

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:29,920

What strange compulsion made man etch vast designs on the face of the

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00:00:29,920 --> 00:00:35,840

earth on downland and desert on the slopes of solitary mountains? I can so

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00:00:35,840 --> 00:00:43,280

many only be seen from the air. What is their message from the distant past?

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00:00:43,520 --> 00:00:48,860

Mysteries for Arthur C. Clarke, author of 2001 and inventor of the

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00:00:48,860 --> 00:00:54,280

communication satellite. Now in retreat in Sri Lanka after a lifetime of science,

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00:00:54,680 --> 00:01:02,680

he ponders the riddles of this and other worlds. For thousands of years people have drawn figures,

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00:01:02,680 --> 00:01:08,520

cut designs in the landscape, apparently for no one on earth to see. One of the

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00:01:08,520 --> 00:01:15,360

strangest wonders of this great rock of Sigiriya here in Sri Lanka is this gallery of frescoes

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00:01:15,360 --> 00:01:23,240

on a sheer cliff hundreds of feet up in the sky. Yet until a modern staircase was constructed,

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00:01:23,720 --> 00:01:31,880

no one could possibly have seen them properly. So why was this done and who are these charming ladies?

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00:01:35,080 --> 00:01:39,080

Similar questions can be asked of figures in many other parts of the world.

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00:01:53,240 --> 00:02:12,400

Dawn breaks over the Nazca desert of Peru and a hazardous experiment designed to prove that primitive

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00:02:12,400 --> 00:02:18,120

Indians could fly 2,000 years ago. American explorer Jim Woodman leads the team.

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00:02:18,280 --> 00:02:26,520

The hot air balloon is made of materials which the ancient Indians are known to have had.

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00:02:26,520 --> 00:02:40,240

Woodman's gondola of reeds is based on the traditional boats of Lake Titicaca.

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00:02:41,240 --> 00:02:50,520

The balloonists risked their lives to try to unravel a mystery etched on the desert beneath them.

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00:02:50,520 --> 00:03:03,840

A fantastic picture book of shapes and lines. Lines so strange and enigmatic that some have

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00:03:03,840 --> 00:03:14,720

imagined they served as an airport built for ancient astronauts. Lines invisible to man until

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00:03:14,720 --> 00:03:22,320

modern aviation came to South America. So grand is the design that Jim Woodman believes the

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00:03:22,320 --> 00:03:28,520

Nazca Indians could only have laid out and admired their giant scratch pad 200 square miles of it

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00:03:28,800 --> 00:03:35,880

from the air. American astronomer Gerald Hawkins has tried to map Nazca. This map extends three

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00:03:35,880 --> 00:03:41,760

miles long and two miles wide and almost all of the lines run off the edge. So right away you

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00:03:41,760 --> 00:03:47,120

know they're more than three miles long. The longest line on record that I personally know about is

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00:03:47,120 --> 00:03:53,440

about 20 to 22 miles long and they can go even further than that and they are perfectly straight.

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00:03:54,400 --> 00:04:02,240

There are triangles. There are radiating triangles and there are zigzags. In fact it is a maze and it

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00:04:02,240 --> 00:04:10,360

is quite a problem to begin to study this textbook on the surface of the desert. Hawkins was called

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00:04:10,360 --> 00:04:15,920

in to crack the code of the Nazca lines which had bewildered archaeologists for more than 40 years.

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00:04:15,920 --> 00:04:22,800

In six expeditions his team painstakingly mapped the desert floor. They made precise measurements

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00:04:23,120 --> 00:04:33,240

not only of the lines but of huge drawings of creatures as well. A bird, a whale. The question was

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00:04:33,240 --> 00:04:50,720

how and why did the Nazca Indians make the lines and drawings. The lines turn out to be the lesser

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00:04:50,720 --> 00:04:57,520

problem. In this experiment Peruvian schoolboys using ranging poles took only minutes to lay out a

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00:04:57,520 --> 00:05:03,720

perfectly straight line. They removed the surface stones to reveal the yellow sand beneath.

