

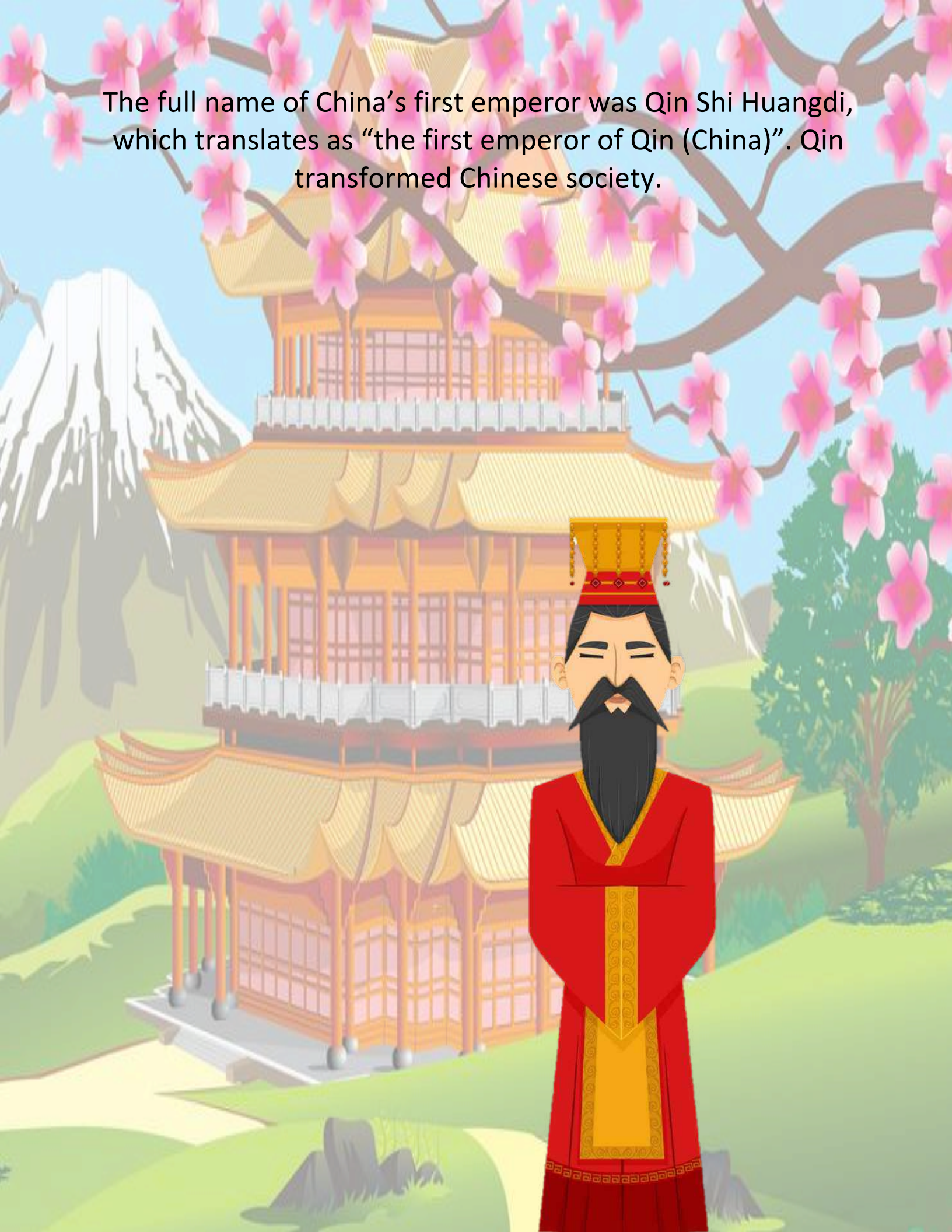


# Tales of Ancient Worlds

## The Secret of Emperor Qin's Tomb



The full name of China's first emperor was Qin Shi Huangdi, which translates as "the first emperor of Qin (China)". Qin transformed Chinese society.



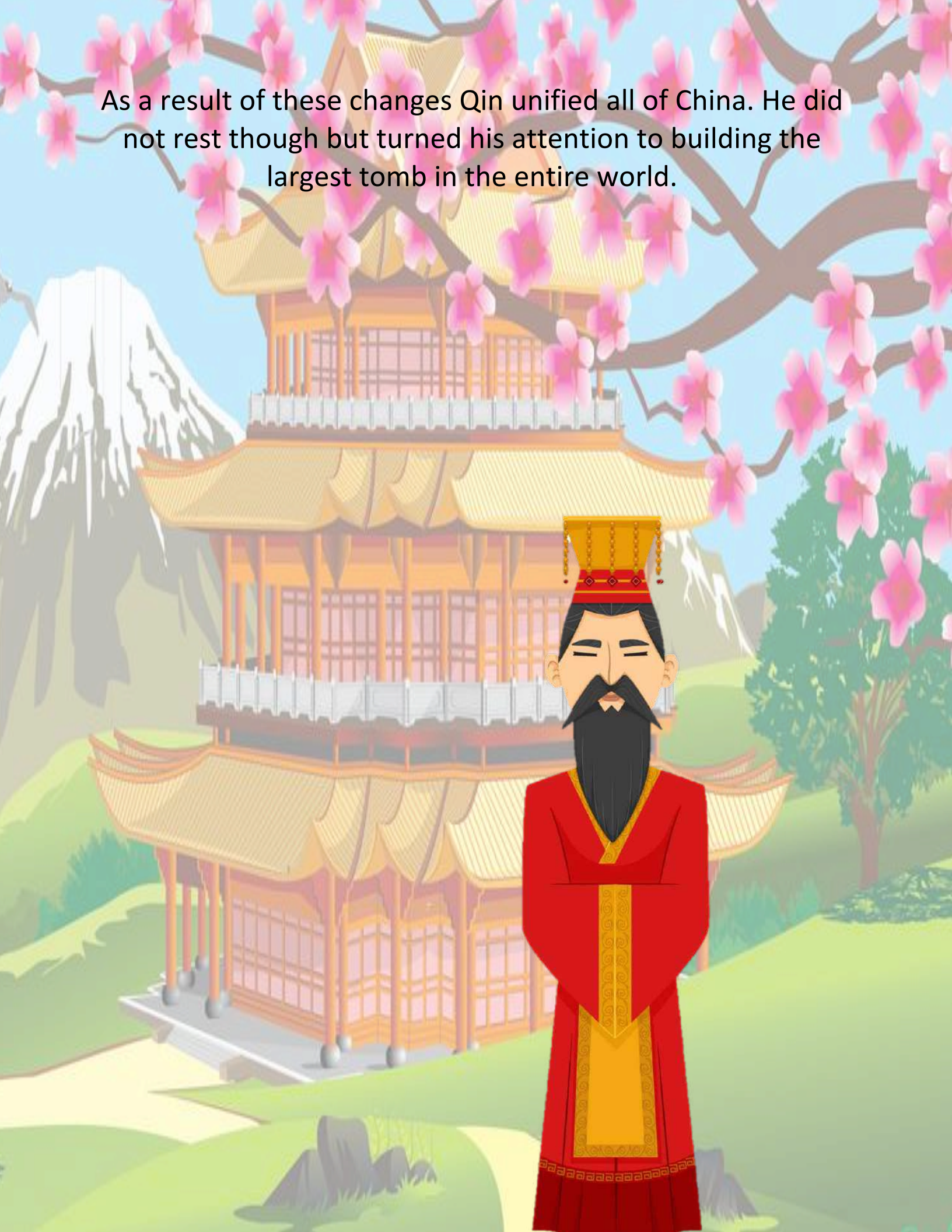
Before him, China was made up of several warring kingdoms, but Qin wanted to rule over the entire land. To achieve this, Qin and his chief minister, Li Si, revolutionized their small kingdom.



