

Theoretical and practical problems in studying pottery in Sri Lanka: a case study in the Sigiriya region

Chitra Dambadeniarchchi¹

Sri Lanka is one of the best islands in the world which contains remarkable archaeological ruins such as world heritage sites Sigiriya, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa etc, have been named as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The excavation of many archaeological sites in Sri Lanka represent enormous amount of pottery and potsherds. This major find of pottery is also significantly prominent in archaeological contexts and more than hundreds of thousand ancient settlement sites in the island. The potteries found in these excavations are very complicated and researches might have many problems with regard to identification, technology, functional aspects etc. the aim of this paper is to discuss some of the problems and also possible solutions for these problems.

Considering these enormous amounts of pottery, its technological variations and functional aspects, a detailed study in this regard is not only important but also critical, to archaeological interpretations. The study of pottery carried out in the country as well as its theoretical framework is very important. When studying pottery it is difficult to identify the nature of technology used by people at ancient times. However, certain technologies such as wheel turned pottery, hand made pottery, cane basket pottery can be identified. The analysis of pottery firing techniques is also very important because of the variety of firing techniques employed by potters.

Key words: Sigiriya, Pottery, Technology, Archaeology, Technology, Potsherds, Sri Lanka.

¹ Central Cultural Fund, Colombo, Sri Lanka