invites a similar literary reading of his opening appeal, and that their repeated description in terms of “softening” the witch’s heart (“mollire”, 14; “mollibus | lenire verbis impias”, 83-84) evokes love-elegy. “mollis” is already a key term in early elegiac self-definition, particularly Propertius’: in 1.7, for example, the Propertian narrator contrasts his soft verse (“mollem […] versum”, 19) with Ponticus’ epic.64 By evoking elegy in the child, Horace incorporates an element of self-definition against this genre into the boy’s words: rather than maintaining the futile appeals which will lead to a death through tantalisation and desire which tendentiously literalises the elegiac lover’s

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expression of his love in terms of death, the *puer* avenges himself with “active” curses. *Epode* 5 ends, however, with the suggestion that the *puer’s* revenge will take effect only after his death at the hands of his captors; the implicit failure of his curses to change his fate suggests that Horace’s iambic may be as practically ineffective as any other poetry.\(^65\) I begin by suggesting how Canidia, the *puer*, and Varus evoke the dynamic of the elegiac relationship in the explicit context of the witches’ magic ceremony before discussing the boy’s inhumation.

Canidia tortures the *puer*, arousing and manipulating his desire as part of her ritual, while she pursues Varus with her magic — this dynamic between the three characters evokes the elegiac “triangle” of the lover, his mistress, and his rival, and particularly the situation of Tibullus 1.8, where Pholoe, whose dazzling beauty needs no magic aids to bewitch suitors (“*forma nihil magicis utitur auxiliis*”, 1.8.24), torments the *puer delicatus* Marathus while she courts an older man (“*canus amator*”, 29). Marathus’ older, rather than richer, rival is unique in Tibullan and Propertian elegy; his youth and effeminacy resonate in the Horatian *puer’s* “*impube corpus*” (*Epode* 5.13), while Varus, the “*senex [...] adulterus*” (57), balances Pholoe’s elderly lover. Horace’s parody of this Tibullan dynamic is reinforced by *Odes* 1.33, where the lyric narrator comforts the mourning elegist, Albius (“*Albi*”, 1) — whom commentators predominantly identify with Tibullus — over losing Glycera to a younger rival (“*cur tibi iunior | laesa praeniteat fide*”, 3-4), suggesting that Tibullus’ idiosyncratic focus on age in the triangle of 1.8 was particularly

\(^{65}\) For the *puer’s* curses suggesting the “pragmatic” ineffectiveness of iambic: Lowrie 2009a pp. 110-111. This impression is reinforced by the narrator of *Epode* 6, who undercuts the effectiveness of his own iambic tirade by asking if he will weep like a boy who remains unavenged (“*an si quis atro dente me petiverit, | inultus ut flebo puer?*”, 15-16): Fitzgerald 1988 pp. 185-187, Oliensis 1998 pp. 76-77. Lowrie 2009a p. 110, Mankin 2010 pp. 99-100, and Johnson 2012 pp. 106-108. By contrast, Watson 2003 pp. 187-190 argues that the boy’s words successfully disrupt the witches’ spells and enable his escape.
noticeable to his friend and contemporary.\textsuperscript{66} Other elements in the puer’s characterisation encourage reading him as evoking the elegiac lover. Canidia’s seizure of the child’s emblems of Roman citizenship (“purpurae decus”, 7; “insignibus”, 12) — symbolises, I suggest, his removal from society and demotion to a slave-status, dramatising the elegiac lover’s social detachment through his emasculating servitium to his puella.\textsuperscript{67} Propertius 1.1.1 programmatically combines magic with amatory servitium (“Cynthia prima suis miserum cepit ocellis”), and the narrator emphasises his innocence from physical desire before Cynthia’s eyes captivated him: “contactum nullis ante cupidinibus” (2). In the overtly magical scene of Epode 5, the puer’s sexual purity may also evoke the Propertian lover’s, with Cynthia’s gaze resonating in Canidia’s hostile stare: “quid ut noverca me intueris […]” (Epode 5.9).\textsuperscript{68} The boy’s extreme youth and sexual purity develops the documented use of young boys in magic — for example, the non-fatal use of sexually innocent boys as divinatory mediums — by combining it with popular Roman superstition regarding the victimisation of children by magic-workers. This is evident in Cicero’s accusations in his invective in Vatinium that Vatinius honoured the gods with the entrails of young boys, and in a gravestone for a girl which records her abduction by witches; equally

\textsuperscript{66} On Horace Odes 1.33 ridiculing Tibullus’ exaggeration of ages: Cairns 1995 pp. 72-73 with n. 12. For debate over the problem which this focus on age creates for equating “Albius” with Tibullus: Postgate 1903b p. 183 and Ullman 1912 p. 153. Cf. Watson 2003 p. 186, comparing Tibullus 1.8.24, “an argument widely canvassed in love-poetry”, with witchcraft as “Canidia’s only hope of holding onto Varus”. We may suggest that Varus — “bandy-legged”, an insulting moniker for a homosexual man — anticipates the narrators of Epodes 11 and 17, who also evoke the elegiac lover in the iambic speaker. The narrator of 11 laments his present infatuation with Lyciscus; the poet’s premature aging in 17 is the result of Canidia’s nard (“tuis capillus albus est odoribus”, 23), with which she had unsuccessfully anointed Varus’ bed (“indormit unctis omnium cubilibus | oblivione paelicum”, 69-70). This adds extra irony to Horace’s self-presentation as the elegiac lover successfully subjected by Canidia’s spells in Epode 17 which is in keeping with the ironic palinode of 17.1-52 and which continues to parody the elegiac lover’s hollow and self-justificatory attachment of magic power to his mistress. On “Varus” as a pejorative term for a homosexual man: Mankin 1995 p. 131. This is not to read a sequential narrative between the poems or to suggest that “Varus” should be identified as the narrator in 11 and 17; rather, it reflects the thematic and lexical links which unify the Epodes.

\textsuperscript{67} On “purpurae decus” (7) and “insignibus” (12) indicating the toga praetexta and the bulla: Ingallina 1977 pp. 109-1115 and 198, Mankin 1995 p. 112 and Watson 2003 p. 193. Watson 2003 p. 194 suggests that Epode 5.9 alludes to Medea as Theseus’ murderous stepmother; this strengthens the Propertian echo if we recall the allusion to Medea at 1.1.4-6. As in 1.1, Medea’s presence develops throughout Epode 5. Cf. Heslin 2011 pp. 63-65 for Horace Epode 11 engaging with Propertius’ adaptation of Meleager A.P. 12.101 at 1.1.1-6; if Horace was aware of this programmatic element of Propertius’ opening lines, it is likely that he was also alert to Propertius’ magical subtext and interaction with Vergil Eclogue 8.47-50.
relevant for our passage is the belief that *striges* fed on the blood of male children. By drawing on these superstitions, Horace exaggerates the elegiac lover’s youth and *mollitia*, and the *puella’s* cruelty, within the bounds of magical credibility.

The *puer’s* torture develops the elegiac parody. After recounting the activities of Canidia, Sagana and Veia (15-31), the narrator outlines the purpose of the ditch Veia digs:

```latex
quo posset infossus puer
longo die bis terque mutatae dapis
inemori spectaculo,
cum promineret ore, quantum exstant aqua
suspenda mento corpora,
executa uti medullia et aridum iecur
amoris esset pocalum,
interminato cum semel fixae cibo
intabuissent pupulae.
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(Horace *Epode* 5.32-40)

The boy’s starvation and tantalisation prepare his liver and marrow for Canidia’s aphrodisiac philtre: his craving for the close-yet-unobtainable food increases as his hunger grows, imbuing his organs with an intense desire which Canidia’s *pocalum* will transfer to Varus. Scholarship investigating the influence of contemporary magic practice on *Epode* 5 notes correspondences between several aspects of Canidia’s rite and realities and popular belief about everyday witchcraft: the boy’s burial keeps his body in contact with chthonic forces throughout his death, increasing the power of the ritual and of his organs; blood and body-parts of birds and animals are common ingredients in philtres and other mixtures; the child’s violent and premature death will make his spirit an *aôros*, or *biaiothanatos*, a restless soul invoked by magic practitioners to communicate with deities and accomplish spells. Execution by live-burial and starvation also had a precedent in Roman history, as a punishment for Vestal Virgins’ violation of their chastity

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70 Ingallina 1977 pp. 132-134.

71 For the interaction between practitioners, *aôroi* and *biaiothanatoi*, and deities in magic: Johnston 1999 pp. 71-160.
and in the ritual burials of pairs of Gauls and Greeks in the Forum Boarium. Eitrem highlights PGM XII.15-95 as a parallel for the length of the boy’s tantalisation (Epode 5.33). PGM XII.15-95 is a ritual for producing an “Eros assistant” (“Π[ά]ρεδρος Ἔρως”, 15), which can accomplish a variety of feats including causing dreams and insomnia, dispelling angry spirits, and, though it is not an erotic spell specifically, making targets love the practitioner and submit to his or her will. We can carry this parallel further: as part of the rites at PGM XII.15-95, the practitioner is instructed to consecrate the waxen figurine of Eros — as Johnston clarifies, “perfecting” the statue “in the sense of preparing [it] for use in a ritual” — by placing before it offerings including fruit, birds, sweetmeats, and honey-wine, as well as inedible objects, over a three-day period (21-24). These meals parallel those which Canidia and her accomplices repeatedly place before their victim; Horace, I suggest, omits the inedible objects from his adaptation of this type of spell to enhance the similarity of the child’s torture with Tantalus’, an element which we pick up below. Canidia’s treatment of her victim, which prepares his organs for use in her philtre, parallels that of the waxen figurine at PGM XII.15-95; strikingly, a live human replaces the inanimate statue here.

These parallels illustrate Horace drawing on contemporary magic in Epode 5; nevertheless, the combination and exaggeration of these details does not correspond with extant evidence of magic practices, and points to the poet adapting contemporary magic ritual for a

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73 Eitrem 1933 p. 37. Winkler 1991 p. 220 discusses the connection between the attraction desired in PGM XII.15-95 and the “more focussed” passion of agōgai spells which aims to force a victim to the practitioner. PGM IV.1716-1870 is an agōgē spell which includes a less elaborate ritual for obtaining an Eros assistant and which involves a burnt-offering, as at Epode 5.17-24, but no food.

literary purpose. I suggest that we can read the boy’s torture as encapsulating, in the context of an erotic magic ritual, the elegiac lover’s amatory servitium — physically trapped in the ditch, and reduced to an implement for Canidia’s spell — and his expression of his love and fidelity to his puella in terms of his death and burial, literalising and caricaturing the elegiac lover’s connection of his enslavement to a single beloved with magical enchantment, and his eroticised visions of his death and burial; the same image, as we will see, also represents the torments of the elegiac lover explicitly as the results of erotic spells. The manner of the child’s burial indicates a literary significance behind his torture, and reinforces reading him as a tendentious portrait of the elegiac lover: Horace specifically likens him to one whose body is suspended in water with his head above the surface — “cum promineret ore, quantum extant aqua | suspensa mento corpora” (35-36) — so that he can see the forbidden food as he dies. This description evokes Tantalus in the Underworld; Horace explicates this allusion at Epode 17.65-66, when Canidia explicitly likens her victim to the sinner (“optat quietem Pelopis infidi pater | egens benignae Tantalus semper dapis” 65-66). Tantalus provides a mythological paradigm for the amator’s unattainable desires in the first Tibullan and Propertian collections; Tibullus 1.3 offers the clearest example:

Tantalus est illic et circum stagna sed acrem iam iam poturi desert unda sitim.

(Tibullus 1.3.77-78)

Tibullus depicts Tantalus in the pool, unable to drink the water he craves. Propertius 1.9 makes an oblique reference to the Titan’s punishment in the context of literary polemic with the epicist Ponticus: “nunc tu | insanus medio flumine quaeris aquam” (14-15). While Horace emphasises the starvation of Canidia’s victim, the desiccation (“aridum”, 37) of his organs recalls the thirst which the elegists foreground. I develop this elegiac reading of the puer’s death in two sections: firstly, by considering the elegiac lover’s concern with his death and burial; secondly,
by exploring how the boy’s torture represents the elegiac amator’s desire as the result of practical erotic magic.

The elegiac lovers repeatedly imagine their death and burial, anxious that they should occur during their love for their mistresses who faithfully attend to their funerary rites. The lovers use death as a metaphor for their amatory experiences and to illustrate the strength of their passion and fidelity to their beloveds; at the same time, the lover’s narration of his funeral maintains the separation from his mistress which prevents the fulfilment of their relationship. I suggest that Canidia’s live inhumation of her victim reworks these elegiac concerns in a representation of literal magic practice, dramatising the elegiac narrator’s romanticised equation of love with death and his vision of dying in and through love; it will be useful to highlight some examples of the handling of death in Tibullus’ and Propertius’ early work before we look at Horace’s adaptation of the motif more closely.

Tibullus 1.1 offers an extended vision of the narrator’s death (57-68) in which he hopes to see Delia as he dies in her arms (“te spectem suprema mihi cum venerit hora; | te teneam moriens deficiente manu”, 59-60) and imagines her tears and kisses as she places him on his funeral bier (“flebis et arsuro positum me, Delia, lecto, | tristibus et lacrimis oscula mixta dabis”, 61-62); echoes of his earlier wish to hold Delia in his arms in bed by the fire (45-48) underline the narrator’s eroticisation of his funeral. The Tibullan lover’s envisioned death provides the framework for 1.3: the elegy begins with the narrator lamenting the absence of his mother, his sister, and Delia at his funeral (5-10); the epitaph he recites (55-56) introduces his catabasis into an elegiacised Underworld (57-82). Tibullus 1.3 will become more relevant for our reading of Epode 17; for the present poem, I focus on the eroticisation of death which Tibullus 1.1 illustrates and which features more frequently in Propertius Book 1. The Propertian lover treats his death in 1.6, 1.14, 1.17, and 1.19. Notably for us, Propertius’ earliest expression of his love for Cynthia as death occurs in 1.4: after Propertius stresses Cynthia’s beauty, he asserts that she has many

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80 Bright 1978 pp. 129-130; cf. Papanghelis 1987 p. 53 and Bassi 1994 pp. 56-57. For Tibullus’ “conflation” of love and death in 1.1: Bassi 1994 pp. 53-61. It is perhaps significant for our elegiac reading of Canidia that the Tibullan narrator’s imagined funeral introduces his encouragement to Delia to love him before death comes or old age makes love and elegy unsuitable (1.1.69-74): “iam subrepet iners aetas neque amare decebit, | dicere nec cano blanditias capite” (71-72).
more attributes for which he would willingly perish: “haec sed forma mei pars est extrema furoris; | sunt maiora, quibus, Basse, perire iuvat” (1.4.11-12). 81 1.4.11-12 may provide a jumping off point for Horace’s literalisation of the elegiac lover’s equation of love and death in the eroticised live-burial of Canidia’s victim.

