

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5:1 INTRODUCTION

Inference from, and interpretation of prehistoric Aboriginal rock art in terms of ethnographic parallels is tempting especially in the Australian context. In this country a considerable proportion of the known body of rock art is still in an ethnographically recent stage where techniques can be readily demonstrated and motifs easily identified and perhaps understood by some members of local Aboriginal social groups.

The dangers and limitations inherent in cross-cultural identification and interpretation has been ably demonstrated by MacIntosh.¹ His interpretation of the Beswick Creek and Tandanjai Cave sites in Arnhem Land was later shown to be substantially incorrect when compared with the information provided by the local initiated 'owners' of the sites. He had even failed to correctly identify a major proportion of the figurative art. As a result MacIntosh warns against "The Dangers inherent in interpretations based on comparison with assumptive likeness in parietal art elsewhere, rather than on direct information from Aboriginal senior initiates in the rituals of the region,".² He goes on to point out that among members of a social group that is still practising rock art there are differing

1. MacIntosh, N.W.G., 1974: Beswick Creek Cave Two Decades Later: A Reappraisal.

2. *Ibid.* p.2.

levels of understanding and interpretative ability concerning the motifs depicted.

This point is taken further by Maddock³ who recorded the meaning, mythology and ritual content of the art at the Bolungbim site also in Arnhem Land as it is reflected in the present social context of the clan which owns the site. He emphasises the fact that the contemporary interpretation may not reflect that of the original artist.

In the first edition of his survey of Australian prehistory Mulvaney stated with reference to rock art that "comment concerning motivation and meaning is beyond the scope of normal archaeological activities".⁴ In the second edition he qualifies this statement, referring to his concern "that superficial ethnographic observations, readily available in Australian literature, could condition a pre-historian in search of an explanation."⁵ He cautions those who would jump from the ethnographic present to the past without specialist advice.

Maynard in a recent paper which lays emphasis on the archaeological approach to the study of prehistoric rock art indicates that if a qualified Aboriginal informant is not available to the European recorder "he is deluded if he believes that he can do anything about the meaning of a figure except speculate on it."⁶ She believes that standard archaeological techniques such as typological and distributional studies, relative and absolute dating are the only way to derive cultural information from the rock art in these

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3. Maddock, K., 1970: *Anthropological Forum*, Vol. 2, pp. 444-463.
 4. Mulvaney, D.J., 1969: *The Prehistory of Australia*, p.174
 5. Mulvaney, D.J., 1975: *The Prehistory of Australia*, p.275.
 6. Maynard, Lesley, 1974b: *The Archaeology of Australian Aboriginal Art*, p.7.

circumstances.

The theoretical basis for the study of prehistoric rock art is essentially Eurocentric, originating as it does in the study of the Upper Palaeolithic art of the Franco-Cantabrian region of western Europe. A variety of theories which seek to explain the meaning of this art body have been propounded since its first discovery in the late nineteenth century. Ethnographic parallels were used by students of Franco-Cantabrian Palaeolithic cave art to explain that art in terms of totemism, sympathetic, hunting and fertility magic. In this respect it is perhaps ironical that the "Search for a variety of possible reasons behind Palaeolithic parietal art on the basis of ethnographic parallels must. . . be based almost entirely on the Australian aboriginal material."⁷ It is a further irony "that in many cases where Australian aboriginal rock art is 'archaeological' material . . . interpretations have followed much the same lines as those adopted for Palaeolithic parietal art."⁸

Recent scholars of European Palaeolithic art such as Leroi-Gourhan⁹ have rejected the use of ethnographic parallels and concentrated on the art itself - its content and context. Ucko and Rosenfeld while applauding this approach have argued against a complete rejection of the ethnographic evidence. They point out that:

First, it is necessary to remember that one draws upon ethnographic parallels simply to avoid over-emphasis of one's own experience based on one's own cultural conventions. Second, the ethnographic parallels cannot produce simple answers but can only be used to demonstrate the range of possible factors underlying human activities. 10

7. Ucko, P. & Rosenfeld, Andree, 1967: *Palaeolithic Cave Art*, p.159-60.

8. *Ibid.* p.162.

9. Leroi-Gourhan, A., 1968: *The Art of Prehistoric Man in Western Europe*.

10. Ucko, P. & Andree Rosenfeld, 1967: *Ibid.* p.153.

The greater the range of variety of ethnographic analogies the greater the possibility of arriving at "a convincing interpretation of an archaeological fact."¹¹

Despite more careful analytical studies European rock art theory is still substantially concerned with the search for meaning. In the Carnarvon Range region where direct ethnographic evidence for art is non-existent any search for meaning at this stage could be regarded as futile. Certain general comments however can perhaps be made on the basis of the accumulated data from the Australian ethnographic literature.

5:2 THE SITE AND ITS ASSOCIATIONS

Mulvaney indicates that "The site itself must be comprehended as frequently more meaningful than the art which covered it."¹² The Aborigine who lives in close alliance with his land and the natural environment which surrounds him might see natural phenomena such as a cliff face or a rock as possessing totemic or mythological significance. The art depicted there might then be considered simply as a connecting link between the artist and the sacred theme or spirit with which the site is imbued. In some parts of Australia the art at such sites was ceremonially retouched from time to time, providing a tangible link and a continuity between generations and reinforcing the underlying significance of the site.

The very nature of the stencils and engravings, the dominant techniques in the Carnarvon region, preclude their being retouched in this manner. However, it is possible that the superimposition of the same motif or even the multiplicity of appearance of the same motif

11. *Ibid.* p.157.

