

# ‘Come and Give my Child Wit’. Animal Remains, Artefacts, and Humans in Mesolithic and Neolithic Hunter-gatherer Graves of Northern Europe

By MAJA PASARIĆ

*Unmodified and modified animal remains and animal representations significantly contribute to the content of Mesolithic and, in some cases, Early Neolithic hunter-gatherer burial assemblages in Northern Europe. Though these finds have received noteworthy attention, predominant archaeological narratives focus on their economic, aesthetic, or symbolic values in relation to humans. This contribution explores ways of looking at these assemblages beyond seeing them primarily as signifiers of human identities and human symbolic and/or economic choices. Drawing on insights from Russian ethnographic literature about near-recent East Siberian hunting and gathering communities, this paper explores paths for understanding unmodified and modified animal remains and animal representations from Mesolithic and Neolithic hunter-gatherer graves as animate objects and investigates ways of recognising their personhood. The paper outlines what could be considered as the material consequences of communicative actions and performative acts in relation to artefacts and animal remains that might have been perceived as having the qualities of a person, such as their placement and arrangement within the burial and treatment prior to deposition.*

**Keywords:** Mesolithic, Neolithic, East Siberian ethnography, hunter-gatherers, animal remains, animal artefacts, animal representations, non-human personhood, agency, communicative acts

Modified animal remains and animal remains modified to different degrees, often into various types of pendants, are frequently found in Mesolithic and, in some cases, Early/Middle Neolithic hunter-gatherer burials<sup>1</sup> across Northern Europe and are a rich dataset to consider. Animal representations have also been documented and incorporated into overviews of zoological remains and zoomorphic iconography in Mesolithic graves across Europe (eg, Grünberg 2013).

The last decades have seen important shifts in how human–animal relationships have been perceived, which has encouraged new approaches to archaeological assemblages and attempts to challenge anthropocentric ontologies and, instead, view animals as autonomous agentic entities and active social constitutors rather than ‘passive recipients of human cultural projections’ (Conneller 2011, 49; Overton

& Hamilakis 2013; Overton 2016; for an overview of attempts to move beyond anthropocentrism see Boyd 2017). In the same spirit, the renewed, contemporary interest in material culture has encouraged not only inquiries that focus on the ways in which people relate to material culture, but also those that question the Western theoretical distinction between active subjects (humans) and inert passive objects (Sillar 2009), especially with reference to materials and artefacts that derive from once living animals (eg, Conneller 2004; 2011). Nevertheless, the rich material from Northern European Mesolithic and Neolithic hunter-gatherer burials has not been discussed much in light of these new approaches to human–animal relations. With reference to animal remains and animal objects from the graves, the predominant archaeological narratives usually focus on their economic, aesthetic, or symbolic values to humans. A few interpretations, however, do part ways with the dominant approaches and investigate the active roles

Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Šubićeva 42, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia. Email: [maja@ief.hr](mailto:maja@ief.hr)

animals and animal remains might have had (see Fowler's (2004) engagement with assemblages from several Scandinavian sites; Overton & Hamilakis's (2013) re-interpretation of Vedbæk grave 8; segments of Mannermaa's interpretations of osprey remains from Oleniy Ostrov (2016); as well as Macāne's (2021) proposal for interpreting the burials at Skateholm and Zvejnieki).

This paper starts by first offering a short review of the prevailing narratives about different groups of finds, unmodified animal remains, modified animal remains (mostly pendants), and animal representations from Mesolithic and Neolithic hunter-gatherer burials across Northern Europe (including the northern parts of European Russia). It then explores notions of non-human personhood and animal and material cultural agency (objects and artefacts).

Furthermore, the paper draws upon Russian language ethnographic data about East Siberian near-recent hunter-gatherer groups (Nivkh, Nanai, Ulchi, Udege) to highlight contexts where distinctions are blurred not only between humans and animals but also humans and things, and where certain objects and artefacts can be perceived as persons. This is especially significant as the specific ethnographic material is not readily available to English speaking audiences. Siberia has recently been highlighted as an increasingly important locus of anthropological inquiries and theoretical insights into 'human-animal relations, systems of spirituality and human perceptions of the environment' (Jordan 2011, 17). However, a significant scope of noteworthy Russian language ethno-historical and ethnographic literature, especially in relation to near-recent East Siberian hunter-gatherers, has not received much attention in Anglophone hunter-gatherer literature and, in comparison to some other hunter-gatherer groups, has been less visible in related anthropological and archaeological comparative discussions (see, however, Pasarić & Warren 2019). The data that will be presented here derive from an engagement with the Russian language ethnographic literature and the Siberian ethnographic collection from the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography in St Petersburg.

It has been argued that 'prehistoric or ethnohistorical hunter-gatherer communities in the northern Eurasian zone shared broadly similar temporal, practical and cosmological structures' (Zvelebil 2008, 42) and the role of analogy in charting interpretative archaeological frameworks has been showcased

(Zvelebil & Jordan 1999). I note the potential risks of 'Siberianisation' of the Mesolithic (Warren 2018, 428) as well as the inherent limitations of any ethnographic material. Yet, I follow the suggested 'analogical' conceptual routes accepting foundations for the analogy between Northern hunter-gatherers and Mesolithic communities. Ethnographical investigations have been regarded as invaluable – not only for developing analogies and offering insights into how animals have been placed in hunter-gatherers' worldviews and how belief systems are reflected and constructed through material culture (such as animal remains, ornaments, and iconography), but also for highlighting the variety of human social and cultural pathways (Jordan 2006, 95–9; Widlok 2020). Acknowledging that lives and worldviews of hunter-gatherers have been rich and variable, as some recent discussion have especially underlined (eg. Lane 2014; Warren 2018; 2021), the section of ethnographic material presented in this paper aims to widen somewhat the range of ethnographic data utilised in archaeological discussions and to expand insights on possible aspects of social interaction between humans, animal remains, and artefacts. In this manner, it increases our awareness of similar archaeological possibilities and encourages us to rethink dominant perceptions about animal remains and artefacts made from them (or representing them) that are included in Mesolithic and Early Neolithic hunter-gatherer burials.

#### RESTING PLACES OF SYMBOLS AND RAW MATERIALS

Unmodified animal remains, animal remains modified into various types of pendants, and animal representations significantly contribute to the content of Mesolithic and, in some cases, Neolithic hunter-gatherer burial assemblages across Northern Europe. Though these finds have received a significant amount of attention, the dominant narratives tend to interpret them through economic or symbolic frameworks and thus recognise them as primarily representative of human social and symbolic actions or technical behaviour. For example, unmodified animal remains in human graves have usually been understood as raw materials or food intended for the humans in their afterlives, alternatively for the spirits, possibly also as remains of burial feasts or as sacrificial and 'special' offerings (Zagorska & Lõugas 2000, 234; Popova 2001, 131; Fahlander 2003, 109; Grünberg 2016,

19). They have also often been thought of as symbolically representative or referential of the occupations, personalities, and clan identities of the humans while they were alive. For example, a grave containing the vertebrae of a pike from Zvejnieki in Latvia has been described as a resting place of a fisherman (Zagorska 2006, 94), while two whole bird carcasses found in a grave at the same site were thought to be in some way related to the man's identity and occupation (Mannermaa 2006, 296). Eurasian jay wings from graves at Zvejnieki and Ajvide in Sweden and the osprey legs from Oleniy Ostrov in Russia have been linked to the clan relationships of the humans buried in these graves or the identities of socially important individuals to whose clothes bird remains might have been attached (Mannermaa 2008, 208; 2013). In a strictly symbolist meaning, the wings and remains of numerous waterbirds that dominate the burial faunal assemblages at Zvejnieki and Ajvide, along with the swan remains from Vedbæk (grave 8) in Denmark, have been linked with notions of protection or transport and transformation from one world to another and from one state of being to another (Mannermaa 2008, 212, 217; Serjeantson 2009, 345). The osprey legs occurring in graves at Oleniy Ostrov have been linked with the power of this bird appreciated by humans and implicated in the burial. A suggestion has also been made that remains of nine animal species from grave 121 at Zvejnieki could be viewed as symbols of the Mesolithic landscape, signifying water, air, earth, or forest (Macāne 2021, 656).

Apart from unmodified remains, the bones of birds and other animals have been frequently found shaped into various types of pendants or beads, positioned in ways that suggest that they can be interpreted as being parts of necklaces and similar adornments or decorations attached to clothing. Beside their solely decorative and aesthetic relevance, their symbolic and social factors have been considered as well, and the pendants are often understood as personal items, such as amulets, or items having special value as exotic goods (eg, Eriksson *et al.* 2003, 7; Larsson 2006; Mannermaa 2008, 220; Grünberg 2016).

