

STUDIA HERCYNIA V



PRAGAE 2001

STUDIA HERCYNIA

Redactional board: Jan Bouzek, Jiří Musil, Iva Ondřejová

Directed by Jan Bouzek

Vol. V.

Part I. Rapports du colloque »Numismatique et archéologie, les Celtes de Bohême et la Gaule aux IIe – Ier siècles av. J.-C. »

Part II. Studies and notes

Edited by the Institute for Classical Archaeology, Charles University, in collaboration with the Czech Society of Archaeology.

Printed by Ediční centrum AMU

© authors

ISSN 1212-5865

Prague 2001

Cover: Tetradrachma of Lysimachus, from the Pistiros hoard 1999.

Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	2
-----------------------	---

Part I Actes du colloque « Numismatique et archéologie, les Celtes de Bohême et la Gaule aux IIe – Ier siècles av. J.-C. », organisé le 15 novembre 1999 au Musée National à Prague

Introduction, par J. Bouzek et V. Kruta	3
Brigitte Fischer, Les monnaies boïennes découvertes en Gaule	5
Jen-Jacques Charpy, Le Rèmes, un peuple, un territoire. Essai de synthèse	18
Eva Kolníková, Der Einfluss des keltischen Westens auf das Münzwesen der mitteldonauländischen Kelten	31
Jan Bouzek, Le trésor de Pistiros, imitations thraces des monnaies grecques et les premières monnaies des Celtes	41

Part II Studies and notes

Introduction	45
Jan Bouzek, When did the Iron Age Greece start and how to explain its beginnings	47
Jan Bouzek, Les origines de l'art laténien : les parallèles et les inspirations orientales ..	57
Jan Bouzek, Notes on the sculpture of Hatra	63
Ladislav Stančo, Buddhists in Alexandria ?	69
Virginia Grace and Jindra Hůrková – Kohoutková, Six amphora stamps from the Salač collection	75
Jan Bouzek, Iva Ondřejová and Radislav Hošek, Magical gem from Staré Město ?	80
Iva Ondřejová, Römische Gemmen aus Mušov	83
Jiří Musil and Iva Ondřejová, Römische Fibeln in Böhmen und Mähren	88
Jan Bouzek, Jiří Musil and Ladislav Boháč, Emporium Pistiros excavations : preliminary reports 1998-2000	105
Česká a bulharská archeologie, pět generací vzájemné spolupráce (Czech and Bulgarian archaeology – Five generations of mutual collaboration), by J. Bouzek	115
Za Jaroslavem Králem a jeho euripidovskou tetralogií (In memoriam Jaroslav Král), by J. Bouzek	119

Buddhists in Alexandria ?

Ladislav Stančo

(with Pl. IV below)

Egyptian Alexandria, the most important cultural centre of the Hellenistic world, was doubtless a melting pot of all at that time known cults of various deities, from Roman and Greek gods and goddesses to local Egyptian, Syrian, the only God of the Jews and later also of the Christians. Here I am trying to answer the question, whether there are archaeological documents from Alexandria or from its vicinity confirming the existence of another eastern religion, Buddhism, so far away from its area of origin.

Many recently published works discussed contacts between the Mediterranean and South Asia.¹ I will not repeat here what had been said there, and limit myself to summarize the basic facts. The diplomatic relations between the Ptolemies and the Mauryans started in the 3rd century B.C. At the time when Seleukos I sent to Chandragupta's court at Pataliputra his ambassador Megasthenes, Ptolemaic Dionysios travelled to king Bindusar to arrange to procure trained elephants.² Around 100 B.C. the monsoon route was discovered; it enabled direct maritime contacts from the southern Red Sea across the Indian Ocean to southwestern India (the discovery happened probably at 117 B.C.).³ The discovery was reputedly made either by Hippalos, the steersman of Eudoxos of Cyzicus, or by Eudoxos himself.⁴ During the earliest Roman rule over Egypt, under the governor Cornelius Gallus (30-27 B.C.), some 120 ships were sent each year to India. This was considered a substantial enlargement of the earlier, Ptolemaic trade relations with the Far East.⁵ The intensity of mutual relations and the relatively good knowledge of India in Ptolemaic Egypt is also suggested by the story in which Kleopatra intended first - after she lost the sea battle at Actium - to flee to India.⁶ Greeks and Romans thus broke the Arab monopoly in the trade with the East, a.o. by constructing better and larger ships that were those of the Arabs and the Indians.⁷ The pottery linked to Indian and two fragments with Tamil graffiti found at Leukos Limen⁸ on the Red Sea coast, Indian pottery and archaeobotanic samples from Berenice and probably also those found at Coptus,⁹ a town on the Nile where the route from the Nile valley (Alexandria) to the Red Sea started, show that also Indians themselves participated in the trade actively. Three maritime routes existed: One led to the Indus estuary, where a Roman harbour called Barbaricon existed, a second ended somewhere on the shores of Gudjarat, and a third, apparently the most

