

Arts Of Indus Valley

Emerged during the second half of the third millennium BCE.

- The forms of art found from various sites of the civilisation include sculptures, seals, pottery, gold jewellery, terracotta figures, etc.
- The two major sites of the Indus Valley Civilisation, along the Indus River—the cities of Harappa in the north and Mohenjodaro in the south—showcase one of the earliest examples of civic planning.
- Other markers were houses, markets, storage facilities, offices, public baths, etc., arranged in a gridlike pattern.
- Highly developed drainage system.
- While Harappa and Mohenjodaro are situated in Pakistan, the important sites excavated in India are Lothal and Dholavira in Gujarat, Rakhigarhi in Haryana, Ropar in the Punjab, Kalibangan and Balathal in Rajasthan, etc.
- Stone Statues-
- Found at Harappa and Mohenjodaro are excellent examples of handling three dimensional volumes.
- In stone are two male figures — one is a torso in red sandstone and the other is a bust of a bearded man in steatite—which are extensively discussed.
- The figure of the bearded man interpreted as a priest, is draped in a shawl coming under the right arm and covering the left shoulder. This shawl is decorated with trefoil patterns.
- The eyes are a little elongated and half-closed as in meditative concentration.

Bronze Casting-

- Made using the 'lost wax' technique in which the wax figures were first covered with a coating of clay and allowed to dry.
- Then the wax was heated and the molten wax was drained out through a tiny hole made in the clay cover.
- The hollow mould thus created was filled with molten metal which took the original shape of the object.
- Once the metal cooled, the clay cover was completely removed.
- In bronze we find human as well as animal figures, the best example of the former being the statue of a girl popularly titled 'Dancing Girl'.
- Amongst animal figures in bronze the buffalo with its uplifted head, back and sweeping horns and the goat are of artistic merit.
- Bronze casting was popular at all the major centres of the Indus Valley Civilisation.
- The copper dog and bird of Lothal and the bronze figure of a bull from Kalibangan are in no way inferior to the human figures of copper and bronze from Harappa and Mohenjodaro.

- Metal casting appears to be a continuous tradition.
- The late Harappan and Chalcolithic sites like Daimabad in Maharashtra yielded excellent examples of metal-cast sculptures.

Terracotta

- The Indus Valley people made terracotta images
- Compared to the stone and bronze statues the terracotta representations of human form are crude in the Indus Valley.
- More realistic in Gujarat sites and Kalibangan.
- Most important among the Indus figures are those representing the mother goddess.
- Also find a few figurines of bearded males with coiled hair, their posture rigidly upright, legs slightly apart, and the arms parallel to the sides of the body which represents as a deity.
- A terracotta mask of a horned deity has also been found
- Toy carts with wheels, whistles, rattles, birds and animals, gamesmen and discs were also rendered in terracotta.
- Seals Archaeologists have discovered thousands of seals, usually made of steatite, and occasionally of agate, chert, copper, faience and terracotta, with beautiful figures of animals, such as unicorn bull, rhinoceros, tiger, elephant, bison, goat, buffalo, etc.
- The realistic rendering of these animals in various moods is remarkable.
- The purpose of producing seals was mainly commercial.
- It appears that the seals were also used as amulets, carried on the persons of their owners, perhaps as modern day identity cards.
- The standard Harappan seal was a square plaque 2×2 square inches, usually made from the soft river stone steatite.
- Every seal is engraved in a pictographic script which is yet to be deciphered.
- Some seals have also been found in gold and ivory.
- They all bear a great variety of motifs, most often of animals including those of the bull, with or without the hump, the elephant, tiger, goat and also monsters.
- Tree or human figures were also depicted.
- The most remarkable seal is the one depicted with a figure in the centre and animals around.
- This seal is generally identified as the Pashupati Seal by some scholars whereas some identify it as the female deity depicts a human figure seated cross-legged.
- An elephant and a tiger are depicted to the right side of the seated figure, while on the left a rhinoceros and a buffalo are seen.
- Animals two antelopes are shown below the seat.
- Seals such as these date from between 2500 and 1500 BCE and were found in considerable numbers in sites such as the ancient city of Mohenjodaro in the Indus Valley.

