

# Order, Legitimacy, and Wealth in Ancient States

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## 8 Wealth and socioeconomic hierarchies of the Indus Valley civilization

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### Introduction

When archaeologists first began excavating the ancient cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro in the 1920s and 1930s, they did so in the shadow of unique discoveries being made in Egypt and Mesopotamia. The social and political organization of these civilizations set the standard against which other early state societies were compared. Furthermore, monumental stone architecture, sculptures made of stone or precious metals, elaborate grave goods, and royal tombs filled with gold and exotic treasures came to be used as a standard of ancient wealth. Based on the written records of Egypt and Mesopotamia, many scholars have assumed that indicators of wealth and socio-economic status were relatively uniform in the ancient world and that these indicators were used in much the same way in all early states.

The absence of comparable categories of wealth items and centralized architectural structures in the Indus cities has led most scholars to conclude that the people ruling the Indus cities had different values and possibly a different form of political organization from that seen in other early states (Kenoyer 1989; Fairervis 1989; J. G. Shaffer 1982). The lack of long texts and the fact that the Indus script has not been deciphered has remained a major obstacle in explaining these differences.

In contrast to other civilizations where written texts provide the foundation for discussion, it is necessary to look back to the first settlements of the Indus Valley in order to understand the ideology and hierarchy of order, the legitimation of that order, and the nature of wealth

in the Indus cities. In these early settlements it is possible to trace the origins of specific objects that came to be used as wealth items and symbols of order and legitimation during the later Indus cities. The creation of these wealth items and the role of specific wealth items as indicators of socioeconomic status is based on a combination of economic and ideological processes that are highly variable, both regionally and temporally. Nevertheless, contextual and chronological studies of specific artifact types reveal the use of symbolic objects and the accumulation of wealth as a means of reinforcing social and economic hierarchies, beginning with the earliest Neolithic occupations at Mehrgarh (7000–6500 BC), continuing through the Chalcolithic occupation at Mehrgarh, Nausharo, and Harappa, and culminating in the Integration Era, Harappan Phase, 2600–1900 BC.

With the rise of the Indus cities around 2600 BC, technology and crafts appear to have become an essential mechanism for creating unique wealth objects to distinguish socioeconomic classes and reinforce the hierarchy of these classes in an urban context. Many of these wealth objects have strong ideological associations and appear to have been used as symbols that served both to unite as well as to differentiate socioeconomic classes living in the cities (Vidale 1989a; Kenoyer 1992a; Bhan *et al.* 1994). Merchants and artisans of the Indus cities appear to have played a significant role in power negotiations through restricting access to exotic raw materials and by the invention of new and more complex technologies requiring special knowledge of materials and manufacturing processes. Some of these technologies and their products were directly controlled by the rulers and powerful merchants (similar to what Baines and Yoffee call inner elites [Baines and Yoffee 1998; chapter 2 in this volume]), but there is little evidence for military coercion. Other technologies may have been subject to indirect control through taxation and limited access to raw materials.

While some of the wealth items used in the Indus Valley can be identified by comparison with contemporaneous cultures, other objects that may have been used as symbols of wealth can be identified archaeologically through quantitative studies combined with technological analysis and distribution patterns within the site (Kenoyer 1992b, 1997a). Through the use of stylistic studies and relational analogies with later cultures of the subcontinent and adjacent regions, it is also possible to identify symbolic objects that may have been used to communicate power and status. The nature of wealth that must have been used to support and legitimize power can also be identified. These studies have made it

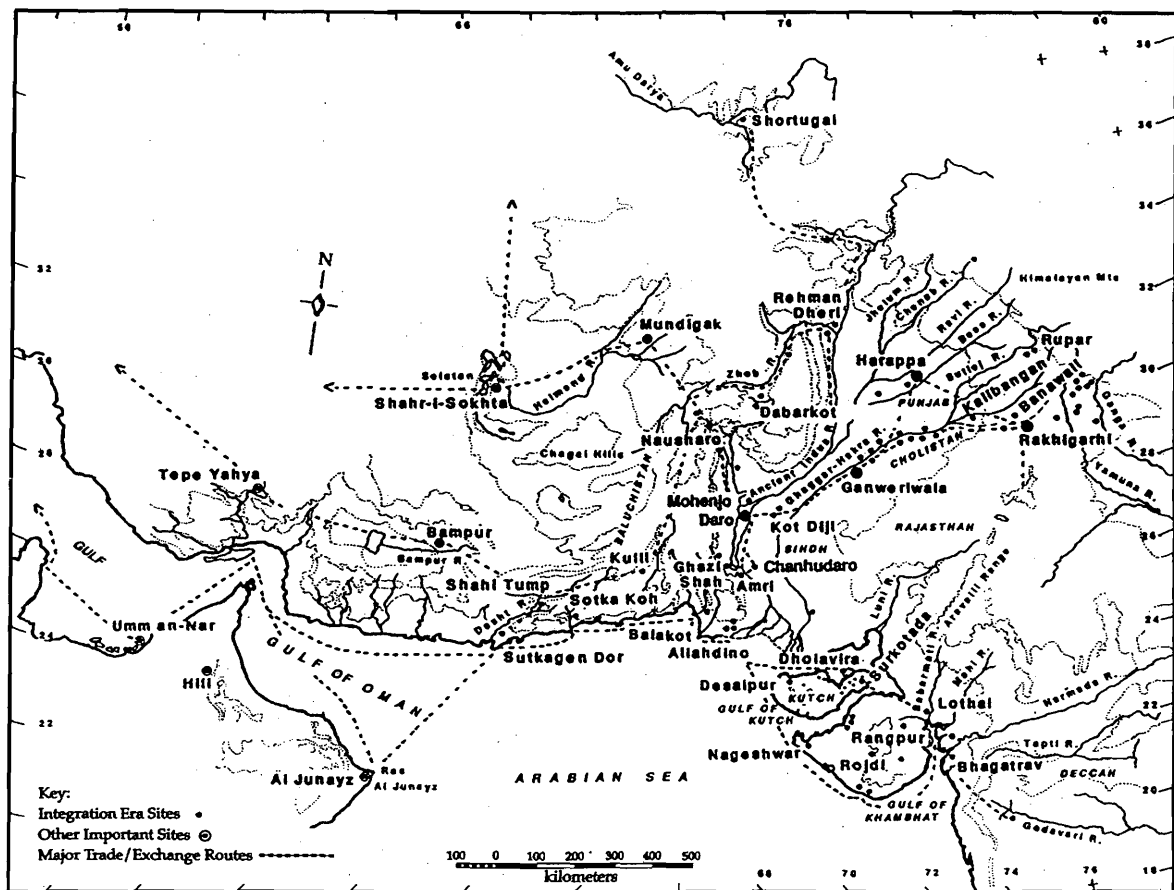


Figure 8.1 Indus Valley Tradition: geographical extent and major sites.

possible to outline the basic structure of socio-economic and political order in the Indus Valley cities and identify distinctive regional patterns of wealth accumulation within the Indus Valley. Collectively, these patterns are significantly different from what is seen at contemporaneous sites in West and Central Asia.

#### Geographical setting and resource distribution

The geographical setting for the Indus Valley Tradition includes the piedmont and plateaus of Baluchistan to the west, and the mountainous regions of northern Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India to the northwest and north (Figure 8.1). Two major river systems formerly watered the greater Indus plain, the Indus and the Ghaggar-Hakra (now dry). The alluvial plains have abundant resources in terms of fertile agricultural land,

grazing areas, and fishing grounds that would have produced great wealth in terms of grain, livestock, dairy products, carved wood, and textiles. These and other ephemeral materials were probably the major commodities used to acquire the raw materials and finished objects that are preserved archaeologically.

Except for clay used for pottery, and animal products such as bone, antler, and ivory, most of the permanent raw materials used in the production of other types of wealth items came from one or more source areas outside of the alluvial plain. Some of the chert and limestone used in the cities was obtained from outcrops in the alluvial plain, but most of the other lithic materials and mineral resources were brought from peripheral regions. The distribution of important natural resources along the edges of the Indus Valley was such that several alternative sources of specific materials

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<b>Localization Era</b>	
Late Harappan Phase	c. 1900–1300 BC
<b>Integration Era</b>	
Harappan Phase	2600–1900 BC
Harappa: Period 3C, Final	2200–1900 BC
Harappa: Period 3B, Middle	2450–2200 BC
Harappa: Period 3A, Initial	2600–2400 BC
<b>Regionalization Era</b>	
Early Harappan (several Phases)	c. 5500–2600 BC
Kot Diji Phase	2800–2600 BC
<b>Early Food Producing Era</b>	
Neolithic	c. 7000–5500 BC

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Figure 8.2 General chronology of the Indus Valley Tradition.

existed. Lapis lazuli, agate, carnelian, steatite, ochre, copper, tin, gold, silver, marine shell and wood could all be obtained from more than one source area (Kenoyer 1995a). The unique distribution of these resources led to the early development of inter-regional trade networks that stimulated economic competition and more complex economic and political interaction between the early village communities.

### Chronology

The Indus Valley Tradition refers to the long cultural trajectory leading to the first urban state level society in South Asia (Kenoyer 1991a; J. G. Shaffer 1992). This trajectory is divided into four Eras (Figure 8.2), beginning with the Early Food Producing Era (c. 7000–5500 BC), when domestic plants and animals are first exploited by semi-sedentary communities in the Indus Valley region. The Regionalization Era (5500–2600 BC), is a period of cultural development on a regional scale with the emergence of distinctive artifact styles, burial practices, and settlement organization. At the site of Harappa there is new evidence suggesting the emergence of an Early Indus state around 2800 BC, but the major urban phase begins around 2600 BC during the Harappan Phase of the Integration Era (Kenoyer 1994a; Meadow and Kenoyer 1999).

The Integration Era sees the widespread use of the Indus script, inscribed seals and tablets, standardized weights, similar styles of pottery vessels and a wide range of other symbolic objects and wealth indicators.

There is considerable evidence for economic and ideological integration throughout the vast regions of the Indus valley and some evidence for localized political domination by individual city states or republics (Kenoyer 1997b).

During the Localization Era (1900–1300 BC) there is a breakdown of integration and the reemergence of regional cultures that reflect localized trade networks and stylistic features of material culture. The disappearance of Indus writing, standardized weights, and the collapse of long-distance trade represents a major reorganization of social, economic, and political structures. In addition, there appear to have been major changes in the ideology used to legitimize elite control (Kenoyer 1995b).

### Symbols of wealth and status

The creation of wealth items in a specific culture is directly correlated to the distribution of specific raw materials and the accessibility of these materials to the general public. As summarized by Van Buren and Richards in the introduction to this volume, these wealth items form the basis for both order and legitimacy within a society. In order for symbols of wealth and status to be effective they must be commonly understood or legitimized by the society at large and by the smaller communities within which private symbols of wealth are viewed. Manufactured with permanent or ephemeral materials, these wealth items and their correlation with status or power can result from very different processes of cultural selection and use (Kenoyer 1995b). Although the mechanisms through which this association and its legitimation is achieved cannot be determined without recourse to textual records, it is possible to follow the changing role of specific objects over time.

