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Between Sound and Silence – The Sonic World of Calpurnius Siculus’ *Eclogues*

ABSTRACT: The aim of the article is to analyze selected ways of sound presentation in *Eclogues*, written by Calpurnius Siculus, a Latin poet who lived and created in the time of Nero’s rule. Most attention will be drawn to songs performed by shepherds in their agons along with the sounds that are composed by surrounding nature, like rustling trees, murmuring streams and singing birds. What is more, an essential part is played by onomatopoeic effects realized by means of neatly chosen expressions. The correlation of accurate sounds has an impact on the sense of hearing and on the readers’ imagination, as they can be moved into the bosom of nature and almost ‘hear’ the sounds that accompany the scenes.

KEYWORDS: Calpurnius Siculus, *Eclogues*, sound, silence

Eclogues, by the Latin poet Calpurnius Siculus, created in the first century C.E., are a series of shepherds’ agons in which sound can be interpreted on many layers. The interpretation can start primarily with the reader’s own perception (imagining the scenes presented in individual verses and creating a visual image of the poetic world), through literary analysis where vivid comparisons and metaphors take place and ending with a stage in which one can discover the content hidden between the lines and get to know the craftsmanship of Calpurnius’ poetic

techniques. The auditory reception of lyrics allows one to enjoy the sounds resounding in appropriately selected terms and the sounds located in them. Such techniques allow the production of not only onomatopoeic effects but also emotional ones. They can make one feel agitated, curious and even anxious. The harmony (or disharmony) of sounds strongly affects the sense of hearing. In poetry, therefore, the intensification of the poetic function is clearly noticeable when attention is directed more to the form of the message than its content.¹ With regard to the literature of ancient times, it is worth noting that the sound plane was exposed in a very expressive way. This was largely related to the dominant oral production of linguistic texts. Appropriate reading of the lines of a poem (just like giving a speech in the case of rhetorical texts) slows the pace of reading and directs the recipient's attention to the sound side of the statement.²

Various sound effects can be observed, or even more precisely be heard, in Calpurnius Siculus' *Eclogues*. Unfortunately, there is not much information left about the author per se. It is believed that Spain was his home country, and the period of his work falls during the reign of Nero.³ Researchers who support dating Calpurnius' life and his works in the time of Nero also pay attention to clues incorporated into the poems. They include emphasizing the young age and beauty of the reigning emperor and his poetic interests,⁴ Faunus' prophecy concerning respect for the rights and authority of consuls⁵ and information

¹ Lesiak 2007: 79.

² Pszczołowska 1977: 61.

³ E. Champlin is an opponent of this theory. In his article (Champlin 1986), he incorrectly dates presented facts. For instance, he mentions a comet (*Calp. Ecl.* I 77) that appeared in the sky after the time of Claudius' rule (13 October 54 C.E.) and before Nero took over the reign (cf. *Suet. Claud.* 46; *Cassius Dio LX* 35; *Pliny. NH* II 25, 92). This phenomenon may have been mistaken by the poet as an omen heralding the coming of happy years, which is known as *quinquennium Neronis* (see *Aur. Vict. Caes.* V 2.; etiam: Antiqureira 2011; Favarsani 2014; Anderson, Haverfield 1911. The period of the first five years of Nero's rule (54–59 C.E.) is described as the time of the nation's splendor and perfectly conducted state policy (Gryksa 2020: 51–52).

⁴ *Calp. Ecl.* IV 87.

⁵ Cf. *Tac. A.* XIII 4.

about the Games⁶ or fights in a wooden amphitheater.⁷ Although there are few references to the reign of Claudius,⁸ the evidence corresponding to the events of Nero's time is convincing enough.⁹

There is a clear division of the preserved poems from political ones (Eclogues I, IV, VII), in which the praise of the ruler as well as the competition for songs comes to the fore, and the so-called *merae bucolicae*, dealing with pastoral and rural matters. In each type, a different implementation of sound-related procedures is emphasized, which, however, can be categorized and compared by noticing tendencies characteristic of the genre. The aim of this article is to indicate selected sound realizations in Calpurnius' poems and to define their purpose. The main emphasis is placed on the motifs of songs performed by shepherds in agons, as well as on the sounds generated by the surrounding nature. The role of sound will be contrasted with the shepherds' agon conducted in silence, which appears in Eclogue VI and is a genre novelty.

