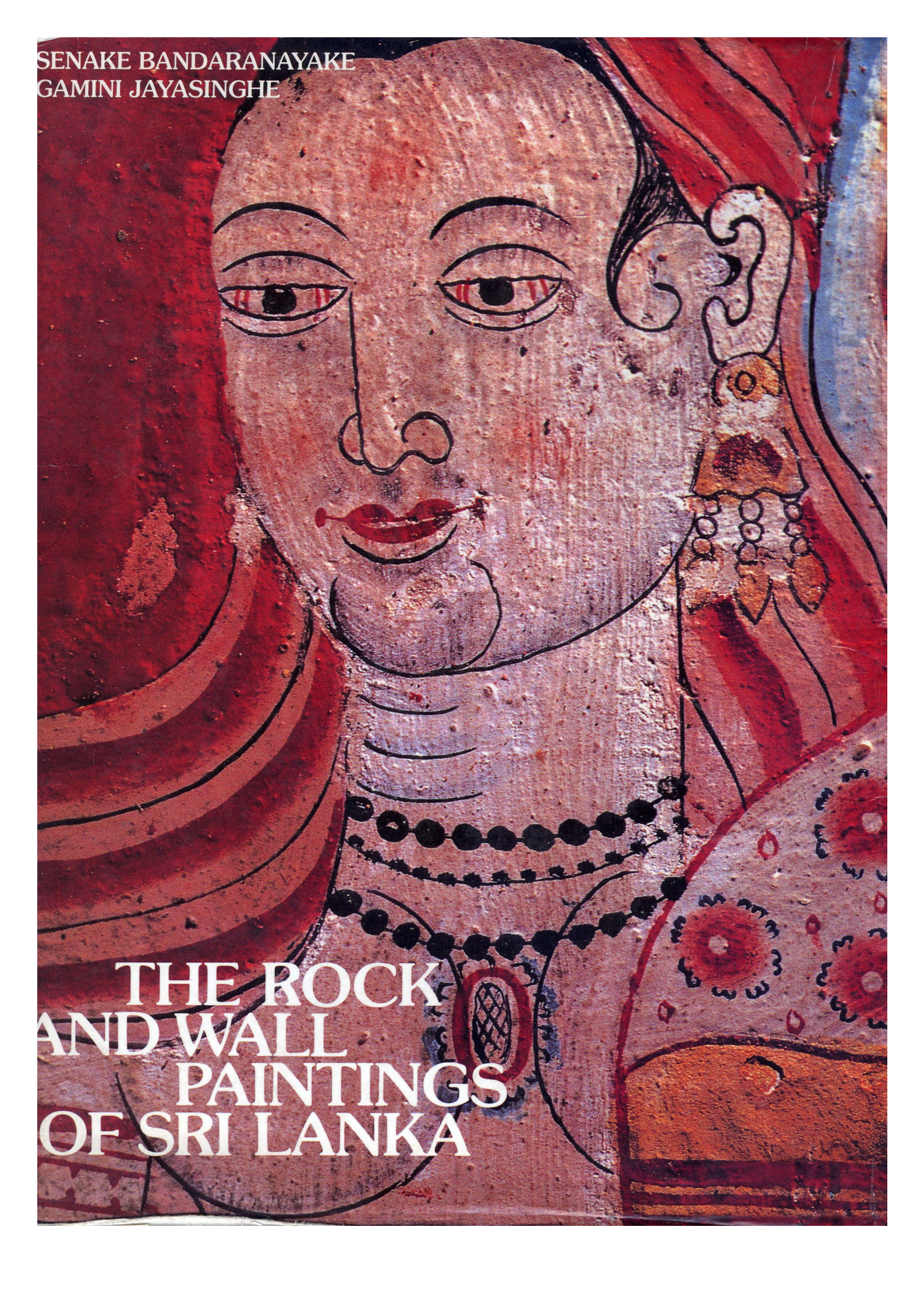


SENAKE BANDARANAYAKE
GAMINI JAYASINGHE



THE ROCK
AND WALL
PAINTINGS
OF SRI LANKA

THE ROCK AND WALL PAINTINGS OF SRI LANKA

SENAKE BANDARANAYAKE
WITH PHOTOGRAPHS BY
GAMINI JAYASINGHE

Sri Lanka has a long history of rock and wall painting extending from at least the last few centuries BC to the early 20th century. Fragmentary remains of early painting are known from a number of ancient archaeological sites, while a great cycle of 18th and 19th century murals is found in many urban and rural temples and monasteries. The early paintings, fragmentary and incomplete though they are, give us vivid and complex images of a distant historical epoch. The later paintings - some of them painted almost within living memory - constitute one of the richest and most substantial expressions of Sri Lankan pictorial art in its final period of efflorescence. They give us access to an imaginative world of the recent past in a way that is not easily paralleled by any other form of documentation.

Modern interest in Sri Lankan rock and wall paintings began in the late 19th century. Although there have been several books and articles published on the subject since, this study is the first to present an overview of the entire tradition from its early historical origins to its contemporary traditional manifestations. It brings together almost all the available material belonging to the Early and Middle Historical periods and selected studies of the *Kandyan* and *Southern* schools of the later epoch. The analytical and descriptive text is accompanied by photographs and line-drawings selected to illustrate the thematic range, compositional methods and stylistic variety displayed in these paintings as well as their historical evolution and functional context.

Looked at in a regional perspective, the Sri Lankan murals take their place in a broad spectrum of South and Southeast Asian traditions, best known from the Indian subcontinent for the early period and from Burma and Thailand for the later. At the same time, the specific character and continuity of Sri Lankan art over a period of two millennia give it a distinctive place in the art and art-history of the region.

305 PAGES WITH 272 ILLUSTRATIONS
INCLUDING 174 COLOUR PLATES AND 98
BLACK-AND-WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS, LINE-
DRAWINGS AND MAPS

Jacket illustrations. Front: Lady attendant accompanying Madri Devi, wife of Vessantara (detail). Vessantara Jataka, Kumaramahavihara, Kumarakanda, Dodanduva. Late 1880's. Back: Colossal painted door with fretwork panels (detail). Lankatilaka Temple, Handassa. 18th century.

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Photographs by
GAMINI JAYASINGHE



Endpapers: Ceiling panels probably representing the kalpa-vrksha or 'tree of life'.
Kelaniya Rajamahavihara.
Early to mid-19th century (?).

Half-title: A representation of the Himalayan lake
Anotatta: detail from a ceiling panel depicting a
sacred cosmographical landscape.
Rankot Vihara, Panadura. c.1888.

Title-page: Detail of apsara. Figure B10.
Sigiriya. AD 477-95

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