



## Aphrodite of Cnidus

### Summary :

Aphrodite of Cnidus is a marble statue of Aphrodite made by the Athenian sculptor Praxiteles around 360 BC, purchased by the Cnidians and set up at Cnidus. Its legend lived on long after its destruction by fire in the 5th c. AD.

### Date

ca. 360 BC

### Geographical Location

Cnidus

## 1. The written sources on this statue

Aphrodite of [Cnidus](#) is one of the most celebrated masterpieces in the Greek and Latin literature. References to this work and in few cases even descriptions of it cover a span of time, which ranges from the 4th c. BC until the 12th c. AD. In fact, this work of art is mentioned in no less than 33 ancient and Byzantine sources.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, two inscriptions may also refer to it.<sup>2</sup> We can infer therefore from this abundant evidence several clues concerning the motivation of Praxiteles to make this statue, its configuration, its setting at Cnidus as well as its later vicissitudes and fortune.

## 2. The creation of Aphrodite of Cnidus by Praxiteles

### 2.1. Chronology

Praxiteles, with [Aphrodite](#) of Cnidus, tried to represent the goddess in her full glorious beauty, as an absolute entity. The statue must be dated to 364-361 BC, the high point of Praxiteles' career.<sup>3</sup> We know from [Pliny](#) that it was made concurrently with the Aphrodite statue set up on [Cos](#), which must be dated a little later than the new foundation of Cos in 366 B.C.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, it was usual to identify the peak of an artist's career with his most famous work, which for Praxiteles is Aphrodite of Cnidus.

### 2.2. The rationale behind Praxiteles' creation of the Aphrodite of Cnidus

The ambitious claim of Praxiteles that the divine beauty of Aphrodite could be translated into terms of human beauty was based on the notion that other men before him, like [Paris](#), [Anchises](#) and Adonis, had seen Aphrodite in her true naked form. Particularly important for him was the example of the judgement of Paris.<sup>5</sup>

### 2.3. The use of models for the creation of the Aphrodite of Cnidus

Praxiteles was influenced by the philosophy of Plato.<sup>6</sup> According to Plato, *Symposium* 210 e - 211 c, in order to arrive at the beautiful form, which is the closest one to divine perfection, it is necessary to have experience of the least imperfect examples of earthly beauty. Moreover, a personal knowledge of beauty is possible through one's inner feelings. This theory must have implied therefore that it was better to employ examples of earthly beauty, which provoke an emotional feeling. Probably for this reason, Praxiteles used as his models two courtesans who were also his lovers: Phryne for the goddess' body and Cratine for Aphrodite's head.<sup>7</sup> Through these examples, and especially the itinerary towards the knowledge of the goddess described above, Praxiteles was said to have obtained direct inspiration from the



## Aphrodite of Cnidus

goddess.<sup>8</sup>

### 2.4. Use of magic in order to create Aphrodite of Cnidus

It is well known that the imposition of a divine or heroic subject into a statue was often obtained in Classical antiquity through magical practices, which assured the epiphany of the subject portrayed into the statue.<sup>9</sup> In the case of Aphrodite of Cnidus, as we are told in two *epigrams*, one of which is attributed to Plato, this was supplied through the iron chisel used for making the statue and for representing the beauty of the goddess. Iron, it is perhaps worth remarking, was the symbol of [Ares](#), Aphrodite's lover.<sup>10</sup>

### 2.5. Use of Parian marble for Aphrodite of Cnidus

The marble used was [Parian](#),<sup>11</sup> Praxiteles' favourite, especially for expressing figures of particularly high beauty, including the [Eros](#) of Thespiae,<sup>12</sup> and generally considered in Classical antiquity to be of the best available quality. The choice of this marble by Praxiteles perhaps also depended on the belief that, particularly in Parian marble, stone statues of deities were, so to speak, immanent, awaiting the sculptor's removal of superfluous material and the release of these natural works of art.<sup>13</sup>

