The Mystery of the Perforated Pots an Indus Valley Artefact Enquiry

Ilona Aronovsky

Resource to support articles on teaching the Indus Valley in Primary History 91, 2022 p.25 - 33

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Contents

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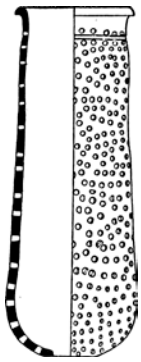
Perforated Pot from Harappa, Cemetery R37 excavated by Mortimer Wheeler



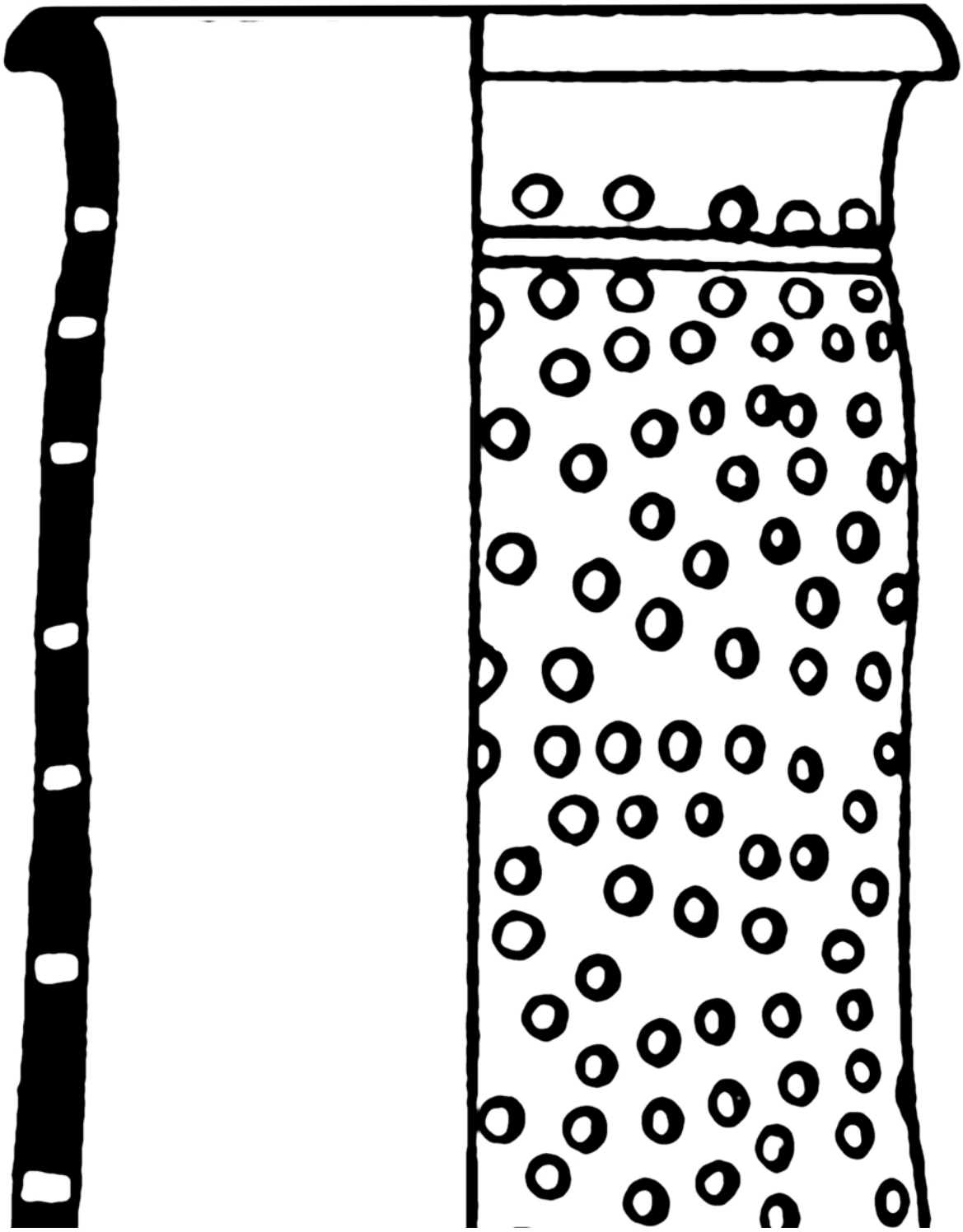
Actual Size H 45cms

Top, and bottom next page.

✂ Cut out, fit together, stick on card or poster.

