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**VERG. ECL. 6,13–30**  
**MIMIC HUMOUR IN SILENUS' SCENE\***

GIORGOS C. PARASKEVIOTIS

*Eclogue* 6 could be considered as the most complicated poem in Vergil's collection (perhaps after *Eclogue* 4) due to the oddity that its non-pastoral content shows. It begins with an explanation to Varus (in all probability the consul in 39 BC and jurist, P. Alfenus Varus)<sup>1</sup> that Vergil cannot write on great deeds (*ecl.* 6,1–12). Vergil's explanation (i.e. *recusatio*)<sup>2</sup> is followed by a scene which describes Silenus' capture by two fauns or satyrs<sup>3</sup> with the assistance of a naiad (*ecl.* 6,13–30) and culminates in Silenus' song that contains several mythological stories (*ecl.* 6,31–86). Scholars have sought numerous unifying principles or codes in the *Eclogue*, laying special emphasis on the content of Silenus' song and the rationale that governs the selection and arrangement of the mythological stories

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<sup>1</sup> For Varus' identity see, e.g., Coleman 1977, 177; Clausen 1994, 181 and more recently Cucchiarelli 2012, 329.

<sup>2</sup> For the *recusatio* motif see, e.g., Wimmel 1960, *passim*. See also Cairns 1972, index s.v. *recusatio*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Serv. *ecl.* 6,13–15: *Chromis et Mnasyllus isti pueri satyri sunt. pueri nonnulli 'pueri' non absurde putant dictum, quia Sileni priusquam senescant, satyri sunt. utrum ergo aetate pueros, an ut ministros et familiares solemus communiter pueros vocare?* and 24: *sufficit enim, quia potui a vobis, qui estis homines, videri: quod ideo dicit, quia hemithei cum volunt tantum videntur, ut fauni, nymphae, Silenus*. See also Coleman 1977, 178; Clausen 1994, 182 and Cucchiarelli 2012, 334–5.

that are traced in the song.<sup>4</sup> However, there seems to be a consensus among critics on the role which Silenus' song has in the *Eclogue* and on the role which the *Eclogue* has in the entire collection. Hence, the introductory section (*ecl.* 6,1–12) along with Silenus' song (*ecl.* 6,31–86) and more generally *Eclogue* 6 constitute a literary composition that reflects Hellenistic (i.e. Callimachean) and Neoteric (i.e. Gallan)<sup>5</sup> literary principles.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, scholarship has ignored or failed to offer a convincing or satisfying explanation for *ecl.* 6,13–30 (i.e. Silenus' capture) and their function in the *Eclogue*. This paper aims to fill the specific interpretative gap by examining *ecl.* 6,13–30, trying to show that Silenus' scene can be considered as a pastoral Greco-Roman mime<sup>7</sup> whose function and role in the *Eclogue* is also associated closely with that which critics have already suggested for Silenus' song and more generally for the entire *Eclogue*.

Silenus' capture by Chromis and Mnasyllus has not received exhaustive critical attention<sup>8</sup> by modern scholars who have characterised the specific episode

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<sup>4</sup> Convenient reviews regarding the main literary interpretations that are concerned with Silenus' song can be found in, e.g., Stewart 1959, 180–3; Saint-Denis 1963, 23–35; Segal 1969, 407 with n. 1; Schmidt 1972, 261–8; Coleiro 1979, 198–208; Briggs 1981, 1327–30; Papanghelis 1995, 132 with relevant notes and more recently in the bibliographical list for *Eclogue* 6 in Cucchiarelli 2012, 321–3.

<sup>5</sup> These literary principles are identified with the literary manifesto which was first conceived by Callimachus, was then adopted by poets after Callimachus and was later embodied in Gallus. See also Smith 2011, 69–70 who considers that Gallus in *ecl.* 6,64–71 symbolises the best of Rome's Neoteric tradition.

<sup>6</sup> Cf., e.g., Wimmel 1960, 132–48; Coleman 1977, 205–6 and Clausen 1994, 176–7. See also, e.g., Skutsch 1956, 193–5; Stewart 1969, 179–205; Ross 1975, 18–38; Courtney 1990, 99–112 and Papanghelis 1995, 131–72.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Panayotakis 2014, 379, who nicely argues that the Hellenistic mime has entered into the Roman literary mime and other Latin literary genres where there also existed a strong native theatrical tradition (e.g. *fabula Atellana*) with which the Hellenistic mime was combined in a form that should be more rightly termed as the "Greco-Roman mime". See also Panayotakis 2005, 139 and Panayotakis 2010, 1–2.

