

CITIES IN THE INDUS VALLEY: THE OLDEST CITIES



We read how people took to agriculture and village life. This began some 6000 years ago in our subcontinent. Can you guess when the first cities emerged- 100 years ago, 5000 years ago or 50,000 years ago? In what ways were those cities like modern cities? In what way were they different? What would you like to know about these cities?



The Discovery of Ancient Cities

It was the year 1922. There was a village in Sind called Mohenjodaro. The people of this village were digging on a large mound beside the village.

To their great surprise, they found a brick wall buried under the ground! They began to

wonder whether anyone had ever lived there. How old could all this be?

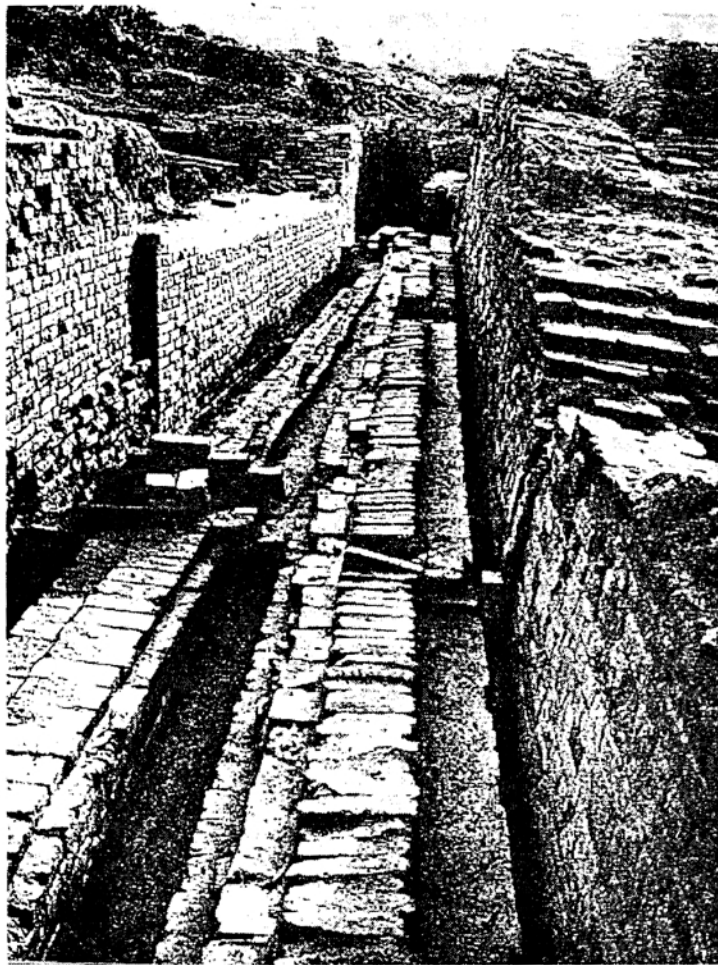
People who study the remains of the past (archaeologists) started digging more and more till they found the remains of a whole city buried beneath! They climbed down and walked along the lanes of the buried city. They saw stairs leading to the houses. Imagine! Like any modern house! There were streets too, between rows of houses - just like our streets today. Such a big city! How many people would have lived here?

People were surprised to find that the buried city was very ancient, about four to five thousand years old. Earlier historians believed that four to five thousand years ago, people lived by agriculture, hunting-gathering and rearing animals. Could cities have been built during such early times?

Cities Amidst Villages

Slowly, the search went on. After digging at many places, it was found that there were not one or two, but many cities in those times. These cities were not found all over India, but in the valley of one main river and its tributaries.





remains of these cities are also found in Ropar in the present Punjab state of India, Kalibangan in the present state of Rajasthan, and Lothal in the present Gujarat state.

• *The oldest cities in India were built in the valley of the river _____.*

• *The search for these ancient cities started in the year _____.*

• *The traces of these cities are found in places like _____, _____ and others.*

Buildings of the Indus Valley Cities

Many kinds of buildings were found in these buried cities. Some of the houses were two-storeyed. They were the houses of the rich. The poor had smaller houses.

- *Look at Map 1 and name the places where we find remains of these ancient cities.*
- *In the valley of which river are these places situated?*
- *In the plains of which rivers do we find traces of old villages?*
- *Were the ancient cities surrounded by villages?*
- *Which modern cities have you visited?*
- *Are modern cities also surrounded by villages?*
- *If there are no villages, can there be cities?*

One or two thousand years had passed since villages grew on the banks of the Indus. The first cities of the India sub-continent came to be built amidst these villages.

