

# Indus River Valley Civilization

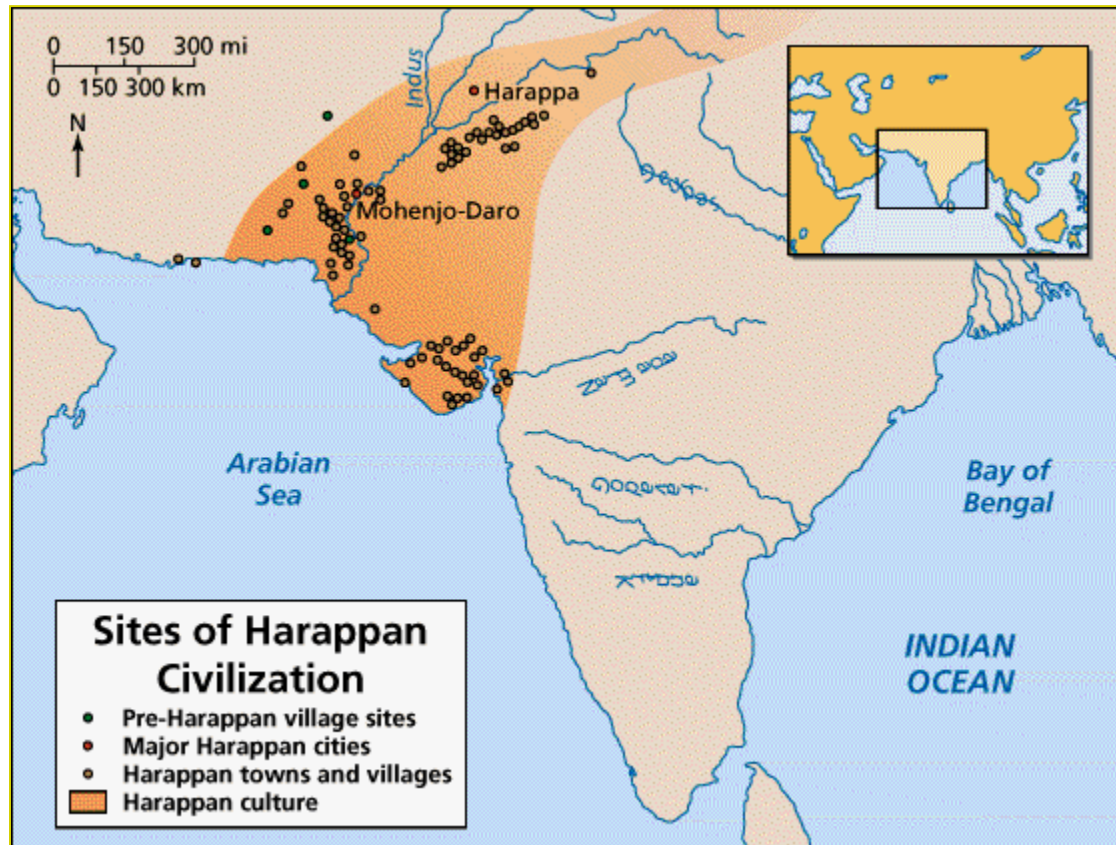
## The Story Continues

Thousands of years ago near the Indus River valley there existed a village called Amri, whose citizens were makers of fine pottery. Indus River valley people like those in Amri helped lay the foundation for cultures in the modern countries of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

# Indus Valley Civilization

Harrappan Civilization

# The Harappan Civilization



3300 BCE - 2400 BCE

# Civilization Emerges on the Indus

- Indus Valley Civilization
  - Influenced an area larger than Mesopotamia or Egypt
- Earliest Arrivals
  - About 7000 B.C.E., evidence of agricultural and domesticated animals
  - By 3200 B.C.E., people farming in villages along Indus River



# Geography

- Barriers and Pathways
  - Passes in Hindu Kush let invading peoples in
    - Earliest Indus Valley peoples
  - Rivers from mountain snow melt
    - Indus and Ganges rivers
    - Flow across plains, allow agriculture

# Geography

- Rich soil from silt
  - Continuous supply
  - Farming grains and surpluses
    - Allows cities to develop
    - 2500-1500BC Indus River Civilization
      - Well planned
      - Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa

# Indus or Harappan Civilization

- Early civilization in India developed in the Indus River valley.
- A civilization flourished there from 3000 to 1500 B.C.
- Archaeologists have found remains of over a thousand settlements in this area.

# Indus Valley Civilization

- a Primary Phase Culture
  - All elements of civilization (food surplus, government, public works, language, complex religion, specialized workers)
- little or no continuity with the following cultures
- forgotten until the 19th Century
  - rediscovered by the British, while building railroads



## Main Idea 1:

Located on the Indus River, the Harappan civilization also had contact with people far from India.

- Archaeologists think that the Harappan civilization thrived between 2300 and 1700 BC.
- The Harappan civilization controlled large areas on both sides of the **Indus River**.
- The largest settlements were two cities: **Harappa** and **Mohenjo Daro**.
- The Harappan civilization was dependent on agriculture and grew a variety of crops—from wheat and barley to dates and vegetables.
- The Harappans traded with people as far away as southern India and Mesopotamia.

