

Sirens:

Read the following accounts of the Sirens.

Pausanias 9.43.3: “On the market-place of Coroneia I found two remarkable things, an altar of Hermes Epimelius (Keeper of flocks) and an altar of the winds. A little lower down is a sanctuary of Hera with an ancient image, the work of Pythodorus of Thebes; in her hand she carries Sirens. For the story goes that the daughters of Achelous were persuaded by Hera to compete with the Muses in singing. The Muses won, plucked out the Sirens' feathers (so they say) and made crowns for themselves out of them.” (Pausanias from the 2nd C AD)

“And soon they saw a fair island, Anthemoessa, where the clear-voiced Sirens, daughters of Achelous, used to beguile with their sweet songs whoever cast anchor there, and then destroy him. Them lovely Terpsichore, one of the Muses, bare, united with Achelous; and once they tended Demeter's noble daughter still unwed, and sang to her in chorus; and at that time they were fashioned in part like birds and in part like maidens to behold” (Apollonius Rhodius 4.891ff., tr. Seaton)

“But, daughters of Acheloüs, why have you the feathers and feet of birds, though you still have maidens' features? Is it because, when Proserpina was gathering the spring flowers, you were among the number of her companions, ye Sirens, skilled in song? After you had sought in vain for her through all the lands, that the sea also might know your search, you prayed that you might float on beating wings above the waves: you found the gods ready, and suddenly you saw your limbs covered with golden plumage. But, that you might not lose your tuneful voices, so soothing to the ear, and that rich dower of song, maiden features and human voice remained.” (*Met.* 5.552-63)

“The Sirens, daughter of the River Achelous and the Muse Melpomene, wandering away after the rape of Proserpina, came to the land of Apollo, and there were made flying creatures by the will of Ceres because they had not brought help to her daughter. It was predicted that they would live only until someone who heard their singing would pass by. Ulysses proved fatal to them, for when by his cleverness he passed by the rocks where they dwelt, they threw themselves into the sea. This place is called Sirenides from them, and is between Sicily and Italy.” (Hyginus *Fabulae* 141)

DRP 3.190 (Ceres questions the nurse) “What force has driven away the winged Sirens?” (*volucres quae vis Sirenas abegit?*)

DRP 3.205 (nurse): Sirens are P's companions “she has ... the Sirens for relaxation” (*Sirenes requies*)

DRP 3.254-8 (nurse): “the Sirens, daughters of Achelous, rose on swift wings and have gone to haunt the cliff of Sicilian Pelorus, where, incensed by this ill deed, they have turned their lyres, no longer harmlessly melodious, to destruction: their alluring voice holds ships fast; at the sound of their song the oars are curbed.”

Q: How do we know that Ovid is not following the account in which the Muses have had bad dealings with the Sirens, as in the Pausanias passage?

Q: What can we say about the treatments of the *Metamorphoses* and *DRP* versions?