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Archaeology and Petroglyphs of Dampier (Western Australia) an Archaeological Investigation of Skew Valley and Gum Tree Valley

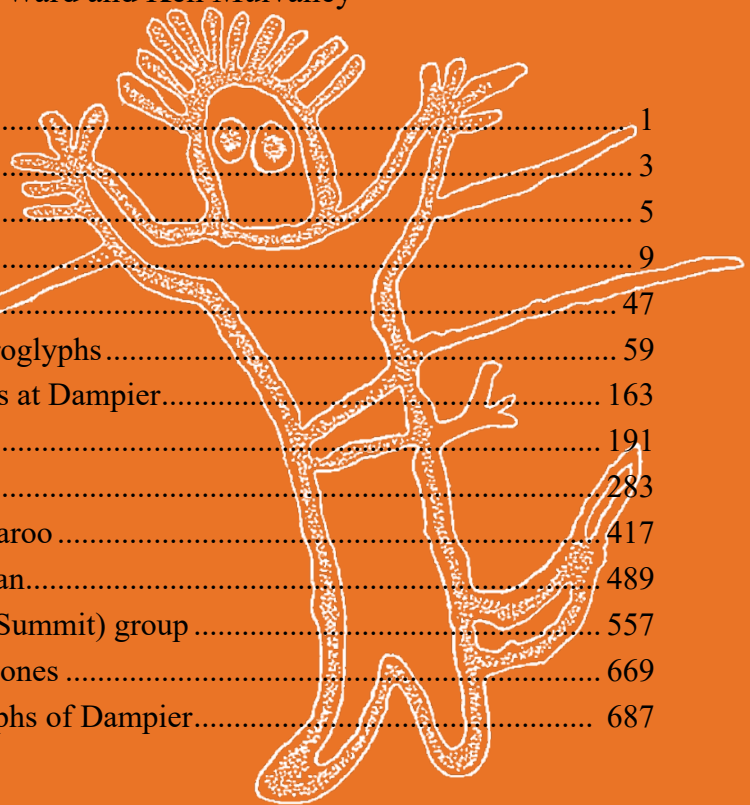
by

Michel Lorblanchet

edited by

Graeme K. Ward and Ken Mulvaney

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Author

Michel Lorblanchet joined the *Centre national de la recherche scientifique* (CNRS, France) in 1969 to study the Palaeolithic rock art of France. After graduating in 1972 from Université Sorbonne (Paris) with a doctorate in Prehistory, he was employed from 1974 to 1977 at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies to conduct research into indigenous Australian rock art. From his base in Canberra, he participated in projects in Far North Queensland and in western Victoria. Between 1975 and 1976, he conducted the fieldwork at Dampier, Western Australia, on which this monograph is based, and made two further fieldtrips there in 1983 and 1984. He returned to France in 1977 to the *Centre de Préhistoire du Pech Merle* (Cabrerets). Lorblanchet was appointed *Directeur de recherches au CNRS* in 1995; he retired in 1999 and lives near Saint Sozy in the Lot Valley where he continues to research and publish about rock art. He is the author of many papers and several books on European Palaeolithic art (some are listed in the editors' introduction) as well as reports and this monograph on his Australian researches.

Volume Editors

Graeme K. Ward has conducted archaeological and ethno-archaeological fieldwork in the island Pacific and Australia. He gained his doctorate from The Australian National University and was employed at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies where he was involved with administration of research programs including the national Rock Art Protection Program. Subsequently, as Research Fellow and Senior Research Fellow at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Studies he undertook research into Indigenous cultural landscapes in northern Australia with traditional knowledge-holders of cultural heritage places. He is the author of various research papers, of three monographs and editor of many collections of archaeological papers; he served as the editor of the Institute's journal, *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, for several years. Currently he is a visitor at the Department of Archaeology and Natural History, School of Culture, History and Language, College of Asia and the Pacific, of The Australian National University.

