



**Australasian Institute for
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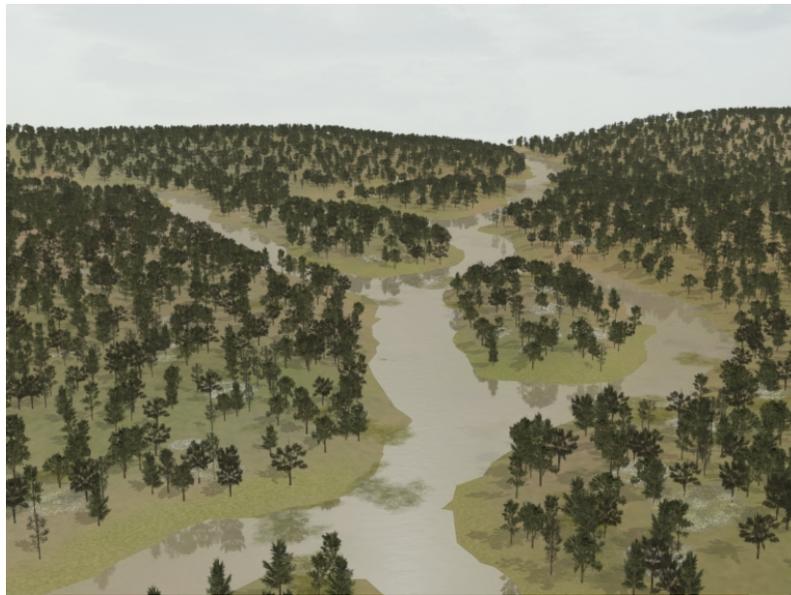
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Submerged Landscapes of Port Phillip Bay

After 18 months, my three month project investigating the submerged prehistoric landscapes of Port Phillip Bay has almost come to an end. The new website for the project is online, incorporating a short animation illustrating what the landscape might have looked like around 10000 years ago <http://heritage.vic.gov.au/Maritime/Submerged-landscapes/Animation.aspx>

Information for this project has come almost exclusively from published sources and grey literature held by Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV), with some reanalysis of previously collected raw data. The key aim of the project was to test a methodology used elsewhere in the world to investigate the potential for the survival of ancient land surfaces beneath modern marine sediment and sea water in Port Phillip Bay. (*continued on pg 11*).



Port Phillip Bay submerged landscape (Heritage Victoria)

Hanna Steyne

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For more information see:

<http://www.museum.wa.gov.au/collections/maritime/march/uwa-gradprog.asp>

<http://www.archaeology.arts.uwa.edu.au/for/future/postgrad>

Congratulations to the first graduate of the WAM/UWA Masters in Applied Maritime Archaeology Harry Schrefer III. Harry has returned to the States where he will continue with his studies. All here at WAM and UWA wish him the best for his future endeavours!

The results of the inquiry into the loss of the HMAS *Sydney* by Commissioner Terence RH Cole have been published in a three volume report entitled: *Loss of HMAS Sydney II: Evidence and Conclusions* (Vols 1-2) and *Frauds, Conspiracies and Speculations* (Vol 3). These are available at:

<http://www.defence.gov.au/sydneyii/finalreport/index.html>

The WA Museum has also been busy excavating its stores as part of a relocation of material from the former conservation facilities at Finnerty St (the old Fremantle Asylum). This material includes heavy items such as cannon and cannon balls, ships' ballast, timbers and fittings.

