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978-1-108-07567-1 - Operations Carried On at the Pyramids of Gizeh in 1837: With an Account of a Voyage into Upper Egypt, and an Appendix: Volume 2

Howard Vyse

Excerpt

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OPERATIONS CARRIED ON AT GIZEH,

*§c. §c.**May 31st.*

	Reis, 9.	Men, 217.	Children, 191.
Great Pyramid.—Excavation in northern front.			
— Excavation eastward in northern front.			
— Excavation westward in northern front.			
— Excavation for round holes in northern front.			
— Roof in Queen's Chamber.			
— Clearing Chambers and Passages.			
Second Pyramid.—Roof in Belzoni's Chamber.			
Third Pyramid.—Interior.			
Excavation between Third and Fifth Pyramids.			
Campbell's Tomb.			
Fourth Pyramid.—Interior.			
Shaft between Campbell's Tomb and Second Pyramid.			
Shaft north of Sphinx.			

MR. MASH and Mr. Perring went on with the survey. Excavations were begun to the westward and eastward of the centre on the northern front of the Great Pyramid, in order to discover whether the step and pavement were continued, and also to ascertain the base. In both places pieces of the casing stones, and of the blocks, were

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found, which had formed a pavement, and the rock had been levelled, but not to so great a width as at the centre. The ground was also cleared in front of the north-eastern angle, that the round holes and grooving already mentioned might be surveyed. Several green idols were found at the depth of fifty-five feet in the southern foss of Campbell's Tomb, also a round knob of yellow stone, apparently the stopper of a vase, and a rectangular oblong piece of the same material, two inches by one inch and a half, and half an inch thick. It was highly polished, but was perfectly plain, without carving or inscription. These articles were afterwards sent to the consulate. I again examined the ruins to the eastward of the Great Pyramid, and went round the works with Mr. Raven.

An Englishman (Goodman), whom I had sent to Alexandria with the packet for Mr. Hamilton, returned with a letter from Colonel Campbell, and entered my service. He informed me that the weather had been unusually stormy at Alexandria. We had also experienced at the pyramids heavy showers and strong gusts of wind chiefly about sunset. The ground at Gizeh, and also at Thebes, is in many places broken up by ravines, or channels, which are supposed to have been caused by heavy rains. Mr. Wilkinson and also Mr. Hamilton mention periodical showers; and pits have been formed near the entrances of some of the tombs at Thebes, apparently to secure them from damp. Yet, although heavy showers do occasionally occur, continued rain is exceedingly rare, and it can hardly be supposed to have fallen in sufficient quantities to have made these deep channels, which are probably, therefore, the repeated effects of violent winds.

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June 1st.

Reis, 10. Men, 198. Children, 157.

The same works were repeated.

The Sheik of Harronieh again informed me that the people from his village, and from Cafr el Batran, would be sent to the canal. I therefore requested Mr. Piozan to apply to the Madyr. Mr. Mash, copied the hieroglyphics in Campbell's Tomb. A flat piece of black stone, about half an inch thick, square at one end, and round at the other, but without any hole, carving, or inscription, was found in the southern foss. Particles of leaf gold, broken pieces of coarse earthenware, and a small ornament like a cross, were likewise taken out. This tomb, which, before it was plundered, must have been amazingly rich, was a sort of Columbarium. Quantities of bones, and five sarcophagi, were found in it; and probably many others have been deposited in the adjacent pits. The whole ground, indeed, is one vast cemetery, and abounds with shafts and sepulchral grottoes formed in the quarries, which have supplied materials for the pyramids and for other buildings.

June 2d.

Reis, 10. Men, 201. Children, 165.

Great Pyramid.—Excavation in northern front.

— Excavation eastward in northern front.

— Excavation westward in northern front.

— Roof in Queen's Chamber.

— Clearing the Chambers and Passages.

Second Pyramid.—Roof in Belzoni's Chamber.

Third Pyramid.—Interior.

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Excavation between Third and Fifth Pyramids.

Campbell's Tomb.

Fourth Pyramid.—Interior.

Well north of Sphinx.

The shaft¹ between Campbell's Tomb and the Second Pyramid was examined. From the grotto at the bottom of the first shaft a second descended to a lower chamber, in which square pillars had been left to support the roof; a third shaft in this apartment was full of water, which was perfectly fresh, and covered the floor to the depth of four or five inches. The level of the water was one hundred and thirteen feet seven inches below the top of the upper shaft. The Arabs said that an horizontal passage proceeded to the northward from these chambers through the side of the rock, but, owing to the drifting of the desert sand, and to the effects of repeated excavations, it is at present impossible to form an idea of the original surface of the ground. It was highly probable that water had been collected in artificial reservoirs for religious purposes; but we did not suppose that it proceeded from a spring, or fountain, as nothing of the kind was to be met with in the whole country of Egypt; although, had it been proved to be an original source, it would have sufficiently accounted for the reputed sanctity of the ground. It may proceed from rain, but does not appear to flow from the river; as it does not rise and fall with it.² In whatever way it may be produced, the sarcophagi could not have been intentionally immersed, and the inundations of the tombs must have

¹ No. 1, in map.

