

Proto historic burial site Excavation at Galagamuwa, Andarawewa*

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Abstract

Galagamuwa Andarawewa megalithic burial site is situated at Anamaduwa Divisional Secretariat in the North Western Province, Sri Lanka. In the ancient times, the proto historic people have settled in this region before 2500 years ago. They have constructed burials at several places in this region, for burying their dead. In this article, I have discussed new findings from the proto historic burials excavation at Andarawewa. In this research, I have collected Archaeological evidence through the field survey and excavations for the success research outcome.

Keywords: Protohistory, Anuradhapura, Andarawewa, Burial, BRW

Introduction

The Department of Archaeology and Heritage Management (RUSL) has started a second research program since 2017 between Mid-Daduru Oya basin and Mid-Mee Oya basin. Middle Daduru Oya basin and Middle Mee Oya

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Basin are the most important river basins in the proto historic period. Proto historic people had settled in these river basins before 6th century B.C. According to the archaeological evidence, it was confirmed that in the last ten years, researches carried out between these two basins have identified proto historic settlements, burials and their material culture. Proto Historic People introduced these important cultural aspects for these basins. Iron and Copper Technology Village Settlement, Paddy Cultivation, Tank and Irrigation System, Animal and Plant Domestication, BRW, RW, BW Pottery making Methods, Beads Production Methods (Seneviratne 1984:237-305).

According to our research objectives firstly we have done exploration between these two basins and after that, we have selected a place for excavation, Galgamuwa Andarawewa Megalithic burial site at end of the year 2017. Before the excavation, the exploration team started surveying in the surrounding area of the burial site and they identified a natural hollow (pathaha), a bead production site (Furness) and a monastery complex near the burial site. At some point in time proto historic people had used this type of natural hollow (Sihala meaning pathaha) for their small paddy cultivation. Subsequently developing this culture, they had converted the hollow into a small tank. The burial site is extended to 14 acres and the exploration team has identified 34 cist burials on surface level. Among these 34 burials, we have selected two cist burials for excavation; site code of the excavations is RUSL/AW/01/2017, RUSL/AW/ 02/2017.

Previous Investigation

The explorations conducted by Central Cultural Fund, Yapahuwa Project suggest that middle Daduru Oya basin in the North western region, Sri Lanka was first colonized by hunter - gatherers during the microlithic period (Mesolithic). In the decades following the 1970's S.U. Deraniyagala discovered several rock shelters with stone artifacts (Deraniyagala 1992). Between 2010-2013 CCF Yapahuwa Project has started a new research programme in this region and had identified a microlithic period rock shelter

in the Yapahuwa Fort. As per data from over the past two decades of Archaeological investigation, it is now suggested that the microlithic period was formally superseded by the proto historic Iron Age in the study area. A review of the previous, proto historic investigations undertaken by several scholars namely Sudhrashan Senavirathne (1984) and Ranjith Bandara Dissanayake (2013-2015) and Department of Archaeology, Sri Lanka (2003) indicated that approximately 10 proto historic Iron Age Megalithic burials and Proto historic Iron Age settlements with BRW sites are located between middle Daduru Oya basin and middle Mee Oya Basin.

The Earliest known proto historic Iron Age settlement of North Western Province reported from Polpithigama was dated to around 520 BC by radiocarbon dating (Press.com with Ranjith Dissanayake July 25th, 2018). However, the present work and new dating evidence from Andarawewa megalithic burial dates it to 500 B.C. The Archaeological importance of the Andarawewa Proto Historic Iron age burial site area was first recognized by the Department of Archaeology, Sri Lanka who investigated a small portion of the Andarawewa megalithic complex, they reported the discovery of megalithic burials in the study area. The first systematic archaeological exploration of the area began in 2003, with the Department of Archaeology, reporting the discovery of approximately 20 megalithic burials. In the same year, the burial site was extended to approximately 14 acres.

