

Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	The Lines and Geoglyphs of Nasca and Pampas de Jumana
<i>Location</i>	Provinces of Nasca and Palpa, Department of Ica
<i>State Party</i>	Perú
<i>Date</i>	1 October 1993

Justification by State Party

The "Nazca Lines", as they are commonly known, are the most outstanding group of geoglyphs anywhere in the world. They are also one of the most impenetrable enigmas of archaeology by virtue of their quantity, nature, and size, as well as their continuity. The concentration and juxtaposition of the lines, as well as their cultural continuity, demonstrate that this was an important and long-lasting activity.

History and Description*History*

Intensive study of the geoglyphs and comparison with other manifestations of contemporary art forms suggests that they can be divided into three chronological phases.

The first dates from the Chavín period (500-300 BC) and is characterized by the technique of forming figures by piling stones. This was an important period for cultural developments in the Andean region, with strong influence exerted in the Ica region from the north by the Formative Middle Late Culture.

The local development known as Paracas represents the second phase (400-200 BC), again strongly influenced from the north. The town of Paracas adapted its culture skilfully to its severe geographical location and achieved a high level of artistic development.

The third phase, which represents the great majority of the geoglyphs, is the Nazca phase proper (200 BC-AD 500). The Nazca culture derived directly from that of Paracas. The Andean towns developed a powerful religious system which produced, along with Moche on the northern coast of Perú, an outstanding culture represented by its handicrafts (notably pottery) and textiles. Most of the geoglyphs of this period are located close to villages of this culture, such as La Quebrada del Frayle, Cahuachi, Palpa, and Ingenio, concentrated in Pampa de Jumana.

Description

The Nasca geoglyphs are located in the arid Peruvian coastal plain, some 400 km south of Lima, and cover about 450 km². They are to be found both in the desert and on the low Andean foothills. These are covered with ferruginous sand and gravel which has acquired a dark patina from weathering. Removal of the gravel reveals the underlying lighter coloured strata, which contrasts strongly with the darker gravels.

Two techniques were used to define the geoglyphs. In the earlier Chavín period they were defined in outline, the gravel being removed and piled inwards, so as to leave the figures in slight relief. For the most part, however, the technique used was the removal of the gravel from the figure, providing a solid figure that contrasts with its surroundings.

In general terms the geoglyphs fall into two categories. The first group (of which about seventy have been identified) are representational, depicting in schematic form a variety of natural forms. Many of these are animals, birds, insects, and other living creatures: examples include the Spider (46 m long), the Monkey (55 m), the Guanay or guano bird (280 m), the Lizard (180 m), the Humming Bird (50 m), the Killer Whales (65 m), and the largest of all, the Pelican (285 m). Stylistically they can be linked closely with motifs on other representational art of the period, such as the pottery and textiles.

Other figures represent flowers, plants, and trees, deformed or fantastic figures (for example, a strange creature with two human hands, one with only four fingers), and objects of everyday life, such as looms and *tupus* (ornamental clasps). There are very few anthropomorphic figures, which have acquired somewhat fanciful names - the Astronaut, E.T. (discovered in 1982), the Man with the Hat, and the Executioner. These are paralleled by the petroglyphs to be found in the more rocky parts of the region and are considered to be early in date.

The second group comprises the lines proper. These generally straight lines criss-cross certain parts of the pampas of the region in all directions. Some are several kilometres in length and form designs of many different geometrical figures - triangles, spirals, rectangles, wavy lines, etc. Others radiate from a central promontory or encircle it, as in the cases of the *quipus*. Yet another group consists of so-called "tracks", which appear to have been laid out to accommodate large numbers of people.

There have been many theories put forward to interpret these remarkable geoglyphs. The more fantastic of these, which relate them to extra-terrestrial beings, can be summarily rejected. The general consensus at the present time is that they had ritual functions connected with astronomy. They were closely linked with the *ayllus* (clans), probably as totemic representations, and played an important role in their economic and social relationships.

