

The Faces of Marcahuasi

Anna M. Galon & Cezary Zych check out Peru's rocky versions of crop circles

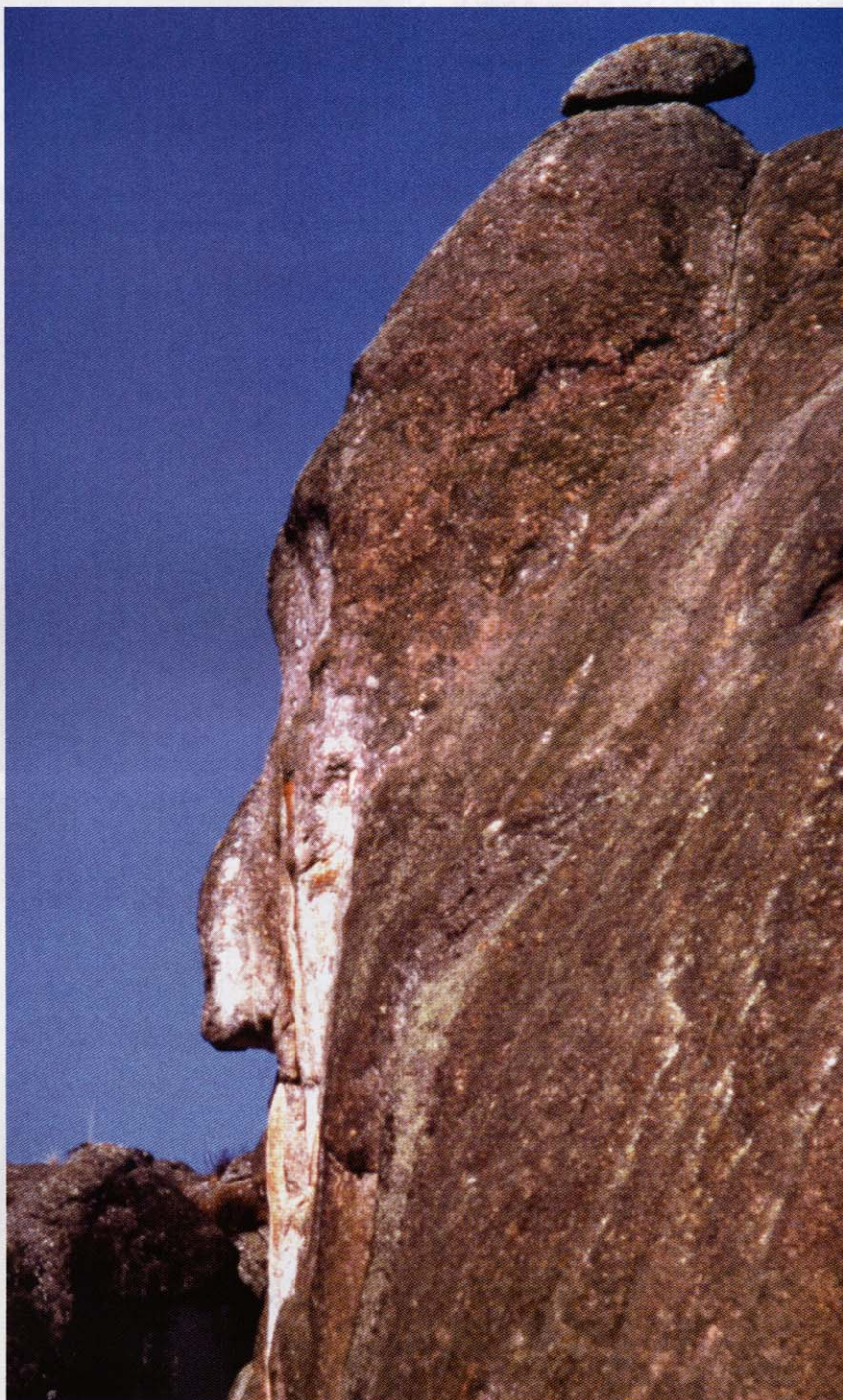
ARE THESE GREAT MONUMENTS THE work of man or nature? Or are they perhaps proof that extraterrestrial life once moved our planet?

Nobody knows who or what carved the faces of Marcahuasi, the giant sculptures that populate a desolate 4,000 metre plateau in the Andes of Peru. Though little known to outsiders, the Marcahuasi plateau has been a subject of local controversy for many years. Scholars say it constitutes a blank spot on the map for if these are indeed sculptures then they are of an unknown style.

One of the giant rocks is called "Monument to Humanity" because, discernible on its side, are relief's of several different races, a Caucasian youth, a Semitic man, an African and possibly others. Some rocks, amazingly, seem to reveal the shapes of lions, camels and rhinos, animals that never inhabited the South American continent.

Marcahuasi is said to be a place of healing for both body and soul, and spiritualists from around the world make pilgrimages to this site. Our expedition assembled in Lima, Peru, before heading out to the start our trek up to the plateau. After several hours climbing along a narrow footpath leading from San Pedro de Casta, the last settlement on the trail, we finally reached our goal and stood dumbfounded.

It was a totally different world, as though we had landed on a strange planet. The huge boulders resembled giant sculptures of animals and humans, the most fascinating being the gigantic humans faces. We inspected dozens of them 20 metres high, scattered all over the area, most of which had been given names by local Indians. 'The Inca', 'The Prophet' and 'The Black Woman's Face', stared down on our party.



■ **THIS PAGE:** - The Inca

OPPOSITE - The legend of the Marcahuasi Faces reaches as distant places as the Cordillera Blanca.