



**On an Unfamiliar Island:
A Sri Lankanist Review of *Banishment and Belonging***

Review Essay of:

Ronit Ricci, *Banishment and Belonging: Exile and Diaspora in Sarandib, Lanka, and Ceylon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

First South Asia edition 2020. 296 pp.

ALEXANDER MCKINLEY

Loyola University, Chicago

alex.mckinley@gmail.com



<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9255-6027>

Over the past two decades, historiography of Southern Asia has increasingly looked to the sea. This has yielded a robust sub-field of “Indian Ocean Studies,” illuminating cultural connections and exchanges over borders and boundaries, and emphasizing mobility across wind and wave as a means to think past “area studies” and other colonially inherited categories and conceptions of space.¹ Ronit Ricci’s recent book, *Banishment and Belonging: Exile and Diaspora in Sarandib, Lanka, and Ceylon*, represents the best fruits of such oceanic studies, tracking Javanese and Malay literary movements back and forth across the greater archipelago of the southern seas. In this way, the book takes Malay texts and people beyond the nationalized boundaries of “Malaysia,” moving over a number of island worlds, including Bali, Borneo, Java, Sulawesi, Sumatra, and of course Sri Lanka, the subtitle of the book indicating its importance in Malay imaginations of homeland and exile. While writing Malays into Sri Lankan history, Ricci acknowledges that she is not trained as a Sri Lankanist.² Oceanic studies broadly conceived ultimately runs up against a scholar’s linguistic limits. So while Ricci’s analysis of Javanese and Malay sources is highly nuanced, she is unable to access local Lankan texts in the same first-hand manner to corroborate her argument.

¹ A recent collaborative example with Sri Lanka at its center is Biedermann and Strathern 2017.

² Ricci 2019, ix. Pages from *Banishment and Belonging* are hereafter cited parenthetically. All other sources are footnoted.

The most productive review of the book I can offer is therefore to supplement it with supporting Sinhala and Tamil sources. These are just a few more drops to deepen the ocean of wonders Ricci already presents, gifting us with a book that belongs on the shelf of every serious historian of Sri Lanka.

Writing Malays back into Sri Lankan History

The first two chapters of *Banishment and Belonging* immerse the reader in the fantastic world of Malay manuscripts. The book itself is a testament to Ricci's endeavors to preserve Sri Lankan Malay writing through the British Library Endangered Archives Programme, creating a digital repository that will be an invaluable resource to future researchers.³ Ricci's tour through the forms of these manuscripts demonstrates a fascinating interplay of various languages within the Arabic script, showing Arabic, Javanese, Malay, and Tamil to be close kin in this literary world. All these languages could even appear in the same manuscript to express Islamic teachings through a range of registers with difference resonances (15-48).

Ricci therefore writes Malays back into Sri Lankan history in very nuanced fashion. She does not merely add to an understudied field, but unpacks the idea of "Malay" itself, to understand its evolution and standardization as a term that encompasses multiple diverse identities (2-7). This reanimates a category flattened under labels of militarized British colonialism. Moreover, not only exiled people, but also the distant islands of greater Indonesia are written into Sri Lankan history, as the middle chapters of Ricci's book relay letters from banished Javanese royalty in Jaffna pining for their home island (49-56), compositions remembering the Islamization of Java (57-75), stories of exiles maintaining connections to their homeland through magic and mysticism (97-124), and even texts written in Java that imagined what life must be life for those exiles who were "Ceyloned" over in Lanka (76-96). Through this kaleidoscopic approach, Ricci presents the phenomenon of exile from all sides, rearranging the bounds of colonial and national histories in the process.

Ricci writes that "the book as a whole, brings the Malays 'back' into Sri Lankan history – in which nationalist tendencies have prioritized a past divided along Sinhalese and Tamil lines – and offers a destabilizing perspective on this history 'from the margins'" (218). This is a noble goal, although more might have been said as to how Tamil history has also been relegated to marginality of late. Tamil and Malay histories are both in danger of erasure by Sinhala nationalists, and

³ <https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP450>
<https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP609>

drawing more connections between the two could raise the profile of both pasts together. Their religious commonalities are especially rich. When Ricci points to Adam's fall, for example, as an anchor for modern Malay identity, "offering a universally human but also specifically Muslim genealogy, ...[which] condensed space and time, portraying the Malays as the earliest in habitants of Ceylon and thus entirely at home there" (242), an almost identical phenomenon can be seen at work among Tamil-speaking Muslims, as well as other political exiles in Lanka like Ahmad Arabi from Egypt.⁴ More connections like this would help Ricci emphasize that she is not only re-writing the Malay history of Sri Lanka, but also retelling Lankan Muslim history more generally.

