

Dakshina Samudra Reconsidered:

Textual and Chronological Problems in the Bhagatraya

Identification of Rāmāyaṇa's Laṅkā

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Scope and Rationale

Every public claim tested in this paper is presented by its own author as a summary of an argument made in full elsewhere, in a published book, or on a research platform the author separately maintains and directs readers to for supporting detail. That raises a fair question this paper takes seriously rather than sidesteps: if the underlying argument is only fully stated in the book, does testing the public claims mean anything without reading the book itself?

The answer argued here is yes, for a specific and narrow reason, developed at length in [§4.1](#). Every claim examined in this paper is one the author has himself repeatedly pointed back to that book as fully substantiating. That means the book's contents are not a separate, untested body of evidence sitting apart from what is tested here: the public claims are the book's own claims, offered by its author as accurate summaries of it, with the promise that full references live inside it. When one reader asked directly and specifically for a single one of those references, the response was not to supply it but to decline and point to a purchase instead. A source that is never produced when producing it would have been trivially easy is not proof that no such source exists, but it is not evidence that one does either, and after years of opportunity across three separate platforms, the burden of producing that evidence sits with the claim's author, not with an obligation on this paper's part to read an entire book in search of a citation its own author will not name.

For that reason, this paper does not evaluate Geography of Rāmāyaṇa the way an unread book might be taken on faith. It evaluates the claim on the full public record its author has generated defending it: years of posts across X, Facebook, and LinkedIn, the published book itself where independently reviewed, and a wiki platform, AncientVoice, that the author separately maintains and cites as his primary research resource, checked in every case against the Critical Edition text of the Rāmāyaṇa, the published excavation record, and independent scholarship. That is the record within which the case for Bhagatrav would need to succeed if it is going to succeed anywhere a reader can verify it for themselves.

One finding bears naming here specifically, because it goes beyond showing the public case unsupported. In at least two places, the claim does not merely lack support: it runs directly against material from the same author's own longer-standing work. His reference map on AncientVoice, independently verifiable back to 2012, places Laṅkā and Malyavat exactly where mainstream scholarship places them, not where the newer claim requires ([§6](#)). And the fullest, most detailed version of his own genealogical argument rests on citations from a part of the epic whose authenticity as an original component is independently and separately contested, a qualification the promotional material for the claim never mentions ([§2.4](#)). This paper is not only unable to find support for the claim in the public record. In places, it finds the opposite.

A Note on Sourcing

Every citation in this paper is shown as a dated, clickable link: [\(RED\)](#) marks the claim under examination, at the date it was made, and [\(BLUE\)](#) marks the evidence weighed against it. Colour reflects what a citation is doing in a given sentence, not simply who wrote it: the claim's own reference map, in [§6](#), is coloured blue there because it functions as evidence against a different claim by the same author, and a sympathetic third-party review is coloured red where it is the only available source documenting

what the book itself asserts. A third colour, **(GREY)**, marks sources named for background or context, most of them in §7's discussion of the wider Indus Civilization warfare debate, which the paper explicitly declines to resolve and does not rely on; these are cited so a reader can verify they exist and say what they are described as saying, not as part of the direct evidentiary chain against the claim. Several claims were posted across X, Facebook, and LinkedIn, sometimes worded identically and sometimes reworked between platforms; where that happened, every dated instance found is cited. X, Facebook, and LinkedIn may prompt a login for some readers depending on session and region; the wording quoted here reflects what was directly verified at the time of writing.

Abstract

A popular reinterpretation of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa geography identifies Rāvaṇa's Laṅkā with Bhagatrav, a minor Late Harappan port site at the mouth of the Narmadā in Gujarat, rather than with Sri Lanka. This paper traces the claim across every public instance located, on X, Facebook, and LinkedIn, in a published book, and in an independent review of that book, and tests each instance against the Critical Edition text of the Rāmāyaṇa, the published archaeological record, and the site's own excavation history. None of the claims examined survives contact with a checkable source. The directional use of Dakṣiṇa Samudra, undercut further by the claim's own shifting labels for the identical gulf across different posts, the repeatedly and consistently stated hundred-yojana ocean crossing, and the Vindhya-region search route in Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍa together describe a location well south of Gujarat. The claim's author maintains, on his own primary research platform, a reference map independently verifiable back to 2012 that places Laṅkā on the island south of India rather than at the Narmadā, unreconciled with the claim examined here. A 2024–25 peer-reviewed re-excavation of Bhagatrav itself directly revises the original claim the identification relies on, describing an unfortified site with no structures, no port evidence, and no trace of the destruction the epic's account of Laṅkā's fall requires. The redaction history proposed to explain away the textual evidence rests in part on an unconfirmed submerged landmass with no more standing in mainstream geology than Lemuria, and has never been supported, on any platform or in the book, by any manuscript or textual-critical evidence, a pattern the claim's author states explicitly and in his own words when directly asked for a source, and that is independently documented again in an unrelated 2022 exchange with a credentialed peer reviewer. The proposed date for Rāma coincides with the onset of Harappan de-urbanization, and the claim's chronology and geography are shown to depend on each other circularly rather than on any external anchor.

