

The muses in greek mythology and art



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Muses in Greek Mythology and Art The Muses were deities worshipped by the ancient Greeks. They were 9 women, sisters, whose sole purpose for being was that of the inspiration to mortal man, typically in an artistic capacity. The embodiment of the classical idea of the poetical faculty as a divine gift, these famous sisters dwelt on Mount Helicon, in Greece.

The Muses were therefore both the embodiments and sponsors of performed metrical speech: mousike, whence “ music”, was the art of the Muses. nationbuilder) They were the “ personification of poetic inspiration, the divine afflatus or breath which supposedly wafted itself into the poet’s inflamed mind”. The Muses of Greek mythology had one of the most important functions of all: to inspire poets and promote the arts and sciences. The fortunate person inspired by them was held in the highest esteem and considered sacred far beyond any priest. (mythman) The nine Muses are the daughters of the Zeus and of Mnemosyne the goddess of memory. Mnemosyne slept with Zeus nine consecutive nights and gave birth to nine daughters.

Interestingly, according to Pausanias , a Greek traveler, geographer, and writer of the 2nd century AD, there were only three original Muses: Aoide (“ song”, “ voice”), Melete (“ practice” or “ occasion”) and Mneme (“ memory”) . These 3 were thought to be fathered by Apollo. However, by classical times their number was set at nine, and Zeus was noted as their father. In this context the god dearest to them was Apollo and they were his faithful followers. The Muses revered him.

For these reasons he is often called the Musegetes, which means “ Leader of the Muses”. Pierus the Macedonian, from whom the mountain Macedonia is named came to Thesbia and ordered that the Muses be worshipped by the names they have at present: Euterpe; Calliope; Clio; Erato; Melpomene; Polyhymnia; Terpsichore; Thalia; and Urania. The muses themselves, as part of Greek mythology have many stories written about them. The poet Thamyris bragged about being able to remember all of his work without the help of the Muses, (poets then did not write their work down but remembered it by heart), and the Muses punished him by taking his memory and eyesight.

(thinkquest). In Roman, Renaissance and Neoclassical art, the Muses, depicted in sculptures or paintings are often distinguished by certain props or poses, as emblems. Statues of the Muses were a popular decoration in long galleries and similar places; naturally, sculptors did not make them all alike but gave each a different attribute Euterpe (music) carries a flute; Calliope (epic poetry) carries a writing tablet; Clio (history) carries a scroll and books; Erato (lyric poetry) is often seen with a lyre and a crown of roses; Melpomene (tragedy) is often seen with a tragic mask; Polyhymnia (sacred poetry) is often seen with a pensive expression; Terpsichore (dancing) is often seen dancing and carrying a lyre; Thalia (comedy) is often seen with a comic mask; and Urania (astronomy) carries a staff pointed at a celestial globe. (nationbuilder). Some of these paintings are: Muses”, part from Mantegna’s Parnassus 1497, Louvre Paris “ Dance of Apollo and the Muses”, Baldassare Peruzzi “ Sleeping Apollo, Muses and Fama”.

Szepmuveseti Lorenzo Lotto c. 1540 On display in the Louvre museum in Paris, France there is an ancient Greek vase depicting either Terpsichore or Erato " Muse with lyre", c. 400 B. C..

Also, The Muses Urania and Calliope by Simon Vouet, in which she is holding a copy of Homer's Odyssey. An extraordinary example of art depicting the Muses is the Archelaos Relief: " Apotheosis of Homer, a relief sculpture which some scholars have estimated to have been created around 250 B. C. depicts all the Muses, Zeus, Mnemosyne, Apollo, as well as the Greek author Homer. In literature, the muses were typically invoked at or near the beginning of an epic poem or story.

They have served as aid to an author, or as the true speaker for which an author is only a mouthpiece. Originally the invocation of the Muse was an indication that the speaker was working inside the poetic tradition, according to the established formulae. Homer, the great Greek poet and writer often used to write about the Muses, either as a whole, or singularly by name. Also, other historical writers did as well.

Some examples being: Homer, Book 1 of The Odyssey " Tell me, O Muse, of that ingenious hero who traveled far and wide after he had sacked the famous town of Troy. " (Homer)And Dante Alighieri (mid-May to mid-June 1265), in Canto II of The Inferno; O Muses, O high genius, aid me now! O memory that noted what I saw. Now shall your true nobility be seen! (Dante) Euripides (ca. 480 BC-406 BC) who was the last of the three great tragedians of classical Athens wrote " When two poets produce a hymn, the Muses are

wont to work strife between them. ” (Maidens of Phthia. Euripides, Andromache 476).

(Euripides) Shakespeare used the Muses as instruments of his love in his sonnets. The broadness of emotions and scenarios that Shakespeare wrote about in his works, he may have evoked all nine of the Muses for inspiration. There are many references to them throughout the sonnets. For example, Sonnet 100 of which the first line reads: _Where art thou, Muse, that thou forget'st so long (Shakespeare).

