UNIT 2

Ancient Civilisations

Learning Objectives

- To learn about early societies and state formations
- To understand the development of civilisations
- To learn about the ancient Egyptian civilisation
- To study the main features of the Mesopotamian civilisations
- To know the Chinese civilisation
- To gain knowledge about the Indus civilisation

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Introduction

Urban societies that adopted complex ways of life were more organised than the early hunter-gatherer and Neolithic farming societies. Urban societies had social stratification and well-planned cities. They practised crafts, engaged in trade and exchange, adopted science and technology and formed political organisation (early form of state). Hence the term 'civilisation' is used to distinguish them from the early forms of societies. However, they should not be considered superior to other forms of societies, since each culture or civilisation had its own unique features.

2.1 Ancient Civilisations

Civilisation is seen as an advanced, organised way of life. It instilled a way of life that could be considered as an adaptation to particular environmental and cultural contexts. When it became necessary for large numbers of people to live in close proximity, they brought in planning, organisation and specialisation. Settlements were planned and laid out, a polity emerged, society became organised and food production and craft production were regulated. As civilisations began to take shape, huge buildings were built, the art of writing developed and science and technology contributed to the betterment of society.

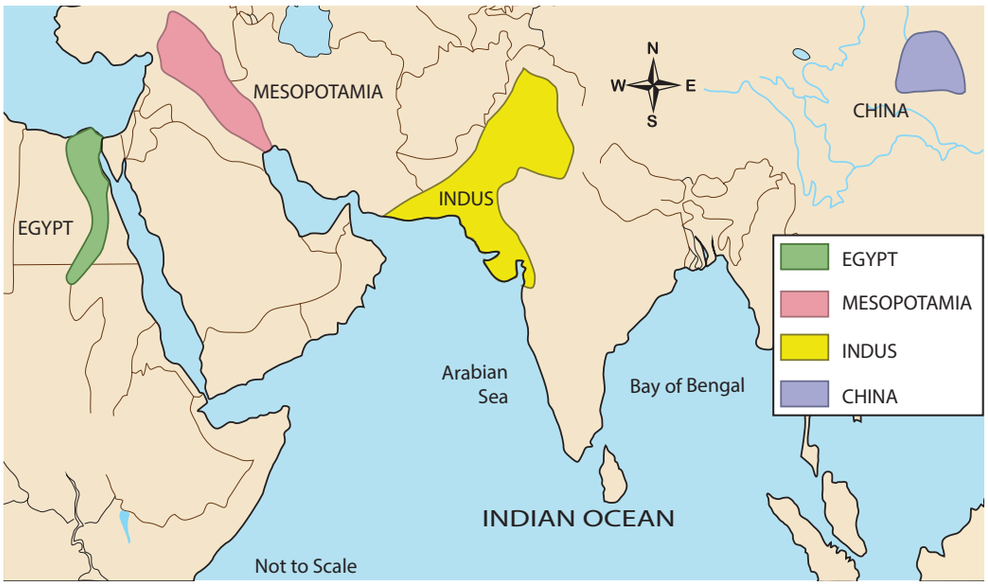
The Egyptian, the Mesopotamian, the Chinese and the Indus were the important early civilisations. While these civilisations flourished in certain regions, people in other parts of the world lived as hunters-gatherers and pastoralists. The hunters-gatherers and pastoralists maintained their relationships with these civilisations through interactions. Their history is also equally important. During the time of these civilisations, South India witnessed the emergence of Neolithic agro-pastoral communities and Microlithic form of life by hunter-gatherers.

2.2 The Egyptian Civilisation

As one of the oldest civilisations, the Egyptian civilisation is known for its monumental architecture, agriculture, arts, sciences and crafts at a very early age.

Geography

Egypt lies in the north-eastern corner of the African continent. It is bounded by the Red Sea on the east and Mediterranean Sea in the north. Egypt is irrigated by the River Nile,



Early world civilisations

which originates in Lake Victoria in the south and flows into the Mediterranean Sea in the north. Deserts are seen on both sides of the Nile River. The Egyptian civilisation depended solely upon the flow of Nile River, and hence Egypt was called the Gift of Nile by the Greek historian Herodotus. The Nile also served as a means of transport. The Nile valley is very rich and fertile as the river deposits fresh alluvium every year. This alluvium nurtured agriculture and helped to produce surplus of food grains, leading to the development of Egyptian civilisation. The dry regions on both the sides of the Niles, however remained deserts.

The Hyksos were the rulers of the 15th dynasty of Egypt and they were probably from West Asia.

Persians are the people from the region of Persia, the ancient Iran.

Greek refers to the language and people of modern-day State of Greece in Europe.

Rome refers to the ancient Roman Empire, which had as its capital the city of Rome in Italy.

