

Phryne: Before and after her

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Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Deniz Kırımsoy and our artist Elbruz Denge for their hard work and dedication in organising this valuable event. I am also grateful to everyone who contributed to the event and to those who took the time to listen to my speech. I would also like to extend my thanks to Prof. Dr. Ertekin Doksanaltı, Head of the Knidos Excavations, for his presence and valuable suggestions.

While the information I will be presenting may be familiar to many of you, I do not intend to simply repeat what is already known. Instead, I will offer a unique perspective on the subject. Now, let us turn our attention to our topic for today: Aphrodite.

Beauty's transforming by Zeitgeist

For the first time in my life, I undertook a comprehensive research project beyond the scope of archaeology in preparation for a presentation. I now have Kim Kardashian in my Google search history. It is evident that many models, artists and ordinary women are all beautiful and valuable, as they represent different cultures and different eras.

The image depicts a group of women from Padaung. The women are at risk of death should one or two of the rings on their necks become detached. The women's elegance and beauty are attributed to these necklaces. And these are a group of women who live in the vicinity of Kenya and are well-known to the general public due to their appearances in various documentaries. Upon reaching their teenage years, the lower lips were excised and circles were inserted, which gradually increased in size. The woman with the largest ring was considered the most desirable and therefore received the greatest number of cattle and a larger

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dowry. The sole expectation placed upon them was that: It was expected that they would not shed tears when their lips were cut. This is the source of their beauty. It is widely acknowledged that geisha experience significant emotional distress. These are women who use potentially carcinogenic cosmetics for the sake of beauty, including to shape their eyebrows and lips, and who carry a pillow on their back as a burden.



Figure 1 Padaung Indians



Figure 2 A Kenyan woman



Figure 3 A geisha

Twiggy (Lesley Lawson), the then skinny model Twiggy (Lesley Lawson) who began to rise in the 1960s, has left her mark on world beauty. I want to share a family story here: My mother says she weighed 48 kilos when she got married. My

aunt and her peers say the same. I have yet to see someone who says 'I weigh 49 kilos'. 49 is not the number, 50 will never be the number. In the years that followed, I solved the mystery: It was Twiggy. Twiggy was the idol of young women in my mother's time. We're not even in the days of single channel TV. And yet, Twiggy has captivated every girl. Also, I think this model is the basis of the white skin disease and the obsession with blue eyes in an ideal bride. Girls wanted to be as white as she was, with an elegant body and blue eyes, and they strived for it.

During my adolescent years, Cindy Crawford was my primary source of inspiration. My contemporaries are generally aware of this information. Cindy Crawford was the epitome of beauty. She weighed a little heavier than her predecessors, with a less slender waistline and hips that were not as pronounced. Her legs were notably athletic and her height was considerable. She was in excellent physical condition and exuded a vibrant, energetic spirit. While women was envious of this model, a whole generation perished in aerobic and step-aerobics centres. Any women tried to reduce their thighs and hips as if they wanted to erase the features of their femininity. They wore nylon tracksuits, wrapped stretch film around their thighs, risked kidney disease, ran for hours and squeezed their hips with rolling pins. There were stories of women throwing themselves on the floor to get their hips thinner. Furthermore, it has been heard that women have thrown themselves on the floor to thin their thighs. None of the mentioned above methods were successful in solving this problem. As women, we are subject to the physical reality of having thighs. Similarly, women have breasts. It is necessary for them to be able to give birth and to feed their children.

Subsequently, as if a whole generation had not perished, other women became idols. Indeed, there were even those who resembled *Kentauros*, mythological creatures with horse bodies and human heads. The concept of beauty is not limited to the physical attributes of the face, body, and thighs. Additionally, various cultures espoused the view that women should have feet of a certain size. The feet in question were of a size corresponding to a 33 or 32. Feet that are subjected to a considerable degree of pressure from an early age.

Women are subjected to this form of distress throughout their lives. Because of all this, individuals are unable to walk after a period of time, due to the application of bandages to their fingers and feet.



Figure 4 Women with small shoes

This bodybuilder has a different perception of the search for beauty. Our issue is not to go back and forth between judgments like “What a body she has” and “What kind of a woman is that”. We are just looking at various beauty pursuits and approaches and their materials and methods.



Figure 5 Women in bodybuilding

These youths are Mursis from Ethiopia. The faces are not painted, they are worked on with various objects such as pebbles, predator teeth and ink. The aim is to achieve a permanently beautiful appearance.



Figure 6 Mursi youths

Which of these is beautiful? We can't give you an answer. Because there isn't one. Beautiful. Beautiful according to what, according to whom? It's beautiful according to the norm. Who decides the norm? We don't know.