Tooth pendants especially are considered representational of human social statuses. Current interpretations of tooth pendants consider their aesthetic and symbolic values as personal adornments or decorative items attached to clothing, belts, headdresses, footwear, or other garments of the interred humans demonstrating the status and wealth of

individuals and/or their affiliations within particular family, tribe, or other grouping (Kannegaard Nielsen & Brinch Petersen 1993; Larsson 2006, 253; Mannermaa *et al.* 2021). Elaborate assemblages of tooth pendants, most likely attached to clothes or headdresses, such as those from Zvejnieki (Zagorska 2006, 94, 96, 98), Oleniy Ostrov (Gurina 1956, 58), Popovo (Oshibkina 2016), and Skateholm and Duonkalnis (Zagorska 2006, 98), have been especially linked with the identities of prominent members of societies, such as lead shamanic practitioners or skilled hunters. Recent interpretations link tooth pendants with child carriers/papoooses and with their function as rattles (Vang Petersen 2016; Rainio & Tamboer 2018; Rainio *et al.* 2021).

Though less numerous in comparison to these pendants, zoomorphic representations have also been documented and their analyses usually follow similar symbolical, interpretative pathways or highlight human identities and social stratification. However, Iršėnas (2007) considers the possibility that zoomorphic figurines could also have functioned as toys. Rods with sculptural elk or reindeer heads from the rich female and male graves at Zvejnieki and at Oleniy Ostrov and male graves from other burial grounds in Russia have been interpreted as insignias of status and power, indicating burials of chiefs, shamans, or mature and respected members of society, perhaps even elk hunters (Gurina 1956; Iršėnas 2000, 99; Zagorska 2006, 96; Zhulnikov & Kashina 2010; Mantere & Kashina 2020). Judging from their location in the graves and relation to human bodies, several bird figurines from Zvejnieki have been described as amulets, parts of a necklace, or as decorative headgear (Zagorska & Lõugas 2000, 230; Zagorskis 2004, 38; Mannermaa 2006, 297). The presence of bird figurines in graves in Latvia and Sweden (at the Ajvide site) has also been linked with their significance in seasonal hunting or with their symbolism of re-incarnation or translocation of the human soul, or with notions of birds as guiding spirits for the journey to the afterlife (Zagorska 2000, 90; Mannermaa 2008, 220). Animals have been represented in bone and antler but also clay and amber as well as wood.

These significant analyses highlight different aspects of human–animal relationships and the possible economic, symbolic, mythico-religious, and social relevance some animals might have had in prehistoric hunter-gatherer communities. However, animal

remains, artefacts made from them, and animal representations are seen as symbolic referents or signposts to a meaning and their agency as objects does not form a significant part of the interpretations. Though there has been a lot of consideration of active material culture and human–animal relations in the theoretical literature, there is still little evidence of it in how we are making sense of this material.

#### ACTIVE MESOLITHIC OBJECTS AND PERSONS

Several authors have already considered animal remains and objects made from them in the archaeology of the Mesolithic as active social constitutors of worlds rather than just natural resources or objects that are simply thought of or acted upon by humans.

For example, Mansrud (2017) studied fishhooks made from osseous remains of ungulates from the north-eastern Skagerrak area of eastern Norway and western Sweden. Relying on Descola's (2013) account that, in animist or totemist societies, animals and objects are often perceived as animated, Mansrud (2017, 40) also proposes that fishhooks, as objects retaining the animals' 'anima' within them, can be considered animated by certain attributes of the once living animals. As large ungulates, such as elk, are the most frequently portrayed animals on Mesolithic rock art and have played an important part not only in the subsistence but in the cosmologies of Mesolithic communities, perhaps even as ancestors or creator beings, Mansrud (2017, 43) understands fishhooks as liminal agents in acquiring vital aquatic food and in 'mediating [the] dangers and insecurities of an unpredictable "life aquatic"'.

Several works have been inspired by concepts of embodiment deriving from Amerindian ontologies and the theory of perspectivism brought forward by Viveiros de Castro (1998), proposing that humans and animals have the same unchangeable interiority (spirit or soul) while their exteriority (body) is alterable but also where the core of being human or animal is located, encompassing all the unique qualities of being and their engagement with the environment. Employing the concept of 'affects' (Viveiros de Castro 1998), understood as an animal's perspective or way of being and acting in the world, Conneller (2004; 2011) considered red deer antler barbed points and antler frontlets from Star Carr in England as being imbued with different animal

attributes. For example, hyper-male aggressiveness could have been harnessed in the barbed points, while red deer frontlets, worn on a human body, might have facilitated a certain deer-like way of acting in the world (Conneller 2004; 2011, 62). Similarly, Overton (2016) considered small mammal (wildcat, marten, fox, or wolf) remains from the Kennet and Colne Valleys in England that, potentially worn by humans as amulets and pendants, allowed them to adopt not only the bodily abilities that pertain to certain animal species but their perspectives in ways of being, as well.<sup>2</sup>

Animal remains and animal bone/tooth artefacts from Mesolithic burials, along with the effects they might have had on humans and human bodies and identities, have also been considered. Following the concept of perspectivism Živaljević (2015) discusses practices of placing animal body parts alongside human bodies in the Mesolithic–Neolithic Danube Gorges by exploring how various aspects of animals' ways of being, or experiencing the world conveyed through the body, could have affected human permeable bodies. In reference to Skateholm and Zvejnieki burials Macāne (2021, 658) highlights the importance of viewing animals as human companions and animal remains as entangled and embodied entities in the acts of becoming.

Relying on notions of individual personhood and concepts of partibility and permeability deriving from Melanesian and Indian ethnographies, Fowler (2004) contends that animal body parts and tooth pendants found in close association with humans in Mesolithic burials from Denmark and Sweden (eg, Vedbæk, Skateholm) could have contributed to the construction of human personhood. Animal body parts are often found near human sensory organs or bodily openings, making it easier for them to affect human bodies with their animal-like qualities (Fowler 2004, 75). However, into his broad definition of personhood, a condition or state of being a person, Fowler (2004, 4) includes any entity, human or non-human, which can be imagined and treated as a person, thus acknowledging the possibility for animals and objects to be considered as persons as well.

Fowler also notes fluidity and flexibility as two of the inherent characteristics of personhood that allow persons to be constituted, de-constituted, maintained, and altered in social practices through life and death, a process that is dependent on particular contexts. This has been a useful concept for studies engaging with the

creation of human personhood in the Mesolithic, which has been understood as a relationship that can be negotiated, expressed, and mediated through, among other things, objects and artefacts; by the placement of grave goods with certain human individuals, for example (Janik 2019). The relationship between objects and the personhood of animals has been discussed as well, though not in reference to the Mesolithic period. For example, Argent (2016) proposes that the horses interred in the Iron Age Scythian burial mound Pazyryk were considered as persons and that the differently detailed and ornamented riding gear, head garments, and other objects the horses were buried with reflected their own individualities and personhoods.

Animal personhood in prehistory has indeed been thematised and several works highlight social relations as essential vectors in the conceptualisation of animals as persons. Just as Brück (2001, 655), in reference to humans, acknowledges a person to be made up of a wider set of social relations, which is also where agency should be recognised, Hill (2013) notes how the agency of animals and their recognition as subjects in the constitution of social worlds entitles them, at least in some cases, to be considered as persons. As evident from discussions about Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic hunter-gatherer personhood, the subjectivity and individuality of animals tend to have been recognised through their mortuary treatments (especially in the cases involving dogs, wolves, and bears; eg, Larsson 1989; 1990; Fowler 2004; Losey *et al.* 2011; Hill 2013; Živaljević 2015). Overton and Hamilakis (2013) and Overton (2016) shift our focus from the dead to the once living animals and their embodied interactions with humans. In specific reference to swan–human interactions in the Mesolithic they stress that swans were recognised by Mesolithic hunters as persons and individuals since they exhibit unique physical characteristics and intentional actions (vocal and bodily communication) that facilitate social interactions, amongst themselves first of all, but also with humans. As part of their dedication to challenging generic interpretations and stressing the importance of inter-corporeal, sensuous, and affective mutual engagements of animals and humans, Overton and Hamilakis (2013) offer a different perspective in understanding animal remains found in burials together with humans. Re-interpreting the finds from the famous grave 8 at Vedbæk in Denmark they argue that the remains of the whooper swan found in close

association with those of a young child and a female should be thought of as the remains of an individual swan infused with understandings and relationships borne through specific embodied interactions (eg, hunting, killing, consumption) between humans and the swan instead of, for example, a generic symbol of flight and transference of the human spirit to the afterlife (Overton & Hamilakis 2013, 131–6).

The highlighted discussions recognise living animals as agentic entities that engage in social relationships between humans and non-humans and consider the ways non-human personhoods might have been acknowledged and negotiated in life and death. Similarly, objects made from animal remains were understood to carry a certain ‘animalness’ within them, be capable of actively mediating human behaviour, and making up a part of human identities while increasing the range of their corporal and sensorial capacities. Yet, the possibility that objects might also have been recognised as sentient agents that have the power to act and that they might have been perceived and treated as persons has not been addressed. The archaeological implications of such notions will be explored below. However, I first turn to the Siberian ethnographic material to explore the contexts of sociality and communication occurring between animal remains, objects, and humans through which non-human personhood can be acknowledged and expressed.

