

ONDERZOEKSGROEP ARCHEOLOGIE

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THE SPHINX AND GRIFFIN AS POLITICAL-RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

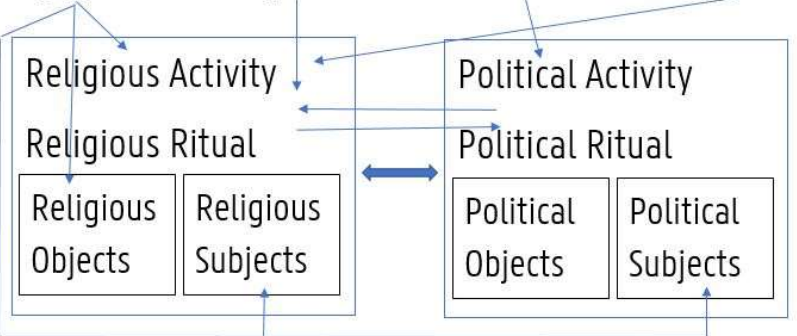
Facts & Hypothesis

- Composite Creatures (in this case sphinxes and griffins) are known in all regions of the Ancient Near East.
 - In Egypt, they seem to be mainly political, while they chiefly represent the pharaoh.
 - In Syro-Mesopotamia, they often appear with gods, so it seems they are generally used in a religious context.
 - In Anatolia, most sphinxes (lion- and bull-sphinxes) act as guards at doorways of temples, palaces,
 - In the Aegean, the Theban sphinx is known best, so it seems the mythological context prevails.

→ Is it possible that, despite the differences, there are general similarities between the meaning and function of the sphinx in the different regions?



Egypt – Mesopotamia – Anatolia- Aegean



The sphinx has gone through a dynamic process through different cultures but the motif seems to have common essential features, although there exists a great diversity of meanings, according to region and period.

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