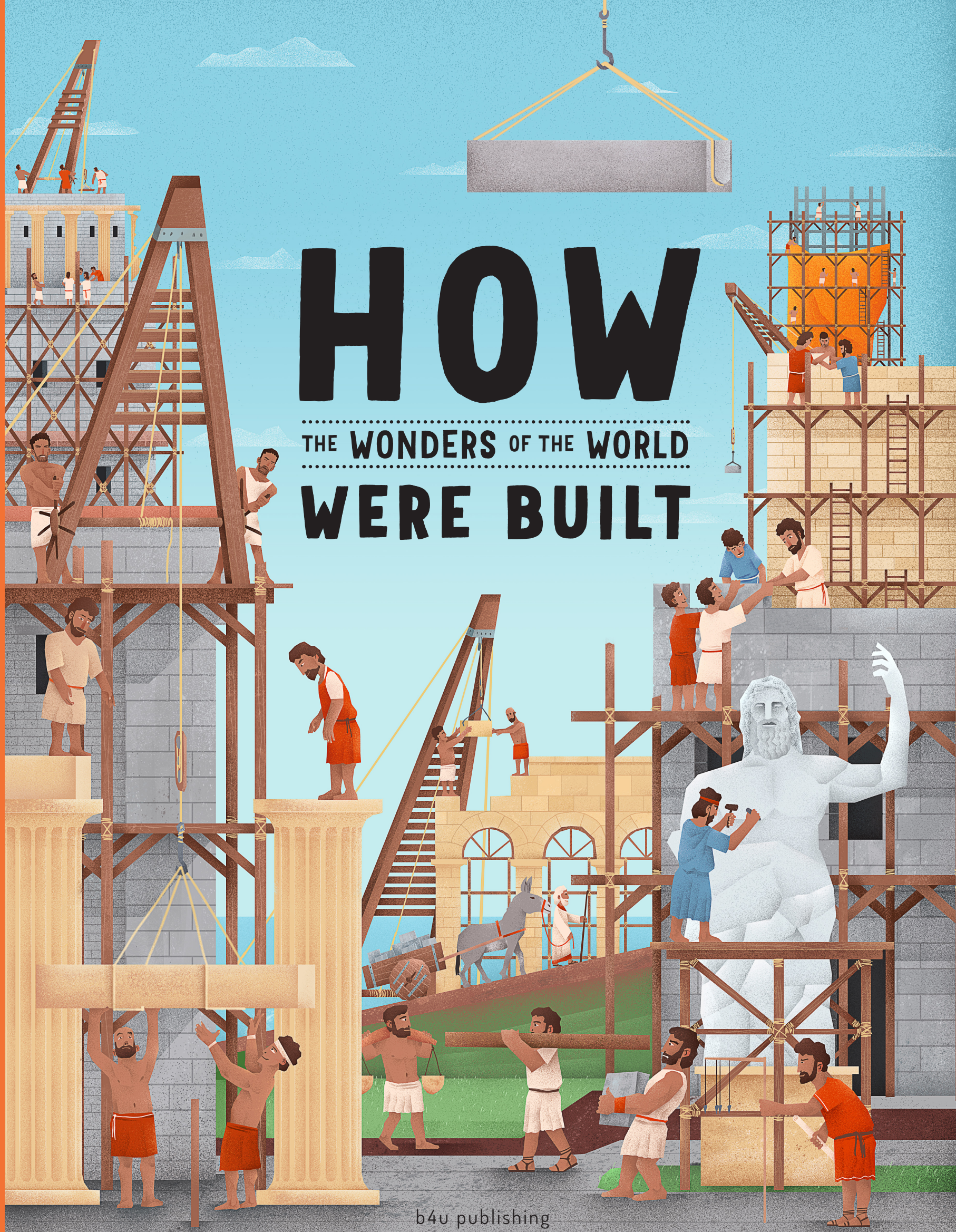




Ludmila Hénková | Tomáš Svoboda

HOW THE WONDERS OF THE WORLD WERE BUILT



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The Colossus of Rhodes

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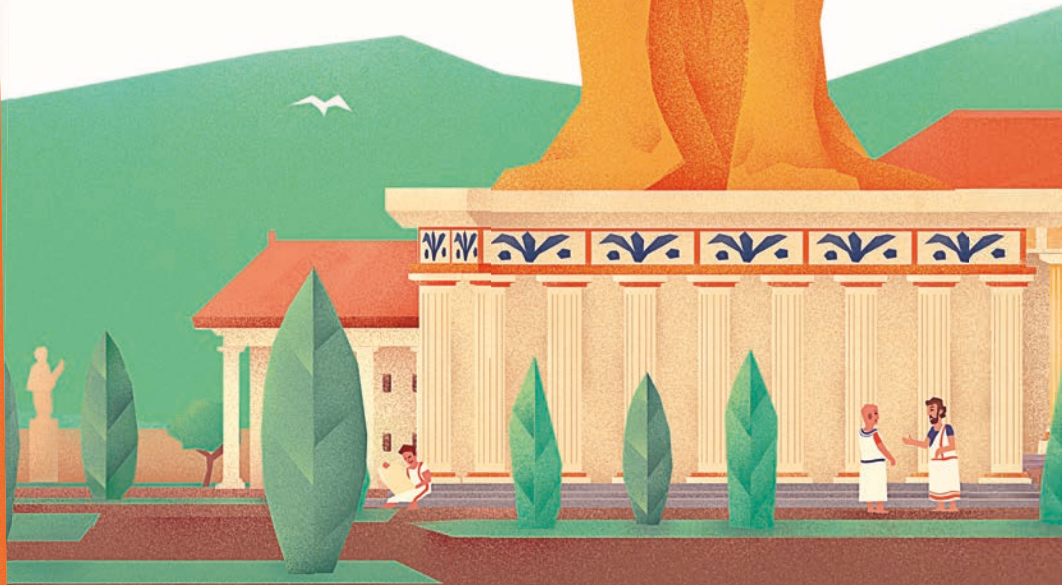
