

BRICKS, BEADS AND BONES

The Harappan Civilisation — Theme One

हड़प्पा सभ्यता — प्रश्न बैंक

Class:	XII — NCERT Themes in Indian History, Part I
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Section A	30 Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ)	2 marks each
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SECTION A | Multiple Choice Questions

बहुविकल्पीय प्रश्न — 30 प्रश्न (1 | कुल 30 अंक)

Q1. The Harappan Civilisation is also known as:

हड़प्पा सभ्यता को कसि अन्य नाम से जाना जाता है?

- (a) Aryan Civilisation
- (b) Gangetic Civilisation
- (c) Indus Valley Civilisation**
- (d) Dravidian Civilisation

Ans: (c) Indus Valley Civilisation

Explanation: Because it developed mainly along the Indus river and its tributaries.

Q2. The Mature Harappan phase lasted from approximately:

परपिक्व हड़प्पा काल लगभग कसि समय था?

- (a) 6000–2600 BCE
- (b) 2600–1900 BCE**
- (c) 1900–1300 BCE
- (d) 3000–2000 BCE

Ans: (b) 2600–1900 BCE

Explanation: This is the most prosperous and well-known phase of the civilisation.

Q3. Who reported the first Harappan seal to the Archaeological Survey of India?

हड़प्पा की पहली मुहर की रिपोर्ट कसिने को दी?

- (a) John Marshall
- (b) R.E.M. Wheeler
- (c) Alexander Cunningham**
- (d) Daya Ram Sahni

Ans: (c) Alexander Cunningham

Explanation: He was the first Director-General of ASI and received the seal in 1875.

Q4. The ploughed field found at Kalibangan is associated with which period?

कालीबंगन में जुता हुआ खेत कसि काल का है?

- (a) Early Harappan**
- (b) Mature Harappan
- (c) Late Harappan
- (d) Vedic period

Ans: (a) Early Harappan

Explanation: The ploughed field at Kalibangan belongs to Early Harappan levels.

Q5. Which stone was mainly used to make Harappan weights?

हड़प्पा के बाट किस पत्थर से बनते थे?

- (a) Granite
- (b) Chert**
- (c) Limestone
- (d) Sandstone

Ans: (b) Chert

Explanation: Harappan weights were generally cubical and made of chert with no markings.

Q6. The Great Bath is located at:

महान स्नानागार () कहाँ स्थित है?

- (a) Harappa
- (b) Mohenjodaro**
- (c) Lothal
- (d) Dholavira

Ans: (b) Mohenjodaro

Explanation: The Great Bath is one of the most impressive structures on the Citadel at Mohenjodaro.

Q7. Harappan script is written from:

हड़प्पा लिपि किस दिशा में लिखी जाती थी?

- (a) Left to Right
- (b) Right to Left**
- (c) Top to Bottom
- (d) Boustrophedon

Ans: (b) Right to Left

Explanation: Seals show wider spacing on the right and cramping on the left, confirming right-to-left writing.

Q8. Which of these was NOT a material used for making Harappan beads?

निम्न में से कौन-सा हड़प्पा मोती बनाने में प्रयोग नहीं होता था?

- (a) Carnelian
- (b) Lapis lazuli
- (c) Iron**
- (d) Steatite

Ans: (c) Iron

Explanation: Iron was not used in the Harappan civilisation. It came into use much later (c. 1000 BCE).

Q9. The site Chanhudaro was almost exclusively devoted to:

चनहूदड़ो कसि गतविधिके लिए समर्पति था?

- (a) Agriculture
- (b) Religious rituals
- (c) Craft production**
- (d) Trade administration

Ans: (c) Craft production

Explanation: Chanhudaro was a tiny settlement but a major centre for bead-making, shell-cutting, metal-working and seal-making.

Q10. Which archaeologist announced the discovery of the Harappan Civilisation to the world in 1924?

1924 में हड़प्पा सभ्यता की घोषणा कसिने की?

- (a) R.E.M. Wheeler
- (b) Daya Ram Sahni
- (c) John Marshall**
- (d) Rakhal Das Banerji

Ans: (c) John Marshall

Explanation: John Marshall, as DG of ASI, announced the discovery of the Indus Valley Civilisation in 1924.

Q11. What is "Meluhha" believed to refer to in Mesopotamian texts?

मेसोपोटामिया के ग्रंथों में "मेलुहा" से क्या अभिप्राय था?

- (a) Egypt
- (b) Mesopotamia itself
- (c) The Harappan region**
- (d) Afghanistan

Ans: (c) The Harappan region

Explanation: Many scholars identify Meluhha with the Harappan region based on trade goods mentioned.

Q12. The lower denominations of Harappan weights followed which system?

हड़प्पा के छोटे बाट कसि प्रणाली पर आधारित थे?

- (a) Decimal
- (b) Binary**
- (c) Hexadecimal
- (d) Octal

Ans: (b) Binary

Explanation: Lower denominations were 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32 — a binary system.

Q13. Harappan seals were mostly made of:

हड़प्पा मुहरें प्रमुखतः किससे बनाई जाती थीं?

- (a) Copper
- (b) Steatite**
- (c) Terracotta
- (d) Ivory

Ans: (b) Steatite

Explanation: Steatite (soft stone) was the primary material; terracotta seals were also found.

Q14. Who took over as Director-General of ASI in 1944 and improved excavation techniques?

1944 में के महानिदेशक बनकर खुदाई तकनीक में सुधार किसने किया?

- (a) John Marshall
- (b) Daya Ram Sahni
- (c) George Dales
- (d) R.E.M. Wheeler**

Ans: (d) R.E.M. Wheeler

Explanation: Wheeler introduced proper stratigraphic excavation to Indian archaeology.

Q15. Which CBSE-important feature of Harappan cities indicates town planning?

हड़प्पा नगरों की कौन-सी विशेषता नगर नियोजन दर्शाती है?

- (a) Large population
- (b) Grid-pattern streets and uniform bricks**
- (c) Iron tools
- (d) Copper currency

Ans: (b) Grid-pattern streets and uniform bricks

Explanation: Streets at right angles and standardised brick ratio (1:2:4) show prior planning.

Q16. The Harappan script has approximately how many signs?

हड़प्पा लिपि में लगभग कितने चिह्न हैं?

- (a) 50
- (b) 150
- (c) 250
- (d) 375–400**

Ans: (d) 375–400

Explanation: The script has between 375 and 400 signs and remains undeciphered.

Q17. Lapis lazuli, a blue stone highly valued by Harappans, was sourced from:

हड़प्पावासियों द्वारा मूल्यवान नीला पत्थर लाजवर्द () कहाँ से आता था?

- (a) Rajasthan
- (b) Gujarat
- (c) Afghanistan**
- (d) Oman

Ans: (c) Afghanistan

Explanation: Shortughai in far-off Afghanistan was the nearest source of lapis lazuli.

Q18. Which of the following is the CORRECT statement about the Harappan script?

हड़प्पा लिपि के बारे में कौन-सा कथन सही है?

- (a) It has been fully deciphered
- (b) It is alphabetical
- (c) It remains undeciphered to this day**
- (d) It is similar to Sanskrit

Ans: (c) It remains undeciphered to this day

Explanation: Despite many attempts, no scholar has successfully deciphered the Harappan script.

Q19. The archaeological term for the study of DNA of ancient populations is:

प्राचीन जनसंख्या के अध्ययन को क्या कहते हैं?

- (a) Archaeo-zoology
- (b) Archaeo-botany
- (c) Archaeogenetics**
- (d) Stratigraphy

Ans: (c) Archaeogenetics

Explanation: Archaeogenetics uses molecular genetics to understand population history.

Q20. At Harappan sites, finds of which crop are relatively rare?

हड़प्पा स्थलों पर किस फसल के अवशेष अपेक्षाकृत कम मिलते हैं?

- (a) Wheat
- (b) Barley
- (c) Rice**
- (d) Sesame

Ans: (c) Rice

Explanation: Rice finds are relatively rare at Harappan sites despite its importance in India today.

Q21. The "Aryan invasion theory" as a cause for Harappan decline was challenged by:

"आर्य आक्रमण सिद्धांत" को किसने चुनौती दी?

- (a) John Marshall
- (b) George Dales**
- (c) R.E.M. Wheeler
- (d) Cunningham

Ans: (b) George Dales

Explanation: George Dales in the 1960s showed skeletons at Mohenjodaro did not belong to the same period and there was no destruction level.

Q22. Craft production evidence at Harappan sites includes all EXCEPT:

हड़प्पा शिल्प उत्पादन साक्ष्य में क्या शामिल नहीं है?

- (a) Raw materials
- (b) Unfinished objects
- (c) Rejects and waste
- (d) Written trade records**

Ans: (d) Written trade records

Explanation: No written trade records have been found since the script is undeciphered.

Q23. Which Harappan city had an elaborate system of water reservoirs?

किस हड़प्पा नगर में जलाशयों की वसित व्यवस्था थी?

- (a) Harappa
- (b) Mohenjodaro
- (c) Dholavira**
- (d) Rakhigarhi

Ans: (c) Dholavira

Explanation: Dholavira in Gujarat had a remarkable system of water reservoirs, possibly for irrigation and storage.

Q24. Harappan copper was likely imported from:

हड़प्पा का तांबा संभवतः कहाँ से आयात किया जाता था?

- (a) Rajasthan only
- (b) Oman (Magan)**
- (c) Sri Lanka
- (d) Mesopotamia

Ans: (b) Oman (Magan)

Explanation: Chemical analyses show common nickel traces in both Omani and Harappan copper artefacts.

