

to the Suly river, **Dubovaia Balki** and **Kaistrovaia Balki** (Nadporozhie on Dnieper), **Amvrosievka** (Donbas, Miuss watershed), **Yakimovskaia Balki** (Luganski Province) and **Ilskaia** (the Kuban river) in the central and southern regions of the Ukraine. The finds are mostly ornamented fragments of objects and beads. A piece of amber with traces of polish found in Dubovaia Balki and an oval object with a large cavity in its centre and handle-like joints from Gontsy are unique (Abramova 1962: XXXIX). Few ornamented objects have been found near Bakhchisarai on the Crimean Peninsula (**Siuren, Shan Koba, Balin Kosh**).

### Central Russia

The sites of Central Russia are located in the watershed of the Desna, Don and Kama rivers. The Palaeolithic settlements on the Desna **Novgorod-Severskaia, Pushkari, Timonovka** and **Suponevo** are located upstream from Mezin. Single ornamented fragmentary objects have been discovered from Novgorod-Severskaia and Pushkari, some ornamented and also sculptural art objects of vague shape have been found in Suponevo and Timonovka. Radiocarbon dating on the cultural stratum of Timonovka suggests that these locations may be 12–15 millennia old. The location quite rich in prehistoric art finds is the prehistoric settlement of Yeliseevichi, which dates back 13–15.6 millennia.

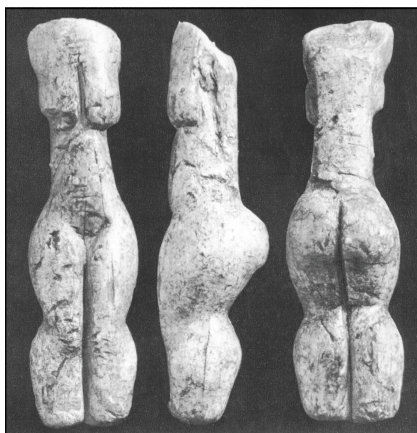


Figure 23. *Venus of Yeliseevichi* (Stoliar 1985: 243).

The **Yeliseevichi** site was discovered in 1930 and it is located on the river Sudost, the right tributary of the Desna, in the Briansk Province, Russia. The majority of prehistoric artefacts was found in a heap of mammoth skulls piled next to a residential house. The most remarkable of these is a finely modelled 15 cm tall figure depicting a shapely woman with no feet, head and hands, carved of mammoth tusk. The figurine

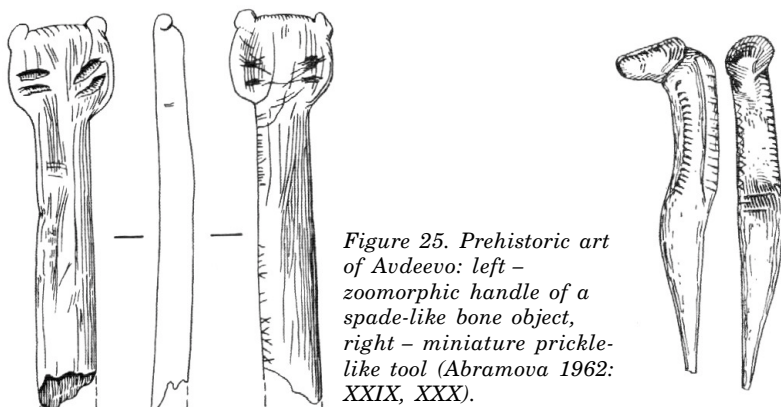
has prominent buttocks and legs (Figure 23).

Like artefacts discovered from Mezin, prehistoric art found in Yeliseevichi consists mostly of ornamentation. The best examples of ornamentation are 8 elaborately patterned mammoth tusk plates. The ornamentation of two plates consists of regular hexangles, resembling a honeycomb. Other plates display engraved mixed ornamentation of zigzag and undulating parallel lines crossed by straight and curved lines (Figure 24). Similar ornamentation has been discovered on 5 mammoth tusk pieces, 1 mammoth and 1 animal rib. The rest of the collection consists of fragmentary mammoth tusks and bones covered with remnants of various patterns (Abramova 1962).



