

Disobedient Histories in Ancient and Modern Times

Disobedient Histories in Ancient and Modern Times:

*Regionalism, Governance,
War and Peace*

By

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INTRODUCTION

This is a book about disobedient histories. What is a disobedient history? In the last two decades, I have had uncanny luck in finding disobedient sources in the archives. These historical people had the audacity to live their lives in a manner that disagrees with and disobeys the way that many scholars of my generation and earlier think about their lives. I have no idea of how to go back in the past and say to these historical people, “Cut. Take two. Rewrite your script. Redesign your set. Recast your family and neighbors. Relive your entire life. You are doing it all wrong! If you do not stop, we will have to rewrite our textbooks and lectures in the twenty-first century. That is too much for us to do so *you* have change.” For two decades, I have questioned where my loyalty lies as a historian.

Should I be more loyal to history as lived by these historical people or should I limit my efforts to sources that support the general consensus and traditional narratives of history as shaped by the global academy of scholars? In this century, more scholars are taking up this question and making the decision that I made with this book. There are times when we choose to disobey the traditional narrative and side with the deleted or edited peoples of the past. Why did I finally decide to bring my research findings to print? In the disobedient sources, I found ancient and modern political theories that are blossoming into more humane regionalisms and governance systems that lead to less warfare and more peace in general.

In this book, I share with you some disobedient histories based on evidence from ancient and from modern times, evidence that speaks to older theories of international relations that promote peace, life and prosperity. The stories come from India, Southeast Asia, Scandinavia, Wales, Ancient Carthage, Arabia, France and Nigeria. These disobedient histories of regionalism, good governance, gender, war and peace are in practice today. Peace is breaking out like a plague around the planet in the twenty-first century and it is beautiful!

In 2000, 190 nations agreed to work together on the United Nations Millennium Development Goals 2000-2015 (MDGs) against the indignities of poverty. (See www.un.org/millenniumgoals/.) The progress was so remarkable and so many more people are alive and thriving that the nations agreed to do it again under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030 (SDGs). I have seen glimmers of hope in

the eyes of young adults in North America, Europe, Africa and Asia in the last ten years. I am sure it is also present in South America and Australia but I have not yet researched in those areas. This wave of peace is a plague to people who remain fixated on zero-sum game, binary, Cold War political theories derived in part from nineteenth-century colonial agendas. The outbreak of peace is incomprehensible to such theorists who often boast of being realists.

Sometimes, an international relations realist will accuse those nations in the world who practice peaceful international relations of being simple, amateur and ignorant mimics of Western political theories. I believe that the question for those realists is this: If your theories led to the First and Second World Wars and the lethal proxy wars of the Cold War era, is it wise to think that people will continue to sign up for another global war just because you cannot imagine peace? In this book, I disobey the realists by showing some ancient, pragmatic political theories that privilege peace above war, theories that I believe are part of the very deep historical context underlying the MDGs, the SDGs and some international regional organizations like the Association for Southeast Asian Nations. Sometimes, the MDGs and the SDGs make us question the inevitability of war as supported by the general historical consensus. Such questioning rattles realists into saying, "I accuse you of disobedience to the Narrative!"

When I entered physical and digital archives, I looked for additional evidence of what I learned in the canonical versions in scholarly literature on the topic. Scholarly literature and the canons of history are phrases that historians use to describe the consensus that we reach when we sum up knowledge that we have gleaned and shaped into articles and books. We gather in regional, national and international conferences to discuss what we find. We give each other feedback and hints about additional sources or published works to help us make sense of the information that we find about people who lived in the past. We distill this information to a general narrative on a topic. The most condensed versions appear in textbooks. I was looking for more evidence to explain additional details of the textbook narratives. The details that I found answered some standard questions that historians and history-lovers ask but the answers were not what I expected.

Historians try to answer some of these questions. What happened back in the days before our day? How did that big building get here? Why do we speak this language instead of another? Why do we do things in a way that is different from the people over there? Who contributed to the making of the world that we now live in? Were there other possibilities? In addition to these, there are the questions that are sometimes the most difficult to answer. Why did my family member or ancestor have to die in

that war or that famine or that urban slum or that underdeveloped part of the world? Why did the laughter stop that day? Why are we still crying today? Obedient histories often try to give us answers to help us accept what happened in the past. Sometimes historians help us feel better, nobler, or even less complicit in this sadness. At best, obedient histories bring hope and peace. Sometimes, obedient histories can only pacify and numb us with fatalism.

I found history versions that pacify and they existed in the ancient, medieval and modern eras; however, those historians often accomplished their goal by editing the evidence. In this book there are examples of the difference between history-as-it-was-lived and history-as-it-has-been-edited. Restoring the discarded people is not easy and it will raise questions. I used evidence from traditional history sources like Titus Livius' version the Roman Empire history. I also use evidence from archaeology, genetic anthropology, sociology, and even sonar mapping along the shores of India. This kind of prehistory evidence, evidence that is not based on written sources, made me reconsider oral histories from those regions that are usually discounted as fiction, myth and legend. Why?

We used to think that the story about the Trojan War was just fiction until Heinrich Schliemann showed us the actual city of Troy and its artifacts starting in the 1860s. He was quite disobedient until he turned out to be correct. In this book, I include other scholars who are doing historical research that may be disobedient today but will eventually be just as significant to our understanding of the past and how local people chose myth and legend to keep the memory of the past alive over the centuries.

The problem with adding the deleted details to the canonical narratives is that the results may cause us to ask questions about some of the twenty-first century political assumptions about difference and privilege, questions that may also support the peace and prosperity agenda of the UN MDGs and SDGs. If the scholars whose research I include in this book are correct, we as a human family will have to question differences based on nationalism, racism, sexism, and classism. In this book, as in my world history classes, I am not telling you what to conclude about the past. I only ask that you question the canonical narrative by considering this additional evidence from the past. You are free to continue with the canonical narrative or expand it.

The purpose of *Disobedient Histories* is to survey some ancient and modern political theories at play in twenty-first century international politics. There is a rhythm to each chapter, a waltz if you will. The first

step is to introduce a story. The next step is to search for lessons about domestic and international political theory. The third step uses the lessons to inform understanding about movements toward peace and away from war. In this book, I took license with a rule of grammar. There are titles of epics or books that I did not italicize. In English, the word “Bible” is capitalized but not italicized because it is a normal part of the lexicon. During my academic career, I have seen the same treatment extended to the Quran. So, in this book I continue that practice with respect to works like the Elder Edda or the Mahabharata. We are one human family so I decided that I will not continue the practice of making these works into strangers or others. They are part of the history of all of us.

