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Investigating the Utility of the Pottery Wares Unearthed from the Burial Contexts during the Proto-history Period in Sri Lanka.

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Abstract

The social, temporal and behavioural inferences based on pottery wares form the core of many archaeological studies, and this paper evaluates the utility of the pottery wares employed at burials during the proto-historic period in Sri Lanka. It is a prominently distinguished feature that during the burial traditions, the presence of pottery wares inside the burial chamber or around the burial. Relevant research has not been conducted about the utility of the pottery wares used to place the crematory bones to check whether the wares had been prepared for the mortuary practices in the burial or as a secondary utility of contemporary society. Even though Phytolith analysis or pollen analysis can be applied to investigate whether these were used for culinary purposes, such research has not yet appeared in Sri Lanka. Accordingly, this study investigates the utility of the pottery wares used for ritual activities from selected burial contexts in Sri Lanka. The pottery assemblages of the Kokebe Megalithic burial complex of the Middle Yan Oya Basin, Andarawewa Megalithic burial complex of the Middle Deduru Oya Basin and Palippothana Megalithic burial complex located in Upper Ma Oya are examined during the study. During the research, a standardized pottery classification was done

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based on the morphological features, utility and design technology of the pottery wares retrieved from Kokebe, Andarawewa and Palipbothana Megalithic burial sites. Then these wares were subjected to a comparative study between the pottery wares of the Indian peninsular and Sri Lanka. By integrating the function of pottery with the studies of technology, and physical and mechanical properties, the utility of the pottery wares was recognized. The pottery wares yielded from settlement and burial contexts were subjected to research based on the form, type and utility upon the coincidence and its differences. Using these criteria, the mode of utilizing the pottery wares was observed and the variations of the rim, body, subtypes and locating the cup marks derived information on burial traditions of the proto-historic period. The organization and the distribution of pottery wares in burials of the proto-historic period, established together with the functions of vessels, the organization of settlements, the social and economic status of the people and their expression of cultural and social identity and traditions in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: pottery, utility, burial, proto-history

Introduction

The archaeological research conducted so far in Sri Lanka has revealed that the proto-history of Sri Lanka dated to 2400 BCE -350 AD (Senavirathne,1984; Somadeva,2018; Dissanayake,2018; Mendis, 2019). The burials of this techno-cultural phase represent two main types megalithic and non-megalithic burials (Mendis, 2019). Accordingly, clay canoe/clay cist and urn pot types can be categorized as non-megalithic burials. The cist, cairn circle, stone alignment, cairn mound/cairn heap, Delmenoid and Menhir types, which are made using rocks, can be recognized as megalithic burial types (Dissanayake, 2018; Mendis, 2020). Concerning the rituals of both burial traditions, pottery wares inside the burial chamber or around the burial is a significant feature. The utility of locating these pottery wares can be traced through the experimentation of the consumption modes of the pottery wares. The potteries identified from the proto-historic burial contexts play a significant role in the social, economic, political, cultural, and technological fields and creativity skills. In Particular, the burial rituals of contemporary society are showing up in these artefacts and investigating the utility of these pottery wares is essential here.

Relevant research has not been conducted about the utility of the pottery wares used to place the crematory bones to check whether the wares had been prepared for the mortuary practices in the burial or as a secondary utility of contemporary society. Even though Phytolith analysis or pollen analysis can be applied to investigate whether these were used for culinary purposes, such research has not yet appeared in Sri Lanka. Accordingly, this study investigates the utility of the pottery wares used for ritual activities from selected burial contexts in Sri Lanka.

The study area includes the proto-historic sites of the Kokebe Megalithic burial complex, Andarawewa Megalithic burial complex and Palipbothana Megalithic burial complex. In 2016, the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Management, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, conducted two excavations in the Kokebe Megalithic burial complex, a prominent proto-historic site along the Middle Yan Oya basin. It was revealed that this was dated 790AD (Mendis, 2017). In this burial site, excavations directed over the cist burials and stone alignment and ten forms of pottery wares yielded. Accordingly, it will be used as the main data source for this study. The burial site Andarawewa, located along the Middle Deduru Oya, was excavated by the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Management, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, in 2017. As a result of the two excavated cist burials, eight forms of pottery wares were yielded, dated 490 BCE (Mendis, 2019) and these pottery wares are being used as a primary data source. Furthermore, Palipbothana Megalithic burial site located at Upper Ma Oya basin has revealed ten forms of pottery wares from an excavation conducted by the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Management, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Methodology

A standardized pottery classification was done based on the morphological features, utility and design technology of the pottery retrieved from Kokebe, Andarawewa and Palipbothana Megalithic burial sites. Then these wares were subjected to a comparative study between the pottery wares of the Indian peninsular and Sri Lanka. Pottery wares yielded from both contexts of settlements and megalithic burials were applied for this study, including Anuradhapura citadel Gedige, Akurugoda in Thissamaharama, Pomparippu, Ibbankatuwa proto-historic sites and also Indian pottery wares (Deraniyagala,

1992; Begley., Sithramplm, 1981; Karunaratne, P, 1994). This comparative study focused on the pottery ware's form, type and utility. Accordingly, an investigation was conducted based on the pottery retrieved from Kokebe, Andarawewa Palipbothana Megalithic burial sites with the pottery wares found from settlement and burial contexts while searching for their coincidence and the differences. Finally, the mode of utilizing the pottery wares could be recognized.

Discussion

The pottery classification recognized from the Kokebe Megalithic burial site is given below and was mainly eight types. According to the variations of the rims, some subtypes were identified. Considering the firing techniques, these pottery wares belonged to the Black and Red Ware and Red wares.