Estate of R.E.M. Wheeler

SCALE 1:10



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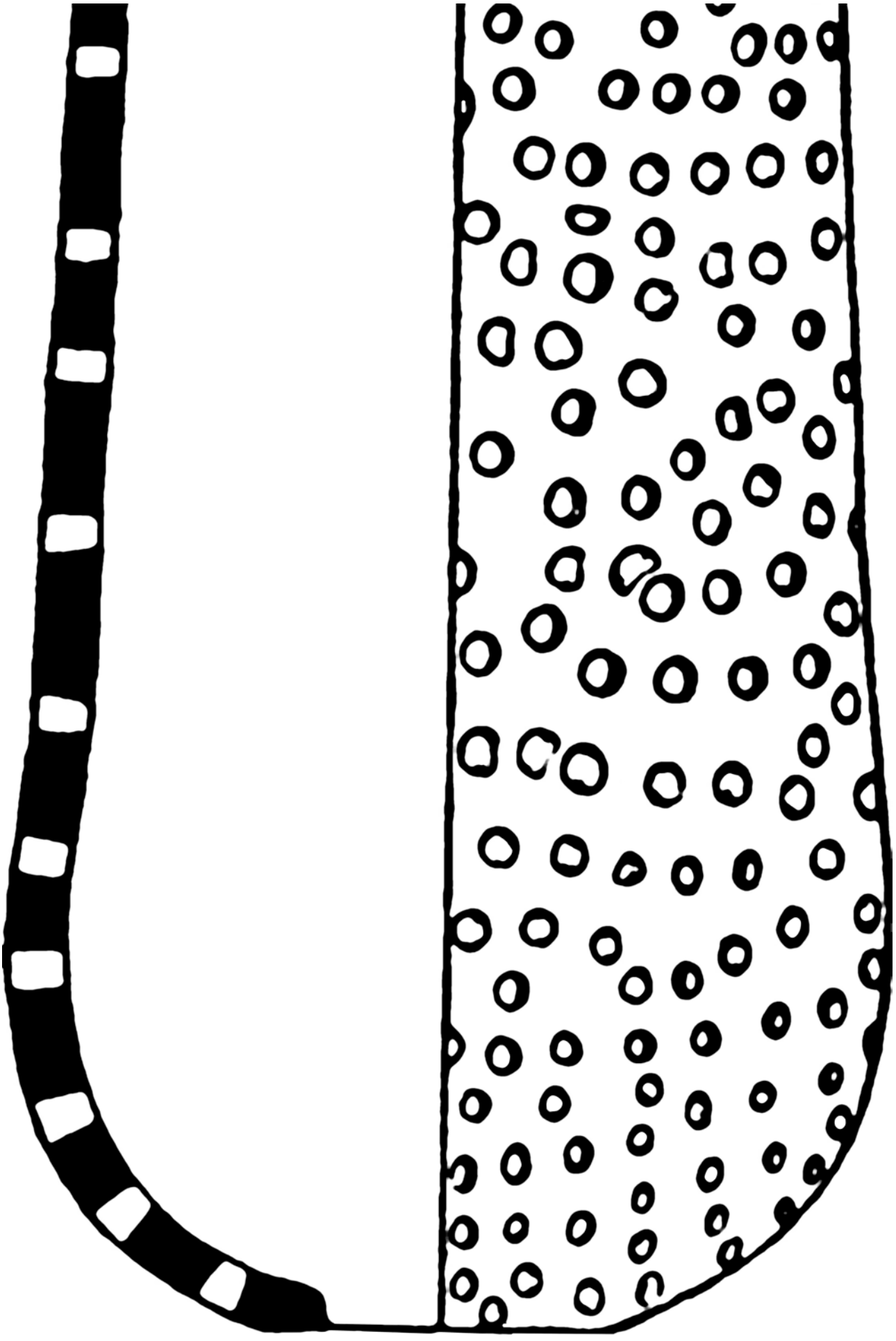