Management and Protection

Legal status

The complex of geoglyphs is protected under the provisions of Law No. 24047 for the Protection of the Cultural Heritage (1985). This confers on the National Institute for Culture the responsibility for the identification, protection, and investigation of archaeological sites; central and local government authorities and agencies have a duty to ensure the enforcement of the law, and urban and rural development planning projects must take account of them. There are restrictions upon the powers of owners of cultural properties, with penal sanctions in the case of transgression or default.

Management

There is at the present time no overall management plan for the area covered by the Nasca Lines. At the monuments protected by the National Cultural Institute under the terms of Law No. 24047/1985 there are signs forbidding access to the geoglyphs themselves. However, there is comparatively easy access to the whole area and tracks have been made by tourists, in vehicles and on foot, which leave indelible traces on the landscape. In the past there has also been some damage to certain of the figures from road construction, notably the Panamericana Sur highway, which passes directly through the area.

The *Proyecto de Investigación Aeroarqueológica* (Aerial Archaeology Investigation Project) includes among its objectives the definition of the monumental zones and the archaeological reserve and the preparation of a plan for their designation as part of the archaeological heritage and protection, but this is still in its early stages.

Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

The first scientific exploration of the Nasca Lines was begun in 1941 by Paul Kosok, who studied them with the assistance of the Peruvian Air Force. Since 1946 Dr Maria Reiche has devoted her whole life to studying them. In the course of her investigations she has carried out many conservation tasks as well. The National Cultural Institute has also been responsible for the maintenance of a number of figures in its care. However, there has been no overall plan for the conservation of the entire corpus of lines that make up the nomination.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the Nasca Lines is not in question. The method of their formation, by removing the overlying weathered gravels to reveal the lighter bedrock, is such that their authenticity is assured.

Evaluation

Action by ICOMOS

An ICOMOS expert mission visited the area in April 1994 and had discussions with national and local officials. It was agreed that the limits of the proposed nominated site should be revised to conform with the reality of the distribution of the lines and geoglyphs on the ground. Problems of security, especially in relation to access from the Panamericana Sur highway, were also discussed.

Expert comments were received from Dr Wolfgang Wurster (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut), who strongly supported inscription on the List.

Qualities

The Nasca Lines are one of the most impressive archaeological monuments in the world. They represent a remarkable manifestation of communal religious and social homogeneity over a considerable period of time.

Comparative analysis

There are many other examples in the world's archaeological record of geoglyphs of this kind, in the Americas and Europe. However, none of these compares remotely with the extent, diversity, and long duration of the Nasca Lines.

ICOMOS recommendations for future action

The definition of the area to be included on the List is being studied and new proposals will be made by the State Party before the meeting of the World Heritage Committee in December.

There is no evidence in the nomination dossier of the existence of a viable management plan for the conservation and protection of this vast area, which is essential in the light of the continuing threats to the geoglyphs from tourism and vandalism. The State Party has informed the Secretariat that a working party has been set up by the National Cultural Institute, charged with the preparation of such a plan. ICOMOS does not, however, feel that inscription should be delayed to await the approval and implementation of this plan, though the State Party should be encouraged to carry out this work with the minimum of delay.

