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PAPER - III

INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION

- Earliest civilization of the world
- Prehistory to the harappan civilization
- The first villages
- The Harappa city culture
- Economy
- Culture & society
- Problem of decline

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INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION FOR EARLIEST CIVILISATIONS OF THE WORLD

About 5000 years ago human civilisation came off age when, in four separate areas of intense agricultural activity, a number of dispersed farming villages evolved first into towns, and then into cities. From these centres eventually arose the first civilisations of the world, all of them located in broad river valleys— the Tigris and the Euphrates in Mesopotamia, the Nile in Egypt, the Indus in India and the Hwang Ho (Yellow river) in China.

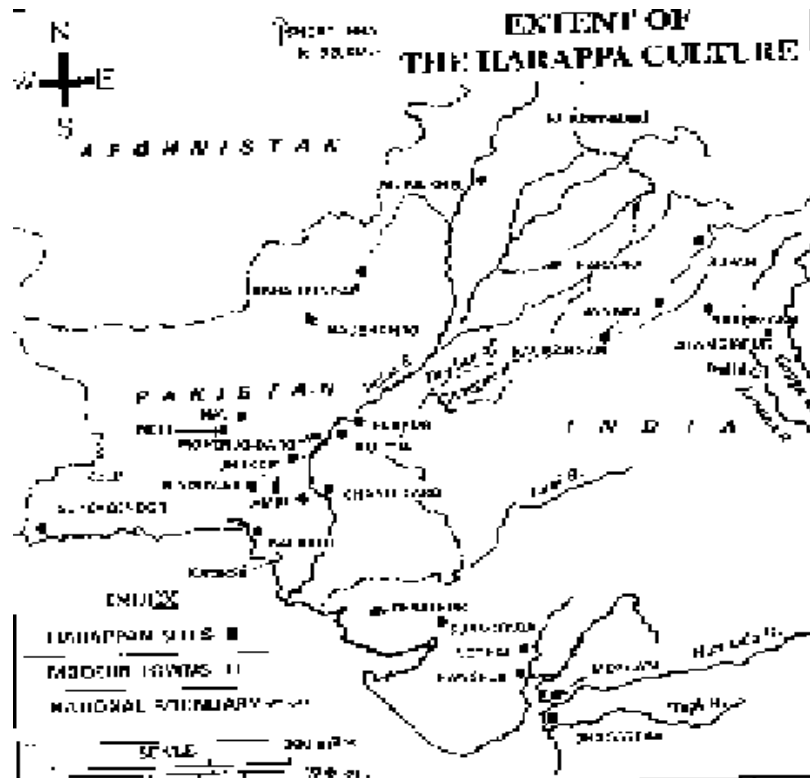
Around 3500 BC the first cities developed in Mesopotamia, followed shortly afterwards by similar developments in Egypt and India, and a little later in China. Each of these urban literate civilisations was centred on a major river valley which had the agricultural potential needed to support a dense population.

The special environment of the river flood-plains enabled these ancient Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Indians and Chinese to construct societies rich enough to free a few persons from the task of producing their own food. These 'free' individuals gradually became specialists and developed a substantial range of new skills such as writing, bronze-making, seal-making, "large-scale building, and the like.

Its Place in Indian History

The name 'India' is derived from the river 'Indus', for India means the country of the Indus. The earliest literary evidence, however, shows that the first Aryan settlers in India called the Indus, the 'Sindhu' (a huge, sheet of water). The Aryans in their long trek through Iran into India could never before have encountered a river of such magnitude as the Indus. In 518 BC Darius I, the Persian emperor, conquered the country around the Indus and converted it into a Persian Satrapy (province). The Persians, because of their own difficulty in pronouncing the initial 'S' turned 'Sindhu' into 'Hindu'. Later passing through the hands of the Greeks, 'Hindu' became 'Indus'. Thus, to the Greeks and Romans India came to mean the country of the Indus. With the Arab conquest of Sind, however, the old Persian name returned in the form of 'Hindustan' (Land of the Hindu), the people who inhabited the land came to be called 'Hindus', and their religion was described as 'Hinduism'.

