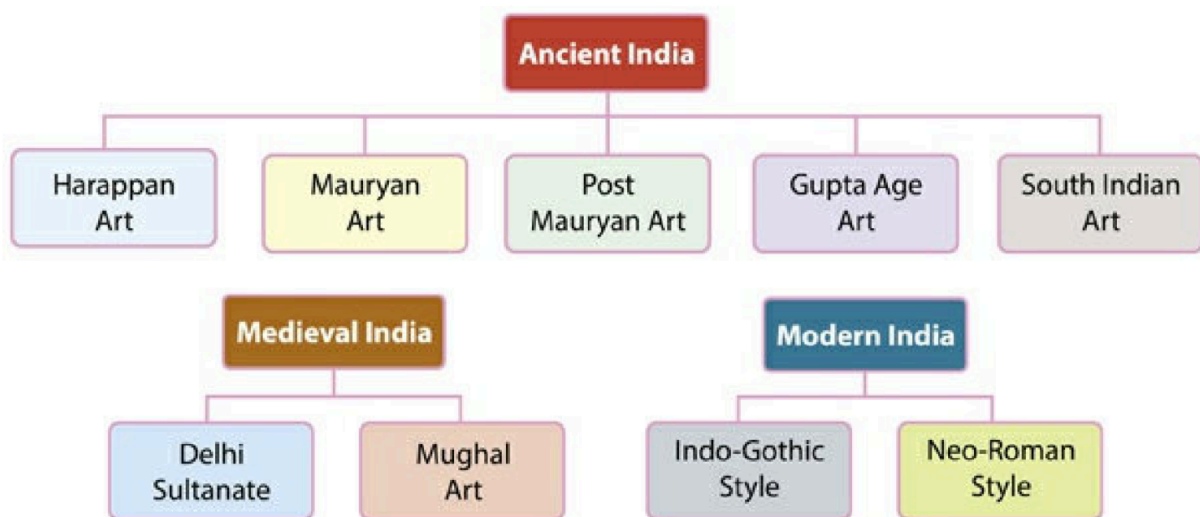




Indian Architecture

- Indian architecture, an expression over space and time, has evolved through centuries.
- It is closely associated with its history, religion, culture, geography and socio-economic conditions.

Classification of Indian Architecture



Harappan Civilisation Architecture

- **Harappan Civilisation period extending from 2600 BCE to 1900 BCE** witnessed the development of some of the earliest **big buildings** in India

- These sites possessed a flourishing **urban architecture**. **Harappa and Mohenjo-daro – the two major sites of this civilisation** – are among the earliest and finest examples of urban civic planning.

Features of Harappan Architecture and Town Planning

cities were divided into 2 parts

- **Citadel:** It is smaller and higher (standing some 40 to 50 feet above) than the rest of the area and situated on the western side of the town.
- **Lower town:** It occupies much larger area as compared to citadel but is on a lower plain than citadel. It is situated on the eastern side. It is divided into wards like chess board



- **Cities** are in parallelogramic form laid out in a regular grid pattern.
- The roads ran in north-south and east-west direction and cut each other at right angles
- There were large-scale use of burnt bricks of standard dimensions (4x2x 1)
- The cities comprised of well-planned and thought out architectural features:
- Underground drainage with inspection holes – Drainage system has been the most striking feature of this civilization. Small drains ran from each house and were connected to drains running along the main roads. The inspection hole, where top cover was loosely attached, was mainly to allow regular cleaning and maintenance.



City wall:

- City in the Indus Valley was surrounded by massive walls and gateways.
- Each part of the city was made up of walled sections. Each section included different buildings such as: Public buildings, houses, markets, craft workshops, etc.
- In Mohenjodaro and Harappa the citadel was surrounded by a brick wall.
- At Kalibangan both the citadel and the lower city were surrounded by a wall.
- In settlements like Kot Diji and Amri in Sind there was no fortification of the city.
- The site of Lothal in Gujarat also shows a very different layout.
 - It was a rectangular settlement surrounded by a brick wall.
 - It did not have any internal division into citadel and lower city.

● Street:

- The streets and houses of Harappan cities are thought to be laid on a grid-pattern oriented north–south and east–west.
- There is no strict correlation between the level of planning and the size of a settlement.
 - For example, the relatively small site of Lothal shows a much higher level of planning than Kalibangan, which is twice its size.
- There were covered drains along the road. Houses were built on either side of the roads and streets.

- Each street had a well organized drain system. If the drains were not cleaned, the water ran into the houses and silt built up. Then the Harappans would build another storey on top of it. This raised the level of the city over the years.
- Obviously, this kind of alignment of streets and houses represents conscious town planning. However, the resources of the town planners in those days would be very limited.
 - This assumption is based on the finds from Mohenjodaro and Kalibangan where the streets stagger from block to block and the alignments of streets and buildings in one part of Mohenjodaro is quite different from the rest of the areas.
 - Mohenjodaro was not constructed in homogeneous horizontal units. In fact it was built in different times.

Citadel

It comprised various buildings like Great bath, pillared assembly halls, granaries etc.

- **Great Bath:** Great bath, found at the site of Mohenjodaro, had an ingenious hydraulic system. It denotes the prevalence of public baths and thus importance of ritualistic cleansing in that era.
- The pool used to be in the centre of a large open quadrangle surrounded by rooms on all sides. It is connected to these rooms through a flight of steps at either end. The pool was fed by a well nearby and the dirty water was drained into the city's sewage system through a large corbelled drain.



- **Granaries:** The granaries were designed with strategic air ducts and raised platforms, giving us an idea of the intelligence behind its construction. The largest building in Mohenjodaro was granary. Some sites like Harappa had as many as six granaries.