Islamic heritage is another past that has found itself on the nationalist chopping block, and some overt attention to this is warranted.⁵ While Ricci includes a picture of "Malay Street" in Colombo (247), for example, she makes no mention of the "Java Lane" neighborhood near there being demolished in 2014.⁶ A history from the margins should note how these very margins are continually trimmed. It seems every sort of history is at risk of being dismantled or willfully forgotten in modern Sri Lanka, aside from a distortedly simplified Sinhala heritage. Ricci's book certainly helps counter this trend by the source material it presents. To further integrate these Malay pasts with Sri Lankan sources on similar topics, the following sections present Tamil and Sinhala textual supplements to *Banishment and Belonging* that consider local perspectives on the concepts in the book's title.

Adam's Peak, the *Ramayana*, and Interreligious Resources

Sri Lanka specialists will find the most familiar ground in the later chapters of *Banishment and Belonging*, which turn to famous sites like Adam's Peak, stories like the *Ramayana*, and events like the Anglo-Kandyan wars, as Ricci enriches our understanding of them with Malay sources. The sixth chapter focuses on the Peak and its legends linked to Adam, the first human and prophet of Islam, and Ricci shows the depth of this myth through a sampling of its legacy in Arabic texts (125-127). While this is an appropriate way to start the chapter, the assemblage of sources appears as a rather random bricolage, jumping across place and time and overlooking some important patterns of recycling in these descriptions. For example, by the time al-Idrīsī wrote the twelfth-century geography that Ricci analyzes, his same description of the Peak had already been written and rewritten by at least two authors in previous centuries, first by Ibn Khurradādhbih in 846.⁷ These rhythms of repetition in the Arabic myths of Adam support Ricci's premise

⁴ McKinley 2018, 233-235.

⁵ e.g., Friedrich 2016.

⁶ Azeez 2014.

⁷ McKinley 2018, 201-203.

that the retelling of such stories re-creates the familiar in foreign spaces across successive generations, hence the repeated references to Adam's mountain in Malay literature, too.

Ricci presents several fascinating Malay compositions that incorporate Adam's Peak. These include Yasadipura's eighteenth-century *Serat Ménak Serandbil*, which narrates a pilgrimage where a Muslim devotee named Umarmaya meets Adam and subsequent prophets on the summit through dreams (142-144). Even more remarkable is the *Hikayat Seri Rama*, a Malay retelling of the *Ramayana* extant across two manuscripts, which begins with Ravana receiving his power from Adam atop the Peak, and ends with Ravana humbled at the foot of this same mountain, defeated by Rama who is likened to Adam (157-168). Ricci's interpretation of such stories in terms of their significance to Malay identity is intriguing, positioning "the ancient story of Adam's banishment from Paradise to earth [as] a paradigm for all future banishments" (147). This paradigm ultimately makes a friend out of the unfamiliar, as "Referencing Adam put Ceylon on the map, ...no longer just a godforsaken place of exile but home to the important Islamic sacred site of Adam's Peak, itself somewhat 'exilic'" (148).⁸ Likewise, the presence of Ravana at the Peak, beginning and ending his own story in a state of exile, convey "cautionary lessons" that are set "in Islamic terms" (163-164).

Instead of limiting herself to Islamic interpretations of these texts, Ricci admirably gestures toward their interreligious resonances. Her approach, however, is limited by secondary sources. Concerning Adam's Peak, for example, William Skeen's 1870 monograph leads to repeating the old canard about Christians believing St. Thomas left his footprint there, a tale Rev. S.G. Perera has convincingly shown to be only a fantasy of European historians embellished over time.⁹ Additionally, Ricci's footnotes about the shared footprint and *Ramayana* myths may over-speculate, as she notes that "Adam's landing on that spot could be tied to Hindu sacred space...within a cultural sphere in which both Rama and the Buddha were often viewed as incarnations of the god Vishnu" (150 n.2). Later, she guesses that "one of the names for the mountain where Adam fell in Arabic sources is al-Rahūn, which may be associated through sound with Rawana" (161 n.33). Since Ricci strives to pursue "a broader point...beyond the tracing of 'influence'" (159), such guesswork is unnecessary. As the circa sixteenth-century *Hikayat Seri Rama* is the only text where I have seen Ravana at Adam's Peak, it seems impossible that Ravana inspired an Arabic name coined several centuries earlier. Likewise, the Buddha is not included in all variations of

⁸ For an eighteenth-century Persian text from India that makes the same conceptual move with Adam's Peak, see: Ernst 1995.

