

Tell me Muse, Who and Where are You?

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Abstract

The paper sheds new light on the popularity of the nine Muses and their names in Greco-Roman Egypt. Questions raised are: How popular are the names of the Muses, and if so, in which nomes and at which period? Is there any archaeological evidence outside Alexandria for the Muses, and in which form do the Muses appear?

Keywords

Muses, Alexandria, Oxyrhynchus, Fayyum

One may expect rare evidence of the Muses in the Greco-Roman countryside of Egypt, at least outside Alexandria and the *metropoleis* as Oxyrhynchus. However, as it turns out, they were also known in the countryside, in particular in the Arsinoites, where there was a large Hellenistic community. This study deals with the popularity of the Muses outside Alexandria seen in their names used in Greco-Roman Egypt appearing in the papyrological and epigraphical evidence. In addition to the written sources, archaeological objects will complete the picture.*

Muses appear for instance, in the works of Homer and Euripides, both abundantly read in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods in the countryside of Egypt (of course in Oxyrhynchus, but even as far south as in Elephantine).¹

In consequence, the collective term Μοῦσαι found in texts from the Roman period in some expressions and phrases outside Alexandria shows that people beyond Alexandria had a literary knowledge of the Muses; this is attested for example by the following texts:

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¹ BGU VI 1470 (A fragment of book 1 of Odyssey, Elephantine, 190 B.C.); P.Oxy. LXVII 4546 (A fragment of Alcestis play of Euripides, 99 B.C.-99 A.D.)

1. A text from the Eastern Desert dated to the 2nd century A.D. in which the philosopher Diogenes says that the Muses dwelled in the minds of the students.² Sayings of Diogenes were popular at this time.
2. A petition from Oxyrhynchus that dates to the 3rd century A.D.,³ in which the writer mentions the Muses in the honorific formula of the emperor «Your fellowship with the Muses».
3. One typical example from Alexandria, an inscription dated to the Roman period and dedicated to a young man described as «clever in the art of Muses».⁴

On the other hand, there was also a religious understanding of the role of the Muses in the Greek and Roman Pantheon.

1. In a newly published text from Karanis (P.Mich. XXI 827 verso: granary C 123), the Muses are mentioned three times with the epithets Olympian, Helikonian and Pierian Muses;⁵ these epithets appear in the opening song of a festival in which the Muses feature among the Olympian gods and female deities: «Pray while informing a sacrifice (?)», and then after Zeus and other gods and goddesses «for the Olympian Muses, for the Helikonian Muses and for the Pierian Muses».⁶ This text is an important attestation of the knowledge of the Muses in the Egyptian countryside. It may underline the assumption that the religion of the Roman governors with Greek education became more popular among the Egyptian people.⁷

2. We encounter the word Μουσηγέτειος for Apollo, the Leader of the Muses, in the previously mentioned papyrus from Karanis. This title of Apollo also appears in texts from Alexandria and Antinoopolis.⁸

3. We read the title Μουσοπόλος «the servant of the Muses» in an inscription found outside Alexandria in Hermopolis Parva (Damanhur)⁹ dated to the 4th century A.D. The text from Karanis

² O.Claud. II 413 (2nd century A.D.): Διογένης ὁ κυνικὸς φιλόσοφος, ἐρωτη[θεὶς ὑπὸ τινος] ποῦ αἱ Μοῦσαι κατοικοῦσι, εἶπε[ν· ἐν ταῖς τῶν φιλο]πονοῦντων ψυχαῖς: «Diogenes the Cynic philosopher, when asked by someone where the Muses dwelled, said: In the minds of those who study hard»; cf. Criboire 2005, 128.

³ P.Oxy. XLVII 3366 = P.Coll.Youtie II 66. ll.5-9 esp.l.8 (253/ 260 A.D.): πα[ρ]ὰ Λολλ[λι]ανοῦ τοῦ κ[α]τὰ Ὀμοί[ο]υ δημοσίου [γρ]αμματικοῦ τῆς Ὀξυρυγχειτῶν πόλεως. Ἡ [ο]ὐράνιος ὑμῶν μεγαλοφροσύνη \η/ ἐπιλάμψασα τῆι ὑμετέραι οἰκουμένηι καὶ ἡ πρὸς τὰς Μούσας [καὶ πα] [. . . .] [οἰ]κείωσις.