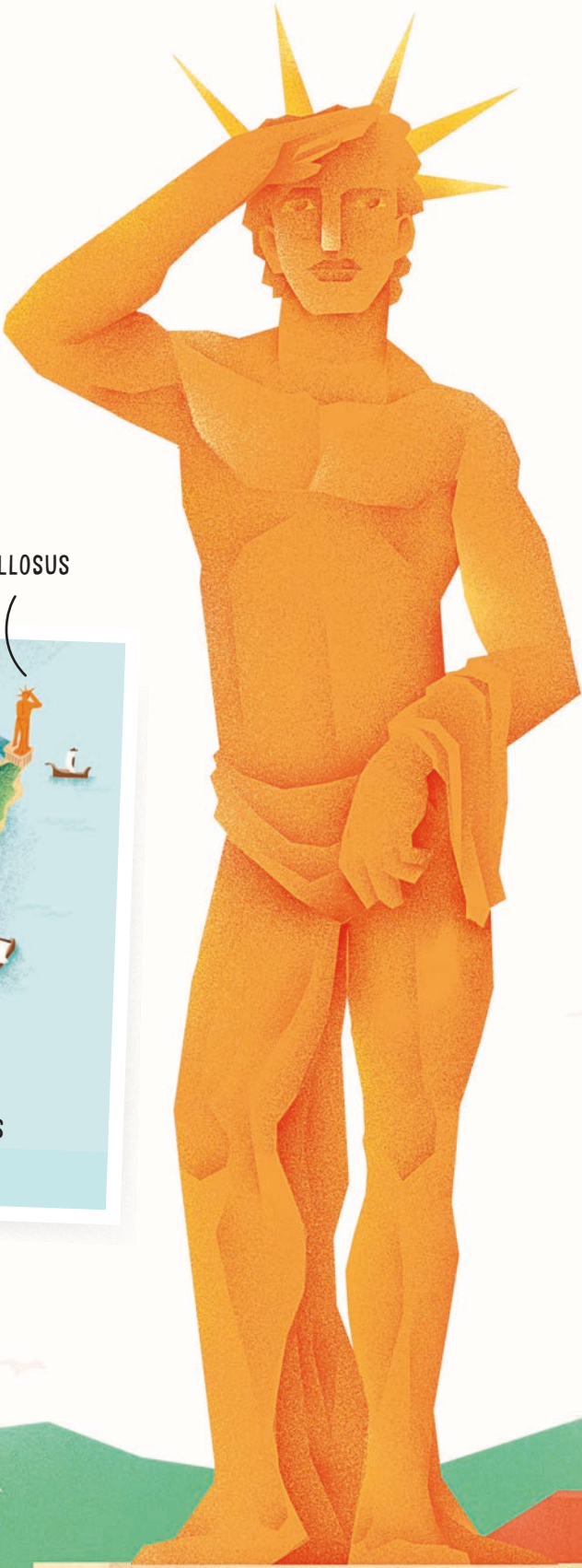
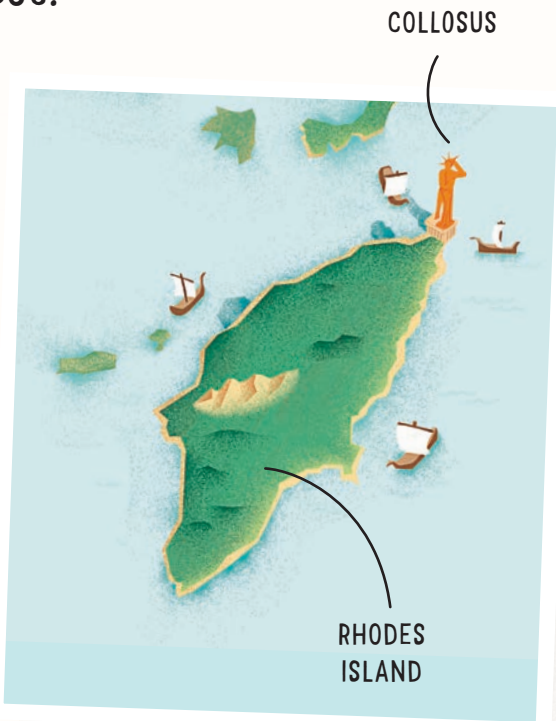
An impressive guy, huh? The Colossus of Rhodes. It was built probably between 292 and 280 BC. The bronze statue of the god Helios was 30 metres tall with a 50-metre-high marble pedestal. Start counting! The statue was built for twelve years; each year it grew by less than three metres on average. At that time, sculptures were carved either from stone or cast from bronze. The Colossus of Rhodes, however, was an extraordinary statue; no one had ever tried to carve such a gigantic statue.

