



The tomb of King Tutankhamun was a treasure trove. Now, in his brilliant new book, author **ROBERT TEMPLE** claims there are grander burial sites that are filled with jewels and gold

KING Tutankhamun died at the age of 19 in 1323 BC. His unexpected death while still a boy meant that there was no large royal tomb ready for him, so he was buried in a small and obscure site which was so insignificant that it was even overlooked by the ancient tomb robbers. It was opened in 1922 by Howard Carter and his team and the treasures found in it astounded the world. But what if a really large tomb of a powerful and famous pharaoh were found intact? It would be likely to contain treasure that would far exceed anything imagined before.

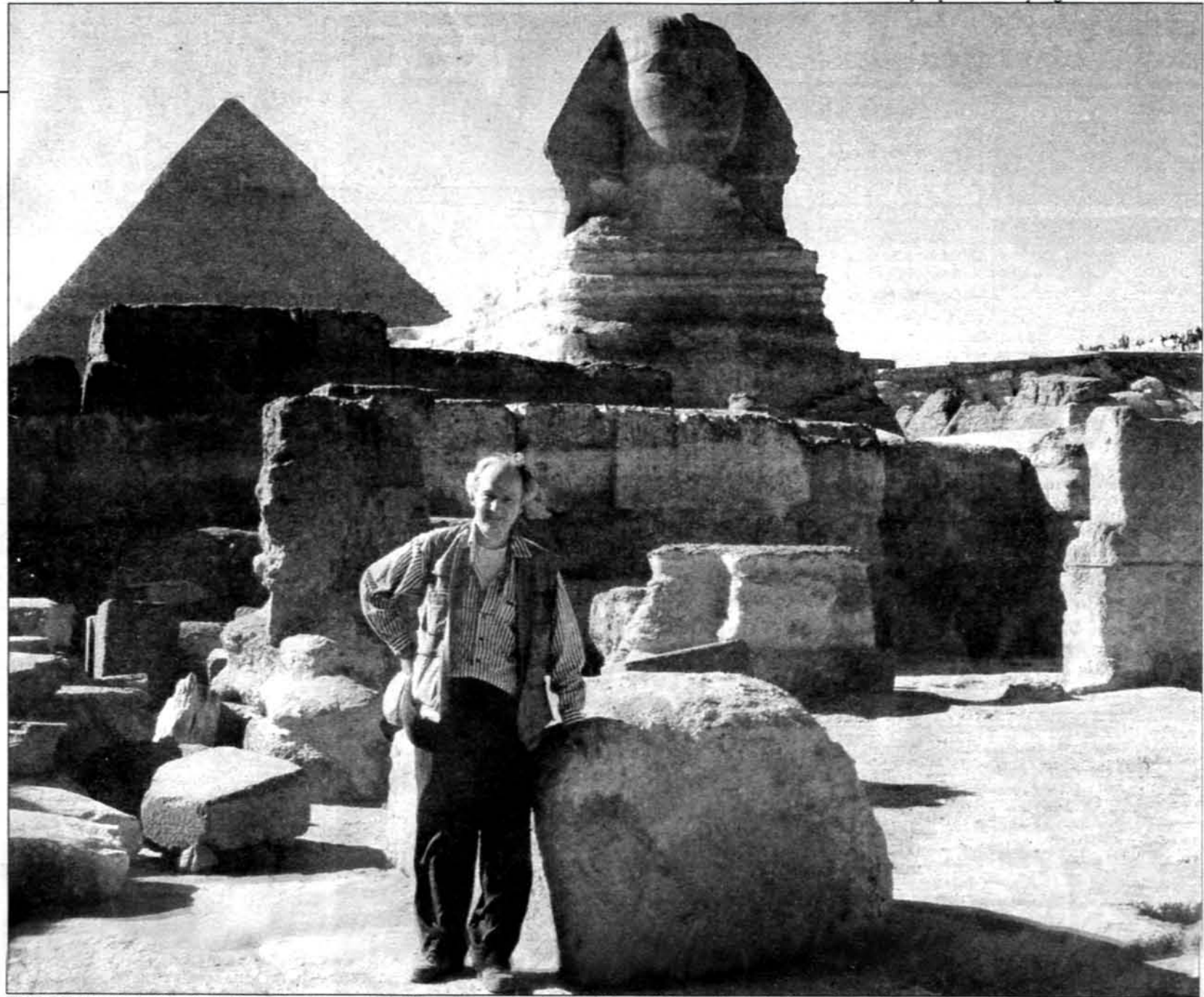
It will happen. Evidence has now been found for not just one but seven intact royal tombs at Giza in Egypt, detailed in my new book, *Egyptian Dawn*. These seven grand royal tombs are just sitting there waiting for us to open them. They include the tombs of the three most famous pharaohs of them all, Cheops, Chephren and Mycerinus, after whom the three main pyramids of Giza are named.

