

# Introduction

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South Asia sits at a geographical intersection between Africa and East Asia, a location that is critical to understanding human migrations, evolution, and biocultural diversity in the Old World. Throughout the Pleistocene, as our hominin ancestors migrated out of Africa and back again, they left traces of their journey scattered across the landscape of the subcontinent. Hominins did not just pass through South Asia but it is also far from the cul-de-sac it was once imagined to be. Genetic, archaeological, and fossil evidence demonstrates that in the Late Pleistocene, anatomically modern humans settled here and then spread out from South Asia to colonize the rest of the Old World. As hominins have lived in South Asia for more than 1.5 million years, the unimaginable volume of archaeological evidence on the surface of the landscape of the subcontinent alone is a sight we would encourage anyone interested in paleoanthropology to behold. This deep heritage has an influence on the incredible diversity we find in South Asia today. South Asian populations have evolved and developed over many millennia, and present an incredibly diverse suite of biocultural traditions and adaptations to the subcontinent's varied and changing landscape. These deep roots of sociocultural complexity have been increasingly explored for more than a century by anthropologists of all kinds.

Scholarly interest in South Asia is burgeoning and an increasing number of scholarly books and articles attest to this exploding interest in South Asian pre- and protohistory. With a growing crop of fresh young investigators comes a diverse suite of analytical, theoretical, and methodological approaches to understanding complexity in the past. Long-standing questions about the development of sociocultural diversity in South Asia are being approached with fresh scientific investigations, including recent excavations. In addition to fieldwork, advancements in paleoclimatic, molecular, isotopic, and bioarchaeological

approaches have revitalized the study of already excavated material and have changed the way we think about South Asia and its prehistory. For this reason, it is a great time to edit the *Companion to South Asia in the Past*.

This volume is intended to provide an overview of the current state of knowledge about South Asians in the past, using an integrated approach from both archaeological and biological evidence, spanning the Paleolithic to the Historic era in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. While no volume can entirely cover the fields of South Asian archaeology and biological anthropology, we have worked hard to include a comprehensive set of chapters, written by a diverse group of experts, more than half of whom are of South Asian origin or are currently working in South Asian scholarly institutions. The other authors are internationally known scholars who have dedicated their careers to working in South Asia. South Asian scholarship is broadly represented abroad, in North America and Europe. In developing the list of contributors, we made diversity—stage of career, gender, and institutional affiliations—a priority, as this has not always been attempted in other volumes covering this topic. We think this is critically important, as diversity of backgrounds and training brings fresh (and sometimes critical) perspectives to archaeology and anthropology, which may capture more fully some of human diversity in the past.

The chapters in this book cover the major theoretical approaches and issues in South Asian archaeology, from early human migration into the subcontinent and genetic diversity, to insights about biocultural adaptations of Paleolithic and Holocene hunter-foragers, to the environmental, social, and biological challenges of the adoption of agriculture in the middle Holocene and the development of urbanism and long-distance exchange in proto-history. The volume is tied together by the influence of the early pioneers in South Asian archaeology and biological anthropology, including the influence of K.A.R. Kennedy, a scholar of South Asian paleoanthropology and archaeology who has been a mentor, a collaborator, and an inspiration to all of the authors in this volume. His recent death on April 23, 2014 was an additional impetus to complete the volume in a timely manner, so it can serve as a proper tribute to his memory and his contributions to the field.

The volume commences with a section on “Paleoanthropology in South Asia,” including a discussion by Rajan Gaur of the mammalian paleodiversity and ecology of the Miocene primates of India and Nepal (Chapter 2). The Siwalik deposits of the Indian subcontinent rank among the world’s most famous because of the diversity of mammalian fossils represented here. Gaur provides a reconstruction of paleoecology and paleohabitats of several major primate fossil localities, based on an analysis of the fossil assemblages. In Chapter 3, Parth R. Chauhan reviews the last decade (2005–2015) of research on paleolithic archaeology in the Indian subcontinent, as an increasing number of students and scholars are performing new field and museum-based research, conducting experimental archaeology to understand pre-existing collections, and refining techniques for field (geographic information system, or GIS) and laboratory study. Chauhan reviews the current state of the field, ongoing projects, and potential avenues of investigation, including the need for basic research—additional surveys and paleoecological work.

