

جمعية الآثار بالإسكندرية

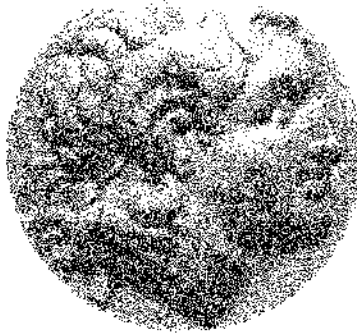
SOCIÉTÉ ARCHÉOLOGIQUE D'ALEXANDRIE

1893 - 2003

110 ans

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**The Archaeological Society
of Alexandria**

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Preface

The issuing of volume 47 coincides with an auspicious occasion, namely that of our Society's attaining the venerable age of one hundred and ten years, an age undoubtedly worthy of being proud of. On this occasion one necessarily remembers the founding fathers who, led by Geoseppi Botti, most wisely conceived in 1893 the idea of establishing the Archaeological Society of Alexandria and of issuing a regular Bulletin. The course of events over the long span of 110 years has not been without its hazards, which at a certain time, threatened the Society's very existence. It is thanks to the resilience and tenacity of the civic community of Alexandria and their international friends that the Society is still going strong and capable of sustaining the publication of the Bulletin as well as maintaining multiple other cultural activities.

The survival of our Archaeological Society into its second hundred years calls to mind an ancient Egyptian tale, the so-called Westcar papyrus (W.M.Flinders Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, 1895). It tells of a magician called Dedi who lived to the ripe old age of one hundred and ten years in the reign of King Khufu. Dedi could still eat "500 loaves of bread, a side of beef and drink 100 draughts of beer.... He restores the head that is smitten off; he knows how to cause the lion to follow him trailing his halter on the ground; he knows the designs of the dwelling of Tahuti which King Khufu long sought after that he might make the like of them in his pyramid." In spite of his extreme old age, "Dedi sat blithely in the sun, free of infirmities without the babble of dotage. This is the salutation to worthy age."

This tale is not without its symbolic relevance. Archaeology in a sense, strives to restore "smitten off heads" and continues to seek

to unravel the mysterious designs of the pyramids ! The contributions to the present volume cover a variety of areas : Greek papyri (R.S.Bagnall), Arabic papyri (G. Frantz-Murphy), Roman art and craft (N. Bonacasa & E.Rodziewicz), late Roman archaeology (M. Rodziewicz and P. Grossmann). In a metaphorical / figurative sense and in their own ways, they are restoring "smitten off heads". To them all, I extend my sincere thanks for their continued cooperation.

My special thanks go to the Moharram Press, not only for so generously undertaking the free publication of this volume, but especially for their warm and friendly spirit as represented by the director general, Mr. Mostafa Mahdy and Mr. Mohammed Naguib Salah-el- Din, head of the technical department.

Last but not least, my special thanks go to Prof. Mona Haggag, secretary general of the Society who patiently handled every step in the intricate process of publication with her typical devotion and dedication. She deserves our sincere appreciation and gratitude.

Mostafa El-Abbadi

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Aspects and New Problems of Late Alexandrian Sculpture

Nicola Bonacasa

This short communication, for volume 47 of the Bulletin of the glorious Archaeological Society of Alexandria, in the 110th year of its foundation, is but a small thing, but is intended to be a fragment of memory and, above all, an act of homage to the City, the Society and the Scholars. To Alexandria, as is known, I am now tied by almost half a century of friendship and research, from 1955 to the present day.

I will deal rapidly with the analysis of two unusual Alexandrian sculptures, undoubtedly of significant value, and yet, intrinsically very different in nature and meaning; and at the same time, I will refer to a group of heads from Africa which are kept in Syracuse. The sculptures are all in nummulitic limestone, which is typical of the Lybian-Egyptian falaise, which is often used for works that appear only on first inspection to be of relatively low quality, but in fact use innovative techniques and stylistic fashions, and stimulate the scholar's attention.

