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The Holdings Relating to the Tlingits in the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera),¹ St Petersburg

The materials to which the present article is devoted — the thematic collections in the MAE, St Petersburg, relating to the Tlingit Indians — have already been the subject of two detailed studies written by employees of the museum [Razumovskaya 1968; Ratner-Shteinberg 1927, 1929, 1930]. However, these articles contained some inaccuracies relating to the attribution of certain items in the collection. I have myself devoted a number of recent articles to questions concerning the attribution of the items in the collection and the formation of individual collections of folk objects from Russian America [Korsun 1998, 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2003a, 2003b], and as a result it has been possible to draw some new conclusions about the number of Tlingit objects in the museum. At the end of the present article, I will compare my conclusions on this point with those of earlier researchers of the MAE Tlingit collections.

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To begin with some preliminary observations on the Tlingit: This ethnic group was settled in the Pacific coastal regions of Alaska, and on the islands off that coast. Their main economic activity was fishing. In the case of salmon and members of the Salmonidae, their main tools were traps, weirs and drift-nets, but they fished for halibut mostly with large wooden double hooks made in a 'horned shape'.¹ The MAE has in its possession five hooks of this kind (No. 2539–2, 3, 5–7), and also a watercolour sketch of another that has been lost (No. 2539–4).

In order to fish for halibut, the Tlingits would go out to sea and at a short distance from the bank throw into the water a vast wooden float, which was normally carved in the shape of a water bird (No. 2888–91). A long fishing line would be attached to the float (No. 2539–8); at its far end, it would be fixed to a stone sinker (No. 2539–9). A short distance away from the sinker, several wooden hooks with metal or bone ends would be fastened. The hooks usually carried the image of some mythological person, or an animal or human. The Tlingits believed that halibut were very curious and were certain to want a close look at the figure carved on the hook; they would then swallow this, and the double-hook design would mean that it lodged in their gullet. The fisherman would wait a few hours, and then come along to pick up any halibut who had taken the bait. The fish would be dragged into the boat and finished off with a special bone club (No. 5805–1). Dragging a large halibut into the boat (specimens more than a metre long and weighing up to 60 kilograms were not uncommon) was an activity not without risks. [Emmons 1991: 115]. Other items of fishing tackle in the MAE include a harpoon for catching flatfish (No. 2539–1).

It was women who were mainly responsible for preparing fish for storage over the winter. The fish would be cut up with a special knife resembling the Tlingit female knife, the *ulu* — for instance, one in the MAE, purchased by I. G. Voznesensky from the Eskimos of Kodiak Island, looks exactly like this (No. 593–44; cf. *A Catalogue* 1976: 42). The museum has only one example of other foods, a brick of dried seaweed (No. 211–31).

The boats that the Tlingits used for getting round the waterways were dugout canoes made of a whole cedar trunk. The heartwood would be burned out of the centre of the trunk, and then the remainder of the wood would be tamped down and the empty space filled with water; heated stones would be put into this to bring the water up to the boil. After the trunk had been given a good boiling, wooden struts

¹ I.e. looking something like a pitchfork [Editor].

would be put into it so that it started to look like a boat. The sides and the bow would be reinforced with planks. On top of the boat's skin would be fanciful paintings of totem beasts, the guardians of its owner.

Six models of such traditional boats are held in the MAE (No. 593–53, 54; No. 2520–2, 3; No. 4105–9, 10). Two of them contain figures of human beings working with oars (No. 593–34 и No. 2520–2). There are also several different models of oars (No. 593–53c, No. 2868–216 и No. 4105–11–14). Such models were used as children's toys, and later as tourist artefacts in the trade with European visitors. One of the models (No. 593–53), though this too was made by the Tlingits, is a copy of a big Haida Indian war canoe, which in real life could have held more than forty warriors. It was only the Haida who made boats this size, because only they lived in a region where the trees grew tall enough to let them.

Other tools include a plain hunter's bow of the type made by the Atabaskan (No. 5795–1), and two hammers, one light (No. 564–2) and two heavy (No. 536–3). Also to be counted in the 'tool' category of object are three brushes bearing different handles, used to paint faces and masks (No. 633–37, No. 2448–26, 28), which form a set with two tree-fungus palettes used to mix paint on (No. 2539–10/1–2). There is also a watercolour sketch of another brush that has now been lost (No. 2448–27).

Household utensils are represented quite widely and richly in the MAE. So far as the collection of wooden items goes, many of them are covered with carvings and paintings of beasts, birds and fish with the 'big eyed' decorations typical of Tlingit work — i.e. with eyes shown in several different place of the composition — in the crooks of knees and arms, paws, wings, etc. Any empty space would also be filled up with eye drawings.