«From Lollianus also called Homoeus, public Grammaticus of the city of the Oxyrhynchites. Your heavenly magnanimity, which is irradiated your domain, the whole civilized world, and your fellowship with the Muses».

⁴ Remijsen 2015, 124, 264; Bernard 1969, no. 82, 325-326: Δάκρυσον εἰσορόων με | Διόσκορον Ἑλλάδος υἱόν, | τὸν σοφὸν ἐν Μούσαις | καὶ νέον Ἡρακλέα. «Weeping when you see me, I am Dioscoros, son of Greece. Wise (clever) in the arts of the Muses and a new Heracles».

⁵ Claytor / Verhoogt 2018, 33.

⁶ P.Mich. XXI 827. l. 29 (Karanis, 120-124 A.D.): Μούσαις Ὀλυμπιάσ[ι]. Μούσαις Πιερίσι, «For the Olympian Muses, for the Pierian Muses»; l. 30: Μ[ο]ύσαις Ἑλικωνιάσ[ι] «For the Helikonian Muses». Another attested epithet for the Muses is the Libyan Muses as in: P.Select III 140 a 155 (Greek Poetry, 5th century A.D.): ἐν[θ]α με [κικ]λήσκουσι Λιβυστίδες εἰσέτι [Μο]ῦσαι, «where the Libystides Mousai (Libyan Muses) are still calling me».

⁷ Claytor / Verhoogt 2018, 50.

⁸ Claytor / Verhoogt 2018 note about ll. 26-27, 64; l. 26: Ἀπόλλωνι Μουσηγέτητι «For Apollo, leader of the Muses»; P.Oslo III 129, 14 (3rd century A.D.); PSI XII 1237, ll. 9, 25, 27 (162 A.D.).

⁹ Bernard, Inscr. Métr. 61 (Hermopolis Parva, 4th century A.D.) cf. Lefebvre 1907, 14: Μουσοπόλον, ῥητήρα, δικασπόλον, ἄκρον ἅπαντα τύμβος «ὄδ' εὐγενῆς Ἰωαννίαν ἔχω. «I, this wide tomb, hold Ioannia, a servant of the Muses, an orator, a judge, excelling in everything».

and this inscription indicate that the Muses were well known during the Roman era outside Alexandria, and not only in the metropoleis.

4. A clear sign for the popularity of the Muses is also the celebration of the festival τὰ Μουσεῖα in the countryside.¹⁰ This festival is considered one of the most traditional music festivals.¹¹ The Thespians who honored the Muses with a shrine in the Muses' valley, organized the Mouseia as festivals in this open-air site. Aeschines (*Against Timarchus*, 10) mentions the festival as a school festival, where the pupils do some performances in front of their parents and friends.¹² There were not only music but also athletic competitions.¹³

In Egypt, there is little evidence for the interest of Ptolemy IV and Arsinoë III for this music contest in Central Greece, except of the Ptolemaic donation to the Thespian festival.¹⁴ There is only one clear attestation for τὰ Μουσεῖα;¹⁵ it is from Philadelphia (Fayyum), a letter dated to the Ptolemaic period addressed from Kleon to Zenon, asking him for instructions concerning the contribution (payment-donation) to Hermes and the Muses' festival, τὰ Μουσεῖα.¹⁶

On the other hand, Turner suggests that the appearance of the word τὸ μουσικόν in the agricultural accounts and contributions for religious festivals can be taken as a sign of the existence of τὰ Μουσεῖα.¹⁷ There was a donation (wine-oil) for religious festivals, and τὸ μουσικόν seems to come with the names of the Greek deities.¹⁸

In the Roman period, the word ἡ ἑορτή is also found in a private letter to a student named Aphrodisios who lives in a large city.¹⁹ The ἐ[ο]ρτή (l. 11) is here connected to τῶν Μουσῶν τὰ μυστήρια (ll. 8-9), in particular: οἱ γὰρ ἐπ' ἀγαθοῖς πρότερον τῶν Μ[ο]υσῶν τὰ μυστήρια τελο[ῦ]ντες ὕ[σ]τερ[ο]ν αὐτοῖς συμβαί[νει ± 18] ἐ[ο]ρτή [± 20] ²⁰ «For those who at first are initiated in the mysteries of the Muses, it happens to them later ...».

¹⁰ Bonnet 2001, 53-70.

¹¹ Hermary / Jaeger 2011, 42.

¹² Cf. Fischer 2001, 73, 132.

¹³ Pausanias 1918, vol. I, 306-307.