All soldiers were given the same weapons to cut costs. He standardized the Chinese alphabet so his people, no matter where they were from, could communicate. And he built canals and granaries to move and feed his growing army.



As a result of these changes Qin unified all of China. He did not rest though but turned his attention to building the largest tomb in the entire world.



As well as the Terracotta Army he also built the world's largest pyramid to contain his tomb. According to records he mobilized over 700,000 people to build it! Qin was not a man who was happy with the simple things in life.



It's easy for stories of great kings and queens to become exaggerated over time, their achievements becoming legend. Apparently, underneath Qin's pyramid, workers built a replica model of China. Qin's body was placed in the centre of a map and rivers of mercury (a special liquid metal the Chinese considered the elixir of life) flowed into a recreated sea.



It sounds too good to be true, but no one has been inside the tomb since he died. Out of respect for their emperor, the Chinese have not excavated it.





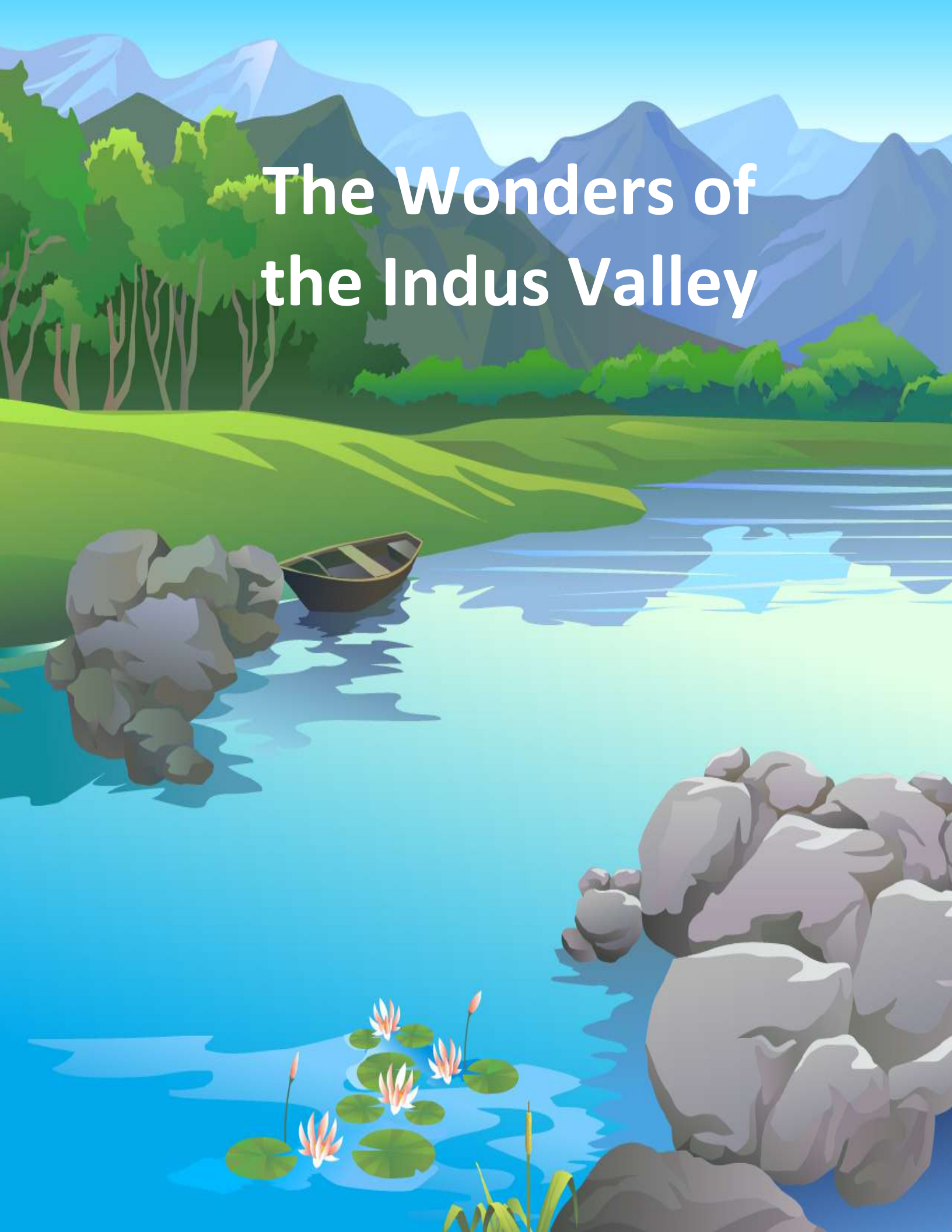
Scientist Guanyu Zhao realized it might be possible to find out if the story was true without moving a single spade of dirt. Liquid mercury can easily become a gas, so by scanning the air around the pyramid with special lasers, they could try and detect it.



As it turned out, they did discover elevated levels of mercury above the tomb. It seems that this story of China's legendary first emperor might be true!



# The Wonders of the Indus Valley



Modern India and Pakistan are incredible lands, full of diverse cultures, languages and religions. The earliest of all civilisations in this region was the Indus Valley Civilisation. Reaching its height around 2600 BCE, it was one of the largest Bronze Age cultures in the entire world – bigger than ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia combined!



## Nice Pad

If you were to go back in time, you might want to pick the Indus Valley. Everyone had nice houses – even those who didn't have high status in society. You would have had toilets, water, and a bathroom for showers. For normal people to have access to such comforts was really unique for the time.



