



Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Gandhara

Harappa

Mehrgarh

Moenjodaro

ANCIENT PAKISTAN







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ANCIENT PAKISTAN

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*“The Magilum-boat of Meluhha
Transport silver and gold,
Bring them to Nippur.....”*

Ancient Sumerian literary text about Indus Valley



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FOREWORD

Pakistan is a prehistoric land, the cradle of one of the four ancient civilizations. Many historical processes have left their indelible marks on the land and its people. Little wonder then, Pakistani society can claim a remarkable ability to accept, accommodate and produce new social and cultural trends, art and crafts.

From the prehistoric habitations of Mehrgarh to ancient civilizations in the fertile plains of the Indus Valley and the verdant hills of Gandhara, the people of Pakistan have inherited a genius that informs their heritage.

The influence of ancient Pakistan transcended boundaries - geographical as well as political – to areas as far as the edges of South, Central and East Asia. Mehrgarh's landmark cultivation of food, Indus Valley's urban settlements and Gandhara's syncretic art continue to remind the world of the immense share of ancient Pakistan to the development of human civilization.

Modern Pakistan today, carries a proud legacy of curiosity for diverse ideas, quest for knowledge and eagerness for innovation including in art and crafts. These traditions are to be passed on to the succeeding generations of Pakistanis.

Exhibition, “Ancient Pakistan” celebrates the achievements of the people of Pakistan in the ancient world. Simultaneously, it underscores the relevance of our heritage with its unmistakable stress on accommodation, reason and creativity towards promotion of regional peace and development.

I would like to commend our officers who, in line with the vision of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, have conceptualized and implemented this initiative. Gratitude is due to our partners who eagerly participated in holding this event.

I invite the visitors to explore the *Gift of Indus* that is Pakistan, through this exhibition.

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry
Foreign Secretary
Islamabad
30 March, 2016

MESSAGE (from the Honourable Prime Minister of Pakistan)

Pakistan can be rightfully proud of its rich and diverse cultural heritage. The creative pursuits of our artists and artisans have stimulated imaginations throughout the ages. Great works of art produced at Mehrgarh, Moenjodaro, Taxila and many other ancient centres help us understand our past. Perhaps our most significant legacy is the tradition of tolerance, respect for difference, and acceptance of plurality, which even today is the bedrock of the true Pakistani ethos.

In the same spirit, the fundamental teachings of the great sages and saints who lived and died in the lands that constitute modern Pakistan were centred on the concept of not just peaceful, but also respectful, coexistence.

Pakistan's foreign policy objectives today are consistent with these time-honoured ideals. We are focused on strengthening regional connectivity and collaboration, as well as on developing a consensus-based agenda for a peaceful neighbourhood to promote harmony, security and socioeconomic development in the region and beyond. The success of our efforts is in good part linked with recognizing and nurturing trans-regional cultural roots to stimulate closer people to people contacts, interaction, and cooperation.

This exhibition, *Ancient Pakistan*, is a sincere effort to promote awareness about our true cultural and philosophical heritage, which is as much regional and multicultural as it is Pakistani.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan deserves commendation for taking this excellent initiative.

Muhammad Nawaz Sharif
Islamabad
30 March, 2016

EXPERTS' COMMENTS

“...Modern Pakistani culture is marked by its peculiar characteristics and unique properties...Pakistani culture not only has a close connection with the modern nation and Pakistani people, but also links intimately with ancient civilizations and ethnic groups. Pakistani culture serves as a bridge connecting the past, present and future of Pakistan.”

Professor Tang Mengsheng
Director, Center for Pakistan Studies
Peking University, China

“The monuments of Pakistan are like precious pearls on a long chain.”

Professor Dr. Michael Jansen
RWTH Aachen University, Germany

“The Great Buddha of Todai-ji Temple has historically originated from Gandhara. This story indicates that Gandhara is one of the significant roots of Asian civilization and linkage between different cultures.”

Mr. Atsushi Noguchi
Secretary General,
NPO-Japan Centre for South Asian Cultural Heritage

“...conflicts over the differences between ideologies or beliefs are further deepening at various places of the world. Mankind is facing a critical moment. In such an era, I would like to remind ourselves of the wisdom inscribed in Pakistan’s history. I hope that we can review the Gandhara Art, learn deep lessons from the historical experiences and overcome crisis.”

