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**Theme: 5. State, City and Society .**  
**Sub-theme: b. Urban Design and Layout**

**The Premodern City in Sri Lanka:**  
**The First and Second Urbanization**

**Senake Bandaranayake**  
*Department of Archaeology*  
*University of Kelaniya and*  
*Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology*  
*Sri Lanka*

The study of ancient urbanization in Sri Lanka, as elsewhere in Asia, takes its place within the framework of at least two major problematics: *one*, a general group of questions regarding urban genesis and urban function -- i.e. questions regarding the origin, evolution, character and function of that unit of human settlement whose definition and study has been a primary concern of archaeology since its inception in the 19th century; *two*, the more specific problem of why the technologically-advanced, substantially-urbanized, substantially-mercantilist societies of Asia, with their extensive urban systems and commercial networks, failed in the period between the 11th and 15th centuries to generate the dynamics and momentum that produced the modern transformation which originated in Europe from about the 15th and 16th centuries onwards - a transformation whose most distinctive products (and vehicle) was the late mediaeval and modern European city and its derivatives elsewhere in countries occupied or affected by the European expansion and diaspora. The first set of these questions relate to familiar and basic problems, of the most general kind, but very little studied in the South Asian region outside the Harappan context; the second leads us into one of the major, unstudied problem areas of Asian historiography.

#### **Archaeology and the paucity of data**

In the Asian context, at least, as elsewhere, the discussion of these problems is greatly hampered by three interconnected factors -- the paucity of data, the inadequacy of research interest and input, and the difficulties of data retrieval. Although Sri Lanka is better-endowed in its early written records than mainland South Asia, even here it is largely (or only) through the increasingly-expensive and extremely slow-moving process of archaeological fieldwork that we can begin to recover the kind of diagnostic data that will enable us to study the premodern city in terms of the problematics indicated above.

#### **Objectives**

The principal objective of this paper, therefore, is to present a largely empirical overview of the archaeological data relating to premodern urbanization in Sri Lanka, as an indication of research potential, research limitations and as a basis for comparative study. At the same time we propose a model of the morphology and spatial organization of the historical city and introduce the concept of a 'first' and 'second' urbanization in the Sri Lankan context, outlining