Pharaohs, Society and Administration

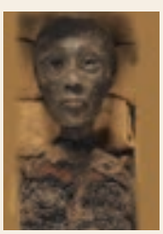
The Egyptian king was known as the Pharaoh. The people treated pharaoh as a divine form. Under the pharaoh, there was a hierarchy of officials including viziers, the governors of provinces, local mayors and tax collectors. The entire social system was supported by the work and production of artisans including stone cutters, masons, potters, carpenters, coppersmiths and goldsmiths, peasants and workers. Land belonged to the king and was assigned to the officials. Slavery was not common, but captives were used as slaves..

Viziers were the high officials who administered territories under the direction of the Pharaohs.

The Egyptians believed in life after death. Therefore, they preserved the dead body. The art of preserving the dead body is known as mummification. Pyramids and tombs were built to preserve the body of pharaohs.

The famous Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamen's (who ruled from 1332 to 1322

The golden mask of Tutankhamen



The mummified body of Tutankhamen

BC (BCE)) tomb with a rich variety of offerings is located near Luxor in Egypt. The mask of his mummy made of gold and decorated with precious stones is an important artefact of the Egyptian civilisation.

Mummies of Egypt

The preserved dead body is called the mummy. The Egyptians had the tradition of preserving the dead bodies using Natron salt, a combination of sodium carbonate and sodium bicarbonate. The preservation process is called mummification. After 40 days, when the salt absorbed all the moisture, the body was filled with sawdust and wrapped with strips of linen cloth and covered with a fabric. The body was stored in a stone coffin called sarcophagus.

Agriculture and Trade

The Egyptians cultivated wheat, barley, millets, vegetables, fruits, papyrus and cotton. Papyrus was used for making rope mats, sandals and later for producing paper. They domesticated cattle, sheep, goat and pigs, and hunted wild animals. They had pets such as dogs, cats and monkeys. The Egyptians had trade relations with Lebanon, Crete, Phoenicia, Palestine and Syria. Gold, silver and ivory were imported, and they acquired the Lapis Lazuli, a precious stone of bluish colour, from Afghanistan.

A ploughing farmer, 1200 BC (BCE)

Depiction of grain harvest

The cities of Egyptian civilisation

Art and Architecture

The Egyptians excelled in art and architecture. Their writing is also a form of art. Numerous sculptures, painting and carvings attest to the artistic skills of the Egyptians.

The pyramids are massive monuments built as tombs of mourning to the Pharaohs. The great pyramids near Cairo are known as the Giza Pyramids.

The Great Sphinx of Giza is a massive limestone image of a lion with a human head. It is dated to the time of Pharaoh Khafre (2575-2465 BCE). It is one of the largest sculptures of the world and measures seventy three metres in length and twenty metres in height.

The Great Pyramid of Giza

View of the Sphinx with the Great Pyramid, Egypt

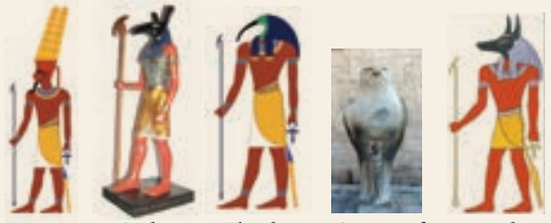
Religion

The Egyptians practiced polytheism. Amon, Re, Seth, Thoth, Horus and Anubis are some of the Gods of Egyptians. They worshipped many Gods, but the Sun God, Re, was the predominant one. Later on, the Sun God was called Amon.

Philosophy, Science and Literature

The Egyptian civilisation excelled in science, literature, philosophy, astronomy, mathematics and the measurement system. Sundial, water clock and glass were developed by the Egyptians. They devised a solar calendar that consisted of twelve months of thirty days each, with five days added to the end of a year. This calendar was introduced as early as 4200 BC (BCE). Literary works included treatises on mathematics, astronomy, medicine, magic and religion. The Egyptians also distinguished themselves in painting, art, sculpture, pottery, music and weaving.

Ancient Egyptian Gods



Amon Seth Thoth Statue of Horus Anubis

Writing System

The Egyptians are well known for their writing system. Their form of writing is known as hieroglyphic. Hieroglyphic was used in the inscriptions on seals and other objects. The heretic, an another form of writing, was used for common purposes. This form of writing used a pictogram-based system. It was developed around 3000 BC (BCE) and many texts and books were written using this script. Now this inscription is on display in the British Museum, London.

Hieroglyphic script

Characteristics and Contributions of the Egyptian Civilisation

- The Egyptians developed a solar calendar system.
- The pyramids and their designs show their mathematical and surveying skills.
- Hieroglyphic writing system attests to their skills in handling symbols.
- Preservation of human body in the form of Mummies.
- They applied innovation in the use of science and technology.

DO YOU KNOW?

The word 'paper' comes from 'Papyrus'. The Egyptians wrote on the leaves of a plant called papyrus, a kind of reed, which grew on the banks of Nile.

