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Paper: Diversity

Discovery of an iron smelting site in Waakare, Batticaloa district in Sri Lanka

Steel was being produced in Sri Lanka since 300 BC by furnaces blown by the monsoon winds, and the protohistoric Early Iron Age in Sri Lanka lasted from 1000 to 600 BC. In March 2010, a group of researchers from the Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology of the University of Kelaniya, discovered a mound of iron slag in the flood prone area of the Kunjalkalkulam Reservoir in Batticaloa District in Sri Lanka. The GPS location of the particular site is obtained as (08° 13' 1.3" N: 081° 24' 20.4" E) which is situated 39ft amsl.

This particular site is about 10x10m² in size and located between the Second Singha Regiment in Maankerny in Kunjalkalkulam and the Kunjalkalkulam Reservoir. Other than iron slag, pieces of a furnace were also discovered. The sizes of iron slag were less than 50cm. Pieces of iron slag were brought to the laboratory and tested for magnetism, which was proved. Also found were iron ore along the jeep track which extends from Madurankuliya to Omaliyamadu village. It was also discovered that for the construction of this particular jeep track, materials had been brought from another place close to this village. According to the visual inspections those iron ore were similar to Magnetite (FeO₃). This preliminary investigation shows evidence of an iron smelting industry in this particular area. Further investigations would be needed.

Keywords: Iron ore, Kunjalkalkulam, Omaliyamadue