## 3. The identification of the iconography of Aphrodite of Cnidus in the copyist tradition

Aphrodite of Cnidus was recognized on coins struck by Cnidus in Roman times by Spanheim as early as 1671,<sup>14</sup> enabling the two Jonathan Richardsons in 1728 to identify a marble copy in the Belvedere Aphrodite.<sup>15</sup> This statue, representing the goddess taking up her garment after her bath, with long drapery falling on a small *kalpis*, is closer to coin representations and thus to the Praxitelean original than other copies. The Cnidia Colonna, with short drapery upon a large hydria, is probably a Hellenistic variation, in which the goddess is no longer shown as having just bathed in a natural spring but with water from the hydria against which she reclines.<sup>16</sup>

The surviving copies and variations from this masterpiece supercede 250 in number and include around 70 life-size copies: it is therefore possible that this Aphrodite has been the most copied and imitated Classical Greek statue in Hellenistic and Roman times.<sup>17</sup> The copies are divided into two main sub-types, named after the Belvedere and Colonna examples considered above.

## 4. Considerations on the setup of the Aphrodite of Cnidus

Bathing clearly has the function of purifying and regenerating the goddess, and her nakedness is also intended to express a state of primordial purity thus regained.

Having completed her bath the goddess, returned to her primordial purity, becomes an example to mortal men. They, being themselves regenerated by a vision of absolute beauty, can transcend vulgar love and turn to the heavenly one. The small *kalpis* on the left side of the goddess would probably have contained the perfumes with which she has anointed her skin, a very apparent symbol of purification. The act of covering her pubis with a hand is possibly related to her bathing in an open space, signifying her fear of the gaze of strangers such as the mythical inhabitants of the forest, or heroic personages such as Teiresias or Acteon, who have seen other bathing goddesses. The shielding of her pubis, the source of life, with her right hand could perhaps mean a very favorable fecundation of the world.



## Aphrodite of Cnidus

From a stylistic point of view, the Aphrodite of Cnidus is conceived as being viewed from the front and the back, but not from the sides: the statue consequently lacks a sense of space and three-dimensional quality. The absence of space is typical of other sculptures attributed to Praxiteles: see for example the Wine-pouring Satyr, the Lizard-slayer Apollo and the Resting Satyr.

In the case of the Aphrodite of Cnidus, the absence of space emphasized the function of her complete nakedness and particularly the importance of her back as suggestive of seduction. The goddess was conceived as standing on two different stages at the same time, pictured from the front and back. This conception of the figure reflects a theatrical approach, reducing the statue to only two viewpoints, clearly a more pictorial than sculptural idea of sculpture. It is possible that Praxiteles was influenced by his numerous commissions relating to the theatrical life of Athens, and especially for **choregic monuments**.

### 5. Considerations on the style of the Aphrodite of Cnidus

The stance of the goddess shows a sinuosity more pronounced than in the early works of Praxiteles - compare especially the Wine-pouring Satyr - but also less pronounced than works of his full maturity, as the Lizard-slayer Apollo and the Resting Satyr. Nor is the jar and drapery merely a static support for part of the figure - as in the cases of the leaning Lizard-slayer Apollo and the Resting Satyr. This feature places the Aphrodite of Cnidus in the late 360s, later than Praxiteles' works of the early 360s, but before the two main works of his full maturity, the Lizard-slayer [Apollo](#) and the Resting Satyr.

With regard to the anatomy, the direct derivation of most of it from the actual young female body has been shown,<sup>18</sup> confirming the ancient tradition of Praxiteles' inspiration from young female models. However, a part of her anatomy, especially the back, is derived from the male body.<sup>19</sup> This mixture of the principal female features with minor male ones perhaps has the function of achieving an ideal beauty, transcending both sexes. From Lucian's *Amores*, it is known that lovers of boys also recognized their erotic taste in the Aphrodite of Cnidus.

The stylistic rendering is quite different in the Belvedere and Colonna sub-types. The Belvedere shows a moderate softness on the surface, while the Colonna shows a much more advanced rendering in treating the various surfaces as a continuous series of transitions. Consequently, the Belvedere sub-type corresponds to Praxiteles' work of the late 360s BC, between the Wine-pouring Satyr and the Centocelle Eros on the one hand, and, on the other, the Resting Satyr and other later creations. The Colonna sub-type rendering cannot be dated before 340-330 BC, because the mutation of the body's structure is here too pronounced. On the basis of the numismatic evidence, it is likely that the Belvedere sub-type gives the true features of Praxiteles' creation and that its treatment confirms the dating of the Aphrodite of Cnidus proposed above.