The cultural selection of wealth items often results from long-term economic conditions and/or ideological associations, such as the rarity of gold and its immutable qualities. Other forms of wealth are short-term creations stimulated by the need for overt displays in a rapidly changing social system. For example, the creation of inscribed seals with animal motifs and script coincides with the emergence of Indus elites and disappears with the breakdown of the Indus economic and ideological system.

The use of wealth items is also quite complex in that some wealth items were meant for general public display, whereas others may have been privately displayed among elites or a more limited set of social groups (again, similar to what Baines and Yoffee refer

to as inner elites). Examples of publicly visible wealth would be the vast herds or agricultural lands of ruling families, the massive architecture and cities in which the elites resided, or the occasional public displays of elites dressed in elaborate costumes. Private wealth can be defined as objects that are viewed by a limited number of individuals, generally restricted to the interior of habitation areas or sacred precincts, used in special rituals such as burial, or personal ornaments that are worn beneath the clothing or are not displayed ostentatiously. Private wealth displays among elites would be seen in the details of ornaments, utensils, textiles, and the ornamentation of private domestic furnishings, such as beds, tables, stools, and containers.

The differentiation between public and private is important because they often present contrasting views of a society. Public symbols may be used to unite people to a common ideology or political agenda, while private symbols may be used to reinforce smaller group identity, especially among elites. The identification of public and private symbols is quite difficult archaeologically since private wealth objects may intentionally or inadvertently be exposed for public viewing. Nevertheless, it is useful to differentiate between public and private use of wealth symbols for interpreting their role in legitimation of social order and ideology. Both public and private symbols of wealth are used by human societies as a form of non-verbal communication of status, ideology, and power. Once a child has become socialized or an outsider has become acculturated to a specific community, the visual effects of a wide range of cultural materials communicate meaning without the need for repeated verbal articulation. In the context of early state society, a secluded temple precinct with sacred sculptures and buried wealth offerings could be contrasted with openly worn ornaments and decorated buildings. Both sets of symbols provide important clues about the role of wealth and other symbolic objects in the reinforcement of social order and ideology within specific contexts (Hodder 1982; R. L. Anderson 1989).

Systematic recovery and documentation of preserved objects or symbols can provide unique perspectives on the socioeconomic structure of a society. Coercive power (military) or ritual power (ideology) also can be reflected in specific forms of utilitarian or symbolic items. For example, military power legitimized by ideology can be depicted in graphic displays depicting rulers supported by deities. When such narratives are carved in stone or incorporated into ornaments they also reflect the wealth in materials or labor that is at the disposal of certain elites. More often than not, where

texts are available, economic wealth is directly linked with coercive power, both physical and ideological.

Competition for wealth is also an important factor in technological elaboration and exploration for new material resources. When objects that were once considered as wealth become accessible to the common people, new forms of wealth must be created. Illegal production and imitation are important factors that often result in expanded trade contacts and new technological achievements.

In the context of the ancient Indus Valley Tradition there is an absence of written texts that could provide culturally specific information on the value of different objects and their relationship to economic wealth, social status, and power. Furthermore there are no large narrative carvings that depict rulers or elites with symbols of power or wealth. Consequently the evaluation and ranking of wealth items must be approached from a more empirical perspective based on slightly overlapping assumptions that will be discussed below. These assumptions are central to understanding the creation of wealth and how wealth items are modified over time.

#### Archaeological indicators of wealth and power

Generally speaking, a wealth item can be defined as an archaeologically preserved object that reflects relatively high levels of indirect or direct economic control of resources, labor, or technological knowledge. Archaeologically preserved objects, such as ornaments, architecture, or tools reflect other forms of wealth that are not preserved, for example, grain, foodstuffs, livestock, or even agricultural land. The relative value of preserved objects can be calculated on the basis of four major assumptions:

- 1 rare or exotic raw materials have relatively more value than locally available raw materials;
- 2 the overall wealth value of an object increases with the amount of labor required for production, where labor refers to time and/or numbers of artisans involved in production;
- 3 technological processes involving numerous stages, high degrees of skill and/or specialized technical knowledge increase the value of an object;
- 4 once an item has been accepted as a symbol of wealth within a society, elites will attempt to control the access to raw materials or knowledge in order to limit the production of specific wealth items and control their use.

The validity of these assumptions in the evaluation of economic wealth is well supported by cross-cultural studies of crafts and the relationships between long distance trade, crafting and power (Helms 1993). Within this framework it is possible to rank various crafts products used in a society and estimate the relative value of specific types of objects. This ranking can then be compared with the actual distribution of objects throughout the site or their frequency over time (Kenoyer 1992b).

These four assumptions can be further correlated with major groups of specialized crafts that are defined by two sets of variables: the accessibility of raw materials and the complexity of the technology required to process raw material into specific objects (Kenoyer 1992a). In the geographical context of the Indus Valley the craft technologies used to create objects can be divided into four major groups:

- 1 crafts processing from locally available materials using relatively simple technologies include wood-working, basket making, simple weaving, terracotta pottery production, and house-building;
- 2 crafts using imported materials with relatively simple technologies include stone-shaping for domestic purposes and chipped stone tool-making;
- 3 crafts using local materials and complex technologies and production processes include stoneware bangle manufacture, elaborate painted and specialized pottery production, complex weaving and carpet making, inlaid woodwork production and construction of decorative architecture;
- 4 crafts using imported materials and highly complex technologies include agate bead manufacture, seal production, copper/bronze metalworking, stone-carving, precious metalworking, shell working, and faience manufacture.

The production and distribution of objects made by crafts in the last two categories are the most easily controlled. Consequently, these are the crafts that tend to be used in the creation of wealth items, a process that began with the earliest Neolithic communities and became modified with each subsequent phase of development.

#### Early technologies and wealth indicators

Beginning with the early Neolithic settlements of the Indus Valley region, around 7000–6500 BC, regional cultural identity and social complexity within specific settlements began to be represented by symbolic and

utilitarian objects created by specialized craft technologies, such as metallurgy, ceramic production, lapidary, and glazing (J.-F. Jarrige 1982). The invention and initial development of these specialized technologies seems to have focused more on the production of symbolic objects representing wealth and power, rather than simply utilitarian objects, a pattern noted by C. S. Smith in his broad comparative study of early metallurgy (C. S. Smith 1976).

The site of Mehrgarh, at the western edge of the Indus valley, provides an excellent record of the early use of material objects as symbols to define social status and power (J.-F. Jarrige 1984). The Neolithic and early Chalcolithic occupations reveal a rich assemblage of material culture from both domestic and burial contexts which reflects changing economic strategies and possibly changing attitudes towards wealth.

In the Neolithic cemetery, during Period 1A (non-ceramic Neolithic), both juveniles and adults were buried with varying quantities and styles of ornaments and grave goods (Sellier 1988; Barthélémy de Saizieu 1990, 1992), but there is no clear patterning to suggest hierarchical social organization (J.-F. Jarrige 1995). Valuable ornaments of particular importance to this study are wide shell bangles made from the marine shell *Turbinella pyrum*, shell beads and pendants, and beads made from colored stones and soft steatite. These same materials continued to be used in later times and eventually came to be used as wealth items during the Harappan Phase. Over time, the number of burial goods interred with the dead decreased, such that the later Chalcolithic burials (Periods II and III, from around 5500 to 3300 BC) had very few ornaments or utensils (Samzun and Sellier 1983; Samzun 1988).

In contrast to the burials, the Neolithic figurines depict few, if any, ornaments. Later Chalcolithic period figurines show increasing amounts of ornaments, with a veritable explosion in the diversity of coiffure styles and body ornaments for both female and male figurines during Periods VI and VII, c. 2900–2600 BC (C. Jarrige 1988; C. Jarrige *et al.* 1995). These figurines undoubtedly reflect changing patterns of personal adornment as well as attitudes towards wealth.

Corresponding to the increases in ornamentation on figurines is a marked change in production strategies for ornaments and other objects at the site. During the Neolithic occupation (Period I), most of the ornaments were made of exotic materials that appear to have been traded to the site as finished objects (C. Jarrige *et al.* 1995; Kenoyer 1995c). In contrast, during the Chalcolithic there is a gradual increase in the importation and

processing of non-local raw materials and local production of many ornaments and tools becomes the norm during Period III (around 4800 to 3300 BC).

The change to local production is quite significant because it reflects the direct control of production for items that would have been used to define ethnic identity, status, and power. The inhabitants of Mehrgarh no longer traded for finished shell bangles and beads through intermediaries, but had begun to acquire the raw materials and produce their own styles of ornaments. Steatite and other varieties of soft stone were brought to the site and processed there rather than at the source areas in the mountains.

Eventually steatite bead production became more complex through the addition of pyrotechnological components (Vanzetti and Vidale 1994; Vidale 1989b, 1995) that set the foundation for the later production of glazed quartz or faience, also referred to as siliceous faience (Barthélémy de Saizieu and Bouquillon 1994; H. M.-L. Miller 1997). These developments can be directly correlated with increasingly sophisticated pottery production and copper working (J.-F. Jarrige 1995: 67), technologies that were probably not accessible to all individuals of the community.

The increasing diversity of ornaments used by the living populations at Mehrgarh reflects an increased need to publicly display wealth and status indicators. This trend corresponds with the increase in settlement size and complexity, and also coincides with the gradual decrease in ornaments as a component of burial offerings. Although Jarrige has argued that there is nothing in the burials, architecture or spatial organization of the site during Period III to suggest a greater degree of hierarchy than in the Neolithic (J.-F. Jarrige 1995: 73), it is not unlikely that the overall decrease in the total number of grave goods in these later levels indicates a gradual change in social attitudes towards wealth. If this changing pattern of burial offerings reflects a change in attitudes towards wealth accumulation, it is probable that wealth items were being kept in circulation rather than being buried in the ground. The few burial offerings that were placed with the dead may represent ritual items or ornaments that were not transferable to other individuals, either in the family or clan.

Although the emergence of distinct socioeconomic classes at Mehrgarh cannot be documented through conventional data, such as burials and architecture, I would argue that the invention of glazed steatite and faience clearly reflect the need to create unique wealth materials for certain members of the community. No centralized structures for political, economic, or ideolo-

gical control have been found at the site, and yet craft production was gradually transformed from relatively simple forms of processing to highly specialized industries involving both local and exotic materials and complex pyrotechnologies. The trend towards wealth creation through the control of technology rather than simply the centralized acquisition of exotic or rare materials reflects a basic pattern that is quite different from that proposed by Baines and Yoffee for Egypt and Mesopotamia (Baines and Yoffee 1998). These general trends in the production, display, and deposition of wealth items during the Neolithic and Early Chalcolithic period at Mehrgarh provide an important background for understanding later forms of wealth creation in the Indus Valley as a whole.

