

High-Intermediate 1
Unit 9: Reading
Presented by Mohammad Rajabpur

Close Encounters

encounter = a meeting, especially one that happens by chance

In 1927, Toribio Mexta Xesspe of Peru must have been very surprised to see lines in the shapes of huge animals and geometric forms on the ground below his airplane. Created by the ancient Nazca culture, these beautiful forms (over 13,000 of them) are too big to recognize from the ground. However, from about 600 feet in the air, the giant forms take shape. Xesspe may have been the first human in almost a thousand years to recognize the designs.

Peru (noun) = a country in south America

Peruvian (adjective) = from Peru

geometry (noun) = the scientific study of shapes in mathematics

geometric / geometrical (adjective) = related to geometry

He must have been very surprised. = We are 100% sure that he was very surprised.

below = under

ancient = very old

recognize = notice, realize, observe

1 foot = 0.3048 meter = about 30 centimeters

600 feet = 182 meters and 88 centimeters

giant = too big, immense, gigantic, huge

take shape = be seen as a shape

He may have been the first human = We are not sure. Maybe he was the first human

Since their rediscovery, many people have speculated about the Nazca lines. Without airplanes, how could an ancient culture have made these amazing pictures? What purpose could they have had?

rediscovery = discovering something again

speculate = think, guess, theorize

purpose = goal



One writer, Erich von Däniken, has a theory as amazing as the Nazca lines themselves. According to von Däniken, visitors from other planets brought their civilization to the Earth thousands of years ago. When these astronauts visited ancient cultures here on Earth, the people of those cultures must have believed that they were gods. Since the Nazcans could have built the

lines according to instructions from an aircraft, von Däniken concludes that the drawings might have marked a landing strip for the spacecraft of the ancient astronauts. Von Däniken writes, "The builders of the geometrical figures may have had no idea what they were doing. But perhaps they knew perfectly well what the 'gods' needed in order to land."

civilize (verb) = to educate a society so that its culture becomes more developed

➤ Erich von Däniken believes the aliens civilized the ancient human beings.

civilization (noun) = the stage of human social and cultural development and organization that is considered most advanced

astronaut = spaceman

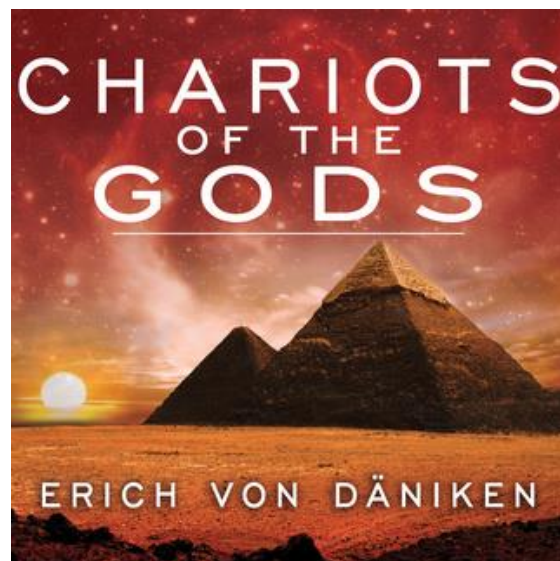
since = because, as

landing strip = runway = a road in the airport where airplane land or take off

figure = shape



Erich von Däniken



In his book *Chariots of the Gods?* (New York: Bantam, 1972) von Däniken offers many other "proofs" that ancient cultures had contact with visitors from other planets. Giant statues on Easter Island provide von Däniken with strong evidence of the astronauts' presence. Von Däniken estimates that the island could only have supported a very small population. After examining the simple tools that the islanders probably used, he concludes that even 2,000 men working day and night could not have been enough to carve the figures out of hard stone. In addition, he says that at least part of the population must have worked in the fields, gone fishing and woven cloth. Therefore, he concludes, "Two thousand men alone could not have made the gigantic statues.

estimate = evaluate roughly

carve = cut a picture in stone

field = farm

weave => wove, woven

weave = fabricate cloth

gigantic = huge; immense; too big



Statues of Easter Island



“Ahmet Muhiddin Piri” known as “Piri Reis”

In a later book, *In Search of Ancient Gods* (New York: Putnam, 1984), von Däniken sees additional "evidence" in a famous map created by a Turkish admiral, Piri Reis, in 1513. The map appears to include Antarctica, which was not discovered until 300 years later. Von Däniken believes that in 1513 map makers couldn't possibly have had the information shown in this map. He insists, "Whoever made it must have been able to fly and to take photographs." According to von Däniken, only one conclusion is possible: "To me it is obvious that extraterrestrial spacemen made the maps from space stations in orbit. During one of their visits, they made our ancestors a present of the maps."

evidence = proofs

admiral = the commander of the navy

Antarctica = the south pole

obvious = clear

extraterrestrial = alien

orbit = an imaginary line in the sky around the earth

present = gift

ancestor # descendant

Obvious? Well, perhaps not to everyone. Scientists, among others, are skeptical and prefer to look for answers closer to home. However, von Däniken's theories continue to fascinate people, both believers and non-believers. And even nonbelievers must admit that space visitors might have contributed to human culture. After all, no one can prove that they didn't ...

skeptical = doubtful

fascinate = amuse, excite



Piri Reis's Map in Public Display at Istanbul's Topkapi Palace

Full Text:

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Sample Summary:

In 1927, Toribio Mexta Xesspe of Peru discovered the Nazca lines, massive designs created by the ancient Nazca culture that can only be recognized from the air. Since their rediscovery, theories about their creation and purpose have flourished. Erich von Däniken suggests that extraterrestrial visitors might have instructed the Nazcans to create these lines, possibly as landing strips for spacecraft. He expands on this idea in his books, offering various "proofs" such as the giant statues on Easter Island and an ancient map by Turkish admiral Piri Reis that allegedly includes Antarctica, which was undiscovered at the time. While many scientists are skeptical, von Däniken's theories continue to intrigue both believers and non-believers, as they spark curiosity about the potential influence of space visitors on human history.

Source:

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