Discussion

Previous investigation lefts several questions concerning site formation process, stratigraphy and chronology of the burial complex unanswered. With a view to filling this gap, the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Management of the Rajarata University had the opportunity to undertake exploration and a limited excavation of the study area from 4 x 4 m with the permission of the Director General of the Department of Archaeology. The exploration of the area has identified approximately 34 stone cist burials including the new form of cist burial within the area of 14 acres. Following

the exploration, and excavations of two cist burials, it was found that these burials were very rich in endeared metered in particular Black and Red Ware, Black Ware, Red Ware and beads made of glass, and iron chisels; most of these cultured materials were placed as offerings in the pot. Two radiocarbon dates which have been secured on charcoal; was dated by Beta Analytic as Cal BP. 2490 (507-500 Cal B.C), and Cal BP, 2378 (429 Cal B.C)

Anuradhapura western peripheral area is very important for identifying ancient human behavior pattern. In the proto historic period, humans had settled this region for the minerals. Velagedara Panirendawa is one of the valuable places of ancient time. People had identified copper magnetite deposit in the Panirendawa. It is only 30 years ago that the Sri Lankan Geology Department had identified 6 million ton copper magnetite deposit in the Panirendawa (Senaviratne 1995:116-118) but this deposit had been identified by proto historic people in these two basing before 2500 BP. They remove copper in surface level and transport these to the two basins for the production of iron and copper objects. Exploration team had identified many places which were used for iron or copper production. This evidence is highly valuable to construct the ancient metal recourse pattern between these two basins. After the proto historic period, specialized people established Trade, and Metal production in this area. According to inscription evidence we could identify Kabara (Iron smith) (*Ic.* Vol.I. No. 1049), Cuda and Manikara (*Ic.* vol.1, No.998,1033) as the people who produced metal objects and may be beads. These items were distributed throughout Sri Lanka by merchants known as Vnika or Vaniga (*Ic.* Vol.I. No. 897)

Pottery: In this excavation we have found pottery collection that dates to 500 BC. The untitled pottery classification was conducted on the basis of predominate Color, Rim, Shape and Body shape. Subsequently the results as per the classification system, introduced nine pottery forms. These pottery forms were classified and categorized types (form) and based on a comparison with the Anuradhapura, Pomparippu, Kok-ebe and Pinwewa Galsohon

Kannaththa pottery types (Table No.01). According to the pottery conservation program we have identified three early Brahmic letters on the pot shard (Sinhala Tha, Tha and Sha). Beta analytic U.S.A has dated this burial from 500- 507 B.C. Previous Sri Lankan researchers have not found early Brahmic letters inside proto historic burials. This is very important as this is the earliest date regarding early Brahmic letters in Sri Lanka

Form	Description
A	Haliya or Muttiya - Pot with Restricted and Inverted Upper Body With Everted and Flared Rim Zone
B	Attilya or Halliya - Large Bowl with Wide Orifice
C	Deep Globular Bowl with Restricted Upper Body and Mostly Triangular Thickened Rim Halliya
D	Barani/Muttiya - Small Storage or Water Jug with Narrow and Short Neck and Globular Body
E	Baraniya - Huge Storage Vessel with Thick Walls and no Neck
F	Small Jug with Mostly lenticular Built Body a Narrow Orifice and High and Funnel Shaped Neck
G	Pattaraya - Begging Bowl with Narrow Neck and Globular Body
H	Conical Dish
K	Lid/Lid-cum-bowel

Table No. 1 - Pottery form Details

Beads : Mineral and glass beads production had been introduced by proto historic people to this basin. In this excavation over 50 beads had been found by the excavation team. All beads were made of glass. Exploration team has identified bead production site (Furness) beyond north side of burial site. It was situated near the bank of the stream and the canal constructed by Irrigation Department had destroyed it. According to previous survey at the site of Giribawa, a large amount of glass as well as beehive-shaped furnaces, possibly for the primary production of raw glass were revealed. We observed that these two furnaces are of the same type and these two furnace area appear to be waste from primary glass production.

According to James Lankton all of the new Giribawa samples were made from mineral soda glass with high alumina, variable potassia and lime, low cesium and low to moderate uranium. Comparing the chemical compositions of the new samples with those from previous analyses by Dussubieux (2001) and ourselves, there appears to be no significant difference in the range of values for individual oxides. In addition, there was no significant difference in composition between the beads and fragments at the site and the furnace samples, providing additional evidence that all or almost all of the glass found at the site was most likely made there (Lankton 2014:5)

