

## THE GREAT SPHINX: IDEAS OF THE SPHINX IN THE ANCIENT WORLD.<sup>1</sup>

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Every now and then our interest is renewed in one of the oldest monuments of the world, by a sort of ceremony of unveiling. However long the Great Sphinx of Egypt may have crouched on the edge of the Libyan desert, with the exception of his head, he has certainly spent most of his time covered up with the sand, which, according to Arab tradition, he is supposed to keep back from encroaching upon the fertile land in front of him. We read of this sand being cleared away as early as 1500 B.C. Again, in modern times Lepsius and the Duc de Luynes accomplished the same work; and in 1869 Mariette cleared it out in honour of the opening of the Suez Canal, and yet again, three years ago, the sphinx was covered as thickly as hundreds of years before. In 1886 the excavators again set to work, and the great sphinx was unveiled to the world, and for a time, at least, we are able to see the whole of the huge lion body crouching far below the gigantic human head, which rises high above the level of the surrounding table land. How long we may have this advantage is very doubtful. Thothmes IV, when he cleared away the sand about 1500 B.C., built a crude brick wall to keep it back, and there is some talk of restoring this old wall, unless something of the kind is soon undertaken the greater part of the sphinx will be speedily again hidden. That at the present moment he *can* be seen will, I hope, be a sufficient excuse for my asking you to give a few minutes to the consideration of such a very well-known object of antiquity.

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The form of the great sphinx is that of the man-headed lion; it is carved out of the limestone rock, the natural form of which probably gave the artists the first idea of their design.

The head, which rises 40 ft. above the surrounding plateau, is carved with much more care than the rest of the figure; the forehead is wide, the eyes remarkably deep set, the cheeks round, the lips very full. As a whole the face gives the characteristics of the old Egyptian face, features which are repeated in the Copts of to-day, and it therefore may be regarded as a portrait, not of any individual, but of the race itself. The face was bearded, the beard being plaited broad and square, and slightly turned up at the end, representing the false beard of the ancient Egyptians, which was fastened by a strap round the face. Good examples of this form of beard may be seen in pictures and statues of gods and kings of ancient Egypt. The head is encircled by a headdress made of folded linen, striped with red or blue lines; it covers the whole of the head and upper part of the forehead; the broad folds stand out behind the ears, and fall in two lappets in front over the sides of the chest. This headdress is called the *klaft*, a word signifying in the Coptic a monk's cowl; it was formerly reserved for royalty, and may be seen on many sculptures of sphinxes and kings of ancient Egypt, a good example being the diorite statue of King Khafra of the fourth dynasty. Centuries later it was used as an artistic drapery for the head by Greek workers in Alexandria, as we see by some of the bronzes of that period. At the present day the Coptic priest puts a striped handkerchief over his head, much like the *klaft* of the great sphinx, at the celebration of the Holy Communion, as part of his ritual dress. Above the *klaft*, the head of the great sphinx is surmounted by the hooded snake or uraeus, which rears its upraised head from the forehead; the origin of this symbol is most obscure, but from the earliest times it seems to have been the emblem of royalty, both human and divine. Pieces of the uraeus and the beard were found broken off, and were brought to England early in this century, and are now in glass cases in the British Museum. The body of the sphinx, in the form of a crouching lion, lies 100 ft. below in a huge

artificial amphitheatre hollowed out in the limestone plateau. It is 140 ft. long, and, like the head, is formed of the rock itself, but supplemented here and there with masonry to complete the shape; it was formerly plastered all over with smoothed limestone, and coloured; this has almost disappeared; but we read of traces having been seen by Greaves in 1736. The colour used was chiefly a dull red, the same red as the Egyptians used to depict themselves as distinguished from the lighter coloured Libyans or the darker Ethiopians. Some of this colour is still to be seen, not only on the face and body, but also on the broken pieces in the British Museum. In order to reach the front paws, a sloping descent leads to a flight of steps, 40 ft. wide, described by Pliny, and uncovered by Caviglia in 1817, but since then entirely lost to sight for seventy years. These steps lead to a platform of the rock, on which some Roman buildings seem to have stood; from this platform another flight of thirty steps lead down to the level of the paws. The paws are stretched out straight; they were restored in Roman time, and look very insignificant and poor with their covering of thin slabs. Before them still stands the Roman altar made from a piece of granite, which possibly was taken from the granite temple close by; this altar probably replaced an earlier one, on which sacrifices and incense may have been offered to the great sphinx for some thousands of years.

