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A POLITICAL HISTORY OF ROHANA FROM C. 991-1255 A.D.

This thesis attempts to reconstruct the political history of Rohana - an island in the southern part of Sri Lanka - during the period between the fall of the Sinhala Kingdom of Polonnaruwa and the rise of the Kingdom of Galle. It traces the political development of Rohana from its incorporation into the Kingdom of Polonnaruwa in the late twelfth century to its independence in the early thirteenth century. It also examines the role of Rohana in the political events of the period, and the influence of the Sinhala Kingdom of Polonnaruwa on the development of Rohana.

by

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This thesis is a study of the political history of Rohana, an island in the southern part of Sri Lanka, during the period between the fall of the Sinhala Kingdom of Polonnaruwa and the rise of the Kingdom of Galle. It traces the political development of Rohana from its incorporation into the Kingdom of Polonnaruwa in the late twelfth century to its independence in the early thirteenth century. It also examines the role of Rohana in the political events of the period, and the influence of the Sinhala Kingdom of Polonnaruwa on the development of Rohana.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to examine critically the political history of Rohana - as the southern and south-eastern parts of Ceylon were known in ancient times - during the period between A.D. 991 and 1255; and the relations of that kingdom with the other two ancient kingdoms in Ceylon, namely, Rājaraṭṭha and Dakkhiṇapadesa or Māyāraṭṭha, during that period which covers a span of about 265 years and which coincides with the Polonnaruva period of Ceylon history. It consists of nine chapters and two appendices, marked 'A' and 'B'. The first few pages of the first chapter briefly explains the need for a comprehensive study of the history of Rohana for a proper understanding of the history of Ceylon as a whole. The rest of this chapter deals with the sources that are available for such a study. Here, an attempt is made to strengthen the suggestion made by S. Wickramasinghe in her thesis on the age of Parākramabāhu I that the first part of the Gūlavamsa consists of two sections written by two different authors in two different times, and to elucidate the theory of Geiger that the author of the Gūlavamsa had made use of an unknown Chronicle of Rohana, which is now lost. Chapter II analyses the geographical features of Rohana and examines their influence on history, not only of that region, but also of the whole Island. This is followed by a chapter on administrative centres and the political boundaries of Rohana during the period under survey. The next chapter outlines the political history of that region from the earliest time to A.D. 991. This chapter is intended to serve as an introduction to the main study which begins

with chapter V which is devoted to the political history of Rohapa of the period between 991 and 1048. As the period covered by chapter V was one of the most unsettled ages of Rohapa history, we have captioned it as 'The dark age of Rohapa'. Chapter VI discusses the rise of Vijayabāhu I and his rule in Rohapa with special reference to his relations with the other local rulers there and the Cōlas at Polonnaruva. The period of civil wars that followed Vijayabāhu's death in c. 1110 and ended with the demise of Mēnēbharapa of Rohapa in c. 1154, is dealt with in chapter VII. The political conditions in Rohapa and its relations with Rājaraṭṭha during the age of Parākramabāhu I and his successors at Polonnaruva are the topics discussed in the next chapter. A study of political and administrative organization in Rohapa is taken up in the last chapter, viz. IX. Apart from a discussion on central administration, an examination of revenue and judicial administration and local government is attempted in this chapter. The important results of our investigations are summarised in the conclusion. Two important problems which are connected with the present study, viz. the identification of Koṭṭha-sāra and the extent of Malayadesa, are dealt with in the two appendices.