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**History of Archaeology in Ceylon**

GODAKUMBURA, M.A., Ph.D., D.Lit. (Lond.)

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By C. E. GODAKUMBURA, M.A., Ph.D., D.Lit. (Lond.)

*Presidential address delivered on 29th November 1968 at the  
New Arts Theatre, University of Ceylon, Colombo.*

The title of my lecture is "The History of Archaeology in Ceylon", but I shall be covering a wider spectrum, for archaeological evidence embraces the whole gamut of human existence. Thus my attempt is not a history of the State Department of Archaeology in Ceylon. What I intend to give is a broader account of the history of antiquarian studies in our country. The study of the remains of man and his handiwork is, in a way, a new subject, and is full of human interest. It has a long history. In the modern sense, it began with our contacts with European people. Our literature, however, is replete with passages which describe ancient cities, their fortifications and moats, parks, baths, religious edifices and secular buildings, paintings, sculpture, woodcarvings and various other works of art. The word-portraits of abandoned sites, city walls, dwelling-places and the like are indeed what the poets themselves had seen. These accounts and descriptions help us at least in the study of the meaning and purpose of our archaeological remains.

Sinhalese writers have also produced a vast amount of historical material. In Ceylon, history and archaeology were almost synonymous. The Sinhalese term, borrowed from Sanskrit, to denote archaeology is *purāvidyā*. It is derived from *purāvid* which means "knowing the past", "versed in ancient lore", and this word goes as far back as the *Atharva-veda*. Early Sanskrit uses the words *purāvidyā* and *purāveda* in the meanings, "things or events of the past."<sup>1</sup>

As with other literate civilizations, in Ceylon also ancient records form a very important part of the source material of our archaeology. The old Sinhalese inscriptions have not been left to oblivion, but have been read from time to time. In the twelfth century, the Abhidhamma commentator, Sumaṅgala Thera, is said to have read the early Sinhalese inscriptions. He is also said to have made a *Compendium of Sinhalese Inscriptions*.<sup>2</sup> This information is gathered from the most recent epigraphical research by Professor Senarat Paranavitana, to which I will have to return later. Paranavitana has also published the information that during the reign of Śrī Parākramabāhu VI of

1. *Srauta-sūtra*, see M. Monier Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Oxford, 1899, s.v. *purā*.

2. See *Ceylon Today*, Nov.-Dec., 1968.

Rayigama and Kotte (A.D. 1412-1467), Toṭagamuvē Śrī Rāhula Thera and his pupil Sumaṅgala Thera read some four hundred verses of the Sīgiri graffiti, and a copy of these was available at the Toṭagamuva vihāra.<sup>3</sup>

King Parākramabāhu VI interested himself in literature and epigraphy, and as Professor Paranavitana tells me this king did some archaeological explorations as well. The emperor had heard of Sīgiriya from a relative of his queen, a provincial ruler who resided at Pidurāgala.† Parākramabāhu had come across a description of Sīgiriya, and he is said to have had tested the measurements of the various buildings given in the records. For this purpose he would have had to send his officers and men, and get them to make some excavations. We are awaiting the publication of Paranavitana's *Sīgiri-vistaraya*,<sup>4</sup> "the Account of Sīgiri", which will no doubt give more information regarding the archaeological interests of Sinhalese kings. Parākramabāhu VI got down to Kotte some sculpture from Anuradhapura and Sīgiriya, examined them, and sent them back to their original find spots to have them reburied there, perhaps for the benefit of future archaeologists! Some of them have since been re-discovered.

Now we come to records made by European writers concerning the ancient cities and buildings of Ceylon. They were quite often made for the benefit of those who had not seen them, or would not have had the opportunity of seeing them. This explains the lack of such accounts in the productions of our own historians. Father Fernão De Queyroz in his *The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon*<sup>5</sup> has a few notices of some of our cities. Of Kandy (Candi) he says, "The metropolis has well-built houses and streets, cleaned and adorned. The buildings are of masonry, thatched with leaves of bamboo and rattan, good material for fire, though the Pagodas and the Palace of the King, they say, were covered with copper, silver and gold."<sup>6</sup> Here the last statement is only hearsay. Queyroz took the Brāhmī script of the Sinhalese inscriptions to be Greek.<sup>7</sup> He believed that a Tamil inscription at Trincomalee contained a prophecy.<sup>8</sup> An account of this inscription, which is at Fort Frederick, is in the Riks-archief at the Hague, Netherlands.<sup>9</sup> The Dutch have left some interesting maps of the island, and useful plans of the cities and forts.

3. *Lankādīpa*, June 27, 1968, p. 8.

†Now locally pronounced "Piduran-gala."

4. Read from interlinear inscriptions.

5. Translations by Father S. G. Perera, Colombo, 1930, 3 vols.

6. *Op.cit.* Book I, p. 60.

7. *Op.cit.*

8. *Op.cit.* Book I, p. 66.

9. *JCBRAS*, Vol. XXX (No. 80), 1927, pp. 448-449.

Diogo do Couto,<sup>10</sup> the Portuguese historian, records that one of their captains stationed at Mannar\* excavated at Mantota in 1574 or 1575 remains of Roman buildings in the form of masonry work of foundations, an iron chain, medals, coms (copper and gold). The coins were identified as those of Claudius, the Roman Emperor.<sup>11</sup>

The Dutch historian François Valentyn<sup>12</sup> refers to a report of the same discovery (in A.D. 1574-75) of Roman finds of archaeological value along the coast of Mannar. He writes "Great ruins and pieces of a Romish building of marble work to be seen from which the workmen threw down a stone on a part of the foundation, and turning over the same they found an iron chain of such a wonderful and stately fashion that in all India there is no artificer who should dare to undertake to make such another. They found also three pieces of copper coin the underside of which was entirely worn, and also one of gold which was on the underside which was entirely worn, and also one of gold which was on the underside likewise entirely worn."<sup>13</sup> These are about the earliest statements regarding such valuable antiquarian discoveries from the earth in the island. Valentyn had also worked out the lengths of reigns of the Sinhalese kings.

Phillipus Baldaeus, the Dutch predikant, who was in Ceylon from A.D. 1656, in his *Description of Ceylon*,<sup>14</sup> chapter forty-eight, says that the pagoda at Bintenna (that is, the Mahiyaṅgana-dāgāba) whose base was 130 paces, was very lofty and wide it was gilt at the top....." He mentions also the Kuṣṭarajā figure at Weligama, Adam's Peak and another important site in the South or South-East, possibly Dondra.

The English captive, Robert Knox,<sup>15</sup> has made a passing reference to our lithic inscriptions. This is published in the preface to volume I of the *Epigraphia Zeylanica*<sup>16</sup> and I do not propose to repeat the same here. Pybus, the British Ambassador to Kandy in A.D. 1762, gives an account of the Town of Candia (Kandy).<sup>17</sup> As the text is now easily

10. Diogo do Couto (born, Lisbon 1543).

\*Donald Ferguson says that the date should be 1584 or 1585.

11. *JCBRAS*, Vol. XX, No 60 (1908), pp. 83-84.

12. Valentyn, François, English translation, in MS in the Library of R.A.S. (London). Mr. James T. Rutnam of Colombo has a typed copy.

13. See also Casie Chitty S., *JCBRAS*, Vol. I, No. 1, 1875. Cf. Johnston at p. 6.

14. Phillipus Baldaeus, *A true and exact description of the Great Island of Ceylon* translated by Pieter Brohier, *The Ceylon Historical Journal*, Vol. VIII, (1958-59), pp. 381-382.

15. Knox R., *An Historical Relation of the Island of Ceylon*, London 1681; *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, Glasgow, MCMXI; Colombo 1958.

16. *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol. I, preface.

17. Raven-Hart R., *The Pybus Embassy to Kandy, 1762*, "National Museums of Ceylon Historical Series," Vol. I (1958), pp. 29-30.

available, I shall cite only the sentences relating to the royal palace. "The palace stands in a manner detached from the rest of the houses at the south end of this valley (which should be north end as Raven-Hart has also pointed out), and is a large, lofty, spacious building, containing a number of apartments, and seemingly well constructed; but as I (was) never admitted there till night, I cannot be very circumstantial in my description of it. There is a large garden enclosed with a High Wall in the north front of it, and close on the other side of it, to the south, are Hills and thick woods."

Admiral Suffrein when he was at Trincomalee with the French fleet in 1781, sent a copy of a Sinhalese inscription to Mons. Anquetil du Perron\* then in France with an offer of a considerable reward to any person who could decipher it.<sup>18</sup> He added that so far as he knew that had never been accomplished. We will hear of this inscription† later when we come to Alexander Johnston.<sup>19</sup>

Ceylon had the good fortune of having here at the end of the eighteenth century, and the beginning of the nineteenth, a number of men, chiefly military officers and others accompanying them, who took a keen interest in describing our ancient monuments. This certainly was the result of the artistic inclinations of these people, and I believe, not a requirement of their profession. The journal *Asiatic Researches*<sup>20</sup> has published, among other subjects, accounts of the temples of Dondra by Captain Colin Mackenzie<sup>21</sup> and temples of the god of Kataragama by Captain Mahony<sup>22</sup> (1803, Vol. VII). There are also in this journal further accounts of antiquarian value relating to Ceylon by other writers such as Joseph Joinville.<sup>23</sup> Lieut. Col. Barbut, one of the commanders of the ill-fated British expedition to Kandy in 1803, gives a vivid account of the city of Kandy, Senkadaganuvara,<sup>24</sup> as he saw it on Tuesday, March 22, 1803. His description is far more accurate than that of Pybus. Barbut must have found the palace unoccupied since the king had fled to Hanguranketa, and he would have been able to completely satisfy his antiquarian curiosities. The descriptions of the palace, its halls and rooms, their adornments, and

\*Perron made a map of Ceylon.

18. See below, note 30.

†This is the Vēvalkāṭiya inscription of Mahinda IV (A. D. 956-972), which has been deciphered, translated and published by Wickremasinghe in the *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol. I as Art. No. 21 therein (see below). We shall speak of Wickremasinghe later on.

19. See below: note 30.

20. *Asiatic Researches or Transactions of the Society instituted in Bengal*, . . . Vol. I, London, 1801, later Calcutta.

21. Op.cit., Vol. VI, p. 442.

22. Op.cit. Vol. VII (1803).

23. Op.cit., Vol. VII.

24. See Pieris, Paul E, *Tri Sinhala, the Last Phase, 1796-1815*, (1930), Appendix D, pp. 169-171.

the temples, are full of details. These accounts of Kandy, though not all of them antiquities when their authors saw them, I have cited as they should be helpful to officers and workmen of the Archaeological Department who are expected to see to the conservation of the palace.

In Rev. James Cordiner's *Description of Ceylon*,<sup>25</sup> London, 1807, there are some interesting accounts of roads and fortifications.

In 1817, an officer in the British Army while travelling from Bintenna to Minneriya came across the ruins of Polonnaruwa which was called Topary (Topāvāva) at the time.<sup>26</sup> He remarks on a "stone-slab containing on both sides an inscription, apparently in Cingalese characters, its height above the ground 7 feet, breadth 2 feet 9 inches, thickness 10 inches, and the lines of inscription 2 inches apart."

Lieutenant M. H. Fagan, another British Officer examined, in 1820, the ruins of Topary including those in the Vatadāgē site, Tivaṅka-piḷimagē and the Galvihāra (Galle Vihari). His descriptions were published the same year.<sup>27</sup> He gives a vivid account of the Circular Temple, which he begins expressing his opinion, "The circular building I think was once a temple open above." Of the 'Guardstones' with the anthropomorphic Nāga figures he says, "on each side of the steps which conduct to the 4 doors of the temple, stands the same female figure that guards the entrance to most of the Kandyan temples, covered nearly to the knees with rubbish . . ." In spite of such misunderstanding Fagan's detailed description of the shrine is very informative. He describes the terra-cotta ornamentations of the Tivaṅka Piḷimagē, where the Gaṇa figures attracted his attention.

