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Harappan Civilization is the earliest known urban culture of the Indian subcontinent. It is also known as the Indus Valley Civilization. This civilization is famous for its advanced urban planning, craftsmanship, and script.In this article, we will learn about the Indus Valley Civilization, its rich cultural heritage, and important sites like the Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, etc in detail.Indus Valley CivilizationIntroduction to Harappan CivilizationHarappan Civilization is known to be a 4,700-year-old civilization in the subcontinent. It was discovered in 1920. Harappa, Lothal, Dholavira, Mohenjodaro, and Kalibangan are known as Harappa Cities and were discovered around the river Indus, hence the name Indus Valley Civilization.Harappan Civilization is a synonym for the Indus Valley Civilization, which arose in the northwestern part of the Indian subcontinent.It is called Harappa because this civilization was first discovered in 1921 at the modern site of Harappa situated in West Punjab (Pakistan).Harappa was excavated in 1921, by Dayaram Sahni while Mohenjo-Daro was discovered by R. Das Banerji in 1922 in the Larkana district of Sindh. It is said that the shape of the civilization was triangular being spread over 12,99,600 sq. km.Some of the major Harappan sites are :Dholavira and Lothal are located in Gujarat.Balathal and Kalibangan are located in the state of Rajasthan.Rakhigarhi is situated in Haryana.Ropar is another site currently located in Punjab.Indus Valley Civilization Location on MapHarappan Civilization Time PeriodThree are four phases of Harappan Civilization in terms of the time period. They are as follows:Early Harappan Phase (3300 BCE to 2600 BCE)Mature Harappan Phase (2600 BCE to 1900 BCE)Late Harappan Phase (1900 BCE to 1300 BCE)Later Harappan phase (which is found in Rangpur and Rojdi in the Kathiawar Peninsula, Gujarat)Archaeological Sites of Harappan CivilizationAll the major archaeological sites of the Harappan Civilization, including Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro, and Dholavira have been listed in the table below. Discoverers of SitesYear of DiscoveryHarappan sites and Archaeological FindingsHarappa 6 granariesSeal (figure of a goddess on it)Stone symbols of male and female sex organs.Painted PotteryVanity BoxCopper made MirrorDiceClay figure of Mother GoddessWheat and barley in a wooden mortarDayaram Sahni 1921Mohenjo-Daro Great GranaryGreat bath (largest building of Harappa civilization)Assembly HallPashupati MahadevBronze Image of women dancerSteatite image of a bearded manHuman Skeletons huddled togetherClay figured Mother GoddessPainted SealFragment of woven cottonBrick Kilns2 Mesopotamian SealsDiceSeals (more than 50% of the seals have been found from here)Rakhal Das Banerji1922LothalDockyardRice HuskShell ornament makerBead makers' shopFire altarsTerracotta figurine of a horseDouble burialTerracotta model of ship Iranian and Bahraini sealMetal WorkersPainted JarS.R.Rao1957KalibanganPloughed field7 fire altarsDecorated bricksWheels of aToy CartMesopotamian cylindrical sealLuigi Pio Tessitori1953ChanhudaroNo citadelInkpotLipstickMetal workersShell ornament makersBead makersImprint of a dog's paw on the brickTerracotta model of a bullockBronze toy cartN.G.Majumdar1931Banawali Grid pattern town planningToy ploughClay figures of Mother Goddess.Lack of systematic drainage patternRavindra Singh Bhist1974DholaviraWater harnessing systemWater drainage systemA large well and a bathThe only site is to be divided into 3 partsLargest Harappan inscriptionA StadiumRavindra Singh Bhist1991Surkotada Bone of horseOval gravePot burialsSri Jagat Pati Joshi1964-1968,DaimabadBronze images with a charioteer with a chariot, ox, elephant, and rhinoceros.B.P. Bopardikar1958Major Harappan Sites on the MapSome major Harappan sites, their related rivers and locations in today's time have been tabulated below:LocationsIndus Valley Civilization on the Current MapHarappaRaviMontgomery District, PakistanMohenjo-DaroDaro SindhuLarkana District of Sindh, PakistanKalibanga GhagharaHanumangarh of RajasthanLothal BhogwaAhmedabad of GujaratRopar SutlejRopar district of PunjabManda ChenabJammu and KashmirDaimabad PravaraAhmednagar District of MaharashtraAlamgirpur HindonMeerut District of Uttar PradeshSutkagendorDashtBalochistan Makran Coast, PakistanRangpurMadarKathiyawadi district of GujaratHarappan Civilization Features Some of the important features of the Harappan Civilization are:Urban PlanningAgricultureDomestication of AnimalsTechnology and CraftsTrade and CommerceHarappan Seals, Script, and WeightsReligion and WorshipBronze Casting Let's discuss them in detail.Urban Planning in Harappan CivilizationThe town of Indus Valley Civilization was divided into two parts. One part was, raised citadel where the rulers were staying, in the other part of the lower town lived the ruled and the poor. Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa had their own citadel.Some of the important features of urban planning in harappan civilization are as follows:Houses in the cities followed the grid pattern.Burnt bricks were used in the construction.Underground drainage system (giant water reservoirs were found in Dholavira)Houses in harappan civilization were well planned and the material which was used for building included sun-dried bricks and burnt bricks.Houses had a separate bathing areas and were mostly one or two- storeyed.The houses had wells and each house had proper drainage system planned and were connected with the streets.The streets had proper planning of waste disposal, water supply and lighting.Harappan Civilization and CitadelThe cities in Indus Valley Civilization were divided into two or more parts.The eastern portion of the city was located in lower level but was larger in size. The western portion of the city was situated higher but was much smaller in size, this was the citadel.In certain cities of Indus Valley Civilization, special buildings have been constructed on citadel. For instance, in case of Mohenjodaro of Indus Valley Civilization, special tank had been placed in citadel and it was termed as "Great Bath".Harappan Civilization: AgricultureAccording to the findings, agriculture was the backbone of the Harappan Civilization. Sowing used to happen during the time of November.No hoe or ploughshare has been discovered but furrows were discovered at the Kalibangan.Wooden ploughshare is used by Harappans.Gabarbands or nalas enclosed by dams were present in parts of Baluchistan and Afghanistan.Canal Irrigation seems to be absent.Harappan people used to grow wheat, barley, peas, sesamum, and mustard.Lothal people used to grow rice.Huge granaries were found in both Mohenjodaro and Harappa and possibly in Kalibangan.It has been regarded that the Indus people were the earliest people to produce cotton.Harappan Civilization: Domestication of AnimalsAnimals were domesticated in a big number.Oxen, buffaloes, goats, sheep, and pigs were animals that used to be domesticated.Harappans favored humped bulls.Dogs and Cats were domesticated.Asses and camels were animals that were used as beasts of burden.Horse domestication evidence comes superficially from Mohenjo-daro and from Lothal. Remains of the horse have been found from the Surkotada. But the horse was not in regular use among Harappans.Elephants and rhinoceros were also known by the Harappans.Note: Harappan people in Gujarat produced rice and domesticated elephants.Indus Valley Civilization: Technology and CraftsIndus Valley Art came to emerge with prominence in the second half of the third millennium BCE.Here are some of the important features of this important moment in Indian ancient history:The Harappan culture was from the Bronze Age.Harappans knew about Copper and it was brought by the Khetri copper mines of Rajasthan.Bronze smiths constituted an important group of artisans in the Harappan society.Utensils and images were produced.Tools and weapons such as axes, saws, knives, and spears were produced.A piece of woven cotton was recovered from the Mohenjo-Daro and textile impressions was also found on several objects.Spindle whorls were used for spinning.Huge brick structures were found that suggest bricklaying was an important craft.Boat-making was also practiced.Seal Making and terracotta manufacturing were important to the craft.Silver, gold, and precious were used for jewelry making, Bead making was also present there. Pottery made by potter's wheel Harappan Civilization: Trade and CommerceMohenjo-Daro, Harappa, and Lothal were the important centers for metallurgy and tools and weapons production as well as kitchenware.Navigation was practiced on the coast of the Arabian sea.Good commercial links of Harappans with Rajasthan, Afghanistan, and Iran have been foundForeign trade was flourishing in Mesopotamia.Seal and Script of Harappan CivilizationIndus Valley Civilization is known for its enigmatic script. Here are some important characteristics of the writing system and seals of this period.Like ancient Mesopotamia, Harappan knew the art of writing.The earliest script was noticed in 1853 and the complete script was discovered in 1923.It has not been deciphered yet.Harappans followed the pictographic script, their script was not alphabetical. This script was written from right to leftWeights and Measures:Various articles of weight have been found. Weighing mostly happened in 16 or its multiples.Sticks have been found, which were inscribed with measures marks.To facilitate long-distance communication seals and sealings were used.Harappan Culture: Religion and WorshipLet's discuss about the nature of worship and religious practices in the Indus Valley Civilization.In Indus Valley Civilization, people practiced nature worship and yoni worship.No signs of temples have been found at the Harappan site. Except for the Great Bath, no religious structure has been found.Fire cult practices indication has been found in Lothal Gujarat.Numerous terracotta figurines have been found. (In one figurine plant is shown growing out of the embryo of a woman, which was assumed as the goddess of the earth.)The male deity was represented on a seal. This god has three hands and horns. This god has been represented in the sitting posture of a yogi, placing one foot on the other.He is surrounded by an elephant, a tiger, a rhinoceros, and a buffalo below his throne. At his feet appear two deer. it has a resemblance to Pashupati Mahadev.Numerous symbols of the phallus and female sex organs made of stone related to worship have been found in Harappa.Tree (Pipal Tree) worshipping was also there. Humped bulls and the animals surrounding the Pashupati Mahadeva were worshippedIn Harappan culture, no temple practice was there.The founding of a large number of amulets indicates that Harappans believed in ghosts and evil forces.Indus Valley Civilization: Bronze Casting Certain types of bronze statues have been discovered from Harappa, which were made by technique known as Lost Wax technique. Certain parts of the country still uses this method and the method was popular in almost all sites. Both humand animal figurines have been made in this manner.Harappan