

● **LIVE** **CLASS 12th HISTORY**

BACKLOG
MARATHON
S E R I E S

1. Bricks, Beads and Bones
2. Kings, Farmers and Towns
3. Kinship, Caste and Class



BRICKS

BEADS AND BONES

Sources

IVC

~~Written Evidence~~

Introduction

- **Harappan Civilisation** → Indus Valley Civilisation.
- **Evidence** → Harappan pottery, bricks (baked and unbaked), seals, weights, beads, copper and bronze articles
- **Location** → Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Sind and Punjab provinces of Pakistan and the Indian States of Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra
- **Area** → Approx. 12,99,600 sq. kilometres

John Marshall

P + S + T



Terminologies, Places and Time

INDUS VALLEY CIVILISATION (6000-1300 BCE)



EARLY HARAPPAN PHASE (6000-2600 BCE)

- Formative phase
- Beginning of settlements & cultural growth
- Evidence of agriculture and pastoralism and some crafts.
- Settlements were small and virtually no large buildings.



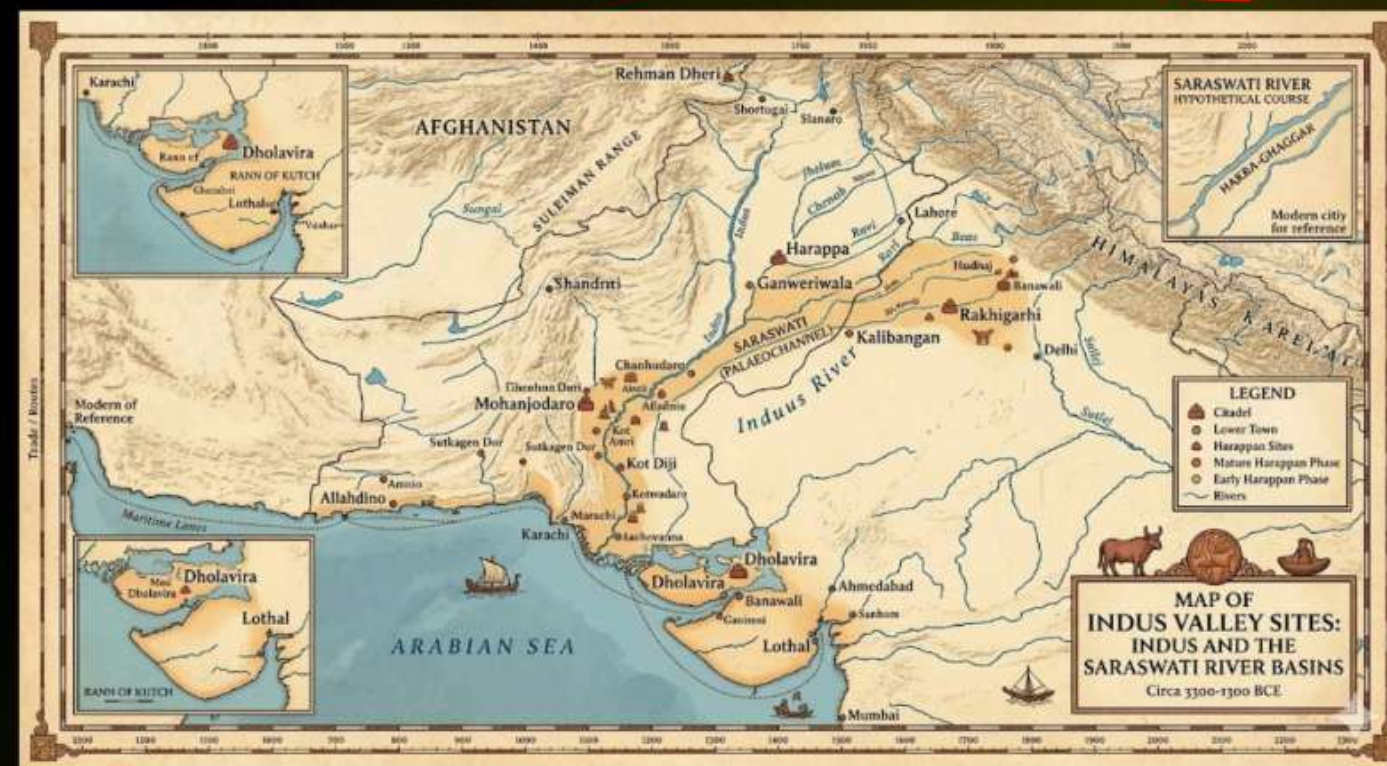
MATURE HARAPPAN PHASE (2600-1900 BCE)

- Urban phase
- Most prosperous stage
- Cities like Harappa, Mohenjo-daro flourish



LATE HARAPPAN PHASE (1900-1300 BCE)

- Decline phase
- Urban centres weaken and disperse

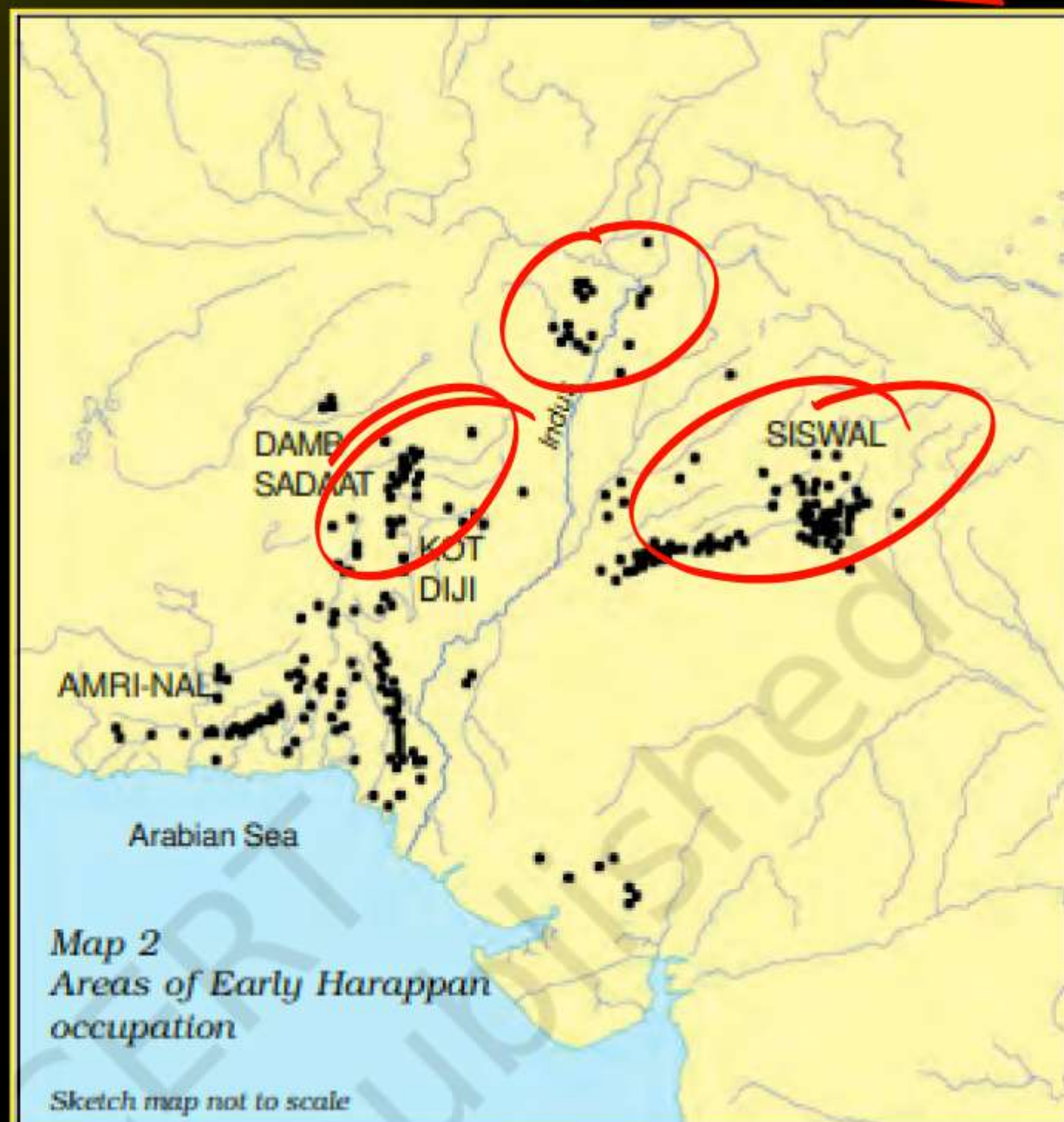


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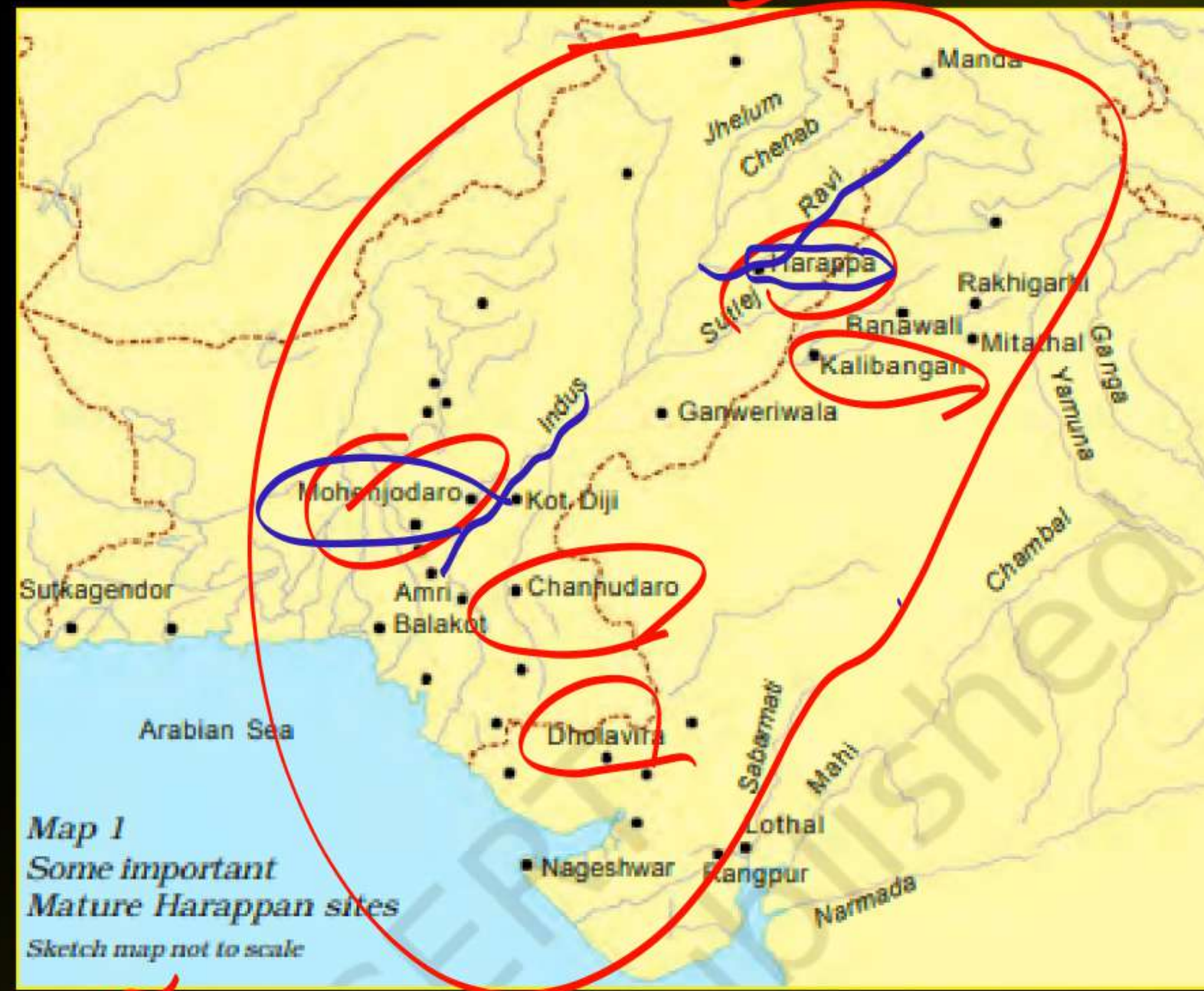
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ختم

Early Harappan Sites



Mature Harappan



Harappan seal

- Distinctive artefact of the Harappan or Indus valley civilisation.

Material → Steatite stone → Soft

Depicts → Animal motifs and signs

Script → Undeciphered.

Archaeological Sources → Houses, pots, ornaments, tools and seals

Trade



A Harappan Seal

Subsistence Strategies

- Source: Charred grains and seeds → dietary practices

Grains - ●

- Wheat, barley, lentil, chickpea and sesame etc.
- Millets are found in Gujarat.
- Rice is rarely found.

Archaeo-Botanists -

- Specialists in ancient plant remains.

Animals - ●

- Practice of Pastoralism and Hunting.
- Bones of Cattle, sheep, goat, buffalo and pig are found at Harappan sites. They were domesticated
- Archaeo-zoologists / Zooarchaeologists - Specialists in remains animal bones
- Wild species - Boar, deer and gharial.
- Bones of fish and fowl

Agricultural Technologies

- Fields had two sets of furrows at right angles to each other, situated in semi arid lands → Kalibangan → growing two types of crops on the same field.
- Terracotta models of the plough → Cholistan, Banawali,
- A terracotta bull → used for ploughing

Tools

- **Material** - Copper tools and Stone blades
- **Purpose** - Harvesting and ploughing

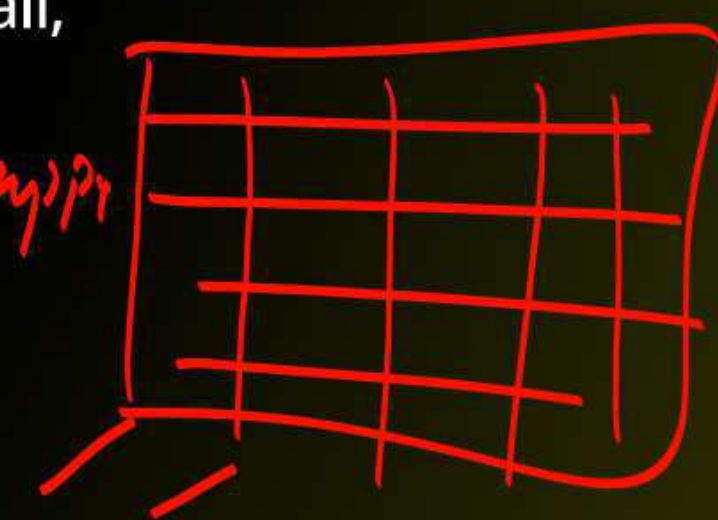
Irrigation

Most Harappan sites are located in semi-arid lands

- **Canals** - Shortughai in Afghanistan.
- **Wells**
- **Water reservoir** - Dholavira - To store water

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Harappan



Mohenjodaro : A Planned Urban Centre

Harappan civilisation was a well developed and urbanized.

- Harappa- First site to be discovered.
- Mohenjodaro - Largest site of IVC.