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00:05:03,720 --> 00:05:15,960

But the vast figures must have been not only an immense labor but almost unimaginably difficult

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00:05:16,080 --> 00:05:22,600

to draw unless the Indians really did have the power of flight or had mastered a sophisticated

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00:05:22,600 --> 00:05:31,360

technique of scaling up small drawings. Whatever the method the results were perfect. Actually a bad

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00:05:31,360 --> 00:05:37,840

mistake on this desert would still show the lines are 2,000 years old and if somebody had goofed we

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00:05:37,880 --> 00:05:44,680

would see their goof. I don't see any errors here. Hawkins fed the information into a computer.

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00:05:44,680 --> 00:05:56,560

The most likely theory had been that the lines were an astronomical calendar pointing to the

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00:05:56,560 --> 00:06:05,040

rising and setting places of the sun, moon and star. Our immediate conclusion was that the lines as

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00:06:05,120 --> 00:06:12,400

a whole are not an astronomical textbook for calendric purposes. Strangely enough the lines that

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00:06:12,400 --> 00:06:18,200

seem to work astronomically have a little picture on the end. Here we have a spider and that line

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00:06:18,200 --> 00:06:24,400

does indeed point to Orion. Here we have a condor bird and this line does indeed point to the

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00:06:24,400 --> 00:06:31,600

rising of the sun at midsummer and midwinter. But the overriding result that we found was that

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00:06:31,680 --> 00:06:38,320

there were no two or three centuries in the history of this spot on the world where every line would

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00:06:38,320 --> 00:06:45,720

fit the sun, moon or star. But one clue did emerge later to help explain the Nazca Riddle. It came

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00:06:45,720 --> 00:06:52,120

from the nearby Altiplano Indians who still remembered stories about making desert lines. The

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00:06:52,120 --> 00:06:59,520

results that were obtained by questioning the Altiplano Indians show that the lines that they

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00:06:59,520 --> 00:07:07,680

built were pointing to what they would call gods. These gods took many many forms. One form the

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00:07:07,680 --> 00:07:13,360

god could take would be a mountain peak. The higher the mountain peak the greater the god. We also

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00:07:13,360 --> 00:07:18,000

know there was a tendency to point to anything that was regarded as holy. Perhaps a place where a

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00:07:18,000 --> 00:07:24,720

yammer gave birth, perhaps a place where a rainbow was seen to end. But whatever these lines point

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00:07:24,800 --> 00:07:30,960

to it is going to be a mixture. There is no one particular object. The only thing that connects

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00:07:30,960 --> 00:07:37,520

the lines together is that they probably point to god objects and they probably are pathways

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00:07:37,520 --> 00:07:42,960

connected with these gods. And so the only common denominator is that they are pathways to the gods.

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00:07:46,720 --> 00:07:51,600

But the urge to leave an imprint upon the landscape is also a curiosity of the English

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00:07:51,600 --> 00:07:59,360

countryside. The first of these badgers was cut by soldiers of the Great War in idle hours before

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00:07:59,360 --> 00:08:10,880

rifle practice. This horse was cut by Lord Abingdon's steward Mr. G in 1778.

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00:08:22,560 --> 00:08:29,280

But all the fifty or more chalk figures of England have to be cared for from generation to generation.

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00:08:29,920 --> 00:08:36,240

One of the oldest is the Cern Giant, the rude man of Cern. But no one knows why he was cut

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00:08:36,240 --> 00:08:42,800

or even what his name is. Although the locals have a few ideas. I think he's a Celtic god really,

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00:08:43,600 --> 00:08:50,560

a sex symbol. We did have one girl that was uh been married for about seven years and uh

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00:08:51,600 --> 00:08:55,920

hadn't managed to have a child. So we told her go and sit on the giant. Apparently he was supposed

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00:08:55,920 --> 00:09:00,240

to sit up where he knickers off. I don't know whether she did that or not. But uh the next spring she

64

00:09:00,240 --> 00:09:06,240

was pregnant. I look at him every day. I think he is a sex symbol because he does wonders for me.

