

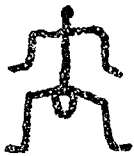


# Ki'i Pohaku

o Kaloko-Honokōhau



Before written language, humans recorded their history, traditions, and beliefs in a variety of ways: oral tradition, *pictographs* (painted images), and images pecked into rock called petroglyphs. *Ki'i pohaku* (petroglyphs) are created by using a dense stone tool to peck the image directly or by using a hammerstone to hit another stone tool.



These fragile images speak to us from the past; they can provide insight into the lifeway of a people: their society, traditions, beliefs, religion. Petroglyphs, as a permanent record, are a valuable resource for historians and archeologists to learn about past cultures.

Interpretation of petroglyphs is precarious. Although exact meanings may never be known, *kupuna* (elders), researchers, and oral histories have attempted to interpret some of them. They can be symbols, metaphors, depictions of everyday life or historic events, and even used for medicine and other rituals.

**DO NOT LEAVE THE BOARDWALK.**

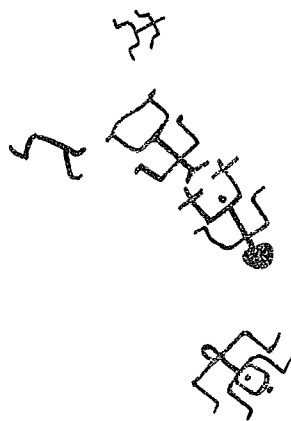
The petroglyphs are fragile and can be easily damaged.

You are standing in the 'ahupua'a (mountain-to-sea land division) of Honokōhau. People once intensively used this area. The ocean was easily accessed, its bounty harvested in varied and unique ways. Inland and upland *ohana* (family) grew crops. Food and other products were shared throughout the 'ahupua'a.

This lava field may have had many and multiple uses. Take in the area as a whole. Imagine yourself here hundreds of years ago, laboring at your craft on this hot, stark landscape. What was imperative to commemorate, communicate, or record, for your people and those to come?

## How to view

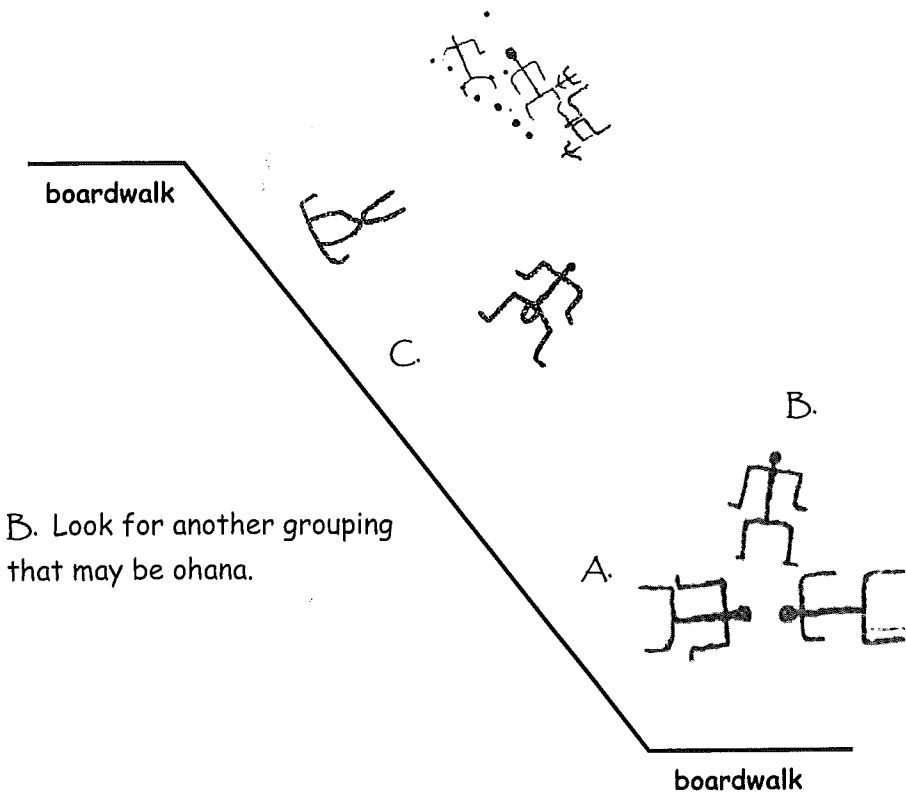
Petroglyphs are best viewed in early morning and late afternoon sun, when shadows illuminate them. They are best viewed from a distance: walk up and down the boardwalk to find the most favorable viewpoint.



