

Lesson Three: Prehistory and Pictographs

Definitions

<i>Prehistory</i>	the period and study of human evolution antedating written history
<i>The Stone Age</i>	the oldest period in which human beings are known to have existed and in which they made and used stone tools
<i>The Bronze Age</i>	a period of time that began between 4000 and 3000 B.C. in which people used bronze to make weapons and tools
<i>The Iron Age</i>	a period of time between about 3000 B.C. and 1000 B.C. in which people used iron to make weapons and tools
<i>Artifacts</i>	objects (such as weapons, tools, ornaments, receptacles...etc) showing human workmanship or modification as distinguished from a natural object
<i>Pictograph</i>	(also called pictogram) an ancient or prehistoric drawing, painting, or carving on a rock wall symbolizing a word or a phrase
<i>Primitive</i>	of or relating to the earliest age or period
<i>Cupule</i>	a cup-shaped structure made into rock walls by prehistoric people through repeated percussion blows
<i>Finger Fluting</i>	lines left by prehistoric people's fingers on surfaces

Visual Representations

The Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages

Here is a table breaking down prehistory into the three ages:

TABLE 1: Breakdown of prehistory, based on the original three age system

Original Three Ages	Subdivisions	Transitional Phases	Notes on Further Subdivisions, etc
STONE AGE	OLD STONE AGE (PALAEOLITHIC)	LOWER PALAEOLITHIC	Cultures often extending over huge areas, with comparatively little local variation. The main cultures are usually divisible into broad stages to some extent.
		MIDDLE PALAEOLITHIC	Cultures extending over wide areas, with some local variations, and internally divisible into stages almost everywhere.
		UPPER (OR ADVANCED) PALAEOLITHIC	The cultural sequence varies according to area. Some cultures occur over wide areas; others are purely local. Most have well-defined stages, sometimes numerous.
		EPI-PALAEOLITHIC	Not a valid phase everywhere: various cultures locally recognisable, and occasionally forming a short sequence.
	MIDDLE STONE AGE (MESOLITHIC)		Local cultures and culture-sequences, making up a period of very variable duration and importance according to geographical position.
		PRE-POTTERY OR 'ACERAMIC' NEOLITHIC	A phase of variable duration, only locally recognisable and only occasionally subdivisible.
NEW STONE AGE (NEOLITHIC)		'Early', 'Middle' and 'Late', or 'Primary' and 'Secondary' phases have been distinguished in some areas, but are not synchronous between different territories. Local cultures differ widely, and local chronology depends on the spread and development of the first farming cultures.	
	'COPPER AGE' (CHALCOLITHIC)	A locally recognisable phase of variable duration and importance, sometimes subdivisible, preceding in some areas the introduction of bronze working.	
BRONZE AGE	'Early', 'Middle' and 'Late' phases are encountered in certain areas, but such terms no longer have much validity as general subdivisions of the Bronze Age. Where they are used, they are usually defined on grounds of the technology and typology of the bronze implements. Local cultures occur, and their names are also sometimes loosely used as subdivisions of the Bronze Age in their own areas. Chronology of the inception and development of the Bronze Age is locally much influenced by the very variable extent and directness of contacts between the barbarian and civilised peoples.		
IRON AGE (Pre-Roman)	As with the Bronze Age, there are no general synchronised 'Early', 'Middle' and 'Late' Iron Age phases, although such terms as 'Early Iron Age' or 'Late Pre-Roman Iron Age' are sometimes used in specific areas for specific purposes. The dating of the first spread of iron-working varies considerably between areas according to their geographical position and relations with the higher cultures, while the expansion of the Roman Empire brings the Iron Age in some areas to a premature end. The spread of the major Iron Age cultures of Hallstatt and La Tène over much of Europe offers the best means of establishing local sequences and phases, but is not directly effective everywhere.		

Artifacts

Here are some artifacts examples:



Pictograph

Here is an example of a pictograph can be:



The picture above represents a cave painting (the most recognizable type of pictographs); however, there are many other types of pictographs; for instance:

Cupules



Finger Fluting



Text

Prehistory is the study of the era that precedes written history. It follows a three age system which encompasses the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age. How prehistorians go about studying prehistory is first, by finding, identifying, and explaining the solid and visible traces left by the prehistoric man. Said traces include structures, living sites, burial places, and artifacts. Second, is by studying the natural background to prehistoric human existence. This entails the study of climate changes and their effects on animal populations and on the relative distribution of land. If history's gaps are filled by making deductions of facts, then

prehistory's gaps are filled by tracing the story of human development backwards in time. Prehistory is characterized by having flexible time limits, being stretched over immense periods of time, and being spread out like a jigsaw puzzle. One aspect of prehistory that helps put the jigsaw puzzle together is pictographs.

Pictographs are images, signs, or symbols drawn on rock walls in order to express some idea or information. Pictographs can be either drawn and painted on rocks, and we call them 'petrograms', or cut and carved into rock surfaces, and we call them 'petroglyphs'. Both petroglyphs and petrograms can be referred to as rock art as both of them take rocks for canvases. To make this kind of art, natural pigments are created from a mixture of minerals and plants which is then applied using fingers or primitive brushes. Pictographs can be classified according to the type of drawing. They can be abstract symbols such cupules, cruciforms, or finger flutings; hand stencils in which handprints or palm-prints are left on surfaces; rock engravings which are pictures drawn by incising lines on rock surfaces; and lastly cave paintings which are pictures painted on rock walls using pigments as colours. These four types can be further divided into basic pictographs and complex pictographs with the basic ones being made by only one unit, and the complex ones being made by assembling or fusing basic units together. Pictographs are essential in the study of prehistory because they provide valuable insight into the social and spiritual lives of prehistoric peoples by revealing their relationships with the natural world and each other.

