

## PLAUTUS AND GREEK TOPOGRAPHY

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Much has been made of inaccuracies in Plautine topography, particularly in the plays set elsewhere than at Athens. However, discussion has rarely been substantiated by study of the actual topography of the sites concerned. Here an archaeologist may make a contribution.<sup>1</sup>

In the *Amphitruo* Plautus ascribes a harbor to Thebes. References to the harbor are not incidental; it has an integral place in the plot. For Amphitruo has just arrived thither from his campaign against the Teleboae, and much of the off-stage action of the play takes place there or on the road from there to Thebes or back (Sosia makes the journey at least five times). Indeed some scholars have suggested that one scene of the play (551–632) is actually staged there; an attractive suggestion in some ways, for it would remove the main difficulty in the notorious lines 629–32, but it should be rejected on the ground that such a change of scene is unparalleled in Roman Comedy, and in what we have of Greek New Comedy.<sup>2</sup> Plautus seems to have wanted his

<sup>1</sup> My thanks are due to Prof. E. W. Handley, who encouraged me to look at these problems, and read a draft of this article.

<sup>2</sup> The only possible parallel would be in the Roman tragedy *Octavia*, in which the final scene (877–983) seems to take place at Ostia (K. Münscher, "Senecas Werke," *Philologus Suppl.* 16 [1922] 139–40). The suggestion was first made by H. W. Prescott ("The *Amphitruo* of Plautus," *CP* 8 [1913] 14–22), taking up a note by J. L. Ussing (*Plauti Comoediae* 1 [Copenhagen 1875] note on *Amphitruo* 547 = 551). It has been accepted by C. C. Conrad, *The Technique of Continuous Action in Roman Comedy* (Diss. Chicago 1915) 33; G. Burckhardt, *Die Aktenteilung in der neuen griechischen und in der römischen Komödie* (Diss. Basel 1927) 24; R. T. Weissinger, *A Study of Act Divisions in Classical Drama* = *Iowa Studies in Classical Philology* 9 (1940) 88; apparently also by P. W. Harsh, *Handbook of Classical Drama* (Stanford 1944) 339. It has been rejected by F. Leo, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur* 1 (Berlin 1913) 132 note 1; E. T. Merrill, "Plautus *Amph.* 551 ff. and Simultaneous Action in Roman Comedy," *CP* 11 (1916) 340–41; A. Thierfelder, *De rationibus interpolationum Plautinarum* (Leipzig 1929) 125 ff., 129; G. E. Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy* (Princeton 1952) 122–23; J.

audience to imagine the scene as taking place during the journey of Amphitruo and Sosia from the harbor to Thebes, which they reach at the end of the scene.

The "Harbor of Thebes" has been almost universally dismissed as a stupid mistake, either by Plautus or by his Greek source. Of those who attribute the mistake to Plautus some scholars explain that he was unthinkingly applying a normal stage convention, that in comedy the action is set in a city with a harbor.<sup>3</sup> (One may object at once: would not the same convention have applied to Plautus' source?) Some believe that the play, being a mythological parody, is set in an imaginary world, where anything is possible.<sup>4</sup> We are frequently reminded that in *The Winter's Tale* (III.3.1-2) Shakespeare makes Bohemia a

Genzmer, *Der 'Amphitruo' des Plautus und sein griechisches Original* (Diss. Kiel 1956) 107; S. Mariotti, "Adversaria Philologica III: 1. [Plaut.] *Amph.* 629-32," in *Studien zur Textgeschichte und Textkritik G. Jachmann gewidmet*, ed. H. Dahlmann and R. Merkelbach (Köln 1959) 123-26.

See the earlier discussion of lines 629-32 by Ussing (ad 623-25) and P. Langen, *Plautinische Studien = Berliner Studien* 5.1 (1887) 237-38. I am not convinced that lines 629-32 need be rejected. If they are retained one must assume another journey by Sosia to the harbor and back (as Genzmer, Mariotti). This is feasible if one accepts the convention about off-stage journeys to which I refer below (page 16). Admittedly this would be Sosia's quickest journey, in amount of "stage time."