With that grammatical choice, I now confess one of my own disobediences: I believe that the operative conjunction in the twenty-first century is “and” rather than the nineteenth century preference for “or.” In this century, all of us are needed to contribute our talents to helping the human family survive the growth of deserts, the lowering of water tables, the rise of oceans and our damning prejudices that keep us from sharing the abundance of food that we produce with those who are hungry. After seeing the sparkle of hope in the eyes of young adults in so many countries in the last twenty years, I no longer believe in the zero-sum game theory.

There are many people to thank for their contributions to my research on this matter. First, I thank Miami University of Ohio for the opportunity to teach World History to 1500, World History since 1500 and World History since 1945. The three-semester curriculum is part of the Liberal Arts portion of the Miami Plan for general education. Miami’s Code of Love and Honor, especially the phrase “we respect the dignity of other persons, the rights and property of others, and the right of others to hold and express disparate beliefs,” gives me room to teach about the humans who lived in the past and their search for a humane existence. I am grateful to Miami University and to the Southwestern Ohio Council for Higher Education for their support of my research for this book and for other projects now completed or under contract for publication. I am grateful to my colleagues around the world for their patience and wise guidance as I researched this book. There are too many to name. Many of the conversations took place at conferences: the American Historical Association, the Ohio Academy of History, the Association for University and Regional Campuses of Ohio, the Fourth Women in Africa and the Africa Diaspora Conference in Abuja, the University of Texas-Austin Africa Conferences, the Islamic Resurgence in the Age of Globalization Conference at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, the Microhistory Network meeting in Budapest, the Sixth International

Conference on Southeast Asia in Kuala Lumpur and the African Studies Association. More conversations took place at the Greater Cincinnati World Affairs Council. My friends who gather annually at a meeting of historians and World History educators in Salt Lake City inspire me. I am deeply grateful to Cambridge Scholars Publishing for their commitment to publishing canonical and other historical works to help all of us become more learned. Of course, all of us depend upon each other, the librarians and archivists, the people who support and endow these centers of knowledge. In particular, I am grateful to have had access to archives in the United States, the United Kingdom, Nigeria, Ireland and Morocco. I thank the people of the past who made it possible for us to be alive today.

I am also grateful to you for wanting to hear the voices of the people of the past who were deleted from some of the pacifying and numbing narratives of history. This book covers many parts of the world in a few pages and it may only whet your appetite. I decided to use footnotes so that you can have ready access to sources to provide more details as you go through the chapters. This is a survey and an introduction. It is not a definitive work. My hope is that *Disobedient Histories* is a beginning point for creating a new reading list for you, a lover of history.

CHAPTER ONE

FROM LORD KRISHNA'S LOST CITY OF DWARKA TO SAARC

India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan are not enemies and have not been for a generation, despite disputes over Kashmir and borders. Nepal and Bhutan are not powerless. There are some people whose worldview disagrees with these twenty-first-century position statements. As of this writing in the United States many radio talk show hosts, editorialists and Sunday morning political media pundits continue to frame world events as if the sole worldview that matters is the stilted and outmoded context of Joseph Stalin's and Harry Truman's Cold War over Winston Churchill's planet on which all other people on the planet were disempowered objects. Many of those who venture to diversify their worldview might include the twelfth-century polarized contest of Richard I of England with Emperor Saladin in the Middle East as if the medieval crusades never ended and were the only form of interaction between Europeans and anyone else over the last four thousand years or even over the last four hundred days.

The time-locked and distorting contexts of the defunct Cold War or medieval Crusades to access the trade routes intersecting in Jerusalem are a crutch for media and political analysts' insufficient depth and breadth of historical knowledge. Contexts like these are time-locked and automated by a social science methodology that analyzes or filters a snapshot or screenshot of an international event as if it were the entirety of human experience. Overreliance on social science to the exclusion of deeper history seriously hobbles United States' foreign policy and security strategies, especially when other nations factor deeper history into their policy equations. Too many time-locked policy analysts make the US national government look increasingly unconnected with the twenty-first-century global community that includes its own citizens' deep history and culture with their business and civil interests.

Sometimes, it seems that those who use these frameworks have no idea of the endgame for either the Cold War or the medieval Crusades contest – namely access to the Indian Ocean trade routes that Alexander III of

Macedonia coveted. In general, United States senior executives of multinational corporations are fully aware of the importance of treating South Asian owners and executives of indigenous companies as respected equals in the twenty-first century. Their pragmatic awareness today is as intense, if not more so, than that of the Jardine & Matheson executives or the Directors of the East India Company in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Those company executives faced terms of trade that were dictated by rulers of nations trading across the Malacca Strait, the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. Readings of unedited European documents from that era reveal that it was a multi-polar world then, too.

One of the frustrations in researching this book has been an increasing awareness of a trend in secondary and post-secondary general education curricula in the United States that does a great disservice to the nation by producing political science and history textbooks and course topics that presume the continuity of the “rise of the West” to the “Cold War,” narratives wherein ordinary people feature only as labor units or collateral damage casualties in the hundreds of thousands without regard to the multigenerational impact of wars. This narrative is no longer patriotic because US students’ future employers need cohorts and cadres of new employees who are versed in the multipolar globalized world. In the twenty-first century there is a new global endgame articulated by more than 190 countries in the United Nations Millennium and Sustainable Development Goals. The new endgame is this: When everyone lives and lives a dignified life, there is peace and peace is profitable because it creates more customers. Even political realists need to factor India as the world’s largest democracy with some of the world’s largest corporations, with its Indian Space Research Organisation with a satellite now orbiting Mars, and with its increasing blue water navy capacity.

India is a 1985 founding nation of a regional trade organization with Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. The organization is the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). There is an inverse relationship between the strength of SAARC and border conflicts. It is unrealistic, and embarrassing for the United States, for media, analysts and educators to ignore co-existing international relations theories based upon deeper histories simply because this data does not fit quantitative social science studies or time-locked Cold War models.

This book is an attempt to provide multiple frameworks to help political pundits, theorists, strategists, and those who care about the human family, to step gently into the world that exists beyond the Cold War and Crusader narratives, a world in which SAARC represents the world

historical norm. There are multiple complementary ancient and early modern theories of international relations at play this year and this book is an attempt to help those locked in Cold War and Crusader binaries expand their global political fluency so that they can hear the warm and genuine invitations to peace and prosperity that they have been unable to decipher. This book begins with the oldest political theory that I could find and it concerns a submerged city near the state of Gujarat in India.

The salinity of the Arabian Sea, with its water temperature approaching that of the human body, is a deceptively soothing and inviting marvel of the interplay of sunlight and waves that is at once a momentary glimpse of eternity from which all life emerges and returns and also a reminder of rocking in amniotic fluid where time is suspended. The sea is more complex than poetic. The deception is that this sea conceals a raw truth. It can erase the human civilizations that huddle along its life-supporting shores. Despite the wisdom conveyed in deluge myths around the world, we continue to concentrate our populations in port cities where a two-foot change in ocean level will render them obsolete, a fact that the citizens of the nations of Tuvalu, Vanuatu and others know so well since their Pacific nations are increasingly submerged by rising ocean levels as of this writing.