When examining the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, it is evident that each decade had its own distinct understanding of beauty. During each time, there were various idols who evoked a diverse range of responses, with each individual perceiving beauty in their own unique way. Like most people, I also have a subjective view of beauty. However, it is unclear why certain idols are "beautiful in my opinion". This is because the individual in question is, in fact, themselves. We often emulate and imitate these idols because we aspire to be our true selves. For instance, Anna Nicole Smith, a model who emulated Marilyn Monroe, tragically passed away in a similar manner. Adriana Lima or Elisabeth Taylor are indisputable, I suppose. And of course Trkan Őoray, one of Turkey's best-known actresses, must be mentioned.

There are some people who are considered ugly. But we do not say that. Such an answer would be considered uncivilised. In fact, they are not ugly; they are simply outside the norm. To illustrate, a Gucci model, who is typically considered ugly, has reaped considerable financial rewards. Some women, with their assertive and masculine appearance, have been able to gain

recognition in prominent fashion magazines alongside renowned fashion designers. These are women who are perceived as ugly but are not labelled as such. Looking at the models, it becomes clear that male beauty elicits a similar response.

I conducted a visual search by typing in the word “aestheticized” in our context. It was evident that a significant amount of money had been spent on these individuals. They all appeared to be carbon copies of one another, having lost their individuality. Like pebbles in a bag, they have become indistinguishable from one another and continue to rapidly resemble each other. There is a lack of originality among them. They believe they are beautiful now, so there is nothing to argue about. For instance, Carla Bruni attempted to emulate Angelina Jolie’s appearance. There are even men who undergo plastic surgery in an attempt to resemble Barbie’s companion, Ken. Another woman strived to look like Barbie herself. Yet another individual believed that prominent cheekbones were the key to beauty.

What I mean, is not ‘adorning’. That is something we women have been doing since the beginning. In a cave discovered in France, which is believed to be at least five thousand years old, evidence has been found that women adorned themselves. It is an inherent aspect of our nature to be decorated, a practice that has been observed in women throughout history. Indeed, women are adorned. It can be observed that women have consistently engaged in the practice of dressing up, attempting to align themselves with prevailing fashion trends and adopting a variety of colours. Upon reflection, we are disconcerted by the clothes we wore at a certain time and the photographs we took at that time. These recollections often elicit feelings of surprise and even shame. The rationale for this phenomenon can be attributed to the prevailing *Zeitgeist*. *Zeitgeist* is a German expression. *Zeit* means time; *Geist* means spirit. Every time has its own spirit.

Before Phryne

Having completed the introductory speech, let us now return to our subject. The Venus of Tan-Tan is a figure that is

frequently referenced in sculpture lessons. It is important to note that there are earlier figures, they are estimated to be approximately 2.5 million years old. However, they have not yet been depicted. That's why I didn't take them into consideration.

I will continue with 'woman'. Venus of Tan-Tan was discovered in Morocco in 1999. The statue is 6 cm in height and is composed of quartzite. The artefact is estimated to date from between 500,000 and 300,000 years ago. The temporal span may appear somewhat unexpected. In this manner, the prehistoric ages can be dated. In classical archaeology, however, such a substantial temporal span is not feasible.



Figure 7 Venus of Tan-Tan, Museo de la Evolucion Humana, Burgos

It is evident that the figure depicted is that of a woman. It might be argued that the piece can be described as stylised, although the concept of stylised was not yet in question at that time. The maker of this figure has done his/her best, that's all. Furthermore, it has been proposed that this is a *maniport*, which would indicate that it was relocated from its original position. Consequently, these findings also provide insights into the migration patterns of humans.

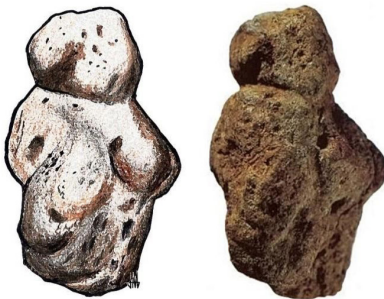


Figure 8 Venus of Berekhat Ram, Museo de la Evolucion Humana, Burgos

Then the Venus of Berekhat Ran was found in the Golan Heights, in present-day Israel. Again a small 6 cm figurine. There is a rumour circulating about the statue that 'It is a pregnant woman, she tried to make a self-portrait by looking in the mirror'. But such claims are of no importance. The real question is this: Why did we start making women's bodies?