¹ Dellbrueck 1955-56; Dihle, 1978; Raschke 1978; New studies esp. *Rome and India* 1991; *Crossroads of Asia* 1992; Ball 2000; Hahn 2000.

² Tarn 1928, p. 251.

³ General: Raschke 1978, historical study with exhaustive bibliography; Schlingloff 1982, studies on maritime trade: Dihle 1978; Huntingford 1980, commentary to the translation of the *Periplus*; later contributions by Casson 1991; Sidebotham 1991; Whitehouse 1991.

⁴ The Poseidonios's report preserved with Strabo (*Frg Hist* 87 F 28). The expeditions of Eudoxos probably 118-116 B.C., cf. Strabo 2,3,4.

⁵ Strabo 2,5,12.

⁶ Plutarchos, *Ant.* 81.

⁷ Casson 1990, 10-11. Here also a map of sea routes, Map. 1.1.

⁸ Sidebotham 1991, 20. Here also a survey on the Red Sea harbours, cf. esp. Map 2.2.

⁹ Tomber, R. 2000: Indo-Roman Trade: the Ceramic Evidence from Egypt. *Antiquity* 74 (2000), p. 630.

important, reached the Malabar coast in the area of present-time Kerala.¹⁰ Under Claudius also a direct route probably existed to Ceylon.¹¹ The North Ceylon harbour of Mantai, identified by Carswell as the *Modutti Emporion* of the map of Ptolemaios, played an important role in the long-distance trade with the West, and also with China. The site, together with the capital of ancient Ceylon, Anuradhapura, yielded several fragments of Hellenistic pottery and metal vessels and of Roman glass; one Egyptian scarab was found at Mihintale, near to Anuradhapura.¹²

The *Periplus Maris Erythrei* from the 1st century A.D.¹³ brings important information on the sea route from the Red Sea to India, on many anchorages in India and on various commodities carried by the ships. It is commonly believed that nearly all Mediterranean imports found in the Indian peninsula were brought there by sea trade, while rich finds on northern parts of India's hinterland came there from the West by the land routes. Among the first especially important was Arikamedu near Pondichery in SE India. Many Roman imports found there - notably Arretine terra sigillata and transport amphorae - document rich contacts with the West in the 1st century B.C. and A.D.¹⁴ Fragments of imported pottery, transport amphorae and glass imports, and their imitations, are known from many sites in SE India, as at Alagankulam, Kaveripattinam, Karaikaddu, etc.¹⁵

Finds documenting the presence of Indian seafarers in Egypt cannot alone prove the transference of religious ideas. These Indians coming to the West, however, could hardly have not been Hinduists or Buddhists. But even this argument is not a proof of the presence of a Buddhist community in Alexandria. Indian seamen felt themselves at home in India, and we have no direct reports on their settling in Egypt on a larger scale.¹⁶ On the other hand it can be supposed that a small Buddhist community in Alexandria could be formed of Alexandrian Greeks and immigrants from the East. Many Greeks in Bactria and in NW India converted to Buddhism. A characteristic example is the king of Gandhara and Punjab Menandros (ca. 155-130 B.C.), known in Indian sources under the name Milinda.¹⁷ The edicts of Ashoka from mid 3rd century B.C. speak about activities of dharmamahamatries among the Iona devoted to dharma, and elsewhere he mentions among the countries where the dharma teaching is present also the kingdoms of Antiochus, Ptolemy, Antigonos, Magas and Alexander.¹⁸ Often quoted but suspect literary documents are mentions of a participation of monks from the Iona country in the 4th Buddhist council in Sri Lanka in early 2nd century.¹⁹ Alexandria is called here Alasanda, but it is not specified which Alexandria is meant. Several Alexandrias in the Kushan kingdom, where communities of Buddhist monks are well documented, could also be mentioned in the document.

There are only few archaeological documents of a presence of Buddhists in Egyptian Alexandria. Fraser mentioned in this respect a funeral stele found by Petrie, on which -

¹⁰ Dihle 1978, 549.

