

Plautus'
Erudite Comedy:
New Insights into the
Work of a *doctus poeta*

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Volume IX

Plautus'
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Work of a *doctus poeta*

Edited by

Sophia Papaioannou and
Chrysanthi Demetriou

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



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Series: *Pierides*

Edited by Sophia Papaioannou and Chrysanthi Demetriou

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The present volume originates from the international workshop “*Plautus Doctus: Plautine Comedy and Its Intellectual Context*”, held at the Swedish Archaeological Institute at Athens (SIA) on 20 and 21 June 2016, and set out to re-examine Plautus’ work as the first extant witness of Rome’s middle republican milieu and explore various cases through which Plautine comedy interacts with contemporary intellectual and cultural issues and debates. Eight of the ten chapters in the collection are thoroughly revised versions of papers originally delivered at the workshop. The workshop was organized by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Department of Classics, home institution of one of the editors of the volume with the support of the Swedish Institute at Athens. Our superb host, Professor Jenny Wallensten, the director of the SIA, embraced our collaboration with enthusiasm and generously offered the space and the facilities of the Institute for two days of intense and fruitful discussion. To her and to the staff of the Swedish Institute of Athens the volume editors would like to express their gratitude. As editors and students of Plautus and Roman Comedy, we have been blessed to reap the benefits from our collaboration with a group of insightful critics who deeply respect Plautus’ dramaturgy and his contribution to Roman culture, and we are grateful to all contributors in this collection for their insightful readings, their superb cooperation and above all their patience. We are grateful to Peter Barrios-Lech and Mike Fontaine, who enthusiastically accepted our invitation to join the project and complement it with original and groundbreaking ideas. We would additionally like to single out for thanks the remaining panelists from the workshop, Evangelos Karakasis and Katerina Kounaki-Philippides, whose contributions of scholarship and insight informed the subsequent design of the volume in important implicit ways.

We also wish to thank Cambridge Scholars Publishing, and in particular the editors of the Classics Series Pierides, Professors Philip Hardie, Stratis Kyriakidis and Antonis Petrides, for offering an excellent home for this volume. Special thanks are to be offered to Antonis Petrides, who read earlier versions of the introduction, and offered valuable advice that helped improve the entire project. Thanks are also due to the anonymous referees for the series, who have made several very helpful suggestions on the individual articles of the volume, and to the editorial team of CSP and the

Pierides Series, for their support and prompt assistance throughout the publication process.

A certain level of formatting standardization has been imposed to ensure consistency across the volume, but individual stylistic distinctiveness has been respected.

This book is intended for the specialist scholars of Roman Comedy but also for the graduate students working in the fields of Classics and Literary History. All long quotations of Greek and Latin are translated.

Athens and Nicosia, June 2020

S. Papaioannou

Ch. Demetriou

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Ruth R. Caston is Associate Professor of Classical Studies at the University of Michigan, where she has been teaching since 2005. Her work is mainly in Latin literature, especially elegy, satire and comedy. In addition to a number of articles in these areas, she has a book on jealousy in Roman love elegy (Oxford 2012), a co-edited collection (with Robert Kaster) on positive emotions titled *Hope, Joy and Affection in the Classical World* (Oxford 2016), and is currently writing a book on all six plays of Terence for Oxford University Press.

Chrysanthi Demetriou studied Classics in Cyprus, and received her MPhil in Classics from Cambridge University and her PhD from the University of Leeds. She is currently an Adjunct Tutor of Latin at the Open University of Cyprus. She has published articles and book chapters on the comedies of Plautus and Terence, the ancient scholia on Terence, the interaction between theater and rhetoric, and the survival of Terence's comedy in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages.

Michael Fontaine is Professor of Classics at Cornell University. His latest books are *The Pig War* (Paideia Institute Press, 2019) and *How to Drink: A classical guide to the art of imbibing* (Princeton University Press, 2020).

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religion, and the reception of Greek tragedy. Seth has recently published chapters on obscenity in Roman Comedy (*Ancient Obscenities*, 2015) and lament in early Roman drama (*The Fall of Cities in the Mediterranean*, 2016).

Ioannis M. Konstantakos studied in Athens and Cambridge and is now Professor of Ancient Greek at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. His scholarly interests include ancient comedy, ancient narrative, folklore, and the relations between Greek and Near-Eastern literatures and cultures. He has published many studies and essays on these topics. He has received scholarships from the Greek State Scholarships Foundation and the Onassis Foundation. In 2009 he was awarded the prize of the Academy of Athens for the best monograph in classical philology. In 2012 he was shortlisted for the Greek state prize for critical essay.

Gesine Manuwald is Professor of Latin at University College London (UCL). Her research interests cover Roman drama, Roman oratory, Roman epic and Neo-Latin literature; she has published widely on all these areas, including a survey of early Roman drama *Roman Republican Theatre* (2011). She is currently the general editor of the Loeb series *Fragmentary Republican Latin (FRL)* and has recently contributed two volumes on Ennius to this project (2018).

Sophia Papaioannou is Professor of Latin Literature at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. Her research interests include Roman Comedy, Ancient epic, and Latin literature of the Age of Augustus, and she has published several books and articles on the above topics. She has edited *Terence and Interpretation* (2014) and co-edited (with A.K. Petrides) *New Perspectives on Postclassical Comedy* (2010) for the Pierides Series of CSP. Her current projects include a book on the reception of the Latin tradition in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*.