Chart Number 01 - Pottery Description of Kokebe (Mendis et al., 2017)

Form	Pottery wares	Description
A	H'eliya or Muttiya	Pot with restricted and inverted upper body with inverted and flared rim zone
B	Atiliya or H'eliya	Large bowl with wide orifice
C	H'eliya	Deep globular bowl with restricted upper body and primarily triangular thickened rim
D	Baraniya/Muttiya	Small storage or water jug with a narrow and short neck and globular body
E	Baraniya	Massive storage vessel with thick walls and no neck
F	Kothalaya /Small jug/ Pot	Small jug with a mostly lenticular built body, a narrow orifice and a high and funnel-shaped neck
G	Pattaraya / Begging bowl	Begging bowl with a narrow neck and globular body
H	Nembiliya, Koraha, Metikoppaya, dish	Conical dish
I	Small Bowl or Cup	Small Bowl or Cup – Rounded or Tapered body
K	Lid	Thickened wall, vast globular body, no neck

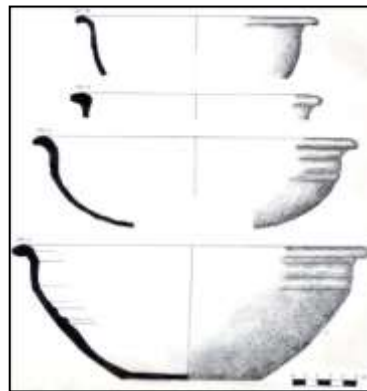
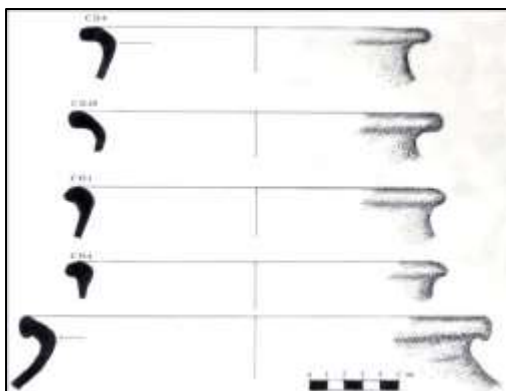


Figure 01- B type Pottery wares unearthed from Kok-ebe Megalithic Burial Site

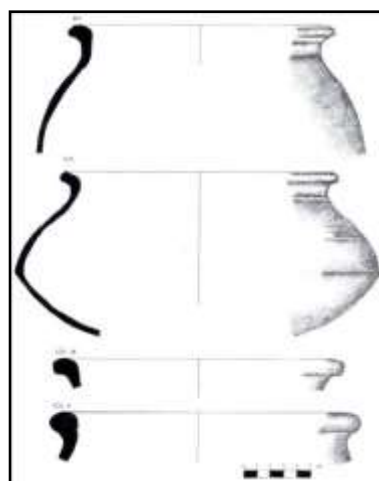
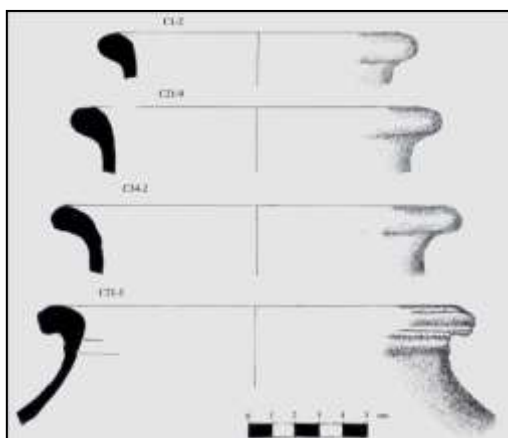