A monument in the Louvre informs us that as late as 600 B.C., a priest named Psammetichus offered incense in honour of the pyramid builders, Khufu and Khafva the king gods, and to the great Hormakhu (Hor on the Horizon), the name by which the sphinx was known to the Greeks. Close to this altar were found the little sphinx, the hawk and the lion, which were dedicated to the sphinx in Ptolemaic times, and which are now in the British Museum. From the altar the old processions passed along the sacred paved way, between the paws to the sanctuary at the breast. This was a chamber, 35 ft. long by 10 broad, formed by three stelae 14 ft. high. The two side ones are gone; they were made of limestone, and two low jambs projected to form a doorway. The third stela is of granite, and still rests against the breast; it was placed there by the king Thothmes IV, and some

holes in it behind shew that he appropriated a piece of granite from the granite temple to make it. In the bas-relief at the top, the king is represented offering incense and a libation to the sphinx, who like the colossal figure behind has a beard and other divine attributes. Below is an inscription, a full translation of which may be found in Brugsch's history. The following extracts are perhaps the most interesting: We read how Thothmes IV, before he came to the throne, hunted lions in the valley of gazelles, behind the pyramids, riding in a two-horsed chariot, with two attendants. When in the heat of the day he granted rest to his servants, he was wont to advance and present an offering of the seeds of flowers to Hormakhu, and to the great goddesses.

Further on we read, "On one of these days it happened, when the king's son Thothmes had arrived on his journey about the time of midday, and had stretched himself to rest in the shade of this great god, that sleep overtook him. He dreamt in his slumber at the moment when the sun was at the zenith, and it seemed to him as though this great god spoke to him with his own mouth, just as a father speaks to his son, addressing him thus:—"Behold me! look at me, thou, my son Thothmes. I am thy father, Hormakhu, Khepra, Ra, Tum. The kingdom shall be given unto thee, and thou shalt wear the white crown and the red crown on the throne of the earth-god Seb, the youngest (among the gods). The world shall be thine in its length and in its breadth, as far as the light of the eye of the Lord of the Universe shines. Plenty and riches shall be thine; the best from the interior of the land, and rich tributes from all nations; long years shall be granted thee as the term of life. My countenance is gracious towards thee, and my heart clings to thee; I will give thee the best of all things. The sand of the district has covered me up. Promise me that thou wilt do what I wish in my heart, then shall I know whether thou art my son, my helper. Go forward; let me be united to thee." After this Thothmes awoke and he repeated all these speeches, and he understood the meaning of the words of the god and laid them up in his heart, speaking thus with himself: "I see how the dwellers in the temple of the city honour this god with sacrificial

gifts, without thinking of freeing from sand the work of King Khafra, the statue which was made to Tum Hormakhu."

Thus Thothmes IV received, as he said, the command in a dream to clear the sand away from round the sphinx. This he faithfully fulfilled afterwards when he became king, as a thank-offering to the sun-god, who had helped him to ascend the throne of Egypt.

As to the date of the sphinx there have been diversities of opinion, varying not by centuries, but by thousands of years. Miss Edwards, in a recent lecture on portrait sculpture, proposes 10,000 B.C. as a possible date. For myself, I feel that we know so little of the course of events we will say between 4,000 B.C. and 10,000 B.C., that at present it does not much matter what date we fix upon between those limits.