<sup>8</sup> Cf., e.g., Skutsch 1956, 193–5; Stewart 1959, 179 and 197; Elder 1961, 119–20; Williams 1968, 243; Segal 1969, 414–8; Coleman 1977, 178–83; Rutherford 1989, 42; Courtney 1990, 101; Baldwin 1991, 103–4; Clausen 1994, 182–9; Papanghelis 1995, 141–3 and Hubbard 1998, 101.

as "little drama",<sup>9</sup> "rustic comedy",<sup>10</sup> "oneiric drama",<sup>11</sup> "pantomime"<sup>12</sup> and "bucolic farcical scene".<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, much more attention has been given to the much debated subject that deals with whether the *Eclogues* have ever been performed publicly in theatre;<sup>14</sup> and indeed scholars have variously correlated the *Eclogues* with the genre of mime based on the ancient sources that related Vergil's *oeuvre* to theatrical performance.<sup>15</sup> The *Vita Suetoniana-Donatiana* relates the success which the *Eclogues* had on stage, stressing also their frequent theatrical performances:

*bucolica eo successu edidit ut in scaena quoque per cantores  
crebro pronuntiarentur (VSD 26)*

Yet, the biographer's ambiguous meaning based on the ambiguous terms he uses (namely, *edidit* (i.e. either "to publish"<sup>16</sup> or "to exhibit publicly"),<sup>17</sup> *in scaena quoque* (i.e. "also on stage", a phrase that can mean that the *Eclogues'* first *editio* should had not occurred in theatre but in some other literary medium),<sup>18</sup> the *cantores* (i.e. either "singers" or "persons who are playing-singing the musical parts in a play")<sup>19</sup> and finally *pronuntiatur* (i.e. either "to give out publicly" or "to speak one's lines")<sup>20</sup>) cannot testify that the *Eclogues'* success (*eo successu*) is

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Segal 1969, 416.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Coleman 1977, 182.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Papanghelis 1995, 142.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Kohn 1999–2000, 271–3, although he is not referred exclusively to Silenus' capture by Chromis and Mnasyllus but to *Eclogue* 6 and its "protopantomimic style".

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Panayotakis 2008, 193. See also Panayotakis 2010, 251.

<sup>14</sup> Cf., e.g., Hight 1974, 24–5; Quinn 1982, 152–3; Kohn 1999–2000, 267–74; Panayotakis 2008, 185–97 and Höschele 2013, 44–7. See also Panayotakis 2010, 251 and Panayotakis 2014, 392.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Ziolkowski – Putnam 2008, 162–78 who have collected all the ancient sources which are referred to performances of Vergilian poetry.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *OLD* s.v. *edo* 9. See also *TLL* s.v. *edo* I.C.1a.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *OLD* s.v. *edo* 12. See also *TLL* s.v. *edo* I.D.2a.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Höschele 2013, 46 with n. 39.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *OLD* s.v. *cantor* 1a and 1b respectively with Walter 1972, 1–14. See also Höschele 2013, 47.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *OLD* s.v. *pronuntio* 1a and 7b. See also *TLL* s.v. *pronuntio* II.A.1b.a.I.

related to the genre of mime. However, much more information for the Vergilian collection and its relation to mime is given by Servius, who records that the famous mime actress Cytheris performed *Eclogue* 6 in theatre:

*dicitur autem ingenti favore a Vergilio esse recitata, adeo ut, cum eam postea Cytheris meretrix cantasset in theatro, quam in fine Lycoridem vocat, stupefactus Cicero, cuius esset, requireret. et cum eum tandem aliquando vidisset, dixisse dicitur et ad suam et ad illius laudem "magnae spes altera Romae": quod iste postea ad Ascanium transtulit, sicut commentatores loquuntur. (Serv. ecl. 6,11)*

