



## ROCK PAINTINGS OF THE GUMARDIR RIVER, ARNHEM LAND, AUSTRALIA

STANISLAV NOVOTNÝ

### Introduction

In this paper I will deal with a locality, which is formed by one of several isolated, not too big rock blocks in the north-eastern region of the Spencer Range. It stands about 50 m to the right of the track from Maningrida Native Settlement to Oenpelli Mission; the block is 140 km (87 miles) distant from Maningrida and 98 km (61 miles) from Oenpelli (Fig. III). The rock lies on the southern foot of one of the northeastern boundary hills, and the crossing across the cyclically wetted Gumardir (or Goomadeer) River is about 2 km (1,2 mile) to the east. The geographical position of the locality is — according to the map SD 53-2 Series 5 502 — approximately 134°43' of eastern longitude and 12°15' of southern latitude. The block stands in the Gunwinggu tribal area (Tindale 1940; Elkin 1972, 124).<sup>1)</sup>

### Description of the Locality

The rocky block is one of the many huge boulders, fallen down from the tops of a gradual and long mountain ridge, which forms the northern boundary of the Spencer Range. The block, which lies several meters from the southern foot of that ridge, is about 5 m high and has an irregular five-angle form (Fig. IV). The rock is formed by a hard, light-gray-brown, soft and poorly layered sandstone with isolated flint pebbles on an average from 1 cm to 3—5 cm.



There are two shallow shelters with paintings here. The first of them is in the northeastern corner of the block and the second one is running along the whole western side of the block.

The Site 1 (Fig. I) is situated in the northeastern corner of the block. It is 3 m long, about 2 m deep and 1 m high. The ceiling of the cave is even and horizontal. This site contains 19 pictures altogether and a quantity of so strongly damaged rests that it is not possible to describe the original forms of these paintings. The ground of the shelter is bare, flat, without any vegetation, and with a few small stones. A small number of softly retouched and small-sized stone implements was scattered on the ground. All stone tools, bones and fragments of the fresh-water as well as salt-water molluscs, found in both shelters and close by the block, are deposited in the collections of the Moravian Museum, dept. Anthropos, Brno.

The Site 2 (Fig. II) is a rock shelter, situated along the whole western side of the block. The left part of it is rather deep and low and its ceiling is smooth and nearly horizontal. The right, southwestern part of this shelter is very shallow, and its highly placed and oblique ceiling comes directly into the back wall of the shelter. Paintings are mostly at the central, more shallow part of the shelter and they appear on the surface of the ceiling and on the back wall. In the left, deeper part of this shelter, paintings are near the frontal edge of the horizontal ceiling only. The back part of the ceiling and the whole northwestern corner of the shelter are unpainted.

The bottom of this site was nearly without any vegetation. The right and central parts of it were rocky, while the left half was covered by homogenous stratum of earth and ash with — similarly to the ground of the Site 1 — fragments of bones and molluscs, pieces of burnt-up wood, several large and partly worked-up sheets of eucalyptus bark (*Eucalyptus Tetradonta*) and a rather high number of softly retouched, small-sized stone implements. This earthy stratum with ash extended forwards of the frontal edge of the shelter, and 2,5 m far from it it made a low and broad mound, which runs along nearly the whole northwestern and central part of the shelter.

The Site 2 contains 43 paintings and a lot of badly damaged rests of old, mostly unidentifiable pictures.



## The Description of Rock Paintings

All 62 pictures in both sites are genuine paintings from the technological point of view. They were made by applying a colour solution with brush or fingers on the rock wall surface — I have called this method "painting" — and by blowing the colour solution directly from mouth on the rock-surface, which method I have called "spraying" (Novotný 1974). In this locality I did not find the method — not very frequent in Arnhem Land — of applying dry colour on the rock-surface ("drawing").

I made the sketches of the paintings by copying the pictures from the rock wall directly on a transparent paper in the scale 1:1. Simultaneously, I took photographs and then copied them on a transparent paper, too. I compared the copies, which I obtained by these two methods, and succeeded in getting the minimum possible distortion of the pictures.

I realize that resulting copies obtained by both methods have a certain degree of distortion. Necessarily, the distortion of the paintings is caused, on the one hand, by transformation of them from the three-dimensional original (the rock wall surface is never ideally smooth) into the two-dimensional copy, and simultaneously, there is a distortion of the real width of the lines and of their colour shade as well. In spite of those reservations, I think that in both cases the copies include the minimal extent of a subjective distortion. I do not add any photographs of the paintings to this paper because I am afraid that during the process of reproduction a letting down of the contrasts of the colours, moreover changed into black-and-white gamut, could occur and the pictures would not be well visible. In any case I did not try to complete the vanished parts of the damaged pictures.

As I mentioned above, in both sites there was a rather high amount of rests of the old paintings. When these rests were in such a bad condition that it was not possible to make copies of them by any of the mentioned methods, I eliminated them from the description. Not to leave out motifs which I was not able to determine, graphic fashion and colours of the older painting period, I enclosed also fragments of paintings usually omitted in reports.

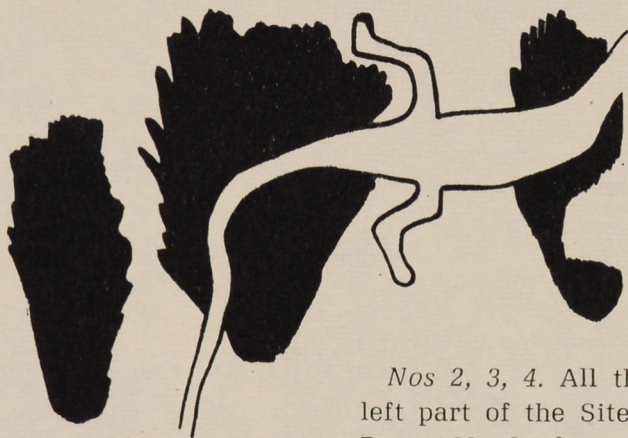


*No 1.* A simple, conventionalized painting of a human body without sexual organs. The left edge of the Site 1. Height 16 cm, maximal width 5,5 cm. The head is represented by a plain oval (silhouette) without any details; the body, both legs and one preserved arm are depicted in all cases by a single and rather wide line without any details. The yellow colour was used; the right part — from the observer's view — of the painting is not preserved.



No 1.

At first sight, this painting has a certain similarity to the pictures of human beings depicted in the so called mimi-style in Oenpelli Mission area, described by Mountford (1956, 114). This similarity, however, is based only on the form of figures. According to my view, the important distinction are the complete absence of any details (for example dress, hairdressing, fingers, soles, strengthening or reduction of lines representing arms and legs, etc.) and the static character of the picture (which does not correspond to the typical movement nature of the mimi-style pictures).



Nos 2, 3, 4.

*Nos 2, 3, 4.* All three paintings are similar. The left part of the Site 1. No 2.: length 20 cm, width 7 cm; No 3.: length 24 cm, width 13 cm; No 4.: length 19 cm, width 8 cm. They are "tree-shaped" and formed by rather short and thin yellow lines, running closely to each other from one point in the upward direction with a soft curving to the



left or to the right. All three paintings are symmetrical along the vertically oriented axis. They are not too well perceptible and are rather peeled off. I do not presume to compare their forms with any natural objects. I did not find any similar motifs in any other locality with rock paintings in Arnhem Land or in published reports.

*No 5.* A well preserved painting of some sort of lizard, perhaps goanna, in fresh white colour. The picture shows this animal in silhouette, seen from above. The head is a narrow oval, the body is rather short and S-shaped. The middle part of the body is wide, the tail is crooked to the right and sharply narrowed. The front, as well as hind limbs, are formed in all cases by single lines with minimal changes of their width. The front limbs are bent once and run to the back, the hind limbs are bent twice and run to the head. The whole painting is rather conventionalized and any details are left out. The left part of the Site 1. Length 48 cm, width (distance between the toes of both hind limbs) 15 cm.

*No 6.* A rest of a damaged picture or an unfinished painting. I incline to the second of these two possibilities, because the colour (white) is very bright and fresh, and, in the whole length, the lines are not damaged. Both lines have the same width, they cross themselves and their curving is oriented in the opposite way. It is difficult to determine the original form of that picture conceived by the painter, even if a certain similarity with a rough sketch of a fish body can be traced. The left part of the Site 1. Length 21 cm, width 10 cm.

*No 7.* A conventionalized painting of a kangaroo or wallaby in white colour, combination of silhouette (head, front and hind limbs) and outline. The left part of the Site 1. Length 37 cm, width 19 cm. Any details of the body (e. g. eyes, muzzle, fingers of front as well as hind limbs, sexual organs, etc.)

No 5.



No. 6.



No. 7.





No 8.



are lacking — similarly to the majority of other motifs painted at both sites — the presence of which is usual in pictures of kangaroos or wallabies in the whole western part of Arnhem Land. On the other hand, this painting is similar, exactly in the elimination of these details, to some paintings of kangaroos or wallabies which were published by Mountford from Obiri (1956, Figs. 51 A, B) and from Sleisbeck (1958, Pl. 13 c), although the kangaroo from Gumardir River has a different form of the body, a different orientation of ears and another width of the tail. A more detailed analysis and comparison with paintings from other localities is not possible for a very bad state of preservation of this picture.

No 9.



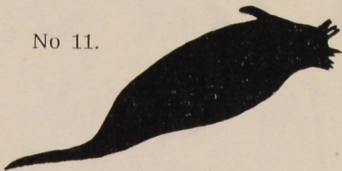
No 8. A group of rather broad and not too bright lines in white colour. The right part of the Site 1. Length 20 cm, width 9 cm. Considering the good preservation and the immediate surrounding of the lines I do not think it could be a rest of a finished picture but rather a fragment of an unfinished one. Nevertheless, it is very difficult to decide what it originally represented.



No 10.

No 9. A very well preserved white stencil of a right hand, which — in consideration of its size (20 to 17 cm) — is probably a man's hand. This is the simplest type of the stencilled hand, frequent all over Australia (Verbrugge 1970). The central part of the Site 1.

No 11.



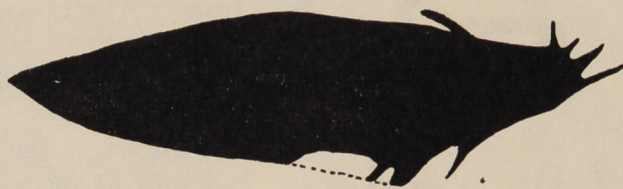
No 10. A wrongly discernible stencil of a rather narrow left palm, made by spraying yellow-white colour. This stencil is of the same type as the stencil No 9, but here the longer part of the forearm is drawn. The right part of the Site 1. Length 30 cm, width 17 cm.

No 11. A white and clearly visible silhouette of a catfish. The left part of the Site 1. Length 40 cm, width 11 cm. Similarly to all cases of the previous zoomorphic motifs, and in contrast to paintings from other places in Arnhem Land, this picture lacks



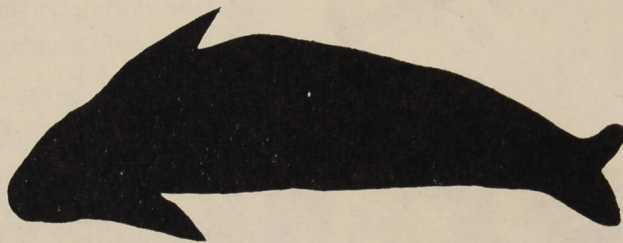
depiction of any details of the body, with the exception of several short, thin, and parallel lines on the frontal edge of the head directed obliquely ahead, which represent the beard. Considering the symmetry of the trunk along the lengthwise axis, I think that the catfish has been depicted in a rather unusual view from above downward. In other localities, this motif is represented more frequently from the side view. It holds good at least for the paintings from the western parts of Arnhem Land (Unbalanya, Obiri, East Alligator River, etc.).

No 12.



No 12. A painting similar to the foregoing one: white silhouette of a rather long and narrow catfish, which is depicted in the bird's eye view, too. The central part of the Site 1. Length 29 cm, width 9 cm. The short velvic fins are painted on both sides of the body; they are executed in short, thin and parallel lines, placed on the edge of the frontal third of the body, and are directed to the back.

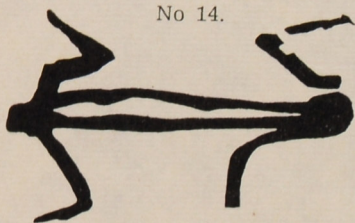
No 13.