He recognized the colossal standing statue at Galvihara to be one of the Buddha. He says, "I found it to be a figure of the Budhoo in an upright posture, of excellent proportions and in an attitude I think uncommon, his hands laid gracefully across his breast and his robe falling from his left arm." At the excavated cave (*Vijjādharaguhā*) he saw 'the old wooden Door in good preservation' and 'the ceiling painted in red ornament.' Fagan's excellent account of Polonnaruwa should be found useful to all students of Ceylon archaeology.

T. Ralph Backhouse, collector at Mannar made measured descriptions of some monuments and tank bunds at Anuradhapura, and also the bunds of Minneriya tank and the Kavuduluvāva.<sup>28</sup>

25. Cordiner, Rev James, *Description of Ceylon*, Vols. I & II, London, 1807, See Vo. II pp. 155ff.

26. Supplement of the *Government Gazette*, August 1st, 1820.

27. *Orientalist*, Vol II, p. 87.

28. Ievers, R. W., *Manual of the North Central Province, Ceylon*, Colombo, 1899, p. 213. A documented account of the History of the archaeology of the N. C. P. is given in chapter XV of this *Manual*, pp. 211-242.

John Davy in *An Account of the Interior of Ceylon, etc.*,<sup>29</sup> London, 1821, notices various architectural styles prevalent in the districts he saw, but has failed to discern any style which he could call Sinhalese. This indeed is surprising seeing that he spent most of his time in the Kandyan provinces. These are the opening sentences of Davy's comments: "In architecture, I am not aware that the Sinhalese can be said to have any national or any very peculiar style. In no country is much greater variety to be seen, or much stronger marks afforded to trace the progress of the art. Rock-temples, which are very numerous in the interior, may, with the exception of their embellishments, be considered rather the work of nature than art." Davy also makes a brief note on Anuradhapura. "A large tank, numerous stone pillars, two or three immense tumuli (probably old dagobas), are its principal remains."

Sir Alexander Johnston in a contribution to the *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, made in 1824 (Vol. I, art. xxx) refers to the archaeological remains at Mantai which Valentyn had earlier noted: He writes in a note:\* "The ruins of the ancient town of Mantotta, all of which consist of brick, still cover a considerable extent of country. Great numbers of Roman coins of different emperors, particularly of the Antonines; specimens of the finest pottery, and some Roman gold and silver chains, have been found in those ruins." Johnston has also published in the same journal the Sinhalese inscription from Trincomalee a copy of which the French Admiral Suffrein had sent to du Perron in 1781 with a fac-simile made in 1806 under his direction.<sup>30</sup> This appears to be a duplicate of the Vēvālkāṭiya inscription of Mahinda (A.D. 956-972).† Words such as *dasagam* can be read clearly. A slab bearing a tenth century inscription had been utilized for the pavement of the *cella* of the *budugē* (image-house) at Velgamvihāra (Periyakulam) near Trincomalee as was noticed when the Archaeological Department was engaged in conserving the remains of that building in 1953 (see *ASC Report* for 1953, p. G. 11). These probably may be fragments from the inscribed slab which Admiral Suffrein and Alexander Johnston refer to. Johnston also communicated to the same *Transactions*<sup>31</sup> the text of a Cufic inscription from Ceylon (dated Hejira 317—A.D. 948) with a translation by Samuel Lee, Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge (art. xxxii, "A Cufic Inscription found in Ceylon, communicated by Sir A. Johnston, with

29. Davy, John, *An account of the Interior of Ceylon, etc.*, London, 1821: p. 255; p. 302 f.n.

\*See also account at p. 3.

†See f n. 18 above.

30. *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* Vol. I (1824), art. xxx, "An account of an inscription found near Trincomalee."

31. *Ibid.* art. xxxii.

a translation by the Rev. Samuel Lee, A. M. Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge"). This inscription was at Jawatta in Colombo.

In a country like Ceylon, with a long literary tradition going back to twenty-five centuries and farther in the original home lands of the people who inhabit it, a knowledge of history is the prerequisite for all archaeological work. In countries like Ceylon and India research in prehistory has also to follow history. It should be so for prehistoric archaeology as well. Very often prehistorical levels lie under several historical layers. If an archaeologist digs for prehistory, without a knowledge of history, or without the co-operation of scholars with a sound knowledge of chronology of the historical times, he will be destroying a number of historical levels before he alights on the prehistoric strata in which he is interested. The pre-historic strata have to be reached after a careful examination of the historic ones. I shall come to pre-history in Ceylon later on. Now we turn to the study of Ceylon chronology by modern scholars, who were also interested in antiquities.

Edward Upham's<sup>32</sup> translation of the *Mahāvamsi*, the *Rāja-ratnācari* and the *Rājā-vali* from the Sinhalese, published in London in 1833, did not add in any manner to the knowledge of Sinhalese chronology. The news of the publication in London of a translation of the *Mahāvamsa* only delayed George Turnour's work on the chronicle. Meanwhile, Turnour completed in 1832 his "Epitome of the History of Ceylon."<sup>33</sup> The author states this in his letter from Kandy, dated September 14, 1832, to the Editor of the *Ceylon Almanac*. Turnour comments on the scepticism of some individuals who wrote on Ceylon History, namely Cordiner, Perceval, Bertolacci, Philalethes and Davy, stating that they "unacquainted themselves with the native languages, and misguided by the persons from whom they derived their information, have concurred in representing that there were no authentic historical records to be found in Ceylon." Turnour made use for his *Epitome*, in addition to the Pali *Mahāvamsa* and the *Commentary* to its first part, the Sinhalese works: *Pūjāvaliya*, *Nikāyasaṅgrahaya*, *Rājaratnākaraya*, *Rājāvaliya* and Vilbāgedara Mudiyanse's "Account of his embassy to Siam." Turnour's *Epitome of the History of Ceylon* contains its chronology, the prominent events recorded therein, and the lineage of the reigning 'families', and gives, in somewhat greater detail, an account of the foundation of the towns and of the construction of the many stupendous works, the remains of which still exist, to attest the authenticity of those annals. Turnour prepared his notes hastily and he was aware that this was done imperfectly, but we have to admit that the publication of this *Epitome* was the turning point of

32. Upham, E., *The Mahāvamsi, the Rāja-ratnācari, and the Rājāvali*, London, 1833.

33. *Ceylon Almanac*, 1832? Also as Appendix to Forbes's *Eleven years in Ceylon* (Vol. II, pp. 271-323).



antiquarian studies in Ceylon. From the summary we note his bias towards archaeological remains, and he would make use of the existing monuments to test the authenticity of the historical and literary records. This was the purpose of archaeology at the time and to a very great extent even today. Did not Schliemann dig in the site of Troy to find the truth of Homer's epic?<sup>34</sup>

Writers after the publication of Turnour's *Épitome* have made use of his essay, and have certainly benefited from the same. They have identified some of the cities and monuments mentioned in the annals. Forbes reproduced Turnour's *Épitome* as the Appendix to his work which we shall presently refer to. Turnour published a Revised Chronological Table of Sovereigns of Ceylon in the *Ceylon Almanac* of 1834, and this is appended also to the introduction to his *Mahāvamsa*<sup>35</sup> (London, 1837). This made a further advance to the *Épitome* in respect of the earlier period. In 1832-33 Major Skinner, who wrote the *Fifty Years in Ceylon*<sup>36</sup> (London, 1891), supplied Turnour notes regarding the ancient sites at Anuradhapura with a plan showing the principal ruins under the names ascribed to them by tradition. Some of the identifications may be wrong, but we notice the names sticking to the monuments to this day. Tradition has a greater sway on people than archaeology or history.

Major Forbes,<sup>37</sup> who explored the island in the fourth decade of the nineteenth century, has given us first hand accounts of several sites such as Matara, Dondra, Mulgirigala, Kurunegala, Yapahuva, Kandy, Dambulla, Polonnaruwa, Mihintale and Anuradhapura. Forbes was at Anuradhapura between 1828-1829. (See Vol. I. Ch. X. of *Eleven Years in Ceylon*, Vol. I-II, London, 1840.) Ievers,<sup>38</sup> in his *Manual of the North-Central Province* (p. 214), says, "In 1831 Major Forbes visited Polonnaruwa, and gives a far more reliable account of the ruins than Sir Emerson Tennent."<sup>39</sup> Forbes's description of Anuradhapura is illustrated with drawings of Lōvāmahapāya, Abhayagiri (Jetavana) and Thūpārāma, before restoration in about A.D. 1829, and details of a pillar with capital from the last site. In his account of Matara and Devinuvara, Forbes records a tradition that the seven tombs built in memory of Kumāradāsa, Kālidāsa and the five queens of the king, and the seven bo-trees planted there existed "as

34. Durant, Will, *The Life of Greece*, "The Story of Civilization," Part II, New York, 1939. pp. 33ff. Jacquetta Hawkes, *The World of the Past*, New York, 1963, pp. 23-25.

35. Turnour, *Mahāvamsa*, London, 1837.

36. Skinner, Major Thomas, *Fifty Years in Ceylon*, London, 1891.

37. Forbes, Major, *Eleven Years in Ceylon*, Vol. II, London, 1840.

38. Op. cit. p. 214.

39. Tennent, J. E., *Ceylon, an account of the island, physical, historical and topographical*, Vol. I-II, London, 4th edition 1860.

late as the year A.D. 1783, when a Dutch gentleman made use of the materials of which the tombs were built, and cut the venerable bo-trees."<sup>40</sup> Forbes also has published translations of four long inscriptions, which were supplied to him by George Turnour, namely, Tablets of King Mahinda from Mihintale, Niśsaṅkamalla's Galpota inscription from Polonnaruwa, Dambulla Rock Inscription of Niśsaṅkamalla, Sāhassamalla's slab-inscription from Polonnaruwa, while he himself translated an inscription from Matale District. This is Hapugastāna Inscription dated Śaka 128 (A.D. 1359) of Parākramabāhu V (A.D. 1344-1359) cited by Bell at *JCBRAS.* Vol. XXII (No. 65), p. 295, of this Society's *Journal*, and the full text and translation of which is published by Simon de Silva at *ibid.* pp. 362-363. Of the Sinhalese inscriptions Forbes says, "the dates which they afford confirm the accuracy of the Cingalese histories, and the correctness with which Mr. Turnour had arranged its chronology in an Epitome not then published, although compiled several years before."<sup>41</sup>

Sir Samuel Baker,<sup>42</sup> in his *Eight Years in Ceylon* gives a vivid description of the abandoned ruins of Polonnaruwa. While speaking of 'the Architectural relics,' as he calls them, he says, "The Bricks, or rather the tiles, of which all the buildings are composed, are of such an imperishable nature, that they still adhere to each other in large masses in spots where portions of the buildings have fallen."<sup>43</sup> The visitor can yet see these masses of brick. It is interesting to note that Baker calls bricks also 'tiles'. The Pali term for both 'brick' and 'tile' is *iṭṭhakā*.

Now let us turn our attention again to the south. J. W. Bennet,<sup>44</sup> in his *Ceylon and its Capabilities*, London, 1843, gives some accounts of the temples of Dondra Head, and sites with ruins near Ambalantota. While dwelling on the remains of the *pansala* and the *vihāre*, of Wanderope<sup>45</sup> (Vāṇduruppē), that is, the monastic residence and the dagoba, he says, "the priest considered it a desecration of the sacred relics of the ancient *vihāre* to part with them for a lay purpose." They were being, however, used, Bennet says, to fill in some nook in the monastic grounds. It is interesting to note that to this day the conservative Buddhist monk regards the bricks of dagobas which have received the adoration of the devotee to be sacred.

