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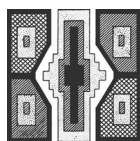
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NASCA ORIGINS AND PARACAS PROGENITORS

Patrick H. Carmichael

The origins and endings of Nasca culture lie with the appearance, florescence, and termination of Nasca religion (south-coastal Peru, Early Intermediate Period, ca. 100 B.C.–A.D. 600). Elaborate, polychrome iconography on ceramic vessels reveals a pantheon of supernatural creatures representing the materialized ideology of Nasca worldview. This article takes an iconographic approach to examine the origins of Nasca religion by tracing the central deity—the Masked Being—the most complex, common, and constant figure of the painted designs. It is demonstrated that the predecessor of the Masked Being was the Paracas Oculate Being, which originated in the Ocucaje Basin of the Ica Valley. Both deities were the icons of severed-head (huayo) cults. Archaeological examples of the diadem always painted on Masked Being motifs are seldom found outside of Ocucaje and the Paracas Peninsula cemeteries, where they date to Paracas Phase 10. Paracas ancestors, migrating from the Ocucaje Basin during the Necrópolis Era (ca. 100 B.C.–A.D. 100), brought a religion and severed-head cult, which on the Nazca frontier morphed into a new belief system conducive to new social and environmental circumstances. It is proposed that, in the southern region during Early Nasca times, religion facilitated a subsistence strategy of gardening and gathering combined with herding, hunting, and residential mobility as an adaptation to a hyper-arid desert environment subject to droughts and flash floods. This study advocates a multi-regional approach to Nasca archaeology by developing independent chronologies, ceramic seriations, and culture histories for each region.

Los orígenes y el final de la cultura Nasca se corresponden con la aparición, el florecimiento, y la extinción de la religión Nasca (en la zona costera del sur de Perú, en el Periodo Temprano Intermedio, ca. 100 a.C.–600 d.C.). Elaborada iconografía policromada en vasijas de cerámica revela un panteón de criaturas sobrenaturales que representan la ideología materializada de la visión del mundo Nasca. En este trabajo se realiza una aproximación iconográfica para examinar los orígenes de la religión Nasca mediante el trazado de la deidad central—el Ser Enmascarado—la figura más compleja, común, y constante de los diseños pintados. Se demuestra que el antecesor del Ser Enmascarado fue el Paracas Ser Oculado, que se originó en la cuenca Ocucaje del Valle de Ica. Ambas deidades eran los iconos de los cultos con la cabeza cortada (huayo). Ejemplos arqueológicos de la diadema siempre con motivos pintados en el Ser Enmascarado rara vez se encuentran fuera de Ocucaje y los cementerios de la península de Paracas, que datan de la fase 10 Paracas. Los antepasados Paracas, emigrando de la cuenca Ocucaje durante la Era Necrópolis (ca. 100 a.C.–100 d.C.), trajeron una religión y el culto de la cabeza cortada que, en la frontera

Patrick H. Carmichael, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Mount Royal University, Calgary, Alberta (pcarmichael@mtroyal.ca)

de Nazca, se transformó en un nuevo sistema de creencias conducente a nuevas circunstancias sociales y medioambientales. Se propone que en la región sur durante Nasca Temprano, la religión facilitó una estrategia de subsistencia basada en la jardinería y la recolección combinada con el pastoreo, la caza y la movilidad residencial como una adaptación a un entorno hiperdesértico sujeto a las sequías y las inundaciones. Este estudio aboga por un enfoque multi-regional para la arqueología Nasca mediante el desarrollo de cronologías independientes, seriaciones de cerámica, y las historias de la cultura de cada región.

The Early Intermediate Period (EIP) Nasca culture (ca. 100 B.C.–A.D. 600) of Peru's south coast is world famous for its giant ground drawings (geoglyphs), delicate textiles, and brilliant polychrome ceramics. The iconography exhibits a rich cosmology populated by fabulous supernatural creatures while establishing humanity's place in the cosmos, the forces they sought to control, and the rituals deemed necessary to maintain balance. Nasca art describes Nasca religion which, in turn, is the essence of Nasca identity. This study takes an iconographic approach to the question of origins for key Nasca religious beliefs and practices, focusing on antecedents and their geographical source. By identifying Nasca innovations derived from imported concepts we are better positioned to reconstruct the historical and social context in which Nasca culture emerged.

In this article I demonstrate that the central deity and cult focus of Nasca religion were based on concepts imported to the Nazca Valley during the Necrópolis Era (100 B.C.–A.D. 100) from the Ocucaje Basin in the Ica Valley. The opening sections situate this study in time and space, and review the migration and settlement evidence to establish context. Elements of EIP Nasca culture are then compared with their Early Horizon (EH) Paracas predecessors. The custom of taking and preserving human heads in both traditions is examined by reviewing the archaeological and iconographic evidence. It is proposed that this practice represents a severed-head tradition (*huayo* cult) associated with a supernatural creature called the Oculate Being in Paracas studies, and the Masked Being in Nasca studies.

In the following sections, the Nasca Masked Being and the Paracas Oculate Being are compared. The

reader is first introduced to the Nasca Masked Being with its diagnostics and associations. It is shown to be the central Nasca deity, and its appearance, florescence, and termination mark the trajectory of Nasca religion (and Nasca culture) from beginning to end. It is thought to be both the principal divinity of Nasca religion and the icon of the severed-head cult. Against this comparative background, the Paracas Oculate Being is presented along with its diagnostic features and affiliations. The Paracas art style is very different from Nasca and produces visually distinct imagery. Nonetheless, when the structure of the Paracas and Nasca compositions is compared, numerous correspondences are found in addition to a common set of associations.

A major point of dissimilarity are the head ornaments worn by the Nasca Masked Being (mouth mask, diadem, bangles, shell collar), which do not appear on the Paracas Oculate Being. A review of archaeological finds demonstrates that the diadem ornament originates in the Ocucaje Basin and is seldom found outside it, thus strengthening the argument that ancestors from Ocucaje founded the Nasca religion.

The concluding section considers some of the social pulls and environmental pushes that favored metamorphosis to a new Nasca religion as a social, political, and economic mediator in the Nazca desert and its rapid spread over the entire Ica–Nazca coastlands. Besides providing a vehicle to social power it is proposed that, in the southern region where the new religion first appeared, it generated an inter-village and inter-valley social web of commonality. This facilitated a strategy of gardening and gathering with herding and hunting, and residential mobility as an adaptation to a hyper-arid desert landscape vulnerable to droughts and flash floods.

Information on the artifacts and line art illustrating this study is given in Appendix 1. While acknowledging that the historically correct spelling of Nasca is with an “s” (Menzel et al. 1964: 8), in this article I spell Nasca with an “s” when referring to the archaeological culture and art style, and with a “z” when referencing the river valley, modern city, and geographical region of Nazca.

Location and Environment

On the south coast of Peru the broadest expanse of coastal desert is found in the regions of the Ica Valley and the Río Grande de Nazca drainage basin, which together constitute the heartland of the Nasca culture (Figure 1). While coastal rivers run

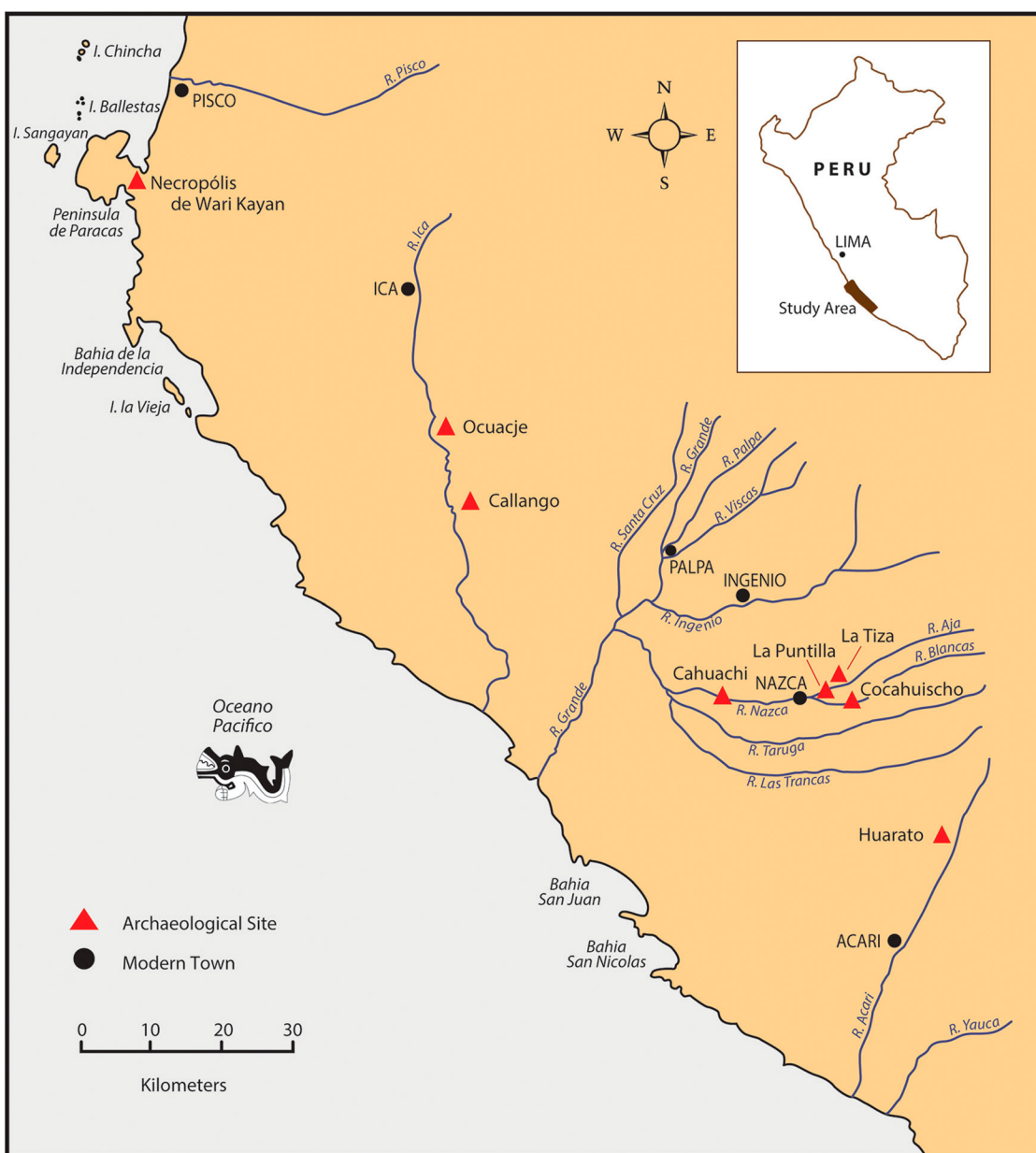


Figure 1. Peruvian south coast showing the regions and sites mentioned in the text.

west across the desert plain from the Andes to the Pacific Ocean, the Ica River is unique in that, having emerged from the sierra, it turns south traversing some 150 km before finding its effluent to the ocean. It is the Ica Valley oases of Callango and Ocucaje that concern this study (Figure 1). Far to the south of Ica, and also well inland, the Río Grande de Nazca drainage presents clusters of rivers like the fingers of two hands that join in a single flow, the Río Grande, which completes the journey to the sea. These two river clusters will be referred to by their modern district capitals, Palpa and Nazca.

While the entire coast of Peru is a near rainless, hyper-arid desert, the most extreme sun and wind regimes are encountered in the Ica–Nazca region. Here, long stretches of river have surface water for only a few months during seasonal run-off from the Andes. Throughout the remainder of the year these channels are dry, although underground filtration continues 4 to 10 m below the surface. However, the yearly flow lessens from Ica to Palpa to Nazca, while the incidence of drought increases (Beresford-Jones 2011: 9–28; Schreiber and Lancho Rojas 2003: 24–30). In Early Nasca times, cultivation was limited to the river margins and dependent on a generous seasonal soaking. Ironically, one of the greatest dangers was periodic mega floods, which could drown entire valley systems (e.g., Beresford-Jones 2011: 79, 205; Beresford-Jones et al. 2009: 246). I will return to the environment along with religion in the concluding section.

Chronology

Figure 2 shows the Ica Valley Master Sequence as it was conceived by Rowe and Menzel (1973 [1967]). Menzel et al. (1964) seriated the EH Paracas pottery of Ica into 10 sequential style phases, labeled Ocucaje 1–10. Only the last three are of importance to the current work (Oc. 8–10). Today these phases are alternatively referred to by some researchers as Paracas Phases 1–10. Following the EH, the EIP Nasca ceramics were divided into eight style phases. Originally, the style phases were used to define epochs (discrete units of time). Over

8	Early Intermediate Period
7	
6	
5	
4	
3	
2	
1	
10	Early Horizon
9	
8	
7	
6	
5	
4	
3	
2	
1	

Figure 2. Traditional chronology of the Ica Valley master sequence after Rowe and Menzel (1973 [1967]).

the years questions of sample size, methodology, and applicability outside of Ica have shadowed the Master Sequence. The relative chronology employed in the current work is shown in Figure 3. I treat ceramic phases as units of style that show direction through time but may overlap. The definition of *epochs* includes style, but relies equally on wider cultural patterns and absolute dates (Carmichael 2013: 219–220; Carmichael et al. 2014: 7).¹

Of special concern to this study is the Necrópolis Era, a band of time (ca. 100 B.C.–A.D. 100) when the Necrópolis of Wari Kayan was in use, and Paracas, Topará, and Nasca ceramic traditions interacted along the south coast (Carmichael 2015: 121–122). This was an era of growing and shifting populations, and a new religion emerged in the Nazca Valley; it soon dominated the entire Ica–Nazca region. Figure 3 shows the cultural epochs and style phases that preceded and followed this critical time of co-mingling and genesis.

Settlement Patterns, Migrations, and Cahuachi

The settlement history of the Ica, Palpa, and Nazca regions and their adjacent coastlines shows scattered

EPOCHS Units of Time & Cultural Patterns	ABSOLUTE TIME	CERAMIC PHASES Units of Style	PERIODS
Loro	AD 600	Loro	Middle Horizon
Late Nasca	AD 500	N7	Early Intermediate Period
Middle Nasca	AD 400	N6, N5, N4	
Early Nasca	AD 300	N3	
	AD 200	N2	
	AD 100	N1	
Proto Nasca	AD 1	N1, Oc. 10	Necropolis Era
Late Paracas	100 BC	Oc. 10	Early Horizon
	200 BC	Oc. 9	
	300 BC	Oc. 8	
	400 BC	Oc. 8	

Figure 3. Revised chronology for the southern Nasca region with epochs and ceramic phases.

occupations going back to the Middle Archaic (5000–3000 B.C.), but the frequency and size of sites increase over time (Carmichael 1998a; Cook 1999; García Soto and Pinilla Blenke 1995; Reindel 2009; Schreiber and Lancho Rojas 2003). In the Callango Basin of the Ica Valley, the massive Animas Complex² was begun at the start of Late Paracas (Oc. 8). By its conclusion (Oc. 10) it covered more than 90 ha, including some 100 mounds (Bachir Bacha and Llanos Jacinto 2012, 2013: 174; Cook 1994, 1999; DeLeonardis 1997; Massey 1991). At this same time (Oc. 8), large migrations into the Palpa and Nazca regions took place. Reindel describes the Late Paracas influx to Palpa (Oc. 8 and 9) as a “massive colonization,” with 118 documented sites (2009: 448), in part reflecting shifting residence from the sierra to the coast (Reindel et al. 2015: 58). In the southern tributaries around Nazca,

Schreiber and Lancho Rojas (2003: 13) date the initial colonization to Oc. 8, noting that most villages were relatively large, indicating planned colonization as opposed to gradual, single-family settlement. While evidence of human occupation in the Nazca region goes back to the Middle Archaic (Isla Cuadrado 1990; Vaughn and Linares Grados 2006: 605–608), by “initial colonization” Schreiber and Lancho Rojas (2003) refer to the first extensive, permanent, sedentary occupation of these inland valleys. Ceramic evidence strongly indicates that these first settlers came from the Callango Basin in the Ica Valley (Massey 1991: 341; Menzel et al. 1964: 102, 148, 150, 261; Van Gijseghem 2006: 426–427).

Moving forward in time to the Necropolis Era (Oc. 10 and N1), populations continued to expand significantly throughout the south coast as shown by another steep increase in the number of settlements (Cook 1999: 83; Reindel 2009: 450; Schreiber and Lancho Rojas 2003: 14; Silverman 2002: 58). Researchers attribute some of the growth at this time to a second migration from Ica (Silverman 1994: 378; Sořna 2015: 265; Van Gijseghem 2006: 436). This article demonstrates that the second wave of colonists into the Nazca region came from the Ocucaje Basin of the Ica Valley.