#### Early Harappan transformations

In order to follow the subsequent developments in the Indus Valley Tradition it is necessary to focus on the site of Harappa, located in the center of the northern alluvial plain. Here it is possible to document the crystallization of social order and mechanisms for legitimation during the Early Harappan Phase, around 3500 BC to 2800 BC. The gradually standardized forms and orientation of architecture and the overall layout of the site are perhaps the most direct indicators of social and ideological order. These developments coincide with the emergence of writing, the use of inscribed seals and specific symbols on painted pottery and other objects. Together with major advances in craft production and shifting centers of trade networks these changes reflect more complex forms of social, political, and ideological organization in the Indus Valley. Some of these changes can be directly linked to the creation of new forms of wealth to distinguish hierarchical social and economic classes, while other changes can be indirectly associated with ideological developments and political-economic control (Kenoyer 1991a).

Unlike early Egypt, where rulers and ideologies can be identified on the basis of inscribed ivory tags and carved stone palettes (Fischer 1989), it is not possible to identify the individuals or groups who were responsible for the early economic and political development in the Indus Valley. Nevertheless, as will be demonstrated below, there is clear evidence for the creation of order through social and economic stratification and the accumulation of wealth, as well as the legitimation of order through the use of both exclusive and shared symbols.

At Harappa, the Early Harappan occupation (Harappa Period I) represents one of the oldest village

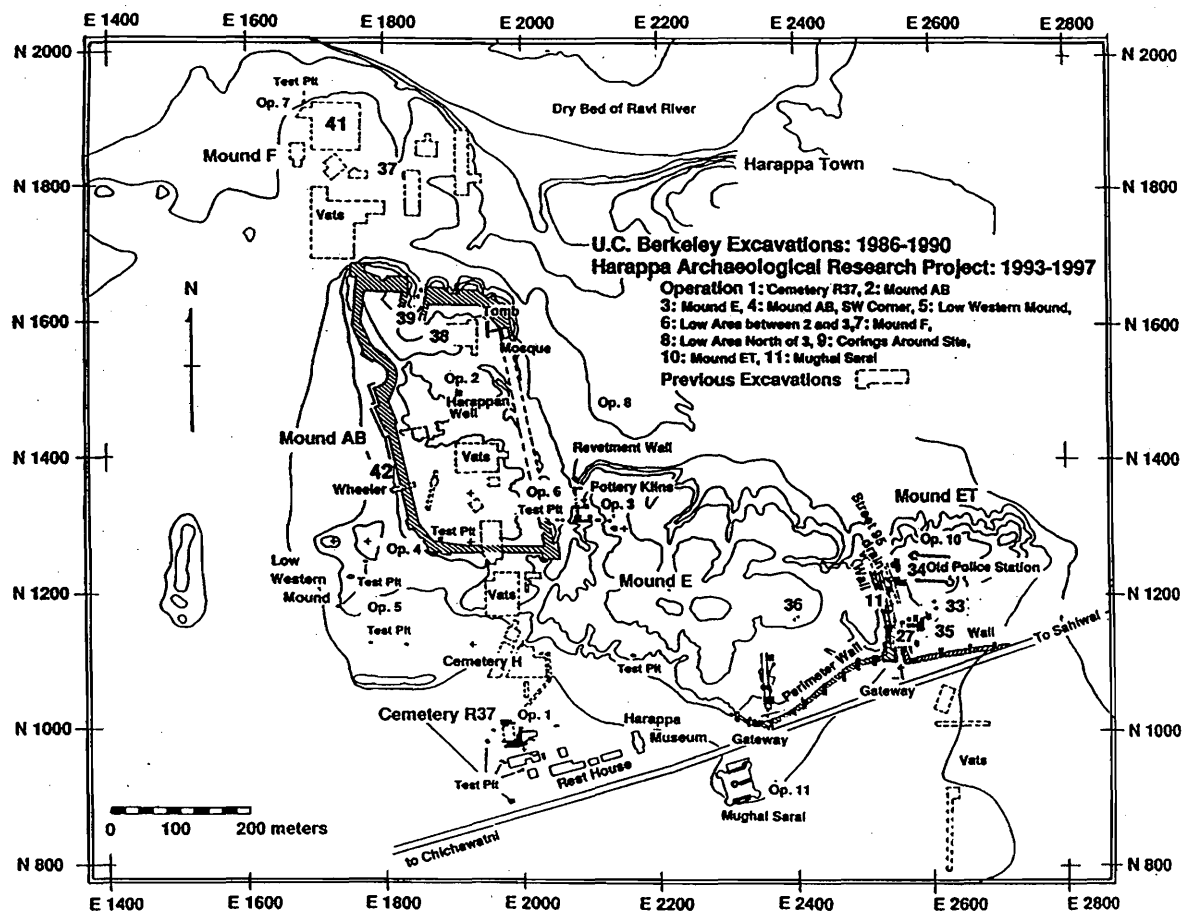


Figure 8.3 Harappa 1997: site plan and excavation areas.

settlements in the core area of the northern Indus valley, dating from around 3300–2800 BC (Figure 8.3). During this period Harappa is characterized by a small community, approximately 10 hectares in area, practicing wheat and barley agriculture, supplemented by animal husbandry, specialized crafts, and long-distance trade. Other settlements equivalent to Period 1 have been discovered to the south at Jalilpur (Mughal 1974) and at Rajanpur to the northwest (Mughal 1997; M. R. Mughal and Afzal Khan, personal communication). By Period 2 (2800–2600 BC) the settlement at Harappa had expanded to more than 25 hectares with numerous smaller sites in the surrounding hinterland (Mughal 1990; M. R. Mughal, Punjab Survey, personal communication). Although detailed regional surveys have not yet been completed, a multi-tiered settlement pattern

can be expected, with Harappa being the earliest urban center of the northern Indus Valley.

The early levels at the site contain a wide variety of exotic materials indicating long-distance trade contacts with the Makran coast in the south, as well as with the mountain regions to the west and deserts to the east (Meadow and Kenoyer 1999). The strategic position of Harappa in a rich agricultural zone centered between major north–south riverine routes and east–west overland routes is quite significant. Over time, the manipulation of trade and subsistence resources, the invention of new technologies to create new forms of wealth, and possibly specific political and ideological factors led to its growth and eventual dominance as an urban center. A similar process may have been occurring at sites such as Mohenjo-daro, Chanhudaro, and Amri to the south,

but concrete evidence for the initial phases of this important transition have so far only been recovered from Harappa. Contrary to previous models for the origin of Indus cities, which suggested a population movement from the piedmont to the central alluvial plains (Dales 1965; Fairervis 1967), it is more likely that communities which had been living in the alluvium for hundreds of years began a process of economic development similar to what had happened at Mehrgarh during Periods II and III. But unlike Mehrgarh, where, with the exception of pottery production, specialized craft activities appear to have fallen off after Period III (around 3500 BC), Harappa sees the gradual increase and elaboration of craft activities beginning at approximately the same time. Because of the larger agricultural base and potential markets to the east and south, Harappa was able to continue along a trajectory of economic and political growth that led to its eventual establishment as a dominant urban center. These developments at Harappa and presumably other sites such as Mohenjodaro, resulted in major reorganizations of trade networks, political structures, and power relations, such that the new centers were in the alluvium rather than along the piedmont.

During the Early Harappan Phase increasing social stratification is reflected in the overall hierarchy of settlement sizes (Mughal 1982, 1990) and the internal divisions of sites into neighborhoods with localized craft activities. Perhaps most important is the creation of massive walls and gateways to protect the settlements and control movement into and out of the occupation areas (Kenoyer 1991a, 1991b).

Other indicators of social stratification are seen in the creation of new styles of wealth indicators which include decorated pottery, ornaments, metal tools, and symbolic objects such as seals. Of central importance is the fact that many of the same basic styles of objects were being created in materials of different relative value (as defined above). Presumably this pattern reflects socioeconomic stratification and some degree of ideological integration. It has been possible to identify specific examples of the types of artifacts that were being developed into symbols of status and wealth during the Early Harappan Phase. Some of these objects, such as painted pottery motifs, beads, bangles, and carved seals may also have served as symbols of ethnic and/or ideological identity.

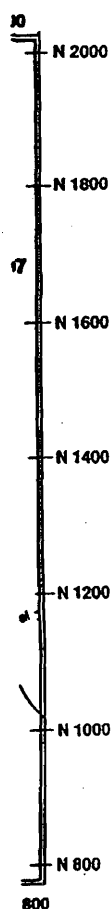
Painted pottery is a common artifact in the earliest occupation at Harappa (Period I) when there is a great diversity in motifs and color combinations, but a relatively low number of vessel shapes. The earliest examples of the intersecting circle design and the fish-scale motif

appear during this period (Figure 8.4). Later, in Period 2, most of the polychrome painting and the diversity of geometric and floral motifs is replaced by black/brown designs or horizontal bands, on red slipped surfaces. The development of wheel-thrown pottery results in a greater diversity of rim, body, and base forms. Although most of the earlier shapes and designs disappear, two notable exceptions are the intersecting circle motif and the fish-scale design (Figures 8.4 and 8.9).

At Harappa these two motifs continue to be executed on pottery vessels using black paint on red slip and at this same time begin to appear at sites throughout the Indus Valley and Baluchistan. These painted designs are certainly more than simple decorative motifs and most likely represent important rituals or ideologies that are gradually spreading or crystallizing throughout the Indus Valley. In later times, the circle, and by extension the intersecting circle motif, is associated with concepts of unity, interconnectedness, protection, and strength (Parpola 1990, 1994). The fish motif is commonly associated with fertility in later iconography and hence the fish-scale design may reflect abundance or fertility. When painted on large vessels that were used in the home as well as in rituals, such as weddings or harvest celebrations, these motifs would have served as both private and public reinforcement of an ideology that was shared by communities throughout the Indus Valley.

The lower proportion of decorated to plain vessels during Period 2 (Early Harappan Phase) suggests that painted vessels may have been more valuable than plain wares, but there is no evidence that these painted vessels were being traded as a form of wealth. More important is the fact that only wealthy people can afford to fill large vessels with beer or grain. Consequently, the display of large vessels with painted designs during a ceremony or simply as a part of daily use in the home can be seen as a form of legitimation and reinforcement of status and ideology.

