

# The Indus Valley

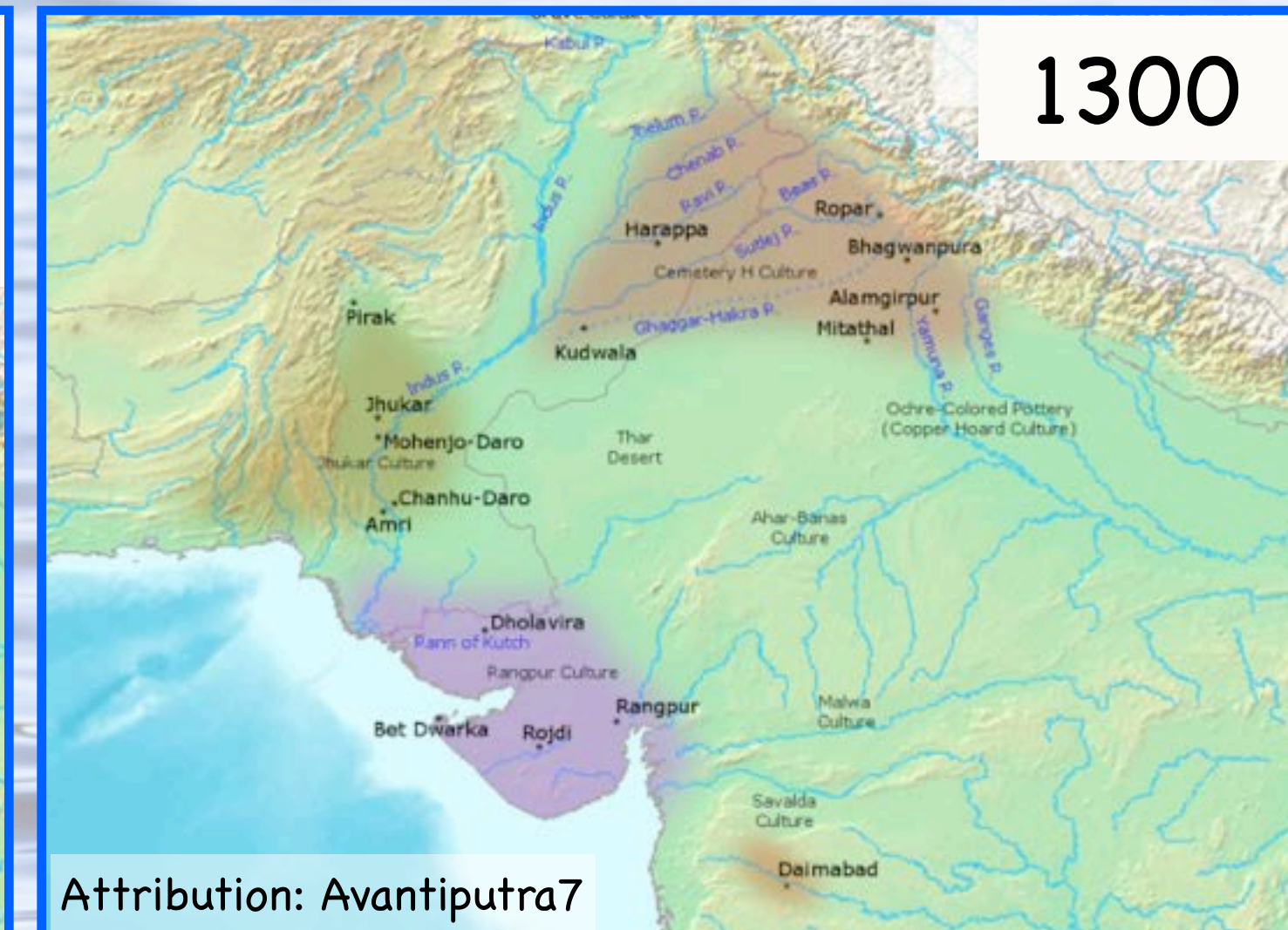
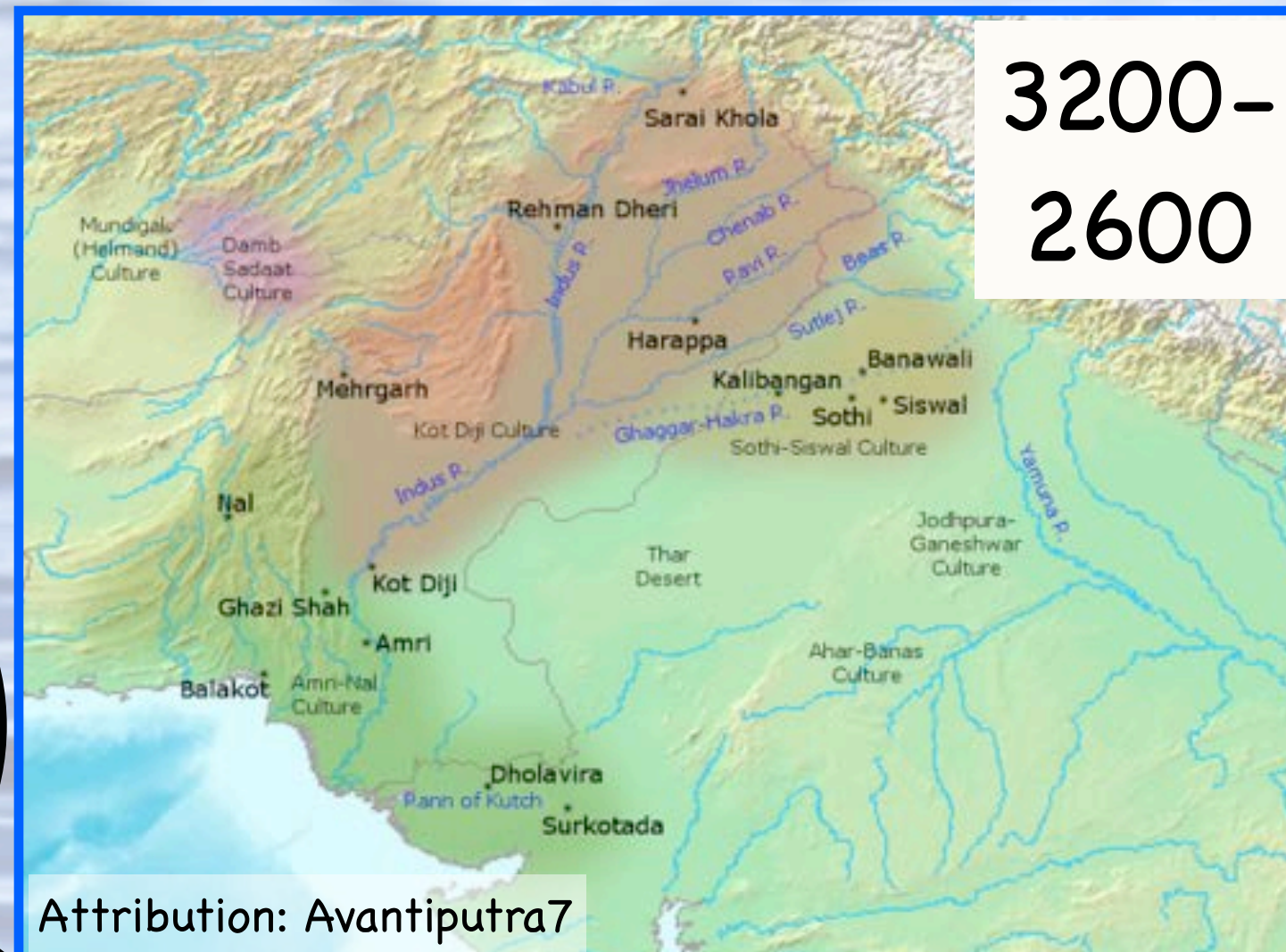
Learning Objective:

To find out about the decline of the Indus Valley civilisation.





The Indus Valley civilisation began to decline around 1900 BCE. Over the next two hundred years trade with foreign regions stopped. By 1700 BCE most of the cities had been abandoned. The reasons why the civilisation declined are unknown but there are many different theories.



Why don't we know more information about the decline of the civilisation?

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Think, pair, share





The Indus Valley civilisation existed thousands of years ago and no one has been able to decode their writing. This means that we are unlikely to find any new detailed or accurate information.

3000 BCE

2000 BCE

1000 BCE

1 CE

1000 CE

2000 CE

Indus Valley Civilisation  
3200 - 1500

Why do you think the  
civilisation declined?

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Think, pair, share





Here are some of the theories on why the Indus Valley civilisation declined. Click on each speech bubble to find out more.

The rivers  
changed...

There was an  
outbreak of  
disease...

There was an  
invasion and a  
massacre...

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# The changing rivers theory

Several of the rivers changed course over time, and many scholars think this happened due to climate change. The Sabarmati river used to flow next to the city of Lothal. It now flows around 6 km (4 mi) away from Lothal.

Excavations of Mohenjo-Daro have revealed buildings built later were built on several layers of silt, which suggests the city was badly flooded several times.

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The behaviour of the rivers in the Indus Valley has changed over time. Today the River Ghaggar-Hakra, which flows by the sites of the eastern Indus cities, only flows in the rainy season. This suggests the cities suffered droughts.





# The invasion and massacre theory

Sir Robert Eric Mortimer Wheeler was a British archaeologist and British Army officer. He was born in Glasgow in 1890 and died in 1976.