Chapters 4 and 5 concern the evidence for the peopling of South Asia. In Chapter 4, Mark Stoneking takes up the topic of archaic genomes, what they can tell us about Early Pleistocene migrations out of Africa, and the peopling of the subcontinent. He argues that genomics data from Neandertal and Denisovan samples support a Multiple Dispersals model for AmHs and an overall picture of recent human evolution in Asia characterized by migration and admixture, not long-term continuity and isolation. Moreover, he suggests that introgression provided an important source of variation by which humans could quickly adapt to new environments.

In Chapter 5, Ravi Korisettar summarizes the archaeological evidence for Pleistocene migration routes of modern humans into South Asia, addressing the question of a long or short chronology for the first African exodus. He focuses on the securely dated archaeological evidence from South Asia to argue that hominins arrived with Mode I technology around 2 million years ago (mya) and then colonized South Asia in multiple waves: bringing Mode II Acheulean technology around 1.6 mya, late Acheulean technology between 0.7 and 0.5 mya, and Middle Stone Age technology from 130 thousand years ago (kya). Korisettar describes how, throughout the Late Pleistocene, humans traveled across the Sahara into the subcontinent along migration routes that may have been in constant use, from the Early Pleistocene forward.

Despite its prolific Paleolithic archaeological record, South Asia is not known for providing a wealth of hominin fossils. In Chapter 6, A.R. Sankhyan describes the hominin fossil record in India with a focus on recent discoveries of a Narmada fossil sequence, including a right clavicle, a partial left clavicle, a partial ninth rib, and two long bone fragments—femur and humerus—from another locality, Netankheri. Sankhyan reviews evidence for his hypothesis that the Narmada fossils belong to at least two distinct hominin groups (species?) living in South Asia in the Late to Middle Pleistocene—a “large-bodied” group that might belong to *Homo heidelbergensis* and a “small-bodied” group that evolved from *Homo erectus*. The central Narmada Valley was a corridor of intra- and intercontinental migrations and suggests the possibility that the “small-bodied” lineage was related to other Upper Paleolithic populations of small hominins.

Chapters 7 and 8 provide an overview of the archaeological and bioarchaeological evidence from well-documented, deep, stratified, semi-sedentary Mesolithic Lake Culture (MLC) sites of the Ganges Plain, and the rockshelter and open-air settlements of the adjoining hill region of the Vindhyas. The MLC people hunted and foraged for lacustrine resources, processed wild edible grains and other gathered foods in the early to middle Holocene of north India. Contrary to early expectations, these foragers were sedentary, living in permanent villages that also demonstrate evidence for contact with agriculturalists, of incipient domestication of animals, inclusion of wild grains in the diet, heavy use of food-processing equipment (querns and mullers made of sandstone and quartzite), structural activity in the form of hutments, evidence for storage bins, handmade, ill-fired, crude stamped pottery, and remarkably consistent tool technology. J.N. Pal demonstrates how these sites offer important anthropological insights into what it means to be a hunter-gatherer in addition to demonstrating the roots of Neolithic culture in the Vindhyas.

John R. Lukacs describes evidence for pathology, stature, and subsistence in the human skeletal material from three major MLC sites—Damdama, Mahadaha, and Sarai Nahar Rai—conducted with the goal of understanding skeletal responses to diet, disease, and the physical strains of the hunting and foraging lifestyle. Traumatic injuries and skeletal markers of growth and activity in tibiae of Damdama specimens suggest repetitive or forceful biomechanical action in the lower limbs. Tall average stature and a lack of skeletal indicators of disease suggest that MLC people had food sufficiently nutritious to complete skeletal growth, despite evidence of repeated, periodic stress, evidenced in the form of enamel growth disruption. This profile is collectively consistent with a mobile foraging subsistence pattern and contrasts dramatically with predictions for the expression of these variables among sedentary agriculturalists.

