

THE FATE OF THE SOUL IN ANCIENT ‘CONSOLATIONS’
RHETORICAL HANDBOOKS AND THE WRITERS*

Ancient consolatory literature has always placed scholars before the problem of the precise classification of this genre, which appears to occupy a middle position between rhetoric (more specifically epideictic oratory) and philosophy. Accordingly, scholars are divided as to whether the latter or the former – philosophy or rhetoric – was the stronger influence in this type of writing. Roughly, each one of these two positions may be identified by the name of two German scholars, the authors of two influential books on the subject: Rudolf Kassel and Horst-Theodor Johann respectively¹. Kassel advocated the pre-eminence of rhetoric, Johann of philosophy. Of course, I would like to make it clear from the outset that I’m referring to consolation for the death of a beloved person, though there were consolatory speeches for several other occasions: for example, for somebody’s exile, like Seneca’s consolation to his mother Helvia, for somebody’s absence, like Porphyry’s letter to his wife Marcella, and so forth.

Now, there surely are formal statements by ancient authors which testify to the inclusion of the *consolatio*, λόγος παραμυθητικός in Greek, as an integral part of philosophical literature. Seneca, in two of his letters, tells us that it was a customary element of the ethical part of philosophy, at least since Posidonius². However, undervaluing the rhetorical factor would make us lose sight not merely of the strong influence of rhetoric at a later time, when the *consolatio* became a standard rhetorical theme and was regulated by

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¹ R. Kassel, *Untersuchungen zur griechischen und römischen Literatur*, München 1958; H.-Th. Johann, *Trauer und Trost. Eine quellen- und strukturanalytische Untersuchung der philosophischen Trostschriften über den Tod*, München 1968. For the rest of the copious literature I refer the reader to four previous papers of mine: A. Setaioli, *Seneca e l’oltretomba*, “Paideia” 52, 1997, 321-367 (now collected in Id. *Facundus Seneca. Aspetti della lingua e dell’ideologia senecana*, Bologna 2000, 275-323); Id., *La vicenda dell’anima nella Consolatio di Cicerone*, “Paideia” 54, 1999, 145-174; Id. *El destino del alma en el pensamiento de Cicerón (con una apostilla sobre las huellas ciceronianas en Dante)*, “Anuario Filosófico” 34, 2001, 487-526; Id., *Il destino dell’anima nella letteratura consolatoria pagana*, in C. Alonso del Real (ed.), *Consolatio. Nueve estudios*, Pamplona 2001, 31-67.

² Sen. *ep.* 94.21, 39, 49; 95.34. The reference to Posidonius is at *ep.* 95.65. See the discussion in A. Setaioli, *Seneca e i Greci. Citazioni e traduzioni nelle opere filosofiche*, Bologna 1988, 336-349.

rhetorical handbooks, but even of its very origin. This origin goes back to the Sophists (a Τέχνη ἀλυπίας, literally “Art of not grieving” was attributed to Antiphon, V century B.C.), and, later, consolation became a stock topic in the λόγοι ἐπιτάφιοι, the speeches held to commemorate the dead, one of the forms of epideictic oratory. We have some of these speeches, written by some of the great Athenian orators, such as Lysias and Hyperides, as well as one attributed to Demosthenes; and Plato’s *Menexenos* is of course another specimen of this genre. All of these speeches duly contain consolatory parts.

One of the handbooks I was referring to, the Τέχνη ῥητορική attributed to Dionysius of Halicarnassos (to which from now on I’ll refer to as Ps. Dionysius), treats consolatory speech precisely in the framework of the λόγος ἐπιτάφιος³, but shows nevertheless clear similarities not only with what Menander of Laodicea, the author of another such handbook, the Περὶ ἐπιδεικτικῶν, wrote on the λόγος ἐπιτάφιος⁴, but also with Menander’s autonomous treatment of consolation, the παραμυθητικὸς λόγος, as a self-standing genre⁵. This proves the continuity between that particular branch of the old epideictic oratory (the λόγος ἐπιτάφιος) and the later self-standing consolations, whose model and fountainhead was commonly considered in antiquity to be the lost Περὶ πένθους by the Academic philosopher Crantor (IV-III century B.C.). Though both these handbooks date from the III century A.D., both reflect an established literary situation, going back at least to Alexandrian times.

