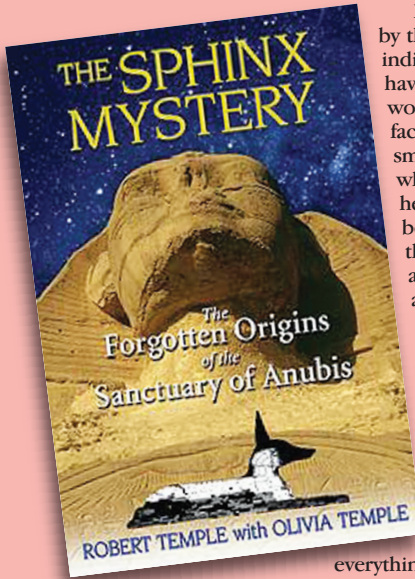


The Sphinx Mystery: The Forgotten Origins of the Sanctuary of Anubis

by Robert Temple



Everyone has always been mystified by the Sphinx. Even if they have been indifferent to the pyramids (as some have, believe it or not), they have wondered about the Sphinx. Whose face is that? And why the Mona Lisa smile? Or is it a smile? Hard to tell, what with the damage. And why is the head so small compared to the giant body? And what is it doing down there in a pit, rather than sitting on a peak somewhere so that it can be admired from afar?

I decided I really had to figure all of this out, and it was intolerable that we should remain in ignorance of all of these things for a moment longer. It took a few years, which was a long moment, but I now think I can answer all of these questions and lots more besides. I was not at all prepared for what I discovered. It goes so against everything that everyone thought they knew.

But then I like that. I believe that everybody is always wrong, including myself, and nothing delights me more than proving it.

First of all, the face is the face of a pharaoh (no surprise there!), but not of a pharaoh anyone had ever suggested before.

Then, the body is not the body of a lion at all. It never was.

What is it then, if it is not a lion and does not have the face of a pharaoh whom anyone has ever suggested before?

I identified the face of the pharaoh with the help of a long-forgotten and unjustly maligned study of the subject written in the late 19th century by a German scholar, Ludwig Borchardt, which I have translated and included as an appendix. Borchardt, the Director of the German Institute at Cairo, was laughed at because of his analysis of the face of the Sphinx, but I have been able to vindicate him. It is an interesting tale of misperception. Now the precise identity of the pharaoh whose face is on the Sphinx is known at last, which helps explain the history of the Sphinx, since that face was re-carved from the neck of an original animal head.

The Sphinx never had a lion's body. It is the body of a dog. As may be seen in the drawing, the Sphinx was originally carved as a giant statue of a crouching Anubis. He was the traditional guardian of the necropolis, and he appropriately crouched at the entrance to the Giza Plateau. Once one realizes that the Sphinx is Anubis, much ancient evidence pours in to confirm it. All Egyptologists have been puzzled until now that the world's largest stone statue was never mentioned in early texts or depicted in ancient art. The reason is they were looking for a lion with a man's head, and the Sphinx never had a lion's body and only later had a man's head.

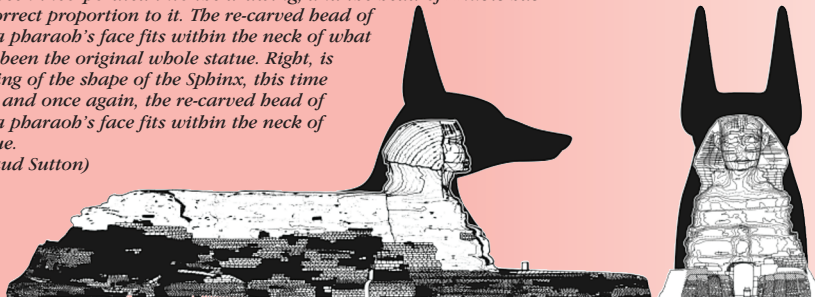
The Pyramid Texts of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties are full of references to the Sphinx, but you cannot recognise them unless you realize the Sphinx was originally Anubis. He is described so accurately in those texts that they even specify that he was beside a causeway at Giza. I have gathered all the quotations, and I have reproduced ancient depictions of the 'super-sized Anubis' from the Old Kingdom, where they are found in Fourth Dynasty royal tombs.

What about the water erosion? Most people by now know the claims of water erosion at the Sphinx. Egyptologists scoff at this idea, but then they would, because they can't explain it. When one can't explain something, one's last refuge is to scoff.

