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**MFA**  *The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston*  
**Hirsch Library Research Guide**



### Torso of Aphrodite

Unknown Roman

Roman, Roman Republic-Roman Empire, 100 BC - 100 AD

Marble: 47 x 23 x 12 in. (119.4 x 58.4 x 30.5 cm)

base: 34 x 21 x 21 in. (86.4 x 53.3 x 53.3 cm)

Museum purchase funded by the Caroline Wiess Law Foundation with additional funds provided by "One Great Night in November"

The first monumental female nude of antiquity was carved by the great sculptor Praxiteles in the 4th century B.C. The image of Aphrodite, goddess of beauty and love, was enshrined on the Aegean island of Knidos in a circular temple so that it could be admired by worshippers from all sides. The statue was so renowned that people sailed to the island just to see it.

The original statue by Praxiteles was destroyed in a fire of A.D. 476, but a small number of fine copies of Aphrodite survived. This goddess dates from the 1st century B.C. to the 1st century A.D., the late Greek Hellenistic to early Roman period. Aphrodite was portrayed in the act of bathing, her full figure modeled in realistic detail and rendered in white marble, polished to give the appearance of glistening flesh. On her left arm she wears a bracelet that imitates metal set with a gem.

#### Online Resources:

[Hirsch Library Online Catalog](#)

[The Metropolitan Museum of Art Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History](#)

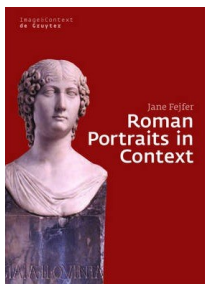
**Articles:** (full-text access available on-site; off-site access available through your school library or Houston Public Library)

[Alexander, Christine. "A Statue of Aphrodite." \*The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin\* 11, no. 9 \(1953\): 241-251.](#)

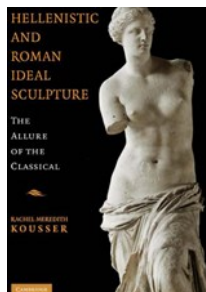
[Dickins, Guy. "The Followers of Praxiteles." \*The Annual of the British School at Athens\* 21 \(1914/1915-1915/1916\): 1-9.](#)

[Marcovich, Miroslav. "From Ishtar to Aphrodite." \*Journal of Aesthetic Education\* 30, no. 2 \(1996\): 43-59.](#)

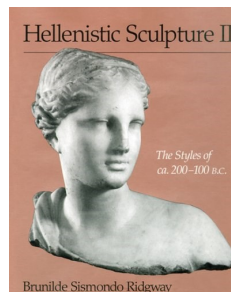
#### Print Resources:



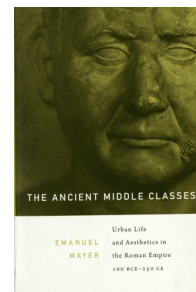
[Roman Portraits in Context](#)



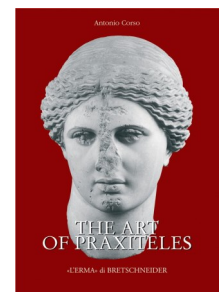
[Hellenistic and Roman Ideal Sculpture](#)



[Hellenistic Sculpture](#)



[The Ancient Middle Classes](#)



[The Art of Praxiteles](#)

## Bibliography

### General Surveys of Roman Art

[Gardner, Helen, Fred Kleiner, and Christin J. Mamiya. \*Gardner's Art Through the Ages\*. 12th ed. Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2005. N 5300 .G25 2005 Ref.](#)

[Janson, H. W., and Penelope Davies. \*Janson's History of Art: The Western Tradition\*. 7th ed. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007. N 5300 .J3 2007 Ref.](#)

[Stokstad, Marilyn, and David A. Brinkley. \*Art History\*. 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008. N 5300 .S923 2008 Ref.](#)

### Inspiration: Praxiteles and the Aphrodite of Cnidus

[Bieber, Margarete. \*The Sculpture of the Hellenistic Age\*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1961. NB 90 .B48 1961](#)

