

Beginning (and) Literary History

No passage from Roman antiquity has so determined the shape of Latin literary history as Cicero's discussion (72–73) of Livius Andronicus' dramatic production of 240 BCE.¹ In the year following the successful conclusion of the first of three wars against Carthage (the First Punic War, 264–241), Livius adapted a Greek play into Latin to be put on at the Great or Roman Games (*ludi magni* or *Romani*). Likewise, no event of Latin literary history has received such sustained attention from scholars since: Aulus Gellius in the Roman empire, Vasari and Bruni in the Renaissance, Friedrich Leo's marvelous literary history (1913), and on up to Denis Feeney's 2016 *Beyond Greek*. The moment described was itself not a first but (at least) a second beginning for Latin literature, as Cicero, with the assistance of Varro and Atticus, ostentatiously refutes Accius' proposed starting point, Livius' *Hymn to Juno Regina* of 207 BCE. The terms Cicero laid out, in conjunction with the bare facts of history and the refined inquiries of his contemporaries, have been the subject of endless fascination and dispute, and the values and prejudices that brought him to this beginning have been equally questioned and embraced by scholars ever since.

It is not this book's aim to insist on a different beginning of Latin literature. It will suggest, however, that Cicero – and all of us who have since followed him – must have seriously considered at least one other possibility: Appius Claudius Caecus and his *Speech against the Peace with Pyrrhus* in (roughly) 280. Still, even a better beginning would be a failure of sorts, for Cicero as for any literary historian. That hard skepticism results not so much from the paucity and complexity of the Roman evidence as from the acknowledgment that seeking out such beginnings is akin to tracking unicorns: a better unicorn trap cannot yield better prey. Such beginnings are serviceable fictions that reveal as much about their

¹ Quoted and discussed at length in Chapter 4.

authors' intellectual assumptions and limits as they do about the literary tradition. As Eviatar Zerubavel remarks, "offering a fair historical account may very well require some willingness to actually consider multiple narratives with *multiple beginnings*."² Consideration of Cicero's beginnings illuminates his guiding assumptions and innovations in literary historiography. It also reveals his political and intellectual aims: what motivated him in 46, as Caesar was winding down the civil war, to write a dialogue on the history of Roman oratory and literature? Why look to the past when the present and future were so in doubt?

There was nothing new in this nostalgic reflex, to intervene in the present and future by looking backward. In creatively reworked accounts, Roman historians had made an entire historiographical category out of *exempla* – great men and women of the past who exemplified communal values through singular actions.³ And even the most past of past authors for Greeks and Romans, Homer, conjures up a world in which the fascination of a bygone era reveals the shortcomings and hopes of the present, a world in which the great heroes in and around Troy are categorically unreachable and worthy of poetic recollection and heroic emulation. This is one of the great and inevitable manipulations of historical accounts – to shape the present by claiming a particular shape for the past, because however much the past is factual and did happen in a particular way (that has never been in dispute), what determines our understandings of those facts, and therefore our future actions, is not the raw past but the memory we impose on it.

Such rewritings of the past continue to animate political interventions. Reactionary political groups active in the United States since the 2010s, from the Tea Party to #MAGA to Identity Evropa, have so eagerly reenvisioned the past in order to sideline new possibilities made urgent by demographic and social change. To imagine or long for prerevolutionary America (Tea Party), the United States in the 1950s (#MAGA), or a long-gone ideal of Western Whiteness (Identity Evropa) is hardly mere nostalgia for a bygone era. It is a dictate about what and who in the past merits remembrance, and such claims are so attractive and so powerful precisely because they easily and almost imperceptibly omit, ignore, or quell the counterclaims that others have on the past and its meaning for

² Zerubavel (2003) 100; cf. 109 on "entertaining multiple perspectives on the past."

³ For valuable surveys of Roman *exempla*, see Langlands (2018) and Roller (2018), the former addressing larger conceptual issues and the latter focusing on a select but significant group of figures.

the present. Whether today or for Cicero and his contemporaries, such remembering is almost always a political act.⁴

Even as modern scholars have scrutinized Cicero's newfound emphasis on 240 as the beginning of Rome's literary tradition, those same inquiries have yet to consider the relationship of that date and its event to other possibilities in the *Brutus*. His decision to settle on 240 is inextricably connected to the foregone alternatives, which all in turn reveal his methods and motivations. Insistence on Livius Andronicus' play as literature's beginning is inseparable from insistence on Marcus Cornelius Cethegus (cos. 204) as the beginning of oratory (57–58).⁵ Even more so, these decisions are inextricable from the remarkable, even perplexing, refusal to set Appius Claudius Caecus at the beginning of oratory and therefore literature. Cicero's choices, it will become clear, have at least as much to do with his various aims in the dialogue as with any sense of obligation to factual accuracy in narrating a beginning of literature. He goes to great lengths to depict literary history as a valid discipline of scholarly inquiry, providing it with Greek and Roman forerunners who justify his own appropriative and hellenizing tendencies. Unsurprisingly (for students of Cicero, at least), the narrative presented is as much about Cicero as it is about the origins of Roman literature.⁶

Oratory's Hard Beginnings

“Every beginning is hard” (“Aller Anfang ist schwer”) according to the German proverb, and Cicero's beginning of oratory is no exception. He hardly makes matters any easier by choosing Marcus Cornelius Cethegus

⁴ By contrast, leftist agendas tend to look to the future in a way that is also a kind of reflected nostalgia: progressivism and the vocabulary that goes with it, “hope” in aspirational moments, or neo-liberal salvation by the eventuality of demographics in others; in this regard Lin-Manuel Miranda's musical *Hamilton* is a rare exception. The difficulty for the progressive view is that few ideologies, however justified their ideals, can live on without appropriating and valorizing the past, even if only in a distorted version. This is, in many respects, the great insight that concludes Sander Goldberg's (1995) explanation of the failure of first-century epic before the advent of the *Aeneid*: late republican epic, including Cicero's own verses, could no longer adapt inherited forms to the ideologies and pressures of the inherited context. That would require an emperor and his bard.

⁵ Chapter 4 contextualizes 240 BCE and Livius' play in addition to considering the perplexing fact that Roman oratory – unlike Roman poetry and despite a wealth of possible options – begins with neither a fixed date nor a fixed text.

⁶ While the *Brutus* is a history of oratory, Cicero's account is based on the evaluation of other literary genres, such as poetry of various types, dialogue, or biography. He treats speeches as if they function like literature, and thus his oratorical history does explain what we call literary history. See Schwindt (2000) 96 on “Rhetorikgeschichte” in the *Brutus* as “Literaturgeschichte” and the end of Chapter 4 on oratory's literariness. On (Latin) “literature,” see Feeney (2016) 152–78, esp. 152–55.

(cos. 204) as the first orator at Rome (57–58, quoted and discussed further below). The choice is justified not by judgment of Cethegus' speeches but by citing the judgment of the epic poet Ennius and by dismissing earlier orators, most notably Appius Claudius Caecus (cos. 307, 296). There are several problems in beginning the history with Cethegus, both because of Caecus' achievements and because of Cicero's otherwise inclusive tendencies. As Henriette van der Blom remarks, "Cicero operates with two criteria for inclusion into his history of Roman orators: oratorical activity and no longer living at the time of writing (46 BC)."⁷ Caecus was probably the best choice for the beginning of (prose) literature at Rome, and Cicero struggles with Caecus' inevitable presence in his account.⁸

I propose here first to make the strongest possible case that Cicero on his own terms should have set Caecus at the beginning of Roman oratorical (and literary prose) history and, second, to defend Cicero's choice with an eye to the dialogue's literary-historical enterprise. The point of reconstructing Appius Claudius Caecus as the fount of oratorical history (and perhaps of published literature at Rome) is not merely to point up Cicero's logic. His choices, along with their inconsistencies and justifications, will contribute once more to the methodological insight that literary history is skewed by its authors' needs and perspectives and by the nature of literary history itself.⁹ Cicero provides just enough information in the *Brutus* to demonstrate how arbitrary his construction of oratorical history is, and that arbitrariness suggests ulterior motives in the construction of his, or any, literary history. Furthermore, in offering one – visibly biased – version of literary history, Cicero also equips the reader with the means to consider and to construct alternative and equally valid versions.

Given his public prominence, Appius Claudius Caecus (ca. 343 – ca. 275 BCE) must have been a candidate to lead off Cicero's oratorical history. Caecus' renown well outlasted his own generation, as literary and political history would grant him a considerable afterlife.¹⁰ Two inscriptions, one from Rome and the other found at Arretium (modern Arezzo, in eastern Tuscany), document a litany of remarkable achievements:¹¹ thrice a military tribune, quaestor (by 316?), twice curule aedile (by 313? and 305?), twice praetor (by 297? and 295), twice interrex

⁷ Van der Blom (2016) 5.

⁸ Cf. Suerbaum (2002) 80–83; at 81 he calls Caecus' speech the oldest datable document of Latin literature (although its dating is not exactly fixed).

⁹ Perkins (1992) is the seminal study on the problems of literary history, which I address in greater detail below.

¹⁰ Roller (2018) 95–133 on Caecus as an *exemplum*. ¹¹ *CIL* 6.40943, 11.1827.

