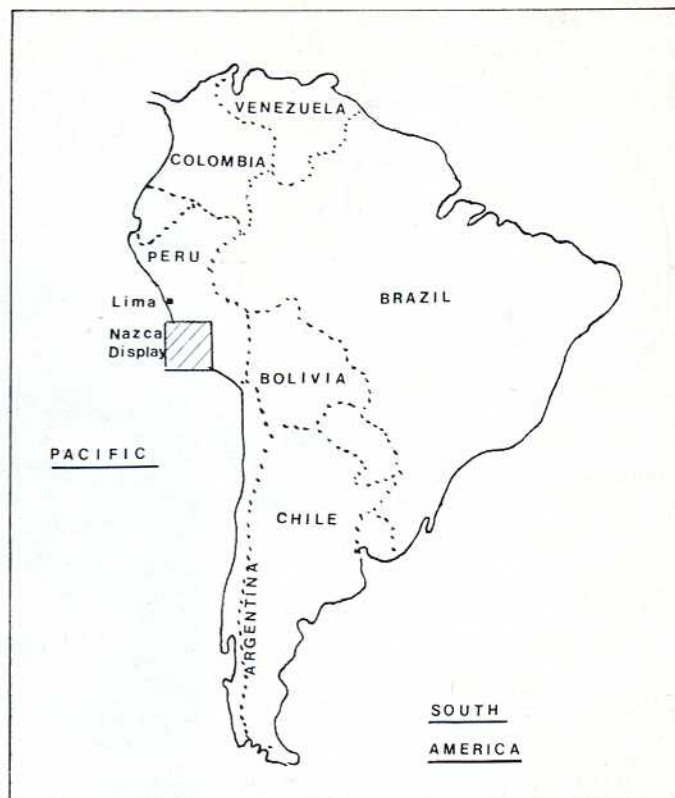


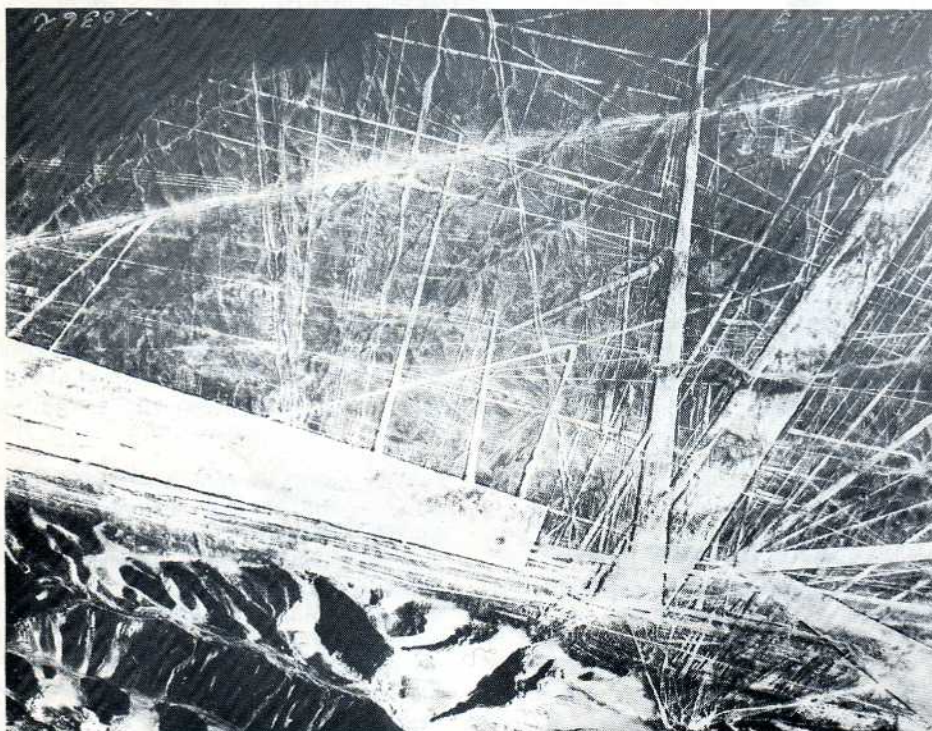
The Hidden Image of the Nazca Display

by William J. Veall



South America showing the location of the Nazca Display in Peru, 300 miles south east of Lima and some 50 miles inland of the Pacific coast.

Various described as “the World’s largest astronomy book”, a gigantic scratch pad, “Pathways to the God’s” – a spaceport for our extra-terrestrial ancestors – the Nazca Lines remain what they will always be; one of the most beautiful and enigmatic examples of prehistoric human diligence ever recorded on the face of the earth. William J. Veall, currently reading Archaeology at the University of Southampton Extra Mural Department, has made a systematic study of the Nazca Lines and in this first of two articles, introduces the display and attempts to dispel much of the vivid speculation that surrounds this astounding and misunderstood monument.



An aerial photograph of the Pampa de San José Archaeological Zone, showing one of the huge rectangles along the southern border on which can be seen a bird pictogram with extended whip-like neck pointing in the mid-summer solstice direction (22nd December in the southern hemisphere). Faintly in the top right hand corner can be seen the “Iguana” pictogram. This obvious multi-directional maze of lines and geometric shapes tends to go against Kosok’s astronomical atlas theory for the Nazca Display. Photo Courtesy the Maria Reiche Collection.

THE Nazca Lines, or Nazca Display is scored on a desert plateau high above the Nazca and the Ingenio Valleys, whose respective rivers, the Rio Nazca and the Rio Ingenio, flow sea-wards via the Rio Grande. The plateau, called Pampa Colorada, lies 300 miles south-east of Peru’s capital, Lima, and some 50 miles inland of the Pacific coast.

Geologically speaking this desert pavement has not been substantially modified by erosion or deposition for at least 3000 years. Rainfall along this coastal section of Peru was then and is now extremely rare. Admittedly, the strong south winds have blown a certain amount of sand and small rocks into the archaeological features but essentially this Pre-Columbian work of art is the same as when it was sculptured some time between 1000 B.C. and A.D. 600. The underlying soil of the pavement is a mixture of sand, clay and calcite which resulted from generations of rainwash from the bordering Andean Mountains before the advent of a drier climate. This soil is covered by a surface layer of volcanic pebbles and angular, fragmented rock called rhyolite. Exposure to the early morning dew followed by intense equatorial sunlight has changed the colour of the metallic surface-coating of the rock from manganese and iron oxide to a soft reddish-brown colouring, hence the name of the plateau – the Red Plain – or Pampa Colorada. A freak of geological circumstances created for prehistoric man a wondrous natural scraper board.

The Pampa Colorada is covered with fascinatingly beautiful works of semi-naturalistic, abstract art. An incredibly intricate and integrated lacework of lines, some narrow as goat tracks, others as wide as airport runways dart across the desert