

ROCK ART, DID YOU SAY?

ANNEX 1 | HOW CAN HISTORY BE DEFINED?

A few definitions of history

- Study of the past as it is described in written documents.
(Wikipedia)
- A chronological record of significant events (such as those affecting a nation or institution) often including an explanation of their causes.
(Merriam-Webster)
- Narration of the events which have happened among mankind, including an account of the rise and fall of nations, as well as of other great changes which have affected the political and social condition of the human race.
(John J. Anderson. 1876. A Manual of General History)
- Discipline that studies the chronological record of events (as affecting a nation or people), based on a critical examination of source materials and usually presenting an explanation of their causes. History is treated in a number of articles.
(Encyclopædia Britannica)

And prehistory?*

- Period of human activity between the use of the first stone tools c. 3.3 million years ago and the invention of writing systems, the earliest of which appeared c. 5,300 years ago.
(Wikipedia)
- The prehistoric period of human evolution.
(Merriam-Webster)
- Period before recorded events, known mainly through archaeological discoveries, study, research, etc.
(Dictionary.com)

*Note : Some individuals, including many Indigenous people, are against the use of the term prehistory. They argue that this term has a negative connotation implying that nothing occurred “prior to history.” Instead, they propose using the term paleo-history, i.e. “very ancient history”, from the Greek palaios, which means “ancient”. For an interesting, yet simple discussion about issues related to this definition, please see the “Protohistory” Wikipedia article.