We can reinforce this suggestion by considering Propertius’ subsequent handling of the lover’s death. The Propertian narrator emphasises his burial in the earth after dying in love in 1.6 (“multi longinquo periere in amore libenter, | in quorum numero me quoque terra tegat”, 27-28); he creates the same idea in 1.17 — firstly, separated from Cynthia after a shipwreck (“haecine parva meum funus harena teget?”, 8); then concluding his vision of his mistress attending his funeral in Rome (“illie si qua meum sepelissent fata dolore | […] | ut mihi non ullo pondere terra foret”, 19-24). 82 The live-burial of Canidia’s victim in Epode 5 — whose slow death is intertwined with his physical desire for the food he cannot reach — dramatises love-elegy’s eroticisation of death and the continued separation of lover and beloved which the amator’s death and burial embodies; it also evokes the lover’s liminal narrative presence in this theme, simultaneously dead and holding the position of poet and narrator. 83 The boy’s incarceration illustrates the physical separation of lover and beloved through the latter’s imagined death; Canidia’s attendance at the puer’s burial distorts the elegiac lover’s desire for his mistress’ presence at his funeral as an indication of her fidelity and expands his fears on this score as Canidia plunders the child’s remains in pursuit of another.

The puer’s murder will cause his desire to last physically in his remains, echoing the elegiac narrator’s claims of his eternal love and fidelity to his puella; Propertius 1.19 is the most developed treatment of this theme in Book 1. The narrator declares that his love will cross over into the Underworld (“traicit et fati litora magnus amor”, 12), and claims that his passion is so

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81 On *perire* (1.4.12) meaning “to die from love” and “to be in love”: Fedeli 1980 p. 133 and Baker 1990 p. 54.
82 Propertius again expresses his desire to remain in love while he dies, without reference to burial, at 1.14.14 (“quae maneant, dum me fata perire volent”). Baker 1990 p. 178 notes the equation of “dolor” with elegiac love in 1.17.19 and (p. 140) highlights the dual meanings of “dum” and “perire” in Propertius 1.14.14: “till the fates wish me to die” and “while the fates wish me to be in love”. Cf. Baker 1970 p. 674 on Propertius 1.6.27-8.
83 Flaschenreim 1997 p. 266 suggests that death metaphorically enables Propertius’ narrator “to have it both ways: to be present in the poem’s discourse and absent in its governing fiction”.

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strong that it will endure even in his ashes (“non adeo leviter nostris puer haesit ocellis, | ut meus oblito pulvis amore vacet”, 5-6). Lines 5-6 evoke the physicality of the lover’s desire which stems from his mistress’ beauty, underlining this through the emphasis on his eyes. Horace adapts this emphasis on desire lasting in physical remains to a magic context; the puer’s visual fixation on the meals before him replicates love’s possession of the Propertian narrator’s eyes (1.19.5), combining this with his literalisation of Cynthia’s initial enchantment of the lover with her gaze (1.1.1). The boy’s starvation deflates the lover’s eternal fidelity by substituting forbidden and desired food for the mistress, distorting the elegiac expression of fidelity into a magical practice and trivialising the lover’s desire by indicating that it can ultimately be felt as strongly for frequently-changed plates of delicious food as for the woman the lover professes to hold above all others.

The exemplum of Protesilaus and Laodamia in 1.19 offers further correspondence with the Horatian image:

\[
\textit{sed cupidus falsis attingere gaudia palmis} \\
\textit{Thessalus antiquam venerat umbra domum.}
\]

(Propertius 1.19.9-10)

Protesilaus’ ghost, whose incorporeal form leaves him unable to touch Laodamia, provides a paradigm for the Propertian lover, illustrating his eternal passion for and separation from Cynthia; “\textit{falsis […] palmis}” (9) evokes the tradition in which Laodamia fashions a waxen effigy of her dead husband. “\textit{falsis}” subverts the lover’s successful reunion, introducing the deceitful hope elegy offers of uniting the lover with his mistress. Canidia’s victim is similarly stranded between life and death, unable to reach the object he desires (“\textit{interminato […] cibo}”, Epode 5.39); Horace’s substitution of a live child for waxen effigies inverts the detail of the figurine of Protesilaus, de-romanticising the elegiac exemplum in his magical context. The continuation of the child’s spirit after death as an aōros or biaiothanatos for Canidia to control

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84 Papanghelis 1987 pp. 12-13; Michels 1955 p. 175 cites 1.19.6 as exemplifying the physicality of Propertius’ vision of death.
87 On “\textit{falsis […] palmis}” evoking the wax Protesilaus: Lyne 1998a pp. 211-212.
also echoes the returned Protesilaus; unlike the Propertian ghost, who remains desirous of the woman he cannot touch, the child’s closing curses threaten that his spirit will return and assail the witches in their sleep: “petamque voltus umbra curvis unguibus | quae vis deorum est Manium, | et inquietis assidens praecordiis | pavore somnos auferam” (93–96). The boy’s resistance to this fate in his closing curses highlight the difference between slavish elegiac devotion and iambic aggression.

The child’s torture also represents the elegiac lovers’ insinuations that their puellae arouse their devotion by magic rather than by their beauty. Physical emaciation and sleeplessness — illustrated by the puer’s wasted eyes and their fixation on the food — are generic characteristics of elegiac love; Propertius 1.5 lists both among the suffering which unrequited devotion to Cynthia entails: “aut cur sim toto corpore nullus ego” (22); “non tibi iam somnos, non illa relinquuet ocellos” (11). As we highlighted above, 1.5 is the first elegy in Propertius Book 1 which explicitly develops his experience of loving Cynthia as magical enchantment (“et bibere e tota toxica Thessalia”, 6), and, in its close relationship with 1.4, creates the impression that Propertius is warning Bassus against the magical consequences of loving Cynthia.88 Horace, I suggest, expands Propertius’ metaphorical comparison into a vivid representation of magic, exploiting the similarities between the elegiac symptoms and the effects demanded for the targets of erotic spells.89 So far, we have viewed the treatment of Canidia’s puer as adapting rituals for consecrating Eros assistants; by embodying the physical effects of elegiac love as though they were the result of magical enchantment, the child analogises figurines in erotic binding spells. In contrast to statuettes of Eros, which are created to perform the bidding of the practitioner, the figurines deposited bound, pierced, or arranged in pairs alongside written erotic spells represent the target and the effects intended for them — namely, the torturous symptoms of passionate

88 At Propertius 1.13.15 the narrator similarly states that love conquers and enfeebles its victims (“vinctum languescere”): “languescere” is synonymous with “intabescere” (TLL VII, 1, 2066, 60 ff., s.v. intabesco), used of the child’s eyeballs at Epode 5.40; the applicability of both verbs to the elegiac amator reinforces Horace’s gory reworking of elegiac love in the child’s murder — cf, below for the puella of Propertius 3.6 expressing her amatory despair with “tabescere” (23).
89 For the similarities between general literary symptoms of love and the torments demanded in magic: Martinez 1995 pp. 353-354.
love. Horace’s literary adaptation of magic conflates these two distinct uses of figurines, enabling Canidia’s victim to represent the physical disturbances suffered by the “enchanted” elegiac lovers while evoking rituals for consecrating Eros assistants.

Physical wasting and the denial of food, drink, and sleep are regularly wished for the targets of amatory spells: PGM IV.1496-1595 (“εἰ πίνει, μη πινέτω, ἐ εἰ ἐσθίει, μη ἔσθιέτω”, 1515-1516; “εἰ κοιμᾶται, μη κοιμᾶσθω”, 1521), and PGM XXXVI.134-160 (“πεινῶσαι, διψῶσαι, ὑπνοῦ μὴ τυγχάνουσαι”, 149) are two examples of curses which deny victims both nourishment and rest. One second century AD erotic curse (Preisendanz Ostrakon 2 = Gager 35) specifies the victim’s starvation (“ἀσιτω”, 35); the spirit invoked at PGM XVI.1-75 is repeatedly commanded to make the target “pine and melt away” with passion (“ποιήσον | φθείνει | κατατήκεσθαι | τῷ ἐρωτί”, 11-12). In Epode 5, the wasting of the boy’s eyeballs (“intabuissent pupulae”, 40) and the dehydration of his organs (“medulla et aridum iecur”, 37) provide vivid focal points for this starvation and thirst; his unrelenting gaze on the food (“fixo cibo | […] pupullae”, 39-40) evokes the insomnia wished upon victims of erotic magic, as well as the elegiac lover’s fixation on a single beloved. By highlighting the child’s physical deterioration, Horace lingers upon the grim, visceral reality of witchcraft to create an unromantic adaptation of the elegiac metaphor of magical enchantment.

Erotic deprivation curses, as interpreted by Martinez, cause the target’s “isolation from the land of the living”. This is particularly notable, as asserting his detachment from the normal course of society is central to the rhetoric of the elegiac lover, and illustrated by his willing enslavement to his beloved. Both Tibullus and Propertius combine this domination with an undertone of magical enchantment both to increase the lover’s detachment from normality, and to

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90 Gager 1992 p. 15 and Graf 1997a pp. 136-141; for the argument that the treatment of statues in amatory magic generated, by means of “persuasive analogy”, the same effects in the targets they represented; Faraone 1999 pp. 41-42 and 51-53. Collins 2008 pp. 92-103 suggests an alternative interpretation of the function of figurines employed in amatory binding spells based on Greco-Roman attitudes towards statuary, and also discusses the differences between these figurines and those designed as magical assistants.

91 Martinez 1995 p. 358.

92 Wyke 1989a pp. 41-43 discusses the elegiac lover’s presentation of his social isolation by emphasising his domination by his mistress; Allen 1950b pp. 264-270 examines the programmatic presentation of a universal experience as unique to the lover of Propertius 1.1.
justify his indiscretion in such a way as to restore his social position in the future. In *Epode 5*, the child’s entrapment in the ditch, and loss of his emblems of citizenship, physically illustrate the lover’s isolation and his domination by his beloved through magic. Horace exploits these similarities between the effects of deprivation curses and the elegiac self-presentation to expose the lover’s self-serving rhetoric and to parody his condition in overtly magical terms.

The child’s torture forms the focus for Horace’s parody of the elegiac lover’s presentation of his relationship in terms of magic enchantment. We can identify further elements of Horace’s metapoetic engagement with the genre through magic, and a response to Propertius’ iambic polemic in 1.4, in the following sections of *Epode 5* — the introduction of Folia of Arimium and Canidia’s monologue — and I offer some brief suggestions about these here.

Immediately after describing the boy’s tantalisation, the narrator introduces the fourth witch, Folia:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{non defuisse masculae libidinis} \\
\text{Ariminensem Foliam} \\
\text{et otiosa credidit Neapolis} \\
\text{et omne vicinum oppidum,} \\
\text{quae sidera excantata voce Thessala} \\
\text{lunamque caelo deripit.}
\end{align*}
\]

*(Horace *Epode* 5.41-46)*

Folia is unique among her companions in the mention of her native town (42) and her country-wide fame (42-44), and in that she has no physical task — unlike Canidia who organises the burnt-offering (17-24), Sagana who purifies the house (25-28), and Veia who digs the ditch (29-32) — but is the only witch credited with the power to control the heavens with her incantations (45-46).\(^93\) We have explored this last ability as a marker for a metapoetic aspect to magic in Vergil *Eclogue* 8 and in love-elegy; I suggest that the image in our poem invokes this contemporary motif to signal the same element in the Horatian witches and their magic, and demonstrates the inventive power of the poet’s verses and their ability to inspire his audience’s

imaginations.\textsuperscript{94} Lowrie reads “spectaculum”—which introduces the image of the child’s burial and concludes his Thyestean curses and the poem (34 and 102)—as raising iambic poetry’s representational power, which the description of the puer’s torture demonstrates.\textsuperscript{95} This corresponds well with the interpretation we have highlighted of carmina drawing down the moon and stars representing poetry’s creative force, and underlines the suggestion that Folia’s power performs the same function here. The position of our passage directly after the description of the inhumed child reinforces Lowrie’s suggestions, and—as extant contemporary parallels for lines 45-46 all occur in love-poetry, predominantly elegy—encourages our interpretation of the boy’s treatment as a comment on amatory elegy.

Canidia’s monologue invokes Nox and Diana for aid with her love-magic (49-82): she details the spells she has tried (49-66) and her new plans, venting her anger and desire for revenge against Varus (67-82). The failure of Canidia’s love-magic despite her care and diligence is a key concern (57-70); she concludes that a stronger witch’s carmen must be influencing Varus’ actions (“a! a! solatus ambulat veneficae | scientioris carmine!”, 71-72). In the centre of her tirade, Canidia reveals that her previous spell had relied on the poisons which Medea employed against Jason’s new wife, Creusa:

\begin{verbatim}
quid accidit? cur dira barbarae minus
venena Medeae valent,
quibus superbam fugit alta paelicem,
magni Creontis filiam,
cum palla, tabo munus imbutum, novam
incendio nuptam abstulit?
\end{verbatim}

(Horace Epode 5.61-66)

This emphasis on Medea picks up the herbs (“herbasque Iolchos atque Hiberia”, 21) to be burned in Canidia’s “Colchian” fire (“flammis […] Colchcis”, 24) at the beginning of the epode; these flames resonate in the conclusion of her speech (“quam non amore sic meo flagres uti |”\textsuperscript{96})

\textsuperscript{94} While deripio (46), unlike deduco, appears to have no independent literary connotations, it does reflect the speed and violence associated with the iambic metre and subject matter, modifying the motif to the context of the Epodes. Cf. Epode 17.78: “deripere lunam vocibus possim meis”. For Horace’s idiosyncratic use of deripio at Epode 5.46: Ingallina 1977 pp. 136-138 and Watson 2003 p. 220, who comments that the verb introduces “a violence […] normally absent from the procedure”. Mankin 1995 p. 123 and Watson 2003 p. 219 note the correspondence between Epode 5.45-46 and passages of magic in contemporary Latin poetry but neither develop this nor remark on their metapoetic nature. Porter 1995 pp. 125-126 reads “excantata” (45) as the first direct mention of poetry as a theme in the Epodes.

\textsuperscript{95} Lowrie 2009a p. 111: “Horace turns him [the puer] into a spectacle through poetry’s mimetic power.”
Medea’s prominence in the context of failed love-magic links Canidia into the intertextual chain of literary witches who similarly invoke the Colchian princess; while her predecessors leave the association of Medea’s magic with revenge implicit, Canidia amplifies this subtext. I suggest that we can read this expansion of Medea’s vengeful magic as a parody of contemporary elegy as well as defining Horace’s iambic poetics — including his close dialogue with contemporary poets and genres. Canidia’s emphasis on her use of Medea’s spells to rekindle Varus’ love highlights the failure of her attempts, as well as her unconsciousness of its cause. Given Medea’s recurrence in love-magic from Theocritus’ *Idyll* 2 onwards, we may ask why Horace should direct his parody specifically at elegy? I suggest that the prominence which Tibullus, and particularly Propertius, give to Medea in characterising their poetry and their narrators through magic in their first collections make this a target for Horace’s humour. By expanding Medea’s inapplicability for love-magic to the point of ridiculousness, Horace caricatures the elegiac poetics of amatory failure; Canidia’s amplification of Medea’s revenge — which, in elegy, simmers below the lovers’ failed seductions — simultaneously foregrounds a defining characteristic of iambic.