40. Forbes, *op. cit.* Vol. II, p. 176.

41. *Op. cit.* Vol. I, p. 421.

42. Baker, Sir Samuel, *Eight Years in Ceylon*, 2nd Edition, London, 1847, ch. iv.

43. *Op. cit.* p 77.

44. Bennet, J. W., *Ceylon and its Capabilities*, London, 1843.

45. *Op. cit.* p. 314.

Charles Pridham's *Historical, Political and Statistical Account of Ceylon*<sup>46</sup> contains in addition to descriptions of Anuradhapura, Mihintale and the large tanks of the north, accounts of the ancient city of Māgama, including the Tissa-vihāra and Saṅdagiri-dāgāba, and the Mulgirigala-vihāra.

Anuradhapura was the centre of archaeological interest for government in the middle of the last century, but officers continued to visit other sites and produce accounts of them. In 1840 a sum of £40 was spent for jungle clearing at Anuradhapura. Ievers in his *Manual of the North-Central Province*<sup>47</sup> says that an estimate of £100 was not accepted by the government. Ancient edifices were, however, not left alone. Renovation began. In 1841, a Buddhist bhikkhu collected a large sum of money and restored the Thūpārāma-dāgāba, obscuring all its ancient features. Ievers says that the "chief architect" could have known nothing of the proper lines of erection of a dagoba. The "restoration" has been vehemently criticized by a writer on the history of world architecture.<sup>48</sup> The *Samantapāsādikā*<sup>49</sup> and the *Thūpavaṃsa*<sup>50</sup> say that this dagoba was originally built in the shape of a paddy-heap.<sup>51</sup> The picture given by Forbes<sup>52</sup> shows what it looked like in the eighteen-twenties, a *paḍmākāra* dagoba. The same fate has later befallen the Laṅkārama-dāgāba, another dagoba with a *vaṭadāgē* of about the same size, also at Anuradhapura. Years later, the Ruvanvālisāya was rebuilt, and many other ancient stūpas, in Anuradhapura and in other places. We shall come to this later on.

In 1845 the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society was founded, and archaeology was included within the orbit of its activities. An examination of the contents of the journals of the Society shows that antiquarian studies and research have been given a very important place by the Society. Numerous papers on ancient sites and monuments have been read before the Society and articles on such topics are published in the *Journal*. A large number of ancient records are also published in them. In fact, the sole organization which could have advised the government until the appointment of an Archaeological Commissioner with the establishment of the State Archaeological Survey was this Society.

46. Pridham Charles, *An Historical, Political and Statistical Account of Ceylon and its Dependencies*, Vol. I-II, 1849.

47. *Op. cit.* p. 214.

48. Fergusson, *Ancient Architecture*, p. 187.

49. P.T.S. ed. para 88; *Sacred Books of the Buddhists*, Vol. XXI, para 93. (Translation 78. text; p. 201).

50. P.T.S. ed. p. 50.

51. See also Paranavitana, *Stūpa in Ceylon*, "Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon," Vol. V, p. 13 nt. 3.

52. Forbes, *op. cit.* Vol. I p. 226.

In the same year as the establishment of the Society (1845), *The History of Ceylon* by William Knighton,<sup>53</sup> a member of the Civil Service, and a Secretary of the Society, was published in London. Reading through Knighton's pages one would easily come to the conclusion that unlike many other European writers who have undertaken the writing of histories of Asian peoples, our author was full of sympathy and love towards the ancient nation he was dealing with. The work is not devoid of accounts of archaeological interest. He describes the palace of Kandy and the "beautiful little trellised wall" by the side of the lake (p. 378). He says that it was gradually crumbling away, and adds "probably ere long, it will be replaced by some structure of brick and stone, permanent as ponderous and ponderous as ugly". Of the tombs of the kings of Kandy, he says, they "now afford scarcely any thing worth the trouble of looking at. The hand of rapine has been busy, the carvings and sculptures have been removed, and but a few shapeless stones attest the burial places of the 'lion kings'." (Since demolished with the extension of the railway line from Kandy to Matale through Mahayiyawa.) A description of these tombs is given in the same author's *Forest Life in Ceylon*,<sup>54</sup> In the same chapter there are accounts of the rock of Dambulla and the cave-temples of the same site. Chapter V of the volume is devoted to Anuradhapura, the buried city.<sup>55</sup>

*Ceylon, A General Description of the Island and its Inhabitants with an Historical Sketch of the Conquest of the Colony by the English*<sup>56</sup> by Henry Marshall published in 1846, a year after Knighton's *History*, is a distinct contrast to the latter work. To him the history of Ceylon begins with the discovery of the island by the Portuguese in A.D. 1505. His sketch of the Town of Kandy and the surrounding country for about three miles taken in the year 1815 is nevertheless<sup>57</sup> interesting.

I have already referred to Pridham's *History* which appeared in 1849. Sir James Emerson Tennent who came as Colonial Secretary to Ceylon in 1845 and remained here until 1850 devoted himself to the study of the history and antiquities of the island. He made full use of the opportunities he had to see the country and what remained of ancient works. His two volumes on *Ceylon*\* show his vast amount of reading. He makes reference to numerous volumes and essays relating to Ceylon and the neighbouring countries. His descriptions of early Buddhist monuments, irrigation works, fine arts, ancient coins, etc. with the illustrations that accompany them are an invaluable source

53. Knighton W., *The History of Ceylon*, London, 1845.

54. Knighton W., *Forest Life in Ceylon*, 2nd. ed., London, 1854.

55. Op. cit. pp. 136 ff.

56. Marshall, H., *Ceylon*,....., London, 1846.

57. Op. cit. facing page 146.

\*4th ed., 1860.

of information to those engaged in antiquarian studies relating to Ceylon. For example, I may refer to his account of Padaviya tank (the Great Tank of Padivil, as he calls it,)<sup>58</sup> is not without interest even today, both with regard to its history and construction. Tennent had described this tank earlier in his book *Christianity in Ceylon*.<sup>59</sup>

In the very first year of its inception (1845) Simon Casie Chitty,<sup>60</sup> the Secretary of this Society, had presented to the Society twenty-five copper coins from a hoard that was found buried in a cemetery attached to a mosque at Kalpitiya, with descriptions of two of them. In 1847 Casie Chitty read a paper "On the History of Jaffna from the earliest period to the Dutch conquest."<sup>61</sup> This paper is of considerable antiquarian value. We may not accept today some of the information which Casie Chitty has presented as history, but the essay contains valuable notices of archaeological interest. He refers here, in a note,<sup>62</sup> to the discovery of Roman antiquities cited by Valentyn and Alexander Johnston to which I have made reference earlier.<sup>63</sup>

In the first part of the last century the *Ceylon Almanac* published papers on Sinhalese inscriptions,<sup>64</sup> but from the middle of the century the journal of this Society was the chief medium for the publication of our ancient records. A.O. Brodie contributed a paper on the "Rock inscription at Gurugoda Vihāre in the Magul-Korale of the Seven Korales"<sup>65</sup> and "A Notice of various Rock Inscriptions in the North-Western Province."<sup>66</sup> Casie Chitty contributed a note on "A Royal Grant, Engraved on a Copper Plate"<sup>67</sup> and a paper with eye copies on a "Rock Inscription at Pīramankandel."<sup>68</sup> Rhys Davids's contributions up to 1872 are "On Inscriptions from Dondra",<sup>69</sup> "Inscription at Weligama Vihāra,"<sup>70</sup> and "On Methods of taking Impressions of Inscriptions."<sup>71</sup> A text and translation of a Rock Inscription at the Buddhist

58. Tennent, op. cit. Vol. II, pt ix, ch. v.

59. Tennent, *Christianity in Ceylon*, London, 1850.

60. Casie Chitty, S, "Account of Some Ancient Coins," *JCBRAS*, Vol. I, No 1, 1845, pp 79-82.

61. Ibid. No. 3, 1847-48, pp 73-84.

62. Ibid, p. 73 f.n.

63. See notes 30-31.

64. See Forbes, op. cit. Vol. II, pp. 324-356.

65. *JCBRAS*, Vol. II, (No. 6), 1853, pp. 59-64.

66. Ibid. No 8, 1855, pp. 193-196.

67. Ibid. Vol. I, (No. 3), 1847-48, pp 115-116.

68. Ibid. Vol. II, (No. 7), 1853, p. 102.

69. Ibid. Vol. V, (No. 16), 1870-71, pp. 25-28, No. 17, 1871-72, pp. 57-56.

70. Ibid. Vol. V, (No. 16), 1870-71, pp. 21-24.

71. Ibid. pp. 1-3.

Temple at Kelaniya<sup>72</sup> and the transcript and translation of an ancient copper-plate Sannas<sup>73</sup> were published by L. V. de Zoysa.

During the governorship of Sir Hercules Robinson (1865-1872) an Archaeological Commission was appointed (1868) to consider practical measures to be taken to conserve ancient architectural structures and other works of art. The Surveyor-General, Col. A. B. Fyres was the Chairman, and J. G. Smither, the Chief Architect of the Public Works Department, was the Secretary.<sup>74</sup> The Government Agents of the Provinces were circularized to report on all architectural structures. In 1871, a series of photographs of the principal monuments of Anuradhapura was taken by Mr. Svaminathan Kanakaretnam Lawton.\* This pioneer photographer, I am told, came from Jaffna.

Antiquarians of Ceylon were fortunate when Sir William Gregory,<sup>75</sup> a good classical scholar who had missed prizes and scholarships and failed to sit his final examination, took up duties as Governor of Ceylon in 1872. Gregory was a cultured Irish gentleman from Galway. He had been a member of the British Parliament, and Chairman of the Committee on the British Museum which was appointed in 1860 to inquire into extensions and arrangements of the various collections. He had also taken an interest in the affairs of the Royal Irish Academy. In Ceylon he was keen on improving facilities not only for the large and annually increasing number of foreign students of oriental history and of oriental philology, but to the people of the Island, many of whom had already widely distinguished themselves by antiquarian research.<sup>76</sup> Evidently inspired by the work of this society, chiefly in the collection of inscriptions, he founded the Colombo Museum. That epigraphy was foremost in Governor Gregory's mind is evidently by a passage of his speech to the Legislative Council on the subject of the museum. "I propose, in connection with this Museum, to obtain reproduction of the inscriptions throughout the island, by means of photography, casts, and hand-copying. These inscriptions, varying in character and dialect, will be of deep interest to the philologist, and throw light on the ancient usages, religious customs, and the early history of Ceylon."<sup>76</sup>

72. Ibid. No. 17, pp. 36-44.

73. Ibid. No. 18, 1873, pp. 75-79.

74. *The Administration Report of the Surveyor-General for 1868*, published in 1869.

† James T. Rutnam gave the lecturer the full name of LAWTON who is mistaken by the present generation to have been an Englishman or an American.

75. Hulugalle, H. A. J., *British Governors of Ceylon*, Colombo, 1963, pp. 116ff.

76. Lady Gregory, *Sir William Gregory*, K. C. M. G., London 1894, pp. 314-315.

Gregory in his autobiography, published by his widow, gives some of his impressions of the ancient sites. Very vivid is his narrative<sup>77</sup> of the transport of the Kalinga Lion from Polonnaruwa to the Colombo Museum, although at the time he wrote he could not lay his hands on the letter of Mr. Mac Bride, the Director of Public Works, who carried out the operation. Great strides in archaeology were made during Gregory's period of stay in Ceylon. Between 1873-75 under his directions, a complete survey of all that was known of ancient Anuradhapura was made by George Capper. This surveyor met his death at the hands of a villager whilst on this work, but an account of "The dagobas at Anuradhapura" was published in 1888 by John Capper, father of George, in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, London.<sup>78</sup> He deals with the "Thuparama, Miris-wattiya, Ruvan-waeli, Abhayagiri, Jetawanarama and Selachaitiya dagobas." The heights and other measurements of these seven dagobas are given, in accordance with the recommendations of Sir James Fergusson.

