

2.29 Prehistoric Pitted Stone Tools: a Review of their Technology, Utilization and Interpretation

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ABSTRACT

The history of research into Sri Lankan prehistory spans over a hundred years and have revealed scientific dates for prehistoric sites which ranging from 250,000 BP to 3200-2800 BP (Deraniyagala, 1992: 686-710). Prehistoric stone tools can be considered the main source of prehistoric research. And pitted stone tools are one component of the numerous types of stone tools discovered from Sri Lanka. The exact reason for this pitted feature is subject to much debate. The main aim of this paper is to discuss the technology, utilization and existing hypotheses (as well as their validation) with regard to these tools.

Pitted stone tools discovered from Sri Lankan prehistoric sites; display either one, two, three or more pits on their outer surface. In some instances these pits are all found on one face of the tool, at others pits can be found on all faces of the tool (ibid).

Such tools have been discovered in places such as Murunkan, Thibolketiya of the Iranamadu Formation, the wet zone caves of Batadombalena, Fa-hiengala, Kitulgala Belilena in the Rathnapura area (also known as the Rathnapura deposits) and the dry zone sites of Sigiriya, Aligala and Potana (Deraniyagala, 1992 Karunaratne and Adikari, 1994). These tools have been classified as 109a and 109b in Deraniyagala's (1992) stone tool classification.

Investigations of Sri Lanka's prehistoric period thus far however have revealed only relatively few tools of this type. However there have been several hypotheses as to the probable utilization of these tools, such as their use as a fire drill, nut cracker etc (ibid). It has also been suggested that they were used as a hunting tool.

References:

Deraniyagala, S. (1992) *The prehistory of Sri Lanka an Ecological Perspective*, Parts I and II, Department of Archaeological Survey, Colombo.

Karunaratne, P. and G. Adikari (1994) "Excavations at Aligala prehistoric site" In S. Bandaranayake and M. Mogren (Eds.) *Further Studies in the Settlement Archaeology of the Sigiriya-Dambulla Region*, PGIAR, Colombo pp 55-62.