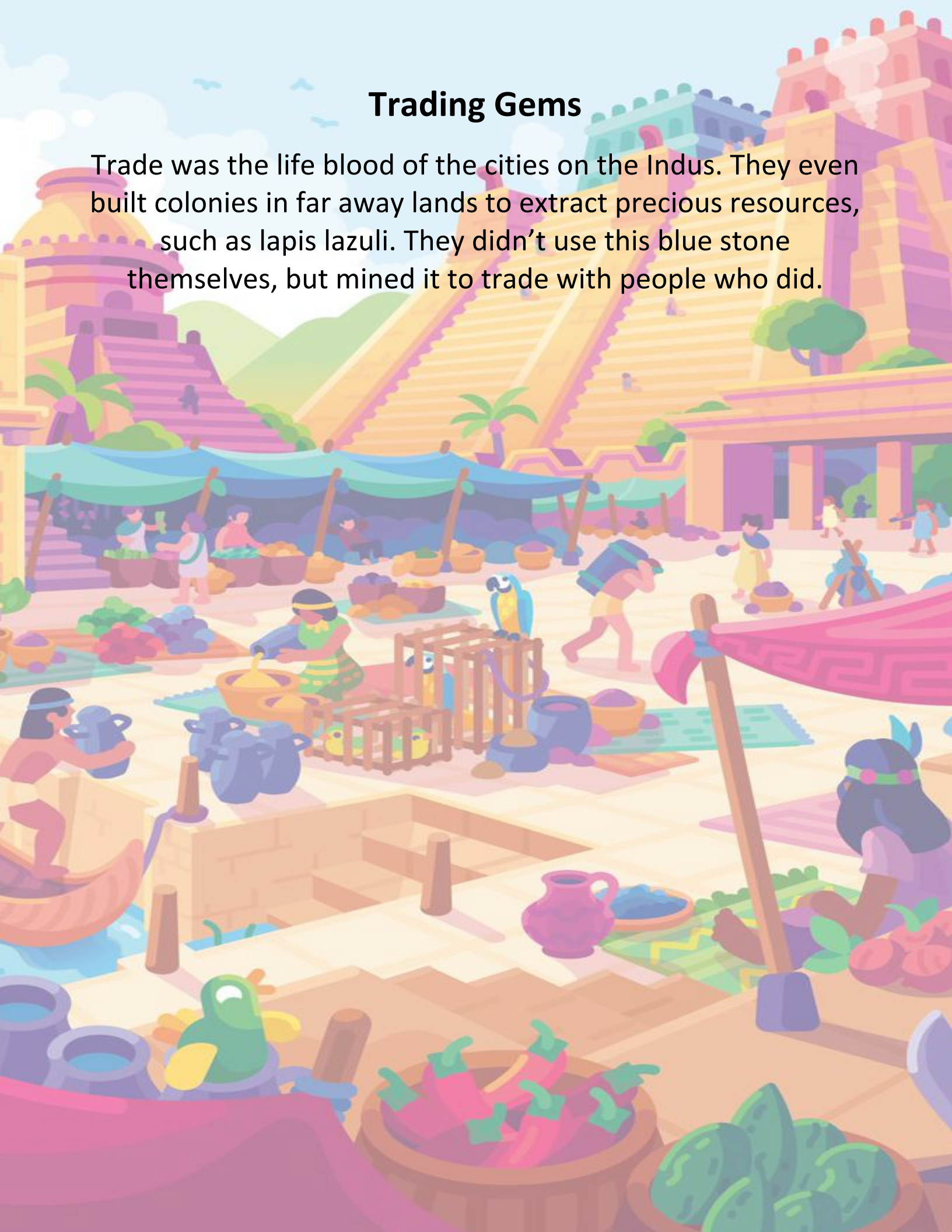
## Fertile Valley

The Indus Valley Civilisation got its name because it's on the Indus River (archaeologists aren't very imaginative when thinking of names). It was an area of fertile land, really good for farming. The two main cities were Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa.



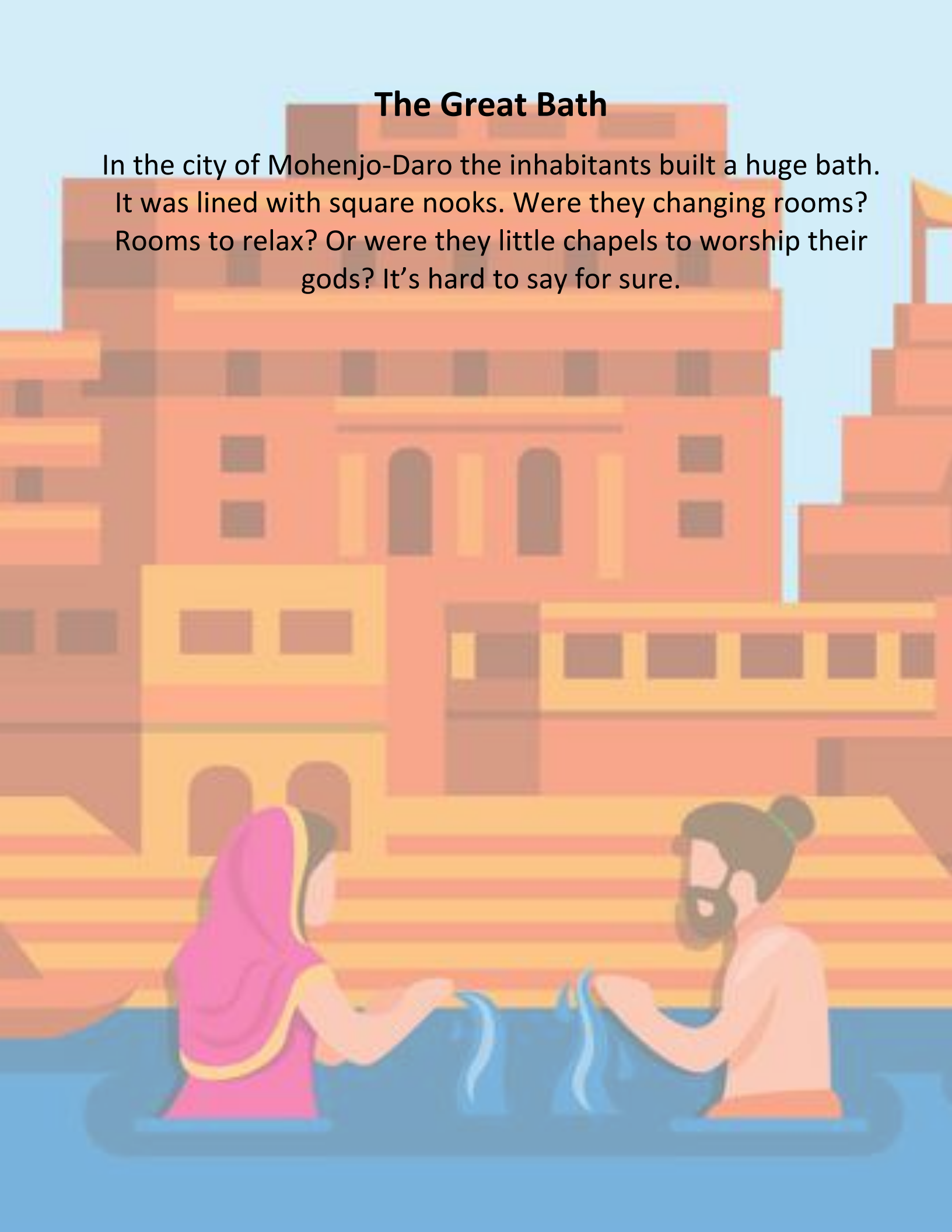
## Trading Gems

Trade was the life blood of the cities on the Indus. They even built colonies in far away lands to extract precious resources, such as lapis lazuli. They didn't use this blue stone themselves, but mined it to trade with people who did.



## The Great Bath

In the city of Mohenjo-Daro the inhabitants built a huge bath. It was lined with square nooks. Were they changing rooms? Rooms to relax? Or were they little chapels to worship their gods? It's hard to say for sure.





