

ARCHAEOLOGY

Thousands of Sphinxes

Not just one, but many thousands of sphinxes throughout the ages have witnessed the strife of man. Ancient roads of Egypt were once lined with them.

By MARTHA G. MORROW

► THE SPHINX is a symbol of strength and mystery. As kingdoms changed, and civilizations rose and perished, the sphinx held sway over Egypt for thousands of years.

Today when another struggle for power is being enacted in the Land of the Nile, the sphinx endures.

Many thousands of sphinxes, not just one, throughout the ages have watched the strife of man. For while the Great Sphinx of Gizeh is the most renowned, and rightly so, other sphinxes by the score are found in all parts of the world.

No one knows just how many sphinxes there really are. But we do know that one Egyptian road was once lined with about a thousand. Sphinxes were carved in Greece, Assyria, Phoenicia and Persia as well as Egypt.

Symbol of royal power, cloaked by the Greeks with an aura of mystery, the sphinx is still one of the most exciting figures in the world. Archaeologists find it worth spending a lifetime to discover, study and understand.

The Great Sphinx of Gizeh, which for some five thousand years has watched the sun rise over the Nile valley, is perhaps the only one of these human-headed, lion-bodied statues that has never been completely hidden by sand and dirt and debris of the ages.

Carved from a promontory of rock which overlooked the royal city of Memphis, the Great Sphinx is the largest royal portrait ever made. The face, mutilated today, is 13 feet eight inches across. Although made in the distant past and its creation a mystery,

it is believed by many to portray Khafre, the king who built the second pyramid frequently pictured in the background.

Throughout the centuries sand has encroached in waves and ripples, hiding the temple below and the stone upon which the Sphinx lies, the paws extended in front of the statue, and sometimes all except the portrait-face of the Sphinx. But always lovers of this ancient figure have freed it.

Cleared Previously

Some 3,500 years ago, as in recent decades, the Great Sphinx was extricated from the sands. A Pharaoh of the XVIII Dynasty, Thothmes IV, had the sand cleared away and a system of mud-brick walls built around it to keep the encroaching sands at bay. A granite slab placed against the breast of the image proclaims his deed, and portions of the walls unearthed in recent years testify to its truth.

The monument was restored by Ramses II, by the Ptolemies and by the Romans, then once again the sands took over. But always the head remained free. The face was visible to travelers of the Middle Ages as to modern tourists.

The great statue has withstood the storms and wind-borne sands of thousands of years, but within the last dozen centuries man has helped destroy its comeliness. Worshipped and protected by the ancient Egyptians, the image was disfigured by the Moslems because images of every sort are forbidden by their religion. The Mamelukes used the great stone image for a rifle target.

Within the last century or two, however, French and Egyptian engineers alike, prompted by love of archaeology, hope of fabulous discoveries or desire to attract tourists, have carted away the sand. Beginning with an expedition sent by Napoleon, periodically the statue has raised its head higher and higher above the sand.

Once again the Great Sphinx is honored. Visitors come from all parts of the world to admire it. Modern tourists get a clear view of the animal, the partial pedestal hewn in the rock and temple beneath the paws.

But other kings of other ages also left their portraits for posterity. Carved of alabaster or granite, limestone or sandstone; formed of wood or pottery, gold or ivory—the sphinx for ages has stood as a symbol of royal wisdom and might.

Sphinxes, usually in pairs, stood guard over the entrance to temples and tombs just as the Great Sphinx watched over the

approach to the pyramids. Pairs of small ones held jars of ointment, an offering to the gods. Sometimes entire temple avenues were lined with pairs of sphinxes.

The Great Sphinx of Gizeh and others of that wonderful early period had not just a human face, but also a human head complete with human ears. During the Middle Kingdom, which flourished some four thousand years ago, only the face was human—the head and ears were lion-like as well as the body. The usual head-dress in these Hyksos sphinxes, a number of which have been found near Tanis, was replaced by a lion's mane. Some sphinxes were given human hands as well as human heads, and a few even had human arms.

As century after century of sphinx-creating passed, the thickset, muscular bodies of the earlier sphinxes were replaced by slender, graceful, cat-like forms. The ornaments became numerous and heavy, the over-decorated creatures being expected to balance tall and unsuitable crowns upon their heads. But even to the last the sphinx in Egypt remained a masterpiece.

Both Sides Lined

More than a thousand sphinxes once guarded the road that connected the temples of Karnak and Luxor. Some three thousand years ago Thebes was mistress of the Ancient World, and Karnak and Luxor within her borders. The temple of Karnak was regarded as the earthly palace of the god Amon, Amun or Amon-Ra, the temple of Luxor his southern home. The road connecting the two, like many other great avenues in Egypt, was lined on both sides with sphinxes.

In time, however, the capital of Egypt was moved to the Delta, and Thebes lost her political importance. The city was sacked by the Assyrians in the seventh century B. C. and later by the Persians. The temples were pillaged and the Avenue of Sphinxes became completely obliterated.

Fortunately for tourists today the last great king of ancient Egypt, Nectanebis I of the XXXth Dynasty, in the fourth century B. C. restored the Avenue of Sphinxes. The faces of the sphinxes which the visitor sees are carved in his image. They were probably made during his youth as the faces are those of a young man; some grin, some smile and one has an empty look.

By lucky chance, an inscription on one of the pedestals upon which the sphinxes lie enables us to visualize the Sacred Avenue as it was some two thousand three hundred years ago.

