

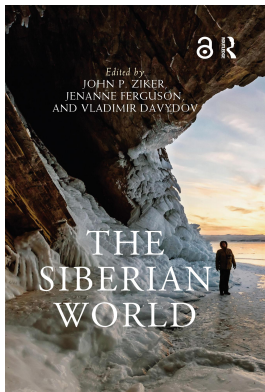
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Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *Routledge*

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## **The Siberian World**

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### **Power, ritual, and art in the Siberian Ice Age**

Publication details

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780429354663-45>

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**Published online on: 29 Mar 2023**

**How to cite :-** Liudmila Lbova, Tatyana Rostyazhenko. 29 Mar 2023, *Power, ritual, and art in the Siberian Ice Age from: The Siberian World* Routledge

Accessed on: 21 Nov 2023

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780429354663-45>

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## CHAPTER 38

# POWER, RITUAL, AND ART IN THE SIBERIAN ICE AGE

The collection of ornamented artifacts as evidence of  
prestige technology



*Liudmila Lbova and Tatyana Rostyazhenko*

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the phenomena of “primitive art” have increasingly been examined from the vantage point of human ethology and evolutionary psychology. Several book publications, inspired by this novel interdisciplinary approach, have found the support of readerships; among them are *Beauty and the Brain* (1988), *The Anthropology of Art* (2006), and *Art as Behavior* (2014). The evolutionary paradigm concept of the symbolic behavior on the basis of using a large comparative diachronic and cross-cultural study of prehistoric paintings and mobile art takes a place of priority in these analyses. In the process of evolution, humankind formed a system of signs beginning from simple (i.e., based on the simulation of natural phenomena) to complicated cultural and social systems. Ritualization was then the next step. During the process of behavior ritualization into expressive movement, behavioral patterns undergo specific changes, serving conspicuousness, distinctiveness, and unambiguity. The simplification and exaggeration of behavioral sequences and amplitudes of movements occur as well as rhythmic repetition. Cultural and social symbols, along with bodily symbols, gestures, power domination, and language are constants of human communications (Barton et al., 1994; Filippov, 2004; Khlopachev & Devlet, 2016). From these positions, the prestige items that make up the Paleolithic collections of Siberia are of particular interest.

Siberian archaeological collections contain unique samples of early artistic culture which provide extensive information about the early stages of the formation and development of human communities and various cultures in Northern Eurasia. Cultural codes recorded in the described series of items can be expressed through a variety of forms, materials, technology, features of aesthetics, and other elements of human behavior strategies. The meaning of these codes lies in the form of a semiotic reading of signs; while there are universal components, we can also find ornamental elements specific to the Eurasian continent as a whole. The special interest in Siberian collections is explained by its transit position of the territory along the continental migration routes of ancient peoples, as well as by the movements of ancient people from north to south, and from west to east along the vast North Asian landscape zones.

The theoretical bases of prestige and the prestige economy role were developed in a number of works of well-known researchers of the 19th and 20th centuries. Bronisław Malinowski, Marcel Mauss, and Marshall Sahlins made a great contribution to the development of the concept of gift economy (Lbova & Tabarev, 2010). Further to this, Brian Hayden and D’ann Owens (among others) developed the concept of the functioning of transegalitarian societies in archaic times. Transegalitarian societies are characterized by some degree of socio-economic inequality, a sedentary or semi-sedentary lifestyle with permanent dwellings grouped in relatively dense settlement areas. Socio-economic inequality is embodied through the use of prestige items or other indicators of excellence (for example, the organization of periodic festivals and feasts). Hayden and Owens created a wide base of practical materials for developing the concept of functioning of prestige objects in archaic societies, described in greater detail in Hayden (1998).

“Prestige technologies” refer to a social and technological complex in archaic societies. Their purpose is to demonstrate wealth, prestige, and the elite position of one or more members of a given society. Whereas the purpose of practical technologies is to achieve a pragmatic task, prestige technologies are employed to demonstrate wealth, success, and power. The purpose is to solve a social problem or to perform a social task, such as to attract new productive people in the group (new workforce or allies) or to unite members of social groups via demonstrating the success (Hayden, 1998). Therefore, the logic and the strategy of making prestige items is totally different from the logic and the strategy of making practical items. The main purpose of prestige technologies is to make the most of surplus labor for creating the items, which would attract people to the possessor of those items due to admiration for economic, aesthetic, technical, or other skills. Rational use of the surplus labor for creating additive objects could significantly increase the attractiveness of these objects (and their possessors) for others. The objects that achieve this goal also drive other people to possess them, sometimes just for their own pleasure or self-esteem, rather than using them to demonstrate their quality, high cost, and other “prestige” elements (Hayden, 1998).