It is so obvious that it is a statue of a woman that you don't think for a second whether it is a man or a woman. It has been suggested that these objects may also be fetish objects. Such objects are called *apotropaic*, and their purpose is to protect against the evil eye and other malevolent forces. They may also be used to gain power. It is possible that they are just ornaments, or that they may be an attempt to pass the time. Alternatively, they may be self-portraits, as has been claimed.

The female body has been the subject of admiration throughout history. In addition to its current sexual significance, the female body is also admired for the following reasons: According to Engels, the role and importance of men in female reproduction was not initially recognised for a considerable period of time. It was only when animals were domesticated that it became evident that men also played a role in reproduction. At that time, it was not known that sexuality was a reproductive activity. For them, it was merely a sexual act. The female was regarded as a creator, a being who brought a living being into being from nothing, and who nourished

it. This is evidenced by this kind of sculptures. These objects are intended to honour the female body, rather than to convey a sexualised meaning. They depict the sexual reproductive organs of the woman, which enabled this extraordinary creation, and her large breasts, which were full of milk and nourished her offspring.

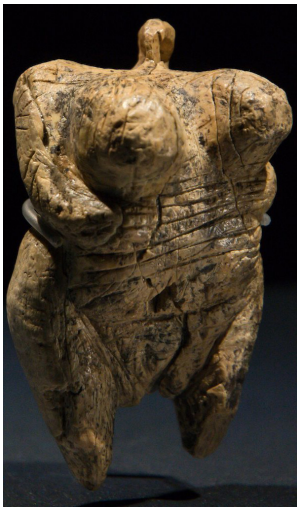


Figure 9 Ivory woman figurine, Urgeschichtlichen Museum Blaubeuren, Stuttgart

The statue in question is composed of ivory. It is also noteworthy that all the statues of women are of a relatively small scale. This evidence may be interpreted as evidence of a problematic, issue-related, or desire-related phenomenon concerning women. A significant proportion of the objects found are of a form based on the female body.

The Venus of Willendorf is particularly renowned and distinctive. It is considerably more realistic than its predecessors. The artefact is estimated to date back approximately 30,000 years. The statue is 11 cm in height and features stylised hair and reproductive organs in the foreground. The statue is named after the village of Willendorf in Austria.



Figure 10 Venus of Willendorf, Naturhistorischen Museums, Vienna

This is the Venus of Renancourt. Once more, the statue displays a certain degree of stylisation. However, when evaluated within the context of the period, it becomes evident that there is a striking resemblance to women and a remarkable degree of craftsmanship.



Figure 11 Venus of Renancourt

All of these prehistoric statues were given names based on their region of origin. However, the reason behind the naming of the Venus statues is a matter of contention and remains a mystery. Some argue that it would be more appropriate to refer to these statues as Woman of Tan Tan, Woman of Willendorf, or Woman of Renancourt. This is because the term “Venus” may only refer to their physical beauty, which is a narrow interpretation of their significance. It is clear that the meaning attributed to these statues in ancient times was entirely different.



Figure 12 Woman of Brassempouy, Musée d'Archéologie nationale, Saint-Germain-en-Laye

This is a small artefact, measuring only 4 cm, from Amiens in northern France. It is one of the earliest known depictions of a female face and is slightly stylised. The craftsmanship of this piece is remarkable, especially considering the conditions of the time. This sculpture is known as the Venus of

Brassempouy, but for the sake of clarity, let's refer to her as the Brassempouy woman. She stands at 3.5 cm and also has a torso, though unfortunately we do not have the opportunity to see it. It is intriguing to wonder what kind of body she may have had.



Figure 13 Woman of Vestonice, Národnímu Muzeu, Prag

There are numerous sculptures of women from this period, too many to include here. I would show you them all, they are all equally remarkable. These sculptures date back to the prehistoric period, approximately 20-30 thousand years old.

This Vestonice Woman was discovered in the Czech Republic. Do you notice the distinguishing characteristic? She appears to be slightly slimmer than the others.

There are other statuettes of women in the same place. They are also quite thin. It's thought that the *gravettian* people, who were the first to leave the caves, were a little weaker than others. There's also a thing called the Mediterranean body type and the European body type. We can think that it is related to the *Zeitgeist* I mentioned at the beginning of my speech. These are the kinds of characteristics

that we all follow and change others. For instance, our goddess from Konya, Turkey is the woman of Central Anatolia who feeds on wheat and grain, has a lovely belly, hips and large breasts.