The ancient commentator's testimony has significantly preoccupied modern scholars whose suggestions for the literary form that Cytheris' performance could have vary. Quinn argues that Cytheris' recital was accompanied with some interpretative dance<sup>21</sup> and he is later followed by Kohn who further suggests that *Eclogue* 6 is a pantomime.<sup>22</sup> Panayotakis claims that Cytheris could have acted out those lines from the *Eclogue* which were the more suitable for dramatic representation (i.e. ecl. 6,13–30).<sup>23</sup> Höschele observes that we cannot be sure for the form which Cytheris' recital had; and she suggests that Vergil's *Eclogues* can be related to the mime genre in the sense that the herdsmen perform mimes on the level of the text by imitating life and performing songs that are sung in their fictional world (i.e. "the mimesis concept").<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, there are certain inconsistencies in the passage which have already been noticed by modern critics<sup>25</sup> (i.e. given that Cicero's death happened in 43 BC, his occurrence in Cytheris' performance is inconsistent with the period 42–39 BC when the *Eclogues* seem to have been first composed before their circulation)<sup>26</sup> and can also confirm that our ancient sources do not allow to draw certain conclusions for the literary form

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Quinn 1982, 152–3.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Kohn 1999–2000, 272–3. See also above p. 2 with n. 12.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Panayotakis 2008, 192–3.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Höschele 2013, 48–58 and esp. 58 who, based on Schmidt's suggestion that the *Eclogues* are "*Dichtung der Dichtung*", argues that the *Eclogues* are also "mimes about mimes".

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Quinn 1982, 153; Kohn 1999–2000, 268–69 with n. 13 and 14; Panayotakis 2008, 191–2 and Höschele 2013, 49–50.

<sup>26</sup> For the exact date of the collection's composition that remains a matter of discussion among scholars see, e.g., Coleman 1977, 14–21 and more recently Paraskeviotis 2009, 1 n. 2 with further bibliography.

which Cytheris' spectacle, if it actually happened, could have.<sup>27</sup> In other words, while scholars recognise that *Eclogue* 6 had actually a dramatic form, they strive to relate it to the mime genre based on the *Eclogue's* extra-textual testimonies; although, they also argue that these extra-textual testimonies (i.e. ancient sources) should not be considered as unequivocal evidence for the theatrical performance of the Vergilian collection.<sup>28</sup>

Nevertheless, turning to the *Eclogue* itself and examining thoroughly Silenus' scene it would be shown that this scene can be considered as a pastoral Greco-Roman mime, confirming that the mime genre, although allusively, is actually found in *Eclogue* 6. This is either the "literary" (i.e. a mimic drama composed in verse and presented in theatres with subjects that dealt with political satire, literary parody, philosophical burlesque and mythological travesties)<sup>29</sup> or the "popular" (i.e. a mimic drama enacted in streets, squares, theatres and houses whose repertory contained adulteries, mock-marriages, staged-trials, staged-shipwrecks performed in humorous manner)<sup>30</sup> mime; since the ancient authors scorned all these shows and did not divide the mime genre into "literary" and "popular",<sup>31</sup> a distinction which is only made by modern scholars.<sup>32</sup> In other words, the mime constitutes a performative genre which had gained great success on the Roman stage<sup>33</sup> and its influence had also been well established in the Roman literature during the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC<sup>34</sup> when Vergil created his pastoral corpus; and this can also suggest that Vergil should have been familiar with mime and especially with the mimic conventions from first-hand experience of these shows.<sup>35</sup> Yet, how the lines under examination could be considered as a pastoral Greco-Roman mime,

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Panayotakis 2008, 192–3. See also Höschele 2013, 48–58 and esp. 58.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Panayotakis 2008, 191–4 and esp. 194. See also Höschele 2013, 48–60 and esp. 58–60.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Panayotakis 2005, 140.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Panayotakis 2005, 140.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Esposito 2010, 279–80; Panayotakis 2005, 140; Panayotakis 2010, 3–4; Höschele 2013, 41–2 with n. 19. See also Panayotakis 2014, 382.

<sup>32</sup> Cf., e.g., Fantham 1989, 153.

<sup>33</sup> Cf., e.g., Wiseman 1999, 195–203 who nicely observes that mimes were conventionally associated with an obscene festival, the *Floralia* which had been instituted in or after 173 BC (cf. Val. Max. 2,10,8; Ov. *fast.* 5,347–50 and Lact. *inst.* 1,20,10) See also Panayotakis 2008, 141 and Höschele 2013, 42.