More specific indicators of wealth can be seen in ornaments made from different types of raw materials and complex manufacturing processes. Exotic raw materials such as marine shell, lapis lazuli, carnelian, and banded agate were being processed at Harappa using a variety of techniques and finished objects made from these materials can be identified as valuable wealth items based on the assumptions stated earlier. Gold and silver ornaments have not yet been found at Harappa during this early period, but they are reported from other sites such as Rehman Dheri (Durrani 1988), Jalilpur (Mughal 1974), and Kunal (Khatri and Acharya 1995). In addition to these more commonly identified materials, stea-



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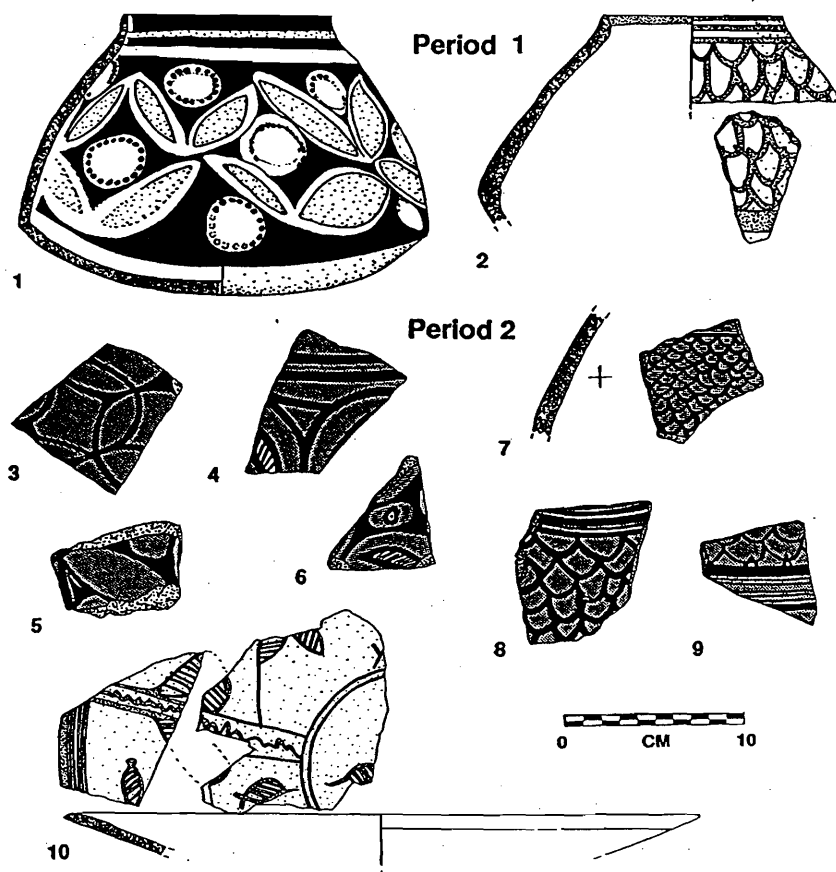


Figure 8.4 Early Harappan painted ceramics. 1–2: period 1; 2–9: period 2; 10: non-local ware with pipal leaf design.

tite is one of the critical raw materials used in the creation of wealth objects at Harappa and presumably at other sites throughout the Indus Valley.

Unlike the site of Mehrgarh, where steatite was available in the nearby hills and may have been accessible to a large number of individuals, the steatite lumps used at Harappa were a valuable commodity obtained through long-distance trade networks extending over 500 kilometers and across several major rivers, including the Indus. A very thin copper saw that may have been designed specifically to conserve the raw material was used to saw the bead blanks. A wide variety of bead shapes was produced (Figure 8.5) and perforated with a thin copper drill that had a beveled tip (Kenoyer 1997b).

Whereas the technology for heating and hardening steatite appears to be similar between Mehrgarh and Harappa, the glazing at Harappa reflects a more complex technology of production (Kenoyer 1997a). Green glazed steatite may have been used to imitate turquoise or amazonite, both of which are natural raw

materials that are difficult to make into shiny beads. During Period 2 at Harappa (2800–2600 BC) the white colored silica glaze on steatite was replaced by the manufacture of white fired steatite that does not have a preserved layer of silica glaze. Green glazed steatite is replaced by green and blue-green colored faience beads, many of which were extremely small and made with a glassy, fine-grained structure referred to as compact faience (McCarthy and Vandiver 1990; Kenoyer 1994b).

Square or circular seals carved with geometric designs were also made from glazed and hardened steatite during the Early Harappan Phase (Figure 8.5). The circular seals are similar to button seals found at other Early Harappan sites such as Rehman Dheri and Kunal. A new form of seal at Harappa is seen in the square glazed steatite seal with a perforated boss (Figure 8.5). Square seals with script and other motifs were also first used during this period. Excavations in 1998 uncovered a square-seal impression on a broken lump of clay that may have been used to seal a storeroom or bundle of

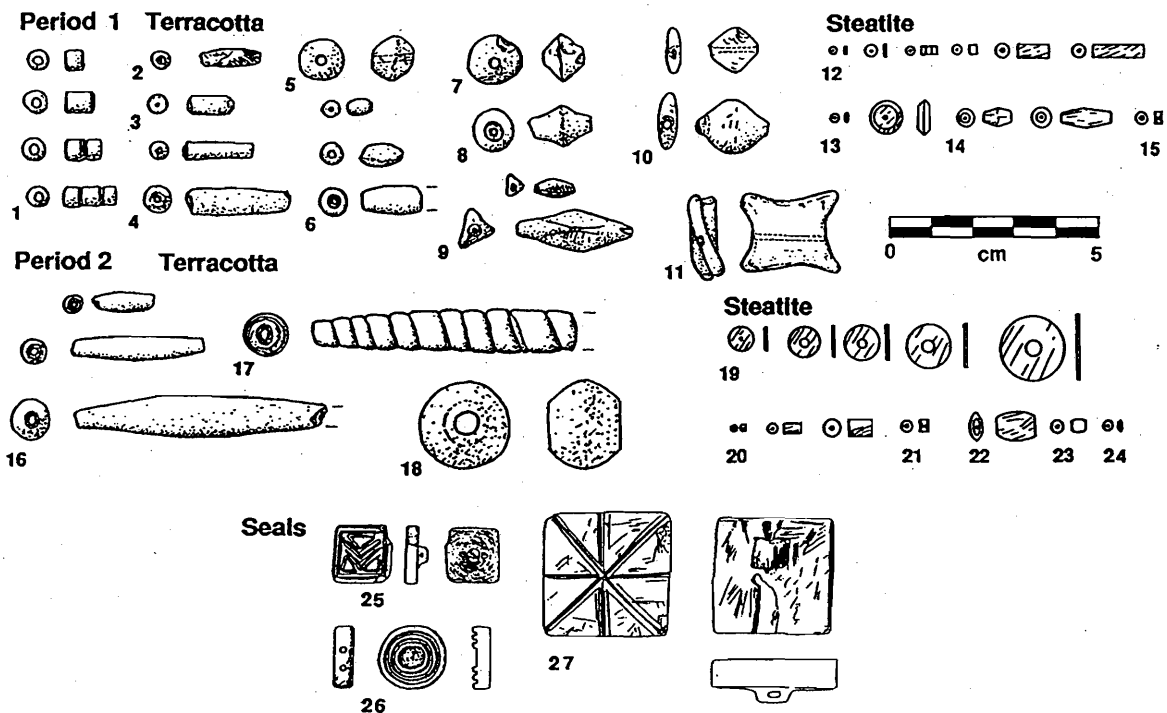


Figure 8.5 Early Harappan beads and seals. 1–11: period 1, terracotta beads; 12–14: Period 1, fired and glazed steatite; 15: carnelian; 16–18: Period 2, terracotta beads; 19, 20, 22: fired steatite; 21: carnelian; 23: amazonite; 24: lapis lazuli; 25–27 square and circular seals.

goods. Such sealings are very rare because they are usually not preserved, but this one example is proof that someone at Harappa was receiving or controlling the distribution of a commodity that must have had considerable value. These early square seals appear to be prototypes for the square seals that are distinctive of the Harappan Phase and are associated with high economic status and political power.

The use of similar technologies to produce two different types of objects, beads and seals, provides some insight into the early role of economics and ideology in the creation of wealth items. Although the sample size from Harappa is quite small, glazed steatite beads are relatively more numerous and may have been used by more than one socio-economic group, possibly as a form of wealth or some unifying ideology associated with white beads. On the other hand, glazed steatite seals appear to be extremely rare and may have been used only by a limited number of individuals. Since the technology for production is basically the same, except for the carving of geometric designs and script, the only

thing stopping bead makers from making seals would be ideological or political control. This control is more clearly exercised during the following Harappan Phase, but its origins may be traced to the Early Harappan Phase.

Another important wealth item that was being created during the Early Harappan Phase is bangles made from circlets of terracotta, shell, and copper (Figure 8.6). Beginning in Period 1A and continuing into Period 2 there is a gradual increase in the variety of bangle styles made from terracotta, many of which were decorated with red and black paint. Reduction firing was used to create distinctive black or gray colored bangles which were highly burnished and incised with hatched designs.

In both bead and bangle production new technologies and more complex manufacturing processes were employed to create more varieties of ornaments each of which probably had specific cultural meaning, and presumably some of these ornaments would have been more valuable than others. It is not possible to deter-

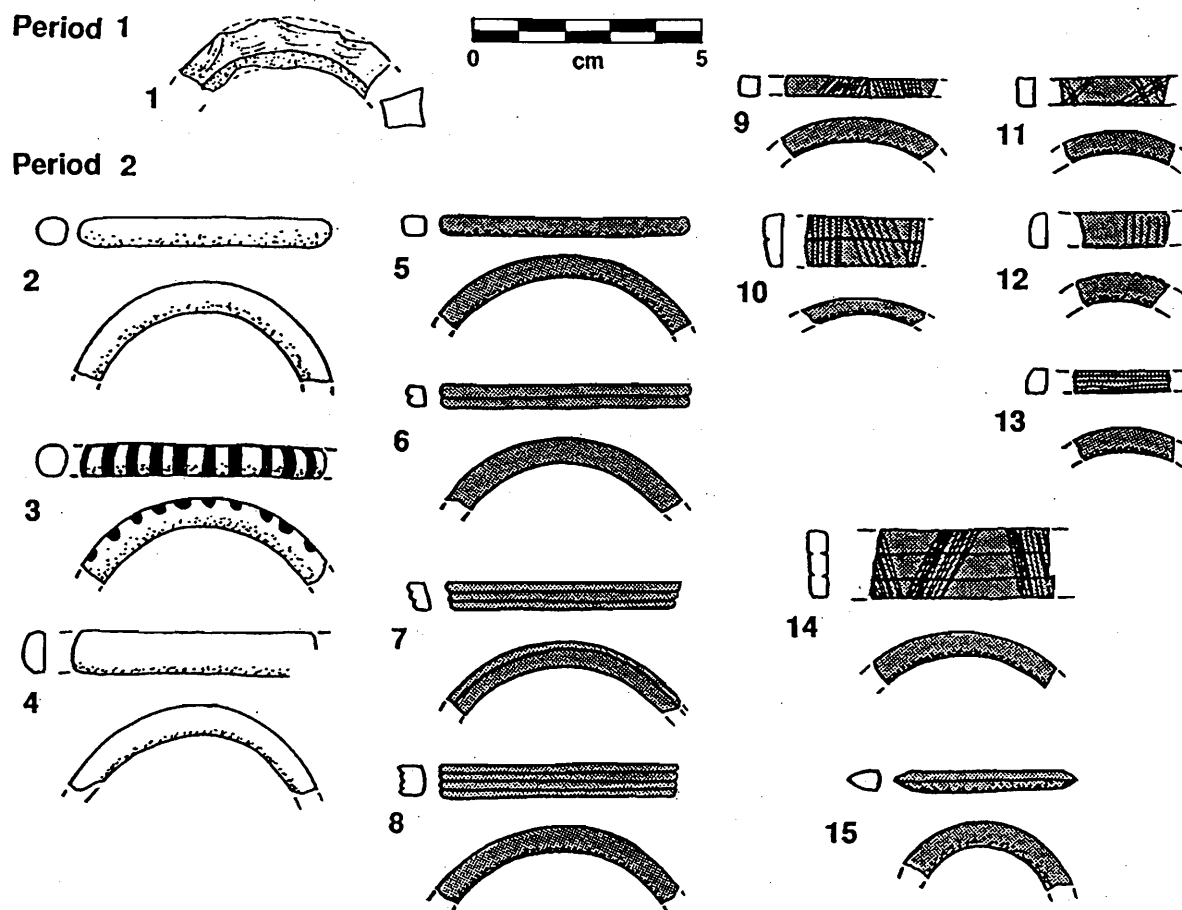


Figure 8.6 Early Harappan bangle types. 1: period 1; 2 and 4: period 2, terracotta; 3: painted with black bands; 5–15: gray-fired, burnished and incised.