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00:09:08,000 --> 00:09:13,040

Others say the giant depicts a disillute 16th century abbot from a nearby monastery.

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00:09:14,160 --> 00:09:20,960

Or Lord Hollis, an 18th century landowner lampooned by rebellious servants. But the key to the giant's

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00:09:20,960 --> 00:09:26,880

identity may lie in something now missing from the drawing. What did he have in his left hand?

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00:09:27,760 --> 00:09:33,920

Either um a trophy since he's bandishing in a club or perhaps uh his wife a woman.

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00:09:33,920 --> 00:09:40,640

Well I've heard a theory that it's a head. Um uh you know that he killed somebody and

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00:09:40,640 --> 00:09:46,480

and he's holding the head in his hand. They say that there used to be a dog. He was holding a dog in

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00:09:46,480 --> 00:09:57,120

that hand on a leash. Some experts believe the giant portrays Nodun's, a Celtic hunting god.

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00:09:57,120 --> 00:10:02,800

This Celtic statue found near Cern shows him like the giant with a club in one hand. In the other he

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00:10:02,800 --> 00:10:10,720

carries a rabbit or hare. Hercules is another possibility. The Romans worshiped him in the

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00:10:10,720 --> 00:10:17,280

second century. Statuettes like this one found in Bristol show him with a club in his right hand

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00:10:17,280 --> 00:10:20,000

and draped over his other arm a lion skin.

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00:10:26,960 --> 00:10:32,800

We used a new technique, a resistivity survey, to establish whether the ground around the giant

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00:10:32,800 --> 00:10:37,360

had ever been disturbed. This might show whether part of the drawing is now missing.

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00:10:38,320 --> 00:10:39,360

60.4.

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00:10:39,360 --> 00:10:43,120

Britain's top resistivity surveyor is Dr Anthony Clark.

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00:10:43,120 --> 00:10:49,440

We've taken over 5,000 readings on a regular grid at half meter spacing

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00:10:50,320 --> 00:10:56,000

and what we're going to do when we go away from here is to turn those readings into some sort of

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00:10:56,000 --> 00:11:02,160

visual map which will show the outline of anything which is buried under the grass

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00:11:02,560 --> 00:11:06,560

and we shall probably use a computer to produce that map.

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00:11:12,560 --> 00:11:19,200

It proves to be an historic experiment. On the computer map an unsuspected area of disturbed soil

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00:11:19,200 --> 00:11:21,760

appears beneath the giant's left arm.

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00:11:21,840 --> 00:11:27,920

This refined dot density of yours ties in very well with this overlay of the plan of the giant

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00:11:27,920 --> 00:11:34,800

and it's done remarkably well and we can see the feature just about as clearly as I think we shall

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00:11:34,800 --> 00:11:42,400

ever see it here. There can now be little doubt about the rude man of CERN. The resistivity survey

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00:11:42,400 --> 00:11:47,200

has established that there was once a curiously shaped outline of the giant's body.

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00:11:47,200 --> 00:11:52,240

The resistivity survey has established that there was once a curiously shaped outline now

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00:11:52,240 --> 00:11:54,640

missing beneath the giant's empty arm.

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00:11:55,120 --> 00:12:22,560

On the giant himself the man in charge archaeologist David Thackeray uses the survey results to

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00:12:22,560 --> 00:12:27,120

restore the complete outline for a few hours with a pail of whitewash.

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00:12:34,000 --> 00:12:38,480

The result is stunningly convincing.

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00:12:38,480 --> 00:12:58,560

Suddenly lost for words. Yes. The CERN giant with his new trappings is the image of Hercules

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00:12:58,560 --> 00:13:04,160

with his lion skin. His resemblance to the Roman statuette is unmistakable to David Thackeray.

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00:13:04,720 --> 00:13:12,720

He has so many of the features which Hercules has on portrayals of the period of the Roman period.

