

VI. Book reviews

Dilip K. Chakrabarti 2003 *Archaeology in the Third World – A History of Indian Archaeology Since 1947*. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld x + 281pp. ISBN 81-246-0217-4 (Hard Back). \$40 US.

This is a fine book standing as a major contribution to the history of archaeology in India, as well as to the developing discourse about the nature of a Third World archaeology. Given the current focus on issues associated with the incorporation of postcolonial discourse into archaeology, this second element of Chakrabarti's book should guarantee that it receives the attention of archaeologists with a stronger interest in archaeological theory.

The primary purpose of the volume is to continue the history of archaeology from 1947 where Chakrabarti left off in his 1988 contribution *A History of Indian Archaeology From the Beginning to 1947*. In this the author identifies significant continuities of approach and practice, but he also recognises that the importance of archaeology to the Indian nation plays itself out rather differently over the last 50 or so years. Here the issues raised by the construction of identities (national, ethnic and religious) and of course the rise of religious fundamentalisms (Islamic and Hindu are just two examples) have created new possibilities and challenges for archaeologists as well as for the State level bureaucracies that have to manage the archaeological heritage of the world's largest democracy. Certainly such challenges operate at a scale and intensity that make them globally significant.

All of this takes place against a backdrop of careful analysis of the primary sources, particularly of major publications and journals and the institutions that encompass the national archaeological effort such as Universities, museums, and government agencies. I was particularly struck by the close attention Chakrabarti made to the impact of dam building, of the introduction of archaeology into the Indian school curriculum, and the ever-present evil of looting. This discussion is further sharpened by a consideration of the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas and of the Mosque at Ayodhya, as well as of the more long standing controversies over the nature of the Aryans.

The great themes of nationalism and the particular context of India as a Third World nation receive fuller consideration in the last two chapters (one of which is designated as an Appendix: Towards a nationalist Archaeology of India). Chakrabarti is surely correct in his analysis that there are great dangers in dealing with monolithic blocks on interest and interaction, but it is also the case that we are here given strong grounds for welcoming the development of a Third World archaeology as a potential distinct and valuable addition to the realm of archaeological thought and action.

Tim Murray

The Beast on the Table: Conferencing with Anthropologists, by Sydel Silverman. 2002. Walnut Creek CA: Altamira. \$29.95 (paper) ISBN 0-7591-0240-6, \$75.00 (cloth) ISBN 0-7592-0239-2. 272 pp., references, index.

Silverman succeeded Lita Osmundsen as president of the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research in 1987, retiring at the end of 1999. During her thirteen years she