The name 'India', thus, goes back to the earliest civilisation in India, the Indus civilisation, though no one had heard of such a civilisation, though no one had heard of such a civilisation till the third decade of the twentieth century. However, in the 1920s, two ancient sites in the Indus valley – Harappa and Mohenjodaro – were excavated. These cities brought to light a civilisation, which was at first called the 'Indus Valley civilisation', but later termed as the 'Indus civilisation' due to the discovery of more and more sites far away from the actual river valley. Alternatively it has also come to be called the 'Harappan civilisation' after the name of its first discovered site. This discovery of India's first and earliest civilisation posed a historical puzzle. It seemed to have suddenly appeared on the stage of history, full grown and fully equipped. All civilisations known to history till then have started from small beginnings and have taken hundreds of years to reach their prime. But the Harappan civilisation till recently showed no definite signs of such birth and growth. However, the puzzle could largely be solved after the extensive excavation work conducted at Mehrgarh in Baluchistan between 1973 and 1980 by two French archaeologists (Jean Françoise Jarrige and Richard H meadow). Mehrgarh, according to these researchers, gives us an archaeological record with a sequence of occupations. The sequence clearly shows a process of continuing elaboration that affected cereal cultivation, animal husbandry, crafts, architecture and even ideology. And one can easily witness the stage being gradually set for the development of the complex cultural patterns that became manifest in the great cities of the Indus civilisation in the middle of the third millennium BC.



When did man begin to live in India? The answer is suggested by a large number of primitive stone tools found in different parts of the country, from Kashmir to Tamilnadu. The antiquity of these tools and their makers goes back more than two million years ago, to what is known as the Pleistocene period. We have some information about the Old stone (Palaeolithic) Age. Stone, roughly dressed by chipping, found throughout the country except the alluvial plains of the Indus, Ganga and Yamuna rivers.

The Indus or Harappa culture originated in the north-western part of the Indian subcontinent and seems to have covered an area larger than those of the contemporary civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia. Discovered in 1921, this culture was spread over parts of Panjab, Haryana, Sindh, Baluchistan, Gujarat, Rajasthan and western parts of Uttar Pradesh, and coexisted with communities which thrived on hunting-gathering or pastoral nomadism. Nearly a thousand Harappan sites scattered over this vast area have so far been explored or

excavated, though a very limited number of them belong to the developed phase of the civilization and only half a dozen can be described as cities. Of these, Harappa on the bank of the Ravi in the Montgomery district (western Panjab), was the first to be excavated, whence the name Harappan is derived. Covering a circuit of a little less than 5 km, the site has yielded a large variety of objects in the course of excavations and is one of the two most important Harappan cities; the other is Mohenjodaro, in the Larkana district on the river Indus, the largest Harappan settlement. The third important Harappan site is Chanhudaro, about 130 km south of Mohenjodaro in Sindh. Lothal in Gujarat situated at the head of the Gulf of Cambay, Kalibangan in the dry bed of the river Ghaggar in northern Rajasthan and Banawali (Hissar district) in Haryana are the most important sites giving evidence of the flourishing phase of the Harappan civilization in India. Other sites include the coastal cities of Surkotada in Gujarat and Sutkagendor near the Makran coast, close to the Pakistan-Iran border. Rangpur and Rojdi in the Kathiwar peninsula in Gujarat represented the later phase of Harappan civilization. Despite the fact that a large number of sites associated with it have been discovered since 1946, the culture itself is still best known by the two cities, Mohenjodaro and Harappa. Both situated now in Pakistan, the Hindu revivalists are busy locating the epicentre of this culture in the elusive, Saraswati valley.

The houses were equipped with rubbish-bins and bathrooms, and occasionally with a privy on the ground or upper floor. The bathrooms were connected by drains with sewers under the main streets.

In Harappa, Mohenjodaro and Kalibangan, the citadel area, contained monumental structures which stood on a high mud brick platform. Of the large buildings that have been so far discovered, the Great Bath in the citadel at Mohenjodaro is the most striking. A specimen of beautiful brickwork, it is a rectangular tank and measures 11.88 × 7.01 m and 2.43 m deep. At the north and south ends of the Great Bath brick steps led to the bottom of the tank, which could be emptied by a drain. The Bath, it has been suggested, was meant for ritual bathing. In Mohenjodaro the largest building is a granary, 45.71 m long and 15.23 m wide, though its identification has been challenged. The 'Great Granary' is among the well-known buildings at Harappa and consisted of a series of brick platforms on which stood two rows of six granaries.

