



Arts & Crafts Of The Harappan Civilization: An Analysis With Regards To Their Socio-Economic Role And Relevance

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ABSTRACT

The arts and crafts of the Harappan Civilization offer valuable information on socio-economic and cultural life in one of the world's earliest known urban civilizations. This study focuses on the details of Harappan craftsmanship, intending to describe production techniques, material utilization, and cultural relevance. The study explores artifacts which would include pottery, metalware, exquisite beads, engraved seals, terracotta figurines, etc from archaeological evidence found at the sites of Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa, Lothal, and Dholavira. A qualitative methodology has been employed, emphasizing material analysis and archaeological evidence to uncover the artistic sophistication and technological prowess of the Harappans. Comparative studies with the contemporary civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt further reveal the uniqueness of Harappan arts, particularly in their functional appeal and aestheticism. The findings of the study reveal a highly organized production system, indicating the presence of specialized artisans, trade networks, and a rich cultural ethos. The study, therefore, puts the significance of the Harappan civilization into the larger tapestry of ancient civilizations and its contribution to the development of early crafts. This analysis advances our understanding of Harappan ingenuity and situates their arts and crafts as a cornerstone in the evolution of human creativity and technology.

Keywords: Aesthetics, Harappan civilization, pottery, sculptures.

1) Introduction

The Indus Valley Civilization (IVC), or Indus Civilization, was a Bronze Age society that thrived in the northwestern parts of South Asia from around 3300 BCE to 1300 BCE, at its peak between 2600 BCE and 1900 BCE. It is recognized as one of the three earliest civilizations besides ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. (It is spread over an extensive territory with its sites ranging from modern-day Pakistan to northwestern India and northeastern Afghanistan.) The civilization centered along the fertile alluvial plains of the Indus River and the monsoon-fed (Ghaggar-Hakra) river system presented outstanding achievements in urban planning, trade, and cultural development. The term "Harappan" originated from the first excavation of this civilization in the early 20th century at the site of Harappa, in what is now present-day Pakistan. 2600-1900 BCE is referred to as "Mature Harappan" to distinguish it from the Early and Late Harappan phases. The civilization also traces its roots to earlier Neolithic cultures, such as Mehrgarh in Balochistan, underscoring its deep historical and cultural continuity.

The art and craft of the Harappan civilization prove to be one of the most impressive and sophisticated evidence of one of the oldest urban cultures in the world. It dates from roughly 2600 to 1900 BCE. The most striking tradition of artistic and craft production has been developed from the archaeological findings in major sites like Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro, Dholavira, and Lothal. Harappan artifacts present an excellent blend of decorative and practical objectives, pointing towards the importance of aesthetics and utility in their culture. The intricate beading for ceramics, terracotta human and animal figures, stone carvings, seals with script and designs, and sophisticated metallurgy boast excellent craftsmanship and technical proficiency on the part of the Harappans. These items were extremely relevant from the aesthetic and functional perspective. They were significant for the trading activities which were carried out at internal and external level with Mesopotamia. Mass production and dissemination of crafts speak well of an organized economy, a large number of specialized

communities of artisans working in collaboration, and a great pride in artistry that embellished Harappan culture and commerce (Ratnagar, 2024).

A core part of the Harappan economy was its art and crafts production activities, evidence of a sophisticated acquisition system, manufacturing system, and trade. Large volumes of beads, pottery, terracotta objects, seals, and metalware indicate that there are specific units of workshops and skilled manpower that cater to their customers in the domestic market along with the international market. Therefore, the trade networks connect the Harappan sites internally and with distant places such as Mesopotamia, Oman, and Central Asia to show that the crafts hold much economic importance. The craftsmen used diverse raw materials such as carnelian, steatite, lapis lazuli, copper, and shells sourced from distant regions to manufacture beautiful artifacts that were not only useful but also ornamental. Maritime trade was done through ports like Lothal and other coastal settlements of Gujarat and Sindh which made this civilization a place of cultural and economic exchange. It is through the interplay of artistic ingenuity and economic integration that the Harappan civilization sustained their urban centers while also forming part of their cultural legacy, leaving behind artifacts that even today reveal the vibrancy of their society (Katiyar and Katiyar, 2024).

