

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

PUBLIC DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following paper :

From J. BURGESS, Esq., LL.D., Director-General of the Archæological Survey of India, to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, dated Lahore, 29th March 1887, No. 284.

I have the honor to forward herewith the progress report of Mr. A. Rea on the work of the Archæological Survey during the preceding two months.

2. Mr. Rea has carried out most intelligently his instructions as to the work to be done, and the results are very satisfactory. The amount of work is large, and his accurate discrimination of the styles and ages of the different temples, and even parts of the same temple, is of much scientific interest. This perception of style and relative age characterizes the archæologist from the mere dilettantist. When Mr. Rea's work is published—and I expect he will have a volume ready for publication in a very short time—its value will be properly understood.

ENCLOSURE.

From A. REA, Esq., M.R.A.S., First Assistant, Archæological Survey Department, to the Director-General, Archæological Survey of India, dated Virinjipuram, 19th March 1887, No. 74.

In continuation of my letter, No. 17, dated Vellore, 19th January 1887, embodied in G.O., dated 25th February 1887, No. 286, Public, I have the honor to forward the following progress report of field-work since accomplished in the South Indian circle.

2. On the 23rd ultimo I completed the survey of the large temple at Vellore. The drawings made include a large scale plan; transverse and longitudinal sections of the entire temple; elevational and sectional drawings of the large *gopura* and *kalyana mandapa*, and a number of sheets of sculptural and other ornamental details. The temple is one of the best examples of Vijayanagar architecture, and the sculptures in the *kalyana mandapa* are well known for their beauty of design and execution. One interesting matter has just been brought to light; the small inner shrine, around whose walls I found the old relics mentioned in my last report, seems, from an examination of its architecture, to be of Chola date. This temple would therefore seem to have been, like the majority of temples of the 15th or 16th centuries, simply a series of extensive additions to an already existing small shrine.

3. From my camp at Vellore, I despatched survey parties to Chalapuram, Veppampetta, Abdullapuram, Tellur, Puthupádi, Ganganellur and Nellavay.

The following list gives some of the places around Vellore surveyed or visited, and the drawings done at each:—

4. *Chalapuram*.—The traditional site of an ancient town. The old buildings have almost entirely disappeared; a few remains of temples, &c., are found appearing above the soil at various places. Drawings were made of a number of ancient images.

5. *Veppampetta*.—The temple here is in fairly good preservation, and has a number of inscriptions. It is, however, covered with shrubs which are destroying the masonry; suggestions have been made to have the vegetation removed. A plan, elevation and sections of the building were made.

6. *Abdullapuram*.—Has the remains of an old palace or mahal built in brick and ornamented with some good stucco work.

The general design of the building is effective, being a lofty central portion with wings containing bays of arched openings on each side. It is traditionally stated to have been the residence of a brother of the Nawab of Vellore. A plan, sections, elevation, and sketches of some of the stucco ornaments were made.

7. *Tellur*.—An old Chola temple, with inscriptions. Close to the west of this building is a large lake or tank, which is said to have been breached several years ago. The outflowing water is said to have been the cause of the partial ruin of this temple. A small, square field surrounded by a stone coping, on the south side of the temple, is pointed out by the people as the site of the tank attached to this shrine. They say it was silted over with earth through the breaching of the bund of the large tank. An old *ratha* or car, covered with brass-work, and some other articles, are said to have been washed into the temple tank and covered over with soil; they are stated to remain buried there to the present day. Inquiries might be made by the taluk officials into the authenticity of this story, and, if found true, an excavation may lead to interesting results, as the area of the temple tank is not large and it cannot be very deep. If this car was really washed in here, it cannot be more than a few feet below the surface. A plan, section and elevation of the temple were made.

8. *Puthupádi*.—A Chola temple, with semi-circular shrine and inscriptions. The drawings done were plan, section, and elevation.