No 13. A white silhouette of a fish, which misses any signs typical for a certain species. The central part of the Site 1. Length 38 cm, width 9 cm. The body is narrow, rather crooked and the first dorsal fin as well as one pectoral fin are simply demonstrated. The caudal fin is small and slightly forked. This painting is in the standard side view.



No 14.



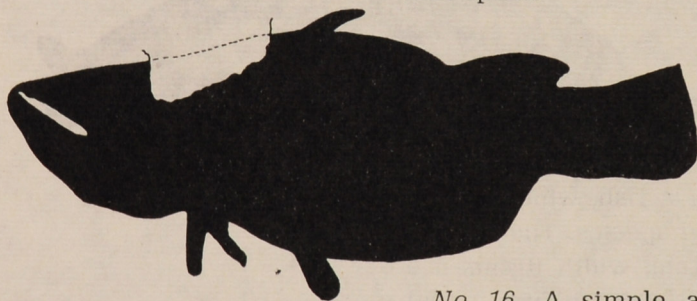
No 14. A rest of a single painting, perhaps a conventionalized picture of a human being. Only the middle and the lower parts of the body are shown. They are depicted in slightly curved and broken line; both arms and the right leg are represented by a single and only once broken line, while the left leg is drawn by a line which is broken twice. White colour was used. The left part of the Site 1. Length 31 cm, width (the span of arms) 18 cm.

No 15.



No 15. A painting representing an anthropomorphic spirit, somewhat similar to the spirits mimi, known from the bark paintings from the Croker Island and published by Kupka (1972, Fig. 23). The right part of the Site 1. Length 46 cm, width (from the end of the hand fingers to the outer line of the back) 15 cm. The head is represented in silhouette and has the form of a slightly elongated, horizontally directed oval with a rather large mouth, directed to the right, that means backward. The bent arms and legs are nearly parallel, and in all cases they are completed by three long fingers. The limbs are directed to the left part of the picture, that is forwards of the figure. The body is straight, narrow, and is broadening from the head downward. It is drawn in a thin, white colour outline. Remnants of this colour inside of the body are perhaps rests of a decoration or some signs, characteristic for that spirit.

No 16.

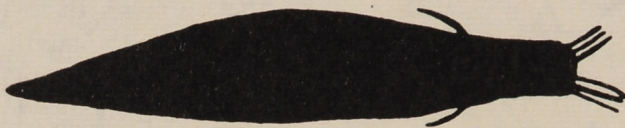


No 16. A simple and for the western part of Arnhem Land typically conventionalized painting of the barramundi fish (*Osteoglossum leichhardtii*). The right part of the Site 1. Length 55 cm, width



21 cm. It is vertically oriented and the body is slightly crooked. The first dorsal fin is not represented and the second dorsal fin as well as anal fin are indicated only in the rough sketch of the whole body. The caudal fin has a form of a simple trapezium and is not clefted. Both pectoral fins are depicted by short and thin lines, which are slightly curved, parallel, and directed backward. The muzzle is represented by a narrow strip not covered with colour. The painting is a silhouette in fresh white colour.

No 17.



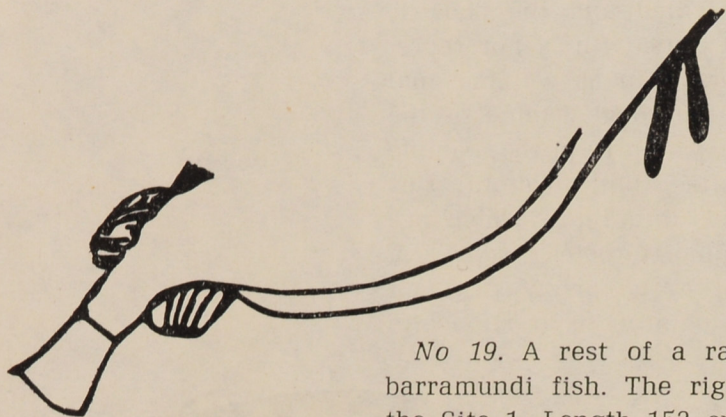
No 17. A very well preserved white silhouette of a catfish, depicted in the view from above. The painting is placed just above the lower edge of the central part of the wall in the Site 1. Length 127 cm, width 25 cm. The beard is made by two triads of the forward-oriented lines on the frontal straight edge of the head. The pectoral fins are painted in a similar way, they are placed on both edges in the first third of the body, and are directed backward. The body is straight, widening in the middle, and the tail is rather short.

No 18. A very badly visible rest of a painting, which probably represented a human being. The upper edge of the boulder in the right part of the Site 1. Length 19 cm, width 13 cm. Only the middle part of the body is preserved, approximately from the waist to the shoulders. The body is depicted by three, not too wide, straight and parallel lines, and the arms, raised sideways, are represented in both cases by a single line, which is bent once. White colour was used. This painting is similar to other anthropomorphic motifs from this locality in the way of conventionalization.



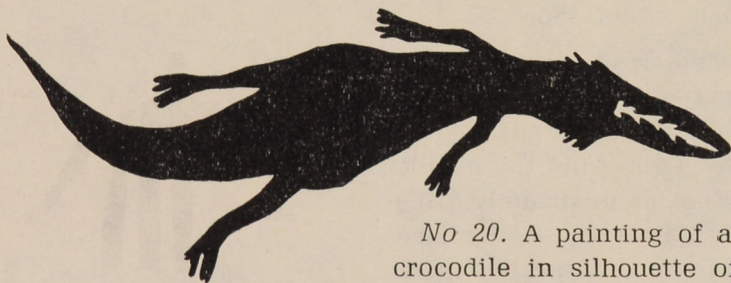
No 18.





No 19.

*No 19.* A rest of a rather large painting of a barramundi fish. The right part of the ceiling in the Site 1. Length 153 cm, width (the distance of the outer edges of the anal and second dorsal fins) 26 cm. Only the lower and the hinder parts of the body are preserved. They were painted by a rather broad line of white colour. Both pectoral fins are drawn by not too wide, straight and parallel lines, that are oriented obliquely backwards. The second dorsal fin as well as anal fin are both approximately semicircle-shaped and their inner area is filled up by parallel lines, directed to the centre of the body. The caudal fin is trapezoid, not split, and is similar to the caudal fin of the fish No 16. This caudal fin is separated from the hinder part of the body by a thin and straight line. White colour was used.



No 20.

*No 20.* A painting of a long and somewhat bent crocodile in silhouette of fresh white colour. Left part of the Site 2. Length 85 cm, width 25 cm. The front and hind limbs are bent once, they are oriented backwards, and ended by short and diverge lines, which represent the fingers. The muzzle is stretched forward and has marked jaws with two



rows of the teeth. The tail is rather long, not much crooked and with smooth edges. There is a combination of views, directed to the various parts of the body: the head is depicted in the side view and the rest of the body in the view from above.

*No 21.* A picture of a crocodile, similar to the previous one. The left part of the Site 2. Length 58 cm, maximum width 32 cm. Also in this case, there is a combination of the side view and the bird's eye view. The muzzle is represented in the side view and, with its painted jaws and teeth, is similar to No 20. The middle part of the body as well as the front and the hind legs are depicted in the view from above, and, finally, the crooked tail is in the side view again. The teeth-like projections are painted along the whole right edge of the tail and they represent skin protuberances which follow the line of the backbone.



I saw this element on the rock painting in the shelter near the Cadell River Crossing, when a young Rembaranga man painted a picture of the same motif. In this case the combination of views on the body of the animal was done in the same way: the head with depicted jaws and teeth and the tail with the skin protuberances were depicted in the side view and the middle part of the body and both couples of legs in the view from above. The same elements exist in the paintings of crocodiles on sheets of bark, which were made by Nangunyari Namiridali (Gunwinggu tribe, Croker Island), and were published by Kupka (1972, Pl. LVIII, LIX, LXIII, LXXV).

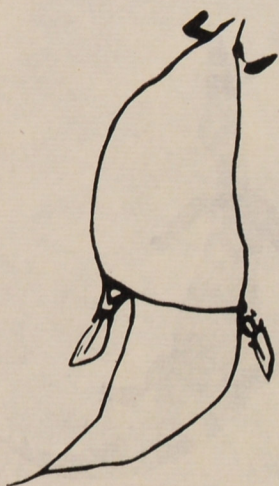
*No 22.* A white, simple outline, representing a goanna or a crocodile. The left part of the Site 2. Length 50 cm, width 26 cm. The painting is fairly conventionalized, without any details of the body — the fingers of the front and hind couples of the legs, eyes, etc. are omitted. The head is circle-shaped and its inside is filled up with two straight and



No 22.



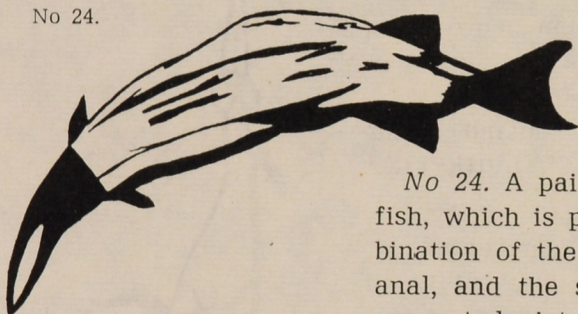
No 23.



mutually crossing lines; the inside part of the body is decorated similarly. The tail is on the level of the hind legs separated from the body by two parallel, rather crooked lines. The hind legs are pictured by simple and wide lines, while the front ones are crooked forward and made by a single uninterrupted line, which runs across the body, as it sometimes appears on the bark paintings (Kupka 1972, Pls. III, IV, VI, XV, XXXI, etc.). The hind legs are broken twice and are directed backwards.

*No 23.* This painting represents probably a part of the body of a goanna or a crocodile, depicted in white outline; the head is left out. The left part of the Site 2. Length 142 cm, width 56 cm. Similarly to the previous painting, this one is a simple picture in the bird's eye view. All border dashes are rather thin. The body is wide and short and its left side is conspicuously convex. The tail is short, wide and softly crooked to the left, separated from the central part of the body by a thin and straight line. The front legs are short, thin, bent once and heading forwards. The hind legs are short, too, fin-like formed and the inside of them is filled up with parallel lines. The details of the body are missing, as it is typical for many other paintings of this locality. Clear white colour was used.

No 24.



*No 24.* A painting representing the barramundi fish, which is painted in the side view in the combination of the outline and the silhouette (caudal, anal, and the second dorsal fins). The other fins are not depicted; the head and the trunk are not separated and are graphically coalescing. The caudal fin has a roughly trapezoid form and is slightly clefted. The remaining fins are semi-circular. The inside of the body is filled up with several lines,



which run from the head across the trunk to the tail and are parallel with the outline of the back. The colour (white) is not fresh. The left part of the Site 2. Length 65 cm, maximal width 13 cm.

No 25. A white outline of a goanna or a crocodile in the view from above. The left part of the Site 2. Length 72 cm, width 35 cm. The animal has a rather narrow body, a short and thick tail and its oval shaped head is placed on a fairly long and narrow neck. The muzzle is represented by two parallel lines, which run out in the front of the frontal edge of the head. The front legs are wide, covered with colour in the whole width. They are bent once and directed ahead. The hind legs are narrower, bent twice and are directed in the same way as the front couple. They are represented by a single line, running across the inner part of the body without interruption, as it is in the case of the front legs on the previous picture of the animal (No 22). The right hind leg is finished by several short and radiately placed lines that represent the fingers. In the inside of the body is a U-shaped dash, going across the inner line that is tying the hind legs.



No 25.

No 26. An outline of a goanna or a crocodile. The left part of the Site 2. Length 76 cm, width 33 cm. It is similar to the previous picture of the same lizard-like animal in the form of its body, both couples of the legs as well as in the combination of the side view (head) and the bird's eye view (remaining parts of the painting). The muzzle is represented by a straight line, going from the front edge to the second third of the length of the head. The similar line, which has probably only the function of a decoration, is running through the centre of the body from the end of the tail, crossing the line tying the hind legs, and is finished near the half of the length of the body. White colour was used.



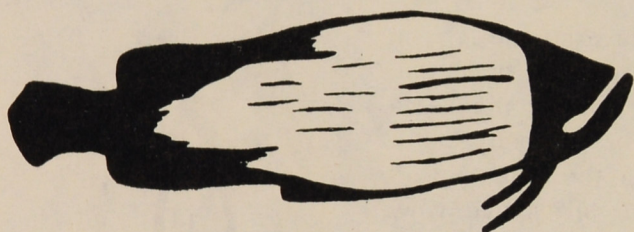
No 26.