<sup>3</sup> Langen 96: "Da sonst bei Plautus der Schauplatz immer eine Seestadt ist, so ist er auch hier bei dieser Gewohnheit geblieben, ohne weiter darüber nachzudenken, ob dies auch passe, da er seinem Publikum gegenüber auf solcherlei Dinge nicht aufmerksam zu sein brauchte"; A. Polczyk, *De unitatibus et loci et temporis in nova comoedia observatis* (Breslau 1909) 3; C. H. Buck Jr., *A Chronology of the Plays of Plautus* (Baltimore 1940) 27 note 8, referring to the convention in Roman Comedy that one arriving from foreign parts arrived by way of the harbor; H. Marti, *Untersuchungen zur dramatischen Technik bei Plautus und Terenz* (Winterthur 1959) 13: "Anders geht es offenbar in einer Komödie nicht"; W. B. Sedgwick, edition of the *Amphitruo* (Manchester 1960) note on line 164: "Plautus unthinkingly retained the normal stage convention, by which one exit led to the forum, one to the harbour."

<sup>4</sup> C. Knapp, "Travel in Ancient Times as Seen in Plautus and Terence," *CP* 2 (1907) 14 note 1 (p. 15): "reference is made to a *portus* (of Thebes!). . . What wonder if in a play which lies close to the magic world Thebes develops a harbor?"; F. A. Wright, *Three Roman Poets* (London 1938) 85: "The scene is laid in Greece but it is a Greece of fantasy, like Bohemia, where Thebes is a sea-port with a harbour"; E. Bignone, *Storia della letteratura latina*, 1<sup>2</sup> (Firenze 1946) 222-23, referring to the exotic geography produced by Plautus' imagination; Marti 13: "Die Handlung des Amphitruo ist gänzlich in einem geographischen Phantasie-Land lokalisiert"; cf. G. Michaut, *Plaute* 2 (Paris 1920) 225, who is uncertain whether Plautus or his source is responsible, but inclines to the view that Plautus misunderstood his source.

coastal country, but a more striking, and more certain, mistake in that play is the reference to Delphi as an island (III.1.1-3).<sup>5</sup> Some scholars ascribe Plautus' mistake to his ignorance of Greek geography (Ussing, della Corte, Paratore);<sup>6</sup> others to his carelessness over incidentals (Langen, Palmer).<sup>7</sup> They argue that the mistake must be Plautus', since no Greek poet could have made this mistake, and no Greek audience would have allowed it to pass.<sup>8</sup>

I wonder whether the corollary of this is necessarily true: that a Roman audience would have allowed anything to pass. A Roman army had been in central and southern Greece from 198 to 194 B.C. and in central Greece from 191 to 188; the most widely accepted, and it seems to me correct, dating of the first production of the *Amphitruo* is between 188 and 186. The Roman army was a citizen army and one should therefore assume that by this time some at least of Plautus' audience had seen service in Greece. It is not safe to assume that it was still totally ignorant of Greek geography.

Others believe that the harbor must have been present in Plautus' Greek source; that a Greek poet could have made this mistake, through sheer carelessness, or through ignorance (if, for example, he was a western Greek), or through resorting to poetic licence in applying a

<sup>5</sup> Bohemia has bedeviled discussion. Since Palmer's reference to it (below, note 7) the parallel has been quoted frequently by both sides in the argument.

<sup>6</sup> Ussing, note on line 149: "*Portum* Plautus geographiae parum gnarus Thebis tribuit"; on line 400 (= 404): "*Thebarum portus, quem sibi finxit poeta*"; F. della Corte, *Da Sarsina a Roma: Ricerche Plautine* (Genoa 1952) 49; E. Paratore, edition of the *Amphitruo* (Firenze 1959) 6; cf. B. M. W. Knox, *Oedipus at Thebes* (New Haven 1957) 63.

<sup>7</sup> Langen 96: "mir scheint dies vielmehr aus einer gewissen Sorglosigkeit in den Nebensachen herzurühren"; A. Palmer, edition of the *Amphitruo* (London 1890) xv note 1; F. Middelmann, *Griechische Welt und Sprache in Plautus' Comoedien* (Diss. Münster 1938) 84, 91. Cf. F. G. Osann, "Über den *Amphitruo* des Plautus," *RhM* 2 (1834) 306-7; A. Cartault, *L'Amphitryon de Plaute* (Paris 1893) 26-27; H. Jacobi, *Amphitryon in Frankreich und Deutschland* (Diss. Zürich 1952) 12-13. Kakrides attributed the mistake to clumsy *contaminatio* by Plautus ("Plautus *Amphitruo*," *RhM* 57 [1902] 465).