We can also highlight possible echoes between Canidia’s speech and Propertius 1.4 which suggest that this monologue may give the Propertian lover a taste of a real iambic *puella*. In 1.4 the narrator threatens Bassus with unbridled defamation by Cynthia, who will adopt the role of the iambist, and his consequent exclusion from the girls of Rome (17-22); instead of offering Cynthia’s speech the narrator outlines his mistress’ extensive endeavours to retain his love before praying that she will never change and reaffirming his attachment (27-28). At lines 17-18, Propertius’ narrator highlights the expansive range of Cynthia’s potential abuse: “haec insana puella | […] tibi non tacitis vocibus hostis erit”. I suggest that the Horatian narrator’s introduction of Canidia’s speech — “quid dixit aut quid tacuit? […]” (Epode 5.49) — picks up this verbal cue, introducing her monologue as simultaneously a response to his elegiac contemporary and a characterisation of his iambic; Canidia’s demand that Night and Diana direct their divine wrath towards keeping Varus, her enemy, from the doors of other women shows her

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96 For Horace drawing on Theocritus’ *Idyll* 2 throughout *Epode* 5, though without mentioning the inapplicability of Medea to love-magic: Fedeli 1978 pp. 93-96.
attempting to carry out the slanderous actions of Cynthia only imagined in 1.4.\textsuperscript{97} Canidia’s incapability of barring doors to Varus responds to Propertius’ characterisation of his poetic magic — Cynthia herself — as perennially ineffective in love, showing this failure in action; at the same time, her lack of success picks up the thread of Horace’s iambic impotence which runs through the \textit{Epodes}. All of these elements unite to make Canidia’s speech a microcosm of the collections’ poetics, including Horace’s interaction with, and self-definition, against early Propertian love-elegy.

We can develop hints of similar iambo-elegiac interaction in \textit{Epode} 17, where, as the concluding poem of the book, Horace recalls and concentrates the variety of themes and genres he incorporated throughout the preceding works. I summarise the poem before outlining my reading.

\textbf{Epode 17}

\textit{Epode} 17 is a dialogue between a male poet and Canidia: the poet prays for release from Canidia’s torture (1-52); his enemy replies, refusing to listen and promising further torments to avenge his insults to her character (53-81). The suppliant poet begs Canidia to reverse her spells (1-18). He has suffered enough punishments: Canidia’s potions have aged him prematurely; there is no release from his labour, night and day follow on one another and breathing is difficult — Sabellan \textit{carmina} and Marsian \textit{nenia} physically assault him (19-29). He burns like Hercules or Etna; does Canidia, a laboratory of Colchian poisons, burn while the wind scatters his ashes (30-35)? He will appease the witch with hecatombs or by singing her praises on a false lyre, gaining pardon as Stesichorus did after he had slandered Helen (36-52). Canidia responds by asking why her victim pours prayers on her barred ears — she is deafer to his pleas than any rock which Neptune batters is to shipwrecked sailors. Did he believe that he could mock Canidia’s rituals and slander her unpunished (53-59)? Paying Paelignian old women or concocting faster poisons will not help — more drawn out fates wait for him and he will lead a miserable life, ever

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{97} Oliensis 1998 p. 97 notes that “quid dixit aut quid tacuit?” could equally apply to Horace’s words in \textit{Epodes} 8 and 12.}
on hand for new labours: Tantalus, Prometheus and Sisyphus begged for peace; Jove’s laws forbade it (60-70). Suicide will give no release; Canidia will ride the poet’s shoulders and the world will shake before her insolence. She may be capable of incredible feats of magic — should she weep because her arts are ineffectual on their target (71-81)?

Scholarship proposes a range of metapoetic interpretations of Epode 17. Barchiesi argues that the poem treats the “principles of iambic poetry and its effects”, among which magic is prominent: both the poet and Canidia employ iambic spells against one another, and both embody the genre — in the narrator’s case, thanks to his adversary’s magic. Through the symmetry of the poet and the witch, Horace demonstrates the tendency of iambic verse to be as harmful to the practitioner as to its victim; Barchiesi also suggests, in keeping with the theme of “reversability” which he traces through the poem, that the introduction of the Cotyia (Epode 17.56) — a festival which involved male transvestism — raises the possibility that Canidia, too, is “in drag”, a masculine transvestite whose voice belongs to her poet but who has the power to lead “into crisis his poetics”. Barchiesi uses the concept of reversibility to explicate the close link between Horace and Canidia. I suggest that it also expresses Canidia’s iambic inversion of the elegiac puella, and we will develop this further when we discuss the male narrator’s false palinode at the end of our discussion. Spina’s metaliterary interpretation of the poem, which draws out a similar “chiasmic” relationship between the poet and Canidia, suggests that the content and tight structural coordination of Horace’s final epode emphasises the variety of genres, styles and traditions — Archilochean, Alexandrian, and Neoteric — which he experiments with in the collection.

Johnson offers a similar reading to Spina’s: the poet’s speech tries to engage Canidia through epic, lyric, and elegy, reflecting the variety of genres which Epodes 11-16 incorporate and anticipating Horace’s lyric work. Johnson reads the narrator’s symptoms at Epode 17.21-26 as characterising him as an elegiac lover, addressing Canidia as his beloved; though Johnson

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99 Spina 1993 pp. 163-188.
100 Johnson 2012 pp. 163-179.
argues that Canidia has read and understood Horace’s work, he does not comment on elegiac aspects in her reply. Bushala also suggests elegiac resonances in the poem: after arguing that the male narrator is Canidia’s lover and the victim of her erotic magic, Bushala closes his article by quoting E.K. Rand’s suggestion that Epode 11 “laughs prophetically forward at” Propertius and Tibullus before finally proposing that Epode 17 ridicules the “enclosed, absurd, and morbid world” of Roman love-elegy and the lover’s anguished relationships with an “uncanny, voracious Charybdis-Cimaera”. My discussion extends beyond these comments, highlighting specific parallels with Tibullan and Propertian elegy which suggest that Horace engages with the attribution of love-magic to the puella in these poets’ already-available early work, and which continue into Canidia’s half of the epode.

I suggest that in Epode 17 Horace presents a vision of the elegiac lover’s idealised future — expressed as a faithful love which will last until their old age — with a beloved who, in reality, seldom admits them to their company and who has at least one other lover. Tibullus 1.6 presents the most extreme example of this in early love-elegy: after lamenting Delia’s deceitfulness and infidelity (1-36), promising to submit to punishments from his mistress if he mistreats her (43-74), and outlining an old age of loneliness, poverty, and mockery for those loyal to no one (75-84), the narrator concludes by declaring that others may have such reproaches — he and Delia may be a model of love in their old age (“[…] nos, Delia, amoris | exemplum cana simus uterque coma”, 85-86). Propertius expresses a similar sentiment in the closing lines of 1.8B: rejoicing after Cynthia has responded to his preces and blanditiae and proven her fidelity (1-45) by refusing to accompany a rival to Illyria as she had previously threatened to do (1.8A.1-26), he declares that no man will steal his love and that claim will last into his old age: “ista meam norit gloria canitiem” (46). The idea of poetic immortality also resonates in these

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sentiments. Commentators highlight Propertius 1.8A and B as meditations on the power of his elegiac blanditiae, and note that the thought of old age, alongside the poet walking in the stars ("nunc mihi summa licet contingere sidera plantis: | sive dies seu nox venerit, illa mea est", 1.8B.43-44), evokes the everlasting glory his work will bring. Tibullus 1.6 concludes the Delia elegies of Book 1, giving the lover’s wish an undertone of literary achievement and longevity. The disjunction between the fame the extratextual poet and his work will enjoy through the ages and the immortal youth and beauty of the fictional lover and his beloved which it will preserve introduces an irony into the elegiac lovers’ hopes for their future happiness; Horace, I will argue, exploits this to parody the contemporary genre in his concluding epode while asserting the enduring power of his own poetic text.

In Epode 17, Horace ironically distorts the elegiac lover’s wish for a reciprocal union with his mistress in their dotage, beginning again from the lover’s association of his puella with magic: in Canidia, he gives the elegiac lovers the faithful elderly mistress they envision, but one whose age and ugliness requires her to retain her suitors with witchcraft. As in Epode 5, Horace literalises the elegiac metaphor of magically enchanting beauty, now exploiting the desires of the practitioners of erotic magic that their victims should love them for the rest of their lives; one explicit example of this wish exists in a fourth-century AD curse-tablet from Pella, in which the defigens requests that she and her beloved “grow old together” (‘συνκαταγηρᾶσαι”, Voutiras 1998 line 5). The iambic narrator inverts elegiac conventions by reversing the pleas of the exclusus amator for admittance, begging instead for release from the spells which prolong his amatory torture. The power and effectiveness of poetry is central to Epode 17, which presents the poet’s carmina as magic incantations — a “performative” category of verse which, like iambic, aims to have tangible influence on the world — before appearing to raise doubts about their capabilities.103 The significance of Canidia closing the Epodes by questioning her magic and of her victim’s ensuing silence continues to provoke discussion in scholarship; I hope to add to this debate based on our investigations of literary magic. As in our reading of Epode 5, I focus

on specific points in 17 which highlight Horace’s engagement with love-elegy. We begin with the poet’s speech, then consider Canidia’s reply.

The poet begins with a prayer to Canidia for release from her love-magic:

iam iam efficaci do manus scientiae
supplex et oro regna per Proserpinae,
per et Dianae non movenda numina,
per atque libros carminum valentium
refixa caelo devocare sidera.
Canidia, parce vocibus tandem sacris
citumque retro solve, solve turbinem.

(Horace Epode 17.1-7)

We previously highlighted line 7 in relation to magical subtext at Tibullus 1.5.3-4; I here suggest that the Horatian verse alludes to the Tibullan couplet, giving an early indication that the epode will again engage with love-elegy through this motif. To explore this idea, it will be helpful to quote the Tibullan simile in context:

asper eram et bene discidium me ferre loquebar,
at mihi nunc longe gloria fortis abest;
namque agor ut per plana citus sola verbere turben
quem celer assueta versat ab arte puer.
ure ferum et torque, libeat ne dicere quicquam
magnificum posthaec: horrida verba doma
parce tamen, per te furtivi foedera lecti
per Venerem quaeso compositumque caput.

(Tibullus 1.5.3-8)

The narrator recants his earlier ferocity and desire to break with his mistress; driven back to her, he re-submits himself to servile punishments and prays for mercy. Read alongside one another, our two passages display several points of contact: in addition to the lexical echoes in the description of the instruments — “citus” (Tibullus 1.5.3; Epode 17.7); Horace’s “turbinem” echoes the unusual Tibullan form, “turben” — both narrators appeal for mercy (“parce”, 1.5.7; Epode 17.6), evoking a hymnic-style with the anaphoric “per” (1.5.7-8; Epode 17.2-5).104 The iambic narrator’s self-characterisation as a “supplex” (17.2) condenses the Tibullan lover’s servile posture (1.5.5-6), evoking the exclusus amator prostrate at his mistress’ threshold; as we will see, the opening lines of Canidia’s reply pick up this theme.105 In the Tibullan passage, the simile of the top activates a magical subtext to the lover’s expression of his servitium amoris

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105 For the exclusus amator as supplex in the first collections of Propertius and Tibullus: Propertius 1.9.3 and 1.16.4; Tibullus 1.2.87, 1.4.72, and cf. 1.8.5-6.
which justifies his return and submission to Delia. Horace inverts the Tibullan lines, expanding this subtext into an explicit atmosphere of magic and having his narrator beg for release from the witch’s spells rather than following the elegiac lover’s demand for further punishment. *Epode* 17.1 (“*iam iam efficaci do manus scientiae*”) echoes Canidia’s declaration that a stronger witch must be controlling Varus at *Epode* 5.71-72 (“*a, a, solutus ambulat veneficae | scientoris carmine!*”); recalling the weakness of Canidia’s love-magic undermines the seriousness of the narrator’s surrender, balancing the Tibullan lover’s flawed attempt to align Delia with Theocritus’ Simaetha and bringing out the humour in the elegiac lover’s submission to the magic power which he himself attributes and gives to his mistress.106 Tibullus 1.5.1-6 also incorporates palinodic elements; evoking this elegiac passage in the opening lines of *Epode* 17 intertextually foreshadows Horace’s ironic palinode to Canidia at lines 47-52 — we return to consider the significance of this for Canidia’s anti-elegiac aspects in the conclusion to this section.107

The elegiac element recurs when the narrator details the effects of Canidia’s punishments:

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{fugit iuventas et verecundus color,} \\
& \text{relinquor ossa pelle amicta lurida,} \\
& \text{tuis capillus albus est odoribus;} \\
& \text{nullum a labore me reclinat otiun,} \\
& \text{urget diem nox et dies noctem neque est} \\
& \text{levare tenta spiritu praeordia.} \\
& \text{ergo negatum vincor ut credam miser.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Horace *Epode* 17.21-27)

The narrator’s pallor (21-22), emaciation (22), insomnia (24-25), wretchedness (27), and light breathing (26) evoke the elegiac lover; his self-description as “*miser*” (27) — a term which is virtually programmatic of the anguished elegiac lover, and associated with magical enchantment at Propertius 1.1.1 and 1.5.5 and 29 — reinforces this association.108 In Propertius 1.5, the

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106 For *Epode* 17.1 recalling 5.71-72: Johnson 2012 p. 165. At the same time, this echo, alongside the incantatory style of the poet’s words, introduces the affinity between the poet and the witch which develops throughout the epode until the climactic final lines. For Horace’s similarity to Canidia in *Epode* 17.1-7 and throughout the poem: Barchiesi 1994b pp. 205-217 and esp. 205-208, and Johnson 2012 pp. 165-166; cf. Spina 1993 p. 181.

107 For palinodic elements in Tibullus 1.5.1-6, including comparison with *Epode* 17: Cairns 1978 pp. 546-552 and Cairns 1979 pp. 168-171.

narrator lists these symptoms — excepting the lightness of breath — among the sufferings of Cynthia’s *exclusus amator* (“discere et exclusum quid sit abire domum”, 20), an experience he initially likened to drinking all of the potions in Thessaly (6); the narrator of Tibullus 1.8 suggests that Marathus’ infatuation may result from pallor-inducing herbs (“num te pallentibus herbis | devovit”, 17-18). All of these symptoms parallel those demanded for the targets of erotic magic in the *PMG* and *defixiones*; in the explicitly magical context of *Epode* 17, Horace encourages these parallels to literalise the elegiac lovers’ characterisation of their infatuation as the result of witchcraft.\(^\text{109}\) We discussed the length and constancy of the torments in relation to the *puer’s* torture in *Epode* 5; here, we can add that amatory spells demand that their victims become pale, or suffer torments day and night.\(^\text{110}\) Extant erotic spells target breathing only occasionally;\(^\text{111}\) light breathing is, however, a characteristic of the elegiac lover which Horace parodied in *Epode* 11: “[…] *latere petitus imo spiritus*” (10). “spiritus” denotes breathing only in these two *Epodes*, reinforcing the parallel between our narrator’s symptoms and those of the elegiac *exclusus amator*.\(^\text{112}\)

The narrator’s loss of his “*verecundus color*” provides another link with *Epode* 11, echoing “[…] *inverecundus deus*” (11.13). Directly applied to the god, *inverecundus* equally describes the effect of the undiluted wine on the narrator (“*fervidiore mero arcana promorat loco*”, 11.14); the repetition of the positive form in our passage, the sole parallel in the *Epodes*, prompts the reader to recall the earlier elegiac parody in the present poem.\(^\text{113}\) We can press these

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\(^{110}\) *Suppl. Mag.* 42: “βασανισάτε αὐτῆς τὸ σῶμα νυκτός καὶ ημαιρας” (16); *PGM* XVIIa.1-25: “ἐὰν πάσαις ἓν ὀραίς ημεριναῖς καὶ νυκτεριναῖς”, (10-12).