J. G. Smither, the Government Architect, who acted as Secretary to the Archaeological Commission of 1868, completed by 1877, detailed plans and drawings to scale of the more important ruins at Anuradhapura.<sup>79</sup>

Meanwhile there had also been published in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, London, two articles on Sigiriya, namely, "Sigiri, the Lion Rock, near Pulastipura, Ceylon & c., by T. W. Rhys Davids<sup>80</sup> and "On the Ruins of Sigiri, in Ceylon" by B. H. Blakesley.<sup>81</sup>

P. Goldschmidt was appointed Archaeological Commissioner in 1875, to carry out systematic research in Sinhalese Epigraphy. For two years he worked in the North-Central, North-Western Provinces and the Hambantota District. Before he died of malaria in May 1877, Goldschmidt had published two reports in the *Sessional Papers*<sup>82</sup> for 1875 and 1876 and a paper entitled "Notes on Ancient Sinhalese Inscriptions" in this Society's *Journal*.<sup>83</sup>

In 1878, Edward Müller was appointed Archaeological Commissioner also for the same purpose as Goldschmidt. He took over the papers left by Goldschmidt, and began his explorations for more inscriptions. Muller brought out the first main publication on the epigra-

77. Ibid. pp. 342-344.

78. Vol. XX, 1888, art. v.

79. Smither, J. G., *Architectural Remains of Anuradhapura*, London, 1894

80. Vol. VIII, 1876, art. x.

81. Ibid. Vol. VIII, 1876, art. ii.

82. Reprinted in the *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. V, 1875 pp. 189-192, Vol. VI, 1876, pp. 318-329.

83. Vol. VI, (No. 20), 1879, pp. 1-45.

phy of the island in two volumes under the title *Ancient Inscriptions in Ceylon*.<sup>84</sup> Besides, he contributed two papers on Sinhalese inscriptions to our *Journal*<sup>85</sup> and three contributions in the *Sessional Papers*<sup>86</sup> 1878, 1880, 1881. Among the latter, a study entitled "Contributions to Sinhalese Grammar"<sup>87</sup> is the first attempt in the approach to the Sinhalese language on an historical basis. Muller's *Grammar of the Pali Language*<sup>88</sup> on similar lines was published in London in 1884. Müller relinquished his post in 1879.

The Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society continued its activities in antiquarian research under the patronage of another enlightened governor, Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon, afterwards Baron Stanmore (1883-1890)<sup>89</sup>. Sir Hamilton presented to the Society Henry Parker's "Report on the Archaeological Discoveries at Tissamaharama in the Southern Province of Ceylon" and this was published as No. 27 of the Society's *Journal*.<sup>90</sup> This exhaustive report running to nearly 100 pages is supported with a map, plans and illustrations. It is also accompanied by a comparative palaeographical table to help in the deciphering of inscriptions. It appears that the Irrigation Officer, Henry Parker, had carried out archaeological excavations, and, in the absence of an Archaeological Commissioner at the time, he may have been commissioned to do the work by the government. Parker's material is embodied in his *Ancient Ceylon*<sup>91</sup> which was published in 1909.

S. M. Burrows carried out some operations at Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa during the years 1884-1885. His name is yet remembered in connection with an archaeological monument at Anuradhapura, namely, "Burrow's Pavilion". The results of Burrows's work is found in Iever's Manual,<sup>92</sup> pp. 227ff. In 1885-86, at Polonnaruwa Burrows removed the debris from the portico and the vestibule of the Tivaṅka-pilimagē and laid bare the wall-paintings therein. He might well have left them alone.<sup>93</sup> Burrows's report to the Government on 'A year's work at Polonnaruwa, where he gives the translation of twelve inscrip-

84. Vol. I. Text; Vol. II. Plates, London 1883.

85. "Text and Translation of the inscription of Mahinda III at Mihuntale, with glossary, *JCBRAS*, Vol. VI (No. 21) 1880, pp. 3, 36; "Notes on Ancient Sinhalese Inscriptions," Vol. VIII (No. 26), 1883, pp. 18-43.

86. *Ceylon Sessional Papers*, 1878, 1880, 1881.

87. *Ibid*

88. Muller, E., *A Simplified Grammar of the Pali Language*, London, 1884.

89. See Hulugalle, *op. cit.* pp. 124 ff.

90. Parker, H., "Report on the Archaeological Discoveries at Tissamahārāma in the Southern Province of Ceylon," Vol. VIII (No. 27), 1884, pp. 95-192.

91. Parker, H., *Ancient Ceylon*, London, 1909.

92. See Note 28.

93. Bell, H. C. P., Notes and Queries "Demalahaseya Paintings", *JCBRAS*, Vol. XXVI (No. 71), 1918, p. 200.



tions at the ancient capital is published in our *Journal*.<sup>94</sup> Burrows became Director of Education. He was a man of literary talents, as is seen from the little guide, *The Buried Cities of Ceylon*, he wrote (1905).<sup>95</sup>

In 1886, the Society had given a grant to W. J. S. Boake of the Ceylon Civil Service to conduct excavations at Tirukketisvaram or Mantai.<sup>96</sup> The results of a few days' digging were incorporated by the excavator in a paper which was read before the Society on the 7th of November, 1887. The paper is accompanied by two plans. The pottery is compared with Parker's finds from Tissamahārāma. Finds from two spots examined are listed. Of other archaeological explorations before the establishment of the Archaeological Survey, the results of which are recorded in the Society's *Journal*, the papers relating to Riṭigala in the North Central Province should be mentioned.<sup>97</sup>

A regular vote for archaeological purposes was for the first time inserted in the Supply Bill for 1890, and introduced to the Legislative Council by Governor Gordon's Message dated November 20, 1889. Herein he says, "It is proposed to make some systematic examination of the interesting remains at Sigiri, and to commence on a modest scale, before the rapidly disappearing monuments of the past have altogether perished, a species of Archaeological Survey resembling that carried on in India." In February 1890, the commencement of the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon was entrusted to H. C. P. Bell of the Ceylon Civil Service, who was the Honorary Secretary of this Society at the time. Bell was at the time stationed at Kegalla, and he found it convenient to make that district the first scene of his work. It was an unworked field with several sites of considerable interest, stretching from the most ancient times to the latest. Bell produced his monumental *Report, Historical and Antiquarian, on the Kegalla District* in 1892.<sup>98</sup>

The purpose of the establishment of the Archaeological Survey appears to have been to make a descriptive list of ancient monuments and inscriptions. A commission of four persons appointed to look into the matter reported that in twenty years' time this task would be completed.<sup>99</sup>

94 *JCBRAS*, Vol. X, (No. 34), 1887

95. Burrows, S. M., *Buried Cities of Ceylon*, a guide to Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, with chapters on Dambulla, Kalawewa, Mihintale and Sigiri, (Colombo, 1905).

96. Boake, W. J. S., "Tirukketisvaram, Mahātirtha, Matoddam, or Mantaddai," *JCBRAS*, Vol. X, (No. 35), 1887 pp. 107-114.

97. Wickremasinghe, D. M. de Z., "Etymological and Historical notes on Riṭigala." *JCBRAS*, Vol. XI, (No. 39), 1899; Rideout, J.B.M., *ibid*, Vol. XII No. 43, 1892.

98. *Sessional Paper XX* of 1894, Colombo, 1892.

99. *Sessional Paper I* of 1899.

Even after the Archaeological Survey began to function this Society continued its archaeological activities at least in the publication of various papers in the *Journal*, affording a platform for lectures and providing opportunities of discussion. Preliminary reports of the Survey's work of exploration and excavation were presented to the Society. After Bell completed his exploration of the Kegalla District, he shifted the scene of his activities to Sigiriya, (while making Anuradhapura his headquarters) the site named by Governor Gordon in his communication to the Legislative Council containing the proposal for the initiation of the Archaeological Survey. Bell's "Interim Report on the Operations of the Archaeological Survey at Sigiriya in 1895" was presented to the Society at its meeting on September 10, 1895. This paper was prefaced with extracts from a short paper by A. Murray, giving a general description of Sigiriya and its history. In illustration of the report, plans, architectural drawings and views of the Rock and the surroundings, done by the Archaeological Survey, were exhibited in the room; also an album of photographs taken by the Archaeological Commissioner. The paper gives information as to how archaeological activities were carried on at the time. Personal supervision by the Commissioner had not always been possible. Bell acted as District Judge, Kalutara, whilst also directing Archaeological Survey operations, between May 1st and December 7, 1894. In August that year Bell's assistant, M. F. Maxfield, acting on written directions from Kalutara employed a number of Sinhalese villagers to fell and burn the trees on the top of the Rock, as well as close round the base of the western and southern scarps. The employment of this *chena* clearing method is what archaeological explorers now try to guard against. One knows the fate of inscriptions, sculpture or other works of art if they should lie unnoticed under the trees subject to burning. Even after seventy-five years of the existence of the Archaeological Survey we find this still being done. Bell's *Interim Report* on the second season, 1896, was submitted to the Society on January 9, 1897, while the third report (which was for 1897) was presented in December 8, 1897. The last evoked some public discussion on Bell's views of the Sigiriya artists. Since the Archaeological Commissioner supervised operations only at one site during one given period, and he had no "Antiquities Ordinance" to operate (nor to attend to constant needs of members of the public including politicians as now) he could speedily finish his report. This is the ideal we must expect in all archaeological work, especially in exploration and excavation. The Society's interest in receiving the Reports also would no doubt have been an encouragement for the Archaeological Commissioner to expedite them. No one wishes to write reports and books that are not promptly read! The Archaeological Commissioner annually presented to the Council of this Society a synopsis of the work done by the Archaeological Survey during the year. Some of these summaries are published in the *Journal* (1900: Vol. XVII, No. 52; 1901; 1901: *ibid.* No. 53; 1902: Vol. XVIII, No. 54;

1903: *ibid.* No. 55, 1904). Archaeological summaries continued to be published in our *Journal* until very recent times. The last published were for 1951 and 1952 in the New Series Vol. IV (pt. 1), 1955. I shall not enumerate here the Reports of the Archaeological Survey, later named the Department of Archaeology; but a passing reference must be made to the *Seventh Progress Report*<sup>100</sup> of Bell, a much sought after volume, like the same author's *Kégalla Report*.<sup>101</sup> Meanwhile F. E. Oertel of the Public Works Department of India reported on the restoration of monuments at Anuradhapura.<sup>102</sup>

Let us turn our attention again to epigraphy. Don Martino de Zilva Wickremasinghe, who had been Assistant Librarian of the Colombo Museum Library, joined the Archaeological survey soon after its inception as Bell's "Native Assistant". Wickremasinghe's thoroughness and ability as a scholar, though not a graduate of any University at the time, is seen from his contribution to the *Seventh Progress Report* just referred to. Wickremasinghe had proceeded to Europe on studies in 1898 and there shown full evidence of his ability. It would be sufficient to refer to his *Catalogue of the Sinhalese Manuscripts in the British Museum*, London, 1900. Wickremasinghe was appointed Epigraphist to the Ceylon Government simultaneously with his duties as Lecturer in Tamil and Telugu in the University of Oxford, and he began editing and translating lithic and other inscriptions of Ceylon for the *Epigraphia Zeylanica*. The progress of the first volume was reported in the archaeological summary<sup>103</sup> for the year 1901. In the similar statement for the year 1903, under *Epigraphy* we read. The first number (Vol. 1, part 1) of the *Epigraphia Zeylanica* has been issued in a neat and scholarly form, by Mr. D. M. de Z. Wickremasinghe. A copy was laid on table at the Annual General Meeting held on March 2, 1904.