The reasons for migrations from Ica to Palpa and Nazca remain unknown. Expanding populations in the Ica Valley, reduced crop yields from drought or soil depletion, adverse political conditions, warfare, and charismatic leadership can all be invoked to explain migration. Such questions must be left for future study.

In the Nazca region the large settlement of La Puntilla was established in Oc. 8 and occupied throughout the ensuing Necropolis Era (Figure 1). While evidence of Oc. 9 and 10 utilitarian pottery wares is present, fineware bottles and incised, polychrome ceramics of these phases are absent (Van Gijseghem 2006: 432). From the perspective of La Puntilla, it appears that Oc. 8 developed directly into Nasca Phase 1 (N1). Van Gijseghem does not imply that Oc. 9 and 10 are entirely absent, only that the distinctive, polychrome fineware are not seen at La Puntilla (2006: 436). Elsewhere in the

Nazca region, Oc. 10 incised polychrome has been identified at Pueblo Viejo (Isla et al. 1984: 8), Ocongalla West B (Kroeber and Collier 1998: 245), and Cahuachi (Orefici 2012: 84, Figure 10; Strong 1957: 17, Figures 6a–c), although finds are limited. Monochromes, negative decoration, and very fine, thin-walled plain vessels (including blackware) indicative of Oc. 10 and Topará-derived types are more common in the Nazca region (Orefici 2012: 76, 81, 83–84; Schreiber and Lancho Rojas 2003: 14; Strong 1957: 17, Figures 6d–j). Dawson shows a mask of unfired clay said to be from Cahuachi, which he attributes to late Oc. 9 (1979: Figure 19).

What is missing in the archaeological record of the Nazca region is solid evidence of Oc. 9 incised fine-ware. This Ica Valley phase may be represented by some utilitarian forms at La Puntilla, but the fancy, polychrome elite wares are absent,³ suggesting sporadic and limited contact between Nazca and the Ica homeland at this time. For this reason, Figure 3 shows Oc. 8 leading directly to N1 in Nazca while branching off to Oc. 9 in Ica and Palpa. Although absent in Nazca, Oc. 9 ultimately gives rise to the Oc. 10 style phase in Ica and Palpa, which in turn interacts with N1 before being completely replaced by it. Additional support for this scenario is provided below.

It should be noted that the settlement history of the Palpa region is different from that of Nazca. It was occupied from Early Paracas times onwards. The ceramic phases match well with the Ica Valley Master Sequence (Isla Cuadrado and Reindel 2013). Reindel et al. (2015) located many Paracas sites in the adjacent highlands, demonstrating that this was also an important resource zone. They note that the Late Paracas population surges in Palpa were, in part, the result of shifting residential patterns from the highlands to the coastal valleys. Although Oc. 9 finewares were absent in Nazca, they were well represented at large sites in Palpa (Isla Cuadrado and Reindel 2013: 245). In the EIP when Nasca pottery dominated the south coast from Ica to Nazca, the Palpa Nasca style had some unique features that do not match the Nazca Valley

seriation (Carmichael 2013). The seminal work of Don Proulx (1968) demonstrates a much closer connection between Ocucaje and Nazca during the EIP. With reference to the map in Figure 1, this seems curious, as Palpa lies on a direct line between Ocucaje and Nazca. The trail of the proposed Necrópolis Era migration from Ocucaje to Nazca appears to have followed the Ica River to the coast and then back up the Río Grande to the Nazca Valley. The two areas (homeland and frontier) continued to interact along this same route. Clearly, once the Early Nasca epoch began, there was much direct interaction between Nazca and Palpa. However, the ceramic evidence indicates that the people of Ocucaje and Nazca always maintained an especially close relationship.

Cahuachi. The great ceremonial center of Cahuachi was founded in the Nazca Valley during the Necrópolis Era (Bachir Bacha and Llanos Jacinto 2006; Orefici 1996). The site is enormous, with size estimates ranging from 150 ha along 2 km of the Nazca River, including some 40 terraced mounds situated in a 25 ha core (Silverman 1993: 57; Silverman and Proulx 2002: 98) up to 20–24 km² for the entire complex (Orefici 2006: 183; 2012: 149). Many thousands of burials have been discovered there over the last century. Some researchers suggest Cahuachi may have had a small resident population (Bachir Bacha 2007), but it was principally a pilgrimage center, periodically hosting large gatherings for feasting and ritual. Giuseppe Orefici's recent two-volume work on Cahuachi (2012) summarizes his excavations over 27 years and cites the extensive literature on this major site. He views Cahuachi as the Early Nasca theocratic capital of the south coast. All writers emphasize the importance of Cahuachi as the politico-religious center of Early Nasca society (e.g., Kanter and Vaughn 2012; Llanos Jacinto 2008, 2009, 2010; Silverman 1993; Silverman and Proulx 2002; Vaughn and Van Gijsegheem 2007). It was the setting in which the new Nasca religion emerged and flourished. As demonstrated below, Oc. 10 burials and offerings discovered at Cahuachi

(Orefici 2012: 75–85) mark the arrival of early colonists. Among these people were the original founders of the new religion, destined to be the honored ancestors of the Nasca.

In the following sections, evidence for the geographical origin of the founders is pursued through a comparison of Paracas and Nasca traits fundamental to the ideology of both peoples. Archaeological specimens and iconography demonstrate the importance of the head-taking tradition (*huayo* cult) and its deity. In both inquiries the Nasca evidence is presented first to provide a comparison for the less-well-known Paracas material.

Severed Heads

It is impossible to consider Nasca divinities and religion without mentioning the prominent role of severed human heads for which the Nasca are famous. Severed heads were carefully prepared and naturally mummified, often with the long hair intact, so the result could be startlingly life-like. On well-preserved specimens, a carrying cord emerges from a hole in the forehead and the lips are pinned shut. Many archaeological examples are known and they are prominent in the iconography (Proulx 1971, 1989, 1999, 2001, 2006). For present purposes, they provide the first evidence of a direct link between Nasca origins and Paracas progenitors, for the head-taking custom began in the Ocucaje Basin of the Ica Valley during the Oc. 9 style phase (Figures 3 and 4).

In the Nasca tradition, prepared heads are usually adult males, but female and juvenile examples are known (Verano 1995: 214; Williams et al. 2001: 95). Archaeological examples are often found in nests of three or more buried in shallow pits, although a singular instance of a cache containing 48 severed heads has been recorded (Verano 1995: 212). Nasca burials of headless bodies are also known (Conlee 2007; Conlee and Noriega 2014; DeLeonardis 2000; Llanos Jacinto 2015) beginning with N1 (e.g., Rubini Grave 30 in Dawson 1960; Rubini Drago 1989: 56). Isotope analysis indicates that the

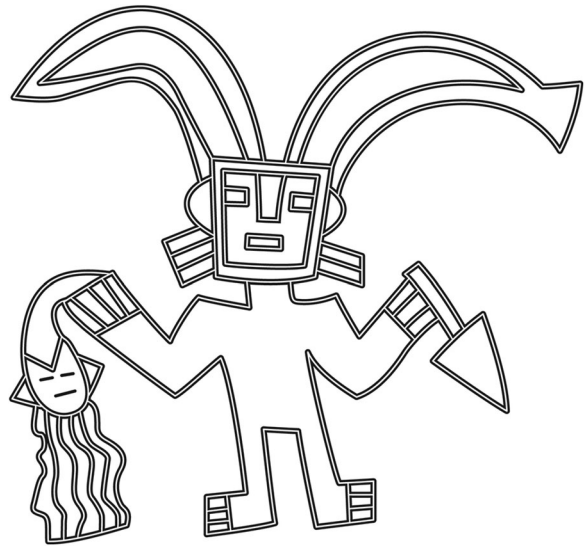


Figure 4. Incised Paracas figure with severed head and knife (Oc. 9).

ritual heads came from local Nasca peoples, not foreign populations (Knudson et al. 2009).

In Nasca iconography, disembodied heads can appear as independent, primary motifs or can be held by warriors (Figure 5; Proulx 2006: 105–110) and supernatural creatures (Figure 6b–d, g). However, their strongest and most constant association is with the Masked Being motif where they usually appear in the creature’s hands or attached to the trailing signifier (Figure 7). An association with agricultural fertility is especially obvious with the Sprouting Head motifs popular in N5 (Figure 6d; see Carmichael 1994).

Paracas severed heads are not as archaeologically numerous, but specimens are documented (DeLeonardis and Lau 2004: 100; and see DeLeonardis 2012: Figure 9.13). The first archaeological examples of cached human heads are associated with Phase 9 contexts at Ocucaje (Menzel et al. 1964: 199). Alfred Kroeber describes nests or groups of heads found at Ocucaje “Cavernas” sites (1944: 38, Plate 11), and Alejandro Pezzia excavated additional examples at Cerro Max Uhle and Cerro de la Cruz in the Ocucaje Basin (1968: 99–102). Descriptions and photographs of these heads make clear that Paracas taxidermy was not the same as Nasca. While there is some variety, it appears that most Phase 9 heads consist of the front part of the skull above the mandible with the face,



Figure 5. *Huayo* cult members with severed head (N2/3) (American Museum of Natural History, 41.2/7988).

skin, and hair intact. A carrying cord protrudes from the forehead or top of the skull. In the Palpa region, the Phase 9 headless body of an adult male seated inside an urn was found to have cut marks on the top vertebrae and an obsidian projectile point in the ribs (Tomasto-Cagigao et al. 2015: 81).

A Phase 10 cache consisting of a single ritual head inside an urn with miniature textiles and three pots is known from the Ocucaje Pinilla site (AMNH 1959–1961: 41.2/6039–50; see Sawyer 1997: 49, Figure 20). In this instance, the mandible is present, the suspension hole is in the top of the artificially elongated skull, the face is painted white, the mouth is open and stuffed with cotton, and the individual wears a gold diadem.

Severed heads first appear in Paracas iconography during Phase 9 in Ocucaje where they can be held by anthropomorphic figures (Figure 4) but usually accompany the full-bodied Oculate Being (also making its debut at this time, see Figure 14). The direct correspondence with agricultural fertility expressed in Nasca art is seldom found in Paracas iconography, but close affiliation with the most powerful supernatural of the time is clear.

There is strong continuity between the severed-head custom in Paracas and Nasca but they are not identical. The Paracas archaeological examples are numerically limited, mostly restricted to the Ocucaje Basin and

Paracas Peninsula sites, and vary in taxidermy from the classic Nasca form. However, the salient point here is that the archaeological and iconographic evidence appear together first in the Ocucaje Basin during Phase 9, thus establishing geographical origin and temporal priority.⁴ As with Nasca, the Paracas heads are held or attached to the primary deity of the time.

Religion and the Huayo Cult

Nasca iconography reveals a pantheon of supernatural creatures. Collectively, they are representative of Nasca religion⁵ and cosmology encompassing the Nasca world view. Figure 6 shows a sample of these creatures with their traditional names. Some are present throughout the sequence from N1 to N7 (Figure 6a–e), while others are localized. (For example, Figure 6f–h are N4–N5). Each motif and its many varieties provide important evidence of materialized ideology. The formal study of Nasca religion must include all supernatural entities, but the task is vast and multi-faceted. A good start has been made on some motifs such as the Killer Whale and Spotted Cat (Proulx 2006: 83–87; Wolfe 1981). However, the many fabulous creatures with their interchangeable body parts are a subject beyond the scope of the current work,

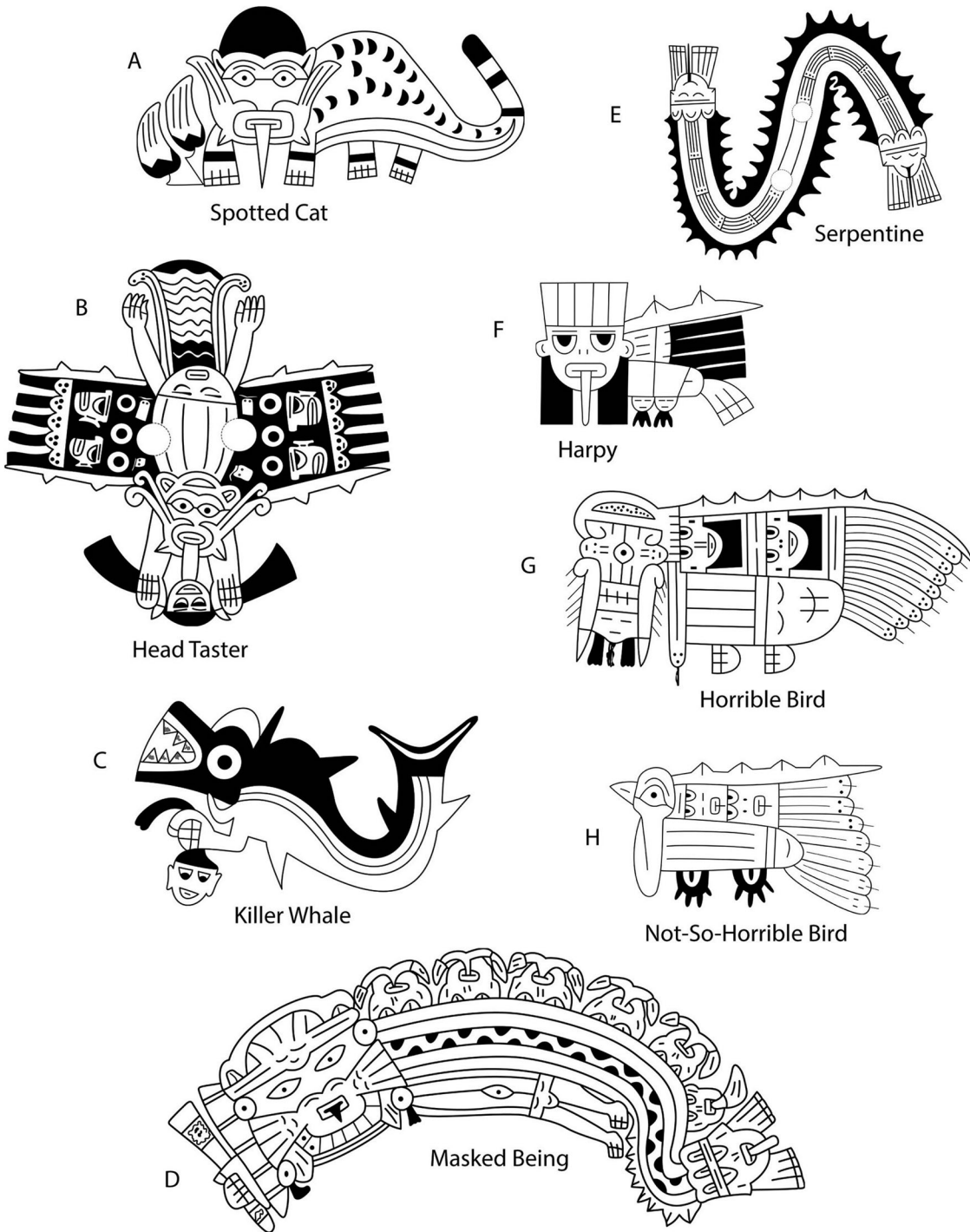


Figure 6. Sample of Nasca supernaturals: (a) Nasca 3; (b) Nasca 3; (c) Early Nasca 3; (d) Nasca 5; (e) Nasca 3; (f) Nasca 5; (g) Nasca 5; (h) Nasca 5 (see sources and comments in Appendix 1).

which focuses on the Masked Being motif. (On Nasca divinities see Carmichael 1992; Proulx 2006: 81–91.)