Figure 02 - D type Pottery wares unearthed from Kok-ebe Megalithic Burial Site

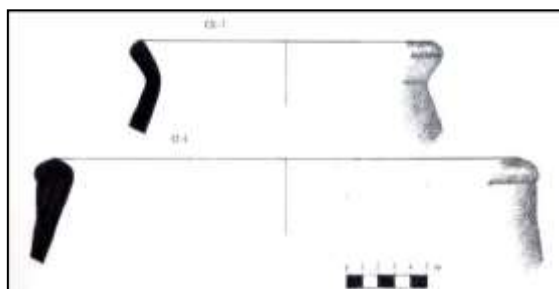


Figure 03- E type Pottery wares unearthed from Kok-ebe Megalithic Burial Site



Figure 04 - F type Pottery wares unearthed from Kok-ebe Megalithic Burial Site

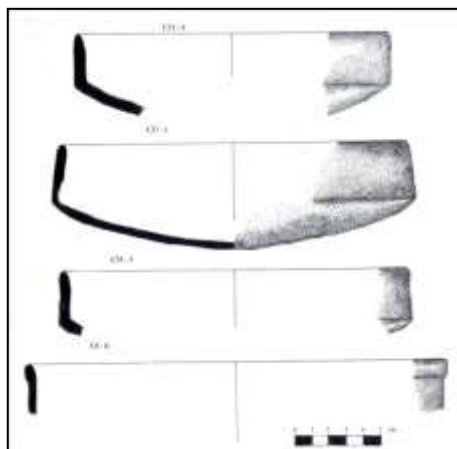


Figure 05 - G type Pottery wares unearthed from Kok-ebe Megalithic Burial Site

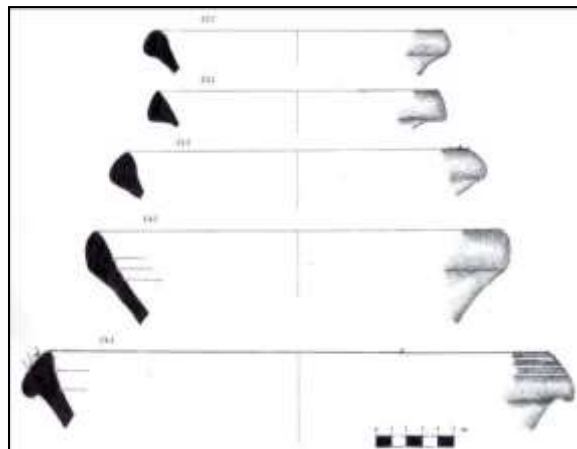


Figure 06 - H type Pottery wares unearthed from Kok-ebe Megalithic Burial Site

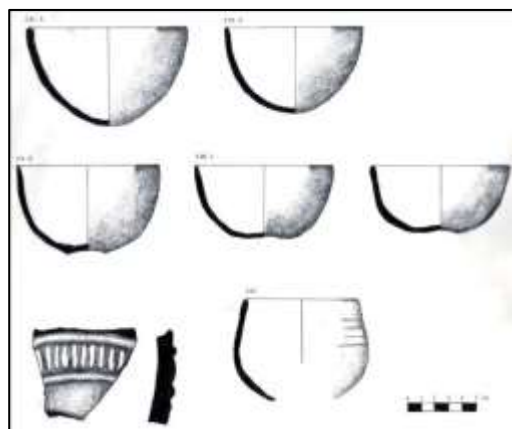


Figure 07 - I type Pottery wares unearthed from Kok-ebe Megalithic Burial Site

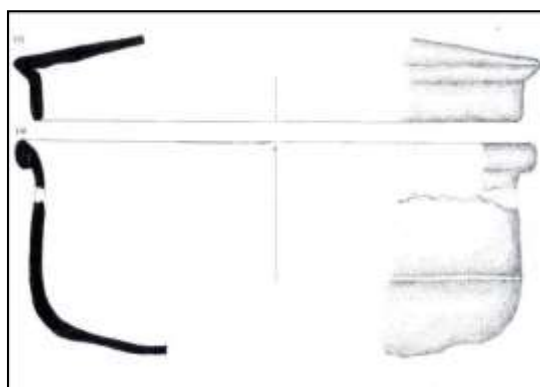


Figure 08 - K type Pottery wares unearthed from Kok-ebe Megalithic Burial Site

The Andarawewa Megalithic Burial Site revealed pottery wares which belonged to Black and Red Wares and Red Wares. The following eight forms were recognized on the site.

Form	Pottery Ware	Description
A	<i>H'eliya</i> or <i>Muttiya</i>	Pot with the restricted and inverted upper body with everted and flared rim zone
B	<i>Atiliya</i> or <i>H'eliya</i>	Large bowl with wide orifice
C	<i>H'eliya</i>	Deep globular bowl with restricted upper body and primarily triangular thickened rim
D	<i>Baraniya</i> / <i>Muttiya</i>	Small storage or water jug with a narrow and short neck and globular body
E	<i>Baraniya</i>	Massive storage vessel with thick walls and no neck
F	<i>Kothalaya</i> /Small jug/ Pot	Small jug with mostly lenticular built body, a narrow orifice and high and funnel-shaped neck
G	<i>Pattaraya</i> / Begging bowl	Bowl with a narrow neck and globular body
H	<i>Nembiliy</i> , <i>Koraha</i> , <i>Metikoppaya</i> , dish	Conical dish

Chart number 02- Andarawewa Pottery Classification (Mendis et al., 2017)

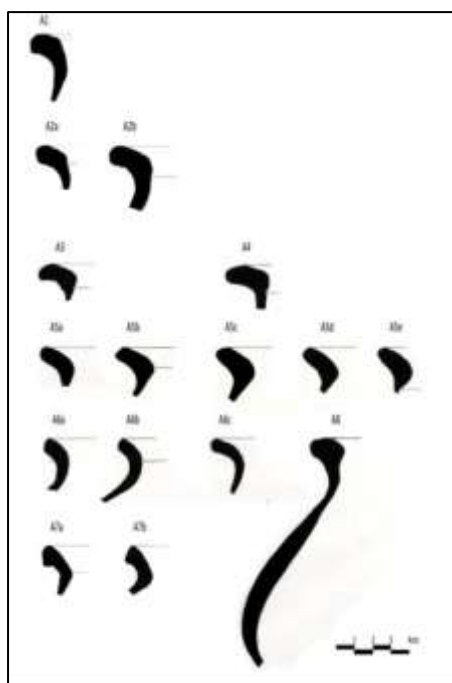


Figure 09 - A type Pottery wares unearthed from Andarawewa Megalithic Burial Site



Figure 10 - B type Pottery wares unearthed from Andarawewa Megalithic

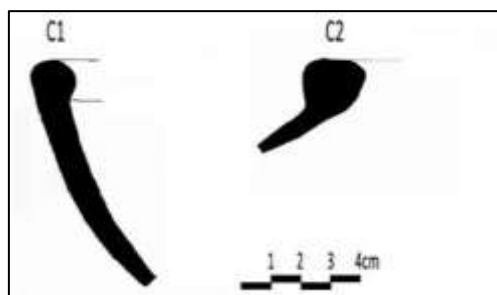


Figure 11 - C type Pottery wares unearthed from Andarawewa Megalithic Burial Site

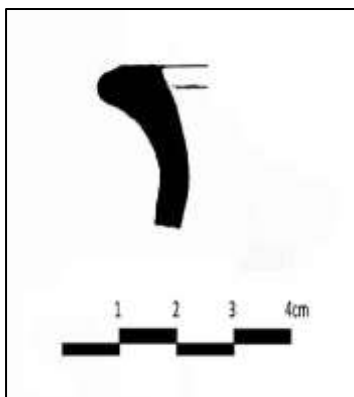


Figure 12 - D type Pottery wares unearthed from Andarawewa Megalithic Burial Site