\(^{111}\) *PGM* IV.149 (“I will bewitch her breath […] until she comes to me); *PDM* xiv.655-65 includes the lungs of the victim among the places of her body to be burnt (Johnson, H.J. (tr.), in Betz 1986 p. 231). Breathing occurs in Jordan 1985 7 and 8, erotic *defixiones* for separation: Jordan 1985 pp. 223-227; Jordan 1985 pp. 251-255 Inv. No. 1737 is a possible curse for erotic attraction which targets the victim’s lungs and complexion. For non-erotic *defixiones* desiring to “deprive a victim of breath”: Watson 2003 p. 556.

\(^{112}\) Propertius 1.9.32 (“*spiritus iste levis*”) and Tibullus 1.8.57-58 (“*ut lenis agatur | spiritus*”). Conversely: Watson 2003 p. 556. Mankin 1995 p. 198, citing Propertius 1.16.32 and Horace *Epode* 11.10, notes that Propertius and Horace are the earliest extant poets employing “*spiritus*” in this way.

\(^{113}\) For *inverecundus* (*Epode* 11.13) as unusual: Mankin 1995 p. 200. For correspondences between *Epode* 17.30 and *Epodes* 11.4 and 11.27 underlining the amatory, though not elegiac, theme of the final epode: Schmidt 1990 p. 158 n. 116.
adjectives further. Each connotes moral as well as physical characteristics; the narrator’s loss of his youth and “verecundus color” since coming into contact with Canidia evokes the effect which the narrator of Propertius 1.1 claims that Cynthia’s enchanting beauty had on him: “contactum nullis ante cupidinibus. | tum mihi constantis deiecit lumina fastus” (2-3).\footnote{OLD s.v. constans 1b and 4a. Cf. Stahl 1985 pp. 33-34 for Propertius’ emphasis on the narrator’s moral purity before encountering Cynthia (1.1.3-4).}

In the more overtly magical context of Epode 17, the poet’s loss of modesty echoes the demand of erotic spells that their victims come “without shame” to their lovers (PGM XVIIa.21), shifting the emphasis from the effect of the woman’s beauty to her love-magic and amplifying the Propertian narrator’s negative characterisation of his love.

Even as he describes the effectiveness of Canidia’s spells, Horace ironically undercuts the power he claims that she holds over him. After listing the physical results of Canidia’s love-magic, the narrator likens her to Deianaira — comparing himself to Hercules burned by his wife’s false love-potion (30-33) — and to Medea (“cales venenis officina Colchicis?”, 35). This triad of witches recalls Epode 3.7-18; in the amatory context of Epode 17, Deianaira and Medea exemplify women whose magic did not inspire love but instead had a toxic effect.\footnote{Epode 17.21-26 parallels Heracles’ description of the effects of Deianaira’s poison at Trachiniae 1053-1057: wasted flesh, attacked breathing, and bloodlessness. For parallels between Trachiniae 1053-1057 and erotic magic: Faraone 1994 pp. 115-135 and Versnel 1998 p. 250 n. 94. Barchiesi 1994b pp. 214-215 n. 31 highlights the correspondence between the narrator’s self-comparison with Etna (Epode 17.32-33) and Catullus 68.53 to indicate the “underlying eroticization” in the epode (quotation: Barchiesi 2009 p. 243 n. 31).}

As in Epode 5, Horace highlights his awareness of the elegiac narrators’ misapplication of Medea to the power of their own poetic love-spells and turns this around, associating Canidia with inappropriate witches to ridicule the hollowness of the elegiac lover’s claims of magical enchantment whilst underlining Canidia’s associations with iambic magic, poison and revenge.

Canidia’s reply maintains the elegiac element. The witch begins by proclaiming her deafness to her victim in terms which evoke the elegiac paraclausithyron (“quid obseratis auribus fundis preces?”, 53); here, in a witty inversion which echoes the reversal of Tibullus’ paraclausithyron in lines 1-7, Canidia becomes the elegiac beloved who refuses to listen to her suitor’s pleas for escape rather than for entry. Her self-comparison with a rock’s unresponsiveness to sailors battered by Neptune (54-55) — which balances, as Spina notes, the...
evocation of the *Odyssey* at lines 15-17 — also draws out the hardness of Cynthia, Delia, and Pholoe implicit in their etymological links with mountains: Cynthus and Pholoe.\(^{116}\)

After assuring her victim that magic will not help him (60-61), Canidia emphasises the ceaselessness of his punishments:

\[
\begin{aligned}
&\text{sed tardiora fata te votis manent:} \\
&\text{ingrata misero vita ducenda est in hoc,} \\
&\text{novis ut usque suppetas laboribus,} \\
&\text{optat quietem Pelopis infidi pater} \\
&\text{egens benignae Tantalus semper dapis,} \\
&\text{optat Prometheus obligatus aliti,} \\
&\text{optat supremo collocare Sisyphus} \\
&\text{in monte saxum: sed vetant leges Iovis.}
\end{aligned}
\]

(Horace *Epode* 17.62-69)

Canidia’s *exempla* prepare for her assurance that her victim will find no release through suicide (70-72), and their sins — the betrayal of Zeus’ secrets — correspond to the poet’s publication of Canidia’s rites (56-59); we can also highlight an erotic dimension to the catalogue as, as Barchiesi notes, the sinners’ punishments “are all traditional allegories of insatiable love”\(^{117}\). Tantalus’ prominence (65-66) explicates the description of the *puer* at *Epode* 5.35-36, connecting Canidia’s victims; the birds which torment Prometheus (67) allude to their eternal devouring of his liver, reinforcing the connection between the poet’s future punishment and Canidia’s harvesting of the *puer*’s organ. The erotic purpose of the child’s death alerts the reader to a similar element in our present passage, and *Epode* 17 internally reinforces this with “laboribus” (64) answering the poet’s *exemplum* of “laboriosi […] Ulixei” (16)\(^{118}\).

Lines 65-69 find an elegiac parallel in Tibullus 1.3, where Venus, guiding the narrator through Elysium to the gates of Tartarus, shows him Ixion (73-74), Tityos (75-76), Tantalus (77-78) and the Daniads (79-80) serving sentences for amatory sins\(^{119}\).


\(^{119}\) Schmidt 1990 p. 158 n. 116 cites the parallel *exempla* at Propertius 2.17.5-10 and 13f. to reinforce the amatory nature of *Epode* 17.62-69.
Tantalus’ fellow inmates similarly illustrate lovers’ sufferings: Houghton reads Ixion as symbolising the lover’s continually changing fortunes; Tityos, the chronic pain of infatuation; the Danaids, the puella’s insatiable demands. In addition to the presence of Tantalus, Tibullus’ catalogue resonates in the Horatian passage in two further ways. Birds denote Tityos’ torture here (”aves”, 76) as they do Prometheus’ at Epode 17.67. In the elegiac passage, Tisiphone marshals the souls in the Underworld: “Tisiphoneque impexa feros pro crinibus angues | saevit et huc illuc impia turba fugit” (1.3.69-70). Bright notes the striking detail of the Fury’s snaky hair, which distorts the beautiful tresses of the beloved which the amator — and especially Tibullus’ narrator — singles out to illustrate her attractiveness and fidelity; Houghton extends this association, suggesting that Tisiphone is the puella’s Hadean avatar. In Epode 17.62-69, I suggest, Canidia plays on the Tibullan Tisiphone’s link with Delia. The close links between our poem and Epode 5 suggest the witch’s implicit characterisation as an avenging deity here: the narrator of the earlier epode introduces Canidia with a description of her distinctive hairstyle (“Canidia brevibus implicata viperis | crinis et incomptum caput”, 15-16), styling her as a Fury and characterising her as a wickedly comic inversion of the elegiac beloved and her ideally

120 Houghton 2007 pp. 158-164; cf. Henderson 1969 pp. 649-653 and Bright 1978 pp. 30-31 for the elegiac focus of Tibullus’ Underworld. Bassi 1994 p. 58 highlights Tibullus 1.1.55-56 as likening the exclusus amator’s existence to “life” in Hades’. To Houghton’s points we can add that Ixion’s punishment, as well as anticipating Fortune’s wheel in Tibullus 1.5 (“versatur celeri levis orbe rotae”), 70, also picks up the lover’s torment at Tibullus 1.5.3-4 — “namque agor ut per plana citus sola verbere turben | quem celer assueta versat ab arte puer”; Houghton 2007 p. 162 n. 49 quotes 1.5.70 as a parallel for 1.3.73-74. Horace’s explication of the magic subtext of 1.5.3-4 at the beginning of Epode 17 highlights his awareness of Tibullus’ work, and suggests that he is evoking the Underworld scene of 1.3.73-80 in Canidia’s speech. Tibullus’ description of Tantalus in the pool (1.3.78) resonates in Epode 17.1: “iam iam efficaci do manus scientiae”. In the Tibullan lines, “iam iam” conveys just how close Tantalus is to finding relief before the water recedes, illustrating the intensity of the lover’s disappointment and frustration; in Epode 17.1, the same expression conveys the narrator’s desperation for release from Canidia’s magic. Re-reading this opening line in light of Canidia’s comparison of the poet’s suffering with Tantalus’, the structural and thematic balance between the halves of the epode encourages us to hear the poet’s initial surrender echoing in this exemplum.

disordered tresses; she also orchestrates the puer’s Tantalean sufferings which our passage balances (66). Evoking Tibullus 1.3 in *Epode* 17.62-69 recalls the witch as a Fury while maintaining her inversion of the elegiac mistress’ beauty by co-opting the image already employed for this purpose by Tibullus.122

Tibullus’ elegiacised Underworld, in which lovers’ joys and misfortunes continue as they had in life, expands on the lover’s assertion that his passion for his mistress will continue beyond the grave.123 In *Epode* 17, in which magic is the dominant motif, Canidia’s list at lines 62-69 evokes the repeated wishes of erotic spells that the practitioners may control their victims eternally (“ποίησε τὴν δείνα | ἄγρυπνονόσαν μοι διὰ πάντας [αἰώνος]”, *PGM* IV.2965-2966) or for the rest of their lives (“ὑποτεταγμένην εἰς τὸν ἀπαντα χρόνον τῆς ζωῆς μου”, *Suppl. Mag.* 47); *PGM* XVI.1-75 includes a formulation of this wish which is particularly pertinent for our passage, as the practitioner demands that their victim conform to their will and love them “until he reaches Hades” (“ἐως ὅτα Ἅδην ἀφίκηται”, 16).124 This literalisation of the elegiac lovers’ declaration of passion and their eroticisation of death balances that which we traced in *Epode* 5, reinforcing the elegiac parody in both poems.

The iambic passage also picks up the thread of poetic immortality in *Epode* 17, playing on the paradox of this theme in love-elegy in terms suited to Horace’s work. As we highlighted in the introduction to this section, the narrators of Tibullus 1.6 and Propertius 1.8B predict that their happy, faithful relationships with their mistresses will last into their old age; while the extratextual poets will enjoy their work’s fame for many years, the lovers and their puellae will remain young and beautiful and this reciprocal union will remain out of reach forever. Canidia, by contrast, is already old and unattractive; she has accelerated her victim’s age to match her own (*Epode* 17.21-27) and her spells will keep the aged poet alive forever in eternal torture. In keeping with his inversion of the elegiac lovers’ representation of their relationships with their


mistresses, Horace grants their wish of an enduring union with their white-haired *puellae* by providing an eternal torture like that supervised by the Tibullan Tisiphone. This reversal also allows Horace to use the same imagery of old age and immortality to illustrate the longevity of his iambic collection and its fame.

Poetic power and immortality come to the fore in the final lines of the epode with Canidia’s climactic list of her abilities:

```
an quae movere cereas imagines,
   ut ipse nosti curiosus, et polo
   deripere lunam vocibus possim meis,
   possim crematos exciitare mortuos
   desiderique temperare pocula,
   plorem artis in te nil agentis exitus?
```

(Horace *Epode* 17.76-81)

The witch’s last question and the repeated subjunctive “*possim*” (78-79) destabilise the credibility of her powers, which recall her actions in *Satires* 1.8 and *Epode* 5; the structural parallel with the opening line of the poem (“*iam iam efficaci do manus scientiae*”, 1), in which the intratextual echo of *Epode* 5.71-72 undermines the narrator’s acknowledgment of Canidia’s abilities, intensifies this doubt.125 This doubt parallels the recurrent scepticism of love-magic in contemporary poetry which, as we have seen, highlights the ineffectiveness of magic and poetry over its internal target whilst affirming its power to influence the belief and imagination of the extratextual audience. I suggest that these levels of poetic potency and fiction are active in our passage; this supplements current metapoetic readings of these lines, particularly Barchiesi’s suggestion that Canidia in *Epode* 17 is Horace’s feminine costume, a personification of his iambic text and his poetic voice.126 The equation of poetry with magic *carmina* throughout *Epode* 17, as in *Satires* 1.8 and *Epode* 5, suggests that these final lines illustrate the images which Horace’s poetry produces. Here, too, the introduction of doubt in the witch’s abilities undermines their power and betrays their illusoriness, ending the collection on the theme of poetic impotence in contemporary political circumstances; at the same time, I suggest, concluding the book with Canidia’s magic abilities draws attention to the creative power of

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Horace’s verses. The balanced and chiastic structure of the poem, alongside the magical language which runs through it, tightens the associations of the poet and witch; by the final lines, they speak as one voice, an impression which Horace’s following silence reinforces. This same silence creates the impression that Canidia’s combative question addresses the extratextual audience more than her victim — calling her powers into doubt while the audience is envisioning the feats jolts them mentally out of the illusion, increasing the impression of the power of the poet’s verses as well as the fantasy which they create. Posing this doubt as a question strengthens this effect, creating a lingering doubt in the reader over whether Canidia is as powerless as she seems.

To conclude this section, I would like to return to Horace’s palinode to Canidia in lines 47-52. This closes the first half of the epode, balancing the idea of the longevity and enchanting power of the iambic collection illustrated through magic in lines 76-81 with the narrator’s promise that his poetry will immortalise Canidia in the stars (39-40) and the extended invective with which he ends his speech (46-52). As I hope to suggest, this passage also provides a device which neatly expresses the elegiac lovers’ double-edged association of their beloveds with magic and articulates the relationship between these puellae and Canidia. It will be useful to begin by outlining the background of Stesichorus’ palinode and Horace’s evocation of this model before we explore how it relates to his elegiac polemic.

Stesichorus’ palinode was framed as a retraction of an earlier work which had offended Helen by defaming her character. To appease her and to reverse the blindness with which he had been punished for his insults, Stesichorus’ new lyric asserted that the “real” Helen had remained in Egypt, chaste and faithful, during the events at Troy while her wanton doppelgänger followed

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127 Lowrie 2009a pp. 108-109 notes that Epode 17.81 relates Canidia’s abilities to “iambic effectiveness” but does not relate the witch’s powers to Horace’s poetry: “He may be incapable of pulling down the moon, or convincing the Roman populace to migrate to the Isles of the Blessed, but his poetry can blame and praise. Its pragmatic power is to circulate representations and affect reputations.” Cf. Lowrie 2009a p. 111 for the “mimetic” power of Horace’s iambic in Epode 5.