[Havelock, Christine M. \*The Aphrodite of Knidos and Her Successors: A Historical Review of the Female Nude in Greek Art\*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007. NB 163 .V62 C575 2007 Reserve](#)

[Palagia, Olga, and Jerome J. Pollitt. \*Personal Styles in Greek Sculpture\*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. NB 90 .P34 1996](#)

### Greek and Roman Art and Sculpture

[Beard, Mary, and John Henderson. \*Classical Art: From Greece to Rome\*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. N 5610 .B295 2001 Ref.](#)

[Bieber, Margarete. \*Ancient Copies: Contributions to the History of Greek and Roman Art\*. New York: New York University Press, 1977. NB 94 .B47](#)

[Boardman, John. \*Greek Sculpture: The Late Classical Period and Sculpture in Colonies and Overseas\*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1995. NB 94 .B63 1995 Ref.](#)

[Henig, Martin. \*A Handbook of Roman Art: A Comprehensive Survey of All the Arts of the Roman World\*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983. N 5760 .H36 1983 Reserve](#)

[Kjellberg, Ernst, and Gösta Säflund. \*Greek and Roman art : 3000 B.C. to A.D. 550\*. London: Faber & Faber, 1968. N 5610 .K5513 1968](#)

[Ohly, Dieter. \*The Munich Glyptothek: Greek and Roman Sculpture: A Brief Guide\*. München: C.H. Beck, 1992. N 2320 .A613 1974](#)

### Nudes in Ancient Art

[Hersey, George L. \*The Evolution of Allure: Sexual Selection from the Medici Venus to the Incredible Hulk\*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996. N 8241.5 .H47 1996](#)

[Kampen, Natalie, and Bettina A. Bergmann. \*Sexuality in Ancient Art: Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Italy\*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. N 5333 .S425 1996](#)

[Stewart, Andrew F. \*Art, Desire, and the Body in Ancient Greece\*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. N 5633 .S74 1997](#)

### Mythology

[Grant, Michael, and John Hazel. \*Who's Who in Classical Mythology\*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. BL 715 .G68 1993 Ref.](#)

[Guirand, Félix. \*Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology\*. New York: Prometheus Press, 1959. BL 310 .G853 1959 Ref.](#)

[Hamilton, Edith. \*Mythology\*. New York: New American Library, 1942. BL 310 .H35 1942 Ref.](#)

### Roman Culture

[Allan, Tony. \*Life, Myth, and Art in Ancient Rome\*. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2005. DG 77 .A56 2005 Reserve](#)

[Grant, Michael. \*The World of Rome\*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969. DG 77 .G62 1969](#)

### Marble Sculpture

[Anderson, Maxwell L., Antonio Giuliano, Leila Nista and Daniela Candilio. \*Radiance in Stone: Sculptures in Colored Marble from the Museo Nazionale Romano\*. Roma: De Luca, 1989. NB 115 .M87 1989](#)

[J. Paul Getty Museum. \*Marble: Art Historical and Scientific Perspectives on Ancient Sculpture\*. Malibu: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1990. NB 1210 .M3 M28 1990](#)

This reference guide is just the tip of the iceberg on helpful resources in the library's holdings. Many of the suggested resources above have their own bibliographies. Each of these may lead you to another resource that would also be helpful in your research here in the museum or in another library. To find additional resources, use keywords such as "Roman sculpture" and "Aphrodite" in the online catalog and in periodical indexes. Once you find a few relevant titles, pay attention to the subject headings to identify similar materials. Examples of useful subject headings are:

*Marble sculpture, Roman*  
*Nude in art*  
*Human figure in art*  
*Mythology, Roman, in Art*  
*Art, Classical*

For guidelines about writing it may be helpful to look at Sylvan Barnet's *A Short Guide to Writing about Art*, which includes tips for looking, reading, and writing about art. Ask for it at the reference desk. At every stage of your work, please allow the library staff to help you. Contact us at 713-639-7325 or [hirsch@mfah.org](mailto:hirsch@mfah.org)