

Use of Rocks for Building Construction in Ancient Sri Lanka: Efficiency of Rock Handling and Carving Technology

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Abstract: Remains of ancient construction and historic buildings constructed in historical period have proved that the rocks were the main building material of ancient Sri Lanka. Rocks used for such construction still can be seen in their original form or as fragments after destruction of enemies or invaders. However, the rocks prepared to use as construction material in ancient times can be utilized for many more centuries without any alteration or by slightly changing their appearance. The reasons for the use of rocks as construction material by our ancestors still require further study for verifications. The type and size of the rock pieces used, distance transported and the technology applied to cut and carve the rocks still require further study. The main objective of the current paper is to further investigation about these reasons. Rocks used as construction materials to build temples and other religious places, palaces and other common buildings situated in archaeological sites Dambadeniya, Yapahuwa, Polonnaruwa, Anuradhapura were taken into consideration in this study. Field visits, written documents and interviews with relevant experts were the main techniques used to gather the data. Visual interpretation was used as the method for data analysis and the findings was presented using reports, maps and photographs. The study would help archaeologists, historians and policy makers along with policy implementers to consider the importance of the lithic heritage of Sri Lanka and to reconsider the rock carving technology of ancestors of Sri Lanka.