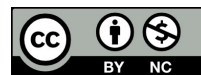


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Original article



Architecture of domestication among Evenki reindeer herders: materiality and human-animal relations

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Abstract

The article examines the role of material objects in human-animal interactions. The text analyses the use of landscape and various structures and devices in the process of reindeer domestication. Evenki structures serve more than just practical tools for performing everyday tasks. State organisations implemented various domestication regimes. Evenki reindeer herders mastered new material forms and adapted them for their own purposes. They developed specific strategies that include the use of small architectural forms such as tripods and other structures to protect animals from fire, fences sheds, feeders. Various structures and landscape features can be used both to restrict and to rationalize movement. They are not necessarily concentrated in one specific location and can be dispersed over a large area. Both buildings and landscape play a significant role in human-animal interaction. The article discusses the trilingual reindeer herding terminology used by Evenkis, which allows for the rapid localization of specific actions, as well as the tracking and memorization of animal movements. Domestication is not a distant past event, but a unique form of relationship between people, animals, landscape, and material objects, each component of which is essential to the ongoing reproduction of these relationships. At the same time, the landscape, small and large-scale architectural forms, and the array of objects used by reindeer herders in their everyday practices represent the material expression of these relationships.

Keywords: Evenki, human-animal relations, reindeer herders, domestication, materiality, vernacular, architecture, emplaced relations, temporality, ergonomics

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Оригинальная научная статья

Архитектура доместикации эвенкийских оленеводов: материальность и отношения человека и животного

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Аннотация

В статье на примере собственных полевых материалов автор рассматривает роль материальных объектов во взаимодействии человека и животного. Рассматриваются технологии использования ландшафтов и различных построек и приспособлений в процессе одомашнивания оленей. Постройки эвенков выступают не просто практическим инструментом для выполнения повседневных задач. Они связаны с определенными социальными отношениями, которые всегда являются пространственными. Государственные организации внедряли различные режимы одомашнивания, которые дополнялись использованием определенной инфраструктуры. Эвенкийские оленеводы осваивали новые материальные формы и адаптировали их для своих целей. Они выработали определенные стратегии, которые включают в себя применение малых архитектурных форм, таких как треножки и другие приспособления для защиты животных от огня, изгороди, навесы, кормушки. Различные строения и части ландшафта могут использоваться как для ограничения, так и для рационализации перемещений. Они не обязательно сосредоточены в одном конкретном месте и могут быть рассредоточены на большой территории. Довольно сложно провести строгое разделение между постройками и ландшафтом. И постройки, и ландшафт играют важную роль в отношениях человека и животного. В статье рассмотрена используемая эвенками трехязычная оленеводческая терминология, которая позволяет оперативно локализовать конкретные действия, а также отследить и запомнить направления перемещения животных. Одомашнивание – это не свершившийся в далеком прошлом факт, а особая форма отношений между людьми, животными, ландшафтом и материальными объектами, причем каждый компонент важен в постоянном воспроизводстве этих отношений. В то же время ландшафт, малые и более масштабные архитектурные формы,

а также используемый оленеводами в повседневных практиках набор вещей представляют собой материальное выражение этих отношений.

Ключевые слова: эвенки, взаимоотношения человека и животного, оленеводы, одомашнивание, материальность, народная культура, архитектура, устоявшиеся отношения, темпоральность, эргономика

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Introduction

It is doubtful whether domestication is a process which can be linked with a certain place. Reindeer herders rarely stay in one particular place for a long time; reindeer, dogs and people move together. At the same time, these movements imply periodic returns to the same places. In these places, reindeer herders actively use different kinds of self-built objects such as fences, gates, dwellings, storage platforms, sheds. They employ a number of small-size constructions which, nevertheless, play an important role in the process of domestication. These are feeding-racks, where they put salt, different kinds of poles and stakes for binding animals, dog shelters, frames for smoking smudges and other objects.

Reindeer herding is based on traditional patterns of controlling the flow of biological matter and energy [1]. Reindeer herders' camps represent a strong idea of autonomous existence or universe [2], when a person can find everything he needs at the moment. In other words, a reindeer herders' camp accumulates everything a person needs for survival and daily activities.