In Chapter 9, Vasant Shinde provides a summary of the contours of urban life in the Harappan civilization, with a focus on cultural processes in the Early (3300–2600 BCE), Mature (2600–1900 BCE), and Late Harappan (1900–1700 BCE) periods. Shinde provides a synthesis of the most current understanding of the following aspects of the Harappan

civilization: its origin and extent, town planning, subsistence and economy, industry and trade, copper/bronze metallurgy, script, religion, polity, and theories of decline. Shinde lists contributions of the Harappan civilization to world history, and discusses issues requiring attention in future research and some promising strategies for addressing long-standing questions. Shinde emphatically stresses the need for collective, interdisciplinary effort to achieve a correct and full understanding of the Harappan civilization.

In Chapter 10, J.M. Kenoyer and R.H. Meadow describe evidence from excavations that took place at Harappa from 1986 to 2010 which resulted new insights on the Indus civilization. Their chapter provides an overview of the scientific excavations and analyses of materials from the type-site of Harappa, Pakistan, the pottery and associated burial goods, stratigraphic relationships between the burials, the analysis of the skeletal materials by a team of biological anthropologists, and subsequent isotopic analyses by other scholars. These studies provide important new insights into the nature and role of burial in Harappan society as well as information about the extremely small percentage of the ancient populations of Harappa that are represented in these burials.

Nancy C. Lovell participated in the project described above as one of a team of bioarchaeologists involved in the excavation of the cemetery. Despite serious limitations posed by the poor preservation of these remains post-excavation, the efforts of a growing number of scholars have yielded important new insights from these assemblages. In Chapter 11, she synthesizes the published information from the past 30 years of bioarchaeological research conducted on skeletons from the Harappan civilization, including work on the biological affinities, paleopathology, and chemical analyses of the Harappans. Lovell suggests that bioarchaeologists working on migration and paleopathology should explore linkages between those aspects, connections between matrilocality or fosterage and violence against women and children, for example. She suggests that recent work in bioarchaeology has led to important insights, which warrant more careful excavation and preservation of human skeletal material, and implores archaeologists to examine some of the hypotheses generated from bioarchaeological research, including those involving social organization, kinship, and the effects of climate, social, and economic changes at the end of the Harappan civilization.

Benjamin Valentine seeks to refine models of migration in Harappan civilization archaeology to focus on human interactions in the past, rather than just the origin of people or the diffusion of technologies and concepts. Chapter 12 provides a brief review of the archaeological literature on migration, followed by a discussion of how the migration concept has been applied to Indus studies. Particular attention is given to the prospects and limitations of different analytical approaches. Furthermore, the review provides archaeological context necessary for interpreting recent bioarchaeological data sets on Indus civilization residence change. Within this chapter, Valentine outlines a lot of the predictions entailed by different models of migration, which must be tested on additional samples.

In Chapter 13, Michel Danino describes how eighteenth- and nineteenth-century attempts to trace the movement of languages—and, by extension, culture and people—from west to east were inspired by the idea of “Aryan Man” and ultimately constituted a false paradigm of an “Aryan invasion” as the driving force for human variation in South Asia today. Danino uses conceptual, methodological, and interpretive approaches to deconstruct the idea of the “Aryan invasion” before disowning the notion of Central Asia’s assumed contribution in the second millennium BCE of a major share of the Indian subcontinent’s gene pool. He explains and ultimately rejects neocolonial ideas that tribal groups are the relics of India’s “original” inhabitants while upper castes descend from recent Indo-Aryan immigrants. Finally, Danino argues for a “Paleolithic” origin for most Indian populations, including upper castes.

Teresa P. Raczek describes the archaeology of the Ahar culture and others that are included in the social spectrums of the Mewar Plain in the third and second millennium BCE (Chapter 14). While the “Ahar culture” is contemporaneous with the Harappan civilization and demonstrates a high level of social complexity, stylistic and lifestyle differences set them apart from the homogeneity of the Harappan civilization. Raczek opines that research on Ahar sites has focused on distinguishing them from the Harappans; thereby considerable variation has been obscured and some sites have even been excluded in this streamlined vision of the “Ahar culture.” She offers a description of Ahar life and a comparison of cultural practices that opens new possibilities for understanding sites typically considered “Ahar”—Ahar, Balathal, Gilund, and Ojiyana—as well as those that are generally considered outliers, like Bagor.