Much of the territory in which these cities were built is in today's Pakistan. However,

Look at the walls of the houses in the picture. Only a good mason could have built them! The walls are built of bricks. There must have been kilns for making bricks in those days. Who knows who worked in these kilns. Perhaps there were poor labourers even then!

The streets of the city were not crooked like those of the villages. They were absolutely straight. There were drains on the sides of these streets. The drain from each house was connected to the main drain. All this shows that the city was very well planned.

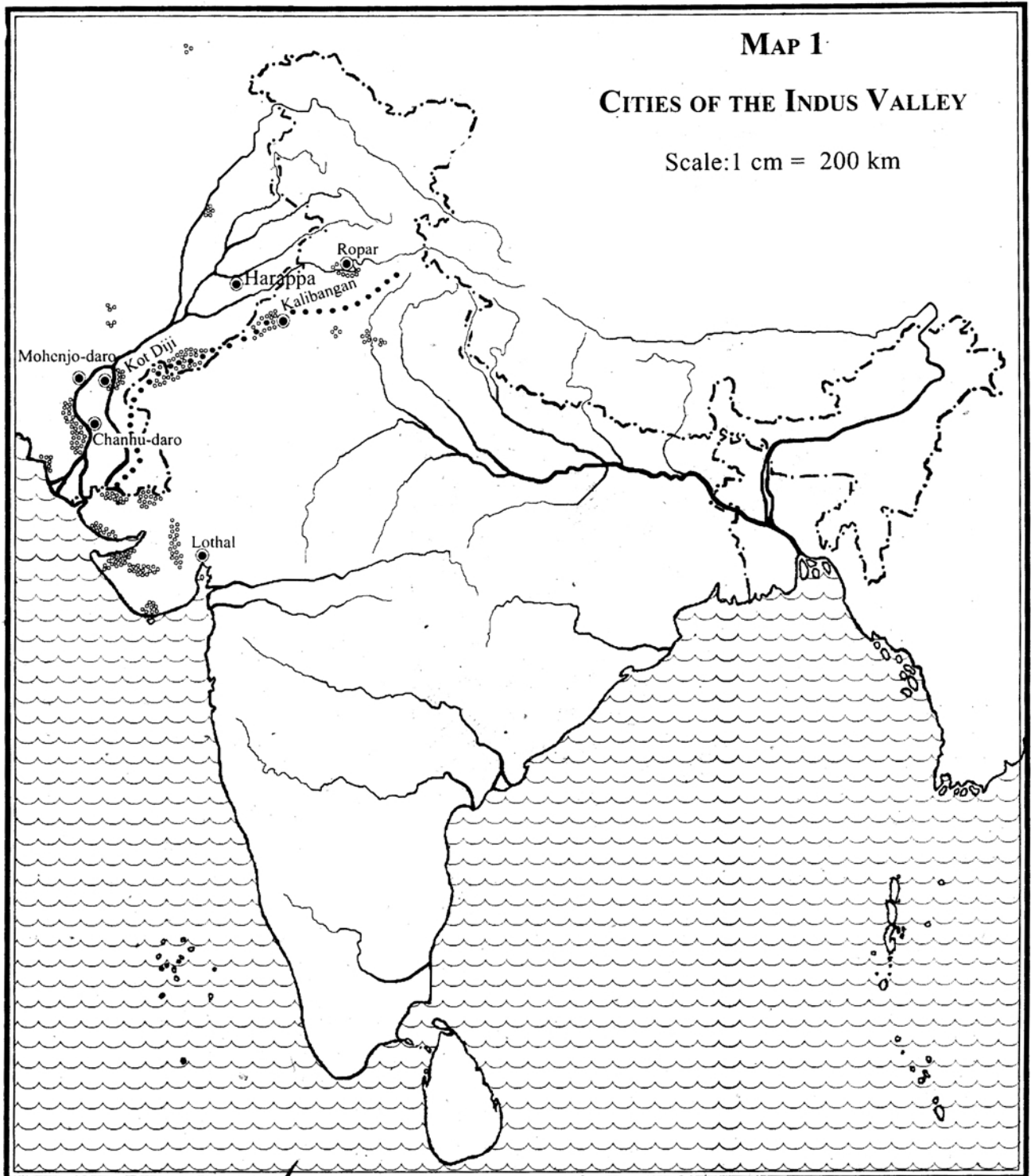
Perhaps we will never know who built these cities, and how. However, from the remains of the city, we can come to know in what ways the lives of the towns-people had changed from the lives of the hunter-gatherers and agriculturists.

Apart from houses, big godowns were found among the remains of the cities of the Indus Valley. Grains collected from nearby villages were stored in these godowns.