Two Sections of settlement

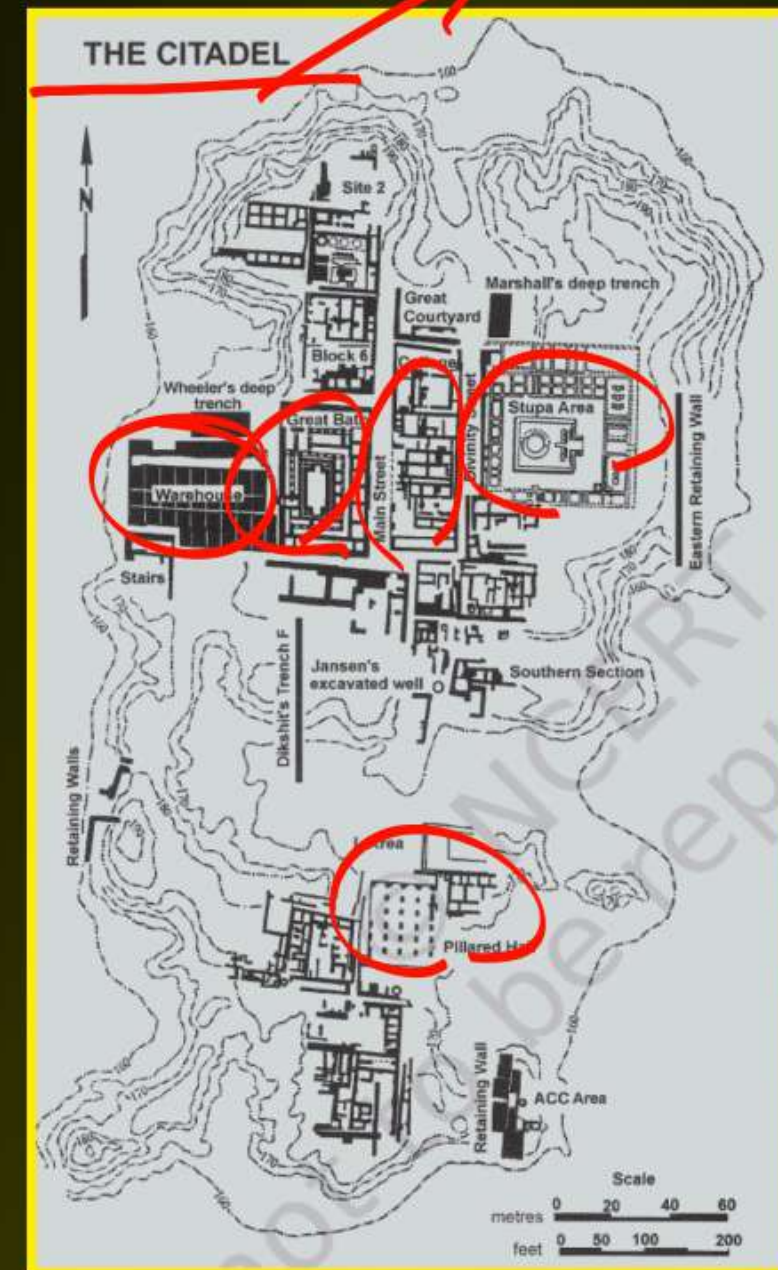
Citadel

~~Lower Town~~

Mohenjodaro : A Planned Urban Centre

Citadel

- Smaller but higher
- **Reason** - buildings were constructed on mud brick platforms.
- It was walled → Physically separated from lower town.
- **Variations** - Generally Harappan settlements have a small high western part.
- At sites such as Dholavira and Lothal (Gujarat), the entire settlement was fortified, and sections within the town were also separated by walls.
- The Citadel within Lothal was not walled off, but was built at a height.
- **Purpose** - Probably used for special public purposes. Ex:- Warehouse and Great Bath.



Mohenjodaro (A planned urban center)

The Citadel

1. **The warehouse** – Lower brick portions remain, while the upper portions of wood, decayed .
2. **The Great Bath** - Large rectangular tank in a courtyard surrounded by a corridor on all four sides.
 - Steps on the north and south leading into the tank,
 - Made Watertight by setting bricks and using a mortar of gypsum.
 - Rooms on three sides with a large well.
 - Eight bathrooms, four on each side of a corridor, with drains from each bathroom connecting to a main.
 - Feature - Special ritual bath.



Warehouse



Great Bath

Mohenjodaro : A Planned Urban Centre

Lower Town

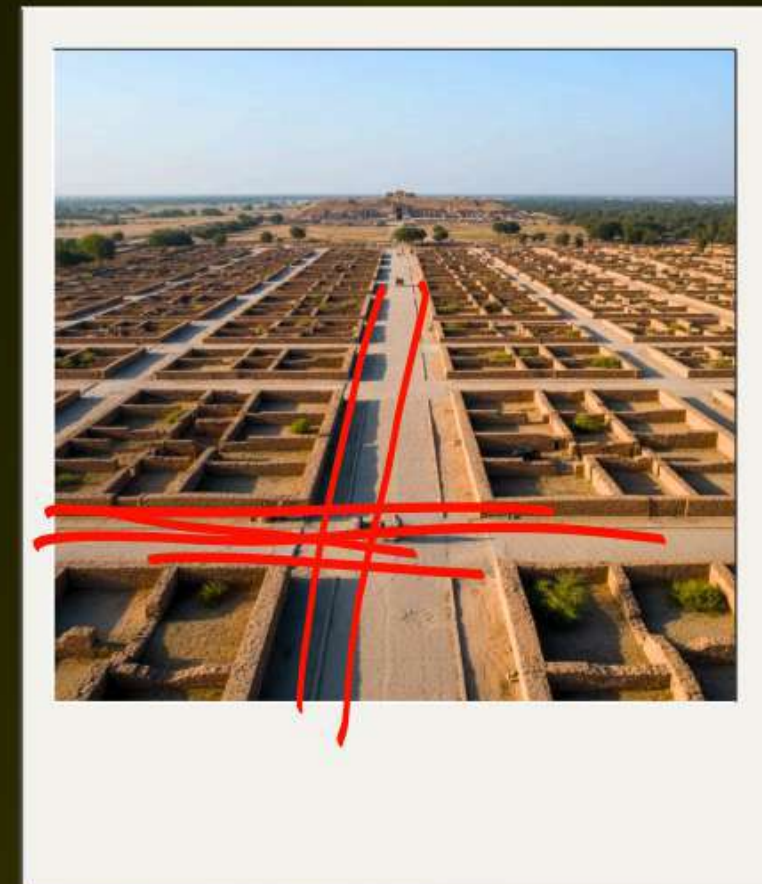
- Larger but lower.
- Also walled and had several buildings built on platforms, which served as foundations.
- Planned drainage system
- Lower Town roads and streets grid pattern intersecting at right angles
- Seems - streets with drains houses
- Domestic waste water had to flow into the street drains.

Signs of planning -

1. Construction was restricted to a fixed area on the platforms - first planned and then implemented .

2. Material

- Sundried or baked bricks
- Standardised ratio - L : B : H :: 4 : 2 : 1
- Used at all Harappan settlements



8M

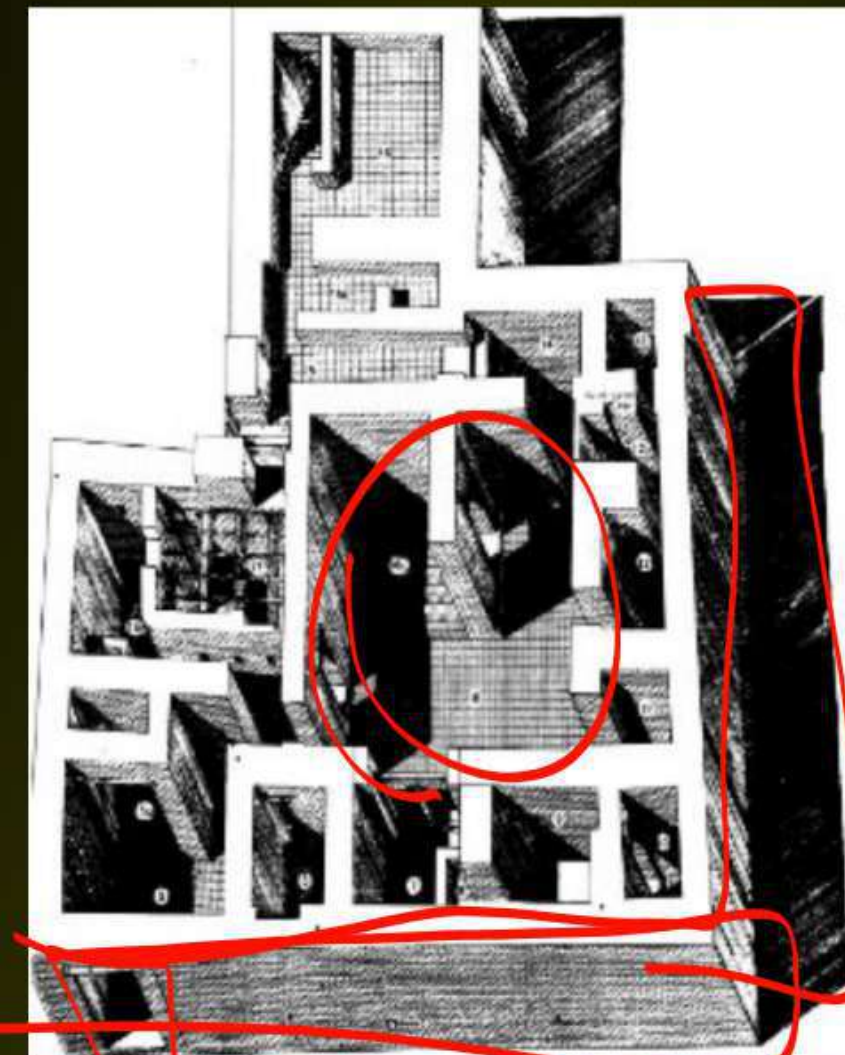
Mohenjodaro

Domestic architecture -

- Lower Town → residential buildings.
- Centred on a courtyard, rooms on all sides.
- The courtyard → centre of activities ✓

Privacy -

1. No windows in walls along ground level → no direct view
 2. Main entrance does not give a direct view of the interior or the courtyard.
- Had individual bathroom, paved with bricks drains connected to street drains.
 - Had remains of staircases → second storey or the roof. ✓
 - Many houses had wells which could be reached from the outside and perhaps used by passers-by.
 - About 700 wells in Mohenjodaro.



This is an isometric drawing of a large house in Mohenjodaro. There was a well in room no 6

Drainage System

- Every house was connected to the street drains. The drains were made of mortar, lime and gypsum.
- They were covered with big bricks which could be lifted easily to clean the drains.
- For sewage from the houses, pits were provided at either side of the street.
- Very long drainage channels were provided at intervals with sumps for cleaning.
- In smaller settlements such as Lothal, the houses were built of mud bricks and drains were made of burnt bricks.



A drain in Mohenjodaro Notice the huge opening of the drain.

IVC → Sanitation

Tracking Social Differences

Bones

Burials

- Dead were laid in pits → Poor.
- Hollowed-out spaces were lined with bricks → Rich

Pottery and Ornaments -

- Could be used in the afterlife. ✓
- Jewellery - Both men and women ✓
- Excavations - In the mid-1980s, an ornament consisting of three shell rings, a jasper bead and micro beads was found near the skull of a male, buried with copper mirrors.



Belief

- Harappans did not believe in burying precious things with the dead.

Tracking Social Differences

Utilitarians

- Objects of daily use made fairly easily out of ordinary
- **Materials** - stone or clay.
- These include querns, pottery, needles, flesh-rubbers (body scrubbers), etc.,
- Found distributed throughout settlements.



A faience pot

Luxuries

- Rare or made from **costly, non-local materials** or with complicated technologies.
- Pots of faience in Mohenjodaro
- Harappan gold jewellery from hoards.
- **Exception** - Articles of daily use, such as spindle whorls made of rare materials like faience.
- Found in large settlements like Mohenjodaro and Harappa.

- In Hoards are objects kept carefully by people, often inside containers such as pots, saved for reuse by metalworkers

Finding Out About Craft Production

Chanhuduro → Craft Centre

- Less than 7 hectares
- Devoted to craft production- Bead making, shell-cutting, metal working and weight making.

Materials for bead making

1. **Stones** - Carnelian, jasper, crystal, quartz and steatite
2. **Metals** - Copper, bronze and gold;
3. **Others** - Shell, faience and terracotta or burnt clay.

Shapes – disc - shaped, cylindrical, spherical, barrel-shaped, segmented.

- Decorated by incising or painting, and some had designs etched onto them



A tool and beads

Finding Out About Craft Production

8m

Techniques for making beads

Depend on the material.

- **Steatite** - Soft stone, was easily worked → Variety of shapes
- Harder stones → geometrical forms
- **Red colour of carnelian** - Firing the yellowish raw material and beads at various stages of production.
- Specialised drills found at Chanhudaro, Lothal and Dholavira.



Carnelian Beads



Finding Out About Craft Production

Shell Craft

- **Centres** - Nageshwar and Balakot → near the coast.
- **Objects** - Including bangles, ~~ladles~~ and inlay.
- **Transportation** - from Chanhudaro and Lothal → large urban centres such as Mohenjodaro and Harappa.

Identifying Centres of Productions

1. **Raw material** - Stone nodules, ~~whole shells~~, copper ore
 2. Tools
 3. Unfinished objects ✓
 4. Rejects and waste ✓
- **Result** - Craft production occurred → specialised centres + large cities.



Shell Craft

Finding Out About Craft Production

Identifying centres of production

- Sometimes, larger waste pieces were used up to make smaller objects, but minuscule bits were usually left in the work area.
- These traces suggest that apart from small, specialised centres, craft production was also undertaken in large cities such as Mohenjodaro and Harappa.



Pottery

Some of these can be seen in the National Museum, Delhi or in the site museum at Lothal.

Strategies for Procuring Materials

Materials from the subcontinent and beyond

- Local - Clay
- Import → Stone, timber and metal

Means of transportation

- Land routes
- Riverine routes
- Coastal routes

Materials from the subcontinent and beyond

1. Establishment of Settlement

Shell	Nageshwar and Balakot
Lapis lazuli	Shortughai
Carnelian	Bharuch, Gujarat
steatite	South Rajasthan and North Gujarat



Terracotta cart



Seal depicting a boat

Strategies for Procuring Materials

2. Sending Expeditions

- Copper → Khetri
- Gold → South India

Occasional finds of Harappan artefacts indicates -

- Contact with Local communities
- Ganeshwar Jodhpura culture(Khetri region) - distinctive pottery and copper objects. → Copper supplier

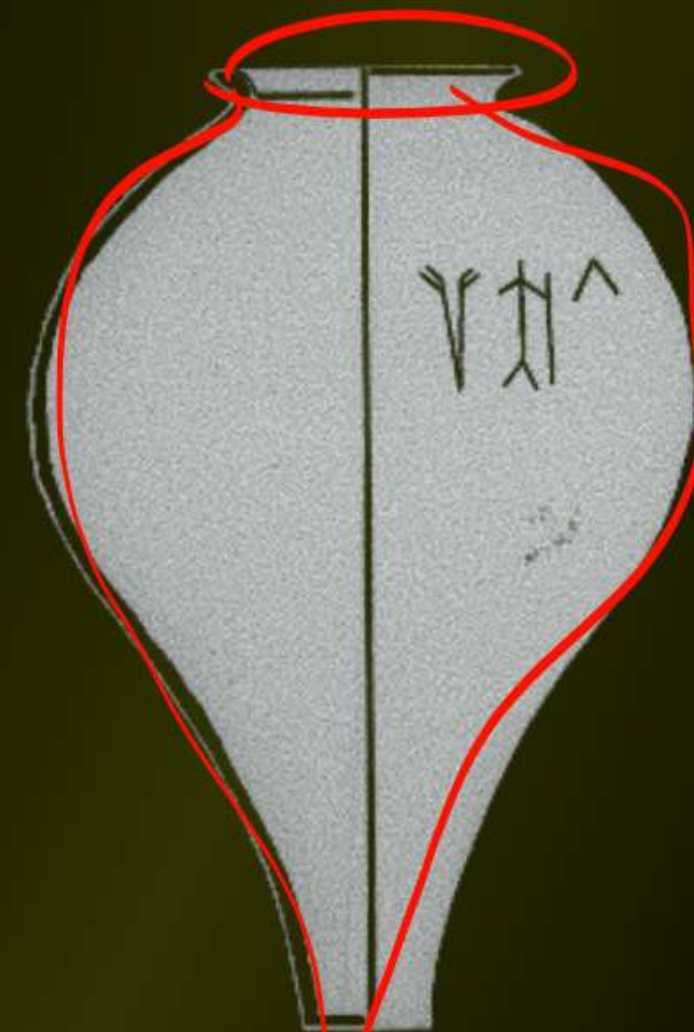
Copper

Strategies for Procuring Materials

Contact with Distant Lands

- Copper → Oman.
- Chemical analyses → Omani copper and Harappan artefacts have traces of nickel → common origin

- A large Harappan jar coated with black clay thick coatings prevent the percolation of liquids.
- Harappans exchanged the contents of these vessels for Omani copper.

