

ON SOME POTTERY OBJECTS FROM SURAT.

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In July, 1930, I received, for purposes of description, from Dr. A. F. G. Kerr, of Bangkok, certain very puzzling specimens recently found in a cave in a limestone hill close to the deserted village of Buang Bep, Ta Kanawn district, Surat, Siam.

None of these is complete. That which is most so measures in its present state 13 cms. in length. They are hollow, but thick-walled, ox-horn-like objects which terminate abruptly at their tapered ends and are there flattened.⁽¹⁾ The clay of which they are composed is of brown to yellow-ochre in colour and contains much grit. Each appears to have had a round hole communicating from the outside with the central and longitudinal space, this hole being rather towards the broader end. In one the complete hole can be seen, while, in two much broken bits only part of its edge can be observed. The walls of the central passage are nicely smoothed and one of the blunted smaller ends is pierced by two little holes which do not, however, appear to extend to the central cavity. The larger ends, closed like the smaller, are finished off below somewhat concavely, as if they had been pressed against a rounded piece of wood, perhaps a medium sized branch of a tree. At their edges, however, they are fractured in the only two specimens that we have, but in the case of one there is a distinct projection here. It is obvious, therefore, either that there was some projecting piece, which I think probable, or that they were joined to some large object, which does not appear to be very likely. Two of the tapered ends bear spiral markings as if their clay, while still wet, had been closely wound, round and round, with a fairly fine cord. The indentations left by the cord and also by the twists in its structure are clearly visible. The other tapered ends, two base pieces and one from the centre — all are figured — are also cord-marked, but the marking is coarser and runs more or less longitudinally.

(1). There are two ends showing this.

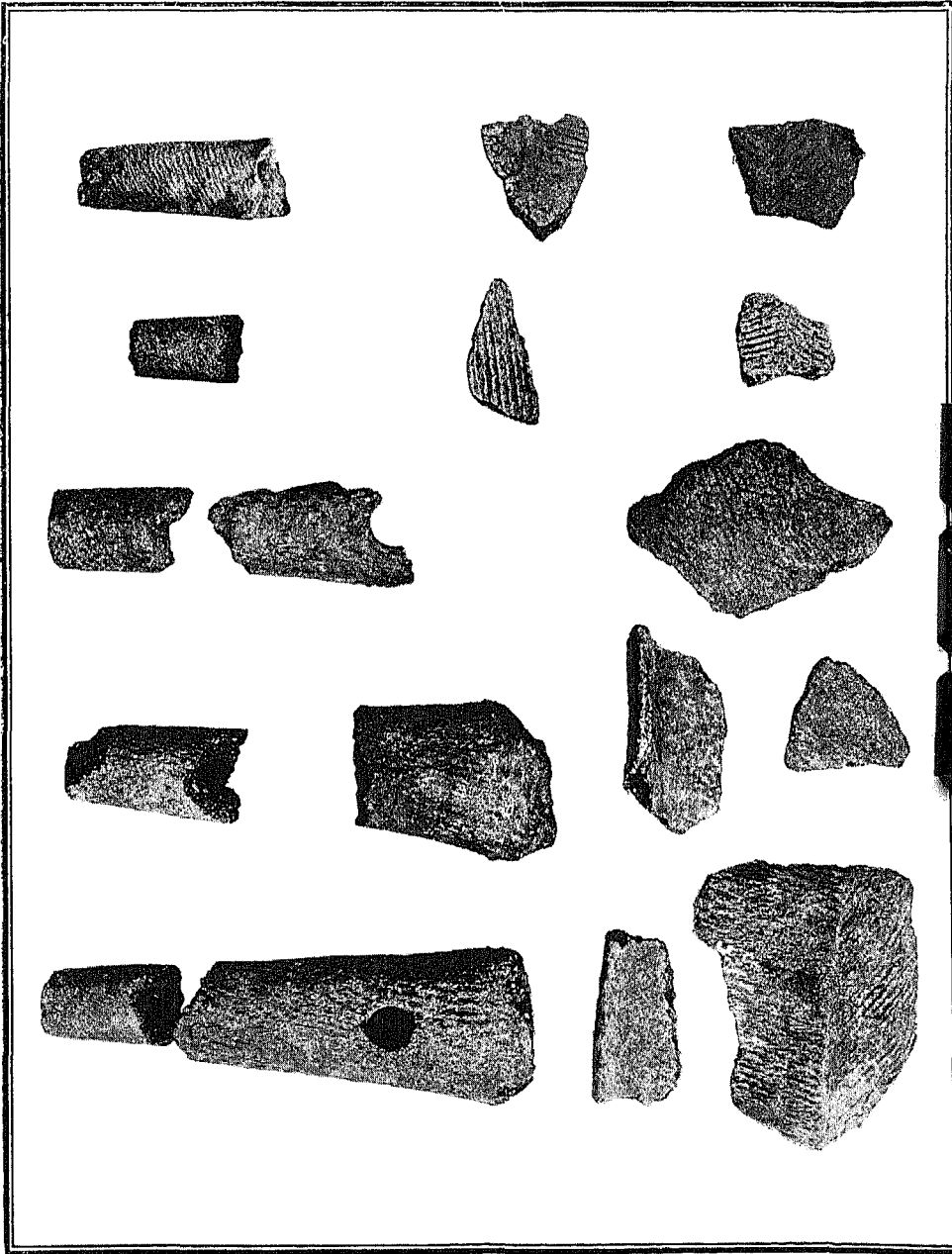
Part of an object exactly similar to these from Siam has been obtained by Mr. W. Linehan from Jeram Kwi on the Tembeling River, Pahang, Federated Malay States — this too is figured. It is a tapered end, and the cord, as in two of the Siamese examples, has been wound spirally on the still soft body. The colour of the object is red-ochre on one side; slightly brown on the other. The inside passage does not penetrate the end so deeply as in the Siamese specimens.

