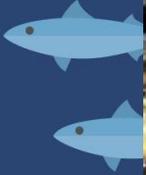




# Rock Carvings as Historical Evidence

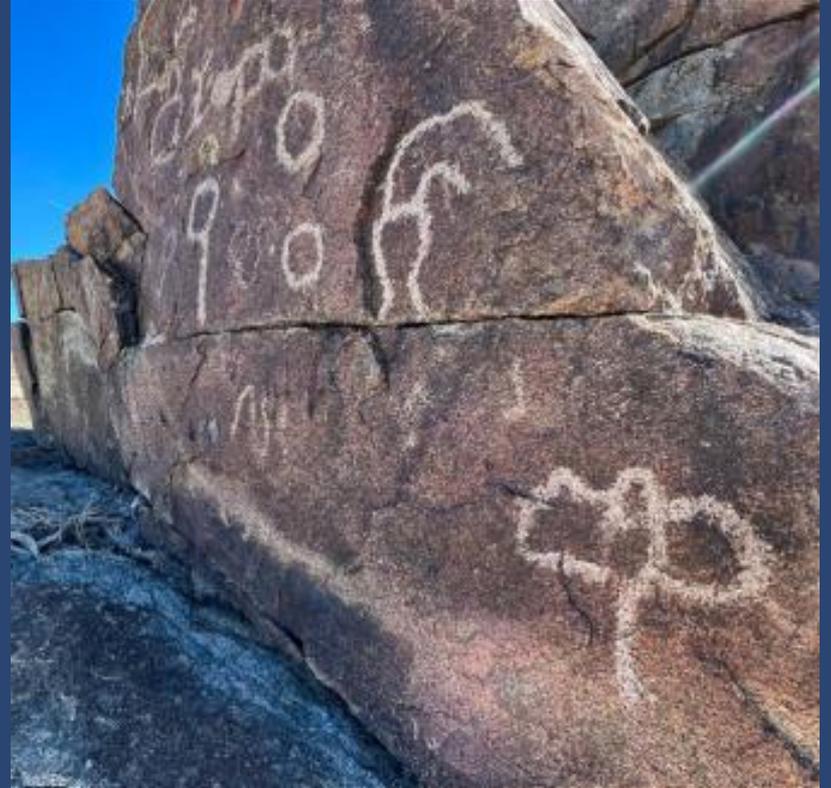
Reading the Stones of the Pacific



# Learning Goals

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- **Explain** how archaeologists document petroglyphs without touching them.
- **Evaluate** rock carvings as primary sources of information.
- **Identify** what carvings tell us about beliefs and society.
- **Compare** visual evidence with written records.
- **Analyze** petroglyphs that record real historical events.



# Key Vocabulary



## Evidence

Evidence: facts showing a belief is true.



## Primary Source

An original object or document created during the time period being studied.



## Perspective

Perspective: a way of regarding something.



## Heritage

Valued traditions, buildings, and objects that are passed down from previous generations.

# Recap: Scientific Methods



Archaeologists study ancient art without touching it to prevent damage. They use non-invasive methods: tracing outlines on clear plastic, high-resolution photography with varied lighting, and 3D laser scanning for digital models.

# Quick Check: Tools



## Question 1:

Why do archaeologists avoid touching the petroglyphs directly?

## Question 2:

What tool creates a digital copy of the rock art?

## Question 3:

What material is often placed over the rock for tracing?



Answers on the next slide...

# Quick Check: Tools



## Answer 1:

To prevent damage from oils and pressure on the rock surface.

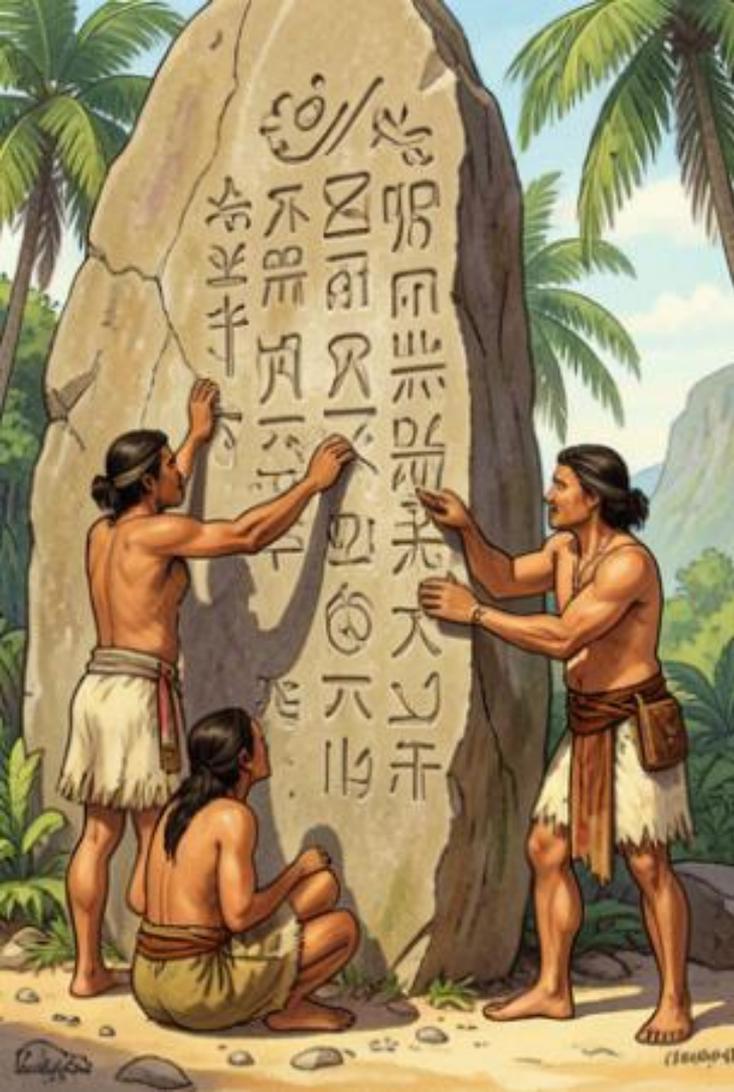
## Answer 2:

A 3D laser scanner.

