

## THE EGYPTIAN LILY.

THE historical value of decoration has never received the attention which it deserves. To compare two or three examples together from different lands may show some part of their story, but they need a context. What we require for study is a series of wide extent, in which any new example may take its place, that the relations of it, in time and place, may be compared. With a view to beginning this, I have copied about two thousand dated and placed examples, and already several historical results of much interest have appeared.

Articles of utility may be re-invented any number of times independently, and lost to knowledge by neglect or trade opposition; this was the case with the remarkable inventions of automatic looms and saw mills before 1660 at Danzig. On the contrary, the arbitrary nature of decoration, without any urge of utility, leaves it free to be devised without any direction of the impulse. The resemblances of decoration seen in various lands have therefore great value as indicators of the movements of trade, of culture, of conquest, or of race. The comparative study of decoration gives an organized mode of research into ages which are without a record. One may illustrate the method, and its wide implications, by a study of the derivatives of the Egyptian form of the lily which show connections of countries and the continuity of art.

Beneath each of the drawings, the period is stated as EM, or MM, or LM (Early, Middle, or Late Minoan), each divided in three stages; or else the date in years is marked, — for B.C. or + for A.D.; this dating is often difficult to ascertain from the publications. The place where the design was found is quoted; and, lastly, the reference to the book source, as follows:—A.O. *Alte Orient*; A.S. Andrae and Schäfer; B.A.S. Blavignac, *Architecture Sacrée*; B.K. Blegen, *Korakou*; C.I.P. Cohn, *Indische Plastik*; D.C.O. Delaporte, *Cylindres Orientaux*; E.P.M. Evans, *Palace of Minos*; F.L.M. Furtwangler-Loescheke, *Mykenische Vasen*; F.P. own copy; G.A. Gusman, *Art Decoratif*; H.W. Hayes Ward, *Seal Cylinders*; K.B. *Kunstgesch. in Bildern*; K.M. *Kircherian Museum*; K.T. Koch, *Terrakotten camp.*; M.A.A. *Mem. Amer. Acad. Rome*; M.A.K. Montelius, *Ältere Kulturperioden*; M.I. Montelius, *Prim. Civ. Ital.*; M.S. Metz, *Frühkretische Siegel*; P.A.H. Pottier, *Art Hittite*; P.A. Petrie, *Amarna*; P.C. Perrot and Chipiez; P.I.K. Petrie, *Illahun and Kahun*; R.M.P. Renan, *Mission en Phénicie*; R.S. Riegl, *Spätröm. Kunst*; S.A. Strzygowski, *Altai-Iran*; S.A.A. *Ann. Scuola Archeol. Atena*; T.A.P. *Trans. Dep. Arch. Pennsylvania*; U.C. University College; Φ Photographs.

The lily motive seems to have originated in Crete, amid that rich appreciation of nature which surrounds all Cretan art. In the Middle Minoan III, on the great jars at Knossos (Fig. 1), and on fresco (2), the lily is triumphantly used at about 2300 B.C. The group of lilies is perhaps the noblest decoration ever devised, and the closest to nature, for the natural plant can be here taken without any artificial alterations, and simply adopted in a fitting group. In a few

centuries it was changed, and by about 1600 it was modified (4) in its form of growth, but retained the projecting pistils and the re-curved petals, which always distinguish it. The Late Helladic 5, 7, are of about the same age, and the less natural form 3, is of about 1400. The form of flower was adapted to a branching plant, 6, suggesting that it was not well known in Rhodes.

The lily in the Cretan form thus passed down to being merely a flower, at the mercy of any one who needed such to fill a space, regardless of its nature. But in Egypt it became fixed in its botanical aspect of the parts, and this permanent type went through immense changes. The most perfect example is on a glazed ring bezel, 8, from Amarna (see also *Objects of Daily Use* xii, 39). On this the detail is much more precise than on the Cretan paintings; the straight pistil, P, is made triple, and the anthers, A, are shewn below in their peculiar form; beneath are the calyx, C, and the thin spathe, S, with the withered tip dangling. This is in accord with the style of botanical detail on other Egyptian work, but it appears that though the designer knew the flower he could not include the deeply curved petals, and simplified them; the size and prominence of the stamens was what he felt to be characteristic. This was simplified in Fig. 9, which retains the up-turned anthers, a feature which lasted in transformations down to the bitter end in Catholic Italy. Figs. 10, 11, are early departures into senseless types. 12 and 14 maintain the parts, but double the anthers. 13 has the anthers and pistils, but has merged the calyx with the spathe, keeping the dried tips of the spathe as coming from the calyx. This compound form of calyx lasted on into Assyria and Cyprus. Much simplified forms are in 19 to 21.