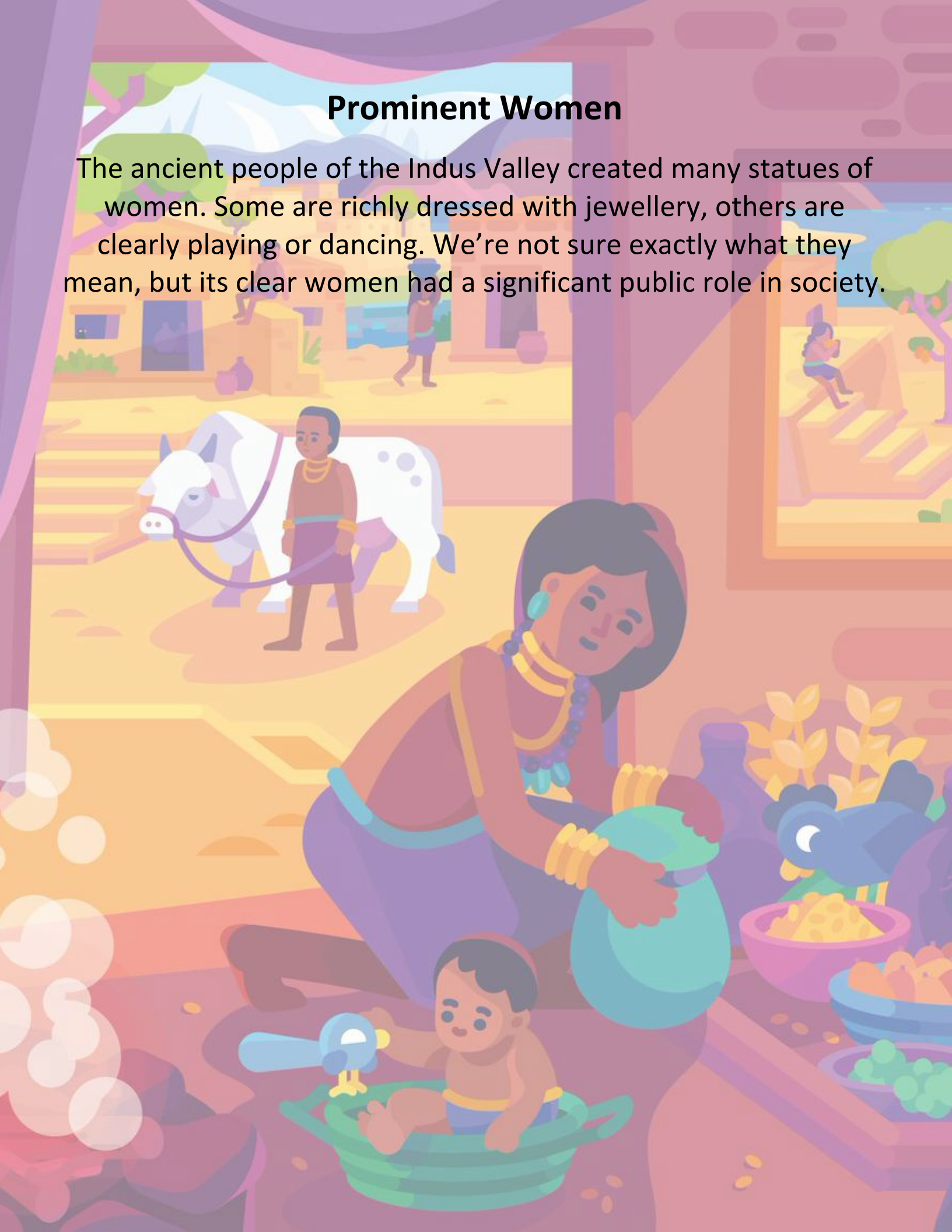
## Life on the River

Traveling on the rivers of India and Pakistan would have been an almost daily occurrence in the Indus Valley. Trade, communication, transport – everything revolved around the river.



## Prominent Women

The ancient people of the Indus Valley created many statues of women. Some are richly dressed with jewellery, others are clearly playing or dancing. We're not sure exactly what they mean, but it's clear women had a significant public role in society.



## Warriors

Archaeologists have long debated how peaceful life was on the Indus. Were the people there wild warriors or peaceful merchants? Many houses contained spears and axes, which probably weren't used to bake cakes.



# The Riddles of Mohenjo-Daro



In 1919, R.D. Banerji was working for the Archaeological Survey of India. His mission was to find and identify unknown ancient sites. As he explored an area of what is now central Pakistan, he found a Buddhist stupa, dating to the year 300 CE. A stupa is a round building where Buddhists store the precious relics of their most important monks and teachers.



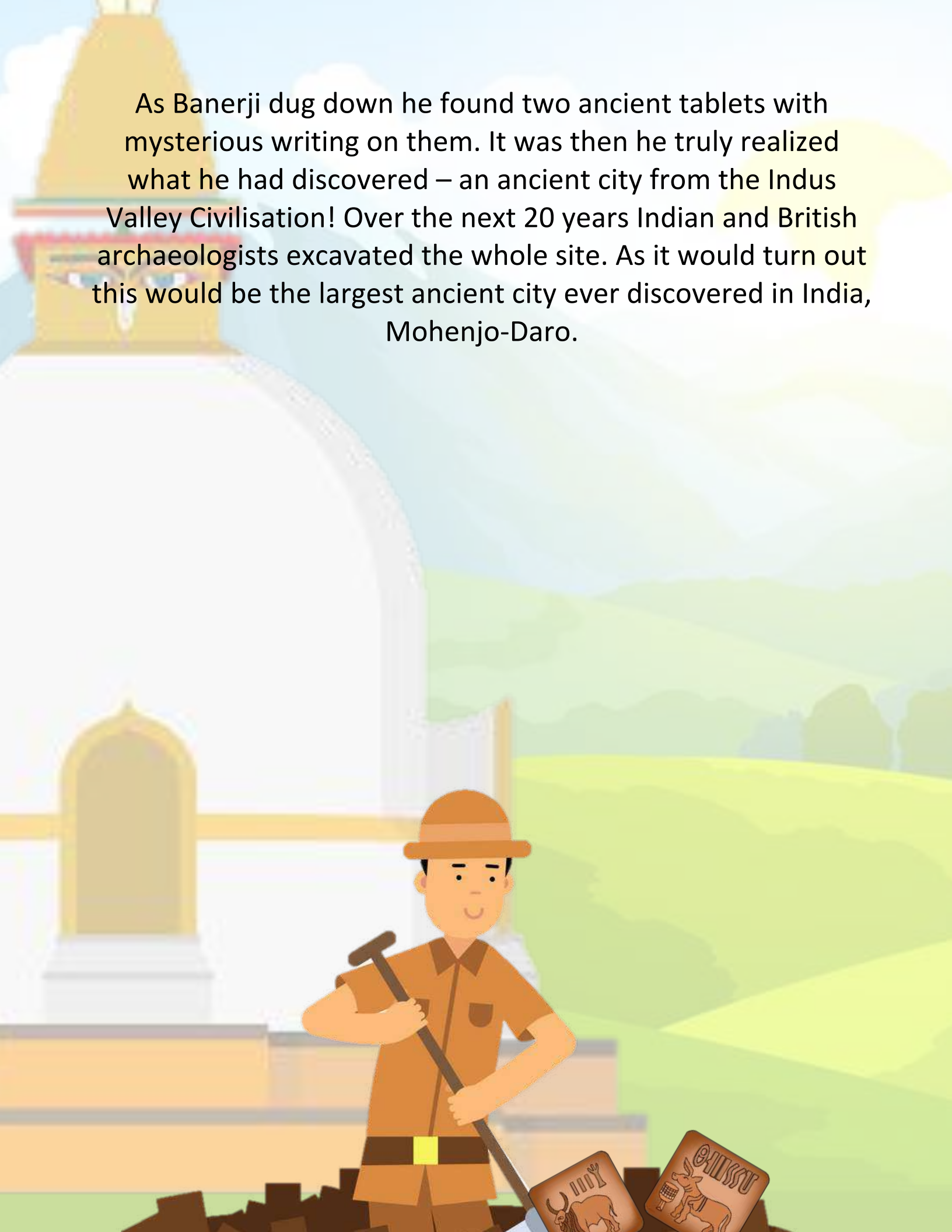
Banerji was an energetic and accomplished archaeologist. As he pottered around the site, more and more things started to stand out to him. The stupa seemed to have been built on a mound made up of two distinct layers. One was built by the Buddhists, but who built the bottom layer?