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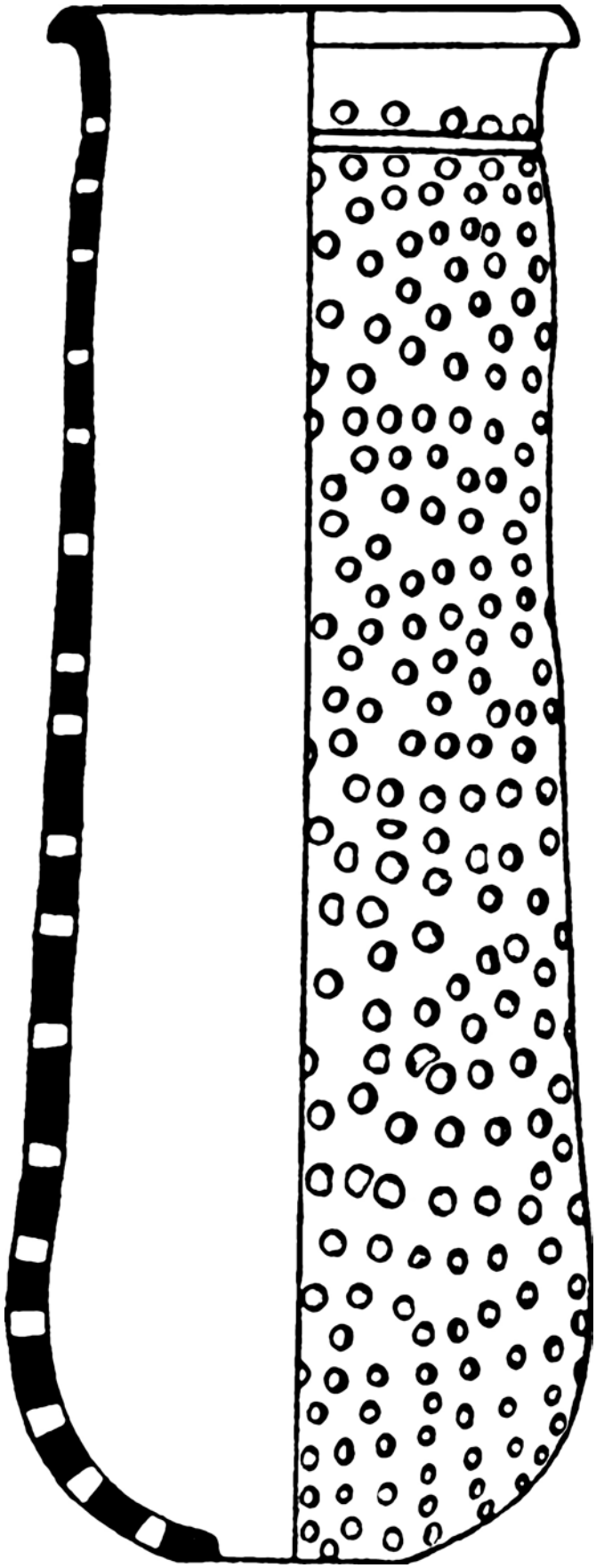
Pot from Harappa R 37 Scaled to 1:5



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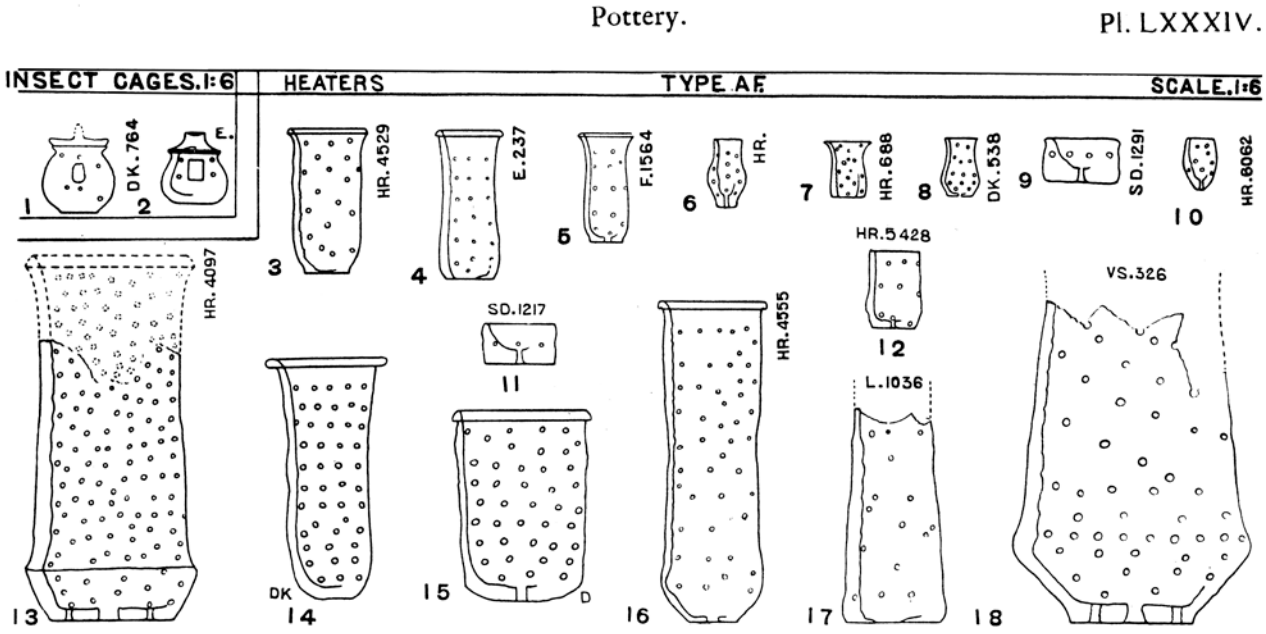
Mohenjodaro - Archaeologists' Line Drawings

from Mohenjo-Daro and The Indus Civilisation: excavations, 1922-1927, report by Sir John Marshall and the first excavators, published 1931.