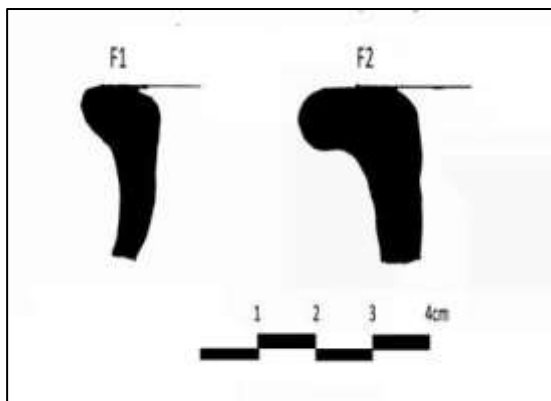


Figure 13 - F type Pottery wares unearthed from Andarawewa Megalithic Burial Site

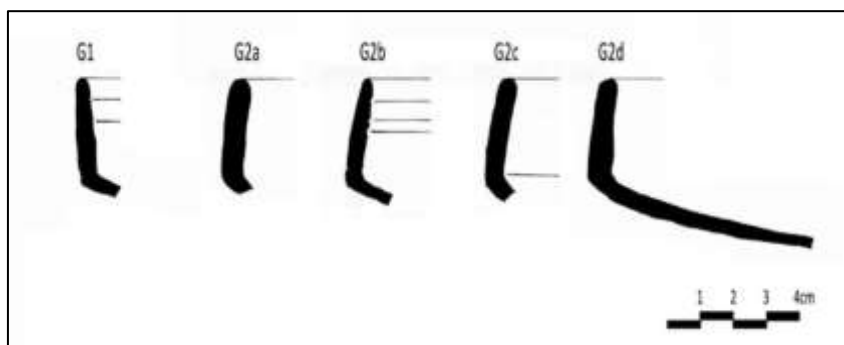


Figure 14 - G type Pottery wares unearthed from Andarawewa Megalithic Burial Site

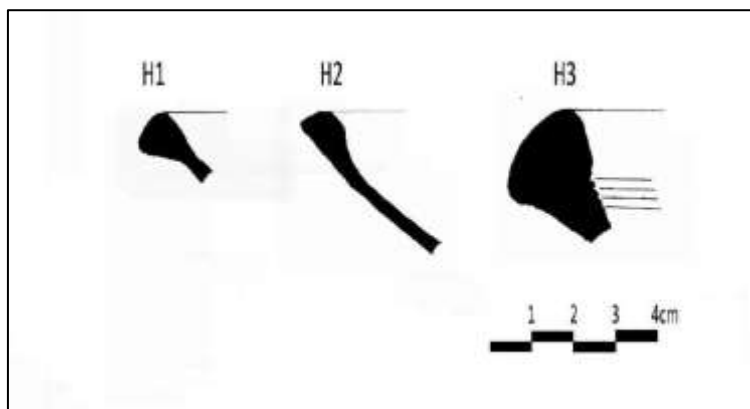


Figure 15 - G type Pottery wares unearthed from Andarawewa Megalithic Burial Site

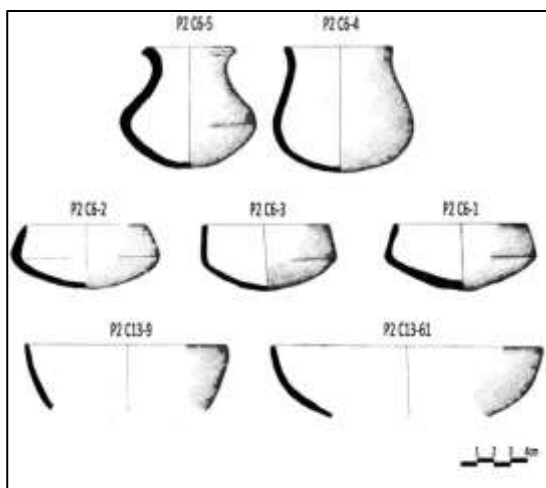


Figure 16 - H type Pottery wares unearthed from Andarawewa Megalithic Burial Site

The pottery wares yielded from Palippothana Megalithic Burial Site recorded black and red wares and red wares with 10 types.

Form	Pottery Ware	Description
A	<i>H'eliya</i> or <i>Muttiya</i>	Pot with restricted and inverted upper body with inverted and flared rim zone
B	<i>Atiliya</i> or <i>H'eliya</i>	Large bowl with wide orifice
C	<i>H'eliya</i>	Deep globular bowl with restricted upper body and mostly triangular thickened rim
D	<i>Baraniya</i> / <i>Muttiya</i>	Small storage or water jug with narrow and short neck and globular body
E	<i>Baraniya</i>	Massive storage vessel with thick walls and no neck
F	<i>Kothalaya</i> /Small jug/ Pot	Small jug with a mostly lenticular built body a narrow orifice and high and funnel-shaped neck
G	<i>Pattaraya</i> / Begging bowl	Begging bowl with narrow neck and globular body
H	<i>Nembiliya</i> , <i>Koraha</i> , <i>Metikoppaya</i> , dish	Conical dish
I	Cup	Rounded or Tapered body
K	Lid	Lid

Chart No 03 - Types of Pottery Ware from Palippothana (Mendis et al., 2021)

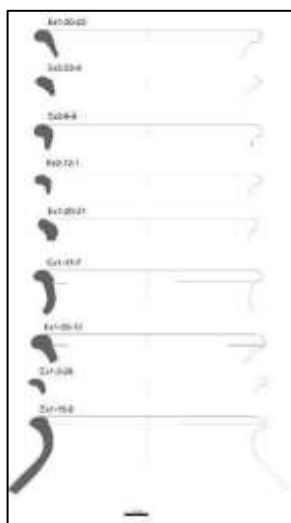


Figure 17 - “Model A” pottery wares unearthed from Palippothana Megalithic Burial Site