In 7000 BC, or possibly 6400 BC, these statues were discovered in Çatalhöyük. They are known as *Potnia Theron*, which translates to 'Queen of the Animals'. Just like in modern times, gods and goddesses in ancient civilizations were often given epithets based on their areas of influence, power, geography, and stories. For example, in today's session on Aphrodite at the Symposia Dadia, Dr. Britta Özen-Kleine will discuss the epithet *Eupolia* associated with the goddess. Not all deities were responsible for everything, but there were also gods and goddesses who acted as guardians and took care of important tasks in extraordinary situations. It was believed that there must be a higher power in charge of ruling over animals, which is why they were often depicted alongside goddesses.

She is always referred to as Cybele of Çatalhöyük. Calling Cybele a goddess, rather than Venus or a female figure, may be comforting, but calling her as Cybele is misleading on the evidence available. There is no written evidence of her name in any source. In discussions with colleagues and professors, it is



Figure 14 Çatalhöyük Matron depicted with animals, Anadolu Medeniyetleri Müzesi, Ankara



Figure 15 Woman 2 of Çatalhöyük, Anadolu Medeniyetleri Müzesi, Ankara

agreed that it would be more accurate to refer to her as the Matron of Çatalhöyük. The term 'patron' is derived from the word *pader* meaning father, while 'matron' comes from *mader*, mother. This title suggests a powerful and dominant woman, not to be trifled with, who possesses extraordinary abilities beyond those of nature. In addition, she is depicted as having recently given birth, with lionesses at her side, further emphasising her dominance. This is no ordinary woman.

Here is a further physiognomic detail worthy of note. This figure is holding her breasts with her hands. This is also a motif that is encountered in later depictions of goddesses. The significance of this holding is not erotic; only her breasts full of milk are highlighted.

Throughout history, in every geographical region, humans have created images of women. These images were carved in stone, carved in ivory, and, as time progressed, painted on walls.

We are delving into the realm of classical archaeology, specifically the Cretan culture, which is familiar to us as residents of Datça. One aspect that particularly stands out to us as archaeologists is the Minoan culture's depiction of women in realistic and beautiful sculptures dating back to 1500 BC. These sculptures feature traditional poses commonly found in ancient art, such as those seen in Hittite, Assyrian, and Prehistoric paintings. The women are portrayed with their faces in profile, but their eyes facing the viewer, and their bodies positioned at a three-quarter angle. However, what sets these sculptures apart is their level of realism. Additionally, we appreciate the use of *polychrome* (multiple colours) in these sculptures. During this time period, mineral oxides and sea creatures were used to create colours.

This female figure is the serpent goddess. The snakes depicted on her hands and animals on the head serve to emphasise her dominance over these creatures. One of the better-known *Potnia Therons*. Anatolia was also influenced by these figures.

Approximately fifteen years ago the Olympic Games for young people were held in Greece. A group of young women

were dressed in a similar manner and lowered to the stage via a cable car-like device. The act of the Greek girls exposing their breasts and presenting them to the nation was the subject of much discussion. Nevertheless, the objective was merely to convey a greeting to the ancestors and to present a spectacle that could evoke the past.

The arrival of Phryne

We now turn to the field of classical archaeology, where we encounter the female figures of the Archaic period, known as *Kore* (young girls). These figures are notable for their peculiar postures, as if swaddled tightly. It took approximately 300 years for the posture to be adopted in its current form. The general body shape is triangular. This shape may be seen on the shape, on the upper and lower body. The number of folds increased over time. The name *Kouros* was employed to represent the youthful male form. On the sides of the *Kores*, there are figures that reflect their relationship with nature and animals. It is known that some of these were painted in polychrome. These are known by the colouring that was applied in accordance with the original.

As time elapsed, the female figures began to exhibit a smile. This is known under us, the archeologist, as the 'archaic smile' and is regarded as a joke within the archaeological community.

This smiling of the figures will not endure for long; in 490 BC, the East-West Wars will commence, the consequences of which are still being felt today. The Median Empire, founded by the Persians, will devastate and destroy the Acropolis of Athens. Subsequently, this expression will become fixed on the faces of women. Events affect the realm of art as they do the human being.



Figure 16 Snake Goddess, Heraklion Archeological Museum, Crete

The lack of sculpture in our country meant that we did not have the opportunity to appreciate this art form. Upon encountering the art of sculpture, some of us were intrigued and sought to comprehend its essence. It subsequently became evident that sculptures have been a constant feature of human life throughout history. Furthermore, we were of the opinion that the origins of art were to be found in Europe. It was commonly believed that the East had no contribution to make to the development of art. The prevailing view was that art originated in Europe, which began after a period of religious reform and the Renaissance. If the Renaissance was the origin of Western art, the question arises as to the relevance of the issues we are discussing here today. It is possible that the people of the East were deceived in this way so that they would not come to their senses. It is incorrect to assert that art originated in the West. It is evident that art existed in the East. The archaeological sites of Çatalhöyük, the Hittites, the Assyrians, the Sumerians, the Egyptians, and of course Crete, demonstrate the existence of significant artistic traditions in the East. These are not inferior to any other examples. Among the civilizations of the time, there were metropolises that were far ahead of their time.