128 For an alternative interpretation, which does not include the magic in the final lines, of the reader’s response to the ending of Epode 17 demonstrating the “efficacy” of Horace’s poetry: Johnson 2012 pp. 178-179.

Paris. A palinode, by its nature, is, however, double-edged: the supposed recantation necessitates the repetition, and reaffirmation, of the original view of her character. As a result, Stesichorus’ poem expresses two images of Helen simultaneously: while the emphasis on the recantation appears to foreground the presentation of her character as virtuous, the original picture of her as a shameless wife remains visible alongside it and casts it in an ironic light; recalling that Stesichorus’ poem was motivated by the desire to regain his sight rather than by altruism heightens this irony further.\footnote{On Stesichorus’ Palinode: Woodbury 1967 pp. 157-176, Bassi 1993 pp. 51-75 and Austin 1994 pp. 90-117. For the palinode as double-edged: Bassi 1993 p. 52. For the “doubleness” of Helen throughout her tradition and Stesichorus’ specific innovations: Bergren 1983 pp. 81-82.}

Horace’s palinode amplifies these ironies. The narrator announces the insincerity of his poetic offering by declaring that he will sing of Canidia’s chastity, and immortalise her among the stars, with a dishonest lyre (“[...] sive mendaci lyra | voles sonari: ‘tu pudica, tu proba | perambulis astra sidus aureum”, 39-41); the echo of Catullus 42.42 (“pudica et proba, redde codicillos”) — the narrator’s about-face from abuse to praise to persuade his female addressee to return his writing-tablets — at lines 40-41 also sets up for the hollowness of the present recantation.\footnote{The allusion to Catullus 42 also reinforces the notion of poetic power and immortality in this section; significantly for us, it also plays into Horace’s dialogue with contemporary love-elegy by evoking a recent literary predecessor whose work straddled, and influenced the development of, both Roman traditions. For lost writing-tablets expressing the durability of the poetic voice in Catullus 42 and 50: Roman 2006 pp. 353-359; similarly on Epode 17.40-41 and Catullus 42: Lowrie 2009a p. 109. For alternative readings of the allusion to Catullus 42 at Epode 17.40-41: Oliensis 1991 pp. 115-116, Barchiesi 1994b pp. 209-210, Oliensis 1998 pp. 71-72 and Johnson 2012 pp. 168-170. Against Epode 17.40-41 alluding to Catullus 42: Lindo 1969 pp. 176-177.} Horace’s narrator goes beyond the repetition of previous insults by adding new material to his earlier abuse of the witch (46-52). Evoking the model of Stesichorus reinforces the self-interested reason for the narrator offering his recantation to Canidia (“infamis Helenae Castor offensus vice | fraterque magni Castoris victi prece | adempta vati reddidere lumina”, 42-44), and the witch’s alignment with Helen intensifies its irony further through the extreme
contrast between her advanced age and ugliness and Helen’s divinely bewitching beauty.  

The question now is: how does this relate to Horace’s parody of the elegiac puellae? As we saw at the beginning of this chapter, the elegiac lovers’ characterisation of these girls’ physical attractiveness as magical enchantment is double-edged: while it initially appears to praise their beauty through the favourable comparison with magic, it covertly implies that their attractiveness stems from an artificial source of power with which they target and control their lovers. Introducing this ambivalence in the form of praise illustrates the unreliability and hypocrisy of the elegiac ego as a lover and as a narrator, as well as his willingness to modify his expressed attitude towards and representation of his mistress to the needs of his present situation. Horace’s ironic palinode magnifies this hypocrisy to the point of ridicule. As an inversion of the elegiac puellae, Canidia replaces their attractiveness with literal love-magic, embodying the negative view of them which their lovers’ flattery implies. The witch’s ironic alignment with Helen — a woman of bewitching loveliness who, like both Canidia and the elegiac girls, is also associated with magic enchantment and the poetic text — parallels this inversion, and the device of the palinode emphasises the simultaneity of both views as well as the ease with which one can be brought to the fore according to the lover’s self-serving demands; in keeping with his expression of his iambic poetics, Horace tips the emphasis towards the negative image through the narrator’s continued slander of Canidia. Helen and her phantom half hint that we can take this co-existence further and suggest that Canidia and the elegiac puellae are to be read as opposite sides of the same coin, making Canidia, as much as a positive embodiment of Horatian iambic, a pointedly “anti-elegiac woman”.

132 Helen also adds a literary dimension to the palinode which is in keeping with the association of Horace’s iambic with magic throughout the epode. In Odyssey 4.219-234, the pharmaka which Helen adds to the wine before she begins her stories of Odysseus in Troy symbolises the enchanting effect of epic poetry on an audience: Clader 1976 pp. 32-33, Bergren 1981 pp. 206-210 and 213-214, and Bergren 1983 pp. 79-80. For Helen practising literal magic as well as seduction in Troy: Boyd 1998 pp. 7-14; cf. Clader 1976 p. 34. Gumpert 2001 pp. 40-42 highlights the erotic presentation of Helen’s magical charms.

133 Stesichorus’ Palinode also incorporates an element of literary polemic, presenting two traditions — the narratives of Homeric epic and his lyric — alongside one another and apparently asserting the supremacy of the “new” work while reaffirming the legitimacy of the earlier text: Bassi 1993 pp. 53-59; cf. Bergren 1983 p. 82 and, with an alternative interpretation, Austin 1994 pp. 96-117. This model further underlines the element of elegiac polemic in Epode 17.39-56 before his extended invective of his target in the final lines of his narrator’s speech exemplifies his iambic. Barchiesi 1994b pp. 208-210 reads Horace’s palinode as contrasting iambic and lyric, genres which “define each other in turn as praise poetry and slander” (quotation: Barchiesi 2009 p. 238).
Spinning on a Dime: Propertius 3.6

Propertius 3.6, a poem which reopens the exchange between Horace’s *Epodes* and earlier love-elegy from the other side, illustrates this affinity between Canidia and the elegiac beloved well, using allusions to Canidia’s rites in *Epode* 5 to make the witch a part of the *puella*’s construction and to present a striking example of the lover’s easy switch between romanticised and denigratory presentations of his mistress which Horace’s evocation of Stesichorus’ palinode brings out.\(^\text{134}\) I summarise the elegy and address particular questions which relate to its interpretation before developing Propertius’ answer to Horace’s iambic *puella*.

3.6 is organised around a *puella*’s monologue, presented in direct speech; her lover’s words frame this monologue, introducing and reacting to it. A slave, Lygdamus, is the estranged couple’s mutual, silent addressee, and the narrative background emerges gradually as in a mime.\(^\text{135}\) The lover demands that Lygdamus tell him the truth about his *puella* (1-8). Before the slave can reply, the narrator, through a series of rhetorical questions, constructs an image of his mistress as he imagines Lygdamus found her — beautiful, though she is in mourning and disarray; disregarding make-up or jewellery — (9-14) and describes her spinning wool with her handmaidens and lamenting their quarrel (15-18). This image introduces the *puella*’s speech (19-34): the girl stresses her lover’s unjust neglect and her fidelity to him, and accuses another woman of stealing him with witchcraft; after detailing her rival’s practices (25-30), she prophesises her lover’s return and punishment (31-34). In the closing frame, the narrator declares that if the girl’s words reveal her true character, Lygdamus should tell her that her lover was angry but not false — he reciprocates his mistress’ passion and he will swear that he has

\(^{134}\) Luck 1955 pp. 434-437 notes echoes of Horace *Epode* 5 in Propertius’ description of and curses on Acanthis in 4.5; cf. O’Neill 1998 p. 59 n. 35. I interpret these echoes as evoking Canidia in the Propertian *lena*, enhancing the narrator’s abuse and ostensibly legitimising his curses on his adversary, as well as underlining the *lena*’s metalertary role and affinity with the poet and his *carmina* by recalling Canidia’s relationship with the poetics of the *Epodes*; as Propertius’ echoes of the Horatian witch do not relate to our primary focus on the association of magic with the *puella*’s beauty, I omit further discussion of Propertius 4.5 here.

\(^{135}\) For the gradual revelation of detail in 3.6: Butrica 1983 pp. 17-18.
remained celibate for twelve days; if he reunites with his puella, the narrator will endeavour to ensure Lygdamus’ freedom (35-42).

Scholarship primarily concentrates on whether 3.6 should be read as a monologue by the lover or whether it should be divided into three voices: the lover, Lygdamus, and the puella. The dominant view remains that the poem is a monologue in which the lover focalises his mistress’ embedded speech; McCarthy’s narratological analysis of 3.6 develops this reading by proposing that the extratextual poet narrates lines 15-18, rather than the fictional lover.\textsuperscript{136} Discussions which focus on the elegy’s magic content remain rare; commentators note that the magic rites which the girl lists (25-30) recall Horace Epode 5, though they do not expand on these observations.\textsuperscript{137} Propertius’ close engagement with Horace’s lyric work in the programmatic opening sequence of Book 3 (1-5) invites closer investigation of the correspondences between 3.6.25-30 and Epode 5.\textsuperscript{138} 3.6 is also the first elegy of Book 3 which presents the familiar relationship between the lover and puella of Propertius’ previous collections — this position adds significance to the presence of magic in the poem, and we can suggest that the motif carries a metapoetic element here, as it does in the opening poems of Books 1 and 2, which reflects Propertius’ literary developments in his third collection.\textsuperscript{139}


\textsuperscript{139} McCarthy 2010 pp. 176-179 discusses how 3.6 demonstrates the place of the amatory relationship in the new elegiac program of Book 3, including its “shift toward metapoetic concerns”; McCarthy does not dwell on the magic content, nor does she approach 3.6 from the intertextual perspective I take.
Over the course of 3.6, the narrator draws two contrasting images of his beloved: the first, positive, portrait emerges through his rhetorical interrogation of Lygdamus in lines 9-18; the second, negative, picture develops through the girl’s speech. The first image creates the puella as her lover claims that he wishes to see her — naturally beautiful and unadorned, and chastely working at home; his emphasis that her words reveal her true character indicates that the second picture conveys the picture of his mistress most suited to his present circumstances — and verbal echoes link the two portraits, reinforcing the narrator’s construction of both and their existence side-by-side in the same girl. The lover’s introduction of magic into his puella’s speech characterises her and her rival as witches, excusing himself for his unfaithfulness to the former and his hinted sexual impotence with the latter. The allusion to Epode 5 aligns the puella with Horace’s Canidia; I suggest that Propertius recalls Horace’s iambic inversion of the elegiac puella and re-appropriates it to construct one of two divergent views of the mistress. Following the focus on the mistress’ natural beauty in the opening lines, the narrator leads his audience to associate Canidia’s practical magic with a young and radiantly attractive girl rather than Horace’s elderly, unattractive witch. Propertius thus turns the tables on Horace’s reworking of Cynthia to show that he can have a beloved who is beautiful and a practising witch, offering an entertaining comment on his narrator’s capacity for hypocrisy and self-delusion in his application of magic to his mistress, which the narrative of 3.6 illustrates.

This discussion is part of my wider reading of Propertius 3.6 as a reinterpretation of Theocritus Idyll 2 focalised through an elegiac “Delphis” who presents himself as the victim of Simaetha’s love-magic, a work-in-progress paper which I presented at the Classical Association Annual Conference Durham, 2011 — “I Will Swear I Have Been Faithful for Twelve Days: Jilted Witches and Unfaithful Lovers in Propertius 3.6 and Theocritus Idyll 2”. In this paper, I argue that the Propertian narrator adapts Simaetha’s narrative devices in her lament to Selene (Idyll 2.64-166) — most prominently, the use of an embedded, direct speech by her beloved, focalised from her perspective — to construct a portrait of his puella as a successful witch who controls him with her spells; the narrator’s failure to appreciate that Simaetha’s love-magic is unsuccessful and that Delphis is unfaithful to her during his twelve-day absence undermine his

140 Chadha 2011; this reading offers fresh evidence for interpreting 3.6 as monologue by the narrator.
images of his beloved and his own claim of fidelity during their estrangement ("iurabo bis sex integer esse dies", 40). 3.6.26 and 30 evokes Simaetha’s rhombus (26; Idyll 2.30-31) and wool (30; Idyll 2.2-3) in the first half of Idyll 2, aligning the puella with Theocritus’ witch; the central lines of this passage allude to Horace Epode 5. The similarities between Simaetha’s situation and Canidia’s — two witches abandoned by unfaithful beloveds who unsuccessfully attempt to retrieve them by love-magic — enables the smooth integration of these models into 3.6.141 In keeping with our present focus on Propertius’ dialogue with Horace and the connection of magic with the puella’s beauty, I concentrate on the allusions to Epode 5 and reference my work-in-progress paper where necessary.

It will be useful to begin with the lover’s vision of his mistress’ appearance in the opening frame; we return to the girl’s domestic activities (15-18) after examining the magic-content of her speech. After stressing the need for Lygdamus to be truthful (1-5), the narrator’s questions build up a picture of his puella:142

\[
\begin{align*}
sicin eam incomptis vidisti flere capillis? \\
ilius ex oculis multa cadebat aqua? \\
nec speculum strato vidisti, Lygdame, lecto? \\
or nabat niveas nullane gemma manus? \\
ac maestam teneris vestem pendere lacertis, scriniaque ad lecti clausa iacere pedes?
\end{align*}
\]

(Propertius 3.6.9-14)

The lover concentrates on her lack of adornment (11-12, 14), her dishevelled hair and clothes (9 and 13) and her attractive physique (“niveas [...] manus”, 12; “teneris [...] lacertis”, 13). Her neglect of her grooming and cosmetics are attractive as indicators of her fidelity and chastity; the narrator’s specification of her hands and arms highlights her youth and beauty and introduces these as a key factor in his attraction to her.143 His repeated demand to know what Lygdamus “saw” (“vidisti”, 9 and 11) prompts the extratextual audience to visualise the puella with him,

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141 Cf. Fedeli 1978 pp. 95-97 for correspondences of structure and content between Theocritus Idyll 2 and Horace Epode 5.
143 Warden 1980 p. 71 comments that 3.6.9-14 “indirectly” hint at the puella’s attractiveness.
intensifying their mental image of her. This augments the details of the colour and delicacy of her hands and arms which add vividness to the girl, and which also, alongside “scrinia”, evoke the concept of the beloved as a work of physical, as well as poetic, art — particularly in this case a marble or ivory statue, on which clothes have been haphazardly draped (13) — concretising her image for the audience and alerting us to read her embedded speech as the narrator’s continuation of his artistic vision. We return to the metapoetic element of the puella towards the end of our reading of 3.6; for now, it is important to note that the picture of the girl which emerges in these lines draw attention to her ideal, uncultivated charm so that as the lover leads into her speech this is the image the audience retains alongside the character portrait which unfolds.