This study aims to analyze the two-dimensional nature of Harappan arts and crafts, where the production process focuses both on symbolic cultural meaning and economic functionalities. The production processes of several crafts, the organization of the workshops, and how such crafts are integrated into broader social and trade networks of the Harappan civilization are dealt with in detail. It further probes the symbolic significance that these artifacts assume in the context of belief systems and practices related to Harappans. The study thus seeks to comprehend the interlocks of art, culture, and economy in the Harappan civilization and discusses how the study of these arts offers valuable lessons for contemporary societies. The archaeological evidence of such a civilization available at sites like Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro, Lothal, and Dholavira speak of highly planned urban centers and extraordinary technological breakthroughs. Harappan civilization was at its peak between 2600 BCE and 1900 BCE, marked by extensive urbanization, sophisticated drainage systems, standardized brick architecture, and a well-developed trade network (Prabhakar, 2024).

The Harappan Civilization is notable for the fact that no deciphered written records have been found. Thus, making it difficult for archaeologists and scholars to understand the social organization and cultural practices of this civilization. However, by examining material culture specifically its arts and crafts the life of Harappans can be understood. Arts and crafts are also an integral part of Harappan artifacts, from ceramics to metallic forms; though serving various functional purposes, they had significant cultural and symbolic meanings. These pieces provide a peek into religious practices, social stratifications, and the economic model followed by this civilization (Khan et al., 2024).



Figure 1: Arts & crafts of the Harappan civilization
(Source: <https://rooftoppapp.com/art-of-indus-valley-civilisation>)

Craft production in the Harappan civilization was highly specialized, reflecting both technological innovation and a complex economic structure. Across the cities of the Harappan settlements, many craft industries have been unearthed, such as bead-making, pottery, faience production, and metallurgy. These were also very structured in their division of labor with specific areas within cities that were dedicated to just certain crafts such as beads or metalwork. Such craft specializations indicate a rather organized urban economy to support such an array of artisanal activities (Deshmukh et al., 2024).

The arts and crafts of the Harappan civilization were not solely for utilitarian purposes. Rather, they were symbolic of deeper significance in the religious as well as cultural context. Depictions of animals, humans, motifs and designs of Harappan beads, pottery, and seals are reflective of this. Such things indicate a higher degree of spiritual bonding during artisanship. The most important artifact of the Harappan civilization is their seals which carry intricate motifs and animals with possible human figures. Seals are understood to be used for administrative as well as religious purposes. Some scholars believe that these seals could have been used for identification of ownership or even for trade. Others view them as symbols of religious or cosmological beliefs (Rahat et al., 2022).

The common terracotta figurines in Harappan settlements are mostly of female forms and animals. These are believed to have had religious or ritualistic significance. The prevalence of female figurines, especially those with prominent features such as large breasts and wide hips, might have been associated with fertility cults or

goddess worship. The Harappans could have used these figurines in rituals to invoke fertility or ensure agricultural prosperity. Animal figurines, including those of bulls, elephants, and humped cattle, could have had symbolic or religious significance, possibly associated with the Harappan reverence for animals and nature (Shinde, 2011).

The arts and crafts of the Harappan civilization are an important source of information on the cultural, economic, and technological achievements of one of the world's earliest urban societies. Its advanced craft production in the realms of pottery and bead-making, faience, and metallurgy has revealed an extraordinary balance between functionality and artistic expression. The symbolic and spiritual significance involved in Harappan crafts indicates a very religiously aware and cosmologically sensitive society, while the economic value of these crafts brings home the role of trade and specialization in sustaining civilization. The study of Harappan arts and crafts is important in broadening our vision regarding that ancient civilization as well as providing lessons about timelessness in innovation, sustainability, and the culture-economy nexus. The study examines the material culture of the Harappans. It uncovers a civilization whose artistic and craft traditions continue to echo in the annals of human ingenuity and cultural expression (Fuller, 2008).

