



PEABODY MUSEUM
of ARCHAEOLOGY & ETHNOLOGY

PRESS RELEASE

How much is Heritage Worth? Australia's Greatest Rock Art Competes with its Most Valuable Industry

What: FREE Lecture and Reception

Where: Lecture in Geological Lecture Hall, Harvard University, 24 Oxford St., Cambridge.
Reception follows in the Peabody Museum, 11 Divinity Ave.

When: Thursday, March 12 at 5:30 P.M.

Contact: 617-496-1027 (Public Information)

(Cambridge, February 12, 2009) The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology presents the lecture *How much is Heritage Worth? Australia's Greatest Rock Art Competes with its Most Valuable Industry* on Thursday March 12th at 5:30 P.M. in Harvard's Geological Lecture Hall, followed by a reception at the Museum.

Expanding industrial development in Australia's Dampier Archipelago has created a dramatic impact on the ancient rock art of the region. The rock art, composed of petroglyphs exposed on the natural rock outcrops of the region, is both abundant and very high quality. The industrial development is principally the construction of railways and ports for shipping iron ore and a major plant for processing and shipping liquid natural gas. The damage is directly physical (destruction of rocks, removal of rocks) and

probably chemical through the emission of nitrogen oxide gases. Much damage has already been done, and the very presence of industry in the region will likely lead to more deleterious impacts. But the industry is among the most valuable in Australia, estimated at 2% of Australia's GDP. This conflict brings into stark relief the need to carefully assess the priorities of cultural heritage, and to ask questions about the value of knowledge of the past through history, archaeology, and cultural heritage places.

About Iain Davidson

Dr. Davidson has more than 40 years experience as an archaeologist, including work as a volunteer in England, France, Jordan, Knossos, Turkey and other parts of the east Mediterranean. He joined the University of New England, Australia (UNE) in 1974, and was appointed to the Personal Chair in Archaeology and Palaeoanthropology in 1997. He retired from UNE in July 2008 and became Emeritus Professor of Archaeology. He is currently Visiting Professor of Australian Studies at Harvard University.

Dr. Davidson has worked on the Spanish Upper Palaeolithic, archaeology and ethnography of Northwest Queensland, Australian rock art, archaeology and heritage, and language origins. He has contributed to discussions of interpreting animal bones as evidence of prehistoric economy, use of ethnography in archaeological interpretation, evidence of non-human primates for understanding language origins, the interface between psychology and archaeology, problems of understanding the meaning of prehistoric art, and the relations between stone tools and cognition. His publications include 4 books, 6 edited books, 48 chapters in books and more than 65 articles in refereed journals.

About the Peabody Museum

The Peabody Museum is among the oldest archaeological and ethnographic museums in the world with one of the finest collections of human cultural history found anywhere. It is home to superb materials from Africa, ancient Europe, North America, Mesoamerica, Oceania, and South America in particular. In addition to its archaeological and ethnographic holdings, the Museum's photographic archives, one of the largest of its kind, hold more than 500,000 historical photographs, dating from the mid-19th century to the present and chronicling anthropology, archaeology, and world culture.

Location: The Peabody Museum is located at 11 Divinity Avenue in Cambridge. The Museum is a short walk from the Harvard Square MBTA station.

Hours: 9 A.M. to 5 P.M., seven days a week. The Museum is closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. Admission is \$9 for adults, \$7 for students and seniors, \$6 for children, 3–18. Free with Harvard ID or Museum membership. The Museum is free to Massachusetts residents Sundays, 9 A.M. to noon, year round, and Wednesdays from 3 P.M. to 5 P.M. (September to May). Admission includes admission to the Harvard Museum of Natural History. For more information call 617-496-1027 or go online to: www.peabody.harvard.edu.

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