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Charles Piazzi Smyth  
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### **Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid**

Charles Piazzi Smyth (1819–1900) was appointed to the post of Astronomer Royal for Scotland and Regius Professor of Astronomy at Edinburgh University in 1846. He was respected for his practical work, and his *Teneriffe, an Astronomer's Experiment* (1858) is also reissued in this series. However, this book, first published in 1864, is testimony to the author's interest in 'pyramidology', and although it was so popular in his own lifetime that it was reprinted five times, his eccentric interpretation of the data he had collected by measuring all aspects of the Great Pyramid of Giza damaged his scientific reputation. Smyth was convinced that the British measurement standard of an inch as a basic unit of length was associated with the sacred cubit of the Bible. This measure was supposedly incorporated in the Pyramid, which he claimed was built under divine guidance by the Ancient Israelites, and enshrined scientific information.

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,  
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108044417](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108044417)

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2012

This edition first published 1864

This digitally printed version 2012

ISBN 978-1-108-04441-7 Paperback

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ALEXANDER STRAHAN AND CO.

*London, . . . . . 32, Ludgate Hill.*  
*Edinburgh, . . . . . 35, Hanover Street.*  
*Glasgow, . . . . . 1, Royal Bank Place.*

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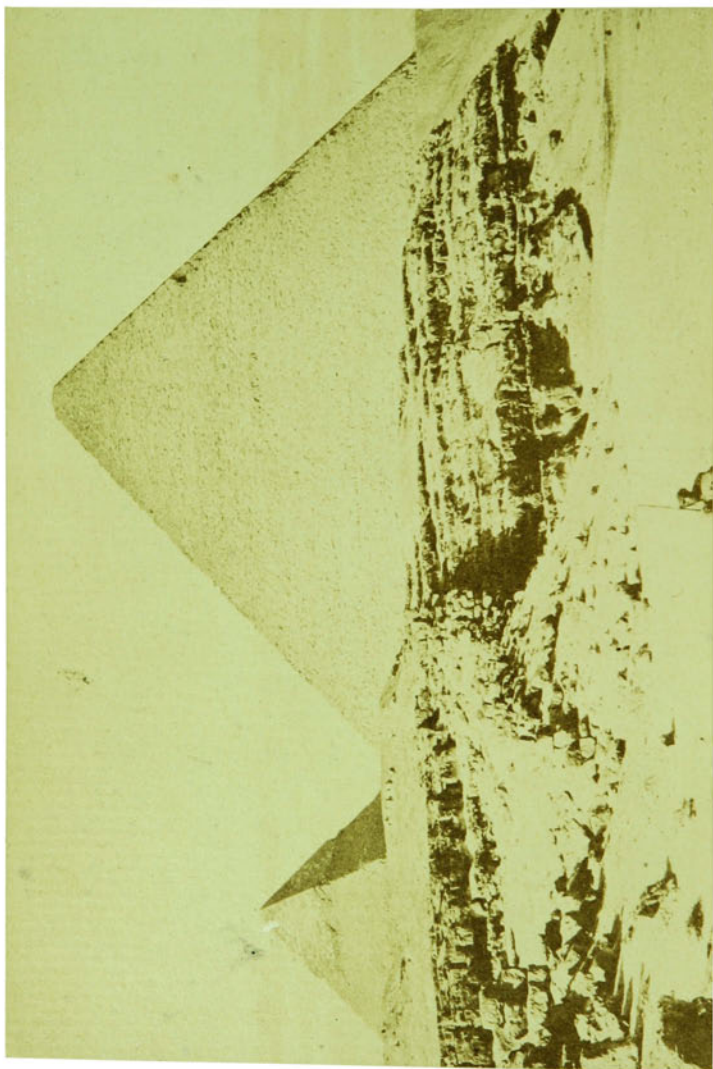
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PLATE. See preface & p. 6.



**THE GREAT PYRAMID OF JIZEH,**

Photographed by Francis Bedford, Esq. on March 5<sup>th</sup> 1862, during the travels of  
His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales.



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IN  
THE GREAT PYRAMID.

BY  
PROFESSOR C. PIAZZI SMYTH, F.R.SS. L. & E.  
ASTRONOMER-ROYAL FOR SCOTLAND.

*With Photograph, Map, and Plates.*

LONDON:  
ALEXANDER STRAHAN AND CO.  
1864.

Cambridge University Press

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EDINBURGH: T. CONSTABLE,  
PRINTER TO THE QUEEN, AND TO THE UNIVERSITY.

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IN the short interval between the printing and publication of this book, the estimable JOHN TAYLOR is dead.

During the late spring he had come to know, only too surely, that his mortal career was drawing rapidly to a close, while many years might still elapse before his Pyramid discoveries would be appreciated in the world; but he had already calmly resigned himself to believe, "that he must pass *away*, before the popular prejudice with which a new view is always received, can be forgotten."

