



## The Braggart Soldier

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### Places Discussed

Periplecomenus's house. Home of the old gentleman Periplecomenus in Ephesus, a Roman town in Asia Minor. The front of this house appears stage right (to the audience's left); its front door opens onto the street, which is represented by the stage, on which all the action takes place. The stage right exit, right of the house, leads to the harbor. It is clear that the houses share a common wall through which a clever servant has made a secret opening, which is a key to the plot. The house's roofs are also connected, since the soldier's servant Sceledrus is able to move from one to the other while chasing a monkey.

Pyrgopolynices' house. Home of the braggart army captain, Pyrgopolynices, adjacent to Periplecomenus's house. The description of this house gives much more detail on the structure of Roman houses. From the roof of Pyrgopolynices's house, his neighbor's servant violates his privacy by peering into his living quarters. This is possible because the roof slopes inward to an opening (*impluvium*) below which a courtyard or patio (*atrium*) is open to the sky. Here the slave observes the mistress of Pyrgopolynices kissing the houseguest of his neighbor Periplecomenus. This house is situated stage left (to the right of the audience), and the stage left exit next to it leads to the forum.

### Bibliography:

Anderson, William S. *Barbarian Play: Plautus' Roman Comedy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993. A well-written scholarly work. In his discussion of Plautus' *The Braggart Soldier*, Anderson suggests that in this play the quality of "heroic badness" is transferred from a conventional hero to the clever slaves who outwit their masters. Exhaustive bibliography.

Hanson, J. A. S. "The Glorious Military." In *Roman Drama*, edited by T. A. Dorey and Donald R. Dudley. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965. Plautus' egotistical soldier is the most famous use of a military stereotype in Roman drama. This essay is an excellent examination of the subject.

Hunter, R. L. *The New Comedy of Greece and Rome*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1985. The chapter on "Plots and Motifs: The Stereotyping of Comedy" explores the use of the comic soldier in Roman comedy. An index also points to specific passages discussed. Detailed notes and bibliography.

Segal, Erich. *Roman Laughter: The Comedy of Plautus*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968. Numerous references to the play, noted in the index to passages from Plautus, as well as useful comments on "military heroes" and relevant discussions of slaves. Extensive notes.

Slater, Niall W. *Plautus in Performance: The Theatre of the Mind*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985. Approaches Plautus' works from a different perspective. Some specific comments and notations about *The Braggart Soldier* suggest the subtleties that may be missed in a casual reading.

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