9. *Ganganellur and Nellaray*.—Contain temples similar to the last; a similar series of drawings were completed.

10. From Vellore, I moved the camp to Virinjipuram. The temple here is generally the same in plan, and covers a somewhat larger area than the Vellore one. It however differs from the other in many important respects. One feature in the plan is specially interesting; the majority of the different structures embodied in the temple are of Vijayanagar date, but the central shrine is semi-circular in its plan. Till we undertook the survey of a number of Chola temples in the Chingleput district in 1885, this peculiarity of plan was considered very unusual. We found it occurring in a number of examples, but only in Chola works. The presumption therefore is, that this inner shrine at Virinjipuram is a Chola temple. I was not allowed inside to examine it closely, but the architectural detail drawings, combined with the plan, lead me to believe that it belongs to a period some centuries anterior to the rest of the works here. It is surrounded by a small court-yard, probably the original limits of the primary shrine; this court is surrounded by two outer enclosures.

Our work here includes a large plan, sections and details. I have also commenced a set of drawings of one of the large wooden cars which are dragged along the streets on festival occasions. These are covered with very good wood-carving; and, as we have not hitherto copied any of these necessary adjuncts to every large shrine, I think it should be an interesting addition to the series of drawings already collected.

11. From my camp here, I visited Melpadi and Vallimalai, whither I had previously despatched the head draftsman and another, to survey the remains there.

12. On the road I visited the large temple at Tiruvallam; it has a number of inscriptions, and is said to have a number of fine sculptures around the inner shrine; this temple will shortly be more fully examined, and, if necessary, a survey made.

13. At Melpadi there are two temples, which are beautiful examples of the finest Chola work. They are built of black-stone from the basement to the summit of the towers. One is deserted, so I was enabled to examine it thoroughly. The sculptured and moulded work is extremely good, and the inscriptions which partly cover portions of the shrine wall are cut in finely-formed letters of a very archaic type. One inscription is in an old form of Tamil, another is in Chola Grantha characters similar to those given in Plate XIII of Burnell's *South Indian Palæography*. This plate is very fragmentary, and if this inscription should be of a similar date, the blanks in the Palæographical table might be at least partially filled up. This temple is covered with prickly-pear and other shrubs, which are destroying the tower; these should be at once removed.

The other temple at Melpadi is in use for worship. From what I saw from the outside, the inner shrine is almost identical with the temple I have just noted, and the walls are, I am told, almost completely covered with inscriptions similar to the others. The large outer courts of this temple are late additions of the 15th or 16th centuries.

In a tradition regarding one of these temples, given in the *District Manual* (p. 161), it is stated that it is an ancient Jain temple now converted into one of Siva; and that the tradition attached to the place acknowledges the original Jain occupation. Four celebrated Brahmin poets are said to have converted the temple into a Saivite one by the recital of one of their sacred poems, which was to the effect that the moon did penance here to Siva, and made a yagam, which induced the svami to appear in human form and grant the moon's desires.

This tradition as applied to these temples is evidently without foundation, for all their sculptures are Saivite; moreover, the four *nandis* around the sikaras of the towers are almost certainly part of the original work, and would never have been put on a Jain building. The temples have therefore most certainly always been Saivite.

14. The tradition may, however, if applied to the cave temple at Vallimalai—a mile west of Melpadi—have some foundation in fact. The temple is situated at the top of a gorge in one of the hills, and is simply a natural cave with a number of rooms built in front to form the usual parts of an ordinary temple; the rock doesn't seem to have been excavated in any part.