In writings of the latter type, the self-standing consolations, the philosophical element could no doubt attain a considerable importance, when the author was a philosopher and used this vehicle to convey his own ideas. Nonetheless the very function of consolatory writings, which aimed to soothe the grief of the addressee, gave this practical goal the upper hand over theoretical and philosophical consistency. What we can say for sure is that even in consolatory works written by philosophers – in Seneca’s *Consolationes*, for example – we find the same *topoi* as in the other writings of this type that have come down to us.

Our special topic, the fate of the soul after death, could hardly be ignored in writings which aimed to soothe the grief caused by the death of a beloved person, but it could be treated in a variety of ways. According to Ps. Dionysius, the public λόγος ἐπιτάφιος, that is the speech in commemoration of the dead of a whole community, especially in war, should not be concerned with the survival of the individual soul: the immortality of the glory of the dead is

³ Ps. Dionys. *ars rhet.* 6.4-6 (II, pp. 281.1–283.19 Usener-Radermacher)

⁴ Men. *rhet.* III, pp. 418.5–422.4 Spengel.

⁵ Men. *rhet.* III, pp. 413.15–414.30 Spengel.

the only one that matters⁶. This rule is in fact based on the actual λόγοι ἐπιτάφιοι that have come down to us. I may refer to the analysis of such writings by Gorgias, Lysias, Hyperides and Ps. Demosthenes I have conducted elsewhere⁷. But when it comes to the private λόγος ἐπιτάφιος, the one commemorating a single member of a single family, Ps. Dionysius enjoins to present the immortality of the individual soul as self-understood⁸. Needless to say, the private λόγος ἐπιτάφιος was the only such type of speech still vital under the empire, when the body politic was totally subjected to one supreme authority. Not surprisingly, we find the same recommendation in Menander's handbook, both in his independent treatment of consolatory speech⁹ and in the pages he devotes to the private λόγος ἐπιτάφιος¹⁰. It may be of interest to stress the fact that in the latter context Menander advises the writers to describe the immortality of the departed either according to traditional mythology or in agreement with more up-to-date philosophical and religious ideas: the dead person may indifferently be depicted as either inhabiting the Elysian fields or partaking of the life of the gods¹¹. However, while treating the consolation (παραμυθητικὸς λόγος) as a self-standing genre, he does show his preference: after mentioning an eternal life in the Elysian fields with the heroes of myth, he continues: "or rather the dead person lives with the gods, wanders about the aether and observes the events of our world"¹²: a picture strongly reminiscent of the eschatological ending of a famous consolation: the *Consolatio ad Marciam* by Seneca. On his part, Ps. Dionysius adopts the Platonic idea of death as a liberation of the soul from the prison of the body¹³. As can easily be seen, a curious intertwining of rhetorical and philosophical elements had taken place. Of course in the rhetorical handbooks the latter had been completely severed from the theoretical ground from which they had originally stemmed. Doctrinal consistency was completely given up for the sake of rhetorical effect. Ps. Dionysius does recommend, as we said, to mention the Platonic doctrine of the body as prison of the soul, but only in the case of someone who died young, when it could be rhetorically used to emphasize the fact that the dead had been lucky to

⁶ Ps. Dionys. *ars rhet.* 6.4 (II, p. 281.19) ἀθάνατος αὐτῶν ἡ δόξα.

⁷ Setaioli, *Il destino dell'anima nella letteratura consolatoria pagana*, 33-35.

⁸ Ps. Dionys. *ars rhet.* 6.5, II, p. 283.7-9.

⁹ Men. *rhet.* III, p. 414.16-20.