## Stop 1.

### The Importance of Ohana

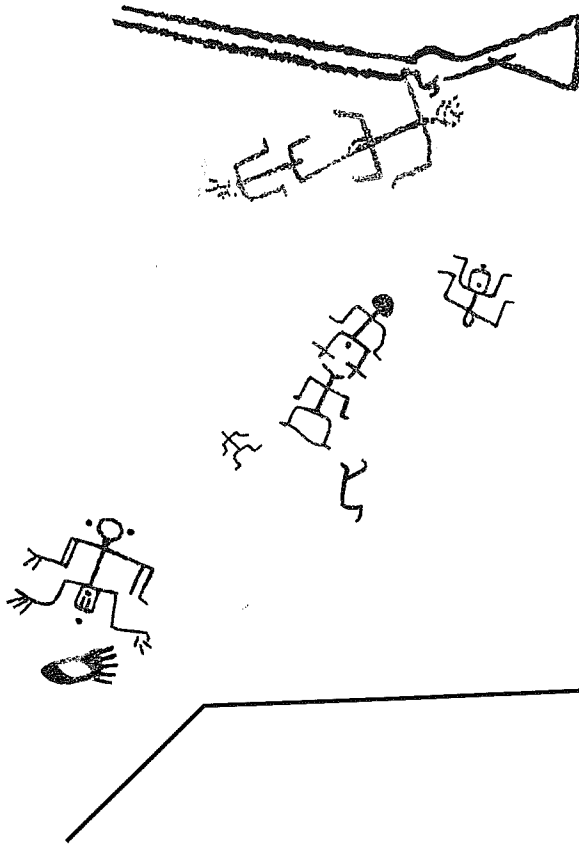
A. There seems to be sensitivity to the placement of each individual; perhaps these three images were made at the same time by the same artisan. Petroglyphs are often important in relation to each other and to the landscape as a whole, a piece of a larger a *mo'olelo* (story.) Which image came first? Why are two placed head to head? Perhaps images record a meeting or event that took place in the area. Clusters of figures you see like this might indicate *ohana* (family).



B. Look for another grouping that may be ohana.

C. Look for the female image. Of the thousands of petroglyphs in Hawaii, less than 20 % show any indication of gender; at the sites here at Kaloko Honokōhau National Historical Park, 40 % of recorded figures do. Why was it important to distinguish gender here?

When gender was indicated, it was probably crucial to the meaning the petroglyph maker had in mind. Why are there so many gendered images here? What does the unusually high number of female forms mean? Is this a clue to some change in their lives?

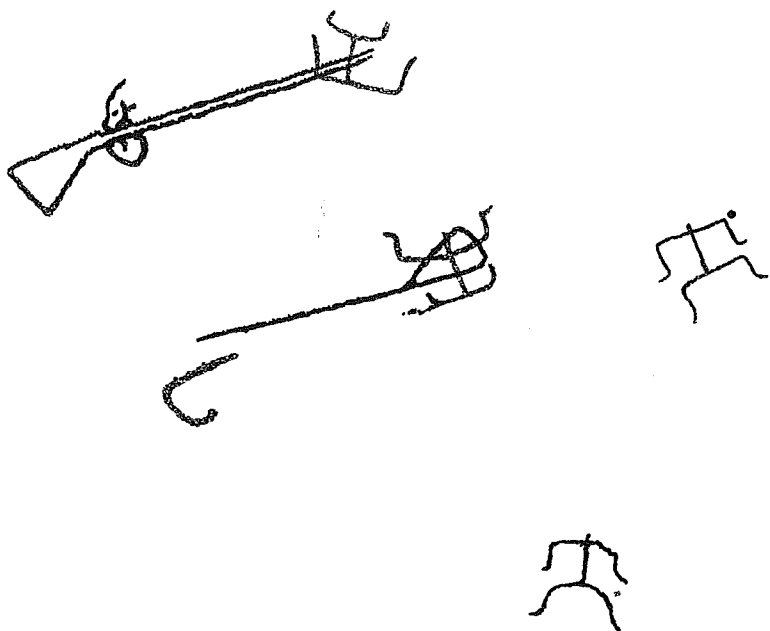


Stop 2.

## A Balance of Energy

Perhaps the answer lies in the significance female gods had in ancient Hawaiian beliefs and religion. There were two great ancestral gods of heaven and earth: *Ku* (a male war god), and *Hina* (a female god); they brought balance to the world.

View this scene in front of you as a composition. There are a few muskets, depictions of western power, which were introduced to Hawai'i by Europeans in the 1700s. Each musket has what appear to be male figures attached to it. Generally, guns symbolize power, status, aggression, a means of defense, or war.



