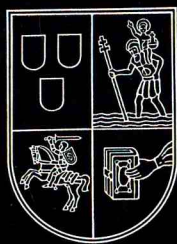


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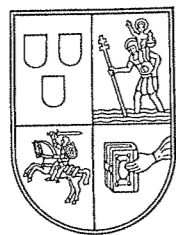
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Prehistoric  
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# Prehistoric art in the Baltic region

*Edited by Adomas Butrimas*

Vilnius Academy of Fine Arts  
Lithuania



Vilnius 2000

## PREFACE

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This volume of *Acta Academiae artium vilnensis* is devoted to the prehistoric art of the Baltic Region. The first permanent settlers arrived in the Region during the Old Stone Age, a thousand years or so before the Birth of Christ. Newcomers from the south and south west brought with them artistic traditions which were already many thousands of years old. In the eastern Baltic they continued their ancient traditions and developed characteristic new styles, creating work that was influenced directly by local ecological and economic factors.

Good preservation conditions in the bogs and wetlands of the Baltic Region mean that artefacts of amber, wood, clay, bone and horn, such as small figurines, carvings and decorated pottery have survived to modern times. These artefacts were discovered first some time ago and have attracted local and international interest, especially since R. Kleb's 1882 publication. Thousands of examples of metal decorative work widespread in the Region's barrows, level burial sites and early settlements were not only of spiritual and aesthetic value but also of everyday practical significance. Decorative works of applied art from the Bronze and Iron Ages represent the most artistic branch of prehistoric craftsmanship and played a major role in developing the aesthetic sensibilities of various peoples in the Region. Objects of high artistic and aesthetic value which were created throughout the prehistory and early ages of Baltic life function as a link to unite various cultures and peoples around the Baltic Sea.

Researchers specialising in Baltic prehistoric art would find it difficult to imagine Stone-age art without the particularly high-quality amber products found at Šventoji,

the pictorial forms inscribed on pottery from settlements in Nida, wooden idols or the most artistic of all prehistoric northern European artefacts, the Šventoji elk, whose image graces many Baltic archaeological posters, conference brochures, regional art albums, postcards and calendars. All these objets d'art inspired the organisation of this conference - many of them discovered by the renowned specialist of Baltic Prehistory, Dr R. Rimantienė.

Rimantienė will celebrate her eightieth birthday on October 25 2000, Her friends in many countries express their appreciation of her work through this collection of essays which cover one of her many areas of interest, prehistoric Baltic art. For many years Dr Rimantienė has devoted her considerable talents to a great number of varied subjects mostly within Stone-age archaeology. She is that *rara avis*, a scholar endowed with knowledge of many areas of research. Her prodigious bibliography of academic work has been placed at the end of this volume. We also wish to mention her non-archaeological publications, especially her translations of Scandinavian literature into Lithuanian which have served to build a bridge linking cultures across the Baltic Sea.

Conference delegates gathered in Vilnius wish to congratulate Dr Rimantienė on the occasion of her eightieth birthday and express their honour and regard for her and her work through this modest *festchrift*.

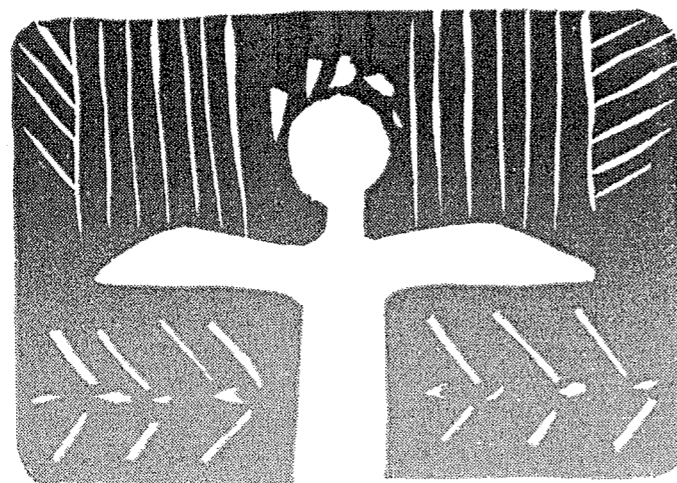
Vilnius, September 11 2000

Adomas Butrimas, Viktorija Daniliauskaitė

## HUMAN FIGURINES IN EASTERN-BALTIC PREHISTORIC ART

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*Viktorija Daniliauskaitė. The Balts I. 1988*

Human figurines represent an important part of the iconographic system of all archaeological cultures in the Eastern Baltic, the territory which comprises modern-day Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, the Kaliningrad District of the Russian Federation (formerly East Prussia), Finland and surrounding regions, during the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods. This study analyses the chronology, stylistic classification and possible function and meaning of stone, wooden, amber, bone and clay human figurines alongside anthropomorphic symbols on pottery and bone in the Region during the Middle and New Stone Ages. The origins of these objects are also examined. The illustrations provided here represent the best examples of prehistoric eastern-Baltic anthropomorphic art in all its main figurine groups.

The first permanent settlers on the south-eastern Baltic littoral arrived in the area during the tenth millennium before Christ, that is, at the end of the Palaeolithic period. Newcomers from the south and south-west brought with them artistic traditions which were already sixteen thousand years old. In the eastern Baltic they continued their ancient traditions, developing original, specific styles and selecting objects that were directly influenced by local ecological and economic factors.

Objects of prehistoric art from the European forest zone include small sculptured figurines and engravings on horn/bone, clay, wood, stone and amber. If we wish to understand levels of art and thought, we should analyse pottery decoration. We can state objectively that the art

work of Mesolithic and Neolithic hunters and fishermen and of late-Neolithic cattle-breeders in the Baltic forest zone is much richer and more varied than that found in the steppes and forest-steppe zones. The eastern Baltic, Karelia and the Kola Peninsula and the Northern Urals are particularly rich in artefacts. Distinguishing these regions for the wealth of their works of art, we should pay attention to specific reasons why prehistoric artefacts were able to survive there. In the Baltic area, including what is now Lithuania, there are many peat bogs which provide excellent conditions for preserving artefacts. Thus, the best surviving examples of prehistoric art come from bog sites at Šventoji, Sarmatė, the Lubana lowlands, Kretuonas, Asovets and the Usviaty region and these form the material base for our study. Unfortunately, numerous examples do not survive from every period of the Stone Age. The Palaeolithic period is the poorest with only a few surviving flint figurines.

### **The subjects of palaeolithic art in western Europe and the Baltic Region**

On the basis of palaeolithic *objets d'art* we can discern what were vital human needs in that age: subsistence and reproduction of the kin-group. These needs could be satisfied only through hunting an animal. Care of oneself and one's livestock increase. All human creative and productive energy was channelled to these ends. Palaeolithic man acted collectively because individual action was not so important then as it was to become in later times.

When we see collective action, we confront the collective idea which provokes that activity, collective outlooks and collective creative thought. Objects created in the Palaeolithic Period reveal that at that time a whole range of people were involved in creating artefacts, judging by the number of poor quality examples that survive (Müller-Karpe H. 1966, S. 170). Thus the real masterpieces of European palaeolithic art and the rock painting of particular Australian Aborigines bear witness not only to long tradition but also to particular individual skill which was noticed and appreciated by societies in past ages. (Haskovec I., Sullivan H. 1989, p. 57-74).

Art was not confined to a separate, distinct sphere of human endeavour because it was connected directly with world-awareness and survival. The versatility and function of created objects were predominated by various connections with cultural processes. Creative work depended on other cultural phenomena such as mythology and religion. The art of every society, including that of the Stone Age, has a characteristic world model, viz. an ideal image system whereby man's relationship with his surroundings must be defined concretely. This system dominates the structure and meaning of an artistic image. It lends wellknown anthropomorphic and zoomorphic forms to non-human forces. Basic forms of awareness – of the ego, the other and Nature – existed in palaeolithic art. Creative art stimulated man's ability to maintain his traditional way of life, to pass on knowledge from one generation to the next and in the end distinguished *homo sapiens* from his animal ancestors. Unfortunately, the small encampments built on the sandy banks of the Nemunas, Neris, Merkys or Dvina (Dauguva) rivers have not left many examples of palaeolithic art. Unexpressive flint figurines from Skaruliai and other Lithuanian sites (Rimantienė R., 1984, p.56) cannot explain the complex spiritual and creative world of palaeolithic Man and we can understand him and his work really only through analogy.

**Eastern Baltic Mesolithic Art: continuation of north-west European art and the development of new styles**

During the Middle Stone Age hunting implements improved and the inhabitants of the South-eastern Baltic coastlands engaged in fishing and in domesticating the dog. This led to an increase in the value placed on an individual hunter's intellectual and physical abilities. Hunters' graves of this period from Zvejnieki (Latvia), the Spiginas and Donkalmis islands of Lake Biržulis (Lithuania), taken together with the burial of corpses in a

sitting position (tied up?) in sites from Eastern Germany and graves containing only heads with many grave goods and an abundance of red ochre reveal that people were afraid of the dead. This induces us to conclude that complicated hunting magic existed at that time and that art was used to serve it. There is no doubt that the main subject of Mesolithic art was man as hunter - a figure with arms aloft, holding an arrow or axe in his hand. Often he is caught in a dynamic pose, leaping in pursuit of his prey. Such huntsmen were engraved on a bone object found at Ozernoe Site Two in the Lubansk area (Minsk District) (Fig. 1). This is a unique composition of three anthropomorphic figures engraved on a fragment of elk bone

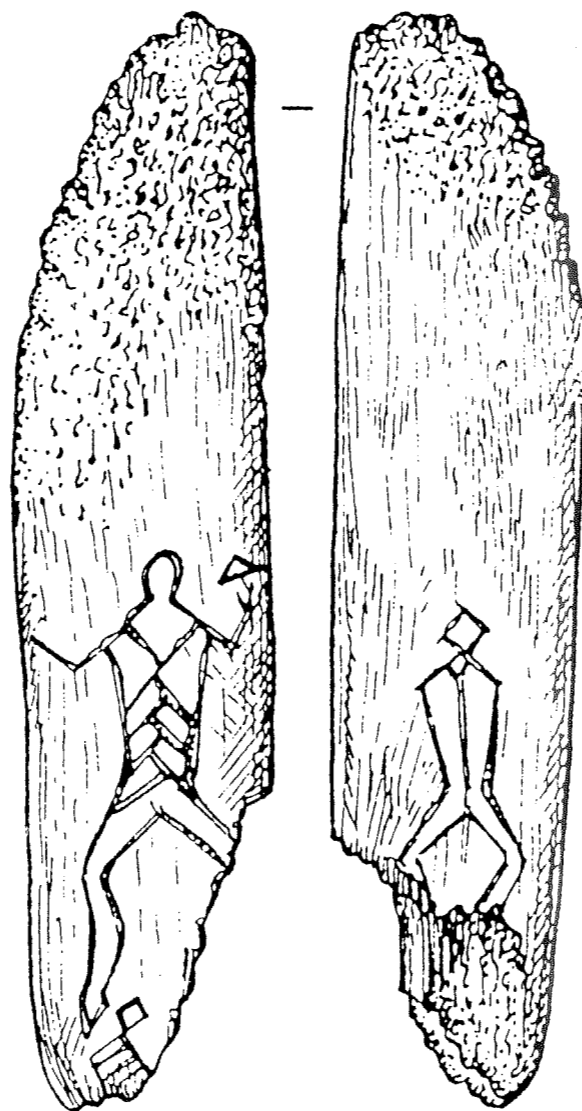


Fig 1. Ozernoe 2 (Belorussia). Anthropomorphic engraving on bone. Mesolithic

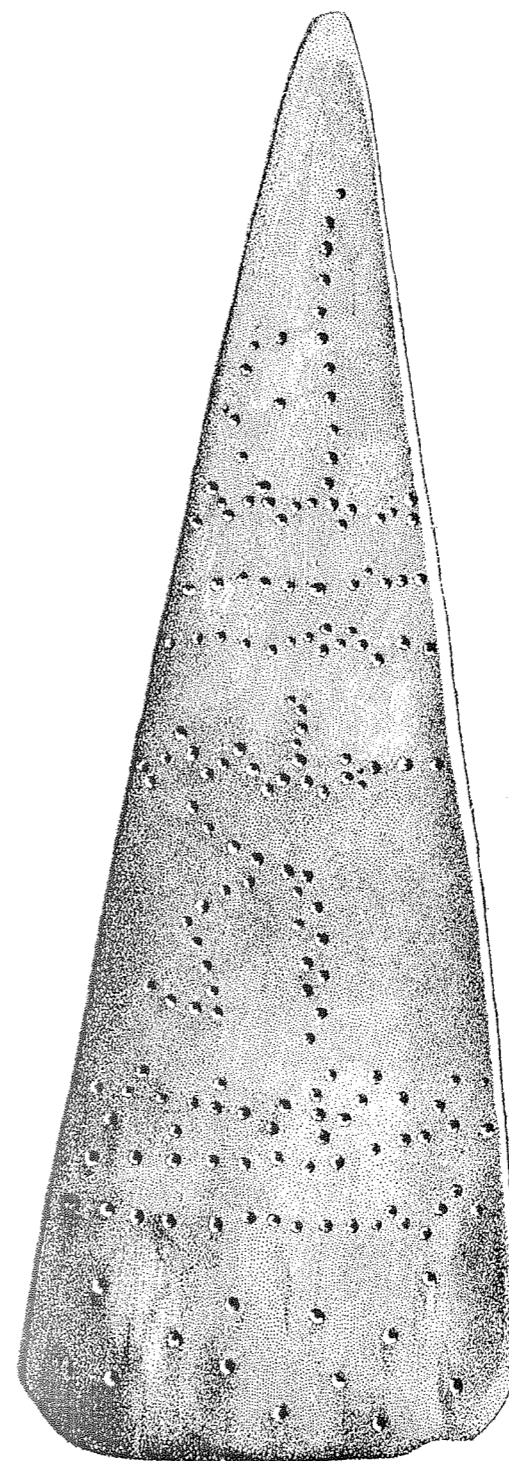


Fig. 2. Zvidzē (Latvija). Anthropomorphic figure formed by drilling on triangular bone lamella. Late Mesolithic

(Krivalcevič N. N. 1987, p. 456). On both sides of this artefact we see two full-length anthropomorphic figures. The outlined bodies are remarkably wide at the shoulders,

while the legs are akimbo. On one leg we can detect the broadening of the huntsman's shanks. The body of the better preserved figurine is covered by herring-bone decoration. It has hands which are expressed by a single line. In his raised left hand the man holds a bow and arrow (or axe?). Both hands are crooked with upturned palms, a pose which reminds us of figurines from the late Neolithic period – worshippers. The hand holding the above-mentioned implement is three-fingered. The figure's head is oval. The second man is depicted without hands and with a rhomboid head; his torso is divided symmetrically by vertical lines and he stands akimbo, his legs bent slightly. Only a small fragment of the third figure survives because the bone artefact was broken below where his waist is. The head is a small rhombus connected with larger rhombi forming his body. The lower (and bigger) rhombus is scored by diagonal lines. The huntsmen are very schematic and only the features associated with *Homo sapiens* as a biological species are depicted more clearly. Two other bone-engraved figures bear the same graphic expressions and stylistic technique. These come from the Vekso peat bog (Liversage D. 1967, p. 229-230, fig. 4-5). The existence of an imagery canon can be confirmed by two other figures depicted on flint artefacts from Holmegard in southern Zealand (Fieher A. 1973, p. 153-168) and Langeland (Mathiassen T. 1941, fig. 4:a).

A separate group of anthropomorphic figures includes images formed by drilling. One figurative composition formed on a triangular bone lamella was found at Zvidzē in the Lubana lake district of Eastern Latvia. An anthropomorphic figure was formed by drilling (Loze I. 1988, p. 68-69). The figure of a man standing with stretched-out arms and a raised right leg (Fig. 2) is depicted on the lamella. This figure is very schematic: arms, legs, head and body are hinted by rows of shallow drilled pits. This figure, like one from Belorussia, is connected with a whole landscape, where we suppose land and sky to be depicted using the same horizontal and vertical rows of shallow drilled pits. This image dates back to the fifth millennium BC, i. e. the Late Mesolithic.

A second anthropomorphic figure from the same period provides a highly schematised picture on a bone lamella from Eastern Prussia (Gaerte W. 1929, S. 18). Head, eyes, body and hands are formed by means of pits and holes (Fig. 4). The human images in this group are formed by drilling small-diameter holes side by side at very small intervals. This way of making images is known only in the territory of Baltic region during the Mesolithic period. In the western European palaeolithic art such ways of depicting human figures was unknown (Breuil H., Lantier R. 1959, p. 224).



Fig. 3. Parnu river's area (Estonia). Figurine carved from antler. Mesolithic



Fig. 4. Eastern Prussia. Anthropomorphic figure on bone lamella. Mesolithic

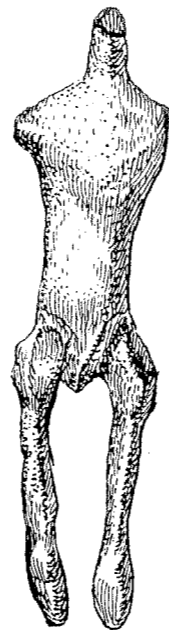


Fig. 5. Oleneostrovskij cemetery grave N. 130 (Russia). Male figurine from bone. Mesolithic

The closest analogies we have to this group come from the Danish island of Fynen (Mathiassen T. 1941, fig. 5) and the Charlothenlund area (Kozłowski J. 1992, p. 30). Geometrical compositions formed by drilling technology provide the main types of Maglemosian ornamentation (Clark 1975, Abb. 37).

During the Neolithic period, when pottery technology was mastered, the well known style of depicting figures by drilling was transferred immediately to ceramic surfaces. However, it was no longer necessary to drill – pricking out the holes in the clay was enough.

Hitherto full-figured Mesolithic depictions are known only from the East Baltic region and consist of a quite distinctive group of five figures.

A very schematic, albeit naturalistically made anthropomorphic figure 10.5 cm in height was found in Estonia, in the Pärnu river area around 1911-12. This figure which is carved from antler is round in cross-section (Fig. 3). Its quadrangular head is too large and has a small pit on its vertex. Only the nose and chin are discernible on the face. The mouth is marked with two engravings. The torso and proportionally-shaped legs are outlined broadly. The whole figurine is carefully polished. (Gluck E. 1914, Tafel 1). When he published his study of this figurine in 1930 R. Indreko wrote that it is very hard to believe, that this example has a very specific stylistic divergence and he expressed the hope, that in the future figurines in would be found of the same style (Indreko R. 1931, p. 67). He was right. A very similar figurine was found in a Mesolithic grave at Oleneostrov (Gurina N. 1956. P. 221, fig. 120).

This sculpture also presents a slightly stooping person (6.5 cm high). The body of the figurine is also round in a cross-section, but its legs are carved separately. The head is also joined directly onto the body, there is no neck. The figurine is double faced, but the faces look in different directions. The arms are depicted by a small bump on the surface of the breast. The front part of the face is well shaped. The eyes are formed with oval hollow, the straight nose protrudes and the mouth is formed by an oval hollow. The chin is sharp. The other side of the figurine is without arms. The details of the face are very unclear and there is a small pit on a vertex of the figurine – as in Estonian example, but this pit divided two faces.

The next two figurines of this type were found in the Oleneostrov cemetery, graves 18 and 130. One figurine is male (Fig. 5), the other has female features (Gurina N. 1956, p. 220-221). The proportions of the female figurine – the parts of hips and legs are broad, the head has very strange proportions. For that reason the author who published those figurines supposed, that one was a depiction of a woman, dressed in a skirt with her head covered with head's cover. A very small flat human figurine found in Besov Nos Mesolithic Site VI (western shore of Lake Onega) and dated to the end of XX century BC can be attributed to the same group (Lobanova 1995, p. 32-34, fig. 2).

All those figurines have common schematic features which form an indication of natural development. Prehistoric art developed towards schematism before the formation of states and class societies. Eventually a

realistically depicted object becomes transformed in to an abstract sign or ornament which bears a symbolic meaning very different from the original one.

The Mesolithic art and ornamental system of the Eastern Baltic is comparable with that of Sweden and Denmark, cause of contemporaneous formation of these territories. The cultures of Kunda (Eastern Baltic) and Maglunoze (Western Baltic) continued the traditions of western European Madlenian culture. Besides the similarities in anthropomorphic and zoomorphic depictions, decorations of hunting and fishing implements also abound with geometric motifs. Thus, the styles of western European prehistoric art remained here and thrive. Mesolithic artefacts became a bridge to the rich, original Neolithic art of Lithuania which was linked broadly with the rest of Northern Europe.

### Formation of the Neolithic Art style

During the early and middle Neolithic, inhabitants of the Eastern Baltic continued the artistic traditions of the forest area hunters that dated from the Early and Middle Stone Ages. The greatest part of artefacts from Narva culture are found in peat-bogs. The Indo-European cultural invasion and processes of Indo-Europeansation which had already taken place in other parts of Europe reached the Baltic coasts around 4300-2300 B.C. At this time a cattle-breeders' *weltanschauung* developed which included the fertility rites of a farming culture and worship of the Sun and other heavenly bodies, a tradition imported from the East. This cultural transformation through "Globular Amphora Culture" and "Cord Ware Culture" affected native art, giving rise to other forms, and fostering old schematised formula by lending new motives to them. Simultaneously another cultural invasion towards the north-eastern Baltic happened. Hunters of the "Pitted Ware and Comb Pottery Culture" which had not been influenced by Indo-Europeansation arrived. From these tribes the fino-ugrian population with its specific culture and art developed on the northern Baltic littoral. Small clay objects with human depictions of a completely different style enriched both the native and imported Indo-European art traditions. A repository of these three cultural traditions formed the artistic basis of the Ancient Balts by the end of the millennium BC.

The tenacity of those hunters' life and the old sources of Eastern Baltic art is exhibited by realistically depicted animals, elks for the most, on ritual rods. Similar wares in the waste territories of the North Europe bear witness to the area's ideological unity. Besides realistic and more or less stylised zoomorphic figurines, anthropomorphic ones

are found. Their abundance, especially noticeable during the Late Neolithic, should be connected with impulses from the South, i. e. with the Indo-European world outlook, as well as with native traditions, because imported ideas may have served as a catalyst. Great sculptures from Šventoji and Sarnate and amber figurines from Juodkrantė are highly schematised and have no indications of gender, although there are phallic figures which seem to be linked with fertility rites of hunter tribes. Variety of anthropomorphic figures let us analyse them from both the stylistical and the functional mind sets. First of all general features should be discussed. All the depictions are more or less schematised, a particular characteristic of the Northern Europe. The only depicted parts of the body are those, which enable us to distinguish human beings from animals. This is achieved by portraying a face. Figures usually have a round head, prominent nose, deep eye-sockets, prominent eyebrows and a protruding chin. On flatter objects, such as bone, amber, lamellae and pottery, graphic forms are achieved through engravings, imprints and drilled holes. Schematical and primitive forms helped to express only very abstract ideas that are discernible most easily in compositions on pottery surfaces.

Anthropomorphic figures found in the Eastern Baltic are classified in several groups:

1. Anthropomorphic sculptures on wooden poles with faces carved on a trunk.
2. Whole-figured sculptures.
3. Compositions on a flat surface.
4. Sculptured human head depictions - amulets.
5. Phallic figurines.

### Sculptures on wooden poles

Such sculptures are known from broad territories in the European forest area. In the territories inhabited by the ancient ancestors of the Balts four such sculptures (Fig. 3) have been found up to now. The find-sites are rather similar. All the sculptures were found in peat-bogs near former aquatic sites by old lakes or river-beds. In 1959 the first sculpture was found in the peat bog at Sarnate, near Liepājā on the Baltic coast. The figure is 168 cm in height (Fig. 6:1) with its upper part squared obliquely on one side and the lower part on both. The figure is divided into three almost equal parts. On the bottom of the upper part a human head is carved and this section ends at the neck. The next part is made of a squared log and serves as the figure's body. The lowest section is tapered and is squared on both sides. On it the legs are depicted. The author of the excavation report thought it was an idol

(Vankina L.1970, p. 103). On the basis of the find site, the sculpture's milieu was reconstructed. The idol stood under a large tree, in a square enclosed by timber fencing, typical of temples of ancient hunter-fisher societies. Sacrifices were offered in front of the idol. A hearth containing a mixture of burnt charcoal and sand was found there. The figure, as well as the other sculptures found on the territory of the Balts' ancient ancestors, is made from the trunk of a deciduous tree. The author quotes interesting data from church visitation records in Vidzeme. It is said that in 1740 idols were found on a farmstead in the parish of Drutsk. These stood under a large tree and offerings were brought before them (Vankina L. 1970, p. 103).

In 1969 a second sculpture was found at a dwelling site in a Šventoji peat-bog (Fig. 6:3) on the banks of a former lake. It lay with its spike end-down in the lake. From the location of the sculpture it seems that it once stood on the water's edge (Rimantienė R. 1979, p. 111-112). The sculpture is made from a straight alder tree log. It has a human face carved on its upper part and is tapered into a perfect square. The pole is 195 cm high and 10 cm thick. Its Stone-age sculptor worked only the 32-cm-long upper part of the log. He took off bark and carved a head and part of the chest there.

Modelled faces (Fig. 7:1,2), which we find recurring many times in amber and bone figurines are worth noting. The roundness of the log remains on the forehead and proceeds into a thin flat nose much longer than that of the Sarnate sculpture. As was usual in the Stone-Age sculpture of our region, perfectly carved eyebrows are common and thus there is no sign of eyes either here or on the other sculptures. The mouth is marked by an undistinctive rise. A triangular chin is outlined. Neck and breast are squared in small planes using a stone axe or a slate chisel. No endeavour was made to correct asymmetrical carvings, although a flint knife was used. The eyebrows are not very symmetrical and the shoulders clearly differ in height. The vertex is squared in a narrowing manner rather correctly. Bark was left on the back of the head.

The face of a small, 14-cm-high wooden sculpture found in the Malmuta river estuary in 1969 is formed in an identical manner (Fig. 8). A long nose and clear eyebrows dominate the features. The oval face including the mouth is formed in a deep hollow, similar to the ancient figures of Juodkrantė. The vertex and the whole surface of the sculpture are polished carefully (Loze I. 1983, fig. 23).

The fourth sculpture found at the Asavets peat-bog (Northern Belorussia) differs greatly from the previous squared ones. Only a fragment of the sculpture, 9.5 cm in length, was found (Fig. 9). The sculpture is made of tough deciduous timber. Unlike the other cases, here we do not

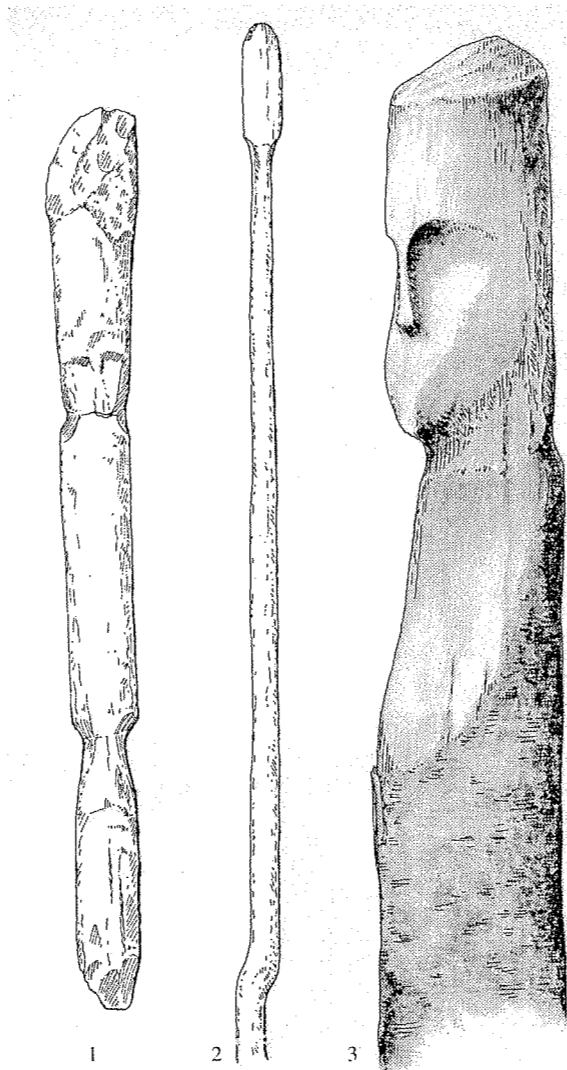


Fig. 6:1 Sarnate (Latvia). Wooden sculpture made from deciduous tree trunk. Neolithic  
6:3 Šventoji (Lithuania). Upper part of wooden sculpture. Neolithic  
6:2 Hopfenbach (Schleswig-Holstein). Wooden human sculpture. Early Neolithic

have an asexual figure. It is a male bearing certain features such as oval vertex, clear eyebrows, straight nose, prominent moustache and mouth with a triangular beard. The deep eye sockets and characteristic mouth form lend the face a severe expression. A perfectly squared neck joins on to a schematical body without arms. The lower part of the body is broken off (Černiauskis M.1987, p. 19-23).

In Hopfenbach on the western shores of the Baltic (Schleswig-Holstein), a wooden human sculpture 3,5 cm in height with a primitively carved head lacking facial detail was found (Fig. 6:2). It was dated by radiocarbon methods to the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC. The

Fig. 9. Asavets peat-bog (Belorussia). Wooden sculpture. Late Neolithic

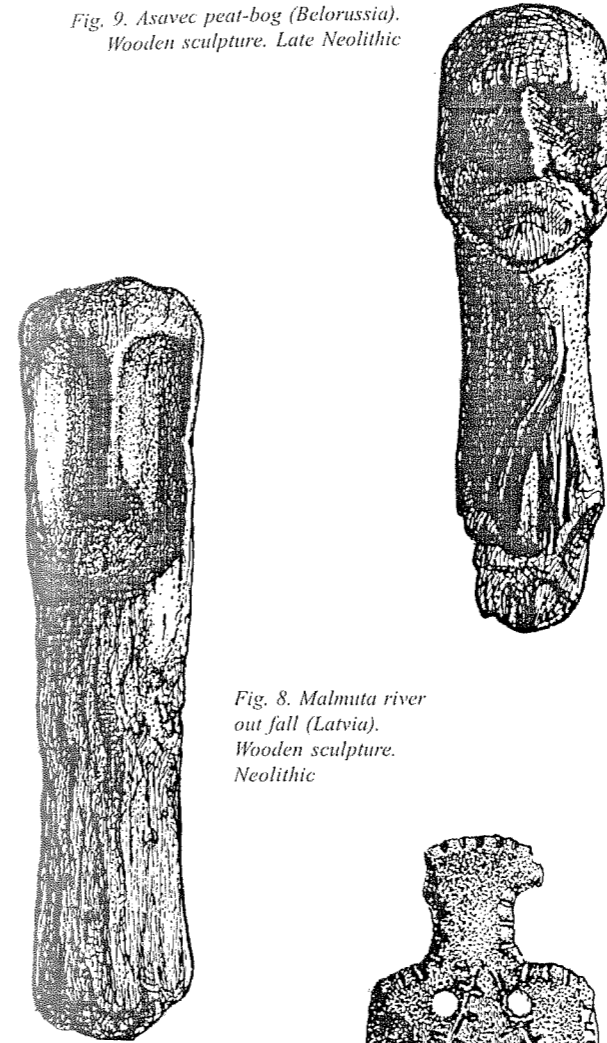


Fig. 8. Malmuta river out fall (Latvia). Wooden sculpture. Neolithic

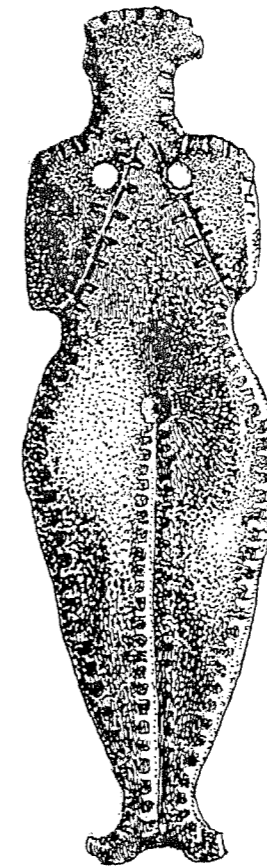


Fig. 10. Zvejnieki cemetery grave N. 172. (Latvia), Female bone figurine. Early Neolithic

circumstances surrounding the find favour the conclusion that the sculpture was placed in the water between two shorter stumps (Rust A. 1958, p. 141-145, fig. 55) about 15 m from the lakeside.

The five wooden sculptures we have discussed here all date back to around 4000-2500 BC i.e. the Early and the Middle Neolithic. They all have schematical faces and are depicted as asexual beings, except for the one from Asovets, which is chronologically later than the others. It seems, that the builders of these pole sculptures - ancient fishermen of the Baltic coasts - did not link fish and livestock breeding with realistic human pictures, which later on acquired a new function as fertility symbols. On the basis of nineteenth-century ethnographic information (Vilkuna K. 1975, p. 410-413) and engravings from the 16<sup>th</sup> century together with find-site data, we can hypothesise that during the Stone Age, at least at the beginning of the Neolithic, and, as unpublished data from Poland show, perhaps even earlier, human headed idols were erected in places that abounded in fish. They are called great Master-Fathers, were held in high honour and presented with offerings of fish. The erection of idols in fish-rich places continued until the times when metal was worked. They are known from the Shigirforest area and the Gorbunov peat-bogs in the Urals (Eding D. 1937, p. 138-140), are found in Germanic territories during Roman times (Behm-Blancke G. 1988, p. 363-385). Wooden idols were found on the southern shores of the Baltic in Volin (Poland) where the pagan temple proves that human sculptures of the same style lasted into the early Middle ages (9-11 centuries) (Filipowiak W. 1985, p. 121-138).

#### Whole-figured Human images

A considerable number of these figurines was discovered from the Mesolithic period, but in the New Stone Age they form the largest section of small sculptures in the East Baltic region. They were made from bone, horn, amber and clay. All the figures can be dated and their cultural dependence deduced from the manner of their execution, the degree of schematism, facial modeling, and their find-site, but from the beginning we must state, that the group of figurines belonging to the Neolithic period, differ in many ways from those made in the Mesolithic period, especially in the modelling of their faces. The facial style of those figurines has closest parallels with that of the "monumental" timber sculptures we have already discussed and this perhaps testifies, that this iconographic canon only spread in the East Baltic region in the Neolithic period.

The earliest examples are amber female figurines from Juodkrantė and those carved on bone found in the



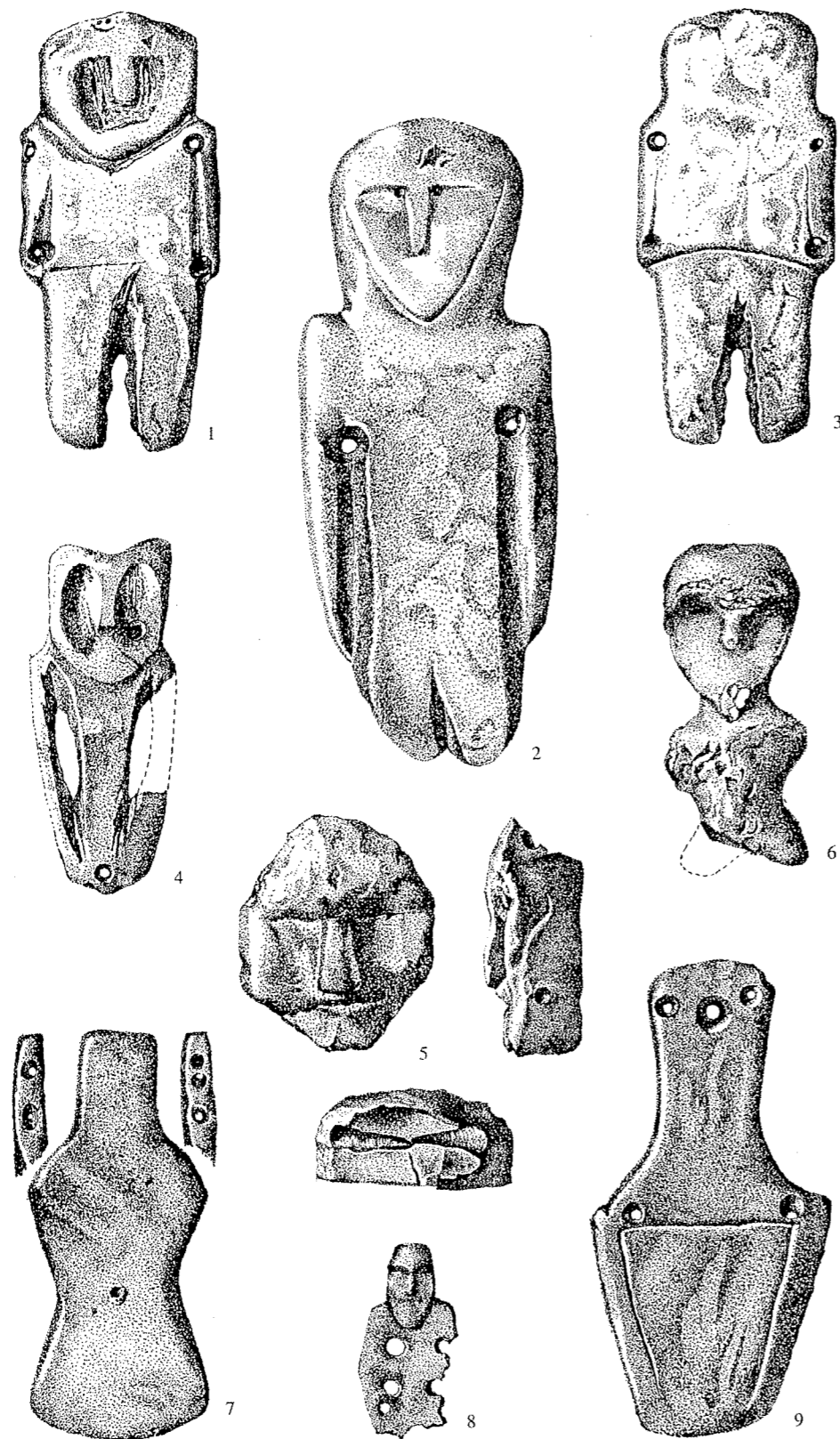


Fig. 11. Juodkrantė (Lithuania). Anthropomorphic amber figurines. Neolithic

Zvejnieki cemetery and at the Siask canal in the southern part of Lake Onega (St Petersburg district).

The female bone figurine from the Zvejnieki cemetery dates to the early Neolithic – e.g. IV millennia B. C. (Zagorski F. 1987, p. 76). She belongs to a separate group of flat amber figurines, which she represents very well. The figurine was found in a child's grave and is 13 cm high (Fig. 10). The body of the female was cut out from a bone lamella 0,7 cm thick. Superficial incisions mark the legs and bent arms. The vulva is marked by an oval cut-out. Where the inner line of the arms ends, two holes perforate the sculpture. They may be breast marks which can also be used for hanging the figure up. The whole perimeter of the figurine and all its inner lines are ornamented by triangular cuts. There are two more characteristic details: the feet are depicted in profile and the quadrangular head broadens a little on the left side. How to interpret this is quite complicated. Very similar to this figurine is the one mentioned above which was found on the southern part of Lake Onega lake in the XIX century (Timofeev V. 1993, p. 21, fig. 2:11). The arms are marked in the same way, but the pelvis is not widened and we can suppose, that this is man's figurine. The head is "T"-shaped and this allows us to understand the Zvejnieki figurine better. In the chest-area we also have two perforation. The triangular incised decoration marked its legs, and body is divided by two lines and, perhaps, marks the hands and later on join again in the area of the head.

In 1882 the east Prussian archaeologist R. Klebs published the famous Juodkrantė amber hoard which includes those anthropomorphic figurines that for more than a century have represented the Stone-age art of the Eastern Baltic (Klebs R. 1882). From recent archaeological research in Šventoji and Sarnate it is possible to conclude that most of Juodkrantė amber figurines' faces were executed in the same manner as those of the wooden idols. They have prominent eyebrows and protruding nose and only one figure has drilled eyes (Fig. 11:2). With such data at hand we can date them to c. 4000-2500 BC, i.e. the early and middle Neolithic. The faces of these amber figurines are made in accordance with the same canon as of the wooden idols from Sarnate, Šventoji and Malmuta, although, their bodies are depicted in a more detailed manner. Thus, the person is pictured schematically, but in full length. The figures are adapted to the amber piece's flat form. The dominant head ruins the figure's proportions. The figurines have no neck and their large head is placed directly onto vast rectangular shoulders. Hands hang at their sides (Fig. 11:1-4) and are schematically separated from the body by deep carved furrows. The hands of one figurines are joined back to the body on the

lower part of the statuette, and a hole to hang the figure is drilled there also. The legs are separated by a deep furrow. Only two of the figurines are made in a different manner, thus, it is likely that they come from different periods (Fig. 11:7-9). One of them has unfinished triangle on the side of its abdomen, which is supposed to be connected with the fertility rites and regeneration deities of agricultural societies (Gimbutas M. 1985, p. 238-239).

All the figurines have two, four, five or even six holes and this makes us suppose they were pendants and for the most having served as string separators. Only one figurine has no holes (Fig. 11:6). It is peculiar for having something like a plait or prolonged hairdress carved torso (Klebs R. 1882, fig. 2).

In order to understand the world outlook of the inhabitants of the Baltic coastlands what is depicted on the Juodkrantė figurines and how were they were worn is not so important as how they came to be part of the treasure hoard. During the Neolithic there was a channel near what is now Juodkrantė between the Curonian Bay and the Baltic which was full of fish. The ancient inhabitants of the Curonian Spit are supposed to have built a cult site in this place which was so important for their community. Offerings were thrown into the water (Rimantienė R. 1999, p. 36). It may be that not only amber offerings were sacrificed to increase amber, but also fish harvests (Rimantienė R. 1989, p. 175). In this important cult site as on the similar Dokalnīs cult hill near Lake Biržulis sacrifices may have taken place for a long time. The 500 figurines and ornaments vary greatly in date from the Early Neolithic to the Early Iron Age, a period of c. 3000 years. So it is not in the least strange that amber figurines should differ in their style and degree of schematization. However, the amber figurines from Juodkrantė, as well as wooden sculptures from Sarnate and Šventoji, are attributed to Narva culture and have nothing in common with "Comb-Pitted Ware Culture" people who settled on the northern Baltic coast, as some authors claim (Wyszomirska B. 1984, p. 203-205).

As we can see from material described here, we can distinguish certain major features of amber figurine style: they are monolithic, geometrical, the body is represented only in its main features: the particularly well-carved head with its main characteristics (eyebrows, nose, mouth) and sometimes only surface incisions or reliefs marks the position of arms and legs. These figurines lack all sense of motion and are absolutely static.

Quite a different way of depicting human beings can be observed in anthropomorphic figures created in the late Neolithic period (2500-1600 BC). Bone/horn figurines from Latvia, Estonia and the Pskov region provide the

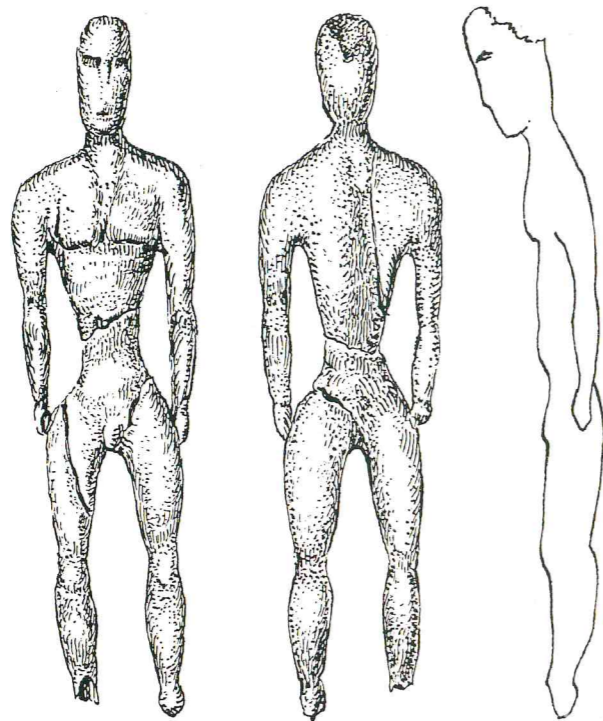


Fig. 12. Abora (Latvia). The horn carved figurine. Late Neolithic

best examples. They are of different types and often represent individual subjects. The greatest category is formed by round, anthropomorphic figures, although flat, engraved figurines are also to be found. Most common are full-length human figures. A group of features common to these figurines shows that a set canon did exist for depicting human forms. It was manifested by static position, a general scheme of composition and by the main requisite details, as understood by sculpturer of that time. The individuality of each sculpture is expressed by facial modelling and by its degree of body detalisation. Male figurines are most common. The general figurative scheme remains, even though individual figurines vary in treatment. A horn carved male figurine from Abora (Fig. 12) is the best example, depicting an athletic male with muscular arms and legs, head bent forward slightly. The master knew perfectly the main forms of the male figure and sculptured them with maximum naturalness, almost in Greek proportions. Thus, the face is very schematically carved with eyes and mouth depicted as shallow pits. The clear triangular pectoral muscles are carved perfectly. The arms hang extended by the body with hands pressed on the hips. Such brachial depiction is typical of all the statuettes in this group.

One flat figurine (Fig. 13) was found in the Tamula settlement (Estonia). It is carved in the same manner:

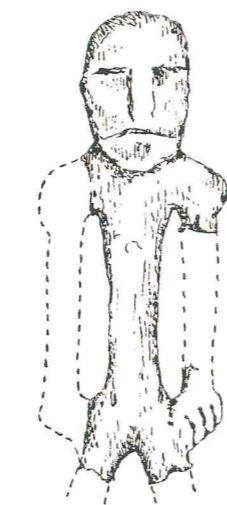


Fig. 13. Tamula (Estonia). The bone carved male figurine. Late Neolithic

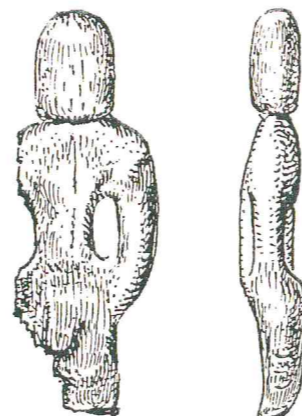


Fig. 14. Tamula (Estonia). Three-dimensional human figurine. Late Neolithic

its static position emphasised by broad, round shoulders and thin waist. The surviving fragment shows hands pressed to hips. This figurine has a more clearly depicted face. Another, similar but three-dimensional figurine was found in the same Tamula settlement (Fig. 14) From its style, height and composition, the figurine found at Usviaty Site 4 (Pskov region) can be attributed to the same group. It is distinguished by even more detailed facial expression and is completely consonant with the canon of late-Neolithic male figures. This sculpture, like the one from Abora, has clearly marked genitalia (Mikliaev A. 1983, p. 68) (Fig. 15).

In the Late Neolithic, at the beginning of Indo-Europeanisation, the inhabitants of the Eastern Baltic began rearing cattle and the male role in family and society became directly connected with cattle-breeding and plant cultivation. Humans were no longer depicted as asexual beings. Compositions with males sacrificing and praying that are depicted on ritual pottery show that sexual dichotomy was appreciated in Eastern Baltic art and ritual during the Late Neolithic. There are some female representations in Eastern Baltic art. The significance of woman as mother is associated with a female figure buried in a child's grave in Zvejniekai cemetery. A very fragmentary female figurine (Fig. 16) was found in the Neolithic settlement at Abora but the circumstances of its discovery give no opportunity to interpret its function. Only the broad, round hips enable us to distinguish the figurine as female.



Fig. 18. Šventoji 3 B (Lithuania). A bas-relief human figurine on the surface of a pottery. Middle Neolithic



Fig 7:1, 2: Šventoji (Lithuania). Face modulation of wooden sculpture. Neolithic



Fig. 29. Kretuonas 1 C (Lithuania). Human head figurine. Bone. Late Neolithic



Fig. 31. Kretuonas 1 C (Lithuania). Human head. Bone. Late Neolithic



Fig. 15. Usviaty Site 4. (Pskov region, Russia). Three-dimensional male figurine. Late Neolithic

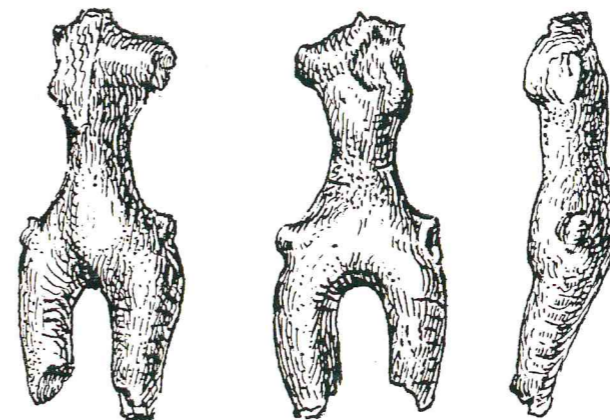


Fig. 16. Abora (Latvia). The bone carved female figurine. Late Neolithic

### Compositions on flat surfaces

We have already discussed some Mesolithic compositions with human figures engraved or drilled on bone/horn lamellae. Such imprinted (drilled or engraved) compositions are especially common on Neolithic pottery. The earliest compositions of this kind are known from the Neolithic stratum of the Zvidzė settlement. One of them – a male figure on the outer side of a bowl, another – on the outer side of a large pot. Both figurines are formed by incisions from a sharp instrument (Loze I. 1988, fig. 40, 41). The human body here is marked by vertical lines of small holes. One line of holes marked supplicant hands. Near the place where the legs are we have one more short line – perhaps a phallus. On the surface of the same bowl we have more unidentified figures, pricked out in the same way. The next anthropomorphic depiction is smaller in diameter, the holes are pricked out on a large potshard. The head of this figure is of an unfinished oval form and together with the neck, arm and body is rendered by two parallel lines of pricks. In the middle of the figurines body, the lines broaden into a rhomboid figure. Although these figures are component parts of the composition, the whole subject remains undeciphered. Since the other parts are unclear, we do not have enough information. Most probably, there were hunting scenes depicted, similar to the Neolithic composition from the Pripet region, where a male is depicted with a duck (Isajenko V. 1976, p. 48) (Fig. 17).

