The Synesthetic Onion in the *Satires* of Horace and Lucilius

This paper explores the satiric and synesthetic metaphor of the word *lippus* ("bleary-eyed" or "watery-eyed") from Horace's *Satires* and the fragments of Lucilius. I argue that Horace draws inspiration for his interpretation of *lippus* (*S.* 1.1.120, 3.25, 7.3; *Ep.* 1.1.28, 2.5) from Lucilius' fragmentary *Iter Siculum* (195M = 217W = 5.10C), signaling Horace's simultaneous adoption and revision of Lucilian satire. Just as Gowers (1993b) argues that garlic is a "uniquely appropriate 'food' for iambic anger," the bitter, lachrymose onion and the physical reaction it induces (*lippitudo*) can be a culinary-sensory metaphor for satiric poetics. This paper reaffirms satire as a genre concerned with the body and sensory aesthetics, and strives to situate Horatian satire within a growing body of scholarship on the senses in ancient literature (Smith 2006, Butler and Purves 2013, Bradley 2014, Toner 2014).

Scholars have long examined the recurrence of *lippus* throughout Horace's *Satires*, especially in its relationship to Horace's eponymous persona (Gowers 1993a and 2012, Freudenburg 2001, Cucchiarelli 2001 and 2002, Barchiesi and Cucchiarelli 2005, Schlegel 2005 and 2010, Farrell 2007). On the "Journey to Brundisium," Horace isolates his *lippus* persona who suffers from an ocular malady (*S.* 1.5.30, 48) and juxtaposes his ailment with the actions of his famous traveling companions: "Noble (*optimus*) Maecenas was to come to this place and Cocceius, each sent as envoys regarding important matters (*missi magnis de rebus*), accustomed to reconcile feuding friends. Here I, bleary-eyed (*lippus*), smear black ointment on my eyes" (27-31). In a poem that emphasizes the sights of travel, Reckford (1999) argues that Horace figuratively blunts his persona's vision to express ignorance about the poem's historical setting.

Previous scholarship has neglected to analyze a potential intertextual reading between Horace's *lippus* persona and a Lucilian fragment that may shed light on Horace's poetic agenda:

lippus edenda acri assiduo ceparius cepa ("an onion grower / eater is bleary-eyed from eating bitter onion regularly," 195M = 217W = 5.10C). Owing to its pungent odor, bitter taste, and being a cause of bad breath, the raw onion is a nexus of sensory experience. Varro confirms the onion's associations with strong odors, rustic simplicity, and thereby unrefined speech: "our grandfathers and great-grandfathers, although their words smelled (*verba olerent*) of garlic and onion (*cepe*), were still high-spirited men" (*Men.* 63). Lucilius, however, emphasizes the onion's effect on eyesight (*lippitudo*) when it is cut. By focusing on its ocular impact, Lucilius' onion fragment can be read as a commentary on the complex nature of the satiric gaze. The semantic ambiguity of *ceparius*, which can mean "onion eater," "onion seller," or "onion grower," simultaneously places the *ceparius* in the dual position of onion producer and consumer. In rendering himself *lippus* ("watery-eyed") by eating his own produce, the *ceparius* becomes a metaphor for the satirist. The producer of satire incorporates a version of himself within his own satire via a poetic persona; as a result, the satirist can simultaneously occupy the role of poetic ego and satiric object. And, just like the *ceparius* and the onion, when the satirist unleashes his satire's caustic stench into the world, he impacts himself in the process. Horace signals his appropriation of Lucilius' metaphor by fashioning a *lippus* persona as an object of derision within his own satire. In sum, Horace lets us know that not even the satirist is free from the impact of his own satire.

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