¹⁰ Men. *rhet.* III, p. 421.14-17.

¹¹ Men. *rhet.* III, p. 421.16-17 πολιτεύεται γὰρ μετὰ τῶν θεῶν, ἢ τὸ Ἥλύσιον ἔχει πεδίον.

¹² Men. *rhet.* III, p. 414.19-20 καὶ τάχα που μᾶλλον μετὰ τῶν θεῶν διαιτᾶται νῦν, περιπολεῖ τὸν αἰθέρα καὶ ἐπισκοπεῖ τὰ τῆδε.

¹³ Ps. Dionys. *ars rhet.* 6.5, p. 282.10-14.

have been so soon delivered¹⁴. Though he does refer expressly to Plato, he considers him only as a model of style, not as a doctrinal source¹⁵. Menander, though he enjoins to stress the divine origin of the soul (a *topos* commonly found in consolations), in order to present death as a return to its divine source, also suggests to present life either as a good or as an evil, depending on rhetorical opportunity¹⁶. As we shall see, the fragments of Cicero's *Consolatio* to himself for the death of his daughter Tullia afford us a glimpse of such a mix of philosophical and rhetorical elements, whose ideological inconsistency does not impair the author's sincerity and effectiveness.

We could perhaps get a better idea about the import and the very existence of a difference between 'rhetorical' and 'philosophical' consolations, as far as the fate of the soul after death is concerned, if we possessed the complete text of the writing that was considered to be the model and fountainhead of the consolatory genre: the already mentioned *Περὶ πένθους* by Crantor. Some scholars have taken it for granted that in this work Crantor discussed the immortality of the soul in the framework of what is conventionally called "the Socratic alternative", after a famous passage in Plato's *Apology*, in which Socrates poses the question whether death should be considered as the total annihilation of man or as a passage to a new (and better) life¹⁷: another typical *topos* of the consolatory genre. Since 1984, however, we possess a reliable edition of the fragments of the *Περὶ πένθους*, by Hans Joachim Mette¹⁸, and it has become impossible, as was usually done before, to consider the *Consolation to Apollonios* attributed to Plutarch, which does indeed quote Crantor several times, as a more or less faithful transcription of the latter's lost work, thereby attributing to Crantor just about all the ideas expressed in that pseudo-plutarchean work¹⁹. We have no time to go into more detail; for this I must refer to a paper of mine²⁰; what we can and must stress now is the fact that, though it is by no means impossible or even unlikely that Crantor did discuss the immortality of the soul in the *Περὶ πένθους*, the

¹⁴ Ps. Dionys. *ars rhet.* 6.5, II, p. 282.6-18.

¹⁵ Ps. Dionys. *ars rhet.* 6.6, p. 283.17-19 ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἐνδόξοις καὶ μέγεθος ἔχουσιν, οἷον ὅσα περὶ ψυχῆς, διηρημένα [ἢ ἀπαγγελία] καὶ μέγεθος ἔχουσα καὶ ἐγγὺς βαίνουσα τῇ τοῦ Πλάτωνος.

¹⁶ Men. *rhet.* III, p. 414.12-15.

¹⁷ Plat. *apol.* 40C δυοῖν γὰρ θάτερόν ἐστι τὸ τεθνάναι· ἢ γὰρ οἷον μὴδὲν εἶναι μὴδὲ αἴσθησιν μὴδεμίαν ἔχειν τὸν τεθνεῶτα, ἢ κατὰ τὰ λεγόμενα μεταβολή τις τυγχάνει οὐσα καὶ μετοίκησις εἰς ἄλλον τόπον.

¹⁸ H. J. Mette, *Zwei Akademiker heute: Krantor von Soloi und Arkesilaos von Pitane*, "Lustrum" 26, 1984, 7-94.

¹⁹ See Setaioli, *La vicenda dell'anima nella Consolatio di Cicerone*, 146-147.

²⁰ Setaioli, *La vicenda dell'anima nella Consolatio di Cicerone*, 151-152.

extant fragments do not permit us to affirm it for sure.