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00:13:12,720 --> 00:13:22,960

He has the club, the great virility, the superhuman size and now the lion skin just adds great weight

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00:13:22,960 --> 00:13:27,840

to the argument that he is Hercules. He may well have been the symbol of a religious

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00:13:28,400 --> 00:13:34,000

which he has long outlasted. But the origin of much more recent figures is just as obscure.

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00:13:34,560 --> 00:13:38,240

Is this as some say King George III riding the Osmington charger?

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00:13:40,240 --> 00:13:44,560

And although the Littlington horse in Sussex was cut as recently as 1925,

103

00:13:44,560 --> 00:13:49,360

the artist's name is lost. The strangest of Britain's white horses dominates the

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00:13:49,360 --> 00:13:54,880

Barksha Downs at Uffington. It's also by far the oldest. In the 12th century it was mentioned

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00:13:54,880 --> 00:14:02,960

in a book of wonders. Leading archaeologist Professor Stuart Piggott has pondered the

106

00:14:02,960 --> 00:14:06,560

origins of the Uffington horse since his childhood in Fythorse Vale.

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00:14:10,240 --> 00:14:14,720

A pointer to its date lies in the coin room at Oxford's Ashmolyer Museum.

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00:14:15,600 --> 00:14:20,800

Looking back into the prehistoric past, at least the late prehistoric past,

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00:14:21,520 --> 00:14:30,480

the best comparable representations of horses are to be found on early British coins,

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00:14:30,480 --> 00:14:38,880

1st century BC, pre-Roman, which do show horses on one side of them. And these horses do seem,

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00:14:38,880 --> 00:14:44,640

to most of us, to be very comparable to the way in which the white horse on the hill is shown.

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00:14:45,520 --> 00:14:56,320

Now, they all share the same characteristics. A horse is a wheel, which is the remains of the

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00:14:56,320 --> 00:15:04,560

original prototype, classical prototype of a chariot, and the horse, shown in anything but a

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00:15:05,520 --> 00:15:14,480

classical manner. It's shown as elongated and disjointed, just as with the white horse,

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00:15:14,480 --> 00:15:18,480

the legs have become detached from the body, they become bananas and dumbbells,

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00:15:19,760 --> 00:15:26,400

and the long neck, and the curious treatment of the head, in which the head is a sort of

117

00:15:27,280 --> 00:15:34,320

beak-shaped object, rather than anything like a naturalistic horse. And I and many others would

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00:15:34,320 --> 00:15:41,040

say that these provide the best stylistic parallels to the white horse, and therefore

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00:15:41,040 --> 00:15:47,360

there's a reasonable supposition that the horse on the hill dates from the same, more or less the

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00:15:47,360 --> 00:15:50,720

same period, as the horse on the coins, 1st century BC.

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00:15:57,040 --> 00:16:04,400

But Britain once also had a red horse, cut by the Saxons.

122

00:16:09,040 --> 00:16:11,680

And the men in this plane think they've rediscovered it.

123

00:16:17,120 --> 00:16:23,520

The red horse's champion is Kenneth Cardis. From 1600 onwards, this has been called the

124

00:16:23,520 --> 00:16:30,880

bale of red horse, from about here up to Straton on Aden. It is the most wonderful work of art,

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00:16:30,880 --> 00:16:35,280

the biggest Saxon work of art in England, of course, and it was a religious work of art.

126

00:16:37,040 --> 00:16:42,400

This is a holy place, this is where they worship the Saxon god too, the god of victory,

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00:16:43,760 --> 00:16:49,120

the gods who gave them victory in war, and naturally gave them land, and then looked after

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00:16:49,120 --> 00:16:57,360

their crops. Beneath this landscape, the red horse now lies hidden. But Cardis believes it

reemerged

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00:16:57,360 --> 00:17:11,600

in this photograph in which he discerned an outline. An old parish map confirmed the discovery.

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00:17:11,600 --> 00:17:17,440

It pinpointed the location of the red horse on the ridge above Tyso, where the photograph was taken.

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00:17:19,520 --> 00:17:23,040

The following year, Kenneth Cardis took this aerial picture of the horse.

