

“Egyptian Stone-work”

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“Whatever skill our masons of the present day may possess, it would seem that their efforts were entirely outshone by the accomplishments of the ancients. One of the daily papers presents the following:

“Persons who inspect the Obelisk in Central Park for the first time, frequently express astonishment that so large a block of stone could have been successfully quarried, carved and handled by the ancients, especially as such work is done with difficulty, even with the improved machinery of the present age. In talking the other day with one of the leading granite men of the country, who has made a personal inspection of the pyramids of Egypt, he said ‘There are blocks of stone in the pyramids which weigh three or four times as much as the Obelisk. I saw a stone whose estimated weight was 880 tons. The builders of the pyramid counted human labor lightly. They had great masses of subjects upon whom to draw, and most of their work was done by sheer manual labor and force. There are stones in the pyramids 30 feet in length which fit so closely together that you may run a penknife over the surface without discovering the break between them. They are not laid with mortar either. There is no machinery so perfect that it will make two surfaces 30 feet in length which will meet together in unison as these stones in the pyramids meet. They were undoubtedly rubbed back and forth upon each other until the surfaces were assimilated to each other.’”

Note: This article is available on the Library of Congress, American Memory, Nineteenth Century in Print web site at this link:

<http://digital.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?c=manu;cc=manu;rgn=full%20text;idno=manu0019-11;didno=manu0019-11;view=image;seq=00258;node=manu0019-11%3A1>

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Further photographs and information about Egyptian stone work can be found at these links:

“Stone Quarries of ancient Egypt,” on Wikipedia
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stone_quarries_of_ancient_Egypt

Egyptian Obelisks in Egypt Today And Obelisks Moved to Istanbul – Rome – Paris – London & New York – Nova: A World of Obelisks (NOVA)
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/egypt/raising/world.html>

“Unfinished Obelisk” on Wikipedia
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unfinished_obelisk

“Stonemasonry” on Wikipedia
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stonemasonry>