Corioli Souter

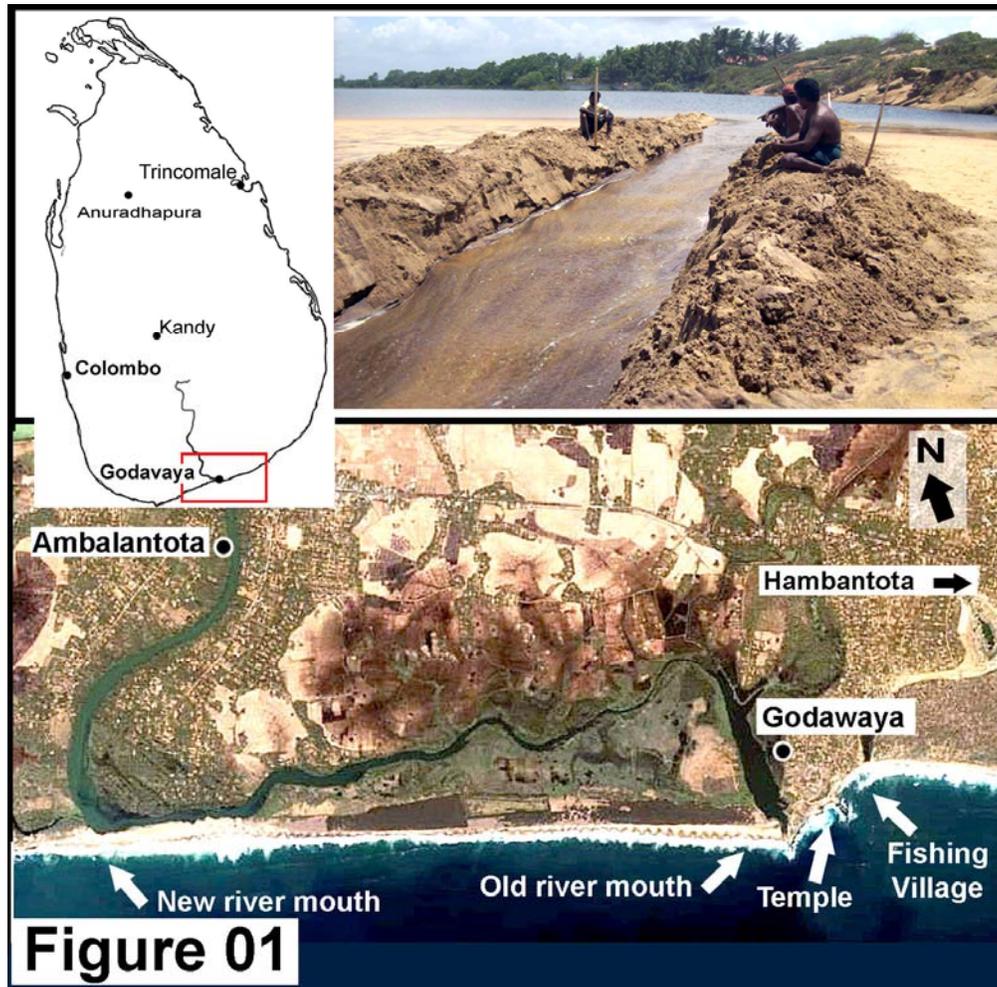
INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Sri Lanka

Godawaya: an ancient port city (2nd Century CE.) and the recent discovery of the unknown wooden wreck. (Part I)

Godawaya is a small fishing village, which belongs to the Hambantota district of Southern Sri Lanka. It is situated between Ambalantota and Hambantota near the river mouth of the Walawe River, the fourth biggest river of the country. This used to be the old river mouth, but with some changes happened in the coastal area and due to the massive sand deposits the river mouth was blocked many years ago. The river is now flowing to the sea from Ambalantota 3km west to Godawaya. The mouth is blocked by a narrow sand strip which from time to time gets cleared by floods or the villagers have to create an artificial outlet at the river mouth to divert the flooding. The temple on a small rocky mountain near the left bank of the river mouth is known by many archaeologists, historians and travellers because of its historical value.

My first visit to Godawaya was in 1998, as an undergraduate who participated in the archaeological excavation at the temple premises. The excavation was conducted by the Archaeological Department of Sri Lanka and the German K.A.W.A. project. After a series of explorations and excavations from 1994, we were excavating the old image house area inside the temple. A significant inscription found from this temple gives an idea about its history. A small and unclear inscription (No 01) and well-known inscription (No 02) found from this temple were first examined and reported by E.R. Ayartone in early 20th century. Later in 1930 professor Senarath Paranavitana read, prepared estampages and published these (Paranavitana, 1983). The main and clear inscription carved on a natural rock north to the Stupa state clearly about a seaport situated at Godawaya.