Keywords: Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa; Laṅkā geography; Bhagatrav; Dakṣiṇa Samudra; textual interpolation; Harappan chronology; Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍa; Sundara Kāṇḍa

1. Introduction

A theory circulating widely on social media claims that the Laṅkā of Rāvaṇa in the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa was not the island now known as Sri Lanka, but Bhagatrav, a small Late Harappan trading port on the Gujarat coast at the mouth of the Narmadā river. The theory originates with Jijith Nadumuri Ravi, a former ISRO scientist, in his 2023 book *Geography of Rāmāyaṇa* and in an ongoing series of posts across X, Facebook, and LinkedIn. This paper traces every distinct claim supporting it back to where it was

made, on every platform where it appears, and checks each one against a source anyone can read for themselves. None of the claims that make up this theory holds up.

2. Claims, Traced and Tested

Each claim below is stated as made, dated and linked to its exact source in **red** on every platform it appeared, then weighed against a dated, linked source in **blue**.

2.1 “Bhagatrav...inside the wide mouth of Narmada” is Laṅkā

Claim: Bhagatrav is Rāvaṇa's Laṅkā, and the nearby forest reflects the pepper- and coconut-growing ecology of coastal Maharashtra ([27 Oct 2025, X](#)) ([Facebook](#)).

Test: Bhagatrav's existence as a Harappan site is not in dispute; the identification with Laṅkā and the Maricha/pepper etymology are both asserted with no lexical or textual source. Compare the primary text's own placement of Laṅkā on the shore of the Dakṣiṇa Samudra, [§3.1](#).

2.2 “Lanka means island inside lakes, rivers, backwaters” — an Austro-Asiatic etymology

Claim: “Laṅkā” derives from an Austro-Asiatic term for a river-island ([Dec 2025, X](#)) ([29 Jul 2026, Facebook](#)). The Facebook version adds: “you can verify it with grok or other tools.”

Test: no linguistic source accompanies this claim on either platform. “Verify it with grok” is not a citation, it is the same evidentiary deferral examined in [§4](#), wearing a different disguise. Even taken at face value, river-islands called “lanka” as a common noun are attested across eastern India, which makes the word non-diagnostic, applicable to hundreds of locations, not evidence for one.

2.3 Bhagatrav confirmed as “the Laṅkā of Rāvaṇa” on S.R. Rao's authority

Claim: Laṅkā is “identified with Bhagatrav Island...discovered by S.R. Rao” ([27 Feb 2026, X](#)).

Test: S.R. Rao is a genuine, credentialed excavator of Bhagatrav and Lothal; nothing in his published excavation work identifies the site as Laṅkā. A credentialed archaeologist's name is being attached to a mythological claim he is not on record as making. Worse for the claim, Rao's own original characterisation of the site has since been revised by more recent excavation, detailed in [§7](#).

2.4 Twelve converging “clues,” an earlier cited version, and an appeal to unnamed researchers

Claim: twelve genealogical, toponymic, and archaeological points converge on Bhagatrav ([1 Nov 2025, X](#)).

Test: this specific posting cites no sarga or verse numbers. Genealogical and toponymic points are stated as interpretive glosses, not quotations. Twelve uncited associative points do not add up to one supported one.

An earlier and more detailed version of the same genealogical argument, “Ravana's Narmada Connection!”, was posted on LinkedIn roughly two years earlier ([2024, LinkedIn](#)), and this version does cite specific verses: VRM 7.5.27, 7.6.50, 7.12.12, 7.12.21, 7.12.24, 7.12.28, 7.25.24, 7.31.6, 7.31.39, and MBH 2.28.50, 3.87.3. Fairness requires stating this plainly: these are real citations, not the empty assertions found elsewhere in this claim. But every one of them is drawn from Book Seven, the

Uttara Kāṇḍa, whose status as a later addition to the original six-book epic is a long-standing and independent question in mainstream Rāmāyaṇa scholarship, unrelated to anything argued in this paper. Citing a verse establishes that the verse exists; it does not settle whether that verse belongs to the epic's earliest compositional layer, which is precisely the question this identification most needs answered and does not address. The same 2024 post also makes a claim not found anywhere else in the material examined for this paper: in response to a reader asking where Rāma's bridge was then built if Laṅkā is at Bhagatrav, the reply states, "Ravana's Lanka is not Srilanka. This is not my own theory but a dozen of other notable researchers agree to it." No researchers are named, then or in any later post reviewed for this paper. An appeal to a dozen unnamed authorities is not a citation; it is a claim about the existence of citations, itself uncited.

2.5 A four-layer redaction (Layer O / A / B / C) explaining away the text's own hundred-yojana crossing

Claim: the ocean-crossing passages are a later editorial distortion of a much shorter Narmadā-mouth crossing ([28–29 Jul 2026, X](#)) ([29 Jul 2026, Facebook](#)) ([30 Jul 2026, LinkedIn](#)). A further Layer B, not present in the earlier X thread but detailed in a later reply, and stated directly within the single LinkedIn post itself, places an intermediate leap onto "Thekkumalai," a supposedly submerged island off Kanyakumari, part of a landmass the claim calls "Kumari Kandan."