The MAE also has five pots in the shape of stylised boats. These include three vessels very similar to each other in terms of shape and decoration (No. 633–29/1–2 and No. 4291–3). Only the sections depicting the bows and the helm of the boat are carved and painted. Another set of vessels (No. 2539–22 and No. 211–39) is made to a slightly different shape from those preceding and is not decorated in any way. A vessel for oil (No. 211–39) closely resembles in form a decorated ceremonial vessel for berry juice (No. 593–46), which was used during potlatches. Its most characteristic feature is the handle, which appears to be modelled on the handle of a European jug³. Other traces of European influence are evident in the form of vessel No. 633–28, which is made in the form of a long 'basket'. Of interest is a round vessel (No. 2539–21), whose whole exterior is incised with stylised animal heads and sections of animal bodies, and

which is also painted. All the other wooden vessels in the MAE are carved to resemble animals, observing a greater or lesser degree of stylisation. Vessels No. 2539–18 and No. 5795–13, represent otters with a fair degree of realism. The otter was considered a shamanistic animal, and every shaman had an otter-tongue amulet as an attribute. The shape of these vessels accordingly indicates that they had a ritual purpose.

The MAE also has examples of a whole series of vessels carved to resemble beavers. These include ceremonial vessels No. 620–38, 39 and No. 2539–16, 20) and also vessels No. 2539–17, 19, which show beavers chewing lengths of wood. On each side wall of these items is carved the face of a beaver with its mouth half-open, showing the large protruding incisors that characterise representations of this animal alone. The head of a bear, an important beast in Tlingit mythology, is carved on vessel No. 4105–6.

The two last wooden vessels in the MAE Tlingit collection are carved in the form of birds: ducks in the case of No. 571–34 and ravens in the case of No. 2539–15. The raven is understood as a demiurge in Tlingit mythology and is represented widely on ritual objects. The duck also has an important place in myths. The mother of the Raven-Demiurge would don duck's plumage and survive the great deluge overwhelming the whole world.

The Tlingits had special boxes for the storage of foodstuffs and of small objects. There are three such boxes in the MAE (No. 633–30, No. 337–18 and No. 211–23/2). (Another box (No. 211–23/1) did not have a domestic function: it was used to store shamanistic attributes.) The walls of the boxes are covered with carvings and are also decorated with paint. All the boxes are rectangular in shape, and the two short sides of No. 337–18 and No. 211–23/2 carry figures of beavers in low relief.

Other domestic items in the MAE include a small table or tray (No. 593–58), which may be modelled on a European prototype, or may adopt a form traditional for the Tlingits. Some woven plates for round items of food (No. 211–35/6–8, 10 and No. 4270–14) can with more confidence be said to bear traces of European influence. At the time when the first contacts between Europeans and Tlingits occurred, the latter used mats, or the shells of sea molluscs (cf. No. 211–38/1–5) to serve food.

The collection of wooden spoons and ladles in the MAE is quite large and varied. There are eight spoons (No. 337–19 и No. 2539–23–29), one large ladle (No. 4105–8), and a paddle for serving food (No. 593–42), which was also used when food was prepared. All these items are either painted or carved. Thus, on spoon No. 2539–23 we find the head of a raven, and on spoon No. 2539–25 the figure

of a killer whale with its mouth open, and the dorsal fin and tail on show; inside the figure of the whale is the figure of a bird — probably a raven — turned on its side. The decoration on the other spoons is more stylised and do not include any entire figures of animals (or what to the European eye appear to be such). The handles of the ladle (No. 4105–8) and the spoons (No. 2539–26) are covered with carvings in the shape of heads and body parts of different animals, of the kind also to be found on totem poles. Some spoons made of mountain goat/sheep horn are also decorated in this way. It should be noted that the majority of such ‘Tlingit’ horn spoons were in fact the work of Haida Indians and of Chugach Eskimos. However, the following items are definitely of Tlingit origin: eight spoons without carving dating from the late nineteenth century (No. 211–29/1–8), a spoon with a carved handle (No. 4291–9) and a ladle whose handle is carved to resemble a raven’s head (No. 4193–28).

The MAE owns only one stone vessel: an oil lamp made of black argillite (No. 571–70). The form of this item has certainly been copied from European models: it is decorated with simple ornamentation in the form of flowers, and has an opening for the wick at the bottom. The ornamentation is markedly different from that on the stone vessels made by Haida Indians.

The final group of Tlingit domestic items consists of objects woven from fir roots: baskets for berry collection women’s work baskets, a tobacco holder, a goblet [*bokal*], and so on. The MAE also has a few large baskets for berry-collection [Razumovskaya 1967: 106], but none of these is Tlingit in origin. Tlingit women would collect berries in small baskets and then decant them into larger ones. The MAE has two small berry baskets (No. 2539–13 and No. 633–4). The ornamentation on the latter points to the fact that it is of southern origin, and it is possible that it was made by a woman of the Nootka tribe working as a slave among the Tlingit. There are four examples of women’s workbaskets (No. 337–5, No. 570–110, 112 and No. 4270–15); these are quite small in size, cylindrical in form, and have a lid with a storage compartment, inside which can be found small shot, pebbles, or fragments of shell. Baskets of this type were known among the Tlingits as ‘noise inside’, and used to store items for needlework (needles, thread, knives, etc.). The MAE also has a lid with a storage compartment that has become separated from its basket, one of similar type (No. 4270–16). Another basket with a lid meant for containing small items is similar in form (No. 211–35/1), but lacks the rattle compartment. Another woven item, a flat basket-dish (No. 4291–6) has a form specific to the Tlingits; its mouth is 45 cm. in diameter. However, all the remaining woven items are modelled on European vessels. They include a flat basket with two side handles (No. 2868–53), a woven goblet (No. 211–35/3),

a tobacco holder (No. 211–35/2), a small glass bottle in a wicker case (No. 211–35/5) and a purse or moneybag (No. 4104–26). The Tlingits ate sitting on the ground, and set their food out on a woven mat (No. 570–64). Sets of sticks for playing games might also be counted as domestic items. The MAE has four of these, two in wicker cases (No. 620–37 and No. 633–5), one in a leather case (No. 633–1), and one with no case at all (No. 4291–4).