Circular brick platforms to their south were meant for threshing grain. At Kalibanga also have been found brick platforms, these may have been used for granaries which constituted an important feature of Harappan cities. Several Harappan sites share some of their features. Chanhudaro lacks the citadel, but like these urban centres, it has produced evidence of the use of drains and baked brick houses. At Lothal (in Gujarat), 720 km south-east of Mohenjodaro, has been revealed a great artificial platform with streets and houses of regular plan. In addition to the urban settlement, some archaeologists claim, a brick dockyard connected with the Gulf of Cambay by a channel has also been discovered here. Sutkagen-Dor, 48 km from the Arabian Sea on the Makran coast, consisted of a formidable citadel and a lower fortified settlement and may have been a sea-port for trading. The Harappan towns situated along the sea coast include Sotka Koh (near Pasni in Pakistan) and Balakot (72 km north-west of Karachi, lying at a distance of 13 and 19 km respectively from the Arabian Sea). The coastal settlements served as ports and participated in regular maritime trade with West Asia. Town planning in most of these places seems to have been marked by a striking uniformity, this can also be said of structures.

The earliest specimen of Harappan script was noticed in 1853 and the complete script was recovered by 1923 from a large number of inscriptions written generally from right to left on a wide range of objects. The most common form of writing is on the intaglio seals, made mostly of carved and fired steatite, presumably used by the propertied people to mark and identify their property. More than 2000 seals have been found at Harappan settlements and there have been more than fifty bold claims to decipherments of the Harappan script. Some scholars try to connect the script with Dravidian or proto-Dravidian languages, others with Sanskrit, and still others with the Sumerian language. None of these readings can, however, inspire confidence. The Harappan cultural zone fell in a comparatively low rainfall area, and it is likely that irrigation was necessary for cultivation. But it is doubtful that the Harappans practised canal irrigation. Most agricultural land in the alluvial plains seems to have been watered by flood, though some archaeologists argue for the existence of irrigation canals of the Harappan period. According to some of them, the massive tank at Lothal, identified by its excavator with a dockyard, may have

been a reservoir filled by river floodwaters. In any case it is probable that the Harappans were familiar with several methods to control water for agriculture.

Although they continued to make tools of stone the Harappans lived in the Bronze Age. They manufactured bronze by mixing tin with copper. Tin was possibly brought from Afghanistan though Hazaribag in Bihar may have been another source of its supply. Copper was brought from the Khetri copper mines of Rajasthan, but it could have also come from Baluchistan. Both metals, however, were difficult to obtain. Bronze tools were therefore not prolific at Harappan sites. Their tool types comprised flat axes, chisels, knives, spearheads and arrowheads of copper and bronze. Various techniques of working in copper were known, such as hammering, lapping and casting. Brick kilns, associated with copper working, have been discovered at various places. Working in bronze, however, was not very common and bronzesmiths therefore may have been an important social group. The authors of the Harappan culture possessed the knowledge of gold. Beads, pendants, armlets, brooches, needles and other personal ornaments were often made of gold, though the use of silver was perhaps more common. Harappan craft production included some works of art. The most striking of them is a bronze statuette of a pert and provocative 'dancing girl', naked but for a necklace and a large number of bangles covering one arm.

A people with numerous arts and crafts, the Harappans engaged in commodity production for which they obtained raw material from outside. Gold may have been imported from south India, especially Mysore, where it was in good supply in antiquity and is still mined. Afghanistan and Iran were other likely sources of this metal. Silver was imported probably from Afghanistan and Iran. Copper may have been brought from south India and from Baluchistan and Arabia, though within the Harappan zone itself, Rajasthan was an important source of its supply. Lapis lazuli is rare in Harappan archaeological material, and came from Badakshan in north-east Afghanistan, turquoise from Iran, amethyst from Maharashtra, agate, chalcidones and carnelian from Sasurashtra and western India. Alabaster was possibly brought from several places both to the east and the west. Jade came from Central Asia.