2.3 The Mesopotamian Civilisations

Mesopotamia refers to the region of Iraq and Kuwait in West Asia. Several kingdoms emerged around the city states of this region from the early third millennium BC (BCE). The Sumerian, Akkadian, Babylonian and Assyrian civilisations flourished in Mesopotamia.

Geography

In the Greek language, *meso* means 'in between' and *potamus* means river. The Euphrates and Tigris flow here and drain into the Persian Gulf is since this area is in between two rivers it is known as Mesopotamia. The northern part of Mesopotamia is known as Assyria, and the southern part is called Babylonia.

The Sumerians

The oldest civilisation in Mesopotamia belonged to the Sumerians. The Sumerians were the contemporaries of the people of Indus and the Egyptian civilisations. These civilisations had trade connections. The Sumerians settled in the Lower Tigris valley around 5,000 to 4,000 BC (BCE). They were believed to have originated from Central Asia. They founded many cities and Nippur was one of the important cities. They developed the cuneiform writing system. During the early phase of the Sumerian civilisation, Kings acted as the chief priests. Their political domination came to an end by 2,450 BC (BCE).

The Akkadians

The Akkadians dominated Sumeria briefly from 2450 to 2250 BC (BCE). The S argon o f Akkad was a famous ruler. The Sargon and his descendants (ca.2334–2218 BC (BCE)) ruled Mesopotamia for more than hundred years. In the cuneiform records of Akkadians, mention is made about the Indus civilisation. The documents of the Sargon of Akkad (2334–2279 BC (BCE)) refer to the ships from Meluhha, Magan and Dilmun in the quay of Akkad. Meluhha is identified with Indus vallley.

DO YOU KNOW?

The city of Akkad later became the city of Babylon, a commercial and cultural centre of West Asia.

The Babylonians

The Semitic people called Amorites from the Arabian desert moved into Mesopotamia. They were known as the Babylonians as they

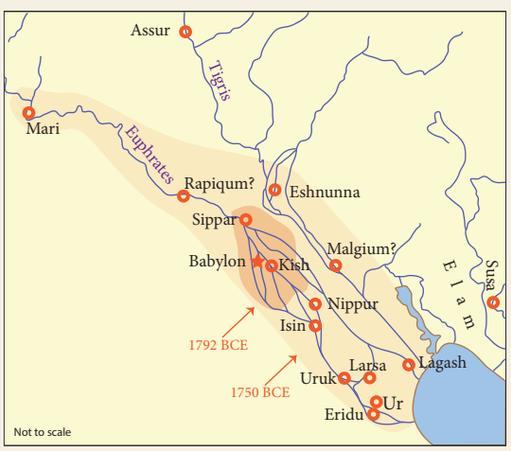
Map of ancient lands of Magan, Dilmun and Meluhha

established a kingdom and made Babylon its capital. By the time of the king Hammurabi, they extended their domination to the western part of Mesopotamia. The powerful states of Ur (2112 to 2004 BC (BCE)) and Babylon (1792 to 1712 BC (BCE)) controlled this region. The hero Gilgamesh referred to in the first ever epic on the earth may have been a king of Sumeria. Hammurabi, the sixth king of Babylon belonging to the first Amorite dynasty (1792–1750 BC (BCE)), attained fame as a great law-maker.

The Assyrians

The Assyrian Empire was politically active in Mesopotamia around 1000 BC (BCE). The Assyrian kings were the priests of Ashur, the chief deity of Assyria. The Assyrian government was controlled by the emperor and provincial governors were appointed by the emperor to administer provinces. Assur was the capital city of Assyria. Ashurbanipal was a popular ruler of the late or neo-Assyrian empire (ca. 668 to 627 BC (BCE)). He maintained a famous library of cuneiform records. The Assyrians worshipped the deity of Lamassu for protection.

A stone image of Lamassu



Mesopotamia and its cities

Society, State and Administration

The Sumerian civilisation had many city states. A typical Sumerian city was surrounded by cultivable lands. The fortified Sumerian cities had the temples called Ziggurats at its centre. The temple was controlled by the priests. Priests, scribes and nobles were part of the government. The rulers and priests occupied the top of the social hierarchy. The ruler performed the role of the chief priest. The scribes, merchants and artisans were placed next in the hierarchy. The scribes maintained the account of the taxes and the priests collected the taxes. The temples acted as storehouses of the taxed commodities. Assemblies were created for the administration of the state. Cultivable lands were owned by the kings and the higher classes of people in the hierarchy. The peasants who remained to the temples in the earlier phase of Mesopotamian civilisation, became free from that association in the later period. Not all people were allowed to live in the cities.

Ziggurat of Ur

The Assyrian Empire was the first military State in history. They emerged militarily powerful because they were the earliest to use iron technology effectively.

Food and Agriculture

Agriculture was the main occupation of the Mesopotamians. They had developed irrigation systems for ensuring the availability of water for agriculture and cultivated wheat, barley, onions, turnips, grapes, apples and dates. They domesticated cattle, sheep and goats. Fish was part of their diet.

