

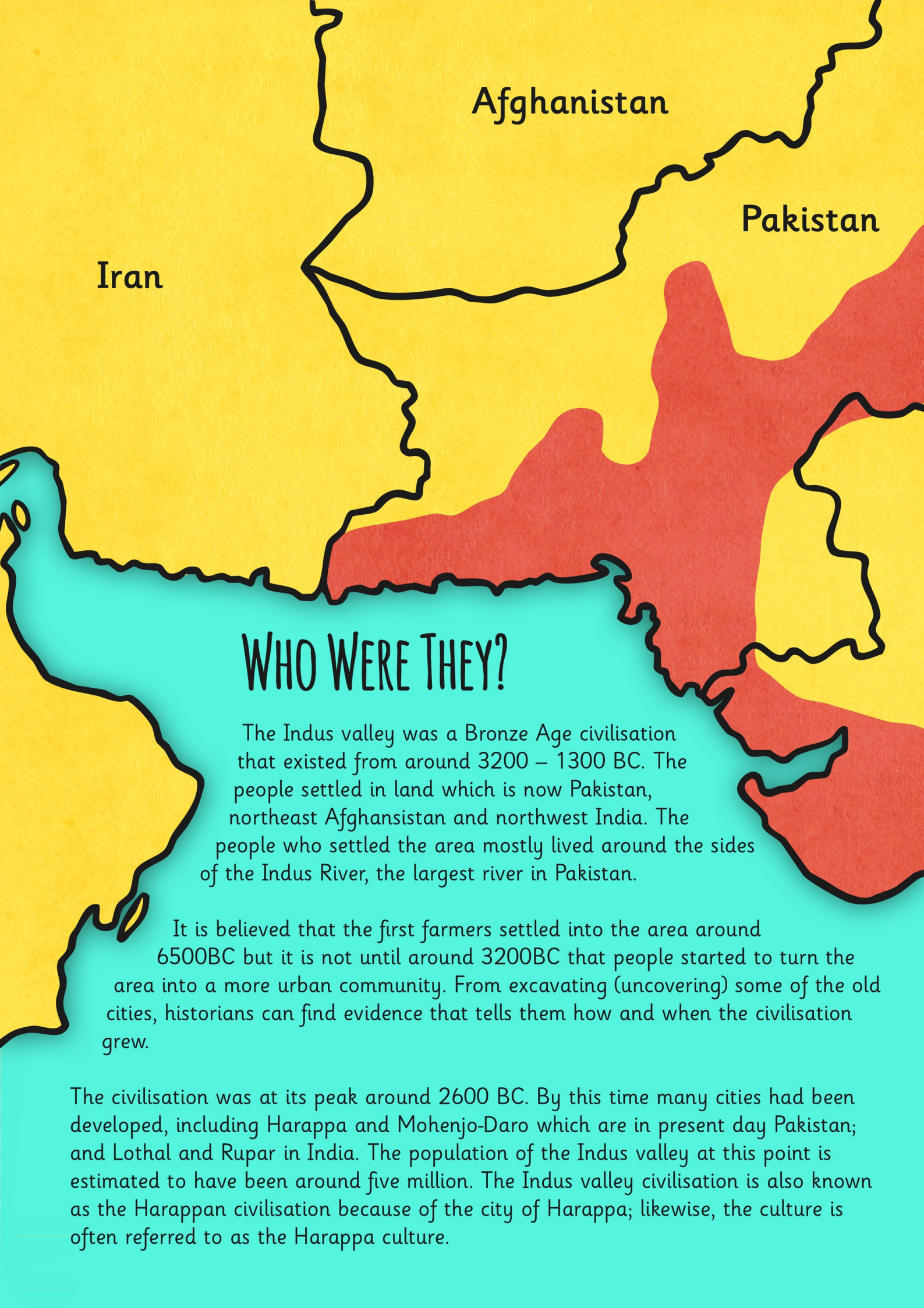
INDUS VALLEY

ANCIENT CIVILISATION

3300 - 1500 BC



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Afghanistan

Pakistan

Iran

WHO WERE THEY?

The Indus valley was a Bronze Age civilisation that existed from around 3200 – 1300 BC. The people settled in land which is now Pakistan, northeast Afghanistan and northwest India. The people who settled the area mostly lived around the sides of the Indus River, the largest river in Pakistan.

It is believed that the first farmers settled into the area around 6500BC but it is not until around 3200BC that people started to turn the area into a more urban community. From excavating (uncovering) some of the old cities, historians can find evidence that tells them how and when the civilisation grew.

The civilisation was at its peak around 2600 BC. By this time many cities had been developed, including Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro which are in present day Pakistan; and Lothal and Rupar in India. The population of the Indus valley at this point is estimated to have been around five million. The Indus valley civilisation is also known as the Harappan civilisation because of the city of Harappa; likewise, the culture is often referred to as the Harappa culture.

China

Nepal

India



HARAPPA

The Discovery

The ruins of the city of Harappa were first talked about in 1842 by Charles Masson, an English soldier and explorer. He heard from local people about an ancient city which they said was 25 miles wide.

In 1856, the East Indian Railway company was building a railway to connect the cities of Karachi and Lahore. They needed to form a stable base for the railway and used bricks from an old ruined city, called

Brahminabad, reducing it to rubble. Further up the line, they also took bricks from Harappa. Alexander Cunningham, an archaeologist, wanted to conduct a survey in 1861, but was not given the funds.

It was not until 1921 that a dig led by Sir John Marshall (left) and Rai Bahadur Daya Ram Sahni (far left) started to uncover the remains of the ancient city.



What They Found

What John Marshall found at the site was a Bronze Age city which was 250 acres in size, very large for a city of that time (about 125 football fields!)

Unfortunately, the city was damaged when the railway company used the bricks from the site.

