



## Two unpublished New Headless Sphinxes

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About 550-530 B.C; Dynasty XXVI

**General Registration No.** Greco-Roman Museum 2136 – 2137

**Statues numbers in Kom el Shoqafa records:** 90 -91

**Current place:** the two headless sphinxes statues have been transferred from Greek Roman Museum to the garden of Catacombs of Kom el Shoqafa where lies are now.

**Provenance:** el-Kom el-Ahmar at Al Buḥayrh 1899

**Material:** Quartzite

**Measurement:** Height of the statue without the base 60 cm.

Length of the base of the statue 155 cm, Width 45cm, Height without the statue 16,5 cm.

### **introduction:**

The body of the most powerful animal, the lion, surmounted by the head of the most powerful human, the king, was the symbol of divine royalty in Egypt throughout millennia from Dynasty IV to the Roman Period

There is more evidence that the figure of the sphinx was favored for the representation of kings throughout the Late Period, but unfortunately more headless inscribed sphinxes than heads of sphinxes or complete sphinxes had survived. All sphinxes from Dynasty XXVI . Down to the beginning of the Roman Period. (Brooklyn museum, 1960: pp 62 - 63 )

But this combination between the body of the lion and the head of the human was not only with political significance but also had a religious meaning.

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In the Pyramid Texts we get the first mention of the Sphinx, where it appears under the name of "Rwty" and is associated with Atum ( line 2082). it is said of the King : " He is taken to Rwty, and presented to Atum"

The association of the Sphinx with Atum was continued into the New Kingdom, and in the so-called " *Book of the Dead* ", a magico-religious work of this period, it says (*Ch. 3, line 1*): "Atum, who appears as Master of the Lake, who shines as Rwty. (Hassan 1949 pp129)

During the Middle Kingdom, the name ( šsp ʿnh).it means (The living Statue ", seems to have been a general name for sphinxes. This can be proved by the determinative of the word, which is usually a representation of a sphinx. It is very possible that this word "šsp ʿnh" was corrupted by the Greeks into their word" sphinx", But it would seem that these names could be applied to sphinxes as a general type until the time of Thothmes I when the name( Ḥr m 3ḥt) appear it means " Horus in the Horizon" this name could also refer to the Dead king. By the time of the New Kingdom, the Sphinx was regarded as a god of the dead, and guardian of the dead, we have several giving the name ( Ḥr m 3ḥt) as a designation of the Sphinx (Hassan 1949 pp127-140 & Christiane .Z ,1984,col 1140& Roeder, 1965 ,col 1329)

### **Description:**

What had survived from those two statues are sufficient to indicate that this sculptures once formed fabulous divine monsters..The two statues almost identical it seems that they were made to be placed on two sides of entrance or doorway The features of the body almost perfect The front legs of the statue shows clearly the muscles while the legs in a stable firmly on the base.

On the shoulders the usual ornament carved in bas relief, while upper the back there was a plait as a part of the headdress we think that the heads of the statues intentionally removed because we almost have almost the same cutting marks in both statues.

The stomach is flat and didn't show the ribs as the way in the Egyptian Museum Statue C.G. 748 (Borchardt,1930: Teil3 p72pl 748 ).

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The behind legs are showing a motivation position. The tail revolves around the left leg in the first statue (90/2163) and around the right one on the second. The back shows good details and under it we could see the testicle clearly.

On the right and left side of the pedestal the following inscription:



King of Upper and Lower Egypt, two ladies ,lord of arm force the Golden Horus who makes two lands flourishing (who rejoice Ra heart ) son of Ra (enduring heart of Ra) beloved of souls of Iwn may be given the life, stability and strength .

On a pedestal front side the following inscription:



The living Horus enduring heart\*(there is no mention to R<sup>c</sup> here)

And On the back of the pedestal is the following inscription:



In the length of eternity like R<sup>c</sup>

Comparison with other royal sphinx of Dynasty XXVI — the period during which this sphinx certainly created – according to the inscription on the base those two statue belong to King Apries (w3h ib r<sup>c</sup>) the fourth king (counting from Psantik I) Twenty Sixth Dynasty of Egypt and presumably they were made during the latter part of his reign and Perhaps they return to one of his buildings in Lower Egypt.

