

Line Ball

3 September 2008

The Nazca Lines are located in southwest Peru near the modern-day city of Nazca.

They were created by the Nazca culture, who flourished there between 200 B.C.E. and 600 C.E. During those 800 years, the Nazca created a complex of lines and geometric, animal, plant and human shapes on the Pampa Colorada ("Coloured Plain," or "Red Plain"). The lines and shapes extend over an area of nearly 190 square miles / 500 square kilometers.

Up to now, no one has been able to discern with certainty the cultural purpose and use of the shapes.

But, after flying over them, I think I've got it figured out.

First, here is some image information and an example of the physical size of the shapes.

Each image in this document has been enhanced to emphasize the lines and shapes.

For example, here's the original, unaltered photo of a segment of the lines and shapes.



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Here's the enhanced version, which better reveals the lines and shapes.

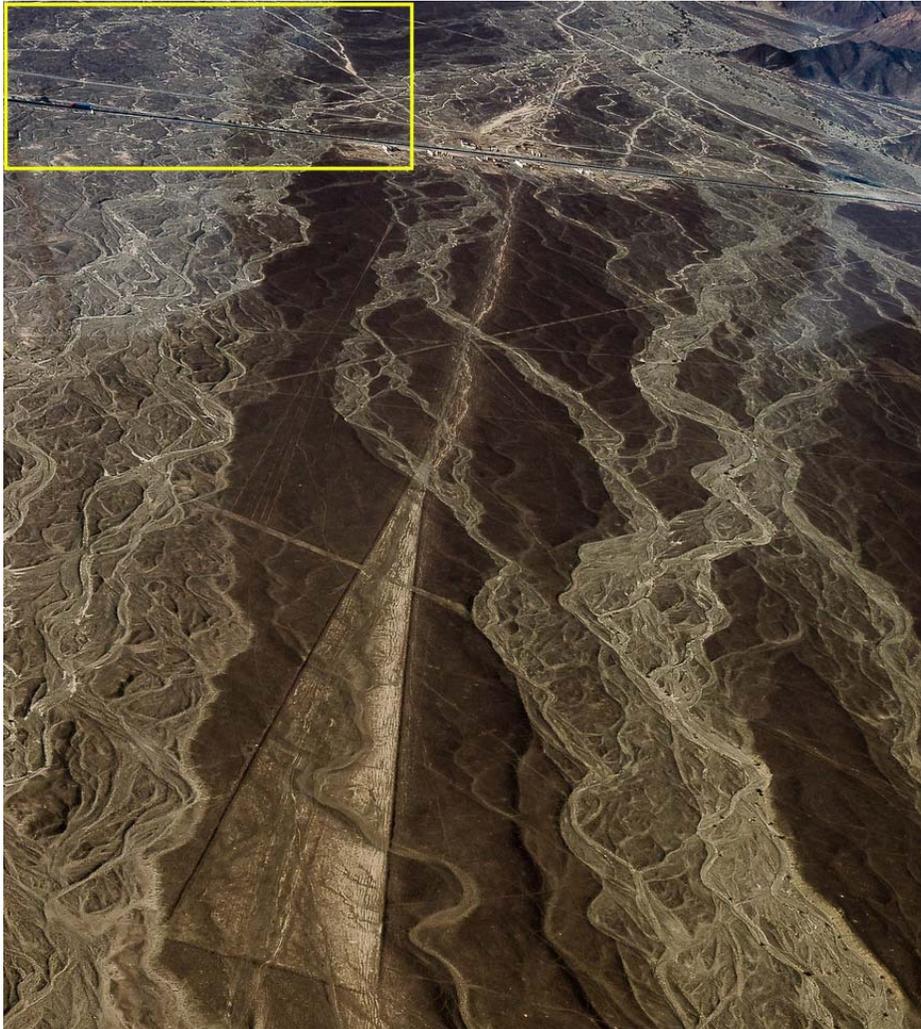


And, here's a cropped section of the enhanced photo.