1) The charming monolithic head of an old man, in greyish limestone, from the necropolis at Gabbari⁽¹⁾, is kept in Storeroom 1

(1) Overall height of the head m 0.34; to the face m 0.22. Broken at the neck, damaged at the nose, mouth, eyebrows, ears and right cheek; it presents diffused abrasions of varying intensity, especially on the forehead, chin and mouth. Th. Schreiber, *Die Nekropole von Kôm esch-Scukâfa* (Exp. E. von Sieglin, Ausgr. in Alexandria, I), Leipzig 1908, p. 255, mentions finding, in the years 1898-1899, in two tombs at Gabbari, the remains of statues made of nummulitic limestone, including a head with "rounded helmet" of distinctive character, which is discussed here. But the first to mention the =

of the Graeco-Roman Museum at Alexandria, under Inv. no. 3336. The head is slightly turned up to the right; and has the realism of the face of an old man, in the guise of a robust, fatigued and pathetic mask, possibly of a peasant (fig. 11, 12): a strong beaked nose, ears bent in fanlike fashion, deep eye sockets in a triangular shape, irregularly cut eyes (the right one is larger) looking afar, rather flaccid and wrinkled cheeks, grooves on the nose, under the cheekbones and the mouth, which is dynamic and opened enough to reveal the teeth. The intensive treatment of these details emphasises their chromatic element. The head has a round-shaped hat, worn high on the brow and very tight on the cranium, with a slightly rolled up brim, markedly pulled down on the right side and pointed over the occipital bone. The hair is divided in locks, escaping from under the hat, roughly modelled at the height of the temples and on the back of the neck; the fact that they do not appear on the forehead, as one would expect since the hat is raised, suggests that the man is balding.

Despite the coarseness of the material and the extremely bad present condition of the surfaces, the head is a lively example of the genre of the realistic portrait, and perhaps, in particular, of such a genre subject; however, nothing can be said about the body, the only real element that could guarantee the significance of the personage. We should say straight away that there is an

= discovery of the tombs at Gabbari was H. Thiersch, *Zwei Gräber der römischen Kaiserzeit in Gabbari (Alexandria)*, in *BSAA* 3, 1900, p. 24. See, A. Adriani, *Repertorio d'arte dell'Egitto greco-romano*, Series C, I-II, Palermo 1963-66, pp. 149-151, nn. 97-98, tavv. 73-75.

For the recent excavations in the Gabbari necropolis, cf. M. Sabotcka, *Ausgrabungen in der West-Nekropole Alexandrias (Gabbari)*, in *Das römisch-byzantinische Ägypten (AegTrev 3)*, Mayence 1983, pp. 195-203; J.-Y. Empereur - M.-D. Nenna (eds.), *Nécropolis (Collected Papers)*, Cairo IFAO 2001, pp. 1 ff., 25 ff., 43 ff., 161 ff., 209 ff.

identification problem concerning the typology, which however does not affect the quality and style of the sculpture.

Giuseppe Botti writes that the head bears a "helmet" and that it is of "the Ptolemaic epoch"; Theodor Schreiber argues with determination that it has a "round cap" and belongs to Alexandrian realist production; Adolphe J. Reinach sees in it the "helmeted" head a Macedonian warrior; Evaristo Breccia presents it as the realistic portrait of an old man, covered with a "felt cap tight on the head", but then adds that it is "evidently the portrait of a (Macedonian ?) warrior"⁽²⁾.

