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The large-scale scientific investigation of Egyptian antiquities by Western scholars began as an unintended consequence of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt during which, in 1799, the Rosetta Stone was discovered. The military expedition was accompanied by French scholars, whose reports prompted a wave of enthusiasm that swept across Europe and North America resulting in the Egyptian Revival style in art and architecture. Increasing numbers of tourists visited Egypt, eager to see the marvels being revealed by archaeological excavation. Writers and booksellers responded to this growing interest with publications ranging from technical site reports to tourist guidebooks and from children's histories to theories identifying the pyramids as repositories of esoteric knowledge. This series reissues a wide selection of such books. They reveal the gradual change from the 'tomb-robbing' approach of early excavators to the highly organised and systematic approach of Flinders Petrie, the 'father of Egyptology', and include early accounts of the decipherment of the hieroglyphic script.

#### Operations Carried On at the Pyramids of Gizeh in 1837

An army officer and politician, Richard William Howard Vyse (1784–53) also made his mark as an Egyptologist. This three-volume work, published in 1840–2, has remained an instructive resource in Egyptology up to the present day. Adopting the style of a journal, with illustrations and diagrams throughout, it narrates in detail his excavations at Giza, surveying and measuring the pyramids. Following Vyse's return to England, the work was continued by the engineer and surveyor John Shae Perring (1813–69). Vyse gives observations of his travels, and of the landscape, people and architecture he encountered, as well as details of the important work he carried out. Most notable was his discovery, using gunpowder, of four new chambers in the Great Pyramid containing 'quarry marks' – graffiti by the pyramid builders. Volume 1 (1840) covers the start of his travels in Egypt and the early excavations on the Great Pyramid.



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# Operations Carried On at the Pyramids of Gizeh in 1837

With an Account of a Voyage into Upper Egypt, and an Appendix

VOLUME 1

HOWARD VYSE





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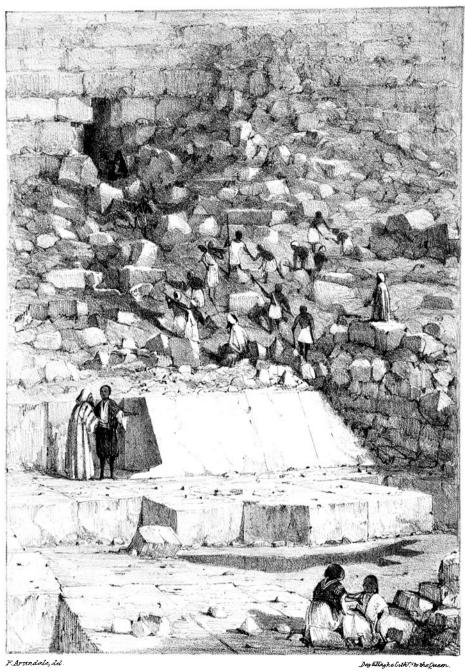
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DISCOVERY of the CASING STONES to the GT PYRAMID.

Published by J. Fraser, Refeat Street



# OPERATIONS

CARRIED ON AT

# THE PYRAMIDS OF GIZEH

IN 1837:

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF

A VOYAGE INTO UPPER EGYPT,

AND

An Appendix.

By COLONEL HOWARD VYSE.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

JAMES FRASER, REGENT STREET.

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TO

#### HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

## THE PRINCESS AUGUSTA.

MADAM,

THE PERMISSION TO DEDICATE THE FOLLOWING PAGES TO YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS GIVES ME THE GREATEST SATISFACTION, NOT FROM ANY VAIN IDEA THAT THEY ARE PECULIARLY WORTHY OF SUCH EXALTED PATRONAGE, BUT FROM THE OPPORTUNITY, WHICH IT AFFORDS, OF EXPRESSING MY MOST GRATEFUL SENSE OF THE UNVARYING CONSIDERATION AND NOTICE, WITH WHICH YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS HAS BEEN PLEASED, FOR MANY YEARS, TO HONOUR MY FAMILY AND MYSELF, AND ALSO THE SINCERE RESPECT AND DUTIFUL ATTACHMENT, WITH WHICH

I HAVE THE HONOUR TO BE,

MADAM,

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

MOST GRATEFUL AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.





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### PREFACE.

THE chief object of the following pages is to give a distinct account of the works carried on at the Pyramids of Gizeh, under a firmaun granted by the Pasha in the winter of 1836.

The form of a Journal has been adopted, and the daily employments, and numbers of the people, have been given, that the extent and difficulties of the various operations may be more fully understood; — difficulties not a little increased by the irregular attendance of the labourers.