² See Appendix; where the different levels are stated.

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accidentally arisen from the artificial channels having been stopped up, and from the water having penetrated between the strata of the rock.

In answer to the letter, which Mr. Piozan had sent by an express into Upper Egypt, the Madyr informed him that the people from Koum el Eswith, Cafr el Batran, and Harronieh, were ordered to come to the pyramids, but that the population of the other villages would be wanted at the canal. This arrangement appeared sufficiently explicit, but it was extremely difficult to find out to what villages the people belonged. The Sheiks could not be depended upon; and, from the fear of conscription, for the army, or for compulsory labour at the factories, many of the people had no settled habitations, but wandered from place to place as opportunity offered. From the fineness of the climate their wants were few, and no ideas of comfort or of home interfered with their wandering inclinations.

A small piece of brown stone, inscribed with part of the cartouche, or legend of Suphis, was dug out of the rubbish at the centre of the northern front of the Great Pyramid. At first I imagined it was supposititious; upon examination, however, it seemed to be genuine, but it did not appear to have been used in the construction of the building.³

This cartouche, together with another, is introduced amongst the hieroglyphics, with which the interior of a building to the westward of the Great Pyramid is covered. It has been called the tomb of Trades; and that part of the inscription, which relates to the cartouche, has been

³ The stone has been already described in vol. i., page 258.

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sent to me by Mr. Perring, and is contained in the following note, with Mr. Birch's remarks.⁴ It had been copied by Signor Rosellini, before the discovery of it in the

⁴ The hieroglyphics, found in the tomb of Trades, over a male and female figure, contain, as may be naturally expected, their names. That over the male has the name and titles of the son of the person to whom the sculptures in the tomb relate, and for whom it was probably excavated. It refers to Eimai, "his beloved eldest son, royal orator, royal priest of the king Shoufô (Suphis or Cheops), superintendent of the palace, scribe of truth." The one over the figure called a female (most probably a person of very high rank), bears the name of "Skafasonkh, royal orator, prophet, royal priest, superintendent of the palaces of Shoufo (Cheops), of the royal race, devoted to his lord, loving his lord," &c. In this latter instance, the name of a king forms part of the name of a private individual,* an occurrence not uncommon at this period, and often adopted during the era of the Psammetici, who revived both the prenomina, titles, customs, &c., of the early dynasties. By the help of these inscriptions, the individual successions of the several dynasties may be sometimes made out, because the names of course generally occur either during, or posterior to, that of the monarch assumed. In the present instance, for example, it shews that the monarch Skafas was one of the immediate predecessors of Cheops, if not the personage termed, in the lists of Eratosthenes and Manetho, Biuris, Aiuris, or Soris.

M. Rosellini indeed makes this monarch a successor of Suphis II. (see tom. i. tav. 1, 6), but the additional light thrown upon the subject by the inscription of the tomb in question proves that he must have been a predecessor, unless we suppose, contrary to all analogy, that names were assumed in advanced life and after infancy.† M. Rosellini

* In an inscription upon a tomb brought from Gizeh (B. M.) a person is named "(Re-Shef) Nofre. Shefre-Nofre;—The good Chefred." Many examples may be found of names thus compounded of the Saite dynasty.

† We know from the Bible, that Joseph's name was changed in Egypt, and those of Daniel and his companions during their captivity; but this was probably on account of their being foreigners.

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Great Pyramid, and was ascribed by him to Suphis, the Cheops of Herodotus. As that monarch is said to have

(tom. i. p. 131) does not propose any reading for the name, but the anterior part, of the Phonetic value of which he was not aware, replaces in the ritual a group reading ΔC, perhaps the obsolete word for statue, and still retaining in Coptic the sense of “antient,” “ancestor,” &c. He justly regards this as the ultimate portion of the name, of which the other part reads CKΔϢ, “he who offers,” or “is devoted to.” The whole then reads CKΔϢΔC, Skafas—a name very analogous to those of the dynasty. Some difference exists between the reading of the group ϩ or ϩϣ, which M. Rosellini, in his account of this tomb (Monumenti Civili, parte seconda, tom. i. p. 35), supposes to signify “purificator.” M. Salvolini, on the contrary, regards the expression as that of “to speak, address, orator” — ϩϣ of the Coptic, probably from its occurring with the determinative image of a seated man holding his hand to his mouth

— the determinative symbol of verbs of speaking, calling, &c. It is remarkable that both these royal names are unaccompanied by regal titles; and the formula, “loving his lord,” is of common occurrence in the inscriptions unattended by the title of the monarch—the office held indicating “the lord” referred to. The accompanying transcription and interlinear interpretation, reads from left to right, in accordance with the European manner, in order to make the translation plainer:

OVER A MALE FIGURE.

