

Age-old secrets of the Sphinx, the enigmatic edifice guarding the Pyramids on the Giza plateau in Egypt, are unlocked in this remarkable book from the international best-selling author Robert Temple following 10 years of meticulous research.

American-born Robert and his wife Olivia, an artist and writer with whom he works closely, have lived in their farmhouse on the Somerset Levels near Glastonbury for 30 years. Robert is perhaps best known for his 1976 book *The Sirius Mystery*, republished in 1999, suggesting that the Dogon people of Mali in west Africa have a tradition of contact with intelligent extra-terrestrial beings from the Sirius star system.

When Robert and Olivia first visited the Sphinx, intuitively they knew something was wrong with it. Why was the head so small, and quite out of proportion with the body, and why was the back flat? And what was it doing down in a pit?

In a book that represents a triumph for independent research into ancient mysteries, the couple reveal that the Sphinx was never a lion with a human head but a giant statue of Anubis, the Egyptian jackal god, set in a moat. They conclude that the face of the Sphinx was that of a Middle Kingdom Pharaoh, Amenemhet II, a re-carving replacing the head of the original jackal which had probably been damaged by vandals when the Old Kingdom collapsed.

A later king of Egypt, Thothmes IV, who excavated the Sphinx from the sand hundreds of years later, falsely claimed that it had the body of a lion, ignoring the fact simply because the lion was a "royal beast" and that was what he wanted the monument to portray, so launching a misconception which has survived to the present day.

"It is amazing how effective propaganda can be," Robert wryly comments, having tackled "consensus reality" - what we all agree to believe - head on.

The disproportionate size of the body to the head could not be seen prior to the excavation of the Sphinx in 1926 so that was why there were no earlier suggestions of the re-carving of the head.

Photographic evidence of ancient sluice gate traces show that, during the Old Kingdom, the Sphinx as jackal Anubis sat surrounded by a moat filled with water from the Nile - called Jackal Lake in the ancient Pyramid Texts - where religious ceremonies were held, and Robert also shows how the exact size and position of the Sphinx were geometrically determined in relation to the pyramids of Cheops and Chephren, and that it was part of a pharaonic resurrection cult, making Giza a unity.

"Truly this plan is magnificent and beautiful," Robert says.

And crucially, he demolishes the theory which has been promulgated by certain popular authors since the 1960s that the Sphinx is much older than conventionally thought, perhaps dating from as far back as 10,500BC, and was the product of an early advanced civilisation destroyed in a global catastrophe.

While evidence for such a lost civilisation continues to grow in other areas, Robert proves that the Sphinx was built at the same time as the

Story behind the Sphinx



Robert and Olivia Temple, pictured right, believe they have pieced together the true history of the Sphinx near the Egyptian pyramids, above; they think that it was once a giant statue of Anubis, inset



Pyramids, about 5,000 years ago, "crouching as the guardian of the sacred necropolis at its entrance".

The 10,500BC date was arrived at because it was thought that water erosion at the Sphinx could have been caused only by a wetter climate thousands of years before the height of the Ancient Egyptian civilisation. But Robert points out that this involves 7,000 years of "missing" archaeological remains, and demonstrates that such erosion was caused by changing water levels in the moat over centuries.

"We are opening the door to people to discover more about the Sphinx mystery," said Olivia. "It shows how important it is to be in the vanguard of discovering things, to not be part of an organisation and be thwarted by what other people think."

The couple expect their book - it has 375

illustrations and includes copious reference material - to be "quite unpopular" with Egyptologists because it will challenge cherished notions. "We hope they will take it seriously and that it will lead eventually to some changed ideas," said Robert. "We think our case is convincing conclusions that come naturally from looking at the material."

Robert and Olivia - she translated early French reports on the Sphinx and took many of the photographs for the new book - are among key speakers at the Megalithomania conference at Glastonbury today and tomorrow. Robert and Olivia will also be signing copies of *The Sphinx Mystery* at Gothic Image, High Street, Glastonbury, today at 12.30pm.

Visit www.sphinxmystery.info and www.megalithomania.co.uk for further information.

Geoff Ward