12. Mulvaney, D.J., 1975: *Ibid.* p.261.

may fulfil a similar purpose.

With the importance of the site kept in mind the investigator should look for such evidence as the repetition or repeated combination of certain motifs as well as the specific location of these motifs to deduce the possible significance of that particular site. Concurrently in the context of a large number of sites, significant similarities or differences of association or uniqueness of appearance should be studied.

An examination of the sites under review in these terms, in conjunction with the evidence provided by the presence or absence of additional archaeological features, indicates that decorated art sites probably fulfilled a variety of purposes. Basically three groups are present; those associated with habitation or factory sites, those associated with sepulchral places and lastly those with no other archaeological features except for their art content.

(i) Habitation sites: All motif groups and the three major techniques practised were present at the largest site, the 'Art Gallery' (M-HE/1) and eight motif groups and four techniques at the next largest 'Cathedral Cave' (M-HE/3). The former does not appear to have been utilized as a major camp site, while the latter has extensive evidence of habitation. This difference is perhaps reflected in the art census frequencies; the ubiquitous human features group forms less than one quarter of the art at the former and over half of the latter. Again at the 'Art Gallery' the characteristic cup and ring motif is relatively important, while being present only in small numbers at the 'Cathedral Cave'. However, both sites share a relatively great frequency of the animal features motif. This group is completely absent at the other major habitation site (M-HE/31) which otherwise shares most of the features at M-HE/1 and 3. No consistent

patterns are apparent at the four factory sites, two (M-HE/7E and 9) are composed entirely of stencilled human features. One (M-HE/7A) is dominated by this motif group but in association with linear and geometric engravings. Engravings, which include the cup and ring and animal features motif groups, outnumber stencils at the last of the factory sites (M-HE/7B).

(ii) Sepulchral sites: There are no consistent patterns of technique or motif in the art represented at the alleged sepulchral sites (see p.216). But one factor has to be taken into account when dealing with the function of sites in this region. That is the wholesale removal of bark cylinder coffins from the region in general and the National Park in particular. At least two dozen cylinders (either complete or without skeletons) are known to be in private collections and small museums in central Queensland alone, others are known to have been burnt by landowners. A bark cylinder coffin in good condition can be easily removed leaving no trace of its former presence. Elsewhere in the central highlands region these coffins have been found in direct association with rock art of all techniques although stencils and paintings are the most common.¹³ In addition a number of skeletons without coffins are known in association with art and there are also cases of cylinder coffins and skeletons not associated directly with art, although art sites usually exist in the immediate vicinity. The known distribution of these bark cylinder interments is consistent with the distribution of the type of rock art presented here.

13. Personal observations, see also Meston's comment above p.19.

(iii) Sites with no additional archaeological features:

These are the only sites which show any consistency of features - an overwhelming preference for the depiction of stencilled human features. However, in terms of the last paragraph, many of these sites could well have originally been associated with burials.

5:3 MOTIFS

Carnarvon rock art can be considered as prehistoric, therefore the meaning of both the total art body and its individual motifs as conceived by the original artists is lost. To facilitate recording procedures descriptive categories have to be established for both figurative and non-figurative motifs. As defined they are valid for recording purposes only.

With figurative motifs the recognition of a shape as an emu track or as a hand is valid at this descriptive level. The futility of attempting to speculate on the equation of motif with symbol and the meaning of that symbol can be illustrated by the following examples. The shape or motif recorded in the census as an emu track could possibly be interpreted as follows:

- (a) an emu track
- (b) a teaching aid for young hunters
- (c) a symbol representing the animal, emu
- (d) a symbol representing the emu's mythological ancestor
- (e) a symbol representing a man of the emu totem
- (f) a symbol to provide for the perpetuation of the species
- (g) a symbol to aid the hunting of the emu.

In Carnarvon Gorge rock art emu tracks appear at six sites and form two-thirds of all motifs at one of these (M-HE/28). Even though the limited regional ethnographic evidence (not directly related to

the art) points to the emu as a species of special significance to men (see p.15) there is no reason to suggest any of the above speculations. The archaeological data simply points to the fact that the emu tracks at site M-HE/28 were a favoured motif that was selectively repeated many times in preference to the range of other motifs present at that site or at all other sites in the gorge.

Moore¹⁴ has shown that on ethnographic evidence there are at least ten possible meanings for hand stencils. These range from an individual sign to record a visit to a site, to those stencilled hands and weapons depicted at a sacred site to derive spiritual strength from ancestors. Hand and hand + forearm stencils appeared at all sites in Carnarvon Gorge and are one of the characteristic features of the rock art in this region. This universal association of hand stencils with all types of sites points to the first of Moore's categories: that the hand stencil is merely the individual signature of a person recording his visit to that site. But such stencils need not necessarily have only one motivation, those present at sepulchral sites may well be associated with mourning or death, as the single occurrence site M-HE/48 may demonstrate (Plate 64b). It is an archaeological fact that human features stencils were a universal factor present at all sites. We do not know why; but on the quantitative evidence we do know that if an Aborigine chose to add his mark to a site there was a 50% chance that he would stencil a human limb.

At this descriptive level Carnarvon Gorge rock art reflects a number of aspects of Aboriginal daily life and their knowledge of the environment in which they lived. The contemporary observer

14. Moore, D.R., 1974: The Hand Stencil as Symbol. pp.5-7.

can see from the variety of hand stencils present that both adults and children visited the sites. A suite of stencilled material culture objects gives some idea of the range of tools and weapons utilized by Aborigines of this region. Their knowledge of the tracks of the various species of animals which shared the local environment, and which they probably hunted, is indicated.