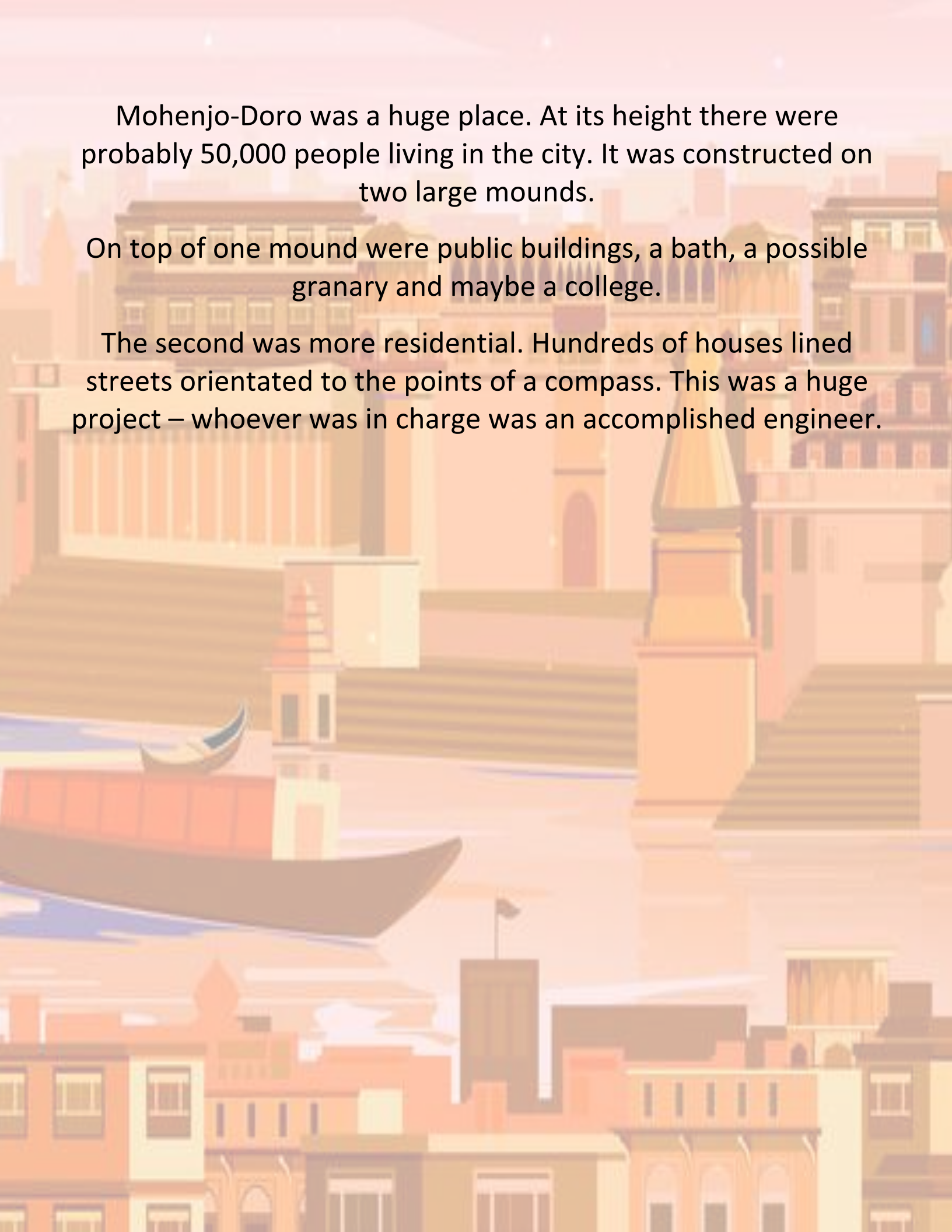
He wandered around the site more (the first step in an archaeological investigation is to walk across the site, just to see what is lying on the surface). As he walked he noticed a flint scraper. But flint tools were not used in 300 CE ... He realized he was dealing with a much more ancient site and decided to excavate.



As Banerji dug down he found two ancient tablets with mysterious writing on them. It was then he truly realized what he had discovered – an ancient city from the Indus Valley Civilisation! Over the next 20 years Indian and British archaeologists excavated the whole site. As it would turn out this would be the largest ancient city ever discovered in India, Mohenjo-Daro.







Mohenjo-Doro was a huge place. At its height there were probably 50,000 people living in the city. It was constructed on two large mounds.

On top of one mound were public buildings, a bath, a possible granary and maybe a college.

The second was more residential. Hundreds of houses lined streets orientated to the points of a compass. This was a huge project – whoever was in charge was an accomplished engineer.

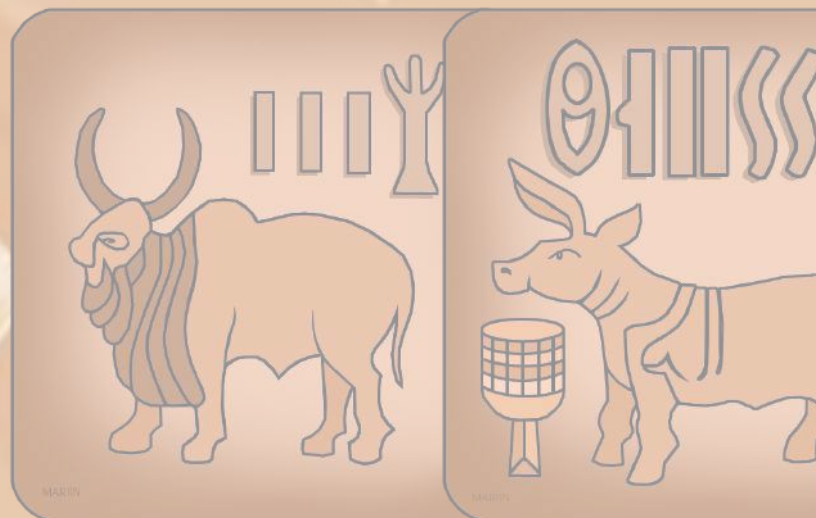
As for the two tablets Banerji found, the tablets with the mysterious writing? Well, they're still a mystery. To this day we have no idea what they say. Imagine if someone handed you a text written in a foreign language. Could you work out what it means without a dictionary? It would be extremely hard! Experts can't even agree how many letters were in the Indus Valley alphabet. Estimates vary wildly – some say around 149, others 537!



