

Enn Ernits

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This is a copy of the article from printed version of electronic journal

Folklore Vol. 18&19

ISSN 1406-0957

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Published by the Folk Belief and Media Group of ELM

Folklore

Electronic Journal of Folklore

Electronic version ISSN 1406-0949 is available from

<http://haldjas.folklore.eelfolklore>

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Tartu 2001

CATEGORISATION OF PREHISTORIC ART OBJECTS ON THE EXAMPLE OF FINNO-UGRIC AREA

Enn Ernits

Art in the general sense includes verbal art, music, dancing, architecture, applied art, decorative art and visual art, but in the narrower sense includes only the latter four, encompassing thus communication through visual means. Artistic expression from the time prior to recorded history is called prehistoric art. It is very ancient indeed. Stone figurines dating back more than 100,000 years have been discovered in the surroundings of Hamburg, Germany.¹

The emergence of art in the distant past has been subject to diverse explanations. Author of the present article agrees with those who assume that “religion and the roots of what later became art and science merged in the spiritual culture of primitive man” (Kangilaski 1997: 25). This enables us to discern the undifferentiated syncretic roots of primitive religion, art and sciences that provide an interesting research subject for researchers of religious history, art history and the history of particular disciplines (e.g. anatomy, archaeology, etc.).

Prehistoric art objects have been the subject of study for both archaeologists and art historians. Due to the all-encompassing nature of archaeology, archaeologists often find it difficult to pay equal attention to both the spiritual and material facets of life. The methods of documentation, dating, identification and interpretation of some categories of prehistoric art, such as petroglyphic art for example, are different than that of archaeology. Methods used in prehistoric art are closer to those used by art historians, yet, prehistoric art is a relatively specific field of study and therefore its study requires thorough knowledge of archaeology, history of religion, biology, etc. Consequently, it appears reasonable to consider prehistoric art research, dealing with the study of prehistoric art, as a distinct discipline. Researchers of rock art, in their turn, have attempted to categorise the research of petroglyphic art under various names (pefology, petroiconology, etc.), failing to introduce a name for prehistoric art as a whole.

The Finno-Ugric peoples² inhabit the area stretching from Scandinavia to West-Siberia in the east and the coasts of the Danube in the south. Prehistoric art found in that area encompasses artistic creation from the Palaeolithic Period to the beginning of recorded history, what among smaller Finno-Ugric tribes can be dated to the 15th century or even later. These prehistoric art pieces may be interpreted in two different ways: either as the art fostered during the period of the Finno-Ugric proto-language (without regard to the duration of this little-differentiated proto-language), or as the art of separate Finno-Ugric ethnic groups or peoples during the whole prehistoric era, i.e. from the beginning of the Stone Age to the subjugation and religious conversion (into Christianity or Islam) of these tribes (sometimes by foreign conquerors). Thus, on the one hand we can, for instance, distinguish between Estonian, Votic, Komi, Hungarian prehistoric art, and on the other, Balto-Finnic, Perm, Ob-Ugric, etc. prehistoric art.

However, the association of Palaeolithic population of any part of this region with the ancestors of the Finno-Ugrians arouses suspicion. Comparative study of cave paintings discovered in Kapova, the Urals, and more recent art objects of the region has indicated that it is possible that the prehistoric culture of Finno-Ugrians has been influenced by the Palaeolithic tribes settled near the edges of permanent ice sheets. Also, the identification of Mesolithic and Neolithic tribes with modern peoples, especially in ethnic border areas, is seldom clear-cut. Therefore it seems practical to describe hereby the Stone Age art under discussion as the art of Finno-Ugric areas and leave the dubious association with specific ethnicities for future study.

CATEGORISATION OF PREHISTORIC FINNO-UGRIC ART OBJECTS

The categorisation of prehistoric art objects may proceed from different bases: material, technique, functions, etc. Categorisations based on different grounds are often interrelated and closely connected with material culture (depending on the applied function) and religion. This enables classifying one object under different categories.

In fact, everything crafted by man during the prehistoric era, be it an amber figurine, clay pot, stone axe or headdress, may be considered an object of art. Evaluation of their artistic quality is different, though. A tool or a consumer good is evaluated first and foremost by its form, while a sculpture or a painting does not serve any material function but reflects religious or other ideas and are evaluated considerably more highly. Thus we could make a distinction between prehistoric art objects in general or in narrower sense.