2) Literature Review

This section consists of two components: the literature review, which encapsulates significant studies, techniques, and research deficiencies, and the theoretical framework, which delineates the foundational concepts, models, and variables supporting the investigation. This literature review aims to situate the study of Harappan civilization arts and crafts by focusing on production techniques, material culture, and socio-economic significance.

2.1 Theoretical Frameworks

This theoretical framework examines the interactive play of aesthetics and socio-economy within Harappan civilization but focuses upon the role of craft as a usable commodity as well as symbol and uses this perspective along with material culture, craft specialization, and trading perspectives in analyzing the importance of Harappan arts and crafts to structuring its society as well as how it creates and establishes identities.

2.1.1 Cultural Anthropology Theory

Cultural Anthropology Theory founded by Franz Boas, understands human cultures in the context of their uniqueness in social, economic, and environmental conditions (Boas, 2016). According to Boas, one of the most central elements of cultural anthropology is that of cultural relativism—the idea that cultural practices can only be understood or interpreted from within the context of the culture itself. This theory has great applicability to the study of Arts & Crafts of the Harappan Civilization because it facilitates an intensive investigation into how social organization, economic practices, and environmental conditions influenced Harappan people's craft production (Nanay, 2024). Applying this lens allows us to look into the meanings of their artistic expressions, the functional roles of their craft products, and how these objects reflected and shaped their cultural identity and social interactions (Jacknis, 2002).

2.1.2 Archaeology Theory

Archaeology Theory is a learning concept developed by Lewis Binford based on ethnographic techniques to study the archaeological record and understand past societies' economic aspects of material culture and artifacts (Binford, 1962). It involves the study of how the activities associated with trade, production, and consumption had impacts on the social structure and growth of ancient societies (Burtenshaw, 2019). This theory would be applicable in the study of the Arts & Crafts of the Harappan Civilization as it would allow an investigation of how craft production, in this case, pottery, metalware, and textiles, was not merely an aesthetic activity but a vital sector of the Harappan economy. An important insight into trade networks, labor specialization, and economic practice is gained from the distribution and use of these artifacts in shaping the cultural and material landscape of the Harappan society (Furholt et al., 2020).

2.1.3 Symbolic Interactionism Theory

Symbolic Interactionism Theory, which is credited to have been established by George Herbert Mead, discusses how people build social ties, identities, and understanding of the world through interacting with others (Mead, 2012). This theory puts great emphasis on the role that symbols, language, and gestures play in creating meaning within society. It can be relevant to the study of Arts & Crafts of the Harappan Civilization as it helps us understand how the creation and use of artifacts, such as sculptures, pottery, and jewelry, may have played a role in shaping social identities and cultural meanings in the Harappan society. The artifacts can be seen to be symbols that convey aspects of social roles, religion, and cultural values, an insight into how people in the Harappan society behaved and presented themselves through the material culture (Stryker, 2001).

2.2 Technological and Craftsmanship Innovations of the Harappan Civilization

The Harappan civilization demonstrated impressive technological and craftsmanship innovations in many aspects. The design of their urban plans was excellent, with advanced architectural designs within cities,

thereby showing their high knowledge in the field of engineering (Dalrymple, 2024). The precision of the weights and measures and the adoption of cubical stone weights in proportional quantities testify to their mathematical competency (Ramesh, 2023). It possessed a rich and developed material culture such as high-quality agricultural tools, ornamented bullock carts, and a variety of tablets and potteries (Rogers, 2020). In metal engineering, it is also highlighted to be an alloy of copper, tin, lead, and bronze (Dalrymple, 2024). Accurate measurements are reflected when a ruler was found in Mohenjo-Daro with the unit length measuring 3.4 cm (Seland, 2017). Interestingly, despite having such sophisticated technological capabilities as the Harappan civilization, it is seen that in the decline phase of the civilization, the key technologies stopped being used and the urban centers began to be abandoned (Surapaneni, 2011). As the Harappan script cannot be deciphered, the scope of their methods and knowledge has been very narrow in terms of understanding (Sengupta et al., 2020).

