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Speech, Silence, and Artistic Expression in the *Pervigilium Veneris*

1. *Pervigilium Veneris* 86-92¹

*adsonat Terei puella subter umbram populi,
 ut putes motus amoris ore dici musico,
 et neques queri sororem de marito barbaro.
 illa cantat, nos tacemus. quando ver venit meum?
 quando fiam uti chelidon, ut tacere desinam?
 perdidit Musam tacendo, nec me Phoebus respicit:
 sic Amyclas, cum tacerent, perdidit silentium.*

Tereus' girl resounds under the shade of the poplar tree, such that you would think the strains of love were being spoken with a musical mouth, and you would deny that she, as a sister, complains about a barbarous husband. She sings, I am silent; when is my spring coming? When will I become like the swallow, so that I cease to be silent? I have destroyed my Muse through silence, and Phoebus doesn't regard me. Thus did silence destroy Amyclae, because they stayed quiet.

2. Venus as speaker (whether explicit or implied)

A. *iubere*:

ipsa iussit, mane ut udae uirgines nubant rosae, "She herself ordered that the dewy maiden roses wed in the morning" (22).

ipsa nymphas diva luco iussit ire myrteo, "The goddess herself ordered the nymphs to go to the grove of myrtle" (28).

'iussus est inermis ire, nudus ire iussus est' (*sc. a me*), "[Amor] has been ordered to go unarmed, he has been ordered to go nude [by me]" (32 - Venus is the speaker.)

iussit Hyblaeis tribunal stare diva floribus, "The goddess ordered her tribunal to stand amongst Hyblaeian flowers" (49).

iussit omnes adsidere Pueri mater alitis, / iussit, et nudo, puellas nil Amori credere, "The mother of the winged Boy has ordered them all to sit near her, she has ordered the girls not to trust Amor, even when nude" (55-56).

iussitque mundum nosse nascendi vias, "And she ordered that the world know the ways of creation" (67).

et canoras non tacere diva iussit alites, "And the goddess ordered the sonorous birds not to be silent" (84).

B. *dicere*:

¹ The Latin text is G.P. Goold's 1987 revision of the 1913 Loeb edition. All translations are mine.

*cras Dione iura **dicit** fulta sublimi throno,* “Tomorrow, Dione, seated on her lofty throne, declares the laws” (7).

*praeses ipsa iura **dicet**, adsidebunt Gratiae,* “She herself, as presider, will declare her laws, the Graces will sit near her” (50).

C. *rogare*:

*‘ipsa vellet te **rogare**, si pudicam flecteret,’* “‘She herself wished to ask you if she could bend your chastity” (40 - The speaker is unclear, but perhaps Venus’ nymphs).

3. *P.V.* 47

regnet in siluis Dione! tu, recede, Delia!

Let Dione [i.e., Venus] rule in the woods! You, Delia [i.e., Diana], depart!

4. Other Verbs of Speech in the *P.V.* (up to line 86)

A. *compari Venus pudore mittit ad te virgines:*

*una res est quam **rogamus**: cede, virgo Delia...*

“Venus sends to you maidens of comparable chastity: there is one thing which **we ask**: go, maiden Delia....” (37-38)

B. *subter umbras cum maritis, ecce, balantum greges!*

et canoras non tacere diva iussit alites:

*iam loquaces ore rauco stagna cygni **perstrepunt**...*

Under the shade, look, the flocks of sheep with their husbands! And the goddess ordered the sonorous birds not to be silent: now the swans, chatty and hoarse-voiced, **resound** through the pools. (83-85)

C. *rura fecundat voluptas, rura Venerem sentiunt;*

*ipse Amor, puer Dionae, rure natus **dicitur**.*

Desire enriches the country, the country feels Venus; Amor himself, Dione’s son, **is said** to have been born in the country. (76-77)

5. *P.V.* 31-35

ite, nymphae, posuit arma, feriatus est Amor!

iussus est inermis ire, nudus ire iussus est,

neu quid arcu, neu sagitta, neu quid igne laederet.

sed tamen, nymphae, cavete, quod Cupido pulcher est:

totus est in armis idem, quando nudus est Amor.

Go, nymphs, he has set down his arms, Amor is at leisure! He has been ordered to go unarmed, he has been ordered to go nude, so that he not harm anything with his bow, his arrow, or with fire. But nevertheless, nymphs, beware, because Cupid is handsome: Amor is entirely in arms when he is naked.

6. P.V. 69-74

*ipsa Troianos nepotes in Latinos transtulit;
ipsa Laurentem puellam coniugem nato dedit,
moxque Marti de sacello dat pudicam virginem;
Romuleas ipsa fecit cum Sabinis nuptias,
unde Ramnes et Quirites, proque prole posterum
Romuli, patrem crearet et nepotem Caesarem.*

She turned the offspring of Troy into offspring of Latium; she gave the Laurentian girl as a wife to her son, and soon afterwards she gives to Mars a chaste maiden from the temple: she created the couplings of the descendants of Romulus with the Sabines, whence she created the Ramnes and Quirites, and for the offspring of Romulus afterward, Caesar, the father and nephew.

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