

Slapstick 2 person scene

This scene is from the beginning of the Roman Comedy *The Braggart Soldier* or *Miles Gloriosus* written by the Roman playwright Plautus. Pyrgopolynices is a war hero, but also very pompous and arrogant. Artotrogus is his companion, his sidekick, who occasionally makes fun of him to the audience behind his back. Artotrogus stays with his friend mainly because of the meals Pyrgopolynices is able to provide.

Pyrgopolynices (*posing pompously, declaiming in heroic fashion*)

Look lively—shine a shimmer on that shield of mine

Surpassing sunbeams!

(*Dropping the bombastic tone*) Say, where the devil is Artotrogus?

Artotrogus He's here—

By destiny's dashing, dauntless, debonair darling,

A man so warlike, Mars himself would hardly dare

To claim his powers were equal of your own.

Pyrgopolynices (*preening*) Tell me, who was that chap I

Saved at Field-of-Roaches,

Where the supreme commander was Crash-Bang-Razzle-Dazzle

Son of Mighty-Mercenary-Messup?

Artotrogus Ah yes, the man with the golden armour.

You puffed away his legions with a single breath

Pyrgopolynices A snap—a nothing, really.

Artotrogus Nothing, indeed—that is compared to other feats I could recount

(*aside, to audience*) as false as this.

(*Continued aside to audience, as he hides behind shield*)

If any of you knows a man more full of bull

you can have me—free of tax.

Pyrgopolynices Hey, where are you?

Artotrogus (*popping up*) Here! And then that elephant in India—

The way your fist just broke his leg to smithereens.

Pyrgopolynices I gave him just an easy jab.

Artotrogus A jab, of course!

If you had really tried, you would have smashed

Right through his elephantine skin and guts and bone!

Pyrgopolynices No more of this.

Artotrogus Of course. Why bother to narrate
Your many daring deeds to me—who knows them all.

Pyrgopolynices How good's your memory?

Artotrogus It's perfect, sir. In Cilicia,
A hundred fifty. In darkest I-robya, hundreds more.
The total men you've slaughtered in a single day.

Pyrgopolynices Your sum is???

Artotrogus Seven thousand.

Pyrgopolynices I believe you're right. You're good at your accounts.

Artotrogus I didn't even write it down, it's all by heart.

Pyrgopolynices My god, you've got a memory!

Artotrogus Food feeds it

Pyrgopolynices Well, if you keep behaving as you have, you'll eat eternally.
I'll always have a place for you at dinner.

Artotrogus There's no one more handsome in all the earth
Why, all the women love you

Pyrgopolynices How wretched to be such a handsome man.

Artotrogus How true.
They are a bother, screeching and beseeching me
For just one little look at you. And sending for me!
That's why I can't give all my time to serving you.

Pyrgopolynices Then off we go!

(they exit)