*Figure 24. Mammoth tusk slab illustrated with honeycomb and zigzag pattern (Yelinek 1982: 728).*

The prehistoric settlement of **Avdeevo** is located 40 km east of the city of Kursk, on the left bank of the Ragozna river before it merges into the Seim (a tributary of the Desna). In the middle of the cultural layer some 22 millennia old (PSSSR 1984: 40) numerous prehistoric artefacts were found during the years 1947–1949. Quite intriguing are mammoth tusk slabs with zoomorphic elements, deco-



*Figure 25. Prehistoric art of Avdeevo: left – zoomorphic handle of a spade-like bone object, right – miniature prickle-like tool (Abramova 1962: XXIX, XXX).*

rated handles of spade-like bone objects and bone prickles with handles that may tentatively be considered human or animal heads (Figure 25). Similar art objects have also been found in the prehistoric settlement of Kostenki (see below).

Of all the finds of Avdeevo, four 16–12.5 cm tall ivory female figures are worth special notice. One of these has a slender body and finely modelled legs, another

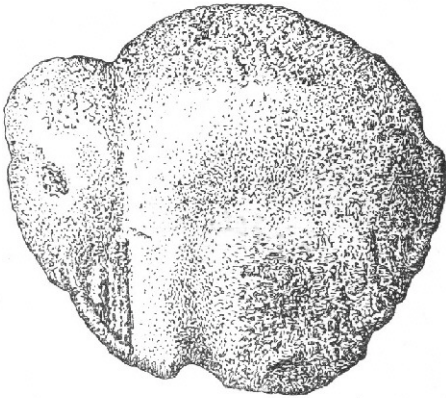


Figure 26. Bone mammoth figure (Abramova 1962: XXIX).

leaves the impression of a short and plump woman, whereas the other two may be considered unfinished sketches. In addition to these figures a sitting anthropomorph and a round sandstone object resembling human head have been found.

Animal figures are represented by the extant left side of a bone mammoth figure (Figure 26). The

most remarkable item of jewellery found is a complete 19 cm long ivory headband. Its ornamentation is not very common and consists of simple straight and curved lines.

**Yudinovo** prehistoric settlement is located on the right bank of the Sudost river in the Briansk Province, Pogar district. Three larger and several smaller tusk fragments with engraved rhombic, zigzag and line patterns were discovered from this settlement. The objects also display traces of deeper indentations. The Yudinovo site was habited during the Magdalenien phase (Grigoreva 1999).

Traces of Palaeolithic human settlement are most conspicuous in the vicinity of Voronezh on the Don watershed. The area 35 km south of Voronezh is called the district of **Kostenki-Borshevo**. Except for Anosovka and Borshevo, all prehistoric settlements of the region are known under a common name **Kostenki**, and are specified by a corresponding Roman numeral. All in all, 26

Palaeolithic sites with more than 60 different archaeological monuments have been discovered in the region. All are located on a kilometre long stretch on the river's right bank and most have been in long-term and recurrent usage. An important link in the complex stratigraphy of cultural strata is the deposit of volcanic ashes that separates the later (32–22 millennia) and earlier layers (Matiushin 1996). Human settlement in the district of Kostenki-Borshevo in the period following the glacial maximum was relatively modest. The majority of artefacts originate in the uppermost, about 22 millennia old cultural layer. The district of Kostenki-Borshevo is one of the world's richest locations in finds of Palaeolithic miniature art. As evidenced by the recent discovery of an elaborately finished female torso, the archaeological excavations held in the region up to the present day have been very successful (Masson 1996: 48).

**Kostenki I** is the most important prehistoric settlement in the watershed of the river Don. The majority of artefacts found at this site originate from the uppermost, 22.3 millennia old cultural stratum (PSSSR 1984: 166). The most famous of these are Palaeolithic Venus figures, four of which are carved in mammoth ivory and two in marl. All these figures are preserved in the Kunstkamera-museum in St. Petersburg, Russia. The most exquisite is a 9 cm tall art object displaying a band ornament engraved on the figurine's back and above its breasts and buttocks. Unfortunately, the figurine's head and feet below the knees are missing (Figure 27).