Civilization: Geographical Expansion Indus Valley Civilization covers parts of Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir, and the fringes of western Uttar PradeshWestern boundary: Sotka-koh and Sutkagen-Dor on the Makran coast.Eastern boundary: Bargaon, Manpur, and Alamgirpur in U.P.Northern Boundary: Manda in Jammu and Ropar in Punjab.Southern Boundary: Daimabad in Maharashtra and Bhagatrav in Gujarat.Of the 250 Harappan sites only six Harappan sites are regarded as cities. Harappa: PunjabMohenjo-Daro: Sindh. Chanhu-Daro (130 km south of Mohenjo-Daro in Sindh). Lothal: GujaratKalibangan Northern RajasthanBanawali: Hisar, HaryanaNote: Banawali and Kalibangan saw two cultural phases pre-Harappan and Harappan.The Capital City of the civilization was Harappa and Mohenjo-DaroPort Cities were Lothal, Sutkagendor, Allahdino, Balakot and Kuntasi.Mohenjo-DaroDaimabadSutkagen-DorAlamgirpur3. Sutkagen-Dor Q 2. Mohenjo-Daro was discovered in which year:2. 1922 Q 3. The expansion of the Indus Valley Civilization does not cover which of the following state?Madhya PradeshGujaratMaharashtraUttar Pradesh1. Madhya Pradesh Q 4. Which of the following was the port city of the Indus Civilization? DaimabadChanhudaroSutkagendorSurkotadaSutkagendor Q 5. Which of the following pair is correctly matched?City River1. Harappa Sutlej2. Roper Bhogya3. Alamgirpur Hindon4. Lothal Saraswati3. Alamgirpur- Hindon Q 6. Harappans do not know which of the following animal?RhinocerosLionElephantSheep1. RhinocerosQ 7. Which of the following is the feature of the Harappan script?Left to rightAlphabeticalPictorialNone of the above3. PictorialQ 8. "A piece of cotton" was discovered from which of the following place?Mohenjo-DaroHarappaLothalManda1. Mohenjo-DaroQ 9. Remains of Horse has been found from which of the following place?DaimabadLothalMohenjo-DaroSurkotada4. SurkotadaQ 10. Which year was Harappan Civilization discovered in?1. 1921Q 11. Is Indus Valley Civilization and Harappan Civilization the same?Yes, Harappan Civilization is just an another name for the Indus Valley Civilization. Since Harappa was the first site to be discovered, the Indus valley civilisation is also referred to as the Harappan civilisation. The Salient features of the Indus Valley Civilization are as follows: The Harappan culture covered parts of Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan, Gujarat, Rajasthan and the fringes of western Uttar' "Pradesh. It extended from Jammu in the north to the Narmada estuary in the South, and from the Makran coast of Baluchistan in the west to Meerut in the north-east. Image Courtesy : 3.bp.blogspot.com/-BgHVaACkNz8/TiGIUgMnQYI/sw.jpg The area formed a triangle and accounted for about 1,299,600 square kilometers. Recent Carbon-14 dating indicate the period of the mature Harappan civilization to be from C.2,800/2,900-1,800 B.C. Modern research on the Harappan civiliation, establishing evidence of their contact with the Mesopotamian Civilization also corroborates this dating. Town Planning: The most remarkable feature of the Harappan civilization was its urbanisation. Each city was divided into a citadel area where the essential institutions of Civil and religious life were located and the lower residential area where the urban population lived. In Mohenjodaro and Harappa, the citadel was surrounded by a brick wall. At Kalibangan, both the citadel and the lower city were surrounded by a wall. Usually, towns or cities were laid out in a parallel grammas form. The use of baked and unbaked bricks of standard size shows that the brick making was a large scale industry for the Harappans. In the citadel area, the Great Bath at Mohenjodaro is the most striking structure. It is assumed that it was meant for some elaborate ritual of vital importance for the people. To the west of the Great Bath there are the remains of a large granary. At Harappa remarkable number of granaries has also been found ranged in two rows of six, with a central passage. In Mohenjoadro, to another side of the Great Bath, is a long building which has been identified as the residence of a very high official. Another significant building here is an assembly hall. The most significant discoveries at Kalibangan and Lothal are the fire altars. The lower town was divided into wards like a chess board, by north-south and east-west arterial roads and smaller lanes, cutting each other at right angles, as in a grid system. The rectangular town planning was a unique feature of the civilization. The arterial roads were provided with covered drains having additional soak pits made of pots and placed at convenient intervals. The houses of varying sizes point towards the economic groups in the settlement. The parallel rows of two room cottages unearthed at Mohenjodaro and Harappa were perhaps used by the poorer sections of society, while the big houses, which had much the same plan- a square courtyard around which were a number of rooms – were used by the rich. The houses were equipped with private wells and toilets. The bathrooms were connected by drains with sewers under the main street. The drainage system is one of the most impressive achievements of the Harappans and presupposes existence of some kind of municipal organisation. The houses were constructed with the kiln-made or Kuccha bricks, not stones. The bathrooms and drains were invariably built with pukka bricks made waterproof by adding gypsum. Agriculture: The Harappans cultivated wheat and barley, peas and dates and also sesame and mustard which were used for oil. However, the people cultivated rice as early as 1,800 B.C. in Lothal. The Harappans