

History of the Art of India, Part I: Origins to Mughals

Week 1. Origins in the Indus Valley Civilization, and Early Buddhist Art through Mauryan Empire

Important points covered:

- Geography, prehistory, and early history of the Indian subcontinent
- Location and time span of the Indus Valley civilization and its two major cities
- Principal characteristics and noteworthy examples of the art forms of the Indus Valley civilization, including steatite seals, terracotta figures, bronze statues, and stone sculptures
- Some characteristics of the nomadic groups of Aryans as they arrived into the Indian subcontinent ca. 1500 BCE.
- The rise of Buddhism, the conquests of Alexander the Great up to the Indus River, and the rise of the Mauryan empire.
- The major artistic forms and their principal characteristics of the Mauryan empire, especially during the reign of Ashoka the Great, including edict pillars and their capitals, stone sculptures, and rock-cut caves.

A. Introduction to the Course

A1. What is India?

MAP: Map of the Indian subcontinent

TERM: Dravidian

A2. What is Indian Religion, Culture, Art?

TERM: Brahmanism

A3. What is This Course?

TERMS: Rasa, rasika

B. Indus Valley Civilization (Mohenjo Daro and Harappa)

B1. Neolithic paintings

IMAGE: Neolithic rock painting from Bhimbetka (near Bhopal), Madhya Pradesh, ca.5500 BCE

B2. Indus valley civilization: Location and timeline

MAP: Indus Valley Civilization

B3. Cities and structures

IMAGE: View of Harappa ruins

IMAGE: View of Mohenjo-daro with commanding citadel

IMAGE: View of Mohenjo-daro, great bath

B4. Sculpture

B4a. Steatite (soapstone) seals, ca. 2600-1900 BCE

IMAGE: Brahman bull, ca. 2600-1900 BCE

IMAGE: Rhinoceros, seal impression into clay, ca.2600-1900 BCE

IMAGE: Siva-like seal from Mohenjo-daro, ca.2600-1900 BCE

B4b. Terracotta figures: Toys or votive objects, ca.2600-1900 BCE

IMAGE: Set of toys or votive objects, ca.2600-1900 BCE

B4c. Terracotta figures: "Mother goddesses," ca.2600-1900 BCE

IMAGE: Mohenjo-daro, terracotta figurine of "mother goddess," ca.2600-1900 BCE, ca.7", National Museum, Karachi

B4d. Bronze statues

IMAGE: Mohenjo-daro, statue of "dancing girl," copper/bronze, 5.5" high, National Museum, New Delhi

B4e. Stone statues

IMAGE: Mohenjo-daro bust of “priest-king,” carved steatite, 8” high, ca.2600-1900 BCE, National Museum, Karachi

C. Arrival of the Aryans

TERM: ārya

TERM: dāsa

MAP: mahājanapadas, ca. 500 BCE

TERM: mahājanapada

D. Early Buddhist Art of the Mauryan Empire

D1. Buddhism

D2. Alexander the Great and Chandragupta Maurya

D3. Ashoka and the Mauryan empire

MAP: Mauryan empire

D3a. Stupas

D3b. Edict pillars

IMAGE: Ashokan edict pillar at Vaishali (Bihar), ca. 240 BCE

IMAGE: Ashokan edict pillar ruin from Sarnath, with Prakrit text, Sarnath Archeological Museum

D3c. Pillar capitals

IMAGE: lion capital from pillar at Sarnath, polished sandstone, 7 ft, Archeological Museum, Sarnath

IMAGE: Emblem of the state of India

IMAGE: Pataliputra capital, sandstone, 3C BCE, Patna Museum

D3d. Stone sculpture

IMAGE: Stone sculpture of yakshi/fan-bearer, sandstone, 5 ft., ca.200 BCE, Patna Museum

IMAGE: Mauryan, Statue of yaksha, red sandstone, probably late Mauryan, 5’ 5”, ca. 200 BCE, National Museum, New Delhi

TERMS: yakshi, yaksha

D3e. Rock-cut caves

IMAGE. Gopika Cave, Nagarjuni hill (Bihar), ca. 230 BCE

IMAGE. Volume drawing of Gopika Cave

IMAGE. Lomas Rishi Cave, Barābar hill (Bihar), ca. 250 BCE

End of Week 1