⁹ Perera 1919.

Vishnu's ten *āvatāra*, and historical records of Hindus on the island lean more Śaiva than Vaiṣṇava anyway.¹⁰ Lankan Buddhist stories actually reverse the *āvatāra* paradigm, transforming Vishnu into a bodhisattva deputized by the Buddha to be a guardian of Lankan Buddhists. These modified myths of Vishnu are also one place among many to find *Ramayana* references in Sri Lankan literature.¹¹

Overall, Ricci undersells the local significance of the *Ramayana* in Sri Lanka (151-152).¹² While the island does contrast with greater Southern Asia for not producing a tradition of *Ramayana* reenactments, the characters of the *Ramayana*, even if not the usual bounds of the narrative, have played an integral role in how Lankan authors have imagined senses of homeland and belonging. In Sinhala and Tamil literature, references to Rama, Ravana, and the *Ramayana* proliferated from the fourteenth century onward across a wide range of texts, including boundary books, court poetry, ritual dances, temple histories, and war poems.¹³ This opens many more avenues for comparison with Malay texts. *Hikayat Seri Rama*, for example, incorporates some Tamil words into its Malay (158), and one of its manuscripts was copied in Trincomalee (167), likely borrowed by others and read aloud (180). Similarities can be found between this Malay text and other Tamil literature produced and performed in Trincomalee around this time. Ricci mentions Ravana's association with the temple of Koneswaram in a footnote (151 n.5), and closer consultation with Koneswaram's temple histories, or *tala purāṇam*, shows *Ramayana* characters to be central to Lankan Tamil identity and the founding of the site. Like the *Hikayat Seri Rama*, these texts clearly equate the Lankapura of *Ramayana* with the physical island of Sri Lanka. Rama is positioned as the first in a lineage of kings to endow the Siva temple at Koneswaram, and Ravana has a confrontation with Siva there that leads to his submission as a devotee.¹⁴

In *Tirikōṇācala Purāṇam*, for example, composed around the late-seventeenth or early-eighteenth century, Rama, Ravana, and Lankapura all appear in the opening apologetic preface (*avai aṭakkam*). Likewise, the first verses of the *patikam* introduction, which mention “Ravana of Lankapura, surrounded by the

¹⁰ It is notable, however, that some members of the modern highland Tamil community have developed rituals around a belief that it is Vishnu's footprint atop the summit. See: De Silva 2018.

¹¹ e.g., Holt 2004, 225-246.

¹² Ricci cites only Charles Godakumbura and Ananda Guruge who generally endorsed the orthodox Buddhist framing of the *Ramayana* as “idle talk” by focusing on its moribund nature in Sri Lanka, and omitting consideration of Tamil texts.

¹³ Henry 2017, 145-181. Henry 2019. McKinley 2018, 155-162. Young and Friedrich 2019.

¹⁴ Henry 2017, 170-174. Henry 2019, 737-742.

gem-bearing Mahaweli” (*maṇi koḷikkum māvali cūl ilaṅkai nakar irāvaṇaṅ*),¹⁵ localize the mythic Lankapura via the familiar Mahaweli River that flows north to Trincomalee. *Tirikōṇācala Purāṇam* also includes Adam’s Peak in its opening depiction of Lanka, another similarity with *Hikayat Seri Rama*. The first chapter of the *tala purāṇam* focuses on the Mahaweli, sourcing it from “Samanai” mountain where Siva imprints his foot:

kaṅkai cūṭiya kaṅṇutaṅ muṭimicai kalanta
 tiṅkaḷ veṅṅilā telḷamutu ukuttiṭum tiṅam pol
 taṅkaḷ nīlciṅai taruppayil camaṅai am kiriyiṅ
 paṅkelām vaḷi aruvi nīr parantatai aṅṅrē
 ...
 kaṅṅi taṅṅai muṅ oru puṭaiyākavē kalanta
 eṅṅai āḷuṭaiyāṅ patamalaiyil niṅṅru iḷintu
 poṅṅi mānati nikareṅa poṅ maṅi varaṅṅi
 inmilattiṅil pala vaḷam ciṅakka ēkiyatāl¹⁶

Its form like the pouring out of clear white light from the moon that blends with the summit gold of the Ganga-wearing Kailash, the river water was widespread that day, flowing down all sides of Mount Samanai over the long-limbed trees existing there.