Now, from what we of monumental examples, in the Hellenistic period, Macedonian characters usually wore three types of head-dress: a) the typical kausia, seen in paintings, on coins and terracottas⁽³⁾; b) the wide-brimmed petasus, of which two parallels will

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- (2) G. Botti, *Catalogue des monuments exposés au Musée Gréco-Romain d'Alexandrie*, Alexandrie 1901, p. 525; Th. Schreiber, *Die Nekropole von Kôm esch-Scukâfa*, cit., p. 255, fig. 192; A. J. Reinach, *Les Galates dans l'art alexandrin (Monuments et Mémoires publ. par l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, XVIII)*, Paris 1910, pp. 37-115, especially p. 107, note 1, fig. 35; E. Breccia, *Alexandria ad Aegyptum* (French ed.), Bergamo 1914, p. 197, n. 23.
- (3) M. Andronicos, *Vergina. The Royal Tombs and the Ancient City*, Athens 1984, pp. 102-103, figg. 58-59; pp. 112-113, figg. 68-69; N. Bonacasa, *Un ritrattino di bronzo dorato nel Museo Greco-Romano di Alessandria d'Egitto*, in *StMisc* 30, 1996, pp. 149-156, with bibl.; A. Adriani, *Annuaire du Musée Gréco-Romain 1935-1939*, Alexandrie 1940, pp. 78-79, tav. XXXII, fig. 2; Id., *Annuaire du Musée Gréco-Romain 1949-1950*, Alexandrie 1952, pp. 36-37, tav. XVII, fig. 3 left and tav. XVIII, fig. 6; F. Dunand, *Musée du Louvre. Catalogue des terres cuites grecques et romaines d'Egypte*, Paris 1990, pp. 212-213, nn. 571-577, with plates; J. Fischer, *Griechisch-Römische Terrakotten aus Ägypten*, Tübingen 1994, pp. 160-166, tav. 17, 196-201; 18, 204-222; C. Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, *L'abbigliamento degli antichi macedoni*, in *Alessandro Magno. Storia e Mito (Catalogo della Mostra, Roma)*, Milano 1995, pp. 112-115, with plates. =

suffice, the mosaic of Pella, with the "lion hunt" of Alexander and Ephestion, and the young Hermes at the scene of the rape at Vergina, in the tomb of Persephone⁽⁴⁾; c) the round helmet with the short brim on the forehead, as seen on the sarcophagus of Sidon, or of Abdalonimus⁽⁵⁾, which is effectively a helmet, but of a totally different type. In short, we believe that the hypothesis that the head-dress of head 3336 is a helmet, even if we use analogies, which are generic and forced-upon, has no strength or even minimum credible support.

On the contrary, we are convinced that the head-dress in question, in very thick felt - as correctly pointed out by Breccia - is possibly that of a genre figure, and one that is hardly capable of protecting the head of a "Macedonian warrior". And here we differ from almost all the authoritative scholars who have dealt with this Alexandrian sculpture, and we are partly in agreement with Breccia.

Furthermore, there is no doubt that the felt is lifted backwards over the head under examination and has rolled-up edges over the forehead and temples, more so on the right, to the extent that it weighs on the ear and bends it, and adheres extraordinarily to the head, very unlike a solid metal helmet, even a light rounded one.

= Very different is the pileum, worn by the Dioscuri in Alexandrian terracottas: P. Perdrizet, *Les terres cuites grecques et romaines d'Égypte de la Collection Fouquet, Nancy-Paris-Strasbourg* 1921, pp. 100-102, nn. 250-252, 254-255; or rather the tall hood, often curved and pointed, of some grotesque terracottas: E. Breccia, *Terracotte figurate greche e greco-egizie del Museo di Alessandria*, II, Bergamo 1934, tavv. LXXXV, 442; LXXXVI, 449; XCVIII, 547-556; XCIX, 557-564.

(4) P. Moreno, *Alessandro e gli artisti del suo tempo*, in *Alessandro Magno. Storia e Mito*, cit., pp. 119-120, 221-222, with plates; M. Andronicos, *Vergina. The Royal Tombs and the Ancient City*, cit., p. 86 ss., especially p. 94, fig. 53.

(5) F. Matz, in *EAA VII*, 1966, pp. 9-10, s.v. "Sarcophago"; R. Ginouvès (ed.), *Macedonia. From Philip II to the Roman Conquest*, Athens 1993, pp. 58-59, fig. 51; D. Pandermalis (ed.), *Alexandros kai Anatol Katalogos tis Ekthesis*, Thessaloniki 1997, pp. 27-28 (B.1), figg. 3-4.

