



Indus Civilization

Sindhu-Saraswati Valley and Beyond...

Economy and Politics

What is Economy?

Process or system by which goods and services are produced, distributed and traded in local region and outside world.

What is Politics?

Art or science of governing, administering and controlling a political entity/unit for its internal and external affairs.

Basis of Economy



Bottomed Boat (Source: Kenoyer 2000)

Stone Carving showing (Source: Kenoyer 2000)

- Economy was mainly based on Agriculture and Trade

Agriculture :

- Most Indus Valley people were farmers
- They grew variety of crops such as wheat, barely, melon and cotton

Trade:

It was a second largest source of economy, and they traded:

- Main Agricultural Products - cotton, variety of grains
- Main Commercial Products - copper, pearls, cloths, ivory cones , jewelry

Agriculture



Seal with Bull (Source: Kenoyer 2000)



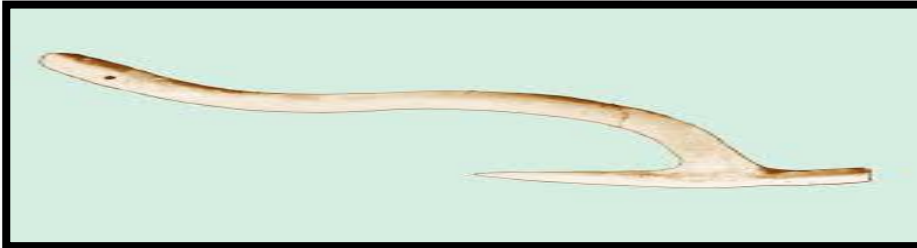
Source: New World Encyclopedia

- Found stone carvings showing agriculture activities
- Found various seals and signs related agriculture activities
- Various animals and plants were domesticated to support agriculture activities.
- Animal husbandry was also major source for food supplies

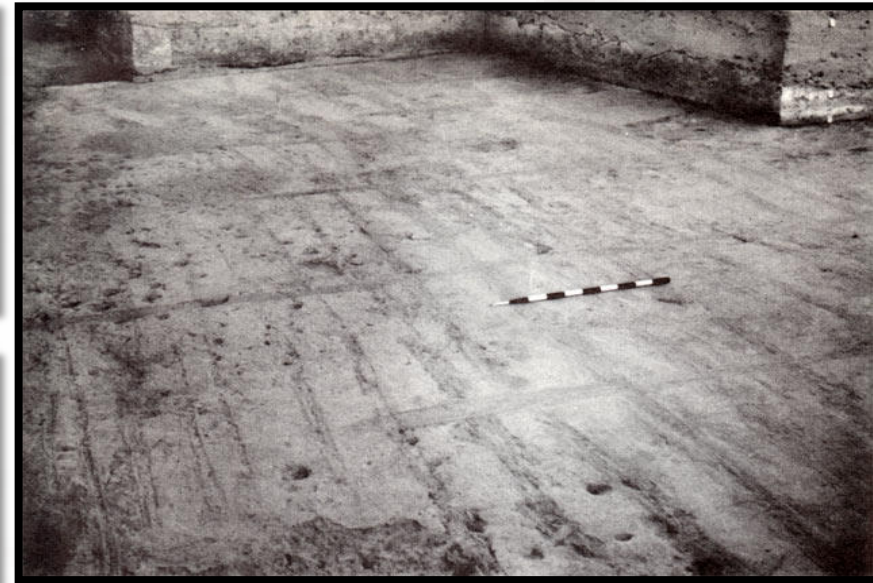
Agriculture: Farming tools and techniques



Copper tools found (Source: BBC)



Plough toy (Source: VECC Kolkata)



Ploughed Field (Source: www.Harappa.com)

- Found ploughed field at “Kalibangan”
- Found copper tools possibly being used for farming
- Found plough toys indicating existence of such tools
- It appears most tools were made of flint