#### ‘COME AND MAKE MY CHILD BRAVE’

An example may be given of how some hunter-gatherer communities may have attributed subjectivity, social agency, and capacities of conscious intentionality not only to animals but also to their remains and even the objects representing them, and, as a result, interacted with them as with persons. This is well demonstrated in Siberian ethnographies and worldviews of some East Siberian near-recent hunter-gatherer groups. For example, notions that all living beings (humans, animals, landscape features, etc) are gifted with reason and a soul and have their own spirit masters are present in the traditional beliefs of the Ulchi people (Ivashenko *et al.* 1994, 64). As highlighted by Ivanov (1977, 80), according to the Nanai people, everything in the environment, including human-made objects and households, are endowed with life, consciousness, and volition. Things can enter into various social relations with



humans on the initiative of humans but also according to their own will (Ivanov 1977, 80–1). Apart from living animals, the unmodified or modified remains of animals, as well as their figural representations, are also perceived as sentient beings with their own will and power to act. Through different forms of social interactions they have been perceived by humans as any other person could be.

Ethnographic data about the Nanai, synthesised by Ivanov (1977), offer valuable insights into forms of human and non-human interaction. The settlements and households of the Nanai people have been dwelling places for different animals, such as rabbits, foxes, geese, ducks, cranes, bears, and dogs. Some animals were kept in settlements due to the belief that they were able to affect and influence the lives of others. For example, owls were thought to be very effective at protecting children. Beliefs that animals have abilities to influence human lives and cause strong affects (emotions) were extended to their post-mortal remains, which encouraged practices of keeping small dead animals, such as dried fish or birds (Ivanov 1977, 86). Teeth, jaws, claws, and other parts of feet could have been simply curated or modified into pendants and similar artefacts and worn around necks or on belts, wrapped around parts of humans' bodies. These objects were of significant importance to East Siberian indigenous people. The Nanai believed these artefacts were able to assist in hunting endeavours, affect people's safety, increase health, provide strength and endurance, or offer comfort in certain emotional states, and they also had very prominent roles in healing (Ivanov 1977, 81, 87; MAE 5530-1,<sup>3</sup> 8, 29, 30, 31, 33, 36). Sometimes, animal body parts or entire animals would be manufactured from chosen and/or available materials. Among East Siberian hunter-gatherers, wood or wood bark was most commonly used. For example, a bear or dog's paw, a figurine of an owl or a pike, a spider, a cuckoo, or a pig would be manufactured in order to comfort a child in fear and distress and aid in various states of their discomfort (Ivanov 1977; MAE 5530-5, 8, 7). With a similar aim, figurines of boars and turtles or models of Siberian musk deer canines were manufactured and believed to ease the difficulties women might experience during pregnancy (MAE 5530-12, 29, 33, 36). Beliefs in the healing properties of figurines in the shapes of animals were documented among the Nivhi people as well (Taksami 2007, 168). Figurines

in the shapes of animals could also represent the protective spirits of homes and families of the Nanai and Ulchi people (Bereznitsky *et al.* 2003, 172).

Most importantly, these artefacts were involved in a variety of social, performative interactions with humans. Ivanov (1977, 87) notes that they were considered able to understand human language and were often spoken to, given personal names, and asked for favours. To secure a child's intelligence one would take a bone from a boar's skull, attach it to the youngster's clothes and say: 'Come and give my child wit' (Ivanov 1977, 89). Animal canines were believed to hear and understand human words directed at them and be able to react. A bear's canine would be addressed in this way: 'You are strong and not afraid of anything, come and help me, make my child brave'. Since both the animal remains and the made figurines were considered to be alive and/or endowed with a spirit, the Nanai people would also feed them by smearing them with porridge or sprinkle them with the blood of a sacrificed animal (Ivanov 1977, 87; Bereznitsky *et al.* 2003, 172). However, if the artefacts failed to fulfil the desired requests, the Nanai may beat them or otherwise express their frustrations by discarding them or simply neglecting them (Ivanov 1977). In other words, the artefacts were also seen as persons with their own will, capabilities, and characteristics entangled in the web of social relations with humans through various types of communication (physical, verbal and affective [emotional]).

Prompted by the ethnographic data, this paper further investigates the likely archaeological implications of perceiving and treating some artefacts and animal remains as persons and focuses on the material consequences of communicative actions and performative acts carried out by humans in relation to artefacts and animal remains that might have been perceived as having the qualities of a person. Mortuary practices, acts which not only represent social relations but also constitute them, stand out as important social arenas where the personhood of humans, animals, or artefacts can be acknowledged and/or negotiated. The personhood of animal remains and objects from the Mesolithic and Neolithic hunter-gatherer burials will thus be explored through different performative actions carried out by humans, such as their placement and arrangement within the burial and their possible treatment prior to deposition.

## COMMUNICATING PERSONHOOD

Due to the nature of archaeological material, certain aspects of sociality between persons (things, animals, and humans) highlighted by the ethnographies inevitably remain hidden (eg, communication through language) or would require chemical analyses to determine whether some remains and artefacts were perhaps smeared with food or blood. However, the graves themselves are important contextual arenas where personhoods can be negotiated, acknowledged, and materially expressed. Looking into possible aspects of their entanglement in social performative interactions prior to or during their incorporation in the burial lays out the possibility of viewing animal remains and objects not simply as signifiers of human identities and human symbolic and economic values but potentially as persons in their own right. The inclusion of animal remains and artefacts in burials can serve as a starting point for considering ways in which their personhoods might have been acknowledged and communicated, followed by an analysis of their positioning in the grave and treatment prior to deposition. Clearly, the different ways in which animals have been perceived and the ways in which they interacted with humans throughout their life spans might have affected the processes of procuring their body parts and the decisions that led to them being transformed into particular artefacts and, further, how they were placed in the graves. Therefore, the personhood of animal remains and the artefacts made from them could also have been linked with other factors involving the identity and individuality of the living animals and their specific relations to humans.

*Positioning in the graves*

As an example of how some animal remains and artefacts can be singled out and treated differently from others, one can consider the arrangements and positions some tooth pendants occupied in graves. Tooth pendants, with or without use-wear, are perhaps the most numerous finds of animal origin included in Mesolithic and Neolithic hunter-gatherer burials across Northern Europe. They are usually found in rows or clusters in close connection to human bodies and, in most cases, they have been attached to headgear and clothing. However, some tooth pendants stand out as they occupy a distinctive arrangement in the burial, hold an autonomous

position in relation to the human body, or were treated differently in other ways.

For example, grave 8 at the Mesolithic burial ground Popovo in Russia contained 120 animal tooth pendants most probably attached to the pelvic belt of a young male individual described as a successful hunter (Oshibkina 2016, 804). However, several tooth pendants, made from beaver incisors, together with crane and pike osteological remains and small pieces of coal, occupied a distinct position as they were placed in a separate small pit located inside the grave area (Oshibkina 2016, 805). Similarly, in grave 57 in the Zvejnieki cemetery a group of elk tooth pendants was found in the pelvic area of an interred female individual (Zagorska 2006, 96), while several other clusters of tooth pendants had an autonomous position in relation to the human body and were distinctively arranged. For example, groupings of pendants, mainly comprised of elk and red deer teeth, were positioned in fan-like shapes beside the body while six elk teeth surrounded a stone axe placed above the head of the woman (Larsson 2006, 260). This indicates that not all tooth pendants found in graves are necessarily in close association with the bodies of human individuals as parts of ornaments or clothing decorations, as already observed by Larsson (2006, 260) and suggests a distinction between pendants of mortuary costumes and other forms of pendant depositions which may be linked with their own distinct social identities.

Grave 300 from Zvejnieki, dating to the Baltic Early Neolithic, contained 59 tooth pendants, which most probably constituted a rich headdress of an adult male individual (Zagorska & Lõugas 2000, 234). Interestingly, at the mouth area, two symmetrically arranged wolf molars were positioned between his upper and lower jaws (Zagorska 2006, 98). Wolf remains are not frequent at Zvejnieki and only several teeth belonging to this species have been noted in other graves.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, molar tooth pendants can be seen to be less frequent finds in graves in comparison to pendants manufactured from canines and incisors.<sup>5</sup> If the molars were part of a larger headdress, their position in the jaw area of the male individual from grave 300 could be related with their, possibly accidental, placements in the ornament. However, their symmetrical arrangement at the mouth area could have also been deliberate. It even evokes vocal communication between the human individual and the molars. Observed morphological changes indicative



Fig. 1.

Female interred with tooth pendants positioned at her chest area, grave 19, Vedbaek, Henriksholm-Bøgebakken (photo by Lennarth Larsen, National Museum of Denmark)

of healed inflammation processes probably caused by direct infection of the scalp areas, which was also the only area in the grave where ochre was found (Jankauskas & Palubeckaitė 2006, 157–8; Zagorska 2006, 98), perhaps also suggest that the communication process that might have been going on between the man and the animal's molars involved requests for protection, healing, or aid for physical discomfort from one person to another.