Q25. Which of the following represents the CORRECT sequence of discovery?

खोज का सही क्रम कौन-सा है?

- (a) Mohenjodaro → Harappa → Marshall
- (b) Cunningham seal → Sahni excavates Harappa → Marshall announces civilisation**
- (c) Wheeler → Marshall → Cunningham
- (d) Dales → Wheeler → Marshall

Ans: (b) Cunningham seal → Sahni excavates Harappa → Marshall announces civilisation

Explanation: 1875 (Cunningham), 1921 (Sahni), 1924 (Marshall announcement) — correct chronology.

Q26. The large building found at Mohenjodaro labelled "palace" is now commonly called:

मोहेंजोदड़ो में मली बड़ी इमारत को अब क्या कहते हैं?

- (a) Temple
- (b) Priest-King statue building / Warehouse**
- (c) Parliament house
- (d) Granary only

Ans: (b) Priest-King statue building / Warehouse

Explanation: The "priest-king" label is a borrowed term from Mesopotamia — it is an assumption, not confirmed.

Q27. What does "stratigraphy" mean in archaeology?

पुरातत्त्व में "स्ट्रैटिग्राफी" का क्या अर्थ है?

- (a) Study of animal bones
- (b) Study of layers of soil/deposits to date artefacts**
- (c) Study of ancient scripts
- (d) Study of irrigation canals

Ans: (b) Study of layers of soil/deposits to date artefacts

Explanation: Lower layers are older; upper layers are more recent. Wheeler used this correctly.

Q28. Nageshwar and Balakot were specialised centres for making objects from:

नागेश्वर और बालाकोट कसि सामग्री की वस्तुएं बनाने के केंद्र थे?

- (a) Gold
- (b) Terracotta
- (c) Shell**
- (d) Lapis lazuli

Ans: (c) Shell

Explanation: Both sites are near the coast and specialised in shell bangles, ladles, and inlay.

Q29. By about 1800 BCE, which Harappan regions saw urban decline?

लगभग 1800 में कनि हड़प्पाई क्षेत्रों में नगरीय पतन हुआ?

- (a) Gujarat only
- (b) Sind and Cholistan**
- (c) Rajasthan and UP
- (d) Afghanistan

Ans: (b) Sind and Cholistan

Explanation: Most Mature Harappan sites in Sind and Cholistan were abandoned by c. 1800 BCE.

Q30. The "priest-king" statue at Mohenjodaro is associated with which type of evidence?

"पुजारी-राजा" की मूर्त किस साक्ष्य से जुड़ी है?

- (a) Confirmed literary sources
- (b) Archaeological assumption based on Mesopotamian parallels**
- (c) DNA analysis
- (d) Harappan script translation

Ans: (b) Archaeological assumption based on Mesopotamian parallels

Explanation: The label "priest-king" is borrowed — Mesopotamian archaeologists familiar with priest-kings applied it here.

SECTION B | Fill in the Blanks

रक्ति स्थान भरें — 20 प्रश्न (1)

Q1. The Harappan civilisation is also known as the _____ Civilisation.

हड़प्पा सभ्यता को _____ सभ्यता भी कहते हैं।

Ans: Indus Valley / □□□□□ □□□□

Q2. The Mature Harappan phase lasted from 2600 BCE to _____ BCE.

परिपक्व हड़प्पा काल 2600 से _____ तक था।

Ans: 1900

Q3. Alexander Cunningham was the first Director-General of the _____.

अलेक्जेंडर कनघिम _____ के पहले महानिदेशक थे।

Ans: Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

Q4. The most distinctive feature of Harappan cities was a carefully planned _____ system.

हड़प्पा नगरों की सबसे विशिष्ट विशेषता _____ प्रणाली थी।

Ans: Drainage / □□ □□□□□□

Q5. The Great Bath was waterproofed using _____ mortar.

महान स्नानागार को _____ मोर्टार से वाटरप्रूफ बनाया गया था।

Ans: Gypsum / □□□□□□

Q6. Harappan script has approximately _____ signs.

हड़प्पा लिपि में लगभग _____ चिह्न हैं।

Ans: 375–400

Q7. Harappan weights were made of a stone called _____.

हड़प्पा के बाट _____ नाम के पत्थर से बने होते थे।

Ans: Chert / □□□□

Q8. Lapis lazuli was sourced from _____ in Afghanistan.

अफगानिस्तान में _____ से लाजवर्द पत्थर लाया जाता था।

Ans: Shortughai / □□□□□□□□

Q9. The civilisation declined by about _____ BCE in most Mature Harappan regions.

अधिकांश परिपक्व हड़प्पाई क्षेत्रों में सभ्यता _____ तक पतन को प्राप्त हुई।

Ans: 1800

Q10. The find of a ploughed field has been reported from _____ in Rajasthan.
राजस्थान में _____ से जुते हुए खेत का साक्ष्य मिला है।

Ans: Kalibangan / □□□□□□□□

Q11. Chanhudaro was almost exclusively devoted to _____ production.
चन्हूदड़ो लगभग पूरी तरह _____ उत्पादन के लिए समर्पित था।

Ans: Craft / □□□□□

Q12. Archaeo-zoologists study _____ to understand animal domestication.
पुराजंतु-वर्जिज्ञानी _____ का अध्ययन करते हैं।

Ans: Animal bones / □□□ □□□□□□□□

Q13. John Marshall announced the discovery of a new civilisation in _____ CE.
जॉन मार्शल ने _____ में नई सभ्यता की घोषणा की।

Ans: 1924

Q14. Harappan seals were mostly made of _____.
हड़प्पा मुहरें अधिकतर _____ से बनी होती थीं।

Ans: Steatite / □□□□□□□□

Q15. Mesopotamian texts refer to the Harappan region as _____.
मेसोपोटामियाई ग्रंथों में हड़प्पाई क्षेत्र को _____ कहा गया है।

Ans: Meluhha / □□□□□□

Q16. The red colour of carnelian beads was obtained by _____ the raw material.
कार्नेलियन मोतियों का लाल रंग कच्चे माल को _____ करके प्राप्त किया जाता था।

Ans: Firing / □□□□□

Q17. R.E.M. Wheeler took over as DG of ASI in the year _____.
... ने _____ में के महानिदेशक का पद संभाला।

Ans: 1944

Q18. The study of DNA of ancient populations is called _____.
प्राचीन जनसंख्या के अध्ययन को _____ कहते हैं।

Ans: Archaeogenetics / □□□□-□□□□□□□□

Q19. Harappan script is written from _____ to _____.
हड़प्पा लिपि _____ से _____ लिखी जाती है।

Ans: Right to Left / □□□□ □□ □□□□

Q20. George Dales in the 1960s challenged the _____ theory of Harappan decline.

जॉर्ज डेल्स ने 1960 के दशक में हड़प्पा पतन के _____ सिद्धांत को चुनौती दी।

Ans: Aryan invasion / □□□□ □□□□□□

SECTION C | One Word / One Sentence Answers

एक शब्द / एक वाक्य में उत्तर — 20 प्रश्न (1)

Q1. Name the site where the first Harappan seal was found.

पहली हड़प्पा मुहर कहाँ मली थी?

Ans: Harappa

Q2. What is the estimated total number of wells in Mohenjodaro?

मोहेजोदड़ो में अनुमानित कुल कुओं की संख्या?

Ans: About 700

Q3. Name the stone used to make Harappan weights.

हड़प्पा के बाट बनाने के लिए प्रयुक्त पत्थर का नाम?

Ans: Chert

Q4. Which archaeologist excavated Mohenjodaro in 1922?

1922 में मोहेजोदड़ो की खुदाई किसने की?

Ans: Rakhal Das Banerji

Q5. What does BCE stand for?

का पूर्ण रूप क्या है?

Ans: Before Common Era

Q6. Name any one coastal settlement that specialised in shell objects.

एक तटीय बस्ती का नाम जो शंख-वस्तुओं के लिए विशेष थी।

Ans: Nageshwar or Balakot

Q7. What material was used to waterproof the Great Bath?

महान स्नानागार को वाटरप्रूफ करने के लिए क्या प्रयोग हुआ?

Ans: Gypsum mortar

Q8. Name the region in Mesopotamia that is believed to refer to the Harappan region.

मेसोपोटामिया में हड़प्पाई क्षेत्र को किस नाम से जाना जाता था?

Ans: Meluhha

Q9. In which state is the Harappan site Dholavira located?

हड़प्पा स्थल धोलावीरा किस राज्य में है?

Ans: Gujarat

Q10. Who was the first professional archaeologist to work in India?

भारत में काम करने वाले पहले पेशेवर पुरातत्त्वविद् कौन थे?

Ans: John Marshall

Q11. Name the technique Wheeler used to correctly date Harappan artefacts.

ने हड़प्पाई वस्तुओं को सही तथिदिने के लिए कौन-सी तकनीक अपनाई?

Ans: Stratigraphy

Q12. What was the size of the smallest Harappan settlement Chanhudaro?

चन्हूदड़ो का क्षेत्रफल क्या था?

Ans: Less than 7 hectares

Q13. Name the island likely referred to as "Dilmun" in Mesopotamian texts.

मेसोपोटामियाई ग्रंथों में "दलिमुन" कौन-से द्वीप को कहा गया होगा?

Ans: Bahrain

Q14. What feature of Harappan bricks indicates standardisation?

हड़प्पा ईंटों की कौन-सी विशेषता मानकीकरण दर्शाती है?

Ans: Uniform ratio 1:2:4 (length:width:height)

Q15. Name any one wild animal whose bones are found at Harappan sites.