Prestige technologies also are used for attracting people and families to debts or mutual obligations (Gosden, 1989). Used in the way they promote the relationships that create hierarchical economic, social, and political organization in a society. Prestige elements in pre-governmental public organizations constitute the infrastructure of social and political hierarchies. Without them, these hierarchies would be unviable. Prestige items also play an active role in the functioning of cultural systems. The generation of hierarchical relationships connected with debt obligations can be considered as a secondary function of prestige technologies. Their tertiary function is the ability of prestige technologies to keep surplus production and labor in a transformed condition. This allows people to use significantly more resources than it is necessary for consumption. Therefore, prestige items must be considered as something more than simply a passive reflection of power (Hayden, 1998).

It is important to note that prestige items demand exceptional costs of their production; therefore, ideological symbols are not necessarily prestige objects because they can be made at very little cost. On the other hand, ideological and cult items can be made with a lot of time and effort, as is the case with the golden crosses of the Renaissance. In the cases when special efforts were employed to purchase or manufacture these ritual objects, it can be assumed that the main purpose of their

manufacturing is to impress participants or spectators. Therefore, these items should also be classified as prestige ones.

The main factor contributing to the emergence of prestige technologies in archaic societies is the emergence of surplus products (the same is the main condition for the emergence of transegalitarian societies). The formation of such societies takes place in the Upper Paleolithic-Mesolithic in hunter-gatherer societies of Europe and in North-East Eurasia. The main premise of the emergence of surplus in such societies is, according to the author, the abundance of resources and their intensive use. Stable surplus production is something that promotes the increase of human populations, leads to a partially settled lifestyle, and becomes a basis for the emergence of economic competition between individuals for control over access to resources (Hayden, 1998). Various economic innovations contributing to the systematization of the exploitation of natural resources also appeared at that time. Transport, fishing nets, fishing lures, and the other tools, early ceramics—these all were prestige technologies first and then transformed into practical ones (Hayden, 1994).

One more premise of the emergence of prestige technologies is the emergence of an individual or group of individuals called “aggrandizers,” a kind of political elite in archaic societies. The purpose of such people is to increase their prestige for promoting their goals and interests. The increasing frequency of prestige works both through the possession and the giving away of prestige items. It was the emergence of such people, according to Hayden, that caused the development of the institute of “prestige technologies,” the complication of social stratification in societies, and the emergence of chiefdoms and proto-states. The “aggrandizers” had a number of prestige functions: they organized feasts and celebrations, made war and peace decisions, used resources for attracting allies, made profitable marriages (both monogamous and polygamous), raised the status of their descendants through special initiations, had the opportunity to spend a great number of resources for making prestige items, and had control over the basic resources (Hayden, 1998; Owens & Hayden, 1997).

Thus, we can distinguish three main principles of prestige technologies for primitive society. Firstly, prestige technologies work for production of the items that are for public demonstration (often one-time, short-term, episodic, but no less significant). Secondly, they play a significantly important role in intergroup and interregional exchange. Finally, despite the exceptional cost and labor costs of production, prestige items can be publicly destroyed or solemnly placed in a burial site. It was prestige technologies that influenced the development of some practical technologies (for example, early ceramics); it was the emergence of prestige technologies that became a revolutionary factor which entailed a complication of social structure because thanks to them, human collectives began to produce more products than the cost of living required (Hayden, 1998).