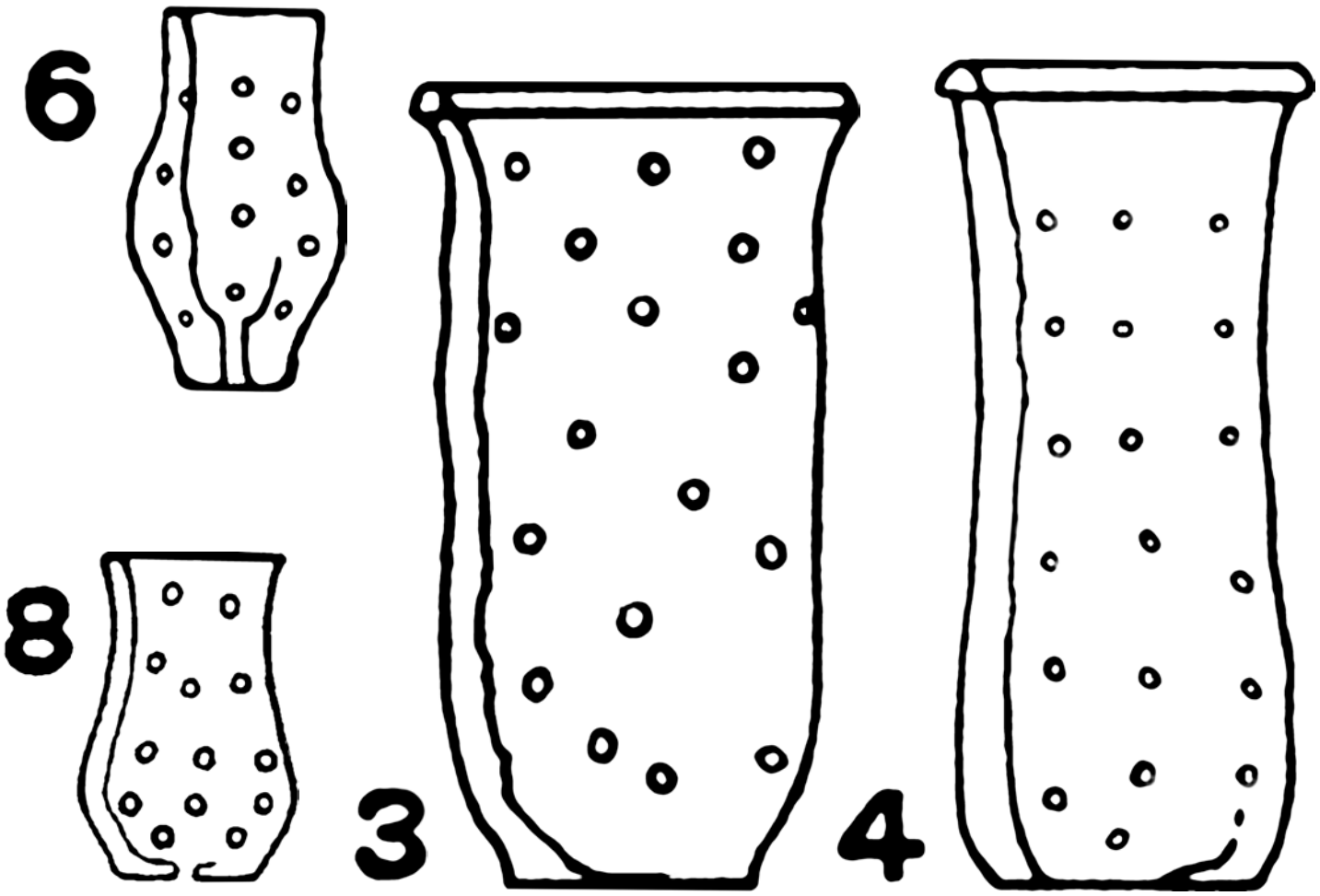
Scale drawings: 1:6 HR, DK, SD, VS, (from excavators surnames), designated different excavated areas.



Archaeological Survey of India

Hole in base indicated by single lines

Selection of pots (from above) scaled up to actual size.