An idea that certainly appeared in the *Περὶ πένθους* was that our life in this world is a punishment and a pain for the soul²¹. Again, several scholars have surmised that this old idea (going back at least to the Pythagorean philosopher Philolaus), was expressed by Crantor in the frame of the doctrine of the cycle of the soul including incarnation, liberation from the body, reincarnation etc., which of course entails the immortality of the soul. Again, this is by no means impossible; but once more we must repeat that the extant fragments do not permit us to say that this was indeed the case. Rather, we should stress that the idea of life as punishment was a *topos* of consolatory writings, which appears several times elsewhere with no connection with reincarnation or the Platonic cycle of the soul; it is found, for instance, in Seneca's two consolations for a death, the *Consolatio ad Polybium*²², and the *Consolatio ad Marciam*²³, where the conception of the fate of the soul is very different and does not include reincarnation. Also, in Cicero's *Consolatio*, which, by his own admission, followed Crantor²⁴, the idea of life as a punishment did figure prominently, being repeated twice²⁵, but Lactantius, the Christian writer who reports the two fragments, clearly states that it was not connected with the doctrine of reincarnation, without which, as the Christian writer realizes, it was philosophically meaningless²⁶. Clearly, the idea of life as a punishment had been detached from its philosophical

²¹ *Consol. ad Apoll.* 27, 115B = Crantor F 6a Mette πολλοῖς γὰρ καὶ σοφοῖς ἀνδράσιν, ὡς φησι Κράντωρ, οὐ νῦν, ἀλλὰ πάλαι, κέκλαυσται τὰνθρώπινα τιμωρίαν ἡγουμένοις εἶναι τὸν βίον καὶ ἀρχὴν τὸ γενέσθαι ἄνθρωπον συμφορᾶς τῆς μεγίστης.

²² Sen. *ad Polyb.* 9.6 *Si velis credere altius veritatem intuentibus, omnis vita supplicium est... in hoc tam procelloso et ad omnes tempestates exposito mari navigantibus nullus portus nisi mortis est.*

²³ Sen. *ad Marc.* 22.3 *Nihil est tam fallax quam vita humana, nihil tam insidiosum: non mehercules quisquam illam accepisset, nisi daretur ignorantibus. Itaque si felicissimum est non nasci, proximum est, puto, brevi aetate defunctos cito in integrum restitui.*

²⁴ Cic. *consol.* F 4 Vitelli = Plin. *NH* praef. 22 *Crantorem sequor.*

²⁵ Lact. *inst.* 3.18.18 *cum in principio consolationis suae dixisset luendorum scelerum causa nasci homines* (Cic. *consol.* F 1 Vitelli), *iteravit id ipsum postea quasi obiurgans eum qui vitam non esse poenam putet* (Cic. *consol.* F 7 Vitelli).

²⁶ Lact. *inst.* 3.18.14-18 *quae ignorantia effecit ut quosdam dicere non puderet idcirco nos esse natos, ut scelerum poenas lueremus: quo quid delirius dici possit non invenio. Ubi enim vel quae scelera potuimus admittere qui omnino non fuimus? nisi forte credemus inepto illi seni, qui se in priore vita Euphorbum fuisse mentitus est... O miram et singularem Pythagorae memoriam et o miseram oblivionem nostrum omnium, qui nesciamus qui ante fuerimus!... Sed deridenda hominis levissimi vanitas. Quid Cicerone faciemus? qui cum in principio Consolationis suae dixisset luendorum scelerum causa nasci homines, iteravit id ipsum postea quasi obiurgans eum qui vitam non esse poenam putet. Recte ergo praefatus est errore ac miserabili veritatis ignorantia se teneri.*

background and was used in consolatory writings to develop the consolatory *topos* of the *lamentatio vitae*, the “lament over life”, or “disparagement of life”, intended to diminish the grief caused by the death of a loved one by stressing the painfulness of life in this world. There is no way to know if this was the case in the *Περὶ πένθους*. But if Crantor, after stating that life is a punishment, left in the background the theme of immortality, he avoided a blatant philosophical inconsistency that Cicero – as we shall see – ran into. For now let us remark that elsewhere (in a fragment of his lost dialogue *Hortensius*) Cicero does correctly link the idea of life as a punishment to faults committed in another life, that is, to reincarnation²⁷, contrary to what he did in the *Consolatio*.