Test: no manuscript, recension, or Critical Edition citation is offered anywhere across any platform, including when a reader asks directly how the mechanism works. Layer B is a further problem in its own right: Kumari Kandan is a long-running claim in Tamil pseudo-historical literature with no accepted geological or archaeological confirmation, treated by mainstream scholarship the same way as Lemuria. The claim explicitly distances itself from "nonsensical Lemuria" while resting one of its own four layers on a structurally identical, equally unconfirmed submerged landmass.

2.6 A directional argument: Hanumān's leap and the bridge are strictly north-south

Claim: repeated Sanskrit directional terms (dakṣiṇām diśam, uttaram tīram) show Hanumān's leap and Nala's bridge run strictly north to south, "not matching Rameshvaram-Srilanka geography at all" ([2 Aug 2026, Facebook](#)).

Test: general southward direction is true under both readings, Kiṣkindhā, wherever placed, sits well north of the southern coast, and the army's march to reach that coast is genuinely southward for hundreds of kilometres regardless of whether the destination is Sri Lanka or Bhagatrav; a narrative using dakṣiṇām diśam for a multi-day march is describing the dominant trend, not a compass-precision bearing for the final short hop. The Adam's Bridge shoal chain itself separates the Gulf of Mannar to the southwest from the Palk Strait to the northeast, so the real crossing has an east-west component too, the same as any real short sea crossing would. Direction was never the load-bearing evidence against this claim; distance and the text's explicit placement of Laṅkā, [§3](#), were, and this argument does not engage either.

2.7 The Nala Sarovar / Ṛgveda 10.136.5 post

Claim: “Nala's Lake,” Nal Sarovar in Gujarat, corroborates “Nala's Bridge of Valmiki Ramayana that connected the northern shore of Narmada to Lanka (Bhagatrav)” ([3 Aug 2026, Facebook](#)).

Test: this conflates two unrelated mythological figures. Nal Sarovar's namesake, in the dominant tradition and the Gujarati Nalakhyan literary corpus, is Nala of Nishadha, the Mahābhārata king, husband of Damayantī. The Nala who builds the bridge to Laṅkā in Yuddha Kāṇḍa is a different figure entirely, a vānara architect, son of Viśvakarmā, from a different epic. A real lake named for one Nala is being treated as evidence for a different Nala's bridge.

2.8 Population genetics “confirms” a Narmadā–Sri Lanka maritime link

Claim: mtDNA and Y-chromosome markers show gene flow between Gujarat and Sri Lanka correlating with a trade axis “that once hosted Bhagatrav, the real Laṅkā” ([3 Nov 2025, X](#)) ([26 Jul 2026, Facebook](#)) ([3 Nov 2025, LinkedIn](#)).

Test: no specific published study is cited on any of the three platforms this claim was posted to. Bidirectional gene flow across a 1,200-year coastal trade window is what ordinary maritime contact would produce regardless of which port city hosted it; it is non-diagnostic. Worth noting separately: this claim frames the Sri Lanka identification as a legitimate transfer of ancestral memory riding on real trade and migration, which sits uneasily next to §2.5's framing of the same identification as a distortion introduced by politically motivated redactors. The claim argues both that the shift was an error and that it was a meaningful, memory-carrying transfer, without reconciling the two.

On the LinkedIn posting of this exact claim, a reader, Dr. Umashankar PR, directly requested a source: *“Improve authenticity by sharing the reference.”* The reply, quoted here in full because its precision matters: *“these posts are for casual readers of Linked In. Not planning to spend hours giving references to every hundred individual comments. Not feasible. For this i write the books... If you are really so dying for references, buy these books.”* This is not an inference about the claim's evidentiary basis. It is the claim's author, asked directly and specifically for a source, declining to provide one and redirecting to a commercial product he sells. The pattern examined at length in §4 is stated here in the author's own words.

2.9 “Not a single reference of Rāma ever crossing the river Narmadā”

Claim, as reported in an independent review of the book: the text's silence on a Narmadā crossing means the itinerary stayed north of it ([10 Mar 2023, Swarajya](#)).

Test: an argument from silence on one point is used to outweigh the text's own repeated, explicit statements on the same point, addressed in §3.

2.10 The claim's own labels for the identical gulf are not stable

Across the claim's own material, the Gulf of Khambhat is labelled three different ways: “Dakṣiṇa Samudra” in the “Which Dakshina Samudra” post ([Facebook](#)); “Apara Samudra (Dakṣiṇa Samudra)”, stacking two different directional terms on the identical water, in an accompanying illustrative map circulated with the same claim; and implicitly redesignated the “Western Ocean” at a later, unstated date, once “the southern ocean to the south of Kanyakumari was discovered by the people of Ganga,” in the Gulf of Khambhat paleochannel post ([1 Aug 2026, Facebook](#)) ([2 Aug 2026, LinkedIn](#)).

Test: no citation anywhere marks when or where this supposed redesignation occurred. If Dakṣiṇa, Apara, and (implicitly) Paścima Samudra were fixed, technical proper names

the way the identification requires them to be, they could not shift depending on which post is being written. The claim's own usage across its own material confirms the directional reading argued for in [§3.1](#): these are relative terms, not place names.