As the periods progress, however, we observe a comprehensive reflection of Athens, the period during which Athens exerted a dominant influence on the development of art.

The woman is more animated, her curves are more alive. She is now a woman who is clearer about her intentions. Gradually, her frontal stance, that is, her stance in front of the viewer, is changing. A slight movement begins. During the classical period, the women's form was limited to a few movements. This statue of a woman is an Amazon, wounded and trying to take care of her wound. Since idealism prevailed in the classical period, she cannot yet show her suffering on her face. Regardless of the circumstances, she maintains her exquisite beauty. She does not express any emotion, whether it be sorrow, joy, or any other feeling. The moving, exciting, and meaningful expressions we call *pathos* have not yet developed. As this statue is an important representative of the Classical period, let us begin with it.

This sculpture was created as part of a competition in which the most renowned sculptors of the period, Alkamenes, Polykleitos and Phidias, participated. It is one of the most striking examples of classical beauty. The hair, parted in the middle, is parallel and orderly, and her bun is perfect, despite the presence of wounds. During the classical period, no reality was ever depicted. They posit that what is realistic is not good or beautiful. The ideal is presented as the norm. The figures will be either warriors or sportsmen, statesmen who have done things for the benefit of the people or gods or goddesses. The representation of women from everyday life is not yet evident in art, although they can be found in earlier and later periods.

We are approaching Phryne, the model of Praxiteles, the embodiment of Aphrodite of Knidos.

This sculpture is a particularly significant representation of the transition to the Hellenistic period: Eirene and Ploutos' sculpture group from the beginning of the 4th century BC. Among the numerous sculptures, I selected this particular piece due to its association with Praxiteles, a renowned artist whose work is well-known to residents of Daça. The 'Eirene and Ploutos' sculpture is the most significant work of Kephisodotos, the father of Praxiteles. Maybe Praxiteles assisted his father, Kephisodotos, in the creation of this work. I am pleased to be able to inform you of a positive aspect of this sculpture. This is one of the earliest examples of the depiction of deities engaged in human activities. There is a sense of humanity conveyed in the work. If we were unaware of their identities, we



Figure 17 Amazon sculpture (classical period), Musei Capitolini, Rome



Figure 18 Eirene and Ploutos, Glyptothek, Munich

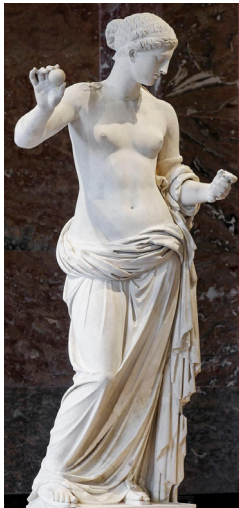


Figure 19 Aphrodite of Arles, Musée de Louvre, Paris

would refer to them as ‘mother and son’. The affection between the two figures can be discerned from their gazes. This indicates a shift in perspective from the upright, posed, and perpetually beautified women of the past to a new understanding of the woman.

The most significant advance in this direction was made by Praxiteles. We continue to hold him in high regard and, should he be able to hear us, we would like to extend our greetings to him.

It is unlikely that Praxiteles woke up one day and suddenly created the Aphrodite of Knidos. He was influenced by his father throughout his formative years, and this undoubtedly prepared Praxiteles for *Knidia*. One such artefact is the *Aphrodite of Arles*, a beautiful woman. She is a bit more dressed than the *Aphrodite of Knidos*. Praxiteles has not yet reached the point of daring; he has a little more time to develop this quality.

In his sculptures, Praxiteles evokes a strong sense of admiration and curiosity in the viewer. The viewers have an expectation: What will happen in the next moment? Praxiteles set a precedent for future artists by capturing a fleeting moment in time with his works. It is important to note that during the time periods I have mentioned, the only forms of visual communication were theatrical performances and these sculptures. News of the sculptures spread from ear to ear. After the creation of the *Aphrodite of Arles* by Praxiteles, it is likely that the

sculpture was disseminated by speeches such as: “He made an Aphrodite, just once, unbelievable”, “She is like a living girl”, “Almost naked. It’s like she’s about to take a step, and...”, “Oh, come on, really?” etc.