 ©Ilona Aronovsky

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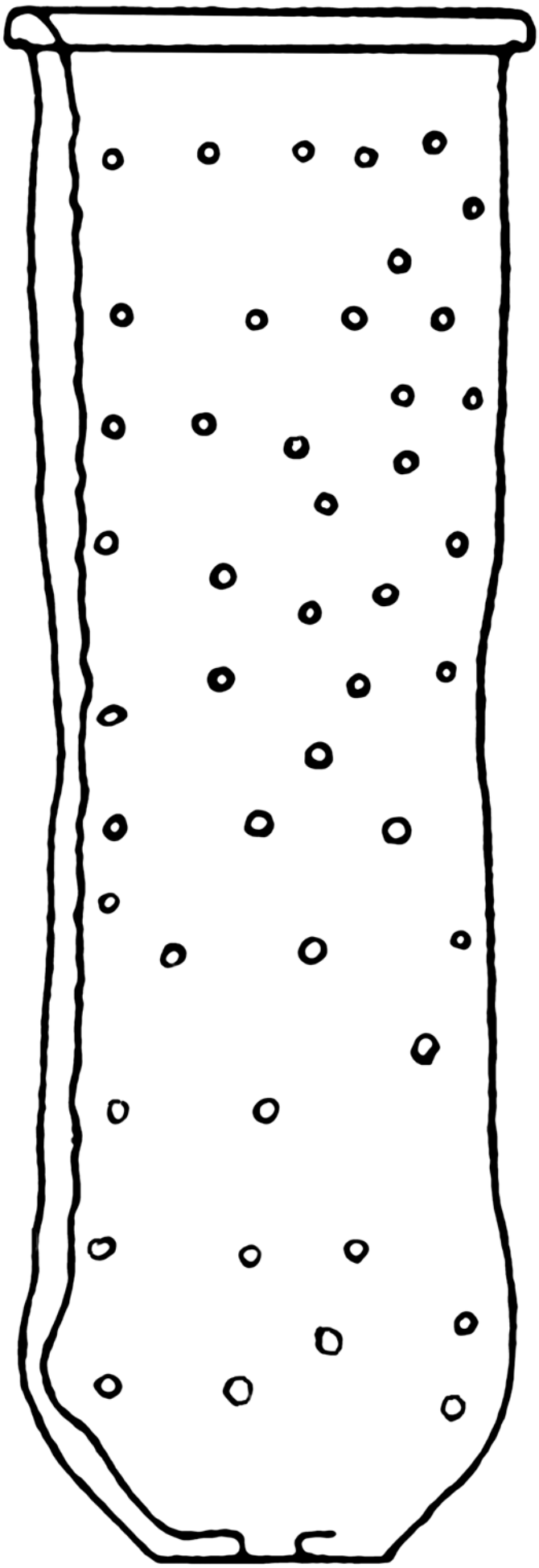

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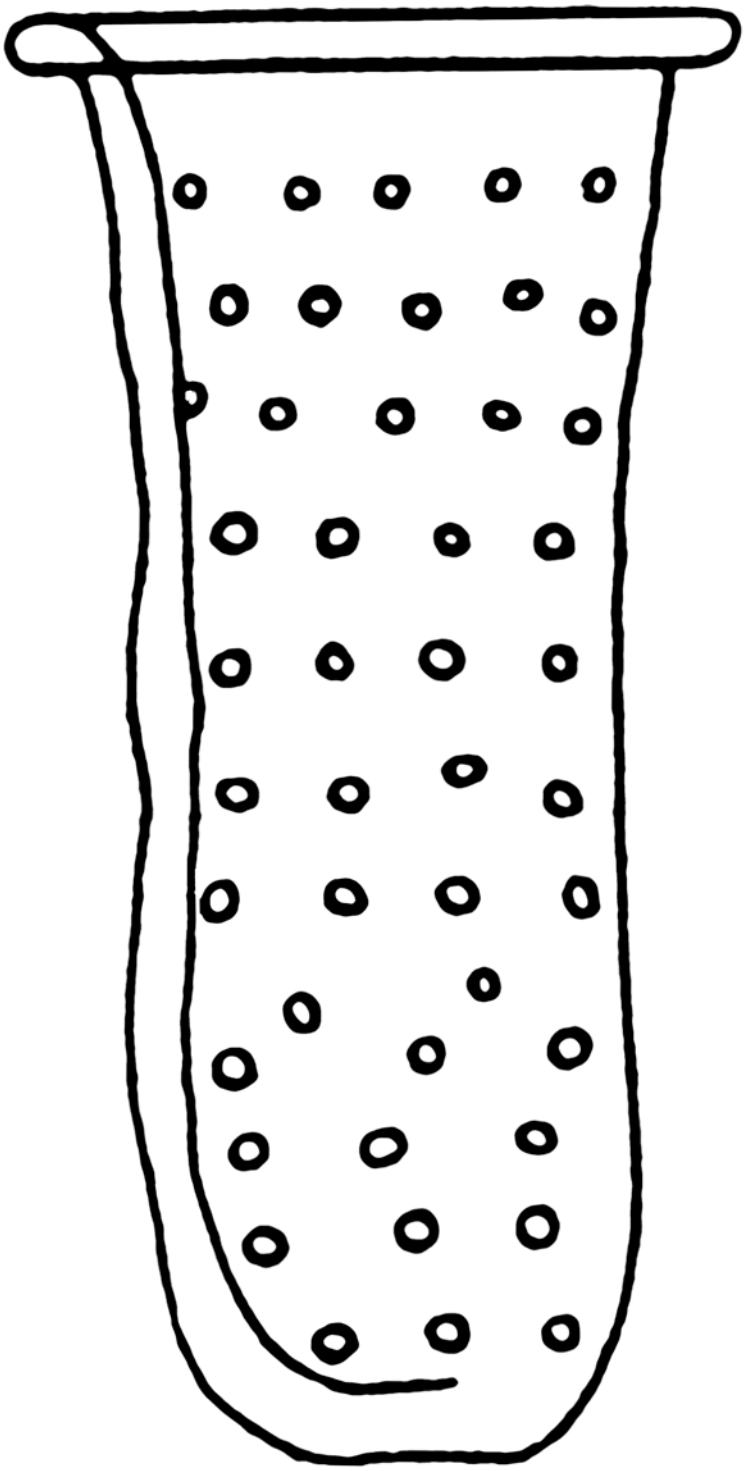