...
 Mixed with the maiden [Parvati] as one side in front of himself, my Lord, the Supreme One, stood and imprinted his foot on the mountain. Like the great Kaveri, the [Mahaweli] river scrapes up gold and gems by going to make abundant the varied prosperity in this land.

Tamil homelands centered on the Kaveri river basin in South India are thereby adapted to the Lankan landscape and its landmarks.¹⁷ This is a creation of belonging that melds familiar sites and stories onto new lands, comparable to what was happening in Malay texts. Moreover, an even closer *purāṇic* echo of *Hikayat Seri Rama* comes from *Taṭcaṅakayilāca Māṅṅiyam*, another Koneswaram history composed in Sanskrit in the late-eighteenth or early-nineteenth century, and translated into Tamil prose in the early-twentieth century. Just like *Hikayat Seri Rama* (175), this text describes Rama visiting the Peak after his victory against Ravana, although to revere Siva’s footprint, not Adam’s.¹⁸

¹⁵ *Tirikōṇācala Purāṇam, patikam*, v.2. In Naṭarācā 1997, 11.

¹⁶ *Tirikōṇācala Purāṇam, āṅṅruppaṭalam*, vv.2, 7. The Peak is called both “Samanai” (*camaṅai*) and “Sivanolipadam” (*civaṅṅōḷipātam*) in this text.

¹⁷ For the first Lankan *tala purāṇam* to express this, see McKinley 2020.

¹⁸ McKinley 2018, 270. Translated there from Nākaliṅkapillai 1928.

Overall, these stories suggest that Tamils and Malays in Sri Lanka were working with a very similar palette of ideas about how to create senses of belonging out of stories of banishment. The centrality of the Malay Rawana character in *Hikayat Seri Rama* certainly compares to Ravana's heroic image in Tamil culture. Yet while Ravana is ultimately redeemed in Tamil stories of Koneswaram, he remains broken, defeated, and exiled from his kingdom in *Hikayat Seri Rama*, a reminder of the important differences between the tellers of these tales. For Malays, Lanka's distance from the motherland was much farther than Tamils who traced roots to India. So while Malays invoked shared sacred landscapes and spoke the same mythic language as their Tamil neighbors in Trincomalee, these elements were nevertheless used to tell different stories, some more about banishment, others more about belonging.¹⁹

A similar point can be made with Sinhala sources. Alahapperuma's *Sītāvaka Haṭana*, for example, was composed around 1585 as the first in an enduring genre of war poetry (*haṭana kavī*). To account for the name of the kingdom of Sitavaka, Alahapperuma uses a story of Sita and Ravana in step with the elaborations of Sita's back story occurring in India at the time.²⁰ In this tale, Ravana kills the other righteous kings of Lanka, driving the last into a forest where he becomes a powerful ascetic. After a pot of this sage's blood is used to trick Ravana and then buried underground, it is plowed up as the princess Sita, who grows into a queen under the sage's care. Here Ricci's work with Malay *Ramayana* expressions provides a model for specialists to move beyond basic explanations for this *Sītāvaka Haṭana* story that suggest, "the fabrication of a new royal seat evidently required ancient royal associations."²¹ Despite the blood, this story seems less about bloodlines than the need to endow an entire landscape with the significance of a homeland after relocating a kingdom. As Ricci notes, Ravana has the metaphorical potential to represent colonial aggression (170-171). Similarly, the rulers of Sitavaka, set in the wilderness of Lanka relative to the coastal kingdom of Kotte that allied with the Portuguese, found refuge in the forest from their powerful foe. It is telling that this story occurs in *Sītāvaka Haṭana* right after the kingdom of Sitavaka is carved out for the youngest prince (Mayadunne) by his eldest brother ruling in Kotte (Bhuvanekabahu VII) who soon becomes his nemesis allied with the Portuguese. Mayadunne therefore represents the exiled ascetic, becoming more powerful by resettling in this land with supernatural fertility. This is reinforced by the agricultural terminology in

¹⁹ It should be noted, however, that Lankan Tamils may have composed so many stories of belonging at Koneswaram because the Portuguese had banished them from the site of the original temple, destroying it in 1622. This history is recounted near the end of *Tirikōṇācala Purāṇam*. See: Pathmanathan 2007.

²⁰ Strathern 2008, 63-65.

