

Greek Mythology #34: THE MUSES

by Joy Journey

CALLIOPE	Muse of POETRY	Symbols: table, book, roll of paper, gold crown
CLIO	Muse of HISTORY	Symbols: seated with an open scroll or stacks of books
ERATO	Muse of LOVE & EROTIC POETRY	Symbols: myrtle wreath, roses, lyre, golden arrow
EUTERPE	Muse of MUSIC	Symbol: the aulos (double flute)
MELPOMENE	Muse of SINGING & TRAGEDY	Symbols: tragic mask, knife, sword, acting boots
POLYHEMNI	Muse of SACRED POETRY & HYMNS	Symbols: finger to her mouth, serious demeanor
TERSICHOE	Muse of DANCE & DRAMATIC CHORUS	Symbols: lyre
THALIA	Muse of COMEDY & IDYLIC POETRY	Symbols: comic mask, ivy crown, shepherd staff
URANIA	Muse of ASTRONOMY & ASTRONOMICAL WRITING	Symbols: cloak with stars, celestial globe, gazing heavenward

According to the myths, Zeus seduced the beautiful Mnemosyne, goddess of Memory, and slept with her for nine nights. The result was the birth of nine beautiful daughters who became the source of inspiration and imparters of wisdom, inspiring the arts, music and knowledge. They were considered to be water nymphs.

Urania was the eldest of the sisters and inherited the power of her father and her mother's beauty and grace. She could tell the future by studying the stars.

King Pierrus of Macedon named his nine daughters after the Muses, and soon thought they were more wonderful than the Muses themselves. In punishment for his pride, his daughters were turned into magpies.

"The Inspiration of the Poet" (Apollo and the Muse Calliope—on the left—inspire a young poet). Nicolas Poussin, 1630. Louvre, Paris.

A precious small sterling silver button of the same image by Kevin Kinne.



Stamped brass of Urania. Large. Courtesy of Lou Yeargain.



Stamped brass of Cupid and the muse Erato. Large. Courtesy of Barbara Barrans. This image appears with varied backgrounds and tints.



Stamped brass the muse Erato. Large. Courtesy of Byson Buttons.