At the very beginning it is worth focusing on the songs themselves, as they are the key elements of each poem. It is in them that the heroes – shepherds—describe their love experiences, most often tragic ones. It should be emphasized that the bucolic genre comes from folk art – songs sung by Sicilian shepherds. Another source indicated by researchers are cult songs performed by villagers in honor of Artemis¹⁰ – the Greek goddess of forests, hunting and protector of mountains and all vegetation. The songs in Calpurnius' *Eclogues* are performed by shepherds in pipe accompaniment. Also present are melodies that accompany sounds extracted from reeds or to the accompaniment of a lute¹¹ (Calp. *Ecl.* II 92).

⁶ Cf. Suet.: *Nero* 11.

⁷ Calp. *Ecl.* VII 23–24 = Tac.: *A.* XIII 31.

⁸ E.g. Calp. *Ecl.* I 54–57.

⁹ Keene 1887: 2–5; Townend 1980: 166–174; Mayer 1980: 175–176; Baldwin 1995: 157–167; Hubbard 1996: 68, footnote 6; Horsfall 1997: 166–196.

¹⁰ Ławińska-Tyszkowska 2005: 560.

¹¹ The lute (lyre) became very popular in the Middle Ages, but the lute, like other instruments, is present in ancient iconographies. Like the Greeks, the Romans believed that the lute and the harp were of Eastern origin. It is believed that instruments arrived in Rome due to Egyptian influence through the province of Africa Proconsularis. Hence, it was quite exotic for the Romans. In the musical iconography of Roman society, lutes appear in the hands of Cupids and both male and female musicians (Féraud 2016: 137).

Two distinct categories of wind instruments in the bucolic tradition are known. The syrinx (incl. Pan's flute, panpipe) appears most often in the literature, i.e., a vertical flute initially made of reed or bamboo, later also of clay, wood or ivory. Plinius (Plin. *Natural History* [NH] XVI 164) mentions that there were several types of reeds that could be used to make musical instruments:

*Plura autem genera. alia spissior densiorque geniculis, brevibus internodiis, alia rarior maioribus, tenuiorque et ipsa. calamus vero alius totus concavus, quem vocant syringian, utilissimus fistulis, quoniam nihil est ei cartilaginis atque carnis. Orchomenio et nodi continuo foramine pervii, quem auleton vocant. hic tibiis utilior, fistulis ille.*¹²

Sound-creating vibrations are generated when air is blown through the column and only one sound can be produced from each tube (the pitch of the sound determines the length of the tube).¹³ The exact number of tubes from which the sounds were extracted is not known. In ancient poetry, Pan's flute, with seven tones, occupies a special place, while Theocritus mentions an instrument made of nine pipes,¹⁴ and Ovid even mentions the hyperbolic number 100.¹⁵ The name of the instrument comes from the name of the nymph Syrinx, the beloved of the god Pan, who was turned into a reed. It was from this plant that Pan made the first instrument.¹⁶ The second instrument known from the bucolic tradition is the aulos (Lat. *tibiae*). Its tube could be made

They symbolize poetic inspiration and poetry itself. The plucked string instrument resembles a pear in its shape.

¹² "There are, however, several varieties of reeds. One is rather compact and has joints closer together with short spaces between them, while another has them farther apart with larger spaces between them, and it is also thinner in itself. But another kind of cane is hollow for its whole length; its Greek name means the flute-reed, and it is very useful for making flutes because it contains no pith and no fleshy substance. The Orchomeus cane has a passage even right through the knots, and it is called in Greek the pipe-reed; this is more suitable for flageolets, as the preceding kind is for flutes" (transl. H. Rackman).

¹³ Smith 1970: 498–99.

¹⁴ Theocr. *Id.* 8, 18; 8, 21.

¹⁵ Smith 1970: 500; Ov. *Met.* XIII 784.