The female individual, 19C, from the triple grave 19 at Bøgebakken in Denmark was not accompanied by a large number of tooth pendants placed around her pelvic area (Vang Petersen 2016, 119), which is otherwise common in female graves on the site. Instead, 50 pendants made from red deer, auroch, wild boar, and human teeth, the jaw of a pine marten, and the distal end of a roe deer hoof were positioned at her chest area (Fig. 1; Brinch Petersen 1979, 47 cited in Vang

Petersen 2016, 119). However, all the tooth pendants were uniquely placed, being positioned upside down with the reverse side turned upwards (Brinch Petersen *et al.* 2015, 143). The arrangement was first interpreted as a woman's chest adornment but, since all the elements were placed with their face downwards, suggestions were made that they were adornments attached to a piece of cloth, such as a carpet or woman's belt (Brinch Petersen *et al.* 2015, 144). Others suggested that, despite their location on the women's chest, the tooth pendants and the animal remains were actually in association with the child and functioned as amulets placed on a child carrier (Vang Petersen 2016, 119). While both suggestions are credible, it can also be proposed that turning the items face-downwards was a deliberate act and a performative action communicating a change in the nature of an important relationship between several categories of persons.

Notions that the world of the living and the world of the dead inversely mirror each other have been recorded among East Siberian hunter-gatherers, such as the Ulchi (Hasanova 2007, 137). The type of communication that might have been going on between the woman, the animal remains, and the tooth pendants ceased with her death and was visually and physically acknowledged in the burial treatment.

#### *Animal representations*

Animal representations or figurines frequently found in close relation to human bodies can also be considered as artefacts that might have been involved in communicative processes with humans. Elk-headed rods, usually interpreted as insignias of human power and status, have been found placed next to the legs, shoulders, and skulls of inhumations at Zvejnieki, Oleniy Ostrov, and other burial grounds in Russia (Gurina 1956, 379–80; Zagorska 2006, 96, fig. 3; Iršēnas 2006; Mantere & Kashina 2020). Bird figurines or bird shaped pendants have been unearthed in female, male, and child graves at Zvejnieki (Fig. 2), Ajvide, and Tamula in Estonia, usually placed at the head and chest area but also in the vicinity of the legs and feet of the deceased (Zagorskis 2004; Kriiska *et al.* 2007, 96; Mannermaa 2008, 211). Representations of other animals have been reported as well. For example, snake figurines were found at Oleniy Ostrov and Tamula in the vicinity of the shoulders and legs of the interred humans (Gurina





Fig. 2. Bird figurine from the burial 228 at Zvejnieki. The figurine was found at head area (near the chin) of an adult male individual (photo by Francis Zagorskis, Archive of the Institute of History of Latvia)



Fig. 3. Elk headed staffs from burials 153 and 56 at Oleniy Ostrov (after Gurina 1956)

1956, 379–80; Kriiska *et al.* 2007, 96–9). An amber figurine from the double grave at Valma in Estonia possibly depicts a seal, although it has also been identified as a wild boar or a beaver (Ots 2010, 14–5, fig. 2, cited in Luik 2013, 83), and a zoomorphic pendant from a male grave at Tamula resembles a boar (Iršenas 2010, 184, fig. 6/5). Though the positions

of some of these artefacts may indicate the ways in which they were possibly worn next to or on human bodies, leading to their interpretation as markers of status, amulets, or parts of larger ornaments (Zagorska & Lõugas 2000; Zagorskis 2004, 38; Iršenas 2006; Mantere & Kashina 2020), these artefacts might have interacted with humans in other ways than simply being worn or handled. As informed by ethnographic material concerning near-recent East Siberian hunter-gatherers, animal representations can be viewed as sentient beings or persons to whom humans communicated their wishes and requests for protection, successful hunting or other endeavours, general well-being, or for the healing of more specific states and illnesses (eg, Ivanov 1977; Taksami 2007, eg, MAE 5530-5, 5530-7, 5530-8, 5530-29, 5530-33). Although we can only speculate, perhaps the specific placement of animal figurines in graves may also indicate the relationships these artefacts could have had with living humans, such as the parts of their bodies they were asked and expected to protect and heal or the activities they were expected to assist in. Such requests would be expressed through communicative processes between humans and artefacts prior to their deposition while the personhood, individuality, and capabilities of these objects could have been ritually acknowledged by the performative act of including them in the burial.

Evidence of prior use of staffs before their interment has been recognised by Gurina (1956, 215) on the handle of an elk-headed example from the female grave at Oleniy Ostrov (Fig. 3). As shown in recent work by Mantere and Kashina (2020), elk-headed staffs across Northern Europe have been found not only in graves and mostly intact but also in settlements where they appear to have been involved in performative communicative processes and embodied interactions with humans. Mantere and Kashina (2020, 10–12) have demonstrated that most of the elk-headed staffs found in settlements have been broken in different ways and were, most probably, deliberately fragmented or, in some cases, exhibited signs of repair. They suggested that staffs were tightly associated with the personal achievements of their owners, as performers of ritual activities or successful elk hunters, which prevented other members from using the staffs and, thus, led to their fragmentation. If staffs are to be understood as artefacts that are, in some way, imbued with the power of the animal they represent and/or are manufactured from (Mantere &

Kashina 2020, 13–15), it can be proposed that, rather than focusing solely on human actions, they were fragmented because their capabilities to effect, cause affects (emotions), and influence actions declined and they could no longer deliver the expectations humans placed on them. On the other hand, individuality and capabilities of some of these artefacts could have been acknowledged and ceremonially displayed through the act of placement in the burials.

#### *Treatment prior to deposition*

Treatment of items prior to deposition in graves is another aspect worth considering. Use-wear patterns, incisions, and other visible traces are indicative of embodied interactions between humans and animal remains and potentially of performative communication as well. The burial of a female and a child at Bad Dürrenberg in Germany, originally interpreted as a shaman's grave due to the presence of deer frontlets and antlers (Grünberg *et al.* 2016a, 310), included tooth plates from five longitudinally split lower canines of a wild boar, two of which were found around the throat region of the deceased. These impressively large and longitudinally split canines were, interestingly, not used as knives. Instead, their lingual faces were shaped by scraping, their ends were rounded, and their surfaces were smoothed out. Traces of forming and shaping as well as several perforations on one of the canines (three perforations side by side at the proximal end, a single perforation at the distal end, and defective holes at the proximal and distal ends), suggest a considerable amount of embodied interaction with the canine, most probably as it was formed into a pendant. The assemblage also contained the right thyrohyoid bone of boar perforated at one end while three transversely incised lines are visible side by side on its convex side (Grünberg *et al.* 2016a, 315).

Worked remains of boars have usually been interpreted as clothing decorations (Grünberg *et al.* 2016a, 314) while recent discussions shift the focus from the adult female to the child buried in the grave, viewing the boar canines as the child's amulets (Vang Petersen 2016, 121). The Bad Dürrenberg burial also included halves of the metatarsus and metacarpus of a red deer shaped into awls and displaying significant use-wear. The smaller one exhibits incised decorations while the longer piece, missing the joint section, has been interpreted as a part of a working kit or, alternatively, a woman's hair pin (Grünberg *et al.* 2016a, 307).

Generally, the incisions observed as decorations on bone, antler, and lithics have so far been linked with the identities, culture, age groups, or gender of those who made the engraving (Karsten & Knarrström 2003, 118 cited in Conneller 2011, 86; Andersson *et al.* 2004) or, in specific cases, their apotropaic function has been highlighted (Conneller 2011, 90). Nevertheless, the act of shaping, forming, and decorating a piece of bone or engaging with it by making systematically associated patterns can potentially also be seen as a visually, tactilely, and olfactorily pleasing way of creating, acknowledging, and negotiating the material individuality of the object.