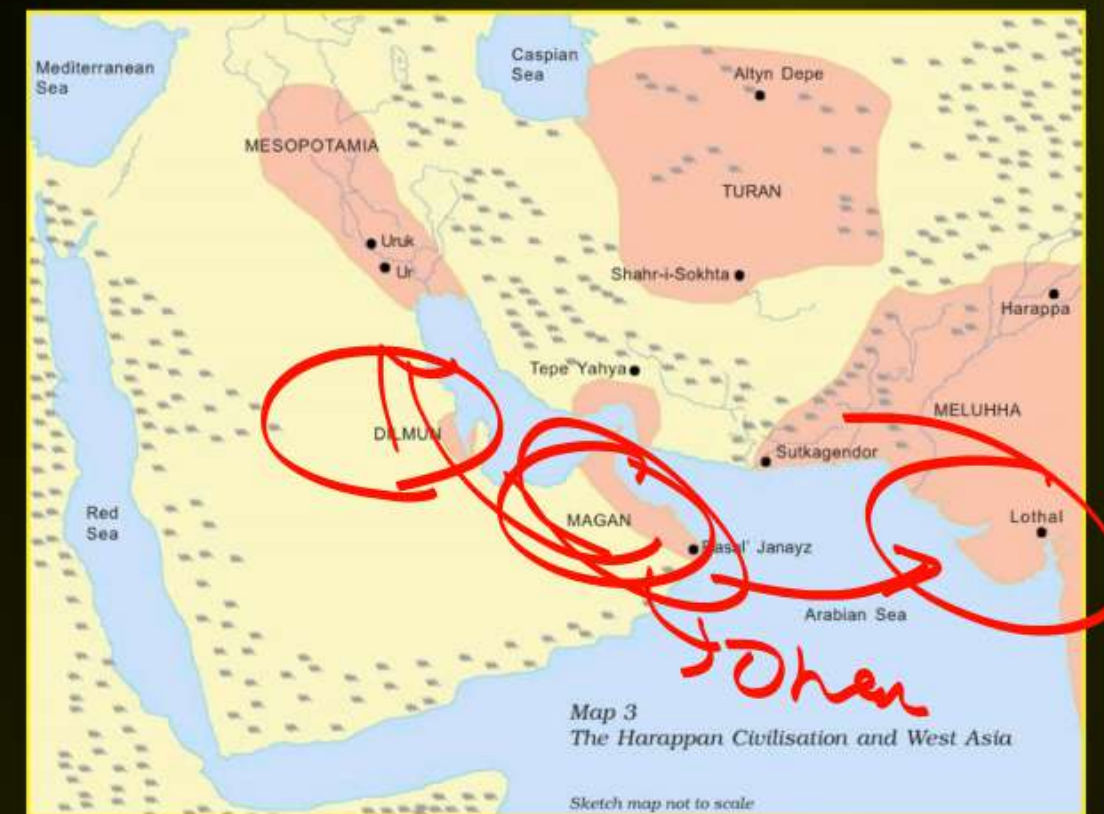


A Harappan jar found in Oman

Strategies for Procuring Materials

Contact with Distant Lands

- Mesopotamian texts → 3rd millennium BCE
- Copper → Magan → Oman,
- Copper found at Mesopotamian sites also contains traces of nickel.
- Contacts were with Dilmun (Bahrain), Magan, Meluhha.
- The products from Meluhha : Carnelian, lapis lazuli, copper, gold, and varieties of wood.
- Meluhha known as land to seafares → depictions of ships and boats on seals.



"May your bird be the haja-bird, may its call be heard in the royal palace."

Seals, Script, Weights

Seal and Sealings

- Used to confirm communication over a long distance.
- Sealings → identity of the sender, containing the name and title of the owner
- **Material** - Steatite
- Contain motifs (Symbols) and signs from a script.

BM

An enigmatic Script

- Harappan seals contain a line of writing → name and title of the owner.
- Scholars suggested motif (generally an animal) conveyed a meaning to those who could not read.
- Most inscriptions are short, the longest containing about 26 signs.
- **Undeciphered** script with **No Alphabetical order**.
- 375-400 signs and written from right to left.
- **Writing-covered objects**: Seals, copper tools, rims of jars, copper and terracotta tablets, jewellery, bone rods, ancient signboard- Dholavira.



This is a cylinder seal, typical of Mesopotamia, but the humped bull motif on it appears to be derived from the Indus region.



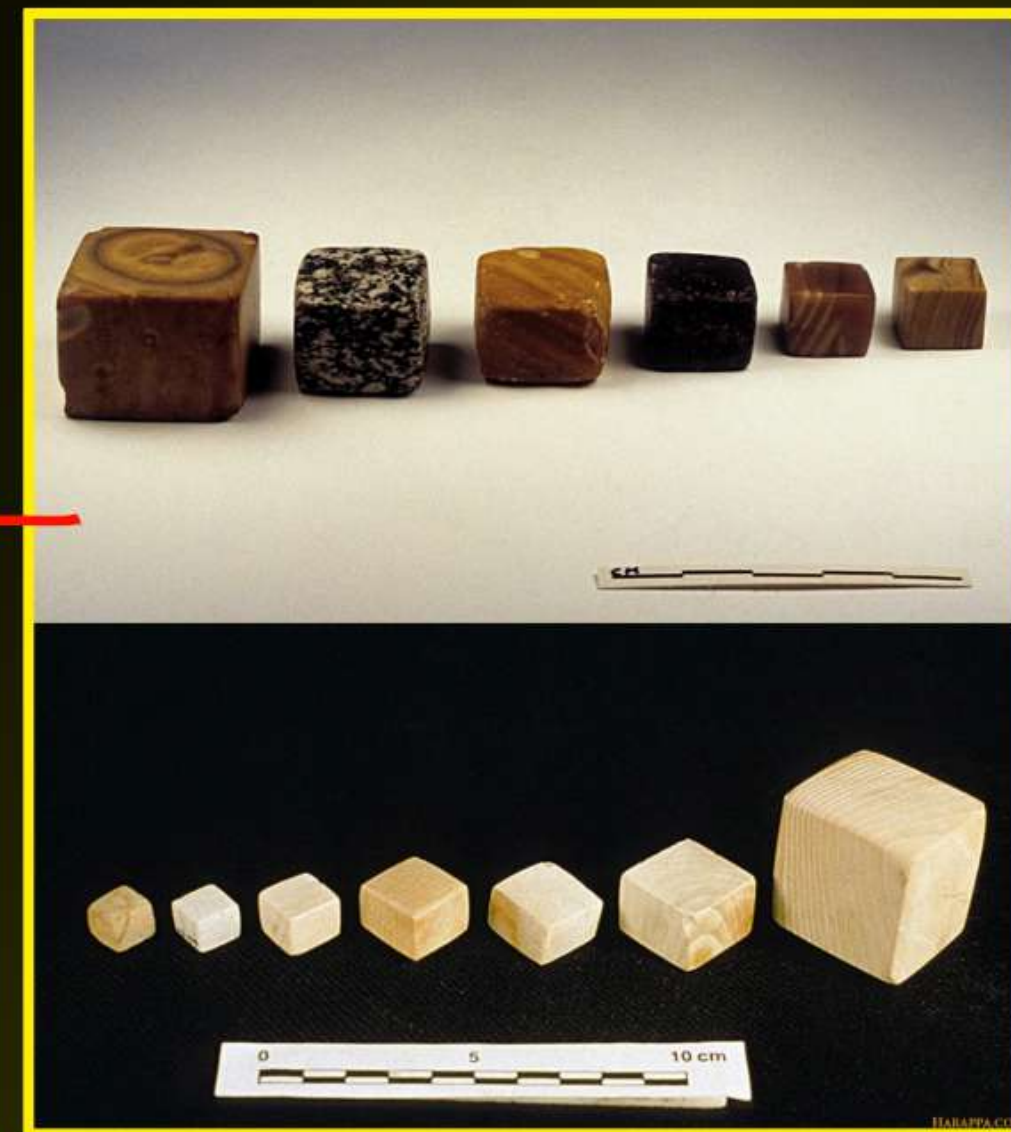
The round "Persian Gulf" seal found in Bahrain sometimes carries Harappan motifs.

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Ancient authority

Weights

- Exchanges were regulated by a precise system of weights.
- Cubical stones known as **chert** were used without markings.
- **Lower weights** followed binary system (1, 2, 4, 8, etc) . Used for Jewellery and beads.
- **Higher weights** followed the decimal system (160, 200, 320, 640).
- Metal scale-pan also found.
- Local "Dilmun" weights followed the Harappan standard.



Ancient authority

Palaces and Kings

Indications of complex decisions being taken and implemented

Ex.-

- Uniformity of Harappan artefacts.
- Uniform ratio of bricks.
- Strategic locations of settlements.
- Mobilisation of labour for making bricks and construction.

Evidences -

- Large building of Mohenjo-Daro → palaces but no spectacular finds .
- A stone statue was known as the 'Priest-king'
- Ritual practices are not well understood nor about those who performed.

Different views -

- No rulers, egalitarian society.
- No single ruler but several.
- There was a single state, setting up the uniformity, standards and planning to others - most plausible.

The End of the Civilisation

"Late Harappan phase ➡ By c. 1800 BCE

Several explanations have been put forward:-

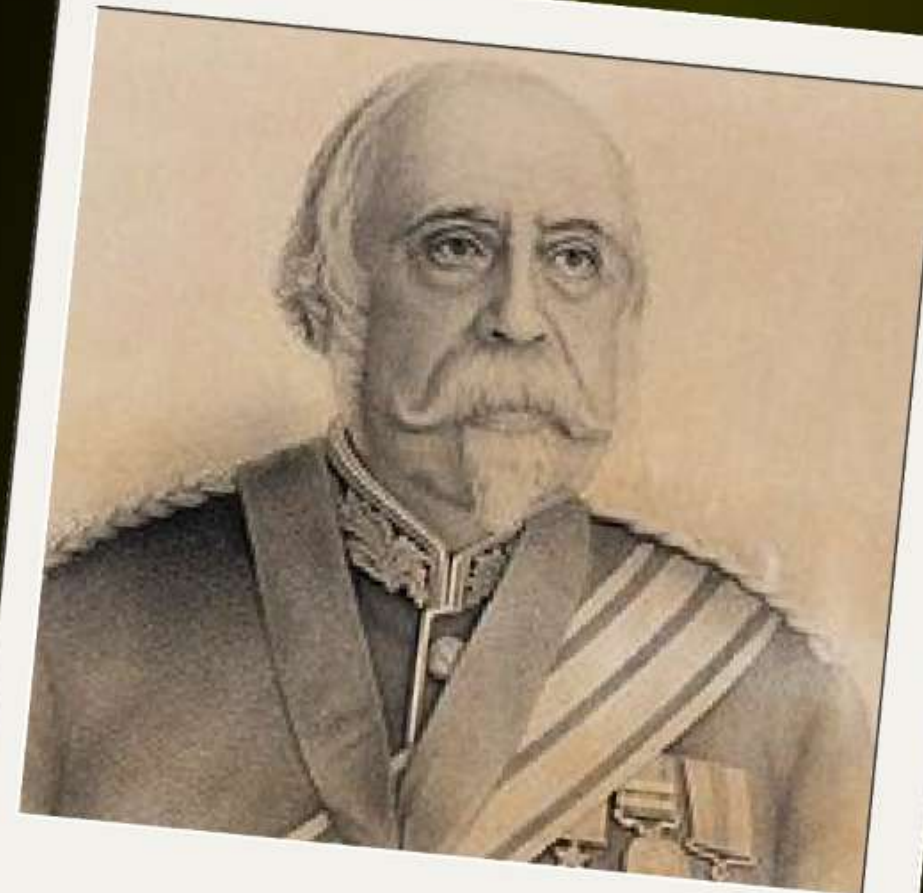
- Climatic changes, deforestation, shifting or drying up the rivers, excessive land use. ➡ hold for certain settlements, but not for the entire civilisation.
- Disappearance of craft and decline of cities.
- **Mixed causes** - Aryan invasion, Political pressure "successor cultures" etc.



Discovering the Harappan Civilisation

Cunningham's Confusion

- Alexander Cunningham → first Director-General of the ASI.(began excavations in the mid 19th century)
- Used the accounts of Chinese Buddhist pilgrims who had visited sub continent to locate early settlements.
- He excavated sites and tended to recover artefacts as a measure of cultural value.
- He tried to place it within the time-frame with which he was familiar → 600 BCE. He missed the importance of Harappa.



Alexander Cunningham

Discovering the Harappan Civilisation

A new old civilisation

1. Seals were found at Harappa by **Daya Ram Sahni** in 1921.
2. **Rakhal Das Banerji** → Mohenjodaro in 1922.
3. **John Marshall Director** - General of the ASI, in 1924 announced the discovery of a new civilisation in Indus Valley.
 - Excavated the site horizontally without paying attention to different stratigraphy → loss of valuable information
 - As **S.N. Roy** noted in The Story of Indian Archaeology, "Marshall left India three thousand years older than he had found her."



Daya Ram Sahni



Rakhal Das Banerji



John Marshall



S.N. Roy

Discovering the Harappan Civilisation

4. R.E.M. Wheeler

- Director General of the ASI in 1944 brought changes(ex-army brigadier).
- He recognised the necessity to follow the stratigraphy of the mound.
- Since 1980 modern scientific techniques are being used to recover traces of clay, stone, metal and plant, animal remains.
- After partition → Kalibangan, Lothal, Rakhi Garhi and Dholavira have been discovered, explored and excavated.



Problems of Piecing Together the Past

Material evidence ➡ allows archaeologists to better reconstruct Harappan life. But Organic Materials like cloths, wood usually decompose in tropical regions.

Classifying Finds

1. Material - stone, clay, metal, ~~bone~~, ivory etc.
2. Function - an artefact, a tool, an ~~ornament~~, or both, meant for ritual use.

An understanding of the function of an artefact

1. Resemblance with present-day things - beads, querns, stone blades and pots
2. Context in which it was found- in a house, drain, grave, kiln etc.

Archaeologists have to:

1. Take recourse to indirect evidence ➡ cotton.
2. Develop frames of reference. ➡ Comparing Harappa with Mesopotamian finds.

Problems of Piecing Together the Past

Problems of Interpretation

- Some objects seem unfamiliar and unusual → religious significance.
1. Figurines of women are expressed as mother goddesses.
 2. Rare stone statuary of men, seated with one hand on the knee – such as the “priest-king.”
 3. Structures with ritual significance – Great Bath and fire altars → Kalibangan and Lothal.
 4. Plants motifs indicate the worship of the nature.
 5. A figure looked as seated in a cross-legged posture, surrounded by animals - Proto Shiva.
 6. A conical stone → 'lingas'.
 7. The depiction of Shiva is not the same as mentioned of Rudra in the Rigveda.