No 27.

No 27. A smaller painting of a male wallaby or a kangaroo. The left part of the Site 2. Length 41 cm, width 35 cm. It is a combination of a white outline (the body and the head) and a silhouette executed in the same colour. The border dashes are wide; both front and hind legs in all four cases are bent once and are directed to the head. The line of the back is conspicuously crooked, while the abdomen is flat, and the tail is straight and parallel with the first half of the hind legs. The inside area of the head is filled up with one straight line, running obliquely across, and the similar line appears again on the narrow neck, just in the front of the front legs. The whole painting is conventionalized and has a simple form without any details.



No 28.

No 28. A picture of the barramundi fish painted in yellow-white colour in the outline combined with the silhouette, while the inner surface of the trunk is covered with the lengthwise parallel lines. The body of the fish is straight, rather narrow and long. The head, the tail and the second dorsal fin are painted in silhouette, while the trunk is an outline drawn in very thin lines. The caudal fin is rather

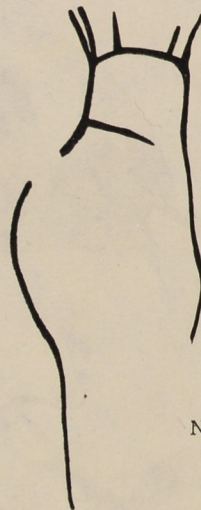


small, has a trapezoid form and its hind edge is convex. The small anal fin is represented only in the sketch of the whole body. The pectoral fins are depicted by two parallel, thin and fairly long lines, oriented obliquely backwards. The muzzle is represented by the narrow strip, not covered by colour, and it is directed in the slight arch obliquely downwards and backwards. The eyes and the first dorsal fin are not represented. The inner area of the trunk is filled up with three unequal columns of lines, that are parallel with the length-wise axis of the body. The left part of the Site 2. Length 61 cm, width 17 cm.

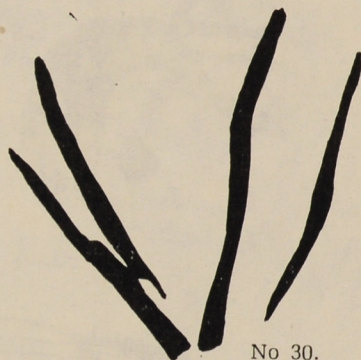
*No 29.* A very damaged painting of a catfish, depicted in yellow outline. The left part of the Site 2. Length 42 cm, width 15 cm. Approximately two thirds of the body are preserved. Considering the form of the head, I think that the creature was painted in the bird's eye view. Two triads of the parallel lines, representing the beard, are depicted on both side edges of the head and are oriented ahead. The head is partially separated from the remaining part of the body by a slightly crooked line, running across, which begins on the left edge of the trunk, but does not come up to the right edge. The outline of the body becomes crooked near the end of the left side, then it collapses sharply down to the center of the trunk and spoils its symmetry. The tail is missing, therefore it is not possible to determine whether the trunk is depicted in the side view or — like the head — in the view from above.

*No 30.* An unidentifiable rest of an old picture — four radiating, short, thin, and straight lines in yellow colour. The left part of the Site 2. Length 11 cm, width 12 cm.

*No 31.* A white rest of a badly damaged painting. It is not possible to identify the motif. The left part of the Site 2. Length 30 cm, width 19 cm.



No 29.



No 30.



No 31.



No 32.



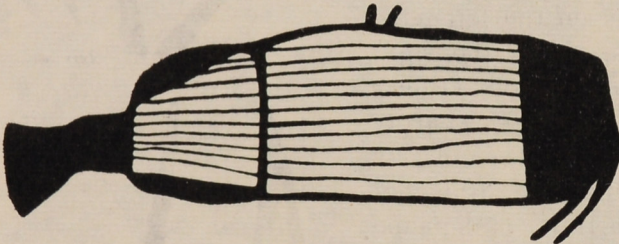
No 32. A badly damaged rest of an old painting done in yellow-white colour. The left part of the Site 2. Length 20 cm, width 15 cm. It probably represents the head of a fish and the frontal part of the pelvic fins. "The head" is depicted in silhouette, the muzzle is formed by a strip not covered with colour and is directed in a slight arch running obliquely down. Only the frontal half of the pelvic fin is drawn.

No 33. A picture (a rest or only an unfinished painting) which is not possible to identify. Only wide dashes and spots of white colour remain. The left part of the Site 2. Length 25 cm, width 30 cm.



No 33.

No 34. A yellow-white painting of a fish, perhaps of barramundi, the outline combined with silhouette, with parallel lines placed inside which are running along the longer axis of the animal. The left part of the Site 2. Length 74 cm, width 22 cm. The body is rather narrow and long, and is depicted in the side view. The silhouette of the head is semi-circular and a sharp line separates it from the trunk. The not split tail, the narrow, semi-oval anal fin, and the second dorsal fin are all painted in the same way.

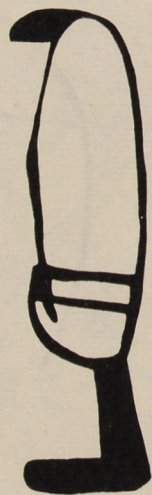


No 34.

Two short, parallel lines are running from the approximate center of the edge of the abdomen; they represent pelvic fins. The inside surface of the trunk is filled up with 11 thin lines, which are parallel with the edge of the back. One vertical, straight and crosswise oriented line divided the trunk in two unequal halves. Two short, thin, and slightly crooked lines, directed obliquely out, are running from the upper edge of the head. Their significance is not clear: they may represent the beard.

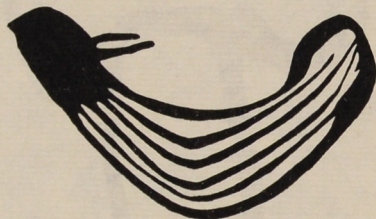


No 35. A damaged painting, or only a rest. The left part of the Site 2. Length 53.5 cm, width 13 cm. An extended oval with two parallel lines running across the first third; from the upper end of the oval, the silhouette of the hooked projection runs out. The outline of the oval is painted in a narrow line of white colour, and the projection is done in white colour as well.



No 35.

No 36. A catfish, a combination of silhouette (tail and head) and outline (trunk) in yellow-white colour. The central part of the Site 2. Length 41 cm, width 12 cm.

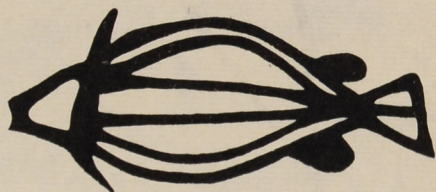


No 36.

No 37. A white outline of a fish. The central part of the Site 2. Length 42 cm, width 15. The small, triangle-shaped head is depicted without the muzzle and the eyes, and the rather short and wide trunk is separated from it by a wide line. The trunk is symmetrical along the longer axis; the tail is short, triangle-shaped and not split. The inner surface of the body is decorated by four lines: two are parallel with the curve of the back and the abdomen, and the other couple, placed between them, is straight and is running along the longer axis of the body. All four dashes are converging in the hinder part of the trunk and, from the point of their connexion, only straight line runs through the central part of the tail to its hinder edge.

No 37.

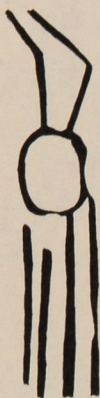
No 38. A painting of an unidentifiable kind of fish. The central part of the Site 2. Length 52 cm, width 8 cm. A simple silhouette of the very narrow and long body is depicted without any details. The back is straight, the curve of the abdomen is slightly crooked, and the tail is triangle-shaped and not



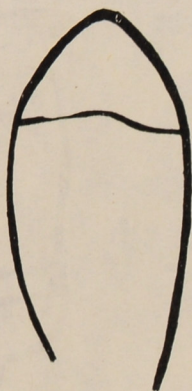
No 38.

clefted. This painting of yellow colour is rather old and badly visible.





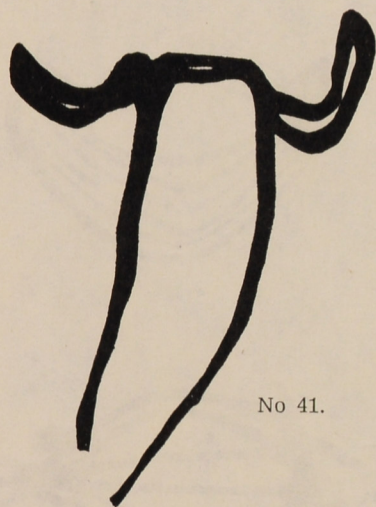
No 39.



No 40.

No 39. An unidentifiable rest of an old painting in yellow colour. The central part of the Site 2. Length 50 cm, width 10 cm.

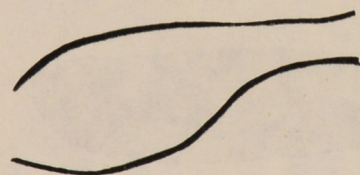
No 40. A rest of an old yellow painting, representing a fish of an unidentifiable kind, which is depicted in the side view. The central part of the Site 2. Length 16 cm, width 6 cm. Only the thin lines of the edges of the central part of the back and the abdomen are preserved. The tail as well as the frontal edge of the head are missing. The details of the head and fins have not been preserved or were omitted.



No 41.

No 41. A badly preserved rest or an unfinished painting which probably represents a goanna or a crocodile. The central part of the Site 2. Length 39 cm, width 31 cm. Only the outline of the central part of the body and couple of the front limbs have been preserved. The painting was made in a wide, now badly visible white line.

No 42. A rest of an old painting, the original form of which is unidentifiable. Only the narrow lines of white colour are distinct. The central part of the Site 2. Length 36 cm, width 16 cm.



No 42.

No 43. This painting consists of six thin and straight lines of white colour, which are directed to one point. I suppose that it is a rest of an unidentifiable old painting. The central part of the Site 2. Length 23 cm, width 22 cm.

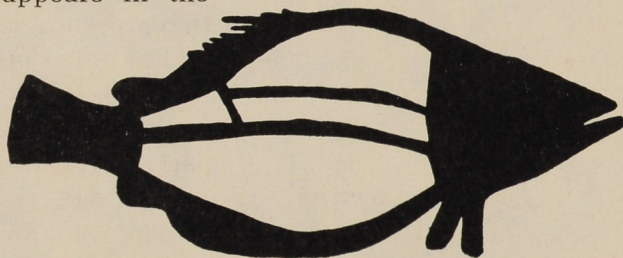
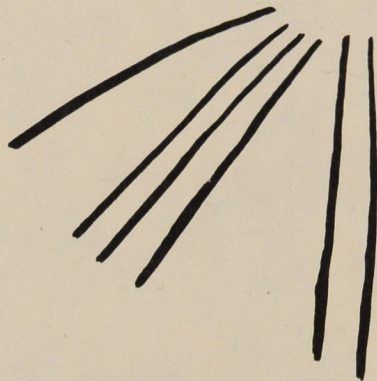
No 44. A very well preserved painting of the barramundi fish with lines which are suggesting its internal structure. The central part of the Site 2. Length 93 cm, width 38 cm. The head, the pelvic fins, the anal fin, the second dorsal fin and the tail are painted in silhouette, while the first dorsal fin is represented by several thin, crooked and obliquely backward directed lines. There are three lines running inside the body, which is not covered by colour. Two of them follow the direction of the longer axis of the trunk and are parallel with the curve of the back; the third one is directed upright



to them and runs from the back to the lower placed line. The muzzle is represented by a narrow and straight strip not covered by colour, directed from the frontal spike of the head backwards. White colour was used.

I consider this picture a representative of the simple X-ray style. If we compare it with other paintings of the barramundi fish from the gallery of the Unbalanya Hill (Mountford 1956, Pls. 37, 39, and 40), which are depicted in the X-ray style, we can see that in the Gumardir River painting the lower line inside the body is depicted in the same way as the backbone of the fish drawn in the classical X-ray style. Some fish from the Unbalanya Hill have other line, which runs between the backbone and the upper edge of the trunk, is parallel with the backbone, and sometimes goes as far as to the caudal fin, while in other cases it finishes in the perpendicular line, which begins near the second dorsal fin. Just the same appears in the case of the painting No 44.

No 43.



No 44.