In order to answer the important questions of dates for glass production plus possible mechanisms for exchange of the finished products, we compared the glass from Giribawa with similar glass from other sites in Sri Lanka, including Mantai, Godavaya and Kuchchaveli, as well as with glass from Manikollai, a bead making centre in Tamil Nadu most likely importing glass from a variety of South Indian sources, using the multivariate statistical techniques of PCA and cluster analysis (*ibid*). As expected, the Giribawa glass was very different from the South Indian glass. Surprisingly, given the geographic proximity, there was little overlap between the glass found at Mantai and the Giribawa glasses, raising the possibility that the two sites were independent glass producers, or, possibly, were most active during different periods. There was one Sri Lankan site, Kuchchaveli on the eastern coast, whose glass, in the form of drawn beads, was sufficiently similar to Giribawa glass to strongly suggest an exchange relationship (*ibid*). Twenty out of twenty-two Kuchchaveli samples overlapped with Giribawa, with only two more similar to glass from Mantai or possibly Manikollai. This similarity to Giribawa glass is quite remarkable, since most sites thought to be trading or consumption sites, such as Kuchchaveli, usually have glass beads from a variety of sources. The significance of this strong apparent relationship will no doubt be important for the interpretation of both Giribawa and Kuchchaveli. One immediate result is that we now have at least some evidence for dating the Giribawa production. The glass beads from Kuchchaveli came

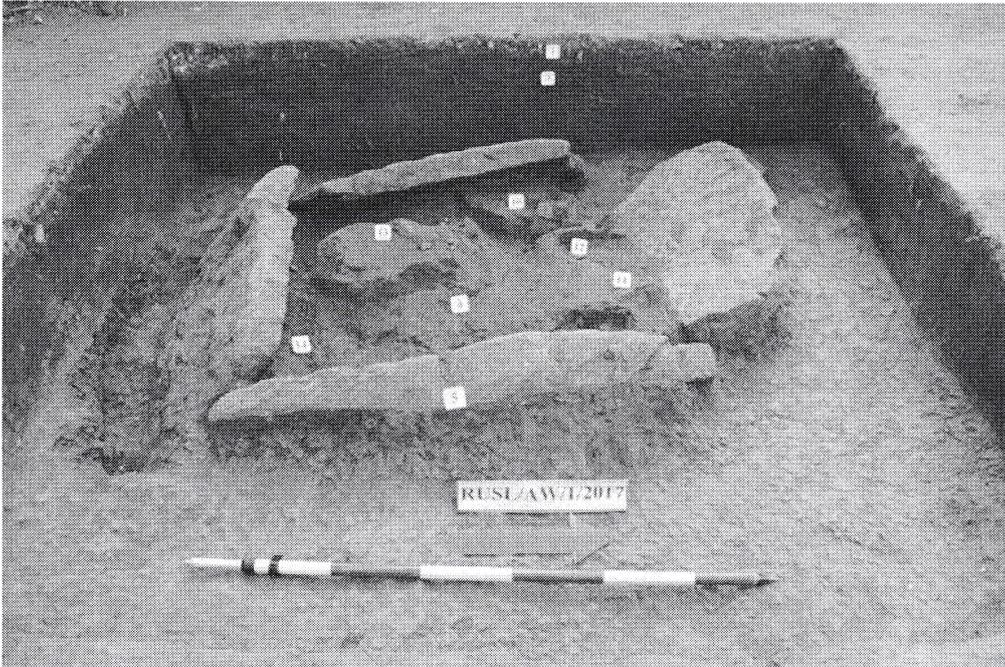
mainly from two layers; the first dated to the 1st to 3rd c. CE and the second from the 7th to 8th c. CE. There was Giribawa glass in both layers, suggesting that glass production at Giribawa at least spanned the two periods (*ibid*). Whether Giribawa production began earlier or extended later we still do not know, but the Kuchchaveli dates are a very important step to interpret glass production at Giribawa and in Sri Lanka in general (*ibid*). According to comparison studies of Girbawa and Andarawewa furnaces, we could identify as same type and believe Andarawewa furnaces can be dated 3rd Century B.C or before 3rd Century B,C