## MATERIALS AND DISCUSSION

### Paleogeography and the environmental situation in Siberian Upper Paleolithic

The Siberian region is located in a contact zone of different landscape areas in Northern and Central Asia. The territory is situated within the limits of the Mongolian-Siberian

folded mountain belt, and the environment (geological structure, relief, climate, waters, biota, and landscapes) differs greatly. The region has a combination of mountain ridges, smooth watersheds, and intermountain basins, oriented in a northeast direction. In general, the mountains occupy a high-altitude belt of 600–1,000 m above sea level (Altai, Sayan, Sikhote-Alin, and Kamchatka) and of 400–600 m above sea level on plants (West Siberian, Middle Siberian, the Prilenskoe and Vitimskoe Plateaus, Central Yakutia). The study of the main geoarchaeological sections makes it possible to reconstruct the environmental conditions of the Paleolithic human occupations and to build a general geoarchaeological scheme for the main developmental stages of nature and human culture. It is necessary to note that most of the sites mentioned above were studied by a variety of natural-scientific disciplines, the results of which are confirmed by various dating methods. The main climatic fluctuations in the Late Pleistocene were established (Medvedev, 2001; Petrin, 1986; Lbova, 2014; among others). Palynological spectra highlights the return of forest formations, with conifers (in particular, pine) and birch light forests dominating (birch with an admixture of broadleaf species such as elm, alder, and hazel, along with meadow associations). Pollen data and the character of mammalian fauna at various localities of Northeast Asia indicate a mosaic landscape of steppes and forest-steppes.

The following species are dominant in the Early Upper Paleolithic (40,000/50,000–25,000/30,000 BP) cultural complexes: horse (*Equus caballus*), Mongolian gazelle (*Procapra gutturosa*), woolly rhinoceros (*Coelodonta antiquitatus*), and wild sheep (*Ovis ammon*). Other species, such as woolly mammoth (*Mammuthus primigenius*), Asiatic wild ass or khulan (*Equus hemionus*), giant deer (*Megaloceros giganteus*), antelope (*Spiroceros kiakhtensis*), steppe bison (*Bison priscus* or *Bos primigenius*), camel (*Camelus sp.*), lion (*Pantera leo*), wolf (*Canis lupus*), steppe fox (*Vulpes corsac*), and hare (*Lepus sp.*) are also presented. During the Sartan period (25,000–10,000/12,000 BP)—a middle, classical stage of Upper Paleolithic—there were typical conditions with cold and arid climate and semi-desert landscapes as a tundra and tundra-steppe. The following species were dominant in the Middle and the Final Upper Paleolithic cultural complexes: mammoth (*Mammuthus primigenius*), woolly rhinoceros (*Coelodonta antiquitatus*), Northern deer (*Rangifer tarandus*), and Arctic white fox (*Alopex lagopus*, *Vulpes lagopus*).

### Archaeological context (classical stage of the Upper Paleolithic)

The Middle, or the classical stage of the Upper Paleolithic (25,000–18,000/17,000 BP), or Last Glacial Maximum is represented by numerous sites and archaeological cultures. Most of the sites are clustered in the river valleys. The Early Sartan Glaciation (from 25,000 BP) saw the flourishing of a culture of hunters of reindeer and mammoth; this is evidenced by diverse mosaic lithic industries, a rich series of bone and antler implements, personal ornaments, and mobile art objects. Industries at most sites were based on the technique of removing the blades with prismatic cores, observed splitting treatment of bone and expressive art of small forms. The plan of graphical structures of most settlements includes the remains of residential structures and other facilities. Meanwhile, due to the results of recent discoveries in Siberia, more than 50 clearly stratified sites relevant to our subject have become known. Among them in Western Siberia the Tomskaya, Shestakovo, and Achinskaya

sites; in the East Siberia the Tarachikha, Novoselovo, Shlenka, Ui-1, Igeteisky Log, and Mal'ta sites; in Yakutia the Dyuktai site; and in the Transbaikal zone we have the Ikhine-2, Sanyi Mys, and Ust-Menza sites.

As was often the case in the Upper Paleolithic throughout the Old World, the inhabitants of Siberia also relied heavily on big game hunting, exploiting many large ungulates. The classical stage of Upper Paleolithic sites displays evidence of intensive procurement of reindeer, mammoth and woolly rhinoceros and such sites as Kashtanka I, Mal'ta, and Buret' have evidence of specialized reindeer hunting. Of course, hunting was not only for procuring meat, and discoveries of numerous bones of arctic fox, red fox, wolverine, and wolf at Mal'ta implies various sources of fur for the Paleolithic inhabitants.

