

Harappa

Harappa (Punjabi pronunciation: [həɾəppaː]; Urdu/Punjabi: ہڑپہ) is an archaeological site in Punjab, Pakistan, about 24 km (15 mi) west of Sahiwal. The site takes its name from a modern village located near the former course of the Ravi River which now runs 8 km (5.0 mi) in north. The current village of Harappa is less than 1 km (0.62 mi) from the ancient site. Although modern Harappa has a legacy railway station from the period of the British Raj, it is today just a small crossroads town of population 15,000.

The site of the ancient city contains the ruins of a Bronze Age fortified city, which was part of the Indus Valley Civilization centered in Sindh and the Punjab, and then the Cemetery H culture.^[1] The city is believed to have had as many as 23,500 residents and occupied about 150 hectares (370 acres) with clay brick houses at its greatest extent during the Mature Harappan phase (2600–1900 BC), which is considered large for its time.^{[2][3]} Per archaeological convention of naming a previously unknown civilization by its first excavated site, the Indus Valley Civilization is also called ~~the~~ Harappan Civilization.

The ancient city of Harappa was heavily damaged under British rule, when bricks from the ruins were used as track ballast in the construction of the Lahore–Multan Railway. In 2005, a controversial amusement parks scheme at the site was abandoned when builders unearthed many archaeological artifacts during the early stages of building work. A plea from the Pakistani archaeologist Ahmad Hasan Dani to the Ministry of Culture resulted in a restoration of the site.^[4]

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History

The Indus Valley Civilization has its earliest roots in cultures such as that of Mehrgarh, approximately 6000 BC. The two greatest cities, Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, emerged circa 2600 BC along the Indus River valley in Punjab and Sindh.^[5] The civilization, with a possible writing system, urban centers, and

Harappa

ہڑپہ (in Urdu)



A view of Harappa's Granary and Great Hall



Shown within Punjab, Pakistan



Harappa (Pakistan)

Location	Sahiwal District, Punjab, Pakistan
Coordinates	30°37′44″N 72°51′50″E
Type	Settlement
Area	150 ha (370 acres)

diversified social and economic system, was rediscovered in the 1920s also after excavations at Mohenjo-daro in Sindh near Larkana, and Harappa, in west Punjab south of Lahore. A number of other sites stretching from the Himalayan foothills in east Punjab, India in the north, to Gujarat in the south and east, and to Pakistani Balochistan in the west have also been discovered and studied. Although the archaeological site at Harappa was damaged in 1857^[6] when engineers constructing the Lahore-Multan railroad (as part of the Sind and Punjab Railway), used brick from the Harappa ruins for track ballast, an abundance of artifacts have nevertheless been found.^[7] The bricks discovered were made of red sand, clay stones and were baked at very high temperature. As early as 1826 Harappa, located in west Punjab, attracted the attention of a British officer in India, who gets credit for preliminary excavations in Harappa.

Culture and economy

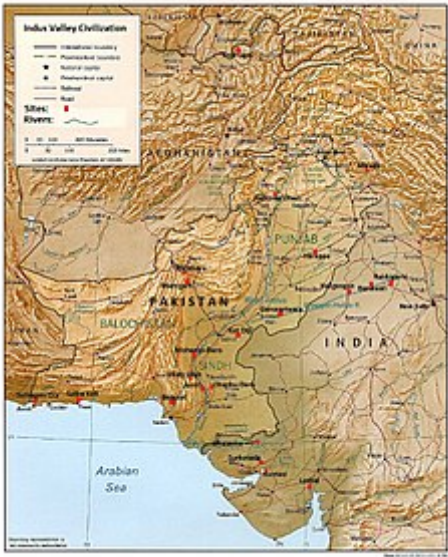
The Indus Valley civilization was mainly an urban culture sustained by surplus agricultural production and commerce, the latter including trade with Sumer in southern Mesopotamia. Both Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa are generally characterized as having "differentiated living quarters, flat-roofed brick houses, and fortified administrative or religious centers."^[8] Although such similarities have given rise to arguments for the existence of a standardized system of urban layout and planning, the similarities are largely due to the presence of a semi-orthogonal type of civic layout, and a comparison of the layouts of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa shows that they are in fact, arranged in a quite dissimilar fashion.

The weights and measures of the Indus Valley Civilization, on the other hand, were highly standardized, and conform to a set scale of gradations. Distinctive seals were used, among other applications, perhaps for identification of property and shipment of goods. Although copper and bronze were in use, iron was not yet employed. "Cotton was woven and dyed for clothing; wheat, rice, and a variety of vegetables and fruits were cultivated; and a number of animals, including the humped bull, were domesticated,"^[8] as well as "fowl for fighting".^[9] Wheel-made pottery—some of it adorned with animal and geometric motifs—has been found in profusion at all the major Indus sites. A centralized administration for each city, though not the whole civilization, has been inferred from the revealed cultural uniformity; however it remains uncertain whether authority lay with a commercial oligarchy. Harappans had many trade routes along the Indus River that went as far as the Persian Gulf, Mesopotamia, and Egypt. Some of the most valuable things traded were carnelian and lapis lazuli.^[10]

