Class XII

Bricks, Beads and Bones
The Harappan Civilization

[NCERT - Class XII
Themes in Indian History - Part I
Chapter I.]

Harappan seal - Made of Steatite
- contains - animal motifs
- signs from script (undeciphered)

Distintive objects: seals, beads, weights, stone blades, baked bricks

Found in: Afghanistan, Jammu, Baluchistan, Gujrat.

Dated by: 2600 BCE to 1900 BCE

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1. Beginnings:

- Break b/w Early Harappan & Harappan civilizat?
- Evidence of - distintive pottery
  - agriculture
  - pastoralism.

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2. Subsistence Strategies:

- Wide range of plants & animals.
- Charred grains & seeds
- Grains : wheat, barley, lentil, chickpea, sesame, Millets in Gujrat, Rice
- Domesticated animals : cattle, sheep, goat, buffalo, pig.

  Wild species: boar, deer, ghariol.

  Bones of fish and fowl also found.

2.1 Agricultural technologies:

- Bull was known (seals & terracotta sculpture)
- Oxen used for ploughing (plough models in Haryana)
- Ploughed field at Kalibhangan (Rajasthan)
- Furrows at right angles (two (diff) crops together)
- Irrigation facility
  - canals - Shortughai (Afghanisthan)
  - wells - Punjab, Sindh.
  - water reservoirs → Dholavira (Gujrat)

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3. Mohenjodaro: A planned urban centre.

Citadel	Lower town
- small but Higher	- large but lower.
- buildings constructed on high mud brick platforms	- on low mud brick platforms

- First planned and implemented later.
- Both citadel & lower town was walled.
- Bricks: - sundried or baked
  - Standardized ration
    - length = 4 times height
    - breadth = 2 times height.

3.1. Laying out drains:

- Planned drainage s/m.
- Roads & street in grid pattern
- Streets with drains laid first & then houses built.

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3.2 Domestic Architecture

- Lower town - residential buildings
- Courtyard → rooms on all sides
- Privacy given importance
  - ↳ No windows in ground floor
  - → No views of interior or courtyard from main door.
- Every house own bathroom
- Staircases in some houses to go to roof.

3.3 Citadel

- Used for special public purposes
  - Warehouse
  - Great Bath
    - ↳ Special ritual bath.

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4. Tracking Social Differences:

4.1 Burials

- Dead burried in pits
- Jewellery found in few instances
- It appears - Harappans did not believe in burying precious things with dead.

4.2 Looking for "luxuries"

Artefacts
↳ Utilitarian → Daily need
↳ querns
pottery
needles
} made of stone or clay

— luxuries
↳ pots of faience
↓
Ground sand / silica
+
colour + gum
} mixed and then fired.

- Luxurious items found in large ~~urbs~~ sites — ex: Mohenjodaro / Harappa
- Gold too rare (found at Harappan sites)

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5. Finding out about craft production

Chanhudaro :- small settlement (less than 7 hectare)

- Devoted to craft production
  - bead-making
  - shell-cutting
  - metal-working
  - seal-making
  - weight making.
- Materials used
  - carnelian
  - jasper
  - quartz,
  - crystal
  - steatite

  Metals used -
  - copper
  - bronzes
  - Gold.
- Decorated by
  - incising
  - painting
  - designs etched onto them.
- Nageshwar, Balakot } specialized centres for making shell objects.

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5.1 Identifying centres of production

- Raw materials.
- unfinished objects
- waste objects (one of best material)

6. Strategies for procuring material

- Bullock cards - means of transporting material from different places

6.1 Materials from sub-continent & beyond

Settlements in areas where resources available

- Nageshwar & Balakot — Shell

Shortughai (Afghanisthan) - Lapis lazuli (blue stone highly valued)

Lothal - Carnelian

Rajasthan - Steatite, metal, copper

Gujrat - Steatite.

South India - Gold.

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6.2 Contacts with distant lands

- Oman - Copper.
  - ↳ Chemical analysis of Omani copper & Harappan artefacts - same origin
  - Harappan jar coated with thick layer of black clay found in Omani sites.

- Mesopotamian texts mention regions:
  - Magan - (Oman)
  - Dilmun - (Bahrain)
  - Meluhha - (Harappan region)
    - ↳ Products
      - carnelian.
      - lapis lazuli
      - copper
      - gold
      - varities of wood.

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7. Seals, Script, Weights.

7.1 Seals and sealings.

- long-distance communication
- Bag with sealing intact
  - product not tampered
  - identity of sender.

7.2 An Enigmatic Script

- Inscriptions are short (longest containing 26 signs)
- Written from right to left
- Undeciphered to date.

7.3 Weights

- Precise system of weights
- Made of stones called chert
- Cubical
- Denominations of weight were binary (1, 2, 4, 8, 16 . . . , 12,800)
- Metal-scale-pans found.

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8. Ancient Authority:

- Indications of authority present
  - planned towns
  - uniform, standardized bricks
  - mobilizing labour to build towns
  - settlements strategically set-up at specific location

8.1 Palaces & kings:

- Priest kings could be present III° to Mesopotamian history.
- No concrete evidance.

9. The End of the Civilization

- 1800 BCE - 1900 BCE
  - ↳ Changes started showing up.
    - Disappearance of distinctive artifacts
- Reasons:
  - climatic change
  - deforestation
  - excessive floods
  - shifting / drying up of rivers
  - overuse of landscape.

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