<sup>8</sup> Langen 96: "Dass der griechische Dichter seinem Publikum eine solche Auffassung der geographischen Lage Thebens sollte vorgeführt haben, ist kaum glaublich"; Palmer xv note 1: "No Greek poet could have made this mistake. The Athenians knew Thebes as well as the Romans knew Capua. Even a Syracusan audience would have hooted at such ignorance. But Plautus was as careless of geography as Shakespeare"; E. Caldera, "Sulle fonti dell'*Amphitruo*," *RIFC* (NS) 25 (1947) 145-54; Sedgwick, note on line 164.

stage convention of New Comedy, that the action is set in a city with a harbor (a reflection, most probably, of the situation at Athens). We are told that Greek audiences would be no more fussy than Roman about the exact portrayal of geographical reality, especially in a mythological parody. Again we are referred to Bohemia.<sup>9</sup> One might add the argument that it is difficult to imagine the Greek play with no mention of the harbor, since Greek legend made Amphitruo return from his expedition by sea (Apollod. 2.4.7).

A few who accept that there is a mistake think it uncertain who is responsible,<sup>10</sup> or maintain that such questions must simply not be

<sup>9</sup> A. Müller, "Szenisches zur römischen Komödie. (1) Rechts und links," *Philologus* 59 (1900) 8-15: a New Comedy convention; K. A. Dietze, *De Philemone comico* (Diss. Göttingen 1901) 74: "etsi scaena non Athenis erat, tamen fere omnia ita agebantur, quasi Athenis esset. Itaque mihi quidem persuasum est poetam Graecum ex consuetudine Attica, non inscitia Plautum in Amphitruone Thebas prope mare sitas esse finxisse"; W. Schwering, *Ad Plauti Amphitruonem prolegomena* (Diss. Münster 1907) 54, quoting Niejahr (*Progr. Stadtgymnas. Halle/S.* 1888, 14 note) on this New Comedy convention: "quam arcte portus cum hac scaena coniunctus sit, eo demonstratur, quod inepte aliquando a poetis in fabulas inducitur. In *Amphitruone* Plauti etsi locus Thebis est, tamen scaena ita est conformata, quasi esset in urbe maritima"; Kelley Rees, "The Significance of the Parodoi in the Greek Theater," *AJP* 32 (1911) 400-1; R. C. Flickinger, *The Greek Theater and its Drama* (Chicago 1918, 4th ed. 1936) 208: the Athenian situation transferred, Bohemia; G. Thiele, "Plautusstudien," *Hermes* 48 (1913) 526: the Athenian situation transferred even to Thebes, but the *Amphitruo* is a mythological burlesque; P. Lejay, *Plaute* (Paris 1925) 163: "Les poètes comiques avaient adapté leur sujet aux conditions locales de la représentation. Ils n'attachaient pas à l'exactitude des données plus d'importance que Shakespeare" (followed by R. Perna, *L'originalità di Plauto* [Bari 1955] 301 note 1); A. de Lorenzi, *I precedenti greci della commedia romana* (Napoli 1946) 36-38; Genzmer (above, note 2) 20 note 22: "Der 'Hafen' Thebens ist so eng mit der Handlung verflochten, dass er auf das Original zurückgeführt werden muss. Wenn Ussing, Palmer, Langen und Kakrides eine derartige Vernachlässigung geographischer Gegebenheiten der Unkenntnis oder Sorglosigkeit des römischen Bearbeiters zuschreiben, so rechnen sie mit zu hohen Anforderungen des griechischen Publikums an die exakte Wiedergabe der realen Verhältnisse (noch dazu in einer Mythenparodie!)." G. de Sanctis (*Storia dei Romani* IV Part 2.1 [Firenze 1953] 18 note 44) suggested the possibility that Plautus' source was a play by a western Greek, not necessarily well informed about Boeotian topography, e.g. Epicharmus or an author of phlyax-plays (one thinks especially of Rhinthon). But see Palmer, quoted above, note 8.

<sup>10</sup> Michaut (above, note 4); W. R. Chalmers, "Plautus and his Audience," in *Roman Drama*, ed. D. R. Dudley and T. A. Dorey (London 1965) 21-50. Chalmers identifies the *portus Persicus* and the harbor of Thebes (34-35.) This is certainly wrong, since though Plautus confuses the two harbors at one point they are clearly distinct in the rest of the play. See below p. 21. Some other references are not explicit on this point, e.g. Harsh (above, note 2) 339 (whose is the "bold distortion"?). Even some editors of the play have ignored the problem, e.g. A. G. Amatucci (Bari 1903), E. W. Miller (Greenville, Pa. 1965).

