

The Analysis of Digital Line Markings

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we propose to extend and further the results of our previous experiments. Following field visits to caves in the Dordogne area, France (Grotte de Rouffignac, Peche Merle, Grotte à Goutran) we have observed a number of finger markings, which we propose to analyse. The results of these experiments may help to elucidate the meaning of the lines that we have studied in Australia.

The finger markings in Grotte de Rouffignac were made with two to three fingers and appeared generally, to be deliberate as opposed to accidental. In both Rouffignac and Peche Merle, the markings were tightly formed but not overlapping. Shapes were visible, such as a V-shape in Rouffignac and in Peche Merle, the lines formed a square. We can use the results from previous experiments to look at their construction. The beginning and ends of the lines are clearly visible, especially in Rouffignac. Other observations, such as length and number of digits used can be deduced from techniques that we have already developed. We will discuss the additional meanings of these observations, for example, the fewer fingers that are used, the more complex the lines are able to be. Access is also a point to consider. At Peche Merle, groups of markings were made high on the roof of the cave. Beneath them is a large boulder, which was probably used in the way of a scaffold. However, there is only enough room on the boulder for one person. This would suggest therefore, that one person used the area for marking; or many people used the same specific area many times.

Our methodology will include finger images, and hand movements used to make specific types of lines, in a computer digitalisation.