एक जंगली जानवर का नाम जिसकी हड्डियाँ हड़प्पा स्थलों पर मिलती हैं।

Ans: Boar / Deer / Gharial

Q16. Which Harappan site in Gujarat had water reservoirs?

गुजरात में कसि हड़प्पा स्थल पर जलाशय मिले हैं?

Ans: Dholavira

Q17. What term is used for the later, declining phase of Harappan settlements?

हड़प्पा बस्तियों के बाद के पतनशील काल को क्या कहते हैं?

Ans: Late Harappan / Successor cultures

Q18. Name the earliest known text of India that mentions a god called Rudra.

भारत का सबसे पुराना ग्रंथ कौन-सा है जिसमें रुद्र का उल्लेख है?

Ans: Rigveda

Q19. What does the uniform distribution of Harappan seals, weights, and bricks suggest?

हड़प्पाई मुहरों, बाटों और ईंटों के एकसमान वितरण से क्या पता चलता है?

Ans: A single unified state / Central authority

Q20. Name any two major Harappan cities.

कनिही दो प्रमुख हड़प्पाई नगरो के नाम लखिए।

Ans: Mohenjodaro, Harappa (also Dholavira, Rakhigarhi, Ganweriwala)

SECTION D | Short Answer Type Questions

लघु उत्तरीय प्रश्न — 20 प्रश्न (3 | कुल 60 अंक)

Q1. [3 Marks / 3 □□□]

What were the subsistence strategies of the Harappan people?

हड़प्पाई लोगो की जीविका रणनीतियाँ क्या थीं?

Ans: The Harappan people relied on agriculture (wheat, barley, lentil, chickpea, sesame, millets), animal husbandry (cattle, sheep, goat, buffalo, pig), and possibly hunting wild species (boar, deer, gharial). A ploughed field at Kalibangan shows two crops grown together. Terracotta bulls suggest oxen were used for ploughing. Canals at Shortughai indicate irrigation.

Q2. [3 Marks / 3 □□□]

Describe the drainage system of Harappan cities. Why is it considered remarkable?

हड़प्पा नगरों की जल निकासी प्रणाली का वर्णन करें। इसे उल्लेखनीय क्यों माना जाता है?

Ans: Streets with drains were laid first, then houses built along them. Every house needed at least one wall along a street so domestic waste could flow into street drains. Main channels were made of bricks, covered with loose bricks for easy cleaning. Lime mortar was used as sealant. Long drainage channels had sumps at intervals. Mackay called it 'the most complete ancient system as yet discovered.'

Q3. [3 Marks / 3 □□□]

What is the significance of the Great Bath at Mohenjodaro?

मोहेंजोदड़ो के महान स्नानागार का क्या महत्त्व है?

Ans: The Great Bath is a large rectangular tank in a courtyard on the Citadel, with steps on north and south, waterproofed with gypsum mortar and bricks set on edge. A large well supplied water; a huge drain removed it. An adjacent building had 8 bathrooms. Scholars suggest it was used for special ritual bathing, though this remains speculative. It is the oldest known large-scale public bathing facility.

Q4. [3 Marks / 3 □□□]

How did Harappans obtain raw materials for craft production?

हड़प्पावासी शिल्प उत्पादन के लिए कच्चा माल कैसे प्राप्त करते थे?

Ans: Harappans used three strategies: (1) Established settlements near raw materials — Nageshwar/Balakot for shell, Shortughai for lapis lazuli, Lothal for carnelian. (2) Sent expeditions to areas like the Khetri region (copper) and south India (gold). (3) Long-distance trade — copper from Oman, lapis lazuli from Afghanistan. Terracotta toy bullock carts suggest land transport; riverine and coastal routes were also used.

Q5. [3 Marks / 3 □□□]

What were the social differences observed in the Harappan civilisation?

हड़प्पा सभ्यता में कौन-से सामाजिक अंतर देखे गए?

Ans: Social differences are traced through: (1) Burials — some graves had pottery and ornaments (afterlife belief); some had hollowed brick-lined pits; but overall, Harappans did not bury precious things. (2) Artefacts — luxury objects (faience, gold jewellery) concentrated in large cities like Mohenjodaro and Harappa, absent from smaller settlements like Kalibangan. These indicate differences but cemeteries show 'little social differentiation' compared to Egypt.

Q6. [3 Marks / 3 □□□]

Describe the Harappan script. Why is it a challenge for historians?

हड़प्पा लिपिकी वर्णन करें। यह इतिहासकारों के लिए चुनौती क्यों है?

Ans: Harappan script has 375–400 signs, is not alphabetical (logographic/syllabic), and is written right to left. Most inscriptions are short — the longest has about 26 signs. It appears on seals, copper tools, jewellery, and even a signboard at Dholavira. It remains undeciphered — this means we cannot directly know the language spoken, thoughts, religious texts, or governance details of the Harappans.

Q7. [3 Marks / 3 □□□]

What were Harappan seals and what was their purpose?

हड़प्पाई मुहरें क्या थीं और इनका उद्देश्य क्या था?

Ans: Harappan seals were small square objects made mostly of steatite. A seal was pressed on wet clay applied to a knotted rope on a bag of goods — the sealing conveyed the sender's identity and confirmed the bag had not been tampered with. Seals typically bore a line of script (owner's name/title) and an animal motif. They also served as a medium of long-distance communication and may have had religious significance.

Q8. [3 Marks / 3 □□□]

What are the different views among archaeologists about the political structure of the Harappan state?

हड़प्पा राज्य की राजनीतिक संरचना के बारे में पुरातत्त्वविदों के क्या मत हैं?

Ans: Three main views: (1) No rulers — society was equal, cemeteries show little differentiation. (2) Multiple rulers — each city (Mohenjodaro, Harappa) had its own king. (3) Single state — evidence of standardised bricks, weights, and seals across a vast region suggests one centralised authority. No confirmed palace or temple has been found. The "priest-king" statue label is borrowed from Mesopotamia and is an assumption.

Q9. [3 Marks / 3 □□□]

What is 'stratigraphy' and why was Wheeler's use of it important?

"स्ट्रैटिग्राफी" क्या है और का इसका उपयोग क्यों महत्वपूर्ण था?

Ans: Stratigraphy is the study of layers (strata) of soil at archaeological sites. Lower layers are older; upper layers are more recent. Wheeler recognised that Marshall had excavated Mohenjodaro along uniform horizontal lines, mixing artefacts from different periods. Wheeler used proper stratigraphic methods — following the natural layers — to correctly date artefacts and understand the sequence of occupation at Harappa.

Q10. [3 Marks / 3 □□□]

What evidence suggests Harappans had contact with Mesopotamia?

हड़प्पावासियों के मेसोपोटामिया से संपर्क के क्या साक्ष्य हैं?

Ans: Evidence includes: (1) Harappan seals, weights, dice, and beads found at Mesopotamian sites. (2) A cylinder seal typical of Mesopotamia with Harappan bull motif found in Bahrain. (3) Mesopotamian texts mention "Meluhha" (the Harappan region) and list products like carnelian, lapis lazuli, copper, gold, and wood. (4) A "Persian Gulf seal" with Harappan motifs. (5) Depictions of ships and boats on seals suggest sea-borne trade via Oman, Dilmun (Bahrain) and Mesopotamia.

Q11. [3 Marks / 3 □□□]

How do archaeologists reconstruct the past using material evidence?

पु्रातत्त्ववद्भिः भौतिक साक्ष्यों से अतीत का पुनर्निर्माण कैसे करते हैं?

Ans: Archaeologists use material evidence because organic materials (cloth, leather) decompose. They find stone, burnt clay, metal, and terracotta. Classification is by material (stone, metal, clay) and function (tool, ornament, ritual object). Context is crucial — the same object in a house, drain, grave, or kiln has different meanings. They also use indirect evidence (e.g., cotton traces found but clothing reconstructed from sculptures). Frames of reference (comparison with Mesopotamia) help interpret finds.

Q12. [3 Marks / 3 □□□]

Why is the "Aryan invasion theory" for Harappan decline now rejected?

"आर्य आक्रमण सद्धिांत" को हड़प्पा पतन का कारण क्यों नहीं माना जाता?

Ans: R.E.M. Wheeler in 1947 correlated Rigvedic evidence (Indra as fort-destroyer) with the Harappan decline. But George Dales (1960s) showed: (1) Skeletons at Mohenjodaro did not belong to the same period. (2) No destruction level was found in the citadel. (3) No warrior bodies surrounded by weapons. (4) No evidence of fire or external attack. Modern DNA evidence (Rakhigarhi, 2019) shows genetic continuity without large-scale Aryan immigration.

Q13. [3 Marks / 3 □□□]

What were "hoards" and what do they reveal about Harappan society?

"संग्रह" () क्या थे और वे हड़प्पा समाज के बारे में क्या बताते हैं?

Ans: Hoards are objects kept carefully by people, often in pots — jewellery or metal saved for reuse by metalworkers. When original owners did not retrieve them, they stayed buried till archaeologists found them. In Harappan context, all gold jewellery was found from hoards, suggesting gold was very rare and precious. Hoards tell us about individual ownership, value systems, and the precious nature of rare metals in Harappan economy.

Q14. [3 Marks / 3 □□□]

Describe the layout of Mohenjodaro. What makes it a 'planned urban centre'?

मोहेजोदड़ो के खाके का वर्णन करें। इसे "नयोजति नगर" क्यों कहते हैं?

Ans: Mohenjodaro is divided into a Citadel (small, high, walled) and a Lower Town (large, also walled). Buildings were constructed on mud brick platforms. Streets were laid in a grid pattern (approximate right angles). Bricks were standardised (1:2:4 ratio). Streets with drains were built first, then houses. The Citadel had public structures (Great Bath, Warehouse). All this indicates prior planning and coordinated construction — hallmarks of a planned urban centre.