Professor Koji Nishikawa

Kyoto University,

Japan

“Shortly after (Mehrgarh), the people of ancient Pakistan were capable of creating beautiful ceramics painted with coloured and intricate designs. They learnt to smelt copper and cast objects with the now lost wax process. By the late 4th millennium BCE, they used stamp seals with geometric patterns, made necessary by the need of securing their properties (in houses, stores, boxes and pots) in societies that became more and more impersonal and demographically inflated. At the same time, signs traced on pottery witness the first steps of writing.”

Prof. Massimo Vidale

University Degli Studi Di Padova,

Italy

ANCIENT PAKISTAN

Ancient Pakistan is a fascinating study of interaction among diverse cultures, languages, social systems and faiths. This interaction has imparted Pakistan a distinctive cultural identity that is essentially tolerant, pluralistic and accommodative. Watered mainly by Indus (*Darya-i-Sindh*) and its tributaries and bounded, inter alia, by majestic Himalayas, Karakoram and Hindu Kush ranges, shimmering Thar and Cholistan deserts, rugged hills and valleys of Balochistan and sparkling Arabian Sea, the land of Pakistan has cradled human habitations since the Palaeolithic Age.

Ideas, arts and crafts produced in ancient Pakistan were disseminated to adjacent countries and regions including South, Central and East Asia by preachers, soldiers, traders, students and scholars. It was the territory of modern Pakistan where experts set rules of as ancient a language as Sanskrit, developed elaborate standards, inter alia, of weights, medicines and town planning, produced exegesis of sacred religious texts and created art and crafts which remain most treasured part of Pakistan's rich cultural heritage.

About 25 kilometers from Islamabad, Pakistan's capital, flows the Soan, an ancient stream that gently raises its head at the foothills of Murree and winding through a tortuous path falls into Indus River near Kalabagh. At Rawat, within reaches of the Soan, researchers have found the oldest stone tools in the world dating as far back as 2.2 million years. Evidence of Palaeolithic culture was also recorded in southern Pakistan near Hyderabad, where a flint workshop was discovered at Ongar. The Sanghao caves near Mardan offer further evidence of contemporary human endeavours. Additionally, fresco paintings and engravings at the caves in Loralai and Musakhel illustrate the story of a prehistoric society in Pakistan. Many sites at Dhok Pathan, Kund, Morgah, Hyderabad, Rohri, Jamal Garhi and Khanpur belong to various stages of Palaeolithic as well as Mesolithic ages.

Neolithic or New Stone Age (6500 to 2500 BCE) marked the beginning of human settlements in Pakistan as well as domestication of useful crops and animals, building of shelters with burnt bricks and experimentation with ceramics. For the earliest farming, wheat and barley were used. The first such settlement existed in the eighth millennium BCE at Mehrgarh in Sibi. The settlement was established with simple mud buildings with four internal subdivisions. Numerous burials have been found, many with elaborate goods such as baskets, stone and bone tools, beads, bangles, pendants and occasionally animal sacrifices, with more goods left with burials of males.

Discovered by Jean Francois Jarrige and his team in 1974, experts found evidence of trans-regional trade as well as wheat cultivation at the site. The concentration of population in Kot Diji, Sindh and Rehman Dheri, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa led to the development of higher civilizations.

Indus Valley (3000-1300 BCE) is one of the four mature civilizations of the world. Across 250 acres on a series of mounds, Moenjodaro, its prime city was the most

advanced in contemporary South Asia. The city was governed as a city-state as no evidence of kings and queens has been discovered either in Moenjodaro in Sindh or Harappa, another city of the civilization in Punjab.

Evidence suggests that these two cities had profound knowledge of city planning. Both had evolved a uniform system of weights and measures and made bricks whose dimensions were in proportion of 4:2:1 considered in line with the ideal strength of the brick structure. Buttons made from sea shells and ivory combs were in use besides bangles worn by females. The practice of dyeing also relates to Moenjodaro. Archaeologists have found private bathrooms at the ground floor of most houses highlighting the use of flush toilets.

