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FIAS – GS Foundation 2024 | Benchmark Assignment #78

GS FOUNDATION PROGRAM 2024*to be filled by the student:***BATCH: D10**

NAME: _____

ForumIAS Roll No: 19100 _____

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Mobile No. _____

*For Office Use Only***Feedbacks:**

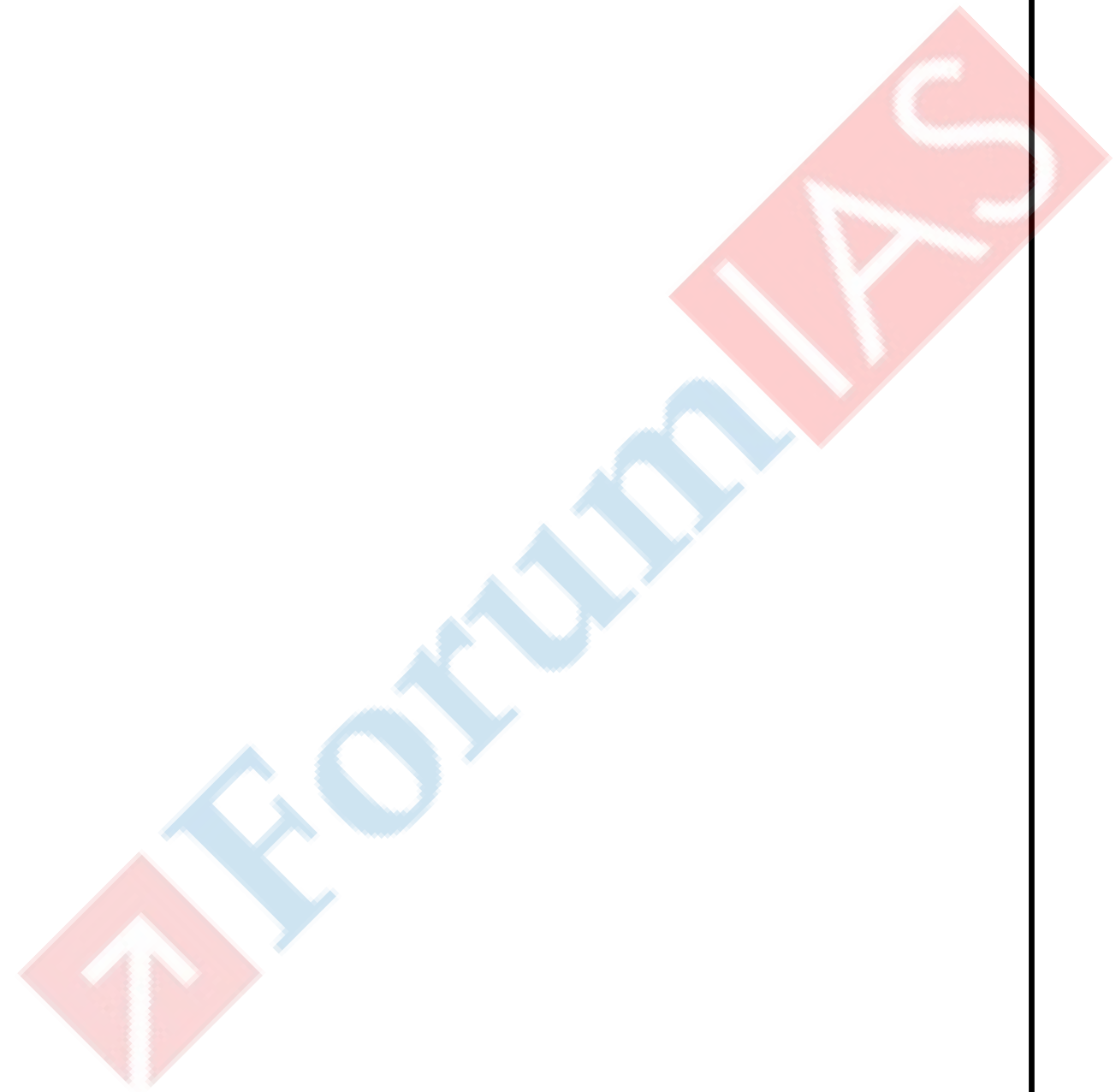
	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Average	Immediate Efforts/Improvement Required
Content					
Presentation					
Structure					
Consistency					
Revision/Recall					