2.3 Cultural and Social Significance of Arts and Crafts in the Harappan Civilization

The Indus Civilization, also known as the Harappan Civilization, featured a very rich cultural heritage and a highly advanced skill in craftsmanship. Finds from more than seventy excavated sites replete with semiprecious stones, artifacts, and archaeological remains speak volumes about the sector of the civilization in terms of arts and crafts (Fuller, 2008). Harappan beads are precious and semi-precious, and have possessed a great deal of astrological importance, and have been carved by very skillful workers in city workshops (Khan et al., 2024). These imported beads by merchants from afar were used in the formation of ornaments and tools to be worn by both commoners and elites that portray the social stratification existing in the society (Danino, 2003). The wide dispersal of Harappan material culture over northwestern South Asia testifies to the complex interregional interaction system and trade (Satpathy, 2015). This is more curious, where recent excavations of two small Indus settlements in Gujarat showed residents' engagement in an interregional economy while showcasing publicly common Harappan identity yet considerable domestic variations (Ceccarelli, 2020). Consequently, the arts and crafts of the Harappan Civilization were pivotal for establishing its cultural identity and societal structure (Ramesh, 2022). The manifestation of this control over the production areas for crafts occurs as an expression of how sophisticated and informed the Harappan society was in their urbanization plans and social setups (Khan et al., 2024).

3) Research Questions

- What technological innovations were employed in the production of Harappan arts and crafts?
- How did Harappan arts and crafts function as symbols of cultural identity and religious beliefs?
- What role did Harappan arts and crafts play in the economic systems and trade networks of the civilization?
- How do the artistic expressions in Harappan crafts compare to those of contemporary civilizations, such as Mesopotamia and Egypt?
- What insights can be drawn from the study of Harappan crafts to understand the socio-economic and cultural structures of the civilization?

4) Objectives

- To identify and analyze the materials, techniques, and tools used in the production of key Harappan artifacts.
- To explore the symbolic meanings embedded in Harappan crafts, particularly religious symbols, motifs on seals, and figurines.
- To investigate the economic significance of Harappan crafts, examining their role as commodities in local and interregional trade.
- To conduct a comparative analysis of Harappan craft styles, motifs, and materials with those of neighboring civilizations.

5) Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach to analyze the arts and crafts production of the Harappan civilization. The research is structured around three primary methods.

- **Archaeological Evidence:** The study is based on an intensive examination of artefacts found during the excavations from some of the prominent Harappan sites such as Mohenjo-daro, Harappa, Lothal, and Dholavira. These sites offer some invaluable artifacts that constitute first-hand evidence of the arts and crafts produced by the Harappans. Excavation reports, site surveys, and photographs of the artifacts will be scrutinized to establish the extent and variety of the civilization's arts and crafts production, and the contexts in which these objects were discovered.
- **Material Analysis:** The study will analyze in-depth the material used in the key artifacts, such as pottery, beads, seals, terracotta figurines, jewelry, and tools. By analyzing the materials used in crafting these items, such as clay, metals, semi-precious stones, and shells, the study will be able to identify technological

innovations and artistic expressions. Also, the forms, motifs, and designs will be evaluated to bring out both practical and symbolic meanings contained in the crafts, and this may indicate the aesthetic and cultural values of the Harappans.

- **Comparative Analysis with Contemporary Civilizations:** A comparative approach situates Harappan crafts in a global context by exploring similarities and differences with Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Persian Gulf arts and crafts. Shared artistic traditions, such as seals and bead-making techniques, point to cultural exchanges and trade networks. On the other hand, the distinctiveness of Harappan craftsmanship—such as the focus on standardized production and functionality—highlights their specific approach to arts and crafts. This method contextualizes not only Harappan's innovation but also throws light upon the civilization's relationships with neighboring cultures.