Problems of Piecing Together the Past

Timeline 1 Major Periods in Early Indian Archaeology	
2 Million BP (Before Present)	Lower Palaeolithic
80,000	Middle Palaeolithic
35,000	Upper Palaeolithic
12,000	Mesolithic
10,000	Neolithic (early agriculturists and pastoralists)
6,000	Chalcolithic (first use of copper)
2600 BCE	Harappan civilisation
1000 BCE	Early iron, megalithic burials
600 BCE-400 CE	Early Historic

→ CUGT + Bowdler

Problems of Piecing Together the Past

Timeline 2 Major Developments in Harappan Archaeology	
1875	Report of Alexander Cunningham on Harappan seal ✓
1921	Daya Ram Sahni begins excavations at Harappa ✓
1922	Excavations begin at Mohenjodaro ✓
1946	R.E.M. Wheeler excavates at Harappa ✓
1955	S.R. Rao begins excavations at Lothal ✓
1960	B.B. Lal and B.K. Thapar begin excavations at Kalibangan ✓
1974	M.R. Mughal begins explorations in Bahawalpur ✓
1990	R.S. Bisht begins excavations at Dholavira ✓
1997	Amrendra Nath starts excavations at Rakhigarhi ✓
2013	Vasant Shinde begins archaeogenetic research at Rakhigarhi ✓

Homework Question

- Describe the town planning of Harappa. (CBSE 2024)
- Explain the different approaches used for the classification of found objects by archaeologists, with examples from the Harappan ruins. (CBSE CFPQ)

Break

Prarambh Poo → B+CUET

Prarambh

KINGS

FARMERS AND TOWNS

Introduction

Developments during 1900-600 BCE -

- Composition of the Rig-Veda - Along the Indus and its tributaries.
- Emergence of Agricultural and pastoral settlements.
- Megaliths - New mode of disposal of the dead with iron tools and weapons in central and south India.

Sources

Inscriptions

Texts

Coins

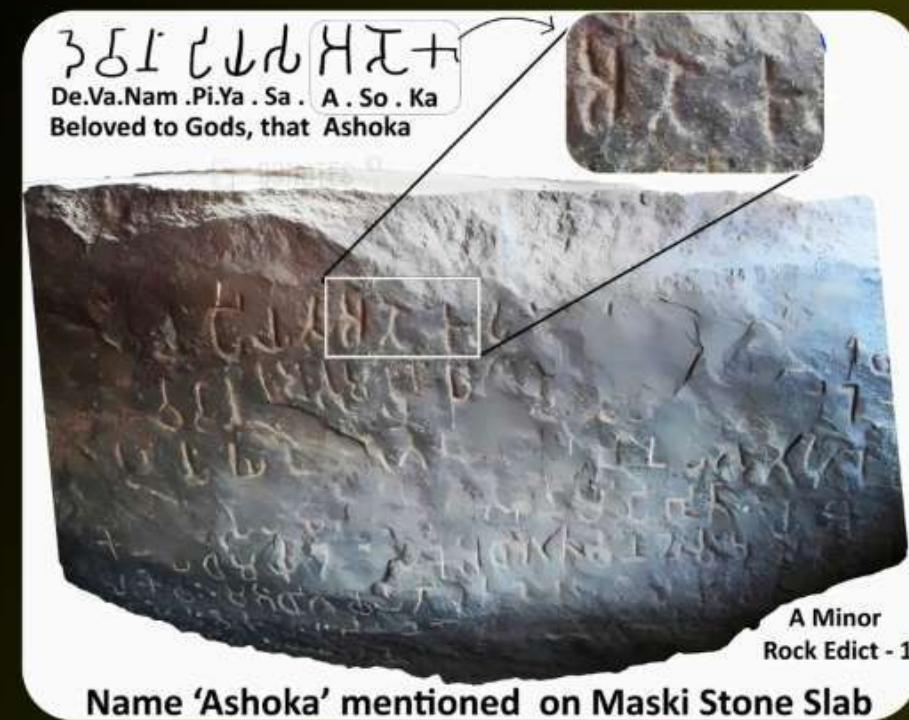
Pottary

Written

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Prinsep and Piyadassi

- In 1838 - **James Prinsep** ➡ an officer in the mint of the East India Company, deciphered **Brahmi and Kharosthi scripts**.
- **Findings** - A king referred to as
 1. Piyadassi ➡ pleasant to behold.
 2. **Asoka** - Famous ruler known from Buddhist texts.
- **Result** - Helped to reconstruct the lineages of major dynasties
- Investigating about the connections between political, economic and social developments.



Epigraphy is the study of inscriptions.

The Earliest States

The Sixth century BCE was a turning point in early Indian history:

- Early states established.
- New cities emerged
- Use of iron grew.
- Coinage developed.
- Diverse system of thoughts grew.
- Buddhism and Jainism flourished.
- 16 Mahajanapadas developed.

janapada means the land where a jana (a people, clan or tribe) sets its foot or settles. It is a word used in both Prakrit and Sanskrit.

3m

Jana

Tribe → Nomad.

Settlement

Janapada

The Earliest States

The Sixteen Mahajanapadas

Mahajanapadas

Monarchy

Ruled by kings
Ex- Anga, Avanti, Chedi,
Kashi, Kosala, Gandhara,
Magadha etc.

Oligarchies

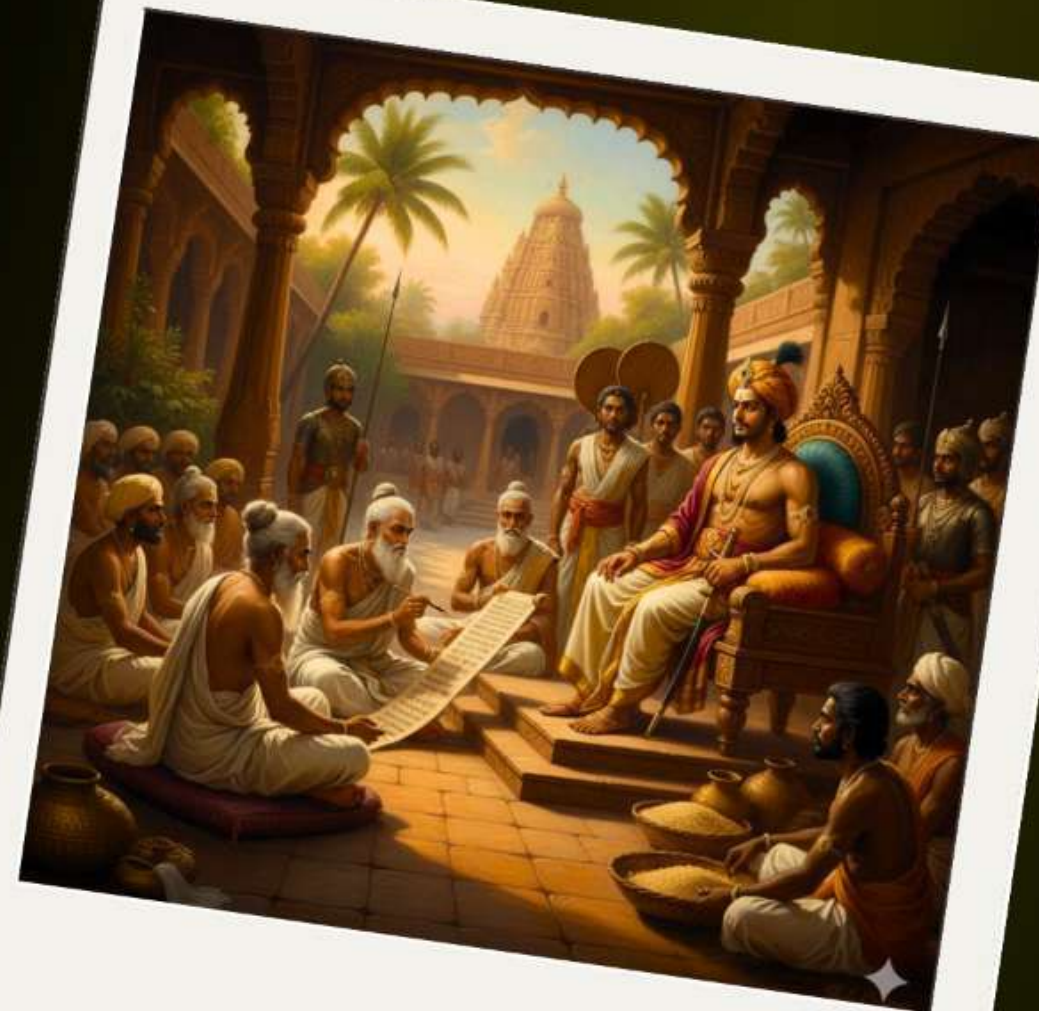
Called Ganas/ (Sanghas)
Power was shared by several men,
collectively called rajas.
Ex.- Vajji, Malla (Mahavira and
Buddha) etc.



The Earliest States

Features

- Had its **own capital**, often fortified.
- Some states maintained **permanent standing armies** recruited from the peasantry and regular bureaucracies.
- From c. 6th century BCE onwards, Brahmanas began composing Sanskrit texts ➔ **Dharma sutras** laid down norms for kings and his subjects.
- Rulers ➔ Kshatriyas.
- Functions ➔ To **collect taxes and tribute** from people.



Factors Responsible For The Rise of Magadha

Between the 6th and 4th centuries BCE → Magadha became the most powerful Mahajanapada

Reasons -

- Fertile soil → agricultural productivity.
- Iron → tools and weapons.
- Elephants → army.
- Ganga and its tributaries → cheap and convenient communication.
- Powerful and ambitious rulers like Bimbisara, Ajatasattu and Mahapadmananda.
- Strategic location of the Capital - Rajagaha, then Pataliputra.

3m / 8m

An Early Empire

Mauryan Empire

- Founder ➡ Chandragupta Maurya (321 BCE).
- **Region of control** - Up to Afghanistan and Baluchistan.

Sources of the Mauryan Age

Archaeological

- Sculpture ✓
- Asoka's inscriptions ✓

Literary sources

- Indica by Megasthenes ✓
- Arthashastra by Kautilya ✓
- Buddhist, Jaina and Puranic literature. ✓



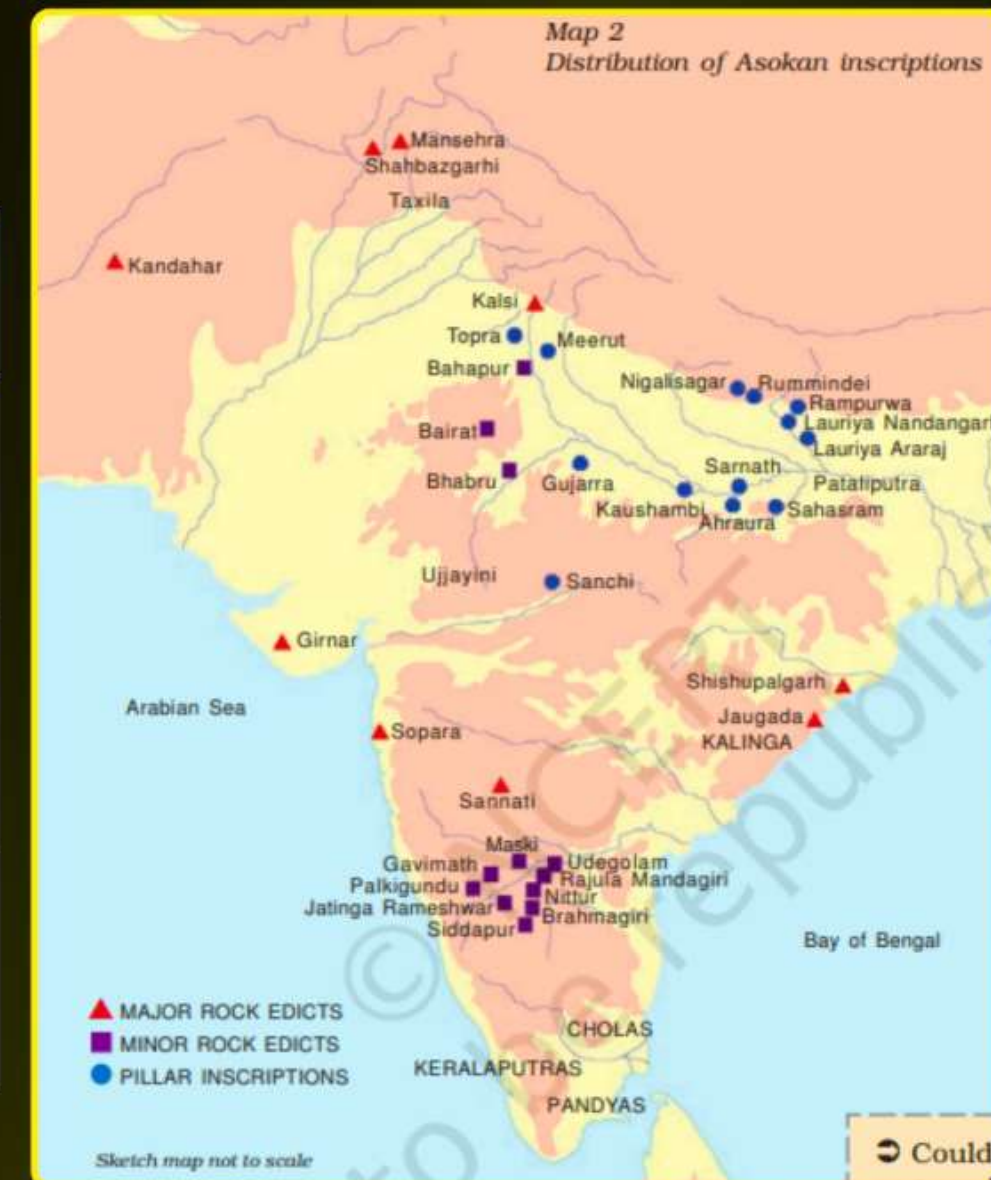
The Lion Capital

An Early Empire

Ashoka - Grandson of Chandragupta Maurya, who conquered Kalinga.

Ashokan Edicts

Area	Language	Script
North, Central and southern parts of India	Prakrit	Brahmi
North-western India	Greek and Aramaic	Kharosti
Afghanistan	Greek and Aramaic	Greek and Aramaic



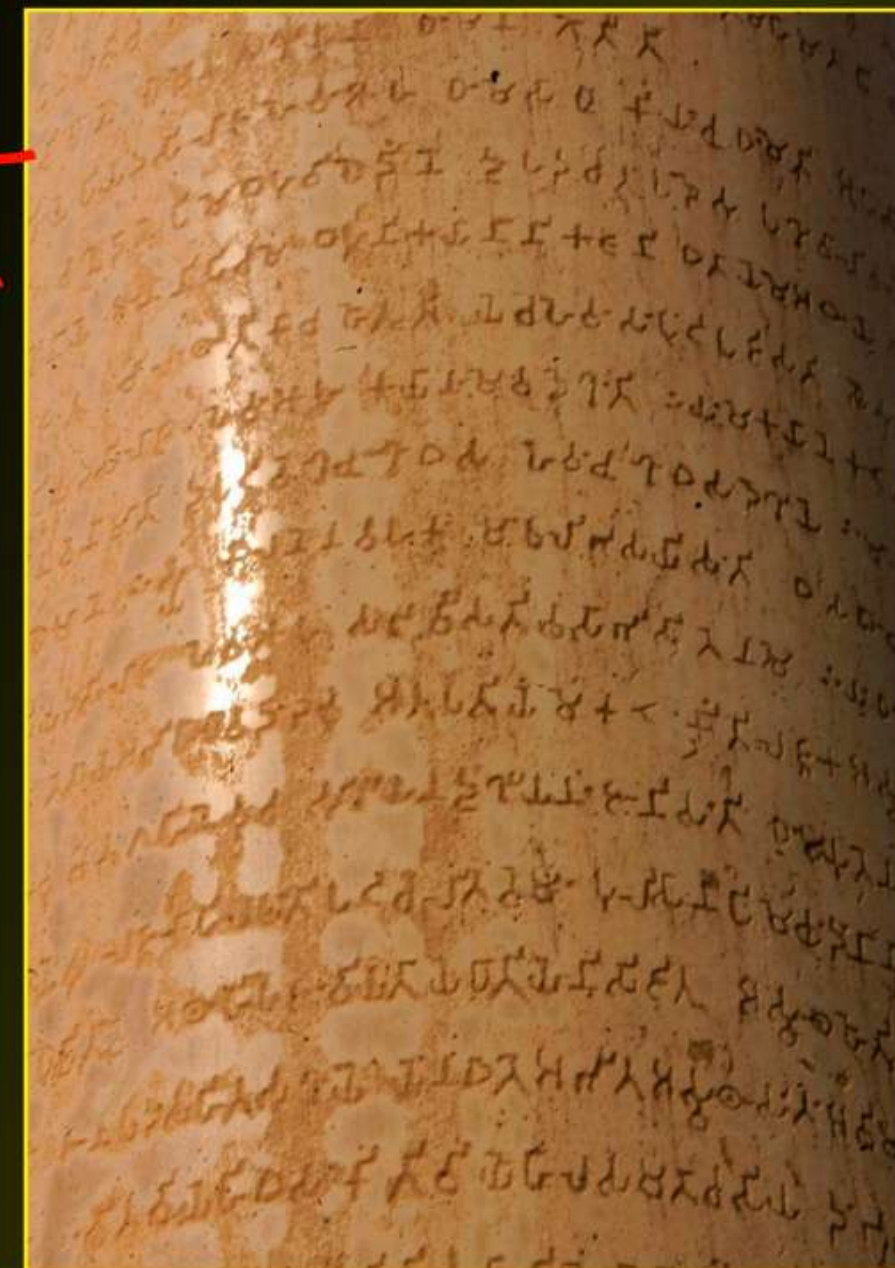
An Early Empire

Ashokan Edicts

- First Indian ruler who inscribed his messages to his subjects and officials on stone surfaces – natural rocks and polished pillars.
- He tried to hold his empire together by promoting Dhamma → ensure well being of people.