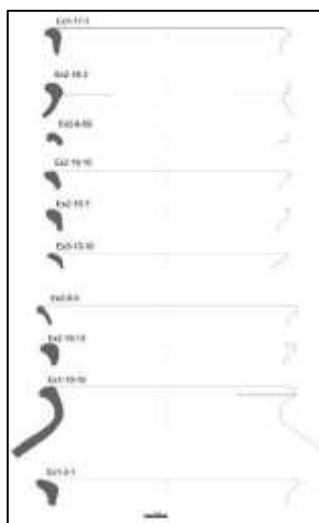


Figure 18 - “Model A” pottery wares unearthed from Palippothana Megalithic Burial

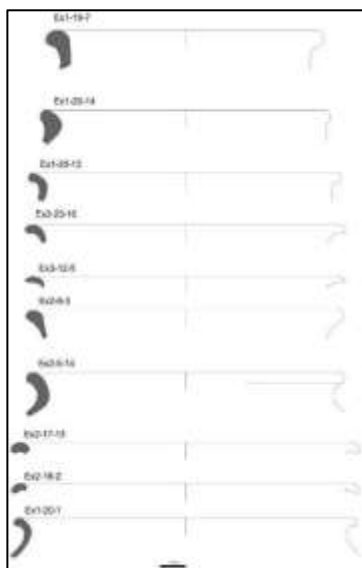


Figure 19 - “Model A” pottery wares unearthed from Palippothana Megalithic Burial Site

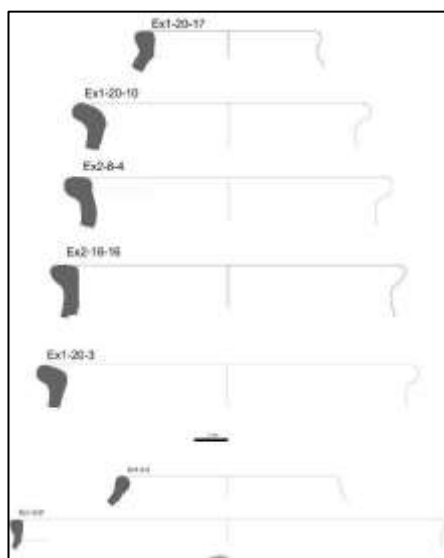


Figure 20 - “Model D-E” pottery wares unearthed from Palippothana Megalithic Burial Site

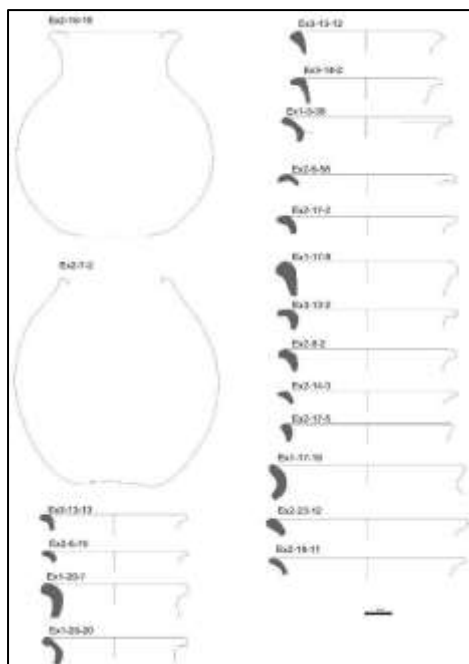


Figure 21 - “Model F” pottery wares unearthed from Palippothana Megalithic Burial Site

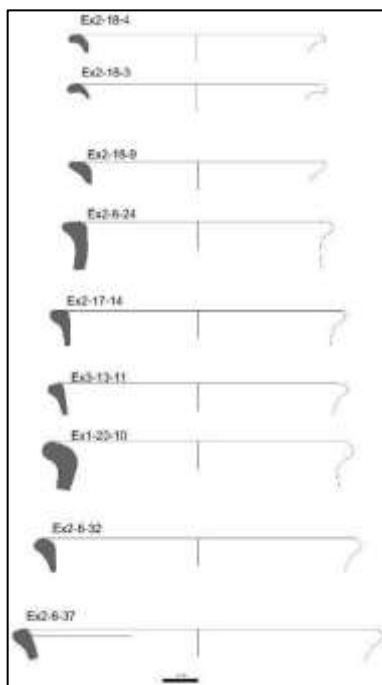


Figure 22 - “Model F” pottery wares unearthed from Palippothana Megalithic Burial

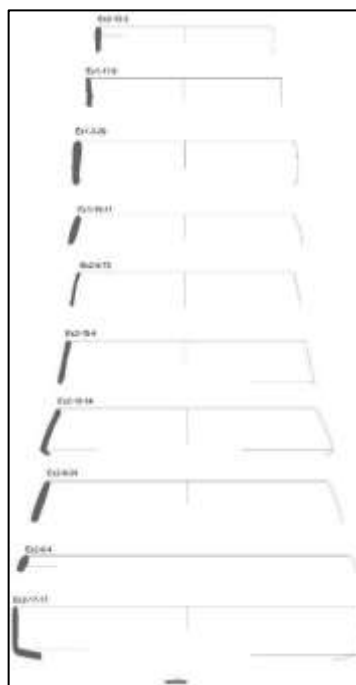


Figure 23 - “Model G” pottery wares unearthed from Palippothana Megalithic Burial