There seems to be a consensus among scholars that by about the beginning of the second millennium BC the urban phase of the Harappan culture came to an end, though signs of its

decay are noticeable even earlier when cities like Harappa, Mohenjodaro and Kalibangan began to experience decline in urban planning and structural activity, and tended to become slums. The Great Bath and the granary at Mohenjodaro fell into disuse. The city, archaeologists tell us, shrank to a small settlement of 3 hectares from the original 85 hectares. Decline is also evident at Harappa, Kalibangan and Chanhudaro and at most of the settlements. The disappearance of systematic urban planning and building activity was accompanied by almost sudden vanishing of the Harappan script, weights and measures, bronze tools and the red ware pottery with black designs. The Harappan cities seem to have been finally deserted by 1800 BC, around this time Meluha (identified with India) ceases to be visible in the Mesopotamian records. The population of Harappan urban centres either perished or moved away to other areas. Not surprisingly traits of the post-urban Harappan culture are found at many places in Pakistan, in central and western India, in Punjab, Rajasthan, Harayana, Jammu, Kashmir, Delhi and western Uttar Pradesh during 2000–1500 BC, which witnessed the spread of non-Harappan Chalcolithic settlements of early farming communities in different parts of the country. It is likely that some of them were direct descendants of the late Harappan culture.

THE FIRST VILLAGES

Palaeolithic man was a hunter and food gatherer, and lived in very small communities, which were usually nomadic. In the course of time he learnt to kindle fire, to protect his body from the weather with skin, bark or leaves, and to tame the wild dog which lurked round his campfire. In India, as all over the world, people lived thus for many thousands of years.

Then, very recently in the perspective of geological time, great changes took place in man's way of living. Certainly not much earlier than 10,000 B.C., and perhaps as late as 6000 B.C., man developed what Professor Gordon Childe calls "an aggressive attitude to his environment". He learnt how to grow food crops, to tame domestic animals, to make pots, and to weave garments. Before discovering the use of metal, he taught himself to make well-polished stone implements far in advance of those of the palaeolithic age. Such implements have been found all over India, but mostly in the North–West and in the Deccan, and usually on

or near the surface. In much of the country neolithic culture survived long, and many of the wilder hill tribes of the present day have only recently emerged from this stage.

The village cultures had varying customs, for the secluded valleys of the Brahui Hills and the comparative simplicity of the lives of inhabitants did not encourage very close contact. Thus the northern villages made predominantly red pottery, and the southern bulk, the people of the Kulli Culture, in the Makran, burnt their dead, while those of the Nal culture, in the Brahui Hills, practised fractional burial, or the inhumation of the bones after partial disintegration by burning or exposure.

Their religion was of the type practised by other early agricultural communities in the Mediterranean region and the Middle East, centring round fertility rites and the worship of a Mother Goddess. Figurines of the Goddess have been found in many sites, and in those of the Zhob culture, to the north of Quetta, phallic emblems have also been found. In many ancient cultures the worship of the Mother Goddess was associated with that of the bull, and these were no exception. Bull figurines have been discovered, and the bull forms a favourite motif for the decoration of the pottery of Kulli and Rana Ghundai, one of the most important of the Zhob sites.

THE HARAPPA CITY CULTURE

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The people of the Kulli culture excelled in making small boxes of soft stone, delicately engraved with linear patterns. Such boxes have been occasionally found in early Mesopotamian sites, and we may assume that they were exported by the Kulli people, perhaps filled with unguent or perfume of some kind. At Susa and elsewhere have been found a few pieces of painted pottery which are evidently imitated from the wares of the Kulli people, who obviously traded with the Middle East. Otherwise there is little evidence of contact. No certainly identifiable Mesopotamian remains have been found in Baluchistan, and there is no trace of

objects from the Kulli Culture along the overland route. It seems that the Kulli people made contact with the earliest Mesopotamian civilizations by sea.

The civilization of the Indus is known to the archaeologist as the Harappa Culture, from the modern name of the site of one of its two great cities, on the left bank of the Ravi, in the Panjab. Mohenjo Daro, the second city, is on the right bank of the Indus, some 250 miles from its mouth. Recently, excavations have been carried out on the site of Kalbanga, in the valley of the old River Sarasvati, now almost dried up, near the border of India and West Pakistan.