Q15. [3 Marks / 3 □□□]

How do archaeologists identify centres of craft production?

पुरातत्त्ववर्द्धि शलिप उत्पादन केंद्रों को कैसे पहचानते हैं?

Ans: Indicators of craft production centres: (1) Raw materials — stone nodules, whole shells, copper ore. (2) Tools — specialised drills, blades. (3) Unfinished objects — half-made beads or seals. (4) Rejects — broken or imperfect items. (5) Waste material — the best indicator. If shell or stone is cut, tiny pieces are left as waste at the production site. Chanhudaro, Nageshwar, Balakot, and Lothal are examples of specialised craft centres.

Q16. [3 Marks / 3 □□□]

What materials were used to make Harappan beads? Describe the process of making carnelian beads.

हड़प्पाई मोती कनि सामग्रियों से बने थे? कार्नेलियन मोती बनाने की प्रक्रिया बताएं।

Ans: Materials: carnelian, jasper, crystal, quartz, steatite; metals — copper, bronze, gold; shell, faience, terracotta. Carnelian bead process: (1) Yellowish raw material fired to turn it red. (2) Chipped into rough shapes. (3) Ground, polished, drilled. Specialised drills found at Chanhudaro, Lothal, and Dholavira. Steatite (soft stone) was moulded as paste to make geometrical shapes. Shapes included disc, cylindrical, spherical, barrel-shaped.

Q17. [3 Marks / 3 □□□]

What evidence suggests the Harappan civilisation had a system of trade?

हड़प्पा सभ्यता में व्यापार व्यवस्था के क्या साक्ष्य हैं?

Ans: Trade evidence: (1) Standardised weights (chert, binary system) for measuring goods. (2) Seals used to authenticate goods in transit. (3) Long-distance materials — lapis lazuli (Afghanistan), carnelian (Gujarat), copper (Oman), gold (south India). (4) Harappan artefacts at Mesopotamian sites and Mesopotamian seals at Harappan sites. (5) Terracotta bullock carts for land transport. (6) Ship depictions on seals for sea trade. (7) Specialised craft centres supplying finished goods to urban centres.

Q18. [3 Marks / 3 □□□]

What is "faience" and why was it considered a luxury in Harappan times?

"फेयेन्स" क्या है और हड़प्पाकाल में इसे विलासिता क्यों माना जाता था?

Ans: Faience is a material made of ground sand or silica mixed with a gum and then fired. In Harappan times, miniature faience pots (perhaps perfume bottles) were found mostly at Mohenjodaro and Harappa — not at smaller settlements. This distribution suggests faience was a luxury. It was considered precious because it was 'difficult to make' (Mackay). It represents an example of how archaeologists distinguish utilitarian objects from luxury goods based on rarity and distribution.

Q19. [3 Marks / 3 □□□]

What are 'archaeo-botanists' and 'archaeo-zoologists'? What is their role in understanding Harappan subsistence?

"पुरा-वनस्पतविद्" और "पुरा-जंतुविद्" क्या हैं? हड़प्पाई जीविका समझने में इनकी भूमिका?

Ans: Archaeo-botanists are specialists in ancient plant remains — they study charred seeds and grains. Archaeo-zoologists (also called zoo-archaeologists) study ancient animal bones. Their findings at Harappan sites: Archaeo-botanists identified wheat, barley, lentil, sesame, millets, and rare rice. Archaeo-zoologists identified domesticated animals (cattle, sheep, goat, pig) and wild species (boar, deer, gharial) from bone structure and patterns. Together they help reconstruct the diet and farming practices of the Harappans.

Q20. [3 Marks / 3 □□□]

Why did Marshall miss the significance of Harappa? What was Cunningham's "confusion"?

मार्शल और कनघिम हड़प्पा की महत्ता क्यों नहीं समझ सके?

Ans: Cunningham's focus was on Early Historic sites (Ganga valley, 6th century BCE onwards) using accounts of Chinese Buddhist pilgrims. When a Harappan seal was given to him, he couldn't place it in his familiar time-frame. He thought Indian history began with the Ganga valley. Marshall, while more professional, excavated along horizontal lines ignoring stratigraphy — mixing artefacts from different periods. Both show how a historian's framework (their lens) determines what they discover and what they miss.

SECTION E | Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

अक्सर पूछे जाने वाले प्रश्न — 20 ()

FAQ 1

Q: Why is the Harappan script important and why can't we read it?

प्र: हड़प्पा लिपि महत्वपूर्ण क्यों है और इसे पढ़ा क्यों नहीं जा सकता?

Ans: The Harappan script is the oldest writing system of South Asia and appears on seals, copper tools, and even a signboard at Dholavira. It has 375–400 signs, is non-alphabetical (each sign likely represents a word or syllable), and is written right to left. Despite many attempts, it remains undeciphered because: (1) No bilingual inscription has been found (like the Rosetta Stone for Egyptian). (2) The signs are too brief to enable statistical analysis. Until it is deciphered, questions about Harappan language, religion, and governance remain unanswered.

FAQ 2

Q: Were the Harappans and the Vedic people the same?

प्र: क्या हड़प्पावासी और वैदिक लोग एक ही थे?

Ans: This is debated. Some scholars argued the Harappans were the authors of the Vedic civilisation. The opposing view is that Vedic/Aryan people arrived later and may have caused the Harappan decline (the now-rejected "Aryan invasion theory"). Modern DNA evidence from Rakhigarhi (2019) shows the genetic roots of Harappans go back 10,000 BCE and show continuity with modern South Asians — but do not definitively resolve the Harappan–Vedic debate. Further research is needed.

FAQ 3

Q: Why do historians think the Great Bath was used for ritual purposes?

प्र: इतिहासकार महान स्नानागार को अनुष्ठान स्थल क्यों मानते हैं?

Ans: The Great Bath's location on the Citadel (an elevated, likely elite zone), its elaborate waterproofing (gypsum mortar, bricks on edge), the adjacent building with 8 bathrooms, and the fact that it was clearly not a domestic structure — all suggest a special public use. Later Indian traditions of ritual bathing in tanks (as in temples) provide a parallel. However, this remains an inference, not a proven fact. Archaeologists acknowledge the interpretation is speculative.

FAQ 4

Q: What is the difference between the Citadel and the Lower Town?

प्र: गढ़ () और नचिले नगर () में क्या अंतर है?

Ans: The Citadel is a smaller, elevated section of the Harappan city built on a high mud brick platform and walled — physically separate from the rest. It contains public/special-purpose buildings like the Great Bath and warehouse. The Lower Town is much larger, also walled, and contains residential buildings with a courtyard pattern, individual bathroom, and wells. The Citadel may represent an administrative or ritual centre; the Lower Town was where ordinary people lived.

FAQ 5

Q: How did archaeologists figure out that Harappans traded with Mesopotamia?

प्र: पुरातत्त्वविदों को कैसे पता चला कि हड़प्पावासियों ने मेसोपोटामिया से व्यापार किया?

Ans: Multiple lines of evidence: (1) Harappan seals, weights, and beads found at Mesopotamian sites. (2) Mesopotamian cylinder seals with Harappan bull motif found in Bahrain. (3) Mesopotamian texts (3rd millennium BCE) mention "Meluhha" with products matching Harappan goods. (4) Chemical analysis shows Omani and Harappan copper share nickel traces (common origin). (5) A Harappan jar found in Oman. (6) Ship depictions on seals suggest seafaring trade via Dilmun (Bahrain) and Magan (Oman).

FAQ 6

Q: Why did the Harappan civilisation decline?

प्र: हड़प्पा सभ्यता का पतन क्यों हुआ?

Ans: No single agreed cause. Proposed theories include: Climate change (evidence of aridity after 1900 BCE), deforestation (for fuel and agriculture), excessive floods or rivers drying up (Saraswati river), overuse of landscape, and epidemic disease. The "Aryan invasion" theory has been disproved. What is clear: by c. 1800 BCE, Mature Harappan sites in Sind and Cholistan were abandoned; simultaneously, new Late Harappan settlements appeared in Gujarat, Haryana, and western UP. The subcontinent had to wait over a millennium for new cities to develop in the Ganga valley.

FAQ 7

Q: What can we learn from Harappan burials?

प्र: हड़प्पाई शवाधानों से क्या जानकारी मिलती है?

Ans: Harappan burials provide evidence of: (1) Belief in afterlife — pottery and ornaments placed in graves. (2) Some social differentiation — hollow brick-lined pits vs simple pits. (3) Gender — jewellery found in burials of both men and women. (4) Relative equality — unlike Egypt's royal burials with vast wealth, Harappans generally did not bury precious things with the dead. (5) At Harappa cemetery (mid-1980s): shell rings, jasper bead, hundreds of micro beads near a male skull; some graves had copper mirrors.

FAQ 8

Q: Who was Daya Ram Sahni and what was his contribution?

प्र: दया राम साहनी कौन थे और उनका क्या योगदान था?

Ans: Daya Ram Sahni was an Indian archaeologist who began excavations at Harappa in 1921 under the Archaeological Survey of India. His excavations confirmed the existence of a significant ancient settlement and provided the material evidence that, combined with Rakhal Das Banerji's 1922 excavations at Mohenjodaro, led John Marshall to announce the discovery of the Indus Valley Civilisation in 1924. Sahni's work was crucial in establishing Harappa as a major archaeological site.

FAQ 9

Q: Why is context important in archaeology?