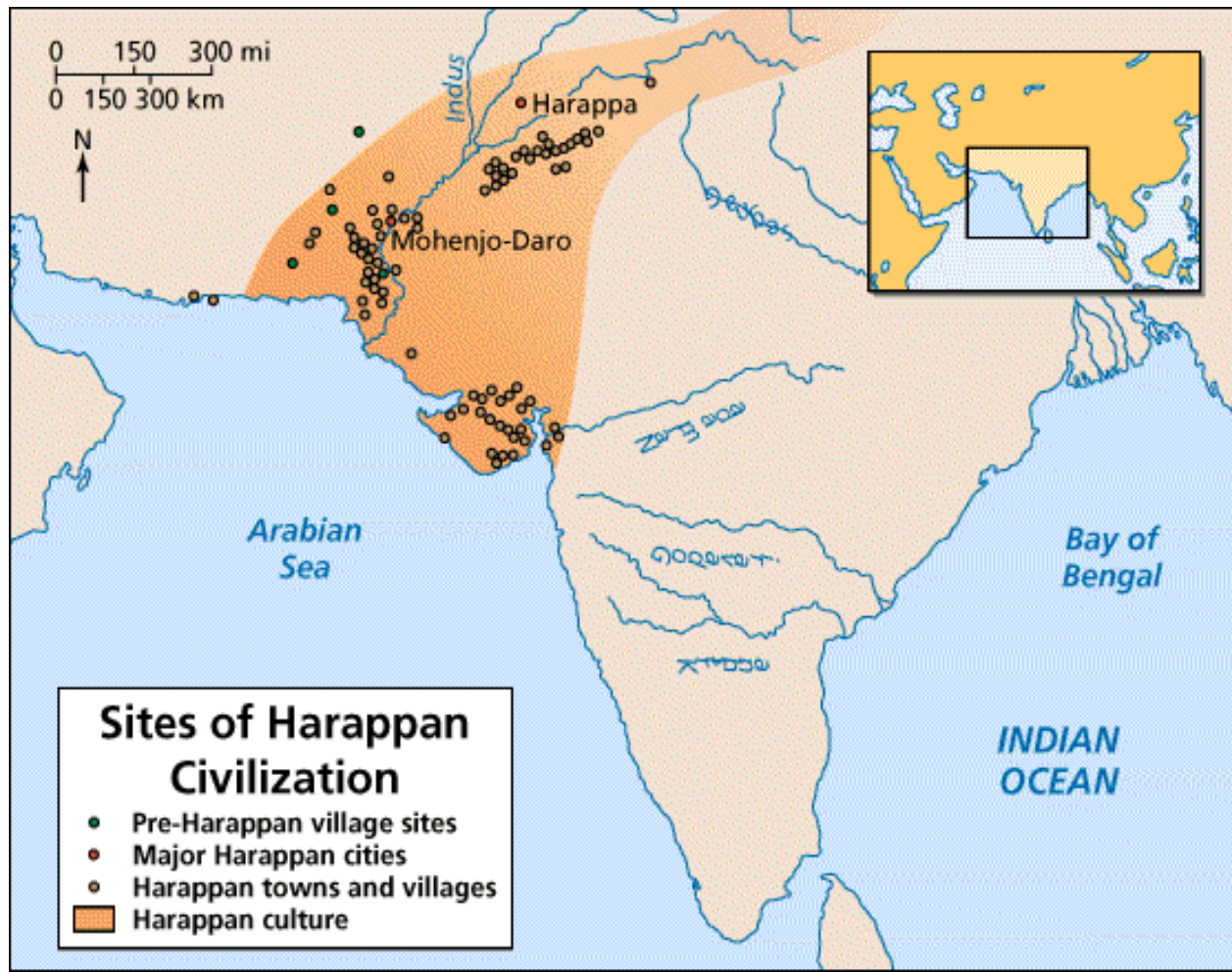
# Indus or Harappan Civilization

- Two sites have ruins of the major cities Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro.



# Early Civilizations in the Indus River Valley

The named derives from one of the two discovered cities - Harappa and Mohenjo Daro ("**Mound of the Dead**")



**Early  
settlements  
date to 7000 BC**

# Indus or Harappan Civilization

- The advanced civilization that flourished for hundreds of years in these cities is called the Harappan or Indus civilization.





# Harappan society and its neighbors, ca. 2000 B.C.E.



# Harappan Culture

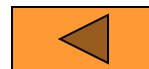
- Indus valley
  - not desert
  - well-watered and heavily forested
- 500 miles along the river valley
  - 10-20 times larger than Mesopotamia or Egypt

# Foundations of Harappan Society

- The Indus River
  - Silt-enriched water from mountain ranges
- Major society built by Dravidian peoples, 3000-2500 BCE
  - Cultivation of cotton before 5000 BCE, early cultivation of poultry
  - Decline after 1900 BCE
- Major cities: Harrapa (Punjab region and Mohenjo-Daro (mouth of Indus River)
  - 70 smaller sites excavated (total 1,500)