There are many more anthropomorphic figures rendered on ceramic surfaces in various ways from the East Baltic region. The most original in its expressive form is a bas-relief human figure on the surface of a pot from the middle Neolithic settlement, Šventoji B, on the Baltic coast in Western Lithuania (Rimantienė R. (1979:114, 115, fig. 93) (Fig. 18). By its schematism, the figurine is very close to those described above. The body, arms and legs are formed by a uniformly thick, protuberant bas-relief line. A larger amount of clay is moulded in the shoulder area and perhaps marks a bowed head. There are no known analogies for this figurine thus far. However, bus-relief human heads are known from southern Europe (Mongait A. 1973, fig. 242; Gimbutienė M. 1996, p. 48, fig. 16), and the Svin settlement (Denmark) where a bas-relief with a human or zoomorphic pot handle was found. This bas-relief can be explained as the influence of Southern Europe (Sandars N. 1995, p. 243; Gimbutienė M. (1996, p.88). Human figure compositions on late-neolithic pottery reflect the process of eastern Baltic Indo-Europeanisation. They are divided semantically into three cosmic spheres: those of heaven, of earth and of Man. People are often

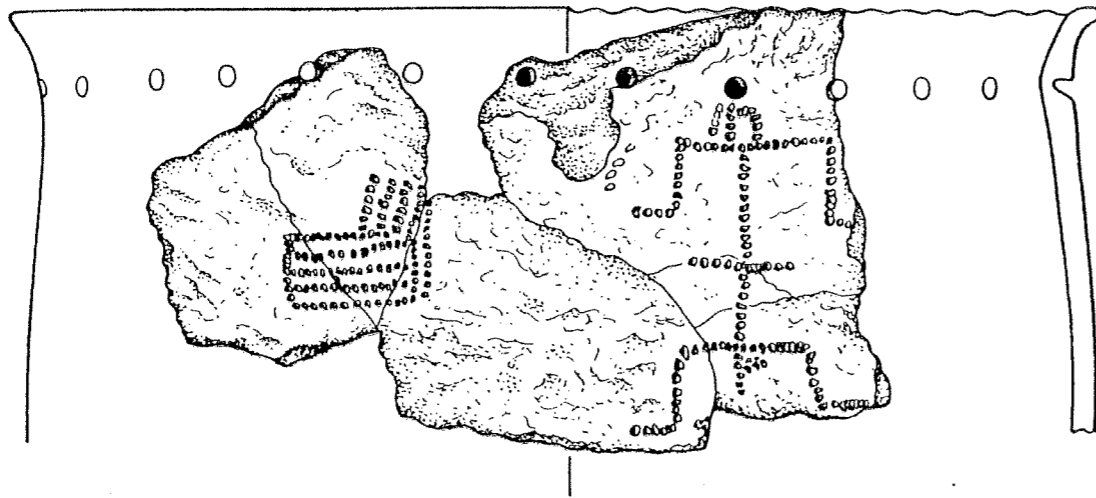


Fig. 17. Juraviči 3 (Belorussia). A male depicted with the duck. Late Neolithic

depicted with their hands raised, praying towards heaven. This theme is specific to agriculturists rather than hunters. The picture on each pot becomes a sort of ideogram. Unfortunately, the abstract nature of these compositions often makes deciphering their significance clumsy.

Perhaps the most interesting composition has been left us by the Pamarių Culture on a large ritual pot from Nida (for fragment see Fig. 19:1). The pot was found separately from the others. It had an opening 36 cm in diameter. The upper brim of the pot was decorated with 4 horizontal rows of strings, from them downwards there are 6 segments imprinted using a string. Besides the segments a human figure is imprinted with a string. The figure's raised hands are depicted at its sides by two crossed lines (prominent thumb and curved palm?) (Rimantienė R.

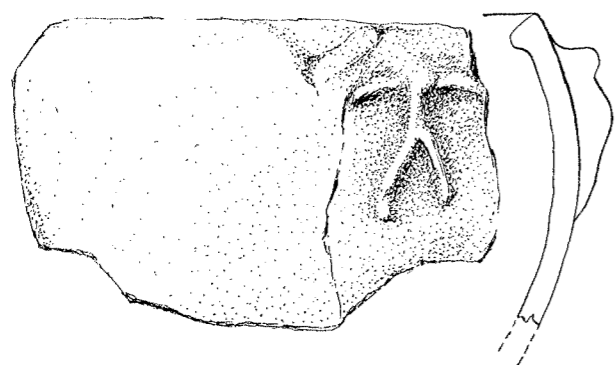


Fig. 18. Šventoji 3 B (Lithuania). A bas-relief human figurine on the surface of a pot. Middle Neolithic

1989, p. 172-173). The other side of the ritual pot is decorated quite differently: beneath the same 4 string rows there is triangular hatching. Another shard bearing a human figure (Fig. 19:2) was also found in Nida. Unfortunately, this is only a fragmentary, albeit very expressive relict. Four-fingered hands are raised at the figure's sides. Similar compositions are seen in other illustrations given here, from settlements belonging to the Pamarių culture. A human figure with outstretched hands besides a flood of water-drops is depicted the mouth of a pot found at the site formerly called Reimannsfelk (near Elblag) (Fig. 20). Yet another human (male) figure stands under horizontal lines (Černiauski M.1987, p. 27) (Fig. :5). on a pot from the Asavets peat-bog (Belorussia). In sum, we might say that in compositions with human forms from Pamarių or similar cultures of that age, there are four clearly discernible motives: horizontal lines around the pot mouth; a group of vertical lines; triangular hatching and human figurines, that for the most part are male. The horizontal lines around a pot rim might have symbolised the heavens and accumulations of water. Vertical lines are interpreted as rain. Hatched triangles usually appear on pots in areas where agriculture was established. Since people of the Pamario and "Corded Ware" Cultures were familiar with a ternary counting system and agriculture, a triangle may have symbolised land. It is possible that a triangle may have signified land as female – earth as mother.

No doubt, the central part of these compositions is formed by human figures. Extended, especially raised hands are a posture known the cultures of Old Europe, and this was widespread in central and northern Europe during the Neolithic Age. A figure with raised hands,

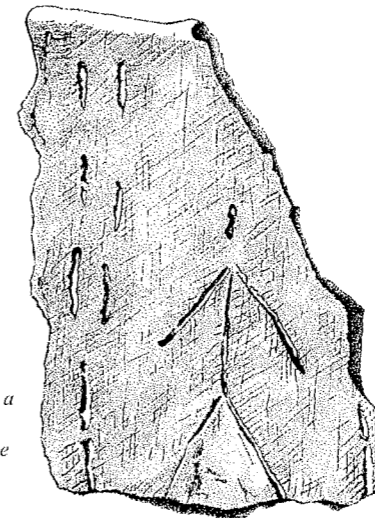


Fig. 20. Reimannsfelk (Elblag region, Poland) a human figure besides a flood of waterdrops. Late Neolithic

usually termed supplicant, might just as well symbolise sacrifice as devotion, if humans are depicted, and blessing in the case of deities and spirits. The fact that figurines are found only on certain pots – most probably they were used for offerings (Müller-Karpe H. 1966, p. 394). Attention must be paid to the hands of the figures, especially to the four-fingered one (Fig. 19:2) of the most fragmental figurine. Four-fingered figures signify evil among some Northern peoples and the three-fingered ones represent deities and spirits in Scandinavian rock-paintings from the Braze age. It is possible that the Nida pot figures did not symbolise the ancient Balts asking for the rain but the spirits of fields and harvest, as the mediators between

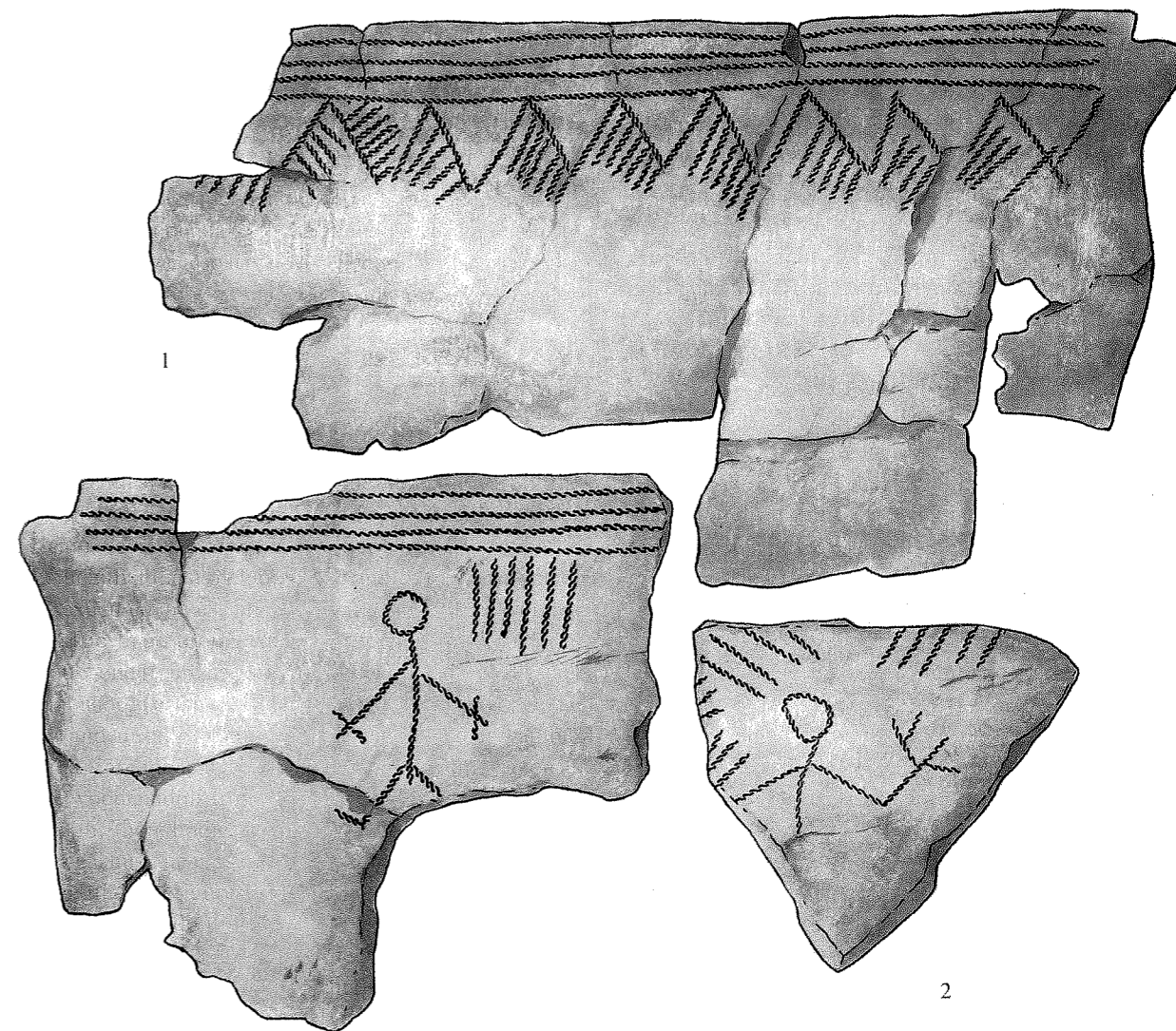


Fig. 19. Nida (Lithuania). Composition on a large ritual pot (1) and a shard bearing a fragmentary human figure (2). Late Neolithic

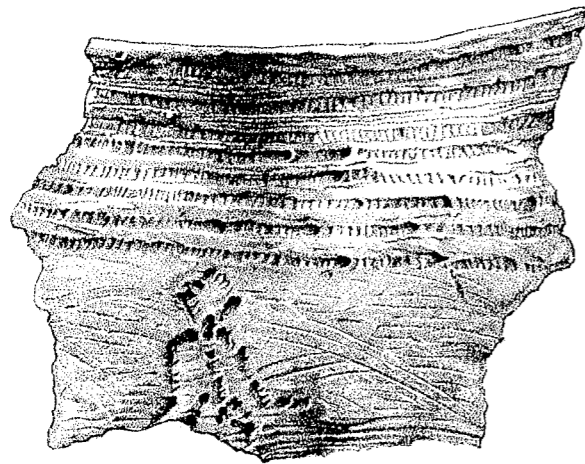


Fig. 21. Asavets (Belorussia). A male figure on a pot. Late Neolithic

heaven and the people, blessing cultivated lands. Probably the main deity of agriculturists was the sky god, which in Lithuania still has the Indo-European meaning of "dievas" ("god") from "dangus", "dangiškas" ("heaven", "heavenly"). Figurines engraved on the Pamarių culture's pottery, as well as their contemporary figures from Belorussia and the figurines depicted on seven Swedish potshards (Wyszomirska B. 1975, p. 129-137) could be dated to 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC. The main difference is that the figurines from Northern areas (Scandinavia) belong to the hunter/fisher society of "pitted Ware Culture" and figurines from Pamarių culture carry agricultural themes and represent processes of Indo-Europeanisation in the Eastern Baltic.

Thus, we conclude from our survey of the most common features of human images on flat surfaces in East Baltic region that:

- anthropomorphic images are presented on a wide variety of material - bone, antler, stone, clay;
- they are created by very different techniques - by carving, engraving, pricking holes;
- these types of images spread around the whole Baltic Sea in both the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods. At that time territorially and chronologically this way of making anthropomorphic images was the most widespread in the Baltic Sea region;
- the first human depictions on flat surfaces were made in a very geometrical way (straight, vertical, horizontal and angular lines) there are no wavy or organic shapes;
- the human figures are very economic - there was no effort to portray arms, heads or facial features in a more detail way. Facial detail are entirely absent. In the same period there was more naturally detailed zoomorphic and anthropomorphic art and it is very hard to explain the canons of human representation on flat surfaces.

### Clay Figurines

One more group of full-figure anthropomorphic statuettes made of clay. Firstly we admit that the greatest part of the statuettes around the Baltic is found in Finland and Karelia, with fewer in Sweden, Norway, Estonia and north-eastern and eastern Latvia. There are no findings in western Latvia or Lithuania. This is completely explicable, because the figurines are typical of "Comb-Pitted Ware Culture" and have no roots in either Ancient Baltic or Indo-European art.

Researchers classify these figurines into several groups. Figurines from Latvia are discussed in this article,

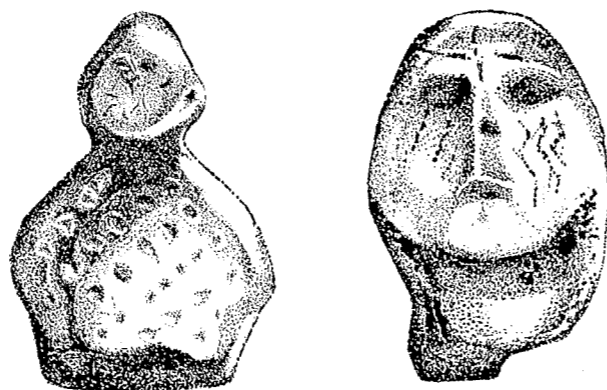


Fig. 22. Purciems (Latvia) Clay human figurines with a raised heads Middle Neolithic

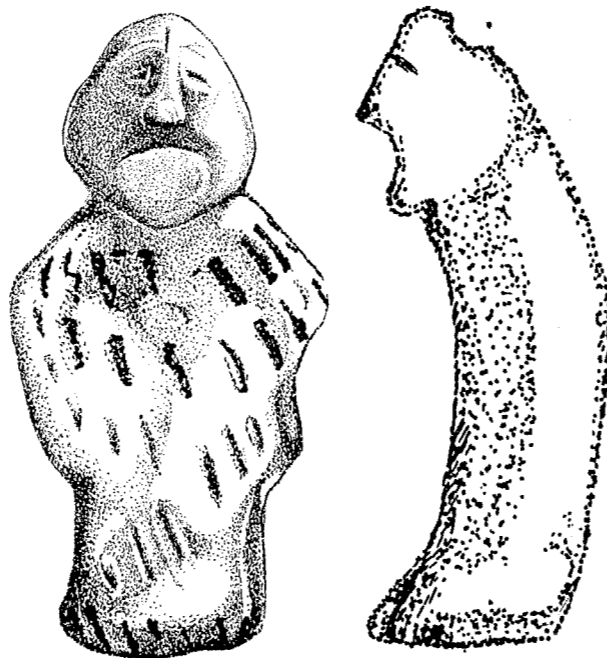


Fig. 23. Abora (Latvia). Clay figurine. Late Neolithic



Fig. 24. Zvejnicki cemetery grave Nr. 221 (Latvia) Embryonic clay figurine. Middle Neolithic



Fig. 25. Zvidzē (Latvia). Embryonic clay figurine. Middle Neolithic

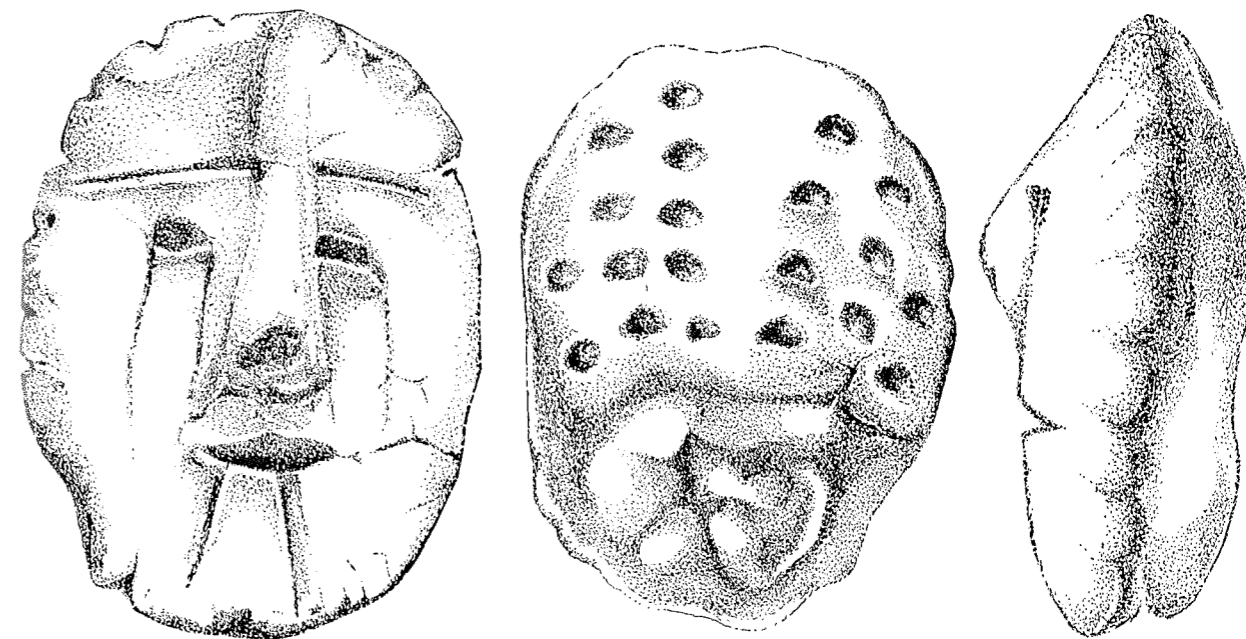


Fig. 26. Nainiekste (Latvia). The head of a single figurine. Clay. Middle Neolithic

in accordance with the work of the Latvian Ilzē Loze (Loze I. 1983, p. 99-107). We divide the figurines into three groups: figures with a raised head (Fig. 22:1,2; Fig. 23), embryonic figurines (Fig. 24; Fig. 25) and a fragment, the head of a single figurine (Fig. 26). Finnish researchers are very interested in these clay figurines, because they form 97% of all Stone age statuettes found in Finland (Nunez M. G. 1986, p. 17). The first group of clay statuettes is formed of the figures with a raised head (Fig. 22, 23) They were all found in the Purciems dwelling site (Štrums E. 1937, p. 83-86). The first two figures are very fragmentary. They have a raised head on a stumpy neck, a flat base and very rudimentary legs. Facial detailization varies greatly: the first figure has a flat, oval face with small indentations; the second has a long, sharp nose, deep eye-sockets and engraved eyebrows. On the cheeks there are faint zig-zag parallel lines. The roundness of vast shoulders is always emphasised. Hairdress suggested by ornamentation is a feature common to all the figurines. Short indentations and sometimes comb imprinted ornaments cover the whole figure. They are all small, varying in height from 3,5 to 5 cm, and have a diameter of less than 1 cm. A particular face is found on a figurine from the Nainiekste settlement dating to Middle Neolithic (Lubana lowland, Eastern Latvia) (Fig. 26). The head comprises a perfect oval with a rather flat face with notched borders. There are clear eyebrow lines on the forehead and two rather deep pits for the eyes with a double line imprinted under each like streams of tears. There is a deep

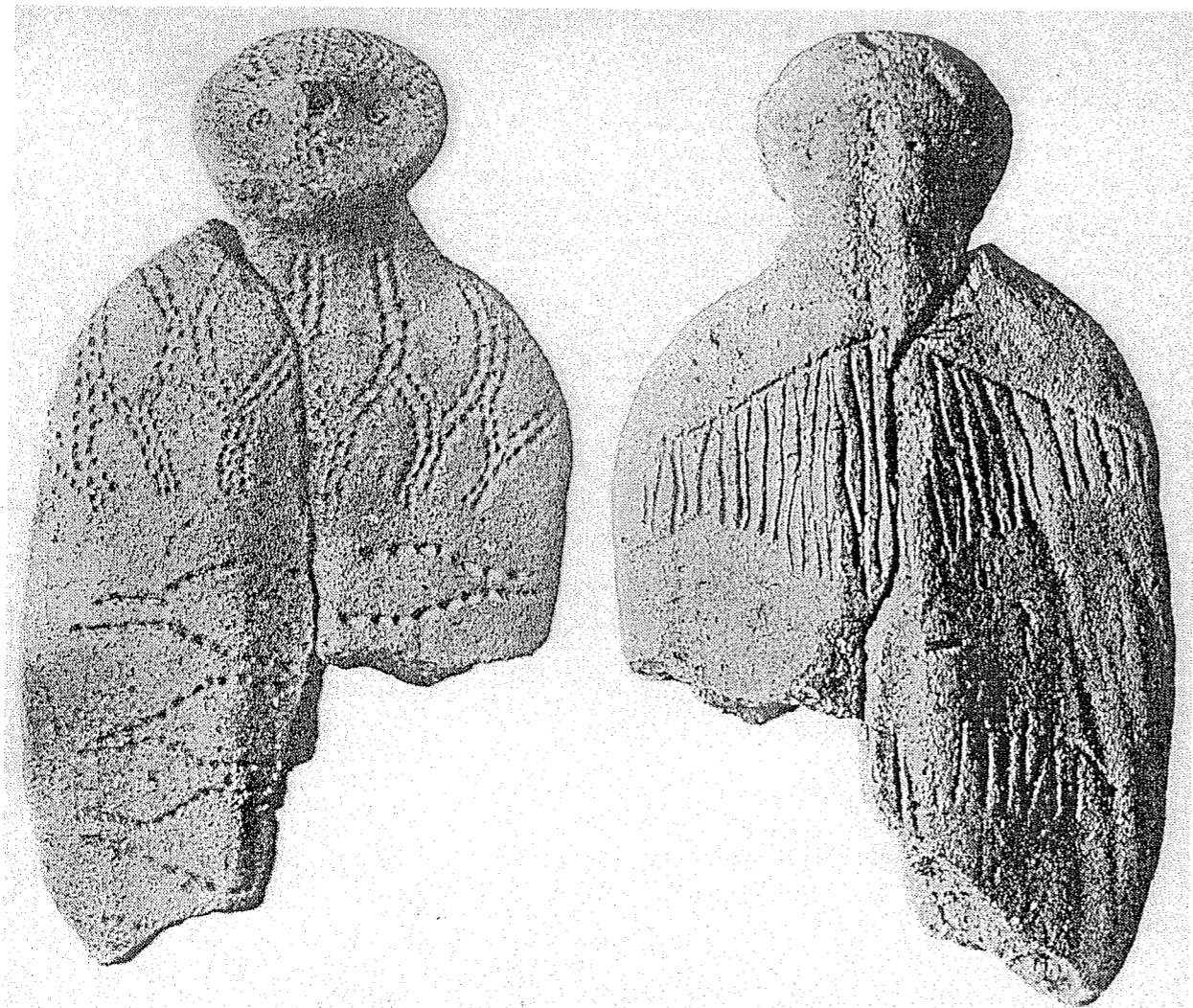


Fig. 27. Jettbole. Åland island (Finland). Clay figurine. Neolithic

oval pit for the mouth, with two clear lines leading out from it. Crescent imprints on the vertex represent hair. A prominent nose dominates the face. Unfortunately, only a fragment of this figure survives; the head has broken off from the neck. Figurines close to this one were found in the Åland island settlement of Jettbole. Since they are somewhat different, I intend to set this figure apart as unique (Fig. 27).

Such figurines belong to the Middle Neolithic cultures of Eastern Baltic. This is clear not only from the style of the figures, but also from their well-documented findsites. Archaeologists found them in cultural strata bearing clear chronology. The clay and decorations of the figurines are identical with those of other pottery found in the same settlements.

### Embryonic Figurines

Embryonic figures form quite a different group of clay art. They are found very often in Finland and Karelia, with Latvia as the southerly limit of their spread. As the figurines are widespread in the Eastern Baltic, we shall try to analyse them on the basis of Latvian examples. The most common features of embryonic figurines are:

- a) typical embryo-like bodypose,
- b) massive prominent nose,
- c) often a curve pendant on the face ("kozirka"),
- d) crest on the back,
- e) legs not separated from each other,
- f) figurines ending in a flat oval shape.

The most hunched (embryonic) examples come from Finland. Some examples of these figures are decorated

with so-called "Como" ornamental motifs - small rectangular stamps. The figurine from Hietaniemi is pricked out with comb indents and other figures are distinguished by short, spread legs (Miettinen 1965, fig. 1). Two figurines (see Fig. 25, 24) represent this type of figurines perfectly. The first one, found at the Zvidzė settlement, is made of clay mixed with some pounded granite (Loze I. 1988, p. 71). It represents strongly curving human body. The head is directly amalgamated onto the body, and there is no limb separation. The face lacks detail and is dominated by a protruding nose. The figurine is roughly made. Like most of these figurines, it belongs to "Comb-Pitted Ware Culture" and dates from the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC. The second figurine was found in Zvejnieki grave No 221. This was a teenager's grave rich in amber decorations. The clay figurine was found by the feet of the corpse. The statuette is 3,7 cm high, and its clay contains plant admixtures. It has a clear head with prominent pulled out nose or mouth, an outlined curve above the face, with eyes and mouth denoted by shallow pits. The figurine is round with a crest on its back. The whole surface of the statuette, except the mouth, is covered with tooth imprints (garment?) typical of comb pottery. The closest analogies to this figure were found in Estonia (Valma settlement) and in many locations in Finland and Karelia. Judging by the other grave goods, the figure dates from the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC (Zagorskis F. 1987, p. 77). All figurines of the Åland group were found at local sites of the Swedish Pitted ware culture (Nunez G. 1986, p. 22).

In the middle-Neolithic grave site at Valma and the late-Neolithic site at Tamula (in Estonia) figurines were found that are very close to this type (Jaanits L. 1965, Abb. 7:7). Those figurines, like the figure from Hietaniemi (Finland), have more detailed facial features: the eyes are marked by deepening strokes, the nose is modelled to dominate the face, and the short legs are separated from each other. The body leans slightly.

Clay figures of the embryonic type were discovered in the eastern part of Lake Onega at the Neolithic Kubenino site and in Karelia at Solomennoe, Kinema and Hekne (Studzickaja 1987, p. 8,4, fig. 7:2; Ošibkina S. 1978, tabl. 40 : 7, 8). A quite different group is formed by the so-called standing (straight) figurines discovered on the Åland islands, at the Jettbole dwelling site in Finland and the Purciems site in Latvia. They are characterised by an oval head and massive non-differentiated body, which sometimes is covered with various ornaments. Those figures survive in many fragments, and sometimes it is possible to reconstruct the whole body of a figurine (Nunez G. 1986, fig. 6:A, 11:c). Incisions and ornaments

made by pricking on those figurines can be interpreted symbolically as clothing. The same can be said about two figures from Purciems (north-western Latvia) (Šturms E. 1937, p. 83-86). The Latvian examples differ from those found on the Åland islands in the form of the drooping head and more naturalistic facial features. They are ended with a flat base and the hexangular body is covered with comb decorations (clothes?). The larger figure from Purciems leans slightly and for this reason is analogous with contemporary embryonic figurines.

Perhaps clay heads from the Åland islands, Finland and Latvia belong to the same figurine group. They belong to the group of "straight" figurines and are, perhaps, parts of them (Nunez M. G. 1986, fig. 5; Miettinen 1965, fig. 6:c, d; Luho 1967, fig. 7:b; Loze I. 1988:85, 96, fig. 58, 66). The majority of those heads are disc shaped or rectangular, with a massive, dominant nose, oval holes inside the eyes, and decorated in diverse ways.

These Latvian figurines as well as many other figurines from Estonia and Latvia, belong to the "Comb-Pitted Ware Culture" which spread through Finno-Ugrian territory in the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, viz. the whole of Estonia and Northern Latvia bound by the Dvina, and later Livonian territories near the Gulf of Riga.

### Human head figurines

One of the most numerous group of East Baltic anthropomorphic figures consists of human head images, made of bone, amber or clay. Most of them, perhaps, can be attributed to an amulet group or were the parts of string of ornaments, because they have the holes for hanging. Most were recovered from graves or belong to well known hoards (Zagorskis F. 1987, p. 76; Girininkas A. 1993, p. 283). The majority of these figurines have faces portrayed on the front side with features modelled in relief or very simply by making holes in those places, where the eyes and mouth should be. However, some examples are very close to volumetric sculpture, and we examine them from both the front and in profile.

Most of these figures were found in Lithuania. They were discovered by A. Girininkas in his excavation of Kretuonas settlement No I C. The amulets were found in graves near the hearth of the building and in common graves. It is surprising that only human heads were buried there. All the pendant amulets from Kretuonas are made of bone, including sometimes that of the human skull. The two bigger ones (Fig. 28a, b; Fig. 29) are mask like and have drilled eye-sockets and engraved noses, mouths, beards and other characteristic features. The outer contour of the first figure forms massive facial features: large

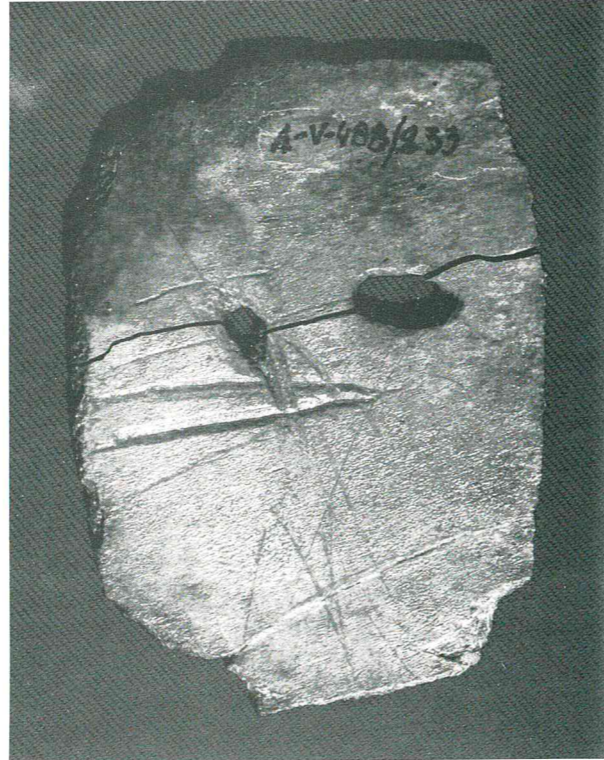
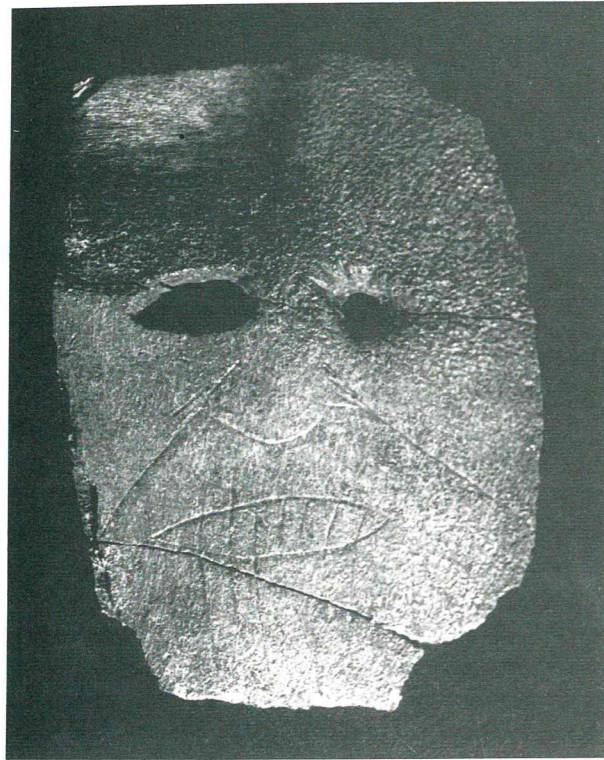


Fig. 28. Kretuonas 1 C (Lithuania). Human head figurine. Bone. Late Neolithic

cheek-bones, jaws and an angular vertex. The other bone lamella seems to be unfinished. The outer contours of the face are unfinished and the eyes are cut through by various holes. There is no hole for hanging. The nose, the bottom line of the cheek and mouth, whence vertical lines extend down to the bottom, are marked with very expressive incisions. Today it is very difficult to appreciate what was going on in the artist's mind, but there is no doubt that this face shape pendant is very suggestive and very different from all the other figures known to us. In its way of conveying emotion, this figurine, perhaps, is the best example we have from the East Baltic region. Here angry emotions are well expressed in linear form.

The other three figurines are made of thicker bone. They have engraved eyes and eyebrows, other features are scooped out to form a relief nose and mouth (Fig. 30, 31, 32). An amulet whose discoverer called it "the twins" is of greater interest (Fig. 30). Although, the holes for hanging have been broken off, they once existed on both sides. Eyes are drilled in the centre of the figurine. It has one mouth just under the eyes and the other, on the other side is mentioned as if in the profile of the face. The figurine might have been worn as a separator on a string. The bearded and moustached face of an old man might be seen on the one side with the face of a youth or a female

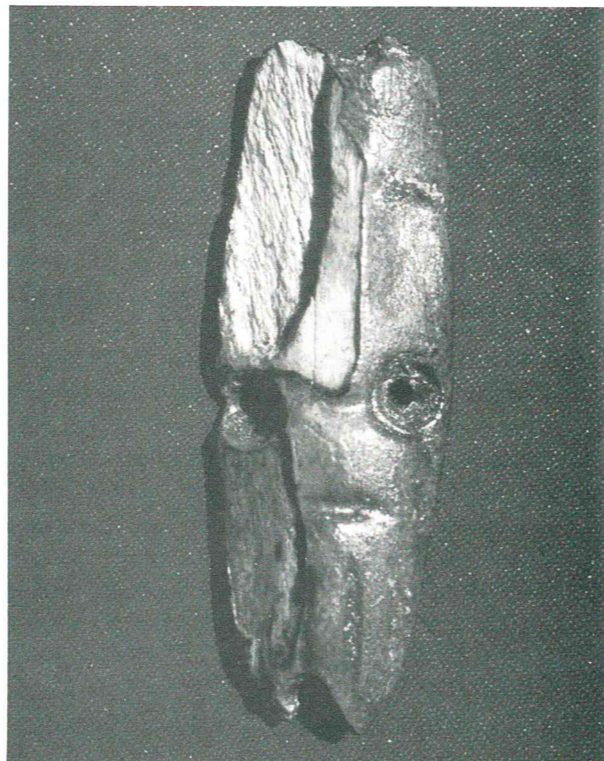


Fig. 30. Kretuonas 1 C (Lithuania). Human head "The twins". Bone. Late Neolithic



Fig. 33. Tamula (Estonia). Male figurine. Late Neolithic



Fig. 36.  
Middle  
Neolithic



Fig. 35.  
Zvejnieki  
cemetery  
grave Nr.  
228 (Latvia)  
Human  
head.  
Middle  
Neolithic

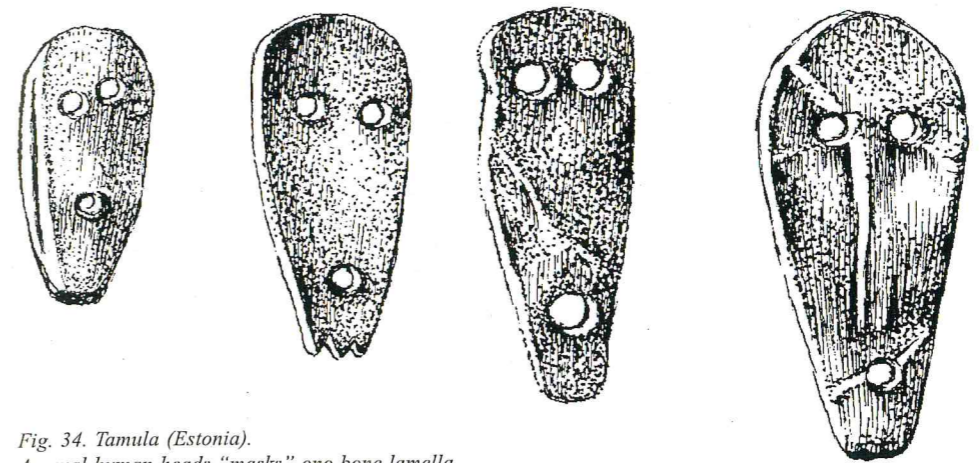


Fig. 34. Tamula (Estonia).  
Asexual human heads "masks" on bone lamella.  
Late Neolithic

Fig. 37  
Human head. Bone.  
Late Neolithic

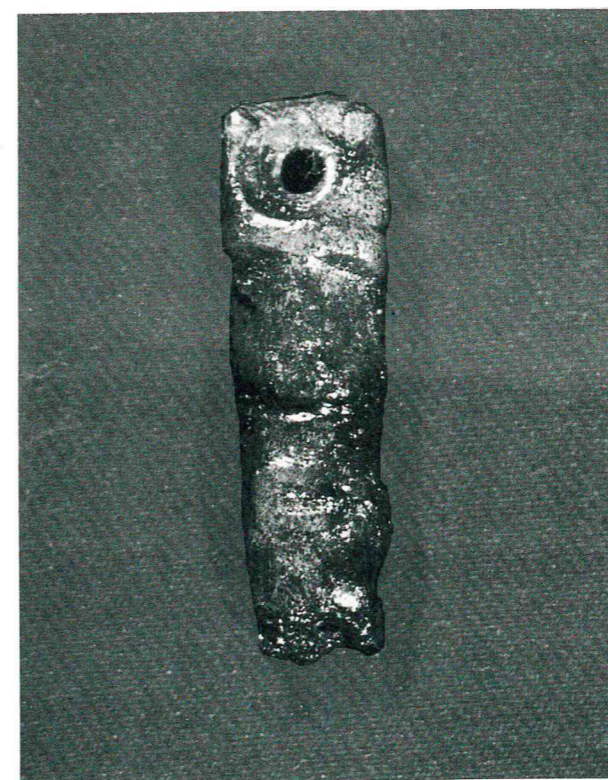


Fig. 32. Kretuonas 1 C (Lithuania). Human head. Bone. Late Neolithic

on the other side. Estonian figures are similar (Jaanits L. 1958, fig. 4:11-13; Jaanits L. 1954, p. 196). Perhaps the most interesting is a male figurine amulet with prominent large nose, clear eyebrows and eyes, roundly drilled mouth and beard (Fig. 33). This figure differs from the others in that a garment is depicted on its shoulders. Stylistically, a human head on a bone implement (dagger?) handle from late Neolithic Lagaža site in Latvia (Loze 1969, p. 40, fig. 1:4) is very similar to the example from Tamula.

Four figurines from the Tamula site on the banks of the Vehandu river form a very different stylistic group (Jaanits L. 1958, Abb. 4:11-13) (Fig. 34:1-4).

This separate subgroup comprises four asexual human heads (Butrimas A. 1994, p. 9:1-4). A highly schematic facial oval narrowing at its lower end is depicted on a bone lamella and three thoroughly drilled holes serve for its eyes and mouth. Two of those figurines have vertical incisions to mark the nose. Those figurines evidently represent a "diminutive" stylistic subgroup. Similar figurines were found at the Zvejnieki grave site in a male grave (Fig. 35) from the Middle Neolithic. Here too the face is not detailed; its eyes and mouths are notched on the sides of porous bone lamellae. Both figurines have prominent straight long necks. They are the earliest figurines of the group. Two human heads –



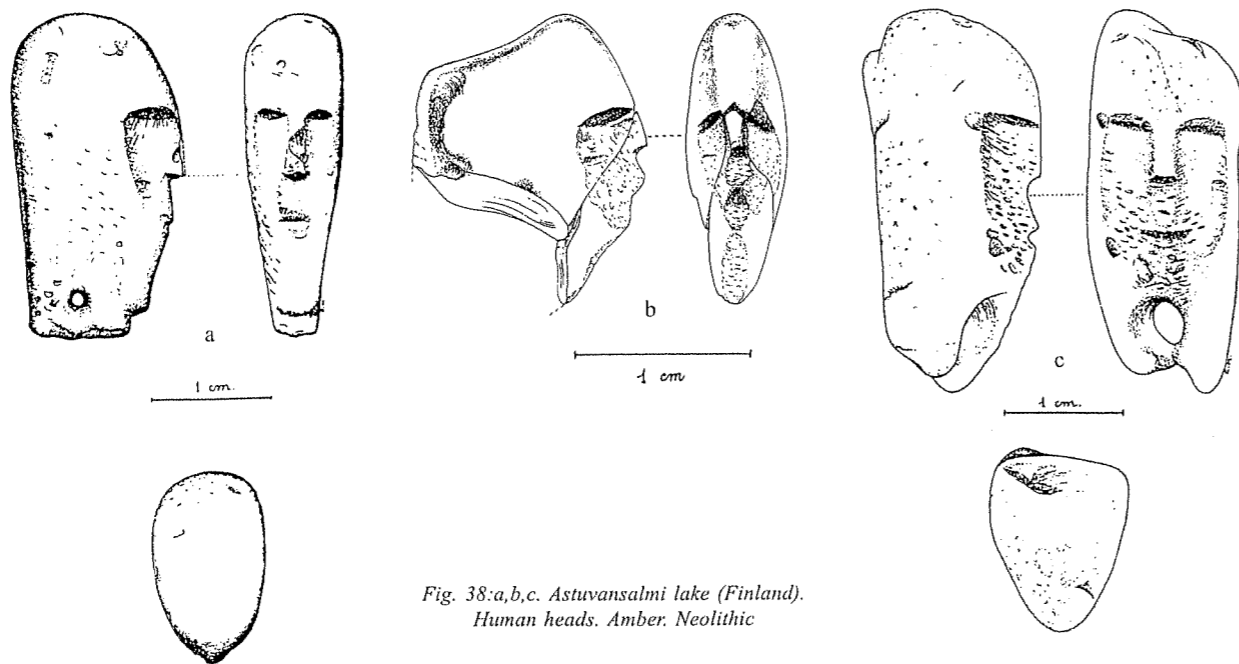


Fig. 38:a,b,c. Astuvansalmi lake (Finland).  
Human heads. Amber. Neolithic

one from Asavets (Fig. 36), the next from Diadica (Fig. 37) have long chins.

There are three very small three-dimensional human heads from Lake Astuvansalmi (Finland) that were discovered during underwater excavations (Grönhagen J. 1994, p. 18, fig. 1, 2, 3) (Fig. 38:a,b,c). One amber figurine of this type is known from the Juodkrantė hoard (Klebs R. 1882, Tafel IX:4; Rimantienė R. 1999, fig. 12:9) (Fig. 11:5), and one more figurine with very severe geometrical proportions is known from the Sakkola site (Karelia) (Almgren 1907, p.121). In Latvian territory one amber pendant was found - an amber human head with a very distinctly expressed, straight nose and deep eyeholes (the Romi-Kalnini site near Riga) (Vankina L. V. 1983, p. 136, fig. 1). The amber figurines from Finland can be viewed from the side as well as in profile. The features of the face are carved with a very expressive eye-brow arch, nose and a mouth marked by small incisions. Two figurines have holes in the bottom. Researchers differ in their interpretation of these figures. Most agree that the figurines depict the ancestors of a tribe or family. Often ethno-cultural parallels are made with north-European hunter/fisher cultures: "(Northern people) constantly seek freedom from the world of the dead, but they think that souls sometimes return to see their people. In order for them not wander without rest something like their previous body is made for them and these are called ancestral depictions" (Richthofen. 1935, p.15). These peoples have

specific pendant amulets, 5-10 cm high. They are drilled and worn hanging around the neck or on the breast. They protect the wearer from the evil eye, from disease, etc. If ancestral depictions protect the household, so pendant amulets protect those individuals who wear them. We can only guess at the functional significance of those figurines, but from the material presented above, we can divide all our examples into two sub-groups: volumetric and flat. Volumetric figurines from Riga, Astuvansalmi, Juodkrantė, Zveinieki, Kretuonas 1 C are modelled from volumetric material and can be examined from the front. The lamella figurines from Kretuonas 1 C, Sweden and Tamula are also modelled in relief, but because of flat intermediate product they can be examined only from the front. The human-head amulets are made of stone, bone, wood, fur, tin and since they represent souls-saviours they are human in form. Eskimos believe that souls and ghosts are of shadowy human shape. That is why their shamans produce these magic tools and amulets like human beings or faces. In the ancestor cult of the Eastern Baltic, the human head probably enjoyed special emphasis. Fragments of human skulls found in dwelling sites, heads buried separately from the body, an abundance of human-head-like amulets (mostly male ones) found in the settlements and graves of the Middle, the Late Neolithic and those of Braze Age prove the singular significance endowed in for human-head amulets in Eastern Baltic art and religion.

## Phallic Depictions

Researchers of Palaeolithic rock-paintings claim that compositions which at first glance appear chaotic were in fact created on the basis of a dualistic system, where symbols of each sex have an ordained place. The same fact is noted by researchers of Scandinavian rock-paintings. In the Western Scandinavia on the White Sea littoral, 30-43% of all human depictions are phallic figures (Malmer M. P. 1981, p. 81), though sexual dichotomy is given more abstract sense in the Neolithic and the Early Braze Age. The rock-paintings of hunter cultures of the

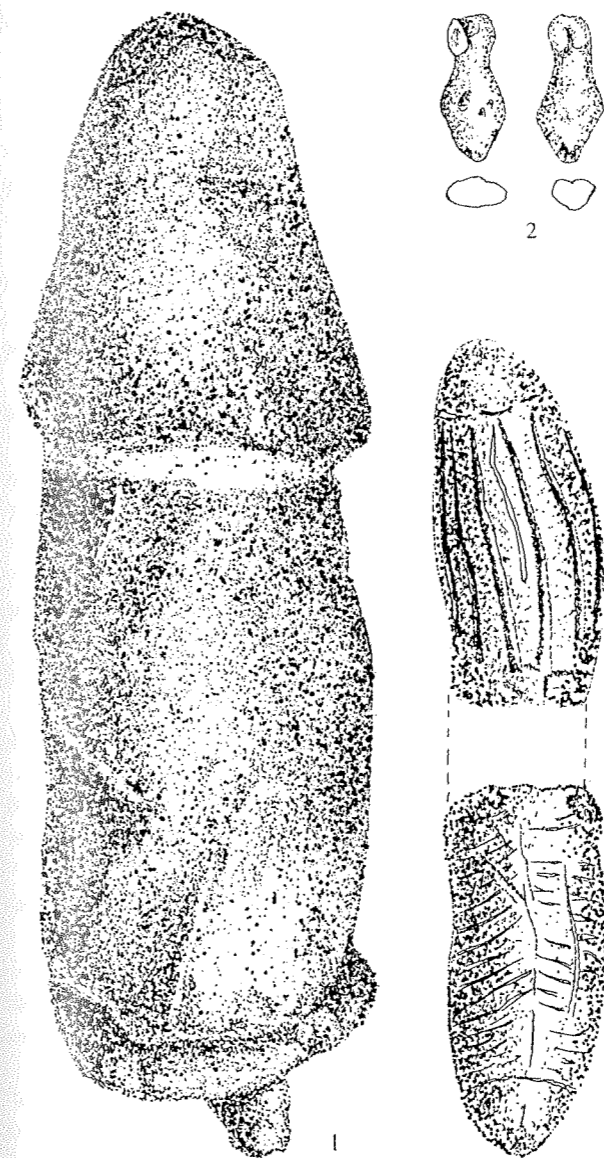


Fig. 39.1-3. Sarnate, Šventoji, East Prussia. Phallic depiction. Wood, amber, bone. Neolithic.

Northern Europe are compositions of interactive human and animal figures. Hunting scenes are mixed with ritual scenes because hunter magic and fertility rites woked side by side. We have already discussed how male figures of the late Neolithic, which are usually found on ritual pots and connected with concepts of agriculture and soil fertility, have prominent genitals.

