

Comparisons Between the Six Zones Studied in Skew Valley and Gum Tree Valley

MICHEL LORBLANCHET

Directeur de Recherches au CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, retired 1999),
Centre de Préhistoire du Pech Merle, Cabrerets, France, and, during the studies reported here:
Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, Australia (1974–1977)

LORBLANCHET, MICHEL. 2018. Comparisons between the six zones studied in Skew Valley and Gum Tree Valley. 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, chapter 8, pp. 669–686. *Technical Reports of the Australian Museum, Online* 27, pp. 1–690. <https://doi.org/10.3853/j.1835-4211.27.2018.1696>

Typological categories of the Skew Valley and Gum Tree Valley petroglyphs

In the introductory chapter, I provided definitions of the typological categories of subjects that I recorded in Skew valley and Gum Tree Valley. (The summary of types of motifs is repeated in this chapter as Fig. 8.1).

In the subsequent chapters, I studied in detail the sampling zones delineated as Skew Valley, Gum Tree Valley Spirit Group (GTVS), Eagle Group (GTVE), Kangaroo Group (GTVK), Woman Group (GTVW), Top Group (GTVT), and the small ‘GTVT Village’. These sample zones are the areas of higher density of petroglyphs observed in the two valleys. They are located in different topographical places: near the sea, close to the middens, at the entrance of a valley, on top of hills commanding a view of the coast and the valley, at the top of a valley ... all these areas can be considered as ‘sites’.

It is time now to compare them in order to show their differences and their similarities, to understand clearly the use of the environment by the first inhabitants of this region and its evolution through time.¹

For each test zone a cumulative graph was established with the database. The individual site data were then combined and are presented here in Table 8.1 and the graph (Fig. 8.2) to provide information that details, develops and summarizes the multiple observations made separately during the studies of these different ‘groups’. (cf. discussion at Chapter 1: *Typology of carved motifs*.)

The graphs for each grouping show:

- GTVT (420 petroglyphs, includes two from the nearby ‘GTVT Village’) stands isolated with an almost vertical step for punctuations (dots) and a slope for geometrical forms, especially circles (category 33), arcs (36) and lines (40);
- GTVK (284 petroglyphs) and GTVW (397) are close together with two important categories: ‘eggs’ (29) and ‘kangaroo tracks’ and ‘bird prints’ (30, 31); and
- GTVS (381 petroglyphs), GTVE (591) and SKV (353) are grouped together and demonstrate the same gentle slope with no outstanding peak except for a sharp one to the right for the ‘other motif’ (47), especially in the Eagle Group (GTVE).

This graph allows an immediate visual comparison between the six different sites of Skew Valley and Gum Tree Valley. The graph of each site presents a stair shape that reflects the proportions of its different motifs. The lower series shows that the sites with middens (SKV, GTVE, GTVS) resemble each other with a gentle slope (with many ‘human’ and ‘animal’ motifs), whereas the sites far from the coast and without midden (GTVW, GTVK, GTVT) are steeper with greater proportions of ‘tracks’ and geometric forms.

¹ This chapter draws upon an earlier paper (Lorblanchet, 1992).