# Indus Valley

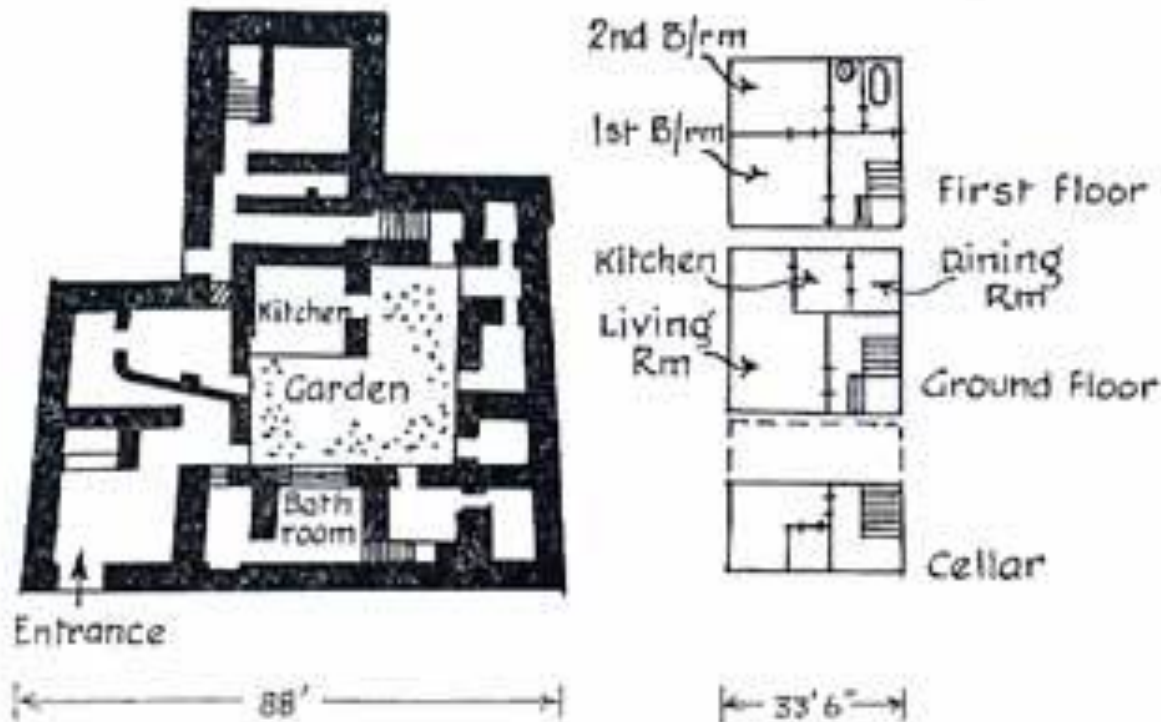
- The Indus River is located in Pakistan. Find it on the map. It was along this river that a civilization developed around 2,500 BCE. It is called the Indus Valley Civilization. Two major cities of this civilization were Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro.





# Government

- Well organized, powerful leaders, possibly priest-kings, made sure all had steady supply of food
- Buildings suggest government planners
- Had to have mathematical skills to put together



# Hydraulic Culture

- like Egypt and Mesopotamia
- agriculture and flood-control
- significant industry and trade
- cities very common

## Main Idea 2:

# Harappan achievements included a writing system, city planning, and art.

### Writing System

- Developed India's first writing system
- Scholars cannot read this system.
- Must rely on other clues to study Harappan society



### City Planning

- Skilled engineers
- Towering fortresses were built near each city.
- Streets were lined with storehouses, workshops, market stalls, and houses.
- Built extensive sewer systems



### Artistic Achievements

- Skilled artisans
- Sturdy pottery vessels, jewelry, and ivory objects



# Indus or Harappan Civilization

- Each of these cities had around 35,000 people and each was planned carefully.
- The cities had a grid of streets and were divided into walled neighborhoods.
- Some houses were as high as three stories.
- Buildings were constructed of mud bricks.

- Planned Cities
  - By 2500 B.C.E., people build cities of brick laid out on a grid system.
  - Engineers create plumbing and sewage systems
  - Indus Valley called **Harrapan civilization** after Harappa, a city.



- Harappan Planning

- City built on mud-brick platform to protect against flood waters
- Brick walls protect city and citadel—central buildings of the city
- Streets in grid system are 30 feet wide
- Lanes separate rows of houses (which feature bathrooms)

# Indus or Harappan Civilization

- Public wells supplied water, and bathrooms used an advanced drainage system.
- A chute system took household trash to public garbage bins.
- The careful structure of these cities showed that this civilization had a well-organized government.

# Cities

- very densely populated
  - houses: two to three stories
  - every house is laid out the same



# Monumental architecture

- very-large scale building
- walled cities, with fortified citadels
  - always on the same scale
  - palaces, temples

# Major Cities

- Harappa and Mohenjo-daro
  - surrounded by smaller cities, towns, and villages
- one situated in the north
- one situated in the south

# Cities, con't

- uniform culture over a wide area
- cities built on a common plan
  - a grid: always NS and EW axes
    - with twelve smaller grids
  - kiln-dried brick

# Architecture, con't

- large grain storage facilities near temples
  - a theocracy ?
  - planned economy

