

ASPECTS OF THE FIGURE OF THE ΑΓΡΟΙΚΟΣ IN ANCIENT COMEDY¹

I. Introductory remarks

The figure of the ἄγροικος seems to have been a stock character in Greek 4th-century comedy.² Several poets of Middle and New Comedy wrote plays entitled ἄγροικος (Antiphanes, Anaxilas, Augeas, Philemon, cf. Menander's Ὑποβολιμαῖος ἢ ἄγροικος) or ἄγροικοί (Anaxandrides); compare Plautus' *Agroecus* and Pomponius' *Rusticus*. Other 4th-century comic plays with 'agricultural' titles doubtless also featured rustics and countrymen among their characters (e.g. Alexis' and Amphis' Ἀμπελουργός, Alexis' Αἰπόλοι, Antiphanes' Κηπουρός and Προβατεύς, cf. Timokles fr. 38).³ Several farmers and countrymen appear in the comedies of Menander (*Dyskolos*, *Georgos*, *Heros*) and in the plays of the Roman *palliata* (Plautus' *Truculentus*, *Mostellaria*, Terence's *Adelphoe*). However, the definition of this comic figure appears somewhat problematic. In practice every comic countryman, i.e. every character of the comedies who lives permanently or chiefly in the country, may be included under the heading of the ἄγροικος. Unlike other stock figures of 4th-century comedy, such as e.g. the 'professional' types of the soldier, the parasite, the cook or the hetaira, the ἄγροικος is not a homogeneous 'type'; indeed, it might be misleading to speak of him as a comic 'type' at all. The ἄγροικος is rather a convenient name for a broader category of comic figures, which may include characters of different age and status: old men (Knemon in Men. *Dysc.*, Kleinetos in Men. *Georg.*, Demea in Ter.

1) I am grateful to Professor Richard Hunter for his many valuable comments on an earlier version of this essay; and to Professor James Diggle, who encouraged me to publish my discussion of the comic ἄγροικος.

2) On the figure of the comic ἄγροικος see in general Ribbeck; Legrand 72–80; Meineke I 332; Webster 56 f.; Ussher 55; Millis 18 f.

3) On these plays cf. Legrand 72 f.; Arnott, Alexis 81. Timokles fr. 38 is introduced by Clem. Alex. Strom. 4.7.1 with the words κατὰ τὸν γεωργὸν Τιμοκλέους; this means either that Timokles' comedy was called *Georgos*, or at least that it included a farmer as a speaking character.

Ad.), young men (Gorgias in Men. *Dysc.*, *Georg.* and *Her.*, Strabax in Plaut. *Truc.*) and even slaves (Truculentus in Plaut. *Truc.*, Grumio in Plaut. *Most.*, Daos in Men. *Dysc.*). When he is a free man, the ἄγροικος may be of any financial standing (Gorgias in Men. *Georg.* is very poor and makes a living as a hired worker of Kleainetos; Gorgias in Men. *Dysc.* possesses a small farm but is poor; Knemon in *Dysc.* and Kleainetos in *Georg.* are rather well off; Demea in Ter. *Ad.* is quite prosperous). The Greek word ἄγροικος often carries derogatory connotations, signifying a ‘boor’, a rude and coarse person.⁴ But this is not invariably a characteristic of all ἄγροικοι of Greek comedy: many of them display indeed traits of boorishness and crudeness (Knemon in Men. *Dysc.*, Strabax and Truculentus in Plaut. *Truc.*, Grumio in Plaut. *Most.*); but the word ‘boor’ would be hardly appropriate for characters like e. g. Gorgias in Men. *Dysc.* and *Georg.*

Nevertheless, most of the ἄγροικοι of 4th-century comedy present certain basic common qualities, a sort of ‘ethological common denominator’ which Middle and New Comedy almost standardly associate with men from the country: these traits unify and distinguish the comic ἄγροικος as a particular figure. First and foremost among them is the inexperience in the refined ways and manners of the city: cf. Stob. Anth. 2.7.11k, II p. 103.24 ff. Wachsmuth τὴν γὰρ ἀγροικίαν ἀπειρίαν εἶναι τῶν κατὰ πόλιν ἐθῶν καὶ νόμων, Men. *Georg.* fr. 5 Sandb. εἰμὶ μὲν ἄγροικος ... καὶ τῶν κατ’ ἄστου πραγμάτων οὐ παντελῶς ἔμπειρος. This often results in some suspicion or prejudice against city-life and its pleasures and also in a certain clumsiness or coarseness in the manners and behaviour of the ἄγροικος; but the degree in which each particular comic rustic displays these traits may vary considerably (contrast e. g. Knemon and Gorgias in the same play, Men. *Dysc.*). Another prominent characteristic of comic ἄγροικοι is a certain rigidity and clumsiness of language, which seems natural enough, since rustics would have little opportunity to practice the art of talk. This may take various

4) In this sense it can be applied metaphorically even to persons or things which have nothing to do with the country (e. g. Ar. Plut. 705 ἄγροικον ἄρα ... εἶναι τὸν θεόν, Vesp. 1320, Apollod. Car. fr. 5.14 ἄγροικον οὖσαν ἡμῶν τὴν Τύχην, Pl. Phaedr. 229e etc.). Ancient grammarians distinguish between ἀγροῖκος (countryman) and ἄγροικος (boor): see Pollux 9.12 ἄγροικος ὁ σκαιοῦς, καὶ ἀγροῖκος ὁ ἐν ἀγρῷ ζῶν, Ammon. Diff. 6. But the use of the words in classical texts does not support such a distinction (cf. Ussher 55, Millis 19).

forms. Many ἄγροικοι show a propensity for moralistic sententiousness, which is combined with maladroitness in the expression of their thoughts and manifests itself in comically pompous tirades (see e.g. Gorgias in Men. *Dysc.* 269–298, probably Kleainetos in Men. *Georg.* fr. 1–3, Grumio in Plaut. *Most.* 15–33, 72 f., Demea in Ter. *Ad.* 413–419).⁵ Aristotle (*Rhet.* 1395a6 f. οἱ γὰρ ἄγροικοὶ μάλιστα γνώμοτύποι εἰσὶ καὶ ῥαδίως ἀποφαίνονται) draws attention precisely to this trait. Other comic rustics show a predilection for emphatic language and absolute or exaggerated expressions: Kneemon in Men. *Dysc.* and Demea in Ter. *Ad.* accumulate in their speech absolute expressions signifying ‘all’ or ‘nothing’ (e.g. *Dysc.* 155–159, 169, 175, 427–429, 483, 505–508, 713–747, 751 f., *Ad.* 84–96, 540, 855–876) and are prone to exaggerations and inflated statements (e.g. *Dysc.* 160–178, 466–486, *Ad.* 90–93, 111 f., 381–385, 396 f., 544–547, 721–723, 757–762, 898); such linguistic traits indicate their rigidity and narrowness of spirit and tally with their loud, coarse comportment.⁶ Strabax in Plaut. *Truc.* seems almost ‘linguis-

5) Cf. in general Ribbeck 38 f.; Legrand 76 f. On Gorgias in *Dysc.* see in particular Handley 183; Arnott, *Language* 151, 155 f.; Arnott, *Values* 224–226; Arnott, *The Confrontation of Sostratos and Gorgias*, *Phoenix* 18 (1964) 117 f.; Arnott, *Menander, qui vitae ostendit vitam ...*, *G&R n. s.* 15 (1968) 14 f.; F. H. Sandbach, *Menander’s Manipulation of Language for Dramatic Purposes*, *Entretiens Fondation Hardt* 16 (1970) 116 f.; Gomme / Sandbach 179; Del Corno 25; A. Heap, *Word Order in Menander*, *LCM* 17 (1992) 56 f.; Ireland 133–135. On *Georg.* fr. 1–3 see Gomme / Sandbach 116 f.; W. G. Arnott, *Menander*, vol. I, Cambridge, Mass. / London 1979, 129. On Grumio see J. Collart, *T. Maccius Plautus. Mostellaria*, Paris 1970, 33; I. Mariotti, *La prima scena della Mostellaria di Plauto*, *MH* 49 (1992) 114–116. On Demea cf. E. Fantham, *Comparative Studies in Republican Latin Imagery*, Toronto 1972, 62, 68 f., 74; M. K. Papademetriou, *Στοιχεία της ομιλουμένης Λατινικής στον Τερέντιο και η χρήση τους στη διαφοροποίηση του λόγου των χαρακτήρων του*, Ioannina 1998, 248 f., 288; A. Bagordo, *Beobachtungen zur Sprache des Terenz. Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der umgangssprachlichen Elemente*, Göttingen 2001, 86 f.; and R. Maltby, *Linguistic Characterization of Old Men in Terence*, *CP* 74 (1979) 146, who notes Demea’s predilection for archaisms and long-winded expressions (much greater than that of other *senes* in the same play, like the urban Micio) and other individual linguistic traits which may characterize his rusticity; cf. also Donatus on *Ad.* 99.3, 136.3, 396.2.

