

Mostellaria

Plautus' *Mostellaria* is one of ancient Rome's most breezy and amusing comedies. The plot is ridiculously simple: when a father returns home after three years abroad, a clever slave named Tranio devises deceptions to conceal that the son has squandered a fortune partying with pals and purchasing his prized prostitute's freedom. Tranio convinces the gullible father that his house is haunted, that his son has purchased the neighbor's house, and that he must repay a moneylender. Plautus animates this skeletal plot with farcical scenes of Tranio's slapstick abuse of a rustic slave, the young lover's maudlin song lamenting his prodigality, a cross-gender dressing routine, a drunken party, a flustered moneylender, spirited slaves rebuffing the father, and Tranio hoodwinking father and neighbor simultaneously. This is the first book-length study of *Mostellaria* in its literary and historical contexts. It aims to help readers and theater practitioners appreciate the script as both cultural document and performed comedy. As a cultural document, the play portrays a range of Roman preoccupations, including male ideologies of the acquisition, use and abuse of property, relations between owners and enslaved persons, the traffic in women, tensions between city and country, the appropriation and adaptation of Greek culture, and the specters of ancestry and surveillance. As a performed comedy, the play celebrates the power of creativity, improvisation and metatheater. In *Mostellaria*'s farce, sleek simplicity replaces complexity as Plautus aggrandizes his comic hero by stripping plot to the minimum and leaving Tranio to operate alone with no resources other than his quick wit. A chapter on *Mostellaria*'s reception considers modernity's continuing fascination with Plautine farce and trickery.

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A Stage Edition of the "Mostellaria" (Haunted House) of Titus Maccius Plautus

Plautus: Mostellaria Bristol Classical Press

Each number includes "Reviews and book notices."

"Mostellaria" is one of Plautus' most lively plays.

Probably based on a Greek original, Philemon's "Ghost", it concerns the scheming slave Tranio's attempts (including the invention of a haunted house) to disguise from his old master the sexual and financial prodigality of the latter's son. The complex plot of deceit and confusion is, in the way of the genre, finally resolved in reconciliation and forgiveness. This edition, first published in 1968, was conceived as a first reader in Roman comedy. Its introduction includes sections on Plautus, on the genre, on the play and its plot, on Plautine language, style and metrics. Annotation and a full vocabulary aid the beginning reader.

"The Captivi and the Mostellaria" from Plautus. Roman playwright of the Old Latin period (254-184B.C.).

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Reprint of the original, first published in 1869.

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Plays in Latin with English translations on facing pages;
introduction and introductory notes in English

Mostellaria is a play by the Roman author Plautus. Its name translates from Latin as The Haunted House (with the word Domus understood in the title). It is a comedy with a very linear plot. It is set in the city of Athens, on a street in front of the houses of Theopropides and Simo. Odin's Library Classics is dedicated to bringing the world the best of humankind's literature from throughout the ages. Carefully selected, each work is unabridged from classic works of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, or drama.

This volume takes a new approach to Roman drama by looking at comic and tragic plays from the Republican and imperial periods in 'context'. By presenting a number of case studies and considerations of wider issues, the 33 international contributors explore the role of Roman drama in contexts such as the literary tradition, the relationship to works in other literary genres, the historical and social situation or the intellectual background.

Titus Maccius Plautus is better known in English as Plautus, a prolific Roman playwright of the Old Latin period. As can be expected little is known of his early life. Accounts are reconciled that he was born in Sarsina, a small town in Emilia Romagna in northern Italy, around 254 BC. He first worked in the theatre as a stage-carpenter or scene-shifter. It would take quite some time for his acting talent to develop and then to be recognised. Redolent of the characters he

originally portrayed he adopted the names 'Maccius' (a sort of clownish stock-character popular in farces) and 'Plautus' (to mean "flat-footed" or "flat-eared", like a hounds' ears). In acting he appears to have met with some success and from it a regular income. An account now suggests that he then returns to manual labor and to have used his spare time to study Greek drama, especially the New Comedy of Menander. Whatever the impulse it is clear that he would, between c. 205 BC and the time of his death in 184 BC write a large and significant canon of plays. Indeed, his name became a byword of theatrical success. His comedies are, in the main, sourced from standard Greek models and this includes his reworking and adapting the plays of the earlier Greek playwrights for a Roman audience, adding local nuance and cultural aspects to ensure both their acceptability and understandability. These works are the earliest surviving intact works in Latin literature. Unfortunately, of the 130 plays which are attributed to him a mere 20 survive intact and a further 30 only in part or fragmented form. The historical context within which Plautus wrote can be seen, to some extent, in his comments on contemporary events and persons. In Plautus's lifetime Rome was becoming increasingly powerful, gathering influence and flexing its undoubted muscle to its greater good. The 17 year Second Punic War (218 BC - 201 BC) where for many years Italy itself

was rampaged by Hannibal and his armies before his own final, crushing defeat back in Africa were seismic events in the Ancient world, with hundreds of thousands killed and entire regions of Europe overrun and devastated. Against this horrific backdrop Roman theater was at the early stage of development and still dependent on the earlier Greek classics for a supply line of stories and characters. Expanding empires tend to appropriate from other cultures and call it their own. Plautus was a popular comedic playwright, who along with his near-contemporary, Terence, was able to integrate these earlier works into the demands of a vast new cultural, economic and military power that was growing at an incredible rate. Plautus died in Rome in 184 BC.

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This 2006 book examines notions of virtus as it contributed to Roman ideas of manliness.

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