In the following I will attempt to present a categorisation of prehistoric art objects of the Finno-Ugric areas. The categorisation should largely apply to other areas as well and hopefully future approaches will help to elaborate the general framework presented here.

Prehistoric art research takes interest in all objects crafted by prehistoric man. All these objects can be divided in three major groups:

- 1) representational art objects;
- 2) prehistoric buildings, or prehistoric architecture;
- 3) various consumer objects, including tools and utilities (ceramic, wooden and stoneware), vehicles, weapons, clothes, etc.

While objects of the first group include art objects in the narrower sense, those of the second and third groups can be classified among prehistoric art objects in the general sense. For example, clay pottery and round stone cudgel characteristic of the so-called Suomusjärvi culture are art objects in the general sense, while in the narrower sense it is only their ornamentation that is artistic.

The origin of consumer art and fashion design can be found in techniques used in creating different consumer objects (clothes, pottery, weapons, etc.). Constructing buildings and manufacturing objects has changed in accordance with their changing functions, the improved choice of material, new stereotypes, and the improvement of crafting skills.

The article will further present a more elaborated categorisation of the first two major groups of prehistoric art objects, focusing on classification based on crafting technique. Works of art may also be categorised by material used, motifs and on other grounds, but these will not be discussed in this article.

2.1. Representational art objects

The differentiation of modern art into representational and consumer art does not apply to prehistoric art, since the latter, as pointed out above, was not differentiated in the prehistoric era. Representational art objects are associated with representations that can be further divided into 1) figurative and 2) non-figurative images.

Figurative representations (motifs, in fact) depict animate creatures (humans, animals, plants) or, seldom, inanimate objects. Prehistoric art research distinguishes between human, animal, bird, tree, sword and other figures with the contour or figure defining the shape of the depicted creature or object. Since we cannot be certain whether the figure of a man or an animal represented a real person or animal or an animal-shaped or human-shaped deity, we will use the terms ‘anthropomorphic’ or human-like representation, ‘zoomorphic’ or animal-like representation, ‘theriomorphic’ or mammal-like representation, ‘hippomorphic’ or horse-like representation, ‘ornithomorphic’ or birdlike representation, ‘ophiomorphic’ or snakelike representation, etc. (see further Poikalainen & Ernits 1998: 7–8, 50).

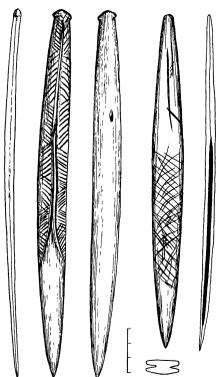


Figure 1. Geometrical ornament on Mesolithic stabbers from Verete, the Arkhangelsk Province (Oshibkina 1997: 131).

Non-figurative representations include beside those of ambiguous form, also those consisting of geometrical elements (lines, circles, spirals, triangles, etc.). Such recurrent elements usually constitute an ornament (Figure 1). All attempts to authenticate the figurative source of geometrical ornament have failed. Symbolic representations or symbols, however, may originate in figures. Likewise, an ornament may consist of figurative elements (birds, plant leaves, etc.).

It often proves necessary to determine whether a whole object is an object of art (e.g. a bear figure) or only a part of it (such as an ornamented bone awl or a sword hilt). The former are categorised under full or total art objects, the latter under partial art objects.

If only one technique has been used for creating the object of art, it is a simple art object, whereas if more than one technique has been used, then the art object is called a complex art object. Complex art objects are often multipartite, consisting for example of a pierced plate-like main part, chains, small bells, etc. like the clinging pendants of the Finno-Ugric people (see spatial art objects).

By their size, art objects can be divided into monumental art objects and small art objects (sometimes also called mobile or portable art objects). Based on the degree of precision of a representation or its artistic endeavours we may distinguish between hyperrealistic or natural, realistic and stylised on the one hand and detailed and schematic representations on the other.

Prehistoric art objects can be divided also according to whether they were created on a flat surface (due to the representation's low depth or height it is virtually two-dimensional), or they are clearly perceivable as three-dimensional. We can accordingly divide prehistoric representative art objects into the general categories of two-dimensional or flat art objects, and spatial art objects.