If it is really an implication of the X-ray style, it is a very good illustration of the substantial simplification of it. In many cases of paintings of the barramundi fish, which are known from the Oenpelli area, two to four colours were frequently used but the author of that one from Gumardir River, in order to gain the polychrome effect, made full use of the contrast of the white colour and of the blackened surface of the rock. The same effect was used by the mentioned Rembaranga man, who painted the picture of a crocodile in a shelter near the Cadell River Crossing. He used only white colour for painting silhouette of a female crocodile with



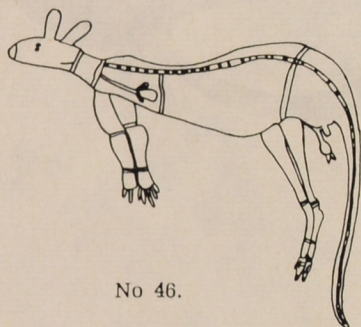
two series of oval-shaped eggs in its abdomen. Those eggs remained black, were not covered by colour, and contrasted well with the silhouette of the body of the animal.

I do not think that painting No 44 represents either the unfinished or a damaged picture in the classical X-ray style. The other paintings from this locality, which are depicted in that style (Nos 46 and 56) are painted in red lines over the homogeneous layer of white colour that extends behind the edges of the picture.

No 45.



No 45. A badly preserved rest of a white outline. The central part of the Site 2. Length 63 cm, width 10 cm. It is difficult to determine its original form. It represents perhaps a goanna or a crocodile. The limbs are not preserved.



No 46.

No 46. A very well preserved picture of a male wallaby or a kangaroo in the X-ray style. The right part of the Site 2. Length 152 cm, width 82 cm. The picture is formed by two layers of different colour. The lower, white layer, is compact. Over it the outline of the body and its anatomical structure is drawn in red lines. This painting corresponds in the form of the head and the body, in the position of the ears, in the form of the front and hind legs, and in the indicating of the details (eyes, fingers and sexual organs) to the paintings of kangaroos and/or wallabies in the X-ray style which were published by Mountford (1956, 1958), Maddock (1970), and Brandl (1968) from western part of Arnhem Land. This painting is, on the other hand, somewhat simpler than the paintings from the west where the use of three or four colours appears (e. g. Prokopec 1974 furnished proves for use of four



colours in El Sherana II) and of the surface between the anatomic organs covered with thin coloured lines, which perhaps serve as a decoration or represent the muscles.

*No 47.* A rest of a simple, conventionalized painting of a wallaby or a kangaroo, depicted in white outline. The right part of the Site 2. Length 62 cm, width 25 cm. Only the head, the legs, the line of the abdomen, a part of the tail and the first quarter of the back are preserved. The picture is similar to other paintings of this locality by its simplicity and absence of any important details. On the other hand, the picture is not different from the kangaroos' paintings from the western part of Arnhem Land in the form of its head, limbs and the line of the abdomen.



No 47.

*No 48.* A painting, representing probably a goanna in an unusual side view. The picture is white, well preserved and vertically directed. The right part of the Site 2. Length 62 cm, width (it means the width of the body only, without protuberances or limbs) 3 cm. As in many other paintings from this locality, some details of the body are left out, with the exception of the long tongue and protuberances on the back and tail (where they are depicted on the side of the abdomen). One hind leg is omitted. It holds good for all, at least for the majority of younger paintings (as this one) in the western part of Arnhem Land, that if the bodies are depicted in the side view, all four limbs are represented.



No 48.

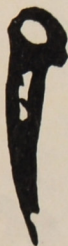
*No 49.* A rest of a wallaby drawn in outline, showing the head, the frontal part of the abdomen and the back. The right part of the Site 2. Length 77 cm, width 58 cm. The picture is painted in a single and rather thin, white line, only one front leg is depicted in silhouette. Similarly to many paintings from this locality, some details (muzzle, eyes, ears) are omitted, but others are presented (fingers of the front leg).



No 49.



No 50.



No 51.



No 52.

I suppose that this is an unfinished painting. The colour is fairly fresh and round the preserved lines on the surface of the wall no traces of colour can be seen. My opinion is based mainly on the usual way of painting, no matter if it is a painting on the rock or the sheet of bark, because, as I saw it in the Cadell River Crossing area, the working process is the same (Novotný 1974). Before everything, the author paints the outline of the subject, then he covers it with colour and turns it into silhouette, later he paints the outline with another colour and so on. The body of this wallaby is depicted only in the outline, but the front leg is done in a silhouette. In many localities (and this one is no exception) such paintings can be found, when the silhouette and the outline are combined. It is very frequent especially in kangaroos and wallabies. Such paintings, however, are usually small and the limbs are not depicted in a real silhouette, but only in wider lines. In relation to the usual small size of the body, the limbs depicted in a silhouette would be too wide, and, on the other hand, the single line unnaturally thin.

*No 50.* Probably another unfinished painting: rather thick lines are well visible and, around them, there are no rests of colour. White colour was used. The right part of the Site 2. Length 9 cm, width 3.5 cm.

*No 51.* A white silhouette of a wallaby or a kangaroo, depicted in the usual side view. The right part of the Site 2. Length 135 cm, width 29 cm. This picture is well preserved and it seems to be very young. The form of the body and its pose is not different from other paintings of that subject which are known from the western part of Arnhem Land. Some details are depicted (ears or fingers of both front and hind legs), others are omitted (eyes, muzzle, sexual organs).

*No 52.* A white silhouette of a male wallaby/kangaroo, well preserved and similar to the previous

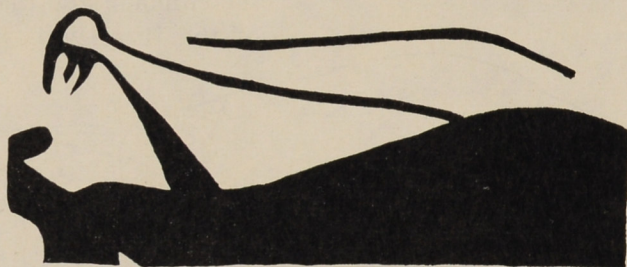


picture. The right part of the Site 2. Length 105.5 cm, width 36 cm.

No 53. White silhouette of a wallaby/kangaroo. The right part of the Site 2. Length 30 cm, width of the body only 6 cm. The picture is slightly damaged — the colour from some parts of the body is fallen down and front legs are completely missing. But the colour is fresh and, therefore, the picture does not seem to be older than the previous one. In comparison with No 52, however, this depiction is simpler and more schematic.



No 54. A rest of an old painting of a wallaby kangaroo. Length 57 cm. The right part of the Site 2. Only a badly visible outline of the hinder part of the head and small part of the back-line are preserved. This line is simultaneously followed by another one of the same colour and of the same curving. Both fragments are close to the painting of the kangaroo/wallaby, No 52, they are nearly parallel with the outline of its back and have the same curving, too. I do not eliminate the possibility that both lines are rests of a sketch, which was done in the time of painting of the mentioned picture.



When observing the procedure of the painting of the crocodile near the Cadell River Crossing, I noticed that the author used similar sketches. First of all, he made the outline of the whole subject, then he corrected the sketch, and, finally, he covered the inside surface of the body with a compact layer of colour. I suppose, from this analogy, that these small rests are only the sketch-lines of the painting No 52.

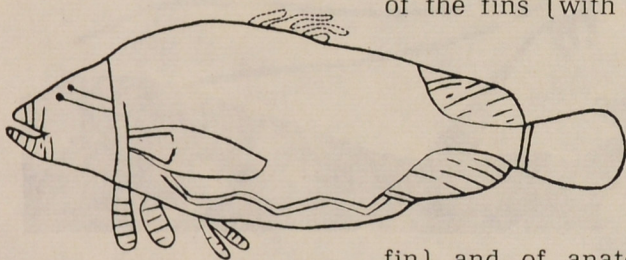


No 55.



No 55. A well preserved silhouette in white colour, representing a rare black wallaby (*Osphranter bernardus*) which is typical by its brush-like tail, and is sometimes imaged on the rock (Mountford 1958, Pl. XIII, c) or on the sheets of bark (Mountford 1956, Pl. 73, B). This picture is not different from other paintings of kangaroos or wallabies from this locality in that it lacks all details, too, with the exception of the typical brush near the end of the tail. The right part of the Site 2. Length 43 cm, width 13 cm.

No 56. A well preserved, young painting of a barramundi fish, which has — similarly to other paintings of this species of fish in both shelters — a rather narrow outline of the body. The right part of the Site 2. Length 80 cm, width 23 cm. The picture illustrates also details, for example both eyes, the muzzle, the bronchial arch, the structure of fins etc. The X-ray style can be implicated (two colours are used only — white and red), even if in a very simplified form. This picture lacks the depiction of the backbone — in contrast to similar paintings from the classical locality Unbalanya — and shows only the stomach and the bowels. The outline of the body, of the fins (with the exception of the first dorsal



No 56.

fin) and of anatomic details is depicted in red colour, while the inside surface is covered with white colour. In white colour also the first dorsal fin (four obliquely backwards directed lines) is depicted.

In this case, one feature is to be stressed, which I mentioned in my description of the barramundi fish No 44: below the red lines, the surface is covered with a compact layer of white colour. The red lines,



representing the outline of the body and its anatomical details, are placed on this layer and not behind it.

*No 57.* A well preserved, young painting of a fish, perhaps barramundi. The right part of the Site 2. Length 31 cm, width 10 cm. It is a white outline and the inner surface of the body is decorated with parallel lines, which run along the lengthwise axis. Some details are omitted (for example both eyes) and others (the fins) are depicted.



No 57.

*No 58.* A very badly visible stencil of a left hand. The right part of the Site 2. Length 32 cm, width 19 cm. White colour was used. This is the same kind of stencil as are those from the Site 1.



No 58.

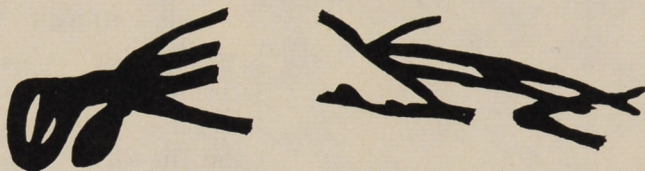
*No 59.* A very badly visible rest of a picture of a fish (barramundi). The left part of the Site 2. Only a small part of the whole body is preserved, namely: the tail and the hinder edges of the anal as well as the second dorsal fins.

Some centimeters to the right of this rest, there is a part of a picture, which is — according to its colouring and position — perhaps a rest of the central part of the trunk of that fish. The lower edge of this painting — in the place, where was or could have been the outline of the abdomen — is bordered by a red dash, which is, however, omitted in the tail.



No 59.

Length of the tail 29 cm, width 30 cm; length of the fragment with red outline 19 cm, width 20 cm.



No 60.

*No 60.* A rest of an unpreserved picture, consisted of undistinct and thin lines of white colour. The left part of the Site 2. Length 100 cm, width 14 cm.

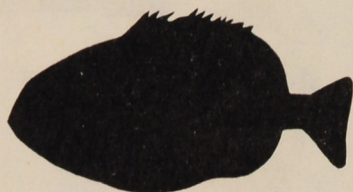


No 61.



No 61. A painting of a fish (barramundi). The left part of the Site 2. Length 52 cm, width 19 cm. It is a well visible and rather new painting in white silhouette, which is characteristic — similarly to nearly all paintings of fish in this locality — by a rather narrow body. Even if the painting is conventionalized, the painter depicted all signs, which are typical for this kind of fish: the rather long tail, the shape and the position of the muzzle and localization of the anal and the second dorsal fins.

No 62.



No 62. A very badly distinct white silhouette of a barramundi fish. The central part of the Site 2. Length 24.5 cm, width 14 cm. The outline of its body is striking by its width, which is a typical sign for the pictures of the barramundi fish in other localities of the western part of Arnhem Land, and which is surprisingly wide in comparison with all the paintings on that subject from both sites of this block. It does not seem that the author depicted all details of the body, like the bronchial arch, the muzzle or the eyes.