प्र: पुरातत्त्व में संदर्भ () क्यों महत्वपूर्ण है?

Ans: Context means WHERE exactly an artefact was found — in a house, drain, grave, kiln, or street. The same object can mean very different things depending on context. For example, a terracotta figurine found in a house might be a toy or household deity; found in a ritual deposit it suggests religious use. Marshall's error was excavating horizontally (mixing artefacts from different time periods), losing their stratigraphic context. Context is what transforms an object into historical evidence.

FAQ 10

Q: How do archaeologists distinguish utilitarian objects from luxury items?

प्र: पुरातत्त्वविद् उपयोगी वस्तुओं और विलासितापूर्ण वस्तुओं में अंतर कैसे करते हैं?

Ans: Utilitarian objects: made of common materials (stone, clay), easily available, found distributed throughout settlements (pottery, needles, querns, flesh-rubbers). Luxury items: made of rare or costly materials (faience, gold, lapis lazuli) OR require complex technology, found mainly in large settlements. However, complications arise: spindle whorls made of rare faience are found widely — are they utilitarian or luxury? Archaeologists must judge based on material rarity, distribution, and complexity of manufacture.

FAQ 11

Q: What is "archaeogenetics" and what has it revealed about Harappans?

प्र: "पुरा-आनुवंशिकी" क्या है और इसने हड़प्पावासियों के बारे में क्या बताया है?

Ans: Archaeogenetics is the study of DNA extracted from ancient skeletal remains to understand population history using molecular genetics. The landmark study of Rakhigarhi (Haryana — the largest Harappan site, 550 hectares) published in 2019 in Cell showed: (1) Harappan genetic roots go back 10,000 BCE. (2) Majority of South Asian population are their descendants. (3) Genetic continuity without large-scale immigration from steppe pastoralists (so-called Aryans). (4) The Harappans are the genetic ancestors of modern people in this region.

FAQ 12

Q: What does the "plight of Harappa" refer to?

प्र: "हड़प्पा की दुर्दशा" से क्या अभिप्राय है?

Ans: Harappa was badly damaged by brick robbers (people stealing ancient bricks for construction). As early as 1875, Cunningham noted that bricks from the ancient site were used to lay track for about 100 miles of the Lahore–Multan railway. After Partition (1947), Harappa became part of Pakistan, further limiting Indian access. In contrast, Mohenjodaro was better preserved. This "plight" refers to the systematic destruction of the site before archaeologists could properly excavate it.

FAQ 13

Q: Why did early archaeologists assume some Harappan figurines were "mother goddesses"?

प्र: प्रारंभिक पुरातत्त्वविदों ने कुछ मूर्तियों को "मातृदेवी" क्यों माना?

Ans: Early archaeologists saw terracotta figurines of women, heavily jewelled, some with elaborate head-dresses. They assumed these represented mother goddesses — a common religious figure in many ancient cultures. However, this is an interpretation problem: the figurines could equally represent women of status, dolls, or fertility symbols. The same speculative jump was made with stone querns (compared to lingas). Archaeologists now acknowledge these as "problems of interpretation" — moving from the known (present analogies) to the unknown (past meaning).

FAQ 14

Q: What is significant about the ancient signboard found at Dholavira?

प्र: धोलावीरा में मलिा प्राचीन साइनबोर्ड क्यों महत्वपूर्ण है?

Ans: At Dholavira, a large inscription with about 10 Harappan signs arranged in a row was found — possibly a signboard at the entrance of the Citadel. This is significant because: (1) It is the largest known Harappan inscription. (2) It suggests public display of writing — implying literacy was not just a skill of a select few. (3) It suggests writing was used for public communication, not just trade/administrative purposes. (4) The signs used on the signboard are among the clearest examples of the Harappan script.

FAQ 15

Q: How are archaeological sites formed? What is a "mound"?

प्र: पुरातात्विक स्थल कैसे बनते हैं? "टीला" क्या होता है?

Ans: Archaeological sites are formed through continuous production, use, and discarding of materials and structures. When people keep living in the same place, their accumulated debris (broken pottery, discarded tools, collapsed walls) builds up into a raised mound. Brief or permanent abandonment results in landscape alteration — wind, water, and erosion change the surface. Archaeologists find occupations detected as layers (strata), each different in colour, texture, and artefact types. Abandonment or desertion creates "sterile layers." Generally, lower layers are oldest, upper layers most recent.

FAQ 16

Q: What role did the Khetri region play in Harappan trade?

प्र: खेत्ती क्षेत्र ने हड़प्पाई व्यापार में क्या भूमिका निभाई?

Ans: The Khetri region in Rajasthan is an important source of copper. Occasional finds of Harappan steatite micro beads in the Khetri area suggest contacts between Harappans and local communities. There is also evidence of what archaeologists call the Ganeshwar-Jodhpura culture in this area, with its distinctive non-Harappan pottery and an unusual wealth of copper objects. It is possible that inhabitants of Khetri supplied copper to the Harappans in exchange for other goods — a form of resource exchange rather than formal trade.

FAQ 17

Q: What is special about Harappan domestic architecture?

प्र: हड़प्पाई आवासीय वास्तुकला में क्या विशेष है?

Ans: Key features: (1) Courtyard-centred plan — rooms on all sides of a central courtyard. (2) Privacy — no windows at ground level, main entrance gives no direct view inside. (3) Individual bathrooms — paved with bricks, connected to street drains. (4) Wells — Mohenjodaro had about 700, providing water access in every neighbourhood. (5) Staircases — evidence of second storeys or roof access. (6) Uniform brick ratio (1:2:4) used throughout the region. These features suggest a standard of living and concern for comfort and hygiene remarkable for the ancient world.

FAQ 18

Q: What do the "Proto-Shiva seals" show? Are they really Shiva?

प्र: "प्रोटो-शिव मुहरे" क्या दर्शाती हैं? क्या वे सच में शिव हैं?

Ans: These seals show a figure seated cross-legged in a "yogic" posture, sometimes surrounded by animals. Some scholars call this "proto-Shiva" — an early form of Shiva as Pashupati (Lord of Animals). However, the Rigveda (c. 1500–1000 BCE), the earliest known text, mentions Rudra (later associated with Shiva) — but does NOT depict Rudra as Pashupati or as a yogi. Rudra in the Rigveda is neither Pashupati nor a yogi. So calling the seal "proto-Shiva" is a later inference, not confirmed. It may depict a shaman or ritual figure.

FAQ 19

Q: Why are some Harappan settlements located where they are?

प्र: कुछ हड़प्पाई बस्तियाँ अपनी वशिष्ट स्थानों पर क्यों हैं?

Ans: Location was strategic for multiple reasons: (1) Near raw materials — Shortughai (Afghanistan) near lapis lazuli, Nageshwar/Balakot near coast for shell. (2) Near agricultural land — Most sites on semi-arid plains near rivers (Indus, Saraswati). (3) Trade routes — Lothal in Gujarat on coastal route. (4) Water access — Dholavira with elaborate reservoirs in dry Gujarat. (5) Population growth and expansion — new settlements in Gujarat, Haryana, western UP in Late Harappan period. Location thus reflects economic strategy, resource access, and trade needs.

FAQ 20

Q: What is the CBSE examiner looking for in a "discuss" or "describe" type question?

प्र: परीक्षक "विवचना करें" या "वर्णन करें" प्रकार के प्रश्नों में क्या देखता है?

Ans: CBSE examiners look for: (1) Accuracy — correct facts, dates, names. (2) Structure — proper introduction, body with at least 3-4 points, and a conclusion. (3) Examples — specific site names (Mohenjodaro, Kalibangan), archaeologist names (Wheeler, Marshall), artefact examples. (4) Analysis — not just description but WHY it matters or what historians debate. (5) Bilingual awareness — using correct technical terms (stratigraphy, archaeogenetics, sealing). (6) Neat presentation — maps referenced, margin diagrams if allowed. Avoid vague statements; use evidence.

SECTION F | CBSE Important Questions

महत्त्वपूर्ण प्रश्न — 20 प्रश्न (5 |)

Q1. [5 Marks]

Describe the distinctive features of Mohenjodaro as a planned urban centre.

मोहेजोदड़ो को एक नियोजित नगर केंद्र के रूप में वर्णित कीजिए।

Model Answer:

The settlement is divided into two sections: the Citadel (elevated, walled, built on mud brick platforms) and the Lower Town (much larger, also walled).

The Lower Town shows grid-pattern streets intersecting at right angles — streets with drains were laid first, then houses built along them. Every house had at least one wall along a street for drain connectivity.

Mohenjodaro had about 700 wells, individual bathrooms in every house (paved with bricks), and a sophisticated covered drainage system — called "the most complete ancient system as yet discovered" by Mackay.

The Citadel contained the Great Bath (large rectangular tank, gypsum-waterproofed, used for ritual bathing), a warehouse, and an area with 8 bathrooms. Bricks were standardised (1:2:4 ratio) across all Harappan settlements.

Buildings were on platforms; scholars estimate foundation construction required 4 million person-days of labour — indicating large-scale, coordinated planning. Privacy was built in — no ground-floor windows, entrances not revealing the interior.

Q2. [5 Marks]

Discuss how archaeologists reconstruct the past. What are the main challenges in interpreting Harappan evidence?

पुरातत्त्वविद् अतीत का पुनर्निर्माण कैसे करते हैं? हड़प्पाई साक्ष्यों की व्याख्या में मुख्य चुनौतियाँ क्या हैं?

Model Answer:

Material evidence is the key — pottery, tools, ornaments, household objects. Organic materials (cloth, leather, wood) generally decompose; only stone, burnt clay, metal, terracotta survive.

