

HIS†ORY

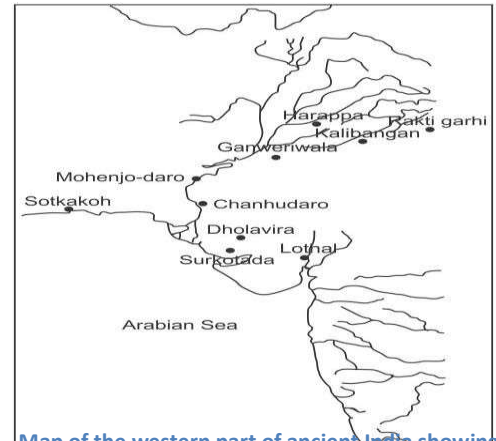
In The Earliest Cities

The Cities of Harappa and Mohenjodaro

The cities of Harappa and Mohenjodaro developed about 4,700 years ago in the Punjab area of present day Pakistan. Other cities which developed alongside Harappa and Mohenjodaro are Lothal, Dholvira and Surkotda (present Gujarat), Kalibangan (present Rajasthan), Chanhudaro (present Pakistan) etc. The civilisation encompassing these cities came to be known as the **Indus Valley Civilisation** as it developed on the banks of the River Indus and its tributaries.

Discovery of the City of Harappa

While building the railway line in Punjab, about one hundred and fifty years ago, many bricks of high quality were collected from one of the nearest sites. This was the city of Harappa in the present day Pakistan. As this was the first city to be discovered, all the other sites where similar buildings were found came to be known as Harappa.



Map of the western part of ancient India showing the location of the cities of the Indus Valley Civilisation

Town planning in the Harappan Civilisation

Following were the main features of town planning in the Harappan cities:

Citadel

- Many cities were divided into two parts- the lower town and the upper town.
- The western part of the city was built on a higher platform known as **citadel**. The eastern part was usually built on the lower part.



The western part of the city was built on a higher platform known as citadel.

Great Bath of Mohenjodaro

- In Mohenjodaro, a tank called the Great Bath was found.
- This Great Bath was made up of bricks and then coated with plaster and a layer of natural tar to avoid any seepage of water.
- Steps leading to the Great Bath were constructed on both the sides. It was surrounded by rooms on all the sides.
- It has been concluded that the water in the Bath was brought in from a well and drained after use. It was probably used for ceremonial occasions when important people took a dip in it.



The Great Bath of Mohenjodaro

Fire Altar and Store Houses

- From many other cities such as Kalibangan and Lothal, fire altars have been discovered where sacrificial rituals were performed.

- Archaeologists have discovered various store houses for storing grains in the cities of Harappa and Mohenjodaro.

Houses

- Houses found in the cities were either one storey or two storeys. Rooms were built around the courtyard.
- Most of the houses had a separate bathing area and in some houses wells were also discovered.

Drainage System

- The cities of Harappa are known for their well developed drainage system. Drainage was laid out in straight lines and had gentle slope so that water could flow through it.
- House drains were connected to the bigger drains in the streets.
- The drains were covered and had inspection holes at regular distances in order to clean them.



Well laid drainage system of the Harappa civilisation

Roads

Roads of the Harappan civilisation were well laid in straight lines which intersected each other at right angles.

The People of the Harappan Civilisation

From the ruins and remains of the cities, many conclusions have been drawn about the people and their activities such as:

- There was a class of people who were rulers as many special buildings were discovered. The rulers probably lived in these special buildings.
- The rulers had objects made up of valuable materials like gold and silver ornaments, beads etc.
- There were perhaps other classes of people known as scribes who probably knew to read and write and who might have prepared the seals. Harappan writing has not been interpreted till date.
- Some men and women may have been craftspersons.
- People perhaps also travelled to distant lands in search of raw materials so that finished goods could be made out of them.
- Copper, silver, tin and precious stones were brought in through trade from far off places.
- It is concluded that the Harappans might have brought copper from the present day Rajasthan and Oman in West Asia.
- Tin was perhaps brought from Afghanistan and Iran.
- People might have brought gold from Karnataka and precious stones from Gujarat, Iran and Afghanistan.