6) See Arnott, *Language* 152 f.; Arnott, *Values* 223; Arnott, *Phormio Parasitus. A Study in Dramatic Methods of Characterization*, *G&R n. s.* 17 (1970) 54, 56; Arnott, *The Modernity of Menander*, *G&R n. s.* 22 (1975) 147–149; Del Corno 24 f. Compare Donatus on Ter. *Ad.* 88.2 (*vide, qua pompa, qua vociferatione dilatatur accusatio de moribus Demeae nihil non in maius efferentis*), 396.2, 397.1. The ἄγροικος in Antiphanes fr. 69 (on which see more below) also shows a propensity for emphatic language; note the accumulation of emphatic elements in vv. 8 f. (νὴ Δί’

tically retarded', as he talks in an extremely plain, indigent style and uses elementary syntax with brief and simple clauses (vv. 645–663, 922–924), which indicate his lack of education and underdeveloped faculties of expression. And the rustic slave Truculentus in the same play commits ridiculous linguistic mistakes.⁷

In the essay which follows I do not aspire to offer an up-to-date 'Ribbeck', a comprehensive ethological study of the ἄγροικος in ancient literature; nor do I attempt a full presentation of all the rustics in extant Greek and Roman comedy. I only intend to explore certain aspects of the comic portrayal of the ἄγροικος. I am chiefly interested in the comic technique, the devices employed by the comic poets to render the ἄγροικος a funny figure, and in recurrent comic routines, motifs and plot patterns involving this figure, especially in 4th-century comedy.

II. *Aristophanes and the birth of the comic ἄγροικος*

Many farmers and countrymen appear in the plays of Aristophanes and often have an important role: in some comedies (*Acharnians*, *Peace*, *Wealth*) the protagonist himself is a farmer or countryman and the Chorus is also composed of peasants.⁸ In Aristophanic plays, however, there is generally little or no trace of what will become later the usual attitude of comedy towards the ἄγροικος-figure.⁹ The farmers of Aristophanes are not normally laughed at for their uncouthness and rusticity. The poet does not ridicule or mock them e. g. for their ignorance of city-life, their bad behaviour and blunders when they find themselves in a refined urban environment, their simple-mindedness and naïveté,

σφόδρα, ἄπασιν) and 11 f. (ἅπαντας, emphatic τούτους, perfect νενόμικα stronger than the simple νομίζω; cf. also the long, mouth-filling word ἀνθρωποφάγους). This style befits a loud, flat-footed, uneducated rustic.

7) On Strabax see Hofmann 191, 212; on Truculentus' barbarisms Enk, Truculentus II 154–157; Enk, Studies Ullman 57, 63; K. Plepelits, Beobachtungen zu Plautus, in: R. Hanslik / A. Lesky / H. Schwabl (Eds.), Antidosis. Festschrift für Walther Kraus, Wien / Köln / Graz 1972, 272 f.; Hofmann 193 f.; and cf. below.

8) On farmers and peasants in Aristophanic comedy see Ribbeck 6–9; V. Ehrenberg, *The People of Aristophanes*, Oxford ²1951, 73–94; K. J. Dover, *Aristophanic Comedy*, Berkeley / Los Angeles 1972, 35 f.

9) The one notable exception to this rule is the portrayal of Strepsiades in the *Clouds*, for which see below.

their coarse manners, clumsy speech, unkempt appearance or any other such traits, which the playwrights of the 4th century will repeatedly exploit for comic purposes.¹⁰ On the contrary, just as country-life and its pleasures are often praised in Aristophanic theatre with great delight, so peasants and countrymen are portrayed quite favourably and sympathetically. Indeed, in plays like the *Acharnians*, *Peace* and *Wealth* the farmer, the central hero, proves to be a figure of heroic dimensions, who overcomes all adversities, triumphs over his opponents and manages to impose his comic vision on reality. Dikaiopolis, Trygaios and Chremylos have little in common with the rustics of later comedy, like Kneemon, Grumio or Strabax, or with the boorish ἄγροικος of Theophrastus' *Characters* (nr. 4).¹¹ Looking at the Aristophanic theatre from the point of view of later comedy, we might say that for most of the Aristophanic corpus the figure of the comic ἄγροικος has not yet been 'born'.

There is, however, one exception to this in the extant Aristophanic corpus: one play in which the countryman, being again the central figure, is made to appear laughable precisely for his rustic uncouthness and thus foreshadows the ἄγροικοι of 4th-century comedy. This play is the *Clouds* – significantly a play which in other respects too forecasts themes and patterns of later comedy (note e. g. the conflict between the extravagant son, who is wasting his paternal property, and the avaricious father, who is worried at the prospect of ruin). Strepsiades, a countryman (see Nub. 43 ἐμοὶ γὰρ ἦν ἄγροικος ... βίος; 47 ἄγροικος ὄν; 138 τηλοῦ γὰρ οἰκῶ τῶν ἀγρῶν), is the first true ἄγροικος of extant comedy: he, and not Dikaiopolis or Trygaios, is the veritable forerunner of Theophrastus' rustic.¹² He displays several typical rustic qualities, which will recur in the later comic ἄγροικοι: he is a blockhead, simple-minded, uneducated

10) Ribbeck 9 had already made concisely this point: „Auch ist es ja in den erhaltenen Stücken nirgends seine (= Aristophanes') Absicht, diese Volksklasse als solche lächerlich zu machen oder in ihren Schwächen darzustellen“. Cf. Wilkins 31, 105–107 on the favourable portrayal of farmers and countrymen in Old Comedy.

11) Pace Ussher 55 and J. Rusten, in: J. Rusten / I. C. Cunningham / A. D. Knox, *Theophrastus Characters. Herodas Mimes. Cercidas and the Choliambic Poets*, Cambridge, Mass. / London 1993, 169, who adduce Dikaiopolis and Trygaios as typical examples of the comic ἄγροικος, alongside the title-figures of 4th-century ἄγροικος-plays.

12) On Strepsiades' character see in general Ribbeck 7f.; K. J. Dover, *Aristophanes. Clouds*, Oxford 1968, xxvii–xxviii.

and uncouth, and raises laughter with his ignorance and coarseness. In order to heighten the comic effect of Strepsiades' portrayal, Aristophanes has developed in the *Clouds* a particular comic technique, which we shall find again in the 4th century, especially in the poets of Middle Comedy. This technique is chiefly based on contrast and incongruity: the ἄγροικος, with all his rustic uncouthness, rough manners and ignorance of city-ways, is made to get involved in a characteristically urban, refined and sophisticated environment or situation, in which he obviously appears out of place. This incongruity in itself, the clash between the rustic's uncouthness and the sophisticated surrounding environment, is a capital source of comic effect: the refined urban milieu, like a foil, highlights the shortcomings of the ἄγροικος. The poet may further enhance the comic effect by depicting in greater detail the rustic's reactions in the unfamiliar situation. The rustic ignores the savoir vivre, the proper way to comport himself in the refined environment, and as a result he makes many mistakes: he breaks the rules, behaves badly or improperly and commits amusing blunders and misunderstandings.

