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(2) Date of repair 13.7.46

(3) Initials of the Referencer Q

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 1525

Press
Mis.

Original

Dated 8-7- 1884.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

PUBLIC DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following paper:—

From Brigade-Surgeon G. BIDIE, M.I., C.I.E., Superintendent, Government Central Museum, to the Chief Secretary to Government, dated Madras, 25th June 1884, No. 620.

In obedience to G.O., Public department, No. 843, of 28th April 1884, I have the honor to submit, for the orders of the Right Honorable the Governor in Council, the following remarks on the erection in one of the halls of the museum of the sculptured slabs which have been brought from Anaravati.

2. So far as can be judged from specimens which have been exposed in the museum for a quarter of a century, the air of Madras has no appreciable prejudicial effect on the denser sort of marble on which most of the Amaravati sculptures are executed. It is the carbonised air *plus* moisture that is so destructive to many marbles in cities, like London. Fortunately we have no smoke nuisance or noxious chemical vapours in Madras; and as regard the salt air the museum is quite two miles from the sea, and the wind before it reaches Egmore is filtered through masses of foliage. In the museum companion too some very delicate ferns, which are most sensitive as regards saline air, grow in an open shed in the most luxuriant manner. As a matter of fact the air in the neighbourhood of the museum is very pure.

3. The bleaching and decay of the surface of the marble, alluded to in paragraph 4 of Dr. Burgess' letter, are I think not as a rule due to simple *weathering*, or to contact with sea air, but to the destructive action of earth, moisture and air when the stones were buried in the ruins at Amaravati. The damage done is not at first very apparent as the stones contain a good deal of moisture when freshly exhumed, but as the water evaporates the marble in few weeks or months assumes the dead white color referred to by Dr. Burgess.

4. When the stones are placed under cover in a dry room I do not anticipate that this disintegration will advance. As already stated it is the combined action of coal-smoke and rain that is so destructive to limestones and marbles, and this combination fortunately does not exist here.

5. Some of the marbles have suffered a good deal also from apparently genuine, simple *weathering*, that is the action of air and rain, and this is hardly to be wondered at considering the nature of the stone and the great number of years that it has been exposed. I feel pretty confident, however, that the destructive process will not advance when the stones are housed in a dry room; but if it does then the stones may be protected with glass or with some preservative application.

6. It will be recollected that in G.O. Public department, No. 624-A, of 26th July 1882, sanction was given for my setting up in a stone frame-work a very fine specimen of sculpture from Amaravati. From one cause or other the frame was not delivered, till shortly before the departure of the Consulting Architect to England on leave. I then pointed out that it was too massive and would crush the marble, and refused to accept it. There the matter rested till the arrival of the new Superintendent of the School of Arts, when I asked him to design and make a wooden frame that would harmonise with the sculpture. This he was good enough to do, but on submitting the bill to the Accountant-General he refused to pass it, owing to the lapse of time. The original grant for the work was Rs. 310, but the cost of the wooden frame is only Rs. 150; so I trust that early sanction will be given for the disbursement. This frame will admit of glass being put in if found necessary.

7. With reference to paragraph 1 of G.O., Public department, No. 843, of 28th April 1884, as I did not feel confident that I could give a reliable opinion regarding the cost of housing the marbles, I took the liberty of asking the assistance of Major Morant, R.E., Acting Consulting Architect, who very kindly furnished me with the enclosed letter and estimate, which are submitted for the orders of Government.

8. I quite approve of the manner in which Major Morant proposes to move the marbles, and do not think that the work could be entrusted to any one more competent to carry it out with taste and care. The only suggestion I would add to those made by him is that in raising the sculptures from the backyard with a crane so as to get them inside, the stones be hoisted in the truck as in many cases they are so brittle that their own weight might break them. The amount of Major Morant's estimate is Rs. 1,200, and I believe that this will suffice. I trust therefore that early sanction may be given for the execution of the work.

ENCLOSURE.

From Major J. L. L. MORANT, R.E., Officiating Consulting Architect to Government, to the Superintendent of the Government Central Museum, dated Chepauk, 19th June 1884, No. 456.

In reply to your letter, No. 485, dated 19th May 1884, I have the honor to report that I would advocate the marbles being moved in a truck on rails to a window at the back of the museum. A crane could there hoist them into the room in which you propose placing them. After reaching that room they would have to be conveyed to the parts of the room where they are to be fixed. To effect this another truck running on rails or on planks (which would be shifted as needed) might be used, or the stones might simply be dragged along the floor in a truck, or they might be very slowly moved by means of hydraulic jacks, or perhaps a combination of all these methods might be necessary. When close to the position which each stone is intended to occupy it could be erected either against the wall or in the room as might be thought desirable, according to the nature of the stone and so on.