At the same time, architecture is not just a practical tool for completing everyday tasks. Rather it is connected with certain social relations. These relations are always spatial. Many classical ethnographic works describe different types of constructions, their history and design, their authors created very elaborated classifications of Evenki indigenous architecture [3; 4], yet there was a lack of reflections of social aspects connected with the existence of these material objects. In other words, different buildings, as well as small-scale architecture, were usually analyzed as self-sufficient things, separated from other activities, structures and surroundings. These objects were carefully

investigated, documented and described; however, the information about people who produced them and animals, which inhabited them, was missing. There was a lack of reflection on how these structures were incorporated into human-animal relations [5].

Human-animal relations are not necessarily functional. At the same time, the existing Evenki ethnography tends to be anthropocentric, written from a utilitarian perspective with the accent on different functions of a particular structure with a strong cross-cultural comparison. In other words, in the context of reindeer herders' ethnographic studies an object and its numerous dimensions became a center of analysis. However, architecture of domestication cannot be studied separately from the landscape surrounding it. The purpose of this text is to show that the border between architecture and landscape is flexible and transparent. Moreover, the structures reindeer herders build are rather flexible and adaptive to contemporary needs. It creates the spaces for animal autonomy and agency [6].

Classical ethnographic accounts often represented architecture as something rigid and reproducing traditional patterns, inherited from the previous generations [7]. At the same time, architecture exists in the context of life. People and animals (both wild and domesticated) are always in contact with structures, they constantly change their shape, condition and location. These objects are always in use in the context of human-animal interaction. In this sense, architecture is full of life; it is a part of environment of humans and animals.

Materials and methods

Field materials were collected during fieldwork expeditions I conducted between 2012 and 2018 among Evenki reindeer herders in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Zabaikal'skii Krai, and Republic of Buryatia. The research was based on qualitative methodology, employing both participant observation and semi-structured interviews.

The purpose of this research was to study emplaced human-reindeer relations and to investigate the role that architecture and material objects play in human-reindeer-landscape relations. My main interest was how people employ particular landscapes and various constructions in human-reindeer relations.

The central question of this study concerns the role reindeer herders' architecture plays in framing social relations between human and non-human persons. I was particularly interested in how certain built forms embedded in the landscape transform human-animal relations, alter their spatial structure, and help to build relationships based on trust rather than domination.

Results and discussion

1. Architecture and the state

Architecture embodies decisions of the state authorities and organisations; it may serve as a manifestation of particular form of materiality regime, based on economic situation, supply, exchange practices. At the same time, we cannot neglect its practical functions in building of certain kind of human-animal relations. Changes of materiality and building technologies during the last century brought changes to domestication regimes. Evenki reindeer herders became involved in sedentarisation projects proposed by the state and many of them received living spaces in the villages. Yet, they had to spend most of their time working outside the settlements. They became employed by the state organizations such as *kolkhozes* and later *sovkhoses*, which constantly tried to increase the productivity and sustainability of reindeer herding. Their innovations were based on the ideology of control: human animal relationship involved such operations as counting, measuring, supervision and veterinary care.

The change of management regime involved innovations in architecture. Fences were very useful to sort animals during the visits of veterinarians and specialists. During Soviet period Evenki reindeer herders constructed fences with several cameras of different sizes which they used for various task and categories of reindeer. In some regions large reindeer herders' bases (complexes), which consisted of several houses, storehouses and bathhouses became constructed. Soviet architecture was designed to optimize reindeer herders' labour. The enclosures were introduced both in the village and in taiga spaces for the separation of animals, plants and people. In the plane places, where reindeer were often lost reindeer herders started to build long fences, which served as enclosures (Rus. *gorod'ba*; Ev. *kure*), spreading over tens of kilometers. Employed by the state organization reindeer herders were supplied with construction materials such as wire and nails that made the process of building easier.

