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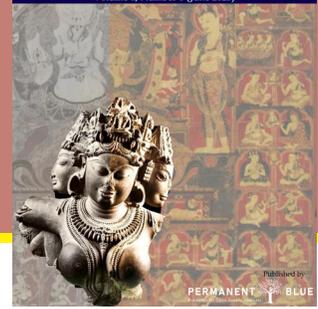
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Editorial Introduction to the First Issue of the Journal of Studies in South Asia (JSSA)

SPECIAL ISSUE ON THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF SOUTH ASIA

It is with great pleasure that we present the inaugural issue (Vol. 1, No. 1) of the *Journal of Studies in South Asia*. This journal has been conceived as a platform for advancing interdisciplinary research on the history, archaeology, art, culture and society of South Asia, drawing together fresh perspectives from both emerging and established scholars. By fostering dialogue across regions and disciplines, we hope to contribute meaningfully to the growing body of scholarship on the cultural and historical dynamics of this vibrant part of the world. The present special issue of the *Journal of Studies in South Asia* brings together a collection of scholarly works that explore the rich archaeological heritage of the Indian subcontinent. These contributions highlight the diversity of archaeological research from prehistoric cultures and rock-cut monuments to early scripts, religious iconography, and material culture demonstrating both the depth and dynamism of ongoing studies in South Asian archaeology.

The articles in this issue reflect the wide intellectual scope of the journal. The first article, by Praveen Kumar K, reports the *discovery of a Mesolithic site at Madapatana–Yallappana Palya* in the Arkavathi Basin of Southern Karnataka. This important find adds new data to the prehistory of the region, filling a significant geographical gap in Mesolithic studies and inviting further reassessment of settlement and technological patterns in peninsular India.

The paper by Raghunath Bokil and Riya Kamble introduces newly discovered rock-cut caves from the Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra. Their study expands our understanding of rock-cut architectural traditions in the Konkan region and emphasizes the untapped potential of this terrain for further archaeological investigation.

Focusing on one of India's most iconic monuments, Jamil Ahmed explores the architectural, technological, and epigraphical evolution of the Sanchi Stupa—from its Mauryan beginnings to contemporary conservation efforts. This study brings into dialogue the artistic innovations, religious symbolism, and historical patronage that shaped the monument over centuries.

Chandreyee Paul contributes a meticulous palaeographic study of the Bhārhut inscriptions preserved at the Indian Museum, Kolkata. By analyzing morphological transitions from Early to Middle Brāhmī, the paper illuminates the development of writing systems and the cultural context of donative epigraphs during the 2nd century BCE.

Iconography and religious art form another key thread in this issue. Nagendra Shukla, Sakshi Nagayach and Pankaj Pandro examine Yogini sculptures from the Baghelkhand region, highlighting their Tantric significance, artistic attributes, and regional variations. Based on inscriptions and iconographic markers, the study offers a detailed analysis of Yogini worship and its aesthetic expressions during the 10th–12th centuries CE.

Material culture is further explored in Ayesha Arobi's paper on ornamented bricks of Bangladesh. Focusing on terracotta as both an artistic and architectural medium, the article sheds light on technological adaptation, symbolism, and the cultural identity embedded in Bengal's brick-making traditions, especially through newly recovered and exhibited artifacts.

Together, these contributions reflect the essence of South Asian archaeology: a field where landscapes are layered with history, where art converges with ritual, and where inscriptions, stones, and ceramics speak of human ingenuity and devotion. This special issue aspires not only to document discoveries but also to encourage further research, critical engagement, and collaborative scholarship.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the authors for their significant contributions and to the anonymous reviewers whose careful reading, constructive feedback and scholarly engagement have greatly enhanced the quality of the contributions in this inaugural issue. Their commitment to maintaining academic standards has been invaluable in shaping the *Journal of Studies in South Asia*. We also acknowledge the dedicated work of **Mukant Bishwas** in preparing the manuscripts for publication.

We also gratefully acknowledge **Permanent Blue**, our publishing partner, for their dedicated support in bringing this journal to fruition. Their professionalism and commitment have ensured that the vision of this journal has taken its first tangible form.

Sincerely,
Prof. (Dr.) Jayanta Singh Roy
Editor-in-Chief