Translations

Words

- *The Stone Age* → العصر الحجري
- *The Bronze Age* → العصر البرونزي
- *The Iron Age* → العصر الحديدي
- *finding* → العثور
- *identifying* → التعرف
- *structures* → بنايات
- *living sites* → منازل
- *burial places* → مقابر
- *flexible time limits* → حدود زمنية مرنة
- *being stretched over immense periods of time* → تمتد على مدى فترات زمنية جد طويلة
- *drawn and painted* → مرسومة
- *cut and carved* → منقوشة
- *canvases* → لوحات
- *brush* → فرشاة (للرسم)
- *abstract symbols* → رموز تجريدية
- *hand stencils* → رسومات أخذ الأيدي كنموذج تتبعه
- *rock engravings* → نقوش صخرية
- *cave paintings* → رسومات في الكهوف
- *assembling* → تركيب

- *artifacts* → قطع أثرية
- *distribution of land* → التغيرات الطبوغرافية
- *tracing the story of human development backwards in time* → تتبع تطور قصة البشرية إلى الوراء في الزمن
- *natural pigments* → أصبغة طبيعية
- *minerals* → مواد معدنية
- *fusing* → دمج
- *the social life* → الحياة الاجتماعية
- *the spiritual life* → الحياة الروحية

Paragraphs

عصر ما قبل التاريخ هو فترة و دراسة العصر الذي يسبق التاريخ المكتوب. يتبع هذا العصر نظام الحقبات الثلاث الذي يشمل العصر الحجري، العصر البرونزي، والعصر الحديدي. لدراسة عصر ما قبل التاريخ، يقوم الأورخون أولاً بالعثور على، و تحديد، و تفسير الآثار الصلبة والمرئية التي تركها إنسان ما قبل التاريخ. تشمل هذه الآثار البنايات و المنازل و المقابر و القطع الأثرية. ثانياً، يقوم الأورخون بدراسة الخلفية الطبيعية للوجود الإنساني في عصور ما قبل التاريخ، ويستلزم ذلك دراسة التغيرات المناخية و تأثيراتها على الحيوانات وعلى التغيرات الطبوغرافية. يتم سد فجوات التاريخ من خلال استنتاج الحقائق، لكن فجوات ما قبل التاريخ يتم ملؤها من خلال تتبع تطور قصة البشرية إلى الوراء في الزمن . يتميز عصر ما قبل التاريخ بوجود حدود زمنية مرنة، وامتداد فترات زمنية على نطاق جد واسع، و بانتشاره عبر الأرض كاللغز الذي يجب جمع قطعه معا. أحد جوانب عصور ما قبل التاريخ التي تساعد في تجميع قطع اللغز معا .هي الرسومات الصخرية

الرسومات الصخرية هي صور أو علامات أو رموز مرسومة على الجدران الصخرية للتعبير عن فكرة أو معلومة ما. في حال كونها مرسومة على الصخور، نطلق عليها اسم "البتروجرامات" و في حالة كونها منحوتة على الأسطح الصخرية، نطلق عليها اسم الصخرية "البتروغليفات". يمكن الإشارة إلى كل من "البتروجرامات" و "البتروغليفات" على أنها فن صخري لأن كلاهما يستعملان الصخور كلوحات قماشية. لصنع هذا النوع من الفن، يتم إنشاء أصبغة طبيعية من خليط من المواد المعدنية والنباتات والتي يتم تطبيقها بعد ذلك باستخدام الأصابع أو الفرش البدائية. يمكن تصنيف الرسومات الصخرية حسب نوع الرسم فقد تكون رموزاً مجردة مثل الفجوات و إشارة + و خطوط الأصابع؛ نماذج يدوية كبصمات اليد أو بصمات الكف؛ نقوش صخرية وهي عبارة عن نقوش محفورة على الأسطح الصخرية؛ وأخيراً لوحات الكهف وهي صور مرسومة على الجدران الصخرية باستخدام الأصباغ الطبيعية كألوان. يمكن تقسيم هذه الأنواع الأربعة أيضاً إلى صور توضيحية بسيطة وصور توضيحية معقدة، حيث يتم صنع الصور البسيطة بواسطة وحدة واحدة فقط، ويتم صنع الصور المعقدة عن طريق تركيب أو دمج الوحدات الأساسية معاً. الرسومات الصخرية ضرورية في دراسة عصور ما قبل التاريخ لأنها توفر رؤية قيمة للحياة الاجتماعية والروحية لشعوب ما قبل التاريخ من خلال الكشف عن علاقاتهم مع العالم الطبيعي ومع بعضهم البعض.

Activities

Read the text carefully and answer the following questions:

1. Which system do we use to divide the prehistoric era?
2. What is prehistory concerned with?
3. What are the characteristics of prehistory?
4. What are the different kinds of pictographs? Give examples.
5. Why are pictographs important?

Further Reading

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