In polytheistic religions, each supernatural can have its own cult. Here I use the term *cult* as a focus within a larger set of religious beliefs.⁶ A cult is fixated on a

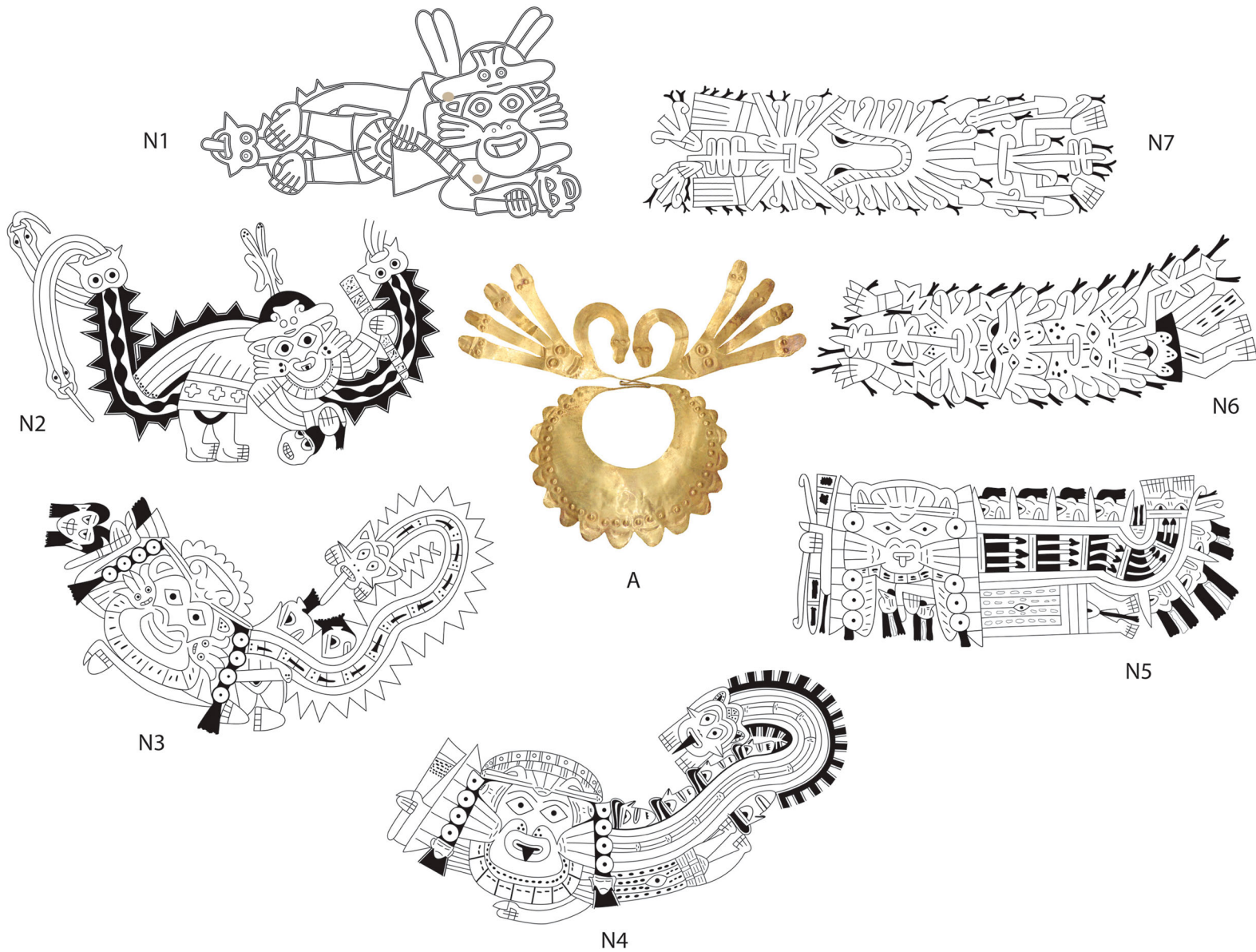


Figure 7. The Masked Being motif in the Nasca style sequence: (a) Early Nasca gold mouth mask (Museum zu Allerheiligen, Eb 15026.01); N1–N7 are examples of the Masked Being in the style phases of the Dawson seriation (see sources and comments in Appendix 1).

particular object, place, and/or personage (living or supernatural); membership is voluntary, exclusive, and expressed through ritual behaviors and symbolism. I suggest that real severed heads were cult fetishes and that only cult members (limited to particular adult males) took part in their ritual procurement and use. Drawing on Quechua terminology from the early seventeenth century *Huarochiri Manuscript*, the best Andean cognate to describe Paracas and Nasca severed heads is *huayo*⁷ (Salomon and Urioste 1991: 120). The Masked Being in its polymorphic expressions was the central figure of Nasca religion and, at the same time, was the patron deity of a *huayo* cult. It appears that *huayos* provided the animating nourishment required to sustain, venerate, and supplicate divinities for the benefit of all. Members of the *huayo* cult must have garnered enormous status and influence, and most elite men were likely participants at some point in their lives. The precise protocols of head procurement cannot be known, but they were such that women and children could become *huayos* (Verano 1995: 214). Occasionally, ancestral tombs were reopened and the desiccated skulls removed (Kroeber and Collier 1998: 78 [Al-4]; Whalen 2016). In the *Huarochiri Manuscript*, both revered ancestors and war captives could become *huayos* (Salomon and Urioste 1991: 120). However, as Verano points out, the great majority of *huayos* were adult males of warrior age (1995: 214), and although some *huayos* show evidence of long curation, most were fresh when processed. It may be speculated that depictions of two to five warriors on Early Nasca vessels commemorated teams of *huayo* cult members representing their *ayllus* in staged, ritual encounters analogous to the Andean *tinku* (Figure 5; see Carmichael 2015: 136, Figure 14; on *tinku* see Carmichael 1992: 191, 1994: 83–84; Llanos Jacinto 2015: 232; Urton 1993). Llanos Jacinto suggests that the plazas of Cahuachi were used as arenas for these ritual combats (2015: 232). In terms of costly signaling theory, participation in a ritual combat without knowing at the outset which man would provide the essential *huayo* would certainly be an honest signal of

adherence to the religion. (On costly signaling, see Kanter and Vaughn 2012: 68–70.)

The Nasca Masked Being Motif

A central thesis of this study is that Nasca iconography documents an ancestor/water/fertility religion with a *huayo* cult at its core. The advent of the religion is marked by the appearance of the principal deity figure, the Masked Being, the most complicated and ubiquitous of all motifs. Through a close examination of style syntax on the Masked Being motif, we can determine where and when the religion began and ultimately where its founders came from. Here I introduce the Masked Being motif, identify its salient characteristics, and trace its evolution through time (Figure 7).

Roark referred to this motif as the Masked Mythical Being (1965: 17), while Proulx dubs it the Anthropomorphic Mythical Being (1968: 32, 2006: 62). I choose the moniker *Masked Being* because (a) it is easier to say; (b) it identifies the motif by its most essential element, the mouth mask; and (c) it is descriptive rather than interpretive, being neutral on human versus supernatural status (also see Allen 1981). The term *mouth mask* is not precise in terms of the mechanics of this ornament. As demonstrated by archaeological specimens (Figure 7a), technically it is a nose ornament (*nariguera*) suspended from the septum, where the gold wire joins mouth and whisker elements. However, the term *nariguera* is a broad classification in which a tiny gold ring attached to the septum also qualifies as a nose ornament, although the visual effect is completely different. Here, to acknowledge both the technical and visual aspects, I consider the mouth mask to be a type of nose ornament in which the largest surface area of gold surrounds the mouth, thereby directing attention to the mouth (Figure 7a).

Sawyer identifies the mouth mask as a combination of monkey, pampas cat, and otter characteristics (1997: 50). He was the first to recognize monkey feet on early Masked Beings (Sawyer 1960: 2, 1961: 277, 287, 1972: 110–111). Jungle dwelling monkeys

(perhaps spider monkeys) were brought to the south-coast deserts along trade routes where they were depicted on Paracas 10 and Nasca 1 pottery vessels. The monkey's prehensile thumbed feet are evident on many N1 and N2 Masked Beings (Figures 7 and 21, see Carmichael 2015: 137–138, 144–145), supporting Sawyer's assertion that these unfamiliar jungle animals were regarded by coastal inhabitants as possessing supernatural qualities (1997: 50). After N2 the thumbed foot vanishes (Figure 7), but the monkey was clearly an influence on the early concept of the Masked Being. The white-whiskered spider monkey (*Ateles marginatus*) may have provided inspiration for the Nasca mouth mask.

Alternatively, or in addition, Sawyer suggests the mouth mask may be inspired by the pampas cat and/or river otter (1997: 50). According to Sawyer, these animals appear when water flows in the rivers and then disappear in the dry season, which might imply they controlled this precious resource. He suggests that horizontal laterals on a mouth mask (whiskers) represent the pampas cat (*Lynchailurus colocolo*, also *Felis colocolo*), while upswept whiskers identify the river otter (*Myocastor coypus*, actually a large, semi-aquatic, rat-like rodent known locally as *gato de agua*). Only river otters have whiskers that slant up towards the ears (Peters 1991: 277–279; Proulx 2006: 146–147; Sawyer 1961: 287, 1997: 50, 52; Valcárcel 1932: 16–23). A distinction should be made between upswept and horizontal whiskers (laterals). Figure 6a shows the classic Nasca Spotted Cat. It always appears with upswept whiskers and is the only supernatural with this feature. Another important diagnostic of Spotted Cat whiskers are the pointed, divided projections on the bottom corners of the muzzle. Note that Figure 6b, the Head Taster, has the head of the Spotted Cat with avian wings and tail. This is typical of Nasca supernaturals; all have interchangeable parts (Figure 11). Actual metal masks with upswept laterals and divided corner points like those shown in the painted iconography are unknown.⁸ Therefore, the upswept whiskers of the Spotted Cat should not be confused with the mouth mask of the Masked Being where laterals are horizontal. Referring to Spotted Cat whiskers as

mouth masks implies that the Spotted Cat is wearing a face ornament. The Spotted Cats of Nasca 1 and 2 clearly show that natural feline whiskers are intended (Wolfe 1981: 3, 43–44). In N4 occasional examples appear in which Spotted Cat whisker conventions are horizontal (Wolfe 1981: 20, 46), but this usually happens when Spotted Cat attributes are blended with other Nasca creatures (e.g., Katz 1983: 241, Figure 115). I reserve the term *mouth mask* exclusively for the metal examples and their painted representations on the Masked Being. That point having been made, it is worth noting that the classic Spotted Cat in Figure 6a, while sporting the whiskers of a river otter, has the pelage of the pampas cat with spotted body and striped tail and legs (see Peters 1991: 275). The Nasca Spotted Cat motif appears to be a combination of river otter and pampas cat attributes.

Tello and Mejia Xesspe (1979: 463) suggest that the mouth mask with its lateral projections represents the whiskers of a jaguar or an ocelot as they are envisioned in Andean mythology. Conceivably, felines such as jaguars, ocelots, and pumas could have been traded as cubs to the coastlands and contributed to the concept of the mouth mask. Some Masked Beings have strong feline characteristics (Figure 10), but the Nasca propensity to mix creature parts makes it unlikely we can ever be certain of a single derivation. Since the time of Seler's "katzendämon" or cat demon (1923: 183–187) it has been common to assume the Masked Being is based on a feline model, and this remains viable, but the depiction of monkey feet on N1 and N2 Masked Beings leaves open the possibility that monkey faces might have contributed to the mouth mask appearance, and the Masked Being is a feline/monkey blend.

Figure 8 is based on the work of Proulx (1968: 143, Figure 18, and 2006: 62, Figure 5.1; see Seler 1923: 196, Figure 43). This is a Nasca Phase 3 (N3) Masked Being from the Ocucaje Basin, Ica Valley. The figure is laid flat in the line drawing to facilitate study, but the original is wrapped around the circular chamber of a double-spout bottle (Proulx 1970: Plate 25a–c). The viewer's eyes are

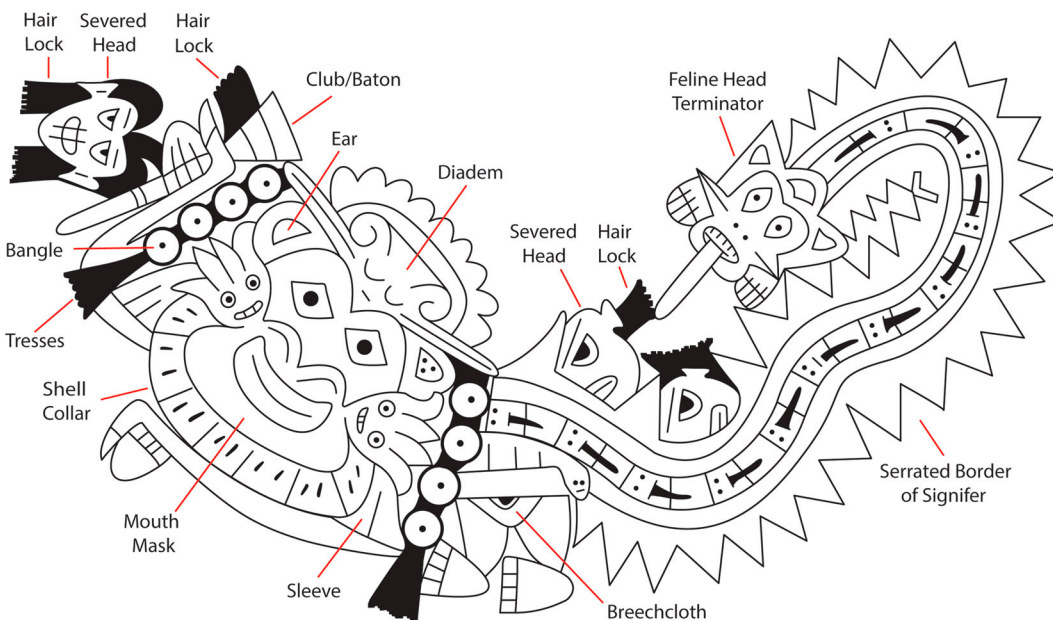


Figure 8. Elements of the Masked Being motif (N3).

drawn first to the head and face, which occupy the largest area of the painting. Importance is always indicated by size in Nasca ceramic art. The figure wears a mouth mask with lateral extensions representing whiskers; a diadem; circular bangles in hair tresses on either side of the face; and a shell collar. The right hand holds a baton and severed head (*huayo*). A serrated streamer or serpentine referred to in Nasca iconographic studies as the signifer extends from the rear of the creature's head, trails down the back, and curls behind, usually terminating with an indicator (head, plant, or bird). Severed heads are attached to the signifer. Although absent on Figure 8, most examples have the tongue extended (see Figure 7). The mouth mask is always present on Masked Being motifs and may be accompanied by one or more of the following: diadem, bangles, collar, signifer, extended tongue, or *huayos*. The association with severed heads is strong, such that, even when heads are not shown, they are an unspoken element of meaning.

The Masked Being can be depicted in an abbreviated format as a bodiless head (Figure 9), but it usually appears in one of the following postures:

1. Extended body (as if flying) (shown in Figure 7, N4–N7)
2. Crouched pose, with the body down-turned and the head to the side, facing the viewer (dancing?) (Figure 7, N2–N3)
3. Standing frontal pose, in which the being is standing on two legs facing the viewer, with hands on either side holding batons or *huayos* (Figure 10; also see versions of this drawing in Proulx 2006: 68, Figure 5.13; Seler 1923: 185)
4. Inverted view, in which the body is in profile but the head is turned upward (Figure 21).

The trailing signifers act as both adjectives and verbs. The Masked Being, although always recognizable by its facial ornaments, appears in many aspects. Proulx documents 16 subtypes, of which some are contemporary while others are chronological (2006: 63–79). As a supernatural figure, the Masked Being is ubiquitous, inhabiting and animating life-forms of the earth, water, and sky (Figure 11). Metonymy is inherent in Nasca art, and at times the entire Masked Being motif is reduced to a few essentials in a shorthand reference to the larger concept (Figure 9).

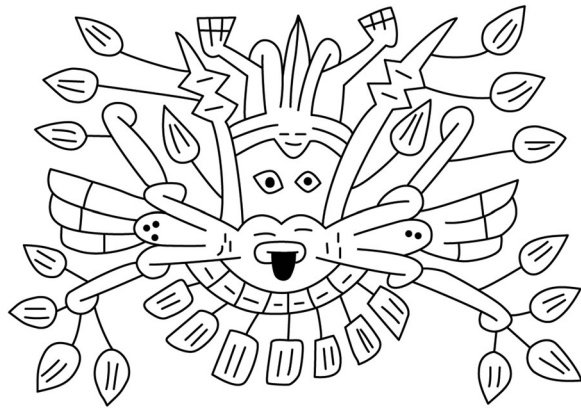


Figure 9. The Masked Being in abbreviated format as a bodiless head (N5).

The Nasca style changes through time, from depictive images to heavily proliferated and stylized renditions, but the basic grammar and narrative remain constant (Figure 7). The salient traits of the Masked Being are always recognizable, even in Late Nasca when they are often hidden in a swirling confusion of volutes, rays, and faces. On the N6 example in Figure 12, the mouth mask and diadem are still visible as well as the extended tongue, arms, legs, and signifer, but severed heads are reduced to hair hank morphemes fringing the motif. The signifer is that of the Killer Whale.