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For scale, here's an overall shot of one of the geometric shapes and surrounding erosion.



This is the cropped area outlined in yellow in the overall shot.



Note the semi-truck highlighted by the arrow. Now, go back and look at the full frame photo again.

As you can see, the lines and shapes are very large. Some lines and geometric shapes extend for many miles / kilometers.

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The lines and shapes on the plain were formed by scraping off the top, dark layer of sand, rocks and soil, revealing the lighter layer underneath. This work was accomplished by methods available at the time, which consisted of human, manual labor. There were no draft animals, such as oxen, horses or mules, available for the work since they all arrived with the Spanish more than a millennium after the Nazca Lines were constructed.

People who live their entire lives in developed societies generally have very little understanding and appreciation of how much work can be accomplished with manual labor. Our travels in developing economies have given us some insight into those possibilities, including witnessing gravel roads being built by hand; where the workers manually broke large boulders down into gravel.

However, even given our enhanced appreciation of what can be done over time with an organized work force of manual laborers, the extent of the lines and shapes on the Pampa Colorada is geological in scale, truly monumental and wonder-inducing. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that many thousands of person-years were required to construct the lines and shapes.

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As in every ancient culture, different deities and purposes shaped the ongoing use of temples, holy sites and significant public areas. Almost anywhere in the world there is evidence of a site of cultural significance, regardless of the society, corresponding evidence exists that later generations modified, built on top of, or obliterated earlier instances of construction. The Nazca Lines are no exception.



Condor, 443 feet / 135 meters long

As this enhanced photo of the condor reveals, there are lines that cross over the condor and lines that the condor was built over. The inescapable determination is that succeeding eras of the Nazca culture built their own lines and shapes on the plain; establishing them as a new layer over anything previously constructed by earlier generations.

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The primary source of the fascination with the Nazca Lines is that they are only fully visible from the air. There are low hills and small mountains along some edges of the plain, but the shapes and lines extend well over the horizon from those viewpoints. Considering the Nazca people did not have designers and project managers circling the construction site in airplanes, the symmetry and accuracy of the lines and shapes are very impressive.



Hummingbird, 165 feet / 50 meters



Monkey, 360 feet / 110 meters

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Spider 150 feet / 46 meters

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Killer Whale, 210 feet / 65 meters

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When we see the work of the Nazca, as humans, we devote most of our attention to the easily recognized animals. The geometric shapes and lines are often entirely ignored. However, when you fly over the vast Pampa Colorada, you cannot help but be impressed by the countless lines and shapes radiating out in all directions.



What purpose could these hundreds of miles of lines and shapes serve? That question has puzzled every viewer since the lines' modern-day discovery in the 1920s. Subsequently, there have been nearly as many theories proposed as people who have seen the lines.

The most fanciful theory is that the lines and shapes are guides and runways for visitors from alien worlds. Unfortunately for proponents of this theory, there is no remaining evidence that the plain was ever used as a spaceport and no record of any kind, written or otherwise, that any aliens ever stopped by the neighborhood.

The most prominent scientific theory has been that the shapes and lines were for astronomical purposes and that the non-geometric shapes corresponded with constellations. This theory was dealt a blow in 1976 when American astrophysicist Gerald Hawkins found no correlation between changes in celestial bodies and the design of the Nazca Lines (*).

The remaining scientific theory is that the lines, like most everything else in this part of the world of large-scale, pre-Columbian construction, is related to religion. Specifically, the theory states that the Nazca Lines are either a cluster of sacred paths or an outdoor temple (*).

(* Source: Encyclopedia Britannica, 2008

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I find all of these theories lacking. They ignore one of the fundamental aspects of humans: competition.

I propose a new theory of the Nazca Lines based on human competition: The Line Ball Theory.

