

Class 12

HISTORY
CHAPTER - 1

BRICKS, BEADS AND BONES

INTRODUCTION

- One of the world's oldest urban civilizations (Indus Valley)
- Known for planned cities, advanced technology, and trade
- Time span: 6000 BCE – 1300 BCE
- Major phases:
 - Early Harappan: 6000 – 2600 BCE
 - Mature Harappan: 2600 – 1900 BCE
 - Late Harappan: 1900 – 1300 BCE



Terminologies, Places & Time

- Harappan Civilisation = Indus Valley Civilisation
- Named after Harappa (first site discovered)
- Spread across present-day Pakistan & northwest India
- Key states: Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra
- Found as far as Afghanistan and Baluchistan

Beginnings

- Origin from early farming communities (~7000 BCE)
- Early Harappan phase: small settlements, agriculture, and crafts
- Urban phase evolved through gradual growth

Subsistence Strategies

Ate wheat, barley, lentils, chickpeas, sesame, millets, rice

Domesticated animals: cattle, sheep, goat, buffalo, pig

Also hunted: boar, deer, gharial, fish, fowl

Evidence from charred grains & animal bones

Agricultural Technologies

- Oxen used for ploughing (evidence from seals & models)
- Ploughed fields at Kalibangan – two crops together
- Tools for harvesting: stone or metal blades
- Irrigation possible through wells, reservoirs (Dholavira)
- Canals found at Shortughai (Afghanistan)

Mohenjodaro – Planned Urban Centre

- City divided into Citadel (higher) & Lower Town (larger, lower)
- Planned streets in grid pattern
- Standardised bricks (ratio 4:2:1)
- Huge labour force mobilised for construction

Domestic Architecture – Harappan Cities

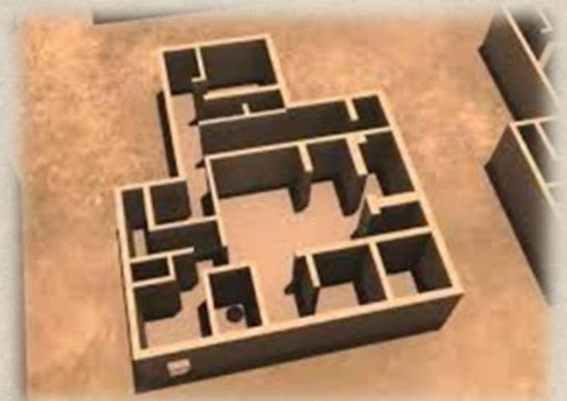
- Most houses built with **baked or sun-dried bricks**
- Layout centred around a **courtyard** – main family activities like cooking, weaving happened here
- **Rooms** on all sides of the courtyard
- **Main entrance** faced away from the street for privacy
- **No windows** on ground-level walls facing the street
- Each house had a **bathroom** paved with bricks, connected to street drains
- Some houses had **staircases** to a second floor or roof
- Many houses had **private wells**; in Mohenjodaro, about **700 wells** have been found

Drainage System



- Covered brick drains along streets
- Houses connected to drains via bathrooms
- Cesspits for waste settlement before water entered street drains
- Found in big & small towns

Domestic Architecture



- Houses around a central courtyard
- Main door faced away from street (privacy)
- Many had wells & staircases
- Bathrooms paved with bricks

Citadel Structures



- Great Bath – watertight pool for ritual bathing
- Warehouse – massive structure for storage
- Other public buildings

Tracking Social Differences

Burials: Most graves simple, some with ornaments & pottery

Luxury items: Rare materials like gold, faience, semi-precious stones

Luxuries found mostly in large cities

Craft Production

- Centres like Chanhudaro specialised in beads, shells, seals, weights
- Beads made from carnelian, jasper, steatite, gold, faience
- Coastal towns (Nageshwar, Balakot) made shell goods

Procuring Materials

- Local & long-distance trade
- Raw materials from:
- Rajasthan (copper)
- Gujarat (carnelian)
- Afghanistan (lapis lazuli)
- South India (gold)
- Bullock carts, river & sea routes used

Contact with Distant Lands

- Trade with Oman, Bahrain (Dilmun), Mesopotamia (Meluhha)
- Harappan seals, beads, weights found abroad
- Mesopotamian texts mention Meluhha goods

Seals, Script, Weights

Seals: for identification, security in trade

Script: undeciphered, 375–400 signs, right-to-left

Weights: chert stone, binary & decimal system



Ancient Authority

- Evidence of organised planning & standardisation
- Debate: single ruler, many rulers, or equal society
- Likely coordinated governance for large-scale works



End of the Civilisation

- Around 1900 BCE: cities declined
- Reasons: climate change, floods, river shifts, overuse of land
- Loss of trade, writing, standard weights
- Rural lifestyle replaced urban centres

Discovering the Harappan Civilisation

- Forgotten until 19th century
- Alexander Cunningham (1875) found seal but misdated it
- John Marshall (1924) announced discovery
- Later excavations revealed many sites

Problems of Piecing Together the Past

- Script undeciphered – rely on material evidence
- Finds classified by material & function
- Religious beliefs hard to interpret – figurines, seals, altars
- Some ideas speculative (e.g., proto-Shiva)

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THANK YOU ALL!