

**SCULPTURED HEADS OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT
IN
THE GRAECO-ROMAN MUSEUM, ALEXANDRIA - EGYPT (1)**

By
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In Egypt, where the deified Alexander was buried in Alexandria(2), the Greeks, who owed their ascendancy to his feats, made many statuettes of him from marble as well as limestone heads, and dedicated them, either to his cult or as a kind of divine honour, which were paid to the Great Conqueror during the Ptolemaic period. They made offerings of these dedicated statuettes at his magnificent tomb(3), or kept them in their houses to emphasize their devotion to the Great Conqueror.

In the Graeco-Roman Museum of Alexandria, there is a group of heads of these statuettes or portraits which still need a more complete and satisfactory interpretation. In this article, I will try to give a commentary on the subject in the light of new findings, stressing on the comparison between them and the others in and outside of Alexandria.

(1) I am indebted to Prof. M. Awwad Husain, the Chairman of the Department of Classical Archaeology of Alexandria University, giving me the opportunity to go to Greece to write this article. I am also grateful to Prof. N. Kontoleon who made many valuable corrections and suggestions. My thanks are also due to Dr. Henri Riad and the staff of the Graeco-Roman Museum for kindly giving me the permission to take the photographs attached to this article and for their assistance in more than one way.

(2) For the tomb of Alexander the Great in Alexandria, see an article by El-Fakharani, F., Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, Alexandria, vol. XVIII, 1964, pp. 169 — 199, and references.

(3) Schreiber, Th. Studien über das Bildnis Alexanders des Grossen, Leipzig, 1903, pp. 41 ff., pl. III—IV; Bernoulli, J.J., Die erhaltenen Darstellung Alexanders des Grossen, München, Bruckmann, 1903, pp. 34 ff., figs. 5 — 8; Gebauer, K., in Athen. Mit., 63 — 64 (1938 — 39) pp. 33 ff., pls. 6 — 14; Bieber, M., The Sculpture of the Hellenistic Age, Columbia, New York, 1961, p. 90; Id., Alexander the Great in the Greek and Roman Art, Chicago, 1964, pp. 56 — 57.

1 — (Fig. 1 — 3) (4)

Head of Alexander in marble. H. : 0.23 m. Found in 1941 at El-Kom-el-Ahmar (Beheira). Alexandria Graeco-Roman Museum, No. 28094.

The head is slightly inclined to its right. The hair is only sketchily executed, but it strongly shows the rising lion's mane falling over the sides of the forehead. There is a trace of a band extending around the head to hold the hair. On the top of the head there are also three small holes. The lower part of the forehead is slightly bulging, the nose is straight with chipped tip, the lips are full and slightly parted, while the cheeks and the parts around the mouth are subtly modelled.

2 — (Fig. 4) (5)

Head of Alexander in marble. H. : 0.115 m. found in Alexandria. Alexandria, Graeco-Roman Museum, No. 3402.

The head is inclined to its right and the neck is slightly bent. The greater part of the nose and the lower part of the neck and the body are restored. The hair, instead of the ἀνατολή τῆς κόμης, is rather bushy in front, falling down over the forehead more than usual. There is a band extending around the head to hold the hair, which flows down over the ears and along the neck on the neck. The nose is straight, and the lips are full and narrow.

3 — (Fig. 5) (6)

(4) Not previously published.

(5) Schreiber, Th., op. cit., pp. 41 ff., pl. I B; Bernoulli, J. J., op. cit., pp. 33—36, figs. 5 — 6; Breccia, E., *Alexandria ad Aegyptum*, Palermo, 1922, p. 186, fig. 22; Devan, E., *A history of Egypt under the Ptolemaic Dynasty*, London, 1927, fig. 3, p. 5; Sühr, E., *Sculptured portraits of Greek statesmen with a special study of Alexander the Great*, Oxford, 1931, pp. 95 — 96; Grandor, P., *Bustes et Statues-Portraits d'Egypte Romaine*, Le Caire, 1936, p. 73, pl. XXII, b;

دليل آثار الاسكندرية ، اعداد هنرى رياض وآخرين ، مراجعة داود حبه ، داود الاسكندرية ، ١٩٦٦ ، ص ١٠١ ، شكل ٢٧ .