Some naturalistic Eastern Baltic phallic depictions dating to Early and Middle Neolithic, depictions are connected with hunter magic and fertility. The first is a wooden lingam from the Sarnate site (Vankina L. 1970, p. 104), which was probably used during fertility rites. The sculpture (Fig. 39:1) is 23 cm in length, 7 cm in diameter. The phallus was found inside a building, in a pit near the 4m<sup>2</sup> square hearth, which had been used for a long time (researchers managed to distinguish 4 stages of hearth building and exploitation). Multi-layered hearths of such a size are known to have been used as a cult hearth in the Neolithic Baltic. A phallus was found inside the building most probably near the cult hearth in a pit 150 x 130 cm in size with a round bottom. It is difficult to discern whether the building was a temple or a dwelling house. Nevertheless, the place where the phallus was found, the pit by the cult hearth, is special. A wooden ladle that was found there is probably evidence that the phallus ought to be attributed to a hunter/fisher cult site (Vankina L. 1970, fig. 54). This might be substantiated by an extant description of a hunters' sacrifice Karelia (Maringer J. 1960, p. 139): "Sacrifices took place on an isolated hill surrounded by peat-bogs. Meat meal was prepared in a big pot, then hunters dipped their wooden tureens into the soup and ate it with wooden spoons. After they had finished, they would put some meal into one of the tureens as an offering for the forest deity, asking her to taste the meal and to help them to have a good catch. It should be noted that the wooden spoon was thrown out with the tureen for the forest deity". However special the circumstances behind the phallus find may be, unfortunately, they cannot help us to re-establish the fertility rite during which this phallus was used. Narva culture pottery and some wooden ware found inside the building enables us to date the finding within the first part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC.

A similar phallus was found in Eastern Prussia (Fig. 39:3) Decorated with geometrical engravings, this 7 cm long phallus with its broken off stem is a fragment of a sculpture. Phallic depictions survive on small symbolic amber sculptures from Šventoji (Fig. 39:2) and Juodkrantė. Most probably all phallic figurines represent the male as stimulator in nature, since animal, human, and plant reproduction is impossible without his influence.

Similar phallic symbols were widespread in Old European cultures, where they represent the deity of agricultural societies and are connected to the calendar year (Gimbutas M. 1982, p. 216).

#### Functional purposes of the Figurines

The variety of antropomorphical sculptures and depictions was determined by their function. Anthropomorphic figurines are usually treated as components of religious life and their ritual connection seems logical (Gimbutas M. 1974, Wyszomirska B. 1984), but is difficult to prove or disprove this. In the Baltic region this interpretation is proved by many ethnohistorical data, sacrificial sites rich in statuettes (Juodkrantė), sculptures as grave goods (Zvejnieki) and statues placed as idols by water sources (Sarnate, Šventoji). Obviously figurines had several function.

Art in hunter/fisher communities served as an attempt to control nature. Thus zoomorphic art is connected with society's economic aims, i.e. hunting and fishing, and was devoted particularly to continuing, preserving and propagating such activities. Zoomorphic art is more expressive, less canonical and stylised.

Anthropomorphic depictions carry greater religious meaning and are more closely connected with the activities of a shaman. On the basis of their function anthropomorphic figurines from the Eastern Baltic may be divided into:

1) wooden idols connected with economic rites - sympathetic magic, hunting and fishing purposes (Sarnate, Šventoji),

2) symbolic depictions of supplicants related to agricultural rites and found on offering pots from the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age (Nida, Asovets, Reimannsfelk),

3) symbolic figurines carrying ritual meaning only, related to shamanism (Juodkrantė, Kretuonas),

4) symbolic figurines connected with death rites. Sculptures found in graves (Zvejnieki) can serve as ceremonial objects, as images of dead relatives, as fetishes or idols.

5) phallic depictions connected with fertility rites (Sarnate, Šventoji),

6) amulets as a part of a priest/seer's garment and as protectors of the person who wears them (Kretuonas, Tamula, Zvejnieki),

7) toys.

This classification is not strict, since according to ethnographic parallels, it should be admitted that sculptures may serve different purposes, depending on circumstances.

#### Concluding Remarks

The most important aspect of prehistoric art is its meaning. All other archaeological findings have practical explanations. Dwelling sites were used for living in, graves - for burying the dead. Tools were needed for work, weapons for hunting or battle, pots either for water or food, saving products for emergencies or for preparing a meal. All the objects created by prehistoric Man were affected somehow by social solidarity, status, by ideas of beauty, magic or religion. Material culture may be formally analysed in accordance with the size of implements, the degree of rarity of material and quality of work. But these categories do not help us to understand prehistoric art very much. The object is a message sent by its prehistoric creator or guardian to humanity (including us), or, perhaps only to those who attempt to receive the message. Thus, in both cases, it was sent to higher forces. (Malmer M. 1981).

We shall never be able to make prehistoric art totally clear, but in receiving it as a sign, trying to interpret its meaning, we must put it into words. Thus, the aesthetic point of view is important, it expresses our attitude towards prehistoric art, but not towards our ancient ancestors. Highly versatile analysis is needed for maximum revelation of information about such a complex phenomenon as prehistoric art and its human quality. Then we may be drawn closer to the creations of centuries-old generations. A raised human hand on a pot from Nida perhaps provokes many thoughts in the modern interpretator, but the main message remains hidden deeply because nowadays many ideas which then were of minor importance seem particularly significant to us. The chief thing is that the message was sent and that after several millennia we have received it. Now we must accept it.

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## EXPRESSIONS OF ART IN THE MESOLITHIC SOCIETY OF SCANDINAVIA

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### Introduction

Because of good preservations in bogs and other wetlands of southern Scandinavia, bone and antler artefacts including objects with decoration were recognised early and attracted international interest (Clark 1936; Larsson 1990). Through excavation, peat cutting and drainage work the number of objects increased considerably during the late part of the last century. Of major importance are the finds in connection with excavation, providing reliable information on dating and cultural context.

As no total presentation of the Mesolithic art of southern Scandinavia has been published, the number of decorated objects is difficult to calculate. According to some important but limited presentations, the number of objects is at least 500.

In this presentation of Mesolithic art, examples will primarily be chosen from Sweden but in some cases references will be made to other parts of Scandinavia, especially Denmark (Fig. 1).

The variety of motifs and the way they have been used in the decoration has encouraged archaeologist to analyse

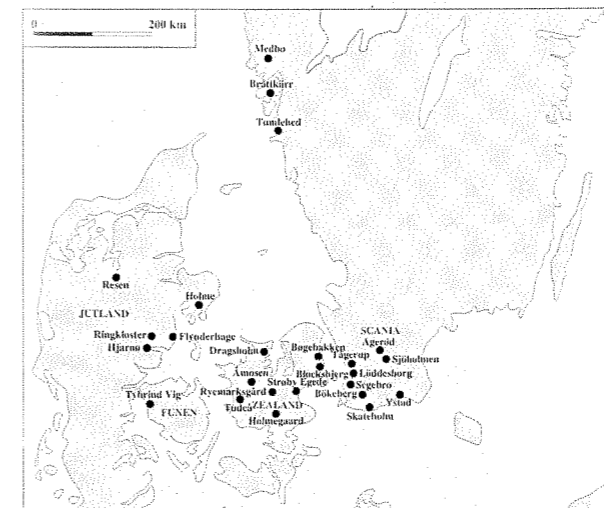
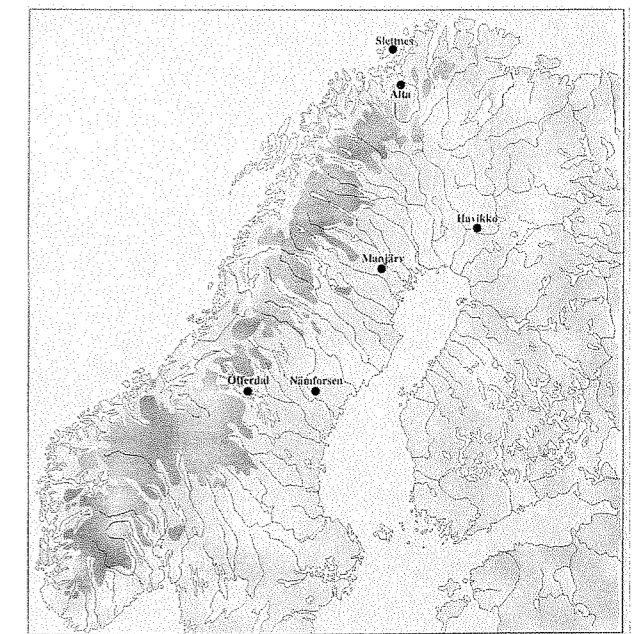


Fig. 1. Northern Europe and southern Scandinavia with the sites mentioned



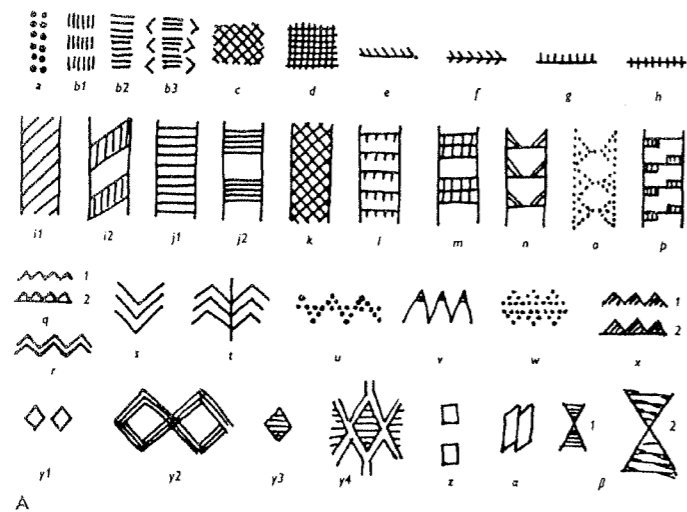
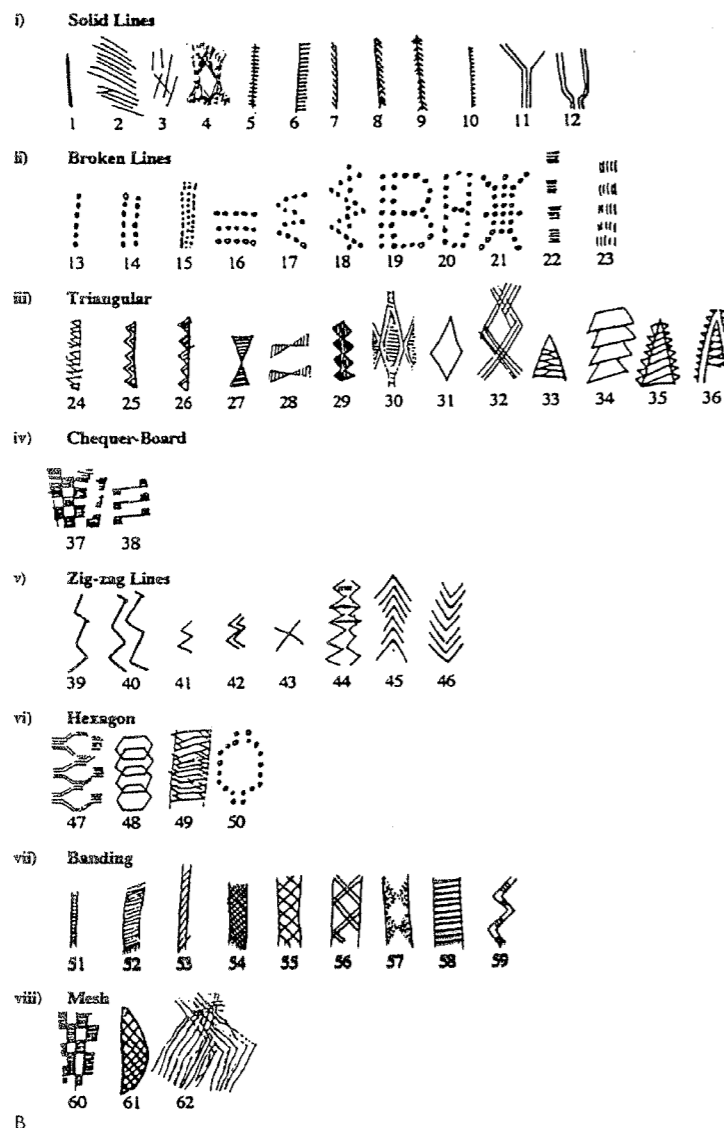


Fig. 2 Different motif classifications by A: Clark (1975) and B: Nash (1998)



the basic elements. Different motif classifications has been presented (Clark 1936, 1975; Vebæk 1936; Liversage 1967; Andersen 1981; Nash 1998) (Fig. 2). Especially since Grahame Clark sorted out the motifs (1936) in Scandinavia, archaeologists have tried to look for structures in Mesolithic art, chronological as well as chorological. Attempts to find chronologically related motifs or combinations of motifs have been made without achieving convincing results. As a whole, decoration appears with varying frequencies during the Mesolithic.

### The interpretation of art

In current archaeological research there are attempts to find new ways to analyse and structure the results in order to discern which regulations and norms governed society and how these affected the position and action of individuals. Bridging the intellectual distance between explaining and understanding might be almost insurmountable. However, it is when we try to take that step that the prehistoric world reveals something other than artefacts, constructions and features.

This presentation is influenced by the conception that the primary goal for practising art in prehistory was to use it for communication between humans as well as between humans and agents, concrete or abstract, who were part of the supernatural world. However, we should not exclude the aesthetic aspect and the importance of the skills needed to perform art. A product of high artistic value and a striking appearance, admired by members of the society, reinforced the communicative function.

One has to realize that the world-view had a much more penetrating influence on everyday life and that the present-day division between sacred and profane is a delusion. The integration of the phenomena is very apparent from the analysis of prehistoric as well as still existing "low technology" societies.

An interesting difference exists between how art historians and archaeologists deal with the results of artistic performance. Evaluations by art historians, based on aesthetic values leading to ranking by quality, are rarely used by archaeologists. Of course superlatives might be used when describing rock art from the Upper Palaeolithic or the design on a brooch from the Iron Age, but such valuations are rather rare. Archaeology today provides good proof that we as a product of the modern world cannot act as independent observers of prehistory. Consciously or unconsciously our attitude affects the prehistory we want to describe or interpret. In order to discern a model for the value norms which existed in

prehistory, we try to sort out repetitions which suggest some kind of structure. This is not only traced in the material culture but in connection with features and burials as well. So to combine indications in a contextual view of the prehistoric society, to observe the shadows of the world-view which leavened the life of the people, is a most desirable but very difficult goal. The intention in this presentation is to regard the role of art as an agent integrated in the expressions of society.

In a way it is wrong to use the term art, as prehistoric people viewed the results of artistic performance in quite a different way from us. We tend to distinguish between art and handicraft, but this division might have been irrelevant in a hunter-gatherer society. Handicraft exemplified as a skill in knapping techniques was a way to impress fellow members of the society. If art can be regarded as an abstraction of the world then there might have been expressions of this abstraction which are very difficult for us to observe.

The primary intention of decoration was its symbolic importance. The meaning is lost, but by observing how hunter-gatherers in other parts of the world use ornaments it is obvious that most motifs have a special meaning and that the motifs are some kind of abstraction of the world (Munn 1973; Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1989; Parkington & Manhire 1997). The understanding of this design grammar might have been restricted to a few members of the society. By decorations the knowledge of how to encode the world into special designs gave some members a specific position in the society. To decorate an object was to provide it with some kind of power. But even if just a small number of people knew the full meaning of all the designs, perhaps all or several members of the society understood some motifs of personal importance, such as the design of the totem or some other part of the environment linked to that specific person. This could also include symbols of importance for the society as a whole, such as the sign for the inhabitants of a specific settlement.

Some archaeologists believe that there is a connection between a high density of humans and the execution of decoration. This does not mean that the average density of a particular society has to be large. It is when several people are settled permanently or for a short time in the same area that different signs and symbols, from monuments to decoration, are used as means to facilitate the organization of the society members in order to establish a ranking. Such locations as meeting places and sites with exceptionally rich art, on rock as well as on portable objects, are known as early as the Upper Palaeolithic (Conkey 1982).

### The geometric motifs

Of the numerous ornaments of the Upper Palaeolithic the less recognized decorations – the geometric motifs – seem to be the most persistent symbols with a continuation throughout the Mesolithic and the Neolithic as well.

Some of these motifs can be recognized in the decoration among hunter-gatherer as well as agricultural societies. The most reasonable explanation for the interest in these motifs is their relationship with neurological phenomena shared by all humans.

In several present-day and recorded hunter-gatherer societies the state of trance has been an important ritual to get in touch with the supernatural world. Trance was especially performed by the shaman, the person who could open communication between different worlds (Lewis-Williams 1997). If the transition phases between the existing world and the supernatural one included some specific motifs, no wonder these became of special importance in many parts of the world.

During stages of trance, members of the modern society as well as those belonging to "low-technology" societies experience common motifs (Bradley 1989; Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1989, 1990, 1993). Other motifs differ and are related to the motif world of the specific society.

Ornaments were executed with several different techniques. The most important one is engraving, but different motifs could be effectuated by pressure and drilling. In most cases the ornaments are shallow and are not exposed in their totality except when viewed close up. In such cases the decoration seems to be related to the maker of the design or the owner of the artefact and the spiritual world. For other objects the designs are deeply cut and easily visible even at a certain distance. For some objects resin was used to fill the engravings or deepened areas in order to achieve contrast between the light surface and the black decoration, easily observed by other people (Malmer & Magnusson 1955).

The extent of ornaments varies a lot. On some objects most of the surface might be covered while others have just a few engravings, in some cases so few that it might be difficult to distinguish the strokes from traces of use. The objects are often handled and the ornaments weathered.

### Mesolithic art in a chronological perspective

Compared to the large number of mobile objects with decoration from the Upper Palaeolithic, the number of finds is very small in Scandinavia during the Late

Palaeolithic and the early part of the Mesolithic. That most sites in southern Scandinavia do not include decorated objects is not entirely due to the localization of almost all sites on ground with good natural drainage and no preservation for objects of organic content. The number of decorated pieces from well-known sites in northern Germany with excellent preservation conditions is seemingly small (Rust 1962). There are no comparisons with continental sites from the deglaciation, such as Gönnersdorf, where a large number of decorated stone slabs with numerous carvings have been found (Bosinski & Fischer 1980).

The only object from Sweden with some kind of decoration, although of limited proportions, is a pear-shaped flat stone, about ten centimetres long, from the site Segebro in south-western Scania (Salomonsson 1964), the southernmost county of Sweden (Fig. 3). The site belongs to the Bromme culture, dated to the Allerød interstadial or the early part of the Younger Dryas (Larsson 1996). Short and hollow strokes are found on the narrow sides. By using oblique illumination, two figures with cross-hatching – perhaps fishes – have been observed.

More than 11,000 years ago, at the end of the Younger Dryas, the temperature increased dramatically. The tundra changed into park-tundra and later on to an open forest with birch and later pine and juniper as well. But it was

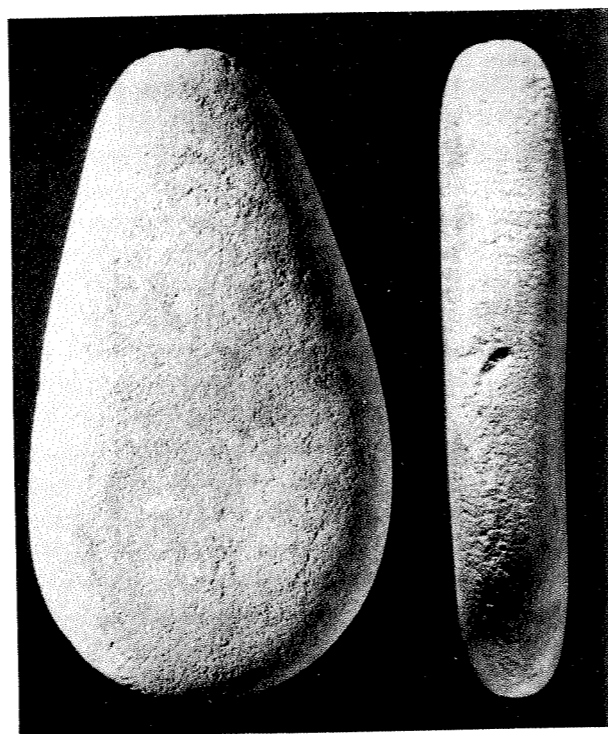


Fig. 3. Pebble from the late Palaeolithic site of Segebro, south-western Scania, with engravings. From Salomonsson 1964:Fig. 13. 1:1.

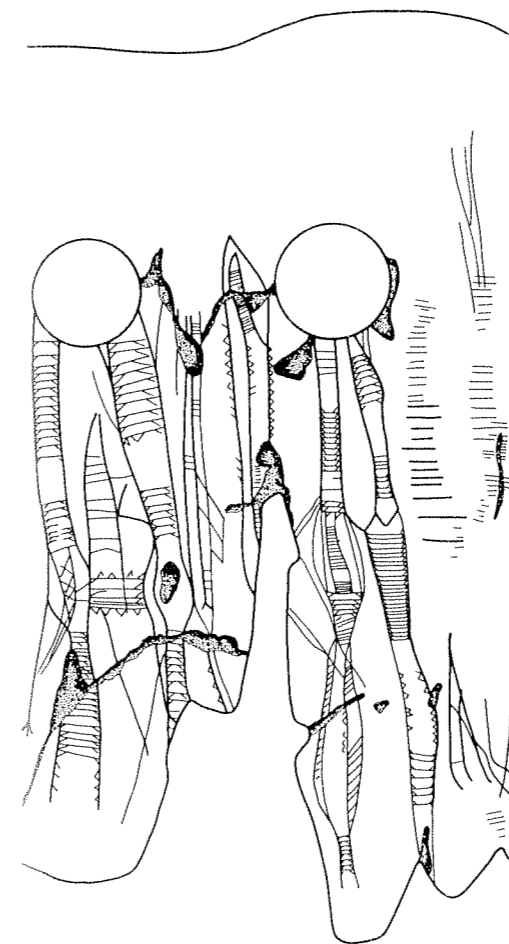


Fig. 4. Decorated antler axe from the settlement of Ageröd I:HC dated to the late Maglemose culture. From Larsson 1978b: Fig. 3. 2:5.

Fig. 5. Part of a decorated antler axe from the Mesolithic settlement Segebro dated to the Kongemose culture.



not until some centuries later, during the early part of the Pre-Boreal, that the material culture changed. At about 8500 BC (all dates are calibrated) the Mesolithic tool kit was introduced. Decorated objects at the earliest Mesolithic sites, even at such sites as in northern Germany where the preservation is excellent, are very few or non-existent (Gramsch 1987, 1991; Gramsch & Kloss 1989).

The number of Pre-Boreal sites from southern Scandinavia inland is small (Fischer 1996; Degn Johansson 1990), while a large number of sites from the same period are found on the Swedish west coast (Kindgren 1995). However, they are situated in environments that have caused a total decomposition of organic finds. Some Boreal sites from the west coast of Sweden have provided organic remains (Wigforss *et al.* 1983; Nordqvist 1995). But the number of decorated objects is small and usually there are none at all. The need to use decoration was low. The situation in southernmost Scandinavia is somewhat better but the number of decorated objects is still small (Sarauv 1903; Bille Henriksen 1979).

It is not until the late part of the Boreal period at about 7500 BC that the material becomes larger. It is difficult to determine whether this is due to the factual situation that sites with good preservation are more numerous or the need for decoration of objects increased at that time because of site concentration and frequent interaction between people. The largest collection of decorated artefacts from Sweden originates from the bog Ageröds Mosse in central Scania, originally a part of the still existing lake Ringsjön (Fig. 1). The earliest sites were located at the edge of the former lake and the later ones on islands formed by organic litter as the lake was being filled in (Larsson 1978a, 1980, 1983). From sites of different duration there are several examples of portable

objects with decoration (Fig. 4). The same is evident in Denmark with the large-scale excavation of bog sites

There are few objects during the middle Mesolithic – the Kongemose culture. At the Mesolithic settlement of Segebro, dated to the Kongemose culture, just a small number of objects are decorated (Fig. 5) despite the excellent preservation and large number of bones and antlers. (Larsson 1982). They increase considerably in number during the early Ertebølle culture (Andersen 1981) (Fig. 6), especially in the large base camps, but decrease at the end of Mesolithic (Nash 1998:Fig. 3.1).

Although a chronological division is difficult to verify, a certain process of change in some motifs can be established. Some seem to be present only in the early Mesolithic, some during the late Mesolithic (Nash 1998:48). The composition of different motif objects from the Maglemose as well as the Ertebølle culture has a more complex layout than during the Kongemose culture (Nash 1998:116). As to the geographical distribution a small number of motifs turn out to be limited to a region, such as the "wheatsheaf" which is only to be found in western Denmark during the early Ertebølle culture (Andersen 1998a:Fig. 8). Other regional customs may occur. Decoration of the outer edge of the barbs of the harpoon, for example, is found only in Scania (Larsson 1999a) (Fig. 20).

#### The find situation of decorated objects

Several ornamented objects have been found in the refuse of settlement sites. In just a few instances the special position of the decorated objects has been recognized. A decorated antler axe was found in two pieces close to a stone in the refuse layer of the inland Ertebølle site of Bökeberg in south-western Scania (Regnell *et al.* 1995) (Fig. 14). Richly decorated objects were found almost intact in the refuse layer of the site Ageröd I:HC dated to the late Maglemose culture (Fig. 4 and 9). In both instances some of the artefacts were cracked, probably intentionally, but deposited close to the settlement. These depositions suggest a situation where the use of the artefact is to be terminated but it is still of too much power to be regarded as ordinary refuse. The number of decorated objects found occasionally during peat cutting or drainage might indicate that such objects were often deposited at wetland sites outside settlements.

Of special interest is the reuse of decorated objects. In some examples decorated objects, probably antler axes, were reused as raw material for other tools such as harpoons (Andersen 1976:Fig. 2; Larsson 1984) (Fig. 7 and Fig. 20). A decorated slotted bone dagger has been cut into a bone point (Andersen 1998a:Fig. 19). The

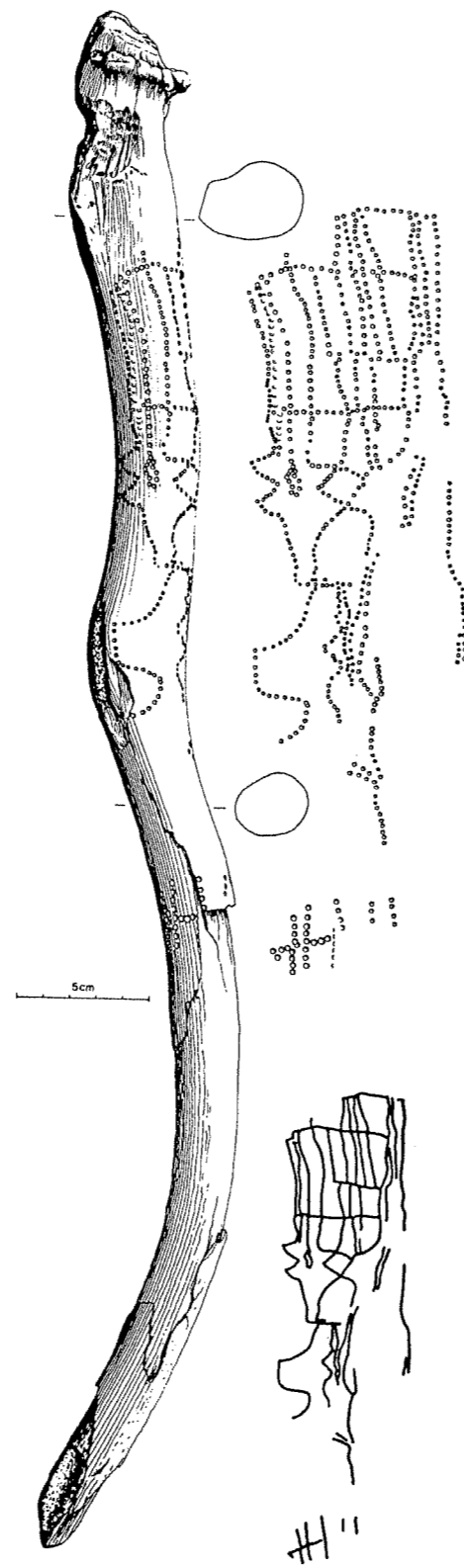


Fig. 6. Decorated antler object from Hjarnø, eastern Jutland, dated to the middle part of the Ertebølle culture. From Andersen 1981:Fig. 14, 2:5.

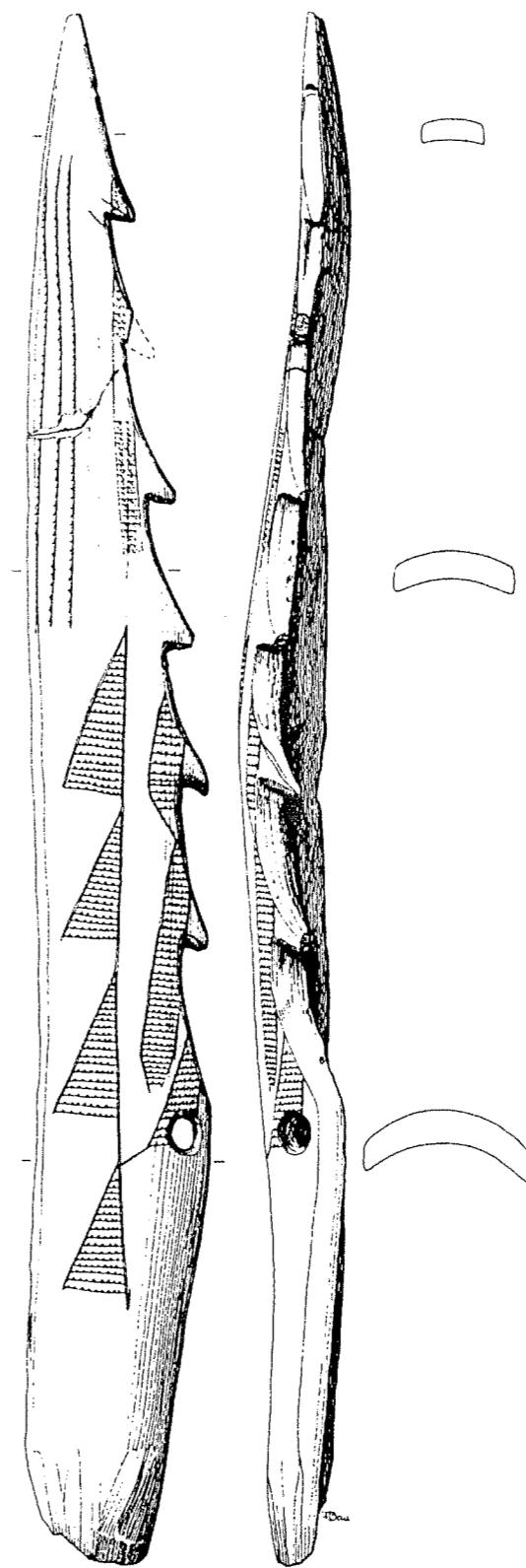


Fig. 7. Harpoon made of a decorated antler object from Tudeå, western Zealand. From Andersen 1976:Fig. 2, 1:2.

ornaments were clearly visible on those objects which were reused, and no attempts were made to blur the decoration. This shows that the decorated objects could very well be changed into another shape. At least some of the decorated objects were not sacred in a way that they had to be deposited unchanged.

Some tools are rarely or never decorated, others are decorated almost without exception. A latter group are the slotted bone daggers. They are not common but equipped with rich decoration (Voss 1961) (Fig. 8). However, an undecorated example was found as a grave good in a grave at the Bøgebakken cemetery on eastern Zealand (Albrethsen & Brinch Petersen 1977:7). One of the most exquisite examples (Fig. 8) was found far from the ordinary distribution, namely in the parish of Offerdal in Jämtland, northern Sweden (Fig. 1). Despite its location, the shape and decoration make it similar to other finds of slotted daggers such as a find from Flynderhage in Jutland dated to the early Ertebølle culture (Andersen 1998a) (Fig. 8). In a group of related tools, the slotted arrow- or spear-heads, decoration is rare (Lidén 1942; Larsson & Larsson 1976).

#### Examples of decorated objects from Scania

A very special object was found in the refuse layer of the site Ageröd I:HC, central Scania and dated to the late Maglemose culture at about 7000 BC. Through its shape and decoration it differs from other portable objects in southernmost Scandinavia (Larsson 1976) (Fig. 9). It is shaped out of an antler shovel with a hole in the middle and a pointed part carved with a central ridge and a marked shelf. A piece of the outermost part of the shovel has been removed and there are traces of gnawing marks by a rodent. The central motif is formed by impression technique – *ornementation pointillé*. Running from the circle are lines in the same technique which converge in a triangular motif on the only preserved antler tine (Larsson 1976:Fig. 4). Impressions arranged in rows form a zigzag decoration on both sides of the central ridge. Above the shelf hatched triangles have been carved.

It is not only the shape and decoration which make the object special – it has been shaped out of a reindeer antler. When the object was used and finally deposited, reindeer had been extinct in southern Scandinavia for at least two thousand years. It is hardly realistic to imagine that the artefact was used for such a long time. It might have been deposited during the late Glacial and recovered later. But the most plausible explanation is that the raw material, or more likely the finished object, originated from Hardangervidda, the highland of southern Norway, where reindeer were present during the late Boreal period.

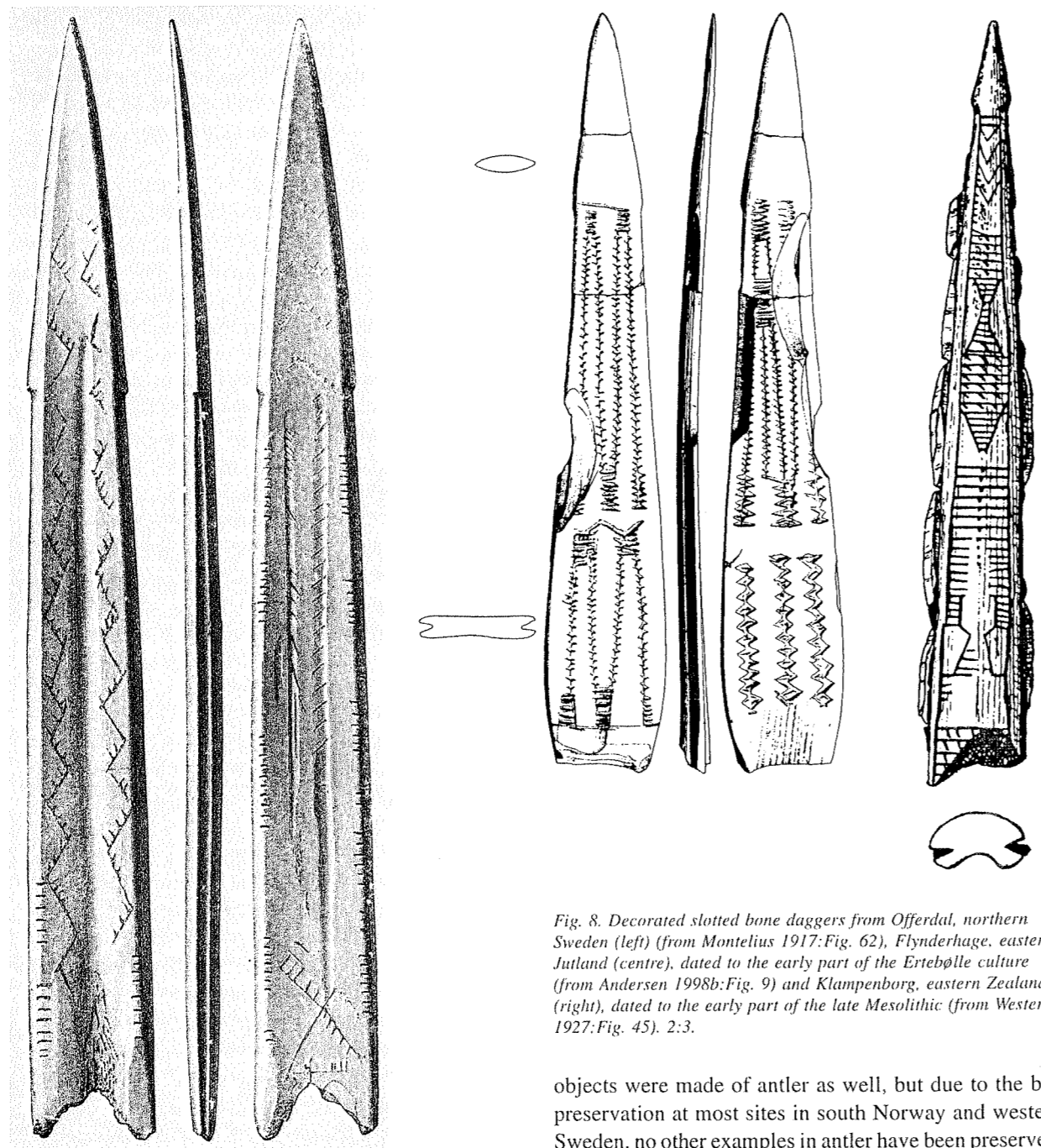


Fig. 8. Decorated slotted bone daggers from Offerdal, northern Sweden (left) (from Montelius 1917:Fig. 62), Flynderhage, eastern Jutland (centre), dated to the early part of the Ertebølle culture (from Andersen 1998b:Fig. 9) and Klampenborg, eastern Zealand (right), dated to the early part of the late Mesolithic (from Westerby 1927:Fig. 45). 2:3.

There is a resemblance between the object from Ageröd and cross-shaped or star-shaped stone axes from southern Norway and western Sweden (Petersen 1946; Gräslund 1962). The best parallel is a stone object from Bråttkärr, Bohuslän, one of the very few decorated objects in western Sweden (Fig. 10). The same general shape is present as well as the design composition, although other motifs have been used. It is most probable that similar

objects were made of antler as well, but due to the bad preservation at most sites in south Norway and western Sweden, no other examples in antler have been preserved.

The object from Ageröd is probably a manifestation of distant exchange of special objects. In exchange networks artefacts of special importance might have been handed over from one region to another to be deposited at a site hundreds of kilometres from where they were made. We know of flint which was transported hundreds of kilometres to the north as well as objects of slate from northern Sweden found in the southern part of the country (Althin 1953; Taffinder 1998:99 ff.). Geographically wide networks existed during the Mesolithic.

The object of reindeer antler from Ageröd I as well as most of its counterparts in stone have a phallic shape of the pointed part and might have had a role in fertility rites. The same interpretation might be applicable to some antler objects on which a tine has been removed and the soft tissue deepened. Short incisions were cut into the edges of the sunken oval in order to distinguish a special part of the object (Müller 1918:Fig. 6). These ovals might be viewed as an abstraction of the vulva.



Fig. 9. Decorated object made of reindeer antler from the settlement Ageröd I:HC, central Scania, dated to the late Maglemose culture. From Larsson 1976:Fig. 1-2). 1:1.



Fig. 10. Decorated stone object from Bråttkärr, western Sweden. From Larsson 1976:Fig. 9. 3:5.

Yet another object of special interest is a find from the site of Sjöholmen in central Scania. The Y-shaped object made of antler has a shaft-hole at which it was broken (Fig. 11). The entire surface is covered with decoration dominated by hexagonal and rhombic motifs. Only two figures differ from the rest, namely two elongated bodies identified as fishes with marks for fins. The find location, Sjöholmen, was a site of long duration where several other decorated objects were found, some with decoration similar to the Y-shaped object (Larsson 1978b) (Fig. 12). These objects should be dated to the early part of the late Mesolithic.

Another antler object has partly similar shape and design. It was found during a test excavation in 1998 of a site, Tågerup in western Scania, from the Kongemose as well as the early Ertebølle culture (Karsten *et al.* 1998) (Fig. 13). The object was found at a depth of more than three metres in the outermost part of a refuse layer connected to a settlement from the Kongemose culture. The object is intact. A dating of the artefact gave the value

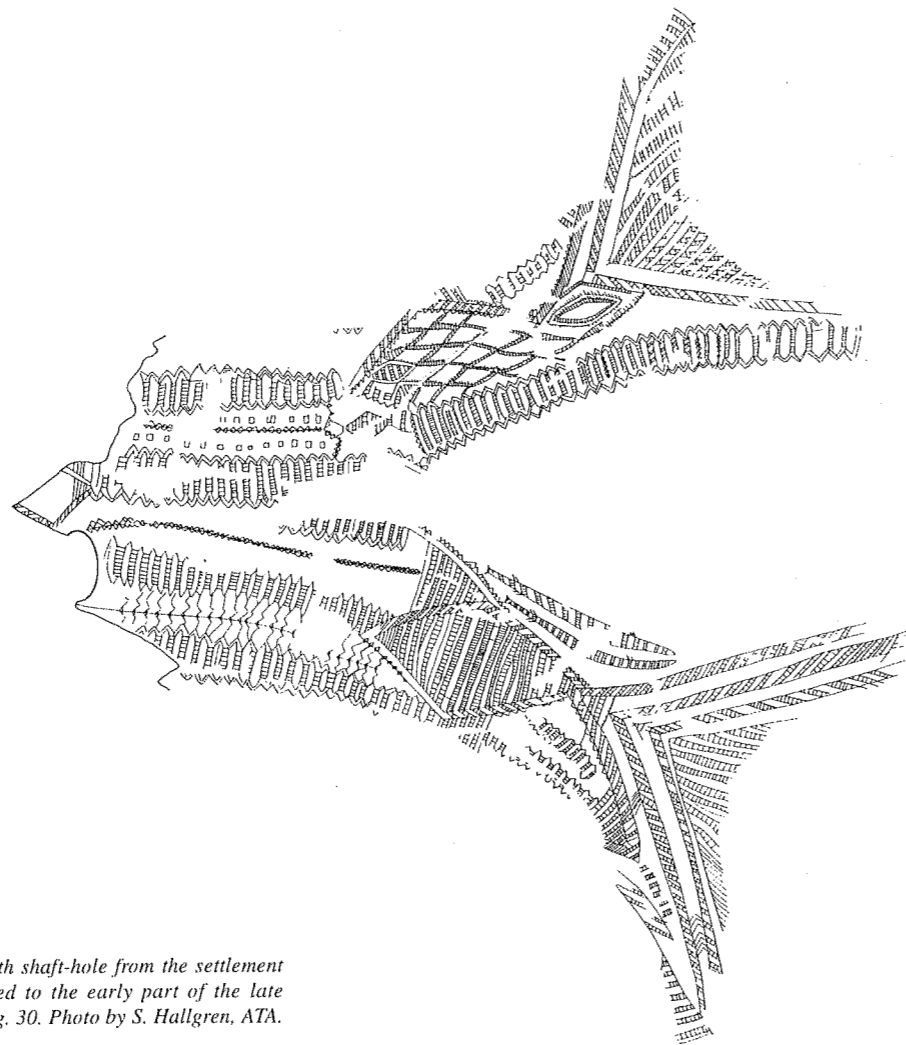
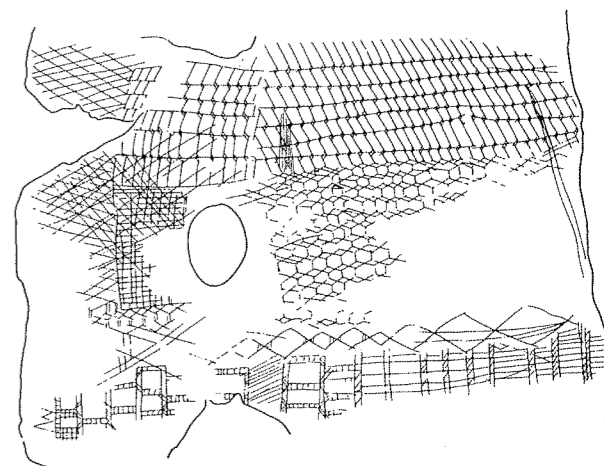
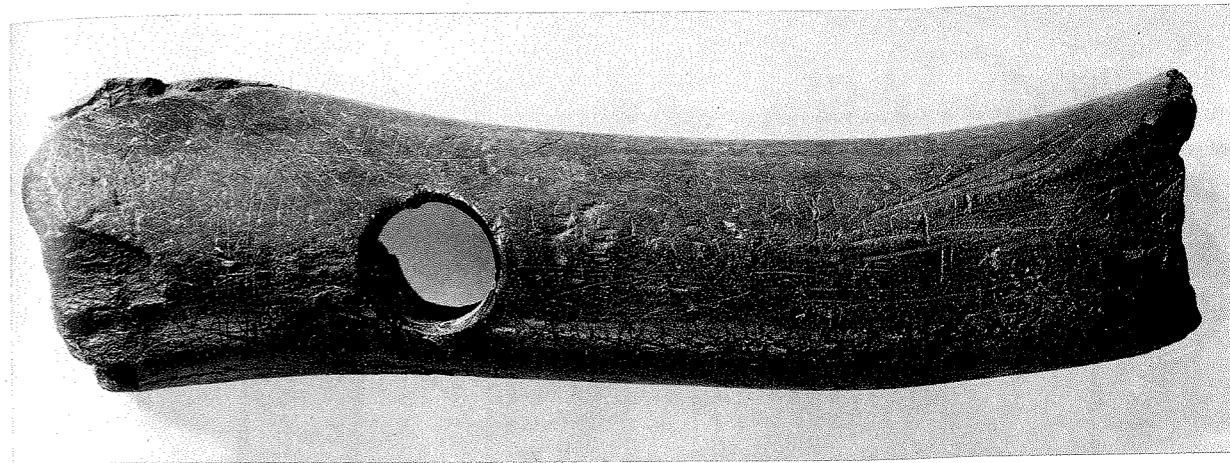


Fig. 11. Decorated antler object with shaft-hole from the settlement of Sjöholmen, central Scania, dated to the early part of the late Mesolithic. From Larsson 1978b:Fig. 30. Photo by S. Hallgren, ATA. 2:5.



6300 BC. It is totally covered with decoration, just like the object from Sjöholmen, except for the area on the opposite side of the shaft hole. The basic motifs are bands of hexagons with a variety of hatching.

Decorated shafts with a simple as well as complicated design are also common in the Ertebølle culture (Andersen 1981) (Fig. 6). They have in some cases been interpreted as axe shafts. As not a single example has been found connected to an axe blade, one must doubt this interpretation. They have also been regarded as looms or handles of digging sticks (Broadbent 1978). It is most plausible to view them as objects with a primary ritual function.

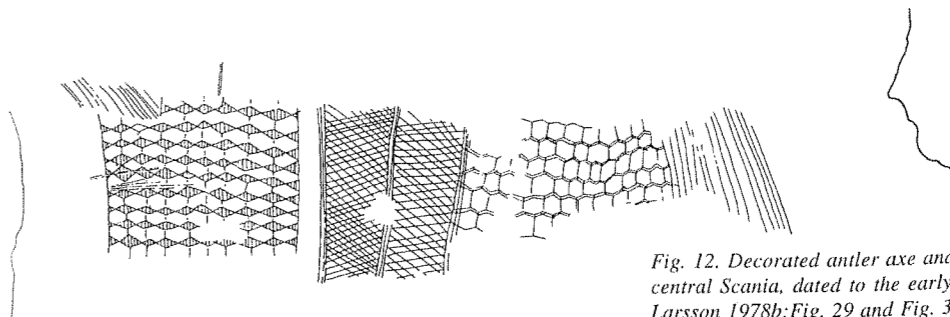


Fig. 12. Decorated antler axe and an antler object from Sjöholmen, central Scania, dated to the early part of the late Mesolithic. From Larsson 1978b:Fig. 29 and Fig. 34. 1:2.



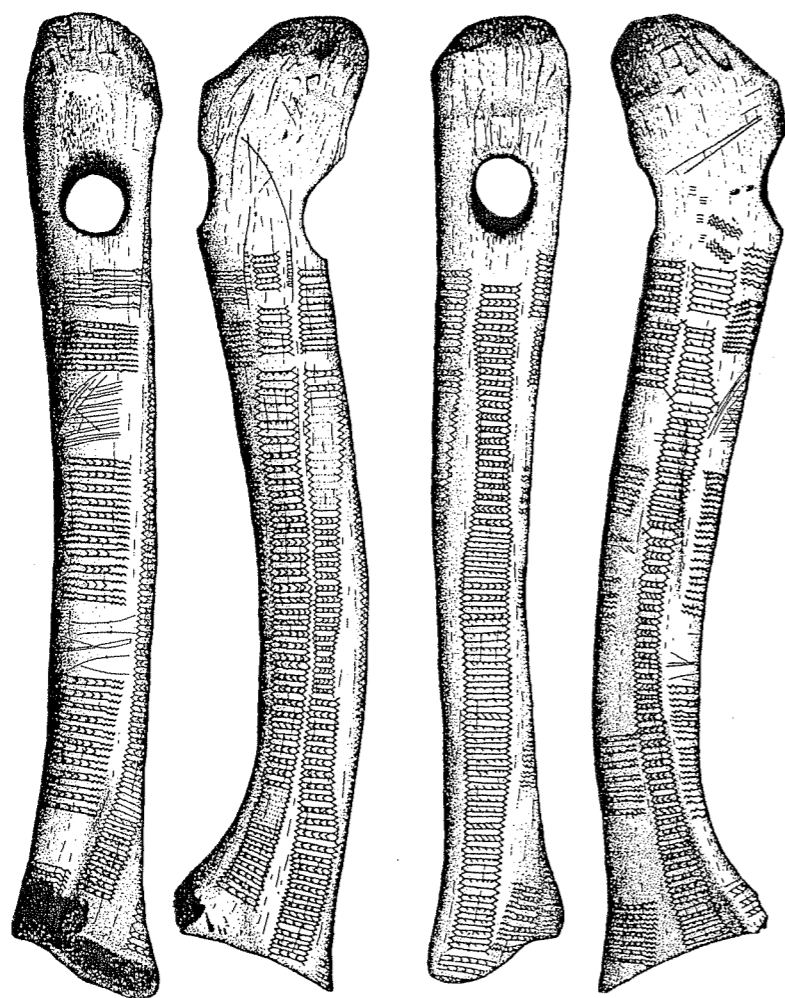


Fig. 13. Decorated antler object with shaft-hole from the settlement of Tägerup, western Scania, dated to the Kongemose culture. From Karsten *et al.* 1998:Fig. 2. 1:2.

In some cases objects appear without any resemblances to other finds. At the inland site of Bökeberg in southwestern Scania an antler object without a shaft-hole was found in the refuse layer dating to the early part of the Ertebølle culture (Regnell *et al.* 1995). Despite its fragmentary state a human figure can be observed (Fig. 14). The head is made up of a triangular part deeply cut into the antler and with a marked nose. This head is combined with a thin engraving of a body and legs. Anthropomorphic figures are rare in Mesolithic art (Fig. 30), but no other has been shaped by a combination of engraving and plastic design. However, a kind of plastic design is included in the decoration of an antler axe from eastern Denmark (Fig. 15).