The Masked Being is not only present from the beginning to the end of the Nasca sequence, but as the primary icon—the very essence of what it meant



Figure 10. The Masked Being in standing frontal pose (N3).

to be Nasca—its appearance heralds the inception of the Nasca tradition, and its disappearance the demise. Figure 13a shows an N1 Masked Being incised on a ceramic *antara* (panpipe) (photographs in Carmichael 2015: 143, Figure 20). Figure 13b is an N7 rendition of the Masked Being on a collared jar from the site of Cocahuischo in the Nazca region (Whalen 2014: 159), although it is hardly recognizable but for the mouth mask and protruding tongue. It represents the Masked Being in its water/piscine aspect (compare Figure 11b). Soon after this motif was painted, the style became extinct. At a glance, Figure 13a and 13b appear unrelated, but by following the stylistic changes through time (Figure 7), we can now recognize them as the same figure enduring for more than half a millennium in the sacred iconography.

The earliest depictions of the Masked Being appear on *antaras* dating stylistically to Nasca Phase 1 (e.g., Figures 7 (N1), 13a, 21). They were most likely produced at Cahuachi in the Nazca Valley. (For color photographs and an expanded discussion see Carmichael 2015.) Of interest here is the fact that these earliest Masked Beings are instantly recognizable, with all the diagnostic features that distinguish this motif for centuries to follow (mouth mask, diadem, and *huayo*). As materialized ideology, they capture the archaeological moment when the Nasca religion came into being. That moment may have been a generation in length, but the fundamental characteristics of the religion and art style coalesced rapidly, making their appearance seem more of an event rather than a process in the archaeological record. Evidence suggests that the debut happened in the Nazca Valley, while at the same time in Ica more conservative style canons were followed (Carmichael 2015: 149). However, in N2 the new religion, with its principal icon and art style, spread over the entire Ica–Nazca region to the exclusion of all competitors.

Some of the accoutrements, such as gold mouth masks and *Spondylus* shell collars, are documented in the archaeological record, and it is assumed by many that diadems and sets of bangles existed also. Because of this, it is often suggested that Early Nasca standing Masked Beings with humanlike bodies (e.g., Figure 10) are, in fact, deity-

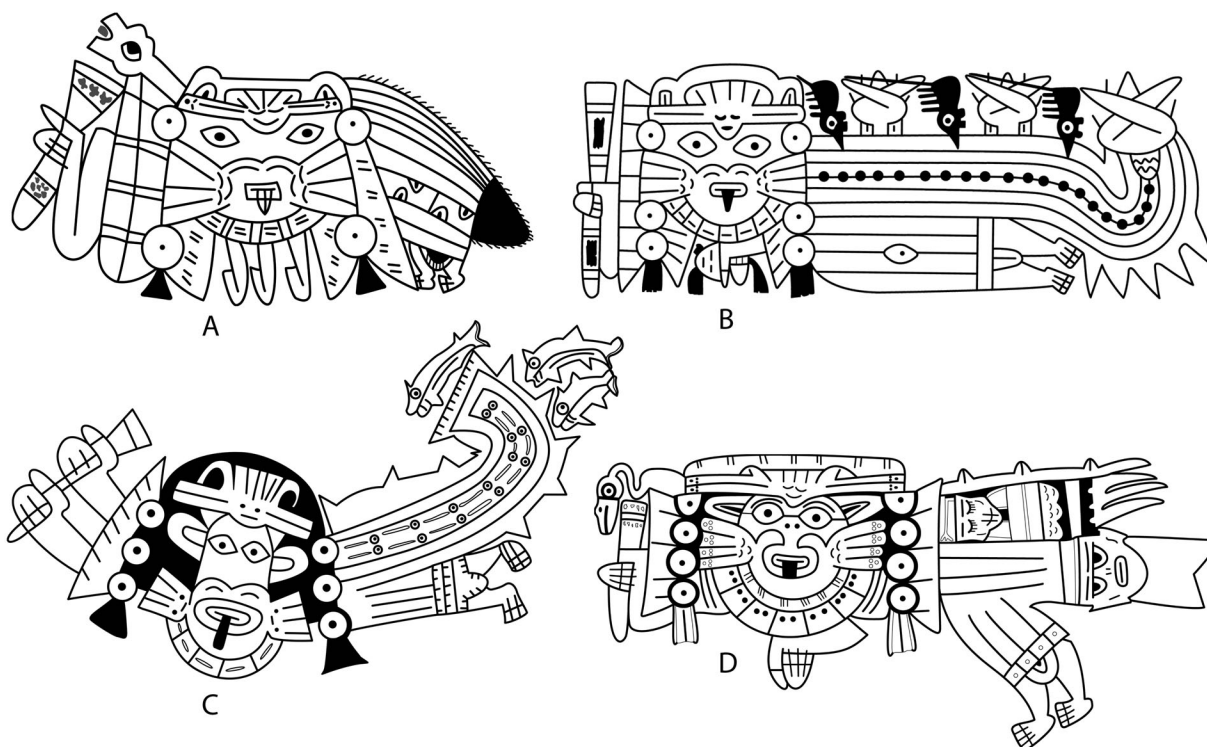


Figure 11. The Masked Being animating life forms of the earth, water, and sky: (a) fox aspect, N5; (b) plant aspect, N5; (c) piscine aspect, N3; (d) avian aspect, N4.

impersonators (Llanos Jacinto 2015: 233; Menzel et al. 1964: 246; Sawyer 1997: 50) and that the crouched body format represents a costumed dancer

(Townsend 1985: 131). Roark published the first detailed analysis of the motif. In it he allows that, in Early Nasca, some Masked Beings may represent

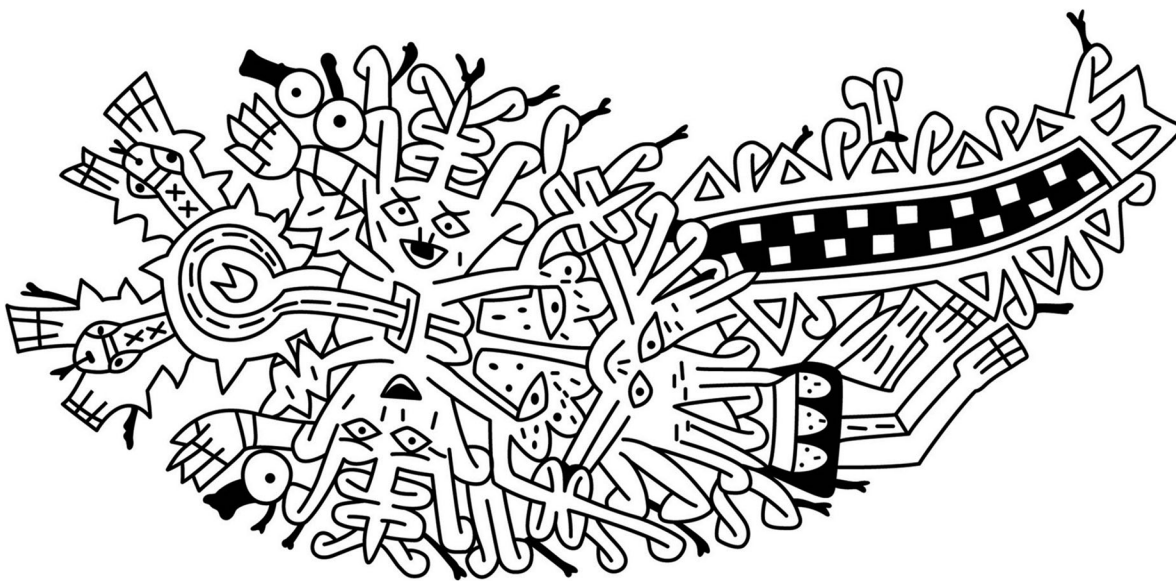


Figure 12. The Masked Being in the Proliferous style of N6. Killer whale aspect.



Figure 13. The Masked Being in N1 (a) and late N7 (b).

a masked man, but in Middle and Late Nasca they are purely mythical or supernatural beings (1965: 17). Don Proulx has studied this motif for decades and concludes that the vast majority of depictions are of mythical creatures (2006: 63) but, in some cases, humans may be representing a deity (2008: 578). While the impression of impersonators wearing sets of ornaments is reasonable, the archaeological record does not support this interpretation. In the two undisturbed tombs excavated by archaeologists that contained metal mouth masks, only one had a *Spondylus* shell collar and neither contained a diadem or set of bangles despite conditions of exceptional preservation (Isla Cuadrado 2001; Orefici 2012: 547–565). Bangles and diadems have not been found in Early Nasca contexts in the Nasca heartland (Ica, Palpa, or Nazca), although a single, aberrant diadem from the Acari Valley is known

(Valdez 2006: 17). The entire set of ornaments (mouth mask, diadem, bangles, and shell collar) probably did belong to a founding ancestor sometime during the Necrópolis Era, but the Early Nasca painters were depicting a remembered ideal, not contemporary reenactments. The known mouth masks in museum and private collections are all from Proto and Early Nasca times. Ceramic painters in Middle and Late Nasca followed established conventions, but they never saw the adornments they depicted. I am in agreement with Catherine Allen's statement:

While the masked beings on Nasca vessels might be interpreted as actual representations of priests in costume, wearing real mouth masks, I am inclined to treat the Mouth Mask motif as a general sign of the

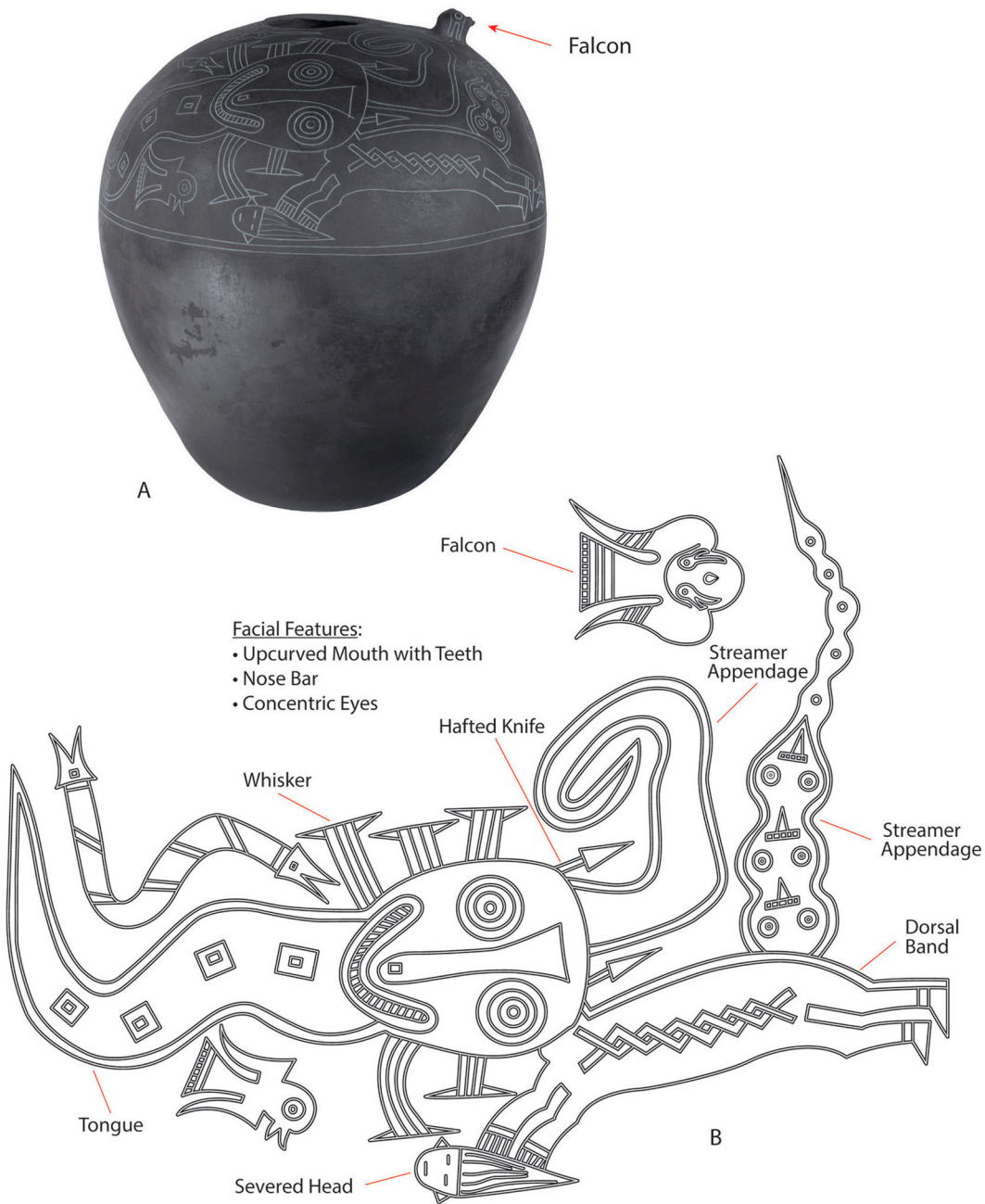


Figure 14. The Oculate Being in extended pose (Oc. 9): (a) blackware, ovoid jar; incisions filled with white pigment (photograph courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, 41.2/6208); (b) line drawing of figure on 10a, with elements labeled (see Appendix 1).

transcendent, or spirit, dimension of reality (which is, after all, what the actual mask would signify of the wearer as well). (Allen 1981: 50–51)

The Paracas Oculate Being

It was obvious to south-coast researchers of the 1950s and 1960s that the Nasca Masked Being developed

from the Paracas Oculate Being, although this ancestry was never published with illustrations tracing the genealogy. Sawyer stated the connection in his writings (1972: 110–111, 1997), Rowe and Menzel mentioned it to their students (Dwyer 1971: 13; Proulx 1968: 32), and Dawson referred to what is herein called the Masked Being as the Nasca Oculate Being (Dawson Archive 1953–1991: Carton 6, Folders 52, 53). But to the uninitiated, the relationship between the Paracas Oculate Being and the Nasca Masked Being is not obvious at a glance.

When Larry Dawson pointed out the connection to me, I remember staring at him blankly. But years later I came to realize Dawson and his colleagues were correct. Here I review the salient features and provide illustrations to demonstrate this conclusion for the reader.

The Oculate Being motif is indigenous to the Ica Valley, occurring first in the region extending from Ocucaje to the seashore and up to the Paracas Peninsula (Figure 1). Antecedents may be present in the early part of the EH (García Soto 2009: 203),

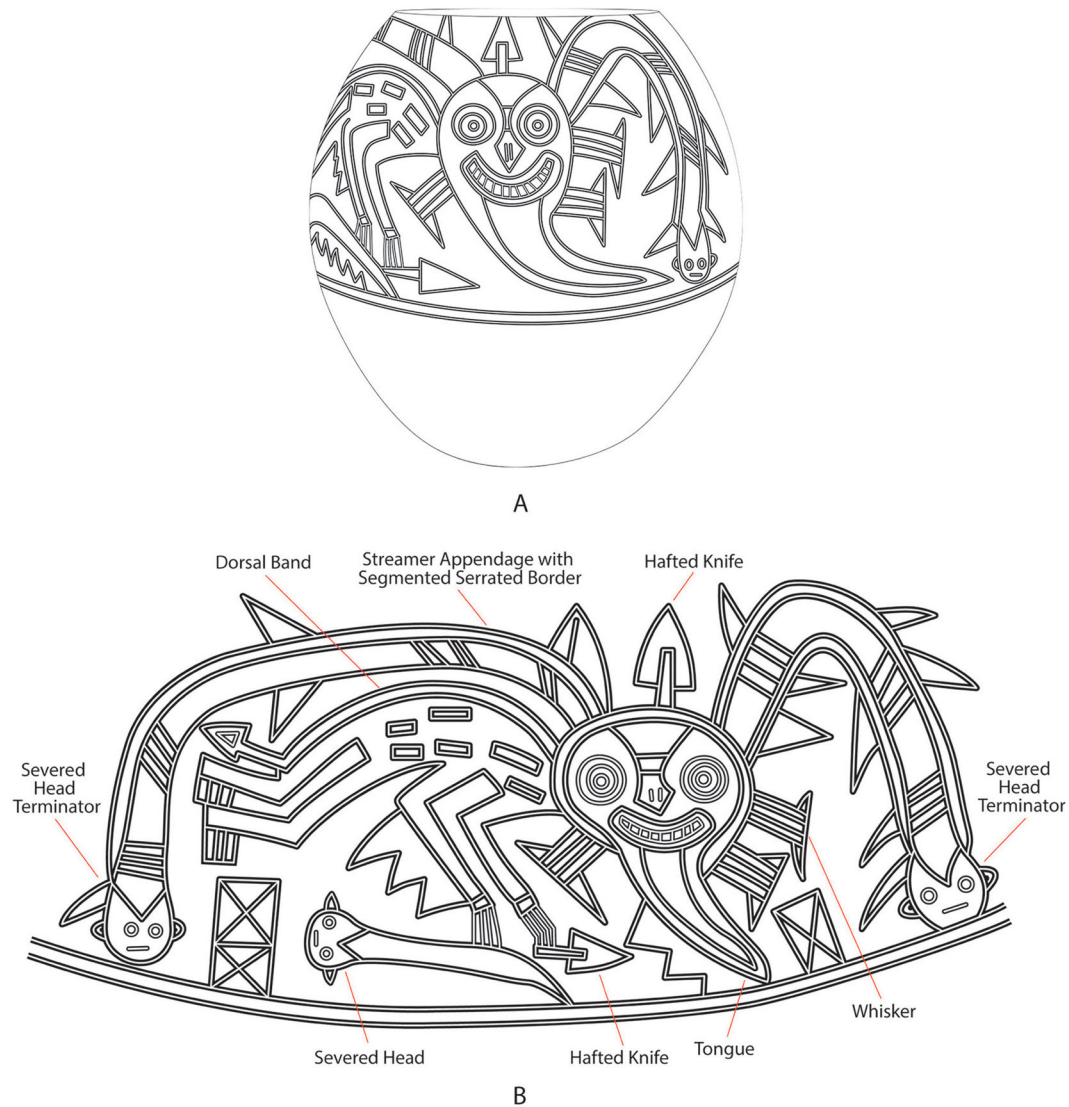


Figure 15. The Oculate Being in extended pose (Oc. 10): (a) drawing from a photograph; (b) opposite side line drawing of 10a, with elements labeled (see Appendix 1). Note the oval head and segmented serrated border on the streamer appendage.

