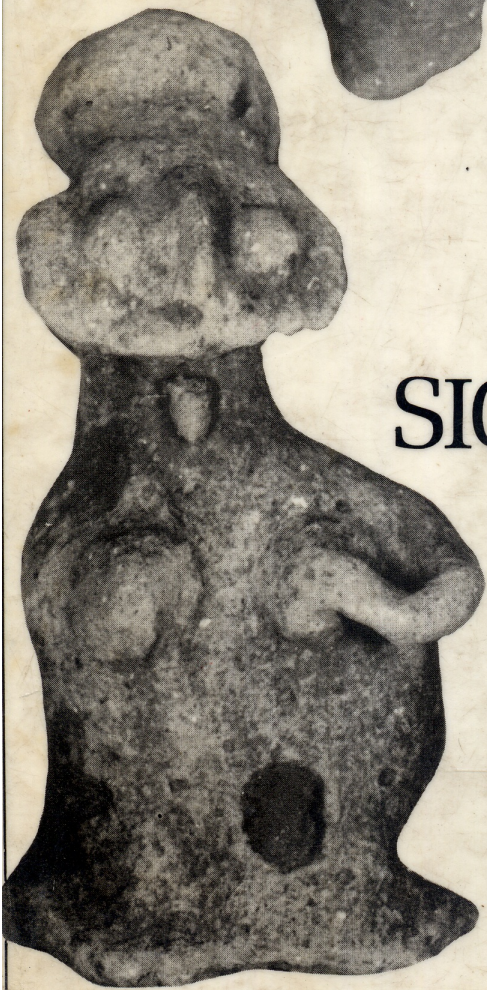




THE
SETTLEMENT
ARCHAEOLOGY
OF THE
SIGIRIYA-DAMBULLA
REGION

SENAKE BANDARANAYAKE
MATS MOGREN
SENEVIRATNE EPITAWATTE



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REGION

Editors

Senake Bandaranayake

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POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF KELANIYA

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Frontispiece

Aerial view of Mapagala, Sigiriya and Pidurangala
(Photo: Robert Swarthe Inc., Beverley Hills, California, USA)

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Contents

Preface	9	Notes on the history of the Sigiriya-Dambulla region in the 18th and 19th centuries	149
✓ Approaches to the settlement archaeology of the Sigiriya-Dambulla region	13	✓ A preliminary socio-economic investigation of villages of the research area: a catalogue of inquiry results	159
Senake Bandaranayake		Jayaratne Sooriyagoda, Channa Wickremesekara, Anura Yasapala	
✓ The physical environment of the study area	39	An extract from 'A Gazetteer of the Central Province of Ceylon' Vol. I and II, Colombo 1898,	167
Seneviratne Epitawatte		A.C. Lawrie	
✓ Project strategies: methodology and perspectives	49	The Beliyakanda, Kaluarachchigama and Neeravva stone inscriptions	195
Mats Mogren		Raj Somadeva	
✓ Approaches to the study of traditional techniques related to food procurement	61	Readings of hitherto unread graffiti on the Mirror Wall and <i>Asana Guhava</i> at Sigiriya	201
Eva Myrdal		Benille Priyanka	
✓ The Kiri Oya valley	73	The Ilukvava terracotta figurines	219
Anura Manatunga		B.D. Nandadeva	
The Sigiri Oya and Mirisgani Oya basins	93	'The Maradanmaduva-Tabbova' Culture terracottas found at Manavava in the vicinity of Inamaluva	237
Channa Wickremesekara		Anura Manatunga	
✓ Preliminary explorations in the Eastern Precinct (SEP)	105	A catalogue of some of the terracotta objects at Manavava	237
Rose Solangaarachchi		B.D. Nandadeva	
✓ Dehigaha-ala-kanda (KO14): a pre-historic habitation site, a monastic rock-shelter site and an iron production site in the Kiri Oya Basin	113	Appendix - Nuvaragala Kanda	247
Mandalika Manjusri		H.C.P. Bell, W.M. Fernando, H.L. Moysey	
The locational significance of early Iron Age sites in intermediary transitional eco-systems: a preliminary survey study of the Upper Kala Oya region, North-Central Sri Lanka	121	Index of Pali, Sanskrit, Sinhala and Tamil words	254
Sudharshan Seneviratne		List of illustrations	257
✓ Farming systems in the ancient Dry Zone	141		
W.I. Siriweera			

Preface

This book is a collection of preliminary field reports and research papers arising from the first season of operations of a research and training program in the Settlement Archaeology of a selected micro-region in central Sri Lanka. The program began in July 1988. Fieldwork was completed in seven weeks. Analysis, report writing, cartography and editing continued into 1989. A second season commenced in August 1989.