"The *Cause*," he wrote recently in a private letter, "is the grand object; and if in any manner we are able, while on earth, to *vindicate the ways of God to man*,—we have not lived in vain." But again rather checking himself, he added: "*Many* must approve, before the thought will enter into the popular mind; and if that result ever takes place, I am only one among many who are entitled to any commendation; nay, there is no room for commendation to any one, for all do but impart what has been *given*;—'Paul plants, Apollos waters, but it is God gives the increase.' I suppose this is the meaning of the elders casting their crowns before the throne in Revelation iv."

Such was the spirit which fell asleep in the Lord, on the 5th of the present month.

*July 1864.*

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TO  
JOHN TAYLOR, ESQ., OF LONDON,  
IN HIS EIGHTY-FOURTH YEAR,  
AUTHOR OF "THE GREAT PYRAMID: WHY WAS IT BUILT?"

(In reference to which Lord Neaves, Vice-President in the Chair at the Royal Society, Edinburgh, on the evening of March 21, 1864, said:—"If these things are only coincidences, they are most extraordinary coincidences; but if they are facts, that is, if the metrical proportions indicated were designedly and purposely established, they form the most remarkable discovery of the age;")—

THIS ATTEMPT TO FOLLOW OUT SOME OF HIS ARGUMENTS,  
AND TO TEST THE TRUTH THAT IS IN THEM,

IS DEDICATED BY

THE FRIEND OF HIS LATTER YEARS,  
AND ADMIRER OF HIS TRUE AND EARNEST LIFE,

C. PIAZZI SMYTH.

EDINBURGH, *June* 1864.

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## P R E F A C E.

THE following pages are the foundation of a paper Origin of the Book. which I had the honour of reading before the Royal Society of Edinburgh, on March 21, 1864, descriptive of researches specially undertaken to test the truth and importance of some of the very remarkable statements in Mr. John Taylor's altogether remarkable book, published in London in 1859, and entitled,—

*The Great Pyramid; why was it built, and who built it?*

They contain, therefore,—though without attempting Endeavour to test the truth of Mr. Taylor's data and conclusions. to follow Mr. Taylor through the whole range of subject which his truly capacious mind and extensive reading had included,—the results of a not inconsiderable amount of investigation into original authorities on both the Pyramid and Egyptian monuments generally; as

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## PREFACE.

well, too, for the literature, as the mechanics, of those more scientific branches of the whole question which, from their nature, were not very far removed from much of my professional experience.

From a right point of view the Pyramid question unfolds itself.

In the course of this proceeding I could hardly help both feeling and confessing, very much as Mr. Taylor had done before me, that the theory, meaning, and then even the very history of the Great Pyramid, open out almost spontaneously when viewed in connexion with right leading ideas. In many details I have arrived at the same results as Mr. Taylor, though by a different road; in others, by prosecuting them longer, I have been enabled to penetrate somewhat further; and in others again I may have a few slight differences from him, though the general and final result of the whole is eminently *with* him and his conclusions; both those of them bearing on the Great Pyramid, as being the most ancient of finished primeval monuments, and those also indicating the part which it has had already, and is intended still to perform, in organizing the metrology, or weights and measures, of many nations

All of the more important of Mr. Taylor's conclusions affirmed, on examination by a second person.

Startling nature of some of the conclusions.

In this latter respect some of the conclusions are startling to a degree, especially as leading to a new and



## PREFACE.

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noble mission for science, and shadowing out something of the character, as well as place in the world's history, of the age in which we live.

Yet precisely some of the strangest and most soul-thrilling of these conclusions, are those which are best supported by proof from various quarters. Indeed that very one which led to the choice for this book of the title, *Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid* (*our* being used in a national sense), has been made the subject of a striking and apparently involuntary public acknowledgment in the press, within the last few weeks, by the highest authority in the whole country on general science.

One of the most remarkable has led to the title of this book.

For therein does it now stand asserted by that very great philosopher, that not the *yard*, as so often advocated by many men, but the *inch*, is really the unit of British linear measure; that it is, moreover, *hereditary* to the nation, and possesses some most admirable and even transcendent scientific recommendations; in illustration of one of which he proposes that a new standard shall be constructed, containing 25 such unit-inches very nearly; under the name of the "geometrical cubit;" whose remarkable adaptation to astronomical

Truth of the scientific bearings of that Pyramid conclusion, recently confessed by an independent philosopher.

and many other purposes he points out with all the fervour of genius working in a new field.

Mr. Taylor's discovery at the Pyramid, preceded the modern scientific discovery.