Principles of Dhamma were,

- Respect to elders.
- Generosity towards Brahmanas and others sects.
- Kindness to slaves and servants.
- Religious tolerance towards other religions.



An Early Empire

Administering the Empire

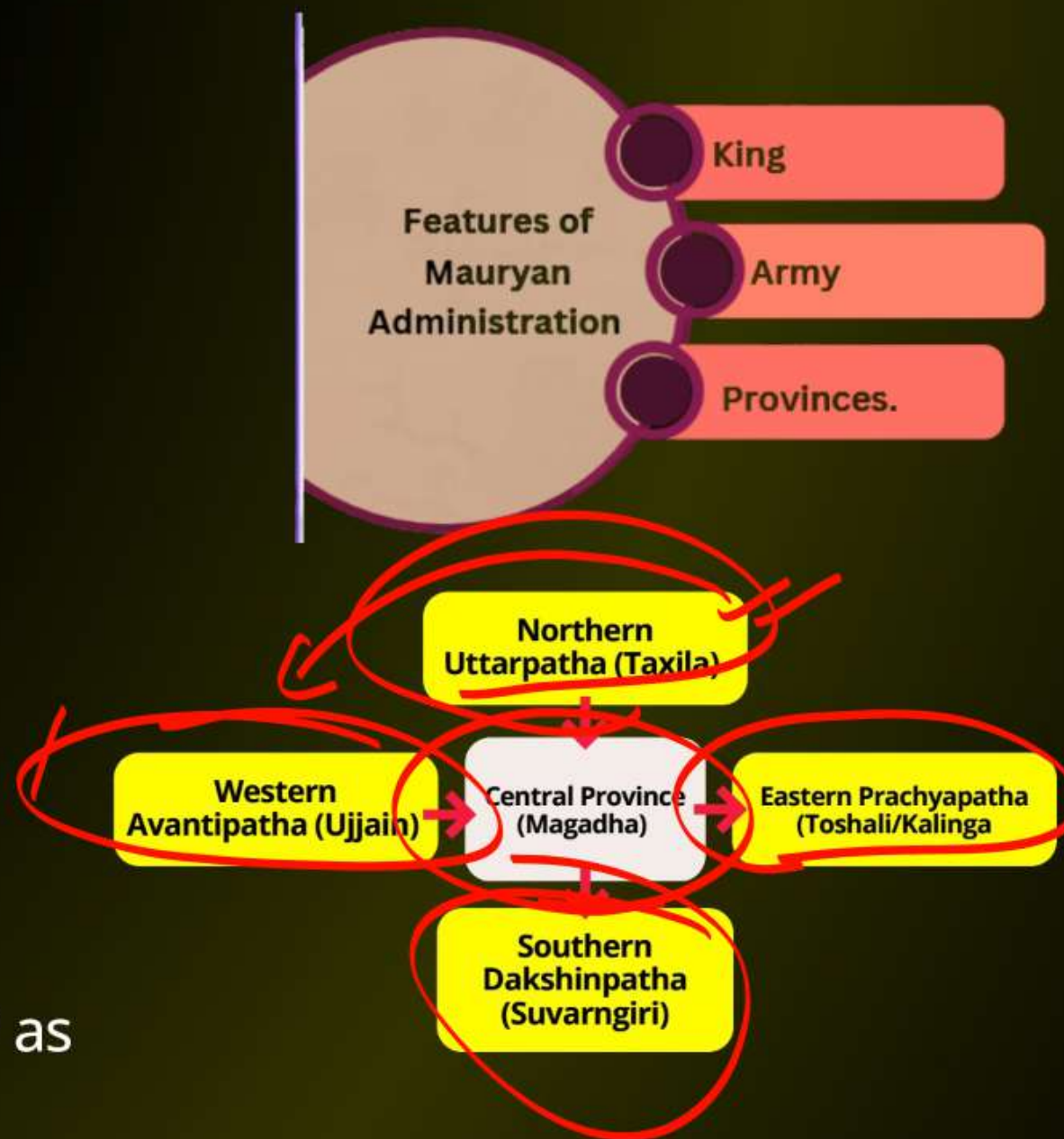
- 5 major political centres
- Strong administrative control was around the capital and provincial centres.
- Maintained long-distance trade routes.

Strong army

- Various committee and sub-committee → to coordinate military activity.
- Appointed **dhamma mahamattas** → Unity by Dhamma

Importance

- Lasted for about 150 years.
- Considered as a major landmark.
- Under colonial archeological excavation → Asoka appeared as powerful, industrious and humble.



New Notions of Kingship

(Post-Mauryan period)

Chiefs and chiefdoms

- A chief is a powerful man whose position may or may not be hereditary.
- He derives support from his kinfolk.

His functions include

- Performing special rituals.
- Leadership in warfare
- Arbitrating disputes.
- Receives gifts from his subordinates and distributes these amongst his supporters.
- No regular armies and officials



New Notions of Kingship

Chiefs and Kings in the South

- In the Deccan and its south, new kingdoms emerged in the 2nd century BCE.

Chiefdoms

- Cholas, } Tamilakam.
- Cheras }
- Pandyas }
- **Satvahanas** (from 2nd century BCE - 2nd century CE → western and central India.
- **Shakas** (Central Asian native) → North western and western part of the subcontinent.
- **Kushana** (1st cent. BCE - 1st cent. CE) → from central Asia to north-west India.



A Kushana coin Obverse:
King Kanishka Reverse: A deity

New Notions of Kingship

Divine Kings

- Kushana expressed themselves as god
- Adopted title 'devaputra' → Inspired from Chinese rulers.
- Their notions of Kingship was reflected in their coins and sculpture.
- Huge Statues → in U.P (Mat in Mathura) and Afghanistan.

By the 4th century → larger states like the Gupta Empire.

Depended on Samantas → men who maintained themselves through local resources including control over land.

Source - Prayaga Prashasti

- Language → Sanskrit
- Composed by → Harishena, the court poet of Samudragupta.



Sandstone sculpture of a Kushana king

A Changing Countryside

Popular Perception of Kings

- Stories- In anthologies, Jatakas, and the Panchatantra.
- Jatakas - Pali.
- **Gandatindus Jataka** ➡ Conditions of the works of a bad king.
- Kings filled their treasury by high taxes, ➡ Peasants were under oppression ➡ safe in forest.

Conclusion -

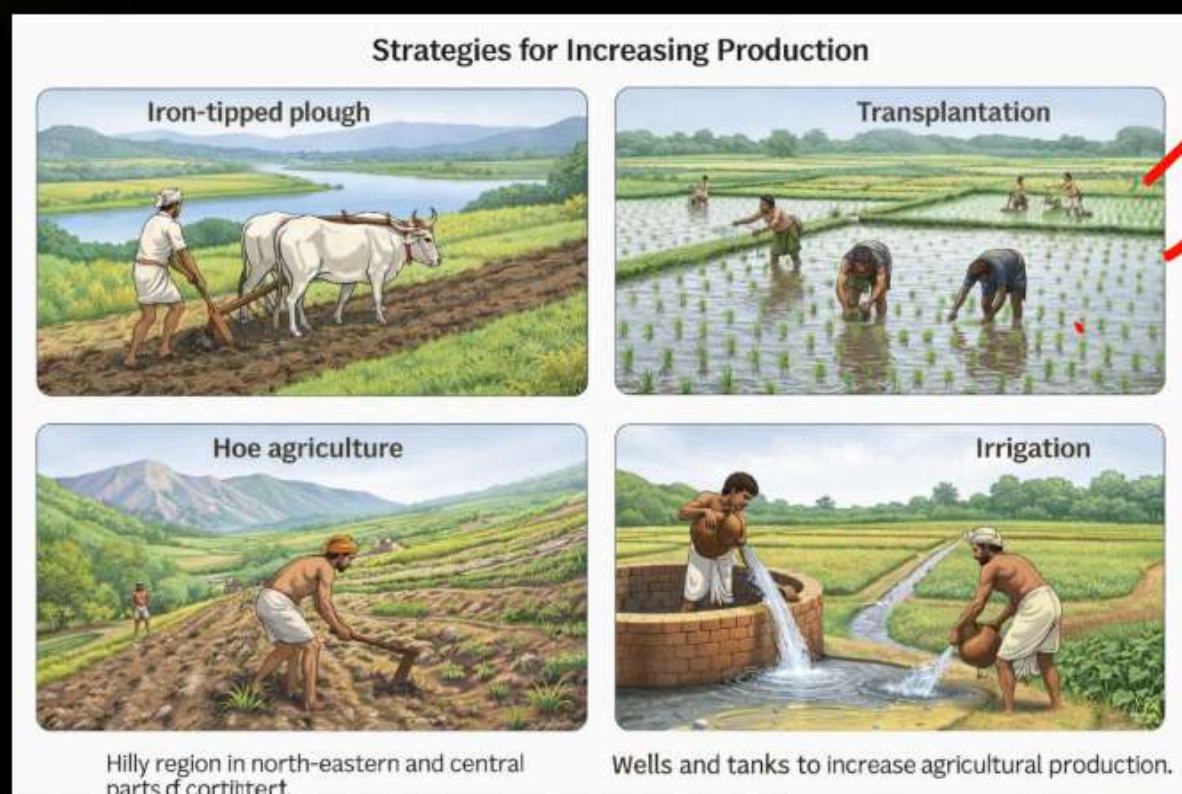
- Strained relationship between kings and subjects.
- The demand for high taxes opposed by peasants.



A Changing Countryside

Strategies for Increasing Production

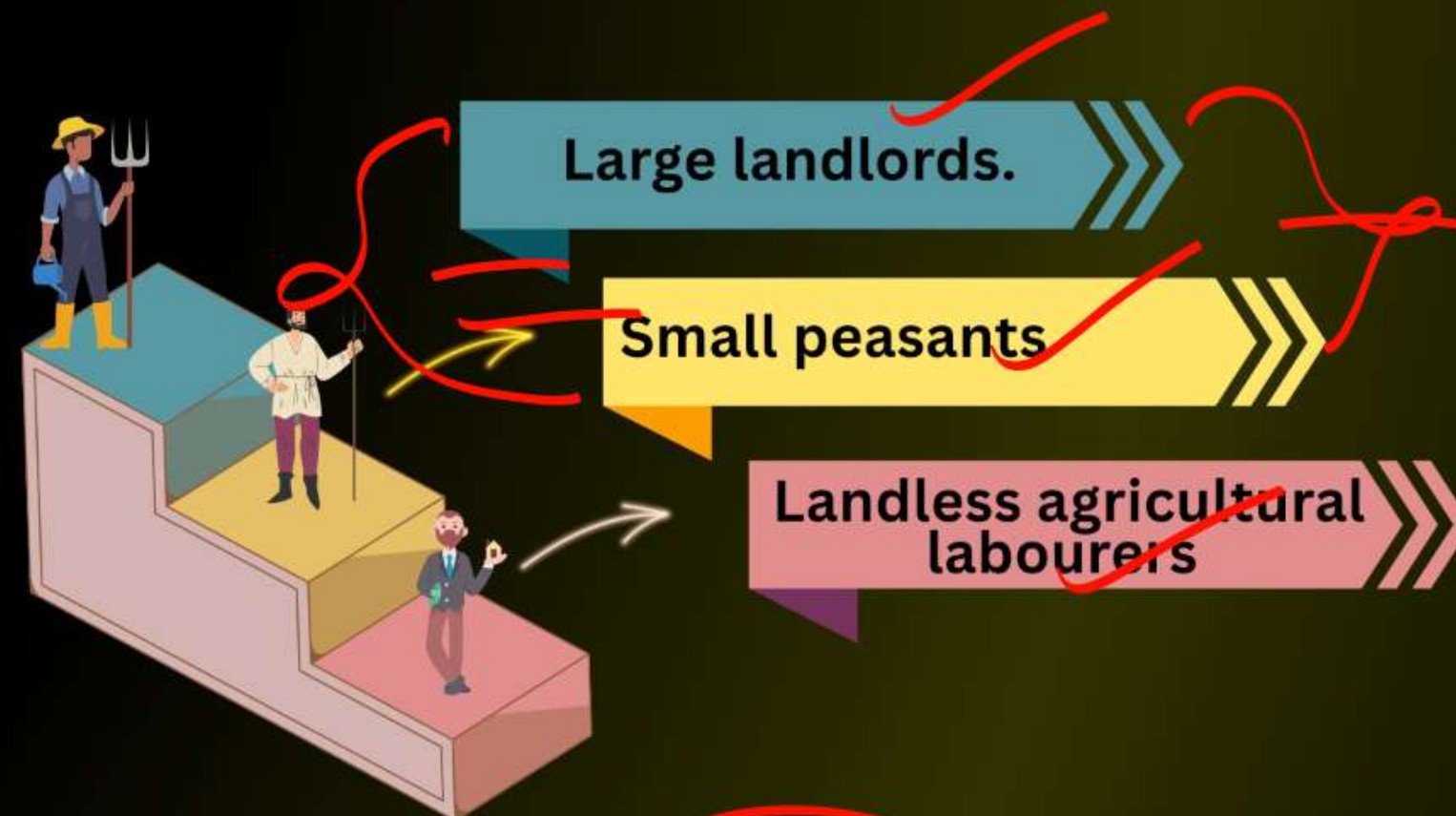
1. Iron-tipped plough → to turn soil - used in fertile river valley (Ganga and Kaveri).
2. Transplantation → to increase paddy production.
3. Hoe agriculture → on hilly region in north eastern and central part of continent.
4. Irrigation → through wells and tanks to increase agricultural production.



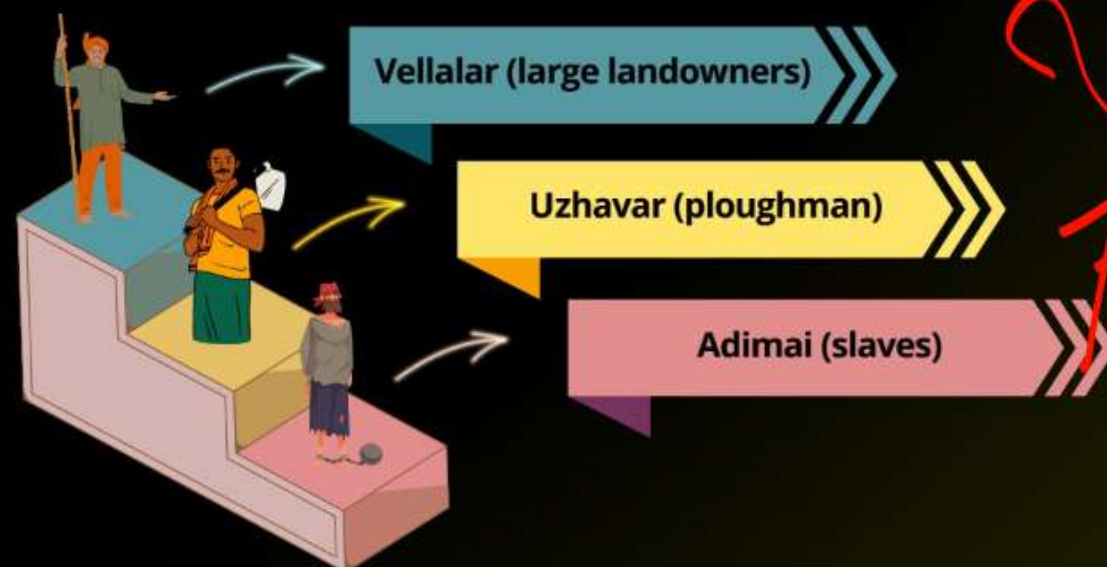
A Changing Countryside

Differences in Rural Society

- **Result** - Led Differences in Rural Society
- **Gahapati** was used in Pali to describe the small peasants and Large landholders.
- Large landholders + village headman (hereditary position) Powerful figures who exercised control over other cultivators.



