The timeworn argument that semidraped female figures must precede the fully nude is not relevant in the case of the Aphrodite of Melos. It was abandoned in a different context by B.S. Ridgway, who has persuasively shown that the life-size Aphrodite of Arles, a sort of companion to the Capuan statue, is not a copy of an original from the hand of the youthful Praxiteles, but perhaps was newly created for a theatrical setting in Athens in the first century B.C. I would hypothesize that the Aphrodite of Capua, found in an ancient amphitheater, is a work of the same period that was inspired by the Melian Aphrodite (found near a theater), a fresh invention of only a few decades earlier. The Aphrodite of Melos is a very great work of art, and there is every reason to consider it a leader rather than a follower.[47]

Aphrodite Kallipygos ("of the Fair Buttocks")

The statue was discovered some time in the sixteenth century, probably in the Golden House of Nero in Rome. In the later eighteenth century it was moved to Naples, where Winckelmann saw and criticized it (fig. 35). Before being sent to Naples, it was heavily restored and altered by Albacini. This type was frequently imitated in the eighteenth century, the people of which seemed, except for Winckelmann, to be largely untroubled by the statue's erotic overtones. Plaster casts were sent to collectors in France, Sweden, and England.[48]

Of all the statues thought to be of Hellenistic origin, this one has raised the most eyebrows. The manner in which the figure lifts her garment to reveal her body is far more provocative than other examples. Attempts were made long ago to connect this action with the goddess' proverbial bath, and one can see how the arm movement and pulled drapery might lead one to think she is drying herself with a towel. The design is an all-around spiral one; the dress is open on one side so that one section can be drawn up with the left hand to expose the whole back below the waist, and the right hand pulls the other part away from her pubic zone. The upper body is also not obscured; one breast, including the nipple, is enticingly released from the covering, which falls off one shoulder. But the way

47. B.S. Ridgway, "The Aphrodite of Arles," *AJA* 80 (1976) 147–54; Ridgway, *Hellenistic Sculpture I,* 89–90. T. Hölscher's arguments that the Victory of Brescia derived from the Capuan Aphrodite are convincing, but he offers no persuasive evidence for the existence of fourth-century or even a pre–late Hellenistic prototype for either statue: "Die Victoria von Brescia," *AntP* 10 (1970) 69–79.

48. Naples, National Museum 6020, *LIMC* 2, s.v. "Aphrodite," no. 765; Haskell and Penny, *Taste and the Antique,* 316–18.

the head is set on the neck has been considered the critical feature. It is twisted quite sharply around and thus positively directs the observer to admire the woman's buttocks. One wonders how a design could be more artfully and wholly single-minded. If so inclined, it could be said that the statue is the perfect illustration of the moral degeneration predicted of the art in the Hellenistic period.

Bernoulli was not sure whether the figure was a goddess or a prostitute, but he was convinced it was much later than the fourth century because, he wrote, even if it did represent a hetaira, her actions indicated she was certainly not as naive as Phryne or other hetaira from the period of Praxiteles. Another writer, who accepts the subject as Aphrodite, tends to be shocked by the "combination of strip-tease and religious art" and figures it is the result of "the jaded sophistication of the age."[49]

To counter some of the scurrilous criticism and to come, as it were, to the lady's rescue, Gösta Säflund argued that this Aphrodite, a Roman copy, was restored by C. Albacini in the eighteenth century in a way that lent it "an air of coqueterie and self-preoccupation . . . which was alien to the original composition." This was a sure signal that an attempt would be made to remove the work as far as possible from the late Hellenistic period and to put it, if at all possible, into the more respectable classical phase of Greek art. The correct pose, Säflund stated, is one in which the head is turned forward more, so that her glance would not be directed toward her buttocks. In this way he intended to redesign the figure so that the goddess could resume a classical innocence and modesty, neither of which were possible in the erroneous restoration by Albacini. The original movement of the woman can be seen, he continued, in the bronze statuette on the handle of a Locrian spatula made not too long after 300 B.C. This statuette is crude and indistinct, and the date of the spatula itself is guesswork; it hardly provides solid ground for determining the chronology of the prototype. Säflund himself cites a much more helpful parallel: the small limestone relief from Kos of late Hellenistic date, in which a dancer, probably a hetaira, takes a pose almost identical to the one in the Neapolitan figure. The drapery exposes the genitals in both, and like the statue, the relief dancer bends her whole torso as if to admire her own naked buttocks.[50]

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49. Bernoulli, *Aphrodite,* 342; quote from Robertson, *History,* 553.