²¹ Ibid. 64.

these verses, with plowshares (*nagula*) tilling (*hā*), digging (*sārā*), and plowing (*hāna*) a furrow (*hīvālaka*) in a field (*piṭṭiyaka*) during the rainy season (*vāsi kalaya*), ending with an idiom of Sita “taking the reins” (*hasurā*),²² all of which would resonate with a populace from peasant to headman who were familiar with farming.²³ With this narrative and imagery, Alahapperuma makes Sitavaka a worthy kingdom, in turn implying that the ostensible exile of Sita to Lanka by Ravana in the *Ramayana* is really a homecoming to Sita’s own soil. Once again, Lankan applications of the *Ramayana* stand in illustrative contrast to the Malay. Whereas Ricci emphasizes Sita’s state of banishment in Lanka as an analogue for Malay experiences (149-152), *Sītāvaka Haṭana* casts Sita as a grounded symbol of Lankan belonging.

Military Malays and Sinhala War Poetry

Malay military memories in Sri Lanka extend far beyond the *Ramayana* war. Mercenary soldiers were recruited by Portuguese, Dutch, and British colonial powers, and the Malay texts Ricci presents reflect on events from the Anglo-Kandyan wars of 1803-1818. She compares these accounts with English colonial texts, and a Sinhala composition lauding the Kandyan victories of 1803 called *Īṅgīsi Haṭana* (“The English War”). Ricci uses Udaya Meddegama’s partial translation reprinted in Gananath Obeyesekere’s recent book,²⁴ but otherwise omits scholarship on Sinhala war poems that indicates how unique the mentions of Malays are in *Īṅgīsi Haṭana* compared to other works of the genre.

The *haṭana kavi* construct senses of belonging in part by stylistically castigating outsiders and banishing invaders. Foreignness is therefore a fearsome trope in these poems,²⁵ although native Sinhala soldiers who sold services to enemies are also criticized for upsetting power balances, causing “confusions” (*avul*) over loyalties and land revenue.²⁶ Ricci finds *Īṅgīsi Haṭana* interesting for showing Malays employed on both sides of the war, serving British forces and the Kandyan king (202-203), but this is more than a record of that particular history; it is also a trope of *haṭana kavi* in general. In *Rajasinha Haṭana*, for example, composed in the mid-seventeenth century to laud the victories of Rajasinha II over the Portuguese, Malay (*jāvi*) mercenaries in Portuguese employ appear in a mix of unsavory foreigners and traitorous locals:

²² *Sītāvaka Haṭana*, vv.127-129. In Paraṇavitāna 1999.

²³ McKinley 2017.

²⁴ Obeyesekere 2017, 345-360.

²⁵ Paraṇavitana 2007; Roberts 2004, 115-134; Strathern 2008.

²⁶ Pirani 2016, Pirani 2018.

gona geḍḍiyan men kaṅsā abinut kā rā bimat
nan dāḍḍikan pānā kāberī kannāḍi saha jāvit
man dāḍḍi benkālot paravara avaguṇa marimērut
sen vāḍḍiyen gennā siṅhala sen nositā nambut

pera siṭa raṭa savilā siṭi noyekut soldāduvanut
raṭa toṭa dāna gaṇḍa soṅḍaṭa koḷambin gat paraṅginut...²⁷

Like king coconuts, ganja and opium were consumed and toddy drunk. Exhibiting various severities were Kaberi, Kannadi, and Javi. Along with tough minded Bengalis and un-virtuous Paravar seafarers, armies were increasingly brought, including Sinhala armies not thinking of honor.

Various strong soldiers who had lived in the country from before were taken by the Portuguese from Colombo to learn the region's ports well...

While some *haṭana kavi* suggest Sinhala soldiers were pardoned after defeat, outsider mercenaries remained forever unfamiliar.²⁸ Intoxication was commonly applied to these foreign bodies, coincidentally showing the assimilation of Malay terms like “ganja” into the Sinhala language.²⁹ Such descriptions can be seen as a Sinhala version of how British colonial powers fetishized the Malay term “*amok*” to characterize their unmatched bravery in battle (214-216). To both colonizer and native, the Malays were fearsome foreigners with a particular skillset.

How many Malays one sees in *haṭana kavi* depends in part on how to interpret the Sinhala term “*kavisi*.” It occurs in *Sītāvaka Haṭana*, where Rohini Paronavitana glosses it as “Malay.”³⁰ Other commentaries and dictionaries, however, suggest it means black African, reading *kavisi* as *kāpīri*, derived from the Portuguese and Dutch *kaffir* for black Africans, itself derived from the Arabic term for “non-believer.”³¹ I am inclined to read *kavisi* as African albeit for different reasons, as it also appears in the pre-colonial *Dambadeni Asna*. Historian Asiff Hussein hypothesizes that *kavisi* comes from the Arabic *ḥabīshī*, referring

²⁷ *Rajasīha Haṭana*, vv.232-233. In Somaratne 1966.