Abstracts from various authors antient and modern, who have treated of the Pyramids, are inserted in the Appendix: for those taken from Arabian writers I am indebted to the labours of Dr. Sprenger. A few other subjects are, likewise, incidentally alluded to, from a supposition that



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they might interest, and, perhaps, assist future travellers in Egypt, but without any idea of competition with Mr. Lane's accurate account, or with Sir J. Gardner Wilkinson's more extensive work,—two books, with which every traveller in that country should be supplied.

When, in consequence of Colonel Campbell's letter, M. Caviglia withdrew from the Pyramids, I was engaged in assisting Mr. Perring in his survey of those monuments, and, although I had not, at first, the slightest intention of remaining abroad, I considered it my duty to await the completion of the survey, and, at the same time, to pursue the objects, for which the firmaun was obtained. discovery of the exterior mouth of the northern air-channel in the Great Pyramid, and the hope of arriving at the apartments, which were supposed to exist in the Third, by the excavation begun in its interior induced me to persevere; and, as is often the case, one thing led on to another, until, being fairly engaged in works of so much interest, I was, of course, determined to carry them on to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Sir J. Gardner Wilkinson has received the honour of knighthood since the following pages were written.



PREFACE.

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a favourable result, whatever sacrifices of money or of time might be incurred.

Many of our researches proved failures, they are, however, all described, together with the reasons why they were attempted. It will also be seen that some of the discoveries were accidentally made, a circumstance, indeed, to be expected from the little analogy, which exists in the internal construction of the three larger Pyramids, although their general purposes appear to have been the same; and the following pages will clearly shew that, whatever ultimate success was obtained, it must be chiefly attributed to the zealous and able assistance of Mr. Perring and of Mr. Mash, and to the unwearied perseverance of Mr. Hill and of Mr. Raven; nor should the valuable services of two other Englishmen (Goodman and Jack) be forgotten, the latter of whom, besides being constantly employed during the day, passed every night for nearly five months, in superintending the excavations in the interior of the Third Pyra-These details, however, it is to be feared mid. will not be completely understood, excepting by a constant reference to Mr. Perring's plans, published in two numbers, by Mr. Fraser, of Regent Street, from which the sections and admeasure-



xvi PREFACE.

ments inserted in these volumes have been copied.2 Plans of Campbell's Tomb, and of most of the other Pyramids, as far south as the Faiyoum, including the ruined site of Abou-Reche, have also been received from Mr. Perring, and will compose a third The whole, it is presumed, will form a number. work of considerable interest; and the value of it will be greatly increased by a number of excellent drawings taken on the spot by Mr. Andrews, who remained at Gizeh for a considerable time, and who with the same disinterested kindness, which distinguished the conduct of the other two gentlemen, was indefatigably employed in my behalf even during the intense heat of summer. it difficult to express my acknowledgments for the

<sup>2</sup> The plates which relate to Gizeh have been executed from Mr. Andrews' drawings by Mr. Arundale, with the exception of the panoramic view, the well, and the tent, which together with the other plates that gentleman has contrived to arrange from rough and imperfect sketches attempted by myself. I take this opportunity of remarking that the table of levels at the bottom of the plate containing the section of the rock (see page 138, Appendix, Vol. II.) was added in this country to Mr. Perring's drawing, and that the difference of 13 feet 10<sup>2</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches is erroneously inserted, as may be seen by reference to page 150. Another mistake in the level of high Nile of 1838, instead of 1837, has been corrected.



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cheerful and valuable assistance which these gentlemen invariably afforded me. The public will be enabled, in some degree, to estimate the extent of my obligations by the excellence of their works; and I beg to assure them, that I shall ever remember with pleasure the time spent with them at the Pyramids.

It is with regret I allude to the unpleasant detail, which the dishonourable accusations made in the name of M. Caviglia against Colonel Campbell and myself have rendered indispensable; but in doing so I think it particularly necessary to mention, in reference to that gentleman's opinion, that I never experienced any interruption, or even had reason to suspect the slightest hostility on the part of the French, or of any other persons, whilst I was engaged at the Pyramids.

Could I have obtained a direct order from the Pasha to enforce the constant attendance of a sufficient number of people, my intention was to have excavated the entire area round the Sphinx, which appears, at least on the western and southern sides, to have been enclosed by a peribolus of unburnt bricks; but my application was not forwarded to the Pasha: and, from the immense quantity and the looseness of the sand to be

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removed in order to make the operation of any real utility, without the constant attendance of a considerable number of people the undertaking would have been almost indefinite as to time and expense. I conceive that this object, and the different levels of the water in the tombs, are peculiarly worthy of further investigation.