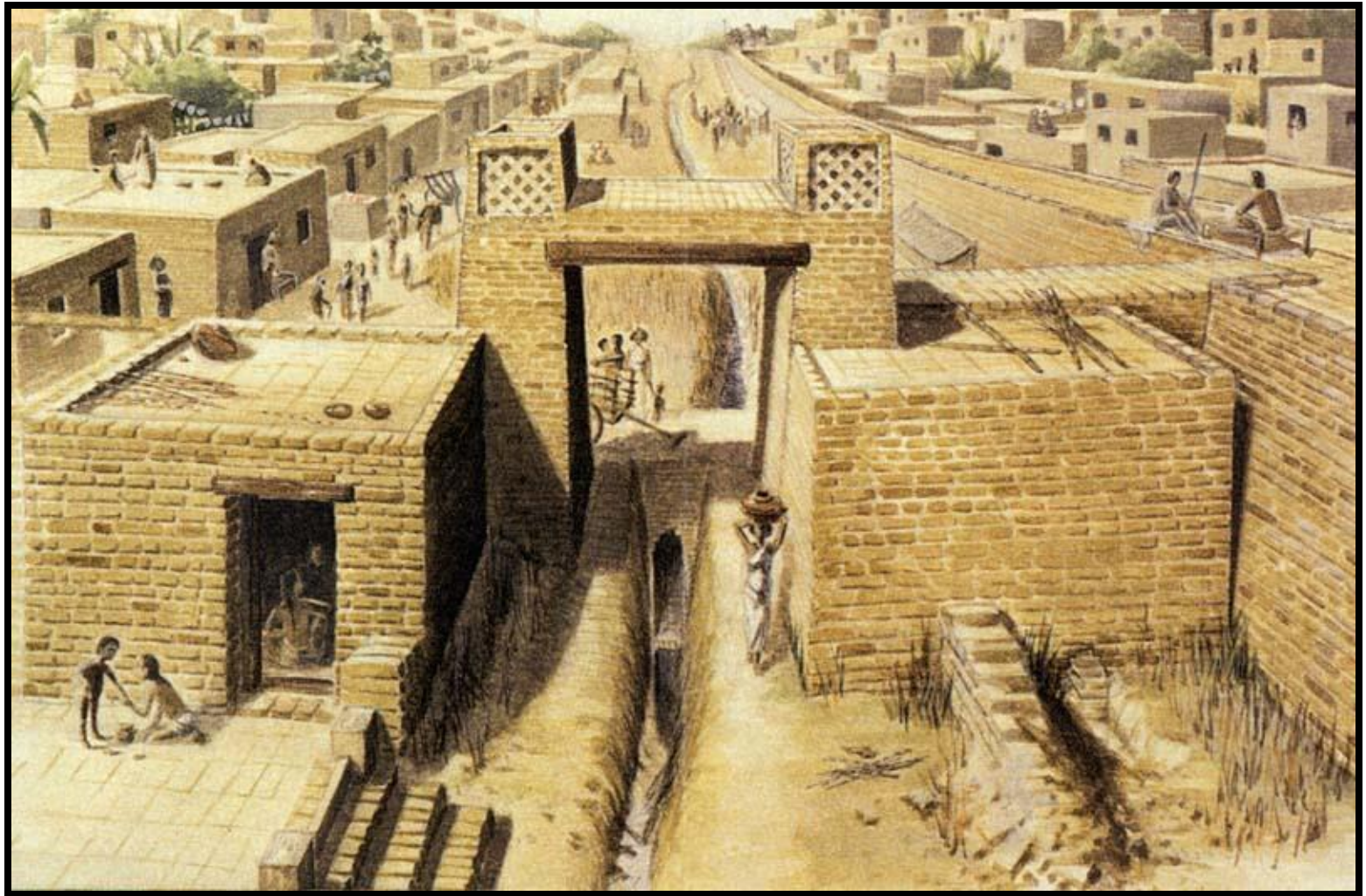
# Mohenjo-Daro: The First Planned City?

- 2,500-1,300 B.C. Indus River Valley had planned cities
- Mohenjo-Daro was built on a plateau to deal with unpredictable river flooding
- To allow easy movement city streets were divided into squares
- Houses and shops were built within these squares