MAP 1

CITIES OF THE INDUS VALLEY

Scale: 1 cm = 200 km



Based on Survey of India outline map printed in 1987.

The territorial waters of India extend into the sea to a distance of twelve nautical miles measured from the appropriate base line. C. Govt. of India 1987

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Remains of a large bathing-tank were found in Mohenjo-daro. Rooms had been built on all sides of this tank. There were stairs leading to the tank. We don't know who bathed in this tank and why so many arrangements were made for bathing!

- *What kinds of buildings have been excavated (dug out) in the Indus Valley region?*
- *Why does it seem that the cities in the Indus Valley were well planned?*
- *Why do you think it was necessary for cities to store grains in godowns?*

Metal Objects

Besides big buildings, many small things were found in these cities. Look at these pictures. Look at the bronze swords - they are so sharp!

- *Could such swords have been made of stone?*
- *Which other metal objects can you see in the picture?*

These objects are made of bronze and copper. This means that the people of these cities knew how to mine mineral ore, smelt it

and mould it into different shapes.

The surprising thing is that along with metal objects, stone tools were also made during this period. Perhaps one reason for this is that brass and copper were not as strong and durable as stone. It was not very easy to find these metals either. Therefore, people continued to make things out of stone. No object made of iron was found in these cities.

The Wheel

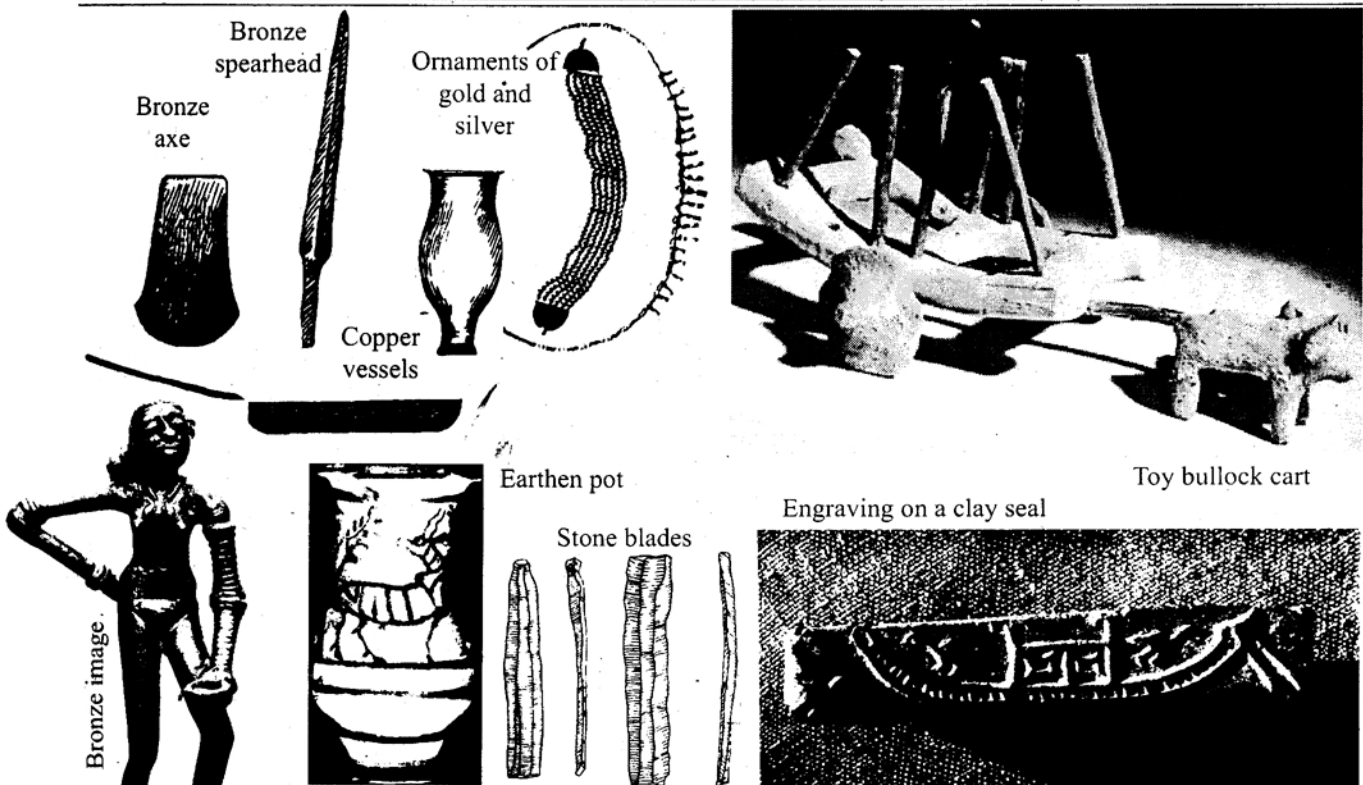
Look at the toy bullock cart. It looks just like the bullock carts of today. Yet, there is one difference. Can you spot it?