Map of Sri Lanka, The Walawe River and artificial outlet at old river mouth (Sanath Karunaratne)

This inscription (No 02) consists of two lines, and the letters, which vary in height between 2.5 inches and 6 inches, have been clearly incised and regular in formation. These writings can be identified as belonging to the first or second century CE (Paranavithana, 1983)

The record informs us that King Gamini Abaya (Gamani Abhaya) donated the customs duties of the port of Godapavata to the vihara at the site. The name Godapawatha, Gota pabbata or Godawaya means mountain with boulders (Gota – Short and round / Pabbata – Rocky Mountain). The Rocky Mount south to the temple is the highest place of this area. The small Stupa is built at the peak of this mount. From the sea, we can see the rock and the white stupa on it from miles away, which can be used as a landmark. Most probably the name



Figure 02
Godawaya Image house excavation 1998 (Rasika Muthucumarana)

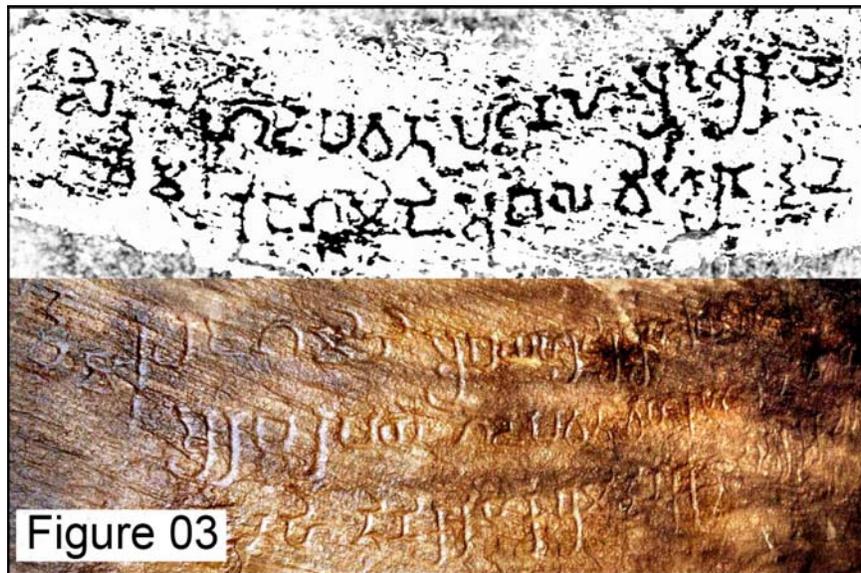
Godapawatha can be a creation of early seafarers. The name Gamini Abhaya in the inscription can be identified as the king Gajabahu I, who ruled Sri Lanka in the 1st Century (113-135 CE).

The text of the Inscription No 02 reads:

1. Siddham Godapavata patanahi Su(ka) su(ri)yi
2. Raja Gamani Abaya viharata dini

Which translates to: “Success! The customs duties of the port of Godapavata, King Gamani Abaya granted to the vihara (temple).”

This is an excellent way to prove about the ancient temple, settlement and the seaport situated in Godawaya. This was not just a port, it was a developed and well-organized port which was able to claim custom duties.



Inscriptions No 02 and 03 (Rasika Muthucumarana)

When the excavation team placed another new trench under the rock with the main inscription mentioned above, they found another completely new and well preserved three line inscription just one meter below the old one. It is a separate inscription but in another way it also showed a continuation of the upper one. It also describes some of the donations to the temple.

The text of Inscription No 03 reads:

1. Siddhama /* raja Gamani Abayaha rajika ahalaya bathika mithaye thini(ha kari)haka...
2. Arabapaya Godapavata viharata (dini) ethahi (Javaha)ka vihakalanakara(ka)
3. Kethahithinikarihaka bumi dine (symbols) nakaraka chethahata dine (symbols)

According to Dr. Piyathissa Senanayaka, who inspected the inscription at the site, this is the rough meaning of the text: “Success! Ahalaya bathikamithaya, the Queen of the King Gamini Abaya granted three Karisaka (twenty-two acres) of land to the Arabapaya Godapavata vihara (Temple). At the same time another three Karisaka (twenty-two acres) of land from the paddy field of the Jawahakavilaka city to the Stupa.”