Beside of these described pictures, there is a rather great number of rests of paintings in both sites; but those are formed only by undistinct spots of colour. With regard to the colour used in the paintings, we can divide these fragments into several groups:

- (a) red spots are in the central part of the wall in the Site 1, and on nine places of the right part of the Site 2;
- (b) white spots are in the central and left parts of the ceiling in the Site 1 and on twelve places of the Site 2;
- (c) one insignificant rest of the picture in X-ray style is placed above the lower edge of the wall on the right part of the Site 2 (under the stencil of a hand No 64);
- (d) a rather great number of white spots with the gentle red interior line designs or a red outline can be found in many places in the Site 2;



(e) two nearly vertical stripes are on the wall in the right part of the Site 2. The stripe A is approximately 30 cm wide, its central part is white and both edges are red; it is running between the pictures Nos 47 and 50 in the downwards direction to the left to the picture No 57. The length of it is approximately 2 m.

The stripe B narrower (15 cm), has a white center, which is bordered by narrower stripes of black and yellow colour. The stripe B is parallel with the previous one, runs between the paintings Nos 54 and 61 in the direction downwards to the No 64. Its length is approximately 2 m, too.

Several isolated rock paintings appear on boulders round this block. For lack of time I was not able to make copies of them.

As follows from the description as well as from the sketches, both sites contain 62 pictures and remnants of them and a certain number of more closely unidentifiable dashes and spots.

Seven different motifs appear in this locality: anthropomorphic figures, fish, catfish, kangaroo/wallaby, goanna/crocodile,<sup>2)</sup> stencils of hands, and unidentifiable subjects. These pictures were depicted in ten different fashions and four kinds of colour were used.

Schematic sketches of both sites shows the occurrence of the same motifs concentrated in four places. In the left lower part of the Site 1 is a group of three catfish and of one fish; on the left part of the site 2 a group of six paintings of goanna/crocodile appears; in the central part of the Site 2 are five pictures of fish and three rests, which could represent fish as well; and in the right part of the same Site is a group of eight pictures of kangaroo/wallaby.

It does not seem likely that these four interesting centres originated by chance. If these groups, however, were done on purpose, it could show that



the individual paintings were not meant as single rendering of the subject but as a part of a large whole following a certain composition scheme. Or, there is another possibility, namely that some centres of shelters had some special meaning for aboriginal society and that these centres with different motifs could be placed side by side. Unfortunately, I did not meet any Aborigines there, and for that reason I was not able to make inquiries about the meaning of those centres.

#### Superimposition

The superimposition of paintings is frequent in both Sites; it occurs in twenty cases. In two of them, however, it is very difficult to decide which painting is superimposed. It is caused by the same shade of the colour used and — as I suppose — by small differences in the age of paintings.

From the analysis of the superimposition of paintings (see Tabl. No 1) we can derive the basic facts about the relative age of them, and\* further, the information about the possible subsequence in using of different colours as well as fashions.

- (a) the yellow colour is covered with the white one; in no case the contrary covering of the white colour with the yellow one appears;
- (b) the yellow-white colour is covered with the white one, and never in the opposite way;
- (c) the yellow-white colour never covers any other painting;
- (d) the white colour in combination with the red inside line designs or with the red outline appears only in unidentifiable remnants of old paintings; no picture of this fashion is preserved;
- (e) in one case the painting in the X-ray style is partially covered with a white silhouette;
- (f) in the second case the X-ray style covers the picture, which is done in white outline;
- (g) no picture in the X-ray style is covered with either a painting done in yellow or yellow-white colour or with rest of the painting, executed in white colour combined with the red inner line designs or a red outline;
- (h) the white outline never covers the white silhouette;



- (i) the white silhouette covers the white outline;
- (j) the combination of the white silhouette and the outline, or of the white silhouette, the white outline and the inner line designs does not cover the white silhouette or the white outline. The picture No 54 (kangaroo/wallaby in the white outline) is, though covered by the painting of the kangaroo/wallaby, depicted in the combination of the white silhouette and the white outline (No 49), but — as I mentioned in the description of the painting — No 49 is in fact an unfinished white silhouette.

On the ground of all these facts, it is possible to take for granted that the oldest preserved paintings of this locality are rests of white silhouettes with red inner line design or with a red outline, and the badly presented red dashes. Approximately of the same age are the rests of white paintings (perhaps silhouettes which — contrarily to the previous types — occurred during a long time, because the white silhouettes are also among the youngest paintings of this locality. In one part of the period of the white paintings, the paintings in the yellow colour and perhaps also the pictures in yellow-white colour came into existence. Neither the yellow paintings nor yellow-white ones belong to the youngest paintings (they are covered with the paintings in white colour) nor to the oldest pictures, because I did not find any rest of the yellow or yellow-white picture, which would be similar by the state of its preservation to the unidentifiable rests of white paintings, red paintings or paintings done in the combination of the white and red colours.

Probably before the period or periods in which the paintings in the yellow and yellow-white colour originated, also the badly damaged picture in the X-ray style [see p. 88 under (c)] was painted. The painting of the kangaroo/wallaby, depicted in the X-ray style (No 46), however, covers the white outline (No 47), and No 56 (X-ray style picture of a barramundi fish) is covered with a white silhouette of a kangaroo/wallaby (No 51). Both these paintings in the X-ray style seem to be the youngest in the locality, while the rest [p. 88 under (c)], depicted also in the X-ray style, is older than paintings in the yellow and the yellow-white silhouettes and outlines.



From what has been said can be concluded that (1) the rest of the unpreserved picture in the X-ray style is older than the yellow silhouettes and outlines, (2) pictures Nos 46 and 56 are rather young and are of the same age as the white silhouettes and the outlines, and — finally — (3) the X-ray style was used in the same period when the pictures in white, yellow and yellow white colour were done. So, the period of time, in which the paintings in the X-ray style originated, was rather long and was not typical by using that fashion only, because in the same time also the white, the yellow and the yellow-white paintings of different fashions had their origin.

Some paintings, however, depicted in different fashions, are not covered with other pictures and therefore it is not possible to determine the relative age of them in this way. But the stage of preservation shows at least the approximate time of their origin.

I suppose that to schedule the hand stencils in any subsequence is very difficult. They appear frequently all over Australia, and are probably one of the most frequent motifs in all painting periods. They appear even today: Crawford (1968, 22, Fig. 11) published the description of the making process of them in northern Kimberley, and I saw the same near the Cadell River Crossing as well (Novotný 1974).

All three stencils of a hand in this locality are done in white colour. They are in a different state of preservation; the most badly preserved stencil (No 58), which is probably the oldest one, is better visible than the white silhouette of the barramundi fish (No 62) which is older than this stencil. Other two stencils from the Site 1 are better visible, they are thus younger than No 58 and originated in the same time as the other paintings in white colour. It means that all stencils of this locality originated in the period which had begun after the origin of the spots of the red colour and of the spots with the combination of the red and white colour. The period of the stencils is long, even if the youngest stencil (No 9) does not belong to the youngest paintings of the locality. It is curious, however, that the stencils in some other shade of colour do not appear here.

The antropomorphic picture No 1 is yellow and the condition of its preservation is the same as that of all other yellow paintings from both Sites. It holds good even for



the yellow "silhouettes" of the Nos 2, 3, and 4. They all originated in the same time as all other yellow paintings of this locality.

### The Age of Paintings

I suppose that the pictures from this locality are not too old. This opinion is based on mutual relation of the state of preservation of the paintings, of the colours used there, and of the way of using of both shelters by Aborigines.

The colour most frequently used in both Sites is the white one, for which a rather small durability is typical. The rock paintings in white colour, which I saw in other localities in the central and western parts of Arnhem Land, were frequently very damaged, even if their colour had a fresh look. Several hundred years old red paintings, depicted in the so called mimi-style, were never so badly damaged. It means that the well preserved pictures in white colour are very young. In this time, or several years ago, white colour has still been used. It appears frequently on the bark paintings and on the contemporary rock pictures.

An old Rembaranga painter frequently used just that colour shade near the Cadell River Crossing. This painter, called Mandarrg, is the author of several rock paintings in that area and of paintings on sheets of bark. He used four colour shades (white, yellow, red, and black) but he preferred the white one. His pictures were depicted in different fashions: a white silhouette, a white silhouette with a red outline, the X-ray style in the combination of the all above-mentioned colours (but paintings on the rock were made by two shades only: white and red) and the splash-spotting of red and white (the Mandarrg's painting of that fashion was published by Maddock 1970, Pl. 6).

Bunganial, son of Mandarrg, depicted for us the above mentioned painting of the white silhouette — or more exactly a simplified monochrome X-ray style picture — of a crocodile and several stencils of his hands. He is the author of many other rock paintings in this area as well as of bark paintings. He used white colour as the basic one, too.

If we regard Mandarrg and his son Bunganial as typical representatives of painters on bark and rock, then we cannot



exclude the probability that also other authors use different colours and paint in different fashions. Unfortunately, there are no published data concerning other authors of rock paintings, but some information about painters of bark paintings exists (Kupka 1972)<sup>3</sup>).

Because of it, we may accept the fact that although in both Sites of the described locality pictures in different colours as well as fashions appear, it need not be a sign of the different age of their origin.

Approximately in the half of the distance between the Gumardir River and Oenpeli, there are paintings on several rock walls in the valley of the Birraduck Creek. These pictures (silhouettes and outlines) are painted in yellow colour. Considering their motifs I am of the opinion that they are very young — they came into existence about the end of the World War II or soon after. My opinion is based on the painting (silhouette) illustrating an airplane of the type Catalina (Fig. V), which was used by the Allied Airforce and appeared in this part of Australia at the time of danger of the Japanese invasion to the Northern Territory. Besides this picture which is possible to date with a great accuracy, there are other paintings in yellow colour in this locality, illustrating an European axe (silhouette), a face of a white man with a hat (outline) (Fig. VI), a boat (silhouette) and an unidentifiable kind of another airplane (silhouette) (Fig. VII). The yellow silhouette of the other exceptional motif — an isolated head of a horse — is depicted on one of the shelters about 4 km southerly of Cahills Crossing near Oenpelli (Fig. VIII).

I think the yellow colour was preferred and used in this way in the time, which is not too far off today, but it was superimposed by another period preferring the white colour. Mandarrg and his son, however, were using the yellow colour, too, but they used it only for depicting complementary details and for line designs, which fill up inner surfaces of pictures in the X-ray style.

Another important fact is that the authors of the pictures, depicted in white and yellow, painted in several different graphic fashions. I deduce from it that the pictures in the form of the white silhouette, the white outline, the white outline with



interior line designs in the same colour, the yellow silhouette, the yellow outline, the X-ray style, the red-and-white splash-spotting (and perhaps some others) do not represent seven different time periods but only two, eventually one (because the short "yellow" period belongs also inside the rather long "white" period).

For the age of paintings also the condition of preserving is important. In the case of this locality, it is closely connected with the way of using both sites by the Aborigines.

Both shelters form a natural protection against the rain (with the exception of the right part of the Site 2), and they could be used like a convenient hiding place during wet seasons.

On the ground of the findings of different organic remnants and stone implements on the bottom of both Sites (especially of the Site 2) it is evident that these shelters were really used in this way (see the next chapter).

In this place, I want to draw attention only to a lot of ash on the ground of the Site 2. It shows that fire burned here frequently; its origin is not important in this place. It is possible to deduce from the findings on the ground that the last fire burned here in time, which is not too far off today. Most of the ash is on the bottom in the left part of the Site 2. Those paintings, which I mark as well visible or well preserved, have no symptoms of the soot, and therefore they are younger than the upper layer of the ash. I infer from the condition of the organic remnants, which are liable to a rapid destruction (bark, wood) in the tropic climate of North Australia, that the last fire burned here just before my visit (1969), probably sometimes in the years 1966—1969.

#### The Original Significance of the Described Paintings for the Aborigines

Unfortunately, neither during my stay in the locality nor in Oenpelli, I met any Aborigines who would had been able to inform me about the significance of the rock paintings or of the use of both Sites. Therefore, I can only try to sketch a general explanation of their meaning based on the function of both Sites.



As I mentioned above in the general description of the locality, we found a rather high number of stone implements on the bottom in both Sites. Beside them, there were also fragments of wood, sheets of worked up eucalyptus bark, bones, shells of salt-water as well as fresh-water molluscs and ash.

It is possible to divide the found stone implements into two groups: the real stone tools and the cores. The innumerable multitude of fine flakes, arising during the fine retouching of the new implements or during the secondary retouching, were in the earth of the ground of the Site 2 and just in front of it. The first retouch had been generally done in workshops or in camp-sites, while the secondary retouch only in camp-sites. The large and rough flakes, resulting from flaking off cores from which pieces for a detailed retouching were selected, were rare in this locality. I think therefore that both Sites were never used as workshops and that at least the Site 2 was the camp-site of a social unit.