These have revealed a third city, almost as large as the two earlier known, and designed on the same plan. As well as these cities a few smaller towns are known, and a large number of village sites, from Rupar on the upper Satlaj to Lothal in Gujrat. The area covered by the Harappa Culture therefore extended for some 950 miles from north to south, and the pattern of its civilization was so uniform that even the bricks were usually of the same size and shape from one end of it to the other. Outside this area the village cultures of Baluchistan seem to have continued much as before.

Thus the Harappa Culture, at least in the Panjab, was later in its beginnings than the village cultures, but it was certainly in part contemporary with them, for traces of mutual contact have been found; and some of the village cultures survived the great civilization to the east of them. From the faint indications which are all the evidence we have, it would seem that the Indus cities began in the first half, perhaps towards the middle, of the 3rd millennium B.C.; it is almost certain that they continued well into the 2nd millennium.

The two cities were built on a similar plan. To the west of each was a "citadel", an oblong artificial platform some 30-50 feet high and about 400x200 yards in area. This was defended by crenelated walls, and on it were erected the public buildings. Below it was the town proper, in each case at least a square mile in area. The main streets, some as much as 30 feet wide, were quite straight, and divided the city into lanes. In neither of the great cities has any stone building been found; standardized burnt brick of good quality was the usual building material for dwelling houses and public buildings alike. The houses, often of two or more stories, though they varied in size, were all based on much the same plan—a square courtyard, round which were a number of rooms. The entrances were usually in side alleys, and no windows faced on

the streets, which must have presented a monotonous vista of dull brick walls. The houses had bathrooms, the design of which shown that the Harappa, like the modern Indian, preferred to take his bath standing, by pouring pitchers of water over his head. The bathrooms were provided with drains, which flowed into sewers under the main streets, leading to soak-pits. The most striking of the few large buildings is the great bath in the citadel area of Mohenjodaro. This is an oblong bathing pool 39x23 feet in area and 8 feet deep, constructed of beautiful brickwork made with bitumen.

The recently excavated site at Lothal in Gujrat has revealed harbour works, and the Harappa people may have been more nautically inclined than was formerly supposed. No doubt from their port of Lothal they were in touch with places farther south, and it is possibly thus that certain distinctive features of the Harappan culture penetrated to South India.

It seems that every merchant of mercantile family had a seal, bearing an emblem, often of a religious character, and a name or brief inscription in the tantalizingly indecipherable script. The standard Harappa seal was a square or oblong plaque, usually made of the soft stone called steatite, which was delicately engraved and hardened by heating. The Mesopotamian civilization employed cylinder seals, which were rolled on clay tablets, leaving an impressed band bearing the device and inscription of the seal; one or two such seals have been found in Mohenjodaro, but with devices of the Harappa type. Over 2000 seals have been discovered in the Indus cities, and it would seem that every important citizen possessed one. Their primary purpose was probably to mark the ownership of property, but they doubtless also served as amulets, and were regularly carried on the persons of their owners. Generally they depict animals, such as the bull, buffalo, goat, tiger and elephant, or that appear to be scenes from religious legend. Their brief inscriptions, never of more than twenty symbols and usually of not more than ten, are the only significant example of the Harappa script to have survived.

But if the Harappa folk could not produce works of art on a large scale they excelled in those of small compass. Their most notable artistic achievement was perhaps in their seal engravings, especially those of animals, which they delineated with powerful realism and evident affection.

The great urus bull with its many dewlaps, the rhinoceros with knobby armoured hide, the tiger

roaring fiercely, and the many other animals are the work of craftsmen who studied their subjects and loved them.

ECONOMY

NATURE OF INDUS ECONOMY

Production of Large Quantities of Agrarian Surplus To maintain a widespread civilization like the Harappan, with almost a dozen cities and several dozens of towns, an agrarian system, sufficiently well organised to produce the necessary surplus must have existed. The granaries at Harappa and Mohenjodaro clearly suggest that cereals were produced in such quantities that not only were produced in such quantities that not only were all the immediate needs of the people duly met with, but there was also a surplus of face any future emergency. While the cereals stored in public granaries were evidently controlled by the authorities, even private individuals seem to have taken precautions, as indicated by the occurrence of large storage jars. In one of the rooms at Kalibangan, many such jars were found stacked one over another.