6. Breccia, E., *Rapport sur la marche du service des musées pendant les années 1910 — 1911*, p. 19, pl. VIII, fig. 25; Id., *Alexandria ad Aegyptum*, pp. 175 — 176; Lawrence, J. E. A. II (1925) pl. XXI.

Head of Alexander in coarse-grained white marble. Found in Roseeta street, Alexandria. Alexandria, Graeco-Roman Museum, No. 19118. (A gift from Baron de Ménéasse in 1911).

The face is slightly turned to its right. The hair is rising over the middle of the forehead and falls in a thick mass of curls on each side, especially, the left side of the head. There is a hole in the top of the head. The forehead is almost divided in half due to the strong projection in the lower part, the eyes are upturned and deep-set, the nose tip is missing, and the lips are not well defined.

4 - (Fig. 6) (7).

Head of Alexander in red granite. H. : 0.43 m. Found in Antoiades, Alexandria. Alexandria, Graeco-Roman Museum, No. 3242.

It has the usual bend of the neck and the face with the right turn, but it differs from the preceding heads in its left side. The thick mass of the hair is largely worked and arranged, and falls with exaggeration on each side onto the neck, covering the ears. Instead of the *ἀναστολή τῆς κόμης* there is a lock stretching horizontally across the centre of the forehead. There is a large hole in the top of the head, which Schreiber supposes to have an uraeus, but Breccia thinks it more probable to be an Ammon Crown. The nose is broken off.

5 - (Fig. 7) (8)

Marble head of Alexander. H. : 0.053 m. Found in Alexandria. Alexandria, Graeco-Roman Museum, No. 3403.

The bend of the neck and the slight turning of the face are to the opposite direction, to the left. The upraised lion's mane rises over the middle of the forehead and falls with arranged curls on each side.

(7) Bötti, G., *Catalogue des monuments exposés au Musée Gréco-Romain d'Alexandrie*, 1900, p. 522; Schreiber, Th., *op. cit.*, pp. 46 ff., pl. III E; Breccia, Ev., *op. cit.*, p. 176, No. 17; Sahr, E., *op. cit.*, p. 130; Noshy, I., *The Arts in Ptolemaic Egypt*, London, 1937, p. 124, pl. XIV, 1; Gebauer, K., *op. cit.*, p. 30; Adriani, A., *Testimonianze e Momenti di Scultura Alessandrina*, II, 1948, p. 16, pl. XII, 4.

(8) Breccia, E., *op. cit.*, p. 186.

There is a band extending around the head to hold the hair, and like the other heads, there is a hole in the top of the head just behind the ἀναστολή. The nose is straight with chipped tip. The lips are full and short and slightly parted. The parts around the mouth are subtly modelled, and the cheeks elongated.

6 — (Fig. 6) (9).

Marble head of Alexander. H. : 0.17 m. Found in Alexandria. Alexandria, Graeco-Roman Museum, No. 3404.

The face is slightly turned to its right and also bend of the neck is represented. The hair is rising over the middle of the forehead and parted in the centre into two symmetrical short locks, falling on each side. There is a hole behind the ἀναστολή. The nose is straight with chipped tip. The lips are slightly parted and the cheeks are elongated

7 — (Fig. 9) (10)

Marble head of Alexander. H. : 0.21 m. Circumstances of discovery are unknown. Alexandria, Graeco-Roman Museum, No. 3405.

It has the turned face and the bend of the neck to the right. The hair is rising over the middle of the forehead and represented in a short low-lying manner. There is a hole in the top of the head. The lower part of the forehead is bulging. The nose is straight and chipped off. The lips are full and separated and the cheeks are elongated and subtly modelled.

8 — (Fig. 10) (11)

(9) Schreiber, Th., op. cit., pp. 46 ff., pl. III, f.; Breccia, E., op. cit., p. 186; Subt, E., p. 101;

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(10) Schreiber, Th., op. cit., pp. 46 ff., pl. III, f.; Breccia, E., loc. cit.,

دليل آثار الاسكندرية ، ص ١٠٢ .