Sangam texts described ➡ People in villages



Gahapati

A gahapati was the owner, master or head of a household, who exercised control over the women, children, slaves and workers who shared a common residence. He was also the owner of the resources land, animals and other things that belonged to the household. Sometimes the term was used as a marker of status for men belonging to the urban elite, including wealthy merchants.

Towns and Trade

Land Grants and New Rural Elites

- From the early centuries of the CE, land grants were recorded in inscriptions.

Purpose - Provide information about the relationship between the cultivators and the state.

Material

- Stone inscriptions
- Copper plates

Receivers

- Religious institutions and Brahmanas(Agraharas)
- Samantas

Language

- Sanskrit, Tamil and Telugu



Towns and Trade

Prabhavati Gupta → Daughter of Chandragupta II (c. 375-415 CE).

- Daughter-in-law of the Vakatakas in Deccan.
- **Law** - According to Sanskrit legal texts, women were not supposed to have independent access to resources such as land.
- **Exception** - Inscription → Prabhavati had **access to land** which she granted.

Inference - It seemed rules were not implemented uniformly.

Purpose of Land Grants

- To extend agriculture to new areas
- To win allies
- To project king as a Superman
- **Size** - Small plots → vast stretches of uncultivated land
- **Strategy** - To gain control on the samantas
- Provided a clear perception into the relationship between cultivators and state.



Towns and Trade

New cities

Urban centres that emerged from c. 6th century BCE.

Capitals of mahajanapadas.

Pataliputra,
Kausambi,
Varanasi etc.

Located along routes of communication.

- Pataliputra - Riverine routes.
- Ujjayini - Land routes
- Puhar - Port town
- Mathura - Centres of commercial, cultural and political activity.



- Pataliputra- Pataligrama.
- In the 5th century BCE, the Magadhan rulers decided to shift their capital from Rajagaha to here.
- By the 4th century BCE- capital of the Mauryan Empire and one of the largest cities in Asia.
- In the 7th century - fell into ruins---- Chinese pilgrim Xuan Zang .

Towns and Trade

Elites and craftpersons

- Northern Black Polished ware - Fine pottery bowls and dishes with a glossy finish → rich people.
- Ornaments, tools, weapons, vessels, figurines, etc.
- Materials - Gold, silver, copper, bronze, Ivory, glass, shell and Terracotta.
- By the 2nd century BCE - votive inscriptions → record gifts made to religious institutions
- These mention - Guilds or shreni's, organisations of craft, producers and merchants were mentioned.
- These corporations brought raw material, made the products and sold out them.
- Craftspersons used a range of iron tools to meet the growing demands of urban elites.

Second Urbanization



This is part of an image from Mathura. On the pedestal is a Prakrit inscription, mentioning that a woman named Nagapiya, the wife of a goldsmith (sovanika) named Dharmaka, installed this image in a shrine.

Urban Populations

Trade in the Subcontinent and Beyond

From the 6th century BCE.

Transportation → land and water

- Overland - Central Asia and beyond ✓
- Overseas → Arabian sea → to east and North Africa and west Asia, ✓
- Bay of Bengal → To south Asia and China ✓

Rulers often attempted to control these routes, possibly by offering protection for a price.

Travellers included:-

- Peddlers - Travelled on foot
- Merchants - Travelled with caravans of bullock carts ✓ and pack-animals. ✓
- Seafarers - Ventures were risky but highly profitable. ✓

Urban Populations

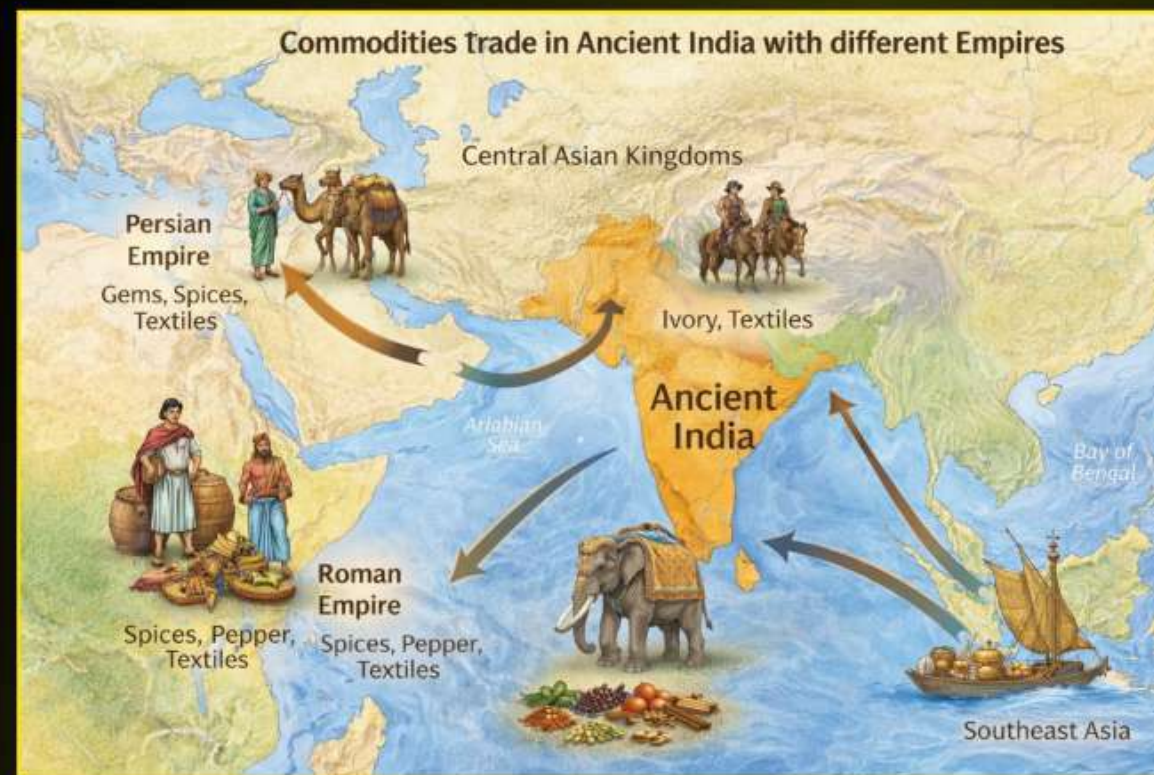
Trade in the Subcontinent and Beyond

Established Traders

- Masattuvan → Tamil
- Setthis and Satthavahas → Prakrit.

Commodities - Salt, grain, cloth, metal ores and finished products, stone etc .

- Spices - Pepper → High demand in the Roman Empire
- Textiles and medicinal plants - Transported across the Arabian Sea to the Mediterranean
- In Kodumanal (Tamil Nadu) - bead-making industry.
- Local traders brought the stones mentioned in the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea from such sites to the coastal ports.



Coin and Kings

1. Punch-marked coins,

- Material - silver and copper.
- Consists of Symbols of the main ruling dynasties.

2. Indo-Greeks - ruled over the north-western part of the subcontinent c. 2nd century BCE.

- Issued the first coins to bear the names and images of rulers
- 3. Some coins were released by merchants, bankers and towns people.

In 1st century CE

4. Kushanas issued first gold coins.

Features -

- Similar in weight with those issued by contemporary Roman emperors and the Parthian rulers of Iran.
 - Found from several sites in north India and Central Asia
5. Copper Coins - Tribal republics of Yaudheyas of Punjab and Haryana
6. Pure gold coins - Gupta rulers - promoted long distance business.
7. Hoards of Roman coins - in south India - networks of trade

800 1300



A Punch-marked Coin



A Coin of the Indo-Greek king Menander



A Yaudheya Coin



A Gupta Coin

local

Coin and Kings

Numismatics → study of coins → Numismatists

1. Scripts and images,
2. Metallurgical analysis
3. Contexts in which they have been found

- Numismatic Society of India is India's oldest institution dedicated to research on coins and related currency items.

Economic Crisis -

- From c. sixth century CE onwards, the quantity of gold coins decreased.

Historians are divided on this issue:-

- Decline of long distance trade - collapse of Western Roman Empire which affected the prosperity of states, communities and regions.
- New towns and networks of trade started emerging around this time - More Circulation and less collection of coins.



Back to Basics

How are inscriptions Deciphered?

Brahmi -

- Backward Teachinique - Modern Indian languages are obtained from Brahmi script → Ashokan inscriptions.
- James Prinsep deciphered Ashokan Brahmi in 1838.

Kharosthi -

- Use → in inscriptions in the northwest was different.
- Bilingual Coins of Indo-Greek rulers contained the names of kings written in Greek and Kharosthi scripts.

Historical Evidence from Inscriptions -

- Ashokan inscriptions → the titles devanampiya, piyadassi → adopted by the ruler.
- Examined in terms, content, style, language and palaeography, by epigraphists and confirmed that all were issued by the same ruler.

Large landlords



A Coin of the
Indo- Greek king
Menander

The Limitations of Inscriptional Evidence

Historical Evidence from Inscriptions

- Letters were **weakly engraved** ➡ reconstructions are not certain.
- Inscriptions might be **damaged** and letters may be missing.
- Thousands of inscriptions are discovered but not deciphered,
published and translated.
- Agricultural practices, happiness and sorrow
of daily existence are not mention in inscriptions.



Conclusion -

- Inscriptions may not provide a complete idea about political and
economic history
- Inscriptions are written from the point of the view of the person who
commissioned them.

TIMELINE 1 MAJOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

c.600-500 BCE	Paddy transplantation; urbanisation in the Ganga valley; <u>mahajanapadas</u> ; punch-marked coins
c. 500-400 BCE	Rulers of Magadha consolidate power
c. 327-325 BCE	Invasion of Alexander of Macedon
c. 321 BCE	Accession of Chandragupta Maurya
c. 272/268-231 BCE	Reign of Asoka
c. 185 BCE	End of the Mauryan empire
c. 200-100 BCE	Indo-Greek rule in the northwest; Cholas, Cheras and Pandyas in south India; Satavahanas in the Deccan
c. 100 BCE-200 CE	Shaka (peoples from Central Asia) rulers in the northwest; Roman trade; gold coinage
c. 78 CE?	Accession of Kanishka
c.100-200 CE	Earliest inscriptional evidence of land grants by Satavahana and Shaka rulers
c. 320 CE	Beginning of Gupta rule
c. 335-375 CE	Samudragupta
c. 375-415 CE	Chandragupta II; Vakatakas in the Deccan
c. 500-600 CE	Rise of the Chalukyas in Karnataka and of the Pallavas in Tamil Nadu
c. 606-647 CE	Harshavardhana king of Kanauj; Chinese pilgrim Xuan Zang comes in search of Buddhist texts
c. 712	Arabs conquer Sind

(Note: It is difficult to date economic developments precisely. Also, there are enormous subcontinental variations which have not been indicated in the timeline. Only the earliest dates for specific developments have been given. The date of Kanishka's accession is not certain and this has been marked with a "?")

TIMELINE 2 MAJOR ADVANCES IN EPIGRAPHY

Eighteenth century

1784	Founding of the Asiatic Society (Bengal)
------	--

Nineteenth century

1810s	Colin Mackenzie collects over 8,000 inscriptions in Sanskrit and Dravidian languages
1838	Decipherment of Asokan Brahmi by James Prinsep
1877	Alexander Cunningham publishes a set of Asokan inscriptions
1886	First issue of <i>Epigraphia Carnatica</i> , a journal of south Indian inscriptions
1888	First issue of <i>Epigraphia Indica</i>

Twentieth century

1965-66	D.C. Sircar publishes <i>Indian Epigraphy</i> and <i>Indian Epigraphical Glossary</i>
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Questions

- “Coinage played a significant role in the expansion of early Indian empire.”
Explain the statement with examples.
- “The sixth century BCE was a period of emergence of early states, empires and diverse thoughts in the early Indian History.” Justify the statement.

KINSHIP, **CASTE AND CLASS**

Introduction

Social & Economic

- From the period between c. 600 BCE and 600 CE, there were many changes in the economic and political life such as:
- Expansion of farming into forested areas, which changed the lives of people living in those forests.
- Formation of social groups by skilled craftsmen.
- Increased social differences due to the unequal distribution of wealth.
- Textual traditions (written records) are studied by historians to understand the changes in history. Some texts contain rules for social behaviour, others comment on different social situations and practices.
- For example, the Mahabharata

600 BCE - 600 CE



Changes in
political and
economic life



Influenced early
Indian societies.



Social history → deals with the
everyday people, the masses and
how they shape history rather
than their leaders.

Mahabharata

- **Composition** → c. 500 BCE - 500 CE , and even earlier.
- **Author** → Ved Vyasa and others.
- Consist over 1,00,000 verses.
- Richest texts of the subcontinent → deals with social categories and situation.

Contains -

1. Descriptions of battles, forests, palaces and settlements.
2. Norms of behaviour for various social groups.

The principal characters follow these norms.

Result -

1. Pandavas emerge victorious.
2. Patrilineal succession.



Feud over land → Power

Kurus

Kauravas



Pandava

s

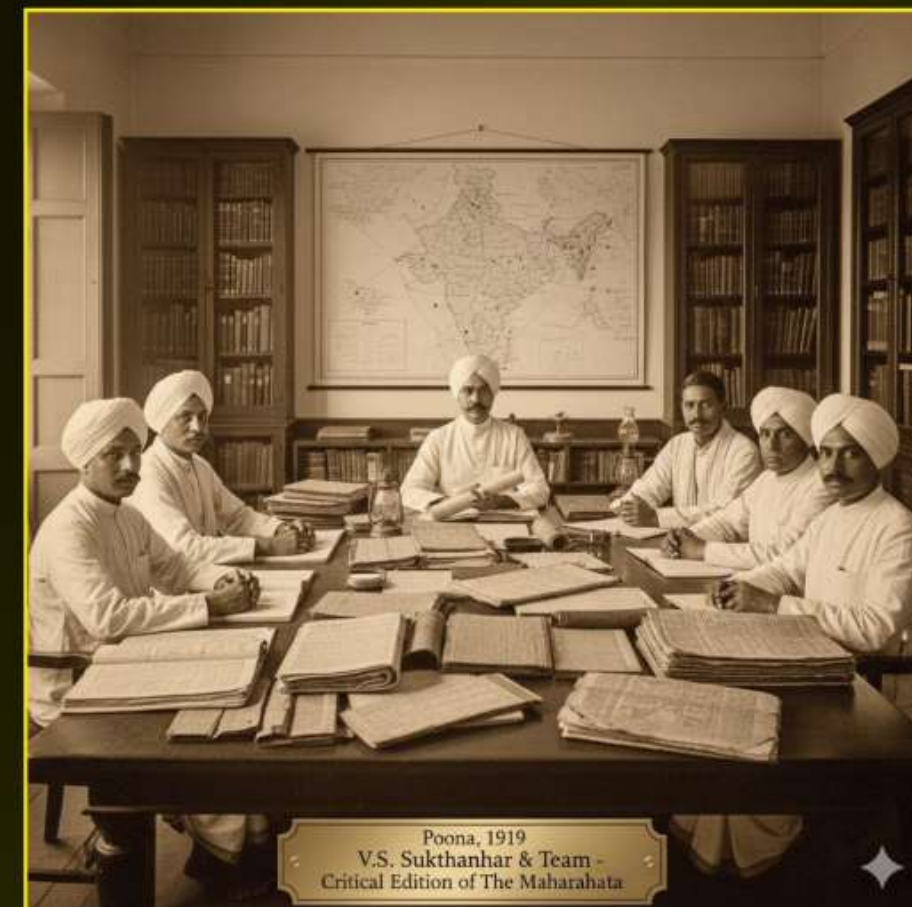
The Critical Edition of the Mahabharata

In 1919 -

- V.S Sukthankar → Sanskrit scholar of India.
- Undertook a project work of preparing a critical edition of the Mahabharata appointed a team of various Sanskrit scholars.