¹⁶ Ov. *Met.* I 689–712.

of reed, bone, lotus, boxwood or silver, and was provided with finger holes (the earlier version had three or four such holes). It adopted the shape of two long pipes connected by two mouthpieces, from which a sound resembling a modern oboe or clarinet was emitted. Even in the first verses of Eclogue I, Corydon, addressing Ornytus, announces what instruments he will use to perform his song:

*prome igitur calamos et si qua recondita servas.
nec tibi defuerit mea fistula, quam mihi nuper
matura docilis compegit harundine Ladon*¹⁷ (Calp. *Ecl.* I 16–18)

According to the data analyzed in comparative ethnographic organology, reed blades (as well as leaves and shells) are among the oldest human musical instruments.¹⁸ It is also worth adding that, according to Diodorus Siculus, we owe the invention of singing to attempts of imitating the breath of the wind rustling in the reeds of the Nile.¹⁹

Other interesting solutions referring to sounds and melodies can be found in Eclogue IV. Corydon (in the form of whom researchers identify Calpurnius himself) and Amyntas alternately worship the emperor in their agons, presenting him as a god, smiling and cheerful, who gives peace to the shepherds, the Roman state and the whole world. The scene takes place under a sycamore tree, where the gurgling currents of the nearby river are clearly audible, while Corydon sits in silence.²⁰ The rivals evoke figures of mythological deities who take care of music and fine arts in the broad sense (Apollo,²¹ Bacchus and Muses²²). They

¹⁷ “Produce your reed-pipes then and any song you keep stored for use. My pipe, you will find, will not fail you – the pipe that Ladon’s skill fashioned for me lately out of a ripely seasoned reed” (transl. J.W. Duff, A.M. Duff). All passages of Calpurnius’s *Eclogues* in this article are quoted from translation by J.W. Duff and A.M. Duff.

¹⁸ Kurzeja 2016: 50.

¹⁹ Riley 2002: 159.

²⁰ Calp. *Ecl.* IV 2–3: Why sit you [Corydon] in an unwonted place, beneath this plane-tree at whose roots brawl the prattling waters?

²¹ Calp. *Ecl.* IV 9: Sweet of sound are your lays and ‘tis not with cold disdain that Apollo looks upon you, young Corydon.

²² Calp. *Ecl.* IV 57–58: but you are often the singer of sweet poetry, and now the Muse rewards you with Bacchic ivy-clusters, now fair Apollo shades your brow with laurel.

emphasize that with the new ruler times have changed for the better, which should be praised with a song.²³ In the poem there are references to the songs of the cures²⁴ or the singing of the Parrhasian flute.²⁵ The strength of the sounds emitted during the agons is also important, which cannot be drowned out even by noisy trumpets:

*ille meis pacem dat montibus: ecce per illum,
seu cantare iuvat seu ter pede lenta ferire
gramina, nullus obest: licet et cantare choreis
et cantus viridante licet mihi condere libro,
turbida nec calamos iam surdant classica nostros.*²⁶ (Calp. *Ecl.* IV 128–131)

The third character in the scene, Meliboeus, expresses his appreciation of the agon by comparing the shepherds' songs to honey:

*verum, quae paribus modo concinuistis avenis,
tam liquidum, tam dulce cadunt, ut non ego malim,
quod Paeligna solent examina lambere nectar.*²⁷ (Calp. *Ecl.* IV 150–152)

The products of bees inhabiting the area of Pratola Peligna (the Abruzzo region in Italy, province of L'Aquila), especially wax, were highly valued in ancient times.²⁸ However, it should be stressed that honey was not the only benefit that resulted from bee breeding. Var-

²³ Calp. *Ecl.* IV 26–31: What will the pipe bring you to ward off famine? Of a truth, no one repeats my lay save the wind-spiced echo from yonder crags.

²⁴ Calp. *Ecl.* IV 92–96: Even he, controller of the heavens in heat and cold, our father Jupiter himself, to whom you yourself, Caesar, now stand next, doth oft lay down his thunderbolt awhile to visit Cretan meads, and, in some verdant grot reclining, 'mid Dicté's forests listens to Curetic lays.

²⁵ Calp. *Ecl.* IV 100: Forthwith the Parrhasian reeds let their notes go free.

²⁶ "He [sc. Nero] it is who bestows peace on my hills. See, it is through him that no one prevents me, if 'tis my pleasure to sing or to tread the sluggish grass in triple measure. In choral dance too may I sing, and I may preserve my songs on the green bark; and no more do boisterous trumpets drown our reed-pipes' note".