The time-space systematics of the Siberian classical stage of Upper Paleolithic seem to be very complicated (for a recent overview of the Upper Paleolithic development in general terms, see Vasil'ev, 1993). During the time span under consideration, industries based on advanced blade technology with rich and diversified series of lithic, bone, and antler tools predominated. The Middle Upper Paleolithic assemblages of Mal'ta, Buret', and Achinskaya, with an absolute majority of tools made on small blades, were contemporaneous with such assemblages as Shestakovo, which exploited both the blade and flake technology extensively. Despite some shared features, mostly demonstrated in lithic technology, there are marked differences among the sites, and they do not seem to be grouped as a clear-cut spatio-temporal entity. It seems safer to suggest only astonishing similarities in tool types, ornamental designs and art style in the assemblages of Mal'ta and Buret', which give rise to the definition of the Mal'ta Culture. A complicated mosaic-like picture of different cultural variants can be reconstructed. Worth mentioning here is the appearance of microblade technology, which became ubiquitous in Siberia in the Final Paleolithic, in both technological groups of assemblages.

The classical stage of Upper Paleolithic in Siberia displays cultural traits well known among European Upper Paleolithic assemblages. However, this superficial similarity does not provide ground for either an equation of the European and Northern Asian Paleolithic record, or for speculations about long-distance migration of the European Upper Paleolithic population. On the basis of a careful stylistically analysis of European and Siberian female statuettes, Abramova (1962) demonstrated peculiar features in the pieces from Mal'ta and Buret'. As such, the Mal'ta Culture is now regarded as having some local roots (Medvedev et al., 1996; Lipnina, 2012; Lbova, 2017).

The Siberian classical stage of Upper Paleolithic is, like its contemporary in other parts of the Old World, rich in artifacts reflecting their non-material way of life, such as superb mobile art objects and personal ornaments. No other period in the Upper Paleolithic development in Northern Asia is comparable to this time span, which yielded a series of art objects from Mal'ta and Buret', along with isolated discoveries from Achinskaya and Ust' Kova.

### Archaeological artifacts as prestige objects

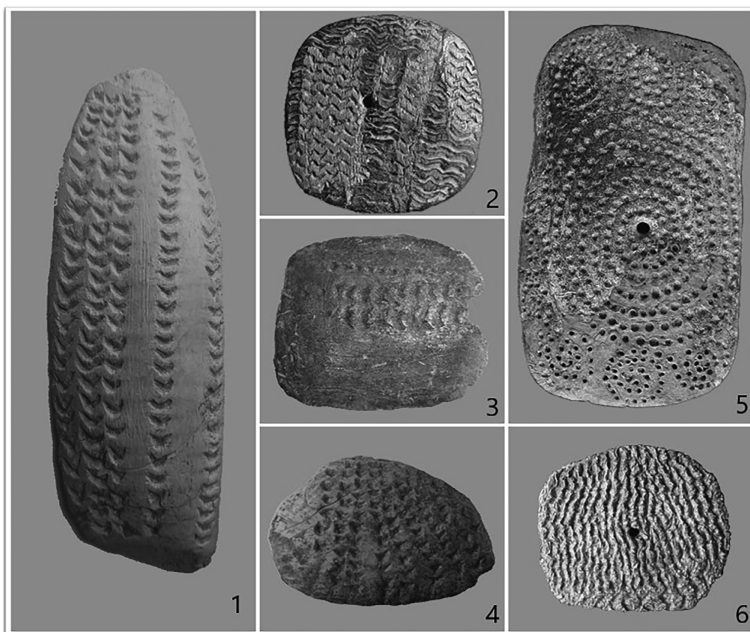
#### *DISCOIDS*

A famous site of the classical stage of Upper Paleolithic in Eurasia is the Mal'ta site located in the Baikal zone of (South Siberia); it is viewed as a key to understanding