Ariana Traill (B.A. Toronto 1991, Ph.D. Harvard 1997) is an Associate Professor and Lynn M. Martin Professorial Scholar in the Department of the Classics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her research interests include Greek and Roman comedy, women in antiquity, and the reception of ancient comedy. She is the author of *Women and the Comic Plot in Menander* (Cambridge, 2008) and co-editor of *A Companion to Terence* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013, with Antony Augoustakis).

ILLUSTRATIONS AND TABLES

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Line drawings of a small bronze bust inscribed “Sotades”, from Anatolia, Eskişehir Archaeological Museum, inventory number A-283-67. Provenance unknown, but probably of Hadrianic date (120-130 CE) or a little later. Credit: Lucy Plowe, after Peege and Frei 2001. © Michael Fontaine, 2017.	
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A charioteer grips the <i>kentron</i> in his right hand. Terracotta Panathenaic prize amphora ca. 520 BCE. Metropolitan Museum of Art. Accession Number 56.171.4 Credit Line: Fletcher Fund, 1956. Free, unrestricted reproduction: http://images.metmuseum.org/CRDImages/gr/original/DP227372.jpg .	
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Select Testimonia for Temples or Shrines of Ops at Rome.	

ABBREVIATIONS

- Blänsdorf = *FPL*⁴ Blänsdorf, J. (ed.) (2011) *Fragmenta Poetarum Latinorum Epicorum et Lyricorum Praeter Enni Annales et Ciceronis Germanicique Aratea post W. Morel et K. Büchner editionem quartam auctam curavit J. B.* Berlin; New York: De Gruyter.
- FGrH* Jacoby, F. (ed.) (1923-) *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Berlin: Weidmann.
- FRL I* Goldberg, S.M., and Manuwald, G. (2018) *Ennius. Fragmentary Republican Latin, Volume I: Ennius, Testimonia. Epic Fragments*. Edited and Translated. Loeb Classical Library 294. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- FRL II* Goldberg, S.M., and Manuwald, G. (2018). *Ennius. Fragmentary Republican Latin, Volume II: Ennius, Dramatic Fragments. Minor Works*. Edited and Translated. Loeb Classical Library 537. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Jocelyn Jocelyn, H.D. (1967) *The Tragedies of Ennius*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- K.-A. Kassel, R., and Austin, C. (eds.) (1983-2001) *Poetae Comici Graeci*. Vols. I-VIII. Berlin; New York: De Gruyter.
- Kock Kock, Th. (ed.) (1880-1888) *Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta*. 3 volumes. Bibliotheca Teubneriana. Leipzig: Teubner.
- Koster Koster, W.J.W. (ed.) (1975) *Prolegomena De Comoedia; Scholia in Acharnenses, Equites, Nubes. Fasc. IA Continens Prolegomena de Comoedia*. Groningen: Bouma's Boekhuis.
- Lenfant Lenfant, D. (2004) *Ctésias de Cnide. La Perse. L'Inde. Autres fragments*. Collection des Universités de France publiée sous le patronage de l'Association Guillaume Budé. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- LS Long, A.A., and Sedley, D. (eds.) (1987) *The Hellenistic Philosophers*. 2 volumes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Meineke	Meineke, A. (ed.) (1839-1857) <i>Fragmenta Comicoorum Graecorum (FCG)</i> . 5 volumes. Berlin: G. Reimer.
Montanari	Montanari, F. (2015) <i>The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek</i> . English edition edited by M. Goh and C. Schroeder. Leiden: Brill.
PEG	Bernabé, A. (ed.) (1996) <i>Poetae Epici Graeci. Testimonia et Fragmenta. Pars I: Poetarum epicorum Graecorum testimonia et fragmenta</i> . Bibliotheca Teubneriana. Leipzig: Teubner.
Powell	Powell, J.U. (ed.) (1925) <i>Collectanea Alexandrina: reliquiae minores poetarum Graecorum aetatis Ptolemaicae, 323-146 A.C., epicorum, elegiacorum, lyricorum, ethicorum</i> . Oxford: Clarendon Press.
R ²	Ribbeck, O. (ed.) (1871) <i>Scaenicae Romanorum poesis fragmenta: Tragicorum Romanorum fragmenta</i> . Bibliotheca Teubneriana. Second edition. Leipzig: Teubner.
Skutsch	Skutsch, O. 1985. <i>The Annals of Quintus Ennius</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press.
SV	Epicurus, <i>Sententiae Vaticanae</i>
SVF	von Arnim, Hans. (ed.) (1903-1905; 1924) <i>Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta</i> . 4 volumes. Leipzig: Teubner.
TrGF	Kannicht, R., Snell, B., and Radt, S. (eds.) (1971-2004) <i>Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta</i> . 5 vols. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
TrRF	Schauer, M. (ed.) (2012) <i>Tragicorum Romanorum Fragmenta, Vol. I. Livius Andronicus. Naevius. Tragici Minores. Fragmenta Adespota</i> . Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht; Manuwald, Gesine. ed. 2012. <i>Tragicorum Romanorum Fragmenta, Vol. II. Ennius</i> . Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Abbreviations for journal titles generally follow the system used in *L'Année Philologique*; lists of standard abbreviations for classical authors and works can be found in *LSJ* and the *OLD*.

Note on the Critical Editions of the Texts Cited

Unless otherwise noted, Plautus' text follows Lindsay (1904-1905) or de Melo's (2011-2013) Loeb. Terence's plays are quoted from the *OCT* edition of Kauer and Lindsay (1961). Menander's texts follow the following editions: *Dyskolos*: Arnott (1979); *Epitrepontes*: Furley (2009); *Samia*: Arnott (2000). The texts and translations of *Kolax* and *Misoumenos* are those of Arnott (1996b). Plautus' translations follow Wolfgang de Melo, unless otherwise specified. Translations of other sources either are the authors' own or follow the authors' individual choices and when so, clearly noted.