Discovery of figurines of dancing girls made Sir John Marshal reflect, “When I first saw them I found it difficult to believe that they were prehistoric; they seemed to completely upset all established ideas about early art and culture.”

Similarly, it is said that the earliest plough (animal drawn) and rulers used in the world were by the Indus Valley people. Interestingly, rulers were made of ivory. In the same vein, knowledge about weights and measures used in Moenjodaro also gradually spread to Central Asia.

Indus Valley Civilization is also the first literate civilization of South Asia. Goods produced by it were exported to Egypt, Sumer, and Ur, a fact that informs its international connections and knowledge of the world outside its boundaries. Indus Valley inhabitants were given the name 'Meluhha' by the Babylonians because of their fondness for sea voyages. The dikes built by the Indus Valley people are believed to be the first in the world. The *Rigveda*, one of the four canonical texts of Hinduism composed approximately between 1500 and 1000 BCE, describes Sindhu (Indus) as the cradle of civilization. The *Ramayana* mentions Sindh as part of the empire of Dasaratha.

Scholars from Harvard University, University of Wisconsin and New York University dealing with ancient civilizations in a project in collaboration with the Department of Archaeology and Museums of the Government of Pakistan, have opined that “a new study of artifacts” has revealed the presence of silk at the site of Harappa. This indicates the use of silk by the Indus Valley Civilization.

After Mehrgarh and Indus Valley, Gandhara is yet another landmark on Pakistan's archaeological landscape. Situated in the northwest of Pakistan, its boundaries extended to Lahore in the east of Pakistan and to the west into Afghanistan. Occupying a prominent position at a crossroads, Gandhara facilitated ancient Pakistan's international relations.

Rigveda mentioned Gandhara as a tribe. In historical literature, it was first mentioned as “part of the Achaemenian Empire” during the time of Cyrus the Great. Over the centuries, it developed into a place where contemporary scientific, political, social and religious ideas, as well as art and crafts of diverse lands met and influenced each other.

Taxila, the ancient city of Gandhara has been described as the wealthiest in contemporary South Asia. Its prosperity resulted from its position “at the junction of three great trade routes: one from eastern India, the second from western Asia; and the third from Kashmir and Central Asia.” It attracted distinguished preachers including Apostle Thomas and Apollonius of Tyna whose biographer Philostratus described Taxila as a fortified city that was laid out on a symmetrical plan and compared it in size to Nineveh.

King Ambhi of Taxila received Alexander the Great around 320 BCE. In the following seven centuries, Greek influence introduced classical traditions that became an important part of the Gandhara heritage. It is said that *Mahabharata* was recited for the first time at Taxila by Vaismpayana, a disciple of Veda Vyasa. Buddhist literature including Jataka mentions Taxila as a great centre of learning. Taxila was also visited by the famous Chinese monk Fa Hien in 405 CE. The city is mentioned in his travelogue titled *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms*. Another well-known Chinese Xuanzang, also called Hieun Tsang, visited Taxila in 630 CE.

Analysts have expressed the view that the world's first university was established at Taxila. Called Takshashila University, it existed in the eighth century BCE. Analyst Janaka Perera opines that “this university, the world's oldest seat of higher learning” was in existence even before the time of the Buddha “and even before the Achaeminid rulers who occupied the Taxila valley in the sixth to fifth century BCE.” Scholars opine that Buddha had undertaken a visit to Sindh. It is said that given the extreme dry conditions, special permission was given by Buddha to his followers to wear shoes when they traveled in Sindh.

Chandragupta Maurya, who later founded the Maurya dynasty, studied at Takshashila University. Chanakya (Kautilya) taught politics and diplomacy in the University where he wrote his masterpiece *Arthashastra*. It is said that Charaka, the famous ayurvedic physician who wrote *Charaka Samhita* was a product of Takshashila University. Atreya taught medicine and surgery at Taxila.

Scholars have emphasized that Greek populace in the Mauryan Empire converted to Buddhism after Asoka (304-232 BCE), a grandson of Chandragupta, became a Buddhist. In the context of Hellenic influence, a reference could be made to the Kailash people in Chitral, who may well be the direct descendants of the soldiers of Alexander.

