

T8: Indus Valley and Vedic Civilizations

Indus Valley in the Neolithic Age

- Contemporary to Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations.
- Traces of Neolithic culture in Bhirrana (Haryana) and Mehrgarh (Baluchistan) – c. 7,500 – 7000 BCE
- Fertile land along the **Indus and Ghaggar-Hakra rivers** facilitated rich agriculture

Bronze Age Civilization

Early Bronze Age – c. 3300 BCE

Late Bronze age - c. 2600-1900 BCE

Early civilization known as **Indus Civilization**

Over 1000 sites spread over 5 lac sq.m.- **Harappa, Mohenjodaro** and others

Present-day Location:
Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan, Haryana, Rajasthan and other areas in Pakistan and India



Town Planning

Citadel & Lower Town

- **Citadel** : Built of mud & mud brick
Raised on platform 7-14 meters high
Included public buildings, **Great Bath**
granary, assembly hall, priest residence
- **Lower Town**: well planned and walled
- Access to water: public and private wells, bathrooms & toilets
- Sewerage system – covered drains

Town Planning (Cont.)

Citadel



Lower Town



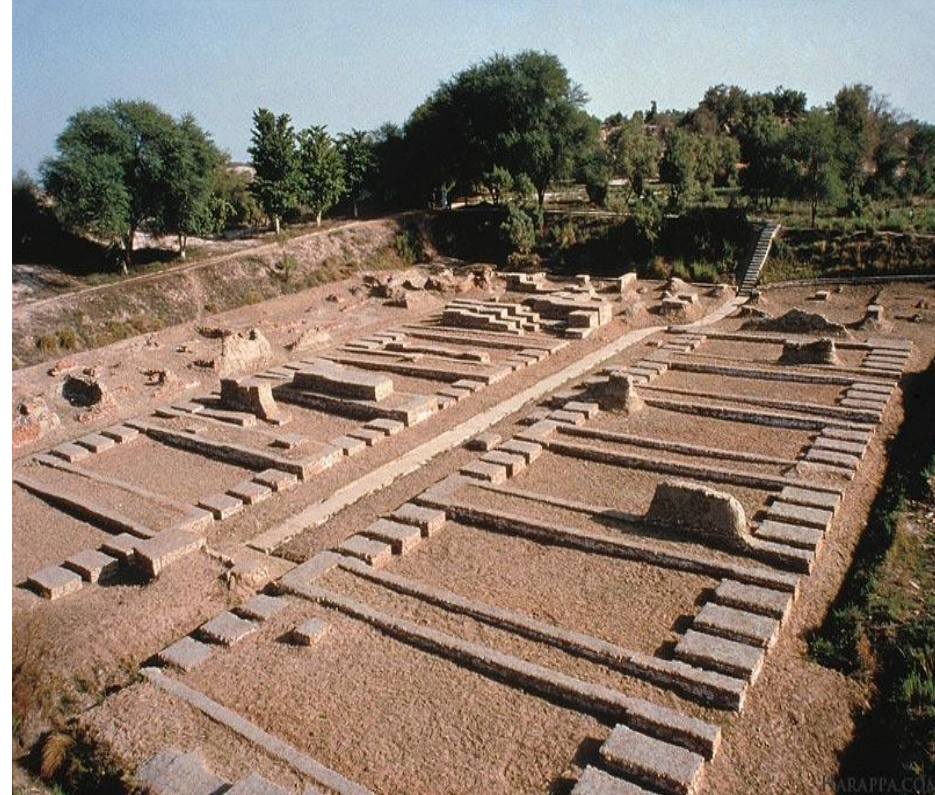
Town Planning (Cont.)

Great Bath, Mohenjo Daro



Measured 11.88 m. X 7.01 m. Depth 2.43 m. Two staircases. A hole to drain the water.

Great Granary, Harappa



Built in raised platform. 45 m. north-south and 45 m. east-west. Six rooms in two rows, 7 m. central passage way

Town Planning

Well, Mohenjo Daro



Drainage system



Trade and Industry

- Profitable trade with other territories
- Exported timber, ivory, textiles, copper, shell
- Imported woolen products, precious stones, food
- Industry: metallurgy, pottery, shell cutting, jewelry
- Units of measurement

Indus Valley Seals

- Discovered more than 2000 in number. Made of soapstone, terracotta and copper.
- Human figures, real animals, sometimes mythical animals
- Information reveals:
 - ❑ dress, ornaments, hair-style
 - ❑ skills of artists and sculptors
 - ❑ trade contacts
 - ❑ religious belief
 - ❑ script