Iron Object: The typological rang and the number of metal object found within the megalithic burials in Sri Lanka. The objects may be listed as knife, arrow- blade, nail (Senavirathne 2007:170., Begley 1981:77-78). Most of these were used in hunting or as weapons (Senavirathne 2007:170). In Andarawewa excavation we have discovered two iron chisels inside the burial pot. These two iron chisels dated to 500 B.C. It may have been used by a carpenter and not as a weapon. The raw material required for the production of iron implements may have been obtained from the locality itself. Iron concretion of hematite/limonite may be easily procured Brown Earth and the Red Earth in north west Sri Lanka (Senavirathne 2007:170., Dahanayake *et* Jayawardena 1979:433-440., Cooray, .1984). Such iron concretion can be used for smelting, and Iron slag has been reported from near Andarawewa burial site. According to S. Senaviratne he has explained limonitic nodules in direct association with iron slag (Senavirathne 2007:170). Geological investigation has also established the vast deposit of magnetite at Vilagedara Panirendawa. This deposit can be processed for production.

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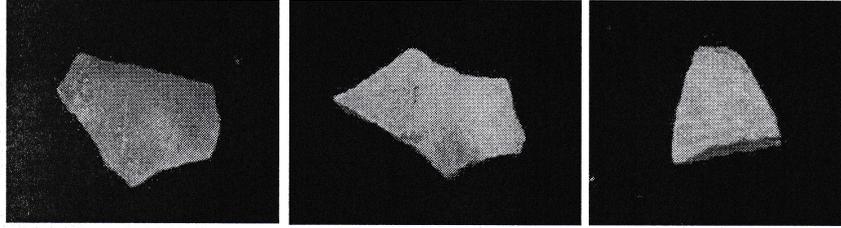
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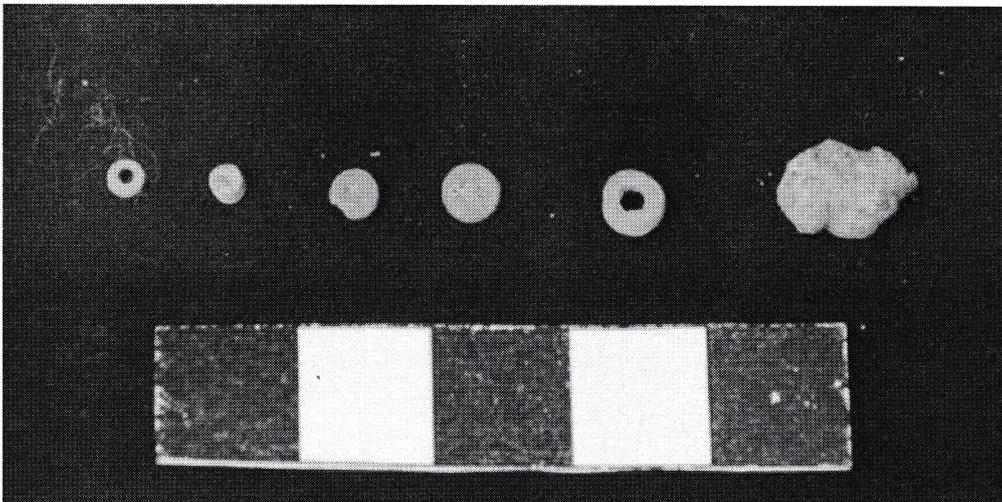
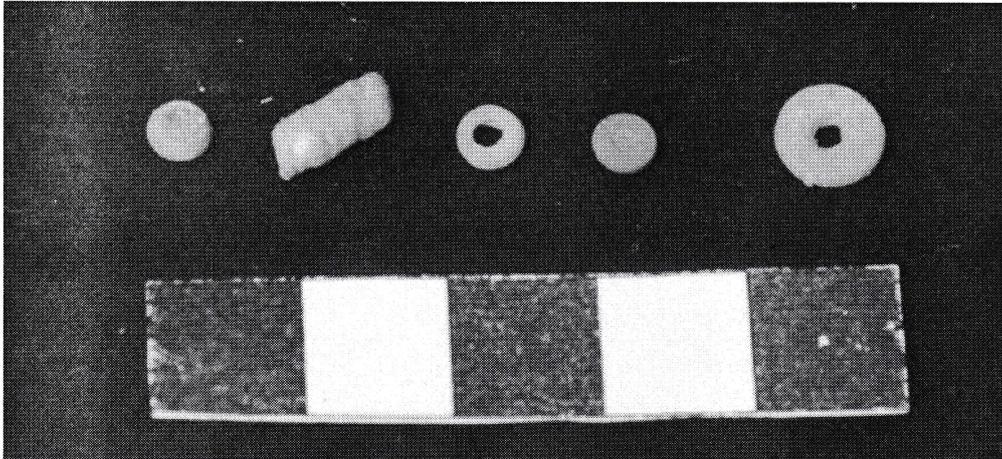
Excavated inside the burial



