

## **THE AUTHORS SHOW – Historical Fiction**

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Harappa Trilogy is a series of three books dealing with Bronze Age Indus valley civilisation in a fictional format. All three books are now available globally on Amazon

Book One: Harappa: Lure of Soma:

I have used existing archaeological evidence along with known historical evidence in writing this book. Rigveda talks about several conflicts among the descendants of the emperor Bharata and the Avestan scriptures talk about the conflicts between the Aryans and the Dasyus. There have always been fierce debates about who exactly these Aryans were and the Daevas mentioned in the Avestan scriptures. I have used some poetic license to accommodate the dates and times of various individuals and events to suit the story telling. The book tries to portray the life of ordinary people during the period of Harappans, while trying to tell the tale of the priestly kings, Magi, Rishis and Sages of the great Indus Valley Civilisation during the middle of third millennium BCE. This is the story of our hero, Upaas, a trainee physician from Harappa. It is a story of a young man growing up, falling in love, getting involved in adventures and finally fighting for the city he loves most – Harappa. The story shows the human elements of people around him. He faces friendship, love, hate, jealousy, treachery and deceit in day to day life. There is generous sprinkling of magic and sorcery. As the country of Ariana, west of Hindu Kush dries up, the Avestans facing with near extinction take up arms against their neighbours to obtain the precious Soma. The tactics used include deceit, sorcery and finally a war between the Meluhhans and Avestans

The Soma plant has been the centrepiece of several hymns in the Vedic scriptures. It is a plant still not accurately recognized. The Vedic people revered it as a God, drank the extract from the stalk of the plant, used the plant for medicinal purposes and it is supposed to have magical properties. There are hymns composed to the Soma within the Vedas. The Avestan had a similar plant and called it Haoma and their scriptures also revered the plant for its spiritual properties. Vedas describe it as growing in a sacred mountain around a sacred lake (Mount

Mujavant and lake Sharynavat). Avestan scriptures describe a similar sacred mountain and a sacred lake in Sistan where the Haoma plant grew. Similar to the Soma of Indus valley, we still do not know exactly what this plant was as it disappeared at the same time as the Harappans. It was considered the mushroom, Amanita Muscaria for a long time because of the "hallucinogenic" effects the Soma was said to produce when consumed. This may be a misconception by the writers who tried to explain the events described in Vedic scriptures and the powers of ancient sages.

Book Two: Fall of Shuruppak:

Harappans appear to have ventured far and wide with their trade, both on land and sea. Harappan settlements spread as far west as Shortugai in Afghanistan at the head of river Oxus, which was the centre of raw materials such as Lapis Lazuli, Gold and Silver for the Harappan artisans. Harappan seals, jewellery and pottery have been found in Elam (present day Iran), Egypt, and Sumer. Jewellery found in Queen Puabi's tomb had all the hallmarks of Harappan artisans. The cylindrical Carnelian beads with central core drilled after hours of careful work is typical of the Harappans.

Cylindrical seal of Shu-ilishu, the translator has the typical humped bull on one side and cuneiform text on the other side. Archaeologists agree that he must have been a translator of Sumerian and Akkadian into Meluhhan language. He is placed to have lived in Lagash around the middle of third millennium BCE. There is archaeological evidence of Meluhhan enclaves around Lagash.

Sargon the great who ruled most of Mesopotamia from around 2300 BCE, boasts of ships from Meluhha, Dilmun and Magan docking in the port of his capital city, Akkad. The Meluhhans obviously had marine trading links with Akkad for a long time with some of them settling down in Sumer. Despite elaborate description of the city of Akkad in several tablets in cuneiform texts, the city eludes detection.

Epic of Gilgamesh is a well-known story with an almost entire story written and transcribed from cuneiform texts. Emperor Gilgamesh befriends an uncouth Enkidu from the deep forests

and a deep friendship ensues. The epic is that of undying love, sacrifice and heroism. Enkidu is mortally injured fighting a -mythical demon and only a meluhhan sage can save him.

### Book Three: Dasharajna: The Battle of Ten Kings

Book six of Rigveda describes a battle between King Sudas and “ten kings.” It is a confederacy of ten to twelve kings compiled by disgruntled descendants of King Yayathi’s sons who felt hard done by when the ageing king gives the central part of the great Bharatha kingdom to the youngest son, Puru over the elder four brothers – Yadu, Turvasu, Druhyu and Anu. King Sudas is brought up and trained by sage Vishwamitra and Vasishtha. Vishwamitra falls out with the king and the senior sage Vasishtha and joins the confederacy of ten kings. A bitter battle ensues on the banks of River Parushni (present day Ravi) between the forces of King Sudas, highly outnumbered by the huge army of “sixty six thousand” of the confederacy. God Indra intervenes and takes the side of “righteous Sudas,” and a flash flood destroys most of the army of the confederacy.

While there is no archaeological evidence of the battle or the actors within it, there is enough evidence within the Rigveda itself to place the event around the third millennium BCE. River Parushni is easily identifiable as the present day Ravi and the kingdom to be the present day Punjab, Haryana and parts of northeast Pakistan with seven rivers. This epic is considered by many to be the third epic of India, after the great epics of Mahabharata and Ramayana. Descendants of king Puru form the famous Kuru dynasty who are the actors within the great battle of Mahabharata. This battle has often been used by the proponents of the Aryan Invasion theory as proof of mighty Aryans invading India and destroying the Harappan civilisation. It is claimed that they brought the horses and Iron weapons to destroy the great Harappan empire.