

Kings of the Kelaniya dynasty: a study into primary sources

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Kelaniya was one of the centers of power in the early historic Sri Lanka. It has been ruled by a royal family whose origin and decline are still obscure. The present study is an attempt to recognize this royal family with the help of literary and epigraphical sources.

Details given in the *Mahavamsa*, *Vamsattappakasini* and other chronicles about Kelaniya and its ruling family will be critically evaluated in this paper. Early Brahmi inscriptions discovered at Karatota, Pilikutthuwa, Varana, Yatahalena, and Lenagala are re examined and will be compared with inscriptions found elsewhere for identifying members of the royal family. The rise and fall of the Kelaniya dynasty and its socio – political impact in the state formation in Sri Lanka with the establishment of the Anuradhapura kingdom will be elaborated in this study.

Key words: Kelaniya, Epigraphy, Chronicles, Early history, State formation.

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