Aristophanes uses amply this comic technique in the *Clouds*. It is introduced already from the prologue of the play, in the description of Strepsiades' married life (Nub. 41–72): the ἄγροικος marries a refined lady from a distinguished city family, and his rusticity contrasts strongly with his wife's elegance and luxury. Strepsiades is unkempt and ill-smelling (vv. 44 f., 50) but his wife is luxuriously attired and perfumed (vv. 48, 51 f.). When a son is born, Strepsiades imagines him as a rustic, pasturing goats in a διφθέρα, while his wife imagines him driving a chariot, dressed in rich clothes, like a gentleman (vv. 68–72). It is exactly this juxtaposition and contrast between the rustic's uncouthness and the city-lady's refinement that produces the comic effect. Strepsiades, the unkempt and stinking rustic with an elegant perfumed lady by his side, is the forerunner of later comic ἄγροικοί like Strabax in Plaut. *Truc.*, who, wrapped in his country clothes, straight out of farm-work and with the country smells and dirt still clinging on his body, goes to be entertained by a smart hetaira of the city. The same technique is employed at greater length later in the play, when the ἄγροικος goes to Socrates, in order to be taught his 'subtle' doctrines. Again, this situation proves too sophisticated for the ignorant rustic blockhead, who is unable to comprehend the philosophical learning. He continually misunderstands and distorts Socrates' teachings and comically disfigures his syllogisms (e.g.

vv. 232–236); above all, he is entirely preoccupied with the material and lowly side of life, and so he constantly turns Socrates' figurative expressions, abstract ideas and scientific endeavours into lowly or vulgar things (e. g. vv. 187–190, 201–217, 247–249, 380 f., 408–411, 478–481, 489–491, 638–646, 650–655 etc.). Socrates himself, to make Strepsiades grasp his theory about thunder, is obliged to draw an example from low bodily functions, because this is the only area which the ἄγροικος can understand (vv. 385–394). It is significant that Socrates, when he complains about his pupil's slow-mindedness and ineptitude to learning, uses precisely the word ἄγροικος to describe him (Nub. 628 οὕτως ἄνδρ' ἄγροικον, 646 ὡς ἄγροικος εἶ καὶ δυσμαθής, cf. 655 ἀγρεῖος εἶ καὶ σκαιός). It is Strepsiades' ἀγροικία, his uncouth rusticity, that renders him out of place in the Socratic circle of 'sophisticated' learning. The incongruity produced by the presence of an ἄγροικος in such an environment is the source of the comic effect. The later comic poets will take over this technique for the portrayal of their ἄγροικοι; and they will extend it to other urban milieus and situations, which are more suitable for 4th-century comic plots.

III. *The ἄγροικος in Middle and New Comedy*

a) *Comic techniques and character portrayal*

What was in Aristophanes a single exception becomes a common phenomenon in the 4th century. In Middle and New Comedy the ἄγροικος is very often made to look funny for his rustic qualities, although the degree in which this happens may vary considerably from one character to another: the tone of the comic portrayal may range from gentle irony to downright ridicule. However, the poets of the 4th century, especially those of New Comedy, do not always employ the technique introduced in Aristophanes' *Clouds*. In many cases the comic effect depends simply on the presentation of the rustic's uncouthness and coarseness per se, rather than on the incongruity and inappropriateness of such qualities in an urbane environment. The rustic may remain in the country (as in Men. *Dysc.*) or come to the city (as in Ter. *Ad.*, Plaut. *Most.* and *Truc.*); he may come into contact with people of the city as well as with those of the country. But the comic effect

may still largely rely on the figure of the ἄγροικος in itself and the funny portrayal of his rustic qualities, not on the disharmony which ensues when he displays his ἀγροικία in a sophisticated situation, to which he proves ill-suited (e.g. a symposium of the high society, the circle of a fashionable philosopher or an affair with an elegant hetaira). This is the case e.g. with Knemon in Men. *Dysc.*, Grumio in Plaut. *Most.* and the first appearance of the slave Truculentus in Plaut. *Truc.* 256–314.¹³ In these cases the comic technique is based on excess and caricature. Just as in a caricature drawing bodily defects or uncomely features are magnified to excess, so here the moral shortcomings of the ἄγροικος (e.g. coarse manners, rudeness, rough temper) and sometimes also his bodily deficiencies (unkemptness, dirt, bad smell) are highlighted and magnified for comic effect. Knemon in *Dysc.* provides a fine illustration of this technique: in him the coarse manners and irascible temper (typical traits of many comic ἄγροικοι) are carried to such excess, as to turn him for the largest part of the play into a kind of farcical ogre, producing amusing scenes of slapstick (note in particular his encounters with Pyrrhias, Getas and Sikon, *Dysc.* 81–144, 466–514). Similar is the conduct of Truculentus in his first encounter with Astaphium (*Truc.* 256–314): note his angry shouts (*Truc.* 252 *clamore apsterret*, 286 *quid clamas, insane?*, 291 *propter clamorem tuom*)¹⁴, his rude or vulgar insults (vv. 260, 263, 276–279) and violent threats (vv. 268, 287 f.).¹⁵

It is such figures that illustrate best Aristotle's remarks about the ἄγροικοι of his contemporary comedy. The most significant passage in this respect is Eth. Eud. 1230b18 ff., in which Aristotle

13) On the other hand, in Truculentus' second appearance in the play (*Truc.* 669–698) the comic technique is similar to that of the *Clouds*; see below.

14) Cf. Broccia 155. The loud voice and the shouting are also typical characteristics of many comic ἄγροικοι. Compare Grumio in *Most.* (6 *quid tibi... clamitatio?*); Knemon in *Dysc.* (116 ὀξύτατον ἀναβοῶν τι, 586); Demea in *Ad.* (60 *clamitans*, 727, 789–791, cf. Donatus on *Ad.* 88.1, 88.2); and Theophrastus' ἄγροικος (Char. 4.5 μεγάλη τῆ φωνῆ λαλεῖν). This loudness of comic ἄγροικοι tallies with their propensity for pompous speech, overuse of emphasis and exaggerated expressions.

15) With Truculentus' threats to assault Astaphium physically compare similar threats of physical violence by Knemon (*Dysc.* 168, 205, 467 f., 502, 591 f.) and Demea (*Ad.* 571, 782). With *Truc.* 259 f., where Astaphium greets politely the boor and he replies angrily, turning her very greeting against her (*AST. salve. TRUC. sat mihi est tuae salutis. nil moror. non salveo. aegrotare malim quam esse tua salute sanior*), compare similar exchanges in *Dysc.* 512 f. (ΣΙΚ. χαίρε πόλλ'. ΚΝΗΜ. οὐ βούλο-

is discussing ἀναισθησία, i.e. insusceptibility or indifference to pleasures (ἡδοναί) and remarks: μάλιστα δ' εἰσὶ τοιοῦτοι (= ἀναίσθητοι), οἷους οἱ κωμωδοδιδάσκαλοι παράγουσιν ἀγροίκους, οἳ οὐδὲ τὰ μέτρια καὶ τὰ ἀναγκαῖα πλησιάζουσι τοῖς ἡδέσιν; compare similarly (although without special reference to comedy) Eth. Nic. 1104a24 f. ὁ δὲ πᾶσαν (sc. ἡδονὴν) φεύγων, ὥσπερ οἱ ἄγροικοι, ἀναίσθητός τις. According to Aristotle, then, the comic ἄγροικος is a man insensitive to pleasures, someone who avoids all pleasures, even moderate and necessary ones.¹⁶ This description is very suitable for figures like Knemon, Grumio and Truculentus (in his first appearance): these rustics appear not simply as averse to pleasures but as hostile or prejudiced against them; they not only avoid the ἡδοναί but indeed condemn them as evil and corrupting and castigate those who indulge in them. This kind of ἄγροικος is an enemy of pleasure. So Knemon obstinately refuses to take part in the lunch-party at the end of *Dysc.* (see vv. 852–855, 867–870, 874–878), illustrating in an exemplary manner the Aristotelian definition: he keeps away from an occasion of moderate and sensible entertainment, which a civilized man would welcome. He is generally hostile to the luxury and elegance of the well-off people of the city: he despises leisured life, fine clothing and culinary sumptuousness; he will react violently if he sees Sostratos in a fine χλανίς with his air of leisure and luxury (vv. 355–357, 364–366) and he condemns animal sacrifices, because they provide an occasion for people to enjoy themselves in banquets and feast on the meat of the victim (vv. 447–453).

In the same way, Grumio rebukes harshly the life of pleasure which Philolaches and Tranio lead, castigating their feasts on expensive food and drink, their affairs with prostitutes and their use

μαι χείρειν παρ' ὑμῶν οὐδενός) and Ad. 373–375 (SYR. *ehem Demea ... quid agitur? DEM. quid agatur? vostram nequeo mirari satis rationem*); cf. Enk, Truculentus II 70; Enk, Studies Ullman 64 f.