At the same time people managed to appropriate large-scale state projects for their own purposes [similar argument see e.g., 8]. The infrastructure which was introduced during Soviet time did not make people sedentary but helped them to facilitate their movements. Even though villages were planned as centers of different regions people remain incorporated into transregional system of exchange. We have to take into consideration wide socio-political context: people from three neighboring regions I visited during fieldwork often cross administrative borders, which were established in Soviet Union, exchange animals and are connected through kin relations.

2. Temporality of architecture and memoirs

Domestication should be seen as a dynamic process and approached in present tense. Architecture is also changing all the time and always in the process of building and rebuilding. In other words, architecture exists “in the weather-world” [9], it is blown by winds, afraid of fire and washed by rains. Therefore, it needs constant repairing, restoration and rebuilding. If we employ Tim Ingold’s idea of “temporality of the landscape” [10], we will see that architecture is not frozen but is always in the condition of building, repairing, dismantling. People constantly add new objects at the intensively used places.

Architecture is represented by visible material objects, which embody local people’s memoirs and knowledge. Fences and enclosures people constructed are associated with certain people who made and used them. The existence of the structures on the territory serves as a significant sign of belonging to particular people or community.

The construction of roads of the state significance in the northern Baikal and Zabaikal regions, such as Baikal-Amur railway, makes reindeer pastures easy of access for people from the side (mostly tourists and poachers). Local people do not want the *obshchina* (communal organization) territories to be used by outsiders. Therefore, they may construct special signs which state that these territories belong to *obshchina* and all activities should be reported to and coordinated by this “communal organisation”. In 2012, I documented these signs, which do not have an official juridical power, but claim the territories as a private property both in northern Buryatia and Zabaikal’skii Krai.

At the same time, memory is more important argument in common law for local people. Some fences’ remains are associated with particular people. For instance, Iurii Iur’evich Mal’chakitov from Kust’-Kemda village told me he discovered old fences near the Sakukan River, and they belonged to Pavlov’s family which used them around the 1940s. Old architecture helps people to keep memoirs about the people who used the landscape. The remains of old corrals show how the places were used in the past. If places are intensively used, e.g. camps on the shores of Amudisa Lakes in Zabaikal region, they contain a set of remains belonging to different time periods. In many cases there are time gaps between these remains because people often change the main locations of the herds for some time in case the pastures became exhausted. In contrast to Dolgans in the Taimyr Peninsula, it is not banned among Evenkis to use old constructions or camps. Therefore, many contemporary reindeer herders’ camps are located on the places of old camps and people constantly change these sites by adding new structures.

3. Architecture of domestication and space: “narrow places”

Architecture has certain spatial characteristics. Any structure has own capacity. It either restricts or allows movements. Generally, architecture is designed to divide and concentrate people, animals, objects and plants.

In the northern Baikal people use local term “narrow places” (Rus. *uzkie mesta*) to describe the valleys of mountainous rivers in-between ridges serving as natural borders. They used these valleys for breeding reindeer because they serve as natural enclosures. These places help sustaining certain level of concentration of animals.

In all reindeer herders' camps in the northern Zabaikal region and the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) I observed enclosures of several hundred square meters where people used to keep reindeer for several hours every day. They serve as places where animals can be periodically kept concentrated for certain periods. Enclosures play an important role in the process of making human-animal relations more intensive. They create narrowness of space for social interaction. Working inside enclosures, people learn the characters of animals; they try to grasp which animals are lost. In turn, animals learn to see people around, get accustomed to physical contacts with humans and learn not to be scared of them.

Working with Zabaikal reindeer herders, I saw that regular observation of animals in enclosure is very important for revealing lame and ill animals. Enclosure is a place where an animal can be caught relatively easily that creates the situation of physical contact of humans and animals. While on the terrain reindeer herders may frame the directions of movements of reindeer but rather seldom contact them physically, except the situations when they catch riding or cargo reindeer or reindeer they use as a hostage to bring herd to a camp. Most of reindeer they needed they caught inside enclosures.

Architecture helps people to concentrate animals in certain places. It is also used for temporary separation of different groups of animals: working reindeer (Rus. *rabochii olen'*), bulls, calves, she-deer for milking, vaccinated animals and so on. Architecture as a physical border creates an opportunity to manipulate social structure of animals. Thus, enclosures help to sort animals physically into different groups or mix them together into one group.