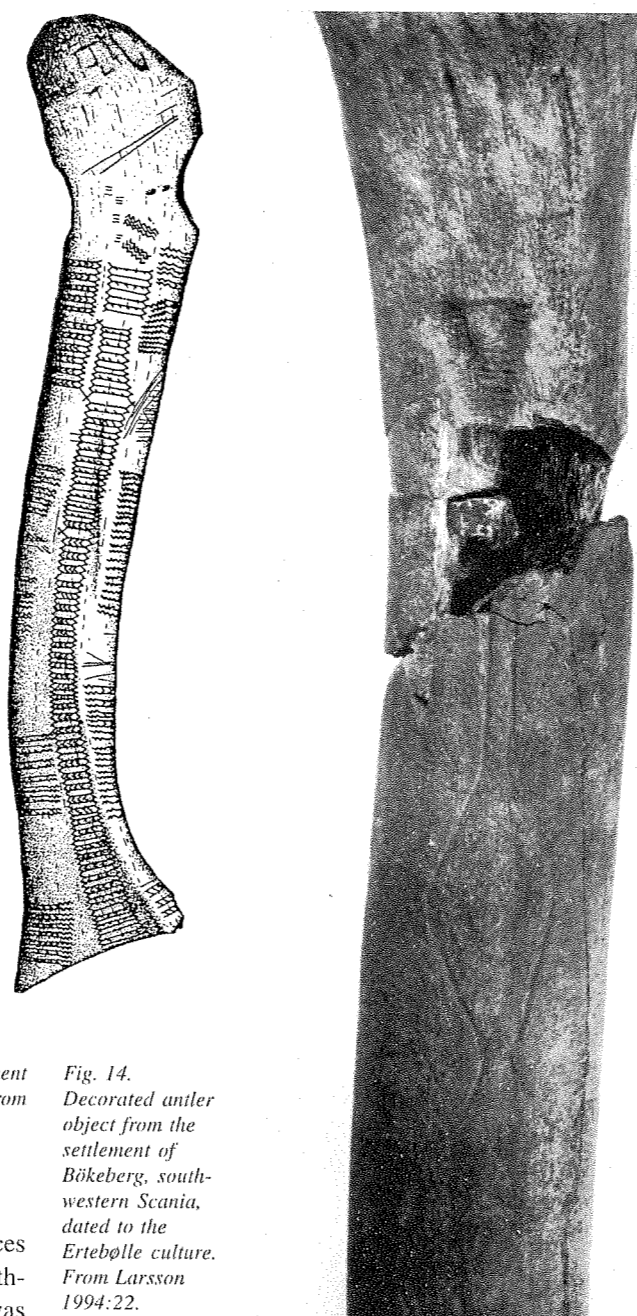


Fig. 14. Decorated antler object from the settlement of Bökeberg, southwestern Scania, dated to the Ertebølle culture. From Larsson 1994:22.

Another unique object in Mesolithic art is an antler axe found close to the town of Ystad, southernmost Scania. It is an old find, unfortunately without information about the locality. Among the motifs two are easily recognized as deer, probably red deer (Fig. 16). One seems to have antlers and should thus be a male. The design exemplified overlapping motifs – a rather common phenomenon in Mesolithic art. Groups of strokes run through both bodies. The hatched areas, triangular or rhombic, are a common

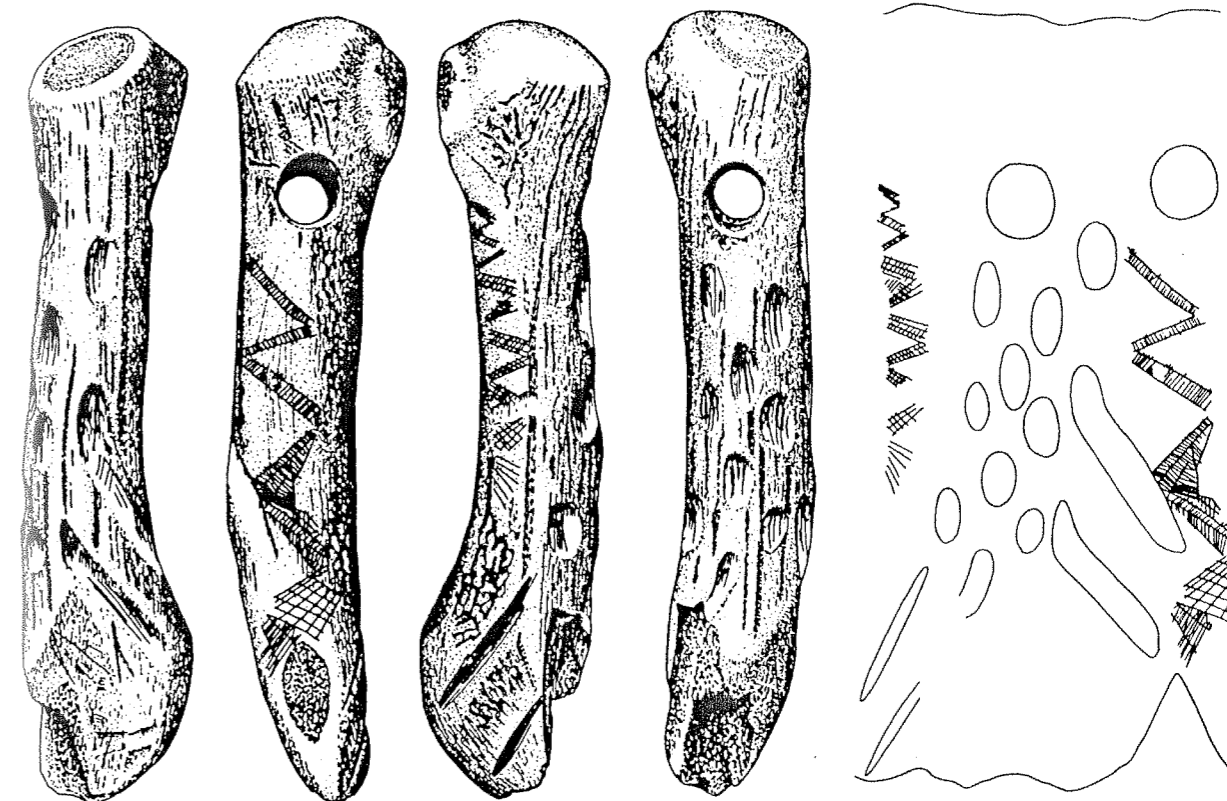


Fig. 15. Decorated antler axe from Åmosen, central Zealand. From Vang Petersen 1990:201). 1:2.

motif in Mesolithic art. The decoration was carried out at two, perhaps three intervals. The worn appearance of some of the initial designs shows that a considerable time elapsed between the performances, with the engravings

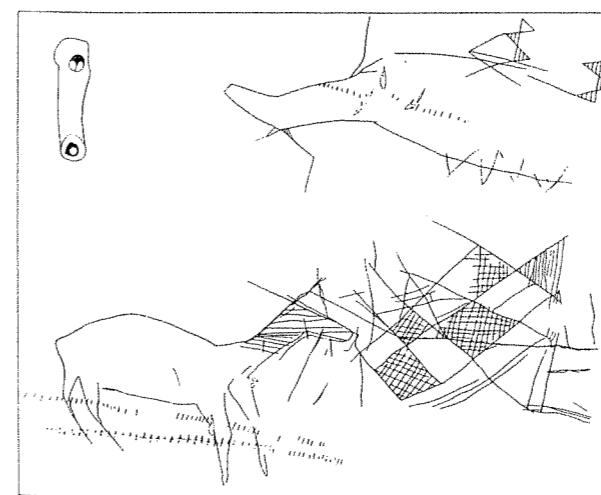


Fig. 16. Decorated antler axe from Ystad, southern Scania. From Clark 1975:Fig. 34. 2:3.

of the two deer belonging to the later stage (Clark 1975:156). The hatched motifs have been interpreted as some kind of nets in which the prey was supposed to be trapped.

This kind of interpretation is fully acceptable if hunting magic is part of the means of the design. However, one may question the importance of design for the magic to facilitate hunting. In Upper Palaeolithic cave art, specific animals are favoured, such as mammoth, horse and aurochs. However, in the occupation remains these animals are not common (Gamble 1986). Reindeer is one of the most common species in settlements but a rare animal in rock art.

Another example are carvings on stones found at a settlement from the late Mesolithic at Slettnes, a long-term settlement site on an island in northernmost Norway (Hesjedal *et al.* 1996) (Fig. 1). Here sunken house foundations were found. Excavations between the houses yielded five large rocks with extensive carvings (Fig. 38). Although the site was located in an archipelago, the carved motifs, which can be dated to the late Mesolithic, contain only examples of forest animals. With a rich marine fauna,

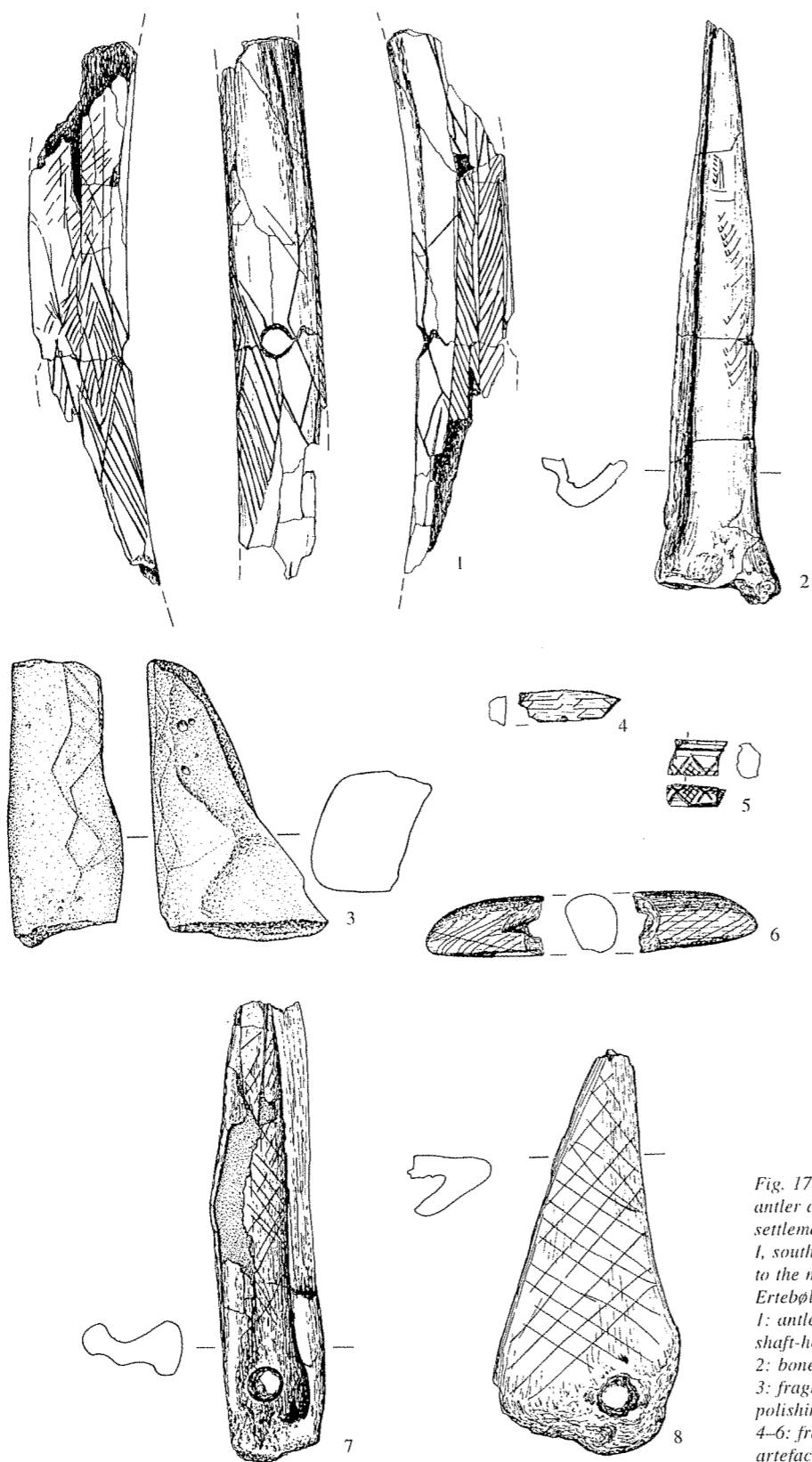


Fig. 17. Decorated antler axe from the settlement of Skateholm I, southern Scania, dated to the middle part of the Ertebølle culture. 1: antler object with shaft-hole, 2: bone point, 3: fragment of a polishing stone, 4-6: fragments of bone artefacts, 7-8: bone artefacts with perforations. 1:2.

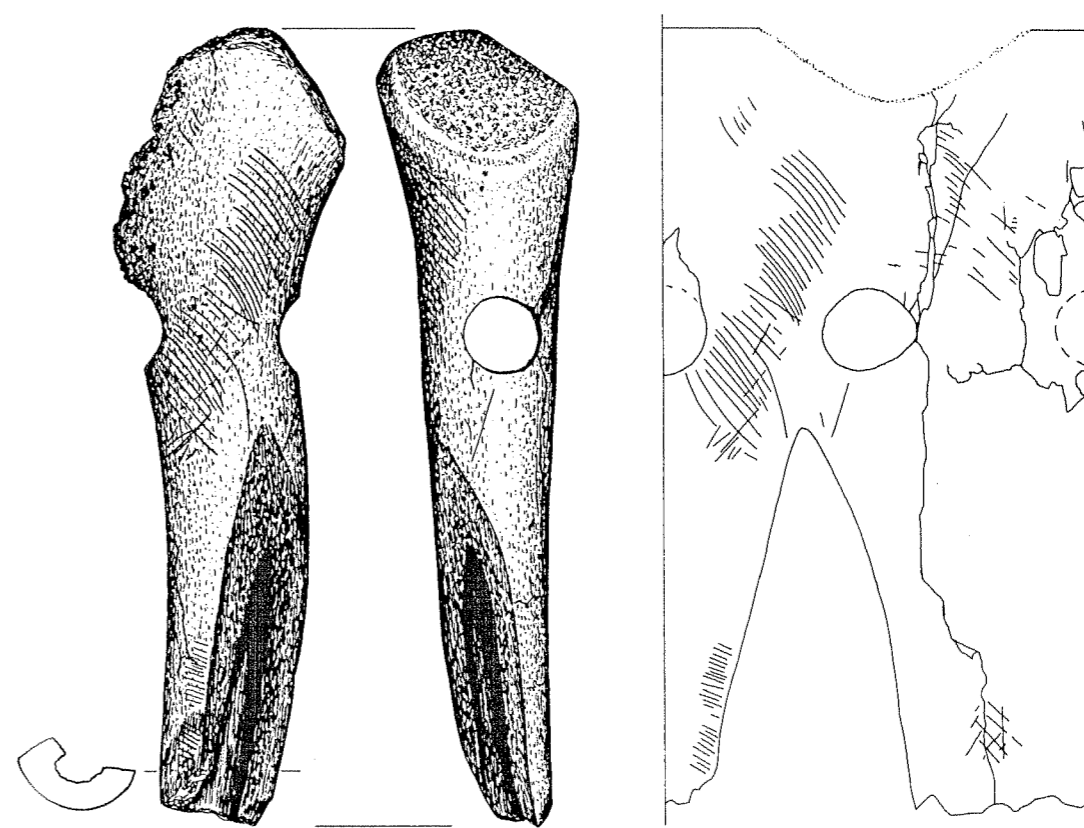


Fig. 18. Decorated antler axe from grave 22 at Skateholm I, southern Scania, dated to the middle part of the Ertebølle culture. From Larsson 1984: Fig. 23. 1:2.

people ate fish and seals but thought about elk and bear (Larsson 1999b:102). This exemplifies that what people reproduced did not always have much in common with everyday life.

**Decorations objects in graves**

The number of decorated portable objects found as grave goods is small in relation to the number of Mesolithic graves from southern Scandinavia (Larsson 2000). At the complex of three combinations of settlement as well as cemeteries, decorated objects have been found in occupation layers (Fig. 17) as well as in graves. An antler axe, inserted under the left arm of an elderly man, was found at Skateholm I, one of three late Mesolithic cemeteries in southernmost Sweden (Larsson 1984, 1993). The design was limited to a row of strokes at the head of the axe running obliquely to the axis of the object (Fig. 18).

At the somewhat older cemetery of Skateholm II a small object was found at the forehead of a male in a sitting position. The object is in a fragmentary state and exhibits

a symmetrical plastic appearance as well as small incisions in the sides of the flat bone object (Fig. 19). The decoration of a harpoon from a male grave in Skateholm II was limited to the flat surfaces of the barbs with small incisions and cross-hatching by strokes (Fig. 20). A fragment of a slotted bone dagger was found in the same grave. Decoration as a row of short strokes is found on one side.

A young child in the same cemetery had a bone point with a small number of notches as decoration. In relation to the other finds the decoration of an antler hammer from a dog grave at Skateholm II is intensive (Fig. 22). The handle as well as the hammer-head show ornaments. The

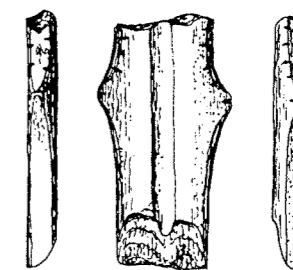


Fig. 19. Fragmentary bone object from grave II at Skateholm II, southern Scania, dated to the early part of the Ertebølle culture. From Larsson 1984: Fig. 23.

former is covered with large rhomboids while rows of short lines cover the handle. The antler hammer, judging by its presence in a dog grave, must have had another function, for example as a drum hammer connected with acts of ritual importance (Larsson 1988b:148). Two objects from Denmark have a similar shape and partly similar design (Vang Petersen 1998:Fig. 16).

Just two decorated objects have been found in Danish graves from the late Mesolithic – a bone dagger from a grave with two females at Dragsholm on north-western Zealand (Brinch Petersen 1974:Fig. 10) with drilled

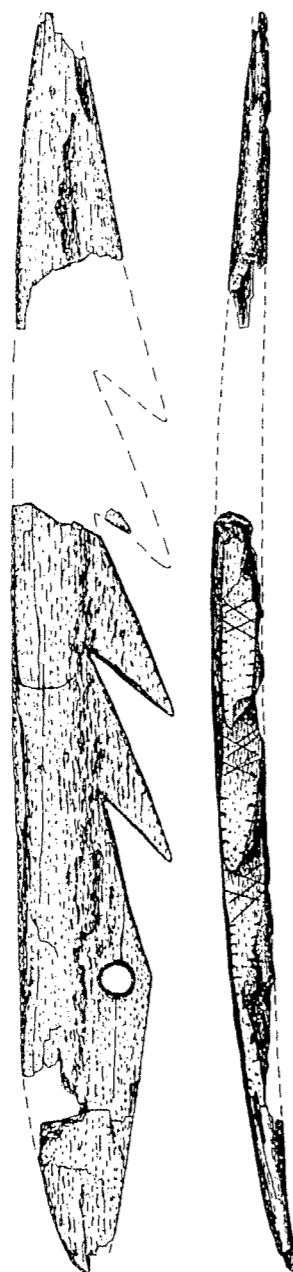


Fig. 20. Harpoon with decoration on the barbs from grave IV at Skateholm II, southern Scania, dated to the early Ertebølle culture. From Larsson 1999b:Fig. 6. 1:2.

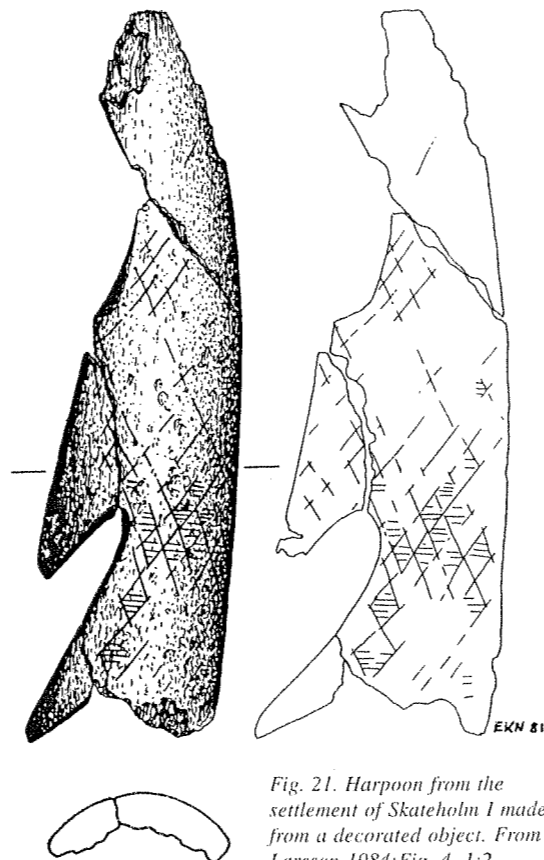


Fig. 21. Harpoon from the settlement of Skateholm I made from a decorated object. From Larsson 1984:Fig. 4. 1:2.

decoration similar to another bone dagger (Fig. 31) and a decorated antler axe found close to a man in a grave at Strøby Egede with eight bodies (Brinch Petersen 1988). Apart from the last one, the decoration is very simple and might be signs of personal importance connected with the interred.

#### Decoration on stones

Other objects than of bone and antler are decorated. On a small bog site dated to the latest part of Maglemose culture, Ageröd I:D in central Scania (Larsson 1978a), a small slab of sandstone was covered with decoration on both sides. The design on one side includes furrows in pairs, thin as well as deep, with an almost symmetrical design proceeding from a central part of the slab (Fig. 23). The other side is covered with different designs including a fish-like motif.

Similar sandstone slabs have also been recovered from the nearby site of Ageröd I:HC, dated to the late Maglemose culture (Althin 1950:Fig. 3). As they are in a fragmentary state it is not possible to distinguish the composition of the design. Perhaps these slabs were made

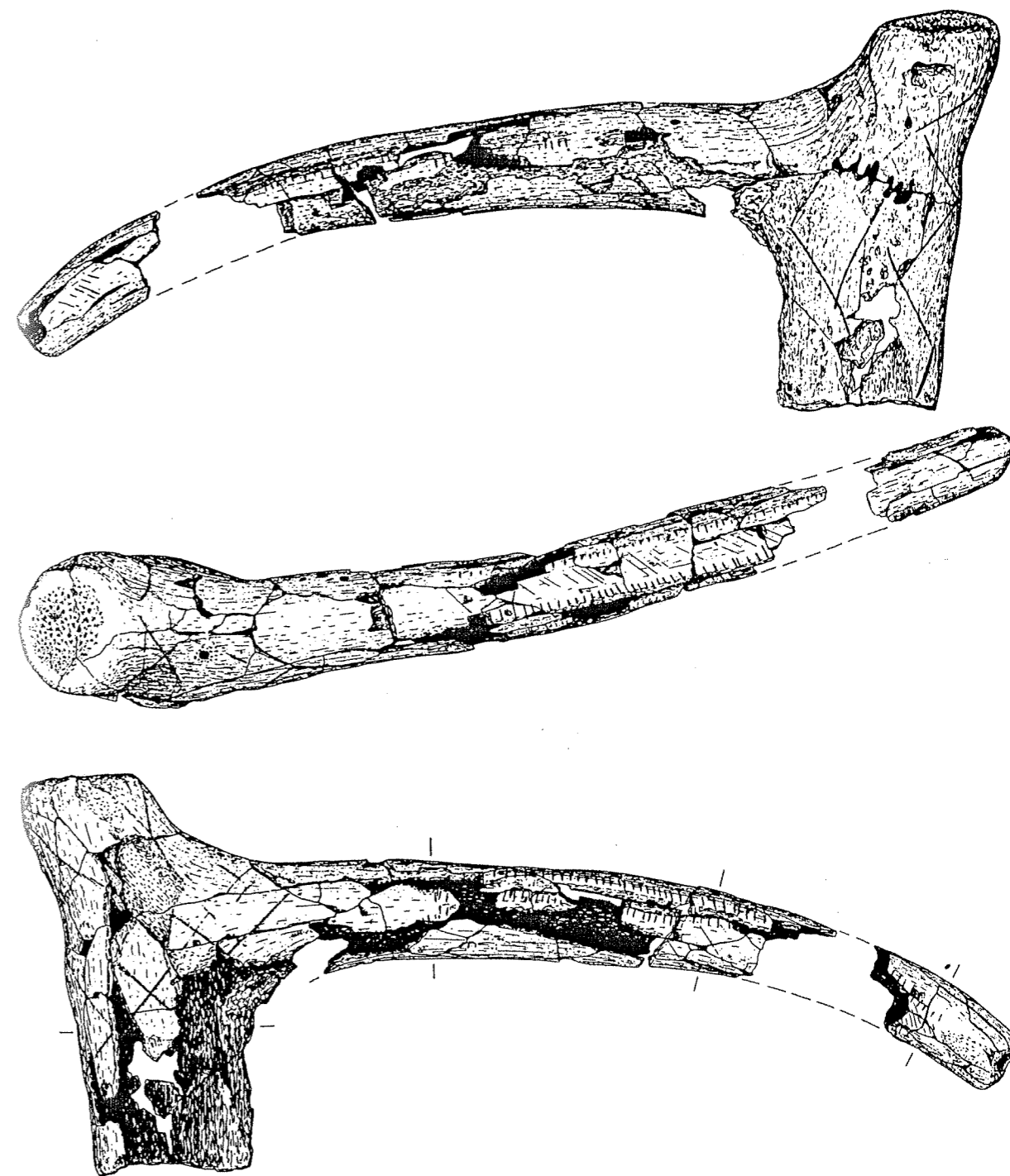


Fig. 22. Decorated antler hammer from the dog grave XXI at Skateholm II, southern Scania, dated to the early Ertebølle culture. From Larsson 1988b:149. 1:2.

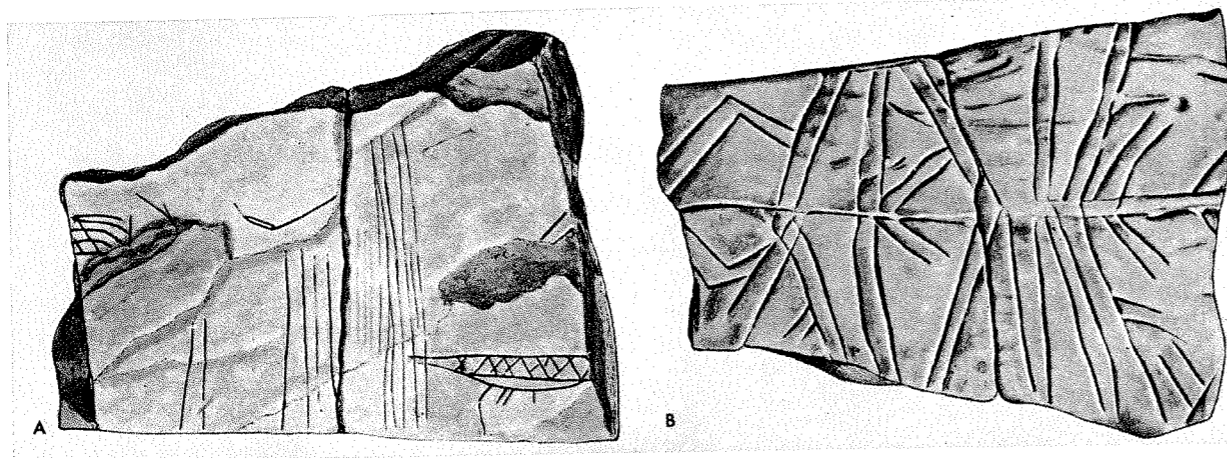


Fig. 23. Stone plate with decoration from the settlement of Ageröd I:D, central Scania, dated to the final part of the Maglemose culture. From Larsson 1978a:Fig. 81. 1:2

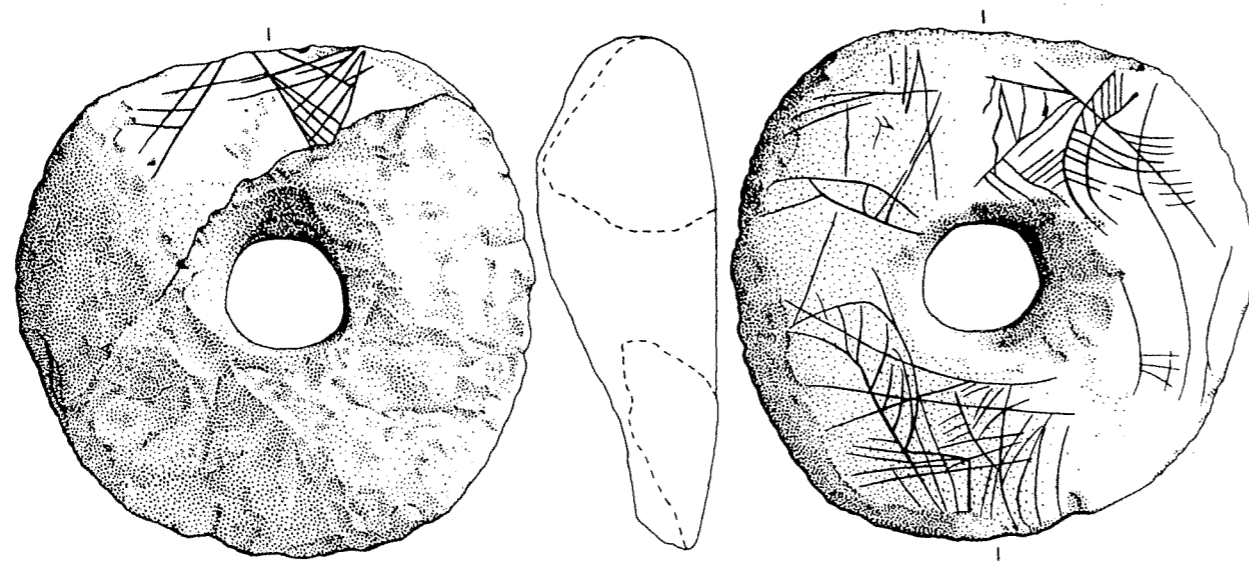


Fig. 24. Perforated object of lime found at the shell midden Flynderhage, eastern Jutland, dated to the Ertebølle culture. From Andersen 1981:Fig. 24. 3:4

as a kind of stylistic maps in order to facilitate travel in the real world as well as in trance. They might then be maps of an imaginary landscape.

Outside central Scania, just a small number of decorated stones have been found. Restricted design was found on a polishing stone from the settlement of Skateholm I (Fig. 17:3). Typical Mesolithic design was found on a perforated object in lime found at Flynderhage, eastern Jutland (Andersen 1981) (Fig. 24).

At most Mesolithic sites in southern Scandinavia engravings and parts of hatched figures are found on the cortex of ordinary flakes and blades (Althin 1950: Fig. 4-5) (Fig. 25: 2-3). The fragmentary state reveals that the engravings were originally made on rather large flint

cores which were later knapped into small pieces. At Ageröd I:HC, two larger parts of the same decorated core could be refitted on which a crosshatched band is visible (Fig. 25:1). An interpretation put forward is that the engravings were to facilitate the knapping. As the engravings can be traced at any angle to the longitudinal axis of the blades and flakes, this speaks against this form of magical significance.

At the Danish site of Holmegaard V several flakes and blades within a small area could be refitted into a core of an oblong shape (Fischer 1975) (Fig. 26). On this core and on another Danish find (Vang Petersen 1993:143) engravings had been made in order to emphasize the phallic form. In addition, elongated and hatched motifs

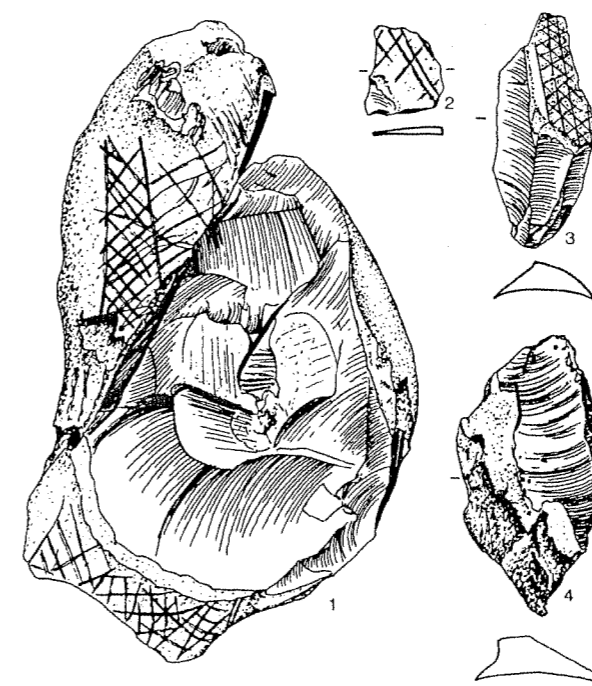


Fig. 25. 1: Refitted core with decoration from the settlement Ageröd I:HC, central Scania, dated to the final part of the Maglemose culture (from Larsson et al. 1994:30, 2-3: decoration in the cortex of flints from the settlement of Ageröd:B and Ageröd I: D, central Scania, dated to the final part of the Maglemose culture (from Larsson 1978a:Fig. 68 and Fig. 79) and 4: flint with scraping traces on the calcareous crust from the settlement of Ageröd I:B (from Larsson 1978a:Fig. 68). 3:4

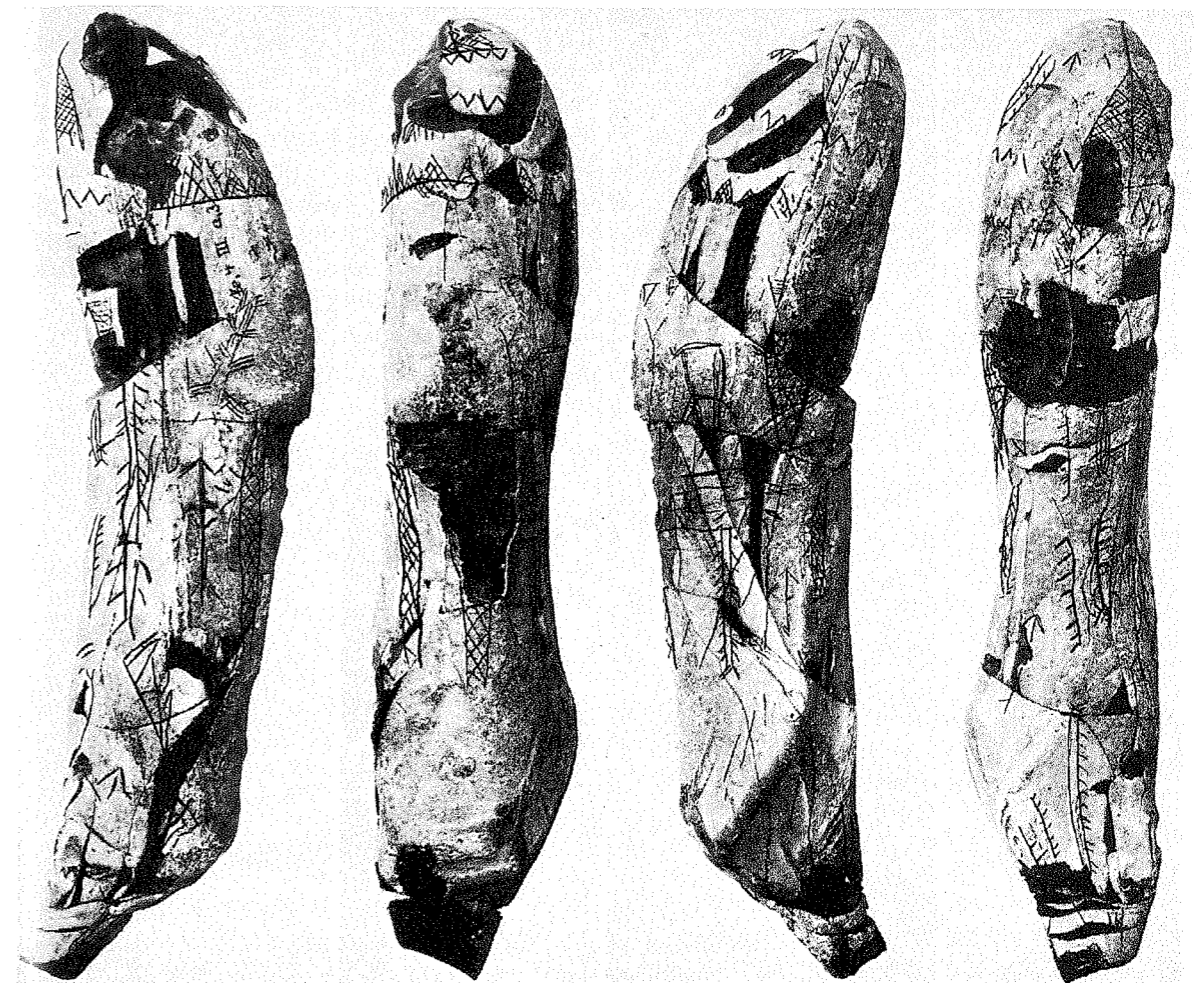


Fig. 26. Refitted flint core with decoration from the settlement of Holmegaard V, central Zealand, dated to the late Maglemose culture. From Fischer 1975:Fig. 1. 3:5

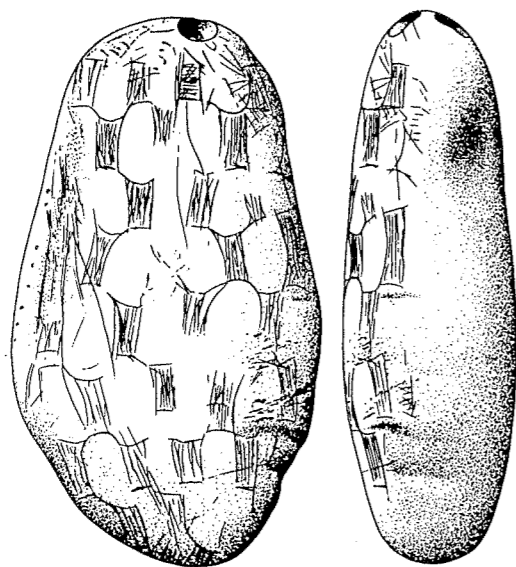


Fig. 27. Amber pendant with decoration from Holme, eastern Jutland. From Andersen 1981:Fig. 25. 3:4

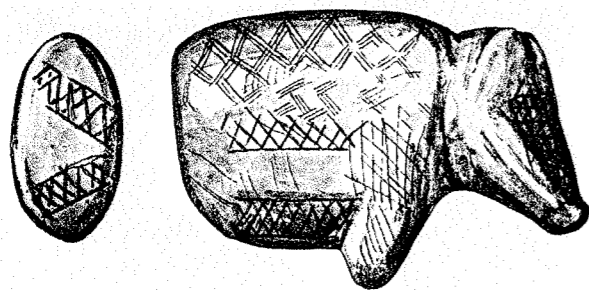


Fig. 28. A figurine of a bear carved in amber from a bog at Resen, central Jutland. From Müller 1918:Fig. 24. 3:4

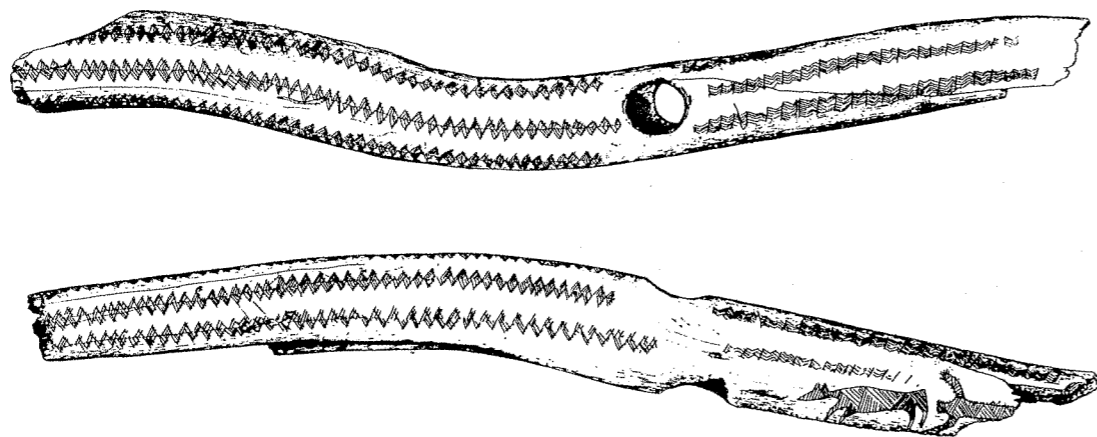


Fig. 29. Decorated antler object from Åmosen, central Zealand, with a combination of zoomorphic as well as anthropomorphic representations. From Brinch Petersen 1982:Fig. 2. 1:3

shaped like fishes or humans were engraved. Small parts of the core were missing, although the core had been knapped in a seemingly ordinary way in order to produce a number of blades. The reason might be that the engravings as well as the knapping was meant to produce a small number of blades for special purposes such as ritual butchering or circumcision.

#### Human decoration and decorated humans

In a wider perspective personal decorations should be included in the representations of art. In the graves from Skateholm some of the interred had decorations of perforated teeth mainly from red deer but also from wild boar, elk, brown bear, aurochs and deer. Large belt decorations included teeth from more than thirty deer (Larsson 1988b:133). Perforated teeth were also found decorating the dress at the wristband and the elbow as well. The only other ornament was a thin, rectangular stone plate, perforated at all four corners and used as a necklace. No engravings or painting could be documented on the surface of the plate.

In a few examples jaws from animals such as grey seal, wolf and otter have been found in graves, just like the hoof and other parts of the skeleton from animals such as roe deer and red deer. These bones were probably fastened to the dress and must have been of importance for the relation between the interred and the supernatural world (O'Shea & Zvelebil 1984).

Males had a few perforated teeth specially made of eye-teeth from wild boar at the neck or at the belt. In two graves pieces of amber were found (Larsson 1988b:126). Despite the weathering of the surface parts of the

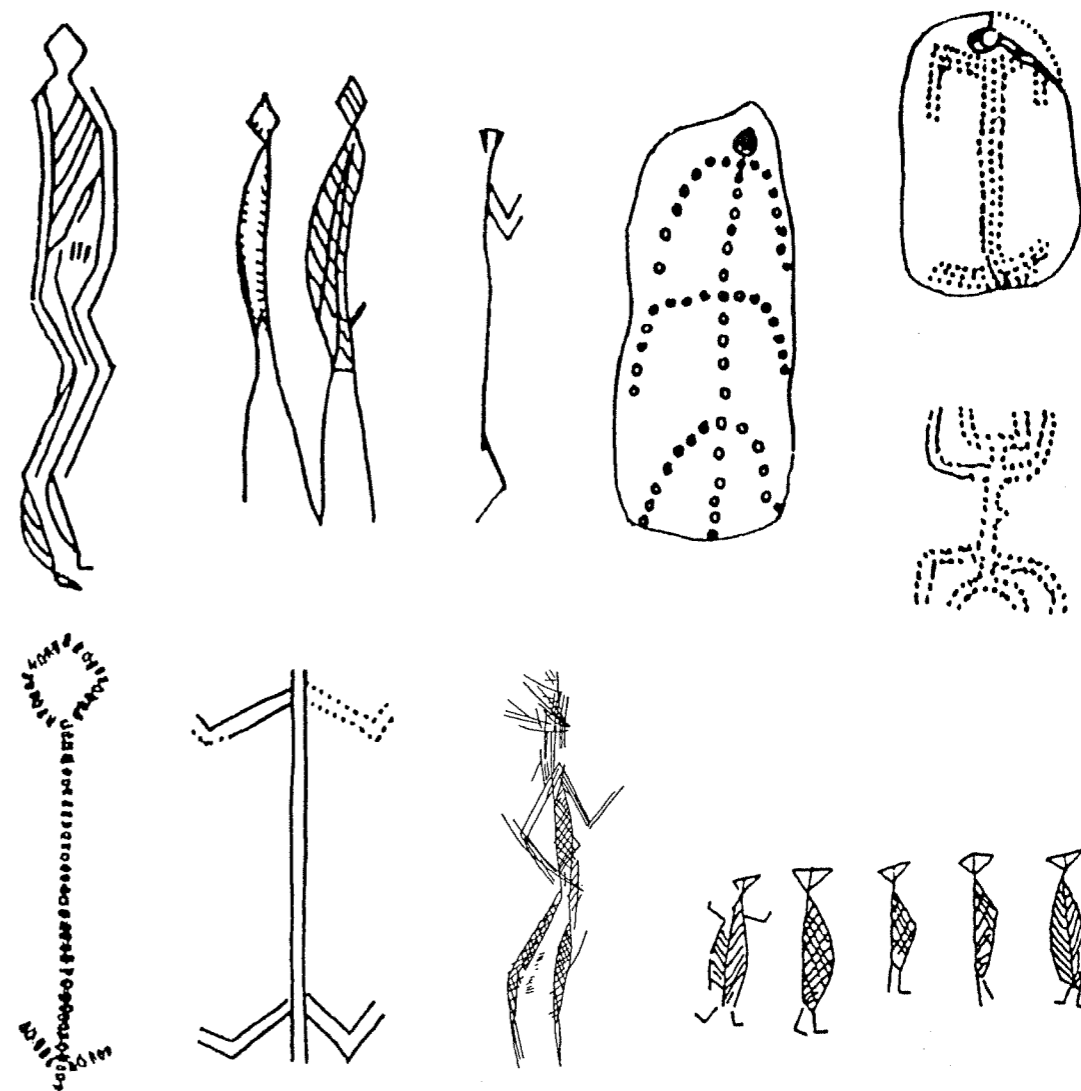


Fig. 30. Anthropomorphic representations including the "Mesolithic family" engraved on an aurochs bone from Ryemarksgård, Zealand (bottom right). From Clark 1975:Fig. 35 and Fischer 1985:Fig. 1

perforation could be documented. If they have been worked into a special shape or decorated with engraved motifs can not be established due to the bad preservation. These amber ornaments are the only ones known from Mesolithic graves of southern Scandinavia. One perforated piece of amber found in Scania with decoration in rough drilling technique has been dated to the Mesolithic (Petré 1963). Such pendants are common in the Danish Mesolithic (Mathiassen 1960; Vang Petersen 1998). Amber pendants with other kinds of decoration have been found at Danish Mesolithic sites (Andersen 1998b) (Fig. 27).

From Denmark a collection of eight animals carved in amber has been dated to the Mesolithic (Vang Petersen 1998). Four are shaped like bears, one like an elk and one

like a swimming bird, while the species of two finds cannot be recognized. They are all single finds, but the dating of the amber figures to the Mesolithic is clear from a find from a bog in Jutland (Fig. 28). A bear has been equipped with decorations based on typical Mesolithic motifs. On one of the bears clear traces show that a string has been wrapped around the neck and it might have been carried as a pendant (Vang Petersen 1998:Fig. 2). The amber figurines as well as perforated eye-teeth indicated that the bear had a special position in the world-view of Mesolithic society.

Another kind of ornament is proved by a find from the bog site Ageröd V, central Scania, dated to the earliest part of the Ertebølle culture. In the refuse of the site a

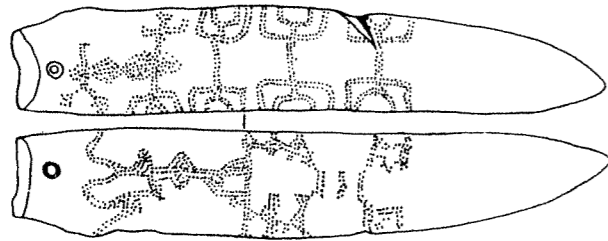


Fig. 31. Bone knife, probably from Funen, with six female figures. From Clark 1975:Fig. 18. 2:3

concentration of more than thirty perforated hazelnuts was found (Larsson 1983:Fig. 42). The nuts might have been arranged as a necklace.

Despite the large number of decorated bone and antler artefacts, there are few zoomorphic and probably theriomorphic representations. We have already seen the deer on an antler axe from southernmost Scania (Fig. 16) as well as fishes on an antler object from central Scania (Fig. 11). A small number of Danish objects may be added to this group of finds (Fig. 29).

The number of anthropomorphic presentations is small and in most cases impossible to identify by sex (Clark 1975:Fig. 35) (Fig. 30). The most well-known of these is the "Mesolithic family" – five humans engraved on an aurochs bone from Ryemarksgård on Zealand. In some cases the human figures are easy to recognize but in other examples they might be consciously integrated or incorporated in the design, thereby being transformed into theriomorphic figures.

On two bone knives from Denmark, the decoration in drill technique might show females (Degn Johansen 1999:Fig. 27) (Fig. 31). A similar bone knife decorated in drill technique probably representing females was found as a grave good in a double grave at Dragsholm in northern Zealand (Brinch Petersen 1974:Fig. 109). Several of the amber pendants are decorated in drill technique. These observations could be the basis for suggesting that the drill technique has a special gender relationship with a female association.

#### A variety of decorated objects

Decorations on animal remains do appear on other materials, for example, on the carapace of a pond tortoise. One such find originates from the upper occupation layer at Segebro, dated to the Kongemose culture (Larsson 1982). The carapace was decorated with rows of triangles (Larsson 1986; Gramsch & Larsson 2000). At a Danish site a carapace had holes at all four "corners" and was used as a bowl or perhaps as headgear (Jøger 1990:Fig.

1). The latter possibility refers to the location of pieces of a carapace close to the head in a grave from the cemetery of Zveinicki (Zagorski 1987:Fig. 26).