Other scholars have hypothesized meanings for a variety of non-figurative motifs that have been described by shape in the census. Clusters of solid rubbed ovals (Plate 43a) have been thought to represent a clutch of emu eggs¹⁵, painted grids (Plates 32-3) the zamia fruit¹⁶, and outline designs type 1-2 (Plate 41a-b) have been described as pubic aprons.¹⁷

The cup and ring motifs have been referred to by Goddard as representing "fertility",¹⁸ by Mulvaney as "apparent female symbols",¹⁹ and Maynard sees them as "designs which range from a simple pit enclosed by a circle to realistic three-dimensional sculptures of vulvas".²⁰ My subjective interpretation of this motif as a female design is based on its resemblance to "the ventral view of the human female external genitalia, the vulva."²¹ It is of interest to note that this appears to be a general European interpretation of this motif. A large coloured transparency showing a quantity of cup and ring motifs was removed from a display presented by the Archaeological Division, D.A.I.A. at the 1974 Royal National Association Exhibition (the Brisbane

15. Goddard, R.H., 1940/41: *Oceania*, vol.11, p.371.

16. *Ibid.* p.370.

17. McCarthy, F.D., in Mulvaney, D.J. ed., 1969: *Australian Archaeology: a Guide to Field Techniques*. p.61-2, fig. I,22.

18. Goddard, R.H., 1940/41: *Ibid.* p.371.

19. Mulvaney, D.J. & E.B. Joyce, 1965: *P.P.S.*, vol.31, p.206.

20. Maynard, Lesley, 1974b: *Ibid.* p.41.

21. Quinnell, M.C., 1974: *Schematization and Naturalism in the Rock Art of South Central Queensland*. p.5.

Annual Show). It was regarded by the authorities as being unsuitable for the public gaze.

5:4 SCHEMATIZATION AND NATURALISM IN MOTIFS

Edwards and Ucko have pointed out that the concepts of schematization and naturalism remain substantially undefined especially in relation to Australian Aboriginal rock art. They note that elsewhere in the world "schematization has been taken as a chronological marker".²²

When dealing with naturalism-schematization in an art body one has to assume that observer imposed descriptive labels may be correct. In this case the motif which looks like an emu track is an emu track, a hand stencil is a hand and a cup and ring is probably a vulva.

The motifs of the rock art in Carnarvon Gorge range from the non-figurative to the figurative. Much of the former can be classified as abstract while the latter together with the cup and ring can be seen as a range of naturalistic and schematized conceptions of any given motif. I take naturalism as it is traditionally defined as being art which is characterised by its close adherence to nature, that is, to the physical identity of the object being depicted. The degree of this adherence is of necessity governed by the technique and the medium of expression utilized.

The scope of the artist in Carnarvon Gorge has been limited by cultural and technical parameters. Some motif groups reflect a naturalistic or a schematized approach. Animal tracks in general,

22. Edwards, R. & Ucko, P., 1973: *Nature*, vol. 246, p.277.

because they are themselves negative impressions of original paws or feet in the sand, lend themselves to naturalistic reproduction in a similar fashion on the surface of rock shelter walls to such an extent that some engraved examples appear to be fossilized in sandstone. In general negative stencils can be viewed as naturalistic motifs in so far as they represent a two-dimensional facsimile of actual material objects.

The term schematization can be used to describe that process by which there is a conscious breakdown of the component parts of an original (either an actual imitation or an original concept) to a simplified design which retains its essential form and/or general outline. Other members of the same socio-cultural group as the artist should be able to recognize the motif for what it represents (at the descriptive and perhaps also the interpretative level). Perhaps the ultimate test for a schematized motif is its recognition at a descriptive level by a cross-cultural observer. I acknowledge stencils which are only mere outlines as being naturalistic rather than schematic, because there was no conscious process required other than technical proficiency to produce them. However, the stencilled emu tracks (Plate 23b) could be regarded as being schematized. For stencils specifically, schematization would refer to the deliberate arrangement of stencilled components to form a recognizable and meaningful motif showing the essential form of the subject intended although it may have no relation at all to the actual objects or parts thereof utilized.

Simplified engraved tracks of the animal features motif group can either be regarded as schematized forms of original animal tracks or as being derived from the naturalistic engraved motifs. There is no evidence of a gradual process of either schematization or naturalism.

Indeed there are examples of both forms among what appear to be the latest, less weathered designs. Some cup and ring motifs can be seen as naturalistic renditions of vulvas close to anatomical accuracy (Plate 29), but most seem schematic designs which show only the essential details of the naturalistic motifs (Plates 30-31a-b).

In Carnarvon Gorge rock art I see no continuum from naturalism through schematization to abstract or vice versa. Rather there are two forms, naturalism and schematization, both of which can relate directly to the subject; the latter in certain circumstances may derive from the former. Neither have a direct relationship with the abstract. Therefore no chronological assumptions can be based on the appearance of schematized motifs.

5:5 COMPOSITION

There is evidence that not all placement of motifs was random as there are a few examples where deliberate composition of motifs appears to have taken place. At the 'Art Gallery' there is the design of crossed hands + forearms (Plate 34b) and a number of groups where a right and a left macropodid track have been placed either side of a cup and ring (Plates 21a, 29b). In 'Cathedral Cave' a series of hand stencils and clubs have been arranged around a hole from which a burial cylinder was allegedly removed (Plate 50a). An arrangement of a tier of boomerangs flanked on either side by a vertical hand + forearm also appears at this site (Plate 18a). The use of a prepared red pigment wash as a background for engravings at M-HE/1, 3, 7A, 10A and 49 points to a deliberate preconception of what the artist intended to depict.