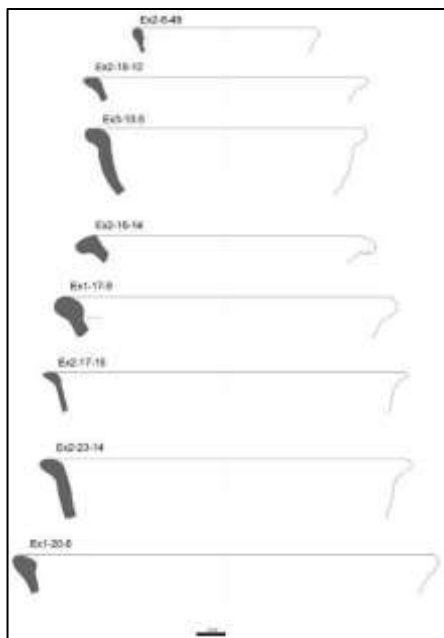


Figure 24 - “Model H” pottery wares unearthed from Palippothana Megalithic Burial Site

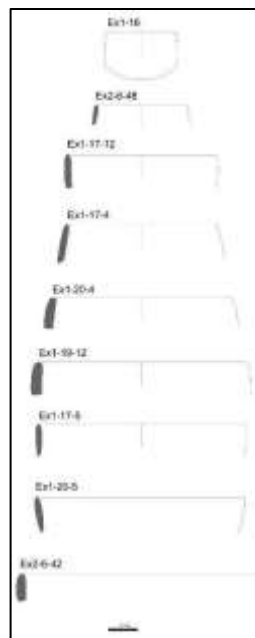


Figure 25 - “Model I” pottery wares unearthed from Palippothana Megalithic Burial Site

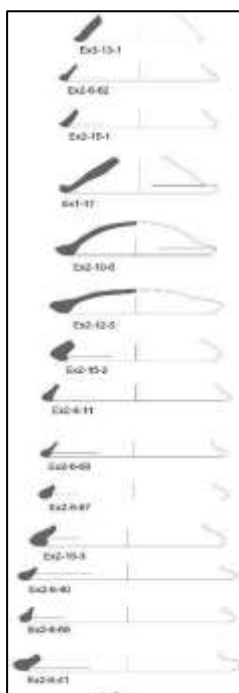


Figure 26 - “Model K” pottery wares unearthed from Palippothana Megalithic Burial Site

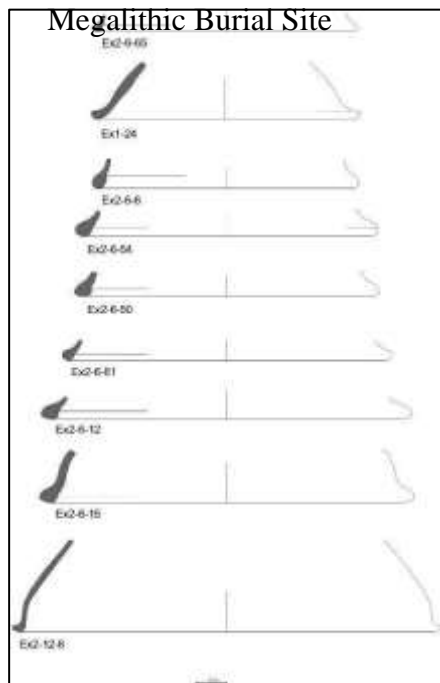


Figure 27 - “Model K” pottery wares unearthed from Palippothana Megalithic Burial Site

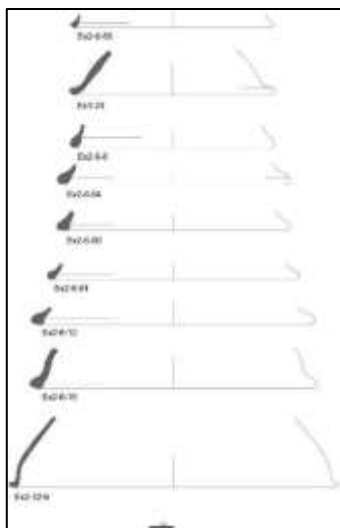


Figure 28 - “Model H, K” pottery wares unearthed from Palippothana Megalithic Burial Site

Conclusion

The utility of the pottery wares can be observed from the present scenario of the village cultures in Sri Lanka.

Formal analogy	Function
<i>Muttiya</i>	Cooking /Boiling/Collecting
<i>Appalla</i>	Cooking/Storing
<i>Äthiliya</i>	Cooking Curries
<i>Hattiya</i>	Cooking Curries
<i>Häliya</i>	Boiling rice/Storing
<i>Kabala</i>	Baking/Parching
<i>Adivalanda</i>	Auxiliary Processing/Eating
<i>Mūduya</i>	Auxiliary Processing/Cove
<i>Nämbiliya</i>	Husking tray
<i>Koraha</i>	Husking tray
<i>Kalé</i>	Transferring water/Storing

<i>Kotale</i>	Storing sprinkling water.
<i>Pātraya</i>	Offering/Collecting
<i>Tāliya</i>	Storing
<i>Guruléttuva</i>	Carry water /Holding Drinking water
<i>Tātiya</i>	Eating plate
<i>Bujama</i>	Storing liquid
<i>Baraniya</i>	Storing (dried food)

Most probably, the pottery wares unearthed from the burial sites resembled the present pottery wares yielded from the settlement contexts in present villages. Further, the pottery wares showed similar features based on utility as cooking wares, storage wares, employed wares and offering wares in settlement contexts. However, the form and the size of the pottery wares revealed that the utility in the burial context is somewhat different as the pottery wares were used to place the cremated bones, lids to cover the cremated bone wares and ritual urns. Primarily, wares such as Muttiya, Appalla, Äthiliya, Hattiya, and Häliya had used to place the cremated bones, and Tātiya was employed to cover the burial urn which was used to place the cremated bones or place the sacrifice materials. A cup or bowl was used in burials not to place the sacrifice materials but for funerary practices. Considering the design technology of pottery wares, there must not be a difference between the burial and settlement contexts. Concerning these factors, it can be suggested that those pottery wares were used in settlements and acted as a secondary utility inside the burials. Some pottery wares existed adequately, and some were employed as fractional wares, illustrated by the pottery wares found in Palipbothana megalithic burial site. Accordingly, it is clear that today, discarded pottery wares are employed for this purpose.

