

*The Verbal Procefs upon the Discovery of an Antient Sepulchre, in the Village of Cocherel upon the River Eure in France.*

**I**N the yeare 1685. the 11<sup>th</sup>. day of *July*; Wee *Olivier Estienne* an Advocate in Parliament, subdelegated by *Monseigneur de Marillac*, Concellour of State in ordinary, having the conduct of the workes that are making upon the River of *Eure* below the Village of *Passy*, Doe Certifye to all present and to come, that upon the petition of *Messire Robert*, Prevost of *Cocherel*, Knight and Lord of the Mannour of the upper and lower *Cocherel*, wee have this day come to the sayd town of *Cocherel*, having with us several Witnessses, and from thence to a piece of Land of the sayd Mannour of upper *Cocherel* called *les Hautberges*, upon the top of a rising Ground exposed on all sides to the Sunn, a little declining from South to West. Where being come the sayd Lord of the Mannour of *Cocherel* did remonstrate unto us, that having occasion for a considerable quantity of Free-Stone for the reedification of the gate or Sluice for boates of the Mills of *Cocherel*, and which hee is to repair by the King's order, hee had for that purpose caused two great Sones, which appeared in this place above gound onely as two Limits or Bounds, the one about a foot and the other about 8 or 9 Inches to be further uncovered, and they had been found to bee 6 foot heigh, and about a foot and a half thick; marked in the figure of the Sepulchre A and B; the bredth of the one marked A of three foot, and the other marked B of two foot and a half, set end ways by one another; and they had further observed in making this discovery, that it was an Antient Sepulchre, shut only on three sides, *viz.* at one end at the head by the two Stones already mentioned; on the right side by a Stone placed edg-ways upon its thickness of about 14 Inches, and being above 5

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foot and a half long, and about 3 foot broad, touching in a Right Angle the Stone marked B at the head; and at the feet another Stone was set, it was marked D, of the same thickness of the precedent, and about 4 foot square; all these Stones were cemented together with Morter made of the Chalk or Marle taken out of the same hole, and mingled with little Stones or Gravel.

That in this Sepulchre were found the Bones of about twenty Bodies of Men, of the ordinary Stature, between 5 foot and a half, and 6 foot, except two Youths of about 15 or 16 years old; all these bodies lay extended North and South, the arms along the Bodies, and the Heads all placed along the two Stones A. B. In the Right Angle there were two Bodies separated from two others by the Stone E, of about a foot thick, 4 foot broad, and 5 foot and a half long, that lay in the manner of a Tomb Stone upon the two Bodies underneath. All these heads had very fair found Teeth in them, and the *Cranium* and other Bones of the Head, were much stronger and thicker than those of ordinary Heads; which argues them to have been of strong well constitution'd men; amongst them all there was not any Womans Head.

In proceeding still to examine the Sepulchre, we did observe, that at the same distance from the Superficies of the Earth, and from those Bodies thus buried, there was three little earthen pots, of about 4 Inches Diameter, and between 4 and 5 Inches high, of a black Earth as soft as Wax; which could not be separated from the other Earth without breaking them, and the peices being come into the open Air turn'd of a greyish Colour and grew hard: These Pots were full of Wood Coals and Ashes, which were not much examined.

All these large Stones of the Sepulchre were rough, and had not been cut, but seem'd to have been fetcht from a Neighbouring Quarry, which is about 400 foot off, upon the same Hill.

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We observed besides, that in the place where were laid the two Heads of the Bodies, that lay upon the Tomb-Stone E there were found two Stones: The one whereof was about 6 Inches long, and some 15 Lines broad in its broadest place, and about 4 Lines thick; fram'd like the head of a Pike, very sharp and cutting at both ends and on the sides; it was a yellow Flint, of which the best Fire-lock Stones are made, being almost as hard as an *Agat*. The other Stone, which was likewise under one of these Heads, was shap'd like the head of an Axe, about 4 Inches long, and 3 Inches broad, having a hole at the narrowest end, and about 6 Lines thick, very sharp and of a greenish Stone, spotted with white spots as hard as *Agat*: the *French* Lapidaries call it *Pierre de Jade*, or the *Nephretick* Stone.

Under the two Heads which were under the Tomb-Stone E, there were also found two other Stones; the one much of the same Nature with that first described, but something longer, and the sharp end a little dull'd. The other was likewise in the shape of an Axe Head, very sharp and cutting, of about 3 Inches long and 2 and a half broad, and 6 Lines thick, with a hole in it at the narrow end: The Stone was of a dark green Colour, which the Lapidaries call, *Oriental Serpentine*.

On the left side of the Sepulchre which was open, there were sixteen Bodies in the same Situation as the first, placed North and South, their Heads along the great Stone A, and the Arms extended along the Bodies, the Bones all entire, though they appeared very antient, and after two Days lying in the Air fell all to Dust.