3. What the Text Itself Actually Says

3.1 Dakṣiṇa Samudra Is a Direction, Not a Place Name

In Sundara Kāṇḍa 5.65.9 ([read the verse](#)), Hanumān reports that Laṅkā sits on the southern shore of the Dakṣiṇa Samudra, the very sea he has just finished crossing. If Dakṣiṇa Samudra were a fixed name for a gulf near Bharuch, Laṅkā could not also sit on its far shore after a described ocean crossing away from that region. The term works the way Pūrva, Paścima, and Uttara Samudra work throughout the same corpus: as directions relative to the speaker, not as place names, exactly as confirmed by the claim's own shifting usage in [§2.10](#).

3.2 The Hundred-Yojana Ocean Crossing Is Stated Five Separate Times

Sundara Kāṇḍa states the same figure five times: [\(5.1\)](#), [\(5.2\)](#), [\(5.35\)](#), [\(5.36\)](#), and [\(5.65\)](#), including Hanumān's own account to Sītā after the crossing is finished. Each instance describes open ocean, crocodile-infested water, and flight, not a short swim across a river mouth.

3.3 The Southern Search Runs Through the Vindhya

Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍa 4.41 ([read the verse](#)) has Sugrīva dispatch the southern search party already assuming Rāvaṇa's location is an island, before any coastline is reached. 4.50 ([read the verse](#)) places that search in Vindhya-region terrain, consistent with a route converging on the far south of the peninsula.

4. The Redaction Claim Has Never Been Supported

The claim's own redaction history is laid out across [\(28–29 Jul 2026, X\)](#) and [\(29 Jul 2026, Facebook\)](#) and [\(30 Jul 2026, LinkedIn\)](#): an original Layer O has Hanumān swim a short distance across the Narmadā mouth; a later Layer A reassigns this to a much longer voyage from Orissa to Sri Lanka; an intermediate Layer B routes through the unconfirmed “Thekkumalai” island of [§2.5](#); and a final Layer C garbles the start and end points of A and B, producing the “Rāma Setu” concept.

This is a strong claim, made with no supporting evidence anywhere in the public record checked for this paper. When a reader asks directly how one voyage could have been converted into the other, the answer given is that the direction of derivation runs the other way, restated assertion, not argument. A genuine interpolation claim would need to show manuscript-family variation, engagement with the Baroda Critical Edition's own apparatus, or internal stylistic evidence distinguishing the disputed passages. None of these appears anywhere across any of the three platforms.

The same gap appears to extend to the book. This paper has not read Geography of Rāmāyaṇa directly and does not claim to have checked its internal citations firsthand. What can be said, from every proxy available, the claim's own thread summaries across all three platforms and an independent review of the published book [\(10 Mar 2023, Swarajya\)](#), is that none of them surfaces a manuscript citation for this specific claim, even where producing one would have directly settled a reader's stated objection.

4.1 The Burden the Book Has Not Discharged

One point of logic is worth stating carefully, because it would be easy to overstate and the paper has tried throughout not to claim more than the evidence supports. Every claim examined in §2 of this paper is not offered as a freestanding argument, complete in itself. Each one is explicitly presented, in the claim's own words, as a public summary of an argument “well detailed in my book... with full references,” and when a reader asked directly for even one such reference, the answer given was that the books exist precisely “for this,” and that anyone wanting references should buy them (§2.8). The book is not, in other words, a separate and untested body of evidence sitting apart from everything traced in this paper. It is the thing the public claims themselves repeatedly point to as their own evidentiary backing.

That relationship matters for where the burden of proof sits. A claim that names its own source and promises that fuller evidence exists there is a claim whose author has every incentive, and every opportunity, to produce that evidence when challenged, since doing so would settle the challenge immediately and favourably. Across every platform and every claim traced in this paper, that opportunity was presented repeatedly, sometimes as a general request for authenticity, once as a direct, specific, low-cost request for a single reference, not a demand for “hours” of work, one citation. The lowest-cost, most persuasive response available in that moment would have been to supply it. It was not supplied. The response was to decline and redirect to a purchase instead.

This paper does not conclude from that pattern that the book is wrong, or that it lacks the citations it claims to contain; that would be a claim about content this paper has not verified and is not entitled to make. What can be fairly said is narrower and, on reflection, sufficient: the book has been named, repeatedly and by its own author, as the place where these specific claims are substantiated; it has been offered every reasonable opportunity, across years and three separate platforms, to make good on that claim in even the smallest way; and at every such opportunity, the response has been deferral rather than demonstration. A source that is never produced when producing it would have been easy, cheap, and immediately persuasive is not the same as a source that does not exist — but it is also not evidence that it does. The book has not been shown to fail. It has also not been shown, by the one person positioned to show it at essentially no cost, to succeed.

5. The Positive Case for Sri Lanka

The shoal formation between Rāmeśvaram and northwest Sri Lanka, Rāma Setu or Adam's Bridge, has been directly surveyed by the Geological Survey of India in connection with the Sethusamudram Ship Channel Project; its existence, location, and scale are matters of surveyed physical record in the Palk Strait, not textual inference. No equivalent formation is surveyed or claimed anywhere near the Narmadā estuary.

