

Chapter 1

Bricks breads and bones

(2 MARKS)

1. List the raw materials required for craft production in the Harappan civilisation and discuss how these might have been obtained.

Ans. The variety of materials used to make beads is remarkable: stones like carnelian (of a beautiful red colour), jasper, crystal, quartz and steatite; metals like copper, bronze and gold; and shell, faience and terracotta or burnt clay.

Two methods of procuring materials for craft production:

1. They established settlements such as Nageshwar, Shortughai and Balakot.
 2. They might have sent expeditions to areas such as the Khetri region of Rajasthan (for Copper) and south India (for gold).
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2. “Our knowledge about the Indus Valley Civilization is poorer than that of the other Civilizations”. Explain it by your arguments?

Ans. Yes, our knowledge about the Indus Valley Civilization is poorer than that of the other because of the following reasons:

1. The script of that age has hitherto not been deciphered.
 2. The easy method behind seeking knowledge about other Civilizations such as that of Egypt, Mesopotamia, China etc. was the deciphering of their scripts. Scripts is that sole basis through which we can gather through knowledge about the art, literature, customs, dresses, function and religion etc. of any Civilizations
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3. What were the confusions in the mind of Cunningham while studying Harappan civilization?

Ans. He used the accounts left by Chinese Buddhist pilgrims who had visited the subcontinent between the fourth and seventh centuries CE. He thought that Indian history began with the first cities in the Ganga valley. In fact, Cunningham's main interest was in the archaeology of the Early Historic (c. sixth century BCE fourth century CE) and later periods.

4. What were the differences in the techniques adopted by Marshall and Wheeler in studying Harappan civilization?

Ans. Marshall tended to excavate along regular horizontal units, measured uniformly throughout the mound, ignoring the stratigraphy of the site. This meant that all the artefacts recovered from the same unit were grouped together, even if they were found at different stratigraphic layers. As a result, valuable information about the context of these finds was irretrievably lost. R.E.M. Wheeler rectified this problem. Wheeler recognised that it was necessary to follow the stratigraphy of the mound rather than dig mechanically along uniform horizontal lines.

5. "Burials is a better source to trace social differences prevalent in the Harappan civilization". Discuss.

Ans. 1. Studying burials is a strategy to find out social differences.

2. At burials in Harappan sites the dead were generally laid in pits. Sometimes, there were differences in the way the burial pit was made - in some instances; the hollowed-out spaces were lined with bricks.

3. Some graves contain pottery and ornaments, perhaps indicating a belief that these could be used in the afterlife. Jewellery has been found in burials of both men and women.

6. Write a note on the Drainage system of the Harappans.

Ans. One of the striking features of this town was a well-planned drainage system. The drains were made of mortar, lime and gypsum. They were covered with big bricks and stones which could be lifted easily to clean the drains. Smaller drains from houses on both the sides of the streets came and joined a brick laid main channel. Bigger drains which

cleared the rain water were 2 and half feet to 5 feet in circumference. For sewage from the houses, pits were provided at either side of the street. All this shows that the Indus valley people took great care to keep their cities clean.

(4 MARKS)

1. Discuss the functions that may have been performed by rulers in Harappan Society.

Ans. Some archaeologists are of the opinion that Harappan society had no rulers and that everybody enjoyed equal status. Others feel there was no single ruler but several.

There are indications of extraordinary uniformity of Harappan artefacts as evident in pottery seals weights and bricks. Notably bricks though obviously not produced in any single centre were of a uniform ratio throughout the region, from Jammu to Gujarat.

Under the guidance and supervision of the rulers plans and layouts of the city were prepared. Big buildings palaces forts, tanks wells, canals, granaries were constructed.

Roads, lanes and drains were also constructed and cleanliness was maintained under the overall supervision of the ruler. The ruler might have taken interest in economy of the state or city states. He used to inspire the farmer to increase agricultural production.

He used to motivate the craftsmen to promote different handicrafts. Internal as well as external trade was promoted by the ruler. He used to issue common acceptable coins or seals, weights and measurements. During the natural calamity such as flood earthquake, epidemic etc. the ruler used to provide grains and other eatables to the affected people.

He used to play active role to defend cities or state from foreign attack.

2. How can you say that the Harappan culture was an urban one.

Ans. We can say that the Harappan culture was an urban one, due to the following reasons:

- The cities were well planned and thickly populated.
- The roads were straight and wide.

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- The houses were made of burnt bricks and contained more than one storey.
 - Every house had a well and a bathroom.
 - The drainage system was excellent with house drains emptying into street drains.
 - The citadel of Harappa had public buildings
 - Lothal was a dockyard and important trading centre.
 - After the decline of the Harappan culture, town planning was forgotten and there was absence of city life for about thousands of years.
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3. Write a note on the agricultural technology of Harappans.

Ans. Agriculture was the chief occupation of the Harappans. The prevalence of agriculture is indicated by finds of grains. But it is more difficult to reconstruct actual agricultural practices. Archaeologists have found evidence of ploughed field at Kalibangan. Representations on seals and terracotta sculpture indicate that the bull was known, and archaeologist extrapolate from this that oxen were used for ploughing. Terracotta models of the plough have been found at sites in Cholistan and at Banawali. The field had two sets of furrows at right angles to each other, suggesting that two different crops were grown together. Most Harappan sites are located in semi-arid lands, where irrigation was probably required for agriculture. Traces of canals have been found at the Harappan site of Shortughai in Afghanistan. It is also likely that water drawn from wells was used for irrigation. Besides, water reservoirs found in Dholavira may have been used to store water for agriculture.

(8 MARKS)

1. Discuss how archaeologist reconstruct the past.

Ans. 1. Material evidences, allows archaeologists to better reconstruct Harappan life. This material could be pottery, tools, ornaments, household objects, etc.

2. Recovering artefacts is just the beginning of the archaeological enterprise. Archaeologists then classify their finds.

3. The second, and more complicated, is in terms of function: archaeologists have to decide whether, for instance, an artefact is a tool or an ornament, or both, or something meant for ritual use.

4. An understanding of the function of an artefact is often shaped by its resemblance with present-day things - beads, querns, stone blades and pots are obvious examples.

5. Archaeologists also try to identify the function of an artefact by investigating the context in which it was found

6. The problems of archaeological interpretation are perhaps most evident in attempts to reconstruct religious practices.

7. Attempts have also been made to reconstruct religious beliefs and practices by examining seals, some of which seem to depict ritual scenes. Others, with plant motifs, are thought to indicate nature worship.

8. Many reconstructions of Harappan religion are made on the assumption that later traditions provide parallels with earlier ones. This is because archaeologists often move from the known to the unknown, that is, from the present to the past.

9. Remains of crops, saddle querns or pit are studied to identify food.

10. Archaeologists observe the different layers of site and try to find out different things which give picture of socio-economic conditions, religions and cultural life of the past people.