Now we pass to the changes in other lands. On a cylinder from the Hauran, 22, the different parts are maintained, but they are wildly changed on one from Cyprus, 23, where the idea of a column has come in, yet the incurved anthers remain. In Persia further changes took place (24) where the tips of the spathe became bunches of dates, and the idea of a kind of palm ruled the form. The change in 25, based on a tree form, is probably of Persian work; yet even here the original parts are visible, but the tips of the spathe have become birds' heads. An Italian form at Vulci, 26, brought in sprays, though dimly keeping the proper parts. Such a form passed to India, 27, 28, where the calyx and spathe survived.

Further changes gradually came in. The pistils were entirely changed into a varied group of flowers (29), while the anthers and calyx remained. Another form is in 30, as lettered on the drawing, where the tips of the spathe are little flowers, and supplementary flowers are added below. On a Syro-Hittite cylinder, 31, the pistils are made into a separate flower on the top. On the same lines is a Graeco-Italian transformation on a gold ornament, 32.

Another change was the enlargement of the pistils in a fan form, 33, and again, 34, where the whole is made into a tree, with two bulls as supporters at the sides. This was a Hittite modification, and yet it retained the three main parts. It is interesting as being the last sight of the flower, before it passed into a very different shape.

The form 35 was long a puzzle, it looked like a bowl containing objects; but the example 34 showed the transition, and in 35 we can just trace the origins, P, A, C, of the parts. This change was the Assyrian form derived from the Hittite. From Assyria this new shape was borrowed by Cyprus (36), part of



MM III  
KNOSSOS EPM 603



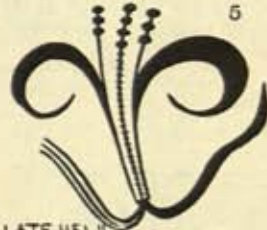
MM III  
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1400  
IALYSOS. FLM.V



LMI  
KNOSSOS TAP. II. 52



LATE HELL II  
KORAKOU B.K.VII



1450  
IALYSOS SAA 1926 f50



LATE HELL II  
KORAKOU B.K. f-77



8  
P  
A  
C  
S  
-1370  
AMARNA  
P.A.XVI



9  
P  
A  
-1370  
AMARNA  
P.A.XVI



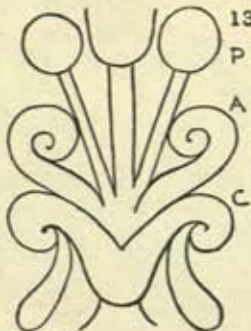
10  
-1370  
AMARNA  
P.A.XVI



11  
-1370  
AMARNA  
P.A.XVI



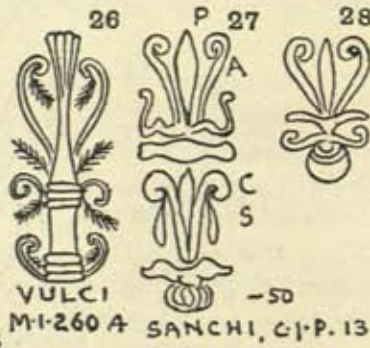
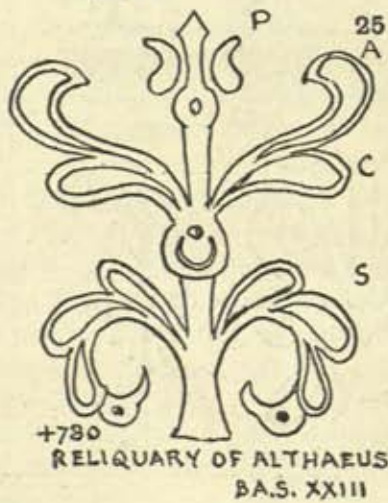
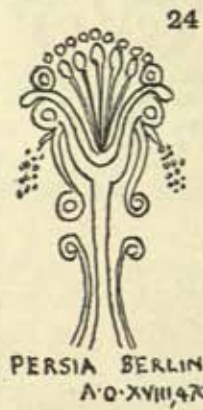
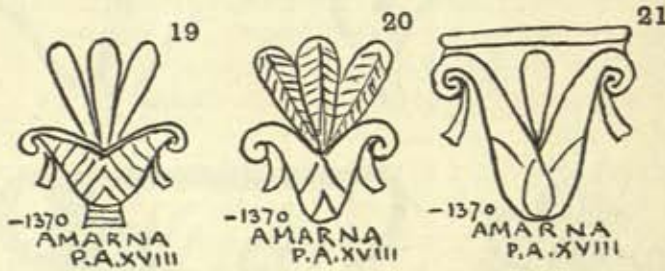
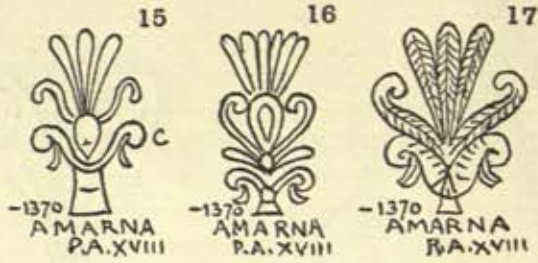
12  
P  
A  
C  
S  
-1370  
AMARNA  
P.A.XVI