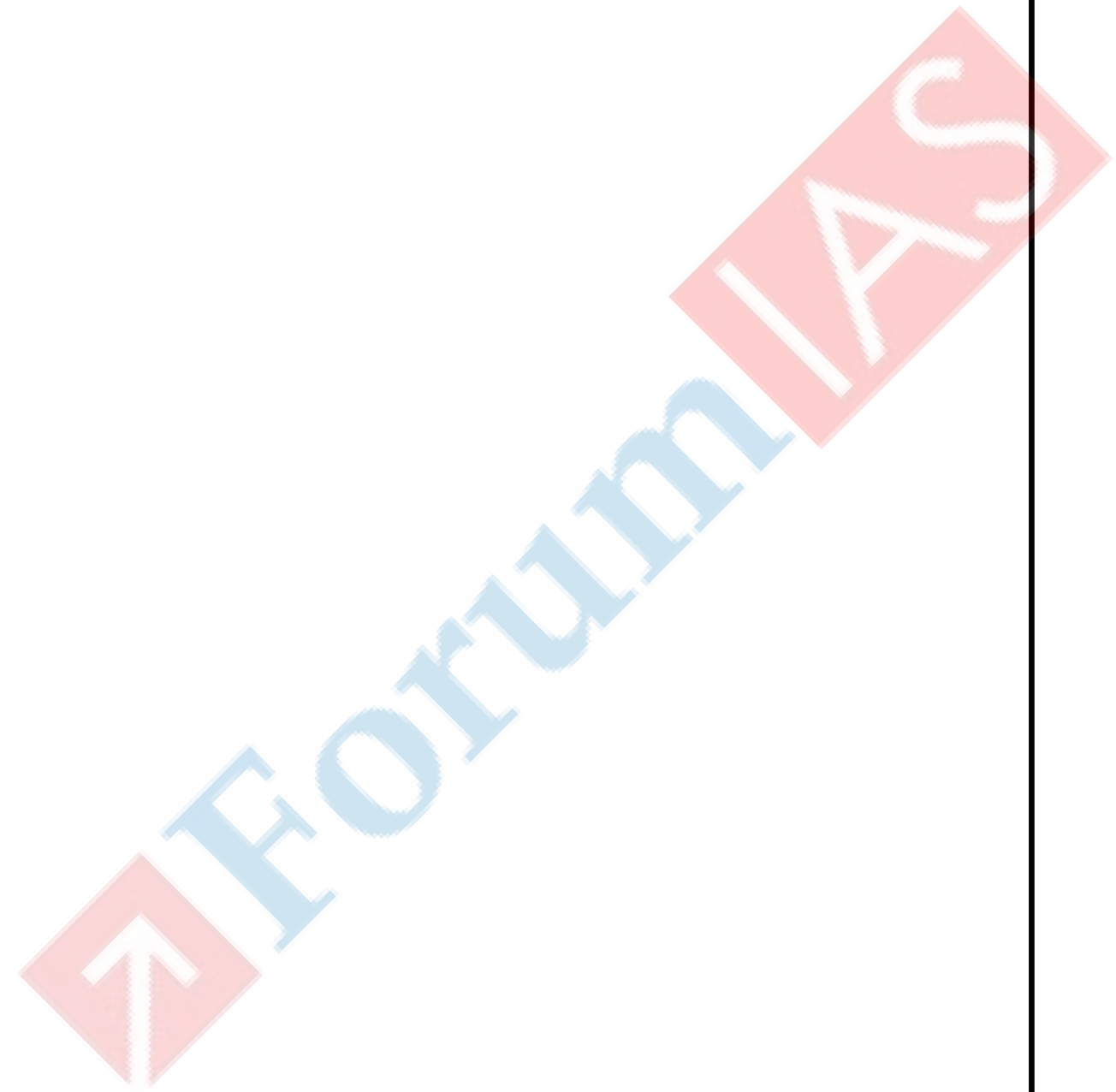
Marks:

Subjective	Objective	Total

Subjective Questions:

Q.1) Describe the cultural significance of Mauryan pillars. How are they similar or dissimilar to Achaemenian pillars? (15 marks, 250 words)





Objective Questions:

Q.1) With reference to the difference in cultural and material life between Indus Valley Civilization and Rig Vedic age, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Indus Valley people worshipped mother goddess, trees and animals while Rig Vedic people worshipped Indra, Varuna, Agni, Soma, Aditi.
2. Polychrome pottery was not known to the Harappan people but was known to Rig Vedic people.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- ☐ a) 1 only
- ☐ b) 2 only
- ☐ c) Both 1 and 2
- ☐ d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.2) With reference to the Harappan civilization, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. There is evidence of used well-fired pottery.
2. There is evidence of the usage of cotton and wool.
3. There is evidence of usage of cosmetic products.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- ☐ a) 1 and 3 only
- ☐ b) 3 only
- ☐ c) 2 only
- ☐ d) 1, 2 and 3

Q.3) Consider the following statements regarding ornaments during Harappan period:

1. Ornaments like girdles, earrings and anklets were worn by both men and women.
2. Bead making factories were located in Chanhudaro and Lothal.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- ☐ a) 1 only
- ☐ b) 2 only
- ☐ c) Both 1 and 2
- ☐ d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.4) The typical pottery of the Mauryan period has been classified as

- ☐ a) Northern Black Polished ware
- ☐ b) Ochre coloured pottery
- ☐ c) Painted grey ware
- ☐ d) None of the above

Q.5) With reference to the ancient inscriptions and edicts, consider the following statements:

1. Mehrauli Inscription mentions the Ashoka's human approach in internal administration.
2. Aihole Inscription mentions the defeat of Harshavardhana by Pulkeshin II.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- ☐ a) 1 only
- ☐ b) 2 only
- ☐ c) Both 1 and 2
- ☐ d) Neither 1 nor 2

GS Foundation Program 2024 | D10 | Benchmark Assignment #78

Subjective Questions:

Q.1) Describe the cultural significance of Mauryan pillars. How are they similar or dissimilar to Achaemenian pillars?

Approach: Introduce with a brief description of Mauryan pillars. Mention the cultural significance of Mauryan Pillars. Compare and contrast Mauryan Pillars with Achaemenian pillars in a tabular format. Conclude saying how artistic styles and designs would have influenced Mauryans but there was a history of indigenous development of that craft.

The Mauryan pillars are the **monolithic rock-cut pillars** made of **Chunar sandstone** erected all over the Mauryan Empire during the **reign of Ashoka in third century BCE**. These pillars carried **inscriptions and animal capital figures** and were a symbol of State to **commemorate battle victories and propagate imperial sermons**.



Figure 1: Mauryan pillars

The pillars comprised of four parts - long monolithic **shaft** slightly tapering upwards made of chunar sandstone, stylized lotus or bell-shaped **Capital base**, a **square or circular abacus** on the capital, and **capital figures** - at top portion of the pillar with carved animals like bull, horse, lion, elephant, etc.

Cultural meaning of symbols associated with the Ashokan pillars had a **special Buddhist significance** but **also blended with Jainism and Brahmanical traditions**.

The cultural significance of Mauryan Pillars are:

1. Mauryan Pillar columns depict **the territorial spread** of Mauryan empire. Pillars were found at Sanchi, Vaishali, Rampurva, Sankisa and Sarnath. They also **depict important events during rule of Ashoka**. For example: Kalinga war. Ashokan pillars edicts at Rummindei and Nigali Sagar had commemorative inscriptions engraved on them. Thus, they provide written inputs for reconstruction of historical past.

2. Mauryan pillar inscriptions had **messages of dhamma** transforming the pillars into **epigraphic monuments of unique cultural meaning**. It played a very important role in popularizing and **propagating Buddhism** in India.
3. The **sculptural motifs on the abacus** of Ashokan pillars had a rich and varied symbolism in harmony with **dhamma message** and in resonance with **different Indian religious traditions**.
 - a) **Lotus** - Symbol of purity and abundance.
 - b) **Wheel** - Symbolizes **dhamma chakra** representing Buddha's first sermon. It is a symbol of creation and time in Vedic texts.
 - c) **Bull** - Symbol of fertility
 - d) **Elephant** - Representing Maya in Buddhism, White elephant symbolizing Tirthankaras in Jainism and Gaja Laxmi & wealth in Brahmanical tradition.
4. The **Lion Capital found at Sarnath**, executed with precision is the finest example of Mauryan craftsmanship, was adopted as **Indian national emblem**.