I wrote that the broad entrance of the Site 2 was rimmed by a not too high, wide mound. During our stay in the locality, we dug the shallow sound across this mound and we ascertained that the stone implements appear in a 50 cm high layer. This layer contained a number of implements proportionally placed in all its parts. It means that the locality — camp-site — was not inhabited only from time to time, but almost constantly or continually. We can infer from the sheets of the eucalyptus bark, which still were in a very good condition and were rather fresh, that the last aboriginal visit occurred not long before our arrival.

The shallow and smooth concavities, produced by the grinding of axe and perhaps even by the rubbing of colour, are on the surfaces of five large boulders on the ground in the left and central parts of the Site 2. The first boulder has eight concavities, the second seven, the third five, the fourth seven and the fifth 84. Two similar concavities are in the Site 1 and several others are on the surfaces of the boulders, scattered near the block. I found similar concavities also in workshops near Cadell River Crossing, but their number was never so high. The presence of more than 120 concavities is an evidence that the locality was used as a camp-site and that this camp-site



was used for a long time. I think we can take for granted that at least the Site 2 was used as the camp-site.

If at least one of both Sites was a camp-site, then women and children, thus uninitiated members of an aboriginal community were able to see these paintings on the walls of both sites. I deduce from it that these paintings had no connection with any rituals, accessible only to adult men. Further, I think that they had no religious meaning at all, because of the profane character of the camp-site. On the other hand I was not able to get any aboriginal information that would confirm any of the explanations given by Elkin concerning the Doria Cave (1952, 247). It is possible that some paintings had the meaning of information about animals to be hunted, or that they were sketches, painted by youths, who learnt to paint. I incline to the last-mentioned explanation which makes the existence of unfinished pictures clear. These unfinished pictures cannot appear in the sacred galleries, of course.

#### Comparison with Paintings of other Localities

The detailed comparison with the paintings of other localities is very difficult because too damaged pictures and rests are usually not included in published records. From other localities all paintings have not been published, e. g. from the Oenpelli area only a selected part of paintings has been published (Mountford 1956). Many other known sites containing paintings (El Sherana, Birraduk Creek Valley, Deaf Adder Creek, Cadell River Crossing, Bulman Gorge, Yaimanyi Creek, and so on) have not yet been worked out or published at all. Therefore, the following comparison will be neither detailed nor definite.

In this locality, the paintings of the same motifs appear as in other sites in the western direction off the Gumardir River. The only two motifs, which I am not able to find among the rock paintings elsewhere, are those tree-shaped pictures formed by thick yellow lines, which are running so close each other that the whole picture looks like a silhouette (Nos 2, 3, 4), and a spirit (probably a mimi) that has a certain similarity with some spirits known from bark paintings (No 15).

For almost all paintings of this locality, the simplification of the form and the omission of details is characteristic. In the



pictures of fish, catfish, kangaroo/wallaby, and goanna/crocodile, the eyes, muzzles, fingers, fins, etc. are usually not depicted. Some paintings from Sleisbeck (Mountford 1958) and St. Vigeon (Mountford — Brandl 1967) usually show such simplifications, too, but on the other hand, the paintings where the details are depicted are more frequent here than in the Gumardir River. For the whole Oenpelli area, the paintings with executed details are typical while the number of simplified pictures is rather small. The same holds good even for the undescribed localities in the direction to the south-west (Deaf Adder Creek) or to the east (Cadell River Crossing, Yaimanyi Creek).

Among the more detailed paintings, also the motifs which we do not find at the Gumardir River appear, e. g. emu, snake, flying-fox, echidna, turtle, and others.

The small number of anthropomorphic motifs and stencils of hands in the locality is surprising.

Beside the mentioned simplification of forms, a certain small alternation in the form of the barramundi fish body appear in this locality. Bodies of the barramundies are, with the exception of Painting No 62, rather narrow. Paintings of the same motifs are usually wider in the classical locality Unbalanya Hill (Mountford 1956).

Another difference exists in the X-ray paintings. Pictures with depicted anatomic structure of the body, known from other places, have almost in all cases more complicated and detailed build. There are usually more fully depicted entrails, sometimes the muscles are illustrated and even four different colours in one painting appear. Both paintings from the Gumardir River (Nos 46 and 56), which are depicted in the X-ray style, have only the minimum of anatomic details. The explanation that the Gumardir River is too far from the center of the use of that fashion cannot hold out. The paintings of kangaroo/wallaby published by Maddock (1970, Pls. 1—5) and by Prokopec (1974) are more detailed, even if the localities lay in a greater distance from Oenpelli than the Gumardir River, and even if they lay in another tribal area (Djauan), while both Oenpelli and Gumardir River are in the territory of the same tribe (Gunwinggu). Similarly, more detailed are the paintings in the X-ray style which appear near the Cadell River Crossing (I suppose



that this is the most eastern locality with pictures in this fashion). Unfortunately, I am not able to give any evidence for it.

#### C o n c l u s i o n

The rock paintings from two Sites, placed in the most eastern part of the Gunwinggu tribal territory, have some different marks in comparison with paintings, known from the more western and the eastern parts of Arnhem Land. From this comparison follows, that a mature skill in painting on rocks is no speciality for the mentioned tribe. The paintings of the described locality, even if they are frequently badly preserved, are rather young and probably have neither ritual nor religious significance.

The age of the paintings was roughly determined. Even if the pictures painted in ten different fashions, in three colours and combinations of colours there appear, they all originated in one period of time. It means that one fashion in one colour shade do not represent one period. According to my opinion this piece of knowledge does not hold good only for the cave paintings of the Gunwinggu tribe but also for other tribes.



## Notes

1) I visited this locality as an enthnologist of the Czechoslovak Scientific Expedition to Australia in September 1969. I should like to thank to all who participated in the preparation of the expedition, to all team members and particularly to Mr. E. J. Brandl M. A. of the Welfare Branch, Darwin, who initiated and organized our visit of this locality.

2) In some cases, it was not possible to recognize if paintings represented a kangaroo or a wallaby, a crocodile or a lizard.

3) From the pictures of the mentioned study the fact that many authors of bark paintings have painted in different fashions can be drawn. The painter Namatbara (Ivatya tribe, Croker Island), the X-ray style (Pls. on the pages 52, 54, 55, 67, 68, 70, 76), the silhouettes (Pls. on the pages 52, 53, 55, 56).

Nangunyari-Namiridali (Gunwinggu tribe, Croker Island) the silhouettes with an outline and an inner line design or designs (58, 59, 60, 61), the silhouettes with an inner line design or designs (57, 61, 62, 63, 90), the X-ray style (61, 90 /?/).

Midjau-Midjau (Gunwinggu tribe, Croker Island), the X-ray style (42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50, 51, 65, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 90), the silhouettes with outline (46, 77) the silhouettes with inner line designs 46, 47, 50, 67).

Irala (Gunwinggu tribe, Croker Island), the X-ray style (37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 65, 67, 68, 69, 74, 75, 89, 90), the outline with inner line designs (64), the silhouettes with inner line designs (38, 64).

Wagbara (Maung tribe, Croker Island), the X-ray style (44, 45, 68), the silhouette with an outline and inner line designs (69).

Malangi (Manarrngu tribe, Milingimbi), the silhouette with inner line designs (17), the silhouettes with an outline and inner line designs (17, 20, 29, 33, 35, 93).

Barrngandi (Wulaki tribe, Milingimbi), the X-ray style (18), the silhouettes with an outline and inner line designs (8, 24).



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Tabl. No 1. The superimposition of the paintings

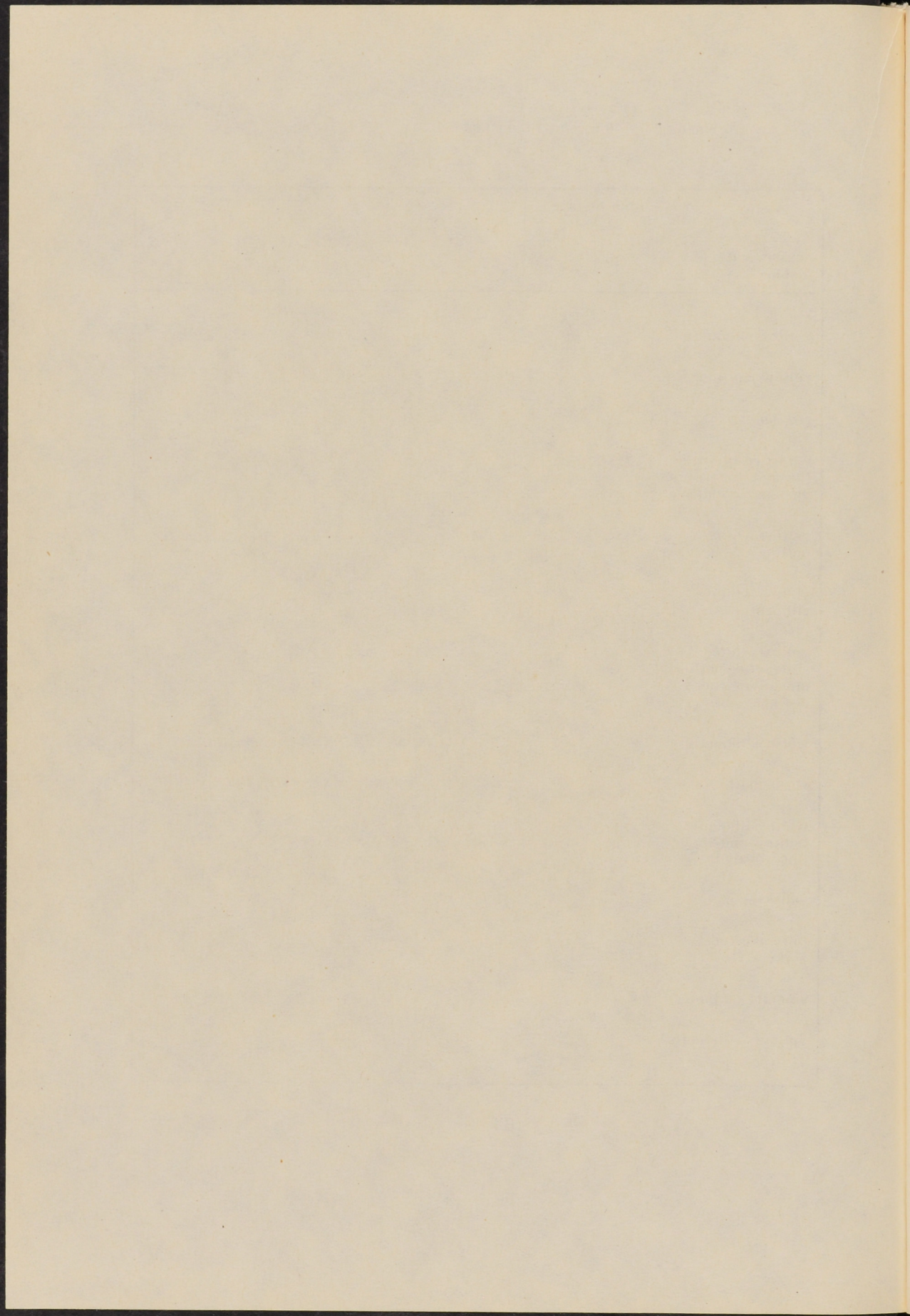
painting No	motif	fashion	colour	covered by the younger painting No	motif	fashion	colour
3	?	silhouette	yellow	5	goanna	silhouette	white
4							
11	catfish	silhouette	white	14	anthropo- morphic	outline	white
12	catfish						
13	fish						
29	catfish	outline	yellow	20	goanna	silhouette	white
24	fish	silhouette, outline and inner line designs	white	23	goanna	outline	white
22	goanna	outline	white	?? 23	goanna	outline	white
23	goanna	outline	white	?? 26	goanna	outline	white
24	fish	silhouette, outline and inner line designs	white	31	?	?	white
28	fish	silhouette, outline and inner line designs	yellow- white	27	kangaroo	silhouette, outline	white
34	fish	silhouette, outline and inner line designs	yellow- white	35	?	silhouette, outline	white
39	?	?	yellow	38	fish	silhouette	yellow
40	fish	outline	yellow	41	goanna	outline	white
47	kangaroo	outline	white	46	kangaroo	X-ray style	red, white
54	kangaroo	outline	white	52	kangaroo	silhouette	white
stripe A				46	kangaroo	X-ray style	white, red
				48	goanna	silhouette	white
				49	kangaroo	silhouette outline	white
stripe B				49	kangaroo	silhouette outline	white
54	kangaroo	outline	white	49	kangaroo	silhouette outline	white
56	fish	X-ray style	white, red	51	kangaroo	silhouette	white