INTRODUCTION

PLAUTUS DOCTUS

SOPHIA PAPAIOANNOU
AND CHRYSANTHI DEMETRIOU

This book, building upon recent innovative studies and following a remarkable revival of interest in Plautus, presents a collection of original essays that contribute to a developing appreciation of Plautus' comedy as a multi-faceted text that engages in a creative dialogue with various contemporary intellectual and cultural issues. As suggested by the title, the studies in this volume approach Plautus as a 'learned' poet, and a skilful and cunning playwright who transformed and composed his *materia* in a clever way, *docte*.¹ Thus, the following studies approach Plautus' work not as an exclusively theatrical—or improvisatory—creation nor as a solely popular performative event addressing the masses. This volume instead focuses on several aspects of Plautus' literary interests, which often stand in a creative dialogue with important contemporary cultural developments. In this context, the term *doctus*, as used in the subtitle, does not exclusively indicate the ideal *poeta doctus* of Alexandrian tradition. While it certainly points to Plautus as an 'erudite' poet, it simultaneously identifies and highlights broader qualities of Plautus' poetic output, so as to argue convincingly that the twenty-one plays surviving under his name comprise the oeuvre of a dramatist remarkably skilled and deeply informed of both literary and cultural institutions.² Along these lines, this

¹ Cf. Plautus' use of the term *doctus* in association with *dolus*, a term related to plays-within-the-plays and intrigues, as for instance in *Mil.* 147, where the *servus callidus* Palaestrio boasts that he will deceive his victim *doctis dolis*.

² See the illuminating discussion of the use of term in various literary references by Habinek (1998) 123-126; note especially his discussion about the use of the term in Ennius' *Annales* (p. 124): "When Ennius describes the good friend of the Roman aristocrat as *doctus* he means not only that the friend is well-informed but also that he is capable of applying his knowledge in making judgments or offering

volume aims to confirm that Plautus' comedy is *docta* not only for its knowledge and use of the literary tradition (in its various genres, from drama and satire to philosophical writing and travel legends) but also for its adroit exploitation of various contemporary intellectual trends, cultural vogues, ideological issues and other themes of cultural significance.

Given that the Plautine corpus is the earliest surviving literary output by a single Latin author, the studies of this volume aspire to examine comprehensively the first complete expression of the intellectual reception of Hellenistic culture at Rome, and illustrate the complexity of this process. Thus, naturally, part of the book revisits Plautus' interaction with the earlier dramatic tradition. Some of the papers trace how Plautus' scripts illustrate his insightful reading of New Comedy even at those points where he pointedly deviates. Significantly, earlier drama—along with other forms of literary production—is explored as a source for inspiring learned compositions that bear Plautus' individual poetic imprint. However, beyond the (re)examination of Plautus' relationship to Hellenistic literature and culture, the volume also includes studies that look at the way in which contemporary discussions on various topics, such as the popularization of Greek philosophy and medicine, the reaction to the Romanization of Greek philosophy, or the Roman attitudes towards philosophy in general, are articulated not just on the Roman comic stage, but more generally in the earliest extant literary expressions of cross-cultural reception that builds on *aemulatio*. Plautus' reaction to contemporary religion as a cultural product subjected to evolution and stirring cultural debates is also a topic attracting strong attention. Finally, as the first Latin poet whose work survives in extant form, Plautus is also examined as a major literary figure who influenced the development of Latin literature significantly. Roman Comedy developed in Rome at the same time as many other genres, and an interaction among them is only natural and expected. In this context, the following discussion also points to Plautus' reception as a major figure of Latin literature, already from an early stage.

All in all, this book treats Plautus as a prominent literary figure whose work is pioneering in the development of Latin literature and simultaneously reflective upon ongoing cultural developments, at a time which identifies with a turning point in Roman (literary) history. Although, as shown below, recent scholarship has examined several aspects of Roman comedy's 'contexts' and Plautus' work, this collection

advice about specific problems... In short, the *doctus vir* is both learned and discerning". Cf. the Greek *sophos* as used by the comic playwrights, discussed in Wright (2012) 25-30.

foremost examines Plautus as a competent poet whose oeuvre stands in a fruitful dialogue with critical moments throughout the development of the Roman history of ideas. Along these lines, while all studies of this book offer close-readings of Plautus' comedies, they do not simply offer isolated interpretations of the texts under examination but are set to place these interpretations into a 'framework'. In this context, as noted, this collection aims to confirm that Plautus' erudite work does not only correspond with matters of literary history but also succeeds in turning various intellectual and social matters into a multi-faceted poetic composition.

* * *

We believe that the publication of this volume is timely. In less than a decade, we witnessed an outburst of scholarly interest in the study of Greek and Roman New Comedy, through the publication of important collective volumes and reference works. The massive *Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Comedy*, the first collective work of this kind, covers, for the first time, various themes of both Greek and Roman comic production, from the beginnings up until its revival in Late antiquity and related genres.³ As to the best-known representative of Greek New Comedy, we have recently seen important edited volumes on Menander. The volume *New Perspectives on Postclassical Comedy*, edited by Petrides and Papaioannou (Pierides series), paved the way in accentuating new approaches in the study of New Comedy—primarily Menander—with emphasis on interpretation rather than textual criticism.⁴ The studies in this volume point to New Comedy both as performance and in relation to its social and cultural context. Another collective volume, edited by Alan Sommerstein (*Menander in Contexts*),⁵ aims to place Menandrian comedy into its cultural and literary framework. The volume impacts the study of the history and development of ancient (Greek) comedy overall as it covers a wide range of themes, from Menander's reflection of contemporary social and intellectual issues to his reception up until the modern stage. The ambitious *Encyclopedia of Greek Comedy*, a project managed by the same editor, is a monumental work, which stems from the

³ Fontaine and Scafuro (eds.) (2014).