Trade and Exchange

Trade was an important economic activity of the Mesopotamian society. Traders assisted in the exchange of goods procured from the potters and artisans. They traded with Syria

and Asia Minor in the West, and in Iran and the Indus Valley civilisation in the east. They travelled in ships across the seas for trade. Their temples acted as banks and lent credit on their own account. The Mesopotamian documents have references to loan and repayment, with or without interest. Perhaps this is the first written evidence of charging an interest on borrowed money.

Cities and Town Planning

The Mesopotamian cities featured mud or baked brick walls with gates. Some people lived in reed huts outside the cities. The Ziggurats were at the city centre on a platform and appeared like steep pyramids, with staircases leading to the top. Around this temple were complexes of ceremonial courtyards, shrines, burial chambers for the priests and priestesses, ceremonial banquet halls, along with workshops, granaries, storehouses and administrative buildings.

Religion

The Sumerian religion was polytheistic. They worshipped several Gods and Goddesses. The Sumerians prayed to Enlil, the God of sky and wind. The city of Nippur was centre of Enlil's worship. Ninlil was the Sumerian Goddess of grain. The Babylonians worshipped Marduk, and Ashur was the supreme God of the Assyrians. Ishtar was Goddess of love and fertility, Tiamat the God of the sea and chaos, and Sin, the moon God. The kings were seen as representatives of the Gods on earth. The Mesopotamians developed a rich collection of myths and legends. The most famous of these is the epic of Gilgamesh, which is written in the cuneiform text. It contains a legend of the flood and has similarities with the account of Noah's Ark mentioned in the Bible and other myths in the Hindu *puranas*.

The Hammurabi's Law Code

The Hammurabi Code is an important legal document that specifies the laws related to various crimes. It has 282 provisions specifying cases related to family rights, trade, slavery, taxes and wages. It is carved on a stone, which portrays Hammurabi as receiving the code from the Sun God Shamash. It was a compilation of old laws based on retributive principles. 'An eye for an eye' and ' a tooth for a tooth' form of justice is used in the Hammurabi Code.

Cuneiform tablet

Cuneiform: The Sumerian Writing System

Cuneiform is the Sumerian writing system. The shape of the letter is in the form of wedge and hence it is called cuneiform. Evolving around 3000 BC (BCE), it is one of the earliest scripts of the world. They used this script for commercial transactions and writing letters and stories. The clay tablets contain loads of information on the Sumerian civilisation.

Art

The Mesopotamian art included sculptures in stone and clay. A few paintings and sculptures from the Mesopotamian times have survived today. Mesopotamian sculptures portray animals, such as goats, rams, bulls and lions. Some mythological figures like lions and bulls with human head have also been found in their art. Massive sculptures were created at the time of the Assyrian and the Babylonian empires.

A clay tablet with the accounts of sheep and goats, from Tello, southern Iraq

Development of Script

Development of script is an important milestone in human history. Writing system began to emerge in Sumeria in the later part of fourth millennium BC (BCE). Hieroglyphic, the Egyptian system of writing, developed in early third millennium BC (BCE). The Harappans also had a system of writing around the same time, but it has not yet been deciphered. The Chinese civilisation too developed a writing system from a very early period.

Development of cuneiform script

Science

The Mesopotamians excelled in mathematics, astronomy and medicine. They developed the concepts of multiplication, division and cubic equation. The numerical system based on 60 was conceived by them. They were the ones to formulate the 60-minute hour, the 24-hour day and the 360° circle. The Sumerian calendar had seven days in a week. Their numerical system had place values. They created the water clock and the lunar calendar based on the movement of the moon. They developed methods for measuring areas and solids. They also developed advanced weight and measurement systems.

They introduced the twelve month calendar system based on lunar months. Their ideas influenced Greek astronomy. They had developed a medicinal system as well. A text called the *Diagnostic Handbook*, dated to the 11th century BC (BCE) Babylon, lists symptoms and prognoses. This indicates their scientific understanding of herbs and minerals.

Contributions of the Mesopotamian Civilisation

- The invention of the potter's wheel is credited to the Sumerians.
- They developed the calendar system of 360 days and divided a circle into 360 units.
- The cuneiform system of writing was their contribution.
- The Hammurabi's law code was another legacy of the Mesopotamians.