In 1999 and 2000, sonar aquanauts led by chief geologist S. Badrinaryan of the National Institute of Ocean Technology of India, used human-generated sound waves to see through the murky waters near the Gulf of Khambhat (Cambay). They revealed a city of right-angled structures at a depth of 120 feet, a city that measured five miles by two miles and that dates to at least 10,000 years ago when Ice Age ocean levels rose due to melting glaciers. The immediate response from many in the established academic community was that it is not possible for any population to have created a civilization before the Mesopotamians did.¹

¹ S. Badrinaryan, "Gulf of Cambay: Cradle of Ancient Civilization," *Archaeology Online*, n.d. www.archaeologyonline.net/artifacts/cambay. See also S. Kathirolu, "Recent Marine Archaeological Finds in Khambhat, Gujarat," *Journal of Indian Ocean Archaeology* (2004): 141-149; Asha Krishnakumar, "The Gulf of Khambhat Debate," *Frontline: India's National Magazine* 19, no. 7 (March 30-April 12, 2002); Lyla Bavadam, "Questionable Claims: Archaeologists Debunk the Claim that Underwater Structures in the Gulf of Khambhat Point to the Existence of a Pre-Harappan Civilisation," *Frontline: India's National Magazine* 19, no. 5 (March

This hard scientific evidence may eventually produce as much of a tectonic shift in Western knowledge as Galileo's assertion that the Earth travels around the sun. Badrinaryan and his team discovered an impermissible history. I call impermissible history those events based on disobedient primary evidence. It is impermissible because no one or two or ten academics have permission to cause perhaps a million or more scholars and educators and publishers around the world to recalibrate their lectures and teaching materials in order to accommodate new historical facts like this submerged city in the Arabian Sea. Badrinaryan's discovery of an Ice Age metropolis disobeys the narrative that Indian culture was created by Aryans and it may empower Dravidian descendants seeking greater civil rights and an end to discrimination in modern India. Changing the general historical narrative of those who came of age in the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries may be more difficult than traveling back in time to tell the people who lived in this submerged city to move the entire city to Mesopotamia so that the evidence they leave behind will obey the narratives of people thousands of years in the future.

Is this lost city the stuff of legends and myth? Badrinaryan's discovered city feels similar to the lost city of Troy before Heinrich Schliemann found it in the 1870s. Badrinaryan's team made sonar scans showing foundations of buildings. While many of the walls gave in to the tides of history and have been scattered, the foundations are still there. Some are so big that they may have been public buildings. One basement measures 45 meters by 200 meters and this building was constructed on high ground with steps and fortifications around it. Another building measures 190 meters by 85 meters. Smaller buildings along streets may have been residential neighborhoods. Many of these measure 5 meters by 4 meters and 13 meters by 15 meters. There is even a large public bath or swimming pool. Badrinaryan reported that the larger buildings had deeper basements and thicker walls than the smaller buildings. The people of this city applied engineering science and they were good at it. The astonishing quality of their work is evident because these foundations remain intact against the onslaught of ten thousand years of tides.

Please understand that the next sentences are difficult for me to write because they shatter what I had been taught as human history over the last forty years.

Engineering physics was an academic topic and an art for developing real estate five thousand years before the Egyptian pyramids or two thousand years before the walls of Jericho were built. This means that the

02-15, 2002). Manhattan Island in New York City measures thirteen miles long and about two miles wide.

historical narrative that we teach in the West is woefully incomplete history and that the linear progression of Western Civilization that takes us back in time from London on the Thames River to the city of Sumer on the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers must now be extended into the Arabian Sea beyond the Indus Delta region to the Narmada River whose headwaters are not far from the Son River that flows to the Ganga/Ganges River. Compared to the submerged city that Badrinaryan and his team found, Jericho and Catal Huyuk are mere campsites scratched into the faint, unstable silt along the path of human history.

Some of the personal property artifacts recovered from this submerged site confirms continuing human habitation. Material culture is a catch-all term for these tangible items or artifacts and they can be used to create, modify or enhance historical narratives. This kind of evidence is recognized by many historians when a population being researched did not leave written evidence. "Microhistory" is what some historians call the kind of history that can be learned from an artifact. Others use the term "microhistory" to refer to the narratives of the past that we learn when we look at the ways in which ordinary people lived and thought in the past. When combined, these approaches enable historians to listen to the past in the absence of a written record. Sonar waves and aerial photography are newer tools that help us recognize places where humans once engineered the environment. Sometimes, this newer kind of research produces disobedient history.

Badrinaryan's team used sonar waves in 1999 and 2000 and their results now force historians to re-plot the time and place of the origin point of human civilization. Here is a city built on an urban grid of right-angled streets. Houses had basements or foundations that are still holding their rectangular shape. This discovery robs Western historians of what we thought were the bedrocks of human civilization in the Mesopotamian and Nile River ways. In order to deny that these are the remains of a metropolis, historians would have to convince natural scientists that ocean currents carved straight lines and right-angled pits that might be confused with basements and foundations in an area that measures five miles by two miles. There might be some historians who would rather convert scientists than accept this ancient city as a prologue in the traditional narrative of history anchored in Mesopotamia. Artifacts found there, however, were made by humans and not by tidal waves.

Some of the items brought to the surface from this city confirm that people lived there and that ten thousand years ago they did some of the same things that some humans still do. First, there is evidence that people were actually there before the ocean currents. Human bones, teeth, and

numerous hand tools made of stone have been recovered. Second, those hand tools were used by humans to drill stone beads made of jasper, chalcedony, agate, and quartz. Badrinaryan's reports included analysis of these items performed in some Western and non-Western laboratories. More evidence of their engineering prowess exists in some beads made of red corundum, "something unique as it is the second hardest material known after diamond as per the mohs scale of hardness."² To determine their antiquity, several items were sent to the National Geophysical Research Institute in Hyderabad, the Birpal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany, the Physical Research Laboratory in Ahmedabad, Oxford University in England and the Instituts für Geowissenschaftliche Gemeinschaftsaufgaben in Hannover, Germany. The items revealed that humans inhabited this city in urban living spaces at least 9500 years ago. Pottery from pre-urban culture dated to 30,000 to 15,000 years ago. The summary of findings performed at Indian and foreign research laboratories prove, according to hard science, that this city predates Mesopotamian cities by at least 4000 years in an area occupied long enough to warrant a pristine planned urban metropolis, meaning that this was not the first city for this civilization.³

It may take at least twenty years for this information to be processed and entered into the general narrative of world history as taught in the West. While the story of the discovery of this city is a history in itself, the question remains about which city this likely was. Heinrich Schliemann searched for a mythical city of Troy where superheroes and demigods like Ulysses, Achilles and Agamemnon fought. The closest legend that matches this lost city also features superheroes and demigods. Enrico Baccarini reviewed some of the findings and he connected these to the Bhagavata Purana account of Lord Krishna's final departure from the city of Dwarka, especially his order that its residents migrate to a new home on the mainland.⁴ Lord Krishna was the avatar or incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the regulator and preserver of the universe and one of the Trimurti or three-fold godhead that also includes Shiva the destroyer who brings

² Badrinaryan, "Gulf of Cambay."