¹¹ Pliny, *NH* 6,84.

¹² Cf. for ex. Carswell 1991 (he excavated at Mantai in 1980-1984); Bouzek-Silva 1985; Bouzek 1993 (Anuradhapura excavations 1981-1984); Bouzek 2000.

¹³ *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, translation with commentary, Huntingford 1980.

¹⁴ Cf. esp. the contributions in the volume *India and Rome: imports of amphorae with commodities as Greek and Italic wines, and olive oil from the Adriatic*, are attested in the 1st century B.C./A.D. (Will 1991). Terra sigillata comes apparently from workshops in South Gaul or from the Rhineland, but also Eastern Sigillata B, dated ca. 10 B.C., has been uncovered.

¹⁵ Raman 1991, 125-133, Map. 7.1. In: *Rome and India* 1991.

¹⁶ Strabo (II, 3, 4) mentions a story of a wrecked Indian, saved by a Ptolemaic coastal watch.

¹⁷ Cf. Milindapandha.

¹⁸ It is in the 5th and 12th rock inscription, translation Filipický and Vacek 1970, p. 196.

¹⁹ Mentions in Ceylonese chronicles Dellbrueck 1955-56, p. 44-48.

according to his view - the wheel of law, dharmachakra, is represented.²⁰ A group of small terracotta statues found by Petrie at Memphis includes, according to his view, also the Indians.²¹ He distinguished within this group two subgroups, one "Tibetan" (Fig. 1-2) and one "Aryan - Punjab type".²² His Tibetan type should, however be rather called "Central Asian" in a broader sense of the word. We found parallels to the latter in the Gandharan art, notably in the winged *devas* on the garland carriers from Taxila.²³ Petrie also supposed an Indian colony at Memphis during the Persian rule; these terracottas are dated by him to the 5th-3rd century B.C.²⁴ Some terracotta heads from Memphis, which Petrie called Sumerian, tries Gordon to interpret as likenesses of Buddhist monks.²⁵ The stylistic similarity of these terracotta heads with the true representations of Buddhist monks is, however, only a very distant one (no parallel among them exist for the widely opened eyes and for the long skull), so Gordon's hypothesis can hardly be accepted.²⁶ In any case no priest could be represented, only monks. Besides the terracottas representing Indians also other terracottas were found there resembling the Indian god of richness Kuvera or Panchika, who were, together with Paiti, taken over from Hinduist context into Buddhist iconography (Fig. 3).²⁷ The terracotta plaque from Haoulti is an import from India; its style of execution was influenced by the Mathura Buddhist art of the 1st to 2nd century A.D., and an amulet with representation of Buddha was reputedly found in Ethiopia.²⁸

A limestone head in the collection of oriental art of the National Gallery in Prague may contribute to the discussion of the Buddhist presence in Alexandria (Fig. 4).²⁹ The head is classified into the sculpture of Gandhara, though it was reputedly bought in Alexandria. Its left half has been completed in modern times. Its surface shows that the head suffered from the sea water. The characteristic hairdress with cranial extension (*ushnisha*) led the keepers to identify it as a representation of Buddha. But the broadly opened eyes, the narrow nose, the pointed small chin and the narrow face are Graeco-Roman elements unusual among Buddha's portraits, even in its Hellenized versions. Two of characteristic features of Buddha's representations, long ears and *urna*, a mark above the nose, are missing here.

The head could not even represent the ascetic Gautama. If we turn our attention away from the elements discussed above, a similarity can be observed for ex. to the features of the stucco head in the Los Angeles County Museum from Gandhara, probably dating from the 4th century.³⁰ It has broadly open eyes, beardless face and similar hairdo. The expression of the ascetic state is, however, different. This head and its close parallels (including the bodies, as

²⁰ Fraser 1972, p. 312, n. 391; In 1928, p. 251.

²¹ Petrie 1909, p. 16; Petrie 1939, p. 159.

²² Petrie 1909, Pl. XXXIX, 35 and 36.

²³ Marshall 1960, Pl. 20, Fig. 23. This type of bearded face show also the likenesses of boddhistatvas, though not with such strongly expressed "mongoloid" traits.

²⁴ Ibid. p. 17.

²⁵ Gordon 1939, 35-38, Pl. XVI, XVII; Petrie 1909, Pl. XXXVII, 22.

²⁶ Loose parallels show several heads of monks from Taxila (Ingholt 1957, Cat. No. 504) and on the Peshavar reliefs (o.c. Cat. No. 144).