⁴ Petrides and Papaioannou (eds.) (2010).

⁵ Sommerstein (ed.) (2014).

collaboration of many international scholars, covering every aspect of the study of Greek comedy.⁶

On the Latin side, the outburst of scholarship is striking. A number of significant collective volumes have recently appeared, covering different aspects of Roman theater, either focusing on a specific theme (e.g. *Women in Roman Republican Drama*),⁷ or offering a variety of approaches to Latin plays, such as the recent volume *Roman Drama and its Contexts* in the ‘Trends in Classics’ series,⁸ which presents a wide range of original studies on all kinds of Latin dramatic genres.⁹ Contextualization is here taken in its broadest sense: the studies of the volume offer new insights on a wide range of topics, such as the plays’ connection with other literary genres, their dialogue with several cultural and intellectual developments and their reception in later literature. Undoubtedly, this strong interest in Roman theatrical production has been advanced by the publication of the first up-to-date study on Roman theater by Gesine Manuwald (*Roman Republican Theatre*),¹⁰ which offers a fresh, comprehensive examination of the central aspects of all dramatic genres of the Roman Republic, taking into account the research findings of modern scholarship. Marshall’s earlier study on *The Stagecraft and Performance of Roman Comedy*, although primarily focusing on Plautine drama, opened up new perspectives for a holistic examination of Roman theatrical experience, “[b]y examining the plays as works intended for performance”.¹¹ A few years later, Timothy Moore contributed to the examination of the performance of Roman comedy with a comprehensive study on the plays’ musical elements (the use of *tibia*, voice and dance, meter and rhythm).¹² Roman (Republican) tragedy, for decades mostly neglected in favor of comedy’s fuller and thus more tempting evidence, has finally received a

⁶ Sommerstein (ed.) (2019). Several important monographs on Menander also appeared recently, revisiting various intellectual spectrums of Menandrian comedy: e.g. Nervegna (2013) on Menander’s reception in antiquity, Petrides (2014a) on performative contexts, Cinaglia (2014) on Aristotelian analogies.

⁷ Dutsch, James and Konstan (eds.) (2015).

⁸ Frangoulidis, Harrison and Manuwald (eds.) (2016).

⁹ For instance, individual contributions discuss several social or philosophical echoes in Plautine comedy, e.g. Slater (2016) on the way Plautus’ *Mostellaria* mirrors financial practices and philosophical discourses or complex composition techniques, often in dialogue with the comic tradition, e.g. Konstantakos (2016b) on Plautus’ use of folktale and fable material, and Papaioannou (2016) on Plautus’ self-conscious dialogue with dramatic conventions.

¹⁰ Manuwald (2011).

¹¹ Marshall (2006) 2.

¹² Moore (2012).

more comprehensive attention: a new series of editions of Roman tragic texts is under preparation (*Tragicorum Romanorum Fragmenta*),¹³ while the first *Companion to Roman Tragedy*¹⁴ aims to revive the interest in this genre, offering new insights on both Seneca's plays and the remains of the archaic period.

New publications on Roman Comedy are overwhelming. Peter Barrios-Lech has recently published a monograph on *Linguistic Interaction in Roman Comedy*,¹⁵ employing quantitative method and data analysis. The *Companion to Roman Comedy*, the first volume of this kind dedicated exclusively on Roman comedy, has just been published. Its introductory and at the same time rich and thought-provoking chapters aim to offer up-to-date and fresh insights into all 'contexts' of the genre.¹⁶ The *Companion to Terence*, published in 2013, is the first comprehensive, in-depth examination of Terentian comedies,¹⁷ ranging from individual presentations of the six plays to the discussion of themes addressed across the corpus (e.g. connection with literary tradition, social contexts, reception). Terence seems to have been the first of the two main Roman comic representatives to be examined in the light of new research trends. The collection of essays under the title *Terence and Interpretation*,¹⁸ in a unique structure that shows how Terence interpreted previous literary traditions and how his comedy was, in turn, interpreted by subsequent authors and scholars, offers a fresh look at Terence's position in Latin literature as himself an erudite literary figure; Terence's reception, on the other hand, has received extensive treatment in *Terence between Late Antiquity and the Age of Printing*.¹⁹

The publication of Wolfgang de Melo's new Loeb translation reinforced the latest generation of Plautine studies.²⁰ The first *Companion to Plautus* appeared last March.²¹ The well-known, successful series of

¹³ Two volumes have already appeared: Schauer (2012) and Manuwald (2012).

¹⁴ Harrison (ed.) (2015).

¹⁵ Barrios-Lech (2016).

¹⁶ E.g. Roman comedy's connection with Italian drama and Greek comedy, matters of composition (e.g. action, music, language), the genre's social interests (e.g. slavery, religion, legislation), and its reception from antiquity to modern productions; see further Dinter (ed.) (2019). As the editor notes in his prologue, "this volume accompanies, rather than guides, those approaching Roman comedy" (p. xvii).

¹⁷ Augoustakis and Traill (eds.) (2013).

¹⁸ Papaioannou (ed.) (2014b).

¹⁹ Turner and Torello-Hill (eds.) (2015).

²⁰ de Melo (2011-2013).