Another object of multiple interest is a broad dagger with small incisions forming a truncated edge (Westerby 1927:110) (Fig. 32). Most of the surface is covered by thin, crossed strokes. It was found at Bloksbjerg, a site from the Kongemose culture on the eastern shore of Zealand. The raw material was originally classified as elk antler. A thorough analysis proved that it was quite another material, namely the sword of a sword-fish and thereby a rare object in southern Scandinavia (Vang Petersen 1996). A detailed study of the surface revealed another decoration similar to a net-design. This decoration was more or less removed by scraping before the new design was added. Originally the sword, more than half a metre long, was

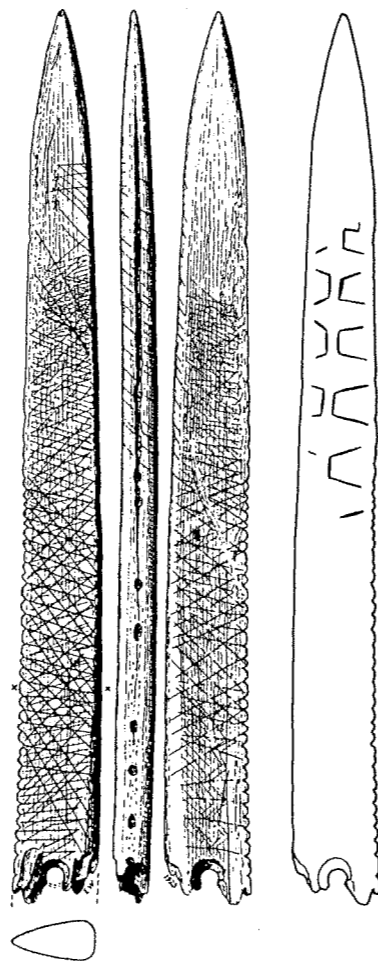


Fig. 32. Decorated dagger made of the sword of a swordfish from Bloksbjerg, eastern Zealand, dated to the early part of the late Mesolithic. A reconstruction of a former decoration is presented to the right. From Vang Petersen 1996:16

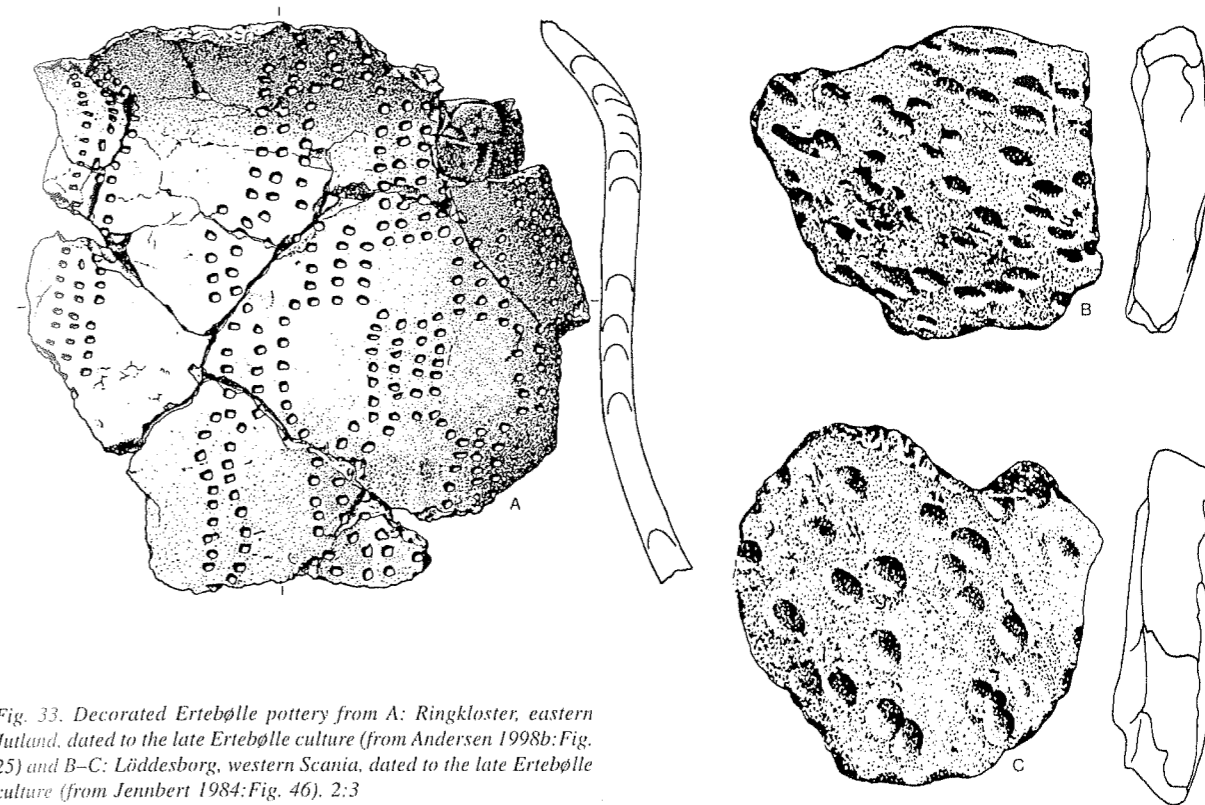


Fig. 33. Decorated Ertebølle pottery from A: Ringkloster, eastern Jutland, dated to the late Ertebølle culture (from Andersen 1998b:Fig. 25) and B-C: Löddesborg, western Scania, dated to the late Ertebølle culture (from Jennbert 1984:Fig. 46). 2:3

covered with decorations. Later on a part was cut loose, the surface was scraped in order to remove the design and a new one was added. The dagger is proof of the intentional destruction of an old design. This might have been much more common as few objects have been studied for older design. In addition, the removal might have been more successful on other objects and totally erased the design. In most cases the surface on which the design is applied was carefully ground and polished.

During the later part of the Mesolithic, pottery appears as an invention from the south. Two basic types thick-bellied, pointed-based jars and oval bowls, are identified.<sup>1</sup> However, it is only the pointed jars which show decoration. A small number of vessels are provided with deep and small imprints forming a chessboard pattern, bands and other probable more formative patterns which are not distinguishable because of the fragmentary state of the pottery (Andersen 1998b) (Fig. 33). Some motifs are similar to the decoration on pottery from the northern part of continental Europe and regarded as an example of a network distribution not only of the manufacturing technique but also of decorative elements. Other motifs show a similarity to Mesolithic art. Most of the decoration consists of shallow, oval or round imprints (Fig. 33). In

Denmark just a small number of pots are decorated but in Scania most pots have this kind of decoration covering the entire surface (Jennbert 1984).

An interesting perspective concerning the use of designs is that decorated bone and antler artefacts are almost absent during the latest part of the Ertebølle culture. It looks as the interest in decorating portable objects was transferred from bone and antler artefacts to the pottery. The similarity in the presentation between drilling technique and the imprints on pots might give a further indication that the pottery was incorporated in the female symbolic world presented earlier.

In southernmost part of Sweden a small number of wooden objects have been found. A couple of bows found at bog sites in central Sweden have been furnished with transverse strokes close to one end (Larsson & Bartholin 1978). But it is hard to tell whether this should be classified as a simple decoration or had a functional implication.

The most interesting finds have been made at the submerged site of Tybrind Vig on Funen, Denmark (Andersen 1985, 1988). On a small number of paddles areas has been sunken and filled with resin in order to provide a contrast between the dark resin and the light wood. The relation between these light and dark parts of

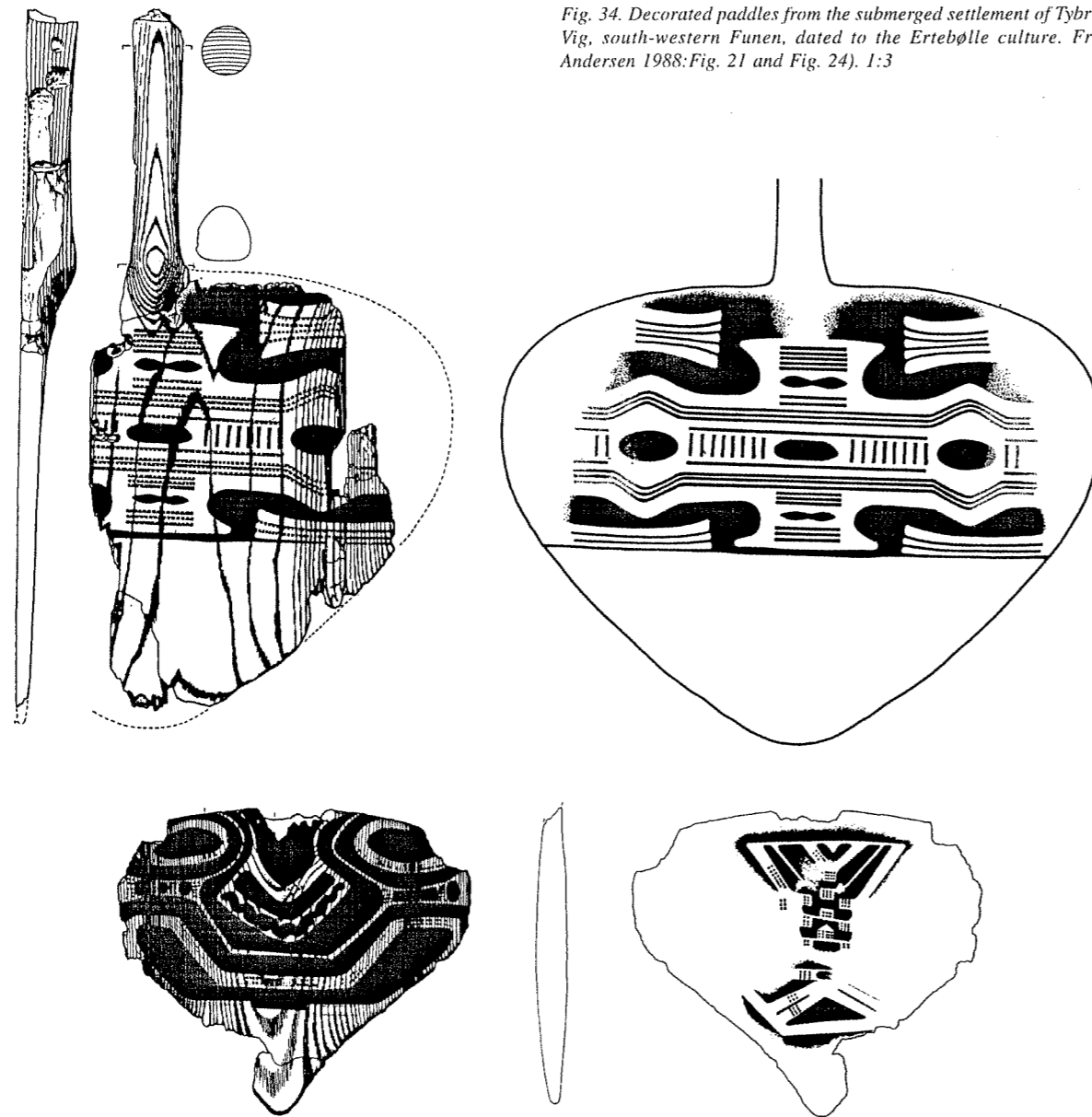


Fig. 34. Decorated paddles from the submerged settlement of Tybrind Vig, south-western Funen, dated to the Ertebølle culture. From Andersen 1988:Fig. 21 and Fig. 24). 1:3

the surface was visible even from a distance (Fig. 34). The paddle might have been used as a sign from the sea in order to confirm the origin of the vessel – friend or foe.

Of the expression of art and symbols there are accidental finds which might survive in extreme preservation conditions, as with the decorated paddles. Judging by the animals represented by bones in occupation layers and ethnographical parallels, the dress might have been fashioned from several different furs and skins which included a wide colour spectrum. Pups of grey seal might have been hunted because of the white colour (Jonsson 1988:64). Bones from marten, beaver, otter, wolf, bear

and weasel demonstrate the importance of furs. Among hunter-gatherers the costumes include decorative elements of important symbolic meaning. Several of the birds represented in the settlements have feathers which might be used as decoration. A hint of its symbolic use is provided by the find combination in a grave from Bøgebakken on Zealand where a child had been placed on the wing of a swan (Albrethsen & Brinch Petersen 1977).

Some finds such as those with a fill of dark resin mark that opalescence was a part of south Scandinavian Mesolithic art. There might have been many other colours which could have been extracted directly or indirectly from

minerals, soil or plants. However, only ochre is proved to have been used. According to the analysis of the sediments in the wells close to the cemeteries of Skateholm, red ochre was manufactured locally. The intense red colour ochre appear as powder, rarely as small lumps. Just a few graves are entirely covered with red ochre. In most graves parts of the body were covered or more likely parts of the body or the dress were rubbed with ochre. The red ochre is most common on the head and the hip. Some of the grave goods have been rubbed with red ochre. Red ochre was found in large quantities in connection with a construction within the cemetery of Skateholm II, southernmost Sweden, interpreted as a structure for ceremonial activities (Larsson 1988a).

Red ochre is common in the Mesolithic graves of Scandinavia (Hougaard Rasmussen 1990; Kannegård Nielsen & Brinch Petersen 1993). At the cemetery of Skateholm I, 65% contained ochre. A small number of Mesolithic graves have been found in northern Sweden (Halén 1994). In a grave from Manjärvi in north-east Norrland two burials in the same pit were strewn with rich quantities of red ochre (Liedgren 1993). The grave is dated to about 4000 BC. This grave with intense red ochre is linked to similar phenomena dated to the early Combed Ware culture at several locations in Finland (Edgren 1993).

Other minerals such as chalk could have been used. From settlement sites flints show traces of scraping, as thick parts of the cortex have been removed (Fig. 25:4). Despite several tests of grave documentation, among

others with different types of film, at Skateholm no other colouring has been observed.

Charcoal was used, for example, to make resin darker. The filling of some graves at Skateholm shows clear divisions where light, sandy soil and earth richly mixed with charcoal have been used to create differences in the filling, clearly visible when the grave pit was filled in.

#### Rock art

Because of its oblong shape, Sweden includes several different topographic as well as geological and climatic zones, and hence has obvious ecological differences. Contacts with surrounding areas were of importance for the formation of the society, with cultural influences from continental Europe in the south, the links with the Baltic region by the archipelago in central Sweden and the circumpolar network in northern Sweden. As a result, the Swedish territory includes several partly different prehistories. This is of special importance if we look at rock art.

In most cases rock art is difficult to date. Sea-level studies have facilitated the dating of rock art in the North Atlantic region of Norway. The earliest rock art figures executed by grinding could date to the early Mesolithic (Hesjedal 1992).

At Alta in northern Norway four different phases have been discerned, dating from the late Mesolithic until the Bronze Age (Helskog 1988:33). The earliest phase is

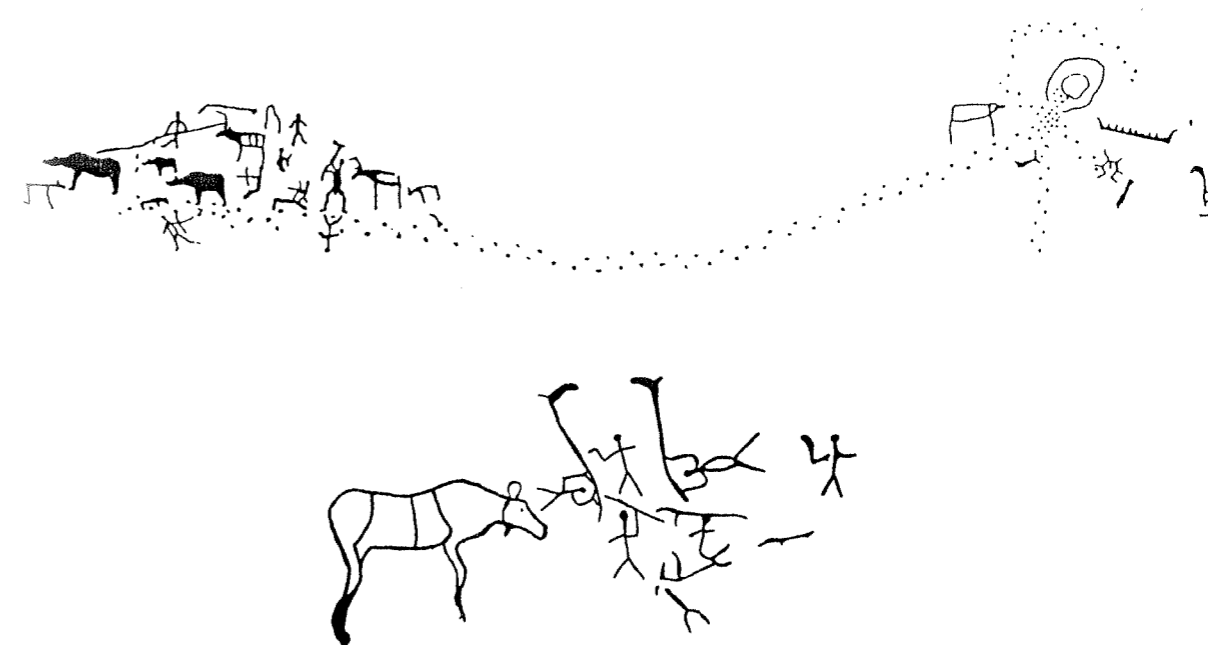


Fig. 35. Rock carvings from Alta, northern Norway, dated to the late Mesolithic or early Neolithic. From Helskog 1988:80

characterized by humans in action, such as taking part in a bear hunt on snow. The footprints are visible and they originate from a circular figure, probably marking the den (Fig. 35). A dancing shaman (?) and humans, men as well as women, holding poles ending in heads of elks are represented (Helskog 1988) (Fig. 35). People take part in processions or dances, most likely activities of ritual importance just like the hunting scenes. In contrast to the succeeding phase, most scenes are connected with terrestrial activities. There are few boats. Fish occur, but elk, reindeer and bear are numerous. The importance of bears in art could be linked to the bear as the most common animal reproduced in the Danish amber figurines. But the elk is the most frequent animal. Elk heads are frequent on poles or on the top of the stem of the boat on the largest Swedish rock carving on the rocks at the rapids of Nämforsen in the southern part of northern Sweden (Hallström 1960) (Fig. 36). These carvings have been frequently studied, and from their position above sea level the eldest might be dated to the early Neolithic, the youngest one to the late Neolithic (Forsberg 1993). The earliest carvings includes elks with the entire body marked by carvings, line drawings of human figures and canoes. The presumably oldest carvings of humans show a much larger variety in the depiction – standing, walking or running with raised arms. The humans on younger rock carvings on islands at lower altitudes have a much more stereotyped appearance.

At Nämforsen most of the carvings were made on small rocky islands in a rapid at the outlet of a river. The carvings were hardly visible from the banks of the river and the islands were very difficult to approach. Nämforsen is interpreted as an important meeting place for several



Fig. 36. Rock carvings from Nämforsen, the southern part of northern Sweden, probably dating to the early Neolithic. From Hallström 1960:pl. XIII. 1:33

settlements along the coast. A large site, settled for a long period, was situated in the neighbourhood of the rock carvings (Forsberg 1993:Fig. 22). Rock carvings of later use but combined with a hunting-gathering economy have been recently identified close to other river outlets along the north Swedish coastline (Ramqvist *et al.* 1985). As at Alta, the motifs were mainly chosen from the inland. The boats and a few fishes give a hint of the important marine fishing and sealing. The different motifs – elks, fishes and birds – might be linked to different clans in the area close to Nämforsen based on a totemistically structured worldview (Tilley 1991).

The carving at Nämforsen is not only restricted to the solid rock. Recently a stone weighing about ten kilos was found covered with carvings of humans (Forsberg 1993:Fig. 12). It must have been realized that similar examples of portable or semi-portable objects with designs were more common than the small number known today.

The carvings differ considerably from the south Scandinavian Mesolithic art as regards motifs. The large number of humans and animals is without parallel.

Nämforsen and other sites with rock art are part of a huge region with a common cosmology which has counterparts in northern Scandinavia and areas further to the east (Lindqvist 1994). Like Nämforsen and Alta, several sites with a concentration of rock art are situated at locations which might have been important meeting places for a long period. Settlements from most of the Stone Age are linked to these locations.

In the inland of Norrland rock paintings have been found at about ten locations (Baudou 1991:81). The paintings do not differ strikingly as to motifs from carvings. Most of them are of Neolithic dating but some

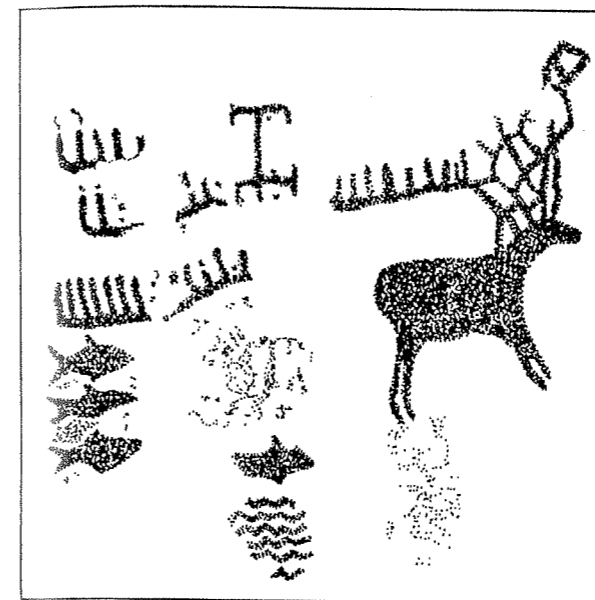


Fig. 37. Rock painting from Tumlhed, western Sweden, probably dated to the late Mesolithic. From Nordbladh 1987:Fig. 2. 1:13

might be of Mesolithic age. The small number of locations gives just a hint of their previous occurrence, since specific environmental factors such as the topography and the structure of the rock are of importance for the preservation or in most cases destruction of paintings.

That rock paintings are not a north Scandinavian phenomenon is evident from finds in western Sweden. The first one was identified in 1974 at Tumlhed (Cullberg *et al.* 1975) (Fig. 1). The problems of dating rock art are obvious, but at least some paintings may belong to the Mesolithic. At Tumlhed (Fig. 37) and at later finds such as Medbo, humans, deer and net-figures are depicted (Nordbladh 1987). They are very similar to paintings and carvings from northern Scandinavia. The question is whether western Sweden is the southernmost area for rock carvings of north Scandinavian design. Bare rock appears much further to the south, and there are numerous examples of rock carvings from the Bronze Age (Glob 1969; Burenhult 1973). So far no carvings with the same combination of motifs as in northern Sweden have been found. Western Sweden including southernmost Norway is the northernmost area where the south Scandinavian cultural complexes seem to have an important influence on the material culture.

Portable objects with decoration are rare in northern Sweden (Baudou 1992:Fig. 69). That elk heads were used as decoration on poles or on the stems of boats during the Mesolithic is proved by a bog find from Havikko in

northern Finland. The wooden head, measuring about forty centimetres, has been dated to about 6500 BC (Edgren 1992:34). Traces of red paint were also found on the head.

This type of portable objects with elk heads can be linked to the objects in Finland (Edgren 1992:81 f.), west Russia and the Baltic region, such as grave goods from the cemetery of Olenij Ostrov (Gurina 1956) and the settlement at Sventoji (Rimantiene 1979:107 f.).

#### Rock art in the north versus portable art in the south

Rock art is well represented in northern Scandinavia, while in southern Scandinavia art is found on objects, many from settlement sites. That engravings might be much more common close to or even within settlement sites in northern Scandinavia is exemplified by the excavation finds from the late Mesolithic settlement at Slettnes (Hesjedal *et al.* 1996). By excavating areas in between sunken houses, large stones with extensive carvings were found (Fig. 38). These stones were later

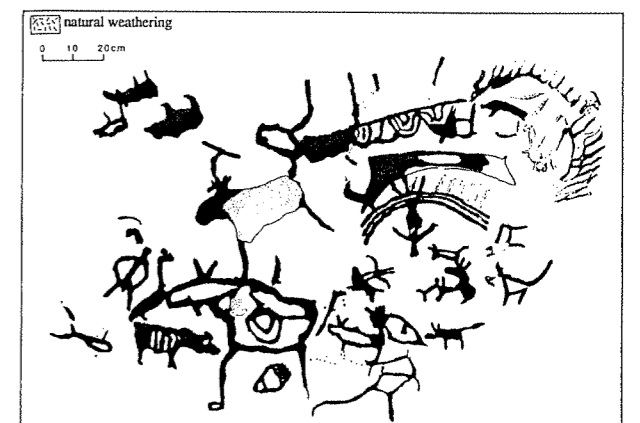


Fig. 38. Stone with carvings, found at the late Mesolithic site Slettnes, northern Norway. From Hesjedal *et al.* 1996:Fig. 73 and Fig. 75



covered with sand because of a transgression. It is most probable that similar examples of art "just outside the doorstep" might be found at other sites if areas within or beside settlements were excavated.

The north Scandinavian rock art might be found further to the south; the sites in western Sweden are proof of a much more southerly distribution than earlier accepted. However, rocks suitable for engraving or painting do not occur in connection with most Mesolithic settlements in southern Scandinavia. This may be the reason why the number of decorated portable objects was much higher in the south than in the north. The magic of art was the same but expressed in different ways. In the north people had to gather at a certain location in order to be affected by the magic of art, while the objects in the south were handed between people and places.

In the discussion as to why the largest concentration of north Scandinavian carvings is located close to the coast, the combination of land, water and the sky seems to play an important role (Helskog 1999). In the circum-polar area these three elements are crucial in the cosmology – the existing world in the middle with the spiritual under-world, the water, as well as the upper-world, the sky. The most obvious part of the landscape where these worlds meet is at the coast, by a large lake or on a large river. Here sacred sites for ritual communications could be easily accepted. Settlements, in some cases of a considerable size, have been found close to the carvings.

The division of the actual as well as the supernatural world into land, water and sky is a phenomenon which can be found in geographically and chronologically different societies. These three cosmic spheres are of importance in a world-view where shamans act as a transmitter between worlds. Similar tripartite divisions have been explored in studies of, for example, the iconography of the Bronze Age – in carved motifs on the slabs of a cist (Randsborg 1993) and the motifs on bronze razors (Kaul 1998) from southern Scandinavia,

While rock carvings and paintings have been regarded as constituting an important part of the mental world of the hunter-gathering people of northern Scandinavia, the expression of art in southern Scandinavia has rarely been attributed the same importance.

An interesting aspect is the role of the decoration for the reaction of the society to external ideas. In areas with rock carvings dating to the Mesolithic, additional carvings were often made during most of the Neolithic. The importance of the sacred location is marked with additional activities for centuries, in some cases for millennia. The obvious designs in rock make it easy to perform traditional ritual behaviour but could be an important mental as well

as physical obstacle for changes, especially if they had a major influence on social interaction including the sacred sites with carvings – resistible mentally as well as physically.

In southern Scandinavia there are no obvious centres such as in northern Sweden. When dealing with decoration on organic material, the representativeness is of major importance and complicates the analysis. Most decorated artefacts have been found either in the refuse layer of large settlement sites or as single finds in wetlands. In the distribution of decorated objects there is a direct relationship to areas with a concentration of settlements and most probably a dense population (Andersson 1998a:Fig. 7; Nash 1998:Fig. 3.1).

The expression of art was different in southern and northern Scandinavia, with geometric designs of major importance in the south while anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figures predominate in the north. As a matter of fact, the two different ways of constituting the designs continue into the Neolithic. The rock carvings in the north continue to be made at the same locality, even if some changes as to the composition and design of the motifs can be detected. Geometric design and the zonal composition of repeated motifs are easily recognized in the decoration of the Neolithic pottery in the south.

The question is whether sacred sites such as the concentration of rock carvings in northern Scandinavia existed in the south. Most of the decoration was done on perishable material in southern Scandinavia. The decorated paddles from the Danish Ertebølle culture hint at a habit of decorating large wooden objects. Decorated panels and poles might have been erected in special places. It might seem like a strained idea, but large poles of a size and at locations similar to the Early Neolithic decorated menhirs of continental Europe do appear in the Mesolithic (Larsson 1992). A large post-hole was documented in connection with a cremation grave at Skateholm I, southernmost Sweden, and large post-holes excavated close to Stonehenge have been dated to the Mesolithic (Larsson 2000). In both cases the poles were erected on sacred sites. Sacred sites could also be marked in many different ways. The deposition of humans in graves, common in the large sites of southern Scandinavia, is one way to assemble decorated objects, linked to spirits, to a selected areas such as the "refuse" of settlements or wetland deposits might be another.

In a society with sacred places kept active, as in northern Scandinavia, the introduction of new ideas, just like new technology, which might have implication to the society must have been much more difficult than in areas where the marking of sacred places was not as resistible

as rock carvings. In southern Scandinavia the sacred site, if they were ever marked by design, were much more difficult to maintain, which made it easier successively to confront the traditions with new ideas, with major consequences for the world-view of the people.

#### Note

1 In southern Scandinavia the introduction of pottery at about 4700 BC is not equivalent to the introduction of the Neolithic. The transition is set to the introduction of material culture characteristic of the Funnel Beaker culture in combination with agriculture and pastoralism at about 4000 BC.

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## LATE NEOLITHIC AMBER FROM THE LUBĀNA WETLANDS

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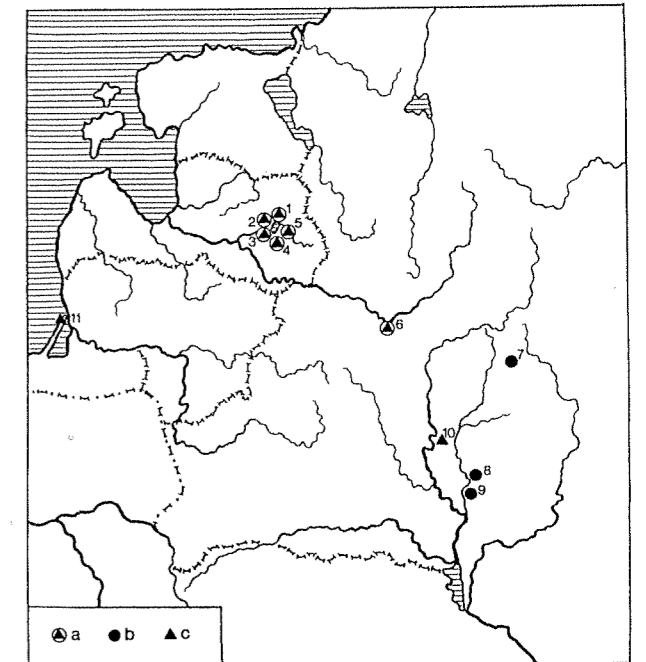
### Introduction

Amber-working in the Neolithic of the eastern Baltic is being studied on the basis of material recovered by archaeologists from settlement sites on the shore of the Litorina Sea as well as inland at sites in river and lake basins (Fig. 1).

Research on Neolithic amber has a history of over 100 years, beginning with the sensational finds from the port of Juodkrante on the Kuršių Spit in the second half of the last century<sup>1</sup>, the excavations of wetland sites at Sārņate in the Latvian littoral<sup>2</sup> and the 40 sites at Šventoji lagoon in Lithuania<sup>3</sup>.

The people inhabiting these sites collected amber on the shore of the Litorina Sea and had no problem of obtaining raw material. There was no need to amass large stocks of the material, since the sea was nearby and generously provided small pieces and even chunks of amber, which could of course not only be exchanged, but could also further the development of contacts and understanding between tribes, and perhaps even a wide-reaching communications system.

The northern part of the Kuršių Spit around the site of the port of Juodkrante is usually regarded as one of the most prominent locations for amber-working in Neolithic Europe. The finds at Juodkrante were recovered from the waters in the course of harbour deepening, and they represent a very high level of amber-working culture.



*Fig. 1. The map of distribution tooth- and key- head shaped amber pendants:  
a- both ornaments, b- tooth- shaped, c- key- head shaped pendants:  
1.- Abora I, 2.- Asne I, 3.- Eiņi, 4.- Iča, 5.- Lagaža in Lake Lubana wetland, 6.-Asavec II in Krivina wetland (Beloyrussia), 7.- Pečkuri, 8.- Proletariat village, 9.- Strelitsa site, 10.- Chodosovitschi barrows in Middle Dnieper region, 11.- Juodkrante in Kuršių spit*

Archaeological research in inland areas of the eastern Baltic, specifically in the Lake Lubāna basin, in the 1960s – 80s, revealed another no less important region for Neolithic amber-working in Europe. Unlike the sites near the coast, this had developed spontaneously as an intermediary for amber exchange.

The Neolithic inhabitants of this regions, who obtained unworked amber through exchange with the people living on the shore of the Litorina Sea, themselves organised the processing of amber, intercepting this exchange process and allowing only a flow of finished products to the east, north-east and south-east, thus withdrawing unworked amber from circulation as an item of exchange between tribes.

This need was dictated to the inhabitants of the Lubāna wetlands by purely economic considerations, the need to ensure a supply of another raw material needed for the subsistence strategy. In this particular case amber was exchanged for flint concretions from the flint-bearing layers in exposures on the banks of the River Volga. Their quality, unlike that of erratic flint pebbles, made possible the manufacture of hunting and also agricultural implements in sufficient number.

The development of this particular model of exchange was facilitated by the advantageous geographical location of the Lake Lubāna depression together with the whole of its basin: the 9 rivers that flow into it, providing suitable settlement locations, and one major river that collects the waters of the lake and the inflowing rivers, the Aiviekste, a tributary on the right bank of the River Daugava, which played an important role in the development of inter-tribal contacts.

The inhabitants of the Litorina Sea coast, who established their settlements on a seasonal basis, of course watched for the amber to be washed up by the sea, collecting it in due time and using it according to their needs, as did the people of the banks of the Volga, who maintained a hold over flint sources.

The development of skill in manufacturing amber ornaments at the settlements of the Lake Lubāna basin ensured a supply of flint concretions for the inhabitants, evidently not only for their own needs, but also permitting the extension of this exchange process to the amber-collectors of the Litorina Sea shore, whose skill at amber-working served as an example to the makers of amber ornaments on the shore of Lake Lubāna.

This serves to underline not only the introduction of the working of amber obtained at the sea shore into

the Lubāna lowlands, where there are no natural occurrences of amber, but also indicates the great mobility of the Neolithic inhabitants of this lowland area in intercepting unworked amber, regulating the fulfilment of their economic needs and preventing an undesirable, premature flow of amber.

That this was in fact the case is shown by the fact that unworked pieces of amber have not been found at the Neolithic sites of the east European forest zone, amber being present here only in the form of ornaments, mainly as grave-goods.

Questions relating to research on the amber exchange and production centre in the Lake Lubāna basin have previously been treated in short articles, acquainting the reader with particular aspects of study<sup>4</sup>.

Here the products of the Late Neolithic amber-working centres in the Lake Lubāna basin are considered with regard to the choice of forms of amber ornaments, their classification, typology, function, distribution and the role of finished products in the development of an exchange system.

In this paper attention is given to the amber artefacts obtained in excavations at 5 Late Neolithic settlement sites in the Lake Lubāna basin (Abora, Asne, Eiņi, Iča and Lagaža), which form one picture, emphasising local features of manufacture, and point to common features in the context of other amber-working centres in Europe.

The choice of forms of amber ornaments in the eastern Baltic, including the settlements of the Lake Lubāna basin, was determined by the aesthetic tastes of the people of this time together with their ideological concepts, which are reflected in particular anthropomorphic or zoomorphic pendants or as heavenly bodies (the sun – a disc; the moon – a lunula etc.). The production of series of ornaments in the Lake Lubāna depression, which was also stimulated by purely economic considerations, was connected with the choice of different forms of pendants and beads, the first being dominant among the finds obtained and documented in excavations.

In this case attention is given to two main forms of amber pendants from the Late Neolithic settlement sites of the Lake Lubāna basin: tooth-shaped and key-head shaped pendants, as well as various figurine pendants and series of amber beads, emphasising in particular the button-shaped beads, the working of which, like that of the pendants, culminated in the Late Neolithic, when radical innovations were introduced to improve amber-working techniques.

### Tooth-shaped amber pendants

Tooth-shaped pendants are characteristic examples of the ornaments produced in the amber workshops of the Lake Lubāna depression. Pendants of this form were first found in archaeological excavations at the Abora settlement site, in the years 1964-65 and 1970-71<sup>5</sup>. The unusual form bore some resemblance to an animal tooth, and so this term began to be used to describe them.

The pendants are made in the round from transparent, smoky or even bone-white amber, which gives them a particularly splendid appearance. The particular features of their manufacture and the quality of the finish places them among the most unusual of the early amber ornaments of the eastern Baltic (Fig. 2).

### Classification and typology of pendants

The classification of these pendants is based firstly on the form of the perforation. These technical innovations, which were not known to Middle Neolithic amber-workers, held many advantages for the production of Late Neolithic amber ornaments, which in this case made possible many different variations in the attachment of tooth-shaped pendants, which could be fixed to dress, strung into ordinary necklaces or combined as part of much more complicated ornaments.

The forms of perforations, on the basis of the tooth-shaped pendants from Abora and other Late Neolithic settlement sites, including Asne, Eiņi, Iča and Lagaža, were as follows (Fig. 3):

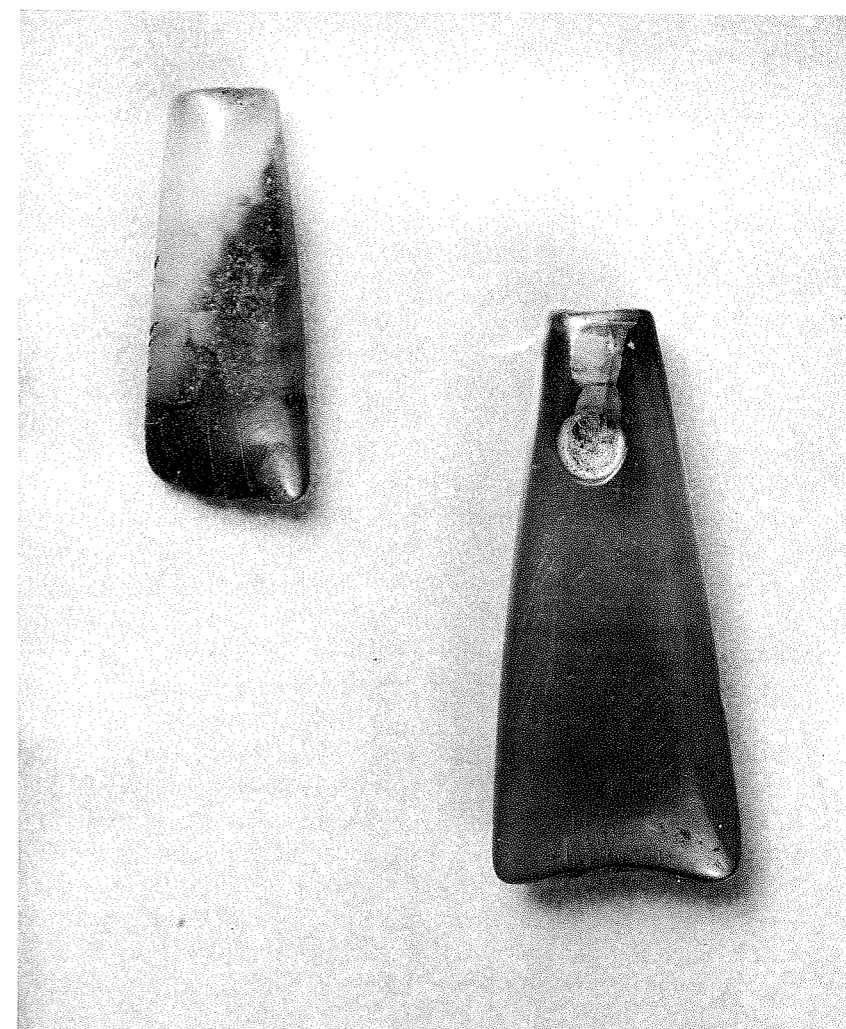


Fig. 2. The tooth-shaped amber pendants. Abora I site

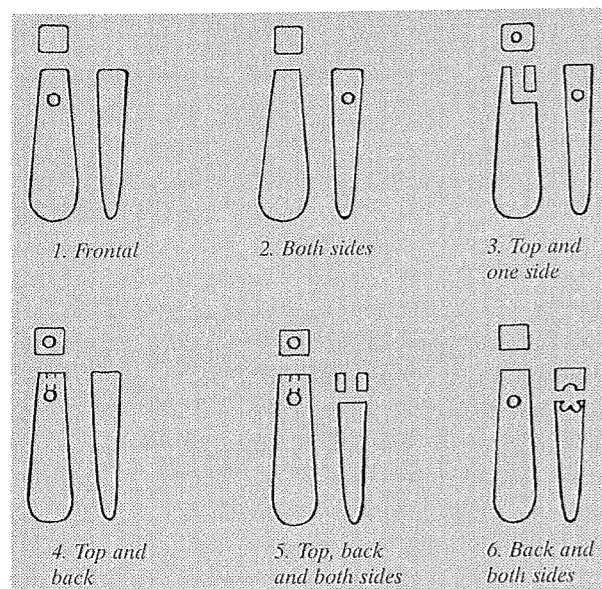


Fig. 3. Ways of perforation amber tooth-shaped pendants

- 1) frontal perforation;
- 2) lateral perforation;
- 3) perforation from one side and top;
- 4) perforation from back and top;
- 5) lateral perforation, supplemented by perforation from back and top;
- 6) lateral perforation, supplemented by perforations from back.

The most widespread form of perforation of tooth-shaped pendants, which was used for the most part, was from the flat upper surface of the top of the pendant and the back (Fig. 3: 4).

The typology of tooth-shaped pendants, including sub-types and variants, takes into account the form of the upper surface of the top of the pendant and the cross-section of the pendant. These pendants display a wide variety of forms, because the amber-workers had not introduced any particular strictly-defined form. The upper surface of the pendant was rectangular or round, but not so much attention was paid to making pendants with a definite form of cross-section, in other words the creation of lateral facets was not obligatory. This can evidently be explained in terms of the form of the piece of amber, which not always corresponded to the ideal form for this class of pendant.

Sub-types of pendants are distinguished in the first place on the basis of their morphology, where narrow and broad examples can be distinguished, including symmetrical and asymmetrical pendants. The final consideration relates to the character of the lower edge, which can be straight or sloping.

Secondly, they can be divided on the basis of the quality of the work, one group including examples with lateral edges or facets, and the other including pieces without these edges, the technological features of the perforation being, however, the main criterion.

#### Pendants with frontal and lateral perforations

Pendants with frontal perforations were not widespread (Fig. 3: 1). They include both narrow, asymmetrical and broad symmetrical examples, pendants with and without lateral edges. Dominant among laterally perforated pendants (Fig. 3: 2) are narrow, symmetrical and asymmetrical pieces without lateral edges, although there are certain examples in the collection from Abora that have carefully worked lateral edges, and with the upper surface of the pendant in the form of a rectangle. The former are generally sub-round or rounded quadrangular in cross-section.

#### Pendants perforated from one side and from the top

The pendants of this sub-type correspond to the forms of the previous sub-type, and in addition one cylindrical pendant with this sort of perforation should be mentioned. (Fig. 3: 3). Among these pendants dominant are narrow symmetrical examples, with few broad, asymmetrical pieces. These include both pieces where much attention has been given to working the facets, giving the pendant, including the top surface, a regular form, as well as pendants oval and segmental in cross-section, with sub-rounded and sub-oval contours of the upper surface respectively.

#### Pendants perforated from the back and the top

This is the most widespread pendant sub-type, series of which were made in the dwellings at Abora, with the greatest number of different sub-types (Fig. 3: 4). These are also found in all of the other Late Neolithic settlement sites of the Lake Lubāna depression. This serves to underline the particular suitability of this form for constructing complicated ornaments. 7 main variants can be distinguished, including examples with strictly regular cross-section and shape of the upper surface, and pieces exhibiting a great variety of forms. The latter, like the former, include both symmetrical and asymmetrical pieces, mainly narrow pendants. Mention should be made of the form of the lower edge, which is straight or sloping.

and in certain cases with notching or fine incised decoration. These include examples without clearly marked lateral edges and pieces with these edges marked only along the lower or the upper part of the pendant. There is a lack of correspondence between the cross-section and the upper surface of the pendants. Pendants with narrow lateral facets may have a round upper surface.

These are the most expressively made tooth-shaped pendants, often made of perfectly transparent amber, where the best evidence of technical innovation, the particular form of perforation, can be clearly seen. The pendants are also arranged in series according to size and width, which, when viewed together and with the use of other features such as a cloven lower part, varying thickness of the lateral facets and varying shapes of the upper surface, could produce a very effective set of jewellery. They vary in length from 2 to 4.5 cm, with a maximum thickness of 1.1 cm and with slightly thinner examples dominant.

Alongside the slender examples, more robust pieces also appeared, with the lower edge directed outwards. Special mention should be made of one larger pendant (4.7 cm in length and 2.25 cm in width, with a thickness of 0.98 cm) having a markedly broadened, sloping lower edge, segmental in thickness and with the upper surface sub-oval in shape. The find circumstances of this pendant, underneath a large pendant with three V-shaped perforations in the lower edge, clearly indicates its use for attachment to the larger pendant, forming the components of the first complex amber ornaments.

Even pendants produced by one amber-worker have been found, for example at Abora, where they have been made in like manner, with the side facets rounded, but with the upper surface rectangular.

The collection of pendants of this sub-type from Abora includes the greatest number between this type of pendants, with a wide variety of nuances in the form of the body, representing all 7 forms of cross-section (rectangular, circular, lens-shaped, oval, segmental, flattened oval and irregular).

#### Pendants with a complex perforation

Pendants with a complex perforation have a particular system of perforations, mentioned above in the description of technical innovations in amber-working in the Late Neolithic settlement sites of the Lake Lubāna depression. That such pendants were made in very small numbers is shown by the small

number of examples (two found at Abora and another two at Iča). This shows that not all amber-workers were capable of dealing this complicated and technically difficult process, in view of the quality of the primitive flint tools. Some of these had in addition to the lateral perforation another perforation from the back of the pendant, while others had a particularly complicated perforation, namely a lateral perforation and another two perforations from the upper surface, which pass through the large perforation at the back. The maker of the latter form of perforation was an inhabitant of Iča settlement, whose amber-working skills differed somewhat from the amber-workers at Abora, although the latter had much finer tastes in ornament making than the former. It was evidently the amber-workers at Abora in particular who dictated the choice of manufacturing standards and the form of the ornaments (Fig. 3: 6).

#### The production of pendants

The manufacturing process of tooth-shaped pendants can be reconstructed on the basis of semi-manufactured pieces recovered from sites in the Lake Lubāna depression. These comprise no more than 5.5 % of the total number of pendants.

Suitable material for making pendants was selected by experts who were very familiar with the techniques of amber-working, particularly in view of the fact that the number of suitable pieces of amber for the manufacture of particular ornaments was to a certain extent limited. If necessary, a piece could also be split, but the natural form of pieces of amber was also used by flaking off the excess. This was followed by removal of the natural surface of the amber in places where it had not been split. This was done by re-touch, with the use of a special flint re-toucher. The maker attempted to produce the required form of pendant at outset, taking into account the proportions of the piece or flake of amber. Thus, the form of the upper surface of the pendant was determined by the form of the original piece of amber. Lateral facets were formed, depending on the thickness and size of the material, trying to use rationally the available choice of pendant form. The flaking technique was supplemented by re-touch, smoothing out the irregularities. This was followed by grinding and polishing, the former process being done with a sandstone whetstone, the latter employing a piece of hide. The perforation could be bored either before or after the re-touch, or after grinding. There are also examples where the perfo-

ration was made from the back when the other side was still only re-touched.

The grinding technique is easy to trace with the help of semi-manufactured pieces and whole examples. The surface of the pendants was ground in a horizontal, diagonal or vertical direction. The lateral facets were ground in a vertical direction, and sometimes from opposite directions.

#### The distribution of tooth-shaped pendants

Pendants belonging to this type are not distributed universally (Fig. 1). The distribution pattern is limited to a definite cultural area. The closest find of this pendant type to the Lake Lubāna depression is from north-western Belarus, at Asavets II habitation site (on the bank of the Krivina, a left tributary of the Daugava)<sup>6</sup>.

At the Asavets site no unworked pieces of amber or amber chips were found (personal comment kindly received from Mikhail Chernavsky). Thus they have been exchanged from the sites of the Lake Lubāna depression. The tooth-shaped pendants represented at Asavets have a lateral perforation, as well as one example perforated from the top and back of the pendant.

Amber tooth-shaped pendants with lateral perforations are also known from the area of the Corded Ware culture of the Middle Dnieper: in the very rich grave inventory of burial 43 of the Strelitsa cemetery belonging to this culture located on the left bank of the Sozh a left tributary of the Dnieper, and among the grave goods with burial 1 from the settlement site near Proletariat village, also on the bank of the Sozh not far from the cemetery<sup>7</sup>.

The 21 amber pendants from cremation grave 43 at Strelitsa cemetery, found in situ together with a copper diadem (?) included 9 pendants with a slightly rounded lower margin, 7 with a straight margin and 5 with an somewhat oblique margin (Fig. 4). The prominent Belarussian archaeologist A. Laudansky notes that 20 amber pendants and 5 wedge-shaped flint axes were found a depth of 1 m with one of the burials of Pechkury cemetery, located on the right bank of the left tributary of the Sozh, the Oster<sup>8</sup>. In view of the fact that a wedge-shaped flint axe was also found among the grave goods of the aforementioned burial at Strelitsa cemetery, it may be thought that this same type of pendant may have been found at Pechkury cemetery.

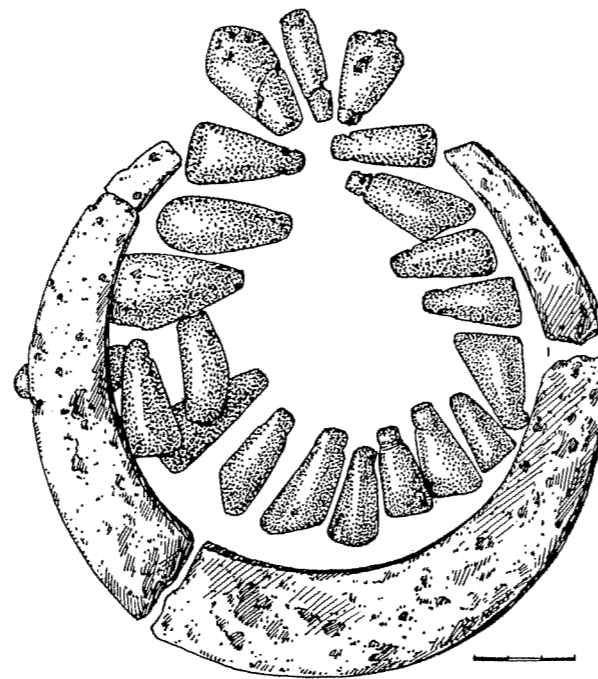


Fig. 4. The necklace of tooth-shaped amber pendants. Strelitsa, Middle Dnieper Corded Ware culture (after I. Artemenko, 1967)

#### The modes of wearing tooth-shaped pendants

The tooth-shaped amber pendants with a lateral perforation from burial 43 at Strelitsa cemetery on the Middle Dnieper comprised a whole string, arranged in a circle inside a copper diadem (?) (Fig. 4).