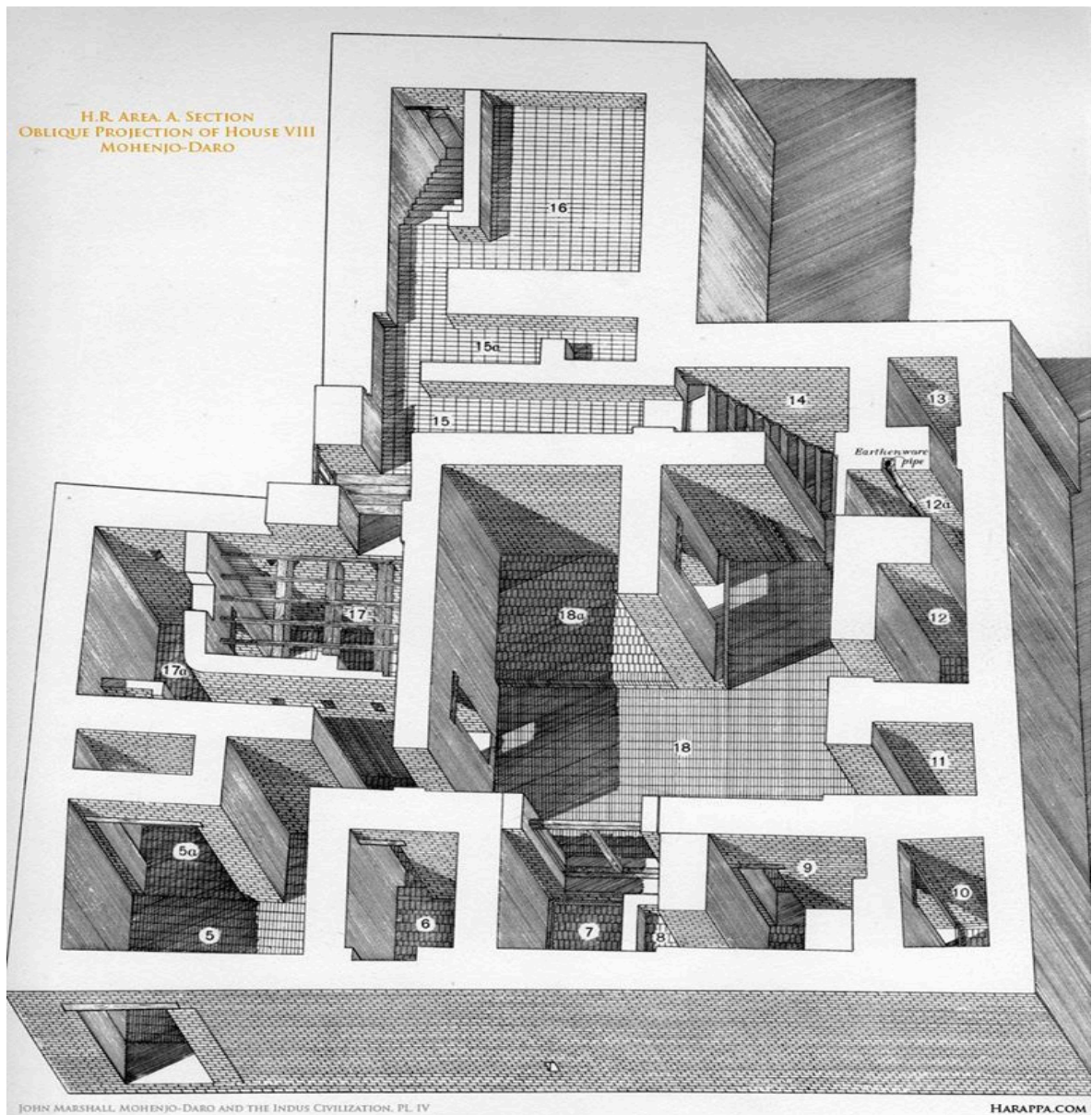


- **Pillared Assembly Hall:** The pillared hall with twenty pillars arranged in rows of five probably carried a large roof supported on them. It might have served as the court of the city magistrate or as a secretariat of the State.



Lower town

- Lower town had houses of various different sizes which, as some researchers believe that, showed people had different economic status. The class distinction between rich and poor existed where rich had private wells and toilets.
- No house had windows opening up in the main street. Even entrance of the house was through sideways.
- Most buildings were properly ventilated even as the constructions varied from a one-roomed building to even double-storied houses.



Housing Pattern:

- People lived in houses of different sizes, mostly consisting of rooms arranged around a central courtyard.
- The average citizen seems to have lived in the blocks of houses in the lower city.
- Here too there were variations in the sizes of houses.
 - It could be single room tenements meant for slaves like the ones discovered near the granary in Harappa.
 - There were other houses complete with courtyards and moving upto twelve rooms.
 - In the larger houses, passages led into inner rooms, and there is evidence of frequent renovation activity.
 - Bigger houses had much the same plan- a square courtyard around which were a number of rooms.
 - The bigger houses or groups of houses were provided with separate private wells, bathing areas and toilets.
 - Bathing platforms with drains were often located in rooms next to a well.
 - The floor of the bathing area was usually made of tightly fitted bricks, frequently set on edge, to make a carefully sloped watertight surface.
 - A small drain led from here, cut through the house wall, and went out into the street, connecting ultimately with a larger sewage drain.
 - Small houses attached to large ones may have been the quarters of service groups working for wealthy city dwellers.
 - **Doorways and windows** generally faced the side lanes and rarely opened onto the main streets.
 - The entrances to the houses were from the narrow lanes which cut the streets at right angles.
 - The view from the lane into the courtyard was blocked off by a wall.
 - **Kitchen:**
 - Generally house had an indoor and outdoor kitchen.
 - **Staircases:**
 - There are remains of staircases that may have led to the roof or a second storey.
 - **Floors:**
 - Floors were usually made of hard-packed earth, often re-plastered or covered with sand.
 - **Ceilings:**
 - The ceilings were probably over 3 m high.

- Roofs may have been made of wooden beams covered with reeds and packed clay.

Doors and windows:

- The doors and windows of houses were made of wood and mats.

Toilets:

- Although some people may have used the area outside the city walls to relieve themselves, toilets have been identified at many sites.
 - They ranged from the simple hole in the ground above a cesspit to more elaborate arrangements.