50. Quote from G. Säflund, *Aphrodite Kallipygos* (Stockholm 1963) 30. Spatula: Säflund, ibid., 22–29, figs. 9–11; *LIMC* 2, s.v. "Aphrodite," no. 768. Cf. M. Robertson, Review of *Aphrodite Kallipygos,* by G. Säflund, *JHS* 86 (1966) 290. Relief: Säflund, ibid., 42, fig. 27; *LIMC,* ibid., pl. 76, no. 767.

Nevertheless Säflund's final conclusion is that the Aphrodite Kallipygos in Naples is a paraphrase of a bronze Greek original of about 300 B.C.—that is, at the threshold of the Hellenistic age—which was executed in marble rather late in the first century B.C. The bronze original may have stood in a sanctuary either in Magna Graecia or in the east Greek world. He thought the action could be explained by the religious prostitution known to have occurred in sanctuaries devoted to Aphrodite in such places as Corinth, possibly Locri, Eryx in Sicily, and Asia Minor. The motif of lifted drapery is a gesture of religious initiation that Säflund links to a possible cult statue standing in the temple of Aphrodite in Syracuse, which was dedicated, according to Athenaeus (12.554c–e), by two grateful peasant girls with fair buttocks. But that the statue in Naples reproduces the hypothetical cult image is far from certain.

Despite Säflund's efforts to find a religious meaning in the statue and to purify the figure's action, the rotating movement and suggestive exposure—no matter how the head is turned—may well indicate that it represents not Aphrodite at all but a dancer, courtesan, or ordinary maiden. The status of this type in antiquity seems to have been different from the other Aphrodite figures examined in this study. There are almost no ancient copies of this type, and she is the only one not used on Roman coinages. Thus in this case Bernoulli's reaction to the figure may have been right, since it is hard to argue that the statue possesses either political or religious significance. J. Pradier, a near-contemporary of Bernoulli, considered the pose just right for his marble statue of Phryne for the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London.

There is no question in Neumer-Pfau's mind that the Aphrodite Kallipygos is late Hellenistic and that it is the only new creation of the first century B.C., when Rome dominated the Greek world. Because the action is unrelated to bathing, the provocative nudity suggests that the subject could still be Aphrodite but that a hetaira may have served as the model. Neumer-Pfau conjectures that a courtesan might have erected the work as a votive monument in a sanctuary of Aphrodite. Finally, because the woman in the statue moves with utter self-certainty and disregard for her naked condition, we are allowed to believe that at least some Greek women living under Roman hegemony reached a high degree of independence.[51]

The uncovering of female buttocks aimed at the male spectator occurred in vase paintings of the fourth century B.C. (see, e.g., fig. 36). A

51. Neumer-Pfau, *Studien,* 237–40.

red-figure situla now in the Tampa Museum of Art shows a young nude woman in the lower zone tiptoeing away to the right. She turns and looks back while she holds a transparent veil just across her buttocks. Following her is not only a big white swan but also an old bearded man. Whether she is Aphrodite or Leda is not certain, but in either case the humor of the episode is obvious. Gems of the later third century B.C. show how artists delighted in twisting the female body so that the back is prominently exposed. However in monumental form the motif became more evocative and prevalent in the late Hellenistic period. It seems to me that there is no certain evidence to certify that the type of figure represented by the three-dimensional, life-size Aphrodite Kallipygos in Naples was created any earlier than the late Hellenistic period.[52]

52. Vase in fig. 36: Tampa Museum 86.106 (Joseph Veach Noble Collection); *LIMC* 2, s.v. "Aphrodite," no. 1490. Gem: *LIMC,* ibid., pl. 65, no. 658; for later example, the group of the Three Graces 100–50 B.C.: Stewart, *Greek Sculpture,* fig. 809.