



## Buddha from Berenike among the most exciting discoveries of 2023

A find by a Polish-American archaeological expedition working in Berenike (Egypt) has been named among 10 most exciting discoveries of 2023 in Near Eastern archaeology by the American Society of Overseas Research (ASOR) Newsletter. The object in question is a Buddha statue from the 1st/2nd century CE found in the courtyard of the city's main temple.

Berenike is the most important of Roman ports on Egypt's Red Sea coast. It was part of a trade route used for transporting goods from distant regions of the ancient world – including India – to the Roman Empire. The discovery of the Buddha statue was made by a team led by Rodney Ast of Heidelberg University conducting research at the temple of Isis.



The finding, made public in April 2023, received tremendous attention from the media and the general public (see the original announcement on the PCMA UW website [<link>](#)); it even received its own Wikipedia page. The Buddha statue is not only the most prominent of a number of finds confirming the intense contacts between Berenike and India; it is also evidence of the presence of Buddhism in the Mediterranean world.

In addition to this beautifully crafted statue made of Anatolian marble, pieces of other representations with Indian iconography carved from local gypsum were also identified at Berenike, along with an inscription in Sanskrit and Indian coins. (They were discussed by Shailendra Bhandare of the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford at a PCMA Seminar – see the recording on the PCMA UW YouTube channel: [link](#)).

ASOR's list of the 10 most exciting discoveries of 2023 included those deemed to have pushed the limits of the discipline and provided new insights into the ancient world ([link](#)). The American Society of Overseas Research is an American scientific society founded in 1900. It publishes several major archaeological journals on Near Eastern archaeology and related studies, supports excavations and other research projects, and organizes leading international scientific conferences in the field.

- Read more about PCMA UW research at [Berenike](#)
- Berenike Project on social media – Instagram: [@berenikeproject](#) ; X: [@BerenikeArcheo](#)
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*Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw (PCMA UW) coordinates Polish archaeological research in the Eastern Mediterranean since 1959 (since 1990 under the present name). In recent years, it broadened its scope of interest into the Arabian Peninsula and the Caucasus. Currently about 20 projects are ongoing in [Egypt](#), [Sudan](#), [Tunisia](#), [Cyprus](#), [Lebanon](#), [Kuwait](#), [Oman](#), [Georgia](#) and [Armenia](#). The PCMA UW also runs Research Centres in Egypt, Sudan, Cyprus and Georgia.*

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