(11) Schreiber, Th., op. cit., pp. 46 ff., fig. 6; Breccia, E., loc. cit.; Subt, E., op. cit., p. 102.

Head of Alexander in white limestone. H. : 0.12 m. Found in Alexandria. Alexandria, Graeco-Roman Museum, No. 3406.

The head is of sketchy workmanship. The face is slightly turned to its right. The unfinished hair rises over the middle of the forehead and falls in rough way on each side. The eyes are large, the nose is straight and its tip is broken off, and the lips are full and narrow, roughly parted. The cheeks are somewhat elongated. There is a trace of colour on the stone.

* * *

There is no doubt that the fine head No. 1 (Figs. 1 — 3) could be considered one of the best heads in the Graeco-Roman Museum of Alexandria. It reveals the characteristic features of Alexander in heavy brows, deep-set eyes and fiery glance. The *ἀνατροπή τῆς κόμης* of Alexander, especially noted by Aelian (12) and also by Plutarch (13), is well represented. There is a great emphasis on all the features of the head in order to accentuate their importance.

The two profiles (Figs 2 — 3) resemble that on the two Cameos found in Alexandria, and one of them is now in Leningrad, while the second is in Vienna (14). They also resemble that on the coins of Ptolemy I, dated in the early Ptolemaic period (15), but the expression is much softer and the modelling less vigorous. The hair somewhat resembles that of a statuette found in Priene dedicated to the cult of Alexander and dated c. 300 B.C. (16).

(12) Var. Hist. XII, 14.

(13) Alex. II. 2.

(14) Bernoulli, J.J., *op. cit.*, pp. 126—131, pls. IX, I, VIII, I. Noshy, I., *op. cit.*, p. 110, pl. XII, 1 (The Cameo of Vienna); Bieber, M., *op. cit.*, pp. 57 — 58, figs. 3 — 4. These portraits, wrongly interpreted as Ptolemy II and Arsinoë II (Noshy, I., *loc. cit.*), but Bieber recently said that they are the portraits of Alexander and his mother Olympias, who was allowed to share the divine honours in Alexandria with her son.

(15) Σβόρωνος, I. N., *Τὰ Νομίσματα τοῦ Κράτους τῶν Πτολεμαίων*, Ἀθήναι, 1904, *pl. I, nos. 11, 13, 16; pl. II, nos. 11, 12.*

(16) Vigand, Th. — Schrader, Priene, Berlin, 1904, pp. 180 — 182, fig. 176; Bernoulli, J.J., *op. cit.*, pp. 58 — 61, fig. 15; Bieber, M., *op. cit.*, pp. 54 — 55, figs. 47—49.

In general, we recognize in this head the outward appearance of Alexander which was best represented by Lysippos, and to a certain extent, the square face and deep-set eyes of Scopas style characterized by the soft treatment of Praxitelean style.

The next head (No. 2, Fig. 4) has been particularly treated by Schreiber (17). He bases his opinion on its resemblance to the Apoxyomenus(18), and the Azara herm (19). But this opinion has been refused by Bernoulli (20), who denies any similarity between its features and those of the Azara herm. Suhr(21) says "Its resemblance to the Azara herm is indeed superficial, except for the mouth", and sees also that Apoxyomenus holds some resemblance if we consider that this head is a portrait.

Anyhow, we cannot overlook the poize and features characteristic of Alexander's head : The turning of the neck and the face, the form the mouth and the chin, and the falling of the parted hair over the ears and down the neck (22). The hanging hair over the forehead reminds us of the Eubuleus of Eleusis(23).

The two vertical creases between the eye-brows, and the horizontal furrow which nearly divides the forehead in two halves, with the lower one bulging, give the impression of serious thought and attentive observation. It represents life and free movement of the Lysippic style with the turning of the head to the right and the melting glance of the eyes. It somewhat reflects the lively impression of motion of a statuette in Lower Egypt (now in Louvre) and is interpreted as an early Hellenistic adaptation (24).