Of Wickremasinghe's work on Ceylon epigraphy, his successor as Epigraphist, Paranavitana, later Archaeological Commissioner, says as follows in the preface to the fourth volume of the *Epigraphia Zeylanica*: "In the midst of his (Wickremasinghe's) multifarious duties, first at Oxford University and later at London University, he edited and published, between 1903 and 1927, thirteen parts of this journal, consisting solely of his own contributions. The scholarly and able manner in which Dr. Wickremasinghe carried out this onerous task earned for him a first-class international reputation among Indianists; but it is sad to reflect on the indifference of his own countrymen towards the great service he has rendered his country by his researches into the history, language, and culture of the Sinhalese people, incident-

100. *Sessional Paper XIII* of 1896.

101. *Sessional Paper XIX* of 1892, Colombo, 1892.

102. *Sessional Paper XX* of 1903.

103. *JCBRAS*, No. 52, p. 7.

tally bringing credit to Ceylon scholarship." Wickremasinghe made his contribution to archaeology also by his research and teaching. I may here refer to his paper on "the Antiquity of Stone Architecture in India and Ceylon" published in our *Journal*.<sup>104</sup> Wickremasinghe deserves to be remembered by philologists and antiquarians of Ceylon for his scholarship, if his patriotic deeds are not widely known. Not even has a street been named after him. Wickramesinghe, though blind at the time, favoured this Society with a valuable paper<sup>105</sup> in 1934. I searched through the pages of our journals for an Obituary Notice of this distinguished scholar and found none.

The first decade of this century also had among us another Ceylonese. He has not been forgotten. This is Ananda Coomaraswamy, the exponent of oriental art, chiefly Sinhalese, the author of *Medieval Sinhalese Art*<sup>106</sup> published in 1908, in London. Earlier he had contributed three papers to this Society of which "Some Survivals in Sinhalese Art" is of particular interest to antiquarian studies.<sup>107</sup>

John Still is better known for his *Jungle Tide*<sup>108</sup> than for his contributions towards archaeological and historical research in Ceylon. His *Index to the Mahāvamsa*<sup>109</sup> has not yet been superseded. He was Assistant to the Archaeological Commissioner under Bell from January 1, 1902 to December 31, 1907, and his contribution during this brief period is indeed noteworthy. His papers and notes on the ancient Sinhalese coins read before this Society and subsequently published in the *Journal* are a notable advance in the study of Ceylon Numismatics, while his paper on Tantrimalai<sup>110</sup> shows the accuracy of his archaeological observations and the trustworthiness of his deductions. He also wrote a book on the *Ancient Capitals of Ceylon*.<sup>111</sup> Very few are aware of its existence. In the first world war he was taken captive by the Turks when he wrote the *Poems in Captivity*. When Still had to give up archaeology, he took to planting. He was later on appointed the Secretary of the Ceylon Planters' Association. Before Still died, he burnt all his notes.

104. Vol. XXI, No 62, 1909.

105. "Evolution of the Language of the Pali Canon," *JCBRAS*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 87, 1934. pp. 18-33.

106. Second Edition, incorporating the author's corrections, Pantheon Books, New York, 1956.

107. *JCBRAS*, Vol XIX, No. 57, 1906.

108. First printed January 1930. Reprint of popular edition, William Blackwood & Sons Ltd., Edinburgh and London, October 1955. Other works include: *Poems in Captivity*, *A Prisoner in Turkey*.

109. *Index to the Mahāvamsa*, Government Printer, Colombo, 1907.

110. "Tantrimalai: Some Archaeological observations and deductions", *JCBRAS*, Vol. XXII, No. 63, 1910. pp. 199-214.

111. John Still, *Guide to Ancient Capitals of Ceylon*, Anuradhapura, 1907.

Prehistory did not come within the purview of the State Survey or Department of Archaeology until the 1st of October, 1965. Nevertheless, foreign anthropologists have done some field-work for sometime. I have given a very brief account of their work in *Ceylon Today* (October 1965) and I do not propose to dwell on the subject today. I may only mention some of the early papers published in our *Journal*.<sup>112</sup> A paper by Drs. Sarasin had been published as early as 1886. John Pole read a paper entitled "A Few Remarks on Prehistoric Studies in Ceylon", before this Society.<sup>113</sup> John Still has appended to his paper on Tantrimalai reproductions of a large number of cave paintings of the prehistoric type. Still had made further pre-historic findings at this site.

Bell retired from the post of Archaeological Commissioner in 1912. Before we proceed further in this history of antiquarian research in Ceylon, we must consider the effect of this new subject on the masses, chiefly the Sinhalese speaking people who form the great majority of the population. For a number of centuries learning had been at a low ebb, and even this was confined to a few. The higher classes had begun to imitate European ways. There was little interest in the indigenous culture of the people. The studies in oriental lore or antiquarian research then undertaken were not meant to be for the benefit of the people of the country. These subjects were pursued for the sake of a few selected people in the "colony" and their results published in European languages for the information and edification of their countrymen in their home countries. This Society too was founded for this class of people. The few natives admitted were those who lived apart from the majority of their countrymen. The so-called elite that were able to devote themselves for antiquarian studies had no roots in the soil; they had no contact with the common man. Thus the ordinary citizen had no idea of the meaning and purpose of archaeology. It served no purpose to lament or criticize the renovation or the destruction of ancient monuments and works of art. No one had tried to educate the masses on their usefulness and value. A Society like this did not cater even for the less privileged of the English educated. It was only for the very high strata of the Europeanized society. Until the third decade of this century the meetings of the Society were after dinner gatherings, to attend which members had to be in dinner-suits. One may have entered with the national dress. Thus the only body which encouraged antiquarian studies was highly exclusive. The Archaeological Survey too presented its findings only to a limited audience. The Sinhalese press hardly reported archaeological discoveries. No one knew about them. The excavation sites were not opened to the public. I have been told that archaeological operations were carried out within barbed wired fences, and no villager

<sup>112</sup> Sarasin, Drs. B. P. and C. F., "Outline of two years Scientific Researches in Ceylon," *JCBRAS*, Vol. IX, No. 32, 1886, pp. 289-305.

<sup>113</sup>. *JCBRAS*, Vol. XIV, No. 53, 1907, pp. 272-278.

was allowed to see them. Thus fanciful stories were circulated among the ignorant folk.

The state of affairs regarding antiquarian studies was in this condition when the national awakening took place during the second half of the last century. The Sinhalese press could do nothing to spread the knowledge of our ancient culture. They were only interested in the language and a little history. Some devoted their columns to arguments on religious or caste affairs. As time went on, however, there was some interest at least on the history of the country. The *Mahāvamsa* and its commentary were published in the Sinhalese character, and translations of the chronicle also appeared. More began to read about the ancient monuments.

Some of the ancient sites in the Southern Province had been subjected to clearing during the Dutch and early British times. This area was for the most of this time free from enemy activities, and there were Sinhalese Buddhists who had acquired wealth from trade. Their object was to renovate Buddhist edifices, particularly the dagobas. When business took these people to other places in the island, and they saw ancient monuments, their whole aim turned to restore or rebuild them. We have already seen how the smaller dagobas the Thūpārāma<sup>114</sup> and the Lankārāma had been renovated. Now the attention of the restorer was drawn to the Ruvanvālisāya. In 1871 a young bhikkhu came to Anuradhapura from some far off place and began the removal of debris to repair it. There was no Archaeological Department to advise the monk, nor was there an "Antiquities Ordinance" to protect the edifice. Countless works of antiquarian value would have been lost or destroyed during the operations. The extent and value of the antiquities that would have come to light could be judged from their remains that still lie strewn about the pavement and grounds of the dagoba, and those that have been recently collected into an open shed.

A branch of the Mahabodhi Society was opened in Anuradhapura towards the end of the last century and Walisinha Harischandra appeared in Anuradhapura during the first years of this century. He was interested in the preservation of the national monuments. He wrote a book in English entitled *The Sacred City of Anuradhapura*,<sup>115</sup> giving the history and some of the archaeological features of the edifices. He wrote separate booklets in Sinhalese on some of the more important

114. For Thūpārāma as it was in 1828-1829, see Major Forbes, *Eleven Years in Ceylon*, Vol. I, London 1840, pp 226-227, with woodcut on p. 226.

115. Walisinha Harischandra, *The Sacred City of Anuradhapura*, Colombo, 1908. See also Kaḷukoṇḍayāvē Paññāsekharā Thera, *Siṃhala Puvaṭṭat Itihāsaya*.

buildings, and also a work called the *Purāvidyāva*,<sup>118</sup> "Archaeology". I believe this was the first time the word was used as the Sinhalese equivalent for 'archaeology.' I am not certain whether Harischandra's idea of the preservation of an ancient edifice was conservation or whether it was restoration.

A Sinhalese journal by the name of *Siri-anurapura-puvata*<sup>117</sup>, started on the 2nd of August 1909, was first published monthly and then fortnightly. One of the objects of the journal, as stated in one of the editorials, was mainly to announce to the public the discoveries of antiquities made by the government officers engaged in examining ancient monuments. I do not know how far this purpose was achieved.

Sinhalese journals had begun the publication of ancient documents. Some of them started on publishing inscriptions also in Sinhalese borrowing their material from the English publications (e.g. *Jñā-nādarāya*,<sup>118</sup> Vol. X).

Following the year of Bell's retirement, in 1913 Edward R. Ayrton,<sup>119</sup> a young Egyptologist who had worked under Flinders Petrie was appointed Archaeological Commissioner. In addition to his work at Anuradhapura, Ayrton carried out explorations in the south, an area which had hitherto not been explored archaeologically, except for the tours by Goldschmidt and Müller in search of inscriptions, and investigations made by the irrigation engineer, Henry Parker. Ayrton's archaeological activities in the south came to an unfortunate end with his sudden death when he was accidentally drowned in 1914, before a year had passed after his appointment.\* Ayrton's field-notes made in the south were published in the *Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Register*.<sup>120</sup> A. M. Hocart, who came to Ceylon as Archaeological Commissioner in 1921, incorporated, in the first "Memoir of the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon," Ayrton's field notes from Anuradhapura.

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116. See note 115.

117. See note 115.

118. Ed. Gunasekera, A. Mendis, 1896 ff. (ten volumes are published).

119. Ayrton was joint author of *Abidos III* with C. T. Curell and E. P. Weigall, London, 1904.

\*Ceylon's officialdom did not want even to honour Ayrton's memory. The present Śrī-mahabodhi-māvata was named "Ayrton Road". It was later changed to "Dickson Road", after the name of a Revenue Officer (Government Agent) of Anuradhapura. Such was the treatment archaeologists have received in our country even after their death. See also Harischandra, *The Sacred City of Anuradhapura*, p. 117 foot note.

120. "Antiquities in the Southern Province", Diary of the late Mr. E. R. Ayrton (Archaeological Commissioner of Ceylon) with notes by John M. Senaveratne, *CA* and *LR*, Vol. VI, pt. I (July 1920), art. vi, pp. 39-46; *ibid* pt. 2, pt. 3 (January 1921) art. xvi pp. 151-153; pt. 4 (April 1921), art. xviii, pp. 191-197; Vol. VII, pt. I (July 1921), art. v, pp. 38-41.

Ayrton has published six contributions in the *Ceylon Notes and Queries* of this Society. They chiefly deal with the identification of places and monuments with the help of literary evidence. After the death of Ayrton until the appointment of an Archaeological Commissioner in 1920, the Government Agent, North Central Province, was in charge of the Department and the reserves at Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Sigiriya were maintained.

