

# ARTS OF THE INDUS VALLEY

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# Introduction

Indus Valley Civilisation (c. 2500 BCE) had skilled art like sculptures, pottery, jewellery, and terracotta figures. Cities like Harappa and Mohenjodaro showed advanced planning with grid streets, public baths, and drainage. Key sites: Lothal, Dholavira, Rakhigarhi, Ropar, Kalibangan.



# Phases of Development

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Early Harappan Phase (3300–2600 BCE)

Small villages grew into towns. Copper tools, pottery, and simple mud-brick houses appeared.

Mature Harappan Phase (2600–1900 BCE)

The peak of urban planning, architecture, and trade.

Late Harappan Phase (1900–1300 BCE)

Gradual decline in urban life; cities became deserted, rural life continued.



# Urban Planning and Architecture

Dholavira, and Rakhigarhi were built on a grid pattern, with streets crossing at right angles.

## TWO MAIN PARTS:

Citadel: a raised platform for public buildings, warehouses, or religious purposes.

Lower Town: residential areas for the general population.

- Houses were made of uniform baked bricks with proper ventilation and access to wells.
- The drainage system was advanced — covered drains along streets connected to soak pits and inspection holes.
- The Great Bath of Mohenjo-Daro — a large water tank — is thought to have been used for ritual bathing, showing the importance of cleanliness and ceremony.



# Economy and Occupations

The Harappan economy was diverse:

- Agriculture: Wheat, barley, sesame, mustard, and cotton were cultivated.  
They may have been the first to grow cotton.
- Animal Husbandry: Cattle, buffalo, sheep, goats, and camels were domesticated.
- Craftsmanship: Harappans excelled in bead-making, pottery, metalwork, and weaving.
- Trade: Both internal and long-distance trade existed, including with Mesopotamia. Standardized weights and seals ensured trade quality.



# Script and Seals



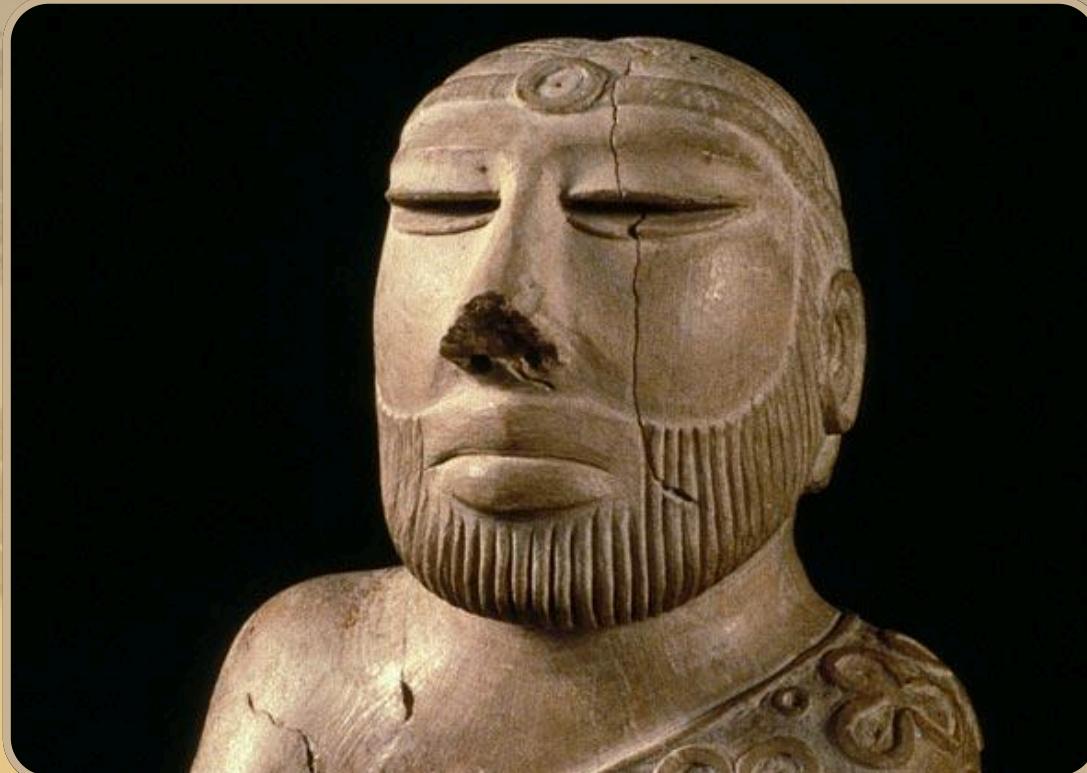
- Harappans developed a script with around 400 signs, written mostly right to left.
- Found on seals, pottery, and other objects, the script remains undeciphered.

Seals often carried animal motifs and may have been used for trade or identification.



# Art and Cultural Artifacts

## The Priest-King



- Found at Mohenjo-Daro, carved from steatite (soft stone), about 17 cm high.
- Wears a patterned robe with a fillet across the chest, a headband, and a neatly groomed beard.
- Has a calm, dignified expression — suggesting wisdom and authority.
- Although called the “Priest-King,” historians are unsure of his real role.
- Shows Harappans’ fine stone carving skills and attention to clothing detail.



