

tpo_23_passage_2

Ever since Europeans 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. 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, bringing to bear all available archaeological techniques and the knowledge of present-day Aboriginal informants? 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. 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. 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 predetermined sequence?

question 1

According to paragraph 1, the twentieth-century approach to studying Australian rock art was different from earlier approaches because the twentieth-century approach

A recognized that many different groups of Aborigines created Australian rock art

B concentrated on a limited range of Aboriginal rock art

C examined Aboriginal art from an Aboriginal rather than from a European perspective

D focused more intensely on understanding and documenting rock art

question 2

Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence in the passage? Incorrect choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

A The oldest rock art sites have simpler motifs than the best known sites of Panaramitee North.

B Because motifs primarily associated with the Panaramitee region are common in the oldest sites, the term Panaramitee style has become the general term for rock art of this type.

C Because the Panaramitee style is so common in the older sites, researchers have described it most extensively.

D The motifs carved in the rocky surface of the Panaramitee region make up the oldest form of rock art discovered in Australia.

question 3

According to paragraph 4, researchers have organized and structured Australian rock art by distinguishing between which of the following?

- A Images found at Panaramitee North and images found in other parts of Australia
- B Images found in a particular type of rock layer and images found in other types of rock layers
- C Images that have geometric elements and images that have figurative elements
- D Images that are typically found and images that are rarely found

question 4

According to paragraph 4, all of the following are signs of the great age of the Panaramitee engravings EXCEPT:

- A The engravings consisted of simple animal drawings.
- B The engravings were covered with a layer of a substance known as "desert varnish."
- C Local Aborigines who were asked knew nothing about the origin of the engravings.
- D Geologic changes had occurred after the engravings were made.

question 5

Why does the author include information about Tasmania in paragraph 4?

- A To provide evidence that the Panaramitee style is widespread and of great age
- B To prove that Aboriginal Australians could not have made the carvings in Tasmania
- C To indicate how researchers have determined how long ago Tasmania separated from the mainland
- D To illustrate the importance of geometric rock art to tourism in Tasmania

question 6

According to paragraph 5, the complex figurative style differs from the geometric style in that the complex figurative style

A varies significantly from region to region

B is more meaningful

C appears on only a few types of rocks

D has changed little over time

question 7

According to paragraph 5, Lesley Maynard made which of the following suggestions about Australian rock art?

A There was a pattern of human figures being represented in a more complex style than animal figures.

B Australian archaeology should concentrate on determining the sequence of styles that led up to the Panaramitee style.

C The great antiquity of Australian rock art would probably make it impossible to determine the ages of the various styles found in rock art.

D The geometric style of Australian rock art was replaced by increasingly complex figurative styles.

question 8

In paragraph 5, the author indicates that twentieth century art has shown that "naturalism does not necessarily follow abstraction in some kind of predetermined sequence" in order to

A emphasize that it may not be possible to determine what the figures in ancient rock art represent

B suggest a reply to those who have questioned Maynard's interpretation of the sequence of Australian rock art

C provide a counterexample to Maynard's interpretation of the sequence of Australian rock art

D indicate that twentieth century art is more advanced than ancient rock art

question 9

Look at the four squares [] that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage.

Ever since Europeans 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. 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, bringing to bear all available archaeological techniques and the knowledge of present-day Aboriginal informants? [] 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. [] 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

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question 10

Directions: An introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below. Complete the summary by selecting the THREE answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some sentences do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas in the passage. This question is worth 2 points.

- A. Late nineteenth century studies of Aboriginal rock art failed to recognize that a variety of styles existed.
- B. In determining the way in which Australian rock art was organized, archaeologists have made little distinction between geometric and figurative elements.
- C. The extreme age of the earliest Aboriginal rock art has been established but the interpretation of rock art images is still debated.
- D. Older examples of rock art consist of simple, repeated geometric patterns while later rock art includes figures and animals.
- E. A sequence from geometric to more representative art fits many sites but does not necessarily indicate a progression from simple to complex meaning.
- F. Aboriginal informants were able to explain the meanings of ancient rock art symbols.