¹⁴ Aneziri 2007, 77-78; Castaldo / Giannachi / Manieri 2011, vol. I, 33, 38.

¹⁵ Perpillou 1993, 113.

¹⁶ PSI V 528, ll. 3-10 (Philadelphia, Arsinoites, 263-229 B.C.): ἀποστείλας ἡμῖν τὸ ὀψώνιον ὃ γίνεται ἐμοί τε καὶ τῆ μητρὶ, τὸ πᾶν σὺν ἐλαίῳ (δραχμαὶ) ἰζ καὶ οἰνάριον ἡμῖν γίνεται χόες ς κο(τύλαι) γ καὶ εἰς τὰ Ἑρμαῖα καὶ τὰ Μουσεῖα· πάντες γὰρ ἤδη εἰσηνηνόχασιν.

«Please send to us the Provisions that are for both me and my mother, totaling with the oil, 17 drachmas. A wine jar is also ours, containing 6 large measures plus 3 small measures; also the contribution for the festival of Hermes and of the Muses, for everyone else has already contributed».

¹⁷ P.Hib. II 214, ll. 15-30 (250 B.C.): Εὐρύλοχος θεοῦ Σωτῆρος | Ἀρτεμίδωρος οἰκ[ονόμος (?) | καὶ μουσικ[ὸ]ν στ[] | Ἀπολλώνιος γρ(αμματεὺς) θεοῦ Σωτῆρος | καὶ Ἀρτέμιδος [] | καὶ Ἑρμοῦ . . . | Ἀφροδίτης [] | Ποσειδώνιος | τὸ μουσικὸν [] | Κτήσιππος γρ(αμματεὺς) θεοῦ Σωτῆρος | Βασιλίσσης [] | Ἡρακλέους [] | Ἀρτέμιδος [] | Μυσαι[] γ τὸ μουσικὸν [] | Ἀ.μη[] ὄσης [] | ηπη[] | τὸ μουσικὸν. For Roman period, cf. P.Amh. II 70 b, 16 (Letter of the Magistrates of Hermopolis, Hermopolis, 149 A.D.).

¹⁸ P.Hib. II 214 (250 B.C.): Agricultural Accounts, and Contributions for Religious Festivals, Introd. 133; cf. Casarico 1981, 124-125.

¹⁹ Cribiore 2005, 102-103.

²⁰ SB V 7567, 7-11 (Unknown, 200-299 A.D.); Martin 1932, 245-247.

Beside these attestations let's now turn to the names of the Muses. We will first look at the more general name *Musa* as a personal name, before we come to the nine particular names of the single Muses.

The attestations for the name *Μοῦσα* in documents and its usage as a personal name are as follows:

1. The first attestation for *Μοῦσα* as a personal name is found twice in a very early Roman contract, a sale of an Egyptian female slave from Alexandria named *Μοῦσα*; she is 35 years old, honey coloured as the writer describes her in this oldest sale contract of a slave.²¹ *Μοῦσα* is also encountered as a female slave's name who has been purchased together with her son in a document that included a series of decisions relating to a soldiers' marriage dated to the 2nd century A.D.; it comes from Alexandria or the Arsinoites.²²

2. *Μοῦσα* is also found as a double name for a Roman widow named *Αἰλία Μοῦσα* from Hermopolis Magna. *Αἰλία Μοῦσα*, obviously a rich woman, is encountered in one text where she pays the dike tax for herself and for her slaves.²³ *Αἰλία Μοῦσα* is found in another text concerning a land dispute and is perhaps from the same family.²⁴

3. *Μοῦσα* occurs in one of the newly published *ostraka* dated to the 2nd century A.D. from Krokodilo (modern El-Muwayh) in the Eastern Desert. The private letter is addressed from a father named Menandros to his daughter; *Μοῦσα* appears among others to whom he sends his greetings.²⁵

4. *Μοῦσα* is also the name of a veteran's wife in a text dated to the 3rd century A.D.²⁶ *Μοῦσα* here was an owner of private land at Philadelphia (Arsinoites) which gives us the idea that she was from the upper class.

So the name *Μοῦσα* is used as a women's name not only for a freeborn female of the higher class but also for a slave; from the early Roman period to the 3rd century A.D. *Μοῦσα* is attested in Hermopolis, the Arsinoites and the Eastern Desert.