Raw material used:

- In villages, houses were made mostly of mud-brick, with the additional use of mud and reeds; stone was occasionally used for foundations or drains.
- Buildings in towns and cities were made of sun-dried and burnt bricks.
- In Harappa and Mohenjodaro baked bricks were used for buildings. In Kalibangan mud bricks were used.
- In the rocky areas of Kutch and Saurashtra, however, there was extensive use of stone.
- There were various styles of laying bricks, including what is known as the 'English bond style'.
- A striking feature of Harappan structures is the uniformity in the average size of the bricks

Water Management System:

● **Drainage System:**

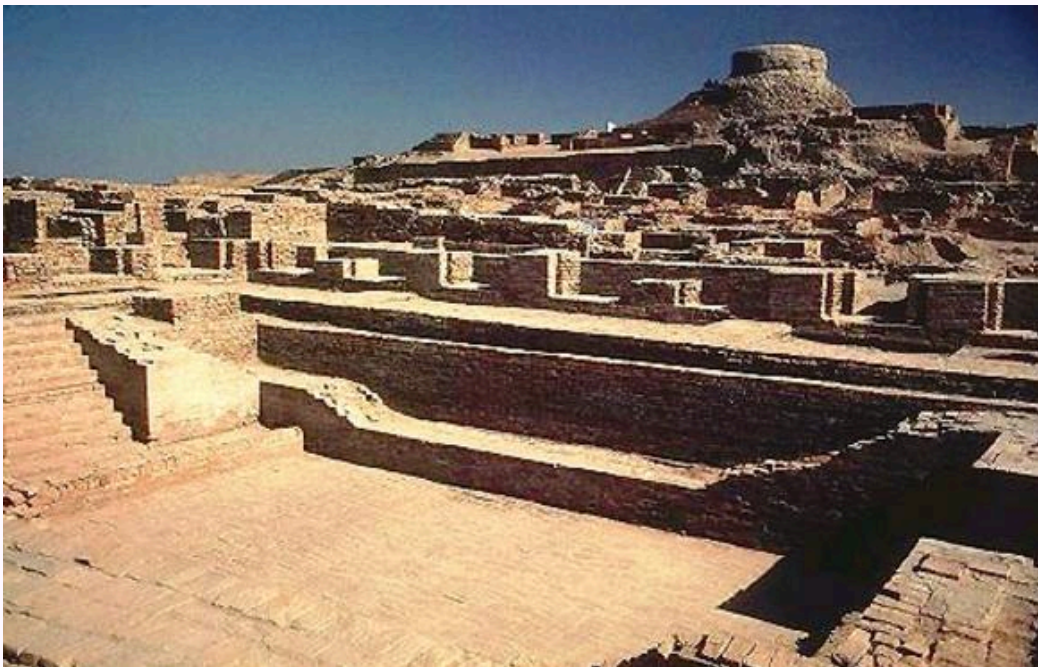
- An efficient and well-planned drainage system is a notable feature of Harappan settlements.
- Even the smaller towns and villages had impressive drainage systems.
- The drains for collecting rainwater were separate from the sewage chutes and pipes.
- Drains and water chutes from the second storey were often built inside the wall, with an exit opening just above the street drain.
- At Harappa and Mohenjodaro, terracotta drain pipes directed waste water into open street drains made of baked bricks.
- The main drains were covered by corbelled arches made of brick or stone slabs.

- There were rectangular soakpits for collecting solid waste at regular intervals.
 - These must have been cleaned out regularly, otherwise the drainage system would have become choked and a health hazard.
- Excellent arrangements for sanitation indicates the presence of a civic administration which would take decisions for the sanitary requirements of all the townsmen.



Bathing and drinking:

- The Harappans made elaborate arrangements for water for drinking and bathing.
- It is possible that frequent bathing also had a religious or ritualistic aspect. The sources of water were rivers, wells, and reservoirs or cisterns.
- The Great bath at Mohenjodaro is a unique example.
- Mohenjodaro is noted for its large number of wells.
- Harappa had much fewer wells but a depression in the centre of the city may represent a tank or reservoir that served the city's inhabitants.
- There are a few wells at Dholavira, which is noted more for its impressive water reservoirs lined with stone.



- The city of Dholavira had an impressive and unique water harvesting and management system.
- **Dholavira's system** of water management was architectural marvel which was crucial in an area, which is prone to frequent droughts.



- **Dockyard of Lothal** is the most distinctive feature of the site.
 - It is roughly trapezoidal basin, enclosed by walls of burnt bricks.
 - The dockyard had provisions for maintaining a regular level of water by means of a sluice gate and a spill channel