Craftsmanship in the Cities

In the Harappan cities, various objects have been found which seem to be the works of skilled craftsmen.

- Many objects made up of stone, shell and metals (copper, bronze, gold and silver) have been found.
- While copper and bronze were used for making tools, weapons and vessels, gold and silver were used for making ornaments.

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- Many beads, weights and blades have also been discovered. Many rectangular seals have been found with the carvings of animals on it.
- Various pots with beautiful black designs have been found.
- Cotton was known to the people and it was probably grown at Mehrgarh. Archaeologists have found spindle whorls made up of terracotta and faience.
- It is also assumed that many people were specialists in their own areas.



Various beads made up of stone and metals have been found from the Harappan cities

Occupation of the People

The people living in the countryside grew crops and herded animals. They grew wheat, barley, rice, sesame and mustard. Since the city of Harappa does not receive adequate rainfall, various means of irrigation were used. The people reared animals such as sheep, goat, buffaloes and other cattle. They also collected forest products such as fruits and honey. Fishing was an important activity. Apart from cultivation, people also hunted wild animals.

Harappan Towns in Gujarat

Some of the Harappan towns situated in Gujarat were Dholvira and Lothal.

Dholvira

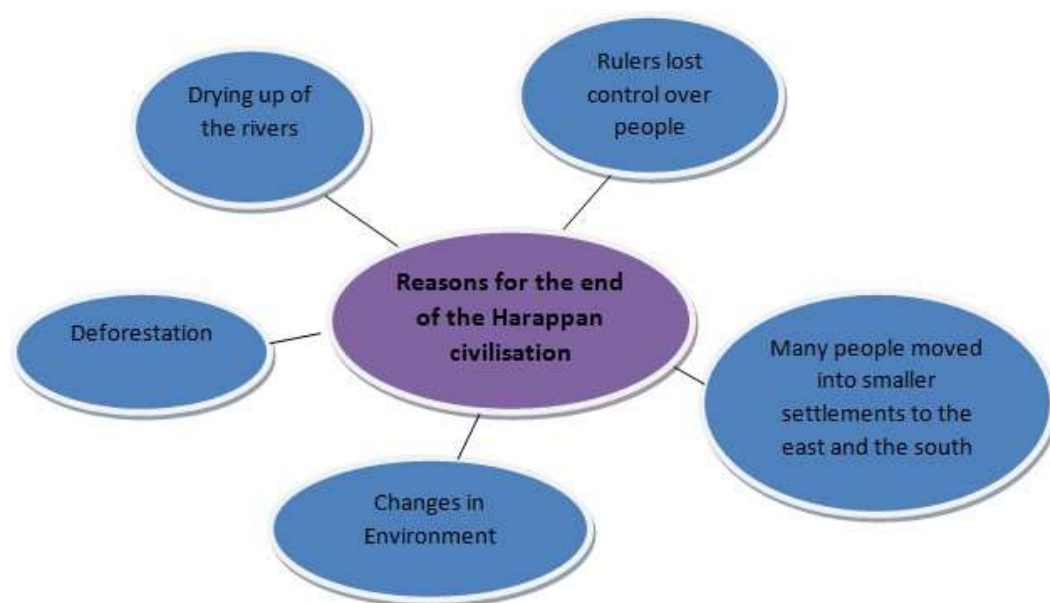
- This city was located on the Khadir Belt in the Rann of Kutch since fresh water and fertile soil was available there.
- Dholvira was divided into three parts, each surrounded by big stone walls with an entrance through the gateways.
- A large open area was found in the settlement where perhaps public ceremonies were held.
- Many large letters of the Harappan script were found carved out on white stones.

Lothal

- The city of Lothal was located beside the tributary of the River Sabarmati near the Gulf of Khambhat.
- Various semi precious stones were available in these areas.
- Many objects made out of stones, shells and metals were found.
- A store house was also been discovered in the city. Many seals and sealings were found in this store house.
- A building which was probably a workshop for making beads was discovered. Various types of stone tools and finished beads were found here.

Reasons for the End of the Harappan Civilisation

Following are the reasons which were concluded by archaeologists and historians for the destruction of the Harappan civilisation.



However, the above reasons are only probable causes which might have led to the end of the Harappan civilisation.