²⁷ "But what you have ever now sung on well-matched pipes has so clear, so sweet a fall that I would not liefer sip the nectarous honey which Pelignian swarms are wont to sip".

²⁸ Ransome 2012: 89.

ron distinguishes three more basic products produced by hardworking insects: propolis, erithace and wax (Eclogue III, 16, 23–24).²⁹ The reference, both to honey and bees, is in turn one of the traditional elements of the bucolic genre, which also resounds in the predecessors of Calpurnius.³⁰ Comparing poetry to honey and bees has a rich tradition and offers many interpretative possibilities. On the one hand, poetry is perceived as a product of hard, painstaking work,³¹ the effects of which – like honey – can be enjoyed by the audience. It is worth adding that over the centuries the bee has become a symbol not only of diligence and reliability but also of deity, royal dignity, altruism and wisdom. They were called the birds of the Muses,³² under whose inspiration poets created their *opera magna*. The honey produced by bees was also supposed to be a gift from the guardians of the fine arts.³³ Due to the subject of this article it is also worth paying attention to the sound made by bees. Insects communicate using so-called chemical informants, as well as through specific behavior (e.g., dancing), emitting light or just by making voices. The sounds emitted are used to defend against predators, and during reproduction they are helpful in mating females and males. The range of emitted sounds is wide, some of them – in the form of ultrasounds – are not audible to humans.³⁴

²⁹ Mikołajczyk 1984: 120.

³⁰ E.g., Verg. *Ecl.* VII 24. The wind passes through the branches and leaves, and that is why the tree has a voice of its own. It contributes to the musical atmosphere, together with the buzzing of bees and the fringe of reeds along the river. Scarborough 2017: 442.

³¹ Hor. *Carm.* IV 2, 27–32.

³² Varro, *Rust.* 3.16.7: *Musarum esse dicuntur uolucres.*

³³ Pind. *Ol.* 7, 8: νέκταρ χυτόν, Μοισᾶν δόσιον. Scarborough 2017: 446.

³⁴ Aristotle, in his *Historia animalium*, made an analysis of the differences in the animal series related to phonation. His observation are as follows: “insects, for instance, have no voice and no language, but they can emit sound by internal air or wind, though not by the emission of air or wind; for no insects are capable of respiration. But some of them make a humming noise, like the bee and the other winged insects; and others are said to sing, as the cicada. And all these latter insects make their special noises by means of the membrane that is underneath the ‘hypozoma’ – those insects, that is to say, whose body is thus divided; as for instance, one species of cicada, which makes the sound by means of the friction of the air. Flies and bees, and the like, produce their special noise by opening and shutting their wings in the act of flying; for the noise made is by the friction of air between the wings when in motion. The noise made by grasshoppers is

In addition to the melodious rivalries undertaken by the characters, one (sc. the reader) can ‘hear’ the surrounding nature. It creates a space characteristic of the *locus amoenus*, or ‘delightful place’. In the ancient tradition it was created by the scenery, thanks to which the thoughts and works of both poets and philosophers were shaped naturally and with divine inspiration. Starting from the era of the empire until the 16th century, the *locus amoenus* was one of the main motifs of descriptions of nature, which focused on a beautiful place, naturally shaded. The natural landscape also included at least one tree, a meadow and a stream or a spring. It was also possible to consider the singing of birds, the beauty of flowers and wind.³⁵ The tradition of *locus amoenus* undoubtedly dates back to the times of Hellenistic literature and art, when there was much greater interest in the countryside and its inhabitants (in comparison with earlier times³⁶). This trend was directly related to a certain tiredness of life in increasingly larger cities and nostalgia for a peaceful, uncomplicated past. Theocritus, the creator of the idyll,

produced by rubbing or reverberating with their long hind-legs” [*Hist. an.* IV, 9, 535b, transl. D’Arcy W. Thompson], quoted after Zanatta 2013: 7–8.

³⁵ Curtius 1973: 202.