132

00:17:30,560 --> 00:17:33,600

When enhanced, a stylized creature emerges.

133

00:17:40,480 --> 00:17:45,760

Cardis hopes the infrared photographs taken on this flight will provide unequivocal evidence

134

00:17:45,840 --> 00:17:51,760

of the red horse, now hidden beneath a wood, enough to convince other people that it should be recut.

135

00:18:01,520 --> 00:18:06,480

With fellow searchers Dr Sidney Agnew and Graham Miller, it's time to view the results.

136

00:18:08,960 --> 00:18:10,720

That's good, it's very good.

137

00:18:11,600 --> 00:18:15,040

I can easily tell myself that there's a horse now.

138

00:18:15,680 --> 00:18:22,320

Don't tell yourself, see it. Come on, Graham. Can you see the bald patch where we excavated

139

00:18:22,320 --> 00:18:29,920

on the tip of the air? That's absolutely there. Can you see it, Graham? That is there.

140

00:18:29,920 --> 00:18:31,360

Yes, I think so. I think so.

141

00:18:31,360 --> 00:18:34,800

I just think there's a lighter coloration than just where the head is.

142

00:18:35,760 --> 00:18:40,640

We should be coming to one to a vertical shot and as we look down through the trees,

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00:18:42,000 --> 00:18:45,600

there's just a possibility. Okay. Last one, this is it.

144

00:18:47,040 --> 00:18:51,280

Now there, what about there? Now when you've got me, it's too close.

145

00:18:51,280 --> 00:18:54,880

The trees are still too close. I don't think anybody will ever see it again.

146

00:18:57,360 --> 00:19:01,360

Undaunted, Kenneth Cardis still hopes to recut the red horse of Tyso.

147

00:19:02,080 --> 00:19:08,000

It was one of the great landmarks of England. This was the Vale of Red Horse, up to 1600,

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00:19:08,000 --> 00:19:17,280

and it ought to be again. If the figure were recut, we would have the Vale of Red Horse back again.

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00:19:20,080 --> 00:19:24,640

But other lost landscape figures are being rediscovered for us to wonder at.

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00:19:24,640 --> 00:19:29,680

Back in the deserts of South America, Jim Woodman, the intrepid Nazca balloonist,

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00:19:29,760 --> 00:19:31,680

heard of a whole gallery of them.

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00:19:39,680 --> 00:19:43,680

From Nazca, it meant a journey 600 miles to the south,

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00:19:43,680 --> 00:19:49,680

to the heart of the hostile Atacama Desert of Chile. Woodman brought back this story.

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00:19:49,680 --> 00:19:55,680

These deep 2000 foot valleys are covered, literally covered for many, many miles,

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00:19:55,760 --> 00:20:02,640

with geoglyphs or hieroglyphs or glyphs writing on the sides of the sand.

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00:20:03,520 --> 00:20:09,760

These geoglyphs were originally thought to be Chinese characters in the first journals that

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00:20:09,760 --> 00:20:15,520

recorded them. They were mysterious signs. Some people argued they were tracks of mules.

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00:20:15,520 --> 00:20:18,800

Some other people, when they began to see that there was a definition,

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00:20:18,800 --> 00:20:25,280

as explorers pushed farther back into the valleys, they realized that there was a zoo of the Atacama,

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00:20:25,280 --> 00:20:34,720

animals, pumas, jaguars, tigers, llama trains, reptiles, dogs, a series of stylized men.

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00:20:35,280 --> 00:20:41,360

All these immense figures were soon discovered as the Spaniards moved across the Atacama and down

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00:20:41,360 --> 00:20:48,000

into the colonization of Chile. That was our first objective, to enter those valleys, to climb and

163

00:20:48,000 --> 00:20:52,880

scale the mountains of sand, to see the geoglyphs of the Atacama.