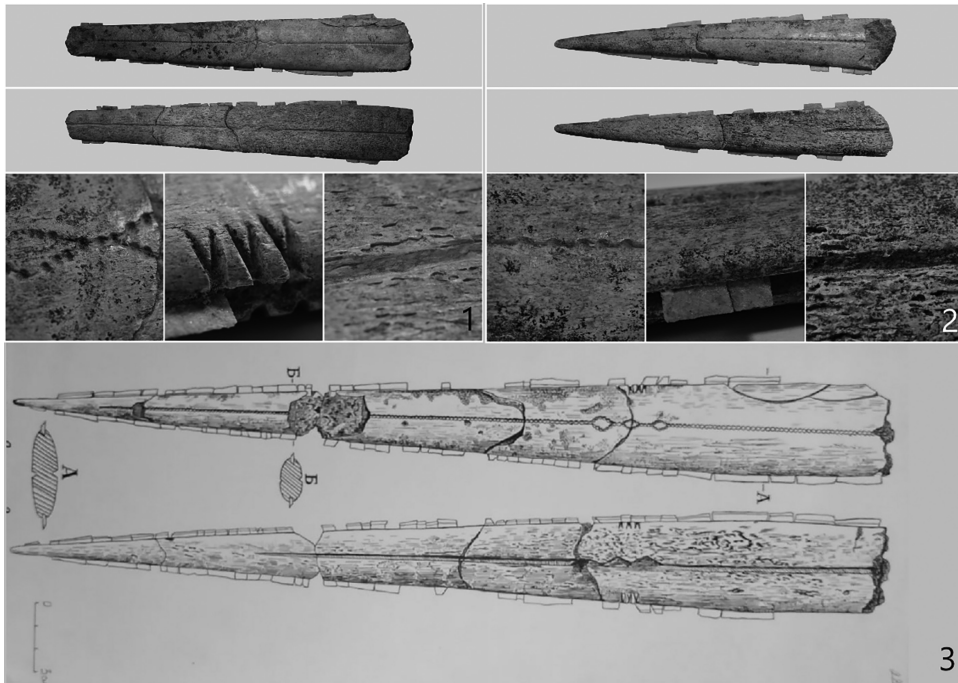
Paleolithic migration processes to the North-East of Eurasia and later to North America, especially in combination with data regarding the ancient DNA of the Mal'ta local group (Raghavan et al., 2014). To summarize, Mal'ta is a typical site of the Siberian Ice Age, especially in Last Glacial Maximum. Gerasimov (Gerasimov, 1931, 1941, 1958) excavated this site between 1928 and 1958. Currently, Malta has presented stratified culture deposits dating from 43,000/41,000 to 12,000 years <sup>14</sup>C BP. The “classical” component from Gerasimov’s excavation, characterized by ivory artifacts, anthropomorphic sculptures, and habitation features, dates between 19,000 and 23,000 years <sup>14</sup>C BP; according to the latest results, it is included in the strata no. 8 and 9 of the geological section (Medvedev et al., 1996; Medvedev, 2001; Lipnina, 2002, 2012). Particular attention among the archaeological finds at the Mal'ta site has been paid to distinctive anthropomorphic figurines, which have become a historical source for our understanding of the life characteristics of the population of Siberia during the Ice Age (see, among others, Abramova, 1995; Marshak, 1991).

The collection contains six items made on ivory flat flakes and blades. They can be differentiated according to the type of blank, the shape and the style of decoration. The first group contains items which are made on blade blanks and have an elongated shape (Figure 38.1—1, 5) while round- or square-shaped disks are assigned to the second group (Figure 38.1—2, 3, 4, 6).

The first big plate (The Big Mal'ta plate) has a slightly arched trapezoidal shape with rounded corners and a hole in the center (Figure 38.2—5). The front side of the plate is covered with typical ornamentation for Mal'ta, which consists of spirals



**Figure 38.1** Decorated ivory discs from Mal'ta site (19,000–23,000 BP). 1. Large plate with C-shaped marks. 2. Disc found in the child's burial. 3. Small disc with C-shaped marks. 4. Small disc with C-shaped marks (“shell”). 5. Big Mal'ta plate. 6. Disc with zigzag ornament.



**Figure 38.2** Ornaments dagger from Chernoozerie II. 1. Fragment no. 1 of the dagger (front, back, macro). 2. Fragment no. 2 of the dagger (front, back, macro). 3. A drawing of the dagger made by Valerii Petrin.

composed of rounded dimples (or “cupules”). The ancient sculptor carved lines along which the dimples then line up. In the center of the plate, there is the biggest spiral which takes more than half of the plate’s area. It consists of seven spiral rows, which contain 242 cupules. To the right and left of a central spiral, there are two smaller spirals. It is remarkable that indistinguishable forms are symmetrically located on each side. In the bottom corners of the spiral (which has a trapezoidal shape), there are two simple spirals. The left one consists of 63 dimples (11 holes are for the wavy line which continues the spiral), and the right one contains 43 dimples. Two complex S-shaped spirals are located above the simple spirals. The right spiral has 46 dimples and the left one contains 57 dimples (Larichev, 1986). The concave side of the plate is decorated with six parallel wavy thin lines arranged two by a group; they are presumably the images of snakes. Whereas two snakes have enlarged heads, so that they resemble cobras with spread-out hoods, the third snake is depicted in a calmer state. All of the snakes’ heads are turned in the same direction and their wavy bodies occupy the entire length of the blade.