³⁶ It should be noted that descriptions of an idealized landscape or place that can be described as *locus amoenus* can be found throughout the literary tradition, starting with Homer’s output (Gacia 2008: 187). He prefers amiable aspects of nature, such as a cluster of trees, a grove with springs and lush meadows. There dwell the Nymphs (*Iliad* XX, 8; *Odyssey* VI, 124, and XVII, 205) or Athena (*Ov.*, VI, 291). Also, Curtius enumerates that: “A ravishing bit of scenery in this tonality is the uninhabited goat island near the land of Cyclops (*Od.* IX, 132ff.): «Here are meadows on the banks of the gray sea, moist, with soft soil; here vines could never die; here is smooth ploughing-land; a very heavy crop, and always well in season, might be reaped, for the under soil is rich. [...] Just at the harbor’s head a spring of sparkling water flows from beneath a cave; around it poplars grow.»”

Here fertility is made an element of the ideal landscape. The most elaborate variant is afforded by the Gardens of Alcinoos (*Od.* VII 112). Here there are fruits of the most various kinds: pomegranates, apples, figs, pears, olives, grapes. The trees bear all through the year, for it is always spring and the west wind always blows – the island of the Phaeacians is indeed a land of faery. Two springs water the garden. Another fabulous place of heart’s desire is the grotto of Calypso (*Od.* V 63). It is surrounded by a forest of alders, aspens and cypresses. Four springs water the meadows, in which violets and parsley grow” (Curtius 1973: 185).

whom Calpurnius imitated in his works,³⁷ seemed to use the idea of *loci amoeni* in such categories.³⁸

The sounds that can be heard in the poetic bosom of nature can be divided into several categories. The first features singing crickets (Calp. *Ecl.* V 56) and whimpering and chirping birds (Calp. *Ecl.* V 18). An unusual juxtaposition occurs in Eclogue VI, when Lycidas compares the rival Nyctilus and Alcona to a goldfinch and a crow, and a nightingale and an owl:

*Nyctilon ut cantu rudis exsuperavit Alcon,
Astyle, credibile est, si vincat acanthida cornix,
vocalem superet si dirus aedona bubo.*³⁹ (Calp. *Ecl.* VI 6–8)

While the chirping of the goldfinch is a melody pleasant to the human ear, enriched with equally harmonious trills, the cawing of a crow definitely does not resemble singing and may even scare. In the cultures of European countries, even in ancient times, the crow was considered as a symbol of death, war and plague. According to Plinius, an unfavorable omen is the time of crow hatching, which falls after the summer solstice (Plin. *NH* X 14). The second bird combination can be interpreted in a similar way. The beautiful singing of the nightingale was already appreciated by the ancients. Plinius (*NH* X 43) describes it as follows:

³⁷ His poems also clearly echo the works of Ovid and Virgil. For more information on the genre features highlighted in the latter's poems, see, for example, Sickle 2004; Chandler 2012; Haarhoff 1960; Whitfield 1956; Campbell 2023.

³⁸ Hunter 1999: 13. One of the poems interpreted by researchers in relation to the concept of *loci amoeni* is *Idyll* 7. It is an allegorical poem in which the most information about the author appears. One of his characters, Simichidas, tells the story of his journey from the city of Kos to the countryside. He stays there with friends who are celebrating the harvest festival and organizing a countryside feast for this occasion. It takes place in an orchard, in the shade of trees. In the background one can hear birds singing, cicadas and bees buzzing. The participants of the feast enjoy ripe fruit and wine, compared to that served to mythical heroes (Ławińska-Tyszkowska 2005: 567). See, e.g., Pearce 1988: 276–304.

³⁹ “That untrained Alcon could have beaten Nyctilus in song is only believable, Astylus, if the crow could excel the goldfinch or the eerie owl surpass the tuneful nightingale.”

