

It happened 5000 years ago...

Indus Valley Civilization



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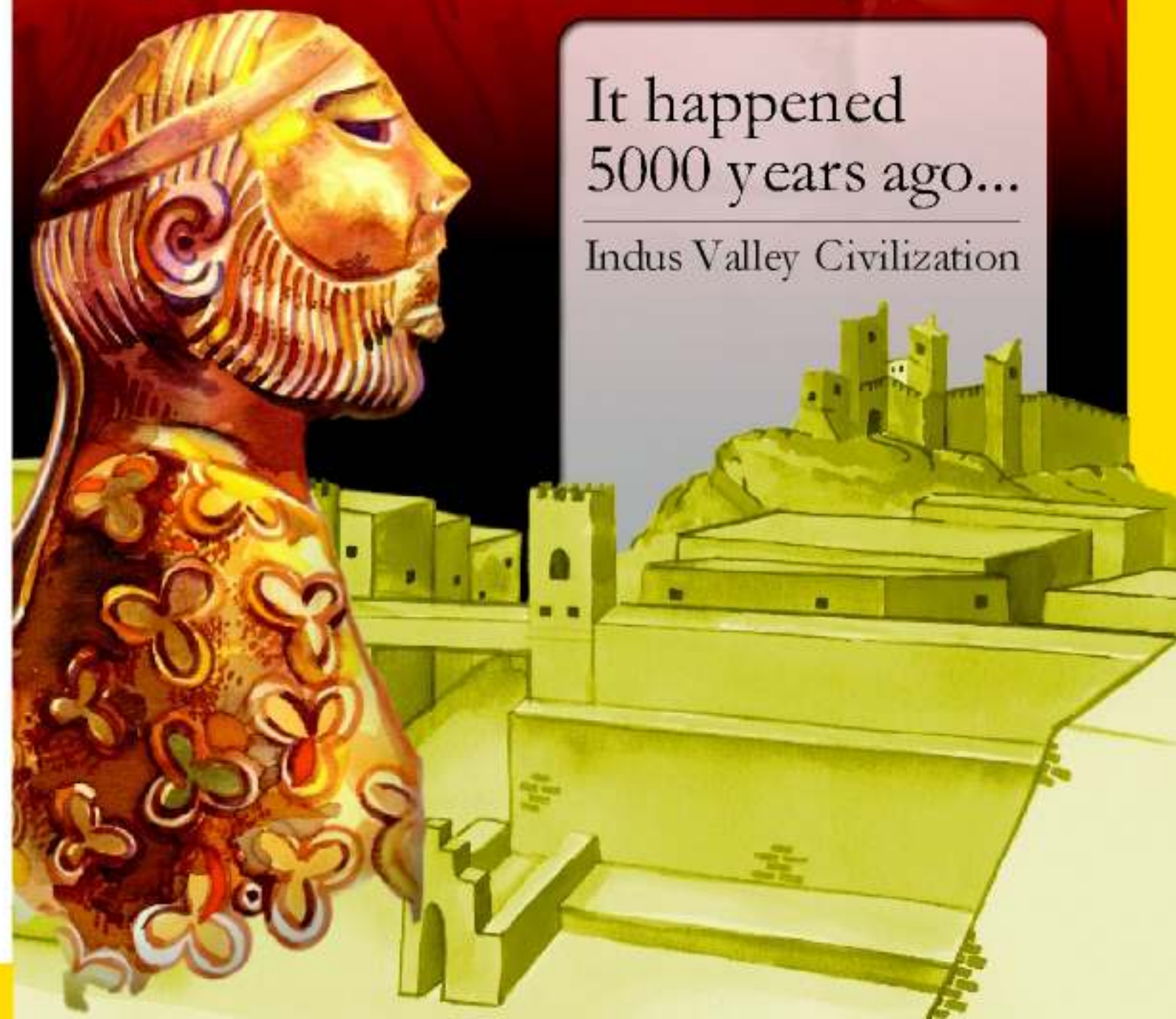
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Lost and Found

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When, where and how



I am a historian. I unroll the carpet of time, and learn about the lives of men and women who lived on earth thousands of years ago.

One of the oldest, and most fascinating groups of people that I have discovered through the pages of my history books, lived 5000 years ago in parts of what is now modern day India and Pakistan. This is today known as the Indus Valley Civilization. After flourishing for about 800 years, it just disappeared. No one seems to have known that these people existed until, in the 1800s, some archaeologists decided to dig up land in a place called Mohenjo-daro. Under the mounds they discovered ruins, which tell a wonderful story.

Now I'm sure that you must be curious to know where this civilization was located.

By 2500 B.C., that's more than 5000 years ago, many towns and cities belonging to this culture had sprung up. Most of them were centred on the fertile plains of the great river Indus and its tributaries - Ravi, Beas, Chenab, Sutlej and Jhelum.

Map of the Indus Valley Civilization



B.C. – These initials stand for 'Before Christ'. A date that has these initials after it signifies that the event it marks took place that many years before the birth of Christ.

Dates in our present century would have the initials **A.D.**, standing for 'Anno Domini', after them. A.D. signifies the number of years that have passed since Christ was born.

Most of the cities and towns were located in the Punjab and Sind provinces of what is modern day Pakistan. This civilization came to light just by chance when a railway line was being built in the mid 1800s. At first, workers came upon some bricks and soon after they found that the bricks belonged to a larger structure. Thus began the unearthing of the Indus Valley Civilization. More settlements that probably belong to this civilization have been found recently in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab and Gujarat.