### 6. Nikias' collaboration to the creation of the Aphrodite of Cnidus

The promising young painter Nikias probably coated the surfaces with wax, in order to produce a continuous mixture of light and shade, conveying the impression of flesh-color.<sup>20</sup>

According to this interpretation, the goddess' appeal lays in her dreamy, magical sense of physical presence.



## Aphrodite of Cnidus

### 7. The sale of the statue to the Cnidians

Having completed it, Praxiteles put the statue up for sale in his workshop. The Coans, who had asked him for an Aphrodite statue, refused to accept it on moral grounds, as we know from Pliny, preferring instead a draped Aphrodite, which is thought to be the prototype of the draped Richelieu Aphrodite, declared to be a work of Praxiteles in an inscription.<sup>21</sup> The Cnidians, who had also asked the Athenian master for an Aphrodite, accepted this naked version, possible because the bathing iconography was taken as an allusion to [Aphrodite as Euploia](#)(= of the fair sea voyage), an epithet characteristic of the cult of the goddess at Cnidus,<sup>22</sup> and also perhaps because at Cnidus Aphrodite had already been conceived in terms of the naked Phoenicio-Cypriot Astarte.<sup>23</sup>

#### 7.1. The setting of the statue at Cnidus

The Cnidians placed this statue in their sanctuary of Aphrodite *Euploia*,<sup>24</sup> probably as a votive offering.<sup>25</sup>

Pliny asserts that the statue stood inside a small temple which was completely accessible, also from the rear side. This statement and the description of the temple in the *Amores* of [Lucian](#) are in accord.<sup>26</sup>

The identification of this small sanctuary with the round temple on the highest terrace of Cnidus has been asserted by I. C. Love.<sup>27</sup> The discovery near this temple of a 3rd c. BC decree on the cult of Aphrodite<sup>28</sup> shows that Aphrodite was worshipped on this terrace. The further discovery near that temple of another 3rd c. BC inscription mentioning a *Prax...* and a second subject of which the letters *gym..* survive, may be relevant, because it may be a dedication of a lover to the naked (*gymna*) Aphrodite.<sup>29</sup>

The discovery immediately under the round temple of a right hand and a drapery fragment, considered by I. C. Love to be consistent with corresponding parts of the Aphrodite of Cnidus and perhaps belonging to one or two copies of this statue, may provide another indication that this Aphrodite was standing in that temple and that copyist workshops were established in the vicinity.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, the discovery on the round temple terrace of terracotta figurines that seem to represent Aphrodite<sup>31</sup> may also be related to her cult.

The garden mentioned in the *Amores* may have been in the area to the east of the temple and around the altar.

The round temple may have had two main phases: a late-classical one in stuccoed limestone, following the **Corinthian order**, of which a Corinthian capital, a drum of a column and fragments of the entablature survive; and an early 2nd c. BC phase: the marble podium, with the base of the statue, the altar, a column drum and a Doric capital belong to this Hellenistic phase.<sup>32</sup> The order therefore changed from Corinthian to Doric and this temple will be imitated in the Doric round temple, with a copy of this Aphrodite in the middle, which will be erected by [Hadrian](#) in his villa at Tivoli.<sup>33</sup>

### 8. The fortune of the Aphrodite of Cnidus

#### 8.1. Late Classical and early Hellenistic times

Praxiteles' masterpiece received a warm welcome especially in Platonic circles: two epigrams praising the statue are



## Aphrodite of Cnidus

attributed to Plato.<sup>34</sup> A female head, found in the sanctuary of Demeter at Cnidus, dated still to the third quarter of the 4th c. BC and, being very similar to the head of the Aphrodite of Cnidus,<sup>35</sup> reveals that the statue began to be imitated very soon.