Lusciniis diebus ac noctibus continuis XV garrulus sine intermissu cantus densante se frondium germine, non in novissimis digna miratu ave. primum tanta vox tam parvo in corpusculo, tam pertinax spiritus; deinde in una perfecta musica scientia: modulatus editur sonus et nunc continuo spiritu trahitur in longum, nunc variatur inflexo, nunc distinguitur conciso, copulatur intorto, promittitur revocato, infuscatur ex inopinato, interdum et seum ipse murmurat, plenus, gravis, acutus, creber, extentus, ubi visum est, vibrans, summus, medius, imus. breviterque omnia tam parvulis in faucibus, quae tot exquisitis tibiatarum tormentis ars hominum excogitavit, non ut sit dubium hanc suavitatem praemonstratam efficacia auspicio, cum in ore Stesichori cecinit infantis.⁴⁰

On the other hand, an owl, whose sound is generated in the larynx, hoots, and the sound itself can make you shiver, especially at night. In the ancient tradition, this bird was considered an omen of death, misfortune⁴¹ and failure. The juxtaposition of a nightingale and an owl, as an example of an animal *adynaton*,⁴² is an interesting and at the same time blunt way of justifying Lycidas' position while adding pathos to

⁴⁰ "Nightingales pour out a ceaseless gush of song for fifteen days and nights on end when the buds of the leaves are swelling – a bird not in the lowest rank remarkable. In the first place there is so loud a voice and so persistent a supply of breath in such a tiny little body; then there is the consummate knowledge of music in a single bird: the sound is given out with modulations, and now is drawn out into a long note with one continuous breath, now varied by managing the breath, now made staccato by checking it, or linked together by prolonging it, or carried on by holding it back; or it is suddenly lowered, and at times sinks into a mere murmur, loud, low, bass, treble, with trills, with long notes, modulated when this seems good - soprano, mezzo, baritone; and briefly all the devices in that tiny throat which human science has devised with all the elaborate mechanism of the flute, so that there can be no doubt that this sweetness was foretold by a convincing omen when it made music on the lips of the infant Stesichorus" (transl. H. Rackman).

⁴¹ Becker 2000: 223.

⁴² It is worth mentioning that such animal juxtaposition is also present in other ancient poets, for example, in Theocritus' works (*Id.* VII 40–41), where Simichidas compares the fight between Asclepiades and Filitas to a frog and grasshopper. Similarly, in Vergil's works (Verg. *Ecl.* IX 35–36), Lycidas compares his competition to be with Varius and Cynna to goose squawking among swans. In zoology, the best-known swans are, of course, the mute ones and the whooping swans. Ancient literature compares the last inspired utterances of soothsayers or orators to the death cry of these vocally unprivileged birds (Gryksa 2020: 56). More examples of the swan idea in ancient literature can be found, e.g., in Callimachus and others: Hor. *Carm.* II 20; Pl. *Phd.* 84e–85b;

the work.⁴³ When analyzing the Latin version of the passage mentioned above (Calp. *Ecl.* VI 6–8), attention should be paid to the frequent usage of the consonant ‘s’, which in antiquity was considered unpleasant to the ear.⁴⁴ Its accumulation (at the end, beginning⁴⁵ or in the middle⁴⁶ of words within a line) is called sigmatism by ancient grammarians and modern scholars:

*Nyctilon ut cantu rudis exsuperavit Alcon,
Astyle, credibile est, si vincat acanthida cornix,
vocalem superet si dirus aedona bubo.*

The consonant ‘s’, although unpleasant to the ear, often appears in both prose and poetry. Ancient authors willingly used its wording to evoke appropriate emotions in readers. The sound ‘s’ evokes noise, murmur, whistle, hissing and in relation to Calpurnius’ owl or crow, it intensifies the unpleasant sensations caused by their speech. It is also worth paying attention to the sound ‘s’ hidden under the letter ‘x’ (= cs), and therefore in the words *exsuperavit* (= *ecssuperavit*) and *cornix* (= *cornics*).

Another group of sounds that appear in Calpurnius’ *Eclogues* are those made by nature itself, i.e., trees, streams and everything that surrounds the shepherds during their agony. These include the mentioning of bean pods that have stopped rattling in the field (Calp. *Ecl.* IV 115); a description of a wine that foams softly (Calp. *Ecl.* I 3); the waters of the swift stream that seethe as they flow (Calp. *Ecl.* I 11); currents that

Hom. *Hymn* 21; Theocr. *Id.* I 136, V 29, VII 41; Verg. *Ecl.* VIII 55, IX 36. See e.g. Hunter, Laemmle 2019.

⁴³ Gryksa 2020: 55.