16) Elsewhere, Aristotle defines the ἄγροικος more specifically as a man deficient in and averse to a particular kind of pleasures, those which have to do with παιδιά, i.e. amusement and jokes: the ἄγροικος is a man who shuns every kind of humorous entertainment and neither makes himself jokes nor puts up with those made by other people; so Eth. Nic. 1108a23–26, 1127b33–1128a10, 1128b1–4, Eth. Eud. 1234a5–10, Magn. Mor. 1193a11 ff. In these passages too, though in a more limited sense, the ἄγροικος appears as hostile to a certain kind of pleasures, and indeed to moderate and necessary ones, since, according to Aristotle himself, δοκεῖ ... ἡ ἀνάγκησιν καὶ ἡ παιδιὰ ἐν τῷ βίῳ εἶναι ἀναγκαῖον (Eth. Nic. 1128b3 f.).

of exotic perfumes (Most. 20–24, 41–45, 64 f.). Truculentus, in his first encounter with Astaphium, seems to be infuriated above all at her ornaments and cosmetics: he rants against her jewels, her daintily arranged curly hair, her perfumes and make-up (Truc. 270–272, 287–294), significantly taking notice of them all in some detail. Perhaps he feels in fact attracted to the woman (note his later advances to her, vv. 669–698), and this is precisely why he attacks her so vehemently: as an ἄγροκος he is a sworn enemy of refined urban pleasures, so his sudden attraction to the *meretrix*, the incarnation of those pleasures, makes him furious; it is his struggle to fight against temptation that makes him behave so fiercely.¹⁷ Demea in Ter. *Ad. lives parce ac duriter* (v. 45) and praises this sort of austere life (vv. 94 f.), while he is contemptuous of the life of leisure and pleasures (vv. 863–865); he is infuriated when his sons indulge in such ‘corrupt’ pleasures as love-affairs with courtesans, drinking, good food or fine clothes (vv. 61–63, 82–92, 355–360, 379–392, 742–754, 789–801). One emblematic passage sums up most characteristically his hostility to pleasures (vv. 845–849): he declares that he will take the pretty harp-girl, his son’s girlfriend, to his farm and put her there to hard labour, till she becomes a dirty slave-woman, soiled with ashes and smoke, as dry and black as a lump of charcoal – a dreary fate for the girl who symbolizes his son’s deviation into the life of enjoyment.¹⁸ Compare the ἄγροκος in Alciphr. Epist. 2.14, who has yielded to temptation and spent a night with a flute-girl, drinking and sleeping softly; but as soon as he sobers up, he coarsely abuses the girl, because she dared offer him a night of rest and entertainment; his own indulgence in pleasure has infuriated him, and, like Truculentus, he overreacts. Even Gorgias in Men. *Dysc.*, perhaps the most sympathetic among the ἄγροικοι of extant comedy, who never really displays coarseness or bad temper, retains some traces of this typically rustic prejudice. He looks with suspi-

17) Cf. G. E. Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy*, Princeton 1952, 255; Enk, *Truculentus* II 153 f.; Enk, *Studies Ullman* 52; C. S. Dessen, *Plautus’ Satiric Comedy: The Truculentus*, PQ 56 (1977) 152 f.; J. Tatum, *Plautus: The Darker Comedies. Bacchides, Casina and Truculentus*, Baltimore / London 1983, 151, 167–169. For various interpretations of Truculentus’ volte-face see Enk, *Truculentus* I 17–19; Enk, *Studies Ullman* 62 f.; D. Konstan, *Roman Comedy*, Ithaca / London 1983, 154 f.; Broccia 154–157; E. Lefèvre, *Truculentus oder Der Triumph der Weisheit*, in: E. Lefèvre / E. Stärk / G. Vogt-Spira, *Plautus barbarus. Sechs Kapitel zur Originalität des Plautus*, Tübingen 1991, 193 f.; Hofmann 16 f.

18) Compare the same motif in Aelian, *Epist. Rust.* 19.

cion upon someone who is richly attired (vv. 257 f., note the strong expression κακοῦργος εὐθὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ βλέμματος); he has no time for love-affairs (vv. 341–344); and he too is very reluctant to join the lunch-party (vv. 611–619, 871–873).

The examples discussed above come from plays of New Comedy or Roman adaptations of them. But Aristotle's remarks on the rustics οἷους οἱ κωμωδοδιδάσκαλοι παράγουσιν no doubt refer to his contemporary comic playwrights, presumably those who were active in the Attic theatre during the 330s and early 320s, i. e. the last representatives of the so-called Middle Comedy. Although the scanty remains of the comic production from that period do not offer any clear example of an ἄγροικος shunning or condemning pleasures, Aristotle's testimony is significant: this kind of ἄγροικος, the killjoy and enemy of pleasure, must have been developed already in Middle Comedy.

In other cases of 4th-century comic ἄγροικοι we find again the technique used in Aristophanes' *Clouds*. The ἄγροικος, with all his ignorance of city manners, coarse conduct and naïve simplicity, gets involved in an urbane, sophisticated environment or situation; in this he behaves naïvely or inappropriately, commits blunders or misunderstandings and thus produces comic effect. The poets of the 4th century seem to have developed in particular two such comic situations: the ἄγροικος at the banquet and the ἄγροικος in an affair with a hetaira.

b) The ἄγροικος at the banquet

In this comic scenario the ἄγροικος is invited to an elegant dinner-party or symposium, to enjoy the fine food and wine, the company of smart guests, the cultured conversation, the perfumes, the games and all the other pleasures of such an occasion. But being unaware of the proper manners required there, he can only display his own ignorance and uncouthness and amuses the audience with his blunders.¹⁹ This situation occurred in Anaxandrides' ἄγροικοι, as fr. 1 suggests:²⁰

19) On this comic theme see in general Fisher 356 f.; Ribbeck 43–45; Webster 178; Cooper / Morris 77 f.

20) On this fr. cf. Millis 20; Cooper / Morris 78; Fisher 357; Wilkins 222.

(A.) τίνα δὴ παρεσκευασμένοι
 πίνειν τρόπον νῦν ἔστε; λέγετε. (B.) τίνα τρόπον
 ἡμεῖς; τοιοῦτον οἶον ἂν καὶ σοὶ δοκῇ.
 (A.) βούλεσθε δήπου τὸν ἐπιδέξι', ὦ πάτερ,
 λέγειν ἐπὶ τῷ πίνοντι; (B.) τὸν ἐπιδέξια
 λέγειν; Ἄπολλον, ὡς περ ἐπὶ τεθηγκότι;

The character B. is an elderly ἄγρικοσ about to participate in a drinking-party, probably together with one or more other rustics who accompany him (note the plurals in vv. 1–4). The character A. is presumably the host. The vocative πάτερ in v. 4 need not mean that he is the son of B.: πάτερ and its diminutives (παππία, πατρίδιον) are commonly used as a deferential, ingratiating or affectionate form of address by someone younger to an elderly man.²¹ A. is apparently a ‘man of the world’, experienced in sympotic manners, and asks B. about his preferred manner of drinking (vv. 1 f.). The ἄγρικοσ, however, knows nothing about the various different ways of drinking and sympotic rituals: so he does not know what to say and gives a vague answer (vv. 2 f.). The host suggests then a particular way of drinking (τὸν ἐπιδέξια etc.), which must refer to some known practice of ancient symposia (drinking a toast to the guest seated at one’s right, or passing the cup to him and saying something in his praise while he is drinking).²² But the ignorant ἄγρικοσ misunderstands this and takes it for some sort of funerary custom (v. 6).²³ His blunder humorously underlines his ignorance and naïveté. Fr. 2 of the same play (ὡς δ’ ἔστεφανώθην,

21) In comedy see e. g. Ar. Eq. 725, 1215, Vesp. 556, Men. Dysc. 171, Sic. 379, 381, Plaut. Rud. 103. In some fragments πάτερ is used, as in Anaxandrides fr. 1.4, in sympotic conversation, addressed by a younger συμπότης to an older one (Nikostrotos fr. 18.5, Antiphanes fr. 42.2, Eriphos fr. 1.2, Diphilos fr. 20.2). Cf. W. Headlam, Herodas. The Mimes and Fragments, Cambridge 1922, 43; Handley 220; E. Dickey, Greek Forms of Address. From Herodotus to Lucian, Oxford 1996, 78–81; Millis 22 f. It is of course possible that A. is indeed the son of B.; in that case the scene would evolve around an urbane, sophisticated son and his boorish, simple-minded father – a situation similar to that of Aristophanes’ *Wasps*.

22) See Kritias fr. 6.6 West, Dionysios Chalkous fr. 4 West, Pl. Symp. 214b, 222e, Ath. 11.463e–f; H. D. Darbishire, *Reliquiae Philologicae: or Essays in Comparative Philology*, Cambridge 1895, 78, 80–82; R. Reitzenstein, *Epigramm und Skolion*, Giessen 1893, 39 f.; Mau, *Comissatio*, RE IV (1900) 613 f.; A. F. Braunlich, ‘To the right’ in Homer and Attic Greek, *AJPh* 57 (1936) 245 f., 256 f.; Millis 21 f.

23) See Kassel-Austin II 238; Millis 23 f.