Under Asoka, Buddhism became the most popular faith in ancient Pakistan. The Mankiala Stupa near Rawat is an important Buddhist site. According to a legend, Buddha at this place “sacrificed some of his body parts to feed seven hungry tiger cubs.” Scholars believe that the “entire area from Peshawar to Gabral and the entire Dir Valley were stupa-studded.” There were “hundreds of monasteries” throughout these valleys. Now in advanced stages of decay, the remnants of such monasteries can be seen at many places in Pakistan including Mardan, Jamalgarhi, Shabazgarhi, Charsadda and Takht-i-Bahi.

Guru Padmasambhava, also known as Guru Rinpoche (the Precious Guru), was born in Swat which is not far from Islamabad. Considered as the 'Second Buddha', he is highly venerated in the entire Himalayan region especially in the Tibet region of the People's Republic of China, and Bhutan. In his youth, Asoka, served as the Governor of Taxila. His son Mahindra, and daughter Sanghamitra, preached Buddhism in Sri Lanka, from where this religion is said to have spread to East Asia including Thailand.

After Alexander and his Indo-Greek satraps, many other groups took control of Gandhara including Sakas, Parthians, Scythians and Kushanas. The great Kushanas took keen interest in developing Gandhara into an important Buddhist center under Kanishka during the second century CE. The period of prosperity ended with devastating Hun or Hephthalite attacks during the fifth and sixth centuries setting in gradual decline of this great culture.

History places Pakistan at a central position on the world heritage map. The unique geography and cultural diversity of the country have shaped it as an inevitable forerunner of great cultural and political movements across South, Central and East Asia. While writing about ancient Pakistan, renowned scholar, Mr. Mukhtar Ahmad aptly remarked, “It is to this unique region that we owe much of our élan in South Asia.” In line with a great tradition, Pakistan remains a prime proponent and promoter of regional integration and connectivity as well as a culture of tolerance and accommodation for all. In fact, these are the most prominent traits of our ethos.

Exhibition, “Ancient Pakistan”, is the latest in the series of events the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been organizing to highlight the richness and diversity of Pakistan's cultural heritage. Artifacts and paintings displayed at the exhibition are representative of the three major cultures which emerged here.

This article is based on material provided by Ambassador Afrasiab, Ambassador of Pakistan in Wellington, Dr. Ghani-ur-Rehman of Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad and Mr. Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, Joint Secretary, National Security Division, Islamabad.