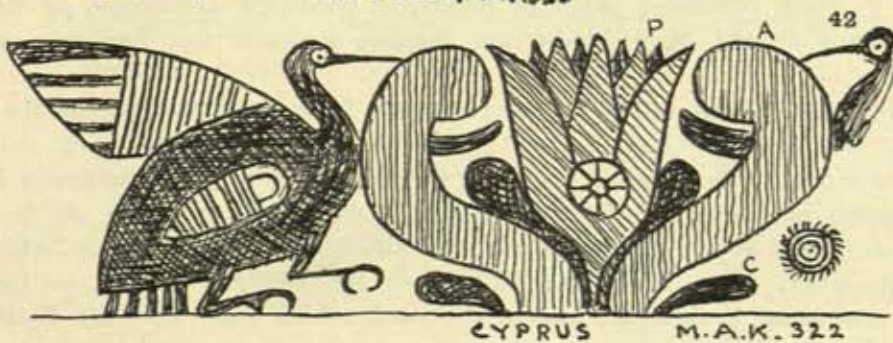
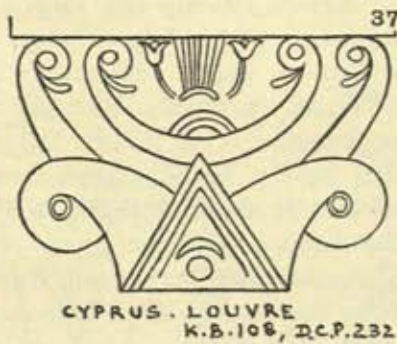
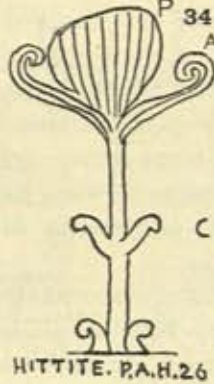
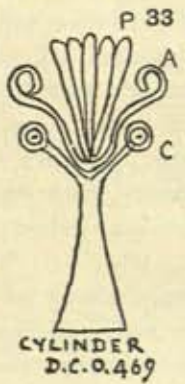


13  
P  
A  
C  
-1200?  
BRACELET, LOUVRE  
A-5.38



14  
P  
A  
-1370  
AMARNA  
P.A.XVI





the senseless jumble of styles and motives which belong to that unoriginal island. The strange dotted band across the pistils is unexplained. The loss of all sense in the use of this form is seen by its being repeated one over the other; it was probably looked on as a form of fruit dish. The old parts were put together differently on the top of an Ionic capital of Assyrian origin, 37; the dried tip of the spathe is here added to the inner side of the anther, as a finish to the spiral. The ends of the volutes of the capital turn up, and appear as a repetition of the old calyx, a mad jumble; while, on the front of the capital, the sun and moon are stuck on. Anything came handy to a Cypriote.

Another modification of the bowl motive was turning it upside down in duplication, 38. A variant of the Cypriote capital, 40, makes the calyx into the body of the capital with the pistils and anthers rising from it. Two discs from Crete (39, 41) seem to be modifications of these ideas, but they are undated; if early, they must be of some other origin. Another Cypriote freak, 42, was turning the pistils into a lotus flower, between two enormous curved anthers with tags of spathe added, and traces of calyx below; the whole is between two cranes.