²⁸ e.g., *Sītāvaka Haṭana*, v.1108. See: Strathern 2008, 61-62. Even foreign “Mukkara” allies in *Rajasīha Haṭana* (v.433), rewarded for their aid, are depicted as demonic in nature.

²⁹ Gunasekara 1891, 382.

³⁰ *Sītāvaka Haṭana*, v.1107; Paronavitāna 1999, 167. The term *kavisi* is likewise defined as the Malay language by Gunasekara 1891, 382.

³¹ e.g., Carter 1924, 160.

to the region of “Abyssinia,” or Ethiopia.³² The very confusion over the term, however, is itself an indication of how the foreigners described in *haṭana kavi* are abstract, steeped in fantastic tropes rather than objective records. A pinnacle of packing others into a single verse appears in *Kustanīnu Haṭana*, a war poem circa 1619 praising the Portuguese general Constantino de Sá, attributed to the Sinhala scribe Alagiyavanna, who himself changed political allegiance after the death of Rajasinha I.³³ In favour of the Portuguese, all the foreignness becomes a productive show of force, with soldiers coming from nearby Indian locales and distant lands:

kaliṅgu teliṅgu kannāḍi urunū sī
kāvisika 'bisi ārabi isbā sī
jāvaka koṅgana sīna parū sī
*nikmuṇu avi leḷavā bāṅa vā sī*³⁴

Kalinga, Telingu, Kannadi, Ormuzi,
 African Abyssinians, Arab, Parsi,
 Javaka, Konkan, Chinese, and Persian
 emerged brandishing weapons and berating residents.

Here the Malay (*jāvaka*) identity appears as just another foreign rhyming word to flash through an elegiac quatrain. Even in Kavisundara Mudali’s *Āhālēpoḷa Vaṇanāva* (a.k.a. *Vaḍuga Haṭana*) composed circa 1815 to laud the Sinhala nobleman Ehelepola’s alliance with the British and capture of the last king of Kandy,³⁵ the grotesque foreignness of the Malays was still emphasized despite their key role as allies in the war. The poem notes the British army “took forces of nine-thousand Jāvi sepoys, Kavisi, and Kannāḍi,”³⁶ yet these forces are depicted as almost as bad as the “Tamil” king, with the captured monarch “femininely requesting the tasty beef of the Jāva sepoys” (*illā gena katase sipay jāvungē gōmas rasa*).³⁷ Continuing its anti-Tamil propaganda, captured allies of the king were punished by “being given as slaves to the fearsome Jā sepoys exhibiting fiery power” (*biya kara jā sipayin haṭa vāḷaṭa dī pāṭada bala*).³⁸ Giving enemies as slaves to other lowly persons was a trope of earlier *haṭana kavi*, too,

³² Hussein 2014, 453. This theory finds support from *Āhālēpoḷa Vaṇanāva* (v.62), its list of foreigners mentioning “*kavisi habisi*.” In the next line this verse separately names “*malayi jāvi sipay*” (sepoys).

³³ Berkwitz 2013.

³⁴ *Kustanīnu Haṭana*, v.96. In Raṇavaka 1938.

³⁵ Obeyesekere 2017, 83-94.

³⁶ *Āhālēpoḷa Vaṇanāva*, v.65. In Pranāndu 2014.

³⁷ *Āhālēpoḷa Vaṇanāva*, v.100.

³⁸ *Āhālēpoḷa Vaṇanāva*, v.92. Likewise in v.154.

with mixed-race soldiers (*tuppāhu*) given as slaves to Vedda tribal chiefs, and captured Portuguese given to the Dutch.³⁹

This consistent pattern of war poems dehumanizing foreigners makes the human depiction of Malay soldiers in *Īṅgīsi Haṭana* all the more remarkable. On both sides of the war, the Malays are depicted as warriors with courageous valor, not gluttons for flesh or intoxicants.⁴⁰ Moreover, Malay leaders on both sides are actually named, a rarity for actors in *haṭana kavi* outside of Sinhala and European leaders. This reiterates Ricci's point that the memories of the Malay "Noordeen brothers" hold weight in Sri Lanka (198-206), with the Malay captain Sankīlan lauded in the Kandyan court.⁴¹ In general, *Īṅgīsi Haṭana* is filled with names beyond these Malays, including not only expected Sinhala leaders, but also four enemy Englishmen, and even the captain of the Bengali regiment from Trincomalee. Aside from demonstrating how well the author of *Īṅgīsi Haṭana* was tapped into information moving through the Kandy, this also speaks to Obeyesekere's point that *Īṅgīsi Haṭana* had to depart slightly from the *haṭana kavi* model of the warrior king, focusing more on the secondary tier of military leadership because Sri Vikrama was not personally going into battle like the Rajasinha who fought the Portuguese.⁴² With the poet therefore turning to other figures for battlefield elegies, Malay military leaders were given a special chance to shine.