³ Ibid. Another version of this article is S. Badrinaryan, "The Gulf of Khambhat: Does the Cradle of Ancient Civilization Lie off the Coast of India?" in *Lost Knowledge of the Ancients: A Graham Hancock Reader*, ed. Glenn Kreisberg (Rochester, VT: Bear & Co., 2010): 145-167.

⁴ Enrico Baccarini, *Vimanas and the Wars of the Gods: the Rediscovery of a Lost Civilization, of a Forgotten Science and of an Ancient Lore of India and Pakistan* (n.p.: Enigma Edizioni, 2016).

opportunity and Brahma the creator. Fairly soon, textbooks should feature a paragraph modeled after one composed by Badrinaryan.

This wonderful twin prehistoric metropolis of Cambay lasted from about 13,000 BP [before present] to about 3000 BP making it the most ancient and largest city civilization not only in Asia but also in the entire world. It is seen to be at least 7500 years older than the oldest Mesopotamian city civilization. However strong evidence supports the presence of humans from at least 31000 BP who were evolving and developing and formed a great hitherto unknown civilization that [was] submerged by the flood, giving credence to local and global flood myths.⁵

The magnitude and implications of the discovery of this city beneath the surface of the Arabian Sea are only just beginning to be understood by more people. This discovery means that the myth or legend of the Lost City of Dwarka, the city of the blue Hindu god Lord Krishna who was an incarnation or avatar of the god Vishnu, the regulator of the laws of the universe, is as true as the story of the Battle of Troy. Both are historic events preserved as oral history in the form of embellished legends. If the city of Dwarka and its submersion are now facts, does this mean that Lord Krishna was a historical person and, if so, can anything be learned about international relations theory from that submerged civilization?

There is no controversy about Indus River civilizations developing about five thousand years ago. In the mid-twentieth century, many scholars accepted that the Indus River Valley civilizations were a peer of those in the Nile River Valley and also with those of the Tigris and Euphrates River areas. Western popular culture was familiar with these from ancient literature, whether based upon the Abrahamic traditions of the Talmud, the Bible and the Koran, upon military ventures from the Christian Crusades through the Second World War, and/or the commercial enterprises and reports of diplomats and merchants. The Mesopotamian and Nile regions are foundational to the story of Western Civilization courses and the Indus appears when examples of the reach of Western power are needed in the traditional narrative.

These trends in the editing, winnowing and presentation of the lived experiences of people in the past have been identified. Cultural exoticism and Orientalism are phrases that some Western-oriented intellectuals use

⁵ S. Badrinaryan, "Gulf of Cambay."

to describe a place that was less familiar in the twentieth century. They are terms that some historians use to describe non-European people as they often filtered and packaged historical evidence with phrases that compared but maintained a superior difference. The tradition that lingered from the nineteenth century was to recognize that there was an ancient civilization in South Asia but that it needed Aryan or European rejuvenation through Christianity and civilizing missions. Commercial, missionary, military and colonial adventurers in the Indian Ocean often gave the Western public such information about faraway places.

There were so many huge buildings, fortresses and temples in India, along with a local intelligentsia and upper class that included people far wealthier than many Western mansion owners, that it would have been foolish to suggest that India was a place without history. One could hardly do this when standing at the foot of places like Chittoorgarh military fortress where the walls protected a space of approximately a full square mile and within which there was enough stored water and supplies for an army of more than 50,000 soldiers. The scale of construction of many medieval Indian buildings dwarfed perhaps all of those of Western Europe at the time of their construction, especially those that mimicked Mediterranean architecture. Material culture and foundations of very large planned living spaces in Chittoorgarh and in the older Harappan cities forced even the most prejudiced Europeans to acknowledge that there were sophisticated civilizations in medieval and ancient India.

Acknowledging the antiquity of civilization in India has been a struggle. C. Daryll Forde published an article in 1932 that is indicative of the struggle to reconcile India's history with its colonial status at the time.⁶ He devoted the first two pages to comparing the Indus civilization to those of Egypt and Mesopotamia, drawing more comparisons to the latter in terms of wide plains. He assumed that the erratic flooding of his day, unlike the predictable annual flooding of the Nile River, continued in the past when the Indus area was lush enough to support elephants, tigers and rhinoceroses.⁷ Another difference is antiquity. The first Egyptian dynasty established by Narmer dated to approximately 3100 BCE. Ancient Sumer, the first Mesopotamian civilization, also dated to approximately 3100 BCE. In both places, humans lived in settled communities long before those dates. Forde suspected that Indus civilization was older for "there is evidence of a long occupation during which much building and rebuilding took place, and the record probably goes back beyond 3,000 BCE. At

⁶ C. Daryll Forde, "The Ancient Cities of the Indus," *Geography* 17, no. 3 (September 1932): 183-192.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 184.

Mohenjo-Daro in the Indus River Valley, the real beginnings have yet to be disclosed, for the earliest period of settlement lies below the present water table.”⁸ Forde shared with his readers that Mohenjo-Daro home construction required more technology than Sumerian houses where sun-baked bricks were sufficient. In Mohenjo-Daro, “houses were built of kiln-baked brick” and tar-like “bitumen regularly laid on the foundations.”⁹ He wrote about the many houses with courtyards and rooms on the second floor where “one or more of these upper rooms was frequently built on a solid pediment, i.e., there was no room but a solid mass of brickwork and rubble underneath,” speculating that this was “an insurance against the dangers of flood, as a means of affording the householders a refuge that would not be inundated nor swept from its foundations by the rising waters.” Many Mohenjo-Daro houses had indoor toilets connected to city sewer systems. Forde discussed evidence of trade toward the Himalaya Mountains and toward communities on the Tibetan Plateau but he stressed that connections to Mesopotamia were speculations when he wrote. While Forde’s essay is an example of the controversy among scholars regarding the traditional narrative about ancient Indus civilization, he was bold enough to write against Eurocentric narratives of the ancient world.