Spatial art objects were often covered with virtually flat representations (cf. for example ornamentation on clay pottery). Since flat and spatial art objects constitute two highly different sub-categories, their categorisation is also based on different grounds.

I. Two-dimensional or flat art objects are generally categorised by the used technique. Flat art objects are

1. Additive art objects:
 - 1) paintings,
 - 2) drawings,
 - 3) appliquéd art objects.
2. Extractive or depressed art objects:
 - 1) carved art objects,
 - 2) engraved art objects,
 - 3) abraded art objects,
 - 4) depressions.
3. Fabric or textile art objects.
4. Tattoos.

1. Additive art objects are works of art created by applying one material onto another, e.g. paint to surfaces, or different strips of fabric or leather to fabric or leather items (about the term see e.g. Flood 1997).

Paintings are works of art painted with liquid pigment on stones, rocks, timber (also birch bark), leather, ceramics and metals. Ornamentation painted also on huge mammoth bones have been discovered in Mezin; these objects are regarded as musical instruments of the Palaeolithic man (Paleolit SSSR: 231). Ceremonial and war paintings made on skin can also be categorised among paintings.

Depending on the surface, the paintings may be divided into rock paintings, wall paintings, tree paintings, and body paintings. Images may be painted also on convex or concave surfaces of the body, earthenware and elsewhere. Paintings may be either silhouette representations or contour representations. If parts of body have been used for painting the surface, then it is called stencil or impression. Stencils are either positive or negative. Positive stencils are silhouette representations printed on the rock with a part of body soaked in paint. For negative stencils a part of body has been used as a stencil and the representation has been created by sprinkling, supposedly orally, pigment suspended in water on the rock surface surrounding the body part.

Painting emerged in the Palaeolithic Period. Cave paintings, representations painted in ochre, black pigment or charcoal on the walls and ceilings of caves supposedly used as sanctuaries, are especially valuable. In Finno-Ugric areas cave paintings can be found in the southern part of the Urals (the caves of Kapova, Ignatieva and possibly Serpievka) where figures dating back to the Palaeolithic Period depicting mammoths, wild horses, rhinoceroses, geometrical ornaments, humans, etc. can be seen (Figure 2 – see Figures 37-46 in previous article). Cave art was also practised on neighbouring areas, which in the Palaeolithic Period may have been inhabited by the ancestors of Finno-Ugric people.

Numerous representations painted in the Neolithic Period on vertical precipices have been discovered in Finland. Ancient figures painted in ochre have been found also on the Kola Peninsula, Norway and Sweden.

Twenty-five locations of rock paintings originating from the period between the Late Stone Age and the Early Middle Ages have been discovered in the Southern Urals. Seventeen of these are located on the coasts of the rivers Ai and Yuriuzan. In the Central Urals north of Yekaterinburg 30 locations of rock paintings have been found on the coasts of the rivers Irbit, Tagil, Vishera, etc. It is possible that in prehistoric times paintings were also made on timber and on other disintegrable materials.

Drawings are representations made with solid colour pigment. Paintings and drawings form the group of pigmented or coloured art objects.

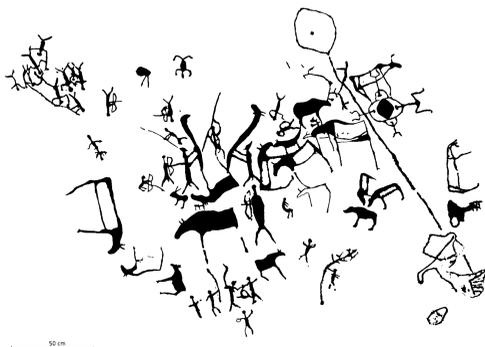
Applicative art objects are works of art created by appliquéing cut-out pieces of cloth, leather, beads, etc. on an object. Beads were used for decorating items of clothing already in prehistoric times.

2. Extractive art objects are works of art created by extracting parts of surface. Depending on the purpose and the surface material, they were made by pecking, abrasion, engraving, depressing, piercing or perforating, etc.

