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978-1-108-06593-1 - Travels in Southern Europe and the Levant 1810–1817

Charles Robert Cockerell Edited by Samuel Pepys Cockerell

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Travels in Southern Europe and the Levant, 1810–1817

The architect Charles Robert Cockerell (1788–1863) was encouraged to travel at a young age, so that he might draw inspiration from the great works of European architecture. However, when the Napoleonic Wars made parts of the continent inaccessible to Englishmen, his eye was turned towards southern Europe and the Ottoman Empire. This version of the Grand Tour took up seven years, during which he recorded the events in his journals. There his observations would have remained had it not been for the editorial labours of his son, Samuel Pepys Cockerell (1844–1921), who published the present work in 1903. The narrative takes in such cities as Constantinople, Athens, Florence and Rome. Touching also on friendships made with such figures as Byron, the text gives a sense of what continental travel was like at that time and how the architecture of the past continued to captivate designers in the modern age.

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TRAVELS IN SOUTHERN
EUROPE AND THE
LEVANT, 1810–1817. THE
JOURNAL OF C. R. COCKERELL, R.A.

EDITED BY HIS SON

SAMUEL PEPYS COCKERELL

With a Portrait

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PREFACE

My father, Charles Robert Cockerell, whose travels the following pages record, was the second son of Samuel Pepys Cockerell, a man of some means, architect to the East India Company and to one or more London estates. He was born on the 27th of April, 1788, and at a suitable age he went to Westminster, a fashionable school in those days. There he remained until he was sixteen. He was then set to study architecture, at first in his father's office, and later in that of Mr. Robert Smirke. His father must have had a great faith in the educational advantage of travel, as already in 1806, when he was only eighteen, he was sent a tour to study the chief architectural objects of the West of England and Wales. The sketches in the diary of this journey show him already the possessor of so light and graceful a touch in drawing that it is evident that he must have practised it from very

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early years. This no doubt was followed by other similar excursions, but his father's desire was that he should see foreign countries. Unfortunately, in 1810 most of the Continent was closed to Englishmen. Turkey, which included Greece, was, however, open. As it chanced, this was a happy exception. The current of taste for the moment was running strongly in the direction of Greek architecture; Smirke himself had but lately returned thence. When a scheme for making a tour there came to be discussed, Mr. William Hamilton, then Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, an intimate friend of the family, who had himself travelled in those parts, took a great interest in it, and offered to send him out as King's messenger with despatches for the fleet at Cadiz, Malta, and Constantinople. Such an offer was too good to refuse.

No definite tour had been or could be marked out in the then existing conditions of European politics. The traveller was to be guided by circumstances; but nothing approaching the length of absence, which extended itself to seven and a quarter years, was contemplated at the time of starting.

As far as possible I have used my father's own words in the following account of his journeys; but the letters and memoranda of a youth of twenty-two,

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who disliked and had no talent for writing, naturally require a great deal of editing.

His beautiful sketches form what may be called his real diary.

I should add that accounts of some of the episodes recorded in this Journal have seen the light already. For instance, the discovery of the Ægina Marbles and of the Phigaleian Marbles is narrated in my father's book, 'The Temples of Ægina and Bassæ,' and in Hughes's 'Travels' as well. Stackelberg gives his own account of the excavations at Bassæ in 'Der Apollotempel zu Bassae &c.' So that I cannot flatter myself that the matter is either quite new or well presented. But in spite of these drawbacks I have thought the Journal in its entirety worth publishing. Sympathetic readers will find between the lines a fairly distinct picture of what travel was like in the early years of the last century, and also the portrait of a not uninteresting personality.

SAMUEL PEPYS COCKERELL.

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PORTRAIT OF C. R. COCKERELL, *after a Pencil Drawing by*
J. D. INGRES.