These discoveries have disposed once and for all the theories popularized by Max Müller and others in the last century that the Aryan-speaking invaders of India were a superior race who first introduced the crafts of civilization among a savage and backward population. The internal evidences of the early Sanskrit literature have made it abundantly clear that these invaders were essentially a pastoral people and most improbable carriers of advanced agricultural and metal-working crafts, while Baden-Powell, Oldham, Slater and others have adduced literary and cultural evidence to show that the fundamental elements of Indian society, economy and religion were laid down long before the Aryan invasions.¹⁰

Forde wrote to re-educate Western scholars who had an emotional need to believe in a myth of Aryan supremacy in 1932. The Aryan invaders were horsemen who arrived “more than a thousand years after the latest phase at Mohenjo-Daro.”¹¹ Forde could not say when this civilization began. He chose to write that the information was buried under water.

⁸ Ibid., 184.

⁹ Ibid., 186.

¹⁰ Ibid., 191-192.

¹¹ Ibid.

The controversy about the origin of Indus River civilization increased when archaeologists started working under water along the Arabian Sea coast of India. One of the scientists who wanted to use this new technology to explore the historical merits of ancient Indian epic literature such as the Mahabharata was Shikaripura Ranganatha Rao, a member of the National Institute of Oceanography of India. Rao was a dedicated archaeologist whose expedition findings have convinced increasing numbers of people that the city of Dwarka was relocated further inland several times as sea levels rose.

Several scholars studied these relocations of Dwarka. One of those reconstructions is submerged about two and a half miles from the current shoreline and it dated to the time of the Harappan civilization approximately four thousand years ago.¹² Items found there include Red Ware pottery with Sanskrit writing, bronze spearhead moulds, stone anchors and numerous seals that place this location at approximately 1800 or 1700 BCE, making them contemporaries of King Hammurabi's era in the Middle East.¹³ Explorations continued between 1997 and 2001 in the area a half mile from shore and at a depth of about twenty-seven yards and the findings are reviewed in an article by A.S. Gaur, Sundaresh Tripathi and Sila Tripathi.¹⁴ After discussing some of the circular and square stone structure foundations and many stone anchors, as well as the absence of pottery or coins, they concluded that this near-shore site was likely a jetty rather than an inhabited city. Evidence of additional rebuilds of Dwarka were found at depths of six and nine meters but the dates of these sites are not very old, not even as old as Harappa or Mohenjo-Daro according to an earlier article by Rao. Based upon these offshore sites and another onshore dig, Rao posited that there were eight cities of Dwarka, beginning around 1400 BCE and ending with the modern town built in the 1400s CE.¹⁵ Rao did not accept any of these as the city of the Mahabharata era.

Rao was encouraged by oceanographic studies showing that the Gulf of Kutch was more than forty yards lower until an abrupt change some

¹² For an introduction to Harappan civilization, see Tarini Carr, "The Harappan Civilization," *Archaeology Online* <https://archaeologyonline.net/artifacts/Harappamohenjodaro.html>.

¹³ S. R. Rao, "From Dvārāka to Kurukshetra," *Journal of Marine Archaeology*, 5-6 (1995-1996): 61-71. See also Rao, *Lost City of Dvārāka* (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1999).

¹⁴ A.S. Gaur, Sundaresh Tripathi and Sila Tripathi, "Ancient Dwarka: Study Based on Recent Underwater Archaeological Investigations," *Migration & Diffusion* 6, no. 21 (2005): 56-77.

¹⁵ Rao, "Excavation of the Legendary City of Dvaraka in the Arabian Sea," *Marine Archaeology* 1 (January 1990): 64.

10,000 years ago. On a quest to find a legendary city established by a legendary demigod or incarnation of the Vishnu the regulator of the universe, Rao wrote,

Sri. Krishna, the towering personality of the Epic Mahabharata and the greatest philosopher statesman—who has given the world the Bhagavadgita—is said to have founded a new city called Dvaraka which is (spelt Dwarka) near a place of the same name on the west coast...The Mahabharata, Harivamsa, the Bhagavata, Vayu, Matsya and Vishnu Puranas refer to the migration of the Yadavas from Mathura to Dvaraka under Krishna's leadership.¹⁶

He cited several studies conducted in the 1960s and 1970s and drew upon a 1981 publication by Nair and Hashimi who used radiocarbon dating of fauna found in sandstone at forty meters depth. They found that the sea level rose rapidly between 9000 and 11,000 years ago and again 5000 years ago in the Gulf of Kutch due to glacial melt.¹⁷ The ocean continues to reclaim land in the area and eventually it may claim the Dwarka that is lived in this year. Over the last century or more, the ocean near modern Dwarka gained an average of four yards each year for a total of more than five hundred yards, leaving signs of anchorage and harbor under three to seven yards of water.¹⁸

This coastal city relocated or reincarnated at least eight times and there is indication that the Arabian Sea will claim another Dwarka and cause another mass migration. Rao, who died in 2013, lived long enough to learn of the discovery of the city forty yards below the surface of the Arabian Sea, a city so large that it makes the earliest of the eight Dwarkas that Rao chronicled look like mere suburbs. Perhaps S. R. Rao was satisfied that Lord Krishna's Dwarka had finally been found.

What if the city that lies forty yards below the surface of the Indian Ocean in the Gulf of Kachchh/Kutch really is Lord Krishna's lost city of Dwarka? If this is true, then it is one of the most disobedient histories of recent times and it is a dangerous one. It is dangerous for divers because the current is too strong for anyone not using a diving bell of the sort used

¹⁶ Rao, "From Dvārāka to Kurukshetra," 61.

¹⁷ Rao, "Excavation of the Legendary City of Dvaraka," 95.

¹⁸ A. S. Gaur, Sundaresh Tripathi and Sila Tripathi, "An Ancient Harbour at Dwarka: Study Based on the Recent Underwater Explorations" *Current Science* 86, no. 9 (May 10, 2004): 1256-1260.

to visit the *RMS Titanic*. It is also dangerous because the water is too murky to see any predatory animals. Perhaps it is more dangerous because finding this city may cause an academic tectonic shift, rocking the standard Western Civilization textbook narratives about the location of the cradle of civilization. Think of it. If the first of the eight relocations of Dwarka dates to the time of Mesopotamian civilization and that one lay only twenty-five yards beneath the surface, how old is the original city that lay forty yards beneath the surface and about two miles from the places where the eight relocations were constructed? It will take immense courage and deep financial resources to explore this archaeological site, and even more resources to rewrite the history books around the world. Perhaps the most expensive cost of exploring this site is that it will bankrupt the worldview of those who continue to hold dear the notion that an Aryan race, the mythological one idealized by Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau and by Adolf Hitler, created Indian civilization.