⁴⁴ Dionysius of Halicarnassus claimed that the excessive use of the ‘s’ sound causes disgust and even pain (Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 14, 80). In turn, Quintilian (Quint. *Inst.* XII 10, 32) describes it as ‘unpleasant’ (*absona littera*).

⁴⁵ So called real sigmatism (Lesiak 2007: 73).

⁴⁶ So called apparent sigmatism (Lesiak 2007: 73). More precise debate on sigmatism in the field of Latin literature was undertaken by J. Korpanty (1997).

talk (*quam garrulus*⁴⁷ *adstrepit umor*, Calp. *Ecl.* IV 2). The leaves of singing trees rustle around (Calp. *Ecl.* II 95):

*iam resonant frondes, iam cantibus obstrepit arbos*⁴⁸

and attention is drawn to the terms etymologically related to the production of sounds: *resonare* (to make a long sound, echo, resound) and *cantare* (to sing, sound, play). Furthermore, the wind echoes the words of the song on a rocky ridge (Calp. *Ecl.* IV 28):

praeter ab his scopulis ventosa remurmurat echo

Calpurnius used an interesting repetition here. The verb *remurmurare* (repeat, imitate) contains the repetition of the clusters ‘mur’, which give the impression of reflecting the sound characteristic of an echo. This is pure onomatopoeia.⁴⁹

62: *sed, ne vicini nobis sonus obstrepat amnis*

65: *obest arguti glareae rivi*

64–65: *sub exeso raucum mihi pumice lymphae/respondent*

The sounds appearing in the abovementioned passage of Eclogue VI perfectly reflect the character of wild nature, with an additional aspect that cannot be omitted, the phrase: *sub exeso pumice lymphae respondent* – “Because under a hollow rock, water nymphs answer me dully.” These are words spoken by Astylus, and therefore, since the nymphs give the answer to the hero of the *Eclogues*, at the same time being under a rock, it can be concluded that in this way an acoustic

⁴⁷ The double ‘r’ in the adjective *garrulus* evokes the sound of chirping, which was considered irritating in the ancient tradition. The adjectives *raucus* (hoarse, shouting, screaming) and *argutus* (creaking, endowed with a squeaky voice), characteristic of pastoral poetry of later periods, have a similar connotation, i.e., in post-Vergilian pastoral poetry (Fitzgerald 2016: 7). Cicero believed that the letter ‘r’ resembled sounds made by animals, not by humans, which is why he was not particularly fond of it (Lesiak 2007: 41).

⁴⁸ “Now are the leaves a-rustling; now the forest drowns our song”.

⁴⁹ Lesiak 2007.

echo will be created – an auditory sensation caused by a soundwave impulse, which returns after reaching an obstacle, which in this situation is the rock. Important as well is also the alliteration of sound ‘s’ in words: *sed* and *sonus*, which enhance the term *obstrepat*.

Although alternative places for resolving the agon are part of the tradition of the pastoral genre, the departure from the already mentioned *locus amoenus* (characteristic of the murmur of a stream or sounds of nature) is an innovation introduced by the Latin poet. The heroes of Eclogue VI are looking for a silence⁵⁰ that will not be disturbed by any noise (Calp. *Ecl.* VI 62–72). The silence, which the shepherds care so much about, is a sign of Calpurnius’ interaction with the political situation of the time and its influence on the shape of the emerging works. The theme of silence is a direct reference to the apolitical environment in which shepherds reside.⁵¹ The motif of silence also appears in Eclogue II, in which the shepherd Idas and the gardener Astacus, both in love with a girl named Crocale, lead singing competitions:

*et tenere suos properantia flumina cursus;
desistunt tremulis incurrere frondibus Euri
altaque per totos fecere silentia montes:
omnia cessabant, neglectaque pascua tauri
calcabant, illis etiam certantibus ausa est
daedala nectareos apis intermittere flores.*⁵² (Calp. *Ecl.* II 15–20)

Their judge is Tyrsis, and all nature, which remains in silence, favors them. In this case even time seems to stand still to wait for what happens next. Silence – as even in the case of a contemporary musical event – is an element required for any rivalry – in this case, the singing agon of shepherds – to begin.⁵³ In a deeper meaning, it can be interpreted as the silence of the natural world, which recedes into the back-

⁵⁰ Idea of avoiding sound by Calpurnius, see: Damon 1961: 293–294.

