

LEGEND AND FOLKLORE SYMBOLS:

The NINE Muses

The Muses, or Pierides, were the root of all creative inspiration. They were described as beautiful, violet-eyed goddesses of poetry and music.

The Muses were the daughters of Mnemosyne, goddess of memory. Mnemosyne was a Titan who coupled with Zeus for nine consecutive nights. She later gave birth to nine goddesses to preside over the arts and music. They were Calliope (philosophy and epic poetry), Clio (history), Polyhymnia (mime), Euterpe (flute), Terpsichore (light verse and dance), Erato (lyric choral poetry), Melpomene (tragedy), Thalia (comedy) and Urania (astronomy).

Inspiring goddesses

All the Muses were wonderful singers, whose music delighted Zeus, and their first song celebrated the victory of the Olympians over the Titans. As well as pleasing the gods, the Muses inspired humans in all creative pursuits. This is why the ancients would begin stories with the phrase, "Tell me Muse".

The Muses provide inspiration for poets, philosophers, artists, dancers and musicians even to this very day.



symbolism of the muses

Each Muse was depicted carrying or wearing her sacred symbol:

Calliope, Muse of philosophy and epic poetry, was often shown with a writing tablet.

Clio, Muse of history, carried a scroll.

Polyhymnia, Muse of mime, always wore long robes.

Euterpe, Muse of the flute, carried a flute!

Terpsichore, Muse of light verse and dance, carried a lyre.

Erato, Muse of lyric choral poetry, carried a harp to play her songs at important festivals.

Melpomene, Muse of tragedy, had a tragic mask, and sometimes wore cothurnus (boots worn by tragedy actors) and bore a knife or club.

Thalia, Muse of comedy, carried a comic mask and a shepherd's crook.

Urania, Muse of astronomy, had a globe and compasses.

Get in touch with your inner Muse and take time out to write some poetry.