From the conclusion of the inscription on the granite tablet of Thothmes IV, we see that in *his* time the great sphinx was said to be the work of King Khafra, the builder of the second pyramid, according to Brugsch 3666 B.C. This idea may have arisen from the fact, that this colossal work lies in a direct line east of that pyramid, and that close by, is the granite temple, probably built by Khafra, wrongly called the temple of the sphinx. But that this opinion was erroneous, we learn from a limestone stela in the Boulak Museum which was found in the ruins of the temple, close to the southernmost of the three little pyramids near the great pyramid. Though this inscription only dates from the time of the 21st or 25th dynasty, and therefore not earlier than 1000 or 700 B.C., yet there seems no doubt that it was a copy of an older stela. It tells us that before the time of Khafra, king Khufu, the builder of the great pyramid, re-established the offerings in three temples, that of his mother Isis, that of Osiris, and that of the Sphinx. He built his pyramid and a pyramid for the king's daughter, Hontsen, near the temple of the goddess. The stela also gives representations of the gods and goddesses, and state the material of which they were made. Amongst these, the most interesting is that of the great sphinx, whose dwelling place, we are told, is to the south of the temple of Isis, lady of the pyramid, and to the north of the temple

of Osiris, master of the city of the dead. Therefore from this stela, we gather that the great sphinx is anterior to the time of Khufu whom Brugsch places 3733 B.C., and further than that, I feel we cannot as yet go.

An idea has struck me, which I will mention here as a hypothesis, which would reconcile the two important stelae relating to the great sphinx. Is it not possible that the head and the body belong to different eras? A limestone rock rising above the table land may like other rocks, still in Egypt, have borne a resemblance to a great head, and artists in the pre-historic times before the pyramid age, may have carved the splendid face, looking ever to the east. King Khafra, needing limestone for his pyramid, may have hollowed out the great amphitheatre and added the lion's body to the head above. There is a great causeway leading from the second pyramid to the temple of the sphinx close by, up which these great limestone blocks could have been taken to the site of the pyramid. If this were the case, it would give a reason for the legend current in the time of Thothmes IV, nearly two thousand years later, that the great sphinx was the work of King Khafra.

As to later accounts of the great sphinx, we have the ex-votos of the Greek visitors, and also the verses of the historian Arrian, still to be seen on the paws; these graffiti are of late date, and are scarcely legible, being generally faintly scratched; two years ago Prof. Maspero began the difficult task of translating them. Yet, notwithstanding these, we can find no mention of the great sphinx by any author or traveller before Roman time; even Herodotos, who describes the pyramids and mentions the avenue of andro-sphinxes which he saw at Sais, passes him over in silence. Pliny gives a long account of this monument, supposing it to be the tomb of King Amasis of the twenty-sixth dynasty.

The old Arabs, like the modern Bedouins, called him Aboulhol, the father of terror, and spoke of him as a talisman or charm to keep the sand from the cultivated land; they say that the desert has encroached only since he suffered terrible mutilations at the hands of a fanatical sheik in the fourteenth century. Abdel Lateef of Bagh-



dad, the learned Arabian doctor, philosopher, and traveller, who visited Egypt about the beginning of the thirteenth century, gives us his impressions of the great sphinx. He tells us that at a little more than an arrow's shot from the pyramids he saw the colossal figure of a head and neck rising out of the ground. "This figure is called Aboulhol, and it is said that the body to which this figure belongs is buried beneath. On the face is seen a reddish tint, which has all the sparkle of freshness. This face is very beautiful, and the mouth bears the impression of grace and beauty. One might say that it smiles graciously. An intellectual man asked me what I most admired of all I had seen in Egypt, which object had most excited my admiration; I told him the truth of the proportions of the head of the sphinx. In fact, the different parts of the head, for instance, the nose, ears, and eyes, bear the same proportions, which nature observes in her works. Now it is most astonishing that in a work so colossal the sculptor should have been able to preserve the right proportion of all the parts, whilst nature gave him no mode of such a colossus, nor anything which could be compared to it."