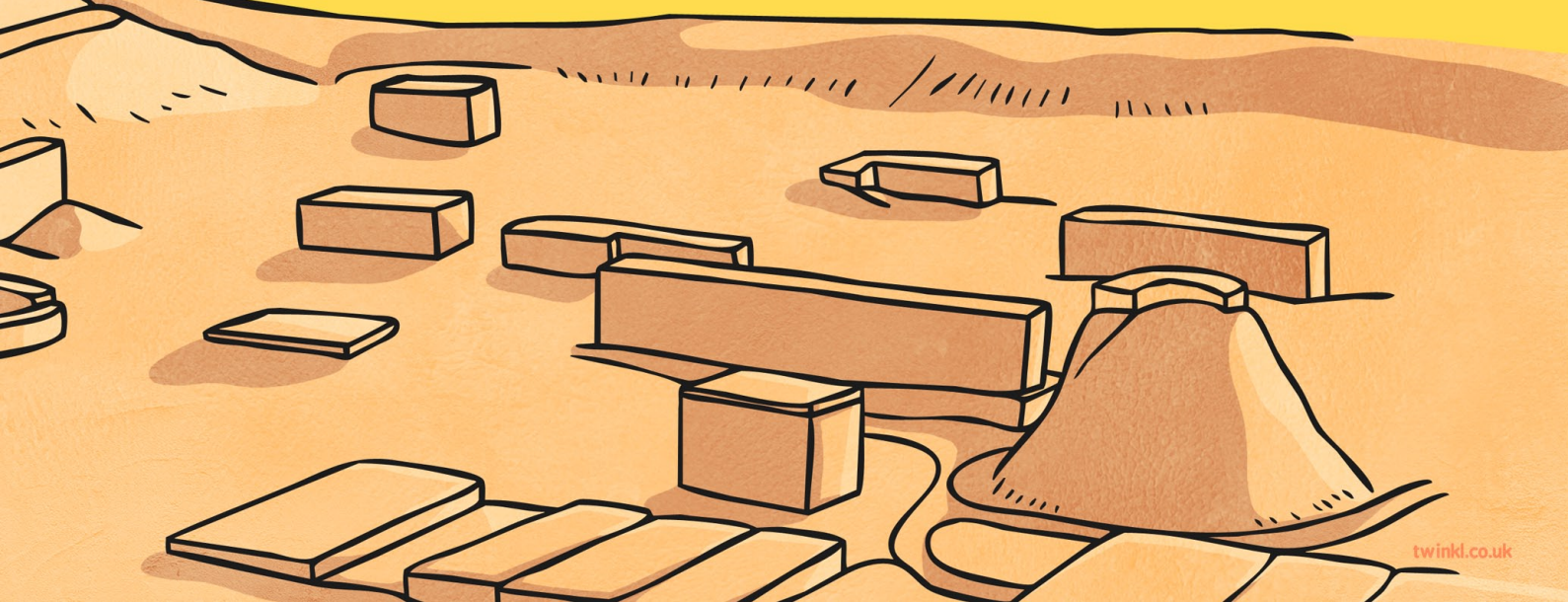
The city of Harappa gave the modern world the first clue that people had lived in cities in Pakistan and India during the Bronze Age. Previously, it was thought that the first cities dated back to only 500BC. The first settlers lived off the land, keeping farms with animals and crops. It is thought that towards the end of the Indus Valley civilisation they made a lot of trade with the Sumerians who lived to the west.

The team digging up the site noticed that at one point the city was surrounded by large walls, likely to have been built to keep something out, perhaps animals or maybe people. Another theory is that they were there to control what people were bringing in and out of the city, which



means they might have had guards at the entrance checking peoples' goods. Given the nearby Indus River, maybe they were there for flood protection.

Keeping clean was very important, shown by the existence of the first known cleaning areas. A well would be used to collect water for people to wash themselves (see photo above). The water would then drain away in the small drain which runs along the bottom. This method of draining sewage and water is more advanced than many sewage systems in the world today.



MOHENJO-DARO

The Discovery

The discovery of Harappa by the Indus River gave John Marshall a good idea of where to keep looking. Together with an Indian historian called Rakhaldas Bandyopadhyay (also known as R D Benerji), he found the ruins of Mohenjo-daro further south down the river.

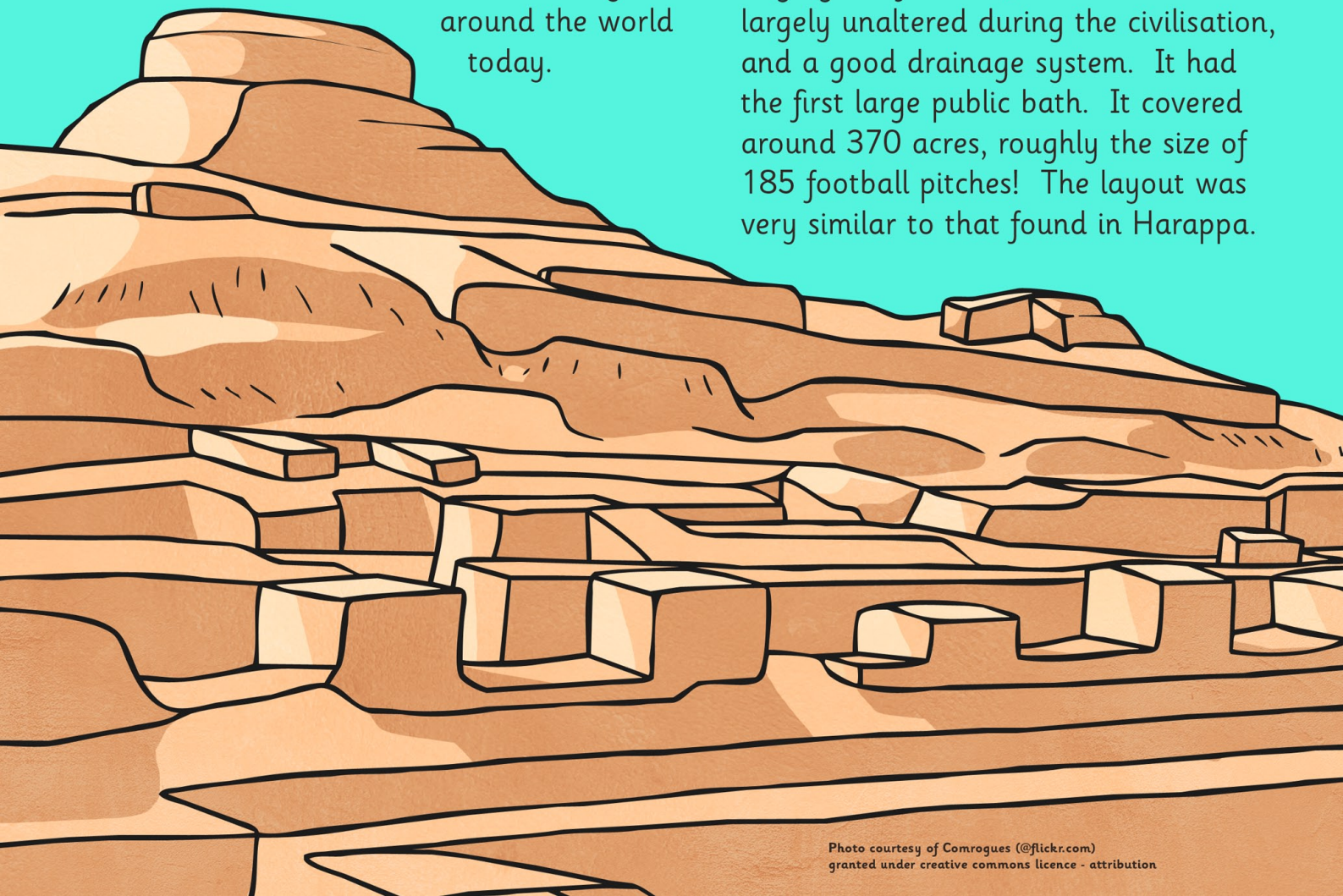
The original name for the city is not known. Mohenjo-daro means 'Mound of the Dead' in Sindhi. Historians have also suggested (based on analysis of a seal) that the city was called Kukkutarma, meaning 'City of the Cockerel'. Cock fighting may have happened and chickens bred for more than just a source a food.