Carved, engraved and abraded art objects are works of art cut into a hard surface (stone, bed rock) by using various methods: carving, scratching, pecking, engraving, abrading. Pecking denotes making small punctures into rock surface by striking the surface with a pointed instrument. Creating a figure or ornament on a hard surface, including metal, is called engraving. This group, for example, contains bone slabs with traverse indentations from the Palaeolithic Period discovered in a settlement near Perm and the Iron Age representations carved into rock in Prikamye (Rossiskaia 1971: 304, 496). Another example are bronze dishes with mostly ornamental engravings originating from the Early Iron Age and discovered from the settlements of the Mari and an extinct Finno-Ugric tribe, the Muroms (Rudenko 1996).

A very important category is the relatively shallow images carved into rock called petroglyphs or rock carvings (Figure 2). The simplest type of rock carvings is smooth-bottomed cup-marks cut into bedrock, sacrificial and cup-marked stones. Cup-marks can be found

Figure 2. A group of Neolithic petroglyphs in Alta (Helskog 1994: 21).



in many regions, in Scandinavia they often appear together with figurative representations. More than 1,700 cup-marked boulders have been registered in Estonia (Tvauri 1999: 115–119). Depending on the used method, petroglyphs can be divided into carved, engraved and abraded petroglyphs.

Petroglyphic art may be either vertical (images are cut into cliffs) or horizontal (representations are cut into horizontal surface). Rock art research studies, rock paintings, rock drawings and rock carvings.

Petroglyphs of the Finno-Ugric areas are scattered on the area stretching from North Scandinavia to West Siberia (see further Poikalainen & Ernits 1996). It is speculated that the hunter-fishers of prehistoric Scandinavia who created these petroglyphs were the forefathers of the Sami. The most important locations in Scandinavia are Nämforsen in Northern Sweden and Alta in the northern part of Norway (Figure 3).

Major rock art sites in Karelia are situated in the mouth of the Vyg River close to the coast of the White Sea and on the eastern coast of Lake Onega (Figure 3). In the Arkhangelsk Province some figures have been carved also in the coastal limestone cliffs of a tributary of the Pinega River.



Numerous petroglyphs have been discovered on the

Figure 3. Rock carving on Cape Besov Nos site at Lake Onega. Photo by E. Ernits.

rocks at the Ponoï River near the former Sami village Chalmne-Var in the central part of the Kola Peninsula and Lake Kanozero in the southern part of the same peninsula.

In West Siberia more than 600 rock carvings have been discovered near the Tom River between Kemerovo and Tomsk.

Depressions are art objects created by pressing images into soft material – e.g. pattern pressed into clay pottery with a finger, stick, fishbone, coarse fabric tissue, etc. After being treated in fire the vessel hardened and became durable. Finno-Ugric ceramic objects are covered with both geometrical ornaments as well as figures of waterfowl, humans, etc. (Figure 4). Images may have been pressed into the ground and yielding sandstone surfaces with a finger, toe or some object, but no such art objects have reached our day.

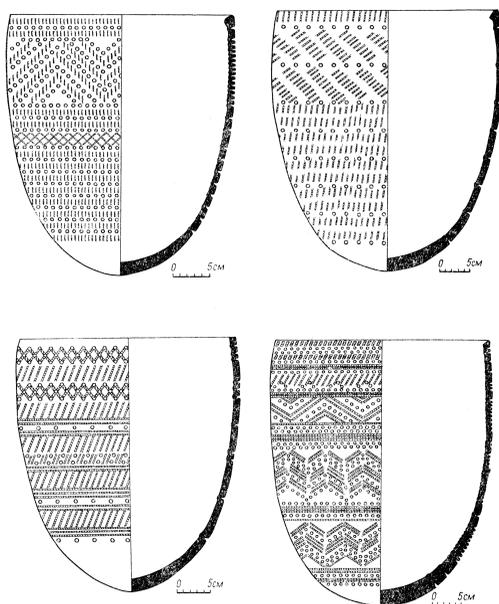


Figure 4. Reconstructions of comb-ceramic clay pottery found in Karelia (Pankrushev 1978, figure 48).

3. Fabric or textile art objects were created by weaving, braiding, etc. Use of woven articles in Estonia has been determined in the Late Neolithic Period, deduced from findings of textile ceramics; various techniques had been used to create such objects (see Selirand 1975: 17). Also, various patterns were woven into fabric. This group of art objects, however, does not include images painted or printed on fabric.

