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THE MYSTICAL TRAIL OF ANCIENT CIVILIZATION

When somebody tells us about pre-Columbian civilizations in South America we think about Inca, Aztec and Maya. However, there is the other one that is even more interesting – Nazca. They are known by their giant ground drawings. It is also known as Nazca figures, but you can hear other names such as Nazca Pictures and Nazca Images. The Nazca Lines are located in the Pampa region of Peru. They cover nearly 400 square miles of desert. There are 300 figures that are made of straight lines and geometric shapes. It is clearly visible from the air. The researches consider that the majority of lines were built by an ancient civilization which lived and flourished on that territory from around A.D.1 to A.D.700 and called Nazca. For the first time, the Nazca Lines were noticed when commercial airlines began flying across the Peruvian plateau in the 1920s.

The lines are known as geoglyphs. It is the picture on the ground made by specially planted trees or removing rocks to create a “negative” image. It is one of the earliest known examples of applied geometry so well preserved [1. p. 79].

In 1927 the researcher Dr. Paul Kosok arrived to Peru. He was very attracted by that cultural pre-Columbian period. In one of his first trips to the south of the country, he stopped at the top of a plateau and saw extensive lines on both sides of the road near the mountains. After some research, he was amazed to find out that one of the figures had the unmistakable shape of a flying bird. Kosok was followed by Maria Reiche, who had studied the Nazca Lines drawings for 50 years.

Maria Reiche and Dr. Kosok were supporters of astronomy theory of lines function. She explained how these lines were used by ancient Peruvian astronomers as if they were a gigantic solar and lunar calendar, nestled in the sand, legends and myths of the locals. The Kosok-Reiche astronomy theories held true until the 1970s when a group of American researchers arrived in Peru to study the glyphs. This new wave of research started to poke holes in the arche-astronomy view of the lines. Johan Reinhard believed that the lines had a religion meaning and were meant to worship gods who would bring a successful crop. It was offerings to the gods. Anthony Aveni thought that the straight lines and

trapezoids were related to water, but not used to find water. They were used in connection with rituals [3].

It is known that some of the animal designs that are perceived in Nazca are a whale, a dog with long legs and tail, two llamas, the fox, the shark, various birds such as herons, the crane, the pelican, the gull, and the parrot. In the category of reptiles, there is an alligator, an iguana and a snake. Human shapes are also known as the Austronaut. Some drawings consist of trees and flowers [2. p. 158].

Now scientists all over the world recreate some figures, but the really purpose creating this fascinating monument and its origin is not known for certain. We may never know why the Nazca people put so much time and care into a project that they could barely see. Moreover, the Nazca Lines are still the excellent example of ancient culture to future generations.

LITERATURE

1. Aveni, Anthony F. *Between the Lines: The Mystery of the Giant Ground Drawings of Ancient Nasca, Peru* / Aveni, Anthony F. // Austin, TX: University of Texas Press. – 2000. p 72 – 86.
2. Haughton, Brian. *Hidden History: Lost Civilizations, Secret Knowledge, and Ancient Mysteries* / Haughton, Brian // Career Press. – 2007. p 156 - 162.
3. <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/archaeology/nasca-lines/>