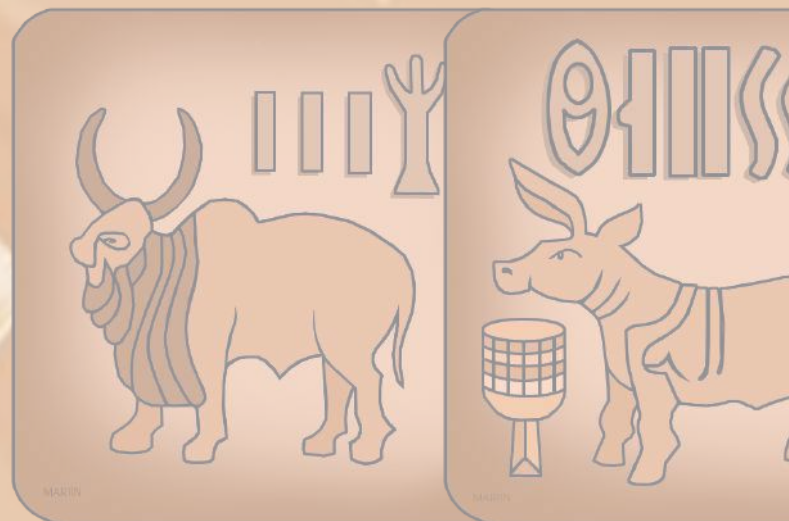
The big difficulty is that we can't be sure if we're looking at different letters, or if people just had different handwriting. Most of the letters are all carved on to clay seals. This has given archaeologists and linguistics a small clue as to what they mean.



Some could have been used to give out different goods, almost like money. Perhaps you could go to the granary with your inscription, and they would give you bread. Other seals had hoops on the back, which suggests they might have been worn like a badge of office. In the same way we have police badges and ID cards, perhaps Indus people had seals describing their jobs, like “Farmer”, “Scribe”, or “Merchant”.



The seals have many images of animals on them. Elephants, rhinos, tigers and most commonly, a bull ... or maybe it's a unicorn. Take a look at the seals. One clearly shows an animal with just one horn, another a bull, but two show an animal with just one horn. Are we looking at a bull from the side, or is it a unicorn? Archaeologists can't agree and the bull versus unicorn debate has been raging for over 100 years! What do you think it is?



You can have a go at deciphering the riddles of Indus Valley language yourself. Below is an ancient Indus seal with seven different symbols on it. Two stick people, two slightly different crosses, a jar, a fish and another jar. Archaeologists have worked out that the script is read from right to left, so start there and have a guess.



Linguists (language experts) working on this exact inscription have different theories. One thinks it says “Here is the tribute offered to the god Kueyo”, while another has suggested, “The aquatic birds have covered all the waterways”. Other suggestions include “The mountain worshipped one” and “Three Great Buffalo”.

As you can see there is little agreement amongst experts. Which of the translations looks best to you?