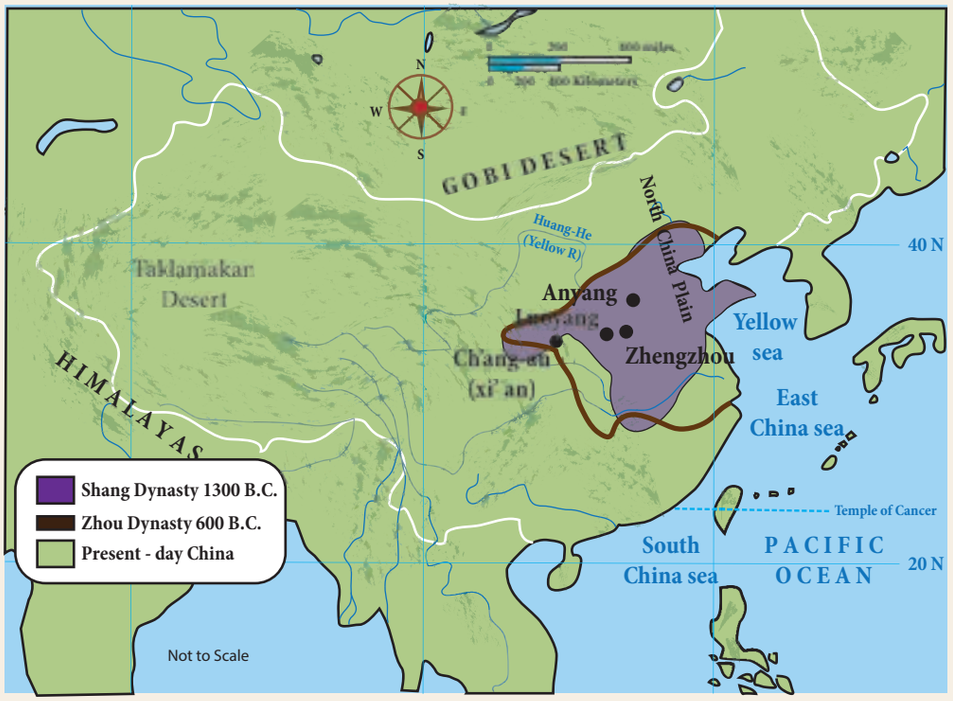
2.4 The Chinese Civilisation

China has two major rivers. One is known as Huang He (Yellow River) and the other is called Yangtze River. The Yellow River is known as the Sorrow of China, since it changed its course and caused frequent floods.

Evidence for the prehistoric Peking man (700,000 BP and 200,000 BP) and Yuanmou Man exists in China. Neolithic communities lived in China between 4,500 and 3,750 BC (BCE). The Henan province in the Yellow and Yangtze river valley contain evidence for Neolithic villages. China had many city states and gradually these states became part of an empire.

Polity and Emperors

Shi Huangdi (Qin Shi Huang, which means the first emperor) founded the Qin (Chin) dynasty. The emperor had the title 'son of heaven'. He is considered to be the first emperor of China. The period



Map of Chinese civilisation

between 221 and 206 BC (BCE) is known as the imperial era in China. He conquered other principalities in 221 BC (BCE) and remained the emperor till 212 BC (BCE). He defeated the feudal lords and established a strong empire. He is credited with unifying China. Shi Huangdi destroyed the walled fortifications of different States and constructed the Great Wall of China to protect the empire from the invading nomadic people. He also built roads to integrate the empire.

The Han Empire (206–220 AD (CE))

During this period, a written history of this empire was made available in China. The greatest of the Han emperors, Wu Ti (Han Wu the Great, 141 to 87 BC (BCE)), expanded the empire and built many public amenities, including irrigation tanks. He sent Zhang Qian as emissary to the West in 138 BC (BCE) and thereby paved the way for the opening of the Silk Road in 130 BC (BCE) to encourage trade activities.

Because of the Silk Road and the resultant trade connections, China benefitted immensely during the rule of Emperor Zhang (75–88 AD (CE)). Chinese silk was much sought after by the Romans during the time of the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius in 166 AD (CE). Some of the Chinese silk might have reached Rome through the ports of Tamilagam.

The Terracotta Army

The Terracotta Army refers to the large collection of terracotta warrior images found in China. They depict the armies of the king Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor of China. They were buried with the king in 210–209 BC (BCE). They are found at the northern foot of the Lishan Mountain, thirty five kilometres northeast of Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, as part of the mausoleum of the king.

Terracotta Warriors, China

Philosophy and Literature

Chinese poets and philosophers such as Lao Tze, Confucius, Mencius, Mo Ti (Mot Zu) and Tao Chien (365-427 AD (CE)) contributed to the development of Chinese civilisation. Sun-Tzu, a military strategist, wrote the work called *Art of War*. The *Spring and Autumn Annals* is the official chronicle of the state at the time. The Yellow Emperor's *Canon of Medicine* is considered China's earliest written book on medicine. It was codified during the time of Han Dynasty.


Confucius

Lao Tze (c. 604–521 BC (BCE)) was the master archive keeper of Chou state. He was the founder of Taoism. He argued that desire is the root cause of all evils.

Confucius (551–497 BC (BCE)) was famous among the Chinese philosophers. He was a political reformer. His name means Kung, the master. He insisted on cultivation of one's own personal life. He said, "If personal life is cultivated, family life is regulated; and once family life is regulated, national life is regulated."

