



Curse of the Ancients

In this exciting 5 x 60' history series, "Curse of the Ancients" Professor Alice Roberts reveals how scientists are unearthing the evidence for cataclysmic events in the past and their disastrous consequences. From wars to earthquakes and floods to famines – these are the events that have helped shape our modern world.

In each episode, Alice takes viewers on a journey across Europe and North Africa to discover epic sites and landmarks - fabulous cities abandoned, battlefields long forgotten and sophisticated civilisations toppled and lost to the mists of time. To our ancient ancestors, suffering these catastrophic events, it must have seemed they were cursed but science is now exploding those myths and re-writing history.

GENRE
**History
Science**

DURATION
5 x 60'

BROADCASTER
Sky History

PRODUCER
Barcroft Productions

YEAR OF PRODUCTION
2022

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SERIES OVERVIEW

Curse of the Ancients

Episode 1

In episode 1 of “Curse of the Ancients” Professor Alice Roberts charts the rise of civilisation from 6100BCE to the end of the Bronze Age. A time of great architecture, literature and the arts, most of these great civilisations suddenly collapsed, never to rise again, plunging the world into a dark age. Alice reveals how scientists are uncovering what happened to these civilisations - the devastating flood that separated Britain from Continental Europe; the cataclysmic volcanic eruption that wiped out Minoan Civilisation and the discovery of Europe’s earliest battlefield – throwing new light on disasters that shaped the world today.

Episode 2

In this episode of “Curse of the Ancients”, Professor Alice Roberts looks at the rise of the Roman Empire – one of history’s greatest civilisations, asking what was the secret to Rome’s success? Experts explore the empire, investigating newly discovered battlegrounds in Britain and Spain to find out how Rome defeated her enemies - and suppressed stubborn resistance - making her one of the world’s first superpowers. Alice also discovers how Rome herself suffered military disaster in the forests of Germania but her eventual downfall was the enemy within – the decadence and misrule of the Emperors that were Rome’s real curse.

Episode 3

In this episode of “Curse of the Ancients”, Professor Alice Roberts explores the disastrous last days of the Roman Empire and the cataclysmic power vacuum following its collapse, the effects felt even beyond the Empire’s borders. Once known as the Dark Ages, this period saw kingdoms rise and fall, cities wiped out by invasion and plague ravage Europe and the Middle East. Despite these disasters, archaeologists are revealing a world where trade continued, cultures flourished and new world religions emerged and spread. Never far from catastrophe, Alice reveals how humankind continued to prosper even during the darkest of times.

Episode 4

In this episode of “Curse of the Ancients” Professor Alice Roberts reveals how archaeologists are shedding light on one of history’s most mysterious periods. For three hundred years, after the collapse of Rome, Saxons and Vikings rampaged through Europe, but then these pagan societies seemed to disappear. Where did they go? And why? From new discoveries of Viking settlements and burials in Scandinavia to the last stand of paganism against Christendom in Poland and the brutal repression of Saxons in Northern England by William, Duke of Normandy, Alice reveals the catastrophes, calamities and disasters which helped shape modern Europe.

Episode 5

In the final episode of “Curse of the Ancients,” Professor Alice Roberts looks at one of the most cursed periods in European history - the Middle Ages. Archaeologists reveal how wars, such as the Mongol invasion of Hungary, the Black Death that wiped out up to half of Europe’s population and climate change causing cataclysmic floods – turned the world of our ancestors upside down. Death was a brutal part of everyday life. With such calamities, Western Society was on the verge of collapse. So how did it survive? And how did these catastrophes lay the foundation for the modern world?