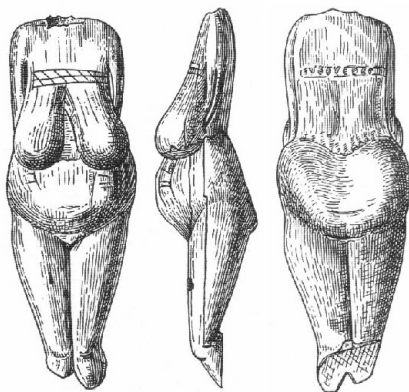


Figure 27. Female figurine in ivory found in the Kostenki I site (Abramova 1962: I).

The artefacts of Konstenki I include 7 female figurines and 25 fragments, 21 female heads, 1 engraved fragment of a female figurine, 3 anthropomorphs in the sitting position, 3 anthropomorphic staffs, 7 anthropomorphic heads, 10 medallions, 16 mammoth or rhinoc-

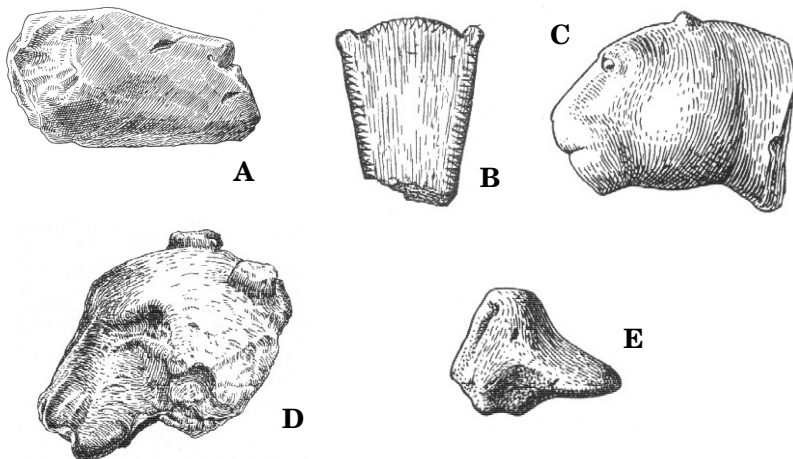


Figure 28. Various head figures from the Konstenki I site: A – marl anthropomorph, B – zoomorphic ivory tablet, C – marl head of a cave lion, D – marl wolf head, E – marl bird head (Abramova 1962: XII, XIV, XVI).

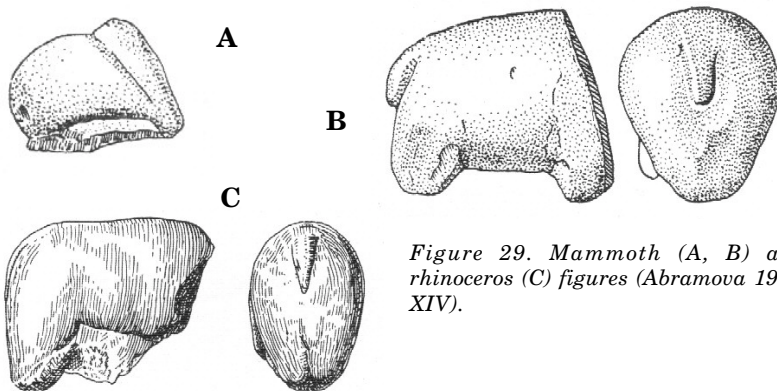


Figure 29. Mammoth (A, B) and rhinoceros (C) figures (Abramova 1962: XIV).

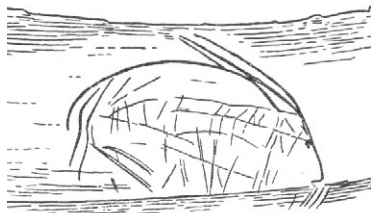


Figure 30. Animal engraved on a piece of rib (Abramova 1962: XIV).

eros figures, 5 heads of cave lion, 5 bear heads, 1 wolf head, 2 horse heads, 10 heads of indistinct zoomorphs, 11 bird heads or fragments.

Most female figurines found at this site are broken, only one was discovered intact. The number of fragments and traces of repeated pounding suggest that the destruction of figurines was intentional. If the crushing blow was not destructive enough it had to be repeated with greater force. It is generally believed that this act was necessitated by some ritual (Abramova 1962: 9). Fragments include torsi or pieces of torsi, feet, parts of arms, shoulders and breasts. The number of representations of female heads mostly made of marl or chalk is also large. Several zoomorphic finds are also fragmentary and are represented by some cm tall head figures (Figure 28).