Almost all the clothes and items of headgear in the collection have ritual associations. The MAE owns more than twenty wicker hats made by the Tlingits, the Chugaches and the Eskimos of Kodiak Island. Deciding which items were produced by a specific ethnic group is highly problematic. For instance, a hat with four cylindrical appendages indicating the number of potlatches organised by its owner (No. 633–16) can only hesitantly be assigned to the Tlingits. Whichever way, headgear of this kind would have been owned only by a very rich and powerful leader. The stylised image of an animal on this hat is not typical of Tlingit art, and may indicate either the archaic character of the representations used, or to influence from Eskimo (Pacific Yupik) artefacts. A hat with a very broad brim (No. 2520–12) is also to be classed with the ceremonial costumes worn during potlatches. The whole outer surface of this hat is covered with representations of animals — the totem beasts of its owner.

Hats No. 620–19, No. 2520–13 and No. 5795–20 — whose brims and crowns are elaborately decorated — also had a ceremonial function. It should be borne in mind that ornamentation was organised hierarchically — what was represented on the crown of the hat was always more important than what was represented on the brim. However, very occasionally, an animal or bird figure occupying space on both the crown and the brim can also be found [Art... 1965: 31].

The hats that the Tlingits wore on everyday occasions were shaped like truncated cones, their crowns and brims cut and sewn round with binding, or interlaced and trimmed in various other ways. Hats worn by high-status Indians had bodies decorated with totem symbols. Eight such hats are held in MAE (No. 2520–14, 15, 17, 20–22 and No. 5795–18, 19), all but one of which is decorated — this last (No. 2520–22) may perhaps be unfinished.

In connection with the persistent confusion of Tlingit and Chugach hats, it is worth citing various Chugach hats on which the identical mythic figure appears [Crossroads... 1988: 293]. On these hats (No. 344–73, No. 593–34, No. 633–17, No. 2520–19, 27 and No. 5795–22) the dominant motif is a bear's head with open jaws and eyes with double or triple pupils. On the back of these hats, we

find the image of a human face, pointing to the double nature of all living things: the soul of the animal inside the body of the man. So far as the bear is concerned, such an interpretation seems all the more cogent, given that in both Tlingit and Chugach mythology, the bear is an ambivalent animal, capable of taking on both bestial and human guise.

One should also note a wicker hat made by the Eskimos — Alutiiq of the Pacific Coast (if the information passed on by its collector is to be relied on). This hat (No. 633–18) is a unique item, without close analogies of any kind. Its body and brim are decorated with geometrical patterns (adopting the form of rhomboids). This type of decoration is not found on any of the other Eskimo — Alutiiq or Tlingit artefacts in the MAE. The only parallel is found in the geometrical patterns on eighteenth-century Tlingit capes. Therefore, it is fair to suppose that this is one of the older types of ornamentation used by those living on the Pacific coast of Alaska.

The MAE's wicker Tlingit objects also include a model top hat (No. 2520–24), and two pieces of headgear resembling European top hats (No. 337–3 and No. 2520–23). There was a ready market for wicker top-hats of this kind in California, and the Tlingits produced them specifically for European buyers.

So far as ceremonial headgear meant for tribal leaders is concerned, the MAE has three cylinder-shaped head decorations, one bearing the carved form of a beaver on its front panel (No. 2448–20), one with a crow's head on this panel (No. 2448–19), and one with a double decoration (the top figure being a hawk's head) (No. 2448–21). The museum also has two carved panels from head decorations of this type, one with a crow's head (No. 4291–2) and the other with a hawk's head (No. 2448–12). Tribal leaders would use head decorations of this kind during ritual dances. The upper part of each head decoration has a compartment which was filled with eagle down. During the dance, the pieces of down would rise in the air and scatter on the dancers like snow.

Another kind of ceremonial headgear is one not having the cylindrical compartment for eagle down. In this case, the animal heads would be represented on a solid piece of wood rather than a hollow panel. There are eight such head-decorations in the MAE, two with a crow's head (No. 2448–18 и No. 5795–34); and one bearing a mosquito's head (No. 571–20); another (No. 2448–17) shows a sea monster with a bear's head; another (No. 2448–2) a bear's head; No. 2448–3 also seems to represent a sea monster. The identity of the animal represented on No. 2448–16 is elusive, having both ursine and avian features. The last head decoration of this type (No. 571–19) carries a double representation, with a

raven above and a hawk below. It belongs to the type of head decorations worn during ritual dances, when the Indians would don costumes representing specific animals and act out scenes from tribal mythology.