Rhodes Island

One of the 227 inhabited Greek islands in the Aegean Sea, it is strategically located between Asia Minor, Egypt, Syria-Palestine and the Aegean region. It was a centre of business, art and public speaking. It became famous for the most important sculpture schools, so where else would you find better experts for such a building?

Take a look at the giant!

No exact description of our handsome man has been preserved but we do have a few facts. The raised right hand, shielding Helios' eyes, was attached to his head for stability reasons. The statue was likely naked, wearing a cloth at most. Helios had a gilded crown on his head and one leg forward. In this way he resisted the onslaught of the wind and earthquakes. He seemed like he had a great deal on his mind.



SCULPTURE PLACEMENT VARIANTS



Chares of Lindos

This famous sculptor is the author of the Colossus of Rhodes. He might look inconspicuous, but he was a well-known student of the even more celebrated and world-famous Lysippos. His reputation preceded him! The construction of the god Helios provided him with glory and immortality during his lifetime. Chares left nothing to chance. He first created the individual parts of the statue on a small model, and then enlarged and fine-tuned the proportions. Then he had to choose the right place...

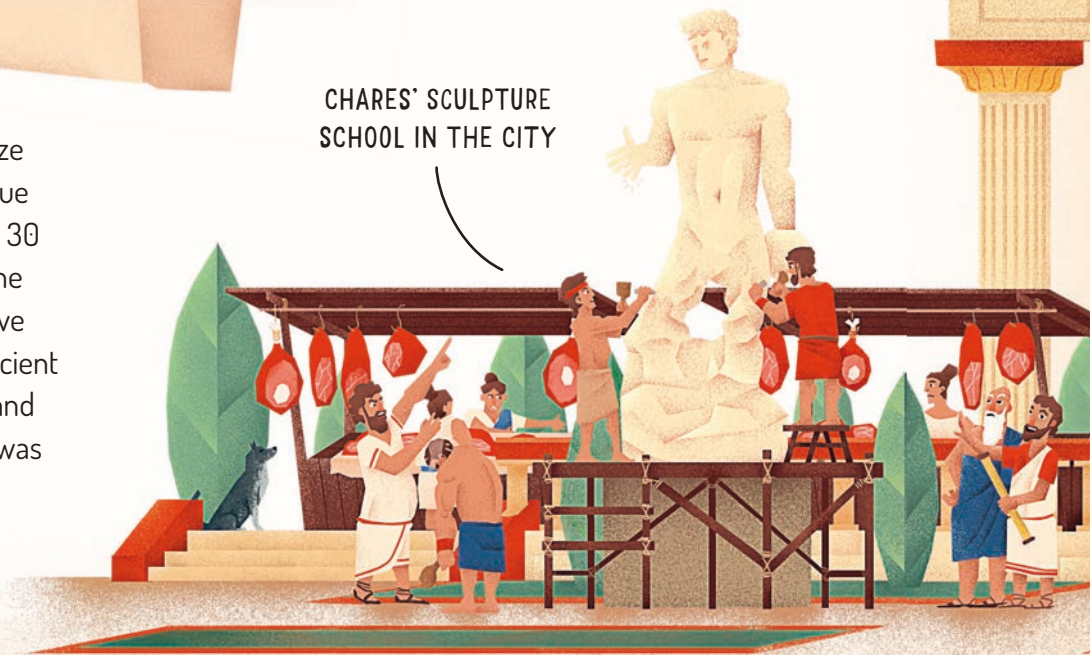


Where should I put the Colossus?

"Are you guys crazy? The colossus cannot stand on the pier in the harbour. No sculpture straddling 300 metres wide can stand firm! When it collapses, it will destroy the city and you in it. I won't be responsible for this!" The anger paid off for Chares. Common sense prevailed and he won the dispute. In accordance with his vision, the statue stood on the shore, in an elevated and easily visible place near the harbour. Logically. It was the safest space and, moreover, people were not staring at the back of the statue (it wouldn't be polite to stare at a God like that, would it?)

So much bronze!

According to classical sources, it took 500 bronze talents, and 300 talents of iron to build the statue of the Colossus of Rhodes, which is about 20 to 30 tonnes! Although only the external surface of the statue was bronze (the "skin"), it was said to have caused a shortage of bronze throughout the ancient world during its construction. And inside? Iron and stone. During its construction, 8 tonnes of iron was used. In short, tonnes of iron, stone and rivets.

