

Ovid Unseen 1: The Fame of Arion

Ovid's Fasti, Book 2,

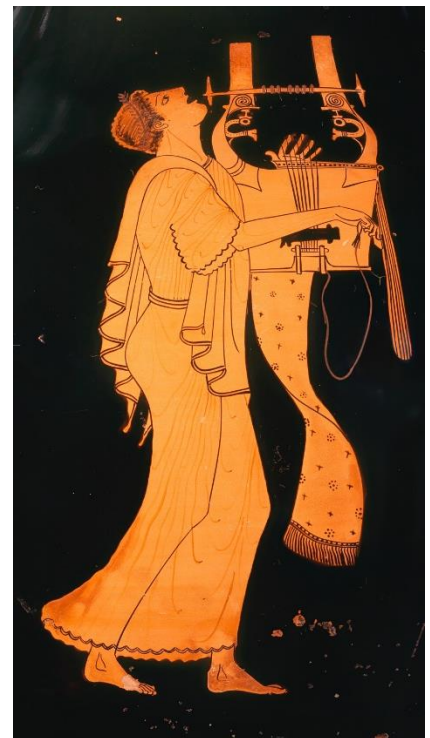
Edited and supported by Mathew Owen in the Classic Bloomsbury book, *Ovid Unseens*, 2014.

The poem, as you can tell from the way the lines alternate, is written in Elegiac Couplets i.e. alternating Hexameter and Pentameter lines.

Arion, a famous lyre-player and singer, has made a tour of Italy, in the course of which has charmed men and beasts alike, as well as winning a fortune for himself. Now he prepares to return home to the island of Lesbos.

The story begins

quod mare non novit, quae nescit Ariona tellus?
carmines currentes ille tenebat aquas.
saepe sequens agnam lupus est a voce retentus,
saepe avidum fugiens restitit agna lupum;
saepe canes leporesque umbra iacuere¹ sub una,
et stetit in saxo proxima cerva leae.
nomen Arionium Siculas impleverat urbes
captaque erat lyricis Ausonis ora sonis;
inde domum repetens puppem conscendit Arion,
atque ita quaesitas arte ferebat opes.
forsitan, infelix, ventos undasque timebas:
at tibi nave tua tutius aequor erat.



Athenian Vase c.490BC attributed to The Berlin Painter.
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/254896>

Vocabulary:

Arion, Arionis (Gk. acc. -ona) (m)	- Arion
Arionius, -a, -um	- of Arion
Siculus, -a, -um	- of Sicily, Sicilian
lyricus, -a, -um	- of a lyre (see picture for what this musical instrument looks like)
Ausonis, -idis	- of Italy
puppis, -is (f)	- the stern of a ship, a ship (by synecdoche)
(navem) conscendo, -ere	- board (a ship)
ops, opis (f)	- power, strength, help (pl: wealth)
aequor, aequoris (n)	- flat expanse, plain, the sea
tutus, -a, -um	- safe (what form of the adjective is tutius?)

The poem is written in Hexameters, because it's from Ovid's epic poem, the *Metamorphoses* 15 Books worth of non-stop mythology, united by the theme of 'change of shape'!

¹ iacuere = iacuērunt

Adding -ere to the Perfect Stem is a common substitution, especially in verse, for the 3rd person plural perfect ending -ērunt.