Some sculptures—seemingly Jain—are cut on rocks on the east side of the hills to the right and left of this cave temple. In the inner shrine chamber of the temple is an ordinary Hindu image, but on the back wall of the cell—cut on the rock—is a figure, which from examination by the draftsman seems to be similar to the other Jain sculptures on the hill; it is partly plastered over, and the priests would allow none of it to be touched, so the point couldn't be clearly settled. One other matter, which would seem to point to this having been a Jain sculpture, is that, till within a few years ago, this innermost chamber was built up and the Hindu image was placed in the room immediately in front of it. Some Brahmins, out of curiosity, it is said, opened the inner shrine and placed their god there. The only part of the temple visible from the outside is the front *mandapa*, which is clearly Hindu in style. Taking into consideration the close proximity of the other sculptures on the hill, there is a possibility that some of the interior rooms of this temple may date anterior to the Saivite occupation; it may have been a sort of *Vihara* or residence of the Jain priests. If the tradition noted above has any foundation in fact, the probabilities point to this place having been Jain, and afterwards used as a Saivite place of worship by the building of the *mandapas* in front and the plastering over of the rock-cut sculpture, thereby preventing any but Brahmins from investigating the matter. Some curious traditions exist in regard to the hill; one is to the effect that it was named after Valli, the wife of Subramanyasvami, of Tirutani. The people of the place call the hill Vellimalai; they say it was in the time of the Hindu occupation formed of gold; when the Muhammadans came into power, it became silver, hence the name; when the English gained the country, it was transformed into its present material.

15. The other sculptures referred to are in three places: one set, to the north-east of the hill temple, midway up the hill, is cut under a projecting ledge of rock. They are very well executed and show three groups of Jain figures sitting cross-legged, with umbrellas over, and attendants. Some very archaic inscriptions are cut on the rock close to the sculptures.

The group south-west of the temple is situated about the same distance up the hill as the other, and is in three panel-groups; the principal figure, Parivanath, with a *naga*, occupying the central panel. A short distance to the left is a large, seated figure, with lesser figures in the ledge of rock underneath. A broken Jain figure was also lying beside these, with two massive posts, and a large moulded stone, somewhat like the top of a *dagoba*. Drawings and photos have been made of all these.

16. General plan and sectional drawings were made of the cave temple on the hill, and complete drawings of the fine temples at Melpadi were also executed.

17. A Chola temple at Erukampett, three miles from Melpadi, was also surveyed.

18. On completion of these works, I directed two draftsmen to proceed to Sholinghur, where there are a number of fine temples. They are at present engaged in surveying these works.

19. Several other small Chola temples have been noted at various villages, but it was neither advisable nor possible to survey all of them. The smaller temples already surveyed serve as good examples of the majority of them. A mile east of Virinjipuram are two villages, one on each side of the road: one is Poygai (der. falsehood), the other is Satyamangalam (village of truth); at the former is a small Chola temple with inscriptions; at the latter another, and a long inscribed stone in a field.

Inscriptions in this part of the district are very numerous, both in the temples and on detached stones in the villages. The earliest works as yet visited during the tour are—with the exception of the Vallimalai sculptures—of Chola date.

ORDER—dated 20th April 1887, No. 583, Public.

Recorded.

2. The attention of the Collector of North Arcot will be drawn to paragraph 7 of Mr. Rea's interesting report.

(True Extract.)

H. E. STOKES,
Ag. Chief Secretary.

To the Director-General, Archaeological Survey of India.

„ A. Rea, Esq.

„ the Public Works Department.

„ the Collector of North Arcot.

Exd. A. Raitt.

Govt. of 1887 Madras.
PUBLIC.

B. No 1305 Wd/12 May 1887

Recorded in
Continuation of G.O.
No 877 Wd of 22 March
1887

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Issued

Recd.

Encl.

G.O., 20th April 1887, No. 583.

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Archæology.

Recording with remarks Mr. Rea's progress
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St. J. Cuile

20TH APRIL 1887, No. 583, PUBLIC.

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Exd. A. Raitt.

Govt. of 1887 Madras.

PUBLIC.

B. No 1305 Wd/12 May 1887

Revised in
Continuation of G.O.
No 897 W dated 22
March 1887

(Sd) L. S. H.
W

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