

Prehistoric evidence discovered through the Upper Malwatu Oya Exploration Project

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The focus of Sri Lankan prehistory has been mainly concentrated on the Wet zone of Sri Lanka, whilst significant research attempts to discover the prehistoric past of the dry zone especially that of the central and north-central provinces began in the 1990's. The main aim of this paper is to discuss sites of a prehistoric nature discovered through the surveys conducted in the Anuradhapura hinterland i.e. the Upper Malwatu Oya Region.

So far many of the prehistoric sites in this region are open air sites, whilst further examination of cave shelters and rocky outcrops of this area would no doubt reveal prehistoric evidence. One of the primary challenges in discovering prehistoric evidence in cave shelters in the dry zone is the fact that they are used as residences by ascetic monks from the Early Historic Period onwards. Hence much of the prehistoric deposits have been disturbed. Our surveys have shown that the cave shelters and outcrops are promising prehistoric sites and further research would no doubt reveal more concrete prehistoric evidence.

Key words: Anuradhapura hinterland, Prehistory, Dry Zone

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