I contend that the lines and geometric shapes form a huge, plain-sized playing field. The playing fields were created for the game of Line Ball. The purpose of Line Ball was to move the ball, likely the head of an unfortunate enemy or slave, by any means possible, down the paths formed by the lines, into the open areas of the geometric shapes, and then into the goal.

To support my theory, note the round, goal-like structure at the ends or intersection point of each of these geometric shapes.



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The Nazca civilization was not limited to the Nazca valley, but also included the Pisco, Chincha, Ica, Palpa, and Acarí valleys. Given the competitive nature of humans from different communities, it is not a large conceptual leap to imagine days-, weeks- or even months-long Line Ball tournaments between Line Ball teams from the different valleys.

The rules of the game were probably simple, and something similar to:

1. Line Ball is played between two teams per game.
2. The first team to score a goal wins.
3. Play begins with the ceremonial decapitation of a slave or enemy captive to create the ball.
4. Once play begins, the game continues with no interruptions or pauses until a goal is scored.
5. The ball may be advanced toward the goal by any means possible.
6. No weapons allowed on the field of play.
7. Maximum of 1,000 members per team; with no new members allowed during a tournament.
8. Maximum of 100 players from each team on the playing field at any time.
9. All team members must be native residents of the team's valley. No slaves, captives or foreigners allowed.
10. Any player dying on the field of play cannot be moved until after the game is complete; but their head may be used to replace the ball should the ball in play be destroyed or lost to a predator.
11. Except for substitution, any player(s) leaving the boundaries of the lines, paths or shapes constituting the playing field before a goal is scored are immediately put to death.
12. All players on the losing team on the field at the time of defeat are immediately killed.
13. Any player(s) or team member(s) who break a rule of Line Ball are immediately killed.
14. The final arbiter of any dispute is the King, or the King's appointed representative.

I assert the Line Ball theory provides a framework which solves all the mysteries of the Nazca Lines. In the Line Ball theory, the animal shapes on the plain represent the mascots of the various teams, e.g. The Hungry Hummingbirds, The Mauling Monkeys, The Stinging Spiders, etc. New lines and shapes were built over the old lines and shapes to form fresh, more challenging fields of play. Lines and shapes were built over the mascot shapes of former championship teams after the teams faded from glory.

And, finally, the Line Ball theory provides the best explanation to date of the man on the mountain.

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Unlike almost every other shape on the plain, the man on the mountain was constructed on a mountain side, overlooking the plain. In other words, the man on the mountain overlooks the Line Ball playing field.



Many use the man on the mountain as the foundation for the Alien Airport theory. The Line Ball theory puts the man on the mountain in proper perspective.

The man on the mountain is not an alien. The man on the mountain is not signaling the aliens.

The man on the mountain is a tribute to the typical Line Ball fan—a guy ogling the cheerleaders while ordering a beer.

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The Nazca Lines include about 70 images of animals, various flowers, trees, and other plants—as well as geometric shapes, including triangles, trapezoids, and spirals. Virtually indecipherable from ground level, they are plainly visible from the air.

UNESCO added the Nazca Lines site to its World Heritage List in 1994.

Chicha, beer made from corn, was found in every past civilization in this area of the world, and remains an important part of rural culture today.

The Man on the Mountain and the rest of the Nazca Lines are located at S14.74446 W75.08414.

Like the Earth not being the center of the universe, gravity, and evolution, the Line Ball theory is proposed by a voice outside the recognized Science Establishment. Like those fresh views, the Line Ball theory is heretical, and threatens the established order. However, similar to those groundbreaking assertions later proven, I believe future discoveries of incontrovertible proof of Line Ball betting pools, Line-Ball-team themed llama pack and halter accessories, and Line-Ball-fan chicha vessel headgear will add Line Ball to the orthodoxy of commonly accepted fact.

Unless otherwise noted, all photos by Douglas Hackney.



Photo by Jorge Valdes

Douglas and Stephanie Hackney are on a two to three year global overland expedition.

You can learn more about their travels at: <http://www.hackneys.com/travel>