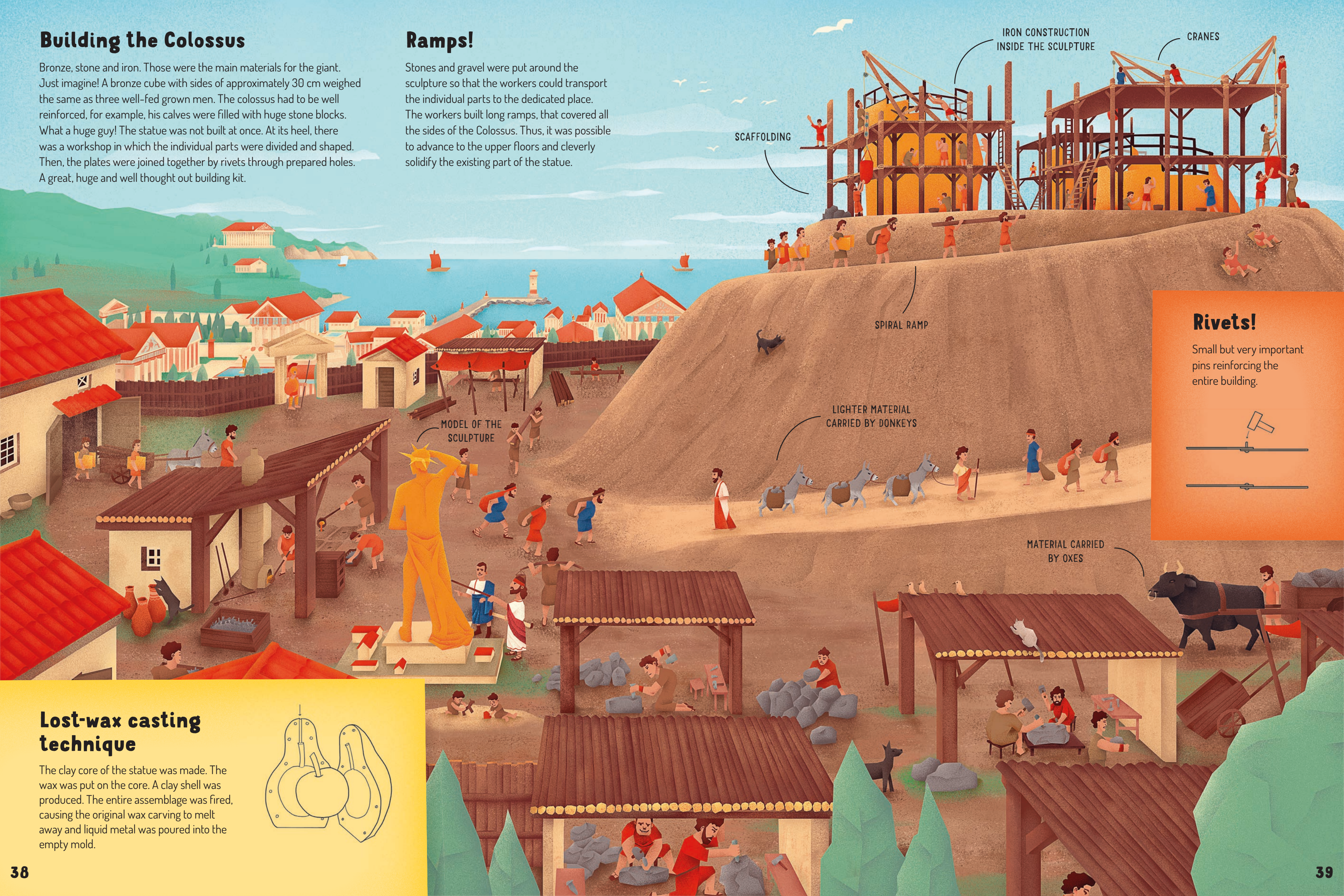


Building the Colossus

Bronze, stone and iron. Those were the main materials for the giant. Just imagine! A bronze cube with sides of approximately 30 cm weighed the same as three well-fed grown men. The colossus had to be well reinforced, for example, his calves were filled with huge stone blocks. What a huge guy! The statue was not built at once. At its heel, there was a workshop in which the individual parts were divided and shaped. Then, the plates were joined together by rivets through prepared holes. A great, huge and well thought out building kit.

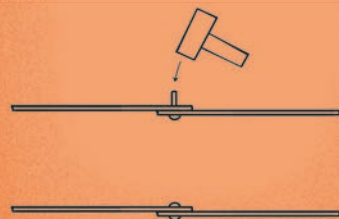
Ramps!

Stones and gravel were put around the sculpture so that the workers could transport the individual parts to the dedicated place. The workers built long ramps, that covered all the sides of the Colossus. Thus, it was possible to advance to the upper floors and cleverly solidify the existing part of the statue.



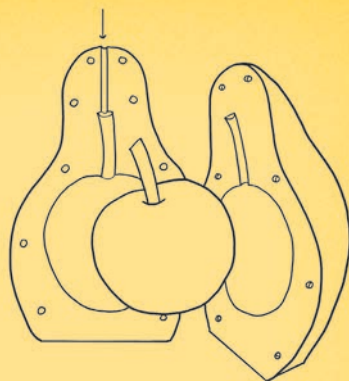
Rivets!