Stupa Architecture

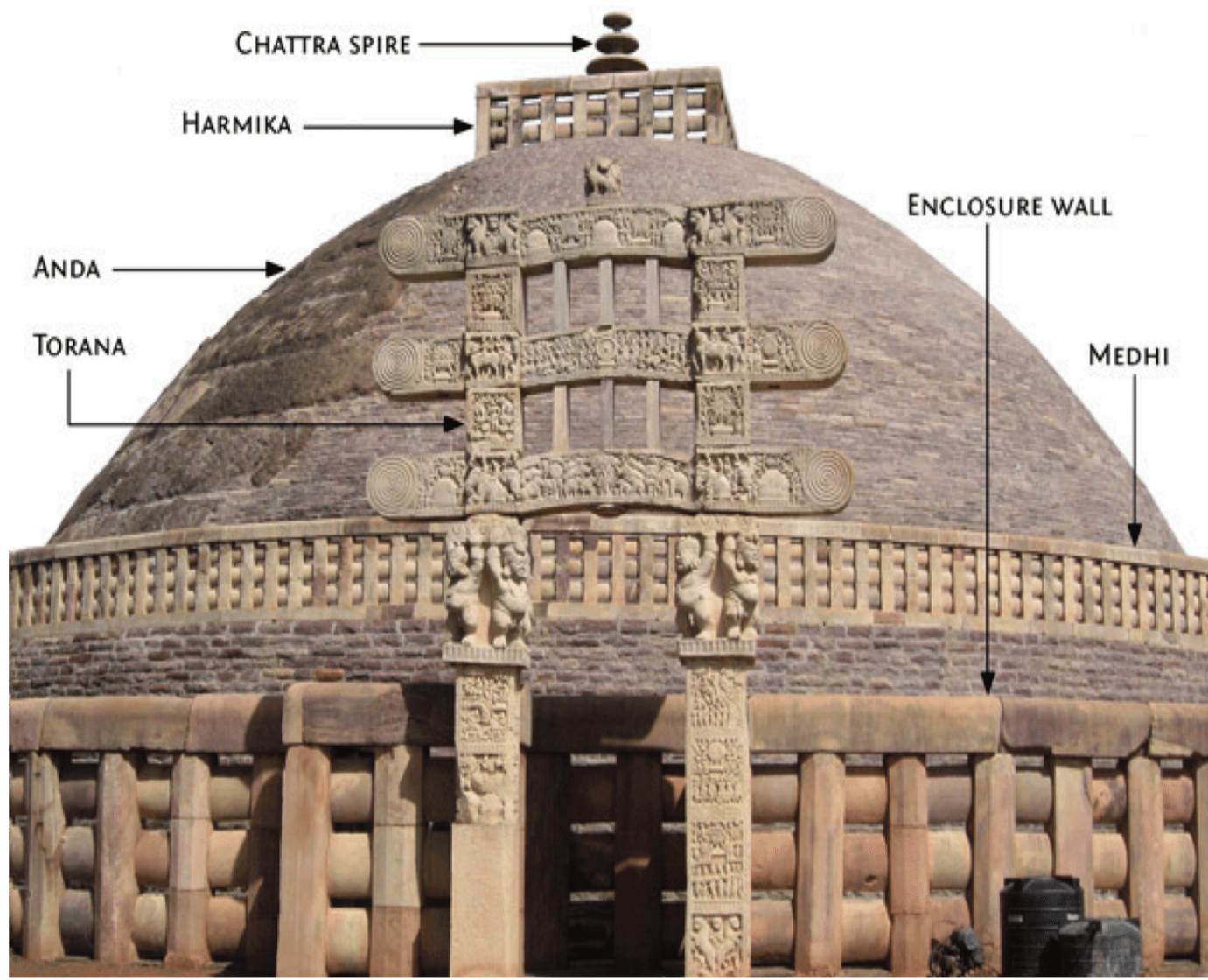
A stupa (literally “heap” or “pile”) is a reliquary, a shrine containing the remains of a holy or sainted person and/or artifacts (relics) associated with them, originating in India prior to the 5th century BCE as tombs of holy men and evolving afterwards into sacred sites dedicated to the Buddha.

stupas were also raised to honor Buddhist arhats (saints), bodhisattvas (enlightened ones), other saintly figures, or local deities.

A stupa is a hemispherical structure, with a spire at the top, sometimes situated on a base that varies in shape and size (depending on the designated purpose of that particular stupa) surrounded by a walkway for visitors.

- Buddhism was the earliest Indian religion to require large communal spaces for worship.
- This led to three types of architectural forms the **stupa, the vihara and the chaitya**.
- Stupa, originally the focus of a popular **cult of the dead**, is a large burial mound containing a relic of the **Buddha**.
- It celebrates the Buddha’s parinirvana (end of cycle of suffering), symbolizes his eternal body, and is an object of worship.
- Initially stupas were Buddha’s relic places. Then it got extended to his followers as well and gradually stupa itself became an object of worship.
- Some stupas, such as the Great Stupa at Sanchi, India, or the Boudhanath Stupa at Kathmandu, Nepal, are large, ornate structures while others are more modest.
- The construction of stupas, on a large scale and associated with Buddhism, began throughout India during the reign of Ashoka the Great (268-232 BCE) of the Mauryan Empire (322-185 BCE) after his conversion to Buddhism.
- Prior to Ashoka’s reign, there were eight stupas (or ten, according to some scholars) dedicated to the Buddha (and containing his cremated remains) at different sites
- Ashoka had the remains disinterred and ordered the construction of many more (84,000, according to legend)
- Buddhist stupas are only one type, as there are also Hindu and Jain stupas, but Buddhist stupas remain the most popular, and their construction, worldwide, has been the most prolific.

- After the demise of Buddha and his cremation at Kushinagar and later the corporeal relics were distributed among 8 Mahajanapadas.
- Initially 8 Stupas (Saririka Chaityas) were constructed at 8 centres → Rajagrihya, Vaishali, Kapilavastu, Allakappa, Ramagrama, Vethadipa, Pava and Kushinagara
- Drona the Brahmin who initiated the distribution, himself erected a Stupa to enshrine the urn that was used to divide the relics.
- Mauryas arrived too late for a share of the relic and were given the wood ashes from the cremation pyre, and they too built a Stupa in their city of Pippalavana.
- Jatakas mentions about the existence of Stupa but does not throw any light on the structural details of Stupa.
- Archaeological excavations and findings proved that during Ashoka's reign use of bricks and stone for constructional purpose became popular. Predecessors of Ashoka like Bimbisara and Ajatsatru both had constructed a number of Stupas in honour of the Buddha which contained relics of Buddha.
- With the emergence of Mahayana sect it was not necessary that all the Stupas contained relics. It was taken over by the image worship, with the transformation from non-iconic to iconic for changes were also found in the architectural patterns.
- Sungas gave a new dimension to the Stupa architecture. During Sunga and Ikshvakus period enlargement and additions were made in the existing Stupas of Sanchi, Bharhut and Amravati.