The rapid dissemination of Praksiteles’ renown gave rise to a surge in commissions for his sculptures. In addition to imparting a sense of dynamism to the statue, Praxiteles also undertook other modifications. This is his *Artemis Skulptur*. The statue is unmistakably female. From her shoulders, it is clear that the statue is female, as evidenced by the way she holds her hand. We do not understand an individual’s sex solely in terms of reproductive organs. Furthermore, gender can be discerned from other anatomical features, including the kneecaps, shoulder blades, foreheads, and eyeholes. The successors of Praxiteles not only learned this, they also learned to sculpt in such a way as to reveal the age of the figures depicted, even to depict national characteristics.

The image demonstrates the artist’s ability to create a seamless transition between fabric and skin. The distinction between fabric and skin is no longer apparent. The loose topknot, the sculptural and three-dimensional appearance, the addition of elegance... The female figures are depicted as moving their hands and feet in a graceful manner. After all, what Artemis is doing is not an inherently feminine task. She is fastening a cloak. But, her hands appear as if they are performing the most feminine task in the world. Praxiteles is renowned for his depiction of the female form, characterised by a soft, feminine quality. The feet are also depicted in a very aesthetic form.

Did Praxiteles always sculpt women? No, he did not. There are also known male statues by

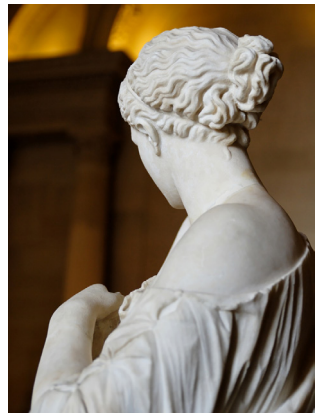


Figure 20 Sculpture of Artemis, Musée de Louvre, Paris

Praxiteles. For example, here we see a reclining satyr. And here we see Hermes carrying the baby Dionysus.



Figure 21 Resting Satyr, Musei Capitolini, Rome

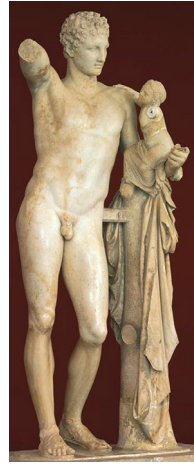


Figure 22 Hermes and Infant Dionysus, Arkhaioloyikó Mousiό Olympias, Olympia



Figure 23 Apollon Sauroktonos, Musée de Louvre, Paris

There is also *Apollon Sauroktonos*. One of the first known effeminate Apollons, we see the soft Apollo. He dealt with the great Apollo with a new understanding. Apollo the strong god; a warrior, an aggressive, irritable character, Apollo who destroyed the Greeks in the Trojan War. In this sculpture he is trying to chase the lizard in the tree like a little child. Praxiteles saw no harm in depicting gods and goddesses doing ordinary human activities without fear of them or society.

In short, Praxiteles made many works. He made warriors, gods and

goddesses. It took him a long time to arrive at *Aphrodite of Knidos*. He developed his philosophy, his way of thinking, his mastery, his audacity. Because he did what was not done, and because the later periods were already the period of copying the sculptures of the masters, there were many imitators.

Phryne has arrived!

Praxiteles has finally completed the *Aphrodite of Knidos*. His audacity is evident in this work. This statue, which challenged social norms and may have been considered immoral at the time of its creation, not only depicted a goddess engaged in human activities, but also portrayed the revered Aphrodite as an object of desire. It pushed boundaries. But if anyone could push boundaries, it was Praxiteles.

Let's move on to the tabloid effect the statue had. People fell in love with it. Ships set sail to see it. This is the 'lady' who officially made Knidos a pilgrimage centre for trade. The people of Knidos were wise, clever, as always, they immediately turned this into trade and money. They did not send the visitors away empty-handed. They sold them oil lamps, amphorae, olive oil, ornaments and anything else they could sell. Knidos added wealth to their wealth. Can one statue make a whole country rich? It can, and it did. I want to draw your attention to this: We call it vulgar, but it is not; in other words, this statue is not vulgar. It has a sense of embarrassment, which we call *aidoumene*. We see that she does not show her naked body completely, on the contrary, we see that she leans forward slightly, in the form of a dagger, and covers the necessary places with her hand, in a way that shows her embarrassment.



Figure 24 *Aphrodite of Colonna*, Museo Pio-Clementino, Vatican

No vulgar works were actually produced during these periods. There are some with erotic scenes. Nevertheless, the artists were expected to produce works that were embarrassing. The Aphrodite of Knidos was part of this trend. There are copies of the statue in various parts of the world. In Berlin, in Rome...