Magic dominates the puella’s reported monologue. After bemoaning her undeserved neglect by her lover (19-24), she accuses a rival of controlling him with love-magic:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{non me moribus illa, sed herbis improba vicit,} \\
\text{staminae rhombi ducitar ille rota;} \\
\text{illum tergentis ranae portenta rabetae} \\
\text{et lecta excusis angibus ossa trahunt,} \\
\text{et strigis inventae per busta iacentia plumae} \\
\text{cinctaque funesto lanea vitta toro.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Propertius 3.6.25-30)

The central lines (27-29) recall Canidia’s burnt-offering at the beginning of Epode 5:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{iubet sepulcris caprificos erutas,} \\
\text{iubet capressos funebris} \\
\text{et uncta turpis ova ranae sanguine} \\
\text{plumamque nocturnae strigis} \\
\text{herbasque quas Iolcos et Hiberia} \\
\text{mittit venenorum ferax} \\
\text{et ossa ab ore rapta ieiunae canis} \\
\text{flammis aduri Colchicis.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Horace, Epode 5.17-24)

The Propertian witch echoes Canidia’s herbs (21; 3.6.25), toad (19; 3.6.27), strix feathers (20; 3.6.29), and bones removed from the body of an animal (23; 3.6.28), as well as the graveyard

144 Cf. McCarthy 2010 p. 157: 3.6.9-14 “shift the reader’s attention” to the puella’s home, and “vidisti (9, 11) […] keeps front and center the context of the Ego accosting and questioning Lygdamus, while its semantic value points us toward Lygdamus’ function as a witness and thus to the scene he saw.” For the puella’s monologue positioning Lygdamus as a cipher for the extratextual audience: McCarthy 2010 p. 173.

provenance of these materials and their association with the dead (17-18; 3.6.29-30). The removal of the bones from the snakes (3.6.28) — notable in extant Latin poetry as an example of a witch handling snakes manually, rather than controlling them by song — suggests that Propertius’ condensed allusion extends to the burial and starvation of Canidia’s puer (“exsecta uti medulla et aridum iecur | amoris esset poculum”, Epode 5.37-38).146 “ossa” (3.6.28) parallels the bones snatched from dogs (Epode 5.23) and, alongside “exsectis”, encompasses the medulla which are vital for Canidia’s philtre (Epode 5.37).147 Canidia’s fire corresponds to an epithuma, a smoke-offering which initiated magical and religious practices. The materials are appropriate to the rite’s erotic aim, as resonances later in the epode, including the child’s burial, indicate: tearing the bones from dog’s jaws (23) sympathetically imbues them with the creature’s desire, anticipating the same desire in the puer’s marrow which is created by his longing for food (32-40); commentators suggest that the strix feathers (20) symbolise forgetfulness, foreshadowing Canidia’s attempt to make Varus forget her rivals, and the bird’s reputation for feeding on the blood of young boys looks forward to the witch’s extraction of the puer’s organs.148 Canidia’s later declaration that Varus will burn for her like bitumen (“quam non amore sic meo flagres uti | bitumen atri ignibus”, 81-82) also balances the erotic purpose of her epithuma.

Though the puella attributes love-magic to a rival with whom she contrasts herself (“improba”, 25), her detailed knowledge of her rival’s practices, however, signals her own expertise in the art and her particular affinity with Horace’s Canidia, recalling Horace’s iambic parody of the elegiac lovers’ metaphorical application of magic power to their mistresses. Propertius’ association of his puella with practical magic responds to Horace’s iambic pastiche, 146 For 3.6.28 as a rare literal treatment of snakes in Latin poetry: Tupet 1976 p. 364; cf. Heyworth 2007b p. 306 n. 35.
147 A textual point common to 3.6.28 and Epode 5.37-38 is pertinent to our analysis: editors dispute the reading of the Propertian line, emending the transmitted “exsectis”, with the connotation of dissection, to “exsuctis”, “exuctis”, or “exsucis”, suggesting that the bones were collected after the snakes dried out; similar difficulty exists over “exsecta” at Epode 5.37, though this remains the dominant reading. The evocation of Epode 5.37 remains even an acceptable emendation at 3.6.28, the reptiles’ desiccation corresponding with that of the child’s organs (“aridum”, 37). For 3.6.28: Butler and Barber 1933, Richardson 1977 p. 339 and Fedeli 1985 p. 219 adopt “exsuctis”; Camps 1966 adopts “exuctis”; Heyworth 2007a reads “exsucis”; Tupet 1974 p. 256 retains “exsectis.” For “exsecta” at Epode 5.37: Wickham 1896 p. 367, Tupet 1976 pp. 313-314, Mankin 1995 p. 121, who notes the parallel issue at Propertius 3.6.28, and Watson 2003 pp. 213-214; Bain 1986 p. 126 reads “exsucu”.
literalising his beloved’s association with magic and juxtaposing it with the picture of her beauty
to show that he can have a beautiful woman who also controls him with powerful witchcraft; the
final lines of the monologue develop this characterisation of his beloved.

The puella ends by prophesying her lover’s punishment:

\[
\begin{align*}
\textit{si non vana canunt mea somnia, Lygdame, testor,} \\
\textit{poena erit ante meos sera sed ampla pedes;} \\
\textit{putris et in vacuo texet aranea lecto;} \\
\textit{noctibus illorum dormiet ipsa Venus.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Propertius 3.6.31-34)

Commentators interpret lines 33-34 as implying the lover’s impotence; given the centrality of
love-magic to the monologue, I suggest that we can read this section as a binding spell to cause
the narrator’s sexual failure elsewhere and his return to the puella. 149 Line 31 indicates the girl’s
utterance of a spell: “\textit{cano}” can signify chanting an incantation as well as — with “\textit{somnia}” —
making a prophecy; the weaving of the spider’s web over the bed (33) symbolises the binding as
well as indicating, alongside the pentameter (34), that sexual impotence is the intended effect. 150
Verbal echoes connect this spell with the puella’s opening lament over her lover’s neglect,
providing the motivation for her use of magic: “\textit{vacuo […] lecto}” (33) recalls her own empty bed
(“\textit{gaudet me vacuo solam tabescere lecto?”}, 23); “\textit{putris}” (33) echoes the connotation of disease
in “\textit{tabescere}” (23). The beds also parallel the funeral bier in the catalogue of magic (“\textit{funesto}
[…] \textit{toro}”, 30) — the \textit{vitae} from which, Tupet suggests, symbolise binding to cause impotence
— underlining the girl’s active performance of a poetic incantation in the final lines. 151

149 For 3.6.34 and the lover’s impotence: Butrica 1983 p. 31; Warden 1980 p. 120 n. 5 notes that
Venus metonymically signifies sexual intercourse here. I originally suggested this interpretation
of 3.6.31-34 in my MA dissertation: Chadha 2008 pp. 30-32; for the function of these lines in
relation to Theocritus \textit{Idyll} 2: Chadha 2011. For an alternative reading of 3.6.31-34: Novara

150 TLL s.v. \textit{cano} II B i.q. \textit{divinare, vaticinari, praedicere} 2, p. 272, 5 citing Propertius 3.6.31;
Fedeli 1985 pp. 221-222 highlights the applicability of “prophecy” here, though he suggests that
the puella’s prophecies provided her with information about the rival in the preceding lines.

151 Tupet 1974 p. 261. “\textit{toro}” is the favoured emendation for the transmitted “\textit{viro}”. For
discussion: Butler and Barber 1933 p. 275, Camps 1966 p. 81, Fedeli 1985 pp. 220-221, and
Cf. Richardson 1977 p. 339. The lover’s imagined position at the girl’s feet (“\textit{ante meos […] pedes}”, 32) echoes that of the \textit{scrinia} at the end of her bed (“\textit{ad lecti […] pedes}”, 14).
This image of the *puella* as a shameless witch contrasts with her lover’s portrait of her domestic modesty, demonstrated by her spinning wool with her handmaidens:

\[
\text{tristis erat domus, et tristes sua pensa ministrae} \\
\text{carpebant, medio nebat et ipsa loco,} \\
\text{umidaque impressa siccabat lumina lana}
\]

(Propertius 3.6.15-17)

These lines allude to Lucretia similarly engaged at Livy *Ab Urbe Condita* 1.57.9 (“Lucretiam [...] nocte sera deditam lanae inter lucubrantes ancillas in medio aedium sedentem”), as well as evoking Homer’s Penelope.\(^{152}\) Recalling these models reinforces the narrator’s vision of his mistress as a chaste, domestic girl which he claims he wishes to see; following the monologue, his emphasis on the *puella*’s words revealing her “true spirit” (“quaes tibi si veris animis est *questa puella*”, 35) indicates that the second vision of her as a witch is meant to display her real nature. Despite their sharp division, similarities between the two images of the girl signal that the narrator constructs both. The whirling threads of the *rhombus* (“staminea rhombi ducitur ille rota”, 26) distort the girl’s domestic spinning (16), particularly as “staminea” derives from a specific term for threads drawn from the distaff or those on the warp of a loom; her spinning (16) anticipates the cobwebs she wishes to cover her lover’s bed (“texetur aranea”, 33). The wool with which she dries her tears (17) also resonates in the “lanea vitta” adorning the funeral bier (30). In the positive image, wool and spinning enhance the girl’s virtuousness; in the opposite vision, they demonstrate her use of wanton love-magic.\(^{153}\) These echoes link the contrasting images of the girl, alerting us to read her both as the product of the narrator’s imagination and underlining his motivation for constructing her as a witch; the opposition between them also reveals the tension in the elegiac lover’s desires — though he claims to want an ideal, domestic girl, he also longs for a mistress who is sexually available and eager, and violently possessive of him. Reading the *puella*’s speech as focalised through the elegiac lover, the claim that a rival lured him away exculpates his neglect of his mistress and his suspected infidelity; at the end of

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\(^{152}\) Fedeli 1985 p. 213, highlighting “medio [...] loco” (3.6.16) and “in medio aedium” (*Ab Urbe Condita* 1.57.9).

\(^{153}\) Chadha 2011 places these echoes in the context of Propertius’ engagement with Theocritus *Idyll* 2. Cf. Warden 1980 pp. 71 and 100 on the “contrast” in 3.6 between the *puella*’s peaceful domesticity and natural beauty and the aggression in her “jealous” monologue, and between the pictures of the girl “spinning like a good housewife” and of the “usurper spinning her magic wheel”. On wool-working and Roman feminine virtue: Milnor 2005 pp. 29-32; cf. Butrica 1983 pp. 29 and 36 n. 37 on our passage.
his beloved’s monologue, the narrator develops her association with magic to suggest that she actively employed a love-spell against him, implying that this was the reason for his return to her and for his sexual failure with another woman. As these lines are the product of his own invention, he reveals his motive for constructing his beloved as a witch; aligning the *puella* with Canidia reinforces this characterisation.

The lover’s reaction to his girl’s speech continues to reinforce the veracity of her construction as a witch and illustrates his character as a narrator. After he affirms the truth of her character, he gives Lygdamus a message to carry to his mistress: “*me quoque consimili impositum torrerier igni: | iurabo bis sex integer esse dies*” (39-40). Line 39 maintains the narrator’s suggestion that he is a victim of love-magic: his burning desire picks up the earlier allusion to Canidia’s fires and her intention that Varus will burn for her (81-82). The narrator includes the allusion to *Epode* 5 to reinforce his mistress’ intimacy with love-magic by aligning her with Canidia; this, however, places himself in the position of Varus, who remained unaffected by Canidia’s repeated attempts to control him with witchcraft. The recollection of Canidia’s lack of success in love-magic undermines the narrator’s claims to have been bewitched by his mistress; his inability to appreciate the ramifications of his association of his beloved with Horace’s witch reveals his fallibility and untrustworthiness as a narrator, betraying his willingness to construct his mistress’ character according to his own needs and circumstances — in our case, to justify his infidelity, sexual failure, and return to his *puella*, whose primary source of enchantment, despite her employment of practical magic, remains her beauty.

The *puella*’s association with love-magic in 3.6 differs from that in Propertius’ earlier works — whereas the narrator previously attributed bewitching power to his mistress’ looks, the presence of witchcraft in the *puella*’s monologue in 3.6 creates the impression that she employs

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154 Cf. Butrica 1983 pp. 32-33 for an alternative reading of the contrast between the girl’s desire for punishment and the narrator’s view of their relationship humorously illustrating the lover’s “self-deception”.

155 “torrerier” (39) is an emendation of the transmitted “torquerier”. For *torquerier*: Butrica 1983 p. 32 and Heyworth 2007a; Butler and Barber 1933, Camps 1966 and Fedeli 1985 retain *torquerier*. For discussion: Fedeli 1985 p. 224 and Heyworth 2007b p. 308

156 Chadha 2011 argues that 3.6.40 aligns the narrator with Simaetha’s unfaithful beloved, Delphis, who neglects her for twelve days (“ος μοι δωδεκαταῖος ἀφ’ ὧ τάλας οὐδέ ποθί κει”, *Idyll* 2.4; “νῦν δὲ τε δωδεκαταῖος ἀφ’ ὦτε νῦν οὐδὲ ποτείδον”, 157).
practical magic and carmina. The narrator’s description of his mistress (9-14) and his construction of the monologue signals that the girl and her words are an extension of the poet-lover and his elegy, the attributes of which she and magic represent. The girl’s speech and her employment of love-spells dramatise the bewitching power of Propertius’ elegy in a more detached fashion than previously, developing Calliope’s exhortation at 3.3.49: “ut per te clausas sciat excantare puellas”; the poem’s narrative also enacts Propertius’ return to the subject-matter familiar from his Books 1 and 2 following the programmatic opening group of 3.1-5.  

Propertius’ engagement with Horace’s iambic puella in 3.6 has ramifications for the elegiac lover and for his mistress. By offering the puella an embedded direct speech, the narrator vividly dramatises her association with love-magic; this heightens the contrast between the puella in the monologue and her previous construction in the shape of Lucretia, creating a striking example of how quickly the idealised puella can become a witch from another angle. This explicates the lover’s double-edged association of the puella’s beauty and magic in Propertius’ earlier elegies, which betrays the narrator’s contradictory feelings towards his mistress and his inability to resist her charms. By recalling Horace’s earlier amplification of this elegiac narrative use of magic in his Epodes, Propertius reclaims this parody on his own terms, humorously acknowledging and reaffirming the lover’s hypocritical attitude towards his mistress and his need to justify his susceptibility to female loveliness as the result of something more than physical attraction.

Conclusion

The expression of the puella’s attractiveness in terms of magic enchantment in Propertian and Tibullan love-elegy functions metapoetically, as well as in the generic narrative. In the latter, the elegiac narrator’s insinuation that his mistress has captivated him with witchcraft reveals the ambivalence in his feelings towards her, characterising him as a hypocritical lover and as a fallible and untrustworthy narrator. On a metaliterary level, the attribution of magic power

to the girls who embody the elegiac text complements the construction of the genre as love-spells, giving a physical dimension to the enchanting effects of poetry and its influence over the lover and poet as well as the extratextual audience. This triangular relationship between magic, elegy, and the puella runs through the genre from its beginning, further indicating that magic was a key metaphor for Augustan love-elegy; Ovid’s Medicamina faciei femineae explicates and responds to this connection, as we will see in the conclusion. Recognising the metapoetic level to the puella’s enchanting beauty in early love-elegy also opens an alternative avenue for reading magic as facilitating intergeneric communication — dramatising literary polemic through female personifications of the poetic text who are associated with witchcraft. Our new interpretations of Horace’s Epodes 5 and 17 as responding to Propertius’ and Tibullus’ first collections illustrate this and testify to a contemporary awareness of the metaliterary dimension to the puella’s magical attractiveness.