Two other discs in the collection have central holes and are covered with zigzag ornaments. Two discs which do not have a central hole are covered with C-shaped marks. The collection also contains a big plate covered with C-shaped marks; we have already described these items in detail elsewhere (Lbova and Rostyazhenko, 2019).

Thus, three categories of decoration are presented in the collection. The categories of marks are typical for Siberian Paleolithic Art, especially Mal’ta-Buret’ culture



(Lbova, 2017) and also for the matrix of signs compiled by G. Van Petzinger (2017): C-shaped or scalloped marks, zigzag (a.k.a. wavy lines) and round indentations (or “cupules”). C-shaped marks are found on three disks, zigzag is presented on three blades, one blade is fully covered with “cupules” and one more is covered partially.

### DAGGERS

In addition, the Siberian collection includes a bone dagger with geometric micro-blades found on Chernoozerie II and covered with a row of drilled points, rhomboids, and V-shaped marks. The Paleolithic seasonal camp at Chernoozerie II is one of the most ancient sites of Western Siberia and contain evidence of human artistic activity. The site is located near the village of the same name in the Sargat district of the Omsk region (Petrin, 1974). The site was discovered in 1967 by the expedition under the direction of Vladimir Genning and Valerii Petrin. During the excavations, three cultural layers were found. The site also contained a numerous stone inventory and unique bone items. The collection of bone items consists of 34 pieces, which can be divided in four groups: insert daggers and knives, household items, decorations and unknown items. The found items were often covered with a layer of hard lime scale up to 1–4 mm thick. Its removal was almost always associated with damage not only to the surface, but to the whole item.

In the collection of bone items, an ornamented insert dagger is of particular interest for us. It was found in the cultural layer no. 1, near the fragments of another dagger and four decorative items (14,500 years ago). The dagger was represented by five fragments of a blade (Genning and Petrin, 1985), or in six fragments according to Petrin (1974). The dagger does not have a handle. Four of five fragments were glued to each other, with the fifth fragment kept separately. The length of connected fragments is 265 mm, while the length of a separate one is 132 mm. The maximum width is 42.5 mm, and the thickness is the same along the whole item (115 mm) and only at the distance of 100 mm from the tip does the dagger begin to narrow (Figure 38.2).

The dagger is double sharpened, and the blade has a regular elongated triangular shape. The blade is regular and oval in cross section, and the surface of the front side is solid, polished, and of a yellowish-gray color. The back side has some remains of spongy material which turns into solid bone about 100 mm from the bottom edge. The dagger is made of a rib bone of a large mammal, possibly bison. The blade consists of quartzite inserts placed in the slots on both edges. The slots have a triangular shape in cross section. Their depth is 2.5–3 mm, the width is 1.5–2 mm (average), and the depth of the slots reduces to a tip. On several of the inserts, there are traces of edge retouching.

The dagger's handle is broken on two holes, with a diameter of not more than 5 mm. They are located 11 mm from the edges, and drilled from both sides. The dagger is ornamented on two sides; on the solid surface of the front side, and there is a row of points along the central axis. The depth of points is not more than 1.5 mm. There are 11 points per 20 mm on average, with the row of points ending 35 mm from the tip. At a distance of 256–291 mm from the tip, the line of points has three adjacent rhombuses 9x5 mm in size. On both sides from the second rhombus, there are three V-shaped marks on the front and back sides made by sawing. The depth of each one is about 1.5 mm (Genning & Petrin, 1985; Gorbunova and Shmidt 2014).