Perhaps this was the start of chicken breeding around the world today.



The Size

The city was built around 2600 BCE, around the start of the peak of the Indus civilisation. The building of Mohenjo-daro required a massive amount of planning. The city had a large grid of streets, which remained largely unaltered during the civilisation, and a good drainage system. It had the first large public bath. It covered around 370 acres, roughly the size of 185 football pitches! The layout was very similar to that found in Harappa.



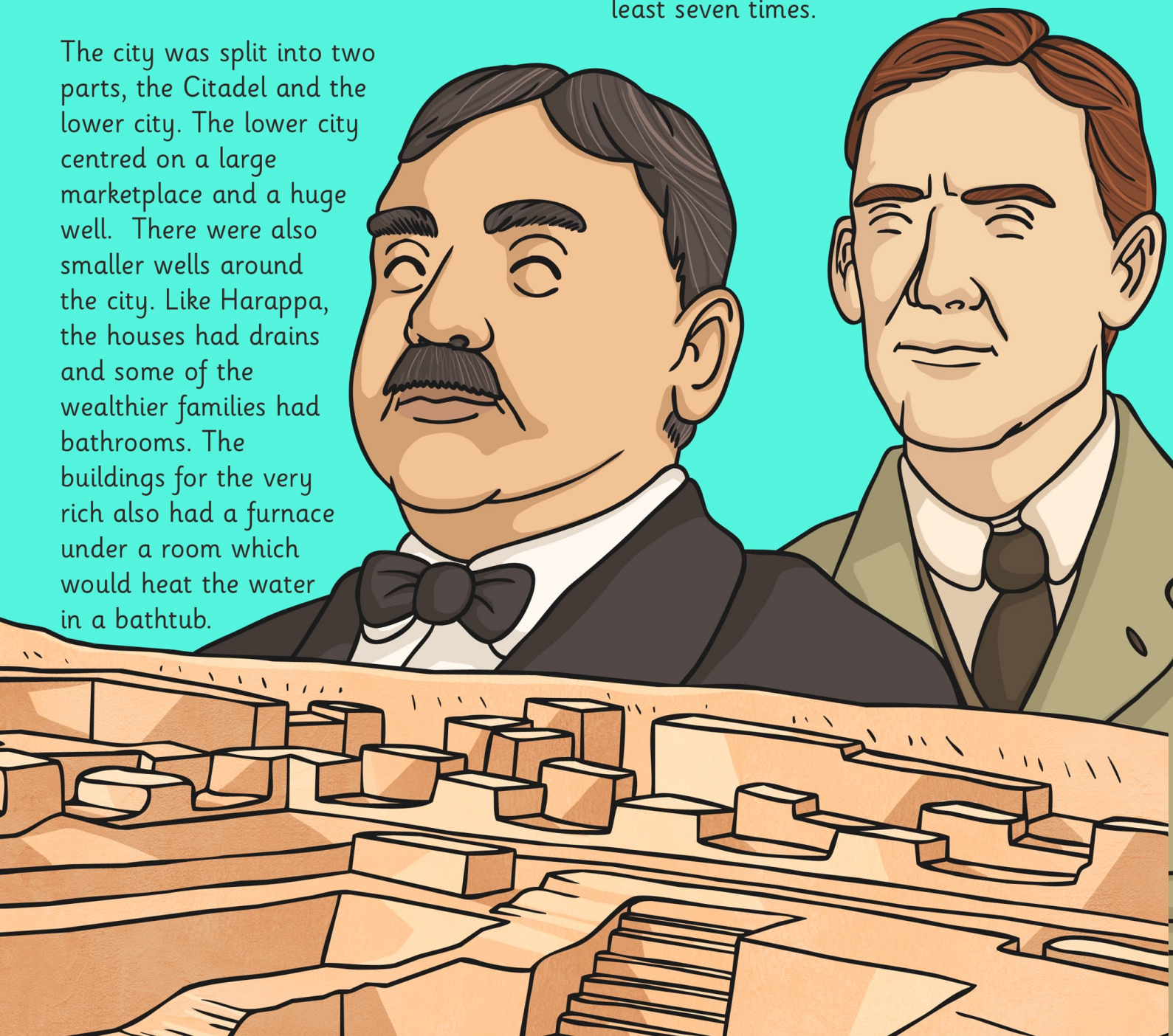
What They Found

Judging from the ruins found, the city population would have been around 40,000, very large for the time. Evidence suggests that there was an administration system organising the construction. The bricks were all made to the same standard size and the grid and drainage system planned in advance. Reservoirs and wells were built for water collection. The presence of a large number of public buildings points to the people who lived there being friendly with each other.

The city was split into two parts, the Citadel and the lower city. The lower city centred on a large marketplace and a huge well. There were also smaller wells around the city. Like Harappa, the houses had drains and some of the wealthier families had bathrooms. The buildings for the very rich also had a furnace under a room which would heat the water in a bathtub.