pressed.<sup>11</sup> Only one scholar, to my knowledge, has denied that there is any mistake at all.<sup>12</sup>

Confusion has been caused by a careless use of terms. For example, we are told that in the *Amphitruo* Thebes is a "seaport with a harbour" (Wright), "Seestadt mit Hafen" (Langen), "Hafenstadt" (Marti), "città marina" (Paratore), "città di mare dotata di un porto" (della Corte), "porto di mare" (Bignone), "port de mer" (Michaut). This is manifestly not true, for Thebes is not on the coast, but Plautus never implies this. The harbor of Thebes is clearly depicted as quite distinct from Thebes and at some distance, though a walking distance, away.<sup>13</sup>

A similar situation is portrayed in the majority of Plautus' plays, which are set in Athens, and in that case it accurately reflects the geographical reality. Strictly speaking Athens is not a port or "Hafenstadt," but has a port, Piraeus, four and a half miles away on the coast.

Did not Thebes similarly "have a port"? This, when considered, has always been denied. For example, Lejay imperiously asserts, "Thèbes, située au milieu des terres, n'a jamais eu de port et ne peut en avoir, même à quelque distance." Boeotians were boorish landlubbers; Thebes lay inland and therefore had no contact with the sea. (Ancient Athenian propaganda is still surprisingly effective in its influence.) But Boeotians were not all landlubbers like Hesiod. For a time in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. they had, under Theban leadership, a respectable fleet. Epaminondas even made a brief bid to challenge Athenian supremacy at sea.<sup>14</sup>

Nor was Boeotia a harborless land. Ephorus noted the natural

<sup>11</sup> A. Ernout, Budé Edition of Plautus I (1932) note on *Amph.* 101: "Il ne faut pas serrer de trop près le récit de pareilles aventures, pas plus qu'il ne faut essayer d'expliquer comment Thèbes, ville située au milieu des terres, en pleine Béotie, se trouve être devenue un port de mer, ou tout au moins, comme Athènes, avoir eu un port." (He sees the important point.)

<sup>12</sup> K. Abel, *Die Plautusprologe* (Diss. Frankfurt a. M. 1955) 32-33. His discussion of the question is sound, though not supported by topographical study.

<sup>13</sup> See for example *Amph.* 533, 690, 730-32. The point is recognized by Th. Kakrides, "Ein geographisches Versehen des Plautus," *BPW* 1902, 1180-82; Knapp 14 note 1; Lejay (above, note 9); Ernout (above, note 11); Abel (above, note 12); Mariotti (above, note 2).

<sup>14</sup> P. Salmon, "L'armée fédérale des Béotiens: (6) Le navarque et la flotte béotienne," *AC* 22 (1953) 358-60; P. Roesch, *Thespiens et la Confédération Béotienne* (Paris 1965) 110-12. For a fuller treatment of the Boeotian fleet and harbors, see my discussion in *AA* 1968, 21 ff., 89 ff. (see below, note 18).

advantages of Boeotia in fronting three seas and in having many harbors, though he adds that they did not make the best of these advantages.<sup>15</sup> The quality of these harbors has been underrated;<sup>16</sup> they served mainly local trade and fishing, but they could at times be of greater importance. For Thebes, an inland city out of sight of the sea, the important question was accessibility. The harbors of southern Boeotia were rather inaccessible, because of the intervening mountains of the Helicon range.<sup>17</sup> But at the point on the north coast of Boeotia nearest to Thebes lay Anthedon, close to an easy pass through the hills through which ran the ancient road to the central plain and Thebes. Anthedon was the natural harbor of Thebes in classical antiquity.<sup>18</sup> Thebes was not completely cut off from the sea.

Admittedly Anthedon is 15 miles from Thebes (Creusis on the south coast about the same). This seems a fair distance, but it was clearly a convention of later Greek and of Roman Comedy that characters could make fairly long journeys off-stage in an unrealistically short amount of "stage time." For example, in Menander's *Dyscolus* Getas goes the 13 miles from Phyle to Athens on the day on which the action takes place, and returns with a cook before the end of Act II. In Plautus' *Captivi* Philocrates goes from Aetolia to Elis (460), arranges an exchange of captives, and returns to Aetolia by line 768, coming on stage again at line 922. Many other parallels could be quoted.<sup>19</sup> The

<sup>15</sup> Strabo 9.2.2, p. 400; *FGH* 70 F119. Ephorus divided the north coast at Euripus.