It was understood that the antiquities discovered under the firmaun were to belong to the Pasha, and that, without his Highness's permission, nothing whatsoever could be retained by either Colonel Campbell or myself. Separate lists are in consequence subjoined of the different articles found at Gizeh since the 13th of February, distinguishing those, which we were allowed to keep in consequence of an application to Boghos Bey; and since my return to England I have sent every thing of value to the British Museum. Sarcophagus of Mycerinus was removed with considerable trouble and expense out of the Third Pyramid for the same purpose; as I was convinced that owing to the brittle quality of the stone, of which it was composed, it would soon have been entirely destroyed had it been left in an open I was the more confirmed in this pyramid. apprehension by having found, to my great regret,



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that the magnificent casing-stones discovered at the base of the Great Pyramid were so much defaced, even during the time that I remained at Gizeh, that I thought it my duty, upon leaving the place, to cover them again with a considerable quantity of rubbish, and thereby to do all in my power to protect from further injury one of the most interesting features of these unrivalled monuments. I am sorry to add, that my precautions were unsuccessful, and that I have been subsequently informed that the blocks have been again uncovered and much injured.

The following narration is chiefly composed from a regular journal of the daily occurrences, as they severally happened; and I have to observe, that it was written in 1838, notwithstanding the great delay, which has taken place in its publication, owing to the number of plates, to my own inexperience, and to other incidental causes, which have also unfortunately made a list of errata necessary; and the reader's attention is particularly requested to these inaccuracies, and likewise to lists of corrections made by hand, which are added in order to prevent mistakes although every copy has been carefully examined.

I cannot conclude these prefatory observations without returning my best thanks to Mr. Birch



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PREFACE.

for his valuable notes now published, and likewise for those on the inscriptions at Tourah, Abouseir, &c., already prepared for a third volume, which will contain Mr. Perring's recent discoveries, since my return from Egypt, and one or two other papers relating to that country. I have also great satisfaction in expressing my acknowledgments for the kind assistance and attention, which I have met with at the British Museum; and at Oxford from Dr. Macbride, and Dr. Bandinel of the Bodleian Library; likewise at Eton College, particularly from the Rev. Mr. Coleridge, an advantage, for which I was chiefly indebted to the late Rev. Mr. Wright; whose lamented death has deprived me of a very old and much-respected friend, and the Church and the College of a most virtuous and distinguished ornament; a man possessed of the soundest judgment, and of great literary attainments; dignified by the highest sense of honour and of moral integrity; and inspired with an ardent love for his country, and with undaunted resolution to secure its liberties, and to promote its prosperity, by maintaining inviolate its antient laws and glorious constitution:

> "Cui pudor, et justitiæ soror Incorrupta fides, nudaque veritas, Quando ullum invenient parem?"

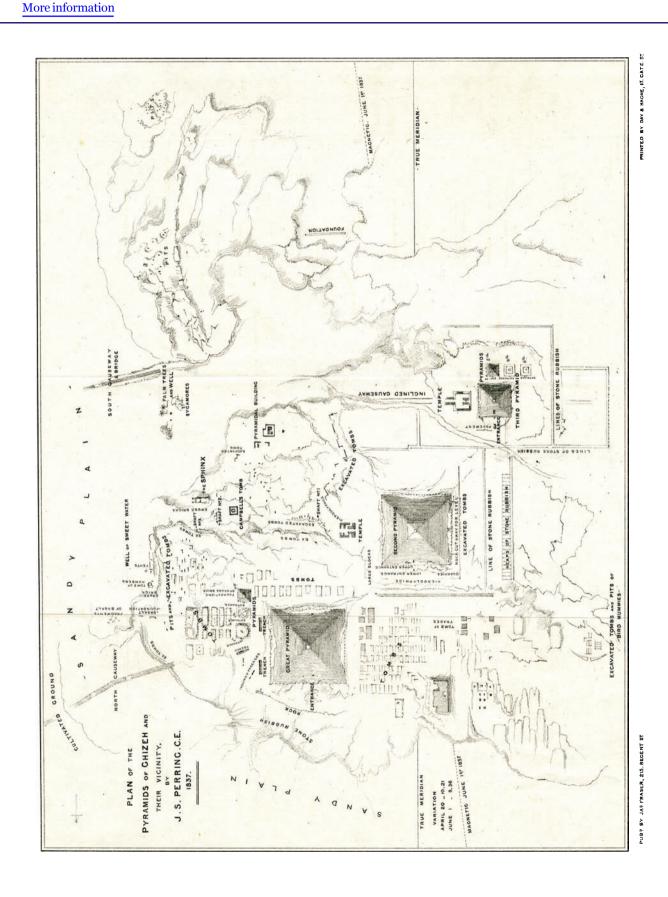


#### ERRATA IN Vol. I.

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#### CORRECTIONS MADE BY HAND.

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