Most of the family buildings had courtyards which might have been used for cooking. Some houses also had two floors.

Mohenjo-daro has no walls around the outside, perhaps they did not think this city would need to be defended against enemies. Walls would have kept out flood water though, which is possibly what destroyed some of the town. There is evidence the city was destroyed and rebuilt on top of the remains at least seven times.



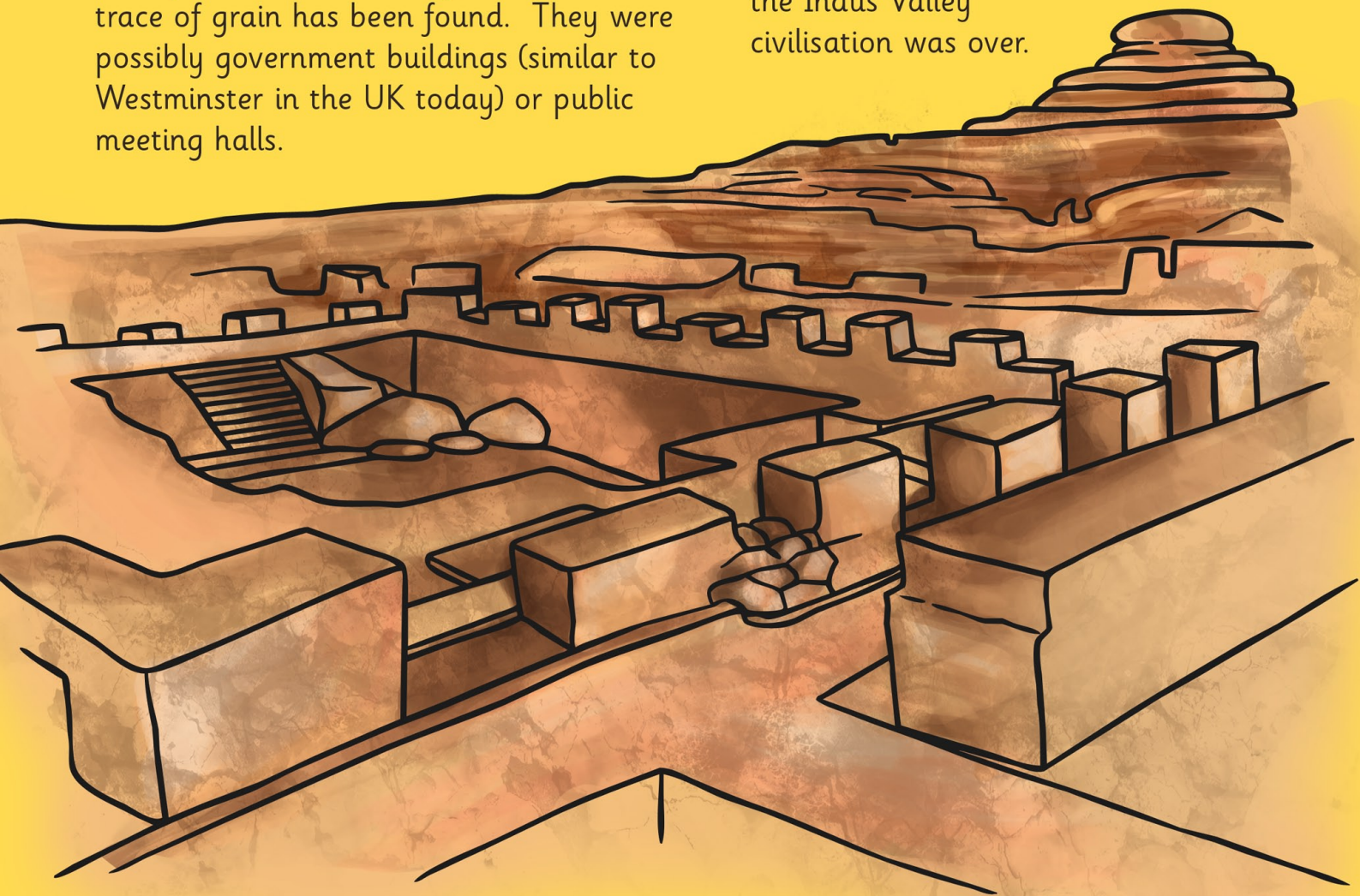
THE BUILDINGS

The Citadel

The Citadel was the other half of Mohenjo-daro, a mud brick mound around 12m high which supported a number of different buildings. There was a large bathhouse, a big residential building and two great halls. Initially it was thought one of these halls was a granary but no trace of grain has been found. They were possibly government buildings (similar to Westminster in the UK today) or public meeting halls.

Most of these buildings were made using wood so only the bricks have lasted this long.