Tabl. No 2. The Approximate Time of the Origin of Paintings from Gumardir River, Depicted in Different Fashions and Different Colours.

colour and fashion	time of origin			
	???	1940—1945	???	? 1969
yellow silhouette		XXXXX	X	
yellow outline		XXXXX	X	
red spots	XXX			
white rests with the red inner line designs or outline	XXX			
yellow-white outline		XXXXX	X	
yellow-white silhouette		XXXXX	X	
yellow-white silhouette, outline and inner line designs		XXXXX	X	
white silhouette	X?X?X	?X?X?X?XXX	XXXXXXXXXX	X
white outline	X?X?X	?X?X?X?XX	XXXXXXXXXX	X
white silhouette, outline and inner line designs	X?	X?	XXXXXXXXXX	
white spots	XXX			
white-and-red X-ray style	XXX		X	X
stencils of hands		X	X	X
yellow "silhouette"			X	



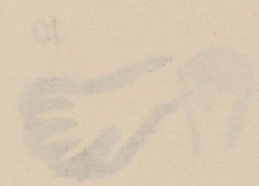




The south of the site 1



111 31



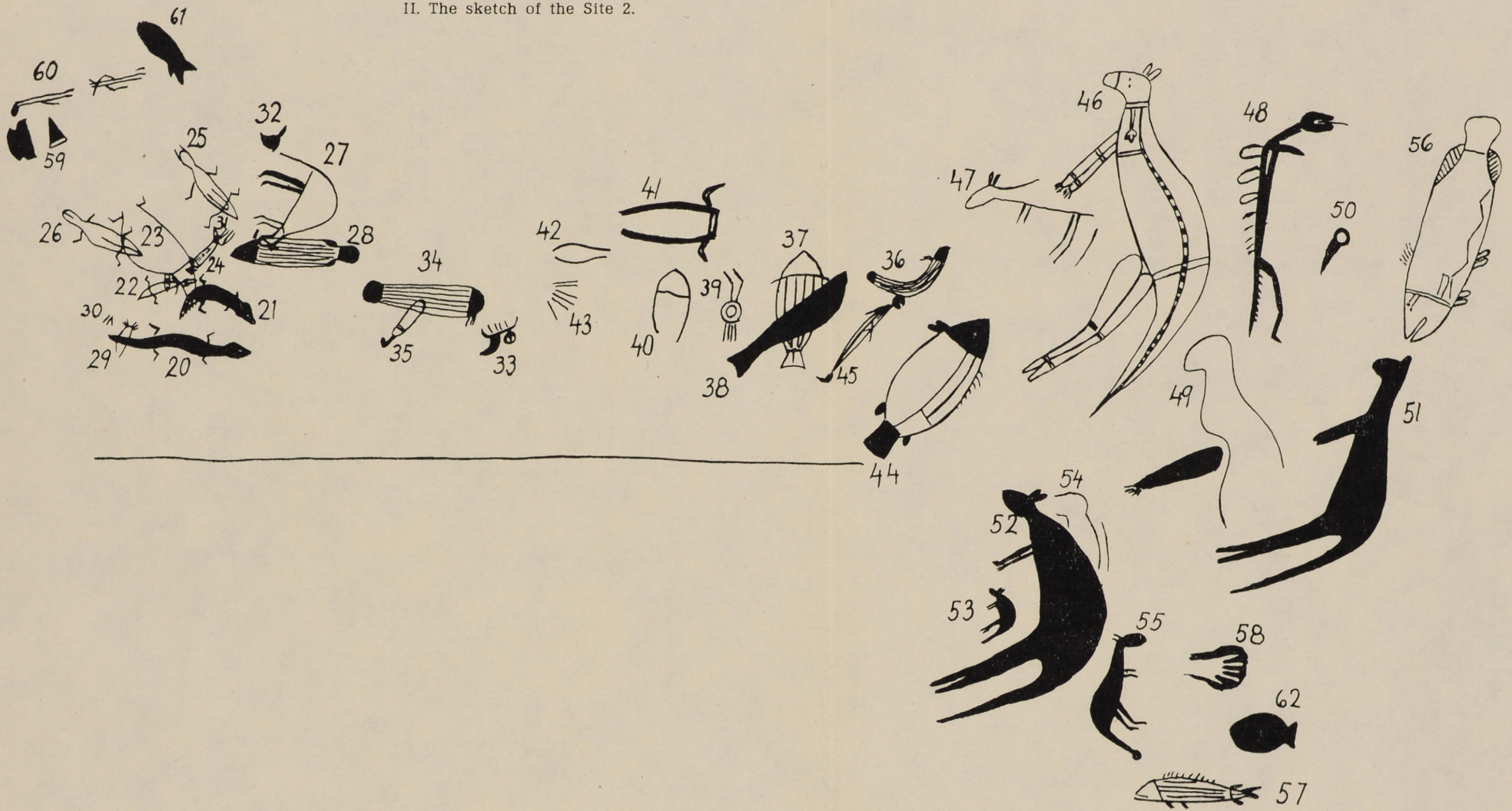


I. The sketch of the Site 1.

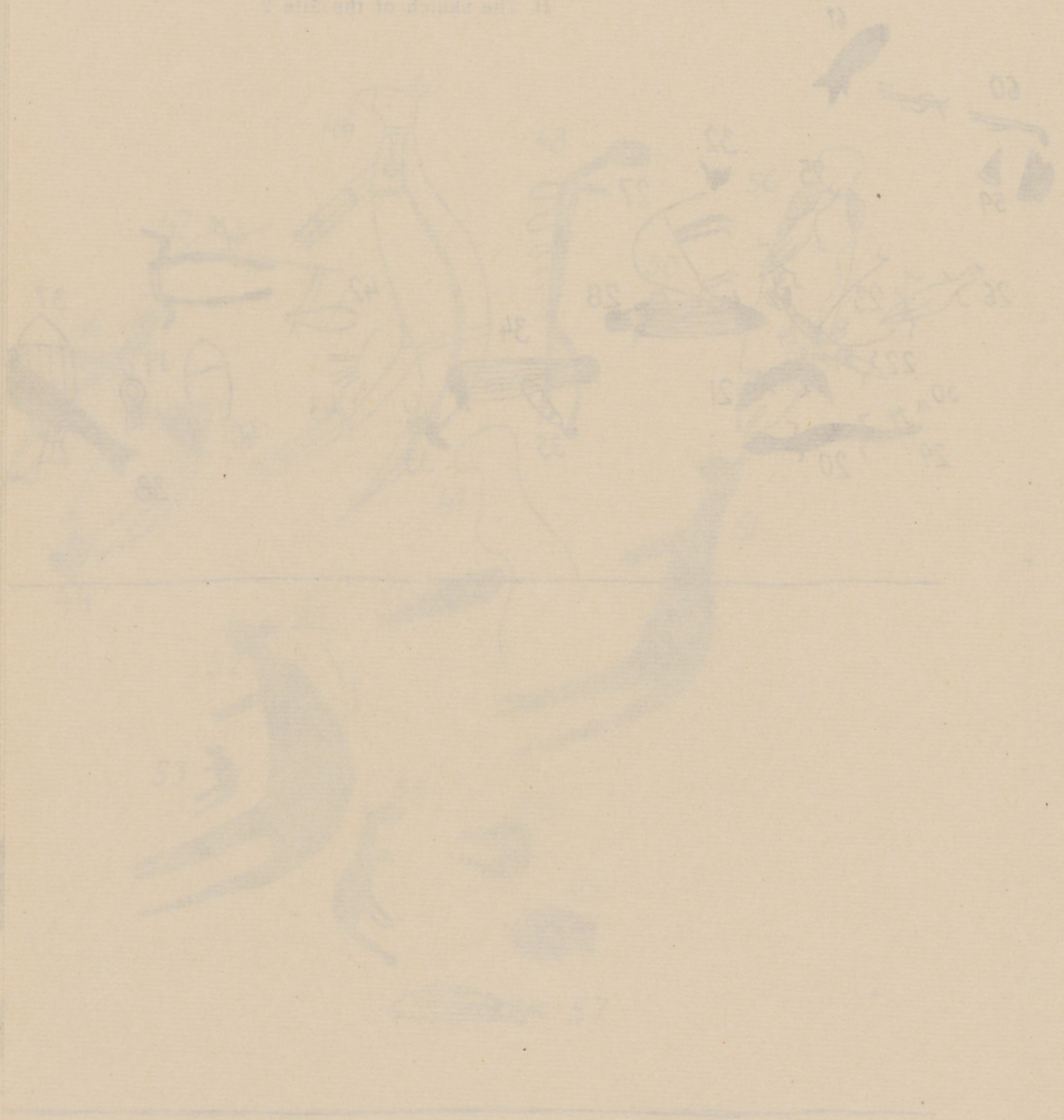




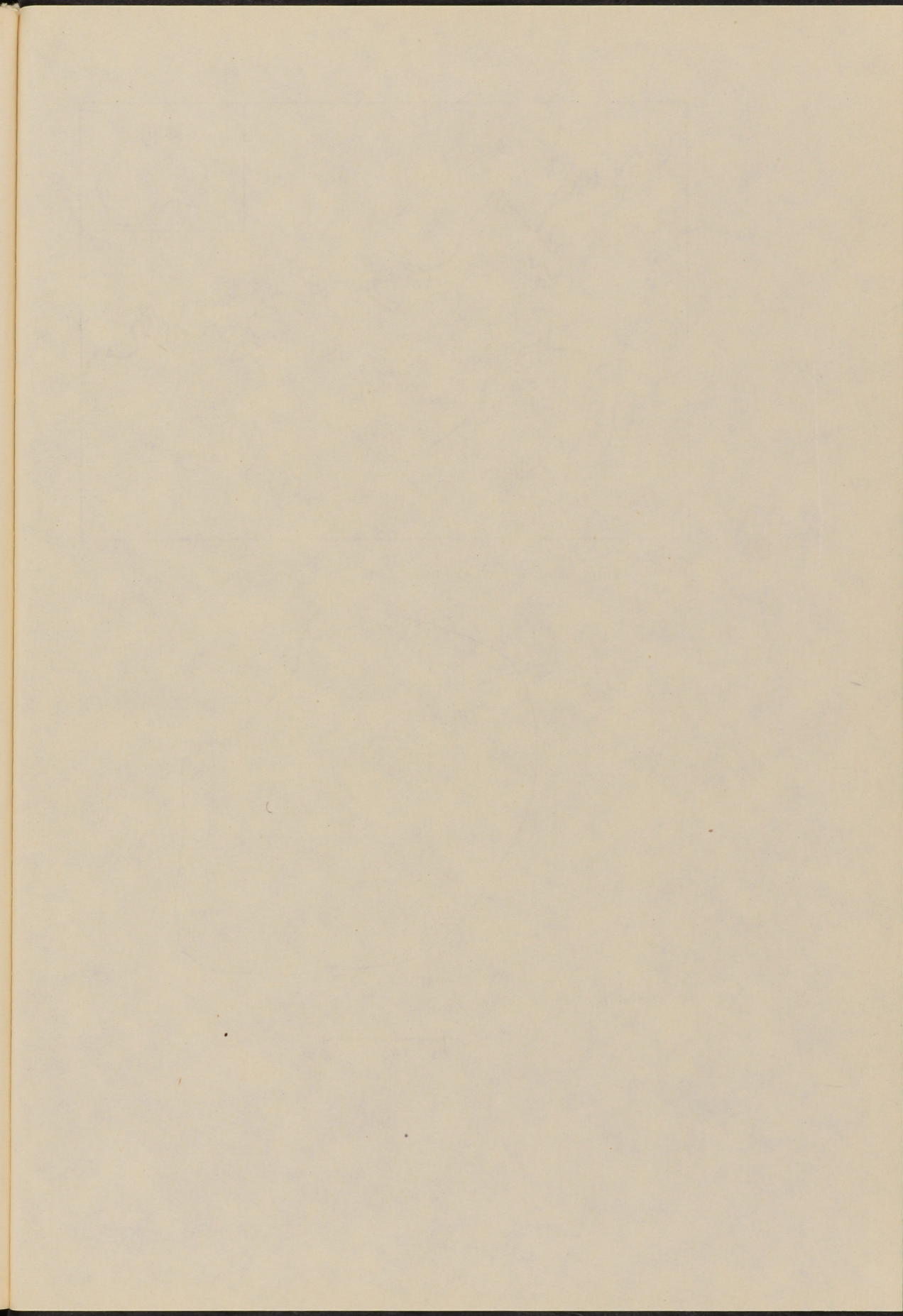
II. The sketch of the Site 2.