The mode of wearing tooth-shaped pendants at Abora and other habitation sites of the Lake Lubāna depression is shown by the large, rounded triangular pendant from Abora I with a lateral perforation and three pairs of symmetrical V-shaped perforations in the lower face (Fig. 5). The position of this find in the occupation layer, with a large tooth-shaped pendant underneath it perforated from the top and the back, indicates the creation of complex ornaments in the Late Neolithic.

In addition to this pendant, a semi-manufactured ornament has been found at Abora I, reminiscent of the linking elements of a *kņiepkens* type of brooch. It is possible that this ornament too may have had a lateral perforation, with two or even three V-shaped perforations for attachment of tooth-shaped pendants. The basic element of this ornament – a rounded triangular segment – may later have become a linking element, creating an even more complex and unusual

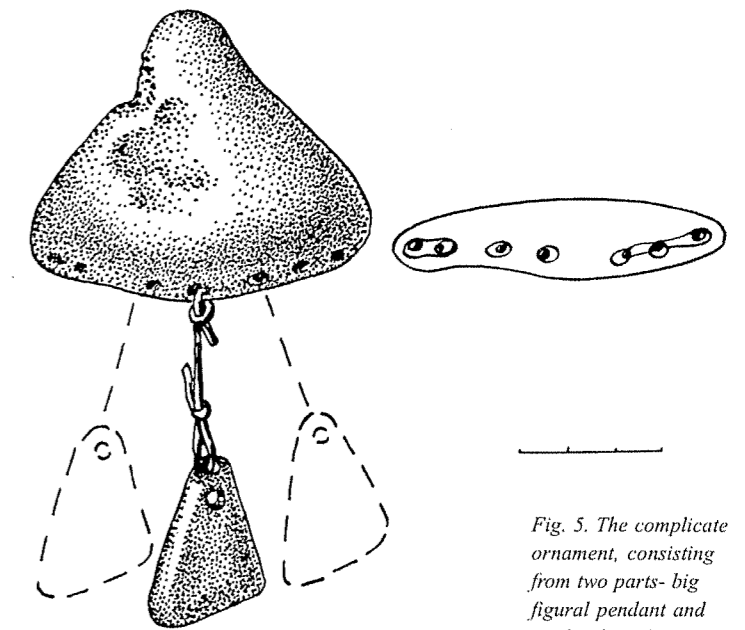
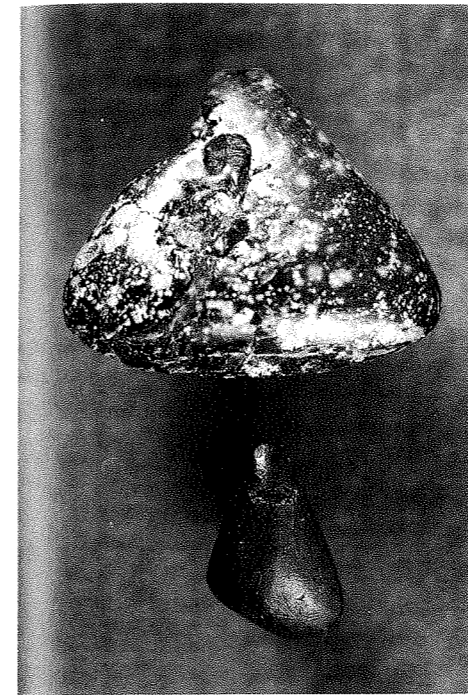


Fig. 5. The complicated ornament, consisting from two parts- big figural pendant and tooth-shaped pendants. Abora I site

composition, similar to the Latvian ethnographic *kņiepkens* or brooch.

In view of the complicated arrangement of such Late Neolithic ornaments, it may be considered that these do in fact represent the origins of the ethnographically known *kņiepkens* type of brooch, although it is separated from the present day by millennia. Among present-day mass produced amber products, the *kņiepkeni* are still popular, and *kņiepkens* type brooch of a very archaic type are still to be found<sup>9</sup>.

#### Key-head pendants

The first four key-head shaped pendants were found in the second half of the 19th century in connection with harbour deepening work at Juodkrante on the Kuršiū Spit in Lithuania. In publishing these finds along with the whole collection of amber artefacts obtained in the course of this work, Klebs described them as "gesteilte Ringan hängsel"<sup>10</sup>.

This unusual form of pendant consists of a ring, or more commonly a disc, topped by a bar like that of a key. It was these features that prompted the use of this unusual, but very convenient name, indicating the similarity to the head of a metal key. The term "key pendant" is given in the *Dictionary of Archaeological Terms* published in Latvia<sup>11</sup>.

The key-head amber pendants represented three different forms with a bi-conical frontal perforation or from the side<sup>12</sup>.

A key-head amber pendant, of a different type with a particular form of bored perforation, was also found outside the eastern Baltic in the Middle Dnieper basin downstream from Mogilev in Moshka Khodosovich cemetery, barrow 11, burial 1 in the early 1960s<sup>13</sup>.

In the early 1970s, in excavations at the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age settlement site of Abora I in the Lake Lubāna depression, 20 key-head shaped amber pendants were found, (Fig. 6) two of which came from female burial No. 33 within the settlement. Since they were found under the lower jaw and back of the head, they can be assumed to have formed part of the woman's necklace or head-dress.

The upper part of a key-head shaped pendant, regularly quadrangular in cross-section and with perforations bored from the top and one side and a fragment of a disc with a row of double notches along its edges were obtained in excavations at Iča settlement site, also in the Lake Lubāna depression, in the late 1980s (collections of the Archaeology Department, Latvian Institute of History at the University of Latvia, henceforth LVI AN, Nos. 197 and 316).

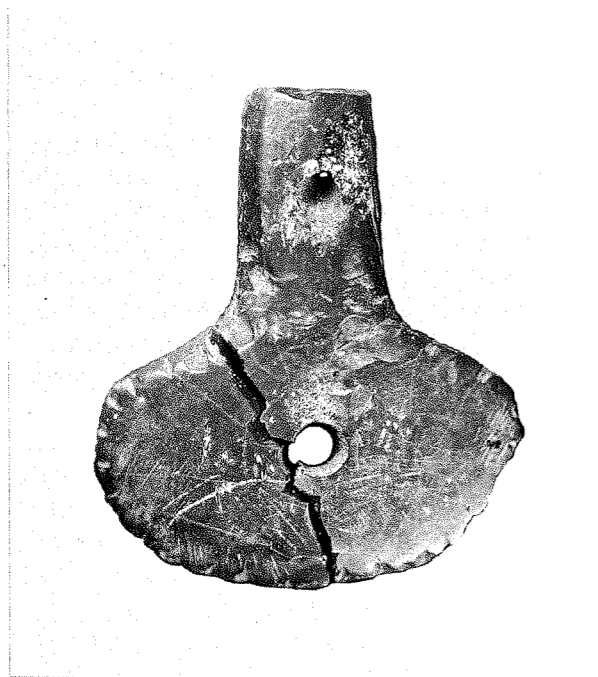
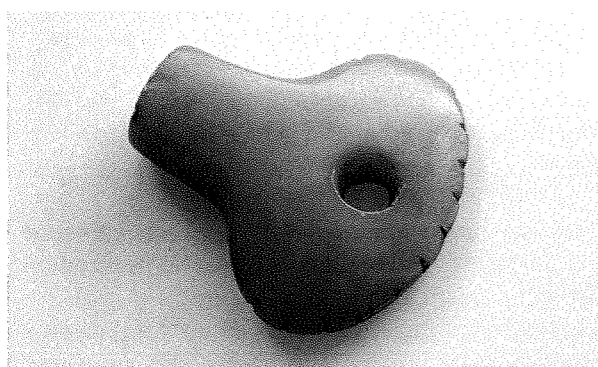


Fig. 6. The key-head shaped amber pendants. Abora I site

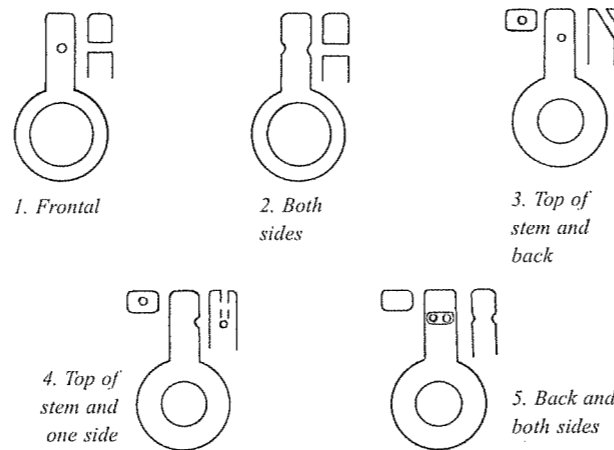


Fig. 7. Ways of perforation of key-head shaped pendants

### Classification and typology of pendants

The pendants are classified according to the character of the perforation bored for suspending the pendant. They can be: 1) frontally perforated (Fig. 7: 1) 2) laterally perforated (Fig. 7: 2), 3) perforated on two adjacent faces, i.e. from the top and the back, forming a wide angle in section (Fig. 7: 3), 4) likewise, but with the perforation from the top and one lateral face (Fig. 7: 4), or 5) with a complex perforation consisting of a larger perforation from the back of the pendant and two smaller additional perforations joining the larger one, beginning in the lateral faces (Fig. 7: 5).

The pendant typology makes use of the presence of either a ring or a disc as part of the ornament. The four pendants from the Juodkrante collection (Kuršiu Spit) are classified in the group of pendants with rings, while the examples found at Abora I site and Khodosovichi barrow 11, burial 1 have discs.

The latter can be divided into three sub-groups, depending on the form of the disc: round, oval or flattened oval.

Attention also needs to be given to the relative proportions of the ring or disc of the pendant and the bar at the top. These can be 1:1, 2:1 or 1:1,5.

Also noted are variations in the diameter of the hole in the ring. This may either be small or large

The top part, the bar, of the pendant may be flat, circular, oval or rectangular in section.

Depending on the character of decoration, the pendants can be classified as follows: 1) pieces with decoration of fine notches along the whole outside edge of the pendant (Fig. 6), 2) pieces with fine notches

along the outside edges of the disc and symmetrical herring-bone incised decoration on the top (Fig. 6), 3) with fine notches only along the outer edge of the disc (Fig. 6). The latter include examples with notching in either one or two rows along the outside of the disc (Fig. 6).

### Key-head pendants in grave inventories

Two key-head pendants were found with female burial No. 33 at Abora I settlement site.

The woman had been buried in the occupation layer of the central part of the settlement at a depth of 0.45-0.55 m (the total thickness of the occupation layer was 0.60 m). She was placed with the head was oriented SW, on her left side, with legs tightly flexed and arms stretched out<sup>14</sup>. The edges of the grave could not be traced because the woman had evidently been buried within a structure of horizontal (?) logs (no post-holes that would indicate a post-built structure were found). The grave-goods consisted of two amber key-head pendants, one of which was found under the lower jaw of the deceased and the other was under the back of the skull. Also found was a cylindrical amber bead at the left foot (LVI AN No. 2639) and a bone fish-hook under the left knee (No. 2640).

Bearing in mind that the occupation layer in the central part of the site, including area A, that contained burial 33, was particularly rich in artefacts and potsherds, the bone fish-hook and the amber bead may not be related to the burial.

Of 61 burials in the settlement site, only 13 had amber ornaments, mainly button-shaped or cylindrical beads.

The burials were badly damaged through repeated short-term occupation in the Middle and Late Iron Age, and this had also affected double burials 30 and 31, likewise 36 and 53. In view of this, the key-head pendant found to the W of double burial 30/31 and two other key-head pendants, one in the vicinity of the remains of burial 36, and the other, a semi-manufactured piece, to the W of burial 53 (LVI AN 2914) could not be associated with the respective grave assemblages, although this is a distinct possibility.

The double burial 30/31 of unknown sexes with heads in opposed directions (N and S), and disturbed burial of unknown sex 36/53 had no grave goods.

In view of the placement of the key-head pendants in the region of the head of female burial 33 under the lower jaw and the back of the skull, it can be considered part of an ornament on the woman.

One amber key-head pendant has also been found with burial 1, barrow 11 of Moshka Khodosovichi cemetery in Belarussia. This pendant, attributable to the Middle Dnieper Culture, belonged to the grave inventory along with a stone battle-axe, a wedge-shaped flint celt, four flint knives, 27 flint points, 53 flint flakes and a copper axe. Also in this grave were two copper spectacle pendants and a copper spear-tip<sup>15</sup>.

Judging from the arrangement of the finds in the grave, where the bones had not been preserved at all, the amber pendant, being part of the grave inventory, may have been next to the head or neck of the deceased<sup>16</sup>.

In the middle of the grave, about 0.30 m from the W edge copper spectacle pendants were found which, being particularly valuable, would undoubtedly be placed on the chest of the deceased. The burial, on the E side of barrow 11, was oriented in a N-S direction.

Describing the burials in the barrows at Khodosovichi, Artemenko notes that the orientation with the head to the N is typical for males. However, bearing in mind that the width of the grave was 2.2 m, i.e. 1 m wider than for the other burials in this barrow and others, it may be thought that two individuals were buried alongside each other in this grave, one of which, buried on the W side, may have been a woman, to which this amber key-head pendant may have belonged.

A key-head pendant with a short top and a frontal perforation has also been found at Konchanska cemetery in Novgorod Region, with burial 232<sup>17</sup>, where it is found together with round button-shaped beads, trapezium iform pendants and tubular beads with a broadened middle.

### Key-head pendants at Abora I settlement site

Amber key-head pendants found in excavations at the Abora I settlement site in the Lake Lubāna depression come both from the central part of the site in the occupation layer formed in sandy clay, and from the slope, where the occupation layer is an admixture in the bog deposits.

The data given in the table permits certain nuances of their form to be related to their distribution in the occupation layers of Abora I settlement site. It is significant that in the central part of the settlement (areas A, A<sub>1</sub> and F) pendants have been found with longer bars (Fig. 6) than the three examples found on the slope of the site (area B), which have a very short bar at the top (Fig. 6).

It is hard to say whether these differences relate to the skill of the ancient amber-worker in working different sized pieces of amber, or whether this reflects chronological changes. It should be mentioned that the bog deposits on the slope of the site are at least partially, on the upper part, covered by the layers of sandy clay that characterise the central part of the site. This means that much more archaic types of artefacts may be preserved on the slope of the site than in the central part of the site. The likelihood of this is underlined by the fact that sherds of so-called Lubāna Ware, so characteristic of the central part of the site, were not found in the bogged up part of the site<sup>18</sup>.

#### The prototypes for key-head pendants

The prototypes for the eastern Baltic amber key-head pendants discussed here can be sought among gold and copper pendant forms found in the northern Balkans and Carpathians, as well as in the eastern Aegean and Anatolia. These prototypes are encountered in the Aravissos gold hoard in Macedonia (Greece), where examples with round and oval discs with a large hole have been found (with two perforations for suspension in the front)<sup>19</sup>. The third fragmentary pendant with an oval disc has a small diameter hole, similar to the amber examples from Abora (Fig. 6).

On the other hand, the copper pendant found at Doneva-Mogila-Safronievo in Bulgaria<sup>20</sup>. Bears a very close resemblance to the amber pendant from the Dnieper basin at Khodosovichi barrow 11, grave 1, although the former has two bored frontal perforations for suspension.

It can be concluded that the prototypes for the amber key-head pendants from the eastern Baltic can mainly be sought in the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age (AB) cultures of the Aegean, evidently the Aegean ABII and ABIII phases, dated to 3000-2500 BC, as shown by the material from this area, which has been discussed in detail by Makkay<sup>21</sup>.

There is considerable evidence of the reproduction of silver and gold key-head pendants not only in amber, but also in bone. Such examples are known in the Eneolithic Schönfelder Culture, which is considered an intermediate culture between the Corded Ware and Bell Beaker Cultures in Germany<sup>22</sup>.

The pendant from Lobesitz in Bohemia comes from a triple grave of the Bell Beaker Culture, found together with an ornamented bone plate, identical to the one from Zvejnieki cemetery, burial 186<sup>23</sup>. This

pendant consists of a circular disc with a bar having two frontal perforations.

A pendant of the same type cut from bone has been found in the forest-steppe area of the Middle Volga, in the inventory of grave 1 of the Neprikoka barrows of the Timber-Grave Culture<sup>24</sup>. This belongs to the earlier phase of the culture, dated to the late 17th - early 15th century BC<sup>25</sup>.

This pendant bears a close resemblance to the large pendant from the Abora I site (Fig. 6), although the former has a circular disc. It should be mentioned that these barrows were located in the basin of a left tributary of the Volga and is the furthest eastward of the known barrows of this culture. What contacts were there between the Timber-Grave Culture and the Early Bronze Age culture of the eastern Baltic? The former had established its area of distribution along the Volga and had begun its northward and westward expansion at the end of its initial phase of existence.

This question may be of interest to a wide circle of researchers, bearing in mind the distribution of key-head pendants independent of raw material – amber, bone, copper, silver or gold. The question of synchronising cultures over a wide area including the forest-steppe zone of eastern Europe can be discussed in the light of these pendant finds. It may be noted that in the 1980s there was already a wide discussion on the dating of the Varna cemetery in Bulgaria, where, as is known, examples of key-head pendants in gold were represented too<sup>26</sup>.

Amber key-head pendants whose prototypes can be sought in the Aegean basin and among the gold and copper pendants from the Balkan area and the Carpathians are at the same time a source for establishing the existence of very ancient contacts with one of these regions, which could also be explained in terms of diffusion.

In this connection particular attention should be given to the find, already mentioned, of an amber key-head pendant in grave 1, barrow 11 of Khodosovichi cemetery on the left bank of the Dnieper. Bearing in mind that an amber key-head pendant with this same complicated perforation for suspension, consisting of a large perforation at the back, which is joined by two smaller perforations from the sides of the pendant, has been found in the Lake Lubāna depression, i.e. within the area of the river network of the River Daugava basin, there is a distinct possibility that the piece found in the Dnieper basin has been imported from the eastern Baltic, possibly from the middle Daugava basin, from the Lubāna amber-working centre.

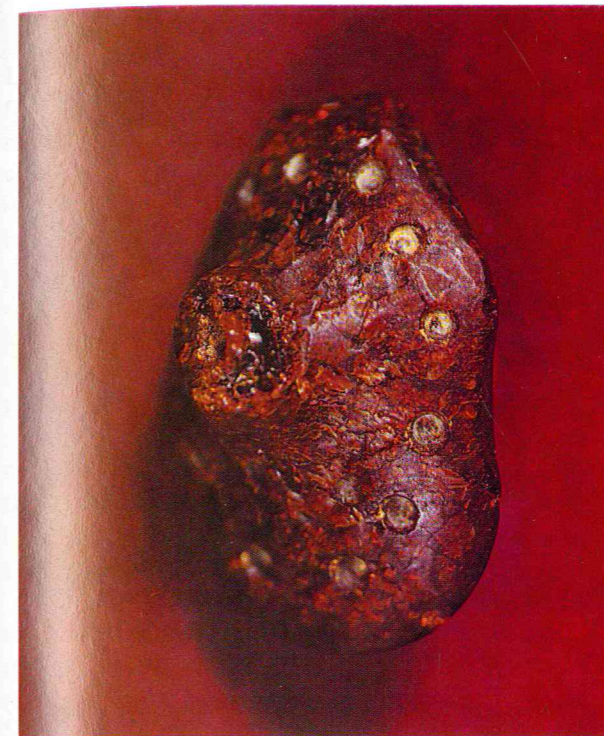


Fig. 10

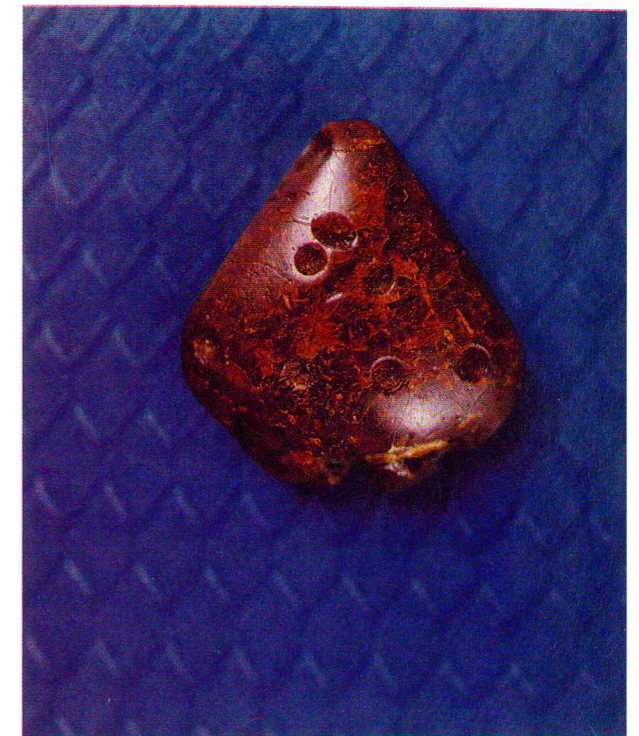


Fig. 11



Fig. 12. Owl-shaped amber pendant. Lapmežciems. Stray find.

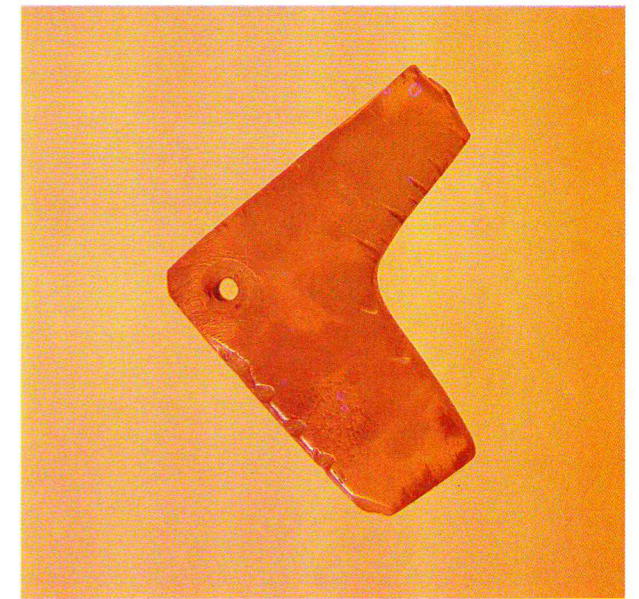


Fig. 13. Elk head-shaped (?) amber pendant. Abora site.



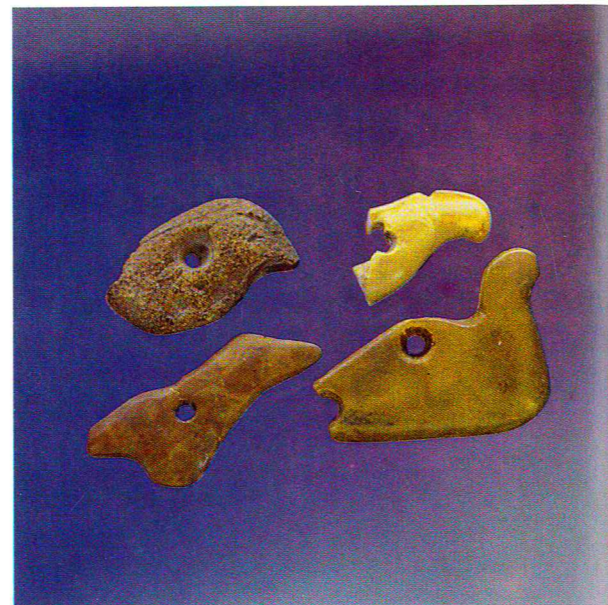


Fig. 15. The amber bird pendants: 1, 2, 4 - Zvidze, 3 - Dziedziste.

← Fig. 14. The drop (1.), axe (2.) and chisel (3.) shaped amber pendants. Eipi and Abora sites.



Fig. 16. The broken elk (1) and small fur animal (2) amber figurines. 1 - Abora II, 2 - Sułka.



Fig. 17. the head of zoomorphic figurine

That amber key-head pendants were made in the Lake Lubāna basin is shown by finds of semi-manufactured examples of these pendants from the Abora I site. Amber key-head pendants at the Abora I site, which make up only one 31st part of the total number of amber pendants and one 61st part of the total number of ornaments, belong among distinctive amber products from the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age, exhibiting local characteristics. These are also reflected in the production of key-head pendants and particularly in the arrangement of perforations, differing from that of the examples made in Juodkrante.

The Dnieper waterway can possibly be considered one of the main routes along which products not only from the settlements of the Lake Lubāna depression, but also from other amber-working centres may have spread southwards.

Amber ornaments in the Aegean basin, notably in the Peloponnese and in south-eastern Thessaly occur only at certain sites in the Aegean Late Bronze Age (Late Helladic Periods I-II), corresponding to the Middle Bronze Age in the north<sup>27</sup>. Thus it can be considered that the direct routes for amber from the eastern Baltic had not yet reached the Aegean basin in the Early Bronze Age.

It can perhaps be considered, nevertheless, that in this particular case the gold and copper key-head pendants from the Aegean basin could have been used as prototypes for the production of amber pendants far to the north, in the eastern Baltic, via some intermediary.

#### Key-head pendants: a female ornament

The practical significance of key-head pendants has been discussed by Petrov in connection with a series of finds of bone pendants in the grave inventories of the Timber-Grave Culture, mentioning that a total of 70 such pendants are known in the western Volga area. Unfortunately only one example within this series belongs to the type under discussion here<sup>28</sup>. A general comment is made that the bone pendants are mostly found at the chest, where, according to Petrov, they were used to fasten dress, although examples have also been found at the feet or placed next to the deceased. Unfortunately there is no information regarding the placement of the particular pendant of interest here and there is no discussion of whether the pendants come from male or female graves.

The well-known Hungarian archaeologist J. Makay, in his analysis of the typology of this type of

pendant in gold, silver and copper and its distribution in Hungary, the Balkans, the Aegean basin, Bulgaria and the Near East, provides data on the representation of such a pendant on the chest of a female figurine from Truesti in Moldavia, as well as one drawn in white paint on the chest of a female figurine found in Petsof<sup>29</sup>. Also, Dimitrešcu<sup>30</sup> notes that in Hungary, too, at Magyarter Eneolithic cemetery such a pendant has been found in a female grave. These examples are undoubtedly of interest in connection with the amber key-head pendants found with burial 33 at the Abora site.

The distribution of key-head disc and ring pendants over such large areas as the Aegean basin, Macedonia, Thessaly, Hungary, Germany, Bohemia, Scandinavia, the eastern Baltic, the Dnieper and Volga regions is evidence of a common perception of the world, which could of course only have been current among tribal confederations belonging to one economic system in ancient Europe. Thus, this phenomenon observed at Abora provides a new view on one of the possible answers to this question in the eastern Baltic.

#### Figurine pendants

The figurine pendants are amber artefacts, specially made as single examples, having a unique form and with some definite ideational content.

Worthy of attention is a set of two figurine pendants, one of which is a zoomorphic piece, possibly a reptile (grass snake?), with the front of the animal represented, showing the lithe and rounded body. The eyes are fine bored pits and the mouth consists of two incised lines (Fig. 8: 1).

The other figurine pendant belonging to this set of ornaments, which, like the first, was found among the grave goods with a child burial at the Abora site, was an unusual ornament, over 6 cm in length, with rounded sides and a truncated egg-shaped cavity in the lower part, with two small holes symmetrically arranged on each side (Fig. 8: 2).

Another zoomorphic pendant with the bottom broken off, lens-shaped in section and made of completely transparent amber, is amorphous with marked eyes that, like those of the previously mentioned zoomorphic figurine, are to be viewed from above (Fig. 8: 3).

Also worthy of attention is another pendant, oval in form with slightly incurving sides and a very carefully polished back. In the middle of the front is a round, symmetrically formed projection with a bored pit in the centre, and around it along the edge of the pen-

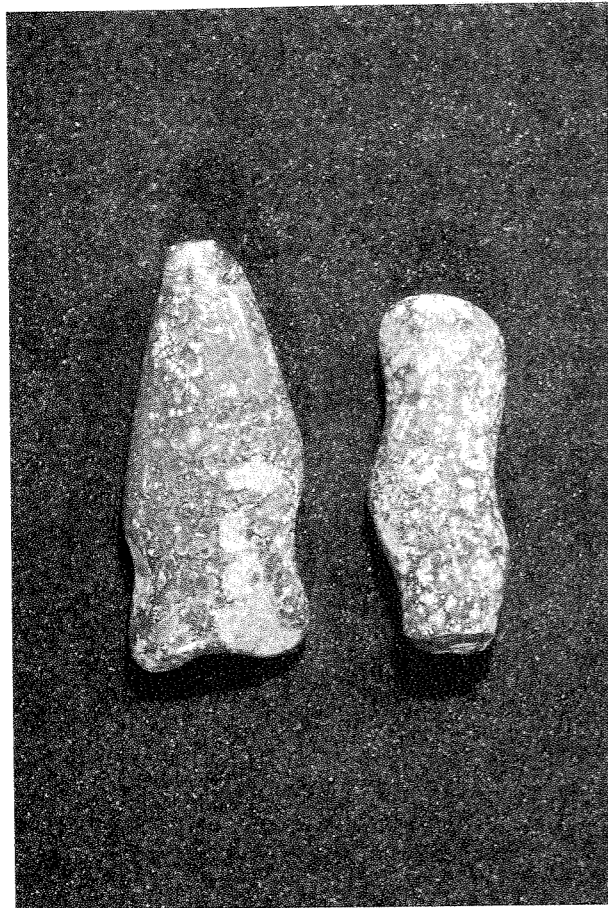


Fig. 8. Figural amber pendants: 1- snake and pendant with double birds (?)head, 2- zoomorphic. Abora I

dant are larger diameter bored pits arranged in a pattern that produces a splendid decorative effect (Fig. 8: 3).

This principle of ornamentation, using bored pits to decorate the ornament, has been used to decorate the surface of another simpler pendant, a rounded triangular pendant, which has been obtained in excavations at Abora, while the first was found at Asne I.

It is thought that the unusual form of a large, sub-oval pendant is connected with some symbolic meaning, representing the tip of a woman's breast or some other part of the body, according to the tradition where a part stands for the whole figurine.

The rounded very great pendant with lateral perforations mentioned above, as well the drop shaped and axe-shaped pendants represented the other forms.

The similar amber owl-like figurine pendant over 5,8 cm in length with rounded sides and a head with two bored eyes and mouth was found as the stray find near Lapmežciems, 0,5 km from the littoral of Rīgas



Fig. 8: 3. Button-shaped amber beads. Abora I site

Golf (Fig. 12). The similarity with the example from Abora site, mentioned above, allows to consider the Late Neolithic age of Lapmežciems pendant.

Very primitive elk-head (?) shaped pendant with the frontal drilled hole has been made using the small amber plate (Fig. 13). The small carvings cover the edge of neck and the more deeper carvings are on the forehead.

Attention should be paid to axe-shaped and chisel-shaped pendants as well as to drop-shaped ones (Abora and Eņi). Sometimes the very good transparent amber has been used for manufacturing such ornament (Fig. 14).

There is great difference between the Late Neolithic and Middle Neolithic amber figurine art in the Lake Lubana wetland. The last figurines are represented by more than 10 examples. The small plate figurines of birds, especially water birds, like duck were usually used by Middle Neolithic people of Dzedziekste, Nainiekste and Zvidze settlements (Fig. 15). The broken figurine of elk- the fragment of head has

been made in similar manner (Abora II) (Fig. 16: 1). The three-dimension broken figurine of small fur animal head looks like much better, because there are the drilled eyes and the carved mouth (Suļka) (Fig. 16: 2). The bear and other zoomorphic small figurines had been carved using the amber plate (Zvidze) (Fig. 17: 1), more rarely- the Middle Neolithic people made three-dimension examples (Zvidze) (Fig. 17: 3).

Only one anthropomorphic figurine, unfinished and broken was found between the peaces and flakes at amber master dwelling in the settlement Zvidze (Fig. 17: 2).

#### The dating of tooth-shaped, figurine and key-head pendants

The chronology for tooth-shaped amber pendants can be traced on the basis of their stratigraphic position at Abora and other Late Neolithic sites in the Lubāna wetlands. Detailed analysis of the distribution of each particular type of tooth-shaped pendant has established that pendants with a lateral perforation, as well as pendants with a perforation from one side and from the top, have been found only in the central part

of the site. On the other hand, the pendants perforated from the back and from the top were found both in the central part of the site and on the slope in occupation layers formed earlier than that of the central part of the site.

Thus it can be assumed that the tooth-shaped pendants, judging from their distribution in the occupation layer of this site, are of relatively later date. Since the radiocarbon datings given in the table are from the sloping part of the Abora site, they serve to date the fourth type of tooth-shaped pendant

In order to determine the chronology of key-head pendants, use can be made of five radiocarbon datings, which relate to the examples found on the slope of the site.

The key-head pendants from the centre of the site are later than the former. The key-head pendants characteristic of the Lake Lubāna depression found in the central part of the Abora I site can be dated to the Early Bronze Age (1800-1450 BC), while the pieces found on the slope relate to an earlier period, corresponding to the end of the Late Neolithic, 2000-1800 BC (Table in text).

Laboratory code	Material	Years BP	Years BC	Years cal. BC
LE-671 *	peat	3870±70	1920±70	2470-2210
LE-749 *	peat	3860±100	1840±100	2470-2200
TA-394 *	wooden poles	3770±60	1820±60	2330-2050
TA-2144	wood	4490±80	2540±80	3350-304
TA-2145	wood	4250±100	2300±100	3010-27

TABLE Radiocarbon datings for the occupation layer on the slope of Abora I settlement site (area B) (after Loze & Liiva 1990, 66).

#### Button-shaped beads

The makers of button-shaped beads of the Late Neolithic in the Lake Lubāna wetlands gave priority to circular beads, which comprise over half of all finds. These may be classified, apart from the particular features of manufacture, according to their cross-section: 1) lens-shaped, 2) segmental, 3) conical, 4) convex, 5) segmental with obliquely truncated edges and 6) oval.

\* These samples were dated at the time of the excavations in 1964-1965 and 1970-1971.

The diameter of the beads varies between 1 and 2.5 cm (up to 5 cm in exceptional cases), with a thickness of 0.4-0.7 cm.

The production of quadrangular button-shaped beads in the Late Neolithic of the Lake Lubāna wetlands provided much greater opportunities for varying their form, namely the following possibilities are represented (Fig. 9):

1) diversity in the contours of button-shaped beads: rectangular or square in form (with sharply distinguished or rounded corners),

2) diversity of size and length:width proportions of button-shaped beads,

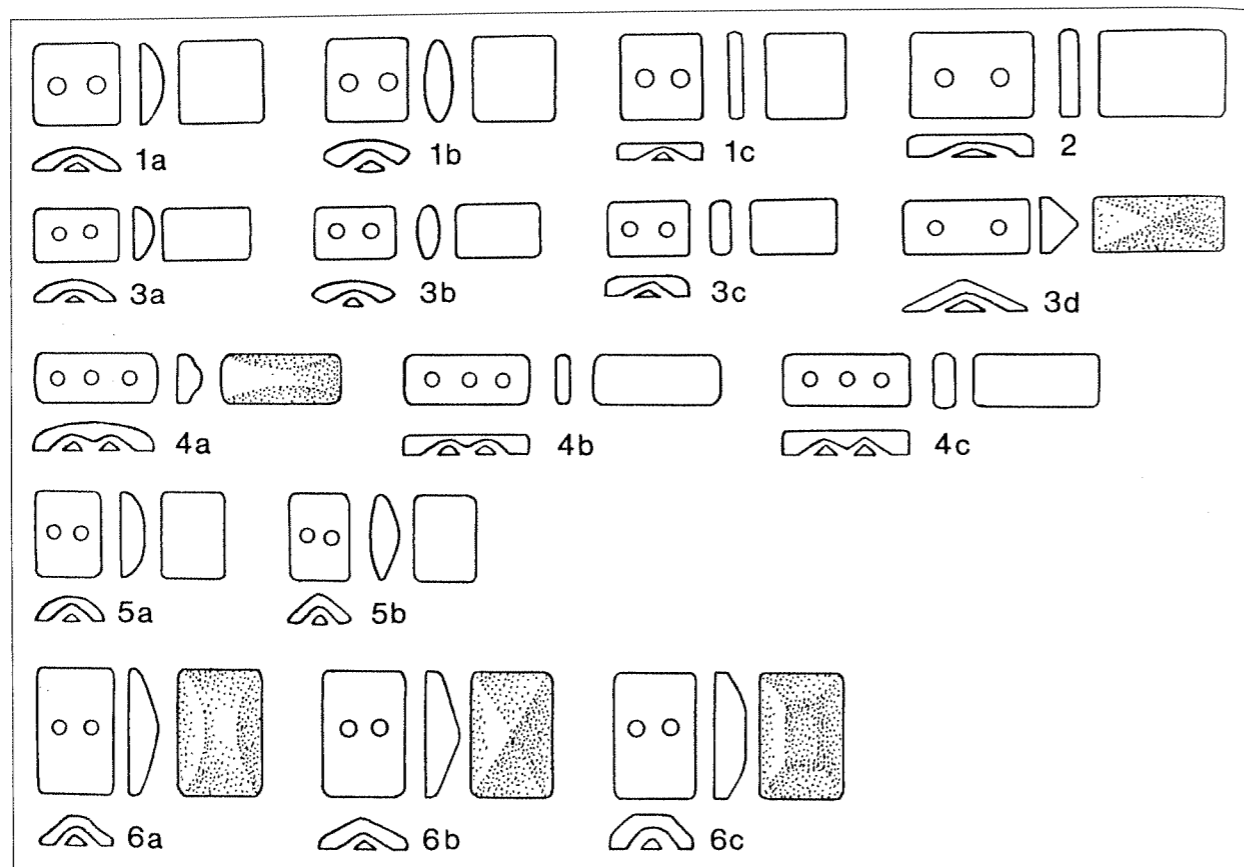


Fig. 10. Typological scale of rectangular button-shaped beads. Abora I.

3) variations in the cross-sections of button-shaped beads,

4) the placement of the V-shaped perforation along the longitudinal or transverse axis of the rectangular button-shaped bead,

5) the possibilities of surface finish of the button-shaped bead, leaving it smooth or with various facets.

The following classification of quadrangular button-shaped beads has been devised, with division into sub-types, but without indicating variants (i.e. differences in the cross-section) (Fig. 10):

1) small and medium-sized square beads with or without surface facets,

2) rectangular beads (length:width proportions 1.5:1),

3) rectangular beads with three perforations (with length:width proportions 3:1, 4:2 and 5:2),

4) rectangular beads with a single V-shaped perforation, arranged along the transverse axis of the bead (with length:width proportions 4:1 or 4:2),

5) large rectangular beads with a faceted surface and rounded corners (length:width proportions 5:3):

a) with segmental flaked facets along opposite edges, b) with the surface divided into four triangular facets,

c) with a rectangle in the centre of the bead and four trapeziform facets around it along the edges of the button, with the longer edges towards the edge of the button.

Great variation in the form of quadrangular button-shaped beads is characteristic of the examples from Abora, which are technically well made not only in adult graves (no. 3), but also among child grave goods (nos. 8 and 11).

As shown by grave goods, complicated strings of beads consisted both of round and quadrangular beads.

Worthy of mention is the string of beads from male grave no. 3, consisting of 27 button-shaped beads, including round and quadrangular examples, among them also examples of the last mentioned sub-types given above.

In comparison with the Middle Neolithic, the production of button-shaped beads in the Late Neolithic of the Lubāna wetlands was technically

improved, with innovations in the choice of form and in the nuances of surface finish and the arrangement of the perforation along the longitudinal or transverse axis of quadrangular beads.

These technical innovations allowed Late Neolithic amber-workers to manipulate, producing one or other form of button and arranging them according to certain rules, creating the most varied strings of beads.

Judging from semi-manufactured pieces found at Abora and other habitation sites in the Lubāna wetlands, the production process for these button-shaped beads consisted of the following stages:

1) the selection and flaking of a suitable piece of amber;

2) shaping of the flake by further flaking;

3) working of the surface and sides of the button-shaped bead: removal of irregularities by re-touch;

4) smoothing of the surface of the bead or creation of facets;

5) grinding of the bead (on sandstone)

6) arrangement of perforations in relation to the length:width proportions of quadrangular beads.

#### The distribution of button-shaped beads

Unlike tooth-shaped pendants, which represent a local type of ornament of the Lake Lubāna basin, button-shaped beads were widespread in many different areas in the Neolithic and Eneolithic of Europe.

However, it should be noted that great variety in button-shaped beads is a characteristic of the Lake Lubāna basin, where technically very ambitious examples are found also among the grave-goods of child burials at Abora (nos. 8 and 11).

The inhabitants of the habitation sites of the Šventoji lagoon on the Lithuanian littoral produced square beads with the surface divided into four facets<sup>31</sup>. These are characteristic of the Juodkrante collection, which represents the products of Late Neolithic amber-workers of the Kuršių Spit and its environs<sup>32</sup>.

Further north, Late Neolithic button-shaped beads have not been found in large numbers. We may note the presence of a circular button-shaped bead among the grave-goods from burial no. 10 at Tamula habitation site<sup>33</sup>.

Some of the button-shaped beads of lens-shaped section, like square and rectangular beads with 3 perforations along the long axis, found at Asavets II habitation site are analogous to those made in the sites of the Lake Lubāna basin<sup>34</sup>. Separate finds of circular button-shaped beads are known also from the Middle

Oka basin, from burials of the Shagara Culture<sup>35</sup>, while the furthest easterly find comes from the inventory of burial no. 1 at Lobana habitation site in the Vjatka basin<sup>36</sup>.

To the west of the eastern Baltic and the Lubāna wetland area in the territory of the Rzucewo Culture at the habitations of this culture along the Bay of Gdansk, as along the Kuršių Spit and the south-western coast of Latvia, amber was washed up from the sea. At the amber-working sites found here, in the mouth of the Vistula, as well as to the east and west of it (Kronovo, Zatoka Gdanska etc.), circular button-shaped beads of lens-shaped or segmental section were predominantly made<sup>37</sup>.

On the other hand, in the area of the Złota Culture, in the Sandomierz region of south-eastern Poland (the cemeteries of Grodzisko I, II, and nad Wawrem) not only circular, but also quadrangular beads were in use<sup>38</sup>. The latter, according to the typology of R. Mazurovsky, are not only lens-shaped and segmental, but also rectangular in section<sup>39</sup>.

Button-shaped amber beads from the Late Neolithic of the Lubāna wetlands are of the same date as the tooth-shaped, figurine and key-head pendants. At the Abora site their stratigraphic position does not indicate any tendency towards relatively earlier or later dates for particular sub-types.

#### The cultural affiliation of the amber-workers

The Late Neolithic amber ornaments from habitation sites in the Lake Lubāna basin represent the products of local amber-working, and the makers belonged to groups of the Corded Ware or Battle-Axe Culture of this region. It is clear that the people who lived in this micro-region, which was connected with adjacent and more distant parts of Europe, particularly the areas of the Upper and Middle Dnieper in eastern Europe, were very familiar with the new tendencies in craftwork, characteristic of that time in Europe. Influences that arrived through diffusion, such as for example the manufacture of the open key-head pendants, were not only an expression of aesthetic tastes, but also testify to the development of particular ideological concepts within the circle of agricultural cultures, and these pendants appeared only as female ornaments.

The Late Neolithic products of amber-working described here, showing certain very noticeably local tendencies, especially the introduction of technical innovations, testify to the ability of the amber-working

centre in the region of the Lubāna wetlands to compete with the traditions and specific features of amber-working in other eastern Baltic production centres such as the Kuršiu Spit and its surrounding area, developing their own traditions and particular features and thus ensuring an advantageous position for the development of further contacts with kindred tribal groups in areas to the east, particularly in the Middle Dnieper region.

*Translated by Valdis Bērziņš*

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## THE ART FROM ZVEJNIEKI BURIAL GROUND, LATVIA

*Ilgā Zagorska*

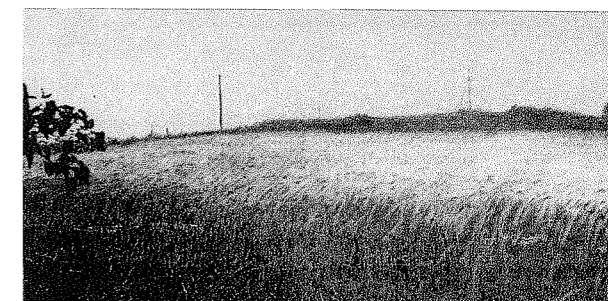
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It is pieces of art that provide a greater insight into the spiritual culture of Stone Age people. A large part of primitive art has disappeared over the millennia, for some artistic expressions we have only indirect evidence and only a proportion of works of art have survived. These representations give us direct and invaluable evidence, reflecting all spheres of the life of Stone Age society.

In the territory of present-day Latvia only small-scale forms of art have been found – sculptures, drawings and ornamentation on bone artefacts, pottery, bone and amber jewellery etc. (Loze I., 1983). Such finds are most frequently discovered at cemeteries and are associated with a death cult (Wyszomirska B., 1984, 129). One such place is Zvejnieki Stone Age burial ground in the Lake Burtnieki basin of northern Latvia.

Even the choice of site is evidence of the artistic intentions of ancient people. In the Stone Age, the site on the northern shore of the lake was a peninsula or even an island in the lake. The gravel hill of glacial origin rose some 4 – 7 m above the lake-level, giving a wide and beautiful panorama of the surroundings (Fig. 1). On the slopes of this hill two settlement sites were located, the burial ground being established on the highest part of this long gravel ridge.

Zvejnieki burial ground is still the richest in northern Europe in terms of the number of burials (315) and also in terms of the duration of its use, spanning a period of four millennia (approximately 6200–2200 bc). This gives us an opportunity to observe change in burial practices and grave-goods over time. Among carefully arranged burial

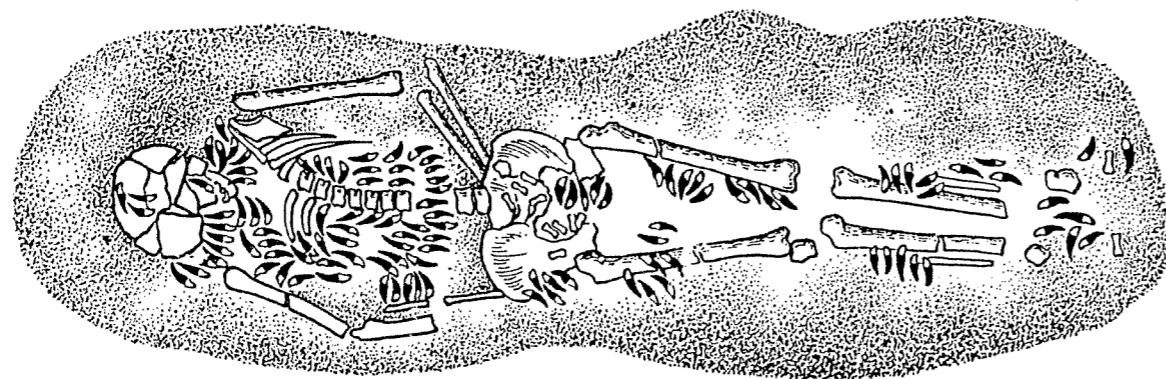


*Fig. 1. Zvejnieki burial ground from south – east, photo by F. Zagorskis*

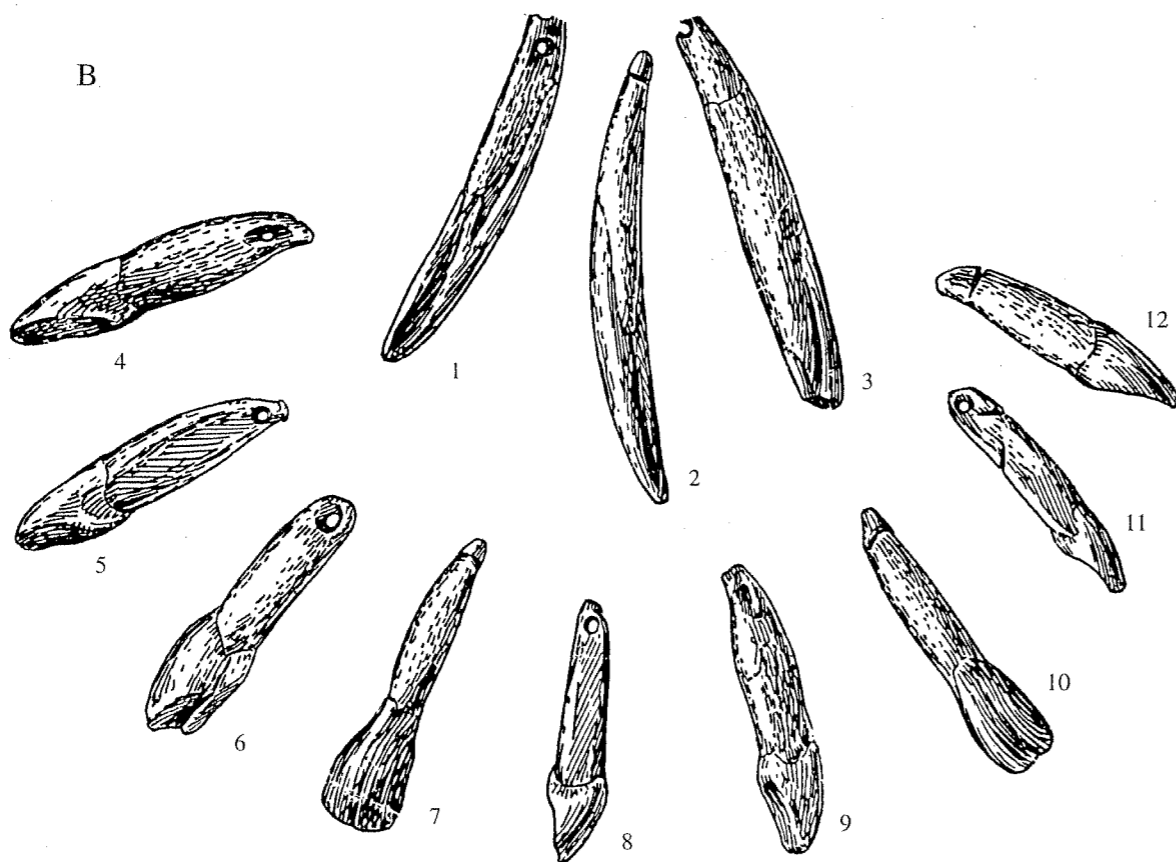
places and the rich array of grave-goods there are a large number of artistic representations: anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines, bone artefacts with ornamentation and some fragments of decorated pottery. Artistic expressions of Stone Age people may be observed also in head-dresses and adornments on clothing, consisting of animal tooth pendants and amber jewellery. All of these materials have already been published in articles and in a monograph, written by the director of the excavations, Dr Francis Zagorskis (Zagorskis F., 1974, 7-24; 1983, 138–142; 1987). Here, attention is devoted expressly to the artistic representations found at Zvejnieki burial ground with regard to main burial customs.