(298, 291?), dictator, twice consul (307, 296), and censor (312). The censorship brought crucial building projects, a major roadway and aqueduct (see below), and the temple of Bellona, the Roman goddess of war, a meeting place outside the *pomerium* for the senate and foreign ambassadors. He boasted victories over Samnites, Sabines, and Etruscans. Livy, even despite apparent hostility to the *Appii Claudii*, finds him outstanding in law, eloquence, and the civil arts.¹²

Plutarch's *Life of Pyrrhus* memorably portrays Caecus' speech. King Pyrrhus of Epirus invaded Italy after the Greek colony Tarentum (Taras), in Magna Graecia and on the inner "heel" of Italy's "boot," requested aid against Roman encroachment. The conflict was cast into a well-conceived global and historical mold: Pyrrhus claimed descent not only from Alexander the Great, but from Achilles. Set against this lineage was the parallel backstory of the Romans, who claimed descent from the Trojans via Aeneas, who fled Troy's destruction to found what would become the Roman state. Alert to the historical parallels, Pyrrhus aligned the mythical past so as to arrange a conflict between two great nations, Greece and Rome, whose intertwined histories stretched back to the beginnings of warfare and literature: the descendants of Aeneas against the descendants of Achilles.¹³

Pyrrhus won successive battles, first at Heraclea (280) and then at Asculum (279). His response to this latter event secured his renown for millennia: after Asculum he quipped, "If we beat the Romans in one more battle, we'll be wholly ruined" (Ἄν ἔτι μίαν μάχην Ῥωμαίους νικήσωμεν, ἀπολούμεθα παντελῶς, Plut. *Pyrrh.* 21.9). Thus "Pyrrhic victory" would come to mean something far different from just "the victory of Pyrrhus." Cineas, Pyrrhus' ambassador, soon came to Rome to negotiate with the Romans, who seriously considered the offer of peace until the appearance of Appius Claudius Caecus ("the Blind"). A litter carried by attendants brought Caecus, now suffering the effects of age, to upbraid the senate.

¹² Livy 9.42.4, 10.15.12, 10.19.6, 10.22.7. Cf. *ORF*³ no. 1, Humm (2005) 510. Hostility is likely too simplistic a formulation; see Vasaly (1987) on the *Appii Claudii* in Livy's first pentad. The hypothesis that Cicero excluded Caecus because of distaste for his former nemesis, Clodius the tribune, should be discarded. Cicero could malign Clodius all the more by conferring distinction upon Caecus and excluding Clodius. He includes three different *Appii Claudii Pulchri* (cos. 143, 79, 54 – the brother of the tribune), and three *Gaii Claudii Pulchri* (cos. 177, cos. 92, pr. 56). Cicero's beginning, Cethegus, is an ancestor of an executed Catilinarian conspirator: the struggles of the 60s and 50s pale in comparison to those of the 40s.

¹³ *CAH*² vii.2: 464–65, with the marvelous didrachm issued by Pyrrhus; the coin depicts Achilles on the obverse and on the reverse Thetis bringing him armor.

He railed against peace with the invading Greek general. Ever on the alert for the perfect bon mot, Plutarch perfectly ramps up the rhetoric:

“Previously, Romans, I bore as an affliction the misfortune to my eyes, but now it pains me not to be blind *and* deaf as I hear your shameful deliberations and decrees that debase Rome’s glory.”

Πρότερον μὲν . . . τὴν περὶ τὰ ὄμματα τύχην ἀνιαρώς ἔφερον, ὧ Ῥωμαῖοι, νῦν δὲ ἄχθομαι πρὸς τῷ τυφλὸς εἶναι μὴ καὶ κωφὸς ὢν, ἀλλ’ ἀκούων αἰσχρὰ βουλευόμενα καὶ δόγματα ὑμῶν ἀνατρέποντα τῆς Ῥώμης τὸ κλέος. (Plut. *Pyrrh.* 18.1)

Plutarch notes the speech’s immediate effectiveness.¹⁴ It is hard to know what Latin word for “glory” Caecus might have used in concluding the memorable retort (*fama, gloria, laus, nomen?*), but Plutarch, or even Caecus himself, with the wryness reserved for *sententia*, may have crafted a recognizably Achillean response in arguing against the Achilles-like invader: κλέος, of course, is the value that so animated Achilles in the *Iliad* and ultimately led to his death at Troy.

If we were seeking out a forerunner for the combined civic and literary enterprises of a Cato or a Cicero, it would seem to be Caecus. He emerges from the mists of Roman history as the first political personality of recognizable depth and is tied to the invention of written publication as a means of public self-profiling in the republic.¹⁵ His reputed predilection for intervocalic “r” probably helped to formalize Latin rhotacism in written records, a preference matched by his ardent displeasure at the sound of the letter “z”.¹⁶ Traces of his larger cultural interests would also endure, such as the enduring tag *faber est suae quisque fortunae* (“each man is craftsman of his own fortune”), one of the *sententiae* or *carmina* for which he was known and for which Cicero himself praises Caecus in the *Tusculan*

¹⁴ Plut. *Pyrrh.* 18.5–19.5. Cf. App. *Sam.* 10.2 on the speech, 10.1–3 on the Roman prisoners taken at Heraclea.

¹⁵ Humm (2005) marshals the primary evidence and secondary literature: 1–12, 61–73 (on Appius’ speech), 508–40 (on his eloquence and *carmina*), and 666–70 (conspectus of sources); cf. Suerbaum (2002) 80–83. Tacitus’ Aper can still quip that some prefer Caecus to Cato (*num dubitamus inventos, qui pro Catone Appium Caecum magis mirarentur, Dial.* 18.2). Centuries later Isidore of Seville would place Caecus at the beginning of Latin prose (oratory): “and among the Romans Appius Caecus speaking against Pyrrhus first used speech without meter. And since then others vied in prose eloquence” (*apud Romanos autem Appius Caecus adversus Pyrrhum solutam orationem primus exercuit. Iam exhinc et ceteri prosae eloquentia contenderunt, Isid. Orig.* 1.38.2 = Varro *GRF* 319). Van den Berg (2019) 575–76 erroneously attributed Isidore’s claim to Varro (whom Isidore cites shortly before).

¹⁶ Pompon. 1.2.2.36, Mart. Cap. 3.261.

Disputations.¹⁷ His maxims in the native Saturnian meter were – or for an observer of the first century BCE could be thought to be – based on Greek (Pythagorean) models. In 304 (or thereabouts) he prompted the curule aedile Gnaeus Flavius to publicize the *legis actiones* and calendar days for court proceedings, precedents that Cicero notes in *pro Murena* were essential to ensuring the prestige of oratory over the prestige of law.¹⁸ No longer was knowledge of juridical formulas or calendrical restrictions on legal procedures the sole purview of patricians and priests, which opened advocacy to other social groups.

Civic achievements such as the *Via Appia* and the *Aqua Appia* also ensured a material legacy in Rome and Italy. Michel Humm has well demonstrated that Caecus was a catalyst in Rome's hellenizing process, a core feature of Cicero's literary history: like Livius' adaptation of a Greek play (72–73), Caecus offers the prospect of a literary beginning inspired by Greek models.¹⁹ Caecus equally suited a narrative for oratory's rise that celebrated Roman militarism along with the adoption of Greek culture, as was the case when Livius initiated Latin poetry.

Given Cicero's interest in the synchrony of cultural and military developments, he could, for example, have considered a very different organization: the classical Athenian canon, from Lysias to Demosthenes,²⁰ begins to decline with Demetrius of Phalerum, the moment at which Caecus inaugurates a crude stage of Roman oratory. Cato the Elder makes subsequent refinements that shore up oratory's essential place in the history of the art and of political life, without yet raising oratory to the level of the Greek masters. Romans finally begin to compete with their canonical Greek forerunners in the generation of Crassus and Antonius.²¹ Caecus was a near coeval of Demetrius of Phalerum, the “beginning of the end” of Greek oratory (37–38), and their simultaneous presence as political and

¹⁷ *Tusc.* 4.4: Cicero uses it as an example of early learning, specifically of Pythagorean influence. He notes that Panaetius praised Caecus' *carmen*. Dupraz (2007) on the *sententiae* as literature.

¹⁸ *Cic. Mur.* 25; cf. *Att.* 6.1.8 (SB 115), *Liv.* 9.46.1–6; *V. Max.* 2.5.2, *Macr. Sat.* 1.15.9; Humm (2005) 441–55, Rüpke (2011) 44–67.

¹⁹ See esp. Humm (2005) 483–540 on Caecus' hellenism. Cicero will not have excluded Caecus from the canon because he was insufficiently trained in Greek, since that is not a *sine qua non*: Gaius Titius lacked Greek learning and yet was an exemplar of Latin style (167), in both oratory and drama.

²⁰ Cf. [Plut.] *Xorat.* 836a, 848c for the story (probably apocryphal) that the young Demosthenes once saw Lysias. The topos may motivate Cicero's possibly invented claim to have heard Accius (107) or Ovid's to have seen Vergil (*Tr.* 4.10.51).

²¹ Cf. the second of Quintilian's four groups at *Inst.* 12.10.10–11, which spans Crassus through Hortensius. Quintilian singles Cicero out for special treatment at *Inst.* 12.10.12–15. Quintilian's modernism allows him to begin with Cato and to extend the classical period into the empire.

oratorical figures would serve well the synchronies courted by Greek and Roman thinkers. This imaginary scheme emphasizes that oratory in Greece reached dusk just as it found first light at Rome, an idea in consonance with the *Graecia capta* motif, by which Rome's imperial assertions against Greece go hand in hand with enthrallment to and adoption of its cultural acquirements.²² Cicero's penchant for cultural parallels is evident in the cases of Pisistratus/Solon and Servius Tullius (39), or Coriolanus and Themistocles (41–43), exactly the synchronism so essential to Roman habits of mind.²³ The Pyrrhic War heralded Rome's emergence onto the world stage:²⁴ Pyrrhus was repelled and Greek hegemony in the colonies of Magna Graecia became uncertain; Rome was recognized as a player on the Mediterranean scene, as evidenced by the opening of an embassy of amity by the Macedonian king of Egypt in Rome in 273 BCE.

