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Indus Valley Civilisation

- The advent of the **Indus Valley Civilization (IVC)**, also known as the Harappan Civilization, marks the beginning of Indian history.
- The Indus Valley Civilisation was called after the Indus river system, on which alluvial plains the early sites of the civilization were discovered and excavated.
- The **Indus Valley Civilization** began approximately 3300 BC.
- It thrived between 2600 and 1900 BC (Mature Indus Valley Civilization). It began to decline around 1900 BC and vanished around 1400 BC.
- This is also known as the **Harappan Civilization**, after the first city unearthed, Harappa (Punjab, Pakistan).
- The first evidence of cotton production has been discovered in Mehrgarh, Pakistan, dating back to the **Pre-Harappan civilization**.
- The **Indus Valley** was home to the largest of Egypt's, Mesopotamia's, India's, and China's ancient urban civilizations.
- The Archaeological Department of India conducted excavations in the Indus valley in the 1920s, unearthing the ruins of two ancient towns, **Mohenjodaro and Harappa**.
- In 1924, ASI Director-General **John Marshall** proclaimed to the world the finding of a new civilization in the Indus Valley.

Origin and Evolution

- The archaeological discoveries made during the previous eight decades demonstrate the Harappan culture's progressive growth.
- **Pre-Harappan, early-Harappan, mature-Harappan, and late Harappan** are the four major stages or periods of development.
- Eastern Balochistan is the location of the pre-Harappan stage.
- Excavations in Mehrgarh, 150 miles northwest of Mohenjodaro, have shown the presence of **pre-Harappan civilization**. At this point, the nomadic people began to settle down and live a stable agricultural existence.
- The Early Harappan Phase is associated with the Hakra Phase, which was discovered in the **Ghaggar-Hakra River Valley**.
- People lived in huge communities on the plains during the Early Harappan period. The settlements in the Indus valley grew gradually.
- During this time, there was also a movement from country to urban life. The sites of **Amri and Kot Diji** continue to provide evidence for the early Harappan period.
- Great cities arose during the **mature-Harappan era**.



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- The excavations at **Kalibangan**, with their intricate town planning and urban elements, demonstrate this stage of progression.
- The fall of the **Indus civilization** began in the late-Harappan era. This stage of progression is revealed by the excavations at Lothal.
- Lothal, with its harbor, was established considerably later. As flood protection, it was enclosed by a large brick wall.
- Lothal remained a commerce hub for the Harappan civilization and the rest of India, as well as Mesopotamia.

Date of Indus Valley Civilisation

- Sir John Marshall estimated the length of Mohenjodaro's settlement between 3250 and 2750 B.C. in 1931.
- As a result, as additional sites are uncovered, the date of the Harappan civilization is revised.
- The development of the radiocarbon technique allows for the determination of nearly exact dates.
- On the basis of radiocarbon dates from his finds, Fairservis reduced the chronology of the Harappan civilization to between 2000 and 1500 B.C. by 1956.
- **D.P. Agarwal** concluded in 1964 that the overall period of this civilization should be between 2300 and 1750 B.C.
- However, these dates are subject to additional change.

Important sites of Indus Valley Civilisation

Sit	Discovered by	Location	Features
Harappa	Marshall, Rai Bahadur Daya Ram Sahni and Madho Sarup Vats. 1921	Located in the Montgomery district of Punjab, on the banks of the Ravi River.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Granaries, bullock carts, and sandstone human anatomy sculptures



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Mohenjodaro	R.D. Banerjee, E. J. H. MacKay and Marshall. 1922	Located in the Punjab district of Larkana on the banks of the Indus River	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mound of Dead• Great bath• Granary Bronze• dancing girl• Seal of Pashupati Mahadeva statue• Steatite of beard man• A plethora of seals have been discovered.• The most significant employment was agriculture. Cotton cultivation was pioneered by the earliest civilisation.• Domesticated animals included sheep, goats, and pigs.
Sutkagendor	Stein in 1929	Dast river in Pakistan's southern Balochistan province	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harappa's and Babylon's trading post
Chanhudaro	N.G Majumdar in 1931	Sindh is located on the Indus River.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shop with bead makers• a dog chasing a cat's footprint
Amri	N.G Majumdar in 1935.	On the banks of the Indus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence of antelope
Kalibangan	Ghose in 1953.	Rajasthan, beside the Ghaggar River.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Altar of fire• Bones from camels.• Plough of wood
Lothal	R.Rao in	Gujarat on	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The first artificial