Three fragmented mandible halves originating from roe deer found at Bad Dürrenberg have been interpreted as sickles and fragments of several pond turtle carapaces have been interpreted as bowls or raw material. Scratches and black stains indicating traces of fire have been noted on the inner side of several pieces of carapace (Fig. 4) and potentially linked with techniques of separating the layers of the scutes and removing the vertebrae (Grünberg *et al.* 2016a, 311, 321). A shaft, an artefact made from red deer antler with a perforation and a rounded burr from heavy use, was included in the same burial (Grünberg *et al.* 2016a, 307). Though some of these objects exhibit clear use-wear (awls, shaft) they may have been put to a variety of uses and need not have been used exclusively as tools. They could have been assigned several social tasks during their lifetime, perhaps even simultaneously, and their usage could have changed over their lifespan. They could have been involved in a multiplicity of communicative processes with humans through which they were acknowledged as persons and, as suggested by the Siberian ethnographies, people might have laid their expectations on them and subsequently even expressed emotions. These could include anger and frustration leading to the mistreatment of the artefacts (beating or discarding) (Ivanov 1977) or to deliberate exposure to fire and scratching or over-extensive usage, if we envision such possibilities in the cases of the turtle carapaces and the red deer antler shaft from Bad Dürrenberg. Though not in association with burials, evidence for selection, curation, and movement of animal body parts that exhibit features related to human activity (burning and charring, polishing, trimming) and even introducing them to sites as single elements, has been demonstrated by Overton (2016, 570) in reference to the Mesolithic in southern England. Evidence

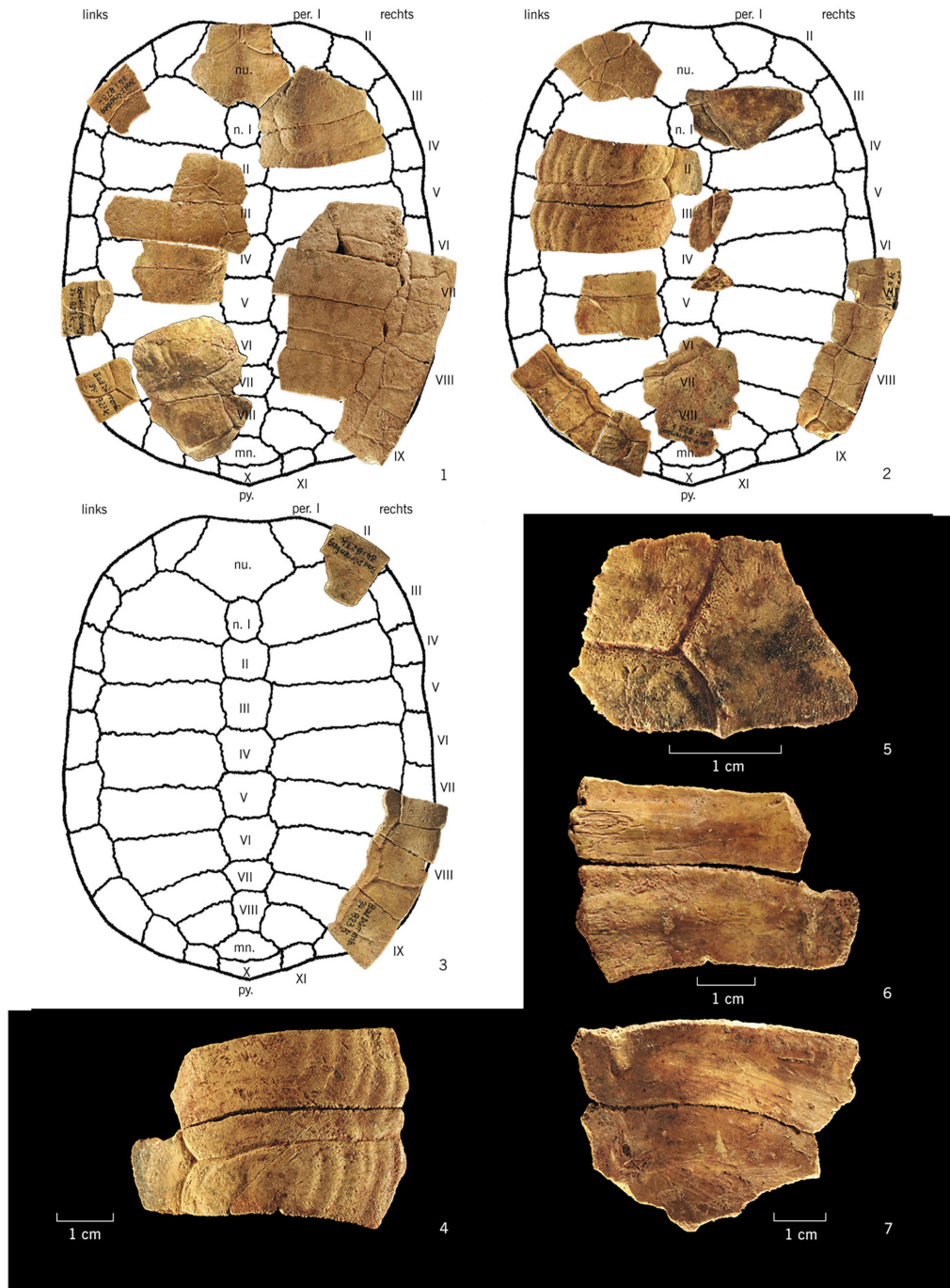


Fig. 4.

Fragments of turtle shells with scraping traces and burn marks from the burial at Bad Dürrenberg (photo by Andrea Hörentrup, State Office for Heritage Management and Archaeology Saxony-Anhalt)



suggesting intentional damage of various objects that were placed in Mesolithic graves has also been put forward (eg, Zagorskis 2004). It has been suggested that osprey and white-tailed eagle bones from several burials at Oleniy Ostrov, were intentionally broken before deposition (Mannermaa 2016, 789). The custom of causing damage to artefacts that are placed in graves has also been noted in the ethnographic evidence relating to East Siberian hunter-gatherers, such as the Orochi and Udege (Avrorin & Koz'minskiy 1949, 326, 327; Startsev 2005, 227).

#### DISCUSSION

Building from archaeological discussions about animal personhood and agency, as well as the agency of objects made from animal remains, and following interpretations offered by Siberian ethnographies, this paper proposes that some objects made from animal remains and animal representations might have been considered as persons within prehistoric Mesolithic and Neolithic hunter-gatherer communities. The ethnographic data about East Siberian near-recent hunter-gatherer groups, which have not been previously introduced to English speaking audiences, have been brought forward with the aim of including them within the scope of ethnographies from other parts of the world (eg, Amazonia, India, Melanesia, or other parts of Siberia) that have previously been considered in discussions of prehistoric hunter-gatherers and explorations of archaeological possibilities. The data are employed to highlight aspects of worldviews in which human agency is not necessarily in primacy, where some animal remains and animal artefacts have been perceived as effective and affecting animated things and to draw out archaeological implications. Although it is hard to be certain, the treatment of animal remains as persons (or with agency) is at least possible and, in some cases, can help us understand the material treatment.

By exploring non-human personhood, the intention has been to highlight the possible shared characteristics and qualities of humans and non-humans, to rethink the superiority of human agency, and not to incorporate the non-human into the category of human. As Viveiros de Castro (2004, 467) notes, anthropomorphism does not necessarily stand next to anthropocentrism, especially if viewed through an animist framework. Notions that not only animals but also plants, things, and landscape features are

animated, endowed with soul, and can be perceived as persons are common to a variety of animist/totemist communities (Hallowell 1960 cited in Anderson 2017; Ivanov 1977; Viveiros de Castro 2004; Fausto 2007). Yet, the degree to which these elements would have been considered alive or comprehended as persons depends on the context and social relations with other persons (eg, Ingold 2000, 97; Sillar 2009, 369). As Fowler (2004, 88) puts it: 'it is what things and animals and non-humans do that allows them to be understood as persons'.

Ethnographic data about Siberian near-recent hunter-gatherers and, especially, about the Nanai people speak of sociality and communication occurring between animal remains, objects, and humans involving food and physical, verbal, and affective (emotional) communication. Perhaps these can be viewed as actions through which one's personhood, a state of being that is not exclusively human, can be negotiated and acknowledged. Yet, unlike humans and animals, whose agency is embodied in their physical ability to act and engage in social relations (Sillar 2009, 370), or that of plants as living things whose growth and form may be attributed to their own agency (Rival 2014), artefacts are somewhat different. Though, as shown by the Siberian ethnographies, some objects can be perceived as having their own intentions and capacities to act, to be in possession of a spirit or a soul and therefore also being animated, the recognition and negotiation of the personhood of such artefacts will be expressed through human actions and perceptions.

Following Fowler's (2004, 85) notions that there can be no single process through which personhood is attained and no definition of personhood that applies to all contexts, different performative actions have been considered in relation to various animal remains and the artefacts made from them in Mesolithic and Neolithic hunter-gatherer graves. They can, however, be understood as material consequences of communicative actions carried out by humans in relation to artefacts and animal remains that might have been perceived as having qualities of a person (or with agency) and as categorical and consequential actions or formalised acts (see Lambek 2013, 147) constitutive of societies where humans are not the exclusive social agents.

The unique placement and positioning of some artefacts and animal remains in burials, which provides them with a distinct or independent position in



relation to the human bodies, unlike other finds of the same kind, can perhaps be viewed as acts that communicated their distinctive, individual importance and/or were ritual displays of the unique relations they had with other persons (humans) or the termination of such relations in the world of the living (eg, tooth pendants from Popovo, Zvejnieki, and Bøgebakken).