Other items of dress in the MAE include four wool capes with geometric patterns (No. 2520–4–7); these were woven from the hair of mountain goats. Such capes are extremely rare; less than a dozen made by the Tlingits are held in museums across the world [Samuel 1982]. As Yury Lisyansky observed: ‘Wealthy [Tlingits] also wrap themselves in white blankets which they make from the wool of the local wild sheep. They are usually embroidered with square figures surrounded by yellow and black tassels. Sometimes beaver down is used to decorate the insides’ [Lisyansky 1947: 211]. Such capes were widely used up to the 1820s; later they were replaced by chilkat-capes (the MAE has only three of the latter: No. 593–26 and Nos. 5795–16, 17). These capes took their name from the Tlingit kuan⁴ Chilkat, where the woman weavers were famed for their mastery of complex stylised ‘eye’ [*glaznoi*] ornamentation. According to Indian tradition, the art of chilkat-cape-making was borrowed by the Tlingits from the Indians living to their south, the Tsimshian. The design template for the cape was always made by a man, using a wooden board as the background, and his wife would then following the pattern precisely when weaving the cape. The design would be divided up into three sections — a central section and two side panels. The central part of the cape went over the wearer’s back and was completely on view. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, such capes were valued very highly, and were a sign of high status: not every householder, even, could afford to own a chilkat cape. All the chilkat capes in the MAE belong to the first half of the nineteenth century.

An apron made according to the same technique as the capes (No. 593–28) is part of a set with cape No. 593–26, as are some leg-guards (No. 593–29). In addition, the MAE also has two ceremonial aprons (Nos. 5795–14, 15), decorated with animal figures, two pairs of trousers (No. 211–27 and No. 2520–10); and two pairs of Athabaskan-type moccasins (No. 337–41 and No. 2520–11). The Tlingits did not make moccasins of this kind, but purchased them from the Atapass. Other elements of festive costume include a bag with Athabaskan — type flower patterns on it (No. 5801–10) (the Tlingits referred to bags of this kind as ‘octopuses’) and a leather sack for storing small objects (No. 211–28).

Another piece of Tlingit costume is a hat in the form of a low cylinder made of seal pup fur (No. 211–26). This was made to copy a European style. Further garments, this time made for warriors and shamans, will be described below.

Among pieces of jewellery in the MAE, the following can be confidently assigned to the Tlingit holdings: women's lip pins (No. 211–30, No. 337–6/1–2, No. 633–36a–b, No. 4105–7). When Tlingit girls reached puberty, they would pierce their lower lip and insert a small pin into the hole. As the girl got older, she would replace the pin by a larger one, and so on. Such pins were considered to denote high status and wealth. Slaves were not allowed to wear them.

Neck and chest ornaments are represented in the MAE by a single wooden amulet with mother-of-pearl inlay, which originated among the Indians settled on the shores of the Gulf of Yakutat (No. 620–24v). The Museum has three watercolours of amulets formerly in the collection, but now missing (Nos. 620–24a, b, g). It is known that the collection used to include a necklace made of abalone shells; item No. 2539–11/1–230 consists of fragments of such shells.

Symbols of authority and status in the MAE include two family crests — one wooden (No. 2448–30) and the other made of leather (No. 2448–29). Crests of this kind assigned the right to various kinds of hunting privileges and rights. This type of crest is older than another type, on sheets of copper. There are records of Russian sea voyagers getting such items from the Gulf of Yakutat coast in 1788 [Dzeniskevich 1992: 64–73].

On the roof of the house and inside it the Indians would put figures of their family patrons. One such figure, the head of a bear with real teeth, is held in the MAE (No. 633–32). Inside the home were placed poles with complex compositions of human figures, animal figures, and bird figures carved one on top of the other — the so-called 'totem poles'. During religious ceremonies, wooden sculptural groups representing the ancestors would be set up in front of the entrance to the home to be admired by all. In the second half of the nineteenth century, under the influence of the Hyde Indians, the Tlingits started to place totem poles in front of their chiefs' homes on a permanent basis; such poles were now always kept outdoors. The Museum only has one such pole, dating from the end of the nineteenth century (No. 2788–1). Its lower section is carved with the head of a crow, the founding father of the fraternity of that name, and the upper section is topped by a sculpture of the head of the chief himself, wearing a headdress with two cylindrical appendages.

An essential symbol of the chief's authority was a wooden staff representing a stylised miniature copy of the totem pole. The MAE only has one such staff (No. 5795–25). At the present moment it is missing from the collection, but two photographs from different angles exist. Emissaries sent to establish a truce between warring tribes would carry such staffs. No-one had the right to kill a chief

carrying one, even in the heat of battle. Other types of sceptre are represented in the MAE by a staff of composite materials, bone and baleen (No. 5795–24).

All the Tlingits' public ceremonies began with tobacco-smoking, and there were special wooden or stone pipes made for this purpose. The MAE has five wooden Tlingit pipes (No. 571–41, 620–21, Nos. 2539–39, 40, 41), and a photograph of a pipe that is now missing (No. 593–43). The stems of these pipes are made up of carvings of interlaced figures or the body parts of different animals. These include the figure of a sea monster with a bear's head and a sea creature's body (No. 2539–41); the figure of a raven (No. 620–21), a raven's head (No. 2539–40); and a complex composition uniting the features of a bear, an octopus, and a bird (No. 571–41). The Museum also has fifteen pipes made of black argillite. Such pipes were generally made for sale to Europeans. The majority of them were made by Hide Indians; which ones precisely were made by Tlingits remains unclear.