5:6 RELATIVE CHRONOLOGY

Reference to the superimposition sequences allows the construction of a relative chronology for this art in its latest phase. Within this framework there is no evidence to suggest that either stencils or engravings were practised first, in fact there is no reason to suggest that they were not carried out contemporaneously from the commencement of the utilization of these sites. There is certainly no indication of a continuum, either in the form of a development or a deterioration in the form of the engravings. Schematized and naturalistic motifs appear to be spontaneous products of the artist's skill and imagination. The number of superimpositions involving stencils and engravings are small, there are more stencils superimposed over engravings than vice versa but these occur in a similar proportion to the total number of each technique present. At 'Cathedral Cave' it should be noted that most of the engravings which cover stencils and areas of pigment wash are fresher in appearance than the bulk of engravings which are heavily patinated. The patination of engraved designs is usually an indication of great age.²³

Tools and weapons as a motif group appear later in the stencil sequence than human features. Most early stencils in superimposition sequences are coloured red. The latest group of stencils to make their appearance are white human features.

There are two groups of painted motifs; one includes chevron tiers and the outline face, the other the full figure goannas and the range of grids and crosses. The former occur well down in super-

23. Edwards, R. in Mulvaney, D.J. & J. Golson, 1971: *Aboriginal Man and Environment in Australia*. p.360.

imposition sequences and appear to be more carefully delineated than the latter which usually occur at the top of superimposition sequences.

Thus the picture which emerges indicates that at some time in the past Aboriginal artists began to engrave designs into the rock surface at a restricted number of sites; at these same sites red stencilled human features were perhaps added concurrently. At other sites red stencilled human features alone were the first motifs to be figured. Some paintings were then introduced, and the tools and weapons stencil group began to be depicted in addition to human features. Yellow and black coloured stencils also came into use. At a later stage again white stencilled human features were introduced - possibly at about the same period as the painted goannas, grids and crosses. Meanwhile red and other coloured stencils and engravings continued to be practised and these together with the later additions continued through to the period of European occupation.

5:7 ABSOLUTE CHRONOLOGY

Direct evidence of an absolute chronology for this rock art has not yet been published. 'Cathedral Cave' was excavated in late 1975 by John Beaton²⁴, his excavation revealed that engraved macropodid and emu tracks similar to those appearing above ground level extended to a depth of 1.5 metres in the archaeological deposit. There were no extant pictographs below ground level, but Beaton indicates that chemical and environmental factors adequately account for their disappearance. Ochre and ochre grinding implements which occur in all occupation levels were found in close proximity to the decorated wall, this evidence points to the probable use of coloured pigments for rock art from the outset of occupation at the site.

24. Personal Communication. John Beaton, Research Scholar, A.N.U.

No radiocarbon dates are yet available for 'Cathedral Cave', Beaton excavated to a depth of 2.3 metres exposing four thin occupation layers each separated by broad sterile sediments. At this stage he interprets the stone tool assemblage as being of the Small Tool tradition certainly no older than 7-5000 years B.P. and with reference to his other work in south central Queensland probably no older than 4.5 to 3.5 thousand years B.P. Older archaeological data also supports the inference that coloured pictographic art had a time depth. Dr. D. Tugby's 1965 excavation at 'Cathedral Cave' also revealed ochre fragments in all levels, more importantly was the existence of utilized ochre in layers 1/5D, 7, 8, 10 and 2/3, 8.²⁵ Mulvaney regarded the cultural assemblage from this excavation as being comparable to the microlithic horizon at 'Kenniff Cave' which dates from about the third millennium B.C.²⁶ This supports Beaton's interpretation, we await radiocarbon dates to confirm this. Thus on present evidence pictographs and engravings at 'Cathedral Cave' appear to have a time depth extending back for at least 3.5 to 4.5 thousand years.

The possibility of an even older date for the use of pigments in rock art in this region has been postulated by Mulvaney. He found ochre in all layers at 'Kenniff Cave' (25 kilometres north west of 'Cathedral Cave') dating back over 18000 years. But the oldest dated layer containing utilized ochre has a radiocarbon date of only 4130 \pm 90 B.P.²⁸ The appearance of utilized ochre cannot be taken as absolute evidence for use of coloured pigments in rock art but it does indicate that pigment was used from about that date.