Agriculture: Irrigation and Rain Harvesting



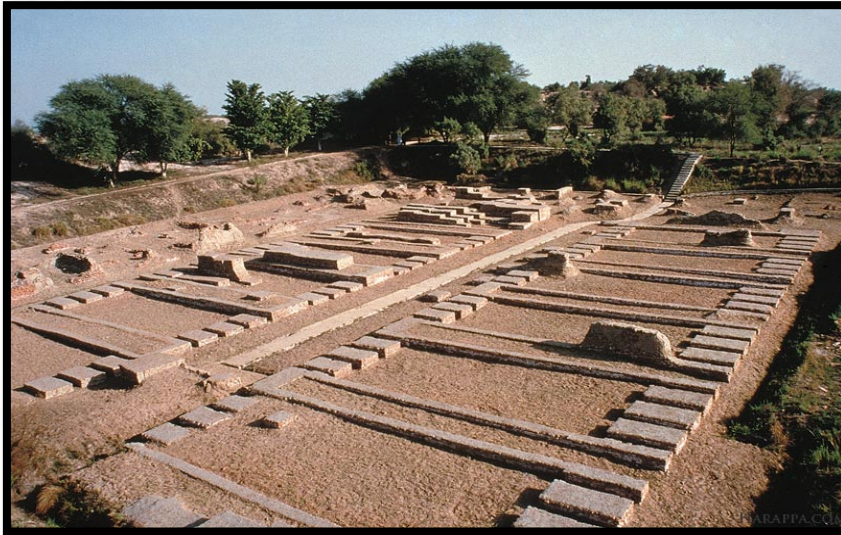
Irrigation System (Source: BBC history)



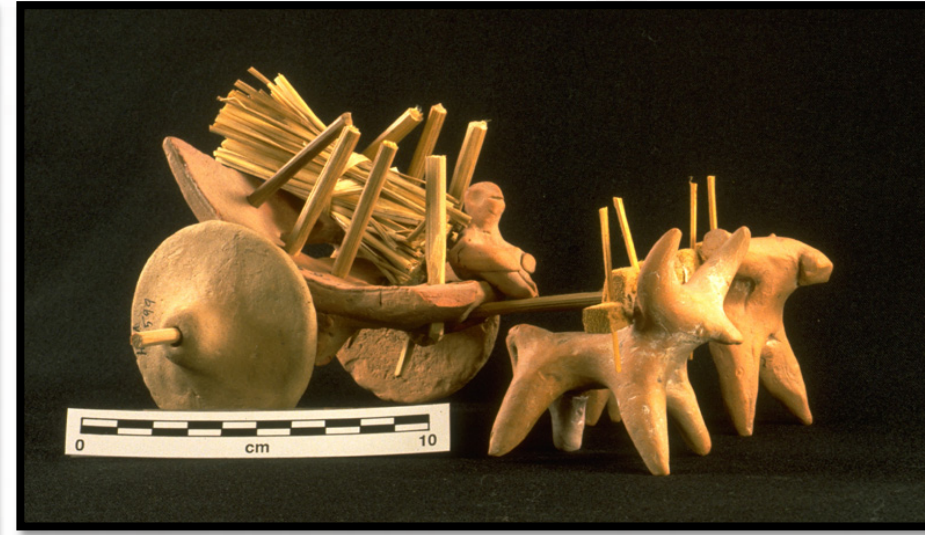
Source: New World Encyclopedia

- Found evidences for rain harvesting methods
- Found evidences of irrigation methods
- Flood irrigation could be primary method of irrigation
- They might be using water streams from mountains for irrigation

Agriculture: Grain storage and transportation



The Great Granary at Harappa Mound 'F'
Source: Harappa.com



Bullock Cart Toy (Source: Source: Kenoyer 2000)

- Found great granary at Harappa Mound– “F”
- Found evidences of food storage and preservation
- Bull cart was main mode of ground transportation
- Surplus food was sent to cities from suburban areas

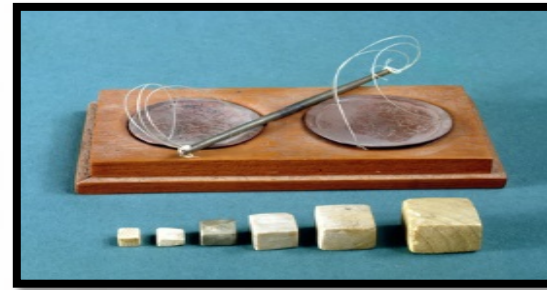
Trade: Activities



Bottomed Boat (Source: Kenoyer 2000)



Seal for trading goods (Source: Kenoyer 2000)