CHATTRA SPIRE

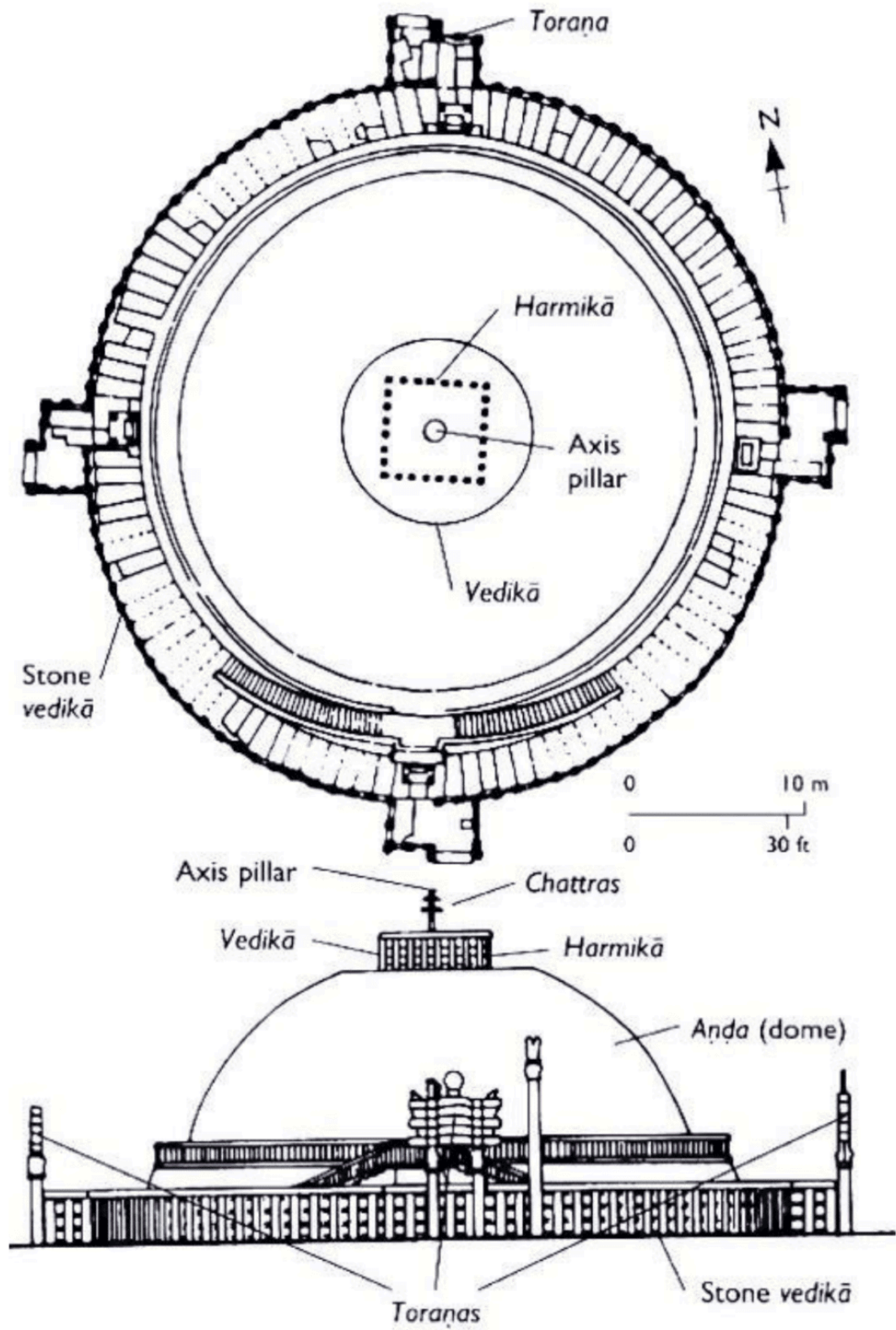
HARMIKA

ANDA

TORANA

ENCLOSURE WALL

MEDHI



Meaning, Function & Structure of Stupa

- The physical appearance of the stupa is intended to elevate the mind. The top spire (yasti) symbolizes the axis mundi (axis of the world), the line through the center of the earth which the universe revolves around. It is also thought to represent the World Tree whose roots are deep within the earth and branches in heaven, a symbol common in many cultures around the world. The yasti is surrounded by a square gate known as the harmika, and over the yasti and harmika are parasols which symbolize protection, majesty, and the Buddha himself.
- The large hemisphere descends from the yasti to a platform or base, sometimes square, which is often surrounded by a wall with four gates (toranas) corresponding to the four cardinal directions. These directions, in turn, relate to four events in Buddha's life:
 - East – Birth of Buddha
 - South – Enlightenment of Buddha
 - West – First Sermon of Buddha
 - North – Nirvana/Release from Samsara of Buddha

Basic structure of Stupa

- The stupa consists of a square platform known as **medhi**.
- On medhi there is a hemispherical structure which encloses a casket.
- The medhi is surrounded by **vedika**(boundary wall).
- Between the medhi and the vedika was **pradakshina path** or the circum-ambulatory.
- On the stupa there was **harmika** followed by one or more chatris which signified 'axis mundi' or axis of the world.

Structure of Stupa – terminology

- **Anda**
 - It is the semi-circular mound built on earth.
- **Harmika**
 - It is the balcony like structure above anda.
 - It is believed to be the living place of god.
- **Yashti**
 - It is the mast above harmika surmounted by umbrella.