Moreover, a man, Macareus from Perinthos, fell in love with this Aphrodite already at the time of the sacred prostitute Ischas, who lived around 300 BC.<sup>36</sup>

A dedication of an *Arist...*, probably one of the lovers of this statue, to Praxiteles' Aphrodite survives and is dated to the end of the 4th c. BC.<sup>37</sup>

Cephisodotos the Younger, the elder son of Praxiteles, made the original statue of the Capitoline type of Aphrodite, around 300 BC, up-dating the iconography of the statue of Cnidus.<sup>38</sup>

It was probably in the early 3rd c. BC that a man, having fallen in love with the statue and hidden inside the temple by night behind the door when it was locked, ravished the statue, leaving a stain and, after this sacrilegious act, committed suicide.<sup>39</sup>

In around 260 BC, Cnidus suffered from a huge financial deficit, and Nikomedes I, king of Bithynia, wanting to give artistic importance to his newly founded capital [Nicomedia](#), offered to pay the Cnidian deficit in exchange for Praxiteles' masterpiece. The Cnidians rejected his offer, and the king commissioned another bathing naked Aphrodite to the Bithynian sculptor Doedalsas.<sup>40</sup>

### 8.2. From middle Hellenistic to Roman Imperial times

Probably in the early 2nd c. BC, the previous round temple was replaced by a more magnificent one, and the statue was placed on a large base. A cylindrical marble monument, with an inscription apparently referring to Praxiteles and a naked figure standing above, was probably the base of a small votive offering dedicated by one of the many lovers of this goddess.<sup>41</sup>

The new temple, which seems to have been in existence until Late antiquity, made it impossible to walk around the statue and obliged visitors to view the goddess from just two angles - from the front, upon entering the temple from the front door, and then, from the back, after having stepped outside and re-entered the temple through a rear door, contemplating her back. These precautions, about which we are informed in Lucian's *Amores*, were probably aimed at avoiding possible encounters between men and the statue. The large high base would also have served not only to give an imposing presence to the statue, but also to distance visitors from the masterpiece.

From the 2nd c. BC to the 3rd c. AD, the Aphrodite of Cnidus had been one of the most celebrated statues in literary tradition as well as perhaps the most often imitated in the copyist tradition.

However, it is very significant that under Domitian, in the prevailing moral atmosphere of that period, [Apollonius of Tyana](#) put an end to the phenomenon of Cnidia's lovers. Considering it based on the vulgar mythology of goddesses in love with men and not on a spiritual conception of the deities, he persuaded the last lover of the statue to repent of his intentions.<sup>42</sup>



## Aphrodite of Cnidus

### 8.3. The Aphrodite of Cnidus at Constantinople

Following the closure of the pagan temples, decreed at the end of the year 392 AD, the problem of moving statues of significant artistic value to profane buildings became urgent. The Aphrodite of Cnidus and five other Greek statues were moved to Constantinople, the new imperial capital, and placed in one of the imperial palaces, the so-called [Lauseion](#), probably in 393-394 AD. The Byzantine historian Cedrenus refers to this collection in his tract on the last years of Theodosius' empire.<sup>43</sup> As we know from Cedrenus and Zonaras,<sup>44</sup> this collection of statues was destroyed by a fire in 476 AD.

The legend of the Aphrodite of Cnidus, as a symbol of classical beauty, which has continued into Modern times, began in the Middle Byzantine age, with the rediscovery of ancient Greek art.<sup>45</sup>