(17) Schreiber, Th., *op. cit.*, pp. 41ff.

(18) Richter, G.M.A., *The Sculpture and Sculptors of the Greeks*, 1946. figs. 739, 742, 743.

(19) Bieber, M., *op. cit.*, figs. 13 — 17.

(20) Bernoulli, J.J., *op. cit.*, p. 36.

(21) Suhr, E., *op. cit.*, pp. 95 — 96.

(22) Suhr, E., *loc. cit.*

(23) Richter, G.M.A., *op. cit.*, fig. 512.

(24) Bieber, M., *op. cit.*, pp. 34 -- 35, pl. X, fig. 18.

In the head No. 3 (Fig. 5) we can easily recognize a portrait of Alexander, in spite of the poor state of the preserved features. The squareness of the head and the sunken eyes remind us of the surviving battered male heads from the pediments of the temple of Athena Alea in Tegea, which were made by Scopas in the second quarter of the fourth century B.C. (25). This head also reminds us of the same square faces and deep-set eyes of the figures in the scene on a column base in the temple of Artemis at Ephesus, 370 — 330 B.C., made also by Scopas (26). The scene represents Hermes leading Alceis towards winged death to die in place of her husband Admetus, king of Thessaly. The other figures surrounding the drum include Admetus himself, and Hades and Persephone, the king and queen of the underworld.

We can add to the preceding examples the Attic grave-relief found at the river Ilissus and dated soon after 350 B.C., now in the National Museum of Athens. We find in the head No. 3 (Fig. 5) the broad square head and the deep-set eyes of the figures of this scene, which represents a nude young man is the dead, watched sadly by his old father, while his younger brother sits on a step and his dog noses the ground. The features of all these figures represent the stylistic influence of Scopas (27).

It is therefore, clear that this head (Fig. 5) with its eyebrows hanging heavily over the deep-set eyes, recalls the influence of the Scopas style and it is rightfully put in the first half of the third century B.C. (28).

The next head (No. 4, Fig. 6) is made of red granite, a common material in Egypt and foreign in Greek sculpture. The eyeballs, now missing, were of a different material, and it is stated by Breccia (29) and Noshy (30) that making the eyeballs of a different material and inlaying them in the hollows of the eyes, as was done in this head, was not a familiar manner to the Greek artist. But I would like to add that in the Greek sculpture, the eyeballs were occasionally inset in a different

(25) Barron, J., *Greek Sculpture*, 1965, pp. 126 — 128, fig., on page 120.

(26) Barron, J., *op. cit.*, pp. 128 — 129, fig. one page 129.

(27) Barron, J., *op. cit.*, p. 130, fig., on page 130.

(28) Noshy, I., *op. cit.*, p. 91; Lawrence, *op. cit.*, p. 183, pl. XXI.

(29) Breccia, E., *op. cit.*, p. 176.

(30) Noshy, I., *op. cit.*, p. 124.

material, probably in ivory, stone or glass(31). In any case the Greek artist here in Alexandria had the ability to acclimatize to the new circumstances of his work in the granite stone and created a purely Greek style.

The thick hair is carefully twisted and modelled in its falling at the sides onto the neck. The lower parts of the brows are projected and the eyes are somewhat large and animated as he gazes in the distance. The cheeks are full and elongated. All the features are carefully modelled to represent the head in a serious and powerful appearance. It reminds us of the serious appearance of Eubuleus of Elcuisis in the National Museum of Athens and to a certain extent of the head of Youth Alexander, in the Acropolis Museum at Athens.

This head had been attributed to the influence of the Lysippic style (32), but it also has the Praxitelean treatment in polishing.

In head No. 5 (Fig. 7) all the transitions have been glossed over and the delicate sentiments is stressed by the disappearing of the masculine and leonine aspect. The *'ἀνα βλέπειν* (33) is more stressed here and the head in general reminds us of a head found in Alexandria, and now in Stuttgart (34), which offers the same example of illusionism in the finishing which glosses over the details of modelling in the third century B.C. (35).

The head reflects the Peculiar Alexandria manner which developed from the Praxitelean School. We note that the beauty of Alexander is stressed by the softness and the polishing of the head.