²¹ Dutsch and Franko (eds.) (2020).

book-length collections of Plautine essays, *Lecturae Plautinae Sarsinates*, on individual plays of Plautus, with specialists covering a wide range of themes, including reception, has now approached its conclusion;²² in the meantime, new collective volumes and monographs have enriched Plautine bibliography.²³ *Plautine Trends*,²⁴ a ‘Trends in Classics’ supplementary volume, presents a collection of papers on various Plautine plays and themes, focusing on comic plot and composition as well as on cultural contexts and reception. Ferdinand Stürner’s recent study on Plautine monologues²⁵ is influenced by the line of thought promoted in the past decades by the ‘Freiburg School’ and transcribed in a series of important works founded on the premise that the influences of the native theatrical traditions of Italian popular theater on Plautus are evident in his comic composition. On the other hand, Erik Gunderson, in *Laughing Awry: Plautus and Tragicomedy*,²⁶ examines Plautus’ dramatic techniques and the plays’ social dimension, mainly in regard to the mechanisms of humor and the audience’s response, while Rodrigo Tadeu Gonçalves, in *Performative Plautus*,²⁷ reads Plautus in light of the works by Barbara Cassin and Florence Dupont, on the concept of non-Aristotelian drama, as a work influenced by sophistic instruction and philosophy, and examines translation practice in archaic literature as a process that heavily depends upon its power of performance.

More generally, it seems that, along with more ‘traditional’ studies on Plautus’ performative and metatheatrical elements, plot construction or possible connection with his Greek models, recent scholarship has demonstrated a strong interest also in Plautus’ sophisticated treatment of literary tradition.²⁸ Groundbreaking in the appreciation of Plautus’ and his audience’s (more) elevated interests have been the monographs by Alison Sharrock and Michael Fontaine. Sharrock, in *Reading Roman Comedy*, shifting the focus from performance, approaches Plautus’ and Terence’s

²² Raffaelli and Tontini (eds.) (1998 onward); the last volume (2017) comprises studies is dedicated on *Truculentus* and *Vidularia*.

²³ For an overview of important bibliography on the basic themes associated with Plautine studies (e.g. Italian theatrical tradition, Roman audience, metatheater, the Freiburg School, stagecraft), see Petrides (2014b) 440-441. Karakasis [(2014a) xiii-xvii] gives a comprehensive assessment of the major developments of Plautine bibliography of the fifteen years prior to that volume. The overview in the present introduction aims to single out the most recent additions to this extensive list.

²⁴ Perysinakis and Karakasis (eds.) (2014).

²⁵ Stürner (2011).

²⁶ E. Gunderson (2015).

²⁷ Gonçalves (2015).

²⁸ E.g. Traill (2005), M. Wright (2013).

plays as literature,²⁹ challenging the “underlying prejudice about the playwrights as fundamentally different from respectable poets like Vergil, or even Ovid”.³⁰ Similarly, Fontaine, in examining *Funny Words in Plautine Comedy* proves Plautus as a “philologist of Greek and Latin”,³¹ who offers linguistic jokes and word-plays of various levels, some of which require an audience that was “elite, philhellenic, and versed in the same classics of Greek literature that were studied throughout the rest of the Hellenistic *oecumene*”.³²

Ever inviting new readings, the old question of Plautus’ debt to his Greek originals is now being revisited through the new, large-scale research project “Anchoring Innovation”,³³ a collaboration of specialists based in various Dutch institutions: among other authors, Plautus is re-examined as to the creative way he deals with his Greek models through the concept of ‘anchoring’, that is, the audience’s direction to a creation’s sources and, simultaneously, the author’s self-conscious presentation of an innovative work that stands in an antagonistic dialogue with its models.³⁴

The interests of Plautus’ audience are variously addressed anew by several scholars who have directed their attention to further, wide-ranging themes, such as scientific knowledge,³⁵ echoes of contemporary philosophical discussions,³⁶ or even financial concerns.³⁷ The re-examination of Plautus’ audience, which seems to have included Romans of various intellectual capacities,³⁸ stands in line with recent scholarly interest in revisiting the cultural background against which early Republican literature was produced.³⁹ On the other hand, Amy Richlin, recently in her monograph *Slave Theater in the Roman Republic: Plautus*

²⁹ Goldberg (2005), although focusing on reception, also examines Plautine work as literature.

³⁰ Sharrock (2009) ix.

³¹ Fontaine (2010a) 249-250.

³² Fontaine (2010a) 255.

³³ www.ru.nl/oikos/anchoring-innovation/

³⁴ See De March (2015) on *Pseudolus*; on the concept of ‘anchoring’ in Classics more generally, see Sluiter (2016).

³⁵ e.g. Papaioannou (2012) on mathematics; Fontaine (2013) and (2018) on Hellenistic medical practice.

³⁶ e.g. Dutsch (2009) on Pythagorean echoes, and (2014) on Plautus serving as evidence of early Roman acquaintance with Hellenistic philosophy; see also Caston (2014b).

³⁷ Sergi (1997) on the employment of the vocabulary of finance and commerce for the description of interpersonal relationships.

³⁸ On the diversity of Plautine audience, see also Manuwald (2011) 98-103.