The MAE has quite a varied collection of Tlingit weapons. A complete set of kit for a warrior fighting on foot included a heavy helmet, a face guard, a shirt made of thick moose-skin, over which the warrior donned a protective tunic made of strips of wood, and a leather shoulder-cape. Hands and legs were covered by guards made of wood-strips. Heavy, double-edged daggers were used as the weapons of battle. The MAE has examples of most of these items. After the Indians began using firearms, in the early nineteenth century, battle kit of this kind started to be used in single combat only, and by the mid nineteenth century was reserved for war-dances at ritual ceremonies.

The MAE has twenty battle helmets, which can be divided into a number of different types. Nos. 2454–15, 16 and Nos. 5795–11, 12 are carved with the heads of sea-lions. The most naturalistic of these is No. 5795–11, which is covered with the skin of some sea-creature, probably a seal. If these first three helmets were made for battle-kit in the practical sense, then helmet No. 5795–12 was certainly intended for ritual occasions from the start. It is far too light and delicate to have acted as a serious means of defence.

Three other battle helmets are carved with the heads of wild sheep (No. 633–9, Nos. 2454–13, 18). Helmet No. 2454–19, on the other hand, bears the carving of a wolf's head. Another fierce forest creature often found on battle helmets is the bear. The MAE has four helmets carved with this animal. Two (No. 2454–14 and No. 5795–10) have naturalistic images of bears' heads, and are covered in different types of skin: bearskin in the case of No. 5795–10, seal in the case of No. 2454–14. Two other helmets (No. 2454–17 and

No. 4291–1) are carved out of wood and painted, and the bear representations on them are more stylised, combining anthropomorphic and zoomorphic traits.

Another group of battle helmets (Nos. 571–16, 18 и No. 2454–11) is decorated with bird symbols. Only No. 571–18, modelled on an eagle's head, is naturalistic in form.

Yet another group of battle helmets is explicitly anthropomorphic in character. These comprise Nos. 571–14, 15, 17; No. 633–8 and No. 2454–12. Two of them (No. 571–15 and 17) have very similar carvings, and were probably made by the same craftsman. The first shows an evil spirit, and the second, a legendary ancestor. For its part, No. 571–14 is carved with the representation of a forest spirit. The two remaining helmets are of particular interest. Seen from the front, No. 633–8 has an unusual, triangular form, rather like that characterising some shamans' headdresses. The subject of the carving is hard to identify, but some researchers think it may be the head of a killer whale [Spirits... 2000: 112]. Helmet No. 2454–12 also represents a spirit, with two further small masks of an anthropomorphic character held in the corners of its mouth. It is possible that this represents a cannibalistic evil spirit [The Far North... 1973: 252].

The MAE also has six face-guards, meant for protecting the lower part of the head from attack. One has carved decoration, which has not been painted (No. 5795–9); three are painted as well as carved (Nos. 2454–20–22); and the two other ones (those of latest date) have painted decoration only (No. 620–18, No. 5795–48). In order to keep the face-guard in place and stop it getting in the way of his head-movements, the warrior would grip a special cross-piece on the inner side in his teeth.

The Museum has two of the heavy leather shirts used as part of the body-armour. No. 211–21 has one sleeve, and No. 2454–10 is sleeveless; the latter is richly decorated. The chest carries the representation of a raven, and below this is the head of another bird, probably a hawk. Tlingit ritual objects often have such double images of a raven and a hawk [The Far North... 1973: 206]. A closely similar image of a raven is to be found on a ceremonial hat in the Peabody Museum [Art... 1965: 31]. The presence of such an image on this shirt indicates that it too had a ceremonial function.

The MAE also has five of the wood-strip protective tunics that covered a warrior's chest and back (Nos. 2454–4, 5, 7, 8 and No. 5795–8). 'Wood-mail' tunics of this kind had two halves, one smaller than the other, to go over the chest, and the other, larger, one, for the back. The tunics were constructed of thin wood-lathes held together with the interwoven sinews of sea mammals. On each side of the tunic, a space was left free of interweaving, and this

carried the image of the owner's totem. The Museum also has one of the capes that were sometimes worn over these tunics (No. 593–27). It also has one example of a leg guard (No. 2454–9). Such leg-guards, which stretched from the foot to the knee, were made by the same technique as the protective tunics, as were the similar guards worn by the warrior on his left arm.

In hand-to-hand combat, warriors used stone-tipped spears as well as their metal daggers. The MAE has one spear-tip (No. 564–4), one knife with a metal blade (No. 5795–5), and eight double-edged battle daggers (with the cutting blades arranged to both sides of the handles); several of them also have scabbards (No. 337–23, No. 633–33–35, No. 2454–2, No. 4105–15 and No. 5795–3, 4). The oldest example is dagger No. 2454–2, whose shorter blade is made to resemble a shark's head. This dates from the eighteenth century. Daggers like this were worn on the breast in special scabbards with a long strap attached; this was worn over the shoulder. A metal dagger was an essential item for a male Indian, worn by him everywhere. It was used for skinning animal carcasses, cutting up food, chopping twigs, and so on.

