



# WELCOME TO STUDYSHIP WITH KRATI

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Textbook in History  
For Class XII

THEMES IN  
**INDIAN HISTORY**  
PART I

**THEME 01: CLASS 12**

# **BRICKS, BEADS AND BONES**

**THIS LESSON IS DIVIDED INTO 2 PARTS.**

**EXPLANATION AS PER THE LATEST SYLLABUS.**

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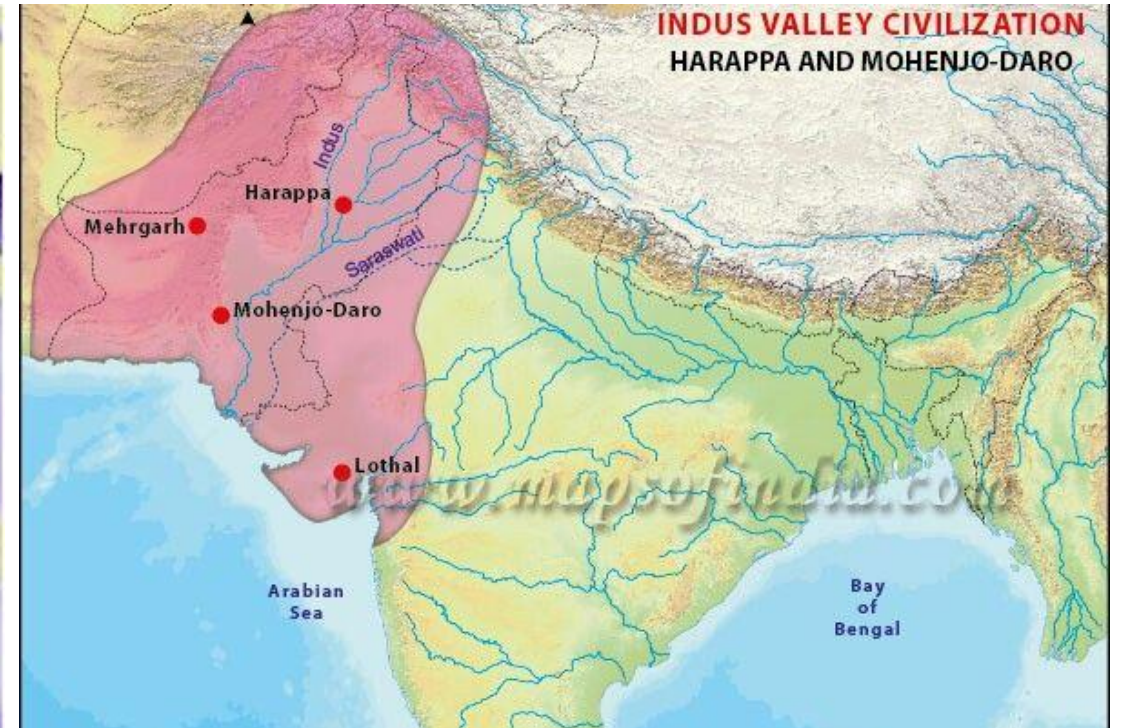


# WHAT ARE THE SOURCES AVAILABLE TO UNDERSTAND (OR) TO STUDY HARAPPAN CIVILIZATION?

- A) The Harappan seal is possibly the most distinctive artefact of the Harappans or Indus valley civilisation. Harappan seals contain animal and plant motifs and signs from a script that remains undeciphered.
- B) We know a great deal of sources which were left by the people, such as their houses, pots, ornaments, tools and seals – in other words, archaeological evidence.



# Contemporary Civilization & Harappan C.





# WHY WAS INDUS VALLEY CIVILISATION ALSO CALLED THE HARAPPAN CULTURE?

- a. Archaeologists use the term “culture” for a group of objects, distinctive in style, that are usually found together within a specific geographical area and a period.
- b. In the case of the Harappan culture, these distinctive objects include seals, beads, weights, stone blades and baked bricks.
- c. These objects were found from areas of Afghanistan, Jammu, Baluchistan (Pakistan) and Gujarat .
- d. Harappan civilisation is dated between c. 2600 and 1900 BCE.