Though the link between the placement of animal remains next to or on the human body and the pathological processes on human bone tissue, potentially causing discomfort to the individual throughout their lifetime, has been made, so far, only in the case of wolf molars (placed between the upper and lower jaw of the man) and the human individual buried at Zvejnieki (grave 300), conceptions that animal remains have inherent abilities to protect, heal or aid in the physical discomfort of the human body are conceivable and noteworthy considerations. Notions of the agentic qualities of not only animals and animal remains but their representations as well, as suggested by the ethnographies, and especially their abilities to act, protect, or heal, encourage us to at least consider the possibility of communicative processes between humans and artefacts such as the animal figurines or the elk-headed staffs and the requests and expectations humans might have placed on them prior to their deposition. The agentic capabilities and individualities of some animal figures and staffs could have been ritually acknowledged by the performative act of including them in the burial.

The act of shaping animal representations itself can, perhaps, also be recognised as a way of visually, tactilely, and materially inscribing the personhood of a once living animal into bone or antler by morphologically shaping the artefacts into the animal's resemblance. Other animal artefacts could also have been involved in a variety of communicative interactions with humans through which they were acknowledged as persons with specific capabilities and their own intentions, those whom humans depended on and to whom they directed different requests and expressed various emotions. These may have included disappointments and frustrations, possibly resulting in physical interaction with the artefacts, eg, through burning, scratching, or over-using, or in other ways damaging or altering the artefact.

The intention of this paper has been to rethink the notion that animal artefacts and animal representations included in Mesolithic and Neolithic hunter-

gatherer burials were solely grave-goods accompanying a human person and to view them instead as effective and affecting animated things evocative of worldviews in which different types of persons have communicated, interacted, and mutually shaped each other. The material consequence of the communicative actions and performative acts carried out by humans in relation to artefacts and animal remains that might have been perceived as having the qualities of a person discussed here can be seen as constitutive of non-anthropocentric societies where there has been more than one social (human) agent. The focus on burials permitted a view of fixed archaeological contexts that have been acknowledged as important settings for the expressed consequences of human acts and attention. Scattered graves, animal remains, and artefacts, though providing a rather generalised view, also serve as prompts for future discussions on non-human personhood since it is through the dynamic process of human interaction with physical objects, including our and others' bodies, that our self-consciousness emerges as well as our capacity to conceptualise the perspective of another person (Mead 1934, cited in Sillar 2009, 370).

*Acknowledgements* I wish to thank Yuri Kirillovich Chistov for granting me permission to study the objects from the Siberian ethnographic collections in Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunst-kamera), Vladimir Davydov who kindly facilitated the work at the Museum and provided access to databases and Vladimir Kysel' for assisting the access and work with the artefacts. I am grateful to Graeme Warren for perceptive comments on a draft of this paper. Three anonymous referees provided helpful further advice on the initial submission. I am responsible for any errors of fact or judgement that remain.

This work was supported by European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement no. 701636.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>In parts of Northern Europe, such as the Baltic countries and northern Fennoscandia, the Neolithic period is characterised by non-agricultural hunting and gathering groups (as, for example, the Pitted Ware culture complex in Sweden, to which the burials from Ajvide can be related; Loze 1993; Burenhult 1999 cited in Mannermaa 2008; Mannermaa 2008). Stone Age finds from Zvejnieki range from the Middle Mesolithic to the Late Neolithic (Zagorska 2006). The Zvejnieki burials referred to in this paper date from the Middle Mesolithic to the Middle Neolithic, approximately 9000–3500 BP (Zagorska 2006).

<sup>2</sup>Similar notions of animal body parts as having an important role in shared ontologies have been explored in reference to historical hunters and their relationships with prey animals. For example, though referring to them as charms intended to bring successful hunting outcomes, McNiven (2010) acknowledges dugong ear bones worn or carried by hunters to be crucial in mediating the dialogues between Torres Strait Island marine hunters and whales. Mostly ear bones, but also other body parts of dugongs, which are known as animals with exceptional hearing capacities, were considered to aid sensory communication between hunters and prey in bringing animals close to the hunters. Here the animals' body parts provide hunters sensory access to the cognitive agency of dugongs through an ontology of shared and permeable personhood (McNiven 2010).

<sup>3</sup>The numbers refer to the number of the collection from the large Siberian ethnographic collection housed at the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera) (MAE) and to the individual objects studied (eg, MAE 5530-5). Each object is followed by short description and notes made by the person who collected the artefact. Collections 5530-1, 5530-7, 5530-8, 5530-12, 5530-29–31, 5530-33, 5530-36 MAE collection number 5716-691.

<sup>4</sup>Among the cluster of animal tooth pendants only three wolf incisors were included as part of the headgear of the male individual in grave 153; one was found amid tooth pendants lying around the knees of the individual in grave 290 and two canines in the cluster located next to the left lower limb of a child buried in grave 190 (Larsson 2006, 263–4; Lõugas 2006, 84–5).

<sup>5</sup>See for example, Lõugas (2006, 82–5, fig. 7).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, D. 2017. Humans and animals in northern Regions. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 46, 133–49
- Andersson, M., Karsten, P., Knarrström, B. & Svensson, M. 2004. *Stone Age Scania: significant places dug and read by contract archaeology*. Malmö: National Heritage Board
- Argent, G. 2016. Killing (constructed) horses – interspecies elders, empathy and emotion, and the Pazyryk horse sacrifices. In L.G. Broderick (ed.), *People with Animals: perspectives and studies in ethnozoarchaeology*, 19–32. Oxford: Oxbow Books
- Avrorin V.A. & Koz'minskiy I.I. 1949. Predstavleniya orochey o vselennoj, o pereselenii dush i puteshestviah shamanov izobrazhenyye na 'karte'. *Sbornik Muzeya antropologii i etnografii* 11, 323–34
- Boyd, B. 2017. Archaeology and human-animal relations: thinking through anthropocentrism. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 46, 299–316
- Berezniitskii, S.V., Gaer, E.A., Karabanova, S.F., Kile N.B., Kocheshkov, V.V., Podmaskin, Prokopenko, V.I., Sem, YU. A., Sem, T.A., Starcev, A.F., Turajev, V.A., Fetisova L.E., Fadeeva, E.V. & Shanshina, E.V. 2003. *Istoriya i kul'tura Nanaitsev: istoriko-etnograficheskie ocherki*. St Petersburg: Nauka
- Brinch Petersen, E. 1979. Kvindernes smykker. *Søllerødbogen* 1979, 39–56
- Brinch Petersen, E., Jønsson, J.H., Jeul, C. & A. Kjær. 2015. *Diversity of Mesolithic Vedbæk*. Copenhagen: Acta Archaeologica 86(1)/Acta Archaeologica Supplementa XVI/Centre of World Archaeology Publication 12
- Brück, J. 2001. Monuments, power and personhood in the British Neolithic. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 7, 649–67
- Burenhult, G. (ed.). 1999. *Arkeologi i Norden 1*. Stockholm: Natur och kultur
- Conneller, C. 2004. Becoming deer. Corporal transformations at Star Carr. *Archaeological Dialogues* 11, 37–56
- Conneller, C. 2011. *An Archaeology of Materials: substantial transformations in early prehistoric Europe*. Abingdon: Routledge
- Descola, P. 2013. *Beyond Nature and Culture*. Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press
- Eriksson, G., Lõugas, L. & Zagorska, I. 2003. Stone Age hunter-fisher-gatherers at Zvejnieki, Northern Latvia: radiocarbon, stable isotope and archaeozoological data. *Before Farming* 1, 1–25
- Fahlander, F. 2003. *The Materiality of Serial Practice: a micro-archaeology of burial*. Gothenburg: Gotarc Series B23
- Fausto, C. 2007. Feasting on people: eating animals and humans in Amazonia. *Current Anthropology* 48(2), 497–530
- Fowler, C. 2004. *The Archaeology of Personhood: an anthropological approach*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Grünberg, J.M. 2013. Animals in Mesolithic burials in Europe. *Anthropozoologica* 48(2), 231–53
- Grünberg, J.M. 2016. Mesolithic burials – rites, symbols and social organisation of early postglacial communities. In Grünberg *et al.* (eds) 2016b, 13–24
- Grünberg, J.M., Graetsch, H.A., Heußner, K.-U. & Schneider, K. 2016a. Analyses of Mesolithic grave goods from upright seated individuals in Central Germany. In Grünberg *et al.* (eds) 2016b, 291–328
- Grünberg, J.M., Gramsch, B., Larsson, L., Orschiedt, J. & Meller, H. (eds). 2016b. *Mesolithic Burials – Rites, Symbols and Social Organisation of Early Postglacial Communities*. Halle: Tagungen des Landesmuseums für Vorgeschichte Halle 13(I)
- Gurina, N. 1956. Oleneostrovskiy mogilnik. Moscow: *Materialy i issledovaniya po arheologii SSSR* 47
- Hallowell, A.I. 1960. Ojibwa ontology, behavior, and the world view. In S. Diamond (ed.), *Culture in History: essays in honour of Paul Radin*, 17–49. New York: Columbia University Press
- Hasanova, M.M. 2007. Put dushi v 'mir mertvih' po predstavleniyam narodov Amura. Moscow: *Mifologiya smerti. Struktura, funktsiya i semantika pogrebal'nogo obryada narodov Sibiri: etnograficheskie ocherki*, 134–54
- Hill, E. 2013. Archaeology and animal persons: toward a prehistory of human-animal relations. *Environment and Society: advances in research* 4, 117–36
- Ingold, T. 2000. A circumpolar night's dream. In T. Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: essays in liveliness, dwelling and skill*, 89–110. London: Routledge
- Iršenas, M. 2000. Elk figurines in the Stone Age art of the Baltic Area. *Acta Academiae Artium Vilnensis* 20, 93–105