Daggers like this were used for hand-to-hand combat between women as well as men. If the custom of blood-feuding between tribes brought about huge losses and enmity could not be resolved for a long time, then women would also join battle. They would strip to the waist, let down their hair and climb into a fast-flowing river, where they would begin fighting with these daggers. Deep wounds would be inflicted and the blood would flow down their naked bodies and into the water, turning this red. Those who had been badly injured would slip down into the water, where they would drown, being unable to get up. The men watching the battle would order the women to stop fighting, and at this point the blood-feud would be deemed to have ended, even if the numbers of those killed and injured on each side were unequal. The difference would be made up by exchanges of slaves, copper plates, and other such valuables.

The last section of the Tlingit collections in the MAE is made up by shamans' attributes. These include hats and headdresses of different types, a comb, masks, various items of costume, a bag for narcotic substances, a range of different amulets, a necklace, rattles, a drum with clappers attached, a goblet for sea-water, a large fan, a dagger for tormenting spirits and sacrificing slaves, wooden weapons for doing battle with the spirits and a box for shamanistic appurtenances of different kinds.

The MAE has five types of shaman's headdress. There are five 'eight-horned hats', one made of mountain-goat horns (No. 211–11/2), and another of wood (No. 211–11/1). The eight horns embodied the

eight regions of the world, where the shaman's spirit helpers could take fly about. Two other headdresses have attached to them locks of hair from the heads of powerful dead shamans (Nos. 211–12,13). It was believed that one of the shaman's souls lived in his hair, both while he or she was alive and after they were dead. Hair was also the substance where one of the souls of any dead person lived until he or she was reincarnated. Therefore, appropriating the hair of a dead shaman gave one access to the aid of a powerful spirit-helper. One other, very rare, shaman headdress (No. 211–15/1) is woven from fir-roots, and its tip is crowned by a wolf's tail. A second headdress (No. 211–15/2) is at present in the collections of the Museum of the History of Religion. A fourth type of headdress is made in the form of a narrow cylinder, the carcass of which is comprised of sliced-up feathers sown round with fabric and fur (No. 211–14). A similar headdress in the Museum of Natural History, New York, has a miniature anthropomorphic mask attached [Jonaitis 2000: 96]. In the MAE, two such miniature masks are catalogued under Nos. 536–211a and 536–211b. These may also once have been part of a shaman's headdress.

The last type of shaman's headdress held by the MAE is in a hoop form with a mask attached (No. 211–3). Another mask from a headdress of this type is catalogued under No. 211–8. Such headdresses were used during healing sessions, when shamans drove evil spirits out of the body of the sick person. It was believed that the spirit embodied in the mask returned the sick person the life-force that he or she had lost.

Although shamans never cut or combed their hair, they used large wooden combs as decorations (viz. No. 2539–30).

But it is shamans' masks where the MAE's collection is strongest. Masks of this kind represented the shaman's helper spirits, and it was believed that these spirits entered his body when he put on the mask. No-one except their owner was allowed to wear them. There was also another type of mask that could be used during ceremonials by other Indians, chiefs in the first instance. On masks of this type, legendary ancestors, dead chiefs and shamans, and spirits of different kinds were represented. The difference between masks of this second kind and shamans' masks lay in the fact that, when those performing a dance or ritual put them on, they would represent a concrete hero or act out specific scenes from mythology, rather than being themselves transformed into the spirit represented on the mask. But determining which masks had a shamanistic function and which a ceremonial function is very difficult. Among the characteristics that indicate the shamanistic associations of a mask are that it has no eye-holes, since it was considered that the spirit represented on the mask would look through the eyes represented on it⁵. Animal masks

also had shamanistic associations. But both shaman masks and ceremonial masks represented dead heroes, rather than living ones — i.e. beings from the spirit world. It is therefore appropriate, in a provisional way, to deal with all the masks in the collection under the category of ‘shaman attributes’.

The MAE has fourteen masks showing female spirits (No. 211–6, No. 337–2, Nos. 620–32, 35, Nos. 2448–4, 5, 7–9, No. 4105–2 and Nos. 5795–27–29, 33). Mask No.211–6 is an example of the most ancient type [Holm 1987: 232]. The face sections are painted with totem symbols and there is a pin shown in the lower lip of each face. A female mask (No. 5795–29) and a male mask (No. 5795–30), to judge by the technique of execution used, were made by the same shaman. Neither of these masks has eyeholes.

There are eleven male masks in the Museum (Nos. 211–5, 7, 9, Nos. 620–33, 34, 36, No. 2448–11, No. 4105–1 and Nos. 5795–30–32). The main sign identifying the sex of these masks is the presence of a beard and whiskers, though these are not represented on all of the male masks. Thus, on masks No. 211–5, No. 620–34, No. 2448–11 and No. 5795–30 no beard and whiskers are shown. The paint on mask No. 211–5 has almost completely worn away, so that it is impossible to say whether it did in fact once have a beard and whiskers painted on it. This mask is distinguished from the others by the strongly arched shape of the brows. Mask No. 4105–1 represents a spirit which is blind in its left eye. Mask No. 5795–31 also represents the spirit of some particular person. The craftsman who made it was obviously trying to give it the character of a portrait. There is a mask with an analogous design on it in the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, Leiden [Yakutat... 1964: 18].

