

# The Classical Review

<http://journals.cambridge.org/CAR>

Additional services for *The Classical Review*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)



---

## Leo on the Plautine Cantica *Die plautinischen Cantica und die hellenistische Lyrik*, by F. Leo (Berlin, Weidmann, 1897). M. 7.50.

E. A. Sonnenschein

The Classical Review / Volume 12 / Issue 06 / July 1898, pp 319 - 320  
DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X00032698, Published online: 27 October 2009

**Link to this article:** [http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract\\_S0009840X00032698](http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X00032698)

### How to cite this article:

E. A. Sonnenschein (1898). The Classical Review, 12, pp 319-320 doi:10.1017/S0009840X00032698

**Request Permissions :** [Click here](#)

## LEO ON THE PLAUTINE CANTICA.

*Die plautinischen Cantica und die hellenistische Lyrik*, by F. LEO (*Berlin, Weidmann, 1897*). M. 7.50.

THE present treatise is the first attempt to consider the metrical constitution of the Plautine cantica in the light of recent discoveries in the field of Hellenistic verse; and it will be studied by students of Plautus as breaking new ground and raising, if not solving, problems with which every future editor will have to reckon. At the same time it is a valuable supplement to the author's edition of Plautus, which does not contain an account of the metres.

Ever since 1896, when Mr. Grenfell published the Alexandrian erotic fragment, the date of which appears to be about the same as that of the death of Plautus, the question has been mooted how far we have in it a specimen of the kind of verse on which the Plautine cantica may have been based. A certain similarity between the two was noticed by Crusius in his review of the fragment in the *Philologus*.<sup>1</sup> A wide field of enquiry is thus opened up, the problem being to trace the relation between the lyrical measures of Plautus and Greek dramatic lyrics, as developed between the time of Euripides and the 2nd Century, B.C.; and this enquiry has an important bearing not only upon the question of Plautus's originality as an artist in metre, but also upon the reconstitution of the Plautine cantica themselves.

To this problem Leo now addresses himself with characteristic boldness and ingenuity, and all students of Plautus will be grateful to him for the important light which he throws on the matter. But the difficulties of the problem are enormous. Neither term of the comparison is fully known; and one of them is only just emerging from the total obscurity in which it has lain up to the present time. What may not the next few years bring forth in the way of new discoveries, which may throw wholly unexpected light upon Hellenistic verse?

The difficulty as to the other term of the comparison is illustrated by the fact that Leo has to begin by an elaborate examination of the cantica of Plautus themselves, in order to determine first of all what metres he employed and how they should be regarded and arranged. As every editor of Plautus

knows, this is a question by no means solved, and every page of this treatise bristles with problems and possibilities of error. It has been the practice of the most scientific editors to accept as a rough basis of operations the division into lines and cola exhibited in the best MSS. and to scan them as best they may, acquiescing in any heterogeneity of metres to which they may thereby be forced, while at the same time attempting to reduce the many to one, so far as was possible by way of reasonable emendations and redivision of lines. Leo holds that the 'Kolometrie' of the MSS. did not originate with Plautus himself, and it cannot do more than give us a basis of departure in the work of reconstruction. It is obvious that in such a *modus operandi* there is plenty of room for differences of opinion, even within the pale of strictly scientific procedure: and Leo would be the first to admit that his constructions are not the only possibilities.

Still it must be confessed that the result at which Leo arrives is one which has much to commend it. Hitherto it has been supposed that the polymetry of the cantica—'mixed multitude' or 'buntes Gemisch,' as it has been called by some editors—is a distinctively Roman creation, due to Plautus himself, whereas the other metres of his plays are due to his originals. In opposition to this Leo maintains that the Plautine lyrics are the last outcome of a long process of development which began with the monodies of Euripides, and in which the erotic fragment of Mr. Grenfell is to be regarded as the missing link.<sup>2</sup> Plautus is then neither an originator of an entirely new departure in this field, nor a mere adapter of existing metrical material, but rather the continuer of a certain line of development. His contribution to the process was similar in kind and extent to that made by some of his predecessors, whose claims to be regarded as original creators is generally admitted; that is to say, he was original in so far as he isolated a type which he found in sporadic use before his time, and employed it in successive lines for the composition of *δλα ᾄσματα*. Leo thus builds a bridge from

<sup>2</sup> Leo scans this according to the scheme of Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, who makes it mainly dochmiac throughout. It is to be noted that dochmiacs do not appear in Plautus, as Leo himself admits.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. 55, pp. 353-384.