were the earliest people to grow cotton. Irrigation depended on the irregular flooding of the rivers of Punjab and Sind. Canal irrigation was not practised. The evidence of a furrowed field in Kalibangan indicates that the Harappans were using some sort of woodern plough. It has also suggested that the Harappan people used a toothed harrow. Stock Breeding: No less important than agriculture was stock breeding. Besides sheet and goats humped cattle, buffalos and elephants were domesticated. The camal was rare and the horse was probably not known to the Harappans. Trade and Its Network: There was extensive inland and foreign trade. It has also been reasonably established that this trade might have been overland as well as maritime. It is proved by the occurrence of small terracotta boats, and above all, by the vast brick built dock at Lothal. As there is a no evidence of coins, barter must have been the normal method of exchange of goods. But the system of weights and measures was excellent. For weighing goods – small as well as large – perfectly made cubes of agate were employed. The weights followed a binary system in the lower denominations: 1, 2, 4, 8 to 64 and then going to 160 and then in decimal multiples of 16, 320, 640, 1,600, 3,200 etc. What they imported must have been goods locally unavailable such as copper (from South India, Baluchistan and Arabia), gold (South India, Afghanistan and Persia), Silver (Afghanistan and Iran), lapis lazuli (Badak-shan in north east Afghanistan) turquoise (Iran), Jade (Central Asia), amethyst (Maharashtra), agate, chalcedony and carnelian from Saurashtra and western India. Harappan seals and other small objects used by the merchants and traders for stamping their goods have been found in Mesopotamia. Mesopotamian literature speaks of the merchants of Ur (in Mesopotamia) as carrying on trade with foreign countries. Among these the most frequently mentioned are Tilmun, Magan and Meluhha. Tilmun is most commonly identified with the island of Bahrein in the Persian Gulf-Magan may be Oman or some other port of South Arabia. Meluhha is now generally understood to mean India, especially the Indus region and Saurashtra. Crafts: The various occupations in which the people were engaged spanned a wide range – spinning and weaving of cotton and wool, pottery- making, bead-making and seal making metal working was highly skilled. They made fine jewellery in gold, bronze implements, copper beakers, saws, chisels and knives of different metals. Stone sculptures were rare and undeveloped. The Bearded Head in stone from Mohenjodaro is a well known piece of art. Science: The Harappans knew mining metal- working and the art of constructing well-planned buildings, some of which were higher than two stories. They were also adopting at manufacturing gypsum cement which was used to join stones and even metals. They knew how to make long-lasting paints and dyes. The Indus Script: The Harappan script has not been deciphered so far, but overlaps of letters on some of the potsherds from Kalibangan show that the writing was boustrophedon or from right to lift and from left to right in alternate lines. Religion: Clay figures of the mother Goddess, worshipped by the people as the symbol of fertility, have been found. A seated figure of a male god, carved on a small stone seal, has also been found. The seal immediately brings to mind the traditional image of Pasupati mahadeva. Certain trees seem to have been treated as sacred, such as the pipal. They also held the bull scared. Harappa: Harappa, located on the bank of river Ravi, was the first site to be excavated. It ranks as the premier city of the civilization. In Harappa, a substantial section of the population was engaged in activities other than food production – like administration, trade, craft work or religion. Mohenjodaro: Mohenjodaro, located on the bank of river Indus, was the largest Harappan city. Excavations show that people lived here for a very long time and went on building and rebuilding houses at the same location. Kalibangan: Kalibangan, located on the dried up bed of the river Ghaggar, was excavated in 1960 under the guidance of BK Thapan. This area had the largest concentration of Harrappan settlement and has also yielded evidence of the early Harappan period. Lothal: In Gujarat, settlements such as Rangapur, Surkotada and Lothal have been discovered. This place seems to have been an outpost fro sea-trade with contemporary west Asian Societies. Sutkagen-Dor: Sutkagen-Dor is located near the Makran coast which is close to the Pakistan-Iran border. The towns had a citedel surrounded by a stone wall built for defence. Its location in an inhospitable area was probably to fill the need for a seaport for trading purpose. Decline: Around 1,800 B.C. the major cities in the core region decayed and were finally abandoned. The settlements in the outlying regions slowly de- urbanised. Some of the plausible theories for the decline of the Harappan civilization are the given here along with their pros and cons. A. Floods and Earthquakes: It has been postulated that floods and earthquakes destroyed the civilization. The theory has been criticised on various grounds: 1. Decline of settlements outside the Indus Valley cannot be explained by this theory. 