All art objects depicting large mammals (mammoth and rhinoceroses) are carved in marl. The prototype for some fragmentary figurines may have been either mammoth or rhinoceros (Figure 29 B). Six of the found figurines plus 4 raw pieces are mammoth-like (Figure 29 A), whereas only one sculpture is more clearly distinguishable as a figure of rhinoceros, though its head is missing (Figure 29 C).

In addition to sculptural art objects single engravings have been discovered at the site. The most spectacular of these are a fragmentary female representation created on a marl stone tablet and a zoomorphic representation engraved on a piece of animal rib (Figure 30).

Items of jewellery discovered at this site include pendants, medallions, parts of headbands and beads. Mammoth tusk pendants and headbands have been partly ornamented (Figure 31 A). Oval marl pendants with an opening for suspending in their thinner upper end (Figure 31 C) were often used as items of jewellery. Other polished stones with a unique oval opening are medallions presumably associated with feminine cult (Figure 31 B). All 9 whole and 3 raw medallions are carved in marl. Fangs of arctic fox and fox, stones with natural cavities and snail shells have also been used as items of jewellery (Abramova 1962).



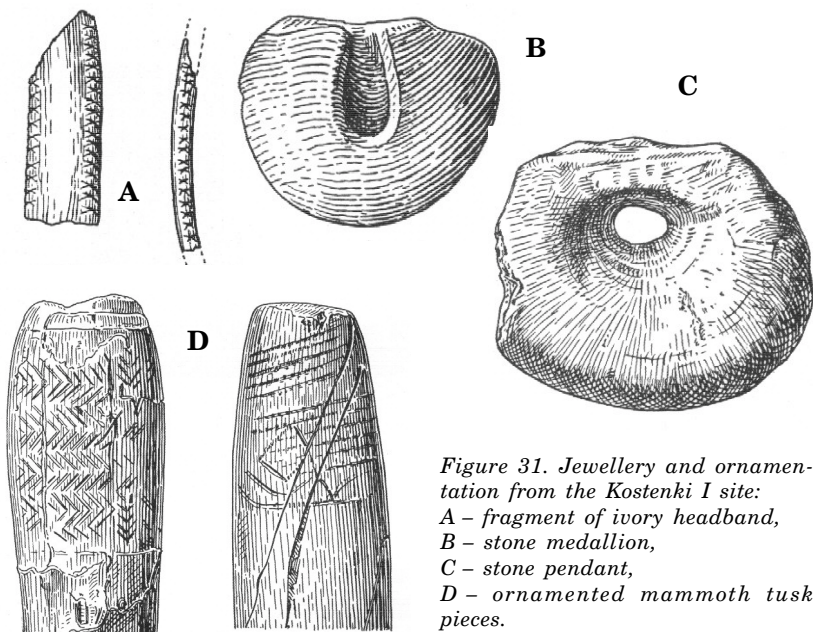


Figure 31. Jewellery and ornamentation from the Kostenki I site:  
 A - fragment of ivory headband,  
 B - stone medallion,  
 C - stone pendant,  
 D - ornamented mammoth tusk pieces.

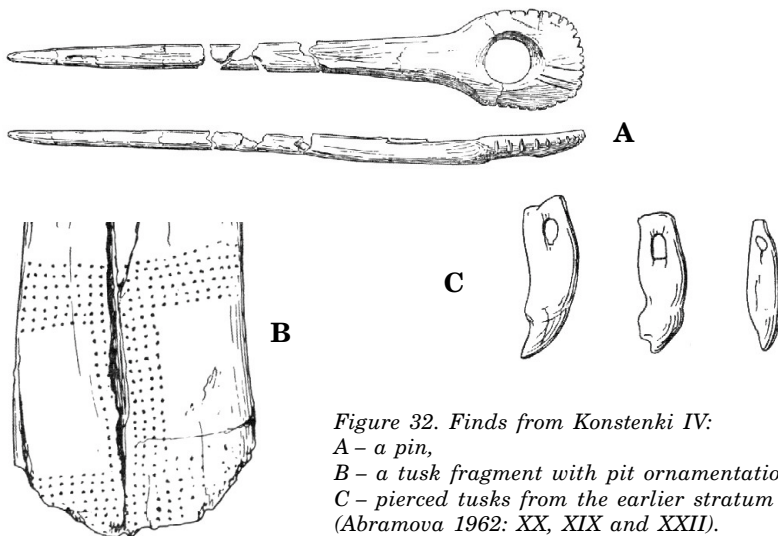


Figure 32. Finds from Kostenki IV:  
 A - a pin,  
 B - a tusk fragment with pit ornamentation;  
 C - pierced tusks from the earlier stratum  
 (Abramova 1962: XX, XIX and XXII).