BRW Pottery Andarawewa



Brhamic Letters on potshard



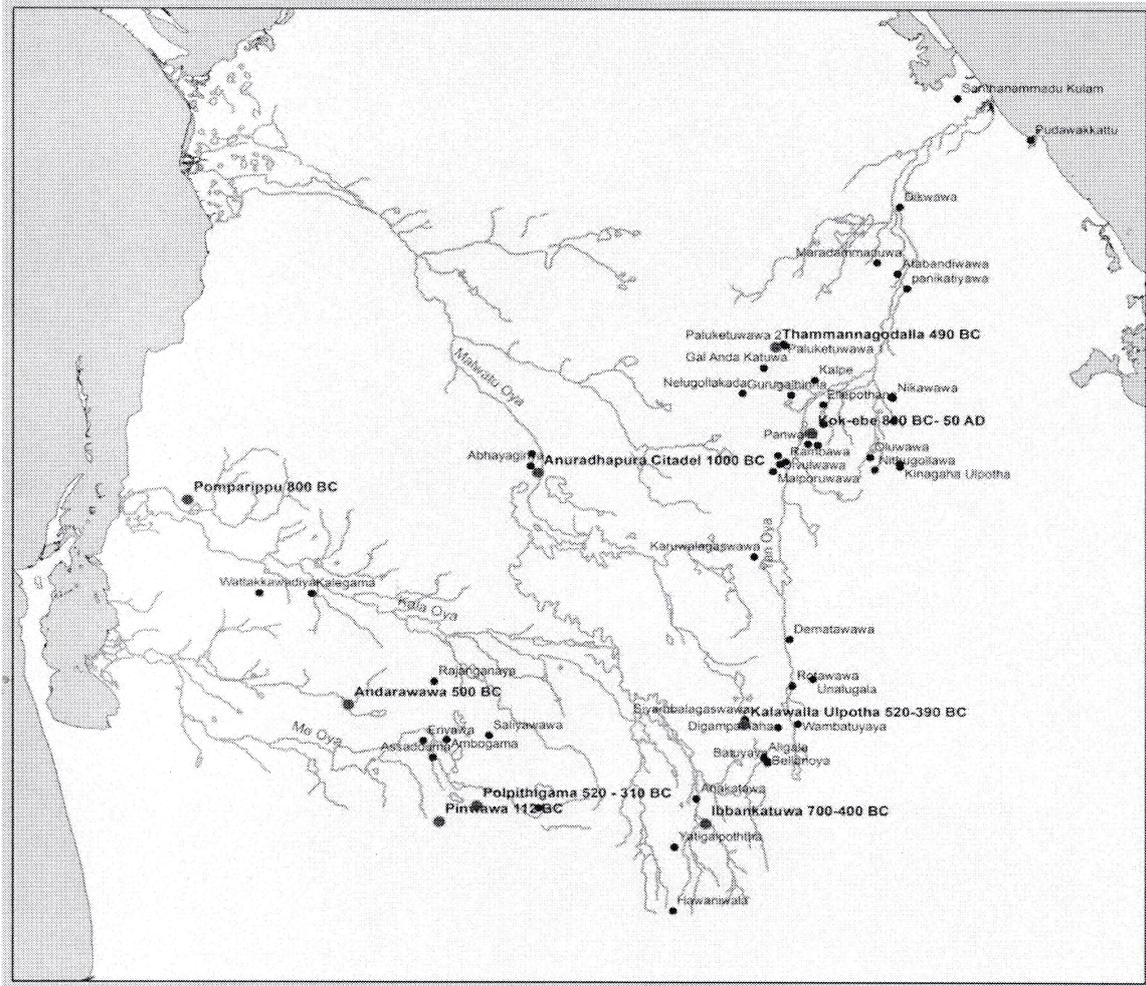
Glass Beads Andarawewa



Part of furnace Andarawewa



Iron Chisels Andarawewa



C14 Dating in the Proto History Period Surrounding the Anuradhapura