

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

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

The Urals

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

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



Figure 36. The flat ivory figure from the Bezymiannyi cave (Bader & Petrin 1978: 30).

blance to those of Eastern European cultures and some to those of the Palaeolithic cultures of Siberia (Ščelinskij & Širokov 1999).

The cave of **Bezymiannyi**, where examples of Palaeolithic art have been found, is located on the eastern foothills of the Urals in the environs of the Sukhoi Log mountain on the right bank of the Pyshma river. The cultural layer inside the cave is dated 19.2 millennia old. It is unique in that the discovered material consists of bone objects only. Prehistoric art is represented by a single object: an 8 cm tall flat stylised ivory figurine resembling a smaller predator (weasel, ermine, or marten) (Figure 36). The figure's closest analogue is perhaps the figurine of a feline (cave lion) discovered in Pavlov (Bader & Petrin 1978).

Shulgan Tash (Kapova) became known in 1959 with sensational cave paintings discovered by A. V. Riumin. The first representation discovered is today known as the sc. Riumin's Horse (Figure 37). Shulgan Tash (*Kapova* in Russian) is situated in the Republic of Bashkyrtostan of the Russian Federation, 40 km west from the town of Burzian (Starosubkhangulov) and some 200 km south-east of Ufa. The cave is colossal (the portal is 20 metres in height and 40 m in width) and has been shaped by the brook of Shulgan, which flows into the river of Agidel (the White, or *Belaia* River). The ex-

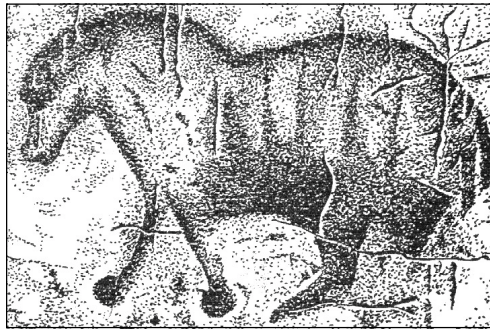


Figure 37. First discovery of Paleolithic cave painting in Eastern Europe: the Riumin's Horse. After Bader (Obydennov & Korepanov 1997).

plored passage extends in a more than kilometre long stretch into the limestone massif. Paintings cover the walls of two levels of the three-floor cave; the third floor is almost completely filled with the flowing water of the Shulgan brook, which runs three km inside the mountain and forms a 5 m deep lake on its exit.

Inside this legendary cave a 16–17 millennia old cultural layer containing Palaeolithic stone tools, a primitive clay lamp, stone bowl, a stone with remnants of painting fallen from the wall, numerous pieces of charcoal and ochre have been discovered. Bader and Shchelinski have thoroughly inspected the paintings and published articles on the subject (Bader 1965; Ščelinskij & Širokov 1999). Topics associated with these paintings have been discussed by Liubin (1990), Filippov (1990), Kotov (1997) and other authors.

Red ochre that was finger-painted on the limestone wall was mostly used for painting. Some representations are terra cotta or purple-coloured, made with red ochre darkened by adding charcoal or manganite. Also, one painting is painted in black.

Painting compositions differ in arrangement and themes, which refers to their specific role in the system of cave sanctuary. The majority of paintings have been created on sheer or projecting walls, 1–2 metres above the cave floor, partly on the ceilings above small alcoves and niches. The size of representations ranges between 0.1–1.2 metres. Most of the representations have disintegrated due to the unstable microclimate (and humidity level in particular) in the cave after the glacial period. The paintings that have been cleansed of layers of calcite deposited on the walls are more distinct and brighter. This kind of restoration, however, has sometimes proved fatal. One of the representations discovered in the Chaos Hall was almost completely destroyed as the result of removing the calcite layer.

The middle floor of the cave that stretches about 350 m north and northeast into the mountain massif is most easily accessible. 120 m from the cave opening lies the spacious Main Hall. A small passage from the Main Hall leads to the three following high-ceilinged halls. The first is known as a Dome Hall, the second as a Symbol Hall and the third as the Chaos Hall. Traces of water level of a subterranean lake from the Atlantic climatic period are clearly distinguishable on

the walls. The floor of the Chaos Hall is formed of irregular giant boulders fallen from the ceiling through the floor to the lower, underwater level – visitors can hear the somewhat spooky murmur of the Shulgan brook below.

All three halls of the middle floor have paintings on the walls. Most of the paintings in the Dome Hall are spots of paint of vague shape. The first painting composition is situated some 150 m away from the cave's mouth and consists of similar paint spots. Streaked trapezoidal figures located near the entrance to the Symbol Hall have more definite contours. Unfortunately, the figures are partly disintegrated.