Classification: Archaeologists classify by material (stone, clay, metal, bone, ivory) and by function (tool, ornament, ritual object). Context — where the artefact was found (house, drain, grave, kiln) — is crucial for determining function.

Indirect evidence is sometimes needed. E.g., cotton traces found at sites but clothing inferred from sculptures. Comparison with Mesopotamia helps create frames of reference.

Problems of interpretation: (1) Valuable objects were recycled — accidental finds are not typical. (2) Organic objects have decayed. (3) Religious practices are hardest — terracotta figurines called "mother goddesses" is an assumption. (4) The "priest-king" label is borrowed from Mesopotamia. (5) The script is undeciphered — so no textual confirmation.

Harappan archaeology is also limited by the fact that the first seal was missed by Cunningham (wrong framework), Marshall excavated without stratigraphy (mixing time periods), and many artefacts from before Wheeler's time lost their stratigraphic context.

Q3. [5 Marks]

Analyse the trade and economic activities of the Harappan civilisation.

हड़प्पा सभ्यता की व्यापार और आर्थिक गतिविधियों का विश्लेषण कीजिए।

Model Answer:

Raw material procurement: Clay was locally available; stone, timber, and metal came from outside the alluvial plain. Harappans established settlements near raw materials (Shortughai for lapis lazuli; Nageshwar/Balakot for shell; Lothal near carnelian and metals).

Craft production: Chanhudaro (less than 7 ha) was exclusively devoted to bead-making, shell-cutting, metal-working, and seal-making. Nageshwar and Balakot specialised in shell bangles and inlay. Finished goods were traded to urban centres.

Long-distance trade: With Oman/Magan (copper — confirmed by nickel trace analysis), Afghanistan (lapis lazuli), Mesopotamia (Harappan seals/weights found there; Mesopotamian texts mention "Meluhha"). Trade via sea (ship depictions on seals) through Dilmun (Bahrain) and Magan (Oman).

Standardised weights (chert, binary system for lower denominations, decimal for higher) enabled fair measurement. Seals authenticated goods in transit.

Transport: Terracotta bullock carts for land routes; riverine routes along Indus and tributaries; coastal sea routes. The Harappan economy was integrated — specialised production, raw material import, long-distance trade, and urban distribution all formed part of a sophisticated economic system.

Q4. [5 Marks]

What do you understand by "problems of piecing together the past"? Illustrate with examples from Harappan archaeology.

"अतीत को जोड़ने की समस्याएं" से आप क्या समझते हैं? हड़प्पाई पुरातत्त्व से उदाहरण दीजिए।

Model Answer:

Archaeologists face two fundamental problems: (1) What survives is not typical — valuable artefacts were recycled, organic materials decayed; what we find is accidental. (2) Function of artefacts must be inferred, not read directly.

Classifying finds: By material is straightforward; by function is complex. A spindle whorl may be utilitarian; made of rare faience, it blurs into luxury. Context (house, kiln, grave) changes interpretation.

Problems of interpretation — religious practices: Terracotta female figurines assumed to be "mother goddesses" — but this is analogy from present-day practice. Stone statuary in standardised posture called "priest-king" — a term borrowed from Mesopotamia, not proven for Harappa.

"Proto-Shiva" seals: A cross-legged figure surrounded by animals. Scholars called it proto-Shiva but the Rigveda's Rudra is NOT depicted as Pashupati or yogi — so the parallel doesn't hold. It may be a shaman.

Frames of reference: Archaeologists move from known (present) to unknown (past) — the farther back, the more speculative. The first Harappan seal was found in 1875 but Cunningham couldn't interpret it because his framework (Indian history = Ganga valley) didn't accommodate it. The lesson: the historian's framework determines what they see.

Q5. [5 Marks]

Discuss the various theories proposed to explain the decline of the Harappan civilisation. Which theory is now considered most credible?

हड़प्पा सभ्यता के पतन के लिए प्रस्तुत विभिन्न सिद्धांतों की चर्चा कीजिए।

Model Answer:

By c. 1800 BCE, most Mature Harappan sites in Sind and Cholistan were abandoned. Simultaneously, new Late Harappan settlements appeared in Gujarat, Haryana, and western UP.

Signs of decline: Disappearance of seals, script, standardised weights, long-distance trade, craft specialisation; deterioration of house construction; no new large public structures.

Theory 1 — Aryan invasion: R.E.M. Wheeler (1947) correlated Rigvedic references to Indra as fort-destroyer with Harappan decline. Disproved by George Dales (1960s): skeletons at Mohenjodaro were not contemporaneous; no destruction level; no warrior bodies with weapons; no evidence of fire or external attack.

Theory 2 — Environmental factors: Climate change (increased aridity after 1900 BCE), deforestation, excessive flooding, rivers (especially Saraswati) drying up, overuse of landscape. These explain regional decline but not the entire collapse simultaneously.

Theory 3 — Internal collapse: Political/economic deterioration leading to gradual abandonment. DNA evidence (Rakhigarhi, 2019) shows genetic continuity — Harappans are ancestors of modern South Asians with no large-scale Aryan immigration. Current consensus: multiple environmental and economic factors caused gradual decline, not a single dramatic event.

Q6. [5 Marks]

Explain the system of seals, script, and weights in the Harappan civilisation. What do they reveal about Harappan society?

हड़प्पा सभ्यता की मुहर, लिपि और बाट प्रणाली की व्याख्या कीजिए। ये समाज के बारे में क्या बताते हैं?

Model Answer:

Seals: Made mostly of steatite, usually bearing a line of script (owner's name/title) and an animal motif (unicorn, bull, rhinoceros). Used by pressing on wet clay applied to knotted rope on goods bags — authenticated ownership and ensured goods were not tampered with during transit. Also found at Mesopotamian sites, confirming long-distance trade.

Script: 375–400 signs, non-alphabetical (logographic/syllabic), written right to left. Appears on seals, copper tools, jar rims, tablets, jewellery, and the Dholavira signboard. UNDECIPHERED — this is the biggest limitation for understanding Harappan society.

Weights: Made of chert, cubical, no markings. Lower denominations binary (1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32); higher denominations decimal (160, 200, 320, 640). Metal scale-pans also found. Smaller weights for jewellery and beads.

What they reveal: (1) A regulated economy with standardised measurement. (2) Long-distance trade networks (seals found in Mesopotamia). (3) Literacy — writing used for trade, ownership, and public display. (4) Possible political authority that enforced standardisation. (5) A complex, interconnected urban society where identity, ownership, and authenticity mattered.

The uniformity of weights across sites from Jammu to Gujarat suggests either a single state or very strong inter-city coordination — a remarkable achievement for a pre-3000 BCE civilisation.

Q7. [5 Marks]

How did archaeologists discover the Harappan civilisation? Trace the history from Cunningham to modern excavations.

पुरातत्त्ववर्दों ने हड़प्पा सभ्यता की खोज कैसे की? कनघिम से आधुनिक खुदाई तक का इतिहास।

Model Answer:

1875 — Cunningham: First Director-General of ASI. A Harappan seal was given to him but he couldn't place it — his framework was Early Historic Ganga valley sites. He missed its significance.

1921 — Daya Ram Sahni began excavations at Harappa; 1922 — Rakhal Das Banerji at Mohenjodaro. Their finds revealed layers much older than Early Historic levels.

1924 — John Marshall announced discovery of the Indus Valley Civilisation to the world. S.N. Roy noted Marshall "left India three thousand years older than he had found her." However, Marshall excavated horizontally, mixing artefacts from different periods and losing stratigraphic context.

1944 — R.E.M. Wheeler became DG of ASI. Introduced proper stratigraphic excavation — following natural soil layers rather than mechanical horizontal lines. This revolutionised Harappan archaeology.

Modern era: Since the 1980s, growing international interest. Specialists using surface exploration, clay, stone, metal, and plant/animal remains analysis, and archaeogenetics (DNA from Rakhigarhi skeletons). New sites like Dholavira and Rakhigarhi added. Vasant Shinde's 2013 archaeogenetic research at Rakhigarhi is the most recent landmark. Fresh explorations continue to yield new findings.

Q8. [5 Marks]

Analyse the socio-economic differences in the Harappan civilisation as evidenced by archaeological finds.

पुरातात्विक खोजों के आधार पर हड़प्पा सभ्यता के सामाजिक-आर्थिक अंतरों का विश्लेषण कीजिए।

Model Answer:

Evidence from burials: Dead generally laid in pits; some pits had hollowed brick-lined spaces (possible indicator of status). Some graves had pottery, ornaments, copper mirrors. At Harappa cemetery (mid-1980s): shell rings, jasper bead, hundreds of micro beads near a male skull. Jewellery in both male and female burials. Overall, cemeteries show "little social differentiation" — no royal burials like Egypt.

Evidence from artefacts — luxury vs utilitarian: Utilitarian = pottery, needles, querns, found everywhere. Luxury = faience miniature pots, gold jewellery, lapis lazuli objects, found mainly in Mohenjodaro and Harappa — absent from small settlements like Kalibangan.

Hoardings: All Harappan gold jewellery was found in hoards — suggesting gold was rare, precious, individually owned and carefully hidden. No large-scale communal gold deposits.

Settlement hierarchy: Mohenjodaro (125 ha), Harappa, Dholavira — large cities vs regional centres, agricultural villages, and small specialised settlements like Chanhudaro (7 ha).

Political power: No confirmed palace or temple; the "priest-king" label is borrowed. Three views: (1) No rulers, equal society; (2) Multiple rulers (each city); (3) Single unified state (uniform bricks, weights across vast region). The absence of massive royal burials or palaces suggests a more egalitarian society than contemporary Egypt or Mesopotamia — or power was expressed differently.