PALAEOLITHIC
AND
MESOLITHIC AGE

Stone Tool, Soan Valley (2 million years old), Islamabad Museum



Stone Tool, Soan Valley (2 million years old), Islamabad Museum





Chert Blades, Sangaho Cave (25000 – 10000 B.C.), Islamabad Museum



Chert Blades, Rohri Hills (10000 – 3000 B.C.), Islamabad Museum



MEHRGARH



Necklace – Mehrgarh (7000 – 2700 B.C.), Islamabad Museum



Terracotta Figurines, Mehrgarh (8000 – 3000 B.C.) National Museum, Karachi



Mother Goddesses – Balochistan (4000 – 2700 B.C.), Islamabad Museum



Mother Goddess – Mehrgarh (4000 – 2700 B.C.) Balochistan,
Islamabad Museum



Mother Goddess – Mehrgarh (5000 – 4000 B.C.) Balochistan,
Islamabad Museum



Pot – Nal Culture (3500 B.C.) Balochistan, Islamabad Museum



Pot – Nal Culture (3500 B.C.) Balochistan, Islamabad Museum

Pot – Nal Culture (3500 B.C.) Balochistan, Islamabad Museum



Pot – Nal Culture (3500 B.C.) Balochistan, Islamabad Museum





Pot – Nal Culture (3500 B.C.) Balochistan, Islamabad Museum



Pot – Nal Culture (3500 B.C.) Balochistan, Islamabad Museum



Pot – Nal Culture (3500 B.C.) Balochistan, Islamabad Museum



Pot – Kuli Culture (2600 – 2500 B.C.) Balochistan, Islamabad Museum



Painted Jar - Naushero (2700 – 1800 B.C.), Islamabad Museum



INDUS VALLEY



King Priest (Replica) - Moenjodaro (2500 – 1800 B.C.), Islamabad Musuem

Indus Seal - Moenjodaro (2500 – 1800 B.C.), Islamabad Museum

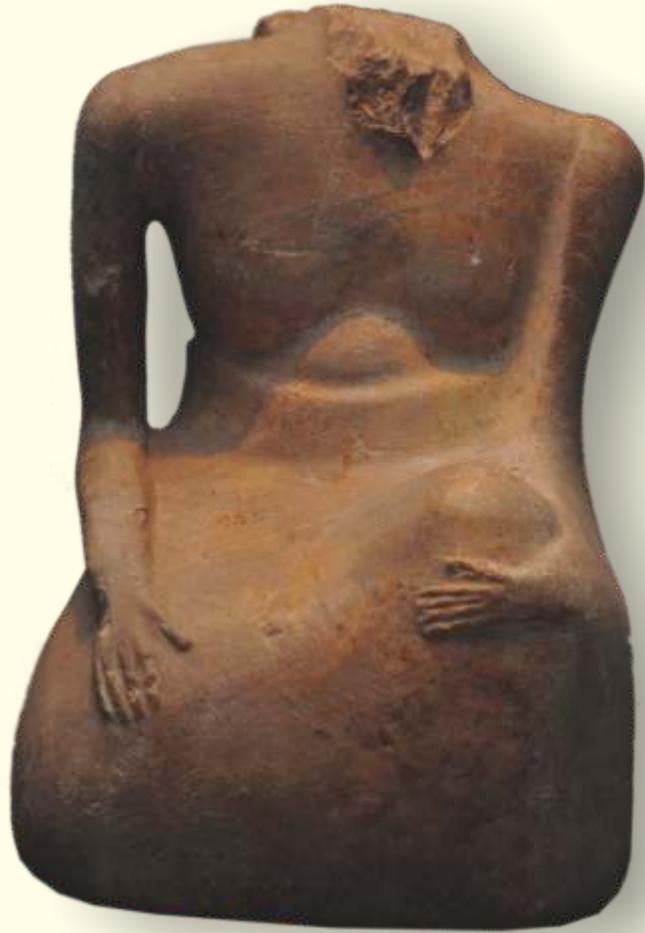


Indus Seal - Moenjodaro (2500 – 1800 B.C.), Islamabad Museum, Islamabad





Bejewelled Mother Goddess, Moenjodaro (2500 – 2000 B.C.), National Museum, Karachi



Male Figure – Moenjodaro (2500 – 1500 B.C.),
Islamabad Museum



Male Torso, Harappa (2500 – 2000 B.C.),
National Museum, Karachi



Dancing Girl, Moenjodaro (2500 – 2000 B.C.), National Museum, Karachi



Whistling Bird, Moenjodaro (2500 – 2000 B.C.), National Museum, Karachi



Terracotta Bullock Cart (2500 – 2000 B.C.), National Museum, Karachi



Mother Goddess, Moenjodaro (2500 – 2000 B.C.),
National Museum, Karachi



Male Dancing Torso (2500 – 2000 B.C.),
National Museum, Karachi



Indus Seals - Moenjodaro (2500 – 1800 B.C.), Islamabad Museum, Islamabad



Human Head, Moenjodaro (2500 – 2000 B.C.), National Museum, Karachi



Barrel Shaped Weight, Moenjodaro (2500 – 2000 B.C.), National Museum, Karachi



Mother Goddess, Moenjodaro (2500 – 2000 B.C.), National Museum, Karachi



(Clockwise)