25. Clegg, J., 1965: A Preliminary Report...Cathedral Cave...., Table 1.

26. Mulvaney, D.J. & E.B. Joyce, 1965: *P.P.S.*, vol.31, p.209.

27. Mulvaney, D.J., 1975: *Ibid.* p.279.

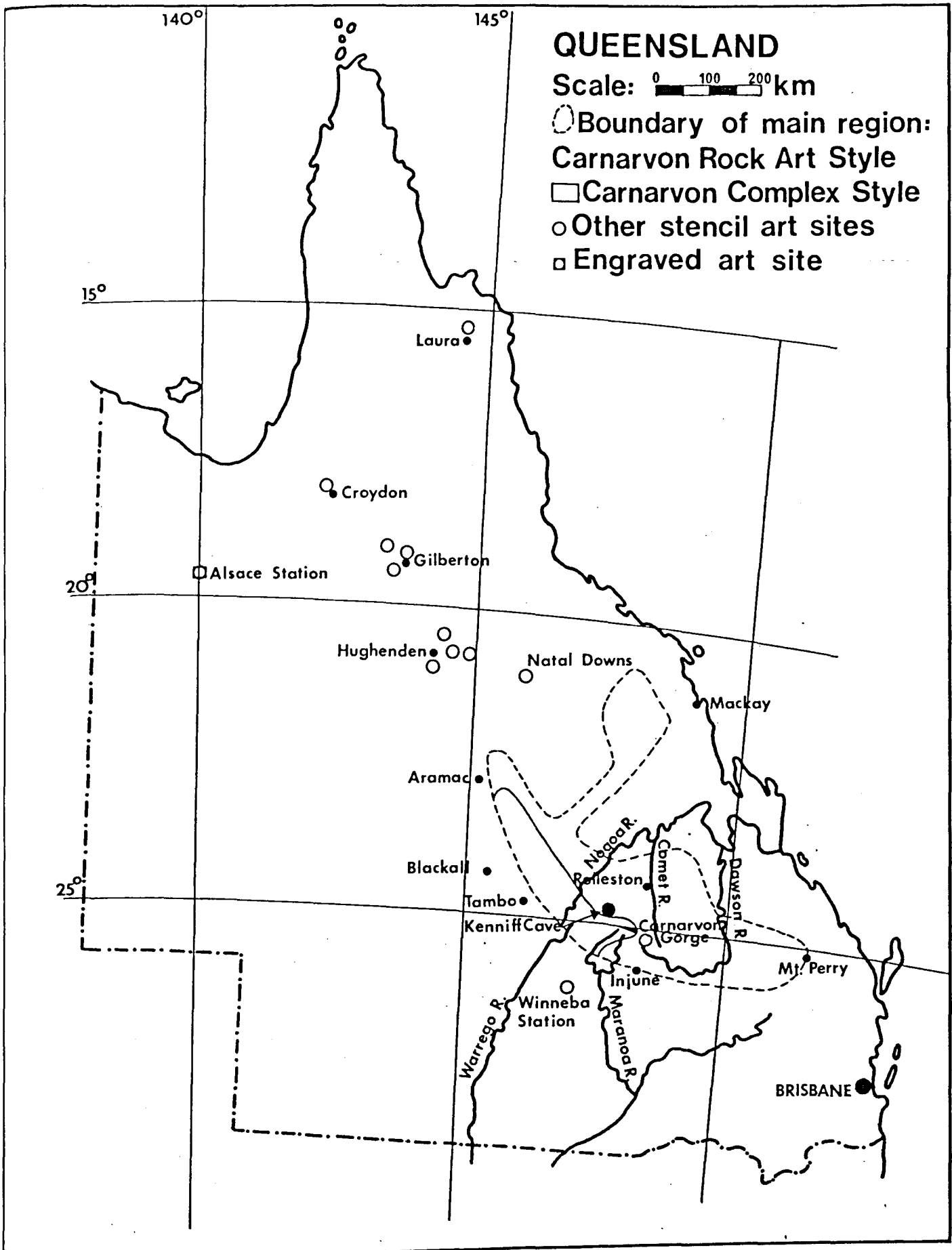
28. Mulvaney, D.J. & E.B. Joyce, 1965: *Ibid.* Table 3.

The appearance of glass implements on the surface at 'Cathedral Cave' indicates that this site was occupied by the Aborigines until after the initial European occupation in the region in the 1860's. That the stencilled art was still being practised in the mid-nineteenth century is verified by the appearance of a steel axe stencil (Plate 12b) at the 'Art Gallery'. Better examples of stencilled steel axes and blades occur at other sites in the region; ranging from 'Wallaroo' cattle station and Rougemont Gorge bordering on the Arcadia Valley in the east to 'Babbiloorra' cattle station and 'Black's Palace' in the west. Leichhardt's evidence points to the introduction of steel axes among the Aborigines just north west of Carnarvon Gorge in the early 1840's. It is probable that such trade items became increasingly available between that time and the 1860's. A set of engraved bullock and horse tracks at 'Goat Rock' on 'Babbiloorra' station west of Carnarvon Gorge indicates that engraving also continued to a late stage in the region. The earliest horses and bullocks to pass through that area would have been those of Mitchell's party in 1846. Thus the *terminus post quem* for this art appears to be the period 1850-1880.

5:8 THE CARNARVON ROCK ART STYLE

The rock art of Carnarvon Gorge is composed of an admixture of techniques and motif groups. Two major sub-groups can be distinguished, these are described as simple and complex (see pp.213-15.)

(i) Simple: Characterized by the appearance of stencilled human features either alone or in company with a small component of stencilled tools and weapons and perhaps a few painted geometric designs. Sites M-HE/ 7F and 12 are good examples of this group.



MAP III

(ii) Complex: The characteristic traits of this group consist of stencilled human features and tools and weapons in combination with painted grids and engraved cups and rings, emu and macropodid tracks. The 'Art Gallery' could be thought of as representative of this group.

The unifying link between the simple and complex sub-styles is the stencilled human features motif group, taken together these two sub-styles comprise the Carnarvon Rock Art Style. This style is essentially a regional one centred on the nuclear area of the Queensland central highlands. The major diagnostic feature of the complex sub-style, the engraved cup and ring, actually forms only a relatively minor component (see p.215, Table 97). Carnarvon Gorge which contains examples of both the simple and the complex sub-styles can be considered as typical for the region.

5:9 DISTRIBUTION IN CENTRAL QUEENSLAND²⁹

On present evidence the stencil component of this art body, which has been termed the Simple Carnarvon Style, has a fairly extensive distribution in south-central and eastern Queensland (Map III). Stencils are depicted in sites throughout the highland and some of the lowland areas within a region which ranges from Albion Vale Station (near Lake Galilee on the western watershed of the Great Dividing Range, north west of Aramac) in the west to Mount Perry about 80 kilometres from the Pacific coast in the east. The southern boundary is formed by a line following the Great Divide through 'Black's Palace' on 'Marston' station (on the eastern watershed), crossing to 'Mount Tabor'³⁰

29. Much of the material on which this distribution is based is culled from the files of the Queensland Museum and the Archaeological Division, Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement.