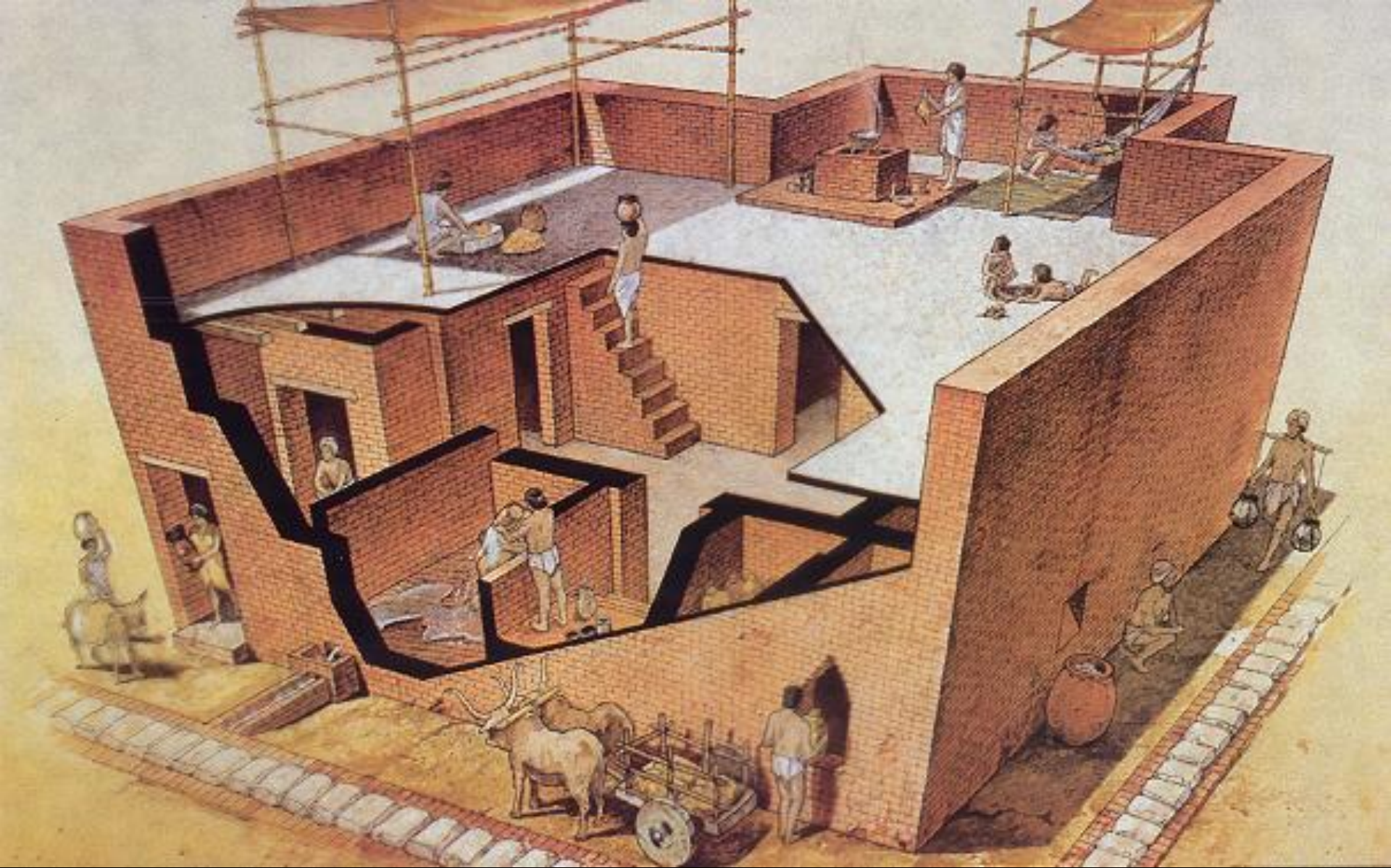


# Mohenjo-Daro Ruins

- Population c. 40,000
- Regional center
  - Layout, architecture suggests public purpose
  - Broad streets, citadel, pool, sewage
- Standardized weights evident throughout region
- Specialized labor
- Trade