The Settlement Archaeology Research and Training Project (SARCP)

The project is designed to extend over a period of three to five years. Conceived, organized and co-ordinated by the Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology (PGIAR), it is carried out with the assistance of the Swedish Central Board of National Antiquities, the Riksantikvarieambetet (RAA), and is made possible by a generous grant from the Swedish Research Development Agency – SAREC. It is essentially a collaborative program, involving a number of different agencies, including the PGIAR, the RAA, the Central Cultural Fund (CCF). Cultural Triangle Program, the Archaeological Department of the Government of Sri Lanka, the Department of National Museums and various department of the Universities of Colombo, Kelaniya, Peradeniya, Sri Jayawardenepura and the Institute of Fundamental Studies, Kandy.

History of the project

The project had its origin in discussions, between Dr. Carl-Gustaf Thornstrom of SAREC, Dr. Gustav Trotzig and Dr. David Damell of RAA and the present writer, in Sweden in 1984. The formulation of the basic research design took place between 1986 and 1987. Discussions and field visits took place during the visits of Dr. Damell to Sri Lanka in November 1986, and Dr. Thornstrom between 1985 and 1987. An important field visit took place in February and March 1988, when the present writer and Mats Mogren of RAA examined the field locations and held a roundtable discussion with Dr. Thornstrom and a PGIAR Project Steering Committee. This culminated in the signing of the agreement between PGIAR and SAREC on 26 February 1988, on the basis of a previous, formal agreement between SAREC and the Department of External Resources, Ministry of Planning, on behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka.

Preliminary work

Preliminary work on the project, familiarization with the survey area and the commencement of the mapping program began as early as January 1988, with the help of Dr. S. Epitawatte (Department of Geography, University of Sri Jayawardenepura). A preliminary ethnological survey was carried out by Mr. Tissakumara (Department of Sinhala, University of Colombo) in July and August 1988. Several discussions and consultations were held with Dr. Roland Silva (Director-General CCF and Director-General of Archaeology), Prof. H. T. Basnayake (Department of Archaeology, University of Kelaniya) and Prof. Mangala Ilangasinha (Department of History, University of Kelaniya), in their capacities as Directors of the Cultural Triangle Projects at Sigiriya and Dambulla. Dr. Sudharshan Seneviratne of the University of Peradeniya, and Prof. Chandra Wikramagamage and Dr. S. B. Hettiarachchi of the University of Sri Jayawardenepura, were consulted with regard to aspects of the history, archaeology and ethnology of the Sigiriya-Dambulla area and the detailed research strategy. Prof. Basnayake was able to visit Sweden in Spring 1988 and to have further discussions and to visit archaeological sites and institutions in Sweden, at the invitation of the Swedish Central Board of National Antiquities.

Cultural Triangle excavations

Since 1982, excavations and other archaeological investigations have been carried out at Sigiriya and Dambulla under the Cultural Triangle Projects directed by the present author. This work is still in progress. Research excavations were also begun at the nearby sites of Pidurangala and Ibbankatuva as part of a collaboration program between the CCF-Cultural Triangle, the PGIAR and the Kommission fur Allgemeine und Vergleichende Archaeologie (KAVA) of the German Archaeological Institute. While these excavation programs are not directly part of the present project, they interface with it and involve many members of the present project team.

Team formation

Preliminary work in Sri Lanka and Sweden on the formation of the team, selection and purchase of equipment, transportation and support structure ar-

rangements, etc. were carried out in the period before 1 August 1988. A cartographic unit was established in the PGIAR some months earlier and began intensive work in August.

Management Committee

The Board of Management of the PGIAR appointed a representative Management Committee for the project which incorporated the Steering Committee proposed at the meeting between representatives of the PGIAR, SAREC and RRA in February 1988. This committee overlooks the broad operations and management of the project. The Management Committee had its first meeting in August. The members of the Management Committee are listed elsewhere.

Project objectives

The principal objective of the first season's operations was a preliminary surface investigation of the ancient settlement network within the Sigiriya-Dambulla area, which covers parts of the administrative districts of Matale, Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa and which, in earlier times, formed the ancient *Sigiri bim*, 'the Sigiriya territory'. The archaeological landscape of this region is one that largely dates from the Early and Middle Historical Period (*EMHP*: circa 3rd century BC to 13th century AC) but the project has also opened up important perspectives in the prehistory and protohistory of the area. At the same time, it is paying considerable attention to the Later Historical Period (*LHP*: circa 13th to 19th century), and the contemporary history, economy, environment and ethnology of the region.