mine if any of these crafts were being directly controlled by elites during the Early Harappan Phase, but the identification of massive walls enclosing portions of the site where these crafts were practiced suggests some degree of indirect control (Kenoyer 1991b, 1992a).

During the Early Harappan Phase this mechanism for creating wealth items appears to have become well established at Harappa and a similar process was probably going on at other major settlements such as Nausharo (J.-F. Jarrige 1988, 1990), Rehman Dheri, and Mohenjo-daro. More specifically, the basic types of ornaments associated with wealth and stratification that begin to emerge in the Early Harappan Phase set the foundation for the creation of unique forms of wealth that were necessary to reinforce the socioeconomic

stratification of the Harappan Phase as seen in the Indus State.

#### Harappan order and wealth

During the Harappan Phase (2600–1900 BC), the cities of Harappa, Mohenjo-daro, Dholavira, Ganweriwala, and Rakhigarhi (Figure 8.1) appear to have been relatively independent city-states that would have had direct control over a limited hinterland. The absence of centralized palaces or temples suggests that these cities were not organized as monarchies or theocratic city-states, but were probably more similar to the republics and oligarchies of the Early Historic Period (Kenoyer 1994a, 1997b). Rulers or dominant elites in the various cities

would have included traders and merchants, ritual specialists, and individuals who controlled subsistence resources. The elites at each of the major cities appear to have shared a common ideology and economic system as represented by symbolic objects such as seals, ornaments, pottery, and other artifacts. Occupational specialists and service communities (such as sweepers, porters, etc.), who appear to have been organized in loosely stratified groups, were also actively integrated into the overall ideology and contributed to its legitimation through the continued production of symbolic objects and wealth items that were used by the different social classes. In contrast to the large cities, the rural settlements may have been less rigidly stratified and segregated, and would have included larger numbers of farmers, pastoralists, fishers, miners, hunters, and gatherers, etc. The precise degree of political integration probably fluctuated over time, but trade and exchange of important socio-ritual status items demonstrates that the cities and villages were economically integrated, and therefore appear to be integrated on a general ideological level as well.

In contrast with earlier periods, the control of craft production through both indirect and direct means is better documented during the Harappan Phase (Bhan *et al.* 1994). Not surprisingly, the major crafts being controlled were those that used complex technologies and either imported or locally available raw materials. In recent excavations at Harappa, stone bead making, stone weight manufacture, shell, bone and ivory working, inlay manufacture, steatite bead and seal manufacture, copper working, and possibly glazed faience and gold working are all found in close proximity in a distinct craft activity area of Mound ET (Meadow and Kenoyer 1997) (Figure 8.7). The presence of more than one craft in a single area can result from factors other than state control (Kenoyer 1992a), but in this case the craft area is situated inside a walled suburb of the larger Mound E and is located just inside the major southern gateway. Indirect control by urban elites can be inferred because of their localization inside a walled area of the city, but the relatively high concentrations of inscribed tablets and seals in association with the craft area also suggests that there may have been some direct control of specific crafts.

All of these crafts produced objects that can be considered wealth indicators, or, as in the case of cubical stone weights, economic indicators (stone weights were not used as symbols of wealth but would have been used to evaluate wealth economically). Some evidence for seal making is found in this area as well,

but copper smelting and stoneware bangle production were being carried out in other areas (Dales and Kenoyer 1991; H. M.-L. Miller 1999). Pottery making, which is found in numerous widely scattered areas of the site, is also noticeably absent from this area of specialized crafts; apparently it was not being directly controlled even though it produced important forms of decorated pottery that had culture-specific symbolic meaning.

When compared with the previous phase of regional development, during the Harappan Phase we see a decrease in the overall variation of certain symbols, such as painted pottery motifs, but an increase in the variety of materials used to make wealth objects and new variations on symbolic themes, specifically in the context of ornaments. We also see the creation of new symbolic objects and wealth indicators, such as seals and weights, that are distinctive for the period of urban integration.

The overall decrease in the heterogeneity or variability of painted pottery designs and the general uniformity of other symbolic objects such as seals and weights probably indicates ideological integration. On the other hand, the increase in variability of ornament styles (Figure 8.8) and raw materials could be the result of several factors, such as diversification of subsistence practices, development of new technologies, and fragmentation and agglomeration of social groups, all of which contributed to the establishment of more stratified social organization. Preliminary comparisons between Indus sites in different geographical regions suggests that there are distinctive regional patterns in certain artifact categories, such as pottery (Dales and Kenoyer 1986) and seals (Rissman 1989), but due to limitations of space it is possible to discuss only a few of the most important categories of artifacts that reflect the wealth and socioeconomic hierarchies of the Harappan Phase. Distinctive seals with Indus script and cubical stone weights represent the important new types of objects that reflect wealth and order. Pottery and ornaments provide examples of socioeconomic stratification, ideological integration, and legitimation.

### Seals

The Harappan Phase and the beginning of the Indus state coincide with the widespread use of a unique form of intaglio seal with Indus script and various symbolic motifs (Figure 8.9). These intaglio seals had a perforated boss on the back and were made from steatite that was whitened and fired at high temperatures to create a hardened surface. Seals were engraved by highly skilled

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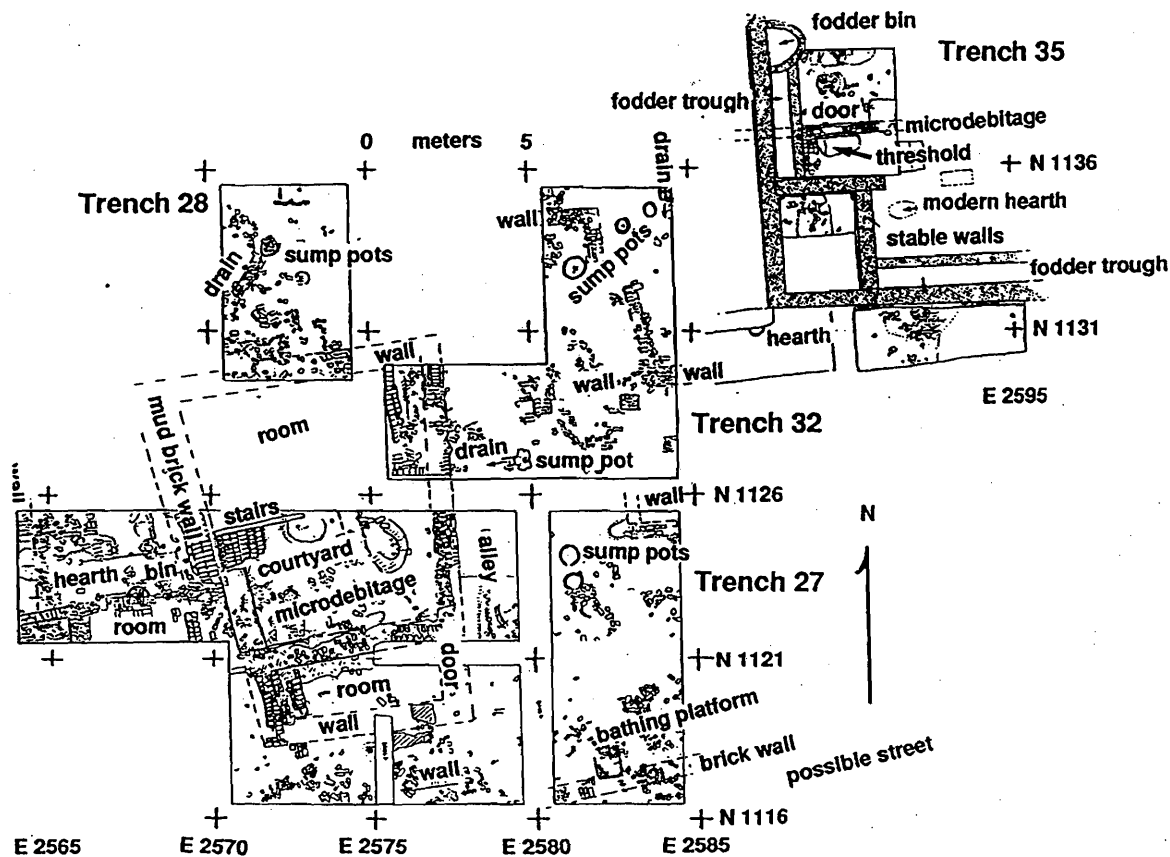


Figure 8.7 Harappan craft activity area: Mound EIET.

artisans, with script as well as zoomorphic and occasionally anthropomorphic figures. Numerous impressions on clay lumps, bullae, and pottery attest to their function as actual seals, though they would have been effective as visible symbols or badges of office as well.

Button seals such as those found in earlier periods are found in association with the intaglio seals, but the geometric designs are generally different from those of the earlier period. The Harappan Phase motifs include the swastika, the endless knot, and various stepped cross designs (Figure 8.9).

All seals can be considered wealth indicators because of their use in the identification of individuals or commodities, but they also served as symbols of ideology and legitimation. The use of intaglio seals appears to have been limited to a relatively small proportion of the population who would have included merchants or political administrators, and in some cases possibly ritual elites. Current research at Harappa has demon-

strated that although discarded seals became distributed throughout the settlements, the people who controlled and used the seals were probably living in distinct areas of the cities (Dales and Kenoyer 1990).