6) Discussion

The Harappan civilization represents one of the oldest, most developed urban cultures which offers an excellent glimpse of the economic, cultural, and technological life of ancient societies. Indus Valley offers some key cities such as Mohenjo-daro, Harappa, Dholavira, and Lothal at the very heart of a thriving culture known for its distinctive arts and crafts. These crafts were not only essential in everyday life but also vital commodities in trade that tied the Harappans to far-flung areas like Mesopotamia, Persia, and Central Asia (Nisha, 2011). Through an extensive analysis of the artifacts produced by the Harappans like terracotta figures, pottery, seals, and jewelry, this Study discusses the cultural, economic, and technological importance of these crafts.



Figure 2: Terracotta Mother Goddess

(Source: <https://www.michaelbackmanltd.com/object/indian-terracotta-mother-goddess>)

The artistic expressions of the Harappan civilization are important to understanding their cultural and socio-economic life. Terracotta figurines, especially the Mother Goddess (Figure 2), found at several Harappan sites, symbolize fertility and were probably used in religious rituals. The craftsmanship of creating this piece highlights the method employed, which is lost-wax casting—a highly advanced technique that enabled even minute details and resulted in highly resistant metal sculptures (Jahan and Quamar, 2024). The Harappan Seals, engraved with various motifs of animals and human figures, give an impression of practical administration and trade usage, yet at the same time provide evidence for symbolic religious meanings that indicate something of Harappan beliefs and rituals (Moosyi, 2022).

Harappan crafts also had significant economic implications. Pottery, for example, was central to daily life and was used for cooking, storage, and trade. The Varied Harappan Pottery, with its simple yet functional designs, reflects the mass production of pottery for local consumption, while the Painted Harappan Pottery suggests an artistic dimension that could also serve ceremonial or symbolic purposes. Bead-making was another key economic driver. The Harappans used materials like carnelian, agate, and lapis lazuli to create intricately designed beads, often used in jewelry. Jewellery crafted out of terracotta such as the bangles found at sites such as Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Rakhigarhi are reflective of the specialisation within the arts and crafts. One art form used for creating different objects. Many sites reveal bangles as burial goods, things which were considered essential or important were the ones buried with the dead. Thus, bangles must have held a relevant position in the socio-cultural life of the Harappan civilization. The Harappan Jewellery (Figure 3), made from beads and other materials, is not only a testament to Harappan's artistic abilities but also provides evidence of the extensive trade networks that the Harappans established. Beads were likely used as currency or traded across regions, linking Harappa to civilizations such as Mesopotamia (Dickson, 2016).



Figure 3: Harappan Jewellery

(Source: <https://www.harappa.com/indus2/123.html>)

Metallurgy is another domain that the Harappans performed well in. "The Bronze Dancing Girl" reveals their skill in fine metal work, which is evidence of both artistic and technological aptness. This ability to handle metals like copper and bronze could help in the production of tools, weapons, and ornamental items. Although textiles are preserved less often in the archaeological record, spindles, and other textile tools have been found and indicate that the Harappans must have been proficient cloth producers, probably using cotton. It is one of the first known usages of this material in the Indus Valley and would have therefore been a staple in any local as well as overseas trade (Thomas, 2020).

The production of Harappan crafts was not only skillful but also technologically advanced. One major technological innovation of the use of a potter's wheel in Figure 4, in Painted Harappan Pottery, is that they were able to mass produce standardized forms of pottery commodities of great economic importance, for both domestic and purposes of trade. One technique that can be seen in The Bronze Dancing Girl is the lost-wax casting technique in the work of the Harappan artisans. Through this technique, it is possible to create sculptures with finely detailed elements that were both expressions of art and symbols of the religious or social life of the Harappans. These standardized systems played a great role in handling trade; they ensured uniformity in exchange and just practice in commerce (Fuller, 2008).