Among all the regional Chalcolithic phases, the Deccan Chalcolithic is the most researched and the best known. In Chapter 15, Prabodh Shirvalkar and Esha Prasad describe the archaeology of the late Holocene on the Deccan Plateau of peninsular India (what is commonly known as the Deccan Chalcolithic). This chapter focuses on the archaeological record of three major sites, Nevasa, Daimabad, and Inamgaon, and provides a detailed discussion of theories regarding the origin and decline of this culture, the ceramic styles, settlement pattern and public architecture, material culture, subsistence, religion, and trade contacts. The chapter also mentions ethnoarchaeological work that has so far attempted to decipher the Chalcolithic settlement pattern.

After the decline of Indus culture, urbanism and Harappan traditions were abandoned in favor of living in simpler, village-level agricultural societies. A number of villages and small towns were founded and flourished in west central peninsular India at this time, until this cultural horizon too came to an end c. 1000 BCE. In Chapter 16, Gwen Robbins Schug and Kelly Elaine Blevins consider paleopathological evidence for the human experience of environmental and social crisis at the beginning and end of the second millennium BCE, based on the immature remains from Harappa and Inamgaon. This chapter explores the biocultural context of “resilience” and describes evidence for metabolic disturbances (including scurvy) in the immature skeletons from these two communities. The results provide additional support for the hypothesis that different cemeteries at Harappa reflect more than community identity; they also show the social suffering of inequality. For the infants and children buried at the rural community of Inamgaon, environmental and social changes were associated with different stressors but biocultural stress levels indicate rates of malnourishment were always high.

In Chapter 17, Muhammad Zahir describes new perspectives on the protohistoric cemeteries of northwestern South Asia, the so-called Gandhara Grave Culture of Pakistan. Zahir details the history of research on these cemeteries and how the myth of the Aryan invasion shaped the direction of research and the interpretations of these burials. Zahir disputes the validity of using the Rg Veda to understand these cemeteries, demonstrating logical inconsistencies and problems related to an erroneous chronological framework, and provides recalibrated radiocarbon measurements for the protohistoric cemeteries in the Swat and Dir valleys. He also provides a more nuanced assessment of fluidity in the structure of graves, burial practices, and mortuary artifacts that suggests meaning was ideologically, ritually, socially, and culturally constituted in relation to features of the landscape where these cemeteries are found. The existence of multiple, and competing, ideologies may have been central to the existence and continuity of these burial traditions for more than three millennia.

In Chapter 18, P.S. Joshi reviews the typology and related terminology of Megalithic architecture before presenting a synthetic account of insights from centuries of research on the megalith builders of the early Iron Age of Vidarbha. He explicates three stages of conceptual progress of the Megalithic studies in the last 50 years. The first phase, from

1968–1978, made progress on the chronology of megalith construction in the Vidarbha region; the second phase, 1979–1999, saw the development of problem-oriented research and new scientific approaches that led to important insights into the socioeconomic and technological aspects of megalithic culture. The third research phase, from 2000 onward, began to address issues related to the origin of diverse traditions in the early Iron Age of Vidarbha. The author categorically states that the Vidarbha megaliths can no longer be examined in isolation but must be considered as organically arising from earlier cultures of South India, namely Neolithic culture.

The South Indian megalithic monuments have undergone only limited excavation and we have only a restricted understanding of the origin, growth, diffusion, authorship, chronology, and material culture of this period in South Indian protohistory. Using a textual and ethnographic approach, K. Rajan provides a nuanced interpretation of the meaning and significance of these monuments (Chapter 19). First, he uses inscriptions on potsherds and accelerator mass spectrometry (AMS) methods to date South Asian megalithic monuments to the Early Historic, up to the fifth century BCE. He then uses archaeological and textual evidence to dispute the notion that these people were nomads; instead, he argues that they were very much instrumental in transforming protohistoric into Early Historic culture. His research on the Sangam literature also sheds light on the rites and rituals performed while erecting the megalithic monuments. The author clearly demonstrates that a textual analysis, when approached from the proper perspective, contributes a great deal of new understanding to the material evidence from the Iron Age, the megalithic, and the Early Historic archaeological record.