Even though only the dominant literate elite used the seals, both literate and illiterate persons would have been able to recognize the message of the seals because most seals contained two levels of information. The script along the top of the seal could have been read by literate elites, while the animal symbol or geometric designs would have informed the illiterate commoners or laborers about the social or ritual affiliation of the seal's owner.

The unicorn motif is the most common symbol used on the seals, while the humped bull and various forms of composite animals are the least common. Due to the lack of stratigraphic and chronological control of seals collected in the past, it is premature to try and sort out the hierarchy of these symbols, but they probably reflect

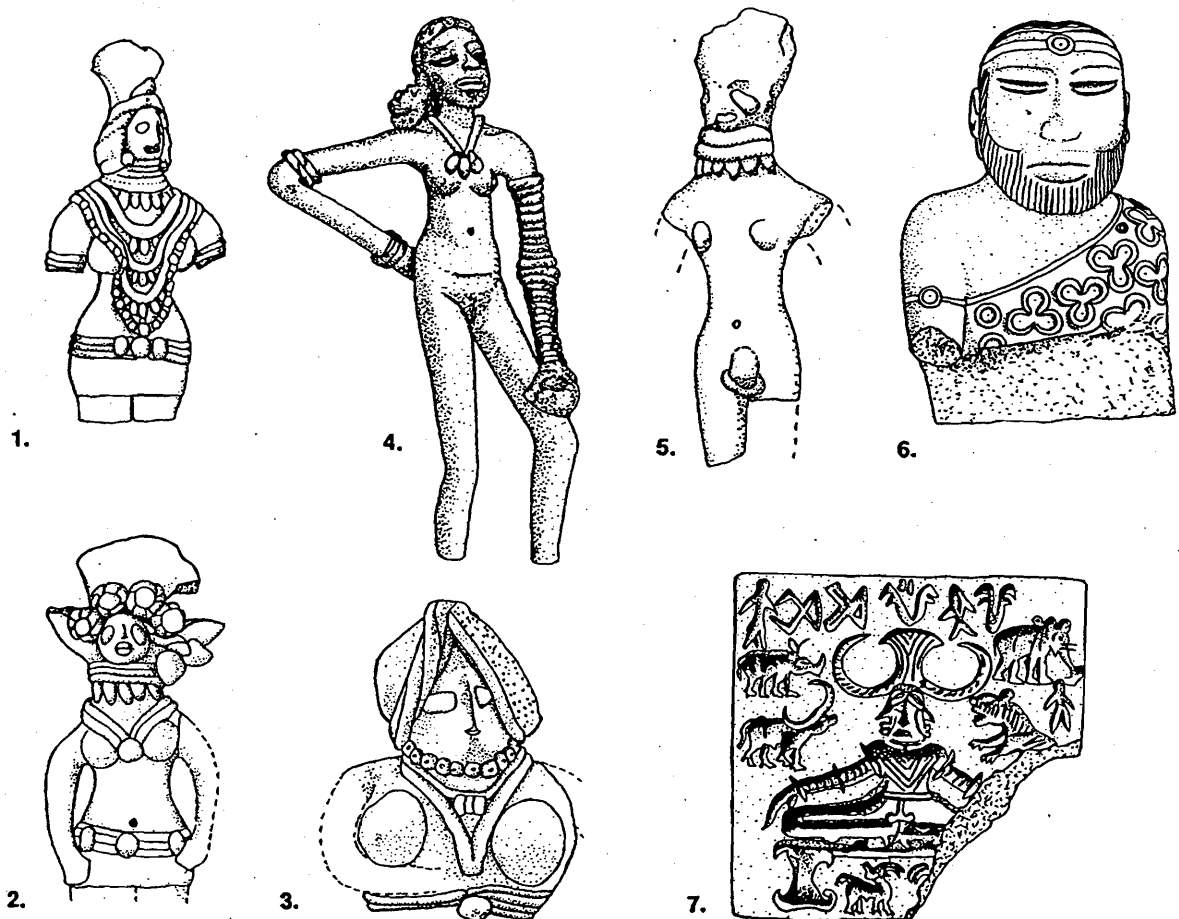


Figure 8.8 Ornament styles of the Harappan Phase. 1–3, terracotta female figurines from Mohenjo-daro and Harappa; 4, copper/bronze female figurine from Mohenjo-daro; 5, terracotta male figurine from Harappa; 6, white steatite male figurine from Mohenjo-daro; 7, fired steatite intaglio seal from Mohenjo-daro.

hierarchy within the elites, and may identify hereditary merchant communities, sodalities, clans, or even different classes of administrative officials.

Regardless of the actual meaning of seals, we can suggest that the visual impact of a seal worn openly by an individual or the impression of a seal on a commodity, would serve to reinforce the social and economic hierarchy of the society. Furthermore, the ritual symbolism of the animal or geometric designs might serve to legitimize the social order. The presence of seals throughout the extent of the Indus State indicates that the individuals who used them were widespread and were present at both large urban centers as well as at smaller villages and outposts. This widespread presence

of administrative elites or literate merchants may indicate an important mechanism that was used to support the Indus State. The lack of evidence for overt military coercion would indicate that the state was legitimized primarily by economic and/or ritual coercion. A wide range of artifacts can be cited as evidence for the presence of both ritual and economic coercion, but only a few of the most important will be presented here.

#### Weights

The Indus weight system is one of the most highly standardized weight systems in prehistory (Marshall 1931) and indicates the existence of a centralized

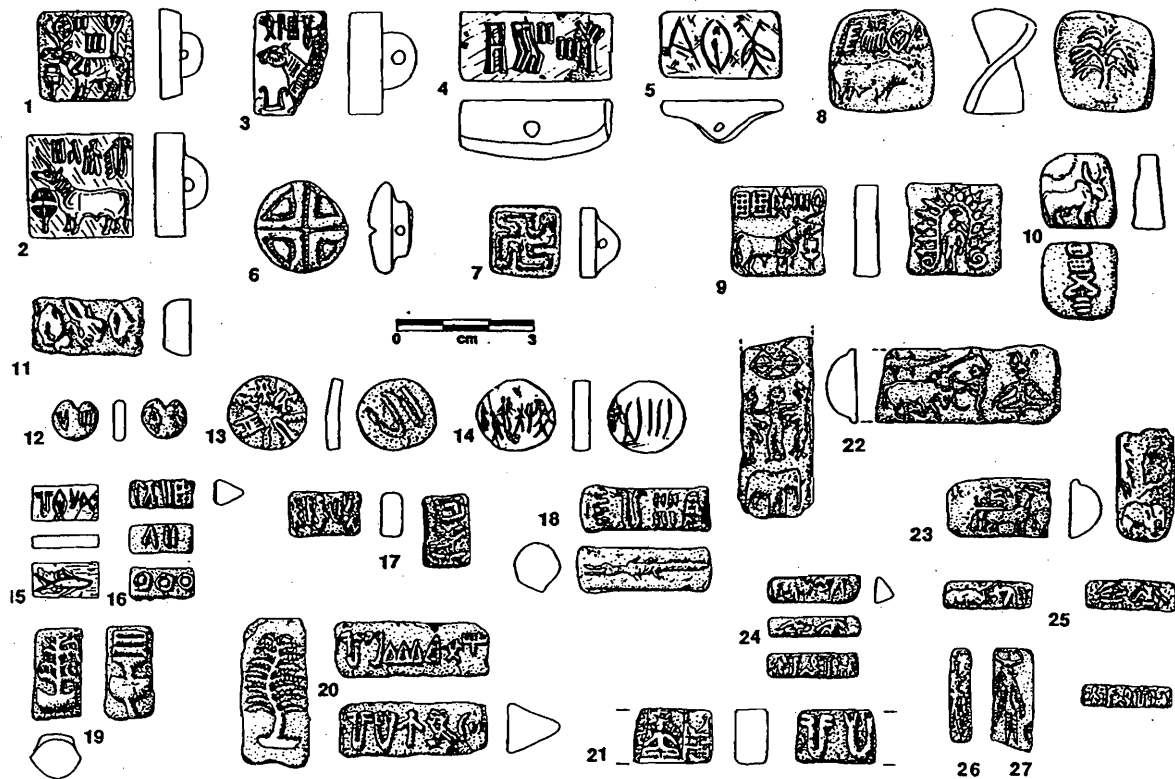


Figure 8.9 Harappan seals and tablets. 1–3: fired steatite intaglio seals; 4–5: fired steatite intaglio seals with script only; 6–7: molded faience button seals; 8–9: molded terracotta tablets; 10: molded faience tablet; 12–18: various shapes of faience and steatite tablets with script and animal motifs; 19–20: faience and terracotta tablets with sacred tree motifs; 21: seated deity with reed hut or shrine; 22–27: terracotta and faience tablets with narrative motifs.

authority or coalition of merchants that taxed or controlled the trade of specific commodities. The distinctive cubical chert or agate weights, usually in several graduated sizes, have been found in most settlements of the Indus region as well as in settlements on the periphery where Indus merchants may have obtained raw materials or traded finished products. However, the manufacture of these weights is only confirmed at the largest sites of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa, and the smaller specialized site of Chanhudaro. These three sites also have the largest range in weight categories while the smaller rural settlements tend to have only the middle weights.

The strict adherence to a standard weight system was probably reinforced from the major cities through centralized workshops that produced the weights and through officials who would periodically check the value of the weights to maintain standardization and discour-

age cheating. This pattern of control may have been similar to the later practice during the Early Historic Mauryan State (c. third century BC) in which the state-appointed Minister of Weights and Measures and his officers would travel to smaller towns and check weights being used in the markets and ensure that taxable items were being properly assessed (Prasad 1984, 1987).

