

# World Rock Art

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Australia is distinguished not only by possessing the largest concentration of rock art, but also by being the only country that has continuing broad access to ethnographic interpretation of rock art by its traditional custodians. Moreover, Australia has the largest organisation of rock art researchers, the premier scientific journal in the field, and the largest academic congress in the discipline. This presentation explains the reasons for some of these factors, and it offers an overview of the huge corpus of Australian rock art. The major regional concentrations of it are introduced, with special attention given to the cave art of Australia, which is the world's second-largest body of this particular phenomenon. Some attention is also given to the time periods the rock art belongs to, to the methodology of estimating the age of rock art, to the issue of its interpretation, and to the questions of its preservation and protection. The presentation closes with a brief synopsis of the current campaigns to protect rock art in Australia.

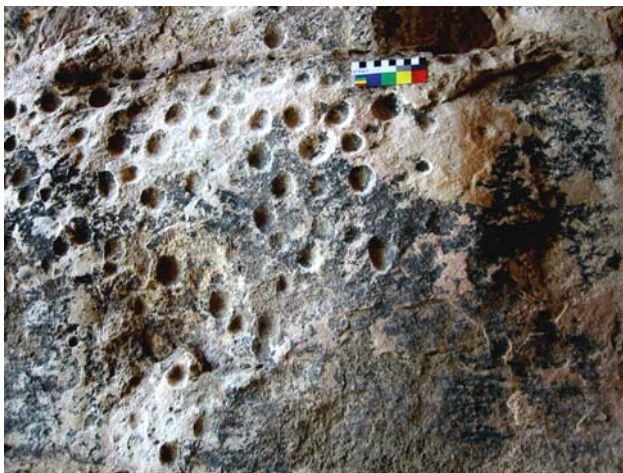
The world's major rock art regions are defined and described, and the long history of their study is briefly reviewed. It is demonstrated, however, that the proper scientific study of world rock art is a very recent phenomenon, having been initiated only in the last few decades. Rock art research remains an embryonic science that is only now being developed through an international network of research organisations.

## **A brief review**

Rock art is a global phenomenon occurring in nearly all countries. It constitutes the major component of the surviving cultural evidence of pre-historic people, accounting for some 99% of all palaeoart in the world today. It is therefore the most outstanding part of humanity's early cultural heritage, providing a rich source of information about the conceptual reality of the ancients, and about the cognitive evolution of our species.

The oldest known rock art dates from the Lower Palaeolithic period, the most recent from the 20th century. This presentation addressed the great diversity of what has survived on the rocks, continent by continent.

**NOTE:** The presentation was verbal; text not available.



**Rio Siguas valley, southern Peru**





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**Toro Muerto, Arequipa, Peru**