- Figures and animals are carved in intaglio on their surfaces.
- Square or rectangular copper tablets, with an animal or a human figure on one side and an inscription on the other, or an inscription on both sides have also been found.
- The figures and signs are carefully cut with a burin.
- These copper tablets appear to have been amulets.
- Unlike inscriptions on seals which vary in each case, inscriptions on the copper tablets seem to be associated with the animals portrayed on them.

Pottery-

- The Indus Valley pottery consists chiefly of very fine wheel made wares, very few being hand-made.
- Plain pottery is more common than painted ware.
- Plain pottery is generally of red clay, with or without a fine red or grey slip which includes knobbed ware, ornamented with rows of knobs.
- The black painted ware has a fine coating of red slip on which geometric and animal designs are executed in glossy black paint.
- Polychrome pottery is rare and mainly comprises small vases decorated with geometric patterns in red, black, and green, rarely white and yellow.
- Incised ware is also rare and the incised decoration was confined to the bases of the pans, always inside and to the dishes of offering stands.
- Perforated pottery includes a large hole at the bottom and small holes all over the wall, and was probably used for straining liquor.
- Pottery for household purposes is found in as many shapes and sizes as could be conceived of for daily practical use.
- Straight and angular shapes are an exception, while graceful curves are the rule.
- Miniature vessels, mostly less than half an inch in height are, particularly, so marvelously crafted as to evoke admiration.

Beads and Ornaments

- The Harappan men and women decorated themselves with a large variety of ornaments produced from every conceivable material ranging from precious metals and gemstones to bone and baked clay.
- Necklaces, fillets, armlets and finger-rings were commonly worn by both sexes, women wore girdles, earrings and anklets.
- Hoards of jewellery found at Mohenjodaro and Lothal include necklaces of gold and semi-precious stones, copper bracelets and beads, gold earrings and head ornaments, faience pendants and buttons, and beads of steatite and gemstones. Ornaments are well crafted.
- a cemetery has been found at Farmana in Haryana where dead bodies were buried with ornaments.

- The bead industry seems to have been well developed as evident from the factories discovered at Chanhudaro and Lothal.
- Beads were made of cornelian, amethyst, jasper, crystal, quartz, steatite, turquoise, lapis lazuli, etc.
- Metals like copper, bronze and gold, and shell, faience and terracotta or burnt clay were also used for manufacturing beads.
- The beads are in varying shapes—disc-shaped, cylindrical, spherical, barrel-shaped, and segmented.
- The discovery of a large number of spindles and spindle whorls in the houses of the Indus Valley that spinning of cotton and wool was very common.
- Both the rich and the poor practised spinning is indicated by finds of whorls made of the expensive faience as also of the cheap pottery and shell.
- Men and women wore two separate pieces of attire similar to the dhoti and shawl.
- The shawl covered the left shoulder passing below the right shoulder.
- The people of the Indus Valley were conscious of fashion.
- Different hairstyles were in vogue and wearing of a beard was popular among all.
- Cinnabar was used as a cosmetic and face paint, lip stick and collyrium (eyeliner) were also known.
- Many stone structural remains are also found at Dholavira which show how the Indus Valley people used stone in construction.
- The artists and craftsmen of the Indus Valley were extremely skilled in a variety of crafts—metal casting, stone carving, making and painting pottery and making terracotta images using simplified motifs of animals, plants and birds.

DANCING GIRL

- One of the best known artefacts from the Indus Valley is this approximately four-inch-high copper figure of a dancing girl.
- Found in Mohenjodaro this exquisite casting depicts a girl whose long hair is tied in a bun.
- Bull-Bronze Found Painted EARTHENJAR Found in Mohenjodaro, this jar is made on a potter's wheel with clay.

MOTHERGODDESS

- The mother goddess figures are usually crude standing female figures adorned with necklaces hanging over prominent breasts and wearing a loin cloth and a girdle.