"Nectanebis," states this valuable inscription, "made a beautiful road for his father Amun, surrounded with walls, growing with



TRANSPARENT PLASTIC BOXES

FOR SMALL OBJECTS.
USEFUL IN LABORATORIES, HOME WORKSHOPS.
A "FIND" FOR COLLECTORS.

Five Sizes Now Available

R. P. CARGILLE
Products For Scientific Laboratories
118 Liberty Street New York 6, N.Y.

Write For Leaflet PB-SNL



TWO SPHINXES—Almost intact, two sphinxes are shown with Zakaria Bey Ghoneim, Egyptian responsible for their discovery. To date, ten human-headed sphinxes that once lined the avenue near Luxor have been unearthed.

trees and glittering with all kinds of flowers." What a marvelous avenue must have greeted those holy enough to be admitted.

Dozens Now Unearthed

But again the road fell into disuse, this time after the fall of the Pharaonic dynasties. By the end of the Roman epoch in the fourth century A. D., it had been completely covered by debris. A new town, which chiefly centered around the temple of Luxor, spread out over the site. Only a small part of the avenue near Karnak remained uncovered.

Buried through the centuries, the first of the statues at Luxor was located only a few years ago below a Roman pavement by Zakaria Bey Ghoneim, then Chief Inspector of Antiquities for Upper Egypt. He has since unearthed other statues near their original

positions along the avenue from Karnak to Luxor. Today ten human-headed sphinxes, four intact, line the avenue near Luxor.

Not the only avenue of Sphinxes in Egypt, nor even in Thebes, this is the only one still existing that is lined with man-headed sphinxes. Other sphinx-guarded avenues have been known for some time; this has just recently been uncovered.

Each statue, cut out of a single block of sandstone, is about ten feet long and four feet high. They stand some 13 feet apart. Each sphinx lies on a rectangular base set upon a four-foot sandstone pedestal. The heads of most are missing, but fragments found nearby may furnish a clue to how they looked.

The figures at the other end of the road, those guarding the approach to Karnak, have the body of a lion but the head of a ram. These, not recent discoveries, have been known for many years and some are beautifully preserved. Several dozen of these may be seen by the interested tourist. Just where the two types of sphinxes meet along the processional avenue is not yet known. But the exact route of this avenue has been worked out through land maps and aerial photographs, and checked by trial pits sunk in several places. Part of the avenue runs directly beneath the modern town of Luxor.

This spring Mr. Ghoneim hopes to return to unearth more of these guardians of the avenue. Some day the whole two miles of the avenue may be cleared. Then perhaps a full thousand of these symbolic creatures will again greet pilgrims to ancient Thebes.

Science News Letter, March 22, 1952

ANIMAL NUTRITION

Cats Have Sweet Tooth Like Other Animals

➤ ALL ANIMALS are sensitive to sweet-tasting food, Dr. Hubert W. Frings, entomologist at Pennsylvania State College, State College, Pa., has found from a study of animals ranging from snails to quail and rabbits to flies.

Dr. Frings has just investigated the charge that cats do not like sweets, a finding reported, he says, by a European scientist. It is false, he found. Tabby likes her sweets just as do dogs or rats or flies or children.

Twenty cats were tested in Dr. Frings' experiment. He offered them plain diluted milk and also the milk with sugar added. Each time they would take the sweet drink and leave the plain.

The European scientist was deceived, Dr. Frings believes, by the fact that the cat's sweet-sensitive taste organs are less numerous than the organs for other tastes.

Science News Letter, March 22, 1952

Television engineers have already proved the technical feasibility of a three-dimensional television system.

GO PLACES
 LISTEN and LEARN A LANGUAGE by LINGUAPHONE IN 20 MINUTES A DAY

World's-Standard CONVERSATIONAL METHOD
FRENCH SPANISH GERMAN RUSSIAN CHINESE
 —any of 29 LANGUAGES Available
 You can step into a whole new world of Scientific, business and cultural opportunities—double your travel enjoyment, increase your chances for specialized work in the Armed Services—when you speak another language.
NO TEXTBOOK CAN TEACH YOU TO SPEAK
 With Linguaphone, you bring a foreign land right into your own home—you learn another language simply, and naturally, the same way you learned your mother tongue. You listen—you hear native voices, both men's and women's. You understand—you SPEAK! You read and write.
WORLD-WIDE EDUCATIONAL ENDORSEMENT
 Used internationally by thousands of schools, colleges, Armed Services, government agencies, and over a million home-study students.
FREE book gives fascinating facts. STOP WISHING—START TALKING. Mail coupon TODAY.
LINGUAPHONE INSTITUTE
 3103 Radio City New York 20, N. Y.
 Approved for VETERANS' Training.

SEND FOR FREE BOOKLET

Linguaphone Institute
 3103 Radio City, N. Y. 20, N. Y.
 Send me your FREE book. I want to learn language, for purpose.
 Name
 Address
 City & State

NEW TECHNIQUES FOR EFFICIENT TEACHING

This book includes game-like, automatic, self-checking, and puzzle-like devices and methods. Presented to all pupils in order to give more variety and thus relieve the three great boredoms of the school room—Reading, Writing and Listening. Presented to all teachers as tools for multiplying their power to teach and for dividing their time spent in correcting papers.

Price.....\$1.75

Wooden Display Boxes 6 1/2 x 1 x 8 1/2.....\$1.25
 8 1/2 x 1 x 12 1/2.....\$1.75

ECKERT MINERAL RESEARCH & NATUREGRAPH CO.

110 E. MAIN ST. FLORENCE, COLORADO