

late material (it had to wait for the development of the wool sheep as opposed to the hair sheep, about the fourth millennium B.C.), the volume is also remarkably well written. This conjunction of virtues advances archeological understanding of textiles—and their social and cultural implications—a giant step.

Prehistoric Textiles is also distinctive for being easy to use. It is divided into two main sections, well illustrated with drawings and photographs, followed by a coda, appendixes, bibliography, and index. Part 1 is basically factual, surveying textile data in the Mediterranean basin, Egypt, and Europe from the Paleolithic to the early Iron Age. Part 2 presents a series of free-standing essays that interpret and at times speculate upon the factual data presented earlier. Using the detailed table of contents, a reader who is interested in loom weights can easily find basic information on their chronology and distribution in an early chapter, then go to a later chapter for a demonstration of how to extract an astonishing amount of ethnic information from these hitherto lowly items, and then find tabular data and references in an appendix. Some of the other stimulating topics that can be traced in this manner concern the influence of wool on weaving, the primacy of flax as the earliest woven fiber (antedating even ceramics and metallurgy), and gender roles in the production of cloth.

In addition to its use as a survey of ancient textiles in Europe and the Mediterranean lands, *Prehistoric Textiles* is important as a model for scholars working on the other crafts of antiquity such as jewelry or ivory-carving. It is now not sufficient merely to chart the changes in a craft, one must also look to see why those changes occurred. This "why" may be related to more than just a change in technique, as in the case of the appearance of woollen twill (modern tweed) in northern Europe, which



"Theban papyrus of the Book of the Dead (18th Dynasty), showing the growing of flax. The flax has been sown close together to force it to grow tall and straight, for better linen fiber." [From *Prehistoric Textiles*; courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum]

indicates the arrival of wool sheep—with their attendant people—from regions to the east where twill was woven much earlier. In other words, the study of crafts in antiquity may be one way to retrieve at least part of the history of people who did not leave a written record.

A chapter entitled "Women's work" considers the predominantly female textile producers, those who labored in the workshop-based, flax-using Egyptian industry with its ground loom and those in the palace-based Mycenaean industry that featured wool woven on a warp-weighted loom. Male names and figures do appear in both industries, but they are a distinct minority in both. In Egypt in particular, male weavers appeared in the Eighteenth Dynasty along with the upright tapestry loom, an imported device used to produce luxurious bands and borders like those seen on the tunic of Tutankhamen. It would seem that prestigious new technology was the province of men, while the women continued to weave the more mundane fabrics. The author also makes the nice distinction between the drudgery of weaving as a slave and the production of elegant, elite textiles like that woven by Homer's Penelope, where pride of craftsmanship and the beauty of the product ennobled the weaver.

Other people whose importance to "Western" culture is more clearly shown through their textiles are exemplified by the weavers of the Caucasus and the steppes to the east. Their labors and migrations may be responsible for not only the development of twill and the invention of felt but also the spread of silk into Europe.

In addition to its historical insights, *Prehistoric Textiles* has the further virtue of joining solid archeological and linguistic understanding with a practical knowledge of the art of weaving. Few archeologists and historians possess this combination, which is essential if we are to understand both the textiles and the weavers who produced them. The authority of this text comes from

the hand as well as the head. The result of this happy union is a distinguished work that educates the reader and exalts the ancient weavers, a praiseworthy accomplishment.

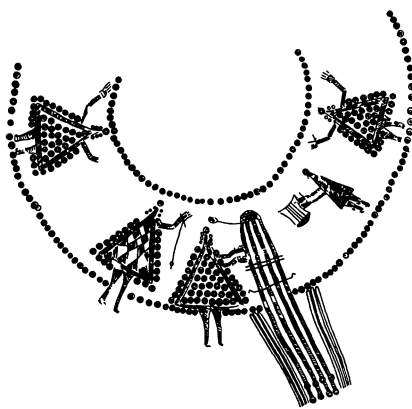
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An Ethnography Completed

The Tlingit Indians. GEORGE THORNTON EMMONS. Edited with additions by Frederica de Laguna and a biography by Jean Low. University of Washington Press, Seattle, and American Museum of Natural History, New York, 1991. xl, 488 pp., illus. \$60.