The names of the nine Muses were:

Τερψιχόρη (Muse of Dance), Πολύμνια (Muse of Hymns), Μελπομένη (Muse of Tragedy), Ἐρατώ (Muse of Love "Songs"), Εὐτέρπη (Muse of Music), Κλειώ (Muse of History), Οὐρανία (Muse of

²¹ BGU IV 1059, ll. 7, 19 (Contract for purchase of a slave, Alexandria, 30 B.C.-14 A.D.). L. 7: αὐτὴ τὴν ὑπάρχουσαν αὐτῇ δούλην ἢ ὄνομα Μοῦσα ἐγγενῆ Αἰγύπτωι, «A female slave named (called) Mousa, has Egyptian origin»; l.19: ἔστιν δὲ ἡ δούλη Μοῦσα ὡς ἐτῶν τριάκοντα πέντε μέση μελίχρως, «Mousa, the female slave Mousa is 35 and half years old, honey coloured»; cf. Bell 1946, 131.

²² Chr.Mitt. 372 col. 6, 10, 13 (Collection of decisions regarding military marriage, Alexandria or Arsinoites, 142 A.D.); cf. Straus 2003, 217-220.

²³ BGU XX 2852, 3 (A Receipt of dyke tax and a noble lady pays for her slaves, Hermopolis Magna, 124 A.D.): Αἰλία Μοῦσ(α) διὰ Εὐήμερο(υ) φροντ(ιστοῦ), «Ailia Mousa, through (her) manager Euhemeros».

²⁴ P.Rein. II 96, 6-7 = BGU XX p. 117-118 (Hermopolis Magna, 133-5 A.D.): ὑπὸ τῆς θυγατρὶδῆς μου Αἰλίας Μοῦσης, «From my grand-daughter Ailia Mousa».

²⁵ O.Krok. II 193, ll. 25-30, esp. l. 23 (Krokodilo, 98-138 A.D.): ἀσπάζου Διδύμη καὶ Κάππαριν καὶ Βαρβαρίωνα καὶ Μοῦσαν καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἐν τῷ πραισειδίῳ, «Give salutations to Didyme, Capparis, Barbariona, Mousa and to all who are in the camp (garrison)»; cf. Bülow-Jacobsen / Fournet / Redon 2019, 81-84.

²⁶ P.Yale III 137, col. V. 139 (An account, Philadelphia, Arsinoites, 216-217 A.D.): Μοῦσα γυνὴ Διογένους οὐετρ(ανοῦ) σιτ(ικῆς γῆς) (ἄρουραι) δ̄ δ̄ενδ(ρικῆς γῆς) (ἄρουραι) β, «Mousa, wife of Diogenes, veteran, 4 arouras of grain land, 2 arouras of orchard land».

Astronomy), Θάλεια (Muse of Comedy) and Καλλιόπη (Muse of the Epic Poetry). Some – but not all – of their names are used as personal names as shown in the following examples:

1. Τερψιχόρη, Πολύμνια, Μελπομένη and Ἐρατώ: there are no attestations for these names as female personal names in documentary texts.

2. Εὐτέρπη is attested 11 times as a personal name in the Arsinoites and in Oxyrhynchus. Εὐτέρπη appears only once in the Ptolemaic period in the Arsinoites, in a letter where she is the wife of the sender.²⁷ The remaining attestations are from the Roman period (1st century A.D.-3rd century A.D.).

The documents with the name Εὐτέρπη vary among private letters, contracts and accounts. Εὐτέρπη is encountered as a name of a female slave in a testament to release slaves.²⁸ This text is from the Arsinoites and is dated to the 2nd century A.D.

Εὐτέρπη is also used as a nickname (Τανεχωταρίον ἢ [καὶ] Εὐτέρπη),²⁹ in a legal text from Oxyrhynchus dated to the 2nd century A.D. In this text, «Tanechotarion also called Euterpe» occurs as a mother who wants to appoint a representative.

The name Εὐτέρπη occurs also as a double name (Νεμεσίλλα Εὐτέρπη)³⁰ in an account from the Arsinoites and dated to the 3rd century A.D.

The name Εὐτέρπη appears as a name of a mother in a declaration of property that comes from a small village named Ταλαώ (Talaos)³¹ in the Oxyrhynchites (TM Geo 2234).³² This last attestation may indicate that the name was popular in the villages as well as in the *metropoleis*.³³

3. Κλειώ is mainly attested as a personal name in the Ptolemaic period. A woman from the Heracleopolites, Clio daughter of Zoilos, submitted a petition to Dioscorides the Phourarchos asking him to arrest her slave.³⁴ She was obviously from the upper class and could afford a slave.