It was in BSSA1 45, 1993, dedicated to the memory of our friend Daoud Abdou Daoud, that, being interested in some small chalk heads from the Graeco-Roman Museum, I identified in their rough felt hats, of conical shape, a detail that is typical of genre figures, tradesmen and vendors⁽⁶⁾. In addition, the sculpture in question, because of the felt hat, reminds us immediately of the well-known sylloge of N. Himmelmann⁽⁷⁾: from the amusing Boeotian jug of the potter Gamedes at the Louvre, mid- 6th cent. BC, to the amphora from Nola in Berlin F 4052, with the young Shepherd with the double flute, to the large and careless "Basque" hat of the old Fisherman at the Museo dei Conservatori, to the rigid beret of the highly restored statuette of the Fisherman n. 1765, at the British Museum in London⁽⁸⁾. Moreover, these shapes of head-dress are paralleled by certain figurines of different meaning and style, but also by genre subjects, this time in smaller size and made in terracotta and bronze⁽⁹⁾.

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- (6) N. Bonacasa, *Modelli o ritratti miniaturistici di gesso nel Museo Greco-Romano di Alessandria*, in BSSA1 45, 1993, pp. 45-54, especially pp. 47 (4), 50-51.
- (7) N. Himmelmann, *Über Hirten-Genre in der antiker Kunst*, Opladen 1980, pp. 55, 67, 85, tavv. 2-3, 14-15a, 21.
- (8) H. Stuart Jones, *The Sculptures of the Palazzo dei Conservatori*, Oxford 1926, p. 144, n. 27, tav. 50; A. H. Smith, *A Catalogue of Sculpture in the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, British Museum, III, London 1904, p. 113, n. 1765 (formerly in the Towneley Collection); H. P. Laubscher, *Fischer und Landleute*, Mainz a. R. 1982, pp. 7, 10, 18 ff. (note 72), 44 (and note 163), 51-52 (note 200), 53, 58 ff., 89, 103, tavv. 8-9 (1); N. Himmelmann, *Hirten-Genre*, cit., p. 85, tav. 21; E. Bayer, *Fischerbilder in der Hellenistischen Plastik*, Bonn 1983, pp. 60 ff., 258 (G 29).
- (9) E. Bayer, *Fischerbilder*, cit., bronze statuettes from Egypt: pp. 102 ff., 264 (KP 46, figg. 14-16), 112 ff., 265 (KP 48, fig. 20), 123 ff., 268 (KP 58, figg. 21-22) and terracottas pp. 170, 275 (KP 80, fig. 31), pp. 167 ff., 276 (KP 84, fig. 30); N. Himmelmann, *Alexandria und der Realismus in der griechischen Kunst*, Tübingen 1983, tav. 43.b. A similar hat is also worn by certain types of young people, tradesmen, vendors and "grotesque" =

Therefore, we believe all this amounts to undisputed evidence in support of the typology to which the limestone Alexandrian head belongs - we have to lament the loss of the rest of the body.

Antiquarian investigations put aside, it is clear that our present communication, as far as possible, aims to throw some new light on the category of the subject of genre, and also to reconsider a type of production which uses poor materials, such as limestone, but which is often of high artistic level in Graeco-Roman Egypt⁽¹⁰⁾. Well, this Alexandrian head, even if late Ptolemaic and slightly prior to the mid 1st cent. BC and probably falling between 80 and 50 BC, belongs to this respected tradition of Alexandrian production.

= characters: N. Himmelmann, *Alexandria*, cit., tavv. 4,a-b; 5,a-b; p. 14, 33,b; J. Fischer, *Griechisch-Römische Terrakotten aus Ägypten*, cit., pp. 211-213, 220, 239, 241, tavv. 37, 390; 38, 394; 42, 414; 48, 488, 496; L. Török, *Hellenistic and Roman Terracottas from Egypt*, Roma 1995, p. 151 (n.227), tav. CXXII; H. Philipp, *Terrakotten aus Ägypten*, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Ägypten Museum Berlin, Berlin 1972, pp. 20-21, n. 9, tav. 6; F. Dunand, *Musée du Louvre. Catalogue des terres cuites grecques et romaines d'Égypte*, cit., p. 274, n. 824.