ἢ τράπεζ' εἰσήρετο / τοσαύτ' ἔχουσα βρώμαθ' ὅσα μὰ τοὺς θεοὺς / καὶ τὰς θεὰς οὐδ' ἔνδον ὄντ' ἦδειν ἐγώ / οὕτως παρέζων ἄχρηστῶς οὐκ ἔζων τότε) is apparently also spoken by an ἄγροικος; it probably came later in the play than fr. 1, after the banquet which is being envisaged there, and was spoken by one of the ἄγροικοι who had participated in that banquet. The ἄγροικος is now narrating his experiences from the feast; and his naïve admiration for the plentiful delicacies which were served in it highlights comically his ignorance of city luxuries. Finally, fr. 3 (μεγάλ' ἴσως ποτήρια / προπινόμενα καὶ μέστ' ἀκράτου κυμβία / ἐκάρωσεν ὑμᾶς. (B.) ἀνακεχαίτικεν μὲν οὖν) refers to certain people who drank too much unmixed wine and were overcome as a result. These must be again the ἄγροικοι who took part in the banquet: ignorant of good sympotic manners, they drank immoderately in the party and perhaps behaved badly in consequence (compare Philokleon in Ar. Vesp. 1299–1323).²⁴

Similar situations occurred in the comedy or comedies produced by Antiphanes under the title ἄγροικος.²⁵ Fr. 69 comes from one of those ἄγροικος-comedies, which was also produced in a revised version under a new title, Βουταλίων:

(A.) καὶ μὴν ἐστιάσω τήμερον
 ὑμᾶς ἐγώ· σὺ δ' ἀγοράσεις ἡμῖν λαβών,
 Πίστ', ἀργύριον. (Πι.) ἄλλως γὰρ οὐκ ἐπίσταμαι
 χρηστῶς ἀγοράζειν. (A.) φράζεε δὴ, φιλούμενε,
 ὄψω τίνι χαίρεις; (B.) πᾶσι. (A.) καθ' ἕκαστον λέγε· 5
 ἰχθὺν τίν' ἠδέως φάγοις ἄν; (B.) εἰς ἀγρὸν
 ἦλθεν φέρων ποτ' ἰχθυοπάλης μαινίδας
 καὶ τριγλίδας, καὶ νῆ Δί' ἤρεσεν σφόδρα
 ἡμῖν ἅπασιν. (A.) εἶτα καὶ νῦν, εἰπέ μοι,
 τούτων φάγοις ἄν; (B.) κἄν τις ἄλλος μικρὸς ἦ· 10
 τοὺς γὰρ μεγάλους τούτους ἅπαντας νενόμικα

24) On fr. 2 cf. Legrand 75; Millis 25. On fr. 3 cf. Millis 28. On both fragments cf. Ribbeck 10 n. 2; Webster 56, 178; Wilkins 222 f.

25) On the ἄγροικος-plays of Antiphanes see Nesselrath 288 f. n. 12; Konstantakos 9–15; and my article, Antiphanes' *Agroikos*-plays: an examination of the ancient evidence and fragments, forthcoming in RCCM 46 (2004). Antiphanes seems to have written more than one comedy entitled ἄγροικος; one of them was produced also in a revised version under the title Βουταλίων – presumably the name of an ἄγροικος who was a main character in it (see Ath. 8.358d–f, 7.304a–b, 313b).

ἀνθρωποφάγους ἰχθῦς. (A.) τί φῆς, ὦ φίλτατε;
 ἀνθρωποφάγους, πῶς; (Πι.) οὖς <ἄν> ἄνθρωπος φάγοι,
 δῆλον ὅτι ταῦτα δ' ἐστὶν Ἐκάτης βρώματα,
 ἃ φησιν οὗτος, μαινίδας καὶ τριγλίδας 15

4. φιλούμενε Konstantakos : Φιλούμενον cod. : Φιλούμενε
 Meineke 12. φίλτατε cod. : φιλότατη Porson, Kassel-Austin

The character here designated as B. is clearly an ἄγροικος who has come to the city (vv. 6 ff.), and he is most probably male (pace Kassel-Austin, who take him for a woman named Φιλούμενον).²⁶ The scene follows the same pattern as Anaxandrides fr. 1. The character A. is again an urban host who invites the ἄγροικος to a banquet (like the host in Anaxandrides fr. 1) and requests his opinion on the menu. He asks the ἄγροικος what is his favourite fish (just as the host in Anaxandrides asked his rustic guest about his preferred manner of drinking). But the ἄγροικος has no idea of the gastronomical variety offered in the city-market, and his first answer is a vague πᾶσι (compare the vague first answer of the rustic in Anaxandrides fr. 1.2 f.). When the host insists, the ἄγροικος can only recall the μαινίδες and τριγλίδες which he has once eaten. These are cheap fishes, regarded as poor food and despised by the

26) The ms. of Athenaeus (Marcianus gr. 447), in which the fr. is preserved, gives contradictory indications as to the gender of character B.: in v. 12 it reads ὦ φίλτατε and in v. 15 οὗτος (which refers again to B., the only person who has mentioned μαινίδες and τριγλίδες, vv. 7 f.) and so it presents B. as a male character. But in v. 4 it reads Φιλούμενον, which can only be a woman's name. Kassel / Austin have chosen to retain Φιλούμενον and make B. a woman, emending φίλτατε in v. 12 into φιλότατη; but οὗτος in v. 15 cannot be emended away, and so the text printed by Kassel / Austin suffers from an unacceptable inconsistency, since their female Φιλούμενον is referred to in the end as οὗτος, i. e. plainly as a male person. Since the transmitted text offers two indications that B. is male and only one that B. is female, it seems more economical to emend Φιλούμενον into something suitable for a man than to try to change the gender of both φίλτατε and οὗτος. Meineke emended Φιλούμενον into Φιλούμενε, taking this as B.'s personal name. I propose, alternatively, to emend into φιλούμενε (with minuscule φ), an adjectival participle addressed as a term of affection from A. to B., like φίλτατε in v. 12: "my friend", "my dear"; cf. Pl. Symp. 201c, Hieroth. Art. Sacr. 163 (II 340.29 Ideler), [Joh. Damasc.] Barlaam and Ioasaph xxv 221 (p. 368 Woodw. / Matt.), Theocr. 3.3. For a more detailed discussion of all this see Nesselrath 288–291; Konstantakos 27–30; and my forthcoming article mentioned in the previous note. In any case, even if one follows Kassel / Austin and takes B. as a female character, this would make little difference to the argument of the present article: B. will still be a rustic character (although this time a female one, a countrywoman), who is visiting the city.

gourmets of the city (and even by the host's slave, vv. 13 – 15); but they are presumably the only seafood that the ἄγροικος has ever tasted, and in his ignorance he regards them as the summit of culinary delight (vv. 8 f.). On the other hand, big fishes (the most expensive ones and the most esteemed by connoisseurs) terrify him: he refuses to taste them, because they are 'man-eaters'. This shows again the ignorance and simple-mindedness of the ἄγροικος and provokes the sarcastic comments of the witty urban slave Pistos (vv. 13 – 15).²⁷ The scene of fr. 69 initiates the preparations for a banquet, for which the slave is sent to buy provisions. Later in the play this banquet would doubtless take place and the ἄγροικος would participate in it. Given the ignorance and naïveté which he displays in fr. 69, he would most probably make similar blunders in the banquet too; these could then be narrated (by the host, a slave etc.) or even shown on stage (if the banquet was staged) and amuse further the audience.

Other fragments from Antiphanes' ἄγροικος-comedies also indicate that a banquet formed part of the plot.²⁸ Fr. 1 (a high-style description of foodstuffs) is presumably spoken by a cook (doubtless hired in order to prepare the food for the dinner-party). Fr. 3 describes the beginning of a symposium, with a libation to Zeus Soter, the singing of a paean and of a skolion.²⁹ And other fragments indicate the participation of the ἄγροικος himself in the symposium. Fr. 4 ([A.] ὄλην μύσας ἔκπινε. [B.] μέγα τὸ φορτίον. / [A.] οὐχ ὅστις αὐτῆς ἐστὶν ἐμπείρως ἔχων) places emphasis on the inexperience of the character B. in drinking; it is clearly suggested that he is unaccustomed to wine (not ἐμπείρως ἔχων, v. 2) and this is why he finds the cup offered to him 'a heavy load' (μέγα ... φορτίον). This inexperienced character may well be an ἄγροικος,

27) Antiphanes fr. 127, from *Kouris*, comes from a similar scene. One of the characters is an ἄγροικος (v. 1 ὁ μὲν ἀγρῷ τρεφόμενος) and he is said to eat only those fishes who have their habitat close to the land (vv. 1–4) and to abstain from all other fishes because they are ἀνθρωποφάγοι (vv. 5 f.). The situation seems similar to that of fr. 69: the ἄγροικος was presumably asked about his culinary preferences (perhaps again in view of a dinner party), and he replies again in a way which comically reveals his ignorance and naïveté. But much in fr. 127 is unfortunately obscure.