Despite the alluring imperial context into which Caecus' speech could have been placed, Cicero astonishingly resists what must have been a nearly instinctual reflex to map Roman cultural achievement onto Roman power. Livius Andronicus and 240 are emphasized precisely because of Carthage's defeat in 241 (72–73). Why not align the debut of oratory – an art so associated in Cicero's eyes with political greatness – with Rome's debut on the Mediterranean scene? Instead Cicero aligns the emergence of poetry with a later stage of Rome's dominance in the Mediterranean after the First Punic War; the beginning of oratory is pushed forward well into the Second. Even in the dispute over whether to make Livius' hymn of 207 or his play of 240 the beginning of literature, the same pattern emerges: a significant event is associated with a specific piece of literature marking that event, just as Caecus' speech is a significant literary monument of the eventual expulsion of Pyrrhus.²⁵

²² *Brut.* 254 and Hor. *Ep.* 2.156–57. The topos of captive conquerors is not original to Cicero; cf. Aesch. *Ag.* 340: οὐ τῶν ἐλόντες αὐθις ἀνθαλοῖεν ἄν.

²³ See Feeney (2007), esp. 7–67, with bibliography. Humm (2005) 519 n.148 stresses the similarities of the two both chronologically and in the *artes civiles*. The syncrisis of Coriolanus/Themistocles is discussed in Chapter 4.

²⁴ Cf. *CAH*² VIII: 83: The defeat of Pyrrhus “put Rome on the map for the Greek world. Ptolemy II Philadelphus was sufficiently impressed to choose this time to send presents to the Senate and to form an informal friendship; the Romans returned the diplomatic gesture.” Cf. Cass. Dio 10.41.1 and Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 20.14.1 with *CAH*² VII.2: 456–85. Consider the similar embassy sent to Rome in 239 to mark the victory over the Carthaginians, which also led to Livius' first Latin play at the *ludi Romani* of 240.

²⁵ Feeney (2007) 38 discusses how ancient scholars (Apollodorus, Eratosthenes, Gellius, Trogus) used Pyrrhus' expulsion to mark Rome's emergence and to synchronize Greece and Rome. On the reading of Humm (2009) Caecus' speech also reflects a newly formed sense of Roman-Italian identity.

It is worth remembering as well that Rome's defeat of Pyrrhus was a victory over Greeks, whereas in the Punic War Rome defeated Carthaginians (even if control of Greek Sicily was in play), and the Carthaginians, though perhaps underestimated in the field of letters, were hardly potential rivals in the cultural domains of eloquence and poetry. Pyrrhus offered a conceptual advantage that Hannibal could not, since Pyrrhus represented the legacy of Alexander and the height of Greek imperialism, which was also a legacy of lost freedom. Cicero could have presented the Roman victory over Pyrrhus as an assertion of Roman *libertas*, both "freedom" and "frankness," contrasted with Greece's succumbing to the Macedonian kings. Given the Caesarian context of the *Brutus*, with its constant anxiety over the silencing of eloquence, so topical a reference must have been tantalizing.

The embassy of Cineas to Rome, which was the occasion for Caecus' speech, presents yet another scenario thoroughly apt for rhetorical and conceptual embellishment. The orator and quasi-philosopher Cineas represented Pyrrhus in the embassy. This pupil of Demosthenes was thought by many to reflect the master's greatness "as a statue does" (οἶον ἐν εἰκότι), says Plutarch (although Cicero ignores Cineas in the *Brutus*). He exemplified the greater power of rhetoric over military command, an idea dear to Cicero in the current crisis (255–57): "Pyrrhus, you see, would say that more cities had been won for him by the words of Cineas than by his own weapons" (ὁ γοῦν Πύρρος ἔλεγε πλείονας πόλεις ὑπὸ Κινέου τοῖς λόγοις ἢ τοῖς ὄπλοις ὑφ' ἑαυτοῦ προσῆχθαι, Plut. *Pyrrh.* 14.2). Cineas also represented the prospect of cultural translation and transfer that nicely complements the parallels represented by Demetrius of Phalerum (discussed above). He was Demosthenes' greatest student, and his words link directly back to the Greek master. He embodies *translatio eloquentiae* between two empires: Greek eloquence literally came to Rome.²⁶

Synchrony and historical figureheads were hardly Cicero's only concern, however, and inclusion of Caecus would require some justification that his oratory could earn him the title *orator*.²⁷ Cicero at first feigns a lack of evidence with which to judge Caecus, shrouding him amidst a cloud of political greats who are nothing more than names and achievements from

²⁶ Cineas and Pyrrhus: *Fam.* 9.25.1 (SB 114), *Sen.* 43.1, *Tusc.* 1.59.

²⁷ Welsh (2011) argues that 240 reflects Cicero's desire to have literature begin in times of peace. Cicero, then, may have excluded Caecus to avoid having oratory/literature begin in wartime. However, these two reasons are not mutually exclusive: Cicero's choice of Livius Andronicus' play both created a peacetime beginning for literature and still allowed Cicero to exclude Caecus. 240 offered more than one advantage.

the past: “we can suppose that Appius Claudius was well-spoken since he pulled back the senate from the brink of peace with Pyrrhus” (*possumus Appium Claudium suspicari disertum, quia senatum iamiam inclinatum a Pyrrhi pace revocaverit*, 55). The criterion for exclusion is that Caecus was *disertus* (“fluent”) but not *eloquens* (“eloquent”); the latter judgment would qualify him to be included in Cicero’s canon. This initial statement is part and parcel of Cicero’s rather deceptive treatment, since language such as *possumus suspicari* recognizes the memory of his deeds (persuasion of the senate) even as it suggests a total absence of his words (the speech). Cicero further minimizes Caecus by burying his name in a litany of quasi-mythical statesmen from the sixth to the third centuries (53–57). Yet we later learn of the renown of Caecus’ speech when Cicero ostentatiously excludes Caecus in the discussion of Marcus Cornelius Cethegus and Cato the Elder:

In fact, I know no one more ancient [than Cato] whose writings I’d think need citing, unless someone happens to take pleasure in the speech I mentioned about Pyrrhus by Appius Caecus or the numerous funeral laudations.

nec vero habeo quemquam antiquiorem, cuius quidem scripta proferenda putem, nisi quem Appi Caeci oratio haec ipsa de Pyrrho et nonnullae mortuorum laudationes forte delectant. (61).

Cicero’s judgments and the criteria he initially uses to exclude Caecus seem plausible enough for the account he presents. Yet his logic becomes increasingly suspect as the dialogue progresses, and indeed the most compelling reasons to include Caecus come from the inclusive criteria that Cicero sets forth in the *Brutus* itself. Building on Aristotle and in consonance with Greek critics, Cicero noted that nothing is both discovered and perfected at a single stroke (*nihil est enim simul et inventum et perfectum*, 71).²⁸ And while he scorns Livius Andronicus’ *Odyssia* and claims that his plays are not worth a second read (*non satis dignae quae iterum legantur*, 71), Livian drama still inaugurates Latin poetry. Aesthetic objections, for poetry at least, are insufficient in determining who begins a tradition. Elsewhere the catalogue of orators contains as many figures as possible, even those Cicero deems undeserving. Over-inclusiveness is a leitmotif of the work, tied to claims about the difficulty of the *ars*.²⁹ Cicero elsewhere

²⁸ Cf. Arist. *Poet.* 1449a7–15, Cic. *de Orat.* 1.13, and (later) Dion. Hal. *Din.* 1.

²⁹ On over-inclusiveness see, e.g., 137, 176, 181, 244, 269–70, 299. On the difficulty of the *ars*: *rem unam esse omnium difficillimam* (25); cf. e.g. 137, 199.

labors to include and to praise speakers who might be thought old-fashioned. Forced to refute charges of irony or poor judgment for including Cato and Crassus, he responds that both speakers must be seen in the contexts of their accomplishments. The willingness to assess works in light of their own times left open the possibility of arguing, as he often does for others, that Caecus' speech was eloquent *ut illis temporibus* ("relative to the times"), according him a place while registering misgivings.³⁰

At the same time, Cicero's logic for the inclusion of Cethegus has two somewhat unexpected consequences. On the one hand, he sheds light on the methodology of his literary history, implicitly outlining how the literary historian should operate and the guidelines and limitations in crafting his account. On the other, his reasons for beginning with Cethegus turn out to be equally valid reasons for beginning with Caecus:

But record exists that Marcus Cornelius Cethegus was the first man memorialized as eloquent and also judged to be so; the authority for his eloquence – and an ideal one in my opinion – is Quintus Ennius, in particular because he both heard Cethegus in person and writes about him posthumously; consequently, there's no suspicion that he lied on account of partisanship. Here's what's in Ennius' ninth book, I think, of the *Annales*:

"Joined to Tuditanus as colleague is *orator* Marcus
Cornelius Cethegus of agreeable speech,
son of Marcus."

He both calls him *orator* and confers agreeable speech on him.

quem vero exstet et de quo sit memoriae proditum eloquentem fuisse et ita esse habitum, primus est M. Cornelius Cethegus, cuius eloquentiae est auctor et idoneus quidem mea sententia Q. Ennius, praesertim cum et ipse eum audiverit et scribat de mortuo; ex quo nulla suspicio est amicitiae causa esse mentitum. est igitur sic apud illum in nono ut opinor annali:

'additur orator Cornelius suaviloquenti
ore Cethegus Marcus Tuditano conlega
Marci filius':

et oratorem appellat et suaviloquentiam tribuit. (57–58)

Placement of Cethegus at the head of the list comes with reflections on his memorialization. He is both eloquent and has been judged so (by Ennius).

³⁰ Pace Suerbaum (2002), who assumes that Cicero rejects Caecus' speech as spurious (62 confirms its existence but rejects its aesthetic). Humm (2005) 65–71 defends its authenticity (at least in the eyes of second- and first-century BCE audiences) and considers its afterlife.