<sup>16</sup> For example, by A. W. Gomme, "The Topography of Boeotia and the Theories of M. Bérard," *BSA* 18 (1911-12) 189-210 (= *Essays in Greek History and Literature* [Oxford 1937, reprinted New York 1967] 17-41). However, he was right to reject Bérard's theory of "isthmus trade routes."

<sup>17</sup> Creusis, Siphac, Chorsiae; see Roesch (above, note 14) 52-58 and references there. Creusis, the nearest and most accessible, was, under the name Ripadostro, the port of mediaeval Thebes, whose trade was mainly with the West. But in antiquity it was the port of Thespieae, most anti-Theban of the Boeotian cities.

<sup>18</sup> U. Kahrstedt, *Das wirtschaftliche Gesicht Griechenlands in der Kaiserzeit* (Bern 1954) 111: "An der Nordküste ist Anthedon von Natur der Hafen von Theben." See now H. Schläger, D. J. Blackman, J. Schäfer, "Der Hafen von Anthedon," *AA* 1968, 21-102. Heraclides Criticus, who visited Anthedon on his way from Thebes to Chalcis, gives the distance from Thebes to Anthedon as 160 stades; the figure seems too high (cf. F. Pfister, "Die Reisebilder des Herakleides," *SBWien* 227.2 [1951] 38-39).

<sup>19</sup> On the *Dyscolus* passage see T. B. L. Webster, "Menander: Production and Imagination," *Bull. John Rylands Library* 45 (1962-63) 239; "The Comedy of Menander," in *Roman Drama* (above, note 10) 7-8; E. W. Handley, edition of the *Dyscolus* (London/Harvard 1965) note on line 393. On the *Captivi* see Langen 119-21; Ph. E. Legrand,

brief amount of "stage time" allowed for the journeys to and from the harbor of Thebes was therefore quite acceptable. Off-stage action occupied less of the audience's attention.

There is therefore no reason to assume that a Greek audience would have balked at a reference to the harbor of Thebes. This is not to say that the Greek poet whose play was Plautus' source had firsthand knowledge of the harbor, or even knew exactly where it was; but he knew that Thebes had a harbor, and so did his audience. The harbor is certainly part of the Greek original, as its integral place in Plautus' play indicates. There is no reason to see here the hand of an ignorant or careless Plautus.

One other possibility may safely be dismissed: neither Plautus nor a Greek poet was inventing a deliberate impossibility, intended to raise a laugh (like the "Swiss Navy") or to help in creating a fantasy-land.

The poet would naturally describe the conditions of his own day. In the case of a mythical plot, as in the *Amphitruo*, this is of course anachronistic. But the anachronism remains, on any interpretation.

At this point we may consider the contested reading in *Epidicus* 14. The MSS reading is *portum*: the victorious Athenian army returns to

*The New Greek Comedy* (London 1917) 334-35; P. J. Enk, *Handboek der Latijnse Letterkunde* 2.1 (Zutphen 1937) 232; Duckworth 132.

Parallels exist in earlier Greek drama: e.g. in Aeschylus, *Agam.* and *Eumen.*; Euripides, *Suppl.* 598-633; Aristophanes, *Achar.* 130/2-175 and *Lys.* 1013-72. For other parallels see Conrad 19-34; Weissinger 28-30, 42-44, 58, 88-90; cf. Harsh 27 on the "double chronology" (all above, note 2). For compression of off-stage action (with no travel involved) cf. *Amph.* 1039-52.

Curculio goes to Caria and back in four days. Some have argued that here "Caria" cannot be the district in Asia Minor, mainly because of the distance and because a forum there is mentioned (336), and that "Caria" must be the name of a small (and unidentified) town near Epidaurus. But a Roman audience, if not a Greek, would surely have assumed that the name referred to the district in Asia Minor (though this does not of course prove the point). The first objection can be met by the "double chronology" explanation. Nor would a forum in Caria sound implausible, since "Caria" would be taken to mean a town in Caria, just as "Aetolia" in the *Captivi* was taken to mean a town in Aetolia; cf. W. Görbig, *Nominum quibus loca significantur usus Plautinus* (Diss. Halle/S. 1883) 41; Knapp 6 note 1; *contra* E. König, "Quaestiones Plautinae," *Progr. Gymnas. Patschkau* (1883) 7-8; F. Hüffner, *De Plauti comoediarum exemplis Atticis quaestiones maxime chronologicae* (Diss. Göttingen 1894) 18; F. Leo, *Plautinische Forschungen* (2nd ed., Berlin 1912) 200 note 2; T. B. L. Webster, *Studies in Later Greek Comedy* (Manchester 1953) 197.