30. Mulvaney, D.J. & E.B. Joyce, 1965: *Ibid.* pp.205-6.

station on the Warrego catchment, 'Darkwater' station on the Maranoa catchment crossing the Great Divide again to 'Poney Hills' station on the Dawson catchment, then along the Great Divide to the headwaters of the Auburn River north of Chinchilla. The most southerly site so far known occurs on 'Winneba' station at the southern end of the Chesterton Range. It is probable that further investigation will show that stencilled art occurs in the high country on both watersheds of this range between 'Winneba' station and 'Mount Tabor' station. The Northern boundary extends from the northern headwaters of the Burnett River north west along the Dawson Range to the northern end of the Expedition Range south of Blackwater, then west to the Drummond Range near Alpha.³¹ At approximately this point art sites of the Simple Carnarvon Style follow the high country either north east along the Drummond and Denham ranges to the Mackay hinterland 65 kilometres from the sea or north west along the Great Divide to the vicinity of Lake Galilee.

Human features are the dominant motif group for the entire region. White appears to be the major pigment used in sites to the east of the Expedition Range³² while red predominates along the confines of that range and west to 'Black's Palace'. However, discrete areas with suitable pigment material available, such as the 'Mount Tabor' region may have a majority of white motifs.³³

The Complex Carnarvon Style, characterized by the additional appearance of the engraved cup and ring, emu and macropodid track motifs, has a somewhat more limited distribution within the confines and intermingled with the Simple Carnarvon Style (Map III). The

31. McCarthy, F.D., 1962: *Australian Aboriginal Rock Art*. Fig. 12.

32. Crosby, E., 1968: *Mem. Qld. Mus.*, vol. 15, p. 77.

33. Mulvaney, D.J. & E.B. Joyce, 1965: *Ibid.*, pp. 205-6,

style covers a narrow band of territory extending from the western watershed of the Great Dividing Range at 'Graceville',³⁴ in the north, past Alpha to 'Black's Palace' on the eastern watershed, then over the Great Divide to the Warrego River catchment through 'Babbiloora' and 'Mount Tabor' stations. The boundary continues to the east, crossing the Chesterton Range into the Maranoa River catchment through 'Darkwater', 'Emu Bends', 'Warrong' and 'Mount Moffatt' stations then extending along the southern and northern confines of the Great Divide to 'Springvale' station and Carnarvon Gorge. A small isolated pocket consisting of two sites is found on 'Wallaroo' station on the edge of the Arcadia Valley on the watershed between the Comet and Dawson Rivers. At only one recorded site on 'Emu Bends' station have these engraved motifs been found alone, usually they occur jointly with stencils and paintings. In the western part of the region notably on the Warrego and at 'Black's Palace' the relative frequency of painted geometric designs (especially in white) and the cup and ring motif appears to increase. Painted monochrome and bichrome figurative motifs also occur sporadically in the west, these include a 'human' figure at Kenniff Cave,³⁵ a 'snake' on 'Dooloogarah' station, a 'human' figure and 'snake' at Cutzies Cave and 'human' figures on Buckland Creek, Tanderra station.

5:10 PERSPECTIVE

The appearance of stencilled art with an emphasis on hand stencils undistinguishable in itself from the Simple Carnarvon Style is widespread in Australia. In some regions such as south east

34. McCarthy, F.D., 1960: *Mankind*, vol. 5, pp.400-4.

35. Mulvaney, D.J. & E.B. Joyce, 1965: *Ibid.* p.203.

Cape York³⁶, western Arnhem Land³⁷ and the north west of Western Australia³⁸ they appear as a minor component of major figurative painted art styles. In the first region however some individual sites have a major stencil content. Stencil art sites in south east and central Australia are rare; only one site each has been reported from Victoria, South Australia and the southern part of the Northern Territory.³⁹

In the islands off eastern Arnhem Land⁴⁰ and the southern Gulf of Carpentaria hinterland⁴¹ stencil art forms a major component of the local art body in combination with painted figurative designs. Stencils form the dominant technique in the southern part of Western Australia⁴² where over 30 sites have been reported, red and white were the major colours used. In eastern New South Wales stencils appear in large numbers, McCarthy⁴³ recorded 1330 stencils in 170 sites in the Sydney-Hawkesbury district, white was the major colour used. In the central Darling region of Western New South Wales stencils appear in association with engraved tracks at Mootwingee; McCarthy and MacIntosh⁴⁴ recorded 1020 stencils of which 853 were red.

36. Tresize, P., 1971: *Rock Art of South East Cape York*.

37. Brandl, E., 1973: *Australian Aboriginal Paintings*.

38. Crawford, I.M., 1968: *The Art of the Wandjina*.

39. Verbrugge, A.R., 1970: *Corpus of Hand Figurations in Primitive Australia*, pp.121,131,189.

40. Verbrugge, A.R., 1970: *Ibid.* pp.162-183.

41. Mathew, J., 1964: *Mankind*, pp.147-154.

42. Verbrugge, A.R., 1970: *Ibid.* pp.134-153.

43. McCarthy, F.D., 1962: *Australian Aboriginal Rock Art*, p.38.

44. McCarthy, F.D., & N.W.G. MacIntosh, 1962: *Red, Aust. Mus.* vol.25, pp.284-5.

In Queensland stencilled art sites are present to the north of the Carnarvon region along the eastern and western watersheds of the Great Dividing Range centred in the Hughenden-Natal Downs⁴⁵ and Gilberton-Croydon areas (Map III). North and west of Hughenden they occur in the same area, though not directly associated with a series of fully pecked figurative engravings showing complete solid human male figures, giant human tracks, solid boomerangs and axes. In the Gilberton-Croydon area stencils appear alone at one site and in combination with paintings and engravings at others. Engraved track motifs similar in technique and style to the engraved component of Carnarvon rock art have been found at a single site on 'Alsace' station in the Gulf country of north west Queensland.

