

for
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Friday, 15th May, 1998

Address

For

Publisher

Dear

Australia's Early Writing

*not nec. w/ 'ol of geom.
Just lines.*

①

To many people, rock art conjures up images of bison, ibex, and horses, dancing across the roofs and walls of eerie caverns and serpentine passageways. However, there is another 'art' form – that of finger flutings. Their presence in the caves of Europe has been known, and overlooked, for many years. In Australia, the finger flutings abound. They cover the walls of massive caverns to tiny passageways, barely large enough for an adult to enter. ~~How did they get there?~~ What did they mean and why was it so important to make them?

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For many decades, scholars have rejected their significance, but lately more and more academics have acknowledged their importance. To ignore their potential as a valid source of evidence for the late Pleistocene is prejudiced. Some 20,000 years ago, a group of people travelled from their home on the coastal belt of southern Australia, across the arid heat of the Nullarbor Plain to begin their descent in to what is now known as Koonalda Cave. They clambered for over an hour through the pitch-black cave, braving its hazardous drops and ascents to the upper chamber. Here they began to cover the walls with lines, the meaning of which has long been lost. This was by no means an unusual scenario – and one that requires careful study.

We would like to propose an article which:

- Looks at the results of a new experimental approach to the study of the lines.
- Discusses a hypothesis for these enigmatic structures – that of a mnemonic notation system.
- Approaches the controversial subject through considered use of both anthropological and ethnographical data.

This is a highly topical area and we feel that it will appeal to everyone with an interest in art and archaeology.

Kevin Sharpe holds two doctorates, one in Mathematics (La Trobe University, Melbourne) and the other in Religious Studies (Boston University). He studied archaeology under Prof. Hallam Movius Jr. at Harvard University 1974-75. Between 1971-73, he worked under Dr. Alexander Gallus investigating Keilor, Victoria, and Koonalda Cave, South Australia, the latter on the line markings of the cave. In 1976, he returned to Koonalda Cave as a co-leader of a National Geographic funded expedition looking further at the markings. In 1991, he examined several sites of markings in the Mount Gambier region of Australia with Robert Bednarik.

Helen Fawbert holds a BSc. (Hons.) in Archaeology from the University of Bradford 1992-96 and an MSt. in European Archaeology from the University of Oxford 1996-97. She has two years experience as a professional Field Archaeologist and now works as a full-time researcher and writer in archaeology.

We enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope for your convenience in replying and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,