Since the above was written, the sphinx has suffered much at the hands of man. The Mamluks are even said to have used the face as a target; the nose is gone, the beard has been knocked off, the sides of the headdress have been broken, and yet we feel the old Arab traveller was quite right in the admiration he expressed. Seen in the full light, the scars and injuries catch the eye and disturb the impression; but seen in the dim light or by moonlight, the grand face still gives one the best idea the world has perhaps ever yet produced of sublime steadfastness.

All testimony is unanimous in bearing witness to the fact that the sphinx personified the sun-god; the old Egyptian names *Hu* and *Akar* seem to denote the man-headed lion as a symbol of the sun of the day and of the night; the word *seshep* is found as a title of Rameses, signifying the *sphinx* and the *luminous*. The titles used on the stela of Thothmes IV, Khepra, Ra and Tum, all denote different phases of the sun-god, and the common name by which

he was known in later times, was Hor-ma-khu or Hor-em-khu, signifying Horus or the sun on the Horizon. This was translated by the Greeks as Harmais or Harmachis, the latter being cut upon one of the paws by a Greek called Babillus, the old Egyptian idea was evidently that the sphinx represented Horus the sun-god, the sun of the morning, of mid-day, of the evening, and even of the night. Later, the Greeks, perhaps because his face was turned to the east, thought and spoke of him as the rising sun only, Horus on the horizon, Horus the light of the morning. Mariette follows these later ideas, when he says of the sphinx: "at the entrance of the great plateau, stands the great sphinx, image of Harmachis or the *rising* sun, the eternal guardian of this vast cemetery, personifying in the midst of all these tombs, the idea of the resurrection, the idea of the light which begins again every morning after having conquered the shades of darkness."

The great sphinx is the only isolated sphinx in Egypt. In later times the rule was to represent sphinxes in pairs; and these later sphinxes are not used as representations of the sun-god, to be worshipped and adored with sacrifices, incense and offerings of flowers, but as sacred emblems of the king. Each Pharaoh claimed to be the mortal incarnation of the sun-god, and therefore selected the sphinx as best expressing his personality. The royal sphinxes of Egypt, stamped with the royal cartouches, usurped sometimes over and over again by succeeding monarchs, must be regarded not as portraits of any particular king, but as representing royalty, majesty, and kingly power in the form appropriated to the sun-god; and with the face bearing the impress of the features, belonging to the ruling race. The Hyksos sphinxes can scarcely be excepted, for however much we may regard them as marvellous portraits, yet they show us more the features of a new *race* of kings, the typical characteristics of another nation, than portraits of individual men. The sphinx, as indicative of royalty, became female in Egypt in a few rare instances, and then represented a queen. Queen Notemmut, wife of king Horus of the eighteenth dynasty, queen in her own right, is represented as a sphinx on the left side of the black



granite throne, on which she and her husband are seated in the museum of Turin. She wears a strange head-dress, a group of lotus flowers, emblematic of Upper Egypt, springing from the crown of Lower Egypt; an erect pair of wings spring out of the body, which were probably Asiatic in origin, there being much intercourse at that time between Assyria and Egypt. A little later, Batanta, daughter of Rameses II, is represented as a female sphinx; there are a few others, for instance, a small winged one of Græco-Roman time of grey schist, in the Gizeh Museum.

The sphinx was also used architectually to form entrance avenues to the temples; some thousands of sphinxes in Egypt here find their *raison d'être*. They have almost lost their divine attributes, though they may still be regarded as royal in character, and sometimes bear a small effigy of the king before the breast. In these avenues we find the sphinx, not only as the man-headed lion, as at Wady Saboach, where the beautiful lions still sit in the golden sand of Nubia, but also ram-headed and pure lion as in the wonderful avenues at Karnak. In the British Museum, one of the ram's heads may be seen from the Karnak avenue; it is certainly one of the best pieces of animal sculpture in the world. The hawk-headed sphinx is also found in the decoration of Egyptian temples the hawk being chosen probably as sacred to the sun-god.