We archaeologists have always had very meaningful discussions: Did Praxiteles make Aphrodite while she was in the bath or while she was coming out? If Aphrodite was taking a bath, why did she put her towel on the *hydria*, the jug of water she used to wash herself? Why would she put it there when she entered the bath? If she takes the towel with her when she leaves the bath, what did she wash herself with in the bath? This is our problem! May God not give us any other problem. Fortunately we have more meaningful discussions and decisions. Praxiteles develops the art of sculpture. Human expression is emphasised, artefacts are no longer colossal. Praxiteles also loved the S pose. He looked for realism in the S pose. Let's remember his earlier sculptures. These S-shaped works always needed a support. In order to solve this problem, the artists of that time, because they had Hellenistic souls, preferred to use an *attribute*, that is, a sign belonging to this holy personality, or an object that emphasised his work. But, in the sculpture of *Apollo Sauroktonos*, Praxiteles used a tree that remained bent because of its S-shape. He softened the appearance of the trunk with a lizard. In this way he added glory to his fame. In the statue of *Aphrodite at Knidos*, he solved the problem of support with *hydria* and a towel.

Aphrodite's torsos are found almost everywhere in the world. No one knows how many more torsos there are under the ground that we cannot see. How many imitations, copies, lines, versions, variations are known? There is no researcher who claims to know. Because every minute something is found somewhere. It just wasn't found in Knidos. It has been found all over the world. What would happen if a tiny piece of it was found here! We can't really know where it went or what happened.

The slight withdrawal of the statue, the feeling of embarrassment, really made Praxiteles superior to his peers. Let's look at the buttocks. It feels as if we're touching real skin, but

it's stone. Everybody knows the expression dimples of Venus. It comes from this Skulptur. Such expressions have survived from antiquity. Let us remember here that it is not necessary to show the reproductive and feeding organs in order to make a statue of a woman. Even if you called this soft and feminine back of Aphrodite a man's back, no one would believe it.

Only the faces, they're still a bit ideal. The faces are the most traditional aspect of Praxiteles. The famous sculptor has reformed posture, handling and touch. But his works are traditional, they still have a classical touch. The hair is still parted in the middle and pulled back. There is still a neat bun, close to a teacher's bun. Again, the ideal profile. Praxiteles liked the triangular forehead and the broad cheeks of the female face. And everyone loved the face of Aphrodite.

Now, we are with Phryne, the protagonist of our story. She's known as the model for Praxiteles. There's a saying: 'All good stories deserve to be exaggerated. Half the stories about Phryne are like that. They exaggerated Phryne's stories so well! Mnesarete was her real name. According to Plutarch, she was called *phryne* (yellow frog) because her skin was yellowish. She came from a poor family, but later became very rich.

Phryne is the opposite of the women at the festivities in honour of Demeter and Kore. She undresses, sheds her clothes, shows everything; when a song comes, she jumps and dances. According to one rumour, she was sentenced to death for this reason. According to another rumour, she is a *heterae*. In other words, she was doing something like male companionship or geisha. She killed a man who was harassing her. In the courtroom, a person like a lawyer pulls down Phryne's clothes and asks the court, 'Are you going to sentence such a beautiful woman to death?' The story sounds very realistic, doesn't it? Later, Phryne met Praxiteles while continuing her life as a priestess. When she went swimming, she couldn't behave like a priestess. Seeing this beautiful woman, Praxiteles offered her to be his model, and she accepted. According to another rumour, it is said that the two fell in love. It is also said that Praxiteles ran away from her and she ran away from Praxiteles. There are so

many ancient magazines! And the artist who was influenced by all these stories. Western art history is full of Phryne paintings, drawings and sculptures.

Here's the part that interests us: Phryne has a tiny defect. Probably a goitre. That is why we see lines on her neck. These were later called *Venus ring*. The ancient Greeks made pottery of young girls. You can see the lines on their necks. Not just young girls, but older ones too. Phryne was considered so beautiful with everything that even the goitre line became part of that beauty. If you look at different art works from that time, girls dancing with instruments, girls with dynamic movements, mortal wives of immortals, other female characters... You can see that this goitre line is prominent in almost all of them. Phryne was so admired that they made lines on her neck wherever they could. One person who did this was our beloved Leonardo da Vinci, a follower of antiquity and a pioneer of his time. He is portrayed as the initiator of art, but he is not the initiator, but the one who reminds us it. He used this line in one of his works, the 'Vitruvian Man'.