Mencius (372–289 BC (BCE)) was another well-known Chinese philosopher. He travelled throughout China and offered his counsel to the rulers.

Chinese Script

Chinese developed a writing system from an early time. Initially it was a pictographic system and later it was converted into a symbol form.


Chinese script on the bone

Contribution of the Chinese Civilisation

- Writing system was improved
- Invention of paper
- Opening of the Silk Road
- Invention of gun powder

2.5 Indus Civilisation

The Indus civilisation, also known as the Harappan civilisation, covers an area of over 1.5 million square kilometres in India and Pakistan. Sutkagen-Dor in the west on the Pakistan–Iran border Shortugai (Afghanistan) in the north Alamgirpur (Uttar Pradesh in India) in the east and Daimabad (Maharashtra in India) in the south are the boundaries with in which the Harappan culture has been found. Its main concentration was in the regions of Gujarat, Pakistan, Rajasthan and Haryana.

Planned Towns


The Great Bath

Harappa (Punjab, Pakistan), Mohenjo-Daro (Sindh, Pakistan), Dholavira (Gujarat, India), Kalibangan (Rajasthan, India), Lothal (Gujarat, India), Banawali (Rajasthan, India.,) Rakhigarhi (Haryana, India) and Surkotada (Gujarat, India) are the major cities of the Indus civilisation. Fortification, well-planned streets and lanes and drainages can be observed in the Harappan towns. The Harappans used baked and unbaked bricks and stones for construction. A civic authority perhaps controlled the planning of the towns. A few of the houses had more than one floor. The tank called the Great Bath at Mohenjo-Daro was an important structure, well paved with several adjacent rooms. Some unearthed structures have been identified as the granary. We do not know

Indus cities and towns

about the nature of the state or political organisation of the Harappans. But they must have had a political organisation at the level of an early form of state. A male image from Mohenjo-Daro has been identified as 'priest king', but we do not know about the accuracy of this interpretation.

The Indus Valley civilisation is also known as the Harappan civilisation, since Harappa was the first site to be discovered. This civilisation is known as Harappan civilisation rather than Indus Valley civilisation, since it extended beyond the Indus river valley.

Agriculture and Animal Domestication

The Harappans practiced agriculture. They cultivated wheat, barley and various types of millets. They adopted a double cropping system. Pastoralism was also known to them. They reared cattle, sheep and goats. They had knowledge of various animals including elephants but did not use horses. The Harappan cattle are called Zebu, and it is a large breed, often represented in their seals.

Pottery

The Harappans used painted pottery. Their potteries have a deep red slip and black paintings. The pottery has shapes like dish-on-stands, storage jars, perforated jars, goblets, S-shaped jars, plates, dishes, bowls and pots. The painted motifs, generally noticed on the pottery, depict *pipal* tree leaves, fish-scale designs, intersecting circles, zigzag lines, horizontal bands, and geometrical motifs, and floral and faunal patterns.


Harappan painted pottery

Metal Tools and Weapons

The Harappans used **chert** blades, copper objects and bone and ivory tools. They did not possess knowledge about iron. The tools and equipments such as points, chisels, needles, fishhooks, razors, weighing pans, mirror and antimony rods were made of bronze. The chisels made out of Rohri chert were used by the Harappans. Their weapons included arrows, spears, a chisel-bladed tool and axe. The bronze image of dancing girl from Mohenjo-Daro is suggestive of the use of lost-wax process.

Rohri chert refers to the chert raw material collected from Rohri in Pakistan. It was used by the Harappans for making blades.The Harappans used both stone and bronze tools.

Rohri chert blades Shikarpur, Gujarat

Textiles and Ornaments

The Harappans used metal and stone ornaments. They had knowledge of cotton and silk textiles. They made carnelian, copper and gold ornaments. Faience, stoneware and shell bangles were also used. Some of them had etched designs, and the Harappans exported them to the Mesopotamia.

Indus ornaments

Trade and Exchange

The Harappans had close trade links with the Mesopotamians. Harappan seals have been found in the West Asian sites namely Oman, Bahrain, Iraq and Iran. The cuneiform inscriptions mention the trade contacts between Mesopotamia and the Harappans. The mention of 'Meluhha' in the cuneiform inscriptions is considered to refer to the Indus region.

Weights and Measures

The Harappans developed a system of proper weights and measures. Since they engaged in commercial transactions, they needed standard measures. The cubical chert weights are found at the Harappan sites. The copper plates for weighing balances have also been found.The weights point to their knowledge of the binary system. The ratio of weighing is doubled as 1:2:4:8:16:32.

Weights of Harappan civilisation

Copper balance from Mohenjo-Daro

Seals, Sealings and Scripts

The seals from various media such as steatite, copper, terracotta and ivory are found in the Harappan sites. They were probably used in the trade activities. The Harappan script is not yet deciphered. About

A seal with the script

5,000 texts have been documented from the Harappan sites. Some scholars are of the view that the script is in Dravidian language.