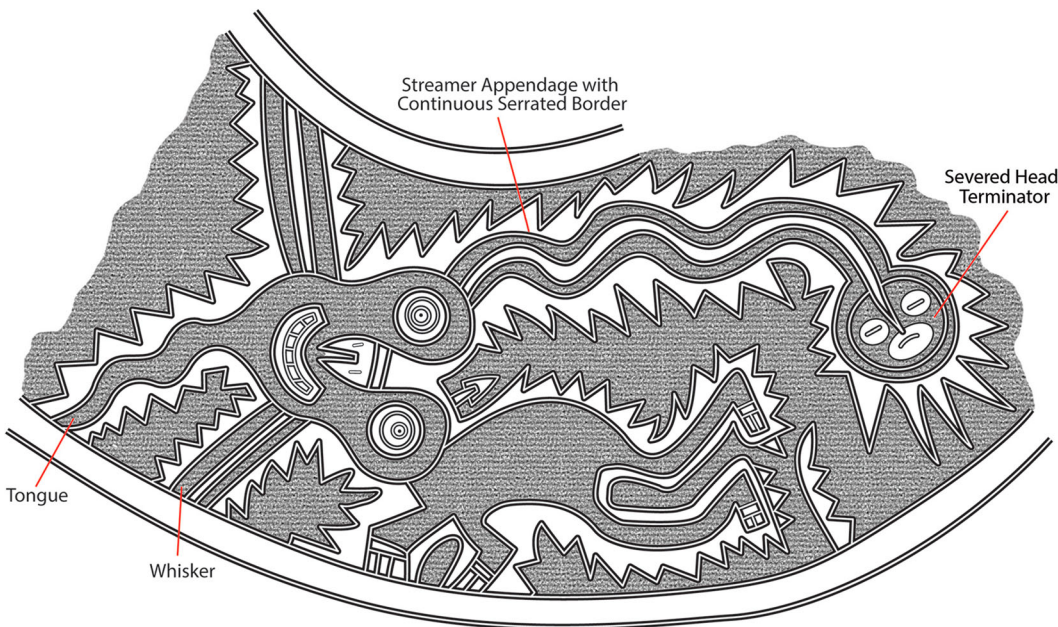


Figure 16. The Oculate Being in extended pose (Oc. 10), from an incised and negative painted ovoid jar. Note the cleft head and the continuously serrated borders outlining the entire figure.

but the Oculate Being format of interest to this study appears in the Ocucaje Basin in Late Paracas (Oc. 8, 9, 10; see Figure 3). It was originally named and described by Menzel et al. (1964: 171–172, 196–198, 239–244). The diagnostic features of this motif are labeled in Figures 14b, 15b, and 16. The Oculate Being appears with an anthropomorphic body, an oversized head with huge eyes (often composed of concentric circles), an elongated bar nose, and an upcurved mouth with teeth. There is often a protruding tongue. On full-bodied renditions, the tongue extends from the teeth or lower lip, appearing like a trailing beard formed by a continuation of the head outline. Side and chin whiskers are shown as lined, rectangular bars, sometimes with “shovel-shaped” ends (Figures 14b, 15b). Long streamer-like appendages issue from the head or body, a Paracas convention identifying the mythical character of the motif (Dwyer and Dwyer 1975: 153). Phase 10 innovations include oval-shaped heads bordered with segmented, serrated streamers (Figure 15a–b) and cleft heads with continuous serrations on streamer borders (Figure 16) (Menzel et al. 1964: 240–241). Also, a narrow band frequently runs down the

creature’s back. This dorsal band starts at the rear of the head and ends at the knees or feet, sometimes terminating in a curl or a triangular knife (Figures 14b, 15b). Other important associations are severed human heads, hafted triangular knives, and darts, held in the hands or appended to the body (Figures 14–16, 18–20).

According to Menzel et al. (1964), the Paracas Oculate Being format under consideration here appeared first during Oc. 8 in the Ocucaje Basin as a bodiless head (Figure 17). In Oc. 9 the creature acquired torso and limbs, streamer appendages, and severed-head associations (Figure 14a–b). For the current study, two of the most important innovations of Phase 9 were the appearance of severed heads (usually in association with the Oculate Being) and the ascendance of the Oculate Being as the main supernatural theme (Dwyer 1971: 13; Massey 1991: 334; Menzel et al. 1964: 199). In Oc. 10 (contemporary with N1), the Oculate Being appears in the greatest numbers and variety with serrated streamers being especially diagnostic of this phase (Figures 15–16). It is often shown with interchangeable body parts from other mythical creatures,

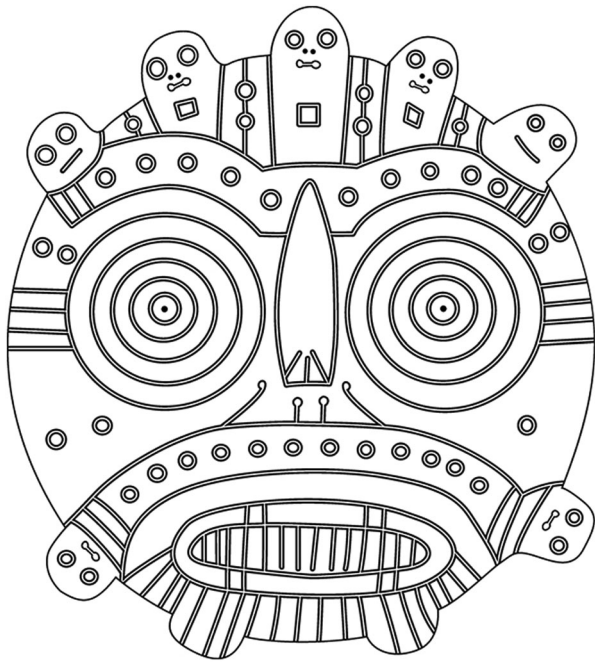


Figure 17. The Oculate Being in abbreviated format as a bodiless head (Oc. 8). The motif covers one side of a double-spout flask.

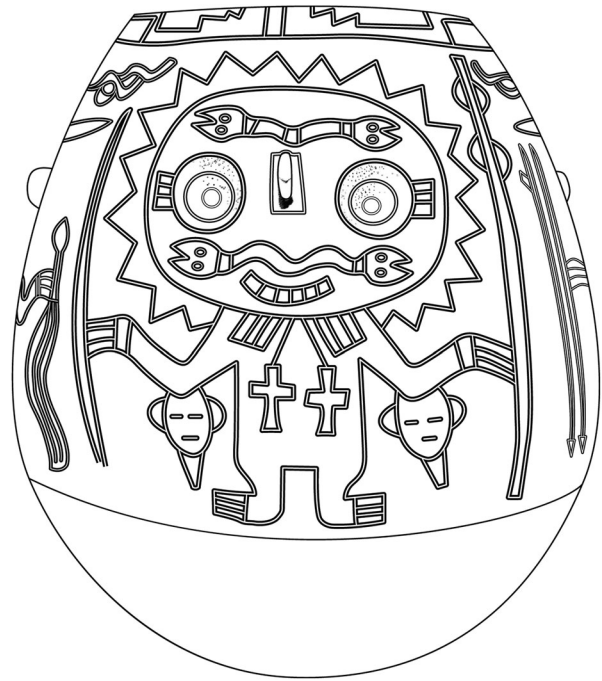


Figure 19. The Oculate Being in standing frontal pose (late Oc. 9); drawing from a photograph (Appendix 1).



Figure 18. The Oculate Being in crouched pose (Oc. 9); drawing from a photograph (Appendix 1).

sometimes emphasizing feline, bird, serpent, or anthropomorphic characteristics (Dawson 1979: 102; Dwyer 1979: 117–118; Dwyer and Dwyer 1975: 154; Menzel et al. 1964: 239).

The majority of ceramics, textiles, and pyroengraved gourds with provenience showing the Oculate Being come from Ocucaje or the Paracas Peninsula. It is present on textiles and pyroengraved gourds from the peninsula sites of Cavernas (Oc. 9) and Necrópolis de Wari Kayan (mixed Oc. 10–N1) (Dwyer 1971, 1979; Sotelo 2009: 55; Tello and Mejia Xesspe 1979: 181); on painted textile mummy masks, engraved gourds, and incised pottery from the Ocucaje Basin (Dawson 1979); and on Oc. 10 ceramic drums and trumpets (Menzel et al. 1964: 243; Sawyer 1966: 84). Although the Oculate Being motif is readily identifiable, aside from postures (discussed below) there is no standardization in the depictions, and each has unique features. As Dawson remarked: “the artists were drawing as much from

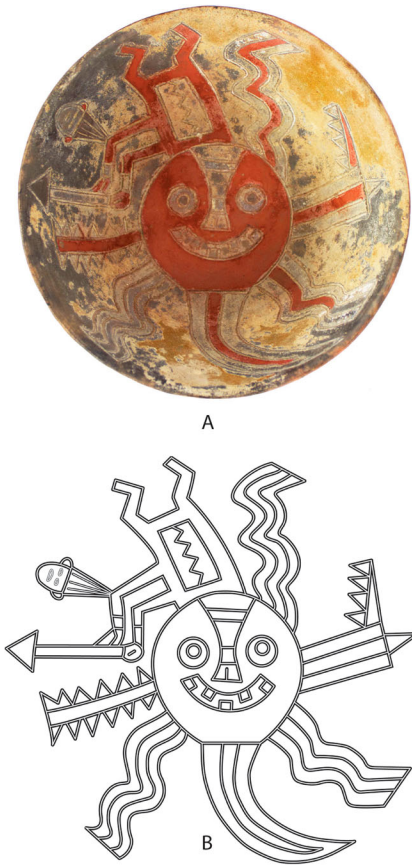


Figure 20. The Oculate Being in inverted pose (Oc. 10): (a) incised and resin-painted bowl interior (photograph courtesy of the Fowler Museum of Cultural History, University of California, Los Angeles, X88-856); (b) line drawing of 10a (see Appendix 1).

the verbal imagery of myth as from design antecedents” (1979: 102).

Although each portrayal is unique, in addition to the bodiless head (Figure 17), the Oculate Being always appears in one of the following postures:

1. Extended body or “flying” position with the head perpendicular to a horizontal body (Figures 14–16)
2. Crouched pose, with the body down-turned, giving a humped profile (Figure 18)
3. Standing frontal pose, with hands on either side holding darts, severed heads, or knives (Figure 19)
4. Inverted view, in which the body is either in profile or vertical and the head is rotated upward (Figure 20a–b).

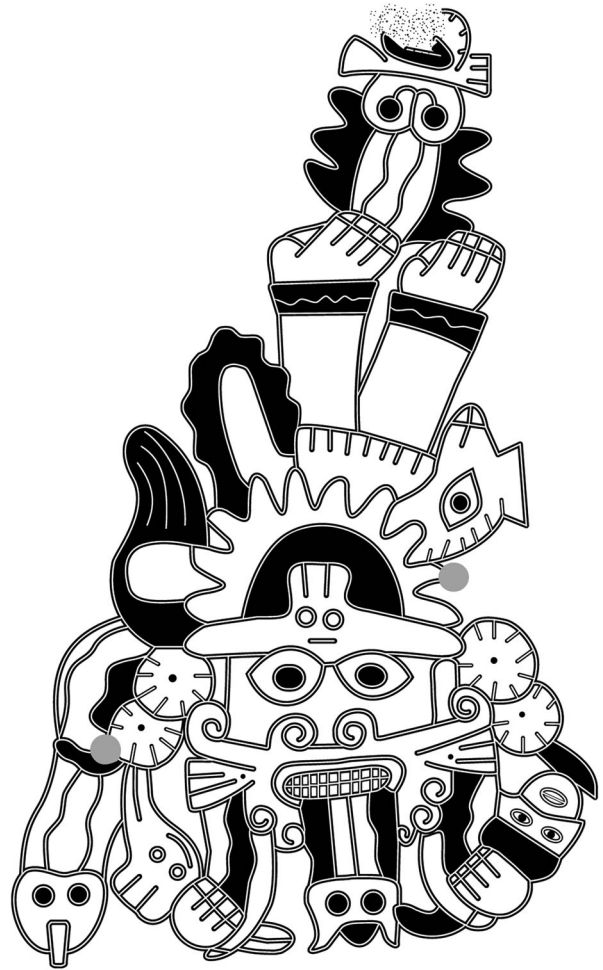


Figure 21. The Masked Being in inverted pose (N1); line drawing from a ceramic *antara* (see Appendix 1).

Figure 20a–b shows a Phase 10 Oculate Being with an inverted head. The enormous circular head occupies the interior bottom of a bowl, commanding attention and instantly relaying its message. The anthropomorphic body is in profile, with a hafted triangular knife and a severed head.⁹ Two of the appendages are serrated, but others are not. This composition seizes attention because of the enormous head and staring concentric eyes, but also because the viewer is halted in search of perspective. We want to turn the image so that the body is in an anatomically vertical position, and readable. But when we do so, the head is upside down. When the head is orientated toward the viewer, the rest of the motif requires us to read upside down. Is the creature

flying with the body trailing behind? There is a sense of motion here. It seems that the Oculate Being has zoomed down from above and, like a hummingbird in pause, suddenly thrusts its tilted-back face in front of us, with its body and appendages streaming around it. This startling form of composition is also observed on some Nasca pieces.

Figure 21 is the motif on an N1 ceramic *antara*, incised and slip painted (see discussion and photographs in Carmichael 2015: 142). This *antara* is a classic N1 piece displaying all the techniques and aesthetics of decoration that define Proto-Nasca polychrome ceramics. The motif in Figure 21 is one of the earliest known renditions of the Nasca Masked Being. Note that all the diagnostic Masked Being attributes (mouth mask, diadem, bangles, and *huayo*) are present. They appear together suddenly in style history without obvious antecedents (an impression discussed further below). The creatures in Figures 20 and 21 look very different at first glance; however, they are both shown in inverted posture. This unique form of presentation first appeared on the south coast during the Necrópolis Era (Figure 3). Figures 20 and 21 are roughly contemporary and represent two visions of the same idea, first articulated in the Oculate Beings of Paracas Phase 9.

