

Ceramic Analysis of the Anuradhapura Hinterland

K. Krishnan¹, Gamini Adikari²

Introduction:

The Upper Malwatu Oya Exploration Project aims at understanding the role played by the communities who lived in the surrounding plain while the urban settlement at Anuradhapura grew through time from a small Iron Age village until its abandonment in 11th century AD. The history of the communities in the surrounding plain is quite significant, as the people who lived there have contributed in several ways to the formation and development of the urban settlement at Anuradhapura, which had a history of nearly 1500 years. The archaeological and chronological sequence at ASW 2, the main excavation area at Anuradhapura, provides ample opportunities to appreciate its architecture, economic wealth and involvement in Indian Ocean trade from time to time.

To achieve the aforesaid aim systematic transect surveys followed by excavations were carried out in the surrounding plains. The sampling area included the regions that fell within a circle of 25 km radius with Anuradhapura as the central point. While conducting the survey the number of ceramics or any other artefact in one square meter was used as a criterion for designating that find spot as an 'activity area'. While examining the finds from these clusters, it was observed that the dominant artefact was ceramics and to assign a date to these artefact clusters one had to depend on ceramics. But, dating these ceramics using the standard typological methods was difficult, as all of them were non-diagnostic coarse wares.

1 Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Faculty of Arts, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara – 390 002, India

2 Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

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