Euripides to Plautus: and even though further research may show that some of the piers do not rest on a very secure foundation, the general result of his enquiry seems likely to be established.

From one point of view the upshot of this treatise is disappointing. Little or nothing is here done to reduce the apparently fortuitous concourse of metrical atoms to order and unity. Indeed, the general tendency of Leo's procedure does not seem to lie in that direction. But it would be premature to pronounce finally on this point until the continuation of the treatise (promised on p. 112) is forthcoming. Meanwhile, however, I confess that I am not satisfied with his treatment of the cola

commonly called trochaic (e.g.  $\text{—} \cup \text{—} \cup \text{—}$ ) and the colon  $\text{—} \cup \cup \cup \text{—}$ , frequently found in connexion with cretic verses. Leo contents himself with maintaining that they are of 'cretic character' or a 'constituent part (*Bestandtheil*) of cretic verse.' But this does not enable us to see a unity, unless we are told how the apparent trochaics can be reduced to cretics, or (it might be suggested) the apparent cretics to trochaics. I am far from intending to imply that such a reduction is impossible; but Leo has not given it, and perhaps was precluded from giving it by his antagonism to the 'rhythmical' school of Westphalia.

E. A. SONNENSCHNEIN.

#### BENNETT'S *DE SENECTUTE*.

*M. Tulli Ciceronis Cato Maior de Senectute.*  
With notes by CHARLES E. BENNETT,  
Professor of Latin in Cornell University.  
Boston: Leach, Shewell, and Sanborn.  
1897. Pp. viii. + 129. Sixty cents.

PROFESSOR BENNETT has given us an edition of the *De Senectute* that is admirable for its brevity and conciseness. In an introduction of but four pages he tells the essential facts about the Dialogue. In the commentary his aim is to give only such information as the student needs in order to understand the text. Most of his comments have to do with questions of language-interpretation and are unusually clear. We should be glad, however, for more references to the grammar in a book intended for comparatively elementary students.

With most of the syntactical notes it is easy to agree, although in a few cases a different explanation might be preferred. Reid's suggestion on *cui qui pareat* (i. 2, 7) brings out the thought better: *unde discerem* (iv. 12, 20) is characteristic rather than purpose; the mood of *scandant* (vi. 17, 19) is subjunctive regardless of the indirect discourse; the note on *quicquid agas* (ix. 27, 11) is inadequate, and the statement that many editors explain *serendis* (vii. 24, 30) as an ablative absolute is rather non-committal. Among many interpretations that deserve to be commended, that of *quid est enim* (ii. 5, 20) seems particularly happy, and the note on *cum...fuisset* (vi. 16, 13) which is founded on the classification laid

down by Professor Hale in his 'Cum-constructions' (pp. 184—189, American Edition), is a model of clearness and completeness.

We are disappointed at the scarcity of literary comment and should welcome references to Latin and English literature, since the *De Senectute* so readily lends itself to this sort of comparison. To make room for such references we could well dispense with the too frequent translations found in the notes. Sentimental Tommy's search for 'hantle' must not be made too easy or he loses the desired training.

The absence of quantity-marks over the long vowels and the relegation of the running English analysis to the commentary, where it properly belongs, leave nothing to mar the beauty of the text page. The loss of a hyphen at the end of line 21, p. 28, is the only error in printing that has been noticed. *Fuissem* (p. 121, line 9) is doubtless a mistake in quotation for *essem*.

The text is mainly that of Mueller, but the critical material which has appeared since 1879 has been utilised and Bennett's text differs from Mueller's in about fifty places. Bennett's own contribution is *exerceri videbamus for mori videbamus* (xiv. 49, 18). Most editors simply omit *mori*, although a few defend it. Some conjectures accepted are; Lachmann's *noenium* for *non enim* (iv. 10, 25), Bernay's *plusque* for *postque* (iv. 10, 26), Ribbeck's *Lupo for ludo* (vi. 20, 19), Reid's *quoniam* for *cum* (xix. 68, 22), Bergk's *dacrumis* for *lacrumis* (xx. 73, 19).