Medallion, Moenjodaro (2500 – 2000 B.C.), National Museum, Karachi

Steatite Seal (2500 – 2000 B.C.), National Museum, Karachi

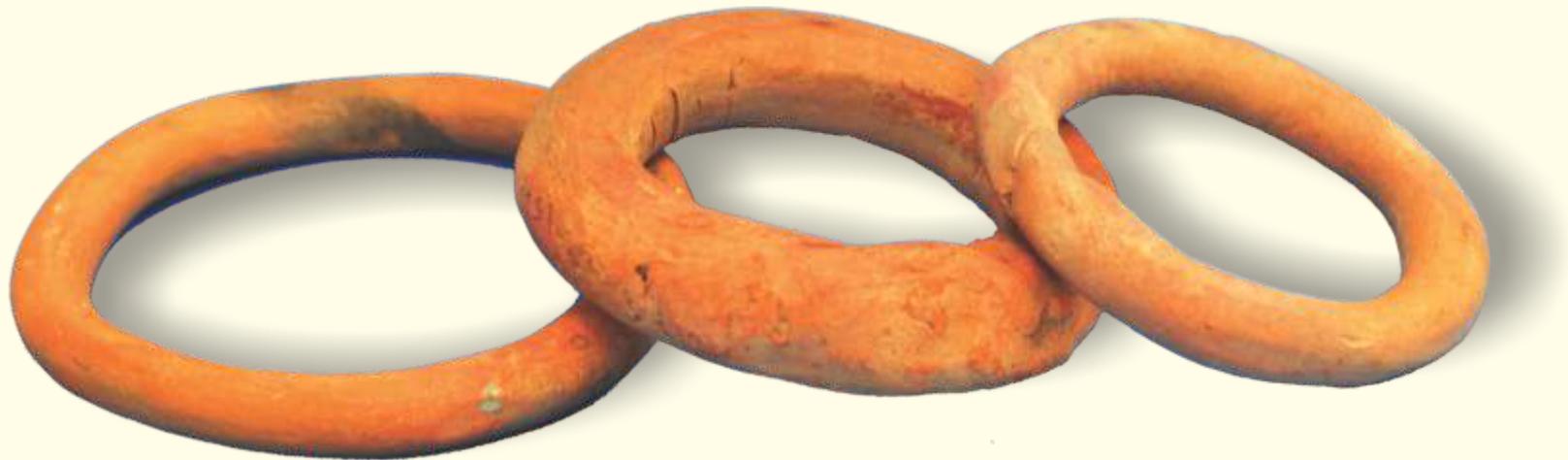
Steatite Seal (2500 – 2000 B.C.), National Museum, Karachi