Ancient India and Ancient Iran shared a **common cultural heritage** due to **interaction** either through **trade or conquest** of Gandhara by Persian emperors. There were multiple similarities as well as dissimilarity between Mauryan and Achaemenian pillars as discussed below:

Mauryan Pillars	Achaemenian Pillars
Similarities	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It has been suggested that Ashoka got the idea of inscribing proclamations on pillars from the Achaemenids. 2. Inscriptions of both Kings (Darius and Ashoka) begin in third person and then move on to first person. 3. The animal capital figures with polished surface are common to both Mauryan and Achaemenian pillars. 4. The style of carving animals was similar. In the Achaemenian context capital figures were double bulls and horses while Mauryan capital figures consisted of carved standing bull, elephant and lion. Both have common motifs like lotus. However, the shapes of motifs are different. 	
	

Figure 1: Left: Mauryan animal capital; Right: Achaemenian animal carving. Similarity in design of whiskers, the eyes, the fur etc.

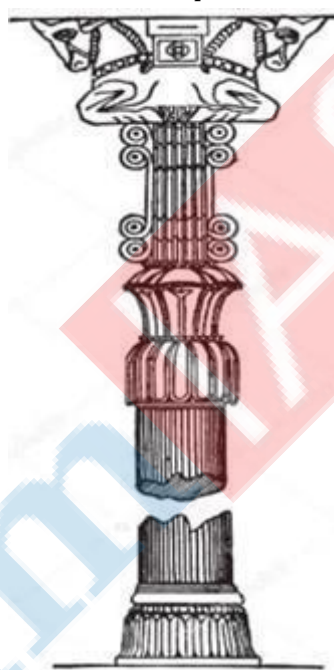
Dissimilarities

1. The Mauryan pillars were **free-standing structures independently erected** all over the Empire with **royal inscriptions** engraved on them.



2. The shafts of the Mauryan pillars were **monolithic** i.e. carved from single piece of **buff-coloured Chunar sandstones** slightly **tapered** towards the top with a **smooth polished surface**
3. In the Mauryan pillars, the **inverted lotus appears at the top** of the shaft. Shape and ornamentation of lotus are different.

1. The Achaemenian Pillars were generally **attached to State buildings**. Persepolis had elaborate pillars.



2. Shafts of Persian pillars were constructed by **cementing pieces of sandstone** by a mason with a **grooved/fluted surface**. These pillars are **not tapered**.
3. The Persian **pillars stand on bases** either **shaped like a bell** (inverted lotus) or a **plain rectangular or circular block**. Persian columns are crowned with a cluster of stylized palm leaves.

Artistic influences do travel over vast distances, but Ashokan pillars cannot in their entirety be attributed to Persian influence. **Historians** have cited **pre-existing traditions of stone and wooden carving** and a history of **indigenous development** of the sculptural techniques.

Objective Questions:

Q.1) With reference to the difference in cultural and material life between Indus Valley Civilization and Rig Vedic age, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Indus Valley people worshipped mother goddess, trees and animals while Rig Vedic people worshipped Indra, Varuna, Agni, Soma, Aditi.
2. Polychrome pottery was not known to the Harappan people but was known to Rig Vedic people.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- ☐ a) 1 only
- ☐ b) 2 only
- ☐ c) Both 1 and 2
- ☐ d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans) a

Exp) Option a is correct.

Statement 1 is correct. Harappans worshipped trees and mother goddess. The picture of diety was represented on a seal in the Pipal tree. Animals were also worshipped in Harappan times like **the one horned animal unicorn**. Similarly, the animals surrounding **Pashupati Mahadeva** indicating that these were worshipped.