164

00:20:53,760 --> 00:21:01,440

These rocks were all carried from all through the valley down and many of them came through the river

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00:21:02,000 --> 00:21:06,800

when the spring floods bring the waters, melting waters, up the Andes. These rocks slowly came down

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00:21:06,800 --> 00:21:12,160

and over the years they've been carried up here, collected, placed in this very sophisticated art

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00:21:12,160 --> 00:21:22,240

form. Let's head on up toward the top part here. As we investigated and explored the animals and

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00:21:22,320 --> 00:21:28,720

the symbols and the geometric designs, always we were asking about the giants and the large men

169

00:21:28,720 --> 00:21:36,000

that we had heard of farther on in the desert. And always these symbols in the edges of the great

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00:21:36,000 --> 00:21:42,640

desert were trying to tell a story. I felt they were panels that represented stories of ancient

171

00:21:42,640 --> 00:21:48,160

battles, of ancient warriors, of ancient caravans. But farther on in the desert we kept hearing,

172

00:21:48,720 --> 00:21:50,880

the giants. You'll find the giants.

173

00:21:54,160 --> 00:22:03,280

We drove 250 miles due south to the region of Tarapacá, where this legendary mountain and really

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00:22:03,280 --> 00:22:14,080

legendary giant was reported to lie. We found Cerro Unitas and I was astonished when we were

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00:22:14,080 --> 00:22:25,600

about five miles from the hill. I saw Nazca type runways. We pressed on and got to the base of

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00:22:25,600 --> 00:22:35,040

the runways and began a climb around the edge of the largest ridge on this solitary mountain.

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00:22:35,040 --> 00:22:42,160

And as we climbed the ridge and came to the crest, I looked across a saddle in the mountain and there

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00:22:42,160 --> 00:22:50,080

we could make out the first faint outlines of a giant. The mammoth size of the giant

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00:22:51,200 --> 00:22:56,560

ran over the crest of the mountain so it's impossible on the ground to get the full scope

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00:22:56,560 --> 00:23:02,560

of a giant. In fact, had we not known he was a giant, there was no way of telling really what we

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00:23:02,560 --> 00:23:10,160

were exploring. We were disappointed with the giant on the ground. The head and crown area

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00:23:10,160 --> 00:23:17,280

were so confusing we could only spot the large piles of rocks where the giants eye. At that point

183

00:23:17,280 --> 00:23:23,200

I made the decision it was to appreciate it and to even get our measurements straight, it would be

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00:23:23,200 --> 00:23:40,080

necessary to fly. To the plexiglass ahead I could see Cerro Unitas, the lone

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00:23:40,160 --> 00:23:46,960

mountain. And as we flew closer, I had the helicopter slow and the view of the giant that began to come

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00:23:46,960 --> 00:23:55,760

into view was incredible. Here the disorganized form that we had seen close up as we explored the

187

00:23:55,760 --> 00:24:02,880

mountain the day before suddenly became finely engraved on the mountain ahead. As we flew closer,

188

00:24:02,880 --> 00:24:09,760

I began to realize the tremendous size of the giant for the feet and the crown and the rays and

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00:24:10,000 --> 00:24:13,360

and the arm with the arrow all became sharply in focus.

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00:24:16,320 --> 00:24:22,400

Looking toward us in the sky was the largest man that ancient man ever created. It was an

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00:24:22,400 --> 00:24:28,640

exciting moment as the helicopter descended to 750 feet. I stopped, I took out my still camera,

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00:24:28,640 --> 00:24:35,600

I began to photograph that drawing and as you hang there in the air looking down into this face

193

00:24:35,600 --> 00:24:42,320

that stared skyward for a thousand years you realize that this drawing was made by ancient

194

00:24:42,320 --> 00:24:49,440

people to be seen from the air either by the gods or by someone with a power of flight.

195

00:25:06,000 --> 00:25:15,280

There are many questions about these wonderful drawings which frankly I can't begin to answer.

196

00:25:16,160 --> 00:25:24,240

Who made them? What are they? Above all, who was meant to see them? Perhaps we need look no further

197

00:25:24,240 --> 00:25:31,440

than man's desire for immortality is urged to leave some abiding mark on the face of his planet.

198

00:26:05,600 --> 00:26:10,800

The monsters of the lakes.