Cooking Pot (1900 – 1500 B.C.), Harappa Museum



Cooking Pot (1900 – 1500 B.C.), Harappa Museum



Harappan Bangles (2500 – 1900 B.C.), Harappa Museum



Necklace (2500 – 1900 B.C.), Harappa Museum



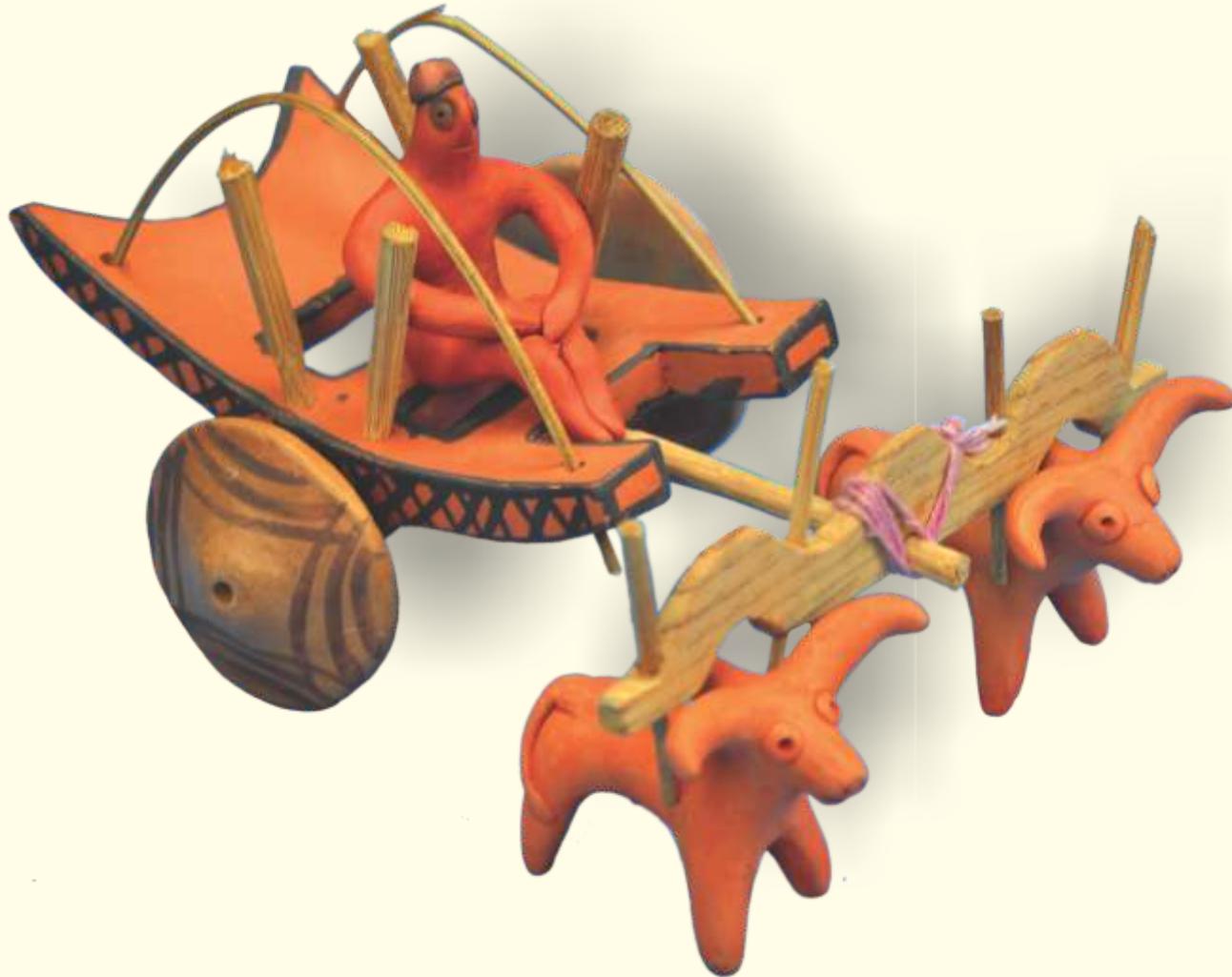
Harappan Bangles (2500 – 1900 B.C.), Harappa Museum