Separately, historian Justin W. Henry's *Ravana's Kingdom: The Ramayana and Sri Lankan History from Below* (Oxford, 2022) documents the real history of how Sri Lanka came to be identified with Rāvaṇa's realm, including the Cōḷa dynasty's role in making it concrete in the ninth century CE, a documented history the Bhagatray claim has no equivalent for. Sri Lankan writer Sunela Jayewardene's *Ravana's Lanka: The Landscape of a Lost Kingdom* (2024) makes the positive, place-based case for the island's own deep connection to the story, an argument register the Bhagatray claim does not attempt to answer.

A wholly independent source corroborates the same basic geography from outside the Indian textual tradition entirely. The Chinese Buddhist monk Faxian, travelling 399–414 CE, sailed from the Indian port of Tamralipti to an island he records as “Sinhala,” stayed two years, and left a detailed eyewitness account ([Legge trans., 1886, Project Gutenberg #2124](#)), describing it as a populous, prosperous island reached only by sea voyage from the Indian mainland. Faxian has no connection to this dispute in any direction; his account simply confirms, from a source contemporary to neither Vālmīki nor any modern claimant, that an island called Sinhala, reached by ship from India, existed exactly where the traditional identification places Laṅkā, five centuries before the Cōla-era developments Henry documents and many centuries before any Bhagatrav claim. This gap has already been noticed publicly by a credentialed critic. Jayasree Saranathan, author of *Mahabharata 3136 BCE: Validation of the Traditional Date*, responded directly to the identification with the same physical objection: if Nadumuri Ravi’s Laṅkā sits at Bhagatrav on the Narmadā, “then what about Ram Setu? That’s across the Narmadā river” ([29 Jul 2024, X](#)). No formation answering to that description exists there; the objection stands unanswered in the public record checked for this paper.

6. The Claim's Own Reference Site Contradicts It

Independent of the social-media claim entirely, Nadumuri Ravi maintains a second, older body of work: AncientVoice ([ancientvoice.wikidot.com](#)), a wiki he describes as containing 25,376 pages and cites as his primary research platform. On its main Bharatavarsha reference map, linked from the site’s principal navigation bar, the labels “Laṅkā” and “Trikuṭa” are placed on the island south of India, not at the Narmadā estuary, and “Malyavat” is placed in the south near Kanchi, not as a northern Vindhyan range as required by §2.4.

This placement is independently verifiable through the Internet Archive’s Wayback Machine, a third-party record the claim’s author cannot alter, back to January 2012, twelve years before the earliest documented public instance of the Bhagatrav claim traced in this paper. The map’s own footer, already visible in the 2018 capture, reads “Created by Jijith Nadumuri at 28 May 2010, 15:50 and updated at 25 Dec 2011, 04:29,” indicating the page was unedited on this point from 2011 through at least 2018, and it remains unchanged on the live site at the time of writing.

Date	Source	What It Shows
7 Jan 2012	(Wayback Machine snapshot)	“Laṅkā” and “Trikuṭa” on the island south of India; “Malyavat” in the south near Kanchi.
18 Jun 2018	(Wayback Machine snapshot)	Same map, same labels; page footer already reads “updated at 25 Dec 2011,” confirming no edit since.
4 Aug 2026 (live)	(Live page)	Same map, same labels, still linked from the site’s main navigation at time of writing.

Date	Source	What It Shows
Full history	(Wayback Machine calendar (122 captures, 2010–2026))	Complete independently-logged capture history, available for further verification.

A fair anticipated response deserves to be named directly rather than left for a reader to raise: this map could be characterised as general or “traditional” reference geography, kept for orientation and separate from the specific reinterpretation argued elsewhere. That is coherent in principle. It is weaker here because the map is not peripheral: it sits on the site's primary hub page, described in the author's own prose as a map “I created...by studying about the probable locations” of ancient India, his own research product rather than a neutral reference merely hosted, and it has remained unedited on this specific point through the entire period the Bhagatrav claim has been published elsewhere. The claim this paper draws from that is correspondingly narrow: not that a reversal has been caught, which would assert an intent this record cannot establish, but that the author's own longest-standing, most detailed cartographic resource places Laṅkā and Malyavat exactly where mainstream scholarship places them, and this has never been reconciled with the claim examined throughout §2.

One further check is worth reporting for completeness, precisely because it does not support this paper's case and is reported anyway. AncientVoice's separate kingdom-list page names “Lanka” among a small number of entries with no corresponding page, alongside unrelated stub entries such as “Romana” and “Loha.”

The natural question is whether this reflects a page that once existed and was later removed. It does not: an identically-dated Wayback Machine capture from [\(3 Jan 2012\)](#) shows the same handful of entries already missing, in the same state, fourteen years before this paper was written. “Sinhala,” in the same row as “Lanka” on this list, has always been a live page. This is consistent with an incomplete stub in a large, long-running wiki, not with concealment, and is reported here in that spirit rather than as a further point against the claim.