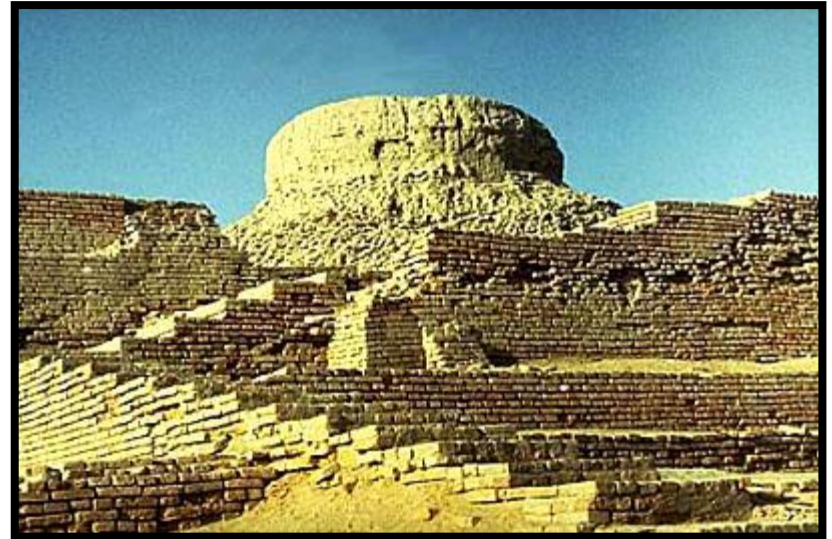


Cities very sophisticated with advanced sewage systems

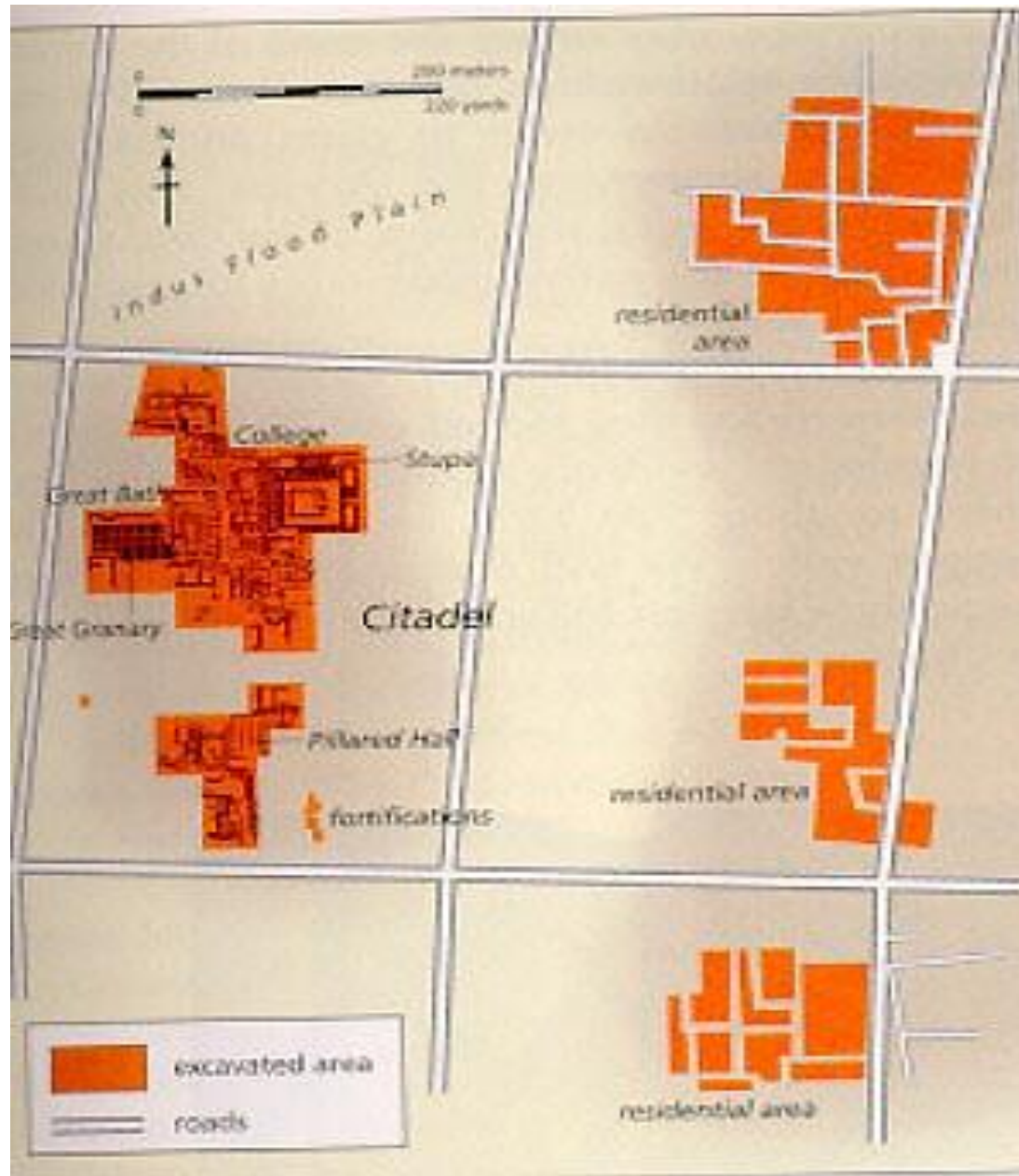


# Mohenjo-Daro: The First Planned City?

- To protect its citizens a *citadel*, a fortress, was built in the center of the city
- Mohenjo-Daro had a heated religious pool, storage facilities for crops, two story buildings made of mud bricks, defensive towers and a sewer system
- Had a written language which used *pictographs*; sign that expresses a thought or idea



# Grid map of Mohenjo-daro

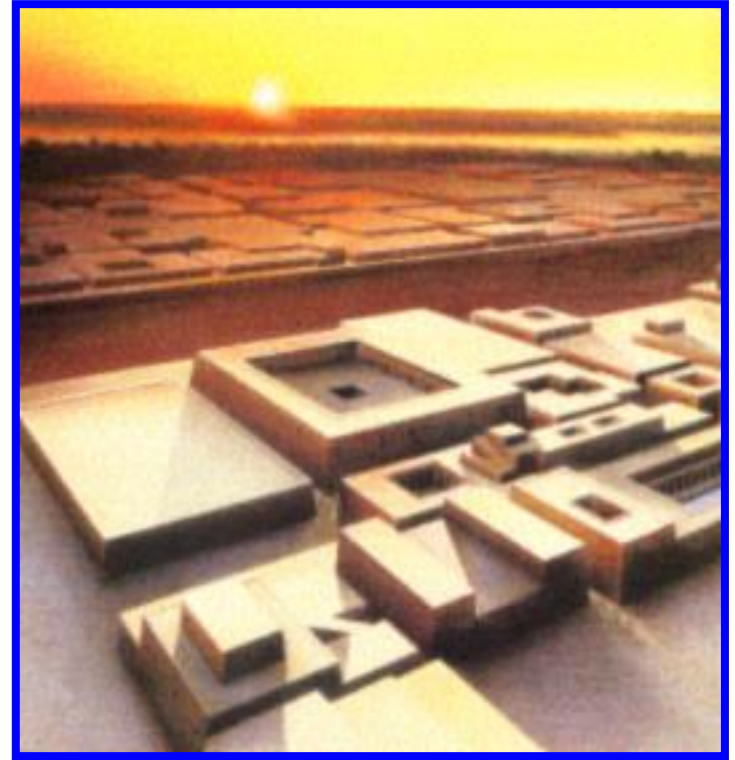






**Mohenjo-daro : aerial view**

# Mohenjo-Daro





# Mohenjo-daro view of the “Citadel”





**The “Great Bath”**



**another view of the “Great Bath”**





**looks like a small  
tower, but actually it  
is a neighborhood  
well**





**A public well in Harappa, or perhaps an ancient laundromat...**



**A bathroom on a private residence**



**A large drain or sewer**





**view of a small, side street**

# Harappa: A Merchant City

- Harappa, 3,000-1,300 B.C. was a city built on local and international trade
- City trade went as far as Mesopotamia, Persia and southern India
- Traded intensively in gold, ivory, spices, cloth and copper
- Harappans domesticated animals and grew crops
- First to grow cotton and produce cloth



# Farming and Trade

- Most Indus Valley people were farmers
- First to cultivate cotton and weave into cloth
- Area close to Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf so easily reach Sumer. Contact caused system of writing to be born
- Cuneiform shows no relationship to Sumer
- Traded cotton, grain, copper, pearls, and ivory