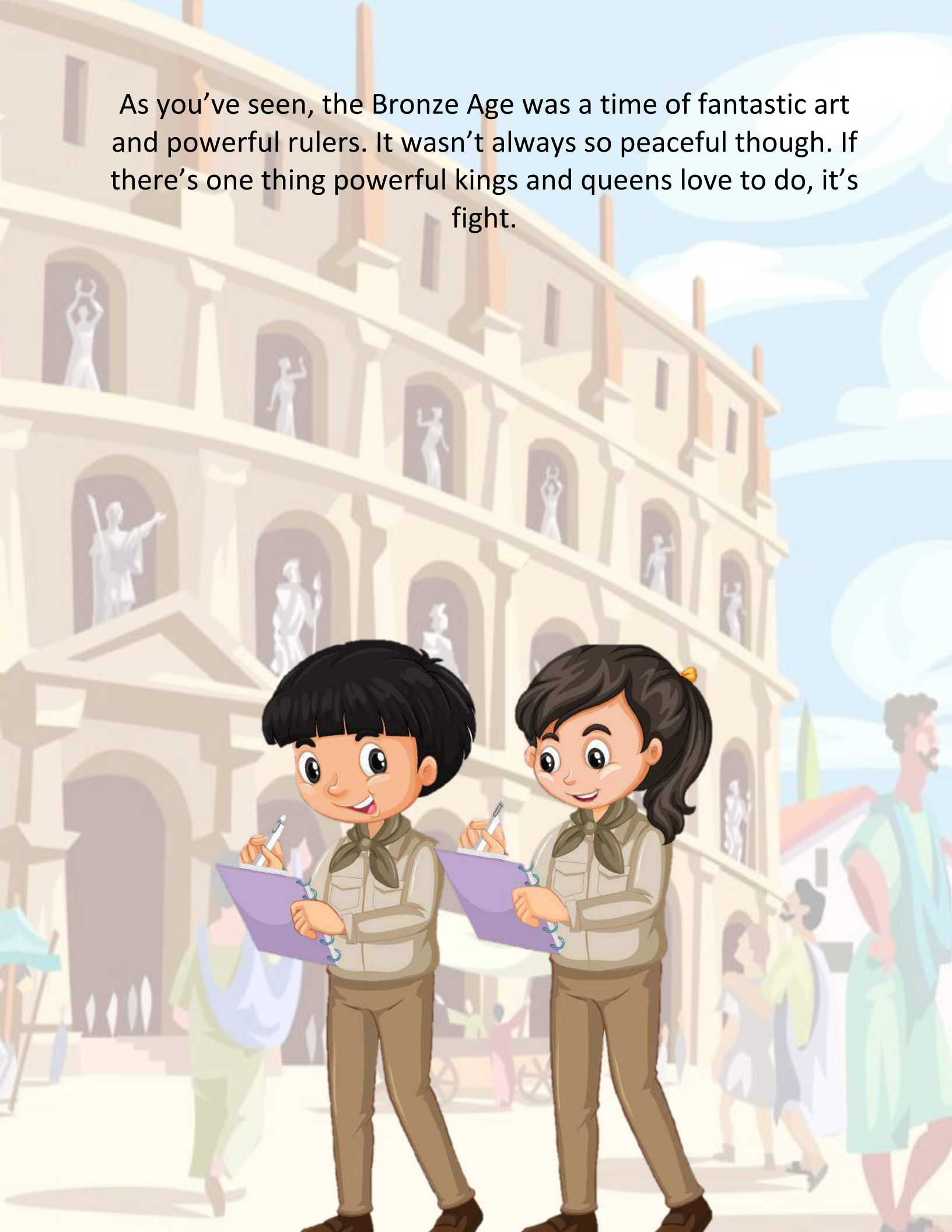


# Warfare in the Bronze Age

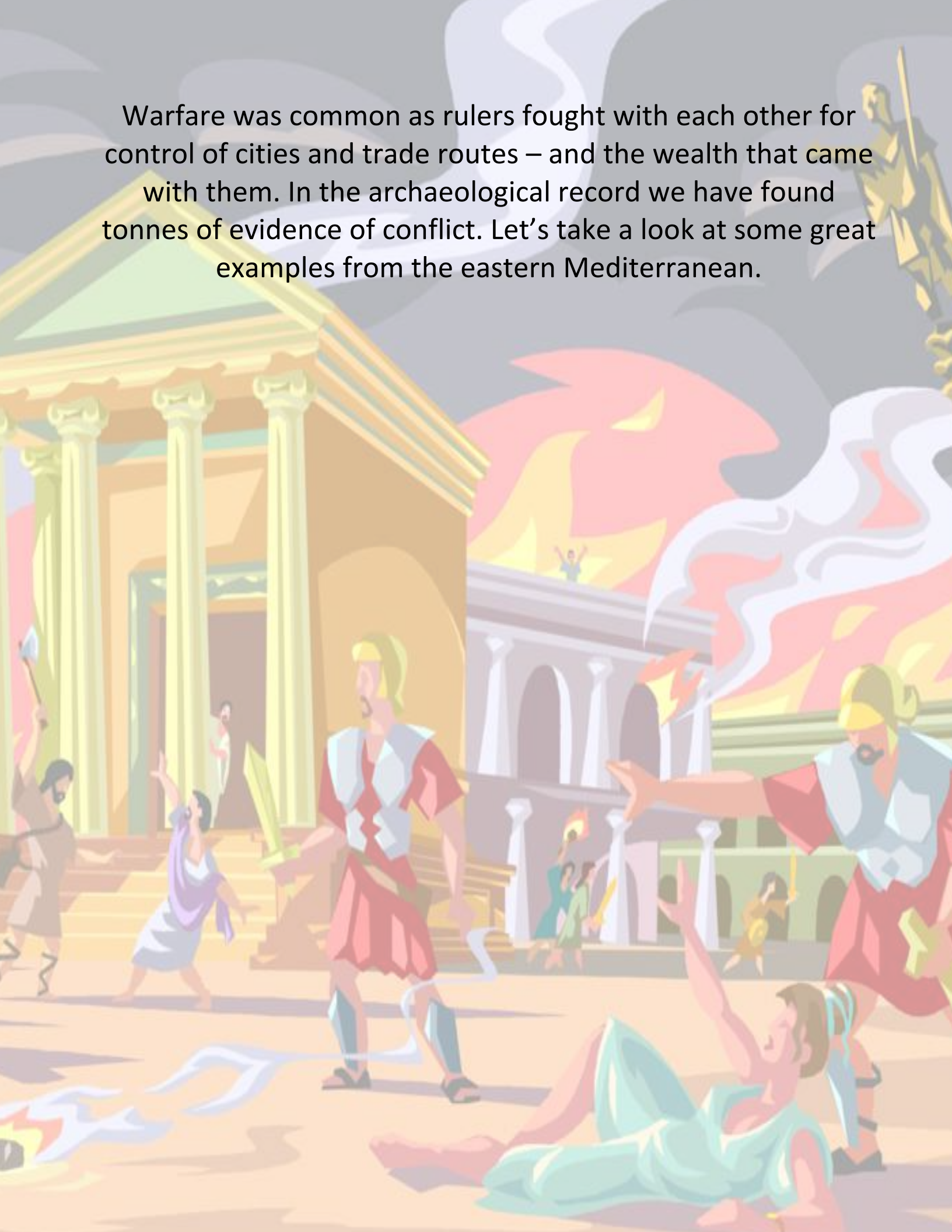




As you've seen, the Bronze Age was a time of fantastic art and powerful rulers. It wasn't always so peaceful though. If there's one thing powerful kings and queens love to do, it's fight.

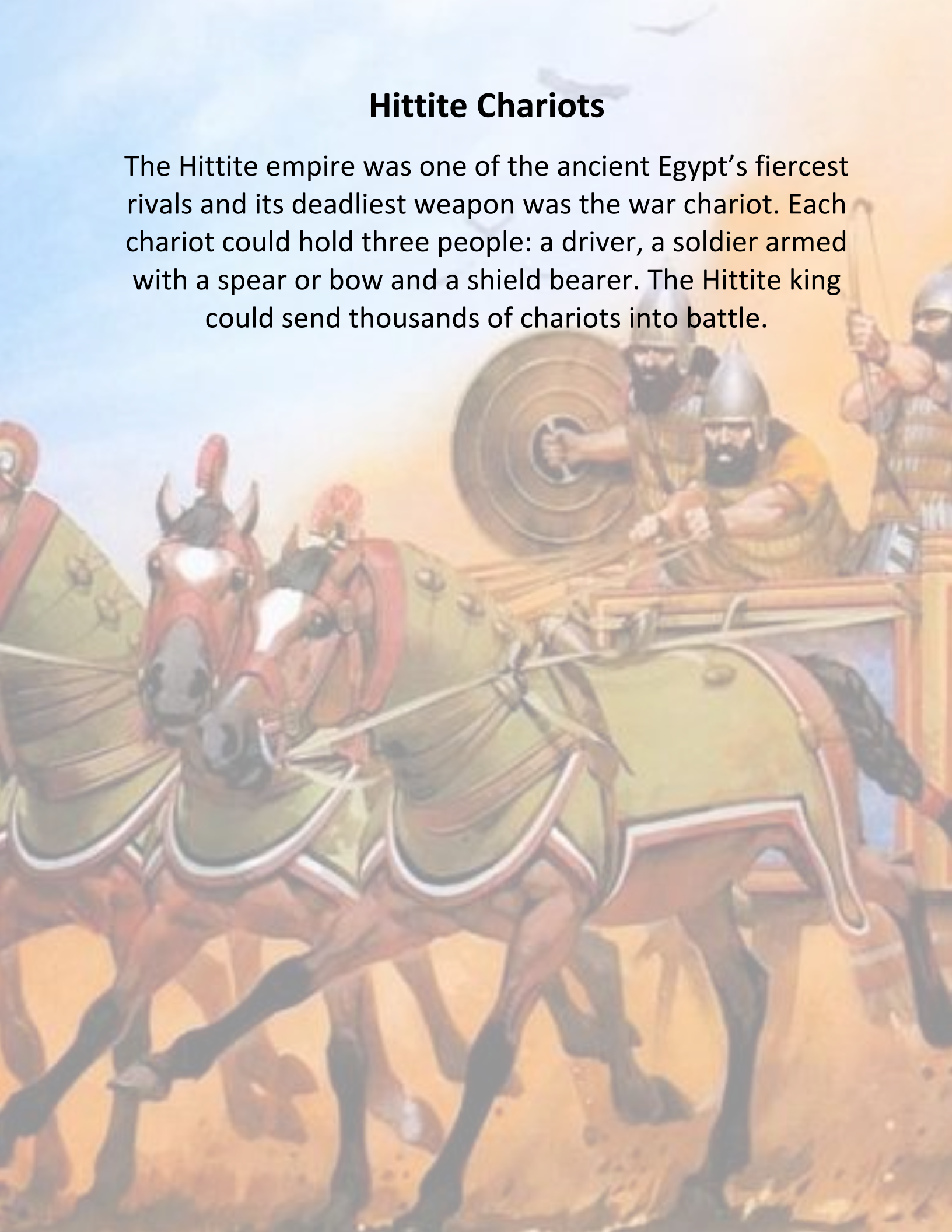


Warfare was common as rulers fought with each other for control of cities and trade routes – and the wealth that came with them. In the archaeological record we have found tonnes of evidence of conflict. Let's take a look at some great examples from the eastern Mediterranean.