<sup>34</sup> Cf., e.g., Fantham 1989, 153–63. See also Panayotakis 2010, 30–1 with n. 59 and further bibliography and Panayotakis 2014, 385.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Höschele 2013, 42.



since the genre of mime has survived only in meagre fragments and cannot be readily defined? The answer is found in the same goal which Silenus' scene and the mime genre have, namely to cause laughter (i.e. *mimicus risus*)<sup>36</sup> or in other words humour.

Before examining the verses under consideration in order to trace humorous elements, we should originally consider their subject, their main character and their metre; because these also constitute evidence for the humour to be found in Silenus' scene. *Ecl.* 6,13–30 describe how the fauns or satyrs Chromis and Mnasyllus joined and aided by the naiad Aegle bind with his garlands the satyr Silenus who is found lying asleep and drunk in a cave after the last night booze in order to hear from him a song. The incident is clearly amusing and humorous and causes laugh not only to the reader, but also to Silenus who wakes up, smiles with the trick (*ille dolum ridens*, *ecl.* 6,23) and agrees to deliver to Chromis and Mnasyllus the requested song (cf. *ecl.* 6,23ff.). The always drunk Silenus (*inflatum hesternu uenas*, ***ut semper***, *Iaccho*, *ecl.* 6,15) can recall the drunkard figure who constitutes a beloved subject in the mime genre. Athenaeus, based on the musicologists Aristoxenus from Tarentum and Aristocles, refers to several solo performers (i.e. ἰλαρωδός, λυσιωδός, μαγωδός, μίμαυλος, μιμωδός, σιμωδός) whose shows seem to have been similar;<sup>37</sup> and he continues by quoting Aristocles' brief information concerning the subjects that the μαγωδοί selected for their shows, namely the adulteress, the bawd, the drunkard and the revel,<sup>38</sup> which can also be traced in the Greek literary and popular mime.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, the drunkard figure is also a subject that can be found in the Roman mime. Though Publilius' mimes have come down to us in fragmentary form and we have only two titles (i.e. *Murmurco*, "the Mutterer"<sup>40</sup> and *Putatores*, "the Pruners" which is a manuscript reading that has been emended either to *Portatores* or more plausibly to

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *Lyd. mag.* 1,40 and *Chor. Apol. mim.* 30. See also Panayotakis 2013, 140.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Panayotakis 2014, 380 who nicely observes that the foregoing terms seem to have the same meaning.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. *Athen.* 14,14,8ff. ὁ δὲ μαγωδὸς καλούμενος τύμπανα ἔχει καὶ κύμβαλα καὶ πάντα τὰ περὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδύματα γυναικεῖα: σχινίζεται τε καὶ πάντα ποιεῖ τὰ ἔξω κόσμου, ὑποκρινόμενος ποτὲ μὲν γυναικας καὶ μοιχοὺς καὶ μαστροπούς, **ποτὲ δὲ ἄνδρα μεθύοντα** καὶ ἐπὶ κῶμον παραγινόμενον πρὸς τὴν ἐρωμένην.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Panayotakis 2014, 380ff.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Panayotakis 2010, 27 with n. 52. See also Panayotakis 2008, 144.

*Potatores*, "the Drinkers"<sup>41</sup>) and four lines,<sup>42</sup> however, the title *Potatores* could suggest that the drunkard subject have been employed by this Roman mimographer. On the other hand, the information drawn from Laberius' mimes is much more useful. His mimes once again survive in meagre fragments but here we have at least five times where we trace words that are closely associated with drunkenness,<sup>43</sup> something that suggests that the drunkard figure could be a source of humour in those plays.<sup>44</sup> Undoubtedly, it should not be argued that the verses under examination are entirely based on the foregoing fragmentary sources and scholars have already suggested the sources from which Vergil could have drawn Silenus' scene;<sup>45</sup> but, it should also be noticed that its humorous nature seems to have its roots in the mime genre.