# PREVALENCE OF AGRICULTURE IN HARAPPAN CIVILISATION



- A. Representations on seals and terracotta sculpture indicate that the bull was known, and oxen were used for ploughing.
- B. Terracotta models of the plough have been found at sites in Cholistan and at Banawali (Haryana).
- C. Archaeologists have also found evidence of a ploughed field at Kalibangan (Rajasthan). The field had two sets of furrows at right angles to each other, suggesting that two different crops were grown together.
- d. Archaeologists have also identified the tools used for harvesting. Harappans used stone blades set in wooden handles and metal tools made of copper.
- e. Most Harappan sites are located in semi-arid lands. Traces of canals, water reservoirs and wells have been found at the Harappan sites indicate that agriculture was practiced.

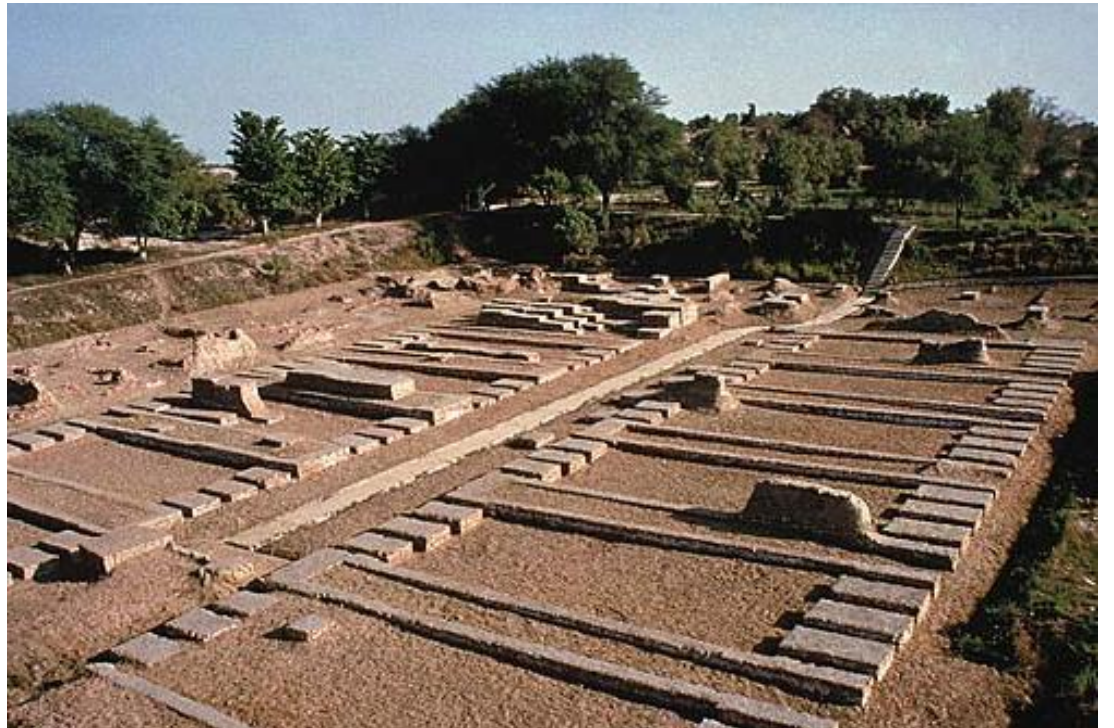


# SUBSISTENCE STRATEGIES (DIETARY PRACTICES) OF HARAPPAN CULTURES AND MATURE HARAPPAN CULTURES

- a. The Harappans ate a wide range of plant products. Archaeologists have been able to reconstruct dietary practices from finds of charred food grains and seeds
- b. These are studied by Archaeo-botanists, who are specialists in ancient plant remains.
- c. Food grains found at Harappan sites include wheat, barley, lentil, chickpea, sesame, Millets and rice.
- d. The Harappans ate a wide range of animal products. Archaeologists have been able to reconstruct use of animals from finds of charred animal bones found at Harappan sites. These include those of cattle, sheep, goat, buffalo and pig.
- e. These are studied by Archaeo-zoologists or zoo-Archaeologists who are specialists in ancient animal remains.
- f. Bones of wild species such as boar, deer and *gharial* were also found. We do not know whether the Harappans hunted these animals themselves or obtained meat from other hunting (tribal) communities.