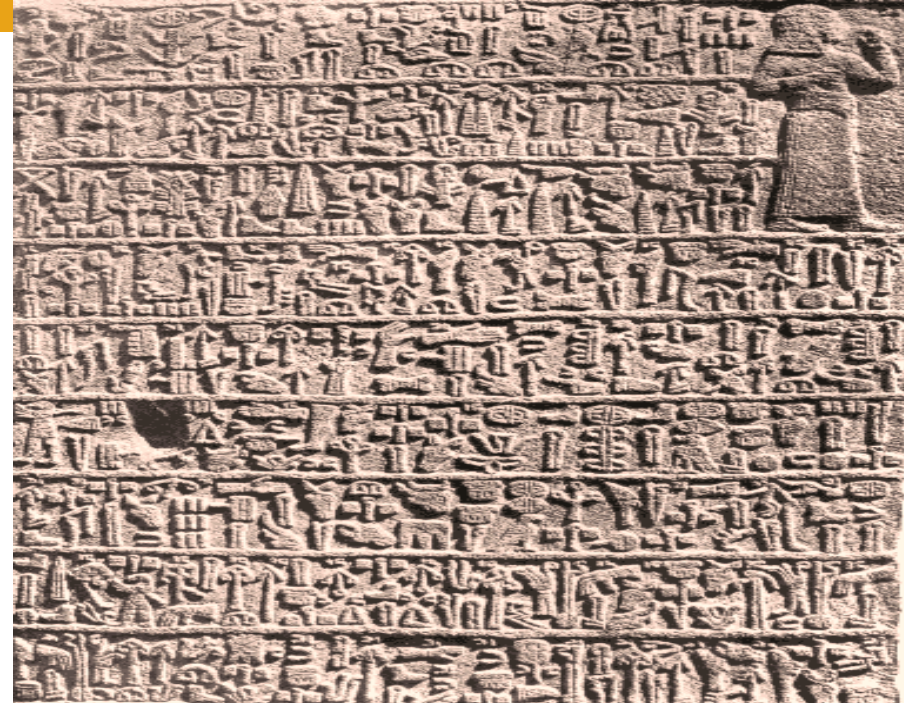


Harappan pottery, necklace and a human torso



“Mystery” of Indus Script

- Not yet deciphered
- Several hundred symbols found on seals, copper tablets, pottery
- Resembles Hieroglyphic characters
- Might be a non-linguistic symbol system



Decline and Demise

- Gradual decay after c. 2000 BCE
- Various causes including climate change (drought), earthquakes causing shift of river course, desertification etc. are attributed
- Aryan invasion c.1500 BCE may have been the final blow