Cicero implies that the memory of an orator requires that someone document that memory fairly, which is an uncontroversial statement on the face of it. Yet Cicero also takes Ennius' assertion as proof of Cethegus' status and ignores the fact that, while memory of Cethegus' oratory persisted, his speeches did not: "the passage of time would have condemned him to be forgotten, like perhaps many others, without Ennius' singular testimony to his ability" (*id ipsum nisi unius esset Enni testimonio cognitum, hunc vetustas, ut alios fortasse multos, oblivione obruisset*, 60).³¹ The interest is less in whether one could actually determine that Cethegus was eloquent – how could Cicero judge in the absence of concrete evidence? – but in the fact that Ennius had already made such an assertion. Here Cicero appeals to autopsy as a source of authoritative statement (though Ennius, not Cicero, bears witness).

The citation of Ennius also evokes the historiographical topos *sine ira et studio* ("without animosity or sympathy"), which validates a judgment or account by noting an author's lack of immediate bias for the dead.³² An appeal to disinterested judgment underlay the discussion of older orators: "But I don't think I've ever read that these men were regarded as orators or that there was then any reward at all for eloquence: I am led simply by conjecture to infer it" (*sed eos oratores habitos esse aut omnino tum ullum eloquentiae praemium fuisse nihil sane mihi legisse videor: tantummodo coniectura ducor ad suspicandum*, 56). Cicero is not merely taking a stab at retrodiction; this earlier reluctance makes him seem as if he diligently meets a duty to scrupulousness. The appeal to historiographical norms contributes to the perception of Cicero's impartiality in his history of oratory, which will become especially important later in the dialogue when he takes his cue from Ennius in reliably documenting orators of a later age. With Ennius as his model, Cicero reviews at length the now-dead orators of the late republic whom he once heard. When Cicero refuses to speak of living orators, it is in light of the earlier discussion of Ennius that such forbearance becomes the mark of impartiality and redounds to his credit.³³

Once again comparison with Cicero's view of poetry is instructive, since in that case documented approval by an older authority, just like aesthetic

³¹ At 61 (quoted and discussed above) Cicero says that no speech earlier than Cato exists, other than the funeral *laudationes* and the speech of Appius Claudius Caecus.

³² Luce (1989) is germane on the topic. Cf. Piras (2012), Elliott (2013) 54–57, 156–61, 382–84 on this passage.

³³ It would be more accurate to say that Cicero takes his cue from the version of Ennius he has managed to construct – see below on Cicero's manipulation of Ennius.

quality generally, matters little in establishing the beginning of a tradition. When disparaging Livius Andronicus' lackluster poetry (71, quoted above), Cicero approvingly cites Ennius' self-serving claim to be the first poet of significance, a claim that seems to exclude Livius from Ennius' canon. Cicero shows us that Livius fails to meet both his criteria: he was neither a good poet (Cicero) nor was he held to be one by a past authority (Ennius). Despite failure on both scores, Livius still inaugurates Latin literature. The criteria to begin one literary tradition (oratory) are dismantled in the case of another (poetry).

There are other clear indications that Cicero's history is hardly as artless as he would have us believe. Despite Ennius' compliment, *suaviloquens*, Cicero is heavy-handed in pressing the evidence for Cethegus: he probably manipulates the semantic breadth of the term *orator* to make a case for Cethegus' inclusion into the history of great speakers.³⁴ And even the term *suaviloquens* involves some sleight of hand, as Cicero introduces the passage by stating that Ennius had judged Cethegus to be *eloquens*.³⁵ This is, at best, stretching the truth, since Ennius nowhere uses the words *eloquens* or *eloquentia*. Cicero seems to suggest that Ennius' term, *suaviloquens*, is a compound of *suavis* and *eloquens* (rather than *suavis* and *loquens*).³⁶ Cicero's coinage of the term *suaviloquentia* only works to underscore the connection, given the formal likeness to what was (in Cicero's day) a well-worn term, *eloquentia* ("eloquence"). All this verbal

³⁴ In early and poetic usage *orator* typically meant "envoy" or "ambassador" as much as "(great) speaker." At 55 Cicero clearly uses *orator* in the older sense when speaking of C. Fabricius' mission as envoy to Pyrrhus (*ad Pyrrhum de captivis recuperandis missus orator*). Douglas (1966a) and Skutsch (1985) take the usage here to mean "orator," but Cicero trades on the ambiguities; see Var. L. 7.41, Elliott (2013) 160 n.74. What Cicero cites from Ennius about Cethegus does emphasize his speaking abilities (which is still no guarantee that *orator* necessarily means "orator" in the strong sense that Cicero seems to require in other cases). Sander Goldberg *per litteras* suggests another example: Ennius' *spernitur orator bonus, horridus miles amator* (Enn. Ann. fr. 249 Skutsch) probably refers to a context of diplomacy. Cicero takes *orator* at *Mur.* 30 to mean "orator" because that meaning suits his context while disregarding the initial Ennian context.

³⁵ Nor is *suavis* a cardinal virtue in the *Brutus* when contrasted with *gravis*. See Cic. *Cat.* 16 and below on Appius' speech (*gravissime*). See Cic. *N.D.* 1.60, Nepos *Att.* 18.5 on *suavitas* as characteristic of poetry. Ennius also used alliteration, assonance, and a *figura etymologica* (*orator Cornelius / ore Cethegus*) to adorn the depiction of Cethegus' eloquence (not unlike Cicero's frequent praise of others' language to offer self-praise); Piras (2012) 50.

³⁶ The terms *suaviloquens/-ntia* are not connected to *eloquens/-ntia* by Roman etymologists. *Eloquentia* is connected to full (rather than sweet or pleasing) speech. See Maltby (1991) 203: "eloquens, -ntis. Var. L. 6.57: hinc (sc. a loquendo) eloquens qui copiose loquitur. Isid. *Orig.* 10.81: eloquens, profusus eloquio."

magic stands in stark contrast to his lapidary claim that Caecus could be assumed to be merely *disertus* (“fluent,” “well-spoken”).³⁷

Further arguments supporting Caecus’ inclusion emerge. Cethegus (or any early orator) could be criticized as Cato will be later on: “a (great) man . . . but an orator?” (*virum . . . sed oratorem?*, 293). Cicero defends Cato in terms that also support according Caecus a place in his canon:

And I know full well that I’m spending time recalling men who neither were thought to be nor were orators, and that I’m omitting some ancients who merit commemoration or praise. But this is from lack of knowledge about an earlier age. What then can be written concerning men about whom no records speak, neither others’ or their own?

Atque ego praeclare intellego me in eorum commemoratione versari qui nec habiti sint oratores neque fuerint, praeteririque a me aliquot ex veteribus commemoratione aut laude dignos. Sed hoc quidem ignoratione superioris aetatis;³⁸ quid enim est quod scribi possit de eis, de quibus nulla monumenta loquuntur nec aliorum nec ipsorum? (181)

The pair of verbs, *esse* and *habitu esse*, repeat the criteria used to include Cethegus (Ennius’ documentation), but the criteria cited to include someone in the historical record (commemoration and the existence of material) would logically dictate that Caecus must be included as well. Cicero is being visibly inconsistent. Caecus’ speech (or versions of it) existed alongside a tradition honoring his achievements.³⁹ Indeed, after his exile Cicero frequently turns to Caecus to attack his archenemy Clodius.⁴⁰ And Caecus, like Cethegus, had been memorialized by Ennius, as Cicero knew. In *de Senectute*, Cicero cites Ennius’ praise of Caecus and goes on to note the renown of his speech, a speech that Cicero may well have pressed into service years earlier in the *pro Caelio*.⁴¹

³⁷ At 55 (quoted above). Cicero goes on to state that Ennius called Cethegus the “marrow of Persuasion” (*Suadai medulla*, 59), which certainly suggests Ennius’ approbation. Cicero’s citation is convoluted and examined at length below.

³⁸ I follow Mommsen, Douglas, and Kaster in moving *superioris aetatis* after *ignoratione* from its transmitted position before *quod* (which requires extreme hyperbaton with *eis*).

³⁹ Suerbaum (1996/1997) rightly questions Cicero’s choice to begin with Cethegus but wrongly assumes that Cicero excluded Caecus’ speech on the grounds of inauthenticity; contra, Humm (2005) 65. Suerbaum claims that Cicero’s choices cannot be explained; the following section offers an explanation.

⁴⁰ Cic. *Dom.* 105, *Har.* 38, *Cael.* 33–35, *Mil.* 17. For other notices: *Div. Caec.* 54, *Phil.* 1.11, *Tusc.* 5.112, *Sen.* 37.

⁴¹ Osgood (2005); on Ennius see Skutsch (1985) 360–62, J. G. F. Powell (1988) 136–39, 278, Elliott (2013) 161–63. Cf. Cic. *Phil.* 1.11, V. Max. 8.13.5, Quint. *Inst.* 2.16.7. Piras (2017) 64 connects the summoning of Caecus in the *pro Caelio* to mention of the technique at 322.