4. Tattoos constitute a special group of art objects, where the human body was used as a substratum and images were created by making punctures in the skin and by inserting pigments.

II. Spatial art objects form a group which includes the following art objects:

1. sculptural and plastic art objects, or sculptures
 - 1) freestanding sculptures or sculptures in the round
 - 2) reliefs or art objects in relief
 - 3) plate- or slab-shaped art objects
2. (spatial) non-sculptural art objects.

The main principles of categorising two-dimensional and spatial art objects are according to their function as well as the use of different production techniques. Materials used for creating spatial art objects have always varied considerably. Some spatial art objects may include elements of flat art objects. A snake-shaped figure carved from an elk's antler found in Tõrvala in North-East Estonia, for example, is decorated with a zigzag line characteristic of the common adder on its back and a pattern of holes which may be the imitation of scales on its side. Also, small anthropomorphic clay figurines covered with geometrical ornament originating from the Early Comb Ceramics Period have been found in Finland and elsewhere (Sarvas 1987: 17).

Depending on purpose and material, spatial art objects are carved from timber, modelled from clay, cut from stone, etc. The main methods used at metalworking are forging and casting; surfaces are decorated by applying techniques like repoussé, perforation, engraving, inlaying (granulating, for example) and overlaying (enameling). Based on their material, spatial art objects can be divided into wooden, clay, stone and other art objects. Metal art objects in particular can also be categorised according to the processing technique as forgings and castings, for example.

1. Sculptures were made of various materials – timber, stone, horn, bone, amber, clay, metal, etc. Here we may distinguish between monumental and miniature plastic art. Small figurines originating from the Palaeolithic Period have been found on the Finno-Ugric areas. Various pendants and other jewellery are often figurative-sculptural. For example, bronze anthropomorphic, theriomorphic and ornithomorphic pendants (7th–6th centuries BC), boot-shaped pendants (2nd–3rd centuries AD), open-work jewellery of non-ferrous metals with ringing tinklers and pendants with goose feet, and

also pendants in the shape of horse-head (5th–11th centuries AD) have been found in the territory of the Maris (Rossiskaia 1971: 482).

Various objects may be covered with sculptural ornaments, such as open-work bronze clasps styled in the shape of bear, hare and elk heads found in the mid-first millennium AD from the Khanty and Mansi areas.

Sculptural images often associate with ritual wooden utensils (spoons, ladles), attributes of tribal or family leaders (staves, war clubs) and handles of bone and stone instruments (axes in the shape of bear heads, sometimes also elk heads, knives, etc.). Often only animal heads are depicted on these objects, which have been found in Finland (Laukaa, Lake Pielinen), Latvia (Sārņate), Russia (Oleni Island, Shigir, Gorbunovo) (Figure 5). Animal ornament supposedly of Germanic origin has been engraved on various luxury weapons originating in the Bronze and Iron Age, especially swords.

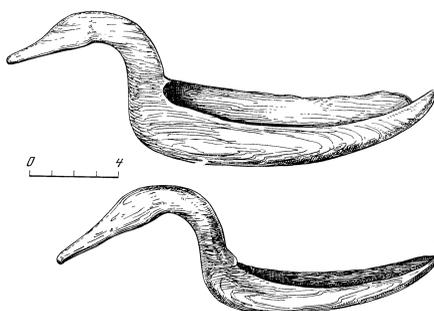


Figure 5. Bronze Age wooden vessels with ornithomorphic figures from the bog of Gorbunovo, South Urals (Epokha bronzy: 401).

Freestanding sculptures or sculptures in the round are works of art where a figure can be viewed from all sides. Numerous freestanding sculptures have been found on the Finno-Ugric areas, but the present article will not aim to present a territorial or chronological overview. Freestanding sculptures are mostly figurines of waterfowl, elks and bears, less often of snakes and humans. Many of these have been found in the Eastern Baltic region (Shventoji, Juodkrante, Tamula), Finland (Pohjankuru, Säkki-järvi, Huittiset), Russia (Oleni Island, Kubenino, Gorbunovo, Shigir) (Gorionova 1978: 470; Figure 6). Zoomorphic flint figurines found in great numbers in the Upper Volga Region