Chert Blades and Core (2500 – 1900 B.C.), Harappa Museum



Animal Figurines (2500 – 1900 B.C.), Harappa Museum



Bullock Cart (2500 – 1900 B.C.), Harappa Museum



Stone Saddle with Pestle (2500 – 1900 B.C.), Harappa Museum



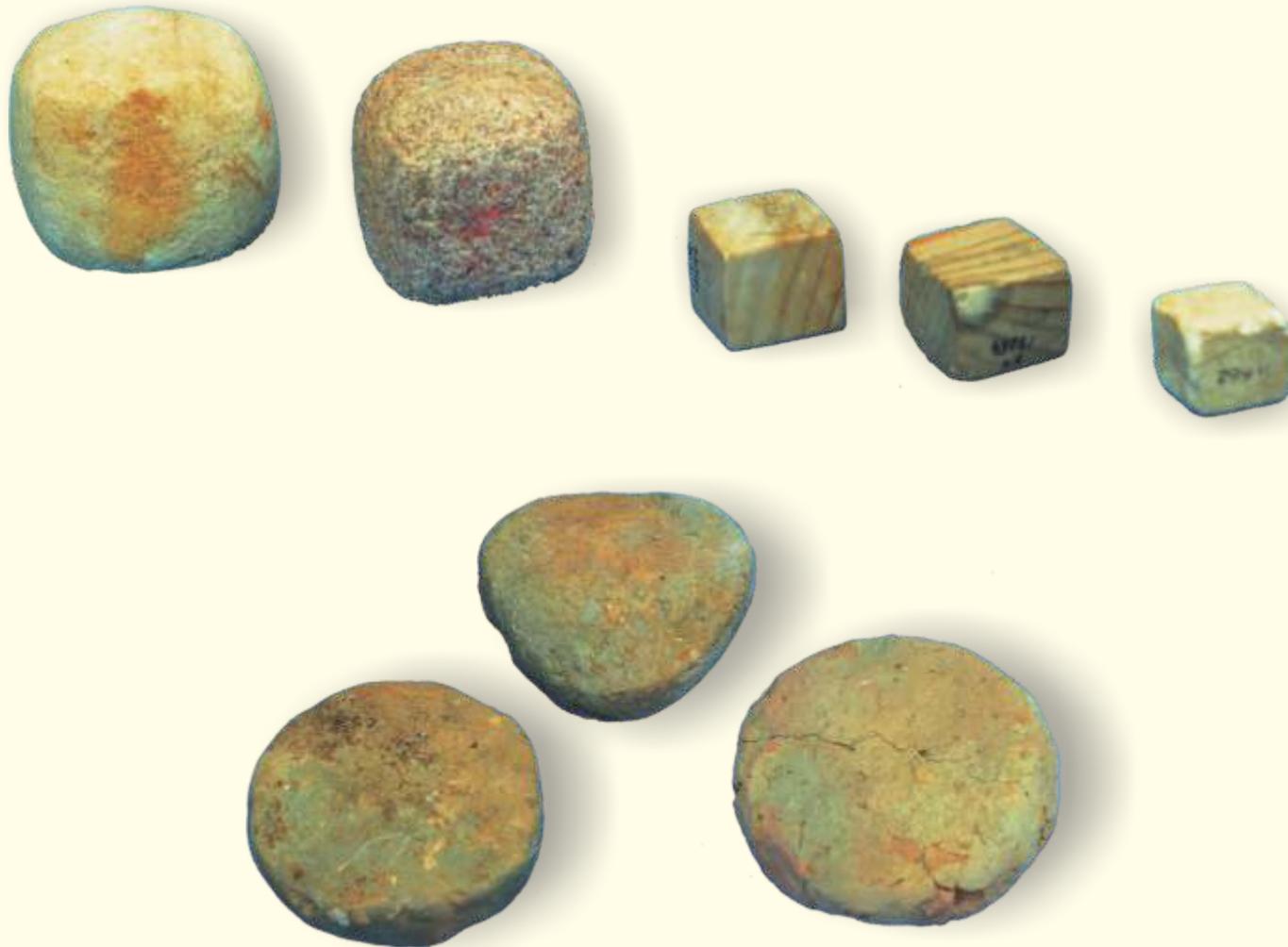
Early Harappan Pot (3000 – 3100 B.C.), Harappa Museum



Terracotta Pot (2500 – 1900 B.C.), Harappa Museum



Burial Jar (900 – 1500 B.C.), Harappa Museum



Measuring Weights (2500 – 1900 B.C.), Harappa Museum

Terracotta Cakes (2500 – 1900 B.C.), Harappa Museum



Indoor Game Objects (2500 – 1900 B.C.), Harappa Museum

Seals (2500 – 1900 B.C.), Harappa Museum



Early Harappan Pot (3100 – 2600 B.C.), Harappa Museum



Dish on Stand (2500 – 1900 B.C.), Harappa Museum



Indus Seals (2500 – 1800 B.C.), Islamabad Museum



Human Figurines (2500 – 1900 B.C.), Harappa Museum
Building Material (2500 – 1900 B.C.), Harappa Museum



GANDHARA



Buddha Head (Kushan Period), Peshawar Museum



First Sermon (3rd – 4th century), Peshawar Museum



Marriage Ceremony (2nd – 3rd century), Peshawar Museum



Kanishka Relic Casket (2nd century), Peshawar Museum



Birth Scene (2nd – 3rd century), Peshawar Museum

Palace Life (2nd – 4th century), Peshawar Museum



Worship of Stupa (2nd – 3rd century), Peshawar Museum



Worship of Turban (2nd – 3rd century), Peshawar Museum



Buddha Head (Kushan Period), Peshawar Museum



Seated Buddha (2nd – 4th century), Peshawar Museum



Fasting Sidhartha (3rd – 4th century), Peshawar Museum



Dipankara Jataka (2nd century), Peshawar Museum



Death Scene (1st – 3rd century), Peshawar Museum



Miracle of Saraswati (3rd – 4th century), Peshawar Museum



