Nazca: Decoding The Riddle Of The Lines

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Dedication
First and foremost to the ancient builders, whose knowledge, skill and determination created a vast network of patterns in the desert floor of the Nazca plain that still puzzle us after more than 1500 years. For my wife Irene, whose love of ancient Peru shows in the beautiful way her heart embraces every stone, ceramic artifact and Native face she encounters. To Sr. Juan Navarro Hierro, director of the Paracas History Museum. He has taught me more about the history of coastal southern Peru, and especially the Paracas culture, than any mountain of books could, because he is the living library. And finally to Maria Reiche, the greatest authority of Nazca, who almost single handedly saved them from destruction.

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**1/ Introduction**

The lines of Nazca, as well as the animal and plant geoglyphs associated
with them, are amongst the most mysterious ancient works of pre-Colombian Peru, and in fact the world. Far less famous than the pyramids of Giza in Egypt, or Stonehenge in England, they do fit into the same class as these enigmas, as none of them have been completely decoded.

Conventional archaeology, or more particularly Egyptology insists that the Great Pyramid, as well as the 2 other main ones that exist on the Giza Plateau outside of, and rising above the city of Cairo were created by the dynastic Egyptians around 2500 B.C. Yet other researchers, including Graham Hancock, Stephen Mehler, and the School of Khemitology, amongst others believe them to be far older.

Stonehenge, which has been dated at having been constructed between 3000 and 2000 B.C., as regard what remain the large standing stones that we can still see today, is also hotly disputed by many who believe it to be far older.

What seems to be apparent is that the dating and explanation of ancient structures via conventional academics, whether in Egypt, England, Peru or other locations is no longer the domain strictly of those with doctorates in archaeology.

Engineer Christopher Dunn for example, who has spent his entire life as a master machinist, and has worked with laser technology and other advanced techniques in the aviation industry in the United States has an amazing theory about the Great Pyramid of Giza. It is his assertion that this massive stone structure, weighing 6 million tons and being composed of 2.3 million stone blocks was not a tomb for the pharaoh Khufu, but an ancient power plant which generated electricity. Read more about Mr. Dunn and his theory at www.gizapower.com.
In order to truly understand what the ancients were doing, and how and why they spent considerable amounts of time in constructing Stonehenge, the pyramids and other great works of the distant past may require a multidisciplinary approach. Having stone masons, engineers, chemists, physicists and other professionals add their opinions to the subject of ancient megaliths and other enigmas can do nothing but expand our understanding of them.

The Nazca (or Nasca) lines and geoglyphs are ancient works which in some ways are as troubling as those discussed above, in that they have never been properly explained. Ranked probably third in terms of popular ancient places to visit in Peru, with Machu Pic’chu clearly being number one and the Lake Titicaca area number two, Nazca receives hundreds of thousands of tourists per year. Those with the stomach for it fly over the vast Nazca plain in order to observe the mysterious etchings from the air. And others, somewhat apprehensive of climbing into a small plane in a foreign country tend to be satisfied with viewing a couple of the geoglyphs and some of the lines from a tower on the side of the highway.

What will attempted in this book is to cover all of the prevailing theories as to who made the Nazca works, why and when. Beliefs range from primitive Nazca native people carving them into the earth of the barren desert in order to appease gods, to ancient aliens making broad runways in order to land their extraterrestrial machines.

Were they artistic reflections of the cosmos, and was it even the Nazca who made them, or other Native people? I have found the local guides to be reasonably ineffective at explaining the origins of the lines and geoglyphs, and the same has been the case both as regard the Cusco and Machu Pic’chu ancient works, as well as those at Lake Titicaca. They tend to solely base their information on western academic archaeology, with perhaps a drop or two of local oral traditions.
Timelines are restricted to the presumed famous dominant culture of each area; in the case of Cusco it is the Inca, and in Nazca the Nazca culture.

The purpose of me writing this is the same as with my other 12 books; no such treatise exists that covers all of the possible answers as far as I can tell. I leave it to you to read what I have put here, ponder the possibilities, and make up your own mind. The only people that know who made these amazing wonders are those that did the works themselves, and they have been silent for centuries. My other e-books are available through www.hiddenincatours.com and www.amazon.com.

Brien Foerster Cusco Peru

2/ Where is Nazca Anyway?
The Nazca Lines are a series of ancient geoglyphs located in the Nazca Desert in southern Peru. They were designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994. The high, arid plateau stretches more than 80 kilometers (50 mi) between the towns of Nazca and Palpa on the Pampas de Jumana about 400 km south of Lima, the capital of Peru. Access to the town of Nazca and the lines are via the highway from Lima, and most people visit using one of the many bus services that travel along
the Pan Americana highway. Though limited air plane service can take you from Lima to the town of Pisco, which is about half the distance from Lima to Nazca, the local airport there has not yet opened for frequent commercial flights.

Also, although there is a small airport just outside the city of Nazca, its sole purpose is for the flights over the lines and geoglyphs. Bus or car transport from Cusco are also a possibility, as are similar conveyances from southern Peru.

Nazca is one of the driest places in the world with average annual precipitation up to a meager 25 millimeters. Its weather is controlled by the Humboldt Current which carries water from Antarctica up the west coast of South America.