Ornamentation can mostly be found on fragments of bone and ivory artefacts and items of jewellery, sometimes also on sculptural objects. Compared to the finds discovered from Mezin, the pattern of ornamentation is considerably less ornate, but still relatively diverse. Representations are formed of parallel lines, small tooth-shaped incisions, fishtail pattern, double zigzag lines, band ornamentation, rectangular ornamentation and in patterns of crescent-like figures arranged in rows (Figure 31 D).

Few poorly preserved ornamented fragments and items of jewellery have been found in the third stratum of the Konstenki I site. No prehistoric art objects have been found deeper below.

The prehistoric settlement of **Konstenki IV (Alexandrovka)** belongs to the same Palaeolithic period than the uppermost cultural layer of Konstenki I (precise dating is so far lacking). Two raw anthropomorphic ivory figurines, one displaying pit ornamentation, have been found there. Animal figurines are made mostly of marl and in their schematic form and style of creation bear great resemblance to the corresponding finds of the Konstenki I site. Two of ten mammoth-like figures are depicted in sitting position. Some figures resemble bison, one is a representation of a bear paw, yet other zoomorphic figures are shaped after indistinguishable prototypes. These sc. sculptural stone objects include more than 30 fragments as well.

Most of the found jewellery are pendants carved of pipe bone. The items include 10 slate pendants, 15 miniature round crosscut marl pegs, more than 30 slate discs, 41 miniature beads or button-like objects and 91 fragments (Abramova 1962). A 17 cm tall flat ivory pin with an oval head is exceptional for its fine elaboration. The edges of the pin's head are decorated with simple cut ornamentation, with a regular opening in the centre (Figure 32 A). The object bears some resemblance to the staffs of Moldova, but is several times smaller in size. Relatively irregular line ornament has been cut on four marl pieces. The same object finds display little pit ornamentation (Figure 32 B). The earlier stratum contained no examples of miniature sculptural art; instead, items of jewellery made of pierced molluscan shell-halves, fangs of wolf and arctic fox were found (Figure 32 C).



A whole series of prehistoric art objects was found in the cultural stratum of **Anosovka II**. Most of these objects are marl mammoth figurines (Figure 33 B). There are 15 figurines all together, plus some raw figures. Other marl sculptures include 4 rhinoceros-like figures, one of which has been preserved intact (Figure 33 A). Both mammoth and rhinoceros figures are very schematic in form. Also, two bone objects with zoomorphic handles (Figure 33 C), some ornamented bone fragments and more than 50 marl discs flat on one side and convex on the other (Figure 33 D) have been discovered at this site.

Palaeolithic art has also been discovered in prehistoric settlements of **Konstenki II, XII, XIV, XV, XVII** and **Borshevo I and II**. The finds include mostly pendants of animal fangs or other material, ornamented bone fragments and other items of adornment. The oldest finds are more than 32 millennia old and originate in the settlements of Konstenki XII and XVII. Bone fragments decorated with incisions have been found from Konstenki XII and pendants from Konstenki XVII (PSSSR 1984: 228). The cultural stratum of Konstenki II revealed a schematic human figure that resembles the corresponding finds of the Buret settlement, Siberia. 3 long ivory tablets with regularly indented edges, 2 objects with gridlike ornamentation of reindeer antler and miniature items of jewellery of bone and stone have been found in the cultural layer of Borshevo II (Abramova 1962).