**El Buey, Mizque valley, central Bolivia**

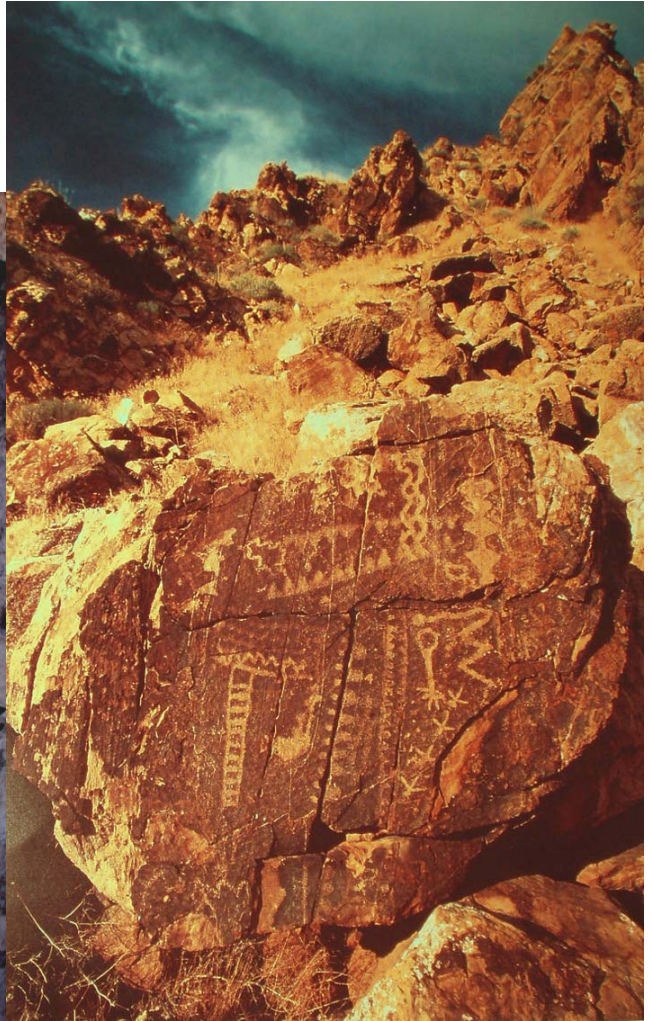


**Noreste tradition, Piaui, Brazil**





**Para, lower Amazon, Brazil**



**Cerro Blanco, Sonora Desert, northern Mexico**

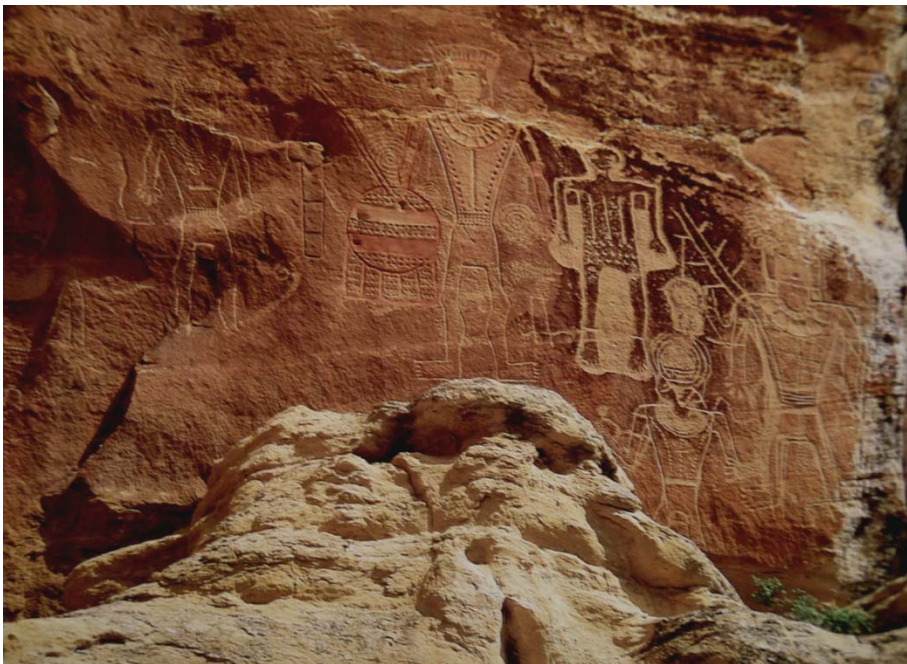


**Hispaniola cave art, Caribbean**





**Barrier Canyon, Utah, USA**

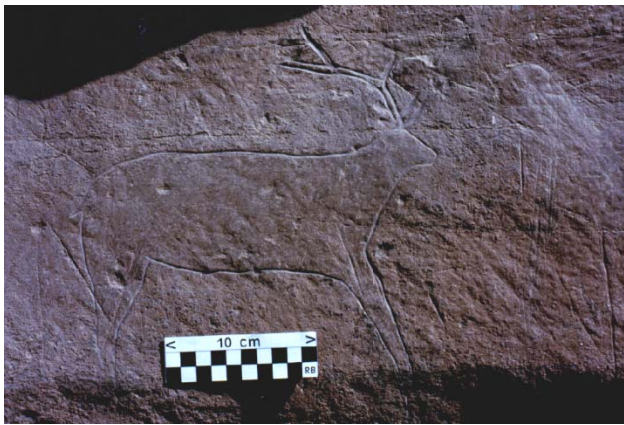


**Three Kings Site, Uinta County, Utah, USA**



**Atlatl Butte, Carbon County, Utah, USA**





**Shishkino, Lena River, central Siberia**



**Helanshan, Ningxia Province, NW China**



**Cliff paintings at Huashan, Ming River, Guangxi Zhuang Province, southern China, extending to 40m height**





Bhimbetka, India