Enclosures create spaces for co-habitation and partnership with animals; they intensify contacts between people and animals as well as between animals themselves. Being in enclosures for short period of time animals learn to be together as a herd.

Keeping reindeer in enclosures helps people to model animal “community” with its leaders (usually reindeer with bells). In these enclosures, animals learn to be together as a herd. This skill helps animals to walk together

concentrated in groups rather than spread over a terrain chaotically in different directions as single animals.

An important characteristic of an enclosure is a level of density of animals when they are inside. Work with animals in corral is always a work in a condition of narrowness. Enclosures are thus serving as “narrow places” which help people to build the relations of “trust” and “companionship” with animals.

Enclosures should not be seen as borders either between people and animals, or “wild” and “tame”. Rather people pragmatically incorporate different kinds of constructions into their way of life where “wild” and “tame” are not oppositions. The degree of being “wild” and “tamed” is more important.

Therefore, enclosures are not designed to separate people and animals. Rather they are built to make people and animals closer. Even though a tent is usually located outside enclosures, people make many tasks inside them. Enclosures are designed to change the distance to animals. There are tools which help people to change this distance. Thus, while working inside to catch an animal people need at the moment, they actively employ a lasso (Ev. *mavut*).

Domestication architecture is used both to control animals’ movements and to facilitate their presence at certain places. It helps to intensify the presence of animals on certain territory that gradually changes the landscape. The presence of large number of reindeer makes a place swampier and full of hummocks. Therefore, the landscape can be co-created by animals and people.

The use of architecture has certain ecological impact. The intensive use of a camp can be a reason for deforestation nearby. People employ trees for building and for firewood and gradually change the landscape. This is what happened with a reindeer camp near the Nomama River in the northern Buryatia. The intensive use of this place within the last 10 years created a need to walk 1–2 kilometers in order to find firewood.

Architecture of domestication is not necessarily concentrated in one certain “narrow place”, it is spread over a vast territory, includes a set of intensively used places. Domestication is a result of movements of people and animals between these locations in a combination with periodic stays at these places. In the Olekminskii District in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) people do not use concrete buildings and prefer mobile architecture instead.

In many places in a forest zone structures are often built near the sites where people extracted wood and rarely removed to other locations. In most cases, people do not take tent frames, dog shelters and fences with them when they move to a new camp. At the same time people use a set of places, where they build objects of a similar shape.

Evenki reindeer herders' way of life implies the use of a combination of mobile and stationary architecture. As I will discuss further, domestication architecture can be both stationary and mobile. It can be either left at the place or transported to a new place.

4. Animal ergonomics

Architecture limits the habitual space and serves as a physical border restricting movements. Therefore, a square surrounded by a fence should be of a proper size. In case the number of animals is too big, reindeer can break a fence. The fences should be of the right size, they should not be too short; otherwise reindeer can easily jump over the fence and escape. Dog shelters are also built taking into consideration a size of an animal.

Architecture may have certain “gender” features. It can be designed for animals of certain age and sex or for their separation. The size of constructions may depend on animals' age. For instance, reindeer herders in northern Zabaikal region used to construct small corrals where they separate calves before milking she-deer.

Sometimes reindeer herders try to keep reindeer away from certain constructions. Thus, people do not usually allow reindeer entering winter log houses. They explained this by the fact that when people leave a log house for certain period, a reindeer can enter inside and will not be able to open the door. Another example is from the northern Baikal reindeer herders. They used building fences around their conical bark dwellings to prevent animals from jumping on them. Furthermore, architecture of smoking smudges (Rus. *dymokur*; Ev. *somnin*) is a very practical one. They are often surrounded by palings or covered by tripods to protect animals from burns.

People and animals share the same living spaces. In the northern Baikal, Evenki use the same term *bikit* (Ev.) both for humans' and animals' living spaces. It is literally translated as ‘a place where I am now’. It may signify living place where animals are concentrated [11; 12; 13], as well as a place of a temporary stay of people.