Terracotta toys

Arts and Amusement

The terracotta figurines, paintings on the pottery and the bronze images from the Harappan sites suggest the artistic skills of the Harappans. 'Priest king' made of steatite and dancing girl made of bronze (both from Mohenjo-Daro) as well as stone sculptures from Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro and Dholavira are the important objects of art. Toy carts, rattles, wheels, tops, marbles and hop scotches made in terracotta suggest the amusement of the Harappan people.

The priest king, Mohenjo-Daro

The Dancing Girl from Mohenjo-Daro

Religion

The Indus people had a close relationship with nature. They worshipped *pipal* trees. Some of the terracotta figures resemble the mother Goddess. Fire altars have been identified at Kalibangan. The Indus people buried the dead. Burials were done elaborately and evidence for cremation has also been found.

Original Inhabitants and their Culture

The authors of the Harappan civilisation are not known, since the script has not been deciphered. One school of thought argues that they spoke the Dravidian language. The archaeological evidence shows movement of the Harappans to the east and south after the decline of the Indus civilisation. It is probable that some of the Harappan people moved into different parts of India. Only the decipherment of the script can give a definite answer.

Indus civilisation had more than one group of people. Several groups including farmers, pastoralists and hunter-gatherers lived in the Indus region. The Indus region had villages and large towns. The population was mixed.

The period of the civilisation has been divided into Early Harappan, starting around 3300 BC (BCE) and continuing to 2600 BC (BCE) and mature Harappan, are the last phase civilisation from 2600 to 1900 BC (BCE). The later Harappan existed upto 1700 BC (BCE).

Decline of Indus Culture

The Indus civilisation and its urban features started declining from about 1900 BC (BCE). Changes in climate, decline of the trade with Mesopotamia and drying up or flooding of the river Indus, foreign invasion were some of the reasons attributed to the collapse of this civilisation and for the migration of people in the southern and eastern directions. It did not completely disappear. It continued as rural culture.

Cracking The Indus Script

Harappans knew the art of writing. The script is found on seals, in moulded terracotta and on pottery. It has not been deciphered till now. Because the Indus texts are very short, the average length of the inscription is less than five signs. It has no bilingual text (like a Rosetta stone written in Egyptian and Greek). Hence deciphering the script is difficult. It was written generally from right to left.

- Based on computer analysis, the Russian scholar Yuri Knorozov suggested that the Indus inscriptions have a Dravidian-like word order.
- Scholar and researcher Iravatham Mahadevan, who has done extensive research on Indus civilisation, says, "We may hopefully find that the proto Dravidian roots of Harappa language and South Indian Dravidian languages are similar."
- According to Mahadevan, a stone Celt discovered in Mayiladuthurai (Tamil Nadu) has same marking as that of the symbol of the Indus script.
- In May 2007, the TamilNadu Archaeology Department found pots with arrow head symbols at Melaperumpallam near Poompuhar, which resembled the seals in Mohenjo-Daro.

According to Parpola, the sign of the Indus script is likely to represent Dravidian mono-syllabic roots.

Sign	Identification	Reading	Meaning	Sign	Identification	Reading	Meaning
a. 	halving + fish	*pacu mi*$^{-}$*n*	green star (Mercury)	a. 	fish	*mi*$^{-}$*n*	1. fish 2. star
b. 	roof + fish	*mey/may mi*$^{-}$*n*	black star (Saturn)	b. 	3 + fish	*mu(m) mi*$^{-}$*n*	three stars (Mrigasiras)
c. 	intermediate space + fish	*vel(li) mi*$^{-}$*n*	white star (Venus)	c. 	6 + fish	*caru mi*$^{-}$*n*	six stars (Pleiades)
d. 	dot/drop + fish	*pottu mi*$^{-}$*n*	1. red fish (carp) 2. red star (Rohini)	d. 	7 + fish	*elu mi*$^{-}$*n*	seven stars (Ursa Major)

Recap

- After the Neolithic Age, civilisations sprang and grew in the Bronze Age.
- People began their settled life in planned towns and began to involve in trade and exchange. Science and technology developed.
- The civilisations are relatively complex social systems.
- The Egyptian civilisation excelled in architecture and the pyramids were its important contribution.
- The Mesopotamian civilisation contributed to the development of calendar system and astronomy.
- The Chinese civilisation contributed in terms of philosophy and inventions.
- The Indus civilisation produced a variety of commodities using innovative techniques. It had cultural contacts with West Asia.