The decorative use of the sphinx in Egypt does not appear to have been earlier than the eighteenth dynasty, and this may have been induced by foreign influence but once permitted, it spread rapidly and on scarabs and vases and jewelry we are never surprised to find the sphinx form, sometimes with human arms presenting offerings, sometimes with human, sometimes with lion or hawk head; it is one of the favourite emblems used in necklets and bracelets from the time of the empire downwards to the Greek period in Egypt.

But the sphinx does not belong to Egypt alone. The idea of the sphinx form seems common to the ancient world, and it is impossible to tell where it first arose, whether in Asia or in Africa. Maspero says that he thinks none of the sphinx forms are

the result of calculated combination, but that as Pliny, Diodorus, and Strabo all describe the lion with human head as really existing, so both the Egyptians and Assyrians believed that in the desert these unnatural beings lived beyond the ken of human kind. To the inhabitants of the ancient world the desert represented the unknown, and was often the symbol of the other world; they, therefore, peopled it with beings of an unearthly nature, in whose existence they nevertheless had unbounded faith. In Assyria, though the sphinx is far rarer than in Egypt, yet it would seem to have its natural home, for in their sculpture the Assyrians far more than the Egyptians preferred the animal body united with the human head; the Egyptian gods of composite form with the exception of the sphinx and one or two others are animal-headed.

In Assyria the sphinxes can scarcely be said to represent gods, they have been called the "ministers of the great gods"; as in Egypt they are generally placed in pairs, and are often the guardians of the gate like the human-headed bulls, and must be classified as genii rather than as deities. The earlier sphinxes were male, and were further developed by the addition of wings. Layard found two male winged sphinxes in the southernmost palace at Nimroud, which he thinks were intended to bear the base of a column, they are crouching and instead of the front paws being stretched out like those of the Egyptian sphinx, they are drawn back in the position of an animal ready to rise, instead of in perfect repose. This apparently small difference is characteristic of the sculpture of the two nations, the one excelling in depicting the position of rest, the other that of life and action. The crouching female-winged sphinx is first found in the palace of Esarhaddon, the seventh century before our era; here it appears technically weak as considered from an artistic point of view, though it is decorative, and the head is adorned with a tiara of twisting horns. In sculpture at this time, the erect lion-headed man looking like the fourth incarnation of Vishnu, seems to supersede the crouching man-headed lion; many examples of the former may be seen in the Assyrian basement at the British Museum, and the sphinx form proper was to a great degree relegated to the sphere

of decoration. On cylinders we find the sphinx represented seated or crouching, generally male and bearded; on the inner side of bowls the winged sphinx appears, and also on small works of art such as amulets, the latter shewing unmistakable signs of foreign influence received from the great metal workers of antiquity, the Phœnicians. These great decorators nearly always used the winged form, they possessed the imitative rather than the creative faculty, so that in their work we generally find combinations of Egyptian and Assyrian motives, harmonised together to form decorative patterns, rather than to express religious ideas. In Asia Minor we have many interesting examples of the use of the sphinx, it is more common in relief than in the round, though it seems to have been placed sometimes in the latter form at the entrances to buildings, for one wingless female sphinx lies on the holy way at Miletus. There is a sphinx in relief on an alabaster slab in the Louvre brought from Aradus on the Syrian coast which seems to follow naturally after Layard's Nimroud sphinx, being both Assyrian and Egyptian in design. It is crouching but with its paws tucked in, on the head is the Egyptian double crown worn above a modified Kluft while above the forehead is the uræus. It has curved Assyrian wings, and the ornamentation of the slab, which is both elaborate and effective is Assyrian rather than Egyptian. The sphinxes in relief at Euyuk in Cappadocia are still more extraordinary, the head, breast, and fore-paws emerge from the granite pillars on either side of the doorway, while above, as if borne on their heads is the lintel of the door. Though Egyptian in character this sculpture is totally unlike the Egyptian *sphinx*—it is female, the features are like those of the Egyptian nineteenth dynasty statues, the eyes appear very deep-set, but the cavities were formerly filled in with enamel and crystal, the ear is placed in the right place, instead of being high up on the side of the head in the Egyptian manner, the headdress is very much like the "Kluft" above the face, but the lappets are drawn into volutes on either shoulder, and round the neck is a simple necklet, both headdress and necklet being those commonly worn by Egyptian ladies of the time of Rameses II. The front paws hang down in a