(31) We have already examples, like a large Kore, No. 682 with eyeballs, of another material and also the so-called "Kore of Antenor" No. 681 in the Acropolis Museum of Athens, see *A Concise Guide to the Acropolis Museum, Athens, 1965*, by Yiannis Meliades, translated by Helen Wace, pp. 27, 31, and Richter, G.M.A., *op. cit.*, p. 147, fig. 447.

(32) Breccia, E., *loc. cit.*; Nothly, I., *loc. cit.*

(33) Plutarch, *Alex.* 4, 1.

(34) See Scribner, Th., *op. cit.*, pl. II, c; Bernoulli, J.J., figs. 7 — 8; Sühr, E., *op. cit.*, fig. 14; Nothly, I., *op. cit.*, p. 90, note 3; Bieber, E., pl. XXIV, figs. 50 — 52.

(35) Cf. Nothly, I., *loc. cit.*

In the two heads, Nos. 6 — 7 (Figs. 8 — 9), we have a new developed style which leaves us with a touch of the same impression of the preceding manner. The softness and the polishing are still stressed, but the features of Alexander do not have the same stress as earlier heads. Here we do not find the heavy brows or the deep-set eyes and the fiery gaze. But the face continues to have a hazy expression, the eyelids are defined and the eyes look dreamily out of their sockets, the mouth in Fig. 8 is half open and the face is long and narrow.

This was the period of the stability, achieved by the two first Ptolemies and reflected on the artists, who observed and expressed accurately the spirit of their age, long after the predominance of Alexander's influence in the early Hellenistic age has abated (36).

Then we come to the limestone head No. 8 (Fig. 10), which is characterized by a thick sketchily mass of hair falling roughly on the sides onto the neck. The forehead is bulgy and the eyes are large with marked eyelids. Although the face represents, in general, a defective modelling, roughness and carelessness of execution, its outline and upraised gaze of the eyes reminds us of a head from Alexandria, now in the British Museum (37). Anyhow, the features here characterize the late Hellenistic art of Egypt and still have the pure Greek style (38).

The small size of the heads leads us to discuss the smallness of the sculpture in Alexandria which has always been explained by the shortage of marble in Egypt, the unwilling to rival the Egyptian art in monumentality, and the inclination towards refined creations (39). Concerning the shortage of the marble, the Ptolemies with their abilities could well bring what they needed from it. Besides, we have a mass of sculptured marble in Graeco-Roman Egypt, and we may take in consideration that most of the monuments of this period are still undiscovered (40). About the disinclination to rival the Egyptian monu-

(36) Noaby, I., *op. cit.*, p. 93.

(37) Suhr, E., *op. cit.*, p. 102; Cf. Eieber, M., *op. cit.*, fig. 53.

(38) Cf. Noaby, I., *op. cit.*, pp. 95 — 96.

(39) Noaby, I., *op. cit.*, p. 84.

(40) Hogarth and Benson, *Report on Alexandria, 1894 — 1895*, p. p 3 II; Breccia, E., *op. cit.*, p. 66 and *passim*; Noaby, I., *loc. cit.*

ntality, the Egyptian artists produced also, beside the great monuments, small statuettes and refined heads. About the inclination of the artists towards refined creations, that is true and may be the main purpose.

Thus, we can say that the conventions of the life, which began to be fashioned in the new city of Alexandria, with its varied population and different characteristics were reflected in art and probably the small dimensions of these sculptured heads and others are related to these new trends which were reflected not only in the sculpture in round, but also in the sculptured and painted grave-stones. We find stepped high bases and on their tops there are very small stelai (especially the painted ones) with represent scenes in very fine detail (41). It is one of the new fashions which were created and subtly modelled in the new city.

In the heads of this subject there are holes in their upper parts : the first head (Figs. : 1 — 3) has three small holes, each of the other heads (Figs. : 4 — 9) has one hole, in the last one (Fig. 10) there are none. In the Greek sculpture there are some cases in which the tops of the heads are separated from their remaining part, the two surfaces being smoothed to fit, and kept in place by small dowells (42). But in our subject, we do not find something like that. In the Greek sculpture also we know that the locks of the hair were occasionally made in bronze or lead (43), and also the ornaments of diadems were added in bronze or gold, but we have only the holes for their attachment remaining and some of them still preserved (44).

