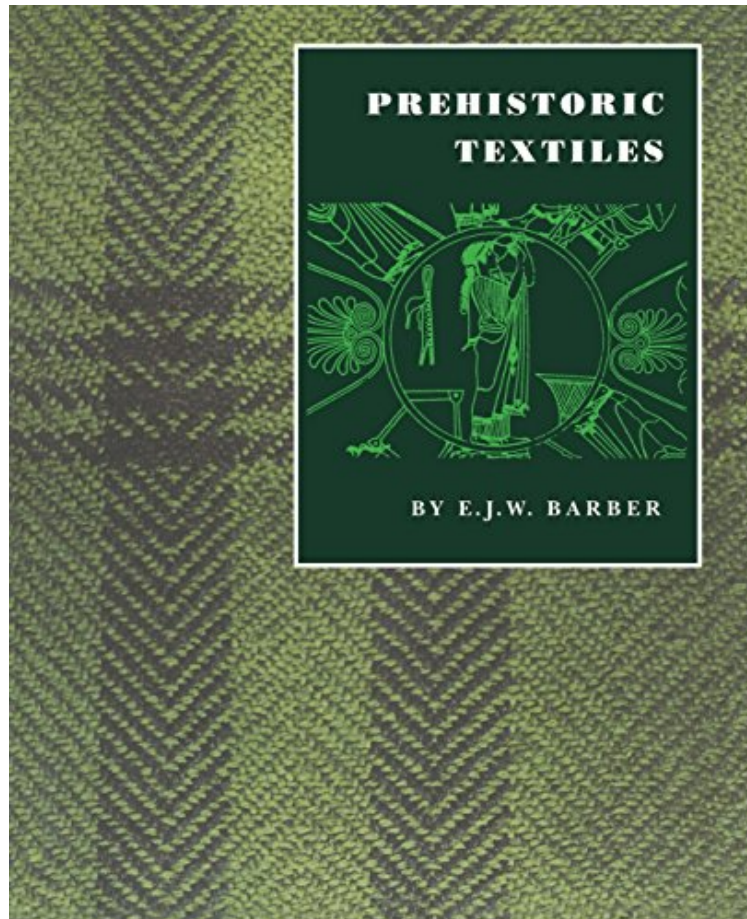


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E.J.W. Barber

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2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Brilliant masterpieceBy Laura A. BrooksThis was fantastic! Very scholarly, and still readable. She lay out her case, and we followed along as she pieced evidence from various sources, i.e. linguistic, archaeological, and persisting folk traditions, together to form a remarkable picture of prehistoric cloth manufacture and use.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent scientific treatment of the subjectBy loretta willardNot much for pictures but contains a boat-load of text if you are more into reading long, detailed and

objective accounts about very ancient artifacts relating to textiles and the means by which they were made. Also reveals how important textile production was as an outlet for women to develop bonds outside immediate family groups while caring for the home and raising children. 14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. If you love your clothes, you need this book!! By Sarah L Britton Not only is this book an amazingly detailed analysis of prehistoric and ancient textile samples left to us from the distant past, it also reviews the techniques, materials and cultural contexts of the societies and environments in which the textiles were produced. Elizabeth Wayland Barber is an enthusiastic specialist with a passion for her subject. Each chapter is a separate story that is spun with language and style that makes it easy for the layman and academic alike to visualise the technical concepts being described. My fingers were itching to try the techniques she discussed and had me pulling coats and pullovers from the cupboard to examine their manufacture. To realise that the items we take for granted and wear everyday have such a rich past and a history that can be traced over thousands of years can make the connections we have with our past ancestors seem much closer, more personal and familiar. I love this book and recommend it to all people with a passion for the past, for those seeking a connection through the familiar and those who want a detailed, comprehensive text about everything to do with cloth - all in one amazing book!

This pioneering work revises our notions of the origins and early development of textiles in Europe and the Near East. Using innovative linguistic techniques, along with methods from palaeobiology and other fields, it shows that spinning and pattern weaving began far earlier than has been supposed. Prehistoric Textiles made an unsurpassed leap in the social and cultural understanding of textiles in humankind's early history. Cloth making was an industry that consumed more time and effort, and was more culturally significant to prehistoric cultures, than anyone assumed before the book's publication. The textile industry is in fact older than pottery--and perhaps even older than agriculture and stockbreeding. It probably consumed far more hours of labor per year, in temperate climates, than did pottery and food production put together. And this work was done primarily by women. Up until the Industrial Revolution, and into this century in many peasant societies, women spent every available moment spinning, weaving, and sewing. The author, Elizabeth Wayland Barber, demonstrates command of an almost unbelievably disparate array of disciplines--from historical linguistics to archaeology and paleobiology, from art history to the practical art of weaving. Her passionate interest in the subject matter leaps out on every page. Barber, a professor of linguistics and archaeology, developed expert sewing and weaving skills as a small girl under her mother's tutelage. One could say she had been born and raised to write this book. Because modern textiles are almost entirely made by machines, we have difficulty appreciating how time-consuming and important the premodern textile industry was. This book opens our eyes to this crucial area of prehistoric human culture.

Winner of the 1993 James Henry Breasted Prize, American Historical Association Winner of the 1992 Davenport Publication Award "This monumental study embraces linguistic and archaeological investigations, practical knowledge of weaving, palaeobiology, and other arcane sciences to trace the development of cloth."--Washington Post Book World "Packed full of useful and intriguing information . . . also remarkably well written. This conjunction of virtues advances archaeological understanding of textiles and their social and cultural implications a giant step."--Trudy S. Kawami, Science "An exhilarating book. As the first comprehensive account of one of humanity's oldest industries, it will be a basic tool for archaeologists."--Helen Hughes Brock, Antiquity About the Author E.J.W. Barber is Professor of Linguistics and Archaeology at Occidental College and is a handweaver. Prehistoric Textiles won the Millia Davenport Publication Award of the Costume Society of America.