Mohenjo-Daro: Weights and Scales

Inside the walls of Mohenjo-Daro’s citadel (fortress built to protect a city), several stone weights and a scale were found near a large building. When archeologists searched the ruins of this building, they found bits of grain such as barley and wheat. They decided the building must have been a granary (a place to store grain). Workers may have crushed the grain into flour. The flour may have been used for trading with other cities.

The scale and weights found near the granary are interesting clues. They suggest that ancient Indians might have used grain like money. They may have weighed the grain and used different amounts to trade for various goods. Farmers also had their own granaries outside the city, so perhaps the grain in the citadel’s granary was collected as taxes.

Mohenjo-Daro: The Great Bath

The most dramatic feature of Mohenjo-Daro’s citadel was the Great Bath. The Great Bath was a pool built of waterproofed brick. It was 39 feet long and 8 feet deep. Small dressing rooms circled the pool. One of the rooms contained a well that supplied the bath with water. Dirty water was removed through a drain that ran along one side of the bath.

It seems certain that the people of Mohenjo-Daro used the pool to bathe. On a hot, clear day, they probably enjoyed washing themselves in the bath’s cooling waters. Some archeologists think the Great Bath was also used for religious rituals. They point out that bathing rituals are important in India’s major religion: Hinduism. Ancient Hindu temples often featured bathing pools.

Mohenjo-Daro: Statue and Beads

In the lower city, archeologists found a stone statue seven inches high. It shows how men in Mohenjo-Daro might have looked and dressed. The figure has a short, tidy beard and a clean upper lip. His hair is tied with a band. He is wearing a patterned robe draped over his left shoulder. He has a calm and noble expression. Archeologists are not sure who the statue represents. Some think he may have been a priest and a king.

Beautiful stone beads in many shapes and colors have been found throughout Mohenjo-Daro. Women probably wore them in necklaces, bracelets, earrings, and rings. Indian bead makers also made beads of clay and baked them in hot ovens called kilns. They drilled holes in the beads and strung them into necklaces.

Mohenjo-Daro: Seals

Small stone seals are among the most mysterious of Mohenjo-Daro’s artifacts. They have been found in large numbers throughout the ruins. The seals are carved with pictographs, pictures, used to stand for objects, sounds, or ideas. More than 400 pictographs have been discovered, but archeologists don’t know what most of them stand for. Many seals show animals such as buffalo, bulls, tigers, elephants, rhinoceroses, fish, and crocodiles.

No one knows how the seals were used, but scientists have made some educated guesses. Many of the seals have a small loop on the back. Perhaps people wore them as charms to keep away evil. The seals may also have been pressed into wax to make a kind of tag. Merchants might have placed the wax tags on their good to show who owned them.
Mohenjo-Daro: Sewer System

A great achievement of Mohenjo-Daro was its sewer system. A sewer system carries waste away from houses. Mohenjo-Daro’s complex system of drains, pipes, wells, and bathrooms set the city apart from other settlements of its time. Two thousand years would pass before the world would see another system like it, in ancient Rome.

A network of clay pipes connected Mohenjo-Daro’s buildings and homes to the main sewer system. Dirty, used water and waste flowed in channels along the streets. This sewage then emptied into the Indus River. The sewer system made it possible for both rich and poor to have bathrooms in their homes.

Deep wells made of brick were located throughout the city. People stored water, including rainfall, in the wells.

Mohenjo-Daro: Games

The people of Mohenjo-Daro enjoyed playing games. They crafted many objects for toys and parts of game sets. Archeologists have uncovered dice, stone balls, grooved clay tracks, and stone game boards.

The game of chess was probably invented in India. An ancient Indian book describes a war game played with dice and pieces called pawns. Although modern chess is not played with dice, historians believe the war game is an early form of chess. The small carved game pieces found at Mohenjo-Daro may have been used to play this game.

The children of Mohenjo-Daro played simpler games. Some of the objects found by archeologists seem to be children’s toys. For example, children probably rolled stone balls along clay mazes and tracks.

Mohenjo-Daro: Homes

Most of Mohenjo-Daro’s people lived in the lower city, which was three times the size of the citadel. Rows of houses lined the streets. The houses had flat roofs and were two stories high. Like most of the city’s buildings, they were made of mud bricks.

The houses faced narrow alleys. The backs of the houses opened onto courtyards where families would gather. The houses had narrow windows on the second floor with screens made of hard clay called terra cotta or a see-through mineral called alabaster.

Homes had from one to a dozen rooms. Scientists believe that poorer people lived in the smaller homes, while richer citizens lived in the larger ones.

Mohenjo-Daro: Clay Models

Archeologists have found small clay models all around Mohenjo-Daro. Most of the models are made of terra cotta. In one model, two bulls are attached to a yoke (wooden harness). The bulls are pulling a person in a two-wheeled cart.

The model may be a toy, but archeologists believe it also shows how farm goods were transported to the city’s market. On market day, farmers loaded their crops into carts. The crops probably included barley, cotton, dates, melons, peas, rice, sesame seeds, and wheat. Then the farmers hitched their bulls to the carts and headed to the market. There they sold or traded their goods with other farmers.