The old age of Appius Claudius was accompanied no less by blindness; nevertheless, when the senate's opinion tended toward making a peace treaty with Pyrrhus, he didn't shy away from saying those famous words that Ennius expressed well in verse:

“Where have your minds wandered off to
in madness, which before this used to stand firm?”

and so forth with great authority. I'm sure you know the poem, and anyway Appius' own speech survives.

ad Appi Claudii senectutem accedebat etiam, ut caecus esset; tamen is cum sententia senatus inclinaret ad pacem cum Pyrrho foedusque faciendum, non dubitavit dicere illa quae versibus persecutus est Ennius:

quo vobis mentes, rectae quae stare solebant
antehac, dementes sese flexere viai . . . ?

ceteraque gravissime; notum enim vobis carmen est, et tamen ipsius Appi exstat oratio. (Cic. *Sen.* 16; Enn. *Ann.* fr. 199–200 Skutsch)

In the *Brutus*, by contrast, the very kind of evidence used to bring Cethegus into oratorical history is suppressed in the case of Caecus. Cicero presents Ennius as a transparent witness to oratory's beginnings, but then manipulates his version of Ennius to produce the account he needs.⁴²

Caecus' literary afterlife is remarkably persistent and only considerable misdirection and special pleading by Cicero create the illusion that Caecus could be gotten rid of. Caecus is the zombie that Cicero can't quite seem to put away. This is not to say that valid reasons for including Cethegus could not be found. He was born about a century after Caecus, around 240 BCE, and his career, mostly during the Second Punic War, is impressive even if it is overshadowed by greater figures such as Quintus Fabius Maximus or Quintus Caecilius Metellus. Cethegus was curule aedile (213), praetor (211), censor (209), and consul (204). He was also a pontifex, and as censor had a historic quarrel with his colleague, Publius Sempronius Tuditanus, that undermined traditional criteria for the office of *Princeps Senatus*. As proconsul of upper Italy in 203 he helped the praetor, Publius Quintilius Varus, defeat Mago Barca and force him out of Italy.⁴³

⁴² Elliott (2013) 159 captures Cicero's distortions: “he turns to the work that suggests the information that he would like and treats it as if it were of the type he requires.” See also Gildenhard (2003) 98–100.

⁴³ *MRR* 1: 263, 266, 267 n.4, 273, 277 n.3, 285, 305, 306. Livy: 25.2.2 (pontifex), 25.2.6 (curule aedile), 25.41.12 (praetor), 27.11.7 (censor), 30.18.1–15 (proconsul, defeat of Mago).

As a literary figure Cethegus receives some notice beyond the *Brutus*. Cicero mentions him again in *de Senectute*, again along with Ennius' memorable tag *Suadai medulla* (*Sen.* 50). Cato there remarks that he even saw Cethegus training his oratory into old age (*quanto studio exerceri in dicendo videbamus etiam senem*). Yet Cicero's motivations for citing Cethegus seem to extend little beyond the probative value of the *exemplum* for Cato's claim that there's a history of eminent men speaking in old age. No speech by Cethegus is cited, whereas Quintus Fabius Maximus at *Sen.* 10, for example, is at least said to have spoken concerning the *lex Cincia* (in 204, a year before his death). Basic questions abide: What did Cethegus speak about and what made him a great speaker? Did Cicero even know much about his oratory beyond Ennius' few words? Cethegus left no oratorical legacy beyond what Cicero has reconstructed out of self-interest, and by the time we reach Horace and Quintilian, he is little more than a quaint example of old-time speech.⁴⁴

This is a remarkably poor foundation on which to build a literary history. One might, however, look to material production to explain Cicero's choice of Cethegus over Caecus. Denis Feeney, drawing on Jörg Rüpke, has taken the terms of Cicero's narrative and reverse-engineered the technical conditions to support them, suggesting that Caecus doesn't become the beginning of literature because the promulgation of prose texts as literary monuments in the early third century did not catch on as a cultural trend and would not until Cato the Elder in the second century.⁴⁵ For this reason it is poetry in the mid-third century that begins literary history in Cicero's account.

The explanation, grounded in social and bibliographic history, is well attuned to the nascent publication of written media in third-century Rome. In Cicero's first-century Rome, however, third-century technical or material constraints need not have been his primary concern (nor is it clear how much he knew about Caecus' constraints). It was certainly possible to craft a narrative that ignored or discarded the realities of mid-republican textual dissemination. Again, whereas Caecus left behind a speech that was still widely available – and this despite the technical constraints on publication – Cethegus had at best a meager afterlife: we know of no speech circulated among his contemporaries, and Cicero never

⁴⁴ On his language: Hor. *Ars* 50; *Ep.* 2.2.117 (probably indebted to the *Brutus*; paired with Cato, but without indicating extant texts by Cethegus).

⁴⁵ Feeney (2016) 210–12; Rüpke (2012) 26: “what we see here is a break with tradition, but not a trend,” and 86: “Whatever the historicity of this text, it remains an isolated datum. Larger numbers of speeches were transmitted only later, from the time of Cato the Elder onward.”

claims to have read anything by him. Cethegus is at best a ghost to Caecus' zombie.

In summary, Cicero gives us ample reason to question his decision to begin oratorical history with Cethegus at the expense of Caecus. The rival possibility of Caecus, however, need not invalidate the choice on which Cicero ultimately settled. Beginning oratorical history with Caecus might be the better option without being more true in an absolute sense. In refusing to put Caecus at the head of oratorical history, Cicero reveals the extent to which the ascription of any art's beginning to a single individual is arbitrary, potentially subject to revision, and tailored to the local purposes of a given text. It is worth emphasizing that Cicero generally remains scrupulous with factual details – or at least contrives to give that appearance – even as he deftly manipulates the presentation of those details in line with the purpose of his narrative.⁴⁶ In light of the material at hand, Cicero faced essentially three choices for the beginnings of literature and the genre that inaugurated it: (1) ca. 280 vs. 240/207 (literature begins with oratory); (2) 207/204 (virtually simultaneous origins for poetry/oratory); (3) 240 vs. 204 (literature begins with poetry). One chief advantage of the third scheme, on which he settled, is that it validates another repeated assumption for which he never argues: oratory, because of its difficulty, develops later than the other arts.⁴⁷ Nothing, however, required a literary history to take this course, just as nothing requires us to take the claims about oratory's retardation at face value.⁴⁸

First Beginnings among the Greeks (26–51)

Cicero had prepared us for the choices he would make about the beginnings of literature and oratory at Rome. Before turning to Roman oratory he offered a survey of oratory in Greece, or at least what purports to be such a survey (26–51). It soon becomes evident, however, that this is

⁴⁶ Cicero's prejudices against the *laudatio funebris* obviated other possible beginnings: the *laudatio* of Quintus Caecilius Metellus (cos. 206) in 221 had the advantage of taking place outside of the context of war; see *ORF*⁴ no. 6, Kierdorf (1980) 10–21. One could also make a case for Quintus Fabius Maximus, *ORF*⁴ no. 3. He gave a *laudatio* in 213 (Kierdorf 1980 83–85) and spoke in support of the *lex Cincia* in 204 (Cic. *Sen.* 10). Cicero's dismissal of the *laudationes* obscures more of the literary-historical record than one might initially think.

⁴⁷ Roman biography does develop after oratory. Philosophy postdated other arts while oratory was adopted quickly, according to *Tusc.* 1.5: Cato is the first example of the orator influenced by learning; cf. Gruen (1992) 52–83 on Cato's hellenism in Cicero.

⁴⁸ Scholars have taken great interest in the peculiar fact that Rome even developed a vernacular tradition of national literature at all, much less one based on Greek models: see Habinek (1998) 15–68, Goldberg (2005), Feeney (2005, 2016).

hardly a historical synopsis. Structurally and thematically the synopsis of Greek oratory is unusual, but its idiosyncrasies shed light on the dialogue's methodological and organizational principles. Cicero's interest in two different aspects of oratorical history, that history itself and those who document it, explains the perplexing "double history" of the art in Greece. He first provides a synopsis of the chief practitioners (26–38) followed by a synopsis focusing on theorists and cataloguers (39–51).⁴⁹ The second section is less a chronology than a methodological justification of Cicero's literary history.⁵⁰

Despite the differences, several parallels of structure and presentation do emerge in the two accounts, and basic details reveal some sense of an attempt to craft the narratives in parallel to one another, like a diptych, in which both comparison and contrast contribute to the total effect. The two halves are of roughly equal length, with the second a bit longer.⁵¹ The first account contains 31 citations of 28 names, the second 38 citations of 28 names; of these, 9 figures appear in both.⁵² Structural repetitions reinforce the parallels. Ring-composition in the first half (Pericles at 27 and 38) recurs in the second (Homer at 40 and 50) and across both halves in the geographical emphasis on Athens.⁵³ Philosophers appear in both (Socrates, 31; Anaxagoras, 44). The list of *magistri* (30) balances a list of theoreticians (46–47), with Gorgias and Protagoras in both lists. Isocrates assumes a prominent place, first as an innovator (32) and then as an author-theorist whose career inversely parallels that of Lysias (48). Stylistic decline concludes each version: the first chronologically initiated by Demetrius of Phalerum and the second conceptually initiated by

⁴⁹ Compare Horace's double history for Roman literature in *Epistles* 2.1: 139–55 (native verses) and 156–81 (adaptation of Greeks).

⁵⁰ Douglas (1966a) *ad loc.* calls it "hesitant and digressive." Compare his general rejection of the two synopses in xliv–xlv. Douglas' insistence that Cicero write a chronology requires him to misunderstand the point of the catalogue and to reject it with severity. Cf. Douglas (1973) 103–4. Objections to the scheme also take aim at the repetitions, e.g. Pericles (29, 38, 44), Gorgias (30, 47), Lysias (35, 48), and Isocrates (32–33, 48). Rathofer (1986) 51–88 makes numerous valuable observations, especially about Cicero's chronological distortions, although his division of the two histories into a history of the *ars* and a history of non-artistic political actors is less convincing. Schöpsdau (1969) 113–34 assesses Cicero's freedom with several sources and the originality of his Greek history.

⁵¹ Each is thirteen chapters in modern editions (26–38, 39–51), although the second catalogue has a higher word count (-720 versus -840 words).

⁵² Atticus, Gorgias, Isocrates, Lysias, Pericles, Pisistratus, Protagoras, Themistocles, Thucydides. Lycurgus is in each but refers to different people (the Athenian orator and the early ruler).

⁵³ The parallel geography is further emphasized by the names cited: *Atticus* (the interlocutor) is the first example and *Attici* (the Athenians) are the last. Athens is, however, so prominent in each account that the appearance of ring-composition may be inevitable rather than intentional.

stylistic tendencies (the allegorical wanderings of *eloquentia*). Geography receives constant emphasis, as the first half intently focuses on Athens to the exclusion of other locales; Cicero signals this focus by citing Atticus before anyone else, proclaiming Athens as his city (*Athenae tuae*), and balancing the reference with the concluding allegory of *eloquentia* departing from Athens.