Continuity and Change from Paracas to Nasca

The salient characteristics of the Masked Being and the Oculate Being having been presented, the two creatures can be compared. Although visually dissimilar, the postures, appendages, and associations are strikingly similar. There are obvious differences, not least of which is style of execution and also the Masked Being's head ornaments, but the structural elements are cognitive duplicates. Each creature was the principal divinity of its time and place, and each was the focus of a *huayo* cult. The comparisons are best summarized in tabular form, as shown in Table 1. The four postures listed in Table 1 apply to all known specimens.¹⁰ It is significant that the creatures are limited to these poses, and that they are

identical for both the Oculate Being and the Masked Being. Variation in posture (extended pose versus crouched) is not due to chronology because all four positions occur in each style phase; nor is it due to regional differences, as they all occur in Ica and Nazca. We must conclude that either there is social meaning to these postures (a special activity portrayed) or they are sequential snapshots in a narrative illustrating stages through which the creature evolves. The latter idea is the Transforming Ancestors Hypothesis put forward by Mary Frame to explain the diverse iconography on textiles from the Necrópolis of Wari Kayan (Frame 1995: 11–14, 2001: 55–92, 2004: 136–137). This concept finds support in an N1 ceramic *antara* that has different Masked Beings on either side—one in extended pose and the other in a crouched pose (Carmichael 2015: 140, Figure 17). Whichever interpretation the reader prefers, the current work, by recognizing the same four standard poses for both the Masked Being and Oculate Being, suggests that these postures had similar meaning in both traditions. As it has been established that the Oculate Being has temporal priority, the EIP Nasca Masked Being can be seen as a continuation of mythology originating in EH Paracas times.

Both divinities were the icons of *huayo* cults, a tradition that first emerged in the Ocucaje Basin in Phase 9. Such a practice must have had a powerful social impact, and perhaps raised some cult members to culture hero status. For these desert dwellers the *huayo* cult worked for almost a thousand years. Ocucaje Paracas people were the progenitors, but in Nasca times the reinterpreted cult spread throughout the Ica–Nazca heartland and dominated the sacred iconography.

Although executed in different styles, the sheer number of corresponding details between the Oculate Being and the Masked Being demonstrate a “genetic” relationship. The Masked Being is an enhanced offshoot or reinterpreted version of the Oculate Being maintaining canons of postures, appendages, and associations (and by implication their ideology) but depicted in a new style, with a wider range of associations (aspects) and accoutrements (mouth mask, diadem, collar, and bangles).

Table 1. Comparison of the Masked Being and the Oculate Being

	<i>Oculate Being</i>	<i>Masked Being</i>
1. Postures	Extended body Crouched pose Standing frontal pose Inverted view, head upward	Extended body Crouched pose Standing frontal pose Inverted view, head upward
2. Appendages	Serpentines with serrated edges from rear of head and trailing down the back, called streamers on Oculate Beings and signifers on Masked Beings, often with a feline or <i>huayo</i> terminator	
3. Aspects	Both may have interchangeable body parts, with feline, avian, serpentine, or anthropomorphic themes, although the Masked Being has an even greater variety of aspects	
4. Associations	Severed heads frequently present or inferred on both	
5. Abbreviation	Both can appear in a bodiless head format	
6. Tongues	Protruding tongues are common but not universal on both, although on some Oculate Beings they are extensions of the head outline and appear like trailing beards; on others they extend from the lower lip. On Masked Beings, tongues are smaller and extend from the mouth (note that the N1 depiction in Figure 21 shows an exception, which follows the Paracas convention of emerging from the lower lip)	
7. Individuality	Although the structural elements of presentation (1–6 above) show commonality, each representation of an Oculate Being or a Masked Being is unique—there is no standardization in either tradition	

Ironically, the concluding piece of evidence tying Nasca origins to Paracas progenitors is provided by one of the Masked Being’s most diagnostic ornaments—the diadem—which does not appear on the Oculate Being. It was noted that archaeological examples of diadems have never been found in Early Nasca contexts in the Nasca heartland (Ica, Palpa, and Nazca). Aside from the aberrant diadem reported from the Acari Valley far to the south (Valdez 2006: 17), all provenienced specimens derive either from Phase 10 graves in the Ocucaje Basin (14 plus two fragments; AMNH 1959–1961; Dawson 1960; Rubini Drago 1989) or the Necrópolis of Wari Kayan (approximately seven plus five fragments and several miniatures; Sotelo 2012; Tello and Mejía Xesspe 1979).¹¹ The salient points are that they all date to the Necropolis Era and are closely associated with Ocucaje. Why does a diadem always crown the Masked Being if Early Nasca artists had never seen one? The answer must lie with a verbal memory of the garb worn by a founding ancestor who morphed with the Oculate Being to

become the guardian spirit of his successors and the patron of the Nasca *huayo* cult.

Conservative elements in Paracas society (especially in Ica) surely continued to produce Phase 10 Oculate Beings for some time after the Nasca Masked Being appeared in Nazca. However, before the Necrópolis Era concluded (Figure 3), all vestiges of Paracas culture became extinct and the Masked Being, with its religion and art style, dominated. This scenario is borne out in the settlement pattern data for the Ica–Nazca region, which document many sites with mixed Oc. 10 and N1 ceramics and many others as pure N1 (Cook 1999: 69, 74; Schreiber and Lancho Rojas 2003: 13–14; Unkel and Kromer 2009: 243). The relationship between practitioners of the Paracas Phase 10 and Nasca 1 styles was such that they lived in the same villages and, as shown in the Rubini graves from Ocucaje (Dawson 1960), were buried side-by-side in the same cemeteries. These facts suggest that the Necrópolis Era revolution from EH Paracas culture to EIP Nasca culture involved a single population, internally differentiating

itself through art styles and residence (migration) along with evolving religious beliefs and practices, but eventually coalescing again into a single tradition called Early Nazca.

The Oculate Being in Nazca

When did the Oculate Being and its *huayo* cult arrive in Nazca? Van Gijseghem (2006: 432) has pointed out the lack of Oc. 9 fineware at La Puntilla in Nazca. This suggests that, after the initial colonists arrived from Callango in Oc. 8, they did not maintain close ties with their homeland, or at least they ceased to participate in its prestige system. The concepts behind the Oculate Being and its *huayo* cult were indigenous to the Ocucaje Basin during Phase 9. Although Oc. 10 fineware is also absent at La Puntilla beyond monochromes and blackware, incised polychromes of this phase have been documented at Cahuachi (Orefici 2012: 84, Figure 10; Strong 1957: 17, Figures 6a–c) and other Nazca-area sites (Isla et al. 1984: 8; Kroeber and Collier 1998: 245). To the best of my knowledge, these specimens do not include Oculate Being iconography. However, a remarkable geoglyph provides conclusive evidence that the Oculate Being arrived in Nazca in Phase 10.

The geoglyph shown in Figure 22 is located on the Nazca pampa, 11.7 km from Cahuachi in a straight line.¹² García Soto (2009: 203) identifies it as an Oculate Being with serrated appendages, holding a knife in one hand and a severed head in the other. He points out its significance as the most detailed and complete Oculate Being outside the Ica region. Additional photographs and drawings are shown in Herrán (1985: 270), Lumbreras (2000: 130), Orefici (2012: 255–256, Figures 17–18), and Reinhard (1988: 41, Figure 40). According to Herrán (1985: 270), the figure is executed in high relief (with ridges 25 cm high) and measures 18 × 9 m. Of interest to the current work, the iconography of this geoglyph shows a classic Phase 10 Oculate Being in standing frontal pose with an inverted head and continuously serrated appendages. As we



Figure 22. Oculate Being geoglyph on the Nazca Pampa, 18 × 9 m (Oc. 10); standing frontal pose with inverted head (photograph courtesy of Giuseppe Orefici, Centro Italiano Studi e Ricerche Archeologiche Precolombiane, Brescia) (see Appendix 1 and endnote 12).

are dealing with a very different medium from incised pottery, not all details are sharp, but I concur with García Soto that the creature is holding a knife and a severed head. This geoglyph not only documents the arrival of the Oculate Being in Nazca and Ingenio, it stamps ownership on the landscape.

Geoglyphs in the Oc. 10 style also mark the hillsides of Ica (García Soto 2013), Palpa (Isla and Reindel 2007: 90–91; Lambers 2006; Reindel et al. 2006) and Nazca (Van Gijseghem 2006: 435), although they are mostly simple renditions of anthropomorphic figures, birds, animals, and large heads with eyes and mouth indicated. This florescence of geoglyph building coincides with major increases in site numbers throughout the south coast (Cook 1999: 83; Reindel 2009: 450; Schreiber and Lancho Rojas 2003: 14; Silverman 2002: 58). While burgeoning populations during the Necrópolis Era are likely to have been an element, migration between river systems is also indicated. The Oc. 10 geoglyphs can be seen as a means by which new arrivals legitimized territorial rights by creating cultural landscapes. During the Necrópolis Era (Oc. 10 and N1), a second migration into the

Nazca region took place (Silverman 1994: 378; Van Gijsegheem 2006: 436). This is when the geoglyph in Figure 22 was produced. Its appearance is dramatic but apparently short-lived. Nonetheless, it presents a classic Phase 10 Oculate Being in the Ocucaje style, and it is reasonable to propose that those who created the image came from the Ocucaje Basin.

Discussion: Environmental Pushes and Social Pulls

The material presented above demonstrates that the central deity of Nasca religion and its *huayo* cult are based on Paracas traditions which originated in the Ocucaje Basin of the Ica Valley during Oc. 9. During the Necrópolis Era (Oc. 10 and N1), these beliefs accompanied colonists to the Nazca Valley, where they morphed into a new or reinvented religion expressed in a new art style. The remaining and largest question is: “why?” Why did a new religion, with its many supernatural creatures, appear in Nazca at this time? Charismatic agency must surely have played a part, but to persist for many centuries the new ideology had to offer advantages over traditional Paracas belief systems. This mechanism must have proved more adaptive to the environmental and social circumstances of the era. Geography, climate, and dietary economy provide observable evidence of how this could have worked, but first we must consider the social context.

Both coercive and cooperative models of Nasca society have been advanced. The coercive model sees Cahuachi as the capital of a centralized, complex, paramount chiefdom; incipient state; or segmentary state whose elites used religion to exercise hegemonic control over the south coast. In this view, society was socially stratified, with a high degree of specialization supported by surplus storage (e.g., Conlee 2014; Isla Cuadrado and Reindel 2008; Llanos Jacinto 2008, 2009; Orefici 2012; Reindel 2009; Reindel and Isla Cuadrado 2006; Sořna 2015: 250). The cooperative model regards Cahuachi as a gathering place, where many lineages maintained shrines and engaged in feasting, craft

manufacture, gift-giving, and communal ceremonies, which served socially unifying purposes. Ascribed status, with social ranking forming a status continuum, was operative (as opposed to stratification; see Carmichael 1995: 162, 174, 181), but society was organized around independent lineages in self-supporting villages, which constantly renegotiated relations with other lineages, perhaps forming something equivalent to a series of middle-range societies (e.g., Carmichael 1988, 1995, 1998b; Kanter and Vaughn 2012; Schreiber 1999; Silverman 1993; Silverman and Proulx 2002; Van Gijsegheem 2004, 2006; Vaughn 2004, 2009).¹³ This is not the place to debate Nasca sociopolitical organization. The reader is referred to Christina Conlee’s excellent overview of the various models, which traces their history, adherents, and supporting evidence (2014: 237–238). The scenario outlined below falls squarely in the cooperative camp and may be called a functionalist, integrationist approach (Kanter and Vaughn 2012: 67). Since this article is primarily concerned with origins, the following discussion applies specifically to the Proto and Early Nasca epochs.

Environmental data show that, during the Necrópolis Era, the climate was arid and unpredictable, while in Early Nasca it stabilized and became warmer and wetter (Kanter and Vaughn 2012: 76). In addition to migrations into Nazca during the Necrópolis Era and the growing popularity of a new art style, the appearance of the Masked Being in N1 (heralding Nasca religion) coincided with the first large temple constructions at Cahuachi (Orefici 1996, 2012). The forces that set these developments in motion affected other aspects of society, such that, by Early Nasca, major shifts had also taken place in site locations, house forms, community organization, and pottery wares (Van Gijsegheem 2006: 438–439; Van Gijsegheem and Vaughn 2008). What factors favored these new directions, which coalesced into mature EIP Nasca culture?

Frontier Colonization and Nasca Ethnogenesis.

Hendrick Van Gijsegheem has developed a cogent perspective on the appearance of Nasca culture by applying general anthropological theory on frontier

colonization to the Nazca region (2004, 2006, 2013). Essentially, this body of theory observes that populations colonizing new territories distant from their homelands are free of traditional obligations, social constraints, allegiances, and leadership patterns. This new, unregulated, social environment allows renegotiation and manipulation of established patterns, and can foster the relatively sudden appearance of entirely new social arrangements and belief systems.

The Necrópolis Era began with three interacting material culture traditions: Paracas, Topará, and Nasca. It ended with a new expression of Nasca as the sole outcome. What happened? Van Gijseghem reasons that, on the Nazca frontier, settlers first spread out to fill all desirable lands, but, when colonization was complete, and in the absence of centralized authority, some means of intra and inter-valley negotiation became necessary. The openness of frontier society allowed experimentation and innovation, and what emerged were new social mechanisms for cooperation (Van Gijseghem 2004, 2006, 2013). For Van Gijseghem these “social mechanisms of cooperation” are what constituted Nasca society (2006: 439). The view expressed here is that religion was the organizing principle and backdrop against which these social mechanisms were played out. They included pilgrimage, feasting, performance, craft production, gifting, and rituals performed in public and private ceremonies at centers like Cahuachi (also see Kanter and Vaughn 2012; Van Gijseghem and Vaughn 2008; Vaughn 2004; Vaughn and Van Gijseghem 2007). While such activities bolster broad societal cooperation by providing a web of commonality among many communities, they are also a means of enhancing the status of individuals who wish to attract and maintain followers. In such a society, claimed monopoly of esoteric knowledge and conspicuous generosity are the two principal currencies of power. They are also the most economical.

Geography. Many N1 sites in the Nazca region are situated in defensible locations, but, by N2 they were abandoned and new settlements appeared in open

areas along the valley margins (Schreiber and Lancho Rojas 2003: 14; Van Gijseghem and Vaughn 2008: 116–117; Vaughn 2004: 115). Evidently, the Nasca had found some means of ameliorating violent conflict. I suggest that the need to find ways of avoiding hostilities was in part due to the geography of the region. The space between valleys is open pampa. Today pedestrian traffic always moves out of the valley bottoms to the high, open ground, and adults will traverse more than 50 km per day (personal observation). Prehistorically, it would have been possible for a raiding party to leave home after breakfast, hit an isolated hamlet in the next valley, and be home in time for dinner (I exaggerate, but the point is made). The Early Nasca settlement pattern in Nazca was one of small villages without fortifications. These people simply could not afford to live under constant threat of retaliation or annihilation. They needed a means of regulating interactions within and between valleys.

Environment. It has been noted that the south coast is a hyper-arid desert with the most extreme sun and wind regimes on the Peruvian coast. For long stretches of the coastal valleys, water flows on the surface for only a few months of the year and, while filtration continues below the surface, the flow decreases from Ica to Palpa to Nazca and droughts become more severe (Beresford-Jones 2011: 9–28; Schreiber and Lancho Rojas 2003: 24–30). The Río Grande, the largest river in the Nazca Basin, is still considered one of the driest and most irregular rivers on the Peruvian coast (ONERN 1971: 197). Nonetheless, occasional massive flooding, and even mega floods capable of ripping out entire valley systems, was also a concern (Beresford-Jones 2011: 79, 205; Beresford-Jones et al. 2009: 246). This may be the main reason why villages were not built in valley bottoms in the Nazca region.

While being cognizant of the limitations and perils of the Nasca heartland, we must not paint it as a bleak, marginal landscape. Deforestation and lowering of the water table by hydraulic pumping have shaped the modern vista. In his classic volume *The Lost Woodlands of Ancient Nasca*, Beresford-Jones

(2011) examines the climate, geomorphology, hydrology, and paleo-ecology of the lower Ica Valley in detail and extrapolates his findings to the Ica–Nazca region. No individual has done more to elucidate south-coast human ecology, and his work sets a high standard for generations to come. Beresford-Jones points out the richness of these riparian environments, where forests of *huarango* trees provided protection and shade with massive root systems to hold the soil in place, while creating micro-environments attractive to useful insect, bird, and animal life, and rich soils for gardening. However, his data indicate that, over a period of several centuries, the Nasca themselves were likely responsible for deforestation, which resulted in land degradation, although the job was finished by the colonial and early modern charcoal industry. The potential benefits to human occupation of riparian, old growth, *huarango* forests counterbalances the perils of droughts and mega floods but does not eliminate them or the ancient preoccupation with water and fertility in a desert land. Influence over the forces of nature was central to Nasca religion.