These truly noteworthy qualities, however, of the British inch were first brought to light, if we mistake not, by Mr. Taylor, from his researches in connexion with the Great Pyramid; and with this most signal addition, viz., that that particular *inheritance* of our nation did not come to pass by accident or chance—but was, on the contrary, the result of settled intention and high purpose, arranged from the beginning of the world! In partial demonstration whereof it may be mentioned, that the remarkable length alluded to, of *twenty-five* such unit inches (increased by  $\frac{1}{1000}$ th on the present Parliamentary inch), formed in early ages *the sacred cubit of the Jews*; and was specially maintained by them for important purposes, in antagonism to the measures of profane nations, during all the period of Divine Inspiration to the chosen of their race.

The newly-proposed modern standard, was the *sacred cubit* of the Jews.

A large part of the present book is therefore devoted to this branch of the question; and when it was prepared for the press, Mr. Strahan had just returned from a tour in the East, which he made during the late spring, in company with the Rev. Dr. Norman Macleod.

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This was extremely fortunate, for what he had seen when in Egypt of the Great Pyramid, its magnitude, majesty, and the deep mystery surrounding it at the place, induced him to enter, with even more than his usual zeal, into the effective bringing out of what he, as well as myself, hoped might throw some little light on the earliest record of intellectual and civilized man contained in the whole earth.

Mr. Alex. Strahan's recent visit to the Great Pyramid.

Not only, therefore, did Mr. Strahan allow any number of plates which a due explication of the Pyramid might require; but, guided by his own experience at the locality, he selected for the frontispiece one of the series of high-class photographs taken by Mr. Bedford, during the recent tour of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales; and has had it photographically copied, with special prohibition against all touching, "stopping of the sky," and anything else which should interfere in any manner or degree with the nature-painting of the whole scene.

He employs a photograph to vouch for the present state of the exterior.

This much, then, for the present aspect of the *exterior* of the Great Pyramid; while, touching its *interior*, Mr. Strahan reports that that deeply interesting vessel, the Porphyry Coffer, on which so many problems of

And reports the condition in which he found the interior.

Present condition of the  
Porphyry  
Coffer.

human regard, as well as scientific value depend,—is still safe in the silent but *ventilated* darkness of the so-called King's Chamber; standing on the polished granite floor, close to the spot where it was deposited by the founders of the Great Pyramid, in a special astronomical direction, more than 4000 years ago; and, by its presence, enabling the mighty edifice still to carry out efficiently the purposes of its ancient name.

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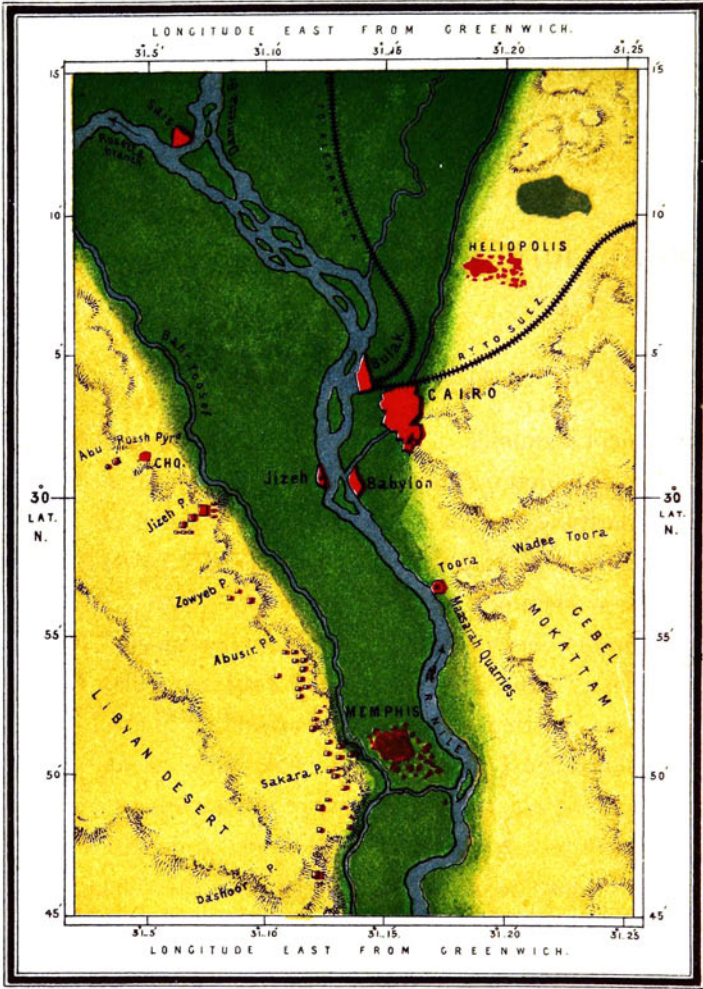
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MAP OF THE NORTHERN PART OF THE ANCIENT PYRAMID FIELD IN EGYPT.  
 SCALE -  $\frac{1}{500,000}$ .