2. A river cannot be damaged by tectonic effects. B. Change in Course of the Rivers: Another theory (HT Lamb rick) is that Mohenjodaro was destroyed by the change in the course of river Indus away from it. The people of the city and the surrounding food producing village deserted the area because they were starved of water. According to this theory, silt observed in the city is actually the product of wind action. Criticism: This can explain only desertion of Mohenjodaro but not its decline. C. Aridity: Another hypothesis is that the increased aridity of the Indus region and the drying up of the river Ghaggar led to the decline of civilization (DP Aggarwal and Sood). Though the theory is interesting, it has not yet been fully worked out. Drying up of river Ghaggar has not yet been dated. D. Aryan Invasion: Another theory states that barbarian or Aryan invasion destroyed Harappa (M Wheeler). Aryan arrival is not dated earlier than 1,500 B.C. Therefore, a Harappan and Aryan clash seems difficult to accept. E. Ecological Factors: Scholars like Fairservis tried to explain the decay in terms of the problems of ecology – that the growing demands of the centers disturbed the ecology in the semi-arid region and the area could not support them anymore. Town people moved away to Gujarat and eastern areas. This process of decline was completed by raids and attacks of nearby settlements. Criticism: Soil continues to be fertile till today in the area. More information about the needs of the Harappan towns is required before this hypothesis is substantiated. Problems in explaining Harappan decline had led the scholars to: 1. Abandon the search for causes of decline. 2. Look for continuities of Harappa in a geographical perspective. 3. Accept that the cities declined and certain traditions like seals, writing, and pottery were lost. Archaeologically speaking, the Harappan communities merged into the surrounding agricultural groups after the urban phase was over but still retained some of their traditions. The history of India begins with the birth of the Indus Valley Civilization (IVC), also known as Harappan Civilization. It flourished around 2,500 BC, in the western part of South Asia, in contemporary Pakistan and Western India. The Indus Valley was home to the largest of the four ancient urban civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, India and China. In 1920s, the Archaeological Department of India carried out excavations in the Indus valley wherein the ruins of the two old cities, viz. Mohenjodaro and Harappa were unearthed. In 1924, John Marshall, Director-General of the ASI, announced the discovery of a new civilisation in the Indus valley to the world. Important Sites of IVC Site Excavated by Location Important Findings Harappa Daya Ram Sahini in 1921 Situated on the bank of river Ravi in Montgomery district of Punjab (Pakistan). Sandstone statues of Human anatomy Granaries Bullock carts Mohenjodaro (Mound of Dead) R.D Banerjee in 1922 Situated on the Bank of river Indus in Larkana district of Punjab (Pakistan). Great bath Granary Bronze dancing girl Seal of Pasupathi Mahadeva Steatite statue of beard man A piece of woven cotton Sutkagendor Stein in 1929 In southwestern Balochistan province, Pakistan on Dast river A trade point between Harappa and Babylon Chanhudaro N.G Majumdar in 1931 Sindh on the Indus river Bead makers shop Footprint of a dog chasing a cat Amri N.G Majumdar in 1935 On the bank of Indus river Kalibangan Ghose in 1953 Rajasthan on the bank of Ghaggar river Fire altar Camel bones Wooden plough Lothal R.Rao in 1953 Gujarat on Bhogva river near Gulf of Cambay First manmade port Dockyard Rice husk Fire altars Chess playing Surkotada J.P Joshi in 1964 Gujarat Banawali R.S Bisht in 1974 Hisar district of Haryana Beads Barley Evidence of both pre-Harappan and Harappan culture Dholavira R.S Bisht in 1985 Gujarat in Rann of Kachchh Water harnessing system Water reservoir Three phases of IVC are: the Early Harappan Phase from 3300 to 2600 BCE, the Mature Harappan Phase from 2600 to 1900 BCE, and the Late Harappan Phase from 1900 to 1300 BCE. The Early Harappan Phase is related to the Hakra Phase, identified in the Ghaggar-Hakra River Valley. The earliest examples of the Indus script date back to 3000 BC. This phase stands characterized by centralized authority and an increasingly urban quality of life. Trade networks had been established and there are also evidences of the cultivation of crops. Peas, sesame seeds, dates, cotton, etc, were grown during that time. Kot Diji represents the phase leading up to Mature Harappan Phase. By 2600 BC, the Indus Valley Civilization had entered into a mature stage. The early Harappan communities were turning into large urban centers, like Harappa and Mohenjodaro in Pakistan and Lothal in India. The signs of a gradual decline of the Indus River Valley Civilization are believed to have started around 1800 BC and by 1700 BC, most of the cities were abandoned. However, one can see the various elements of the Ancient Indus Valley Civilization in later cultures. Archaeological data indicates the persistence of the Late Harappan culture till 1000-900 BC. Town Planning and Structures The Harappan culture was distinguished by its system of town planning. Harappa and Mohenjodaro each had its own citadel or acropolis, which was possibly occupied by members of the ruling class. Below the citadel in each city lay a lower town containing brick houses, which were inhabited by the common people. The remarkable thing about the arrangement of the houses in the cities is that they followed the grid system. Granaries constituted an important part of the Harappan cities. The use of burnt bricks in the Harappan cities is remarkable, because in the contemporary buildings of Egypt mainly dried bricks were used. The drainage system of Mohenjodaro was very impressive. In almost all cities every big or small house had its own courtyard and