7. The Excavation Contradicts the Required Profile

Independent of everything argued so far, the identification can be tested against the most literal kind of evidence available: what the ground at Bhagatrav actually contains. The site was re-excavated in 2015 by a team from IIT Gandhinagar, and the full stratigraphic, radiocarbon, and luminescence results were published in a peer-reviewed, open-access paper in 2024–25.

Kanungo et al. [\(Radiocarbon, 2025\)](#) directly revise S.R. Rao's original 1962–63 characterisation of the site, the same characterisation the identification relies on when it credits Rao with confirming Laṅkā. Rao described Bhagatrav as a “Mature Harappan port town contemporary with Lothal.” The 2015 excavation found no evidence of an early or Mature Harappan phase at all; occupation is now dated to the Late Harappan (Sorath) period only, roughly 2200–1500 BCE, and its excavators conclude the occupation pattern most plausibly represents small, discontinuous seasonal camps, “where people from nearby urban centres come for fishing or other natural resources exploitation seasonally,” rather than a permanent port town.

The excavators state directly, in their own conclusion, that the site is “unfortified,” and

that excavation “neither gave any evidence of structures nor large-scale crafts.” Other regional Sorath Harappan sites, Kuntasi, Rojdi, Pithad, do have fortifications; Bhagatrav specifically does not. Even the port identification itself, the detail the claim leans on hardest, is directly disputed by the excavators: the only physical evidence found consistent with maritime trade is “a few circular features... and a broken anchor... Neither of these can be taken as important criteria for trading, let alone port.”

No burn layer, no destruction horizon, no weapon finds, and no mass grave appear anywhere in this stratigraphic record, across three separate excavation trenches and multiple radiocarbon and luminescence dates. The site's occupational history, from its Late Harappan phase through a roughly 2,500-year gap to its medieval reoccupation, is explained entirely by natural processes, tidal and river erosion, seasonal flooding, gradual abandonment. Nothing in the published excavation record describes or is consistent with a walled capital city that was besieged, burned, and militarily overthrown, which is what the Rāmāyaṇa's account of Laṅkā's fall requires of whatever site is proposed to be it.

This is worth separating from a broader and genuinely contested question, whether the Indus Valley Civilization as a whole was unusually peaceful. That debate is real: while the comparative absence of large-scale military architecture and weapon assemblages across Harappan sites is widely noted ([\(Kenoyer 1998\)](#); [\(Possehl 2002\)](#); [\(McIntosh 2001\)](#)), [\(Cork 2005\)](#) has directly challenged the methodology behind that comparison, arguing that Harappan weapon finds derive from ordinary settlement contexts rather than the elite tombs that inflate Mesopotamian weapon counts, and that the two are not straightforwardly comparable. This paper does not need to resolve that broader debate. The claim tested here does not rest on Harappan civilization in general; it rests on one specific, named, now-excavated site, and that site's own published excavation record, most recently updated in 2025, describes something structurally incompatible with what the identification requires it to have been.

8. Chronology: A Circular Argument Twice Over

The date proposed for Rāma, c. 1950–1850 BCE, sits at the onset of Harappan de-urbanization, not a stable, high-capacity phase of the civilization ([World History Encyclopedia](#)), a chronology independently corroborated by ancient-DNA analysis: Narasimhan et al.'s genome-wide ([Science, 2019](#)) study of over 500 ancient individuals confirms that Steppe-pastoralist ancestry, absent from the Harappan population during its urban height, begins entering South Asia only after the Indus Valley Civilization's decline, placing that decline firmly at the same horizon rather than a later or earlier one.

The chronology and the geography are not independent in this claim, they are chained together in a double circularity. The proposed date for Rāma is used to argue for a maximum feasible bridge length of 12 km; that figure is used to derive a 120-metre yojana; that yojana value is applied to the text to produce the short Narmadā-mouth geography; and the resulting short, technologically plausible bridge is then cited as evidence the original date must be correct. The date produces the yojana value, the yojana value produces the geography, and the geography is used to argue the date is right, an argument with no anchor external to itself, and none of the three variables is independently established.

This circularity is possible only because the underlying premise is never allowed to bend: the claim treats the Rāmāyaṇa as recording one specific, precisely datable, geographically fixed historical event, rather than as itihāsa in the more common

scholarly sense, a layered tradition combining historical memory, oral transmission, and poetic elaboration. A text offering multiple internally consistent descriptions of a place, five repeated hundred-yojana crossings, an explicit shore-of-the-Dakṣiṇa-Samudra placement, a search route through specific terrain, should update the working assumption about what kind of text this is. Instead, four invented redaction layers are built to protect the initial assumption from that evidence. The causality is backwards: the textual evidence is being edited to fit a predetermined premise, rather than the premise being tested against the evidence.

