



Photograph by Ilan Spira

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Courtesy of Aaron Deter-Wolf

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JACKET DESIGN: Katrina Noble
FRONT JACKET ILLUSTRATION: Egyptian finence figure with tattoos on truncated legs (ca. 1980–1850 BCE); not to scale. Photograph by Renée Friedman, British Museum, London (EA3386)

KRUTAK &
DETER-WOLF

Ancient Ink

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF TATTOOING



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OF TATTOOING

EDITED BY
LARS KRUTAK & AARON DETER-WOLF

The desire to alter and adorn the human body is universal. While specific forms of body decoration and the motivations for them vary according to region, culture, and era, all human societies have engaged in practices designed to enhance people's natural appearance. One of the most widespread types of body art, tattooing, appears on human mummies by 2000 BCE and was practiced by ancient cultures throughout the world.

Ancient Ink, the first book dedicated to the archaeological study of tattooing, presents new research examining tattooed human remains, tattoo tools, and art. Examples include Predynastic Egyptian tattoo traditions, from Age animal motifs of Siberia, Ottoman-era religious imagery of Croatian Catholics, historical and contemporary *burik* designs of the Philippines, and the modern revival of birthing tattoos in Alaska. This volume contributes to our understanding of the antiquity, durability, and significance of tattooing and human body decoration and illuminates how different societies have used their skin to construct identities, transmit knowledge, and display societal values. *Ancient Ink* connects ancient body art traditions to modern culture with essays on Indigenous tattoo revitalization and the work of contemporary tattoo artists who employ historical techniques and imagery, demonstrating the pervasiveness of tattooing and its status as a shared human practice.



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A MCLELLAN BOOK

"A careful, measured, detailed, well-researched, and interesting volume. It updates a huge range of scholarship on tattoo practices from across the globe."

—MATTHEW LODDER, tattoo art historian, University of Essex

"Krutak and Deter-Wolf have brought together an impressive group of scholars to write about the antiquity and persistence of a near-universal human activity."

—TANYA M. PERES, associate professor of anthropology, Florida State University

"Tattooing is as popular today as at any time in human history, and *Ancient Ink* will help the layman, as well as the scholar, better understand how we got here."

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"As tattooing has become massively popular, the world has commodified our trade for cash, television shows, magazines, and flash books. Thankfully, every now and then a significant publication comes along that is created by people who know its history and are themselves tattooed. *Ancient Ink* is an important book and a must for every library."

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