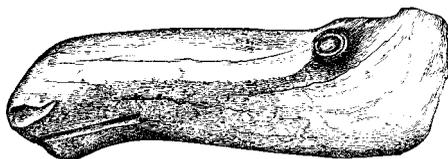
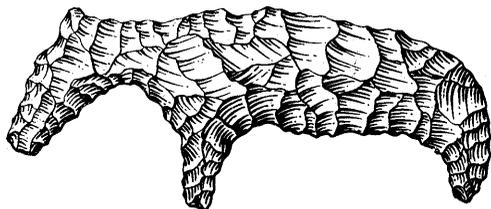


Figure 6. Wooden sculpture from the bog of Shigir in the Urals (Moshinskaia 1976: figure 10b).

Figure 7. Flint figure from Zimnaia Zolotitsa at the White Sea (Epokha bronzy: 245).



have been discovered also in the area of Permian and West-Siberian animal motifs (Oborin & Chagin 1988).

Relief art objects are multidimensional figurative or ornamental works of art that are treated on one side only. This group of art objects includes Permian and West Siberian bronze plaques with animal motifs, such as figurines of predators with fully stretched wings and a human face on their thorax (Figure 8). Reliefs are often classified as plate-shaped art objects (see below). They may be divided into high reliefs and bas-reliefs.

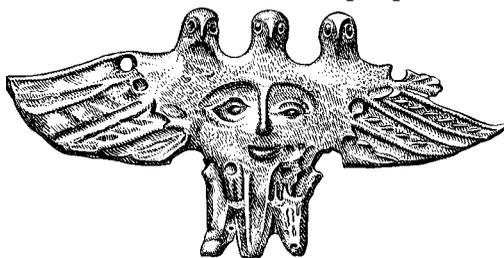


Figure 8. Representation of a three-headed eagle in Permian style (Gribova 1975, table 6).

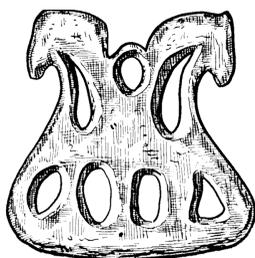


Figure 9. Plate-shaped horse-head pendant from a kurgan in Tereshino on the Upper Volga (Golubeva 1979, table 18–19).

Plate-shaped art objects are thin slab-like objects, where artistic effect is achieved through their figurative or ornamental outer or inner contour. This group includes pendants in different shapes (geometric images, ornithomorphic, for example), bone combs with handles decorated with horse-heads, etc. Plate-shaped art objects often include elements of flat and relief art and cut-outs in various shapes acquired through perforation; the latter are therefore often called openwork or *ajouré* art objects (Figure 9). If the artistic effect is achieved through the perforation of fabric, leather or sometimes also

birch bark, then the objects should be called flat art object (see above). Some non-sculptural objects may also be shaped like plates, but these do not belong to this category.

2. Non-sculptural art objects are non-figurative jewellery, amulets and clasps in various shapes and design. Jewellery and amulets were used for adornment and to warn off evil spirits, though often these functions remain indistinct. Non-sculptural art objects were worn mostly on clothing or on bare skin. Jewellery often served the function of fastening clothes, adorning and also preventive magic. Non-sculptural art objects can be divided by material and the place where they were worn: bone, metal (silver), and other objects; head, neck, wrist, clothing jewellery. In prehistoric art science it seems practical to categorise them by shape and processing technique, particularly metal jewellery (see above).

Depending on the object's design and shape, this group of art objects include:

1) Annular art objects (annular jewellery, such as head circlets, neck circlets, wristbands and anklets, temple circlets, rings, various amber and slate circlets). Annular art objects are often twisted or braided from several metal strands. They may also be spiral shaped. Spiral art objects are made from metal twisted into helical shape. They include mostly spiral circlets, rings and copper ornaments for clothes (bronze spirals), but also spiral tubes adorning jewellery and clothing.

2) Chain art objects consist of series of similar connected parts, forming long thin pieces of jewellery. This group includes chains of snail shells, stones, pendants or beads, also chains of precious metals. Beads strung into necklaces may be of bone (of pipe bones of birds, for example), stone, amber, enamel, glass, silver, and of other material. Pendants used in chain art objects may be of different kind – round-sculptural, plate-shaped, relief, coins, etc. Pendants may be made of teeth, bone, amber, stone and metal.