After Phryne

Aphrodite of Knidos has many successors, followers and later examples: Venus of the Medici, Capitolin Venus, Venus Gemini... The core of all of them is based on Aphrodite of Knidos and Praxiteles. In all of them, the same decent, not vulgar posture, the body slightly bent forward.

Here's my favourite, I like this one. 100-150 years later, the Nicomedians want to buy *Aphrodite from Knidos*. Buy Aphrodite of Knidos. Knidos is in a bad financial situation. Nevertheless, the Knidians do not give *Knidia*. The



Figure 25 Aphrodite of Doidalses, Museo Nazionale Romani di Palazzo Massimo, Rome

Nicomedians got very angry and had a new statue made by a sculptor called Doidalses. This is my favourite statue. Why is it my favourite? Just take a look. Cellulite! As a woman, you are soft, not only in your mind, but also in your muscles. Artists who consciously apply this knowledge get to the bottom of realism. Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic and Roman artefacts lack certain details (details of female genitalia are not visible). You can see the copies, lines and variations that show how famous the *Aphrodite of Doidalses* is. The wonderful Aphrodite; her face is young, as if she would never die. Her full cheeks reveal her age and femininity, her face radiates health, her look is innocent. Naked but not erotic.

Here we are at the end of the 2nd century, the *Venus de Milo*. Is it more famous than the one from Knidos? I always see her in cartoons. Even if she is so famous, I don't have to tell you that she is modelled on the *Aphrodite of Knidos*. There is a difference: He's more masculine now. Body proportions change over time. It's the same today. We also see Phryne's goitre. In societies, women have opened up and closed up; it has always changed.

Is Greek art always about beauty? Of course not. But that will be the subject of another session, and then we will talk about the ugly and the ugliness.

Like Da Vinci's Vitruvius, later sculptors and painters always had something to say about Praxiteles. The closest of these to the present day is Dali. The title of this painting by Dali is *Apparition of the Face of Aphrodite of Knidos in a Landscape*. Dali also had an obsessive interest in following antiquity and especially *Aphrodite of Knidos*. He reflected these characteristics in his work.

Art doesn't end, art is continuous. Sometimes people accuse me of not

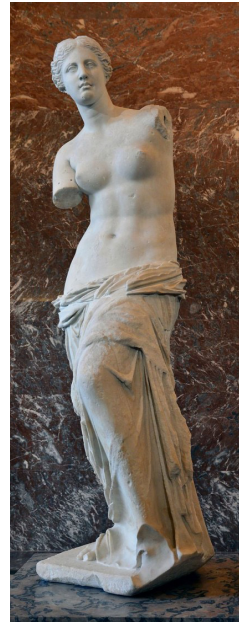


Figure 26 *Venus de Milo*, Musée de Louvre, Paris

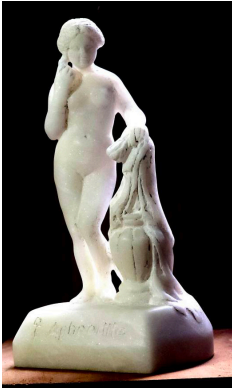


Figure 27 The ubiquity of Aphrodite, Elbruz Denge, 2024

understanding art, I don't agree. I do. I just don't understand abstract art clearly. I feel that they are deceiving me. Do you know that in the ancient world, when an artist was training his apprentice, he would make him make ears or a nose or a hand for months until he made the most beautiful one. To make abstract art, an artist must master the tangible, and this work by Elbruz Denge is proof of that. It seems that he too has heard something from Praxiteles and is trying to tell him something.

Thanks for your time and attention.

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Figure 3 A geisha

Wikipedia Commons. Geiko Kimiha credit: japanexperterna [2024]

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Figure 4 Women with small shoes

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Figure 10 Venus of Willendorf, Naturhistorischen Museums, Vienna

Wikipedia. Willendorf Venus, credit: Don Hitchcock [2024], ©Naturhistorischen Museum

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Figure 16 Snake Goddess, Heraklion Archeological Museum, Crete
Wikimedia Common. Snake Goddess [2024] credit: joyofmuseums ©Heraklion Archeological Museum

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Figure 22 Hermes and Infant Dionysus, Arkhaiolyikó Mousío Olimpías, Olympia

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Wikipedia Commons. Apollo Saurocton [2024], ©Musée de Louvre

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Figure 24 Aphrodite of Colonna, Museo Pio-Clementino, Vatican

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Figure 27 The ubiquity of Aphrodite, Artist: Elbruz Denge, 19 cm, marble

www.delbruz.art, Fotoğraf: Cem Bal, 2024, ©Elbruz Denge