In consolatory writings both cases considered by what we called “the Socratic alternative” could be used for consolation; the writer could maintain that death is not an evil in either case, whether it delivers man from the pains of this life by annihilation or it entails the passage to a new and better life. For this reason it is wrong to blame Seneca as inconsequent, when he has recourse to both hypotheses in his consolations, as I have shown elsewhere²⁸. Seneca was not concerned, in these writings, with establishing philosophical truths, but with attaining the rhetorical goal of affecting the addressees’ souls.

In very few cases authors of consolatory writings expressly refuse one of the two possibilities. On the one hand Plutarch, in his *Consolatio ad uxorem* considers only the case of a new life after death; but he had been initiated in the mysteries of Dionysus, a cult which preached the immortality of the soul. On the other hand, we may safely surmise that the Epicureans refused immortality, because of their philosophical convictions. We have fragments of a consolation that the Epicurean philosopher Metrodorus wrote for his sister when her son died, which make no mention of survival after death. As for Cicero, though in some consolatory letters addressed to people who had lost somebody they loved he does not mention an afterlife at all²⁹, in others he states the Socratic alternative, with no attempt to solve it in a way or another³⁰. In reality, during all his life, Cicero never bothered to solve Socrates’ dilemma, though he sometimes declares to be emotionally closer to the idea of immortality. Elsewhere I have investigated Cicero’s attitude on the

²⁷ Cic. *Hortens.* F 112 Grilli *nos ob aliqua scelera suscepta in vita superiore poenarum luendarum causa natos esse*.

²⁸ Setaioli, *Seneca e l’oltretomba*.

²⁹ Cic. *fam.* 4.6; *ad Brut.* 1.9.

³⁰ Cic. *fam.* 5.16.4; 4.5.6 (a letter by Servius Sulpicius Rufus to Cicero).

problem³¹. Here I'll only mention that even his text where the immortality of the soul seems to be unquestionably accepted, namely the *Somnium Scipionis*, is later demoted by Cicero himself to the simple, however brilliant, literary statement of one of the hypotheses of the Socratic alternative, not in any way being its solution. He does so in a quotation of the "Dream of Scipio" found in a work written about ten years later, the *Laelius de amicitia*³².

Cicero repeats the Socratic alternative in several works: death is either the end of everything or the passage to a better life; in these texts punishment after death is expressly ruled out³³. Things are quite different in his *Consolatio*, whose fragments are now conveniently collected in the edition of Claudio Vitelli³⁴. In fragment 22 Cicero decidedly states the immortality of the soul and says that after death it can receive either a reward or a punishment³⁵. As far as we can see, the *Consolatio* is Cicero's only work where the immortality of the soul is stated with no reservation. This is largely due, of course, to the human factor: the bereaved father can only be soothed by envisaging his departed daughter as eternally blissful, actually, as we shall see, deified. But we have also seen that the rhetorical handbooks recommended to present immortality as a certainty in consolatory writings. We have said that for this purpose they borrowed philosophical ideas

³¹ Setaioli, *El destino del alma en el pensamiento de Cicerón...*

³² Cic. *Lael.* 14 *cuius (Scipionis) disputationis fuit extremum de immortalitate animorum, quae se in quiete per visum ex Africano audisse dicebat. Id si ita est, ut optimi cuiusque animus in morte facillime evolet tamquam e custodia vincisque corporis, cui censemur cursum ad deos faciliorem fuisse quam Scipioni? quocirca maerere eius eventu vereor ne invidi magis quam amici sit. Si autem illa veriora, ut idem interitus sit animorum et corporum nec ullus sensus maneat, ut nihil boni est in morte, sic certe nihil mali; sensu enim amisso fit idem, quasi natus non esset omnino.*