lifeless way, the five toes of even size giving them an unnatural appearance. The whole looks very Egyptian, but has been adapted by an Asiatic artist familiar with Egyptian sculpture.

At Oum-el-Awamid in Syria the sphinx was used in the same way, the hinder parts being left imbedded in the block, while the head and forequarters emerged to guard the temple. Fragments of a throne (now in the Louvre) from the same place are interesting as they shew that the sphinx form was here adopted so as to form part of the sides of the seat probably in the same way as in the throne of a seated figure found at Solento in Sicily. The statue may represent a goddess, and a robed sphinx walks on each side of her throne, the two front legs of the lion appearing out of a narrow skirt.

In Lycia and in Cyprus the sphinxes are very Greek in character. The silver bowls from Curium and Larnaca shew on the inner side winged griffins and sphinxes each holding a man under its claws. This seems to bring us to the Greek myth of the sphinx told us by the old Greek poet Hesiod. This myth may be Phœnician as it belongs to Shebes in Boetia, a Phœnician colony (brought, so some accounts tell us, from Ethiopia to Greece by Hera.) It is curious to relate that an Egyptian crouching sphinx in the round has been found at Thebes. There are several versions of the myth of the sphinx; the daughter of Typhon and Echidna or of Orthros and the Chimaera, she was for ever asking her riddle and devouring all those who could not tell her secret. Oedipus who guessed it received the diadem of Thebes and is represented killing the sphinx with a sword. The myth may give us the origin of the modern appellation sphinx from σφίγγω to throttle. The Greek sphinx was supposed to have the face, perhaps breast, of a woman, the body, feet, and tail of a lion, and the wings of a bird, and from this time onwards the sphinx is, as a rule, female, and only occurs as male in imitative representations of Asiatic and Egyptian motives as e.g., on the walls of Pompeii, or the male sphinx which stands close to the Shoedagong pagoda at Rangoon, which was said to have been begun about the era of Buddha, 600 B.C. Ferguson says he is the last lineal descendant of those

great human-headed winged lions that once adorned the portals of the palaces at Nineveh, but after nearly 3000 years of wandering and ill-treatment, have degenerated into these wretched caricatures of their former selves. The change from male to female was perhaps effected in Asia Minor, where female daemonic forms were common; the siren, the harpy, and the chimaera are all said to have owed their existence to the inventive faculty of this people, who thus tried to bridge over the gulf between gods and men. Etruria shews a close union in her ideas of the sphinx with the types found in Asia Minor. In the Etruscan saloon at the British Museum, is a bronze buckler of Phœnician workmanship, with two sphinxes in the centre of the upper part; the long lion bodies are standing on all four paws, the necks are long and the faces reach up towards the top of an elaborate floral ornament, which stands between the two sphinxes.

At Mycenae, Schliemann found six little gold sphinxes of archaic Greek-work, the sex is not defined, they sit erect, and the head is covered with a three cornered cap, which he calls Phrygian. In the tombs of Spata, of somewhat later date, sphinxes were found carved on bone, all female, with large broad wings, curved back in the Assyrian fashion.

The East was full of symbol, which was inherited by the archaic art of Greece, and the borrowed ideas were crystallised into myths. The Greek myth may be found foreshadowed in Egypt, in a relief found in the graves of Abd-el-Gourneh, at Thebes, where a bearded sphinx is seen with one foot on three men, and the idea of the conquering power of the Sphinx was probably inherited from Egypt, where men believed that it represented the sun's power, which though it might be obscured for a time, nevertheless always remained irresistible and continuous. The Greek story is rich in developments and in Greece we find representations not only of the sphinx conquering, but also of men conquering the sphinx, as in the case of Oedipus.