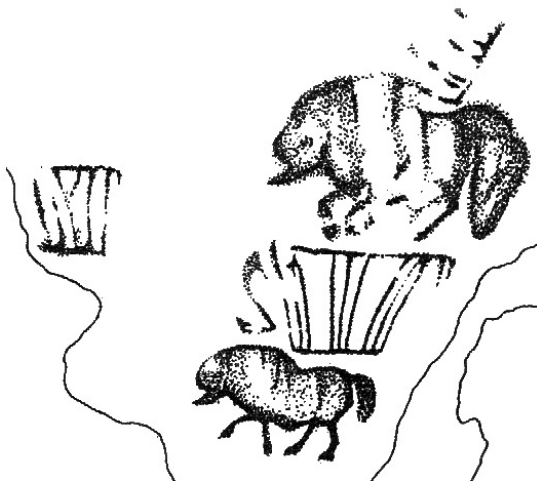
The paintings of the Symbol Hall are grouped in different compositions. The two smallest compositions are on both sides of the hall entrance. Larger compositions are on the north wall and consist of various trapezoidal representations (Figure 38), which are often relatively complex. Handle-like elements can be distinguished in the upper end of some trapezoidal paintings, some exhibiting vertical lines inside. Triangular figures and traces of a zoomorphic painting have also been found there.

The paintings of the gigantic Chaos Hall have been made on the southern and southeastern wall. The removal of calcite layer from the southern wall unearthed the most interesting composition depicting two horses over one another and a trapezoidal figure separated



Figure 38. Trapezoidal markings of Shulgan Tash. After Bader (Kotov 1997).

Figure 39. The composition of horse-like and trapezoidal figures in the Chaos Hall. After Bader (Kotov 1997).



rating them. The left “handle” of the trapezoidal figure resembles a mammoth trunk. Another, partly disintegrated trapezium is depicted on the left, in front of the same composition (Figure 39). The insides of both trapezia are illustrated with vertical lines. The horses’ manes have been painted in black, elsewhere red ochre has been enriched with purplish brown hues. Under the nearly 10 cm thick calcite layer the colours of painting have remained practically unaltered. Ochre used for painting had been previously mixed with fat. The left trapezoidal figure, originally painted in red, has later been restored with a darker hue (Ščelinskij & Širokov 1999: 58).

The southeastern wall of the Chaos Hall is tilted inward. Above a gap running downwards from the heap of stones between the slanting wall and the floor there is an extensive mural, where one can clearly distinguish an about 35 cm high bright red anthropomorphic figure with zoomorphic features (Figure 40). This single anthropomorphic painting of the Shulgan Tash cave is depicted in profile, bending and its triangular head resembles a mammoth head. Some authors argue that the figure’s legs, as it



Figure 40. The anthropomorphic figure in the Chaos Hall. After Bader (Kotov 1997).

were, remind those of horses and that it has a short tail (Ščelinskij & Širokov 1999: 60).

Above the anthropomorph there lies an animal figure, which was damaged in the attempt to restore it in the 1970s and is no longer identifiable. Under the figure there are numerous red and brownish geometrical markings, including trapezoidal, triangular and ladder-like figures and various lines and streaks, partly covered by a calcite layer.

To reach the upper floor of the cave one requires mountaineering skills. The only access to this floor is a 14 metres high almost vertical shaft situated at the end of the Main Hall. People say that there was once a separate entrance to the uppermost floor from outside, which by now has caved in. From the shaft the cave continues some 700 m northwestward and then descends abruptly to join the first floor filled with the Shulgan brook. There lies also a small subterranean lake. The largest of the numerous halls on the upper floor are the Painting Hall, the Acoustic Hall, the Upper Hall, the Jewel Hall, the Rainbow Hall and the Stalactite Hall. Several halls branch into side-passages, which are largely unexplored.