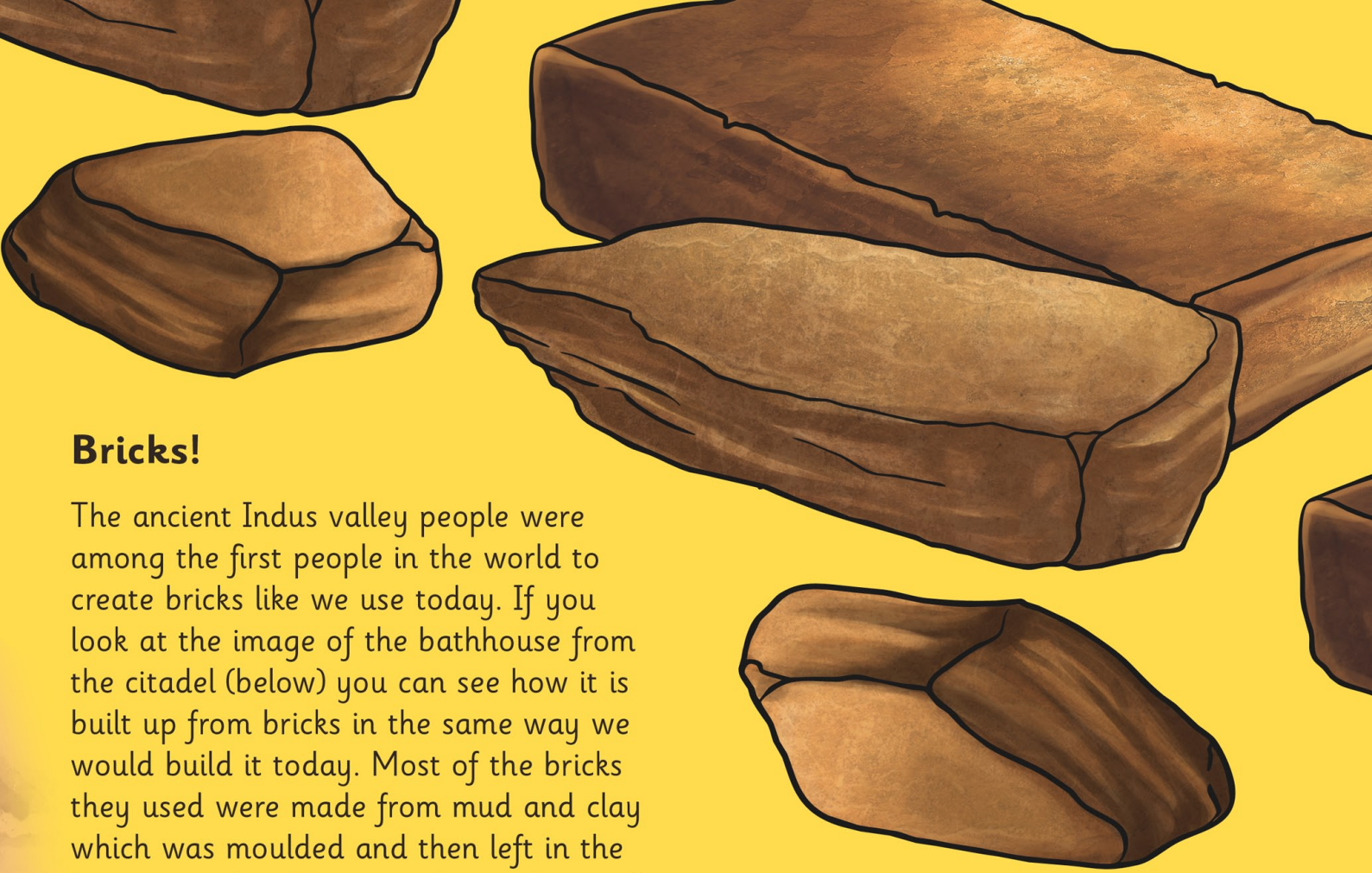
At the top of the hill in the citadel there is a mound. This is a stupa; an ancient dome-shaped building built for Buddhist worship. This was built around 200 BC, long after the Indus Valley civilisation was over.



Rich and Poor

Most of the buildings in the town were very similar which means within the city it is likely there was no big gap between the rich and the poor. However, it is not known whether there were more buildings for poorer people outside the city which would probably have been made of wood.

Wood, unlike brick, does not last for thousands of years; it rots away over time. So if there ever were shanty towns or slums, it is unlikely that clear evidence will be found.



Bricks!

The ancient Indus valley people were among the first people in the world to create bricks like we use today. If you look at the image of the bathhouse from the citadel (below) you can see how it is built up from bricks in the same way we would build it today. Most of the bricks they used were made from mud and clay which was moulded and then left in the hot sun to dry. They may have also used a kiln (large oven). The bricks are so strong they have lasted over 4000 years!

An Indus Valley House

The houses that can be seen in the old cities like Harappa and Mohenjo-Dora had very thick walls. This kept the people inside cool in the heat of the summer. A family may only have had one room in their house apart from the courtyard. There would have been no windows on the side that faced the main streets as it would let in too much noise and dust.

The roof of the house was made from wooden beams and mud-plaster. It would have been strong enough to walk on and people could go up onto it to hang washing, play or just relax.



ARTS AND WRITING INDUS VALLEY CULTURE

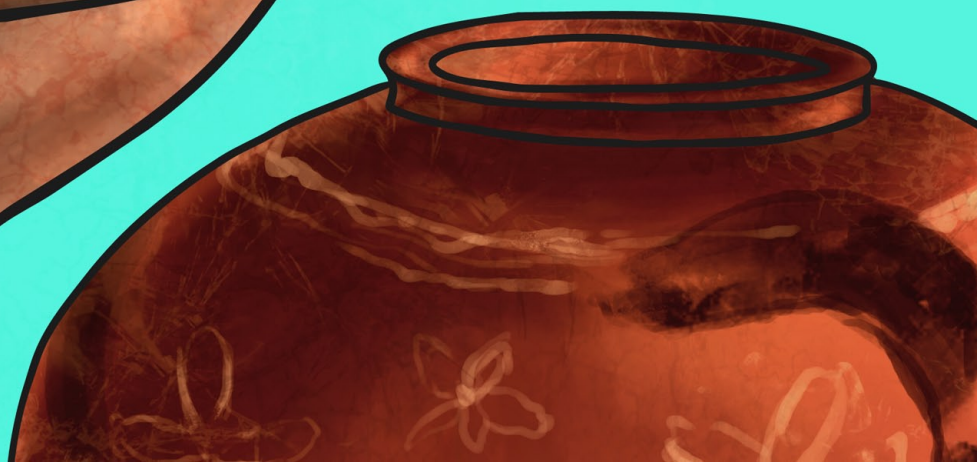
The Writing

Unlike ancient texts such as the hieroglyphics from the ancient Egyptians, no-one has yet translated the letters and symbols from the Indus Valley. There are between 400 and 600 symbols that have been found.

Most Indus scripts are about four or five characters long and most of them are very tiny and can be difficult to read. It is thought that they were used to represent families, religion and gods. It has also been suggested that the symbols represent trade and sales. The symbols appear on ritual items like carvings and small statues which means the symbols were likely to be quite important to them.

Jewellery

Archaeologists have found evidence that the Indus people wore jewellery; mostly beads on necklaces, ear-rings, amulets and bracelets. At Harappa, they found the body of a man who had been buried with a necklace with over 300 soapstone beads on it.





