参考译文：

澳大利亚土著的岩石艺术

Ever since European first explored Australia, people have been trying to understand the ancient rock drawings and carvings created by the Aborigines, the original inhabitants of the continent. Early in the nineteenth century, encounters with Aboriginal rock art tended to be infrequent and open to speculative interpretation, but since the late nineteenth century, awareness of the extent and variety of Australian rock art has been growing. In the latter decades of the twentieth century there were intensified efforts to understand and record the abundance of Australian rock art.

自从欧洲人第一次探索澳大利亚，人们就开始试图了解那些远古的土著居民创造的岩画和洞穴，这些土著居民是这片大陆的原始居民。在十九世纪早期，碰到这些岩石艺术品还不常见并且只是做一些推断性的解释，但是到了十九世纪晚期，人们意识到这些现存的种类繁多的澳大利亚岩石艺术越来越多。在随后二十世纪的几十年里，为了了解和记录这些丰富的岩石艺术人们做出了很大的努力。

The systematic study of this art is a relatively new discipline in Australia. Over the past four decades new discoveries have steadily added to the body of knowledge. The most significant data have come from a concentration on three major questions. First, what is the age of Australian rock art? Second, what is its stylistic organization and is it possible to discern a sequence or a pattern of development between styles? Third, is it possible to interpret accurately the subject matter of ancient rock art, bring to bear all available archaeological techniques and the knowledge of present-day Aboriginal informants?

系统的研究这门艺术是澳大利亚一门相当新的学科。在过去四十年里新的发现使得这门学科日益巩固。最显著的成就来源于对主要问题的集中研究。首先，澳大利亚岩石艺术处于哪个时代？第二，它的组织风格是什么样的以及有没有可能辨别出这一系列风格的发展变化？第三，有没有可能在利用所有可能的考古技术和对现有土著居民中博学者的了解的情况下，准确的了解这些岩石艺术所要表达的主题？

The age of Australia’s rock art is constantly being revised, and earlier datings have been proposed as the result of new discoveries. Currently, reliable scientific evidence dates the earliest creation of art on rock surfaces in Australia to somewhere between 30,000 and 50,000 years ago. This in itself is an almost incomprehensible span of generations, and one that makes Australia’s rock art the oldest continuous art tradition in the world.

关于澳大利亚岩石艺术的时代一直在修正，开始的时候的时代定位是新发现的结果。现在，可靠地科学证据证明最早的岩石艺术创作大约在 3 万到 5 万年前。这项发现的时代跨度是最令人无法理解的，也使得澳大利亚的岩石艺术成为世界上传承最久的艺术。

Although the remarkable antiquity of Australia’s rock art is now established, the sequences and meanings of its images have been widely debated. Since the mid-1970s, a reasonably stable picture has formed of the organization of Australian rock art. In order to create a sense of structure to this picture, researchers have relied on a distinction that still underlies the forms of much indigenous visual culture—a distinction between geometric and figurative elements. Simple geometric repeated patterns—circles, concentric circles, and lines—constitute the iconography (characteristic images) of the earliest rock-art sites found across Australia. The frequency with which certain simple motifs appear in these oldest sites has led rock-art researchers to adopt a descriptive term—the Panaramitee style—a label which takes its name from the extensive rock pavements at Panaramitee North in desert South Australia, which are covered with motifs pecked into the surface. Certain features of these engravings lead to the conclusion that they are of great age—geological changes had clearly happened after the designs had been made and local Aboriginal informants, when first questioned about them, seemed to know nothing of their origins. Furthermore, the designs were covered with “desert varnish,” a glaze that develops on rock surfaces over thousands of years of exposure to the elements. The simple motifs found at Panaramitee are common to many rock-art sites across Australia. Indeed, sites with engravings of geometric shapes are also to be found on the island of Tasmania, which was separated from the mainland of the continent some 10,000 years ago.

尽管一些岩石艺术的非凡遗迹被发掘出来，他们的年代顺序和上面图案的意义却有着广泛的争论。1970 年代中期一种可推理的主要图案说明了澳大利亚岩石艺术的形成结构。为了给这个图案创造一个感性架构，研究者们依赖根基于本土视觉文化形式的不同，这种不同是几何和比喻形象的不同。由最早在澳大利亚岩石艺术地区的发现的简单的集合重复图案——圆，同心圆，以及线条组成了肖像学（人物图案）。几个简单图案在这些最古老的遗址上出现的频率使得岩石艺术研究人员采用了一种描述性的术语——Panaramitee 风格，一个取名于从澳大利亚南部沙漠广袤的岩石丘的标签，这些岩石丘表面都刻有这些图案。这些图案的特点让人们得出一个结论即它们是来自于一个伟大的时代——地质变化明显在这些图案的设计之后，当那些土著中的博学者第一次被问到这个问题时，好像并不知道它们的来源。此外，这些设计被“沙漠漆岩”所覆盖，这种沙漠漆岩是颜料经过数千年的暴露形成的。在 Panaramitee 发现的简单图案和其他岩石艺术遗址的图案大同小异。不过，石刻的几何图案在塔斯马尼亚岛也有发现，这个到 1 万年前就从澳大利亚大陆分离了出去。

In the 1970s when the study of Australian archaeology was in an exciting phase of development, with the great antiquity of rock art becoming clear. Lesley Maynard, the archaeologist who coined the phrase “Panaramitee style,” suggested that a sequence could be determined for Australian rock art, in which a geometric style gave way to a simple figurative style (outlines of figures and animals), followed by a range of complex figurative styles that, unlike the pan-Australian geometric tradition tended to much greater regional diversity. While accepting that this sequence fits the archaeological profile of those sites, which were occupied continuously over many thousands of years a number of writers have warned that the underlying assumption of such a sequence—a development from the simple and the geometric to the complex and naturalistic—obscures the cultural continuities in Aboriginal Australia, in which geometric symbolism remains fundamentally important. In this context the simplicity of a geometric motif may be more apparent than real. Motifs of seeming simplicity can encode complex meanings in Aboriginal Australia. And has not twentieth-century art shown that naturalism does not necessarily follow abstraction in some kind of predetermine sequence?

在 1970 年代当澳大利亚考古处在发展阶段的时候，面对大量的古老岩石艺术，考古学家 Lesley Maynard 杜撰了新词“Panaramitee 风格”，认为澳大利亚岩石艺术的年代顺序决定于几何图案的风格，这种风格决定于简单的比喻风格（人物和动物的形象），这种形象具有很突出的复杂性，它不像泛澳大利亚的几何图案那样有着巨大的地区差异性。我们接受了这些地区的考古图案与其年代顺序相对应的观点，这些地方几千年来充斥着这种东西，然而一些人认为这种潜在结论——从简单图案到几何图案再到复杂和自然主义的图案，使得澳大利亚土著的几何图案象征主义文化的连续性变得模糊，却依然是非常重要的。在这种情况下几何图案可能比真实的东西更简明。对于澳大利亚土著来说简单图案也能包含复杂的含义。而且 20 世纪的艺术难道还没有表明自然主义并不需要遵循某种抽象的顺序？