Directly to the south of the Carnarvon region within Queensland no rock art sites are known except for a series of engraved tracks on horizontal surfaces in a creek bed near Morven.⁴⁶ But at Graman on the western fringe of the Great Dividing Range in northern New South Wales, 540 kilometres south east of Carnarvon Gorge there is a series of sites which indicates some affinities with the Carnarvon Rock Art Style.⁴⁷ One site contains red hand and foot stencils, others nearby show abraded engraved macropodid, emu and other animal tracks.

To the west of the Carnarvon region and extending into the Northern Territory the known rock art appears to fall within the Central Australian style of engraved pecked outline and solid non-figurative motifs together with macropodid and bird tracks (e.g. sites on Birkhead Creek, near Tambo, at Dajarra and on the Mulligan River),

45. Davidson, D.S., 1936: *Mem. Amer. Phil. Soc.* vol.5, p.70.

46. Unacknowledged information in this section is from the files of the Queensland Museum and the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement.

47. McBryde, Isabel, 1968: *A.P.A.O.*, vol. 3, p.91-2.

painted solid figurative art is found in the Mt. Isa region. To the east in coastal south east Queensland there are engraved abraded and pecked outline and solid non-figurative motifs together with some figurative human, animal and bird tracks;⁴⁸ and painted non-figurative outline motifs.⁴⁹ Further north along the coast in the Townsville region painted outline figurative motifs are present.

The validity of proposing a regional Carnarvon Rock Art Style is supported by its isolation from other major stencil component art bodies. The engraved component is similarly isolated on present evidence.

Traditionally Australian rock art has been seen as a series of separate regional art styles which often do not overlap spatially or chronologically (although there are exceptions), e.g. the X-ray and Mimi styles in Arnhem Land, the Bradshaw and Wandjina styles in the Kimberleys, the Central Australian pecked engraved style, the Laura style, the Sydney-Hawkesbury engraved outline style etc. Maynard⁵⁰ in a major innovative contribution to Australian Aboriginal rock art studies has tentatively proposed that there are three major rock art styles ranging chronologically from oldest to youngest which have had wide spatial distribution throughout the continent. Her study further supports the erection of a distinct regional Carnarvon Rock Art Style as she is unable to fit it into her postulated sequence, she sees it as constituting 'An independent regional sequence, floating outside the system into which I have fitted most of Australian rock art.'⁵¹

48. Quinnell, M.C., 1972: *Mem. Qld. Mus.*, vol.16, pp.219-20.

49. Quinnell, M.C., in Mather, P., 1975: *The National Estate in the Moreton and Wide Bay-Burnett Regions, S.E.Q.*, p.194, pl.30.

50. Maynard, Lesley, 1974b: *The Archaeology of Australian Aboriginal Art.*

51. *Ibid.* p.41.

In a global context the stencilled component of this art is paralleled in other parts of the world ranging in time from the Upper Palaeolithic to the ethnographic present. In western Europe⁵² red and black hand stencils are found at a number of Upper Palaeolithic sites. One site at Gargas contained over 150 hands some of which are mutilated. The total number of hand stencils at all European sites is relatively small. Other areas where stencilled art occurs range from Africa to Patagonia in Argentina.⁵³ In the latter region there are a large number of sites containing many hundreds of stencilled hands and a few feet, some hands are mutilated. Colours are red, yellow, white and black. This art style apparently had a continued tradition ranging from 9000 B.C. to modern times. It would appear from the global evidence (which is not quantified as the relevant publications were not available) that stencilled art in most cases forms only a very minor component of any art body of which it forms a part. In Patagonia there occurs a dominance of stencilled art similar to that of the Carnarvon region but the unavailability of the original publications makes it impossible to comment on the significance of this.

5:11 CONCLUSION

This thesis is a preliminary contribution to the study of a regional body of rock art which although known to scholars for some 35 years has never been adequately published or recorded. The study itself has been based on the investigation of a discrete group of sites which have been regarded as representative of the range of Aboriginal

52. Leroi-Gourhan, A., 1968: *The Art of Prehistoric Man in Western Europe*, p.148.

53. Pericot-Garcia, L. *et al.* 1969: *Prehistoric and Primitive Art*, pp.129-130.

rock art in the southern central highlands of Queensland. Sub-regional variations within the postulated Carnarvon Rock Art Style are probable and Carnarvon Gorge may prove to be atypical of the region as a whole when further data becomes available.

The validity of the proposed regional style is based on two foundations. First, the universal emphasis within the region on the presentation of stencilled art either alone or in conjunction with a major engraved and/or minor geometric painted component. Second, the physical isolation of the region, bounded on the east and west by differing rock art traditions, on the south by no rock art at all and in the north by only the sporadic presence of stencilled art in association directly or indirectly with different engraved rock art styles.

