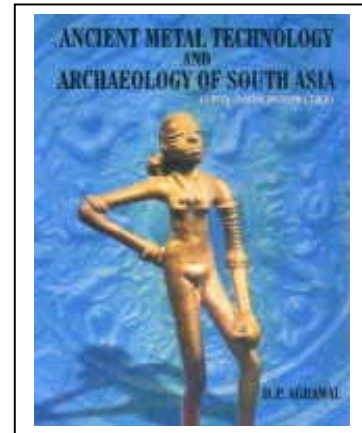


**Ancient Metal Technology and Archaeology of South Asia : A Pan-Asian Perspective/D.P. Agrawal.** 2000, 254 p., 57 halftone illustrations, 3 maps, \$99. ISBN 81-7305-177-1.



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"The focus of the book is primarily on the ancient metal technology of South Asia but its not a technical treatise. Archaeometallurgy has been situated in the matrix of archaeology. Such studies have a meaning only in the human context of the past. The introductory chapter of the book emphasises, by giving examples, what such technical studies should aim at and what all one can glean about the past through them. The main emphasis is on copper/bronze but other metals have been duly covered: silver, gold, tin, arsenic, lead, brass and iron. As more detailed work is available now for the Indus civilisation and its antecedent cultures, it has been discussed in two detailed chapters. But the other chalcolithic cultures and the copper hoards have also been dealt with in adequate detail. The

history of brass is quite polemical and it has therefore been given one full chapter. The chapter on iron summarises all the relevant issues but one could not go into all the details, as it requires a book to itself. The Central Himalayan region has been shown to be equally important for understanding the archaeometallurgy of South Asia. Linguistic evidence has been used to emphasise some of the new perspectives. Socio-economic implications of the archaeometallurgical evidence have been thoroughly discussed. The development of Indian metal technologies has been given in a global perspective but with a different bias. So far the emphasis has always been on West Asia. For the first time South Asian archaeometallurgy has been studied in the context of the eastern cultures of China, Thailand and Japan. The book gives an up-to-date summary of the recent archaeometallurgical evidence from China, Japan and Thailand. The problems to be addressed to in the future studies have also been highlighted.

"All in all it is a book with a different perspective, written without using much technical jargon, tracing the evolution of metal technologies in an archaeological context. It is addressed to the general reader, but a specialist will also find adequate detail that one may need." (jacket)