On the upper floor Palaeolithic art has been found only from the Painting Hall. Its eastern wall displays 8 figures, 7 animal-like (4

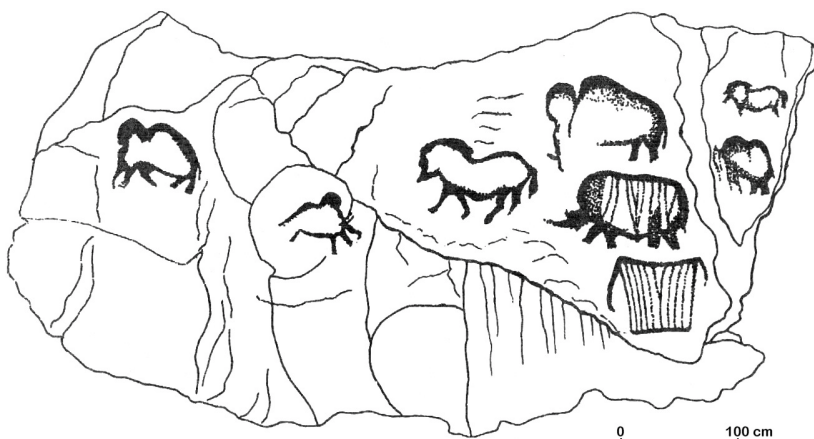


Figure 41. Representations on the eastern wall of the Painting Hall after Shchelinski (Kotov 1997).

mammoth-like, 2 horse-like, 1 rhinoceros-like) and one trapezoidal figure. Traces of paint found on the wall suggest the former existence of three destroyed representations. The same red ochre has been used on the whole mural, and paintings are arranged into a horizontal belt, forming a relatively even compositional entity. The size of figures ranges between 0.5–1.2 metres, most of them are fully painted. The depicted direction of motion of all animal figures, except for one mammoth-like figure, is from right to left. The central figure of the composition is “Riumin’s Horse”, with two mammoths in front and the rest of representations behind it (Figure 41). A prominent rhinoceros and a trapezoidal marking stand out among the latter.

The number of representations on the western wall is smaller – three mammoth-like figures and one painting resembling an auroch. Under the paintings the wall is covered with a network of smooth-bottomed depressions. The paintings are very expressive and relatively well-preserved (Figure 42). No prehistoric paintings have been discovered in other halls of the upper floor, though discovery of those in the future may be possible.

More than 50 prehistoric representations have been discovered in the Shulgan Tash cave so far. Of all the animal figures mammoths

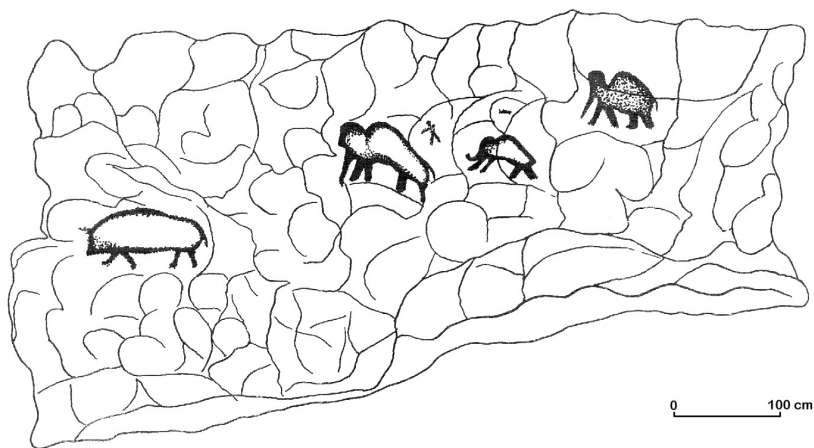


Figure 42. Representations on the western wall of the Painting Hall after Shchelinski (Kotov 1997).

and horses are the most recognisable. Mammoths have been depicted extremely dynamically; in this sense the figures bear striking similarity to many West-European cave paintings, the only difference being the lack of details referring to their fur. At the same time the animal representations of Shulgan Tash are quadruped, a feature quite rare in the Palaeolithic art of Western Europe. There are also many geometrical figures, which have no direct counterparts in Western Europe, generally interpreted to be construction elements, masculine and feminine symbols and tribal tokens.

A. Filippov and V. Kotov have attempted to clarify the mythological background behind the cave art of Shulgan Tash. According to Filippov these are ritual attributes, evidenced by the same orientation of all animal figures in the whole cave, from the Painting Hall through the shaft to the lower floor and the anthropomorphic representations of the Chaos Hall. Similar orientation towards a zoo-anthropomorphic or some other exceptional creature has been noticed in the Palaeolithic art of Western Europe (Filippov 1990). Kotov has also attempted to associate the paintings with various ritual activities. He has traced the ancient beliefs in the ethnography and folklore of the aborigines of the Urals (Kotov 1997).