Increased Evidence of Ploughing For tilling fields, a wooden plough, with perhaps a sharp-ended copper bar attached to its end, seems to have been used. In addition to the evidence of a ploughed field at Kalibangan, Banawali has now yielded a complete terracotta model of a plough. These ploughs were drawn by bullocks that constituted a sizeable part of the cattle wealth of the Harappans. It has also been suggested that the Harappans practiced canal irrigation, but the evidence is rather meager. At the same time, the channelling of overflowing rain-water can be easily visualised. Thus, Harappan agriculture was largely dependent on life irrigation rather than on canal irrigation and therefore, was highly labour-intensive. But we should not view Harappan subsistence exclusively in terms of agriculture.

Pattern of International Trade Though much is already known to us about the Harappan overseas trade to the Gulf and Mesopotamia, the picture has become clearer with recent discoveries in the last few years. In the third millennium BC, there was a kind of international

economy, with metals, stones, timbers and craft items moving between South Asia, Makran, southern Iran, the Oman peninsula, Bahrain, Kuwait and Sumer. A network of several interaction spheres encompassed these regions in the mid-third millennium_{BC}. But in earlier centuries, there were more marked interactions between Central Asia, Afghanistan, Seistan and north Baluchistan and the Indus plains. The chronological coincidence of the shift of interaction spheres and the rise of the Harappan civilization cannot have been accidental.

Relationship between Trade and Social Changes

Was there a connection between a flourishing external trade and the emergence of a ruling class and urban centers in South Asia? We must examine whether external trade led to increased acquisition of status items on the part of aristocracies, or whether trade led to increased productivity. It is possible that external trade induced some changes in labour allocation. The emergence of craft workshops to produce export items, for instance, may in turn have induced changes in the geographic location of certain production activities so that a regional economy came into being. That is why, chert blades and shell items were produced at only a few Harappan sites, but are found at several sites; shells were exported westwards; craft quarters at Chanhudaro and Lothal seem to reveal 'workshop'-type situations. To a certain extent at least, these developments may be seen as responses to the growing demand for Harappan goods in Mesopotamia.

Craft Production and Technology

There is enough evidence to suggest the presence of specialised groups of artisans such as bronzesmiths, goldsmiths, brick makers, stone cutters, weavers (of both cotton and wool cloth), boat-builders, terracotta manufacturers, and others. Some of these crafts such as brick making must have been state-controlled crafts.

Trade and Commerce

Inter-regional trade was carried on with Rajasthan, Saurashtra, Maharashtra, south India, parts of western Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Foreign trade was conducted mainly with Mesopotamia or Sumeria (modern Iraq) and Bahrain.

Main imports consisted of precious metals like gold (from Afghanistan, Persian and south India), copper (Rajasthan, Baluchistan and Arabia) and iron (from Afghanistan and Bihar) and several semi-precious stones like lapis lazuli (Afghanistan), turquoise (Persia), amethyst (Maharashtra), agate (Saurashtra), jade (Central Asia) and conch-shells (Saurashtra and Deccan).

Main exports were several agricultural products such as wheat, barley, peas, oil seeds, and a variety of finished products such as cotton goods, pottery, carnelian beads, shell and bone inlays, terracotta statues, ivory products, and the like.

INTERNAL TRADE

Explicit Evidence of Internal Trade This is seen in the form of the occurrence of various raw materials at Harappan sites in different regions. In the context of Gujarat alone, the site-wise distribution of raw materials includes 28 items. The sheer fact of their being found at different Gujarat sites makes the economic world behind it – a world of raw material procurement, processing, manufacture of objects and their distribution obvious. Gujarat is only one area of Harappan distribution, if all the areas are taken together, this world assumes great proportions.

EXTERNAL TRADE

Evidence in Outside Areas

The evidence of Harappan external trade has been found principally in north Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, north and south Iran, the islands of Bahrain, Failaka and the Oman peninsula in the Gulf, and north and south Mesopotamia. They can be put in different categories.