9. What Separates a Theory from Speculation, and a Second Documented Instance

It is worth being precise about what the word “theory” is doing when it is attached to a claim like this one, because the word is carrying more authority than the underlying practice has earned. A theory, in the sense the term is used in any field that actually tests its claims, has to satisfy three conditions. It has to be specific enough to be wrong, a claim vague enough to accommodate any outcome is not being tested by anything. It has to be checked against evidence capable, in principle, of overturning it, not merely evidence selected because it is compatible with the conclusion already reached. And when a qualified critic identifies a specific, named problem with the claim, the claim has to respond, either by producing better evidence, by revising the position, or by being abandoned. This third condition is not a courtesy extended to critics. It is the actual mechanism by which a position earns the label “theory” rather than “speculation.” Speculation can be interesting, can be creative, can even turn out to be right. What it cannot do, and remain speculation rather than harden into something more, is decline to engage with a specific challenge and continue to be presented with the same confidence as before. Every claim examined in §2 of this paper fails the second condition, evidence selected for compatibility rather than tested for capacity to overturn. This section documents a case where the claim's author also fails the third.

9.1 The Talageri Review

In 2022, Shrikant Talageri, an established Out-of-India-Theory researcher whom Nadumuri Ravi has himself repeatedly described in public as his mentor and guru, published a detailed critical review of Nadumuri Ravi's earlier book, *Rivers of R̥gveda* ([10 Mar 2022, Talageri](#)). The review opens by establishing, at length and without irony, the credibility of the author under review: it calls Nadumuri Ravi “a very important scholar in the field of Indian history,” praises his AncientVoice site as “a veritable treasure house of data and knowledge,” and notes his standing as a former ISRO scientist honoured by a former President of India. This context matters for how the review's substance should be weighed: it is not the dismissal of a hostile outsider, it is a detailed methodological objection from within the same theoretical camp, from a critic who begins by conceding everything about the author's credentials and reputation before turning to the specific problem.

The specific problem, as the review states it, is that Nadumuri Ravi's migration paradigm requires treating textual references to other peoples, rivers, and places as if they were references to the early Ikṣvāku kings and the rivers and places associated with them, a substitution the review states can be used to “forcefit” the data “into an unrecorded, incompatible and fictitious geographical scenario.” One of the specific examples raised in this exchange is a river reference reinterpreted so that it “could then

well be identified as a reference to the Narmadā,” offered by the reviewer as an illustration of exactly this kind of forcing, not as an endorsement of the Narmadā identification. This is worth sitting with directly: years before Bhagatrav entered the picture, a credentialed critic within Nadumuri Ravi's own theoretical camp had already identified and named the specific methodological habit on display throughout §2 of this paper, reading a predetermined geographical conclusion back into ambiguous textual material, with the Narmadā as the specific example used to illustrate it.

9.2 The Response

Nadumuri Ravi's published response ([2022, In Defense of the Book Rivers of Rgveda](#)) engages substantively with several of the review's points, restating and defending his own migration paradigm at length. But on the specific exchange this paper is concerned with, the document ends by directly reproducing Talageri's closing counter-rebuttal in full, and then, rather than answering it, appends a single line: “My Answer:— I chose not to answer further.”

It is difficult to overstate how precisely this single sentence illustrates the pattern this paper has traced across an entirely different body of work. Faced with a general or vague objection, declining to respond might reasonably be read as a judgment that the objection does not merit engagement. That is not what happened here. The objection was specific, named, and illustrated with a concrete textual example. The correct response to a specific, named methodological challenge from a credentialed peer is a specific rebuttal, with evidence, or a concession. Declining to answer is not a neutral third option available in that situation. It functions, whatever the author's intent, as an implicit admission that no rebuttal was available, delivered in the same even tone as everything that came before it, so that a reader skimming the document would not necessarily register that anything had been conceded at all.

9.3 The Pattern, Now Documented Twice

The evidentiary-deferral pattern examined throughout §4 of this paper, the specific challenge, the restated assertion, the pointer to unpublished material, the silence, is not confined to the Bhagatrav claim or to this year's material. It appears in an entirely separate book, on an entirely separate subject, in an exchange with an entirely separate critic, three years earlier. That repetition matters. A single instance of declining to engage with a critic could be an isolated lapse, a bad week, a disagreement not worth the author's time. A second instance, in different subject matter, with a different interlocutor, converging on the identical failure mode, methodological challenge met with silence rather than evidence, is no longer plausibly isolated. It is a documented habit. And it is a habit that makes the credentials discussed elsewhere in this paper more relevant, not less: a researcher with the training, the primary-source access, and the demonstrated capacity for detailed argument on display throughout both books is not someone who lacks the tools to answer a specific challenge. The tools are evidently there. What is documented, twice now, is a choice not to use them when the challenge gets specific enough that using them would require producing evidence that does not exist.

One caveat belongs here for the sake of precision. Talageri's own Out-of-India migration chronology is itself a contested framework with no standing as mainstream consensus history, and citing his review is not an endorsement of that broader chronology. It is cited narrowly and specifically, for the documented methodological pattern it identifies and for the documented response it received, from a critic operating inside the same

theoretical tradition as the author under review, which if anything makes the criticism harder to dismiss as external hostility rather than easier.

Table 1. The Ten Claims at a Glance

Full detail, dates, and reasoning for each row appear in §2; this table is a summary reference only.