Before proceeding to descriptions of this much older Dwarka and appreciating the implications that this discovery will have on worldviews and international relations theory, it is important to understand the challenge of accepting its antiquity that is faced in the academic community by looking at another example from the Mekong River Valley. This comes at a time when hard science is further ahead in disseminating another change in the timeline of East Asian history because of the discovery that bronze technology in Southeast Asia is older than that of China. The traditional narrative holds that bronze technology in East Asia first appeared in China. After the creation of ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) in 1967, the end of European colonization in Indochina and the cessation of hostilities from the Vietnam War, archaeological work in service to local national histories began to flourish. Bronze technology is not the only one undergoing revision. Excavations conducted in Southeast Asia showed that rice and bronze technology developed in the Ban Chiang complex of the Mekong River Valley long before that technology arrived in the Huang He/Yellow River settlements.¹⁹ This change is rolling out in some history textbooks.

The process of rewriting our general narratives of world history is a response to research much like the mid-1960s discovery of “socketed bronze axes and bivalve casting moulds” at a cemetery in Non Nok Tha, Thailand, and a mid-1970s discovery of more bronzes in a cemetery at Ban Chiang, Thailand. Anthropologist Wilhelm G. Solheim wrote in 1972 that the Non Nok Tha find “was the oldest socketed tool yet found

¹⁹ For an introduction to the project, see “The Ban Chiang Project,” Institute for Southeast Asian Archaeology, <https://iseaarchaeology.org/the-ban-chiang-project/>.

anywhere” and it dated to 3500 BCE, more than a millennium before bronze technology arrived in China.²⁰ What happened next about the Non Nok Tha bronzes is a blueprint for what is happening with the discovery of the more ancient Dwarka. “These claims divided the interested scientific community into those prepared to accept the early date and explore the cultural consequences (Bayard and Charoenwongsa 1983; Solheim 1983) and cautious skeptics who did not (Loofs-Wissowa 1983; Higham 1984).”²¹ Many scholars adhered to the idea that bronze technology arrived in Southeast Asia from China around 2000 BCE. Higham et al. demonstrated in their article the volume of information that exists about China's Bronze Age but in their conclusion they suggested that evidence to support the earlier date needs to come from larger excavations. D. T. Bayard acknowledged in the 1970s that the collagen dating of the humans found near the bronze goes only to the second millennium BCE and in the 1980s he wrote a sentence that echoes Galileo's promise to say no more about science contradicting the teachings of the Catholic Church.

I have discussed the problem at length elsewhere (Bayard 1971, 1972, 1975, 1980b) and will say no more here save that I feel the balance of evidence at present still supports a date of about 2500 BCE (ca. 3200 RC calibrated) for the Early Period/Middle Period transition and, by implication, a date some 500 years earlier for the still inadequately dated basal levels of the site...At present the first final data from Non Nok Tha reaffirm our earlier speculations on the sophisticated nature of metalworking in the region almost 5,000 years ago.²²

If some humans then were like many humans now, it is possible that they also appreciated having antique items and historical artifacts. Hard science suggests that these interred humans had antique bronze items that dated to 3600 BCE according to carbon dating. Might this explain the presence of bronze items a thousand years older than the persons interred in the Non Nok Tha graves? Is there a general consensus that the idea of a museum is a modern invention and anything older is an aberration of hard

²⁰ Charles Higham, Thomas Higham, Roberto Ciarla, Katerina Douka, Ampham Kijngam and Fiorella Rispoli, “The Origins of the Bronze Age of Southeast Asia,” *Journal of World Prehistory* 24, no. 4 (December 2011): 229.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 230.

²² D. T. Bayard, “Early Thai Bronze: Analysis and New Dates,” *Science*, ns 176, 4042 (June 30, 1972): 1411-1412; Donn Bayard, “Temporal Distribution and Alloy Variation in Early Bronzes from Non Nok Tha,” *Current Anthropology* 22, no. 6 (December 1981): 697-699.

science? The disparity in years does make it difficult to affirm where the antiques were manufactured. Perhaps, when we are further removed in time from the Vietnam War, we may be more open to considering the implications of new evidence that changes the traditional timeline of history so that ancient Mekong River societies can be perceived as peers or elders to ancient Chinese societies. In both cases, ancient Dwarka and Non Nok Tha, physical evidence of civilizations in the Tropic of Cancer being far older than the Mesopotamian or Yellow River ones rattles the accepted narratives that are the foundation for many Western theories about politics, war and twentieth-century international relations.

If the legends really do derive from the people who built that Ice Age metropolis, are they historical sources and can we learn about political and international theory from Lord Krishna's city of Dwarka? At the turn of the twenty-first century, physical and sonar evidence of an ancient metropolis forty yards beneath the surface of the Gulf of Khambat/Cambay promises to be a discovery on the order of Schliemann's discovery of the lost city of Troy. S. R. Rao was bold enough to match this find to the location of the legendary submerged city of Dwarka and those legends indicate a sophisticated city where the leader implemented a new political theory.

Rao mentioned sources of the legend. Rather than diminish the legends by paraphrasing them, I chose to present here excerpts that describe the ancient city. These excerpts are presented as sources of ancient history retained in literature and I will not undertake a literary or theological analysis. Rather, since a submerged city has been found, they are considered here much as the travel diaries of Ibn Battuta or Marco Polo are treated. The political and economic story is what matters for this book. Each of these excerpts concerns a person who chose to visit Lord Krishna's city.

Soodama sees Dwarka for the first time. (Prem Sagur): With these thoughts in his mind Soodama arrived at the city of Dwarka after a journey of less than nine hours and there beheld a city, surrounded on all sides by the sea. All round the city were forests and groves, producing flowers and fruits. At the ponds, pools and large wells of masonry, wheels and leather buckets were in full play, herds of cows were grazing in different places, and the cowherds' children, who accompanied them, were engaged apart in sports. Soodama, having beheld the beauty of the forests and groves, went into the city, and saw very elegant houses of gold, covered with jewels, shining in full splendor. At the different places of meeting, the descendants

of Jadoo were seated, forming courts like that of Indru: in the markets, roads and cross-roads, things of different kinds were sold; in each house, and in various places, songs were sung, and gifts and adoration offered in honour of Huri, and Krishnu's praises were celebrated; and the inhabitants of the whole city were highly delighted.²³