³⁹ e.g. Volk (2015) on 2nd century BCE Romans being familiar with Pythagoreanism.

and Popular Comedy,⁴⁰ looks at Plautus' comedy not as 'text' but as popular performance that reflects contemporary social and political developments. Richlin reads Plautus' plays as works that express the experience of those from lower classes, and specifically as a depiction of the Roman slaves' harsh lives and desires. In this context, she maintains that Plautus must be interpreted in his historical context, and his comedies must be viewed as works addressed to popular interests and imagination.⁴¹

Evidently, Platine scholarship seems to follow three main approaches: a) studies concerned with form, i.e. the analysis of the text, including Plautus' exploitation of prototypes, often isolated from any cultural associations, b) studies that read Plautus' comedy against its historical context, i.e. the examination of Plautus against contemporary social and political developments, and c) studies that examine Plautus' intellectual interests, i.e. the examination of Plautus' interaction with more 'elevated' themes, such as philosophical ones. The question often extends to Plautus' audience and the extent to which this should be perceived as popular or more refined. This volume does not pursue a sharp categorization: its aim is neither to advocate or reject any of the approaches presented above nor to argue in favor of a low- or high-class audience. Rather, by acknowledging the heterogeneous character of Plautus' audience, the aim of this collection is to contribute to the ongoing examination of Plautus' intellectual interests and, at the same time to place the Platine oeuvre in its contemporary cultural milieu; to re-contextualize, in short, Plautus' 'historicity', with emphasis on the playwright's literary as well as cultural interests, with 'cultural' here incorporating various kinds of ideological discourses, including philosophical, religious, or, even, scientific ones. All

⁴⁰ Richlin (2017); see also Richlin (2014). On Plautus' slaves, see also the study by R. Stewart (2012), who treats Plautus' "dramas as historical artifacts" that "reveal the contours of a Roman discourse about slavery" and "show a range of cases that illustrate an awareness of slavery as a complex problem" (quotations from the Introduction, in p. 2); also R. Stewart (2008), a contextualization of the activity of Plautus' slave tricksters "as a staged public performance in a developing slave society", as exemplified in the *Pseudolus* (quote from p. 69).

⁴¹ Pansiéri (1997) is another notable study that advances the biographical approach of Plautus' plays, though his arguments are often naïve and flawed, trusting to the letter the ancient sources and reading literally, as reflections of actual social tension, the descriptions of clash between members of the upper vs. the lower social classes in the plays. On occasion, however, he advances arguments that are worth consulting as when he reads key metatheatrical passages, such as the antagonism between the *meretrix callida* and the *servus callidus* in *Mil.* 874-946 for the control and direction of the play's plot, as reflections of tension between scripted and improvisatory theater.

in all, this volume aims to re-examine Plautus' work as the first extensive testimony to the cultural developments of its time. While, as seen above, there have been various studies, often following a 'historicizing' approach,⁴² on the way Plautus' comedy corresponds with various social, contemporary developments, we believe that a study exclusively dedicated to the playwright's sophisticated treatment of several literary, intellectual and cultural issues and debates is a *desideratum*.

Naturally, Plautus' oeuvre is firmly linked to its cultural context:⁴³ it is a precious testimony to the Middle Roman Republic, a period of Roman history for which literary sources are scant. Despite its Grecizing character and its generic stylization, the formation of Plautine comedy is determined by its mission as a performance genre that addresses an audience of varied social and intellectual origins. As such it is rooted in contemporary social trends and political anxieties. In this context, although it constitutes an oeuvre whose primal purpose is to secure the audience's entertainment,⁴⁴ Plautus' work has been also seen as a medium for commenting upon—or even criticising—various institutions of contemporary Roman society.⁴⁵ The stage activity of Plautus' heroic tricksters, an outstanding Roman improvement on the Greek heritage of the genre, successfully interweaves the playwright's literary and sociohistorical interests: Plautine slaves have been seen both as entertaining comic innovations and as a medium for social commentaries, perhaps as an opportunity for the playwright to give

⁴² See, for instance, more notably, Gruen (1990); McCarthy (2000); Leigh (2004). See also Dressler (2016), who reads "Plautus' thematic concern with ownership in general against the particular social and historical background of ownership over people as things in the Roman institution of slavery" (p. 16). On Plautus' exploitation of ideas related to Roman institutions, see also Feeney (2010); the argument is summarized in p. 281: "in *Pseudolus* Plautus used the concept of financial credit as a key trope for configuring the kind of belief that the audience grants to the stage event".

⁴³ For a concise but informative discussion of various major elements of historical and social significance traced in the composition of Roman comedies, see now Manuwald (2019) 25-28; as she succinctly notes, "the genre of drama, being performed to mixed audiences, is rooted within contemporary historical and social conditions" (p. 25).

⁴⁴ Segal (1987) remains the classic study on Plautus' humor, although it looks at Plautine comedy almost in a one-dimensional way, i.e. its saturnalian context.

⁴⁵ Gruen [(1990) 124-157] provides an excellent basis in this respect; as he succinctly points out, "Plautus did not reproduce current events, but called attention to their implications" (p. 126).

voice to a suppressed group of his audience, while at the same time they pose as authority figures of superior erudition.⁴⁶

Slavery is of course just one example of Plautus' dexterous exploitation of a basic social structure. Similarly, Plautus' exploitation of religious practices and beliefs is manifold: 'serious' religious elements, often reflecting ongoing practices known to members of the *palliata* audience, are combined with an entertaining, or even parodic element.⁴⁷ *Curculio* offers perhaps one of the best-known instances of comic representation of a religious theme: the description of a religious practice, that of incubation at the temple of Aesculapius, adds a humorous touch to the portrayal of all comic characters involved.⁴⁸ As **Seth A. Jeppesen** shows in this volume (Chapter 8), religious parody is dexterously exploited also in *Cistellaria*. His essay, entitled "Meaningful Mispronunciations: Religious Parody in Plautus' *Cistellaria* 512-527", discusses how Plautus' reference to a moment of Roman history, through a religious parody vividly enriched by the clever exploitation of a prayer's performative elements, becomes a vital part of the play's composition and adds to its central themes. More specifically, for Jeppesen Alcesimarchus' oath in this play—with its errors—functions as a parody of public religious practices; this is particularly evident if we turn to the performative aspects of the prayer. What is more, the passage might refer to a specific moment in Rome's history, the dedication of the temple of Ops Opifera. As Jeppesen demonstrates, the audience's ability to trace this clever, twofold parody—general and (perhaps) specified—is related to the interpretation of central themes exploited in this play and affects the understanding of the whole comedy. If this parody indeed refers to a specific event of Rome's history, then the comic exploitation of a religious—and possibly historical—moment becomes a vital element of