So we may expect that this manner of technique continued in Hellenistic Egypt for the same purpose and almost to attach the ornaments of the diadems(45).

(41) Ghazal, A., *Γραμμάτι Στήλαι τῆς Ἑλληνιστικῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας Ἀθήναι*, 1964, pp. 34-42, and references.

(42) Richter, G.M.A., *op. cit.*, p. 146, fig. 446, note 74.

(43) Richter, G.M.A., *op. cit.*, p. 147, note 84; and on a marble head in the Acropolis Museum, No. 657 (*Ath. Mit.*, 1882, pl. IX, l, p. 193).

(44) Cf. Head of Nemesis by Agorakritos (Richter, G.M.A., *op. cit.*, p. 239, fig. 633); Cf. also head from Delos in the National Museum of Athens, No. 21.

(45) Subr, E., *op. cit.*, p. 100, sees that these holes bored into the marble for holding the heads in their original places.

Last the manner in which the features of the heads were modelled, and the way of the breaking necks lead us to believe that the majority of these heads belong to statuettes. We may add that there are headless statuettes of Alexander with the aegis in the Graeco-Roman Museum of Alexandria(46), which have been explained as private dedications by the macedonian soldiers to Alexander and may hold some relation to the later Alexandrian marble heads of Alexander (47).

(46) Nos. 3874, 3903, 3903, 3801; Breccia, E., *op. cit.*, p. 205.

(47) Bieber, M., *op. cit.*, p. 62.



1 — (Fig. 1)



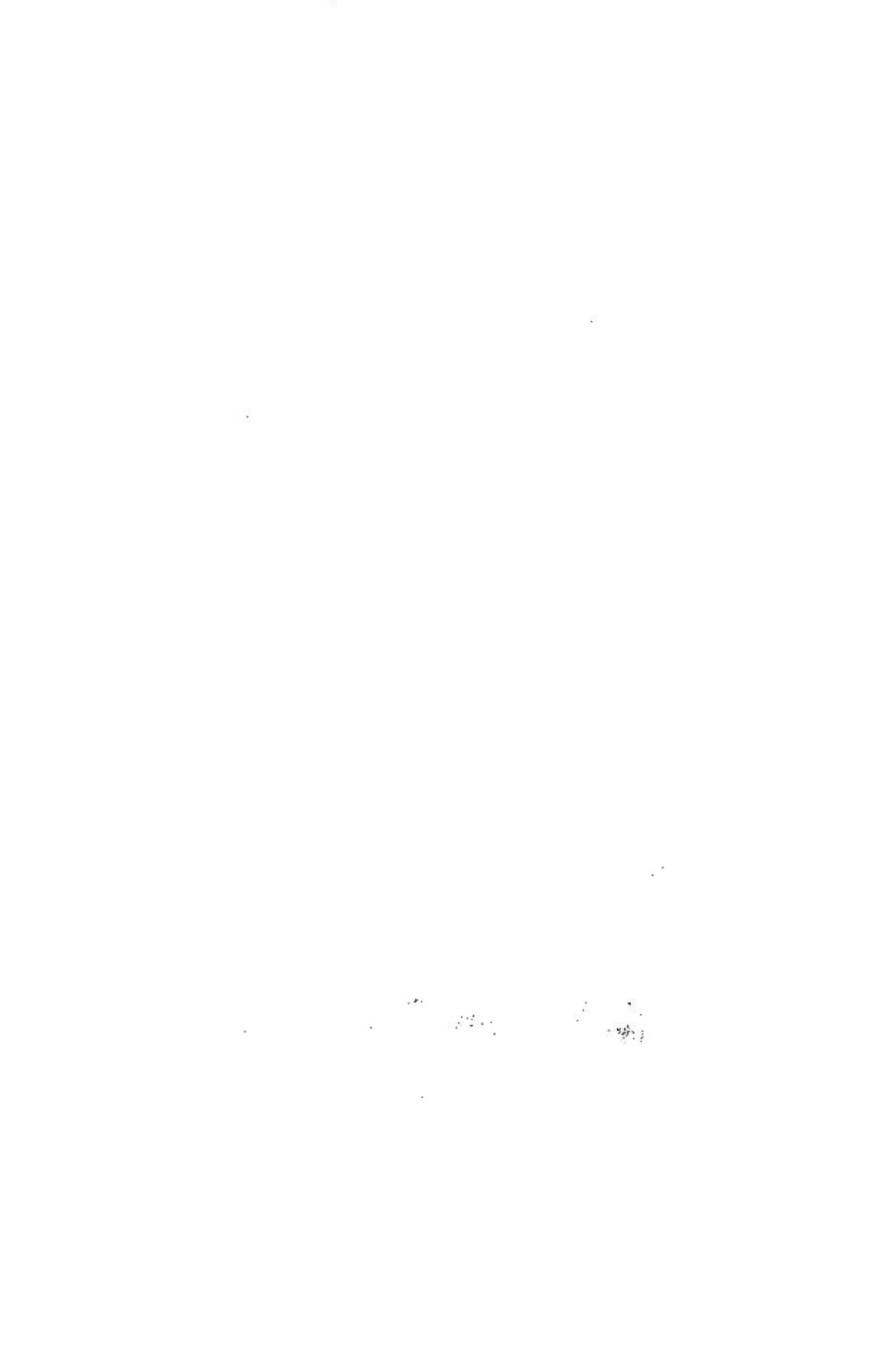
1 (Fig. 2)