-For general reference, cf. N. Bonacasa, *Socialità e arte nel soggetto di genere ellenistico*, in *Alessandria e il mondo ellenistico-romano* (Studi in onore di A. Adriani), I, Roma 1983, pp. 125-130; Id., *Realismo, naturalismo e verismo nella scultura alessandrina*, in *Akten des XIII. Internationalen Kongresses für Klassische Archäologie – Berlin 1988*, Mainz a. R. 1990, pp. 137-143; Id., *A proposito di sei terrecotte del Fayyum nel Museo Archeologico dell'Università di Zurigo*, in *Archeologia e Papiri nel Fayyum* (Atti Conv. Inter., Siracusa 24-25 May 1996), Siracusa 1997, pp. 85-101, with plates.

(10) We bring to mind the statues of poets and wise men, and of characters from the Dyonisiac world, from the Serapeum at Memphis, an expression of the Alexandrian baroque of the late 2nd cent. BC, and the well-known funerary group known as that of Berenix II and her daughter, from the mid-3rd cent. BC, at the Museum of Alexandria. Ch. Picard – J. Ph. Lauer, *Les statues ptolémaïque du Sérapeum de Memphis*, Paris 1955; A. Adriani, *Repertorio d'arte dell'Egitto greco-romano*, Serie A, I Palermo 1961, pp. 32-33 (n. 38), tavv. 32-34.

The sculpture we are examining is comparable in style and chronology to a strong and incisive portrait from Delos (A 2912)⁽¹¹⁾, from the House of the Diadumenos (figs. 13, 14), more or less contemporary, and to two slightly later republican portraits kept at the Roman National Museum⁽¹²⁾, the first more than the second (fig. 14), with a pained but conventional expression; as well as a fine portrait of an old man from Ostia, dated to the second half of the 1st cent. BC⁽¹³⁾. The head from Alexandria belongs to a skilled workshop which was comparable to the equally skilful one that produced the famous limestone portrait-heads in the "P. Orsi" Regional Archaeological Museum in Syracuse: the head of a mature man (Inv. 749)⁽¹⁴⁾ is by no means as expressive as this one, but the expression and the details of the face are equally effective (fig. 15). This further parallel favours most probably an Egyptian origin for the whole group of the limestone portraits kept in Syracuse⁽¹⁵⁾.

II) The reference to the important limestone heads of Syracuse brings us to discuss shortly the charming portrait of a priestess (fig. 16), presented in the volume *Alexandrina 2* (ed. J-Y. Empereur), Cairo - IFAO, 2002 (pp. 139-147), by my expert friend

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- (11) K. Mikalowsky, *Les portraits hellénistiques et romains (Délôs XIII)*, Paris 1932, pp. 11-14, tavv. X-XI; B. Schweitzer, *Die Bildniskunst der Römischen Republik*, Leipzig 1948, pp. 72, 144, n. and fig. 71.
- (12) B. M. Felletti Maj, *Museo Nazionale Romano. I ritratti*, p. 40, n. and fig. 54, pp. 41-42, n. and fig. 58.
- (13) R. Calza, *I ritratti, I* (Scavi di Ostia, V), Roma 1964, pp. 33-34, n. 35, tav. XX.
- (14) N. Bonacasa, *Ritratti greci e romani della Sicilia*, Palermo 1964, pp. 24-25, n. 25, tav. XI, 1-2.
- (15) G. Libertini, *Guida del R. Museo Archeologico di Siracusa*, Roma 1929, p. 118; G. V. Gentili, *Ritratti repubblicani in calcare nel Museo Nazionale di Siracusa*, in *SicGymn N. S. V*, 2 1952, p. 192 ff.; N. Bonacasa, *Ritratti greci e romani della Sicilia*, cit., pp. 22-26, 33-34, nn. 22-27, 35-36, tavv. IX, 2-3 - XII, 1-2, XVI, with previous bibl.: Id., *L'Ellenismo e la tradizione ellenistica*, in *Sikanie*, Milano 1985, p. 310; F. Coarelli - M. Torelli, *Sicilia. Guide archeologiche Laterza*, Toma-Bari 1984, p. 240.