Small but very important pins reinforcing the entire building.



Lost-wax casting technique

The clay core of the statue was made. The wax was put on the core. A clay shell was produced. The entire assemblage was fired, causing the original wax carving to melt away and liquid metal was poured into the empty mold.





Helios on the walk

Helios at that time was riding the sun carriage gracefully across the sky. He arrived late. The land was scattered far and wide. Smiling and without blinking, he drew out the island of Rhodes from the depths of the sea and lit it up with its brightness. Not a single muscle shook in his muscular body. Do you understand? The God Helios belongs to the island of Rhodes just as the rainbow belongs in the sky.

Can we do it?

When the inhabitants of the island fought off the invasion of Demetrius Poliorcetes in 304 BC, they sold their siege machines. Well done! They received 300 talents of silver. Do you know how much gold is in one talent? It corresponds to the price of 25 to 36 kilogrammes! With this kind of capital, it was a good idea to begin the construction of a wonder of the world, what do you think?



SIEGE MACHINE



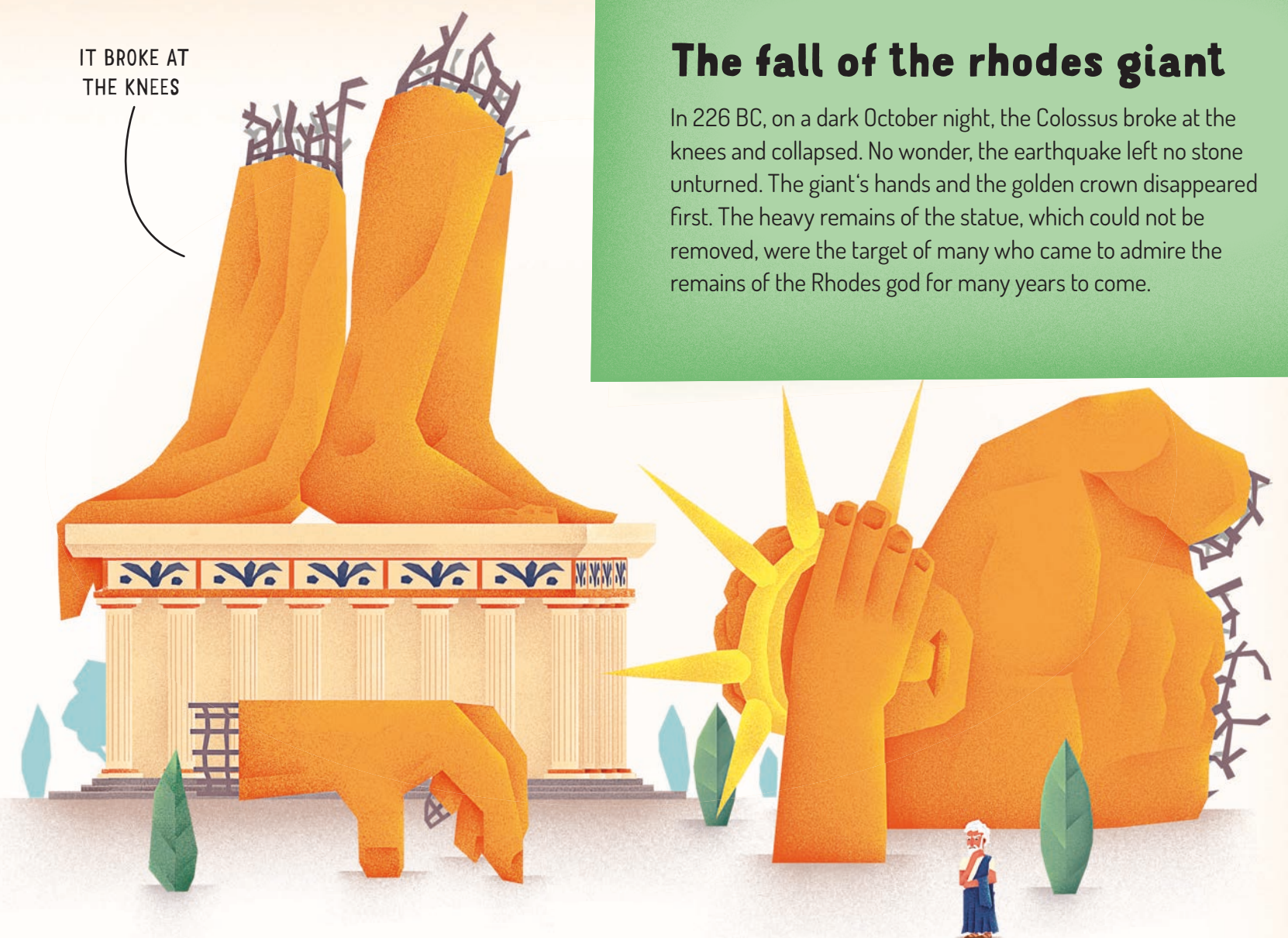
Kolosoi

Originally, the term „kolossoi“ was the name for wax figures and dolls used for magical rituals. Today, „colossus“ represents something huge, going beyond the normal dimensions.

I can do it!

Not even the tallest and strongest man was able to hug a single finger of the Rhodes giant. After all, each and every finger was cast from one piece of bronze and was taller than a man of average height. Sure, many, old, young, fat and thin tried, but nobody succeeded.

IT BROKE AT THE KNEES



The fall of the rhodes giant