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1. Literary sources on Aphrodite of Knidos, listed in chronological order: Plato, in *Anthologia Graeca* 16. 159, 160, 161, 162, 168, Hermodorus, in *Anthologia Graeca* 16. 169, 170. Antipater, in *Anthologia Graeca* 16. 167. Cicero, *In Verrem* 2. 4. 60. 135. Evenus, in *Anthologia Graeca* 16. 165. Evenus, 166. Valerius Maximus 8. 11. *ext.* 4. Plin. *HN* 7.127; 34. 69; and 36. 20-22 and 26. Lucian, in *Anthologia Graeca* 16. 163, 164. Lucian, *Amores* 11-17 and 54. Lucian, *Imagines* 4 and 6. Lucian, *Pro imaginibus* 8; 18; and 22-23. Lucian, *Juppiter tragoedus* 10. Athenagoras, *Legatio pro Christianis* 17. 4. Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii Tyanensis* 6. 19 and 40. Clement, *Protrepticus* 4. 47 and 51. Athenaeus 13. 591 a. Arnobius, *Adversus gentes* 6. 13 and 22. Himerius, *Orationes* 64. 4. Ausonius, *Epigrammata* 62 Green. Scholiast to Lucian, *Juppiter tragoedus* 10. Arethas, *scholium* to Lucian, *Amores* 11-12. Constantine 7. Porphyrogenitus, *De thematibus* 1. 14. 37. Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum* 322 b-c and 351 c. Zonaras, *Epitome historiarum* 14. 24. 2. 52 d. Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 8. *historia* 195. 368-380. *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 989 fol 110.
  2. See Steuben, H., von, "Belauschte oder unbelauschte Göttin? Zum Motiv der Knidischen Aphrodite", *MDAI(I)* 39 (1989) p. 535-546, inscriptions nos. 162 and 178. A reference in these two inscriptions to Aphrodite of Knidos has been argued by Love and Corso (Love, I. C., "A preliminary Report of the Excavations at Knidos", *AJA* 76 (1972) p. 61-76 and 393-405; and 77 (1973) p. 413-424; Corso, A., "Praxiteles and the Parian Marble", in D. Schilardi - D. Katsonopoulou (ed.), *Paria lithos* (Athens 2000) p. 227-236), but has been rejected by Blümel (Blümel, W., *Die Inschriften von Knidos* (Bonn 1992).
  3. See Plin. *HN* 34.50.
  4. See Plin. *HN* 7.127; 34.69; and 36.20-22 and 26.
  5. Plato, in *Anthologia Graeca* 16. 159, 160, 161, 162, 168, Hermodorus, in *Anthologia Graeca* 16. 169, 170; Evenus, in *Anthologia Graeca* 16. 165, 166; and Lucian, in *Anthologia Graeca* 16. 163, 164.
  6. See Corso, A., "Love as Suffering", *BICS* 42 (1997-1998) p. 63-91 and Corso, A., "Small Nuggets about late-classical Sculpture", *Numismatica e Antichità Classiche. Quaderni Ticinesi* 29 (2000) p. 150-151. Havelock, C. M., review of I. Jenkins - G. B. Waywell (ed.), *Sculptors and Sculpture of Caria and the Dodecannese* (London 1997), *AJA* 103 (1999) p. 154 does not believe on an influence of Plato on Praxiteles.
  7. See Clement, *Protrepticus* 4. 47 and 51. Athenaeus 13. 591 a. Arnobius, *Adversus gentes* 6. 13 and 22.
  8. See Plin. *HN* 7.127; 34.69; and 36.20-22 and 26.
  9. See especially Meleager, in *Anthologia Graeca* 12. 57 and Callistratus 3; 8 and 11. See Corso, A., "Ancient Greek Sculptors as Magicians", *Numismatica e Antichità Classiche. Quaderni Ticinesi* 28 (1999) p. 97-111.
  10. See Plato, in *Anthologia Graeca* 16. 160 and Ausonius, *Epigrammata* 62 Green.
  11. See Lucian, *Amores* 11-17 and 54 and Corso, A., "Praxiteles and the Parian Marble", in D. Schilardi - D. Katsonopoulou (ed.), *Paria lithos* (Athens 2000) p. 227-236. Palagia, O., "Parian Marble and the Athenians", in D. Schilardi - D. Katsonopoulou (ed.), *Paria lithos* (Athens 2000) p. 351, is



## Aphrodite of Cnidus

sceptical about the ability to identify the marble of the Aphrodite of Cnidus.

