

Museum objects are irreplaceable evidence of our history and heritage and can really bring your lessons to life. Each of these downloadable resources explores one of the objects in our collection.

For even more ideas, discover our loan boxes at

<http://schoolloans.readingmuseum.org.uk/> and search our amazing online database at <http://collections.readingmuseum.org.uk/>

## Roman musician statuette



Follow this [link to online database](#) to see the object's full record

### DESCRIPTION

**Object:** Flute player or Euterpe

**Date:** 2nd or 3rd century

**Museum object number:** REDMG : 1995.4.3

**Material:** bronze

**Size:** 122mm high and 40mm wide

This is small ancient Roman statue. It was excavated in the Roman town of **Calleva Atrebartum** (Silchester, Hampshire). The figure of a flute player was cast in **bronze** - molten bronze was poured into a cast (usually made of **ceramic**) of the figure. It would originally have looked shiny and golden, but it has become green over time. If you **look closely** you can still see golden traces. Bronze is an alloy, a mixture of **copper** with some **tin**, the copper **corrodes** in the air and oils wear down the surface (including the oils on skin).

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This is a bronze statue of a female musician. She is a flute player and carries a **tibia**, a double reed **wind instrument** similar to an oboe. She is barefoot and wears a tall **stephane**, a headdress, decorated with feathers. She is probably **Euterpe**, one of the nine muses from Greek mythology. In Ancient Greek stories the Muses were the daughters of **Zeus**, king of the **gods** (the Romans called him **Jupiter**) and the titan **Mnemosyne** (titans were early gods). The Muses were challenged by the **Sirens** to a musical contest. Sirens were bird women whose enchanted singing lured sailors to crash their ships. The muses won and humiliated the sirens by pulling out their wing feathers and wearing them on their heads, making Euterpe's headdress. The Muses were **immortal**, skilled in all arts and great inventors of language, music, poetry and dance. They inspired people to create great art, we still call someone who gives us inspiration a 'muse'.

Euterpe was Greek, but this statue is Roman. The Romans often adopted gods and stories from civilisations they conquered, like the Greeks. Romans had large **temples** to gods like Jupiter, but also **household shrines** to gods, goddesses and the owner's ancestors to help and protect them. This statue is from Calleva Atrebartum- the town of the **Atrebartes** tribe, and it is currently being studied by the [University of Reading](#). This statue was excavated by Victorians, **Society of Antiquaries** in 1900 in house 2, **Insula XXIII** (an insula was a block of buildings in a Roman town).

## LINKS TO OTHER OBJECTS

Reading Museum has a large collection of artefacts excavated at Silchester, Follow [this link](#) for more information about our Silchester collection.

These are a few examples of objects you may find interesting:

- [Roman Serapis head](#)
- [Silchester Eagle](#)
- [Silchester Horse](#)
- [Roman doll](#)

See also our [Loan Boxes database](#) for related objects.

## IDEAS FOR ACTIVITIES

- **Design your own Roman statue**  
Children could research Roman gods and mythical creatures to choose the subject of their statuette. They should decide where the statue will be displayed and for whom. They should also think about the material the statuette will be made of, how big it should be and whether it will be coloured and how.
- **Write a story**  
Who made the flute-player statuette? Why? What happened to it? How was it found by archaeologists?
- **Observe and learn**  
Observing this Roman statuette, we can learn a lot about the Romans: their clothes, their music, how women wore their hair.