Dietary Economy. In addition to animal protein derived from domesticated llamas and guinea pigs, plus wild guanacos and deer, the Nasca had many domesticated crops, including varieties of maize, beans, squash, chili peppers, peanuts, and root crops such as *jacama*, *achira*, and *manioc*, as well as fruits, including *pepino* and *lucuma*, along with industrial crops of cotton and gourds (Chiou et al. 2013: 43; Conlee 2014: 239; Kellner and Schoeninger 2008: 232; Knudson et al. 2009: 249; Silverman 1993: 289–292; Vaughn 2009: 58). This impressive array of domesticated plants and their potential to yield large surpluses reinforces the view that the Nasca were sedentary agriculturalists capable of feeding dense populations. In particular, isotope analyses indicate that, among C^4 plants, maize played a significant role in the diet (Buzon et al. 2012; Horn et al. 2009: 192; Webb et al. 2013: 133). Kellner and Schoeninger refer to maize as the main plant staple (2008: 236). It has been suggested that a reliance on maize may have begun

in Late Paracas times (Pezo-Lanfranco et al. 2015: 43). However, maize is not the only source of C^4 isotopes. Cadwallader et al. (2012) point to several important plant families on the south coast with C^4 signatures that provide edible species for humans and animals. These include edible cacti and sedges for humans and several species of grass used as fodder for llamas and guinea pigs and as *lomas* browse by guanacos and deer. The latter were important food animals for the Nasca and provide an indirect route for C^4 signatures in human remains. Cadwallader et al. (2012: 506) conclude that the importance of maize in the ancient south-coast diets must be tempered with the understanding that this environment, both wild and domesticated, offered many C^4 sources that could enter the human diet directly or indirectly. The same holds true for edible C^3 plants, which include both wild and domesticated species. Most importantly for the current work, they state: “the fully agricultural pre-Hispanic societies of the south coast of Peru relied on gathered wild plants for up to half of their diet” (Cadwallader et al. 2012: 503). Wild food sources, both plant and animal, are often mentioned in lists of faunal and botanical recoveries from Nasca sites, but they are seldom attributed much importance. Cadwallader and colleagues demonstrate the abundance of edible but wild C^3 and C^4 plants along the south coast, most of which are found in archaeological sites, and they legitimately question what percentages of the C^3 and C^4 readings from ancient occupants ultimately derive from wild species.

The western boundary of the Nasca heartland is the Pacific Ocean, and it is logical to assume that fishing could have played a significant role in the Nasca dietary economy. However, a survey of the littoral failed to locate any shorefront Nasca villages, although sites from earlier and later time periods were found (Carmichael 1998a), and isotope analyses demonstrate that marine resources, including fish and shellfish, played a minor role in the regular diet (Cadwallader 2013: 187, 2014: 15–17; Horn et al. 2009: 192; Kellner and Schoeninger 2008: 236; Webb et al. 2013: 133–135). The Nasca were

certainly familiar with the ocean, where they gathered mollusks and engaged in some form of net fishing, but their use of the littoral appears to have been seasonal, brief, and opportunistic. Nonetheless, marine foods could have been a crucial resource during times of duress, such as prolonged droughts, and shellfish may have provided a seasonal source of protein (Carmichael et al. 2014: 17–18).

The western slopes of the Andes mountains provide additional ecological zones suited to higher-altitude plants and animals. Although llamas are adaptive creatures capable of consuming a diverse plant diet and were kept in the coastlands, high-altitude grasslands are their natural environment. Alpacas also do best in highland pastures. Llamas were likely moved seasonally from the mountains to the coast, while highland stations were maintained for harvesting alpaca camelid fiber. Reindel et al. (2015) have demonstrated this pattern going back to Paracas times in the Palpa region. Hunting of guanaco and deer surely took place in the highlands, as well as in the seasonal *lomas* fields of the coast.

All recent isotope studies on Nasca samples conclude that we are dealing with an indigenous coastal population in which foreigners who might be expected to have significantly different isotope signatures were absent. This is also true for Nasca *huayos* and headless bodies—they derive from the local population (Conlee et al. 2009: 2761; Kellner and Schoeninger 2008: 237; Knudson et al. 2009: 253). However, Webb et al. (2013: 137) report evidence of seasonally-shifting diets and exploitation of multiple resource zones. In addition, some individuals experienced brief, abrupt, dietary change. The researchers interpret this pattern to represent flexibility in food acquisition from local and distant resource zones involving residential mobility as a risk-minimizing strategy (Webb et al. 2013: 138). As noted above, the river valleys of the south coast during the Proto and Early Nasca epochs could have provided bountiful environments under their *huarango* canopies, but the threat of drought and flood—which in their extremes could be devastating—was ever-present. As Webb et al. (2013) point out, a system of dietary flexibility and residential

mobility minimizes risk. It also stands in stark contrast to some views of Nasca society in which agricultural towns peopled by stationary residents relied on adjacent fields to provide crop surpluses.

Gardening and Gathering

The evidence for residential mobility and use of distant production areas (Webb et al. 2013), combined with the argument for a much heavier reliance on wild foods than previously thought (Cadwallader et al. 2012), suggests an adaptive strategy that may be called the “gardening and gathering model.” It includes herding, hunting, and residential mobility as explained below. In this view, Nasca people did inhabit villages and cultivate crops, but individuals and families also hunted and gathered seasonal wild resources in distant locations, such as the highlands, coastal *lomas* fields, and ocean littoral. The intensity of drought and flood years can vary between valleys and within sections of the same valley. When cultivated crops were lost to such disasters, “islands” of natural plenty could be accessed in distant valleys, and by entire villages if necessary. Such a right of access to natural resources for everyone in the Ica–Nazca region would have provided a powerful adaptive mechanism in an uncertain environment and over time ensured the well-being of all villages in all valleys. In our society, it would be called a social safety net.

It is generally accepted that the Nasca developed irrigation methods in the Middle Nasca epoch as a response to deteriorating climatic conditions (Schreiber and Lancho Rojas 2003). Although claims are sometimes made for irrigation techniques in Early Nasca, conclusive proof is lacking. Reindel and Isla Cuadrado (2006: 173) assume that irrigation systems were used to support large populations, which were dependent on agriculture in the Palpa region. Conlee (2014: 240–241; 2015: 12) finds that, to the south in Nazca, it is highly likely that irrigation was practiced to feed the large population of the Early Nasca sector at La Tiza, although direct evidence is absent. There is logic to these arguments,

but they assume that populations were entirely stationary and dependent solely on agriculture. A strategy of gardening and gathering, herding and hunting, mixing domesticated and wild foods with residential mobility, allows populations at habitation sites to expand and contract as yearly conditions change. It is possible that families maintained dwellings in two or more locations.

Given the *huarango* canopies envisioned for south-coast valleys in the Proto and Early Nasca epochs, and the yearly meandering of river channels in the valley bottoms, it is unlikely that the Nasca had vast fields devoted to maize and others for quinoa or manioc. Rather, a horticultural system with mixed crops in garden patches better suits the conditions (Beresford-Jones 2011: 176-182). Such gardens can be exceptionally bountiful in good years and having several plots reduces risk. The system is more adaptive and economical than attempting to maintain large, permanent fields in an uncertain environment. When combined with herding and hunting, and participation in exchange networks that maintained alliances by circulating exotics (e.g., gold, obsidian, and *Spondylus* shell) and raw foodstuffs, this system could provide a relatively stable lifestyle in a relatively unstable environment.

Conclusions

This study is offered as a contribution towards reconstructing the historical and social contexts in which Nasca culture emerged. The origins of the Nasca *huayo* cult and its icon, the Masked Being, have been traced to Paracas Phase 9 in the Ocucaje Basin of the Ica Valley, where the archaeological severed heads and an associated supernatural called the Oculate Being occur together for the first time. It has been demonstrated through a comparison of associations and postures that, once transplanted to Nazca, the Oculate Being morphed into the new Nasca Masked Being. Between Paracas and Nasca, the taxidermy of *huayos* changed somewhat, and no doubt the mythology was attenuated, but the fundamental ideas behind the core of Nasca religion derive

from Paracas ancestors migrating to Nazca from Ocucaje in Phase 10. It is plausible that real people—the actual founding ancestor(s)—were blended into the Masked Being as suggested by the diadem ornament, always shown on the Masked Being, but primarily confined archaeologically to Ocucaje and the Peninsula cemeteries.

The Nasca head-taking custom has been presented as a *huayo* cult set within a panorama of beliefs generically referred to as a religion. This religion was likely ministered by shamans tending ancestor and animist beliefs along with water and fertility concerns (not a hierarchical priesthood backing a despot), but shamanic roles no doubt carried great influence and, combined with hosting feasts and gifting finely crafted ceramics bearing supernatural iconography, would have generated status and social power. It is suggested that membership in the *huayo* cult was restricted to aspiring adult males, perhaps forming teams of two to five men who represented their lineage against other *ayllu* teams in periodic ritual encounters. These prearranged combats resulted in a single capture and eventual beheading as a fertility ritual perpetuating the Nasca life-from-death continuum (Carmichael 1994). Bands of warriors in Early Nasca iconography show one figure dressed differently from the others, who may be the leader/organizer/sponsor of the group (Figure 5; see Carmichael 2015: 136, Figure 14). Leadership in the *huayo* cult, combined with claimed shamanic powers and conspicuous generosity, would have ensured elite status for a man and the highest social ranking for his lineage.

Finally, it has been proposed that Nasca religion was an adaptation to a new frontier land (new to the Paracas migrants of Oc. 10). The Ica–Nazca region is a hyper-arid desert of sun and wind extremes, erratic river flows, and limited, highly circumscribed, ground for cultivation. It is sometimes bountiful but always fragile, subject to frequent droughts and floods. The gardening and gathering model proposed here envisions a practical adaptation based on flexibility of diet and residence. Horticulturalists maintained garden plots along the river bottoms, with mixed plantings of domesticated

crops; raised guinea pigs and llamas on grown and gathered fodder; hunted guanaco and deer; occasionally harvested marine resources from temporary oceanfront encampments; and gathered wild plants, including edible cacti and sedges. The diet was mixed and opportunistic. Failure in one part of the economy could be made up with increased activity in others. Residential mobility was required to take advantage of opportunities dispersed over the entire coast and adjacent highlands and may have included maintaining two or more dwellings in different regions. Key to this system is free movement up, down, and between valleys, into neighboring highlands and out to the coast, wherever islands of resources appeared in abundance. It was Nasca religion that provided the web of commonality between communities, which guaranteed safe passage by empowering elites to negotiate and regulate social commerce. It was Nasca blood that fertilized the earth, sky, and water. It was Paracas ancestors who watched over their Nasca successors.

The gardening and gathering model, facilitated by the advent of Nasca religion as the critical social glue, provides a plausible adaptation to the Nazca region during the Proto and Early Nasca epochs. While this subsistence mode and religion are proposed as the original foundations of southern Nasca society, it is not assumed that they remained unchanged thereafter. In Middle Nasca, the introduction of *puquio* irrigation, new settlement patterns, the abandonment of Cahuachi, and radical changes in the style of the sacred iconography all suggest evolving patterns. What did not change were the main characters in the Nasca pantheon. The Masked Being and other principal divinities, all present at the inception of this process, remain constant themes in the iconography until sometime around A.D. 600, when the candle flame guttered. The extinction of these divinities marks the end of Nasca culture. Those whose ancestors were Nasca continued to live in the coastal homelands, but the formation we call Nasca, with its stunning art style, no longer existed.

To what extent does the gardening and gathering model apply to other regions? There are major differences between Ica, Palpa, and Nazca. Ica presents a

single long river valley, while Palpa and Nazca each have several shorter rivers, and the hydrology in all three regions varies, as do culture histories. Compared with Nazca, Paracas settlement in Palpa is earlier and differs in the size, number, and location of sites (including valley bottoms and extensive use of the sierra), with a strong highland-coast dynamic in Late Paracas (Reindel et al. 2015). Palpa also has unique and elaborate forms of burial in both Paracas and Nasca times; these are not found in Ica or Nazca (Isla Cuadrado 2009; Isla Cuadrado and Reindel 2008; Tomasto-Cagigao et al. 2015). But Palpa and Nazca have nothing comparable to the massive Animas Complex of the Callango Basin in Ica (Bachir Bacha and Llanos Jacinto 2013). What is unique to Nazca is the great site of Cahuachi (Orefici 2012), not duplicated in Palpa or Ica. These facts tell us that each of these regions (Ica, Palpa, and Nazca) has a unique culture history, and a single model of economy or social process is unlikely to fit comfortably everywhere (a point also made by Van Gijseghem and Vaughn 2008: 115). I recommend a multi-regional approach to Nasca studies. To this end, I encourage the development of independent chronologies, ceramic seriations, and culture histories for each region.

In the EIP, there is a dominant art style called Nasca which, in its ceramic and textile iconography, reveals a familiar pantheon of supernatural beings and a *huayo* cult. Such materialized ideology was a shared commonality throughout the Ica–Nazca territory but of itself does not demonstrate political unification or domination from a particular center. We also observe concurrent and distinctive regional style variations. Elsewhere I have argued that we need to think in terms of at least three distinct style areas—Ica, Palpa, and Nazca—and we may yet identify individual valley variations (Carmichael 2013). We are in a new era of south-coast archaeology in which the focus is on refining local culture histories and elucidating local processes. Attempts to promote a single model of sociopolitical development over the entire south coast have been controversial. We will be in an enhanced position to interpret the grand vista of south-coast prehistory when the regional sequences are better understood.

The current work has taken an iconographic approach to the question of Nasca origins. Although long out of fashion in south-coast research, the study of iconography can provide unique clues when cautiously applied. Iconography cannot be profitably studied in a vacuum; it must be situated within its broader cultural context. Ongoing site excavations and studies in bioarchaeology and archaeometry are providing exciting new information, and we should continue exploring all avenues of inquiry into the past. However, it is hoped that the current study will contribute towards reinvigorating south-coast iconographic studies as an equally legitimate and contributing approach to understanding ancient society.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

- 1 In Figure 3, the Nasca pottery phases are those documented for the Nazca Valley. I have advocated a separate seriation for the Ica Valley Nasca material

(Carmichael 2013: 215–216), but this has not yet been undertaken. However, the Nasca pottery from the oasis of Ocucaje (middle Ica Valley), as seen in the gravelots excavated by Max Uhle (Proulx 1970) and Aldo Rubini (Dawson 1960), shows the strongest parallels to Nazca Valley material. I am uncertain whether Phase 6 is present in Ocucaje, but correlates for the remaining phases are known.

The Paracas Ocucaje Phases 8–10 in Figure 3 are based on the Ica Valley evidence. Elements of these phases are present in the Nazca region, but their definition rests primarily on finds in the Ica Valley oases of Callango and Ocucaje (Menzel et al. 1964). In grouping Oc. 8–10 as Late Paracas, I am following DeLeonardis (2005: 290), noting her proviso that, in Ica, Oc. 8, 9, and 10 are distinct from one another (DeLeonardis and Glascock 2013: 187).

The Paracas ceramics in Palpa are reported to fit well with the phases of the Ica Valley Master Sequence (Isla Cuadrado and Reindel 2013: 245). The Palpa chronology identifies Oc. 8 and 9 as Late Paracas, and places Oc. 10 with N1 in a subsequent Transition Period (Unkel et al. 2012).

Chronology on the south coast is in a state of flux. The scheme shown in Figure 3 has obvious limitations, given that it is a synthesis of sequences from Ica and Nazca, and does not attempt to reconcile the Palpa data. However, chronological resolution is beyond the scope of this article, and the chart provided in Figure 3 is sufficient for current needs.

Ending the EIP after Nasca 7, around A.D. 600, is an estimate. As with all the absolute dates on this chart, a shift of 50 years up or down is allowable, and epochs no doubt began and ended at different times in different areas (hence the slanted boundaries on Figure 3). In the Nazca region, the site of Cochuischo in the Tierras Blancas Valley provides a good example of terminal N7 wares (Whalen and González La Rosa 2014). The following Loro phase (Dawson's original N8) marks the beginning of the Middle Horizon. I believe the same EIP populations continued to occupy the Nazca region, but in technical and artistic terms, the ceramic tradition is impoverished. While a few motifs from Late Nasca can be traced into Loro, the principal deities of the previous seven centuries and, by inference, the belief system at the heart of Nasca culture ceased to exist. It is the termination of this sacred iconography and its religion that marks the end of Nasca culture.