There are six masks with zoomorphic representations on them in the MAE, and in addition a photograph of a mask (No. 211–4), which is currently in the Museum of the History of Religion, St Petersburg. This last mask has a wolf’s head on it. Nos. 2448–1, 14, 15 and No. 4105–3 represent bears’ heads, No. 2448–13 a mosquito, and No. 5795–26 a hawk.

Of great interest are masks Nos. 2448–6 and 10. Judging by the shape of the nose, eyes and brows, these belong together as a pair and were made by one and the same carver. No. 2448–6 shows the moon, which the Tlingits held to be a female spirit. No. 2448–10 may represent the sun; it is painted in a way that has no analogy among the other masks in the MAE. The left half is coloured red, the right blue-green. Probably the carver was trying to express the ambiguous nature of the sun, shining by day and hidden by night.

The shaman’s costume consisted of a breastplate and an apron. The MAE has a single leather breastplate with bone pendants and axe-

blades (No. 211–18), and two aprons, one of which is decorated with strips of leather and axe-blades sewn on to these (No. 211–16/b). Another apron is decorated with the representation of the head of a mythical creature and axe-blades (No. 211–16a). Apron No. 5795–15 may also be a shamanistic attribute; this item was described above, in the section on costume. The Museum also has some bone pendants carved in the shape of animal and human figures from mythology (Nos. 211–24, 26, 32 and Nos. 5795–39–47). Ornaments of this kind were fastened to shamans' clothing. Of interest also are two amulets (No. 211–34 — a section of moose jawbone, and No. 211–37 — a small wooden figure of anthropomorphic design. During healing sessions, a ring-shaped amulet was an essential part of the shaman's attire: one such is held at No. 211–1. It is carved from stone and shows a two-headed dragon that has rolled itself up into a ring shape: one of the beast's two heads is biting the other.

Another essential shaman attribute was a necklace of bone pendants, one of which was suspended horizontally rather than vertically (No. 211–33). It is probable that the representation here showed the chief spirit-helped of the shaman.

Before going into a trance, the shaman would fast and drink seawater, which helped him to attain a delirious state more quickly. The MAE collections include a wicker vessel for drinking seawater (No. 2539–14).

In order to call up spirits, rattles would be used. The MAE has four types of such rattles; nine are made in the form of birds. In one case, only the top half of the item has been preserved (No. 536–7). Six rattles are carved to resemble crows (No. 536–7, No. 620–20a, Nos. 2448–22–24, No. 5795–36). Rattles of this kind were used not just by shamans, but by other Indians during religious ceremonies. Another two rattles are in the shape of oyster catchers⁶ (No. 211–2 and No. 2448–25). They were used to drive the spirit of an illness out of the body of a sick person. It is hard to determine, on the other hand, which bird is represented by rattle No. 571–42, as the section representing the bird's beak is missing. This rattle is of a very simple type and was made for ritual rather than shamanistic purposes.

Another type of rattle has a wooden handle, with axe-blades fixed to it. The MAE has two such rattles, which were collected in the late nineteenth century (Nos. 211–10/2, 3); it also has the drawing of a rattle (No. 211–10/1), though this is at present located in the Museum of the History of Religion. Early rattles of this type had carved handles in the shape of birds' heads [Preliminary... 1982: 32].

Yet a further type of rattle consists of two lathes joined together cross-wise, with three hoops of different diameters attached, and

miniature axe blades fixed to these (No. 5795–35). This type of rattle was widespread among many peoples on the North American Pacific coast, from the Nootka Indians of Vancouver Island to the Aleut of the Bering Sea regions. The MAE rattle has four eyes, a style of carving typical for the Tlingits, among whom the number four was considered sacred.

The final type of rattle, of which the museum has three, consists of an oval pod with a handle (No. 4105–4 and Nos. 5795–37, 38). The pod of each is carved to resemble the head of a mythic beast. Of especial interest is No. 5795–37, one half of which has an anthropomorphic carving, and the other half, the carving of a bird's head. Rattle No. 4105–4 has different carving on both sides. It may have been stuck together from two halves of different rattles.

An essential part of the shaman's kit was a drum (No. 211–18/1) and the sticks to go with it (No. 211–18/2–8). He would aim at the unseen spirits with wooden arrows which had figures of his spirit-helpers rather than tips at the ends (No. 211–19a, 6), and fight them with a wooden knife (No. 211–20). The Museum also has a metal shaman's dagger (No. 211–22), the top of whose handle is carved with a bear's head. A dagger of this kind was used to slaughter the slaves who had been brought for sacrifice.

While in a trance state, shamans would hold a fan made of eagle's feathers; this would also be used in dances (No. 571–16). Every shaman also had a special box for storing his attributes — masks, rattles, necklaces etc. (No. 211–23/1).

All in all, the ethnographical collections in the MAE give quite a full picture of the traditional culture of the Tlingits from the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries.

In order to give a full picture of the MAE's Tlingit collections, the illustrative material held should also be mentioned. The oldest items are pencil drawings by I. G. Voznesensky executed between 1840 and 1844. The first shows a group of Tlingits sailing a boat (No. 1142–15), the second a Tlingit settlement divided from Novo-Arkhangelsk by the fortified city wall (No. 1142–12). On the third and final drawing is a scene from the funeral rites of chief Kukhantan Sukhoruky, who died in October 1844 (No. 1142–28). These drawings have been published on more than one occasion [Blomkvist 1951: 230–303; Blomkvist 1972: 101–170]. In addition, I. Voznesensky's collection has a drawing in coloured pencil executed by a Tlingit, and showing a shaman in a trance state (No. 1142–32); this too has been published [Crossroads... 1988: 275].