## Answer 3:

Clear plastic sheets.

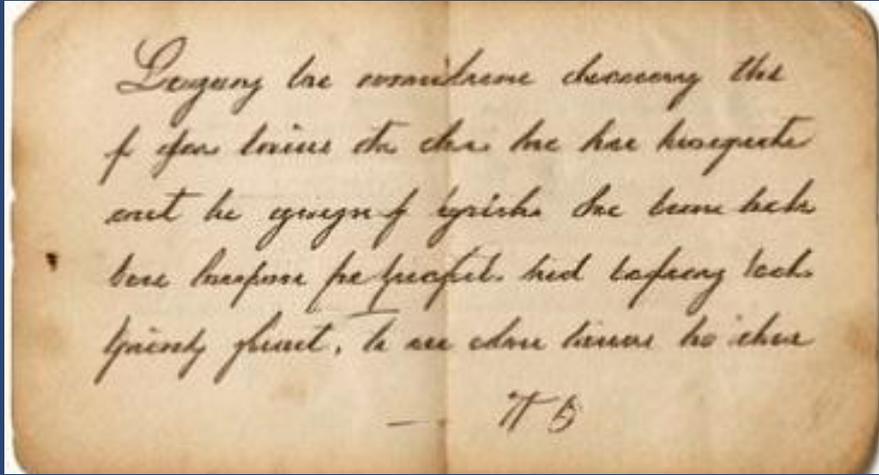




# Petroglyphs as Primary Sources

Petroglyphs are primary sources, offering direct insights into past societies. Unlike later historical accounts, these ancient carvings reveal social structures, religious beliefs, and territorial boundaries. They served as the 'written records' for cultures without alphabets, providing a unique voice from history.

# Written vs. Visual Evidence



## Written Records (Alphabet)

Uses letters/words to explain complex ideas & dates. Requires reader to know the language.



## Visual Evidence (Petroglyphs)

Symbols & pictures show important things (canoes, animals). Understandable across languages.

# True or False



Petroglyphs are considered a primary source because they were created by the people living at that time.



TRUE



FALSE



Answers on the next slide...

True or False



Petroglyphs are considered a primary source because they were created by the people living at that time.



TRUE

That's right! Primary sources are original objects or documents from the time period, like these carvings.



# Case Study: Recording Events



Pacific petroglyphs served as a **newspaper**, documenting significant events.

**Tongariro, New Zealand:** Carvings depict the eruption of **Mount Tongariro**, illustrating the explosion and ashfall, and the community's experience of this natural disaster.

**First Contact:** Other carvings show unfamiliar ships with tall sails, recording the initial encounters between Pacific Islanders and European explorers, offering insight into their perspective on these meetings.

# Discuss!



## Class Discussion

If a community today wanted to record a major historical event (like a flood or a sports victory) without using words, what symbols would they carve into stone? Why would they choose those symbols?

# Discuss!



**You might have said...**

A flood might be shown as wavy lines covering houses. A sports victory might be a trophy or a specific ball. These symbols are instantly recognizable visuals, just like ancient petroglyphs.

# Comparing Sources



Left: A Pacific Islander's view of a person. Right: A European artist's view of an event.  
How are these perspectives different?

# Fill in the blanks



Petroglyphs are a type of \_\_\_\_ source that provide evidence about social structures and beliefs. Unlike written records, they use \_\_\_\_ rather than an alphabet. Archaeologists use \_\_\_\_ scanning to study them without touching the rock surface.

Word bank 

primary, symbols, 3D, secondary, letters, X-ray

Answers on the next slide...

# Fill in the blanks



Petroglyphs are a type of **primary** source that provide evidence about social structures and beliefs. Unlike written records, they use **symbols** rather than an alphabet. Archaeologists use **3D** scanning to study them without touching the rock surface.

Word bank 

primary, symbols, 3D, secondary, letters, X-ray



# Check Your Understanding

Answers on the next slide...



Why is it difficult to understand societies that only left visual evidence like petroglyphs?

1. Because the art is always too faded to see.
2. Because we cannot be sure exactly what the symbols meant to the artist.
3. Because they did not have any leaders or beliefs.
4. Because archaeologists are not allowed to study them.

# Check Your Understanding



Why is it difficult to understand societies that only left visual evidence like petroglyphs?

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4. Because archaeologists are not allowed to study them.

# Summary

## What have we learned?

Rock carvings are vital primary sources for understanding the ancient Pacific. They reveal insights into social structures, religion, and territorial boundaries. Visual evidence, powerful for societies without alphabets, can act as historical records of events like volcanic eruptions. Studying these petroglyphs allows us to hear the stories of the Lapita people and their descendants.