²⁷ Ibid. Pl. XXXVIII, 37 and 40. A close parallel Panchika in the British Museum, cf. Zwalf 1996, Cat. No. 90 and two statues of Panchika from Peshavar, Ingholt 1957, Cat. No. 339 and 344, cf. also another from Lahore, *ibid.* Cat. No. 338. The jewellery characteristic for Panchika is, however, missing on the Egyptian terracottas. Cf. also the sitting figure on the drinking scene on a bowl from Punjab (now British Museum), *Crossroads of Asia*, Cat. No. 101.

²⁸ This and other problematic finds are mentioned by Raschke 1978, notes 1258 and 1259.

²⁹ The head is in the reserves of the National Gallery at the Zbraslav castle, inv. no. Vp 3016 (2123/7); H. 23,5 cm. I am grateful to the curator of the south and southeastern collection Dr. Z. Klimtová for enabling me to study the collection and this head in particular.

³⁰ Pal 1986, 216, S88; I would like to thank to Z. Klimtová for bringing this item to my notice.

far as preserved) are very naturalistically rendered. The skin on the face is sunken, the eyes deeply set in the orbital cavities.³¹ Our head has a slim, but not thin face.

The question then arises: how should this head be characterized? As the sculpture is of limestone,³² it is very unlikely that it would represent a Buddha likeness made in the Gandhara school and exported to the West. If we, however, would keep in mind that it could be Buddha's likeness, it must have been made in one of the East Mediterranean centres influenced by Buddhist teaching. Alexandria had close trade contacts with India³³ and as far as we could identify in Gandharan workshops artists or stonecutters from the West, they came before all from Alexandria; imports from Alexandria also prevail in Gandhara over all other western imports.³⁴ The head also resembles some Late Ptolemaic portraits with their tenderness. If we reconsider again the small kin, fine lips, narrow nose, and the slim oval shape of the face, we can find a close parallel to our head in a monumental "pharaonic" portrait from Karnak, representing probably Ptolemy V. (204-180 B.C.).³⁵

It can be concluded that the head under discussion cannot itself confirm the presence of a Buddhist community in Alexandria. Not only for the complexity and polarity in its traits, as shown by the stylistic analysis, but also for the reason that it does not come from archaeological excavation and no close parallels to it exist. The on-going excavations in Alexandria and in the Red Sea harbours may, as I hope, bring other proofs of a cultural influence of India in the West, of the influence also reflected in the spiritual world of early Christianity.

Bibliography:

- Ball, W. 2000: *Rome in the East. The Transformation of an Empire*. Routledge, London and New York.
- Bouzek, J. 2000: Ceylon and the West: from the Hellenistic period to the 1st century A.D., in: *Festschrift J. Sliwa*, Kraków
- Bouzek, J. – Silva, R. 1985: Mantai – A second Arikamedu ?, *Antiquity* 59, 46-47.
- Bouzek, J., ed. 1993: *Ceylon between East and West, Anuradhapura, Abhayagiri Vihara 1981-1984*, Praha
- The Crossroads of Asia. Transformation in Image and Symbol in the Art of Ancient Afghanistan and Pakistan*. J. Cribb, E. Errington, M. Claringbull. (eds). Cambridge. 1992.
- Dellbrueck, R. 1955-56: Südasiatische Seefahrt im Altertum. *Bonner Jahrbücher* 155-6, p. 8-58, 229-308.
- Dihle, A. 1978: Die entdeckungsgeschichtlichen Voraussetzungen des Indienhandels der römischen Kaiserzeit. In: *ANRW* 9.2, 546-580. Berlin-New York.
- Filipský, J a Vacek, J. 1970: *Aśóka*. Praha.
- Fraser, P. M. 1972: *Ptolemaic Alexandria*. Oxford.

³¹ The best representations of Buddha in the period of full ascetics Ingholt 1957, Cat. No. 52 - 53; Zwalf 1996, Plate VIII.

³² In the territory of proper Gandhara limestone was never used for sculpture; the only exception being Hadda, where several limestone sculptures -besides many of stucco - appeared, for ex. a Dionysiac relief dating from 2nd century, now in Musée Guimet, cf. Klimburg-Schalter 1995, 282, cat. no. 184, but also a marble head in the G. Ortiz collection.

³³ Raschke 1978; Dihle 1978.

³⁴ Menninger 1996.