### **Animal tooth pendant decorations**

Animal tooth pendants represent the richest and most widespread group of decorations found with Stone Age burials. These have been used for adorning the dead during



A



B

Fig. 2. Zvejnieki burial ground: A – Grave Nr. 170; B – elk (4 – 12) and wild – boar (1 – 3) tooth pendants from Grave Nr. 170. Drawing by M. Jāņkalniņa

all periods of the Stone Age. Tooth pendants differ both in terms of the species of animal used and in terms of the diversity of uses.

Around 2400 tooth pendants have been found at Zvejnieki burial ground, given as grave-goods in 83 burials, i.e. in over one third of the graves. The number of pendants in the graves differs greatly, from one or two up to several hundred. One of the burials most richly adorned with tooth pendants was double burial 122/123, consisting of an adult male together with an adolescent, covered by 339 animal tooth pendants. Rich ornaments were found in a two more children graves, Nr. 100 (72) and Nr. 190 (224).

Tooth pendants were used for decoration in various ways. In the first place they were evidently attached to the clothing: at the belt, on the sleeves, on the coat or else fixed to the skins used to wrap the deceased. They also adorned footwear and headgear. Secondly, tooth pendants could be strung like beads or worn as individual pendant-amulets. Thirdly, they often decorated the most important grave-goods, the tooth pendants being attached to leather pouches containing artefacts given as offerings (Zagorska I., Lōugas L., 2000, 227 – 229).

One of the most interesting graves is no. 170, where a male with a very rich set of tooth pendants was buried (Fig. 2: A). This is the earliest currently known burial in the whole cemetery, dated to the Middle Mesolithic,  $8150 \pm 80$  (Ox-5969). The grave was located on the highest part of the gravel ridge, oriented with the head towards the north and intensively strewn with ochre. A total of 167 animal tooth pendants were found, forming a splendid necklace, an ornament on the hip and decoration on the footwear. Most peculiar, however, was the head-dress, consisting of 41 tooth pendants. The forehead was covered by five wild boar incisor pendants, while three elk tooth pendants was found below them. The face was surrounded by elk tooth pendants and two aurochs teeth. Teeth were placed near the nose, mouth and ears. It is hard to reconstruct the original arrangement of this headgear, but the layout of the teeth is very reminiscent of a similarly decorated burial in north-western Lithuania at Dounkalnis burial ground on the shore of Lake Biržulis (Butrimas A., 1985, 41, Fig. 22). Here the head of a 50–60 year old male, grave no. 4, was surrounded by an ornament consisting of elk, red deer and roe deer tooth pendants, with more elk teeth attached above the forehead, covering the eyes, inserted in the nostrils, ears and mouth. In this group we could include also male burial no. 300 from Zvejnieki, which dates from the Early Neolithic,  $5690 \pm 45$  BP (Ua-3642). The grave was filled with dark soil, with ochre in the region of the head, and the deceased was oriented with the head to the west. Surrounding the head was an ornament

consisting of 59 tooth pendants, showing a very carefully thought out and rhythmic arrangement of teeth. Across the head, from one ear to the other stretched a band of teeth consisting of wolf tooth pendants, supplemented with some dog and badger teeth and one marten tooth. At the mouth, between the jaws, were two symmetrically arranged wolf molars. This impressive scene was augmented with hunting implements, placed on both sides of the head (Zagorska I., 1994, Fig. 4). It is clear that sometimes tooth pendants were used not only as ornaments. They were employed also as amulets, protecting the deceased from evil. Ethnographical observations show the survival of old beliefs about animal bones, teeth and claws as amulets, which give people the strengths of the animal (Oshibkina S., 1983, 196). Sometimes they also provided evidence of the social status of the buried individual. The mentioned three male burials perhaps represent prominent members of the community – sorcerers.

Animal tooth pendants were mainly used in graves during the Middle to Late Mesolithic periods, when elk, wild boar and wild horse teeth prevailed in decoration (Fig. 2:B). During the Early Neolithic the ornamentation on the deceased was enriched by dog, badger, wolf and fox tooth pendants. In the Middle and Late Neolithic this kind of ornamentation was rare. Instead of the above described tooth pendants, tusks of wild boar and beaver are observed. During this latest period animal tooth pendants were step by step replaced by amber jewellery (Fig. 8 A).

#### Amber jewellery

The Neolithic group within the cemetery was located on the gentle south-eastern slope of the gravel ridge. The central part of this area was taken up by five collective graves, which differed not only in terms of the number of burials, from three to six, but also in their distinctive grave-goods and unusual mortuary rites. Among the collective graves individual burials were also unearthed, sometimes provided with grave-goods.

The grave-goods of the Middle and Late Neolithic are considerably different. The characteristic finds of this period include hunting and fishing tackle – bone and flint arrowheads, spearheads and daggers, as well as various housekeeping tools. Ornaments in the form of animal tooth pendants were relatively few, these being replaced by bone and slate pendants and especially by amber adornments. Beautiful amber jewellery has been found in collective graves as well as in single burials.

In total about 210 amber ornaments were discovered – mainly in male graves, followed by child burials, but only in two female graves.

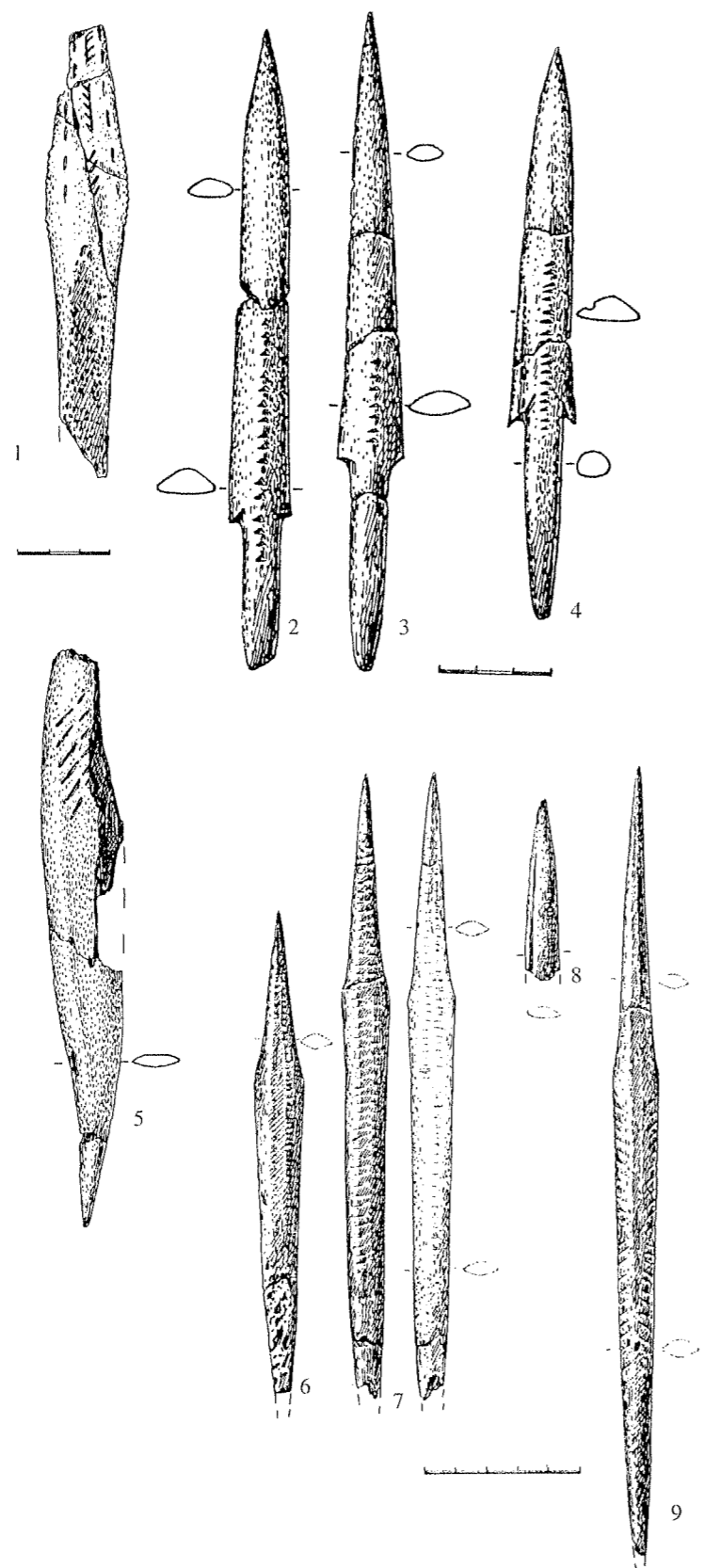


Fig. 3.

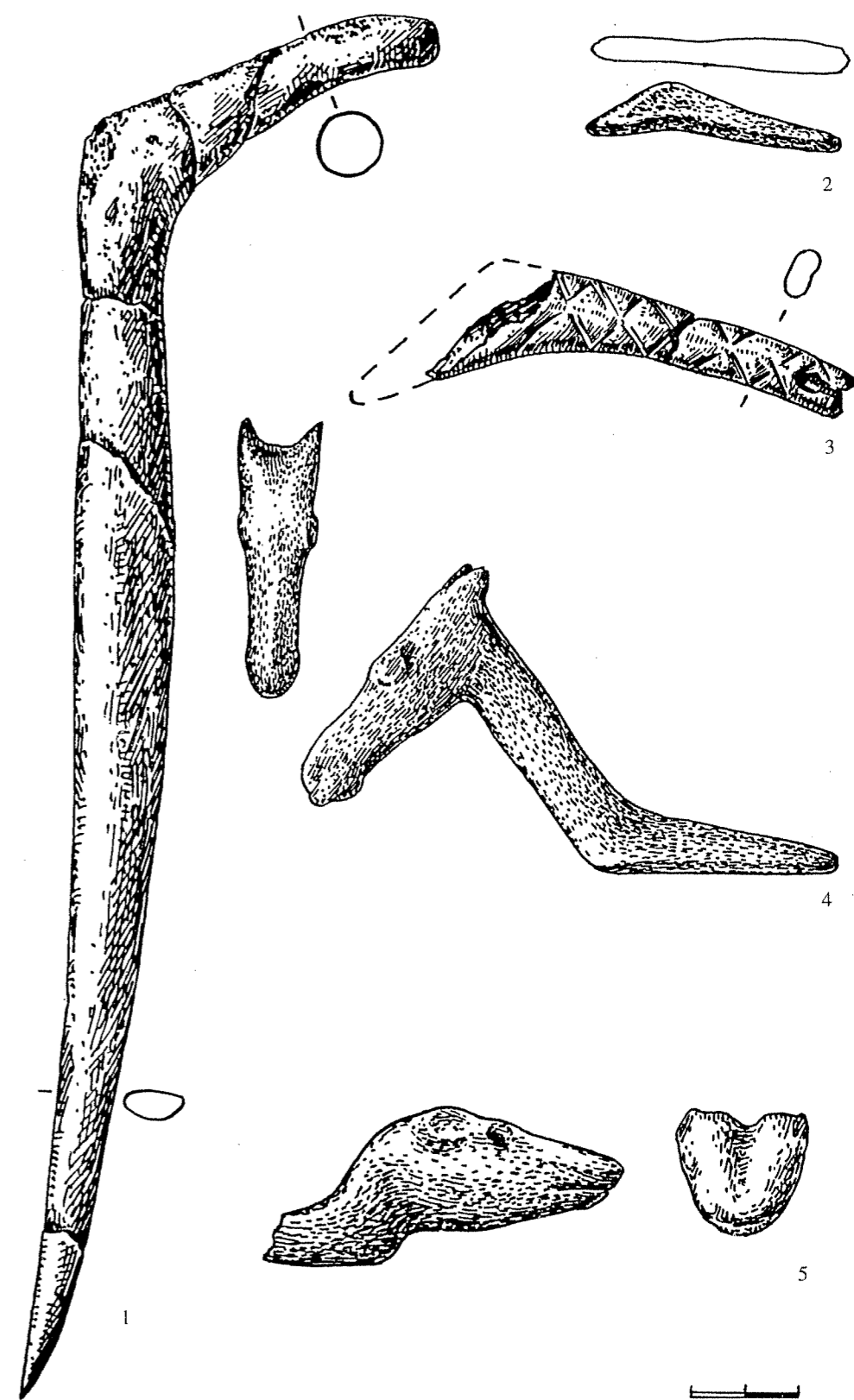


Fig. 4. Bone and antler animal head - sculptures from Zvejnieki burial ground: Grave Nr. 57 (1), Grave Nr. 162 (2), Grave Nr. 100 (3), Grave Nr. 277 (4), Grave Nr. 271 a (5). Drawing by M. Jāņkalniņa

Individual graves. The graves of these individual burials were filled with dark soil. They were mainly oriented west or east with some also in a north-south direction. Two of these single graves (graves 212, 228) had a rich array of amber ornaments, consisting of button-shaped pendants, rhombic and trapezoidal pendants. These pendants and buttons formed necklaces and ornaments on the hips of the deceased. Both of the buried persons were males. The necklace in grave no. 228 has been enriched by the bone and antler figurines of birds and humans.

This assemblage of amber ornaments is characteristic of the descendants of the native Narva Culture people, similar items being found at Särnate settlement site in western Latvia and in the Lubāna Lowlands of south-eastern Latvia (Nainiekste, Piestiņa etc.).

Collective graves. Collective burials were arranged in pits, the bottom of which consisted of dark soil, with an intensive layer of red ochre powdered around the interred person. Adults, adolescents and children were buried together, commonly in opposed orientation. Dominant orientations were with the head to east or west with slight deviation. Some members of the collective graves were very richly adorned with amber jewellery: oval and triangular pendants, beads, rings and discs. Amber artefacts were used as separate pendants, formed necklaces and sometimes quite unusual ornaments. Thus, in one case, in grave no. 221, a male burial, 56 amber ornaments were laid out close together in an intensively ochre-strewn area from the middle of the body to the knees, forming a dense covering. It is assumed that in this case a richly adorned child (grave 221a) had been buried above the adult (Zagorska I., 1997, 45, Fig. 4).

Particular observations were made regarding amber rings. These are small artefacts of 2-3 cm in diameter with a hole in the centre and of lenticular section, with a slightly rounded outer margin. Such rings were found in all the collective graves having amber ornaments. The rings were usually found in the head area or above the chest. Twice (grave 225 and grave 206) these rings were found *in situ* - in each eye socket of the deceased. In these cases reddish or bluish clay, mixed with ochre, was plastered on the head, covering the upper part of the face. Such eye coverings were found only in male graves and once in an adolescent burial.

Sometimes amber ornaments were accompanied by other grave-goods as well. One collective burial (graves 220-225) included a "convex-concave" clay figurine, perhaps in association with the burial of a small child (grave 224a). This burial was surrounded with red ochre fill and the deceased child had some amber rings and other ornaments, too. This small, bent clay figurine has a rounded

head with a projecting nose and elongated, bent lower part. The whole body is covered in comb impressions. This figurine belongs to the well-known north European type E 2 (Nunez M., 1986, 20, Fig. 4). Such figurines are widely known from Finland (Madeneva, Polvijarvi, Hietaniemi) and Karelia (Vigainavolok I, Solomenoe VII), as well as further east in the basin of Lake Onega (Kubenino). This type of small clay plastic art is very characteristic and widely distributed at East Baltic Neolithic Comb-and-Pit Ware sites as well. They are found in the sites of the Lubāna Lowlands, at Särnate, Purciems and elsewhere (Loze I., 1995, 23).

Due to the established and growing exchange in the Neolithic period amber ornaments, slate artefacts and flint spear-heads were distributed in all of this territory as well. It is possible that in southern and central Finland, southern Karelia and north-eastern Russia similar funerary rites were practiced to those observed in Zvejnieki (Hartikka, Vateranta, Tuzozero VI and others). F. Zagorskis and I. Loze have linked these burials to the Comb-and-Pit Ware Culture and its influences in the East Baltic.

Clearly, the use of beautiful, shining amber ornaments was an expression of the artistic intentions of ancient Stone Age people. This tradition, so clearly observed at Zvejnieki burial ground, is evidence that amber was used also in rituals as a symbol of sun and light. These men, with eyes covered by amber rings, could be some sort of leaders or even sorcerers of the community. Amber adornments, especially the rings and discs, could belong to shamans paraphernalia. The tradition of using the amber jewellery as an adornment and cult object in a single burials and collective graves was observed during the Middle and Late Neolithic period (Fig. 8A).

#### Ornamentation on bone, antler and clay artefacts

We can also include among artistic expressions of Stone Age people the ornamentation occurring on hunting equipment and other artefacts provided as grave-goods. Three groups of artefacts can be distinguished: 1) bone spearheads and arrowheads; 2) antler plaques and flat figurines; 3) decoration on pot-shreds found in graves.

Decorated bone arrowheads and spearheads are associated with Late Mesolithic and Early Neolithic burials. Worthy of mention is the spearhead found in collective grave no. 27-31. An adult was placed in the centre, with three children around. A richly ornamented bone spearhead (Fig. 3:1) was found in the pelvic area of one of the child burial (no. 27). The piece was decorated on both sides with vertical and short oblique incisions, forming half of a herring-bone design. Small notches had been cut along the

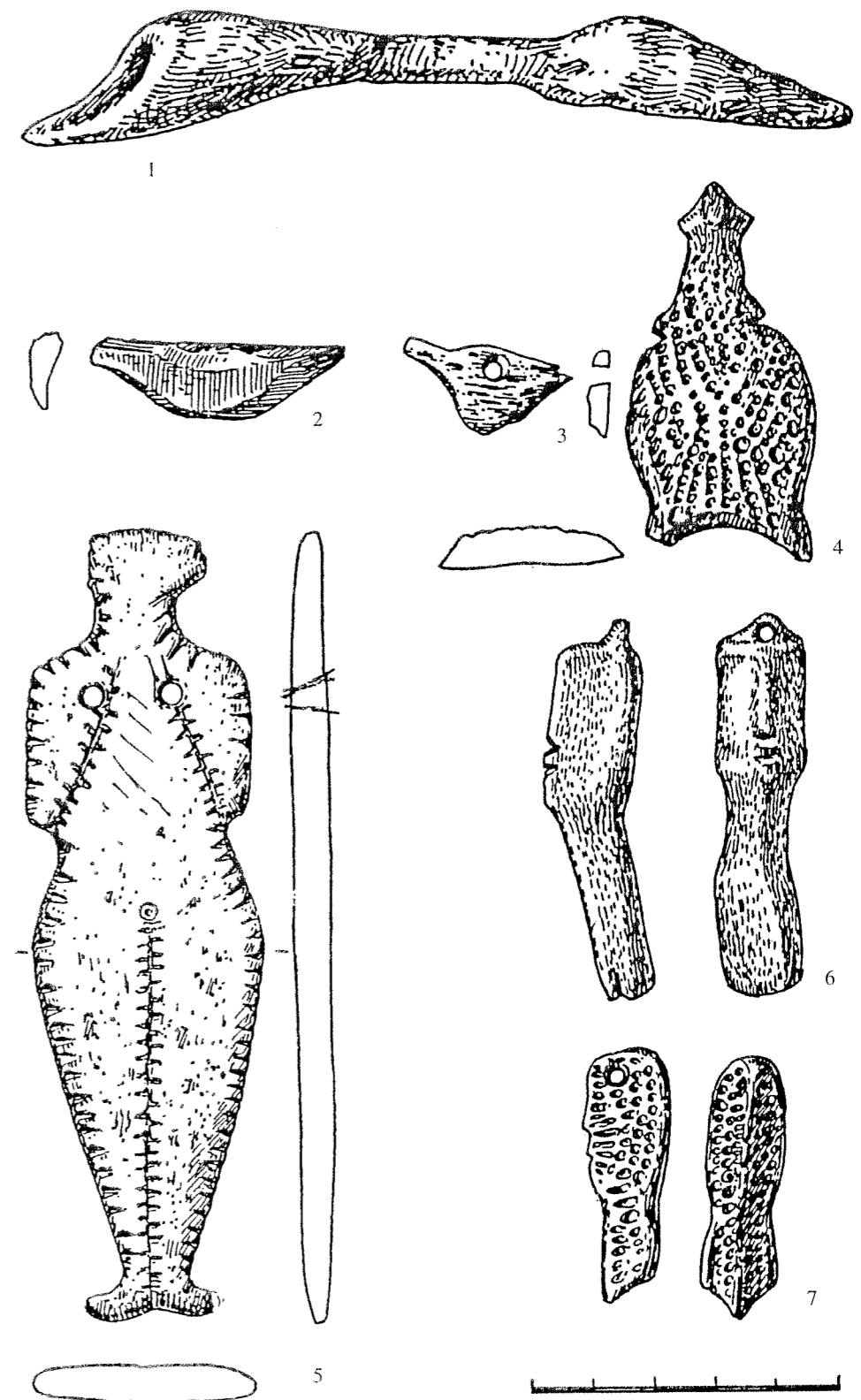


Fig. 5. Bone bird sculptures (1 - 4) and human representations (5 - 7). Grave Nr. 221 (1), Grave Nr. 74 (2), Grave Nr. 228 (3, 4, 6, 7), Grave Nr. 172 (5). Drawings by M. Jänkalniņa

edges of the spearhead. The form of this spearhead has often been taken as representing a fish (Zagorska I., 1994, 136, Fig. 7: 1). A bone dagger (Fig. 3: 5) found in the grave of an adolescent (no. 33) is decorated with irregular incised parallel lines. Three spears with short triangular incisions along the midrib were found with points upwards along with another three undecorated spears at the left arm of an adolescent (grave no. 45). It seems they had been in a leather pouch, which had not been preserved (Figs. 2, 3, 4). Judging from the burial practices and spear forms, all of the mentioned bone spearheads and daggers date from the Late Mesolithic.

More complicated ornamentation is found on the bone spears in grave no. 164 (Fig. 3: 6–9). In this case too, the deceased young man had 11 spears and arrowheads placed at the knees, four of which were covered in short parallel lines or rhombus designs. In one case both sides of the spear were decorated (Fig. 3: 7). This grave has been radiocarbon dated to  $5230 \pm 95$  BP (Ua-15544), i.e. to the very end of the Early Neolithic.

A female representation in the form of an antler plaque is decorated with triangular incisions arranged alternately along both sides of incised lines. This was found in a disturbed child grave (Fig. 5: 5).

As can be seen, the elements used in decorating bone artefacts of the Late Mesolithic–Early Neolithic period are uncomplicated and form fairly simple, rhythmic decoration. However, in contrast to the Middle Mesolithic, when artefact decoration is very rarely observed and careless, the Late Mesolithic–Early Neolithic period Narva culture can be considered as the time when geometric ornamentation flourished.

Very different in character is the decoration of antler plaques (Fig. 6: 1, 2), both of which were obtained in grave no. 186 in the area of the arms of a juvenile (Fig. 6: 3). In this case the grave fill consisted of black earth, the body being placed in a flexed position with the head to the WSW. This grave thus belongs to a group of flexed burials characteristic of the Late Neolithic, examples of which are found in various parts of Zvejnieki burial ground. One of the characteristic features of such flexed burials, apart from offerings of stone axes, are precisely such bone plaques. Various suggestions have been made as to their function, describing them as belt buckles, wrist-guards for archers and otherwise. On the basis of the placement of the plaques on an adolescent burial, F. Zagorskis considered them arm-bands. One of the arm-bands is fragmentary, while the other has been preserved almost intact. It is elongated and broadened on both sides at one end. The plaque is covered in four rows of ornament consisting of bands of zigzags in relief. The ornament on both plaques is identical. Similarly

decorated plaques have also been obtained at Abora I settlement site in the Lubāna Lowlands, at Jurizdika settlement on the shore of Lake Lielais Ludzas, as well as from a single grave at Sarkaņi in the District of Rēzekne. The Sarkaņi grave has also produced a battle-axe (Grasis N., 1996, 60 – 65, Fig. 12; Loze I., 1997, 140, Fig. 4). Ornamented or undecorated antler and bone plaques with perforations for attachment are known from the Late Neolithic over large parts of Europe and are characteristic of burials of the Corded Ware and Battle-Axe culture (Šturms E., 1970, 201 – 202, Taf. 101:1,2). At Zvejnieki burial ground this grave belongs to the final group of Stone Age burials and has been dated to  $4190 \pm 90$  BP (Ua-15545).

Sherds of Middle and Late Neolithic pottery with comb decoration characteristic of these periods have also been found in the cemetery (Zagorskis F., 1987, 78–81). As is known, the decoration of Middle Neolithic Comb-and-Pit as well as the local Piestiņa Ware is very diverse, consisting of many elements forming rich ornamental motifs (Zagorskis F., 1967; Loze I., 1989, 90–115; Fig. 3). A pottery vessel found with juvenile burials 208 and 209 has been preserved intact and is decorated with the design found on typical Comb-and-Pit Ware: bands of oblique comb impressions alternating with rows of small pits. The grave is dated to  $5285 \pm 50$  BP (Ua-3643). Sherds of local porous pottery vessels have been found in several graves, with seven larger body sherds belonging to a single vessel below the head of the woman in grave no. 199. The design consists of fine comb impressions arranged in a herring-bone pattern. This grave is also dated:  $4825 \pm 85$  BP (Ua-15546).

In the completely destroyed grave of an adult individual, no. 137, a type A amphora was found. Graphic reconstruction of this amphora shows characteristic Corded Ware Culture ornamentation – zones of horizontal lines around the middle of the amphora, and shorter vertical lines together with a shorter rows of pits on the shoulder (Loze I., 1997, 140). This burial can perhaps be dated typologically to the second part of the third millennium bc.

Thus, Zvejnieki burial ground has examples of geometrical ornaments on bone from Late Mesolithic/Early Neolithic Narva culture period, representations of main motifs of two ceramic types known during the Middle Neolithic as well as decorations in a changed style on antler plaques and clay amphora, characteristic to East Baltic Corded Ware culture (Fig. 8 C).

#### Figurative sculptures in bone and antler

The Stone Age artistic representations of the entire north European forest zone, due to the uniform natural

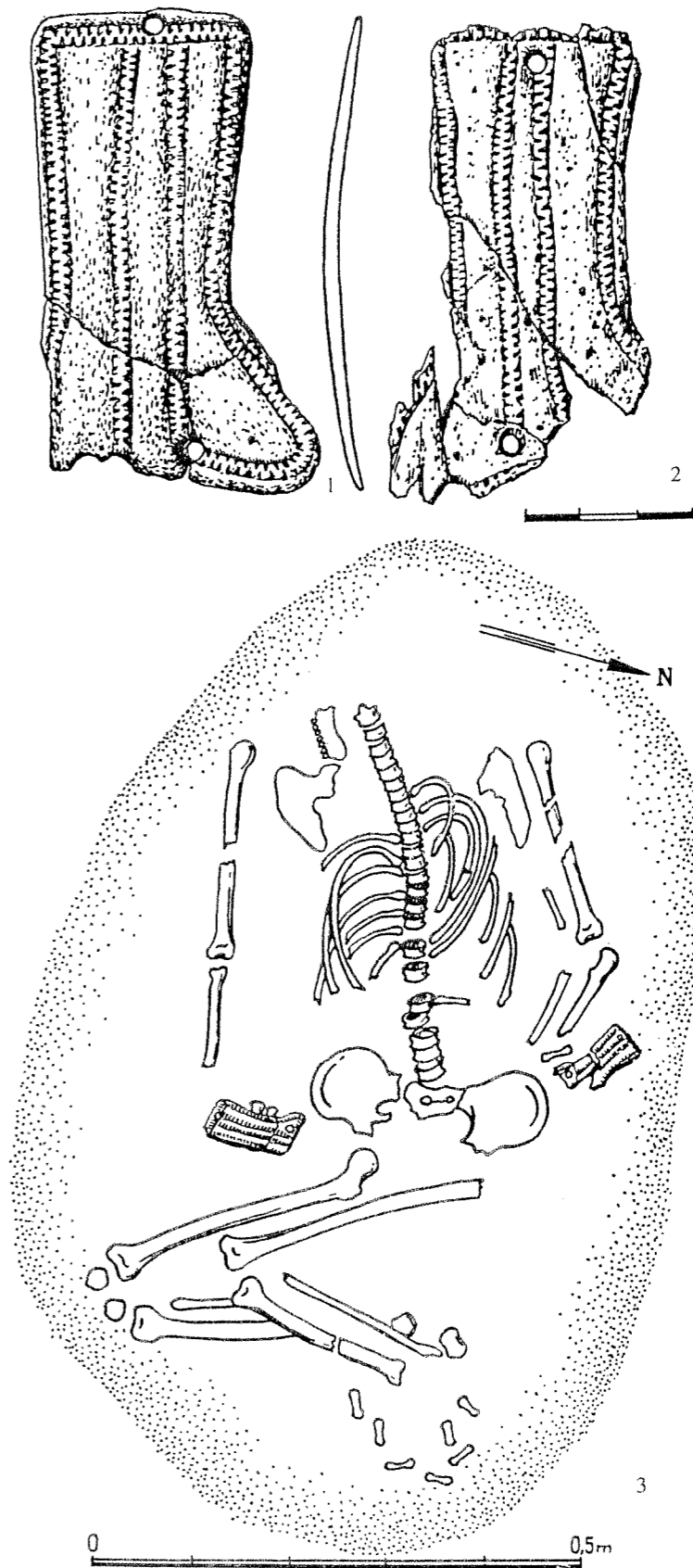


Fig. 6. Bone plates (1, 2) from Zvejnieki burial ground, Grave Nr. 186 (3)  $4190 \pm 90$ : Drawings by M. Jāņkalniņa



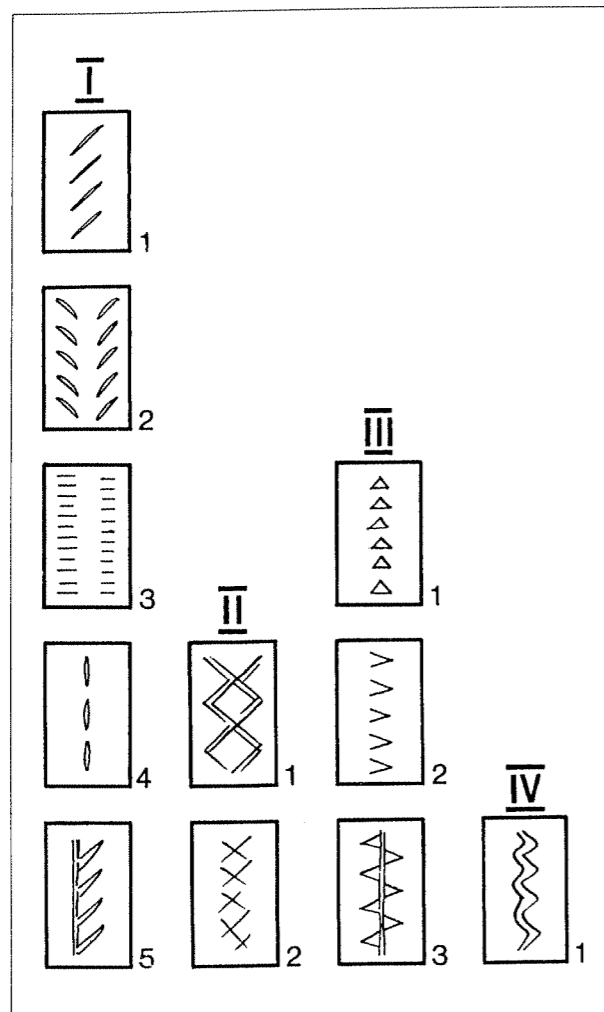


Fig. 7. The elements of ornamentation on bone artefacts, Zvejnieki burial ground

environment, similarity of the economy and common belief system deal with three main subjects – animals, birds and human beings. This applies also to the figurines carved in bone and antler from Zvejnieki burial ground.

Among zoomorphic representations the main foray – elk – prevails. The earliest of all the finds is an elk-head staff or dagger of bone, found in grave no. 57 (Fig. 4:1). The animal's head is very schematically rendered, without any details, showing only the characteristic drooping lower lip. This staff lay in the grave of an elderly woman, above the left leg, with the elk-head pointing downwards. The grave is dated to 6825±60 BP (Ua-3636). In this group we may also include two small bone figurines resembling an elk-head (Fig. 4: 2,3). At least one of them, found in adolescent grave no. 100 and decorated with rhombic

incisions, could have been used as a pendant (Fig. 4: 3).

One more staff with a very realistically formed elk-head was discovered with burial no. 277 by the foot of a male burial. This was part of a collective Middle Neolithic grave. Typical features of the animal-head are accentuated – its hooked nose, two small ears and slightly projecting eyes (Fig. 4:4). One more interpretation is, that it may be the horse head as well. The oblique cut end of the staff is evidence of a wooden shaft that was not preserved. This collective grave could be dated to the last quarter of the fourth millennium bc (5250–5100).

A very similar staff, but representing some other beast, was found with children buried together with an adult (burials 271 and 271a). The head of the animal was elongated, with small, flattened ears, eyes emphasised, protruding nose with the mouth made by a deep incision (Fig. 4: 5). It seems that the sculpture represents an animal well known in the area, perhaps the badger (*Meles meles*) or wolverine (*Gulo gulo*) or otter (*Lutra lutra*). Bones of these animals are represented in burials and at settlement sites of the Neolithic. As already mentioned, a large proportion of necklaces from Neolithic graves consist of badger tooth pendants. The grave with this sculpture is hard to date precisely.

The pieces of art described speak for the significance of these animals in the everyday life of the hunters, keen observation and perfect knowledge of the subject, which enabled the craftsman to produce these true-to-life representations. And in some degree it is linked to hunting magic and death cult too.

Very characteristic of Stone Age art is the tradition of showing only the beast's head as the main part representing the whole animal. It looks as if the primitive artist regarded the beast's head as its most essential part. In northern Europe elk-head staffs are well known beginning with the Late Mesolithic until the Late Neolithic. One of the most ancient is the find at Lake Lehtojärvi in Finnish Lapland of an elk-head carved in pine wood. Next, the famous bone elk-heads of Oleniostrov Island should be mentioned, as well as beautiful Neolithic elk-head staffs from Šventoji 3B site, Lithuania (Rimantienė R., 1979, 106, pav. 85).

It is interesting that these elk-head sculptures are depicted in rock art representations as well. These are found in scenes at Nämforsen and Jiebmaloukta in Alta, mainly dated to the sixth millennium BP. At Nämforsen the elk-head staffs are carried by men standing among herds of elk. At Jiebmaloukta several pairs of men are carrying oversized elk-head staffs as if in a small procession (Lindqvist Ch., 1994, 242). So the rock art and archaeological finds show that staffs with animal heads were connected with cult ceremonies and rites going back to remote antiquity.

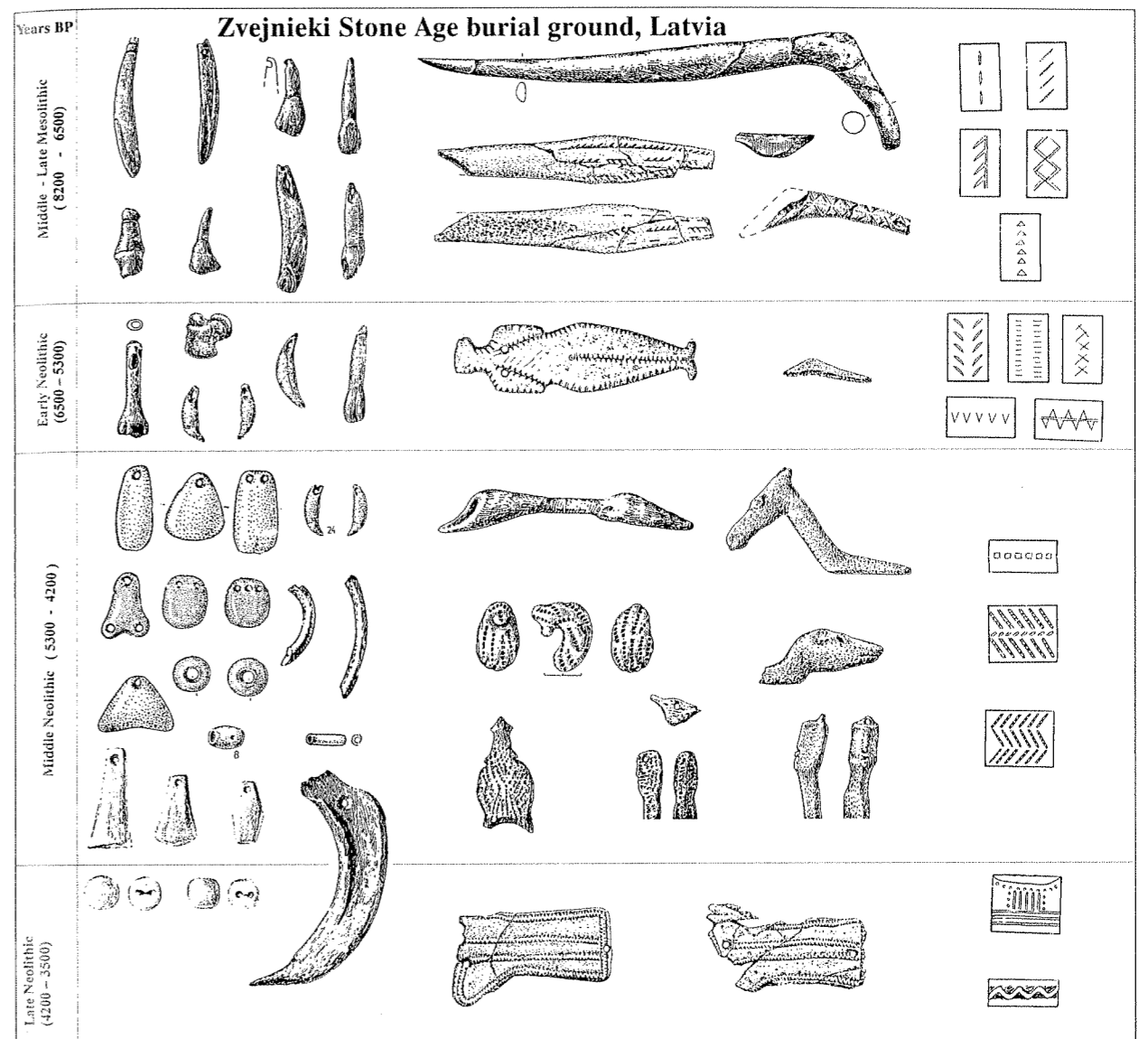


Fig. 8.

Among the bone sculptures there are bird images, too. A quite schematic bird figurine, made from wild boar tusk, was found in Mesolithic grave no. 74. The sculpture was placed behind the adult's head (Fig. 4: 2). In collective grave no. 220–225 a two-headed bird sculpture, perhaps a swan, was found with an adult (burial 221). This sculpture was carved from one piece of bone with heads facing opposite directions (Fig. 5: 1). According to ethnographic data, such two-headed amulets were quite popular in ancient times. They were supposed to protect the owner from both sides and increase the magical properties. In grave no. 228, together with an amber necklace, two bird figurines were recovered. One was more usual, depicting the silhouette of a water-bird (Fig. 5: 3). The second figurine was made from sturgeon bone and perfectly reflects the bird's individual features. It represents a bird, perhaps the black grouse, in a characteristic pose – with protruding neck and head, wings extended and feathers ruffled (Fig. 5: 4). Birds had an important role in seasonal hunting and, of course, the figurines were used as amulets as well. We are apparently seeing the origins of the belief concerning birds as carriers of the human soul to another world. The bird figurine finds in burials has also a close connection of the bird image as the reincarnation of the soul (Gimbutas M., 1991, 195).

Anthropomorphic sculptures in Zvejnieki burial ground were not so numerous: only three were found. A figurine found in the disturbed burial of a small child (no. 172) was made from an antler plate. It represents women in a standing position, arms and legs marked off by distinctive ornamentation, with a flattened head and feet protruding to both sides (Fig. 5: 5). This sculpture was perhaps considered an amulet, representing the care of the mothers for her child. This grave is included in the group of Early Neolithic burials. This female representation is very similar to that found on the southern shore of Lake Ladoga in the collection of Inostrantsev (Gurina N. N., 1961, 138–152, Fig. 19: 14).

Two more human representations were discovered in a male grave, no. 228, thought to be of Middle or Late Neolithic date. This time, as with the animal sculptures, only human heads are depicted. They were carved in antler and in sturgeon bone, triangular in cross-section. The nose and mouth were made with short incisions. The holes in the upper parts of the heads of the sculptures show that they were used as pendants and formed a part of a necklace together with two bird figurines and amber jewellery.

All three human sculptures are entirely schematic, which is a peculiarity of ancient anthropomorphic representations in the art of the Neolithic forest tribes.

## Conclusions

Study of the various artistic expressions at Zvejnieki burial ground reveals the indissoluble link between ancient people and their environment, understanding of processes in the environment and ability to reflect their surroundings, which is characteristic of all of the fisher – hunter – gatherer of the north European forest zone.

It may be a feature specific to Zvejnieki burial ground as a cemetery, but it seems that most of the jewellery and sculptures once represented amulets, protective mascots, devices for hunting magic and ancient cult artifacts, all belonging to burial rites.

Owing to the long existence of Zvejnieki burial ground over four thousand years, this material reflects the course of development of Stone Age art, the belief system and social structure. Radiocarbon datings add credibility to these processes (Table I).

Thus, as evidenced by Zvejnieki burial ground, during the whole Mesolithic and Neolithic period the deceased were buried mainly in a supine position, ochre being used in the grave throughout the whole Stone Age, differing only in degree. Stone settings in the grave constructions are observed mainly in the Late Mesolithic-Early Neolithic period. Individual graves predominate in the earliest period, the number of collective burials increasing significantly during the Middle – Late Neolithic Stage.

The main expressions of the artistic intentions of the ancient inhabitants were decorations of animal tooth – pendants, amber jewellery, ornamentation on bone and antler artifacts and separate zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figurines, formed in clay or carved in bone and antler (Fig. 8). The true symbolic meaning and significance of the pieces, has, of course, been lost to us over the millennia (Larsson L., 1991, 33–34). We can be sure only that they show the firm belief of the ancient inhabitants in the life beyond the grave and strongly observed death rituals.

In any case, some basic observations may be made, based on the materials from Zvejnieki Stone Age burial ground (Fig. 8).

Thus, the main ornaments given to deceased in the **Middle Mesolithic (seventh millennium bc)** are pendants of animal – elk, aurochs, roe deer and wild boar – teeth. In the **Late Mesolithic (sixth and the first half of the fifth millennium bc)** in addition to the previously mentioned species, tooth – pendants of wild horse are also found. During this stage of the Mesolithic the most richly adorned among deceased were children. The number of tooth – pendants found in child graves is twice that of adult burials. The grave inventories of child graves also include spearheads and daggers, decorated in rhythmic sequence,

Table I

Table of the new radiocarbon datings obtained at the Uppsala (Ua) and Oxford (Ox) AMS-facilities. Skeletal remains from Zvejnieki burial ground.

Lab. no.	Sample	C 14 age BP	C 13 0/00 vs PDB
1 Ua - 3634	Zvejnieki, gr. 305	8240±70	- 21.59
2 Ua - 3635	Zvejnieki, gr. 39	6775±55	- 23/01
3 Ua - 3636	Zvejnieki, gr. 57	6825±60	- 22.97
4 Ua - 3637	Zvejnieki, gr. 85	6460±60	- 23.17
5 Ua - 3638	Zvejnieki, gr. 2	6900±65	- 20.07
6 Ua - 3639	Zvejnieki, gr. 124	5280±55	- 23.03
7 Ua - 3640	Zvejnieki, gr. 142	2370±65	- 21.63
8 Ua - 3641	Zvejnieki, gr.185	5230±65	- 23.03
9 Ua - 3642	Zvejnieki, gr.300	5690±45	- 22.81
10 Ua - 3643	Zvejnieki, gr. 206	5285±50	- 23.47
11 Ua - 3644	Zvejnieki, gr. 154	7730±70	- 23.33
12 Ua - 3645	Zvejnieki, gr. 282	5100±65	- 22.53
13 OxA-5967	Zvejnieki, gr. 122	6395±75	- 22.9
14 OxA-5968	Zvejnieki, gr. 153	5745±65	- 22.7
15 OxA-5969	Zvejnieki, gr. 170	8150±80	- 21.8
16 OxA-5970	Zvejnieki, gr. 182	6005±75	- 22.7
17 OxA-5985	Zvejnieki, gr. 210	5660±45	- 23.3
18 OxA-5986	Zvejnieki, gr. 225	5110±45	- 21.2
19 OxA-5987	Zvejnieki, gr. 251	6195±60	- 24.0
20 OxA-5988	Zvejnieki, gr. 252	5410±90	- 23.3
21 Ua - 14688	Zvejnieki, gr. 76	6900±75	- 21.0
22 Ua - 15544	Zvejnieki, gr. 164	5230±95	- 24.0
23 Ua - 15545	Zvejnieki, gr. 186	4190±90	- 21.0
24 Ua - 15546	Zvejnieki, gr. 199	4825±85	- 21.0

and some decorated bone pendants. Among the adult burials only few male (Nr. 170) or female (Nr. 57) graves are richly adorned. Thus we may conclude that there were some egalitarian traits in the lifestyle of the earliest inhabitants, the main care being devoted to small children and juveniles.

In the **Early Neolithic (second half of the fifth and the fourth millennium bc)** the previous art traditions were continued, characterized by tooth – pendants, ornamented hunting weapons and a beautiful female sculpture, laid in the grave of a small child (Nr. 172). The difference is in

the distribution of grave goods. The greatest attention is now given to adornment of males. Thus, a young man was buried with eleven spear – heads, four of which were ornamented. The greatest number of animal tooth – pendant ornaments were found in male graves, now enriched by dog, badger, wolf, fox and marten teeth. Here we must mention the unusually richly decorated head – dresses with hanging ear flaps, found in four male graves (132, 153, 164 and 300).

The situation changes markedly in the **Middle and Late Neolithic (late fourth and third millennium bc)**

with the appearance of the Comb – and – Pit Ware Culture and its influences. Tooth – pendant ornaments are found less commonly and have been replaced by amber ornaments. These amber ornaments are supplemented with both schematic and very realistic examples of plastic art: bent clay figurine (E 2 type), and bird, animal and human sculptures carved in antler and bone. A characteristic feature is the substitution of the whole object by a part, in this case only the head. Our notions regarding Neolithic art are supplemented by ornamentation on pot – sherds found in graves typical of Comb – and – Pit Ware and porous pottery of local origin.

It should be emphasised that in the Middle and Late Neolithic male graves quite overshadow female and even child graves in terms of the number of grave goods and pieces of art. Certain outstanding sculptures, such as amulet – pendants in the form of bird and human heads and the beautiful staff with elk – head representation have been found in a male graves (228, 277 and others). This is not to mention the tradition of covering the eyes of the sorcerers or shamans of the group with amber discs.

In the Late Neolithic (second half of the third millennium bc) richly decorated arm plaques so characteristic of Corded Ware burials have been found in a juvenile flexed burial. Some of amber ornaments, pendants of wild boar tusk and early type amphoras with characteristic decoration were grave goods in adult graves.

The growing importance and dominance of adornments and pieces of art as grave goods in male burials in the Neolithic period seems not to be coincidental, but rather a definite tendency in the development of Stone Age society.

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## ELK FIGURINES IN THE STONE AGE ART OF THE BALTIC AREA

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*Abstract: the article deals with elk figurines in the Stone Age art of the Baltic area. It aims at revealing the manner and types of depiction as well as tries to grasp the function and chronology of objects representing the elk and their relationship with other art objects.*

The subject of this article is the art of the Stone Age. Its scope is confined to the Baltic area<sup>1</sup>, though for the sake of comparison it takes account of the material from as far as the Ural Mountains in the east, i. e. it includes Russia's European part<sup>2</sup>. It is easy to notice that Elk figurines are rather frequent in this material. They are made of horn, bone, wood, stone, amber, clay. It leaves impression that elk figurines may be counted as one of the most frequent and characteristic art objects of this area in the Stone Age. Is the representation of the elk really so frequent and important, what are its distinctive features, its distribution in time and space, its relationship with other art objects?

Elk figurines have been known to archaeologists since the beginning of the 20th c. It was boat-axes, made of Olonets schist, the end of which represented the elk's head. Probably these artefacts amount to the greatest

<sup>1</sup> In this article the Baltic Area means the territory of the countries bordering on the Baltic Sea: Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Karelia, north west Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Kaliningrad-Königsberg district, northern parts of Poland and Germany.