The use of cubical stone weights can be seen as an economic indicator of wealth and a symbol of ideology regarding the economic systems of the Indus state. In the absence of evidence for military coercion, the economic system was most probably supported by a common ritual ideology that legitimized the enforcement of such rigid standards. Whether used specifically for taxation or ritual tithe, or simply for the weighing of special commodities, these weights and the fact that they were highly standardized provide evidence for a coercive economic authority that reached almost every settlement

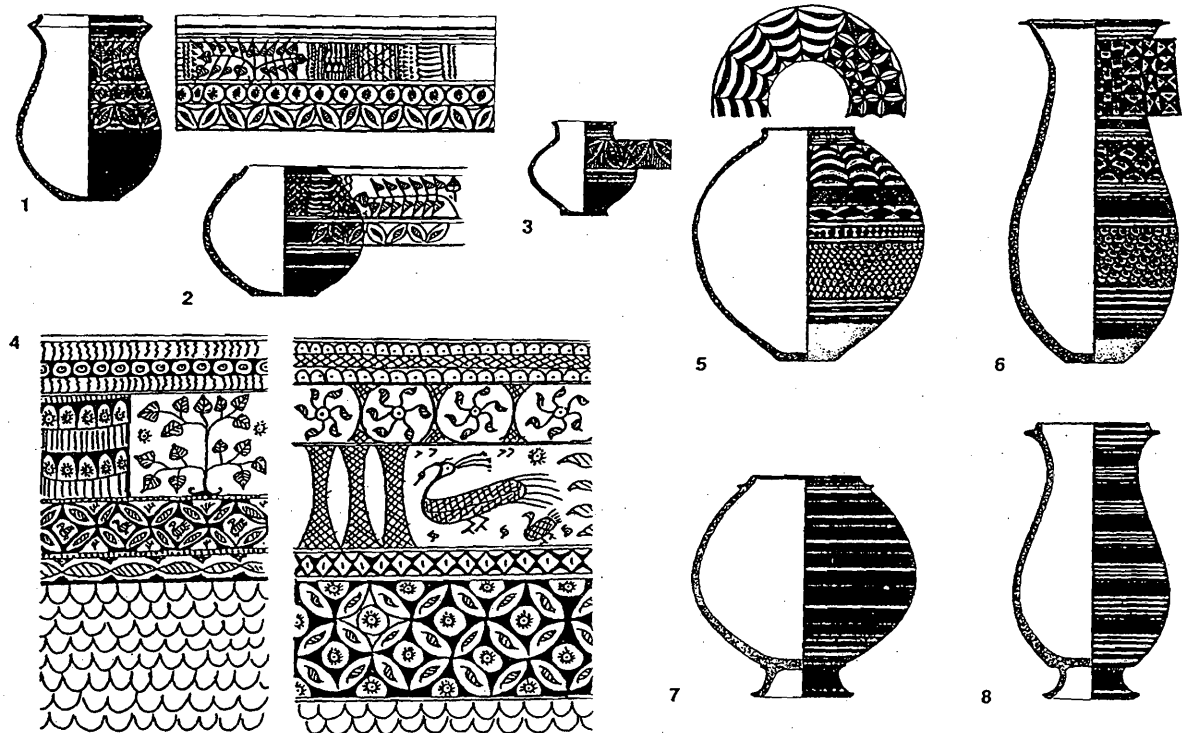


Figure 8.10 Harappan painted ceramics. 1–4: classical Harappan painting styles; 5–6: Harappan geometric painting style; 7–8: Harappan banded painting style.

of the Indus region. In combination with the evidence from the seals mentioned above, we can visualize literate merchants or elites, who, along with their seals and standardized weights, represented the authority of the Indus state. Seals and weights, as symbols of wealth and authority, would have been visible to the general public but would have been used exclusively by elites.

The ideology that legitimized economic coercion appears to have been reinforced through a wide range of symbols that are found distributed throughout most Indus sites and were apparently accepted and used by all segments of the population. Of these, pottery vessels and ornaments are the most easily identified and were used by numerous different hierarchical segments of the population, reflecting the vertical integration of the ideology.

#### Pottery

With the rise of major cities we see a synthesis of some shapes and motifs from the earlier pottery traditions and the introduction of new shapes and some new painted designs. Most of the Harappan pottery is undecorated,

but the small percentage of painted types is dominated by black painting on red slip (Figure 8.10). The painting is organized in horizontal panels and the most widespread motifs, usually found on the lower panel, are the intersecting circle and fish-scale designs. Other symbols occurring on the upper panels include peacock, bull, fish, and floral motifs such as the pipal tree or leaf.

During the Harappan phase an important new development is the reproduction of many of the pottery motifs in other materials. For example, the intersecting circle, fish-scale, pipal leaf and other ritual symbols are found in shell inlay, carved ornaments, decorated beads, floor tiles, and even in the Indus script. It is not unlikely that they were also incorporated into textiles and carved wood, but unfortunately these have not been preserved. The addition of these motifs as decoration would certainly have increased the value of an object as well as its overall symbolic impact.

As mentioned earlier, painted pottery itself may not have been of significant wealth value, but since such pottery would have been needed for domestic use and public rituals, anyone desiring to emulate, affiliate, or



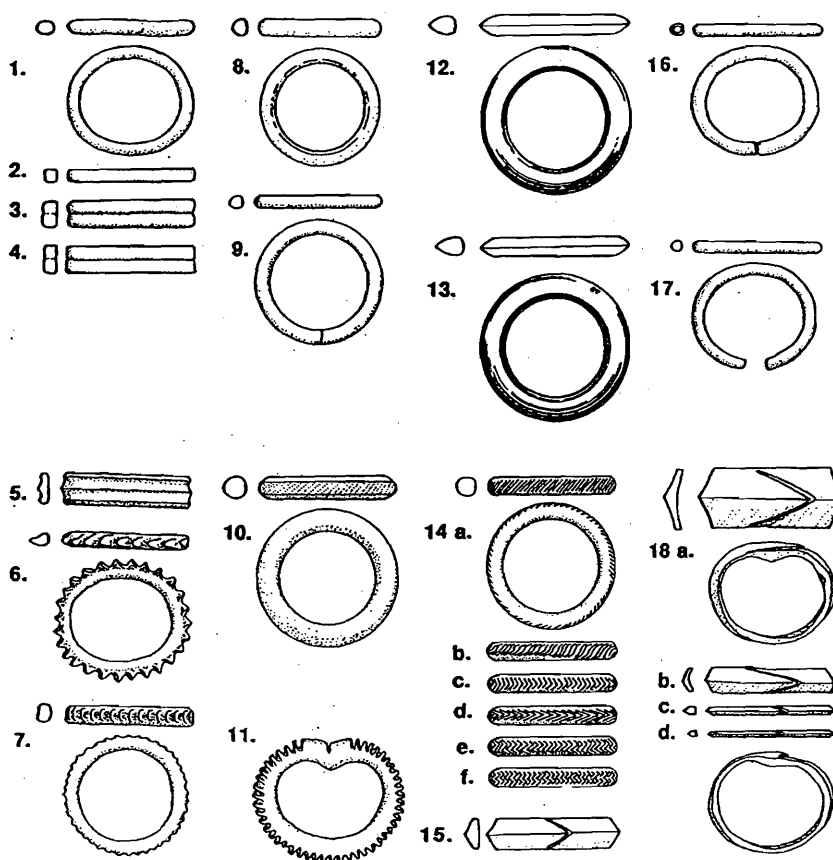


Figure 8.11 Harappan bangle types. 1-7: terracotta; 8: faience; 9: copper/bronze; 10: fine terracotta; 11: faience; 12: fine terracotta; 13: stoneware; 14-15: faience; 16-17: gold/silver; 18: shell.

integrate to this social-ritual-political system would need to acquire and visibly display pottery with appropriate decorative elements. These painted vessels are not limited to specific areas of the cities and it is highly unlikely that they were used only by one community or only by the elites. Such a pattern would indicate that the ideology reflected by the painted pottery was embraced by the many different stratified communities present in the cities. Furthermore, the presence of these distinctive vessels in both large and small settlements indicates the widespread acceptance of the ideology that served to integrate the society vertically within settlements, as well as horizontally across previous regional boundaries.

#### Ornaments

During the Harappan phase, new styles of bangles and beads were created using different raw materials and in many cases different technologies. Many of the same basic styles of beads and bangles were made with raw

materials or technologies of relatively different values. In contrast with painted pottery, which reflects horizontal integration, Harappan phase ornaments reflect the distribution of identical, shared symbols along the vertical socioeconomic axis. At the same time that these shared symbols reinforce the shared ideology through symbols, the ornaments have different values due to the nature of the raw material or technology. Such ornaments reinforce the stratification of Indus society by the fact that only certain classes of merchants or land owners could afford beads of high value.

For example, bangles with the same shape and design were made from common terracotta, fine processed clays, stoneware, glazed faience, copper/bronze, ivory, shell, silver, and gold (Figure 8.11). Identical shapes of beads were made from terracotta, faience, agate/carnelian, copper/bronze, shell, steatite, silver, and gold (Figure 8.12). Circular and banded designs found on natural stones were copied in terracotta, inlaid stone, shell, faience, and steatite. On the basis of later cultural

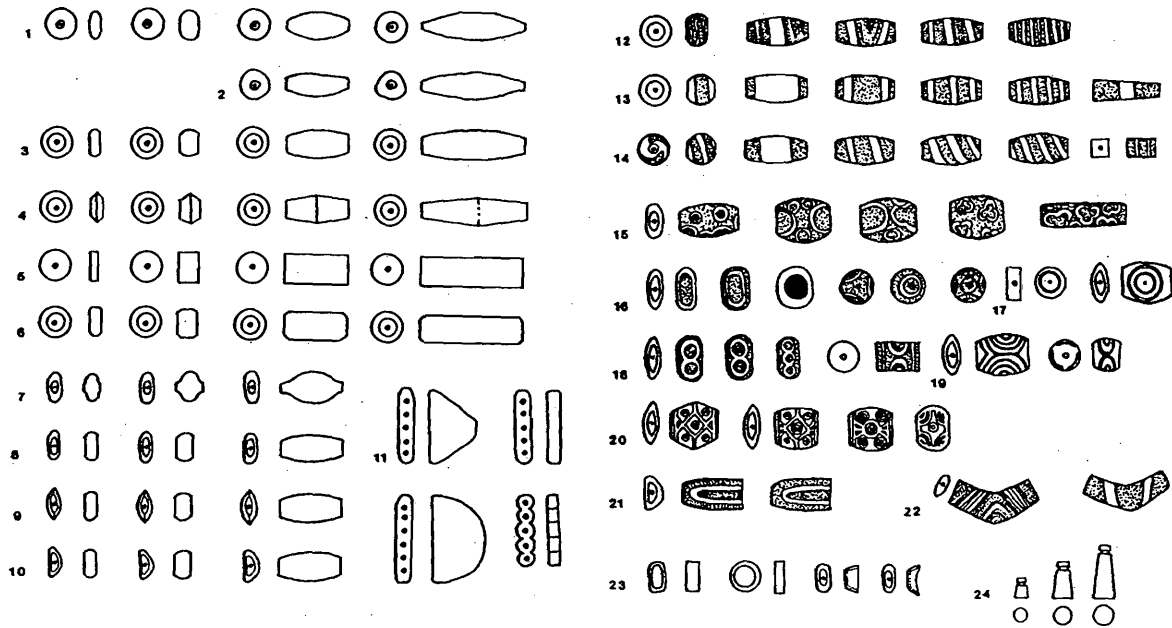


Figure 8.12 Harappan bead designs and amulets. 1–11: terracotta beads; 12–22: natural stone beads and imitation beads made from steatite and faience; 23: gold bead caps; 24: pendants (amulets) made from stone or faience.

traditions in South Asia, the ornament shapes and styles reflect the use of symbols that communicated socio-ritual status and identity. The use of natural and artificial materials allowed for the differentiation of individuals on the basis of economic, social, and ritual affiliations.