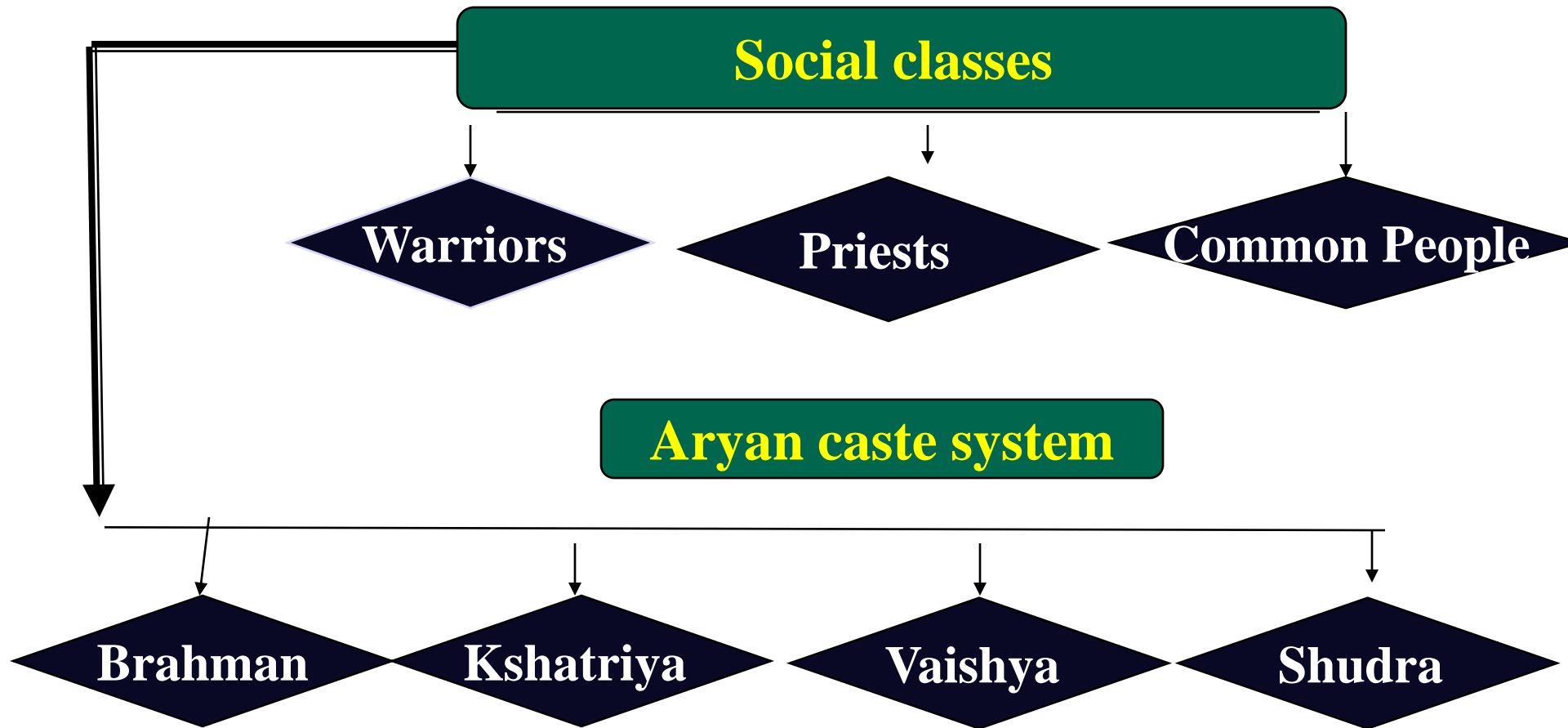
Vedic India

- **Veda** – (“Knowledge”) – 4 versions of Veda – **Rigveda** the earliest one
- Created by the **Indo-Aryans** (“respected ones”) – nomadic people from central Asia - Spoke **Sanskrit** – part of Indo-European language group
- Aryan invasion around 1500 BCE – horses, chariots, iron weapons – spread over entire India by 500 BCE
- Gradual integration with native culture