Fuller comparative interpretation of the types of analysis presented in this thesis can only be made when comparative data is available from other areas within and without the Carnarvon Rock Art Style region. Preliminary regional studies such as this thesis or preferably fully integrated ethno-historical, archaeological and rock art surveys need to be made of all the catchments of the southern central Queensland highlands. Until such objective comparative data is available from this region and from Australia as a whole synthetic surveys such as Maynard's can, as she states, only be regarded as models for the future.⁵⁴

54. Maynard, Lesley, 1974b: *Ibid.* p.41.

ABBREVIATIONS

A.I.A.S.	Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies
A.P.A.O.	<i>Archaeology and Physical Anthropology in Oceania.</i>
B.M.R.	Bureau of Mineral Resources.
Mem.Amer.Phil.Soc.	<i>Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society.</i>
Mem.Qld.Mus.	<i>Memoirs of the Queensland Museum.</i>
P.P.S.	<i>Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society.</i>
Q.G.J.	<i>Queensland Geographical Journal.</i>
Q.G.S.	Queensland Geological Survey.
Rec.Aust.Mus.	<i>Records of the Australian Museum.</i>

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42	(a) Simple vertical lines, cluster - painting, M-HE/1.	"
	(b) Simple vertical lines - engraving, M-HE/3. Scale 30 cm.	"
43	(a) Shallow solid circles - engraving, M-HE/1.	"
	(b) Vertical band - engraving, M-HE/1.	"
	(c) Solid, elongate ovals - engraving, M-HE/1. Scale 30 cm.	"
44	(a) M-HE/1 Scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	141 & 142
	(b) M-HE/1 Scale: 2 metres - 50 cm. units	"
	(c) M-HE/1 Left scale: 2 metres - 50 cm. units Right scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	" "
45	(a) M-HE/1 Left scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
	(b) M-HE/1 Scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
	(c) M-HE/1 Scale: 2 metres - 50 cm. units	"
46	(a) M-HE/1 Left scale: 2 metres - 50 cm. units Right scale: 1 metre - 50 cm. units	" "
	(b,c)M-HE/1 Scale: 1 metre - 50 cm. units ⁽¹⁾	"
47	(a) M-HE/2 Left scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units Right scale: 1 metre - 50 cm. units ⁽¹⁾	" "
	(b) M-HE/2 Left scale: 1 metre - 50 cm. units ⁽¹⁾ Right scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	" "
	(c) M-HE/2 Left scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units Right scale: 1 metre - 50 cm. units ⁽¹⁾	" "

PLATES

Between
Pages

48	(a)	M-HE/2	Scale: 1 metre - 50 cm. units. ⁽¹⁾	141 & 142
	(b)	M-HE/2	Left scale: 2 metres - 50 cm. units	"
			Right scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
49	(a-c)	M-HE/3	Scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
50	(a)	M-HE/3		
	(b)	M-HE/3	Scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
	(c)	M-HE/3	Left scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
			Right scale: 2 metres - 50 cm. units	"
51	(a)	M-HE/3	Left scale: 2 metres - 50 cm. units	"
			Right scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
	(b)	M-HE/3	Left scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
			Right scale: 2 metres - 50 cm. units	"
	(c)	M-HE/3	Right scale: 2 metres - 50 cm. units	"
			Left scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
52	(a)	M-HE/3	Left scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
			Right scale: 2 metres - 50 cm. units	"
	(b)	M-HE/3	Left scale: 2 metres - 50 cm. units	"
			Right scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
53	(a)	M-HE/3	Left scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
			Right scale: 2 metres - 50 cm. units	"
	(b-c)	M-HE/4	Scale: 2 metres - 50 cm. units	"
54	(a)	M-HE/4	Scale: 1 metre - 50 cm. units ⁽¹⁾	"
	(b)	M-HE/5	Scale: 1 metre - 50 cm. units ⁽¹⁾	"
	(c)	M-HE/5	Scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
55	(a-b)	M-HE/5	Scale: 2 metres - 20 cm. units	"
	(c)	M-HE/5	Scale: 30 cm. - 10 cm. units	"
56	(a)	M-HE/6	Left scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
			Right scale: 2 metres - 20 cm. units	"
	(b-c)	M-HE/7A	Scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"

PLATES	Between Pages
57 (a) M-HE/7A Scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	141 & 142
(b-c) M-HE/7A Left scale: 2 metres - 20 cm. units	"
Right scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
58 (a) M-HE/7D Scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
(b) M-HE/10A Scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
(c) M-HE/11 Scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
59 (a) M-HE/11 Scale: 2 metres - 20 cm. units	"
(b) M-HE/12 Scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
(c) M-HE/14 Scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
60 (a) M-HE/16 Scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
(b) M-HE/17: Scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
(c) M-HE/24 Scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
661 (a) M-HE/28 Scale: 2 metres - 20 cm. units	"
(b-c) M-HE/28 Scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
62 (a-b) M-HE/31 Scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
(c) M-HE/31 Left scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
63 (a-b) M-HE/31 Scale: 2 metres - 20 cm. units	"
64 (a) M-HE/31 Scale: 2 metres - 20 cm. units	"
(b) M-HE/48	
65 (a) M-HE/49 Scale: 10 cm.	"
(b) M-HE/49 Scale: 1 metre - 10 cm. units	"
(c) M-HE/80B Scale: 30 cm. - 10 cm. units	"
66 (a-b) M-HE/80B Scale: 30 cm. - 10 cm. units	"
(c) M-HE/80C Scale: 30 cm. - 10 cm. units	"
67 Grinding stone showing traces of red pigment, M-HE/1.	"

(1) Note lower white section measures 30cm. only.