It is apparent that pottery wares had been made individually for funerary purposes; nevertheless, numerous pottery wares, such as cups and dish employed in settlements and then used for funerary purposes. It can be hypothesized that these wares were unique to the megalithic burial sites on account of the findings of the form B pottery wares such as Kotale, Kendiya and Kalé (Pot) from Kok-ebe, Andarawewa, Palipbothana burials and further revealing of a small jug with the mostly lenticular built body with a narrow orifice and high, funnel-shaped neck or flat bottomed lid and a ware which

would be a ritual urn from Ibbankatuwa and Pomparippu proto- historic burials. The pottery ware's form and size are based on utility. This ware had been used as a lid, and its flat-bottomed surface manifests that it has been employed for a funerary purpose. Occasionally, this ware would be used to keep the sacrifice and do the offerings. These form B wares which unearthed from the contexts of Kok-ebe 8th (Bete 444430, 790-540 BC), Pomparippu 8th, Ibbankatuwa 7th, Andarawewa 6th (Bete 482665, 491-366 BC) and Palippothana 4th (Beta 586186, 369-165 BC) represent centuries B.C.E. respectively.

Consistently, this pottery form was long-lasting during the contemporary period with the same utility in megalithic burial traditions. The pottery wares made upon the burial needs allow reading the respective cultural funerary practices in the society. Similarly, the funerary practices and customs would influence the form of the pottery ware. The pottery wares employed for the burial purposes were utilized for various purposes based on their form inside the burial context. Kok-ebe and Palippothana burials revealed small and medium-scaled cups of I form.

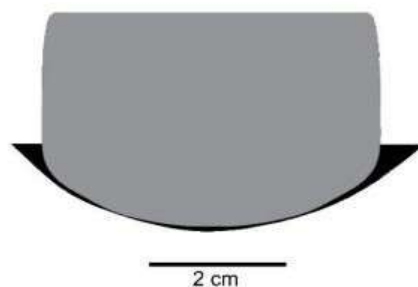
Similarly, the mini cup yielded from Palippothana has not been found in the burial contexts of Andarawewa, Kok-ebe, Ibbankatuwa or Pomparippu. Considering the utility of these pottery wares, it would be used for a particular funerary practice and a sacrifice but not employed in a secondary context. Further, the cup marks that occupied the capstone's surface portray that these mini cups were used for a funerary purpose in the burial of Palippothana.

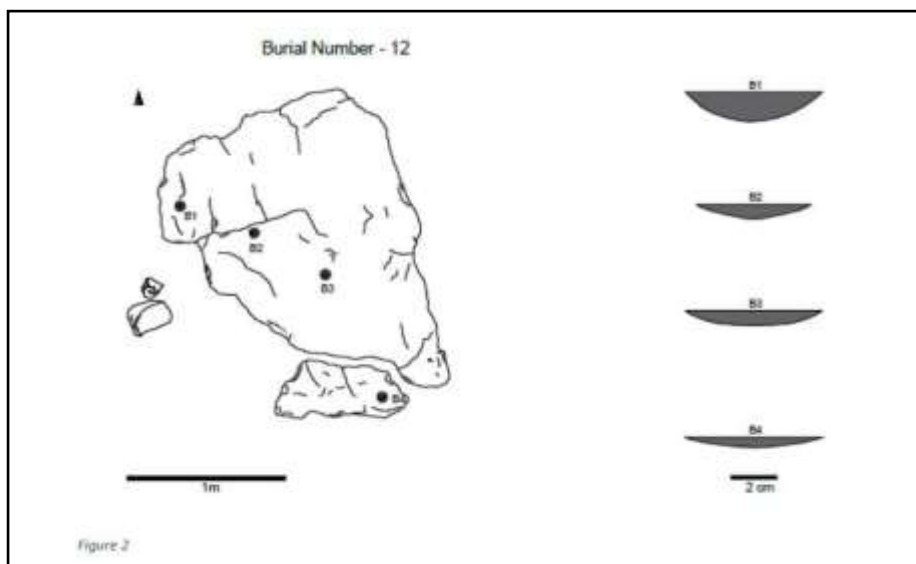
Numerous scholars worldwide have researched cup marks, identified from the megalithic contexts in East Asia, Europe and the American continents. These cup marks were created at a diameter of 1-7 inches with different depths and existed as individuals and clusters. From 1978 to 2004, studies on the cup marks in the Indian

megalithic burial tradition were conducted, and the researcher's idea is that these wares were used for different purposes (Dissanayake, 2021). The term "cupule" was introduced for archaeology by Robert G. Bednarik in 1993. Prior to that, various structural hollows on rocks were known as "Pits", "Pit marks", "Hollows", "Cups", "Cup marks", "Simple cups", "Pitted rocks",

"Dots" and "Potholes". Accordingly, these cup marks are made relating to the form. We call a cup which is a rounded or tapered body, in order to associate the funerary practice.