Merwatte Seif El- Din, "Un portrait de prêtresse trouvé à Alexandrie". The methodology in that study is perfect, the parallels are useful, and the bibliography up-to-date.

However, the considerable category of Hellenistic and late Hellenistic sculptures in limestone, to which the priestess of Alexandria belongs, does not score any points, because the parallels concern marbles and the archetype of the Alexandrian bust of the old priestess cannot be confirmed based just on the clay statuettes of Athribis⁽¹⁶⁾, which were used in that study; instead it is rather the opposite, if only we had at least one way of reconstructing the presumably marble prototype. The argument is much wider, since it should include the statues, all Roman copies, of old nurses and old priestesses⁽¹⁷⁾, and the iconography of nurses

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- (16) Cfr. H. Szymanska, *Terres cuites d'Athribis représentant des veilles femmes*, in *Materialy Archeologiczne* XXVII, 2 1997, p. 36; Ead., *The Dionysian Thiasos at Athribis in the early 3rd Cent. B.C.*, in *L'Egitto in Italia dall'Antichità al Medioevo* (Atti III Congresso Inter. Italo-Egiziano, Roma-CNR – Pompei, 13-19 November 1995), Roma 1998, pp. 673-678; M. Seif el Din, *Un portrait de prêtresse trouvé à Alexandrie*, in *Alexandrina* 2 (ed. J-Y. Empereur), Cairo - IFAO, 2002, pp. 139-147, especially pp. 141-142, notes 13-14, 15-16.
- (17) Cf. A. Giuliano, *Il commercio dei sarcofagi attici*, Roma 1962, p. 86 (III, k), p. 87 (IV); N. Bonacasa, *Un "soggetto di genere" nelle favisse del Capitolium di Sabratha*, in *LibyaAnt* XV-XVI, 1978-79, pp. 89-94 (with bibl.); N. Himmelmann, *Hirten-Genre*, cit., p. 124 ff., tav. 56 ff.; P. Zanker, *Die Trunkene Alte. Das Lachen der Verhönten*, Frankfurt a. M. 1989, pp. 15 ff., 43-48, 50 ff.; S. Pfisterer-Haas, *Darstellungen alter Frauen in der Griechischen Kunst*, Frankfurt a. M. 1989, pp. 6-15, 36 ff., 78 ff., 101-105, 121-124, 144; Ead., *Ältere Frauen auf attischen Grabdenkmäler*, in *MDAIA* 105, 1990, pp. 179-196; H. Wrede, *Matronen im Kult des Dionysos. Zur hellenistischen Genreplastik*, in *MDAIR* 98, 1991, pp. 164-188; N. Himmelmann, *Realistische Themen in der Griechische Kunst der archaischen und klassischen Zeit* (Jdl, 28. Erg.heft), Berlin 1994, pp. 10 ff., 23 ff., 40 ff., 89 ff.; A. Kossatz-Deissmann, *Figurenvase in Gestalt einer trunkenen Alten* (Nachrichten aus dem Martin-von Wagner Museum), *AA* 1995, pp. 527-536; R. Amedick, *Unwürdig Greisinnen*, in *MDAIR* 103, 1995, pp. 141-170; S. Rogge, *Die attischen Sarkophage, I. Achill und Hippolytos* (Die Antiken Sarkophagreliefs, 9, 1, 1), Berlin 1995.

and old women attending rituals on several sarcophagi, including those with Hippolytus and Phaedra.