Similarly, conceptual parallels abound. A loose and simplistic scheme of development offers a handful of technical refinements (Isocrates and rhythm, 32; Pericles and *doctrina*, 44), a general sense of progress, and conclusions that schematically outline oratorical decline. The vocabulary of ages is prominent,⁵⁴ as are references to theory and technical aspects of the *ars*, via teachers (30),⁵⁵ theorists (46–47), and philosophers (31, 44). Two significant groupings emerge, first canonical orators (35–36) and then canonical theorists (46–47). Strong emphasis is placed on how to write about the past, including the use of other authors as sources for information and as a means by which to judge the style of those they document or as representatives of their age. Atticus and Thucydides are the central prose sources for constructing Greek literary history. They are the main Roman and Greek models of historical inquiry, though Aristotle has a moment too as a documenter of theorists, and the poets Eupolis and Homer are important witnesses of oratory. The similarities, differences, and general patterns of historical progress give the impression of a loosely organized whole, a generally coherent group of Greek practitioners and theorists who serve as forerunners for Cicero's own project. In the spirit of competitive emulation, Cicero seeks inspiration from his predecessors even as he seeks to outdo their modes of research.

Encapsulated in the dual histories is a model for how to write literary history, but one with a specific purpose: to calibrate the audience's expectations by offering miniature versions of what such histories could contain and the ideas they could explore. The Greek history draws attention to central ideas and patterns in order to underscore their relevance for the subsequent Roman version. While it might be easy to attribute too much significance to any single parallel, coincidence, or theme, synchrony and parallelism do much of the conceptual heavy lifting. Cicero also exploits the potential flexibility in the presentation of details to create histories that align with his own preferences and prejudices.

⁵⁴ E.g. *aetas*, 28, 29, 36 (×2), 39 (×2), 43, 45; *senes/adulescens*, 37 and 39.

⁵⁵ Cf. *de Orat.* 3.127–29 for the same group (along with Socrates).

The first account (26–38) contains a relatively straightforward catalogue of the major speakers of the Greek world and the sources of innovation, including prominent figures in the training and education of orators – essentially a discussion of oratory, its development, and the means by which to acquire fluency.⁵⁶ As is the case for early Roman history, the early Greek history names political greats who leave no trace of their oratory. For Pisistratus, Solon, and Clisthenes, Cicero must surmise on the basis of widespread belief (*opinio*, 27). We then move through central figures such as Themistocles and Pericles, before arriving at the instructors of rhetoric (*magistri dicendi*) and their most notable detractor, Socrates. The narrative then reaches a seminal stylistic innovator, Isocrates, who introduced innovations in the periodic sentence and prose rhythm and paved the way for Athens' golden age: Lysias, Demosthenes, and the likes of Hyperides and Aeschines. From this highpoint rhetoric descended to the less vigorous style of Demetrius of Phalerum, who went into battle “not as though from the soldier's tent, but as though from the shady retreats of the very learned Theophrastus” (*non ut e militari tabernaculo, sed ut e Theophrasti doctissimi hominis umbraculis*, 37). The modern division of the two catalogues into “orators” and “theorists” has rightly been questioned. Apart from the *magistri* of the first catalogue, the most prominent figure speaking against such a distinction is Demetrius of Phalerum, who wrote extensively on history and rhetoric (Diog. Laert. 5.80); yet in the first account Cicero reduces him to nothing more than an orator.

While the first history offers a veneer of neutrality and circumspection, it is guided by several crucial principles, some unstated, which become evident in Cicero's arrangement of the material. It is explicitly about Athens, as all the people mentioned are Athenian, except for the small number of foreigners who were nonetheless active in Athens as sophists (30). Atticus is highlighted in terms of both his nickname and his residence, and Thucydides becomes his Greek counterpart in many respects. Unquestionably important to the first panel is its intense Periclean emphasis. Pericles begins the catalogue of orators literally and canonically: he is the first Greek mentioned and begins Greek oratory. Ring-composition also underscores his importance: he concludes the panel, with Eupolis mentioned as the very last name, but because he documented Pericles'

⁵⁶ Cf. *de Orat.* 2.93–95. Douglas (1966a) xlv–xlv rightly rejects dividing the two catalogues into “speakers” and “theorists,” but his subsequent explanation is unsatisfactory, citing hasty or negligent composition as the cause of the separate accounts.

powerful oratory. He assumes the most important role in each half of the Greek digression (his only competition, really, would be Isocrates).

The account also offers a fairly simple scheme of development and then decline. Cicero documents Athenian intellectual life almost exclusively in connection to oratory's development. We get *magistri*, *philosophi*, and Isocrates, who crucially discovers prose rhythm and periodic structures. But Cicero organizes the material chronologically to suit his own ends. Isocrates discovered prose rhythm, although months later in *Orator* Cicero would credit Thrasyarchus with the discovery.⁵⁷ He notes Isocrates' innovations (32–34) and then places Lysias after Isocrates in the chronology (*tum fuit Lysias*, 35). Lysias was a slightly older contemporary of Isocrates, yet their reversed order in the narrative suggests that Lysias should have benefited from Isocrates' innovations. Placement of Lysias immediately next to Demosthenes only highlights his inadequacy: Demosthenes powerfully employed prose rhythm.⁵⁸ While the importance of this distortion is not immediately apparent, it will become all the more crucial in the subsequent debate over Atticism and Asianism. Cicero holds up Demosthenes as the model of the powerfully effective oratory against the smoother refined style of Lysias. This is an early shot across the bow in one of the work's central debates.

Further choices, emphases, or distortions enable Cicero to meaningfully craft the account, in particular to make Pericles the first orator of record. His questionable beginning of oratory at Greece anticipates his questionable beginning for Rome (with Cethegus, discussed above). A group of early figures (Solon, Pisistratus, Clisthenes) are recognized as probably having some facility, and reluctance in the face of missing evidence allows Cicero to seem circumspect and therefore reliable. He refers to Atticus' inclusion in the *Liber Annalis* of Themistocles. Although he allegedly possessed wisdom and eloquence, Cicero excludes him from the Greek history (28). Instead Pericles begins oratory because his writings are extant, along with those of Thucydides (27). The status of these writings has been variously disputed since antiquity; their mention is vague and tentative.⁵⁹ In the second history Pericles is credited with a significant innovation, that of having first applied *doctrina* to oratory (44). This results from his association with Anaxagoras, otherwise known more for natural

⁵⁷ *De Orat.* 3.173 also credits Isocrates. What prompted the change remains unclear.

⁵⁸ Rathofer (1986) 76.

⁵⁹ *Cic. de Orat.* 2.93 speaks of them as among the earliest available. *Quint. Inst.* 3.1.12 is far more skeptical of their value; *Plut. Per.* 8 of their existence at all.

philosophy than ethics or dialectic. How he benefited Pericles is unclear, given Cicero's privileging of moral philosophy and logic to help the orator best craft persuasive arguments. The idea that Anaxagoras provided Pericles with learning beyond mere physics appears to be taken from Plato's *Phaedrus* (269e–70a). Cicero may also have read of their connection in Isocrates' *Antidosis*, the justification of Isocrates' civic career, teaching, and works.⁶⁰

Related to the promotion of Pericles is the exclusion of Antiphon from the canon of Athenian orators. He only appears in the list of theorists (46–47); most other accounts cite him as the beginning of artistic oratory at Greece. His writings are still extant, and he receives considerable praise from Thucydides, who classified Antiphon's defense of himself as the best delivered up to his own day.⁶¹ The choice brought with it several advantages. Excluding Antiphon (ca. 480–411) helps to “modernize” the Athenian canon, which is largely populated by figures active in the fourth century. The later and denser canon of Athenian orators supports Cicero's narrative of improvement that then begins to decline with Demetrius of Phalerum. Pericles, somewhat earlier, stands out as the premier oratorical figure of his own generation. Thus an adjustment as minor as excluding one early canonical figure reshapes the center of the canon and allows a lesser-known figure (Pericles) to obtain a new importance. The exclusion of Antiphon reveals yet another virtue of the double history for Greece: surely Antiphon must appear somewhere, and relegating him to the second catalogue makes possible his absence from the canon of Athenian orators.

Although it loosely follows chronology, the second catalogue (39–51) contains individuals and ideas of programmatic import. It offers indirect reflections on writing literary history and the structure of the *Brutus*. Similarities and differences between the two renditions make clear the different emphases. We begin with what seems like a repetition, Solon and Pisistratus (39), but the emphasis turns to explaining the lateness of oratory by comparative chronology across cultures. The Greek politicians are set against Rome's sixth king, Servius Tullius, allowing for metaphors on the relative old-age and youth (*senes*, *adulescentes*) in the lifetime (*aetas*) of Greek and Roman worlds.⁶² Rome's late development will offer an

⁶⁰ Isoc. *Antid.* 235, also listing Damon; Plut. *Per.* 4.4 on Anaxagoras' influence.

⁶¹ Thuc. 8.68. Gagarin (2002) surveys Antiphon's speeches and career.

⁶² *Aetas* is used throughout to describe the ages of individuals, generations, and cultures, but this is the only point at which the *Brutus* uses *senex* and *adulescens* with metaphorical application to Greek or Roman oratory. The terms were first used together for the actual difference in age between orators of the “classical” period at Athens and Demetrius, who was a young man in their old age (37).

entrée into the early documentation of oratory in Greece by Homer. Homer was, significantly, a contemporary of the “first” Lycurgus, thereby connecting significant rulers with the documenters of oratory, a scheme we will later encounter with finer granularity in the Roman world. Homer stands as the first poetic witness to oratory, with a reference to the fact that Nestor and Odysseus possessed force and sweetness (40).⁶³ Mention of Homer and the Homeric heroes in some sense undermines the claim that oratory follows other arts in time and that it is incompatible with kings and war, but it most importantly sets out the idea that poets document oratory. As an epic poet Homer is a kind of “first Ennius,” establishing a pattern that will make sense fully once Cicero comes to the early oratory of Cethegus as documented by Ennius.