The Early Historic (c. 500 BCE–300 CE) witnessed the manifestation of complex politics and social structures, architectural and technological advancement, the use of script and coinage, new religious movements, and the rise of a ruling class. The manifestation of these characteristics occurred at different times in different parts of India. Historical cities in India were traditionally understood through literature-based research, but in Chapter 20 Reshma Sawant and Gurudas Shete review research trends in the archaeology of urbanism that have recently begun to reveal the complex process of city formation, and its social, cultural, political, and economic aspects. By assessing the literary and archaeological sources, the author highlights a persistent confusion in archaeology about political organization at the onset of urbanism; they opine that ancient India is a perfect place to test hypotheses about the city/state dichotomy, among other issues. Finally, the authors advocate use of new techniques such as remote sensing, satellite imagery, and surface mapping in historical archaeology.

In Chapter 21, Monica L. Smith summarizes the field of historical and medieval archaeology in South Asia. Using textual and archaeological sources to understand interactions between cities and how unifying religious traditions shaped the Early Historic and medieval periods in the Indian subcontinent, Smith acknowledges the importance of recent inquiries that include landscape-scale perspectives on human–environmental relations and food production. Archaeology of the medieval period seeks to characterize the decline of urbanism, the strengthening of certain religious traditions, the regional consolidation of power, and the rise of medieval fortification sites. Smith advocates the use of new technologies like ground-penetrating radar, magnetic gradiometry, electrical resistivity, satellite images, and so on to capture information about threatened archaeological sites. She also expresses her deep concern over diminishing resources earmarked for libraries and archives, which puts historical documents at risk of damage from bioenvironmental threats. These and other threats can be ameliorated by relatively inexpensive digital archival technologies.

Archaeological research on the emergence of early agriculture has neglected the evidence from South Asia despite evidence of initial moves toward agricultural production, beginning

in the middle Holocene. Charlene A. Murphy and Dorian Q. Fuller describe the evidence for South Indian entanglements with sedentism and regular cultivation of plant domesticates between 4000 and 1500 BCE (Chapter 22). The transition to agricultural production was slow in India, but by 2000 years ago, the subcontinent was primarily inhabited by farmers. The chapter focuses on evidence of this transition in different regions of India, but places the evidence within a broader context of other centers of domestication. The authors conclude that human communities took distinct pathways toward food production in different regions despite similar timing of domestication, a coincidence that might suggest an influence from broader climatic or social processes.

In Chapter 23, Kathleen D. Morrison examines cuisine, cultivation, and health in southern India. This chapter outlines some of the major transformations in agriculture in the semi-arid interior of peninsular India, with a focus on the conscious planning and desiring that have animated the construction of agricultural facilities, settlement locations, and the organization of labor in rural life and, over the course of 5000 years, created the highly transformed contemporary landscapes of this region. Morrison describes how past decisions have reshaped present realities—hillsides, hydrologies, soils, sacred landscapes, transport networks, flora, and fauna, as well as expectations about the “good life” in respect to food. Diverse food consumption practices are reflected in a mosaic of different forms of production, from rain-fed farming, to grazing, to intensive irrigated agriculture and well-watered gardens. In turn, different forms of production had varied environmental effects; gradually the built environment, too, was transformed by the infrastructure and impacts of irrigated agriculture, as temples, roads, dams, wells, and villages all reshaped landscapes. Morrison opines that food is the both the beginning and the end of a cycle of production, distribution, and consumption and, as such, food practices ultimately constitute both places and people.

Mark Aldenderfer and Jacqueline T. Eng are concerned with the meaning of human bodies and burial traditions among two high-altitude populations in Nepal. Chapter 24 describes human use of the high elevation valleys of the Upper Mustang, Nepal, from 2500 to 1300 years ago. The authors provide an analysis of the human remains and mortuary practices in these caves, which provide an opportunity to understand the biological stresses experienced by these high-altitude communities, biocultural responses that allowed the successful colonization of this challenging region, and the impact of migration and other complex processes on the archaeological record of this area.