12. See especially Meleager, in *Anthologia Graeca* 12. 56 and Corso, A., "Praxiteles and the Parian Marble", in D. Schilardi - D. Katsonopoulou (ed.), *Paria lithos* (Athens 2000) p. 227-236. Katsonopoulou, D., "Paria lithos", in D. Schilardi - D. Katsonopoulou (ed.), *Paria lithos* (Athens 2000) p. 208-209 identifies Praxiteles' Eros described by Meleager with the Eros of Parion.
13. See Cicero, *De divinatione* 1. 13. 23 and 2. 21. 48; Pliny 36. 14; and Quintilian 2. 19. 3.
14. See Spanheim, E., *Dissertationes de praestantia et usu numismatum antiquorum* (Amsterdam 1717) p. 296.
15. See Richardson, J., *Traite de la peinture et de la sculpture* 3. 2 (Amsterdam 1728) p. 520-521.
16. See Pfrommer, M., "Zur Venus Colonna", *MDAI(I)* 35 (1985) p. 173-180. Mandel, U., "Zum Fransentuch des Typus Colonna", *MDAI(I)* 39 (1989) p. 547-554. Reinsberg, C., "Zur Hydria des Typus Colonna", *MDAI(I)* 39 (1989) p. 555-557. Steuben, H., von, „Belauschte oder unbelauschte Göttin? Zum Motiv der Knidischen Aphrodite", *MDAI(I)* 39 (1989) p. 535-546, thinks that the Colonna sub-type is closer to the original statue of Praxiteles than the Belvedere one.
17. A comprehensive catalogue of all the copies and derivations from Aphrodite of Cnidus has never been composed. For partial catalogues, see Michaelis, A., "The Cnidian Aphrodite of Praxiteles", *JHS* 8 (1887) p. 324-354. Blinkenberg, C., *Knidia* (Kopenhagen 1933) and Closuit, L., *L'Aphrodite de Cnide* (Martigny 1978).
18. See Della Seta, A., *Il nudo nell'arte* (Milan 1930) p. 307-349.
19. This feature has been noted already in the source, see Lucian, *Amores* 11-17 and 54.
20. On Nikias' collaboration with Praxiteles, see Plin. *HN* 35.122 and especially 133.
21. On the details of the sale of the Aphrodite of Cnidus, see Plin. *HN* 7.127; 34.69; and 36.20-22 and 26. On the label indicating that the Richelieu Aphrodite is a work made by Praxiteles, see the inscription no. 19 in Corso, A., *Prassitele. Fonti epigrafiche e letterarie* 1 (Rome 1988) p. 31. On the Richelieu Aphrodite, see Todisco, L., *Scultura greca del iv secolo* (Milan 1993) p. 71 and 257, photo no. 109.
22. See Paus. 1. 1. 3.
23. On the naked goddess in the eastern Mediterranean world during the first half of the first millennium BC, see Boehm, S., *Die nackte Göttin* (Mainz am Rhein 1990) and Corso, A., "A Goddess of Cycladic Marble from Etruria", in D. Schilardi - D. Katsonopoulou (ed.), *Paria lithos* (Athens 2000) p. 559-566.
24. The equivalence of Aphrodite *Euploia* and Aphrodite *Knidia* as designating the same cult at Cnidus is confirmed by Paus. 1. 1. 3.
25. Nikomedes I, king of Bithynia, could not have asked the Cnidians to buy the statue from them around 260 BC (see Plin. *HN* 7.127; 34.69; and 36.20-22 and 26), if it was a cult statue. Furthermore, we know from coins that a statue of Aphrodite was the principal cult statue of Knidos even before the Late Classical period (see Cahn, H. A., *Knidos* (Berlin 1970) p. 19-174), from around 530 BC.
26. See Plin. *HN* 7.127; 34.69; and 36.20-22 and 26 and Lucian, *Amores* 11-17 and 54.
27. See Love, I. C., "A preliminary Report of the Excavations at Knidos", *AJA* 76 (1972) p. 61-76 and 393-405; and 77 (1973) p. 413-424. This identification has been rejected by Bankel (see Bankel, H., "Knidos. Der Hellenistische Rundtempel und sein Altar. Vorbericht", *AA* (1997) p. 51-71), who writes of a probable temple of Athena.
28. See Bluemel, W., *Die Inschriften von Knidos* (Bonn 1992), inscription no. 161.
29. See Bluemel, W., *Die Inschriften von Knidos* (Bonn 1992), inscription no. 178. This interpretation, supported by Love (Love, I. C., "A preliminary Report of the Excavations at Knidos", *AJA* 76 (1972) p. 61-76 and 393-405; and 77 (1973) p. 413-424) as well as by Corso (Corso, A., "Praxiteles and the



## Aphrodite of Cnidus

Parian Marble", in D. Schilardi - D. Katsonopoulou (ed.), *Paria lithos* (Athens 2000) p. 227-236), has been rejected by Blümel (Blümel, W., *Die Inschriften von Knidos* (Bonn 1992). However, the third letter of *gym.* in the second line of that inscription is a *mi* and not a *ni* (as Blümel reads), because its oblique stroke is brought too far forward. The reading *Athanai* in the last line, of which only *tha* survives (<A>*tha*<nai>), by Blümel's opinion is of course arbitrary since *tha* occurs in many Doric words.