⁴⁶ Scholarship on Plautine slaves, and especially the typical *servus callidus*, is enormous; see the classic studies by Fraenkel (2007) 159-162 (the English translation of a study originally published in 1922), and Stace (1968); also McCarthy (2000). On Plautine slaves' social background, see mostly the work of Amy Richlin (on which see extensively above).

⁴⁷ *Amphitruo* is a good case study in this respect: Segal [(1987) 171-191] believes that the play is not concerned with anything 'elevated' but simply celebrates sexual desire. On the other hand, more recently, E. Gunderson [(2015) 191-202] points to the tragic resonances of the play, as to the gods' power over men.

⁴⁸ See, for instance, Jeppesen [(2013) 72-75] on the parodic element of this scene. On its comic effects, primarily in regard to the pimp's representation, see also Demetriou in this volume (pp. 201-202).

the play's composition and accentuates Plautus' ability of exploiting the social context of his plays in creating a multi-faceted dramatic creation.

Plautine twins constitute another dramatic instance that reveals this manifold poetic *vis* of our playwright. As **Chrysanthi Demetriou** argues in Chapter 7, this well-known dramatic motif, extensively explored by Plautine scholarship as to its performative and compositional effects,⁴⁹ can also form an interesting case study for Plautus' ability to project various theoretical discussions in his comic creation. In her essay, "Twins in Plautus: A Dramatic Motif in Cultural Context", Demetriou examines possible philosophical echoes in Plautus and, in addition, extends the exploration of Plautus' theoretical interests to the identification of several scientific dimensions. In this context, this paper shows that Plautus' exploitation of twins—especially as to their conception and origins—finds parallels in popular beliefs as well as medical treatises. Furthermore, as this discussion suggests, Plautine twins' rivalry is not just a matter of plot composition; it is represented through a dexterous manipulation of concepts about time as well as various beliefs about mirrors in philosophy and science. Thus, Demetriou's survey confirms that Plautus' exploitation of this intriguing phenomenon is deeply informed by several ongoing theoretical discussions and proves much more sophisticated than a first, dramatic reading often suggests.

The examination of Plautus' philosophical interests receives attention also in another essay of this volume. For **Ruth R. Caston** ("Friends without benefits? Philosophical dimensions of Plautus' conception of friendship"; Chapter 6), Plautus' correspondence with philosophical questions can be traced also in cases of 'unconventional' friendship, which share significant parallels with—and occasionally counterarguments to—relevant discussions found in philosophical treatises. According to Caston, 'unconventional' friendships can be found in cases in which friends do not share the same social status or age. In this context, the paper focuses on two specific cases: Periplectomenus and Pleusicles in *Miles gloriosus*, and Philocrates and Tyndarus in *Captivi*. These two cases of friendship, based on virtue rather than self-interest, stand in contrast with other types of friendship presented in each play respectively, while they simultaneously show a remarkable level of correspondence with various philosophical concepts about friendship. More interestingly, this dialogue is often based on Plautus' *subversion* of well-known philosophical ideas.

⁴⁹ For twins as a dramatic motif in Plautine comedy, see now Demetriou (2019) who shows how Plautus makes use of the standard characteristics of a 'twins comedy', as these are mainly found in *Menaechmi*, in the construction of Palaestrio's first intrigue in *Miles gloriosus*.

The study of Plautus' interest in philosophy is not just a significant contribution to the interpretation of Plautine comedy *per se*; it, more importantly, pertains to the investigation of contemporary Romans' acquaintance with philosophical schools. It is well-known that the traditional view suggests that Greek philosophy was spread in Rome primarily after the famous philosophers' embassy of 155 BCE.⁵⁰ However, recent studies have pointed out that early Latin literature shows a certain level of acquaintance with various philosophical questions—and perhaps also certain philosophical groups—while some schools of thought,⁵¹ such as Pythagoreanism, seem to have been considered by Romans not as Greek 'products' but rather as core elements of the native Italian tradition.⁵² Of course, another possibility should be always borne in mind: Latin texts might simply reflect elements of philosophical interest that first developed in their Greek originals. It is well-known that New Comedy specifically was heavily influenced by Peripatetic philosophy.⁵³

However, even if Plautus' debts to his Greek originals is the only firm explanation for his possible correspondence with philosophical concepts, it should be nevertheless emphasized that our playwright naturally addressed themes that were intellectually challenging and as such would win over the members of the Roman elite among his audience. As Caston in this volume reminds us, Hellenistic philosophy of the 3rd and 2nd centuries would have been known to some of Plautus' contemporary Romans; she thus rightly indicates that "it was not only a question of contact, but also of interest and challenge".⁵⁴ In other words, the co-examination of Plautine comedy with several philosophical debates is important not only for tracing exact parallels between the two but also for pointing to comedy as a source that exploits theoretical questions which, although often central in everyday life, were at the same time complex and manifold.

On the other hand, we should not forget that the composition of Plautus' work coincides not only with important intellectual and cultural

⁵⁰ See Dutsch [(2014) 1], who however argues against this view, by discussing evidence on the Romans' philosophical interests as attested in Ennius, Plautus, Cato and Lucilius.