The next section of the volume, “South Asia in Retrospect,” provides comprehensive treatment of the archaeological record for regions on the edges of South Asian archaeology—Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. We also turn to providing a synthetic overview of anthropological approaches that have been influential, if marginal, to understanding South Asia in the past. In Chapter 25, Shahnaj Husne Jahan reviews prehistoric archaeology in Bangladesh and aims to provide a scientific description of the prehistoric archaeological evidence from Bangladesh, avoiding any projection of the present nation—its origins or identity—onto a distant past. The most conspicuous feature of prehistory in Bangladesh is the use of petrified wood as the raw material for the prehistoric industry. This fossil wood industry is highly significant in that it represents a unique technological adaptation for South Asia, and it also demonstrates a unique Paleolithic horizon in the subcontinent. The fossil wood assemblages of Bangladesh present enough technological and typological similarities to tools from northeast India (Tripura) and Myanmar to suggest a regional prehistoric cultural tradition. This tradition is dissimilar to prehistoric artifacts from West Bengal in India. The chapter highlights how much more work there is to be done in this area and provides impetus for young scholars of prehistory to consider research in Bangladesh.

Prakash Darnal reviews the archaeology of Nepal in Chapter 26—from the reconstruction of the lifestyle and adaptations of the Paleolithic occupants of this region, to the development of relationships between Nepali people and other South Asians in the late Holocene, to archaeology devoted to documenting the life history, teachings, and travels of the Buddha. The chapter outlines the major historical developments in Nepali archaeology, focusing on some of the most spectacular sites and the most influential research in the region but with a goal of highlighting the vast gaps in our knowledge of Nepali archaeology and encouraging young scholars who might undertake to fill those gaps.

While prehistory has been relatively neglected in Nepal and Bangladesh, much more research has been undertaken in Sri Lanka. In Chapter 27, Samanti Kulatilake describes the biological and archaeological evidence for the modern human occupation of Sri Lanka, from the Late Pleistocene forward—a topic of keen interest to Professor K.A.R. Kennedy. In this chapter Kulatilake discusses observations on cultural, morphological, and genetic patterns in the contemporary population of Sri Lanka and their usefulness for understanding Sri Lanka’s biocultural heritage. What is clear is that peninsular and island South Asians maintained complex relationships for millennia, evidenced by archaeological and skeletal remains and genetic data. However, the people of Sri Lanka are heterogeneous and this heterogeneity is layered; traits have been introduced by ancient immigrants, superimposed with traits of more recent arrivals, then erased or highlighted over time by a combination of evolutionary, historical, and cultural processes and events. Kulatilake suggests that correlating biology and ethnolinguistic affinities of regional populations is not a fruitful path for understanding population histories in this region, especially because influences such as language replacement, gene flow, and genetic drift complicate the picture.

With Chapter 28, the book turns to an anthropological perspective on the past, providing a necessary background for the next generation of archaeologists and bioarchaeologists as they begin to reflect more deeply on South Asia’s culture and meaning, and how it is constructed. In Chapter 28, K. Paddayya provides an anthropological perspective on theoretical archaeology in India. He reviews 230 years of history of Indian archaeology from the establishment of the Asiatic Society in 1784 to the influence of processual archaeology to the present day. Paddayya describes the important insights to be gained from a close reading of the anthropologists and ethnographers of the early twentieth century. In reading Redfield, for example, Paddayya notes the similarities between his conception of village peasant life and those proffered by Gandhi. He sees in this vision lessons not only for understanding the past but also for humility in human relations in the present day. Paddayya implores archaeologists to read early twentieth-century anthropology and to think more deeply about the anthropological turn in archaeology.