30. See Corso, A., "Praxiteles and the Parian Marble", in D. Schilardi - D. Katsonopoulou (ed.), *Paria lithos* (Athens 2000) p. 227-236, p. 230.
31. See Corso, A., "Praxiteles and the Parian Marble", in D. Schilardi - D. Katsonopoulou (ed.), *Paria lithos* (Athens 2000) p. 227-236, p. 229-230, fig. 6.
32. See Love, I. C., "A preliminary Report of the Excavations at Knidos", *AJA* 76 (1972) p. 61-76 and 393-405; and 77 (1973) p. 413-424 and Corso, A., "Praxiteles and the Parian Marble", in D. Schilardi - D. Katsonopoulou (ed.), *Paria lithos* (Athens 2000) p. 227-236. Bankel (Bankel, H., "Knidos. Der Hellenistische Rundtempel und sein Altar. Vorbericht", *AA* (1997) p. 51-71) thinks that the temple had been established in the early 2nd c.y BC.
33. See Ortolani, G., *Il padiglione di Afrodite Cnidia a Villa Adriana* (Rome 1998).
34. See Plato, in *Anthologia Graeca* 16. 160. Plato, *Anthologia Graeca* 16. 161: for bibliography on these two poems, see Corso, A., "Love as Suffering", *BICS* 42 (1997-1998) p. 63-91 and Corso, A., "Small Nuggets about late-classical Sculpture", *Numismatica e Antichità Classiche. Quaderni Ticinesi* 29 (2000) p. 150-151. Havelock, C. M., review of I. Jenkins - G. B. Waywell (ed.), *Sculptors and Sculpture of Caria and the Dodecanese* (London 1997), *AJA* 103 (1999) p. 154 does not believe on an influence of Plato on Praxiteles.
35. See Corso, A., "Praxiteles and the Parian Marble", in D. Schilardi - D. Katsonopoulou (ed.), *Paria lithos* (Athens 2000), p. 235, n. 22.
36. See Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 8. *historia* 195. 368-380 and Corso, A., "Praxiteles and the Parian Marble", in D. Schilardi - D. Katsonopoulou (ed.), *Paria lithos* (Athens 2000) p. 229.
37. See Blümel, W., *Die Inschriften von Knidos* (Bonn 1992) inscription no. 162. This interpretation is rejected by Blümel (see Blümel, W., *Die Inschriften von Knidos* (Bonn 1992).
38. See Andreae, B., "Kephisodotos (ii)", in R. Vollkommer (ed.), *Künstlerlexikon der Antike* 1 (München 2001) p. 410-411.
39. This story had been reported already by Posidippus (probably the early 3rd c. BC poet of epigrams), who is cited as the source for it in Clement, *Protrepticus* 4. 47 and 51 and Arnobius, *Adversus gentes* 6. 13 and 22. See also Valerius Maximus 8. 11. *ext.* 4. Plin. *HN* 7.127; 34.69; and 36.20-22 and 26 and Lucian, *Amores* 11-17 and 54. Lucian, *Imagines* 4 and 6. See Robert, R., "Ars regenda amore", *MEFRA* 104 (1992) p. 373-437.
40. See Andreae, B., "Doidalsas", in R. Vollkommer (ed.), *Künstlerlexikon der Antike* 1 (München 2001) p. 189-190.
41. See Blümel, W., *Die Inschriften von Knidos* (Bonn 1992), inscription no. 178. This interpretation, supported by Love (Love, I. C., "A preliminary Report of the Excavations at Knidos", *AJA* 76 (1972) p. 61-76 and 393-405; and 77 (1973) p. 413-424) as well as by Corso (Corso, A., "Praxiteles and the Parian Marble", in D. Schilardi - D. Katsonopoulou (ed.), *Paria lithos* (Athens 2000) p. 227-236), has been rejected by Blümel (Blümel, W., *Die Inschriften von Knidos* (Bonn 1992).
42. See Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii Tyanensis* 6. 19 and 40. See also Corso, A., "Attitudes to the visual Arts of classical Greece in late Antiquity", *Eulimene* 2 (2001) p. 13-51.
43. See Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum* 322 b-c and 351 c and Corso, A., "Il collezionismo di scultura nell'antichità", in G. Fusconi (ed.), *I Giustiniani e l'antico* (Rome 2001) p. 101-129.
44. See Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum* 322 b-c and 351 c and Zonaras, *Epitome historiarum* 14. 24. 2. 52 d.
45. See Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 8. *historia* 195. 368-380 and *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 989 fol 110.