In 1953 he proposed the Indus Valley civilisation declined because an Indo-European tribe from Central Asia invaded. His evidence was mainly thirty-seven skeletons that were found in Mohenjo-Daro. However investigations revealed that the skeletons were buried a long time after the city was abandoned. He also used marks that were found on the skeletons' skulls as evidence that they were killed violently. However later examinations suggest the damage to the skulls was a result of erosion, not fighting.

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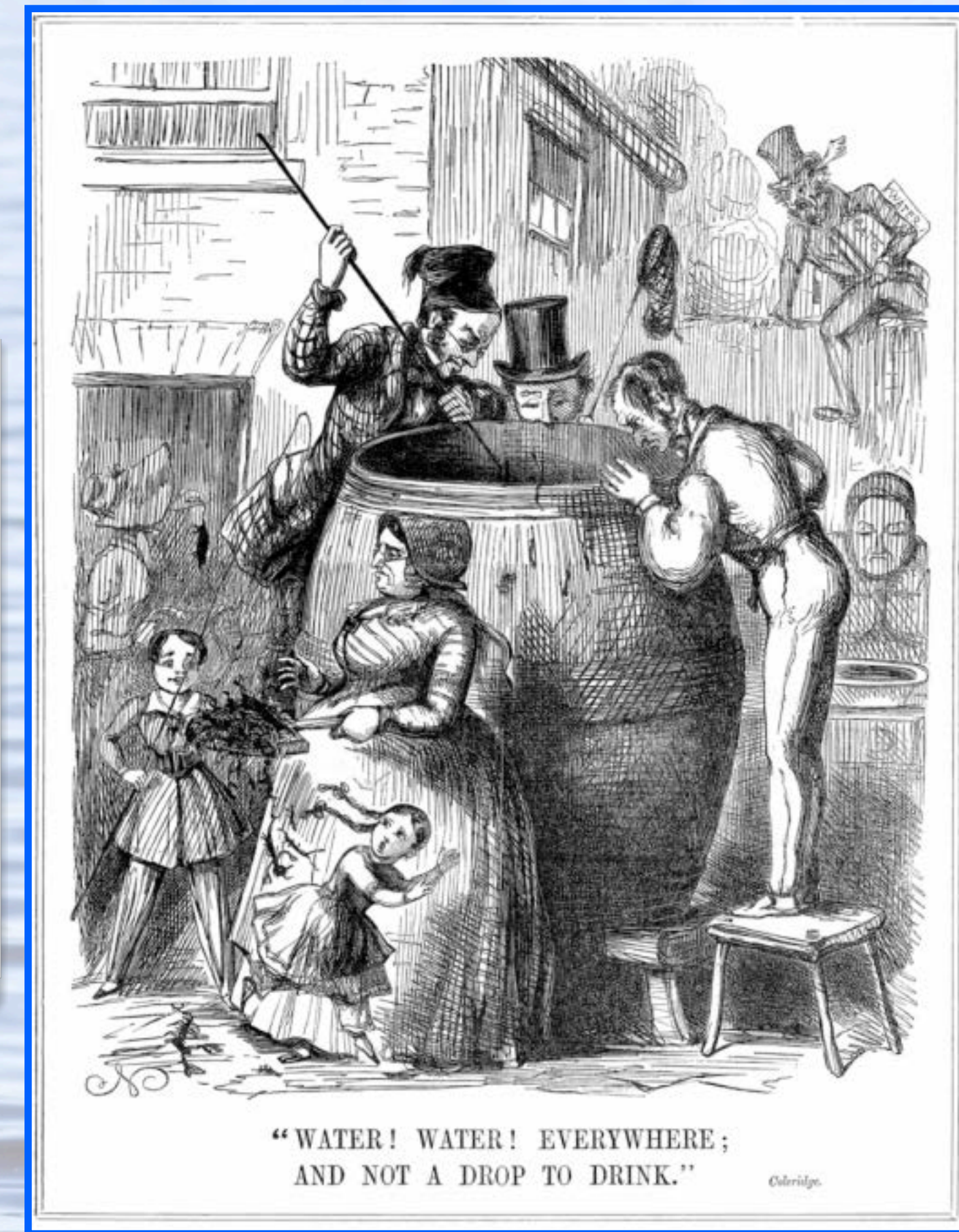


# The disease outbreak theory

Some theorists think that a disease like cholera infected the water supply. Cholera outbreaks are deadly. An outbreak of cholera in London in 1854 lasted for eleven days. During that short time six hundred and sixteen people died.

When Indus Valley skeletons were examined the evidence suggested that many people died from malaria, not cholera. Malaria is spread by mosquitoes.

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Which theory do you think is most likely to be true?

Why do you think the civilisation declined?



Think, pair, share

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