Ken Mulvaney has lived and worked for the past ten years on the Burrup Peninsula, where he is the Principal Advisor Cultural Heritage for Rio Tinto Iron Ore. Prior to this, Ken spent many years in the Northern Territory working with Aboriginal traditional owners documenting their cultural heritage places and land affiliations. He first came to the Burrup in 1980 when employed by the Western Australian Museum as member of a team documenting archaeological sites in areas destined for construction of a petrochemical processing plant. His doctorate from the University of New England is the first such study on the prehistory of the Dampier Archipelago. He is author of many articles on rock art and Aboriginal culture, and is currently affiliated with the Centre for Rock Art Research and Management, University of Western Australia.

Petroglyphs of Dampier—Foreword

JOHN MULVANEY

John Mulvaney AO CMG FAHA (1925–2016),
 founding professor of the School of Archaeology and Anthropology,
 The Australian National University, Australia

MULVANEY, D. JOHN. 2018. Petroglyphs of Dampier—foreword. In *Archaeology and Petroglyphs of Dampier (Western Australia), an Archaeological Investigation of Skew Valley and Gum Tree Valley*, ed. Graeme K. Ward and Ken Mulvaney, pp. 1–2. *Technical Reports of the Australian Museum, Online* 27, pp. 1–690.
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When Michel Lorblanchet began his substantive research at the Pilbara's (then) Dampier Island, there were few professional rock art scholars in Australia. They were supported by a few enthusiastic private researchers, most of whom attended the memorable conference convened in 1974 by the imaginative, newly appointed Principal of the (then) Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Peter Ucko. This comprehensive and extended meeting reviewed the state of knowledge in various Aboriginal studies disciplines and suggested goals for future research within Aboriginal Australia. Several seminal publications resulted, most relevantly, the art volume edited by Ucko. These publications set Aboriginal studies within a global perspective and illuminated the potential for research.

Michel Lorblanchet, an authority on European Palaeolithic cave art, was unable to take up his Institute appointment in time to attend the 1974 meeting because of commitments in France, but had sent his paper on Palaeolithic art and this was included in the edited conference proceedings (Ucko, 1977). During his employment as an Institute Research Consultant he initiated fieldwork at Dampier, spending the large part of one year there (1974–1976), and again in 1983. The definitive report of that research is presented in this volume.

Documented interest in the archaeology of the Dampier Archipelago began in the 1960s when local workers reported on magnificent cultural remains they found there. In 1974 Lorblanchet, bringing his professional training to bear, set about applying recording techniques and analytical processes to understand the prehistory of two valleys within the Dampier art complex. Among his innovations were a critical eye for detail, a systematic approach to recording and identification of the value of recording colour contrast (how sharply does a petroglyph visually stand out from its support).

Supported by photography and use of the Mastersix cell, this provided empirical data on the re-marking of specific petroglyphs.

This report identifies features concerning the relationship between the cultural landscape and the rock art that remain as the benchmark for later work within the Dampier Archipelago. It constitutes the only study which has made a major record of all cultural material present on the block slopes, not just of the petroglyphs. It provides the data and analytical evidence for patterns in the rock art that Lorblanchet had only summarized in previously articles, and presents a specific study of the treatment of motifs, not just a bland report listing subject numbers and position. It indicates that children were involved in production, and documents evidence of the re-marking of images, of the renovation over time of the subject.

This book brings together the work undertaken by a scholar who visited Australia to learn, just as much as to share his own knowledge. Experiences and skills developed here in Australia, not least his time with Aboriginal people, he took back to France and applied to understanding the Palaeolithic cave art of his own country. It emphasises the cross-fertilization that can happen when different approaches to rock art research are implemented, and is an excellent example of on-going collaboration between French and Australian scholarship in this area.

For more than 30 years his documentation of Skew Valley and Gum Tree Valley has lain in the archives of AIATSIS. Too often the works carried out by scholars remain inaccessible to a wider public. It is commendable that Lorblanchet, in collaboration with Ken Mulvaney and Graeme Ward, have completed this manuscript and images, to combine into a lavishly illustrated volume.

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