bathroom. In Kalibangan many houses had their wells. At sites such as Dholavira and Lothal (Gujarat), the entire settlement was fortified, and sections within the town were also separated by walls. Agriculture The Harappan villages, mostly situated near the flood plains, produced sufficient foodgrains. Wheat, barley, rai, peas, sesame, lentil, chickpea and mustard were produced. Millets are also found from sites in Gujarat. While rice uses were relatively rare. The Indus people were the earliest people to produce cotton. While the prevalence of agriculture is indicated by finds of grain, it is more difficult to reconstruct actual agricultural practices. Representations on seals and terracotta sculpture indicate that the bull was known, and archaeologists extrapolate shows oxen were also used for ploughing. Most Harappan sites are located in semi-arid lands, where irrigation was probably required for agriculture. Traces of canals have been found at the Harappan site of Shortughai in Afghanistan, but not in Punjab or Sindh. Although the Harappans practised agriculture, animals were also reared on a large scale. Evidence of the horse comes from a superficial level of Mohenjodaro and from a doubtful terracotta figurine from Lothal. In any case the Harappan culture was not horse centred. Economy The importance of trade in the life of the Indus people is witnessed by the presence of numerous seals, uniform script and regulated weights and measures in a wide area. The Harappans carried on considerable trade in stone, metal, shell, etc. Metal money was not used and trade was carried by barter system. They practised navigation on the coast of the Arabian Sea. They had set up a trading colony in northern Afghanistan which evidently facilitated trade with Central Asia. They also carried commerce with those in the land of the Tigris and the Euphrates. The Harappans carried on long distance trade in lapis lazuli; which may have contributed to the social prestige of the ruling class. Crafts The Harappans were very well acquainted with the manufacturing and use of Bronze. Copper was obtained from the Khetri copper mines of Rajasthan and Tin was possibly brought from Afghanistan. Textile impressions have also been found on several objects. Huge brick structure suggest that brick-laying was an important craft. This also attests the existence of a class of masons. The Harappans practised boat-making, bead making and seal-making. Terracotta manufacture was also an important craft. The goldsmiths made jewellery of silver, gold and precious stones. The potter's wheel was in full use, and the Harappans produced their own characteristic pottery, which was glossy and shining. Institutions Very few written materials have been discovered in the Indus valley and the scholars have not been able to decipher the Indus script so far. As a result, there is difficulty in understanding the nature of the state and institutions of the Indus Valley Civilization. No temples have been found at any Harappan sites. Therefore the possibility of priests ruling Harappa can be eliminated. Harappa was possibly ruled by a class of merchants. If we look for a centre of power or for depictions of people in power, archaeological records provide no immediate answers. Some archaeologists are of the opinion that Harappan society had no rulers, and that everybody enjoyed equal status. Another theory argues that there was no single ruler, but a number of rulers representing each of the urban centers. Religion In Harappa numerous terracotta figurines of women have been found. In one figurine a plant is shown growing out of the embryo of a woman. The Harappans, therefore, looked upon the earth as a fertility goddess and worshipped her in the same manner as the Egyptians worshipped the Nile goddess Isis. The male deity is represented on a seal with three horned heads, represented in the sitting posture of a yogi. This god is surrounded by an elephant, a tiger, a rhinoceros, and has a buffalo below his throne. At his feet appear two deer.The depicted god is identified as Pushupati Mahadeva. Numerous symbols of the phallus and female sex organs made of stone have been found. The people of the Indus region also worshipped trees and Animals. The most important of them is the one horned unicorn which may be identified with the rhinoceros and the next important was the humped bull. Amulets have also been found in large numbers. Decline of the Indus Valley Civilization The IVC declined around 1800 BCE but the actual reasons behind its demise are still debated. One theory claims that Indo-European tribe i.e. Aryans invaded and conquered the IVC. In later cultures various elements of the IVC are found which suggest that civilization did not disappear suddenly due to an invasion. On the other hand, many scholars believe natural factors are behind the decline of the IVC. The natural factors could be geological and climatic. It is believed that the Indus Valley region experienced several tectonic disturbances which causes earthquakes. Which also changed courses of rivers or dried them up. Another natural reason might be changes in patterns of rainfall. There could be also dramatic shifts in the river courses, which might have brought floods to the food producing areas. Due to combination of these natural causes there was a slow but inevitable collapse of IVC. The Indus Valley Civilization dates 3300 BCE to 1300 BCE and flourished in the river basins of the Indus and Ghaggar-Hakra. Indus Valley civilization is the earliest known urban culture of the northwestern regions of the Indian subcontinent. It is one of the world's