What is clear is that Harappan society was not entirely peaceful, with the human skeletal remains demonstrating some of the highest rates of injury (15.5%) found in South Asian prehistory.^[11] Paleopathological analysis demonstrated that leprosy and tuberculosis were present at Harappa, with the highest prevalence of both disease and trauma present in the skeletons from Area G (an ossuary located south-east of the city walls).^[12] Furthermore, rates of cranio-facial trauma and infection increased through time demonstrating that the civilization collapsed amid illness and injury. The bioarchaeologists who examined the remains have suggested that the combined evidence for differences in mortuary treatment and epidemiology indicate that some individuals and communities at Harappa were excluded from access to basic resources like health and safety, a basic feature of hierarchical societies worldwide.^[12]

Archaeology

History	
Periods	Harappa 1 to Harappa 5
Cultures	Indus Valley Civilization
Site notes	
Condition	Ruined
Ownership	 Pakistan
Public access	Yes
Website	www.harappa.com



Map showing the sites and extent of the Indus Valley Civilisation. Harappa was the center of one of the core regions of the Indus Valley Civilization, located in central Punjab. The Harappan architecture and Harappan Civilization was one of the most developed in the old Bronze Age.

The excavators of the site have proposed the following chronology of Harappa's occupation:[3]

1. Ravi Aspect of the Hakra phase, c. 3300 – 2800 BC.
2. Kot Dijian (Early Harappan) phase, c. 2800 – 2600 BC.
3. Harappan Phase, c. 2600 – 1900 BC.
4. Transitional Phase, c. 1900 – 1800 BC.
5. Late Harappan Phase, c. 1800 – 1300 BC.

By far the most exquisite and obscure artifacts unearthed to date are the small, square steatite (soapstone) seals engraved with human or animal motifs. A large number of seals have been found at such sites as Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. Many bear pictographic inscriptions generally thought to be a form of writing or script. Despite the efforts of philologists from all parts of the world, and despite the use of modern cryptographic analysis the signs remain undeciphered. It is also unknown if they reflect proto-Dravidian or other non-Vedic language(s). The ascription of Indus Valley Civilization iconography and epigraphy to historically known cultures is extremely problematic, in part due to the rather tenuous archaeological evidence of such claims, as well as the projection of modern South Asian political concerns onto the archaeological record of the area. This is especially evident in the radically varying interpretations of Harappan material culture as seen from both Pakistan- and India-based scholars. In February 2006 a school teacher in the village of Sembian-Kandiyur in Tamil Nadu discovered a stone celt (tool) with an inscription estimated to be up to 3,500 years old.^[13] ^[14] Indian epigraphist Iravatham Mahadevan postulated that the four signs were in the Indus script and called the find "the greatest archaeological discovery of a century in Tamil Nadu".^[13] Based on this evidence he goes on to suggest that the language used in the Indus Valley was of Dravidian origin. However, the absence of a Bronze Age in South India, contrasted with the knowledge of bronze making techniques in the Indus Valley cultures, calls into question the validity of this hypothesis.



A map of the excavations at Harappa



Miniature Votive Images or Toy Models from Harappa, ca. 2500.
Hand-modeled terra-cotta figurines with polychromy

Early symbols similar to Indus script

Clay and stone tablets unearthed at Harappa, which were carbon dated 3300–3200 BC., contain trident-shaped and plant-like markings. "It is a big question as to if we can call what we have found true writing, but we have found symbols that have similarities to what became Indus script" said Dr. Richard Meadow of Harvard University, Director of the Harappa Archeological Research Project.^[15] This primitive writing is placed slightly earlier than primitive writings of the Sumerians of Mesopotamia, dated c.3100 BC.^[15] These markings have similarities to what later became Indus Script.^[15]

Notes

- The earliest radiocarbon dating mentioned on the web is 2725 ± 185 BC (uncalibrated) or 3338, 3213, 3203 BC calibrated, giving a midpoint of 3251 BC. Kenoyer Jonathan Mark (1991) Urban process in the Indus tradition: A preliminary report. In Harappa Excavations, 1986–1990: A multidisciplinary approach to Second Millennium urbanism, edited by Richard H. Meadow: 29–59. Monographs in World Archaeology No.3. Prehistory Press, Madison Wisconsin.
- Periods 4 and 5 are not dated at Harappa. The termination of the Harappan tradition at Harappa falls between 1900 and 1500 BC.
- Mohenjo-daro is another major city of the same period, located in Sindh province of Pakistan. One of its most well-known structures is the Great Bath of Mohenjo-daro.

See also

- Charles Masson— First European explorer of Harappa

- [Dholavira](#)
- [Lothal](#)
- [Harappan architecture](#)
- [Mandi, Uttar Pradesh, India](#)
- [Mehrgarh](#)
- [Sheri Khan Tarakai](#)
- [Mohenjo-daro](#)
- [Sokhta Koh](#)
- [Kalibangan](#)
- [Rakhigarhi](#)
- [Taxila](#)
- [Chanhudaro](#)
- [Daimabad](#)
- [Adichanallur](#)

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Harappa. Fragment of Large Deep Vessel, circa 2500 B.C. Red pottery with red and black slip-painted decoration, 4 15/16 × 6 1/8 in. (12.5 × 15.5 cm). Brooklyn Museum

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External links

- Harappa.com
 - Harappa.info
 - ""Harappa Town Planning""-article by Dr S. Srikanta Sastri
 - ""Art of the Bronze Age: Southeastern Iran, Western Central Asia, and the Indus Valley"", an exhibition catalog from The Metropolitan Museum of Art (fully available online as PDF), which contains material on Harappa
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