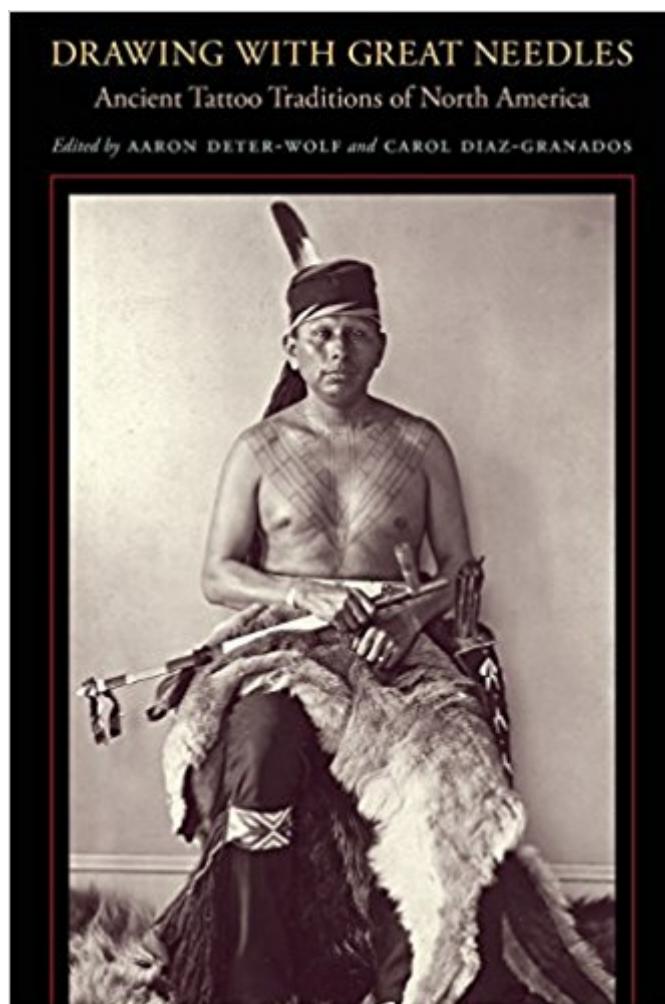


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# Drawing With Great Needles: Ancient Tattoo Traditions Of North America



## Synopsis

For thousands of years, Native Americans throughout the Eastern Woodlands and Great Plains used the physical act and visual language of tattooing to construct and reinforce the identity of individuals and their place within society and the cosmos. The act of tattooing served as a rite of passage and supplication, while the composition and use of ancestral tattoo bundles was intimately related to group identity. The resulting symbols and imagery inscribed on the body held important social, civil, military, and ritual connotations within Native American society. Yet despite the cultural importance that tattooing held for prehistoric and early historic Native Americans, modern scholars have only recently begun to consider the implications of ancient Native American tattooing and assign tattooed symbols the same significance as imagery inscribed on pottery, shell, copper, and stone. Drawing with Great Needles is the first book-length scholarly examination into the antiquity, meaning, and significance of Native American tattooing in the Eastern Woodlands and Great Plains. The contributors use a variety of approaches, including ethnohistorical and ethnographic accounts, ancient art, evidence of tattooing in the archaeological record, historic portraiture, tattoo tools and toolkits, gender roles, and the meanings that specific tattoos held for Dhegiha Sioux and other Native speakers, to examine Native American tattoo traditions. Their findings add an important new dimension to our understanding of ancient and early historic Native American society in the Eastern Woodlands and Great Plains.

**Chapter List:**

- Introduction Carol Diaz-Granados and Aaron Deter-Wolf
- 1. Native American Tattooing in the Protohistoric Southeast Antoinette B. Wallace
- 2. Needle in a Haystack: Examining the Archaeological Evidence for Prehistoric Tattooing Aaron Deter-Wolf
- 3. Swift Creek Paddle Designs as Tattoos: Ethnographic Insights on Prehistoric Body Decoration and Material Culture Benjamin A. Steere
- 4. Tattoos, Totem Marks, and War Clubs: Projecting Power through Visual Symbolism in Northern Woodlands Culture Lars Krutak
- 5. The Art of Enchantment: Corporeal Marking and Tattooing Bundles of the Great Plains Lars Krutak
- 6. Identifying the Face of the Sacred: Tattooing the Images of Gods and Heroes in the Art of the Mississippian Period F. Kent Reilly III
- 7. Dhegihan Tattoos: Markings That Consecrate, Empower, and Designate Lineage James R. Duncan
- 8. Snaring Life from the Stars and the Sun: Mississippian Tattooing and the Enduring Cycle of Life and Death David H. Dye
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## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This is a fascinating volume on a subject for which detailed investigation is long overdue." - Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology

"This volume thoroughly presents the ethnohistorical and ethnographic sources on tattooing and also shows the power of systematic iconographic analysis when coupled with historical information. It also nicely addresses the problems of exploring tattooing from an archaeological perspective. . . . It will make an important contribution to our continued efforts to understand Native American societies in both the recent and the deep past."-- Adam King, Research Associate Professor, South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina

"If you have an interest in tattoo history, you must add Drawing with Great Needles: Ancient Tattoo Traditions of North America to your book collection. I can't emphasize this enough! In it, editors Aaron Deter-Wolf and Carol Diaz-Granados and their team of authors have put together an incredible collection of essays that introduce a wealth of new tattoo history material to the world."-- Anna Felicity Friedman, Tattoo History Daily ([tattoohistorian.com/2013/12/12/book-review-drawing-with-great-needles/](http://tattoohistorian.com/2013/12/12/book-review-drawing-with-great-needles/))

"This is an excellent volume which mixes both ethnohistoric and archaeological evidence to elucidate the use of tattooing in Eastern and Plains North America ... This volume is a must-read for anyone interested in Mississippian (and possible Woodland) symbolism."-- Marvin T. Smith, Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice, Valdosta State University (Reviewed in Southeastern Archaeology v.33 no. 1, 2014)

Aaron Deter-Wolf is a prehistoric archaeologist with the Tennessee Division of Archaeology in Nashville and an adjunct professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Middle Tennessee State University. Carol Diaz-Granados is a research associate in the Department of

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