three earliest civilizations along with Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt. This civilization flourished from approximately 3300 BCE to 1300 BCE. Geographical factors including soil fertility, climate, and physical features contributed to the development of the Indus Valley civilisation. Most of the sites discovered earlier, Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, are present in the Indus valley which gives the name to it. Later sites such as Kalibangan, Lothal, Rakhigarhi, etc revealed similar features. Harappa was the first excavated site therefore, it is also called Harappan culture. Origin and Discovery of Indus Valley Civilization The Indus civilization arose in the Indus River basin evolving from villages that followed the Mesopotamian model of irrigated agriculture. Origin: The Indus Valley in the Indian subcontinent was one of the first places where humans settled down and advanced to a highly civilised lifestyle. Its contemporary name comes from its location in the Indus River valley, but it is also known as the Indus-Sarasvati Civilization. Many sites were excavated later on the banks of the Ghaggar-Hakra river bed. Discovery of IVC: It was in 1924 that John Marshall announced to the world the existence of an ancient civilization in the Indus Valley. The first person to discover Harappa was Charles Masson, who identified it as an ancient city called Sangala from the time of Alexander. Excavating the ruins in the early twentieth century revealed their full significance. Daya Ram Sahni excavated Harappa in 1920, and Rakhaldas Banerjee excavated Mohenjo-daro in 1921. Geographical Factors: The geographical conditions in the Indus Valley must have been ideal for human settlement and development. Today, this terrain is extremely dry and unsuitable for human habitation. The Indus seals are found to have figures of a variety of plants and animals that can exist only in moderately wet conditions. Therefore, it is assumed that the climatic conditions were quite moderate. The vast plains along the Indus were very fertile. The floods deposited rich alluvial soil on these plains every year and irrigated the lands. Chronology: The civilization can be dated between 3300 BCE to 1300 BCE with the help of Radiocarbon dating. The entire timeline can be divided into three phases – Early Harappan, Mature Harappan and Late Harappan. Phases Dates Important Sites Features Early Harappan or Regionalization 3300- 2600 BCE – Harappa – Kot Diji – Amri – Fortification and grid planning – Development of an incipient trade network – Craft specialisation. Transitional Phase – Kunal – Dholavira – Harappa – Increasing level of craft specialization – Organised irrigation system – Partly standardised repertoire of pottery designs and forms. Mature Harappan or Integration 2600- 1800 BCE – Mohenjo-Daro – Harappa – Kalibangan – Dholavira – Full-scale urbanisation – Emergence of writing – Uniformity in artefacts – Full-fledged trade. Late Harappan or Localization Post 1800- 1500/1300 BCE – Cemetery H at Harappa – Siswal – Rojdi – Rangpur – Decline, and abandonment of some sites – Rise of pastoral mode. Map of Indus Valley Civilization Indus sites are distributed across a large area in India and Pakistan. Geographically, the civilization extended outside the Indus zone. It was made up of riverine lowlands that spread east and southeast into Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, highlands and coastal parts in Balochistan, and a coastal strip in Gujarat. Area: It encompassed an area of approximately 1,299,600 square km. It covered a considerably broader region than the ancient Egyptian or Mesopotamian cultures did. Sites of Indus Valley Civilization The Indus Valley Civilization, situated in the river basins of the Indus and Ghaggar-Hakra, featured several key cities such as Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa, Kalibangan, Lothal, Rakhigarhi, Chanhudaro, Banawali, Dholavira, etc. It extended from Sutkagendor (in Balochistan, Pakistan) in the West to Alamgirpur (UP) in the East; and from Mandu (Jammu) in the North to Daimabad (Maharashtra) in the South. Major Indus Valley Sites Major sites Location (Present) Major Findings Harappa (2600-1900 BCE) Punjab province of Pakistan (Ravi River) – The site was discovered by Daya Ram Sahni in 1920 – The city was divided into two parts, i.e., the citadel and the lower town. – Great Granary located in the citadel – Elaborate drainage facilities made of baked bricks. – Evidence of wheel-made and baked pottery. – Evidence of coffin burial. Mohenjo-Daro (2500-1700 BCE) Sindh Province, Pakistan (Indus River) – Included as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. – Mohenjo-Daro was divided into two parts: the Citadel and the Lower Town. – Great Bath (ritual bathing site) and Great Granary. – Stone Art: Sculpture of Bearded Man – Bronze "Dancing Girl" Statue – Terracotta: Representations of bulls and buffalo and female figurines. – Complete burial – Seals: Depict animals, human figures, and even deities. Example: Pashupati seal. Rakhigarhi Hisar district, Haryana (Sarasvati River) – DNA analysis of Skeletal revealed that the Harappan civilization inhabitants had a distinct origin. – Land townships were enclosed with mud and burnt brick homes. – Efficient drainage system and proper sanitation. – The granary consisted of mud bricks and the floor was made of rammed earth plastered with mud. – A seal with an alligator symbol was discovered. Dholavira (3500-1800 BCE) Great Rann of Kutch, Gujarat – Included in the list of World Heritage Sites list of UNESCO in 2021. – Cities