Although the office of Archaeological Commissioner was vacant between the years 1914-1920 antiquarian activities continued, this Society providing the forum for discussion, and publishing the results of research. H. W. Codrington contributed papers on numismatics,<sup>121</sup> and his other contributions such as those to the *Ceylon Antiquary and the Literary Register*<sup>122</sup> formed no doubt the preliminary studies for his large work *Ceylon Coins and Currency*.<sup>123</sup> Inscriptions were published, and papers on subjects of antiquarian interest continued to be read before the Society. Important archaeological operations during this period were the explorations and excavations undertaken by Paul E. Pieris in the Jaffna Peninsula, the results of which were presented to this Society.<sup>124</sup>

Hocart (born 1883) was a graduate in classics of the university of Oxford and had studied Philosophy and Psychology at the Berlin University. He was a member of an expedition to the Solomon Islands in the Pacific, led by the well-known ethnologist W. H. R. Rivers in 1908-9, and later (1912-1914) Graduate Scholar Research of Exeter College and Jesus College, Oxford, when he investigated races, crafts and customs in the Pacific islands. He had acted as a Reader in Mental Philosophy at Oxford (1915) and served as a Captain in France during the First World War (1914-1918).

With this background Hocart took up his duties as Archaeological Commissioner in 1921. In Ceylon he must have found a close connection between cultural anthropology and archaeology. He recommended that an ethnologist be attached to the Department of Archaeology. Hocart was a prolific writer. He founded and edited *The Ceylon Journal of Science*, and contributed a Section on Archaeology and Anthropology namely, Section G. in the "Archaeological Summaries" of which have

121. "A recent find of Coins"; Vol. XXIII, No. 66, 1913, pp 72-88, "Ceylon Numismatics", Vol. XXIV, No. 68, pt. II, 1918, pp 169-186; "The Kahápana of the Vinaya Párajiká Páli," XXIX, No. 76, pt. I-IV, 1923, pp. 215-220.

122. *CA* and *LR*.

123. Government Press, Colombo, 1924.

124. "Nagadipa and Buddhist Remains in Jaffna", *JCBRAS*, Vol. XXVI, No. 70, pt. I, 1917, pp. 11-30; Vol. XXVIII, No. 72, pt. I-IV, 1919, pp. 40-66.



given the results of his work in this field. He started the publication of the "Memoirs" of the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon, and he himself produced two of the volumes. Hocart retired in 1931 due to ill-health. An account and appreciation of Hocart's work is found in the "Obituary Notice" by Paranavitana published in this Society's *Journal*<sup>125</sup> A bibliography of Hocart's writings by Rodney Needham (of Oxford) was published by Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1967.

Much of Hocart's work in archaeology was devoted to the conservation of ancient monuments which were in urgent need of attention. D. T. Devendra, writing about Hocart's contribution to archaeology says,<sup>126</sup> "In it (the *Journal of Science*) he tried meticulously to build up a sequence in the evolution of building styles of old. He failed to hold a permanent architect." I think in the last Hocart was not a failure. Professional architects are very often not a help, but an obstruction in the scientific conservation of ancient monuments. The good archaeologist will only attempt to preserve and protect for posterity what remains of an historical monument. He will not attempt to add any portion to it by conjecture. Any conjectural restoration should be only on paper, or in a model for comparison. It was to deal with restoration work at monuments privately owned that the Department later on desired an Architectural Assistant. (See *Report* for 1933, p. 16, para 21.) This was for providing new structures, and not for conservation. Hocart did not take upon himself such problems. Where Hocart failed was in understanding the full value of Sinhalese inscriptions in Ceylon Archaeology.

After Hocart's retirement C. F. Winzer, Chief Inspector of Art of the Education Department, was appointed Acting Archaeological Commissioner on March 24, 1931. He had already been in charge of the Department from January 15, to October 31, 1929 when Hocart was away from the Island on sick leave. Winzer retired from the Public Service of Ceylon on March 31, 1932. According to records Winzer had been in the Island only for six days during the second period he acted as Archaeological Commissioner and Dr. Joseph Pearson, the Director of the Colombo Museum, had been in charge of the Department for a year (March 23, 1931-March 24, 1931). An officer on furlough abroad had been acting as Archaeological Commissioner!

Winzer's undoubted artistic talents were not without benefit to archaeology. He made a collection of photographs of the sculptural remains at Anuradhapura. He arranged for public view the inscribed stones, images and other stone antiquities which were lying at Anuradhapura in a part of the Department's premises. Similarly he arranged in a room the pottery and the terra-cottas. He had copies of some paintings made from Anuradhapura and Kelaniya.

125. "Arthur Maurice Hocart," Vol. XXXIV, No. 98, 1938, pp. 264-268.

126. *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. XXII.

During Hocart's time an Epigraphical Assistant was added to the staff of the Department. (Mr. Senarat Paranavitana, appointed on April 24, 1926.) Thus the collection of inscriptions and epigraphical research were carried on steadily, in spite of the vicissitudes the Department had to suffer from. The Epigraphical Assistant, S. Paranavitana, acted in the office of Archaeological Commissioner from 1932 (April, 1) to 1935 (October 8). By this time, he had edited two volumes and two parts (Vol II. pts. 2-3) of the third volume of the *Epigraphia Zeylanica*. In 1932 two more parts appeared (4-5). In the first period of two and a half years Paranavitana was Acting Archaeological Commissioner, he had taken action to reserve a large number of sites for purposes of archaeology. At Anuradhapura, Paranavitana took up excavations where Ayrton had left them (publishing, in 1936, Memoir III of the A.S.C. *Excavations in the Citadel*) and the conservation of ancient buildings exposed by earlier excavators. He explored various districts for archaeological remains. This explains the large number of sites reserved for future work.

Paranavitana's greatest contribution is the action he took for the control of the restoration of ancient monuments in private ownership. At the time the Archaeological Commissioner had no legal authority to prevent works of restoration undertaken at sites privately owned. The "Buddhist Temporalities Ordinance," No. 19 of 1931, empowered the Governor-in-Council to make regulations for the preservation and protection of such Buddhist shrines, temples, inscriptions and monuments as may be considered to be of historical, archaeological or artistic interest, and for preventing the same from being defaced by inappropriate or incongruous repairs or additions. This Ordinance was administered by the Public Trustee. Such regulations as were necessary were framed and the acting Archaeological Commissioner was included in a Committee appointed to advise the Public Trustee on such restorations. When the regulations were framed restorations at the ancient shrines at Mulgrigala, a site which had been noticed by early writers and mentioned by me earlier, had advanced to such a stage that nothing could have been done with regard to the place, but the committee was able to prevent the total demolition of valuable remains at another site, namely, Avukana in the North-Western Province.

It would be of immense interest to-day to read what Paranavitana had to say on the subject of restoration of ancient monuments in private ownership. I shall cite but one paragraph from his *Report*<sup>127</sup> for 1933: "The deplorable manner in which ancient religious monuments in private ownership have been restored in recent times has repeatedly been commented upon, both in reports of this Department and elsewhere. There are signs that the Buddhist themselves are beginning to

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127. See paragraphs 16-21, also "Antiquities Outside Archaeological Reserves in *Report* for 1934, Paras 38-44.

realize the harm done to their religious shrines by the pious and well-meant but ill-planned efforts of the restorers; and letters on this subject appear in the daily press very frequently. But, unfortunately, those who actually exert themselves in these works of restoration do not seem to have realized that they are doing anything but meritorious, in completely renovating the ancient edifices according to their own standards of beauty; and on the other hand, those who make public protests against what they call acts of vandalism do not generally belong to the temple-building section of the Buddhists." (Read the whole of section, paras 16-21; also "Antiquities Outside Archaeological Reserves" in the *Report* for 1954 (paras 38-44.)

By the provisions of the "Antiquities Ordinance", No. 9 of 1940 the Archaeological Commissioner was vested with powers to prevent such ugly and incongruous restoration; but, as it will be pointed out at the end, in recent years the craze for restoration and re-building has spread to monuments owned and reserved by the State. The latest news is that an historical ancient stūpa\*, in an Archaeological Reserve already conserved the Department, is in danger of being built upon. The offenders are not the temple-building section of the Buddhists, but quite another section of the public. For various reasons which I do not propose to go into, the Antiquities Ordinance for the most part is a dead letter.

An item of work Paranavitana began during the first period he acted as Archaeological Commissioner, which has earned much deserved praise not only from Archaeologists but also from all persons with an aesthetic taste, is the conservation of the Kaṇṭaka-cetiya at Mihintale. He had no architect to assist or mislead him! There is no conjectural restoration, no attempt to fill in missing portions. In 1965 at least one private owner of a dagoba, † a leading Buddhist monk, requested the Archaeological Department to have the same conserved like the Kaṇṭaka-cetiya.

Archaeological work in Ceylon took a rather different turn with A. H. Longhurst, who was recommended for the post of Archaeological Commissioner by the Director-General of Archaeology in India. Longhurst, who had been Superintendent of the Southern Circle of the Indian Archaeological Survey, took over the charge of the Archaeological Department on October 8, 1935. During the period he held the office of Archaeological Commissioner, just two months and a few days short of five years, he confined his attention to Polonnaruwa, where probably the massive structures attracted him! The only important excavation recorded in his *Reports* is that of the Pabaḷu-dāgāba at

\* Koṭavehera at Dedigama in the Kegalla District.

† Saṇḍagiri-dāgāba at Tissamahārāma. This was when the conservation and restoration of the Kirivehera at Kataragama was in progress (see below).

Polonnaruwa<sup>128</sup> (1938, p. 17). He carried out conservation, or rather restorations, extensively at Polonnaruwa, and a few at Anuradhapura and Sigiriya. Longhurst restored portions of buildings. He even got new Buddha statues made, and placed them in or near shrines, and these are taken today by some to be genuine antiquities.<sup>129</sup> The results of his restoration of the architectural stucco work of the Laṅkātilaka, Thūpārāma and the Tivaṅkapilimagē at Polonnaruwa, can hardly be considered correct from either an archaeological or an aesthetic point of view. At Anuradhapura his attempts to restore the damaged nose of the Samādhi Statue in the Abhayagiri complex disfigured this unique work of Buddhist art, and earned the lament of Pandit Nehru on his last visit to Ceylon. To determine whether Longhurst's conservation methods, which are mainly seen through his works in the mediaeval capital of Polonnaruwa, are scientifically acceptable or aesthetically satisfying, you are as good judges as I am.

Longhurst plastered and colourwashed the gallery wall of the Sigiriya Rock. Restoration of the Sigiriya paintings in recent time,\* earned the censure of the Archaeological Chemist of the Indian Survey, Mohd. Sana Ullah, who wrote: "A careful examination of these frescoes revealed that the old plasters had undergone extensive repairs in recent time, showing the dilapidated condition in which they were found. It is noteworthy that the missing parts of the paintings have also been restored sometimes so skilfully as it is now difficult to distinguish the original from the recent work. It is obvious that such restorations depreciate their value as specimens of ancient art and should therefore not be permitted in future."<sup>130</sup> The vandals of the night of 14th October, 1967 who thoughtlessly damaged the paintings of Sigiriya would have done well had they only applied the cheap paint on the figures and not used their knives on two of the ladies. Perhaps they only wanted to remove the handiwork of a modern artist.

Evidently Longhurst realized what the people of Ceylon, whose voices were heard by those in power at the time wanted, and did what would have been approved and appreciated by them. Like some other archaeologists did, he did not want to court their disfavour. He did not hesitate to build roads at Polonnaruwa cutting through the foundations of old structure to make it possible for the V.I.P's to motor up to the very foundations of some of the important edifices. And did they not exclaim: "At last we have got the man we wanted. We

128. *ASCAR*, 1938, p. 17.

129. I had one of my officers requesting my permission to have some of these removed to the Archaeological Museum. A close examination of the statues convinced him against the proposal. Foreign experts often mislead us!

\*As to who was responsible for it one seeks in vain.