2  
dwalk

It has been suggested that a significant battle may have occurred at Honokōhau or that the area was used as a warrior training ground. Possibly war was taking its toll on the people. Researchers postulate that perhaps male and female energy was out of balance here. The female images might have been created to re-establish the duality of Ku and Hina and bring balance into this area that was dominated by aggression and war.



Look for the "crouching" form; a profile figure is quite unique; it appears to be worshipful or submissive, and faces the female and two connected "male figures." What story might this portray? Perhaps the upright figure it faces is an *ali'i* (chief.)

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Stop 3.

### Writing in Stone

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, missionaries introduced Christianity to Hawai'i, along with the English alphabet; Hawaiian beliefs and values were changing. How might this affect petroglyph making, of recording events and information in stone? How does meaning of a written word differ from an image in conveying meaning?

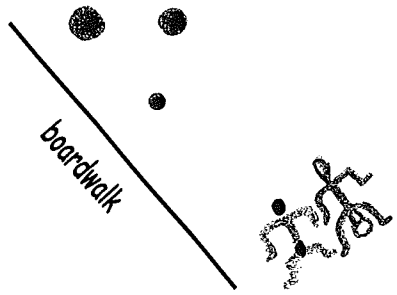
Stop 4.

### The Importance of Poho

*Poho* (circular depressions pecked into stone) were created to benefit and/or commemorate the birth and/or life of an individual. It is widely accepted that natal *piko*, (a baby's umbilical stump,) were ritually placed into poho, crevices, holes, trees, and special places along the shore. Ritual activity probably accompanied prayer for those who were unable to pray for themselves, such as the newborn and the deceased.

We can only speculate why poho are incorporated into this pair of figures (the one on the right may be a female.)

Much larger and deeper *poho* had functional uses, such as for processing food products, fishing bait, and plant materials



Look behind you for the large rock pit; this might have been a food processing area.

## Stop 5.

### An Evolution in Style

Petroglyph styles evolved through time. Formed (triangular) bodies are thought to represent a more recent style of rock art, although the linear style continued to be made. This newer style, along with musket images, indicates that this site was still in use through the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

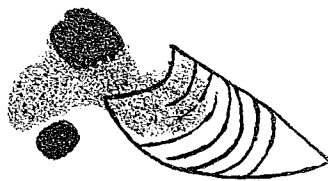


### A Changing Lifeway

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the population of Hawaii culture went through astounding changes in a very short time: Christianity was introduced; the *kapu* system (religious and social rule) was abolished; the system of land ownership changed; and thousands of Hawaiians died from introduced foreign diseases. It is hard to know if the art of petroglyph making continued much past this time, however, the people continued to tell their story through oral tradition and the written word.

## Stop 6.

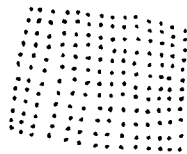
### A Seafaring People



Polynesians were exceptional navigators who risked all and traveled thousands of miles over open ocean. This "crab claw" *pe'a* (sail) might represent the Hawaiians connection with and dependence on the ocean for survival; it might symbolize transportation, or one significant journey. Western ships and goods began to arrive in the late 1770s; by 1800 the crab claw sail design was largely replaced by European spritsails and ship images.

## Stop 7.

# A Highly Advanced Culture



*Papamu* (the checkerboard of small holes) are documented as a game board for *konane*, (similar to checkers,) and for divination. *Kupuna* tell us that *papamu* also may have been used as calendars or abacus, strategic war planning, medical instruction and diagnosis, charting, or teaching constellations and navigation.

## Of What Value?

Honokōhau holds some of the largest concentrations of petroglyphs on the Kona coast. Some of the images in this area are not found anywhere else in Hawai'i.

## Fragile Symbols of the Past

Some petroglyphs in Hawai'i have been lost to natural erosion and lava flows. Some sites have been battered by horses, goats and pigs. Today some petroglyph sites in Hawaii are being bulldozed and lost to development. Will this site still be here in 100 years? 500 years? How would you feel if this field was vandalized or lost? What responsibility do we have to help protect this resource for future generations?

*E uhi ana ka wa i hala i na mea i hala*

Passing time obscures the past

*‘Ōlelo Nōcau: Pukui 2001*

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Produced by Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historical Park  
Printed by the Hawaii Natural History Association

Based on the report "Rock Art Drawings" by Ed and Diane Stasack.  
Mahalo for your recording, research, writing, inspiration, enthusiasm, and passion for the petroglyph sites of Hawai'i.