*Piraeus*, by sea, from its campaign against Thebes. Marti thinks this is impossible, since Thebes has no harbor and one would not return from Thebes to Athens by sea; he accepts the mss reading, but regards it as a mistake by Plautus.<sup>20</sup> Others read *portam* to correspond with lines 217 and 221. But there is no reason why line 14 should correspond, and the sea journey is not completely implausible. The army had large amounts of booty to transport, and coastal travel by sea from Boeotia to Attica occurred in antiquity and since. The mss reading should be retained in line 14, and should not be regarded as a mistake by Plautus.

In the *Poenulus* Plautus gives Calydon a harbor; this too has aroused scorn. He implies that the harbor is some distance from the town, for the *advocati* say (650): "nisi dudum mane ut ad portum proces-simus." The site of Calydon is now well inland. Even in Pliny's day (*NH* 4.2.6) it was seven and a half miles up the River Evenus (now Phidari) from the sea. Therefore some have talked of a mistake, either by Plautus or the author of his source, the *Καρχηδόνιος*.<sup>21</sup>

The geography of the area in antiquity is difficult to reconstruct, for we must allow for the possibility of changes in the coastline due to deposits of alluvium. It is unlikely that the site of Calydon was ever on the coast in historical times, though it may well have been closer to it than now. But a harbor of Calydon is attested by Pausanias (7.21.1) and implied in other passages.<sup>22</sup> It was probably near modern Kryoneri, where submerged remains have been reported.

<sup>20</sup> Marti 13 note 28; similarly Langen 138–39; cf. A. L. Wheeler, "The Plot of the *Epidicus*," *AJP* 38 (1917) 241; Wheeler and G. E. Duckworth, edition of the *Epidicus*, note on line 14.

<sup>21</sup> By Plautus: Knapp 14 note 1; della Corte (above, note 6) 49. In his source: Rees (above, note 9) 401. Legrand, however, maintained that there is no mistake, and believed that the play was actually first produced at Calydon, in circa 221 B.C. ("Pour l'histoire de la comédie nouvelle: (4) L'original du *Poenulus* de Plaute," *REG* 16 [1903] 358–74). The question is strangely ignored by Marti in his discussion of harbor-themes. Either Plautus or his source does seem to forget at one point that the scene is Calydon not Athens (372); alternatively this may be the result of *contaminatio*. Cf. G. Langrehr, "De Plauti *Poenulo*," *Progr. Gymnas. Friedland* (1883) 25; Langen 185; Polczyk (above, note 3) 9–10; Leo (above, note 19) 171 note 1; Duckworth 201ff.; E. Fraenkel, *Elementi Plautini in Plauto* (Firenze 1960) 265–66.

<sup>22</sup> E.g. Xen. *HG* 4.6.14: the Athenians prevented Agesilaus (on his retreat from Acarnania) from crossing to the Peloponnese from Calydon (τὸν ἐκ Καλυδῶνος ἐκπλουν . . . ἐκώλυον). Cf. Thuc. 2.83.3; Eur. *Frag.* 518 (*Meleager*); [Scylax] 35. Strabo (10.2.



Such a situation—a πόλις a few miles inland with its “out-port” on the coast—was common in ancient Greece. There was a technical term for the out-port: ἐπίνειον. Notable examples of such πόλεις, besides Athens, are Elis, Sparta, Argos, Corinth, Megara, Colophon, and, near Thebes, Thespieae. Nor would such a situation have been unfamiliar to a Roman audience.<sup>23</sup>

The harbors of Thebes and Calydon are the two instances usually adduced to show that in Greek New Comedy, Athenian topography was sometimes imposed on other cities, where particular plays were set, in conflict with geographical reality. However, these instances do not show any such conflict. A convention may well have developed that the setting of a comedy was always a city with a harbor, but not that the city itself had to be a sea-port, for Athens was not either. There is therefore no evidence here that the bounds of topographical plausibility were transgressed.