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1 — (Fig. 3)





2 — (Fig. 4)



3 -- (Fig. 5)

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4 - Fig. 6)

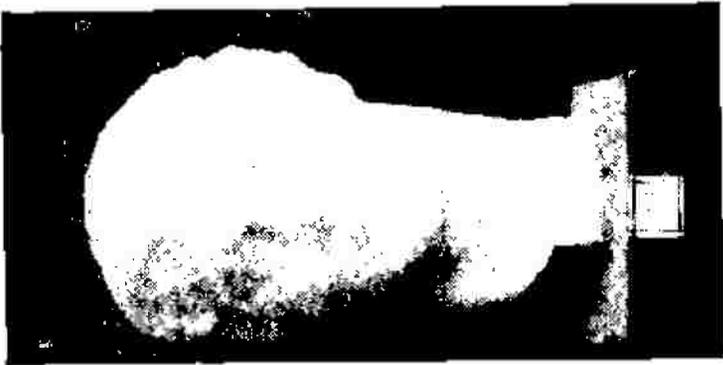


5 (Fig. 7)

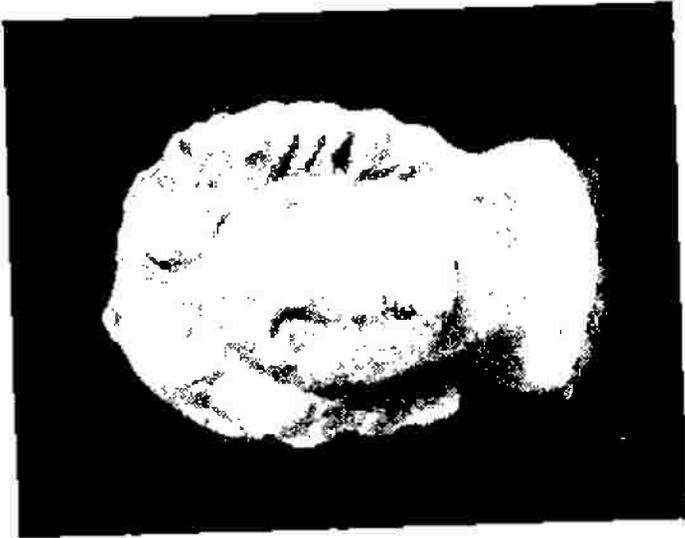




6 -- (Fig. 8)



7 - (Fig. 7)



8 - (Fig. 8)