# Art and Cultural Artifacts

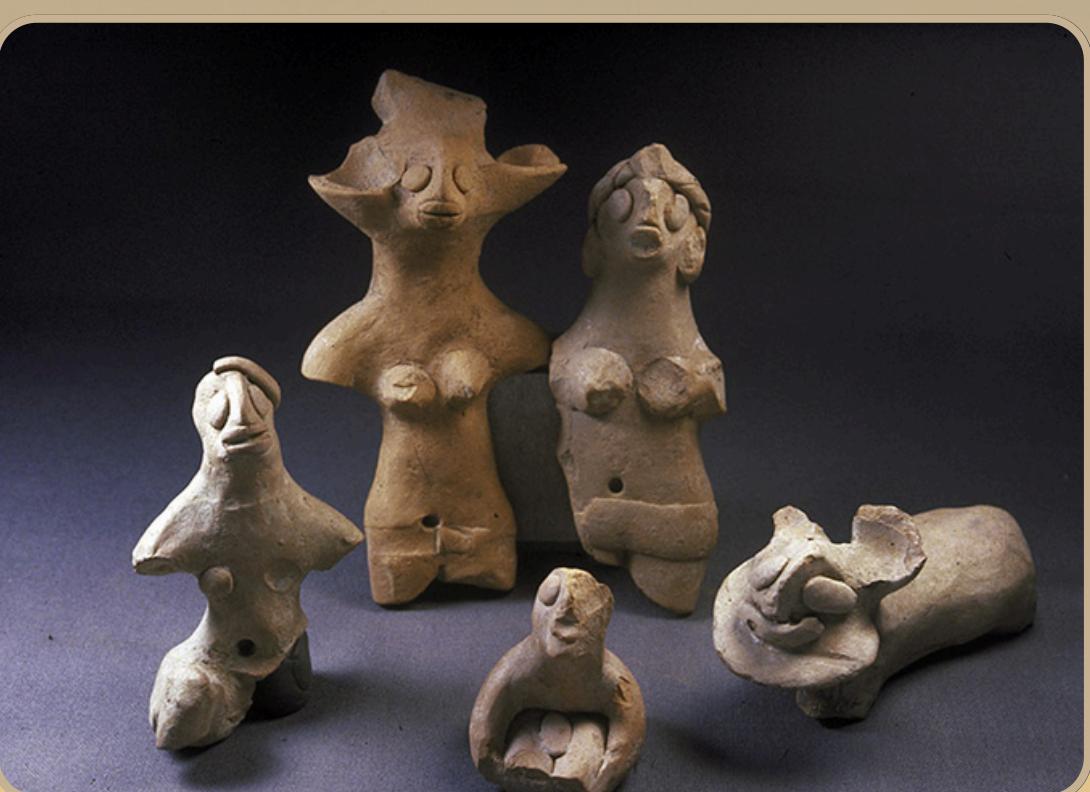


## The Dancing Girl

- Discovered at Mohenjo-Daro, made of bronze using the lost-wax casting method.
- About 11 cm tall, depicting a slim young woman in a confident pose with one hand on her hip.
- Adorned with a necklace and bangles covering most of one arm, hair tied in a bun.
- Symbolizes youth, energy, and possibly a tradition of dance or performance arts.



# Terracotta Figurines



- Made from baked clay, these were less refined than stone or metal sculptures but full of life.
- Include Mother Goddess figures with exaggerated features — perhaps linked to fertility worship.
- Toy carts, bulls, and animals — sometimes with movable parts — suggest use in children's play.
- Provide clues about daily life, beliefs, and artistic creativity



# Decline of the Civilization

- By around 1900 BCE, the civilization began to decline due to:
- Changing river courses, possibly drying of the Saraswati.
- Floods and droughts.
- Decline in trade networks.
- Possible attacks by nomadic groups.
- Urban centers slowly faded, but rural traditions continued.

Decline of  
the  
Civilization



# Legacy

- The Harappans left behind:
- Principles of urban planning
- Sanitation systems
- Craftsmanship traditions
- Trade and measurement standards
- Their achievements show that even 4,000 years ago, people here valued cleanliness, order, and skilled workmanship — values still relevant today





A landscape painting featuring Exeter Cathedral in the background, its tall spire reaching towards the sky. In the foreground, several large, leafy green trees frame the scene. The middle ground shows a town with various buildings and houses, some with red roofs. The overall atmosphere is hazy and pastoral.

# Extra

## Stone Statues

- Few but refined from Harappa & Mohenjodaro.
- Found at Harappa & Mohenjodaro.
- Includes red sandstone torso & soapstone bust of bearded man (priest).

## Bronze Casting

- Widely practised using the lost wax technique.
- Made human & animal figures.
- Famous: 'Dancing Girl' statue, buffalo, goat.
- Notable finds: copper dog & bird (Lothal), bronze bull (Kalibangan), metal figures from Daimabad.



## Pottery

- Pottery – Small Summary
- Mostly wheel-made, plain red clay; some painted with black designs.
- Rare: polychrome, incised, perforated.
- Mostly curved shapes; includes fine miniatures.



## Ornaments

- Made from gold, gemstones, copper, shell, faience, clay, bone.
- Both sexes: necklaces, fillets, armlets, rings.
- Women also wore girdles, earrings, anklets.
- Found at Mohenjodaro & Lothal, well-crafted.

## Beads

- Materials: carnelian, amethyst, jasper, quartz, steatite, lapis lazuli, etc.
- Shapes: disc, cylindrical, spherical, barrel, segmented.
- Some multi-stone, gold-covered, incised, or painted



# Conclusion

- The Harappans made refined stone statues like the sandstone torso and bearded priest bust, and excelled in bronze casting with the lost wax technique, producing works like the 'Dancing Girl' and animal figures. Seals, mostly steatite, showed realistic creatures, served for trade and identity, and had undeciphered pictographs. Pottery was mainly wheel-made red clay, sometimes painted, with rare polychrome, incised, and perforated types, plus fine miniatures. Ornaments of gold, gems, copper, shell, faience, clay, and bone were common, and the bead industry made varied shapes from many materials with high skill.





Thank  
You