During the last two decades many explorations and excavations took place in and around the Godavaya temple. Through these researches many archaeological information related to the old port and its international trade relations were found. From an excavation that took place in front of the fishing village part of an old maritime structure was found. (Weisssharr,



Figure 04

Wijeyapala, and Roth (eds.) 2001) It looks like a part of a jetty or a bridge build with stone pillars,

Stone Pillars at the beach (Department of Archaeology/ KAWA Project)

which are very similar to the stone pillars found from the old image house of the temple. If we observe from the temple, the river is flowing to the sea from the right side and the fishing village (Bay of Godavaya) is at the left side. Both of these places can be parts of the seaport. In one hand the Bay of Godawaya, the beach with the stone pillars and fishing village is the safest landing place of the area. On the other hand the river mouth and the wide sluggish river was also an appropriate way for transportation. Unloaded cargo from the vessels would have been transferred into the country using boats and barges. The Walawe River is flowing through ancient settlements and monastic sites such as Ridiyagama, Mahanavulu pura and Ramba monastic complex. There are records of coins, mainly thousands of Indo-Roman coins found from private lands and paddy fields near the riverbanks (Bopearachchi, 1996).

In 2003 an old stone anchor was found from the sea near the fishing village. The fishermen who found the anchor gave it to the research team. In the same year, when we (Maritime Archaeology Unit) went to see the temple and the excavation project, the archaeologists (Professor Helmut Roth and Mr. Oliver Kessler) asked us whether there was a possibility to do an underwater exploration at the Godavaya. But at that time we were engaged with some other work in Galle harbour and were not ready to do anything outside that. We only managed to record the stone anchor and the surrounding environment.

It was a triangular shaped anchor fully made with Granite stone, and had a hole in the middle. More like the stone anchors found from the Galle harbour exploration. All were made of stone, but the material types were different. Godawaya anchor was more solid and heavier than those found from Galle. According to the records these types of stone anchors were used during the pre-colonial period, especially with the Indo Arabian and Chinese vessels.

In the following year two local divers from Godavaya found another valuable item related to this story. Sunil and Peminda who lived near the Godavaya temple were well-experienced divers making their living by collecting conchs and colour fish. Not like most local divers, they are well trained and work with some sense. One day when they were diving into the deep for shells, they found an area with potshards. They noticed some big parts of clay jars and some strange objects scattered all over that area. From that site they found a small stone object, which was more similar to a small bench. They brought it with them and marked the location of this unusual place on their GPS. The bench was handed over to the excavation project and was stored at the Tissamaharama storeroom, under the Department of Archaeology. But no one knew where the site was (except those two divers) and that incidence and the bench was forgotten with the time.



Figure 05
Stone Anchor, Bench and BRW from the site (Rasika Muthucumarana)

The second phase of the UNESCO regional field school program for maritime archaeology was held in Galle and ended in April 2008. At the end there was a need of finding a shipwreck with Asian origin to use for training activities for the next field school session. In October 2008 we started an exploration with the funds from UNESCO Bangkok office to find some new suitable sites for future fieldwork. Under the instructions of Dr. Mohan Abeyratne (Deputy Director General – Central Cultural fund) a team of maritime archaeologists and conservators set off for south coast. Our main targets were the wrecks around the famous Great Basses reef and the possible wreck site near the Godawaya.

After the exploration at the Great basses we came to Godavaya. During the exploration at Great basses we had time to collect and investigate the data related to the Godawaya. The Stone bench and the stone anchor were carefully investigated. Met the two conch divers and tried to get as much information as possible. According to them the site was at 30m depth and 3km away from the coast. There was no possibility to find potsherds and artefacts like the stone bench from that area unless there had been a shipwreck. On the flat side of the bench we found some symbols, which belonged to very early periods.



Figure 06

Potsherds on the site (Rasika Muthucumarana)

On 18 October following the directions of those two divers, we did our first dive over that site. When we reached the seabed, 31m was indicated on our depth gages. We saw some mounds made with corals and sea plants on sandy bottom. The bottom was bit dark and cold. When we were searching this area we found some potsherds in the seabed among those reefs. We did not have much time to spend, because the divers were using only one air cylinder

and at the 30m depth we were only able to spend around 20 minutes.