³⁵ Kyrieleis 1975, Taf. 45, 2-4.

- Gordon, D. H. 1939: The Buddhist Origin of the "Sumerian" Heads from Memphis. *Iraq* 6, 1939, pp. 35-38.
- Hahn, J. 2000: *Alexander in Indien 327-325 v. Chr.* Stuttgart.
- Ingholt, H. 1957: *Gandharan Art in Pakistan.* New York.
- Klimburg-Salter, D. and Taddei, M. 1995: *Buddha in Indien, die frühindische Skulptur von König Asoka bis zur Guptazeit.* Wien.
- Kyrieleis, H. 1975: *Bildnisse der Ptolemäer.* Berlin.
- Marshall, J. 1960: *The Buddhist Art of Gandhara.* Cambridge.
- Menninger, M. 1996: *Untersuchungen zu den Glässern und Gipsabgüssen aus dem Fund von Begram / Afghanistan.* Würzburg.
- Milindpañha. Otázky Milindovy.* translation V. Miltner. Praha. 1995.
- Ortiz, G. 1996: *In Pursuit of the Absolute: Art of the Ancient World.* The Georg Ortiz Collection. Bern.
- Petrie, W. F. 1909: *Memphis I.* London. p. 16.
- Petrie, W. F. 1939: *The Making of Egypt.* London. p. 159.
- Raschke, M.G. 1978: New Studies in Roman Commerce with the East. In: ANRW 9.2, 604-1378.
- Rome and India. The Ancient Sea Trade.* Begley, V. and De Puma, R. D. (Eds.). Wisconsin. 1991.
- Tarn, W. W. 1928: Ptolemy II. *JEA* 14, 1928, p. 251.
- Zwalf, W. 1996: *A Catalogue of the Gandhara Sculpture in the British Museum,* London.

Illustrations

- Fig. 1-2. Terracotta head from Memphis, depicting a man from Central Asia Drawing K. Urbanová.
- Fig. 3 Terracotta statuette of a stout man, Memphis, drawing K. Urbanová
- Fig. 4 (Pl. IV) Limestone head of Buddha from Alexandria. Photograph: archives of the National Gallery, Prague.