What of the other plays of Plautus set elsewhere than at Athens? The *Cistellaria* and *Curculio* contain no reference to a harbor, though this would have been perfectly plausible. The *Cistellaria* is set in Sicyon, which lay several miles inland and had its ἐπίνειον on the coast.<sup>24</sup> The *Curculio* is set in “Epidauros”; not in the city but at the sanctuary with its surrounding settlement. Epidauros city lay on the coast five miles to the north-east. If, as I believe, “Caria” in this

21, p. 460) speaks of a λίμνη μεγάλη καὶ εὖοπος near Calydon, but this was probably a lagoon, not necessarily navigable by vessels larger than fishing boats. For a full discussion see W. J. Woodhouse, *Aetolia* (Oxford 1897) 91–105; E. Dyggeve, F. Poulsen, K. Rhomaios, *Das Heroon von Kalydon* (Copenhagen 1934) 11–12; A. Philippson and E. Kirsten, *Griechische Landschaften* 2.2 (Frankfurt a. M. 1958) 348, 354.

<sup>23</sup> K. Lehmann-Hartleben, *Die Antiken Hafenanlagen des Mittelmeeres* (= *Klio Beiheft* 14, 1923) 24–25; cf. Arist. *Pol.* 1327A32–33; Schol. ad Thuc. 1.30.2.

<sup>24</sup> Until 303 B.C. the city lay in the coastal plain, but it is clear from the events of 369 and 366 that the harbor was a separate entity with its own fortifications (Polyaen. 5.16.3; Xen. *HG* 7.3.1–3; 7.4.1; but cf. Diod. 20.102.2). In 303 Demetrius Poliorcetes moved the city up onto the former acropolis, over two miles from the sea. Cf. Strabo 8.6.25, p. 382 (wrongly identifying the early city and ἐπίνειον); Paus. 2.12.2; G. Lippold, “Sikyon,” *RE* 2A (1923) 2529, 2532–34; C. H. Skalet, *Ancient Sicyon* (Baltimore 1928); Kahrstedt (above, note 18) 41; G. Roux, *Pausanias en Corinthe* (Paris 1958) 134; Philippson and Kirsten (above, note 22) 3.1 (1959) 161–62. Lehmann-Hartleben has a different interpretation (42, 290).

play means the district in Asia Minor, then sea voyages and a harbor are implicit in the story.<sup>25</sup>

The *Rudens* is set near Cyrene, a city which lay ten miles inland from its *ἐπιλείον*, Apollonia. The setting is unique: not the city or its harbor, but the shore some distance away. City and harbor lie off the same side of the stage, the only case in Plautus' plays, and being both at a distance are not fully distinguished (e.g. 856). The unusual setting makes the play difficult to compare.<sup>26</sup>

The *Captivi* is set in an Aetolian city which has a harbor. Perhaps the Greek playwright had Calydon in mind, but the expanded Aetolia of the late fourth and third century possessed other harbors on its southern coast, such as Naupactus and, for a time, Oeniadae. These were both true sea-ports.

The *Menaechmi* is set in Epidamnus. There are indications in the play that the harbor is somewhat distinct from the city, though too much weight should not be laid on them. For example, Menaechmus Sosicles says to Erotium (399 ff.):

egoquidem neque umquam uxorem habui neque habeo neque huc  
umquam, postquam natus sum, intra portam penetravi pedem.  
prandi in navi, inde huc sum egressus, te conveni.

In fact at Epidamnus the harbor lay outside the city wall, but close to the city.<sup>27</sup> Here portrayal and reality may be thought to coincide sufficiently, but in the *Miles Gloriosus* this is not certain. The play is set in Ephesus, which was a sea-port par excellence, its harbor an integral part of the city. At the end of the play Sceledrus tells Pyrgopolinices of the departure of Philocomasium and Pleusicles towards the harbor (1432-33):

<sup>25</sup> See above, note 19. On Epidaurus city see A. Philippson, "Epidauros (1)," *RE* 6 (1909) 46-50; Philippson and Kirsten (above, note 22) 3.1.105-6; cf. Lehmann-Hartleben 8-9.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. M. Johnston, *Exits and Entrances in Roman Comedy* (Diss. Columbia 1933) 58, 73-76; F. Marx, edition of the *Rudens* (Amsterdam 1959) notes on 32 ff., 631. On Apollonia see R. G. Goodchild, *Cyrene and Apollonia* (London 1963); J. du Plat Taylor, *Marine Archaeology* (London 1965) 170-78.

<sup>27</sup> See especially Polyb. 2.9; App. BC 2.39; Paus. 6.10.8; L. Heuzey and H. Daumet, *Mission archéologique de Macédoine* (Paris 1876) 349-57 and Plan II; A. Philippson, "Dyrrachium," *RE* 5 (1905) 1882-87 with plan; Lehmann-Hartleben 35-36. Epidamnus had considerable trade with Italy.

nam postquam porta exierunt, nil cessarunt ilico  
 osculari atque amplexari inter se.

