

Preliminary assessment of an early historic (2000 year old) shipwreck at Godawaya, Sri Lanka

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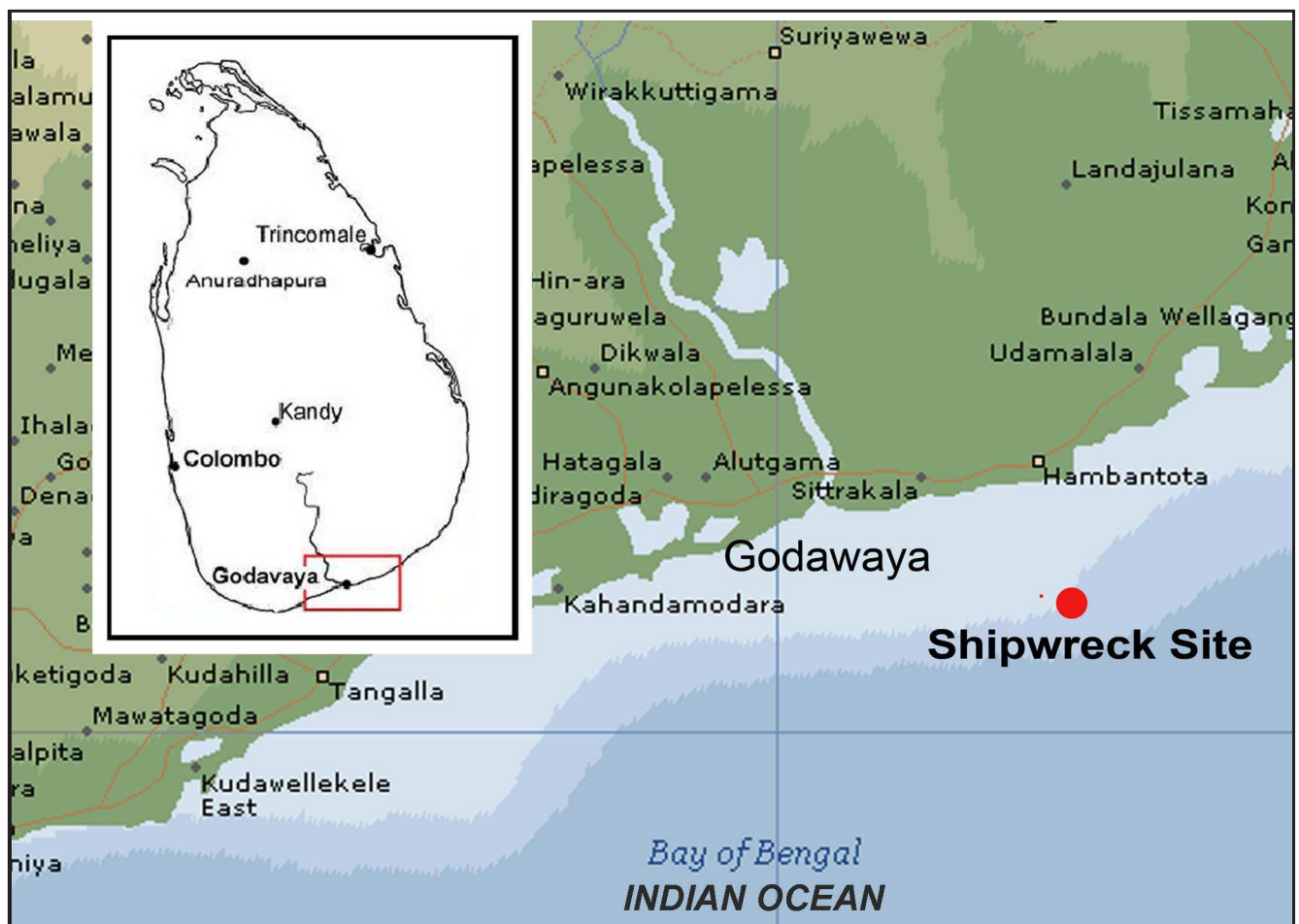


Figure 1. Map showing the location of the Godawaya shipwreck site.

Introduction

An international team comprised of experts in diving and underwater archaeology from Sri Lanka, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines participated in the assessment of a shipwreck at Godawaya, Sri Lanka. The main objective of the exploration was to make assessment of the wreck site based on the data generated during the fieldwork. The shipwreck is lying or trapped in an isolated reef (which virtually surrounded the wreck and only the northeastern part is exposed) in 31 m water depth. The observation of surface distribution suggests that the site

is spread over an area of 40 m by 22 m. The important findings include various sizes of jars, carinated cooking vessels, quern stones and unidentified cargo and possible ship structure. The analysis of pottery retrieved earlier and observed during the present investigation suggests that the pottery is not similar to those found from the shipwrecks of the 10th century AD onwards. Comparative study of pottery and stone artefacts indicate a possible time bracket for this wreck to be between the 4th century BC and the 2nd century AD.