# Early Civilizations in the Indus River Valley

Harappan farmers grew crops in irrigated fields and raised livestock



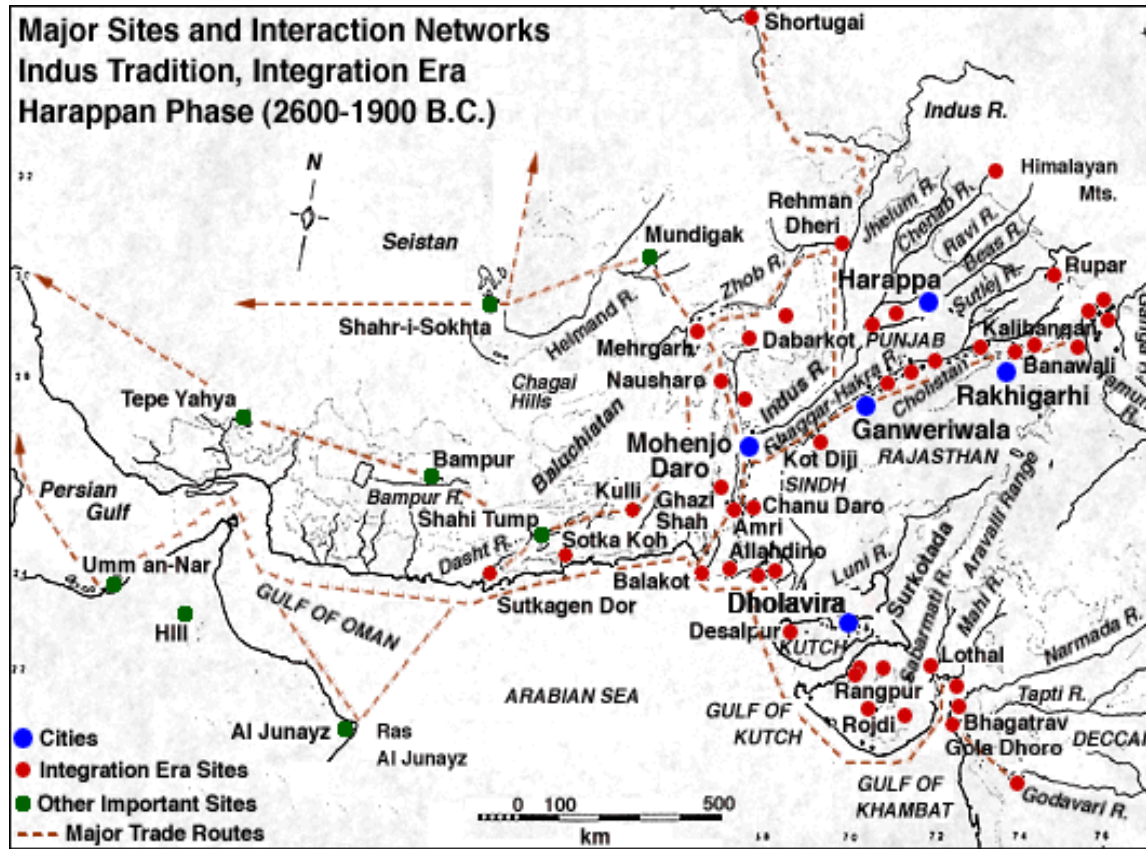
**Ceramic sculpture of a small cart with vases and tools pulled by oxen, from Mohenjo-daro**





# Early Civilizations in the Indus River Valley

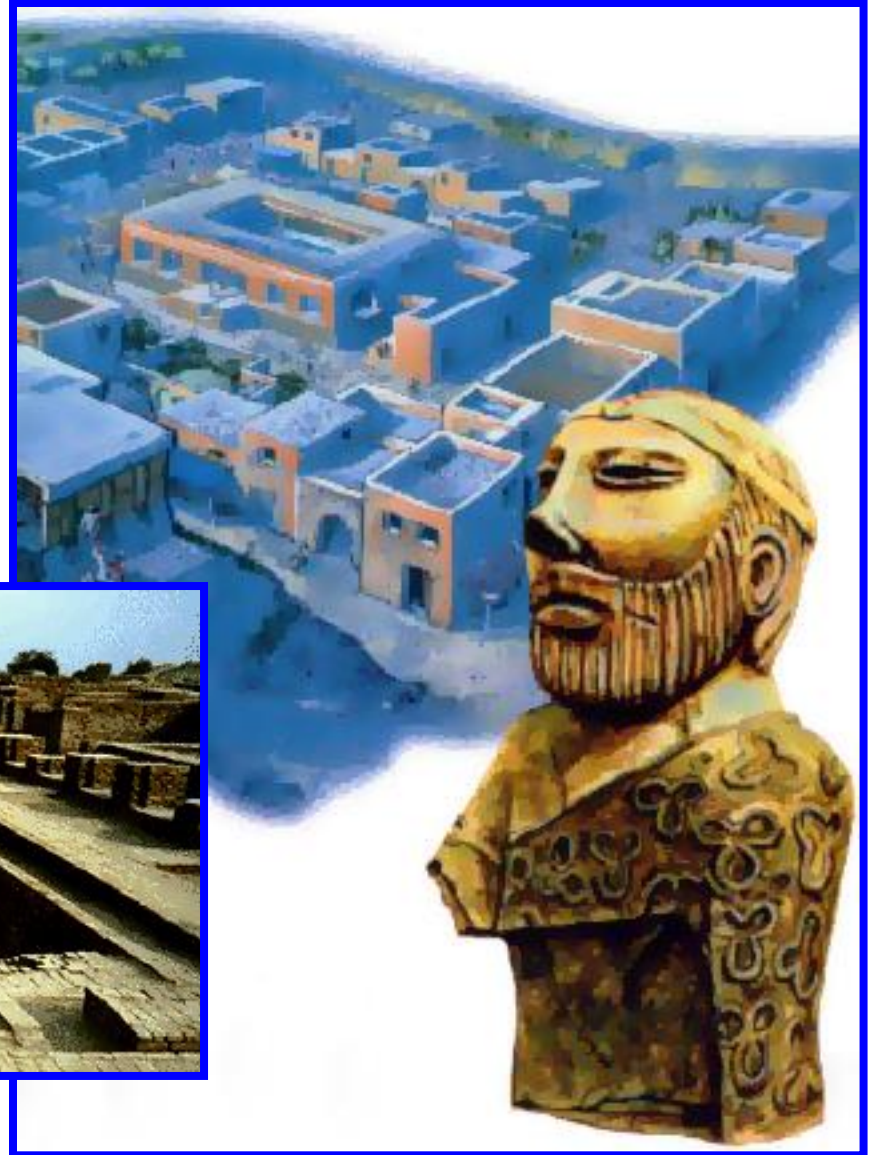
As early as 2300 B.C., the Harappans traded with the people of the Tigris-Euphrates valley