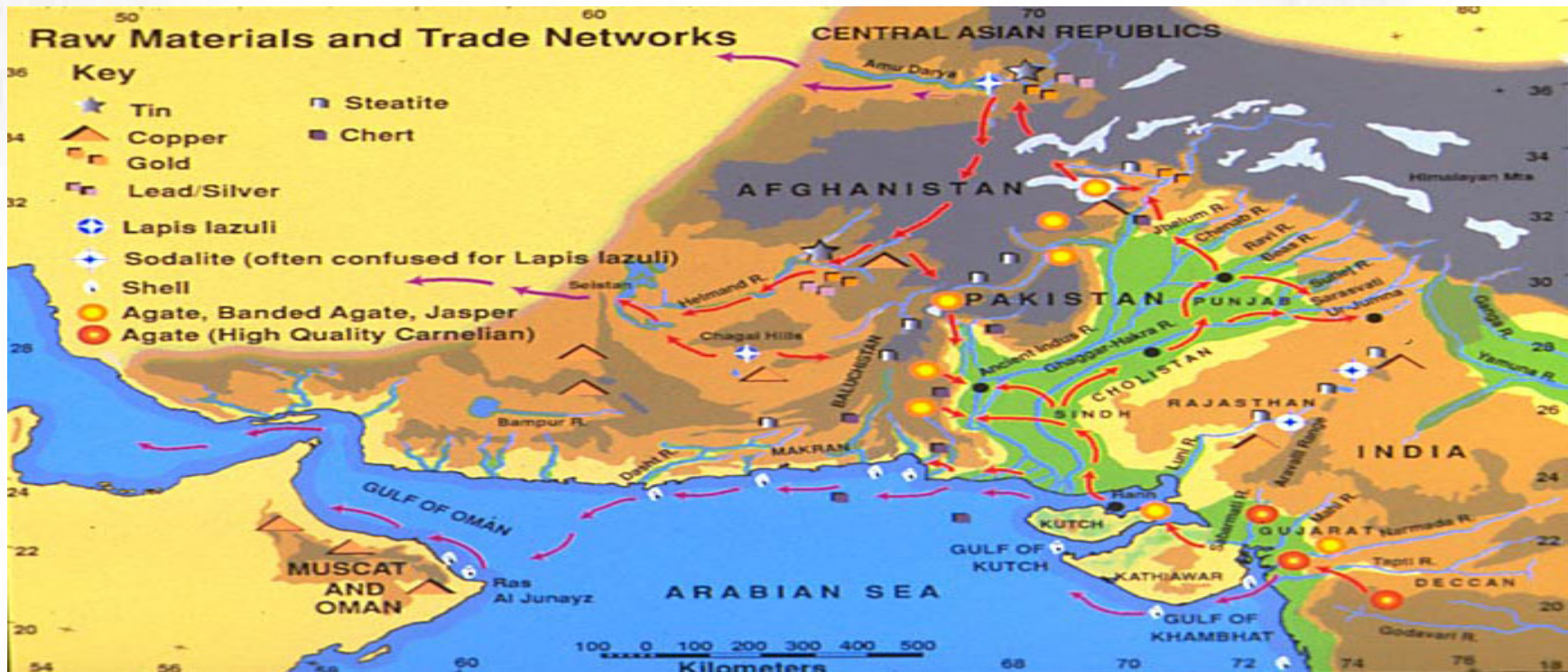


Weights and Counters (Source: Harappa.com)



- Seals with “elephant” were used primarily for trade
- Standardize weights and measures were used for trade and taxation purpose
- No evidences of currency found, possibly barter system in use

Trade : Raw Material Network



Raw Material Trade Network (www.Harappa.com)

- They were getting flint from Rohri Hills
- They were procuring some raw materials from far distances such as southern part of current India
- They developed procurement process and maintain relations with local traders

Trade: Manufacturing Activities



Dyer's workshop, VS Area 53 (Source: www.Harappa.com)