# Citadel & Graneries







# UNIQUE FEATURES OF MOHENJODARO

- A. CITADEL
- a. The settlement is smaller but higher called as the Citadel
- b. The Citadel had buildings which were constructed on mud brick platforms.
- c. It was walled and physically separated from the Lower Town. We find evidence of structures that were probably used for special public purposes.



- *B.IMPORTANT BUILDINGS IN CITADEL*
- c. The warehouse, a massive structure of which the lower brick portions remain, while the upper portions, probably made up of wood, decayed long ago.
- d. The Great Bath was a large rectangular tank in a courtyard surrounded by a corridor on all four sides. There were two flights of steps on the north and south leading into the tank.
- e. There were rooms on three sides, in one of which was a large well. Across a lane to the north lay a smaller building with eight bathrooms, four on each side of a corridor.
- f. Scholars suggest that it was meant for some kind of a special ritual bath.



- *C. LOWER TOWN*

- g. The Lower Town was also walled. Several buildings were built on platforms, which served as foundations.
- h. Once the platforms were in place, all building activity within the city was restricted to a fixed area. So it seems that the settlement was first planned and then built accordingly.

- *D. DRAINAGE SYSTEM*

- i. One of the most distinctive features of Harappan cities was the carefully planned drainage system. If you look at the plan of the Lower Town you will notice that roads and streets were laid out along an approximate “grid” pattern, intersecting at right angles.
- j. It seems that streets with drains were laid out first and then houses were built along them.
- k. Houses were built with unbaked bricks but drainages were made with burned bricks.





- *E.DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE*

- l. The Lower Town at Mohenjodaro had residential buildings. Many were centred on a courtyard, with rooms on all sides.
- m. The courtyard was probably the centre of activities such as cooking and weaving, particularly during hot and dry weather.
- n. People were more concern for privacy: there are no windows in the walls along the ground level. Besides, the main entrance does not give a direct view of the open courtyard.
- o. Every house had its own bathroom paved with bricks. House drains connected through the wall to the street drains. Some houses have remains of stair cases to reach a second storey or the roof.
- p. Many houses had wells, often in a room that could be reached from the outside and perhaps used by passers-by.



# STRATEGIES TO FIND OUT SOCIAL OR ECONOMIC DIFFERENCES AMONGST HARAPPANS

- a. At burials in Harappan sites the dead were generally laid in pits. Sometimes, there were differences in the way the burial pit was made – in some instances; the hollowed-out spaces were lined with bricks. These variations are an indication of social difference.
- b. Some graves contain pottery and ornaments. This indicating life after death. Jewellery has been found in burials of both men and women.
- c. A burial contained ornaments consisting of three shell rings, a jasper bead and hundreds of micro beads near the skull of a male. In some instances the dead were buried with copper mirrors. But the Harappans did not believe in burying precious things with the dead.
- d. Another strategy to identify social differences is to study artefacts, which archaeologists broadly classify as utilitarian and luxuries. The first utilitarian artefacts include objects of daily use made of stone or clay such as querns, pottery, needles, flesh-rubbers are usually found distributed throughout settlements.
- e. Archaeologists assume luxuries objects are rare and made from costly, non-local materials such as little pots of faience, beads, micro beads etc. Rare objects made of valuable materials are generally concentrated in large settlements like Mohenjodaro and Harappa and rich and socially high class people might lived in those cities.



# CRAFT PRODUCTION IN INDUS VALLEY

- a. Types of craft production such as bead-making, shell-cutting, metal-working, seal-making and weight-making were practiced.
- b. The variety of raw materials used for making crafts such as stones (carnelian - red stone, jasper-yellow stone, crystal- colourless stone, quartz and steatite) metals (copper, bronze and gold) shell and clay.
- c. The shapes of crafts were numerous – disc shaped, cylindrical, spherical, barrel-shaped, segmented, etc. Some were decorated by painting and some had designs etched onto them. Some beads were made of two or more stones, cemented together. Some of stones were decorated with gold caps
- d. Techniques for making beads differed according to the material like Moulding, chipping, Grinding, polishing and drilling are some of the techniques used for making crafts.
- e. Chanhudaro, Lothal, Dholavira, Nageshwar, Balakot, Mohenjodaro and Harappa are some of the craft centres.