## Aphrodite of Cnidus

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### Glossary :

	<b>Choregic monument</b> A victorious <i>choregos</i> in <i>dithyrambos</i> received a bronze tripod from the <i>polis</i> , which he frequently erected, often as part of a more elaborate monument, in a public place such as the street called "Tripodon" in Athens or in the general vicinity of the theatre.
	<b>corinthian order</b> The most elaborate of the ancient greek architectural orders. It was developed in the 4th century BC in Greece and it was extensively used in Roman architecture. It is similar to the Ionic order. Its capitals being four-sided and composed of a basket-shaped body decorated with volumes and rows of acanthus leaves.

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## Aphrodite of Cnidus

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Pliny 36. 20-21

Lucian, *Amores* 11-17

Pausanias 1. 1. 3

Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii Tyanensis* 6. 40

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### Quotations

1. 3rd c. BC decree on the cult of Aphrodite discovered at Knidos near the round temple

[Ε]δοξε [Κνιδίους, γνώμα προστα]-  
[τ]άν περί των τοι προαιρημέ[νοι  
[μ]ναμονευταν εφίκαντ[ι  
4 [τ]αι Αφροδίται μη εξήμεν [  
[ ]ν μηδενί υπέρ Κνιδι[ι  
[ ] μηδέ υπέρ Κνιδι[ι  
[ ] αυτός θύεν Κνιδι[ι  
8 [ ] Κνιδίας νόμωι πόλιος Α[  
[σπ]εύσαντας ως νομι[  
[ ]Ι δε ταις θεοίς ως [  
[ ]Ο τεθύκαντι ται Α[φροδίται?  
12 [ ] και υπέρ αυτ[  
[ ]ΑΝΘ[ ]ΕΝ[  
[ ]ΙΑΥ[

Bluemel, W., *Die Inschriften von Knidos* (Bonn 1992) p. 105, no. 161.

2. Dedication of an Arist..., probably one of the lovers of the Aphrodite of Knidos, to Praxiteles' Aphrodite, discovered at Knidos and dated to the end of the 4th c. BC

Αριστ[ο  
Πραξί[  
Αφροδ[ίται

Bluemel, W., *Die Inschriften von Knidos* (Bonn 1992) p. 106, no. 162.

3. 3rd c. BC inscription mentioning a Prax... and a second subject, of which the letters gym.. survive, may be a dedication of a lover to Praxiteles' naked (gymna) Aphrodite, discovered at Knidos SW of the round temple.

Πραξί[ιτέλης]ξ[----]ο[ / καιαγυμ[νή---]αα[ / υπερα [-



## Aphrodite of Cnidus

----] σικλε[ / θα.

Corso, A., *Prassitele. Fonti epigrafiche e letterarie* 1 (Rome 1988) p. 24, no. 12.

### Chronological Table

c. 360 BC: Praxiteles makes a statue of Aphrodite bought by the Cnidians and set up at Cnidus, inside a small temple. The tradition of celebrating the statue with epigrams begins with a couple of epigrams attributed to Plato. Trips to Cnidus to see the statue begin very soon

c. 300 BC: The first lovers of the Aphrodite of Cnidus are known: Macareus from Perinthos and perhaps a certain Arist...

early 3rd c. BC: a man ravishes the statue, leaving a stain on the goddess' thigh and, after this act, commits suicide

c. 260 BC: Nikomedes I, king of Bithynia, offers to pay the Cnidian deficit in exchange for Praxiteles' masterpiece. The Cnidians turn down the offer

early 2nd c. BC: the Late Classical round temple hosting the statue is replaced by a more magnificent one

70 BC: the admiration of the Aphrodite of Cnidus begins to be rooted into the Roman culture, as it is argued by Cicero's enthusiastic reference to the statue

c. 90 AD: Apollonius from Tyana puts an end to the phenomenon of the lovers of the Aphrodite of Cnidus

c. 393-394 AD: The statue is removed from Cnidus and transferred to Constantinople, where it is exhibited in the museum of the Lauseion

476 AD: The statue is destroyed by fire