Another group of illustrative material comprises four photographs taken by the Alaska Orthodox missionary G. Chudnovsky, two of

which were given to the museum along with a collection of ethnographical artefacts (No. 211–2a-b). One of these (No. 211–2b) has been published many times [e.g. *Arte...* 1996: 23; Jonaitis 2000: 96]. It shows a shaman healing a sick person. Both the white American — the ‘patient’ — and the Indian had posed specially for the picture [Emmons 1991: 401]. Another photograph shows a scene of a wizard being tormented by a shaman. Here, the wizard is represented by an Indian, but the shaman seems to be a white American [*Treasures...* 2001: 42]. These photographs were taken in Sitka in 1889 by the photographer E. de Grof and were meant for sale to tourists.

Two other photographs were taken in 1890 at the request of G. Chudnovsky. One (No. 1662–2) shows G. Chudnovsky with a group of Tlingits from Kilisno settlement on Admiralteisky Island, with the chapel of St Andrew the Disciple in the background. On another photograph (No. 1661–1) is represented the chief of Kilisno Nikolai settlement (Kichnal) with his wife Mariya. A. Kamensky wrote of this person, ‘There is a certain Indian tayon [chief], living in Kilisno: he is a person of some distinction, not without wealth, and not without good sense. The following tale is told of him. Whenever boats bring tourists to the little place where he lives, he will present himself to the curious Yankees in a variety of different costumes. Now he will don a general’s uniform, with a vast array of stars donated to him by visiting Americans pinned on the breast, now he will appear as a policeman, now in the habit and headgear of a Russian monk’ [Arkhimandrit Anatoly 1906: 28–29].

Besides G. Chudnovsky’s collection, the Museum also has another collection of photographs donated by an Orthodox missionary in Alaska, though by whom exactly is unknown. The collection was never registered and has no catalogue number. Originally, it consisted of more than 100 photographs, but only thirteen have survived to the present day. Five represent the Tlingits and items of their everyday life. The photographs were taken in Sitka at the end of the nineteenth century. On one of them is shown an Indian holding a spear and in a ceremonial costume decorated with a two-headed eagle. This collection also includes a photograph of an Indian wind band from the town of Sitka, a photograph of two Indian women curing skins, and a photograph of a married couple: a chief wearing a shirt decorated with a bear and holding a spear, and his wife.

Other illustrative materials include an early twentieth-century postcard showing an elderly Indian woman with a pin in her lower lip (No. 1867–158), and a photograph of the Indian artist Lewis Shotridge (No. I–52/3), who was the consultant to G. Gordon, the director of the University of Philadelphia Museum [Holm, Reid 1975: 18].

Finally, let me compare the data relating to the MAE's Tlingit collections assembled here with the information presented in the earlier studies by R. S. Razumovsky and S. A. Shternberg. Such a clarification of the source material is essential before work on the traditional culture of a given people can begin, or else researchers may include items actually produced by other ethnic or cultural groups among those characteristic of 'their' people.

Here I shall concentrate on the question of the ethnic origins of artefacts, rather than enumerating the various other mistakes in description made by Razumovsky and Shternberg. For instance, Shternberg wrongly assigned to the Tlingits the following items: a bone palette made by the Nootka Indians (No. 2454-1); the figure of a beaver with a mask inside it (made by the Chugach) (No. 633-31) [Ratner-Shternberg 1929: 293, 298]; a metal Athabaskan dagger (No. 539-3), and an Aleut knife (No. 2454-3) [Ratner-Shternberg 1930: 184, 186].

For its part, Razumovsky's article was informed by a blatant desire to 'enrich' the collections relating to the Tlingits, to which she assigned any items made in the style of any of the Indians living on the North-West coast. For instance, she included in the Tlingit collection: some Haida Indian vessels made of black argillite (No. 571-69, Nos. 2539-31, 36, 37); a Chugach axe (No. 5795-7); some Californian Indian feather capes (Nos. 2520-8, 9); some items of Athabaskan footwear (Nos. 4105-17 and 26); some Aleut footwear (No. 4105-27); some Chugach defensive armour (No. 2454-6); an Athabaskan metal dagger (No. 539-3); a Chugach wooden figure of a beaver with a mask inside it (No. 633-31); a Chugach wicker basket (No. 4291-7). In addition, Razumovskaya did not indicate the catalogue numbers of a whole series of sets of similar items, but simply gave a general figure for the number of the holdings. For instance, she believed that the Museum had 8 model boats, 8 halibut hooks, 7 wooden and 5 stone pipes, 18 wicker hats, 12 metal knives, and so on [Razumovskaya 1968: 20-28]. This information does not fit with the numbers of objects exhibited in the Museum as given by me above.

Thus, one can see that studying the formation of the collection, and the question of the attribution of specific objects in the MAE's collection is essential if one is to compose reliable, accurate thematic collections relating to the culture of specific peoples, and to study and interpret objects and the culture generally in a meaningful way.

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