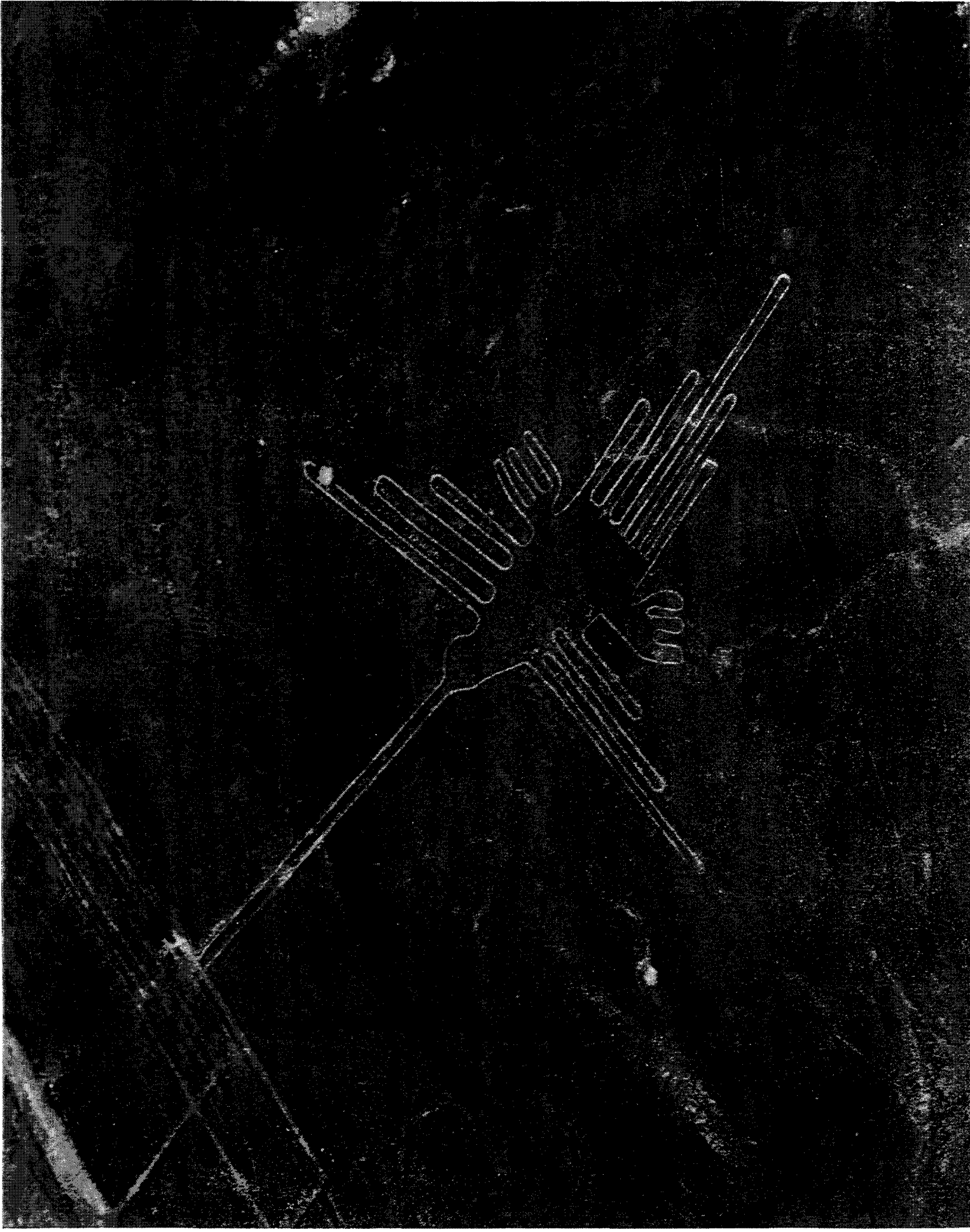
Recommendation

That consideration of this nomination be referred back to the State Party to define the limits of the cultural property.

In the event of this information being provided, ICOMOS recommends that this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria i, iii, and iv:

- *Criterion i* The Nazca lines and geoglyphs form a unique and magnificent artistic achievement that is unrivalled in its dimensions and diversity anywhere in the prehistoric world.
- *Criterion iii* The Nazca lines bear exceptional witness to the culture and beliefs of this region of pre-Columbian South America.
- *Criterion iv* This system of lines and geoglyphs, which has survived intact for more than two millennia, represents a unique form of land-use which is especially vulnerable to the impact of modern society, and especially mass tourism.

ICOMOS, October 1994



Nazca : le colibri /
Nasca : the Humming Bird