the tradition of Cyclopes as smiths who manufacture lightning and work for Vulcan goes back to Hesiod and Callimachus and is prominently displayed at Horace C. 1.4.7-8 (where see Nisbet-Hubbard) and in Aeneid 8 itself (414 ff). 4. Both caves are littered with human remains (Od. 290, 373-4; A. 195-7), and it is possible that Cacus may be cannibalistic, like the Cyclops. 5. Both stories involve acts of deceit and theft. 6. Cacus’ scheme is of course modelled on Hermes’ in the Homeric Hymn. But that Vergil appropriates the trick for use here, a trick involving the leading of herds into a cave, could well be related to Odysseus’ use of a trick involving the leading of flocks out of a cave. 7. Like the story of Polyphemus, Vergil presents the story of Cacus as a narrative reported at the court of a king.

It is possible that one minor point that led Vergil to exploit the Polyphemus tale here was the fact that a μέγα ἡμιπάλον (Od. 319) is a prime instrument for Odysseus’ victory over Polyphemus, as routinely with Hercules’ exploits (and cf. A. 220-1).

That Vergil consciously saw himself presenting the Cacus-tale on the model of Homer’s Polyphemus is brought home by the clear parallels between the Cacus-episode and Vergil’s own treatment of the Cyclops. Thus, note magna se mole ferebat/lusta se mole moventem (8.199, 3.656); recenti/ceade tepebat humus.../ domus sanie dapibusque cruentis... santeque aspersa natarent/ limina (8.195-6, 3.618, 625 f); ora...pallida taboll membra fluentia tabo (8.197, 3.626).

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1) See F. Münzer, Cacus der Rinderdieb (Basel 1911), 36, 48 f; G. K. Galinsky, AJP 87 (1966), 31 (note 32).

**SENeca ON DEATH NOTICES**

In *Suasoria* 6, Seneca the Elder discusses various treatments of the debate as to whether Cicero should seek Antony’s forgiveness and so save his life during the proscriptions. Following this, he quotes several examples of the different historical treatments of Cicero’s death (*Suas.* 6.14-21). Bruttedius Niger’s description of the shocked reaction of the Roman populace to Antony’s mutilation of the orator’s corpse and their recollection of the deceased’s services to Rome leads Seneca to offer the following observations on the evaluation of the dead in classical historiography:

quotiens magni alicuius (viri) mors ab historicis narrata est, totiens fere consummatio totius vitae et quasi funebris laudatio redditur. hoc, semel

aut iterum a Thucydiode factum, item in paucissimis personis usurpatum a Sallustio, T. Livius benignus omnibus magnis viris praestitit; sequentes historici multo id effusius fecerunt. Ciceroni hoc, ut Graeco verbo utar, ἔπιτάφιον Livius reddit. (Suas. 6.21)¹)

A series of notices for Cicero by Livy, Cremutius Cordus, Aufidius Bassus, Asinius Pollio, and Cornelius Severus follows.

The passage quoted has been cited frequently as important evidence for the development of death notices in the historians²). It might even be used to illustrate the importance of the hortatory laudation in the development of Roman historical writing, as has recently been argued by Fornara³). However, before the passage can be so used, the following point needs to be clarified: is Seneca really positing any sort of link between Roman funeral eulogies and the death notices in the historians? I believe it can be shown that the connection is tenuous and that Seneca is using Greek literary terminology here—which, in itself, cannot support any concept of a native Roman historical form developing in the death notice. It might still be possible to use Seneca’s examples of historical writing to construct a theory of the development of this style of writing in Rome. But, as I hope to show, Seneca’s treatment of the subject is highly selective and ambiguous to the point of being unreliable as a source for literary history.

In evaluating Seneca’s remarks, no one would object to the statement that Greek and Roman historians generally offer a summary of the lives of significant individuals after recording their deaths. But the labelling of this form as a virtual funerary oration (quasi funebris oratio) is problematic. As A. E. Edward noted long ago, in his commentary on the passage, this is definitely a loose description, since the “speech by a near relative at the burial of a distinguished Roman”⁴) is substantially different in type from the historical obituaries known to us. The length, status of the deliverer, and the detailed account of careers and virtues of the deceased clearly differentiate these funerary eulogies from the historical type⁵). A brief consideration of the surviving historical obituaries in the Roman authors mentioned by Seneca bears this out. There is only one possible death notice surviving from Sallust’s Historiae, probably a brief moralizing description of Appius Claudius, who died on campaign in Macedonia in 76 B.C.⁶). Livy’s death notices, too, bear little resemblance to the funeral oration: he offers an evaluation of Attalus of Pergamum derived from Polybius⁷), a judgement on Cicero in reply to Asinius Pollio⁸), a consideration of Servius Tullius’ career derived from annalistic sources⁹), and evaluations of Camillus, Fabius Cunctator, and Scipio Africanus which are less clearly derivative¹⁰). In fact funeral orations had come under attack as a source of historical material by the late Republic and were unlikely then to be much used by the Roman historians¹¹). The interests of the writers who followed Livy may be dimly perceived in the works of Tacitus, Plutarch, Suetonius, and Dio, but none of them clearly display influence from funerary laudations on the death notice¹²).