The Priest-King

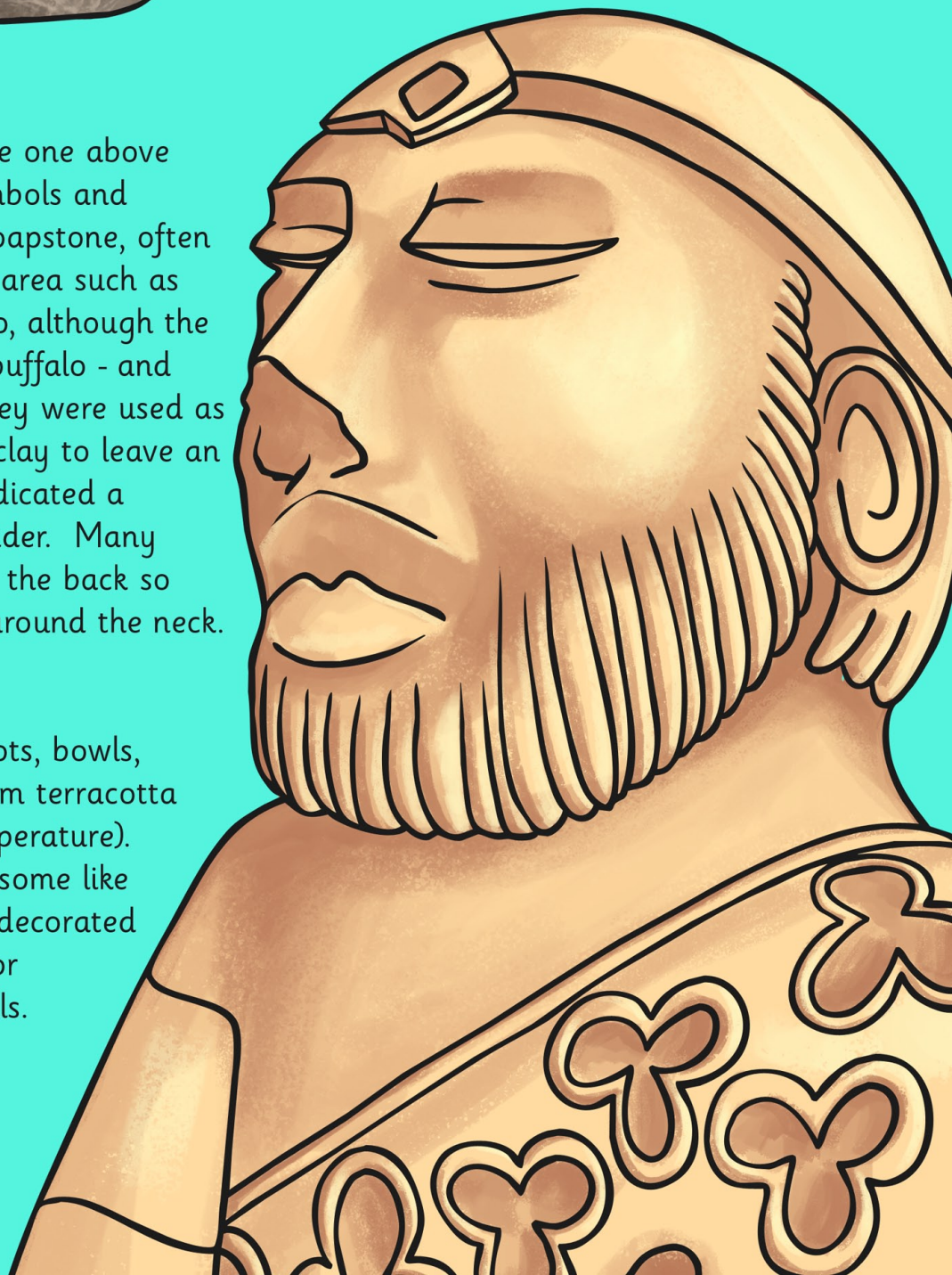
The 'Priest-King' (below) is a small statue found at Mohenjo-Daro in 1927. It shows the head of a man with a headband and beard. He wears a robe with a three-leaf pattern on it. It is not known who he was to the Indus but he must have been quite important to have a statue made of him. He may have been a leader who lived in the citadel or possibly even a God, although no clear evidence exists of organised religion.

Seals

Thousands of seals like the one above have been found with symbols and pictures carved into the soapstone, often animals that lived in that area such as elephants, tigers and rhino, although the most common are water buffalo - and unicorns! It is believed they were used as stamps, pressed into soft clay to leave an indentifiable mark that indicated a certain craftsman or trader. Many were found with a hole in the back so they were possibly worn around the neck.

Pots

The Indus people made pots, bowls, dishes, cups and vases from terracotta (clay baked at a high temperature). Most pots were plain but some like the ones on the left were decorated with flower-like patterns or sometimes with animals.