- **Railing**
 - It is around the mound believed to separate the stupa from surrounding world and make it sacred.
- **Chatra**
 - It is the umbrella built on the top of the dome
- **Pradakshinapatha**
 - It is the path for clockwise circumambulation surrounded by a fence built encircling the stupa.
 - Stone balustrade (wooden fence) consisted of thabas (octagonal upright posts) capped by uhnisa (continuous capping stone).
 - These posts are connected by 3 horizontal rails called Suchis.
- **Torana**
 - Gateways having sculptures depicting Jataka Tales
- **Medhi**
 - Square platform

- The stupa represents the **five purified elements**
 - 1. The square base represents earth
 - 2. The hemispherical dome/vase represents water
 - 3. The conical spire represents fire
 - 4. The upper lotus parasol and the crescent moon represents air
 - 5. The sun and the dissolving point represents the element of space

Northern India

Southern India

Presence of torana dwara

No torana dwara

Circular stupa

Non circular stupa

No decorations on hemispheres

Decorations present on hemisphere

Buddha depicted by symbols

Buddha depicted by symbols as well as in anthropomorphic forms

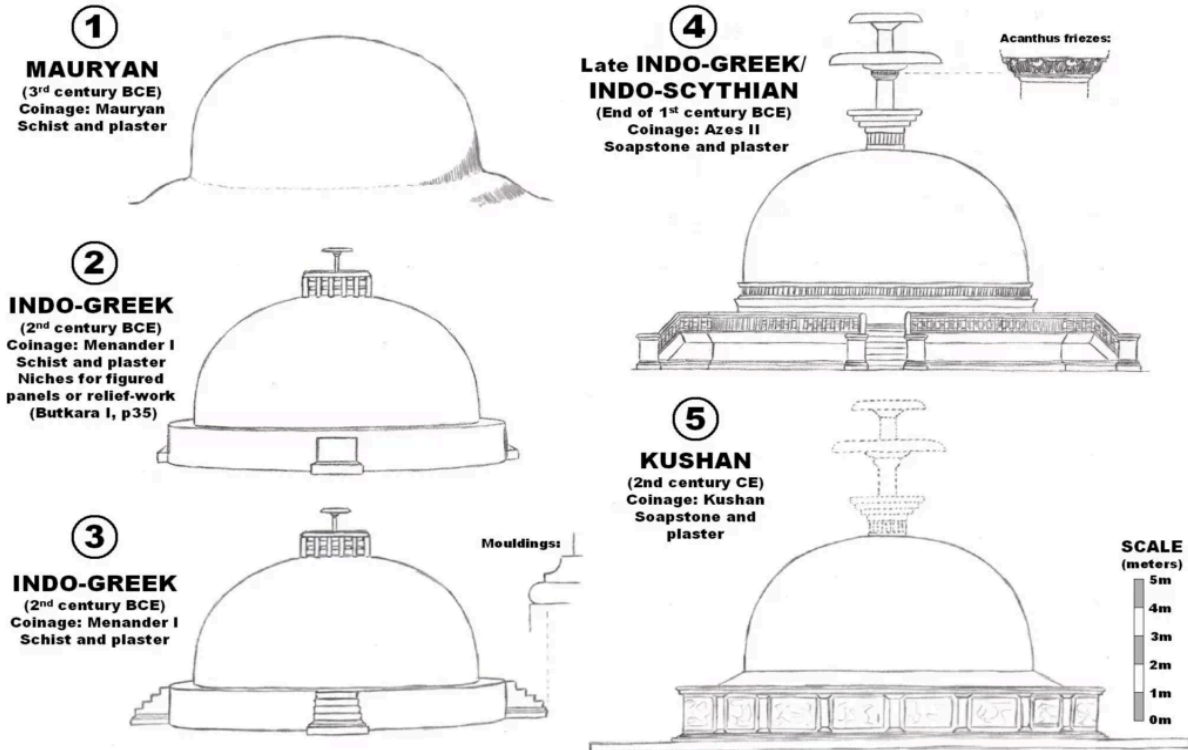
Classification of Stupas based on form and function

- Relic Stupa—in which the relics or remains of the Buddha, his disciples and lay saints are interred.
- Object stupa – in which the items interred are objects belonged to the Buddha or his disciples such as a begging bowl or robe, or important Buddhist scriptures.
- Commemorative stupas – built to commemorate events in the lives of Buddha or his disciples.
- Symbolic stupa – to symbolise aspects of Buddhist theology, for example, Borobuddur is considered to be the symbol of “Three Worlds (dhatu) and the spiritual stages (bhumi) in a Mahayana bodhisattva’s character.”
- Votive stupas – constructed to commemorate visits or to gain spiritual benefits, usually at the site of prominent stupas which are regularly visited.

Stupa Architecture in different periods

- Ashoka was responsible for the construction of several stupas, which were large halls, capped with domes and bore symbols of the Buddha.
- The most important ones are located at Bharhut, Bodhgaya, Sanchi, Amravati and Nagarjunakonda.
- There were numerous stupas constructed earlier but expansions or new additions were made in the 2nd century BC.

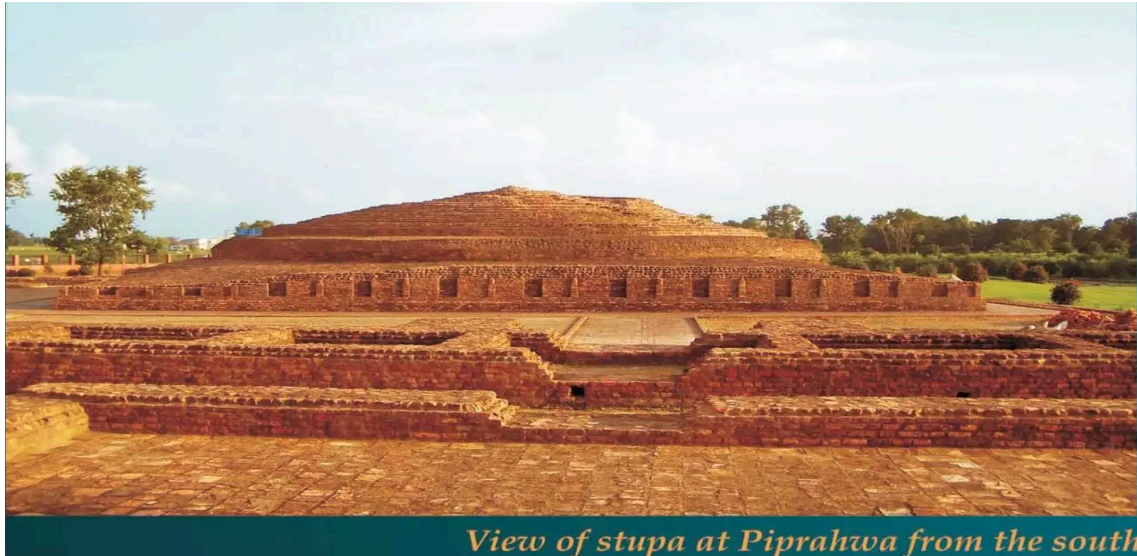
EARLY EVOLUTION OF THE STUPA (BUTKARA Great Stupa, 3rd century BCE- 2nd century CE)



Examples of Stupas

Piprahwa Stupa (Uttar Pradesh)

- Piprahwa is best known for its archaeological site and excavations that suggest that it may have been the burial place of the portion of the Buddha's ashes that were given to his own Shakya clan.
- A large stupa and the ruins of several monasteries as well as a museum are located within the site.