The humorous tone traced in Silenus' scene is also enhanced from its main character. The legendary creature (i.e. satyr)<sup>46</sup> Silenus is the third hand singer in the *Eclogue*,<sup>47</sup> who incongruously stands for the herdsmen or the mythical bards (e.g. Amphion or Orpheus) that are usually found in this role<sup>48</sup> thereby causing

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Panayotakis 2005, 144. See also Panayotakis 2010, 27 with n. 52.

<sup>42</sup> For Publilius' life and *oeuvre* see, e.g., Skutsch 1920–1928, 28. See also Panayotakis 2005, 144–5 and Panayotakis 2010, 51ff. with n. 85 and 86.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. *Laber. fr.* 8, 26, 52, 56 and 87. See also Panayotakis 2010, 141 who nicely observes that the drunkenness-motif constitutes a continuous humorous source also in Petronius' comic novel that shares many elements with mime (cf. *Petr. sat.* 26,1; 52,8; 65,7; 70,6; 72,7; 73,3; 78,5; 79,2; 79,9; 95,7 and 96,5).

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Panayotakis 2010, 141.

<sup>45</sup> It has been argued even from antiquity that the motif of the captured satyr who relates philosophical (i.e., cosmological) subjects comes from the historian Theopompus (*Serv. ecl.* 6,13: *sane hoc de Sileno non dicitur fictum a Vergilio, sed a Theopompo translatum* and 6,26: *haec autem omnia de Sileno a Theopompo in eo libro, qui Thaumasia appellatur, conscripta sunt*. See also *Ael. VH* 3,18), while modern scholars suggested Plato's or Cicero's influence (cf. Hubbard 1975, 53–62 and Coleman 1977, 179). See also Segal 1976, 53–6, who argues that there are analogies between Silenus' scene and two Theocritean epigrams (i.e., 18 G-P = *A.P.* 12,135 and 19 G-P = *A.P.* 9,338).

<sup>46</sup> Cf., e.g., *OCD* s.v. *Satyrs and Sileni*.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. *ecl.* 6,82–84: *omnia, quae Phoebus quondam meditante beatus/ audiit Eurotas iussitque ediscere lauros,/ ille canit, pulsae referunt ad sidera ualles*; where it becomes evident that Silenus' song is related at third hand, since Silenus heard the song from the laurels that heard it from the river Eurotas who originally learned it from Apollo.

<sup>48</sup> Cf., e.g., *ecl.* 1,1–5 (the archetypical herdsman Tityrus); 3,44–46 (Orpheus' influence over nature); 8,1–5 (Damon's and Alpheus' song whose orphic power can magically charm the flora and fauna).

laugh and humour.<sup>49</sup> Yet, Silenus is also inconsistently identified with a mythical singer who can charm all nature through his music and song (cf. *tum uero in numerum Faunosque ferasque uideres / ludere, tum rigidas motare cacumina quercus; / nec tantum Phoebos gaudet Parnasia rupes, / nec tantum Rhodope miratur et Ismarus Orphea; ecl. 6,27–30*),<sup>50</sup> generating in that way laugh and further reinforcing the humorous nature of the scene. Most significantly, the opening of Silenus' song (cf. *ecl. 6,31–40*) is concerned with philosophical (i.e., cosmological) subjects that can clearly echo epicurean philosophy<sup>51</sup> which denies the very existence of the legendary creatures (cf. *Lucr. 5,888–925*) such as the satyr Silenus who is humorously described relating epicurean doctrines.<sup>52</sup> In other words, the old satyr Silenus is emphatically incongruous with the role of the typical herdsman-singer<sup>53</sup> and of the mythical singers who charm the natural world and most significantly with the philosophical doctrines that are traced in his song. This characterisation creates a crucial incongruity between the conventional Silenus and the Vergilian Silenus creating laugh and humour (i.e. "the incongruity theory").<sup>54</sup> Moreover, the "philosopher" Silenus could be seen as a humorous representation of Lucretius and the *Eclogue* as a reply to the epicurean poet who ridicules the rustic belief that music comes from several country divine creatures (cf. *Lucr. 4,580–594*),<sup>55</sup> causing not only laugh and humour but also recalling the philosophical burlesque which constitutes a beloved subject in the mime genre.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Rutherford 1989, 45.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Rutherford 1989, 45.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. *Lucr. 2,1052–63; 5,65–70; 5,416–31 and 5,783–1455*). See also Clausen 1994, 189ff. For Vergil's relationship with the Epicurean philosophy concerning the verses under consideration (*ecl. 6,31–40*) see, e.g., Paratore 1964, 509–37 and Spoerri 1970, 144–63.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Baldwin 1991, 102.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Schmidt 1972, 108 who, observing that the Vergilian collection is always concerned with herdsmen-singers, reached the final conclusion that the *Eclogues* are indeed "Dichtung über Dichtung". See also Davis 2012, 10–11.