- Iršėnas, M. 2006. Antropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines from the Zvejnieki burial ground in the context of the Baltic area. Statistical regularities or exceptional cases? In Larsson & Zagorska (eds) 2006, 301–8
- Iršėnas, M. 2007. Stone Age figurines from Baltic region: toys or sacred objects. *Acta Historiae atrium Balticae* 2, 7–17
- Iršėnas, M. 2010. Anthropomorphic and zoomorphic Stone Age art in Lithuania, and its archaeological cultural context. *Archaeologia Baltica* 13, 175–90
- Ivanov, S.V. 1977. O detskih ‘amuletah’ Nanaitsev. *Pamyatniki kul'tury narodov Sibiri i Severa (vtoraya polovina XIX – nachalo XX v.)*. *Sbornik Muzeja antropologii i etnografii* 33, 80–9
- Ivashenko, L. YA., Kile, N.B. & Smolyak, A.F. 1994. *Istoriya i kul'tura Ul'cheii v XVII–XX vv: istoriko etnograficheskie ocherki*. St Petersburg: Nauka
- Janik, L. 2019. Why does difference matter? The creation of personhood and the categorisation of food among prehistoric fisher-gatherer-hunters of Northern Europe. In A. Cannon (ed.), *Structured World: the archaeology of hunter-gatherer thought and action*, 128–40. London/ New York: Routledge
- Jankauskas, R. & Palubeckaitė, Ž. 2006. Paleopathological review of Zvejnieki sample. Analysis of cases and considerations about subsistence. In Larsson & Zagorska (eds) 2006, 149–63
- Jordan, P. 2006. Analogy. In C. Conneller & G. Warren (eds), *Mesolithic Britain and Ireland: new approaches*, 83–100. Stroud: Tempus
- Jordan, P. 2011. Landscape and culture in northern Eurasia: an introduction. In P. Jordan (ed.), *Landscape and Culture in Northern Eurasia*, 17–45. Walnut Creek CA: Left Coast Press
- Kannegaard Nielsen, E. & Brinch Petersen, E. 1993. Burials, people and dogs. In S. Hvass & B. Storgaard (eds), *Digging into the Past: 25 years of archaeology in Denmark*, 76–81. Aarhus: Aarhus University
- Karsten, P. & Knarrström, B. 2003. *The Tågerup excavations*. Trelleborg: National Heritage Board.
- Kriiska, A.L., Lõugas, L., Lõhmus, M., Mannermaa, K. & Johanson, K. 2007. New AMS dates from Estonian Stone Age burial sites. *Estonian Journal of Archaeology* 11(2), 83–121
- Lambek, M. 2013. The value of (performative) acts. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 3(2), 141–60
- Lane, P.J. 2014. Hunter-gatherer-fishers, ethnoarchaeology, and analogical reasoning. In V. Cummings, P. Jordan & M. Zvelebil (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology and Anthropology of Hunter-gatherers*, 104–50. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Larsson, L. 1989. Big dog and poor man: mortuary practices in Mesolithic societies in southern Sweden. In T.B. Larsson & H. Lundmark (eds), *Approaches to Swedish Prehistory: a spectrum of problems and perspectives in contemporary research*, 211–23. Oxford: British Archaeological Report S500
- Larsson, L. 1990. Dogs in fraction – symbols in action. In P. Vermeersch & P. Van Peer (eds), *Contributions to the Mesolithic in Europe*, 153–60. Leuven: Leuven University Press
- Larsson L. 2006. Tooth for a tooth for a grave. Tooth ornaments from the graves at the cemetery of Zvejnieki. In Larsson & Zagorska (eds) 2006, 253–87
- Larsson, L. & Zagorska, I. (eds). 2006. *Back to the Origin: new research in the Mesolithic–Neolithic Zvejnieki cemetery and environment, northern Latvia*. Lund: Acta Archaeologica Lundensia Series in 8° 52
- Losey, R.J., Bazaliiskii, V.I., Garvie-Lok, S., Germonpré, M., Leonard, J.A., Andrew L.A., Katzenberg, M.A. & Sablin, M.V. 2011. Canids as persons: Early Neolithic dog and wolf burials, Cis-Baikal, Siberia. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 30(2), 174–89
- Lõugas, L. 2006. Animals as subsistence and bones as raw material for settlers of Prehistoric Zvejnieki. In Larsson & Zagorska (eds) 2006, 75–89
- Loze, I., 1993. The Early Neolithic in Latvia: the Narva Culture. *Acta Archaeologica* 63, 119–40
- Luik, H. 2013. Seals, seal hunting and worked seal bones in Estonian coastal region in the Neolithic and Bronze Age. In A. Choyke & S. O'Connor (eds), *From these Bare Bones: raw materials and the study of worked osseous objects*, 73–87. Oxford: Oxbow Books
- Macėane, A. 2021. Mesolithic companions. The significance of animal remains within Mesolithic burials in Zvejnieki and Skateholm. In D. Borić, D. Antonović & B. Mihajlović (eds), *Foraging Assemblages*, Vol. 2, 655–59. Belgrade/New York: Serbian Archaeological Society/ The Italian Academy for Advanced Studies in America, Columbia University
- Mannermaa, K. 2006. Bird remains in the human burials at Zvejnieki, Latvia. Introduction to bird finds and a proposal for interpretation. In Larsson & Zagorska (eds) 2006, 289–99
- Mannermaa, K. 2008. Birds and burials at Ajvide (Gotland, Sweden) and Zvejnieki (Latvia) about 8000–3900 BP. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 27, 201–25
- Mannermaa, K. 2013. Powerful birds. The Eurasian jay (*Garrulus glandarius*) and the osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) in hunter-gatherer burials at Zvejnieki, northern Latvia and Yuzhniy Oleniy Ostrov, northwestern Russia. *Anthropozoologica* 48(2), 189–205
- Mannermaa, K. 2016. Good to eat and good to think? Evidence of the consumption of osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) and white-tailed eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) in the Late Mesolithic at Yuzhniy Oleniy Ostrov, NW Russia. In Grünberg *et al.* (eds) 2016b, 781–92
- Mannermaa, K., Rainio R., Giryay Y.E. & Gerasimov V.D. 2021. Let's groove: attachment techniques of Eurasian elk (*Alces alces*) tooth pendants at the Late Mesolithic cemetery Yuzhniy Oleniy Ostrov (Lake Onega, Russia). *Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences* 13(1), 2–22
- Mansrud, A. 2017. Untangling social, ritual and cosmological aspects of fishhook manufacture in the Middle Mesolithic coastal communities of NE Skagerrak. *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 46(1), 31–47