The prehistoric settlement of **Gagarino** is located on the left bank of the headwaters of the river Don, 5 km north of the mouth of the Bystraia Sosna. S. N. Zamiatnin conducted archaeological excavations in the region in 1927 and 1929. The cultural layer of the site has been dated as 21.8 millennia old (PSSSR 1984: 40). On 23 square metres of the settlement 3 intact female figurines (2.1–2.7 inches or 5.5–7.1 cm), 3 partly preserved female figurines and 3 fragments were found. All the figurines with exaggerated breasts and buttocks and the extant fragments were carved in mammoth ivory (Abramova 1962). One of the figures has an overly corpulent shape and impersonal head covered with pit ornamentation, characteristic of Palaeolithic Venus figures (Figure 34 A), the other is modelled slender and long-legged. The third figure is unique in Palaeolithic art because of its arms raised from elbows, carefully designed fluffy

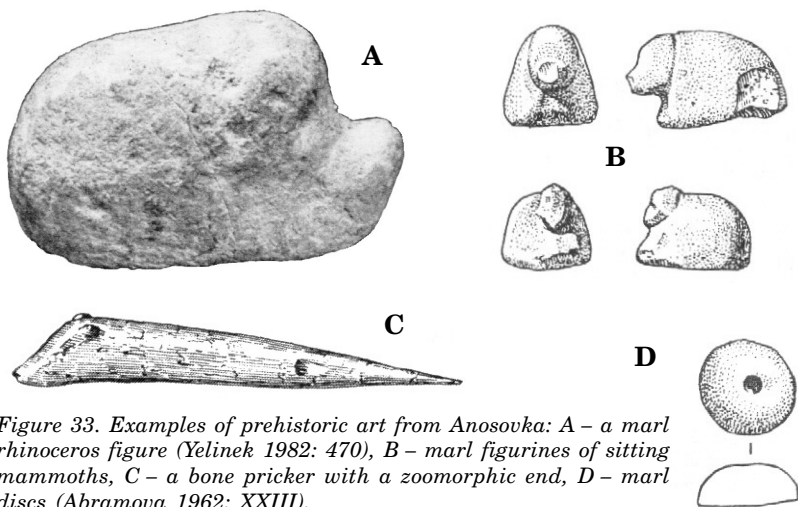


Figure 33. Examples of prehistoric art from Anosovka: A - a marl rhinoceros figure (Yelinek 1982: 470), B - marl figurines of sitting mammoths, C - a bone pricker with a zoomorphic end, D - marl discs (Abramova 1962: XXIII).

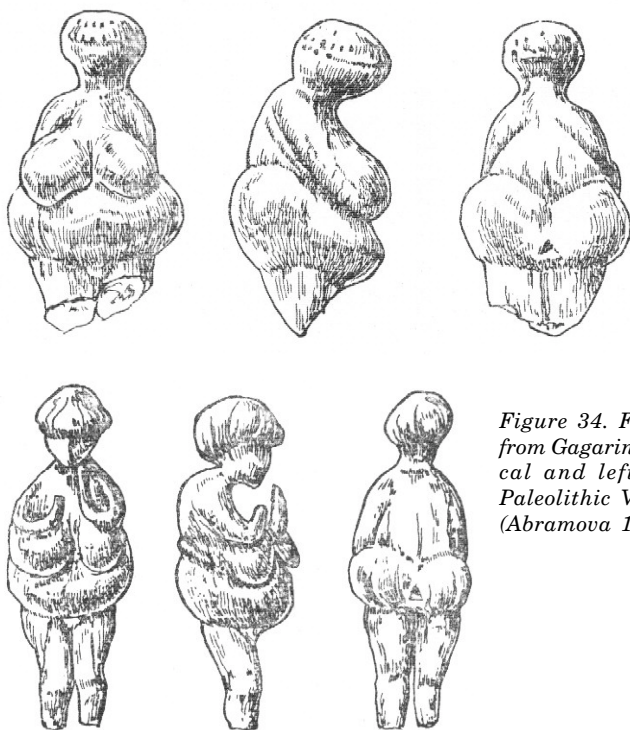


Figure 34. Female figurines from Gagarino: above - a typical and left - an atypical Paleolithic Venus figure (Abramova 1962: XXV).