³³ Cic. *Cato m.* 66-67 (*mors*) *aut plane neglegenda est, si omnino extinguit animum, aut etiam optanda, si aliquo eum deducit, ubi sit futurus aeternus; atqui tertium certe nihil inveniri potest; Tusc.* 1.118 *non enim temere nec fortuito sati et creati sumus, sed profecto fuit quaedam vis, quae generi consuleret humano nec id gigneret aut aleret, quod cum exanclavisset omnes labores, tum incideret in mortis malum sempiternum: portum potius paratum nobis et perfugium putemus.*

³⁴ C. Vitelli, *M. Tulli Ciceronis Consolationis Fragmenta*, Milano-Roma 1979.

³⁵ Cic. *consol.* F 22 Vitelli *nec omnibus - inquit - idem illi sapientes arbitrati sunt eundem cursum in caelum patere. Nam vitii et sceleribus contaminatos deprimi in tenebras atque in caeno iacere docuerunt, castos autem animos, puros integros incorruptos, bonis etiam studiis atque artibus expositos leni quodam et facili lapsu ad deos id est ad originem suam pervolare.* Cicero also admits a punishment after death at *Hortens.* F 114 Grilli *at illi qui Tullius quasi consulares philosophos appellat, quod eorum magni pendat auctoritatem..., non extingui animam sed emigrare censent et, ut merita quoque eius adserunt seu bona seu mala, vel ad beatitudinem vel ad miseriam permanere.* However, the *Hortensius* ended with a statement of the Socratic alternative (F 115 Grilli).

detached from their ideological background and made them subservient to rhetorical effectiveness. Cicero's *Consolatio* is a clear illustration of this rhetorical attitude, though it is about 300 years older than the handbooks of Menander and Ps. Dionysius.

When Cicero, in the *Hortensius*, connects the idea of life in this world as a punishment for the soul with a fault committed in a previous existence³⁶, this obviously entails the doctrine of reincarnation, and the ideological framework of this passage soundly agrees with the consistent picture we find in Plato's *Phaedon*, where the soul is immortal and atones for faults committed during its incarnation with a following reincarnation, and only the very best and the very worst receive eternal rewards or punishments. On the contrary, neither in Cicero's *Consolatio* nor (with one exception) in other extant consolations, nor of course in the rhetorical outlines of Menander and Ps. Dionysius do we find any trace of reincarnation. The two rhetoricians, who have no interest for anything but rhetorical effectiveness, consider only eternal bliss for the soul of the departed; Cicero completes the picture by adding eternal punishments. But this is at odds with his previous statement that life in this world is a punishment for the soul. If there is no reincarnation and the retribution of sins is eternal punishment after death, how can life in this world be called a punishment too? Doing away with reincarnation leads not only Cicero, but almost all the writers of consolations into a philosophical impasse.

This of course did not concern the writers of rhetorical handbooks, bent only on rhetorical effectiveness, nor the writers of consolations themselves, who could hardly ignore the institutional goal of such writings, namely the soothing of the survivors and the celebration of the dead person. To do this they had to make a careful selection within the philosophical doctrines concerning the immortality of the soul, leaving aside anything that did not agree with the goal of such writings. If life on earth is a reincarnation, and this in turn is the punishment of sins committed in a previous life, this would mean attributing such sins to the departed, since he was born in this world. But this would offend, rather than soothe, his surviving relatives. For this reason, as we have seen, the idea of life as a punishment was given the simple function of developing the *topos* of the disparaging of life meant to diminish the grief caused by the death of the loved one. But of course this caused an utter philosophical inconsistency, which perhaps was avoided by Crantor, if he, after calling life a punishment for the soul, left the issue of its survival after death in the background.