On the back side of the blade, along the central axis, there is a groove triangular in cross section. Its depth and width in the upper side is up to 2 mm. The groove ends in 106 mm before the tip. In the upper part, it has three (two) zigzags (9–10 mm size, 3–5 mm height) located in the same place as rhombuses on the front side. These zigzags on the blade are more like wavy lines due to their smooth edges. The ornament was made by drilling, scratching, and sawing techniques. The front side ornament was made in two stages: sawing the organizing line, and then drilling points on it with a stone burin (Genning & Petrin, 1985). Traces of disposal on the inserts are not found, though two fragments of the dagger have a languette fracture. This allows us to consider that the dagger was broken after a strong blow.

Further to this, there is an opinion that the dagger ornament was a counting calendar-astronomic system (Shmidt, 2005). Similar daggers are also known from the Shestakovo, Oshurkovo, Kokorevo sites, and the Shigirskij peatbog.

### “BÂTON PERCÉS”

Traditional “bâton percés” made of ivory and antler are well known in Upper Paleolithic Europe and Siberia. “Bâton percés” are widespread in the Europe and are found on Isturitz, Laugerie-Basse, La Madeleine, La Garenne, Mas-de-Azil, Molodova-5 etc. (Abramova, 1962; Glory, 1959). In Siberia, some important examples of “bâton percés” were found in the Studenoye-2, Listvenka, and Achinskaya sites. These unique artifacts require many labor resources and show a high level of decorative skill.

The “bâton” represented in Studenoye’s collection is made of the middle part of an antler. A natural microrelief of the antler was transformed with abrasive grinding of the surface. Then, the item was properly polished. A fragment of a through-hole arc remains at the distance of 25 mm from the proximal end; presumably, the hole was drilled from two sides. The maximum width of the hole is 21 mm. Microscopic pores on the antler’s surface are filled in with ocher.

The “bâton” surface is covered with an ornament which is represented in two areas. The first area is a “meander.” It is located along the base of the proximal part and consists of five elements. The second area is located below on the side surface of the item. It consists of three ovals made of two parallel lines, a strip, and a groove some notches. Making the “bâton” included several steps: cutting the fragment of antler required; preparing the surface; drilling the hole; and engraving the ornament. A fragment and a whole item like “shaft straightener” were also found in the collections of the Kokorevo I and III sites. The fragment of an antler item was found in Kokorevo III. The item has sizes 50x23x11 mm. Only a round tip and a part of a side of the hole remained (Abramova, 1979). Among the items of the Kokorevo I collection, there is a complete intact item. It has (unlike the previous one) a more convex shape. Three of such items were found in the collection of a famous site called Afontova Gora II (20,900 +/- 300 BP) (Abramova, 1979). The items have a typical hole at one end, are unornamented, and are described as “shaft straighteners.”

Another “bâton percé” was found on the Siberian Upper Paleolithic Listvenka site located near the city of Divnogorsk city in the Krasnoyarskii krai. This “bâton percé” was found in the cultural layer 12G which has radiocarbon dates of 13,470 +/- 285 BP. The item has a symmetrical elongated oval shape and “soft” round contours. A piece of a large split diagonally tusk was used as a blank and was likely

straightened later. The length of the item is 430 mm, the width is 60–90 mm, and the thickness is 2.5–3 mm. Slice negatives smoothed by further grinding remain on the surface of the “bâton.” One side of the item is more convex, while the second side is flat. On the convex side, in the center, there are shallow traces of sheer punches. The quality of preservation on the flat side is apparently due to where the item occurred within the strata. Along the longitudinal axis, there are three biconical holes. The complexity of the manufacturing process consists mainly of the selection of raw material that is difficult for such processing (Akimova et al., 2005).

Items similar to the one found at Studenoye are known among the collections of many Upper Paleolithic sites of the Old World. The items are often made in the form of animal heads or decorated with ornamental signs common in Upper Paleolithic, or simply do not have any decorations. The spreading of “bâton percés” begins with the Solutrean era and reaches its peak in the Magdalenian epoch (Glory, 1959). At present, there are nearly 37 interpretations of such items. A. Glory distinguish five types of interpretations: ideas based on the psychological probabilities of similar items used across the world; on the decoration of the items; on the results of experiments based on ideas gleaned from ethnographic materials; and finally, ideas based on the results of both experiments and ethnographic materials, where traces of wear are also taken into account. A. Peletier (1992) distinguished only three types of interpretations: as non-utilitarian items; as utilitarian items like shaft straighteners, tools for making fire, etc.; and as utilitarian items such as weapons. In the latest publications, in general, only two hypotheses are used: shaft straighteners for spears or handles for throwing.