<sup>54</sup> For the three common humour theories (i.e. incongruity theory, superiority theory and relief theory) see Plaza 2006, 6–13. See also Raskin 1985, 30–41; Attardo 1994, 47–50 and Morreall 2009, 4–23. For more bibliography on humour see Plaza 2006, 6 with n. 10 and more recently Michalopoulos 2014, 36–7 with n. 4 [in Greek].

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Baldwin 1991, 102–3.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Panayotakis 2010, 10–1 with n. 20. See also Panayotakis 2005, 140 and Panayotakis 2014, 385–6.

The incongruity theory is also associated with the metrical form used by Silenus, which constitutes yet another feature that reinforces the humour traced in the scene. Aristotle argued that the literary characters can be separated in three basic categories: σπουδαῖοι or βελτίονες, φαῦλοι or χείρονες and finally τοιοῦτοι or καθ' ἡμᾶς.<sup>57</sup> The σπουδαῖοι are concerned with the superior characters that are found in epic and tragedy, the φαῦλοι are identified with the inferior characters that are traced in comedy and the τοιοῦτοι are referred to the average citizens or everyday characters.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, he continues stressing that the dactylic hexameter is a grand metrical form which constitutes a suitable medium to be used by the σπουδαῖοι or βελτίονες;<sup>59</sup> but, it is also incongruous for the φαῦλοι or χείρονες to use high-flown diction in a literary composition, given that they should use a metre in keeping with their status.<sup>60</sup> These Aristotelian views concerning the congruity between subject and metrical form in a literary genre (i.e., τὸ πρέπον) bequeathed in the Hellenistic and Augustan Age.<sup>61</sup> However, the Hellenistic and Augustan writers set free poetry from its formal occasions and metrical bonds, suggesting also that a literary genre should not be limited by classical strictures on the association between subject and metrical form.<sup>62</sup> Vergil's main literary model, Theocritus used the dactylic hexameter for dramatic dialogues or monologues that deal with low characters (i.e. herdsmen) and their lives, creating in that way an incongruity which is ironical and humorous to the audience.<sup>63</sup> Hence, the satyr Silenus who has long history as an inferior character (i.e. φαῦλος) in the Greco-Roman literary tradition<sup>64</sup> speaks in dactylic

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Ar. *pol.* 1448a 1–5. See also Zanker 1987, 139–42 and esp. 142.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Ar. *pol.* 1448a 16–18.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Ar. *pol.* 1449b 9–10. See also Zanker 1987, 11.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Ar. *rh.* 1404b 12–25. See also Zanker 1987, 142.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Hor. *ars* 73–98 where the Aristotelian theory concerning the appropriateness can also be found since Horace argues that the subject should be in accordance with the metrical form in a literary genre, laying also special emphasis on yet another two literary features: the use of an example *par excellence* (i.e. *auctor*) that can define a literary genre and the fact that a literary genre can contain elements drawn from another genre (i.e. blending of genres) in order to serve special goals.

<sup>62</sup> Cf., e.g., Zetzel 1983, 99–100 with n. 32.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Zanker 1987, 11–12 with n. 56. For humour and irony in the Theocritean collection (i.e. *Idyll* 11) see, e.g., Kantzios 2004, 49–62.