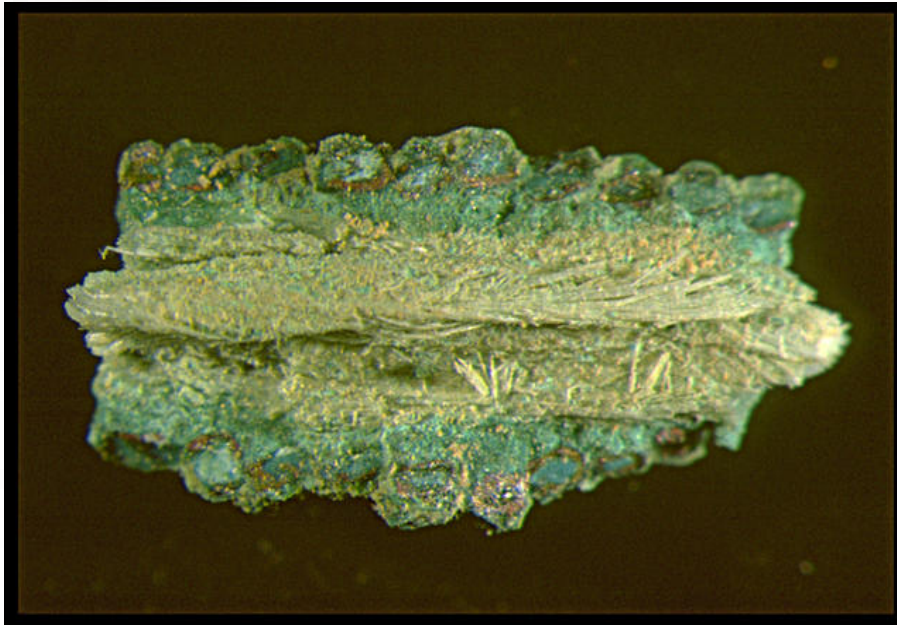
Unfinished shell circlets with grinding stones (Source: www.Harappa.com)



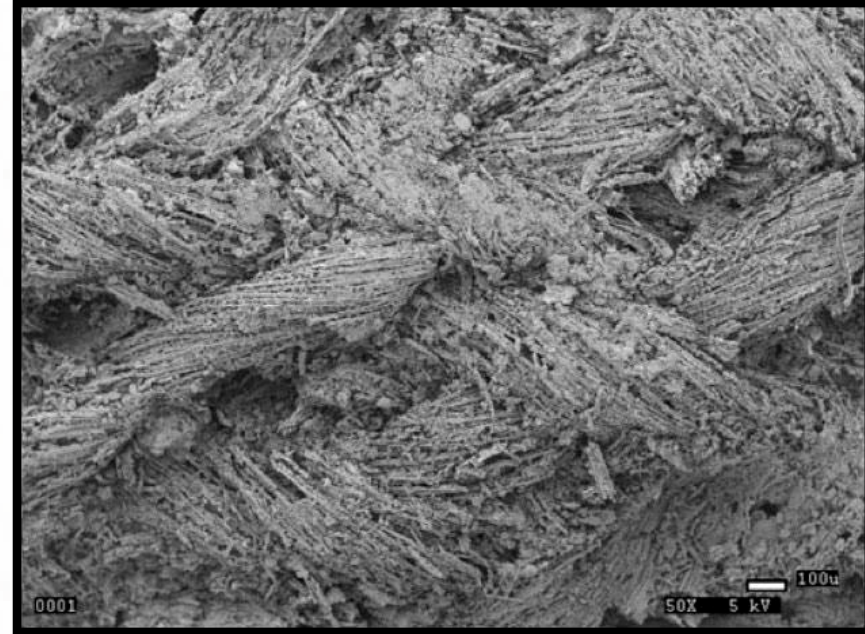
Bead Factory, Lothal (Source: www.Harappa.com)

- Found debris of Unfinished Shell circlets with grinding stones
- Found Evidences of Beads factory found in Lothal
- Found Dyer's workshop

Trade:Textile Industry



Fiber, JM Kenoyer (Source: www.Harappa.docm)



Jute, Rita P. Wright (Source: www.Harappa.com)

- Found evidences of cotton from Mehrgagh
- Found evidences of cloths from figurines and inscribed seals
- Found evidences of silk thread inside copper bead
- Possibly they traded cotton to Mesopotamia and other regions

Trade: Marketplace and Craftsmanship



Craftsmanship (Source: Ne World Encyclopedia)



Market Place (Source: Ne World Encyclopedia)

- Traders used trade routes to bring raw material to towns/cities
- People in cities/town converted raw material in finished products
- Cities/towns were centers for industry, craft and trade
- Cotton was the most important product for trade
- It appears that most city residents were traders or artisans