2. The stones where cracked or chipped can be repaired with cement in such a way as to very closely imitate the marble.

3. I enclose an estimate of the probable cost of effecting these proposals. The work being of a novel kind the estimate, though carefully prepared, is necessarily approximate. Very great care will be needed in carrying out the work and the services of a European subordinate will be requisite, as natives cannot be relied on in matters of this nature. I can (no doubt) obtain from my own department all the aid I require.

4. I have not considered in detail the enclosing of any of the slabs in air-tight glazed cases. This can be determined after the stones are in the building, and can, if considered necessary, be done by degrees. The positions which the stones will occupy in the room is a matter that can be easily decided by and by. The room indicated in Dr. Burgess' letter would, I should imagine, be large enough to contain most if not all the sculptures, without inconvenient crowding.

5. Should the estimate be sanctioned, and funds provided I shall be happy, if you wish it, to undertake the work in which I am interested.

6. I return the book "Fergusson's Tree and Serpent Worship" with many thanks.

ORDER—dated 8th July 1884, No. 1525, Public.

The Superintendent's proposals are approved, and the amount of the estimate, Rs. 1,200, is sanctioned.

2. The cost of the wooden frame, Rs 150, is also sanctioned.

(True Extract.)

Chief Secretary.

To the Superintendent, Government Central Museum, with estimate.
,, Accountant-General.

Exd. J. Wright.

Govt. of 1884 Madras.

PUBLIC.

Issued

Recd.

Encl.

G.O., 8th July 1884, No. 1525.

JULY.

Archæology.

Approving the proposals of the Superintendent of the Government Central Museum on the erection in one of the halls of the museum of the sculptured slabs from Amaravati, and sanctioning the amount of the estimate of Rs. 1,200 for the purpose.

P.W.D.

Enc 6

48

Consulting Architect's Office,

Chepauk, Madras,

19th June 1884.

No. 456

From

The Consulting Architect
to the Government of Madras,

To

Brigade Surgeon George Bidie M.B. C.S.E.
Superintendent, Govt Central Museum.

Sir,

Enclosures.

1 Book

In reply to your letter No 405 dated 19th May 1884, I have the honor to report that I would advocate the marbles being moved in a truck on rails to a window at the back of the Museum. A crane could then hoist them into the room in which you propose placing them. After reaching that room they would have to be conveyed to the parts of the room where they are to be fixed. To effect this another truck running on rails or on planks, (which would be shifted as needed) might be used. Or the stones might simply be dragged along the floor in a truck. Or they might be very slowly moved by means of hydraulic jacks. Or perhaps a combination of all these methods might be necessary. When close to the position which each stone is intended to occupy it could be erected either against the wall or in the room as might be thought desirable, according to the nature of the stone and so on.

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closely imitate the marble.

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5. Should the Estimate be sanctioned and funds provided I shall be happy, if you wish it, to undertake the work in which I am interested.

6. I return the Book - "Fergusson's Tree and Serpent Worship" with many thanks.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant.

John Morant.

Major R.E.

Off Comd Architect to Govt.
Ad 19/10/16

No 599

1884

May

From

The offg: Comg: Archd to
Govt
Madras

To

The Superintendent
Govt Central Museum
Madras.

No 456

Dated 19th June 1884

Recd: 20 — do —

Reports about Amra-
vathy marbles moved
on a truck.

pub 21/5/84
1/84

18 9

Government Central Museum

Egmore

Madras 25th June 1884.

No 520

From

Brigade Surgeon George Bidie M.B.; B.L.C.
Superintendent Government Central
Museum

To

The Chief Secretary to Government
Public Department —
With the Governor
Stonehouse Hill

Sir,

In obedience to G.O. Public Depart-
ment No 843 of 28th April 1884, I have the
honour to submit for the orders of the Right
Honorable the Governor in Council, the
following remarks on the erection in one of
the halls of the Museum of the sculptured
slabs which have been brought from Amaravati.

2/ So far as can be judged from specimens
which have been exposed in the Museum
for a quarter of a century, the air of Madras
has no appreciable prejudicial effect on the
denser sort of marble on which most of the
Amaravati sculptures are executed. It is

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the carbonised air plus moisture that is so destructive to many marbles in cities, like London. Fortunately we have no smoke nuisance or noxious chemical vapours in Madras; and as regards the salt air the Museum is quite 2 miles from the sea, and the wind before it reaches Egmore is filtered through masses of foliage. In the Museum Compound too some very delicate ferns, which are most sensitive as regards saline air, grow in an open shed in the most luxuriant manner. As a matter of fact the air in the neighbourhood of the Museum is very pure.