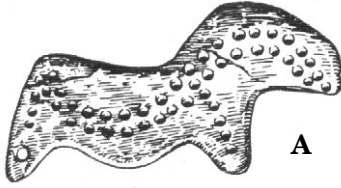
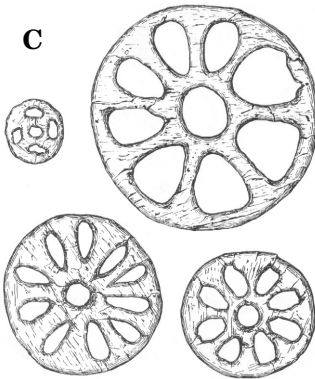
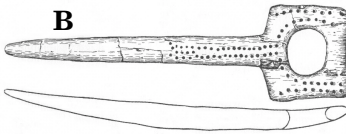


Figure 35. Prehistoric art finds from Sungir: A – an ornimated animal figure (Abramova 1962: XXIV), B – a fastening pin, C – slotted discs (PSSSR 1984: 270).



hairdo and characteristic facial features (Figure 34 B). No other examples of figurative art have been found in Gagarino. Discovered items of jewellery include 2 ivory pendants and 19 fangs of fox and arctic fox. Irregular and plain line ornamentation was found on 9 ivory tablets and a piece of pipe bone (Abramova 1962).

The Upper-Palaeolithic settlement of **Sungir** is located within the borders of today's city of Vladimir at the river Kliazma (the Oka rivershed) and its cultural stratum is 24–25 millennia old. In 1957 a flat horse-shaped bone slab with both sides covered with pit ornamentation was found there. The depressions of ornamentation form rows which schematically follow the contours of the object (Figure 35 A). Traces of bright red ochre found in the depressions suggest that both sides of the sc. Sungir Horse were painted red. During 1965–1969 burials of an about 55–65 year-old man, a 7–8 year-old girl and a 12–13 year-old boy were discovered at this site (Matiushin 1996). The children were buried in the same grave, the tops of

their heads touching. Long ivory spears were placed parallel to the skeletons. These spears are regarded as the most sensational Upper-Palaeolithic discovery in the whole world, since a mammoth tusk could be split and carved only by using a special technique. Reconstructions of the skeletons revealed clearly distinguishable Europoid facial features.

Closer inspection of the burials unearthed a flat mammoth figure, a zoomorphic figure and other finds, including two highly unique pins with an opening and pit ornamentation (Figure 35 B) and four slot-

ted ivory discs with oval openings (Figure 35 C). Two discs had been attached to sharp-ended spears. The grave finds of burials included a plethora of ivory beads (more than 3500 beads in the man's burial and more than 7500 in the children's one) and bracelet plaques. The number of grave finds and remnants of subsequent, at places extremely thick layers of charcoal, lime and ochre suggest a complex funeral ritual tradition (PSSSR 1984: 233–234, 270).

Numerous items of jewellery were found also outside the graves of the Sungir site. Thousands of flat, rectangular, thick, elongated and miniature beads of bone, stone, horn and snail shells, and pendants made of fangs of arctic fox and oblong pebbles have been discovered. Several bone items display incisions that may be regarded as a certain type of ornamentation (Abramova 1962).

### The Urals --->

The earliest traces of settlement in the Ural region are in the Bolshoi Glukhoi cave on the lower course of the river Chusova. These date back about 130 thousand years and thus belong to the period previous to the Valdai-Würm glaciating. Most Palaeolithic sites of the Urals are 20–10 millennia old. The prehistoric art of the Ural region is generally dated to the same period (Ščelinskij & Širokov 1999). The very first prehistoric art finds from the region are examples of miniature plastic art and were discovered from Talitski and Bezymiannyi. Later, surprising discoveries were made when Palaeolithic cave paintings were found in the Southern Urals which have also remained the only sites that represent Palaeolithic cave art in the whole Eastern Europe.

The best known Palaeolithic settlement of the Ural region is **Talitski**, which is located in Ostrovskaia (later became known as Talitski, named after the first explorer in the region) near the mouth of the Chusova river, a tributary to the river Kama. Today the settlement has been flooded by the backwater reservoir of the hydroelectric power station built on the river. The cultural layer of the prehistoric settlement has been estimated 18.7 millennia old. Few prehistoric art objects have been discovered in the rich cultural stratum of Talitski: a mammoth rib and bone fragment with engraved line pattern and two slate tablets decorated with wide streaks of red paint. Archaeological finds of the region bear some resem-