- Mantere, V.N. & Kashina, E.A. 2020. Elk-head staffs in prehistoric north-eastern Europe and north-western Russia – signs of power and prestige? *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 39(1), 2–18
- McNiven, I.J. 2010. Navigating the human-animal divide: marine mammal hunters and rituals of sensory allurements. *World Archaeology* 42(2), 215–30
- Mead, G.H. 1934. *Mind, Self and Society. From the Standpoint of Social Behaviorist*. Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Oshibkina V.S. 2016. Funeral rituals of the population of the Eastern Lake Onega region (based on materials from Popovo and Peschanitsa cemeteries). In Grünberg *et al.* (eds) 2016b, 793–808
- Ots, M. 2010. Loomakujukesed Valma Keskneoliitilises kaksikmatuses. In Ü. Tamla (ed.), *Ilusad Asjad: tähelepanuväärseid leide Eesti arheoloogikogudest*, 11–22. Tallinn: Muinasaja teadus 21.
- Overton, N.J. 2016. More than skin deep: reconsidering isolated remains of ‘fur-bearing species’ in the British and European Mesolithic. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 26(4), 561–78
- Overton, N.J. & Hamilakis, Y. 2013. A manifesto for a social zooarchaeology: swans and other beings in the Mesolithic. *Archaeological Dialogues* 20(2), 111–36
- Pasarić, M. & Warren, G. 2019. Interactions of care and control: human–animal relationships in hunter-gatherer communities in near-contemporary Eastern Siberia and the Mesolithic of Northwest Europe. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 29(3), 465–78
- Popova, T. 2001. New discoveries on the sculptures of Oleni Island. *Folklore* 18/19, 127–36. [[https://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol18/oleni\\_is.pdf](https://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol18/oleni_is.pdf)]
- Rainio, R. & Tamboer, A. 2018. Animal teeth in a Late Mesolithic woman’s grave, reconstructed as a rattling ornament on a baby pouch. *Exarc Journal* 1. [<https://exarc.net/issue-2018-1/at/animal-teeth-late-mesolithic-womans-grave-reconstructed-rattling-ornament-baby-pouch>]
- Rainio, R., Gerasimov V.D., Giryá Y.E. & Mannermaa K. 2021. Prehistoric pendants as instigators of sound and body movements: a traceological case study from Northeast Europe, c. 8200 cal. BP. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 31(4), 639–60
- Rival, L. 2014. Animism and the meaning of life: reflections from Amazonia. In M. Brightman, V.E. Grotti & O. Ulturgasheva (eds), *Animism in Rainforest and Tundra: personhood, animals, plants and things in contemporary Amazonia and Siberia*, 69–81. Oxford/New York: Berghahn
- Serjeantson, D. 2009. *Birds*. Cambridge: Cambridge Manuals in Archaeology
- Sillar, B. 2009. The social agency of things? Animism and materiality in the Andes. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 19(3), 367–77
- Startsev, A.F. 2005. *Kul'tura i byt Udegeitsev (vtoraya polovina XIX–XX v.)*. Vladivostok: Dal'nauka.
- Taksami, C.M. 2007. Predstavleniya Nivhov o vselennoy i mire mertv'ih, *Mifologiya smerti. Struktura, funktsiya i semantika pogrebal'nogo obryada narodov Sibiri: etnograficheskie ocherki*, 154–81
- Vang Petersen, P. 2016. Papooses in the Mesolithic? A reinterpretation of tooth and snail shell ornaments found in grave 8 at Bøgebakken and other Mesolithic burials. In Grünberg *et al.* (eds) 2016b, 109–24
- Viveiros de Castro, E. 1998. Cosmological deixis and Amerindian perspectivism. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 4, 469–88
- Viveiros de Castro, E. 2004. Exchanging perspectives: the transformation of objects into subjects in Amerindian ontologies. *Common Knowledge* 10(3), 463–84
- Warren, G. 2018. From moments to histories: a social archaeology of the Mesolithic? *Journal of World Prehistory* 31(3), 421–33
- Warren, G. 2021. Is there such a thing as hunter-gatherer archaeology? *Heritage* 4, 794–810
- Widlok, T. 2020. Hunting and gathering. In F. Stein, S. Lazar, M. Candea, H. Diemberger, J. Robbins, A. Sanchez & R. Stasch (eds), *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge. [<https://www.anthroencyclopedia.com/entry/hunting-and-gathering>]
- Zagorska, I. 2000. The art from Zvejnieki burial ground, Latvia. In A. Butrimas (ed.), *Prehistoric Art in the Baltic Region*, 79–92. Vilnius: Acta Academiae Artium Vilnensis 20
- Zagorska, I. 2006. Radiocarbon chronology of the Zvejnieki burials. In Larsson & Zagorska (eds) 2006, 91–113
- Zagorska, I. & Lõugas, L. 2000. The tooth pendant head-dresses of Zvejnieki Cemetery. In V. Lang & A. Kriiska (eds), *De temporibus antiquissimis ad honorem Lembit Jaaniits*, 223–44. Tallin: Muinasaja Teadus 8
- Zagorskis, F. 2004. *Zvejnieki (Northern Latvia). Stone Age Cemetery*. Oxford; British Archaeological Report S1292
- Zhulnikov, A.M. & Kashina, E.A. 2010. ‘Staffs with elk heads’ in the culture of the ancient population of the eastern Urals, Northern and Eastern Europe. *Archaeology, Ethnology & Anthropology of Eurasia* 38(2), 71–8
- Zvelebil, M. 2008. Innovating hunter-gatherers: The Mesolithic in the Baltic. In G. Bailey & P. Spikins (eds), *Mesolithic Europe*, 18–59. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press
- Zvelebil, M. & Jordan, P. 1999. Hunter fisher gatherer ritual landscapes – question of time, space and representation. In J. Goldhahn (ed.), *Rock Art as Social Representation*, 101–26. Oxford: British Archaeological Report S794
- Živaljević, I. 2015. Concepts of the body and personhood in the Mesolithic–Neolithic Danube Gorges: interpreting animal remains from human burials. *Issues in Ethnology and Anthropology* 10(3), 675–99



## RÉSUMÉ

*‘Venez donner une âme à mon enfant’. Restes d’origine humaine et animale, et objets provenant de tombes de chasseurs-cueilleurs au Mésolithique et Néolithique en Europe du nord, de Maja Pasarić*

Les restes d’animaux modifiés ou non modifiés et les représentations d’animaux contribuent de manière significative au contenu des assemblages funéraires de chasseurs-cueilleurs du Mésolithique et, dans certains cas, du début du Néolithique en Europe du Nord. Bien que ces découvertes aient reçu une forte attention, les récits archéologiques prédominants se concentrent sur leurs valeurs économiques, esthétiques ou symboliques relatives aux humains. Cette contribution explore les manières de regarder ces assemblages et les considère au-delà de leur signification relative à une identité humaine ou un choix symbolique et/ou économique humain. S’appuyant sur des informations relativement récentes tirées de la littérature ethnographique russe sur les communautés de chasseurs-cueilleurs de Sibérie orientale, cet article explore les voies permettant de comprendre les restes d’animaux non modifiés et modifiés et les représentations d’animaux dans les tombes de chasseurs-cueilleurs du Mésolithique et du Néolithique en tant qu’objets animés et étudie les moyens de reconnaître leur identité individuelle. L’article décrit ce qui pourrait être considéré comme les conséquences matérielles d’actions communicatives et d’actes performatifs en relation avec des artefacts et des restes d’animaux qui auraient pu être perçus comme ayant les qualités d’une personne, tels que leur placement et leur disposition dans la sépulture et leur traitement avant la déposition.

## ZUSAMENFASSUNG

*‘Komm und gib meinem Kind Verstand’. Tierische Überreste, Artefakte und Menschen in mesolithischen und neolithischen Gräbern von Jäger-Sammlerinnen in Nordeuropa, von Maja Pasarić*

Unbearbeitete und bearbeitete Tierreste und Tierdarstellungen sind wesentlicher Bestandteil mesolithischer und, in einigen Fällen, frühneolithischer Jäger- und Sammlergräber in Nordeuropa. Zwar wurde diesen Funden große Aufmerksamkeit zuteil, doch konzentrieren sich die vorherrschenden archäologischen Narrative auf ihren wirtschaftlichen, ästhetischen oder symbolischen Wert in Bezug auf den Menschen. Dieser Beitrag untersucht Möglichkeiten, diese Funde nicht nur als Sichtbarmachung menschlicher Identitäten und Zeichen symbolischer und/oder wirtschaftlicher Entscheidungen zu betrachten. Auf der Grundlage von Erkenntnissen aus der russischen ethnographischen Literatur über ostsibirische Jäger- und Sammlergemeinschaften der jüngeren Vergangenheit werden Wege aufgezeigt, wie unbearbeitete und bearbeitete Überreste und Darstellungen von Tieren aus mesolithischen und neolithischen Jäger- und Sammlergräbern als belebte Objekte verstanden werden können, und es wird untersucht, wie ihre Persönlichkeit erfasst werden kann. Der Beitrag umreißt das, was wir als die materiellen Folgen kommunikativer Handlungen und performativer Akte in Bezug auf Artefakte und tierische Überreste, die möglicherweise als Objekte mit den Eigenschaften einer Person wahrgenommen wurden, verstehen können, wie z.B. ihre Platzierung und Anordnung innerhalb des Grabes und den Umgang mit ihnen vor der Deponierung.

## RESUMEN

*“Ven y dale sentido a mi hijo”. Restos animales, artefactuales y humanos en las tumbas de cazadores recolectores mesolíticos y neolíticos del norte de Europa, por Maja Pasarić*

Los restos animales modificados y sin modificar y las representaciones animales contribuyen significativamente al contenido de los conjuntos funerarios mesolíticos y, en algunos casos, del Neolítico inicial en el norte de Europa. A pesar de que estos elementos han recibido considerable atención, las narrativas arqueológicas se centran predominantemente en su valor económico, estético o simbólico en relación con los humanos. Esta contribución explora las distintas posibilidades de explorar conjuntos más allá de considerarlos principalmente como significantes de identidades humanas y elecciones simbólicas y/o económicas. Basándonos en los conocimientos de la literatura etnográfica rusa de las comunidades de cazadores-recolectores en el Este de Siberia, este artículo explora los distintos caminos para la comprensión de los restos animales modificados y

sin modificar que se documentan en las tumbas de cazadores-recolectores desde el Mesolítico al Neolítico como objetos animados e investiga las distintas formas de reconocer su personalidad. Este artículo señala lo que podría ser considerado como consecuencias materiales de las acciones comunicativas y actos transformadores en relación con los artefactos y los restos animales que podrían estar siendo percibidos como cualidades de una persona, como puede ser su localización y disposición dentro de las tumbas y el tratamiento previo a su depósito.