DAILY LIFE

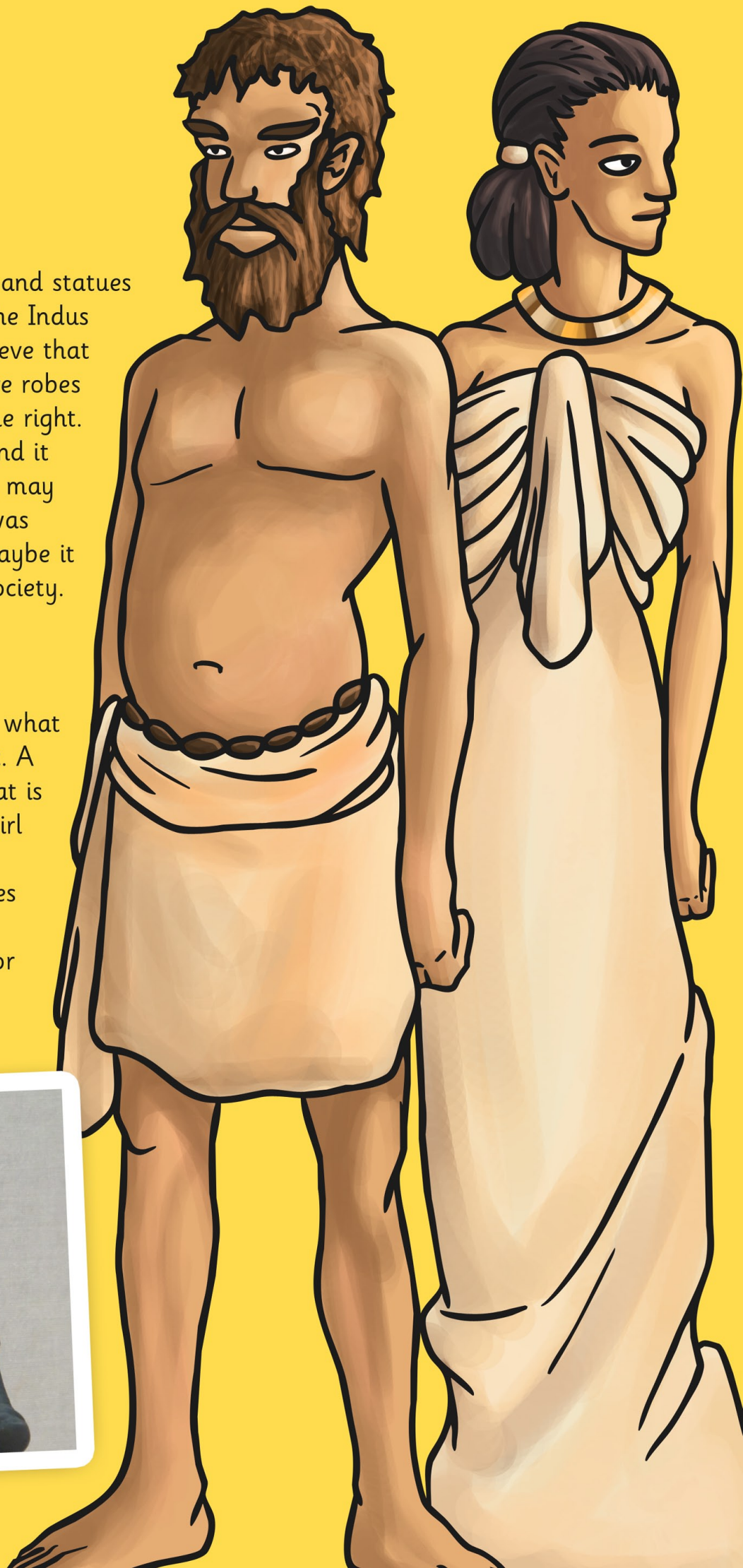
WORK AND PLAY

Getting Dressed

From looking at paintings and statues that have been found of the Indus people, archaeologists believe that men and women both wore robes similar to the people on the right. Everyone wore jewellery and it even looks like the women may have worn lipstick! Hair was worn in different styles, maybe it showed their position in society.

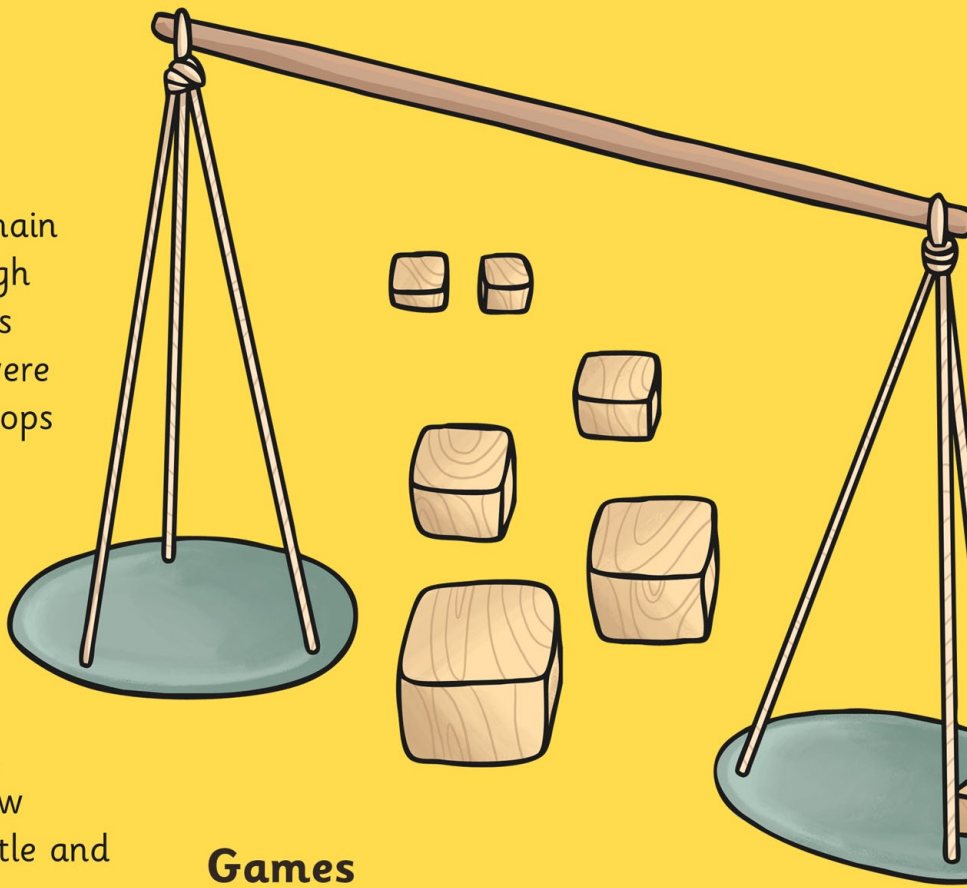
Entertainment

Not much is known about what they did for entertainment. A small bronze statue of what is thought to be a dancing girl (below) was found at Mohenjo-daro which implies they did enjoy dancing, maybe for entertainment or perhaps as a ritual dance.