Themistocles and Coriolanus provide an opportunity for more elaborate syncrisis, including an interest in the limits and distorting potential of dealing with history (41–43).⁶⁴ The carefully planned digression, with Atticus’ strained acquiescence, highlights the potential of cross-cultural comparison throughout the *Brutus*. The next stage only elliptically suggests a relevance to method, as the introduction of Pericles emphasizes his reliance on the philosophy of Anaxagoras for the improvement of oratory. It resembles an entry from the earlier catalogue, and even refers back to his inclusion in it: *de quo ante dixi* (44). Earlier, however, Pericles was mentioned in two contexts, as the first figure of considerable fame whose writings are extant (28–29), and again at the conclusion as a short addendum to the judgment of Demetrius, who failed to attain what Eupolis praised in Pericles: leaving a sting in the audience’s mind (*aculeos etiam relinqueret in animis*, 38).⁶⁵ Discussion of Pericles in the later catalogue emphasizes his application of learning to oratory (*doctrina*) and refers back to Eupolis’ documentation of him. The later pairing of Pericles with Eupolis will be essential to Cicero’s review of literary historians (59, discussed below), and special mention of him anticipates the prominence he ultimately obtains.

Subsequent notice of the *aetas prima* of oratory at Athens stresses, though in abstract terms, the historical determinants of eloquence, connecting the flourishing of oratory with tranquil statehood. The universal claim of the passage is difficult to apply without reservation to circumstances at Rome, and it makes most sense in reference to the Golden Age

⁶³ *Il.* 1.248–49 on Nestor and *Il.* 3.221–22 on Odysseus.

⁶⁴ The passage is discussed in Chapter 4.

⁶⁵ Although it may be simply coincidence, assonance seems to highlight the contrast between Demetrius and Pericles (*tabernaculis* and *umbraculis* in 38 versus *aculeos* in 39).

of peace between the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars, which roughly coincides with Pericles' adult life. The relationship between state order and judicial procedure effects a transition into the subsequent group of theorist-practitioners (46–48), all of whom fall under the documentation of Aristotle's *Συνοργωγὴ Τεχνῶν*. Significant here is that Cicero provides details not from a rhetorical treatise but from a historical survey of rhetorical theory. In some sense Aristotle's treatise was one significant forerunner for the *Brutus*, and the selection from Aristotle's catalogue importantly includes individuals who significantly altered oratory through doctrinal reflections or teaching, including those who, like Cicero, were also active as pleaders. The most telling indication that we do not have here a second chronology of orators is the absence of Demosthenes, who will remain for Cicero the pinnacle of Greek achievement and the stylistic countermodel to the restrained Atticism of Lysias.

Lysias will make a second appearance in the catalogue but in order to express a larger set of problems, namely that experts in oratory and its theory respond to one another and that this determines in many ways their interest in an art, whether as practitioner or theorist. Lysias first focused on theory but then, in response to Theodorus' abilities in that area, began to write speeches for others instead. His career parallels in reverse that of Isocrates, who first wrote speeches before dedicating himself to theoretical questions. The parallels, like those of Coriolanus and Themistocles but without the cross-cultural element, emphasize the ways in which two figures can be read against one another. Cicero, unless he follows material from Aristotle, goes to great lengths to liken Isocrates and Lysias to each other.⁶⁶

The concluding panel (49–51) transforms a chronologically vague explanation into a geographical allegory on the wanderings of *eloquentia*. The conceptual travelogue takes us from Athens to Asia and then back to Rhodes, with an implicit set of values attached to each of the regions. The description foreshadows a range of central arguments in the work: the ultimate passing of eloquence from the Greek to the Roman world, the polemics concerning Atticism and Asianism, the significance of the Aristotelian golden mean as category of explanation, and lastly Cicero's mapping of the narrative of eloquence onto the details of his own life.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Douglas (1966a) places the blame on Aristotle, but much of the material and the explanation seems to come from Cicero as well, including the detail outlawing misuse of court procedures, which is distinctly Roman. At the very least, the depiction of Isocrates hardly matches his biography.

⁶⁷ Dugan (2005) 214 and 226. Stroup (2010) 237–68 on the personification of *eloquentia*. Chapter 1 discusses the allegory in relation to the Ciceropaideia.

The second catalogue is a farrago of ideas and images in comparison to the simpler chronology of the first. We have two sections of comparable length but considerably different character. These are entirely different ways to approach the history of oratory at Greece, the first a relatively transparent and seemingly artless rendering of names and developments, the second a series of repetitions and insertions that outline key methodological principles for literary history. The crucial difference lies not in whom the catalogues introduce, but in the distinct conceptual frameworks produced by each account. Cicero offers two versions of Greek development, each of which sheds light on his aims and instructs the reader in the principles of his method.

An understanding of these two narratives will also help to clarify apparent problems in the teleology of orators and in the principles underlying how Cicero structures oratorical history in the *Brutus*. Themes, ideas, and strategies of representation from the two Greek histories will resurface in various ways throughout the longer Roman version. Pericles will continue to play an outsize role at the beginning of Roman oratory (59) and in connection with Phidias' famed statue of Athena/Minerva on the Acropolis in Periclean Athens (257). Poets crucially document oratory: Ennius first documents Cethegus just as Eupolis documents Pericles. Synchrisis across cultures or of individuals and groups within Roman oratorical history is among the most important – perhaps the single most important – conceptual technique for evaluating the past and creating a canon of orators. With this habit comes the license to find and take advantage of actual or possible parallels to create a more persuasive narrative. The developmental scheme, with individual figures making identifiable contributions, will be the mainstay of oratorical evolution up to Cicero's day. Politics and oratory will be connected to one another over and again. Geography, especially the role of Athens and Atticism, will become a central concern, centered on the question of how best to appropriate Greek intellectual culture in a Roman context.

The second catalogue, when juxtaposed with the first, suggests that the writing of literary history, at least in Cicero's version, will necessarily be shaped by the metaphors, habits of mind, and cultural reflexes of the documenter. Far from denying these factors, as the modern literary historian might wish to do, Cicero signals their importance early on. Yet the two styles of history are simultaneously employed throughout the work, often in a dialectical relationship. Presentation of both in succession at the outset does not mean that Cicero prefers one of the two perspectives on history, but that he will blend them into one another in the subsequent

Roman account. And it is precisely this need to move back and forth between the basic chronological account and the conceptual digressions that makes the dialogue so conceptually and intellectually powerful. Throughout the text Cicero indirectly reflects on the values underlying his construction of literary history.

Because Cicero's catalogue of orators is teleological, we have often been lulled into reading its conceptual development as a forward-driven narrative as well. Yet this is to confuse the work's stated aim to document rhetorical history with Cicero's further aim to document how such a history is possible and why it is meaningful. Assembling the different sections into a coherent picture illuminates Cicero's own conception of literary history. Although there are necessary distortions in the literary history, it does not follow that we therefore must reject Cicero's theoretical framework. Doubtless, modern accounts of Roman literature should strive to resist Cicero's tendentiousness.⁶⁸ Yet resistance alone cannot explain why Cicero chose to be tendentious in the way he has. By demonstrating the arbitrary nature of literary history, and by visibly distorting the material, he prompts us to consider closely his criteria and motivations: why did Cicero choose these beginnings for Greek and Roman oratory, and are they connected?

Poetic Historians

A determining factor in Cicero's literary history is the repeated assertion of oratory's late development. Acceptance of Appius Claudius Caecus' speech (ca. 280 BCE) into the canon would, of course, overthrow the sequence of poetry (240 BCE) and oratory (ca. 204 BCE) at Rome (discussed above). This account requires that poetry reach Rome earlier than oratory and develop long enough for Ennius to supplant his uncouth forerunners such as Naevius and Livius Andronicus in order then to bear first witness to the rise of Roman oratory.⁶⁹ That construction allows Cicero to reflect on his literary-historical predecessors and to insert himself programmatically into a recognizable lineage of literary historians. To create his own version of literary history, Cicero invents a genealogy of significant forerunners that goes back to Eupolis in Greece (59, quoted below). There are three main

⁶⁸ As Goldberg (1995) 3–12 and Hinds (1998) 52–98 remind us. Cicero's prejudices seem still to hold sway, for example, over the terms of the revised first volume of the *Handbuch der lateinischen Literatur*, with its serene embrace of the label "archaic" (Suerbaum 2002); see Feeney (2005).

⁶⁹ Citroni (2001) on Livius–Naevius–Ennius and claims to firstness.

stages in the lineage of literary historians and orators: Eupolis documents Pericles in Greece; Ennius follows by documenting Cethegus at Rome. Cicero and all other Romans are third. Along the way Cicero ingeniously works across both culture and genre: the citation of poetic authorities is accompanied by the repositioning of literary history from Greece to Rome and from poetry to prose.⁷⁰

Cicero had already likened his own project to the transfer of authority among successive poets, taking his cue from rival poets, presumably Sophocles and Euripides, to honor Hortensius: “if tradition has it that renowned poets had grieved the loss of their peers, how should I in fact react to the death of the man with whom it was more glorious to compete than to be utterly without a rival?” (*si . . . memoriae proditum est poetas nobilis poetarum aequalium morte doluisse, quo tandem animo eius interitum ferre debui, cum quo certare erat gloriosius quam omnino adversarium non habere?*, 3).⁷¹ Cicero will return to the poetic tradition in order to align himself with a legacy of literary historians. Eupolis appears at the end of the first catalogue of Greek speakers (38) and reappears in conjunction with Ennius:

But surely the greatest praise is the following:

“He was called once by those people,
Who lived and passed their years then,
Select flower of the people.”

