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between Athens and a league of allied city-states led by Sparta. The conflict continued intermittently for nearly thirty years. Athens suffered irreparable damage during the war and a devastating plague that lasted over four years. Although the city lost its primacy, its artistic importance continued unabated during the fourth century B.C. The elegant, calligraphic style of late fifth-century sculpture () was followed by a sober grandeur in both freestanding statues () and many grave monuments (). One of the far-reaching innovations in sculpture at this time, and one of the most celebrated statues of antiquity, was the nude Aphrodite of Knidos, by the Athenian sculptor Praxiteles. Praxiteles' creation broke one of the most tenacious conventions in Greek art in which the female figure had previously been shown draped. Its slender proportions and distinctive contrapposto stance became hallmarks of fourth-century B.C. Greek sculpture. In architecture, the Corinthian—characterized by ornate, vegetal column capitals—first came into vogue. And for the first time, artistic schools were established as institutions of learning. Among the most famous was the school at Sikyon in the Peloponnesos, which emphasized a cumulative knowledge of art, the foundation of art history. Greek artists also traveled more extensively than in previous centuries. The sculptor Skopas of Paros traveled throughout the eastern Mediterranean for his commissions, among them the Mausoleum at Halicarnassos, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. While Athens began to decline during the fourth century B.C., the influence of Greek cities in southern Italy and Sicily spread to indigenous cultures that readily adopted Greek styles and employed Greek artists. Depictions of Athenian drama, which flourished in the fifth century with the work of Aeschylus, Sophokles, and Euripides, was an especially popular subject for locally produced pottery (). During the mid-fourth century B.C., Macedonia (in northern Greece) became a formidable power under Philip II (r. 360/359–336 B.C.), and the Macedonian royal court became the leading center of Greek culture. Philip's military and political achievements ably served the conquests of his son, Alexander the Great (r. 336–323 B.C.). Within eleven years, Alexander subdued the Persian empire of western Asia and Egypt, continuing into Central Asia as far as the Indus River Valley. During his reign, Alexander cultivated the arts as no patron had done before him. Among his retinue of artists was the court sculptor Lysippos, arguably one of the most important artists of the fourth century B.C. His works, most notably his portraits of Alexander (and the work they influenced), inaugurated many features of Hellenistic sculpture, such as the heroic ruler portrait (). When Alexander died in 323 B.C., his successors, many of whom adopted this portrait type, divided up the vast empire into smaller kingdoms that transformed the political and cultural world during the Hellenistic period (ca. 323–31 B.C.). Colette HemingwayIndependent ScholarSeán HemingwayDepartment of Greek and Roman Art, The Metropolitan Museum of ArtJanuary 2008Boardman, John. Greek Sculpture: The Classical Period: A Handbook. London: Thames & Hudson, 1985.Boardman, John. Greek Sculpture: The Late Classical Period and Sculpture in Colonies and Overseas. London: Thames & Hudson, 1995.Picón, Carlos A., Seán Hemingway, Christopher S. Lightfoot, Joan R. Mertens, and Elizabeth J. Milleker, with contributions by Richard De Puma. man The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Greece, Cyprus, Etruria, Rome. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007. See on MetPublicationsPollitt, Jerome J. Art and Experience in Classical Greece. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.View CitationsHemingway, Colette, and Seán Hemingway. "The Art of Classical Greece (ca. 480–323 B.C.)." In Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-. (January 2008)