Cɪ-ϣ wɛp ɪΔɪϣ cɔɾtɛn ϩ cɔɾtɛn ɔɾΔβ
 His son eldest loving him royal orator? royal priest of

Wɔɾϣɔɾ zɔɪ ɛɛp ɪɪ ɪΔΔ-ɪɪ cɔɾɪ ɛɪɛɪ
 Shoufou prophet superintendent of the house palace scribe of truth? Eimal.
 Suphis I. or Cheops.

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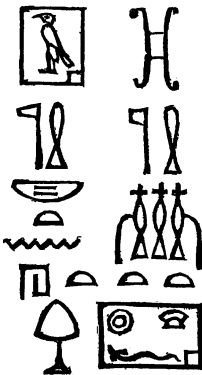
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cartouche was recorded in any place by the priests, or, at all events, that it was not effaced after his death.

The quarry-marks in the chambers of construction in the Great Pyramid, and upon the stones belonging to the Second and Third, prove that hieroglyphics were made use of before these buildings were erected; and the inscriptions in the tomb of Trades shew that they had been employed at

immediately preceding it. At a later period, both terms were abandoned, and the term "royal scribe," the basilico-grammateus of the Greek inscriptions, appeared. II.—The term immediately following the cartouche is rather ambiguous. It appears, in Burton's "Excerpta," to follow or precede each of a small series of cartouches, according to the mode we are willing to read them — the inscription being, unfortunately, imperfect. M. Champollion, Gr. Eg. explains this as ⲒⲐ , or "prophet priest," but affords no information as to the reason of such hypothesis. As the title in the tombs and texts uniformly accompanies persons of the sacerdotal order, it is evidently some functionary of that class, as we have prophets of Amoun, Phtah, Monthra, and almost every principal deity of the Pantheon. But as the term is seldom placed absolutely by itself, and is always *prefixed* to the name of the deity, of which the individual was the priest, sometimes with the sign of the genitive case interposed, it possibly refers to the monarch; and priests, or prophet-priests of the monarch Remeses the Great, appear on some steles. At this early epoch, however, the title appears to have had some original signification analogous to "great God," "gracious God," &c., of a later time, as on the entrance of a Memphian tomb of this era. B. M., Egyptian Saloon, behind No. 64, the goddess Athor and Neith are termed — "*Athor the goddess, mistress of the abode of the*

syaomore. Neith, the goddess resident in the abode of the king Re-shaf, or Shaf-re (Cephren), where the symbols cannot signify "priest," and it is impossible that they indicate "prophet of the goddess Athor."



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that time for sepulchral purposes: they abound, in fact, upon almost every Egyptian tomb and sarcophagus, from the earliest ages down to the time of the Romans; and the exception formed by the pyramids, appears to corroborate the antient tradition that those buildings were the mausolea of the Shepherd Kings, who conquered Egypt, and who were entirely of a different race, and hostile to the religious institutions of the country.

The insertion of the cartouche of Mycerinus in the Fourth Pyramid may have been accidental,⁵ but the manner in which it is inscribed upon the mummy-board found in the Third, agrees with the assertions of the priests, that that king was held in a more favourable light than his predecessors, and it is probable that, on account of his toleration of their religious observances, he may have been considered worthy of funereal rites, and also of having his name recorded over the entrance into the pyramid. It is to be observed, however, that although his sarcophagus was different from those of his predecessors, and was highly ornamented with sculpture, yet that it did not bear a single hieroglyphic, and that his body was not enveloped, according to universal custom, in linen or cotton, but in woollen cloth. This mummy-cloth was the first that had been discovered made of that material,⁶ which is stated to have been considered impure by the antient Egyptians, and therefore unfit for sepulchral ceremonies; but more of it has been subsequently taken by Mr. Perring from some antient tombs at Tourah, which do not appear to have

⁵ See *July* 5.

⁶ An account of this discovery is given in the Appendix. A skull and some of the cloth have been deposited in the British Museum by Dr. Bowring.