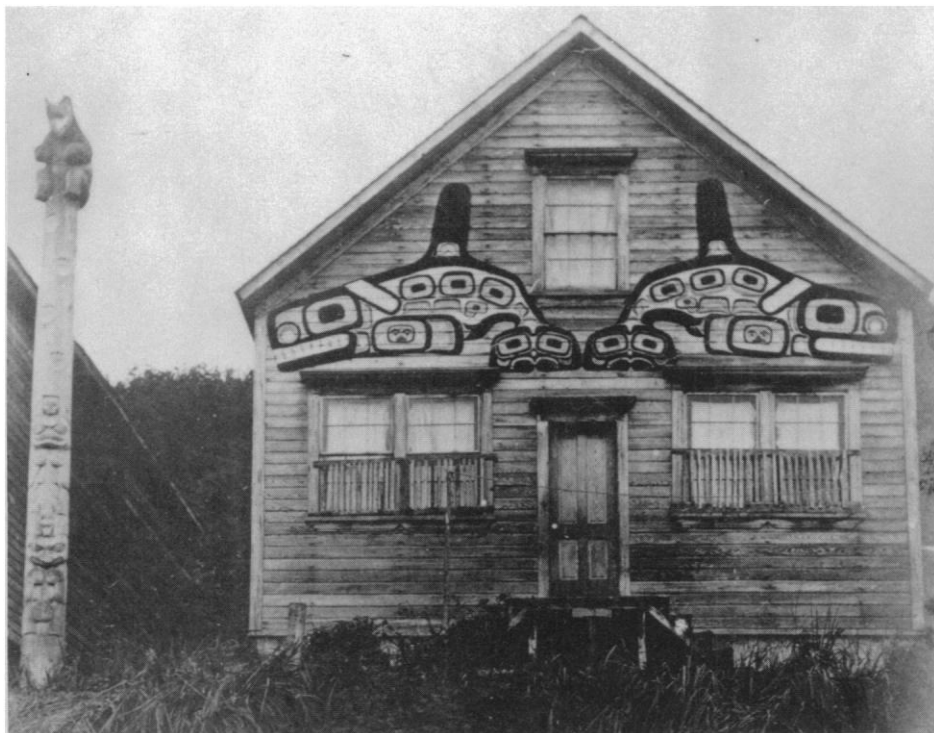
In recent months, whenever colleagues in the field have met or spoken, the first question has almost always been, "Have you seen Freddy's new book on Emmons?" The word that almost always follows is "monumental," and rightly so. This long-awaited work is monumental in many respects, and it represents the achievements of two remarkable scholars: George Thornton Emmons and Frederica de Laguna.

Emmons, a native of Baltimore, first traveled to Alaska in 1882 as an officer in the U.S. Navy. As his first assignment, he resolved a dispute in a Tlingit village, and in the process became acquainted with its chief. This encounter sparked what became Emmons's lifelong passion for the lifeways and material culture of the Tlingit Indians. For the next 63 years, Emmons studied the Tlingits' customs and language and collected vast numbers of their artifacts, which he then sold to the American Museum of Natural History, the Smithsonian, and several other major U.S. museums. Emmons also published reports and articles on Tlingit culture and compiled a massive archive of unpublished material. In the early 1900s



"Design on vase from Sopron (Odenburg), Hungary, showing women spinning and weaving while being entertained." [From *Prehistoric Textiles*; Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna]

TLINGIT SUBJECTS



A Chilkat Killerwhale house from the late 19th century. It is decorated with traditional Tlingit designs but incorporates many non-Indian architectural features, an indication of the increased interaction between the two cultures.



Wooden pipe carved to represent a bear, with a brass cap as a mouthpiece.