Here at least it seems that Plautus or his source may be not strictly accurate.<sup>28</sup>

Finally a related problem in the *Amphitruo*: the *portus Persicus*. Plautus makes it *Amphitruo*'s last port of call on his homeward voyage from his campaign against the Teleboae, not far distant from his final destination, the harbor of Thebes (404, 412, 823). Plautus does in fact confuse the two at one point.<sup>29</sup> Festus attempted an explanation: "Plautus seems to mean the *mare Euboicum*, since the Persian fleet is said to have anchored there, not far from Thebes."<sup>30</sup> Unsatisfactory, but he was guessing as much as we. Modern scholars have done no better. Some have simply dismissed the name as an invention by Plautus.<sup>31</sup> But it is difficult to see why he should have invented it, for it seems to serve no dramatic or comic purpose.

Almost certainly Plautus found the name in his Greek source; as *λιμὴν Περσικός* it fits well into an iambic line, in all cases. Here too it is difficult to see a reason for its invention, though firm conclusions about a lost work are impossible. It is therefore worth considering whether a harbor of this name may actually have existed, lying near the end of *Amphitruo*'s route back by sea from the land of the Teleboae (normally identified with the Taphii, though Plautus is far from explicit on the subject). A voyage from the north side of the entrance to the Corinthian Gulf to the north coast of Boeotia is long but not implausible.

<sup>28</sup> Until Lysimachus moved the city (ca. 290: before or after the date of Plautus' source?) its harbor lay just outside the walls, but the new city harbor was enclosed within the walls; cf. Lehmann-Hartleben 17-18, 22-23, 123-26, 182, 202-4. This harbor was later approached through a gate, but not until the first century B.C. at the earliest; cf. G. Niemann and W. Wilberg, *Forschungen in Ephesus* 3 (Wien 1923) 189-213.

<sup>29</sup> Compare 730-32 and 823; cf. Langen 97; Cartault (above, note 7) 26; Marti 13. Marti wrongly states that the *portus Persicus* is the "Ausgangspunkt für die Heimfahrt der Athenen"; thus also Middelmann (above, note 7) 84; de Sanctis (above, note 9); cf. F. W. E. Rost, *Opuscula Plautina* 1 (Leipzig 1836) 5, who thought it pure fiction by Plautus.

<sup>30</sup> Festus 217 M (238.10 L): "Persicum portum Plautus cum ait, mare Euboicum videtur significare, quod in eo classis Persarum dicitur stetisse non procul a Thebis."

<sup>31</sup> Ussing, note on 408 (= 412), 816 (= 823); Langen 96-97; Palmer, note on 1.1.250 (= 404), a sensible comment; Ernout (above, note 11) note on 412; Caldera (above, note 8) 145; Paratore (above, note 6) 6; Sedgwick is uncertain, note on line 404.

Since Festus the name has been explained as deriving from *Πέρσης*, and Plautus may well have believed this. But, apart from the anachronism, this has not led to any plausible identification of the site. However, *Περσικός* could also derive from *Περσεύς*; Polybius calls the Third Macedonian War *ὁ Περσικὸς πόλεμος* (3.3.8; 3.5.4; 3.32.8). The mythical hero Perseus was an ancestor of both Amphitruo and Pterelaus, the Teleboan king, but this does not solve the problem.<sup>32</sup> I suspect that the solution lies in an entry in Stephanus Byzantius (519.8–9): *Περσεύς, πόλις Ἀττικὴ καὶ λιμὴν ὁμώνυμος, ὃν ἔκτισαν Ἀθηναῖοι*.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> De Sanctis suggested the derivation from *Περσεύς*, but his proposed explanation is not convincing (cf. also note 29).

<sup>33</sup> Meineke in his edition of Stephanus (1849, repr. 1958) suggested that the name was a corruption of *Πειραιεύς*, but offers no good reason. The only other possible candidate for *portus Persicus* seems to be the site of Salganeus, which probably lay on the Boeotian side of the Euripus strait. The position suits very well, but the justification of the adjective *Persicus* would be very tenuous: Salganeus was the Boeotian who piloted the Persian fleet into the strait and was put to death on a groundless suspicion of treachery (Strabo 9.2.9, p. 403; for the ancient references, but not the identification of the site, cf. J. G. Frazer, *Pausanias's Description of Greece* 5 [London 1913] 91–92). See now P. W. Wallace, *AJA* 73 (1969) 246.