Evidence in Indus Area

Within the Indus area, there are some seals of external affinity, steatite vessels with specific designs, some externally derived motifs, etc. The details of the typology and context of all these objects and motifs have drawn much discussion. Thus, there are non-Indus civilizations. Cylinder seals of the Mesopotamian, Iranian and central Asian world occur notably at Mohenjodaro and Kalibangan, but show Indus motifs. A 'Gulf' seal was found on the surface at Lothal and a seal with a 'Gulf' motif they has been found at Bet Dwaraka.

CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Polity

There is no clear-cut evidence about the nature of the polity. According to D D Kosambi the priests constituted the ruling class, but according to R S Sharma the merchants were the rulers. Whatever might be the nature of political organisation, it is evident that the Harappans had very efficient and well-organised administrative machinery.

RELIGION

Pasupati Mahadeva

For example, in the so-called 'Pasupati Mahadeva' seal from Mohenjo Daro, a rhinoceros and water buffalo on one side, and an elephant and tiger on the other, surround a three-faced seated deity in human form (anthropomorphic), crowned with buffalo horns. According to one recent study, the so-called 'yogic' posture of the deity with the soles of the feet facing each other.

Sacrificial Cults

A number of small pits with clayplaster have been excavated at Kalibangan, Lothal, Banawali and Nageshwar, in public places as well as within some houses.

Legacy of Indus Religion

This 'official' religion of the Indus people with its zoomorphic spirits and sacred pipal tree, apparently had roots in the naturalistic beliefs of pre-historic times.

Script and Language

Harappan script is regarded as pictographic since its signs represent birds, fish, varieties of the human form etc. The number of signs of the Harappan script is known to be between 400

and 600 hundred, of which about 40 or 60 are basic and the rest are their variants. The variants are formed by adding different accents, inflexions or other letters to the former.

The language of the Harappans is at present still unknown and must remain so until the Harappan script is read. There are two main arguments as to the nature of the language, that it belongs to the Indo-European or even Indo-Aryan family, or that it belongs to the Dravidian family.

Pargola and his Scandinavian colleagues proceeded with a hypothesis that the language was Dravidian and that the script relied upon homophones.

Seals

They are the greatest artistic creations of the Indus people. Made invariably of steatite (soft stone), they range in size from half an inch to just over two-and-half inches. The technique of cutting and polishing these seals with white lustre was a unique invention of the Harappans.

Though there are different types of seals (such as the square, rectangular, button, cubical, cylinder and round types), only two of them are the main types – the square type with a carved animal and inscription on it, and the rectangular type with an inscription only.

Images

A few specimens of images made of both stone and metal have been discovered. A number of stone sculptures have been discovered – 11 pieces at Mohenjodaro, two at Harappa, one at Dabarkot and one at Mundigak (Afghanistan). The best specimen among the stone sculptures of Mohenjodaro is the steatite image of a bearded man wearing an ornamented robe.

Pottery

The Harappan pottery is bright or dark red and uniformly sturdy and well baked. It consists chiefly of wheel made wares, both plain and painted. The plain pottery is more common than the painted ware.

PROBLEMS OF DECLINE

Environmental Factors

Several Harappan sites are around the now dried-up Ghaggar-Hakra river, which flows south of the Indus and parallel to it. Most of the scholars, as already seen in origins, now feel that the

Ghaggar–Hakra was a mighty river during Harappan times, and may have been the mythic Sarasvati river that the Rigveda and other sources talked about. According to this theory, earthquakes in the Himalayas which are fold-mountains may have resulted in a shift in the Ghaggar–Hakra river destroying cities in the process. Subsequent flooding and drying up of the river may have affected the surviving Harappans, who may have moved southwards.

Evidence of Decline and Shift of Settlements

At the same time, there is a marked overall element of decline. The archaeological repertoire becomes much simpler, the use of script becomes very limited, and there was much less use of raw materials transported over long distances. While trying to explain this decline, one has to point out a major feature of the distribution of late Harappan sites between the Sutlaj and the Yamuna. There was a remarkable shift of the focus of settlements towards the Doab during this period.