In 226 BC, on a dark October night, the Colossus broke at the knees and collapsed. No wonder, the earthquake left no stone unturned. The giant's hands and the golden crown disappeared first. The heavy remains of the statue, which could not be removed, were the target of many who came to admire the remains of the Rhodes god for many years to come.

Hope for recovery

Ptolemy III was an Egyptian monarch who offered to pay for the reconstruction of the statue. He wanted to provide 300 talents of silver, 100 builders, and 350 helpers with a generous salary to pay until the statue was renovated. But there was a prophecy from Delphi that claimed that if the statue was erected again, the sun god would be angry and punish the island of Rhodes and its inhabitants as well.

What happened in the end?

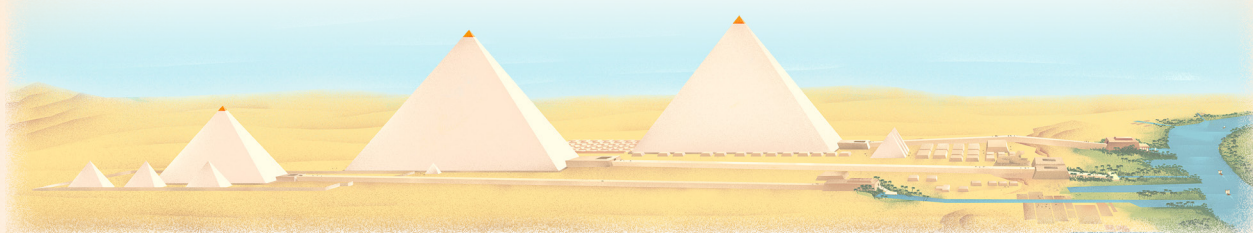
In 653 AD, Muslim invaders disembarked in Rhodes. They brought more than 900 camels with them! And they disassembled the remains of the broken Colossus. It is said that the bronze they earned was melted and used to make coins, weapons and tools. This is how the legendary Colossus of Rhodes ended.



HOW

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WERE BUILT



Illustrated by Tomáš Svoboda
Written by Ludmila Hénková

Each one was unique, its beauty and magnificence lauded by the greatest poets and writers of the age. Everyone longed to see for themselves the Wonders of the World: the Colossus of Rhodes, the majestic Pyramids of Giza, the Lighthouse of Alexandria, which withstood earthquakes and gales, the spellbinding Statue of Zeus at Olympia, the breathtaking Temple of Artemis in Ephesus, the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, inspiration for so many myths and legends. Just one of them survives today. But with us you can go back in time and learn the secrets of how these gems of ancient architecture were created. The building of each comprised so many details and small jobs, so much daily grind and sustained effort, with or without the help of machines.