130. *Ceylon Sessional Paper*, XXI, 1943.

can see everything from our cars!" It is no wonder that efforts to save the ancient features of our historic monuments, and keep the sites in their ancient splendour are not a success. To catch the popular fancy we must clear the old and indigenous trees as much as possible from the historic sites, and plant new flowering trees as Longhurst did.<sup>131</sup>

Longhurst does not appear to have favoured this Society with any of his research or any account of his work. He, however, mentions in the final paragraph of his last *Report* (1939), that his Epigraphical Assistant (Dr. S. Paranavitana) read a paper on Sigiri Graffiti before the Royal Asiatic Society, Ceylon Branch, in October 1939. A contribution of Longhurst here to archaeology was *The Story of the Stūpa*.<sup>132</sup>

Longhurst retired in July 1940 and Paranavitana succeeded him. The Antiquities Ordinance had been proclaimed on June 3rd and gazetted on June 7 of 1940 just before Longhurst's retirement. The enactment of this law was for a very large extent the result of Paranavitana's pleading, when he was earlier acting Head of the Archaeological Department,<sup>133</sup> for such legislation for the protection and preservation of our historic monuments. By section 40 of this Ordinance the Archaeological Commissioner was empowered to.

- (a) to prepare a list of monuments;
- (b) to conserve, maintain, repair and restore all ancient monuments on Crown land and such protected monuments as may from time to time be specified by the Executive Committee (later, the Minister);
- (c) to carry out excavations with the approval of the Executive Committee (later, the Minister).

By an 'amendment act' of 1955 the Archaeological Commissioner was also empowered to purchase antiquities with funds provided for the purpose.

The Regulations made by the Executive Committee of Education under section 47 of the Antiquities Ordinance, which were approved by the State Council and ratified by the Officer Administering the Government, had already empowered the Archaeological Commissioner to exhibit any antiquity delivered to him under the Ordinance in an Archaeological Museum maintained by him or to transfer such antiquity to any national museum established by government to be kept and displayed therein

131. *ASCAR*, 1938, p. 17, para. 23.

132. Colombo, 1936.

133. See, e.g., *ASCAR*, 1933, pp. J5-J6 (paras. 16-21).

The proclamation of the Antiquities Ordinance and the appointment of a Sinhalese scholar with experience and foresight in 1940 to head the Department of Archaeology ushered in a new era for the subject, and much was achieved, but the results would have been of greater magnitude if the support from the State and the co-operation of the public were what they should have been. Paranavitana held office until the end of 1956, and thereafter was Professor of Archaeology in the University of Ceylon up to the beginning of 1965, and still continues his research in the subject. The present lecturer joined the Department of Archaeology in September 1947 as Assistant Archaeological Commissioner but was away on public policy abroad from September 1953 to end of January 1959; he has been in charge of the Department, first in an acting capacity and later confirmed as Archaeological Commissioner. He was, however, not responsible for action under the "Antiquities Ordinance" up to September 1960, which, by gazette notifications, came under the purview of various Permanent Secretaries under whom the Archaeological Department was placed. You will have occasion to note why special reference to this fantastic position is made (See page 34.)

It would not be possible here to attempt even a very brief summary of the achievements in our country and by our scholars during the last twenty-eight years after 1940. D. T. Devendra, in his paper entitled "Seventy Years of Ceylon Archaeology", published in the *Artibus Asiae*<sup>134</sup>, gives an appreciation of Paranavitana's work, including his major publications up to 1960. A full list up to January 1963 is included in the *Paranavitana Felicitation Volume*.<sup>135</sup> Among other articles dealing with the progress of archaeology in our country in the recent times, I may refer you to Paranavitana's "Two Decades of Archaeological Work in Ceylon," published in the *Ceylon Today*<sup>136</sup> for February—March—April 1968. This briefly covers the important work up to the end of 1967.

Since the present lecturer was also involved for the greater part of this period, he would briefly state what has been achieved, without omitting to comment on what has not been, so that others, particularly members of this Society which fosters antiquarian pursuits in Ceylon, will seek for the remedy and apply it.

134. Vol. XXII, 1/2.

135. Printers, M. D. Gunasena & Co. Ltd., Colombo, 1965.

136. Published by the Department of Information.

I shall take archaeological activities as they are enumerated under the powers of the Archaeological Commissioner:

(a) The preparation of a list of monuments.

Preliminary work on this has been done. A great deal of exploration has to be undertaken for the purpose, but the lack of facilities for transport, coupled with the inadequacy of provision for travelling expenses and the shortage of qualified staff, has constantly delayed the publication of even a part of the *Register*. The present lecturer was attending to this duty as Assistant Archaeological Commissioner, but the authorities decided that teaching and examinations in Sinhalese and allied subjects in a foreign University were more important than archaeological activities in Ceylon. At no time had the Department the full services of even the few officers available being provided, and indeed during some years the present lecturer headed the Department he had to work without the assistance of even a single staff officer.

The shortage of accommodation both at the Head Office in Colombo and at the outstations has delayed all work of the Department, particularly that of the Monuments Register. Time and again this has been brought to the notice of the authorities, but without any result except a threat to remove the Department to Anuradhapura, and even to get the Head Office to function under tents, or in a small dilapidated building.

The Department had a sojourn of four years from 1942-1946 in various places, including Anuradhapura, and was brought back to Colombo to the place where it is now, in front of the Colombo Museum. The records, including files from which material has to be gathered for the Monuments Register, the library and the photographic studio, were once more housed in premises which were totally inadequate and unsuitable to be the Headquarters of a department which was the sole custodian of the ancient culture of the land. Paranavitana's comments on the situation in the introduction to his *Administration Report* for 1946 includes the following: "The ordinary amenities which are conducive to efficient work are lacking and the place is crowded to capacity, there being hardly any room for future additions to the departmental staff. If the department is to function satisfactorily, the first requisite is a reasonably comfortable place for its officers to work in when they return after a strenuous time in the field."<sup>137</sup> He goes on to say that conditions under which the officers were obliged to work were no better than what they had to submit by necessity in the field. In his *Report* for 1950, while commenting on the expansion of the Department's activities, he wrote again: "There is, however, one serious shortcoming which stands in the way of maximum results being achieved by the exertions of the Department. This is the inadequate pro-

137. *ASCAR*, 1946, para. 1.

vision of working accommodation for its officers both at the headquarters and at the outstations. There is, for example, no room at the headquarters for the proper storage of the thousands of estampages of ancient inscriptions which the Department has collected, no proper laboratory arrangements for the cleaning and restoration of antiques, and no space for methodical arrangement and study of objects unearthed in excavations or collected during explorations. The result is that the preparations of scientific accounts of the Department's work is much delayed."<sup>138</sup> He goes on to say that the "undesirable state of affairs" will soon become worse with the further addition of staff.

We could not expect a descriptive Register of Monuments under these conditions, and without satisfactory staff. The Department was, and it still is, graded in Class 3, and except for rare cases under special circumstances, it could not recruit good staff or hold whom it had. What has been said concerning accommodation and staff is true not only with regard to the preparation of the Register of Monuments, but of other subjects as well.

(b) Coming to conservation, examples of all classes of buildings, inclusive of various types of each belonging to different periods, have been conserved. Of religious edifices there are new examples of *stūpa*, *vatadāgē*, *bodhighara*, *āsanaghara* and *paṭimāghara* cleared of debris and conserved. Special attention has been paid to wooden architecture, some with architectural numbers containing invaluable carvings. These include Buddha-image houses, temples of the gods and way-side resting-places (*ambalama*). Royal palaces and dwellings of the royalty are also included, but sufficient attention could not be paid to what yet remain of the dwellings of the common people, or what information could be gathered on these. One would think that this is an aspect that should not have been neglected in this era. Here again the means at the disposal of the archaeologist were limited. The conservation notes regarding various works have to be edited and published with the plans.

(c) Systematic excavations, in addition to the scientific removal of debris preliminary to the conservation of a monument, have been carried out, and their results are given in the *Administration Reports*. A *Memoir* on one of the excavations and conservation, namely, on the Koṭavehera in Dedigama was with the printer last year.\* In 1957, P. E. P. Deraniyagala, while officiating as Archaeological Commissioner, carried out some excavations at the pre-historic site of Pomparippu.<sup>139</sup> The UNESCO nominee, P. C. Sestieri, who was in charge of the Department of Archaeology in 1958, excavated at the Geḍigē

138. Ibid. 1950, para 1.

\*Published only in November 1969, as A.S.C. Mem. VII, over two months after the Second International Conference-Seminar on Asian Archaeology held in Colombo from 23rd-26th August, 1969.

139. Ibid. 1957.



site at Anuradhapura.<sup>140</sup> In April 1966 systematic excavations were begun at Kantarodai, where Paul E. Pieris had made his investigations during 1917-1919. A preliminary account of the work by the present lecturer was placed before this Society on the 7th of November 1967.<sup>141</sup> (Also *Ceylon Today* November 1967. "Archaeology of the Northern Peninsula III.")

(d) For the exhibition of antiquities a number of archaeological museums were established, in various parts of the Island. When objects of exceptional historical and antiquarian interest were discovered in the relic chambers of the Koṭavehera at Dedigama the local residents desired that these antiquities should not be removed from their village. Numbers among them even expressed the fear that some misfortune would befall the district if these treasures were not left with them. The government and the Archaeological Commissioner agreed that it would be advantageous both for students of archaeology and the general public as well to exhibit the finds at a convenient place near the monument, and a site museum was built (1954). This museum has earned the praise of several visiting scholars. As stated earlier the collections of sculpture, pottery, etc., were inadequately housed in some part of the premises of the Archaeological Department's quarters at Anuradhapura. In 1960 when the old Kachcheri building fell vacant by the removal of Government offices to the New City, advantage was taken by the Department of Archaeology to obtain the building for the purposes of an Archaeological Museum. Nissanka Parakrama Wijeratne, the Government Agent of Anuradhapura at the time, helped the Department to obtain the buildings, and co-operated in the setting of the Museum. Much renovation was needed to make the main building and the outhouses and sheds suitable to receive the antiquities, and to have them exhibited therein. In spite of these difficulties, and the obstructions from persons in authority, the Archaeological Department has cause now to be pleased that it has a museum at least to serve part of the needs of the ever-increasing students of archaeology and culture of their country and the curious general public. At Polonnaruwa, the old Public Services Club was obtained for an Archaeological Museum, and the old Resthouse at Ambalantota for the same use. At the latter place after the Archaeological Commissioner had obtained the building, the local Police forcibly entered the premises and occupied a part of it but the Archaeological Commissioner got them out although he was unarmed! At Amparai a house that was allotted to the Department for use as a Circuit Bungalow serves the purposes of an office, Circuit Bungalow as well as a museum. A temporary building was put up at Sigiriya for a small museum. At Panduvasnuwara a room in the

140. Ibid. 1959.

141. See *JCBRAS*, N.S., Vol. XI, 1967, and *Ceylon Today*, January, September and November, 1967.

Circuit Bungalow is separated for display of antiquities. The Branch Museum of the National Museums at Jaffna was handed over to the Archaeological Department in 1965 to be organized as an Archaeological Museum, and it served well to house and display the finds from the excavations at Kantarodai and other explorations in the Peninsula. At the same time the Palace of the Kings of Kandy, at which the Archaeological Department had earlier carried out some conservation work, was handed back to the Department for further conservation and for a regional Archaeological Museum.

Simultaneously with the handing over of the Royal Palace at Kandy to the Archaeological Department, the Ministry authorised the Archaeological Commissioner to take back the Kalinga lion-throne from the Colombo National Museum to Polonnaruwa and place it in Niśsaṅkamalla's Audience Hall which was being conserved. The animal's journey to his original native home was easier and more comfortable than his coming out to our capital. He had a ride in a trailer, lent by the then Director of Irrigation, Mr. A. E. de S. Gunasekera, a Head of Department who always was ready to help the poor brother Department of Archaeology, due no doubt to his own interest in the subject. Thus the Archaeological Commissioner has no beautiful incidents to relate about the return journey of the lion, as Governor Gregory had of its first coming to the present Colombo 7, the home of the elite of the country.