Well said, since talent distinguishes a man just as eloquence illuminates his genius; because he excelled marvelously in eloquence, men at that time pronounced him “flower of the people” and

“Of Suasion . . . the marrow.”

The thing the Greeks call *Peitho* and whose creator is the orator, Ennius called *Suada* and he means that Cethegus was the very marrow of it, such that he claims that our orator was the marrow of that goddess who, in what Eupolis wrote, had sat upon the lips of Pericles.

sed est ea laus eloquentiae certe maxuma:

‘is dictust ollis popularibus olim,
qui tum vivebant homines atque aevum agitabant,
flos delibatus populi.’

⁷⁰ The scheme is anticipated as well by Homer’s “documentation” of Nestor and Odysseus (40). Cf. Hinds (1998) 82: “it is clear that his narratives are implicitly teleological and appropriative, tending towards a characterization and defence of his own philhellenism.”

⁷¹ Cf. *Vit. Eurip.* 10. The background gives further point to the metaphor of the forum as the theater of Hortensius’ talent: *theatrum illius ingeni* (6).

probe vero; ut enim hominis decus ingenium, sic ingeni ipsius lumen est eloquentia, qua virum excellentem praeclare tum illi homines florem populi esse dixerunt:

‘Suadai medulla’.

Πειθῶ quam vocant Graeci, cuius effector est orator, hanc Suadam appellavit Ennius; eius autem Cethegum medullam fuisse vult, ut, quam deam in Pericli labris scripsit Eupolis sessitavisse, huius hic medullam nostrum oratorem fuisse dixerit. (58–59)

This seems to punctiliously relay Ennius’ depiction of Cethegus, while actually obscuring Ennius’ words in the guise of paraphrase and philological elucidation. Cicero seamlessly integrates the Ennian passage into his own discussion, even imitating and naturalizing Ennius’ artificiality by turning the adjective *suaviloquens* into the noun *suaviloquentia* (discussed above).⁷² He translates ἐπεκάρθιζεν in Eupolis with *sessitavisse*. And the phrase *effector Suadai* adds a further twist by recalling the πειθοῦς δημιουργός, a nod to Plato as a documenter of rhetoric.⁷³

The alignment with Plato is bemusing, given Aristotle’s importance as a dialogue model, the numerous references to his texts, and the Peripatetic teleology of artistic progress. Allusion to the *Gorgias* here, however, would help to explain the initial symbolic nod to Plato in a work so Aristotelian on the face of it: “we sat in a meadow next to a statue of Plato” (*in pratulo propter Platonis statuam consedimus*, 24), a detail reminiscent of the *Phaedrus* and Cicero’s dialogues of the 50s.⁷⁴ The citation of Ennius shows an intense awareness of Greek forerunners across genres, and the Platonic touch is highly programmatic.

A Roman poet casting around for Latin equivalents to Πειθῶ may well have considered *Suada*. Yet it is entirely Cicero’s suggestion – made without Ennian evidence – that Ennius translated and transposed Eupolis’ description of Pericles. It would be all too easy to accept this assertion, but having the goddess *Peitho* sitting on Pericles’ lips is hardly

⁷² Douglas (1966a) 48, Elliott (2013) 56–57 (with n.130) and 160.

⁷³ Quintilian confirms the connection by “reading” Plato’s *Gorgias* onto the *Brutus* at *Inst.* 2.15.4. He casts aspersions on Ennius’ *Suadai medulla*.

⁷⁴ Kytzler (1970) 280 and 286–88 suggests a connection to the *Phaedrus* here and throughout by emphasizing the triad *ars, natura, ingenium*. However, those traditional terms in the *Brutus* need not indicate exclusive reference to *Phaedrus*; see Shorey (1909). Kytzler (1970) 280 on the “Aristotelian orientation”; Dugan (2005) 172–250 on the Aristotelian aspects alongside the Platonic ones. The reference is also crucial to the role that statuary plays in the *Brutus*, on which see Chapter 8.

consonant with the idea that Cethegus was the *Suadai medulla*. A. E. Douglas rightly called the connection “very far-fetched, and its expression cumbrous.”⁷⁵ Over a century ago Friedrich Leo elucidated Ennius’ meaning: the “flower” of oratory is contrasted with its “marrow” as a careful conceit relying on contrast to make its point: Cethegus was both the most externalized and most internalized expression of eloquence.⁷⁶

Cicero has invented the connection because of the crucial lineage it creates.⁷⁷ Eupolis documents Pericles, the first Greek orator, just as Ennius documents Cethegus, the first Latin orator. Such a tradition of firsts in Greece and Rome offers remarkably persuasive parallels and synchronies. By distorting Ennius’ poetry Cicero makes him participate in a process of appropriating Greeks: Ennius’ account of Cethegus copied Eupolis’ account of Pericles. Eupolis and Ennius are cultural precedents created by Cicero to bolster his own authority as a scholar of the rhetorical and literary past.⁷⁸ For prose literary history he engages in what, for Roman poets, Stephen Hinds memorably dubbed “do-it-yourself tradition.”⁷⁹ He triumphantly steps into a literary-historical legacy of his own making. The alignments also reflect the celebration of Periclean Athens and Cicero’s self-portrayal as a Roman Pericles.⁸⁰ He has brilliantly crafted a lineage that does double-duty, highlighting his twin roles in the *Brutus* as both documenter and documented, literary historian and orator.

⁷⁵ Douglas (1966a) 50. ⁷⁶ Leo (1913) 181: “das Äußerste und Innerste vom Besten.”

⁷⁷ Recent studies have well demonstrated Cicero’s distortions of Ennius the poet as well as the subjects of Ennian poetry, e.g. Goldberg (2006), Zetzel (2007), Elliott (2013). Zetzel (2007) 10 notes of Cicero’s version of Ennius in the *pro Archia* that “Cicero is constructing Ennius on the basis of Archias, in order to defend Archias on the grounds that he is like Ennius.” Cicero likewise manipulates Ennius to make the case for Cethegus.

⁷⁸ A better citation would be Aristophanes’ *Acharnians* 530–31, used only months later: “he is said by Aristophanes the poet to have blazed, thundered, and shaken up Greece” (*ab Aristophane poeta fulgere tonare permiscere Graeciam dictus, Orat.* 29). While the passage more ably demonstrates effective forcefulness, it would not support Cicero’s construction of Ennius’ hellenizing literary history.

⁷⁹ Hinds (1998) 123–44. Cicero’s remark that he often heard Accius’ judgments of Decimus Brutus (107) draws on a potentially agonistic topos, making Cicero the most recent member in a triumphant genealogy of literary historians. See Leo (1913) 386–91 on several similarities of Greco-Roman subject matter, audience, and authorial position in Accius’ *Didascalica* and Cicero’s *Brutus*. Dahlmann (1962) 587–88 n.2 implausibly claims that the choice of Cethegus is taken from Varro.

⁸⁰ Though named only six times, Pericles is central to the *Brutus*’ history and ideology. He begins oratory at Greece, or at least, oratory with written memorialization (27, although Cicero’s assertion there lacks corroboration – have the facts about Pericles been fudged to give him the first record of oratory?). Pericles otherwise does not play the same role in Cicero’s theorizing, and Cicero’s later references to Phidias and Minerva are part and parcel of the *Brutus*’ intensely Periclean moment (257); cf. Chapter 8, Noël (2014).

Crafting this succession from Eupolis and Ennius is also part of the larger strategy to claim superiority in the tradition of Greco-Roman literary historians. Cicero ostentatiously diminished the role of Accius and accords Varro a lesser place among literary historiographers.⁸¹ On this score Accius and Varro are the biggest losers in the *Brutus*. After using Varro (via Atticus) to dispense with Accius, Cicero turns on him, relegating Varro to a lineage of learned researchers through the laudatory comparison to Aelius Stilo: “And our friend Varro, a man eminent in talent and universal learning, laid out in several brilliant writings what he had taken from him and independently supplemented” (*quam scientiam Varro noster acceptam ab illo auctamque per sese, vir ingenio praestans omnique doctrina, pluribus et inlustrioribus litteris explicavit*, 205).⁸² The portrayal is an object lesson in the manipulative magic of panegyric. As a contest for primacy in literary historiography Cicero damns Varro with fulsome praise: elevating – or demoting – him to the position of mere scholar while wresting away the mantle of literary historian.⁸³ Cicero’s alternative lineage of literary history, leading triumphantly from Ennius via Accius to himself, makes him Rome’s premier, though not its first, literary historian, ignoring, adapting, and vanquishing predecessors as he crafts an as-yet-unknown model of literary history.

⁸¹ The nod to the *Phaedrus* in the elucidation of the Ennian passage may also be Cicero’s attempt to upstage Ennius by aligning himself and his dialogue with Plato’s august legacy and by translating his Greek.

⁸² On Stilo see *ORF*⁴ no. 74, Cic. *Ac.* 1.8, Suet. *Gram. et rhet.* 3.1–2, Varro *L.* 7.2, Gell. *NA* 1.18.2; Leo (1913) 362–68, Zetzel (1981) 10–26, Rawson (1985) 269–77, Kaster (1995) 68–70, Suerbaum (2002) 552–57, Goldberg (2005) 60–62.

⁸³ Concealing reliance on Varro involves obscuring and mediating his contributions through Atticus and his *Liber Annalis* – although the triangulation of the three men, including oral and not just textual sharing, should not be ruled out; R. M. A. Marshall (2017). Other literary historians, Volcarius Sedigitus (Gell. *NA* 15.24, fr. 1 Courtney) and Porcius Licinus (Gell. *NA* 17.21.44, fr. 1 Courtney), are nowhere to be found (Aurelius Opillus and Ateius Praetextatus wouldn’t have been worth mentioning).