The aspect of human-animal co-ergonomics is very important aspect of coexistence. A corral is often constructed in a manner that a person can easily wriggle through planks to get inside or outside.

5. Local bio-social knowledge and animal training

Architecture is an important part of vernacular animal training. For instance, training riding reindeer in the taiga may be employed inside a corral. In their daily tasks, people need different types of trained animals: cargo reindeer, riding reindeer. To do these tasks properly people need animals of certain characters and behavior. They employ special training technologies to make an animal calm and teach it not to be scared of people.

Training a reindeer is a very long process, which goes during all stages of animal's life.

People use certain strategies to make animals calm and to study them to return to the same places such as feeding animals with salt, making smudges during summer time, binding animal to stakes, fences and trees, etc. This involves small-scale architecture such as feeding racks, tripods and palings to protect animals from fire, small fences.

An important strategy of domestication is a restriction of their movements such as tethering them to objects for certain periods of time. Zabaikal Evenki reindeer herders used to do this both with reindeer and dogs. Reindeer can be bound both to mobile and immobile, as well as produced by people and natural objects such as stakes, poles, sledges, fences, logs and trees.

Tethering reindeer is an important part of animal training. It can be employed for reindeer of any age. Some reindeer may have bad character and misbehave. Therefore, Georgii Lekarev from the northern Baikal recommended binding a reindeer for 3 days in order to make it calm.

Informants from Zabaikal region and northern Buryatia sure that the use of architecture at the early stages of animal socialization has a great impact on their behavior. In many places, reindeer herders emphasized the necessity to bind reindeer to structures starting from the earliest age. Yet the time reindeer herders actually start doing it may vary. In Buryatia reindeer herders used to employ wooden stakes for binding calves and sure it makes them obedient. The same strategy employ Tofalar reindeer herders from Irkutskaya Oblast'. An Evenki reindeer herder Iurii Mal'chakitov from Kust'-Kemda in Zabaikal'skii Krai emphasized that binding calves is an extremely important practice to make them calm. He employed specially made long log with several holes going through it called *globko* (Ev.) for binding calves. He used it during springtime and summer. A similar tool for binding reindeer was employed at the northern Baikal. Evenkis from Tiania in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) may employ *globko* for transportation of 10–12 reindeer, not necessarily calves, to a new place.

Similarly, to *globko*, sledges may serve as mobile operative substitute for stationary structures. Reindeer herders use sledges instead of fences or poles to bind both reindeer and dogs. They make it possible to anchor an animal in any necessary moment by tying it to a frame.

Another way to control reindeer movements is the use of a small log called *chengai* (Ev.) which is tied to reindeer neck and limits animal's movements. A reindeer seldom walks far from a camp with such an anchor because it strikes its legs. At the same time, an animal can feed itself from the ground and will not remain hungry as it may happen in case it is bound to

tree or sledges. People usually produce *chengai* by an axe directly at the place they need them. When they move to another place, they leave these small logs at the place and may employ them when they are back.

Reindeer herders constantly reflect behavior of all animals they are staying and moving with. Domestication is a process, which simultaneously involves different species and is in fact a co-domestication. This process involves the contact of different animal with structures and objects, for instance, they can use the same things for both reindeer and dogs (binding to the same fence, the use of *chengai* for dogs). In this sense, we can employ a multispecies view on architecture where an object can be employed in the context of relations with different animals.

In Zabaikal'skii Krai people used to keep dogs bound because they can scare reindeer. They do not employ dogs for collecting a herd, but they use them in hunting. Enclosures near the camp separate reindeer and dogs. Iurii Mal'chakitov did not allow small puppies to enter a corral with reindeer. He emphasized that this prohibition is very important for teaching a dog and should be made in the early age, otherwise a dog will misbehave and can kill calves in the future. If a dog is well trained, it will not bite reindeer and will not steal food when people untie it.