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	1953.	Bhogva river near Gulf of Cambay.	port. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dockyard.• husk of rice• Altars of fire.
Surkotada	J.P Joshi in 1964.	Gujarat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Horse skeletons• Beads
Banawali	R.S Bisht in 1974.	Haryana's Hisar district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence of Beads, Barley• Both pre-Harappan and Harappan cultures have been discovered.
Dholavira.	R.S Bisht in 1985.	Gujara, Rann of Kachchh.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water collection system• reservoir of water

Salient Features of the Indus Valley Civilisation

Town Planning

- **Harappan civilization** was characterized by its urban planning system.
- Each of **Harappa and Mohenjodaro** had its own citadel or acropolis, which was likely held by ruling class members.
- Each city has a lower town with brick homes that were occupied by the ordinary people beneath the citadel.
- The grid method was used to arrange the dwellings in the city, which is exceptional.
- Granaries were an essential feature of Harappan towns.
- The usage of burnt bricks in Harappan towns is noteworthy, as dry bricks were often used in Egyptian constructions at the time.
- **Mohenjodaro's drainage system** was rather outstanding.
- The **Great Bath**, which is 39 feet long, 23 feet wide, and 8 feet deep, is **Mohenjodaro's most significant public space**.
- At either end, a flight of steps leads to the surface. There are dressing rooms on the side. The Bath's floor was constructed of burned bricks.



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- Water was drawn from a large well in another room, and a drain was accessible from one corner of the Bath. It was probably used for ceremonial bathing.
- A granary spanning 150 feet long and 50 feet wide is the biggest structure in **Mohenjodaro**.
- However, there are as many as six granaries in Harappa's fortress.
- Practically every big or little property in almost every city has its own patio and bathroom.
- Many residences in Kalibangan had wells.
- The entire community was fortified at locations like Dholavira and Lothal (Gujarat), and portions of the town were also protected by walls.

Economic Life

- The presence of **numerous seals, uniform script, and regulated weights** and measures across a large area demonstrates the importance of trade in the lives of the **Indus people**.
- **Stone, metal, shell**, and other materials were traded extensively by the Harappans.
- Metal money was not utilized, and trade was conducted through barter.
- They practiced navigation along the **Arabian Sea's shore**.
- They had established a commercial colony in northern Afghanistan, which aided commerce with **Central Asia**.
- They also traded with people living around the **Tigris and Euphrates rivers**.
- The Harappans engaged in long-distance lapis lazuli trading, which may have boosted the ruling class's social standing.

Agriculture in Indus Valley Civilisation

- **Harappan communities**, which were generally located in river plains, generated enough foodgrains.
- **Wheat, barley, rai, peas, sesame, lentil, chickpea, and mustard** were among the crops grown.
- Millets have also been discovered in Gujarat. While rice was used infrequently.
- The Indus people were the first to cultivate cotton.
- Whole grain findings suggest the **presence of agriculture**, reconstructing real agricultural operations is more challenging.
- The bull was recognized, according to representations on seals and terracotta art, and archaeologists conclude that oxen were also utilised for ploughing.
- The majority of Harappan sites are in semi-arid regions where irrigation was likely necessary for cultivation.



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- Canal traces have been discovered in Afghanistan's **Shortughai Harappan site**, but not in **Punjab or Sindh**.
- Although the **Harappans** were farmers, they also raised animals on a massive scale.
- A shallow level of Mohenjodaro and a dubious ceramic piece from Lothal provide evidence of the horse. In any event, **Harappan civilization** was not centred on horses.