EXERCISE

EVIZH

I. Choose the correct answer

1. The earliest signs to denote words through pictures
   a. Calligraphy b. Pictographic
   c. Ideographic d. Stratigraphic
2. The preservation process of dead body in ancient Egypt
   a. Sarcophagus b. Hyksos
   c. Mummification d. Polytheism
3. The Sumerian system of writing
   a. Pictographic b. Hieroglyphic
   c. Sonogram d. Cuneiform
4. The Harappans did not have the knowledge of
   a. Gold and Elephant
   b. Horse and Iron
   c. Sheep and Silver
   d. Ox and Platinum
5. The Bronze image suggestive of the use of lost-wax process known to the Indus people.
   a. Jar b. Priest king
   c. Dancing girl d. Bird
6. (i) The oldest civilisation in Mesopotamia belonged to the Akkadians.
   (ii) The Chinese developed the Hieroglyphic system.
   (iii) The Euphrates and Tigris drain into the Mannar Gulf.
   (iv) Hammurabi, the king of Babylon was a great law maker.
   a. (i) is correct
   b. (i) and (ii) are correct
   c. (iii) is correct
   d. (iv) is correct
7. (i) Yangtze River is known as Sorrow of China.
   (ii) Wu-Ti constructed the Great Wall of China.
   (iii) Chinese invented gun powder.
   (iv) According to traditions Mencius was the founder of Taoism.
   a. (i) is correct
   b. (ii) is correct
   c. (iii) is correct
   d. (iii) and (iv) are correct
8. What is the correct chronological order of four civilisations of Mesopotamia
   a. Sumerians - Assyrians - Akkadians - Babylonians
   b. Babylonians - Sumerians - Assyrians - Akkadians
   c. Sumerians - Akkadians - Babylonians - Assyrians
   d. Babylonians - Assyrians - Akkadians - Sumerians
9. **Assertion (A)**: Assyrians of Mesopotamian civilisation were contemporaries of Indus civilisation.

Reason(R): The Documents of an Assyrian ruler refer to the ships from Meluha

a. A and R are correct and A explains R
b. A and R are correct but A doesn't explain R
c. A is incorrect but R is correct
d. Both A and R are incorrect

II. Fill in the blanks

1. _____ is a massive lime stone image of a lion with a human head.
2. The early form of writing of the Egyptians is known as _____.
3. _____ specifies the Laws related to various crimes in ancient Babylonia.
4. _____ was the master archive keeper of Chou state, according to traditions.
5. The _____ figurines and paintings on the pottery from the sites suggest the artistic skills of the Harappans.

III. Find out the correct statement

1. a. The Great Bath at Harappa is well-built with several adjacent rooms.
   b. The cuneiform inscriptions relate to the epic of Gilgamesh.
   c. The terracotta figurines and dancing girl made of copper suggest the artistic skills of Egyptians.
   d. The Mesopotamians devised a solar calendar system.
2. a. Amon was an "Egyptian God".
   b. The fortified Harappan city had the temples.
   c. The great sphinx is a pyramid-shaped monument found in ancient Mesopotamia.
   d. The invention of the potter's wheel is credited to the Egyptians.

IV. Match the following

1.	Pharaoh	-	A kind of grass
2.	Papyrus	-	the oldest written story on Earth
3.	Great Law maker	-	Mohenjo-Daro
4.	Gilgamesh	-	Hammurabi
5.	The Great Bath	-	The Egyptian king

V. Answer the following briefly

1. The Egyptians excelled in art and architecture Illustrate.
2. State the salient features of the Ziggurats
3. Hammurabi Code is an important legal document. Explain.

VI. Answer the following in Detail

1. Define the terms Hieroglyphics and Cuneiform with their main features.
2. To what extent is the Chinese influence reflected in the fields of philosophy and literature.
3. Write about the hidden treasure of Indus civilisation.

FUN WITH HISTORY

Student Activities

Mark the areas of Bronze Age civilisation on the world map.

Prepare a chart on the pyramids and the mummies.

Collect the pictures of the seals and the pottery of Indus people.

Assignment with teacher's guidance

Prepare a hand out comparing the ancient world civilisations.

Prepare a scrap book collecting pictures on Indus civilisation from website.

REFERENCE BOOKS

1. Chris Scarre. *The Human Past*: *World Prehistory and the Development of Human Societies.* Thames and Hudson.
2. G.L.Possehl. *Indus Age-The Beginnings*. Oxford and IBH Publications.
3. J.M.Kenoyer. *Ancient Cities of the Indus Valley Civilisation*. American Institute of Pakistan Studies.

INTERNET RESOURCES

1. https://www.britannica.com
2. http://www.ancient-origins.net
3. http://humanorigins.si.edu

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- Type the URL given below or scan the QR code. Then press the enter key.
- Click the 'Full Screen' to view the architecture.
- Explore the options given at the left lower side. Click 'Open Google Map'. Drag the mouse and rotate the 'Red Shaded Area' in it to watch the area in 360° view or use the arrow keys for the same view.
- Keep the cursor on question marks to get details about that place.

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Website URL:

http://www.airpano.com/files/Ancient-World/2-2