⁵¹ See, for instance, the study of Caston (2014b) (also discussed above).

⁵² See Volk (2015).

⁵³ Cinaglia (2014) provides an informative analysis of Menander's comedy in light of Aristotelian philosophy, with emphasis on ethics, psychology and epistemology. Cinaglia does not argue for Menander's direct dependence upon Aristotle but rather aims to show that the two ancient sources show significant parallels which inevitably find their roots in common cultural contexts.

⁵⁴ See below p. 177.

developments but also with a critical time for Roman history. The emergence of several genres of early Latin literature, including Plautus' comic drama, takes place in a period during which Rome progressively becomes a major geopolitical agent in the Western Mediterranean;⁵⁵ the Punic Wars form a decisive turning point to this end.⁵⁶ The Romans' relationship with the Carthaginians seems to have gone through various stages, until the two long-term enemies eventually sign a treaty of friendship in 189 BCE. Unsurprisingly, this long hostility and suspicion against the Carthaginians, possibly up to some extent softened in periods of peace, is not absent from early Roman literature.⁵⁷ In this context, Plautus' *Poenulus* testifies to the way the Romans of his time would have looked at their neighbors. More importantly, this play, staged after the end of the Second Punic War, might also reflect the Romans' changing attitudes towards their former enemies. It is thus not surprising that the portrayal of Hanno in Plautus' *Poenulus* has proven manifold and has received various interpretations.⁵⁸

Peter Barrios-Lech, in Chapter 3, argues for Hanno's sympathetic characterization, through a co-examination of this Plautine 'stranger' along with similar cases from the Greek comic tradition, by focusing on scenes of encounter between foreigners and natives. In his essay "Theatergrams in Plautine Comedy: The Case of Hanno in *Poenulus*", Barrios-Lech investigates the figure of the 'other' in Plautus' *Poenulus* by employing a concept that, to our knowledge, has not been used in Plautine

⁵⁵ Cf. the title of the work by Leigh (2004), who examines the correspondence of Roman comedy with its historical context, while he simultaneously shows how literature and history stand in a recurrent dialogue.

⁵⁶ On the important impact of the victory against the Carthaginians upon Rome as well as the establishment of the *Ludi Romani* in 240 BCE in connection with the Romans' conquest of Sicily, see Feeney (2016) 122-126.

⁵⁷ On Carthage in Latin literature, see now Giusti (2018). Although this study focuses on Vergil's *Aeneid*, chapter one deals with mid-republican literature, including (fragmentary) dramatic poetry; in pp. 75-87, Giusti turns to Plautus' *Poenulus*, the only extant representation of Carthaginians in Middle Republican literature, and explores how the portrayal of Hanno includes not only stereotypical negative characteristics of the Romans' former enemy but also positive features which would eventually turn this character into a mirror of the self for the Romans and the playwright, thus to some extent reflecting the total defeat—and Roman absorption—of Carthage.

⁵⁸ Hanno has been seen both positively, as regards for instance his piety, and negatively, mainly as to his incestuous and deceptive methods; see the synopsis of the main scholarly views by Maurice [(2004) 267-269] who reads Hanno as a reflection of the well-celebrated Plautine trickster.

scholarship yet: the idea of *theatergram*, a concept that has been used in readings of Italian Renaissance and Shakespearean drama. As Barrios-Lech explains, this concept can be a useful tool in the examination of the elements that Plautus inherited from the comic tradition: a theatergram is broader than a stock-role, since it encompasses a character's relationships with other characters, and, at the same time, it stands for a combination of common dramatic actions/scenes, which together form a larger (and sustainable) dramatic unit. By employing this new approach, Barrios-Lech reads the foreigner of *Poenulus* against scenes from Aristophanes, Euripides, Alexis and mime, and demonstrates that Plautus' representation of the foreigner forms a theatergram that is based on that of his original and is at the same time enriched by elements from other theatergrams, as found in other sources; all in all, Hanno's representation, while based on known theatergrams, at the same time challenges the audience's expectation, forming a unique, Plautine creation. Barrios-Lech's survey adds an important element to Hanno's characterization: by looking at the way in which Plautus handles his encounter with the Greeks in light of the relevant literary tradition, we can discern the development of this character. In turn, we can appreciate Plautus' dexterity in exploiting a theme that deals with recent political history through a clever exploitation of literary tradition. In other words, the employment of a well-known literary theme becomes in this case a vehicle for the playwright to enhance the sympathetic representation of a dramatic character which is firmly connected with a crucial moment of Roman history.

Of course, Plautine characters are rarely identified with historical personalities, nor is the playwright interested in creating a historically faithful atmosphere. The reference to the 'barbarian poet' (*poeta barbarus*) in *Miles gloriosus* 211 is one of the few examples in which Plautine comedy seems to be referring to a real person. This unexpected comment, made by the *senex lepidus* Periplectomenus in a vivid description of the *servus callidus*' effort of concocting a cunning scheme, has been traditionally interpreted as a funny comment on Naevius' imprisonment.⁵⁹ However, **Michael Fontaine**, in his "Before Pussy Riot: Free Speech and Censorship in the Age of Plautus" (Chapter 9), argues that this reference does not allude to Naevius but to Sotades, an Alexandrian Greek poet, who was prosecuted for *lèse majesté*. In doing so, Fontaine revisits the Romans' acquaintance with Alexandrian literary history and, in turn, their concerns for free speech. If this proposal is correct, it results in the reassessment of two major cultural developments of early Republican

⁵⁹ See for instance Hammond, Mack and Moskalew (1970) 96 on *Mil.* 211.