Actually, there is a major discovery hidden in the bullock cart - the wheel. The wheel helps us in so many ways.

- *Look around you and see in how many ways the wheel is used.*

Today, we cannot say how someone might have thought of the wheel, or how the first wheel was made. But surely, by this time the wheel had been discovered, or the people of the Indus Valley could not have made the bullock cart!

At that time, wheels were also used for



making pottery. As a result, better pottery was possible.

- *Why do you think the people of the Indus Valley needed bullock carts?*
- *Earlier, weapons and tools were made of stone. Why then, did people start making weapons of metal? What advantage did metals have?*

Occupations

From the objects shown in the picture, you can make out that there were many artisans in the Indus Valley. Unlike hunter-gatherers the towns-people did not make all the things they needed. Different artisans made different things and sold them to others.

- *Can you make a list of various artisans of those days ?*

Writing

There is another special thing found in these ancient cities - square-shaped, clay or stone tablets. You can see figures of human beings, animals, plants and vessels on them. Figures like these can also be found on the tablets —



- *Can you draw these figures in your note-book?*

According to some people, these are the writings of those days. If this is true, what kind of script (writing) is it? It appears that when people first started writing, they did not use the kind of letters we use today. Their letters looked more like pictures.

Can you understand this writing?

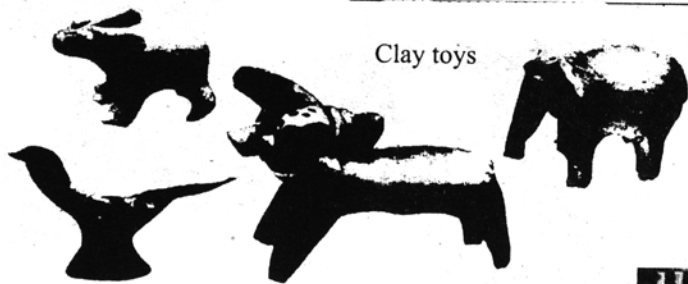
Actually, even historians have not been able to read the writing of the cities of the Indus Valley. That is why we are still in the dark about so many things in these cities.

Trade

Some scholars think that these tablets are actually seals used by traders. When a trader sent his goods from one place to another, he probably packed his things and sealed them with wet clay and stamped them with his seal. Thus, his goods could be recognised by the stamp they bore.

Such tablets have been found in other countries too, especially in Iraq.

- *Locate Iraq on the map of Asia. How far is it from the Indus Valley?*



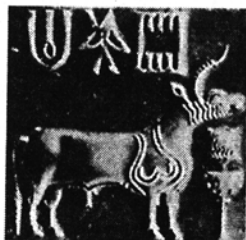
Clay toys

Clay figurine

A stone statue



Stone seals



How did the tablets from the Indus Valley reach Iraq? It appears that there was trade between the Indus Valley and Iraq in those days.

• *From which objects found in the remains can it be said that these people could cross rivers or the sea?*

Many things were found in the Indus Valley which were not from this region. For example, beautiful blue stones with which ornaments were made came from Badakshan in northern Afghanistan. Many other objects, made from silver, gold and lead have also been found here, but these metals were not found in this region. They were perhaps brought from Iraq, south India or some other place. Bringing them from another place must have been difficult and costly!

• *Do you think that there were people in these cities who were rich enough to get costly things for their use?*

You must be wondering whether coins too were found in the Indus cities. No, coins have not been found. Goods must have been bartered or exchanged for other goods, not coins.

Gods and Goddesses

• *Which of the objects in the pictures could have been worshipped by the people of the Indus Valley?*

Perhaps the clay figure was an image of their goddess. A figure with the horns of a bull is found on a stone seal. It is surrounded by the figures of many animals. It might have been some god. Perhaps people worshipped him as the god of animals.

Can you see a very strange animal carved on one of the seals? On another you will find a peepul tree and a snake. Perhaps these too were worshipped. However, we can't be certain.

• *How many of the things mentioned above are worshipped even today?*

Decline of the Cities

Cities emerged in the Indus Valley about four to five thousand years ago. These cities survived for about nine hundred years. Then, for some unknown reason, they were destroyed and deserted. However, many of the surrounding villages remained. After the decline of these cities, no city came up in our subcontinent for many hundreds of years.

