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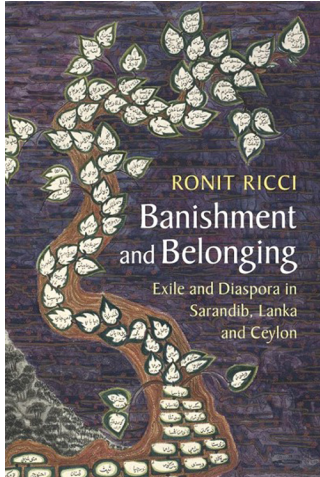
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Ronit Ricci, *Banishment and belonging; Exile and diaspora in Sarandib, Lanka, and Ceylon*. Cornwall: Cambridge University Press, 2019, xvi + 282 pp. ISBN 978-1-108-48027-7 (hardcover), ISBN 978-1-108-72724-2 (softcover). Prices: USD 74.99 (hardcover), USD 29.99 (softcover).



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In Javanese there is a verb *disélongaké*. The word has existed since the era of the Dutch United East India Company (VOC). It means 'to be Ceyloned' or exiled to the island of Ceylon. In Indonesian history, from the late seventeenth century until the eighteenth century, Ceylon or Sri Lanka was known as a site of exile for Indonesians considered rebels by the VOC. The term *selong* is not restricted to the Javanese lexicon. In Malay, this term also appears and has become part of the historical trail in the Malay world in Sri Lanka.

Ronit Ricci's book *Banishment and belonging; Exile and diaspora in Sarandib, Lanka, and Ceylon* is a study of the Malay community, which emerged from the "Malay" diaspora of the colonial period in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka is an island country located off the southeast coast of India. Until 1972, Sri Lanka was known as Ceylon, the name given to it by the British but had once been ruled by the Dutch United East India Company or VOC (1640-1796) and then the British (1796-1948).

The book is based on texts written in a number of different languages. Ricci has used *babad* (Javanese historical chronicles), *hikayat* (Malay prose stories), *pantun* (Malay four-line poems), and *syair* (traditional verse) from collections in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Netherlands, regarded by "some" historians as sources to be avoided because they are dismissed as fiction. However, Ricci's study is a remarkable example of how she has been able to use her multiple language skills to chronicle the life of "Sri Lankan Malays" in Ceylon over the centuries and how these exiles remembered their land of origin.

This book consists of nine chapters. In the Introduction Ricci begins with a discussion of names: Sarandib, Lanka, Ceylon, the different names which refer to one place, Sri Lanka (p. 1) at different moments in time. In Chapter Two Ricci explores how the small diasporic Malay community in Ceylon maintained its culture through the preservation of its language, the transmission of literary and religious texts, and the maintenance of genres and a script. Ricci has used a collection of nineteenth-century Arabic and Malay-language texts belonging to the Saldin family, which is called the

Malay Compendium. The *Compendium* was written by various authors. In it, Ricci discovered a Javanese poem entitled *Kidung Rumeksa ing Wengi* (A song to protect in the night) which offers its reciter protection from all the dangers and evil lurking in the darkness, including jinn, devils, fire, water, and thieves. It is a kind of a protective amulet. This poem is attributed to Sunan Kalijaga, the fifteenth-century leader of the Javanese *wali sanga*, the nine “saints” who are said to have brought Islam to Java (pp. 23-24).

In Chapter Three, Ricci traces individual voices and traditions of storytelling and cultural heroes transmitted through the Ceylon diaspora. She examines the correspondence found in archival Dutch translations from the Javanese exchanged between exiled Javanese royalty who lived in Triconmalle and Jaffna in the 1720s. One example is the correspondence between the banished Javanese king, Amangkurat III, and his sons in Jaffna (exiled in 1708), and Tumenggung Suradilaga, who was being held to the southeast in Triconmalle (pp. 49-50). Ricci also examines two Malay religious texts, a fragmentary biography of Sunan Bonang and the *Hikayat Tuan Gusti* (1897), a biography of Sunan Giri, another of the nine Javanese saints (p. 57). The most interesting fact is the *Hikayat Tuan Gusti* can be categorized as a form of early travel literature. It recounts movements and travels for trade, acquiring knowledge, and propagating Islam. It highlights the journeys made by Sheikh Muhiddin, Sunan Giri’s father, from Arabia to Southeast Asia, and those of Sunan Giri himself throughout his career as well as the travels of sailors, merchants, and soldiers (p. 70).

The Javanese verb *disélongaké* begins the discussion in Chapter Four. In this chapter, Ricci investigates matters related to the Javanese documentation and memorialization of exile to Ceylon with the question of whether and how Javanese authors wrote about exile to Ceylon. The Javanese sources or the accounts in nineteenth-century Javanese *babad* from Surakarta used in this chapter include the *Babad Kartasura* (pp. 79, 82), the *Babad ing Mangkunagaran*, and the *Babad Tanah Jawi* (p. 81). However, as stated by Ricci, although this chapter focuses on cases of Javanese exiles, there are also documentations of the experiences of exiles from other regions in the archipelago, such as the Sultan of Bacan, Siti Hapipa of Makassar, and the Sultan Banten (p. 76).