## CONCLUSION

Disks with and without a central hole are found on many Upper Paleolithic sites in Europe (most of them date back to the Solutrean-Magdeline period). They are made of bone or ivory, and stone; they have various engravings (ornamentation, singles, marks, the image of animals, people). In total, more than 300 disks and their fragments have been found in a vast territory stretching from Western Europe to Siberia. The purpose of such items is various: personal jewelry, elements of clothing, counting systems, and prestige items. It is possible that these pieces played a complicated role for all of the aforementioned purposes (De Las Heras et al, 2008; Barandiarán, 2006; Lbova & Rostyazhenko, 2019; Passemard 1920).

Daggers are quite widespread in the Upper Paleolithic collections of Europe and Siberia. They are usually made of bone, ivory, or antler and can have slots with inserts remaining. Some of the daggers have various elaborate ornamentation consisting of engraved patterns of marks or notches. Such daggers required much time and labor resources to be made. Considering these daggers as utilitarian items only does not explain why ancient people spent so many resources to make them. Therefore, we can assume ornamented daggers to be considered as prestige items.

Thus, “bâton percés” are spread on many sites of Upper Paleolithic Europe and Siberia. These are usually items made of antler with one oval or round hole located on one end of the item. Ivory was used significantly less often; at the same time, one of the main elements of the model was preserved: an elongated support handle. As we have already mentioned, the most popular point of view is that “bâton percés”

were used as shaft straighteners, frames for inserting tools or blanks of other items. However, this does not explain the fact that some “bâton percés” were decorated with an ornamental pattern or images of animals (Hayden, 1998).

In turn, indicators of prestige technologies in archaeological contexts can be reduced to the following: tools (including their blanks) made in high art, with the using of unusual or import types of raw materials, of unusually large sizes; elegant, decorated food containers made of ceramic, wicker, and stone and of unusual sizes, shapes, and colors, etc.; decorations (stone, antler, shells, fiber, feathers, etc.); special clothes (for ceremonies, dances, burials, etc.); vehicles (boats, sleds), made in a decorative style, with special care, hypertrophied or reduced (to the model) size; intentional deformation of skeleton bones, skulls, tattoos, piercings, body painting; toiletries, furniture; housing, household and ritual constructions made of expensive materials, imported or hard-to-get and hard-to-process raw materials; the constructions of unusual size; burials with rich inventory; musical instruments; protective armor made of organic materials; cosmetics, makeup; mirrors; mobile calendars, astronomic tools, counting devices; and narcotic drugs and substances.

In summary, codified records have been identified on some items. The records can be perceived both as an ornament, and as elements of counting. They can also carry other information which is at the level of discussion (Golan, 1993; Kabo 2002; Lbova & Tabarev, 2009; Lbova & Rostyazhenko, 2019; Larichev 1989, 1999; Weise 2003, 2007). Undoubtedly, important information was addressed to the “reader,” and these objects of sacred importance were stored in the dwelling space. We can assume the use of such objects both as subjects of prestige and as ways of recording priestly “mobile” texts. Perhaps these plates and disks could be a kind of “matrix” of information, which formed the basis for the decoration of sculpture and other objects.

The objects highlighted in the study are considered as evidence of the prestige technologies use that reflect not only a technical level of ivory, bone, or soft stone treatment but also the status, the position of their owner in the community (Lbova & Rostyazhenko, 2019; Palaguta, 2012). The results of the conducted research actualize the issues of genesis, classification, and periodization of forms, styles, technological characteristics, and ways of manifestation of ancient artistic creativity. The novelty of the proposed point of view lies in considering art objects (as archaeologists and excavators traditionally believe) within the framework of the concept of prestige technologies, assuming a social meaning in enhanced decoration of selected groups of objects, the use of rare exotic materials, and their non-utilitarian use.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to the Russian Science Foundation, project № 23-28-00140 “Man in the Prehistory art of Northern Eurasia: a paradigm shift”, (<https://rscf.ru/project/№23-28-00140>), as well as organize the placement of materials in the information system of <http://mobileart.artemiris.org>.

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