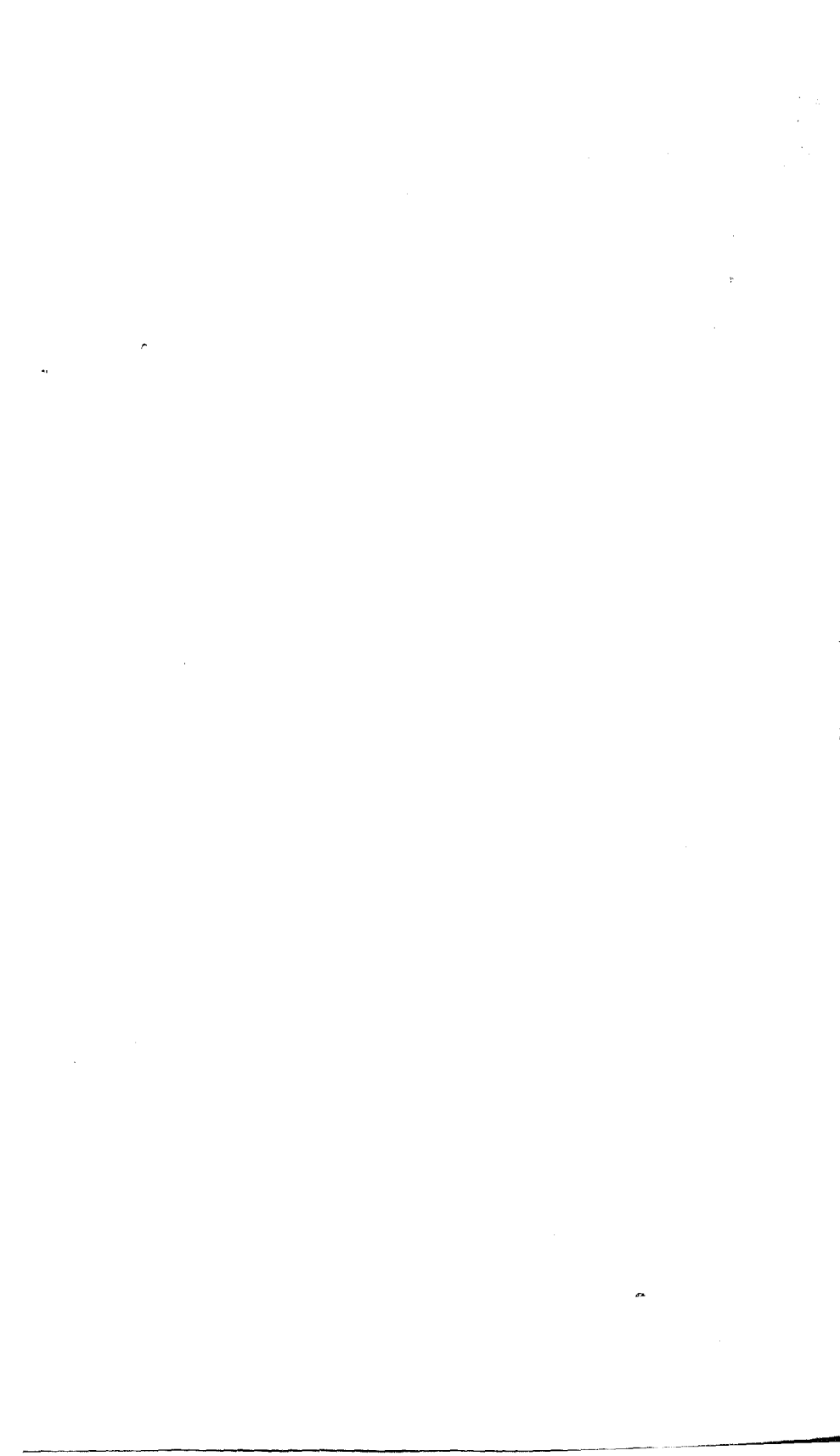
Several sherds of rough pottery accompany the Siamese specimens and are, presumably, of the same age. Except for two plain pieces of pot rims,⁽¹⁾ and two fragments possibly differently treated, all these, too, are cord-marked, the marking being in some cases one of parallel lines, either perpendicular or horizontal according to the way in which it was applied to the pot. In one instance it is certainly perpendicular; in another uncertain, the piece of sherd being too small to allow of an opinion as to where lay the top and where the bottom of the vessel. Apart from the pieces mentioned above, the other sherds are marked with cords to produce a rather indistinct diamond-shaped hatching. Such patterns are common on neolithic culture wares in the Malay States and though not confined to this period (*vide* foot-note *infra*) are very characteristic of it. I feel inclined, therefore, to assign these Siamese specimens (also Mr. Linehan's piece from the Malay States) to that culture. As to the use of the very peculiar objects described above, I do not care even to hazard a guess. Perhaps there may be some modern articles in existence, of which I am ignorant, of similar shape and use.

Certain shells and a stout piece of mammalian limb bone (not human) accompany the other specimens. The shells are fresh water, marine and land and the following genera are, I believe, represented:—*Unio*, (?) *Melania*, *Area*. There are others, too, which I am not able to identify, since my knowledge of conchology is limited.

(1). Probably the bodies of these pots were cord-marked too. Pots with plain rims and cord marked bodies are found in the Malay States from the Protoneolithic and Neolithic cultures to a much later date.

Plate III.





[NOTE. Buang Bep (ပွဲပွဲ မပွဲ) is the site of a small, deserted village some 20-30 kilometers south of Ta Kanawn on the Pum Duang (ပုသိမ်) branch of the Bandawn River. It is 40-50 kilometers in a direct line from the sea. Close by this deserted village is a small, isolated, limestone hill. In this hill are two caves, the smaller of which I did not explore. The larger is a big roomy cave, with its entrance on the western side of the hill. It also has a large hole through the roof, opening on to the summit of the hill. The articles described above by Mr. Evans were all found in the debris on the floor of the cave. No attempt at digging was made. The local people could offer no suggestions as to the use of the curious cylinders. I gathered from their information that a good many articles had been taken away by villagers, at one time or another. *A. Kerr*]