I suggested in the introduction to this chapter that our elegiac readings of Epodes 5 and 17 can also offer a new perspective on Canidia’s construction; I now return to this idea with the following question: why is Canidia a woman, rather than a male personification of genre or victim of iambic aggression in the vein of Lycambe and Bupalus, the targets of Horace’s Greek predecessors Archilochus and Hipponax? Several answers to this question present themselves: misogyny is a prominent element of iambic; laughter provoked by the lewd behaviour of elderly women is associated with the roots of the genre; the contemporary political climate associated Rome’s chaotic state with licentious, “masculine” women.\(^{158}\) I believe that, based on the interaction between Augustan love-elegy and the Epodes, we can add a more specific, literary reason: that Canidia is composed as an “anti-elegiac puella” — particularly, though she also engages with Tibullus’ early work, as an “anti-Cynthia”. Instead of detracting from Canidia’s independence and originality as a literary entity, reading her as constructed symbiotically with the female beloveds of Propertius and Tibullus adds a new dimension to Horace’s witch and, by extension, to his Epodes. As well as symbolising Horace’s poetry and highlighting its differences from Propertius’ and Tibullus’ already-published love-elegy, Canidia’s inversion of the elegiac

\(^{158}\) For old women as the targets of Roman satire: Richlin 1983. For the association between the health of the state and female conduct influencing witch-figures in Augustan literature, with reference to Horace Epodes 5 and 17: Stratton 2007 pp. 71-105; for Canidia as a personification of Rome: Mankin 1995 p. 301.

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puellae necessarily incorporates the generic characteristics she reverses and rejects, uniting — as the palinode of Epode 17 expresses — both traditions alongside one another to embody the literary variety of Horace’s iambic.
Conclusion

We end this study with a retrospective look at magic in love-elegy from the perspective of Ovid’s erotodidactic poems. Ovid’s erotodidactic elegy is a genre which emerges from love-elegy and which roots itself in this tradition. The narrator’s didactic role provides a detached perspective on the elegiac genre, explicating its ironies and subtexts and presenting the lover and narrator in a more cynical light. The now-fragmentary *Medicamina faciei femineae* — in which female cosmetics metaphorically represent the construction of polished poetry — unites our main themes of love-magic, elegiac *carmina*, and the *puella’s* beauty, making it a fitting text to conclude our study. It provides further evidence that this triadic relationship in earlier love-elegy was recognisable to contemporary audiences to the extent that Ovid could promote it to the main subject of his work and use it to emblematising elegiac poetics. It also introduces Ovid’s engagement with Vergil’s *Georgics* through magic as he unites allusions to this didactic epic — a genre which we have not considered in relation to this motif so far — and to earlier love-elegy, fusing the two to create his new, hybridised work. Finally, we briefly return to *Remedia amoris* 249-290, this time to consider its relationship with its corresponding passage at *Ars amatoria* 2.99-108 rather than its dialogue with earlier love-elegy. We begin with the *Medicamina*.

*Medicamina faciei femineae* teaches women to blend cosmetics to create and maintain a beautiful complexion: the introduction, which promotes female *cultus* (1-50), leads into the recipes for facial treatments (51-100). The *praecceptor* exhorts *puellae* to learn to enhance their beauty, detailing the positive results of *cultus* on nature and architecture (1-10) and contrasting the coarse Sabine women with contemporary Roman girls who prefer adornment and luxury (11-
This preference is understandable: girls today must compete with the refined appearance of
the men they wish to please (23-30); nevertheless, like the peacock, girls can take personal pride
in their looks (31-34). Beauty arouses love more than magic can (35-42); an attractive character
inspires affection which will last long after appearance fades (43-50). On this note, the narrator
details his recipes for facial treatments which will make a girl’s face smoother and brighter than
her mirror (51-68), plump the cheeks (69-76), banish spots (77-90), and bring colour to the skin
through cleansing and exfoliation (91-98 and 99-100).

Scholarship on this work highlights its metaliterary elements: Wyke suggests that the
puella’s body analogises poetic composition, celebrating the ars of the male text; Rimell reads
the Medicamina as a “micro-manifesto of Ovidian poetics” — the metaphor of make-up
highlights the poet’s artfulness and versatility; the technical recipes dramatise poetic
composition, equipping the female student to become a poet. In the introduction, Ovid advises
his students to trust cultus rather than magic to win love (35-42), listing products they should
avoid and feats cantus will not accomplish. Commentators predominantly focus on the ostensible
contrast between magical enchantment and beauty or cosmetics in these lines. Rimell, by
contrast, drawing on Sharrock’s discussion of Ars amatoria 2.99-108, suggests that the passage
aligns love, magic and poetry to undermine Ovid’s claims that “the Medicamina are a miracle
cure for fading beauty or that there is any such thing as snake-splitting sorcery” — instead, Ovid
assumes “witch-like powers” as his recipes represent experimentation on his literary puella and
his denigration of magic at 35-42 sets off his artistic expertise.

While Rimell highlights Ovid’s diversion from the elegiac narrator’s usual desire for
natural beauty through comparison with Propertius 1.2 and Tibullus 1.8, she does not comment
further on the relationship between these texts, or on magic in the Medicamina in relation to

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3 Wyke 1994 pp. 144-146; Rimell 2005 pp. 179-185. For “a complementary literary-critical aspect” to cosmetics in Ars amatoria 3.101-134; Gibson 2003 pp. 129-130, 148 and 183. Olson 2009 p. 309 adds to readings of elegiac puellae as artistic creations by noting that cosmetic substances were also used in paints.
earlier love-elegy; similarly, Rimell does not note the presence of magic in Tibullus 1.8 or its metapoetic potential. We can build on Rimell’s interpretation by considering the magic in relation with the motif’s role in the earlier elegiac tradition. *Medicamina* 35-42 evokes the form and content of passages of metapoetic magic throughout the genre — especially Tibullus 1.8.17-26 — indicating that Ovid uses the motif to situate his work in this tradition despite its didactic form and style, as well as reflecting on the earlier elegiac connection of magic enchantment with “natural” beauty by expanding the associations of female charms, magic artifice and the poetic text. Just as this intertextual engagement with love-elegy grounds the *Medicamina* in this tradition, so allusions to Vergil’s *Georgics* underline the poem’s didactic form; as we will see, Ovid evokes Vergil’s epic in the context of magic, integrating the didactic into love-elegy’s emblematic metaphor to illustrate his new blended genre. Before we examine this section, it will be useful to consider the initial catalogue of the abilities of *cultus* (3-10); this passage resonates in 35-42 and introduces Ovid’s interaction with the *Georgics*; we can also suggest an allusion to *Amores* 3.7 which underlines the *Medicamina*’s metapoetic focus and foreshadows its characterisation in terms of magic.

After his opening address, the *praecceptor* illustrates the benefits of *cultus*:

\[
\textit{cultus humum sterilem Cereal} \\textit{ia pendere iussit}
\textit{munera, mordaces interiere rubi;}
\textit{cultus et in pomis sucos emendat acerbas,}
\textit{fissaque adoptivas accipit arbor opes.}
\textit{culta placent: auro sublimia tecta linuntur;}
\textit{nigra sub imposito marmore terra latet.}
\textit{vellera saepe eadem Tyrio medicantur aeno;}
\textit{sectile deliciis India praebet ebur.}
\]

(Ovid *Medicamina faciei feminae* 3-10)

Commentators on these lines read nature as analogous with the female body;\(^6\) they also note echoes of Vergil’s *Georgics*, suggesting that these underline the didactic elements of the

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Medicamina and parody Vergil’s work by giving Ovid’s elegy equal epic status. Alongside these Vergilian reminiscences, we can highlight an elegiac parallel for the catalogue of cultus (3-8) in the harmful effects of magic carmina on nature in Amores 3.7:

\[
\begin{align*}
carmine laesa Ceres sterilem vanescit in herbam, 
deficiunt laesi carmine fontis aquae; 
ilicibus glandes cantataque vitibus uva 
dedicit et nullo poma movente fluunt.
\end{align*}
\]

(Ovid Amores 3.7.31-34)

We suggested in Chapter 2 that these lines illustrate the detrimental effects of love-elegy — and of the “culta” puella (Amores 3.7.1) who embodies it — on Ovid’s poetic creativity, as well as the genre’s essential failure in love; Medicamina 3-8 inverts this list, asserting that cultivation rejuvenates the environment. The metapoetic element to Amores 3.7.31-34 prompts a similar reading of the opening of the Medicamina; the anaphoric “cultus […] cultus […] culta” (3-7) replaces “carmine […] carmine […] cantataque” (Amores 3.7.31-33) reinforcing the equation between the cultus Ovid now teaches, the puellae it will refresh and maintain, and poetry.

If the puella who previously decreased the poet’s creativity and the lover’s sexual potency was already culta, we may ask how the Medicamina will boost her inspiring effects? The clue to this lies, I suggest, in the allusions to the Georgics in lines 3-10, particularly the grafting (“adoptivas”, 6) which evokes the personified trees marvelling at their metamorphosis at Georgics 2.82 (“miratastque novas frondes et non sua poma”). Grafting is prominent in Georgics 2: Vergil emphasises the wonder of the practice with splices of incompatible species (32-34, 69-82), the complete metamorphosis of one tree into another (“et saepe alterius ramos impune videmus | vertere in alterius, mutatamque insita mala | ferre pirum […]”, 32-34), and the trees’ astonishment at their transformations (82). While some scholars interpret grafting in Georgics 2 as a bleak comment on man’s abuse of nature, others view the combinations as

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8 For Medicamina 5-6 and Georgics 2.82: Watson 2001 p. 461.
exemplifying experimentation, creativity, and productivity. In keeping with metaliterary readings of Ovid’s didactic work and of Amores 3.7.31-34, I suggest that grafting at Medicamina 5-6 metaphorically signifies the process of combining genres to create new hybrid poetry. Unlike Georgics 2.32-34 and 69-82, Medicamina 5-6 does not specify the varieties of trees but emphasises the benefits of the process; the transformation suggested in the Vergilian work becomes integration (“adoptivas”, Medicamina 6), which our passage showcases as allusions to the Georgics intertwine with those to Ovid’s Amores and produce fruitful new work — a didactic elegy in which the male praeceptor instructs and constructs puellae and texts without the lena as intermediary. Ovid underlines this last element in lines 7-8 by echoing Dipsas’ advice at Amores 1.8.52-53 (“canescunt turpi tecta relicta siti — | forma, nisi admittas, nullo exercente senescit”), hinting that the puellae, and the text, which he will create will be as duplicitous as the lena’s pupil and raising the question of whether, as in the earlier poem, there is an elegiac lover and poet spying on the instructions in the Medicamina. By evoking and inverting Amores 3.7.31-34, Medicamina 3-10 foregrounds the reawakening of love-elegy through its didactic graft; it also hints at an enchanting aspect to this cultus, which the later warning develops.

Ovid cautions against magic shortly before his recipes:

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11 For a similar literary interpretation of grafting cf. Shea 1988 p. 66 n. 10: the insitor of Propertius 4.2.17-18 symbolises the “Callimachus Romanus […] grafting Greek forms and Latin language”. Lowe 2010 pp. 474-475 notes that grafting is seldom employed metaphorically in Latin literature but cites Ovid Metamorphoses 4.373-379 as one example; Lowe 2010 p. 476 highlights Medicamina 5-7 as a “programmatic” expression of “Ovid’s positive view of grafting”, though he does not develop this comment.

sic potius † vos urget † amor quam fortibus herbis, 
quas maga terribili subsecat arte manus: 
nec vos graminibus nec mixto credite suco, 
nec temptate nocens virus amantis equae, 
nec mediae Marsis findantur cantibus angues, 
nec redit in fontes unda supina suos; 
et quamvis aliquis Temesaea removerit aera, 
nunquam Luna suis excutietur equis.

(Ovid Medicamina faciei feminineae 35-42)

The feats which incantations cannot perform (39-42) replicate those used for the effects of poetry, constructing the Medicamina as an enchanting spell by evoking the imagery familiar from earlier love-elegy; the procedures for gathering and combining juices and herbs (35-38) anticipate the instructions for the facial treatments, equating the subject of the poem with witchcraft and destabilising the surface contrast between magic and cultus.13 Lines 3-10 also resonate in our passage: the untrustworthy, bitter juices (37) recall those improved through cultivation ("sucos […] aceros", 5); the burst snakes (39) balance the split tree trunk ("fissa", 6); the ineffective bronze (41) parallels that of the cauldron ("aeno", 9). These echoes reinforce the relationship between magic and the cultus Ovid’s Medicamina offers, explicating the hints of poetic enchantment in the opening lines to tighten the link between magic, love-elegy, and beauty.

Allusions to Tibullus 1.8.17-22, Amores 1.8 — both of which incorporate didactic elements — and Georgics 3 reinforce this suggestion. Our passage particularly recalls the Tibullan catalogue, echoing its anaphoric structure, the bronze influencing the moon’s chariot (41-42; 1.8.21-22) and incantations controlling snakes (39; 1.8.20). Tibullus 1.8.17-22 is the most overt link between magic, beauty, and poetry in earlier love-elegy; evoking this passage underlines the same triadic relationship in the Ovidian lines, and also lays the foundation for Ovid’s response to this

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13 Richlin 1995 pp. 196-197 notes that Medicamina 35-42 foreshadows the prescriptions though she reads these as evoking medicine, not magic; Fauth 1999 pp. 158-159 suggests that Ovid’s recipes are linked with magic for creating beauty, but that they are differentiated from harmful magic. Alternatively: Cioccoloni 2006 p. 104 n. 31. The ancient association of cosmetics, magic, and poisons also destabilises the contrast between witchcraft and make-up: Richlin 1995 pp. 195-198; Olson 2009 pp. 305-308 discusses the poisonous qualities of cosmetic ingredients; cf. Cioccoloni 2006 p. 104 n. 31. For the ingredients of Ovid’s recipes: Saiko 2005 pp. 203-215. Medicamina 35-36 underlines the relationship between magic and beauty treatments: "subseco" can denote trimming nails, as in the list of Marathus’ self-adornments which are pointless for attracting Pholoe at Tibullus 1.8.9-14 ("quid unges | artificis docta subsecuisse manu?", 11-12).
combination in his predecessors’ works which I will suggest below. The periphrasis for the aphrodisiac *hippomanes* (38) duplicates *Amores* 1.8.8 (“[…] valeat virus amantis equae”), among the powers representing Dipsas’ elegiac persuasions; both passages allude to *Georgics* 3.280-283: “hic demum, hippomanes vero quod nomine dicunt | pastores lentum destillat ab inguine virus” (280-281). Evoking Vergil’s description of the nefarious use which stepmothers make of the substance (“hippomanes, quod saepe mala legere novercae | miscueruntque herbas et non innoxia verba”, 282-283) links the *Medicamina* with their wicked words and love-philtres, distinguishing Ovid’s erotodidactic from his predecessor’s work by aligning it with the excessive passion and its destructive effects condemned in the *Georgics*; the allusion also highlights the mixed genre of the *Medicamina* and, by isolating a remarkable instance of erotic magic in Vergil’s poem, validates Ovid’s treatment of erotic magic in a didactic elegy by invoking the precedent of his illustrious contemporary.

