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978-0-521-57219-4 - The Ancient Indus: Urbanism, Economy, and Society

Rita P. Wright

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The Ancient Indus

The ancient Indus civilization was erased from human memory until 1924, when it was rediscovered and announced in the *Illustrated London News*. Our understanding of the Indus has been partially advanced by textual sources from Mesopotamia that contain references to Meluhha, a land identified by cuneiform specialists as the Indus, with which the ancient Mesopotamians traded and engaged in other forms of interaction. In this volume, Rita P. Wright uses both Mesopotamian texts and, principally, the results of archaeological excavations and surveys to draw a rich account of the Indus civilization's well-planned cities, its sophisticated alterations to the landscape, and the complexities of its agropastoral and craft-producing economy. She focuses principally on the social networks established between city and rural communities; farmers, pastoralists, and craft producers; and Indus merchants and traders and the symbolic imagery that the civilization shared with contemporary cultures in Iran, Mesopotamia, Central Asia, and the Persian Gulf region. Broadly comparative, her study emphasizes the interconnected nature of early societies.

Rita P. Wright is associate professor of anthropology at New York University. A John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fellow, she has conducted archaeological field research in Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan. She is the editor of *Gender and Archaeology* and coeditor, with Cathy L. Costin, of *Craft and Social Identity*.

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This book is the tenth to be published in the series Case Studies in Early Societies, which I founded with Cambridge University Press. Seven other

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