3) Art objects of other shapes, such as brooches, pins, plaques, clasps, special belt ornaments, various pendants. Art objects belonging to this group may have a very intricate design. The design of brooches, for example, has varied through different periods – it has even be-

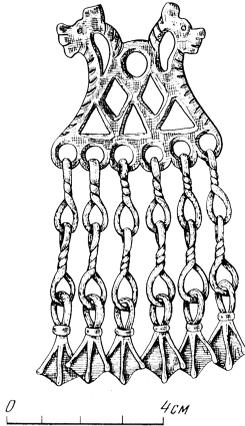


Figure 10. Clinging bronze horse-head pendant from a kurgan in Piankovo on the Upper Volga (Golubeva 1979, table 19–10).

Canines of animals fastened to clothes, which were not stylised but were probably used for religious purposes, can provisionally be categorised under the group of jewellery and amulets.

2.2. Prehistoric buildings

One important branch of prehistoric art is prehistoric architecture, which comprises both individual buildings as well as large groups of buildings – settlements, prehistoric villages. Architecture is commonly categorised by its function into profane, sacral and military architecture. The same categorisation may be applied to the prehistoric era.

I have tentatively categorised sacred natural objects (sacred stones, grove trees, sources) under prehistoric art as well. Even though these objects are not created through manual labour they have a meaningful function. Natural groves and sacred trees enclosed with fences are particularly noteworthy. Natural sanctuaries and sacred

come the basis for their categorisation (see Kirme 1986: 6 ff). During the period from the first millennium to the second millennium AD eastern Finno-Ugric peoples wore numerous pendants with clinging “waterfowl-feet” (Figure 10). Non-sculptural art objects of various shapes include also beads carved from mammoth ivory found in a Late Palaeolithic Period grave in Sungir, in Vladimir, Russia.

Due to their relatively shallow figurative representations or ornament (Figure 11) the objects of the three groups mentioned above may sometimes include elements of flat art or sculpture in the round (e.g. on brooches with theriomorphic motifs).

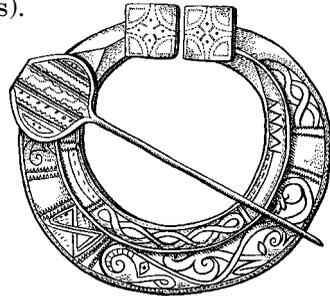


Figure 11. Karelian bronze clasp from Keko Hill at the Gulf of Finland (Finno-ugry: 262; table 14-1).

objects, such as the sites where petroglyphic art was created, were not always artificially enclosed.

Profane structures include houses, open hearths, outbuildings for household works, fences, mills, wells, etc. Settlements appeared in the middle of the Late Palaeolithic Period at the latest. In the Finno-Ugric and surrounding areas a house was built from mammoth bones, whereas the roof was supposedly covered with animal hides. Remains of similar constructions have been found in the Komi region, near the town of Buzovaia Pechora (Rossiskaia 1971: 483). Conical tents supported by wooden poles and covered with skins and dens appeared later and seem to be the most common type (Figure 12). Hearths were set up inside the houses as well as in the open air on the premises of settlements.



Figure 12. Reconstruction of a Neolithic settlement by archaeologist Nina Gurina (Jaanits et al 1982: 90).

Man settled in the Baltic region and elsewhere in the Eurasian forest zone only in the Mesolithic Period, the transitional period of the Stone Age between the years 11,400–5,000 BC, after the retreat of the permanent ice sheet. In the Neolithic Period, or the Late Stone Age (5th–2nd millennium BC), houses built on pole foundations (in Lialovo, 40 km north from Moscow) and lake dwellings (on the Modlona River in Vologda Province) emerged in some regions of the forest zone. The houses built near the Modlona River were rectangular with wattled walls. In the second millennium BC a new type of construction emerged – rectangular buildings with walls of vertical logs. Some time later buildings of horizontal log walls appeared (Raam 1975: 9). In Finland long buildings divided into dwelling space, barn and animal byres, such as the house on Nakkila Rieskaro Hill with the 15 x 4 m ground plan, were built in the Bronze Age (Sarvas 1987: 21–22). Prehistoric villages were of different shapes and sizes, often depending on the surrounding landscape.