Rig Vedic people personified natural forces and looked upon them as living beings to whom they gave human and animal attributes. The most important divinity was **Indra**. **They also worshipped Agni, Varuna, Aditi, Soma.**

Statement 2 is incorrect. Polychrome pottery were known to Harappans but were rare and mainly comprised small vases decorated with geometric patterns in red, black, green, rarely white and yellow. **The Rig Vedic people used painted grey ware pottery.** Knowledge Base: In Harappan civilization, Plain pottery was more common than Painted ware. It was generally of red clay with or without a fine red or grey slip.

In Harappan civilization, Gods were not placed in temples. Harappans believed in ghosts and evil forces as large number of amulets were found.

Q.2) With reference to the Harappan civilization, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. There is evidence of used well-fired pottery.
2. There is evidence of the usage of cotton and wool.
3. There is evidence of usage of cosmetic products.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- ☐ a) 1 and 3 only
- ☐ b) 3 only
- ☐ c) 2 only
- ☐ d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans) d

Exp) Option d is correct.

Statement 1 is correct. The Harappans used diverse variety of pottery for daily use. They used well-fired pottery. Their potteries have deep red slip and black paintings.

Statement 2 is correct. It is evident from the discovery of a large number of spindles and spindle whorls in the houses of the Indus Valley that spinning of cotton and wool was very common.

Statement 3 is correct. From the archeological findings, we found different hairstyles were in vogue and wearing of a beard was popular among them. Cinnabar were used as cosmetic and face-paint, lipstick, collyrium were also known to them.

Q.3) Consider the following statements regarding ornaments during Harrapan period:

1. Ornaments like girdles, earrings and anklets were worn by both men and women.
2. Bead making factories were located in Chanhudaro and Lothal.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- ☐ a) 1 only
- ☐ b) 2 only
- ☐ c) Both 1 and 2
- ☐ d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans) b

Exp) Option b is correct.

Statement 1 is incorrect. The Harappans used a large variety of materials, from precious metals and gemstones to bones and even baked clay, to make ornaments. Both men and women wore ornaments like necklaces, fillets, armlets and finger rings. Girdles, earrings and anklets were worn only by women.

Statement 2 is correct. Beads made from carnelian, amethyst, quartz, steatite, etc. were quite popular and were produced on a large scale, as is evident from the factories discovered in Chanhudaro and Lothal.

Q.4) The typical pottery of the Mauryan period has been classified as

- ☐ a) Northern Black Polished ware
- ☐ b) Ochre coloured pottery
- ☐ c) Painted grey ware
- ☐ d) None of the above

Ans) a

Exp) Option a is correct. The distinguishing pottery of the Mauryan Period was Northern Black Polished Ware. It is characterized by black paint and a highly lustrous finish and was generally used as luxury items.

Option b is incorrect. Ochre colored pottery is of Vedic age.

Option c is incorrect. The painted grey ware is from the Late Harappan period.

Q.5) With reference to the ancient inscriptions and edicts, consider the following statements:

1. Mehrauli Inscription mentions the Ashoka's human approach in internal administration.
2. Aihole Inscription mentions the defeat of Harshavardhana by Pulakeshin II.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- ☐ a) 1 only
- ☐ b) 2 only
- ☐ c) Both 1 and 2
- ☐ d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans) b

Exp) Option b is correct

The Mauryan art can be classified into court art and Popular art. These are further divided into subclasses: the court art includes places, pillars and stupas and the popular art comprises caves, pottery and sculptures. The inscription of pillars as a symbol of the state or to commemorate battle victories gained a great significance during the reign of Ashoka.

Statement 1 is incorrect: The rock edicts of Kalsi inscription described Ashoka's human approach in his internal administration when he converted to Buddhism. It also reflects the policies for the commitment to non-violence and restriction of war. The inscription also tells about Ashoka's life when he took the path of spirituality. The language of these edicts is Prakrit, and the script is Brahmi. The rock edict was written around 450 BC.

Statement 2 is correct: Aihole inscription in Karnataka mentions the defeat of Harshavardhana of Vardhana dynasty by Pulakeshin II and the victory of Chalukyas over Pallavas. Aihole was the first capital of Chalukyas. The inscription is written in Sanskrit, and it is in Kannada script. This inscription also mentions the shifting of the capital of chalukyas from Aihole to Badami.