#	Claim	Source(s)	Why It Fails
2.1	Bhagatrav (Narmadā mouth) is Rāvaṇa's Laṅkā	X, 27 Oct 2025; Facebook	Site's existence undisputed; the Laṅkā identification and Maricha/pepper etymology are both asserted with no source
2.2	"Laṅkā" is an Austro-Asiatic word for river-island	X, Dec 2025; Facebook, 29 Jul 2026	No linguistic source on either platform; "verify it with grok" is not a citation; word is non-diagnostic even if true
2.3	S.R. Rao's excavation confirms the site as Laṅkā	X, 27 Feb 2026	Rao's own published work identifies the site, not as Laṅkā; a credentialed name is attached to a claim he never made, and 2025 re-excavation revises Rao's original claim downward (§7)
2.4	Twelve converging genealogical/toponymic clues; earlier version cites Uttara Kāṇḍa verses; "a dozen other researchers agree"	X, 1 Nov 2025; LinkedIn, 2024	2025 posting is uncited; 2024 posting cites real verses, but all from the separately contested Uttara Kāṇḍa; the "dozen researchers" are never named
2.5	Four-layer redaction (O/A/B/C) explains the text's crossing	X, 28–29 Jul 2026; Facebook; LinkedIn, 30 Jul 2026	No manuscript or Critical Edition evidence at any point; Layer B rests on the unconfirmed "Kumari Kandam" landmass
2.6	Directional terms show a strictly north–south crossing	Facebook, 2 Aug 2026	True under both readings; does not engage the crossing distance or Laṅkā's textual placement
2.7	Nal Sarovar corroborates "Nala's Bridge"	Facebook, 3 Aug 2026	Conflates two unrelated mythological Nalas from two different epics

#	Claim	Source(s)	Why It Fails
2.8	Population genetics confirms a Narmadā–Sri Lanka link	X, 3 Nov 2025; Facebook, 26 Jul 2026; LinkedIn, 3 Nov 2025	No study cited; non-diagnostic even if true; frames the shift as both an error and a legitimate transfer without reconciling the two
2.9	Text's silence on a Narmadā crossing	Swarajya review, 10 Mar 2023	Argument from silence outweighed by five explicit textual statements to the contrary
2.10	Gulf of Khambhat labelled Dakṣiṇa/Apara/“Western” Ocean across posts	Facebook & LinkedIn, various dates	No citation for the claimed redesignation; confirms the directional, not proper-noun, reading of §3.1

10. Conclusion

Ten distinct claims, across X, Facebook, LinkedIn, and a published book, underlie the Bhagatray identification of Laṅkā. Traced to their sources and checked against what can be verified, none of them holds. A credentialed archaeologist's name is borrowed for an identification he never made, and the excavation record that name rests on has itself since been revised: the site's own 2024–25 re-excavation describes an unfortified settlement with no structures, no port evidence, and no trace of the destruction the epic's account of Laṅkā requires (§7). The claim's author's own longest-standing reference resource, independently verifiable back to 2012, places Laṅkā and Malyavat exactly where mainstream scholarship places them, unreconciled with the newer claim (§6). An unsourced etymology is deferred to a chatbot rather than a linguistic source. Twelve genealogical clues rest, in their most detailed surviving version, on real verse citations drawn entirely from a book of the epic whose authenticity as an original component is independently contested, alongside an appeal to a dozen unnamed researchers who are never identified anywhere in the record. A directional argument concedes, by silence, the distance and placement evidence that actually matters. A real lake is misattributed to the wrong mythological Nala. A redaction theory rests one of its four layers on an unconfirmed submerged landmass with no more standing than Lemuria. The claim's own labels for one gulf shift between three different directional terms across its own material. Its chronology and geography prop each other up circularly rather than resting on anything external. And an argument from the text's silence on one point is used against five separate places where the text speaks on that same point explicitly. Set against this is a text that plainly places Laṅkā on the shore of the Dakṣiṇa Samudra, repeats the same open-ocean hundred-yojana crossing five times, sends its search party through the Vindhya toward the far south, is backed by a surveyed geological formation in the Palk Strait, and is supported by a documented history of the Sri Lanka identification the rival claim cannot match. This paper does not need to infer that the underlying claims are unsupported by argument alone: asked directly, on the record, for a single reference, the claim's author states plainly that he is “not planning” to provide one and directs the reader to purchase a book instead (§2.8). Since every claim examined here names that same book as its own evidentiary backing,

that refusal is not incidental to the argument, it bears directly on it: the book has been offered every reasonable opportunity to make good on what its own author repeatedly says it contains, and at the one moment that opportunity was cheapest to take, a single citation rather than an argument, it was declined (§4.1). And this is not an isolated case of a claim failing to meet its evidentiary burden: §9 documents an entirely separate instance, in different subject matter, three years earlier, of the identical pattern, a specific, named methodological challenge from a credentialed peer, met with silence rather than evidence. A reading unsupported by its texts, contradicted by the ground it claims as its capital, unable to name the authorities it appeals to, and consistently unable to answer its strongest critics, does not meet the bar of a competing scholarly position. It meets the bar of an assertion that has never been tested against its own sources, or its own site.

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*Dated sources marked **red** are the claims under examination; sources marked **blue** are the evidence weighed against them; sources marked **grey** are background or context, not part of the direct evidentiary chain.*

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