On the following day we carried out the exploration in more systematic way. Three buddy pairs searched the site separately and collected data and filmed the area. At the end of the 20 minutes the team re-united on the boat. What we found that day was tremendous. Under the mounds, which we thought were reefs, we found some timber sections. Those very fragile wooden parts were covered with a thick layer of corals and plants. These were scattered over an area of about 100m². Between and around two large mounds there were lots of potsherds. Other than the potsherds we found some complete and near complete jars. Some were huge and camouflaged with the environment. If the seabed was interrupted with strong currents these potsherds would not have been like this. This was a clear sign that the site was undisturbed and settled as it is. But it was not easy to understand the site formation, and were not able to identify any parts of ship's constructions. Apart from the potsherds we found some glazed ingots, which were used to glaze or colour the clay pots.

The next few days were spent recording the site and exploring more. We also recovered some artefacts for further investigations. After cleaning the potsherds and jars, they were all identified as Black & Red Ware. We found some big fragments more similar to the Amphora and some small rare types of plates and bowls. After five days we had to stop our site work due to the sudden changes of the climate and due to some strong surface currents, which started to flow just above the site.

If we compare this site with other underwater archaeological sites found so far in Sri Lanka, this is definitely a significant site. According to the analyses we have conducted so far with the artefacts, they should belong to an era before the 4th Century CE. This is the minimum general boundary for the Black & Red Ware (BRW). BRW can be traced up to the 20th Century BCE (De Silve and Dissanayake, 2009). Also some of the symbols on the stone bench were used between 3rd and 1st Century BCE.

The site and the artefacts are being investigated and carefully recorded again. We are hoping to identify and record the wooden parts to get an idea about the vessel and its constructions. Still we do not have a correct evaluation about the area of the wreck site. We need to carry out a careful exploration around the main site to look for some more remains. It can be larger than what we expect and may extend under the sand. Maritime Lanka Website - www.hum.uva.nl/galle/site/books.html

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They are happy to train interested persons over a transition period of 1 to 2 years.

Proposal:

That this issue be tabled for discussion at the 2009 AIMA AGM.

Item 2. Options for printing the Bulletin electronically

Last year Jeremy Green proposed that the AIMA Bulletin be published in electronic rather than printed format. Various responses from the Publications Committee, for and against, were presented in the 2008 Publications Report.

It was suggested that the AIMA membership be surveyed to obtain a general consensus given that some members do not have access to computer technology and prefer to have printed copy. However, this has yet to be actioned.

Several options have been suggested for electronic production ranging from pdf copies that can be made available on CD and/or via the AIMA website with special access provisions for members (similar to those introduced by ASHA), to its inclusion in Informit e-Library, RMIT Publishing's on-line aggregated database of academic and professional journals. This latter facility is clearly aimed at promoting AIMA's publications to a wider market audience for which it would receive Royalty payments from Informit e-Library as a content provider. However, there still needs to be a means of enabling exclusive access to the electronic documents for AIMA members. Hence it would appear that a secure Web access facility for members combined with sales exposure on Informit e-Library could work in parallel.

However, we are still left with a large stock of printed back issues that need to be sold!!!

Proposal:

That this issue be tabled for discussion at the 2009 AIMA AGM.

Item 3. Book reviews

Some discussion has arisen regarding Book Reviews owing to some confusion as to whether they were to be published in the Bulletin or the Newsletter. When the question of Book Reviews was initially raised (at the end of Nathan Richards time as Editor of the Newsletter) it was suggested that this could follow two routes: 1) a 'passive' mode where presses request a book be reviewed, and the newsletter editor send it our for review; or 2) an 'active' mode, where a book review editor is selected and they actively seek out presses to advertise the fact that the Newsletter will do reviews. To date, given the limited number of books for review received by AIMA the 'passive' mode seems to have suited best.

To publish book reviews in the Bulletin as a regular feature (e.g. like the AAMH *Great Circle*) would require a Book Reviews Editor(s) to edit the contributions and take a more active role as per item 2.

Proposal:

That this issue be tabled for discussion at the 2009 AIMA AGM.

**Myra Stanbury
September 2009**