This bowl pattern was borrowed from Cyprus or North Syria into Italy, in about 700 B.C., doubtless by Phoenician trade which was then active. In Italy it underwent farther changes. At Ruad in Syria we find the Cypriote piled-up form, 36, repeated as in 43. Almost exactly the form as in 37, with the inner tag, appears close to Rome (44), on the Appian way. At Falerii, forty miles north of Rome, the similar pattern, 45, is duplicated; this duplication is also on an example (47) in the Vatican (probably Roman), and formed a repeated pattern (46) at Capena near Rome.

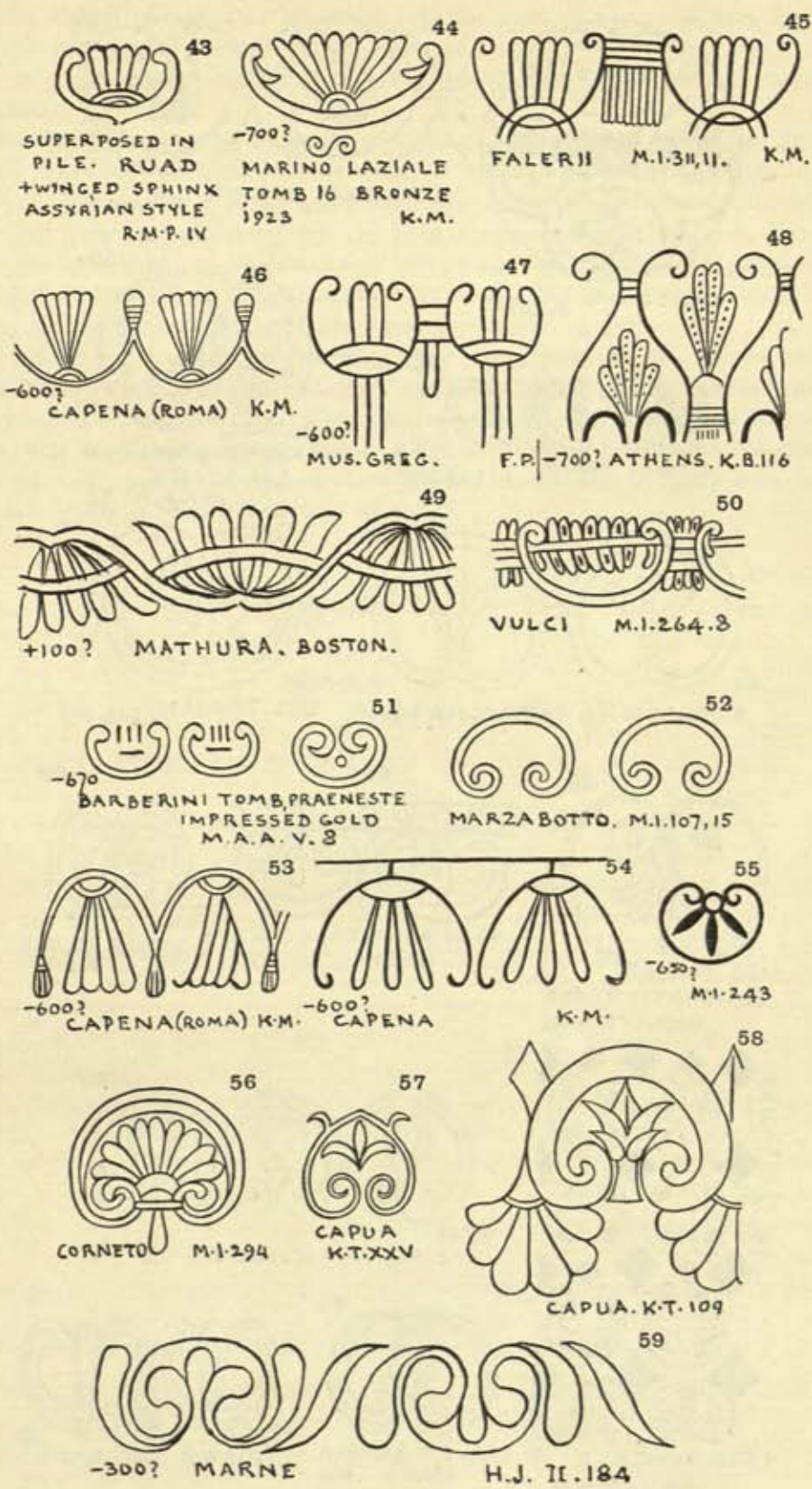
Two patterns which can hardly be separated from this stage are 48, at Athens in the same period, and 49 from Mathura, India (now in Boston Fine Arts Museum), in which the band across the group seems to connect it with Figs. 35, 36 and 50. The last named has advanced from the others and leads on to 51, where the bowl form has merely three lines and one across, detached. This comes from 20 miles east of Rome.