6. Practical terminology

In the Olekminskii District of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), as well as in the Kalarsky District of the Zabaikal'skii Krai, Evenkis historically spoke several languages: Evenki, Yakut, and Russian. This has influenced the terminology used by modern reindeer herders to refer to different categories of animals. For Evenkis, a reindeer herd is not a homogeneous mass. They employ various criteria to distinguish categories. These categories denote not only the degree of domestication but also the ways in which the reindeer are used, implying different modes of using material objects for the temporary stay and transport function of different types of reindeer.

In everyday practice, reindeer herders distinguish different types of animals based on their function in transporting people and things, age, skin color, reproductive function, and role in the herd. Each term allows for the rapid communication of information to other herders both during work with the herd and when changing a person, staying in the herd with reindeer (Rus. *dezhurnyi*). Grigory Kurbaltunov, a herd brigadier from the village of Tiania, uses several basic sets of linguistic terms.

Depending on their function in transporting people and cargo and their role in the herd, the following terms are used: *uuchag* (Ev.) 'riding reindeer'; *gil'ge* (Ev.) 'working castrated reindeer' (such reindeer are harnessed to sleds and used as riding reindeer starting at three years of age); *baretschik*,

berechet (Ev.) ‘the lead reindeer that leads the caravan and is tethered in front of the team on the right side’; *oegoz* (Ev.) ‘a reindeer tethered in front of the team, but walking slightly behind the barechik on the left side of the team’; *dagaptuk* (Ev.) ‘a reindeer tethered behind the driving sled’. Russian terminology is also used: *tormoz* (Rus.) ‘slow reindeer’, a reindeer tied to the back of a cargo sled so that the sled stays in place and doesn’t tip over on descents; *zapas* (Rus.) – ‘reindeer tied to the back of a sled and driven as spares’; *botalohet* (from the Russian word *botalo*) ‘a female reindeer with a botalo’.

Many terms reflect the animal’s physical condition. Depending on the origin and reproductive function, the following terms are used: *oron* (Ev.) ‘domestic reindeer’; *sokzhoi*, *beiun* (Ev.) ‘wild reindeer’; *beiunchukan* (Ev.) ‘a hybrid of an oron and a sokzhoi (a reindeer born from a domestic she-deer and a wild bull)’; *attapcha* (Ev.) ‘a castrated reindeer born from a wild bull and a domestic she-deer’; *nara* (Ev.) ‘not completely castrated reindeer’; *niami* (Ev.) or *matka* (Rus.) ‘a female reindeer’, *bangai* (Yakut) ‘a barren she-deer’; *suru* (Ev.) ‘a breeding bull’.

Depending on the sex and age of the animal, the following terms are used: *ennakan* (Ev.) ‘a newborn calf’; *tugut*, *tuguchenok* (Yakut) ‘a newborn calf’; *chonoku* (Ev.) ‘a 1–1.5-year-old bull’; *sachari* (Ev.) ‘a little over a year-old sow’; *iktene* (Ev.) ‘a two-year-old bull’; *negarkana* (Ev.) ‘a three-year-old bull’; *mutu* (Ev.) ‘a four-year-old adult bull’; *kadar* (Ev.) ‘an adult bull five years and older’; *enni* (Ev.) ‘a she-deer that has given birth’; *sargdacha* (Ev.) ‘an old she-deer’.

Depending on their color, reindeer can be called: *bagdarin* (Ev.) ‘a white reindeer’ (such a reindeer is considered sacred by Evenkis); *bugdy* (Ev.) ‘a reindeer with a white head’; *tomus* (Yakut) ‘a reindeer with a white nose’ (if there are spots); *singarín* (Ev.), *kugas* (Yakut), *ryzhii* (Rus.) ‘a red reindeer’; *kubkugas* (Yakut) ‘a bright red reindeer’; *kyrdila* (Yakut) ‘a reindeer with white spots under the eyes’; *kyryrba* (Yakut) ‘an ash-colored reindeer’; *alak* (Evenk) ‘a variegated reindeer’; *borong* (Evenk) ‘a white reindeer with dirty fur, a “dirty-colored” reindeer’; *saksa* ‘a black reindeer with a whitish, gray stripe along the body’.