Q9. [5 Marks]

Discuss the agricultural practices of the Harappan people. What evidence do archaeologists use to reconstruct these practices?

हड़प्पाई लोगों की कृषिप्रथाओं की चर्चा कीजिए। पुरातत्त्वविद् इनमें पुनर्स्थापित करने के लिए कसि साक्ष्य का उपयोग करते हैं?

Model Answer:

Crop evidence (from archaeo-botanists studying charred seeds): Wheat, barley, lentil, chickpea, sesame found at Punjab/Rajasthan sites; millets at Gujarat sites; rice is relatively rare.

Animal evidence (archaeo-zoologists): Domesticated cattle, sheep, goat, buffalo, pig. Bones of wild species (boar, deer, gharial) also found — may have been obtained from hunting communities. Fish and fowl bones also present.

Agricultural technology: Ploughed field at Kalibangan (Rajasthan, Early Harappan level) — two sets of furrows at right angles suggesting intercropping. Terracotta models of bulls indicate oxen were used for ploughing. Seals and terracotta sculpture show bull representations.

Irrigation evidence: Most Harappan sites are on semi-arid plains — irrigation was probably required. Traces of canals at Shortughai (Afghanistan) but ancient canals may have silted up. Water from wells was also used. Dholavira (Gujarat) had elaborate water reservoirs — possibly for storage.

Reconstruction limitations: We know agriculture existed from seed finds, but HOW it was conducted is harder to reconstruct. Were seeds broadcast on ploughed lands? Were stone or metal tools used for harvesting? These questions remain partially unanswered. Archaeologists use present-day analogies carefully — Mackay's comparison of ancient saddle querns to modern curry stones is an example of this method.

Q10. [5 Marks]

What were the main features of Harappan craft production? How were raw materials procured?

हड़प्पाई शिल्प उत्पादन की मुख्य विशेषताएं क्या थीं? कच्चा माल कैसे प्राप्त किया जाता था?

Model Answer:

Variety of crafts: Bead-making, shell-cutting, metal-working, seal-making, pottery-making, and weight manufacture. Chanhudaro (less than 7 ha) was exclusively devoted to craft production — evidence for highly specialised centres.

Bead materials and process: Materials — carnelian, jasper, crystal, quartz, steatite, copper, bronze, gold, shell, faience, terracotta. Carnelian process: fire yellowish raw material → chip into rough shape → grind → polish → drill. Steatite was moulded as paste to achieve geometrical shapes. Shapes: disc, cylindrical, spherical, barrel-shaped, segmented.

Identifying craft centres: Indicators are raw materials, tools, unfinished objects, rejects, and waste material. If stone is cut, chips remain at production site. Nageshwar and Balakot specialised in shell bangles, ladles, and inlay (near coast). Lothal was a major bead-making centre.

Raw material procurement strategies: (1) Establish settlements near sources — Shortughai (Afghanistan) for lapis lazuli, Nageshwar/Balakot for shell, Lothal for carnelian. (2) Send expeditions — Khetri (Rajasthan) for copper, south India for gold. (3) Long-distance trade — copper from Oman, lapis lazuli from Afghanistan.

Transport: Terracotta toy bullock carts represent land transport. Riverine routes along Indus and tributaries. Coastal sea routes. The production and procurement system was sophisticated — integrating local, regional, and international sources.

Q11. [5 Marks]

How did the Harappan civilisation interact with the rest of the ancient world? Discuss with archaeological evidence.

हड़प्पा सभ्यता ने प्राचीन विश्व के साथ कैसे संपर्क स्थापित किया? पुरातात्विक साक्ष्यों से चर्चा करें।

Model Answer:

Contact with Oman (Magan): Copper from Oman confirmed by chemical analysis — common nickel traces in Omani and Harappan copper. A large Harappan jar coated with thick black clay found at Omani sites (coating prevents liquid percolation — used to transport contents). Harappans may have exchanged vessel contents for copper.

Contact with Mesopotamia: Harappan seals, weights, dice, and beads found at Mesopotamian sites. Mesopotamian texts (3rd millennium BCE) mention "Meluhha" — listing products (carnelian, lapis lazuli, copper, gold, wood). A Mesopotamian myth says "May your bird be the haja-bird [peacock?] from Meluhha." Cylinder seals typical of Mesopotamia with Harappan bull motif found in Bahrain.

Contact with Dilmun (Bahrain) and Magan: "Persian Gulf" seals with Harappan motifs found in Bahrain. Local Dilmun weights followed the Harappan standard. Depictions of ships and boats on seals suggest sea-borne trade routes.

Routes of contact: Sea routes via Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf; land routes through Afghanistan and Iran (Shahr-i-Sokhta, Tepe Yahya). Intermediate trading stations like Dilmun facilitated exchange.

Cultural impact: Mesopotamian texts refer to Meluhha as "a land of seafarers." The shared material culture (weights, bead types) across regions shows deep integration. This network connected the Harappans to a wider Bronze Age world trading system.

Q12. [5 Marks]

What is stratigraphy? How did the method of excavation differ between Marshall and Wheeler?

स्ट्रैटिग्राफी क्या है? मार्शल और की खुदाई पद्धत में क्या अंतर था?

Model Answer:

Stratigraphy is the study of layers (strata) of soil at archaeological sites. Different layers differ in colour, texture, and the artefacts found in them. Lower layers are older; upper layers are more recent. The study of these layers gives the cultural sequence of a site.

Marshall's method: Marshall excavated Mohenjodaro along uniform horizontal lines, ignoring the natural soil layers. This meant artefacts from different time periods got mixed — a Bronze Age bead could end up in the same collection as a later Iron Age one. Information about the stratigraphic context of artefacts was irretrievably lost. S.N. Roy noted that Marshall "left India three thousand years older than he found her" — the discovery was great, but the method was flawed.

Wheeler's method: Wheeler, as DG of ASI from 1944, recognised the problem. He brought military precision to archaeology, following the natural stratigraphy rather than mechanical horizontal lines. This meant artefacts from each layer could be assigned to a specific cultural period.

"Sites, mounds, and layers": Archaeological sites build up through continuous occupation — debris accumulates into a mound. Each occupation layer can be different in colour and artefact type. Abandonment creates "sterile layers." Wheeler's use of stratigraphy transformed Indian archaeology into a modern scientific discipline.

Significance for CBSE: Marshall's discovery was landmark, but Wheeler's methodological contribution was equally important. Both are cited in board exams. Remember: Marshall = discovery of civilisation; Wheeler = scientific methods of excavation.

Q13. [5 Marks]

Explain the concept of "ancient authority" in the Harappan civilisation. Was there a king or a state?
हड़प्पा सभ्यता में "प्राचीन सत्ता" की अवधारणा की व्याख्या करें। क्या कोई राजा या राज्य था?

Model Answer:

Evidence of complex decisions: The extraordinary uniformity of Harappan artefacts (pottery, seals, weights, bricks) across a vast region — from Jammu to Gujarat — indicates complex decision-making and implementation. Settlements were strategically placed for resources. Labour was mobilised for massive walls and platforms.

View 1 — No rulers, equal society: Harappan cemeteries show little social differentiation. No confirmed palace or clear throne room found. Some archaeologists argue everybody enjoyed equal status.

View 2 — Multiple rulers: Mohenjodaro may have had a separate ruler, Harappa another, and so on — no single king over all.

View 3 — Single state: The standardised ratio of brick size, uniform weights and seals across the entire region, and the placement of settlements near raw material sources suggest one unified state with centralised authority.

The "priest-king" statue at Mohenjodaro: Archaeologists familiar with Mesopotamian priest-kings applied the label here. But Harappan ritual practices are not well understood, and there is no evidence proving those who performed rituals held political power. The Great Bath suggests ritual authority; the warehouse suggests economic control. Overall assessment: Harappan authority existed but was expressed differently from Egyptian or Mesopotamian kingship — possibly more collective or distributed.

Q14. [5 Marks]

List the items of food available to people in Harappan cities. Identify the groups who would have provided these.

हड़प्पाई नगरो में उपलब्ध खाद्य पदार्थों की सूची बनाइए। इन्हें उपलब्ध कराने वाले समूहों की पहचान करें।

Model Answer:

Plant foods: Wheat, barley, lentil, chickpea, sesame, millets. Gujarat sites had millets; Punjab/Rajasthan had wheat/barley dominance. Rice was rare. These were provided by farming communities within and around Harappan settlements, using ploughs (terracotta bull models suggest oxen were used), irrigation canals, and water wells.

Animal foods: Cattle, sheep, goat, buffalo, pig (domesticated); boar, deer, gharial (wild species); fish and fowl. Domesticated animals were raised by pastoralists associated with the settlements. Wild species were hunted — possibly by specialised hunting communities who traded meat with urban Harappans.

From trade: Some foods (or ingredients for preparation) may have arrived via long-distance trade — particularly from regions like Afghanistan (trade partners) or coastal areas.

Food processing: Saddle querns (for grinding cereals) found in considerable numbers at Mohenjodaro — used for grinding grain for bread/porridge. Vessels for cooking, blending, and storage made of stone, metal, and terracotta. Mackay's excavation report describes querns used for cereals and smaller ones for grinding herbs and spices (curry stones).

Providers summary: Farmers (staple crops), pastoralists/herders (meat, dairy), hunters (wild game), fishers (fish and fowl), traders (exotic goods). This division of labour and interdependence between different social groups is a hallmark of an urban society.

Q15. [5 Marks]

What do you mean by "social differentiation"? To what extent did it exist in the Harappan civilisation?