1



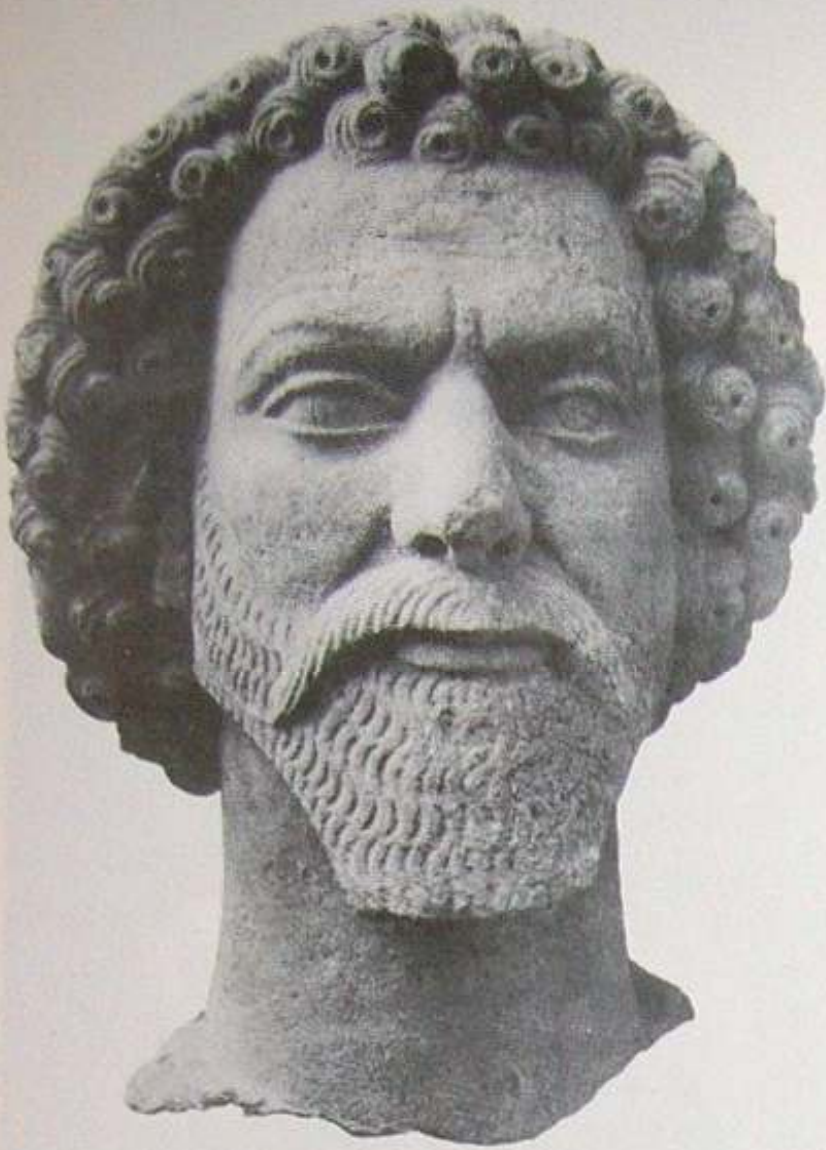
2



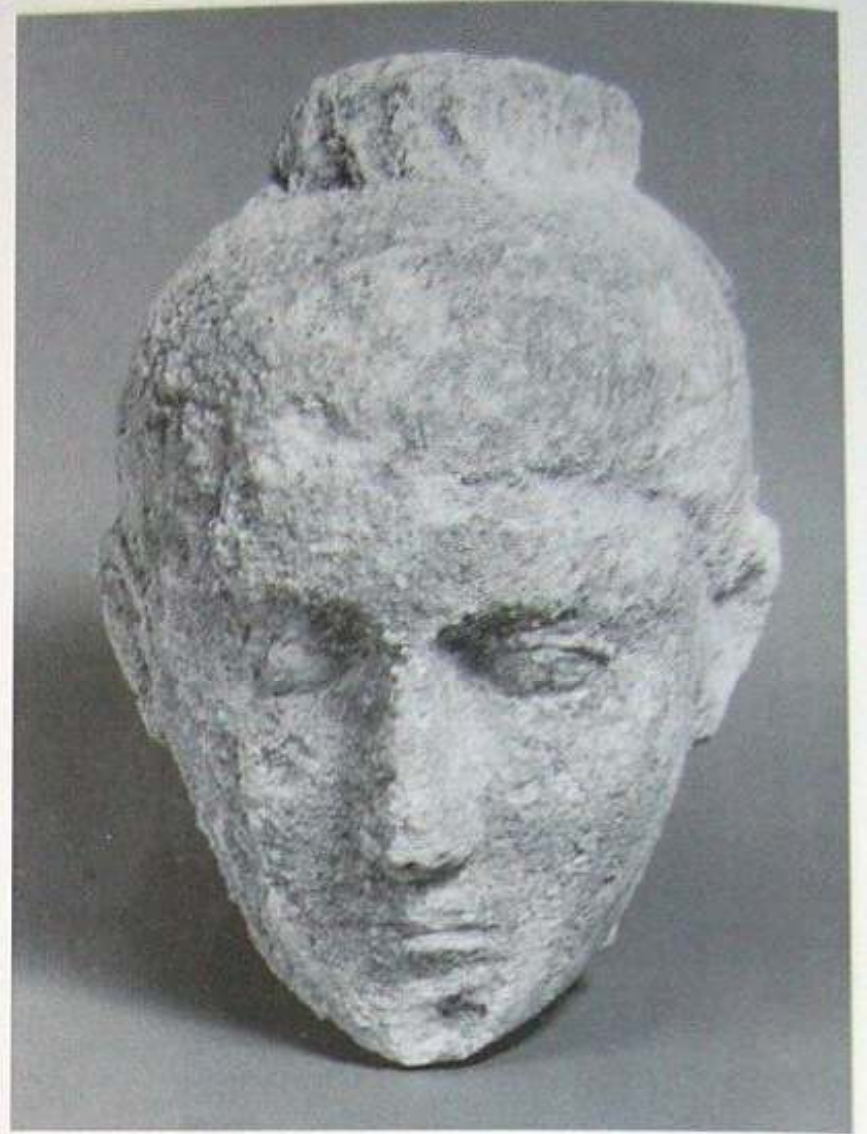
3

Fig. 1-2. Terracotta head from Memphis, depicting a man from Central Asia Drawing K. Urbanová.

Fig. 3 Terracotta statuette of a stout man, Memphis, drawing K. Urbanová



9. Head of a statue from Hatra



Limestone head Alexandria
(ad Stančo, Buddhist in Alexandria?)



Gnostic gem from Staré Město (?)