<sup>2</sup> Russia's European part north of the 50° northern latitude.

group of elk figurines in the Baltic area for they are widespread in Finland, Karelia and even Sweden. Although all of them were found accidentally their form and circumstances of finding (height above sea level) allow to attribute them to the Late Neolithic period and to relate them to the influence of Corded Ware culture (Nordman C.A., 1937; Carpelan Ch., 1975).

First of all we take into account the figurines which were found at archaeological excavations and were more or less precisely dated. The most numerous collection of elk figurines was found in the burial ground of Olenij Ostrov, Karelia (Russia). There is now no doubt that this burial ground dates from the Mesolithic (Price T.D. & Jacobs K., 1990). The three elk figurines decorate the ends of curved staves. One figurine formed the handle of a dagger. Miniature heads are all that remains of the other four figurines and it is, therefore, uncertain what utensils they decorated (Гурина Н.Н., 1956: 113-220, рис.113-119.). All the figurines were found in the graves. It is worthy to distinguish the best-preserved staff with carved elk head, 40 cm long, from grave No 153. Its figurine represents uniform stylization, i. e. an angular silhouette and the eyes and ears reduced to geometrical forms (Fig. 6: 2). Another staff of the same length was found in grave No 56. Its shape is rounded and it looks like that an artisan attempted to imitate the nature (Fig. 6:1). The same rounded forms are characteristic of the end of a smaller staff and of the shaft of a dagger as well as of the three

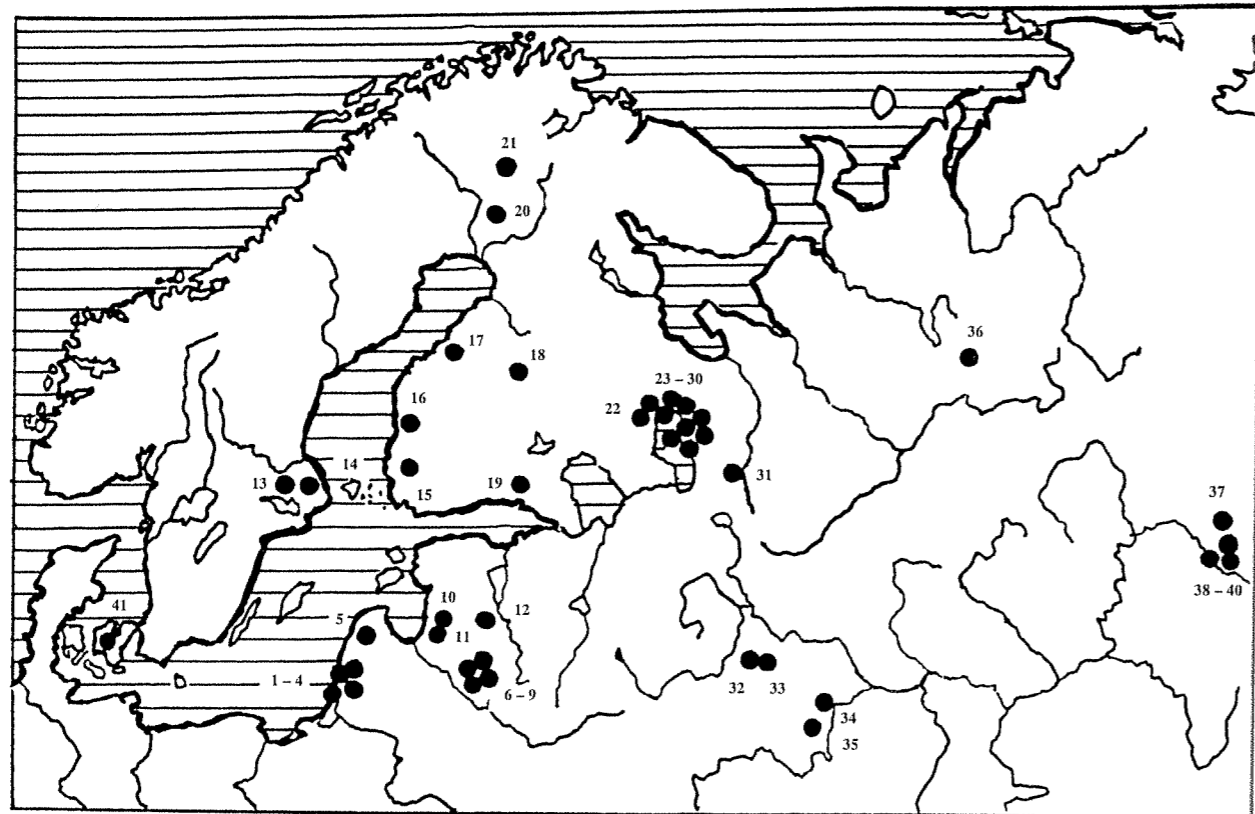


Fig. 1. Places with finds of elk representation. 1, 2 – Šventoji 3B (Rimantienė R., 1979), 3 – Šventoji 23 (Rimantienė R., 1979), 4 – Šventoji 4 (Rimantienė R., 1996), 5 – Sarnate (Ванкина Л.В., 1970), 6 – Malmuta (Лозе И.А., 1969), 7, 8 – Abora I (Лозе И.А., 1979), 9 – Piestina (Лозе И.А., 1969), 10 – Rinnukalns (Лозе И.А., 1969), 11 – Zvejnieki (Zagorskis F., 1987), 12 – Villa (Янитс Л.Ю. 1973), 13 – Nysättra (Almgren O., 1906), 14 – Alunda (Almgren O., 1911), 15 – Huittinen (Nordman C.A., 1937), 16 – Noormarkku (Salo U., 1967), 17 – Korttesjärvi (Nordman C.A., 1937), 18 – Maaninka (Ailio J., 1912), 19 – Säkijärvi (Almgren O., 1911), 20 – Lehtojärvi (Erä-Esko A., 1958), 21 – Kittilä (Kivikoski E., 1935), 22 – Padozero (Almgren O., 1911), 23-30 – Olenij Ostrov (Гурина Н.Н., 1956), 31 – Modlona (Ошибкина С.В., 1978), 32, 33 – Zamosťe 2 (Lozovski V.M., 1996), 34, 35 – Volodary (Архипов Г.А., 1972; Вайнер И.С., 1973), 36 – Vis I (Burov G.M., 1985), 37 – Gorbunovo (Единг Д.Н., 1940), 38-40 – Šigir (Единг Д.Н., 1940), 41 – Egemark (Mathiasen T., 1952). After Carpelan Ch., 1975

fragments of miniature heads. Thus, we may suppose that two stylistic trends are discernable already in the material from the burial ground of Olenij Ostrov. The geometrical and the rounded styles of depiction are reflected in all the figurines of the elk in the Baltic area and Russia's European part from as early as the end of the Stone Age. A stave with carved elk head found on the Lithuanian seashore (Rimantienė R., 1979: 106, pav. 85, 86) in the Šventoji site 3B dates approximately 2583 B.C. (Fig. 4, 5) (Rimantienė R., 1996a: 149). The stave from Šventoji matches the Olenij Ostrov's find in its geometrical stylization and in addition its surface is covered with thin incisions making up a net-like fracture. Another similar sculptural stave was found in the same site but it was not finished off. Its angular silhouette of the head of an animal of the deer family is

formed but not accomplished. We may assume that it was not the final shape since the surface of the stave was not entirely ground and the marks of the incisions were not evened up (Rimantienė R., 1979:106, pav. 85, 86). A smaller and earlier (3510 B.C.) variant of the above-mentioned sculptures was found in the Šventoji site No 4 (Fig. 3) (Rimantienė R., 1996:56, pav. 43: 2). A fragment of a miniature amber figurine representing the elk's head was found in the Šventoji site No 23 (Fig. 8: 6) (Rimantienė R., 1979:106, pav. 87:1.) dating approximately 2310 B.C. (Rimantienė R., 1996a: 149). Another amber figurine dating from approximately the same period, i. e. the middle – the second half of the 3rd millennium B.C. was found in building No 3 of the Sarnate (Latvia) site (Fig. 8:7). This building belongs to the Comb-and-Pit-marked Pottery culture (Ванкина

Л.В., 1970: 111, 137, рис.144, табл. LV:2.). One more zoomorphic bone figurine, most likely representing the elk's head, was also found in Latvia in the mid-Neolithic site of Piestina (Fig. 8:2) (Лозе И.А., 1969: 37-38, рис. 3:1). According to its form it belongs to the rounded type of depiction. The forms and finding circumstances of other different figurines make it likely to date them to the second half of the 3rd millennium B.C. – the beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C. One of them made of horn was found in the Zvejnieki burial ground (Latvia) in grave No 277, which is dated to the turn of the 3rd and 2nd millennia (Fig. 7:6). By the way, this grave contained bronze rings which were unique in this burial ground (Zagorskis F., 1987: 57, 76, 77, att. 21,

27, tab. XXX: 6.). The figurine from this grave follows the rounded pattern of elk head from Olenij Ostrov. Two very small heads which probably decorated implements were found in eastern Latvia, the environments of Lake Lubana, the Abora site I dating 1900±70 – 1890±100 B.C. (Fig. 8:3) (Лозе И.А., 1979: 112, 121, табл. LII: 7, 8). The geometrical stylization of angular lines is represented by a figurine made of horn, which was found in the Modlona site situated at Lake Vožе, east of Lake Onega, north-west Russia (Fig.7:2). The site dates 1980±150 and 2380±130 B.C. (Ошибкина С.В., 1978: 122-124, рис. 19, табл. 51:1). A little worse-preserved elk head made of horn was found in eastern Estonia in the Villa site which dates to the second half

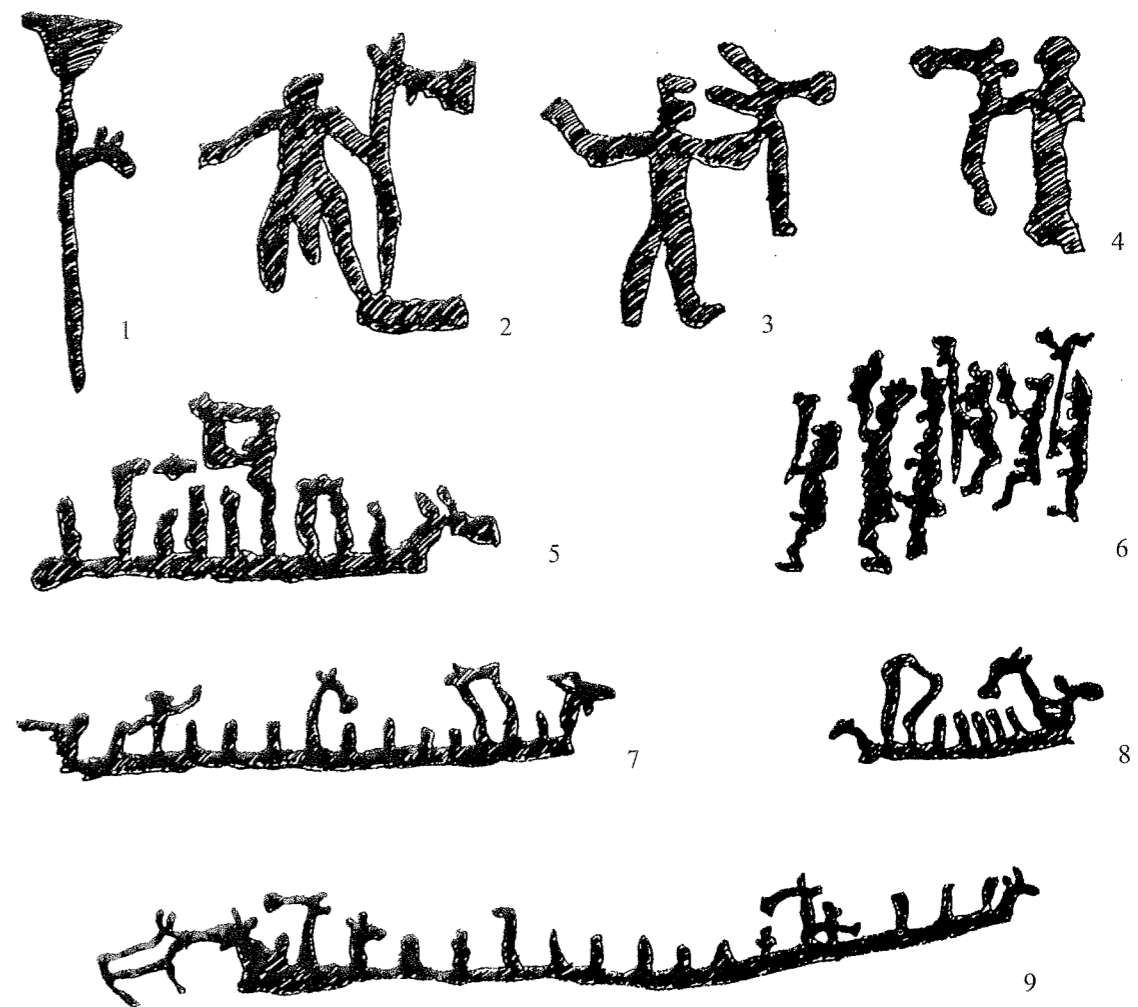


Fig. 2. Scandinavian and Karelian rock-engravings with representations of elk head. 1 – Karekij Nos (Равдоникс В.А., 1939), 2-4 – Nämforsen (Hallström G., 1960), 5 – Karekij Nos (Равдоникс В.А., 1939), 6 – Zalavruga (Савватеев Ю.А., 1973), 7-9 – Nämforsen (Hallström G., 1960). After Carpelan Ch., 1975.



Fig. 3. Stave with carved elk head from Šventoji 4.  
Photographed by  
S. Butrimienė

of the III millennium B.C. (Fig. 7:4) (Янитс Л.Ю., 1973: 202-209, табл. 60: 9). The end of wooden skis depicting the elk's head is to be attributed to the earliest figurines of this kind. This artefact was found in the European part of northern Russia, the Republic of Komi, between the upper reaches of the rivers Pečiora and Vyčegda, in the Mesolithic site Vis I (Fig. 7: 1) (8300-7000 B.P.) (Burov G.M., 1985). Its head is very similar to carvings from the burial ground of Olenij Ostrov. Their common features are a prolonged muzzle, a protruded lip and carved ears. The decorating of skis seems to have been a common practice in the Stone Age and that opinion may be supported by one find from the site of Noormarkku situated in the vicinity of town Pori in western Finland (Fig. 7: 5) (Salo U., 1967). The wood of these skis was dated  $3530 \pm 110$  B.P., i. e. 1674-1454 B.C. According to conventional chronology of the Finnish Stone Age it is the final phase of the *Pyheensilta* period of the Late Comb-Marked Pottery culture and the beginning of the *Kiukais* culture. The most characteristic features of elk are exposed in this figurine as they are in its above-mentioned counterparts. In respect of its shape it is rather close to the geometrical figurines from Olenij Ostrov and Šventoji. Another elk figurine was accidentally found in the Lehtojärvi site, not far from Rovaniemi, north Finland (Fig. 7: 3) and according to its finding place it was geologically dated to the period of the Litorina Sea (6000-3500 B.C.) (Erä-Esko A., 1958). Other two very abstract heads, each with a shaft-hole, were found in the Zamostje site, north

of Moscow, between the rivers of Volga and Oka (Fig. 6: 3, 4) (Lozovski V.M., 1996, fig. 44). They, too, date from the Mesolithic period. There are also more figurines representing the head, or all the body, of the elk but they are either not dated or dated approximately by referring to typological similarities with the already mentioned figurines or by referring to other criteria. Here we should mention finds from the peat-bogs of Šigir and Gorbunovo, western Siberia (Russia) (Единг Д.Н., 1940, рис. 35, 40, 41 - 45). Also the two figurines, each made of a slab of bone, depicting the silhouette and the head of elk respectively. Both these figurines were found in Latvia, the one at the mouth of the Malmuta river (Fig. 8: 4), eastern Latvia, the other in the site of Rinnukalns (Fig. 8: 5) (Лозе И.А., 1969: 37-38, рис. 3:3, 4). The mention should also be made of a ladle made of pine wood, whose end of the shaft depicts the elk's head. This find originated from the Kittilä site, Laplandia (Kivikoski E., 1935). An amber figurine from the Egemark site, Denmark, on account of its surface decoration must be held as belonging to the Mesolithic culture of Maglemose (Fig. 8: 1) (Mathiassen T., 1952) and clay figurines discovered in Åloppe, Nysätra parish, Uppland (Sweden) (Janzon G.O., 1983:1, fig.2:1,2). For the sake of comparison we may refer to stone and bone figurines from the Volodary settlement site, Gorkij district (Russia) (Архипов Г.А., 1972; Вайнер И.С., 1973), a figurine made of horn from Волше Olenij Ostrov, Murmansk district (Russia) (Гурина Н.Н., 1953), bronze figurines from the sites of Kruhovicze,

Fig. 5. Stave with carved elk head from Šventoji 3B.  
Photographed by  
S. Butrimienė



Fig. 4. Detail of stave with carved elk head from Šventoji 3B.  
Photographed by  
S. Butrimienė



Poland (Przeworski S., 1929), and of Sejma, Gorkij district (Russia) (Бадеп О.Н., 1970).

The above-mentioned specimens of the figurines depicting the elk or, as in most cases, its head (*pars pro toto*) can be broken down into the following groups. The first group includes artefacts representing a sceptre<sup>3</sup>. The second and the third groups include those artefacts, which are either functional or miniature ones. The staves with elk heads at the end (Olenij Ostrov; Šventoji 3B, 4; Zamostje) and axe-shaped stone artefacts with a shaft-hole, which depict the elk's head at their end, are to be attributed to the type representing a sceptre. The functional group includes the sculptural carvings of elk heads, which decorate undoubtedly functional artefacts such as the skis (Vis I, Noormarkku), the daggers (Olenij Ostrov), and the ladles (Kittilä). The miniature group is represented by the pendants (Sarnate, Malmuta) and by the other small heads that seem likely to have been parts of some bigger functional artefact (Olenij Ostrov, Abora I). They could also be produced as individual figurines whose function is hard to ascertain nowadays (Nysätra). The possible function of elk figurines in the Stone Age could be somewhat elucidated by taking into account the circumstances of their finding and the rock-engravings

<sup>3</sup> This term is an equivalent of the term *bâton de commandement* used to identify horn artefacts with a hole from the Paleolithic period of Western Europe, see The Penguin Dictionary of Archaeology. Penguin Books, 1982, p. 37.

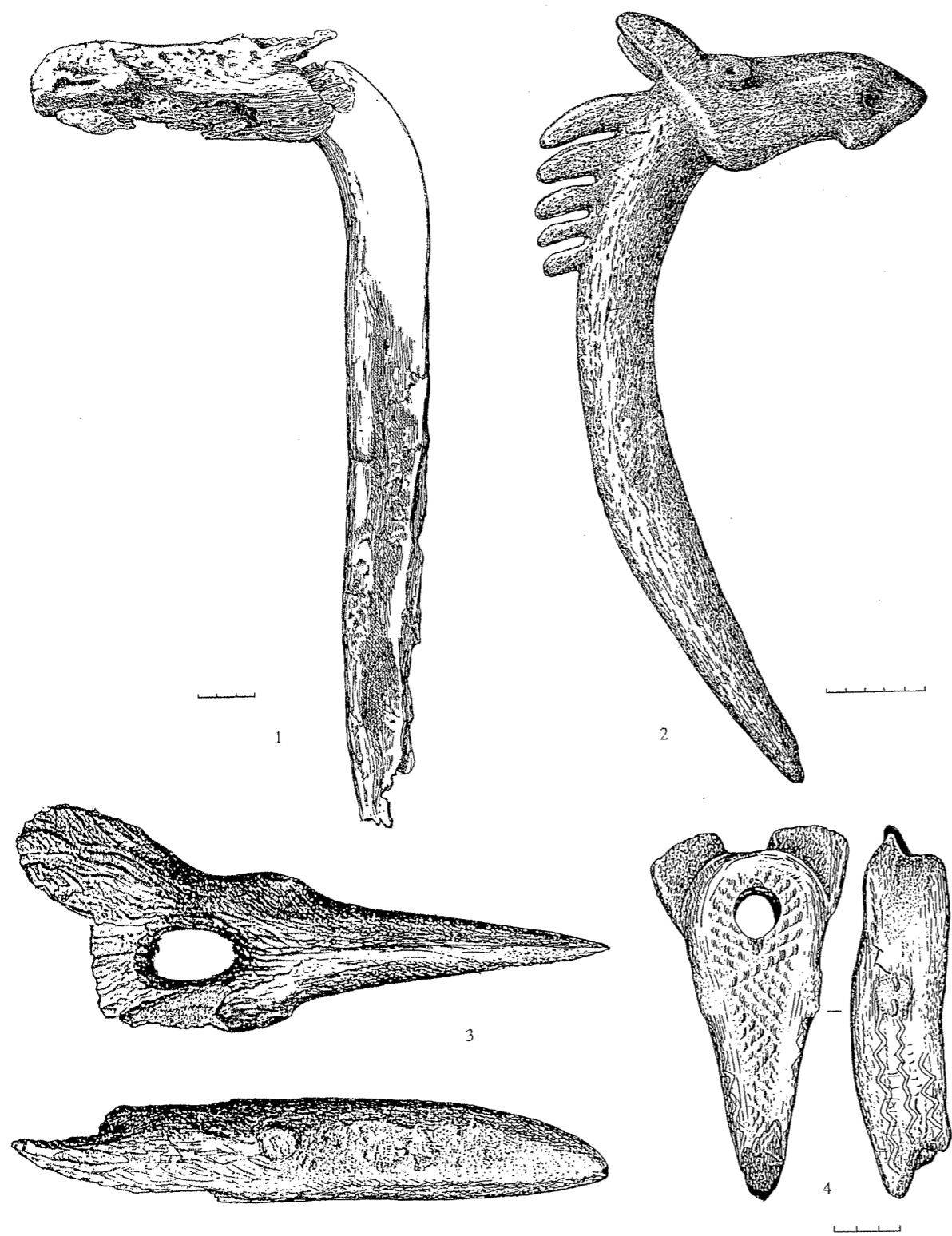


Fig. 6. Elk figurines from: 1, 2 - Olenij Ostrov (antler), after Гурина Н.Н., 1956, рис. 113, 114; 3, 4 - Zamostje 2 (antler), after Lozovski V.M., 1996, Fig. 44

(petroglyphs) from Scandinavia and Karelia. Both the great elk head staves from the burial ground of Olenij Ostrov are the most valuable in this respect. They were found in multiple burials beside the men's skeletons. Grave No 152-153, heads oriented NE, contained the man's skeleton at the chest of which (on the left side) there was the staff whose elk head was laid parallel to the shoulder. The skeleton of the average age man was laid face upwards. The skeleton of a woman of a similar age (No 152) was laid on her back nearby, but her head was turned toward the man (Гурина Н.Н., 1956: 379-380, рис. 76). The second great staff was found in the triple burial No 55-56-57. It was laid on the left side of the man's skull. The man's skeleton lied in a supine position, the other two skeletons lying on both sides were those of women. The latter were put on their sides so that their faces and chests were turned toward the man. A bone figurine of snake was found beside the left shoulder of the female skeleton (No 57). All the three skeletons were laid on a stone pavement and copiously covered with ochre (Гурина Н.Н., 1956: 379-380, рис. 29). Quadruple burial No 275-278 of the Zvejnieki burial ground contained a staff with elk head on its end. This staff lay beside the left leg of the man's skeleton (No 227) which lay by the side of the grave and was equipped with plenty of grave goods (Zagorskis E., 1987: 57, 76, 77, att. 21, 27, tab. XXX: 6). The finished staff from the Šventoji site 3B and the smaller staff from the 4th finding place of the Šventoji site had holes at the end of the shaft and this may indicate that they could have been carried "head upside down". The small amber head from Sarnate was found in the building (Ванкина Л.В., 1970: 111, 137, рис.144, табл. LV:2). The circumstances of finding the great staves allow suggesting that they belonged to the prominent men of the community. They may either have been priests or chieftains of community or they performed both functions at the same time. Unfortunately, only hypotheses can be put forward in this phase of research. The finding of the staves with carved elk heads in settlements means that they were not considered primarily as grave goods. Ch. Carpelan has found a good deal of examples from Scandinavian (Nämforsen) and Karelian (Zalavruka) rock-engravings which represent either humans holding staves with carved elk heads or humans with the same staves sitting in ships, whose sterns represent elk heads (Carpelan Ch., 1975, Bild 2; Савварев Ю.А., 1973: 284-300, рис. 8) (Fig. 2). I suppose that they are symbols of some religion or world outlook, which were used while hunting, fishing, and travelling, at war and elsewhere. Unfortunately we

are unable to establish a hierarchical position and significance of elk symbol in the world outlook of a given Stone Age community. As it is obvious from specimens provided, elk figurines vary in manner of depiction and in their scale. However, it is not clear whether elk depiction was the most important element in the world outlook of Stone Age people since the Stone Age material also includes figurines other than those of elk. We know figurines representing a human being, a bear, a wild boar, a waterbird, a seal, and a fish. If we compare sculptural and graphic depictions of the Baltic area regarding the depicted objects we will be able to conclude that elk constitutes a considerable but not the largest part (diagram 1). Human depictions are the most numerous. Less numerous are figurines of bear, followed by elk figurines which only slightly exceed in number waterbird figurines. Such a comparison, of course, is not flawless, since it brings together the finds from a huge territory and from the period of seven thousand years. But this was determined by such causes as scarcity of precisely dated finds and rarity of art objects, which impedes reliable conclusions being drawn concerning the aesthetics in a specified place and time and regarding the most important objects of depiction. The stylistic evolution of forms shows that there were no essential changes in manner of depiction from the earliest Mesolithic figurines of Olenij Ostrov and Vis I to the late neolithic-bronze skis from Noormarkku (see table). The geometric and the rounded stylization from Olenij Ostrov is reflected in the late neolithic elk figurines from the settlement sites of Šventoji, Modlona, Sarnate and from the Zvejnieki burial ground. The same is observable in the finds from the Šigir and Gorbunovo peat-bogs. We may distinguish only one subgroup. It is so extremely abstract images that it is hard to say if they really represent the elk. Such a subgroup would include the finds from Zamostje (Fig. 6: 3, 4), the bone figurines from the Villa settlement site (Fig. 7: 4), and from the mouth of the Malmuta river (Loze I., 1970, tabula 2, att. 6: 19, 20), the miniature heads from the Piestina, Abora, Rinnukalns settlement sites (Fig. 8: 2, 3, 5), the flat figurine from the mouth of the Malmuta (Fig. 8: 4) (Лозе И.А., 1969: 37-38, рис. 3:1-4; 5:1), the small "copy" of the great staves from the 4th finding place of Šventoji (Fig. 3) (Rimantienė R., 1996: 56, pav. 43: 2).

Ecofacts, i. e. the range of game animals, which is established by analyzing the bones, found in a given site, may help us to define indirectly the position the elk occupied in every day life of human beings of the

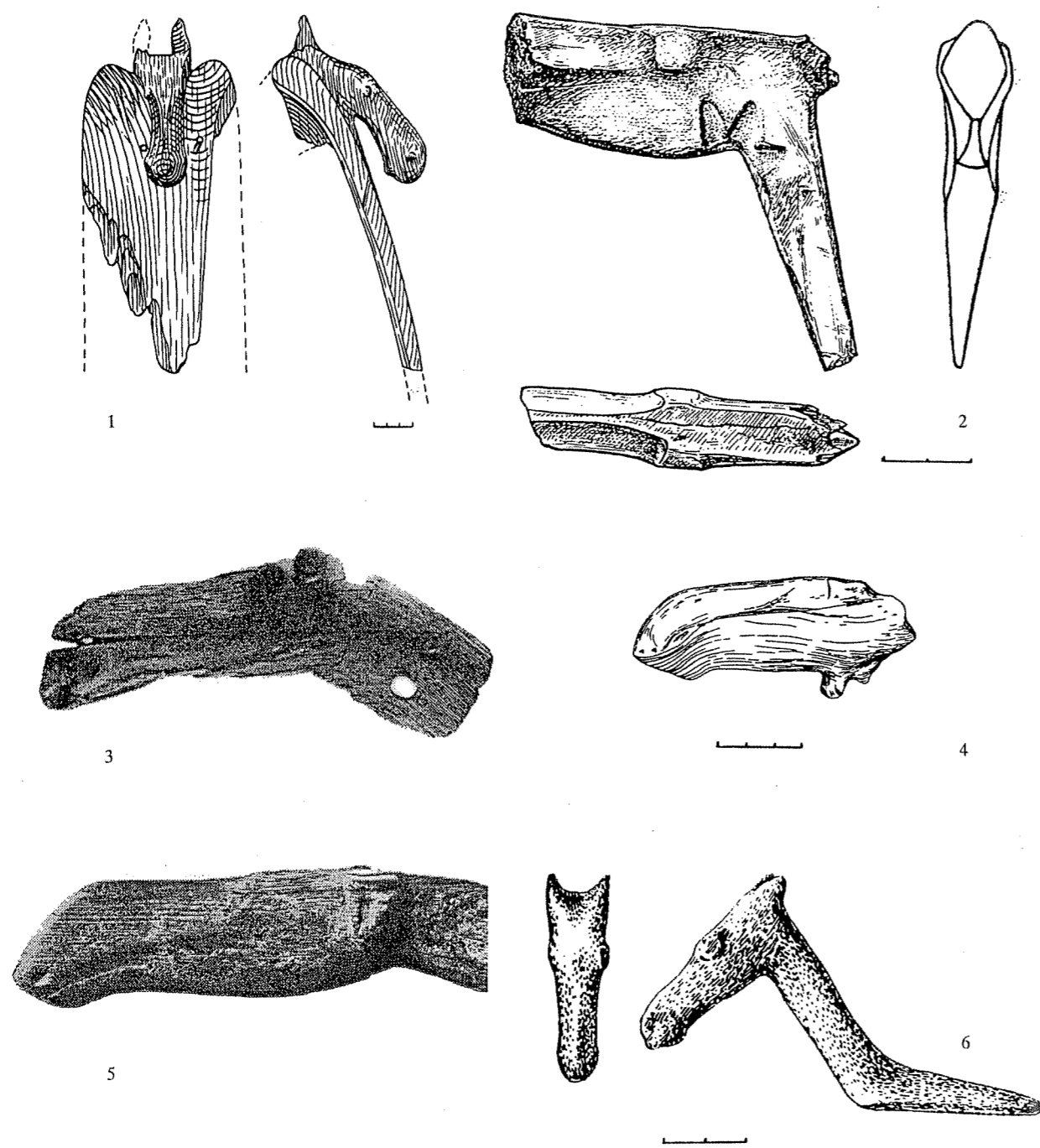


Fig. 7. Elk figurines from: 1 - Vis I (wooden), after Burov G.M., 1985, Fig. 2; 2 - Modlona (bone), after Ошибкина С.В., табл. 60: 9; 3 - Lehtojärvi (wooden), after Erä-Esko A., 1958, Abb. 1; 4 - Villa (antler), after Янитс Л.Ю., 1973, табл. 60: 9; 5 - Noormarkku (wooden), after Salo U. Abb. 1, 3; 6 - Zvejnieki (antler), after Zagorskis F., 1987, tab. XXX: 6, att. 27

Stone Age. In carrying out such a comparison we will rely on data from sites where elk figurines were also found, i. e. the Olenij Ostrov burial ground, osteological material from the Šventoji settlement sites 3B and 23. These data suggest that elk bones occupy a significant but not an overwhelming position among bones of other wild animals. In Olenij Ostrov the elk (22%) and the reindeer share the second position while the beaver (30%) occupies the first (diagram 2). It is worthy to mention that reindeer and beaver figurines were not found there. The bones from the Šventoji 3B settlement site are represented in such percentages: wild boar 57%, deer 15%, roe 12%, beaver 7%, elk only 6% (diagram 3). Figurines other than those of elk and human being were not found in this site. The ecofacts from the Šventoji settlement site 23, where the fragments of the amber elk figurine and the small wooden head of bird were found, demonstrate that the bones of wild boar (24%) and of aurochs (23%) predominate over the bones of elk (16%), which occupy the third position (diagram 4). This succinct comparison shows that in household economy the elk was one of important wild animals among other such as wild boar, beaver, deer, and aurochs. However, figurines other than those of elk were not found in the above-mentioned sites and on the whole they are very scarce in the Stone Age art of the Baltic area. Even such scanty evidence proves that frequency of elk figurines was not determined exceptionally by importance of this animal in economy of a given settlement. The significance attached to elk seems to have depended on some ideological considerations which remain obscure to us so far.

We would like to repeat the main points, which were revealed in the course of dealing with elk figurines in the Stone Age art of the Baltic area. Elk heads made of stone, horn, bone, wood, amber, clay, constitute a considerable part among Stone Age art objects of this area. Not all of them were found at archeological

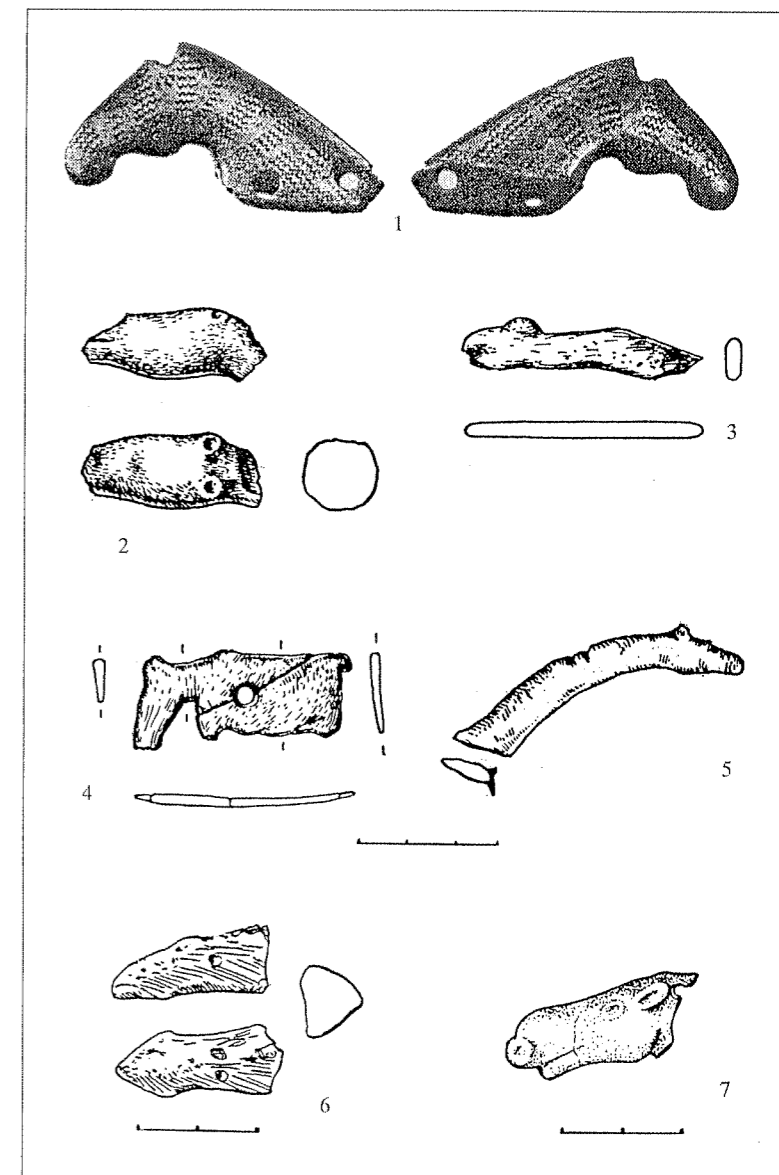


Fig. 8. Elk figurines from: 1 - Egemark (amber), after Mathiassen T., 1952, Fig. 1; 2 - Piestina (antler), 3 - Abora I (bone), 4 - Malmuta (bone), 5 - Rinnukalns (bone), after (2-5) Лозс, И.А., 1969, рис. 3: 1-4; 6 - Šventoji 23 (amber), after Rimantienė R., 1979, pav. 87:1; 7 - Sarnate (amber), after Ванкина Л.В., 1970, табл. LV: 2

excavations and, consequently, not all of them are precisely dated. Their form and stylization are of little avail in dating them, because the same stylistic features are common to Mesolithic and neolithic artefacts alike. It is possible to distinguish the following groups according to the stylistic form of art objects: the geometrical, the rounded, and the extremely abstract. The position of staves with carved elk head indicates that they were the property of the prominent men of the community. Elk head figurines were also used as

TABLE 1. CHRONOLOGICAL DISTRIBUTION OF ELK FIGURINES

Calendar years B.C.*	Radiocarbon years B.P.*	Chronozones*	ELK FIGURINES**	The finding places (the numbers according to map (Fig. 1) numeration)
1	2000	SA 1		
1000				
1500	3000	SB 2		16 - Noormarkku, 11 - Zvejnieki, 10 - Rinnukalns, 7, 8 - Abora I, 5 - Sarnate, 3 - Šventoji 23, 9 - Piestina, 31 - Modlona, 12 - Villa,
2000				
2500	4000			4 - Šventoji 4, 1, 2 - Šventoji 3B, 20 - Lehtojärvi, 23, 24 - Olenij Ostrov, 32, 33 - Zamostje 2, 36 - Vis I,
3000		SB 1		
3500				
4000	5000			
4500		AT 2		
5000	6000			
5500				
6000	7000	AT 1		
6500		BO		
7000				
7500				

\* after Lang V., 1999, p. 269-273  
 \*\*Drawn at different scales

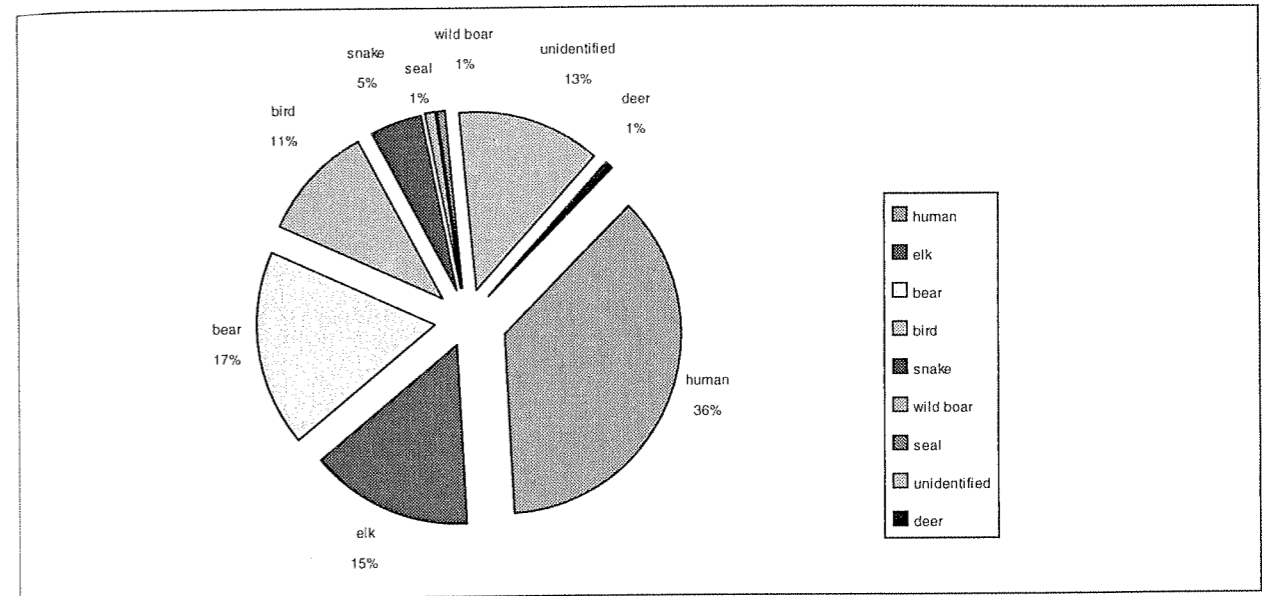


Diagram 1. Distribution of Stone Age art objects of the Baltic area according to their subject. Diagram produced after: Loze I., 1970, tabula 1; Carpelan Ch., 1975 p.40, tabell; Wyszomirska B., 1984; Butrimas A., 1994, p.7-38

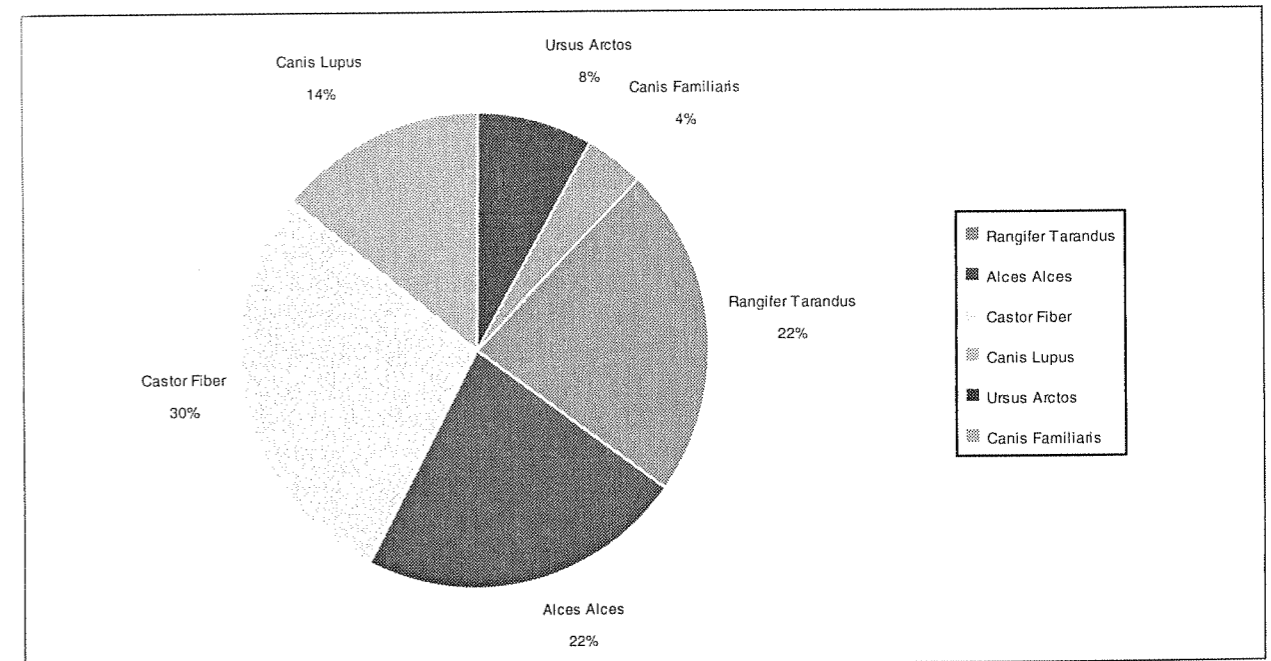


Diagram 2. Minimum quantity of animal distribution from the Olenij Ostrov burial ground (after Гурина Н.Н., 1956, с.421-422, приложение IV)

ornaments of obviously functional artefacts such as daggers, ladles and skis. Pendants representing the elk were produced as well. It is hardly possible to suppose the existence of the distinctive elk cult since on the whole it is not the most frequent art object in the Stone Age of the Baltic area. Regarding frequency, the first position belongs to human figurines (36%), the second

to bear figurines (17%) and only the third to elk figurines (15%) (diagram 1). In respect of bear figurines we should notice that their relative quantity owes much simply to the number (26) of sceptre-like artefacts found in Finland and Karelia. But at the same time the finds from Finland and Karelia increase the number of elk figurines by 6 ones. The frequency of elk figurines



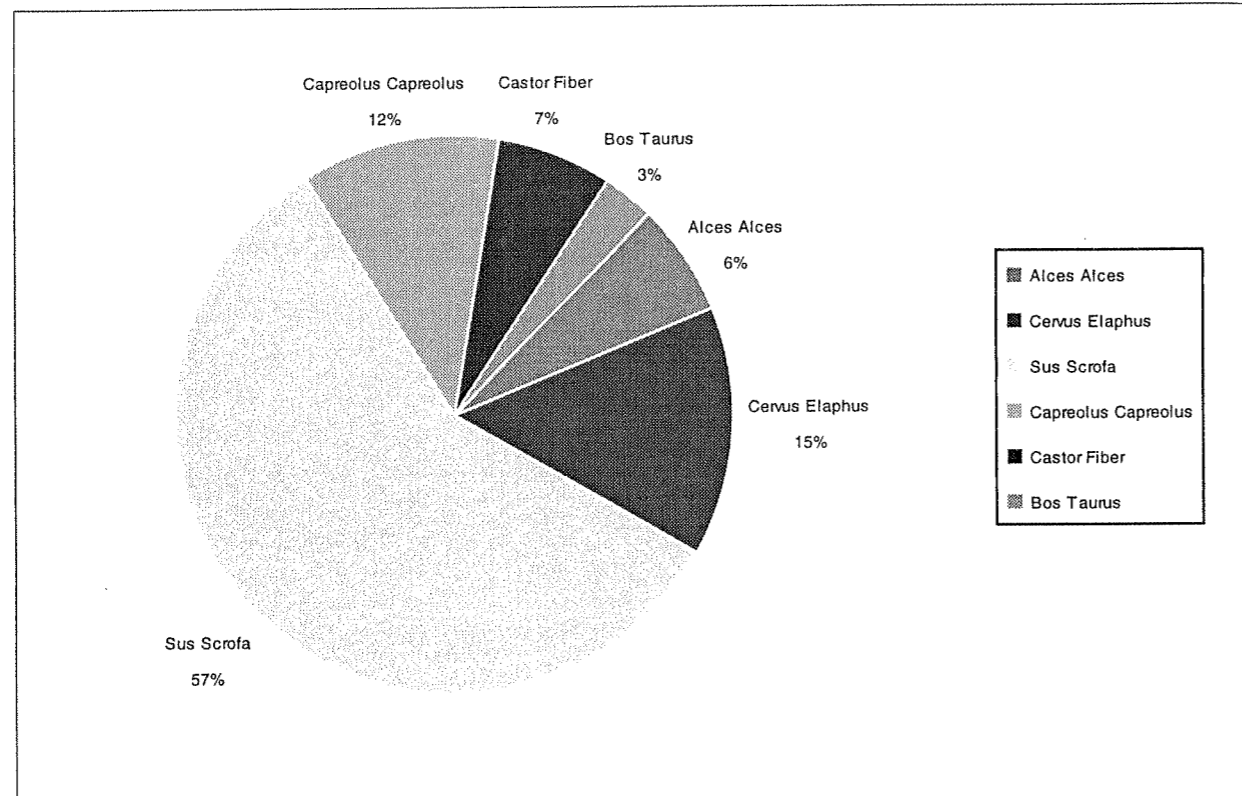


Diagram 3. Quantities of animal bones from the Šventoji settlement site 3B (after Rimantienė R., 1979, p. 9-14.)

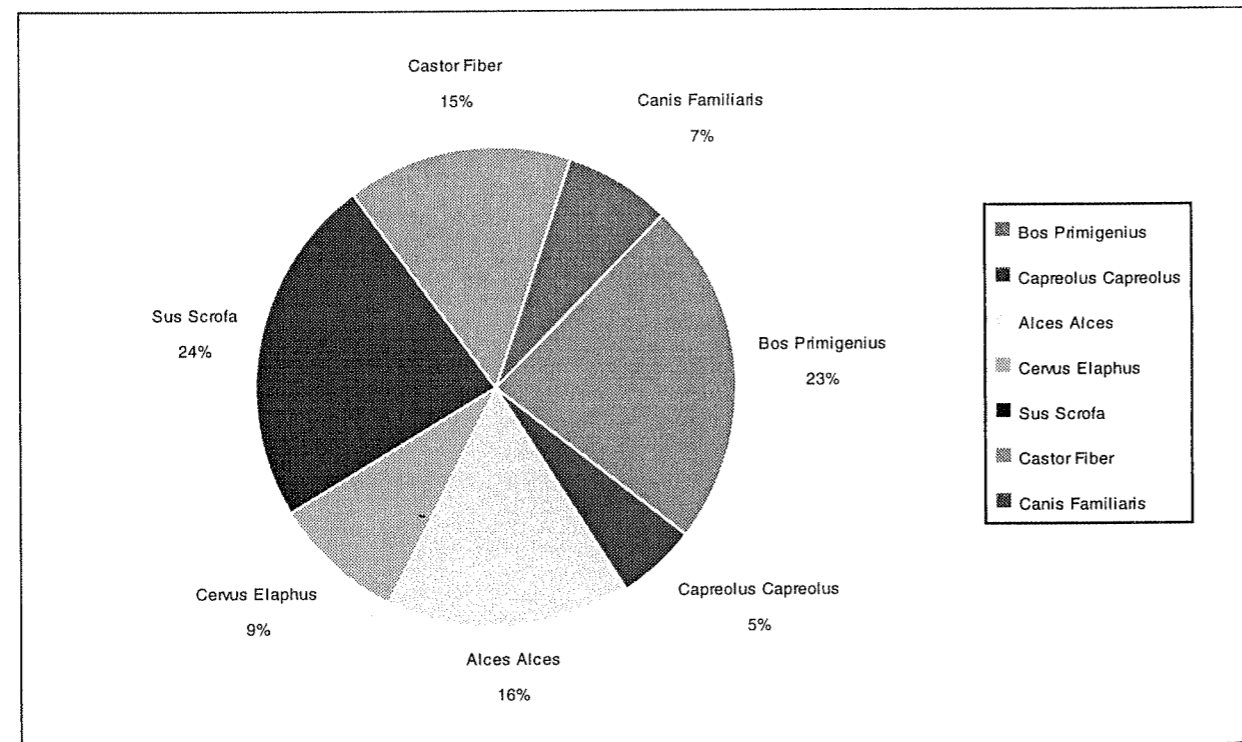


Diagram 4. Quantities of animal bones from the Šventoji settlement site 23 (after Rimantienė R., 1979, p. 9-14.)

cannot be explained by referring to its share among game. Its bones do not constitute the biggest part in the three chosen sites. It seems that nowadays we still have too little data to be able to reveal the significance of elk figurines in a society of the Stone Age. Nevertheless the data we have allow us to state that this significance was great.

Translated by Darius Baronas

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