## Hittite Chariots

The Hittite empire was one of the ancient Egypt's fiercest rivals and its deadliest weapon was the war chariot. Each chariot could hold three people: a driver, a soldier armed with a spear or bow and a shield bearer. The Hittite king could send thousands of chariots into battle.



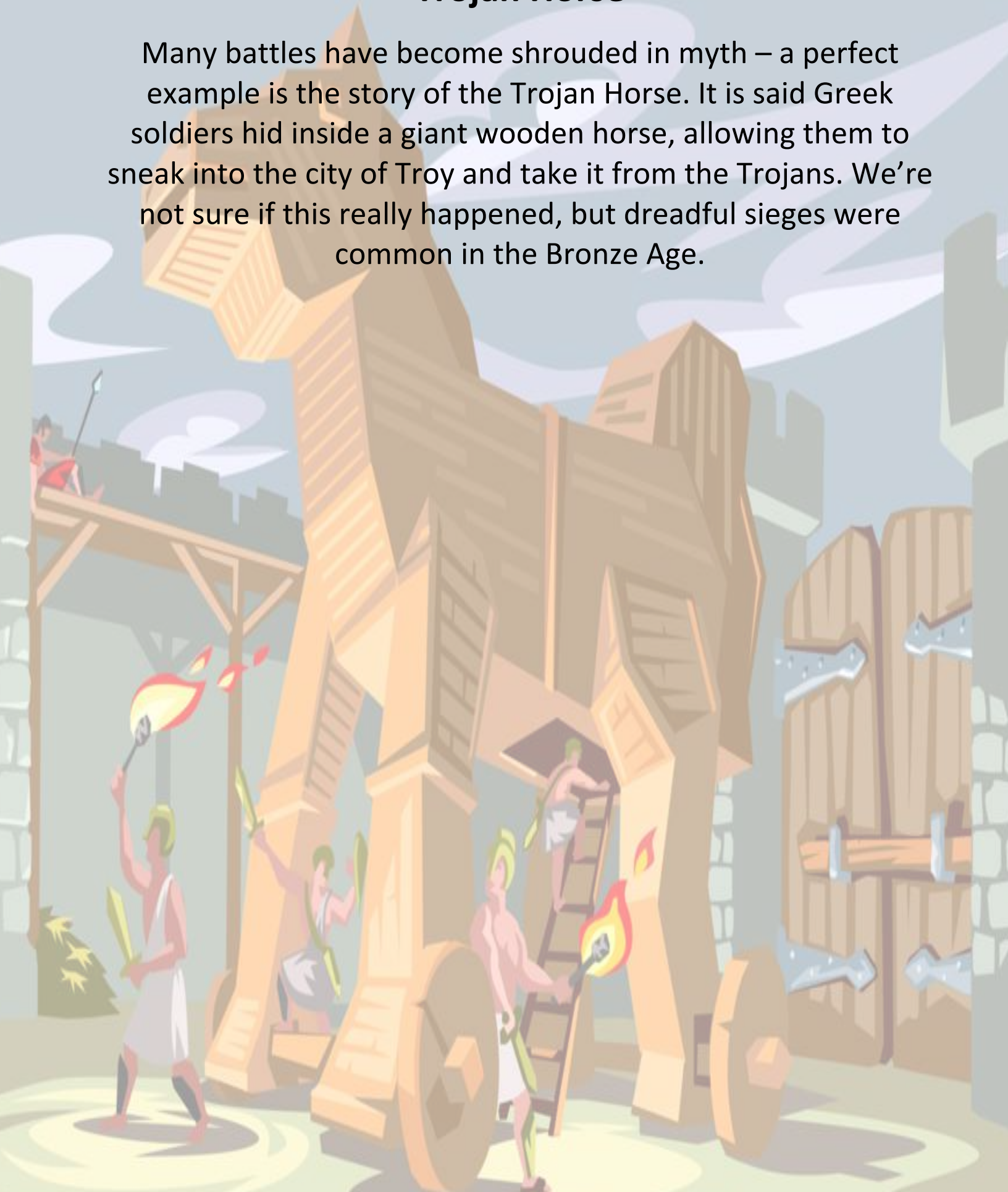
## Spectacular Armour

The best example of armour from the Bronze Age is the Dendra Panoply. It's a full suit of bronze armour, topped with a helmet made of boar's teeth. The Greek warrior who owned it must have been incredibly strong to wear so much armour.



## Trojan Horse

Many battles have become shrouded in myth – a perfect example is the story of the Trojan Horse. It is said Greek soldiers hid inside a giant wooden horse, allowing them to sneak into the city of Troy and take it from the Trojans. We're not sure if this really happened, but dreadful sieges were common in the Bronze Age.



## Egyptian Archers

Archers were a common feature of war. Hundreds, if not thousands, of soldiers would launch arrow after arrow at the enemy. The Egyptian army had a force of archers called the Pitati. Many of these archers came from Kush and Nubia to the south of Egypt.



# The Tomb of the Griffin Warrior



The archaeologists were waiting under a tarpaulin for the rain to stop. The digging season had not been going well so far.

They were excavating in the shadow of the ancient Palace of Nestor, a Bronze Age building on Greece's southwest coast.





The team had hoped to explore a promising site but were unable to get the correct permits, so they settled on an unassuming olive grove further along the hill.



When the rain stopped, they returned to work. Despite the downpour the ground was still rock hard and the archaeologists had to smash through the clay with pickaxes. They were excavating a cluster of rocks about the size of a grove. As they dug deeper and deeper, the outline of a tomb became clear.



Flint Dibble, the archaeologist wielding the pickaxe, moved a stone, and underneath it was something far more precious than mud. He had found a piece of bronze. Flint called over his colleague Alison Fields.



Flint called over his colleague Alison Fields. They knew they had stumbled upon something special, but at this point they didn't yet realise they were standing on the tomb of a warrior from the Mycenaean period of Greek history, which stretched from around 1600 BCE to 1100 BCE.



This warrior had died 3,500 years ago. His friends and family decided to bury him with extremely lavish riches; gold rings, a bronze sword and dagger, a helmet made of boar tusks and a disc engraved with two griffins. The archaeologists named the man the “Griffin Warrior”.



The objects in this tomb are not just beautiful, they also tell us a lot about the past. For 100 years, archaeologists have debated whether Mycenaean Greece and the Minoan civilization on the nearby island of Crete were in contact with each other. The objects buried with the Griffin Warrior were found in a Mycenaean tomb, but are typical of Mycenaean. They were definitely interacting with the Minoans.



Why bury so much wealth in a tomb? Well according to Flint Dibble, it's all about the experience. Burying someone and throwing such a lavish funeral is a powerful experience for those taking part. It helps build and establish social ties, bringing people together. It's also an experience for the archaeologists digging it up 3,500 years later. One that Flint and Alison surely never forget!





# THINK

DIGITAL ACADEMY