Κλειώ occurs also as a name of the priestess of Cleopatra II in a Demotic marriage contract from Gebelein (152 B.C.)³⁵ The remaining attestations for Κλειώ are in inscriptions from Alexandria. Only

²⁷ P.Tebt. III. 1. 766, 5 (136 B.C.).

²⁸ P.L.Bat. XIII 14, 11 (Testament for the release of slaves and some payments, Arsinoites, 127-148 A.D.): δούλην [μ]ου [Εὐ]τέρπην.

²⁹ P.Oxy. IV 726, 5-8 esp. l. 7 (134-135 A.D.): ὁμολογεῖ Ἀπολλώνιος Ἀπολλων[ί]ου τοῦ Διογένους μητρὸς Τανεχωταρίου τῆς [καὶ] Εὐτέρπης Διογένους ἀπ' Ὀξυρυγγῶν πόλεως, «Apollonios son of Apollonios son of Diogenes, his mother Tanechotarion also called Euterpe daughter of Diogenes from Oxyrhynchus acknowledges to».

³⁰ P.Yale III 137, col. V 155 (Philadelphia, Arsinoites, 216-217 A.D.).

³¹ P.Oxy. III 637 descr., ll. 7-8 (109-117 A.D.): Ὀρσενούφιος τοῦ Ἐφαρμόστου μητρὸς Εὐτέρπης.

³² P.Oxy. III 637 descr., ll. 11-12: ὁμολογία διὰ γραφίου Ταλαώ; cf. Bevan 2007, 36-40, esp. 38.

³³ For more attestations of the name Εὐτέρπη, cf. Stud. Pal. IV, col. XII 469 (Arsinoites, 1st century A.D.); PSI VI 687, 6 (fragment of a contract, Oxyrhynchus, 1st century A.D.-2nd century A.D.); SB XIV 11091, 1 (private letter from Euterpe to her brother, unknown, 3rd century A.D.); BGU I 9, col. IV 16 (Arsinoites, 3rd century A.D.); P.Ryl. IV 605, 38 (Private letter, Arsinoites, 3rd century A.D.).

³⁴ P.Phrur.Diosk. IX 2 (Petition, Heracleopolites, 157-125 B.C.): Διοσκουρίδει ἡγεμόνι καὶ φρουράρχῳ παρὰ Κλεοῦς τῆς [Ζ]ωίλου τῶν ἐκ Κορκοδίλων πόλεως τοῦ Ἀρσινοίτου νομοῦ, «To Dioscourides, the leader and Phourarchos, from Clio daughter of Zoilos from Krokodilopolis of the Arsinoite nome», cf. pp. 73-76 in the edition.

³⁵ P.Ryl.Dem. 16, 4, 139 ff.

one of these inscriptions bears the name of the Muse herself (SB I 1025, 1), others are for women from Cyrene.³⁶

4. Οὐρανία presents a more complicated matter. It is attested as a name of a ship in the Roman period in two documents from Alexandria and Oxyrhynchus dated to the 3rd century A.D.³⁷ The attestations of the female personal name Οὐρανία occur in Egypt in 5th-6th century A.D. and are coming from Antinoopolis and the Arsinoites.³⁸ This may recall the old name, which derived from the name of the Muse, but at the time in which everybody was Christian, it would rather have a Christian connotation, meaning «The one from heaven». It has also to be taken into consideration that in the Roman period, the male name Οὐράνιος existed which cannot have to do with the name of the Muse. So, more likely, the name Οὐρανία does not refer to the Muse.

5. Θάλεια is attested as a personal name for a rich lady and for a poor woman. It is found in the Ptolemaic period in Krokodilopolis (Arsinoites) as a personal name of a wife in a will of her husband Euphronios.³⁹

In the 2nd century A.D. in the Arsinoites Θάλεια is encountered – written Θάλια – as a name of a female slave in a will wherein property is divided.⁴⁰

Θάλεια appears as a personal name for the first time in a document in Oxyrhynchus. It is a private letter dated to the middle of the 3rd century A.D. and is addressed from Νῆλος to his sister Θάλεια.⁴¹

So far, there are no attestations from Alexandria regarding the name Θάλεια; all the previous attestations come from the Arsinoites and from Oxyrhynchus.