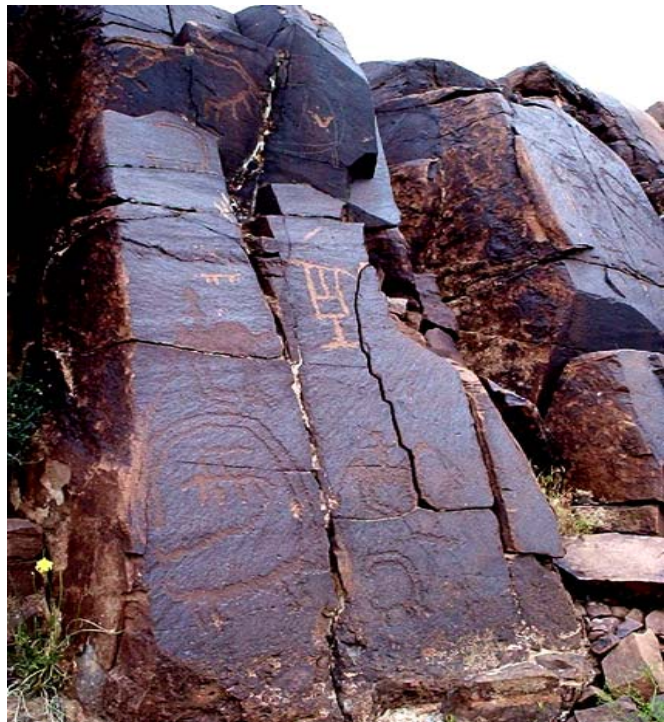


Mesolithic, ~8,000 years



Acheulian, ~200,000 years

Central India, Bhopal region, Madhya Pradesh



Qom region, Iran





**Al 'Usayla, central Saudi Arabia**



**Yatib, Arabia**



**Hima, Najran region, Arabia**





**Acacus region, Libyan Sahara**



**Tahilahi, Sahara**



**Chariot, Tassili, Algeria**





**Horatio Rockshelter, South Africa**

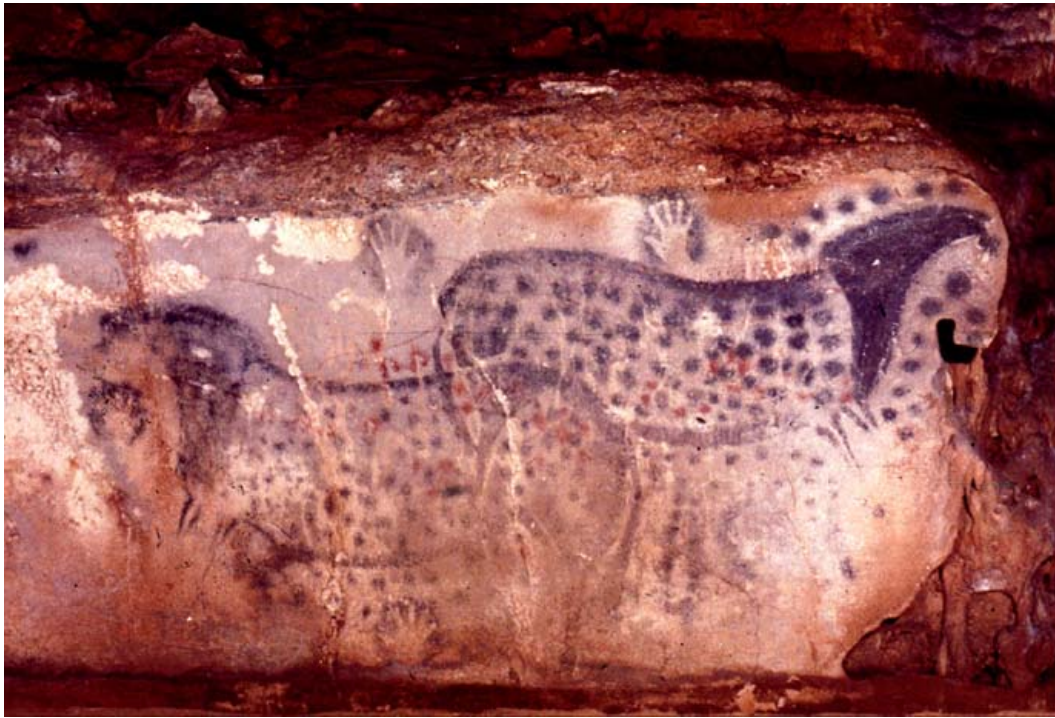


**Tandjiesberg, South Africa**



**Penascosa, Portugal**





CAVE ART



Lascaux, France



Lascaux, France





**Baume Latrone, France, probably Aurignacian, >30,000 years BP**

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**Chauvet Cave, France Aurignacian 32,000 years BP**