Trade: Port and Warehouse



Dockyard at Lothal (Source: Harappa.com)



Warehouse at Lothal (Source: Harappa.com)

- Evidences of dockyards and warehouses were found
- They Exported cotton, wool, grain, and jewelry
- They Imported gold and other metals
- Indus valley cities lived by trade as evidences indicated large scale trade activities

Politics : Administration



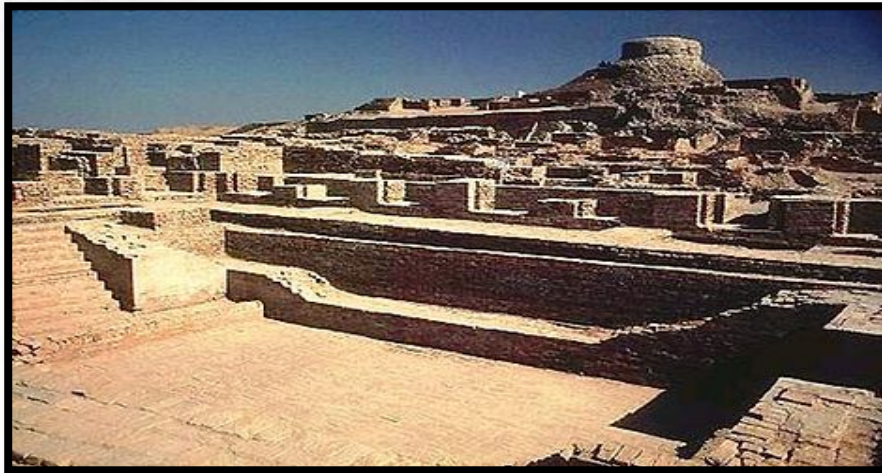
Priest/King and Seal (Source Kenoyer 2000)



Citadel in Mohenjo-daro (Source: Harappa.com)

- Evidences found of administrative hierarchies showing various animal on seals such as - Zebu bull, Male water buffalo, Tiger, Unicorn
- Cities/Towns had efficient administration
- Separate sections for residences and administrative offices.
- Group of self-organized and responsible people/citizen

Politics: City/Town Planning



Great Bath in Mohenjo-daro (Source: Harappa.com)



Mohenjo-daro lower town (Source: Harappa.com)

- Had standards and norms for town planning as Cities/towns were well planned
- Administrative body in place for trade and taxation
- Some centralized authority seems to be in place
- Better water management methods seem to be in use

Politics: City/Town Planning



The Docs of Lothal (Source: Kenoyer 2000)



Well and City Drainage Canals (Source: Harappa.com)

- Found evidences for Citadels and other large buildings
- Found public buildings including great baths, granaries, citadels and city walls
- Found evidences of covered street drainage systems
- Found evidences of socio economic hierarchy

Defense Arrangements



Copper/Bronze weapons (Source: www.Harappa.com)



City Wall (Source: www.Harappa.com)

- Very little evidences found for warfare's
- City walls could be to protect from flood and wild animals
- Found evidences of sophisticated sewer and drainage
- Overall society seems to be peaceful

Inferences and Observations:

- It appears that economy was flourishing and primarily based on agriculture and trade
 - Agricultural activities were very organized and systematic
 - Advance system was in place for internal and external trade
 - Cities were mainly for trade activities and surrounding areas for agriculture
 - It appears to have Theocracy (Priest and Traders run government) in place
 - It seems Cities/Towns were autonomous but had some central authority
- Sources – The British Museum, www.Harappa.com, R. Wright, R. Meadow

The Unknowns/Open Questions:

- Why there is “no” evidence/s of grains found in Granaries?
- Why there is “no” currency in such a flourishing economy and high order of civilization?
- How Indus Valley Cities and Towns were inter-connected politically?
- Why there are no evidence/s of defense system?
- Why seals were in abundance?
- What was the process of choosing rulers?

Sources – The British Museum, www.Harappa.com, R. Wright

Take home message

- People were farmers and traders with transportation network
- Possibly all trade was barter, no evidence of any currency
- They developed good craftsmanship and trade skills
- They were using methods for rain harvesting and irrigation
- Cities and towns were connected through some central authority
- There was administration unit in the settlement, but over all no ruler or king
- It seems there were very little defense arrangements

Thank You!

Question/Answer

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