

by a Himalayan Saraswati river during the time period 6000–3000 BP. Valdiya, who is not a co-author comments²: ‘We believe that it was the Saraswati River originating in the Himalaya’. Saini and Mujtaba⁶ in fact suggest that these sediments point to a source in the Siwaliks (and not in the glacial Himalayas). Valdiya does not refer to this more recent paper.

There is a further instance of misrepresentation by Valdiya. Pointing to a passage from Giosan *et al.*⁷, he writes²; ‘Interestingly, Giosan *et al.* (...) concede that... “the Yamuna may have contributed sediment to this region...” (Hakra–Ghagghar) “before the Mature Harappan Phase. For we recovered 5400-year-old sandy flood deposit at Fort Abbas (in Cholistan) Pakistan”...’.

This makes it seem that Giosan *et al.*⁷ are suggesting that the Yamuna was flowing in this region around 5400 years ago. Here is relevant original text⁷; ‘Provenance detection (...) suggests that the Yamuna may have contributed sediment to this region during the last glacial period, but switched to the Ganges basin before Harappan times. The present Ghaggar–Hakra valley and its tributary rivers are currently dry or have seasonal flows. Yet rivers were undoubtedly active in this region during the Urban Harappan Phase. We recovered sandy fluvial deposits approximately 5,400 years-old at Fort Abbas in Pakistan (SI Text)...’.

Valdiya’s additions ‘before the mature Harappan Phase’ and ‘For’ have given the paragraph a different meaning than what the authors intended. Which rule of science publishing allows one to insert new words and phrases into the published text of some other author?

1. Giosan, L. *et al.*, *Curr. Sci.*, 2013, **104**, 285.
2. Valdiya, K. S., *Curr. Sci.*, 2013, **104**, 42–54.
3. <http://suvratk.blogspot.com/2012/06/fluvia-history-and-fortunes-of-hml>
4. <http://www.suvratk.blogspot.in/search/label/saraswati>
5. Saini, H. S. *et al.*, *Curr. Sci.*, 2009, **97**, 1634–1643.
6. Saini, H. S. and Mujtaba, S. A. I., *Geochronometria*, 2010, **37**, 29–35.
7. Giosan, L. *et al.*, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA*, 2012, **109**, E1688–E1694.

SUVRAT KHER

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Response to Suvrat Kher

Suvrat Kher in his letter admits that he is the author of those sentences that generated misunderstanding between Giosan *et al.*¹ and myself. If Kher had such strong feelings about my writing on the Saraswati as expressed in the sentences he has put on his blog post, he could have communicated directly with me, for he has advised me to revise my works. I must confess that I do not have the ability and inclination to read the material posted on blogs.

I am aware that quite a few geologists hold views different from mine. When I used the words ‘we’ and ‘ours’, I understandably meant those who subscribe to the view that once the Saraswati flowed through Haryana, Rajasthan and Sindh. Having ploughed a lonely furrow all my life, I cannot have the immodesty and temerity of assuming ‘responsibility for all Indian geologists’.

Kher accuses me of misinterpreting the deduction of Saini *et al.*², who clearly state that the sedimentary succession of the area between Tohana and Sirsa which is ‘considered as a part of the area’ through which the ‘lost’ Saraswati flowed (p. 1634), contains grey sandy facies with ‘grey sediments similar to the modern day sediments of the mountain-fed rivers’, ‘like Ganga and Yamuna’ (p. 1637) and ‘The mineralogical characters, extent and style of the grey micaceous sand suggests that it was a Himalayan mountain-fed multi-channel fluvial system.’ Taking in conjunction with the findings of Courty³, I concluded that this fluvial system belonged to the Saraswati.

Logical deduction cannot be construed as ‘misrepresentation’.

I know that Saini *et al.*² alluded to the river coming from the Siwalik. But the Siwalik is the Outer Himalaya. Moreover, in all my writings I have stated that the Himalaya-born Saraswati flowed through the Siwalik terrain between east of Paota Sahab and KalaAm.

I have correctly interpreted what Giosan *et al.*¹ have written in their article. The only error I committed was the wrong placement of quotation mark. I am sorry for this inadvertent mistake. But the meaning conveyed is the same as what Giosan *et al.*¹ intended.

I have not indulged in any misinterpretation or misrepresentation.

1. Giosan, L. *et al.*, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA*, 2012; www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.11127431090, Early edition.
2. Saini, H. S., Tandon, S. K., Mujtaba S. A. T., Pant, N. C. and Khorana, R. K., *Curr. Sci.*, 2009, **97**, 1634–1643.
3. Courty, M. A., *Museum of Technical University*, Lubbock, Texas, 1995, pp. 106–126.

K. S. VALDIYA

Response to L. Giosan *et al.*

Giosan *et al.*¹ rightly protest the attributions I made in my article². I sincerely apologize for the misattribution which was the result of a genuine error.

Giosan *et al.*¹ state that their ‘admiration for the Indian culture’ and their ‘interest for the history of the subcontinent is long-lived’, and that ‘they have the utmost respect for the Indian civilization and its achievements’.

The irony is that they³ have not found ‘reliable enough’ works to be cited – even seminal works – of Indian authors who spent their lifetime on constructing the history of the Saraswati and the Harappa Civilization. Out of the 60 references in their list, only three Indian archaeologists figure, one of them being a co-author of the Giosan paper³. Only one paper on geology is cited, and the contributions of many authors in an edited volume are not mentioned, let alone discussed, even to contend their conclusions.

1. Giosan, L., Clift, P. D., Macklin, M. G. and Fuller, D. Q., *Curr. Sci.*, 2013, **104**, 285.
2. Valdiya, K. S., *Curr. Sci.*, 2013, **104**, 42–54.
3. Giosan, L. *et al.*, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA*, 2012, **109**, E1688–E1694.

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