Meanwhile, because of its style and chronology, we would like to point out the head of a Libyan or Egyptian priest (fig. 17 - 18)⁽¹⁸⁾, which, with the head of the aged crowned poet, is one of the most representative of the eight limestone portraits in Syracuse. The head is bald except for the temples and behind the ears, and is covered by a cloth at the back. The details of the face are strongly marked, with sharp cheekbones, full lips and snub nose. The strongly focused look and the mouth, suspended in a half-open expression, give the mask a distinctive feeling of pathos. We feel that these elements together allow us to attribute the portrait to the cultural milieu of Egypt.

Apart from the special cloth of the head, positioned somewhat similarly and constituting a recurring parallel, above all the most notable shared features are the severe figurative style and the encoded structure, particularly for the head of Syracuse, which far surpasses the old priestess of Alexandria both in style and attitude, and which belongs without doubt to the category of the genre subjects. But we must insist that the conceptual background is identical, the strength of characterisation is very similar, and the artistic milieu and the cultural climate that produced them are also the same, i.e. late Alexandrian style. Moreover, it would not be out of place to recall a realist tendency both in the portraits of the latest Republican period on the one hand⁽¹⁹⁾, and the late Alexandrian

(18) N. Bonacasa, *Ritratti greci e romani della Sicilia*, cit., pp. 25-26, n. 27, tav. XII, 1-2. For the aged crowned poet, p. 22, n. 22, tav. IX, 2-3.

(19) B. Schweitzer, *Die Bildniskunst der Römischen Republik*, cit., pp. 60 ff., 114 ff., 128 ff.; J. D. Breckenridge, *Origins of Roman Republican Portraiture* (ANRW I, 4), Berlin 1973, pp. 826-854.

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portraits in Egyptian style on the other⁽²⁰⁾, which are very similar and characterised by a rude and often arrogant expression. As to precedents and mutual influences, the masterly paper by A. Adriani⁽²¹⁾ is still valid.

Because they are mostly unknown, we have taken this opportunity to mention the eight heads and portraits, of so-called African provenance, kept in the “Paolo Orsi” Regional Archaeological Museum in Syracuse, which were perhaps brought by ship as ballast and were amongst the first collections acquired by the Museum when it was first created. Our friend Concetta Ciurcina, Director of the Museum in Syracuse, is very kindly carrying out a challenging investigation into the provenance of the eight limestone heads in Syracuse, of which we look forward to reading the results.

I should confess that for a long time I was sure that the group of sculptures in question came from Cyrenaica. But now that, every year since 1996, I have been visiting museums and archaeological areas in the region, I have come to the conclusion that the heads in Syracuse might have come from Egypt, rather than Cyrenaica. This review of the Syracusan group has a further aim, since for some time now, also through the pages of the *Bulletin of the Society*⁽²²⁾, I have become interested in the relations between Sicily and Egypt during the Hellenistic period. This time, it is clear

(20) B. von Bothmer, *Egyptian Antecedents of Roman Republican Verism*, in *Ritratto ufficiale e ritratto privato (II Conferenza Inter. sul Ritratto Romano – CNR 1984)*, Roma 1988, pp. 47-65.

(21) A. Adriani, *Ritratti dell’Egitto greco-romano*, in *MDAIR* 77, 1970, pp. 72-109.

(22) N. Bonacasa, *Echi alessandrini nella scultura ellenistica della Sicilia*, in *La Sicilia antica nei rapporti con l’Egitto (Atti Convegno Internazionale – Siracusa, 17-18 September 1999)*, Syracuse 2001, pp. 67-80; Id., *Egypt and Sicily in the Hellenistic Period*, in *BSAA* 46, 2001, pp. 113-126.

that the relation is of a more contingent nature, possibly linked to trade, and, unfortunately, hardly retraceable even from the antiquarian point of view, if the heads indeed reached Syracuse on a ship serving as ballast.

Either way, I felt it useful to disclose this complex of such charming sculptures. And I believe that our friend M. Scif el-Din will be able to draw undoubted benefit from the parallel with the highly expressive portrait of the Libyan or Egyptian priest in Syracuse.