Figure 4: Painted Harappan Pottery

(Source: <https://www.harappa.com/slide/painted-burial-pottery>)

Trade was at the very heart of the Harappan economy, and their crafts played an integral part in connecting Harappa to other ancient civilizations. Seals and other artifacts found as far afield as Mesopotamia attest to the very extensive trade networks that the Harappans had in place. Among these items were beads, pottery, metals, and textiles that went by both overland and maritime routes. The Harappan Seals are the visible representation of the long distances covered by the Harappans in their trading and communication network. The seals that were usually used to mark the traded commodities were found not only in the Indus Valley but also in the Mesopotamian cities like Ur, signifying active cultural and economic relations between the two regions (Fuller, 2008).

Table 1: Key aspects of the Harappan trade

Commodity	Trade Routes	Trading Contacts	Cultural Significance
Pottery	Overland and maritime routes	Mesopotamia, Persia	Household use, ceremonial purposes, and trade.
Beads and Jewelry	Maritime and land-based trade routes	Mesopotamia, Oman, Persia	Luxury items, currency in trade, symbolic of wealth and status.
Metal Goods (Bronze, Copper)	Land routes to Persia, Mesopotamia, and Central	Persia, Mesopotamia, Afghanistan	Tools, weapons, and religious/artistic objects.
Cotton Textiles	Overland and maritime trade	Mesopotamia, Persia	Exported goods indicate technological and cultural exchange.
Harappan Seals	Land and maritime trade routes	Mesopotamia, Persia	Administrative and symbolic communication in trade and governance.

These trade links facilitated not only the exchange of physical goods but also ideas, artistic influences, as well as the different technologies between the Harappans and their neighboring civilizations.

Technical skills in producing artifacts are evident in tools and techniques applied in manufacturing. For example, the potter's wheel applied in making Painted Harappan Pottery (Figure 4) was an essential tool that enabled the mass production of pottery in standardized forms and designs. The varied range of Harappan pottery reflects the creation of objects both from aesthetic and functional perspective. Pottery items such as storage jars, cups, goblets, jugs, bowls etc. made over a wheel, shaped in a specific form that allowed them to stand. The creations of lids for covering the dishes, rimmed bases, perforated jars for straining purposes etc. show artisan's acumen towards creating things as per different utility purposes. Pottery items were used for storage, cooking, serving ware, ceremonial use etc. The aesthetic aspect of pottery items can be seen in the form of the different patterns such as the fish scale, herringbone, parallel lines, diagonal lines, animal silhouette, floral motifs, pipal leaves, animals etc. painted over the wares. Red slip pottery with painted patterns in black, not only breaks the monotony of a plain surface but also makes it appealing to the eye. While plain red slip pottery reflects the utilitarian aspect of pottery technique, the addition of black painted patterns brings out the aesthetic appeal of the artefact. The painted patterns on Harappan pottery show an ease of free-flowing strokes used to achieve desired pattern on the surface. The level of painting skill and the amount of surface covered using the black paint had the ability to turn an essential product into a luxury item. Some of the Harappan pottery's painting patterns can still be seen on the ceramics created by potters, the most common being the black parallel lines painted on the earthen pitchers.

Jewellery crafted out of terracotta such as the bangles found at sites such as Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Rakhigarhi are reflective of the specialisation within the arts and crafts. One art form used for creating different objects. Many sites reveal bangles as burial goods, things which were considered essential or important were the ones buried with the dead. Thus, bangles must have held a relevant position in the socio-cultural life of the Harappan civilization.

Similarly, metalworking tools such as moulds and casting techniques were used to create intricate metal figures like the Bronze Dancing Girl, which testifies to the advanced metallurgical knowledge of the Harappan civilization. As demonstrated in Figure 5, which is the weights and measures found in Harappan cities, the significance of the existence of precision in trade and commerce further indicates that Harappan society was organized and structured around a standardized economic system that relied heavily on craftsmanship (Ray, 2006).