<sup>64</sup> Cf., e.g., Strab. 10,3,19: οὔρειαι νύμφαι θεαὶ ἐξεγένοντο καὶ γένος οὔτιδανῶν Σατύρων καὶ ἀμυχανοεργῶν Κουρήτες τε θεοὶ φιλοπαίγμονες ὀρησθήρες.

hexameter (cf. *ecl.* 6,23–26) which is a medium used to celebrate the actions of gods, heroes, kings and warriors; and therefore, it can be argued that here there is the same incongruity with Theocritus. In other words, Silenus enjoys Chromis', Mnasyllus' and Aegle's joke calling for his freedom in the heroic metre which is a significant incongruity that generates humour. On the other hand, it should be mentioned that by Vergil's time dactylic hexameter had already adapted by Lucilius, Lucretius, Catullus, Vergil and Horace for less elevated literary forms and therefore it had become so common in the descriptions of lower characters (e.g. Horace's *Satires*),<sup>65</sup> thereby losing its humorous function. Nonetheless, it should also be mentioned that the conventional metrical forms used by Greek and Roman mimographers in the fragmentary texts that have come down to us are the iambic, choliambic and trochaic rhythm but not the dactylic hexameter,<sup>66</sup> something which can create yet another substantial incongruity that causes humour; namely, Silenus humorously calls for his freedom in the dactylic hexameter and not the in the iambic, choliambic and trochaic rhythm that are found in the mime genre, thereby reinforcing the suggestion that Silenus' scene is related to this literary genre. Finally, the metrical form used in Silenus' song is also the dactylic hexameter that constitutes the right medium for a song that is reported rather than dramatized.<sup>67</sup> However, its incongruous recital by the uneducated satyr Silenus rather than by someone royal bard (e.g., Phemius or Demodocus) causes not only laugh and humour; but, it can also ridicule these mythical characters and the scenes in which are found, something which is among the favourite subjects employed in the mime genre.<sup>68</sup>

Examining closely the scene we first come across Silenus' hangover (*ecl.* 6,13–17) that constitutes the conventional behaviour for someone who is Dionysus' follower;<sup>69</sup> however, it has already been noticed that here we do not deal with the typical Silenus but with the Vergilian Silenus who can charm the natural environment with his music and song (*ecl.* 6,27–30) and can also recount

<sup>65</sup> Cf., e.g., Hor. *sat.* 1,8 where Priapus' figwood statue relates the way in which he scared the witches Canidia and Segana who desecrated by performing a magical ceremony in his garden and 2,2 where the countryman Ofellus, whose farm has been confiscated, criticises the fashionable gluttony and suggests austerity and simple living.

<sup>66</sup> Cf., e.g., Panayotakis 2005, 139–140. See also Panayotakis 2014, 382.

<sup>67</sup> Cf., e.g., Hom. *Od.* 1,325–27 (Phemius' song); *Od.* 8,499–520 (Demodocus' song) and Verg. *Aen.* 1,740–46 (Iopas' song).

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Panayotakis 2010, 10–11 with n. 20. See also Panayotakis 2005, 140.

<sup>69</sup> Cf., e.g., Hartmann 1927, 39 and 43. See also Notopoulos 1967, 308–9.

philosophical subjects (ecl. 6,31–40), namely two activities which are humorously incongruous with the satyr's hangover. The next incongruity that causes humour is found in the satyr's capture (ecl. 6,18–22). Silenus' binding with his own garlands by two hesitant fauns or satyrs that are encouraged and aided by a naiad who daubs the satyr's face with mulberry juice constitutes a joke which can actually cause laugh (cf. *ille dolum ridens*, ecl. 6,23).<sup>70</sup> But, the martial language (*adgressi* "to assault", ecl. 6,18; *uincula* "chains", ecl. 6,19 and *sanguineis* "bloody", ecl. 6,22)<sup>71</sup> used to describe Silenus' binding is also funny; given that the trivial incident, which is concerned with the capture of the drunk satyr, is incongruously described through serious martial terms causing not only humour, but also recalling the mime genre where similar trivial situations (i.e., "low subjects") are conventionally portrayed through a very learned or even artificial language.<sup>72</sup> Finally, Silenus' answer shows that he enjoys the joke agreeing to offer Chromis and Mnasyllus the long requested song and Aegle some another reward (ecl. 6,23–26).<sup>73</sup> The satyr's reaction confirms his playful character (cf. *nam saepe senex spe carminis ambo / luserat*, ecl. 6,18–19) that is reinforced from his sexual innuendo to Aegle.<sup>74</sup> Such an obscene innuendo accords very well with the conventional lecher Silenus; but, it is entirely incongruous with the Vergilian Silenus who is identified with the mythical singer that can charm natural world (ecl. 6,27–30) and with the "philosopher" that relates cosmological subjects (ecl. 6,31–40) causing also humour.<sup>75</sup> On the other hand, such obscene humour has

<sup>70</sup> See also Law 1978, 85–89, who nicely argues that Silenus' face smeared by Aegle constitutes a typical humorous element that further reinforces the scene's humorous nature.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Segal 1969, 417.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Panayotakis 2014, 382 who nicely quotes Herondas' *Mim.* 1 where an old matchmaker tries to convince a woman whose mate is away from home for some time to yield to another man's sexual advances, thereby identifying the woman with another Penelope who is waiting for Odysseus' return.