This cold ocean water cools the marine air and limits the accumulation of moisture within clouds, and as a result though clouds and fog are able to form there is little rain and the region is exceptionally arid.
Geoglyphs and the Nazca Plain

Unlike Cusco, the capital of the Inca civilization and Peru’s tourist epicenter, Nazca temperatures range from 10° C to 32 ° C with an average daily high of 21° Celsius. Summers months (November to March) are characteristically dry, sunny, and hot, when it is normally raining in Cusco. During the winter (June to August) fog from the coast rolls over the hills to keep temperatures in the moderate range, however the intense sun makes daylight hours seem warmer than the registered temperature.

A thermal induced wind is characteristic of the area much of the year, and actually makes it cooler than it would be otherwise. The wind tends to build in late morning, reaches a maximum in midafternoon, and then dies down in the evening. It is for this reason that the flights over the Nazca lines are usually restricted to the morning time.

The Nazca culture is thought by many archaeologists to have been the
civilization which flourished from 100 BCE to 800 CE beside the dry southern coast of Peru in the river valleys of the Rio Grande de Nazca drainage and the Ica Valley. Having been heavily influenced by the preceding Paracas culture, which was known for extremely complex textiles, the Nazca produced an array of beautiful crafts and technologies such as ceramics, textiles, and the famous geoglyphs (most commonly known as the Nazca lines).

However, a major theory that this book will put forward will not only question the time frame of the Nazca culture, but also their achievements. The key expert on this subject is Sr. Juan Navarro, director of the Paracas History Museum, in the small town of Chaco, located next to the Paracas National Reserve. Though not a credentialed academic, Sr. Juan grew up in the area, and has spent many decades studying the pre-Colombian cultures that lived there. These cultures spanned more than 2000 years, and included, in chronological order the Paracas, Nazca, Wari (Huari), Chincha and Inca. But more of that later.

After the fall of the Inca at the hands of the Spanish conquistadors, the area became dominated by them, and the Native people who they introduced from other parts of a fledgling nation called Peru.

There are two versions of the Spanish foundation of the town of Nazca. According to the writings of colonial Spanish chroniclers, it was founded on October 28, 1548, commissioned by Pedro de la Gasca and Alonso de Mendoza. The other version says that it was founded by Viceroy Garcia Hurtado de Mendoza, 5th Marquis of Cañete, in 1591.

Early on, Nazca was known for producing a grape brandy, similar to the more famous pisco, intended for slaves, and the local people called the distilled liquor Nazca.
In colonial history, there were large and famous farms such as the Ingenio San Juan and San Javier property of the Jesuit College of Cuzco. These enterprises were engaged in the making of wood carvings, grape cultivation, wine processing for Catholic worship, and the construction of two beautiful churches. In 1767 on the expulsion edict of King Charles III of Spain, these properties were made available to the Crown, and thereafter owned by *encomenderos*, which were an almost feudal system by which a Spanish land owner would virtually enslave those Natives living on the land.

During the wars for Peruvian independence from the Spanish crown, Nazca patriots received the liberating expedition of General Don Jose de San Martin on October 14, 1820 after the Battle of Nazca. Two days earlier, on October 12 General Juan Antonio Alvarez de Arenales, from
Ica, was sent to the South, in pursuit of the royalist troops of Colonel Manuel Quimper.

The town of Nazca was established in August 29, 1821, and after that, on July 2, 1855 it was elevated to being a district and then it became a province on January 23, 1941. On 12 November 1996 at 11:59 a.m. local time (16:59 GMT time) a heavy earthquake of 6.4 on the Richter scale (the center of the earthquake was 7.7 in the sea) destroyed the city of Nazca and its surroundings almost completely. Because it occurred during the day there were only 17 fatalities, but 1,500 people were injured and around 100,000 left homeless. Almost all of the old houses made of brick and or adobe were destroyed, but within 12 years Nazca had been completely rebuilt, with some of the buildings reflecting those that had previously existed.

The economy of the Nazca area today is mainly agriculture, limited due to a lack of water, and tourism. All of the water is subterranean, and is accessed via wells and aquifers. 2000 plus years ago the climate was much wetter, and thus the area could grow more food and maintain a very large human population. The desertification of the area over time had a direct impact on the people and cultures of the area, who went from opulence and a rich social and ceremonial structure, to survival, and then abandonment of the area.

**3/ The Peopling Of Nazca**
Ceramic with classic Nazca colours

It is unclear when the first people inhabited the Nazca area. In terms of actual organized cultures, it has been populated by sedentary groups at least since the Formative Period (Initial Period, 1800-800 BC, and the Paracas culture, 800-200 BC). In the Early Intermediate Period (200 BC-600 AD), the region flourished under the Nazca Culture. At the end of the Nazca Period the extreme desertification led to a cultural decline. It was not until the Late Intermediate Period (1000-1450 AD), in a phase of increasing pluviality (increased rainfall), that the regional population increased again. (1) The groups that moved in were the Wari (Huari) from the highlands to the east, then the Chincha from coastal Peru to the north, and finally the Inca.
It is unknown if the Wari conquered anyone still living in the area, or if the collapse of the Nazca culture resulted in there simply being open territory to exploit. The Wari rose as a confederation of related people starting about 600 AD near the present day city of Ayacucho in the eastern Andean highlands, and many of the so called “Inca roads” of this area of Peru were in fact constructed by the Wari. But climate change, which began to take effect in about 800 AD began to cause cultural decline and fragmentation, and by 1000 AD little of the Wari’s power remained.
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