Similar terminology is also used by the Zabaikal Evenki reindeer herders. It allows them to operatively localize specific actions, as well as track and remember the direction of animal movement. Many of these terms are often used as nicknames, allowing herders to remember specific animals and find them among many others in the herd. Thus, the multilingual linguistic terminology adapted by the Evenks performs a pragmatic function and reflects the practices of interaction between humans and specific reindeer.

7. Pragmatic use of the landscape

Reindeer herders actively use natural borders such as mountainous ridges, rivers, ice mounds and precipices as natural enclosures to control animals' movements and to make animals closer to people.

Evenki reindeer herders from Kust'-Kemda village in Zabaikal'skii Krai use mountainous ridges going along the Srednii Sakukan River instead of fences, or, as Iurii Iur'evich Mal'chakitov commented, in a plain territory neighboring groups of Evenkis "employ fences instead of mountainous ridges". Therefore, reindeer herders may employ both architecture and the landscape. It means architecture is not something separated from the landscape. It is always in the landscape and connected with practical activities. Domestication cannot be linked just with the use of certain constructions like fences. Both architecture and the landscape gradually make an animal closer to people.

We can point out certain general difference between valley and mountainous architecture of domestication. In the plane territories in the Olekminskii District of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) reindeer herders spend much more time for building fences and enclosures which they employed in the places with a lack of natural borders.

Evenki reindeer herders creatively employ local materials and remains of old structures in construction process. In many places in the taiga, Evenkis adapted the remains of the former constructions for excavation of building materials and repairing structures. In Olekma River Basin, people may firstly repair formerly used fences and then move to this place with animals.

The shape of architecture strongly depends on the availability of construction materials and terrain. In Zabaikal'skii Krai reindeer herders can construct permanent fences with the use of iron wire, in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutiia) Evenkis usually built fences just by the use of an axe, employing trees of different size, available nearby. When animals start to break fences in different places, they usually move to a new place.

In the forest, trees can be used instead of structures or as parts of new structures. People may employ trees to tether reindeer dogs, as well as use them as parts of fences and poles for storage platforms.

People usually chose a place for a camp pragmatically. First, reindeer herders take into consideration the availability and quality of pastures nearby. Then, the place should be well observed. In the northern Baikal, a camp was near a place called 'Elbow' (Rus. *Lokot'*) – the place where a reindeer herder can observe animals walking on the sides. Windows in the constructions can be especially oriented in different directions to track reindeer movements. Another important thing is water supply. People used to organize camps close to water sources. In wintertime, snow makes it easier to find a place. Winds

are very important in summer because they help to save reindeer from biting insects. Therefore, a windy place is practical for keeping reindeer. Finally, the construction of a storehouse where people keep products both for themselves and feeding dogs should be well blown around. People build them this way in order to avoid mould both on a construction and products.

The knowledge about the places of animals' periodic returns also might be employed for choosing a camp site. For instance, in summertime reindeer return to ice mounds (Ev. *amnunda*, *aian*) on the shores of the rivers to save themselves from blackflies. These are the places where animals may concentrate naturally. Therefore, reindeer herders from the northern Baikal made a summer camp near these ice mounds.

The accessibility of a place is also very important. The camp is usually connected with other destinations such as a village, geologists' settlements, hunters' bases which are important points of supply and exchange.

8. "Mimesis" in architecture

In many contemporary anthropological works, mimesis was interpreted as a particular part of human sociality [14, 15] or human way of communication with other than humans [16]. However, there was a lack of reflection on mimetic characteristics of material objects when hunters or reindeer herders made special constructions, which they want to be perceived by other non-human persons as alive. Let me give an example. Evenkis from Olekma River Basin and Zabaikal'skii Krai used to construct scarecrows (Rus. *pugalo*) in the taiga. They usually make it from black textile and attached it above a snowmobile road tying to trees or poles. As reindeer herders say, reindeer are afraid of large black objects because they perceive them as bears. Thus, *pugalo* represents a mimetic strategy embodied in an object. Wind, which shakes a textile, makes it look alive. These mimetic objects are especially used to scare animals and to restrict their movements.