Much will be found when these tombs are opened, as the treasure of gold, jewels, texts, statues, beds, canopies, chairs, toiletries of kings and queens, piles of old linen and all the things thought necessary for a king in the other world are found inside them. And the ancient texts written on papyrus and leather will at last tell us the true story of the origins of Egyptian civilisation, because these tombs are more than 4,500 years old.

How do we know they exist? I was granted exclusive official access to a sealed site at Giza and made the first of my discoveries there with my colleague from a Greek university. At first I couldn't believe my eyes at what I found.

WHAT I discovered in the ruined remains of the Sphinx Temple at the foot of the Sphinx was a strange feature cut into the limestone bedrock of the floor of the temple. It was a long channel that ran out under the temple wall, each block of the wall weighing about 40 tons.

Into this channel had been inserted with the greatest of care a very long piece of solid red granite from Aswan, which was wedged in very tightly. That piece of granite must weigh at least 100 tons. It runs 5.24 metres, as far as the temple wall, then goes under it and emerges on the other side. It contains a tiny channel only 9cm high



THE REAL INDIANA JONES: Robert Temple in the ruins at the foot of the Sphinx, where he found the first evidence of a still-sealed tomb

My quest to find the riches of ancient Egypt

that runs inside the entire length, which is about 30ft in total.

When I studied the excavation reports, I saw that this bizarre construction was casually dismissed as a "water drainage channel". However, I had a device called an inclinometer with me and I was able to determine that the "drain" sloped inwards and not outwards, so it could not have drained anything away. In any case, the opening was so tiny that no fluid of any quantity could have flowed through it. So what was it? A cable channel, constructed with enormous time, trouble and expense for lowering something immensely heavy down into a subterranean chamber.

When I went round to the other side of the wall to see where the channel came out I was confronted by a sheer cliff face at my feet, about 30ft high. There was only one thing for it, so I jumped down into the trench which had been cut out of the rock in antiquity to separate the cliff from the temple.

There was a small opening cut into the base of the cliff wall. Prob-

ing with a steel spike, I could feel that there was no stone beneath the sand at that point. It was an open access that had become filled with sand, probably before the temple was built more than 4,500 years ago. This place was only excavated in 1936, its existence having been forgotten since at least 2,000 BC when it was abandoned at

'I discovered a strange feature cut in the floor'

the end of the period known as the Old Kingdom.

The stone sarcophagi used in Egyptian tombs are usually of between 40 and 60 tons apiece. There was a basalt pulley of the appropriate date with a triple groove, showing that three-stranded lowering cables were used at Giza. They would have been made of Egyptian

cotton, which is the strongest natural rope material known.

It was clear that this was an opening to an intact tomb dating from before the construction of the Sphinx Temple. Between 2,000 BC and 1936 it was covered in a mountain of sand, so no tomb robbers could have found it. This temple, as ancient as it is, was actually built on top of an even older tomb. The best way to conceal a tomb is to build an entire temple on top of it.

I eventually found six more of these cable guides leading to crypts under the sites of former Giza temples. One is beneath the basalt floor just east of the Great Pyramid, another beneath the funerary temple of Chephren. All we need to do now is get digging.

Because we have also re-dated the Giza pyramids, we discovered that they are too old and were built before Cheops and the other pharaohs after whom they are now named were born. So who could possibly have built them at such an early date? Who had the ability to handle large stones and possessed

advanced knowledge of maths, geometry, the stars and all the technical necessities required?

THE Sumerians in the east built only in brick and so the "Libyans" (no one knows who they really were) must have provided the advanced knowledge to build the pyramids and tombs.

Now we need to investigate what I have found. Is there a new Lord Carnarvon (Howard Carter's financial backer) out there who wants to fund a dig to reveal far more than the contents of a 19-year-old boy pharaoh's tomb? If so get in touch!

● To order *Egyptian Dawn* by Robert Temple (Cornerstone, £25) with free UK delivery, send a cheque or PO made payable to Express Bookshop to Egyptian Offer, PO Box 200, Falmouth TR11 4WJ or ring 0871 988 8367 (10p/min from BT landlines) or visit www.expressbookshop.com