Rookmune Jee sees Dwarka for the first time (Prem Sagur): On arrival, he beheld the city in the midst of the sea, surrounded on all sides by extensive forests and hills, and beautiful groves; in which were heard the cries of animals, and notes of birds of all kinds. There were elegant tanks, filled with pure water; in which the lotus was in full bloom, and bees buzzed in swarms around; on the bank, geese and cranes and other birds were sporting; gardens of fruits and flowers of every kind extended for many coss [miles], on the borders of which betel plantations flourished. Gardeners were standing at the wells, singing sweet melodies; and plying the water-wheels and buckets poured forth water in every direction; and the quays were thronged with female water-carriers. As the Brahmin [Rookmune Jee] progressed, after having viewed this beautiful scene with delights, he saw very lofty castles on all sides of the city, having four gates, and doors studded with jewels, and inlaid with gold. Inside the city were five and seven-storied houses of gold and jewels, glittering with great splendor, and reaching to the sky, the spires of which were as resplendent as lightning. Flags and banners of various colours were waving; perfumed odours came forth from the doors, blinds, air-holes and trellis-work; at each door were pillars of plantain sprouts, and golden water-pots, filled with water; wreaths of flowers and garlands were fastened in every direction; and there were sounds of musical rejoicing in every house.²⁴

Shookdeo Jee sees Dwarka for the first time (Prem Sagur): He came to Dwarka, and beheld outside the city high, lofty trees, flourishing, loaded with fruits and flowers, waving in the orchards, on which pigeons, parrots, peacocks and other birds were sitting, and pouring forth pleasing notes; lotuses were blooming in elegant tanks, on which swarms of bees buzzed; on the banks geese, cranes and other birds were sporting about; in the flower gardens, the gardeners sang sweet strains, and throwing water high and low, saturated the different beds with it; in some places wheels and leather buckets were brought into play, and on the quays there were crowds of women carrying water on their heads, the beauty of whom cannot be described; to be appreciated, it must have been seen...Narud Jee having beheld with delight the beautiful appearance of the forests and groves, saw on going into the city elegant, golden houses, covered with jewels, and shining brilliantly, on which flags and banners were waving. Wreaths and

²³ Caturbhujamisra, *The Prem Sagur*, trans. W. Hollings (Calcutta: Ridsdale, 1848), 398-399.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 212.

garlands of flowers were fastened upon each gate-way, at the doors were placed pillars of plantain and water-pots of gold, filled with sprouts. From the trellis-work, windows and lattices of each house, the smoke of the perfume, burnt at the time of worshipping, came curling forth, like a black cloud; in the midst of which the golden spires shone like lightning.²⁵

Narada Muni sees Dwarka for the first time (Srimad Bhaghavata):

Thus the sage of the demigods eagerly went to Dvaraka. The city was filled with the sounds of birds and bees flying about the parks and pleasure gardens, while its lakes, crowded with blooming indivara, ambhoja, kahlara, kumuda and utpala lotuses, resounded with the calls of swans and cranes. Dvaraka boasted nine hundred thousand royal palaces, all constructed with crystal and silver and splendidly decorated with huge emeralds. Inside these palaces, the furnishings were bedecked with gold and jewels. Traffic moved along a well laid-out system of boulevards, roads, intersections and marketplaces, and many assembly houses and temples of demigods graced the charming city. The roads, courtyards, commercial streets and residential patios were all sprinkled with water and shaded from the sun's heat by banners waving from flagpoles. In the city of Dvaraka was a beautiful private quarter worshiped by the planetary rulers. This district, where the demigod Visvakarma had shown all his divine skill, was the residential area of Lord Hari, and thus it was gorgeously decorated by the sixteen thousand palaces of Lord Krishna's queens. Narada Muni entered one of these immense palaces. Supporting the palace were coral pillars decoratively inlaid with vaidurya gems. Sapphires bedecked the walls, and the floors glowed with perpetual brilliance. In that palace Tvasta had arranged canopies with hanging strands of pearls; there were also seats and beds fashioned of ivory and precious jewels...On the ornate ridges of the roof danced loudly crying peacocks, who saw the fragrant aguru incense escaping through the holes of the latticed windows and mistook it for a cloud.²⁶

These descriptions were written centuries later from oral histories or legends. They may be variations of the same story or they may be various descriptions of the same place. If these descriptions of Lord Krishna's Dwarka are treated in a manner similar to the legends about the Trojan War, what can be gleaned as plausible historical information about the submerged city in the Gulf of Khambat/Cambay?

There are commonalities among the versions that are somewhat consistent with the sonar mapping of the submerged city. First, there is the plat or mapping information. Krishna's Dwarka was on an island. This

²⁵ Ibid., 349-350.

²⁶ Krsna-Dwaipayana Vyasa, *Srimad Bhaghavata*, ed. Jay Mazo (International Gita Society), 986, 69:1-12. www.gita-society.com/pdf2011/BhPuran.pdf.

information alone suggests that the deeper location is truer to the narrative than those built within a mile of shore that S. R. Rao listed. Urban planning of roads, business and residential districts matches the sonar findings of straight roads, larger buildings and plazas, and residential districts. At least one water reservoir that was large enough for lotuses and aquatic birds has been identified by sonar. Not so with the other eight locations. The only possible evidence of multi-storied buildings would be the thickness and depth of the foundation stones but even that may not tell us if the buildings were made of brick or wood.

The legends provide more information about architecture and urban climate conditioning. The streets were covered with banners to block the sunlight. I have seen this treatment of streets and felt the temperature change myself in Rabat and Fez, Morocco. It is quite effective for deflecting solar heat while still allowing ocean breezes to flow. It is a low-tech form of urban air-conditioning. The houses of gold seemed like an exaggeration until one considers local building materials. We know that the people of ancient Peruvian cities often painted their homes yellow. We know that yellow ochre has been used in many continents on walls and human bodies. People living in this ancient Dwarka may not have needed to paint. India has many deposits of yellow sandstone and yellow limestone, some described as honey colored. Such stone is used in buildings in the Dwarka of today. If polished, this stone can shine like gold just as some of the white polished stone buildings in Rabat, Morocco, glimmer like pearls in the bright sun. As for the sapphire on the doors, there is deep blue granite in India, too. People of ancient Dwarka had technology for cutting stones. Consider the drilled red corundum beads mentioned earlier in this chapter. If they could drill beads, they might have been able to cut and polish granite tile. Beads have been found. Golden sandstone has been found. The color and substance of the building materials that I suggest here is based on materials mined today. Certainty was washed away by ocean waves thousands of years ago. A city the *color* of gold with sapphire blue tiles and doors is, however, plausible.

According to legend, Lord Krishna had sixteen thousand wives. My own research into matriarchy in Africa and Asia suggests that these women may have been royal clients engaged in commercial activities rather than conjugal wives.²⁷ There is consensus that matriarchy and polyandry feature in some cultures in the corridor that reaches from

²⁷ One example is from the household of Muley Ismail (1634-1727) of the Alawite dynasty of Morocco. His palaces were more like military bases with a royal residence on them. He had a staff of thousands of single women working there and the women would later marry soldiers in the units known as the Abid al-Bukhari.

