

People and Animals of the Yamal Arctic: the Evolution of Animal Images from Antiquity to the Middle Ages.

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- **Abstract:** The inhabitants of the Yamal Arctic and Subarctic in all historical epochs typically used animal images to decorate various objects. The article presents materials obtained by our team during excavations of various archaeological sites over the past 10-15 years. Artifacts dating back to the final Neolithic (late IV - early III millennium BC) embody birds' images and animals in the form of sculptural moldings, which convey mainly fur-bearing animals on clay vessels, as well as single images of a bear, elk, wolf and seal (Gorny Samotnel-1 settlement - about 150 pcs). Tops in the form of deer heads, figures of various predatory birds, fur-bearing species are decorated with various tools made of horn, images of wood, birch bark, bronze, stone from the early Iron Age (Ust-Poluy sanctuary - about 140 units). This trend continued in the Middle Ages - in the form of already stylized images on bronze bracelets, pendants, knife handles and scabbards (settlements and burial grounds of the tundra zone - 21 items). The analysis of the findings allows us to come to certain conclusions: the diversity of fauna representatives varied only to a small extent in different eras, but the differences are seen in the change in the manner of these images transfer, the shift in emphasis and quantitative indicators towards certain species. All this is evidence of a change in the worldview plots embedded in the images - from images of commercial species to the association of a high social person's status with individual representatives of carnivores. A separate topic for consideration is the surge in popularity of the reindeer image, which is synchronized in time with the birth of transport reindeer herding. Evolution and progress in art are reflected both in the material of the images: clay - bone - bronze, and technique: sculpture - carving – casting.
- **Keywords:** Yamal Arctic, transport reindeer, separate topic