28) On all these fragments see Konstantakos 41–60 and my forthcoming article mentioned in n. 25.

29) See Mau (as n. 22) 611; L. Deubner, Paian, *Neue Jahrb. für das klass. Altert.* 43 (1919) 391–394; H. Sjövall, Zeus im altgriechischen Hauskult, Lund 1931, 86–101; M. Nilsson, *Opuscula selecta*, vol. I, Lund 1951, 438–442.

who is here shown in a drinking scene, perhaps a staged drinking-party.³⁰ If in the end he accepted the cup and drank up the wine, he would presumably get drunk, unaccustomed as he was to it, and would perhaps behave badly in the party (like Philokleon in *Ar. Vesp.* or the ἄγρικοι in Anaxandrides fr. 3). Fr. 6 (κραμβίδιον ἐφθὸν χαρίεν, ἀστεῖον πάνυ) also points to the theme of drinking: boiled cabbage was commonly used as a remedy or prophylactic against drunkenness and the resulting hangover.³¹ So here it is probably suggested for someone who has drunk too much and suffers from the consequences (cf. Alexis fr. 287, Anaxandrides fr. 59, Euboulos fr. 124, Nikochares fr. 18). This may have been again the ἄγρικός, who is likely to drink immoderately, in his ignorance of symptomatic good manners, but unaccustomed to heavy drinking. Finally, fr. 7 (ῥαγδαῖος, ἄμαχος, πῶγμα μεῖζον ἢ δοκεῖς) might belong to a description of the violent behaviour of the ἄγρικός in the symposium, after he has got drunk (compare the description of Philokleon in the same situation, *Vesp.* 1299 ὁ γέρων ἀτηρότατον ἄρ' ἦν κακόν, 1303).

Another interesting passage in this respect is Antiphanes fr. 57 from Ἐφροδίτης γοναί: in that scene one character, A., teaches the game of the κότταβος, a favourite game in ancient Attic symposia³², to another person, B., who is completely ignorant of it. The responses of the ignorant character to A.'s instructions reveal great simple-mindedness and naïveté, similar to that which characterizes many comic rustics. Note especially vv. 11–13, in which A. mentions the μάνης, a part of the equipment of the κότταβος, but B. ludicrously misunderstands this, taking Μάνης for a slave-name (compare the same pattern in Anaxandrides fr. 1, in which the ἄγρικός misunderstands the ἐπιδέξια manner of drinking). Moreover, B. demonstrates notable slowness in learning (see his bewildered questions in vv. 4, 7 f., 10, 17 f., 19 f.), which suggests a certain thick-

30) Cf. Ribbeck 10 n. 2; Legrand 75; Webster 178; Fisher 357.

31) See e.g. Amphis fr. 37, [Arist.] *Probl.* 873a37–b23, *Theophr. Hist. Plant.* 4.16.6, *Diosc. Mater. Med.* 2.120.1, *Eupor.* 1.25, *Ath.* 1.34c, *Geopon.* 5.11.3, 7.29, 7.31.1, 7.33.1, 12.17.21 etc.

32) On the κότταβος-game in Attic society and symposia see K. Schneider, *Kottabos*, *RE XI* (1922) 1528–1541; B. A. Sparkes, *Kottabos, an Athenian After-Dinner Game*, *Archaeology* 13 (1960) 202–207; R. M. Rosen, *Euboulos' Ankyllion and the Game of Kottabos*, *CQ n. s.* 39 (1989) 355–359; Wilkins 234–238; Pütz 221–241.

headedness; this recalls the rustic blockhead Strepsiades in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, who proves similarly incompetent to learn Socrates' teachings. Finally, since the κότταβος was a fashionable game in symposia, B.'s complete lack of knowledge about it indicates that he has never previously attended a symposium, or at least not an elegant and opulent one, in which that game would be played. Such ignorance of refined sympotic entertainments was a distinctive trait of ἄγροικοι in 4th-century comedy, as Antiphanes' ἄγροικος-plays and Anaxandrides' ἄγροικοι suggest. Nesselrath speculates that the ignorant B. is the newly-born Aphrodite of the title, her complete inexperience and naïveté being due to her very young age.³³ However, given the qualities mentioned above, which are typical of comic rustics, another suggestion, made by Legrand and other scholars, is equally interesting: namely, that this ignorant character is an ἄγροικος – another addition to the list of rustic inexperienced guests in 4th-century comedy.³⁴ Since Ἄφροδίτης γοναί was presumably a play about gods, this ἄγροικος-figure too would most probably be a god who could be represented as a rustic fellow (e.g. Heracles or Pan). This rustic god is to participate in a drinking-party (perhaps related to the celebration of the birth of Aphrodite); in connection to that party a more experienced god tries to teach to him the fashionable sympotic game. But the naïve reactions of the ἄγροικος reveal his ignorance and amuse the spectators. It is noteworthy that Heracles was indeed shown playing the κότταβος on stage with a girl in Platon's Ζεὺς κακούμενος, and there too he showed inexperience in the game (see fr. 46, 47, 48).³⁵ In comedy and satyr-play Heracles was often portrayed as a mythological prototype of the ἄγροικος and as a guest behaving inappropriately in a symposium (see below).

Certain traits included in Theophrastus' character-sketch of the ἄγροικος may also point to the same theme of the rustic in the

33) Nesselrath 234; Nesselrath, Myth, Parody, and Comic Plots: The Birth of Gods and Middle Comedy, in: G. Dobrov (Ed.), *Beyond Aristophanes. Transition and Diversity in Greek Comedy*, Atlanta 1995, 21 f.

34) See Legrand 75; Fisher 357; cf. Cooper / Morris 78; Pütz 223, 225.

35) See Kassel / Austin VII 450 f.; Meineke I 171; Kock I 612; G. Norwood, *Greek Comedy*, London 1931, 173 f.; W. Schmid / O. Stählin, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*, vol. I.4, München 1946, 150; R. M. Rosen, *Plato Comicus and the Evolution of Greek Comedy*, in: G. Dobrov (Ed.), *Beyond Aristophanes. Transition and Diversity in Greek Comedy*, Atlanta 1995, 125; Wilkins 237; Pütz 224, 228, 231 f.

banquet: they show the ἄγροικος behaving badly or ridiculously when he is eating or drinking, and we might well imagine him doing such things in a dinner-party. So for instance Char. 4.9 καὶ προαιρῶν δέ τι ἐκ τοῦ ταμείου δεινὸς φαγεῖν, καὶ ζωρότερον πιεῖν (compare the rustics of Antiphanes and Anaxandrides, who drink immoderately in the symposium); cf. also 4.10 and 11. A sympotic context is possible also in 4.3 καὶ τὸ μύρον φάσκειν οὐδὲν τοῦ θύμου ἴδιον ὄζειν. Perfumes were usually distributed to the guests at the beginning of the symposium: we might thus imagine the ἄγροικος in a party, receiving the perfume offered to him, smelling it with some curiosity and then declaring something like “Bah! Thyme smells better”. Variations of this theme occur also in some of the *Letters of Rustics* by Alciphron (book 2), who often draws material, themes and characters from Attic comedy.³⁶ In Epist. 2.30 the ἄγροικος drinks too much in a symposium and suffers from a hangover for two days (compare again the rustics of Antiphanes and Anaxandrides, who are similarly thrown out of balance by immoderate drinking). In Epist. 2.15 an ἄγροικος offers himself a banquet to his friends, but this proves to be a ludicrous parody of what a refined, elegant symposium should look like. Together with the guests the dog is also present as a δαιτυμῶν. Instead of orderly drinking, the guests gulp down wine immoderately, until they get drunk (cf. again the comic rustics). And instead of civilized and fine entertainment, they amuse themselves by dancing the indecent κόρδαξ. These ἄγροικοι have their own symposium, like gentlemen of the city; but in it the rules of urbane symposia are turned topsyturvy.³⁷

It so happens that the theme of the ἄγροικος behaving badly in a banquet hardly appears in extant New Comedy. Menander

36) See Legrand 74; P.E. Legrand, *Les ‘Dialogues des courtisanes’ comparés avec la comédie*, REG 20 (1907) 178–181; Leo 142 f., 149 f.; W. Schmid, *Alciphron* (3), RE I (1894) 1548 f.; A.R. Benner / F.H. Fobes, *The Letters of Alciphron*, Aelian and Philostratus, Cambridge, Mass. / London 1949, 5–17; K. Gerth, *Die Zweite oder Neue Sophistik*, RE Suppl. VIII (1956) 735 f.; J.J. Bungarten, *Menanders und Glykeras Brief bei Alciphron*, Diss. Bonn 1967, 187–189, 193–195; A.-M. Ozanam, *Alciphron. Lettres de pêcheurs, de paysans, de parasites et d’hé- taires*, Paris 1999, 18, 31–36, 173 n.22, 175 f. nn. 49–61.