Social Life

- To comprehend the **Harappan social life**, there is a wealth of evidence. Both men and women wore two pieces of fabric, one for the upper body and the other for the lower body.
- Both men and women wore beads.
- Women wore **bangles, bracelets, fillets, girdles, anklets, ear-rings, and finger rings**, among other things.
- Gold, silver, copper, bronze, and semi-precious stones were used to create these decorations.
- Cosmetic usage was widespread. **At Mohenjodaro**, several household items made of pottery, stone, shells, ivory, and metal have been discovered.
- Copper is used to make **spindles, needles, combs, fish hooks, and knives**.
- Fishing was a popular hobby, while bullfighting and hunting were also popular.
- **Axes, spearheads, daggers, bows, and arrows** made of copper and bronze were among the many weapons on display.

Social Institutions

- In the **Indus valley**, just a few written items have been uncovered, and academics have yet to decode the Indus script.
- As a result, determining the nature of the **Indus Valley Civilization's** state and institutions is challenging.
- At no **Harappan site** have temples been discovered. As a result, the prospect of priests dominating Harappa is ruled out.
- Harappa was most likely dominated by a merchant class.
- Archaeological documents may not give obvious answers when looking for a power centre or portrayals of powerful people.
- Some archaeologists believe that **Harappan culture** had no rulers and that everyone was treated equally.



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Art and Crafts

- **The Harappans** were well-versed in the production and application of bronze.
- Copper was acquired from Rajasthan's Khetri copper mines, while tin was likely imported from Afghanistan.
- Several artefacts have been discovered with textile imprints.
- **Large brick structures** indicate that brick-laying was a valuable skill. This also confirms the existence of a mason class.
- **The Harappans** were known for their boat-building, bead-making, and seal-making skills. **Terracotta** production was also a significant skill.
- **Goldsmiths** created silver, gold, and precious stone jewellery.
- The potter's wheel was in full swing, and the **Harappans** were producing their own distinctive glossy and gleaming pottery.



Religion



- Several clay figures of women have been discovered at Harappa. A plant is represented sprouting out of a **woman's embryo** in one figure.
- As a result, the **Harappans** saw the earth as a fertility goddess, worshipping her in the same way that the Egyptians revered the **Nile goddess Isis**.
- The masculine god is shown as a seal with three-horned heads seated in the pose of a yogi.
- This god sits on a throne surrounded by elephants, tigers, rhinoceros, and buffalo.
- Two deer emerge at his feet. The divinity represented is known as **Pushupati Mahadeva**.
- There have been several stone phallus and female sex organ symbols discovered.
- Trees and animals were highly revered by the **Indus people**.
- The one-horned unicorn, which is related to the rhinoceros, is the most significant, while the humped bull is the second most important.
- **Numerous amulets** have also been discovered.

Script in Indus Valley Civilisation

- The **Harappan script** is currently being deciphered in its entirety.
- There are between 400 and 600 signs, with 40 or 60 being fundamental and the rest being modifications.
- The majority of the script was written from right to left.



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- The **boustrophedon approach** — writing in the opposite way in alternate lines – was used on a few lengthy seals.
- **Dravidian** was the language of the Harappans, according to **Parpola and his Scandinavian** colleagues. This viewpoint is shared by a group of Soviet academics.
- Other researchers hold a different perspective on the Harappan and Brahmi scripts.
- The **Harappan writing** remains a mystery, and deciphering it will undoubtedly provide new information on this civilisation.

Burial Methods

- Cemeteries unearthed near towns like **Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Kalibangan, Lothal, and Rugar** shed information on the Harappans' burial habits.
- At Mohenjodaro, both complete burial and post-cremation burial were prevalent.
- The burial hole at **Lothal** was lined with charred bricks, indicating that coffins were used. At **Harappa**, wooden coffins were also discovered.
- Pot burials have been discovered in Lothal, occasionally with pairs of bones. However, there is no concrete proof that Sati is practised.

Decline of Indus Valley Civilisation

- There is no universal agreement on what caused the Harappan civilization to fall. **Several hypotheses** have been proposed.
- Natural disasters like **repeated floods, river drying up**, diminishing soil fertility owing to overexploitation, and periodic earthquakes may have contributed to the downfall of the Harappan towns.
- The **invasion of Aryans**, according to some experts, was the ultimate blow. The **Rig Veda** mentions the demolition of forts.
- Human bones discovered crowded together at Mohenjodaro further suggest that the city was attacked by strangers.
- The **Aryans** possessed stronger weaponry and fast horses, which may have helped them to conquer this region.



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