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The Terracotta Hoards Culture of Sri Lanka: An Interpretative Study

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ABSTRACT

The occurrence of primitive terracotta assemblages as hoards in different parts of the Island is one of the ambiguous hitherto encountered by Sri Lankan Archeologists. The present paper deals with these problems and is an attempt to interpret the culture behind them.

These terracotta hoards were first discovered by AM Hocart at Thalgasveve, near Puttalam in 1924. Thereafter, they were discovered at Thabbova and Maradankadawala by PEP deraniyagala and they were identified as belonging to a distinct culture. Subsequently, some more sites were discovered and materials were studied by CE godakumbura, RH de Silva, KH Jayathilake, BD Nandadeva, and the present writer.

Later, the present writer had an opportunity to excavate one of these sites at Manaveva in 1992. The finds unearthed from the site were studied comparatively with finds from other sites throughout the last few years. The results of this study led to the identification of the culture associated with these finds as nothing but an elephant cult worship. The present paper will elaborate on this interpretation and a large number of slides and illustrations will be shown along with the oral presentation.