



Sean Mallon and
Tatau: A History of Samoan Tattooing



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Tatau is a beautifully designed and richly illustrated retelling of the initial and powerful history of Samoan tattooing, from 3,000 years back to modern methods. This cultural history is the 1st publication to look at Samoan tatau from its earliest beginnings. The Samoan Islands are virtually unique in that tattooing has been continuously practiced with indigenous techniques: the entire man tattoo, the pe'a has evolved in subtle ways in its style since the nineteenth century, but remains as elaborate, meaningful, and powerful since it ever was. It is richly illustrated with historical images of nineteenth and twentieth hundred years Samoan tattooing, modern tattooing, diagrams of tattoo styles and motifs, and with supplementary photos such as for example posters, ephemera, film stills and artefacts. It argues that Samoan tatau has a long background of relevance both within and beyond Samoa, and a far more complicated history than is currently offered in the literature. Through a chronology wealthy with people, encounters, and events it describes how Samoan tattooing offers been shaped by regional and exterior forces of switch over many centuries.



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