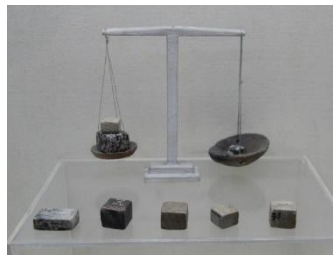


Figure 5: Weights and measures
(Source: <https://www.harappa.com/slide/weights-harappa>)

This study underlines the centrality of crafts in Harappan society and how these objects have functioned as both commodity objects and symbols of cultural identity. The sophisticated techniques in the production of crafts point toward a technologically advanced society, with a fine sense of artistic and cultural expression. Through these crafts, one can understand the Harappan civilization much better and its importance to the ancient world. Through the study of Harappan arts and crafts, a lot is revealed about the economic, technological, and cultural sophistication of the civilization. From the Terracotta Mother Goddess to the Bronze Dancing Girl (Figure 2), these objects are not only practical tools but also symbols of the rich cultural life of the Harappans. The detailed Painted Harappan Pottery shown in Figure 6 and the advanced metalworking as seen in the Bronze Dancing Girl in Figure 2, as well as the methodical use of Weights and Measures in Figure 5, all point to an advanced society that was skillful, technologically powerful, and economically organized (Budin, 2009).

The standardized techniques used, such as the lost-wax casting method and potter's wheel, helped to sustain a thriving craft economy and made Harappan cities centers of both cultural and economic activity. The findings from this study enhance our understanding of the cultural and economic life of the Harappan civilization and also illuminate the technological innovations that formed the core of their success. These crafts, which are at the same time creations of both artistic expression and economic necessity, remain relevant to insights into one of the most advanced ancient civilizations (Davey, 2009).

7) Conclusion

The Harappan civilization's arts and crafts provide rich insights into the socio-cultural and economic basis of one of the earliest urban societies in the world. In the study of Harappan artifacts like pottery, beads, seals, and terracotta figurines, we understand a bit more about the interplay of artistic expression and economic activity

that characterized this civilization. Not only were these crafts functional, but they also represented symbols of the civilization's cultural values, beliefs, and technological advancement. The Harappan civilization, which existed between 3300 BCE and 1300 BCE, is remarkable for its sophisticated workmanship, which includes artistic as well as utility objects. The pottery, with rich motifs, was not only beautiful but also served a purpose. The beads and ornaments made of semi-precious stones such as carnelian and lapis lazuli speak of the sophistication of Harappan stone working and their capacity to trade over long distances. Similarly, across Harappan sites seals are identified, with geometric motifs and animal themes that symbolize the position of objects in trade, administration, and religious activities.

Terracotta figurines include Mother Goddesses, animals, and humans. They provide an insight of the beliefs and practices of the Harappans. Presumably, they symbolically or ritually represented certain cultural and religious values that were relevant for Harappan society. The terracotta mother Goddess figurines are important specimens of the Harappan art and crafts tradition. These female forms depicted with their unique fan shaped head dress seem to be reflective of their special position, probably a part of religious beliefs. Most of the terracotta female figurines from the Harappan sites are very stylistically dressed wearing elaborate jewellery and stylized hairstyles. The fan shaped head dress here deserves a special mention, a striking element of the female depictions. This head gear could not have been a part of day-to-day attire. Their depiction seems to be the artist's attempt towards making his work aesthetically appealing, emphasizing on the physical beauty of the female body.

The sculpture of the bronze 'dancing girl' found at Mohenjo Daro is a specimen of early metallurgy showcasing the feminine beauty with the slender body, stylized posture, naked body and numerous bangles on the wrist. This female representation seems to be primarily focusing on aesthetics. An interesting point to be noted is the fact that in certain parts of India (in Rajasthan and Gujarat) married women can still be seen wearing bangles in a similar fashion above their elbows. Besides such representations, women are also depicted grinding grain, suckling babies, showcasing their role in the domestic space of daily life. The number of male sculptural remains found at the Harappan sites are far less than the number of female sculptures. The depiction of males is based around their physical strength, masculinity and virility. Males are depicted fighting wild beasts like tigers and bison.