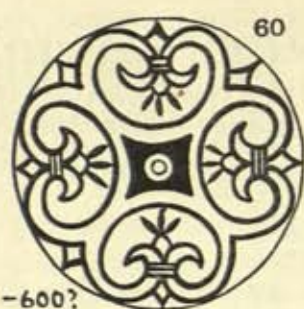
Now begins the inversion of this form; that 53 and 54 are the same subject as 45 cannot be doubted, and they are from Capena, like 46. The inverted form 52, at Marzobotto, takes the form up to Bologna, but otherwise the following examples are mostly near Rome. The design was then a Phoenician importation into Southern Etruria.

After the form was used either way up, we find more license in adding leafage to the opening, as in 56, which comes from 45 miles north of Rome, and in 57 from 100 miles south of Rome. A probable derivation, 59, appears in Northern France, long before the Roman invasion, and therefore carried by trade.

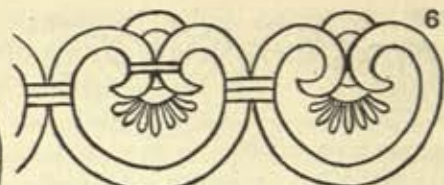
The Italian form seems to have passed back to Crete (60) in the early period, as this is inseparable from the Vetulonia example, 61, from 100 miles north of Rome. The same is found at Chiusi (62) at 80 miles north of Rome.

Passing now into well-known classical times, various forms of the same design are found about Rome; 64 is in the well-lighted catacomb of S. Sebastiano, on gesso work, of about 50 A.D.; others are on the Palatine (63), on the base of the column of Trajan (65), and in the tomb of the Pancratii (66). By Roman trade this passed out to India, and appears in the caves of Ajunta (67).





60  
-600?  
CRETE K.B.115



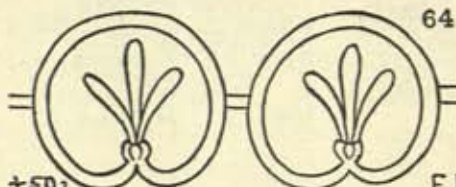
61  
VETULONIA, LICTOR. M.I.191.4



62  
CHIUSI, PANIA M.I.225.7



63  
+90  
CRYPTOPORTICUS  
PALATINE  
M.A.A, IV, XI



64  
+50?  
SEBASTIANO CATACOMB, ROME, F.P. +130



65  
COL. TRAIAN, G.A.117



66  
+150  
PANCRAII TOMB  
M.A.A. IV. XXXIII



67  
+450 AJANTA, C.I.P. 31  
INDIA



68  
+546  
S.VITALE, RAVENNA  
R.S.79



69  
+546 S.VITALE  $\Phi$   
RAVENNA



70  
+706  
S.MARIA, ANTICA. ROME  $\Phi$



71  
S.MARIA, ANTICA  
ROME .F.P.



72  
+770  
S.MARIA, CIVIDALE  $\Phi$



Later still it survived at Ravenna (68, 69), and it was worn out finally in the viii<sup>th</sup> century at Rome (70, 71), and at Cividale (72), where we can bid it rest in peace, with its relics of anthers and the pistil between them still recognisable.

This series is a good example of the long persistence of a form as such, after all the sense has been knocked out of it, and how in new shapes it starts again and runs a fresh course of decay, the Lily, the Bowl, and the Foliage form. The entire independence of the lotus series is clearly marked. The lotus has no external trace of stamens, and the petals are straight. The lily, on the contrary, has everted petals, projecting pistils, and the in-curved anthers, which continue as the main element in the later period.

The dates of the earliest examples show the Cretan origin, before 2000 B.C. Coming thence to Egypt, by 1400 B.C., the idea passed to the Hittites, and on to Assyria as a tree pattern. Thence, transformed by ignorance, it reached Cyprus, and so (passing by its origin in Crete) it came by Phoenician trade to the Tiber, and spread northward from Rome, naturalized in Italy as a foliage form, and finally a senseless group of relief.

FLINDERS PETRIE.