Although many of the basic bead types are found distributed horizontally among many different sizes of settlements throughout the Indus valley, there is a greater range of raw materials and a higher degree of stylistic variation within the larger urban settlements of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa (Kenoyer 1992b), or specialized settlements such as Chanhudaro (Vidale 1989a). This would suggest that the larger urban centers contained a more diverse set of consumers representing a greater number of social strata than was present at rural settlements. Current studies at Harappa are focused on determining if these different communities lived in different areas of the city or in distinct neighborhoods.

The manufacture of similar types of beads or bangles from different raw materials is not unique to the Indus civilization, but is seen in all societies where valuable raw materials are not equally accessible to all members of a community. For example, in Mesopotamia, cylinder seals were made from marine shell, as well as both soft

and hard stones. Exotic lapis lazuli and agate/chalcedony were among the most prized raw materials and elaborately carved cylinder seals made from these materials appear to have been used primarily by elites based on their inclusion in burials (e.g., Woolley 1955) and from the value ascribed to these materials in texts (see Moorey 1994).

Since the Harappans did not include large quantities of wealth items in burials and there are no deciphered texts, the value of different raw materials can only be gauged on the basis of their relative availability to the general public using the assumptions outlined at the beginning of this chapter. Initial studies of beads and bangles from the 1986 to 1990 excavations at Harappa indicated that the most valuable materials were probably precious metals, but due to the fact that metals can be recycled, they may be somewhat under-represented when compared with materials that are less easily recycled, such as terracotta, faience, or shell. In the following tables, the bangles and beads from excavations conducted from 1986 to 1990, primarily from the cemetery and Mound E (Kenoyer 1992b), are contrasted with the totals from 1986 to 1996, which represent a larger sample that has been collected from excavations on each of the major mounded areas, in addition to the Har-

BANGLES Raw Material	1986–1990 Excavations	Percentage	1986–1996 Excavations	Percentage
Terracotta	34,127	97.72%	120,612	97.92%
Faience	390	1.12%	1,092	0.89%
Shell	340	0.97%	1,230	1.00%
Stoneware	48	0.14%	198	0.16%
Copper	17	0.05%	39	0.03%
Total	34,922	100.0%	123,171	100.0%

Figure 8.13 Harappan Phase bangles (2600–1900 BC), sorted by raw material type.

Lowest rank	Terracotta bangles	Common, locally available raw material Relatively simple technology
	Shell bangles	Non-local raw material (except on the coast) Relatively simple technology
Highest rank	Faience bangles Copper bangles Stoneware bangles Gold/silver bangles	Non-local and locally available raw materials Relatively complex technology and high temperature kilns

Figure 8.14 Ranking of bangles by raw material and technology.

appan cemetery. These data represent the total number of bangles and beads recovered from Harappan Phase stratigraphic units (2600–1900 BC) using a standardized procedure for all seasons of excavation (Meadow and Kenoyer 1993).

In the category of bangles, the most rare forms of bangles are metal, gold/silver, and copper. As pointed out above, the very low percentage of metal bangles probably reflects a high degree of recycling. The next ranked raw materials include stoneware, faience, and shell, while the most common and lowest-ranked are terracotta bangles. It is interesting to note that when comparing the results of the two different samples the most common and most rare materials have remained unchanged, but some of the middle ranked raw materials have very different percentages (Figures 8.13 and 8.15). Nevertheless, the overall ranking combining both raw material type and technology remains unchanged (Figures 8.14 and 8.16).

Most Harappan ornaments would have been worn openly, providing public information about one's status and social affiliation, but some beads and pendants appear to have been worn hidden from view under clothing or separate from the more elaborate ornaments. Such ornaments would have functioned as private symbols that informed and reinforced ideologies

or legitimation of the social order on a more intimate level.

Excavations in the Harappan cemetery have revealed that certain men and women were buried with a few beads of carnelian, lapis, and/or copper generally found on the pelvis or at the lower back (Dales and Kenoyer 1990). These beads appear to have been worn beneath the clothing and next to the skin, functioning as protective amulets or personal ornaments that could not be passed on to their descendants. The absence of more elaborate ornaments of gold, silver, and precious stones suggests that they were passed on to the next generation.

Truncated conical stone pendants are also found among burial ornaments and are almost exclusively associated with adult women. Probably worn alone on a cord around the neck these pendants would have been obscured by clothing or the massive bead collars and torques that were commonly worn by Harappan ladies.

In contrast with other ornaments which were removed at death and probably represented wealth and status, the single pendants and beads in the Harappan burials probably represent amulets that were worn, not for public display, but rather for protection or to define personal ritual status. Their inclusion in the burial may indicate the continued need for amuletic protection

BEAD/PENDANT	1986-1990		1986-1996	
	<u>Raw material</u>	<u>Excavations</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Excavations</u>
Steatite/ paste	3,842	77.32%	8,688	69.43%
Terracotta	693	13.95%	2,111	16.87%
Other stone	225	4.53%	667	5.33%
Faience	95	1.91%	832	6.65%
Shell	54	1.09%	94	0.75%
Copper	39	0.78%	98	0.78%
Gold/ silver	21	0.42%	23	0.18%
Total	4,969	100.00%	12,513	100.00%

Figure 8.15 Harappan Phase beads (2600-1900 BC), sorted by raw material type.

Lowest rank	Terracotta	Common, locally available raw material Relatively simple technology
	Shell Unfired steatite Other stone (soft)	Non-local raw material Relatively simple technology
	Fired steatite/paste Faience Other stone (hard) Copper Gold	Non-local and locally available raw materials Relatively complex technology and high temperature kilns
Highest rank		

Figure 8.16 Ranking of beads by raw material and technology.

and/or the fact that such personalized ornaments could not be transferred to living relatives. Although these private ornaments may not have been used to communicate to the general public, members of the immediate community would have recognized and understood their significance as status or wealth items. The presence of stylistically similar private ornaments and amulets in widely distributed settlements is an important indicator of a shared ideology among elite communities that helps to define the general order of the social hierarchy and also integrate the society.

These examples of both private and public ornaments illustrate the hierarchical use of wealth items which in turn reflect the stratification and social order of Indus society. After around 1900 BC, all of the distinctive styles of Indus ornaments mentioned above disappeared, presumably because they were specifically associated with the legitimization of a socio-ritual order that was no longer tenable.

During the Late Harappan and subsequent Early Historic Period, the Harappa ornaments were replaced by stylistically different forms but in most cases there was a continuity in general function and technology of

production. Shell bangles continued to be worn in some regions but they had new forms of decoration. Faience and eventually glass or ivory bangles became quite common in other regions of the subcontinent (Kenoyer 1983). Beads with specific designs or motifs continued to be produced in a wide range of materials that can be ranked and correlated to socio-economic or ritual status (Kenoyer 1986). Private ornaments that were used to define social sub-sets continued to be produced and are still an important feature of ornamentation in Pakistan and India (Kenoyer 1992b).

#### Conclusion

Specific aspects of ideology and legitimization, along with the precise mechanisms that helped to maintain social order in the Indus cities, are difficult to identify without the aid of written texts. Nevertheless, as outlined above it is possible to identify some objects that were used as symbols of wealth and see how these objects were used to reflect and reinforce the social order.

Many of the wealth indicators, such as painted pottery, bangles, beaded ornaments, and even the layout

of the cities show marked stylistic and technological changes at the end of the Harappan Phase. In addition, the use of seals, writing, weights, and specific narrative scenes ends with the period of urban integration. The correlation between the end of the Indus cities and the disappearance of these characteristic artifacts suggests that they were critical to the legitimation of the elites who were maintaining order and socio-economic integration. The fact that such objects do not reemerge for another 300 to 400 years, when they are associated with a new set of elites in the Indo-Gangetic Regionalization Era (Kenoyer 1995a), further supports the role of these objects as symbols of wealth and socioeconomic stratification. Finally, with the reemergence of cities in the Early Historic Period, certain parallel developments occur that provide a historical link to reinforce the interpretation of specific objects as wealth and status indicators.

In historical South Asia, the legitimacy of the state, whether ruled as a republic, by a king, or as an oligarchy, was derived from *dharma* – the sacred order or the sacred duty – of the ruler. The duty of the ruler was to maintain and protect the order of *varna* or socio-ritual organization (Wink 1986: 17–18). This was achieved through the promotion of *dharma* (right action, encouraging virtue, and morality), *artha* (wealth, through the encouragement of trade, industry, and agriculture), *kama* (worldly pleasures, peace, and order) and *moksha* (release from the cycle of rebirth) (Altekar 1984; Ragaranjan 1992; Scharfe 1989). One mechanism through which the state was able to grow strong and remain stable was the promotion of wealth and creation of new forms of wealth that served to maintain social differentiation and at the same time reinforce ideological integration.

Based on the evidence presented above, I feel that the order and legitimation of the Indus State were maintained through the creation of wealth items that had strong ideological associations. These objects changed over time and were modified through technological advancements or changing trade patterns, resulting in regionally distinctive patterns of wealth accumulation. Collectively, these patterns are significantly different from what is seen at contemporaneous sites in West and Central Asia. The most obvious difference between the Indus and cultures to the west is that large quantities of portable wealth were not interred with the dead and wealth was not used to create permanent public monuments that had no direct economic function.

In the past, studies of ancient civilizations have focused on the most obvious differences in wealth,

ideology, and order, with a disproportionate emphasis on the uppermost social strata (i.e. high culture and inner elites). Such general characterizations have limited value for understanding the diversity of socioeconomic hierarchies that were part of early state society. Subtle differences or perhaps similarities in the concepts of wealth and socioeconomic hierarchies between these major regions can only be understood through more detailed comparative studies of raw material and artifact ranking. By changing our levels of analysis to investigate these more subtle patterns that reflect the complex infrastructure within each culture, it will also be possible to begin to understand the multiple levels of interaction between elites and the general population. Initial comparisons between this study and others presented in this volume suggest that there are in fact important similarities in the ways in which the common people were integrated through the use of wealth and ideology.

#### Note

This chapter is a revised and considerably expanded version of an earlier paper titled "Ideology and Legitimation in the Indus State as revealed through Public and Private Symbols" that was presented at the 13th International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences Mexico City, July 28–Aug. 5, 1993, and subsequently published in 1995 in *The Archaeological Review: Pakistan Archaeologists Forum* 4 (1&2): pp. 87–131. I would like to thank the editors for their incredible patience in putting this volume together and their helpful comments on the final version of my paper.

Support for my ongoing research at Harappa and the Indus Civilization has been provided by numerous organizations, and I would like to thank the National Science Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Geographic Society, the Smithsonian Institution and the University of Wisconsin for their long-term commitments to my research. Other support has come through private donations. I would like to acknowledge my great debt to the late Dr. George F. Dales for his encouragement in my early research and also for inviting me to work with him at Harappa as Field Director. I would also like to thank my colleagues Dr. Richard Meadow (Harvard University and Co-Director at Harappa), Dr. Rita Wright (New York University and Assistant Director at Harappa), Dr. Rafique Mughal and my students William R. Belcher, Heather M. L. Miller, Seetha Reddy, and Chris Jenkins for their stimulating discus-

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