The second cave containing Palaeolithic art in the Ural region is **Ignatievka (Yamazy Tash)**. Ignatievka is situated in coastal cliff about 200 km north-east from Shulgan Tash, 8 km west of the village Serpievka on the right bank of the Sim river, a tributary to the Agidel. 15 km from the Serpievka village to the Ignatievka cave along the Sim stretches an extensive Devonian limestone karst area, including more than 20 caves, precipices, grottoes and shafts. During dry seasons the Sim runs mostly underground. The territory belongs to the Katav-Ivanovski district of the Cheliabinsk Province, Russia. Yamazy Tash was first mentioned in 1786, when a member of the Uralic expedition team of the Russian Academy of Sciences, P. S. Pallas described it as a large cave containing human and animal bones. The name 'Ignatievka' is of more recent origin and was derived from hermit Ignati, who lived in the cave sometime in the first half of the 19th century. The first scientific expedition to explore the cave, which resulted in the discovery of traces of post-glacial human activity, was conducted in 1913 by S. Rudenko. Archaeological excavations conducted during 1960–61 by Bader confirmed that the cave had been used by Palaeolithic man (Bader 1980).

Even though the prehistoric cultural stratum of the Ignatievka cave was long known, Palaeolithic paintings were discovered only in 1980 by V. T. Petrin, S. E. Chairkin and V. N. Shirokov (Ščelinskij & Širokov 1999). Based on charcoal samples gathered from the cave the paintings have been dated 15–16 (Cal) millennia old. The cave and paintings it contains have been more thoroughly described in the 1990s (Petrin 1992; Ščelinskij & Širokov 1999).

To access the Ignatievka cave one has to climb up the steep 12 m high bank. The cave's floor descends gradually from the entrance: by 150 m from the cave mouth the floor has fallen 8 m. At the far end of the cave the floor rises some metres. The total length of passages is 626 m, the average height of the cave is 2.4 m and the average width is 3.1 m. After 30 metres the passage proceeding from the hall at the cave's mouth branches into two, which in about 50 metres both lead to the 30 m long and 24 m wide Grand Hall. The at places up to 7–8 m high hall ceiling is supported by a natural pillar (14 x 8 m in diameter).

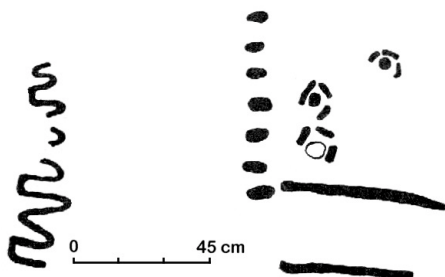
The nearest painting is situated at the beginning of the Grand Hall and depicts a partly disintegrated mammoth figure, adjacent to another figure covered by a calcite layer. The mammoth is depicted climbing uphill (Figure 43).



Figure 43. Representation of a mammoth near the entrance to the Grand Hall (Okladnikov & Petrin 1983).

Two denser painting compositions are situated on the western and northern sides of the central pillar in the Grand Hall. Both consist of geometrical figures. On the western wall there are parallel lines of various length and spots of vague shape, completed by a serpentine and a schematic horse figure. The composition on the northern wall consists of a longer vertical serpentine, spots arranged in a vertical row, a couple of longer lines and round markings, surrounded by short lines on three sides (Figure 44).

Figure 44. Geometrical paintings on the Grand Hall pillar (Okladnikov & Petrin 1983).



Single representations in dispersed black and red have been painted on all the other walls of the Grand Hall. These include schematic animal and various geometrical figures. The latter consist mostly of parallel lines, but also serpentines and annular marks. Most animal-like representations remind schematic mammoths. One of the

paintings presents an anthropomorphic creature with wing-like hands and other features characteristic of a flying bird.

Four passages with no exit proceed from the Grand Hall. From the largest of those two narrow cross-passageways lead to the End Hall. The first passage is about 5 m long, starting slightly lower than the floor level and then sloping up, but so low that it can be passed in the crawling position only. The upper access is a 5 m long smooth-walled vulviform opening, located about 3.5 m above the Grand Hall floor and is connected to the tectonic gap leading to the End Hall. The End Hall is practically square (11 x 11 m), its ceiling rises to 2.5 m in the centre and swells like a dome. The end of the hall is filled with a deposit layer of clay and pebbles, which is also blocking the narrow shaft leading up to the ground. The otherwise 25–30 m thick limestone rock is above the congested shaft only 7 m thick.