6. Καλλιόπη appears as a personal name from the Ptolemaic period to the 5th century A.D. The first attestation is from Alexandria; it occurs as a name of a mother in an inscription (funerary stele) dated to the 1st century B.C.⁴² Καλλιόπη is also encountered as a name of a woman who receives wheat allowance in an account belonging to the Zenon Archive from Philadelphia (Arsinoites).⁴³

³⁶ SB I 1025, 1 (Hadra-Alexandria, 332 B.C.): Κλειώ (Goddess); SB I 5006, ll. 1, 2 (Alexandria, 299-100 B.C.): Κλεώ Ἀντιφίλου Κυρηναία; SB I 606, 1 (Alexandria, 299 B.C.-399 A.D.): Κλεώ; SB I 3437 (Alexandria, 199-1 B.C.): Κλεώ χρηστή χαίρει; SB I 3438, ll. 1, 2 (Alexandria, 199-1 B.C.): Κλεώ Τ[ι]μοζένου Πτολεμαίσα.

³⁷ P.Bingen. 77, 21 (Alexandria, 101-200 A.D.): Σίδης ζ Γαίου Οὐλπίου Ἰάσονος ἄκατο(ς) Ἐλπιδος Οὐρανία; P.Oxy. XLII 3063 (252 A.D.): Ἐπειφ κς ἐν πλοίῳ Μάρκου Αὐρηλίου Διοσκόρου ἄκατος Οὐρανία.

³⁸ P.Lond. V 1889 v, 6; P.Fouad. 85 r, 6; name of nun: P.Ant. III 204, 2 (501-700 A.D.): ἡ Οὐρανία μονάζουσα; as a double name: Stud. Pal. XX 139, ll. 3, 19 (531 A.D.). L. 3: Αὐρηλίας Οὐρανίας θυγατρὸς Ἰωσήφ, l. 19 Αὐρηλία Οὐρανία θυγάτηρ [Ἰω]σήφ.

³⁹ P.Petr. II (2) 1, ll. 17, 49 = P.Petr. III 13 (Kerkodilopolis-Arsinoites, 236-235 B.C.): καταλείπω τὰ [ὑπάρχον]τά μοι πάντα [Θαλει]ᾶ τῆι ἔμου[τοῦ] γυναικί, «I leave all my possessions to my wife, Thaleia».

⁴⁰ P.Strasb. IV 284, 8 (Kerkodilopolis, 177-179 A.D.): καὶ δούλην Θαλίαν.

⁴¹ P.Oxy. LXVII 4626 r, 1; v, 1 (259-299 A.D.): Νεῖλος Θαλία χαίρειν (recto); Θαλία (drawing) Νεῖλος (verso). Cf. P.Oxy. LXVII 4626 note l. 261.

⁴² Breccia 1911, 143; No. 271 = SB I 439, 1 (Alexandria, 1st century B.C.): [Κ]αλλιόπη μήτηρ χρηστή χαίρει, «Calliope the good mother, greetings».

⁴³ P.Cair.Zenon III 59333, ll. 9, 48 = C.Ptol. Sklav. I 104 (Philadelphia? Arsinoites 248 B.C.): Καλλιόπη χ(οίνικες) β, «To Calliope, 2 choenix».

The remaining attestations are dated to the Roman period (from the 2nd century A.D. until the 5th century A.D.). From this period, Καλλιόπη appears as a name of a freedwoman who had Roman citizenship in Alexandria;⁴⁴ it is also found as a mother's name in a declaration of death from Oxyrhynchus,⁴⁵ and occurs for a woman in a will from the Fayyum.⁴⁶ According to the above-mentioned texts, Καλλιόπη is a name given to woman in rich families as well as in ordinary families.

The archeological evidences of the Muses (the goddesses) are as follows:⁴⁷

1. A statue of a draped female (Pl. 1)⁴⁸ housed in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.⁴⁹ It is dated to the 1st century B.C. and is identified as the goddess Clio = Κλειώ by comparison with another statue in the Glyptothek in Munich.