In 1879, Rivett mentioned that these cup marks illustrate the age, number of children of the dead person and number of animals killed by him (Rivett, 1879)' Indian scholars like Abbas, Banarjee, Aswani and Kumar tried to correlate the cup marks with heavenly bodies, location and orientation of burials and seasonal changes (Abbas, 2014; Banarjee, 2016; Aswani, O.K.; Kumar, A., 2018). Rao showed that cup marks yielded from Menhir resemble the Ursa Major constellation star pattern. According to Abbas, this would be related to post-mortuary practice, and Arjun describes that these cup marks should be understood according to the spatial condition of the respective site (Kosambi, 1964; Thakur, 2004; Rivett, 1879; Banarjee, 2016; Aswani, O.K.; Das, S., 2016; Vahia et al., 2020; Dissanayake, 2021). Contrasting to the Sri Lankan funerary practices before the scholar 's ideas in the southern province and a few provinces, it is described that people offer almsgiving at midnight after 7 days after a person's death. They prepare a plate (Thatuwa) with the dead person's favourite food and beverages, then call his name as an invocation to accept that sacrifice. Likewise, it portrays a funerary practice. Meanwhile, in the megalithic contexts, it can be hypothesized that cup marks on the capstones would be used to keep the mini cups to store such sacrifices and offerings as beverages wherever conducted monthly or annually as a practice.





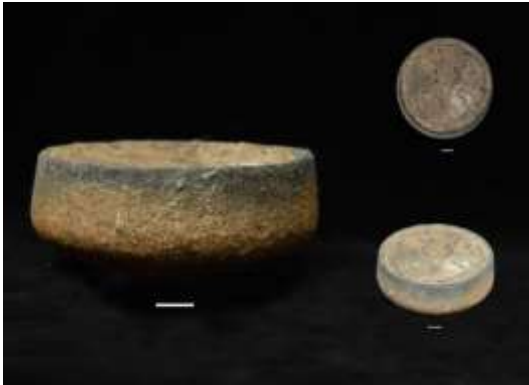
Photograph 01: Matching the cup marks on a capstone in Palippothana with a pottery ware in „cup“ form

Some factors have proved that relevant pottery wares were made for these particular funerary practices. However, it is inadequate to come up with a solid interpretation. Therefore, a wide approach of requirements is there to identify the burial pottery wares. During the identification of significant features and differences between the pottery wares yielded from

Kok-ebe, Andarawewa and Palippothana distinguish that utility in burial contexts of the pottery wares employed in settlement contexts were used as secondary wares and for sacrifices.



Photograph 02- Pottery wares unearthed from Andarawewa „cup“ form



Photograph 03 - Pottery wares unearthed from Palipbothana

Furthermore, when examining the pottery wares located inside the cist burial, no pattern was recognized during the locating of them from the three burials observed. Especially the sacrificial materials inside the Kok-ebe megalithic burial were mainly oriented to the southern orthostats, a dish in the south-eastern corner; a cup and a large pot (Maha Kumbha) in the middle of the burial were located. When considering the Palipbothana burial, locating pottery was in the southeast corner of the western orthostat, a dish at the middle of the capstone, a cup and a large pot (Maha Kumbha) at the centre of the burial. Including the dish, small-scale wares were located near the western orthostat and the large pot (Maha Kumbha) at the centre of the burial in Andarawewa. The large pot (Maha Kumbha) was mainly used to store the incarnated and charred bones. Evidence has been proved; when a person died, his bones were kept for defleshing during the ancient period of India as listed in *Brahmajāla Sutta*, *Silakanda Wagga* in *Digha Nikaya Attakatha*.

"Dhovana means washing bones. In certain regions, they do not cremate dead bodies of relatives. They bury those. Then after knowing that bodies are decomposed, take those out, wash them and smear them with fragrance. When the festival period comes (when playing dice), having put bones in one place and keeping liquors etc., at the same place, drinking liquor crying and lamenting. This was said, monks, there is a custom in the southern region known as washing bones. There is lots of food to eat, drink, chew, and lick, and there is also dancing, singing and music. The custom of washing bone is there, I do not say there is no such a tradition. Some magicians call these washing bones dovana" (Digha Nikaya Attakatha I).

(Dhovananti aṭṭhidhovanam, ekaccesu kira janapadesu kālaṅkate ñātake na jhāpenti, nikhaṇitvā ṭhapenti. Atha nesam pūtibhūtam kāyam ñatvā nīharitvā aṭṭhīni dhovitvā gandhehi makkhetvā ṭhapenti. Te nakkhattakāle ekasmiṃ ṭhāne aṭṭhīni ṭhapetvā ekasmiṃ ṭhāne surādīni ṭhapetvā rodantā paridevantā suram pivanti. Vuttampi cetam – „atthi, bhikkhave, dakkhiṇesu janapadesu aṭṭhidhovanam nāma, tattha hoti annampi pānampi khajjampi bhojjampi leyyampi peyyampi naccampi gītampi vāditampi. Atthetam, bhikkhave, dhovanam, netam natthīti vadāmī”ti (a. ni. 10.107). Ekacce pana indajālena aṭṭhidhovanam dhovanantipi vadanti).

Accordingly, when conducting mortuary practices, no pottery wares were located inside the burial as regular, while most of the sacrificing (offering) pots were employed in the western orthostat. Also, when locating the pottery wares, such as dishes inside the burial, they were mainly arranged in a corner, and the large pot (Maha Kumbha) was at the centre of the burial. When concluding the pattern of locating the burial urns and sacrificing (offering) pots in megalithic burials, research on megalithic burials and the sequence of the pottery wares play important roles widely.



Photograph 04 - Pottery wares yielded from Palippothana burial



Photograph 05 - Location of Pottery wares in Kok-ebe burial



Photograph 06- Location of Pottery Wares in Andarawewa Burial



Plan 01 - Sequence of the location of Pottery Wares in Kok-ebe Megalithic

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