37) Compare also Epist. 3.34: a parasite has spent some time in the country, working in the fields with an ἄγροικος patron. When he returns to the city, the rich hosts, who previously used to invite him to their banquets, find him too coarse and rustic (ὄρειος καὶ τραχὺς καὶ ἀπηχῆς) and send him away.

only plays slightly with it in *Dysc.* 871–873: Gorgias is reluctant to join Sostratos' lunch-party, presumably because he is conscious of his inexperience and unsure of how to behave in such an occasion.³⁸ This, in a way, reverses the traditional comic motif: instead of rushing to the banquet to make himself ridiculous with his blunders, here the ἄγροικὸς keeps away from the banquet in order to avoid making blunders. Another brief instance may occur towards the end of the play: in vv. 954–958, if we follow the stage action as reconstructed by Lloyd-Jones and Sandbach, Getas and Sikon pull Knemon to his feet and try to make him dance with them. Knemon is indeed compelled to dance a few steps, but he does so with such clumsiness as to provoke Getas' comment ἄγροικὸς εἶ (v. 956).³⁹ But apart from such slight instances, Menander makes no extensive use of the theme, in spite of the great opportunities offered to him by the plot of the *Dyskolos* (with two major ἄγροικοι-characters and a lunch-party going on backstage during almost half of the play). Perhaps the theme belonged to the stock repertoire of earlier comedy, which Menander strove to use only sparingly and in moderation, just as he has restrained e.g. the stock comic figures of the parasite and the cook and employed very economically the traditional humour associated with them (see e.g. *Dysc.* 57–70, 393–426).

The theme of the uncouth guest who behaves badly in a dinner-party was known and exploited already in 5th-century theatre, although it was not yet connected with the figure of the ἄγροικὸς. The most prominent comic example is Philokleon in Aristophanes' *Wasps*. Philokleon is not technically an ἄγροικὸς, since he lives in the city, but in many respects he comes close and shares common qualities with figures like Strepsiades of the *Clouds* and the rustics of Middle Comedy: he too is uneducated, ignorant of refined society and polite manners, and uncouth in his comportment.⁴⁰ Bdelykleon attempts to initiate him into fashionable society. For this purpose he rehearses with Philokleon the rituals of a dinner-party, but the old man displays such ignorance and coarseness of

38) Cf. Handley 282; Ireland 168.

39) H. Lloyd-Jones, *Menandri Dyscolus*, Oxford 1960, 56 f.; Gomme / Sandbach 285 f.; cf. Ireland 97.

40) Although he is obviously more intelligent than Strepsiades and the Middle Comedy rustics; in all his uncouthness Philokleon possesses a kind of rough wit, which those rustic blockheads lack.

manner, that he ludicrously fails to conform to the required standards of civility (vv. 1174–1248: instead of fine and impressive stories, he can only relate vulgar or obscene tales; instead of reclining gracefully, he clumsily throws himself down; instead of continuing appropriately the sympotic songs, he turns them into insults against the other guests). Then Philokleon actually goes to a symposium, in which he drinks immoderately, gets drunk and behaves most improperly (vv. 1299–1323). It is significant that the slave uses the very word *ἄγροίκως* to describe Philokleon's behaviour in the party (v. 1320). *ἄγροίκως* is here used metaphorically, but it suggests the sort of person who would be expected to behave so badly in a symposium. Philokleon, the uncouth guest who upsets *ἄγροίκως* the sympotic ritual with his blunders and coarse behaviour, is in this respect a forerunner of the *ἄγροικοι* of Middle Comedy.

Another such 5th-century forerunner of later comic rustics is Heracles, as we see him in Euripides' *Alcestis*. Admetos receives him in his house and offers him a meal, during which Heracles behaves tactlessly and improperly (see the slave's description in vv. 747–766): he eats and drinks greedily, constantly asking for more, gets tipsy and sings loudly in a coarse voice (*Alc.* 760 ἄμουσ' ὕλακτῶν).⁴¹ Thus, in this scene Heracles appears unmistakably in the role of the coarse-mannered guest who behaves badly at dinner. This is interesting, because Heracles is in certain respects similar to the comic *ἄγροικος*, a mythological equivalent of that figure, at least in his portrayal in satyr-play and comedy: Ribbeck regards Heracles as a sort of 'heroic prototype' of the rustic.⁴² In satyr-play and in comedy (both in 5th-century Old Comedy and in the mythological travesties of the 4th century) Heracles was a favourite figure and he was standardly portrayed as a gross eater and drinker.⁴³ So it seems likely that the theme of Heracles behaving badly

41) All this, of course, appears even more tactless amidst the mourning which prevails in Admetos' house.

42) Ribbeck 5f.: "der Typus des böotischen Grossknechtes, aber in heroischen Dimensionen ... Ideal eines Natursohnes". Cf. Luc. Jup. Trag. 32, where Momos accuses Heracles with the words ὦ Ἡράκλεις, ἄγροικον τοῦτο εἶρηκας καὶ δεινῶς Βοιωτίτιον, and Heracles himself admits: ἐγὼ γάρ, ὡς ὁ κωμικὸς ἔφη, ἄγροικός εἰμι τὴν σκάφην σκάφην λέγων.

43) See G. K. Galinsky, *The Herakles Theme*, Oxford 1972, 81–100; Ribbeck 5f.; A. M. Dale, *Euripides. Alcestis*, Oxford 1954, xx–xxi; R. Hošek, *Herakles auf der*

at a dinner-party, as found in Eur. *Alc.*, occurred in other plays as well. Of particular interest in this connection are the mythological comedies of the 4th century: some at least of the Middle Comedy plays which featured the glutton Heracles may have presented him as behaving coarsely or tactlessly in a banquet, and in this way they may have influenced the development of the ἄγροικος-figure in Middle Comedy. Heracles was the mythical ‘prototype’ of the ἄγροικος; so mythological comedies which showed him at a dinner-party could function as models for comedies which featured ἄγροικοι in a contemporary setting and could introduce into them the theme of the ἄγροικος in the banquet.

c) *The ἄγροικος in an affair with a hetaira*

This theme was foreshadowed in Aristophanes’ *Clouds*, in which the boorish, unkempt and ill-smelling Strepsiades married a refined, luxuriously attired and perfumed lady of the city. In 4th-century comedy an elegant hetaira takes the place of the lawful wife, but the basic pattern remains the same: the ἄγροικος comes to the lovely lady with all his rustic ignorance, rough manners and unkempt appearance; the incongruity between those characteristics and the role of the gallant lover, which he undertakes, produces the comic effect. So in Plaut. *Truc.* the young rustic Strabax gets involved in an affair with Phronesium, the *meretrix*: he comes to her unkempt and squalid (vv. 930–934), straight from the farm, to which he had been sent in order to collect fodder for the cattle (vv. 645 ff.); and in such accoutrement, presumably still wrapped in his country-clothes, with the country dirt and smells clinging to his body, he enters the establishment of the *meretrix*, in which even slave-girls (like Astaphium) are elegantly attired and perfumed. As he approaches the lady’s house, he keeps on talking about his rustic affairs (vv. 645–662): the farm, the sheep and their fodder are what the ἄγροικος is thinking about on his way to become a gallant par-

Bühne der alten attischen Komödie, in: L. Varel / R. F. Willetts (Eds.), Γέρας. Studies presented to George Thomson on the Occasion of his 60th Birthday, Prague 1963, 119–127; N. Hourmouziades, Σοφιστικά, Athens 1974, 133–144, 158–161; B. Effe, Held und Literatur. Der Funktionswandel des Herakles-Mythos in der griechischen Literatur, Poetica 12 (1980) 160 f.; N. Dunbar, Aristophanes. Birds, Oxford 1995, 380, 715 f.; Arnott 235; Wilkins 90–97.

amour. His behaviour as a lover is also markedly uncouth and tactless (note especially vv. 914–924, where he bluntly demands from his ladylove to “have some fun”).⁴⁴ In the same play the rustic slave Truculentus changes his earlier attitude towards Astaphium in his second appearance (vv. 673–698): his attraction to her, against which he had fiercely fought earlier, has now taken over and made him yield to the temptation. Thus, he makes amorous advances to Astaphium and attempts to turn himself into a gallant *amator*, but his clumsy manners and ignorance suit very ill such a role; note especially his ridiculous linguistic mistakes and barbarisms (vv. 675, 683, 686, 688). Truculentus professes himself a perfect urbane gentleman and experienced lover (vv. 677 f., 682 f.) but is all too obviously a coarse rustic; thus, his overconfident claims reveal only his naïveté and heighten the comic effect.⁴⁵