On the throne of Zeus at Olympia, it is supposed that sphinxes were represented carrying off children, in the same way as the harpies from the harpy tomb from Xanthus. Amongst the representations of the sphinx,

which have a mythical significance, we may perhaps class the few examples found on scarabs, the Cypriot copy of an old Chaldean seal found at Curium (now at New York) representing a Chaldean priest in the attitude of worship with two sphinxes confronting above him, as well as the Greek coins bearing the symbol of the sphinx. The sphinx coins of Chios range from 600 to 250 B.C., the finest being about 400 B.C., on the latter the Greek sphinx is seen seated before an amphora, on the top of which is a bunch of grapes, the sphinx seeming to have been connected with the worship of Dionysos. Another beautiful type of sphinx coins belongs to Cyzicus on the sea of Marmora about 450 B.C. in one of which the sphinx is seen crouching on a fish. Amongst the Alexandrian coins of the time of Domitian is a crouching andro-sphinx, very Egyptian in character, while on the Alexandrian coins of the time of Hadrian, we see ugly queer creatures, and amongst them sphinxes, some walking and some seated. Of the same nature as the sphinxes on coins is the bas-relief on a limestone tablet of about 150 A.D. found at Tanis in the house of Bakakhuui, the lawyer, representing a Graeco-Egyptian sphinx with turreted crown and curved wings, emblematic of the genius of the town. It is published by the Egypt Exploration Fund in Tanis vol i. But in Greek Art the sphinx form is used not only in mythical representations, but also as pure ornamentation, and in connection with the grave. It adorned the helmet of Athena of the Parthenon, its enigmatical and strange character rendered it dear to the heart of the decorator, who combined the types in different ways, and repeated it a countless number of times on jewelry and on vases, until it became a mere technical form of ornamentation with apparently no hidden meaning.

But the sphinx of the tomb is far more interesting than that of pure ornament. In Greece, as in Asia, it was comparatively rare in the round, but there seem to have been sepulchral pillars, with sphinxes resting on them, which Milchhöfer thinks may have been erected on the top of tumuli; these are often represented on the vases found in the tombs. From the earliest mastababs of ancient Egypt down to the later Greek tombs vases were buried with the dead; water in the East is very precious, and in



early time signified the water of life necessary for the soul, and symbolised by these vases. One very fine vase in the British Museum, found at Capua, is borne on the back of a sphinx, between the wings; the face is of a beautiful Greek type, the position, one that appears to have been the favourite with Greeks, erect on the front paws.

On grave reliefs in Cyprus and Lycia the sphinx is frequently found in relief, as in some of the tombs at Golgos, not far from Larnaca, and on the steles, at either end of the sarcophagus found at the same place. They are about the fifth century B.C., and the sphinxes are seated at the top, back to back, while below them is a floral ornament. On the lid of the beautiful marble sarcophagus, which was found broken in many pieces at Amathus on the southern coast, the sphinxes form the corner ornament, and seem to be in the act of advancing to the top of the sarcophagus. The front paws are straight, the wings down, the lower part of the wings being a further development from those of the sphinxes, which preceded them. The same sphinx is found in the Lycian frieze, discovered at Xanthus by Sir C. Fellowes, forming the external decoration of a tomb. Two doorways belonging to the same building as well as the doorways represented in the frieze, have sphinxes on either side of the entrance. They are seated in perfect repose, resting at the gate of the grave, guardians of those sacred sepulchres of antiquity, and the forerunners perhaps of that composite creature we call an angel. Yet beautiful as they are, their power is gone, and like the great sphinx of Gizeh they now watch at the entrance of empty and violated graves. The modern world has exchanged the old reverence for the dead, for a thirst for knowledge, and a desire to lay bare the secrets of the past. Who shall say which is the better?