<sup>73</sup> Here, it should be mentioned that the female mimes had usually names that reflected show business e.g. Thymele ("Stage"), Eucharis ("Miss Charming"), Paizousa ("The Player"), Anapauma ("Respite") or Mimesis (cf. Garton 1964, 238–9), something that can suggest that the non-pastoral name Aegle ("The Shining") could have its roots in the same tradition.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Baldwin 1991, 103 who also argues that Silenus' sexual innuendo can recall that found in ecl. 3,7–9: *Parcius ista uiris tamen obicienda memento. / nouimus et qui te transuersa tuentibus hircis / et quo sed faciles Nymphae risere sacello.*

<sup>75</sup> Cf., e.g., Cic. *de orat.* 2,242 and 251–52.

also been recognised as a central mimic feature,<sup>76</sup> reinforcing in that way the relationship between Silenus' scene and the mime genre.

To sum up, the subject, the basic character and the metre of Silenus' scene create an amusing *mise en scène* which is the most suitable context for its humorous elements. The satyr's hangover, binding and reaction to Chromis' and Mnasyllus' "assault" constitute the elements which show that here we do not deal with the typical Silenus. The Vergilian Silenus is the herdsman-singer who is a typical figure in the *Eclogues*, the legendary singer who can charm the flora and fauna through his music and song and finally a polymath singer who recounts philosophical (i.e. cosmological) subjects. These activities are emphatically incongruous with those in which the typical Silenus used to be engaged, creating notable incongruities that generate laugh and humour. However, the laugh and humour traced in Silenus' scene are not a mere coincidence; its subject (i.e. the drunkard), main character (i.e. Silenus) and metre (i.e. dactylic hexameter) along with its constituent elements (i.e. Silenus' binding and his obscene joke to Aegle) shows that the humour of Silenus' scene comes from the mime genre. In other words, *ecl.* 6,13–30 can be characterised as a pastoral Greco-Roman mime which is intended to generate laugh and humour (i.e. *mimicus risus*) to the reader. This conclusion can explain the function which Silenus' scene has in the *Eclogue*, justifying also his bizarre role as the "singer" of the ensuing song (*ecl.* 6,31–86). Furthermore, the same inference accords very well with the suggestion that *Eclogue* 6 is a literary composition which reflects Hellenistic and Neoteric literary principles; since mime (i.e. Hellenistic and Roman) that drew its material from everyday life and exploited realistic subjects along with low-life situations in a learned and stylised way can actually reflect the literary trend that prevailed in Rome during the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC; and finally, it also accords well with the *Eclogue's* introductory section (*ecl.* 6,1–12) which clearly anticipates not only its humorous-playful nature but most significantly the Hellenistic-Neoteric character traced in Silenus' song.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Cf., e.g., Panayotakis 2010, 22. See also Panayotakis 2005, 141.

<sup>77</sup> Note the verb *ludere* (*ecl.* 6,2) that refers to the composition of light or playful verse (cf. *OLD* s.v. *ludo* 8a) and has also Neoteric overtones (cf. *Cat.* 50,1–2 *hesterno, Licini, die otiosi/multum lusimus in tuis tabellis*), while it is contrasted with the verb *canerem* (*ecl.* 6,3) that is related to epic poetry. Furthermore, *Thalea* denotes the Muse Thalia who is identified with the genre of comedy and light verse (cf. Roscher 1916–1924, s.v. *Thaleia* and *Thalia*.) whose occurrence is in emphatic contrast to Apollo's epiphany (*ecl.* 6,3–5) and entirely in accordance with the humorous character of Silenus' scene (*ecl.* 6,13–30).

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