As we have noted, the narrator’s didactic role offers a distanced perspective on love-elegy and its poetics, and a more cynical picture of the fictional lover and his association of his mistress’ “natural” beauty with magic; I suggest that the evocation of Tibullus 1.8.17-22 in our passage draws attention to and facilitates this new angle, throwing Ovid’s divergence from the earlier elegiac treatment of this relationship, on the narrative and metaliterary levels, into relief. Tibullus attributes magic power to Pholoe’s uncultivated physical beauty (“inculto […] ore”, 1.8.15), opposing this with the narrator’s later warning that old age will lead the girl to create artificial attractiveness with makeup (41-44); Ovid associates magic with the facial-treatments

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16 Tibullus 1.8.41-44: “heu sero revocatur amor seroque iuventas | cum vetus infectit cana senecta caput. | tum studium formae est; coma tum mutatur ut annos | dissimulet viridi cortice tincta nucis”. 

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which the praeceptor recommends that puellae use to refresh their complexions.\textsuperscript{17} Within the elegiac narrative, this shift in the Medicamina foregrounds that the fictional puella’s “natural” beauty is the product of cosmetics after all. At this point, it will be useful to recall the hint that male lovers are an additional internal audience for the Medicamina: by revealing that the puella’s attractiveness results from artificial cosmetics, Ovid playfully implicates the elegiac amator in knowing that the “magical” beauty of his beloved is not natural but entirely created, deflating the romanticising of his puella’s uncultivated appearance and his self-justificatory presentation of it as magically captivating.\textsuperscript{18} At the same time, by associating the praeceptor’s facial treatments with love-magic, Ovid literalises the magical enchantment which the lovers suggest as causing their infatuation, making their puellae into the witches they present them as being.

Metapoetically, Tibullus’ association of Pholoe’s attractive appearance with magic highlights her status as an embodiment of the elegiac text and its power to enchant; by transposing this power from the girl’s natural charms to the cosmetics with which she acquires them, Ovid also displays the literary craftsmanship behind the beauty of the puella.\textsuperscript{19} The connection of magic with the technical beauty treatments underlines that it is elegy’s creative power which constructs, and inspires the audience to visualise, the puella and her magical charms, aligning her further with the poetic text and its effects on its readers. Ovid’s Medicamina stands at the end of the amatory elegiac tradition: by this point, the audiences familiar with the genre are aware of its fictional nature and of the beloved as poetic construct and text. By persuading his extratextual readers to envision the puellae through minimal details and practical instructions without the narrative of a love-affair and after asserting the complete unreality of his world, Ovid good-naturedly demonstrates the persuasive powers of his new literary graft. Medicamina 35-42 thus explicates the subtextual union of magic, the elegiac text

\textsuperscript{17} For this contrast between Ovid and Tibullus cf. Fauth 1999 p. 158, who gives a different interpretation from my own, and Watson 2001 p. 465 n. 3, who does not develop her observation.

\textsuperscript{18} Cf. Rimell 2005 p. 181: “Authenticity in Ovid is always an act: hence the “bare” face of any woman treated with these medicamina will not glow naturally (nitere in propriis bonis, Prop. 1.2.6), but on account of the wondrous mask that has seeped into the skin and still clings, as if by magic, to the pores.”; Rimell only applies this to the Medicamina and does not connect magic in the poem with the motif in earlier elegy and the ironic view this creates of the puella’s uncultivated appearance there.

\textsuperscript{19} For Ovid displaying the literary artistry behind the puella’s construction, without reference to Ovid’s divergence from the metapoetic connection of the puellae with the text in earlier love-elegy: Rimell 2005 pp. 180-188. Rimell’s argument develops differently from the points I make here.
and the *puella* in early Tibullan and Propertian elegy, enacting the idea that girl’s enchanting beauty and its effect on lovers and extratextual readers alike embodies this element of the poet’s own verses. Ultimately, the lover and the poet — as much as their respective audiences — are enchanted and deceived by their poetry whose seductive powers lead them to create and be drawn into its world and the production of more elegy.  

This leads us to our last question — the relationship between *Remedia amoris* 249-290 and *Ars amatoria* 2.99-108. The close dialogue between these passages, as we noted in Chapter 2, has long been recognised by commentators on both poems and Sharrock demonstrates the metapoetic nature of Ovid’s caution against love-magic in *Ars amatoria* 2, which characterises his poem as a deceitful and seductive spell. One element which Sharrock only footnotes, however, is that the equation of the *Ars* with magic belies the proclaimed capabilities of its instructions. Our readings over the previous chapters have illustrated that calling attention to elegy’s persistent failure to influence the beloved is a key function of magic in the genre — *Remedia amoris* 249-290 foregrounds this failure through its dialogue with earlier love-elegy; *Ars amatoria* 2.99-108, by contrast, only hints at this ineffectiveness, most particularly through the mention of Circe’s futile *carmen* in the central couplet (103-104). I introduced my study with the aim of expanding on Sharrock’s work on *Ars amatoria* 2.99-108; we now bring our discussion full-circle to develop Sharrock’s acknowledgement of the ineffectiveness of the *Ars amatoria* by reading 2.99-108 alongside its pendant in the *Remedia*. By approaching the passages in this way, I hope to show that *Remedia amoris* 249-290 expands the hints of elegiac failure in *Ars amatoria* 2 — as Ovid’s erotodidactic works explicate the themes of elegiac love-magic more generally — and reflects back onto the previous caution against trusting to magic in love, providing, at the same time, a further illustration of the benefits of reading elegiac magic intertextually. It will be helpful to begin by recalling the role of magic in the *Remedia* and how it communicates with earlier love-elegy before focusing on its relationship with *Ars amatoria* 2.99-108.

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20 For the Pygmalion-episode of Ovid *Metamorphoses* 10.243-297 explicating this relationship between the elegiac poet and lover and his artistic creation: Sharrock 1991 pp. 36-49.

21 Sharrock 1994 p. 63 n. 65.
Remedia amoris claims to offer treatments for elegiac love caused by reading the Ars amatoria; in fact, the poem dupes its pupils into believing that they are being healed while it guides them back to the Ars for a new affair. The Remedia evokes elegiac love and poetry throughout its instructions, including its warning against trusting to the infame carmen of magic to cure love rather than to the praeceptor’s “safe” new work (249-290). As we saw in Chapter 2, the opening list of the magic feats which the Remedia will not accomplish (249-260) inverts those in earlier love-elegy, particularly Amores 1.8.5-18 and Tibullus 1.2.45-54, indicating that the motif symbolises elegiac verses which aim to win love but invariably fail. The evocation of Amores 1.8.5-18 and Tibullus 1.2.45-54 destabilises the narrator’s opposition between the Remedia, magic, and earlier love-elegy, hinting that his new work is no different from the amatory agenda of the old. This identification suggests that the lack of effect which the narrator attributes to magic carmina also characterises his current instructions, signalling their uselessness for curing love; at the same time, by couching this indication of the Remedia’s true nature in terms of magic, Ovid illustrates the enchanting power of his verses which will lead his readers — internal and extratextual — through the poem and back to the Ars. The exemplum of Circe and her embedded speech to Ulysses (263-286) expands these indications, casting the mythological witch as an elegiac lover whose Aeaea carmina are ineffective for maintaining love and do not attempt to cure it. Alongside Ovid’s close engagement with Amores 1.8 and Tibullus 1.2.45-54 in this section, allusions to Ars amatoria 2.99 in Remedia amoris 249 and 289 frame the warning against magic; Circe’s monologue also expands the central statement at Ars amatoria 2.103-104 that she could have detained Ulysses if carmina could influence love. These allusions further undermine the Remedia’s apparent curative aim, signalling its affinity with the previous work.

The ostensible purpose of the Remedia can explain its close engagement with magic in earlier love-elegy. As a poem which advertises itself as advice for overcoming love, the poet and the praeceptor are naturally keen to differentiate this work from their previous amatory elegies which — particularly the Ars amatoria (“discite sanari, per quem didicistis amare”, Remedia amoris 43; “Naso legendus erat tum, cum didicistis amare: idem nunc vobis Naso legendus erit”, 71-72) — led the students into love in the first place. Presenting the Remedia as the opposite of love-magic by evoking the characteristic elegiac form of the motif contrasts the work
with “harmful” erotic elegy; the instant subversion of this opposition through the same imagery, as we have seen, humorously indicates the poet’s and instructor’s deception of his readers and the Remedia’s allegiance to the cause of love.

_Ars amatoria_ 2 concerns the pursuit, rather than the abandonment, of an elegiac affair. The poem employs magic, however, for the same reason as the _Remedia_: to persuade its students that witchcraft cannot be trusted to influence love but that the _praeeceptor’s_ instructions can. Earlier amatory elegy constructs itself as magic _carmina_ to win love, but the imagery it uses for this foreshadows its lack of success. _Ars amatoria_ 2.99-108 initially appears to sidestep this danger, creating, on the surface, a greater opposition between poetry and magic by focusing on practical elements of witchcraft rather than on _carmina_ and their powers. The language of the warning, as Sharrock illustrates, still evokes incantations, equating the _Ars_ with magic _carmina_ after all; while this highlights the elegy’s seductive power over its students and extratextual readers, the multivalence of _carmen_ undermines the _praeeceptor’s_ claims for the success of his elegiac magic and hints at its ineffectiveness for maintaining love. This warning is most explicitly given in the central couplet on Circe and her unsuccessful _carmen_ — precisely the couplet which _Remedia amoris_ 263-286 expands. We have already seen how allusions to _Ars amatoria_ 2.99 in _Remedia amoris_ 249-290 undermine this elegy’s attempt to distinguish itself from magic and from earlier love-elegy. The question we now need to pose is: how does the _Remedia’s_ expansion of _Ars amatoria_ 2.103-104 influence our reading of the earlier passage?

_Remedia amoris_ 236-286 presents Circe as a characteristically unsuccessful elegiac lover whose _carmina_ — equally magic and poetic — fail to detain Ulysses. By allusively signalling his students and extratextual audience to read this _exemplum_ as a development of _Ars amatoria_ 2.103-104 and by framing _Remedia amoris_ 249-290 with allusions to _Ars amatoria_ 2.99, Ovid indicates that this passage provides the illustration of elegiac failure downplayed in the earlier warning; the recognition that the _Remedia_ belatedly supplies information which the _praeeceptor_ of the earlier poem had attempted to suppress intensifies the deception enacted upon the students through the _Ars_. The reciprocal relationship between these passages thus undermines the erototidaxis of the _Ars_ as much as of the _Remedia_, tying both texts further into
the elegiac tradition of magic illustrating deceit and failure in love, as well as the successful poetic enchantment of its extratextual audience. The Remedia’s caution against trusting magic should send its students back to the Ars equipped with new information with which to interpret the pendant warning as indicating the ineffectiveness of erotodidactic magic for love; the bewitching force of Ovid’s poetry, however, continues to hold its readers for another round, and the cycle created by the passages on magic reinforces the doubly enchanting power of his erotodidactic elegy.

Ovid’s erotodidactic works bring us to the end of our investigation into the origins and development of magic in Augustan love-elegy. We have followed the motif twice from the beginning of the genre, focusing on its metapoetic role as expressed through two themes: magic carmina, and the bewitching power of the puella’s beauty. The importance of magic to love-elegy is clear from its prominence in Tibullus’ and Propertius’ earliest poems; reading the motif intertextually by considering the recognised correspondences between magic in this genre and in contemporary and Hellenistic texts as active literary dialogues offers a new angle on the motif which provides fresh evidence for its metaliterary and narrative functions and of the extent of their presence in the genre. Resonances of Greco-Roman magic practice and discourse enhance these literary interrelationships, expanding our potential to grasp nuances of the theme and its use in individual elegies.

Propertius’ and Tibullus’ engagement with Vergil Eclogue 8 and Theocritus Idyll 2 — in which erotic magic ritual dramatises poetic composition and foregrounds themes of failed seduction, enchantment, and deceit — from the beginning of their first collections show that elegiac magic originates in the pastoral: the elegists co-opt the imagery and lexis of the motif in the Vergilian and Theocritean texts, promoting magic to the defining metaphor for their genre. Ovid’s close interaction with his predecessors through magic and his continuation of the emblematic form and imagery to position his works in the amatory elegiac tradition — particularly in Heroides 6 and 12, Medicamina faciei femineae and Remedia amoris, which exemplify Ovid’s expansion of the genre while amplifying the humour and ironies of the theme — testifies to the status which the motif achieves independent of its pastoral roots and to its
synonymity with love-elegy. Tracing these dialogues chronologically demonstrates the detail and the variety of the Augustan love-elegists’ engagement with their contemporaries and predecessors through magic, illustrating that the apparently conventionalised motif is in fact a potent idiom for literary interaction; Hypsipyle and Medea in *Heroides* 6 and 12, two female poets who employ magic in the same way as the elegists and their fictional homonyms, also illustrate this interaction on a narrative level.

The triadic relationship between magic, *carmina*, and the *puella*’s beauty has the same effect. Returning to Augustan elegy’s beginning in Propertius’ and Tibullus’ first collections enables us to highlight that the *puella*’s enchanting appearance gives physical representation to this quality of the elegists’ *carmina* from the inception of the genre. The connection of magic with the embodiment of the poetic text makes it integral to elegiac passion, providing further evidence for its emblematic status; Ovid’s *Medicamina* confirms this. Recognising that this metapoetic element to the beloved’s association with enchantment is established at the start of love-elegy as we have it opens a new avenue for reading its intergeneric engagement with contemporary poetry, this time from the other side as Horace’s *Epodes* 5 and 17 use the motif as a vehicle for defining his iambic poetics against his peers’ already-published work. The elegiac *puellae* become fundamental to Canidia’s construction and to her metaliterary role in the *Epodes*, enhancing the generic variety at the heart of Horatian iambic and providing new evidence that Horace’s interaction with contemporary love-elegy was more extensive that scholarship has previously recognised.

It is worth emphasising that the interactions between texts through magic which we have outlined are truly dialogic. The elegists pick up Vergil’s pastoral interaction with their own forerunner, Gallus, extending it from the opposite side and going one better — taking over the form and imagery of magic in *Eclogue* 8 and making it the distinctive marker of their own genre. Ovid’s engagement with magic in his predecessors’ works not only characterises his amatory epistles and didactic poetry as love-elegy, but by continually reinforcing the status of the theme and reflecting back on its position in the genre he also prompts new re-readings of their work, even, through *Heroides* 6 and 12, deepening the layers and pedigree of the motif by inscribing the
“earlier” experiences of his mythological witches into the Augustan elegiac tradition. Horace’s parody of magic in Tibullus’ and Propertius’ first collections also illustrates this two-way dynamic, offering a view of the elegiac beloved which would no doubt resonate for readers returning to Propertius’ and Tibullus’ works and which Propertius’ response in 3.6 explicates. Reading magic intertextually demonstrates that poets did not construct their work as spells in isolation; rather, the interaction between texts initiated and maintained through this theme makes it a fertile ground for dynamic literary dialogue and polemic throughout Augustan poetry, a natural vocabulary for poets to communicate and to define their work in relation to one another and to the wider literary tradition.
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