

The Rehal of Ibn Batuta: A historical analysis of Ibn Batuta's Narration on Sri Lanka

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Sri Lanka possess a greater significance and importance as an island in the Indian Ocean because of the geographical features of the island. Since Sri Lanka is situated in a central position in the Indian Ocean along the maritime trade route, Sri Lanka owns several bays and anchorages which provide adequate facilities for the ships. As a result, from the ancient times, Sri Lanka served as an important arena to maintain the relationships of countries across the globe. There are several foreign scholars who had kept records on the significance of Sri Lanka's geographical features since 4th century B.C. Some of such authors are of Greek, Roman, Persian, Arabian and Chinese origins. A fact to note is that some of those authors had not visited Sri Lanka. Yet, even they had written about Sri Lanka in the like manner of those who visited Sri Lanka. One of the important Arabic traveller who visited Sri Lanka in 14th century was Ibn Batuta. Thus, the objective of this study is to analyze the significance and the accuracy of Ibn Batuta's records when following Sri Lankan history. In order to achieve this aforementioned objective, primary and secondary sources were referred. Ibn Batuta who visited Sri Lanka in 1344, travelled in many parts of the country. Some such places are Sri Padha, Dondra Devalaya, Galle Fort and Colombo Fort. Along with the descriptions of these places the author had mentioned about the politics of Sri Lanka during the period when he visited the island. Especially he mentioned about the Arya Chakrawartha who ruled in Jaffna in that period. In addition, inclusive of his reports are the economic, political and religious facts about Sri Lanka. He has also reported about Gampola, which was the kingdom in rule back then, Thus, it can be concluded that the report written by Ibn Batuta is a useful source when learning history, irrespective of the fact that he is a foreign author.

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