

Important sites of Harappan Civilization

* Mohenjo-daro

The mounds of Mohenjo-daro lie near the right bank of the Indus in the Larkana district of Sind province. The excavations revealed that the lowest level of former occupation was covered by deposits of alluvial silt to a depth of about 30 feet (10 metres), attributable to annual flooding. The lowest levels are thus below the present-day water table and are still largely unexcavated. As noted above, the main features of the layout of Mohenjo-daro are a citadel to the west and a lower city and grid of streets to the east. Enough has been said of the general features of the lower city to make it unnecessary to say more of the considerable areas excavated in that part. The citadel, however, demands further attention. In the citadel the English archaeologist Sir John Hubert Marshall discovered a massive platform of mud brick and clay approximately 20 feet (6 metres) in depth, above which were six main building levels. Under this platform lay the remains of the early period. It is probable, but by no means certain, that the platform was raised as protection against floods. Both it and the great brick defensive wall around the perimeter were built at the beginning of the intermediate period

The main buildings of the citadel all apparently belong to

the same period. The most striking of these is the Great Bath, which occupies a central position in the better-preserved northern half of the citadel. It is built of fine brickwork, measures 897 square feet (83 square metres), and is 8 feet (2.5 metres) lower than the surrounding pavement. The floor of the bath consists of two skins of sawed brick set on edge in gypsum mortar, with a layer of bitumen sealer sandwiched between the skins. Water was evidently supplied by a large well in an adjacent room, and an outlet in one corner of the bath led to a high corbeled drain disgoring on the west side of the mound. The bath was reached by flights of steps at either end, originally finished with timbered treads set in bitumen. The significance of this extraordinary structure can only be guessed at, but it has generally been thought that it is linked with some sort of ritual bathing. To the north and east of the bath were groups of rooms that evidently were also designed for some special function, probably associated with the group of administrators or priests who controlled not only the city but also the great state that it dominated. To the west of the bath a complex of brick platforms about 5 feet (1.5 metres) high and separated from each other by narrow passages formed a podium of some 150 by 75 feet (45 by 22 metres), which has been identified by Wheeler as the base of a great granary similar

to that known at Harappa. Below the granary were brick loading bays. In the southern part of the mound an oblong "assembly hall" was discovered, having four rows of fine brick plinths, presumably to take wooden columns. In a room adjacent to this hall, a stone sculpture of a seated male figure was discovered, and nearby a number of large worked-stone rings, possibly of some architectural significance. It seems certain that this area was invested with some special significance and may well have been a temple or connected with some religious cult.

The vast mounds at Harappa stand on the left bank of the now dry course of the Ravi River in the Punjab. They were excavated between 1920 and 1934 by the Archaeological Survey of India, in 1946 by Wheeler, and in the late 20th century by an American and Pakistani team. When first discovered, the extensive surviving brick ramparts led to the site's being described as a ruined brick castle. The lower city is partly occupied by a modern village, and it has been seriously disturbed by erosion and brick robbers. The citadel, to the west, is roughly a parallelogram on plan, measuring approximately 1,300 by 650 feet (400 by 200 metres). Excavation there revealed a great platform of mud brick about 20 feet (6 metres) in thickness, with a massive brick wall around the perimeter. Below the defenses were discovered traces of the Early Harappan

Period. The excavations were not extensive enough to reveal the layout of the interior, but about six building periods were discovered above the platform. The most interesting remains were discovered immediately north of the citadel, close to the bed of the river: there were a series of circular platforms evidently intended to hold mortars for pounding grain; a remarkable series of brick plinths, which are inferred to have formed the podium for two rows of six granary buildings, each 50 by 20 feet (15 by 6 metres) and of a different design from those at Mohenjo-daro; a series of pear-shaped furnaces, apparently used for metallurgy; and two rows of single-roomed barracks, which are generally thought to have been occupied by servants. Two other discoveries at Harappa were made to the south of the citadel. There two cemeteries were found—"R. 37," belonging to the Harappan Period, and "H," dating from the Late or even Post-Harappan Period. These contained different styles of burial and will be discussed below.