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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

Government of Madras

Public Works DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	920	(W) Press
-B.P.-No.		-Mis-
Dated	7-4-	1876

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
7th April 1876.*

No. 128. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the
Public Department, dated 27th March 1876, No. 329

ABSTRACT — *Ancient Monuments* — A full report called for from the Acting District
Engineer, Tinnevely, respecting the places of sepulture discovered by him

No. 129 ORDER THEREON, 7th April 1876, No. 920.

CIVIL WORKS, No. 16-A.

COMMUNICATED to the Acting District
Engineer, Tinnevely, who will supply the
information called for in the first paragraph

2. He will also report, in communication with the Chief Engineer for Irrigation,
as to the extent to which his time would be taken up by a complete and systematic
investigation of the subject, and how far it would be compatible with his ordinary
duties.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) G. W. WALKER, Major-General, R.E.,
Secretary to Government.

To the District Engineer, Tinnevely.
„ Chief Engineer for Irrigation

Exd T O'Connor
Spare Copies

Ancient Monuments

No 61 Read the following letter from A J STUART, Esq, Acting Collector of Tinnevely, to the Hon. W HUDLESTON, Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St George, dated Tuticorin, 29th February 1876, No 134 —

I have the honor to report, for the information of Government, some interesting discoveries made in company with Dr. Jagor of Berlin by means of excavation in the side of a hill about twelve miles east of Tinnevely.

2 The Acting District Engineer, Mr. Grant, supplied the information upon which we set to work, and superintended the arrangements in a very effective manner

3. We commenced excavations in the side of a hill consisting chiefly of quartz gravel with boulders of the same material and resting on gneiss rock, and within a superficial area of twenty five or thirty square yards, we discovered from twenty to thirty baked earthen pots varying in size from three feet nine by three feet six down to ten inches either way of very various shapes, and of shapes, in most cases, more elegant and of a better manufacture than any one sees at the present day in the bazaars

4. These pots, when examined, were found to contain, besides earth, gravel and stones, a variety of objects of great interest to the antiquarian, the ethnologist, and to science generally

5. Upwards of fifty kinds of baked earthenware, utensils of all sizes and shapes, a considerable number of iron weapons and implements, chiefly knives or short sword blades and hatchets, and a great quantity of bones and skulls were discovered. In one very interesting case, two small pots were found within a large one, together with the bones as in most cases of a nearly complete skeleton, containing what it was impossible to mistake for anything else but the outer coats of grains of rice and of the dry grain known in Tinnevely as samei. The grain itself had disappeared, but the outer coating—probably of silica—had remained.

6. Several places at considerable distances, one at least 300 or 400 yards from our principal excavation, were found to contain similar sepulchral urns, and the surface of the quartz hill above was strewn over with broken pieces of pottery of a similar character. Our excavation in all probability only touched one point of an extensive ancient cemetery or catacomb in which the dead of an age, the habits of which are probably quite unknown in India at the present day, are disposed of in this singular manner, that is to say by placing the skeleton or the body inside a large earthenware vase or pot together with two, three, or four small pots apparently containing food for the dead and weapons and implements of iron ready for use when he reached another world.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,
27th March 1876*

7. Most of the objects of chief interest were given to Dr Jagor for the Berlin Museum, but there undoubtedly remains to be brought to light much more than Dr. Jagor has succeeded in securing, not only in this locality but in others in Tinnevely and in other districts as Coimbatore and Salem, of which Dr. Jagor spoke, as well as in the Nilgiris, about which a work has, I understand, been recently published containing the results of the discoveries made by the late Mr. Breeks when Commissioner of the Nilgiris

8 I cannot but think that the Government would be glad to contribute to the India Museum or to the British Museum a collection which would be undoubtedly of extreme interest to every scientific body in England or elsewhere, establishing, as such a collection almost certainly would, the existence in India in times prior to any known tradition connected with the Hindu race, the existence of a race of men at least as skilful, indeed we thought more so, than the Hindus of the present day, or in the manufacture of pottery, acquainted with the manufacture and use of iron, whether for weapons or implements, and with the cultivation of rice as well as of dry grains, and yet with habits as to burial of their dead not having one point of resemblance with those of existing Hindus, and having ideas as regards a future state more like those of some of the savage races of the present time, who are represented as burying with their dead food for him to eat and as first breaking and then burying his weapons with him in order that by destroying them, the spirit of the weapons may be sent to the world where the dead has gone and by burying them with the dead, the dead may find and have the use of them

9 If the Government see fit to permit Mr. Grant and myself to devote a part of our time to the somewhat more systematic excavation examination, and recording of the results of excavating in this and other localities in Tinnevely, and are disposed to go to a moderate expense, say 500 Rupees a-year, for a year or two, I will undertake to put them in possession of a very interesting collection arranged systematically and accompanied by such notes as shall make the collection intelligible, and explain the circumstances under which every article was discovered, so that it may be available for the India or any other Museum Mr Grant will not require to be relieved of his ordinary duties, only to be permitted to consider this as a part of them.

No. 62. ORDER THEREON, 27th March 1876, No. 329.

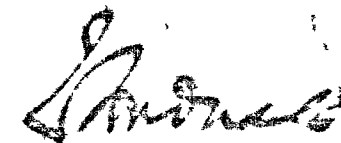
The information afforded by the above letter is interesting, but the Governor in Council desires to have a full report from the Acting District Engineer who appears to have made the first discovery of these places of sepulture, and who should be requested to communicate to Government all the information he acquired on the subject The Governor in Council also desires to know by what authority the Acting Collector considered himself at liberty to give to Dr. Jagor for the Berlin Museum "most of the objects of chief interest" that were exhumed, and whether any selected specimens have been transmitted to the Madras Museum or retained for the orders of Government

2 Explorations of the kind proposed to be made at public expense need to be closely supervised to ensure complete success, and the Governor in Council

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27th March 1876.*

desires to know whether Mr Grant's ordinary duties would allow of his giving continued attention to this matter, if prompt operations were undertaken

(True Extract)



Chief Secretary.

To the Acting Collector of Tinnevely,
.. Public Works Department
.. Board of Revenue

P W 1876 Sept with
 ch. 2384

No. 920

Civilian

Public Works Department

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

UNDER date the

Read the following.—

Proceedings of Government
 Public Dept } (Ch. No 329 of 27 Inst)

Communicated to
 the Acting District Engineer
 immediately who will
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 2 He will also report
 in communication with
 the Chief Engineer for
 Irrigation as to the extent
 to which his time would
 be taken up by a com-
 plete and systematic
 investigation of the sub-
 ject, and how far it
 would be compatible

Cost of 1876, 31/3/76

PUBLIC.

To THE ACTING COLLECTOR OF

MANVELLY,

Co., Co., Co.

Dated March, 27/76

1/2/76 — 31

Recd

2-1

G O, 27th March 1876, No 329

MARCH
 1876, 31/3/76

Approved by the Board—A full report called for
 from the Acting District Engineer immediately,
 respecting the state of affairs as covered by
 the

Pl 744176 BN 128/9

Ch 3-6-26 12/1/76

with his ordinary duty
G.M.

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Sincerely
C.E. for J.
Dec 24/47

128/9

2384

Dept. of 1870
PUBLIC WORKS.

To

The N. E. Lunnally

14

Dated

Issued

Recd

File

G. O. J. Appl. 1870, No. 920

How

Antiquities lately discovered
in the Lunnally
Dept. of the Public Dept.
Calling for a full report
regarding the — Com-
municated to the Army
Genl Engr for submission
of the required information

1870
1/10