"सामाजिक वभिदीकरण" से आप क्या समझते हैं? हड़प्पा सभ्यता में यह किस हद तक था?

Model Answer:

Social differentiation refers to differences in wealth, power, or status among people in a society, reflected in their material possessions, burials, housing, and access to resources.

Evidence suggesting limited differentiation: Harappan cemeteries show "little social differentiation" — no burial mounds, no royal graves with vast wealth (unlike Egypt's pyramids), no single dominant individual's residence clearly identified. The dead were generally buried with pottery and modest ornaments. No clear palace identified. Some archaeologists believe everybody enjoyed equal status.

Evidence suggesting some differentiation: (1) Burial variations — some graves lined with brick, some plain. Some had micro-bead ornaments; others did not. (2) Luxury goods concentrated in large cities — faience, gold, lapis lazuli objects mainly at Mohenjodaro/Harappa, not at Kalibangan. (3) Hoards — gold jewellery found suggests individual wealth accumulation. (4) Differences in house size and quality within the Lower Town.

Settlement hierarchy: Clear hierarchy exists between large cities (Mohenjodaro, 125 ha), smaller towns, regional centres, and small specialised settlements (Chanhudaro, 7 ha). This reflects economic differentiation.

Overall assessment: Social differentiation in Harappa was more moderate than contemporary Egypt or Mesopotamia. The absence of massive royal burials and clear palaces suggests a society where power and wealth were more distributed — possibly a merchant or priestly oligarchy rather than a divine monarchy. But we cannot be certain without deciphering the script.

Q16. [5 Marks]

Write a short note on the "problems of interpretation" in Harappan archaeology with specific examples.

हड़प्पाई पुरातत्त्व में "व्याख्या की समस्याओं" पर एक लघु टिप्पणी लिखिए।

Model Answer:

Archaeologists face fundamental interpretation problems because material objects cannot speak — their meaning must be inferred. This is especially problematic for religion.

Mother Goddess: Terracotta female figurines, heavily jewelled with elaborate head-dresses, were assumed to be mother goddesses. But they could equally be dolls, wealthy women, or fertility symbols. The label comes from analogy with other ancient cultures, not from Harappan texts.

"Priest-King": A rare stone statue in standardised posture was labelled "priest-king" because Mesopotamian archaeologists, familiar with priest-kings, applied the term. No Harappan text confirms political or religious power of this figure.

"Proto-Shiva" seals: Cross-legged figure with animals — called proto-Shiva. But the Rigveda's Rudra (proto-Shiva) is neither depicted as Pashupati nor as a yogi. This parallel breaks down under scrutiny.

"Gamesmen or lingas?": Small stone cones were identified by Mackay as possible linga symbols, but he himself noted they might be game pieces. This dual possibility shows how interpretation depends on the archaeologist's assumptions. The lesson: archaeologists must state their assumptions clearly, acknowledge alternative interpretations, and avoid reading too much meaning into objects whose cultural context is lost.

Q17. [5 Marks]

Discuss the importance of Rakhigarhi as a Harappan site. What new findings have emerged from it?
हड़प्पाई स्थल के रूप में राखीगढ़ी के महत्त्व पर चर्चा करें। इससे क्या नई जानकारी मिली है?

Model Answer:

Location and size: Rakhigarhi is located in Hisar district, Haryana, India. At 550 hectares, it is the BIGGEST Harappan site — even larger than Mohenjodaro. It was partly excavated from 1997 onwards (Amrendra Nath, later Vasant Shinde).

Significance: As the largest known Harappan site in India, Rakhigarhi provides a counterpoint to the Pakistan-based sites (Mohenjodaro, Harappa) that dominated early Harappan scholarship. Post-1947 partition, major sites like Mohenjodaro and Harappa became part of Pakistan, making Indian sites like Rakhigarhi, Lothal, and Dholavira more significant for Indian archaeology.

Archaeogenetic research (2019): A landmark paper in Cell journal by Vasant Shinde et al. — DNA extracted from skeletal remains at Rakhigarhi. Key findings: (1) Harappan genetic roots go back 10,000 BCE. (2) Majority of South Asian population descended from Harappans. (3) The reconstructed facial features show remarkable similarity with modern population of Haryana. (4) No genetic evidence of large-scale steppe pastoralist (Aryan) immigration — continuity without break.

Implication for the Aryan debate: The Rakhigarhi DNA study does not find the genetic signature of Aryan invaders in the Harappan population. This supports the view that Harappans were indigenous and are ancestors of modern South Asians.

CBSE importance: Rakhigarhi appears in questions about: biggest Harappan site, archaeogenetic research, Vasant Shinde's contribution, and the Aryan question. Remember: Rakhigarhi = biggest site; 2013 = archaeogenetic research begins; 2019 = DNA paper published.

Q18. [5 Marks]

How do the uniformity of bricks, weights, and seals reflect the existence of a strong centralised authority in the Harappan state?

ईंटों, बाटों और मुहरों की एकदमता हड़प्पा राज्य में एक मजबूत केंद्रीय सत्ता के अस्तित्व को कैसे दर्शाती है?

Model Answer:

Bricks: Harappan bricks have a standardised ratio of 1:2:4 (height:width:length) — whether sun-dried or baked, whether in Jammu or Gujarat. This extraordinary uniformity across thousands of kilometres and hundreds of years suggests either a single authority enforcing the standard or very strong inter-city conventions.

Weights: Chert weights follow a binary system (lower denominations) and decimal system (higher denominations) — consistent across all excavated sites. Mesopotamian texts note that "local Dilmun weights followed the Harappan standard" — confirming the Harappan weight system was authoritative enough to influence external traders.

Seals: A standardised form — usually square steatite, with script and animal motif — found from Afghanistan to Gujarat. The sealing system required a shared understanding of ownership and authenticity, implying a regulated trading system.

Strategic settlement placement: Settlements were placed near specific raw materials, labour was mobilised for massive construction projects (4 million person-days for Mohenjodaro foundations) — suggesting organised, large-scale resource management.

Conclusion: The three views (no rulers / multiple rulers / single state) are debated, but the evidence of standardisation strongly suggests significant coordination — whether by a single state, a federation of city-states sharing conventions, or a powerful mercantile class. The subcontinent would not see such urban standardisation again for over a millennium.

Q19. [5 Marks]

Describe the importance of the signboard found at Dholavira. What does it tell us about Harappan literacy?

धोलावीरा में मिले साइनबोर्ड का महत्त्व बताइए। यह हड़प्पाई साक्षरता के बारे में क्या बताता है?

Model Answer:

Discovery: At Dholavira (Gujarat), one of the five major Harappan cities, a large inscription with about 10 Harappan signs was found near the Citadel entrance. The signs were made of white gypsum inlaid in wood — creating a prominent display board.

Significance: This is the longest single-piece Harappan inscription known. Its position at the city entrance suggests it was meant for public display — possibly announcing the city's name, a ruler's title, or a public decree.

Implications for literacy: Writing on seals, copper tools, and jar rims could be for a small literate elite. But a public signboard implies writing was expected to be read by the general public — OR at least understood symbolically. This suggests literacy, or at least sign recognition, was more widespread than just among merchants and administrators.

Dholavira's unique features: Unlike Mohenjodaro/Harappa (Citadel + Lower Town pattern), Dholavira had three divisions — Citadel, Middle Town, and Lower Town, all separated by walls. The entire settlement was fortified. It also had the most elaborate water reservoir system of any Harappan city.

CBSE context: Questions about Dholavira focus on: (1) the signboard and what it reveals about literacy; (2) the unique three-part city plan; (3) the water reservoirs. Remember: Dholavira is in Kutch, Gujarat, and is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site (2021).

Q20. [5 Marks]

Write an essay on the contribution of archaeology to our understanding of the Harappan civilisation. What remains unknown and why?

हड़प्पा सभ्यता की समझ में पुरातत्त्व के योगदान पर नबिंध लखिए। क्या अज्ञात है और क्यों?

Model Answer:

Contribution 1 — Material reconstruction: Archaeology has revealed the physical world of the Harappans — cities, houses, drains, tools, ornaments, seals, pottery, weights. From these we know: they were urban, literate (seals/signboard), numerically sophisticated (weight system), artistically skilled (carnelian beads, seals), and had long-distance trade networks.

Contribution 2 — Historical timeline: Stratigraphy (especially after Wheeler) established the sequence: Early Harappan (6000–2600 BCE) → Mature (2600–1900 BCE) → Late (1900–1300 BCE). Comparison with Mesopotamian sites (which had dateable artefacts) helped anchor Harappan chronology.

Contribution 3 — Settling debates: Archaeological evidence disproved the Aryan invasion theory (Dales, 1960s). DNA evidence (Rakhigarhi, 2019) confirmed genetic continuity. These are significant achievements.

What remains UNKNOWN: (1) The script — undeciphered. Without it, we cannot know language, religion, laws, governance, or literature. (2) Social structure — was society equal or hierarchical? We have only material proxies. (3) Political organisation — single state or multiple cities? No confirmed palace. (4) Cause of decline — multiple theories, no consensus. (5) Gender roles — very few scholars have investigated gender in the Harappan context. (6) Relationship between Harappans and the Vedic people.

Why unknown? Organic materials (texts written on perishable material, clothing, wooden objects) have decayed. The script is undeciphered. Many sites are in Pakistan (limited access). Brick robbing (as at Harappa) destroyed context. New scientific methods (DNA, isotope analysis, LiDAR surveys) are promising but still developing. The Harappan civilisation remains one of the greatest archaeological mysteries of the ancient world.