Certain ithyphallic representations of the male figures have been found which were probably symbolizing the male virility required for procreation. While in the female representation the lower part of the body is often covered with loin cloth or an ornate girdle, the male figurines are often shown naked. The torso of a male crafted out of red jasper found at the site of Harappa, shows the craftsman's skill in terms of anatomical accuracy. Craftsmen possessed the skill and technique to depict in both natural and stylized manner. The crafts skills employed for making these terracotta figurines are excellent. The use of sockets for attaching arms to the main body of the sculpture, would have allowed the artist an opportunity for correction or repair.

Numerous square and rectangular shaped seals have been found across the Harappan sites, along with some cylindrical and round shaped ones. The seals and sealings depict a wide range of subjects including the pictographic Harappan script, animals (humped bull, water buffalo, unicorn, rhinoceros, tiger etc.) deities, patterns, humans. Numerous seals depict the unicorn, which may have been symbolic of divinity. These patterns were incised or engraved on the surface of the seals, reflecting the skilled use of tools like drills and chisels. Given the small size of the seal's surface and the clear depictions on them are an example of the fine craftsmanship of the Harappan artisans. The lustrous surface of the seals is achieved through a coating of alkali and then heating them. These may have been a part of their economic transactions, religious beliefs, and cults. Some of them were probably worn as amulets as a protection measure based on their beliefs. Seals to be worn as amulets were crafted from steatite with a hole, which would allow it to be worn.

The depiction of various animal points towards belief in zoomorphic deities whereby each animal species was probably a part of some religious belief. Seals found at Mohenjodaro depicting the tree deities, a horned deity surrounded by animals are an insight in the religious beliefs of the Harappan civilization. Animals had been an essential part of prehistoric cultures, with human life's reliance on them for their existence through hunting, later pastoralism and the use of animals in agricultural activities. Their role and relevance can be gauged by the excessive depiction of animals in the prehistoric rock paintings. Such depictions may have continued as a part of Harappan religious beliefs stressing upon the significance of the animals

The production skills for tools, ornaments, and other artifacts display an integrated, highly systematized character of material culture concerning functionality as well as its aesthetic importance. These crafts have a clear economic impact. Standardized weights, measures, and seals underpin the role of crafts in facilitating trade, regulation, and economic organization. Long-distance trade was an activity in which the Harappans were deeply involved. Foreign materials such as lapis lazuli from Afghanistan are found in the settlements. The uniformity in craftsmanship across different Harappan regions points to a well-regulated system of craft production, which indicates a robust and interconnected economy. Crafts were not only commodities but also mechanisms for economic integration and growth.

This Study is a significant contribution to our understanding of Harappan arts and crafts within the broader archaeological and cultural heritage landscape. The focus of this study on the dual roles of these crafts, as both artistic and economic, challenges previous interpretations that tend to separate art from economy. Findings underscore the interconnectedness of cultural symbolism and economic functionality, revealing a more holistic

view of Harappan society. Advanced production techniques and the extensive trade of Harappan goods reveal how complex their economy is, but they even provide a clearer picture of how the arts were intertwined with commerce in this ancient civilization.

Though this study gives a detailed examination of Harappan crafts, it also opens new scopes of further research. A part that should be explored deeply is the technological side of craft production. This study may have shed light on the advanced techniques involved in pottery and bead-making. However, there are many more things to explore related to the specific processes involved by Harappan artisans while creating them. Additionally, further research into the economic organization of craft production might reveal important insights into how such goods were produced, distributed, and consumed within Harappan society. Further research shall keep piling the riches in its understanding, giving an entire view of one of the world's first great civilizations. The durable importance of Harappan crafts is not just that they have material value, but also because they connect us to the people who made them and the world in which they lived.

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