# HOW DID ARCHAEOLOGISTS IDENTIFY CENTRES OF CRAFT PRODUCTION?

- a. In order to identify centres of craft production, archaeologists usually look for raw materials such as stones, whole shells, and copper ore etc.
- b. Archaeologists also look for tools which were used for making crafts.
- c. Archaeologists look for unfinished or incomplete objects.
- d. Archaeologists also look for rejects and waste material.
- e. *Waste is one of the best indicators of craft work. Sometimes, larger waste pieces were used up to make smaller objects. These traces suggest that apart from small, specialized centres, craft production was also undertaken in large cities such as Mohenjodaro and Harappa.*



# STRATEGIES FOR PROCURING RAW MATERIALS WITHIN THE SUB-CONTINENT

- a. Terracotta toy models of bullock carts suggest that it was one of the important means of transporting goods and people across land routes.
- b. Depictions of ships and boats on seals suggest that river routes along the Indus and its tributaries, as well as coastal routes were used for transporting goods and people.
- c. The Harappans procured materials for craft production by establishing settlements where raw material was available. (*Nageshwar and Balakot- shell, Shortughai- lapis lazuli, a blue stone, Lothal- carnelian, steatite and metal-Rajasthan and Gujarat*)
- d. Another strategy for procuring raw materials may have been to send expeditions to areas such as the Khetri region of Rajasthan (for copper) and south India (for gold).
- e. Occasional finds of Harappan artefacts such as steatite micro beads in the Khetri area indicates that the inhabitants of Ganeshwar-Jodhpura culture supplied copper to the Harappans.



# STRATEGIES FOR PROCURING RAW MATERIALS FROM DISTANT LANDS(WEST ASIA)

- a. Recent archaeological finds suggest that copper was also probably brought from Oman, on the south eastern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. Chemical analyses have shown that both the Omani copper and Harappan copper artifacts have traces of nickel.
- b. A distinctive type of vessel, a large Harappan jar coated with a thick layer of black clay has been found at Omani sites. It is possible that the Harappans exchanged the contents of these vessels for Omani copper.
- c. Mesopotamian texts datable to the third millennium BCE refer to copper coming from a region called Magan, (Oman), and interestingly enough copper found Mesopotamian sites also contains traces of nickel.
- d. It is worth noting that Mesopotamian texts mention contact with regions named Dilmun (Bahrain), Magan and Meluhha (the Harappan region). They mention the products from Meluhha: carnelian, lapis lazuli, copper, gold, and varieties of wood were imported.
- e. A Mesopotamian myth says that: “May your bird be the *haja*-bird, may its call be heard in the royal palace.” Some archaeologists think the *haja*-bird was the peacock.
- f. Mesopotamian texts refer to Meluhha (the Harappan region) as a land of seafarers. Besides, we find depictions of ships and boats on seals.





## • HARAPPAN SEALS

- a. Seals and sealing were used to facilitate long distance communication. Imagine a bag of goods being sent from one place to another. Its mouth was tied with rope and on the knot was affixed some wet clay on which one or more seals were pressed, leaving an impression.
- b. If the bag reached with its sealing intact, it meant that it had not been tampered with. The sealing also conveyed the identity of the sender.
- c. Harappan seals usually have a line of writing and animal motifs. Scholars have also suggested that the motif (generally an animal) conveyed a meaning to those who could not read.

## • HARAPPAN SCRIPT

- a. Harappan seals usually have a line of writing. Most inscriptions are short, the longest containing about 26 signs.
- b. Although the script remains undeciphered to date, it was evidently not alphabetical but syllable.
- c. It has just too many signs –somewhere between 375 and 400.
- d. It is apparent that the script was written from right to left as some seals show a wider spacing on the right and cramping on the left, as if the engraver began working from the right and then ran out of space.
- e. A variety of objects on which writing has been found: seals, copper tools, rims of jars, copper and terracotta tablets, jewellery, bone rods, even an ancient signboard. Remember, there may have been writing on perishable materials too such as cloth, animal skin etc.



