

BOOK REVIEW

A Review of *Essays in History of Archaeology. Themes, Institutions and Personalities*

By K. Paddayya, New Delhi, Archaeological Survey of India, 376 pages, 2013.

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During 2011–2012 the Archaeological Survey of India celebrated its 150th Anniversary. Anyone who has visited India and its justly famous archaeological sites will be well aware of the fine work done by this venerable institution, and the anniversary saw the publication of many excellent new works that significantly expanded some splendid recent scholarship by (among others) Dilip Chakrabarti, Upinder Singh and Nayanjot Lahiri. The history of archaeology in India is in excellent hands, and this new volume by Professor K. Paddayya takes matters further.

This is an intriguing collection of twenty essays dealing with core issues in the history of archaeology, not least being its importance for the discipline generally. Paddayya makes his position on this very clear in a sweeping historical overview of theory in Indian archaeology, which is supported by several more detailed analyses of the role of core institutions and methods.

Paddayya is also vitally interested in the role of biography, and indeed the bulk of the volume is devoted to biographies of key Indian archaeologists from the 18th century to the present, with homages to Sir William

Jones and Robert Bruce Foote (the volume is dedicated to the memory of Sir Alexander Cunningham and Foote) matched by essays on the work of key players such as Sankalia, Deo and Ansari. Paddayya is also keen to note Allchin's great contributions to the archaeology of South Asia.

All of this is interesting and important, but it is the final five essays that take matters somewhat further. Paddayya celebrates the 'revolution' of the Three Age System through a sketch of the work of Christian Thomsen, but it is the essays on Grahame Clark, Desmond Clark, Robert Braidwood and Lewis Binford that have particular interest. Here Paddayya moves past personal reminiscence about his contact with such influential Western archaeologists to a consideration of how Indian archaeologists responded to their work.

There is much to think about here, particularly the sense that archaeologists such as Paddayya have a very much more nuanced understanding of colonial and postcolonial archaeologies than some of their counterparts outside the sub-continent.

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How to cite this article: Murray, T 2014 A Review of Essays in History of Archaeology. Themes, Institutions and Personalities. *Bulletin of the History of Archaeology*, 24: 15, p. 1, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/bha.2415>

Published: 4 August 2014

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