EXERCISES

1. Here are some of the facts of human history. Which of these happened earlier, and which later? Arrange in order of time.

- | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. Reading and writing | b. Clearing forests for making fields | c. Hunting wild animals |
| d. Rearing animals | e. Gathering fruits from the forest | f. Building cities |
| g. Building villages | h. Trading with far-off places | |

First _____

Then _____

Then _____

2. Mention four main features of the seals found in the Indus Valley.
3. If we could read the script of the Indus Valley, what all could we come to know? Name three things.
4. How did people come to know about the cities of the Indus Valley? Which section of the chapter will answer this question?

Choose the correct alternative - a. 'The Buildings of the Indus Valley Civilization' b. 'Cities Amidst Villages'
c. 'The Discovery of Ancient Cities'

5. Make a list of the new features of the cities of the Indus Valley which were not found in the early villages.
6. What is Map 1 about? What is described in it? Write in 4-5 sentences about it.
7. Does the chapter answer all your queries about the oldest towns of India?
Would you like to ask Sawaliram some questions?

RIVERS IN MAPS

You are aware that rivers usually originate in mountains, flow down into the plains and fall into the ocean.

In maps, rivers are shown with black or blue lines. Rivers are narrow at their source and become broad as they reach the sea.

Identify the river, land and sea in Figure 1. Where is the source of the river? In which direction is it flowing? Where does it end?

Can the river flow from the sea to the mountains?

In Figure 2, you can see that many small rivers have joined the big river which is falling into the sea.

1. Trace your pencil on the big river from beginning to end.
2. How many small rivers are joining the big river?
3. Make a circle where the river meets the sea.

On the facing page, there is a map of the rivers of India. Copy this map in your notebook.

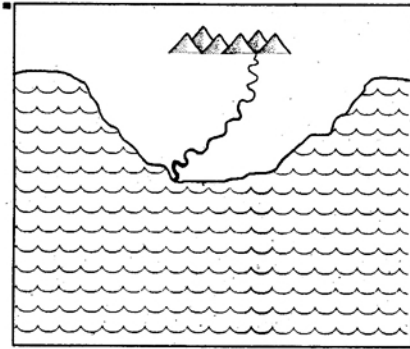


Figure 1.

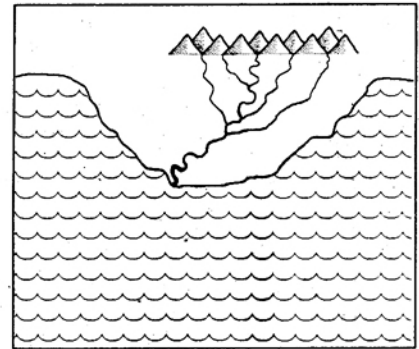
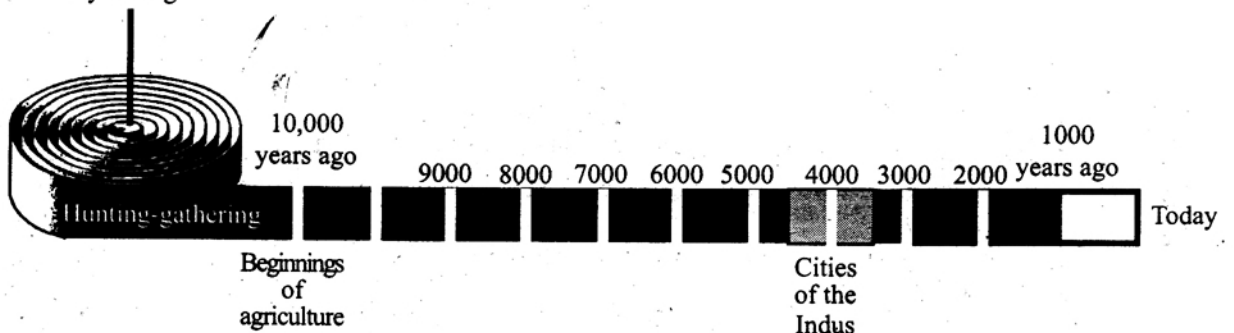


Figure 2.

PASSAGE OF TIME IN HUMAN HISTORY

Human beings emerged on the earth about 15 lakh years ago. They were hunter-gatherers then. So hunting-gathering has been there for 15 lakh years! The beginnings of agriculture took place just about 10,000 years ago.

Human beings emerged fifteen lakh years ago



The emergence of cities is even more recent. Cities emerged in the Indus Valley only 4,500 years ago and disappeared about 3,500 years ago.

RIVERS OF INDIA