## HARAPPAN WEIGHTS

- a. Exchanges were regulated by a precise system of weights, usually made of a stone called chert and generally cubical with no markings.
- b. The lower denominations of weights were binary (1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, etc). While the higher denominations used the decimal system.
- c. The smaller weights were probably used for weighing jewellery and beads and bigger weights were used for weighing food grains.
- d. Metal scale-pans have also been found. These were probably used for measuring cloth and other materials.



# WHAT ARE INDICATIONS PROVE THAT COMPLEX DECISIONS WERE TAKEN AND IMPLEMENTED IN HARAPPAN SOCIETY BY THE RULER?

- a. The extraordinary uniformity of Harappan artefacts as evident in pottery, seals and weights.
- b. Bricks, though obviously not produced in any single centre, but they were of a uniform ratio throughout the region, from Jammu to Gujarat.
- c. We have also seen that settlements were strategically set up in specific locations for various reasons.
- d. Large labour recourse was mobilised for making bricks and for the construction of massive walls and platforms.
- e. Long distance trade with other countries also probably regulated by the ruling authority.



# RULING AUTHORITY OR CENTRE OF POWER



- a. A large building found at Mohenjodaro was labelled as a palace by archaeologists but no spectacular finds were associated with it.
- b. A stone statue was labelled and continues to be known as the “priest-king”. This is because archaeologists were familiar with Mesopotamian history and its “priest-kings” system.
- c. Some archaeologists are of the opinion that Harappan society had no rulers, and that everybody enjoyed equal status ( Democracy)
- d. Other archaeologists feel that there was no single ruler but several, that Mohenjodaro had a separate ruler, Harappa another, and so forth.
- e. Yet other archaeologists argue that there was a single state and single ruler because of the similarity in artefacts, the evidence for planned settlements, the standardized ratio of brick size, and the establishment of settlements near sources of raw material.



# THE END OF THE CIVILIZATION

- a. By c. 1800 BCE most of the Mature Harappan sites had been abandoned. Simultaneously, there was an expansion of population into new settlements in Gujarat, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh.
- b. Distinctive artefacts of the civilisation- weights, seals, special beads, writing, long-distance trade, and craft specialization disappeared after 1800 BCE. House construction techniques deteriorated and large public structures were no longer produced.
- c. Overall disappearance of artefacts and settlements indicates a rural way of life in what is called Vedic culture or Vedic civilisation began.
- d. Several explanations have been put forward. These range from climatic change, deforestation, excessive floods, the shifting and/or drying up of rivers, overuse of the landscape.
- e. Some of these “causes” may hold for certain settlements, but they do not explain the collapse of the entire civilisation. It appears that a strong unifying element, perhaps the Harappan state, came to an end.



# DISCOVERING THE CIVILIZATION

## a. Cunningham's confusion

- Cunningham was the first Director-General of the ASI and called as father of Indian archaeology. Cunningham's main interest was in the archaeology of the Early Historic periods.
- He used the accounts left by Chinese Buddhist pilgrims who had visited India between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries CE .
- Harappan artefacts were found fairly often during the nineteenth century and some of these reached Cunningham, he did not realise how old these were.
- A Harappan seal was given to Cunningham by an Englishman. He noted the object, but unsuccessfully tried to place it within the time-frame of c. sixth century BCE-fourth century CE. It is not surprising that he missed the significance of Harappa.