All the Bones of these heads, as has been said before, were very thick, there was one that had been pierced by some blow, and Nature had repaired the Wound; within, the hole was round as having been made by some sharp round Weapon, which argued likewise the wounded to have been a Souldier. Under every one of these heads, there was a little Stone: Two were round, one of a reddish colour, of about

an inch thick, having a hole at each end, which lessened and grew narrower towards the middle. Another of a Chestnut colour and about the bigness of a Chestnut, made in the shape of a coat-button, with a hole clean through it, but roughly polished and hard, seeming on one side to have suffered by the fire.

There were likewise two other little Stones, which according to probability were under the Heads of the young Bodies; whereof one was about two inches long and eight lines broad and two lines thick, pretty sharp at the broader end, and having a hole at the narrow end: it is thought to be of the same *Pierre de Jade*, green and white, but tis nothing near so hard as the first.

The other Stone was about 17 lines long, and 8 broad, two lines thick, somewhat sharp at the broad end, and having two holes at the narrow end, the one bigger than the other: tis thought to be of a white Marble or Alabaster.

There were moreover found under these Heads three Stones, whereof two were of a grey Pible, such as we find by the Sea side, shaped like Axes Heads, sharp and polished, about four or five inches long and four broad at the broadest end, about an inch and a half at the narrowest, and in the middle about an inch thick. These Stones were by their narrow end to be put into a piece of Staggs Horn fitted to receive them, as appeared by several pieces found in this Sepulchre, which had an oval hollow at the end to receive one of these Stones, these pieces were about six inches long, and had a hole at the other end, by which they might be fastened to a longer stick.

The third Stone was of the shape of the precedent, but of a black Pible like a Flint, of which this Country is very full; and it was besides remark'd that the pieces of Staggs Horn were worn at the end, and polished upon some Stone, but not cut with Iron.

Under all the other Heads there were ten little Stones like black flint, one under each Head, cut all in the same shape

shape, smooth on one side and sharp on the other; tis thought they might use them as Knives.

There was likewise found in the same place under one of the Heads a Stone, which within was of black flint, having the outside of a white Substance, as that sort of Stone uses to be, this had two Eminences like Teeth, which we took to be Natural, and not Artificial. All these Stones thus placed under their heads shewed that they had them in great Esteem.

Amongst these dead Bodies has been also found some Bones sharpened, to put at the end of a Stick, or at the end of an Arrow; one was of the smaller Bone of a Horses Legg, and the other was made of the sharp end of the Andouilleres of a Staggs Horn.

Amongst all these Stones there has been found no sort of Inscription, Sculpture or Character either in *rilievo* or otherwise, which might oblige us to think that these Men had any Knowledge of Christianity, but rather that they had some Idolatrous Superstition, as these Stones seemed to Indicate. Wherefore we thought fit to declare to the said Lord of the Mannour of *Cocherel*, that he might without Scruple use these Stones for what use he thought fit.

Since the Expedition of the present verbal process, there having been further digging on the left side of this Sepulcher, it has been discovered that the bottom of the Sepulcher was raised, and not so deep by a foot and a half as that part where the Bodies were buried. And it is perceivable that in this place several Bodies have been burnt, whose Ashes and burnt Bones have been thrown confusedly into this hole: and 'tis observable that all along the Sepulcher, there is a veine of Coales and Ashes, which runs about two foot below the superficies of the Earth, and all these Ashes, and Bones are under this Bedd of Coales and Ashes which are so salt and ungent that they make one sneeze; and when these Bones are handled they produce a tingling in ones fingers ends, as if one had handled the sharpest Salt-Peter.

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There has not been time yet to finish entirely this discovery by digging into the Earth that has been put into this Sepulcher, which was digged on purpose in the Chalke to bury these Bodies, and likewise the Ashes and Bones of those others that were Burnt. So that it seems difficult how to reconcile the two Cerimonies of Burying and Burning. Except we should say that there has been a fight in this place between the *Gaules* and some barbarous Nation, who had Invaded them; that the *Gaules* have burn't their dead, and sacrificed to the *manes* of them their Prisoners taken in Warr, whom they buried with the Cerimonies proper to those Barbarians, the thickness of whose Sculls shew that they went bare-headed; and their Armes shew that they had not the use either of Iron or Brass to make Arms of, but using such as Nature afforded first, as some *Indian Nations* do now.

There remains now to guess, by these Stones and what Antiquities we have left in History, who these *Barbarians* should be, and at what time this Sepulcher might be made.

*The Sepulchres and Monuments of the Dead having been in all times held sacred, and it being lookt upon as a piaculum to remove or deface them: Mr. de Cocherel having discovered this but now described, thought it his duty to inquire into the Condition thereof, as not being willing, without Legall Authority, to disturb the Bones of those there interred: This was the occasion of this Verbal Process, which for the Novelty of the thing, was thought fit to be Published in the form of Law, as it was communicated by Mr. Justell. Reg. Soc. S. who has promised to procure, if possible, the Figures of the Arms of Stone found in the said Sepulchre, which in some following Transaction shall be given.*