3/ The bleaching and decay of the surface of the marble, alluded to in para 4 of Dr. Burgess's letter, are I think not as a rule due to simple weathering, or to contact with sea air, but to the destructive action of earth, moisture and air when the stones were buried in the ruins at Amaravati. The damage done is not at first very apparent as the stones contain a good deal of moisture when freshly exhumed, but as the water evaporates the marble in a few weeks or months assumes the dead white colour referred to by Dr. Burgess.

4/ When the stones are placed under cover in a dry room I do not anticipate that
this

28
this disintegration will advance. As already stated it is the combined action of coal-smoke and rain that is so destructive to limestones and marbles, and this combination fortunately does not exist here.

5/ Some of the marbles have suffered a good deal also from apparently genuine, simple weathering, that is the action of air and rain, and this is hardly to be wondered at considering the nature of the stone and the great number of years that it has been exposed. I feel pretty confident, however, that the destructive process will not advance when the stones are housed in a dry room; but if it does then the stones may be protected with glass or with some preservative application.

Insert Madras.
6/ It will be recollected that in G. O. Public Department No 2448 of 26 July 1882, sanction was given for my setting up in a stone frame-work a very fine specimen of sculpture from Amaravati. From one cause or other the frame was not delivered, till shortly before the departure of the Consulting Architect to England on leave. I then pointed out that it was too massive and would crush the marble, and refused to accept it. There the matter rested till the arrival of the new Superintendent.

Superintendent of the School of Arts, when I asked him to design and make a wooden frame that would harmonise with the sculpture. This he was good enough to do, but on submitting the bill to the Accountant General he refused to pass it, owing to the lapse of time. The original grant for the work was Rs 310— but the cost of the wooden frame is only Rs 150—; so I trust that early sanction will be given for the disbursement. This frame will admit of glass being put in if found necessary.

7/ With reference to para 1 of L.C. Public Department No 843 of 28th April 1884, as I did not feel confident that I could give a reliable opinion regarding the cost of housing the marbles, I took the liberty of asking the assistance of Major Morant R.E. Acting Consulting Architect, who very kindly furnished me with the enclosed letter and estimate, which are submitted for the orders of Government.

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by him is, that in raising the sculptures from the backyard with a crane so as to get them inside, the stones be hoisted in the truck as in many cases they are so brittle that their own weight might break them. The amount of Major Morant's estimate is Rs 1,200, and I believe that this will suffice. I trust therefore that early sanction may be given for the execution of the work.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your most Obedient Servant,

W.D.
Sidie Brigade Surgeon
Superintendent Government
Central Museum.

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P.S. HONBLE MEMBER
Order 8 July/84
N:1525

The Supt.'s proposals are approved, and the amt. of the estimate, Rs. 1200, is sanctioned. from ~~Museum~~ funds.

2. The cost of the wooden frame, Rs. 150, is sanctioned. This ^{has} had formed the subject of a separate communication. H.S.
30.6.84.

Public (1884) Department

From
The Superintendent
Government Central
Museum.

No. 620
Encl. 1
Dated 25 June 1884
Recd 26

No.

Subject

Offering certain remarks on the erection of the Amaravati Slabs in the Museum.

HONBLE MEMBER

To the Supt. Govt. Cent. Museum
- accountant genl. } Despd 19/7

H.S. 3-7.

[Despatch]
READ AGA. Order of Government, dated 188, No. Miscellaneous.

OF 188
FURTHER PAPER, No.
OF 188

one } a
CURRENT No. 2154

STATEMENT WITH DATES

ORDER, &c. OF GOVERNMENT—A.

PAPERS KEPT OUT OF FILE FOR DESPATCH IN ORIGINAL. (not paged.)

Order 50
Letter
Collection

N.B.—
A = Print in full.
B = Not to be printed.
P = Print abstract only.
Q = Print heading only.
R = Print, but not for monthly volume

PRESS.

Public DEPARTMENT.
 G.O. DATED 18 July 1884
 No. 1525

First copy sent to Press. 11/7

Returned for signature. 10/7

Despatched in print. 19/7

[Despatch Abstract.]

Archeology. Approving
 the proposals of the Superintendent
 of the Great Central
 Museum on the erection
 in one of the halls of the
 Museum of the sculptured
 slabs from Amaravati.
 & sanctioning the amount
 of the estimate of Rs 1200
 for the purpose —