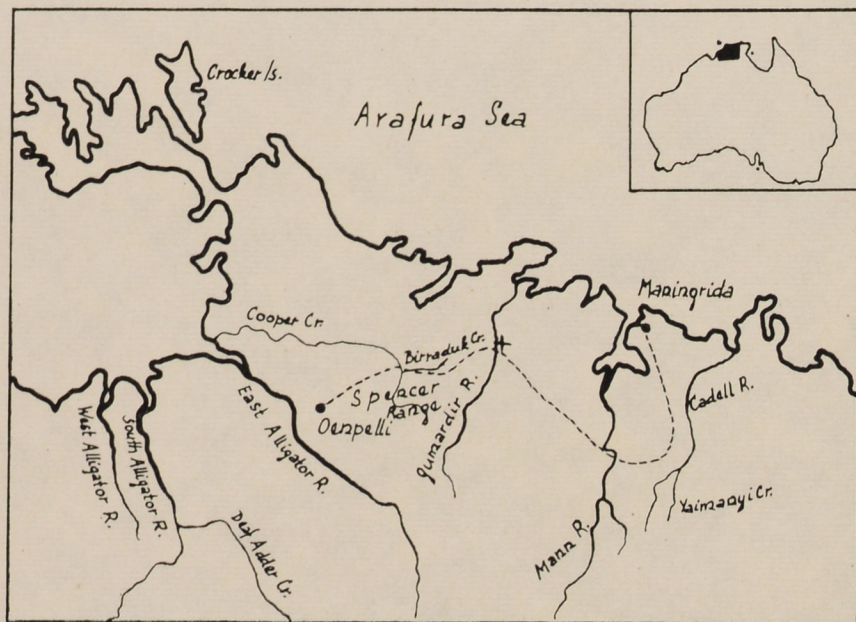




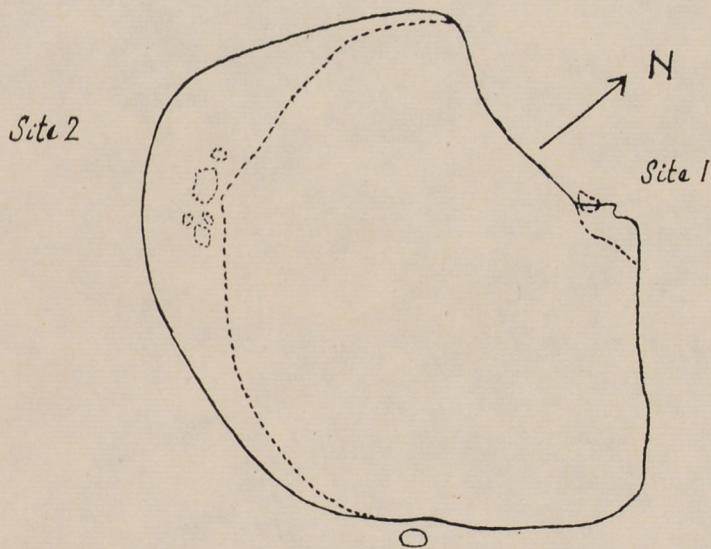




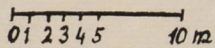




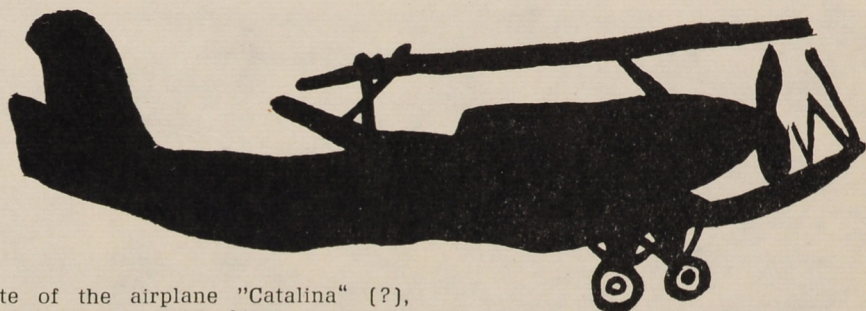
III. The sketch map of NW Arnhem Land.



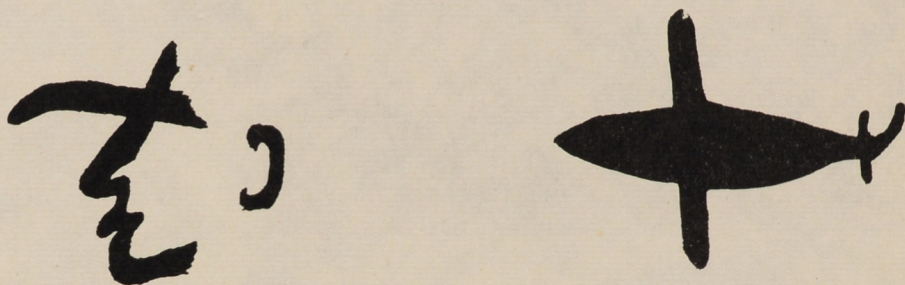
IV. The map of the locality.





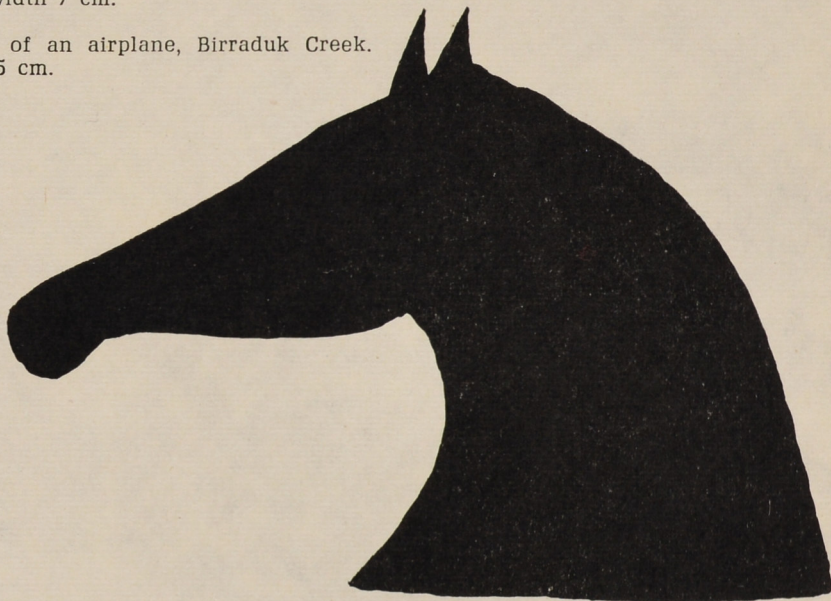


V. Yellow silhouette of the airplane "Catalina" [?], Birraduk Creek. Length 92 cm, width 31 cm.



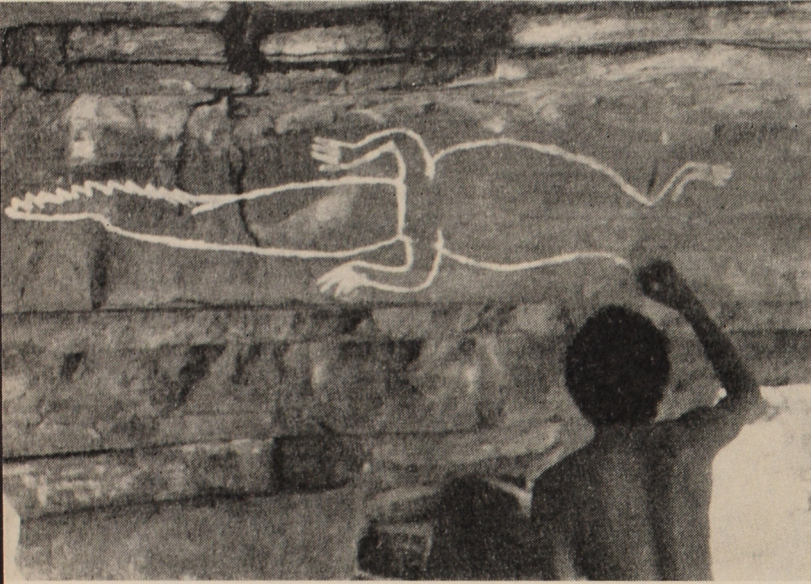
VI. Yellow outline of the head of a white man, Birraduk Creek. Height 14 cm, width 7 cm.

VII. Yellow silhouette of an airplane, Birraduk Creek. Length 49 cm, width 35 cm.



VIII. Yellow silhouette of the head of a horse, south of Oenpelli. Length 74 cm, width 56 cm.





Photos 1—2. The process of painting of a female crocodile in monochrome (white) X-ray style. Painter: Bungani, Rembaranga tribe, Cadell River Crossing.

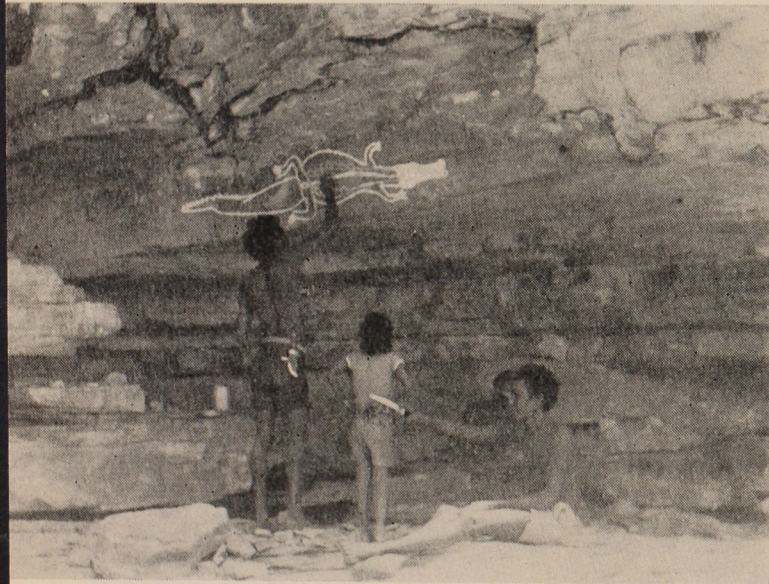
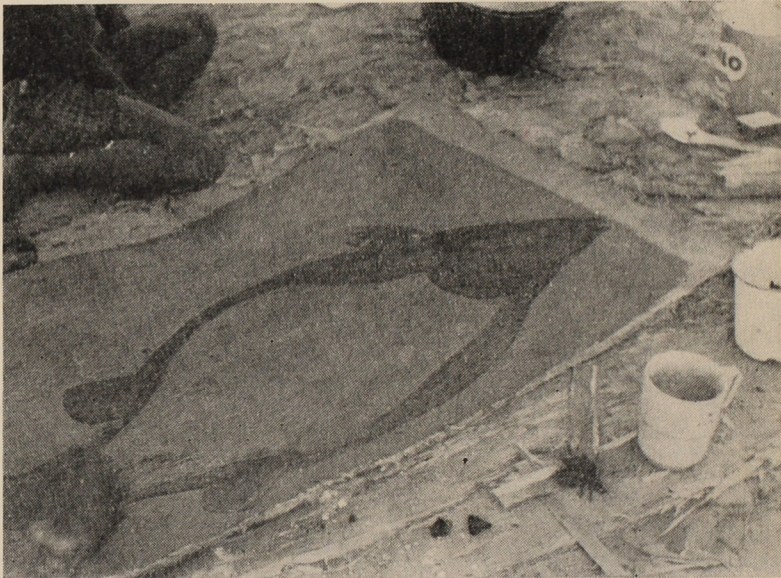






Photo 3. The finished picture. To the left a white stenciled hand make by the same author.

Photos 4—6. The process of the X-ray style painting on a sheet of bark. First of all the outline of the







subject is painted, afterwards it is changed in the silhouette and lines of the inner structure of the body are depicted, which are finally outlined by thin lines of other colour. Painter: Mandarrg, Rembaranga tribe, Cadell River Crossing.