In turn, the Malay sources Ricci presents add another interesting vantage point from which to view the Anglo-Kandyan wars. She gives a tantalizing glimpse into a poem about military exploits written in Ceylon Malay (204). The verses she shares add to the record of Sri Vikrama executing the Noordeen brother who fought for the British, after he refused to switch sides and fight for Kandy. The poem's straightforward narration of this event pairs well with the account of Henry Marshall, who interviewed Kandyans to determine that this Noordeen died fighting after refusing capture (202 n.63). Yet Ricci only footnotes Marshall and instead gives top billing to an embellished tale by James Cordiner, who cites no source and sprinkles in standard British propaganda of a wildly brutal king who needed to be deposed (201). Other accounts are then read as lacking details by comparison (205). Rather than Cordiner being the standard, however, his account should really be the footnoted curiosity. As Obeyesekere has shown,

³⁹ *Sīāvaka Haṭana*, v.1108. *Rajasīha Haṭana*, v.432.

⁴⁰ *Īṅgīsi Haṭana*, vv. 134-135, 245.

⁴¹ Ricci notes twentieth-century memories of a personage named "Jā Muhandiram" who was ingratiated into the court of Sri Vikrama (205). Other Malays in the courtly audience may have been all the more reason for the poet of *Īṅgīsi Haṭana* to depict them honorably.

⁴² Obeyesekere 2017, 361-364.

doing history in the aftermath of this war and others requires carefully sifting out truths from the propaganda proliferated by victors.⁴³

Conclusion

The overall value of Ricci's book is in no way diminished by a few disciplinary blind spots. More than a monograph, her work is also a map toward countless avenues for further research. Guided by the careful details of archival locations, each work cited deserves a singular study in its own right. *Banishment and Belonging* is therefore a gift that will keep on giving to those who study Sri Lanka and the greater Malay world.

In turn, the book itself raises the intriguing question of which horizons are next to be crested by academics of ocean studies who drift toward unfamiliar islands. Considering the steep linguistic demands of comparative work, perhaps the answer lies in alliances. While the sciences and some social sciences have come to expect co-authorship in publications, humanities disciplines retain a strong devotion to the heroic myth of the sovereign author producing an autonomous book. A collective of anthropologists recently showed how fruitful collaboration can be for Sri Lankan studies, producing not another edited volume, but a book with a focused thesis in a singular voice albeit with many authors.⁴⁴ The opportunity remains for a collective of historians to try the same.

Bibliography

Azeez, Abdul-Halik. 2014. Java Lane, Vanishing With Old Colombo. *The Picture Press*. <http://thepicturepress.org/java-lane-vanishing-with-old-colombo/>

Berkwitz, Stephen C. 2013. *Buddhist Poetry and Colonialism: Alagiyavanna and the Portuguese in Sri Lanka*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Biedermann, Zoltán & Strathern, Alan (eds.) 2017. *Sri Lanka at the Crossroads of History*, London: UCL Press.

Carter, Rev. Charles. 1924. *A Sinhalese-English Dictionary*, Colombo: The "Ceylon Observer" Printing Works.

De Silva, Premakumara. 2018. "Competitive sharing: Sri Lankan Hindus and Up-country Tamil religiosity at the Sri Pada Temple." *The South Asianist* 6, no. 1: 76-97.

⁴³ Obeyesekere 2017; Obeyesekere 2020.

⁴⁴ Spencer, Goodhand, Hasbullah, Klem, Korf and Silva 2015.

Ernst, Carl. 1995. "India as a Sacred Islamic Land." *In*: Lopez, Donald S. (ed.) *Religions of India in Practice*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Friedrich, Philip. 2016. "Adjudicating Antiquity: The Politics of Historical Confrontation at Devanagala, Sri Lanka." *In*: Holt, John Clifford (ed.) *Buddhist Extremists and Muslim Minorities: Religious Conflict in Contemporary Sri Lanka*. New York: Oxford University Press. 140-163.

Gunasekara, Abraham Mendis. 1891. *Comprehensive Grammar of the Sinhalese Language*, Colombo: G.J.A. Skeen, Government Printer.