This seal, found in Mesopotamia, indicates a product was made in Harappa, indicating trade took place between the two regions

# Indus Valley civilization

- Right: artist's recreation of Mohenjo-Daro
- Below: Great Bath ruins



# Everyday life





The Indus Valley people had an advanced civilization with large cities, running water and sewer systems. They built walls around their cities which indicated that they might have had to defend themselves against other people. We do not know a lot about them because we cannot yet read their writing.

The picture at the right shows an example of Indus Valley writing. Linguists are still trying to decipher the language. We know they traded with the people of Mesopotamia and Egypt so perhaps those people knew how to read and speak this language!



# Early Civilizations in the Indus River Valley

No temples or religious writings have been found, just animal images and some evidence of a mother goddess of fertility





# Mysterious signifiers

- Examples of the multitude of Harappan clay seals whose meaning(s) still elude us



Harappans  
worshipped cattle and  
Shiva





- Language
  - Had writing system of 300 symbols, but scientists cannot decipher it
- Culture
  - Harappan cities appear uniform in culture, no great social divisions
  - Animals importance to the culture; toys suggest prosperity



# Lack of Sources

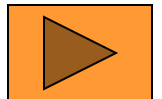
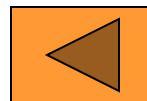
- literate culture
  - we cannot read the writing
  - writing on bricks and seals
  - did not use paper or clay tablets



# Indus Valley Script



- Here are several examples of Indus Valley writing. It is believed that the Indus Valley people may have also written on palm leaves or cloth but no evidence of this has survived.





**“Unicorn” seal + writing**



**More seals**





**...and more seals...**





**Seated “yogi” : early Shiva?**

# Indus or Harappan Civilization

- Harappan rulers based their power on a belief in divine assistance.
- As in all ancient civilizations, religion and political power were linked closely.
- Priests probably performed rituals to a fertility goddess to guarantee a good annual harvest.
- The Harappan economy depended on agriculture.
- The chief crops were wheat, barley, and peas.

- Role of Religion
  - Priests closely linked to rulers
  - Some religious artifacts reveal links to modern Hindu Culture
- Trade
  - Had thriving trade with other peoples, including Mesopotamia.

# Indus Gods

- The earliest accepted Gods were  
**Dyaush-pita** (the sky father),  
**Prithivi mata** ( the earth mother),  
**Vayu** (the wind God),  
**Parjanya** (the rain God),  
**Surya** (the sun God),  
**Varuna** (the God of oceans),  
**Agni** (the fire God),  
**Indra** (the war God),  
**Soma** (the God of speech, deity of soma creeper),  
**Ushas** (the Goddess of dawn),  
**Yama** (the God of death),

# ■ Culture and Society

- advanced agriculture
  - surplus production
- domesticated animals and fish
  - textiles: wool and cotton



## ■ Trade

- with lower Mesopotamia
- but gradually declined

# ■ Bronze Age technology

- no swords
- spears and bows
- stone arrow heads

# Indus or Harappan Civilization

- The Indus valley civilization traded extensively with Mesopotamia.
- They traded copper, lumber, and various luxury goods for Sumerian textiles and food.
- Much of the trade was by ship through the **Persian Gulf**, which lies between present-day Saudi Arabia and Iran

# Ancient Swastika symbol from the Indus Valley



# ■ Society

- dominated by priests ?
  - from the fortified palaces and temples
  - power base: fertility
- deities: male and female, both nude
  - bull worship





**A priest?**



**A bull**

# ■ Decline

- domination of an indigenous people ?
  - who rebelled ?
- foreign invasion?
- gradual decline ?

# ■ Combination of Changes

- climate shift: the monsoon patterns
- flooding
- destruction of the forests
- migrations of new peoples: the Aryans

# The End of the Harappan Civilization

- Harappan civilization ended by the early 1700s BC.
- No one is sure why their civilization ended.
- Perhaps invaders or natural disasters caused the civilization to collapse.

# Indus Valley Culture Ends

- Harappan Decline
  - Signs of decline begin around 1750 B.C.E.
  - Earthquakes, floods, soil depletion may have caused decline
  - Around 1500 B.C.E., Aryans enter area and become dominant