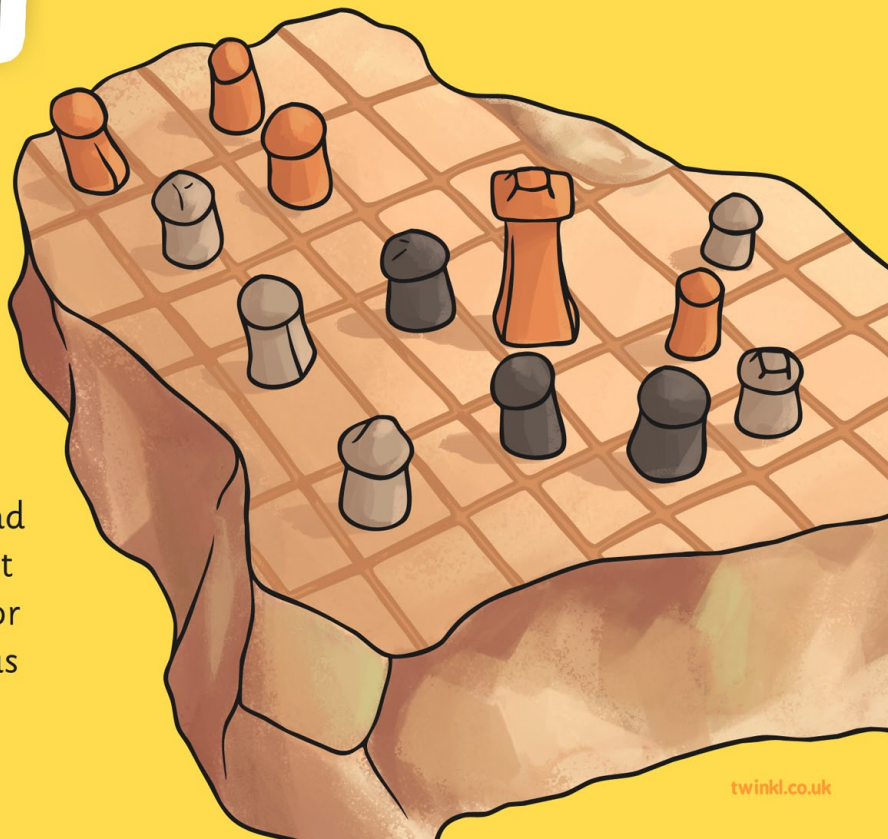
Farming

Like all ancient civilisations, the main way of making money was through crops and animals. Near the Indus city of Lothal a series of canals were found which were used to keep crops with enough water through the growing seasons. The area would have been flooded a lot so there must have been some way of keeping the water in control. The farmers would have grown barley, peas, wheat, dates, melons and cotton. They also grew cotton and raised sheep, pigs, cattle and chickens.



Games

Excavations of the cities have produced many items that provide an idea of the kinds of toys and games that people played with. As well as the cart, other items include whistles shaped like birds, dice games, nodding monkeys and a type of board game (below) which looks quite similar to a chess board.



Trading

Trade was important too, many of the items made like pottery and jewellery were transported around the Indus Valley and many of the traded goods found have the clay seals on them. The traders and merchants would have been the wealthier people in the Indus valley and would travel with their goods on a cart which may have been pulled by oxen or buffalo, similar to the clay toy that was found (above).

WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM?

The disappearance

It seems that at around 1900 BC something started to change and people started to leave the cities. There are many different opinions from historians about why this happened but these are all theories with little evidence to point towards a definite conclusion.

The Theories

1. Fighting

One theory behind why they left is that there was an invasion from the Aryan people. The Aryans were a tribe from Central Asia. The archaeologist Mortimer Wheeler discovered 37 skeletons in Mohenjo-Daro that he believed looked like they were running away from someone as they died. There is also evidence that some of the towns and villages had been burned to the ground. Trade between other countries like the Ancient Egyptians, Aryans and the Mesopotamians started to slow down around this time. However, no weapons have been found, if there was a war it left little evidence behind.

2. Migration

The second most popular theory is that there were a lot of people coming into the area from outside the civilisation (immigration). It is thought that a lot of Aryan traders and farmers came into the area and their cattle may have slowly destroyed some of the canals and land that the Indus people needed to live off.

3. Weather

The most popular theory is linked with weather and climate change. There are a few ideas about how this would have changed the land they lived in. Perhaps there was a change in the amount of rain during monsoon season (the time of year when it rains heavily and floods the land). It was the heavy monsoon rain that brought the water into the canals for the farmers to use. If the monsoons weakened it would have made it more difficult for the farmers to grow their crops, and the rivers the cities depended on might have dried up or changed course. Some of the rivers, such as the Ghaggar-Hakra, only flow today during monsoon season.

An illustration of a terraced mountain landscape. The mountains are depicted with various shades of brown and tan, showing distinct terracing levels. The foreground shows a sandy, light-brown ground. A central teal-colored box contains text. The overall style is a simple, clean illustration with bold outlines.

WHERE DID THEY GO?

By 1500 BC much of the civilisation had left the area and the cities were deserted but some farmers continued to live in their villages. The settlement of Pirak was one of the last places the Indus people lived. It is in the area which is now Pakistan, inhabited until 500 BC.

Many of the Indus people moved towards India and took their culture with them. Some of the oldest symbols in the Hindu religion were found on seals from the Indus Valley. Growing crops on terraces, styles of jewellery, and the importance of water are also elements in common.

INDUS VALLEY TIMELINE

First evidence of people farming the land



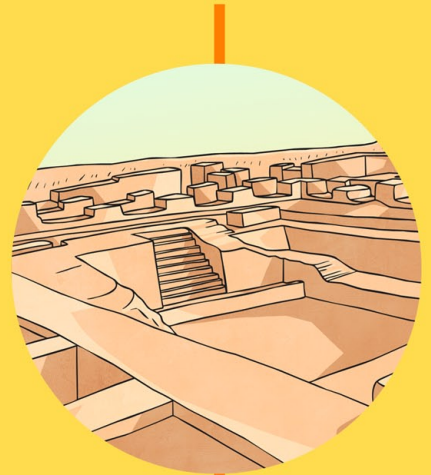
Mehrgarh
7000 - 3300 BC

3200 BC
The first Indus language

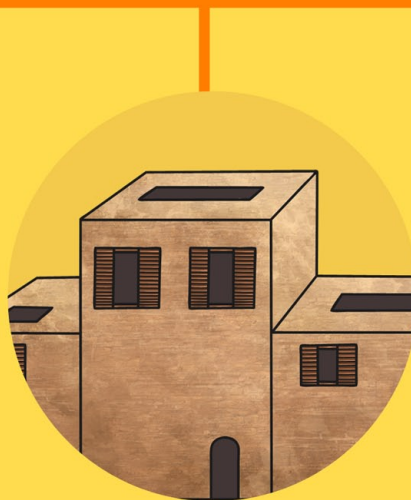


Early Harappan
3300 - 2600 BC

2600 BC
Mohenjo-Daro is built



Mature Harappan
2600 - 1900 BCE



2900 BC
The first towns are forming



2600 BC
Harappa is built

1800 BC

The settlement of Pirak



1500 BC

Indus Valley Civilisation ends



1875 AD

Alexander Cunningham finds first Harappan seal



Late Harappan
1900 - 1300 BCE

Iron Age India
1300 - 200 BCE

Discoveries
1872 - 2014 AD



1900 BC

Mohenjo-Daro is abandoned



325 BC

Alexander the Great (Greece) invades



1921 - 1931 AD

Marshall and his team dig up Harappa and Mohenjo-dora



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