Iurii Iur'evich Mal'chakitov from Kust'-Kemda village emphasized that it is very important skill for a reindeer herder to learn how to scare animals. When he saw that reindeer were walking on the direction to a broken fence, he put off his coat and started to run making noise and shaking his dark coat which he took off in order to scare animals. He added "They think that I am a bear". Therefore, the ability to run is very important here. When we repaired a broken fence, he attached a plastic bag to the top of a pole that it could move freely on the wind. Iurii said that this prevents for several days a reindeer from approaching the fence, which people built across the river. However, he expected that when it becomes warmer, reindeer will break a fence anyway to get to their calving places down the river and people will have to follow them to another camp.

9. Reindeer herders and non-human agents

Structures may reflect the presence of different non-human agents such as predators and wild reindeer and can be designed to control their movements or to catch and exterminate them. Defense of reindeer from predators such as bears, wolves and wolverines is a common daily task for reindeer herders and their dogs. If we have a look at the orientation of dog shelters at reindeer camps and where Evenki reindeer herders bond their dogs, we will see that they usually do this to make it easier for animals to signal the presence or absence of reindeer, predators or other people.

If the loss of reindeer becomes high, people often prefer to change the place and move to the new territory. This is what northern Baikal Evenkis usually did in *kolkhoz*. Nowadays this became rather difficult because *obshchiny* are assigned territories, which occupy a very small part from the former territories used by the *kolkhoz*. Therefore, people must rely now on their own knowledge of predators' movement patterns and ethology.

Some places attract animals; they are visited by certain animals in certain periods of a year. Reindeer herders' skill to predict animals' behavior and interpret their intentions play a great role here [17, pp. 165–169]. Evenkis from Olekma River Basin emphasized that bears often visit old reindeer herder's camps. This is the case when a bear can find old reindeer horns at a place. Informants say it needs calcium and therefore gnaws these horns. A bear is an active agent and can destroy structures. It can destroy fences and damage dwellings. I heard a story at the northern Baikal that a bear damaged an interior of a winter cabin. The same happens sometimes with corrals.

Even though predators are dangerous for a herd, Evenki hunters used to give respect to bears and wolves. They say there is a competition between people and predators. To give a respect to killed animal, they bury bears' bones at a special wooden platform called *del'ken*. In the village of Tiania in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) when they kill a bear, they usually blame Russians or make a face on a tree and say that this person killed a bear in order to transfer a guilt for a dead animal and not to lose hunting luck in the future.

Reindeer herders and hunters use various constructions and traps to exterminate predators. In Zabaikal'skii Krai they built special platforms on the trees which they call *labazy* to lie in wait for a bear during nighttime. Furthermore, they surround a camp by special wooden traps loaded with heavy stones (Rus. *davilka*) to catch and exterminate bears and wolverines.

People use long fences to save herds from wild bulls during rut. They can take domestic she-deer away. In autumn in Olekma River Basin, people

employ fences, which surround large territory. This kind of fences helps people to prevent contacts of wild and domesticated reindeer. In other words, it helps people to keep the border between animals and other non-human agents.

Conclusion

To sum up, the state organizations experimented with different domestication regimes, which were supplemented with the introduction of structures. Evenki reindeer herders appropriated new material forms and technologies, adapted them for their own purposes.

Domestication architecture (buildings and different material objects) can be used either to restrict or facilitate movements. It is not necessarily concentrated in one place; it can be spread over the vast territory. Therefore, it would be quite difficult to make a strict division between architecture and terrain. Both architecture and terrain play a great role in the context of human-animal relations.

Domestication has many directions and in any concrete case, it will show different degree of closeness and remoteness of animals to people. Domestication is a process of constant redefinition of a fluid border between “tame” and “wild”. The main purpose of reindeer herders’ architecture is to make animals closer to people.

We can state that a domestic animal is not a form but a set of relationship between people, animals, landscape and architecture and each component is important in constant re-creation of this set. At the same time, architecture represents the material expression of these dynamic relations.

Abbreviations

Ev. – Evenki

Rus. – Russian

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