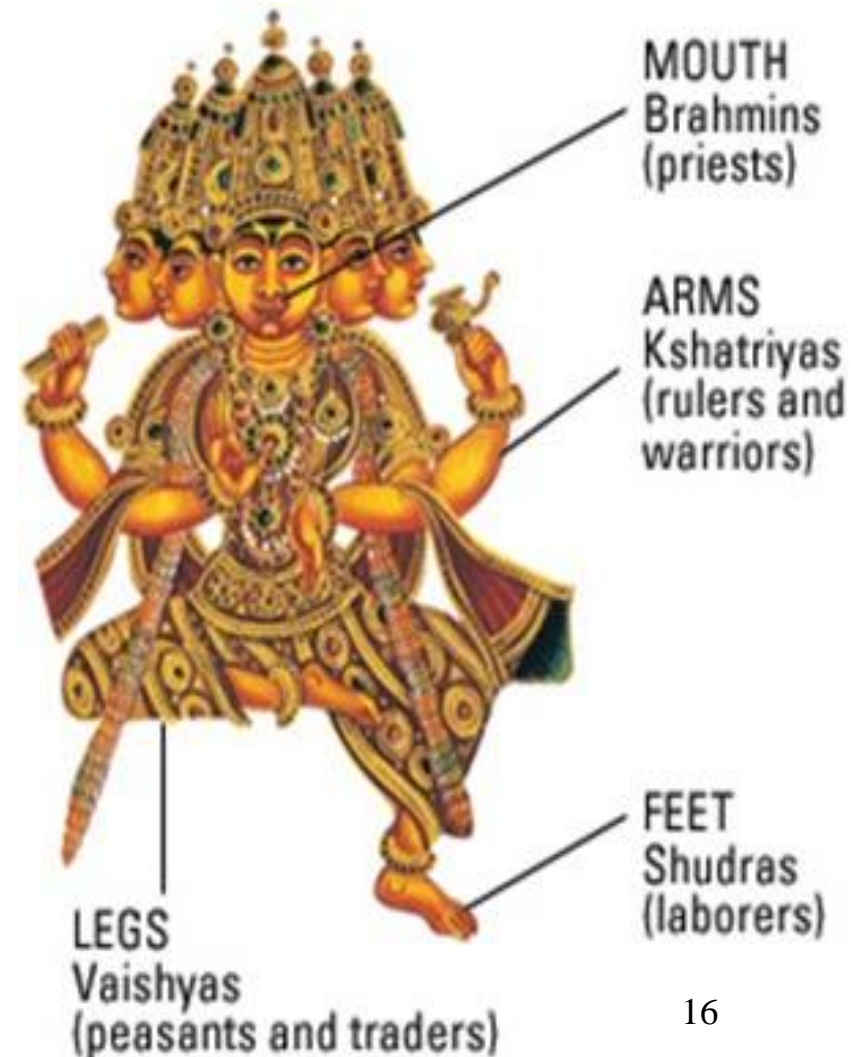
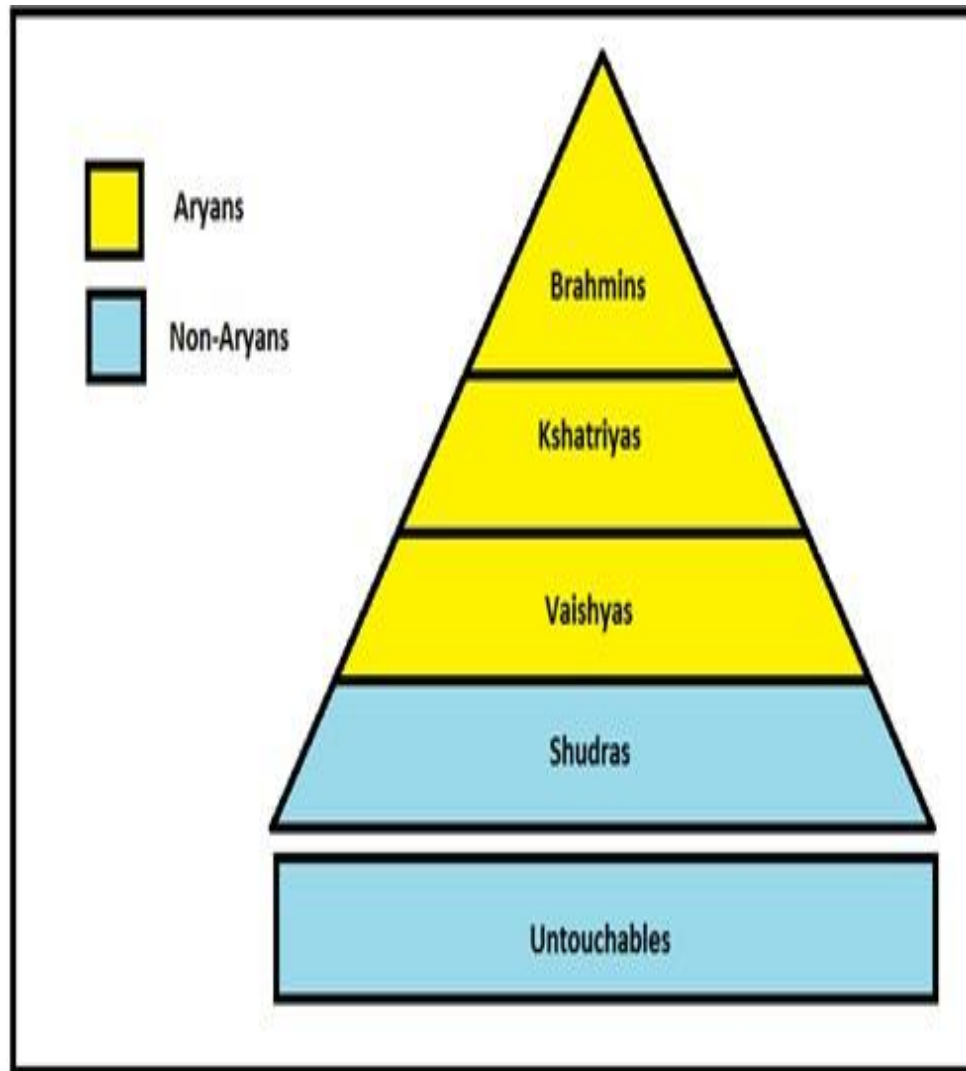
Vedic (Indo-Aryan) Society

- Originally a cattle herding society - consisting of equals
- Settled life and land ownership led to social stratification
- Aryan and non-Aryan as well as land owner and non-owner divide
- From class division to caste division
- **Caste system** – based on the Vedic religion – given a rigid and permanent shape

Social stratification



Aryan Caste System and its origin (Brahma)



Religion

- Polytheistic - based on Veda
- Vedic religion – later Hinduism
- Veda, Upanishad, Ramayana, Mahabharata
- Brahmans treated as the sacred, privileged and dominant group

Study questions

- How is the Bronze Age civilization in India known?
- How were the Indus towns planned?
- What were the export and import items in the Indus?
- Was there any industry in the Indus civilization?
- What kind of seals did the Indus people use?
- Did the Indus people have a script?
- Why did the Indus civilization come to an end?
- What is Vedic civilization?
- Who were the Indo-Aryans?
- What is the origin of the Vedic caste system?
- Where does the superiority of Brahmans lie in the Vedic caste system?

Thank You