View of stupa at Piprahwa from the south

First Relic (Saririka) Stupas at Vaishali

- Buddha Relic Stupa, enshrining one of the eight parts of the mortal remains of Lord Buddha after he attained Mahaparinirvana, is one of the most revered sites for Buddhists and a protected one for Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), located around 55km northwest of Patna in Vaishali district.
- The Buddha Relic Stupa was built by Lichhavis as a mud-stupa in the 5th century BC.
- Asoka → opened the stupa to take out a little of the relic and thereafter closed the monument while keeping back the original casket and coated the stupa with bricks.



Kesariya Stupa (Bihar)

- The stupa is said to be the tallest and the largest Buddhist stupa in the world.
- The first construction of the Stupa is dated to the 3rd century BCE. The original Kesaria stupa probably dates to the time of Ashoka (circa 250 BCE), as the remains of a capital of a Pillar of Ashoka were discovered there.
- The current stupa dates to the Gupta Dynasty between 200 AD and 750 AD and may have been associated with the 4th century ruler Raja Chakravarti.
- Two great foreign travelers, Faxian (Fahien) and Xuan Zang (Hsuan Tsang), had visited this place in ancient times and have left interesting and informative accounts of their travels.
- The discovery of gold coins bearing the seal of the famous emperor Kanishka of the Kushan dynasty (AD 30 to AD 375) goes on to further establish the ancient heritage of Kesaria.



Bairat Stupa(Rajasthan)

- The temple is of a **circular type, formed of a central stupa surrounded by a circular colonnade and an enclosing wall.**
- It was **built during the time of Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE**, and near it were found two of Ashoka's **Minor Rock Edicts**, the Bairat and the Calcutta-Bairat Minor Rock Edicts



Sanchi Stupa(MP)

- Sanchi is a **Buddhist complex**, famous for its Great Stupa, on a **hilltop at Sanchi Town in Raisen District of the State of Madhya Pradesh.**
- Early Indian sculpture that adorned the 1st-century BC entrances of the Buddhist relic mound known as the **Great Stupa at Sanchi**, Madhya Pradesh
- The **Sanchi Stupa** is one of India's most important **Buddhist landmarks**, and it houses some of the country's earliest stone buildings.

- It was commissioned in the **third century BCE** by **Mauryan ruler Ashoka the Great**. It began with a basic **hemispheric brick edifice** erected over the **Buddha's relics**.
- The **Mahastupa (Great Stupa)**, the **Ashokan pillar (with its inscriptions)**, and the beautiful **torans** are all noteworthy features of the **Sanchi complex (gateways)**.
- The **Great Stupa** was enlarged and ornamented with gates and railings in the succeeding centuries, particularly during the **Shungas and Satavahanas**, and minor stupas, including **Stupa No.2 and Stupa No.3**, were also built in the vicinity.



Bharhut stupa(MP)

- The **Bharhut stupa** may have been established by the **Maurya king Ashoka** in the **3rd century BCE**, but many works of art were added **during the Sunga period**, with many friezes from the **2nd century BC**.
- Bharhut sculptures are tall, like the **Mauryan depictions of Yaksha and Yakshini**, and the sculptural volume is modelled in low relief to ensure linearity.

- Gateways, pillars and the uprights and crossbars, all are full of sculptures depicting **pictorial representations of nature**.
- The **stupa (now dismantled and reassembled at Kolkata Museum)** contains numerous birth stories of the Buddha's previous lives, or Jataka tales.
- The Buddha's previous incarnations' birth stories, known as **Jataka tales**, are depicted on the railings.
- The Bharhut stupa railings feature several depictions of **yakshas and yakshis**, who have long been a part of Indian society.



Dhamek Stupa (Sarnath)

- **Stupa of the reign of Dharma** is a massive stupa located at **Sarnath, 13 kilometres (8.1 mi) away from Varanasi** in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India.
- An **Ashoka pillar with an edict engraved on it stands** near the site.

- It was built in 500 CE to replace an earlier structure commissioned by Ashoka in 249 BCE
- The Dhamek Stupa is said to mark the spot Rishipattana, where Buddha gave the first sermon to his first five Brahmin disciples after attaining enlightenment, “revealing his Eightfold Path leading to nirvana”.

Amaravati Stupa(Andhra Pradesh)

- The **Amarāvati Stupa (also known as Mahachaitya)** is a ruined **Buddhist stūpa at the village of Amaravathi, Palnadu district, Andhra Pradesh** (on the banks of the **Krishna River**).
- The Amravati Stupa, **also known as the Great Stupa of Amravati**, is a damaged Buddhist monument.
- It was probably **built in phases between the third century BCE and about 250 CE**, but in later centuries it was **transformed from a Hinayana shrine to a Mahayana shrine**.
- Developed **during the period of the Satvahana & Ikshvaku dynasty**.
- Amaravati stupa is different from the Bharhut and Sanchi stupas. It had **free-standing columns surmounted by lions near the gateways**. The **dome was covered with sculptured panels**.
- The stupa had an **upper circumambulatory path on the drum** as at Sanchi. This path had two intricately carved railings. The **stone is greenish-white limestone** of the region.