2. A statue of a draped female⁵⁰ found at Asyut (Lykopolis) in 1895.⁵¹ It was housed in the Greco-Roman Museum of Alexandria and is dated to 117-138 A.D. The statue is identified as one of the Muses of the sculptor Ammonios Son of Apollophanes.⁵²

3. Another female statue may represents one of the Muses (Pl. 2)⁵³ after comparing it with the Melpomene statue in Berlin and the Polhymnia statue in Rome's Centrale Montemartini Museum. It was housed in the Greco-Roman Museum of Alexandria and is dated to the 2nd century A.D. The statue has been discovered in "Bab Sidra" in the south of Alexandria near Karmouz.⁵⁴

4. A white marble statue of a Muse (Pl. 3)⁵⁵ was also housed in the Greco-Roman Museum of Alexandria; its provenance is unknown.⁵⁶ It is similar to another statue of the Muse housed in the British Museum.⁵⁷

5. A statue of a draped female is also identified as one of the Muses coming from the excavations of Flinders Petrie in Oxythynchus (Pl. 4). It is dated to the Roman period, and was discovered in the area of the great theater.⁵⁸

⁴⁴ Stud. Pal. XX 114, ll. 3, 19 (Alexandria, 421 A.D.): l. 3 Κ[αλλι]όπη πολίτις Ῥωμαίων ἀπελευθέρρα; l. 19: Καλιόπη ἀπελευθέρρα, «Clio, the freedwoman».

⁴⁵ C.Pap.Gr. II 51, 3 = P.Oxy. XXXVI 2761, 3 (Oxyrhynchus, 161-169 A.D.).

⁴⁶ P.Lund VI 6, 12 (Will, Tebtunis, 190-191 A.D.).

⁴⁷ Many thanks to Prof. Sobhey Ashour for providing some images of the statues of the Muses that are housed in Greco-Roman Museum in Alexandria.

⁴⁸ Egyptian Museum, Cairo, inv. No. 27465. [<https://arachne.dainst.org/entity/1117856>]; to be compared with Glyptothek, Inv. 266; cf. the scroll in her hand. This statue is housed until now in the Egyptian Museum and will be moved later to the Grand Museum.

⁴⁹ Edgar 1903, 16, Cat. no. 27465, Pl. V; Pinkwart 1965, 193 Cat. no. 9; Schneider 1999, 135 Cat. no. 14, Pl. 43.

⁵⁰ Greco-Roman Museum in Alexandria (inv. no 3882); [<https://arachne.dainst.org/entity/1117854>].

⁵¹ Riggs 2015, 558.

⁵² Pinkwart 1965, 214, Nr. 5; Schneider 1999, 105 ff., Nr. 5, Taf. 31 b.

⁵³ Greco-Roman Museum in Alexandria (inv. no 3877).

⁵⁴ Savvopoulos / Bianchi 2012, 70-71.

⁵⁵ Greco-Roman Museum in Alexandria (inv. no 24044).

⁵⁶ Adriani 1938, 179-181, Fig. 14; Bonacasa 1960, 184-188, Tav. XL; Pinkwart 1965, 203, n. 3.

⁵⁷ Smith 1904, Cat. Nr. 2095.

⁵⁸ Petrie 1925, 14, plate XXXVI 1, 2.

6. A Mosaic in El-Hadra (Elchatby), Alexandria, dating to the Ptolemaic period bears the name Clio and part of her face (Pl. 5).⁵⁹ The design is in black and white, its frame adorned by cubes in black, white, red, brown and yellow.⁶⁰ A mosaic like this could have been used for the decoration of public buildings such as temples and baths, but also of private houses particularly in the dining rooms of the rich.⁶¹

Conclusion

The Muses are known in the Roman period outside Alexandria in Oxyrhynchus and the Arsinoites, even in a small village like Talaos in the Oxyrhynchites. Furthermore, the festival of the Muses clearly took place in Egypt during the Roman Period in the country side.

The Muses' names and the name Μοῦσα itself are attested as personal names for women of different standings and times, both for rich women and for slaves. The name Μοῦσα (Muse) itself could be used as a personal name for an Egyptian woman.

Statistics show the following attestations: Μοῦσα (6 documents), Εὐτέρπη (10 documents), Κλειώ (6 documents), Οὐρανία (6 documents), Καλλιόπη (5 documents), Θάλεια (4 documents). Τερψιχόρη, Πολύμνια, and Ἐρατώ have no attestations at all. In evaluating these statistics in general, it has to be kept in mind that women's names are far less represented than male names, about only one 10 of all attested names are female; this is of course due to the character of the written evidence preserved on papyrus.

⁵⁹ Breccia 1911, 101.

⁶⁰ Breccia 1914, 274.

⁶¹ Brecolaki 2016, 673, 674.



Pl. 1.



Pl. 2.



Pl. 3.



Pl. 4.



Pl. 5.

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