Objectives -

- Collecting Sanskrit manuscripts of the text
- Written in a variety of scripts,
- From different parts of the country.



The Critical Edition of the Mahabharata

Methodology

1. Compared the verses from each manuscript.
2. Selected the verses that appeared common to most versions.
3. Published these verses in several volumes in 13,000 pages in 47 years.

Result

1. Several common elements in the Sanskrit versions of the story.
2. Enormous regional variations were also found.

- **Variations** Documented in footnotes and appendices over 13,000 pages
- Reflects the complex process that shaped early social histories, dialogues between dominant traditions and resilient local ideas and practices.

Language

- Texts written in Sanskrit by and for Brahmanas.
- Later, in Pali, Prakrit and Tamil.

Kinship and Marriage

Finding out about families

- People belonging to the same family share food and other resources, and live, work and perform rituals together.
- **Kinfolk** → Families are usually parts of larger networks of people defined as relatives.
- Some societies consider cousins as relative while others do not.



Familial ties
are based on

Blood "natural".

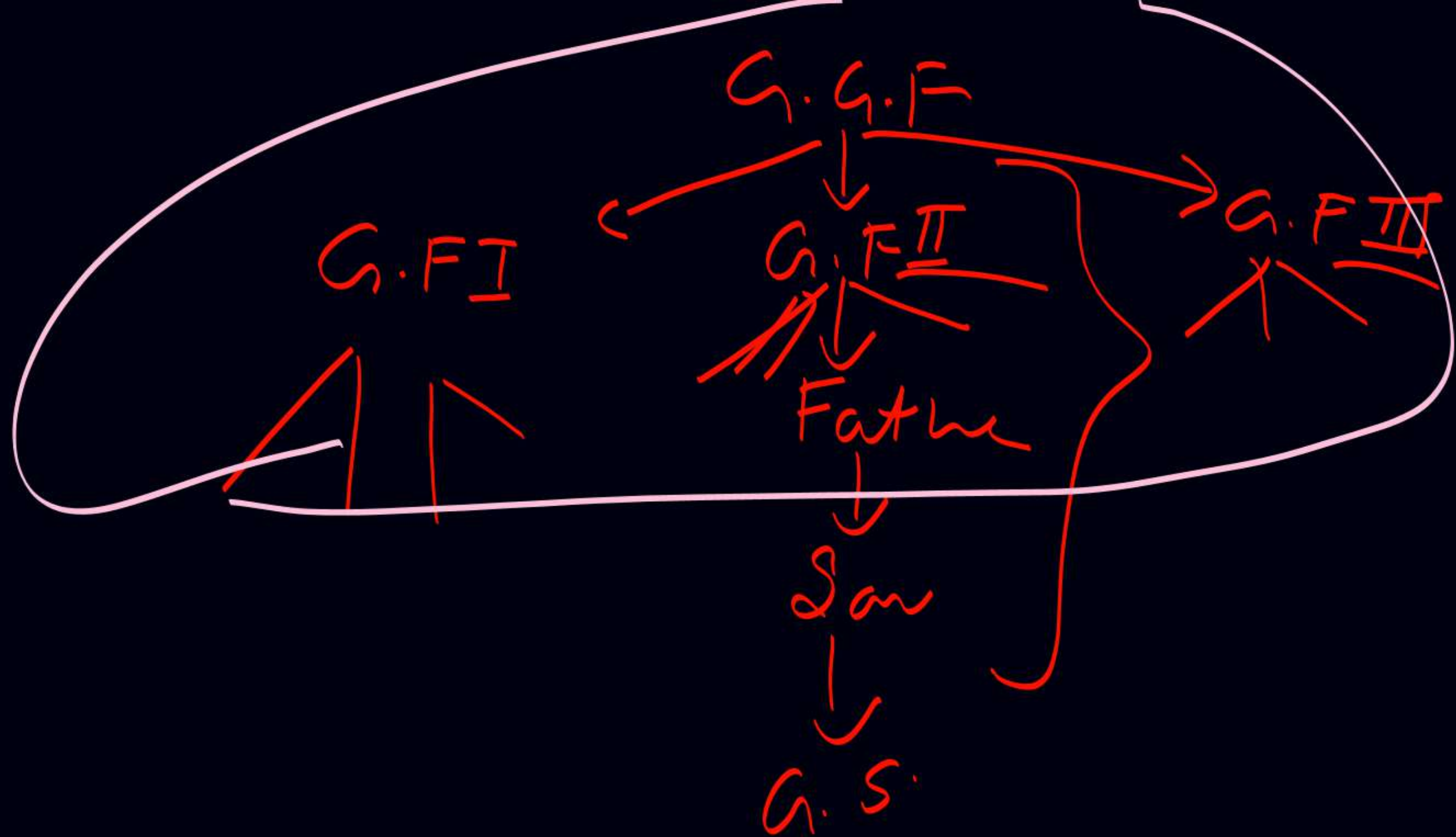
Marriage

Terms for family and kin

In Sanskrit

1. **Kula** - Family
2. **Vamsha** - Lineage
3. **Jnati** - A larger network of families

MCQ



Kinship and Marriage

The ideal of patriliney

Lineage

Patriliney

Descent from
father to son

Matriliney

Descent through
the mother.

- Under patriliney, sons could claim the resources (including the throne) of their fathers when the latter died.
- Mahabharata reinforced the idea of Patriliney.

If no sons

1. Brothers
2. Kinmen
3. Women

Rarely like Prabhavati Gupta



Kinship and Marriage

Types of marriages

- Endogamy → Marriage within a unit → group, caste, locality.
- Exogamy → Marriage outside the unit.
- Polygyny → A man having several wives.
- Polyandry → A woman having several husbands

Sons → Important → Patrilineage
 Daughters → Daughters were viewed rather differently within this framework.

Rules of marriage

- Women could not get any share in her parental property.
- Exogamy was considered desirable.
- Young girls and women from high-status families were regulated to marry at the "right" time and person.
- Kanyadana → important religious duty of the father.



Kinship and Marriage

Urbnisation → Social life became more complex.

Brahmanas → codes of social behaviour

Time Period	Sanskrit Texts
From c. 500 BCE	Dharmasutras and Dharmashastras
c. 200 BCE -200 CE	Manusmriti

- Brahmana authors claimed universal validity and to be obeyed by everybody

Regional diversity + Difficulties of communication - the influence of Brahmanas was by no means all-pervasive.

- Dharma sutras - 8 forms of marriage.

- Good condemned

do not follow Brahmanic norms

Marriage Type	Description
Brahma-I ✓	Giving bride to virtuous groom ✓
Daiva ✓	Offering bride to a priest ✓
Arsha- V ✓	Groom offers gifts to family ✓
Prajapatya- IV ✓	Union focused on dharma ✓
Gandharva- VI ✓	Love-based union ✓
Asura ✓	Dowry-driven alliance ✓
Rakshasa ✓	Violent abduction of bride ✓
Paishacha ✓	Deception or coercion involved ✓

Kinship and Marriage

The gotra of women

- Around 1000 BCE onwards, Brahmanical practice, to classifying people (especially Brahmanas) in terms of gotras.
- Gotra refers to the name given to a particular group of people named after a Vedic seer. All those who belonged to the same gotra were regarded as his descendants.

Rules

- Women were expected to give up their father's gotra and adopt that of their husband on marriage.
- Members of the same gotra could not marry.
- Endogamy was prevalent amongst several communities in south India → ensured a close-knit community.



Exception -

- Satavahana rulers → polygynous.
- The Satavahana queens retained their father's gotras such as Gotama and Vasistha
- Some of the queens belonged to the same gotra.

Kinship and Marriage

Were mothers important?

- Satavahana rulers were identified through metronymics (names derived from that of the mother).
- But succession to the throne was generally patrilineal.

Metronymics in the Upanishads

The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, one of the earliest Upanishads, contains a list of successive generations of teachers and students, many of whom were designated by metronymics.

A Satavahana ruler and his wife

- This is one of the rare sculptural depictions of a ruler from the wall of a cave donated to Buddhist monks. This sculpture dates to c. second century BCE.

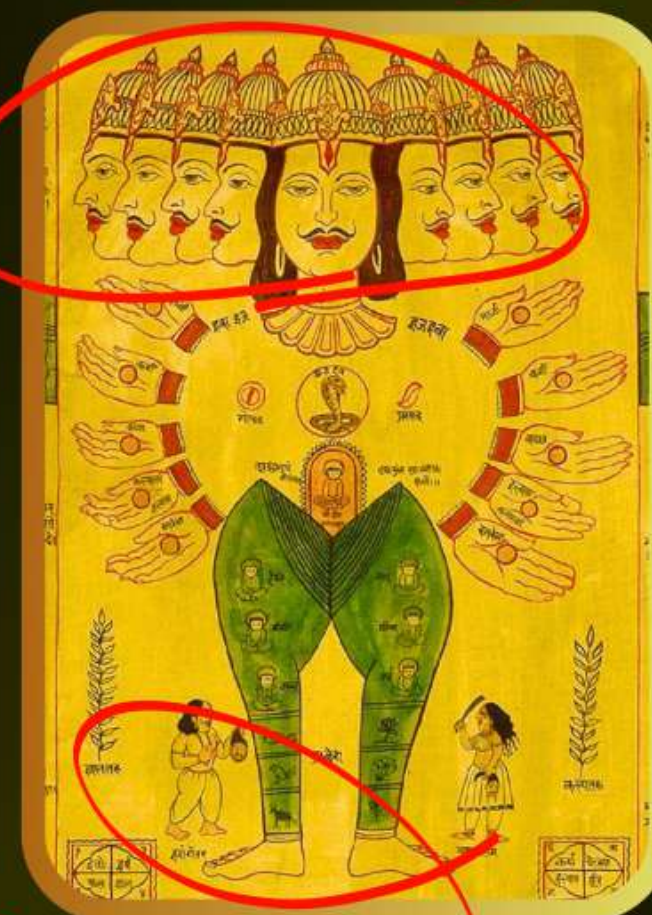


Social Differences : Within and Beyond the Framework of Caste

- **Caste** - Set of hierarchically ordered social categories.
- **The ideal order** → Laid down in the Dharmasutras and Dharmashastras.
- These positions were supposedly determined by birth.



Divinely ordained



Social Differences : Within and Beyond the Framework of Caste

The "Right" occupation

- The Dharmasutras and Dharmashastras ideal → "occupations"

Brahmanas

- Study and teach the Vedas,
- Perform and get sacrifices performed,
- Give and receive gifts.

Kshatriyas

- Engage in warfare,
- protection and administer justice,
- Study the Vedas,
- Get sacrifices performed
- Give gifts.

Vaishyas

- Give gifts,
- Get sacrifices performed
- Study Vedas in
- Engaging agriculture, pastoralism and trade.

Shudras

- Serving the three 'higher' varnas.

Strategies to enforce the Varna system

- Brahmanas asserted that the varna order was of **divine origin**
- Brahmanas **advised the king** to ensure that the varna system was followed within their kingdoms
- Brahmanas attempted to persuade the people that their status was **determined by birth**.



Social Differences : Within and Beyond the Framework of Caste

Non-Kshatriya kings

- Shastras → Kshatriyas could be kings.

Exception

1. Mauryas → origin is disputed.

- Later Buddhist texts - Kshatriyas
- Brahmanical texts - Rulers of 'low' origin.

2. Shungas and Kanvas → Brahmins.

Inference - Any person who is able to muster support and resources and need not to depend on theory of birth.

Gupta
↑

Vaishya

Social Differences : Within and Beyond the Framework of Caste

3. Shakas → Central Asia,

- Regarded as mlechchhas, barbarians or outsiders by the Brahmanas.
- **Rudradaman** rebuilt Sudarshana lake.
- **Source** - The earliest inscriptions in Sanskrit, Powerful mlechchhas were familiar with Sanskritic traditions.

4. The Satavahana King Gautamiputra Satakarni

- Claimed to be Brahman and destroyer of Kshatriya's pride.
- Ensured that there was no intermarriage amongst members of the four varnas, but entered into marriage alliance with the kin of Rudradaman.

Social Differences : Within and Beyond the Framework of Caste

Jatis and social mobility

According to Brahmanical theory:

- Jati → Social categories, based on birth.
- No restriction on the number of jatis.
- New groups that did not fit into the fourfold of the Varna system → jatis.

Ex-

- Nishadas - forests dwellers ✓
- Goldsmith or suvarnakara → sharing a common occupation → shrenis or guilds. ✓

Social Differences : Within and Beyond the Framework of Caste

Mandasor Stone Inscription (Madhya Pradesh)

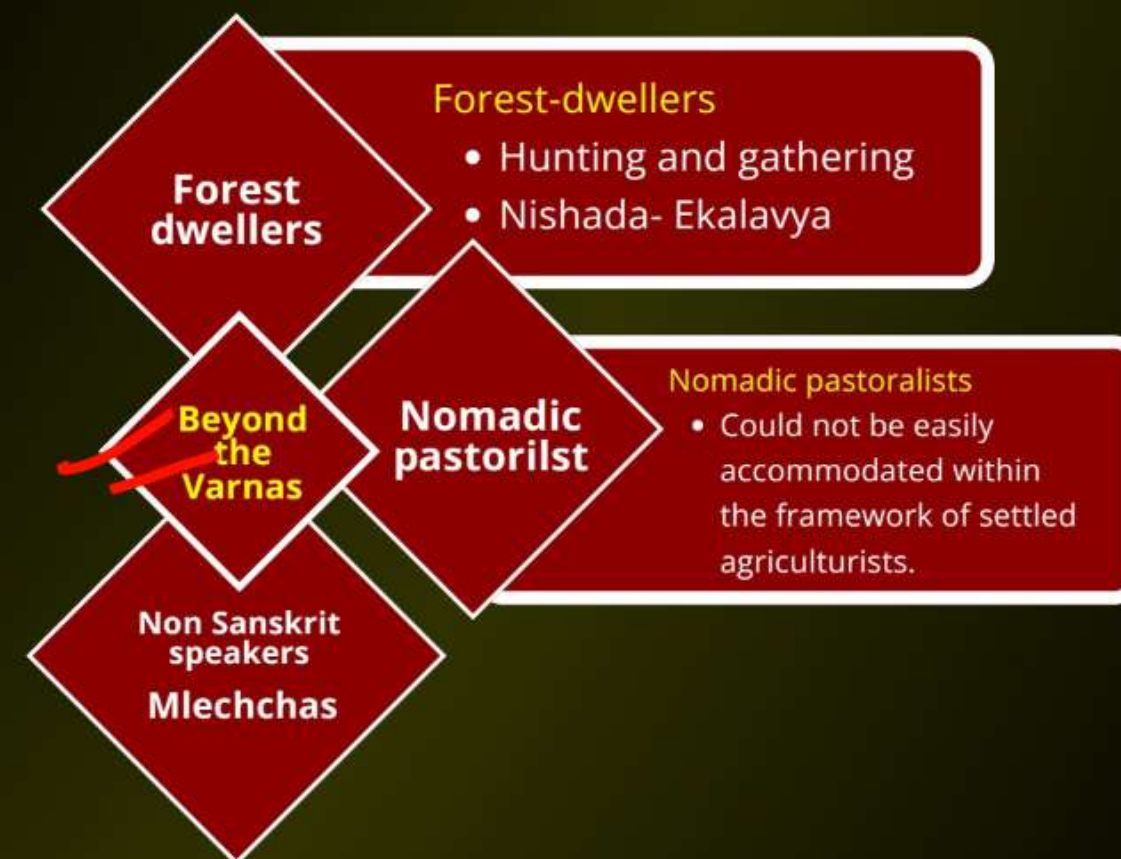
It records the history of a guild of silk weavers who originally lived in Lata (Gujarat) but migrated to Dashapura. It contains the following information about guilds or shrenis:

- The membership was based on a shared craft specialisation, but some members also practiced other occupations.
- The members collectively invested their wealth which they earned through their craft. It was used to construct a great temple in honour of the Sun god.
- They undertook the difficult journey along with their children and kinfolk, to know about the greatness of the local king, or to settle in his kingdom.