**Comment:**

-Fakhry pointed to the epithet *nsw bity nbty nbhps hrnbw swjd t3wy hc ib r s3 r w3h ib* that we see on the statues on Apries Temple at El Kaser in Bahria Oasis ( see Fakhry.A,1950: p.3)

- There are good reasons to believe that every king of the pre-Persian period had at least one sphinx made for himself (Dynasty XXV: Turin 8; London, B.M. 1770. Dynasty XXVI: Psamtik I, Strasbourg 1394 ; Necho II,( ASAE 11 [1911] p. 87); Psamtik II, Alexandria 11273; Apries, Cairo C.G.748 Amasis, Rome, Museo Capitolino 8) head of Amasis in Florence (Museo Archeologico5625) another head attributed to Amasis (Berlin 11864)another head of Amasis At Philadelphia.

(Riefstahl;E;Others ,1960 pp 63)

- There is no evidence pointed out that those statues are appropriated and they Follows the artistic traditional for the middle kingdom as we see in the statues of Amenmhat II .

- There is a great possibility that the two statues transferred from Heliopolis as they mentioned (mry b3w Iwnw)

- Since the degrees of asymmetry employed in the sculptures of the earlier periods have not yet been extensively studied, no precise comparison with those of the Late Period can be offered. It seems, however, as if Late sculptors were far more addicted to loosening a rigid code than their forebears had been. This is also evident in variations in detail occurring in a single statue. For instance, the hands may be highly stylized and the feet modeled naturalistically, or the hands are left crude and undeveloped, and other parts of the body are modeled with great attention to detail. All these deviations serve to enliven a piece of sculpture, though the observer may register them only subconsciously

**Technology:**

. Polished surfaces. Details of the back and leg muscles determined very well

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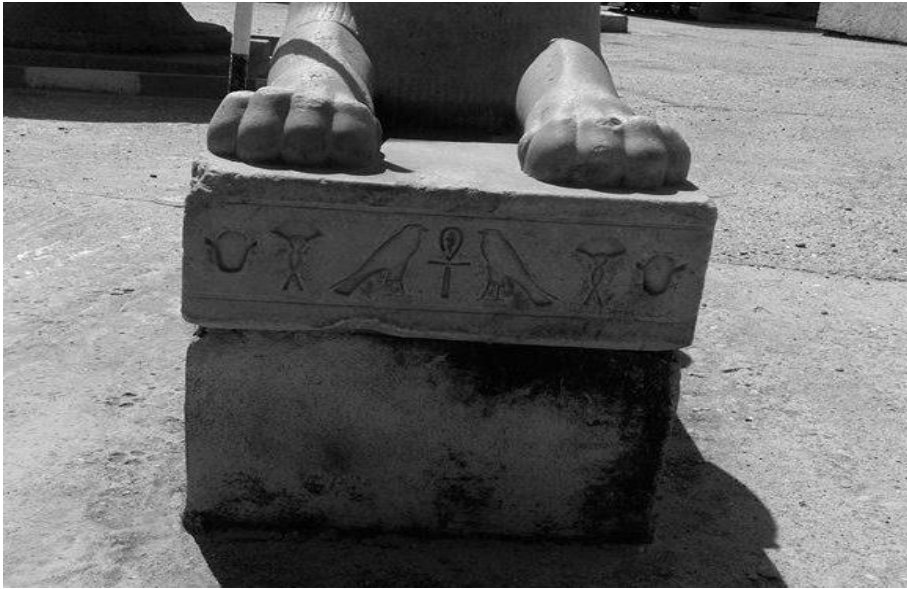
First statue number 90/2136



second statue number 91/2137

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The inscription on front of the base



The left and right inscription for both statues



Side view with the front legs and tail details



Rear view of the two statues



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Details of back the statue No 90



Details of back the statue No 91