Compared to the paintings of the Grand Hall those of the End Hall are in better condition and present several unique motifs. There are two extensive panels in the farther end of the hall. One of the panels is painted in red, the other in black. The central figures of the red panel are a female figure and a 2.3 m high schematic representation of a rhinoceros. The woman's crotch and the rhinoceros are linked by an intermittent dotted line. Numerous smaller geometrical marks and a mammoth figure lie adjacent to these two larger representations (Figure 45).

The paintings of the black panel display an almost equal number of geometrical and animal figures. Perhaps the most interesting of

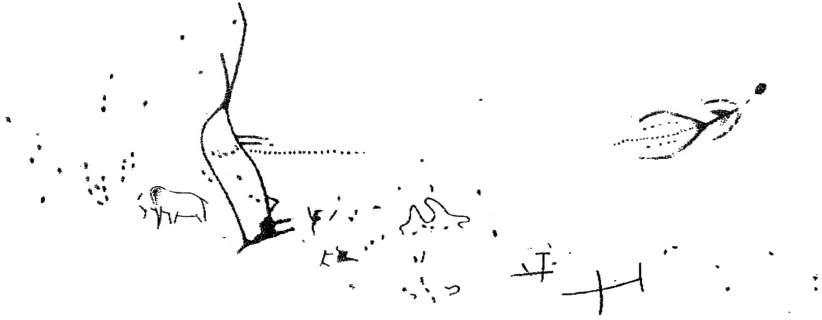


Figure 45. Red panel of the End Hall depicting a female figure and a rhinoceros. After Petrin (Kotov 1997).

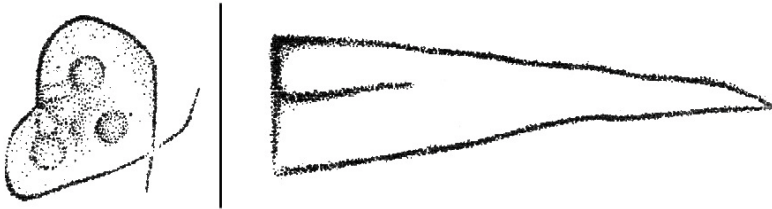


Figure 46. Marks from the black panel of the End Hall. After Petrin (Obydenov & Korepanov 1997).

the geometrical marks are a regular streaked parallelogram, a painting resembling a mask and a wedge-shaped figure (Figure 46).

Unique among zoomorphic paintings is perhaps the one resembling a camel (Figure 47). The same group of paintings includes three horse figures, a mammoth and an auroch figure.



Figure 47. Camel-like animal figure from the black panel of the End Hall. After Petrin (Obydenov & Korepanov 1997).

In the front part of the End Hall there is another painting composition in black, including three arrow-like marks next to ordinary lines and a schematic anthropomorphic figure.

The Ignatievka cave contains about 60 single registered representations (Ščelinskij & Širokov 1999). The number is somewhat tentative and depends, for example, on whether the dot marks figuring in the composition are considered as individual representations or not. The most dominant elements of the composition are geometrical figures, mostly dot marks, which sometimes form dotted lines, semicircles and other figures. The number of various streaks and lines arranged in groups is also large. Due to their systematic recurrence the lines are today interpreted as Palaeolithic numerical symbols (Autio 2000: 180). The most frequent animal figures are those depicting mammoths (8), followed by horses (4) and a rhinoceros, a camel and an auroch-like figure. Some authors regard serpentine lines as representations of snakes. There are also three anthropomorphic figures.

As suggested by cultural layers discovered in the passageways and the Grand Hall and Palaeolithic pendants and beads found in the passage leading to the End Hall, Palaeolithic ritual ceremonies were held in the Ignatievka cave as well. Moreover, a horizontal ledge was found in the southern passage from the Grand Hall, where hundreds of limestone pieces have been removed with a stone chisel (probably on ritual purposes) (Ščelinskij & Širokov 1999).

Some authors argue that paintings discovered in the **Serpievka II** cave are also of Upper Palaeolithic origin. The cave is about 150 m long, at places 7–8 m high and is located some 15 km upstream from Ignatievka in the vicinity of the Serpievka village. Palaeolithic objects and animal bones resembling those discovered from the Ignatievka cave have been found there. Paintings are located about 40 m from the cave entrance, and depict an animal (probably a reindeer) and geometrical marks (lines and oval spots). Some of the geometrical marks (regular lines, in particular) bear resemblance to the corresponding cave paintings of Ignatievka. Unfortunately, most of the representations have been very poorly preserved and therefore can not be further analysed (Petrin & Širokov 1990). It is also possible that the paintings are examples of Neolithic rock art, which the Urals are particularly rich in.

Siberia --->