The same theme reappears in later portrayals of ἄγροικοι, which may well draw inspiration from New Comedy. In Luc. Dial. Mer. 7.3 an Acharnian farmer goes to a hetaira, but he is dirty and ill-smelling like a goat (cf. Strepsiades and Strabax) and the girl sends him away⁴⁶ (compare Alciphr. Epist. 2.24 and 25). In Alciphr. Epist. 2.31 an aged ἄγροικος plays the gallant to a harp-girl, thus becoming the laughing stock of young people. In Ael. Epist. Rust. 7 and 8 an ἄγροικος behaves towards a hetaira with rustic naïveté: he declares that what he loves above all is her name, Opora, because it reminds him of his farm and crops (in the mouth of the ἄγροικος this is doubtless a compliment, but not one that a city courtesan could be expected to appreciate); and he sends to her as gifts figs, grapes and new wine, which the elegant lady scorns as vile and fit only for her slaves. In Ael. Epist. Rust. 9 an ἄγροικος pays a visit to a hetaira, but he has no liking for foreplay and all he wants is to “get the business done” quickly and get back to his goats (ἐγὼ δὲ κατὰ χειρὸς ποιῶ πάντα καὶ σπεύδω καταλαβεῖν ἐν δύο τὰ σκέλη ἄρας καὶ ὑποστρέφειν ἐπὶ τὰς αἴγας πάλιν, as he admits in blunt and rather coarse terms). For ἄγροικοι who get involved in

44) Cf. Legrand 74; Hofmann 211. Generally on Strabax’s grotesque and ludicrous figure see Hofmann 191, 213; P. Grimal, Le “Truculentus” de Plaute et l’esthétique de la ‘palliata’, Dioniso 45 (1971–74) 538.

45) On this scene and its comic effects see Hofmann 16 f., 192–194.

46) On the relation of this Lucianic scene to comedy see P. E. Legrand (as n. 36) REG 20, 222 f.; P. E. Legrand, Les ‘Dialogues des courtisanes’ comparés avec la comédie (suite), REG 21 (1908) 47, 67; Leo 149.

affairs with hetairai compare also Luc. Dial. Mer. 15, Alciphr. Epist. 2.14, Ael. Epist. Rust. 19.

There are indications that this theme was exploited also by the poets of Middle Comedy. We know of two mythological travesties entitled *Anchises*, by Anaxandrides and Euboulos, which probably burlesqued the encounter of the shepherd Anchises with Aphrodite; this might have been portrayed as a meeting between a simple peasant and a beautiful hetaira, in the manner of Plaut. *Truc.*⁴⁷ One of Antiphanes' ἄγροικος-plays included an affair with a hetaira: fr. 2 (ἔστιν δ' ἑταίρα τῷ τρέφοντι συμφορά· / εὐφραίνεται γὰρ κακὸν ἔχων οἴκου μέγα) could be spoken by the hetaira's lover himself at a moment when he is embittered by the conduct of his mistress; or it could be a warning or admonition to someone who is or intends to become involved in an affair with a hetaira.⁴⁸

d) Menander and the 'ennoblement' of the ἄγροικος

It must be noted, however, that New Comedy at least did not portray the ἄγροικος solely as a ludicrous buffoon, meant to amuse the audience with his ignorance and uncouthness. Some ἄγροικοι of New Comedy, especially in Menander, appear also endowed with notable virtues, which show their character in a favourable light and would evoke the sympathy of the audience.⁴⁹ In certain cases both ludicrous and sympathetic elements are combined in the same character, who seems thus intended to elicit a complex response from the audience: laughter for his ignorance and rustic

47) See Hunter 88.

48) Cf. Nesselrath 323 and n.106, 324 n.112; Konstantakos 50f. In later sources, which may be related to comedy, we find further variations of the theme of the ignorant rustic who visits the city and gets involved in situations unknown to him. So in Alciphr. Epist. 2.17 an ἄγροικος is taken to taste the theatre, where he watches a variety of shows but is unable to recall them later (cf. the forgetfulness of the thick-headed Strepsiades in Ar. Nub. 627–631, 785–790); the only spectacle which has sufficiently impressed his simple mind is a conjuror, and he responds to his tricks with naïve wonder. Inexperienced rustics eager to taste the pleasures of the city appear also in Alciphr. Epist. 2.22 and 28. Some traits in Theophrastus' sketch of the ἄγροικος seem to be drawn from situations of this kind. So e.g. in Char. 4.2 the ἄγροικος goes to the assembly after having drunk a κικεῶν, and presumably carrying its smell on his breath; in Char. 4.15 he goes to the public bath and sings (presumably in his coarse, loud voice, cf. n. 14 above).

49) Cf. Ribbeck 27f.; Legrand 78–80.

manners, but also appreciation of his virtuous qualities. A memorable such figure is Grumio in Plaut. *Most.* He displays many of the rustic traits which comedy exploits in order to poke fun at the ἄγροικος (unkempt appearance, bad smell, loud and coarse voice, clumsy manners). But on the other hand he shows great loyalty and devotion to his old master and genuine concern for the welfare of the family, and it is these feelings that motivate his conduct throughout his scene; it is significant that precisely these virtuous qualities predominate in Grumio's last words before he leaves the stage (vv. 76–83) and constitute the last impression that we get of him.

Menander in particular has gone far in that direction and has created sympathetic figures of ἄγροικοί, in whom the funny traits are drawn with gentle irony and combined with many likeable qualities. A prominent example is Gorgias in the *Dyskolos*. He displays some typically rustic traits, which Menander underlines with amusing irony (e.g. his prejudice against the leisured city people and their pleasures, his maladroitness of speech); but such traits are not pushed to laughable excess and do not turn Gorgias into a figure of fun. On the other hand, Menander has endowed him with a series of virtues (e.g. a sense of duty and responsibility, conscientiousness, honesty, good-heartedness and readiness to help)⁵⁰, which attract the sympathy of the audience. The little that remains of Menander's *Georgos* suggests that in that play too Gorgias must have been sympathetically portrayed. He may have displayed a certain irascibility and anger at some point (see fr. 3.3 τὸ δ' ὀξύθυμον τοῦτο καὶ λίαν πικρὸν)⁵¹, which would indicate a rustic roughness of manner; but otherwise he appears as a hard-working youth of a kind and compassionate disposition (when his employer gets injured, Gorgias nurses him as though he were his own father, vv. 55–63). Just as he has done with other stock comic figures, like the soldier or the hetaira, Menander has tried, in some cases at least, to 'ennoble' the ἄγροικος, highlighting prominently his sympathetic qualities, avoiding caricature and excess and limiting the comic portrayal to occasional touches of irony.

50) See especially *Dysc.* 23–29, 233–246, 617–619, 670–685, 722 ff., 821–846.

51) See A. Körte, *Menandri quae supersunt*, vol. I, Leipzig³ 1938, xlv; D. Del Corno, *Menandro. Le commedie*, vol. I, Milano 1966, 400 f.; T. B. L. Webster, *An Introduction to Menander*, Manchester 1974, 143 f.; Gomme / Sandbach 116. Gorgias probably got angry when he learned about the illicit pregnancy of his sister.

In this essay I have tried to trace some themes and trends in the development of the comic ἄγροικος during the 5th and 4th centuries. In most plays of Aristophanes countrymen are portrayed in a favourable manner. However, the comic ἄγροικος too is 'born' in Old Comedy with figures like Strepsiades of the *Clouds*, the uncouth rustic who appears comically maladjusted in the urbane environment of the city. This pattern is further developed and standardized in the 4th century: the poets of Middle and New Comedy caricature the rustic's ignorance and rough manners and place him in typically urbane situations (a high-class symposium, an affair with an elegant hetaira), in which his patent incongruity produces comic effect. The work of the comic poets may be reflected in Theophrastus' character-sketch of the ἄγροικος and has influenced later humorists like Lucian, Aelian and Alciphron. Menander has given a splendid caricature of the rustic boor in the figure of Knemon; but in other cases, in accordance with his overall aesthetics of comic moderation, he has curtailed the buffoonery of other poets and invested the comic ἄγροικος with sympathetic qualities. Thus, in a way, the comic history of the rustic draws a full circle. It begins with the favourable portrayal of the farmer-heroes in Aristophanic comedy; and after a long period of ridicule and emphasis on the rustic's uncouthness, it concludes with some farmers of Menander, who otherwise differ greatly from the exuberant Aristophanic heroes but are, like them, depicted in a sympathetic manner.

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