- 2 I use the term Animas Complex to include both Animas Altas and Animas Bajas. Previously, they were treated as separate sites located .5 km apart with Animas Bajas restricted to Oc. 8 and Animas Altas to Oc. 9 (Massey 1991: 321). However, recent work by Aicha Bachir Bacha and Óscar Daniel Llanos Jacinto (2013) demonstrates that the two areas overlap and, while certain mounds, building phases, and locations pertain primarily to one phase or another, there is more-or-less continuous occupation covering the entire region from Oc. 8 through Oc. 10.
- 3 There is one known qualifier. In his survey of the Nazca region, Robertson (1957: 107) identified a single bowl fragment, incised and with traces of resin paint, that he attributed to Oc. 9 or Cavernas. None of the *huaqueros* he interviewed was familiar with the style.
- 4 To the best of my knowledge, archaeological examples of Late Paracas severed heads have not been found outside of Ocucaje and the Paracas Peninsula cemeteries. Iconography showing severed heads and Oculate Beings does occur elsewhere, such as at the Animas Complex in Callango (Bachir Bacha and Llanos Jacinto 2013: Figures 12, 21), and on a few sherds in Palpa (Johny Isla Cuadrado, personal communication May 2016), but the greatest number and variety of these motifs derive from Ocucaje. The grave goods deposited in the Paracas Peninsula cemeteries came from elsewhere. The headless body from the Palpa area is so far unique (Tomasto-Cagigao et al. 2015: 81), and the actual heads have not been found. However, it would not be surprising if a few examples outside of Ocucaje were eventually documented.
- 5 Throughout this article, I use the term *religion* in a general sense to mean a collective belief in powers, spirits, ancestors, and/or divinities with abilities to transcend the natural world. Religion is structured by myth, ritual, and symbolism. Ritual specialists are a bridge between this world and the supernatural. In the case of Nasca religion, I think it was a combination of ancestor worship and animistic beliefs concerning the forces that control or influence nature and human lives, and an overriding preoccupation with water and fertility. My use of terms like *deity*, *divinity*, and *pantheon* is not meant to imply a formalized hierarchy of supernatural beings, or of priests. Rather, the term *shaman* probably best describes the functionaries who conducted rituals. They were not specialists in the sense of being full-time practitioners, but they claimed special knowledge of the supernatural and the best ways to deal with it. This, in turn, was the underpinning of social power in Nasca society.
- 6 Other writers apply the term *cult* in a more inclusive fashion (e.g., Silverman and Proulx 2002: 247). Vaughn and Van Gijsegem (2007) use “Nasca cult” or “Cahuachi cult” to refer to the religion, its ceremonies, its central place, and the entire set of associated activities, such as feasting and gifting by “sociopolitical elites.” Previously I have done the same (Carmichael 2015).
- 7 In her discussion of Paracas disembodied human heads, DeLeonardis (2012: 214–215) avoids the term *trophy head* because it obscures the careful preparation, curation, display, and eventual ritual burial of what were clearly sacred objects. As she points out, there is no evidence that they were simple “trophy” used as tokens of success, boasting, or derision. The same holds true for the Nasca examples. Since the first scientific study of these curious objects (Tello 1918), all researchers have complained that the popular term *trophy head* is a misnomer. I agree entirely with Tello and DeLeonardis and prefer the more descriptive terms *disembodied* or *severed* heads as synonyms, along with *ritual head*, for they were certainly the focus of religious beliefs and ceremonies. However, as pointed out by Knudson et al. (2009: 246–247), the Andean term that best describes them is *huayo* as related in the *Huarochiri Manuscript* (Salomon and Urioste 1991: 120). In this early historic account from the Central Andes (about a week’s walk from Nazca), the term *huayo* refers to a “flayed face ... with the actual skin and bone ... which would preserve the persona” of a hero, founder, or sacrificial captive, to “be displayed in a dance” and receive “offerings of llama fat in return for sharing its vital powers.” The narrators state: “They actually used to bring out the huayos and carry them around in a litter for two days. On the following day, they’d hang them up together with their maize, potatoes, and all other offerings.” It was said that, after hanging the *huayos* with the offerings: “The huayos will return to the place where they were born, the place called Uma Pacha, carrying these things along with them.” The Nasca are so far removed in time from this account that we cannot assume they had identical beliefs and customs; however, the Huarochiri activities and associations come from the Central Andean tradition, and examination of severed heads in Nasca iconography and archaeology reveals so many conceptual parallels that the

- Andean term *huayo* serves well as a general reference to ancient south-coast head-taking traditions. However, the term *trophy head* is so embedded in the literature and widely employed (e.g., Carmichael 1994, 2015) that it will likely remain.
- 8 The only exception known to me is a mouth mask shown in Sawyer (1997: 52, Figure 27), which has both horizontal and upswept laterals. This odd combination on a single specimen lacking the characteristic divided corner points is not sufficient to claim that the Spotted Cat's whiskers (as painted on pottery) represent a mouth mask.
 - 9 For a similar interior bowl composition, see Rowe 2012: 46, Figure 28.
 - 10 A few Early Nasca effigy bottles show the Masked Being in a seated position (e.g., Peru 1984: cover and 286; Proulx 2006: 78, Figure 5.34). However, the position appears to be related more to helping the vessel stand upright, as the modeled signifer behind provides a third leg to create a tripod.
 - 11 The assertion that Early Nasca diadems with provenience have never been found in the Nasca heartland is based on a thorough review of the literature and personal observation. Further, Johny Isla Cuadrado has not encountered them in Palpa or Nazca (personal communication October 2013). All recorded specimens come from the Ocucaje Basin and Necrópolis of Wari Kayan. The Acari Valley diadem is said to have been looted from a grave at the site of Huarato (Valdez 2006: 17). The provenience is likely sound. This artifact has odd dimensions and *repoussé* markings, and appears to have been produced by someone who had never seen an actual diadem, but was working from a verbal description or iconographic painting. It is a curious piece and, as a singular occurrence from beyond the Nasca heartland, does not alter the central findings of this article.
 - 12 Guisepppe Orefici generously provided the photograph in Figure 19 and reports that he first saw this geoglyph in 1982. He provides the following location: "14°42'38.35"S 75°06'45.81"W esta a 11.719 Kms. en línea recta de Cahuachi, Direccion 181.64°" (personal communication July 2014).
 - 13 The differences between the coercive and cooperative camps are not as black and white as suggested here; nor do the individuals I have cited as representative of a given position necessarily endorse all the points in my brief characterizations. Interpretations tend to be more nuanced in conversation, but some researchers get caught in terminology. Nonetheless, it is fair to say that there are differing opinions that trend towards one view or the other. It is interesting that all concerned are looking at the same data and drawing different inferences. It is time we stopped looking for a single sociopolitical model that applies to the entire south coast and focus more on explaining regional developments in local terms. Stothert (2013: 82–83) provides non-centralized models of "house society" organization from coastal Ecuador that have similarities to the Nasca situation.

Appendix 1. Figure sources and comments

<i>Figure</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Fig. 1	Map of the south coast showing site locations	Redrafted from Carmichael 2015: Fig. 1	
Fig. 2	Traditional Ica Valley master sequence	Rowe and Menzel 1973 [1967]	
Fig. 3	South-coast chronology	Patrick H. Carmichael	
Fig. 4	Paracas figure with severed head and knife	Redrafted from Menzel et al. 1964: 370, Fig. 52c	Ocucaje Phase 9, incised on a flask from Ocucaje; Rubini Collection
Fig. 5	Group of warriors with a severed head	American Museum of Natural History, New York, 41.2/7988, photos by P. Carmichael, illustration by Elizabeth A. Carmichael; another version is shown in Carmichael 1988: Fig. 17 and Proulx 2006: 117	Dawson Phase 2/3, jar ht. 10.8 cm, dia. 15.4 cm; the warriors are crowded on the design field, the spear point overlaps the shoulder of the central figure; also shown in Lapiner 1976: 207, Fig. 491
Fig. 6a	Spotted Cat	Redrafted from Seler 1923: 12, Fig. 8	Dawson Nasca Phase 3
Fig. 6b	Head Taster	Redrafted from Sawyer 1966: 125, Fig. 207	Dawson Nasca Phase 3
Fig. 6c	Killer Whale	Redrafted from Sawyer 1966: 124, Fig. 205	Dawson Early Nasca Phase 3; the creature is not an orca or any particular fish; see Carmichael 1992: 189
Fig. 6d	Masked Being in sprouting head aspect	Redrafted from Carmichael 1994: Fig. 17	Dawson Nasca Phase 5
Fig. 6e	Serpentine	Redrafted from Seler 1923: 14, Fig. 64	Dawson Nasca Phase 3
Fig. 6f	Harpy	Redrafted from Wolfe 1981: 54, Fig. 132	Dawson Nasca Phase 5, Nazca District, Phoebe Hearst Museum, Berkeley, 4-8900
Fig. 6g	Horrible Bird	Redrafted from Seler 1923: 235, Fig. 115	Dawson Nasca Phase 5
Fig. 6h	Not-So-Horrible Bird	Redrafted from Blasco Bosqued and Ramos Gómez 1985: 231, Fig. 259	Dawson Nasca Phase 5
Fig. 7a	Gold mouth mask	Museum zu Allerheiligen, Eb 15026.01, photo by P. Carmichael	Early Nasca; courtesy Museum zu Allerheiligen, Schaffhausen, Switzerland
Fig. 7, N1	Masked Being, extended pose	Museum zu Allerheiligen, Eb 15404; illustration by Elizabeth A. Carmichael	Dawson Nasca Phase 1; see photos in Carmichael 2015: Fig. 17
Fig. 7, N2	Masked Being, crouched pose	Redrafted from Sawyer 1960: Fig. 2	Dawson Nasca Phase 2; see photos in Carmichael 2015: Fig. 12
Fig. 7, N3	Masked Being, extended pose	Redrafted from Seler 1923: 196, Fig. 43, Phoebe Hearst Museum, Berkeley, 4-4737	Dawson Nasca Phase 3, Ocucaje, Ica Valley, also shown in Proulx 1968: 143, Fig. 18, 1970: Plate 25, 2006: 62, Fig. 5.1
Fig. 7, N4	Masked Being, extended pose	Redrafted from Proulx 1968: 144, Fig. 19	Dawson Nasca Phase 4, Nazca Valley, Phoebe Hearst Museum, Berkeley, 4-8873
Fig. 7, N5	Masked Being, extended pose	Redrafted from Roark 1965: Plate 8, Fig. 40	Dawson Nasca Phase 5, Nazca Valley, Phoebe Hearst Museum, Berkeley, 4-8490
Fig. 7, N6	Masked Being, extended pose	Redrafted from Sawyer 1966: 131, Fig. 215	Dawson Nasca Phase 6
Fig. 7, N7	Masked Being, extended pose	Redrafted from Sawyer 1966: 133, Fig. 216	Dawson Nasca Phase 7

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Appendix 1. *Continued*

<i>Figure</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Fig. 8	Masked Being, extended pose	Redrafted from Seler 1923: 196, Fig. 43, Phoebe Hearst Museum, Berkeley, 4-4737	Dawson Nasca Phase 3, Ocucaje, Ica Valley; also shown in Proulx 1968: 143, Fig. 18, 1970: Plate 25, 2006: 62, Fig. 5.1
Fig. 9	Masked Being, abbreviated format	Phoebe Hearst Museum, Berkeley, 4-8859, from a photo by P. Carmichael; illustration by Elizabeth A. Carmichael	Dawson Nasca Phase 5, Nazca District; another rendition is shown in Roark 1965: Plate 10, Fig. 46
Fig. 10	Masked Being, standing frontal pose	Redrafted from Seler 1923: 184, Fig. 27	Dawson Nasca Phase 3, from a double-spout bottle now in the Art Institute of Chicago, AIC 55.2112
Fig. 11a	Masked Being in fox aspect	Redrafted from Roark 1965: 41, Phoebe Hearst Museum, Berkeley, 4-8412	Dawson Nasca Phase 5, from Tunga in the Poroma Valley
Fig. 11b	Masked Being in plant aspect	Redrafted from Seler 1923: 204, Fig. 54	Dawson Nasca Phase 5
Fig. 11c	Masked Being in piscine aspect	Redrafted from Blasco Bosqued and Ramos Gómez 1985: 270, Fig. 217	Dawson Nasca Phase 3
Fig. 11d	Masked Being in avian aspect	Redrafted from Sawyer 1975: 132, Fig. 132a	Dawson Nasca Phase 4
Fig. 12	Masked Being in Killer Whale aspect	Redrafted from Roark 1965: Plate 14, Fig. 62, Phoebe Hearst Museum, Berkeley, 4-8847	Dawson Nasca Phase 6, Nazca district
Fig. 13a	Masked Being in extended pose	Reiss-Engelhorn Museum, Mannheim, 19710; illustration by Elizabeth A. Carmichael	Dawson Nasca Phase 1; see photos in Carmichael 2015: Fig. 20
Fig. 13b	Masked Being in piscine aspect	Illustration courtesy of Verity Whalen	Dawson Nasca Phase 7, on a collared jar from Cocahuicho, Nazca region; see photo in Whalen 2014: 159
Fig. 14a	Ovoid jar with Oculate Being in extended pose	Photo courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, 41.2/6208	Ocucaje Phase 9; see Menzel et al. 1964: 190, 196; from the Pinella Site, Ocucaje; blackware jar; incised with white pigment in incisions and modeled bird head lug, 51.5 × 45 cm
Fig. 14b	Oculate Being in extended pose	Redrafted from original by Nicholas Amorosi, American Museum of Natural History, New York, 41.2/6208	Ocucaje Phase 9; the matching motif on the opposite side of the vessel is shown in Sawyer 1961: 293, Fig. 10a
Fig. 15a	Oculate Being on ovoid jar	Illustration by Elizabeth A. Carmichael, from a photograph in Sawyer 1997: 48, Fig. 18	Ocucaje Phase 10, Ocucaje, Ica Valley; incised and resin-painted jar, 37.5 × 36.8 cm; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1979.206.751
Fig. 15b	Oculate Being in extended pose	Redrafted from Sawyer 1997: 48, Fig. 19; original drawing by Milton Sunday	Ocucaje Phase 10, Ocucaje, Ica Valley; originally published in Sawyer 1972: 108, Fig. 16; this is the opposite side of Fig. 12a
Fig. 16	Oculate Being in extended pose	Redrafted from Menzel et al. 1964: 376, Fig. 58	Ocucaje Phase 10, Rubini Grave 25, Ocucaje, Ica Valley; incised and resist-painted
Fig. 17	Oculate Being in abbreviated format	Redrafted from Menzel et al. 1964: 361, Fig. 43c	Ocucaje Phase 8, Rubini Lot 80, Ocucaje, Ica Valley; incised on a double-spout flask; see Menzel et al. 1964: Plate 9a

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Appendix 1. *Continued*

Figure	Title	Source	Comments
Fig. 18	Oculate Being in crouched pose	Illustration by Elizabeth A. Carmichael, from a photograph in Lavalle and Lang 1983: 147	Ocucaje Phase 9
Fig. 19	Oculate Being in standing frontal pose	Illustration by Elizabeth A. Carmichael, from a photograph in Dawson 1979: Fig. 21; incised ovoid jar, blackware with white pigment in incisions	Late Ocucaje Phase 9; Museum of the American Indian, New York, 23/5500; also illustrated in Dockstader 1967: Fig. 100; height 34 cm.
Fig. 20a	Oculate Being in inverted pose	Photo courtesy of Fowler Museum of Cultural History, University of California, Los Angeles, X88-856; diameter 14.4 cm; incised and resin- painted	Ocucaje Phase 10; other views shown in Donnan 1992: 38, Fig. 60 and Carmichael 2015: Fig. 4c.
Fig. 20b	Oculate Being in inverted pose	Redrafted from Donnan 1992: 38, Fig. 60. Fowler Museum of Cultural History, University of California, Los Angeles, X88-856	Ocucaje Phase 10
Fig. 21	Masked Being in inverted pose	Didrichsen Art Museum, Helsinki, DAM 911a; ceramic panpipe, incised and slip painted; height 19 cm; illustration by Elizabeth A. Carmichael	Dawson Nasca Phase 1; see photos in Carmichael 2015: Fig. 19 and list of prior publications
Fig. 22	Oculate Being geoglyph, standing frontal pose with inverted head	Photo courtesy of Giuseppe Orefici, Centro Italiano Studi e Ricerche Archeologiche Precolombiane, Brescia, and Museo Arqueológico Antonini, Nazca	Classic Ocucaje 10; Nazca Pampa; inverted head and serrated streamers; geoglyph 18 × 9 m; relief ridges 25 cm high; also shown in Herrán 1985: 270; Lumbreras 2000: 130; Orefici 2012: 255–256, Figs. 17–18; and Reinhard 1988: 41, Fig. 40

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