New perspectives

While Sri Lankan archaeological, epigraphical and historical studies have provided us with an extensive knowledge of the EMPH, they have largely been confined to the study of monumental complexes, royal and official inscriptions and political and religious history – mostly relating to the apex or superstructure of the historical society. Similarly, excavations were almost invariably limited to the study of monumental remains and more recently to stratigraphic investigations of sites associated with such remains. These same concerns also determine most explorations and surveys. The present project, therefore, can be seen as an attempt at developing a research strategy to investigate the entire premodern social network and

man-environment nexus of the study area, with special emphasis on the identification and analysis of ancient habitational sites and their inter-relations. This also involves the examination of the localized irrigation system, of production and market centres, monastic sites of various types, and the main politico-urban and monastic centre at Sigiriya, all of which form part of a complex regional system with many diachronic variations.

Development of national research capabilities

A second and related objective was to develop such research orientations and technical and methodological skills among a younger generation of Sri Lankan archaeologists, so that the project would result, not only in an original and pioneering contribution to knowledge, in an important and relatively neglected area of archaeological research, but would also contribute to the internalization of new investigative techniques, and the development of national research capabilities.

Other objectives

Other operational objectives included the development of a cartographic unit, which could provide informational back-up to the project by preparing a series of maps and chart displays, an album of maps and plans, and a collection of topographic and aerial-photograph material. This would also ensure the capability of preparing the publication drawings for the project reports. Preliminary investigations and discussions were also held regarding an ethno-archaeological survey of the target area, which would examine the traditional and particularly the 'modern-transitional' socio-economic and socio-cultural system, as well as the documentation of traditional material culture with specific reference to agricultural production and processing tools and techniques.

Progress and achievements

The most significant achievements of this first season were the clear identification of the research objectives on the ground, the evolution of relevant and operationally-effective investigative techniques, and the smooth formation of an effective and multi-functional field team. It was possible at least midway during the season to see that the project was not only viable and feasible, but that it also had considerable research and training potential. More than one-third of the

total target area and more than half the area that is to be actually covered by the study, was investigated by a combination of field-walking, sampling, surveying and inquiry techniques. The results obtained from seven weeks of fieldwork, between 24 August and 11 October, far exceeded expectations. The analysis of data, the writing of reports and research papers, the preparation of maps and the editing of the publication took place through 1988 and 1989. This work was overlapped by the second season of operations in late 1989 and took place during the very difficult conditions that prevailed in the country in the latter part of 1988 and through 1989. The present publication, the product of this preliminary effort, cannot but be satisfying to all those connected with this enterprise. It is a modest contribution to a relatively new area of research in Sri Lankan archaeology.

Teamwork

An archaeological project of this nature is only possible through teamwork. A significant feature of this publication is that this team effort is reflected in the reports and research papers which it contains. Many of the reports have been written by a number of young team members, whose research product will almost certainly increase both quantitatively and qualitatively as the project develops. An important aspect of the project is that the entire field operation was carried out by this group of young Sri Lankan archaeologists, all of them below the age of 30. Their academic level, abilities, initiative and commitment were well proven during the fieldwork season, which provided them with valuable experience and training in new techniques and research orientations. Field direction and training were principally handled by the Swedish consultants.

Collaboration

Another important aspect of this project, going beyond its purely archaeological significance, is the experience it has offered in showing that modes of creative research collaboration are possible between scientists of developed and developing nations in which there is a genuine transfer of knowledge and expertise without a loss of academic and scientific resources on the part of the Third World country and with mutual academic benefit and satisfaction to all parties engaged in the project. I believe that the first season's activities under this program have established a relationship of a new type, not just between

individuals, but between scientific groups and institutional structures belonging to the two countries involved. The development and completion of this project can be expected to provide not only an original and useful contribution to knowledge but also to exemplify, within its limited scope, new trends in international relationships between scientific communities.

Acknowledgements

As Director of this project, I would like to thank not only all members of the large team of Sri Lankan archaeologists and others who played such an essential role in the furtherance of the program, but also to offer a very special word of appreciation to Mats Mogren, Magnus Elfwendhal and Eva Myrdal for the exemplary way in which they handled both the scientific implementation and interpersonal relationships in their direction of, and work in, this project. Similar appreciation is due to Dr. S. Epitawatte, the project's Associate Director, and the two successive Field Directors, Anura Manatunga and Raj Somadeva, who have handled the day-to-day work of the program. These acknowledgements are not meant to be exhaustive – many others, the Sri Lankan and Swedish consultants, the SARCP Management Committee, the PGIAR Board of Management, the staff of the cartographic and editorial units, the PGIAR library and, last but not least, the staff of the PGIAR itself, have all helped to make this project and this publication possible.

The PGIAR is also deeply appreciative of the support that SAREC and its representatives have extended to the Institute in the formation and development of what is in many ways a pioneering venture in Sri Lankan archaeology and archaeological education, and to the inauguration of a new type of research collaboration between Sri Lanka and Sweden.

Senake Bandaranayake
Colombo
24 March 1990