

Old Money and Ancient Writing: Archaeology undergraduates visit the National Museum and (state) Department of Archaeology to study coins and inscriptions

On 29th August 2022, third-year undergraduates of the Department of Archaeology of the Faculty of Arts visited the National Museum and the (state) Department of Archaeology on a study tour. This study tour aimed at enhancing the student's knowledge of two courses in the undergraduate programme which focused on numismatics—the study of ancient coins—and epigraphy—the study of ancient writings, especially those written in Brahmi script. Thus, they explored the coins gallery and the inscription gallery of the National Museum, comprising local coins and inscriptions from the Anuradhapura period to the colonial period of Sri Lanka and ancient foreign coins such as Roman, Chinese, Indian, etc. Afterwards, the students were shown the museum stores, specifically how the ancient coins are catalogued and stored in the museum stores. The students proceeded to the (state) Department of Archaeology where they met Prof. Anura Manatunga, the Archaeology Director General. They had two practical sessions at the Department of Archaeology, one on taking the estampages (copies) of inscriptions and the other on the chemical conservation of ancient coins. The study tour, which was an enjoyable learning experience, was important for the students to get an overall idea of what they have studied in the classroom. It also helped to develop their soft skills, especially to work as a team. A short video produced by the students on this study tour is shown on the faculty and university websites.



The team in front of the 1877-built National Museum.