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Photo Sources for the Perforated Pot Enquiry:

in Think Like an Archaeologist PH 91, Summer 2022

Pot, Harappa, Cemetery R37 displayed in National Museum, New Delhi

Nomu420, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Harrappan_artefacts_01.JPG

with other pots in the cabinet display::
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum,_New_Delhi#/media/File:Harappn_artefacts_nm_india_01.JPG

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Pot, excavated with a set of household pots in a grave, Harappa, 1989.

Height 20 cm, hole in base.
https://www.harappa.com/excavations/1921/three-crucibles

Online text: Use of pots interpreted by J.M. Kenoyer

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The 20 cm perforated pot, as it was found, set of household pots in a grave, Harappa, 1989.

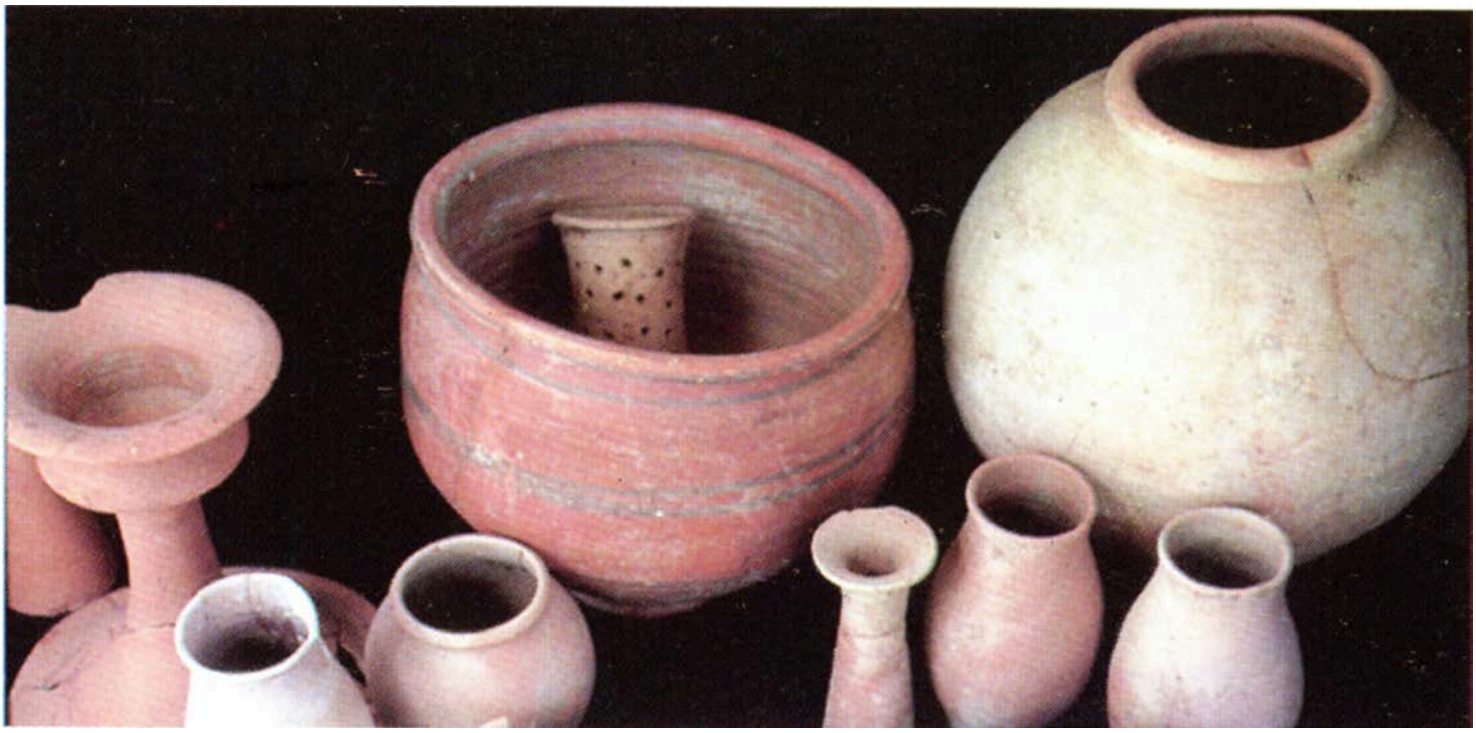


Photo J.M. Kenoyer. Not Online.

