



History & Heritage

THE MYSTERY OF THE LOST CITIES

HELP *JUNIOR* CRACK THE
CASES OF THESE MYSTERIOUS
LOST CIVILISATIONS



Got your magnifying glass? We're about to investigate the clues of Asia's most mysterious lost civilizations. Ones that were once mighty **bastions**, but were then suddenly lost, with their disappearances surrounded by so many different explanations that even world-renowned detective Sherlock Holmes would struggle to figure it all out...

We've drawn up the evidence, and are wondering if you could be our private eye and help us find out how and why these once great civilizations just disappeared.

FUN FACTS

In the Niya settlement, the cutting down of trees was strictly forbidden – perhaps one of the earliest forms of environmental protection!

Evidence from many different cultures has been found whilst digging around the site, suggesting that the settlement was home to people from all sorts of different places; from ancient Greece to eastern Mongolia.

CASE 1

NIYA SETTLEMENT: THE BURIED CITY, "ASIA'S POMPEII" (1600 YEARS AGO)

A thriving trade hotspot and oasis in China's Takla Makan desert that, one day, came to a sudden standstill, buried in the dunes. The Niya settlement was a relic of the early Silk Road, a trade route that linked China with Central Asia, Africa and Europe, much like Singapore is a link between Southeast Asia and the wider world. What confuses historians so much is the sudden and mysterious flight of the people from their homes, was there a sand-tsunami?

THE CASE:

THEORY 1: A sudden sandstorm covered the city forcing everyone to leave.

EVIDENCE: It was always a threat to the settlement that it would become buried in sand, being in the middle of a desert.

THEORY 2: A war drove the people out of their homes and forced them to flee.

EVIDENCE: No physical evidence for a war, yet this still seems logical with such a hasty evacuation.





CASE 2

ANGKOR: THE GREATEST MIEVIAL CITY ON EARTH (802 AD - 1431 AD)

The Angkor Wat temple was once the religious and cultural centre of the Khmer Empire, and used to tower above the great city of Angkor much like Marina Bay Sands stands above Gardens by the Bay in Singapore. At its peak the empire of the Khmer stretched from the most westerly point of Thailand all the way to Laos in the east.

Rich, highly intelligent, and keen builders, today you can still find traces of the Khmer's incredible monuments throughout Southeast Asia, just like King Louie's overgrown city in *The Jungle Book* (without the dancing monkeys!). With temples, tropical waterways and statues, the capital city Angkor was for years the best kept secret of the world in the middle of the Cambodian jungle. All that remains today is that selfie-centre, the Angkor Wat temple, and various ruins throughout the land. This once great city came to a sudden demise, and nobody is really sure why.



FUN FACTS

One temple, Preah Khan, contained 60 tons of gold, if you carried that in dollars you could go to Universal Studios 74 million times!

The capital city Angkor was once ruled by the great king Suryavarman II, who called himself *Chakravartin*, or "King of the World".

Angkor Wat and other Khmer temples were previously covered in gold, but over the course of hundreds of years the gold has disappeared.

Mystery surrounds the creation of the city, with some locals believing that it was once built by giants.

THE CASE:

THEORY 1: Many historians believe that climate change across Southeast Asia may have resulted in the Khmer Empire abandoning Angkor.

EVIDENCE: Tree rings are a great way of showing the history of a changing climate, scientists who studied samples recorded shifts between extreme dry and wet conditions, which leads them to believe that a serious drought or flooding could have driven out the Khmer.

THEORY 2: Some believe there may have been a war with a neighbouring civilisation that wiped out the city.

EVIDENCE: The Khmer were involved in many battles with surrounding factions, with the growth of rival populations it is fair to assume that competition for land was tough.

CASE 3

INDUS VALLEY: AN EXTRAORDINARY CIVILIZATION OF THE ANCIENT WORLD (3,300 BC – 1,300 BC)

Down the longest river in Pakistan, the Indus, under mounds of dirt, archaeologists discovered the remains of a 4,600 year old city – that’s almost as old as Jerusalem! Home to the once great Indus Valley civilization, it now sits like a crumbling sandcastle-city below the snowy peaks of the Himalayas.

Serious **technophiles** of their time, the people of the Indus Valley created incredible

drainage systems, measuring rulers, and a written language that nobody has yet been able to decode. Their civilization covered a large portion of land across Asia, and traces of their settlements have been found far away in Nepal and Sri Lanka. With a population thought to be almost the same size as Singapore (around five million), it remains a mystery as to where and how they disappeared.

FUN FACTS

Mohenjo-Daro was the biggest Indus city. Mohenjo-Daro means “Mound of the Dead”. But so far no archaeologists have found a cemetery there.

Amazingly, the people of the Indus Valley appear to have been a peaceful race with very few weapons being found and no evidence of any army.

The cities’ designs were ahead of their time, with many being rectangular and people living in roomy, two-story houses.



THE CASE:

THEORY 1: A huge earthquake may have moved the course of the river just like a railroad switch, causing the water to flow away from the settlements. With no water for the people or their crops, the civilisation wouldn't have lasted very long.

EVIDENCE: Although the Indus river is not in a place that's famous for earthquakes, there is evidence of earthquakes affecting the region.

THEORY 2: An invasion from the growing population in the north, causing the peaceful Indus Valley people to flee.

EVIDENCE: A Hindu poem called the *Rig Veda* was discovered that described an invasion that drove out the people of the Indus Valley, however there is not much physical archaeological evidence of a violent invasion. **AGJ**