Development and progress in agriculture created a need for buildings of special purpose (granary, cattle-shed, etc.). Barns were originally structured after columnar platforms used for storing game kill. Saunas and wells, perhaps also mills, originate also in the prehistoric era. In the second half of the first millennium AD at the latest, Estonians and Votes started building farmhouses that included a barn room (Viires 1995: 233–234).

Sacral structures are various types of grave constructions (tumuli, stone coffin burials, boat burials, etc.; houses for the deceased), mazes, etc. (Figure 13). The most famous Mesolithic cemeteries in



Figure 13. Stone maze on the islands of Solovets. Photo by E. Ernits.

kangrud, or heaps of stones accumulated over graves, and boat-shaped stone burials, containing one or several stone coffins, emerged in the Late Bronze Age. Some time later people began to build *tarand*-burials, which consisted of several rectangular enclosures laid of stone, filled with soil or stones. The total length of a *tarand*-burial could be up to 100 m. In Estonia burials of this type have been found in Tõravere, Tartu County and Virunuka, Võru County (Jaanits *et al* 1982: 149–151). It is speculated that prehistoric people

the Finno-Ugric areas are located on the Oleni Island in Lake Onega and Zvejniki, North-Latvia. Grave constructions became most conspicuous in the Bronze Age. In Finland grave monuments of hundreds and thousands of cobblestones, such as the one discovered in Perniö Lampola, were erected in the Bronze Age (Sarvas 1987: 21). In Estonia

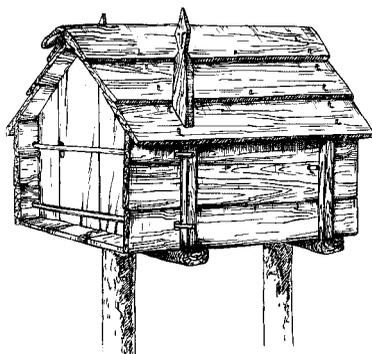


Figure 14. Small barn in a sanctuary located in the North Sosva watershed in Western Siberia (Moshinskaia 1976, figure 7b).

may have believed that both *kangrud* and *tarand*-burials were the abodes of the dead (Raam 1975: 10). Other sacral structures are buildings erected in sacred places, such as the Ob-Ugric small barns-on-pillars (Figure 14).

Military structures are fortified settlements surrounded by wooden or stone fences and/or earthwork, strongholds or fortresses that were, in fact, polyfunctional. In Finno-Ugric areas such settlements emerged in the Bronze Age (e.g. Asva and Ridala in Estonia, and settlements in the Diakovo culture area in today's Moscow). Fences and moulds of different construction were formed

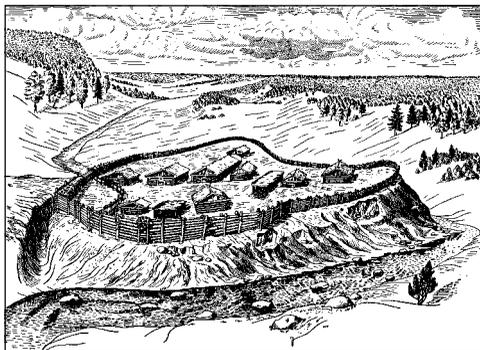


Figure 15. Fortified village of the Merya people in Bereznaia (first millennium AD) (Finno-ugry: 273; table 25–3).

chiefly for protection (Figures 15 and 16). In the first millennium AD small strongholds for families of nobles emerged (e.g. the Stronghold of Lembitu in Lõhavere, Viljandi County, Estonia).



Figure 15. Fort-hill. “A Bed of Kalevipoeg” in Alatskivi, Estonia. (1st millennium BC – 12th century AD). Photo by E. Ernits.

Comments

¹ Most researchers, however, are convinced that these figurines were formed by nature. Nevertheless, it has been proved that Palaeolithic man fostered art some 40,000 years ago.

² Finno-Ugrians constitute of the Balto-Finnic peoples (Livonians, Estonians, Votes, Finns, Karelians, Veps, etc.), Sami, Mordvins, Mari, Komi and Udmurts, Ob-Ugrians (Khanty, Mansi), Hungarians.

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