Contextualising the Enquiry

Pottery Sherds, discarded from excavations at Harappa

©harappa.com

https://www.harappa.com/slide/pottery-sherds-harappa above, and shown piled up in a huge mound at https://www.harappa.com/walk/index21.html

Exposed Pottery Sherds, Harappa

Each year rains and surface erosion bring new pieces to the surface.

https://www.harappa.com/walk/index20.html

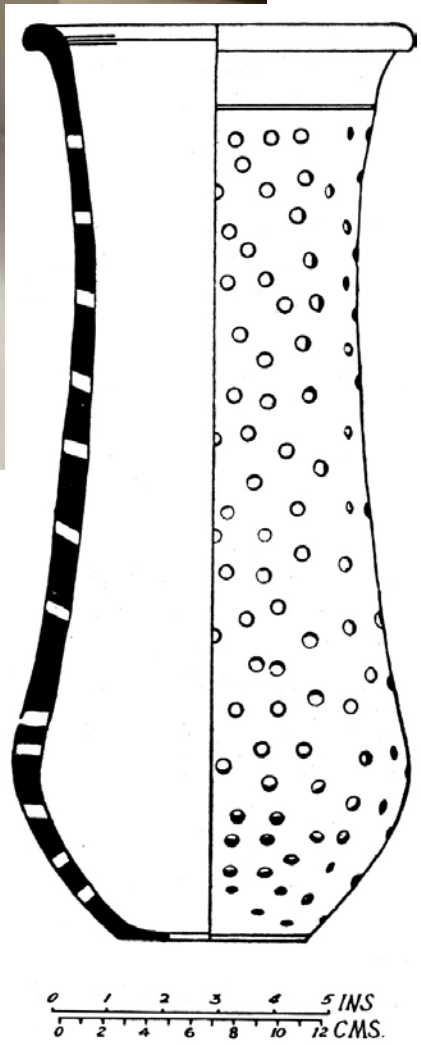
Burial Pottery - Household Sets in 'Around the Indus in 90 slides, no's 69, 70, 72, and also No 73, pointed base goblets. ©harappa.com

https://www.harappa.com/slideshows/around-indus-90-slides

MORE PHOTO SOURCES:

A Perforated Pot from the Harappan site of LOTHAL, Gujarat, India, excavated 1955-60

H 40 cms Photo: T. S. Subramanian.



S.R.Rao the excavator described the 'disc base with a hole in the centre'.

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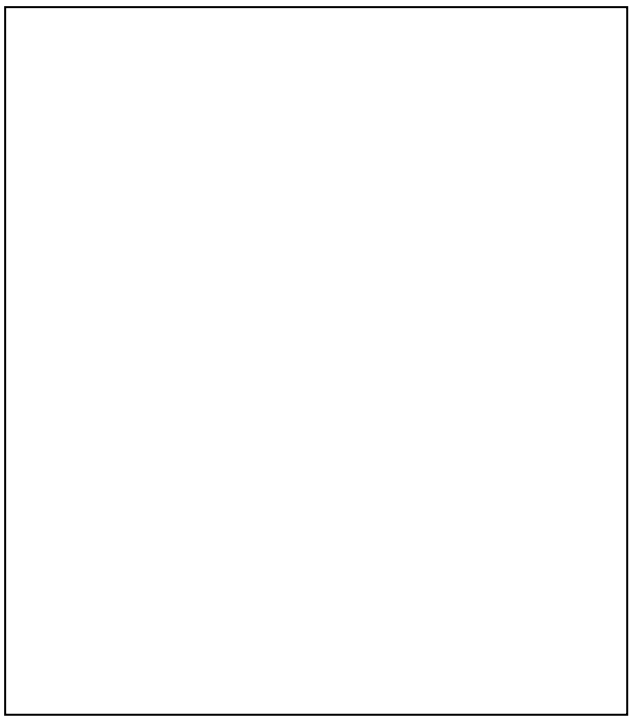
Indus Valley artefacts,
collections of the Institute of Archaeology, UCL.
Pupils handling objects at an Indus Explorer Day

Photos: Ilona Aronovsky

Hole in base shown

 ©Ilona Aronovsky

Close Observation of an Indus Valley Artefact



What can you see?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What do you notice? Drawing can help you notice more!

_____

_____

Describe it using words or phrases like size, shape, surface, texture, made of, the design is...

_____

_____

What do you think it might have been used for?

_____

_____

What questions do you have about it?