In no extant consolation do we find any hint at reincarnation at all – with

³⁶ Cic. *Hortens.* F 112 Grilli (above, note 27).

one exception: a consolatory writing that we have already mentioned as unusual, namely the consolation to his wife by Plutarch, for the loss of their little daughter. In this work Plutarch is bent not so much on rhetorical effectiveness as on stressing the faith in immortality advocated by the mysterious cult of Dionysus he adhered to. It is no chance that Plutarch speaks of an unending series of reincarnations as a punishment for souls who have polluted themselves by a sinful life³⁷ immediately after proclaiming his Dionysiac faith. Their little daughter, however, will be spared this punishment, because she has died so young and had no time to stain her soul. This is the only consolation where the idea of life as a punishment appears in a consistent doctrinal framework.

The idea that those who die young do not have the time to commit sins is found also in Seneca's *Consolatio ad Marciam*³⁸; but in Seneca there is no reincarnation and the eschatological picture is different. Though Seneca does not believe in the immortality of the soul, as I have shown elsewhere³⁹, he too follows the rules of the rhetorical handbooks, which recommend to present it as a certainty, but he does so in a more subreptitious way than Cicero. The great eschatological description which closes the *Consolatio ad Marciam* is presented at first as Marcia's imagination: *puta itaque etc.*⁴⁰ ("so imagine etc."). Then, in the very last line of the work, it suddenly appears to be reality: *felicem filium tuum, Marcia, qui ista iam novit!*⁴¹ ("How happy is your son, Marcia, who already experiences such a bliss!").

In the very last fragment of Cicero's *Consolatio*⁴² we find the statement of a veritable intended deification of his dead daughter. Again, this is only the development of another rhetorical *topos* suggested in Menander's outline. Both the comparison of the departed one with mythological deified characters and his or her consecration by the survivors, which appear in Cicero's frag-

³⁷ Plut. *consol. ad uxor.* 10, 611DE.

³⁸ Sen. *ad Marc.* 23.1 *facillimum ad superos iter est animis cito ab humana conversatione dimissis; minimum enim faecis, ponderis traxerunt.*

³⁹ Setaioli, *Seneca e l'oltretomba.*

⁴⁰ Sen. *ad Marc.* 26.1.

⁴¹ Sen. *ad Marc.* 26.7.

⁴² Cic. *consol.* F 23 *Vitelli cum vero – inquit – et mares et feminas compluris ex hominibus in deorum numero esse videamus et eorum in urbibus atque agris augustissima delubra veneremur, adsentiamur eorum sapientiae quorum ingenii et inventis omnem vitam legibus et institutis exultam constitutamque habemus. Quod si ullum unquam animal consecrandum fuit, illud profecto fuit. Si Cadmi progenies aut Amphionis aut Tyndari in caelum tollenda fama fuit, huic idem honos certe dicandus est. Quod quidem faciam teque omnium optimam doctissimam adprobantibus dis immortalibus ipsis in eorum coetum locatam ad opinionem omnium mortalium consecrabo.*

ment, closely resemble Menander's final recommendations in his treatment of consolatory speech⁴³. On the one hand, immortality is here asserted on the ground of old legends; on the other it is considered to be a benefit that survivors can bestow on the dead through their love. We are a long way even from the pretense of sound philosophical reasoning. We can safely assume, therefore, that Cicero's work ended with a purely rhetorical flourish, which punctually confirms the instructions of rhetorical handbooks to would-be writers of consolatory works.

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⁴³ Men. rhet. III, p. 414.23-27 οὕτω καὶ τὴν Ἑλένην, οὕτω καὶ τοὺς Διοσκόρους καὶ τὸν Ἡρακλέα λέγουσι συμπολιτεύεσθαι μετὰ τῶν θεῶν· ὑμνῶμεν οὖν αὐτὸν ὡς ἥρωα, μᾶλλον δὲ ὡς θεὸν αὐτὸν μακαρίσωμεν, εἰκόνας γράψωμεν, ἰλασκώμεθα ὡς δαίμονα.