Henry, Justin W. 2019. "Explorations in the Transmission of the *Ramayana* in Sri Lanka." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 42, no. 4: 732-746.

Henry, Justin Wesley. 2017. *Distant Shores of Dharma: Historical Imagination in Sri Lanka from the Late Medieval Period*. University of Chicago Doctoral Dissertation.

Holt, John Clifford. 2004. *The Buddhist Viṣṇu: Religious Transformation, Politics, and Culture*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Hussein, Asiff. 2014. *Zeylanica: A Study of the Peoples and Languages of Sri Lanka*, Pannipitiya: Neptune Publications.

McKinley, Alexander. 2017. "Farming Songs from the Poet King: Translation & Explication of a Sinhala *Janakavi* Work." *The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities* 41, no. 1&2: 64-117.

---. 2018. *Mountain at a Center of the World*. Ph.D Dissertation, Duke University.

---. 2020. "Making Lanka the Tamil Way: A Temple History at the Crossroads of Landscapes and Watersheds." *South Asian History and Culture* 11, no. 3: 254-276.

Nākaliṅkapillai, C. (ed.) 1928. *Takṣiṇa Kailāca Purāṇam, Yālpāṇam: Nā. Kumāracuvāmi*.

Naṭarācā, Kā. Ce. (ed.) 1997. *Tirikoṇācala Purāṇam*, Koḷumpu: Intucamaya Kalācāra Aluvalkar Tiṇaikkaḷam.

Obeyesekere, Gananath. 2017. *The Doomed King: A Requiem for Śri Vikrama Rājasinha*, Colombo: Sailfish.

---. 2020. *The Many Faces of the Kandyan Kingdom 1591-1765: Lessons for our Time*, Colombo: Sailfish.

Paranavitana, Rohini. 2007. "Sinhalese War Poems and the Portuguese." *In*: Flores, Jorge (ed.) *Re-Exploring the Links: History and Constructed Histories between Portugal and Sri Lanka*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.

Paraṇavitāna, Rōhiṇi (ed.) 1999. *Sitāvaka Haṭana*, Śrī Laṅkā Rajayē Mudraṇa Depārtamēnttuva: Madhyama Saṅskṛtika Aramudala

Pathmanathan, S. 2007. "The Portuguese in Northeast Sri Lanka (1543-1658): An Assessment of Impressions Recorded in Tamil Chronicles and Poems." In: Flores, Jorge (ed.) *Re-exploring the Links: History and Constructed Histories between Portugal and Sri Lanka*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag. 29-47.

Perera, S.G. 1919. "Adam's Peak." *The Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Register* 5, no. 1: 6-11.

Pirani, Cenan. 2016. *The Military Economy of Seventeenth-Century Sri Lanka: Rhetoric and Authority in a Time of Conquest*. Ph.D Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles.
---. 2018. "Widening the study of military organization in the early modern South Asian context: an examination of the Sinhala *Hatana Kavya*." *South Asian History and Culture* 9, no. 2: 207-224.

Pranāndu, M.E. (ed.) 2014. *Āhālēpoḷa Vaṇanāva*, Koḷamba: S. Goḍagē saha Sahōdarayō.

Raṇavaka, Aḍvin (ed.) 1938. *Kustanīnuhaṭana*, Colombo: Gunasena.

Ricci, Ronit. 2019. *Banishment and Belonging: Exile and Diaspora in Sarandīb, Lanka and Ceylon*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Roberts, Michael. 2004. *Sinhala Consciousness in the Kandyan Period, 1590s to 1815*, Colombo: Vijitha Yapa Publications.

Somarathne, Ellepola H.M. (ed.) 1966. *Devāni Rājasimha samayehi visū kavivarayeku visin viracita Rajasiha Haṭana*: T.B.S. Goḍamunnē.

Spencer, Jonathan, Goodhand, Jonathan, Hasbullah, Shahul, Klem, Bart, Korf, Benedikt & Silva, Kalinga Tudor. 2015. *Checkpoint, Temple, Church and Mosque: A Collaborative Ethnography of War and Peace*, London: Pluto Press.

Strathern, Alan. 2008. "Towards the Source-Criticism of Sitavaka-Period Heroic Literature, Part Two: The *Sitavaka Hatana*: Notes on a Grounded Text." *The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities* 34, no. 1&2: 45-72.

Young, Jonathan & Friedrich, Philip. 2019. "Mapping Lanka's Moral Boundaries: Representations of Socio-Political Difference in the *Ravana Rajavaliya*." *South Asia* 42, no. 4: 768-780.