- *b. John Marshall`s Ignorance*

- • John Marshall , the Director-General of ASI and he made a major change in Indian archaeology.
- • He was the first professional archaeologist to work in India, and brought his experience of working in Greece and Crete to India.
- • He was interested in spectacular finds and patterns of everyday life.
- • Marshall tended to excavate along regular horizontal units, measured uniformly throughout the mound, ignoring the stratigraphy of the site.
- • This meant that all the artefacts recovered from the same unit were grouped together, even if they were found at different stratigraphic layers. As a result, valuable information about Harappan civilisation was irretrievably lost.
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- *c. R.E.M. Wheeler`s problems*

- • R.E.M. Wheeler, took over as Director-General of the ASI in 1944, who rectified many problems.
- • Wheeler recognised that it was necessary to follow the stratigraphy of the mound rather than dig mechanically along uniform horizontal lines.
- • Moreover, as an ex-army brigadier, he brought with him a military precision to the practice of archaeology.
- • However, with the partition of the subcontinent and the creation of Pakistan, the major sites are now in Pakistani territory. This has spurred Indian archaeologists to try and locate sites in India.





- *d. Daya Ram Sahni*
- Daya Ram Sahni discovered Seals at Harappa in the early decades of the twentieth century, in layers that were definitely much older than Early Historic levels and their significance began to be realised.
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- *e. Rakhal Das Banerji*
- Another archaeologist, Rakhal Das Banerji found similar seals at Mohenjodaro, leading to the
- Conjecture that these sites were part of a single archaeological culture.
- Based on these finds, in 1924, John Marshall, Director-General of the ASI, announced the discovery of a new civilisation in the Indus valley to the world.



- *f. S.N. Roy*
- As S.N. Roy wrote *The Story of Indian Archaeology and mentioned that* “Marshall left India three thousand years older than he had found her.”
- This was because similar, till-then-unidentified seals were found at excavations at Mesopotamian sites. It was then that the world knew not only of a new civilisation, but also of one contemporaneous with Mesopotamia.
- Recent developments in archaeological survey in Harappa
- Since the 1980s, there has been growing international interest in Harappan archaeology.
- Specialists from the subcontinent and abroad have been jointly working at both Harappa and Mohenjodaro.
- They are using modern scientific techniques including surface exploration to recover traces of clay, stone, metal and plant and animal remains as well as to minutely analyse every scrap of available evidence. These explorations promise to yield interesting results in the future.



- **What were the problems in finding material evidence or archaeological evidences?**

- 1. Archaeologists do not get biodegradable materials because they were already decomposed.
- 2. The major wastes were either reused or recycled by the people so they do not get them.
- 3. Archaeologists could not understand the meaning/ use of some of the objects which are simply classified as objects associated with religious practice.
- 

- **How do archaeologists classify the finds or evidences?**

- 1. Recovering artefacts is just the beginning of the archaeological enterprise. Archaeologists then classify their finds. One simple principle of classification is in terms of material, such as stone, clay, metal, bone, ivory, etc.
- 2. The second, and more complicated, is in terms of function: archaeologists have to decide whether an artefact is a tool or an ornament, or both, or something meant for ritual use.
- 3. An understanding of the function of an artefact is often shaped by its resemblance with present-day things – beads, querns, stone blades and pots are obvious examples.
- 4. Archaeologists also try to identify the function of an artefact by investigating the context in which it was found: was it found in a house, in a drain, in a grave, in a kiln?
- 5. Sometimes, archaeologists have to take indirect evidence. For instance, though there are traces of cotton at some Harappan sites but to find out about clothing we have to depend on indirect evidence including depictions of cloth on the sculptures.



## What were the religious practices of the Harappans?

- a. Terracotta figurine of a woman, heavily jewelled with elaborate head-dresses was regarded as mother goddesses.
- b. Rare stone statuary of men in an almost standardised posture, seated with one hand on the knee – such as the “priest-king” – was identified.
- c. In other structures have been assigned ritual significance. These include the Great Bath and fire altars, kamandalu, shiv linga, swastika etc found at indicate a form of Hinduism.
- d. Attempts have also been made to reconstruct religious beliefs and practices by examining seals with plant motifs indicate nature worship.
- e. Some animals – such as the one-horned animal, often called the “unicorn” – depicted on seals seem to be mythical, composite creatures refers to animal worship
- e. In some seals, a figure shown seated cross-legged in a “yogic” posture, sometimes surrounded by animals, has been regarded as a depiction of “proto-Shiva”, that is, an early form of one of the major deities of Hinduism.

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