⁵¹ Karakasis 2011: 199.

⁵² “hastening torrents stayed their courses. East-winds ceased their rush upon the quivering leaves and so made deep silence over all the hills; everything stood idle; bulls trampled the pasture, which they heeded not; during that contest even the craftsman bee ventured to leave unvisited the nectar-yielding flowers.”

⁵³ Baraz 2015: 100.

ground while man speaks in the foreground. The topics he deals with are difficult. The shepherds are torn by various emotions, and the nature surrounding them seems to humbly listen and silently respect their feelings. In such situations silence listens to their messages, is open to singing, cooperates with the shepherds and allows them to tell their stories. The cessation of work by the bee – which in the above passage is characterized by the adjective *daedala* in combination with the verb *audere* (*ausa est*⁵⁴) – and thus “the bee dared to stop toil” additionally builds the atmosphere of something extraordinary.⁵⁵ In the Polish translation of the *Eclogues*, proposed by Jan Sękowski,⁵⁶ in a very precise way, in my opinion, the rhythmic and sound imitations were rendered, and the rhymes, which play the role of, e.g., instrumental function, have a direct impact on the shape of the sound of individual verses. It should also be emphasized that sound-creating and sound-imitating tendencies are also visible in the original *Eclogues* notation in Latin. Special ‘sound effects’ introduced by Calpurnius in his poems include repetitions, anaphoras and alliterations.⁵⁷ One example is the selection of terms in the first eclogue (Calp. *Ecl.* I 36–39), in the passage describing the motif of Faun’s singing, in which the pattern of repeating the sounds ‘p’, ‘c’ and ‘n’ appears in several combinations:

*vos o praecipue nemorum gaudete coloni, [pnc]
 vos populi gaudete mei: licet omne vagetur [pc]
 securo custode pecus nocturnaue pastor [ccpcncp]
 claudere fraxinea⁵⁸ nolit praesepia crate [cnppc]*

What is more, they are also kept in certain terms:

⁵⁴ Calp. *Ecl.* II 19–20: *Illis etiam certantibus ausa est daedala nectareos apis intermittere flores.*

⁵⁵ Baraz 2015: 104.

⁵⁶ Sękowski 1985.

⁵⁷ The same literary methods were used as well by Theocritus, e.g., assonance in line 39: *λάλλαι κρυστάλλω ἦδ’ ἀργύρω ἰνδάλλοντο* (*Idyll XXII 39*). “A striking line, with spondees in the first three feet, and a spondaic fifth foot. The unusual rhythm helps to bring out the assonance of -αλλ- [...] which itself suggests the sound of a gently flowing spring” (Sens 1997: 107).

⁵⁸ The sound ‘c’ also occurs in the word *fraxinea* (= *fracinea*).

*vos o praecipue nemorum gaudete coloni, [pcp]
 vos populi gaudete mei: licet omne vagetur [pp]
 securo custode pecus nocturnaue pastor [pc]
 claudere fraxinea nolit praesepia crate [pp]*

Beatrice Martin notes that although only sounds repeated at the beginning of an accented syllable in a word reinforce the alliterative pattern, these words may well indicate some kind of word play introduced by Calpurnius.⁵⁹ Also noteworthy is the double *gaudete* (along with a similar-sounding term *vagetur*) and the anaphora (*vos ... vos*), considered in antiquity to be a method of sound “similarity” (*paromoeosis*), understood in the category of euphony.⁶⁰

A poetic text is a special kind of linguistic message. There is no doubt that it is the weight of this message that is the essence of poetry, as the very first words of a poem (as well as the first sentences of a book) can attract the recipient and encourage them to read further or immediately be discouraged. Thanks to the verse arrangement, all sound repetitions contained therein, both sound and lexical, often appearing in ancient poetry, are additionally exposed.⁶¹ The above-mentioned measures testify to the author’s erudition and effort to delight and charm the recipients-listeners-readers. They are also intended to evoke appropriate emotions in the reader and stimulate his or her imagination.

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⁵⁹ Martin 1996: 22, footnote 15.

⁶⁰ Lesiak 2007: 30.

⁶¹ Lesiak 2007: 82.

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