Try this game. Use your birthday as a starting point and list all the things you know may have happened before you were born. For example, you could plot the birthdays of your parents, their marriage anniversary, some important events that happened in your city or town or village, before you were born, and so on. For instance, if you are born in February 1990 and your name is Nayantara, you can create a B.N. (Before Nayantara) dateline that begins in February 1990 and runs backwards. Have fun plotting as many events as you can, on this dateline.

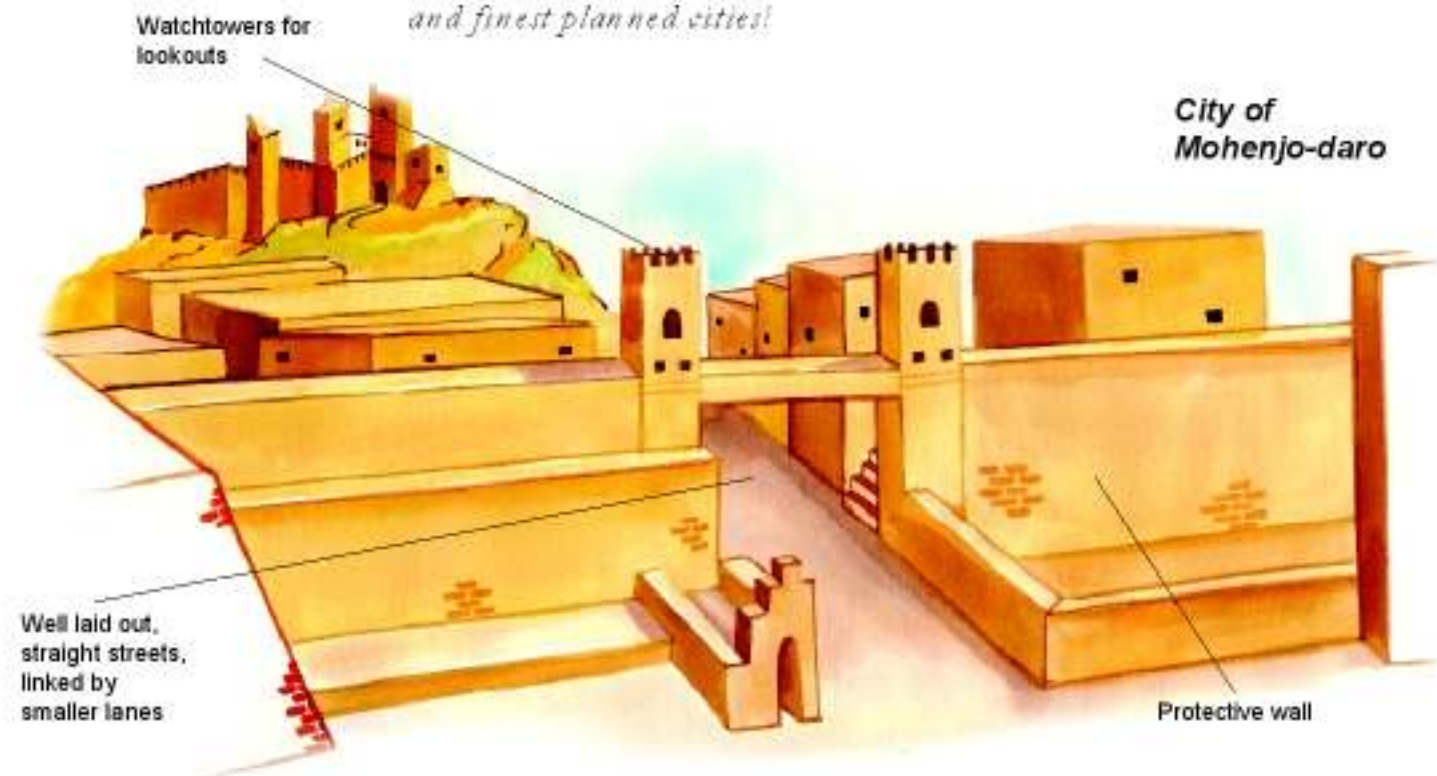


City of Mohenjo-daro: built to a perfect plan

Mohenjo-daro



I find it remarkable that when people in large parts of the world were living in primitive conditions, the people of the Indus Valley Civilization were able to build a fairly advanced and highly organised society. They created one of the world's first written languages, were marvellous traders and craftsmen, and very accomplished builders. They built some of the world's first and finest planned cities!



The Indus Valley bricks, made centuries ago, were of such good quality that they were used to build a railway line from Lahore to Multan in the 19th century!

The ruins speak

Mohenjo-daro and Harappa were the largest and most important cities of the Indus Valley Civilization.

From the ruins discovered, that were buried underground for centuries, historians, archaeologists and architects have been able to create a realistic picture of Mohenjo-daro.

The ruins suggest that the city was surrounded by a high wall that probably protected its people from floods and enemies. The main street of the city was about 30 feet wide. In the centre of the city was a great fortress, built on a small hill. Not far from this fortress, was a large structure that experts surmise was a granary, used to store grain. The possible existence of the granary suggests that the farmers of Mohenjo-daro produced more than they could consume.

The city of Mohenjo-daro also had a large water storage tank - referred to as the Great Bath - probably the first public swimming pool in the ancient world! From its size and design historians have deduced that the Bath might have been used for community bathing or was perhaps an exclusively reserved, special pool for priests and rulers.

The Indus Valley Civilization structures were made of bricks, baked in kilns. The citizens of the Indus Valley were highly environment conscious. None of the brick kilns, which give out a lot of poisonous smoke, were located within the city! Sadly, in parts of the world today, little children work in dangerous brick kilns.