Research has progressed within facilities available. Besides the *Memoirs* of the Department, papers on topics of Ceylon Archaeology have appeared in various journals both local and foreign. Ceylon has been given a prominent position in world Archaeology, mainly due to the contribution of Paranavitana. Large numbers of inscriptions have been collected and many edited. The publication of Paranavitana's *Sīgiri Graffiti*<sup>142</sup> contributed not only to the advance of epigraphical and palaeographical research, but to linguistic studies as well. The fifth volume of the *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, edited by Paranavitana and the present lecturer, was completed. While working on some inscriptions for this volume Paranavitana made his astounding discoveries of the interlinear records in Sinhalese inscriptions.<sup>143</sup> Two volumes of the *Corpus of Ceylon Inscriptions* were completed by Paranavitana towards the end of the financial year 1966-1967. Of these the first, containing over 1,200 Brāhmī inscriptions, had gone through the page proof stage with the Government Printer by October 1967, and the second, covering inscriptions up to the fourth century A.D., that is, up to the end of reign of Mahāsena (A.D. 276-303), was ready for print. The volumes are delayed, and I understand that the second has not

142. Two volumes, Oxford, 1956.

143. See *Ceylon Today*, November-December, 1968.

yet been handed over for printing.\* Now is this not a matter to be taken up by the Council of this Society which led a deputation to the Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs, a few years ago (in 1962) regarding the delay in the editing and publications of inscriptions by the Archaeological Department?

A large number of inscriptions were collected by C. W. Nicholas, Deputy Excise Commissioner, who later became Warden of the Wild Life Department. His contributions in the field of epigraphy are published in the *Journals* of this Society,<sup>144</sup> and elsewhere. A complete volume<sup>145</sup> of the New Series of our *Journal* has been devoted to the research of Mr. Nicholas.

Apart from academic publications, booklets of a popular nature, but with correct and precise information, such as Guide Books<sup>146</sup> or accounts of ancient sites, have been published both in the official language and in English. Among these the twelve booklets of the "Art Series" may be mentioned. Here also the publication of two parts which were ready in November, 1967 are unduly delayed.† The preparation and issue of these simpler works is in pursuance of the policy of bringing archaeology within the reach of the full electorate.

It is not possible here to give a full list of publications relating to or bearing on Ceylon Archaeology brought out in Ceylon or abroad. I will mention two of them as they come to my mind. One is D. T. Devendra's *Classical Sinhalese Sculpture*, (Alec Tiranti, London, 1958,) and the other Heinz Mode's *Die buddhistische Plastik Ceylons*, (Leipzig, 1963). A large number of new sites have been added to the reservations for archaeological work. Among them are some sites believed to contain prehistoric remains and, while new sites are being added, it is regretted that the archaeologist has not been able to hold to a large portion of one of the most important sites, namely, the ancient site of Māntoṭa which was mentioned several times earlier. There were encroachments, and these were legalized in 1959, when a Permanent Secretary was the gazetted Archaeological Commissioner. (See comment on p. 29.)

\*They were not out even at the end of December, 1969. The position remains the same.

144. "Text of the Brāhmī Inscriptions in the Ruhuna National Park", *JCBRAS*, N.S., Vol. VI, Special Volume.

145. "Historical Topography of the Ancient and Medieval Ceylon", N.S., Vol. VI, Special Volume. (Also reprinted.)

146. These guide books, after 1949, were prepared by S. Paranavitana, J. M. Senaveratne, D. T. Devendra, D. S. Gunatilaka, Marcus Fernando and the present lecturer.

†Now, after a long delay, handed over by the Department to the Government Printer only in August, 1969.

The teaching of archaeology has spread to the universities. On his retirement, Paranavitana was appointed Research Professor of Archaeology at the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya. After the conversion of the two main pirivenas into universities, one of them too started courses in Archaeology. The universities have not yet to an appreciable extent taken part in organized fieldwork with the co-operation of the State Department of Archaeology as it is done in other countries, although the Department had been most willing to work together, and in fact more than once made arrangements for the purpose. Provisions of the Antiquities Ordinance had to be applied against an university, when some people, using the name of an institution were alleged to be engaged in illegal diggings.

Dealing with the recent period mention must be made of the Special Committee on Antiquities appointed in 1957 soon after the retirement of Paranavitana. The Committee issued an *Interim Report* in 1958, in which the chief recommendation was to amalgamate the Department of Archaeology, the National Museums and the Government Archives. In their *Final Report*, however, they went back on this recommendation and supported their individual continuance.<sup>147</sup> Nothing came of these Reports, perhaps due to the reason that the Committee themselves were changing their opinions so soon. The Heads of the three departments (or acting Heads) were requested to submit their opinions. The present lecturer, who had no opportunity to place his views before the Committee due to his absence from the island on State policy, had then the opportunity of having his say. He began his lengthy comments with, "The Committee of Inquiry have listed a large number of failures and shortcomings of the Department of Archaeology, and those of its staff; but have not set out the reasons for the state of affairs." The cause must be known to apply a remedy. The Ministry of Industries, Home and Cultural Affairs under which the Archaeological Department was then placed considered the amalgamation of the newly established Department of Cultural Affairs and the three departments dealing with antiquities, and this idea was also given up; and the threats to the individual existence of the Archaeological Department ended there. Here I must point out that during the year after 1959, the Archaeological Department has been driven from pillar to post since it had been placed under seven ministries and ten ministers, every time with some change of policy.

R. L. Brohier, who was the Chairman of the Special Committee on Antiquities, has made his own contribution in the field of antiquarian research in Ceylon. In his three monumental volumes the *Ancient Irrigation Works in Ceylon*, (part I, Colombo. 1934; parts II-III, Colombo, 1935,) he has collected and put together a vast amount of Archaeo-

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147. *Sessional Paper VII, 1959.*

logical and historical material. The same he has done in his *Land, Maps and Surveys* (1800-1950) with the collaboration of J.H.O. Paulusz, the Government Archivist for some time,<sup>148</sup> Colombo, 1950; Vol. II, Colombo, 1951. Brohier has read a number of papers on antiquarian topics before this Society and they are published in the *Journal*. His contribution brings out often the value of archaeology to the modern development of a land with a long past history. Herein I may refer to his "Antiquarian Notes on Padaviya,"<sup>149</sup> wherein he deals with not only the history and the repair of the tank, but also with the land irrigated by the reservoir and its supplementary sources. While commenting on the wrong selection of land for paddy fields he adduces archaeological evidence in support of his statements at pp. 245-261 (also published in his *Seeing Ceylon*).<sup>150</sup>

The wilful destruction of antiquities and the misguided enthusiasm for restoration have been commented on in the *Administration Reports* of the Department<sup>151</sup> under "Archaeological Reserves" and "Antiquities outside Archaeological Reserves." In 1954 a religious fanatic applied a liberal coating of cow-dung on the inscriptions and paintings at Māravīdiya caves in the Archaeological Reserve of Dimbulagala. The inscriptions were unharmed, but it was too late when the officers of the Archaeological Department attempted to remove the cow-dung from the paintings. We all agree with Deraniyagala when he considers that the defacing of the lion depicted upon Duṭugāmuṇu's flag in the famous Dambulla frescoes as a national loss<sup>152</sup> (*Report* for 1957, para. 1). This, so far as we know, is the only ancient representation of the lion-flag of the Sinhalese. Deraniyagala says that the police were unable to bring the culprits to book although they managed to save them from the infuriated mob. What about the vandalism on the Sigiriya frescoes in 1967? The Police and other authorities have failed again. The vandals are at large. Archaeological treasures cannot be protected without public co-operation.

In spite of the provisions of the Antiquities Ordinance, and spread of archaeological knowledge among the public, the other kind of vandalism, namely, the desecration of ancient monuments by unsightly renovation and new additions that vulgarize and destroy their sanctity and dignity goes on unchecked, and is even encouraged by the very persons who should protect their ancient splendour. This enthusiasm

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148. Vol. I, Colombo, 1950; Vol. II, Colombo, 1957.

149. *JCBRAS*, N.S. Vol. VIII, pp. 245-261.

150. Colombo, 1965, pp. 75-85.

151. See e.g. *ASCAR*, 1954, pp. G7-G10 under "Archaeological Reserves" and "Antiquities outside Archaeological Reserves".

152. *ASCAR*, 1957, para I.

for renovation has increased manifold in the recent years. One courts unpopularity by any attempt to tell these enthusiasts of this kind of Buddhist 'regeneration' that it amounts to the deliberate destruction of the evidence which so eloquently proclaims that in the past the Buddhist religion had inspired its devotees in this country to create great works of art of such great magnitude and so universal in appeal. Those in authority fear to take the correct steps when proposals are made for restoration of monuments in private possession. This has gradually spread to those owned by the State, and those in the very Archaeological Reserves. One hears of attempts to modernize the Kotavehera of Dedigama which has already been conserved.

At the same time several societies interested in the restoration of monuments have sought the advice of the Archaeological Department. Sometimes the reason for not being able to preserve as much of the ancient features of an old structure has been due to the reluctance of the officers of the Archaeological Department themselves to hurt or displease people in important positions. The conservation and restoration of the Kirivehera at Kataragama and the Somavati dagoba in the Polonnaruwa District must be mentioned as examples where an attempt has been made to meet both the needs of religion and those of archaeology. Better results could have been achieved if the architectural section of the Department were also more co-operative in furthering the archaeological interests. The re-building of the Mahasāya at Mihintale is not done according to plans approved by archaeologists. I shall not dwell on that work here. The custodians of devale-temples too have sought the assistance of the Archaeological Commissioner and have fully abided by his advice. The Badulla-Kataragama-devale was conserved in this manner, and the Sabaragamuwa Mahasaman-devale was being conserved and restored (1967). During operations at this historic edifices it has been clearly demonstrated that archaeological conservation should not be entrusted to architects, as their desire is to create, and not to conserve. We agree that the architect can be of use to us provided he can conserve for us monuments in the anastylos method which the great French archaeologists have taught us all in their handling of the Buddhist monuments of quondam Dutch East Indies (Indonesia).

This clearly indicates that at least certain intelligent sections of the public have been influenced and educated by the efforts of the antiquarians, including members of this Society, who have taken an interest in fostering archaeological research and spreading relevant knowledge in the Island. A few years ago an Archaeological Society was also established for the further encouragements and popularization of the subject. It would be useful if the Society continued their activities.

Very often the antiquarian in this country is reminded of the words of James Fergusson who wrote in 1876: "The stars in their courses have warring against archaeology in Ceylon."<sup>153</sup> Paranavitana repeated them in 1938 when he wrote an Obituary Notice of Arthur Maurice Hocart for our *Journal*.<sup>154</sup> One still feels that these words are true when we see how our monuments, works of art and everything that reminds us of our culture, are treated by the very people who should take care of them, and the indifference shown by the public towards the pursuit of archaeological studies, and research in the subject and those allied to it.<sup>155</sup>

A growing public enthusiasm for a clear knowledge of the past—and thus essentially and unavoidably with archaeology—so that the knowledge of their rich heritage could be an inspiration for a nobler and fuller future would be sterile if it were not matched with intelligent support by the authorities. One can fervently hope that the dawn of wider horizons will fall upon so vital a part of our cultural studies and disperse that darkness which quite often threatens to overwhelm it.

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153. *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, pp. 185-186.

154. *JCBRAS*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 91.

155. During recent years the underwater Archaeologist also has directed his interest to the coasts of Ceylon and has worked in close collaboration with the Department of Archaeology.—See *ASC Report* for Fin. year 1962-1963, pp. G77-78 and plate XXIV.

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