These writers used the Muses to give an artistic and creative perspective to their storytelling. This was done in most part by just referencing them, however, story did not need to include them by individual name. Many Enlightenment figures sought to re-establish a “ cult of the Muses’ in the 18th century. A popular Masonic lodge in pre revolutionary Paris was called “ Neuf Soeurs” (“ nine sisters”, i.

e. nine Muses). In 1778, the year Voltaire became an honorary member, Benjamin Franklin and John Paul Jones also were accepted. Benjamin Franklin became Master of the Lodge in 1779, and was re-elected in 1780. When Franklin, after a long and influential stay in Europe, returned to America— to participate in the writing of the Constitution— “ his place as American Envoy was taken by Thomas Jefferson, the author of the United States Declaration of Independence, accompanied by his friend John Adams”(wikipedia) .

Tokens from the “ club” depict 9 muses.

In the 18th century, the word “ museum” (originally, “ cult place of the Muses”) referred to a place for the public display of knowledge. There have

<https://assignbuster.com/the-muses-in-greek-mythology-and-art/>

been several words derived from the muses. Previously mentioned was the word "museum". Music, bemused, and amused. The first of the planets to be "discovered" was named after the muse of Astronomy (Urania).

The planet Uranus was discovered by William Herschel in 1781. (Iowa) Urania is so named because she raises her disciples to heavenly heights. Among her other talents she could foretell the future by the position of the stars. Those who are most concerned with philosophy and the heavens are dearest to her. (mythman) Muses play a part in my life and presumably, the lives of others on a daily basis. In Albert Brooks's movie "The Muse", the actress Sharon Stone, known for her classic beauty and choice of movie roles of characters with strong persona's, plays a muse in today's society.

In short, Albert Brooks plays a screenwriter that is out of creative ideas. His lack of new ideas drives him to find inspiration. This is personified by the Sharon Stone character who is able to inspire both the screenwriter and others around him. Albert Brooks, who writes in the comic style (thought deadpan) would have used the muse Thalia (comedy).

She is often seen with a comic mask This is an example of how muses may work today in a contemporary art form. As a professional songwriter for most of my life, I too have experienced the occasional lack of inspiration. I have used my wife or previous figures of my relationships to bring to me something intangible. In essence, I have called upon Euterpe, the muse of music to help me.

Many people feel that nature itself is a muse. I feel perhaps, the muse may be a sense of vulnerability. In other words, a way to access parts of myself

<https://assignbuster.com/the-muses-in-greek-mythology-and-art/>

otherwise kept repressed. The muse I referred to on one particular occasion, gave me my greatest song I've ever written.

I, in writing this paper, have called upon a all The Muses, for inspiration and to guide me through the writing of these pages. In conclusion, it seems evident that there has been a need for The Muses since time began. Whether they are real (doubtful) or simply mythical creations, their need is indispensable. Great authors, songwriters, sculptors, painters and the like all work from inspiration of some sort. Why not then should that inspiration be that of a muse? Bibliography " The Nine Muses" Demons and Nature Dieties : 1/15/1999 Thinkquest.

org 7/20/08 ; <http://library.thinkquest.org>

[/26264/inhabitants/demons/site018.htm](http://library.thinkquest.org/26264/inhabitants/demons/site018.htm); " Muse.

" Encyclopedia Britannica. 2008. Encyclopedia Britannica Online. 20 Jul.

2008 ; <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/398735/Muse>; " The Muses" Greek Gods and Goddesses 2008. Crystalinks ; <http://www.crystalinks.com/greekgods3.html>;

" Muses" 2008. in2greece.com. 7/19/08 ; <http://www.in2greece.com/english/historymyth/mythology/names/muses>;

" Muse" 07/09/08.

Wikipedia 07/20/08 ; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muses>;

" Muses" Encyclopedia. 2008. Nationbuilder 07/19/08 ; <http://www.nationbuilder.com>

<https://assignbuster.com/the-muses-in-greek-mythology-and-art/>

nationmaster. com/encyclopedia/Muses; “ Muses” Mythman’s homework help center. 7/20/08 ; <http://thanasis. com/muses.>

htm; “ Uranus, Neptune and Pluto” 7/9/2008. University of Northern Iowa. 7/20/08 ; <http://www. uni. edu/morgans/astro/course/Notes/section4/new21.>

html; Homer. The Odyssey, Book 1. 800 B. C.

E. Alighieri, Dante. The Inferno Canto II. c. 1308 Euripides.

Maidens of Phthia. Andromache 450 BC. p. 476. Shakespeare, William.

“ Sonnet 100”. c. 1602 ; <http://www. shakespeare-sonnets. com/100comm.>

htm;