_____

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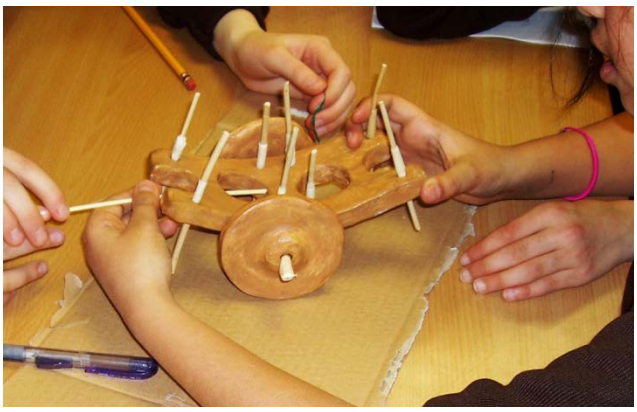
Modelling and Experiment

Whilst it's possible to model accurate, working Indus 'toy' terracotta wheeled carts from templates, test the design, and explore their significance, (for clues about childhood, and the importance of trade and transporting bulk goods) replicating and experimenting with perforated pots is more challenging. Only small sizes would be feasible. The pots were wheel turned and fired. However modelling pots is an opportunity to for children to discuss the technical sophistication of Indus pottery production, and compare with methods they might try. Experimenting with their use excludes burning, cooking, heating or hot liquid, but modern pots and devices for incense, burning lights, or infusing liquids could be used to experiment. Children could create artefacts for a class museum. They could rate their models for authenticity



Working out how to assemble a replica Indus 'toy' cart. Indus Explorer Day, UCL.

Modelling a small pot with air dried clay.

Here's one created earlier.

Lahore Museum H.12 cms

UCL Collection

Call that an authentic replica? They should try using our foot wheel!

Using archaeogists line drawings as guides, measure height and width to work out the circumference. Roll out an oblong slab of clay approx 0.8 - 1 cm thick for the body. Make a soft temporary tube shaped mould (rolled up bubble wrap or cardboard tube) to wrap the slab around and join. Cut out a circle for the base, with a wide hole in the middle. Remove the mould, smooth inside with a small rolling pin or dowel. You could cradle it in a halved cardboard tube. Smooth and shape the pot, poke holes with a wet tool narrower than a pencil. Wet and attach the base. Stand up to dry.

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Links

Historical Association Primary Members: Free

'Investigating the Indus Valley (2600-1900 B.C.)

Primary History 68, Autumn 2014

includes case study about the Indus terracotta toy carts

Indus Valley scheme of work

Lahore Museum: exhibition catalogue

numerous artefact photo's from Re-discovering Harappa exhibition

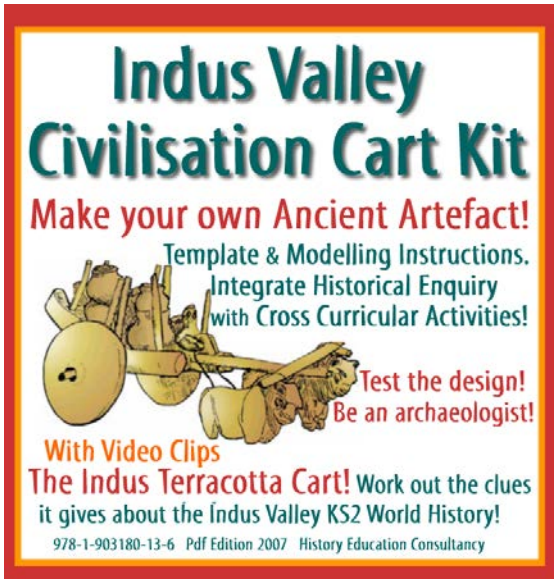
paste Url in browser

https://www.harappa.com/sites/default/files/pdf/Rediscovering_Harappa.pdf

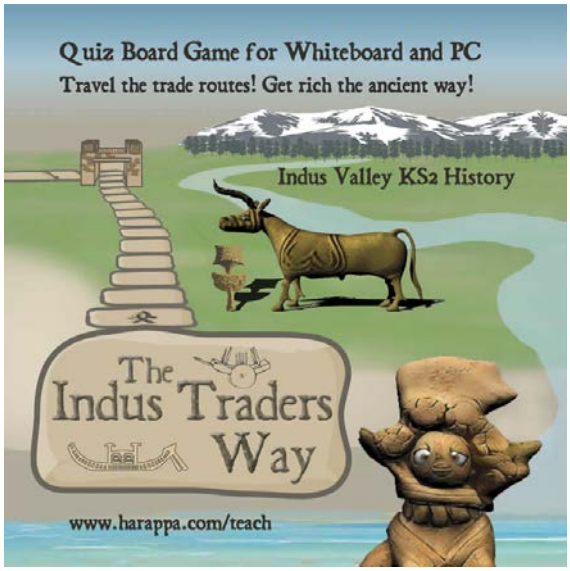
Teach Indus supports Primary Teachers teaching the Indus Valley: links, pupils' Young Historian competition entries.

Children's Indus animations and Cart Kit experiments

Activity learning resources from Teach Indus hec@harappa.com



CD: ISBN 978-1903180136



CD: ISBN 978-1903180075

For whiteboard, PC + printout for traditional board game. Supporting activities

Indus Investigators: Mohenjodaro Mystery Scholastic India

Meet the Indus artefacts, main characters in an adventure story which explores the archaeology of Mohenjodaro and the Indus Civilisation

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