A "rattle top" basket, made from twined spruce-root fibers, with false embroidery made with dyed straw.



Tlingit chiefs in dance costumes. "The man in the doorway wears a complete brown bear skin. Chief Shakes (left) wears the 'bear's ears' headdress and a tunic ornamented . . . to represent [a] bear's head, and holds the 'Killerwhale Cane.' "

From *The Tlingit Indians*



Wooden drum with painted decoration representing an owl.

he began work on a monograph based on his collections and field notes, but at the time of his death in 1945 he had still not finished it.

This material is now available in published form thanks to de Laguna's herculean efforts. De Laguna has dedicated her long career to the study of Northwest Coast cultures and much of the last 30 years to preparing for publication the "final draft" of Emmons's ethnographic data. She first tackled the major problem of how to organize the material, an issue that had baffled Emmons (he tried various arrangements without much success). Other obstacles included Emmons's often confusing handwriting and his highly idiosyncratic Tlingit orthography. For the latter aspect of the book, de Laguna collaborated with linguist Jeff Leer so that all the Tlingit words are presented not only in Emmons's original spelling, but also in a modern, phonetic transcription. This is an important feature of the book, without which Emmons's terms would be relatively useless.

The book is a hefty tome: oversized, on heavy, high-quality paper, and well illustrated with ethnographic and historical photographs from various sources and with original sketches and diagrams by Emmons. There are 17 chapters, more than 30 pages of tables, and a bibliography. Chapter topics include homeland, social organization, village organization, transportation, fishing and hunting, food preparation, men's work and women's work, dress and decoration, the life cycle, ceremony, war and peace, illness and medicine, shamanism, witchcraft, games and gambling, and concepts of time and nature, all of which combine to give a clear picture of Tlingit life at the end of the 19th century. The book opens with a preface and introduction, in which de Laguna recounts the editing of the manuscript and evaluates the controversial Emmons as an ethnographer and museum collector. A biography of Emmons by Jean Low follows. All of this front matter is very interesting reading and is extremely important for understanding the context of the nearly 500 pages of chapters and appendices that follow.

The design of the book is important and requires some comment here. Emmons's original data and de Laguna's comments and additions are distinguished typographically so that their voices remain clear and distinct, and the book becomes a study within a study. De Laguna's ongoing commentary and additions are invaluable in helping the modern reader separate what in Emmons is truly professional and has stood the test of time from what is inaccurate, incomplete, and sometimes embarrassing by modern standards. She also adds valuable material, such as a section on kinship, that



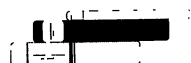
A canoe that belonged to the chief of the Ka-ghan-tan Tlingit of Chilkat. Decorated with an anthropomorphic owl with hinged wings, it was displayed along with other goods as a symbol of the chief's wealth at a "potlatch," or ritual gift-giving ceremony. "Tlingit chiefs prided themselves on the size and ornamentation of their canoes. These have been called 'war canoes,' but they differed in no wise from those of equal size used for traveling or freighting. They were ornamentally painted along the sides, generally in the bow and stern, with the central portion black. . . Carved figures might be placed at or over the bow, and sometimes at the stern. The canoe was named for the painting or figure, which was generally totemic in character or might refer to some incident in the family . . . history." [From *The Tlingit Indians*]

was lacking in Emmons's original data.

The only disappointment that one might voice is that there couldn't have been more. It is unfortunate but entirely understandable that de Laguna deferred Emmons's valuable but still unpublished material on the history of Tlingit clans and tribes to a later publication. During the last stages of preparation of the manuscript for *The Tlingit Indians*, de Laguna quipped, "It's taking me longer to edit this thing than it took Emmons to write it!" In the final product, however, her commendable editorial ef-

forts and her contributions incorporating current research trends combine with Emmons's original field observations of more than a century ago to create a comprehensive and definitive work that will be of interest to the general reader and indispensable to students and specialists in the field. It is the most important single resource now available on the Tlingit people.

Richard L. Dauenhauer
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