Fig. 11
Head of an old man Alexandria Inv. no. 3336



Fig. 12
The head of Alexandria

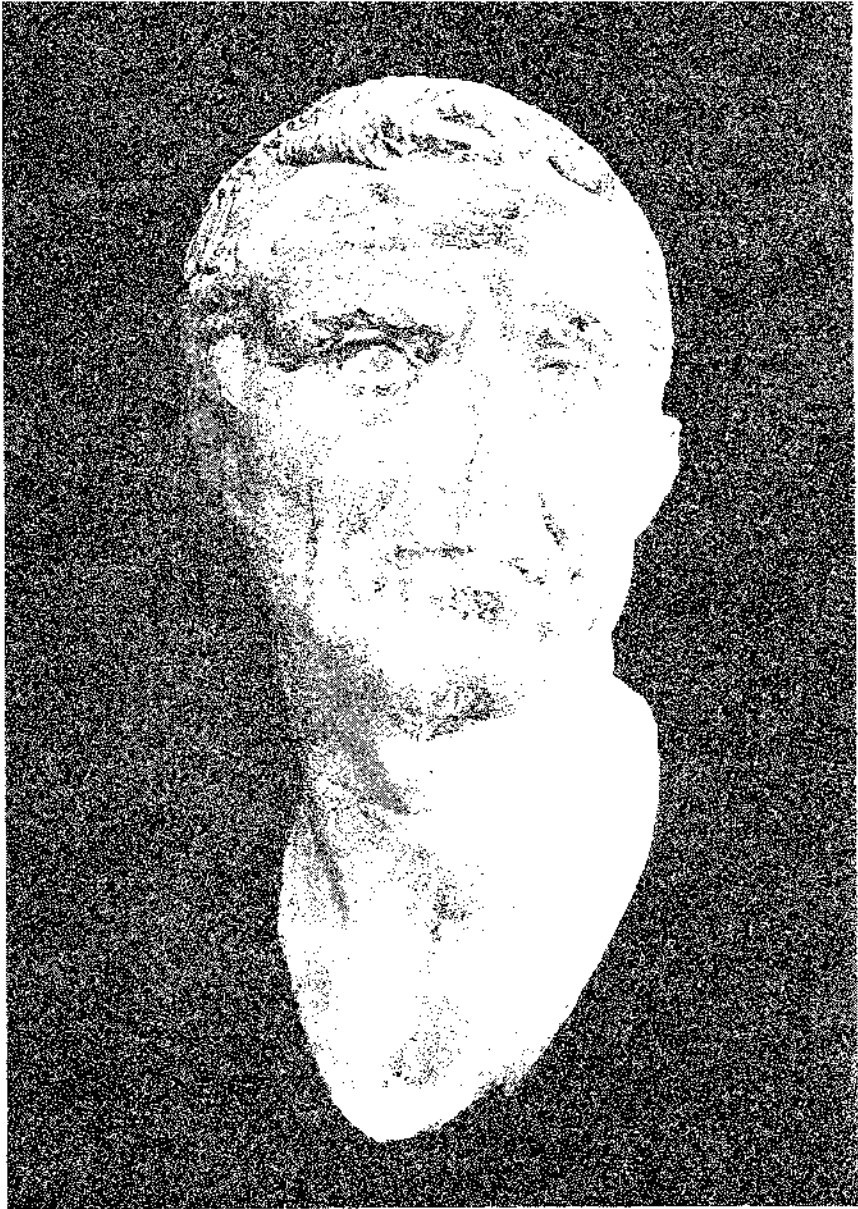


Fig. 13
Portrait from Delos



Fig. 14
Republican portrait in the Roman National Museum



Fig. 15
Portrait head in the Regional Archaeological Museum in Syracuse



Fig. 16
Portrait of a priestess from Alexandria



Fig. 17
the head of a Libyan or Egyptian in Syracuse



Fig. 18
The same head of fig. 17