Abhik Ghosh provides an overview of the early history of anthropological scholarship in India, through to the 1990s (Chapter 29). The “formative phase” (1774–1919) marked the beginning of Indian anthropology and was characterized by its emphasis on basic ethnographic accounts of tribes and caste groups in a “natural” historical setting, with descriptions focused on the diversity and difference of the customs. Colonialism played a large role in shaping the goals and gaze of early ethnographers, whose largely descriptive works are unmatched today by their rich ethnographic detail. In the “constructive phase” (1920–1949), anthropology as a discipline became more analytical, philosophical, academic, and professional. Indian anthropology reflected a clear shift from an ethnographic, descriptive focus to understanding culture as a set of relations and culture change as a process. In the “analytical period” (1950–1990), the focus of anthropological research shifted from monographic studies of a group of people to studies of more complex subjects, like whole villages. The data generated from such a large number of village ethnographies led to much

theory building and generalizations. Ghosh traces the development of the discipline using the works of noteworthy personalities, many of whom may deserve a reread by archaeologists interested in anthropological archaeology.

In addition to new surveys, new excavations, and the employment of new technologies in South Asian archaeology, many of the authors in this volume have commented on the value of revisiting artifactual and skeletal collections housed in various repositories across the subcontinent. These collections represent a vast wealth of information for studies designed to account for biases related to their assemblage. In Chapter 30, Kishor K. Basa describes the history of museums in India, making explicit their historical trajectory from colonial constructs to postcolonial engagements. In the colonial context, museums in India provided legitimacy, although sometimes indirectly, at first to colonial rule and later to the growth of nationalism. To Basa, the museums of India reflect their origins as colonial vehicles for understanding and representing the “Other.” Their exhibits reflect their preoccupation with classification and typologies of all flavors. In a postcolonial situation, the Others speak, in a celebration of cultural diversity that has become an important aspect of modern museums, the challenge being to display cultural diversity with multiple voices without going against goals of national integration. Homogenization of multiple voices in the name of integration would not only result in the intellectual sterilization of the museum profession, but also do more disservice to the cause of national integration by silencing the dissenting imagination. By quoting experiments in recent years, Basa explains how today’s museum professionals in India live up to the nuanced challenge of displaying the dissenting imagination.

In Chapter 31, Subhash R. Walimbe reviews theoretical and methodological trends in South Asian bioarchaeology. His review of the research undertaken on human skeletons in South Asia covers the major lines of inquiry, their major conclusions, and is strongly focused on the anthropological significance of a bioarchaeological approach to the past. Walimbe describes the research prior to 1980 as a descriptive phase, primarily aimed at addressing research questions directly resulting from anthropology’s colonialist and racist origins. Post-1980 research is taken as an analytical and interpretive phase, where human biological variation is regarded as the net result of a highly complex interaction between genetic and nongenetic factors, including cultural and biological acclimatization, adjustment, and adaptation. On the basis of studies on nonmetric dental and skeletal variables, the author imagines biological continuity in the subcontinent during the last 10,000 years. He summarizes recent paleopathological research and its relevance in understanding protohistoric social complexity. He also recommends desired administrative and academic steps for further research in the discipline.

In Chapter 32, V. Mushrif-Tripathy and colleagues conclude the book by providing a very useful resource for students and scholars who will take up the mantle of future research in the bioarchaeology of the subcontinent. They provide an updated and comprehensive account of the human skeletal collections in India, their characteristics, current location, and major research citations. The primary objective of this chapter is to acquaint readers with the large number of human skeletal remains excavated from archaeological sites in India. The chapter serves as the most comprehensive and current inventory of archaeological human remains to date, with updates on the previous inventory compiled by Professor Kennedy in the early 1980s and with new data about more recently excavated sites. The data presented here was compiled from two journals, *Ancient India* (1946–1953) and its more recent incarnation, the *Indian Archaeological Review* (1953–1954 to 2003–2004). These two journals are where all excavation reports have traditionally been published. Information on sites excavated after 2004 is reported here based on personal communication. The authors provide

information on the geographic location of the archaeological sites that have yielded human remains; the chronology of the sites, as reported in *Ancient India* and *Indian Archaeological Review*; the cultural-historical context of the burial phase; the excavation date and agency involved; the number of skeletal remains recovered, including numbers of immature and adult skeletons (wherever possible); the institution where the remains are stored; and the published bioarchaeological references for each collection (where available).