Pillar Architecture

- A pillar is any isolated, vertical structure used in architecture or construction to serve an aesthetic or structural purpose in a building. They are often referred to as a pier, column, or post and can be built from a wide array of materials, including wood, stone, or bricks.
- The earliest example of existing pillars could be dated back to the Mauryan era i.e around 250 BC and especially under the reign of king Ashoka.
- Pillars were mainly erected for the following purposes :
 - To mark the religious sacredness of a place
 - To act as a memorial for the dead at their burial sites.
 - To act as supporting structures for houses , temples , palaces
 - To commemorate important events of the era like victory of a king in a battle, presence of an important historic personality etc. (*dvajastambha and kirtistambha*)
 - To act as a medium of mass communication for the population via inscribing messages, laws, rules for the masses.
- Stambha is actually the circular column or shaft slightly tapering towards the top,an inverted lotus shaped base is present on the top of the pillar. Crowning sculpture rests on the base present on the summit of the pillar.
- All the three portions namely the circular column, base on the column and crowning sculpture on the base are built of the single type of stone.
- Few of the finest samples of Stambhas or Ashoka Pillars present in India are the Saranath Stambha with its four lions as its crowning sculpture.
- Famous Iron pillar which is standing without any rust depicts the mastery of Indian metal-casting in the Ancient Age.

Pillar Architecture in Indus Valley Civilization

- The earliest example of pillar architecture comes from the Harappan civilization.
- Two kinds of pillars have been found at the Harappan settlement. One is a stone pillar measuring that was found at Dholavira (Gujarat). This pillar is probably used to check the water level in the reservoir.
- Pillars made up of bricks were used by Harappan in their houses. These pillars are square/rectangular in shape. These are simple. Their only purpose was to support the roof.

Mauryan's Pillars

- Mauryan Pillars (4th and 2nd Century BC) are one of the crucial architectural belongings of Ancient India. These pillars give details about the major incidents of those times, rulers, wars, etc. Thus, they are major sources of information for Historians.
- Three types of pillars were made during the Mauryan period. The 1st variety was that of a wooden pillar. These pillars were used in the palace build by Chandra Gupta Maurya. These pillars are known only from literacy reference.
- The other 2 varieties of pillars were made up of stone. Out of these 1st variety was used in the stone palace build by Ashoka to support the roof & 2nd variety represented Independent work.
- Mauryan pillars vary from pillars in other regions of the globe (such as Achaemenian pillars) in that they are rock-cut pillars, demonstrating the carver's talent.
- Two kinds of stone were used to chisel these pillars. Some are made of white sandstone from the Mathura region, while others are made of buff-colored fine-grained hard sandstone mined in Chunar near Varanasi.
- Capital is the topmost element of a pillar or column. Figures such as a bull, lion, elephant, and others were carved onto the upper half of the pillar. The capital figures (typically animals) are all carved standing on a square or circular abacus and are all forceful.
- Abacuses have stylized lotuses on them.
- The Lion Capital, a Mauryan pillar capital unearthed at Sarnath, is the best specimen of Mauryan sculpting tradition.
- The [pillars of Ashoka](#) are a series of monolithic columns dispersed throughout the Indian subcontinent, erected or at least inscribed with edicts by the Mauryan Emperor Ashoka during his reign from c. 268 to 232 BCE.
- Ashoka used the expression Dhamma thambhā (Dharma stambha), i.e. "pillars of the Dharma" to describe his own pillars. These pillars constitute important monuments of the architecture of India, most of them exhibiting the characteristic Mauryan polish.
- Of the pillars erected by Ashoka, twenty still survive including those with inscriptions of his edicts.
- Two pillars were relocated by Firuz Shah Tughlaq to Delhi.

- Major pillars are present in the Indian States of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and some parts of Haryana.
- The capital without the crowning wheel and the lotus base has been adopted as the National Emblem of Independent India.

Construction of Ashokan Pillars

- Columns were carved in two types of stone
- Some were of the spotted red and white sandstone from the region of Mathura, the others of buff-colored fine grained hard sandstone
- The pillars have four component parts in two pieces: the three sections of the capitals are made in a single piece, often of a different stone to that of the monolithic shaft
- The shafts are always plain and smooth, circular in cross-section, slightly tapering upwards and always chiselled out of a single piece of stone.
- There is no distinct base at the bottom of the shaft. The lower parts of the capitals have the shape and appearance of a gently arched bell formed of lotus petals.
- The abaci are of two types: square and plain and circular and decorated and these are of different proportions.
- The crowning animals are masterpieces of Mauryan art, shown either seated or standing, always in the round and chiselled as a single piece with the abaci.

Major Pillar Inscriptions

- Sarnath Lion Capital was erected by Ashoka in Varanasi to commemorate Dhammachakpravartana or Buddha's first discourse.
- Single lion on Vaishali Pillar in Bihar, with no inscription.
- Uttar Pradesh's Sankissa Pillar
- Champaran, Bihar: Lauriya-Nandangarth.
- Champaran, Bihar: Lauriya-Araraj
- Uttar Pradesh's Allahabad pillar.

Minor Pillar Inscriptions

- Inscription on the Rummindei Pillar: Asoka's visit to Lumbini and the exemption of Lumbini from taxation.
- Inscription on the Nigalisagar Pillar in Nepal: Asoka extended the height of Buddha Konakamana's stupa to twice its original size.



Differences between Ashokan and Persian Pillars

Asokan Pillars

Shaft→ Monoliths

Outer surface→ Smooth

Bell at top

Erected without any base

Used for inscriptions/edicts

Persian Pillars

Composite→ Joining of different pieces

Outer surface→ Grooves

Bell at top and bottom

Erected on bell shaped base

Used for supporting roof

Independent constructions

Part of palaces, not much evidence of Independent construction

Animal capital

Animal capital + Human capital

Polish was used even in the pottery – Northern Black Polished ware 6-8th century BCE

Glossy polish was used from 6th century BCE onwards