consisted of a citadel, a middle town, and a lower town. – Cascading series of water reservoirs, – Extensive use of stone in construction. – Special burial structures. – Black on red ware pottery, Redware, and Buff ware pottery. – It is renowned for its sophisticated water harvesting system and, therefore, known as alake city or a jala durga (water fort). Lothal (Mound of the dead) (2400-1600 BCE) Gulf of Khambhat region, Gujarat – A metropolis with an upper and a lower town. – A bead factory and tidal dockyard were discovered. – It is the only port town of the Indus Valley Civilization. – People worshipped the fire god. – Use ofcoffins inburial pits. – Redware and Blackware pottery. – Lothal has revealed the earliest evidence of rice cultivation in South Asia. Kalibangan (3500 BC-2500 BC) Rajasthan, (Ghaggar River) – It is made up of three mounds. – Known for its remarkable fire altars and the world's earliest attested ploughed field. – The earliest form of artificial irrigation was practised. – Different types of burials show social inequalities. – Mesopotamian pottery was discovered at the site, showing the trade relations. – Burnt bricks were used only for drains at Kalibangan. Features of IVC The mature Harappan Phase includes a diverse range of urban and non-urban rural sites that vary in size and function but are inherently identifiable as Harappan settlements due to features such as town planning, pottery, script, seals, evidence of external trade, and so on. Some of these features have been discussed here. Town Planning One of the most outstanding features of the Indus cities was their well-planned town planning. The excavations at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro have revealed a great deal of evidence of this. Two parts: Generally, the cities of Harappan culture had two parts – the citadel and the outer city. The citadel was erected on an elevated site. The outlying city was on a lower level. Grid patterns: The IVC cities were constructed in a grid arrangement, with streets flowing north-south and east-west, resulting in a well-organised structure. The roadways were large and straight, cutting each other at right angles. Drainage System: They had an excellent drainage system. The drains were built of mortar, lime, and gypsum. Each residence featured a sturdy washbasin from which water poured into the subsurface drains. Houses: Houses were of different types, small and large. Burnt bricks were extensively used to make houses and other structures. Houses were also provided with wells and bathrooms. Other important structures: The Great Bath and Pillared Hall at Mohenjo-Daro, the dockyard at Lothal, and the granary at Harappa. Social Life Political authority: There may be some sort of political authority/State did exist in the Harappan civilization. The communications systems, standardisation of artifacts, site specialisation, use of a common system of writing, and the establishment of trading outposts like Shortughai are evidence of some kind of political authority. Social classes: The different types of houses indicate different social classes. Merchants appear to have formed the upper class as trading was the primary activity. The artisans and farmers might be the common people. Dress: The discovery of many spindles suggests the use of cotton and woollen fabrics. Ornaments: A large number of ornaments like necklaces, armlets, finger-rings, bangles, etc., have been found from these sites. These were made of gold, silver, ivory, and precious stones. Recreation and amusements: The people of Harappa appear to have enjoyed dance and music. They were also familiar with indoor activities such as dice. A great quantity of terracotta toys were discovered in Mohenjo-Daro. Economic Conditions The Harappan civilization occupied a varied landscape encompassing alluvial plains, mountains, plateaus, and sea coasts. The area was rich enough to generate a surplus which was crucial for urbanisation. Agriculture: Agriculture was the primary employment of the Indus Valley people. They cultivated wheat, barley, peas, and, in some places, rice. They produced enough for both themselves and trade. They did not irrigate their land with canals. The annual flood provided sufficient moisture to cultivate crops. Fields were ploughed using a wooden ploughshare. Domestication of animals: Based on the Indus seals, it can be said that many animals including goats, buffaloes, oxen, elephants, dogs, and camels were domesticated. However, the Harappans do not appear to have been familiar with the horse. Metallurgy: Harappans were aware of copper, gold, and silver metallurgy. Copper was widely used, and it occurs in the form of weapons, agricultural tools, ornaments, etc. Metalcasting appears to be a continuous tradition. The late Harappan and Chalcolithic sites like Daimabad in Maharashtra yielded excellent examples of metal-cast sculptures. Trade: The urban culture and highly specialised manufacturing activity indicate that Harappan cities enjoyed a thriving trade. There was flourishing internal trade between the cities. The river Indus served as the high waterway through which most of this trade was carried out. They also traded with Mesopotamian cities. Many Harappan seals have been found in Mesopotamian cities. They exported grain, jewellery, and pottery and imported thin copper and precious stones. Religious Practices One of the first understandings of the Harappan religion was forwarded by John Marshall. He found several parallels between the Harappan religion and modern Hinduism. One of the seals was identified by him as a 'Proto-Shiva' se