In the fifth chapter, Ricci continues the theme of exilic life as depicted and remembered in Javanese texts. Ricci has used the account in the *Babad Giyanti* of the return of Pangeran Juru, previously Pangeran Natakusuma, who was exiled to Ceylon in 1742 after being accused of leading a pro-Chinese court faction. Pangeran Natakusuma was the chief counsellor to Pakubuwana II. Pangeran Juru returned to Java with his wife (Raden Ayu Juru) in 1758. Here, we find an echo of women’s voices and exilic experiences (p. 97). The depiction in the *Babad Giyanti* offers a glimpse of the religiously inspired contacts and relationships which must have been significant to the exiles in their attempts to overcome the many challenges they faced, for instance, every Friday night the *murid* (the disciples) would convene to recite the Qu’ran. Besides revealing religious observances in the community, the text confirms how, while afflicted

with homesickness, Javanese dishes and fruit, such as fish, *tempe*, *salak*, *durian*, *pundhung*, jackfruit, and *malinjo* which were consumed every Friday were transported to Ceylon with the help of the power of the *guru*, the charismatic Islamic teacher (p. 107).

The island and its exilic histories through the prism of “Sarandib” form the theme of Chapter Six. In this chapter, Ricci shows the links between the story of Adam’s banishment to Sarandib and exile to colonial Ceylon. She focuses on Adam’s Peak and its legend which is linked to Adam, the first human and first prophet of Islam. Adam fell from Paradise onto a mountain, known as the Adam’s Peak, the English name of the island of Sarandib (the Arabic name for Ceylon). The story of Adam’s fall used by Ricci is taken from early Arabic sources and is widespread in Southeast Asia. For example, the works of Arab historians and geographers such as *Ta’rikh al rusul wa ’l-mulūk* (History of prophets and King) by Al Tabari and *Murūj al-dhahab wa ma’ādin al-jawāhir* (The meadow of gold and gem mines) by al-Mas’udi (pp. 125-126). Ricci also presents several Malay texts related to Adam’s Peak, such as *Syair Faid al-Abād* (Bounty of the ages) written by Baba Ounus Saldin, a prominent Malay community leader (p. 139), *Serat Ménak Serandhil* by R. Ng. Yasadipura which offers an additional eighteenth-century perspective on Ceylon. Serandhil is the Javanese form of Sarandib (p. 142).

In Chapter Seven, Ricci explores the *Ramayana* of which the central theme is banishment to Lanka. She asks whether the *Ramayana* played a role in the Malay exilic imagination. In this chapter, she offers a close reading of relevant sections of the *Ramayana* story in the Malay *Hikayat Seri Rama*, a version of the *Ramayana* which was known and copied in colonial Ceylon (p. 149). Two manuscripts of the *Hikayat Seri Rama* have been found in Sri Lanka. Both manuscripts date from the middle of the nineteenth century and are incomplete. Although the two Sri Lankan manuscripts of the *Hikayat Seri Rama* are incomplete, they are fascinating expressions of the remarkable intertwining of Ceylon’s exilic tradition and their place in the literary and religious imagination because exilic Adam and Sarandib Mountain are central to their telling of the story (p. 160). Ricci states that the question of how significant reading the *Ramayana* was to exiles and their descendants in Ceylon cannot yet be answered in full. However, the *Ramayana* must have provided solace and a sense of community (p. 179).

Ricci uses a wide variety of texts in the last two chapters, such as literary manuscripts, family diaries, genealogies, notes, and letters. In Chapter Eight, Ricci focuses on the Malay military affiliation and its links to and overlap with the Malay literary culture (p. 181) in Ceylon. In Chapter Nine, Ricci explores the themes of Malay writing, literary culture, nomenclature, diasporic life, “Malayness” and identity, and historical salience through the biography and writings of Baba Ounus Saldin (1832-1906). He was prominent in the Malay community as the author, publisher, editor of the *Alamat Langkapuri*, and as a religious leader. Two of his major works are discussed, the *Syair Faid al-Abād*, a history of the community, and the *Kitab segala peringatan*, his personal

and family memories. Baba Ounus Saldin's grandfather, Enci Pantasi, left Sumenep, Madura in 1800 and went to Ceylon as a recruit for the British army. He was involved in the war in south India (p. 219).

Ronit Ricci's study is both fascinating itself and important to historical and literary studies on the theme of colonial exile. Although there is a question not yet fully answered (how significant was the reading of the *Ramayana* to exiles and their descendants in Ceylon), with her extraordinary linguistic skills (Javanese, Malay, Tamil, Arabic, Dutch) and her choice of the methodology of comparative philology, Ricci has succeeded in her attempt to "bring the exiled Malays back into Sri Lanka's and Javanese history".