Arabia to the Indus River, the Tibetan Plateau toward Australia and Oceania as well as across much of Africa. On this point, I wander from physical evidence at the scene but it is a thought based upon the idea of shrewd female merchants near the Malacca Strait in the Early Modern East Indies. If one opens one's mind beyond Victorian, Mesopotamian or Confucian social patterns, one might see the district of women's palaces as a marketplace where wholesale buying and selling of commodities took place. Besides, a city of this scale had to have extensive international trade networks and people who organized, jobbed and brokered the wholesale level trade.

So far, none of these elaborate descriptions is improbable for a city that measured two miles in one direction and five miles in the other but these descriptions are less applicable to the eight Dwarka locations closer to shore. What is consistent with the eight coastal locations of Dwarka and the one that is more than a hundred feet beneath the sea surface is anchorage for boats. An island has more room for boats than a jetty. The question that we cannot begin to answer until broader acceptance of Bayard's research about ancient Mekong River Valley societies is this: With whom did Lord Krishna's Dwarka merchants trade by boat ten thousand years ago? What were the rules for international trade in the region?

In some world history textbooks, Kautilya (also known as Chanakya) is included with Plato and Confucius as an early political theorist whose teachings shaped the policies of emperors; however, Badrinarayan's discovery of the more ancient city of Dwarka moves the political theory of Krishna, theory that echoes in Kautilya's works, far earlier than these in terms of chronology. The Mahabharata serves as an ancient political theory text among other functions. This is not news in India. What is new is that the hard science of marine archaeology anchors this literature in a different genre by Western academic standards for Western audiences, namely that of political theory and international relations.

Prafulla Kumas Mohanty performed such an analysis in 2005, describing the broader picture of the Mahabharata as the history of political evolution of ancient Indian societies from communal to kingdom to federal political organization during which the "varnas [broader castes] of Brahmin [intelligentsia], Kshatriya [military/governing], Vaisya [economy or wealth

generators] and Sudra [labor] were established as the basic social rubric.²⁸ The protagonist is Krishna who became the “philosopher who envisions a cosmic order of reality where the individual, the clan and groups as well as chieftains and kings have their operational freedom.”²⁹ There was a prophecy that Krishna might be the nemesis of King Kamsa of Mathura who set out to persecute him before Krishna was born. As an adult, Krishna occasionally exiled himself to the city of Dwarka for safety, returning home as needed over the years. Mohanty summarized the narrative of events as a conflict between Krishna's vision of a federal system of government and the antagonist Shakuni's vision of absolute monarchy.³⁰

When I read the *Mahabharata of Krishna-Dwaipayana* translated by Kisari Mohan Ganguli, I found a style of writing and worldview that is similar to the *Arthashastra* written by Kautilya (approximately 350-275 BCE) and the *Republic* written by Plato (approximately 428-384 BCE).³¹ Somewhere in the deep past, a chilling distance before King Hammurabi of Mesopotamia or before King Narmer united Nile River Valley communities, humans reached a new level of complexity in how they organized their polities. The study of atoms shows that when the density of active molecules is high, there can be friction. The same is true among communities of animals and it also holds true for communities of humans. The benefits of living in dense populations are numerous. When the boundaries of these dense communities grow too close, friction can occur. This friction can be reduced by applying international relations theory.

In some aspects *The Mahabharata of Krishna-Dwaipayana Vyasa* reads like a chronicle or saga of how friction between populations came to be and how two warrior/law-givers, Krishna and Salva, arrived at different solutions for how to reduce that friction through federal or centralized government among the competing kingdoms in the areas of Gujarat, the Gulf of Khambhat, Bihar Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh where the Son River flows. The kingdoms in question include the Yadava Kingdom of Surasena, the Magadha Kingdom, the Pandava Kingdom of Kuru and more.³² Portions of the epic are narrated by different people who transmitted their chronicles

²⁸ Prafulla Kumar Mohanty, “The ‘Mahabharata’: A Reading in Political Structuring,” *Indian Literature* 49, no. 1 (225) (Jan-Feb 2005): 146-151. In text translations are mine and any error or lost nuance is my responsibility.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 147.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 146-151.

³¹ *The Mahabharata of Krishna-Dwaipayana Vyasa*, I. trans. Kisari Mohan Ganguli. (1883-1896). www.gutenberg.org.

³² Kanaiyalal Maneklal Munshi, *Krishnavatara* (Mumbai: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1972-1973).

through oral tradition until the Mahabharata was compiled by Vyasa in the fifth or sixth century BCE.³³

Because the purpose of *Disobedient Histories* is a survey of ancient political theories at play in twenty-first century international politics, I will now focus on a conversation between King Dhritarashtra of the Kuru Kingdom and his Brahmin advisor “Kanika, that foremost of minister, well-versed in the science of politics and an expert in counsels.”³⁴ Brahmins are a social class of academics, theologians, and other professions that often require advanced study. Kings are from the warrior Kshatriya class who defend the people through warfare in times of conflict and through economic development in times of peace. Brahmins have higher social status than Kshatriyas. King Dhritarashtra consulted Kanika for advice about engaging in war with a growing Pandava Empire, the one to which Lord Krishna belonged. “O best of Brahmanas, the Pandavas are daily overshadowing the earth. I am exceedingly jealous of them. Should I have peace or war with them?”³⁵ Dhritarashtra’s question is similar to that faced by national leaders today who feel that the boundaries surrounding their respective polities are too warm with competitive friction.

How a leader receives sage advice about war or peace is a frequent topic of biographies whose authors are skilled in letting readers feel as if they are within whispering distance of the heroes. After ten thousand years, it is difficult to know for certain the environment in which Dhritarashtra and Kanika had this conversation, if it took place at all.³⁶ Were they strolling through the military barracks or the parade ground? Were they in a throne room and surrounded by generals in uniform? Were they in a private library where only the two of them met at a table or on a veranda overlooking the marketplace of the city or a playground of children? Was a scribe present or perhaps a court chronicler with a perfect memory of each moment lived? Who was listening? The matter must have been a very serious one with high stakes if Dhritarashtra should lose

³³ Salendra Nath Sen, *Ancient Indian History and Civilization* (New Delhi: New Age International, 1999), 57. I also recommend reading “Friction in War,” Book I, chapter VII of Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*.

³⁴ *Mahabharata of Krishna-Dwaipayana Vyasa*, Section CXLII.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ It is a leap of faith to believe that this conversation took place or that these persons actually existed. There is a metropolis under water in the Gulf of Khambat/Cambay and it must have been the center of an extensive trade network. In the following analysis, I looked for kernels of ideas about political theory and international relations. These lessons were deemed important enough to preserve. How much is embellishment of an actual event and how much is the moral of the story cannot be known in this book.