
Personal adornments and tools made of wild boar tusks in the Final Stone Age of Central Russia.

Ekaterina Kashina*^{†1} and Aija Macane*^{‡2}

¹State Historical Museum (SHM) – Krasnaya Square 1, 109012, Moscow, Russie

²Department of Historical Studies, University of Gothenburg – Suède

Résumé

Wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) and its biological relatives were always a desirable hunting prey for people at all times all over the world. Prehistoric populations of North-East European forest zone used wide range of osseous materials in their everyday life, including wild boar tusks. This presentation focuses on collection of items made from wild boar tusks obtained from several hunter-gatherer settlements (dated around 3000 cal BC) located in the center of Russian plain (territory of Volga and Oka River interfluvium).

The following categories of items were made of tusks: knives, burins, small oval pendants, small triangular pendants and torque-shaped adornments. During the investigation, various modification traces were observed on tusks. For instance, traces of preliminary cutting of tusk, tool damages, which appeared during the process of working (for knives and burins), as well as reparation and reuse of damaged tools. The torque-shaped adornments could have been made in different ways: of tusk pair from one specimen, of left and right tusks from two different individuals, or of one split tusk. Sometimes the end-parts of torque-shaped pieces were deliberately cut off and were used as separate small pendants.

Apparently, all types of tusk adornments were worn by people in everyday life. This observation is based on tusk items exhibiting heavy use-wear from settlement contexts. Finds from several settlement and burial contexts allowed to reconstruct the functional use of torque-shaped adornments: they were obviously worn in pairs, not only around the neck, but also at the head or chest. Besides morphology and functionality, the special attention will be paid to the age and size estimation of used wild boar specimens.

Finally, the symbolic meaning and possible interpretations of tusk adornments will also be discussed. The find contexts, at least in the discussed region and time, allow us to argue for more pronounced male role connected with the use and probably with production of wild boar personal adornments.

Mots-Clés: wild boar tusks, personal adornments, Central Russia, Stone Age, Middle Holocene

*Intervenant

[†]Auteur correspondant: eakashina@mail.ru

[‡]Auteur correspondant: aija.macane@gu.se