Social Differences : Within and Beyond the Framework of Caste

Beyond the four varnas: Integration

- Populations whose social practices were not influenced by Brahmanical ideas. Described as **odd, uncivilised, or even animal-like** in Sanskrit texts
- There were sharing of ideas and beliefs between these people.



Social Differences : Within and Beyond the Framework of Caste

Beyond the four varnas Subordination and conflict
Untouchables

- The Brahmanas considered some people as being outside the system.
- Developed a sharper social divide.

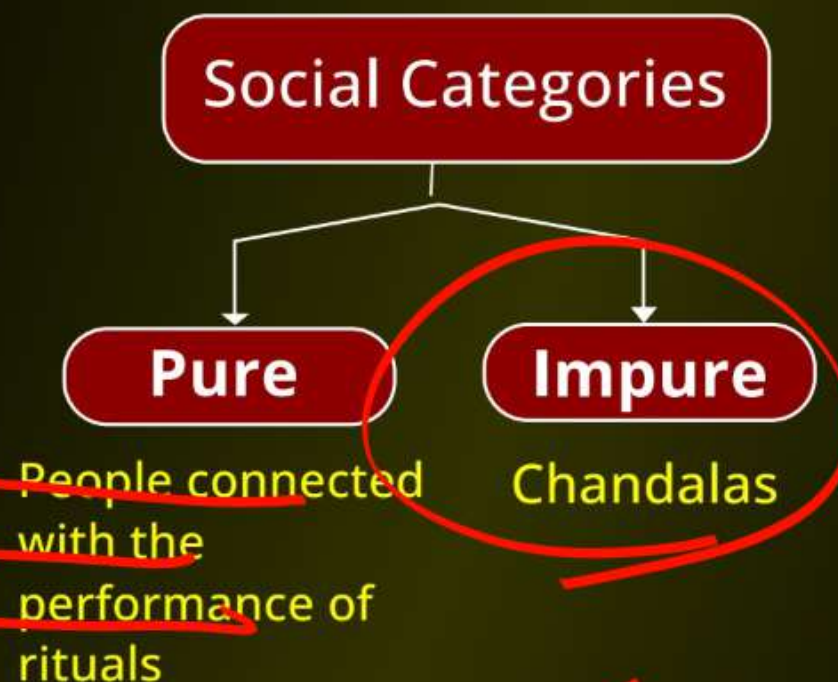
Chandalas

- Polluting activities → Handling corpses and dead animals.

Social implications

- Placed at the bottom of the hierarchy.
- Their touch and sight was regarded as "polluting".

Manusmriti → Duties of the chandalas.



- Live outside the village
- Use discarded utensils
- Wear clothes of the dead and iron ornaments.
- Could not walk about in villages and cities at night
- Dispose dead bodies and serve as executioners

Social Differences : Within and Beyond the Framework of Caste

Beyond the four varnas Subordination and conflict
Chinese Pilgrims

1.

- Fa Xian - in c.5th century CE
- Wrote that the “untouchable sounded “clappers” when they entered street so that the people could avoid the sight.

2.

- Xuan Zang who came in c. 7th century CE
- Executioners and scavengers were forced to live outside the city



Xuan Zang



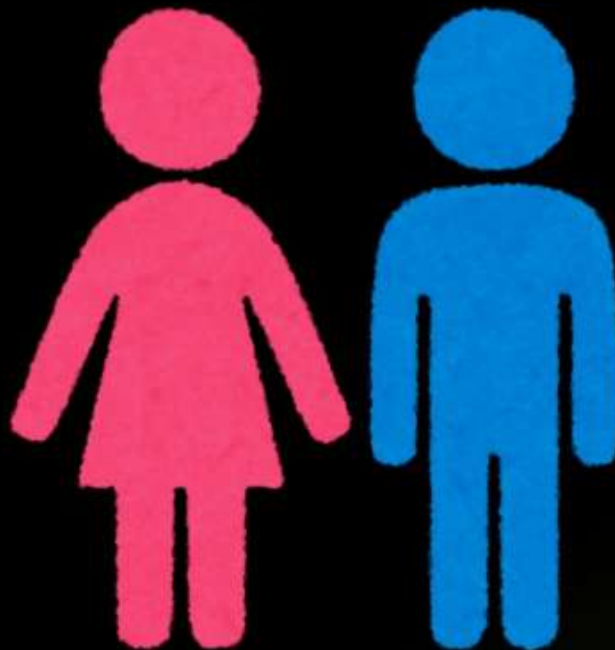
Fa Xian

Beyond Birth Resources and Status

Social positions → Access to economic resources.

Property is granted On the basis of

Gender



Varna ✓



Beyond Birth Resources and Status

Gendered access to property

According to Manusmriti

- Women → not eligible to claim a share in the parental property.
- Paternal property was to be divided equally amongst sons after the death of the parents, → with a special share for the eldest.
- Women retain the stridhana (a woman's wealth) →
- It could be inherited by their children, without the husband having any claim on it.
- Women could not keep family property, or even their own valuables , without the Husband's permission.

Manusmriti warned women against hoarding family property.

Exception - Prabhavati Gupta.

- **Conclusion** - Upper-class women → access to resources.
- However land, cattle and money were controlled by men.
- **Result** - Sharpened the social differences between men and women.

Beyond Birth Resources and Status

Varna and access to property

- Shudras - Only "occupation" prescribed → servitude
- Other occupations for first three varnas.
- Wealthiest men → Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas.
- Sanskrit Textual Traditions → Priests are also generally shown to be rich, occasionally poor.



Explaining Social Differences:

A Social Contract

In Buddhist traditions.

- Division of society is prevalent, but not natural or inflexible.
- Rejected the idea of higher status based on birth.

Tamil Sangam Literature

- Shows the possibilities to assign status beyond wealth.
- Where generous men were respected, while miserly were criticised.
- Owners of the resources were also expected to share them- Praised by Bards and poets.



Explaining Social Differences:

A Social Contract

- The Buddhists developed an alternative understanding of social inequalities and the institutions required to regulate social conflict.

Sutta Pitaka suggests:

The institution of kingship	Human choice
Taxes	Payment for services rendered by the king

Recognizes

- Human agency in creating and institutionalizing economic and social relations.
- As human created this system, then they could bring change in the future.
- Mahasammata → King elected by the whole people

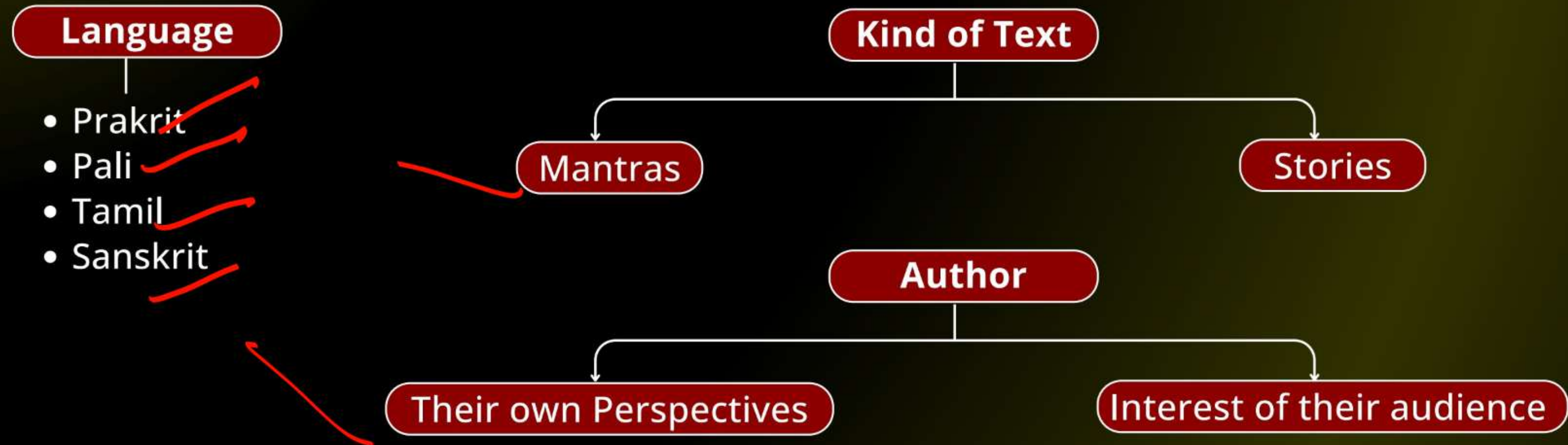
Handling Texts Historians and the Mahabharat

Historian's Approach to Ancient Texts

Elements Considered

- Language
 - Kind of Text
 - Author
 - Intended Audience
 - Date of Composition/Compilation
 - Place of Composition
- **Result:-** After making these assessments that they draw on the content of texts to arrive at an understanding of their historical significance.
 - Difficult task for a text as complex as the Mahabharata.

Handling Texts Historians and the Mahabharat



Handling Texts Historians and the Mahabharat

Brahmanas

Language and content

The Sanskrit of the Mahabharata → simpler → Vedas or Prashastis

Contents

Narrative	→ Contains stories
Didactic	→ Contains prescriptions about social norms

- **Not watertight** - Didactic sections include stories, and the narrative contains a social message.
- Described as itihasa- thus it - **"history"**

Handling Texts Historians and the Mahabharat

Author(s) and dates

- Original story → charioteer-bards → Sutas
- They accompanied Kshatriya warriors to the battlefield
- Composed poems celebrating their victories and other accomplishments, circulated orally.

From the 5th century BCE

Brahmanas

Epic revolves around
Kurus and Panchalas,

Between c. 200 BCE and 200 CE

Worship of Vishnu
was growing in
importance
Krishna

Between c. 200 and 400 CE ,

Large didactic sections
resembling the Manusmriti
were added.
10,000 verses
100,000 verses.
Ved Vyasa.

Handling Texts Historians and the Mahabharat

The search for convergence

- In 1951-52, B.B. Lal- the archaeologist found a village named Hastinapura in Meerut (Uttar Pradesh) in the Upper Ganga doab where Kuru was situated
- Found 5 occupational levels:-

2nd phase (c.12th-
7th centuries BCE):

No definite plans of houses, walls of mud and mud-bricks.

3rd phase (c. 6th-
3rd centuries BCE),

Houses of mud and burnt bricks.
Soakage jars and brick drains
Terracotta ring wells and
drainage pits



Historians suggest that

- Polyandry → prevalent amongst ruling elites
- Gradually fell into disfavour amongst the Brahmanas
- But prevalent in the Himalayan region.
- Situation of crisis - Due to a shortage of women during times of warfare

↓
Vyasa

A Dynamic Text

- Later written in a **variety of languages**
- Several stories that originated in specific regions or circulated amongst certain people found their way into the epic.
- The central story of the epic was often **retold in different ways**. Ex. Mahashweta Devi, - Bengali writer
- Episodes depicted in sculpture and painting and performing arts.

TIMELINE 1 MAJOR TEXTUAL TRADITIONS

c. 500 BCE	<i>Ashtadhyayi</i> of Panini, a work on Sanskrit grammar
c. 500-200 BCE	Major Dharmasutras (in Sanskrit)
c. 500-100 BCE	Early Buddhist texts including the <i>Tripitaka</i> (in Pali)
c. 500 BCE-400 CE	<i>Ramayana</i> and <i>Mahabharata</i> (in Sanskrit)
c. 200 BCE-200 CE	<i>Manusmriti</i> (in Sanskrit); composition and compilation of Tamil Sangam literature
c. 100 CE	<i>Charaka</i> and <i>Sushruta Samhitas</i> , works on medicine (in Sanskrit)
c. 200 CE onwards	Compilation of the <i>Puranas</i> (in Sanskrit)
c. 300 CE	<i>Natyashastra</i> of Bharata, a work on dramaturgy (in Sanskrit)
c. 300-600 CE	Other Dharmashastras (in Sanskrit)
c. 400-500 CE	Sanskrit plays including the works of Kalidasa; works on astronomy and mathematics by Aryabhata and Varahamihira (in Sanskrit); compilation of Jaina works (in Prakrit)

TIMELINE 2 MAJOR LANDMARKS IN THE STUDY OF THE MAHABHARATA

Twentieth century

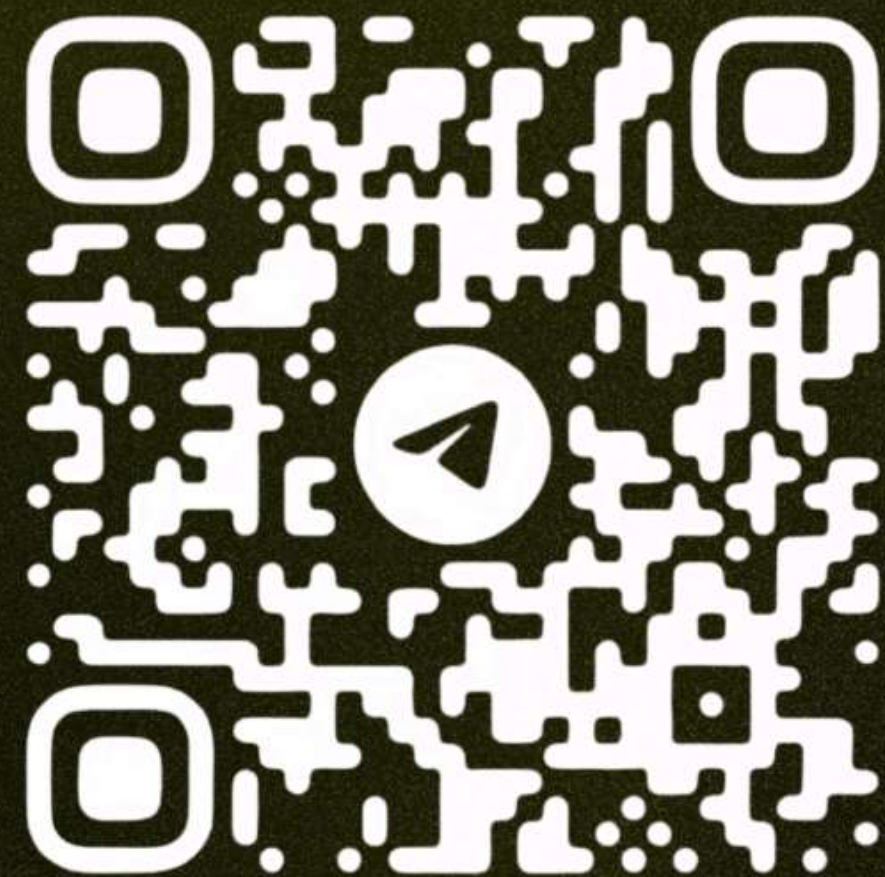
1919-66	Preparation and publication of the Critical Edition of the <i>Mahabharata</i>
1973	J.A.B. van Buitenen begins English translation of the Critical Edition; remains incomplete after his death in 1978

Questions

- How does the Mahabharata show the multicultural nature of ancient Indian society?
Explain with examples. **SQP 2024**
 - Describe the social implications of access to resources during Mahabharata period.
-

THANK YOU

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