But there is water erosion at the Sphinx. Anyone can see that. However, it does not come from ancient rain of 10,000 BC as maintained by other writers. It comes from the fact that the Sphinx Pit was originally a moat full of water. The Nile at the time of inundation came right up to the edge of the Sphinx Temple in early times. I have studied and photographed the evidence showing the channel where the water was led in, and the bolt-holes and counter-weight indentations in the stones for the sluice gates. These are in an area never entered by tourists, which I was able to study carefully with special

Left, we see a re-drawing of the shape of the Sphinx as it would have appeared in the Old Kingdom, when it was a crouching Anubis. The exact profile and proportions of the Sphinx have been incorporated into the drawing, and the head of Anubis has been added in correct proportion to it. The re-carved head of the Sphinx with a pharaoh's face fits within the neck of what I believe to have been the original whole statue. Right, is another re-drawing of the shape of the Sphinx, this time in full face view, and once again, the re-carved head of the Sphinx with a pharaoh's face fits within the neck of the original statue.

(Drawings by Daud Sutton)



permission from the Supreme Council of Antiquities. The evidence has since been destroyed, so my photos are the only surviving record of it.

Anubis thus sat surrounded by water. The water erosion on the statue itself is horizontal, due to varying water levels. But the water erosion on the sides of the pit, particularly on the south side, is vertical. This is because there was so much windblown sand accumulating continually in the moat that it often had to be dredged. During the process of dredging, much water poured with great force vertically down the sides of the moat, causing that erosion.

Anubis's lake was known in Old Kingdom times as Jackal Lake. It is mentioned often in the Pyramid Texts and elsewhere. Special ceremonies took place there, which are described in the book.

I have been able to show that the three main pyramids and the Sphinx were part of an integral complex all designed at once. The pyramids were not built through the successive whims of a series of pharaohs, but were all designed at the same time, and the precise size and general shape of the Sphinx as Anubis was specified in relation to the three pyramids, according to a surprising plan which is shown in the book. It was fundamentally connected with a resurrection cult. It did not necessarily have anything to do with Pharaohs Cheops or Chephren, who may merely have 'usurped' the monuments, which may all be somewhat earlier than is generally thought.

And what about the notorious 'secret chamber' under the Sphinx? Does it exist? Yes! I have discovered 281 years' worth of published eye-witness accounts by people who actually entered it. It was not original, but was an intruded shaft and tomb chamber. I give its precise position, and even the measurements of the shaft leading to it, which was blocked up with cement in 1926 by Émile Baraize. This chamber has nothing to do with the 'rump tunnel' beneath the Sphinx, of which I also publish a photograph which I took inside it. I also discuss the tunnel leading forwards in the Sphinx's body from the 'rump tunnel', which is unknown to most people, and show a photo of the beginning of it too.

There are more mysteries of the Sphinx discussed in the book besides these, but as you can see, the book contains a great deal of information which shatters conventional notions. I am one of the world's leading enemies of conventional notions, so welcome to this china shop in which I smash everything in sight. Out of the rubble rises a coherent and sensible Sphinx, a new/old Sphinx, the true Sphinx, a Sphinx we can all be proud of.

The book is 576 pages long, and it includes at the back a complete collection of all descriptions of the Sphinx from the time of the Roman author Pliny until 1837 (the date at which we became exhausted and had to stop). Most of these had to be translated into English. Just think of all those trips to the British Library you won't have to make in future. It's all there, between two covers.

There is also a vast number of illustrations in the book. I had to write about 375 captions. The many modern photos appear in duotone in the book, a process which suits the large number of very old photos from my collection showing the Sphinx at various stages in its history. So that readers can also have the modern photos in full colour, however, we have created a special website for the book, www.sphinxmystery.com, where they are all available, with the same numbers as in the book, so that they are found easily. The website also has additional material for pdf download. The activation of the website occurs at the time of publication in February, 2009, and is specifically designed to be supplemental to the book.

This book was written jointly with my wife Olivia, who translated all the French accounts, took many of the photos, and was present on every visit to the Sphinx and the Sphinx and Valley Temples. She edited and revised much of the book, and it is very much a joint endeavour. We always work together when investigating ancient mysteries. With her sixth sense and mine as well, that gives us seven senses instead of six, and besides, she has sharper eyes for visual things, whereas my nose is as sensitive as that of a dog, or should I say Anubis. What she can't see and I can't sniff out isn't worth finding.

The book is also a joint endeavour with you, because if you do not read it, it has *not happened*. So together, let's make it happen!

Robert Temple
December 2008

THE SPHINX MYSTERY: The Forgotten Origins of the Sanctuary of Anubis by Robert Temple with Olivia Temple, published by Inner Traditions, £19.99 **Illustrated Paperback** (576 pages with 338 illustrations).

Robert Temple is visiting professor of the history and philosophy of science at Tsinghua University in Beijing, a fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, and member of the Egypt Exploration Society, Royal Historical Society, Institute of Classical Studies, and the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies. He is the author of 12 books, including The Sirius Mystery, Oracles of the Dead, and The Genius of China. He and his wife, Olivia, also translated Aesop: The Complete Fables. They live in Bridgewater, Somerset.